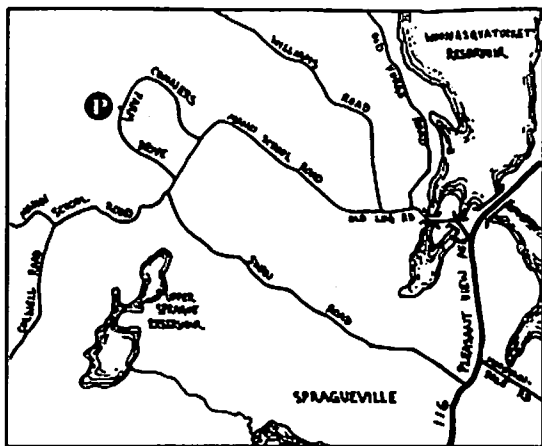


## 5. Connors Farm Conservation Area



**Access:** From Greenville, take Pleasant View Avenue (Route 116) north to Swan Road, then follow Swan Road to its end, about 1.5 miles. At the T junction with Mann School Road, go right and then almost immediately take a left onto Connors Farm Road. After about 0.3 miles, look for a small parking area on the left between houses numbered 20 and 24.

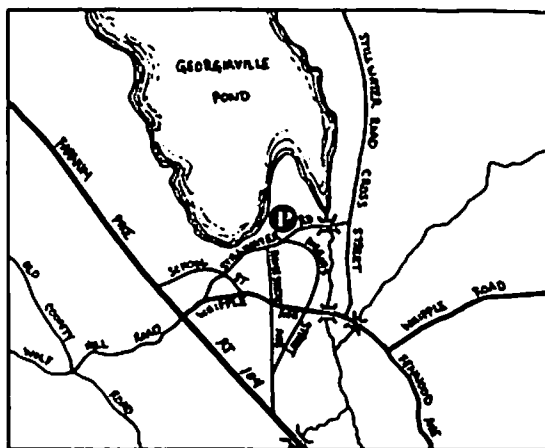
**Features:** Walking trail, pond, brook, dams, an old stone bridge, beech groves, rugged glacial ledges.

Hidden in the forest at the far end of a residential tract, this 66 acre property may be a surprise to even long-time Smithfield residents. Once part of the Connors family farm, it looks nothing at all like a farm. The inviting trail, which is a bit strenuous in places, is just under 2 miles long. Built by the Boy Scouts in 1994, it takes visitors to the top of one of the most rugged ledges in the area. Here you can see unique rock formations and stone slabs that seem to have spilled down the steep slope yesterday. They were, however, left this way by the retreating glaciers thousands of years ago.

You'll also see attractive groves of beech and oak trees, and at the base of the slope, a brook with a stone bridge and two old dams built for a nearby cranberry bog. The brook and trail lead to a tranquil pond that frequently harbors ducks, turtles and frogs. At the far end of the pond is an earthen dam. The border-strewn forest contains plenty of wildlife in the form of songbirds, squirrels, chipmunks, deer and sometimes hawks and foxes.

Walk the entire trail and you'll get two very different perspectives, one from the lively little brook in the valley and one from the top of the boulder field. And you will get a new perspective on a hidden part of Smithfield.

## 6. Georgiaville Town Beach, Dam & Gorge



**Access:** At the end of Stillwater Road just beyond Homestead Avenue; turn off Route 104 across from St. Michael's Catholic Church.

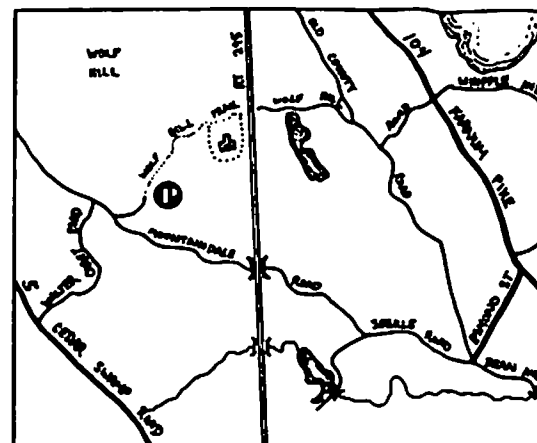
**Features:** Boat ramp, beach, fishing, high dam, spillway, gorge, huge old trees, picnic tables, benches, restroom facilities (open in summer).

