

Seventeen Walks: Maps and Descriptions

A guide to exploring Cheshire's hills, forests, rivers, and meadows. Includes bicycle trails, a canoe route, and places to X-C ski.

Bens Homestead Trail: rocky climb

Bicycle Trails: six rides, easy to strenuous

Bishop Farm: a short walk, good for children

Canoe Trail: Quinnipiac River, herons, turtles

Cheshire Park: family trails; pond, animals

Fresh Meadows Sanctuary: peat bog

Historic Town Ctr.: 18th & 19th c. buildings

Linear Park: inline skating, X-C skiing, bicycling

Mixville Pond: wild plants, pond views

Quinnipiac Park: river walk

Quinnipiac (Blue) Trail: sweeping views

Roaring Brook Falls: second highest in CT

...and more

Published jointly by:
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and
The Cheshire Land Trust

\$9.95



TRAILS

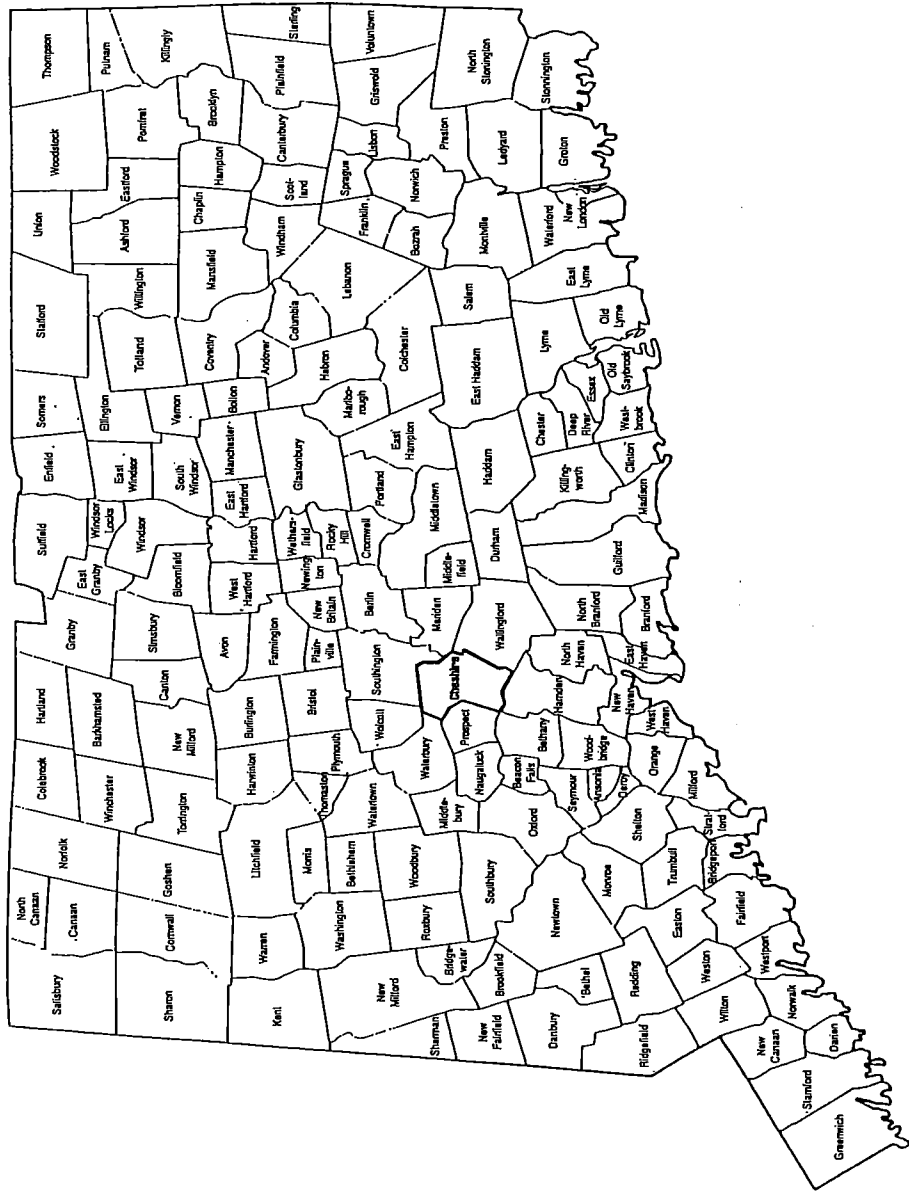
TRAILS



For additional property information
log onto the Town of Cheshire site
www.cheshirect.org/planningzoning/openspaces.html

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TRAILS

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Acknowledgments

The TRAILS committee thanks several people who helped with this book. Paul Cifaldi printed the publicity posters. Jocelyn Patrignelli of the Planning Department was our righthand woman! Mark Cummings (of the King's Mark Resource and Conservation Development Council) helped to blaze trails. Cheshire Town Manager Edward O'Neill, Jr. gave his full support to the project. Town Planner Richard Pfurr encouraged us, wrote the foreword, and helped to write the *Open Space* article.

A Note About Trespass

The trails described in this book are on property owned by the town of Cheshire and the Cheshire Land Trust who have given permission for their use. If you stay on these trails, you will not be trespassing on anyone else's property. If you wander off the trails, however, you may find yourself on someone else's property where permission to walk has not been given. That would be a trespass, and you would be responsible if you caused any damage. If you know you are not supposed to be there because of a **NO TRESPASSING** sign or you have been told, you may be committing a criminal act, and could be arrested. Please check the maps, and respect the wishes of other property owners.

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TRAILS TO EXPLORE

Trails are open from dawn to dusk.

Activities

- B = Bicycles (*non-motorized*)
- C = Canoeing
- D = Leashed dogs
- F = Fishing
- HA = Handicapped Access
- P = Picnicking
- SK = Skating
- SW = Swimming
- W = Walking
- X = Cross-Country Skiing

Facilities

- BL = Ballfields
- F = Fireplaces
- PLY = Playground *equip.*
- R = Restrooms
- T = Tables
- TN = Tennis

Level

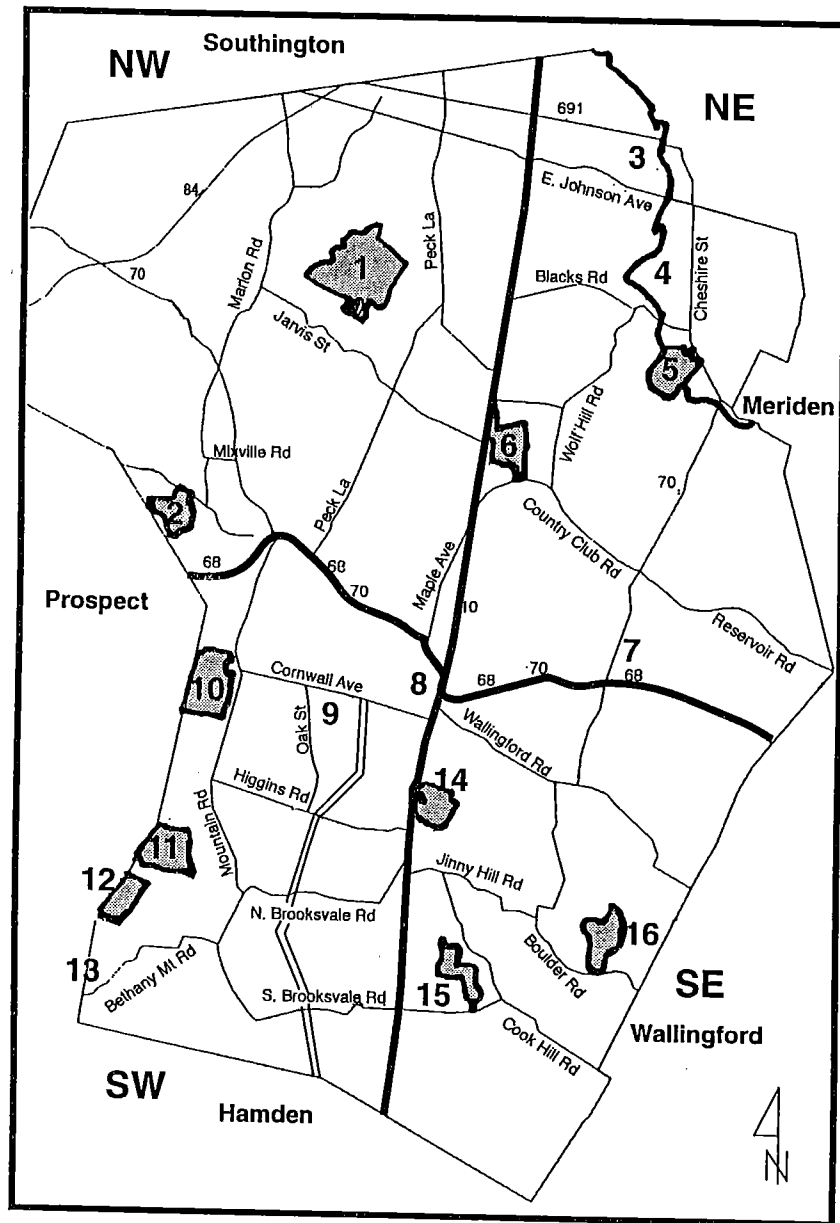
- E = Easy
- M = Medium
- D = Difficult




Horses are not permitted on any of these trails.

P#	Trail Name	Level	Activities	Facilities
28	1. Ten Mile River	E	D, W	R, PLY
32	2. Mixville Pond	E	D, F, P, SK, SW, W, X	
34	3. Riverbound Farm	E	W	
36	4. Canoe Trail		C, F	
38	5. Quinnipiac Park	E	D, F, S(<i>inline</i>), W	BL, PLY
42	6. Cheshire Park	E	D, F, P, W	R, TN, BL
44	7. Bishop Farm	E	D, W, X	
46	8. Historic District	E	B, D, P, W	
55	9. Linear Park	E	B, D, HA, SK, W, X	F (<i>at Lock 12</i>)
58	10. Bens Homestead	M-D	W	
61	11. Roaring Brook	M-D	P, W	F
64	12. Helen Russell	M-D	W	
66	13. Quinnipiac (Blue)	E-M	W	
70	14. Bartlem Park	E	D, F, P, W, X	R, PLY, BL
72	15. Fresh Meadows	E	D, F, P, W, X	
76	16. Cross Rocks Farm	E-M	D, W, X	
78	17. Bike Trails (all)	E-M-D	B, D, W	R, PLY, BL

Cheshire Trails



The Trails in this book are numbered on the map on the facing page. The names of the numbered trails are listed below. To find descriptions and maps of a given trail, look for the trail number at the top righthand corner of the page.

Example: **3** 

1. Ten Mile River Lowlands
2. Mixville Pond
3. Riverbound Farm
4. Canoeable Wildlife Habitat Trail
5. Quinnipiac Park
6. Cheshire Park
7. Bishop Farm
8. Historic District
9. Linear Park
10. Bens Homestead
11. Roaring Brook
12. Helen Russell Memorial
13. Quinnipiac (Blue) Trail
14. Bartlem Park
15. Fresh Meadows
16. Cross Rocks Farm
17. Bike Trails (all sections)



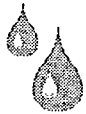
C.S. RAYH

Things to Know Before You Start Out

Safety: The trails are generally safe, but they are trails, not sidewalks. When you walk, watch out for things like roots, rocks, brambles and branches. Most of the trails are not physically demanding. Take it easy and enjoy yourself.



Shoes: On most trails any good walking shoes are fine. On the steep, rocky trails, hiking boots would be better.



Water in brooks and ponds may be clean, but you are better off bringing some water with you to drink.



Insects: There are gnats, black flies, and mosquitoes, so you may want to take some repellent with you. Check for ticks and tick bites because of the possibility of Lyme disease (not serious if treated soon after the bite.)

Snakes: You will probably never see a snake. If you do, rest assured it will be more afraid of you than you of it. The only poisonous snake in Connecticut is the Northern Copperhead, a tan snake with reddish-brown hour-glass shaped bands on its back. It will have a strong desire to leave you alone if you do the same to it.

If you have an accident and need help, you should call out for help. None of the trails is far from populated areas; someone may be nearby on the trail. A good idea is to tell someone before you start out that you are going on a trail, and when you might be expected back.

USE OF THE TRAILS

Hours of use: Dawn to dusk.

Horseback Riding: None of the trails is for horses.

Bicycles are permitted on some trails. See page 3.

Motorized vehicles are not allowed on any trail.

Camping: We're sorry but there is no camping allowed on any of the trails or in any park.

Fires: There are some picnic areas with stone fire boxes. No fires elsewhere, please.

Hunting/trapping: No, we want to share the space with other animals.

Swimming is permitted only in Mixville Pond.

Firearms: NO. Absolutely NO.

COURTESIES

Litter: If you bring something in, please bring it out.

Noise: One of the nice things about many of the trails is their quiet. Please help keep them that way. You don't have to whisper, but not shouting (other than in an emergency) would be nice. We would appreciate your keeping radios and other amplified devices out of the trail areas, or use them only with earphones.

Friendliness: Please say hello to people you meet on the trails. A smile would be OK, too.

Foreword

Visit any older park or school ground and chances are you will discover paths that meander off into the surrounding woods. Most likely these paths were established by children anxious to explore new territory. In these mini-wilderness areas they experience the unknown, a sense of adventure, and freedom. It has been suggested that the whole environmental movement is based on the premise that we never outgrow our need for the wilderness.

This book has been written to serve as a guide to those who wish to explore the lesser known undeveloped parts of our community, but to the careful reader it offers more. Many of the seventeen trails listed here provide a link to the past, a glimpse of the land's heritage. Some of the older, more established trails reveal how the town must have looked before the trees were cut, the hills leveled, and the houses built. Trails such as these give equal value to the unbuilt environment and provide an opportunity to walk back in time.

The Quinnipiac or Blue Trail, for instance, meanders the length of Prospect Ridge past Roaring Brook Falls on the west side of town. From here, there are beautiful views of Sleeping Giant and Cheshire in the valley below. Along parts of the trail are the remains of basalt stone walls built before the turn of the century. The walls were constructed to delineate grazing and farmland boundaries. There are striking contrasts along this part of the trail between what was once pure nature, was then modified to fit a human purpose, and is now beginning the slow process back to wilderness. Each one of the trails offers a unique perspective and insight into the town's development.

These trails and natural areas exist only because of the determination and work of many people. This book is a tribute to the Environment Commission, the Cheshire Land Trust, and the volunteers who spent many hours walking the trails, writing descriptions, and meeting to discuss the work in progress. The book also owes its existence to all the individuals and groups who have been instrumental in open space acquisition. The Cheshire Land Trust has been unceasing in its

commitment to conservation. The Cheshire Town Council has had the foresight to appropriate money for the town's land acquisition program, and the residents of Cheshire have approved the funding of open space referenda for six of the last seven years.

There is an old adage which says "Do not follow the path; go where there is no path and leave a trail." The people who have created this book have chosen to leave the path—this book is the trail they have left. It is hoped that the reader will follow the trail and appreciate where it leads.

Richard A. Pfurr
Cheshire Town Planner



History of Cheshire

Ye Fresh Meddoes, Beachport, the West Rocks... these once familiar names are part of the history that has unfolded on the thirty-one square miles of Connecticut known as Cheshire. Before any of these place names existed, or any European colonists settled here, Native American tribes including the Quinnipiacs lived in and traveled through the region. During colonial times there were several Native American encampments near Wallingford Road and Cheshire Street. In fact, present-day streets such as Cheshire Street, Marion Road and Johnson Avenue follow the routes of well-worn Native American trails.

The same appealing landscape and natural resources that drew Native Americans to this area began attracting European colonists as early as 1676 when adventurous farmers began to venture west from Wallingford into the valley of the Mill River. In 1694 a few men settled permanently in what would become Cheshire. Many of the names of the first settlers, such as Ives, Doolittle, and Hitchcock, are familiar today. Originally called *Ye Fresh Meddoes*, the settlement was renamed New Cheshire Parish in 1705 by Thomas Brooks after his native Cheshire County, England.

Farm crops and fruit trees prospered in the rich soil. The Quinnipiac, Mill, and Ten Mile rivers, along with other streams, provided the power needed for grist mills and small factories, which produced oyster kegs and other small items.

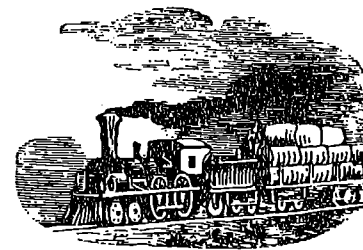
Cheshire's first hundred years were filled with change, accomplishment, and growth. 1719 brought the first school and 1724 the first church. In 1780, with a population of 2015, Cheshire became an incorporated town whose boundaries also encompassed the town of Prospect, known in earlier times as the *West Rocks*.

The second century in Cheshire was marked by advances in transportation and industry. This growth was punctuated by two major events, the construction of the Farmington Canal and the mining of barite.

The canal was envisioned as a fast, direct way to move passengers and goods between New Haven and the

Farmington Valley but it did not live up to this expectation. In its heyday only about sixteen or seventeen boats a day traveled the canal. Repairs to the canal were much more costly than had been expected. The canal did give a boost to business in Brooksvale in southwest Cheshire and in Beachport, the name given to the area around the intersection of West Main and the canal.

The Canal Line railroad, built along the canal route, was originally intended to work alongside the canal, as evident from the railroad bridge design and construction at Lock 12, but when the railroad opened in January 1848 the canal closed. Beachport continued to prosper; the Cheshire Manufacturing Company, which made ivory combs and buttons, opened in 1850. Later, as the Ball and Socket Company, it was a maker of metal stampings and buttons. During the last hundred years, the pace of change in Cheshire has



1830s: Digging in the garden by her log cabin, a freed slave named Jinny noticed some unusual white crystals. This rock had already been identified as barite by Benjamin Silliman, Yale's first professor of chemistry and natural history. Barite, an excellent white pigment for paint and pottery glaze, had definite commercial value. By 1838 the first barite mine in the United States opened on Jinny's Hill. Two hundred or so tin miners from Cornwall, England were brought to work in the Cheshire mine. The miners, who wore candles on their hats for light, worked in the deep narrow mine shafts, extracting the barite with hand-picks. Steam engines powered the hoists which lifted the barite to the surface. The barite went by horse-drawn wagon to the canal station at Higgins Road, and then down to New Haven where it was made into powder and shipped out. After the canal closed, the barite went by rail. When the supply of barite gave out, the mines closed in 1878.

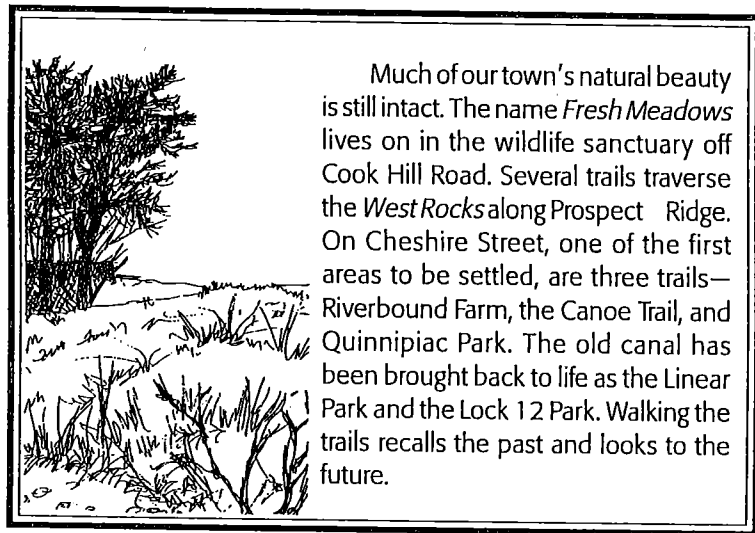
There are those who doubt Jinny's existence, but others claim they know exactly where her cabin was—just off Coleman Road.

JRC

continued to quicken especially in the last fifty years. When the 20th century began, agriculture was still the main industry. Now, as farms disappear, plant-growing continues in acres of greenhouses, earning Cheshire the title, *Bedding Plant Capital of Connecticut*. All the small mills and mines are gone, replaced by modern, high-tech industries. The population, 6,295 in 1950, is now nearly 30,000.

An extensive road system ties Cheshire to the rest of the state and beyond. *Ye Fresh Meddoes* has not evolved into a metropolis by any means and it probably never will. Cheshire has grown beyond a small farming community without abandoning its rural character or sense of history.

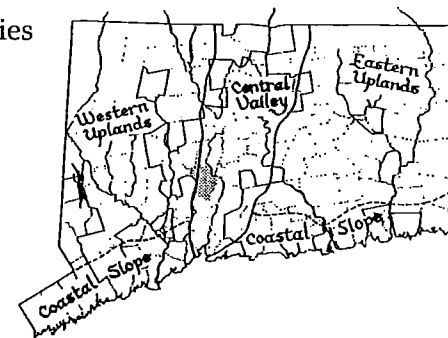
Mark Kasinskas



Much of our town's natural beauty is still intact. The name *Fresh Meadows* lives on in the wildlife sanctuary off Cook Hill Road. Several trails traverse the *West Rocks* along Prospect Ridge. On Cheshire Street, one of the first areas to be settled, are three trails—Riverbound Farm, the Canoe Trail, and Quinnipiac Park. The old canal has been brought back to life as the Linear Park and the Lock 12 Park. Walking the trails recalls the past and looks to the future.

Rocks and Ridges

Most of Cheshire lies within the Central Lowlands, a geologic area which bisects Connecticut north to south. The northwest corner of Cheshire juts into another geologic region, the Western Uplands.



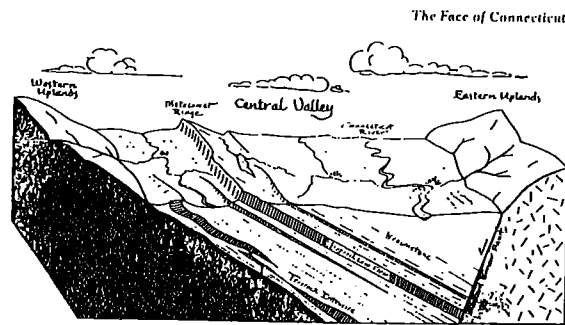
Over millions of years tumultuous geological events shaped Connecticut's hills and lowlands; continents collided, a great crack in the earth opened, volcanoes erupted, and ice encased the entire state.

