

Parks, Nature & Wildlife



MetroWest Boston offers a huge array of parks, nature trails, ponds, and outdoor recreation areas. We recommend the following for groups:

Garden in the Woods (Framingham, MA)

Explore the beauty of New England wildflowers at Garden in the Woods. A place visitors often describe as magical, the Garden's 45 acres were sculpted by retreating glaciers into eskers and steep-sided valleys, with a brook, pond, and wetlands that showcase native plants of the region. **Wander the paths, say hello to the turtles, fish, and frogs in the pond, and attend one of the special talks or events.**



The Garden at Elm Bank (Wellesley, MA)

Visit the Massachusetts Horticultural Society's garden, a jewel that blends historic and contemporary into a place of beauty, contemplation and exploration. Tour the gardens, then take a workshop in horticultural history, gardening, or a hands-on art class.

New England Botanic Garden at Tower Hill (Boylston, MA)

A 200-acre four season botanical paradise with 18 distinct garden spaces, preserved woodlands, and miles of walking trails. Tower Hill offers educational programs, exhibitions, seasonal special events and a lovely garden shop and café.



Christa McAuliffe Center (Framingham, MA)

Step into a world of science and discovery at the Christa McAuliffe Center! This interactive hub immerses visitors in the wonders of space, astronomy, and environmental science. With a cutting-edge **planetarium** and dynamic **Challenger simulation lab**, visitors can take on mission challenges to launch a spacecraft and then bring it home again. Monthly stargazing events are also available.

Hopkinton State Park (Hopkinton, MA)

The park's 1,500 acres of forest are crisscrossed by trails, beaches, stocked fishing, and more. The Boathouse rents **sailboats, kayaks, canoes, rowboats, pedal boats, and paddleboards**. Complimentary beach wheelchairs are also available. The bucolic forest offers **amazing trails** for **hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, and mountain biking**.



Cochituate State Park (Natick, MA)

Rent a **kayak, canoe, pedal boat, paddleboard, or sailboat** to take out on the lake, **swim, fish, wander the hiking trails**, or enjoy a meal at one of the picnic areas of this beautiful park.

MetroWest Rail Trails

Explore 53+ miles of rail trails in MetroWest, including the **Upper Charles Rail Trail**, which you can do **on foot or via bicycle**. The well-maintained trail offers great opportunities to view wildlife in the adjacent forests and bogs, as well as ample spots to hop off the path for a coffee, lunch or to take a peek in one of the little shops and boutiques in town. The **rail trails** in MetroWest offer excellent paved paths for those with limited mobility with a variety of towns, parks, and attractions along the routes to explore.



Sudbury & Assabet Rivers National Wildlife Refuge (Framingham/Sudbury, MA)

Great for groups to **kayak, paddle, or hike** along, the scenic **Sudbury River** is a location lush with vegetation and **excellent for birding**. The entire river basin was formed by glacial activity 10,000 years ago, leaving behind unique geography and geological formations, and a landscape bursting with wildlife. The river runs for miles, with various stops along the way for ponds, lakes and wildlife refuges. Drive a few minutes north to the **Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge**, a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in nature with acres to explore and wondrous species to observe via hiking, biking, or snowshoeing.

Wachusett Mountain Ski Area (Princeton, MA)

With 27 trails, 8 lifts, and a 2006-foot summit, Wachusett is a highly accessible ski resort for all skill levels. Stop at Bullock Lodge Cider House for freshly made **hot cider donuts** (a New England tradition!). In the warmer months, the mountain offers glorious trails to hike and amazing views from the summit. The **fall foliage** here is not to be missed.



Warren Conference Center and Inn (Ashland, MA)

On over 100 wooded lakefront acres, this cozy **alpine-style lodge** is perfect for groups to **indulge in outdoor activities**...kayak on the lake or swim from the beach, hike in the woods, play horseshoes or bocce on the lawn, try your skill at their **ropes course**, or create a little friendly competition with a game of **tennis, volleyball, softball or soccer**. Or simply pull an Adirondack chair up to a fire pit, prop up your feet, and roast a few marshmallows.

Come see what we have to offer in the heart of Massachusetts!
For other activities, links to venues, and more, visit us online at www.metrowestvisitors.org. For help coordinating your group tour, contact Executive Director Stacey David at sdavid@metrowestvisitors.org