Renovated in 1991 with help from Open Space and Recreation Bond funds, the Town Beach has been a fixture in Smithfield for decades. In addition to the swimming, fishing and boating activities, and the picnicking and sitting facilities, the park offers good views of picturesque pine-covered islands in the 92 acre pond and an inviting walk along a high earthen dam that ends at a spillway and a scenic gorge.

The pond and beach have long been the chief attractions, and rightly so, but the dam and gorge also should not be missed. The original dam was built about 1850 and while renovations over the years have kept it solid, it remains an open lane ideal for strolling. Walk the length of the dam; the gorge is just below the spillway. After heavy rains or spring thaws, water roars through the narrow but deep gorge, which feeds a small stream that curves back toward the beach area. Even in more tranquil times, the gorge is lively with water splashing over the rocks.

It is possible to return on a narrow path that follows the stream, then cuts through former picnic area left over from an earlier era. There are still a few old stone fireplaces standing beneath large, venerable trees, mostly beeches, many carrying the initials carved by the youths of another generation. A walk from the end of the beach to the spillway and then along the gorge and stream back through the former picnic area would be about a half mile. No dogs, please.

## 7. Mercer Lookout



**Access:** From Mountindale Road, 1 mile from Pleasant View Avenue in Greenville or 1 1/2 miles from Old County Road in Esmond. Enter on a dirt road, Wolf Hill Trail, in an open power-line strip beside a Narragansett Electric power substation.

**Features:** Quiet woodland trails, second growth forest, a chimney and fireplace remaining from a Boy Scout cabin, blueberry bushes and a panoramic view of the Providence skyline.

This property was acquired in 1997 through a bequest by the late Hester Hastings who wanted it named for her relatives, the Mercers. Consisting of 24 acres, the high, rugged land was used for years as a summer camp by members of a Providence Boy Scout troop. However, after the Scouts' cabin burned, probably in the 1940s, the property was virtually forgotten for decades and the grand view became obscured by growing trees. Since the town took over the land, the vista has been reclaimed and it is once more possible to stand at this spot and enjoy the long views over Providence. On clear days, you can see far beyond the city, down Narragansett Bay as far as the Mount Hope Bridge.

The walking route, marked by blue paint spots on boulders and trees, is rocky in places but also presents looks at songbirds and wildflowers, particularly where it follows ancient Wolf Hill Trail, which before I-295 was built connected this area with Esmond. From the parking area in the power line strip, the trail turns east (right), toward I-295, then follows a second power-line strip along Wolf Hill Trail. Two paths lead from the old road to the cabin site, going to the right at poles numbered 0511 and 0514. Going in on one path and returning on the other makes a pleasant little loop. The walk from your parking area to the outlook and then back down is just under one mile.

# Seven Scenic Walks in Smithfield

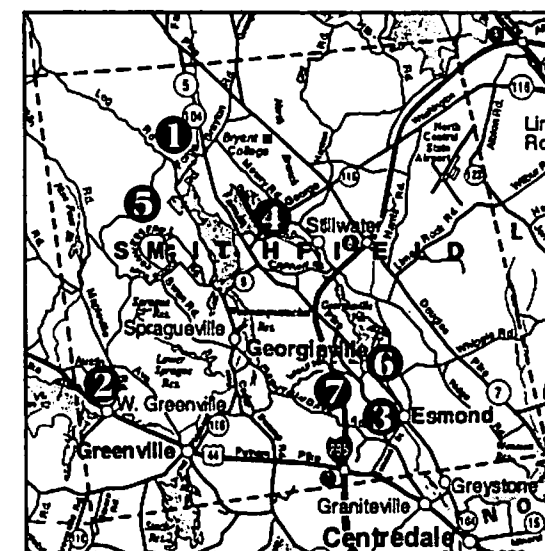


**CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

64 FARNUM PIKE  
SMITHFIELD, RHODE ISLAND 02917

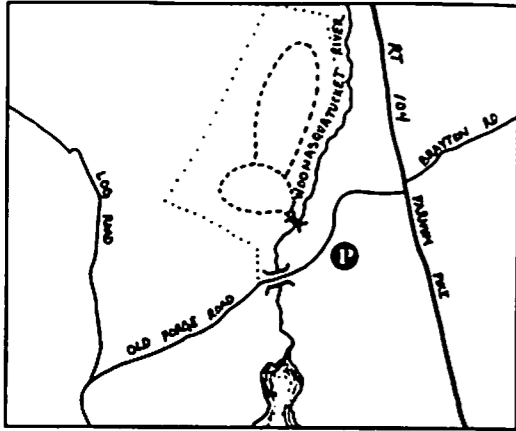
*Written by Ken Weber*

*Hand drawn trail maps by Nick Mayer*



The above map courtesy of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council. For more information on Smithfield & the Blackstone River Valley, contact the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council at (401)724-2200.

