

# Route 73 Hiker Shuttle Frequently Asked Questions

August 2021

## Schedule and Drop-off Locations

- **When will the shuttle services run?**

The shuttle will run on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays from August 21 through October 11 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The final shuttle loop for return trips to Marcy Field will depart at approximately 6 p.m. Riders are responsible for their own transportation if they miss the shuttle.

- **What are the shuttle stop locations?**

Parking and the shuttle start will be located at Marcy Field in Keene Valley. The shuttle will stop at the Rooster Comb trailhead going both eastbound and westbound, and the Giant Mountain/Ridge Trail and Roaring Brook Falls trailheads on the westbound return.

- **What hikes does the shuttle provide access to?**

From the Rooster Comb trailhead hikers can access Rooster Comb, Snow, and Hedgehog mountains. From the Giant Mountain/Ridge Trail hikers can access Giant Mountain, Giant's Washbowl, and Giant's Nubble. From the Roaring Brook Trailhead hikers can access Giant Mountain and Roaring Brook Falls.

- **Where would I find the pick-up/drop-off schedule for the shuttle?**

The Route 73 Hiker Shuttle map and schedule is available on the Essex County website (<https://www.co.essex.ny.us/wp/transportation/>) and DEC's website on the High Peaks Wilderness page (<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/9164.html>).

- **Will there be one shuttle operating on a loop, or multiple shuttles going to different locations?**

There will be one shuttle operating on a loop.

- **Will some trailheads have stops more frequently than others?**

Rooster Comb will have stops both eastbound and westbound, while the other two trailheads will have only one stop.

- **Will the shuttle go to the Adirondack Mountain Reserve (AMR) so I don't have to make a parking reservation?**

The shuttle will not stop at the Adirondack Mountain Reserve (AMR) parking area nor is the AMR Parking area (aka St. Hubert's) accessible from the Roaring Brook/Giant Mountain lot where the shuttle will drop off and pick up riders. Advanced reservations to access parking for Round and Noonmark mountains and the AMR gate are still required as part of the joint DEC-AMR pilot parking reservation system [announced earlier this year](#) to increase public safety. The shuttle system is not part of the DEC-AMR Hiker Parking Reservation System. Visit [www.hikeamr.org](http://www.hikeamr.org) to learn more and to book a reservation.

- **How long on average should I be prepared to wait for the shuttle?**  
The shuttle loop itself will take approximately 50 minutes. Riders should be prepared to wait a full hour in case there is a waiting line. Hikers should plan to arrive early at Marcy Field to ensure early arrival at their trailhead and maximize their time on trail. Lines are expected to be longer in the morning at Marcy Field and longer in the evening at trailheads.
- **Is there a way to know if the shuttle is late or behind schedule while waiting at a trailhead to be picked up?**  
No. The shuttle route should take approximately 50 minutes.
- **What happens if I miss the last shuttle of the day?**  
Riders are responsible for their own transportation if they miss the last shuttle. Please note the area has little to no cell coverage and riders should plan accordingly.
- **What if there is not room for me or the rest of my party on the last shuttle?**  
Shuttle drivers may return to trailheads to pick up remaining hikers if capacity limits are reached on the last return loop of the day.
- **How will drop-off/pick-up safety be ensured?**  
Shuttles will safely approach the trailhead areas to ensure the safety of riders boarding and disembarking the shuttle. Stewards will be on site at each stop to assist riders and help manage pedestrian traffic.
- **Will the shuttle monitor know how many people are being let off at a particular trailhead?**  
No. Visitors should sign in at trailhead registers to provide usage data and important safety information. Riders are responsible for their own transportation if they miss the shuttle.
- **Will the number of people dropped off at any one location be restricted?**  
No, there will be no limit to how many people can be dropped off per day at a single trailhead.

## Parking

- **Can I still park in the old parking areas if I don't want to take the shuttle?**  
Parking will still be available at the Rooster Comb, Giant Mountain/Ridge Trail, and Roaring Brook trailheads. Please park legally and responsibly. Follow @NYSDECAAlerts on Twitter for updates on parking conditions.
- **Will I need to pay for parking or register my parked car at Marcy Field?**  
No. Parking at Marcy Field is free and available on a first-come first-served basis. Overnight parking is permitted.
- **Is there adequate parking at Marcy Field for everyone riding the shuttle?**  
The Marcy Field parking lot provides ample parking.

- **Can I leave my car parked at Marcy Field overnight? Is there a limit to how long my car can be parked there?**  
Overnight parking at Marcy Field is permitted, but camping in the parking area is not permitted. It is recommended that hikers intending to leave their vehicles overnight should notify the stewards at the Marcy Field parking area.
- **Can I park large vehicles like campers at Marcy Field?**  
Yes.
- **What if I start my trip on a weekend, but finish mid-week. How will I get back to Marcy Field?**  
Overnight hikers planning to exit the trail on weekdays should arrange for a different ride back to their vehicle in advance or park at the trailhead itself.

