

Directions are from the center of Northfield

Pulpit Falls

Drive time:

Hike Time, Round Trip: 30 min but you will want to spend an hour or more.

Notes: Great picnic site (except late May and Early June when mosquitos are thick.

Children love this spot (well, everyone does). Short hike, Waterfall, Rocks, Small caves

Drive: From the center of Northfield, go North on Rt 10. And continue into New Hampshire. The state line is just before Cha's Store on the left. Notice the mile markers every 0.2 miles. After mile 1.6 (almost to 1.8), on a left curve, pull off into the road-side pull off to the left and park.

The trail is across the road, marked with surveyor's tape. CROSSING THE ROAD IS DANGEROUS; it is a sharp curve and cars go up to 55 mph—hold children, dogs on leash. Listen for cars.

After you cross the road, head down the trail for 200 yards, then cross the stream (tricky in the spring, easy in summer and fall), you'll find a spot.

Turn left and go up stream for a very short (40 yards) distance then the trail goes right and uphill. It is just a few minutes until the trail goes down to the Pauchaug Brook. Look back at where you came from. When it is time to leave, the trail is not real obvious. You can see the falls from this side of the brook (you can hear it). Cross the brook and go down to the waterfall (easier said than done when the water is high). Notice your surroundings—the valley, the trees, the rocks, the mosses, etc. It is an extraordinary little valley.

The falls is only seven or eight feet high, but it is a beautiful spot with large trees where there used to be a beaver pond. On the far side of the brook there are also small caves in the rocks that children like to go into (but muddy in the spring).

Hike the trail upstream. In just 100 yards, there is a pretty spot where there used to be a beaver dam. You can see the powerlines uphill. Half way up the hill there the trail (not easy to see) continues to Pulpit Rock. Pulpit Rock is right under the power lines. You can go under the rocks (a "cave" to children). It is possible to continue upstream to Bent Pond, but is not a very interesting hike (although there may be beavers in the pond). If you want a longer hike, you can go up the powerlines for some nice views.

Return is the same way you came.

Two short, beautiful hikes

Hobo Falls

This is a great spring time hike, especially when the snow is melting or after a hard rain. There is usually little or no water flowing from mid/late June through the fall. It is spectacular when there is a lot of water. Most of the hiking is easy but there is a short **steep** section. Wear boots, If the falls are running, the trail is likely to be wet. Hiking time is about 10-15 minutes one way.

Drive From the center of Northfield, go South on Routes 10 & 63, turn Left on Maple Street. In about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile, turn right on Old Wendel Road. Keep going until the road turns to gravel, past the last house. Just before the road turns into a Jeep-track there is a parking area on the right.

Hike up the road for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and look for the Hobo Falls trail on the left. You're almost there. The trail goes up steeply to the bottom of the falls. The falls is a cascade of water coming down about 80 feet from the plateau above. If it is still cold out, there are dramatic ice formations on the sides. Kids love to climb up the rocks and along the little rock cliffs.

The Gunnery Sgt. Jeff Ames Accessible Nature Trail, at Alderbrook Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary

This is a short trail in Northfield (near Hobo Falls so I'm including it on the same page). It was opened in 2018. It is a gradual gravel path that is accessible with a wheelchair, stroller, etc. I go here frequently, it is a beautiful spot and you will see lots of birds and pond life. Hike is about 15 min of walking but spend some time looking at the signs and at the pond.

Drive From the center of Northfield, go South on Rt. 63. Drive about a mile past the Rt 10 South turn off (Stay on 63) and the trailhead is on your left. It is a loop trail and has signs about wildlife and local history.

Be sure and take the little side trail to the pond. It is amazing and has a huge beaver dam (breached by a storm in 2024 but still impressive), that is about 80 yards long and eight feet high. The pond has turtles, blue herons, ducks, geese, kingfishers, water snakes, and beavers. Lots to look at.

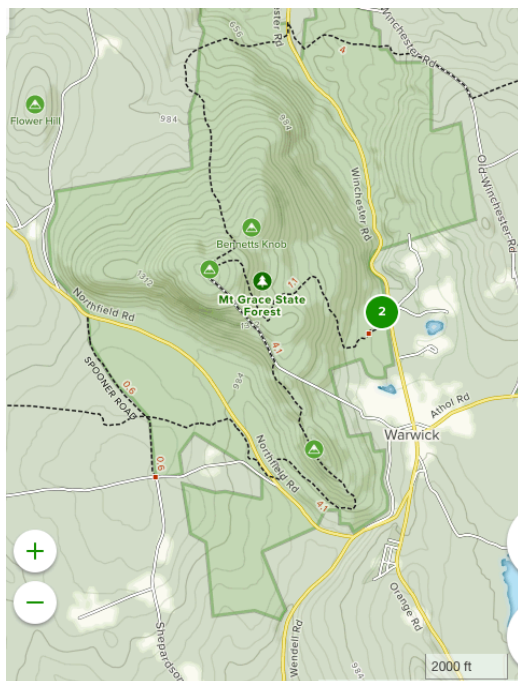
Mount Grace Has a fire tower for a 360 degree view