500 million years ago the present-day continents had not yet been formed. All over the earth there were much smaller pieces of land moving about. 250 million years ago, all these early small continents collided, making one giant land mass. The force of the collision scrunched Connecticut down from an area 2000 miles in width to its present size, 100 miles across. As it got narrower, it also got taller because the mountains were pushed higher under the pressure of the collision. Connecticut's mountains were among the tallest in the world at that time—higher than the Rockies are today.

The giant continent which had formed was unstable and began to crack apart about 200 million years ago. One of the cracks opened just east of the Connecticut River. The central lowlands slipped down into the crack making a deep trench. Over time the crack deepened along its eastern edge, causing the whole central valley to tilt in that direction. The now V-shaped trench gradually began to fill up with sediment washed down from the surface of the towering mountains.

By about 180 million years ago (the Jurassic period) Connecticut had assumed roughly the shape it is today—two areas of hills (on the east and on the west) with a lower, yet rolling, area between. The central lowlands were lush; dinosaurs roamed the valley feeding on the giant plants that thrived in the hot, moist tropical climate of that time.

Then, volcanoes far under the earth erupted; boiling lava flowed into the valley and killed every animal and plant in its path. There were three lava flows, separated by periods of continuing sedimentation. The result was alternating layers of bedrock; thick courses of brownstone interspaced with thinner basalt (hardened lava). The volcanic eruptions occurred while other geologic activities were still going on—the crack was still



widening and deepening, the valley was still slipping sideways and the mountains were still being eroded.

The crack continued to deepen and the layers of rock continued leaning to the east, finally coming to rest at a 25° angle. Millennia of erosion made low hills out of the once-towering mountains. Some of the eroded mountain-top washed down into the valley but much of it also went into the ocean, creating the continental shelf.

The last chapter in this powerful geologic history was the advance and retreat of the glaciers which covered Connecticut with ice at least two, and possibly many more, times. Glaciation reached its peak about 20,000 years ago when the mountains were fully covered with ice. As the massive glaciers advanced, rocks of every size got frozen inside the ice, carried along, and then left behind when the ice melted. These rocks, called *erratics*, were strewn all over the countryside.

Evidence of past geologic events abounds in Cheshire for those who know what to look for. For example the difference in the color of the underlying rocks of the two geologic areas of Cheshire is easily observed. Rocky outcroppings in the Mixville Hills display whitish gneiss (pronounced "nice") and schist, the bedrock of both Eastern and Western Uplands. These are metamorphic rocks, formed far inside the earth where there is intense heat and pressure. This metamorphosed bedrock was

exposed after softer surface rock had eroded. Reddish brownstone, the softer, sedimentary bedrock of the Central Lowlands, shows up in the walls of Lock 12 and the foundations of many old houses. A graphic illustration of the difference in density of the two bedrock, is found in Hillside Cemetery where the reddish-brown gravestones are eroding while the white gneiss markers remain unscathed.

On its east and west, Cheshire is bounded by traprock (basalt) ridges. Basalt is an igneous rock, formed when lava cools and solidifies. To the east rise the Hanging Hills of Meriden, a section of the long Metacomet ridge which bisects the Central Lowlands. The ridge was heaved upward when the Central Lowlands tilted down into the crack in the earth. This process created a gradual east slope and a steep west face, a challenge to rock climbers. The narrow ridge to the west, Prospect Ridge, is part of a long basalt ridge extending south to north from West Rock in New Haven to Southington. It was formed from traprock which cooled underground and was later exposed by erosion.

Clues to glacial action can be seen in giant erratics like Scott's Rock and in the rounded and polished stones found on the ridges in Cheshire Park. These narrow ridges of gravel (called *eskers*) were left there by streams that flowed through long tunnels inside the melting glaciers.

The geologic processes that shaped the land also left behind their traces in Cheshire place names such as Sandstone Circle, Redstone Drive, and Chipping Stone Court.

Jeanné R. Chesanow

Chief Metacomet

The Central Valley's long, dividing ridge is a reminder of Connecticut's past. Metacomet, also called King Philip, was a sachem of a Massachusetts tribe, the Wampanoags. He led his people in a war against the colonists, to try to reclaim the land, and was killed in battle. The bold rocky ridge now bears his name.

Illustrations on pp. 13 and 14 are from the *Face of Connecticut: People, Geology, and the Land* by Michael Bell. ©1985 by the Geological and Natural History Survey of CT. (DEP)

Soils

Thousands of years of erosion and glacial action have created the soils of Cheshire today. Repeated abrasions of wind, rain, snow, and ice have broken down the bedrock of the Central Valley and the Western Uplands into the present-day soil types.

Soil scientists have devised a classification system which categorizes many different land forms and conditions, so that they can be evaluated for various uses. This system of classification can be represented on a map, and from it statistical data can be derived. The detailed maps of Cheshire, compiled by the Soil Conservation Service, list the types of soils and where they are found in Cheshire. These maps are used in the determination of land suitability for uses such as agriculture, grazing, and building.

Soils are often named after the place where they were first mapped. The town of Cheshire has the honor of having a soil series named after it. *Cheshire*, a fine, sandy and well-drained loam, is eroded sandstone a, product of the Central Valley bedrock. Since these soils consist primarily of softer reddish-brown arkosic sandstone and siltstone, they have weathered down to form relatively fine-textured soils which have the ability to hold water fairly well. These soils, found at all the major farms in Cheshire, are ideal for growing corn and other vegetables. Most of this type of soil is on cleared land which is either being farmed or lying idle, but a very small percentage lies in forested areas. This soil type has good potential for community development because it is easy to excavate, but it often contains stones and boulders.

The dense crystalline bedrock of the Western Uplands has been broken down into shallow rocky soil such as that found along the Prospect Ridge. There are usually exposed bedrock outcrops in areas where these soils occur such as on the trails along Roaring Brook Falls. Upland soils are well drained, often rocky, due to the shallowness of the bedrock. These soils are not good for development or agriculture, but, since they are rich in nutrients and minerals, they support lush tree growth and are found in many of Cheshire's forests and managed woodlots such as at Cross Rocks Farm.

Other soils found in Cheshire include wetland soils that are protected under the Wetlands and Water Courses Act of 1974. These soils, found in low lying areas, perform important functions such as storing flood waters, providing food and shelter to wildlife, removing harmful pollutants from storm water discharge, and enhancing water quality. Wetland soils and bogs are found along portions of the Linear Park

A major influence on Cheshire's topography was the glaciers which scraped and bulldozed throughout this area several times between 10,000 and 18,000 years ago,

leaving behind ridges, boulders and lakes. One of the richest types of soil in Cheshire is the alluvial soil found in the delta of what was once a huge glacial lake, Lake Southington, covering much of North Cheshire and all of the town of Southington.

One of the best known examples of these glacier lake deltas in New England is the esker-fed delta of Lake Southington. From examining the features of the present Quinnipiac Gorge, one can determine that this lake was about 185 feet deep and that perhaps the gorge was carved out (after the lake existed) by a late-glacial waterfall.

Glacial, postglacial and related erosional features of the Southington/Cheshire part of the Quinnipiac-Farmington lowlands have been studied in detail. This lowland contains ideal examples of deltaic and related lacustrine (lake) deposits of successive lakes that formed during the northward retreat of the last ice sheet.

The soil types of Cheshire reveal clues to our geological and agricultural history and will play a strong role in determining the future uses of our lands.

James Sipperly

Waters and Wetlands

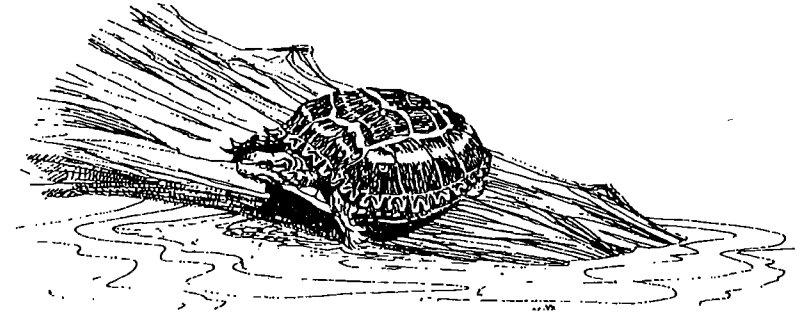
Cheshire is seamed from north to south by a trio of rivers—the Ten Mile River, the Mill River and, largest of all, the Quinnipiac River. The rich bottomland soil along the rivers attracted early settlers. By 1694 the Moss family was farming along the Ten Mile River; somewhat later there were farms along the Quinnipiac and Mill Rivers. Gristmills, sawmills, and metal-polishing industries, powered by water, also grew up along the rivers.

Today the rivers retain their importance in other ways. The Mill River watershed, which includes 767 acres of land, is a source of surface and ground water for the Regional Water Authority. The Mill River feeds the South Cheshire well field while the North Cheshire well field is fed by Honeypot Brook. These two aquifers supply approximately eighty percent of Cheshire's drinking water while the remainder comes from private wells.

Cheshire's rivers support many types of plants and animals. The silt and decaying organic matter (leaves, woody debris) are a major source of energy and nutrients for faunal organisms such as plankton. Bass, burrowing mayflies, and darters prosper in the slow-moving rivers and streams. From the Canoeable Wildlife Habitat Trail, a richness of plant and animal life can be observed.

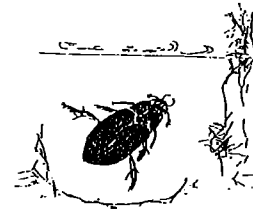
Among Cheshire's brooks are Honeypot, Roaring, Fenn, Willow, and Broad. The best known is Roaring Brook, which as it tumbles over the traprock of Prospect Ridge, forms a beautiful series of waterfalls along the Roaring Brook Trail. Willow Brook, which was dredged and re-routed when the Farmington Canal was built, now meanders beside the Linear Park Trail. Honeypot Brook (Cheshire Park) is the subject of several legends telling how the stream got its name.

The largest body of water in Cheshire, Broad Brook Reservoir, is man-made. Created by damming Broad Brook, the reservoir is the property of the Meriden Water Bureau and is not accessible from any walking trails. However, some roads in town offer a fine drive-by view of the lengthy reservoir—Swamp Road, Route 68, and Reservoir Road. There are a number of ponds in Cheshire, many on private land. Mixville Pond, made



from damming the Ten Mile River, is the focus of a popular town-owned recreation area used for swimming, fishing, picnicking, and walking. (See the Mixville Pond Trail.)

Wetlands are often found in low-lying areas where the water is near, above, or at the ground surface throughout the year. Because they simultaneously provide terrestrial and aquatic habitats for many plants and animals, wetlands are ecologically interesting. A rich diversity of wetlands—marshes, bogs, and swamps—occurs in Cheshire. There are swamps, lands dominated by woody vegetation such as swamp oak, red maple, alder, and willows. Broad Swamp, Cheshire's biggest wetland, is a long north-south band lying just west of the Linear Park. Marshes, which are good duck breeding areas, are dominated by reeds, sedges, grasses, and cattails. Peat bogs are characterized by an accumulation of peat, decayed organic matter that retains water and nutrients. Both marsh and peat bog wetlands can be seen in The Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary. Cheshire even has a cranberry bog, located between Fenn Road and Cook Hill Road.



Of great ecological importance, water is also of scenic, economic, and historical significance. We must protect our water resources so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Andrea Newman

Forests

From the air it might appear as if Cheshire were covered with forests. Even after excluding the residential areas, which have trees but which often lack understory vegetation, woods occupy much of Cheshire. Strips and patches of forest are found along streams and rivers, in wetlands, in ravines, and in our parks. Larger forested areas in Cheshire include the north/south-oriented greenbelt along Peck Mountain and Prospect Ridge, the woods around Broad Brook Reservoir, the Mixville Highlands, and the valley of the Ten Mile River in north Cheshire. Considerable forest acreage also exists, surprisingly, near the center of town. A nearly continuous greenbelt, east of Route 10 and within the watersheds of Honeypot Brook and the Mill River, extends from Cheshire Park south almost to Cook Hill Road. Within these wooded areas are many interesting and diverse plant communities.

The forests of Cheshire are in the broad vegetation zone known as the Central Hardwoods. The plant community of trees, shrubs, and herbs varies with location and through the seasons. In spring one can readily see the forest patterns related to drainage and ground topography. Low lying land has the reddish hue of red maple buds and twigs, and the yellow haze of willow and spicebush (the forsythia of the woods); higher slopes which at first have the more muted colors of oak—slow to leaf out in the spring—later are dotted with the white flowers of dogwood or shadbush. In early fall, the low-lying swamp forests of red maple are a blaze



of vivid scarlet. Later, the upland forests are a tapestry of leaf color—the dazzling crimson of tupelo trees, the vivid russets and maroons of red and black oaks, the bright yellow-orange of the hickories, and the muted pale peach of the white oaks.

The transitional zone (between wetlands and drier oak-dominated upland forest) is the most diverse of the plant communities, with sugar maples, black and yellow birch, white and green ash, groves of American beech and ramrod-straight tulip poplars.

Walking upslope in the various forests around town, such as those along the Quinnipiac Trail, one can also see patterns of change in the low plants which carpet the forests. Skunk cabbage and tussock sedge in the lower wetlands give way, on the moist lower slopes, to cinnamon fern, witch hazel, and a rich variety of wildflowers like red trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit and wood anemone. Native groundcovers, found in better-drained soils, are beautiful: Christmas fern, carpets of running pine, princess pine, Canada mayflower, partridge berry; white woodland asters, and glades of delicate Pennsylvania sedge. The shrubs vary too: in the upland forest are lowbush blueberry, huckleberry, and maple-leaf viburnum which grow much less densely than the often impenetrable thickets of shrubs in the low wetlands—winterberry, arrowwood, spicebush, highbush blueberry and sweet pepperbush, all fragrantly-blooming and bright with fall berries. The diverse shrub thicket bordering the back pond at Mixville Park is a good example of this type of vegetation.

Almost all of the Cheshire's forests were cleared or cut within the past few hundred years to make way for farmlands, pastures, and housing. Thus, the present forests are almost all new growth. When the farmland was abandoned it began to return to forest, passing through successive stages over many years. First, colonizing plants like goldenrod moved in and the land became a meadow, then shrubs took root and shaded out the meadow plants. Small tree seedlings grew under the shrubs and finally emerged to dominate the landscape as the forest returned. It is possible to look at today's forests and read clues to its disturbance history, whether the result of man's activities or natural forces such as fire, wind and disease. For example, a massive tree with spreading branches often can be found along the remains of an old stone wall, surrounded by a much younger stand of narrow-shaped, same-aged trees. When the land was an open farm, the big tree was already growing

along that wall, perhaps providing shade for livestock. The younger trees concentrated on upward growth because they had to compete for light with their neighbors, resulting in a shape like a telephone pole with a tuft of foliage on top—characteristic of the forest trees which are spared in new subdivisions.

Another clue to a forest's history is the presence of prickly species. Because grazing animals avoid the prickly foliage of red cedars and the thorns of black locust and barberry, their abundance may be a sign of a former pasture. You may see only the twiggy skeletons of red cedars, which die when shaded out by later colonizers. White pine, another important colonizer of old fields and pastures, persists in a mature forest. Like cedar it prefers bright sunshine to shade, but a stand of white pines grows fast enough to continue to dominate the forest as it matures.

Certain species which colonize open land have tiny seeds which cannot easily germinate in dense meadow or thick leaf litter. Stands of cottonwood, aspen, birch, and mountain laurel are a clue that bare soil was exposed by plowing or bulldozing, trampling by cattle, erosion (on a riverbank), or by wind and gravity on a steep slope. Areas with small patches of bare soil may have nutrient-poor soil. Species with numerous, tiny, wind-dispersed seeds reach disturbed sites readily. So do bird-dispersed species. You may notice that the heavy berry producers are common in early successional habitats, serving as important food sources for the very bird species which planted them. Some of these species, like Russian olive and Asiatic bittersweet, are alien plants which often grow so densely that they prevent native species from colonizing.

Russian olive and bayberry are plants which fix nitrogen in the soil; their presence is a sign that the soil



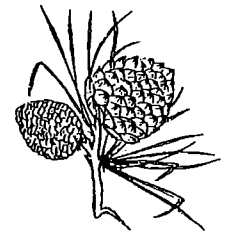
is nutrient-poor, perhaps stripped of topsoil at an earlier date. Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary is an excellent place to observe developing woody plant associations in areas which underwent disturbance in various ways.

As you walk the trails and get to know the forest, you will begin to notice rarer species which reflect the variety of geologic and soil conditions in Cheshire. Deeply chiseled chestnut oaks and delicate red columbines grow in the shallow soils at the tops of the traprock ridges along the Quinnipiac and Roaring Brook Trails. In the richer soils at the base of these ridges you may find a patch of wild ginger, dutchman's breeches, or a thicket of prickly ash. Swamp white oak, tupelo, pin oak, and bright pink gay-wing flowers are common in the silty glacial lakebed soils by the Ten Mile River. On rich moist soils on lower slopes, you may find ironwood with its sinewy steel-gray trunk, American sycamore which has cream/gray mottled bark, the scaly-barked hop hornbeam and the shagbark hickory.

As you come to recognize the recurring distribution patterns within the forests of Cheshire, you will appreciate even more their endless variations and surprises.

Sigrun Gadwa

Note: A forest habitat can be created in your wooded backyard by planting understory shrubs, ferns and wildflowers instead of lawn. If your yard is not wooded, let trees and shrubs colonize an area of lawn and then perhaps add plantings of native species.



SG

Wildlife

The trails in Cheshire pass through a variety of wildlife habitats—meadow, forest, open water, and wetlands. Although nearly all these areas have been developed in the past, many are currently in various stages of reverting back to a natural state.



Meadow or openland habitats, such as The Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary, are home to cottontail rabbit, woodchuck, fox, owl, skunk and small rodents such as field mice. Birds of the openland include hawks, quail, meadowlarks, field sparrows, and owls. A quail may rustle up noisily if you step too close to her nest on the ground.

Forest habitats, like those along the Quinnipiac Trail or in the Russell Memorial, support a variety of birds including the black-capped chickadee, red-bellied woodpecker, thrush, and woodcock. Among the animals of the forest are white-tailed deer, squirrels, chipmunk, opossum, raccoon, and small rodents like voles and mice. A common, but still breathtaking sight, is that of a graceful deer standing in a clearing then bounding away, white tail up, at the sight of you.

Recently coyotes have been spotted in Cheshire. This pointy-eared reddish animal favors forest and meadow areas where their food sources, primarily field mice, can be found. They tend to shy away from people.

At the edges of ponds, such as at Mixville and in Cheshire Park, you may see frogs, box turtles, and the common water snake. Other wildlife which frequent wetland habitats are salamanders, beaver, and small rodents. Canada geese and mallard ducks, such as those in the Bishop Farm pond, are a common sight in and around water.

Among the wetland birds seen along the Linear Park Trail are yellow throats, yellow



Raccoon

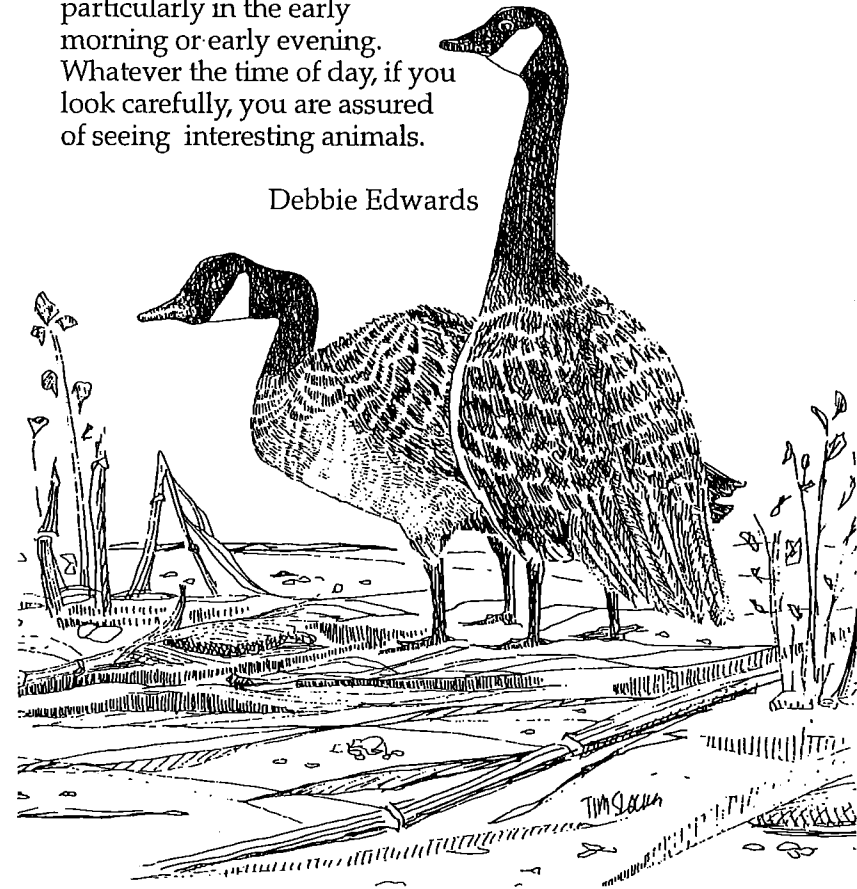
warblers, and white-throated sparrows. Along this trail are also many insects such as damselflies, dragonflies, bees. Hundreds of colorful butterflies—tiger swallowtails, black swallowtails, little coppers, sulphurs, prairie ringlets, and monarchs—use the Linear Park corridor as a flyway.

Other wetland birds that you may see in Cheshire are the belted kingfisher, goldfinch, white-eyed vireo, mourning warbler, and red-winged blackbird.

