



The Walkbook

SIMSBURY LAND TRUST





Acknowledgements

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About the Simsbury Land Trust

Simsbury Land Trust is a member-supported organization that protects the natural habitats, farms, scenic vistas, and geological features that visually define our town's character and contribute to a healthy environment. Our mission is to protect, in its natural state, land that has special conservation, scenic, or historic value. In most cases this means parcels of a size and with features that provide noticeable impact, or parcels that provide a buffer for — or extension to — land that is already protected for the same purpose. We accomplish this by acquiring land, normally through voluntary donations and state and federal grants, and managing land and development rights.

Simsbury Land Trust is governed by a volunteer board of trustees, an advisory committee, and two paid part-time employees. Each year approximately 700 member families make membership donations to fund operations to help care for our properties.

Since inception, we have concentrated on several land types:

- Ridgeline
- Wetlands
- Open fields
- Farmland
- Forests

This book features examples of each type. We hope that by walking these properties you will come to recognize or strengthen your conviction in the importance of land preservation. Each of these land types is rapidly disappearing from our landscape. Some observers point out that change is a natural occurrence and that the town's natural environment has changed dramatically since the first colonials arrived.

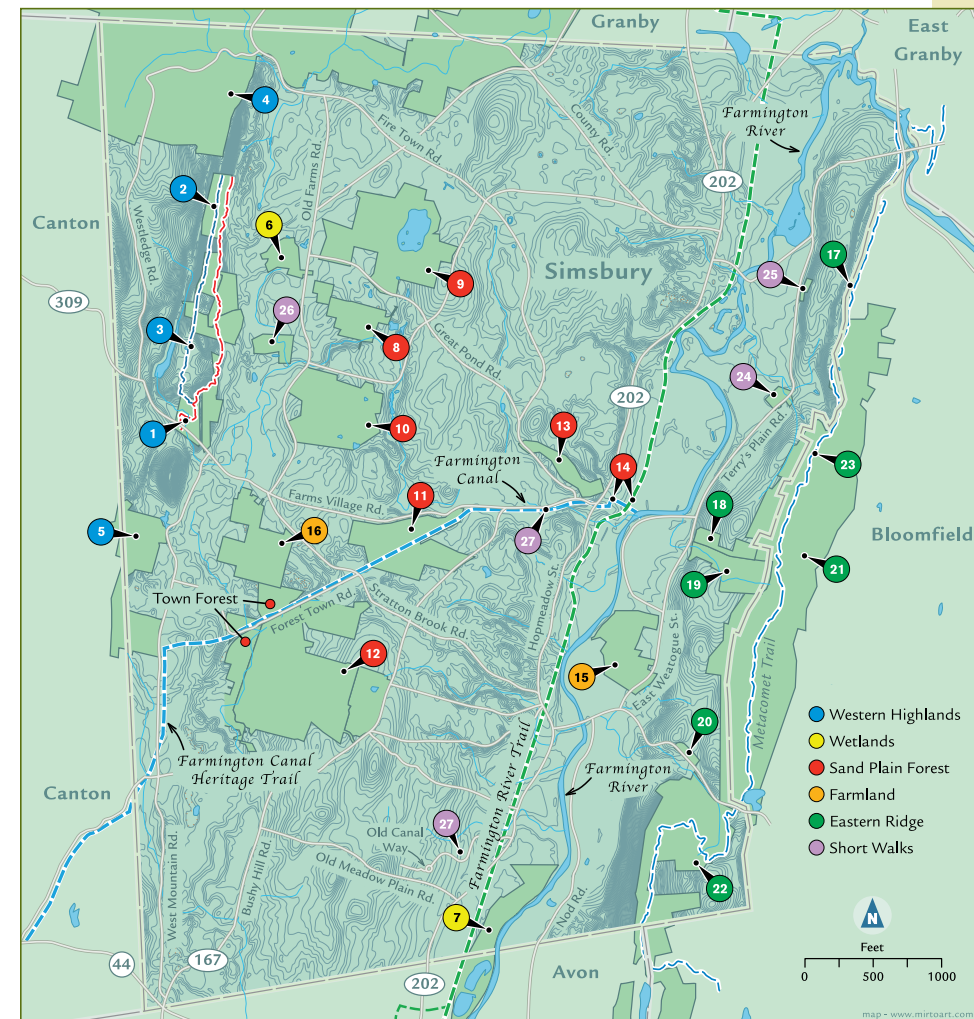
However, once these parcels of land are developed, they will no longer be a part of the rich diversity of habitats found in our area.

Simsbury is our home and we all have a chance to leave it as good as or better than we found it. Each of us can help achieve a deliberate balance between residential growth, commercial development, and our natural setting. You can help us continue to protect these special places by becoming a member and contributing to our endowment fund. By preserving the beauty and environmental vitality of our town we ensure an exceptionally good quality of life, we protect our investment, and we create a legacy for the next generation.



SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Walk Locator Map



Simsbury Land Trust Walkbook Locations

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 60 Westledge | 9. Great Pond State Forest | 16. Tulmewood Farm | 24. Case |
| 2. Cathles | 10. Simsbury Farms | 17. James | 25. Ketchin Quarry |
| 3. West Mountain Trails | 11. Stratton Brook State Park | 18. Owen-Mortimer | 26. Knapp |
| 4. McLean Game Refuge | 12. Ethel Walker Woods & Town Forest | 19. Tanager Hill | 27. Farmington Canal |
| 5. Onion Mountain Park | 13. Belden Forest | 20. Clover | |
| 6. Bog Walk | 14. Farmington Canal Heritage Trail & Farmington River Trail | 21. Penwood State Park | |
| 7. Nod Brook Management Area | 15. Rosedale Farms | 22. Talcott Mountain | |
| 8. Wagner Woods | | 23. Metacomet Trail | |

6/2016

Trail Guidelines and Useful Tips

Please respect our neighbors and fellow hikers:

- Use trails only between sunrise and sunset
- Please pick up litter and leave the trail in better shape than you found it
- Enjoy and respect the peace and quiet
- Leave all flowers, plants, and small animals for others to enjoy
- Keep pets on leash and pick up after them
- Stay on marked trails

Passive recreation is encouraged, while the following are prohibited:

- Motorized vehicles
- Cutting trees and other plants
- Transplanting vegetables
- Building fires
- Camping
- Building tree forts, clubhouses, or other structures
- Hunting (except by special permit)
- Using alcoholic beverages
- Biking and horseback riding (except where noted)



USEFUL HIKING TIPS

Trail Safety

- It is advisable to wear bright colors while hiking on any trail during hunting season. (Please visit the CT DEEP website to learn more about dates for the hunting season.)
- Bring a day hike bag with basic survival supplies, including water.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you plan on returning.
- Take a charged cell phone with you on your hike.

Protecting against ticks and Lyme Disease

Each year several thousand cases of Lyme Disease are reported in Connecticut, and the numbers are climbing. The disease, caused when a bacterium carried by the deer tick enters the bloodstream, is endemic to Simsbury and its surrounding areas.

To avoid contact with ticks:

- Stay on open paths
- Avoid thick brush and grass
- Wear long pants tucked into socks
- Apply permethrin products to clothing and newer DEET repellents to skin

Careful full-body inspection is a critical post-hike ritual, as is an awareness of the signs of Lyme Disease.



Be safe...and happy trails!

A Geological History of Simsbury

When people speak of Simsbury, they often talk of a recognizable sense of place, a particular character. Much of what they mean by this is derived from a number of geological features highlighted by a grand river valley tucked between two dramatic ridges. Like much of New England, the land that is now Simsbury has had a varied and complex geological history, with lengthy episodes of deposition, deformation, erosion, and glaciation.



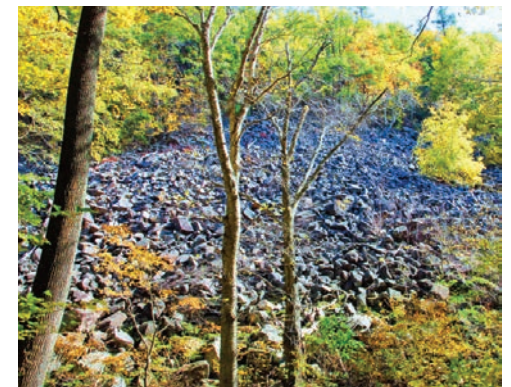
The magnificent West Mountain in the northwest corner of town represents the oldest exposed bedrock in Simsbury. This rock formation can readily be viewed in the road cuts along Route 309 leading to North Canton. Formed between 400 and 500 million years ago (during the Ordovician and Devonian ages, respectively), this bedrock consists primarily of silver-gray, mica-rich schist, highly metamorphosed rocks which probably originated as ocean floor sediments in a long-vanished primordial sea. These sediments, once deeply buried and compacted, were deformed and uplifted during the collisions of continental plates which formed the Appalachian Mountain chain. Over the next 200 to 300 million years the uplands eroded, depositing a variety of sediments into a subsiding basin in central



Connecticut, eventually forming brown-red siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerate rocks. Many brownstone buildings on Hopmeadow Street were built from this, including Town Hall and the Methodist Church. Excellent examples of this rock can be seen along the entrance to Metacom Road and the nearby Simsbury Land Trust Ketchin Quarry on Quarry Road.

The unusual collection of knolls on the west side of town that poke up unexpectedly along the front of West Mountain (Barndoor Hills, the east ridge of West Mountain itself, the Hedgehog, Sugarloaf, and Onion Mountain) as well as the massive ridge along the east side of town (Metacomet Ridge, of which Talcott Mountain is the most notable feature) consists of dense volcanic rocks called

basalt rock from 200 million years ago (Triassic and Jurassic periods). In the earliest Triassic period, Connecticut was tectonically dynamic. During the early Triassic period active north-south faults allowed magma to rise and sheet flow over the surface at least three times. These layers of basalt were overlain by more eroded sediments from the surrounding hills. A major earthquake on a fault line on the eastern side of the Connecticut River led to the subsequent tilting to the east



of the igneous/sedimentary layers in the Connecticut River Valley. Over time the softer sedimentary rock was eroded away to form the river valleys while the harder igneous rock formed the hill, ridges and cliffs. Erosion of the cliffs has created the fascinating piles of talus at their bases and the unique “traprock” habitat. (The term traprock is derived from the Swedish “trap,” meaning stairs.)

A scant million years ago, during the Pleistocene Era, Simsbury was profoundly influenced by the movement of massive continental glaciers which smoothed and rounded local ridges. The melting of the ice sheets some 12,000 years ago left behind accumulations of boulder till and thick deposits of sand and silt sorted by glacial meltwater. Thus, the prominent hills just west and north of the town center consist not of bedrock, but of sand terraces formed on the margin of a large glacial lake. Other features of the glacial period include the sand plains and eskers throughout the central part of town. It was during this period that a retreating glacier deposited a dam in the Bristol area, forcing the Farmington River to bend back and flow north through Simsbury. The present floodplain reflects the river's activity over the past 10,000 years.

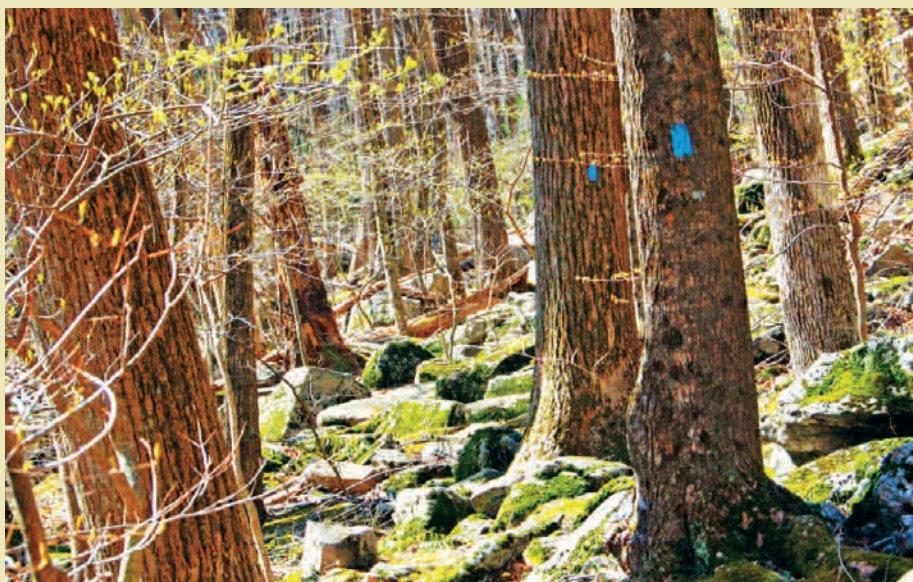
THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS

The eastern ridge of West Mountain, largely undisturbed, provides the hiker with a rich and varied look into the natural history of this unique section of town. Trails here include the Cathles Trails, 60 Westledge Trails, West Mountain Trails, McLean Game Refuge, and Simsbury's trails at Onion Mountain Park. These trails involve some climbing, but are generally appropriate for all age groups. Several of these provide excellent views of the town. Although each is described in greater detail in the following pages, a few general comments at this point may be of interest.



Each of these locations provides at least some exposure to traprock ridge habitat. As noted, traprock ridges consist of hard basalt rock created as volcanic extrusion along geologic fault lines. This fault line can be most easily seen at the Cathles property line, where a steep ravine separates the very old metamorphic bedrock of West Mountain from the much newer igneous rock of the mountain's eastern ridge.

Typically these traprock ridges have a steep, nearly vertical western face with a steep but somewhat more gradual eastern slope that garners more exposure to the sun. The ridgeline is rocky and windblown and the western face is cool and moist. These distinctive features, along with the



characteristic chemistry of the igneous soil, contribute to an unusual mix of several distinct habitats within close proximity to one another.

In pre-colonial days Native Americans may have traveled an ancient trail along the lower ridge of West Mountain. The soil and terrain of these hills was poorly suited for crops. As trees were removed from the more fertile flatlands and river bottoms, settlers harvested the ridges first for firewood and then, in the early 1700s to mid-1800s, for charcoal for local industry. Charcoal pits and early cart paths can still be seen from that period. Eventually this area was stripped of trees, and by the 1800s and into the 1900s, sheep and cattle grazed on the open hillsides. Over the past 50 years the hills have become reforested. Today isolated stone fences and bits of barbed wire remain to point the way to the past.



60 Westledge Trails

ACREAGE: 22 YEAR ACQUIRED: 2000

Location

Trailhead is on the north side of Westledge Road (Route 309) across from Pasture Lane or to the north from the Cathles property.

Distance

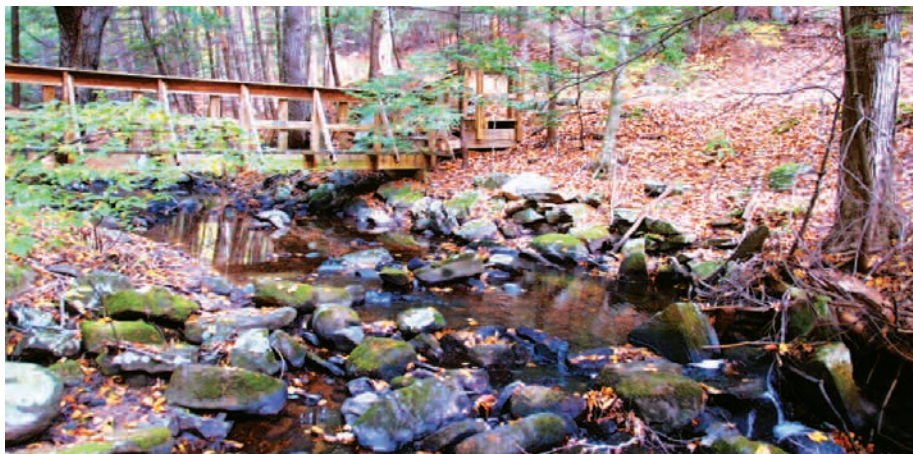
About 1 mile total, a 0.5 mile loop using red and yellow blazed trails. This can be a good starting point for a much longer hike (up to 5 miles) on the West Mountain Trails.

Terrain

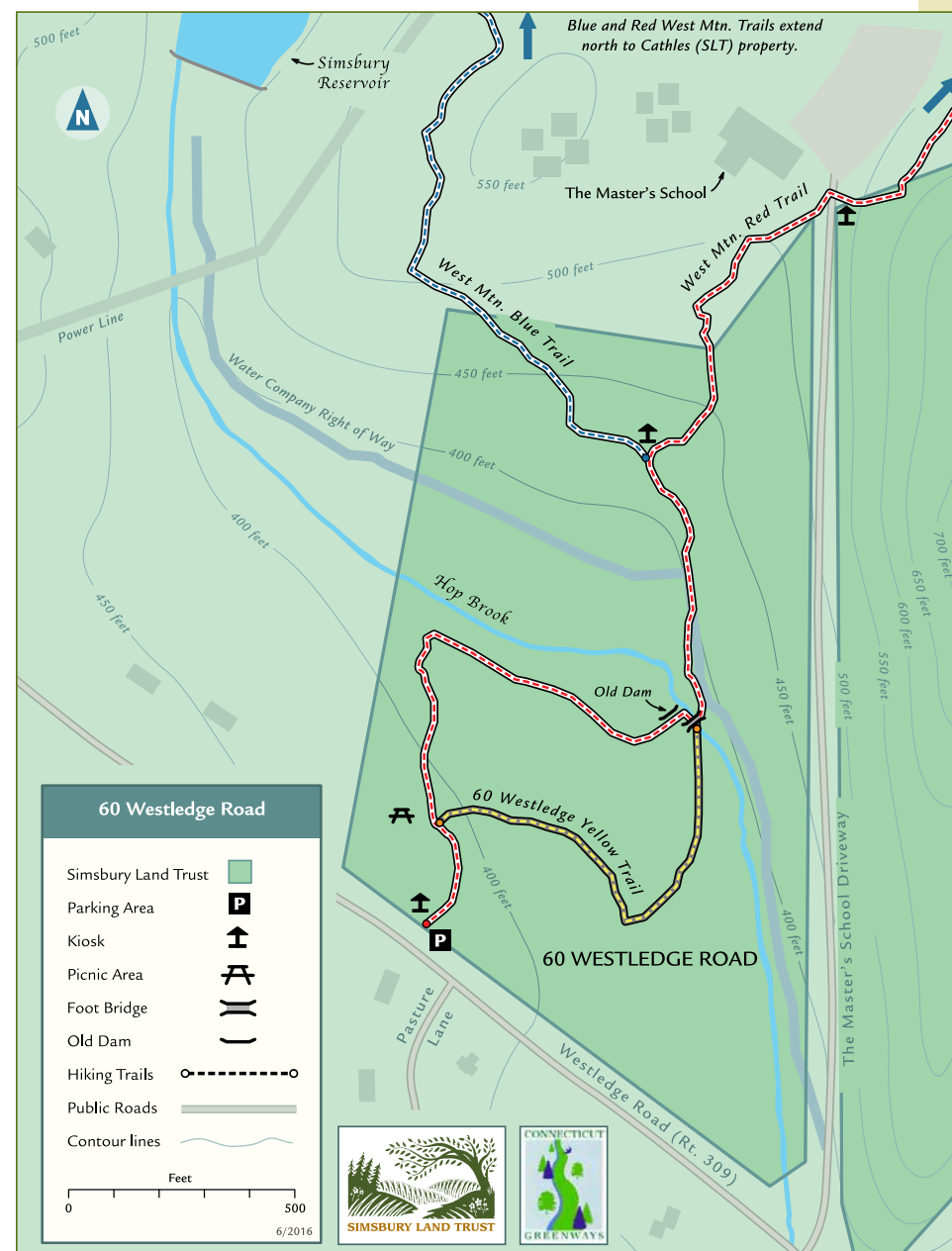
Mostly flat and easy. The drop in elevation down from the parking area is handled by two stone stairways.