## Shuttle System Details

- **Why was this shuttle system created?**  
DEC, Essex County, and town of Keene partnered to launch the pilot Route 73 Hiker Shuttle system to explore how shuttles may help manage safe, sustainable visitation along the busy Route 73 corridor and in the Adirondack High Peaks region.
- **What is the cost?**  
The shuttle is operated at no cost to riders. There is also no cost to park at Marcy Field.
- **Does this replace the Town of Keene shuttle to the Garden trailhead?**  
No. The Town of Keene shuttle will continue to run from Marcy Field both to and from the Garden trailhead. That shuttle will become free (it is currently \$10 to ride) once the Route 73 shuttle program begins on August 21.
- **Is a reservation required to ride the shuttle?**  
Reservations are not required to park at Marcy Field or ride the Route 73 Hiker Shuttle. Boarding is available on a first-come first-served basis.
- **Do I need a mask on the shuttle?**  
Yes. All riders will be required to wear a mask on the shuttle, including vaccinated individuals. Riders are expected to provide their own masks and may be denied entry if not masked.
- **Can I bring my dog on the shuttle with me?**  
No dogs except certified service animals will be permitted on the new Route 73 Hiker Shuttle. Leashed, well-behaved dogs are only permitted on the Town of Keene shuttle to the Garden trailhead.
- **What is the capacity of the shuttle?**  
The shuttle can accommodate up to 20 people at a time.

- **Is there a limit to the number of people in one party that can board the shuttle?**  
Party numbers should not exceed 15, which is the maximum group size limit on the State's trails where the shuttle stops.
- **Can my young child sit on my lap?**  
For the safety of all passengers, children should sit in their own seat.
- **Will there be toilets available at Marcy Field? Water refill stations?**  
Portable toilets are available at Marcy Field and all drop-off locations. There are no water refill stations at any of the drop-off locations. Hikers should bring ample amounts of water with them on every hike. For more information about preparedness go to <https://on.ny.gov/LoveOurNYLands>
- **Can I use the shuttle if I'm not a hiker and I just want to get closer to other nearby recreation activities?**  
Yes. The shuttle is available to all outdoor recreationists headed to any of the three drop-off locations.
- **Can I eat and drink on the shuttle?**  
All riders are required to be masked for the duration of the shuttle ride. Riders may remove their masks briefly to eat or drink but should refrain from any action that requires them to remove their mask.
- **What do I do with my large camping gear/backpack if I can't fit it in the seat with me?**  
The shuttle is intended primarily for day hikers. Hikers planning overnight trips should first attempt to park at the trailhead location itself. There is no additional storage space available on the shuttle for oversized gear.
- **Will the shuttle provide any information or guidance or is it purely a transportation system?**  
Stewards will be stationed at all pick-up and drop-off locations to assist with navigating the shuttle system and educate hikers on responsible recreation, including preparedness, hiking safety, and Leave No Trace™ principles. Educational videos and slides are also planned to play on the shuttle.

## Other Questions

- **How is the shuttle being funded?**  
The shuttle service is supported through the Environmental Protection Fund with up to \$2 million combined from the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 State budgets.
- **Are there concerns that trails with shuttle access will experience overuse?**  
DEC and its partners do not anticipate significantly higher use of trails due to the shuttle system. The shuttle is expected to reduce parking stress at these trailhead locations and facilitate a safer, easier experience for all visitors.

- **Why were these three trailheads chosen? Why not all or other trailheads along Route 73?**

DEC and partners used the recently completed Volpe study to help guide our planning efforts and selected these three trailheads to begin the pilot. DEC and the County will adaptively manage the initiative to learn from the experience of operating a shuttle during one of the High Peaks' busiest seasons as we continue to advance additional improvements to the visitor experience in the area.
- **What is the Volpe study?**

The *Shuttle Feasibility Study for the Adirondack High Peaks Region (April 2021)*, completed by USDOT's Volpe Transportation Systems Center, builds on previous efforts to understand and explore the feasibility of implementing a shuttle service in the Adirondack High Peaks region. This report focuses on current conditions on Route 73, identified by DEC as the most problematic corridor for parking and congestion in the High Peaks region. It captures the feedback from relevant local stakeholders, determines the feasibility of providing a pilot shuttle service, and presents conceptual scenarios to address different potential future conditions. Learn more about the study on [DEC's website](#) or access the report directly from the National Transportation Library: <https://rosap.ntl.bts.gov/view/dot/55788>.
- **Is DEC planning on expanding the shuttle system to include more pickup and drop-off locations?**

These will be the only pick-up and drop-off locations available this year. DEC and partners will use information collected from this year to adaptively manage the shuttle system in future years, including the potential for additional stops.
- **Who can I contact with additional questions?**

If you have additional questions, please email [Transportation@essexcountyny.gov](mailto:Transportation@essexcountyny.gov) or [Info.R5@dec.ny.gov](mailto:Info.R5@dec.ny.gov).