



Trail Documentation Guide

This Trail Documentation Guide is designed to assist trail managers, partner organizations, and volunteers to develop new trail descriptions following Connecticut Trail Finder standards.

Additional Information

To learn more visit the CTTrail Finder FAQ: cttrailfinder.com/about/faqs

CT Trail Finder is administered by:
UConn Extension Trails Team

With generous support from the CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection and the CT Department of Transportation.

CT Trail Finder was designed and built by:
Center for Community GIS

For more information about the site or to submit a trail posting, please contact:

UConn Extension Trails Team
trails@uconn.edu
cttrails.uconn.edu



cttrailfinder.com

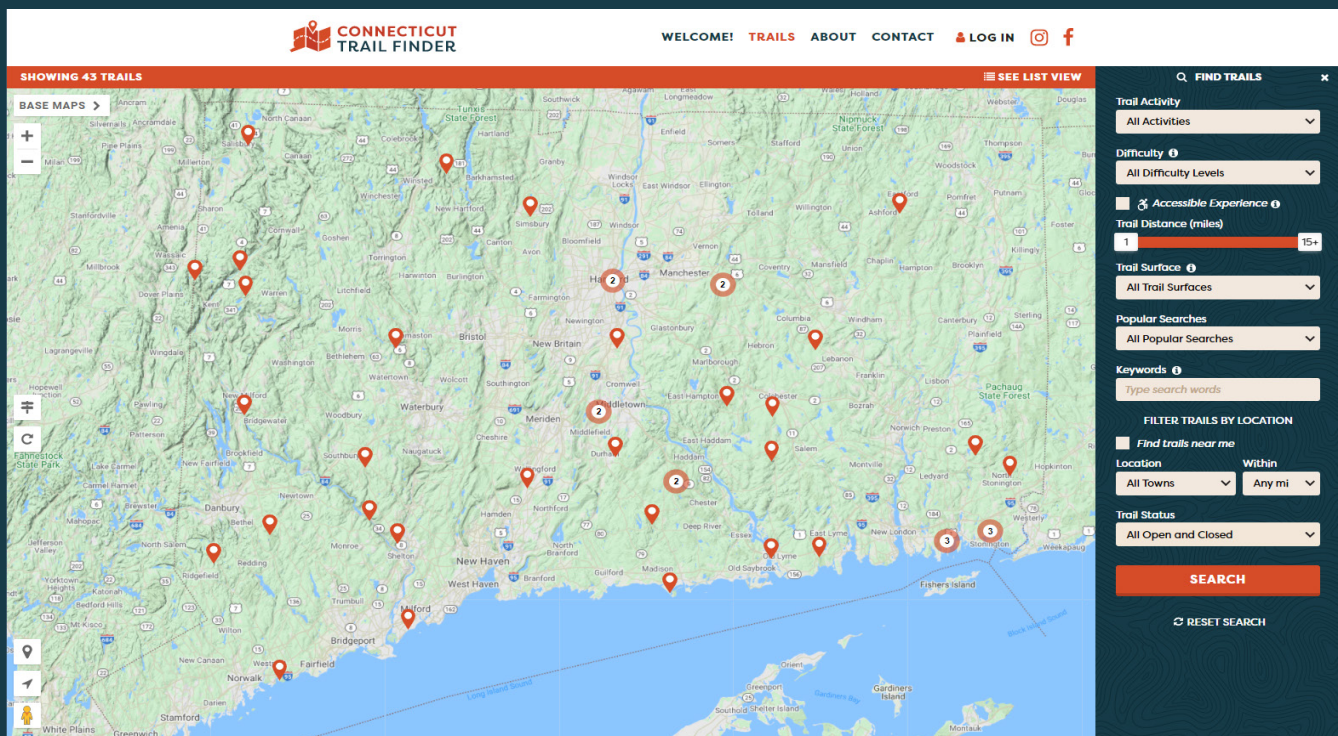
What is Connecticut Trail Finder?

Connecticut Trail Finder is a free, interactive web site designed to help Connecticut residents and visitors find hiking, walking, snowshoeing, mountain biking, cross-country skiing, and paddling trails across the state. Our goal is to help people get out, be active, and explore our state's treasures. Individual trail pages allow users to view the trail map, get essential information, submit trip comments and photos, and a whole lot more. Users are able to track trail experiences including trails that they have completed, favorites, or ones they want to visit.

