

Hiking Times

Walkers can estimate about 30 minutes per mile with the idea of taking time to enjoy the sites along the trail. With this in mind, the following point to point time estimates are given. Each segment offers scenic opportunities for experiencing the history and natural beauty of the trail.

Suggested Walks

- Roanoke Rapids Lake to Canal Museum: 45 minutes
- Canal Museum to River Road: 45 minutes
- River Road to the Aqueduct: 1 1/2 hours
- The Aqueduct to River Falls Park: 45 minutes

Trail Note: The trail from Roanoke Rapids Lake to the Canal Museum is generally flat; from the Canal Museum to River Road there are a few rolling hills; and from River Road to Weldon's River Falls Park is generally flat with some sections where users should be careful of exposed roots and rocks.

Trail Highlights

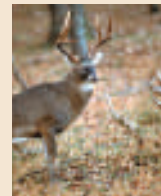
(Mileage begins at Oakwood Ave. Parking Lot)

- 1 (1.5 Mile) Roanoke Rapids Lake, constructed in the early 1950's, is used for electricity production and recreation. The original Roanoke Canal continues approximately two miles west under the lake.
- 2 (.4 Mile) An original culvert is located here for spring and natural drainage under the Canal. The culvert is made from stacked stone and a stone tunnel.



Roanoke Rapids Lake

- 3 (.7 mile) Rochelle Pond and Dam serve as a major storm water retention basin. It is also home to a variety of unique ducks and water fowl.
- 4 (.9 mile) Remnants of the massive bulkhead for the "Power Canal" are located on the left. The power canal was much wider and deeper than the navigation canal and was only 8/10 mile in length. The navigation canal (on the right) was about 9 miles long.
- 5 (1.5 Mile) The Roanoke Canal Museum, slated to open Fall 2003, will explore the rich history of the Canal and the Roanoke Valley. Locks used to lower loaded bateaux can be seen here.
- 6 (1.6 Mile) Just after the trail crosses Highway 48, there is another set of locks. A concrete flume ran from these locks likely in the early 1900's to operate a water-powered sawmill.



Wildlife on the trail



Roanoke Canal Museum

International Paper operates a Kraft paper mill just to the north. The mill, which was the first Kraft pulp mill in the country operating as the Roanoke Rapids Paper Manufacturing Company, started in 1909.

- 7 (2.9 Mile) A small bridge covers an old stone structure that may have been used for surge control for the powerful flood waters in the canal.
- 8 (3.1 Mile) A great neighborhood and pedestrian access to Woodland Road and Park Avenue, this segment is ideal for a morning or afternoon walk.
- 9 (3.3 Mile) The River Road Parking Lot/Access Point is an excellent location to enter the trail. Within 1/2 to 1 mile east are outstanding views of the mighty Roanoke River. Sightings of osprey, bald eagles, hawks, great blue heron, and other water fowl are common along the Roanoke. 1/2 to 1 mile west of River Road, the trail offers great opportunities to see deer, fox, and other wildlife.



Roanoke River

- 10 (4.3 Mile) The navigation canal was the "interstate transportation" of the 1800's. Modern transportation in the form of Interstate 95, intercepts the historic canal trail here.
- 11 (4.6 Mile) A spillway was constructed here to allow water to run from the canal back into the Roanoke River during floods.
- 12 (5 Mile) A pond created by gravel harvesting in the mid 20th century is visible here. Scenic vistas of the Roanoke River can be enjoyed at points along the north end of the pond.
- 13 (6.1 Mile) The Aqueduct Parking Lot/Access offers a beautiful lush lowland forest walk to the west and the Aqueduct and picnicking just to the east.

- 14 (6.25 Mile) The Aqueduct, just a 4 minute walk from the parking area, was built in the early 1800's to span Chockoyotte Creek. Best viewed from the observation deck on the south side, the Aqueduct is one of the best preserved examples of early 19th century canal architecture. Picnicking is available here at Edwin Akers Aqueduct Park.
- 15 (7 Mile) A Confederate graveyard is located in Weldon just south of the canal near this point. The Town of Weldon, once known as Weldon's Landing or Weldon's Orchard, served as a major railroad hub for the Wilmington - Weldon Railroad. Once known as the "lifeline of the Confederacy," remnants of the old trestles still stand today.



The Aqueduct

- 16 (7.8 Mile) River Falls Park/Access point is rich in history. The terminus of the Roanoke Canal eventually ended in a basin here and entered the Roanoke River just east of the rapids. Wooden locks were never successful here because of frequent floods, and thus were abandoned. Grist mills, an iron foundry, and two cotton gins used the old locks. In 1890, a large corn mill was constructed in this area, and is still standing. Today, a NC Wildlife Commission Boat Landing, River Falls Park, and an observation deck overlooking the massive Weldon Rapids are located in the area.



Weldon rapids



Legend

- 15 Point of Interest
- P Parking
- ▲ Mileage Marker
- ⛶ Picnic Area
- ⚓ Boat Landing
- 🚻 Restrooms