

Watson Mill Bridge State Park 5/11K Walk Y2420 ©2019

The UpState PathFinders Volksmarch Club of Greenville, SC, is the only South Carolina member of AVA: America’s Walking Club. We welcome you to our Watson Mill Bridge State Park 5/11k Year-Round Event (YRE) and thank you for taking interest in one of our walks. 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.

Walk Registration:

Please use the online start box provided by the California Volkssport Association website (www.cva4u.org). Follow the left side link, 'Online Start Box', and the instructions provided to sign a waiver and register for this event. Payments for event credit and directions use Paypal. The directions and insert cards are PDFs that you can download and print as needed. The POC does not provide event directions or accept alternate payment methods. The entire online process should take less than 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 “Maps / Finish” 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” start cards that you may later choose to print out.

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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

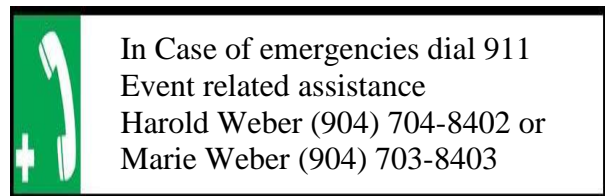
From **Athens**, GA: (34 min., 21.5 mi.)

1. North on N. Lumpkin St. toward E. Clayton St. (0.23 mi.)
2. **Right** on E Dougherty St. (0.28 mi.)
3. **Left** on North Ave. (1.26 mi.)
4. North Ave. becomes Danielsville Rd./GA-106 (.75 mi.)
5. **Right** on Hull Rd/GA-72. (9.09 mi.)
6. **Right** on S. 4th St. (0.38 mi.)
7. **Left** on E. 8th Ave. (0.25 mi.)
8. E. 8th Ave. becomes Simthonia Colbert Rd. (1.81 mi.)
9. Smithonia Colbert Rd becomes Smithonia Rd. (1.12 mi.)
10. Left on Collier Church Rd/County Hwy-3. (3.20 mi.)
11. Collier Church Rd/County Hwy-3 becomes Watson Mill Rd. (3.17 mi.)
12. Destination on the right. 650 Watson Mile Rd.

Restrooms

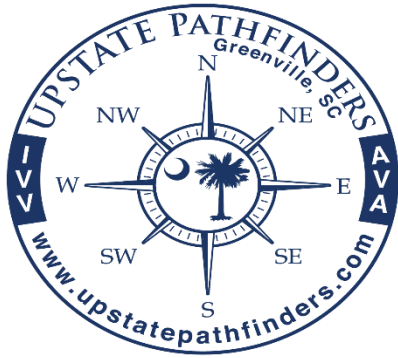
Public Restrooms available adjacent to the parking lot.

Emergency Numbers



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.



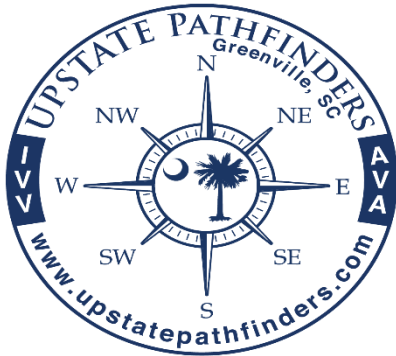
(5K Walkers directions on next page)
11K Walkers

1. Enter the trail from the parking lot on the opposite end from the playground and walk toward the shoals ahead.
2. **Left** at the trailhead, from the asphalt walkway, for the 2 ½ mile loop.
3. Continue straight on the main trail. (At the Observation Path, feel free to walk down on your right and view the meadow, then return to the main trail taking either fork).
4. Check the Brook Observation on your right at the next fork off the main trail. Return to the main trail.
5. **Right** at “T” or dead end of the loop near the shoals returning to the trailhead.
Please do not walk on the shoals.
6. **Right** at asphalt trail start/finish to parking lot and restrooms ahead.
7. Exit the parking lot passing the portable guard shack, then cross the street.
8. **Left** at the wooden rail, on path to the parking lot.
9. **Right** at Beaver Creek Trail 1 ½ mile Loop.
10. **Right** at first fork.
11. **Right** at second fork.
12. Right on asphalt at Beaver Creek Loop Trail End.
13. Walk through the picnic area to the unpaved path.
14. **Right** after crossing wooden bridge.
15. **Right** at “T”.
16. Continue to wooden bridge, Watson Mill Covered Bridge.
17. **Left** at footbridge to cross creek, do not cross the wooden bridge.

