HIKING TRAILS OF MADISON, CONNECTICUT:
AN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE APPROACH

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*Hiking Trails of Madison, Connecticut: An Historical and Descriptive*

*Approach* could not have been completed if it were not for the help and encouragement of several people. This project caused me to look at nature and people with a better understanding of how the two are linked so closely together.

First, the Madison Land Conservation Trust Trails Committee provided me with all of the topographical trail maps included in each trail description. Trail color and highlighting on the topographical maps was added later. In addition, the trail descriptions are modifications of those in the new trail guide of the MLCT. The trails committee additionally supported my efforts by providing me with tidbits of information at their monthly meetings for completing this paper. The trust is a special group of people that care dearly for our environment and especially for the Town of Madison.

Second, special thanks to Steve Durdy in the Public Works Department of the Madison Town Hall for producing the Madison Trail Names and Locations Town Map.

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INTRODUCTION

The Madison Land Conservation Trust (MLCT) was the first land trust formed in Connecticut (1964). The Trust’s mission is as follows:

“To engage in and otherwise promote for the benefit of the general public, the preservation of natural resources in the Town of Madison, including water resources, marsh land, swamp, woodland, and open spaces, and the plant and animal life therein and the preservation of unique, historic, and scenic sites.”

(MLCT Informational Brochure: 1997)

The Trails of Madison: An Historical and Descriptive Approach presents information on 16 public hiking trails in the Town of Madison that includes history, culture, ecology and physical descriptions. My objective in performing work on this project was to bring more closely together the relationships that exist between humans and their environment and specifically, the relationship between the people of Madison and the trails in that town. There seems to be a definitive gap in understanding between what Madison residents actually know about their present-day town and the history that has contributed to its beauty. Hopefully, this document will help to close this gap. Perhaps this document will encourage Madison residents to explore areas of town that they had never thought about before, and by doing so, obtain a broader feeling for, and understanding of, their environment.

I began this project in January 1997 by learning about the trails offered in Madison. I completed the project in March 1998. Early in 1997, I began to walk the trails, taking pictures as I went along and taking notes regarding the flora and the fauna. Wintertime served as one of the best times of the year to walk because the landscape was visible. I really got a feel for the landscape and environment around me. My principle materials were a camera (for taking pictures of Trailheads) and a pad and pencil for
taking notes. Because trail length varied, I made more observations on some trails than on others. Some trails had more cultural history than others, and for them, I interviewed Madison residents to acquire their knowledge concerning certain physical and historical details. Much of the historical and cultural information came from books that I researched through the Scranton Memorial Library, the Madison Historical Society and the Madison Land Conservation Trust. The MLCT was also a great resource, I found, in that they possessed many topographical maps that were of help to me in explaining the physical layout of each trail. Using my computer at home, I overlaid the trail routes and depicted certain features (i.e. Stream crossings, foundations, or observation points) using color. During the time of my research, MLCT was preparing trail descriptions for use in their Guide being produced in 1998. These descriptions helped in my project to navigate a potential hiker through forests, up knolls and across streams.

Finally, this project concludes with my personal observations located at the end of each trail description. These observations are intended to give the reader one trail “users” views of what to expect or what to look for on the trails. Who knows what wonderful things others will find in Madison’s “wild” areas. Happy hiking!

**Appendix Provided To The MLCT Trails Guide**

**Safety Tips and Regulations**

Please be careful when walking Madison’s trails. Although not physically demanding, some trails have challenging sections. Any sections of trail that are a cause for concern are described in the trail description. Some safety tips to remember:

1. Use common sense on steep or rocky slopes.
2. Sneakers are usually adequate footwear, but on certain trails (i.e. The Bailey Trail), hiking boots may be more appropriate.

3. Avoid drinking from any stream or spring. It is a better idea to carry water on an extended hike.

4. Mosquitoes, gnats and black flies may be an annoyance; especially during late spring and summer. Be sure to bring insect repellent.

5. Check for ticks, especially for the tiny deer tick that carries the organism responsible for Lyme disease.

6. Learn to identify and avoid poison ivy. This three-leaved plant often grows near entrances of Trailheads, along roadsides, and up trees.

7. When possible, hike with a partner.

8. Overnight camping, cutting of dead or live wood, and fires are prohibited.

9. Motorized vehicles are not allowed on MLCT trails, nor is hunting.

10. Carry out everything that you carry in. Don't litter!

Finally, before venturing onto the trails, learn the meaning of the painted blue-blaze symbols. The arrangement of the blazes, painted on tree trunks, provides directional information. The blaze "system" is illustrated below:
BRIEF HISTORY OF MADISON

Town records indicate that during the early 1600’s, Europeans began to settle in what was later to become Madison. Originally, a Native American tribe known as the Hammonasset inhabited the area. During the early settlement period, land disputes
developed between the Europeans and the Hammonasett. In 1636, George Fenwick from England colonized the area originally known as Seabrook, (presently Old Saybrook) and purchased land that extended as far west as Madison (Clayton and Lord: 1985).

In 1671, after various land purchases between East and Madison, a committee was formed to determine the towns’ boundaries. Finally, property disputes had been settled and Madison began its existence on the “Esterly Farms” or as it is historically known, the frontier of a new settlement (Clayton and Lord: 1985). In 1675, John Grave Sr. built Madison’s oldest surviving house that is a town landmark today and an icon of the past.

In 1720, Peter Blinn came to North Madison. He is recorded as one of the town’s earliest known settlers. The area where Blinn settled in North Madison was originally known as North Bristol. Madison became an independent town in 1826. (Steiner: 1975)

**MADISON INDUSTRY**

Farming in Madison began in the mid-1600’s. Crops included flax, wheat, rye and potatoes. Flax was used to make basic linen. The most common crop was Indian corn that served as the staple of early settlers’ diets. The development of farming and the necessity to transport produce ushered in an era of shipbuilding.

Shipbuilding began around 1696 and soon became one of Madison’s leading industries. The first of the large shipyards was known as East Wharf Public Beach. Developed in 1765, East Wharf became a prominent place to build and dock boats. Another prominent shipyard was West Wharf. Owned by Captain Abel Hoyt, West Wharf was an economic focal point of Madison around 1800. Boats built there were in high demand and were known for their speed on the open water. Boats known as sloops were built in both shipyards. These cargo vessels carried a variety of goods including
vegetables, pigs, chickens, barrel staves, hoop poles, and even mules. Sloops were primarily trading vessels whose route included pharmacies in New Haven, trade districts in New York City and spice islands in the “Indies”. Return cargos often included molasses, sugar, and rum -- valuable commodities in Madison (Platt: 1964). Schooners, which were significantly larger than Sloops were also built in Madison and carried cargo along similar trade routes. Ships built in town were often sold to Britain. Locally, boats were used for oystering and fishing. Known throughout the region as Oyster Cullers, early Madisonites harvested large quantities of this shellfish. Madison fishermen also hauled nets to catch bunker, which although inedible, made an excellent fertilizer. Oil was the most valuable product obtained from fish. There were four separate fishing companies in Madison that employed a total of 40 to 50 men (Clayton and Lord: 1985).

![Sloop](image1.png) ![Schooner](image2.png)

Figure 2

Increased trade created a need to process raw goods into finished products. This need led to the development of gristmills, cider mills, sawmills, paper mills, and tanneries. Of special importance were the grist and sawmills. One of the earliest, the Summer Hill Saw and Corn Mill, circa 1747, was located on the Hammonasset River that
marks the eastern border of the town. Ruins of this mill can still be seen on Trail #11 (Bailey Trail – North) near its beginning on Route 80. South of the current Route 80 Bridge over the Hammonasset River are ruins of a probable gristmill that ground rye and wheat into flour. Across the river was a tannery which utilized tannin from tree bark to cure or tan hides into leather. Leather goods produced in this tannery were a valuable trade export commodity. Numerous sawmills developed during this period processed trees into lumber that were used by other industries in Madison.

The Papermill Trail (#10), located along the Hammonasset River (near Green Hill Road), passes by the foundations and dam ruins of a mill that produced strawboard. This paper was not of fine quality but was rather coarse. In its last years, the mill was converted to a sawmill.

The earliest factories in Madison were run by waterpower, similar to the earlier mills. In 1848, Samuel Chittenden built the Town’s first steam-run factory. Chittenden’s factory primarily manufactured sashes, doors, blinds, and house trimmings. The Munger & Son Factory, built in 1877, became Madison’s largest lumber processing facility. There, school furnishings such as desks, chairs, pointer’s, erasers, and blackboards were produced. It is a colorful fact that Madison is where the crayon was born. George G. Munger started the crayon factory located on Wildwood Lane in 1877. In 1880, dustless crayons were produced for the first
time and were shipped first to all states in the Union, and later internationally (Clayton and Lord: 1985).