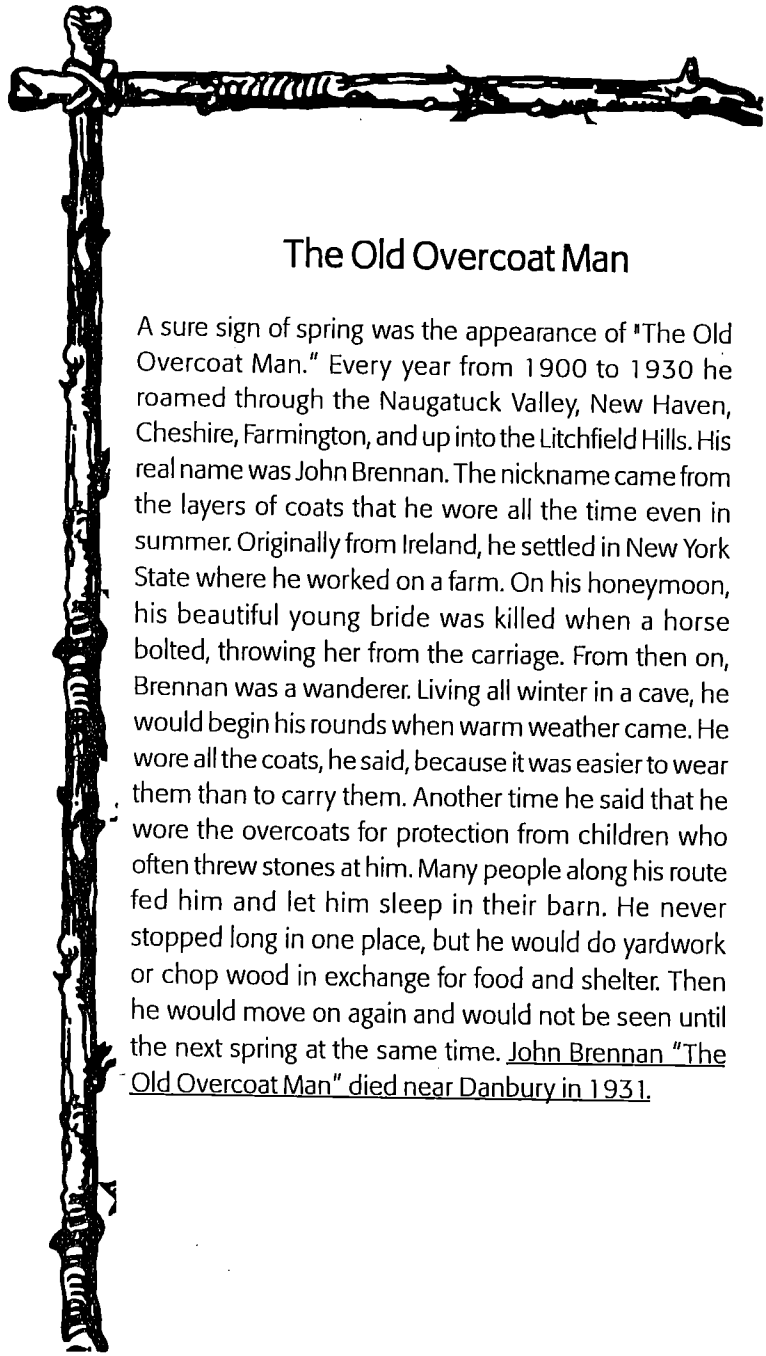
Canoeists on the Quinnipiac River have noticed muskrats, snapping turtles sunning themselves, and a great blue heron poised on one long leg. Tracks on the riverbank indicate the presence of beaver and otter as well.

While walking, biking, or canoeing the trails in Cheshire, you will often see these and other types of wildlife, particularly in the early morning or early evening. Whatever the time of day, if you look carefully, you are assured of seeing interesting animals.

Debbie Edwards

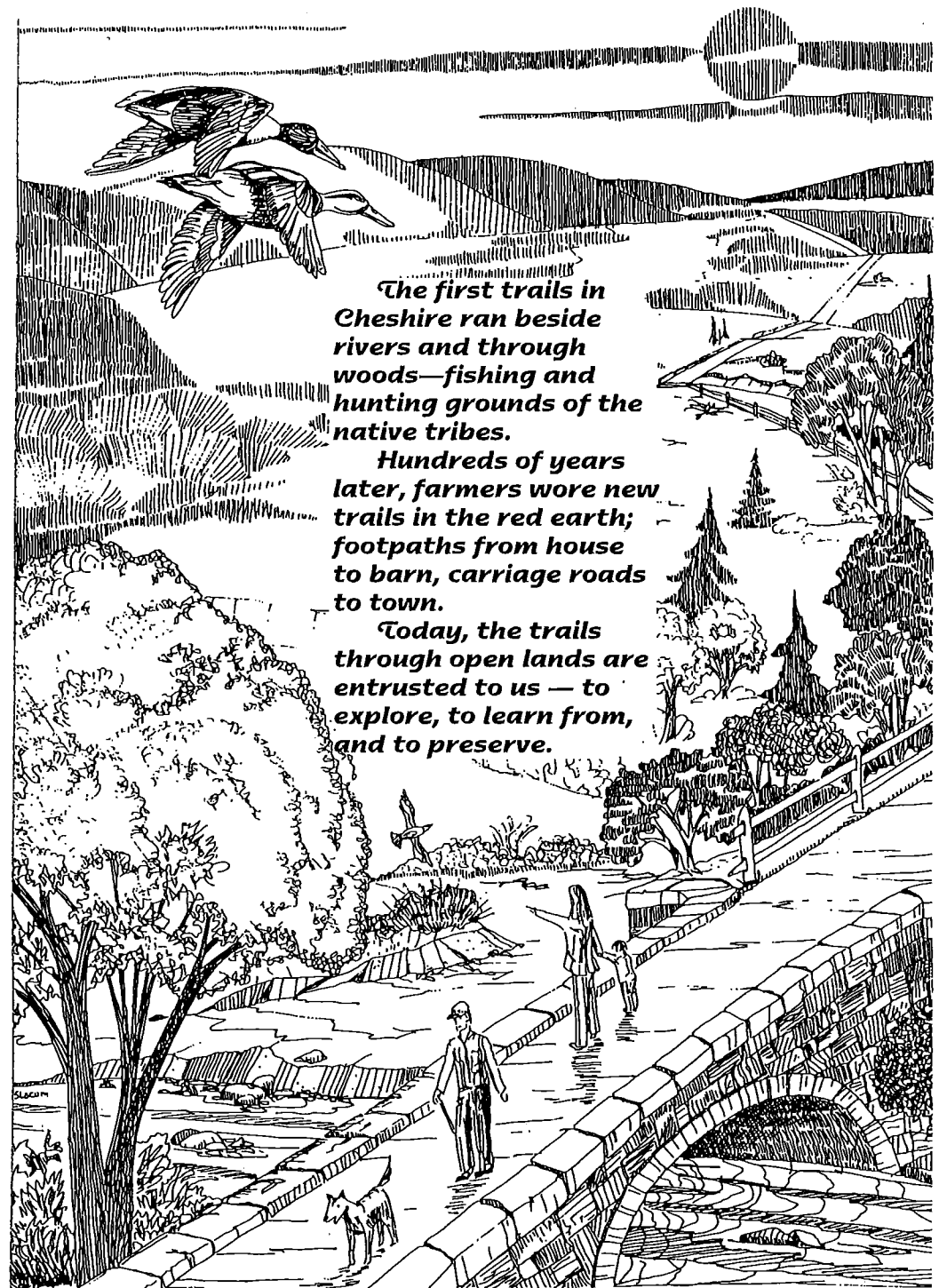


Squirrel



The Old Overcoat Man

A sure sign of spring was the appearance of "The Old Overcoat Man." Every year from 1900 to 1930 he roamed through the Naugatuck Valley, New Haven, Cheshire, Farmington, and up into the Litchfield Hills. His real name was John Brennan. The nickname came from the layers of coats that he wore all the time even in summer. Originally from Ireland, he settled in New York State where he worked on a farm. On his honeymoon, his beautiful young bride was killed when a horse bolted, throwing her from the carriage. From then on, Brennan was a wanderer. Living all winter in a cave, he would begin his rounds when warm weather came. He wore all the coats, he said, because it was easier to wear them than to carry them. Another time he said that he wore the overcoats for protection from children who often threw stones at him. Many people along his route fed him and let him sleep in their barn. He never stopped long in one place, but he would do yardwork or chop wood in exchange for food and shelter. Then he would move on again and would not be seen until the next spring at the same time. John Brennan "The Old Overcoat Man" died near Danbury in 1931.



The first trails in Cheshire ran beside rivers and through woods—fishing and hunting grounds of the native tribes.

Hundreds of years later, farmers wore new trails in the red earth; footpaths from house to barn, carriage roads to town.

Today, the trails through open lands are entrusted to us — to explore, to learn from, and to preserve.

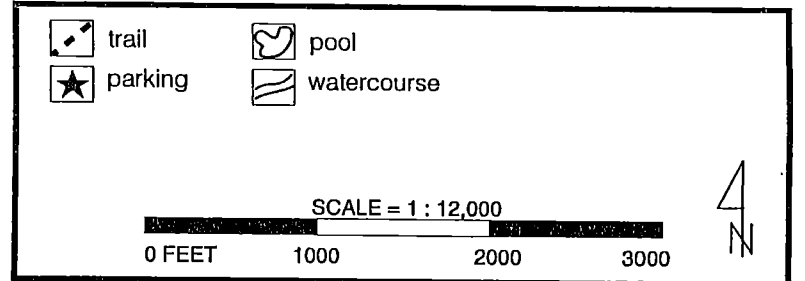
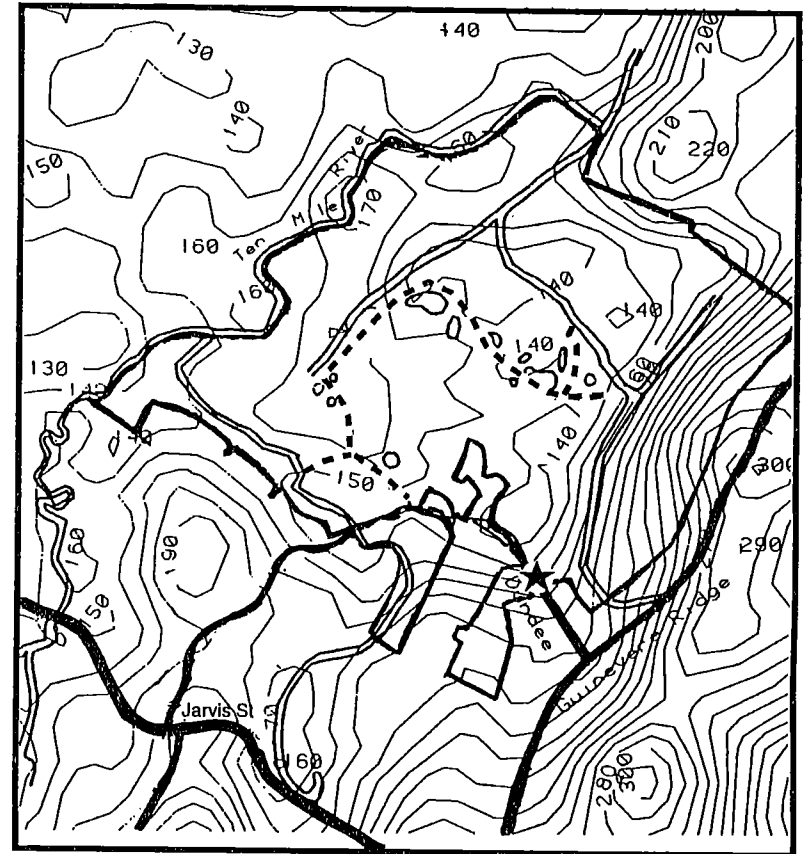
Ten Mile River Lowlands Preserve

- OWNERSHIP:** Pending purchase by Town of Cheshire
ACREAGE: 148
LOCATION: Dundee Dr. in N. Cheshire, off Guinevere Ridge
 (north of Jarvis St.)
ENTRANCE: .2 mi. west of Dundee Circle
PARKING: Dundee Circle
TRAILS: Primary trail 2/3 mi. long; 3 short side spurs
COMMENTS: Wide flat trails; wet areas; biting insects

Background: This property includes part of the John Moss land grant. Settled in 1694, the Moss Farm began a long history of farming the broad fertile lowlands in the lakebed of glacial Lake Southington. A contract for the purchase of this property by the town was signed in 1993 after a protracted series of vigorous public debates on wildlife/scenic value versus development of this land.

Features: The trail begins by heading westward through a ferny, red maple swamp forest along a stream which drains toward the Ten Mile River. It then veers right (north) and rises slowly into an upland forest of American beech, red oak and tulip poplar with an understory of mountain laurel. Another right turn after about 1000 feet loops the trail back, eastward. This forest is actually an upland "island" surrounded by wetlands and dotted with ponds. To the west stretches the floodplain which borders the river. The trail passes by several of the ponds, some just a few meters across and water-filled only in spring and winter; others permanent, supporting wetland shrubs like buttonbush and highbush blueberry. Woodfrogs, spring peepers, and spotted salamanders breed in these ponds, and predatory mammals and herons hunt by them. The trail ends at another major tributary of the river, bordered by a man-made berm. Mountain laurel, lady's slippers, and gay wings are lovely here in June; the birdwatching is excellent.

Ten Mile River Lowlands Preserve



The following areas are ecologically interesting, but vulnerable to overuse. To explore, please write (for directions to trail entrances and parking) to: Cheshire Land Trust, Box 781, Cheshire, CT 06410. Please leave your dogs at home and remain on trails.

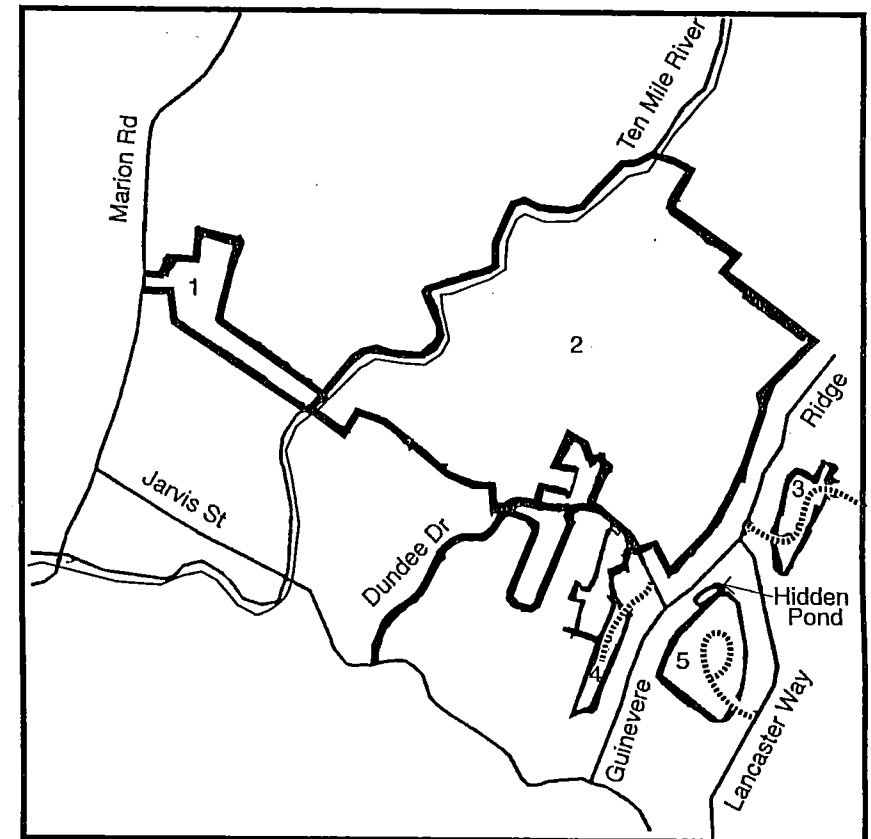
Ten Mile River Preserve This 11.9 acre preserve is the only CLT Preserve with a view of the Ten Mile River. It includes a floodplain along the river with vernal pools, unusual white forms of red trillium and handsome pin oaks. No maintained trail, but one can follow the wet course of the small stream bordered by a shrub thicket, or walk along the outside edge of the thicket—alders, willows, arrowwood, highbush blueberry, and silky dogwood. At the NE corner of the property is a man-made pond, built to compensate for wetland losses.

Lancaster Knoll 9-acre preserve; highest point of the traprock ridge. At the base of the slope is a small stream which feeds into a pool obscured by shrubs. On the slope itself is an oak-hickory forest with evergreen wildflowers like rattlesnake plantain, pipsissewa, and partridge berry. The flat grassy summit of the knoll offers fine views (after leaf drop) of the broad forested valley to the West. A lovely spot for a picnic! Along the broad trail leading SW down from the summit is winged euonymous and a stand of the unusual bladdernut.

Wood Anemone Preserve A narrow, rectangular 3-acre preserve on the traprock ridge's lower west slope. Spectacular display of wildflowers in April and May: wood anemone, Canada mayflower, trout lilies, jack-in-the-pulpit, red trillium. Deep blue swamp violets, spring cress, coltsfoot grow along several little brooks. Red maple dominates the north end; sycamore, green ash and ironwood, the central part. The higher and drier southern end is a sugar maple forest, carpeted with Christmas ferns. Flickers and box turtles often encountered.

Red Columbine Preserve Well-maintained short trail along ridge. Well-suited for observing traprock ridge vegetation. In late spring, wild red columbine and early meadow rue are abundant and striking in bloom against a background of olive-green/brown rocks. Blooming at the same time are: round-leaved hepatica, early saxifrage, true and false Solomon's seal, and delicate rue anemone.

West Cheshire Highlands/ Ten Mile River Lowlands



- 1 Ten Mile River Preserve
- 2 Ten Mile River Lowland Preserve (see pg. 28 for trail)
- 3 Red Columbine Preserve
- 4 Wood Anemone Preserve
- 5 Lancaster Knoll Preserve

Mixville Pond



OWNERSHIP: Town of Cheshire
ACREAGE: Park is 43 acres, of which pond is 12
LOCATION: Off Notch Rd. in NW Cheshire
ENTRANCE: Follow signs, "Mixville Recreation Area"
PARKING: Large lot with ample parking space
FEES: (For swimming.) \$4 adults, \$2 children (per day). Call 272-2743, Cheshire Park and Recreation Dept., for information on season passes.

Background: in 1961 the town of Cheshire acquired two adjoining properties from owners Mitkowski and Adams for use as a recreational area.

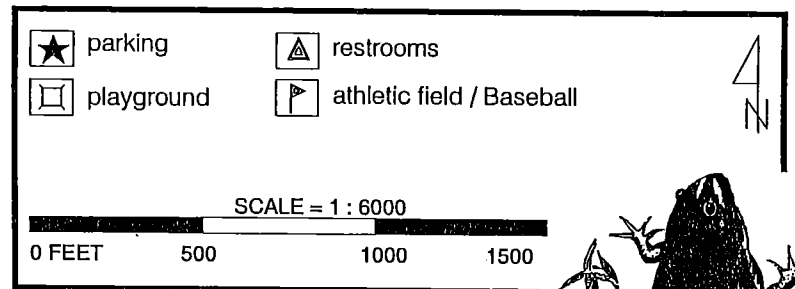
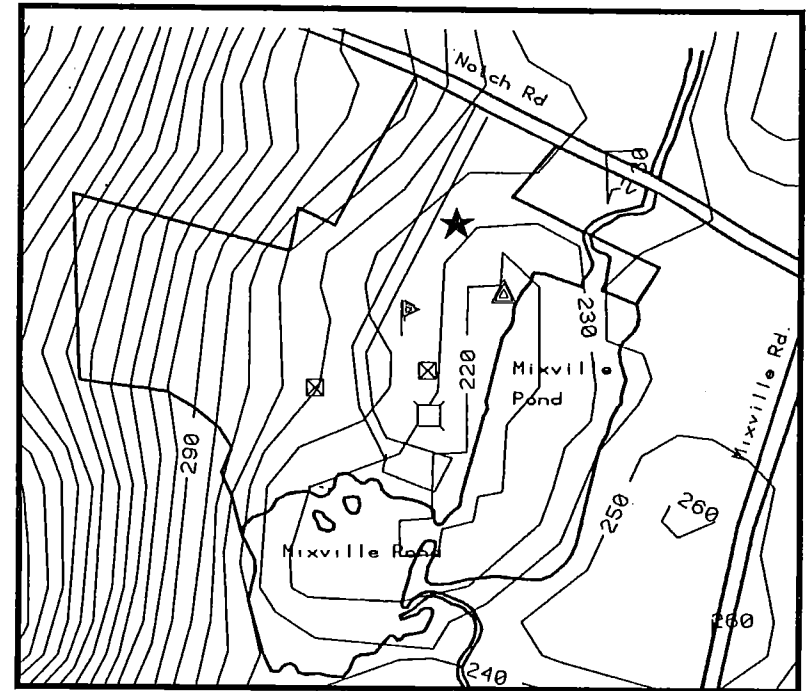
Features (of the park): Mixville Pond is Cheshire's only public swimming area. Other recreational facilities in the park include a pavilion, volleyball court, playground equipment, basketball backboard, picnic tables. Fishing is permitted; the pond is stocked with trout and bass. In winter, the snow is kept cleared off the pond for day and night skating. There is a slope for children's sledding.

Description: Just beyond the parking lot is the lower, larger section of the pond where the beach is located. Mowed lawns surround this part of the pond and it is pleasant to stroll to the dam. You will see Canada geese across the pond on the long slope.

The back pond and adjacent wetland is a more natural area; a narrow but thick band of trees and shrubs lines the water's edge. There is no marked trail, but you can explore in the thickets or make your way through to the water. Among the many shrubs are black chokeberry, buttonbush, arrowwood, and winterberry—food and shelter for many birds and small mammals. At the edge of the pond you may see a box turtle or frog.

Suggestion: waterproof shoes/boots (many wet areas.)

Mixville Pond



Riverbound Farm on the Quinnipiac

3

- OWNERSHIP:** Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society and
Cheshire Land Trust
- ACREAGE:** 23 (8.4 Cheshire Land Trust)
- LOCATION:** 1881 Cheshire Street (South End Rd.)
- ENTRANCE:** .1 mi. north of E. Johnson/Cheshire St.
intersection (From the east, take 691 W. to
exit for Rte. 322; go right off ramp, at 2nd stop
light turn left onto S. End Rd. (Cheshire St.)
- PARKING:** Gravel lot just south of the old white house
(Audubon sign in window) holds 4 or 5 cars;
there is also some on-street parking nearby
- TRAILS:** Blue trail; .8 mile, easy walking
- COMMENTS:** Planned for the future is a wheelchair-accessible
trail to the river (depending on funding)
- SPECIAL NOTE:** **No fishing, no picknicking.** (As specified by
the donors in their bequest.)

