

Hike 1 The Zoo Loop

Trailhead: 6 Southwick Street, Mendon, MA. Park at the Kiosk at the back of the Southwick Zoo parking lot. Follow the "Mendon Hike" arrows. (Approx. 1 ½ hours)

- Begin at the Zoo Connector Trail to Smokin' Joe Trail on the left.
- Continue on Smokin' Joe to the Taft Mill foundation.
- Bear left onto Mill Trail to Taft Trail.
- Turn right onto Taft and immediately take a left onto Split Rock Trail
- At end, turn left onto Taft and then take the first right onto "Quarry Trail."
- Continue to Rio's Run Trail back to Smokin' Joe and back to the Zoo Connector.



Hike #1 Zoo Loop

Park at the bottom of the zoo paved lot near the Town Forest kiosk. The trail head is just to the left of the kiosk.

- Proceed downhill on the Zoo Connector Trail (portions may be muddy depending on the season).
- Go Right continuing onto the Zoo Connector Trail.
- Follow the Zoo Connector Trail until you reach the junction of Rio's Run trail and Smokin' Joe Trail.
- Go Left on Smokin' Joe Trail (The trail was named after Joe the Chimp at Southwick's Zoo. His picture can be viewed in the waiting area at Galliford's Restaurant).
- As you gain elevation on Smokin' Joe, look for the glacial erratics that lie in the channel of Elephant Creek on your left.
- At the end of Smokin' Joe Trail, look to your Left to view the remnants of the Taft Shingle Mill.
- At this point you may want to climb the big rock on your right for a view of the surrounding forest. Go back down and continue the route.
- Proceed straight onto the Mill Trail.
- When you reach the end of the Mill Trail, you will be going right onto Taft Trail but first check out the stone culvert on your left; nice 19th century rock work under the path.
- After walking a short section of Taft Trail, turn Left onto Split Rock Trail. Look for the large split rock on your left near the end of the trail. Notice the drill holes that were used to split this stone.
- At the end of the Split Rock Trail, go Left onto the Taft Trail then right onto the Quarry Trail. Follow the Quarry Trail to Rio's Run on your Left. Along Rio's Run, look for a pit quarry on your left. It is believed that much of the stone for the Shingle Mill came from this site.
- Follow the "Hike Mendon" arrows along Rio's Run (Some sections of Rio's Run are not used for this hike).
- You will come to the intersection of Rio's Run, Smokin' Joe and the Zoo Connector where you originally turned onto Smokin' Joe. Proceed straight on Zoo Connector back to parking lot.