Retail business and trade increased as Madison became more settled. Shoe making developed and an apprenticeship program taught young shoemakers their trade. Several shoemaking and repair shops existed in Madison. As the need for more buildings, breakwaters, and bridges increased, a large quarrying industry developed that provided work for many local men in the area. Stones gathered from nearby hills and fields were hewn into blocks for construction.

Ice harvesting was a seasonal industry in Madison. This labor-intensive business was important between 1880 and 1930. Ice, cut from ponds during the winter, was stored in icehouses that were often built underground to take advantage of the cool ground temperatures. This valuable cash “crop” was traded or used during the hot summer months.

Madison also had a version of the iron industry. Although significantly smaller than the iron works found in either Saugus, Massachusetts or East Haven, Connecticut, Madison’s ironworks were typical of primitive bloomeries in Europe, Africa and Asia (Cleaver: 1985). More information concerning Madison’s involvement with iron production and the Bog Iron Trail is given in the Historical Features of Selected Trails section. Another industry common in Connecticut as well as Madison was charcoal making. Several trails pass remnants of early 17th century charcoal pits. Evidence of charcoal making can be found along the Bog Iron Works Trail (#13), Double Loop Trail (#4), CCC Camp Hadley Trail (#5), and Neck River Trail (#3).
MADISON GEOLOGY AND LAND USE

Connecticut consists of three geologic regions, the Western, Central, and Eastern Highlands. Madison is located in the Eastern Highlands region. Connecticut’s hills and lowlands were shaped by numerous geological events. Approximately 350 million years ago when the earth’s continents collided, Connecticut was compressed and tall mountains were uplifted. Approximately 200 million years ago, the North American continent experienced extreme pressures and began to expand. An example of this expansion is the Central Valley that passes north to south through the state. Volcanic events occurring at the same time added varying layers of ash and bedrock that eventually produced rich soil. Finally, glaciers that advanced and retreated during the Ice Age further smoothed many of the jagged mountains that erosion had worked on for millions of years. As the glaciers melted, boulders of all sizes were left behind.

Madison possesses generally rocky terrain formed from glacial tills with boulders overlaying igneous bedrock. Early settlers encountered difficulties in cultivating their rocky soil and much land was used initially to pasture cows, sheep, and other livestock. Many tree species found along Madison’s trails, including several species of oaks, hickories, maples, birches, ironwood, tulip-poplars and ash, grow well in such soil.

HISTORICAL FEATURES OF SELECTED TRAILS

Garvan Trail (#16)

This trail takes its name from the family of John S. Garvan who once owned the area that is now the Surf Club. This area was once called Hogshead Point. In 1894 L.L. Johnson published a book that made reference to Hogshead Point. He wrote:
“Below where the fields appear to end so abruptly is the inward curve of wave-washed sand and just above this stands the Munger cottages, commanding a view of the sea and the coast from Hammonasset Point on the East to Sachems Head on the West. Of the cottages one known as the “Millburn” is the largest rented cottage on the beach, and as the cut shows, in architecture is unlike most of those on the shore (Clayton and Lord: 1985).”

The hiking trail began through informal use by locals in the 1920’s while the Garvan’s still lived there. In the 1950’s, the Millburn family purchased the estate and then in 1962 the town acquired this valuable recreational property. The area around West Wharf and the Surf Club became a harbor for people as well as for boats.

Some markings from the Garvan estate still remain. The section of trail that crosses the salt marsh was once the entrance driveway, where concrete pillars now mark the beginning and end of this section. Just south of the road that continues by Garvan point, lies the one time location of the main house of the estate. A circular ring of stones may be the remains of a water tower that had a small windmill on top to help bring water up to the holding tank.

*Indigo Woods Trail (#15)*

This recently established trail (dedicated in 1997) is one of the most scenic on the western side of town. Some of the wetland area that this trail runs through borders the town of Guilford to the west. A primary feature of the trail is an historic sawmill that was powered by the Neck River. The sawmill produced wood for the growing shipbuilding industry during the mid-1800’s. Foundation remnants of the dam and mill are found today along with a long, narrow sluiceway that carried water to the mill.
The Paper Mill Trail, along the Hammonasset River, is one of the most scenic of Madison’s trails. It includes the remnants of an historic Paper Mill. Built in 1865, this small mill produced strawboard used in the production of boxes. During a time when experimental fibers were being tested for use in local industry, the Paper Mill site was extremely successful and always on the cusp of new technology for the time it was in operation.

The mill was built by a group of men who formed a corporation known as Ford and Company. The waterpower site that they chose on the river, (the boundary between Madison and Killingworth), included a half-acre site on the Madison side and a gristmill in Killingworth to the east (USDI: 1995). In 1867 the paper mill employed just over a dozen workers. Operational machines included a steam boiler, two beating machines, a cylinder paper machine and a colander (used in finishing the paper product) (USDI: 1995). Water-driven turbines powered all machines. The following paragraph describes the papermaking operation at this mill:

"The process used at the Hammonasset Paper Mill relied on the mechanized methods of papermaking developed in the first half of the 19th century. The raw material, in this case straw, was soaked in hot water and chemicals, and then reduced to a pulp by beating engines; the beating engine was a revolving cylinder with metal blades which rotated next to a stationary plate also fitted with blades (Weeks 1916: 171). The pulp was then fed into a papermaking machine that formed a continuous sheet of paper. There were two types of papermaking machines: the cylinder type, in which a wire cloth-covered cylinder revolved in a pulp-filled vat, the pulp adhering to the cloth by suction and forming a sheet (Weeks 1916: 174), and the Fourdriner, which passed the pulp between two squeezing rolls (Weeks 1916: 173). The sheet of paper was then passed between the rolls of the calendar, which pressed the paper, and then it was cut and allowed to dry. Numerous variations to this basic procedure included bleaching, removal of impurities prior to processing, sizing or finishing the paper"
surface, and different drying actions, which ranged from natural air drying from poles in lofts to wood-fired and steam drying.” (USDI)

Bog Iron Works Trail (#13)

The Bog Iron Works Trail leads to the location of a small bloomery (iron processing plant) which produced bar iron from local bog ore in the late 17th century. It is possible that Bog Iron Works also produced plate iron and a small amount of steel. A charcoal-fired forge reached high temperatures with the assistance of a steady blast of cold air from the water-wheeled powered bellows. After being washed, bog iron ore was fed directly into the fire. At a temperature of 2600-2700°F, silicon based impurities melted and formed a liquid slag, closely resembling melted iron. Small lumps of bog iron ore were reduced to a malleable iron. Bog iron ore, which is a deposit of ferric hydroxide, or limonite found in the bottoms of swamps or ponds, was used. The deposits are formed during the process of
decay by iron-fixing bacteria. The site includes the visible aboveground remnants of the ironworks and possibly subsurface archaeological deposits related to the works.

Very little is known about this early period of ironmaking. Combined historical, archaeological, and metallurgical research could make a significant contribution to understanding how bloomeries operated, the growth of technology and industry, and the bloomery's role in the community. The Bog Iron Works site is significant as it may provide important information on the evolution of metallurgical technology; and by doing so help elucidate the role ironmaking played in the social and economic history of early America (Soulsby: 1995).

*Civilian Conservation Corp* CCC Camp Hadley Trail (#5)

Civilian Conservation Corp men from Camp Roosevelt in Killingworth, CT built this camp in 1935. Camp Hadley was one of 23 such camps in Connecticut. The CCC was a WPA Project designed to provide employment, training and education for young men during the last years of the Great Depression. The men worked on roadways, landscaping, reforestation, and property line development in the area. Two hundred young men lived and worked out of Camp Hadley. The less than $10.00/day they received each day, helped many families through this difficult period. Appreciation for the young men at Camp Hadley increased dramatically as a result of the 1938 hurricane. The storm caused mass destruction and required many man-hours to repair the damage to houses,
roadways, etc.

The camp facilities included barracks, a mess hall, a recreation hall, classrooms, an infirmary, and even an auto maintenance shop. A water cistern and in-ground latrines are still visible today. At six to eight feet deep you might want to avoid stepping in one of those! In addition to foundation slabs, a stone chimney and incinerator still stand. The camp existed until 1941 when WWII forced most of the young men and their Army supervisors into active military service. As you walk through this trail try to imagine what life was like for those in pre-war civilian service to our country.

