



Twelve Mile Creek

A 170-foot suspension bridge and the novelty of standing in two states at once. Pretty cool, right? But those aren't the only compelling reasons to visit Twelve Mile Creek, a Catawba River subbasin near the North Carolina/South Carolina border, about 45 minutes from uptown. Two conjoining Carolina Thread Trails border the creek, offering about five miles of mostly natural-surface, wooded hiking and biking options.

I recommend starting at H.C. Nesbit Park in Waxhaw. There, you'll find plenty of parking, restrooms (currently closed) and a connector trail to the Twelve Mile Creek Greenway--Town of Waxhaw segment.

The greenway trail is 1.4 miles (one-way) end-to-end, but the park entrance starts you about mid-way through. You'll find the trailhead at the back of the parking lot, just past the soccer and baseball fields. Follow the trail -- which for a stretch offers both a paved and gravel option -- south (veering straight/right) and continue on for about a quarter of a mile to find the suspension bridge at the state line.

This bridge is impressive. It's long and it soars over the creek. It's sturdy, but sways playfully. There's a well-marked spot where you can stand with one foot in North Carolina and the other in South Carolina. Even if you turn around here, you'll have gotten your money's worth from the outing. But I recommend journeying on.

Just on the other side of the bridge, the Twelve Mile Creek Trail--Walnut Creek Park segment begins. This is 3.5 miles (one-way) end-to-end. The trail is well marked with Carolina Thread Trail blazes and there are mile-markers every half-mile.

One of the remarkable things to me about this trail is how nicely it is tucked into a natural setting out of view of the surrounding development. There are some sections where you'll find yourself in open grassy meadows, in folks' backyards or at street-crossings. But, for the most part, this gently-rolling, natural surface trail is shaded and meanders through quiet woods along the banks of the creek. There are also a handful of boardwalks and foot bridges.

The trail ends at Walnut Creek Park in Lancaster, SC (10521 Walnut Creek Parkway), where you'll find a giant sports complex, playground and ponds with fountains.

In all, Twelve Mile Creek is a peasant destination, great for hiking and biking, with some fun, novel features thrown in.

Note: This area is subject to flooding after heavy rain.



How to get there:

To start near the swinging bridge, use the trailhead at 1304 H.C. Nesbit Park Rd., Waxhaw, NC, 28173. There's a map kiosk at the trail entrance in the back of the parking, just past the soccer and baseball fields.

©2020/Lauren Sawyers

Find more adventures at www.blazeCLT.com