18. Walk through the bridge staying on the right.
19. **Left** at the next paved street toward “Tent & Trailer Camping”.
20. **Left** at the steps toward the shoals.
21. **Right** at the paved path behind the concession shed. (Stay on the left of the shed).
22. **Left** to wooden bridge and Nature Trails. (Photo OP! Check out the observation point on the left).
23. Continue along the trail to the unpaved path, keeping the canal on your right. (Use caution along the canal and stay on the path).
24. Cross the bridge at the water fall.
25. **Left** at the South Fork River Trail and follow sign to the campground.
26. **Right** at the “T” and go uphill.
27. **Right** again at the next “T” and go uphill.
28. At the campground gates, enter to the right.
29. Restrooms are available ahead on your left.
30. Pass campsite #21, enter the trail to the Visitor Center on your right.
31. **Left** at “T”/ Holly Trees Trail.
32. Follow path to covered bridge keeping canal on the right. (Photo op at deck on your right).
33. Follow paved path past the concession shed to the historic marker ahead.
34. Walk to the covered bridge and through it staying on the right.
35. **Right** onto paved path toward shoals. (**Please do not walk on shoals**).
36. **Left** after the picnic shelter, continue uphill on paved path to parking lot/Finish

End of Walk

Thank you for your interest in our walk. Please contact us at www.upstatepathfinders.com and tell us about our walk or to find out information on any of our other walks



5K Walkers

1. Enter the trail from the parking lot on the opposite end from the playground and walk toward the shoals ahead.
2. **Left** at the trailhead, from the asphalt walkway, for the 2 ½ mile loop.
3. Continue straight on the main trail. (At the Observation Path, feel free to walk down on your right and view the meadow, then return to the main trail taking either fork).
4. Check the Brook Observation on your right at the next fork off the main trail. Return to the main trail.
5. **Right** at “T” or dead end of the loop near the shoals returning to the trailhead.
Please do not walk on the shoals.
6. **Right** at asphalt trail start/finish to parking lot and restrooms ahead.
7. Continue towards the covered bridge.
8. Stay on left side of bridge
9. Walk through the bridge staying on the left.
10. **Left** at paved street toward “Tent & Trailer Camping”.
11. **Left** at the steps toward the shoals.
12. **Right** at the paved path behind the concession shed. (Stay on the left of the shed).
13. **Left** to wooden bridge and Nature Trails.
(Photo OP! Check out the observation point on the left).
14. Continue along the trail to the unpaved path alongside the canal. Keep canal on your right.
15. Walk cautiously on the ridge along the canal. Stay on the path.
16. Cross the bridge at the waterfall and power house ruins.
17. **Right** at the historic kiosk, follow Nature Trails sign, keeping canal on the right.
18. **Right** on the trail staying close to the canal.
19. Follow path toward the covered bridge keeping canal on the right. (Photo op again at the deck on your right).
20. Follow paved path past the concession shed to the historic marker ahead.
21. Walk to the covered bridge and through it staying on the right.
22. **Right** at paved path toward shoals. (Please do not walk on shoals).
23. **Left** after picnic shelter uphill on paved path to parking lot/Finish.

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.



UpState PathFinders
Watson Mill Bridge
5/11K © 2019

**The UpState PathFinders
Watson Mill Bridge
2019 Special Programs
(1-2-2019)**

Special Program

Locations

Walking the USA A - Z

C – Comer

**UpState PathFinders
Listing of YRE's
And Traditional Events**

Greenville Veteran's Day
5/10K
Traditional Event

Clemson Botanical Gardens
5/10k YRE

Historic Greenville
5/10K YRE

Columbia RiverWalk
5/10k YRE

Pickens Doodle Trail
5/10K YRE

Historic Georgetown
5/10K YRE
(OLSB)

Greenville City Parks
5/10KYRE

Lake Conestee Nature Park
5/10K YRE
(New Feb 2019)

Paris Mountain State Park
5/10K YRE

Furman University
5/10K YRE

Greenville – Country Club
5/10K YRE
(New Feb 2019)

Travelers Rest
5/10K YRE

Oconee River Greenway
Athens, GA
(OLSB)

Clemson University
5/10K YRE
(Re-opens March 2019)

Please see website www.upstatepathfinders.com
for more details on our walks or find us on
Meetup.com to join us on one of our upcoming
walks.