




# Arbor Ridge Segment and Devil's Staircase Segment (Atlas Maps 73f, 74f)


## SNAPSHOT


 **Arbor Ridge Segment—2.1 miles:** Robert Cook Memorial Arboretum Upper Parking Area to N. Washington St. (CTH-E)


 At the Arboretum Outdoor Educational Lab area.


 From Marsh Creek.


 In the Arboretum near the Marsh Creek area.


 Hikers will not have any interaction with hunting on this segment.

 Dogs must be leashed (8-ft max) and under control at all times. **Dogs are not permitted in Janesville Parks May 15 to Sept. 15.**



 Small portion overlaps asphalt walkway in the arboretum.

 Robert Cook Memorial Arboretum trail network.


 Portions of this segment are suitable for those using wheelchair or similar device. In addition, there is a network of paved trails accessible from the Arboretum's upper parking area.


 **Devil's Staircase Segment—1.8 miles:** N. Washington St. (CTH-E) to Riverside Park South Pavilion


  At Riverside Park North and South pavilions.

  From the Rock River.

 Two ColdCache sites on segment.

 Hikers will not have any interaction with hunting on this segment.

 Dogs must be leashed (8-ft max) and under control at all times. **Dogs are not permitted in Janesville Parks May 15 to Sept. 15.**

 Small portions overlap golf course paths.

## TRAIL ACCESS AND PARKING

**① Robert Cook Memorial Arboretum Upper Parking Area Trail Access (42.70672, -89.07151):** From Janesville at the intersection of N. Washington St. and W. Memorial Dr., take W. Memorial Dr., which becomes CTH-A, west 1.9 mi. At the paved entrance drive for the Arboretum turn right and go north 0.4 mi. **Parking:** Adjacent to Trail Access.

**② N. Washington St. (CTH-E) Trail Access (42.71533, -89.05413):** **Parking:** Adjacent to Trail Access.

**③ Riverside Park South Pavilion Trail Access (42.70637, -89.03616):** From I-39/90 at Janesville, take Exit 171B and follow USH-14 west for 4.3 mi. At N. Washington St. (CTH-E) turn left and go south 2.5 mi. At Parkside Dr. turn left and go northeast 0.4 mi. **Parking:** Roadside.

**Additional Parking:** (i) Robert Cook Memorial Arboretum lower parking area. (ii) Arbor Ridge subdivision roadside parking. (iii) Riverside Park on Parkside Dr.

## THE HIKE

### Arbor Ridge Segment

This segment traverses an area of bedrock hills covered with till from glacial advances much older than those explored by most of the Ice Age Trail. It also crosses the Robert

Cook Memorial Arboretum-Janesville Schools Outdoor Laboratory, where trailside signage provides educational information on trees and local flora. The arboretum is a 160-acre City of Janesville park (managed by the Janesville school district) open to the public from sunrise to sunset.

Trail access begins at the upper parking area for the Robert Cook Memorial Arboretum–Janesville Schools Outdoor Laboratory (JSOL). Head under the JoLyn Beeman Memorial Trail Archway and into the heart of the arboretum property.

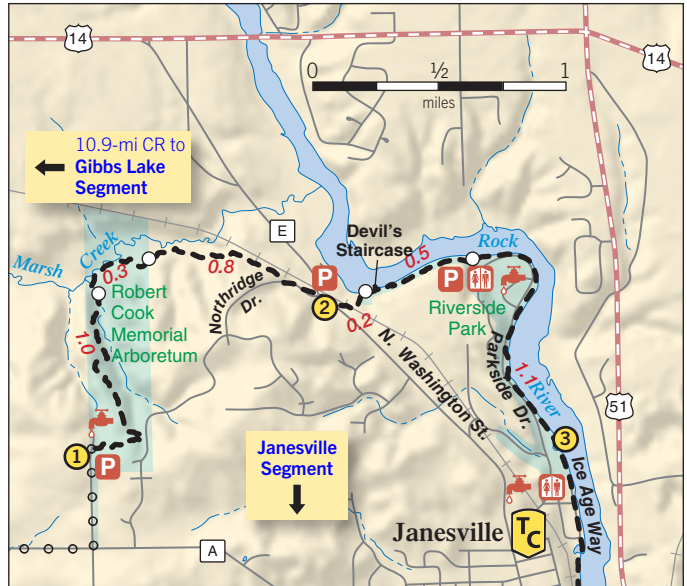
Turn off the paved path at the log cabin and enter the woods. The