## 1. Mowry Conservation Area



**Access:** Look for the entrance sign and park along Old Forge Road between Farnum Pike (Route 104) and Log Road just north of Stump Pond.

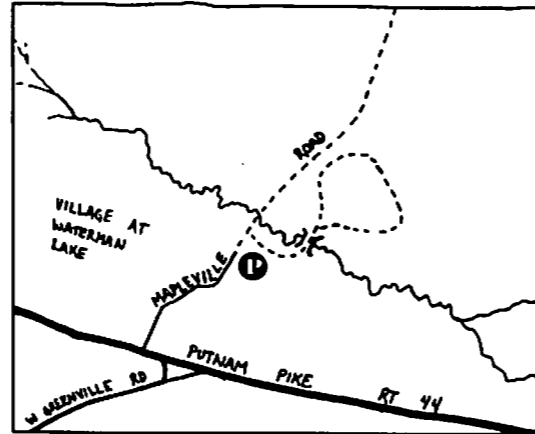
**Features:** A lovely, lively trout stream, towering hemlocks and pines, a scenic footbridge, picnic tables, a walking trail and the remains of an earthen stone dam.

An increasingly popular spot, this shady 44 acre retreat given to the town by S. Burton and Mary Mowry (the Mowry family owned it since 1845) offers something for just about everybody: a stocked trout stream, a picturesque place for picnics, stone walls, marked walking trails that begin just beyond an arching footbridge, and, for the history buffs, much stonework that remains from the 18th century forge, for which Forge Road was named, and a sawmill. In spring and summer, water still tumbles through the old dam creating a miniature but thoroughly delightful waterfall.

Squirrels, chipmunks and birds abound in the picnic and stream area, signs of deer and other wildlife can be found farther from the road, and muskrats and an occasional otter frequent the tiny pond just above the old dam. Hemlocks and pines, many of them very old and tall, dominate the lower area where an orange-blazed trail makes a short loop. A longer yellow-blazed path, accessible from the orange loop, runs up a steep ridge and back through hardwoods of several varieties and mountain laurel. It returns through pines and ends near an old dam. Together, the trails make a walk of about one mile.

Dedicated in 1979, this is a bustling place in spring, when anglers seek the trout and wildflowers bloom; a cool, beckoning oasis in summer; a soothing place in autumn when ferns beneath the pines add a golden glow, and an incredibly beautiful place in winter when the stream is fringed in ice and the hemlocks are draped in snow. There are no "off" seasons at Mowry.

## 2. Ken Weber Conservation Area at Cascade Brook



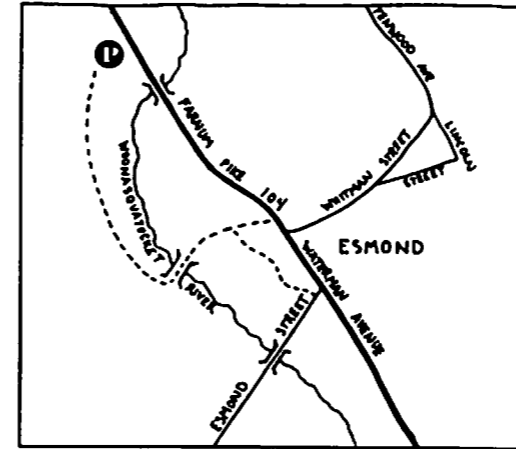
**Access:** Enter off Putnam Pike (Route 44) at the sign for Village at Waterman Lake, at the western edge of Greenville, across from West Greenville Road. This entrance is Mapleville Road and also known as Pig Road to some long-time residents. Park at the end of the paved roadway (do not take the forks that go up to the left).

**Features:** A seasonal brook and small waterfall, immense boulders and rock outcroppings, a walking trail, tall trees, a four fireplace chimney remaining from another era. This 27-acre property, has been dedicated to the late Ken Weber, known as "Nature's best friend in Smithfield". Ken and his wife, Bettie, laid out the trail in this area and named it for a lovely, gurgling little brook that cascades down a ledge in all but the driest seasons. A 1-mile blue blazed walking trail loops through the open, rocky forest, taking visitors to property's high spots, both literally and figuratively. The brook and small waterfall are the place's best features, along with massive outcroppings and ledges, several stone walls and numerous stately trees.