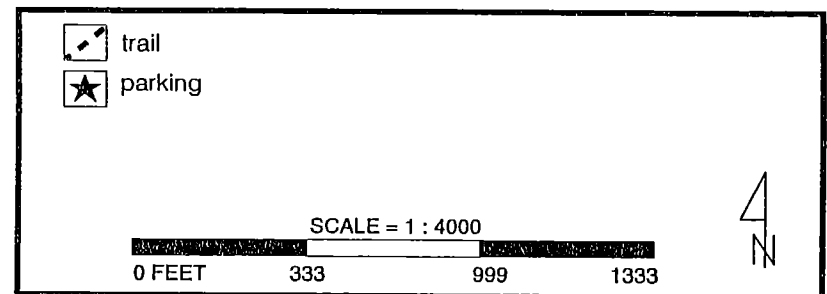
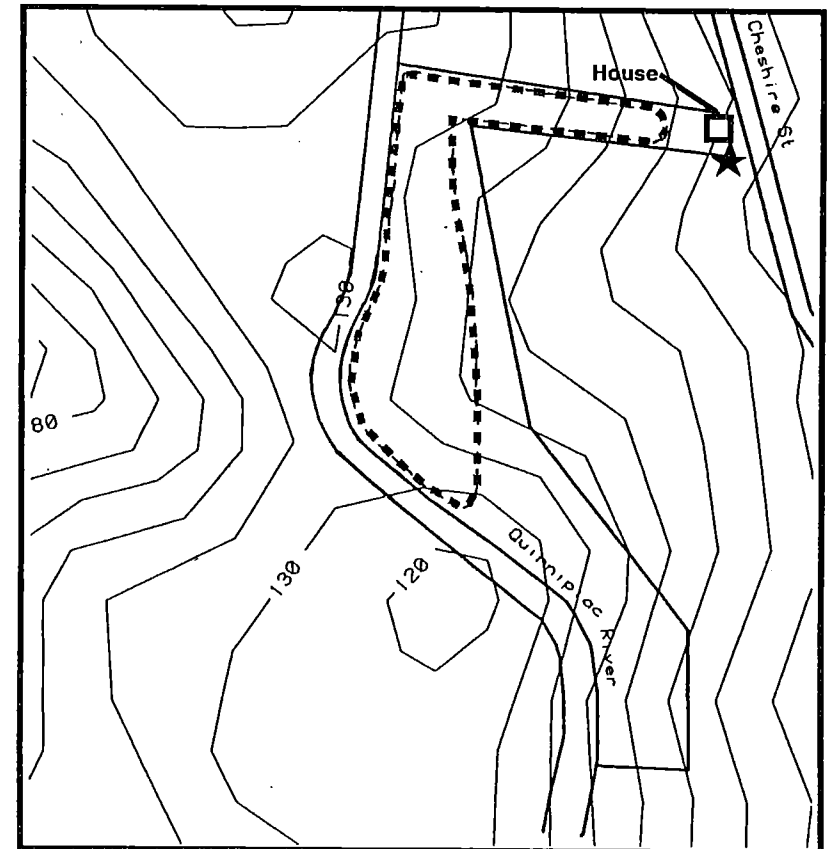
Background: In 1989 Ralph and Esther Mortensen,
wishing their land to be a nature sanctuary, deeded their
1880s house and land to the Audubon Society with rights
of passage to the river to the Cheshire Land Trust. The
blue trail was blazed by Boy Scouts; trees were identified
and tagged by Eagle Scout David Hardy.

Features: This enjoyable trail to the river starts in back
of the house and passes through woods and over small
brooks. Look for signs identifying native trees and vines,
such as sassafras, American bittersweet, and black
walnut. At several points the trail emerges into meadows
where bluebird nesting boxes stand tall above goldenrod.
At the river, the trail winds along a high riverbank
overlooking the long river bend which inspired the name
of this farm. To your north is elevated Route 691. You
may see herons, turtles and many other animals in and
near the water.

Suggestions: dress for ticks; bring binoculars.

Riverbound Farm on the Quinnipiac

3



Canoeable Wildlife Habitat Trail 4



- OWNERSHIP:** State of Connecticut
- LOCATION:** On the Quinnipiac River in NE Cheshire
- LAUNCH SITE:** N. on Rte. 10, E. on Rte. 322; look for the big green Park and Ride sign (commuter lot); take right turn immediately after this lot; short road to gravel parking lot.
- EXIT SITE:** Quinnipiac Park, Cheshire St.; best place is a grassy accessway (good for sliding the canoe) at the water treatment plant, open 7 AM to 3 PM (Gates are locked at 3 PM and all weekend.) Portage from other landing points is 300 feet to parking lot.
- PARKING:** At launch point and at exit point.

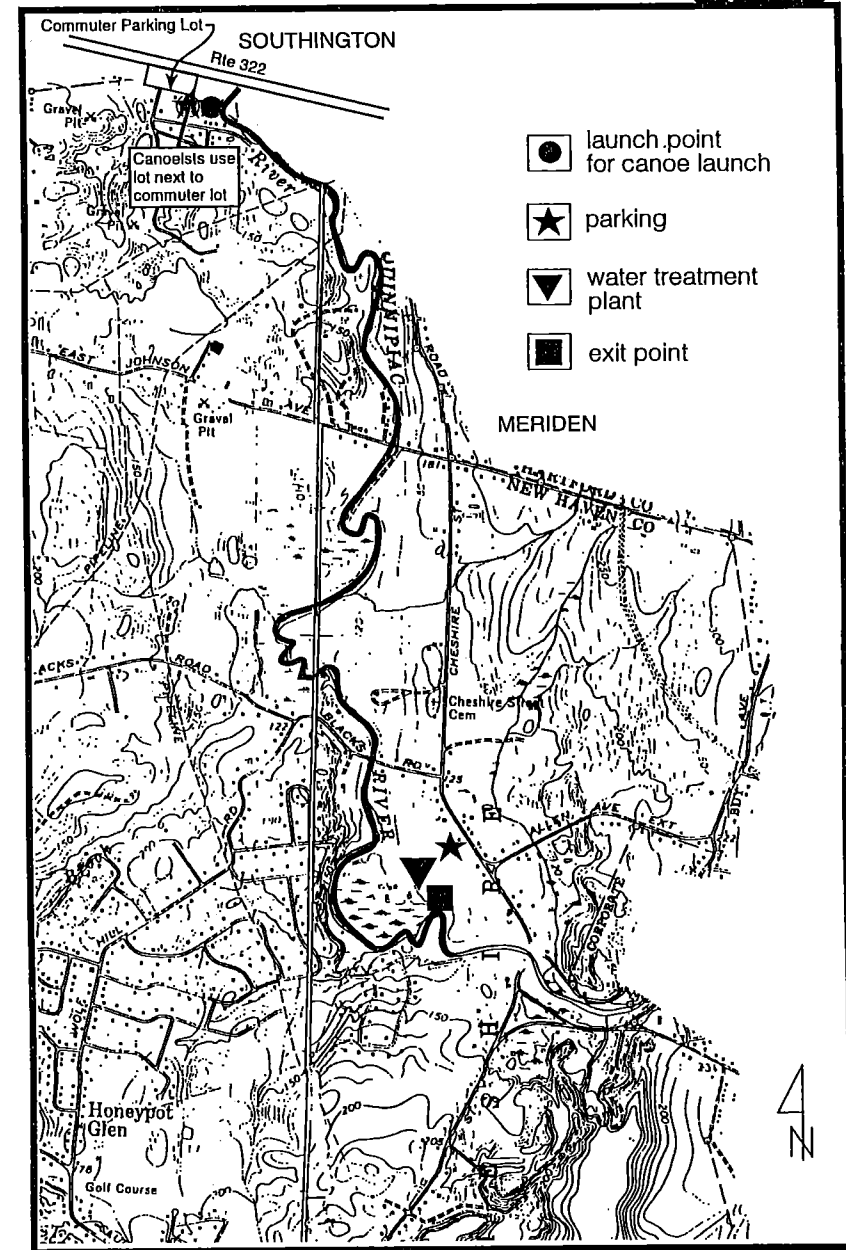
Features: This is a fantastic canoe trip, 3.6 miles long. It can be completed in three hours, but if you want to pause and take photos, allow extra time.

Description: The river environs provide habitat for many types of wildlife. Woodchucks, mallards, great blue herons, belted kingfishers, spotted sandpipers, river otters, muskrats, and many others can be seen in the river or along the banks. In the spring, if you are lucky, you may see young snapping turtles floating lazily in the water. Young deer often graze on the riverbanks. After spring migration, red-winged blackbirds, yellow throats, yellow warblers, and white-throated sparrows can be seen in these marshes. Along the wooded riverbanks, oak-hickory forests provide acorns and nuts for chipmunks, squirrels, and small mammals. The open meadows are flyways for butterflies; tiger swallowtails, sulphurs, and prairie ringlets feed among the abundant flowers.

Safety: Floatation cushions/vests required by law; watch out for submerged trees. Park on the access road (treatment plant) only while actually loading your canoe.

Call 237-2237, the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association, to report any dumping or other illegal activity along the river, or to obtain a field guide for this trail (available summer '95).

Canoeable Wildlife Habitat Trail 4



Quinnipiac Park

5 

- OWNERSHIP: Town of Cheshire
- ACREAGE: 59
- LOCATION: Cheshire Street, NE Cheshire
- ENTRANCE: 300 feet north of the Cheshire St./Allen Ave. intersection. Look for the sign.
- PARKING: Large gravel lot.
- TRAILS: 1.2 miles along the river bank
- COMMENTS: Fishing (in season and with permits)

Features: Well-maintained ballfields, an inline-skating rink, and a playground; river views, wildlife.

Background: The town of Cheshire acquired this property in June 1996 from Wilbert and Catherine Brozie. In 1971 the town built a water pollution control plant here.

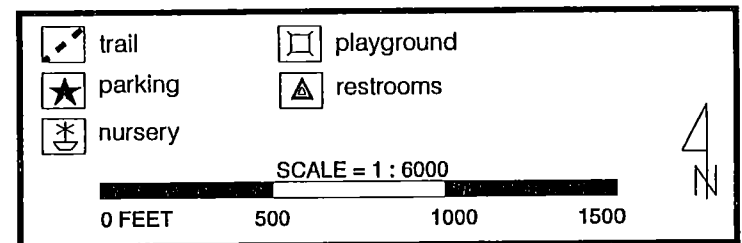
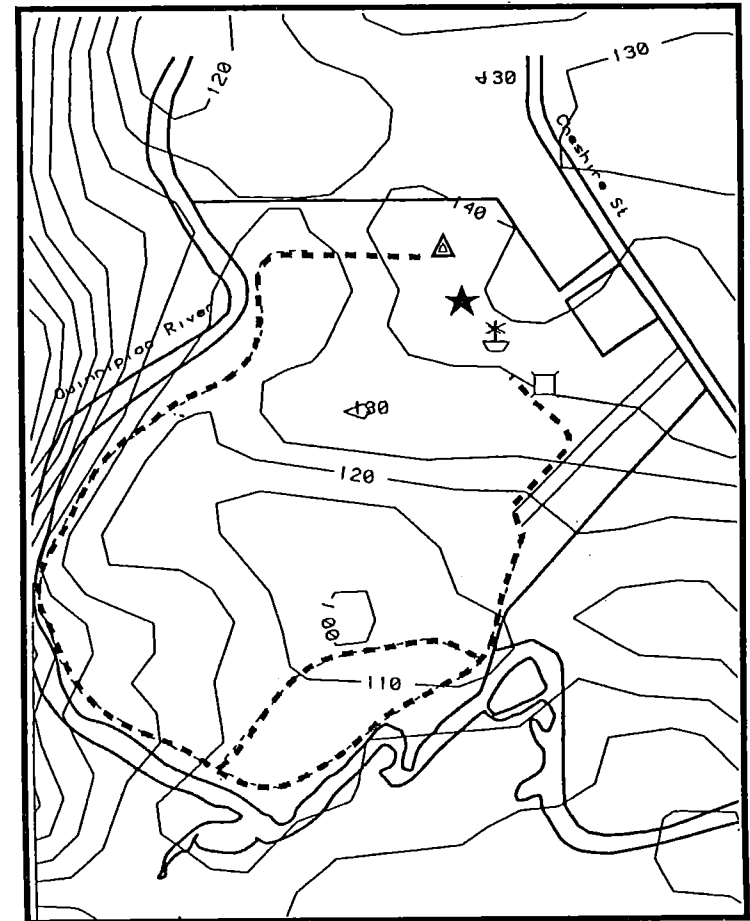
Description: From the parking lot, go north towards the wooded area. An opening in the brush leads to a well cleared and marked trail. Woodchucks, black ducks, mallards, and even owls have been spotted along this area in the early morning hours. The floodplain area adjacent to the river trail is sometimes inundated by water in the early spring, but dries out later in the summer. Along the river bank are tree species which have adapted to this seasonal flooding—red and green ash, American sycamore, silver maple, and slippery elm.

Catbird, yellow shafted flicker, and kingfisher feed on insects, fish and fruits such as mulberry and raspberry. The river is a watering ground for raccoon and deer whose tracks are imprinted in the mud along the banks. Otters have also been sighted in the river.

Note: Because of soils that drain poorly, there is frequent flooding, making the area unsuitable for building and farming. To protect the river corridors, the DEP is working on a stream buffer program which will regulate the activity along the banks of the river, 100 feet from the highest water mark.

Quinnipiac Park

5 



Honeypot Brook



Once, long ago, a boy named Montowese was walking in the woods. He was carrying his new bow and arrow and a small coiled clay pot his mother had made. As Montowese jumped from stone to stone over a tumbling

brook, the sound of loud humming made him look up. Bees were going in and out of a hole in a large sugar maple. A bee tree!

His mouth watered as he imagined the sweetness of honey on his tongue. He had to get some! By striking his flintstone in a pile of dry leaves, he started a fire. He blew out the flame, picked up some smoking leaves in a hollow branch, and climbed the tree. When he had filled the hive with smoke, the bees were dazed and sleepy. The humming had stopped. All was quiet. He reached in and grabbed pieces of honeycomb dripping with golden honey.

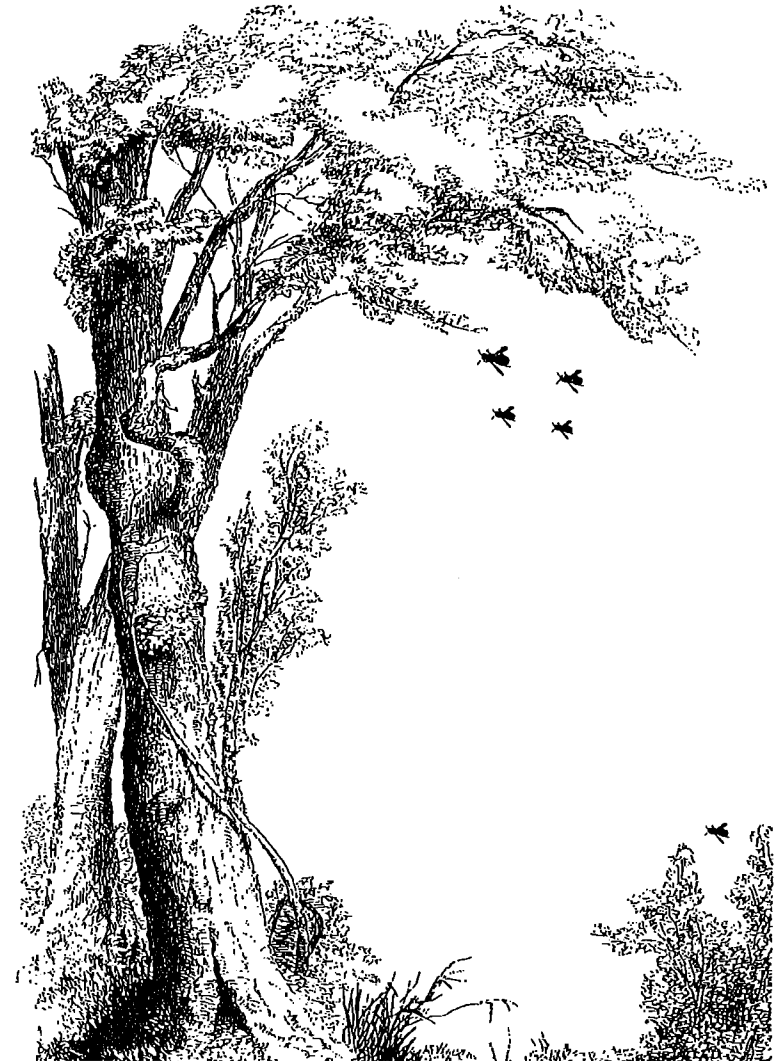
He quickly slid down the tree trunk. Before the bees could revive, he put the honeycomb into his clay pot and ran down the path as fast as he could. "Honey, honey, honey," he said to himself, "in my baked beans, on my squash. Mmm..."

He ran so fast his moccasins skidded on wet mossy ground. His feet slid out from under him and into the brook he fell! The clay pot flew out of his hand and, hitting a rock, shattered into a thousand pieces. The honeycomb split apart and floated off down the brook. Montowese sat for a moment in the cold water, thinking of what a sad day it had been. He was soaking wet, the honey was gone and his mother's beautiful clay pot was destroyed.

When he got back to the camp, he told his story, adding a few things to make it more exciting. "A black bear wanted the honey," he said. "He growled at me and chased me and made me drop the honey."

Montowese's grandfather laughed and laughed. After that

he would tease Montowese. "Hey, let's go bear hunting at that honeypot brook." Montowese never admitted that the bear was made up and he never went back there, but Honeypot became the name of the brook even to this day. When you walk near this brook in Cheshire Park, you may see a bee tree or even, who knows? find a piece of a clay pot in the water.



Cheshire Park



OWNERSHIP: Town of Cheshire

ACREAGE: 55

LOCATION: Route 10, 1.5 mi. north of town center

ENTRANCE: Rte 10 (marked); Stony Brook Rd. (S. side of park)

PARKING: Large lots at both entrances; small unpaved area at Country Club Road end of one of the trails.

TRAILS: 2 main trails, named for Henry W. Hicock and Ruth C. Burke. Also side trails.

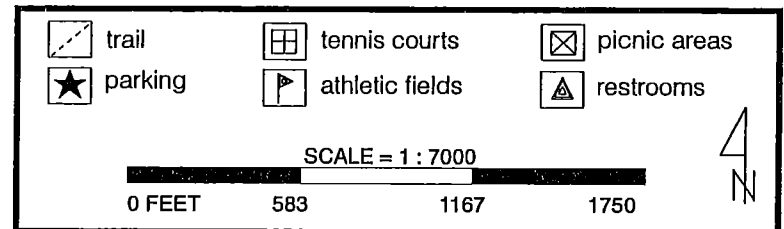
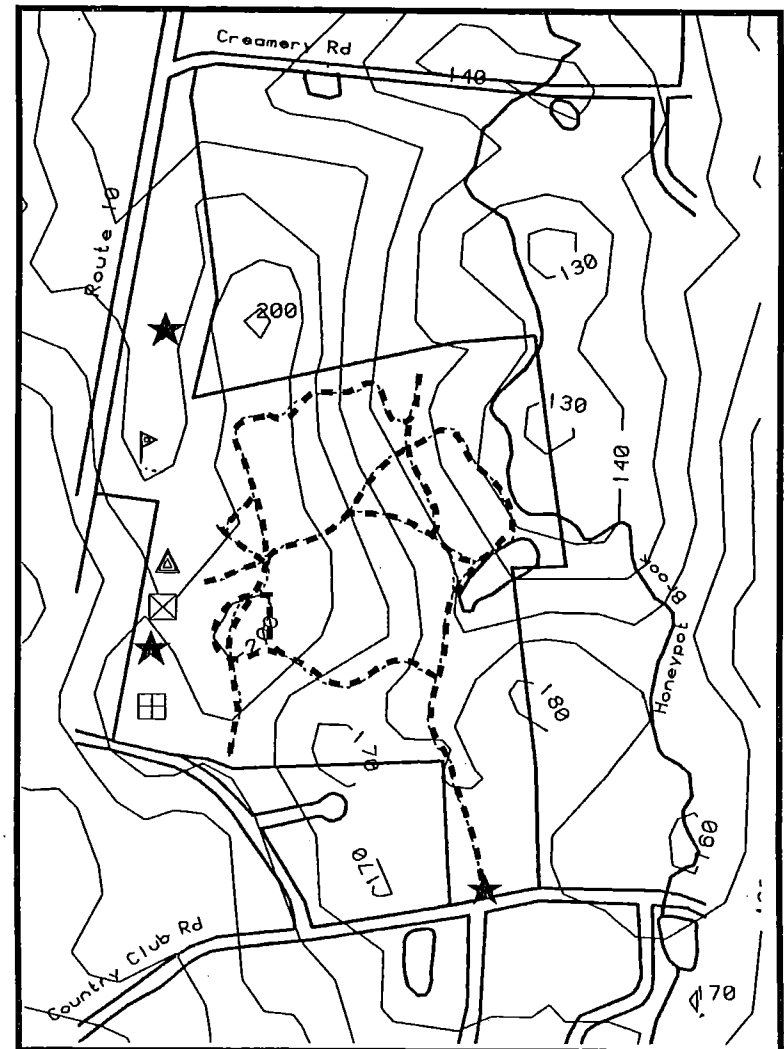
COMMENTS: Rolling, steep in places.

Features: Baseball and softball fields, lighted basketball court, tennis courts, picnic area, children's play area. 14 acres of open land and the balance under a cover of trees and woody shrubs. Set behind the playing fields is a wooded area with an open meadow in the middle and a nice set of trails going around and through it. You can walk for an hour and see the whole park or for a short time and visit one or two areas.

Description: The trails wind through glacial hills which were formed 15,000 years ago when the last glaciers covered Connecticut. You can see rocks of assorted sizes, from pebbles to larger rounded boulders, mixed together by the moving glacial ice. Along Honeypot Brook, which meanders along the eastern side of the park, you will see wetland plants and perhaps frogs and turtles. The Goat Pasture, an open grassy space in the middle of the woods, is good for sunlight and Frisbees™. The pond hosts turtles, ducks, minnows and water bugs and occasionally a great blue heron. Along the trails, look for robins, bluebirds, jays and chickadees; rabbits and squirrels; birches, larches, oaks, maples, pines; mountain laurel in June.

The once-feared troll under the Kissing Bridge has fortunately not been seen in a number of years, embarrassed at displays of affection. Crossers of the bridge are urged to continue kissing, if only to keep the troll from re-appearing.

