



# *Southeast Striders Walking Club, Inc.*

## **Watson Mill Bridge State Park 6K and 11K Walk Y2420 2024**

The Southeast Striders Walking Club is one of the newest members of AVA: America’s Walking Club. We welcome you to our Watson Mill Bridge State Park 6/11k Year-Round Event (YRE), and thank you for taking interest in one of our walks. Watson Mill Bridge State Park is located near Comer, GA. One of Georgia’s few remaining covered bridges and the ruins of the water wheel power generation site are the focal points of the park, preserving a link to the culture of a bygone era. The bridge crosses the South Fork Broad River next to a spectacular shoal. The park is full of magnificent, mature elm, oak, poplar, and sweet gum trees, whose height and size are sure to please.

### **Walk Registration:**

Please use the online start box provided by AVA: America’s Walking Club ([www.my.ava.org](http://www.my.ava.org)). After signing in, select the 'My Start Box' tab. Press the “Help” button in the upper right-hand corner for the instructions to sign a waiver and register for this event. Payment for event credit and walk directions uses your credit card. The walk directions and insert cards are PDFs that you can download and print as needed. The entire online process should take approximately 10 minutes for a first-time user. The POC does not provide event directions or accept alternate payment methods.

### **Walk Completion and Walk Credit**

Once you have physically completed the walk, please login to your Online Start Box account and select the “Finish Table” tab. Use the displayed entry form to submit the date and distance of your walk as well as select applicable AVA Special Programs to generate stamped “virtual” insert cards that you may later choose to print out.

### **Table of Contents**

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## WATSON MILL STATE PARK HISTORY

*Date Established:* 1969

*Original Acreage:* 144

*Current Acreage:* 1,118

The Bryan family, owner of Jefferson Textile Mills, donated the original 135 acres of land to the state of Georgia as the nucleus of a new park. The establishment of the park was a grassroots effort by local citizens and the Bryan family to preserve an old covered bridge and surrounding natural area for future generations. For more than 25 years, the park was focused mainly around the covered bridge, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and provided camping, picnicking, nature trails, and fishing. Seeing the potential for greater natural resource protection and park expansion, the state worked with the Trust for Public Land in 1996 on three phases of land acquisitions. By the end of the decade, the park acreage was at 1,018 acres. In 2006, an additional 100 acres was acquired through DOT land mitigation funds, bringing the total acreage to 1,118.

One of Georgia's few remaining covered bridges is the focal point of the park, preserving a link to the culture of a bygone era. The bridge crosses a natural flowing river, which is surrounded by rich natural resources of flora and fauna. The biodiversity of this site is varied with different ecosystems. It is one of only two parks in Georgia that operate an equestrian stay-use area. There are presently 19 miles of trails with some designated as horse trails, some as hiking/biking, and some as walking only. With the natural scenic beauty of the site, it is a subject for many artists and photographers in the state.

## Watson Mill State Park Walking Directions

### Start Point

Watson Mill Bridge State Park, **650 Watson Mill Rd, Comer, GA**, Phone: 706-783-5349. The main parking area on Watson Mill Road is the start point.


### Driving Directions

From downtown Comer, head South on GA 22 (Main Street) to Watson Mill Road. Left on Watson Mill Road to the Park. After crossing the covered bridge, right into the main parking area where the Start Point is located - 650 Watson Mill Road, Comer, GA

### Restrooms

Public Restrooms available adjacent to the parking lot.

### Emergency Numbers

	In Case of emergencies dial 911 Event related assistance Harold Weber 904-704-8402 or Marie Weber 904-703-8403
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### Walking Instructions

These walk directions and maps may only be used in conjunction with a signed American Volkssport Association athletic waiver. All other uses are prohibited.



