

## A Suggested Mountain Bike Route Through Great Brook Farm State Park

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With map in hand, or in pocket, and **my new Trek** underfoot, here's a route I tried out at Great Brook Farm State Park in Carlisle, MA. Click on the map image for a larger, annotated version of the map with the route highlighted.

- From the main parking lot, head back towards the paved road and turn left until you see a meadow on the right
- Follow the double track trail through the open meadow, this is Pine Point Loop trail.
- After passing over some water, through some trees, and up the hill the trail turns left again
- There will be a sign for Heartbreak Ridge trail on the right side. Following the singletrack trail for the first 100-200 meters is tough, especially the first 50 meters. The trail begins uphill, with lots of rocks and tree roots, and has a couple hairpin curves.
- After 10 minutes of biking the trail levels and straightens, although it remains quite rocky for a while, but continue on and it improves and covered mostly by tree roots popping out of the ground for 2-4 inches.
- Heartbreak trail passes by the Tophet loop trail twice, which is overgrown and doesn't appear to be very passable since it passes through swamp. Heartbreak continues on until it comes out on a road and momentarily leaves the park. Follow the road until it T's with a larger road, and then turn left. Head up the larger road for maybe 100 meters, then you'll see a steel gate on the left where an unnamed trail re-enters the park.
- Heading back into the woods, the singletrack trail will eventually meet a large doubletrack Pine Point Loop again after about a mile. For now, this singletrack is a lot of fun with some rolling curves and tree roots, but nothing too difficult. It overlaps with a small road for part of the way, and where the trail exits the road among the houses is not very well marked so it's easy to pass by.
- Just before the last house on the right there is a blue triangle pointing to a trailhead that is overgrown and hard to see, but that's where you should continue. The trail continues and passes by houses on the park's edge, but the trail itself remains fun with more hills and even a few wooden plank bridges that pass over swampy areas.

- When you meet the wide Pine Point Loop again, follow it to the right until it meets a road, then do a quick left and another right to continue
- Soon you'll meet the Garrison Loop on the right, so push up the hill over the rocky climb. The trail briefly flattens out then reaches a steep, rocky pitch of about 10 meters in length which I had to walk the bike over. Climbing back on the trail continue downhill where it meets the Woodchuck trail
- At the singletrack Woodchuck trail turn right and follow it until the trail widens and a large wooden bridge appears. Pass over the bridge and head straight up the hill. I really had to pump the pedals hard to climb the hill since the rocks are loose and my rear wheel was spinning.
- After that climb, I tried the Indian Hill route by turning to the right, but in retrospect I wouldn't take that one again. Indian hill is VERY rocky, steep, and has many large trees fallen over the trail. Maybe advanced riders could do this smoothly, but I couldn't. I marked this trail in red on the map.
- Instead of Indian Hill trail, when you come up the hill after the bridge take a left instead of a right. To the left follow the Woodchuck trail uphill, which is much better than the Indian Hill. Eventually you'll come out at a cornfield on the doubletrack Litchfield Loop
- Turning right on the Litchfield route you'll enter another meadow. That trail will fork to become the Hill Slide trail and make a big loop around the meadow on the right, but take the left side of the fork and turn into the woods, parallel to part of the wide Litchfield Loop nearby. This trail has a couple steep, but fun hills which are somewhat rocky. I like this part a lot.
- After a few minutes you'll meet up with the Litchfield Loop trail again, so follow it back to the parking lot past the red barn structure.