The Kennebec Highlands

In 1996, the 7 Lakes Alliance initiated a project to protect the Kennebec Highlands area in Rome, Mount Vernon, Vienna, and New Sharon. The Kennebec Highlands contain the highest peaks in Kennebec County, extensive wetlands, and five undeveloped ponds. The areas is now managed in partnership with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry.

The ‘A’ Trail

**Description:** The ‘A’ Trail was designed as a mountain biking trail, with multi-use opportunities for hiking and snowshoeing. The trail starts at the northeast corner of the parking area and crosses the Round Top Trail at 0.3 miles. It continues west and then turns south, crossing the Goat Path at 1.1 miles then continuing to intersect an old logging road at 1.3 miles. The trail follows the logging road to the right (northwest), crossing a stream and gradually narrowing to singletrack as it climbs. At 2.1 miles the trail turns left (south) on another grown-in logging road. (For hikers, a steeper, rockier option continues straight uphill, rejoining the bike trail in 0.2 miles.) The trail descends gradually until meeting another logging road at about 2.7 miles, then climbing steadily to the sparsely wooded summit area, which offers partial views to the east and south through the trees. From here it follows the logging road, climbing to the summit and then turning in a series of short switchbacks at 3.2 miles. As of July 2018, the trail beyond this point has been rough-cut but is not completed or signed. Proceed with caution.

Round Top Trail

**Description:** Sanders Hill Trail continues to the summit clearing (755’) with views of Great Pond to the south and the Kennebec Highlands to the west. Continue the loop trail by rejoining the main trail, passing over a cliff with steep drop-offs and views of Great Pond and the Kennebec Highlands. The trail soon turns east and climbs to reach a junction with the main trail and the Great Pond Loop.

French Mountain Trail

**Description:** At 1.4-mile loop.

Mount Philp Trail

**Description:** A paved parking apron is located on the east side of Watson Pond Road, 0.3 miles south of Route 27. The trailhead is a 0.4-mile loop that begins and ends on the Great Pond Loop (described above). The Outer Loop leaves to the right (north), 0.15 miles from the Great Pond Loop’s southern junction with the main trail, climbing through a rocky area before leveling out and proceeding northward. At 0.4 miles the trail passes over two overlooks of Great Pond, marked by “Steep Drop-Off” signs, then descends until turning west and crossing a snowmobile trail at 0.6 miles. The trail soon turns south through open woods, then climbs in several spurs, recounting the snowmobile trail at 1 mile and ending at 1.1 miles. Here it rejoins the Great Pond Loop just southeast of its northern junction with the main trail.

The Mountain Trails

**Description:** The Mountain trail system consists of a main trail 0.8 miles long and three side trails that can be combined for loop hikes of up to 2.5 miles. The side trails can be hiked in either direction, but are described here from south to north.

Main Trail: The main trail, an old logging road, heads north from the parking area. The Great Pond Loop (marked by a green arrow) leaves at 0.4 miles the upper part of the main trail. The Long Pond Loop (white arrow) leaves the main trail on the left (west) at 0.5 miles. The main trail continues upward straight ahead and ends at a junction with the Great Pond Loop on the right and the Long Pond Loop rejoining on the left.

Great Pond Loop (green arrow): The Great Pond Loop, 0.3 miles long, enters the woods on the right (east) at 0.4 miles from the parking area. At 0.15 miles the Outer Loop (described below) leaves on the right. The Great Pond loop climbs westerly to a small open area—the highest point on The Mountain (665’)—then turns north. The Outer Loop rejoins on the right at 0.3 miles. Keeping left, the Great Pond Loop descends steeply to its terminus at a junction with the main trail and the Long Pond Loop.

Long Pond Loop (white arrow): The Long Pond Loop leaves the main trail on the left (west) 0.5 miles from the parking area. The 0.4-mile Long Pond Loop descends from the main trail, passing over a cliff with steep drop-offs and views of Long Pond and the Kennebec Highlands. The trail soon turns east and climbs to reach a junction with the main trail and the Great Pond Loop.

Outer Loop (blue blazes): The Outer Loop is a 1.1-mile trail that begins and ends on the Great Pond Loop (described above). The Outer Loop leaves to the right (north), 0.15 miles from the Great Pond Loop’s southern junction with the main trail, climbing through a rocky area before leveling out and proceeding northward. At 0.4 miles the trail passes over two overlooks of Great Pond, marked by “Steep Drop-Off” signs, then descends until turning west and crossing a snowmobile trail at 0.6 miles. The trail soon turns south through open woods, then climbs in several spurs, recounting the snowmobile trail at 1 mile and ending at 1.1 miles. Here it rejoins the Great Pond Loop just southeast of its northern junction with the main trail.

Trail Information

Paths designated as hiking trails and described in this guide are suitable for foot traffic only. Unimproved trails vary in condition, but are suitable for cross-country skiing, mountain biking, and snowmobiling. Where trails are marked by blazes, double blazes denote an upcoming change in trail direction or an intersection with another trail or road. Some trails shown on this map cross private property. Please seek landowner permission before venturing onto private land. Not all trails are marked. Always carry a topographical map and compass and know how to use them.

7 Lakes Alliance Supports Leave No Trace Principles

The 7 Lakes Alliance conserves the lands and waters of the Belgrade Lakes region for all.

For your safety and enjoyment, and that of others: please:

- Plan ahead and prepare
- Carry a map and compass, flashlight, food and water
- Keep on the trails
- Dispose of waste properly (pack it in, pack it out)
- Leave what you find
- Respect wildlife
- Be considerate of other visitors

Disclaimer

All descriptions are multi-use and conditions change and a map or trail description cannot describe every feature, the 7 Lakes Alliance cannot accept responsibility for trail conditions or for trail or trail description not being up to date. The 7 Lakes Alliance does not accept liability or legal responsibility for any injuries, damages, or losses caused by using our maps or trail descriptions.

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