## Southeast Striders

Watson Mill Bridge State Park Walk 6k / 11k ©

1. Enter the trail from the parking lot on the opposite end from the playground and walk toward the shoals ahead.
2. From the asphalt walkway, turn LEFT at the **River Trail sign** for the 2 ½ mile Loop.
3. Walk straight ahead on the main trail.
4. At observation path, feel free to walk down on your right and view the meadow.
5. Return to the main trail taking either fork.
6. Check the brook observation on your right at the next fork off the main trail. Return to the main trail.
7. At the “T” near the shoals, walk RIGHT returning to the **River Trail**.
8. Do not walk on the shoals.
9. At asphalt trailhead walk RIGHT on asphalt back to parking lot and restrooms ahead.
10. Exit restrooms and bear right to exit the parking lot. Cross the street at stop sign.
11. At wooden rail ahead, walk LEFT to the Camp, Bike, Hike Parking lot ahead.
12. RIGHT into parking lot. Enter **Beaver Creek Trail** 1 ½ mile Loop to the right.
13. Walk RIGHT at first fork.
14. Walk RIGHT again at second fork.
15. At **Beaver Creek Loop Trail End**, turn RIGHT onto the asphalt.
16. Walk past the picnic tables and beyond to the unpaved path ahead.
17. Cross the wooden bridge and turn RIGHT.
18. At the “Y” walk straight ahead
19. At the “T” turn RIGHT.
20. At wooden bridge, walk straight ahead and do not cross the wooden bridge.
21. When you see the **Watson Mill Covered Bridge** ahead, bear LEFT to cross the creek on the footbridge.
22. Walk through the covered bridge staying on the right.
23. LEFT at the next paved street toward **Tent & Trailer Campground**,
24. LEFT at the steps toward the shoals.
25. RIGHT onto the paved path behind the concession shed.
26. LEFT to wooden bridge and **Nature Trails**.
27. **Photo OP!** Check out the observation point on the left.
28. Continue on the wooden bridge to the unpaved path alongside the canal bed. Keep canal on your right.
29. Walk **CAUTIOUSLY** on the ridge along the canal bed. Stay on the path.
30. Cross the bridge at the waterfall.
31. Walk LEFT and follow the **South Fork River Trail** (eventually to “**Campground**”).
32. Follow the sign to the Campground.
33. RIGHT at the “T” and go uphill.
34. Right again at the next “T” and go uphill.
35. At the campground gates, enter to the right.
36. Restrooms are available ahead on your left.
37. Pass campsite **#21**, enter the trail to the **Visitor Center** on your right.
38. LEFT onto **Holly Trees Trail** at “T”.
39. Follow path to covered bridge keeping canal bed on the right.
40. Photo op at deck on your right.
41. Follow paved path past the concession shed to the historic marker ahead.
42. Walk to the covered bridge and through it staying on the right.
43. RIGHT onto paved path toward shoals. Do not walk on shoals.
44. Pass the picnic shelter on left and walk LEFT uphill on paved path to parking lot/Finish.



## **Southeast Striders**

Watson Mill Bridge State Park Walk 6k / 11k ©

This walk was created by  
Certified AVA Trailmasters  
Southeast Striders Walking Club  
POC Marie and Harold Weber  
904 703-8403 or 904 704-8402  
Thank you for walking our walk!



## Southeast Striders

Watson Mill Bridge State Park Walk 6k / 11k ©

1. Enter the trail from the parking lot on the opposite end from the playground and walk toward the shoals ahead.
2. From the asphalt walkway, turn LEFT at the **River Trail sign** for the 2 ½ mile Loop.
3. Walk straight ahead on the main trail.
4. At observation path, feel free to walk down on your right and view the meadow.
5. Return to the main trail taking either fork.
6. Check the brook observation on your right at the next fork off the main trail. Return to the main trail.
7. This is the end of the 2 ½ mile loop. At River Trail sign, (Restrooms are on the RIGHT of the parking lot).
8. 6K walkers will break away from 11k at this point and walk toward the covered bridge.
9. Stay on left side of bridge
10. Walk through the covered bridge staying on the left.
11. LEFT at the next paved street toward "**Tent & Trailer Campground**".
12. LEFT at the steps toward the shoals.
13. RIGHT onto the paved path behind the concession shed.
14. LEFT to wooden bridge and **Nature Trails**.
15. Photo OP! Check out the observation point on the left.
16. Continue on the wooden bridge to the unpaved path alongside the canal bed. Keep canal bed on your right.
17. Walk **CAUTIOUSLY** on the ridge along the canal bed. Stay on the path.
18. Cross the bridge at the waterfall and power house ruins.
19. At the "T" and historic kiosk, walk RIGHT; follow **Nature Trails** sign, keeping canal on the right.
20. Bear RIGHT on the trail staying close to the canal.
21. Follow path toward the covered bridge keeping canal on the right.
22. **Photo op** again at the deck on your right.
23. Follow paved path past the concession shed to the **historic marker** ahead.
24. Walk to the covered bridge and through it staying on the right.
25. RIGHT onto paved path toward shoals. Do not walk on shoals.
26. Pass picnic shelter on left and walk LEFT uphill on paved path to parking lot/Finish.

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Thank you for walking our walk!



## Southeast Striders

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### POINTS OF INTEREST

Of course, the historic Watson Mill Covered Bridge is the centerpiece of the park.