Cheshire Park



Bishop Farm



- OWNERSHIP:** John and Mary Romanik
ACREAGE: 15
ENTRANCE: S. Meriden Rd (Rte 70), 2 mi. east of the Green
PARKING: At entrance
TRAILS: 5' wide woodchip path, 1/4 mile in length
COMMENTS: Nice walk for children, but strollers do not roll easily on the very coarsely shredded wood path.

Background: The Bishop family farmed this land since before the American Revolution. Apples became the main crop; John Bishop began making apple wine here a few years ago. The Romaniks, owners since 1993, will continue the fruit growing and wine making.

Features: The first thing to see along this user-friendly trail is a mini-zoo. Animals in pens include a gaggle of honking geese, two muddy pigs, a couple of black lambs, and several beautiful birds. The trail is a loop which can be walked in either direction. Going clockwise, walkers go along the edge of an apple orchard, then by a field of blueberries. The Hanging Hills, with a radio tower on top, can be seen to the east. As the trail dips down a slope, a pond comes into sight. This is where six mallard ducks live. Along the edge of the pond are several big boulders to climb or sit on. Watching the ducks is fun; they bob their heads down into the water, waddle up onto the island in the middle of the pond, and sometimes scratch themselves with their long bright-orange pointy toes. The trail winds back through an orchard, ending where it started—by the animals.

Suggestions: Allow at least a half-hour to enjoy this trail with children, seeing everything in a leisurely way.

Pond with Ducks at Bishop Farm 7

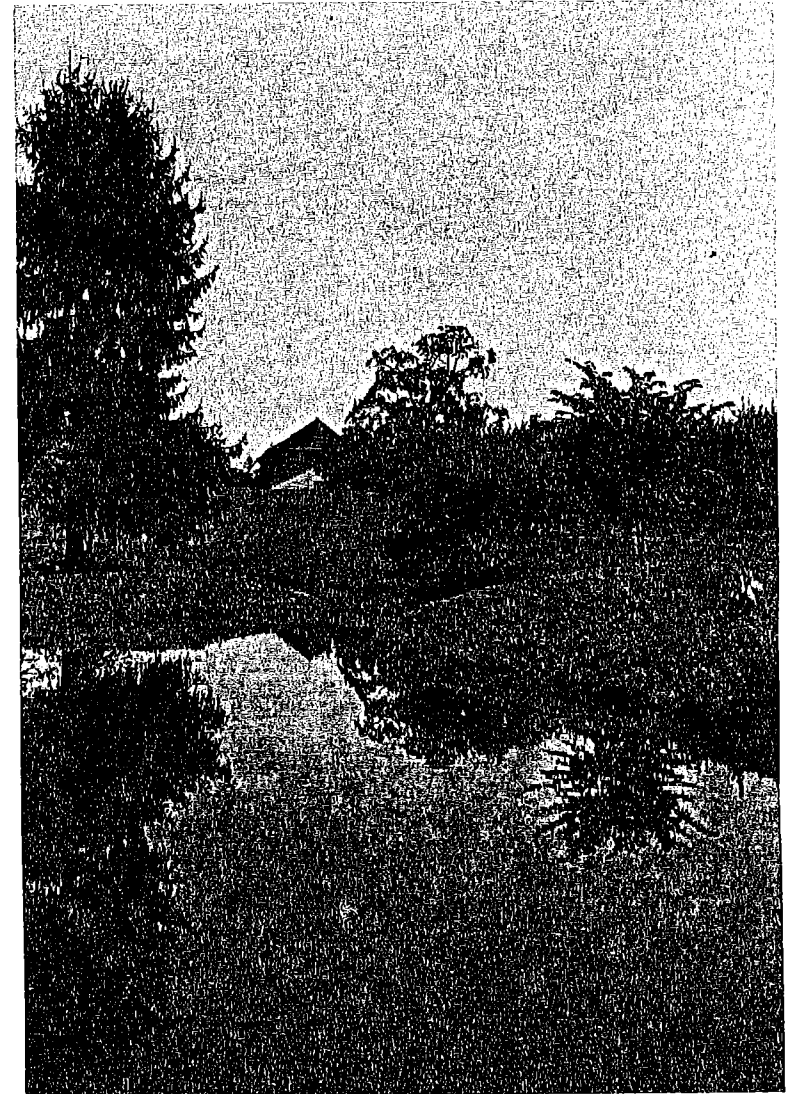
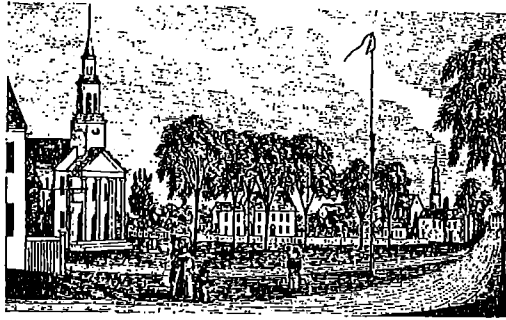


Photo by Jim Sipperly

Historic District

The center of Cheshire grew up around the Congregational Church, the first place of worship. Here on the Green and surrounding streets are 18th and 19th century buildings which



were taverns, stores, and private homes. As you walk, imagine the clop of horses' hooves, the ring of the blacksmith's anvil, and people greeting one another.

Parking: Church Drive Off Rte. 10, front of the Congregational Church. Or behind Town Hall; one block E. on Wallingford Rd, left on Elm, left into the lot.

South Main & The Green, the main walk, is a short loop. Side walks to other nearby streets are described and can be added in any order.

The Green is owned by the Congregational Church; the land was donated to the church by the Rev. Samuel Hall after his appointment as the first pastor in 1721.

1. Congregational Church 1826 Federal Designed by architect David Hoadley, it has had many additions and renovations. The previous church, built 1737, was at the

front of what is now the Green and was surrounded by little Sabbaday houses where people ate dinner between morning and afternoon services.

2. Voight Parsonage 1912-13 Federal Revival The site of Dr. Thomas Cornwall's original house; it later became Dr. Shelton's medical office and tavern, and after that the Munson/Wallace Hotel. The hotel burned down in 1892 and the lot was leased briefly by the CT Lighting and Railway Co. for a trolley car barn.

3. Abijah Beach Tavern 1750 Federal/ Gambrel Roof Built to be a tavern; nine fireplaces, indoor well; 3rd floor ballroom was a popular meeting place for a century.

The Town Clock

Julia Humiston donated money to the town for a handsome Seth Thomas clock, but there was no place in the town hall for the clock nor in the tower of the Episcopal Church, so it was placed in the steeple of the Congregational Church. A self-perpetuating committee of three maintains the clock. One man, the time keeper, regulates the clock every week. He climbs the steep stairs and winds and adjusts two separate sets of weights, one regulating the time, the other the chime.

4. Russell Cook House

1801 Federal/Gambrel Roof Built as a residence w. a small detached store in the rear. In 1850 William Horton converted the store to a tavern and later the house to a hotel. By 1900 Miss Chapman's school was in the outbuilding, and the house was again a residence.

5. Cornwall House 1807

An 18th c. house was torn down to make way for the home of Dr. Thomas T. Cornwall, a doctor known for his treatment of cancer. He added a wing to the house in 1816 as a sanatorium for his patients.

(This is the starting point for the **Cornwall Avenue Walk**; see p. 53.)

6. Foote House 1769 Colonial/Gambrel Renovated and used as a bank since 1978. Built by Rev. John Foot, pastor of the Congregational Church for 40 years. His son Samuel was a US Senator and Gov. of CT in 1834. Another son, Adm. Foote, lived here; his name (with an e added) is in large letters at the base of the **Civil War Monument**. (27.)

Cross S. Main at the walk light. (Corner of Cornwall.)

7. Squire Beach House 1762 Colonial/Gambrel Turned sideways in a recent renovation, it was the home of Atty, Samuel Beach and later his son Burrage. It is slated to open soon as a steakhouse. Walk north past the row of storefronts; are two interesting private residences. (8. and 9.) 9. used to be an antique store.

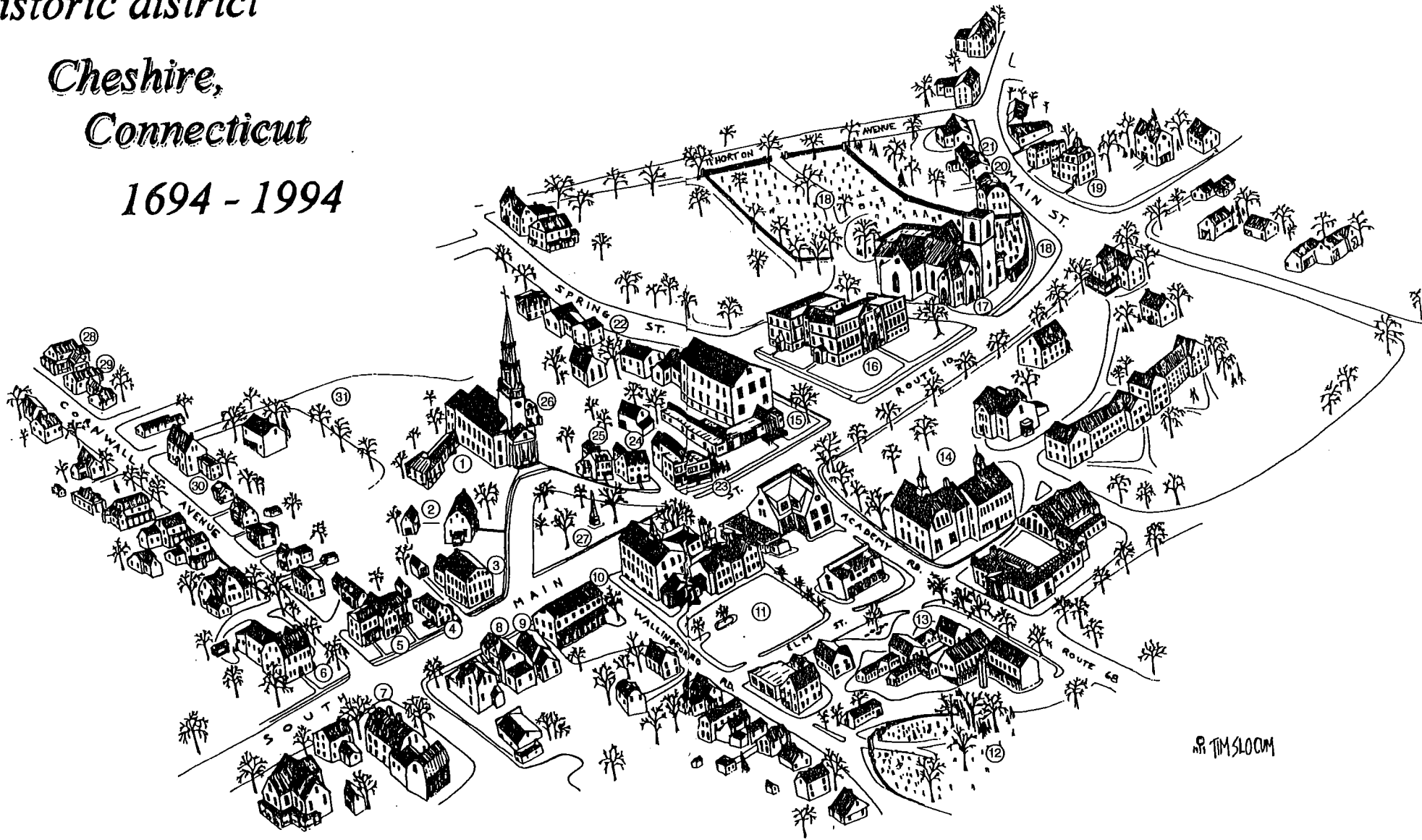
Proceed past the next row of stores to **10. Wallingford Road**. One of the oldest roads in town, it was a main route of the first settlers.

Cross to the town hall. You can take the optional walk. (box below) or look at **11. the Town Hall**.

historic district

*Cheshire,
Connecticut*

1694 - 1994



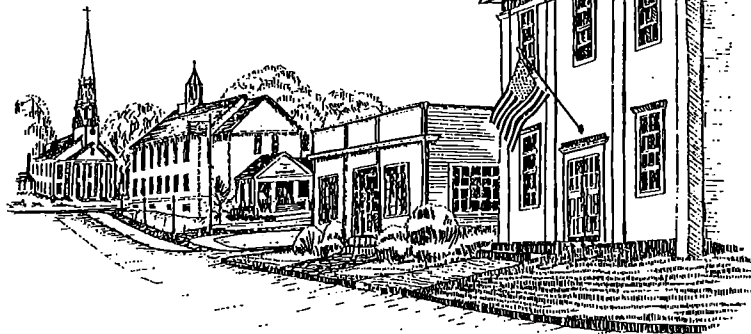
TIM SLOOM

Wallingford Road Walk

12. **Hillside Cemetery** Enter through the red sandstone arch and read the names inside—Cheshire men who served in the Revolution. The oldest cemetery in town; many gravestones date from the 1700s.

13. **Cheshire Watch Factory** 1883 19th c. Industrial Produced watches for only 7 years; closed due to technical difficulties. It later became a dorm for Cheshire Academy, now stores and offices. Inner courtyards to explore.

11. **Cheshire Town Hall** 1867 Late Greek Revival Cost \$8000. Note the two sycamore trees in front— they were there before the hall was built. The hall was the center of social life for many years; the auditorium was used for town meetings, dances, plays, graduations. Cheshire's own vaudeville troupe, the Durands, performed here. The first floor was rented out



to local merchants. Modern rear addition, 1989. In front, notice the granite **Horse Block**. (story, p. 51.)

From here you may walk across Academy Rd to 14. **Cheshire Academy** or go back across S. Main to **Temple Beth David**. (15.)

14. **Cheshire Academy** 1798 Bowden Hall, Georgian Brick Formed as an Episcopal school for boys and girls. Re-organized as Cheshire Academy, boys' school. Military academy in the Civil War. Now a coed school, grades K-12. Beautiful campus, woods, pond, playing fields.

15. **Temple Beth David** (3 Main) 1834 Greek Revival (1981 Modern addition) The brick Methodist Church was purchased in 1970 by Temple Beth David along with three houses around the corner on Spring Street.

Horse Block

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, many couples rode to town on horseback, the husband in the saddle in front and the wife riding on a pillion behind. Most homes and public places had a horse block for ease of climbing down from one's horse, but the newly-built Congregational Church did not provide one. Some young Cheshire men found the perfect stone in Prospect, but it was the stone which the Prospect Church was planning to use. In the middle of the night, with a sled pulled by oxen, the Cheshire men carried the stone back to town and put it in front of the Congregational Church where it stayed for many years, even though the Prospect pastor preached a sermon denouncing the "town with a rock on its heart."



Cross Spring Street, formerly **Bunnell Lane**, a path through the 400-acre Bunnell Farm, extending all the way west to the ridge. (The Bunnell home is 20.)

16. Humiston School

1912 Georgian Revival Cheshire combined its district schools into one large elementary school built with money donated by Julia Humiston and named for her father Daniel Humiston.

17. **St. Peter's Episcopal Church** 59 Main Street 1840/1880/1970 Gothic Revival, brick and brownstone. In 1760 Jos. Moss dedicated this land for the first Anglican Church in Cheshire. The first building was too small; a larger church was erected in 1770. After Zacariah Ives became the first resident pastor, the church thrived. The 1840 church, designed by Sidney Hook, was built by Nettleton and Perkins at a cost of \$4000.

18. St. Peter's Cemetery

Pause here and look across the street to 19., the **Amos Baldwin House**, 84 Main. 1800/1872 Second Empire (mansard roof added in 1872) Amos, owner of a store in the Beach Tavern, built this house shortly after his marriage. The next owner, Rev. Asa Cromwell ran a school in a small outbuilding east of the house. The Beadle-Johnson family has owned it for 4 generations.

20. **Ebenezer Bunnell House**, 87 Main St. 1740 Colonial Cape One of the oldest houses standing in Cheshire, it has survived many owners and uses including that of a blacksmith shop and a cobbler shop. Ebenezer, his wife Lidia Clark and son Israel lived here and farmed the surrounding land. (See above note on Spring Street.)

21. **Seth Johnson House**, Colonial Cape Seth bought 2 acres from Ebenezer Bunnell, built this house, married Eunice Hitchcock all in 1771. He later served in the Revolution. This house stayed in the family until 1825.

Two ways to get back to S. Main: a) turn left onto Horton and walk half a block to the gate to 16. **St. Peter's Cemetery**. Go through this old graveyard, (the cemetery is worth exploring. There is a bench for sitting) out onto S. Main again, b) continue on Horton, left on Spring. Notice 22., (45 Spring), the old school library. The barn behind 33 Spring was the old district school gym.

23. **Rufus Hitchcock Store** (15-19 S. Main) 1787 For 188 years this was a grocery store, owned first by the Hitchcocks and then other families. Additions and remodeling

hide most of the original building, a bit of which is visible in the rear.

24. **Moses Bradley House** (25 Church Drive) 1868 Gothic Revival The original Cape Cod house (which burned) included a silversmith shop and later a shoemaker shop.

25. **Hitchcock Phillips House** 43 Church Drive 1785 Georgian Built by merchant Rufus Hitchcock, it was passed down to his son and then to his granddaughter, Mrs. A.W. Phillips. In 1906 it was purchased by the Cheshire Academy which turned it over to the Cheshire Historical Society in 1972. A rich repository of Cheshire history; open 2-4 PM Sundays

26. **The Whiting House** 43 Church Drive. 1785 Greek Revival Built by the Rev. Joseph Whiting, first pastor of the "new" Congregational Church. Ownership passed to Arthur Sherriff, Cheshire Academy headmaster, and then to the Congregational Church.

27. Stop at the **Monument to Civil War Monument**. Note the names of Foote (house 6.) and Moon (house 29.).

Cornwall Avenue Walk: Turn right at the **Cornwall House** (5.) onto this delightful street, shaded by old sugar maples. Along both sides of the street is a splendid array of Victorian homes, each with its own details—columns, porches, etc.

In the early 1800s, the land on the north side of the street, from S. Main to the foot of the hill, was the Cornwall Farm, run by Edward A. Cornwall, son of Dr. Thomas T. In the mid-1800's EAC began selling parts of his farmland; by 1868 there were three houses on the street, 28., 29, & 30. Over the crest of the hill, savor the view of the "Blew Hills" to the west. 30. Built C. 1865; best known as home of architect Alice Washburn. She added many interior details (1920s). 28. and 29. were identical Capes when built c. 1840. In the 1860s, EAC sold 28. to Richard Brown a barite miner and 29. to Wm. Moon, a 19-year-old mechanic and enlistee in the Civil War.

Return to the Green along the private road W. of 30. which passes by the 3-story barn of 30. and emerges at the parking lot 31. known as "backchurch." Stop to admire the stately church, its white steeple against the sky. The parsonage's red barn completes a fine New England scene.



Sources of information for the Historic Walk:
Landmarks of Old Cheshire (ed. Oedel), *Old Historic Homes of Cheshire* (compiler Ed. Brown), *A Brief Hist. of Cheshire Academy* (Dupre), *First Congregational Church* (Gumprecht). Cheshire residents: Lillian Andrews, Edgar Johnson, and Melville Bennett.

Scott's Rock

Two hundred yards north of South Brooksvale Road and fifty yards west of Green Hill Lane, there is a large and interesting rock formation called Scott's Rock. It is not made of the sandstone seen around South Brooksvale, but is basalt, the bedrock of Prospect Ridge.

An immense glacier, advancing with great force, probably pushed Scott's rock from its original location and dragged it for miles. When the ice melted, the rock was left behind, one of many *erratics* found all over the Connecticut countryside.

This rock formation, which forms a shelter, is not a mere geological curiosity; it has historical interest as well. The following story is one of several about Scott's Rock and how it may have gotten that name.

In the mid-1600's, a group of Indians walking on their ancient trail from Farmington to West Haven, were startled by the appearance of some white men, colonists from Farmington who were exploring what is now southwest Cheshire. The Indians gave chase and captured a man named Scott. For several days they held him captive in a cave formed by a giant boulder, then returned him safely to Farmington.

From then on, this rock formation was known as Scott's Rock. It was used as a reference point in many land grants to settlers moving into Cheshire in the 1700s.

For centuries, Mattabesec Indians had used the cave as a shelter; they left behind many arrowheads and other artifacts.

Over the years, many people found arrowheads in the cave. Archeologists have since removed most of the remaining artifacts for further study.

Linear Park

- OWNERSHIP:** Town of Cheshire
- ENTRANCES:** From north to south: Cornwall Avenue, Higgins Road, N. Brooksvale Rd., S. Brooksvale Rd., Mt. Sanford Rd.
- PARKING:** Cornwall Avenue, 37 spaces (2 handicapped). Lock 12 parking lot at N. Brooksvale; on-street parking at the Mt. Sanford entrance.
- TRAILS:** 2.8 miles of 10-foot-wide paved path; continues unpaved and narrower 2+ mi. into Hamden. (The Hamden section is being widened and paved and will be ready by late summer 1995.) From the Hamden section walkers have access to the Brooksvale Recreation Area and the adjoining Naugatuck State Forest. (The Quinnipiac Trail, part of the state's Blue Trail system, runs through this area.) The Linear Trail ends at Todd Road just west of the Sleeping Giant Park and its hiking trails.
- COMMENTS:** Wheelchair accessible from N. Brooksvale and from the Cornwall parking lot. (Across from entrance to trail.) Benches are planned along trail. Well-marked; patrolled by policeman on bicycle.

Background: Land for the Linear Park was acquired in 1992 from the Boston and Maine Corporation; it is the former right-of-way corridor for the B&M railroad line along the old Farmington Canal. In the spring of 1994, after the widening and paving of the path and the building of bridges and fences, Linear Park had its grand opening. It is part of a planned 113-mile greenway, from New Haven up through Massachusetts. The next stage will be the town's acquisition of the railroad right of way from Cornwall Ave. to Cheshire's north boundary.

Description: Linear Park is a social trail enjoyed by walkers, inline skaters, bicyclists, and cross-country skiers. The trail bends invitingly, closing off one view as it opens another. The lock keeper's house and restored Lock 12 evokes the 1830s when barges, on their way to New Haven Harbor, came through the lock.

In 1828, on opening day of the Canal, the boat *Fayette* flew a red flannel petticoat from its mast. The women of Cheshire were not amused.