Collection of CCC Camp photos – circa 1930’s – Figure 7

*Bailey Trail (#11)*
This trail, at its north end, begins near where Route 80 crosses the Hammonasset River. Before the Hammonasset Dam was constructed, this was the site of beautiful Ninevah Falls. Named after the Biblical City of Ninevah, the name translated means "dwelling" (Watrous: 1995). Sometime during the 1800's, an unfortunate accident occurred at the Route 80 bridge. Lore has it that while traveling via horse and buggy across the bridge spanning the Hammonasset River, a woman named Nellie Dowd lost her newborn child as it fell over the rail of the bridge. The horse, frightened by a severe gust of wind, backed the carriage over the bridge and the baby fell to the rocks below. Amazingly, the baby survived the fall (Clayton and Lord: 1985). At the same location and time-period, a grist and sawmill were in operation. Pictured below (Fig. 8), is an historic photograph of The Bridge at Ninevah Falls and one of the mills to the left of the bridge.
Madison Trail Names and Locations

Trail Numbers and Names
(▲ = Trail Heads)

#1 Blinnshed Loop Trail
#2 Blinnshed Ridge Trail
(Blinnshed Road)
#3 Neck River Trail
#4 Double Loop Trail
#5 CCC Camp Hadley Trail
#6 Lost Pond Trail
#7 Jefferson Park Trail
#8 Oil Mill Brook Trail
(Jefferson Park Road)
#9 Overbrook Trail
(Overbrook Road)
#10 Papermill Trail
(Fawn Brook Circle)
#11 Bailey Trail-South
#11 Bailey Trail-North
#12 St. Francis Woods Trail
(St. Francis Woods)
#13 Bog Iron Works Trail
#14 Indian Rock Shelters Trail
(Lake Drive)
#15 Indigo Woods Trail
(Riverside Terrace)
#16 Garvan Trail
(Surf Club Road)

Bauer Park
A WALKTHROUGH OF MADISON'S TRAILS INCLUDING MAPS

This section is intended to provide the hiker with a descriptive walkthrough of the trails of Madison and to provide a hiker with directions to each Trailhead, the distance of the trail, along with approximate hiking time, and a detailed route once the hike is started.

**Blinnshed Loop Trail (#1)**

To find the Blinnshed Loop Trail, travel south on Opening Hill Road 2.5 miles from where it meets Route 79 just south of the North Madison traffic circle, to Blinnshed Road (0.6 mile south of the intersection of Overbrook Road and Opening Hill Road). Enter the Trailhead on the north side of the intersection of Blinnshed Road and Opening Hill Road. Accessible parking may be found at The Country School just opposite the Trailhead. This trail measures about 1.5 miles and takes 1-1/2 hours to complete.

Enter the Trailhead on a woods road that quickly drops down after a brief ascent and then takes you across a stream. This stream exists year-round and is a continuous source of water for the wetlands surrounding it. Cross on stepstones located on the north side of the trail and travel uphill where you will reach the juncture of several logging roads. Continue north, following the blue blazes until you reach the point where the trail divides. Here the trail branches into a loop, one side to the right, and the other to the left. Following the right side of the loop, pass the streambed to the east. This area of the trail, as is true with much of the Cockaponset State Forest, is under active forest management that provides much of the regular maintenance (periodic harvesting and thinning operations). Remnants of the logging roads, stumps of trees, and presence of young
saplings evidence regeneration in this part of the forest. Second growth forests like this one are characteristic of our region. Intermixed throughout this walk, but especially concentrated in this area, is an array of tree species, including a variety of oaks, maples, birches, and others.

You will cross one stone wall and head towards another passing by a small but dense grouping of Norway spruce. These Norway spruce serve the deer quite well by serving as a thermal cover for them during the often unpredictable New England winter. To find the more amphibious members of the forest you need to travel slightly off the trail to the northwest where several large vernal pools are located.

Traveling uphill you will reach and pass near the second stone wall where you are in the vicinity of a tulip-poplar stand. The stone wall marks the State Forest boundary. The trail becomes slightly less defined as it heads off to the west and descends. There are two more wet swales to be crossed before returning to the base of the loop. One of these swales can be crossed using stepstones of log sections that make this crossing less difficult than it first appears. If the water level is higher than normal, crossing the second wetland can be more difficult, and, a decked walkway has been installed over the deeper sections.

Follow the trail southward and rejoin the old logging roads which lead back to the base of the loop. You may want to consider exploring the recent logging road to the south which forms a second small loop. This loop, not shown in the map, circles another Norway Spruce "deer yard." It is also a very good place to see the extensive swamp wetlands below. The wetlands drainage basin is the Neck River, which can be explored closer from Trail #3 (Neck River Trail).
Personal Observation of the Blinshed Loop Trail

The Blinshed Loop Trail is centrally located in the Town of Madison and exhibits a unique character that sets it apart from any other trail in town. While walking the trail, you get the feeling that very tall trees surround you. The trail has the most Norway spruce and White Pine of all of Madison’s trails and is topographically diverse. Although the trail itself becomes more rugged on the upper part of the loop near the wetland with small rocks intermixed, it is a refreshing walk through a quiet tract of Cockaponset State Forest. Finally, much of the trail (with the exception of the upper loop) is well defined with wide paths and bright blazes.
Blinnshed Ridge Trail (#2)

To find Blinnshed Ridge Trail, travel south on Opening Hill Road for 2.5 miles from where it leaves Route 79 south of the North Madison traffic circle, to Blinnshed Road (0.6 mile south of the intersection of Opening Hill and Overbrook Roads). The Trailhead is located about 330 feet west on Blinnshed Road. On the north side of the road, the trail passes through a pine plantation and soon joins The Blinnshed Loop Trail (#1). Accessible parking may be found at The Country School on Opening Hill Road just east. This trail measures approximately 2 miles and takes 1.5-2 hours to complete.

Enter the trail on the south side of Blinnshed Road and travel south past The Country School immediately upon entering the Trailhead. Follow closely along the west shoulder of a ridge. This ridge slopes downward towards a wetland. Along this initial stretch of trail you will see large oaks, beech, and tall, tulip-poplar trees. Shortly after beginning the hike you enter State Forest land. The trail brings you towards the wetland through a series of plateaus that help you make the descent. Early spring brings out skunk cabbage, false helebore, and spicebush on the edge of this wet swale. Utilizing the cedar log bridges, cross first one small stream and then another. Here, intersect a crossing path that is not a part of the blazed trail system. This path, while not maintained by MLCT, will lead to several excellent vernal pools.

The blazed trail will lead up to the edge of a large glacier-smoothed outcrop. If you are patient and stand at this point for a few moments you may have a chance to see some of the inhabitants of this part of the forest. Descend the rock to the next cedar log
crossing which brings you to another wet swale. Notice the increased number of yellow birch and red maples present here as opposed to the oak-hickory woods, more common on the drier ridges.

Again, ascend over a series of low, rocky ridges where you can see the Neck River to the west. Head for the powerline right of way just beyond the descent of the last ridge. This is an excellent spot to see deer, especially in the early evening hours.

Follow the blue blazes on the power poles to navigate out and across the opening. Once across, notice the base of a loop where, heading to the east into the woods, will lead to Trail #3. Proceeding south, follow the river and continue the hike.

Following the trail towards the south will lead to a small pool of water. It is here that the trail turns east, away from the river, and then north across a rocky swale leading to the junction with a logging road and Trail #3. The option to go west leads along Trail #2 and back to the loop base near the river and powerline opening.

**Personal Observation of the Blinnshed Ridge Trail**

You may access the Blinnshed Ridge Trail just after the entrance to the Blinnshed Loop Trail by turning left after approximately 25 yards and descending to an old firepond. This short walk is blazed and will ascend and lead out to the Blinnshed Road Trailhead entrance illustrated in this description. For those with energy, this is a great connecting trail that will meet with the Neck River Trail. I like the Blinnshed Ridge Trail for its elevation and terrain changes. At one point you climb a small ridge and are able to look to the west over the valley below and then descend to the Neck River. The babble of the river can be heard minutes before the trail actually parallels the river near the powerline opening. This is undoubtely an enjoyable hike.
Neck River Trail (#3)

To find the Neck River Trail, travel south from the North Madison Traffic Circle and proceed to the first right on Opening Hill Road traveling south for 3.3 miles. The Trailhead is 0.8 mile south of where the Blinnshed Road/Opening Hill Road intersection is located. Look for the Trailhead on the right side of Opening Hill Road. Suitable parking may be found near the Trailhead on Opening Hill Road. The distance of this trail is approximately 1.1 miles and can be covered in about 1 hour.

Enter the trail through the remnants of a red pine plantation, traveling west on a State Forest woods road. A group of large rocks indicates a trail split, one branch leads south, the other continues along the woods road. Heading south will lead to a loop where 500ft. farther, the trail rejoins the woods road.