Features

The 60 Westledge Trails can be approached as a short, separate loop trail or as the southern starting point for the West Mountain Trails system. Descend down the stone stairs along the red trail to Hop Brook where you will see the remnant of an old stone and earthen mill dam. The trail follows the pretty brook amid lush beds of ferns. The forest is mostly second-growth with some very large oaks and hemlocks and little undergrowth. The trail continues northward to West Mountain across a wooden bridge. This is a good place to stop and enjoy the stream. To complete the loop follow the brook on the yellow trail which will turn and take you up a second set of steps back to the parking area. Nearby is an open grassy area with a picnic bench.



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Cathles Trails

ACREAGE: 47 YEAR ACQUIRED: 1995

Location

Adjacent to the McLean Game Refuge on the north and Town Open Space on the east and south. Enter the white blazed trail from the cul-de-sac at the end of North Saddle Ridge Road. These trails are a continuation of the West Mountain Trails and can also be accessed from the 60 Westledge trails. Please note there is no trail access to McLean Game Refuge from these trails.

Distance

2 miles of blazed trails.

Terrain

Moderate to difficult, uneven rocky footing.

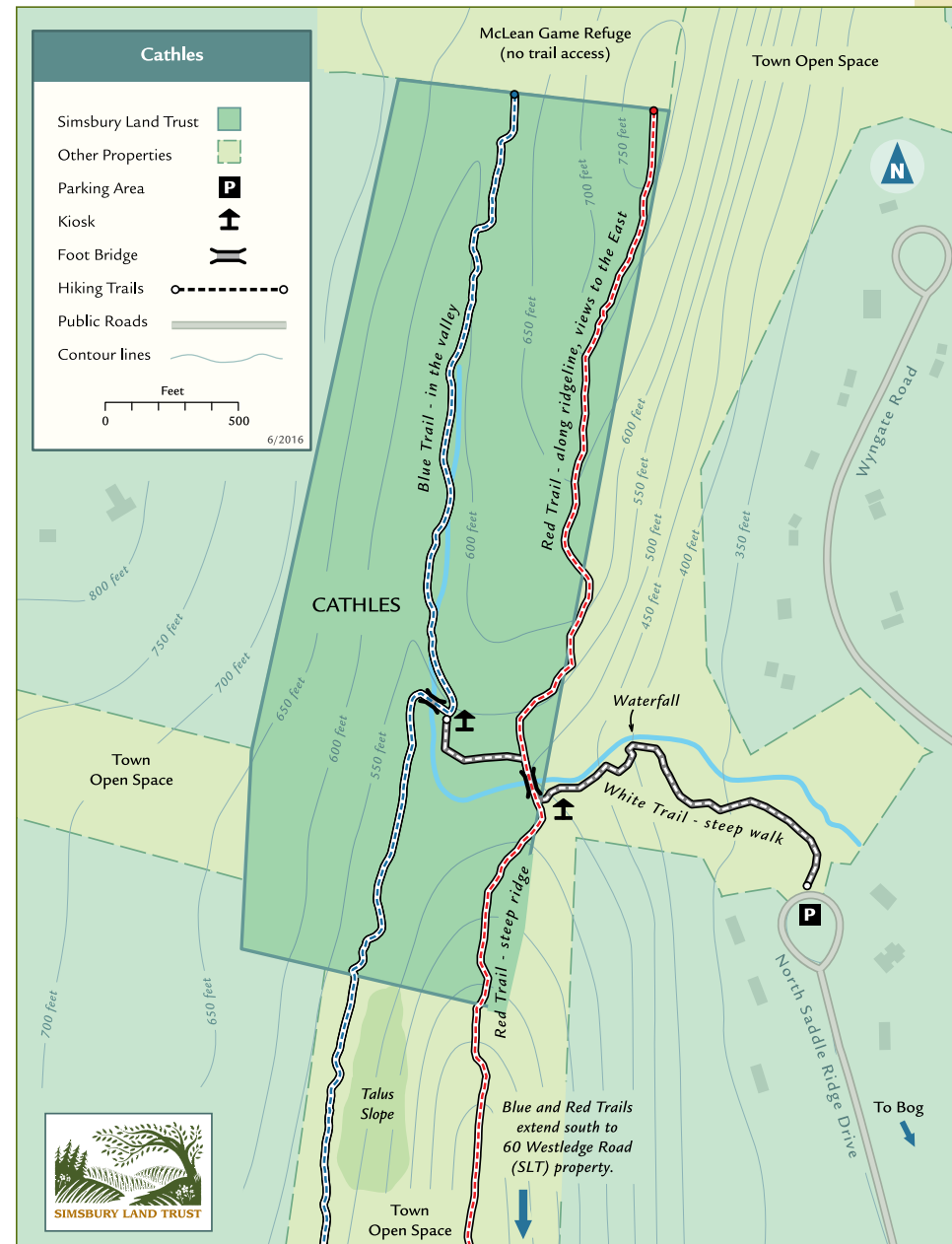


Features

Simsbury Land Trust's remarkably wild and tranquil Cathles property covers 47 acres. The white trail heads steeply north past a striking waterfall on town property to connect the blue and red trails. Two streams originate just above the waterfall. One stream drains south toward the Simsbury Reservoir becoming Hop Brook and the other cuts east through the ridge at the waterfall becoming Bissell Brook. The blue trail goes north along a fault line through a "hidden valley" ending at the boundary of the McLean Game Refuge. The red trail runs north-south along the eastern ridgeline. Multiple vistas offer beautiful views of West Simsbury and beyond. Note the stunted growth of the cedar trees and other vegetation along the ridgetop, the result of marginal soil and winter wind. From the fault to the ridge the trail passes through several different habitat zones typical of traprock ridges.



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West Mountain Trails

Location

The trail system can be accessed from the southern end by the 60 Westledge trails and from the north by the Cathles trails.

Distance

Over 5 miles of trails. Use the red and blue trails to create a challenging loop which can take about three hours.

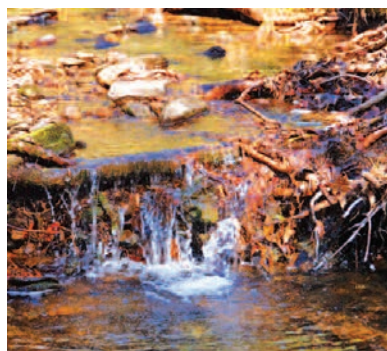
Terrain

Hilly and rough along many sections.

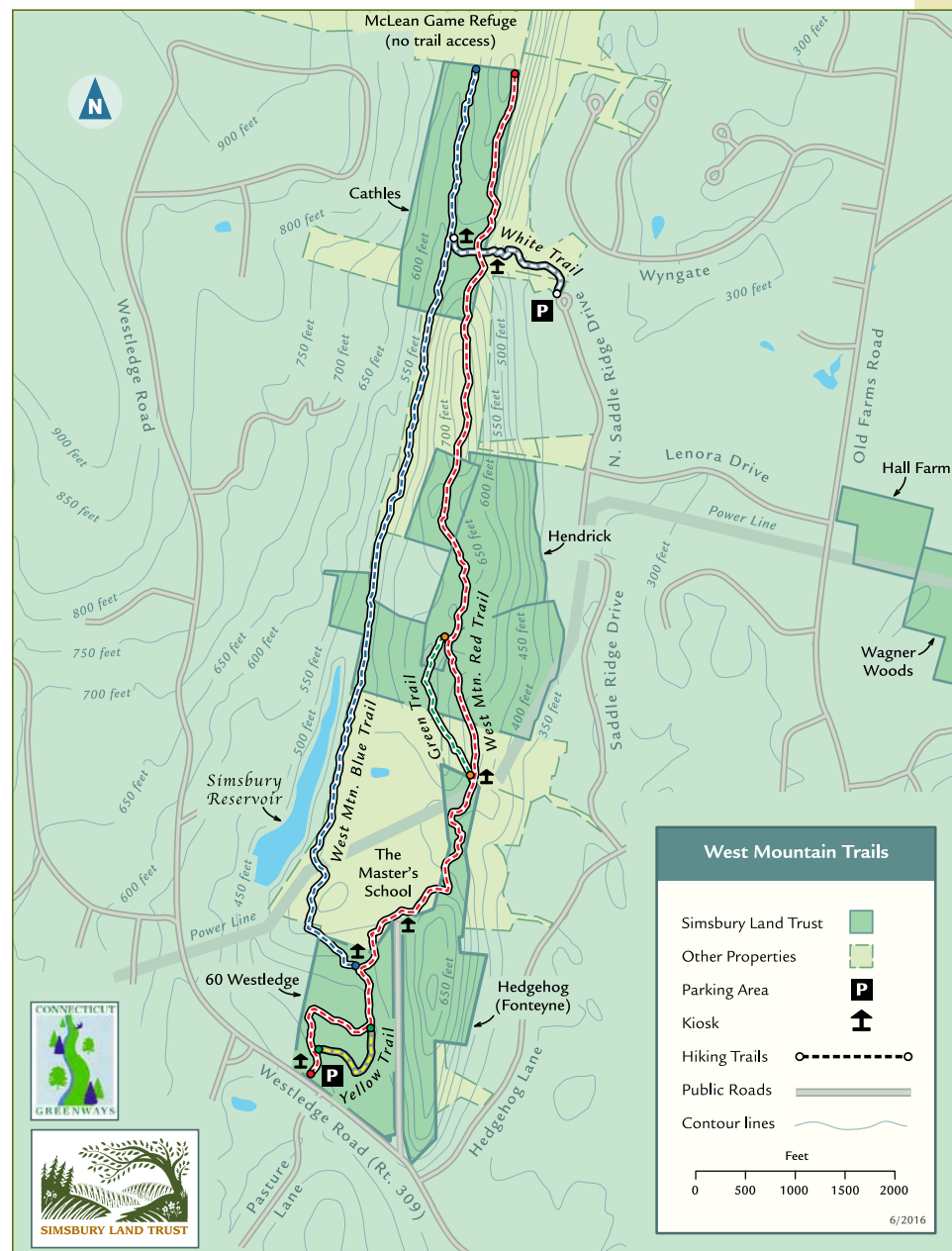
Features

Located atop the ridge west of Simsbury Farms Recreation Area, this land is unique in that it consists of the east slope, ridge top, west slope, a portion of the clearly defined geological fault line and 10 acres of slope on the much older Western Highland. The Simsbury Land Trust and Town properties have preserved the integrity of 500 acres of continuous traprock ridge from McLean Game Refuge to the Tulmeadow Farm Triangle.

This system of trails runs north-south along the east ridge of West Mountain. The red trail runs mostly along the ridge itself while the blue trail follows Hop Brook in the valley to the west. The red trail begins at 60 Westledge and heads north across The Master's School driveway and up onto the ridge. A green trail branches off then reconnects for another option to the peak. There are several scenic vistas. The highest is on Town Open Space just before reaching the white trail to the north. It is common to see red-tail hawks floating on the thermals and in the fall to see large flocks of cedar waxwings feeding on juniper berries along the cliffs. The blue trail branches off of the red trail at the northern end of the 60 Westledge property. It drops into the valley just north of the Simsbury Reservoir and follows a rugged streamside path to eventually reach the Cathles property and perhaps the nicest example of a talus field in Simsbury. The blue trail follows a fault-line where the rock you see to the west is 500 million-year-old metamorphic schist and to the east 200 million-year-old igneous basalt. The sharp fracturing of this basalt produces the talus along the base of the slope. If you have the opportunity to hike both trails, contrast the different types of climate and vegetation you encounter on each.



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McLean Game Refuge

Location

The Refuge straddles the towns of Simsbury, Granby, and Canton. There are two main entrances, one on the west side of Route 10 near the Simsbury-Granby line and a second on Barndoor Hills Road. The latter entrance offers a picnic area.

Distance

A number of trails totaling about 20 miles.

Terrain

Easy to difficult.

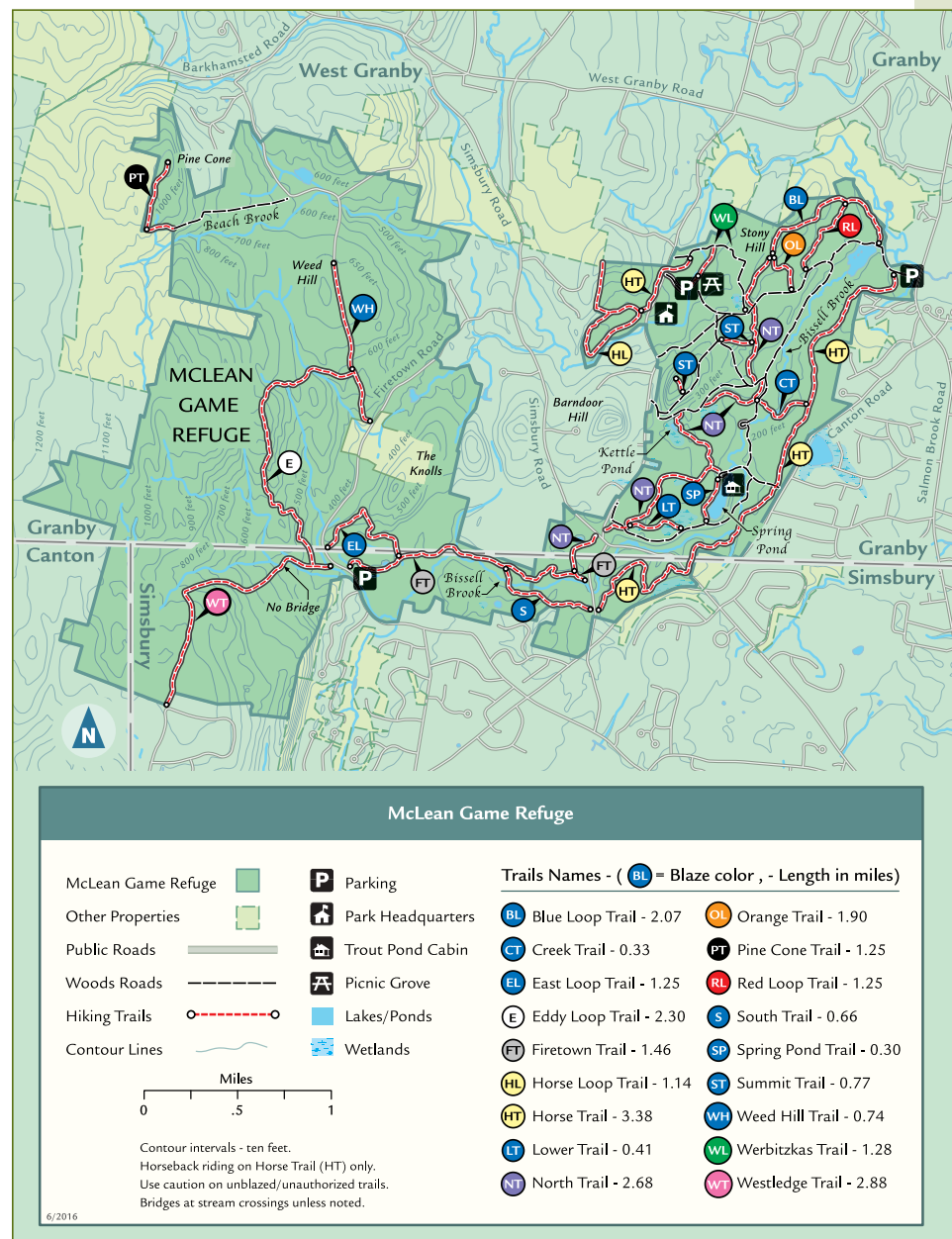
Features

The McLean Game Refuge, established in 1933 under the terms of the will of George P. McLean, is a diverse ecological and geologic area comprised of 4,300 acres of forests and meadows. Today the Refuge's Board of Trustees encourages passive recreation and nature study in portions of the Refuge.

The McLean Game Refuge offers a wealth of diverse opportunities for observing nature. It contains distinct examples of three major types of geologic terrain: the western highland section containing Paleozoic metamorphic rock; Triassic basalt (traprock) ridges to the east (Barndoor Hills); and sandy plains formed by the retreating Pleistocene glaciers.

