

The Gorges of Cornell

Trail Map and Safety Information

Cascadilla and Fall Creek Gorges frame Cornell campus to the north and south—distinguishing the campus' natural beauty, while providing unique opportunities to study geology and the ecology of remarkably different habitats within and around the gorges. Trails were built for all of us to explore and enjoy the stunning gorge landscapes safely.

Along with their beauty, the gorges bring potential danger. The forces that shaped these unique landscapes are still at work. Rocks continue to fall from cliff sides and stream currents are strong, though they often don't appear to be.

Through the misuse of our gorges, many people have been injured or killed, but most of these incidents could have been avoided.

Use the maps and guidelines on the following page to explore Fall Creek and Cascadilla Gorges safely.

Cascadilla Gorge Trails

Please take notice that the Cascadilla Gorge trail from downtown Ithaca (accessible at Linn Street) to College Avenue is temporarily closed. Gorge pathways and railings have been severely damaged from the forces of nature, and are presently unsafe. We strongly urge visitors observe the posted trail closed signs.

The remainder of the Cascadilla Gorge Trail system upstream of College Avenue remains open to the public during temperate weather.

Trails along Cascadilla Creek follow steep, rocky cliffs, and forested slopes, providing a peaceful getaway in the midst of the bustle of Collegetown. From College Avenue to Linn Street in downtown Ithaca, the creek descends 400 feet, where the trail passes through a deeply cut gorge past several noteworthy waterfalls.

Fall Creek Gorge Trails

Fall Creek Gorge, with its forested and rocky slopes, extends from Triphammer Falls (at the west end of Beebe Lake), under the Thurston Avenue bridge and the suspension bridge near the Johnson Museum of Art, and past Ithaca Falls to a city park in downtown Ithaca. The gorge has six waterfalls, cascades, and rapids. Ithaca Falls is the most famous because of its enormous size: 150 feet high and 175 feet wide! The Cayuga Trail runs from Stewart Avenue along the southern lip of the gorge eastward through Cornell Plantations. Another trail begins on University Avenue directly across from the Johnson Museum of Art. This trail's steps lead down to the stream and also to a suspension bridge that provides a fabulous view of the gorge and downtown Ithaca.

"As a member of the City of Ithaca's Underwater Recovery Team, I have spent countless hours in the murky and unpredictable waters of Fall Creek attempting to recover the bodies of drowning victims. These waters are extremely dangerous and are filled with entangling debris. Several undercuts exist near the base of the falls, where bodies are typically recovered. Even as a highly trained, properly equipped professional diver, I wouldn't swim there if I did not have to recover a body."

—Sgt. Scott Salino, Rescue Diver, Cornell Police



Cornell Plantations

The Arboretum, Botanical Garden, and Natural Areas of Cornell University

Safety Guidelines:

