

# West Branch Preserve, Jefferson and Somerville

Miles of walking here (almost seven all together)! An “eternal spring!” where water bubbles up from the ground. And a riverish stream that has both rapids and slow, wide, meandering sections. I loved my walk here on a sharp December day with low glinting sun rays creating long shadows. The [preserve](#), maintained by the Midcoast Conservancy, has nearly 7 miles of trails.

I parked on the North Mountain Road, just a bit before Rocky Mountain Road, and walked the southern trails first, (which are marked by blue blazes), and then hit the northern side (which are marked with yellow arrow signs). The trails for the most part were easy to follow, but keep your eyes peeled for the next sign. The land to the north is wet and boggy, so wear sturdy boots. On the southern side, Joe’s Trail leads to some pretty views of Davis Stream. It’s a steepish hill down to the stream (and back up again), so be prepared for a bit of huffing.

**Directions:** From Village Street in Jefferson, follow North Mountain Road north. You have to drive about 1.5 miles or so from the turn off. Just before the sign for the Rocky Mountain Ranch, look for a small parking lot and trailhead kiosk on the right. Trails leave from the back of the parking lot and the front (across the road). From Route 17 in Somerville, follow Jones Road south. Turn left on North Mountain Road. Just past the sign for the Rocky Mountain Ranch, look for a small parking lot and trailhead kiosk on the left.

# Davis Stream Preserve, Jefferson

This is a sweet, short walk (about .7 miles) along part of the quiet and remote Davis Stream, still and brown. It looks like a glorious place to canoe.

The Midcoast Conservancy's [preserve](#) is nine acres. Walkers can park at the Willow Grange and access the trail from the road bordering the left side of the cemetery. Walk to the far end of the cemetery and follow a mossy old road down a small ravine to the kiosk on the right. The blazed trail heads off right into the woods. Note that the marked trail wraps around the cemetery backlot, keeping to the woods throughout the walk.

**Directions:** From US Route 1 in Nobleboro, take East Pond Road for 6.9 Miles to ME Route 32. Turn left and follow ME Route 32 for 0.7 Miles. Turn right onto ME Route 126 (Washington Road), and follow it for 0.3 miles. Parking is at the Willow Grange on the right. Walk north along the road past the cemetery. The trailhead is located just past the cemetery on the right. Please do not walk through the cemetery.

# Hidden Valley Nature Center, Jefferson

A spectacular outdoor mecca – plus so much more – created by founders David “Tracy” Moskovitz and Bambi Jones. [Hidden Valley Nature Center](#) offers over 20 miles of trails on 1000 acres of forest and bog, and it includes one mile of shoreline along a quiet lake. Plus, you can rent overnight cabins here. My map just shows some of the trails – there’s lots more to explore! The Center does a good job marking easy, moderate, and difficult trails, and there are some fun downhill and climbs on this rolling preserve.

The trails are groomed for skiing.

About its mission, Hidden Valley says it best, so I’ll quote its website here: “The trail network connects the pond with one of the most ecologically diverse and undeveloped roadless tracts of forestland in the region – making it a gem of wilderness in the midst of the rapidly developing Mid-Coast region. Hidden Valley Nature Center’s mission has three parts: (1) To offer premier opportunities for outdoor, non-motorized recreation; (2) To offer educational opportunities related to the natural world, ecological literacy, and sustainable communities; and (3) To model innovative and sustainable forestry practices.”

**Directions:** The address for the center, which has several of plowed parking lots, is 131 Egypt Rd. in Jefferson. There is a daily fee.



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## Stetser Preserve, Jefferson

This 150-acre preserve seemed a little unloved and neglected when I explored it. [The trail](#) when I visited in 2014 was rough – if I lost sight of the tree blazes, sometimes it was hard to know where to go. The loop is about 1.6 miles. The short trail to the pond was better kept – and the pond is pretty, although the shore was thick with vegetation. Across the street from the trail head is the fantastic [Hidden Valley Nature Center.](#)

**Directions:** From Route 194 Alna, take the Egypt Road (just south of the Alna Post office) and follow for 2.5 miles to kiosk and parking area on the right. From Route 215 in Jefferson, take the Egypt Road and follow for 1.25 miles to kiosk and parking area on left.

View [Stetser Preserve](#) in a larger map