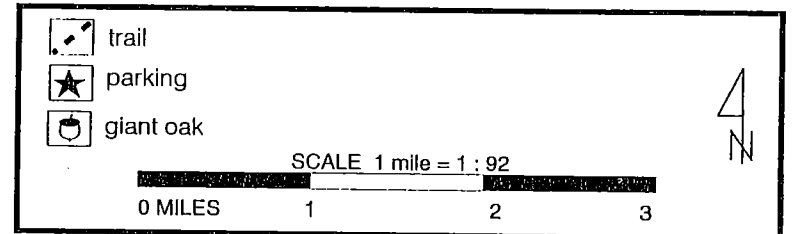
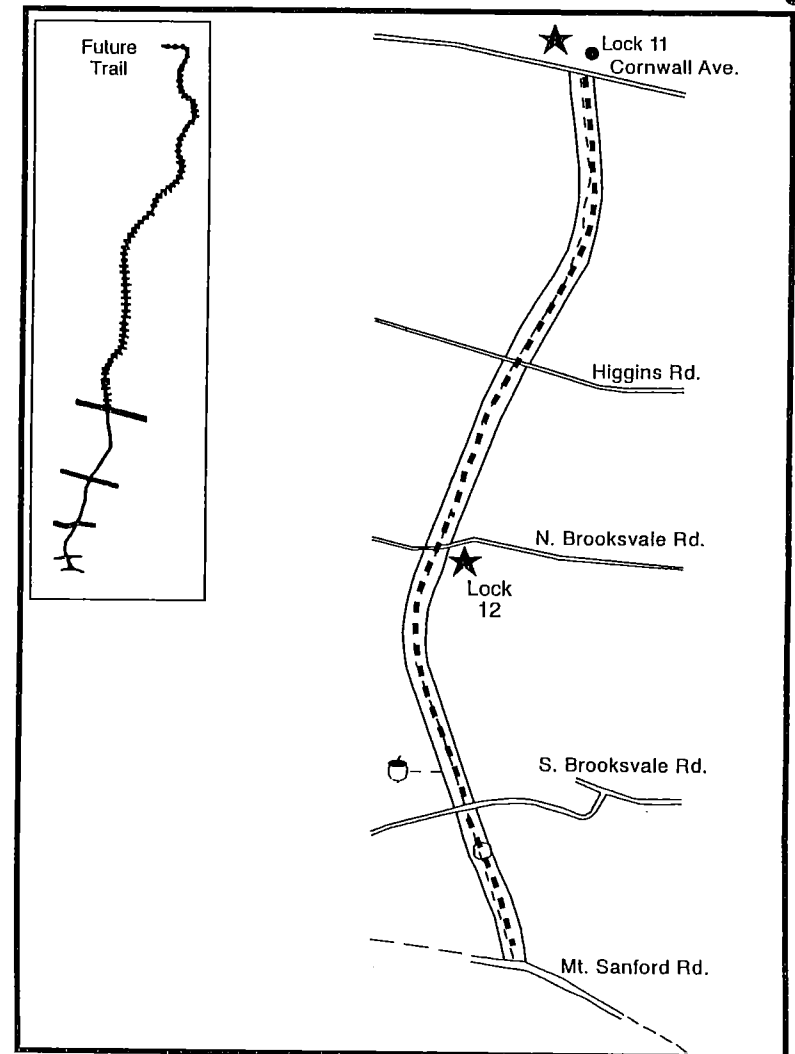
Willow Brook undulates to the left and right of the trail, flowing quietly under a couple of handsome bridges, one wrought iron and one picketed like a New England fence.

The wetlands along the trail are lush with ferns, graceful sedges, skunk cabbage, buttonbush, and sweet pepperbush, canopied over with red maples. In July the ultra-sweet fragrance of swamp azaleas fills the air. Only one or two of these plants grows close to the trail—look for white trumpet-shaped flowers in clusters. One of the most prevalent plants growing close to the trail is three-leaved poison ivy which climbs trees and bushes, holding on with tenacious rootlets. Tangled together with the ivy are woodbine (five-leaves) and grapevine. Trees and shrubs, brambles, vines; ferns, wildflowers, sedges and grasses thrive in habitats varying from wet shady swamps to sunny dry trailsides. The air resounds with birdcalls. At a hollow tree, woodpeckers tap for insects. Bees and butterflies stop to feed on flower nectar. You may catch a glimpse of a rabbit or turtle. On one section of the trail, an orange cat sometimes sits guard. Each day there are new things to see. For all seasons, all ages.

Suggestions: For solitude, try early mornings or drizzly days. Archeology buffs will be fascinated to find the partly hidden remains of Lock 13. (S. side of trail, just over Hamden line.)

To find out more about this part of Cheshire, see *exploring CHESHIRE*, a resource notebook compiled by the TRAILS committee. (Available at the reference desk, Cheshire Library.)

Linear Park



Bens Homestead Trail

10 

OWNERSHIP: Town of Cheshire
ACREAGE: 56
LOCATION: Cornwall Ave. extension
(W. off Mountain Road)
ENTRANCE: 1. Park along Cornwall Ave. extension
in Cheshire. See path at gate. OR 2. Park in
Prospect at dead end of Chatfield Road.
Look for water company storage tanks
and Blue Trail markers.

Background: In 1993 the town acquired ridgetop
property from the Bens family. The terrain is
mountainous and heavily wooded. For many years
Fred Bens, longtime first selectman of Cheshire, operated
a sawmill on his land. Public access from Cheshire to the
Quinnipiac (Blue) Trail is now possible by way of the
Bens Homestead Trail.

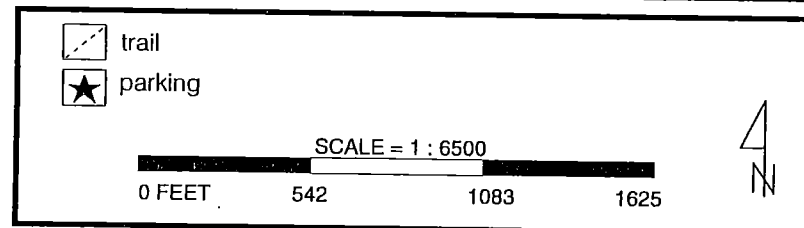
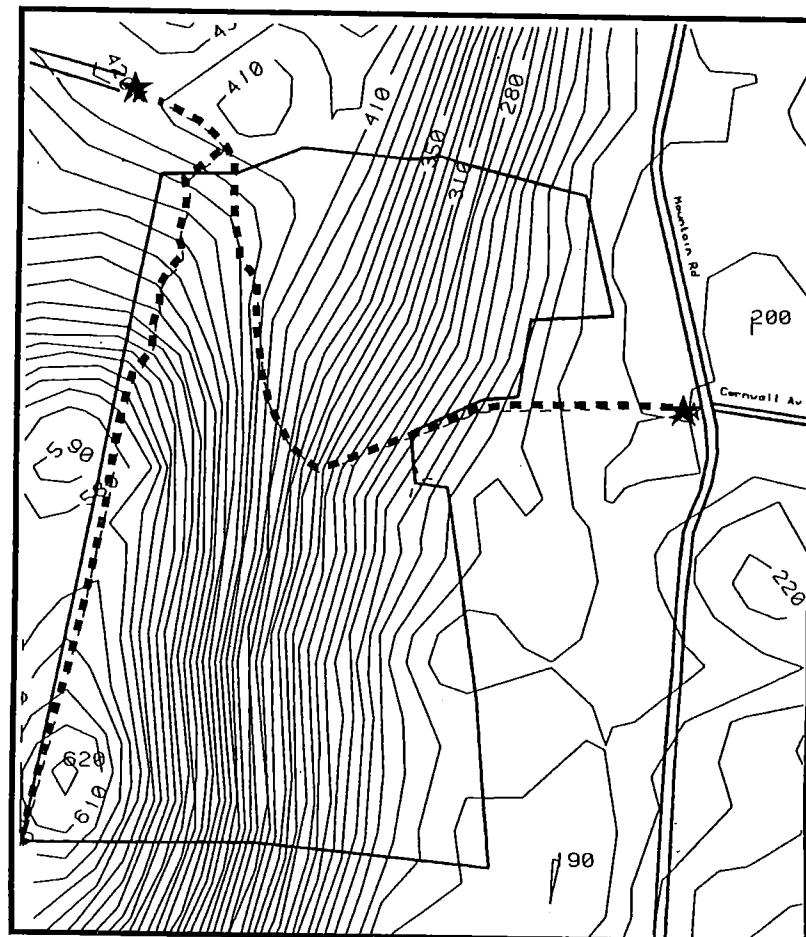
Trails: *Prospect approach (descent):* the Orange blazed trail
follows a long-abandoned section of Cornwall Avenue.
Many years ago Cheshire and Prospect were linked by
Cornwall Avenue, which was carved out of a rocky notch
in Prospect Ridge. Today, the rock-strewn roadbed narrows
to a path that is surrounded by steep escarpments. The
trail is easily walked and with a little imagination you
can get a sense of the rural commerce that passed along
the former road as you approach the old sawmill at the
Fred Bens homestead (private) and Cornwall Avenue
extension in Cheshire.

Cheshire approach (ascent): Begin hike at Cornwall Avenue
ext. Follow blazed trail up to ridgetop. Trail eventually
intersects with the Blue Trail and then terminates at
Chatfield Road in Prospect.

Duration: One and 1/2 hours, round trip.

Bens Homestead Trail

10 



Brooksvale Homestead Preserve

Cheshire was first settled in several districts, some of which were named for prominent families. Such was the case for Brooksvale in south Cheshire. In 1733 Enos Brooks built a saltbox house beside Sanford Brook. The home was enlarged and several other homes were built along South Brooksvale Road as his family and its illustrious descendants prospered. Farming there was a very successful enterprise owing to the excellent land and its proximity to the canal and later the railroad.

Today these stately homes are among Cheshire's finest examples of historic architecture. The scenic pastures have been farmed continuously for over 200 years. In 1991, Betty Lewis, Jean McKee and Gordon Thayer, descendants of Enos Brooks, granted a conservation restriction to the Cheshire Land Trust that will ensure permanent protection for much of the pristine farmland. The land and homestead are theirs, but its rural and historic character are forever preserved by their actions. The land will be farmed for as long as it is economically feasible; the scenic vistas will be preserved and the potential for any large scale development has been eliminated.

As you walk along historic South Brooksvale Road today, you will capture a glimpse of a simpler time when rural, farming life prevailed.



Roaring Brook

OWNERSHIP: Town of Cheshire; easement to Cheshire Land Trust.

ACREAGE: 85 (14.7 CLT)

LOCATION: Roaring Brook Road off Mountain Road in South Cheshire.

ENTRANCE: Go .3 mi. along Roaring Brook Road.

PARKING: Paved lot for 2 cars at park entrance gate. Additional parking on street.


TRAILS: Orange-blazed trail loop that intersects with Quinnipiac (Blue) Trail.

COMMENTS: Moderate to difficult; trails are well marked.

Background: In the 1880s people from New Haven came by horse and buggy to the Robert Cook Farm to picnic, climb the gorge and take in the beauty of this "place of delightful resort." In 1974 the property, then owned by the Foster family, was offered to a developer. Here began a well-organized campaign by Tom Pool and the Cheshire Land Trust to preserve as much of the land as was possible. The outcome preserved one of Connecticut's finest natural treasures, Roaring Brook Falls. A granite marker, dedicated in 1981 to the memory of Tom Pool, was placed beside the trail.

Features: Roaring Brook runs west to east, hitting the traprock and falling 80 feet, the second highest waterfall in the state of Connecticut. Its unique ravine, falls, and traprock formation have put it on the New England Inventory of Natural Resources. Of all the places in Cheshire, this is perhaps the most written-about. Several poems by local poets rhapsodize about the breathtaking beauty of the falls which, together with several smaller cascades, have carved the rugged gorge encompassed by high cliffs and rocky outcrops.

Description: Boy Scouts from Troops 90 and 91 blazed the first trail access from the driveway at the park entrance. For his Eagle Scout project, Bert Else added many improvements to this trail. The Orange Trail begins at an old stone chimney. This portion of your hike

11 

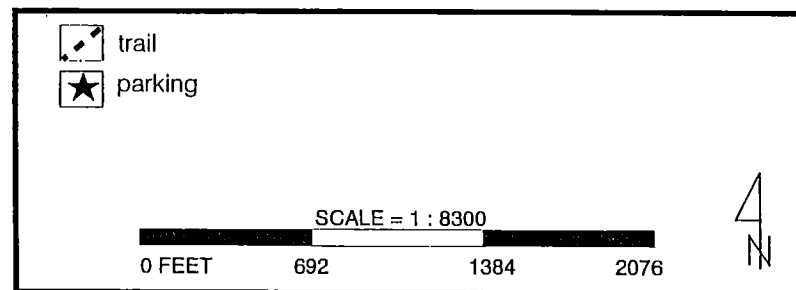
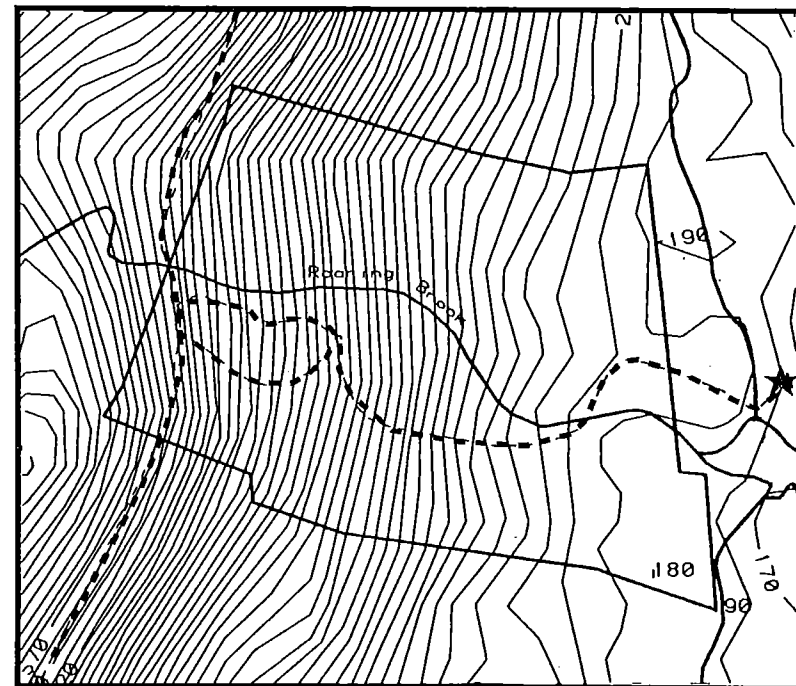
journeys through a magnificent forest of red-oak, beech, maple, and other hardwoods. Further along the trail the grade steepens as the trail approaches the main gorge and main falls overlook. The sound of the falls now grows louder and louder, living up to the name "roaring." There is a sense of excitement at the sight of the water tumbling swiftly through the cavernous hemlock-canopied gorge. From this point the trail continues from the overlook northwesterly to the Blue Trail. Continue along the Blue Trail to the upper falls area. Stone fire boxes have been constructed for a picnic in this unique setting.

You may continue to follow the Blue Trail or follow the orange-blazed trail, visible from the rest area, southeasterly along the gorge. Be cautious as you walk this segment of the trail. The rock underfoot can be loose and brittle along the rocky ravine and its high cliffs. The trail loops back to the site of the picturesque overlook above the roaring falls.

Suggestions: Early spring is one of the best times to view the cascades. At this time of year the flow of Roaring Brook is most impressive because of snow melt and frequent rainfall. The view of the falls is not yet impeded by the dense foliage which forms later along the gorge and trails. Proper footwear is essential; insect repellent is highly recommended as protection against mosquitoes and ticks.

To find out more about Roaring Brook Falls and how it became open space for all to enjoy, see the Vertical File at the Cheshire Public Library and *exploring CHESHIRE*, a resource notebook compiled by the TRAILS committee, available at the Library desk.

Roaring Brook



Helen Russell Memorial

12 

- OWNERSHIP:** Cheshire Land Trust
- ACREAGE:** 40
- LOCATION:** Bethany Mountain Rd. (Rte.42) SW Cheshire
- ENTRANCE:** Behind Number 15 Inverness Court. Walk over the driveway to rear of private garage. A CLT sign marks the beginning of the trail. Persons using trail ROW must respect property rights of the land owners of 15 Inverness.
- PARKING:** On the street along Inverness Court cul-de-sac
- TRAILS:** Orange-blazed trail begins at rear corner of outbuilding on private property. The trail has been improved by Troop 90 Eagle Scout, Jim Lammlin. This trail leads to the blue-blazed Quinnipiac Trail.
- COMMENTS:** Moderate difficulty with steep slopes. Proper footwear is necessary.

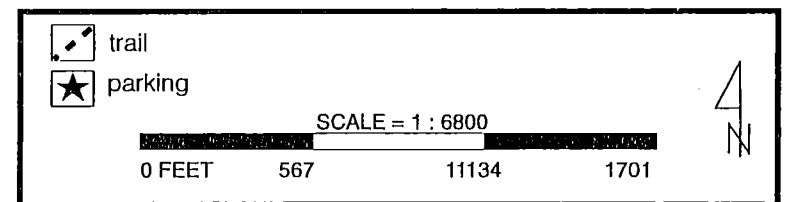
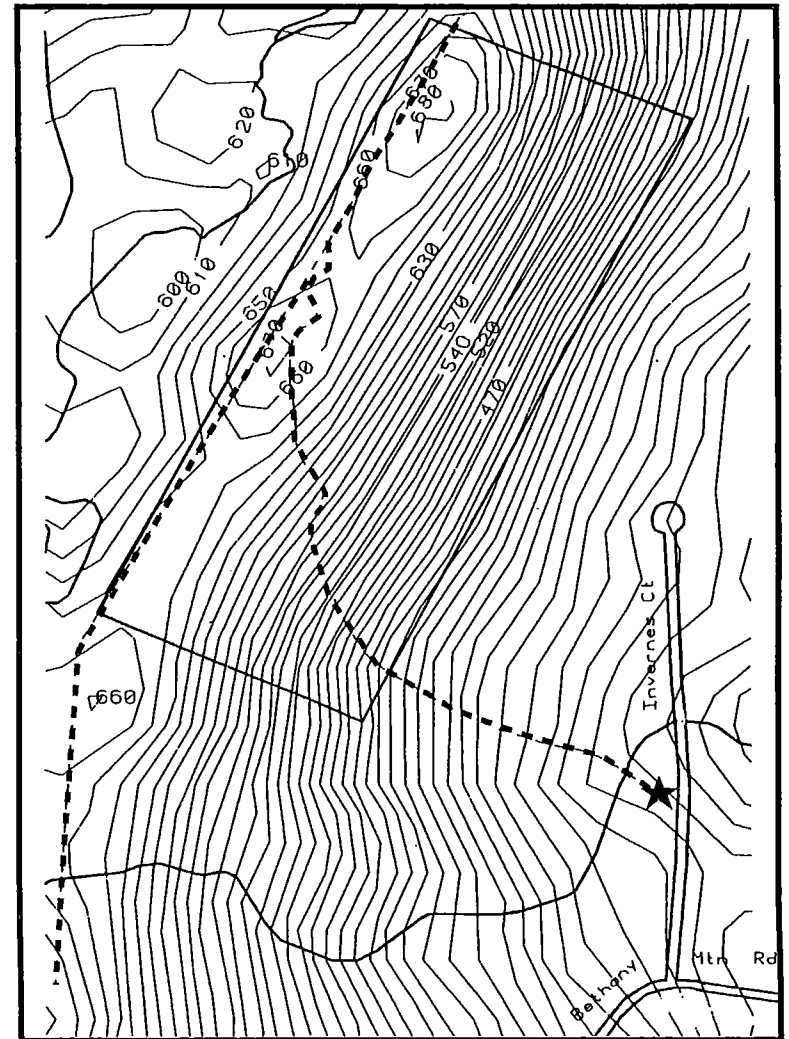
Background: Helen Russell donated this land to the Cheshire Land Trust in 1970 as a nature preserve. The land will remain undeveloped, providing a habitat for many indigenous plant and animal populations.

Features: Following a northwesterly route, this rugged trail links with the Quinnipiac Trail along the Cheshire/Prospect town line. It crosses several stream beds and weaves through a dense forest of hardwoods including oak, maple, beech, tulip and birch. Mountain laurels and other shrubs form a dense understory. At one place along the trail, there is a looking-off point with spectacular views across the valley to the Sleeping Giant.

Suggestions: Early spring and late fall, when the trees are bare, are the best times for viewing from the scenic overlook. In June, the laurel forms clouds of pink and white bloom. A walking stick may be useful on steep parts of the trail. (For the hardy, try the 2-hour hike from this trail to Roaring Brook and back.)

