

From the parking area proceed about 600 feet along the path parallel to the stone wall on the left and the fence on the right. At the southwest corner of the field, enter the woods and follow the blue blazes. The second-growth forest encountered throughout the hike is typical of the oak-hickory forest type. Common species are the oaks (white, red, black and chestnut), beech and sugar maple on slopes and dry ridges, and red maple, yellow and black birches in the lower, moist, cooler areas.

The trail descends and crosses through a wet, and sometimes muddy, red maple swamp. Cross the small stream and ascend a hogback. On the very top, where exposed ledges testify to the shallowness of the soil and dry conditions, slow-growing chestnut oaks abound and eastern red-cedar occur. The latter, members of the Juniper family, require abundant sunlight. Their presence here indicates that the forest canopy on the ridge top has been quite open for a long time. This fact is also revealed by the dense understory of blueberries, huckleberries and grasses.

The trail descends, gradually at first and then steeply, past exposed ledges to cross the stream that drains the watershed on the western side of the ridge.

Just beyond the stream (0.3 mile from the trailhead) the trail splits. This description is written as if you are turning right (north). Pass several probable vernal pools (in spring), and ascend to higher ground. Rock outcrops are common, their smooth rounded tops the result of glacial "grinding" which occurred over 10,000 years ago. Climb and descend several small ridges (hogbacks). Be careful to follow the blue blazes as several other trails and old logging roads intersect and cross our trail. Descend from the highest ridge (where a house is visible on the left), to a junction where the loop cuts back to the left. This can be followed back to the junction mentioned earlier, or you can proceed north to the Old Iron Works.

Following the path north, the trail crosses a stream (which soon joins the Iron Stream). There is a fine step-stone crossing here. This section of trail passes through a managed private forest that recently was harvested. Further on, the trail passes along the Iron Stream, then over two rocky outcrops before it descends to the old iron smelter works. The trail ends here, at the dam site (0.8 mile from the trailhead). A monument describing the site was placed here in 1989 by the MLCT and the Madison Historical Society.

Return along the trail to the junction and, for variation, take the fork (straight ahead to the south). Ascend and descend the ridge (by several homes), pass along a wetland to the east, and through a laurel thicket. Just before an old fence line marking private land, the trail turns sharply left (east), crosses the stream that drains the wetland, and soon rejoins the trail leading back to the trailhead.

### Directions and Parking:

From Route 80, turn north on Race Hill Rd. and follow it until you see the trail head. Parking is available on the west side of Race Hill Rd; parking area is not plowed in winter.

### Permitted/Prohibited Activities:

The trails areas in the MLCT properties are for hiking only. Dogs are allowed, but must be leashed. Please pick up all animal waste. Contact the State Forest HQ for other activities allowed on their sites.



Hiking



Pets on Leash

### For more information about this location, contact:

Madison Land Conservation Trust  
State Forest: Eastern District HQ

[www.madisonlandtrust.org](http://www.madisonlandtrust.org)

(860) 295-9523

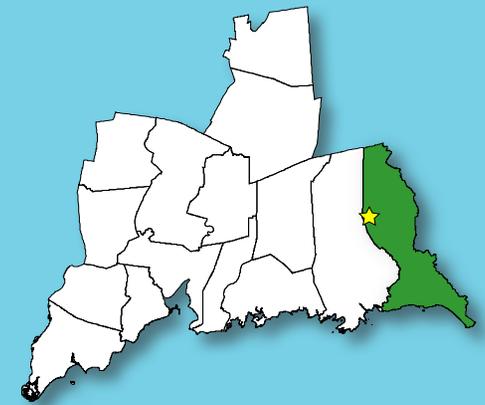
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South Central Regional Council of Governments  
Phone: (203) 234-7555/Fax: (203) 234-9850  
E-mail: [trails@scrcog.org](mailto:trails@scrcog.org)

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## Recreational Trails South Central Connecticut

# Iron Woods Preserve



Madison, CT

# Iron Woods Preserve



Photo by Emmeline Alaconis, SCRCOG

## Trail Description:

### Moderate Hike

The Ironwoods Preserve Trail leads through an interesting variety of ecological settings including open meadows, dry, rocky ridges and low, wet, valley bottom lands and streams. The trail leads to the foundation of an excellent example of a bog iron works dating from the late 18th or early 19th Century.

Total trail distance is approx. 1.07 miles

## Legend

- |  |                           |  |                |
|--|---------------------------|--|----------------|
|  | Parking                   |  | Dam            |
|  | Trailhead                 |  | Bridge         |
|  | Trailhead/Sign            |  | Trail Junction |
|  | Trail Sign                |  | Ruin           |
|  | Iron Woods Preserve Trail |  |                |
|  | Town Property             |  |                |
|  | Land Trust Property       |  |                |
|  | RWA Property              |  |                |
|  | Wetlands                  |  |                |

