 For emergencies, dial 911.  
For event related assistance, contact the Point of Contact, Andrew Schmidt, 845-464-2676

These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.

### Starting Point Information:

The event starts in front of the Administration Building at NY State’s Bear Mountain State Park. The park is adjacent to the Bear Mountain Zoo which the walk passes through.

The address is:  
Bear Mountain State Park Parking Lot, 3004 Seven Lakes Drive, Tomkins Cove, NY 10986. There is a fee for parking at the parking lot.

GPS coordinates are:  
41.310265, -73.990497

### A few introductory remarks:

This walk is either 9km or 10km depending if you do the “River’s Edge Walk’ loop at instruction #12. Maps are at the end of the instructions.

- **Walking imperatives are in BOLD.**
- *Historical and information items are in italics.*
- Warnings and other priority texts are underlined.



Welcome to the Bear Mountain State Park/Zoo/Bridge walk!



## EARLY 2026 ALERT!

There is a major construction project occurring at the Bear Mountain State Park from fall of 2025 through spring of 2026. These directions are routed to avoid the route around the Hessian Lake. Unfortunately, that is a major detour of the walk. To make up the missed distance, you need to walk across the Bear Mountain Bridge two extra times (total of three crossings). In the spring of 2026, this will be changed.

1. **START** facing at front of the Administration Building at the far end of the parking lot. Figure 1 on page 8 contains a high level view of the entire walk.

2. **TURN RIGHT and follow** the curved path towards the Merry-Go-Round (aka “Carousel”; the round building with the cupola on the top to your right)

*A snack bar and restrooms are inside the Merry-Go-Round building (in season), as well as bathrooms in the Field House building next to it.*

3. **PASS** the Merry-Go-Round building on your right **keeping** the basketball court on your left. Bathrooms and a small snack shop are located inside the Merry-Go-Round building in season.

4. **TURN RIGHT** in front of the Field Building (bathrooms inside) ahead of you and **walk** on the path towards the Bear Mtn Inn at the far end of the parking lot.

5. **CONTINUE TO FOLLOW** along the construction fence to the end.

6. **FOLLOW THE DETOUR SIGNS** making your way to Hessian Lake and turn right at the shoreline. **Walk along** the shoreline, keeping Hessian Lake on your left.

*At this point, you are also walking along the world famous Appalachian Trail!*

*During the Revolutionary War in 1777, two hundred and fifty Hessians were killed*

*trying to take an outpost near the lake. Their bodies were thrown into the lake, which according to witnesses, turned red with blood for several days afterward. The lake was then known as Bloody Lake, later renamed to Hessian Lake. Who today would want to swim in Bloody Lake?*

7. **PASS** the large picnic table area on your right and about ¼ of the way around the lake **turn right** on the paved path towards the bathroom/vending machine pavilion on your right.

8. **TURN RIGHT** on the path as you approach the bathroom/vending machine pavilion.

9. **KEEPING HESSIAN LAKE** on your right for roughly 100 feet, **walk** to the sign marked “POOL, ZOO, & HUDSON RIVER DOCK” that marks a set of stairs and ramps descending from the lake’s frontage.

*On this walk, you’ll see signs and blazers along the way referring to the “1777 Trail” and its offshoots The 1777 Trail is significant because it follows the path taken by British troops under Sir Henry Clinton on October 6, 1777, to attack the American forts at Montgomery and Clinton during the Revolutionary War.*

10. **TURN LEFT** to go down the steps or **ALONG** either set of ramps and **TURN LEFT** to walk through the tunnel under NY Route 9W/US 202. The path **turns right** after the tunnel.

11. **TURN LEFT** at the refreshment stand and **walk past** the large swimming pool on your right, **walking** up the ramp on the left to a “T” intersection.



12.



### **DECISION TIME! - “River’s Edge Walk”**

The walk to the river’s edge is about 1km out and back down and up on a fairly steep hill. It is part of the 10km. Continue to the next instruction, #13.

If you don’t wish to do the walk to the river, this walk is 9km. If not, **turn left** at the T intersection and jump to instruction #15 below.

13. (Only for those walking on the River’s Edge Loop): **TURN RIGHT** at the “T” intersection towards the Hudson River Dock. **Follow the trail** as it winds down to the shoreline. **WALK** to the end of the dock to enjoy the view.

*You’ll be rewarded with a beautiful view of the Hudson River and the Bear Mountain Bridge at the shore of the river. The Hudson River is actually a tidal estuary (not a true river) from the Atlantic Ocean, meaning it is brackish at this point, miles from the ocean, It flows both ways depending on the tides. It is at sea level all the way past Albany.*

14. **TURN AROUND** at the end of the dock, and **retrace your steps** up the hill, to the “T” intersection. **Continue straight** towards the “Trailside Museums and Zoo” entrance. (We’ll call this the “Zoo” from here on in.)