Drive up Warwick Rd from the center of Northfield. After you cross into the town of Warwick, it becomes Northfield Road. After several miles, take a slight left at the stop sign to remain on Northfield Road. You will quickly arrive in the center of Warsick at Rt. 78. Turn Left. In less than a mile, just past the elementary school, there is a sign for Mt. Grace and a large paved parking lot on the left. Park there. Hike to the left of the large field (towards the map and sign). This is the start of the hike.

The hike to the summit is less than two miles but it is UP. It will take about an hour. At the top there is not much of a view (a little) but there is a FIRE TOWER. If you don't mind the steep steps and vertigo of fire towers, it is a fantastic view from the top. You can see 360 degrees, Mt. Monadnock, Ski mountains of Vermont, Mt. Wachusett near Worcester, etc. It's a fabulous view. [There is a map here.](#)

Another way up is from Northfield Road on the NET (New England Trail, formally the M&M) trail. There are a couple of places to access on the left as you're driving up from Northfield. I would recommend looking for White road to hit Northfield Road, it comes in from the right almost parallel to Northfield Road so it is a bit difficult to see. But Right after White road (on the right) there is a pull off on the **left** where you can park and access the NET. The trail is just a few feet from the road. Take a right on the trail. It is more gradual, and a little less vertical (but longer) than the trail from Rt. 78. I can ride my bike up this trail (or at least I used to be able to).

I think you can also go up the road (to access the fire tower and communications tower) but I have never done that.

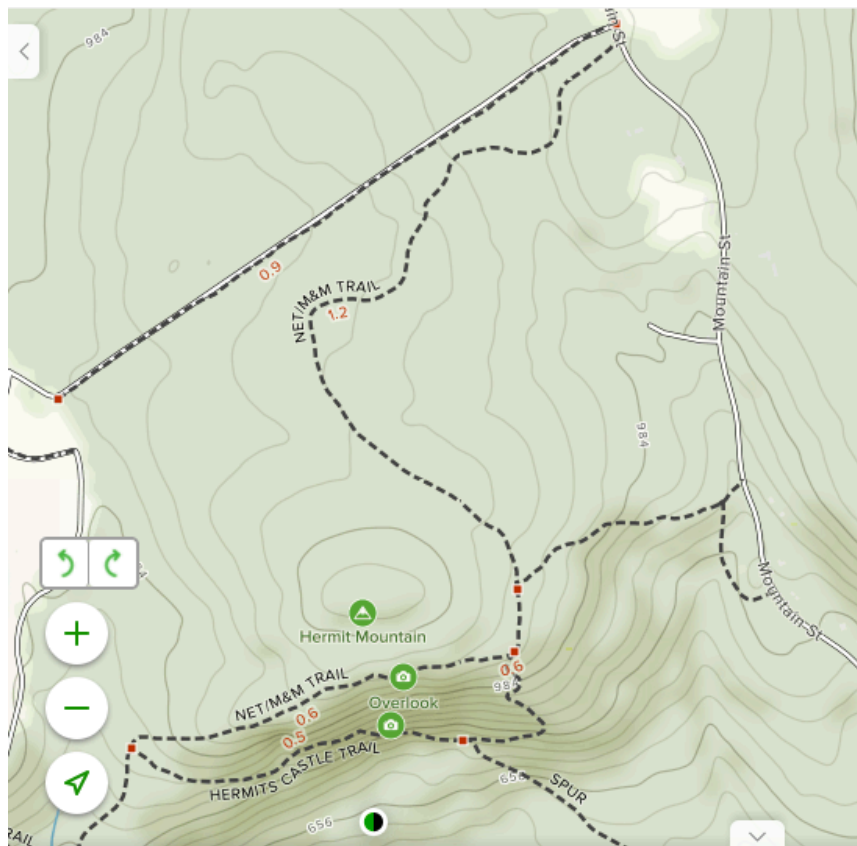


Hermit's Cave (or Hermit's Castle)

This is a fun loop with some good vistas and cool rock formations.
I think the hike is 1.5-2 hours.

