

# Virgil Parris Forest Trails, Buckfield

This is a really great double-trail walk to do in the winter, when South Pond is frozen and you can head across the ice to hike not just the Packard Trail (off of Sodom Road), but also on what I believe is called the Lowell Trail. Both are in the Virgil Parris Forest. Be careful on the pond and make sure the ice is thick enough to cross.

The Packard Trail is a roughly 2-mile loop, with footage along the mostly undeveloped South Pond. Lowell Trail takes you up on a ridge, with views between trees of the pond, in a roughly 1.7-mile loop. There are ups and downs on both trails. In the spring, I imagine the Cascades Trail, on the Packard side, can be quite pretty. When I came here in winter, there was not much to see.

It is impossible to drive to the Virgil Parris trailhead in the winter, I believe, unless you have a snowmobile. Also, while the trails on both sides of the pond are mostly very well marked with yellow blazes, the start of the Lowell trail didn't have any blazes and was not marked (Feb. 2018). So it was quite hard to find. After the first few hundred yards, the blazes start up again.

**Directions:** You can park on the side of Sodom Road to hike the Packard Trail. The trailhead is roughly 1.4 miles from the intersection of Sodom Road and Route 117. If you want to start on the other side, you drive down the John Ellingwood Road, which you can catch off of Route 117, near the town garage.

