

WELLESLEY TRAILS

Self-Guided Walk

The Wellesley Trails Committee's guided walks scheduled for spring 2021 are canceled due to Covid-19 restrictions. But... we encourage you to take a self-guided walk in the woods without us! (Masked and socially distanced from others outside your group, of course☺)

Hemlock Gorge

1.0 miles, 1 hour

Explore the trails in Hemlock Gorge, a scenic and historic area along the Charles River at the corners of Wellesley, Needham and Newton. Get a birds-eye view of the gorge from Echo Bridge and stand under the main arch and count the number of times you hear your echo.



Location and Parking

Park at the [DCR parking lot](#) at 4 Ellis Street in Newton.

Directions

Take Rout 9 east toward Newton, exit at the first ramp after the I-95 interchange (to Chestnut Street), and at end of ramp turn right onto Ellis Street in Newton. Park in the parking lot on your left just 50 feet from the intersection.

Walk Description

Hemlock Gorge is a 23 acre reservation managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). It is located along the Charles River where Wellesley, Needham and Newton borders meet.

From the parking lot, cross over Ellis Street to the grassy park where you will see a small diversion channel for the dam at Route 9. Walk left along the river toward Echo Bridge. The bridge is 500 feet long and 70 feet high with 7 stone arches, the longest arch is 130 feet, which, when constructed in 1877, was the second longest masonry arch in the world.

As you approach the bridge, follow the wooden steps to the platform under the main arch at the river's edge. This is Echo Point. Give a shout!

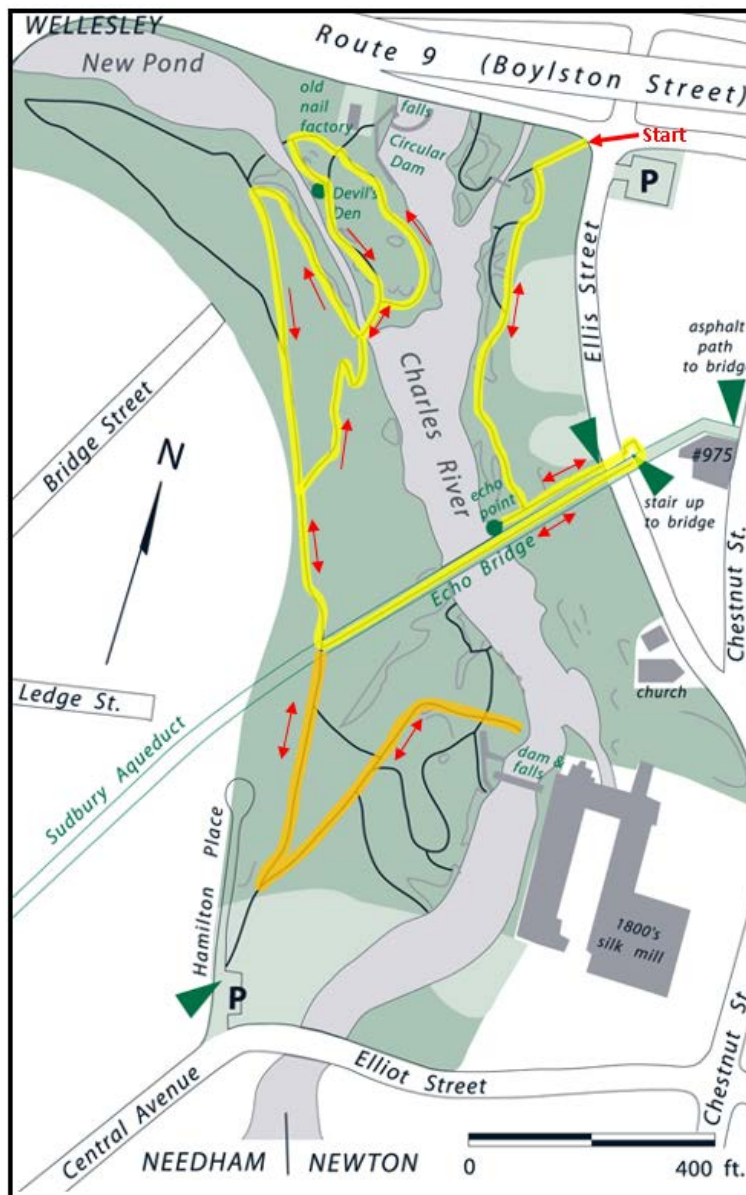
When you are done making your best echo, turn around and cross Ellis Street. Ascend the large set of stairs to the top of Echo Bridge. Walk right across the top of the bridge. Note the old iron railings marked 'BWW' for Boston Water Works. The Sudbury Aqueduct is right beneath your feet – until 1978, this aqueduct supplied water to Boston from reservoirs along the Sudbury River. Note the spectacular views upstream and downstream!

Follow the trail a few yards past the far end of the bridge and then turn right and slightly downhill. Take your first right and follow various steps going sharply downhill. Cross the small footbridge over the small stream to the Wellesley section of the reservation. Immediately to the right there is a stone memorial bench and an excellent view of the arches. The loop trail explores this small area. At the far end of the trail you will see the falls at Horseshoe Dam and a stone building that has been a nail factory, a paper mill and more.

Crossing over the same footbridge as before, follow the trail to the right. Look across the stream and see two small caves where it is said the Ponkapoag tribe stored dried fish for winter. The trail soon turns left and uphill, returning to the main aqueduct trail.

Optional side trail to overlook (+0.35 miles roundtrip, orange trail on map): Cross over the main aqueduct trail and continue down the other side of the hill toward the river's edge. There is an exposed stone overlook with a great views of the upper dam and Echo Bridge. Be careful! There is a very steep drop off at the overlook.

Return back to the main aqueduct trail and retrace your steps back across the top of Echo Bridge. Descend the stairs and walk back toward the parking lot.



We hope you enjoyed our little walk today. We believe hikes help keep us healthy and happy.

Take a Hike!

Wellesley Trails Committee

wellesleytrails.org

April 2021