The sandy plain contains a number of wide, flat trails that are very pleasant to hike. Trout Pond and Spring Pond are gorgeous artificial lakes with floating masses of vegetation. The trails lead hikers through an enormously varied selection of plant life influenced not only by topography but by previous land uses such as farming and pasturing. The trail between Bissell Brook and Spring Pond runs atop a very large glacial esker. Other glacial features of interest include densely vegetated kettle ponds.

Centrally, Barndoor Hills is reached by a steeper yet very manageable trail and offers a terrific vista, especially in the fall. The western portion of the Refuge is wilder and the trails are steeper and rockier. The Westledge Trail, beginning off Westledge Road, partially follows a 1700s stagecoach route from Hartford to Albany (along the "Garrett Stairs"). A walk on this trail is all the explanation necessary for the name. Access to the western portion of the Refuge can also be found along Firetown Road. The loop trails here are secluded and challenging. The vegetation at the summit is predominantly chestnut oak with lower brush of huckleberry and blueberry. Farther down the slopes mixed oak and other hardwoods, including beech, birch, maple, and hemlock can be seen. In large areas mountain laurel is dense enough to confine hikers to the trails. Many of the hardwoods in this area are "sprout hardwoods," meaning that they have arisen from the root systems of trees long ago cut to provide charcoal.



For more information visit www.mcleangamerefuge.org.

Onion Mountain Park

Location

Town-owned West Simsbury park comprised of 190 acres of wooded, rocky mountainside. Enter the parking lot on the west side of West Mountain Road just south of Shingle Mill Road.

Distance

3 miles of blazed trails.

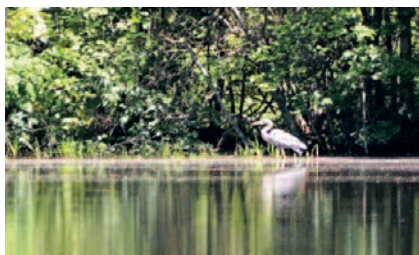
Terrain

Trails are relatively easy on the flat portions but significantly more difficult on the hillside with challenging elevation changes. The ground can be wet and soggy after it rains.

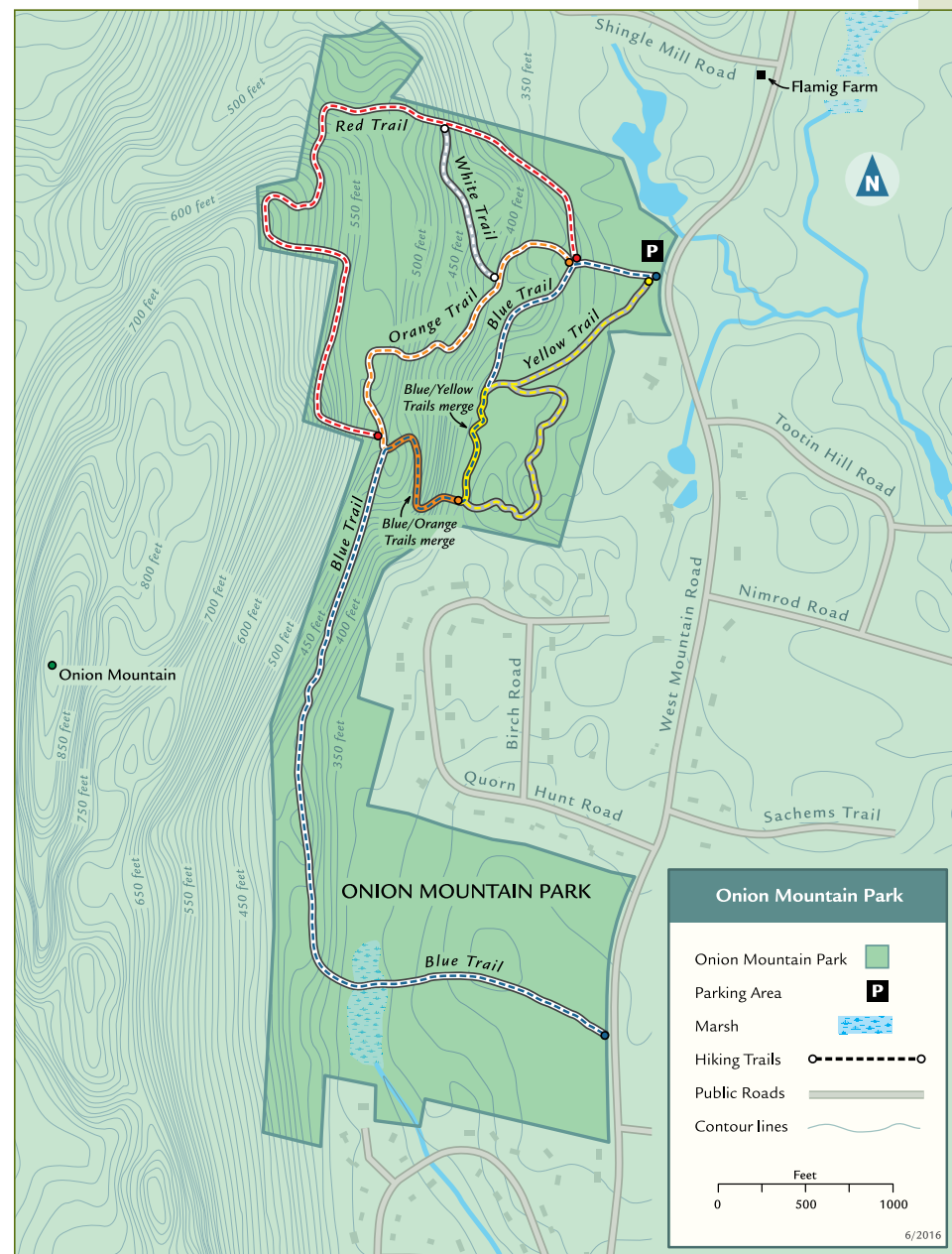


Features

The yellow and blue trails at the base of the mountain run north-south over gently rolling, formerly agricultural land. Most trees in this area are over 50 years old, and are a mixture of hardwoods and evergreens, including white pine, hemlock, oak, and beech. Part-way up the mountain are several small wetlands and seasonal brooks as well as a Town-owned pond on the north side.



The 100 acres on the northern end of the mountain's east slope were cut a few years ago to open the area for improved wildlife habitat and hiking trails. In 2015 a forest management plan was approved by the Town and 37 acres of forest was harvested to increase the age diversity of the trees in the forest so as to ensure forest health. The orange trail winds diagonally up the mountain on old logging roads. The trees here are 80-120 years old, mostly oak and hemlock, with small hemlock, low growing viburnum, witch hazel, and sugar maple in the understory. The red trail follows the park boundaries and has a challenging elevation. The white trail at the north end of the property connects the orange and red trails. Birds of interest include the winter wren, solitary vireo, and the black-throated and green-throated blue warblers, all northern species.



WETLANDS

Wetlands are among our most important types of open space, providing the essential functions of water retention and purification. They also harbor the largest amount and variety of life of any habitat in Simsbury. As would be expected in a river valley bounded by ridges, wetlands can be found in every part of town, from the floodplain itself to vernal or seasonal pools and seasonal streams high in the hills. However, they have become badly partitioned over the years, as residential development has spread into more marginally developable areas. As wetlands are divided into smaller and more isolated parcels, wildlife migration patterns are altered, affecting populations of wetland dependent species. Many of the remaining flora and fauna live under additional stress from lawn chemical runoff, family pets, and changes in water levels.

There are several types of wetlands in Simsbury, defined primarily by the distinctive plants and animals each supports. Among these are the river and its tributary streams, year-round ponds, red maple or brush swamps, bogs, wet meadows, and seasonal vernal ponds. The loss of any one of these wetland types would diminish the rich variety of plants, insects, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals that share this part of the earth with us.

Simsbury Land Trust protects a 39-acre bog, a 29-acre red maple swamp, a 10-acre wet meadow, and various other ponds, streams, swamps, and vernal ponds that exist on its property. The Town and the State own large sections of the riverfront along with nearby tributary streams, marshes, and swamps. Great Pond, owned by the State, is another wonderful wetland resource.



Wetlands Along Old Farms Road

A long stretch of wetlands runs along the base of West Mountain. Here, the SLT protects a 39-acre bog, bordered by a sizable esker stretching from the end of North Saddle Ridge and Elcy Way, and an extensive swamp fronting Hedgehog Lane.

In addition to being an interesting glacial feature in itself, the esker also serves as a highpoint, with water to the north running into Bissell Brook and water to the south becoming Hop Brook. The 30-foot bank of gravel left by a retreating glacier drops steeply to the south and somewhat less steeply to the north. A mountain stream from the ridge to the west feeds the red maple swamp and Bissell Brook just north of the esker.

A mile to the south, just north of Hedgehog Lane, the Simsbury Land Trust owns a 29-acre swamp that is periodically flooded by beaver activity. The best way to view this spot is to park at Meadow Pond (on the south side of Hedgehog Lane, just east of the Saddle Ridge intersection) then walk a short distance east to a spot just before the brook runs under Hedgehog Lane. From that point, there is an open bank a short walk down the slope from the north side of the road. In the spring, listen for duck and goose calls. It is not uncommon to see beavers, muskrats, snapping turtles, ducks, and other birds busy in the marsh. You can see yellow pond lilies and floating duckweed (smallest of flowering plants) from shore.



Bog Walk

ACREAGE: 39 YEAR ACQUIRED: 1999

Location

Trail starts 0.25 miles down North Saddle Ridge Drive, on the right side of the road. Two stone pillars mark the entrance.

Distance

1 mile round trip.

Terrain

A flat trail continues 1,500 feet out to a short but very steep, downhill path to the 150-foot wooden boardwalk over the bog.



Features

This hike takes you out on a wide, flat trail along an esker (a large deposit of glacial gravel left by the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago) to a boardwalk that stretches out over the bog. Simsbury Land Trust constructed the short, elevated walkway to enable people to view the habitat up close. You will see a series of informational signs touching on the unique ecosystem found here. Watch for signs marking the entrance to the bog walk on the right side of the trail.

Although common in northern New England and Canada, bogs are far less common in Connecticut, and this is the only sizeable bog habitat in Simsbury. The water supply for this 39-acre bog comes only from rainwater and underground springs and is poor in oxygen and nutrients. The high acidity of bog water interferes with plants' ability to absorb both water and nutrients. This creates a habitat very different from that of the swamp to the north of the esker. Best known for their sphagnum moss, which "floats" on the water, bogs are also home to a number of plants and animals seldom found in the more common red maple swamps. Characteristic leatherleaf plants, highbush blueberries and swamp azaleas are specially adapted for this environment and thrive on the edges. Other plants found in this bog include red chokeberry, small red maples, common bog cotton and three-way sedge. Few animals live in the bog, although many pass through it in search of food or shelter. Permanent residents include insect-eating birds, garter snakes, frogs, and turtles that feed on large insects. While relaxing on benches at the end of the boardwalk enjoy a fine view of West Mountain.

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Nod Brook Management Area

Location

Access this area from Route 10 in the Tower Business Park. Cross the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail crossing, and take a right down the dirt road; then take either fork at the bottom of the hill and park.

Distance

Over 2 miles of dirt roads provide easy walking access through this area.

Terrain

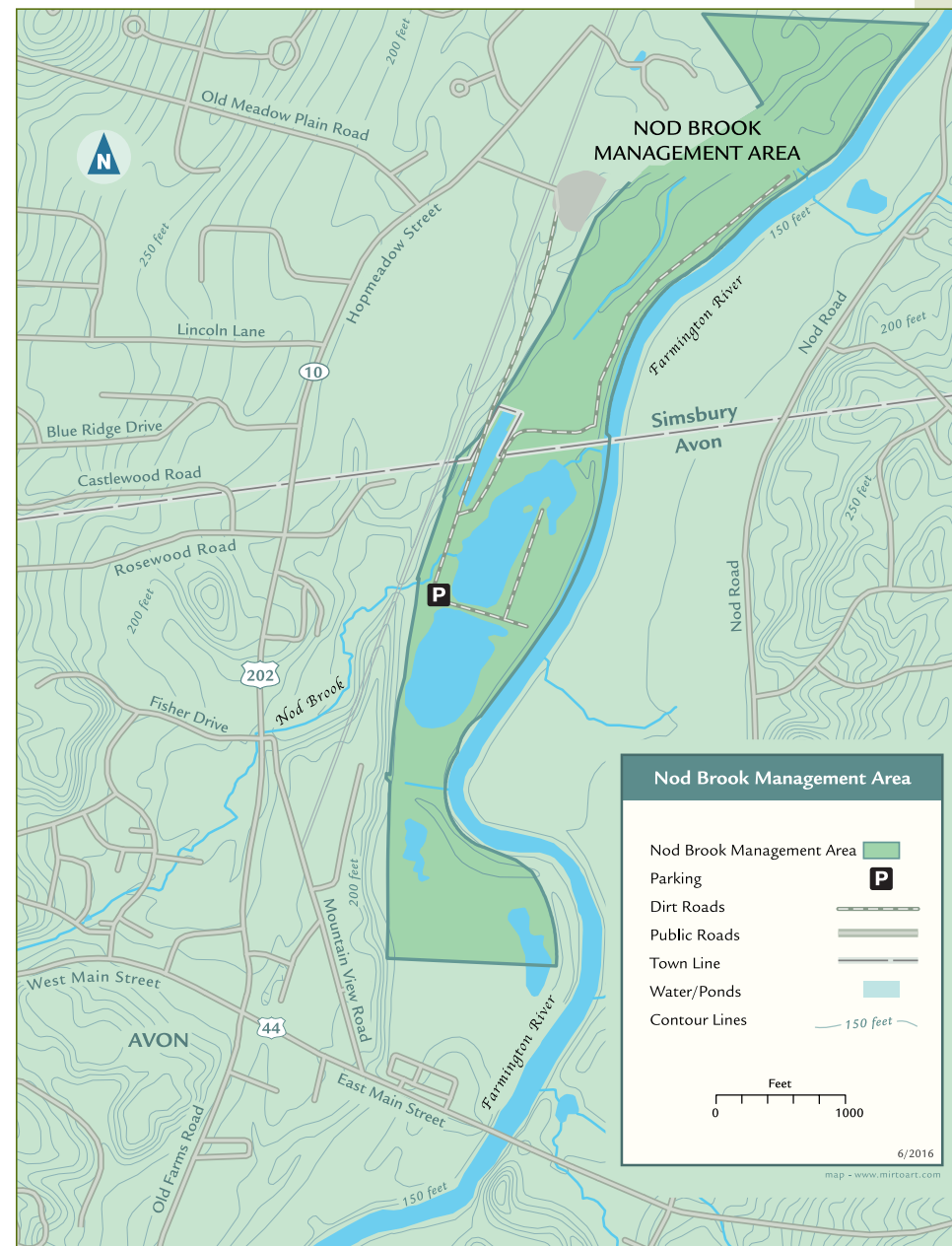
Easy, level.

Features

Nod Brook is a beautiful and easily accessible spot that incorporates open fields, two ponds, and the Farmington River. Half of Nod Brook Management Area is in Simsbury, and the other half is in Avon.

This area is one of four State hunting dog training and field trial areas. Be aware that hunting is allowed during field dog trials and during hunting season. *Public use is prohibited by law when a field dog trial is being held because live ammunition is used. Please read the signs upon entering the area.*

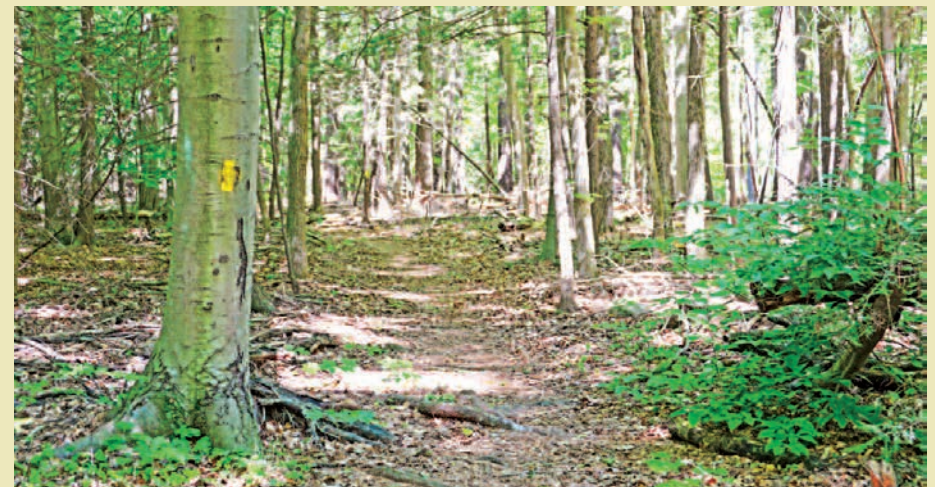
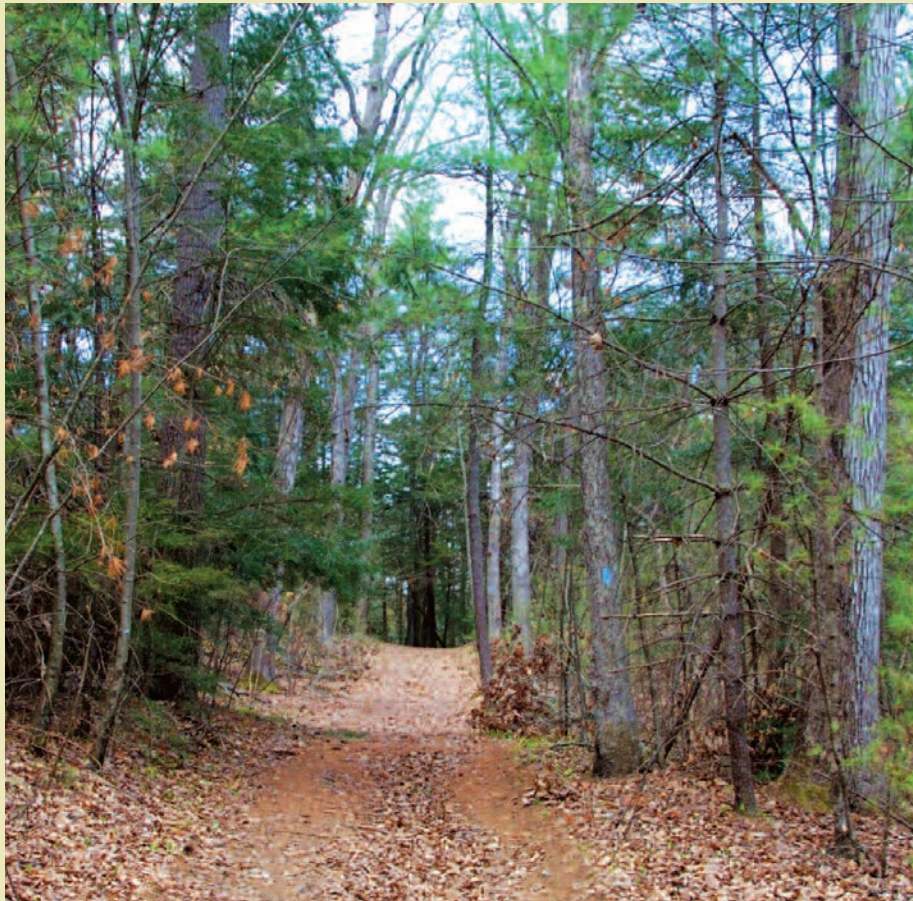
The northern half of Nod Brook is an open, flat meadow with a dirt road running along the Farmington River. The southern half contains two ponds bordered by dirt roads. The area affords a view of Talcott Mountain and the surrounding hills and woods along the river and a place to bird watch, especially during spring and fall migrations. There is also an area to launch canoes into the river at the northern end of the pond.



