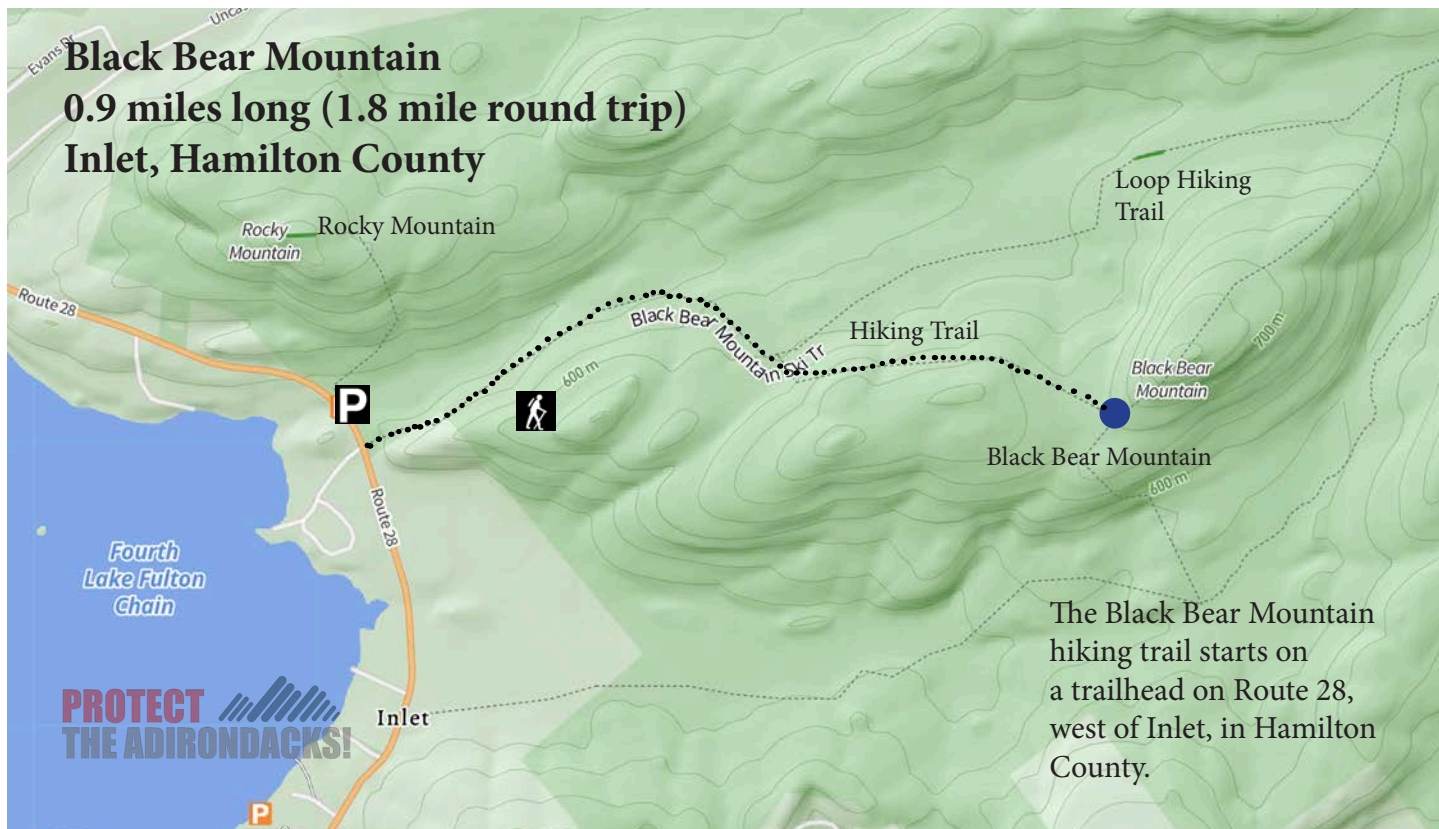


Black Bear Mountain



Black Bear Mountain is a popular trail just outside of Inlet in Hamilton County. The trail is located in the Moose River Plains Wild Forest area of the public Forest Preserve. The parking area for this hike, and the shorter hike up Rocky Mountain (also known as Rocky Peak), is located off of State Route 28 just west of downtown Inlet. During the summer months, there is also a boat wash station in this parking lot.

The hike to Black Bear Mountain can either be done as a 0.9-mile hike (1.9 miles round trip) to the summit and back to the trailhead or as a 3.1-mile loop. The route to the top splits after 0.7 miles into two trails, offering a unique hiking experience of either steep and rocky scrambles and a more gradual incline through the beautiful forest or a dynamic mix of the two. Either way, hikers will pass over dazzling streams and open rocky outcrops en route to a series of magnificent views on the long summit ridge.

The trail begins at the south end of the parking lot on a narrow trail that leads into the woods, towards the trail register. The trail's initial sections are often wide and well-worn, which are muddy and eroded in some areas. A small creek runs parallel to the trail on the left along this stretch.

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The trail soon begins to ascend into a rockier stretch before passing through the first of several sunny, fern-covered clearings. The trail then opens up again at a trail junction about 1 mile in. To reach the summit, follow the trail to the right with blue trail markers, which rises sharply. After flattening out and winding through clearings, wet patches with boardwalks, and northern upland forest, the trail begins its steep climb over rocky outcrops and ledges. The climb is difficult in some spots, but several rocky outcroppings off to the right provide scenic spots to stop for a rest and take in wonderful views.

Soon the trail reaches a wide open summit. The view from the true summit of the mountain is stunning, with many of the Fulton Chain of Lakes in view, and the endless forests of the Moose River Plains.

Hikers can return back down the steep and quick blue trail, or opt for a long but calmer descent by following the yellow markers. Near the summit, this yellow trail descends fairly steeply through a beautiful pine forest. After flattening out somewhat, the trail turns left toward Rt. 28 at another junction marked by a signpost. The path then winds up and down over bridges and diverse forests before reconnecting with the shared yellow/blue trail at the junction about a mile from the trailhead.

Help Protect the Forest Preserve and Be Prepared When You Hike: Please follow “carry in, carry out” rules for all trash and follow other **Leave No Trace** principles when hiking in the public Forest Preserve and other wild areas. The seven Leave No Trace principles are: 1) Plan ahead and prepare; 2) Stay on hiking trails and camp at designated areas; 3) Dispose of human waste and trash properly; 4) Leave what you find; 5) Minimize campfires; 6) Respect wildlife; 7) Respect other hikers. **Educated and prepared hikers do not damage the environment or need search and rescue unless injured.**