Helen Russell Memorial

12 



Quinnipiac (Blue) Trail

13 

- OWNERSHIP:** Trail passes through public and private lands
- TRAIL LENGTH:** Entire length North Haven to Prospect, 22.6 miles. Cheshire portion, 4.4 miles.
- ENTRANCE:** Primary access is from Bethany Mountain Road (Rte 42) in SW Cheshire. Park off the roadside and enter at the oval sign marked "Quinnipiac." Two other accesses: Cornwall Ave. extension in Cheshire, (W. off Mountain Road); and Chatfield Rd. in Prospect. (Take Tress Rd. in Cheshire to Chatfield)
- PARKING:** On side of street.
- TRAIL:** Part of the Blue Trail System

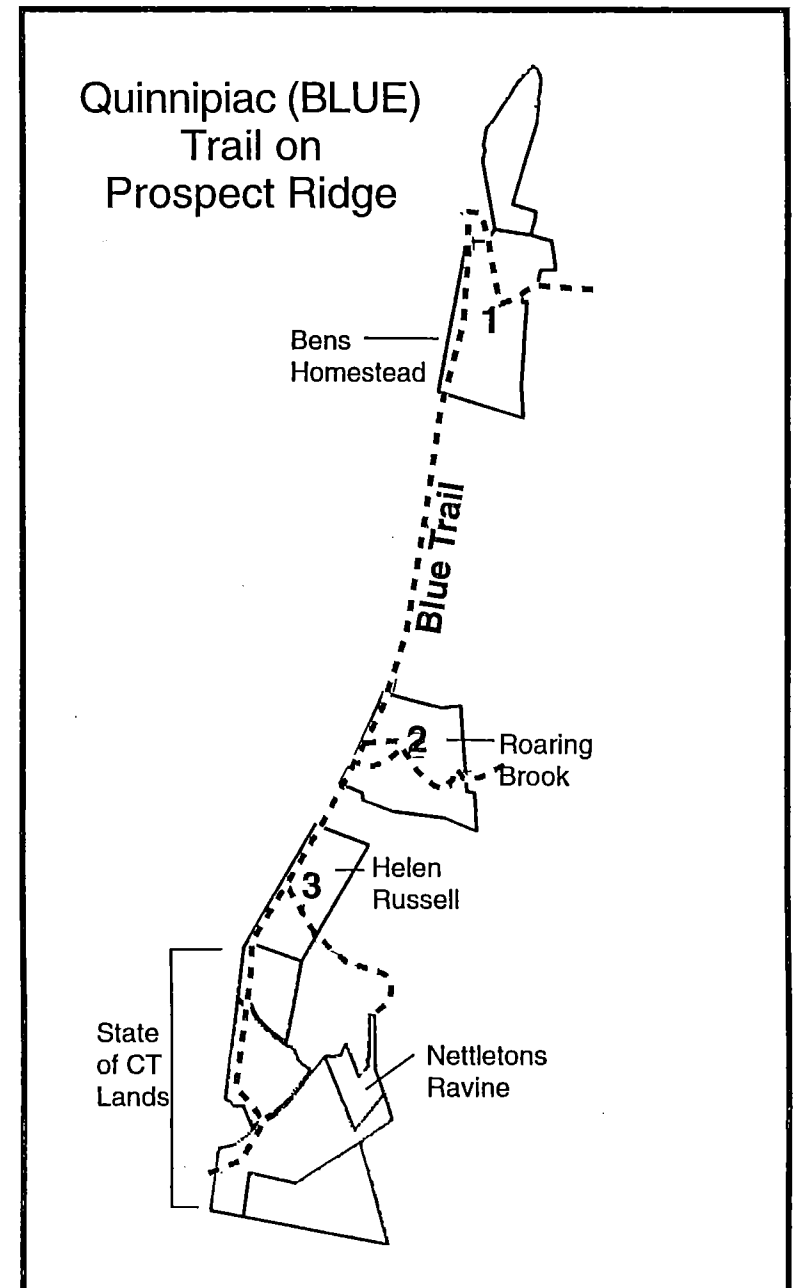
Background: Started in 1928 by Edgar Heermance, this is the first trail in the Connecticut Blue Trail System. It begins in North Haven, passes over Sleeping Giant in Mt. Carmel (Hamden), extends through Cheshire, and ends in Prospect at Cheshire Reservoir. The Blue Trail, blazed along the narrow ridgetop, is well-marked and easy to walk. Most of the blue-blazed trails in Connecticut are located on private property and continue to be available for public use through the goodwill of the landowner. This is true of the Quinnipiac Trail, although significant portions of the trail in Cheshire now cross public property.

Features: This trail passes through some of the most beautiful land in Cheshire. If you hike the entire Cheshire portion, you will experience Roaring Brook Falls, sweeping views of the valley and hills, and dense forests.

Description: You can make your walk as long or short as you want by simply staying on the trail for as long as you want and turning back when you're ready. Exploring the trail in all seasons will offer many rewards.

Quinnipiac (Blue) Trail

13 



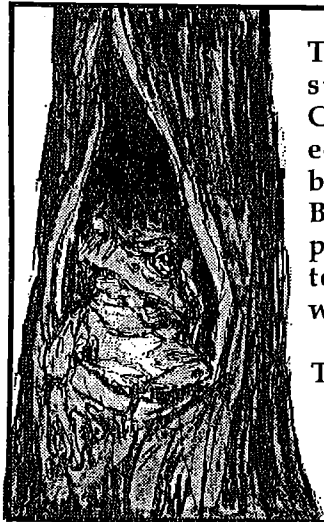
Nettleton's Ravine

This 35-acre preserve is located just south of Bethany Mountain Road. Bordering state forest land, this deep ravine contains a rich array of plant life more typical of northern forests. This is because the narrow, east/west-oriented ravine has a very low light level. Among the more unusual plants are mountain maple, striped maple, hobblebush, twisted stalk, and the spring-flowering leatherwood with its rubbery, bronzy branches.

The clear old stream passes over red sandstone which was formed two hundred million years ago. In the shadows of the overhanging tree roots you can find small brook trout. And in the forest there are wild turkey and white-tailed deer.

The ravine is characterized by extremely steep slopes covered with evergreen ferns and abundant hemlock. This is one of Cheshire's most beautiful and unusual areas.

The main access from Rte. 42 passes by a private home with threatening barking dogs. Continue beyond to a small trail near a falling-down cabin. The trail passes through a dense stand of mountain laurel and joins the brook near a huge glacial erratic.



This area, under the stewardship of the Cheshire Land Trust, is ecologically interesting but vulnerable to overuse. Before you explore it, please obtain permission to do so by sending a written request to:

The Cheshire Land Trust
Box 781
Cheshire, CT 06410



Photo by Frank Dziezic

Bartlem Park

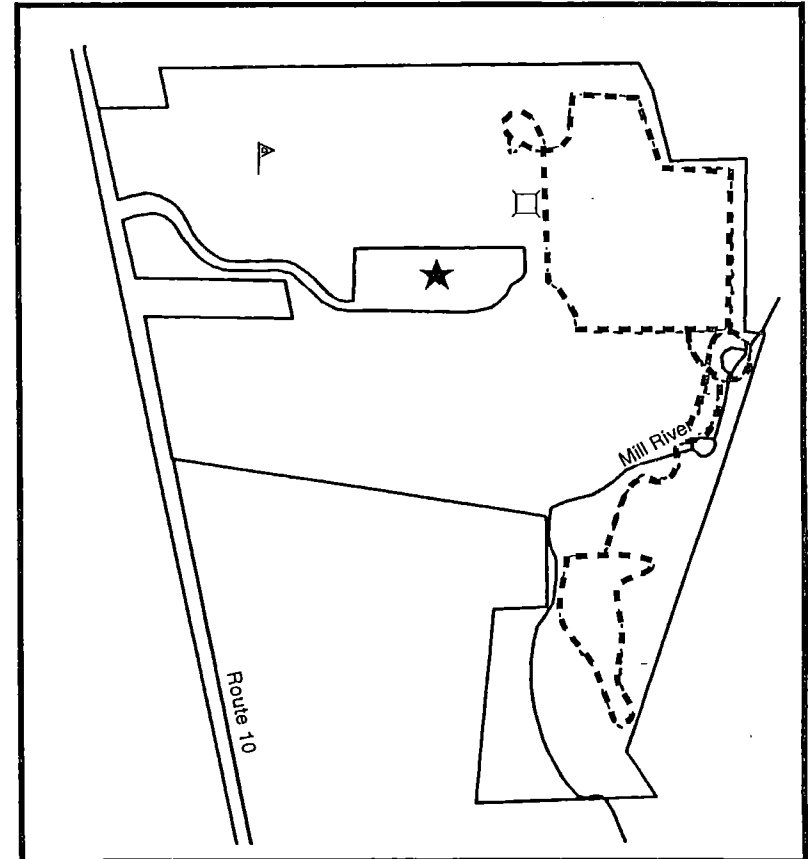
- OWNERSHIP: Town of Cheshire
- ACREAGE: 20
- ENTRANCE: Route 10, opposite Cheshire High School
- PARKING: Follow driveway to parking area.
- TRAILS: No existing trails
- COMMENTS: Primarily a park with playgrounds, it is also a good spot for casual strolling.





Background: Richard Bartlem retired in November 1993 after 25 years as the director of Cheshire's Park and Recreation Department. The town showed its appreciation of his dedicated service by naming this park after him.

Description: Bartlem Park is new and evolving. The children's playground at the end of the parking area is in constant use. Older children ride bikes, and games take place on the playing fields.

A Suggested Walk: Start at the parking area and go to the rear of the park alongside the row of wild cherry trees, until you reach the wooded corner of the park. If you don't mind a little water, head to your right down a small slope to a grove of pin oaks. You can wander along the Mill River, crossing over on stepping stones when the water is low. Following the winding river, you can cross back again further downstream, and climb up a gradual slope to the rear of the cornfield. Returning to the park, you can stroll along the edge of the field bounded by hickory trees and gray dogwood. You will reach a vernal pool which, for most of the year, is dry enough to walk around. Enjoy the large pin oaks and admire the water lilies in a small year-round pond. This brings you back to the children's play area and the parking lot. A nice wooded walk in the middle of town.


Bartlem Park



 suggested walk	 athletic field / Baseball
 parking	 playground

SCALE = 1 : 4752

0 FEET 396 792 1188



Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary 15

OWNERSHIP:	Cheshire Land Trust
ACREAGE:	33
ENTRANCE:	North side Cook Hill Road, just east of the Elim Park Baptist Retirement Home
PARKING:	At entrance (watch for Fresh Meadows sign)
TRAILS:	Well-defined network of trails
COMMENTS:	Dogs should be leashed.

Background: In the 1970s Fresh Meadows came close to being built upon. The first developer removed much of the topsoil on the acreage visible from Cook Hill Road before falling victim to a downturn in the economy. A second development proposal for 61 acres (with an offer to give the town a piece for a ballfield) triggered local residents, led by Edward Tufte, to preserve 33 acres of the most critical land along the Mill River. Tufte and the Cheshire Neighborhood Association raised enough money to purchase the land. In June 1985 they donated it to the Cheshire Land Trust.

CLT charter member Bert Cran created a trail and open space management plan. Much of the trail work has been done with the assistance of Boy Scouts from Troops 90 and 198, most notably Eagle Scouts Steve Rossi, Bob Giddings, and Daryl Hart. Carpentry students from Eli Whitney Vocational-Technical School constructed the memorial Alice Jupp Bridge over Mill River. Land steward Herb Moss provided bluebird houses.

Features: Mill River floodplain with diverse wet meadow plants, wildflower meadows, young pines, cedars, and a forested peat bog.

Description: Fresh Meadows was the name given to much of south Cheshire by the early settlers who farmed the low-lying, sparsely forested land along the Mill River. Local historian Lillian Andrews recalls cow pastures and cranberry picking in or near the Sanctuary. A tribute to an earlier respect for the land, Fresh Meadows

is one of the Land Trust's most visible and accessible properties. The CLT has worked vigorously to maintain trails and managed areas, permitting public access while protecting the plants and animals that live there.

15 

Trails: From the main entrance, the trail leads through a narrow corridor of cedar and pine before opening upon a broad meadow area. The trail winds E. over seasonal wetlands; wood planking makes crossing possible throughout the year. The trail rises to hardwood forest, offering a fine view of the Cheshire/Prospect hills to the West. At a point where the Tennessee Gas Pipeline crosses the Sanctuary, the trail rejoins cleared meadow. Here a trail on private property intersects with the CLT trail. Several CLT blazed posts will keep you on a course that runs diagonally through grassy meadows.

Continue West along the trail toward the Mill River. The trail takes a right turn N. to the Alice Jupp Bridge (named for a longtime, active member of the CLT) which permits access to a fascinating peat bog. The bog is sinking, possibly due to a falling water table, leaving the roots of established trees including red maple, ash, hickory, and oak exposed; many appear to be standing on rooted stilts. There is no blazed trail in the bog since flooding is unpredictable. During the summer months, it is easier to explore this unusual area: Double back over the Jupp Bridge and follow the trail for a short distance along the river's edge. At this point, you have a choice. One option is to follow the easterly path provided by the pipeline right of way which returns you to the center of the Sanctuary and the path S. back to the Cook Hill entrance. Or, you may continue S. along the trail which follows Elim Park's open space along the river and winds through an emerging forest and across scruffy turf populated by bayberries and autumn olive. Either way you select will enable you to rejoin the corridor to the Sanctuary's entrance.

The prospects are very good for seeing deer, blue heron, wood duck, Canada geese, mallards, and (after spring rains) killdeer. Fox and coyote are unusual sightings. Duration: 2 hrs. (For shorter walks, visit only one area.)

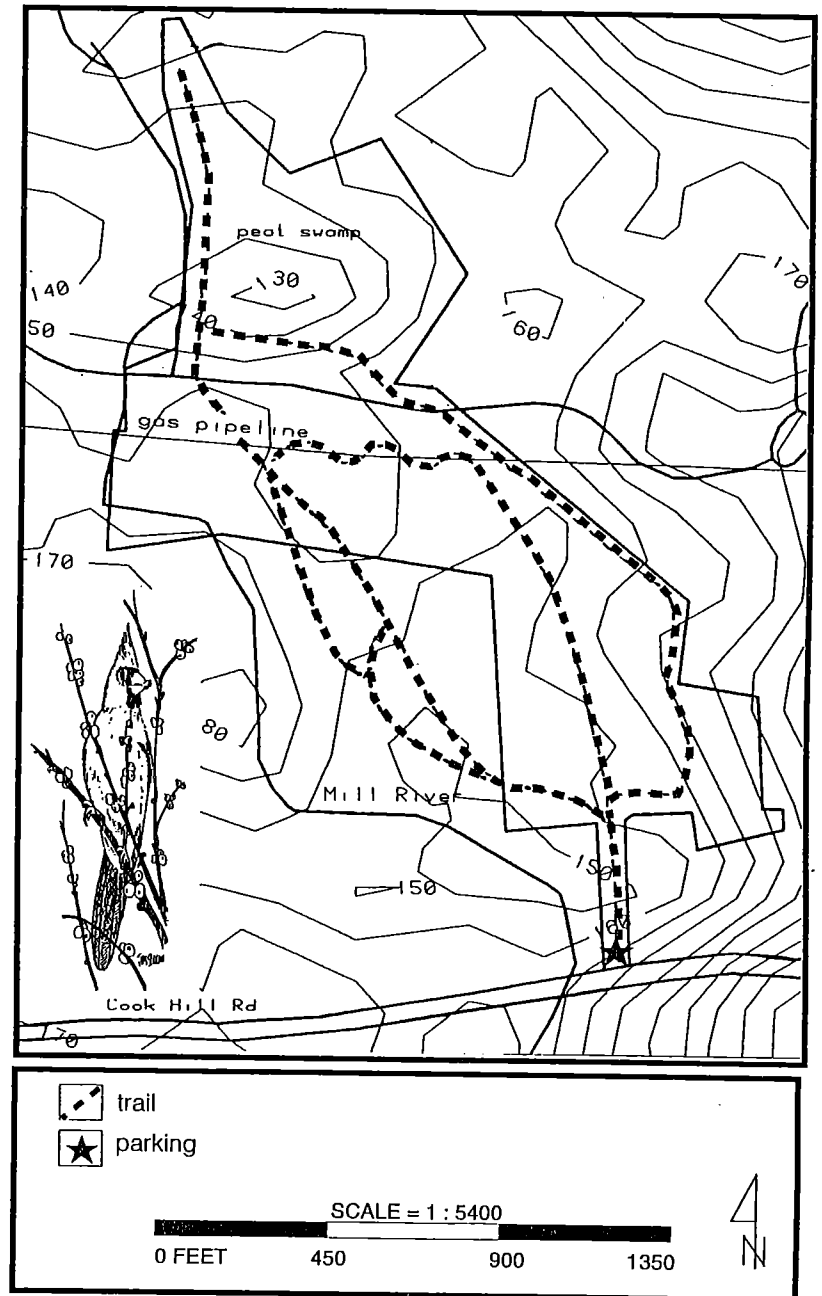
Suggestions: Wear waterproof shoes or boots and long pants to avoid wet feet and ticks. Bring a camera as the setting sun is magnificent when viewed here.

A Cooperative Revegetation Project

When the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company proposed the replacement of its pipeline through Fresh Meadows Sanctuary in 1991, CLT member Sigrun Gadwa devised a revegetation program intended to restore the wetlands disturbed by the project. The town accepted her plan to establish a diverse wet meadow community with plants of high wildlife value using species native to Cheshire. TGPC provided a revegetation fund, hydroseeded with a special mix and mulched with wet meadow hay from the local Krampitz farm. CLT members flagged areas in the pipeline right of way (ROW) to be left for revegetation already occurring and hand sowed seeds and transplants in wet areas. This was accomplished in 1991-1992 with the help of student members of the Cheshire High School Environmental Action Club. In 1994 Gadwa's survey indicated that the program's objectives had been met. While not all the species planted survived in all sections of the ROW, a healthy mix of wetland plants was established.

Hikers have spotted blue iris in the wetter areas. Monkeyflowers (blue and yellow flowers shaped like a monkey face) bloom in midsummer and the ROW is alive with bees, butterflies, and flower beetles. In late summer, creamy boneset blooms and candelabra stems of blue vervain rise above waving grasses. Deep maroon NY ironweed has seeded in from undisturbed adjacent wetlands. There are stands of soft rush and abundant reed canary grass. Silky dogwood shrubs are present, their blue berries a favorite food of many birds. In October the grasses, golden and red-tipped, vibrate with grasshoppers and the songs of crickets.

Gail Collins and Sigrun Gadwa



Cross Rocks Farm

16

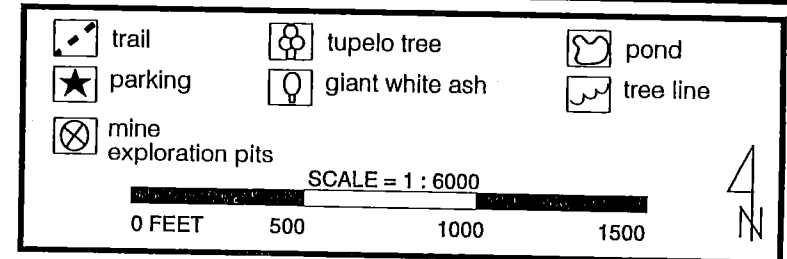
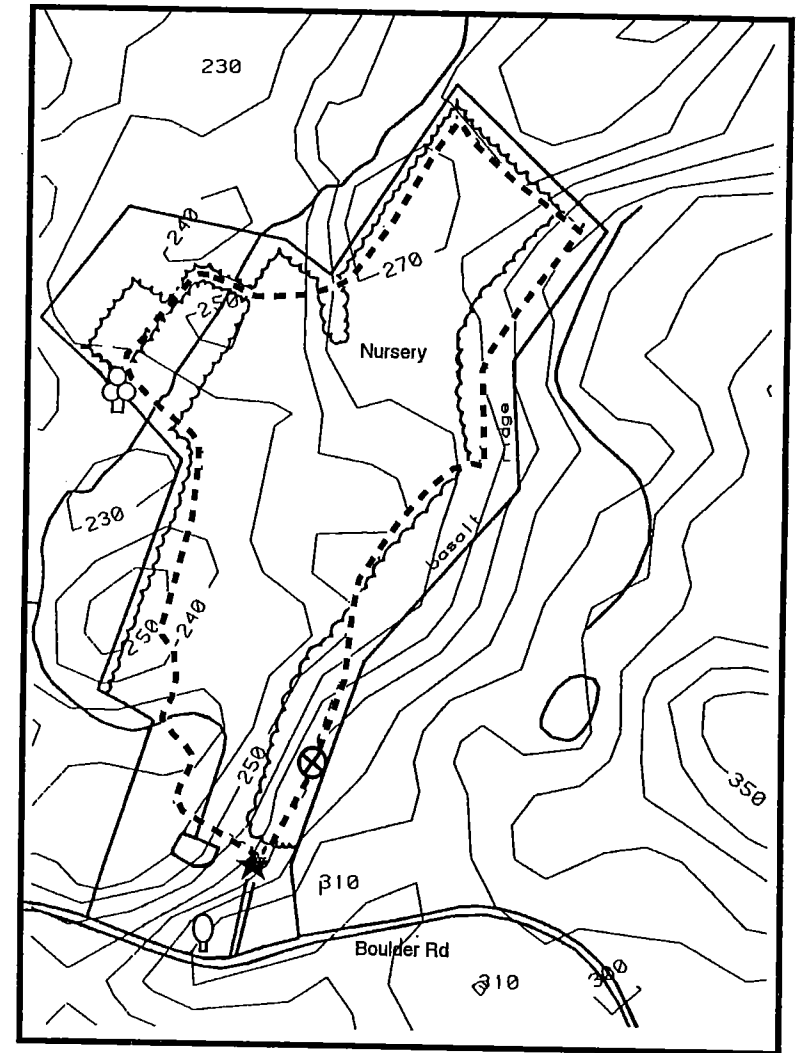
OWNERSHIP: Town of Cheshire
ACREAGE: 38
LOCATION: 800 Boulder Road, SE Cheshire
ENTRANCE: Driveway at SE corner of property
PARKING: Behind barn
TRAIL: Loop trail, approx. 3/4 mile long
COMMENTS: On the forested ridge the trail is well defined, though narrow, but in the fields there may be no clear trail; just follow the woods edge.

Background: This property, formerly the Weber Farm, was purchased from Ralph and Shirley Jackman by the town of Cheshire in March 1994. The Jackmans raised miniature horses, and developed evergreen nurseries which the town intends to maintain. Cornfields are still leased to the adjacent Lassen dairy farm. The property is just across Boulder Road from a geologically unusual site, the Cross Rocks Formation, where a north to south trending traprock dike (ridge) intersects an east to west trending traprock dike. Crossrocks Mine, an abandoned copper mine started in 1711, is at this site.

Description: The loop trail may be taken in either direction: a) begin with the ridgetop trail along the east side of the property, or b) start at the pond and follow the zig-zag field's edge route on the west side. Midway along, the ridgetop trail descends briefly to the field edge to avoid a disturbed section of the ridge where poison ivy grows. Note exploratory mine pits near the south end, and the vegetation community on the north end of the ridge which includes silverrod, Robert's geranium, and large patches of wild ginger on fertile soils derived from the volcanic traprock. The trail descends from the ridge adjacent to the end of the last field. The terrain is rolling, with scattered evergreen groves, tree nurseries, and several wet meadow areas bright with Joe-Pye weed, ironweed, and goldenrods in late summer and early fall.

Cross Rocks Farm

16



Bicycle Trails

17 

Cheshire is a great place to ride a bicycle because you can get off the beaten track relatively quickly. Instead of worrying about traffic and stoplights, you can relax and enjoy decongested atmospheres. You can go farther than you can walk in the same amount of time without losing the close connection with the land that is lost from inside a car. These six bicycling routes, with varied riding conditions in different parts of town, provide something for everyone. Ride your bike to one of the walking trails in this book and enjoy a splendid day outdoors!

