

DONNELL POND

Black Mountain Trail

Location: Franklin, Hancock County

Description of Hike: Hike into the surrounding hills on Black Mountain Trail to get spectacular vistas of the Down East coast and Mount Desert Island. From the parking lot, follow a level woods road to the base of the mountain. From here, the trail climbs steeply up switchbacks and rock steps through spruce, fir and red maples. Before the top, the trail levels out in a forest. You will pass several trail junctions. Beyond the third junction, climb gently onto open ledges, following cairns to the broad top of the mountain where there are spectacular views of the surrounding mountains. Look to the North, over Rainbow Pond to Caribou and Tunk Mountains; east to Tunk Lake; west across Black Mountain to the dome of Schoodic Mountain; and south to the peaks of Acadia and the ocean. After taking in the view, reverse your steps to the very first trail junction, bear right and traverse along the cliff top. The long descent will bring you back to Donnell Pond. Dive in to cool off after the hike.

Directions: The Reserve lies 12 miles east of Ellsworth. Turn onto Route 183 in East Sullivan and proceed for 4.5 miles. Turn left on a gravel road by the Public Lands sign (after the railroad tracks). For the trailhead to Schoodic Mountain, Black Mountain Cliffs, and the trail to Schoodic Beach and campsites on Donnell Pond, turn left after 0.25 miles. Continue straight for the trailheads to Black and Caribou Mountains.

Total Distance: 5 miles

Hiking Time: 3 hours

Maps: DeLorme Maine Atlas and Gazetteer Map 24 D/E-5; Map 25 D-1.

Local Attractions:

- For a shorter hike, walk a half mile to Schoodic Beach. Turn left and follow the shoreline into the woods. The trail ascends steeply at first before leveling off at a small clearing in a scrub oak forest. At the trail junction, bear right up to the summit tower where you can enjoy magnificent views of Acadia. Midsummer, the plateau is covered in delicious blueberries. To return, retrace your steps to the junction and bear right. Descend gradually, passing by several huge boulders with overhangs before reaching the parking lot.

Sources:

- Schoodic and Black Mountains
http://outdoors.maintoday.com/hiking/trails/schoodic_black_mtns.shtml

- Land for Maine's Future. Maine State Planning Office.
http://media.informe.org/lmf/projects/project_detail.php?project=1588

LMF Background: Situated just miles outside of the region's largest commercial center, the Donnell Pond area was saved from development by LMF and several conservation partners. The 15,479 acre property spans between two scenic by-ways, Route 1 and Route 182, and encompasses many mountains, including Black, Caribou, Schoodic, Tunk and Firey. Several ponds have landlocked salmon fisheries including Tunk Lake which is the clearest lake in Maine. Donnell Pond is lined with sandy beaches - great for swimming or relaxing with a picnic.