



This booklet has been reprinted with generous permission from the Kongsicut Land Trust and the Town of Glastonbury, and generously funded by the Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury Inc.

About the Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury Inc.

Founded in 1985, and originally known as the Red Hill Coalition, the Land Heritage Coalition focuses on local land use issues, seeking ways to foster support of farming, to acquire open space, and to protect wetlands, flood plains, surface and ground water sources. For more information about LHC, please visit our website or call 860-652-8995.

About Kongsicut Land Trust

The Kongsicut Land Trust has been working to protect open space land and wildlife habitat in Glastonbury since 1977. The Trust currently oversees ten nature preserves in Glastonbury, totaling 300 acres.

For more information about Kongsicut Land Trust call 860-633-4885.



www.lhcglastonbury.org



www.kongsicutlandtrust.org



Glastonbury HIKES & WALKS TRAIL GUIDE



Sponsored by:





Glastonbury HIKES & WALKS TRAIL GUIDE

2012 EDITION

Revised and updated from 2004, 1993 and 1970 editions.

Credits:

Gerhard R. Schade, Jr.: Text and Maps

Duffy Schade: Photographs

Danielle Garrick: Graphic Design

Raymond E. Purtell: Director of Parks & Recreation

With the exception of Gay City State Park and the Shenipsit Trail, all other walks are located entirely on property owned and managed by the Town of Glastonbury through the Parks and Recreation Department. Their office, located at 2143 Main Street, is open Monday - Friday (8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.) and can be reached by calling (860) 652-7679.

Welcome to the 2012 edition of the Glastonbury Hikes and Walks Guide. We hope it will inspire you to get outdoors and explore some of the many wonderful trails Glastonbury has to offer.

Jolly Steffens, founding member,
Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

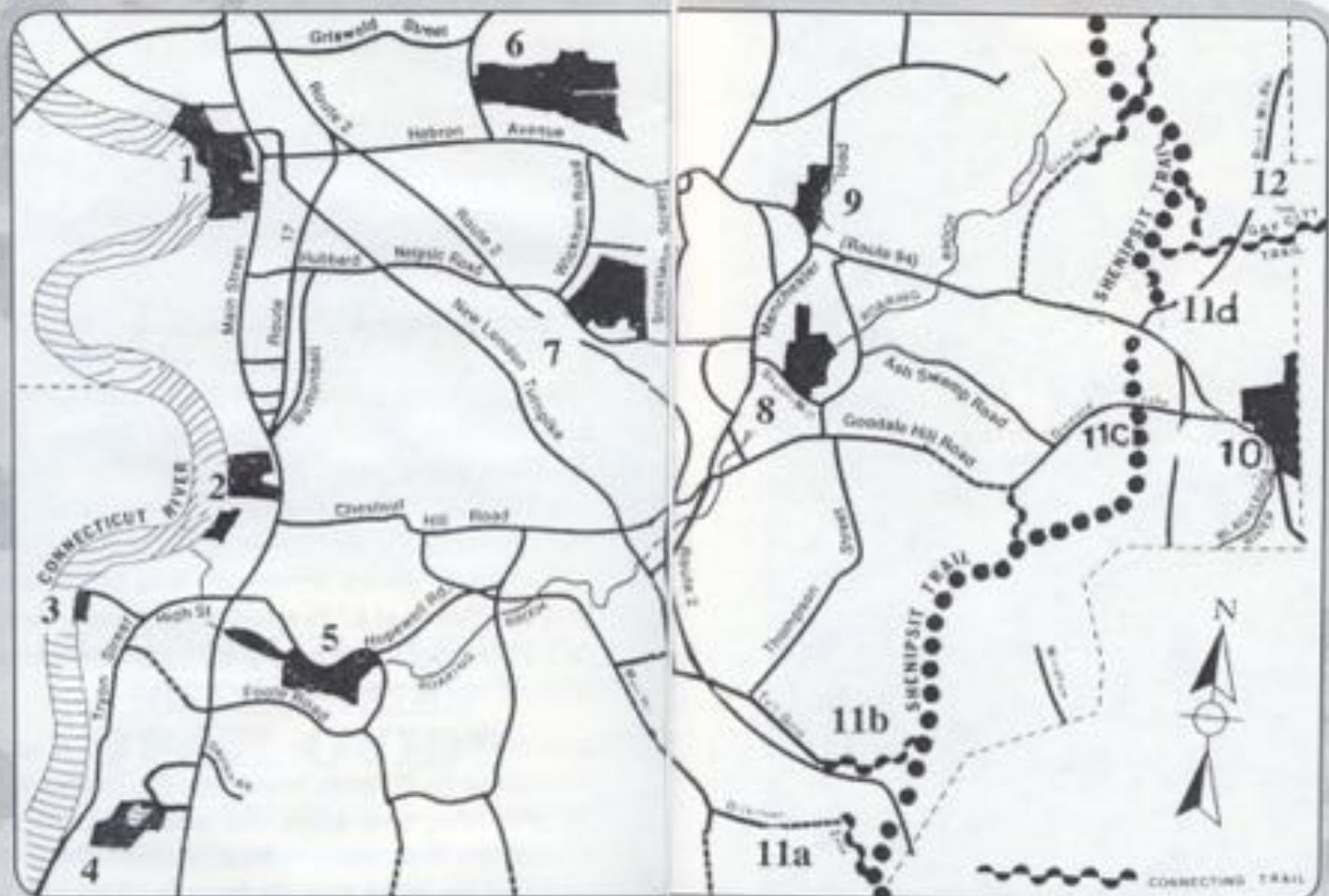
A healthful walk through forests and parks can uplift the spirit and dispel the blues. We are fortunate in Glastonbury to have many miles of footpaths available for public enjoyment. Some lie on town parklands, state forests or other preserved lands. Others pass through private property, courtesy of the landowner. In all cases we should observe the first commandment of the trail, "Thou shalt take only pictures and leave only footprints," and remember, "Blessed are they who leave the trail a little better than they found it." Be considerate of others on the trail. Control your dog with a leash and clean up after him on the way. Motorized vehicles are not allowed.