15. **ENTER** the Zoo via the path either by turning left if you did not walk the River’s Edge Loop or straight ahead if coming from the River’s Edge Loop.

Feel free to make a donation at the cash box. Figure 2 on page 9 is a detailed map of the Zoo.

*On your right, you will pass the statue of Walt Whitman, the famous American poet who wrote “Song of the Open Road”.*

16. You will **pass by** many small animal shelters/exhibits as you walk through the Zoo.

Note the large bear den on your left. In late 2025, the last one passed away, and plans are afoot to re-do this bear cage.

17. **FOLLOWING THE MAIN TRAIL, SHORTLY TURN RIGHT** and walk to end of the short "Geology Trail". View the scenic overlook of the Hudson River. (Do not take the Amphitheater Trail on your right). **After viewing, retrace your steps** to the main trail, **turning right** to **continue** on the main trail.

*Read the large interpretive panel about the history of Appalachian Trail history, Bear Mountain/Harriman Parks, and the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference on your right.*

18. **TURN RIGHT** at "T" intersection at the "EXHIBITS" sign. Note the otter pond on your right.

19. **TURN LEFT** at the Historical Museum sign. (Don't fear, you'll visit this later)

There are bathrooms near this location, find the signs.

20. **GO THROUGH** the gate and **continue** straight ahead towards the Highway to exit the Zoo.

21. **TURN RIGHT** on the pedestrian walkway and **walk across the Bear Mountain Bridge**. (The walk across the Bridge, coupled with the Zoo portion of the AT walk, supplies you with the distance credit (4k) needed for the AT Trail Special Program.

*Just past the old stone bridge administration building, read the informational sign that*

*celebrates the bridge as it passed its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.*

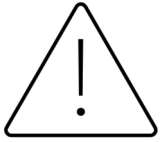
*When the bridge formally opened on November 27, 1924, it was the longest suspension bridge span in the world. At 1,631 feet, it surpassed both the Williamsburg (1,601) and Brooklyn (1,594) Bridges in New York City, the previous two record holders. It was also the first suspension bridge to have a concrete deck.*

*As you walk across the bridge heading east, the Hudson River flows to West Point, 5 miles north. To your right, south towards New York City, 30 miles. Note the two sets of railroad tracks below, one of each side of the Hudson River. The one on the Zoo side (west side) are Conrail freight tracks. The one on the far shore (east side) are Metro North commuter railroad and Amtrak passenger tracks leading to Albany and then to Chicago to the West, or Montreal to the north. You'll be sure to see a train on that side at some point while walking.*

*If you are walking the "Washington-Rochambeau National Historic Trail", look to your right down the river towards the south. The Revolutionary forces used the Hudson River as a crucial transportation corridor for both the 1781 march to Yorktown and the 1782 return. Key events along the river include the Franco-American armies crossing the Hudson from Peekskill / King's Ferry to Stony Point in August 1781 as part of their journey south, and a second crossing of the river for the French forces on their return in September 1782. The actual*

*location is down to the far side of the river, about 4.5 miles. This vantage point is the closest pedestrian/vehicle crossing to that point. Claim AVA Special Program credit!*

22. **CONTINUE** to end of the bridge. Once the pedestrian path guarded by the cement barrier ends, note the small “New York State Bridge Authority” (“NYSBA”) Sign”. Turn around here and re-trace your steps back to the Bridge Toll Booth and entrance to the Zoo.



As mentioned earlier, **walk across the bridge and back two more times (for a total of 3 crossings)** for the full 9/10km credit while the construction is being performed that kept you from walking completely around Hession Lake.

23. **TURN LEFT** and go **back through** the “Trailside Museums and Zoo” gate to **re-enter** the Zoo.

24. **TURN LEFT** at the “Historical Museum” sign. *Visit the great exhibits inside if you’d like. Well worth it!*

25. Upon visiting the Museum (or if choosing not to visit), **walk on the trail wards the rear** (keeping the Historic Trailside Museum on your left) to visit the scenic view at the rear of the Museum. The most fantastic view of the Bear Mountain Bridge awaits you!

26. **WALK** to the far end of the overview, view the “Points of Interest” interpretive sign and map of the area.

*At this location, you’re looking at four New York State counties! You’re standing in Rockland County, Orange County is to your far left, Putnam County is across the river to the left, and Westchester County is across the river to the right.*

27. **CONTINUE** walking around the loop, **back up** the slight hill to the Museum’s front.

28. **RE-ENTER** the Zoo towards the “Exhibits” sign, **turning right**. You will be returning to Hessian Lake back through the Zoo, but the path is slightly different to see other exhibits along the way.

29. **WALK PAST** the duck pond on your right, and then **turn right** at the “Fort Clinton West Redoubt” sign to **walk up** the short path up the small hill to visit.