Proceed along loop trail traveling straight west along the woods road. Notice oaks and hickories dominate the forest here. In the understory, common species include ironwood, American beech, dogwood and red maple. White pines are also interspersed in this area.

The trail continues until where, just before a stream crossing, it turns right and borders the stream to its junction with the Neck River. The option of taking the woods road trail is available by continuing west where, in about 800 feet, it joins Trail #2 (Blinnshed Ridge Trail).

Continue along the Neck River Trail and gradually turn left (south). Notice that the trail meanders through some wetlands and then along the river. The common species of skunk cabbage and spicebush are found in this area. Along this quiet stretch of the Neck River, notice the peacefulness of the area. Stop for a quick break to enjoy the
babble of the river. Continuing along the river, watch for a large beech tree that leans over the Neck River. The trail will curve to the left (east) and follow the border of the State Forest to the south. A wire fence and stone wall delineates the State Forest boundary. The trail curves to the left after the stone wall and then splits soon after to form a small loop. By proceeding to the "cross-over" branch, large pines will dot the trail and will lead to some large rocks.

However, take the right trail (northeast) and proceed around the loop and then turn left again traveling north. Notice the large tulip-poplars in the area. Travel along the edge of a small wetland to the "cross over" trail junction. Proceed right and come out by the woods road junction. Turn right again, near the large rocks and return to the Trailhead.

**Personal Observation of the Neck River Trail**

The Neck River Trail is undoubtedly one of my top three favorite trails in Madison. Not only can it be connected with the Blinnshed Ridge Trail for a longer hike, but the quiet flow of this stretch of the Neck River is relaxing. While walking this trail one mild spring afternoon of May 1997, I recall being "taken" by the ebb and flow of the river. Additionally, one of the more interesting features I encountered along the southern extent of the Neck River trail (before turning east into the forest) is the mammoth beech tree protruding out over the river. The formation is certainly unusual in character. The trail also meanders through a diverse woodland of the Cockaponset State Forest. The trail is well maintained and blazed throughout. I will travel back to the Neck River Trail in the near future for a day of quiet and solitude.
Double Loop Trail (#4)

To find the Double Loop Trail, travel north on Route 79 from the "Pines" and proceed for 0.2 mile to the first left (Warpas Road). Travel on Warpas Road for 1.2 miles to the Church of Latter Day Saints. Trailhead #1 is just south of the Churchyard on the right side. Trailhead #2 is 1/8 mile south of Trailhead #1. To get to Trailhead #3, travel west on Green Hill Road, 1.5 miles from Route 79 to Nortontown Road; follow Nortontown Road 0.5 mile north to where Opening Hill Road splits right, then north on Opening Hill Road for 0.6 mile. Trailhead #3 is on the right near SNET pole #1242. Suitable parking may be found along Warpas Road near Trailheads #1 and 2. The distance of the trail is approximately 1.2 miles and takes 1.5-2 hours to cover.

This trail begins just south of the Church of Latter Day Saints on the west side of Warpas Road. Enter at Trailhead #1 along a stone wall proceeding west. Notice that the trail is unusually wide. For decades, the trail has been used as a logging road for hauling logs removed in harvest operations. This area was last harvested in 1997. At the beginning of the trail notice the abundance of oaks and hickories. Be careful to watch for wet or muddy areas especially after heavy rains. This trail has an abundance of stone walls that mark the boundaries of old fields and pastures. This indicates that the area was once primarily used for agriculture. After about .5 mile, the trail, now heading south, joins another old logging road that leads to Trailhead #2 (.2 mile) that forms the north loop of this trail.

Following the south loop, notice that the trail parallels a ridge to either side. In a short distance, turn right where stone walls come together and go downhill and find large boulders on either side of the trail. Black birch, red maples and beech are common tree
species here. The trail will proceed southward. Walk to another stone wall that marks State Forest boundary. There is the option at the juncture near the State Forest boundary to continue south (straight) along a marked blue-blazed trail onto private land. This trail will eventually connect with the Indigo Woods Trail (#15).

To finish the Double Loop Trail, however, turn left at the stone wall marking the State Forest boundary and follow the trail east. This section of trail is slightly narrower and somewhat more difficult to follow. Continue to follow blue blazes and look for a stream crossing. The trail will turn left (north) and pass through more sections of stone walls. Shortly after, the trail comes out onto another logging road, similar to the one that was encountered near Trailhead #1. The option of going left or right is available at this juncture. Turning left (west) will connect this trail to the one found earlier and will connect with Trailhead #1 or 3. To return to Warpas Road and Trailhead #2, turn right (east) on the logging road for about 300 feet.

**Personal Observation of the Double Loop Trail**

Unfortunately, the Double Loop Trail suggests exactly what one will encounter along this trail—a southern and northern loop and nothing more. The trail, which meanders through State Forest land, has wide and sometimes muddy trails (because of logging trucks) and is less diverse than most trails. I noticed several lines of stone walls that mark where decades ago old pastures were located. Aside from this observation, trails run in straight lines (for the most part), and there is an occasional stream crossing or ridge to vary the terrain a bit. The trail does connect with others to the east and south for an extended hike if desired. This trail is one of my least favorites in town.
CCC Camp Hadley Trail (#5)

To find the CCC Camp Hadley Trail, travel west on Green Hill Road from Route 79 to Copse Road (0.6 mile), then turn right onto Copse for 0.2 mile to Trailhead #1 marked by a commemorative sign for CCC Camp Hadley. Parking is on the right side near a dirt pullout. Trailhead #2 is 0.3 mile north on Ridge Road (0.4-mile west on Green Hill Road), on the left side opposite Sachem Common Road. Trailhead #3 is just 100 feet north of Trailhead #2. Limited parking is available near the dirt pullout on the east (right) side of Warpas Road. The distance of this trail is between 1.1 and 1.5 miles (depending upon which trails are taken) and takes 1.5-2 hours to cover.

Two options are available when beginning the CCC Camp Hadley Trail hike. The first option is to start at the dirt pullout on Warpas Road. The second is to begin at Trailhead #1 on Warpas Road.

If the first option is chosen, park at the entrance of the small dirt pullout. Enter the woods and proceed east to find the foundation ruins of two Camp Hadley buildings. It could be gathered that one of the buildings was a water pumping station and the other an auto maintenance building. Look carefully behind these foundations towards a wetland drainage area and notice a raised slab of concrete—most likely a well or springhouse. Just beyond this point, the trail will lead to a firepond (used in fighting fires) and then to an old roadbed trail. Follow this trail for approximately 200 feet until it joins the main trail from Trailhead #1.

When choosing the second option, take Trailhead #1 near the Camp Hadley sign on Warpas/Copse Roads and walk along an access road until the road divides. The left trail leads to two road loops that lead back to the main access road and trail. However,
take the right trail that leads to the encampment area. Look to the right and find a collapsed stone chimney and a fireplace that is the probable site of an administrator's building that was active during the mid 1930's. Just beyond this point on the right is an area where a possible barracks was located. A descending stone stairway indicates this.

The road divides again, and, bearing right, continue along the trial that soon comes across more of the CCC Camp ruins. From the CCC Camp, follow the trail east until a small clearing. A small pond will be on the left just before the clearing. The trail is close to State Forest boundary and proceeds north, just to the east of the small pond. Continuing along the trail, which soon bends to the east, notice a small stream and accompanying wetland area.

In about 100 feet the trail comes to a step-stone crossing. Be careful of the crossing as occasional high water makes it difficult. Proceed left as the trail bows north and then northeast.

The trail will rise and pass tulip-poplars and oaks. The trail soon comes close to Ridge Road and parallels it for approximately 300 feet. An access trail leads east to the Ridge Road Trailhead #3 or west along a streambed. Follow the trail, at first along the streambed, and then north, away from the stream. The trail rises gradually and then comes out near an old field corner. Follow the trail north passing a stone wall and then to a stream crossing that is near State Forest boundary. Notice that this area of forest is home to generally small trees. The area was harvested in 1990 and is just beginning to regenerate. Soon after, this trail ends and joins the Lost Pond Trail (#6). For those with time, an extended hike is possible by continuing on The Lost Pond Trail.
Personal Observation of the CCC Camp Hadley Trail

This trail presents more history than any of the trails heretofore described. For those hikers with an interest in the Civilian Conservation Corp, this hike will please. An historic stone chimney, foundations and stone slabs are visible. If you don’t mind hiking through some fairly dense thickets of woods and vines located along parts of the trail, this can be an interesting learning experience. In summer, the trails are well shaded because of the dense canopy. Once again, for an extended hike, this trail connects with the Lost Pond Trail and others to the north. I thoroughly enjoyed this hike with my thesis advisor during a warm day in the summer of 1997.
Lost Pond Trail (#6)

To find the Lost Pond Trail, proceed north on Route 79 past the "pines" for 0.2 mile. Turn left on Warpas Road and travel 1.2 miles to Trailhead #1-just opposite the southern boundary of the Church of Latter Day Saints. Trailhead #2 is just 0.2 mile south of Trailhead #1, near the SNET pole #3968. Parking may be found on the side of the road near both Trailheads. The distance of this trail is 0.5 mile; 0.7 mile to complete the loop along Warpas Road. The trail takes less than 1 hour to complete.