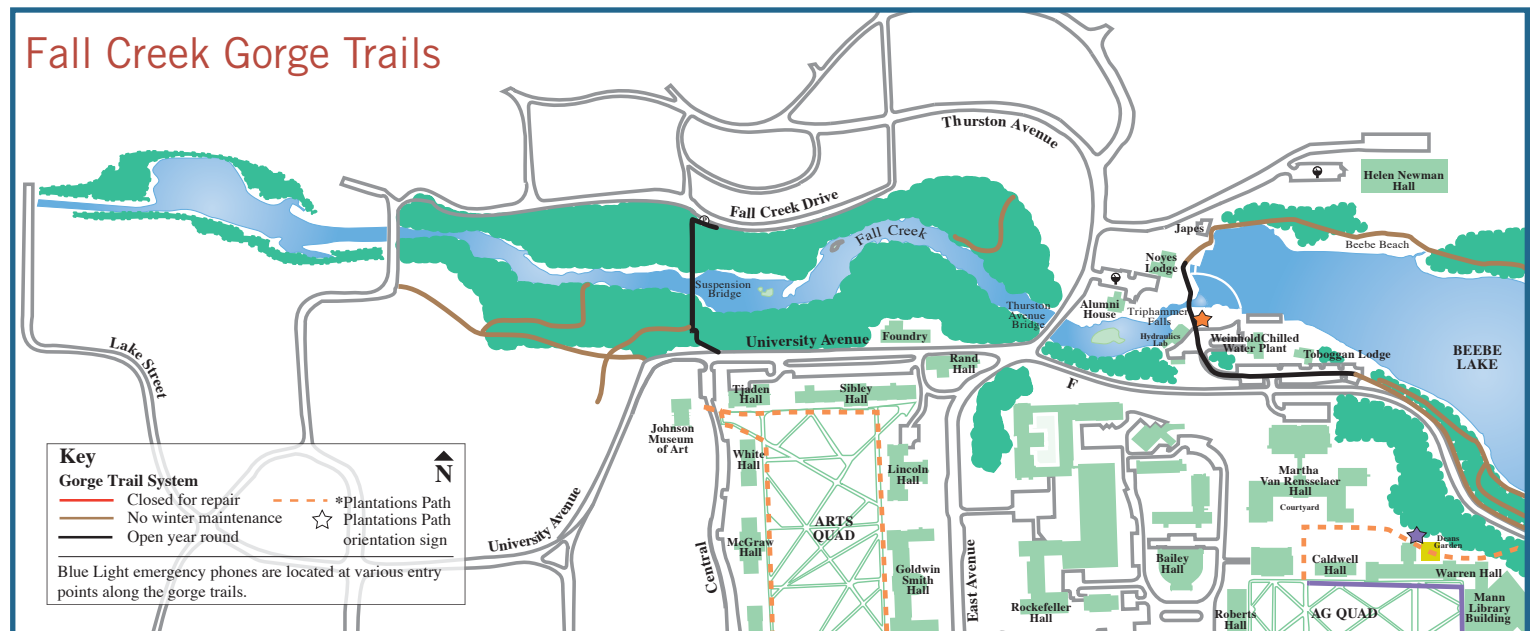
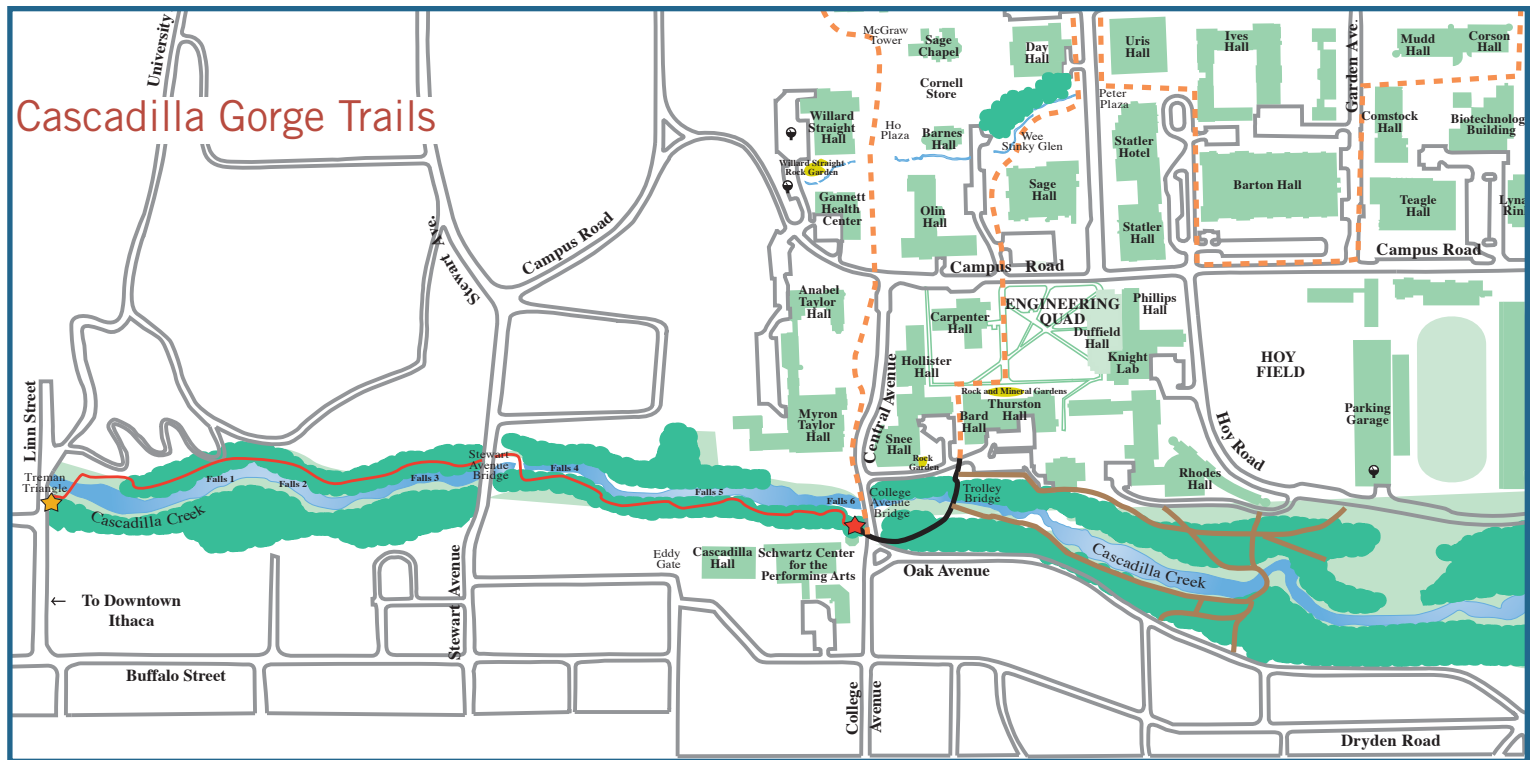
- Stay on the designated trails.
- Do not swim or climb in the gorges. *(swimming is illegal and people have died while swimming in Fall Creek Gorge).*
- Do not walk on closed trails.
- Do not hike after dark.
- Bicycles and skateboards are not allowed on the gorge trails.
- Do not kick or throw stones into the gorges.
- Avoid side paths that are not part of the Plantations trail system.

Violation of these safety guidelines may place you and/or rescue workers in danger.

Be aware of:

- Steep cliffs with no guardrails
- Loose stone on trails
- Falling rocks
- Slippery surfaces
- No lighting
- Turbulent water
- Fallen trees
- Uneven trail surfaces
- Isolated areas
- Some trails have no winter maintenance.

People have been injured and killed through the misuse of these natural wonders, but all of these incidents could have been avoided. Use of alcohol increases all of the dangers outlined in this brochure. Violation of these safety guidelines may place you and/or rescue workers in danger.



Key	
Gorge Trail System	
	Closed for repair
	No winter maintenance
	Open year round
	*Plantations Path orientation sign

Blue Light emergency phones are located at various entry points along the gorge trails.

*The areas surrounding Cascadilla and Fall Creek Gorges are part of 4,300 acres of natural areas, both on-campus and throughout the region, managed by Cornell Plantations in support of Cornell's academic mission. Some of the trails within the gorges are part of a trail system called the Plantations Path. You can purchase a Plantations Path Guide, which highlights all that is special about the Cornell campus, at cornellplantations.org or at the Cornell Campus Store.