Some of the paths follow the ancient ways of early settlers and probably the Wampanoags before them. It is common to see old cellar holes, stone fences, mill dams, and remnants of Glastonbury's 19th century charcoal industry. Although they left behind few lasting signs, the Wampanoag Indians who lived in Nayaug are known to have had well-worn trails through the Connecticut River meadows to the Neipsic Springs in present day Williams Park and also along Roaring Brook to Wassuc, Kongsicut, Minnechaug, and the territory beyond. As we stroll the trails, let's take a moment to remember those who passed this way before us. This booklet is intended to help you discover for yourselves the beauty and history that lie along the public footpaths of our town.

Happy wanderings.

Glastonbury Hikes & Walks

Trail Overview



- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1) GLASTONBURY RIVERFRONT | 7) WILLIAMS PARK |
| 2) EARLE PARK, CIDER MILL, RED HILL | 8) SHODDY MILL |
| 3) FERRY PARK | 9) BUCKINGHAM PARK |
| 4) GREAT POND PRESERVE | 10) BLACKLEDGE FALLS |
| 5) COTTON HOLLOW | 11) SHENIPSIT TRAIL |
| 6) ADDISON BOG & WOODLANDS
MULTI-USE TRAIL | 12) GAY CITY STATE PARK |



Earle Park/ Cider Mill/Red Hill



These three parcels are connected by a publicly accessible pathway.

Park at the Connecticut Audubon Center at Glastonbury, 1361 Main Street. The park entrance is behind the building. Earle Park consists of 38 acres extending to the Connecticut River. It is named in memory of the previous owners Dr. B. Baylis Earle (1903-1972), a beloved physician to generations of Glastonbury families, and his family. The trails, though short, are unmarked and moderately difficult with uneven, hilly terrain. The southern trail connects to the historic town-owned Cider Mill property and to the Red Hill Open Space. Earle Park trails are available for horseback riding.

After your walk, stop in to the Audubon Center where you will find a wide variety of educational exhibits including small live animals and hands-on activities for children. A shaded outdoor seating area is available for picnicking.

RED HILL TRAIL

Access via the Cider Mill trail or Riverview Road. A small sign marking the trail entrance is between houses #25 and #35 on Riverview Road.

Because of its defensive position, Red Hill was used as a place of refuge for the Wampanoag Indians. At times of war with the Mohawks, Pequots, or other hostile tribes, the Wampanoags would build a stockade fort there and heave great boulders and tree trunks down the bank at attackers coming by river.

