

2.Mission Creek Parkway Route



First view of Mission Creek from bridge #1, First photo spot

Highlights: This trail was intended to be an extension of the skyline parkway, which ends at Beck's Road. There are **several stone bridges** along this trail, which serve as crossings of Mission Creek. A long downhill leads you to the **Mission Creek Valley** and the stone bridges. As you come down the hill, you feel like you're in a primeval forest from long ago.

Parking and Directions:

From 35W take the **Midway Road exit and head south**. Midway soon turns into **Beck's Road** and **begin looking for the Frederick Rodney Paine Forest Preserve sign on your right**. From the parking lot, head down the gravel road crossing the railroad bridge and Munger Trail Bridge. From there head down the dirt pathway straight down the hill.



Parking lot sign on Becks Road

Distance: Down and back 4.7 miles

Difficulty: moderate

Recommended for: most hikers



The Route:

Mile 1: Once you reach the dirt pathway, it descends down a long hill through a mixed forest. In May expect to see wildflowers all along the trail, especially yellow, blue and purple violets. At about **two thirds of a mile**, you will cross the **first of five stone bridges** and **photo spot #1**. **Bridge two** shows up but it is hard to get a good photo at this spot. Just before **a mile** there is a **pretty stretch where you can see the river down below you to your right**. **Ferns and wildflowers cover the area between the trail and the river. This is photo spot #2**. Just past a mile you will cross bridge number three. **Each bridge switches the creek to the other side of the trail**. Just beyond the third bridge look for the **Portage bypass trail** that avoids having to cross the creek three times. If you want adventure go ahead and keep going straight to the creek.

Mile 2: After coming back to the main trail, you will come across bridge number four and photo spot # 4. At about a mile and two thirds, you will come to the last stone bridge and photo spot #5. Once past the bridge, the trail heads upland on a long climb. At the end of the climb is highway 210 in Jay Cooke State Park.

Mile:3 You take the long downhill back into the Mission Creek Valley. You will cross bridges five and four before finding the sign for the Portage bypass route.

Mile:4 You will cross the other three bridges on the way back and then up a long hill to the parking lot. Just before I reached the parking area at the end of May, there were dozens of large leaf Trillium in the woods to my left.

(Just a little warning, this trail can get very muddy in early spring or after a heavy rain)



Portage bypass sign



Wild Roses in June



View from bridge three, photo spot #2



View from bridge four, photo spot #3



View from bridge five, photo spot #4

Extended Route: When you reach Highway 210 ,head to your right and find the entrance to the **Valley West bike trail**. This will bring you back to the parking area and add a couple of miles to your hike.

Family Friendly Route: I suggest hiking down to the first bridge and back. Further, depending how good your young hikers are. Head back east on Grand Ave. and stop at the Lake Superior Zoo.

After the hike:

This is a great hike on a nice day when the trail is dry. When done head up Beck's Road to either **The Buffalo House** [The Buffalo House | Duluth, MN \(buffalohouseduluth.com\)](http://buffalohouseduluth.com) or **Dry Dock Menu | Dry Dock Waterfront Grill** restaurants for beverages appetizers or lunch.

Strava Link

[JLMission Creek Parkway Route | 4.4 mi Hiking Trail on Strava](#)