

White Mountains Natural Swimming Areas

North Woodstock Area

CRYSTAL CASCADE : This is a town park in North Woodstock. Pemi Brook tumbles a fair distance over a slideable or tubeable chute, over several small rapids, into a small pool. Another family / kids favorite. Very convenient to several restaurants, ice cream, & fudge place. (2 minutes walk to any of the above) Fairly warm water in afternoon. Suggest cutoffs or similar. Thin suits can get torn or frayed on sliding. To get there: On RT 3 just north of Kancamagus Highway intersection. Park at row of stores across from gas station. Find small arch over a footpath between laundry & other stores.

Franconia Notch State Park

ECHO LAKE BEACH :

At Echo Lake Beach visitors can enjoy the beauty of a 28-acre lake with an excellent view. The slopes of Cannon Mountain ski area drop right to the edge of the lake, and the view highlights where the Franconia Range and Kinsman Range meet, creating the notch. Echo Lake has a small snack bar, and canoe and kayak rentals. Echo Lake Beach is open from 10 am to 5:30 pm daily from June 15th to Labor Day.

Directions :

Take Franconia Notch parkway to exit 34C, which is RT 18. Go West on RT 18 and make a left turn into the echo beach parking lot at Cannon Mt.

Rates

Adults: \$3.00

Children 12 & under: FREE

Canoe/Paddleboat Rental: \$10/hour;

last boat rental - 4:30 pm.



BASIN / CASCADES AREA

Located at the BASIN REST AREA, On the Franconia Notch Parkway. Swimming in the cascade brook, a short walk up from the BASIN. From either direction on the Parkway, park at the basin rest area, and walk toward the Basin. Follow signs for the Basin-Cascades Trail, walk up about ¼ mile. The cascades and waterfalls that extend for a mile along the brook are also great fun to explore, offering a mixture of broad ledges, cool glens, and tempting pools. Altogether there are more than a half-dozen distinct levels of cascades and pools stacked along the ledge.

Crawford Notch Area (Along Route 302)

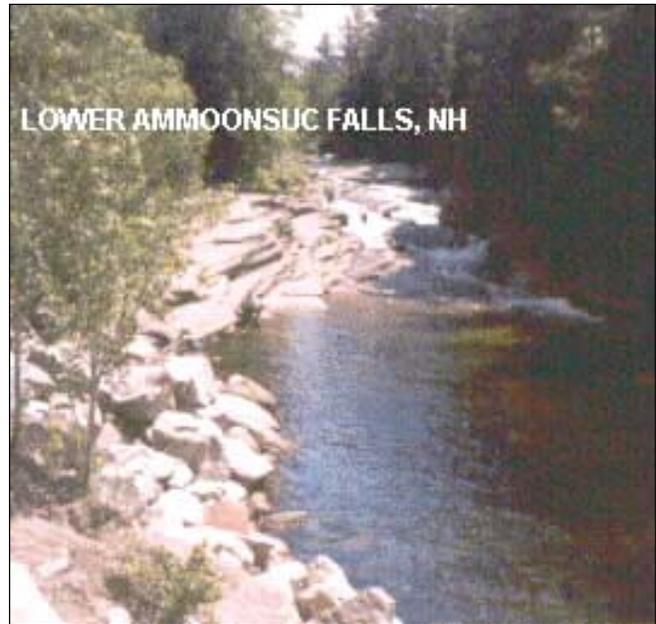
Lower Falls of the Ammonoosuc River

RT 302

LOWER AMMONOOSUC FALLS :

A small falls in the Ammonoosuc River into a very large pool makes for a fine family swimming place. Sliding place in falls, rocks to sun and jump.

Directions : Continue on RT 302 about 3.5 miles beyond Twin Mountain to the street sign on the left for Old Cherry Mtn. Rd. and the sign for "Lower Ammonoosuc Falls". Turn onto Old Cherry Mtn Road and turn quickly left again into the parking area. Walk about 5 minutes down the gravel road to the small falls and huge pool below.



SAWYER ROCK SWIMMING HOLE

This awesome swimming area is just off RT 302, on the north side of the road on the Saco river. Deep pools, cascading water, and cliff diving are available. There is a small sandy beach, and shallow area for youngsters. The full afternoon sun makes this a very warm swim, well into the late afternoon. An additional treat is watching the Conway Scenic Railroad “ **Notch Train** “ passing by every afternoon around 3 pm, accompanied by the usual train whistle and chugging locomotive.

Directions : From Bartlett take RT 302 west 2.8 miles past Bear Notch Rd. There is a small bridge that says "E2". Park on the right (north side) just before you cross this bridge. (There are often cars parked here.) Park and walk a short distance thru the woods north to the Saco River.

Bring beach chairs, a book to read, some sun screen, even some tubes, and spend a splendid afternoon here. This area is not as crowded as lower falls.



