

## Shallow Ford Natural Area History

### The Shallow Ford

Prior to the installation of modern bridges, the Haw River was a major barrier for travelers through Alamance County. The river could only be crossed by ferry, or at the few places where rocks and low water created a natural crossing, called a ford. The most popular ford in northern Alamance County was “The Shallow Ford,” located near this spot. The Shallow Ford became an important crossing for travelers, traders and soldiers in the 18th and 19th centuries. The first bridge across The Shallow Ford was built around by 1835. Over time, a small community called Shallow Ford arose near the crossing. The Shallow Ford Post Office was a short distance northeast of the park. This park is named in remembrance of the crossing and the travelers who used it.

### L.M. Gerringer’s Store and Mill

The land that comprises Shallow Ford Natural Area has been a center of commerce and community for more than 100 years. In late 19th century, Luke Gerringer erected a small grist mill on Basin Creek. The original mill was a traditional water wheel design. Remnants of the mill can be seen just downstream of the bridge on Basin Creek Trail. Around 1884, the mill was moved to this location near Gerringer Mill Road. The new mill was a turbine design, which utilized the fall of water to turn a wheel inside a vertical cylinder. The turbine turned a shaft which extended back to the mill, supported by cedar posts which are still visible. The mill complex contained grist mill, saw mill, cane press and an electric dynamo, which made power for some of the first electric lights in the area. After the turn of the century, the mill gave rise to a country store that sold general goods, and later gasoline, under the guidance of Luke Gerringer. A short walk up Basin Creek Trail is a stone cooler box in the creek on the right side of the trail. The box was used for cooling drinks and milk while waiting for purchase.

### Tickle-Gerringer Homestead

The Homestead Trail leads to former home of Michael and Hannah Tickle, built in the early 1800s. The house and land remained in the family well into the 20th century, occupied by Michael and Hanna’s descendants including John H. Gerringer and Elizabeth Waynick. John Gerringer was a Civil War veteran who served in the 13th North Carolina Infantry and was injured at Chancellorsville. The remnants of the home are still visible from the Homestead Trail, including the stone chimney, hand dug well and root cellar. Another depression nearby indicates the location of the “ice house” used for storing large blocks of ice pulled from the Haw River in winter.

## Park Rules and Regulations

### Park Hours: Sunrise to Sunset

This park is owned by the State of North Carolina and operated by the Alamance County Recreation and Parks Department. For questions please call: (336) 229-2410.

Park rules are enforced by the Alamance County Sheriff’s Department. In case of emergency call 911.

### The following actions are prohibited:

- Possession or Use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs
- Use of Motor Vehicles Outside of Parking Area
- Littering or Defacing of County Property
- Possession of Firearms
- Solicitation of Any Kind
- Failure to Have Pets on a Leash
- Fishing from Boat Launch Area
- Parking Outside of Designated Parking Spots

### Please Practice Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics on the Trail

- Plan Ahead
- Stick to the Trails
- Bag Your Trash
- Leave What You Find
- Be Careful With Fire
- Keep Wildlife Wild
- Respect Other Visitors

### Camping Areas

Three backcountry campsites are available for paddlers or backpackers. Campsites have fire pits and tent pads. Drinking water and restrooms are available in the parking area only. Sites are available by reservation only. To reserve a camp site call 229-2410.

# Shallow Ford Natural Area



**A Part of the North Carolina  
Mountains to Sea Trail**

**[www.thehaw.org](http://www.thehaw.org)**



**Basin Creek Trail**     **Difficulty: Easy/Moderate**     **Distance: .75 Miles**     **Blaze: Orange**  
This .75 mile loop leads through mature forests and open fields to the site of the original grist mill constructed by Lewis Gerringer in the late 1800's. The trail returns along the banks of Basin Creek past beech trees and unique rock formations.

**Hidden Hill Trail**     **Difficulty: Moderate**     **Distance: 2.2 Miles**     **Blaze: Yellow**  
The Hidden Hill Trail travels through a wide diversity of habitats on its 2.2 mile journey. After diverging from the Basin Creek Trail, the trail winds through pine thickets of reclaimed farmland, revealing furrows left from decades of plowing. The trail then climbs to the highest point on the property at 679 feet before winding down the banks and bluffs of Plum Creek, where a rich diversity of plant life thrives on the north-facing slopes. The return leads past vernal pools and wetlands that are home to a variety of turtles, salamanders and frogs.  
Begin on Basin Creek Trail, the Hidden Hill Trail branches off at the .4 mile mark.

**Homestead Trail**     **Difficulty: Moderate**     **Distance: 2.2 Miles**     **Blaze: Blue**  
The Homestead Trail leads up Basin Creek to the Tickle/Gerringer Homestead. The site was originally the home of Michael and Hannah Tickle in the early 1800s. The rock chimney, hand dug well and root cellar are still visible. The trail returns along the Haw River, passing the site of the original grist mill on Basin Creek.  
Begin on Basin Creek Trail, the Homestead Trail begins across the bridge over Basin Creek.

**Shallow Ford Loop Trail**     **Difficulty: Moderate**     **Distance: 3.3 Miles**     **Blaze: Green**  
The longest trail on the park, the Shallow Ford Loop Trail combines elements of the all three trails to provide a complete overview of the park. The trail climbs up Hidden Hill Trail, winds down Plum Creek, and crosses Basin Creek on the northern end of the park. It then continues past the Tickle/Gerringer Homestead and along the Haw River, before rejoining Basin Creek on the return trip.  
Begin on Basin Creek Trail, turning onto the Hidden Hill Trail at .4 miles. At 1.5 miles, turn right, crossing the upper bridge over Basin Creek. At 1.9 miles, turn right again onto the Homestead Trail. After 3.0 miles, cross back over Basin Creek on the lower bridge and return via Basin Creek Trail.

**Haw River Trail/Mountains To Sea Trail**     **Difficulty: Easy/Moderate**     **Distance: 1.7 Miles**     **Blaze: White**  
The North Carolina Mountains to Sea Trail connects Clingman's Dome on the NC/Tennessee border to Jockey's Ridge on the Outer Banks. The Haw River Trail makes up approximately 50 miles of this cross-state trail from Haw River State Park to the Alamance/Orange County line. The Haw River Trail and Mountains to Sea Trail remain works in progress, with sections of natural trail connected by rural roads. In time, this section of Haw River Trail/Mountains to Sea Trail will be a seamless network of natural trails. Complete information about the Haw River Trail is available at [www.thehaw.org](http://www.thehaw.org). For more information about the Mountains to Sea Trail visit [www.ncparks.gov](http://www.ncparks.gov) and [www.ncmst.org](http://www.ncmst.org).