Arboretum’s Outdoor Educational Lab area and buildings are visible through the trees. Several short spur trails offer access to them. Next, descend a long bedrock ridge to the valley floor lined with intermittent tributaries of Marsh Creek. Upon reaching a junction with the Arboretum/JSOL main trail, turn north and follow it for about 300 feet before heading east and climbing a ridge with beautiful views of Marsh Creek below. After a gradual descent, make your way to the edge of the Arboretum/JSOL property. Enjoy a large viewing platform overlooking a prairie full of flowers during the summer, pass under a power line, pass another information kiosk, and exit the Arboretum/JSOL property.

Bend away from Marsh Creek, hiking within a 30-foot-wide wooded easement granted to the Alliance for foot traffic only. Volunteers have worked hard to remove invasive species and open the mixed hardwood forest to views of magnificent oaks. Parallel an active railway to the northeast, then meet Northridge Drive, an Arbor Ridge subdivision road. Turn left and follow Trail signage east along Northridge Drive to the segment’s endpoint at the Ice Age Trail parking area across North Washington Street (CTH-E).

### Devil’s Staircase Segment

When the glacier was at the Johnstown Moraine, the present channel of the Rock River did not exist. Instead, a braided stream system covered much of the area, filling the deep valley with sand and gravel. As the ice began to retreat, drainage concentrated into a few channels that began to downcut the outwash surface. However, the erosion forming the Rock River channel slowed, and the channel widened as braided streams formed, carrying more sediment. Then, as the ice retreated from the Milton Moraine, the river



again became a single channel, flowing with greater erosive power, downcutting to its present level. These changes to the river channel created two levels within the riverbed called terraces. The City of Janesville's Riverside Golf Course occupies the lower terrace.

This segment offers remarkable views of the Rock River along a path built in the late 1920s by the Public Works Department as the City of Janesville was developing Riverside Park. During the intervening years, however, it deteriorated to the point where it became impassible. So, with cooperation from the city, golf course, environmental groups, local businesses, and dozens of local and statewide volunteers, the Ice Age Trail Alliance rebuilt the Trail with an emphasis on keeping the area as natural as possible. As a result, you'll enjoy outstanding views of the Rock River. Skillfully placed rock steps, blending into the landscape, take you up and down steep hills. A portion of the route incorporates and preserves stonework attributed to the original 1920s-era trailbuilders.

**From the Trail access at the parking area on the east side of North Washington Street (CTH-E), head southeast a short distance parallel to the road, then emerge onto the west end of the Riverside Golf Course property. Walk past a couple of the golf course's tee and green areas and cross railroad tracks. Be respectful of golfers when passing through this area: keep voices low and yield to those teeing off, hitting approach shots, or putting. Stay on the mulched pathway and off the grass.**

As you leave the golf course, you'll parallel a high-tension power line and enter a wooded area. Soon you'll descend a steep switchback into the natural feature known as the Devil's Staircase. This area features a huge gully (usually dry) descending from the golf course across the Trail to the river. Large rocks line the gully, appearing to have been purposely placed as steps, explaining the segment's name.

Depart the gully and continue to the shore of the Rock River, where you'll ascend into the wooded area between the golf course and the river. On the uphill (south) side of the Trail, you will soon encounter carbonate calcareous rock faces, some rising to 50 feet above the Trail. Numerous cliff-dwelling plants and woodland wildflowers highlight this portion of the segment.