North Conway Area

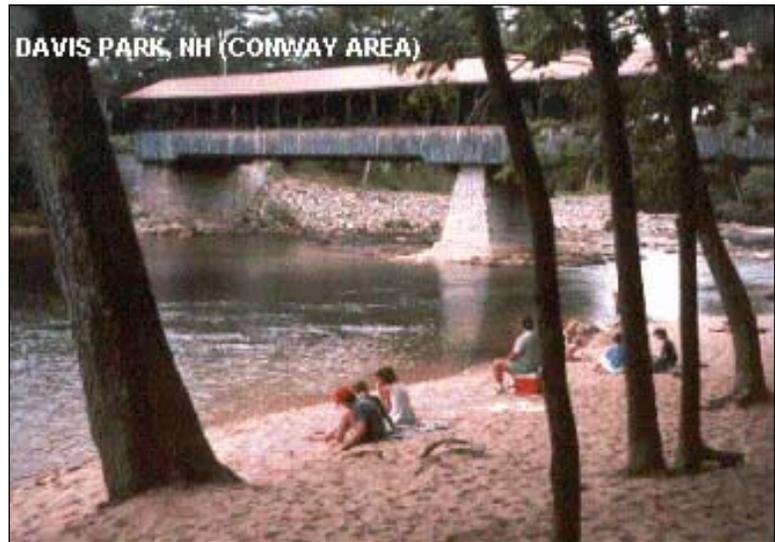
FIRST BRIDGE :

This is a popular local swimming hole by a bridge in North Conway on the Saco River-has a grass beach. No jumping from the bridge! To get there: As you leave North Conway, River Rd. crosses 2 bridges, one of these (the biggest) is "First Bridge" (or "First Iron Bridge") which is well signed. There are parking areas and swimming places at both ends of this bridge, as well as a canoe ramp.

DAVIS PARK :

This small park in Conway has a pretty, narrow beach on the Saco River just below a covered bridge.

Directions : In Conway, go north on Washington St. then east on Eastside Rd to the bridge over the Saco River (you reach the bridge pretty quickly, if not you took the wrong road). Cross bridge and park on right. The park and beach are here. Mostly shallow water, very sandy beach. Good afternoon sun makes this a warm afternoon swim. Great for small kids. You may even catch some Saco river canoes passing by



HUMPHREYS LEDGE :

Deep water swimming in the Saco River.

Directions : To get there: Continue north on West Side Rd.. Go roughly .6 miles past the Diana's Baths parking area to the Humphrey's Ledge Recreation Area. Park along side west side road.



Swimming Holes along the Kancamagus Highway (Route 112)

FROG ROCK :

(May also be known as "Big Eddy".) Small swimming hole up against a large rock on the Swift River. This is roughly about .5 miles west of the Loon Mountain billboard, coming from the Conway Area. There is a wooden retaining wall on the left (south) side of the road and a guardrail on the north side. Cars may be parked along the side of the road, no signs. Park and climb over the guardrail to a large rock over the Swift River. The swimming hole is here.

LOWER FALLS :

Quite possibly, the best swimming area ever. If it's a warm day, bring along a swimsuit and a bottle of sunscreen when you visit the lower falls swimming area. This spot is the closest thing to Coney Island that you will find in the White Mountains, complete with parking lot jams, changing rooms, picnic tables, and (small) sandy beaches. There are fast currents and foaming basins for thrill-seekers, as well as quiet eddy pools above and below the falls for tamer souls and small children. If you don't like crowds you may have to visit Lower Falls when the weather is less inviting. Whatever the timing of your visit, Lower Falls is a compelling sight. Here the collected waters of the entire Swift River basin surge through a maze of channels, slides, chutes, curtains, and spouts arrayed across a broad band of polished ledges and boulders. Though the river drops only 10 feet, you have a front-row view of panoramic cataracts and colorful rock gardens, framed by birch and conifer. The view ranges from lovely to thrilling depending on the level of the river, which rises and falls quickly after heavy rains. Across the river, Moat Mountain rises more than 2000 feet above the valley floor.



Directions : 26 miles From Lincoln, take RT 112, Kancamagus Highway East 26 miles. Make a left turn into the lower falls parking lot. If lot is full, park along Kancamagus highway ¼ mile past parking lot. Watch signs for NO Parking areas. Plan on arriving early.

This one is NOT to be missed.



EAST ROCKY GORGE :

After you pass the west entrance to Rocky Gorge going east on the Kanc, you will see the sign for the east entrance, says "Rocky Gorge Entrance .25 mile". Just past this sign on the Kanc, there is a gravel pull out area on the left (north) side of the road. This is a local swimming place where there is (apparently) no White Mountain N.F. parking permit required as there is at most of the other Kanc places.

