Take a Hike: A Trip to Windsor State Forest and The Jambs
(Windsor State Forest is unstaffed for the 2011 season)

I would like to invite you to take a hike. Not just any hike: A hike to one of the Westfield River’s headwater tributaries. Designated as a National Wild & Scenic River, The East Branch of The Westfield River connects natural, cultural, geological and historical features, within the towns of Huntington, Chesterfield, Cummington, Windsor, & Savoy. The Windsor Jambs were named for towering walls of granite rising 80 feet above the falls in a 25-foot-wide gorge. Surrounded by deep evergreen forests, a well maintained trail follows the safety fence from the top of the falls, with spectacular views down the gorge, to where it flows flat at the bottom. The stream drops up to 50 feet in some places, as it cascades through the narrow gorge. The trail along here is rated as moderately difficult, and may be slippery. Wear good shoes, bring water, a snack, and a jacket.

HISTORY
Windsor once had sawmills, a tannery, a scythe stone factory, a wagon shop and woodworking mills. Cellar holes, stone walls and a sluiceway are evidence of the small village of Babbittville that was built around an axe factory that started around 1852. A historic 1790 farmhouse and outbuildings are still located at Windigo farm. (N. American Indian name for an evil demon). Once a working farm, it became a summer camp for Smith College students up until the late 1980’s. The buildings, rumored to be haunted, were slated to be demolished on November third. However, they were still standing on November 6th.

http://www.berkshireghosthunters.webs.com/casefiles.htm

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES
The Massachusetts Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program identified nineteen species that are endangered, threatened or species of special concern within the town of Windsor. The list includes six bird species, one amphibian, two fish, three insects, and ten vascular plants. Atlantic salmon have been tracked upstream as far as Westfield Brook in Windsor, and could travel to other headwater streams as well. (www.westfieldriverwildscenic.org )

Wild waters cause rocks to mirror its flow and trees to grow with tenacity.

Headwaters of Westfield River
RECREATION

Fishing, hunting, hiking, picnicking, bird watching, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, and snowmobiling are all allowed within the forest.

(www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/western/windsor)

NOTICE
Windsor State Forest is closed for the 2011 season. There are no picnicking, parking or bathroom facilities available. Windsor is no longer a camping area. However, the parking lot for the Jambs is open from sun rise to sunset until weather conditions close it. Warning: Watch for Black Bear and Moose Never physically confront, feed, torment or throw anything at bears. Take appropriate precautions with food so as not to attract bears.

WANDERINGS
Why not make a full day of adventure?

Other outdoor activities within a few miles of the Windsor Jambs:

• DIRECTIONS Chesterfield Gorge is approximately eleven miles from the Jambs, with many more open trails, geological features and a two-hole, rustic toilet facility. (http://www.thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/pioneer-valley/chesterfield-gorge.html)

• Notchview Reservation (3090 privately owned acres), is towards the center of Windsor, just a few miles from the Jambs. Notchview has year-round trails, usually, a hot fire, bathrooms, and good company. (http://www.berkshireweb.com/trustees/notchview.html)

• Eugene D. Moran Wildlife Management Area (1147 acres), which has two miles of trails connected to the Windsor State Forest. (http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/maps/wma/westernwma/eugenedmoranwma.pdf)

• The Daughters of the Revolution (DAR) State Forest in Goshen, with flush toilets, trails, and campsites. (http://www.mass.gov/dcr/parks/western/darf.htm)

Or you can just stop by the old Windigo farm on your way out of Windsor State Forest.

FOOD
I prefer home-cooked food. So, whenever I come to this part of Massachusetts, I look forward to eating at the Old Creamery Grocery (www.hidden_hills.com/oldcreamery/). A country store atmosphere with a little bit of everything. The Creamery has fresh made sandwiches, soups, quiche, produce, baked goods, and other, often organic, choices. They buy local whenever possible, and promote a “green” lifestyle. The windowed dining area is clean and airy, and often filled with local gossip, and greetings. The restroom is clean, with a finicky lock. Also:

DIRECTIONS
1838 River Rd., Windsor
mailing address:
555 East Street
Williamsburg, MA 01096

Park Directions for Windsor Jambs: 42°28′13.06″N 72°55′57.81″W

I began at Chesterfield Gorge. Take a right out of the lot, then a right at the end of the road. At the stop sign, go straight across RT 143 onto Cumington Road, follow it to next stop. That is route 9. Take a left. The Old Creamery will be up a bit on your left. (bathroom & lunch). Take a left out of lot and follow directions below “From the East”. At Creamery, you are about 6 miles from Jambs. (It is 11 miles from Gorge to Jambs)

Windsor State Forest is located in the northern part of the Berkshires in western Massachusetts.

From the East/MassPike (I-90): Take I-90 Exit 4 to I-91 north in West Springfield. Follow I-91 north to Exit 19 in Northampton. Follow MA Rte. 9 west to for 27.8 miles to West Cumington. Turn right onto West Main Street, continue for 0.1 mile then take an immediate left onto River Road and follow for 2.9 miles to the day-use area entrance on the left, or campground on the right.

From West/Rte.9: In Dalton at intersection with MA Rte. 8, take MA Rte. 9 east for 11.3 miles to West Cumington. Turn left onto West Main Street; continue for 0.1 mile then take an immediate left onto River Road and follow for 2.9 miles to the day-use area entrance on the left, or campground on the right.

From the East and West/Rte. 116: Follow MA Rte. 116 to the village of Savoy. 0.5 miles east of the village center turn south onto River Road. Follow River Road for 2.9 miles to the day-use area entrance on the right, or campground on the left

Once in the park: Take a right onto Lower Road (up the hill). Take right onto Schoolhouse Road. The lot for the Jambs in immediately on your right.
Also, Check out this Link: Windsor Jams Tour.kmz (Ctrl, click to open)