The Lost Pond Trail has two Trailheads and may be described as having two short loops. Entering at Trailhead #2 on Warpas Road (the southern entrance), walk along a woods road that rises gradually and then bear left following a path along a stonewall. Soon, the trail divides – follow the trail that leads north along a stone wall. Continue along the trail and after about 200 feet, Trail #5 (CCC Trail) joins from the south. After approximately 200 feet the trail ends at the Lost Pond. This small vernal pool rarely exists during the summer or fall. In most cases, the Lost Pond is full of water during spring after a winter snowmelt.

Follow the trail back to where it splits to the right (north). An old stone wall marks the Cockaponset State Forest boundary. Young birch and beech saplings are prominent here. Logging in this area over the past decade has stimulated growth of dense stands of these two species. In a short distance, the trail joins Trail #7 (Jefferson Park Trail) and moves left along Old Ridge Road. Proceed to Trailhead #1, just south of the Church of Latter Day Saints on the east side of Warpas Road.
Personal Observation of the Lost Pond Trail

The shortest trail in the Madison trail system, the Lost Pond Trail is easy to walk and well blazed throughout. Its reward is finding the Lost Pond, a vernal pool that exists during the spring after a winter snowmelt. The ecological importance of this pool is great, for it harbors wood frogs and salamanders during the spring. For those hiking in another season, the Lost Pond may never be found other than the large “x” marking on an oak tree near where the trail terminates at the Lost Pond. This “ho-hum” trail can be made livelier by continuing to hike north onto the Jefferson Park Trail and beyond.
Jefferson Park Trail (#7)

To find the Jefferson Park Trail Trailhead #1, proceed north on Route 79 to Warpas Road, 0.2 mile past the blinking light at the intersection of Route 79 and Horsepond Road. Turn left on Warpas and travel 1.2 miles until the southern boundary of The Church of Latter Day Saints. The entrance of the trail is just across from Trail #4 and is shared with Trailhead #6. To find Trailhead #2, proceed 0.7 mile on Warpas Road from Route 79 to Jefferson Park Drive (on left). The Trailhead is on the south side of Jefferson Park Drive, just as it enters its cul-de-sac. Parking is sufficient at the cul-de-sac. The trail is just less than 1 mile in length and it takes 1-1.5 hours to hike.

Begin this hike at Trailhead #1 located opposite the Double Loop trail entrance just south of the Church of Latter Day Saints on the east side of Warpas Road. The trail lies along the border of State Forest land to the south and private lands to the north. Notice a stone wall border the trail to either side. Cockaponset State Forest land lies to the south, while private lands lie to the north.

The trail proceeds straight and becomes noticeably muddy, especially during rainy periods. Species common to this area are black birch and oaks. The trail turns sharply left and passes through an area dense with plant species such as witchhazel and highbush blueberry. The trail soon crosses a small stream, which may be dry in the summer, and then through a wetland area before ascending. The trail then divides into two branches. Essentially, this is a loop trail. Either branch will lead to Trailhead #2 of Jefferson Park Trail.

Take the right branch as it slices along a slope of a ridge to the west. Soon after,
pass through a stone wall where the common tree species in the understory is ironwood. The trail soon opens up to a powerline clearing. Cross the clearing and follow the trail back into the woods where it divides in about 200 feet at a stone wall. By continuing straight through the stone wall, the trail will lead to the cul-de-sac on Jefferson Park Drive and connect with the Oil Mill Brook Trail (#8) on the opposite side of the turn around. This option may be taken for an extended hike. However, take a left at the stone wall and follow Jefferson Park Trail's western loop. Proceed uphill slightly before heading back through the powerline clearing and then back into the woods. Follow the trail along a stone wall and then descend a small ridge continuing back to the base of the loop. Follow this trail back to Trailhead #1 on Warpas Road as in the beginning of this description.

**Personal Observation of Jefferson Park Trail**

The Jefferson Park Trail is a fairly easy hike that proceeds through Cockaponset State Forest. Depending on which Trailhead is taken, the hike will either ascend or remain level to a powerline clearing that meets in between the two Trailheads. I hiked this trail at dusk and remember the powerline clearing. Looking to the west as high clouds filtered the setting sun was simply amazing. I recommend hiking this trail at dusk and, if you are able to catch the timing of the sun falling below the horizon, this hike will be memorable always.
Oil Mill Brook Trail (#8)

To find Trailhead #2 on the Oil Mill Brook Trail, travel south on Route 79 until the intersection of Route 79 and Horsepond Road. The entrance to the Trailhead is on the right side of Route 79 about 100 feet past the intersection. Trailhead #1 may be accessed at the cul-de-sac on Jefferson Park Drive by using the driving directions in Trail #7. Parking is dangerous on the Route 79 side near Trailhead #2, as there is little space between the road and the Trailhead itself. Therefore, it is suggested that hikers park on Jefferson Park Drive. The trail is 0.6 mile Trailhead to Trailhead and takes 1 hour to complete. Take Trailhead #1 at the cul-de-sac on Jefferson Park Drive and proceed east walking on MLCT property.

The trail, almost immediately, crosses a stream and encounters a wetland area. Notice the oaks, beech and red maples in the area. Although the trail is maintained by MLCT, young saplings and thickets of black birch and beech cover the trail. This trail on Cockaponset State Forest is under active forest management and has been cleared in previous years. The trail divides into a loop soon. Take the right branch traveling east through a stone wall that most likely marked old field borders, and ascend to a small knoll. Oil Mill Brook soon becomes visible. Cross the brook that is lined with skunk cabbage and then watch for the trail to divide again to form another loop.

Follow the trail carefully to the right through another stone wall, ascend a knoll and proceed left along a logging road. Notice the numerous white pines lining the trail. This logging road leads to Trailhead #2 (Route 79). Otherwise, follow the northern loop
of this trail back to Trailhead #1 on Jefferson Park Drive.

**Personal Observation of the Oil Mill Brook Trail**

The Oil Mill Brook Trail offers the option to walk either east to Route 79 and then, after returning, to proceed south along the Jefferson Park Trail. Parking is spacious at the cul-de-sac on Jefferson Park Drive. I remember this trail to be fairly wooded and not as well maintained as some of the other trails in Madison. Be sure to watch for the blazes especially during the summer as foliage from small saplings and limbs from larger trees may impede trail markings. Also, be sure not to park near the Route 79 Trailhead as there is not a great deal of space to leave your car. Always begin at the cul-de-sac on Jefferson Park Drive. The trail is an enjoyable out and back hike with a White Pine forest and wetland included.
Overbrook Trail (#9)

To find the Overbrook Trail, travel north 0.8 mile from the intersection of Route 79 and Horsepond Road and turn left onto Overbrook Road. To access Trailhead #2, travel 0.3 mile on Overbrook to SNET pole #916 on the left side where the Trailhead is located. To access Trailhead #1 on Colonial Drive, turn left at the intersection of Overbrook and Colonial and proceed 100 feet south to the Trailhead location on the right. Parking is located at a dirt pullout near the intersection of Overbrook and Colonial Roads. The distance of the trail is 1.1 miles and takes 1.5 hours to complete.

This trail may be described as a combination of several loops. Start at Trailhead #2, about ¼ mile north of Trailhead #1. Enter the trail and proceed right. Notice the old stone walls that are indicative of older farmland. Tulip-poplar trees are common here, as well as thickets of poison ivy, honeysuckle, greenbriar and bittersweet. Proceed west along the trail, which gradually ascends. The trail will soon divide. Take the right pathway and at the top of the rise the trail veers left. Soil composition here is much drier than at the lower elevations.