SAND PLAIN FORESTS

Several sizable and more or less contiguous Town, State and private lands in the central part of the town provide a variety of walking opportunities in a sand plain forest setting. The walks are relatively flat with some modest knolls.

Sand plain forests are home to a rich variety of birds and animals that prefer this environment to wetlands or nearby hills for foraging and raising their young. The forests are characterized by thick layers of sand and gravel under topsoil. The soil, deposited by retreating glaciers, tends to be well drained and can become quite dry in places. This creates variations in the patterns of vegetation relative to the nearby ridges and wetlands. Influences such as fire in pre-colonial days, followed later by logging, plowing and pasturing, have profoundly shaped present sand plain vegetation. For example, non-palatable plant species such as cedar and juniper, able to thrive under heavy grazing conditions, have relatively recently been forced into decline under the canopy of oak, maple, hickory and black cherry. Fire sensitive conifers are the most recent large trees to join the canopy.



Wagner Woods Trails

ACREAGE: 63 YEAR ACQUIRED: 2010

Location

Park in the small lot off Great Pond Road, on the south side of the road just east of Great Pond State Forest, or enter from the parking lot at Hall Farm off Old Farms Road.

Distance

1.7 miles of trail.

Terrain

Flat and easy.
Occasionally
muddy in low lying
areas.

Features

This diverse 63-acre property contains a succession forest, wetlands, including several vernal pools, and an eight-acre hayfield, and is home to numerous wildlife species including at least 60 species of birds. The sheltered blue trail ambles through a cool forest of mostly pines, oaks and maples. Numerous stone walls attest to the property's previous life as a farm. On the northwest corner of the large hayfield there are remnants of the farm building foundations. The nearby stream still shows traces of an old dam. A large population of bluebirds takes advantage of the many houses placed on the edge of the field and red-shouldered hawks are often seen gliding



above. Another remnant of farming days is the "two-wagon" wide laneway (orange trail) that leads from the southern end of the field down to Hop Brook. The purple trail (0.3 miles) will take you through a wooded area along the edge of the Hall Farm property to Old Farms Road.

For a longer hike combine Wagner Woods with Great Pond State Forest across Great Pond Road.

MANAGED BY SIMSBURY LAND TRUST



Great Pond State Forest

Location

Access the parking lot via dirt road off Great Pond Road, between Laurel Lane and Old Farms Road.

Distance

Up to 4.75 miles of trails.

Terrain

Easy, flat, and well-marked trails. The trails on the northern side of the pond can become very muddy after rains.

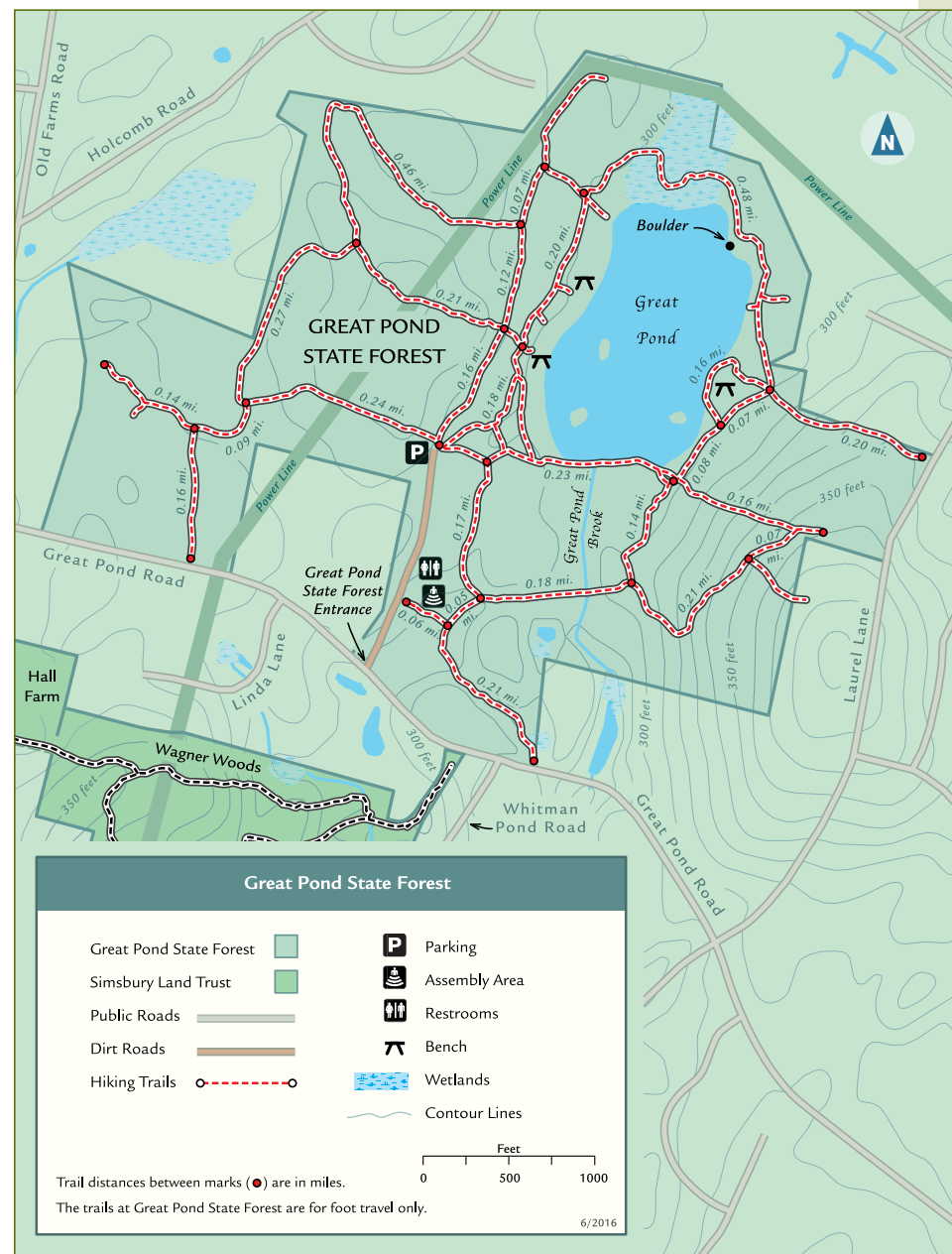
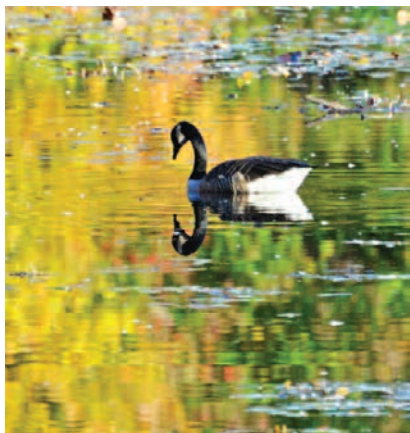


Features

The coniferous 280-acre Great Pond State Forest is unusually peaceful throughout the year. One of its most beautiful features is the shallow 30-acre pond near the center. It attracts a variety of wildlife including deer, beaver, and many migrating waterfowl. The trails around the pond offer a number of scenic outlooks. The pond is particularly lovely when the water lilies bloom in the summer. During the winter it can be a good place for ice skating.

A large stand of rhododendron surrounds a section of the trail along the northeastern edge of the pond, its height creating a virtual canopy. West of the pond are tall pines and hemlocks, creating a cool and quiet atmosphere. Because of the pond and the conifer-based sand plain environment, the forest attracts a large variety of nesting birds. Over 100 species are thought to nest here, including the green-backed heron, common merganser, great horned owl, broad-winged hawk, and pine warbler.

For a longer walk combine with the SLT's Wagner Woods trails across Great Pond Road.



Simsbury Farms Trail

Location

Enter the Simsbury Farms Complex off Old Farms Road north of Route 309. The trail begins on the right before the parking lot and follows the perimeter of the golf course that was once an apple orchard.

Distance

2.5 miles.

Terrain

Primarily an easy, flat walk or run with a few small climbs. The trail also includes a series of exercise stations.

Features

Many apple and pear trees on the grounds still blossom in the spring. To the west there is a stunning view of the Hedgehog Ridge. The fields across Old Farms Road from the Apple Barn are Town-owned, and a trail in the grass to the north of that field connects to Meadow Pond Park, another lovely spot to walk.

Along the trail bordering the golf course and the surrounding woods you will find a number of exercise stations. Each station encourages a type of exercise designed to be combined with walking or running between stations.



Stratton Brook State Park

Location

Access the park through the main gate on Farms Village Road (Route 309), two miles west of Route 10 or across from the junction of Stratton Brook Road and Town Forest Road.

Distance

Up to 4.5 miles of trails.

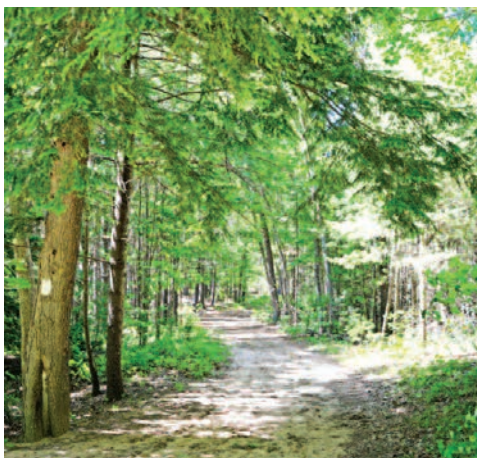
Terrain

Easy, mostly level.

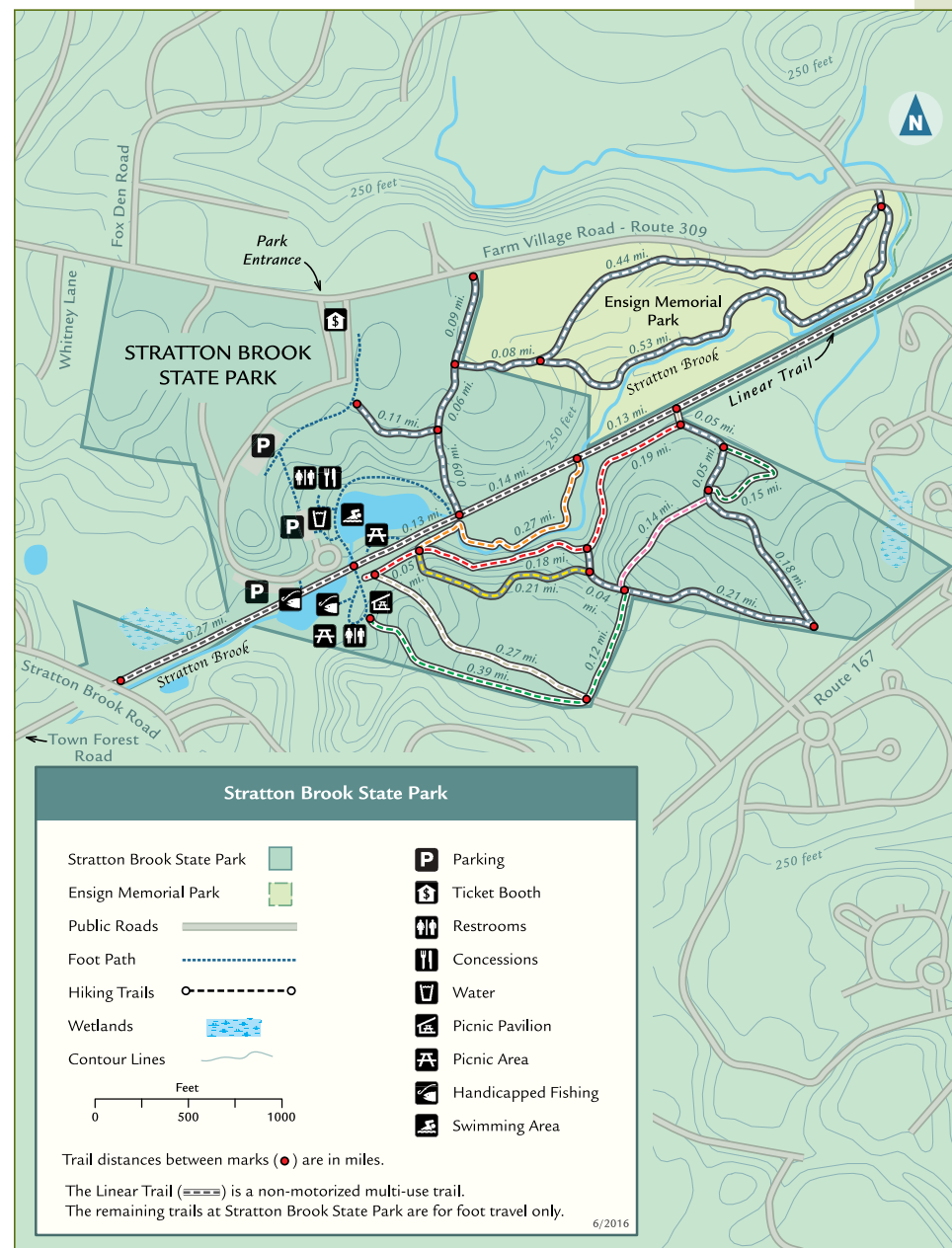
Features

This 148-acre state park includes a pond and brook for fishing, a separate swimming pond and picnic shelter, as well as trails for hiking and biking.

The park was acquired in 1908 as part of the Massacoe State Forest for the purpose of demonstrating forest fire control techniques in areas adjacent to railroad lines. The Town of Simsbury built the bike path on the former Central New England Railroad bed; it extends through Simsbury Town Forest Park to West Mountain Road. A dam built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933 created Massacoe Pond, a small fishing pond.



Replete with large numbers of white pines with mixed hardwoods, this park is a fine example of a sand plain forest. Spring brings wildflowers such as rue anemone, white and birdfoot violets, fringed polygala (gaywings), and lady slippers. Along the edges of the park's open spaces are good spots to see a wide variety of warblers, brown thrashers, cedar redwings, woodpeckers, and other interesting birds. (Note that groves of red pines were harvested in 1990 after they were damaged by insects — Red Pine Scale.)



Ethel Walker Woods and Town Forest

Location

Over 500 acres of open space between the Ethel Walker School and Town Forest Road. Best access is parking in one of four lots off Town Forest Road at Town Forest Park. The trailhead is on the south side of the road where there is a large property map.



Distance

Over 6 miles of interconnected trails.

Terrain

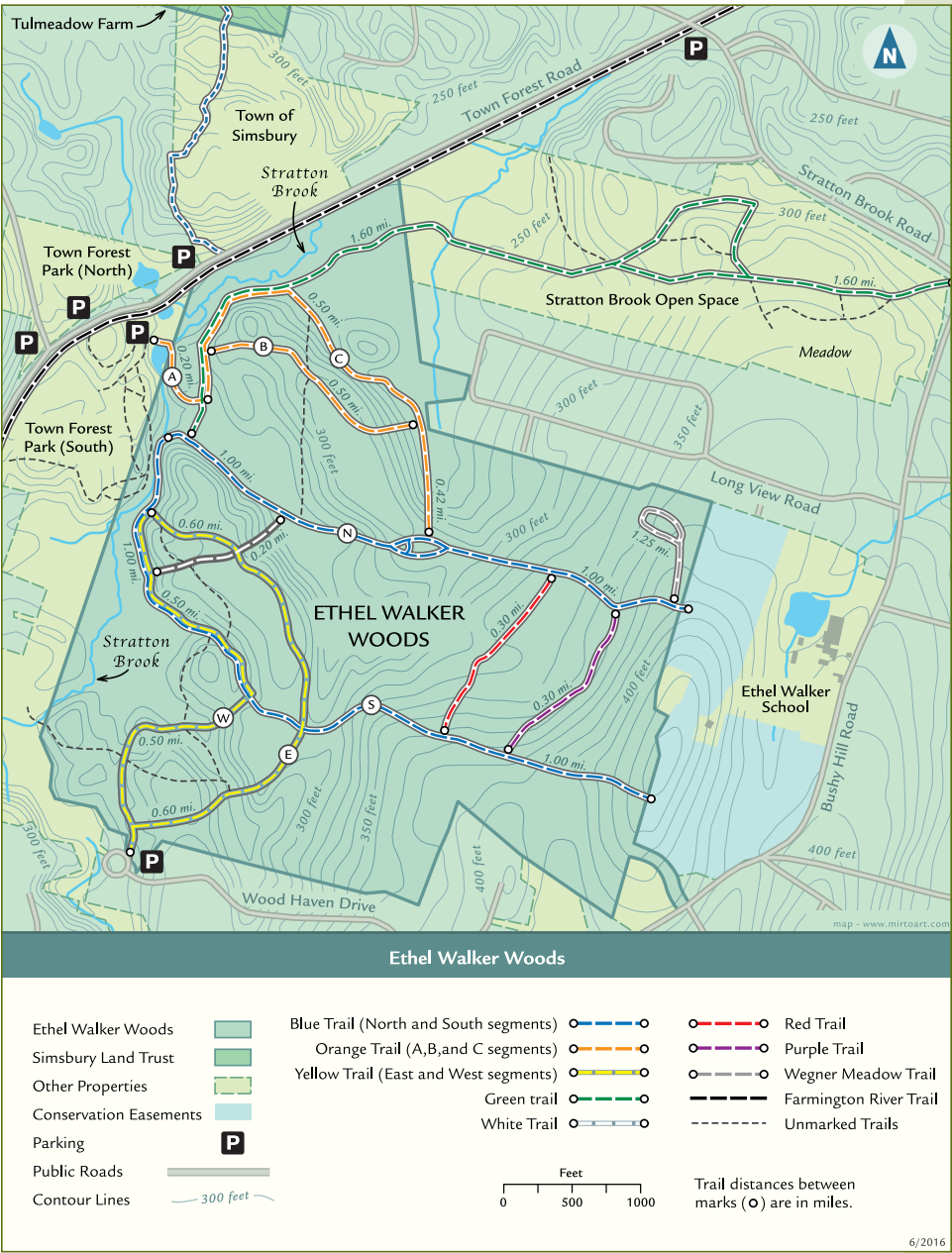
The trails are mostly wide, flat and easy. Trails are well marked but the system is extensive and use of a map is recommended the first few trips.