From the center of Northfield Head South on Rt 63 to South Mountain Road (about 1.8 miles past the Rt 10 turn), take a left and go up almost to the top and turn right on Old Wendel Road. This becomes Mountain Rd when you pass from Northfield to Erving. In about a mile there is a parking area on the right. There is a wide path before you that would lead to the Northfield Mountain Reservoir, that is not the trail.

The trail is the New England Trail (NET) to the South (the direction you were driving). The trail is blazed white. Hiking is flat and easy for about a mile. Then take the blue trail off to the left (to "Erving Castle"). It goes down steeply for about ½ mile. At the bottom you soon see Hermit's Cave, really a large rock overhang (no cave) but pretty cool. There are also small rock cliffs that kids like to climb around, plus a cellar-hole and the remnants of terraced gardens. When you are done there, continue on the blue trail. In about ¼ mile you hit the New England Trail (NET), go right and back up (gradually). Once you get to the top, there are a few very nice views down to the hamlet of Farley, Rt. 2 and the Miller's River hundreds of feet below. The total distance is just a little over three miles (I think) but I generally spend nearly three hours to do the entire hike (with a picnic at the overlook).



Map is from <https://www.alltrails.com/explore/trail/us/massachusetts/hermit-cave-loop>

Northfield State Forest Lots of trails for hiking, biking, xc skiing

From Birnam Road across from the golf course **or** from the top of School Street between Birnam Road and Warwick Road.

There are two loops: The Yellow (Richardson) Loop (about 5 miles) and the Blue (Orchard) Loop (about 3 miles).

There is also an out-and-back, Red Trail, that goes up to Notch Mountain (no view from there except when there are no leaves on the trees).

The only good view spot is at Garnet Rock, about a 30 minute walk from Birnam Road, a little less from School Street (from the School Street parking, go left on the yellow trail and you will meet the Red trail shortly, keep going up).

[The Official Map is here.](#)

There are many other trails for hiking and mountain biking or cross country skiing.

[Here is my "Heat Map" of my bike rides from Strava](#) (I ride up there several days a week).