Continue following the trail to a junction where a "cross-over" trail enters from the left. Proceed straight (east) on the trail following an old woods road that terminates after about 500 feet in the middle of the forest. Proceed right and follow the trail through several decaying dogwood trees. Soon after, notice the stone walls that mark old field borders. This is a junction where a hiker may continue straight following MLCT property or turn left and hike along State Forest boundary. Continue straight and pass through the stone wall following the meandering trail. Look for an overlook shortly and choose between turning left passing along the overlook, or following the trail down to a
pond. Descend a steep grade to the pond and turn left along an old road. Notice the pond on the right. A shorter trail provides a closer view of the pond. The pond, which is a breeding habitat for salamanders and frogs, is a vernal pool. Come back from the short trail bordering the pond and continue traveling east along the woods road. A wetland borders the trail to the right and then the trail bows slightly to the left. Notice that the overlook trail joins this trail from the right.

The trail will soon turn left (north) along the State Forest boundary. Proceed along the trail and cross a small stream. The trail will continue along the State Forest boundary that is marked by a stone wall. Soon, the trail cuts right and then left denoting a short spur trail to Trailhead #1 on Colonial Drive. The option to proceed to Colonial Drive or continue a short distance back to Trailhead #2 is available.

**Personal Observation of the Overbrook Trail**

Perhaps one of the most complex and confusing hiking trails in Madison, especially for a person hiking it for the first time, the Overbrook Trail is not well blazed near Trailhead #2. The zigzag of trails, however, is not to be overshadowed by the trail’s diversity in terrain and ecology. There is both the mix of forest habitats as well as wetlands that add definitive character to this trail. A small pond on this trail (pictured in the trail description) is alive with activity in the spring and summer. The trail is centrally located in town and is very accessible from all routes. Be sure to watch your footing on the optional steep descent to the pond.
Papermill Trail (#10)

To find Trailhead #1 on the Papermill Trail, travel east on Green Hill Road from Route 79 for 0.8-mile to Horsepond Road. Continue through the blinking light onto Green Hill Road for another 0.8-mile to Fawn Brook Circle (just before the bridge that borders Killingworth). The Trailhead is on the east side on Fawn Brook Circle, 50 feet from the junction of Green Hill Road. To access Trailhead #2, proceed north on Horsepond Road to Wickford Place (0.2-mile south of the junction with Route 79). Travel 0.3-mile to the Wickford Place cul-de-sac. The Trailhead is on the right. To find Trailhead #3, travel to Hammonasset Meadows Road (0.1-mile south of the entrance to Wickford Place). Follow Hammonasset Meadows 0.3-mile to mailbox #67. Parking for all these Trailheads may be accessed near the Trailheads. The trail length varies between 2.5 and 3 miles and takes approximately 2 hours to hike.

The Papermill Trail is another scenic hike that travels along the Hammonasset River bordering Killingworth. This trail is located below the lengthy Bailey Trail system further north along the Hammonasset River.

Enter at Trailhead #1 at the entrance to Fawnbrook Circle. Notice the foundation ruins of the historic papermill and dam near the Hammonasset River to the right. Passing the mill site, proceed north along the west side of the river. In this moist area along the river, species of oaks, birches, beech and ash grow. The area is also a large floodplain. When the papermill was in operation in the mid-1860's, waterpower came from this area of the river.

The trail ascends slightly and continues north along the river. Soon, the trial
divides; the right branch goes along the river and the left trail proceeds uphill. Take the right branch continuing along the river. The trail will angle left and then turn sharply right. A short distance later the trail either loops south or heads up to Trailhead #2 (Wickford Place). To take the spur trail to Wickford Place, cross a stream and then follow an old logging road. This part of the trail will go uphill along a rocky upslope leading to the Wickford Place cul-de-sac.

Taking the loop trail south (before the spur trail to Wickford Place), travel alongside a stream uphill and then downhill once again to the base of the loop. Proceed right and ascend until a spur-trail is encountered. Proceed right and follow an old road to the entrance of Trailhead #3 (Hammonasset Meadows Drive). This loop trail follows an old stone wall and then begins to descend. Follow this trail back to the junction with the main trail. Continue back along the river to Trailhead #1 or to Trailhead #2.

**Personal Observation of the Papermill Trail**

The Papermill Trail along with the Neck River Trail is included in my favorite trails of Madison for its location along the Hammonasset River and again, variable terrain. In addition, for history buffs, the historic paper mill here was constructed in the mid-1860’s. The hike is very similar to the Bailey Trail, which also runs along the Hammonasset. The real value in this hike, however, is in the various terrains that are encountered. Depending upon which one of the three Trailheads that one enters, the terrain ranges from rocky (as near the Trailhead entrance at Wickford Place), to soil covered (as near the Trailhead entrance near Fawnbrook Circle). The terrain and vistas change several times along this trail. This is a very suitable hike for a family on a weekend day.
Bailey Trail North (#11)

To find Trailhead #1 of Bailey Trail North, proceed east from the North Madison Traffic Circle approximately 1.3 miles to the bridge that spans the Hammonasset River between Madison and Killingworth. Parking is sufficient near the bridge at several dirt pullouts on either side of Route 80. Be careful of fast-moving traffic. The trail distance is 0.6 one way to Georgetown Circle; 1.1 miles if the Buck Hill Loop is chosen. The hike takes approximately 2 hours to walk.

Begin this hike by entering at Trailhead #1 near the Route 80 bridge that spans the Hammonasset River between Madison and Killingworth. The trail leads south from Route 80 into the woods and shortly descends to the Hammonasset River. Notice a small stream that parallels the trail and shortly thereafter, on the left side are the stonework remnants of an old mill during the mid 1800's (see historical photo in the Historical Features of Selected Trails section.) Once the trail meets with the river, look northward and notice the Route 80 bridge. This is also the point at which the Buck Hill Loop ascends a ridge to the west. The Buck Hill Loop is described later.

Follow the trail south along the river. Notice that the river narrows slightly and then encounters a set of rapids and then broadens once again. Ledges to the east and west may be seen from virtually any vantagepoint along the trail. Common tree species along this area of trail are hemlock, oaks, yellow and black birch, red maple and ash. Because of the cool, damp environment, mosses are common on rocks in the river and along the trail. The hemlock species has suffered in recent years due to the invasive wooly adelgid insect that may have been brought to Connecticut in 1985 by Hurricane Gloria.

Further down the trail, glacier-smoothed boulders meet up with the southern
junction of the Buck Hill Loop. Continue south where many exposed roots and damp ground indicate this area is a floodplain. Soon, the trail heads away from the river and then encounters several man-made bridges en route to Trailhead #2/Georgetown Circle. Be sure to have proper footwear, as the area can be especially muddy during the spring.

**Buck Hill Loop**

Beginning at the northern junction near Route 80, follow the trail west ascending a steep slope. In a short distance, the trail will descend and then pass through some mountain laurel. Be careful of a steep drop-off to the left. Look for the large boulder, just east of the trail. Watch for the crevasse when crossing. From the top of the rock, look to the east for great views of the river below, especially during the winter. Follow the trail across a ravine and along a short slope. Ascend the slope up to another great view—this time of Long Island Sound. This area is called the Buck Hill overlook. Just beyond the trail ends at a sign. To get back to the main trail on the Hammonasset River, closely follow the blue blazes and be careful of footing, as the descent is steep!

**Personal Observation of the Bailey Trail (North & South)**

The Bailey Trail (North & South) is my favorite trail of all that Madison has to offer. For hikers interested in unparalleled views, the smell of the Hammonasset River, and a workout, this trail is the one for them. History buffs will take an interest, too, as there are the remnants of an historic mill just below the Route 80 bridge. My favorite feature of the trail, however, is the view of Long Island Sound from the overlook on the Buck Hill Loop. One needs to use care on this trail as there are several large boulders with steep drop-offs that must not be overlooked. On a clear day, Long Island is very vivid. This trail is great for a family outing.
**Bailey Trail South (#11)**

To find Trailhead #2 of Bailey Trail South, travel east from the North Madison Traffic Circle on Route 80 to Summer Hill Road. Proceed south on Summer Hill Road for 0.7 mile to Heatherwood. Turn left into Heatherwood to the bottom of the hill and proceed left onto Concord Drive. Follow Concord to a stop sign and turn left again on Concord to Georgetown Circle and proceed right to its end. The Trailhead is at the cul-de-sac of Georgetown Circle near the MLCT sign. To find Trailhead #3, enter Heatherwood as above to the bottom of the hill and turn right onto Concord Drive traveling 0.3 mile to the Trailhead. To find Trailhead #4, travel 0.2 mile north of the intersection of Horsepond and Route 79 to Chestnut Hill Road. Turn right onto Chestnut and proceed 0.3 mile to Summer Hill Road. Turn left on Summer Hill Road and travel 0.8 north to the Trailhead entrance. Parking is located near each of the Trailheads. The trail distance is approximately 1.5 miles and takes 1.5 hours to hike.

