

Waterfalls



LOWER FALLS OF THE AMMONOOSUC: To view these falls, park in the lot .25 miles east of Zealand Campground on Route 302. At the far end of the parking lot a short path leads straight to the falls. Here the Ammonoosuc River flows down a long channel of granite shelves. The biggest drop in the river is not more than 3 feet but the overall effect is still quite beautiful. Handicapped accessible.

ZEALAND FALLS: Take the Zealand Road off Route 302 at Zealand Campground, 3.6 miles to the parking area. It is an easy 2.7 mile hike to the falls. Along side the Zealand Falls Hut, Whitehall Brook flows over the ledges creating cascades, waterslides, pools and channels - a great place for kids to scramble around. Find the main falls below the hut where the ledge drops two stories into a shady ravine.

BEECHER & PEARL CASCADES: Park at the Crawford Depot on Route 302 and follow the Avalon Trail to find Beecher Cascades. About 200 feet after crossing Crawford Brook, a side loop trail veers left for a short easy climb to the falls. Crawford Brook flows through a narrow channel, plunging 30 feet down a chute into a glen. Continue following the loop trail 0.1 mile to reach Pearl Cascades. At the back of a small gorge, water leaps 20 feet down a mossy headwall, crosses the gorge and slides into a wide pool. If caution is taken, waders can walk right up to the waterfall. Other nameless falls can be found along the streambed.

SILVER CASCADES AND FLUME CASCADES: These roadside falls can be found at the head of Crawford Notch 0.9 miles below Crawford Depot. Parking is available at either of two large lots on the opposite (west) side of US Route 302. Access is easy. Silver Cascades, on the west side of Mt. Jackson, is a series of falls that feeds the Saco River less than a mile below. It flows from one terrace down to the next into a bedrock chute under the highway. Take a short hike up the rocky ledge to view the lower falls. Much the same can be said for the Flume Cascades. The prettiest sections are higher up and can hardly be seen from the highway.

RIPLEY FALLS: Heading south, this trailhead is off Route 302 .5 miles past the Willey House on a short side road. Parking is available at the end of the road. Heading north, the side road is 1.8 miles north of Dry River Campground. Follow the Ripley Falls Trail an easy 0.6 miles. Avalanche Brook flows over a steep ledge 100 feet high and glides down over the orange-gray granite to a small pool at the base. A 20-foot high rock wall encloses the pool on the right. For better swimming holes, follow the trail to the top of the falls. A number of small cascades and shallow pools can be found upstream.

ARETHUSA FALLS: Coming from the south up Route 302 from Bartlett, turn left onto a side road just past the sign marking the entrance into Crawford Notch State Park. From the north, the road is on the right about 0.5 miles past Dry River Campground just before leaving the state park. Arethusa can be reached by following the easy to moderate trail 1.3 miles. It is the highest 'single drop' water-fall in New Hampshire at approximately 176 feet and is one of the most spectacular. At the end of the trail you are standing at the bottom of a bedrock basin. This is a scenic area; swimming and exploring are not recommended.

COLISEUM AND BEMIS FALLS: Two very small but pretty waterfalls can be found on the way to Arethusa. Coliseum Falls (0.5 mi.) can be approached either by the trail or up the streambed. It has 2 short drops; each separated by large flat rocks with a series of steps. The lower drop, only 4 feet high, has a wide horseshoe etched into the surface swirling the water into layers like tiers of a miniature coliseum. This is an enjoyable place for young children. Above is Bemis Falls which has 4 short drops with terraces and shallow pools. The ravine here is steeper and narrower and is more suitable for older children.

NANCY CASCADES: These cascades are a moderate hike 2.4 miles up the Nancy Pond Trail from Route 302, 6.7 miles south of the Willey House in Crawford Notch State Park. Step from the trail to the base of the first cascade and come to the edge of a large pool. Across the pool, Nancy Brook leaps down a steep bank 8 stories high and 30 feet wide. One can climb onto the base of the ledge and be under the waterfall. Four more cascades follow totaling between 300 and 400 feet of vertical drop.

JACKSON FALLS: Located in Jackson Village, this waterfall can be reached by taking the Carter Notch Road 0.4 miles. Parking is available at a dirt pullout at the top of the first hill. A maze of cataracts and pools can be found on this ledge of pink granite. The Wildcat River drops only a few feet at a time providing very large pools. The riverbed also contains potholes, tubs, slides and small showers. Swimming is allowed. It's not spectacular but is pretty and fun.