



Flowing to the River Quest

Norwich, Vermont

Physical Difficulty: Moderate

Special Features: Natural

Walking Conditions: Trail

Duration: 1 hour one way or 2 hours round trip

Bring: Field Guide, swimsuit

To get there: Take exit 13 on I-91 into Norwich for .5 mile. Take a left onto Beaver Meadow Road and follow for 1 mile. Take a left onto an unmarked road right before Brigham Hill Rd, and park in the parking lot at end. If you wish to park a second car at the end of the trail, continue on Beaver Meadow Rd. for 1.4 miles; there is a small pull off on the left, and trail signs for the Bill Ballard Trail system.

Clues:

Start by walking up past the pool
Where the water is fresh and cool
A pleasant place for a picnic and BBQ
And a place to sit and enjoy the flowing view

See the breached dam off to the right
Hurricane Irene came with all her might
A pool was once here for you to swim
But water has a mind of its own and normally wins

Into the trees, a while you will walk
Along the Charles Brown Brook that falls over the rocks
The road on the other side will remain in view
While hemlocks dominate and ferns blanket the ground, too

You will reach an area with many fallen trees
The trees are dead and produce no leaves,
But their spirit lives on as they decay

They help build the soil by recycling their nutrients for the trees today
Above the stream, be careful of the ledge and lose dirt
Knocking down soil harms plant life and aquatic species get hurt

Soon a clearing over-head appears
Transporting power to the houses that are near
Look at the pile of trees and debris across the stream
Another trace of that Hurricane Irene

A blanket of ferns covers the next clearing
Shaded by a thick canopy of conifers and deciduous,
the treasure you are nearing,
Look at the succession of the forest while you walk
Conifers become less abundant, such as our fellow hemlock
Deciduous trees such as the oak and maple
Start dominating the trail because they are able
From grass to bush, to conifers, to deciduous
This tells us about the distribution history
Of the stands which we walk through, so they aren't a complete mystery

Ahead, up and down, to the right is a waterfall created by humans
You can see what was once part of a dam
Now look up stream at the grasslands growing
The regeneration of a once flooded area is worth noting

Rock stairs lead you up and away from the stream
As it falls away from sight another brook teams
One of the many tributaries that into the Connecticut River does flow
To the Atlantic Ocean, is where that water goes
(Think of all the brooks, leading to all the streams, leading to all the rivers, leading to all of the oceans all over the world, and you will understand why even a little bit of pollution can cause a big mess if each brook was contaminated just slightly.)

Follow the trail as it twists through the trees and snares
Cross five bridges, and up the wooden stairs
While you go, look for the stone walls, a total of three
A result of farmers clearing land and felling trees

The trail straightens for a bit
And a vernal pool is off to the left in a pit
Many brooks come into view

But you want to find where one joins the two

A trail intersection will be just across this brook
Beaver Meadow Rd. is the direction you want to go
At the makeshift bridge, down the flowing brook you look
Two brooks converge into one, making it hard to measure
The trail to your right you must take to find the treasure.

The trail curves back up the hill.
What to the left covered in moss so green
Did storm or human bring down so still?
In between their cracks a treasure box can be seen.

Now back you go, the way you came
Or across the bridge to your 2nd car,
Or on toward a canyon so grand,
Another Quest to tame.

