The Nature Conservancy's
Lucius Pond Ordway/Devil's Den Preserve

The Mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.

A Patchwork of Habitats
Lucius Pond Ordway/Devil's Den Preserve is the largest contiguous nature preserve in southwestern Connecticut, with 5,190 acres of woodlands, wetlands, streams, rock ledges and rugged north-south ridges. Many of these ridges provide scenic overlooks of the Saugatuck Reservoir and picturesque vistas of the Saugatuck River. Devil's Den is a high elevation formation with a spectacular view, and Auberge Gothic, a picturesque stream and trunks with a rocky cascades.

A History of Devil's Den
Archaeological evidence indicates Devil's Den was occupied by semi-nomadic Native Americans as early as 1000 B.C. The overhanging rock formations were used as short-term shelters and hunting huts.

More recently, historical records tell us that David Adams sold the land to Nathaniel Squires in 1750. Squires is believed to have built an oscillating sawmill during the American Revolution. Its wood was used primarily to build homes for the colonists. The Squires later bought the pond, several acres from the Squaishe, and four successive generations ran the mill for 95 years.

The presence of stone walls and foundations suggests that some of the land in Devil's Den also was used for agriculture but farming was its primary industry from the early 1800's until about 1930. In the sticks and up about twenty years, charcoal was produced at as many as 30 sites throughout the preserve. The charcoal was used for many purposes, including fueling iron forges. When technology advanced, charcoal was no longer in such high demand, and this type of production ceased.

In 1956, Katharine Ordway, a local philanthropist, began donating the funds that enabled The Nature Conservancy to purchase the original 1,400 acres of Devil's Den. Today, the preserve is 2,190 acres and home to more than 4,000 visitors each year.

A Patchwork of Habitats

Some 20 miles of trails offer opportunities to visit diverse features including Godfrey Pond, a mill pond created in the 1700's, the Saugatuck Wildlife Refuge, an extensive dry valley reach along the West Branch of the Saugatuck River and the Great Lodge, a high elevation formation with a spectacular view, and Auberge Gothic, a picturesque stream and trunks with a rocky cascades.

An Oasis for Species

Biologically, Devil's Den is valuable because it is a part of a much larger, species-rich landscape that encompasses nearly 20,000 acres of continuous forest. The preserve is home to 145 species of birds, 23 species of mammals and 475 varieties of trees and wildflowers.

At Devil's Den, visitors can hike on blazed trails, try a semi-nomadic Native Americans as early as 1000 B.C. The overhanging rock formations were used as short-term shelters and hunting huts.

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