

The trail is a loop and is described as if walking in a counter-clockwise direction. From the trailhead, descend a short distance to the bottom of the slope and turn right (north) past a large beech tree with an unusual grafted branch. By looking to the left as you walk along you can see excellent views (especially in late fall, winter or early spring) of a rock ledge that runs more or less parallel with the trail and is on the other side of a low wet area. The forest composition in this narrow valley is quite diverse with beech, red and sugar maples, red, black, white and chestnut oaks, black and yellow birches, white ash and hickory.

The trail passes over broken rocks of ancient granite, and just to the right of a large rock outcrop. Note the embedded vein of white quartz. To the left, the valley floor now slopes noticeably downward and to the north. The trail eventually passes just to the left of and along a stone wall—the western boundary of Southern Regional Water Authority land. From this point, follow the trail as it leads gradually to the west and onto the ridge of a hogback and then descends, crossing a small stream (0.4 mile from the trailhead). This stream, flowing north into the Hammonasset River watershed, originates in a wetland perched above and behind the ledge face to the southwest.

The trail now doubles sharply back southward (left) along the stream and close by the rock faces seen earlier. Soon it passes close to a magnificent Indian rock shelter (A). As a winter home for an Indian family, this shelter was probably ideal as it faces away from winter storms and is close by a good source of water. The trail soon crosses the stream near where it enters the valley. A series of small waterfalls often occurs where the stream tumbles down over rocks, and in the winter sometimes creates a beautiful cascade of ice falls and icicles.

On this side of the valley, the forest floor is densely covered by ferns, while fallen tree trunks and rocks are blanketed by mosses. The trail here is quite rough as it passes over and around rocks that have fallen from the ledge faces. The trail soon enters a dense laurel thicket and then, close to a shear rock wall, an area rich in hemlock. Once a cool shaded glen, this area is now being opened up as many hemlocks are being damaged and killed by the hemlock woolly adelgid, a foreign insect that reached Connecticut's southern shores in the mid-1980s.

There are several good examples on the cliff face where trees have become established in cracks in the rock. As tree roots grow they will cause rocks to split away and fall. The many large rocks at the cliff base suggest that this process has been underway for a long time.

Directions and Parking:

From Route 80, take Summer Hill Road North. Take the second left on to Twilight Drive and follow Twilight until Lake Drive. Park in the culdesac of Lake Drive where the trail head to Indian Rock Shelters is located.

Permitted 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

Recreational Trails South Central Connecticut

Indian Rock Shelters



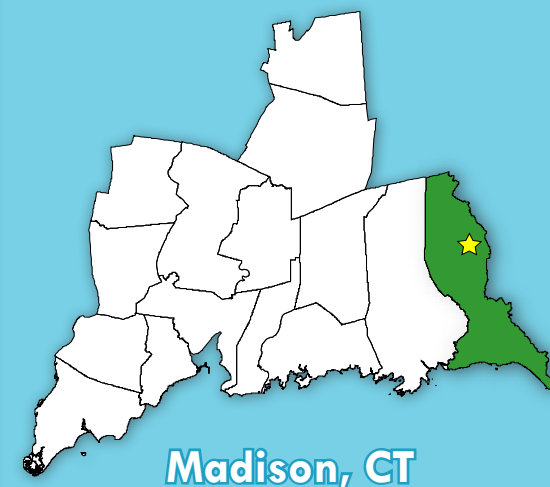
For more information about this trail contact:

Madison Land Conservation Trust
State Forest: Eastern District HQ

www.madisonlandtrust.org
(860) 295-9523

Questions regarding this brochure can be addressed to
South Central Regional Council of Governments
Phone: (203) 234-7555/Fax: (203) 234-9850
E-mail: trails@scrcog.org

Scan QR Code to access the South Central Regional Council of Governments Recreational Trails Webpage



Indian Rock Shelters



Photo by: Madison Land Conservation Trust

Trail Description:

Easy to Moderate Hike

The Indian Rock Shelters trail offers an unusual opportunity to visit the natural rock shelter home sites of early native Americans. The trail encompasses a complex watershed system. Which toward the north flows north into the Hammonasset River basin, and to the south, the headwaters of the Neck River. There are good views of cliff faces, rock shelters, and of Bartlett Pond.

Total trail distance is approx. 1.06 miles

Legend

- Parking
- Trailhead
- Scenic Viewpoint
- Trail Junction
- Stone Wall
- Indian Rock Shelters
- Wetlands
- Land Trust Property
- RWA Property