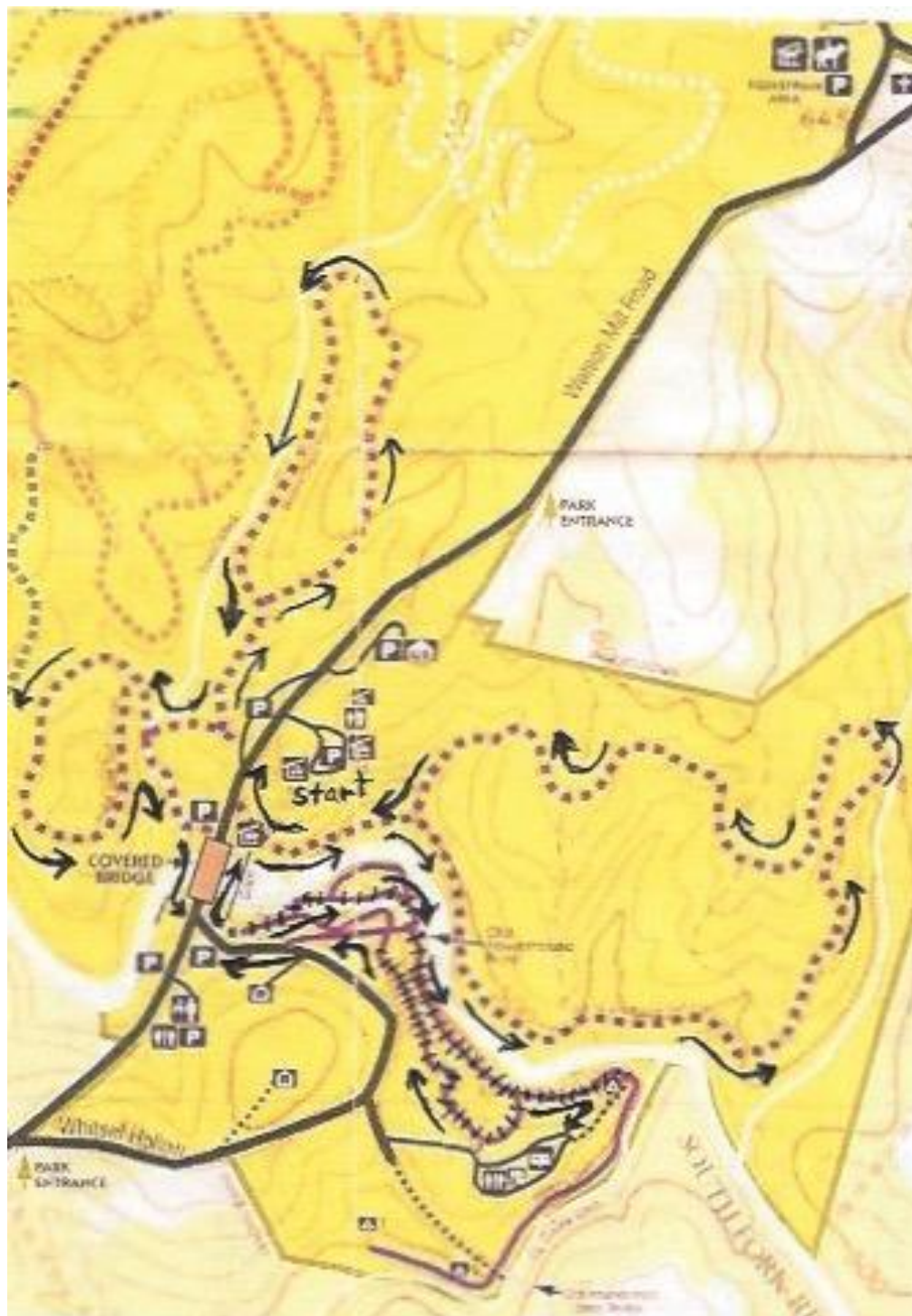
In addition, there are the 100-year old remains of a power generation station using water from the Broad River that you will see along the walk. Be sure to read the signs depicting the use of the power plant and an adjacent community that is now defunct.



## Southeast Striders

Watson Mill Bridge State Park Walk 6k / 11k ©

## Watson Mill State Park Map





## **Southeast Striders**

Watson Mill Bridge State Park Walk 6k / 11k ©



## ***Southeast Striders Walking Club, Inc.***

**Watson Mill Bridge State Park**

**2024 Special Programs**

### **Special Programs**

**Centurion Achievement Challenge, Walking USA A-Z, Walking the United States (50 States)**



## ***Southeast Striders Walking Club, Inc.***

### **Listing of YRE's And Traditional Events**

**North Oconee River Greenway – Sandy Creek Nature Center**

**Athens Sampler**

**Watkinsville**

**Watson Mill Bridge State Park**