Features

In 2014 the Town of Simsbury completed the acquisition of 447 acres of woodland which has been combined with Town Forest Park and Stratton Brook Open Space to form an expansive trail system. The area features beautiful white pine, hemlock and oak, many valuable wetlands and a wonderful view of the Ethel Walker horse pastures and Heublein Tower to the east. The southern segment of the blue trail follows a particularly pretty and



quiet section of Stratton Brook. The northern green trail leads to one of the few large open meadows in town through which paths are often kept open for hikers. This well cleared field harbors a wide variety of birds, plants and small animals. Hiking this property is well worth the time it takes to become thoroughly acquainted with it.



Belden Forest

Location

Access the trail from east side of Beldenwood Road, approximately 500-feet east of the intersection with Firetown Road. This is well-marked by a white Town Open Space marker. It can also be reached by trails from Boy Scout Hall off Route 10.

Distance

Less than 2 miles of trail; park length 0.8 miles.

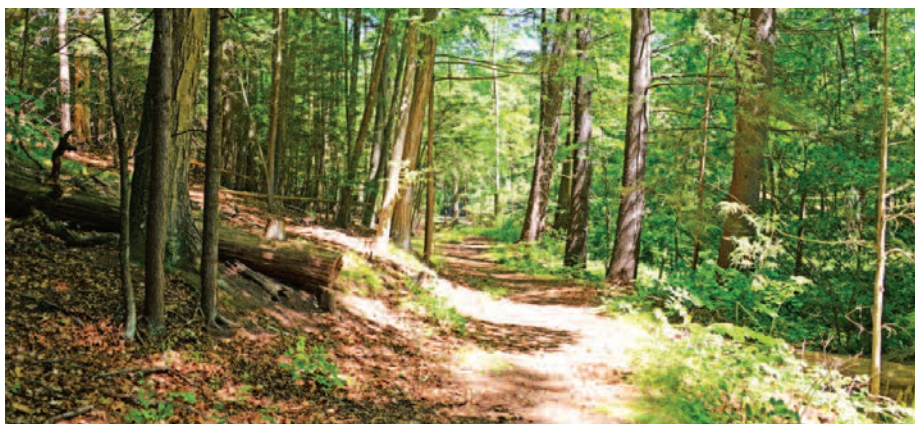
Terrain

Easy, flat.

Features

The 42-acre, Town-owned property consists of a loop of secluded trails dominated by 100-foot-tall white pines. To make a loop, follow the yellow-marked trail out and the blue-marked trail back. The trails are very well marked. Walks here are relaxing as visitors pass beneath the cathedral-like pines mixed with hemlock, beech, and oak. The yellow blazed trail takes you to the top of a ridge with a view of the Town center and western ridge. The blue trail crosses the northern portion of the forest, returning to the yellow trail.

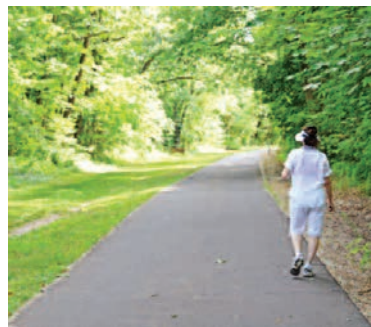
Through much of the 1800s and early 1900s this property was part of the Eno Wood estate, and at that time the pond was used to harvest ice for iceboxes. The adjacent Simsbury 1820 House was the home of Amos R. Eno and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The nearby Boy Scout Hall was built in 1839 as the town hall, and served as such until 1932.



Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and Farmington River Trail

Location

Trail spans five towns and follows the old right-of-way of the Farmington Canal Railroad (which replaced the historic Farmington Canal in 1848). The Farmington River Trail is an 18.2 mile loop which links to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail at points in Farmington and Simsbury, passing through the villages of Unionville and Collinsville and the towns of Burlington and Canton to create a 28.5 mile loop connecting five towns.



Distance

28.5 mile loop, with approximately 12 miles of this trail in Simsbury.

Terrain

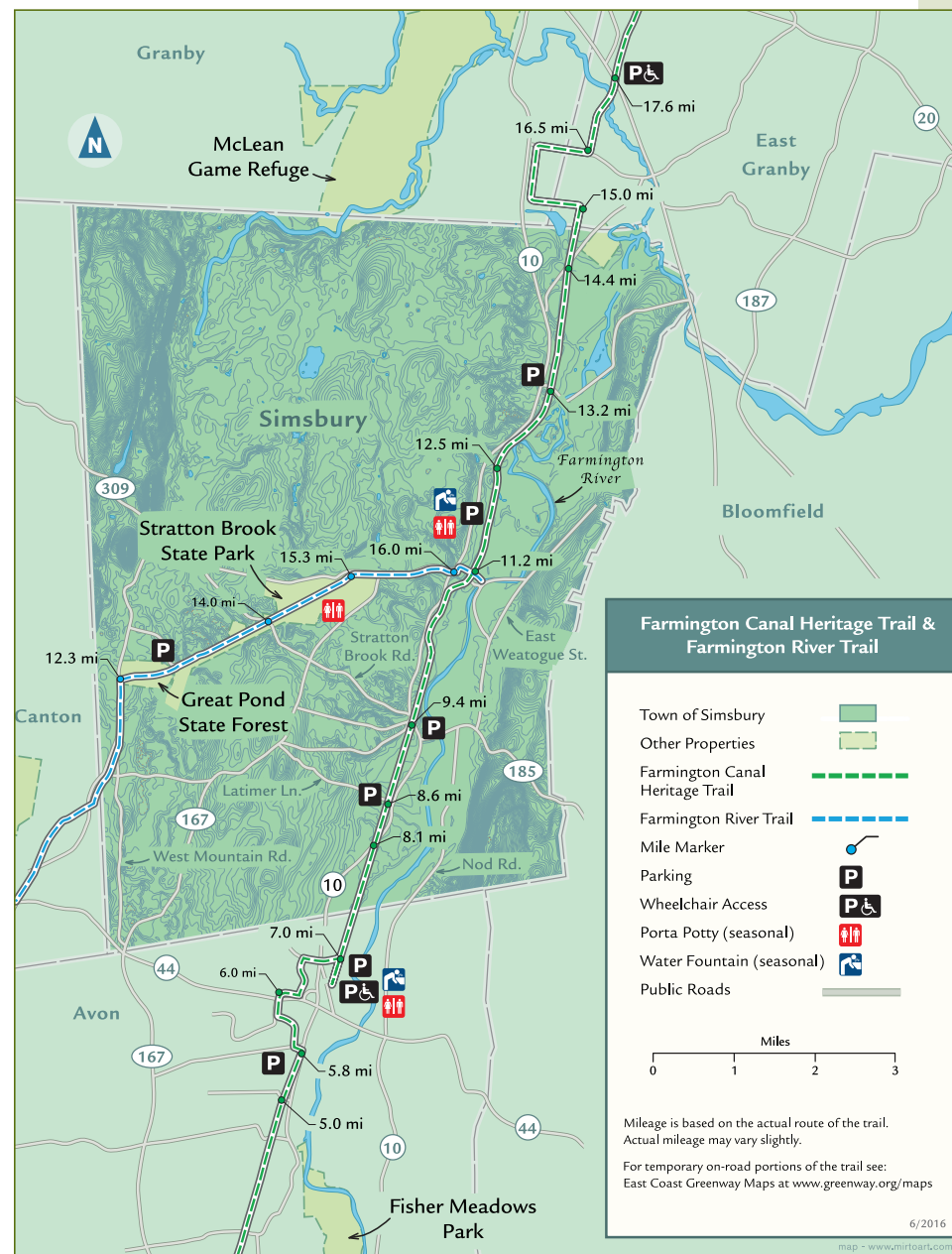
Paved, flat.

Features

This trail is ideal for walkers, joggers, bikers, and skaters, as well as those who require wheelchairs. The trail offers many points of access with ample parking along the trail, several with wheelchair access points.

The Simsbury portion of the trail offers a wealth of lovely spots. At the Avon town line, behind the Riverdale Farms shopping/business complex, the trail skirts the Nod Brook Management Area. Here visitors will find both ponds and the Farmington River. Above to the east is fine view of Talcott Mountain. A short side trip into Canal Place reveals a restored section of the original canal.

In downtown Simsbury, the trail merges with Iron Horse Boulevard. At the southern end, across from the Drake Hill shopping plaza, is a short paved walkway that leads to the Flower Bridge, a one-lane bridge built in 1892. Listed on the National Historic Register, the bridge provides a magnificent view of the Farmington River. As the trail moves north it passes the river floodplain. In the spring and summer wildflowers abound, and it is not unusual to see beaver, deer, mallard ducks, and ring necked pheasants. Several benches line this section, so visitors can take in the sights at their leisure. Concluding this part of the trail is a short side trail that leads to State wildlife land; here you may see ducks and geese nesting in the spring. A side loop of the trail connects Stratton Brook Park to Canton.



FARMLAND

Simsbury farmland is rated as having “prime soil” by the US Department of Agriculture. This soil is a valuable and limited resource. In the 1970s over half the land in town was farmed and today that has fallen to less than 5% due to development and neglect. The remaining farms in Simsbury have been a part of the town for, in some cases, well over 200 years and are a vital part of the town’s historic heritage.

In Connecticut, the continued loss of farmland to development is creating logistical and economic challenges for farmers. The escalating loss of farmland is threatening not just the viability of the farming industry but also the state’s rural legacy and landscape. Simsbury has worked hard over the past few decades to ensure the preservation of its remaining farms and farmland.



Farmland is critical to protecting and promoting regional food systems. Simsbury’s farms produce livestock, eggs, vegetables, fruits, flowers, and seasonally, bedding plants, pumpkins and Christmas trees. Our farmland also contributes to Simsbury’s economy through sales, jobs, and agri-tourism, which allows residents and visitors the chance to enjoy rural scenery and locally produced food and drink.

Simsbury’s operating farms provide important wildlife habitats and open space. Many species of wildlife seek food and cover in our local farm fields. These farm fields also are areas of groundwater recharge, which helps control flooding and protects wetlands. Additionally, Simsbury’s farm fields offer magnificent views of Simsbury’s bordering ridgelines and provide a sense of place.



Rosedale Farms Trail

ACREAGE: 109 YEAR ACQUIRED: 2004

Location

Use the Rosedale Farms store entrance off East Weatogue Street. Park in the parking lot at the rear of the store. The trail begins at the SLT kiosk and follows the existing farm road. Please stay on the path and follow the signs on your right. The area closes at sunset. Dogs are not allowed.

Distance

1.1 miles round trip. This is not a loop trail.

Terrain

Level.

Features

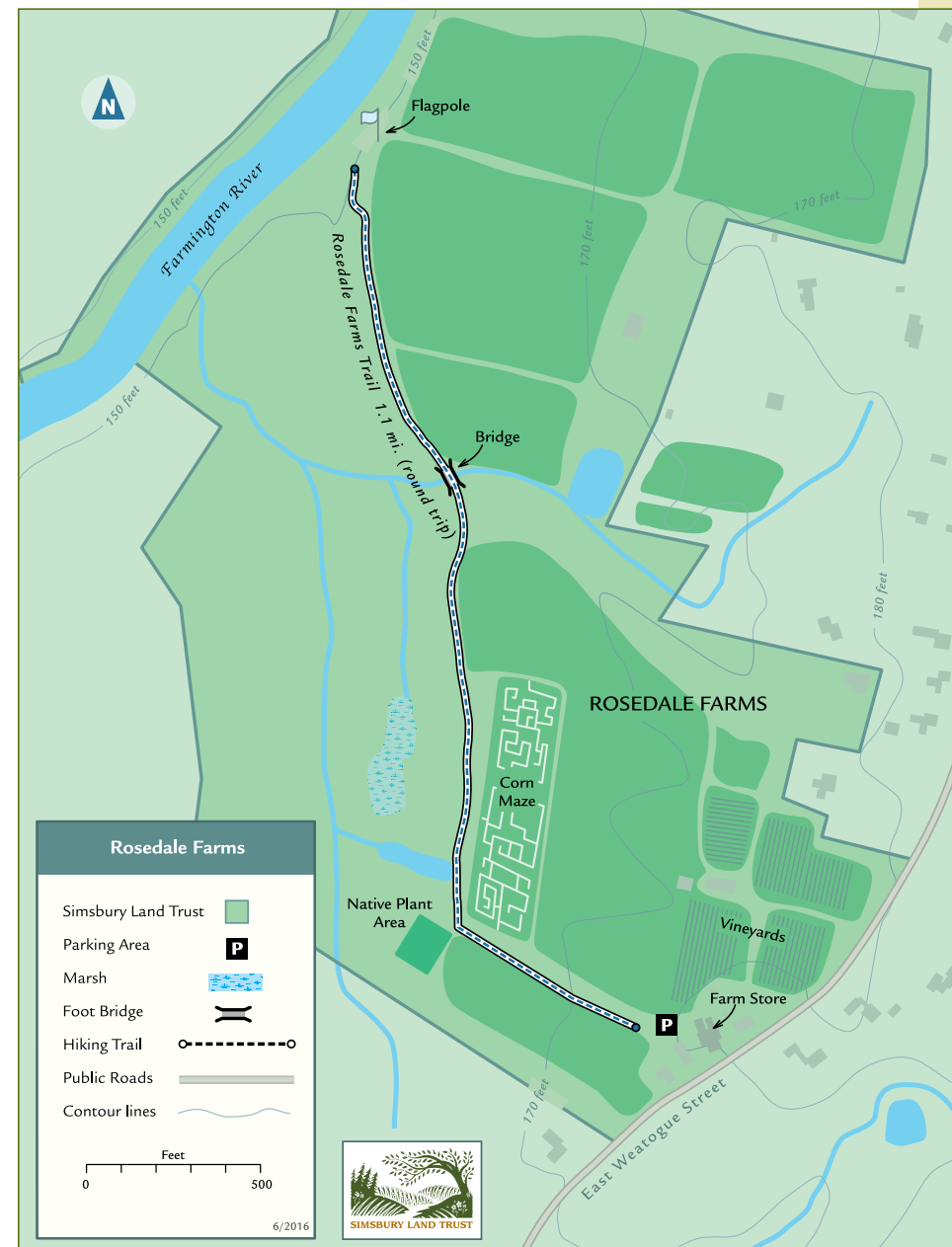
Rosedale Farms is a historic working farm whose agricultural character is permanently protected by a Simsbury Land Trust conservation easement. Rosedale Farms consists of 109 acres of fine agricultural soil. The farm abuts and protects 1,400 feet of Farmington River frontage and associated wetlands. The mix of fields, woods and waterways provides rich wildlife habitat and is part of the Farmington River wildlife corridor. Educational signage is present at the edge of the trail, describing the farmland soils, local geology, and the history of Rosedale Farms.

The trail follows the existing farm road past fruit trees and the entrance to the seasonal corn maze (tickets for the maze are available in the late summer and fall at the farm store). Take a moment to explore the native plant garden that has been planted near the bend of the trail near an old farm pond. The trail continues along the edges of the fields, across a small ravine, towards the Farmington River. The end of the trail offers an opportunity to enjoy glimpses of various birds and other wildlife to be found near the river and surrounding habitats.

Note: This trail is subject to closure at times to accommodate farm operations.



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Tulmeadow Farm Trail

ACREAGE: 260 YEARS ACQUIRED: 2005, 2008, 2009

Location

Use the Tulmeadow Farm store entrance off Old Farms Road. Continue to the rear of the store parking lot and park. The trail begins at the SLT kiosk and follows the existing farm road.

Distance

Almost 1 mile to the border with Town property. The trail on Town property continues an additional 0.4 miles to Town Forest Road. This is not a loop trail. Round trip to Town Forest Road and back is less than 3 miles.

Terrain

Level to undulating hills.

Features

Tulmeadow Farm is a historic working farm whose agricultural character is permanently protected by a Simsbury Land Trust conservation easement. Since 1768, Tulmeadow Farm, Simsbury's oldest continuously operated small business, has been owned and farmed by generations of the Tuller family. The farm road trail takes you through the middle of 60 acres of uninterrupted fields of corn and hay, affording a view of surrounding hills and a view of Heublein Tower on Talcott Mountain. Informational signs along this portion of the trail explain the surrounding geology and the importance of this farmland.