Ferry Park

Located at the west end of Ferry Lane, this is a little gem of a park beside the Ferry Landing in the Nayaug section of South Glastonbury. The Glastonbury-Rocky Hill ferry route began in 1655 and is the oldest continuously operating ferry in the nation. The half-mile loop trail is handicapped accessible. There are picnic tables and benches. A portable toilet is available spring through fall.

May-October enjoy a ride on the ferry over to Rocky Hill and back.



Great Pond Preserve



Park along Great Pond Road near the entrance sign, which is visible from the road.

This 70-acre preserve is owned by the town and managed in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy. The terrain is gently rolling with good footing.

Great Pond itself is a 12-acre glacial drawdown pond. It experiences great fluctuations in water level throughout the year. The plants around the pond are specially adapted to survive conditions of total immersion and drought. Along the wooded uplands the preserve provides a home for a diverse community of plant and animal species. On the Pond Trail, just beyond the bridge, you will see the largest red cedar tree in New England. This tree has a circumference of 10 feet and is over 150 years old. The overlook at the edge of the pond is a great place for birding. Migrating waterfowl and wading birds favor this area. A walk to the platform and back is a one-mile round trip.

Dana's Rim Walk is named in honor of Dana Waring who conceived this route while a member of Glastonbury's Conservation Commission. One section of Dana's trail crosses a steep side hill and is tricky going.

Cotton Hollow Preserve

NORTH TRAIL

Park at the Grange Pool, 500 Hopewell Road. The trail enters along the fence on the west side of the pool. Cotton Hollow, encompassing 83 acres, is a rare example of a once heavily developed industrial area that has reverted to a natural state- a testament to nature's healing power. The only signs remaining of the many mills which once operated there along Roaring Brook are a few tumbled down stone dams and foundations. The ruin of one of the mills is visible across Roaring Brook from the Tree Trail, but is on private property.

The North Trail, though only a mile long round trip, is steep and tricky in places and would be rated moderately difficult.

PLEASE NOTE: The North Trail and Tree Trail are not connected. Please turn around and retrace your steps when you reach the end. Stay on marked trails. Do not climb on walls, boulders or cliffs. To do so can be very dangerous.

TREE TRAIL

Park in South Glastonbury at the trailhead behind the restaurant just south of the Roaring Brook bridge on Main Street.

It is hard to imagine that the area crossed by this trail was once a busy recreational park, popular with trolley passengers from Hartford. It now contains an amazing variety of massive trees, many identified with labels. No doubt the moist and sheltered conditions here favor robust growth and minimize storm damage.

The Tree Trail is mostly level and easy walking; total distance about one mile round trip.



Addison Bog & Woodlands Multi-Use Trail



Park at the end of the access road to Smith Middle School grounds, 216 Addison Road. A portable toilet is available adjacent to the ball field, spring through fall.

In 2012 a one-mile paved multiuse trail opened which connects the Smith Middle School through the Addison Bog and Woods property to Bell Street. There is a trailhead with parking for several cars at both ends. This trail is open to walkers, bikers, joggers, people in wheelchairs and baby strollers, and a number of other uses. There is a long-range plan to eventually connect it westerly all the way to the town center and easterly to Buckingham Park. Since its opening the Smith School Greenway has become one of the most popular short trails in Glastonbury.

There are a number of unimproved side trails worth exploring also. One leads around an interesting feature known as the Addison Bog, which has interpretive signs describing the bog and the unusual flora and fauna to be found there. The Addison Bog is said to be the only black spruce bog in central Connecticut.

The Addison Bog and Woods property encompasses 250 contiguous acres of town-owned land. This is a priceless natural treasure in an otherwise thickly settled part of town.

