



Quest to Velvet Rocks

Hanover, New Hampshire

Physical Difficulty: Difficult

Special Features: Natural

Duration: 1:00

Walking Conditions: Trail

Bring: Field Guide, Compass

To get there: From I-91, take Exit 13, and travel east across the Connecticut River into Hanover. At the first set of lights, turn right onto Main Street. At the next set of lights, turn left onto Lebanon Street. There are parking spaces along the street in front of Hanover High School. Park, and walk towards the intersection of Lebanon Street and Rte. 120. The trail can be found behind Co-op Gas Station.

Overview: This Quest hikes up to the Velvet Rocks Shelter of the Appalachian Trail. This section of the trail is maintained by our partner, the Dartmouth Outing Club. The DOC was formed in 1909 to “stimulate interest in out-of-door winter sports,” and quickly grew to encompass the College’s year-round out-of-doors recreation. Today the club has over 1,500 student members (about a quarter of the College’s student population), and about as many non-student members, making it (to our knowledge) the largest collegiate outing club in the nation (as well as the first). The DOC organizes trips out-of-doors, provides outdoor leader and medical/safety education, and maintains over seventy miles of the Appalachian Trail. For more information:

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~doc/>.

Clues:

As you are walking along Lebanon St.,

A 5-way stoplight you’ll soon greet.

To the east, a grocery store, gas station, and field.

Beyond, a forested hill, is where our treasure is concealed.

Behind the gas station, find an opening.

Head east by foot, for a trail you are hoping.

On the far side of the field, look to the right.
Where the forest begins are blazes of white.

For maybe a mile follow white blazes
Over rocks and roots.
You might be glad if you're wearing hiking boots. When it
seems like you've reached a high ridge top, Keep looking
for a blue blaze where you should stop.

Follow these blue blazes
To another hilltop and see
A hole in the middle of a very old tree.

If you look to the middle of this welcoming space, A
campfire site you will also face.
A wood shelter for hikers will be here, too. And
a rock outcrop boasts a beautiful view!

From here all of Hanover was seen
Now it is blocked by trees beautifully green.
But the sky so blue, you might also see.
And where oh where could the Quest treasure be?

From the back right corner of the lean-to, with your boots
Walk twenty to thirty paces up the hill
Look under a tangle of roots
Sign our book!
Tell us where you are from.
Take an impression of our stamp. Re-hide our box. & you're done.

Enjoy a short rest; then to the right you may wish to go A
few hundred paces to a place you should know.
Now, here on the right, the trees open for you—
A view of Etna, with mountains green, sky so blue.

From here, the blue blazes go vertically down. Go
right at the AT sign you've found.
Follow these blazes onto the right.
When you pick up the old trail—what a welcoming sight!

You will once again pass the velvety rocks,
Pass the forest, the field, the Coop parking lot.
We hope you hike this on a beautiful day:
And, that you find peace and rest—
and a chance to play!

This Quest was created by Mitsu Chobanian's Girl Scout Troop in 1999. Updated by Cara and Steve Liu in 2023.

Please be a good steward of the land: leave it better than you found it and pack out any trash you find.



Valley Quest is a collection of 100+ treasure hunts that share and teach the natural gems and cultural heritage of the Upper Valley with children, families, adults, and visitors. It is a program of Vital Communities, a regional nonprofit working to engage citizens, organizations, and communities in creating solutions to our region's challenges. Learn more at vitalcommunities.org.

Have a suggestion, question, comment, or idea for us? We'd love to hear from you. Reach us at valleyquest@vitalcommunities.org or 802-291-9100.

