
Hike Information for June 12th

The hike will take place on the morning of Wednesday 12th June. There are a number of options for the hike depending on how far you'd like to walk and what time you want to start. All of the options (with the exception of the birding walk) will be self-guided. While the terrain is almost perfectly flat, Princeton can often be quite hot and humid, so be sure to bring adequate water and sun protection.

Breakfast and lunch will be served from 8-9am and 12-1pm in the tent outside of McCosh Hall. Plan accordingly so you don't miss your chance to eat before talks start at 1pm!

5.30am Early birders and ghouls hike! ~4miles round trip

This hike will depart from Fitzrandolph Gate (the main entrance to campus on Nassau Street) at 5.30am prompt and make its way down Witherspoon street to the intersection with Rt206, where we can cross into Mountain Lakes and walk around the lakes, woods and ponds checking out the tail end of the warbler migration and the resident water birds. The map of this hike outlines a basic loop around the lake, but there are plenty of opportunities for further exploration of the other trails (outlined in the Mountain Lakes trail map). The small nature reserve of Mountain lakes was once owned by two of Princeton's most infamous undergraduates, the Menendez brothers, who were admitted to Princeton after their parents were horribly murdered by unknown assailants. Their parents' considerable estate paid for the boys to live a life of luxury at Princeton and they also bought and ran "Chucks Spring street café" in town on Spring street, famous for its excellent chicken wings. When it emerged that the boys were the ones who'd murdered their parents, their sojourn at Princeton was curtailed and they now reside in the "Big House" just outside Los Angeles.

We can return for breakfast at "Chucks" or at the excellent Greek diner on Leigh Avenue, just across from Mountain lakes, or at any of the fine breakfast places on Nassau Street. This should allow us to join the day's main group of hikers who can depart between 8.30 and 10.00 from behind Frist campus center and outside Guyot Hall.

Mid-length hike: Kingston and back, 8 miles round trip

Depart campus around 9:30 am to walk down Washington Road, cross the bridge over Lake Carnegie and then turn immediately left to walk along the old tow path of the Delaware and Raritan canal. The canal was dug by hand and runs all the way from Trenton to Raritan and was used for taking market produce from New Jersey into Newark and Manhattan. The railways instantly made it redundant. The attached nature guide (written by Henry Horn) provides many important insights into the natural history you will see along the canal: the birds will be mainly aquatic although there will be some warblers and blue birds in the trees and a nesting pair of bald eagles on the right bank as you approach Kingston. The guide also describes many of the plants you will see and some history of the creation of canal.

You can make your way back from Kingston by Uber (wimps!), or by returning to the lake side of the canal footpath and retracing your steps to the Princeton campus. Do not be fooled! The path on the east side of the canal dead-ends before reaching Princeton!

Long hike: Rocky Hill and back, 12 miles round trip

Those wishing to do a longer hike can depart campus around 8:30am. This hike is an extension of the mid-length hike described above. After reaching Kingston, take the path on the east side of the canal to continue onwards to Rocky Hill. One third of the way to Rocky Hill is a possible two hundred yard diversion to Rockingham, the house occupied for several days by George Washington after his defeat of the British army at the Battle of Princeton. The house is preserved in the style of the time that Washington spent there. The section of trail between Kingston and Rocky Hill is more wooded and there will be many warblers and possibly foxes and beavers.

After reaching Rocky Hill, you can either return to Princeton by Uber (wimps!), or make your way back by returning to the path on the lake side (west side) of the canal and heading south. Remember, the path on the east side of the canal south of Kingston dead-ends before reaching Princeton!

Short Hike, Lake Carnegie and back, 4 miles round trip

Those wishing to have a slower start to the day (for whatever reason...) can take a short hike along the canal path at their own leisure. After turning onto the lake side of the canal path, continue for about 1 mile to a boardwalk from which you can get a nice view of the lake. Turning around here makes the hike roughly 4 miles round trip.