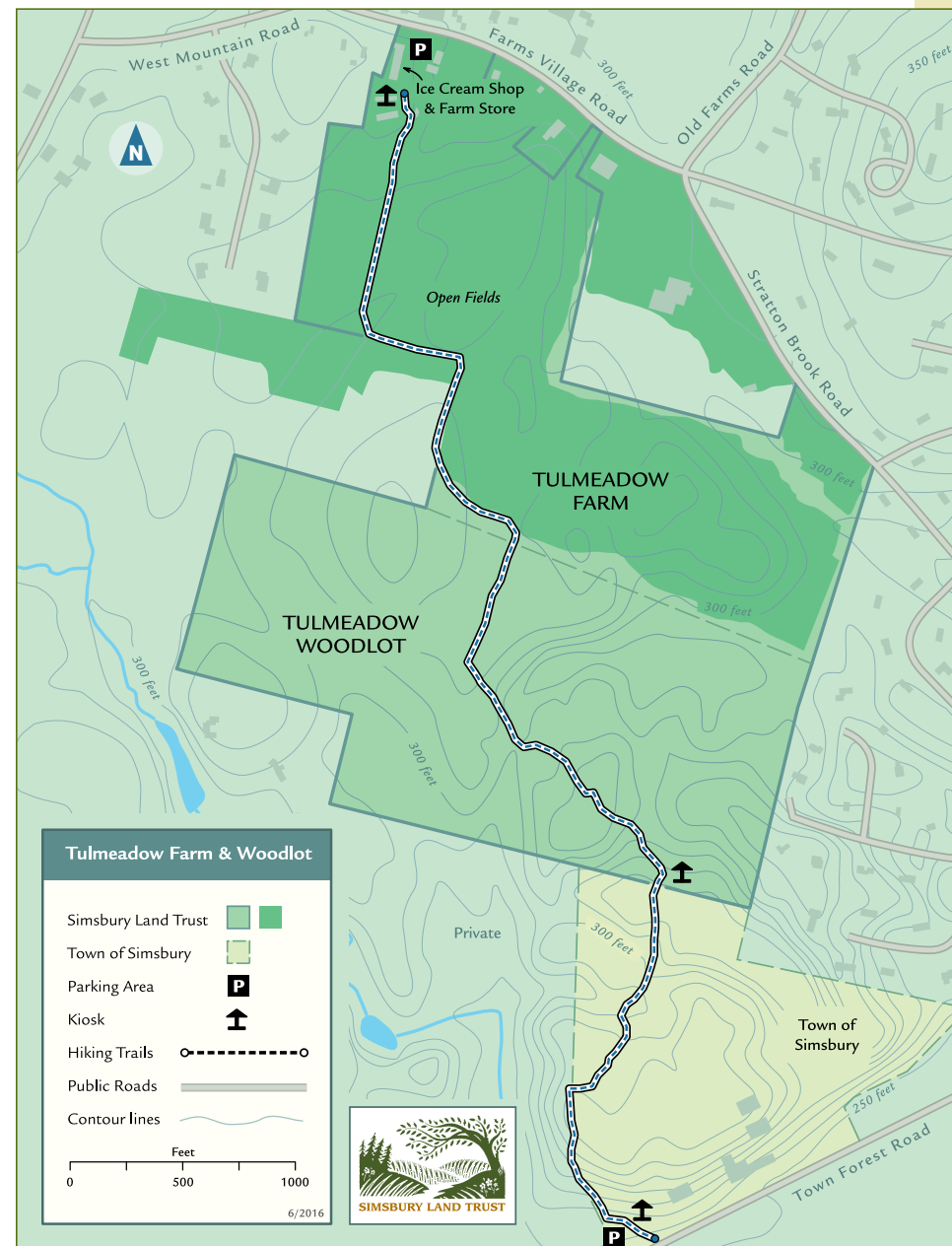


Leaving the open fields, the trail continues in a gently undulating course through the center of Tulmeadow's 73-acre woodlot. Along this trail you may see evidence of the woodlot's management. In consultation with a professional forester and a long-term forest management plan, the farm harvests mature timber every 10 to 15 years to make space for new growth that replaces it. Such management is necessary to ensure the diversity of both young and old trees necessary to a healthy forest.

Approximately 0.4 miles along the woodlot trail a kiosk marks the border of the Tulmeadow Woodlot and Town property. The trail continues through the Town property for another 0.4 miles to Town Forest Road.

Note that portions of the trail are subject to closure at times to accommodate farm operations.

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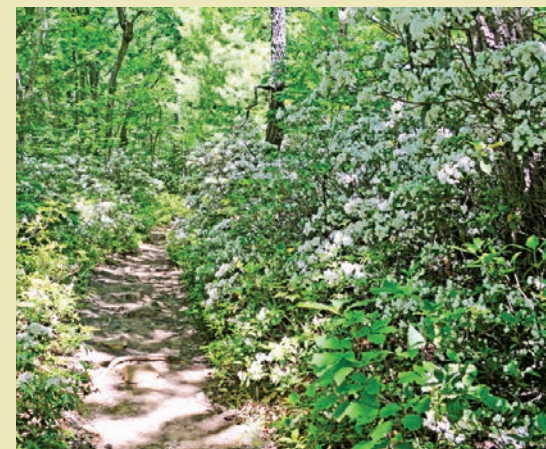


EASTERN RIDGE

Metacomet Ridge, which serves as Simsbury's eastern border, is notable not only for its imposing presence but for its unique geology and ecology. The extensive Metacomet Trail (a part of the New England Trail) runs the length of the ridge, and Penwood and Talcott Mountain State Parks are situated there. The panoramic Heublein Tower Trail is doubtless the most heavily hiked trail in the valley. Hikers will find these trails offer beautiful and scenic vistas.

Metacomet Ridge is the result of continental forces that took place 200 million years ago. The basalt crest of the ridge is the product of a series of massive lava flows hundreds of feet thick that welled up in the faults created by the breaking apart of the North American continent from Eurasia and Africa. Erosion and deposition between the eruptions deposited layers of sediment between the lava flows which eventually lithified into sedimentary rock layers between the basalt. These layers were eventually faulted and tilted upward. Subsequent erosion wore away the weaker sedimentary rock at a faster rate than the basalt layers leaving the tilting edges of the basalt sheets exposed, creating the dramatic cliff faces we see today.

Due to the unique weathering characteristics of basalt, the western edge of the ridge is fractured and covered with rock debris called talus. Along with the effect of west-to-east weather patterns, this has created specialized microenvironments. The windswept and exposed summit is another environment not seen elsewhere in Simsbury. When hiking there carry a plant identification guide and pay particular attention to the smaller species you find. In the spring depressions along the ridge fill with water, forming numerous vernal pools, which are vital for the survival of local toads, frogs, salamanders and turtles. In the fall, hawks and other birds of prey ride the thermals and follow the ridge during their migration.



James Trails

ACREAGE: 9 YEAR ACQUIRED: 1992

Location

The trail entrance and kiosk can be found on the right side of Metacom Drive just before mailbox # 30.

Distance

The trails through this property are short (0.5 miles) but lead to longer trails along the transmission line corridor and the New England Trail. This is not a loop trail.

Terrain

Short moderate climbs lead to level and undulating trails. In portions, the trail has rocky and uneven footing. A short steep climb on the unblazed trail leads to the Metacomet Trail.

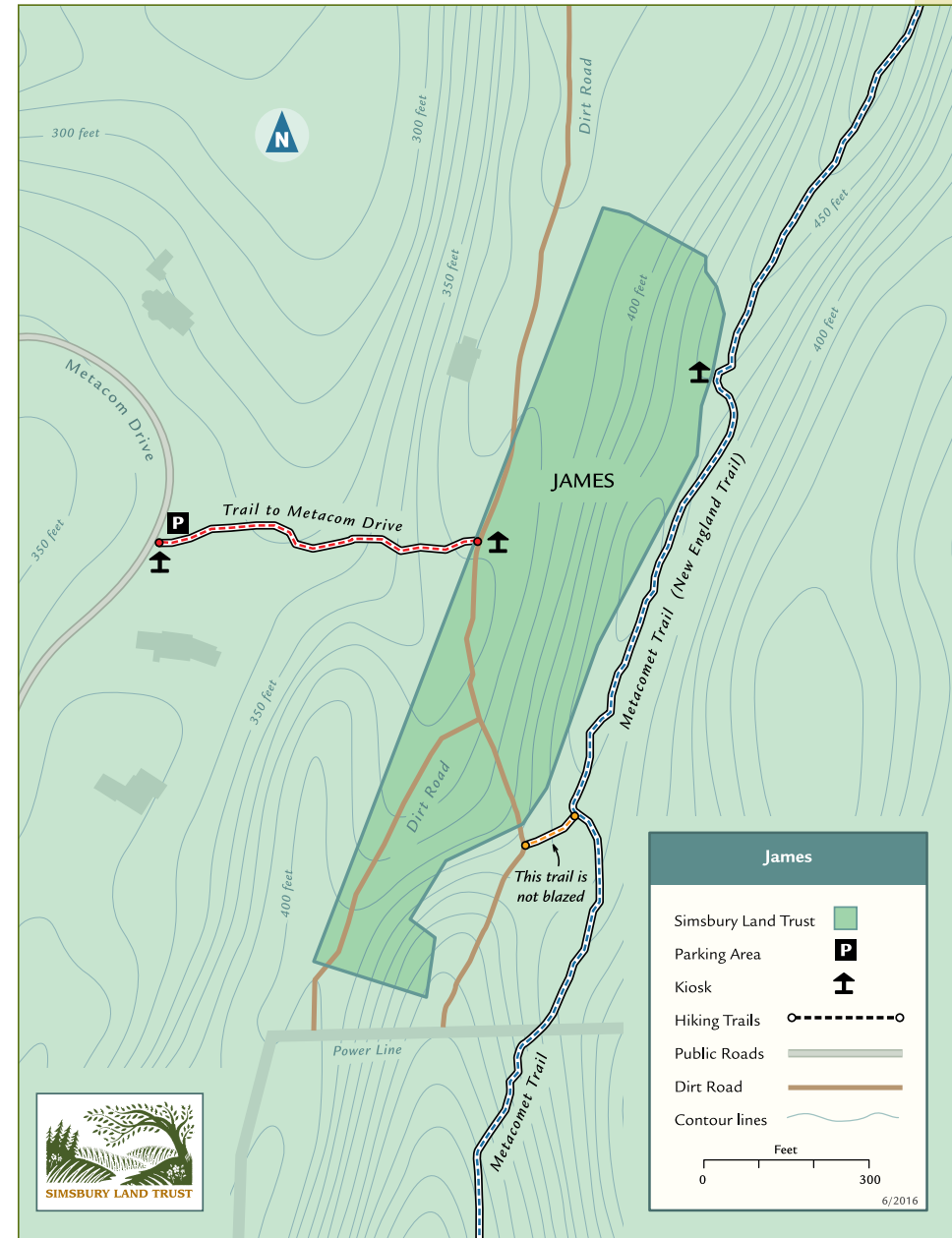
Features

The 9-acre James property provides access via a short unblazed trail to the Metacomet Trail section of the New England Trail, the blue-blazed national scenic trail along the eastern traprock ridge line. Trails along the old dirt roads on the James property also connect to off-property trails in the transmission line corridor that runs parallel to the ridge line at a lower elevation.

The eastern traprock ridge creates an unusual variety of distinct habitats which support a number of state-listed uncommon, rare, or endangered plants and animals. They also provide exceptional hiking opportunities and spectacular views of the Farmington Valley. The trails through the transmission line corridor offer a more open hiking experience. Vegetation management in this corridor has created valuable thicket habitat used by many species of wildlife.



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Owen-Mortimer Trail

ACREAGE: 28 YEAR ACQUIRED: 2008

Location

On the east side of East Weatogue Street, just south of Riverside Road. Park on Riverside Road or at the Tanager Hill (proposed) parking area.

Distance

0.5 miles.

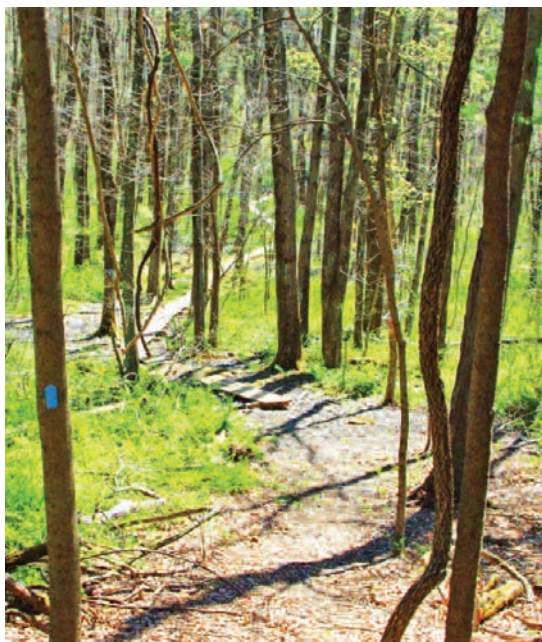
Terrain

A wide and easy trail, the first third of which is on a moderate grade.

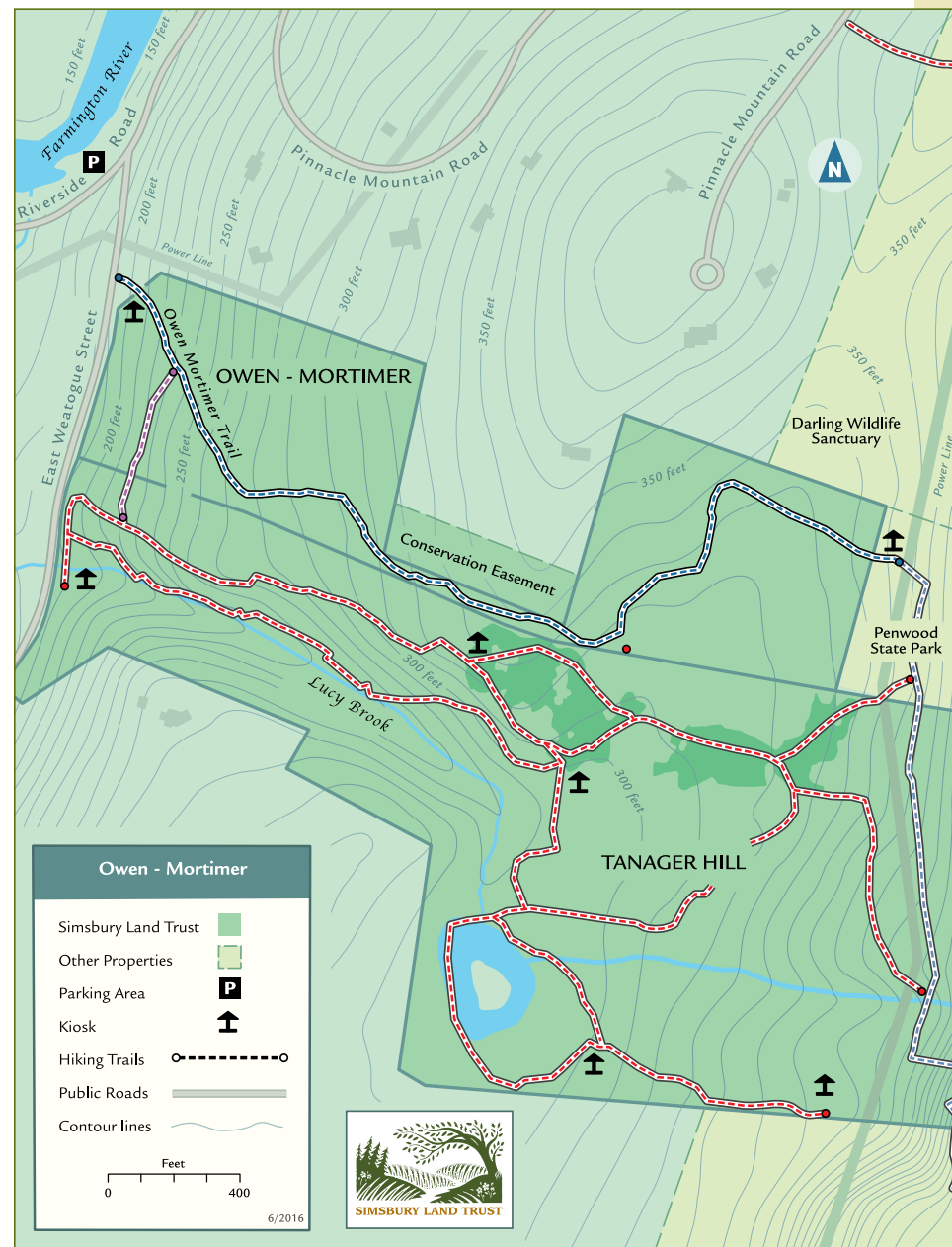
Features

The Owen-Mortimer trail begins with an uphill section on an old farm road surrounded by numerous stone walls and cedar trees. Simsbury Land Trust has done extensive work here to remove invasive plant species. Further on you will be surrounded by mature forest with large pines and oaks. About half way up, the trail runs alongside the open fields of the Tanager Hill property. The upper third of the trail has boardwalks which take a hiker through an extensive wetland with abundant wildlife and interesting plants.

This area has several interconnected open space parcels to explore. To the northeast is the Town-owned Darling Wildlife Sanctuary and trail. To the south is the SLT's beautiful and inspiring Tanager Hill property with its meandering trail system. A short walk south along the utility right of way allows one to connect to a trail up to Penwood State Park. Importantly, Owen-Mortimer has been chosen to be the first section of a future east-west trail connecting the New England Trail with the Appalachian Trail.



MANAGED BY SIMSBURY LAND TRUST



Tanager Hill Trails

ACREAGE: 75 YEAR ACQUIRED: 2015

Location

Park off the east side of East Weatogue Street, just south of Terry's Plain Road.

Distance

More than 2 miles total. Tanager Hill trails are not blazed but highly interconnected and easy to follow. This park-like affect is designed to encourage a more meandering visit. Several kiosks help with location and provide information.

Terrain

Trails are wide, flat and easy. The western end of the property is steep as is the eastern connection to Penwood State Park. There is a 500-foot elevation change top to bottom. Areas can be wet seasonally.