Begin this hike at Trailhead #2 at the Georgetown Circle cul-de-sac. Enter the woods and follow the trail to the Hammonasset River. Upon reaching the Hammonasset, notice the river is slow moving and is bordered by species of beech and birch trees. Mountain laurel dominates the understory here. Continuing south along the trail, notice a long, narrow island dividing the river in two. It is possible to access the island by traversing some log crossings. Be careful, however, as some rocks may be moss covered. Once back on the trail, proceed south and look for smaller islands downriver. The trail eventually ascends and passes through a stone wall. The common tree species along this stretch of trail is the American beech. Soon, the trail will come to a very large, impressive chestnut oak with its deeply fissured bark.
The trail will eventually cross the Cider Mill Brook. Look for the footbridge to make the crossing. For a longer hike, take the Cider Mill Brook Spur Trail that will lead to Trailhead #3 on Concord Drive. The Cider Mill Spur Trail is described below.

For now, continue south along the trail through more beech and laurel. The river soon narrows and then opens up to a series of rapids. A little farther down the trail are the foundation remnants of a possible mill site. Just below this point is access to Trailhead #4 via a spur trail.

The trail is extended another 0.3 mile downriver if a longer hike is desired. The trail curves back away from the river and ends on private land at Summer Hill Road.

Cider Mill Spur Trail

To access the Cider Mill Spur Trail, take Concord Drive to Trailhead #3. Park either on the grass pullout or curbside near the Trailhead. Enter the woods and follow the trail downhill towards a wet drainage area. Common tree species are beech, red maple, tulip-poplar and ash.

The Cider Mill Brook flows on the left and high ridges dominate to the right (west). The trail will pass through stone walls and then notice larger woods roads ahead. Turn left here, being careful to follow the blue blazes, to the junction with the main trail.
St. Francis Woods Trail (#12)

To find the St. Francis Woods Trail, proceed west on Bradley Corners Road for 1.2 miles from its junction with Opening Hill Road to St. Francis Woods. Trailhead #1 is 0.5 mile on the right, opposite house #115. Trailhead #2 is just 0.1 mile farther. Trailhead #3 is just 0.2 mile farther at the cul-de-sac on St. Francis Woods. Parking is sufficient on the side of the road near any of the Trailheads. The distance of the trail is 0.7 mile; 1 mile if the Richard C. Donnelly Memorial is explored. The trail takes between 1–1.5 hours to hike.

Begin this hike at Trailhead #1 entering the woods bearing right following the blue blazes south. The trail quickly comes upon a stream. Notice in this floodplain the swamp red maple and understory species of spicebush, witch hazel and wild azalea. Ascend the trail gradually along a rocky slope and find species of beech, hickories and large chestnut oak. Notice the steep outcrops of the ridge to the east overlooking the stream. Continue along the path through a wetland floodplain. The trail will turn left and will cross a stream on a bridge. The trail now proceeds northward and ascends the ridges seen earlier. The floodplain can be easily seen below—especially during the spring and fall. Thinner soil composition grows chestnut oaks here. Continue the ascent until the trail levels off and comes to an observation point. These rock outcrops are a great spot to rest after the ascent and enjoy the scenic view to the west. Occasionally, a magnificent sunset can be viewed here—especially when the foliage is light.

The trail continues north, but now descends and zigzags downward. Passing a
large rock and a stream crossing, the trail will lead to Trailhead #2 on St. Francis Woods Road. For an extended hike, walk along St. Francis Woods Road to the cul-de-sac and Trailhead #3 that leads to the Donnelly Memorial. Enter the woods and walk uphill to an opened area. Proceed left and walk to a path that leads to a bench. The bench has been placed in the memory of Richard C. Donnelly, a long time Madison resident, founder of the MLCT and faculty member of the Yale University Law School. Mr. Donnelly served as the first vice-president of the MLCT in 1963.

**Personal Observation of the St. Francis Woods Trail**

The St. Francis Woods Trail is an interesting trail that offers a hiker some surprises. In my opinion, one should begin this hike at Trailhead #1, the southernmost Trailhead on St. Francis Woods Road. Proceed through a forest and then into a wetland. Up to this point the forest is quite typical of that on most other trails, but then, one ascends northward to a ridge that overlooks everything that has been hiked. To the west is a spectacular view (especially in the late fall or early spring). Not only is the soil composition much different than the wetland below, but the feeling of being “out there” is felt atop the ridge. Even though this trail abuts a small neighborhood, one would never be able to tell that it wasn’t in the woods of New Hampshire. The trail also highlights the Richard C. Donnelly memorial bench. A quiet place to relax (close to Trailhead #3), the hike may conclude here with some munchies or trail mix.
Bog Iron Works Trail (#13)

To find the Bog Iron Works Trail, travel west from the North Madison Traffic Circle on Route 80 for 1.2 miles to Race Hill Road. Turn right onto Race Hill Road and travel 0.6 mile to the Trailhead, located on the left side of the road. Parking is limited on the left side of the road near the Trailhead. Do not park opposite the Trailhead as this is private property. The distance of the trail is approximately 1.7 miles and takes 1.5 – 2 hours to hike.

Enter the trail and proceed straight past a stone wall and walk along the southern boundary of a field. Walk approximately 600 feet paralleling a stone wall until the entrance to the woods. Follow the blue blazes into the woods and descend through a sometimes wet and muddy red maple swamp. Several species of trees encountered along this trail are oaks, hickories, beech and maple. Soon, cross a small stream and then ascend to a ledge.

Once in the drier soils of the upper elevation, tree species more common are chestnut oaks and eastern red cedar. The trail then descends and crosses a stream on the west side of this ridge. The trail splits, proceeds right, and passes several vernal pools (full when hiking during the spring), and then ascends again. Notice the rock outcrops here. The trail ascends and descends for a while—be sure to follow the blue blazes as several other logging roads cross the trail. Finally, descend to a junction that will loop back to the left and return to the aforementioned split.

Follow the trail north to the Old Iron Works. Cross a stream until the trail parallels the Iron Stream. Notice the trail passes over two rock outcrops and then descends to the trail's end at the old dam site. Look for the monument placed by the

Proceed back along the trail to the trail junction and go straight (south). The trail rises and falls as it passes by homes. The trail will lead past a wetland. Look for an old fence line that marks private land. Just prior to the fence, turn left, cross a stream and walk back to the main trail that goes back to the Trailhead.

**Personal Observations of the Bog Iron Works Trail**

The Bog Iron Works Trail is one of the northernmost of Madison’s trails. There is only one Trailhead, and thus, only one way in and out. This is quite different than most other trails heretofore seen. Parking is minimal at the Trailhead entrance. The Trail is significant in the fact that it was once the location of an Ironworks forge, the remnants of which exist today and are described on an inscription on a stone. Feelings of isolation passed through me when hiking this trail as most of it is not near private homes. The trail presents a scenic view of Shelly Lakes at the trail’s southernmost boundary and is a pretty hike during the fall.
Indian Rock Shelters Trail (#14)

To find the Indian Rock Shelters Trail, travel east on Route 80 from the North Madison Traffic Circle for 0.7 mile to Summer Hill Road. Turn left on Summer Hill Road and travel 0.7 mile to Twilight Drive. Turn left onto Twilight Drive for 0.4 mile to Lake Drive. Follow Lake Drive to the cul-de-sac and the Trailhead. Parking is available at the cul-de-sac on Lake Drive. The distance of this trail is approximately 1.2 miles and takes about 1.5 hours to hike.

This loop trail proceeds past the historic Indian Rock Shelters Caves—home to early native Americans. From the Trailhead at the cul-de-sac on Lake Drive, descend to the bottom of a slope and bear right (traveling north). Notice the rocky ledges of this narrow valley that parallel the entire length of this trail. These ledges are especially visible during the winter or spring months when there is little foliage. Oaks, beech, birches, sugar maples and hickories grow in this diverse environment.

Notice the fragmented rocks of ancient granite that the trail passes. Farther ahead the trail borders a stone wall that delineates the western boundary of the Southern Regional Water Authority. Follow the trail west, crossing a stream that flows north into the Hammonasset River watershed. The trail now doubles back along the stream and follows closely the rock ledges seen earlier. Look for an Indian Rock Shelter on the right. This shelter served as protection from adverse weather for early Native Americans and is situated near the stream.

Proceeding south along the trail, notice the ferns and mosses. Watch for loose
rocks along the trail as some have fallen from the ledge above. The watershed on this part of the trail drains south into the Neck River. Farther along the trail notice another ancient rock shelter. Shortly after this cave, the trail turns left (east) and crosses the Neck River. Be careful of this crossing especially in the spring as high water may make it difficult to traverse. Watch for the trail to proceed to the right (east). By taking a spur trail to the Bartlett Pond (on the map), a hiker may enjoy a quiet break along the water's edge. To finish this hike, proceed back to the junction and travel north, crossing the Neck River returning to the Trailhead on Lake Drive.