ROCKY GORGE SCENIC AREA :

The Swift River has carved out slots in rocks. 24 mi from Lincoln. Signs say that swimming is permitted upstream of the gorge, you can swim legally anywhere except in the area below the bridge.



JIGGER JOHNSON :

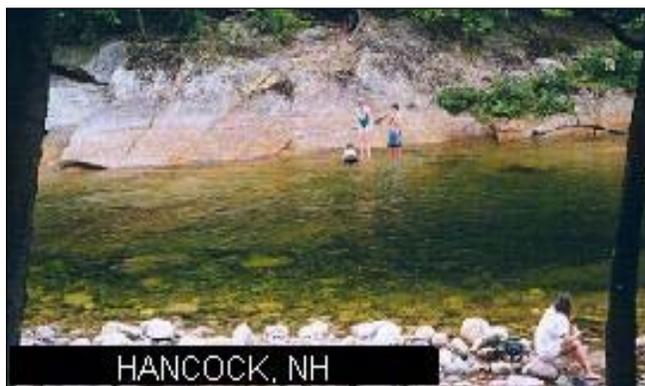
Swimming places in river at Jigger Johnson campground (signed). 22 mi from Lincoln. Park in the Jigger Johnson Campground and walk to river. There are two swimming locations here, both with signs that say "Swift River": One is across from campsite #60, the other across from campsite #49. The first is deep but has little beach, the second one is shallower but has a better beach; a better place for kids.

OTTER ROCKS :

Quiet swimming place in river near Otter Rocks roadside rest/picnic area. 8 mi from Lincoln. Park at Otter Rocks rest / picnic area and walk down to the river. Swimming place is here.

HANCOCK :

Popular swimming place in river behind Hancock Campground. May also be called "Upper Ladies Bath" 5.5 Miles from Lincoln. Park in the parking area after you get through the camping area. Walk back into the camping area to site # 47, look for sign saying "RIVER". Follow sign a short walk to the river.



LADY'S BATHTUB SWIMMING HOLE :

Behind the Riverfront Condo's, Lincoln NH. Deep swimming hole in the east branch of the Pemigewasset river.

From Lincoln, Head east 1 mile on RT 112, park in Riverfront condo's parking lot, behind Tennis Courts between Buildings "B" and "C". Walk down path to river.



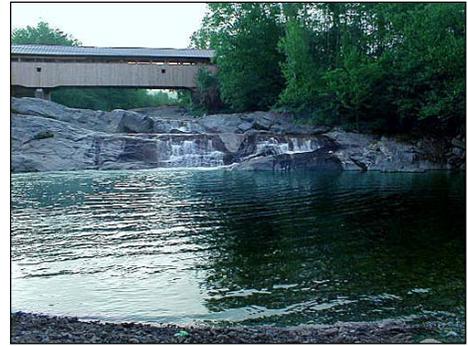
South / West of Lincoln / North Woodstock

Swiftwater Bridge Swimming Area

RT 112, Swiftwater, NH

Classic swimming hole under the swiftwater covered bridge. Shallow and deep sections, quite busy. Good parking, easy access

Directions : RT 112 west to the town of swiftwater. Make a right turn, cross covered bridge, then park on left side in gravel lot.



Flat rock swimming area, Thornton, NH:

Well hidden from the casual observer, Flat rock is a quiet, clean refuge from the heat. No cliffs or deep swimming holes but some interesting riffles to ride and great rocks for sunning. This is a good spot for young children because the water is not very deep in any location. Adults who like the more exciting swimming holes will find this dull by comparison, but if you want to get cool or sunbathe this is a great spot



Directions: Exit 28 of I93 to Rte 49 toward Waterville Valley. Proceed about 2 miles past the National Forest Campground and the Upper Mad River Road. 3 miles past the entrance to the Upper Mad River Road on the left you will see a small pulloff (perhaps with a car or two). Park here and walk in about 50 ft.

"The Swimmin' Hole"

Main Street, Rumney, NH

The Swimmin' Hole features great snorkeling, rocks for jumping and diving, a natural waterslide and a waterfall that you can swim under. The water is clean and clear, flowing down from spring fed Stinson Lake. Because the lake affords the opportunity for a bit more warming of the water than Sculptured Rocks, the water is not quite as cold - but it will still be a shock if you are use to a heated pool! For kids and the young at heart this swimming hole offers lots of fun and plenty of places to explore. Finally the beauty of the spot rivals Sculptured Rocks, a scenic and geologic wonder. This one is a must swim.



Directions: Rte 25 to Main St in Rumney, past the Village Store (stop and say hi to Pat & Peg Hannigan and get your picnic). The swimmin' hole is about 200 yards past the store on the right. Parking is difficult because the town has placed no parking signs around so here are our suggestions: ask permission at the Mary Baker Eddy Homestead where the friendly folks are often willing to allow people to park; or park at the church (not on Sunday mornings please), or the library, just across from the town common.