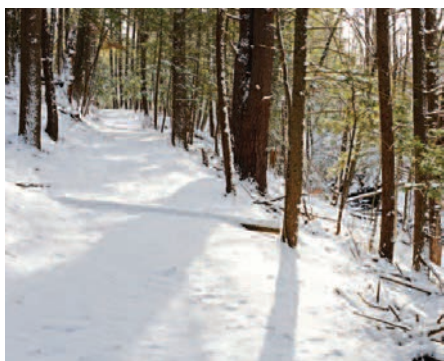


Features

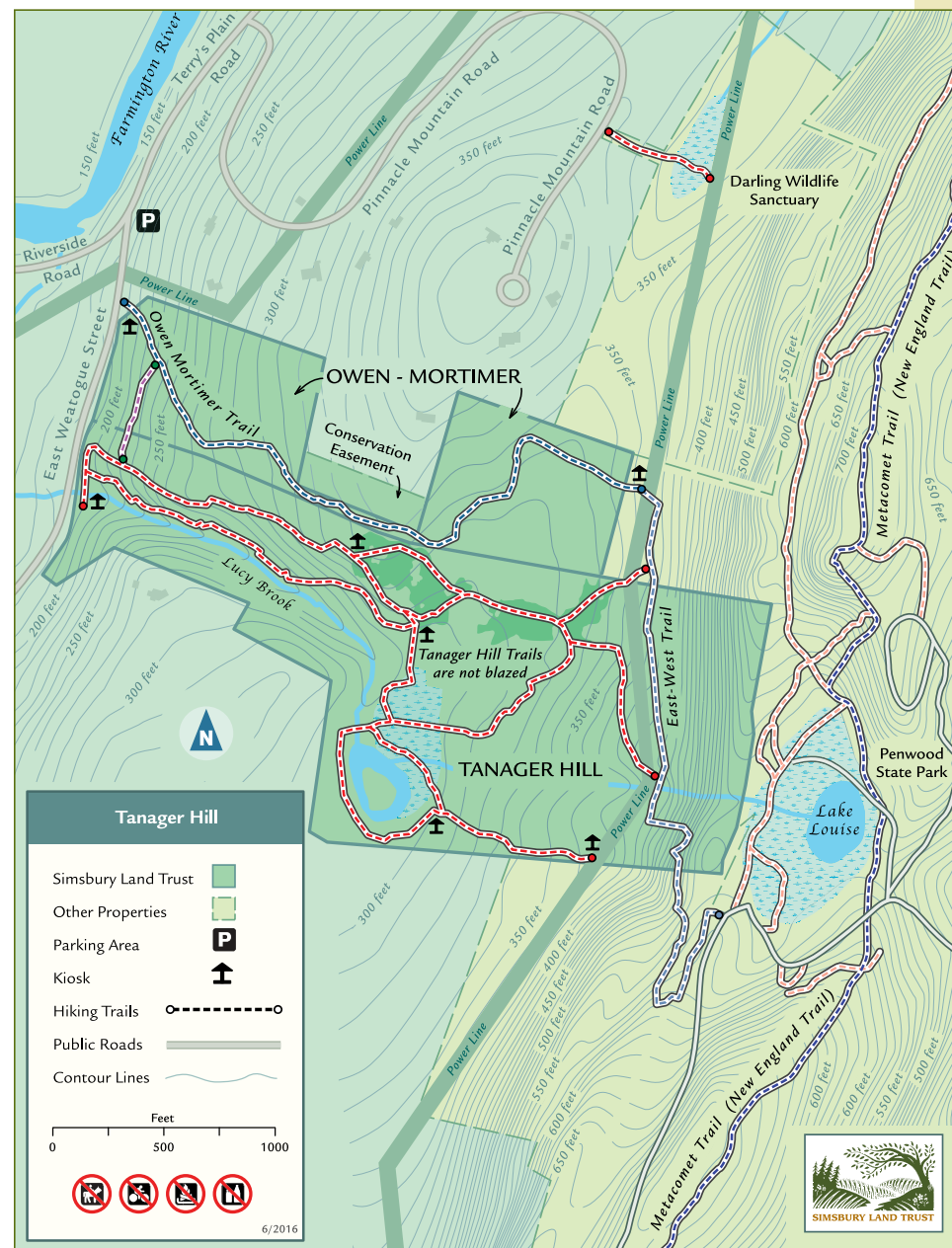
Geographically Tanager Hill is the most diverse parcel of preserved open space in Simsbury. The property begins just above the Farmington River flood plain and climbs by connecting trails, ultimately through a basalt talus field to the top of Talcott Mountain. A large portion of the property is on a glacial moraine at the base of the mountain with extensive wetlands, including a farm pond and vernal pools. Lucy Brook runs along the entire southern boundary cutting a deep ravine in the redstone as it heads to the river. Adding to the diversity are 15 acres of open meadow and extensive, mature upland forest. This is a wonderful area for bird watching as there are numerous species of birds taking advantage of the varied habitats for nesting and as a

stopping point while migrating. To the north the property is bounded by the SLT's Owen-Mortimer property which borders on the Town-owned Darling Wildlife Sanctuary.

This area was designated as a Primary Conservation Area in the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance's Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project conducted in 2006. Please stay on the paths to help protect the many sensitive species that live here.



MANAGED BY SIMSBURY LAND TRUST



Glover Trail

ACREAGE: 8 YEAR ACQUIRED: 2009

Location

Bordered on three sides by Hartford Road, Princess Lane and King Philip Road. Parking and trail access off King Philip Road.



Distance

0.4 miles of trail.

Terrain

Flat, and can be very wet after it rains.

Features

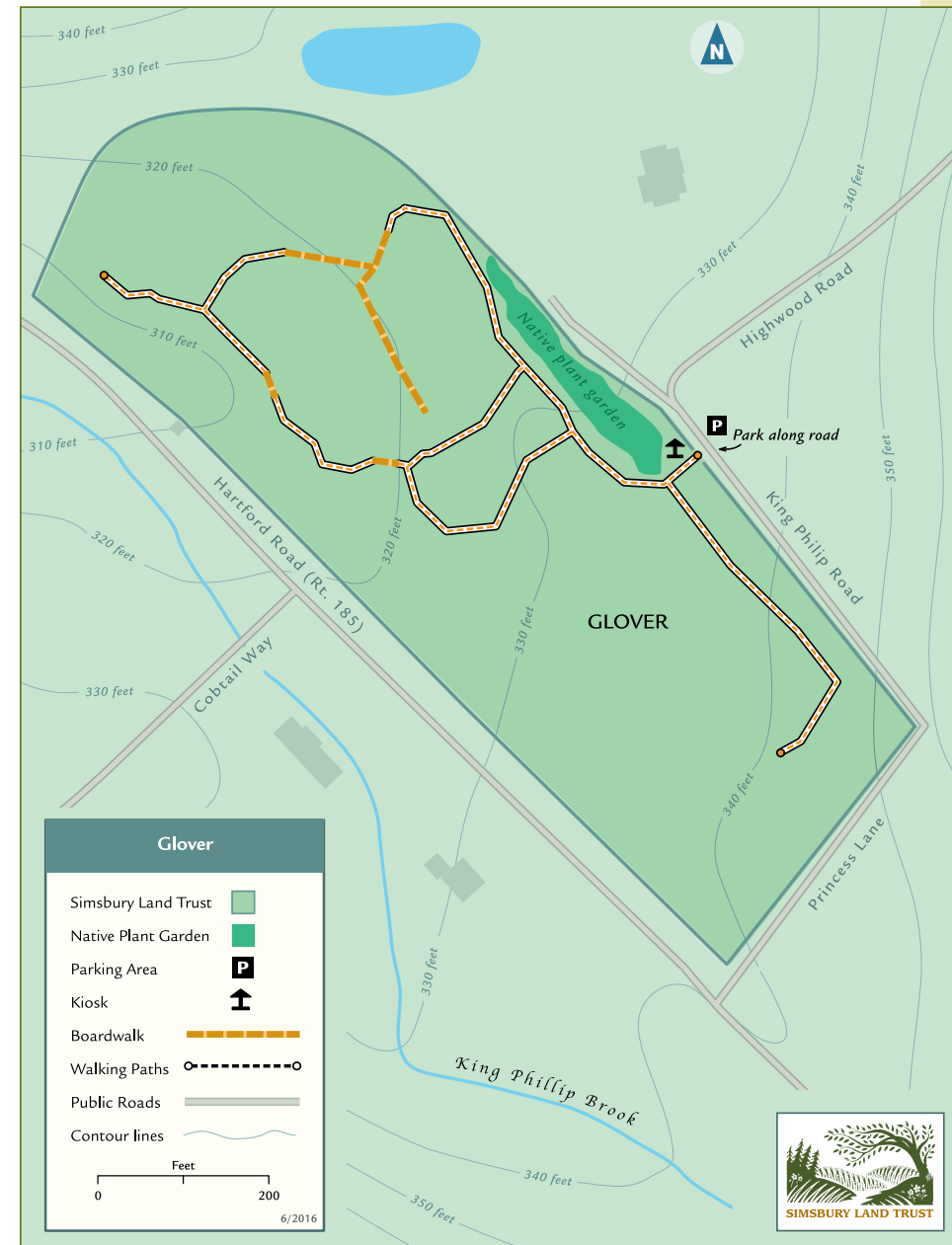
The Glover property is a wet meadow, one of the few at this elevation in the area. It contains many interesting plants including blue vervain, mountain mint and Joe Pye Weed. Trails through the western part of the property cross wet grassland and thickets with the help of boardwalks and two small bridges. The eastern half of the property is a drier, mostly open upland field. There has been extensive removal of a heavy invasive plant infiltration which has enabled the start of a campaign to reintroduce native plant species. The SLT has started a native plant garden along the trail just to the right of the trailhead.

This population of plants will begin to provide native wildlife with more species-appropriate food and shelter over time.

Importantly, the garden serves as a reference to all of us as to what may be done in our own yards to contribute to local biodiversity. The property already plays host to an impressive variety of birds and butterflies.



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Penwood State Park

Location

Access the park from the north via Wintonbury Road and the Metacomet Trail or from the south by a clearly marked entrance off the north side of Route 185, roughly across from the entrance to Heublein Tower Trail.

Distance

From end to end the trail is just over 3 miles.

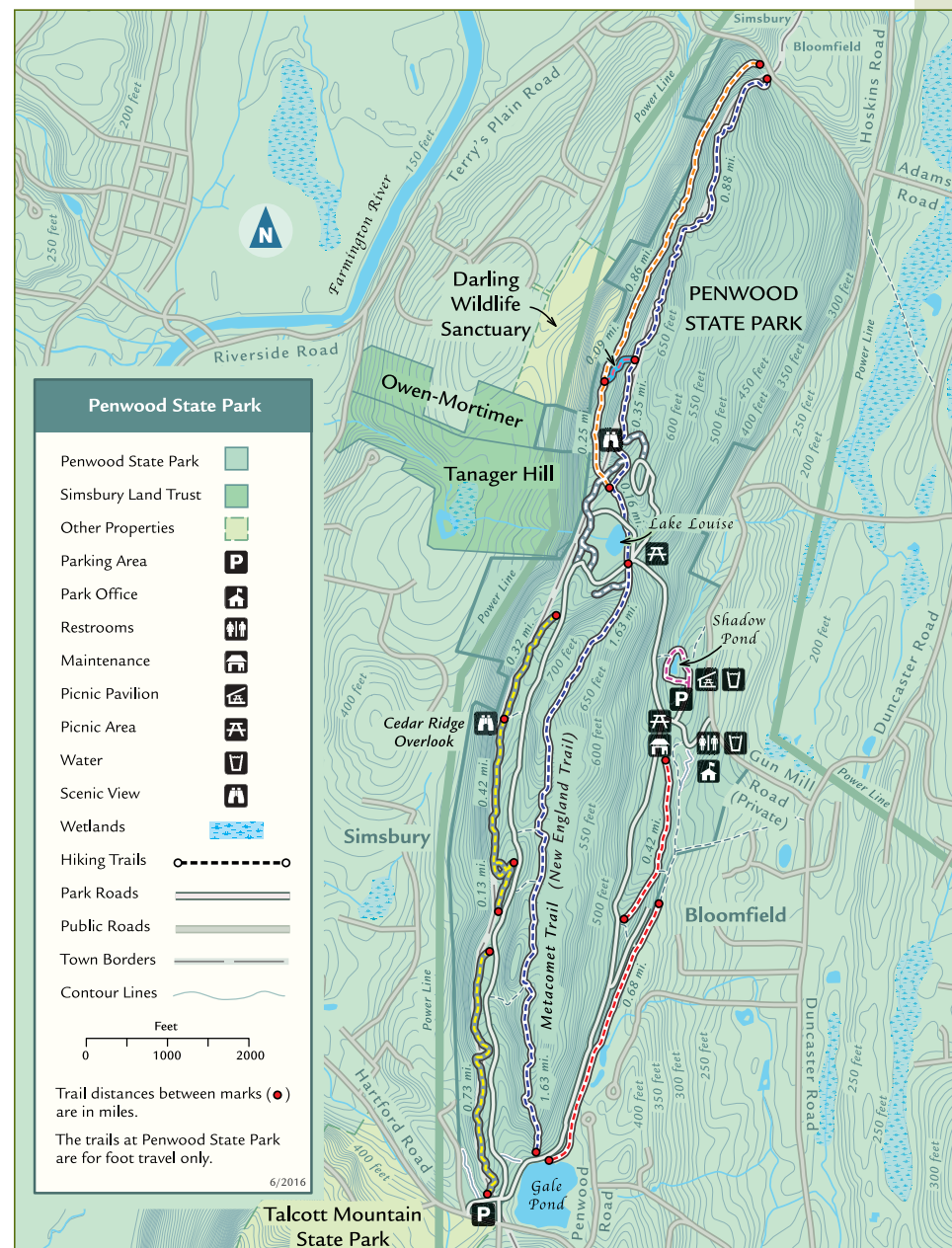
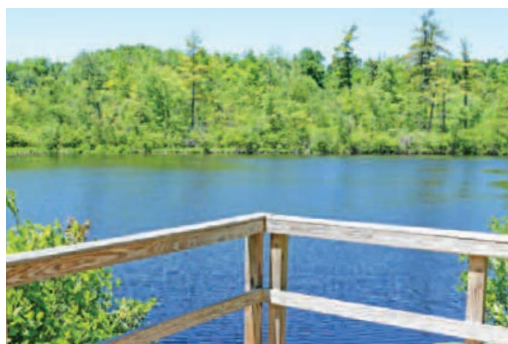
Terrain

Level to undulating to moderately steep.

Features

The 800 acres of Penwood were donated to the state in 1944 by Connecticut industrialist Curtis Veeder. Penwood is a versatile destination, offering a series of interconnected trails traversing varied terrain, some with wonderful views. A section of the Metacomet Trail runs north-south along the length of the park as well. In the warmer months you can reach the picnic area by car along the main route.

The western trails offer great views of the valley and access to Lake Louise. The white-marked trail around the lake is a nature walk complete with a boardwalk through the marsh. Though there is minimal access to the water, the thickets of trees surrounding the lake teem with wildlife. To the north, along the blue-blazed Metacomet Trail, is the “Pinnacle,” a ledge with a spectacular view of Simsbury. Penwood connects to the Simsbury Land Trust’s Owen-Mortimer, Tanager Hill and James trails.



Talcott Mountain State Park

Location

Access the park from the south side of Route 185, roughly across from the entrance to Penwood State Park. The Tower Trail begins on the left, clearly marked, halfway up the access road.

Distance

1.25 miles one way to the tower.

Terrain

Steep for the first 1,000 feet, then the trail is fairly flat. Most of the hike is easy, but be extremely careful near the cliff edges.

Features

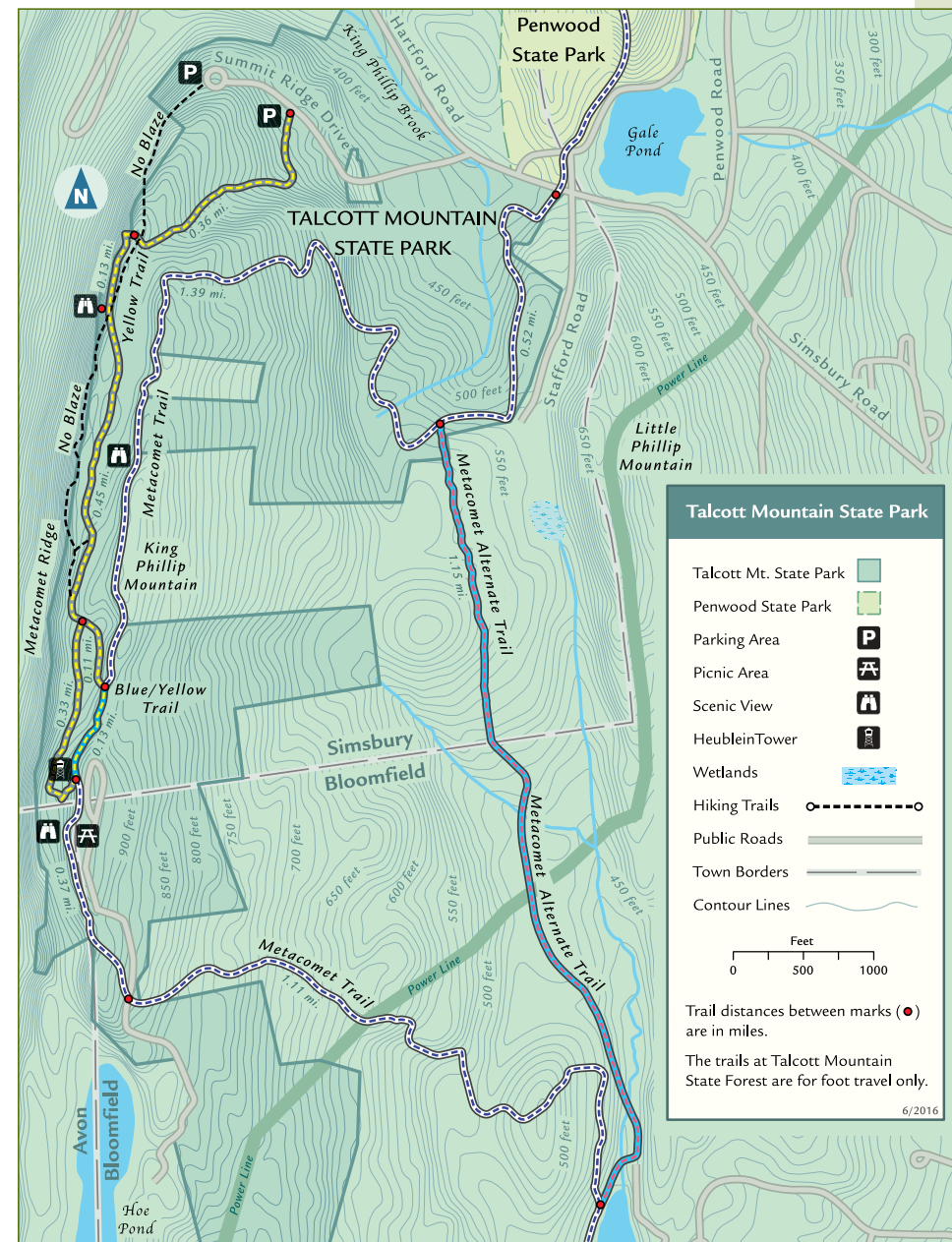
Talcott Mountain is the most dominant natural feature of the Farmington Valley and it showcases the most notable manmade landmark — Heublein Tower. In addition to the tower, Talcott Mountain State Park includes King Philip's Cave, another important local landmark.

