

Now at mid-summer, as August is upon us, there are still some warm days ahead to look forward to into September. This is an ideal time to take advantage of water based recreational activities and to explore the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area of the Green Mountain National Forest! Below you will find some wonderful places to take a swim, or to just to dip your toes. Please always take caution: check out the road construction situation first, wear proper footwear when hiking near water, and never dive into water. Always leave word of your destination with someone you know, in case you don't make it back in time. These areas don't all have reliable cell phone service. These swimming spots do not have lifeguards so you are swimming at your own risk. Following these precautions will make for an enjoyable swimming experience. Have fun!

Below the VT 125 Bridge in East Middlebury there is a nice deep pool where you can take a cool dip. There is limited parking along the road on the south side below and above the bridge. For really adventurous souls, there are a few spots on the Middlebury riverside farther up the road from the bridge on VT 125 where you can hike down the steep banks to the gorge below for some incredible swimming. Only do this if you are sure-footed and in good shape.

In Salisbury, just south of Branbury State Park where Sucker Brook crosses VT 53, park in the area on the east side and walk under the black penstock to the Falls of Lana. There is a nice easy spot near the bottom at the old mill site that has a deep pool to cool off in. But, the more adventurous can climb up on either side of the falls to other more dramatic swimming spots and waterfalls. Only the sure-footed should attempt this. There are also a few nice pools above the falls that are easy to get to by parking at the larger area on VT 25 south of the previous one and hiking up the service road. This is the main trail to Silver Lake. The pools are on the left just after going under the penstock.

If you want something really secluded, try the North Branch of Sucker Brook. This area can be reached by going up the road mentioned in the previous description and crossing the stream where the washed out footbridge to Rattlesnake Point and the North Branch Trail was. On the other side of the stream pick up the trail and bear right, keeping on the North Branch Trail. Eventually you will see some nice pools on your right that are ideal for sitting in.

If you decide to take the nice 1.5 mile hike up to beautiful, quiet Silver Lake, by taking the road mentioned earlier, you can swim at any one of numerous places on the shore - the sandy beach at the north end, near the dam, or from Rocky Point on the west shore.

One great place to swim higher up is at Sugar Hill Reservoir in Goshen. There is a nice parking area on the west side accessible from Forest Road 32. Try also hiking up the Sucker Brook Trail from the access road to where the footbridge is and following the brook downstream toward the reservoir for some nice secluded pools. You can continue down the reservoir and hike around it to your car again.

For something a little farther a field, try Bailey's Falls. This is a secret spot known to few, but it's one of the highest waterfalls (mostly cascades) in Vermont! You get to it by driving over Middlebury Gap going east, and about 1/2 mile down the other side on the right you will see a short road with a barrier that goes back to the Snow Bowl ski area lift with the same name as these falls. Park and walk around the barrier. You will hear the falls - just head over a slight rise and there they are! There are some nice spots for sitting in the water. Again, be careful when climbing up the highest falls.

All in all, you can spend an entire day or just a part of it enjoying something new in the Moosalamoo NRA!

The mission of the Association is to: Collaborate with public entities to plan, manage, and provide stewardship for wildlife habitat conservation and quality public recreation opportunities and facilities, promote responsible recreation participation and environmental awareness through interpretation, education and resource monitoring, demonstrate the unique capabilities of public and private partners working together, and strengthen partnerships at the local level in cooperative projects such as trail construction and maintenance, wildlife habitat improvement, or visual enhancement of roadsides.

Moosalamoo NRA is a 20,000-acre region of public and private land nestled in the Green Mountain National Forest. Moosalamoo's diverse ecosystem is home to a large number of plants and animals. The region is also a marvelous recreation area for wildlife viewing, berry picking, hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, picnicking, and camping. Find out more by visiting www.moosalamoo.org.

Bruce Acciavatti operates Wonder Walks, an outings company that provides hiking and snowshoeing tours in the Moosalamoo Region, as well as throughout Vermont, the Northeast and beyond. He has been leading tours for 20 years.

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