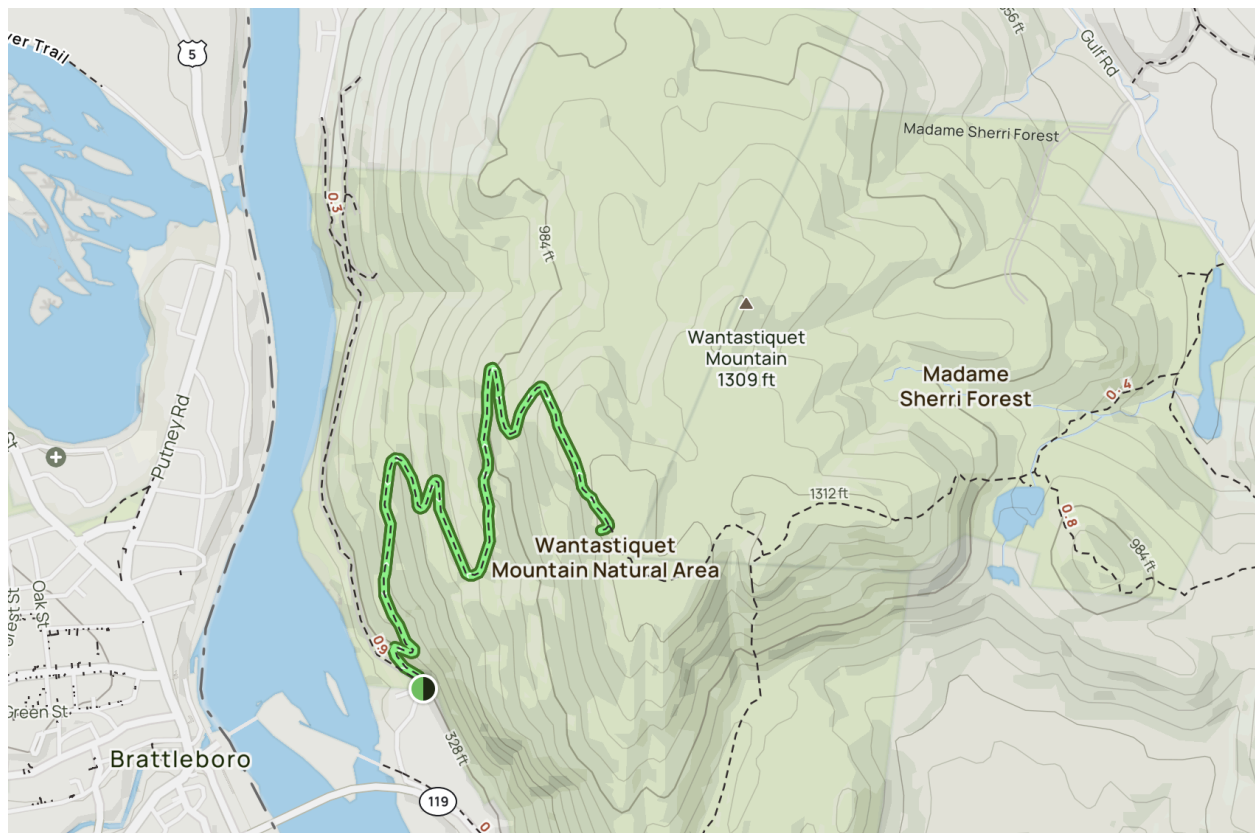
More below — keep scrolling

Wantastiquet Mountain

This is probably the best bang-for-the-buck hike within 30 min on Northfield. The hike is about one hour up for the average hiker. Views of Brattleboro, Connecticut and West Rivers, ski areas of Vermont; it's a 50 mile view on a clear day.

From Northfield, 20 min drive: Head North on Rt 63 to Hinsdale, New Hampshire. At the T in Hinsdale, turn left on Rt 119 towards Brattleboro. In about six miles, do not go over the river to Vermont, stay right and go down the hill towards the old bridge to Brattleboro. Just before the closed bridge, turn Right on Mountain Road. In about 200 yards the road ends at the parking area for the hike (you are below the back side of the Runnings store). The trail is obvious, there are two wide trails, one goes along the river up to Chesterfield, NH, the other goes up the mountain. The trail is wide and not too difficult (medium). But it is rocky and wet in places. In spring it will be very wet, waterproof shoes are a must. At the top there is an offshoot to the right with a great views to the West, rocks to sit on and have a snack. If you get to the radio towers, you have gone too far.

If you want more: you can keep hiking about 15 more minutes and get to the top of a big rock-fall down a ravine on the right with a great view to the South; down to Northfield and beyond. Also, it is fun to use two cars, park one at Madame Sherri's trail head on Gulf Rd (off Rt 9 near Vermont exit 3). And hike up and over via Madame Sherri's ruins and Indian Pond. This is very steep above Indian Pond. I think this takes ~2.5 hours to hike Sherri → Wantastiquet.



Hike: Crag Mountain

Note: Public access to this Crag has flip-flopped over the years (allowed, not allowed) so **I can't guarantee that the routes to the view are open to the public.**

Crag Mountain is the high point on the Northfield Ridge and there are two open views, one to the East and one to the West. Both hikes are short, and the views are great.

Hike 1: The Short Way—Just 10-15 minute hike (one way). Short but difficult. Really.

Drive From the center of Northfield, go South on Rt. 63. Stay on 63 when Rt 10 peels off. In less than a mile, turn left on South Mountain Road. Continue up the road past Old Wendel Road/Mountain Road intersection until you reach the top. Before the road starts to go down, park on the right. If you go past the top there is a cemetery on the right.

The hike: Cross the road and continue up the driveway. There are rocks on the right that children like to climb (when my kids were little I would bring a book and let them climb around to their heart's content). After only 150 yards or so, the trail goes off to the right (blue blazes). In another 300 yards the trail gets steep, then you will reach rocks that you must scramble up. It is briefly very steep and not easy for anyone with movement difficulty.

Shortly after the climb you will see the view to the East. You can see Mount Monadnock to the NorthEast and Mount Wachusett to the SouthEast. Gulf Road is below you.

Walk another 30 yards and there is a fabulous view to the West. You can see the Connecticut River, French King Bridge, Barton's Cove, the Mt. Hermon Campus, and Mt. Graylock 50 miles West on a clear day.

Hike 2: The long way, maybe 45 minutes one way for adults. Moderate hike, steep in a couple of places and a bit rocky in a couple of spots.

Drive From the center of Northfield, go South on 10/63, turn left on Maple Street (the road to Erving. Drive up (it changes name to Gulf Road), soon after you go under the power lines near the top, look for the parking area on the right about 100 yards beyond the power lines.

Hike: The trail from the parking lot goes to the right back towards the power lines Just before the power lines the trail goes left up the hill (this is the steepest part). Follow this trail (blue blazes). However, the blue blazes ~~vanish at some point~~ turn right, go over a little ridge then go down, down, somewhere. **You need to not follow the official trail here** and look for some faint orange blazes. The trail is not too hard to follow, **just keep going up** to Crag Mountain. From this direction you see the West view first. Don't forget to walk a little further for the East view. It's a great picnic spot.

Map Next Page