Personal Observation of the Indian Rock Shelters Trail

The Indian Rock Shelters Trail creates the unique feeling that long ago people lived here. While walking through this primarily north/south valley, ridges on each side (mostly to the west) encompass the hiker. Some of the most interesting features of the trail are the rock shelters that were once used by Native Americans. I climbed into one of these caves (see picture in the description) and began to think about how different the early Native American way of life was compared to ours today. Archaeological data has shown that these rock shelters were used as winter dwellings. Although the trail is named for its rock shelters, you are also able to enjoy the overlook to scenic Bartlett Pond to the east. The hike is fairly lengthy, so be rested before heading out on this historic trail.
Indigo Woods Trail (#15)

To find the Indigo Woods Trail, travel west from the intersection of Route 79 and Green Hill Road for 1.2 miles to Warpas Road. Turn left onto Warpas Road for 0.2 mile to Riverside Terrace to its cul-de-sac. Parking is available at the cul-de-sac. The trail is approximately ¾ mile long and takes less than 1 hour to hike.

This trail begins at the cul-de-sac on Riverside Terrace off of Warpas Road. Upon entering the Trailhead, the trail will immediately divide. You may choose to follow the trail to the left or to the right. The right trail will connect to several other shorter trails, (see end of this description). The left trail will run along the bank of the Neck River that borders Guilford to the west. Choosing the left branch, notice the peaceful flow of the river to the right. Soon after, the trail will divide. One trail leads straight ahead, while the 2nd trail curves downhill to the right. Where the trail divides is the base of a loop. Continue walking straight until the trail passes through an old stone wall and into a meadow. Follow the trail sharply to the right along the stone wall entering into the woods where the trail soon parallels the Neck River. Soon, an historic sawmill can be seen (see Historical Features of Selected Trails section). Upon further examination, look west to where the dam begins. Look for a pile of stones that depicted this area's boundary in the early 1800's between the towns of Guilford and Madison.

After crossing the stream, examine the sluiceway (waterway to ferry the timber of the historic sawmill). This 100-foot trench leads up to the dam. Today, it is possible to
walk alongside the sluiceway on old stone that was used to build this waterway.

Continue to follow the trail to the mill foundation and cross the river again via some stepstones. The trail now follows the southern bank of the Neck River and then proceeds to rise up a slope via a pathway up to the base of the loop and back to the Trailhead. The walk may be terminated here or continue on the right branch.

Right branch

The right branch will lead across the Neck River early. Follow this trail to where it joins an old woods road and shortly thereafter to where the trail passes through a wire fence. Notice a stone wall at this point. This point depicts where Indigo Woods ends and where it becomes the junction with other surrounding private lands. If you choose to follow this trail by proceeding straight ahead, it will eventually join the Double Loop Trail (#4).

Common species of trees found along this trail are tulip-poplars and oaks. Plant species include skunk cabbage and spice bush, especially near the floodplain of the Neck River where there is abundant moisture.

**Personal Observation of the Indigo Woods Trail**

The Indigo Woods Trail is another great trail to hike when river views are desired. The beautiful Neck River is exposed throughout much of this hike. Remnants of an old sawmill used in the early 1800’s are visible as well. The mill remnants illustrate fairly well how the sawmill here operated. The trail is bounded by extremely tall trees (due to the moist wetland) and thus is shaded fairly well in the summertime. The sluiceway, which carried water from the dam above to the saw below, is especially well preserved. I recommend this trail for a family outing and for the historic sawmill.
Garvan Trail (#16)

To find the Garvan Trail, travel south on West Wharf Road from Route 1 to the stop sign. Turn right onto Surf Club Road and proceed to the westernmost parking areas. Trailhead #1 is near the beach and the boat racks. Parking is plentiful in the area. The distance of the trail is approximately 0.5 mile and takes 30-45 minutes to hike.

Much of the beauty that lies in the Garvan Trail is comprised of the diversity between the fresh and salt-water marshes and the older forest further inland. Of all Madison's trails, Garvan Trail is the furthest south and closest to Long Island Sound.

Enter the trail at Trailhead #1, closest to the beach. The area may be described as a Beach and Intertidal Zone. A sign near the entrance points this fact out. Because of the geographic location of this trail, the area is subject to extreme weather conditions and only diverse organisms can survive here. Several species of beach grasses and non-native species such as the Beach Rose are able to thrive.

Proceed north at Trailhead #1, following the blue-blazes across the causeway that spans the salt marsh. This area is referred to as a high salt marsh where tidal flow mixes the salt water from Long Island Sound and the fresh water stream flowing from the north. The area is a nesting ground for various species of fish. After crossing the causeway, the trail proceeds right. The upper part of the High Salt Marsh is visible to the right and parallels the trail. Soon after, the trail divides with the right branch leading back to Trailhead #2. Upon turning left onto the boardwalk (pictured), a sign provides an ecology lesson of a fresh water marsh encountered here.
After crossing the boardwalk, a parking area for Exchange Field will become visible.

Cross the parking area and enter the trail again. At the base loop, turn left and proceed through a field where red cedars and black cherry trees are growing. At the north end of the loop turn right and again enter the dense stand of red cedars. This is the only trail among Madison's extensive system where such a unique red cedar growth occurs.

Continue along the trail to the boardwalk to Trailhead #1 or #2.

**Personal Observation of the Garvan Trail**

The Garvan Trail is the southernmost trail in Madison. This short hike has a diversity that is unparalleled. I recommend beginning this hike at Trailhead #1 near the beach. The several separations between the Beach and Intertidal Zone, the High Salt Marsh, and the Fresh Water Marsh are all noticeable. Beautiful stands of red-cedar trees are prevalent along the trail as well as the smell of ocean air. What I like most about this hike is the fact that it can be a family hike. Bring your family to the beach just east of where Trailhead #1 begins and enjoy a picnic or bar-b-que.
GARVAN TRAIL

- Trailhead #1
- Trailhead #2
- Trailhead #3
- Fresh Water Marsh sign
- High Salt Marsh
- Quiet Forest
Conclusion and Recommendations

I have found that walking the trails of Madison is an enjoyable and peaceful way to set oneself apart from the rest of the world. There is a trail for every mood and conversely, a mood for each trail. Reading these trail descriptions before hiking may help you determine what you would like to learn and feel for a particular day. Consider the salty smell of ocean air walking the Garvan Trail, or the great vista to Long Island Sound from atop Buck Hill on the Bailey Trail. Each trail has a unique offering that I have explained and described.

In my travels, I observed that for the most part, trails are well maintained. The present MLCT Trails Committee works diligently to improve the quality of each trail. Hopefully, this activity will continue in the future. Careless acts that can leave a trail in disarray may negate the work of many devoted people.

Recently, wooden signs denoting the trail name were placed near each Trailhead on approximately half of all trails in Madison. These signs should be installed on other trails as soon as possible, as Trailhead locations are sometimes difficult to find. During 1997, considerable time was spent blazing each trail with brighter circles ensuring that paths' could be followed and that hikers would have less of a chance of becoming lost.

Finally, the goal of the MLCT Trails Committee should be to provide monthly or bi-monthly hikes on different trails. Videotapes made of these hikes could be replayed on the Town's Community Access Channel. Also, the Scranton Memorial Library should have a special section marked clearly in their public information booth of the MLCT
Trails Guide. In addition to this publicity, the library could hold a special slideshow presentation of all trails.

Looking ahead to the future, Madison intends to extend its trail offerings by creating new trails on recently acquired Trust and Town lands, and, connecting existing trails into those of other towns. For example, a new trail system on “Braemore”, a large open space tract recently purchased by the Town, will connect with the Mattabasset Trail, located near the Durham/Madison/Guilford borders. This will be a fantastic addition to the family of trails that already exist. In addition, the MLCT is working with the Killingworth Land Trust to possibly extend a trail across the Hammonasset River and connect with a trail system in Killingworth. Such efforts are highly recommended and should be explored further, if possible.

The beauty of Madison’s trails is not to be underestimated. If you are a nature lover, as am I, then come explore the beauty and secrets of Madison’s trails.
WORKS CITED


Photo and Drawing Credits

Figure 1 and 6 as well as all trail photos depicted in trail descriptions
George R. Lange III

Figure 2:

Figure 3, 5, and 8:
Clayton, L. and Lord, W. Madison: Three-Hundred Years by the Sea.

Figure 4:

Figure 7:
Courtesy of Madison Land Conservation Trust