

Hiking the Belgrade Region, Maine

French Mountain

Obtained in 1990, French Mountain (716') was the first parcel of land acquired by BRCA.

Trailhead: A paved parking apron is located on the east side of Watson Pond Road, 0.7 miles south of Watson Pond Road's junction with Route 27.

Description: From Watson Pond Road the trail immediately heads east then swings south, climbing the ridge of French Mountain (716') to reach a rocky precipice with stunning views of Long Pond. As the trail opens up near the summit, the first views are of tiny Whittier Pond to the east with Rome Corner behind it, Mount Phillip to the northeast, and Long Pond to the southeast. The trail continues along the open rocks until its terminus above steep cliffs overlooking the northern end of Long Pond. From here you can also see Great Pond, The Mountain, and Belgrade Lakes Village. Turkey vultures usually roost in French Mountain's rocky face and often can be seen riding the thermals overhead and looking for a meal.

Mount Phillip

In 2004 BRCA, in collaboration with Pine Island Camp, acquired 207 acres on Mount Phillip (755'), including the hiking trail and summit.

Distance: 1.4-mile loop

Trailhead: A parking lot is located on the north side of Route 225, directly across from Starbird Lane, 1.5 miles east of Rome Corner (the junction of Routes 27 and 225).

Description: The Mount Phillip Trail is a loop trail and can be followed in either direction. The trail, marked with blue blazes, passes through a grove of tall mature pines gently climbing through a mixed forest of hardwoods and evergreens. It continues up to a rocky ledge, partial summit clearing (755') providing views of Great Pond to the south and the Kennebec Highlands to the west.

The Mountain

In 1998 BRCA, with the Belgrade Lakes Association, acquired 207 acres on The Mountain (665').

Distance: 0.8 miles each way

Trailhead: Drive approximately one mile north of Belgrade Lakes Village on Route 27. Turn right (east) onto Mountain Drive; (hiking sign indicates trail head) a parking area is located at 0.3 miles on the left (north) side of Mountain Drive.

Description: The Mountain Trail system consists of a main trail 0.8 miles long, with two shorter 0.4 mile loop trails off each side (Long Pond Loop and Great Pond Loop). The main trail, an old logging road, leads north from the parking area. The trail climbs as it winds through a glacial boulder field to a small open area—the highest point on The Mountain (665'). The Long Pond Loop leaves the main trail on the left (west) 0.5 miles from the parking area and passes over a cliff with steep drop-offs and stunning views of Long Pond and the Kennebec Highlands.

Round Top Trail

Distance: 3.9 miles round-trip

Trailhead: A parking lot is located at the corner of Watson Pond Road and Wildflower Estates, 4 miles south of Watson Pond Road's junction with Route 27.

Description: The Round Top Trail ascends Round Top Mountain (1,133') while winding through a diverse forest of young and old hardwoods and conifers. The trail, marked with blue blazes, is moderate loop hike. Within 200 yards it crosses a large slab of granite originally quarried for an old foundation. After an initial rise the trail meanders through the woods, briefly opening up for a view of Round Top Mountain before dropping to a junction with the Kennebec Highlands Trail at 1 mile.

Sanders Hill Trail

Distance: 2.9-mile loop

Trailhead: A small parking area is located on the west side of Watson Pond Road, 1.3 miles south of Watson Pond Road's junction with Route 27.

Description: The Sanders Hill Trail is a loop and can be hiked in either direction. The trail, marked with blue blazes traverses a ridgeline through a rock field where there are views to the east of Watson Pond, Mount Phillip, and French Mountain. The trail cuts directly through and over some large granite slabs and continues on to a sparsely wooded summit area with views to the east and south through the trees of the Sanders Hill summit (854'), turn left (east) back into the woods along the brook. The trail crosses two small brooks in a northeasterly direction,

swings east through a young mixed growth forest and past a large rock (Snapper Rock), and finally turns north to reach an old logging road.

Fogg Island Preserve: Donated by Central Maine Power

Directions: From Belgrade Lakes village, head south on the West Road. Turn right onto the Dunn Road, and continue to the Wings Mill Road. Turn right onto the Wings Mills Road, and right again onto the Cottle Hill Road. Turn right almost immediately onto the Spring Hill Road, and continue for approximately 0.6 miles to a driveway on the left.

The Fogg island preserve was donated to the BRCA by Central Maine Power (CMP). The preserve was acquired from Central Maine Power (CMP) as part of a wetlands mitigation program to offset (CMP) development in other wetland areas. In total the preserve offers 469 Acres of wetlands and upland forests and over two miles of undeveloped shoreline on Long Pond, Ingham Stream, and Belgrade Stream. The preserve offers the public a variety of recreational opportunities including, Hiking, Snow Shoeing, Cross-country skiing, Horseback Riding, Hunting, Fishing, foraging for berries and flowers, and Snowmobiling. In winter time it is hard to get out to the property without a snow mobile.

Prohibited: All other motor vehicles besides Snow Mobiles are prohibited.