*View the interpretive signage at the top of the small path overlooking the Redoubt. This is an important historical sign to read, providing an overview of the importance of this area, including Fort Clinton (and the battle thereof on 6 October 1777) and Fort Montgomery, a few miles north of the Zoo, during the Revolution.*

30. **RETURN** to the main path after your visit, **turning right** to walk to the “T” intersection at the entrance to the park which you’ll now be leaving.

31. **TURN RIGHT** at the “T” intersection at the EXIT sign.

32. After **passing** the bear den again on your right, **continue** on past the Woodland Pond on your right to the end of the Zoo.

33. **TURN RIGHT** after the admission booth and **pass by** the swimming pool again on your left. **Follow** the path back through the tunnel and **up to the top of the stairs** (that you descended earlier) **or ramps** depending on your preference.

34. At top of the stairs, **turn left** on the path, keeping Hession Lake on your right. **Pass** concession stand #10 on your left.

35. As you **APPROACH** an intersection with a street light pole in the middle. **TURN LEFT** towards the Inn walking towards the parking lot, keeping the Inn on your right.

*The Bear Mountain Inn was opened on 1915. It is listed on both the National Register of Historic Places. Built by park employees using natural materials from the surrounding land, the Inn showcases stone from old local walls and chestnut timber harvested and milled onsite. Its grand fireplaces, sturdy stone foundations, and exposed timber beams speak to the craftsmanship and vision of its creators. There are bathrooms and a small snack shop inside.*

36. **WALK** along the sidewalk towards the parking lot and the administration building at the far end. **Walk** towards the Merry-Go-Round and Field House as you did at the beginning of the walk. **Turn left** in

front of the Field House.

37. **PASS** the Field House on your right, and **turn to enter** the BUS Parking Lot. **PROCEED** towards the traffic tunnel at the far left end of the parking lot.

*On your left before the tunnel is an interpretive sign explaining the 1777 and 1779 trails that you are on.*

38. **WALK** through the tunnel.

*On your right, note (but do not take) the sign towards the woods to “Doodletown”. The settlement was a crossroads for soldiers during the Revolutionary War during battles at Fort Montgomery when many hundreds of British soldiers marched through the tiny settlement prior to a bloody and significant battle with colonists. Its residents left starting in the 1950s. Doodletown is now a ghost town with remnants of several buildings and a graveyard. Its claim to fame is that the song, “Yankee Doodle” is believed to come from the Battle of Doodletown in 1777. How cool is that?!*

39. **TURN LEFT** after exiting the tunnel. Keep the playground to your right as you **walk up** the slight hill. **Walking** through the picnic table area keeping the wooden service road barrier on your left.

40. **TURN LEFT** at the break of the wooden fence, and carefully **cross** the service road. **Pass** the backside of the Administration Building, and **turn left** to walk to your car in the parking lot.

## **CONGRATULATIONS ON WALKING THE “BEAR MOUNTAIN STATE PARK/ZOO/BRIDGE WALK!**

*a paying for credit participant. Note, however, the \$2 coupon for the downloaded PDF will expire in 60 days.) Also note that an event registration expires after 30 days, but if your registrations lapses, you may re-register without cost.*

*End notes:*

*Thanks to Beth Everett's “The Bloody History of Hessian Lake” (Google it!) for words on the history of Hessian Lake as well as Wikipedia and Google “AI” for snippets of other information.*

*The AVA Northeast Region hopes you enjoyed your walk today. Contact us at [AndrewNYWalks@gmail.com](mailto:AndrewNYWalks@gmail.com) if you have suggestions or comments about this walk.*

*There is a seasonal (mid-April to mid-October) staffed no-charge New York State historical museum with exhibits and a historic movie at the Fort Montgomery Battle Site less than a mile north on NY State Route 9W (one of the roads off of the Bear Mountain Bridge circle by the Bridge entrance) that is well worth a visit if you have time. Check their hours at: <https://parks.ny.gov/visit/historic-sites/fort-montgomery-state-historic-site> (845) 446-2134).*

*Be sure to log back into the OSB system to 'finish/complete' your online registration after doing the event. The OSB system does not deduct any event fee from a participant's Event Bank until they have submitted event completion info including the date of the event, the distance, and the selection of applicable special programs that person is participating in. (Nevertheless, a fee of \$2 for a downloaded PDF is deducted from the user's Event Bank when the PDF is downloaded. Later, any PDF fees are credited back to a user's Event Bank when he/she submits the event completion info as*



Map created by Plotaroute, ©2025 Spidersphere Ltd / Map Data © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright) Contributors  
<https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>

Figure 1 – Overview of the Route – Point “A” is the Administration Building, the START/STOP point of the walk



Figure 2 – Detailed view of [Bear Mountain Trailsides Museum and Zoo](https://trailsidemuseumsandzoo.org) – courtesy of the Zoo  
(<https://trailsidemuseumsandzoo.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Trailside-Zoo-Map-Color-4-2025-print-as-shrink-to-fit-scaled.jpg>)