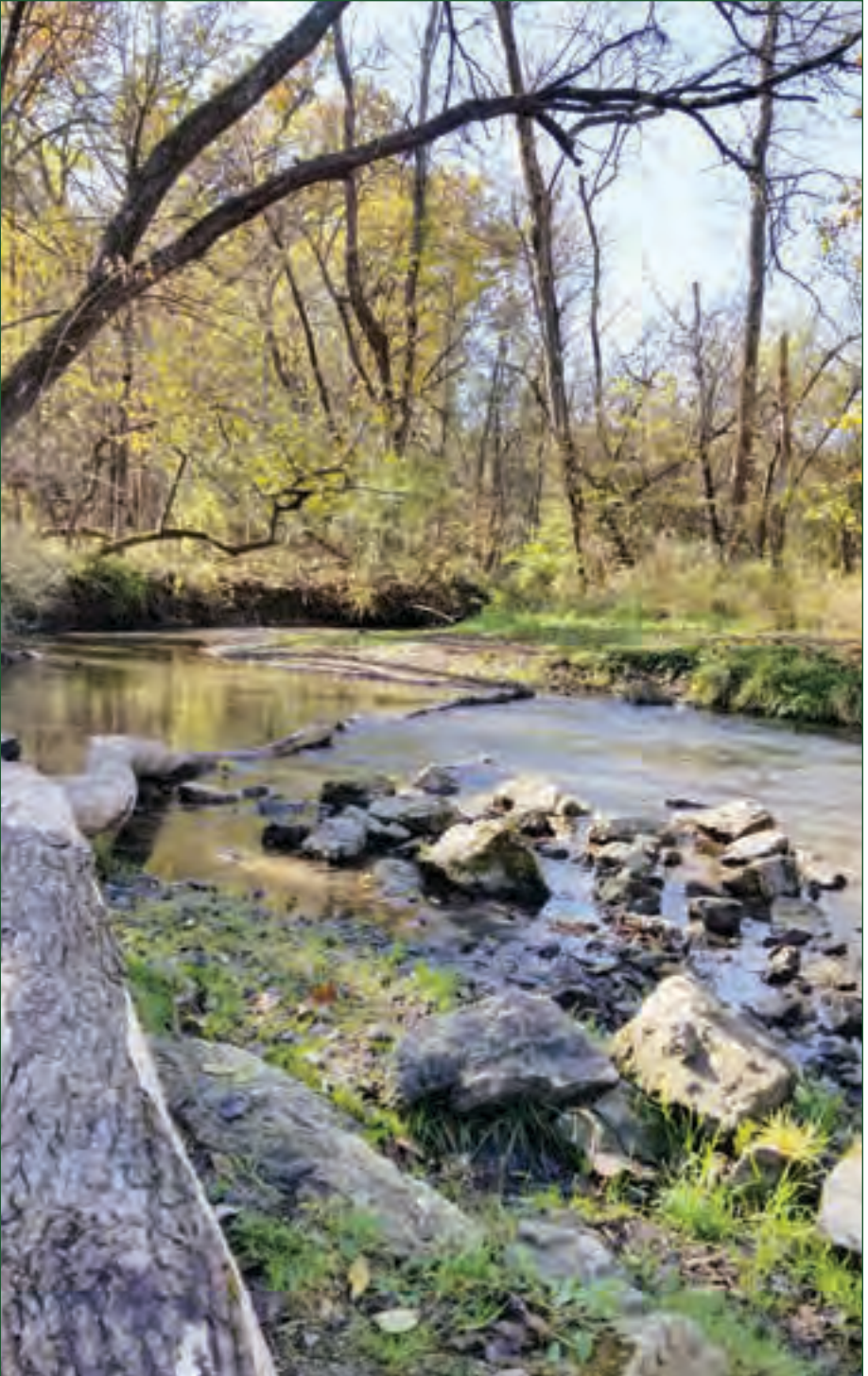
At a hand-crafted stone bench, you'll leave the wooded area by descending a steep set of hand-made steps and arrive at Riverside Park's North Pavilion area. From here to the segment's endpoint at the park's South Pavilion, you'll hug the Rock River's shoreline, generally sticking to the thin strip of land between the river and Parkside Drive.

## AREA SERVICES



**Janesville:** See [Janesville Segment, p. 266](#). From the N. Washington St. (CTH-E) Trail access go south into the city.

**Evansville:** See [Evansville Segment, p. 258](#). From the N. Washington St. (CTH-E) Trail access go north 1.3 mi. At USH-14 go west 12.5 mi.



MEG TURVILLE-HEITZ

*Arbor Ridge Segment: A serene view of Marsh Creek.*