Upon reaching the edge of the cliff, you are treated to a stunning view of the river valley and beyond. This ridge is popular spot to view fall foliage as well as the migration of hawks and other birds as they ride the thermals. Just below is King Philip's Cave. Some say King Philip may have taken refuge there as his troops burned down the settlement of Simsbury. Resist the temptation to take the trail down to the cave as it is very dangerous. Further along the trail on the right is a small vernal pool formed from rainwater trapped by the underlying rock.

The Heublein Tower is the most recent of five towers built here and was completed as a country retreat in 1914 by Gilbert F. Heublein. The State now owns the tower, and with the help of the Friends of Heublein Tower the building has been restored and is open to the public.

For a loop trail continue east from the tower to the junction with blue-blazed Metacomet Trail. At the junction a left turn returns to Route 185 and a right turn leads to MDC Reservoir No. 6 off Albany Avenue (Route 44) in West Hartford.

For additional information about the park and the Heublein Tower operating schedule please visit the Talcott Mountain State Park page on the Connecticut DEEP website.



Metacomet Trail (PART OF THE NEW ENGLAND TRAIL)

Location

Metacomet Trail is a section of the New England Trail system that extends along the Metacomet Ridge from Meriden to Lake Sunapee in New Hampshire. Access the Simsbury portion from several points, including Talcott Mountain State Park and Penwood State Park, and also the Simsbury Land Trust's Owen-Mortimer, Tanager Hill and James trails.

Distance

7 miles (Simsbury portion).

Terrain

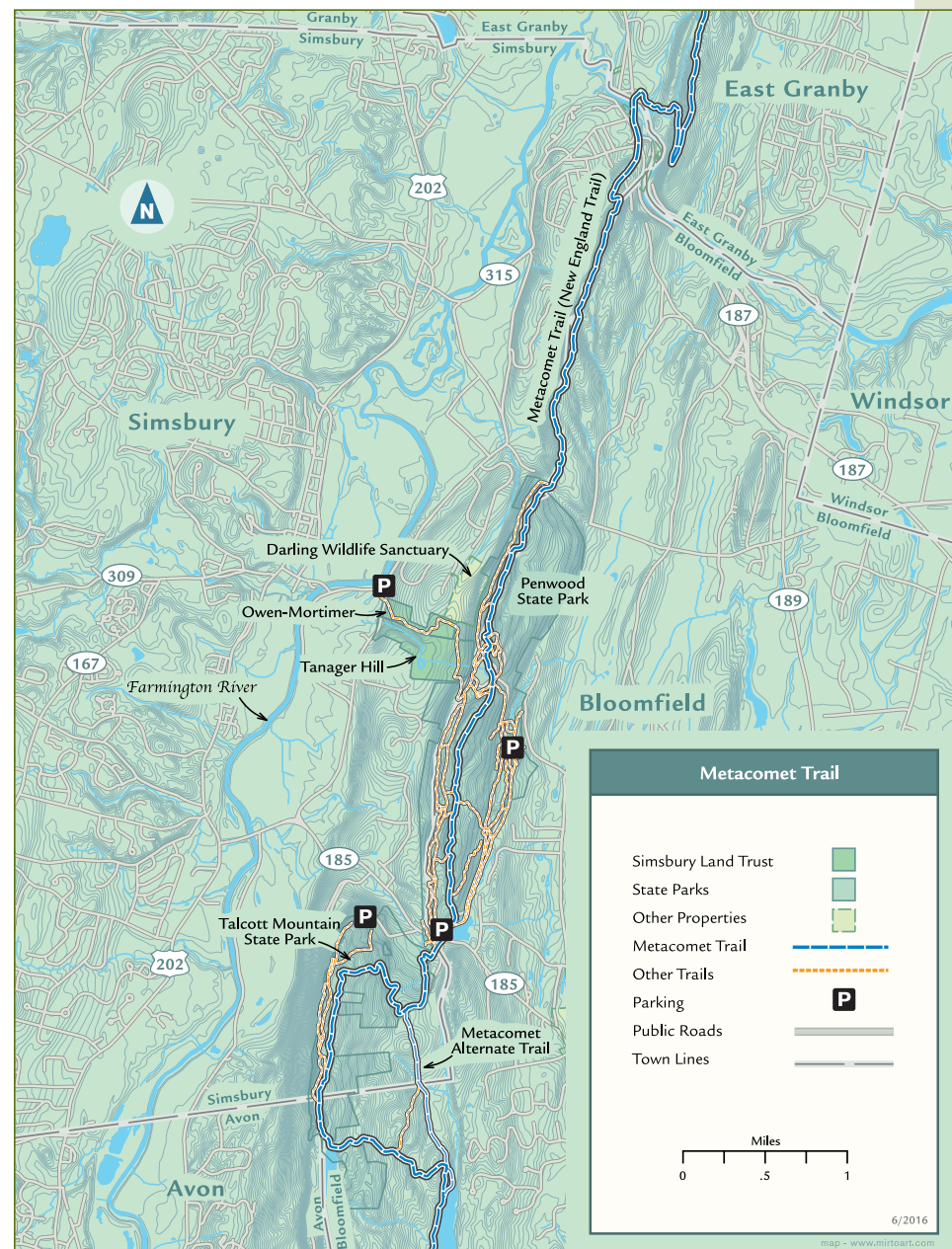
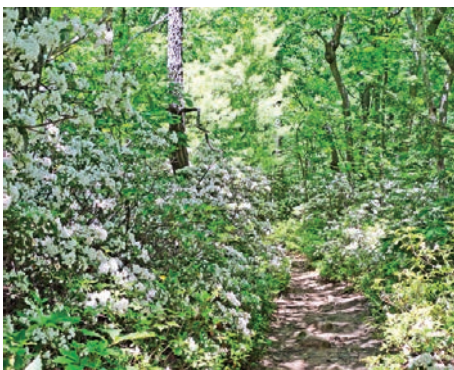
Ranges from smooth and easy to rough and treacherous.

Features

The traprock ridge here is formed from three layers of volcanic basalt sandwiching layers of sedimentary rock, with their angled edges facing west. It offers views that are unequaled in the valley.

The entire trail is marked with blue blazes; be wary of numerous unmarked side trails and access roads. The northern section of the trail begins 0.25 mile up Mountain Road (off Route 189 in Tariffville.) On the right, stone pillars and the remains of a cast iron gate mark the road that led to Bartlett's Tower. Built in 1889 as a pavilion and bowling alley, Bartlett's Tower originally attracted picnicking day trippers from Hartford. Traveling by train to the Tariffville station, and then by carriage to the 70-foot tower, visitors enjoyed varied recreation and the famous panoramic view. Today, a chimney sits at the top of the slope — all that remains of the tower, which burned down on May 24, 1936. Just north of the chimney is a good viewpoint.

Continue following the blue blazes along the ridge. Just past the second power line you'll find an interesting side trail to the right along the cliff; this leads to yet another scenic viewpoint. Down an incline the trail rejoins the blue-blazed trail, and nearby you can see the kettle pond and an open ledge with a view of the Farmington Valley. This portion of the trail ends after 2.5 miles on Wintonbury Road. The trail continues in Penwood State Park.



SHORT WALKS

Case

ACREAGE: 13 YEAR ACQUIRED: 1994

MANAGED BY SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Location

On Ferry Lane, near the intersection of Terry's Plain Road. (Note the sign describing the Pent Road Ferry.)

Distance

Various.

Terrain

Easy and flat.



Features

In the 1600s Ferry Road continued to the center of town and connected the town's two militia fields. There was no bridge at the time; people crossed the river by ferry. Nearby state wildlife land makes this a great place to observe hawks and a myriad of other wildlife.

Further down Ferry Lane toward Terry's Plain Road lies the 13-acre Case property. Part of the SLT's management plan for this property was restoring approximately six acres at the center of the site to a natural wet meadow habitat. There is a network of walking paths throughout the site, and these provide great views of the meadow and the tremendous variety of plant life, insects, birds, and small mammals that abound here. Hikers will pass through a section with a cattail swamp, alder thickets, and saplings of evergreen and hardwood, a sharp contrast to the more open stretches.

Penwood Brook, which runs through the property along the north boundary on its way to the river, adds another wildlife corridor to the site. The "duck pond" at the northeast corner is actually a manmade fire pond leased and maintained by the volunteer fire department. We ask that hikers respect the signs that indicate points where the paths end at neighboring private property.

Ketchin Quarry

ACREAGE: 4 YEAR ACQUIRED: 1994

MANAGED BY SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Location

On the east side of Quarry Road just north of Pharos Farm/George Hall Farm. Please park on the expanded shoulder of the road marked by the Simsbury Land Trust sign.

Distance

0.25 miles.

Terrain

A very short and uneven path. Walk 30 feet up to a narrow landing to view the vertical stone ledges outlining the quarried area. Do not proceed into the quarry or attempt to climb the walls because of the danger of poor footing, vertical drops, and rockslides.

Features

Dating back at least to the early 1800s, this quarry was part of a nearby farm and provided stone for various small projects such as foundation, wells, and fences. In the early 1890s, William Ketchin and his father, two of the area's best known masons, purchased the quarry and made it into a sizable commercial venture. Over the next 25 years, stone from this quarry was used to build many of the Ensign Bickford/Dyno Nobel buildings, the Methodist Church, Central School, Town Hall and the Tariffville Fire Stations, among others. Today the Simsbury Land Trust owns the quarry. Watch for informational signs along this short trail.



SHORT WALKS

Knapp

ACREAGE: 29 YEAR ACQUIRED: 1984
MANAGED BY SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Location

Off of Hedgehog Lane, between Saddle Ridge Drive and Victoria Drive.
Parking available a short walk away at Meadow Pond Park.

Distance

A very short walk (a few hundred feet) will take you to an observation platform.

Terrain

A short path from the road leads down to the level swamp trail. Trail may be muddy depending on weather conditions.



Features

The observation platform affords a close up view of the Knapp property's red maple swamp, the most common type of inland wetland in Connecticut. Red maple swamps have a mound-and-pool topography, where trees (primarily red maples) and shrubs are rooted in mounds created by tussock sedges. They are, perhaps, most noticed in early autumn when the trees turn bright scarlet, hinting at the colors that will soon follow in upland areas.

Red maple swamps are valued for their flood control, groundwater recharge, as well as their ability to improve water quality by filtering sediments and other pollutants. Such wetlands are often called the kidneys of surface water systems. Additionally these swamps are home to many plants such as buttonbush, black alder, blueberries and silky dogwoods. Beavers, ducks, herons and numerous other bird species are found throughout these wetlands.

Farmington Canal

Location

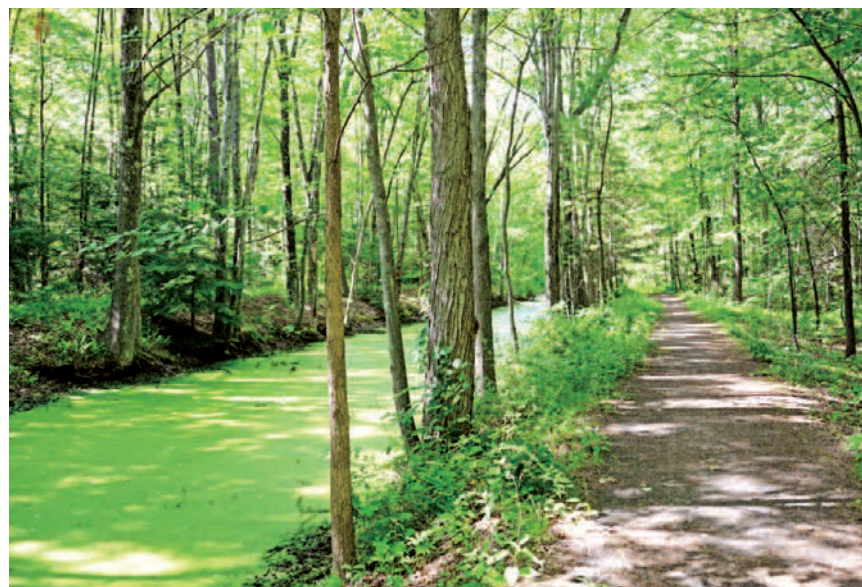
In Simsbury, enter Canal Place off of Route 10. Follow Old Canal Way to a small parking lot on the right and walk the cinder path to a nicely preserved section of the canal. Use the benches here to sit and enjoy this pleasant spot.

Distance

Very short.

Features

The Farmington Canal remains one of the most interesting historical features in the valley. Conceived to provide commercial access to the interior of the state, the canal was an engineering feat and a monumental construction project involving all the communities it passed through. The canal was typically 36-feet wide at the top, 20-feet wide at the bottom and four-feet deep. Canal boats were pulled by horses walking alongside on towpaths.



Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund

Since 1976, the Simsbury Land Trust has brought over 1,100 acres of farmland and open spaces under its protection. We have built an extensive network of trails and related parking and access areas on these lands for the use and enjoyment of the public.

Simsbury Land Trust is committed to protecting these lands and to keeping them open for our community to enjoy in perpetuity.

Acquisition of these properties is only the first step; the long term commitment to preservation also requires that the SLT have resources adequate for the perpetual care and maintenance of all of these properties. While the volunteer support the SLT receives is tremendous, over the long term not all of the necessary stewardship and maintenance can be accomplished solely with volunteer assistance. Consequently, a permanent source of funds is required to enable the Simsbury Land Trust to fulfill its commitment of caring for these properties.

There are a number of expenses associated with the Simsbury Land Trust programs and activities needed to care for the land, the trails and other infrastructure. The endowment fund will provide a permanent source of income to cover these costs.

We are asking you to consider helping us build our endowment by making a gift to the SLT Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund. This will ensure a permanent source of funds to care for the properties we worked so hard to protect. Unlike other contributions to the SLT, this donation must be made directly to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Our fund, called the Simsbury Land Trust Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund, has been named to honor the commitment to land preservation in Simsbury and over 25 years of tireless effort on behalf of the SLT by Dick Davis, long time SLT Trustee and past president. We would like to honor his outstanding contributions by continually increasing this fund.

Building this endowment fund will help ensure that the property now in the care of the Simsbury Land Trust will stay protected and open to the public in perpetuity. Please consider a contribution today!

Donations to the Simsbury Land Trust Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund should be made payable to: HFPG Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund.

Mail the checks to:

Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Simsbury Land Trust Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund
10 Columbus Boulevard, 8th Floor
Hartford, CT 06106



Simsbury Land Trust trails featured in this book were built with membership donations. Are you a member?

Please Join Us! Here are a few of the reasons for you to join today:

- Simsbury Land Trust has over 16 miles of trails for you to hike and explore.
- You can find trail maps for all SLT trails on our website — www.simsburylandtrust.org.
- 32 beautiful properties throughout Simsbury — permanently protected.
- Green Scenes, our documentary film and discussion program is held several times each year — free of charge — at the Simsbury Public Library!
- Over 10 different hikes offered each year on area trails — free of charge.
- Interesting and educational talks — free of charge — are given several times a year at the library.

Simsbury Land Trust is able to offer these activities and programs at no charge thanks to membership contributions from generous area residents. These donations also fund stewardship of our properties, including educational signs, maps, trail construction, maintenance, publications and communications.

MEMBERSHIP

☐ I/we would like to make a membership donation to the Simsbury Land Trust.

- ☐ \$1,000 Star ☐ \$250 Sustainer ☐ \$60 Family ☐ Other \$ _____
☐ \$ 500 Steward ☐ \$125 Sponsor ☐ \$40 Individual

All contributions are tax deductible.

- ☐ Enclosed is my check payable to SLT. Name (as you would like it to appear in membership listings): _____
- ☐ My employer will match my contribution. (Enclosed is a matching gift form.) Address _____ Phone _____
- ☐ How do I donate appreciated stock to the Simsbury Land Trust? Town _____ State _____ Zip _____
- ☐ Please send me more information on how to include the SLT in my will and/or estate planning. ☐ **YES.** I would like to receive monthly email updates about SLT news and events.
- E-mail _____
- ☐ I/We wish to remain anonymous.

NOTES

Celebrating our **local community**
every step of the *way*

Simsbury Bank is proud to support the stewardship of the **Simsbury Land Trust**, and its dedication to providing creative land conservation solutions that stand the test of time.

We take our role as a community bank seriously. It's not just about being a bank; it's about being an active community member, helping to preserve local initiatives and drive economic success.

That's the way banking should be.



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*Protecting open space
in Simsbury since 1976*

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