J. B. Williams Memorial Park

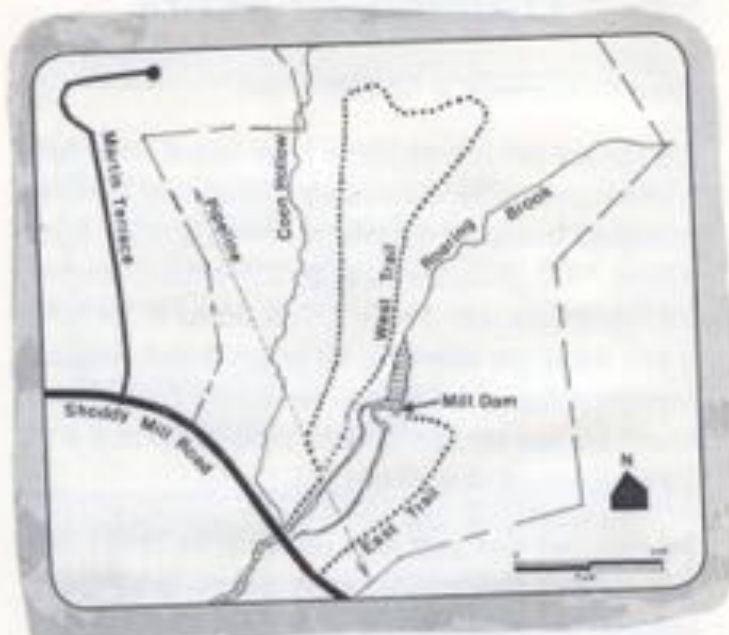
Park in the lot provided at 705 Neipsic Road.

This 159-acre park was established by the Town of Glastonbury in 1964 to preserve the natural beauty of the area and to provide recreational facilities. It is named in memory of James Baker Williams (1818-1907), founder of the J. B. Williams Company and is on the site of the Neipsic Springs, famous for the purity of their waters and believed by the Indians to have medicinal properties. Because of this purity, the Williams Company built its reservoir here and used the water in the manufacture of its shaving soaps and other toiletries.

The main park road leads east, parallel to the stream, then circles north around the hill. A network of mostly easy trails, with a few steep spots, leads to the left and right from there. A children's playground is located next to the pavilion. A restroom near the pavilion is available spring through fall.



Shoddy Mill Preserve



Park on Shoddy Mill Road near where it crosses Roaring Brook.

The Shoddy Mill Preserve, consisting of 77 acres, was acquired by the town in the late '60's as part of an overall plan to create a greenbelt along Roaring Brook. Interesting features include the beautifully constructed Shoddy Mill dam, and a high gravel ridge paralleling the brook to the west. The mill produced "shoddy"—reclaimed wool, usually made from rags, which can be processed into felt or fabric of inferior quality.

The West Trail (blue and white blazes) enters along the west side of the brook, turns left on the gas pipe line for about 70 paces before turning north into the pine forest and looping up over the gravel ridge and around back to the beginning point. It is a moderately easy walk with a total distance round trip of just less than a mile.

The best approach to the Shoddy Mill dam is via the East Trail (blue blazes with two white bars) which enters 250 feet east of the brook. It is an easy quarter mile round trip. You may want to sit on the dam a few minutes and watch for ducks or great blue heron.

Buckingham Park

Park in the main lot, at 1285 Manchester Road, within the park.

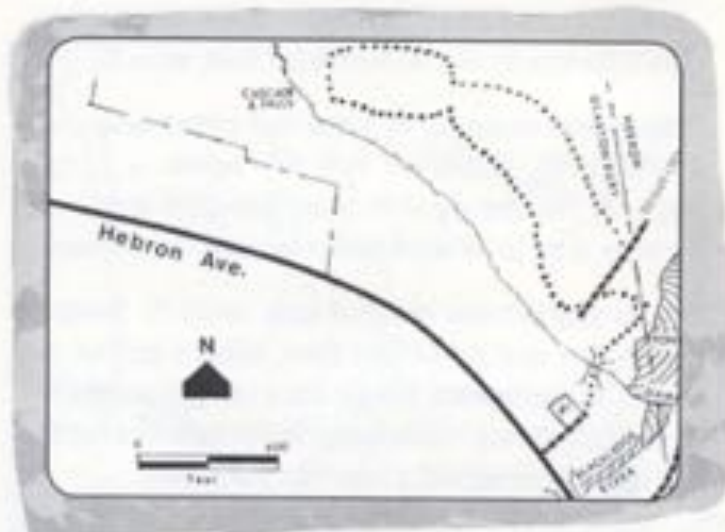
Although best known for its soccer and softball fields (built in 1991/1992), Buckingham Park also includes a pleasant loop walk. The blue-and-white blazed trail starts north of the firehouse at the corner of the parking area near the playground.

