

## Contoocook River Park Trails

### Access to the trails:

From the center of Penacook, drive 0.6 miles on Washington Street to Electric Avenue on your right. Take Electric Avenue 0.2 miles to a gate and parking area across the road.

### The trails:

Hiking travel time: about 1 hour

Distance: about 2 miles

Level of Difficulty: Very easy walking, relatively flat

Follow the road past the gate for less than a minute, watching for a path on the right which runs northwesterly past Canada mayflower and wintergreen on the ground, through maples, birch, and hemlock trees, down into a boggy area passable on a wooden plank bridge. Soon, you will reach the end of the trail and its junction with a path that goes both left and right along the river. Turn left.

You are high above the rapids in the river. Notice a rocky outlook and great cliffs, locally known as "The Palisades," rising across the river. There are blueberry bushes along the trail. When you reach the road, proceed in the same direction you have been traveling until you arrive at a clearing at the end of the road. To your right, you will view a dam and waterfall on the river.

Follow the road back to your car or extend your walk: east of the clearing at the end of the road, an old road goes into the woods. Follow this road along an old canal. You will reach an opening and an old woods road that goes left along the hydroelectric canal. There are deep blue, closed gentians at the edge of the woods and in the spring, pale blue flag on the water's edge. The road bears left and soon reaches Electric Avenue a few yards past the parking lot.

**OR:** East of the circle and a little distance onto the same road from the dam, there's a fork onto a narrower path on the left. This path makes a loop through a patch of lady's slippers and ends on the old trolley track road. Turn right to return to the parking lot. There are also two

unmarked short-cut trails that connect the previously mentioned two trails.

### History:

What now looks like just an old dirt road through the forest used to hold trolley car tracks. In the woods along the river was the much-loved Contoocook River Amusement Park. For twenty cents in 1893, and up until the 1920's, you could ride the trolley from downtown Concord to enjoy swimming, dancing, boating, roller-skating, bowling, and even a steamboat ride up the Contoocook River. The park closed in 1925.

Today the area is still popular with boaters and fishermen, but little trace of the park remains. If you follow the well-used trail along the banks of the river, into the woods, and beside the hydroelectric canal the shore remains a lovely place to walk, ski, or snowshoe.

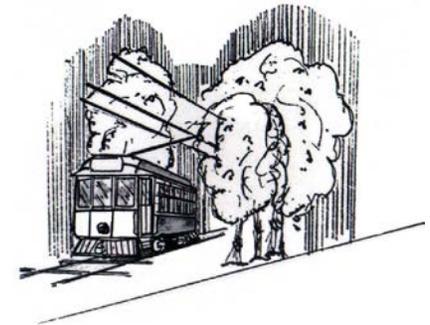


Concord Conservation Commission  
225-8515

Map 5

## *Concord Trail System*

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*Concord Conservation Commission*