Rides 4, 5, and 6, are **Easy**: flat or gently rolling terrain. 2. and 3 are **Moderate**: rolling terrain with some climbing, Ride 1. is the longest and is **Moderate to Hard** with several difficult climbs. Stretches of road and intersections that demand extra caution are marked on the maps. Each ride starts from a location where there is public parking, but if you live near the ride, leave your car at home!

Caveats

Make sure your bicycle is in good working condition. Dress to match the weather. **Always** wear a helmet. Study the map of the ride before starting out. Obey all traffic rules and signs; stop at all stop signs, red lights and railroad crossings. Riding at night is not recommended.

Ride 1: The Cheshire Loop (circle around town)

Distance: 19.1 miles
Difficulty: Moderate/hard (all terrain types, several climbs)
Starting point: Quinnipiac Park, Cheshire St. (NW)
Comments: Challenging, not a ride for the beginner cyclist

Features: Historic homes along Cheshire St., site of old grist mills along the Quinnipiac R., cattle grazing along Coleman Rd, past Fresh Meadows (stop for a rest), big climb up S. Brooksvale, past pond on Mountain Rd. through the large rock cut at the Notch, crossing the Ten Mile River, waterfowl in the industrial park, climb up W. Johnson, through the greenhouse area (bedding plants) on E. Johnson, back to Cheshire St. along farmland or cemetery and more of the historic area.

Ride 2: The Mine Tour

(19th c. mining sites.)

17 

Distance: 12.2 miles
Difficulty: Easy (flat northern half of ride; Moderate southern half of ride)
Starting point: Rte. 10 commuter lot, just N. of I-91
Comments: The most leisurely of the rides. A linear route but you can make it into a loop or arrange for a pick-up at some location.

Features: Reinhard and Peck Lane barite mining sites, Jarvis area barite mines); look at rock cut at the Notch (the dark grey basalt bedrock was quarried near here in the early 20th c.), Linear Park at Higgins Rd. is where barite was loaded onto barges and shipped to New Haven for processing, up Jinny Hill location of the first barite mines in this country, just past Jinny Hill/Coleman Rd. intersection pause and look at the remnants of a major barite vein. Just before the Cheshire Wallingford townline you will traverse a narrow ridge, the site of intermittent copper prospecting from 1712 to 1901. To get back to the starting point, go back up Wallingford Rd to Rte.10 and then N. on Rte. 10 to the lot. (An additional 10 miles)

Ride 3: The 4 R's (reading, 'riting 'rithmetic, and riding)

Distance: 19.1 mi. ride
Difficulty: Moderate (rolling)
Starting Point: Humiston School (or any school)
Comments: This route hopscotches between all but one of Cheshire's public schools and mixes all kinds of riding environments. This is the only ride that passes through the center of town.

Features: Humiston School (now Board of Education offices) Other schools on this ride: Cheshire High, Dodd Jr. High; Norton, Doolittle, Chapman, and Highland elementary schools and the Cheshire Public Library.

Rides 4, 5, and 6: The Neighborhood 8's Shorter routes, all Easy. Each is configured in a figure 8 fashion so that even shorter routes can be derived.



Ride 4: Honeypot Glen



Distance: 6.8 miles
Starting point: McNamara Field (Wiese Road)
Comments: Mostly flat, a little rolling. Country Club Road got its name from the club that was there (now condominiums); Honeypot Brook runs along the entire western edge of this ride.

Ride 5: Brooksvale

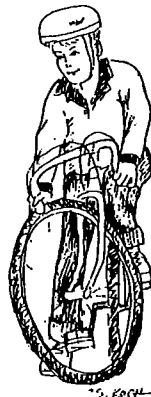
Distance: 5.3 miles
Starting point: Lock 12 Historical Park (N. Brooksvale Rd.)
Comments: This ride explores part of Cheshire's south end

Features: Sperry Rd. has the most climbing of this ride as you pass through the barite industry area. On Cook Hill Road the route goes by Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary. For a shorter ride, turn right on S. Main, go to King Road, then to N. Brooksvale. A left will take you back to Lock 12.

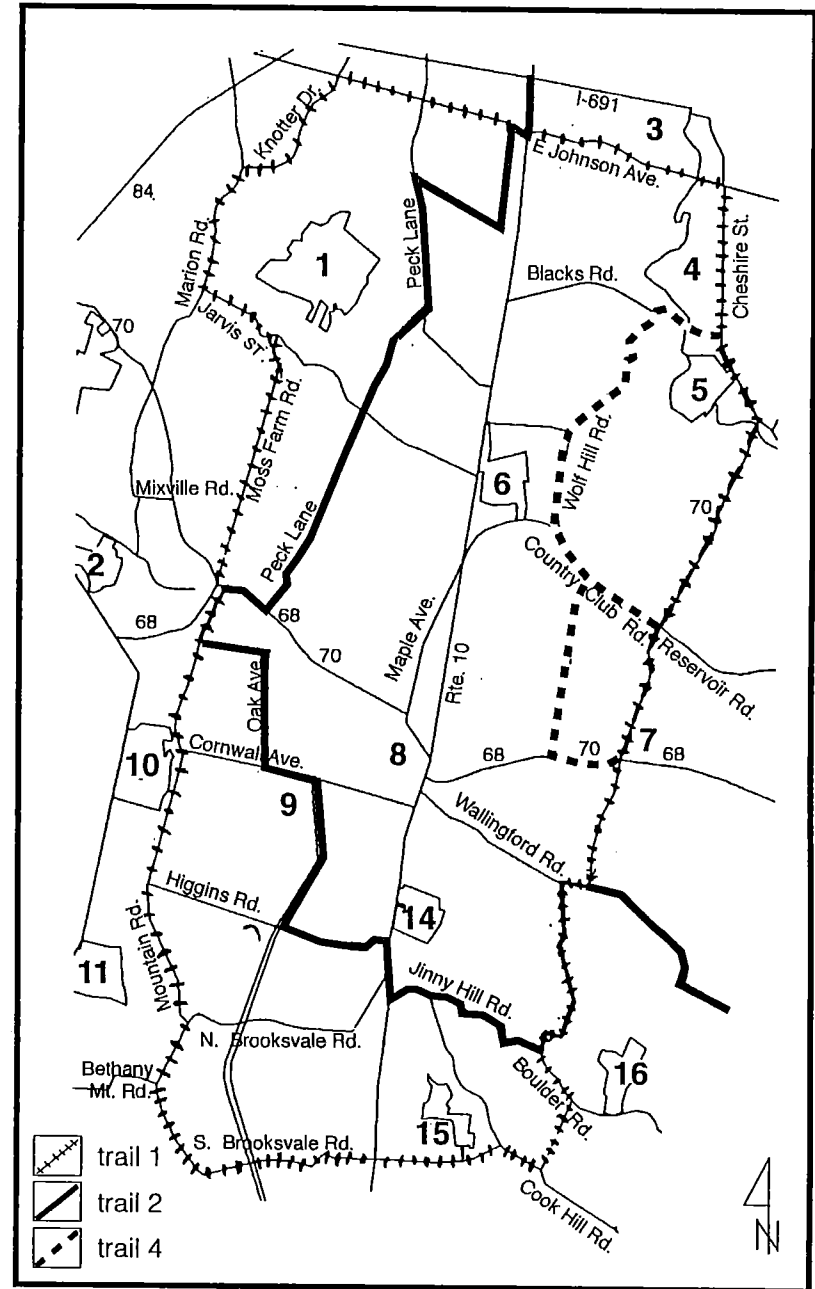
Ride 6: The Notch (Beachport/Mixville)

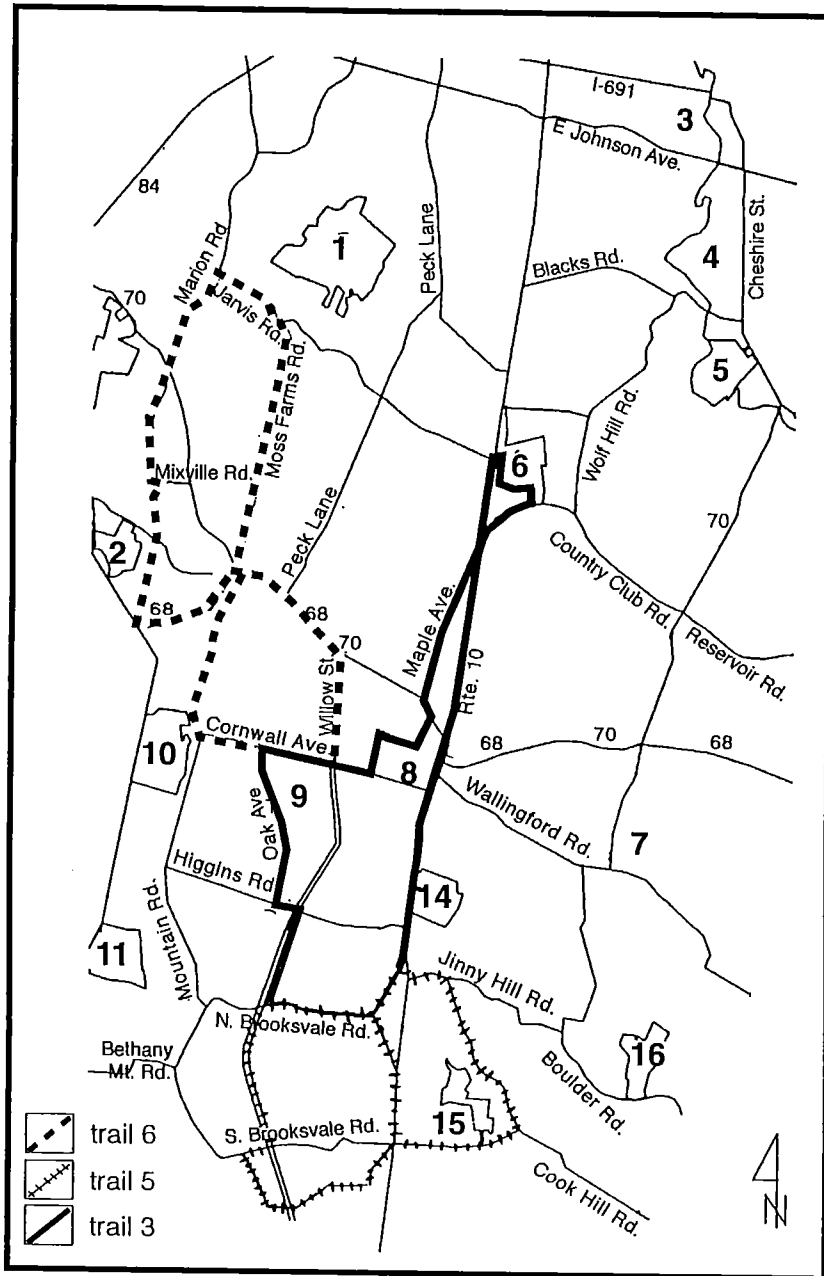
Distance: 10.7 miles
Starting point: Mixville Recreation Area (Notch Road)
Comments: This route wanders around parts of western Cheshire, centering on the Notch, a natural break between Peck Mountain to the north and Prospect Ridge to the south.

Features: Notch Rd. to Mixville (scenic views of Mixville Pond and its hilly backdrop); Prospect Road (Rte. 68), Right on West Main to Willow. This area, known as Beachport, thrived as a transition area for cargo between wagons and canal barges during the 19th century. Take Willow to Cornwall, and a quick left to the Linear Park. Go to Higgins, turn right and right again at Oak. Left off Cornwall to Mountain. A right on Mountain and a left onto W. Main leads back to the Notch.



Bicycle Trails 1, 2, 4





James E. Patrignelli

Open Space

In the days when Cheshire was a rural community, there were miles of open space—farms, pastures, and orchards. No one worried about running out of room or not having long, clear views across the rolling countryside. For years the population hovered just above 2,500, swelling to 6300 by 1950, then to 19,000 by 1970. (It is now approaching 30,000.)

With the open lands quickly becoming populated, it was time to take action. The Cheshire Land Trust was formed in 1969 (see following article) and in 1971 a Community Development Action Plan Economic Base Study declared:

“Cheshire residents at the present time enjoy the open space of the town which comprises nearly two-thirds of its area. Even in development, hardly a street is without at least one field between houses or behind them. For some, the paramount enjoyment of open space may be in visual relief from the monotony of similar houses similarly located on similarly landscaped lots of similar size. For others it may be in the use of the land for recreation. Possibly, there is the enjoyment without the realization that fields, orchards and woods will not always be there. The open space is there now because it is used for the owner’s economic advantage as in agriculture, for the owner’s enjoyment, or because land has been more plentiful than developers’ needs. Potentially, however, the land is available for sale and development at the discretion of the owners. In order to preserve open space for the future, action will have to be taken promptly to acquire it. If Cheshire does not take steps to purchase open spaces, some of the charm and appeal of the town will be lost.”

In 1975 the Cheshire Planning and Zoning Board prepared a Plan of Development. One chapter, entitled *Recreation/Open Space* stated,

“It is simple. The land amount remains constant while the use of it increases due to population growth and migration. The price of this increased development is the loss of natural undeveloped areas.”

The report went on to say,

“Trees have been cut down, swamps filled in and development in general proceeds with little or no regard for natural beauty, wildlife habitat or vegetation that is necessary for climate control and pollution abatement. There are woodlands, streams, swamps and ridges that have not been overrun by *progress*. Many of these areas should be acquired for the public good, not merely from a preservation standpoint, but for the use, edification, and protection of the people of Cheshire.”

This group drew up a Plan for Open Space which had several goals. One was

“... to establish a town-wide system of bicycle and hiking trails, bridle trails, and footpaths using wherever possible town-owned property, utility easements, abandoned rights-of-way, ... to create a network for recreational use and a secondary access in the town.”

In 1986 The Town Council voted unanimously to establish an Environment Commission which was assigned the task of developing an open space plan and reporting to the Council on land which they felt should be purchased and preserved. A plan was drawn and approved; the town applied for, and in 1988, was awarded a two million dollar grant from the state’s Recreational and Natural Heritage Trust Program. The money was to be used to acquire property along the Prospect Ridge.

Beginning in 1986, acquisition funds were requested in the town’s Five Year Capital Expenditure Plan. Cheshire voters overwhelmingly approved the funding; in fiscal year 1985-86, \$175, 000 was appropriated, in 1986-87 \$200,000 was approved, and \$3,000,000 in 1987-88. In 1988-89 and 89-90 \$1.5 million was authorized in each year. From 1990 to 1993 no funds were requested. In 1994-95 \$1.3 million was requested and approved.

Since the inception of the acquisition program, funds have been used to purchase: the Bartlem Park site on South Main Street, 165 acres on Prospect Ridge; in 1992 the B&M railroad right of way (the Linear Park), in 1993-4 the Jackman farm on Boulder Road (*see* Cross Rocks Farm) and the VFW property on Waterbury Road.

Land in the Mixville Hills (the area west of Mixville Pond) is presently under consideration.

Land acquisition is often a cooperative process. The town, the Cheshire Land Trust, the State Department of Environmental Protection, and the Trust for Public Land (TPL) have combined resources and talents in order to acquire lands for public use. The TPL is a non-profit national organization which operates solely to protect land for wildlife and people.

In the future, open lands will continue to be acquired in several ways: 1) gifts to and purchases by the Cheshire Land Trust, the town, etc. 2) Conservation easements occurring as part of the development process. In this way environmentally significant areas can be acquired—farmland, wetlands, ridgetops; also areas with historical or geological value such as copper mines, 3) the encouragement of ownership/agricultural use of farmland, meadow, and orchards as open spaces and natural resources, and 4) the establishment of greenbelts along rivers such as the Quinnipiac.

A related goal is to develop a data base of native plants, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds, butterflies, historic trees, etc. This data base will be a valuable tool in determining critical habitats to protect as well as in daily land-use decision making.



Above quotes from *Recreation/Open Space Plan Chapter, Comprehensive Plan of Development, Town of Cheshire, Adopted August 25, 1975*. (Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission: Philip J. Byrne, Chair; Emma A. Pelz, Sec'y; William F. Broer, Gordon Drazen, John Shull, Stuart J. Beck, Vice-Chair; Frank J. Papandrea, Mary Lou Crane, Dewey Munson; William H. Blitz, Town Planner.)

The Cheshire Land Trust

The Cheshire Land Trust was organized in 1969 to preserve Cheshire's natural resources. Today, 24 properties totalling 270 acres are permanently protected under Land Trust stewardship.



The Land Trust achieved early success with its first acquisition in 1970 of forty acres of rugged land on Prospect Ridge known as the Helen Russell Memorial. Later the Trust worked with the town in developing a strategy for preserving Roaring Brook Falls and Lock Twelve Historic Park along the Farmington Canal. Today, several Land Trust properties adjoin the Linear Park, further enhancing its unspoiled natural character.

Ongoing cooperation with the Town has resulted in significant acquisition of forested land along the Cheshire/Prospect Ridge. This long-term project is part of a twenty-mile nature preserve that will extend from New Haven north into Cheshire. Much of this land is accessible to the public by way of the Quinnipiac Blue Trail.

The Trust has also worked cooperatively with local residents to preserve valuable areas of open space including Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary and the Brooksvale Farm Preserve along South Brooksvale Road.

The CLT has accepted half its holdings from private land owners and the remaining acreage from developers. A gift of land in fee or by easement offers conservation rewards and may be advantageous in estate and financial planning. A videotape on the topic of land giving can be borrowed from the CLT.

The Cheshire Land Trust is funded by membership dues and donations. It has no permanent or salaried staff; its work is carried forth by an elected governing board and member volunteers who have become involved with conservation through land stewardship and management, property acquisition and public relations. The Trust has gained valuable assistance by working closely with conservation organizations including the Trust for Public Lands, the Nature Conservancy, and other Connecticut land trusts.

As a community we must support an active open space protection program to insure the preservation of our rivers and streams, aquifers, wildlife and natural vegetation. The Land Trust is a strong independent voice for these conservation objectives.

Make a difference. Join the Cheshire Land Trust. Membership provides a variety of participatory benefits such as hikes and nature study, open meetings, the annual membership dinner, and a summer picnic. Twice yearly, *The Balance Sheet* newsletter is mailed to all members.

Tim Slocum
 Director and Past President,
 Cheshire Land Trust



The 1994-95 schedule of dues appears below.

To become a member please send your annual dues to:



Cheshire Land Trust, Inc.
 PO Box 781
 Cheshire, CT 06410

	Individual	Family
Student Member	\$5	
Regular Member	\$10	\$15
Sustaining Member	\$25	\$25
Corporate Member	\$50	
Life Member	\$150	\$200

Dues and contributions to the Land Acquisition Fund may be tax deductible. Please make checks payable to: Cheshire Land Trust, Inc.

The Making of TRAILS June-November 1994

Countdown to TRAILS

- June:** we meet for the first time, begin planning the book, decide what trails to include
- July:** we are out walking trails and describing them; mapping begins; trails are being cleared and marked; our weekly meetings continue; we have a cover design!
- August:** the printers' bids are in; trail description goes on
- September:** we're running out of steam; can we possibly finish and have the book out in December? Posters appear, promising the book is coming soon, but will it?
- October:** we finish a preliminary draft, round up missing pages, select artwork, check over the maps. Revise, revise, revise.
- November:** the craziest time! We try to bring it all together. The ISBN number arrives; we get the bar code. In the middle of things we pose for this photo. (Lots of last minute ideas to make the book even better.) Deadline looms. Somehow everything is ready on time; we send TRAILS off to the printer. We did it!



The Cheshire TRAILS Committee

Patricia Berg is president of PB Graphics, Inc. in Cheshire. She is a graduate of Paier College of Art with a major in Design. Prior to starting her own business in 1990, she worked in graphic design and desktop publishing at several companies. She designed the cover for TRAILS and did all prepress typesetting and layout.



John Bullock, a member of the Cheshire Environment Commission, is an attorney practicing environmental law.



Jeanné R. Chesanow, a director of the Cheshire Land Trust, is an anthropologist and author who divides her time among teaching, gardening, and writing. Her most recent book is *Gardening in Connecticut*. She is the editor and project coordinator of TRAILS.

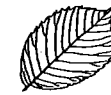


Sigrun Gadwa works for an environmental planning and transportation engineering firm. Her specialties are inland wetlands ecology, botany and soils. She serves on the board of directors of the Cheshire Land Trust and is their stewardship coordinator for the north end of town.



Mark Kasinskas, geographer and local history/archeology nut, is a native Cheshirite. When not out exploring local backwoods and byways with works of Thoreau and Frost in hand, Mark is active in the Cheshire Fire Department.

Jean May, architect and environmentalist, is on the board of directors of the Cheshire Land Trust. Serving on Cheshire's first Environment Commission, she mapped Cheshire's open space and was instrumental in getting funds from the state to acquire land on Prospect Ridge.



Andrea Newman is a graduate student at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. She is studying ecosystem management and geographic information systems in order to become a land use planner. She produced the trail maps using PC Arc/Info.



James Sipperly, the Environmental Planner for the town of Cheshire, is a certified soil scientist. He is staff to the Cheshire Inland Wetlands and Watercourses Commission and the Environment Commission. Previously he worked for a private engineering firm in the capacity of geologist and surveyor.



Tim Slocum is a director and past president of the Cheshire Land Trust. He is a graduate of the University of Connecticut. A native of Cheshire, he created several illustrations for TRAILS—animals, birds, Linear Park, and the centerfold map of the Historic District, as well as helping in the selection of artwork for the book.



Thank-you from the TRAILS Committee to:

Dorothy J. Anthony for her artwork dedicated to a special friend.

Robert ("Ches") Chesanow for taking the photo of the TRAILS committee.

Gail Collins, Master Gardener, for her part in writing about the Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary and her sharp-eyed copy editing.

Debbie Edwards of the Inland Wetlands Commission for her article on wildlife.

Frank Dziedzic for his photographs of brooks and woods, chosen from his collection of Cheshire scenes.

Tess Gadwa who contributed several drawings.

Carla Koch, artist and Cheshire Land Trust Member, for her drawings.

James E. Patrignelli, a student at Wolcott High School, for his drawings of landscapes.

Peter Picone, biologist with the DEP, who helped with the Canoe Trail description.

Laurie Sanders, naturalist, for her description of Nettleton's Ravine and her water bug drawing.

Rebecca Schrumm, Cheshire High student and co-captain of the girls track team, who organized Girl Scouts from Troop 230 (Highland School) to blaze trails as part of her Gold Award project.



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