It is an easy half-mile stroll that leads behind St. Dunstan's Church, then west along Myer's Brook, across a low dam and back to the playing fields. There is also a new gravel connection to the bike trail along Hebron Avenue and we have hope that this will someday connect with a larger bike trail system.

Picnic tables and a children's playground are located next to the parking area. A portable toilet is available spring through fall.



Blackledge Falls



Parking is available using the main entrance on the east side of Hebron Avenue near the Glastonbury/Hebron town line.

Dedicated in 1991, Blackledge Falls encompasses 79 acres. The old mill-dam here was formerly the site of an up-down sawmill which was moved to Old Sturbridge Village.

The blue-and-white blazed trail leads across three footbridges past a knoll overlooking the mill pond, then bends left to lead up the hill to a lovely cascade and 30-foot waterfall. Pause here a few minutes to observe and contemplate how many centuries it will take for the water to erode the ledge out of the park onto the neighbor's property. The trail (a one-mile round trip) is of moderate difficulty.

There is a well-worn path (not on the map) through State Land to Gay City State Park which lies less than a mile to the north. Follow the tote road parallel to the river and cross the power line. Then continue and cross the gas pipeline and behold—you are almost in Gay City!

Shenipsit Trail Access

The Shenipsit Trail traverses the Glastonbury highlands through parts of Meshomasic State Forest, Town of Manchester watershed lands, Kongsicut Land Trust preserves and private properties. This section of the trail leads from Great Hill in the Cobalt section of East Hampton to Case Mountain in Manchester (a distance of about 18 miles) and beyond. It is part of the 700-mile Blue Blaze Hiking Trail System maintained by volunteers of the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association. An excellent guide to the entire system entitled *Connecticut Walk Book*, is available from bookstores or Connecticut Forest and Park Association, Tel. (860) 346-2372.

The Shenipsit Trail is moderately difficult in places and is intended for hikers rather than strollers. The best Glastonbury access points are shown on the Glastonbury Overview map.

A. DICKINSON-ZEKE ROAD: Park near the end of the paved section of Dickinson Road. Follow Dickinson then Zeke Roads (white blazes) three quarters of a mile through part of Meshomasic State Forest to the junction of the Shenipsit Trail (blue blaze). Dickinson and Zeke roads were once an alternate route to Marlborough, to avoid tolls on the New London Turnpike. Warning—do not cross Route 2 on foot!

B. TOLL GATE ROAD: Park at the south end of Toll Gate Road beyond the Route 2 northbound off ramp (Exit 11). Follow white blazes southeast along the abandoned road (formerly the New London Turnpike) across Dark Hollow Brook, then left up the logging road with white blazes to the junction of the blue-blazed Shenipsit Trail. The distance to the Shenipsit is about one mile.

C. DIAMOND LAKE ROAD: The blue-blazed Shenipsit Trail crosses Diamond Lake Road near Flat Brook. There is no parking here.

D. JOHN TOM HILL: There is parking on state land on the south side of Birch Mountain Road. The John Tom Hill/Shenipsit Trail Connector (red and blue blazed) enters through Kongsicut Land Trust property on the opposite side of the road at the break in the wall, about 130 yards north. There is another access trail, blazed blue, at the top of the hill, 1,000 feet north of the power lines. This is the start of a nice 3-mile loop walk with views of Hartford and the Connecticut River valley.

12 Gay City State Park



Drive east on Rt. 94 to Hebron, then north on Rt. 85 for approximately 2 miles to the entrance. Park in spaces provided. Although Gay City State Park lies mainly in Hebron, its trail system spills over into Bolton and Glastonbury and there is a connecting path across Birch Mountain Road, Glastonbury, to the Shenipsit Trail.

Gay City was once a thriving community of 25 families; many surnamed Gay. The settlement continued until the time of the Civil War. A cemetery and several mill sites along the Blackledge River are all that remain.

The park, consisting of 1564 acres, has an extensive trail system totaling ten miles of moderately easy paths. There is a well-worn connection (not on the map) to Blackledge Falls from the south end of the red-blazed outer loop trail.



Pond Trail, Great Pond Preserve



Spring Freshet, Riverfront