Along the trail, which begins a few yards beyond the end of the paved road and forks at the waterfall, are many indications that this woodland has been used by groups over the years. Included is a chimney with fireplaces on all four sides, a remainder of a picnic area built for children of a former orphanage that once owned the land. In addition to the blazed trail, other paths also run through the forest but most quickly run off town property. Be careful on the trail: some of the rocky slopes can be slippery in snowy or wet conditions.

This place is particularly pleasant to visit in the spring, when the brook is running freely, and in autumn, when the oaks, beeches, maples and other trees offer their most colorful foliage.

## 3. Esmond Park



**Access:** At the corner of Farnum Pike (Route 104) and Esmond Street in Esmond; parking lot is at the west end of the park along Farnum Pike.

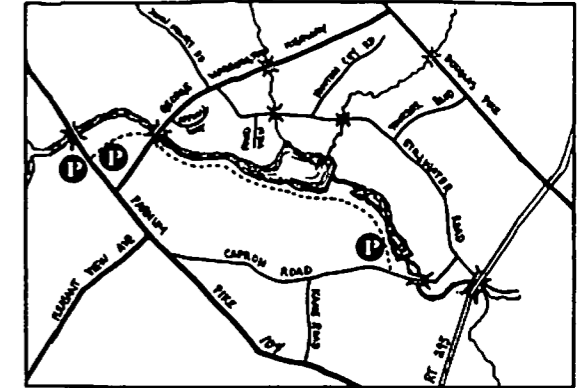
**Features:** Arching bridge, small waterfall, picnic tables, benches, river, cattail marsh, walking path, World War I monuments.

Long known as the Esmond Mills Park and Alexander M. Balfour Square (a sign still identifies it as such), this spot in the heart of Esmond was greatly enlarged and enhanced in 1989 with town and Open Space funds. Now about 4 acres, it is a place for quiet walking or relaxing conversation.

The park retains some of its old charm with plaques on boulders that honor employees of Esmond Mills who served in World War I and other men and women in the village who saw service in that war, and now it adds pleasing new touches with a shady flowery sitting area and a walking path. Another boulder plaque says the park is dedicated to the late Leo Bouchard, "Mr. Conservation", who grew up in the area.

Visitors can now cross the Woonasquatucket River on an arching footbridge just above a curving stone structure that creates a scenic little waterfall in the river. Just above the waterfall is a small cattail marsh that attracts numerous birds in the spring and summer. On the far side of the river, the walking path runs on what was the old Providence to Springfield railroad bed that once served the mills. In the future, this segment of the path may become part of a bicycle trail that will link with other bike paths in Providence and Lincoln.

## 4. Stillwater Scenic Trail



**Access:** Park in a gravel lot off Farnum Pike (Route 104) between Washington Highway (Route 116) and Stump Pond dam. The walkway runs under Washington Highway and along Stillwater Pond all the way to Capron Road.

**Features:** An open flat lane; excellent river and pond views on one side, forest views, rocky slopes and open fields on the other; fishing spots; water birds and songbirds; two dams; remains of the old Stillwater Mill; a plaque honoring World War I soldiers.

Once the bed of a railroad that linked Providence with Massachusetts towns, the walkway now presents a place for easy, leisurely strolls. In addition to the idyllic scenes of the Woonasquatucket River as it leaves Stump Pond and then flows into Stillwater Pond, you are likely to see waterbirds, song birds, turtles, frogs and butterflies. Depending on the season, you may also see wildflowers and songbirds beside the lane, or energetic squirrels and deer tracks.

About a half mile from your start, you reach Stillwater Pond and, looking across the water, you can see some of the buildings remaining from Stillwater Village, once a thriving mill town, along with the modern homes of current residents. Beyond the dam that created the pond, look in the river for more foundations and stonework left from a railroad spur that served the mill complex. Then you reach another, much smaller pond and a second dam near Capron Road. Often the water flows over this dam in a lovely waterfall.

If you continue to the road and turn left to a bridge you can find two plaques, one honoring Adin B. Capron, for whom the road is named, and the other commemorating the 11 men from Stillwater Village who served in World War I. A walk the length of the walkway to Capron Road bridge and back is about 2 1/4 miles. If you wish, bring along a fishing rod and try your luck. There are many good places to sit and cast your line while you enjoy the surroundings. You probably won't care if you catch any fish or not.