



DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of Route 89 and Route 195, head north on Route 195 for .03 miles. Turn left onto Browns Road. Go .83 miles and turn left onto Crane Hill Road. Go .2 miles to Wolf Rock Parking Area; parking is on right.

Suggested Park Activities



Hiking



Picnicking

Prohibited Park Activities

Unleashed Dogs
Mountain / Motor Biking
Camping / Camp Fires
Horseback Riding



**Mansfield
Parks &
Recreation**

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US Department
of Transportation

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For up-to-date trail information or to download maps
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Sawmill Brook Preserve

Mansfield, CT

Sawmill Brook Preserve is adjacent to Joshua's Trust's Wolf Rock Preserve. Together, the properties are a total of 188-acres. The Nipmuck Trail extends through these forested preserves from the Wolf Rock entrance on Crane Hill Road to Puddin Lane. The trail ascends easily to Wolf Rock Cliff, and then descends steeply to follow Old Blacksmith Shop Road across Sawmill Brook then south along the stream valley.



trail guide

There is a total of 3 miles of blazed hiking trails within the Joshua's Trust and Town boundaries. The Nipmuck Trail (blazed in blue) and Joshua's Trust (blazed in yellow) wind through the following points of interest:

1. Glacial Remains - Signs of glacial activity are visibly scattered around the preserve. Many of the rocks were carried by the glacier from regions much farther north and were deposited here over 15,000 years ago.

- 2. Wolf Rock** - Approximately 6 feet in diameter, this rock was left perched at the edge of a 40-foot cliff by the glaciers. Today it remains as one of Mansfield's most spectacular landmarks, mentioned in deeds dating back to the late 18th century.
- 3. Scenic View** - As you look out south and east over the tree canopy from Wolf Rock, the views are breathtaking. Here the forested valley of Sawmill Brook can be seen, as well as the open fields on the brow of Crane Hill Field. In the distance is the campus of Eastern Connecticut State University.

- 4. Rock Ledge** - During the descent down the trail, one of the preserve's many rock ledges can be seen. The bedrock exposed here is a variety of metamorphic rock called Willimantic Gneiss.
- 5. Old Blacksmith Shop Road** - This abandoned road once connected Mansfield Center to the Crane Hill area.
- 6. Riparian Vegetation** - While the trail winds along Wolf Rock Brook, take note of native water-tolerant vegetation growing here: skunk cabbage, ferns and birches. This palette of greenery will appear in many of the wet areas in the preserve.
- 7. Hemlock Grove** - The dominant tree species here is the evergreen hemlock. While these trees are native, the species is currently threatened by a non-native insect called the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.
- 8. Invasive Plants** - As you cross over Sawmill Brook, notice the understory vegetation. These invasive species (barberry, multiflora rose, and bittersweet) were introduced as ornamental plants, and have since escaped from cultivated gardens into the wild, replacing native plants.
- 9. Beaver Activity** - As the trail winds along the marsh's edge, note the pointed stumps. These are the remains of trees that were felled by beavers. The size of the marsh may be attributed to beaver damming.
- 10. Marsh Views** - Sunny, treeless wetlands are called marshes. Phragmites, the tall 'wheat-like' grass seen at the far edge of the marsh, is a common invasive species of this wet environment.
- 11. Wildlife View** - A view opens when the trail rounds the end of the marsh. Approach quietly and you may spot a Great Blue Heron.
- 12. Utility Corridor** - This area is cleared for power lines and reveals the profile of Sawmill Brook valley, as the land slopes down to the brook, then steeply up the other side to Beech Mountain.
- 13. Upland Hardwoods** - As the trail makes a gradual climb, notice the change in tree species. Hardwoods such as oak, beech and maple dominate the forest here.
- 14. Old Stone Wall** - In most forests in New England it is common to find spans of old stonewalls used to contain grazing animals and property boundaries.
- 15. Nipmuck Trail** - The blue-blazed Nipmuck Trail extends 37-miles from Union, Connecticut to Mansfield Hollow State Park and connects many of Mansfield's town parks. The Nipmuck trail is maintained by the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association.