Getting Started

Thank you for sharing your first-hand knowledge about the trails you manage, steward, or simply enjoy using with Connecticut Trail Finder! With your input, Trail Finder moves one step closer towards providing comprehensive information for Connecticut's extensive network of walking, hiking, biking, mountain biking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, paddling, and horseback riding trails.


The primary goal of this guide is to familiarize you with the organizational structure, categories, and classifications that are used to create individual trail listings. The *Anatomy of a Trail Posting* page provides context for the information you are providing. The *Guidelines and Tips* pages describe the elements needed to complete your posting, how to rate trail difficulty, and how to describe getting to the trailhead(s). Use the companion fillable form (PDF), to begin creating your new trail listing. Then submit the completed form, spatial data, and photos to trails@uconn.edu. We look forward to working with you!





Anatomy of a Trail Posting



Features of a Trail Page

- A Trail Abstract:** A concise description of the trail's key features along with a thumbnail photograph. Appears on CT Trail Finder's search page.
- B Quick Facts:** Basic "statistics" about the trail, some of which can be queried from the search page.
- C Photos:** High-quality images help users better visualize each trail experience. Account holders can also upload photos to postings.
- D Details Tab:** Trail info, items I - K.
- E Trail Map Tab:** The trail and key points of interest on an interactive Google Map. Users can pan, zoom, toggle backgrounds, click lines and points for more info, and adjust info shown via the legend. An optional **View Connector Trails** section below the map shows adjacent trails on the map and links to those trail postings.
- F Directions Tab:** Directions to the primary trailhead(s) and an interactive map of parking areas.
- G Comments Tab:** User-submitted comments from account holders and trail managers.
- H Trail Alerts Tab:** Alerts on trails, facilities, roads, and safety. (Optional, only visible if an alert is set).
- I Description:** A narrative description of the trail route, conditions, surrounding environment, and any unique attractions.
- J Other Information:** Additional info about the trail property, history, regulations, etc.
- K Trail Manager:** Contact info and link to the trail manager's website. More than one entity can be listed as a trail manager.
- L Current Weather:** Provides the current weather conditions in the vicinity of the trail (provided by Open Weather).
- M Trail Tips:** Shows rotating suggestions on how to minimize impacts on the environment and other users.
- N Download:** Enables users to download map data in KML and GPX formats.
- O Nearby Geocaches:** Links to geocaching.com where registered users can browse for geocache sites on an interactive map keyed to the same location as the trail.
- P Print Trail Info:** Links to a version optimized to print on 8.5"x11" paper.
- Q Share This Trail:** Social media widgets.




WELCOME! [TRAILS](#) [ABOUT](#) [CONTACT](#) [LOG IN](#)  


NATCHAUG TRAIL


 
ADD TRAIL LOG

A The blue-blazed Natchaug Trail stretches from the Goodwin Conservation Center in Hampton to its intersection with the blue-blazed Nipmuck Trail in Ashford crossing beautiful streams and passing many unique features along the way.

B TRAIL ACTIVITY 

LENGTH	20.5 miles, Network
DIFFICULTY	Moderate, Advanced
TOWNS	Ashford, Chaplin, Eastford, Hampton
SURFACE	Packed Earth/Dirt, Rock/Ledge
PETS	Permitted on leash
FEES	No



 ADD A PHOTO

D DETAILS
E TRAIL MAP
F DIRECTIONS
G COMMENTS (0)
H TRAIL ALERTS

I DESCRIPTION

The blue-blazed Natchaug Trail stretches from the Goodwin Conservation Center in Hampton to its intersection with the blue-blazed Nipmuck Trail in Ashford, 17.6 trail miles to the north. The trail is for foot travel only and has many unique features.

The trail follows a short portion of the beautiful Still River and journeys along Bigelow Brook. Meandering over relatively easy terrain, it crosses several small brooks, passes stone walls, and slips through interesting stands of trees. State foresters actively manage these forests for wildlife and timber production and the trail traverses a diverse and interesting forests ranging from 2 to well over 100 years old.

There are opportunities to catch sight of a variety of wildlife including turtles, beavers, and many birds along the streams and in the areas around Pine Acres Pond, Black Spruce, and Beaverdam Marshes. Active forest management has produced a variety of young, early-succession forest habitats which abound with diverse species of birds and other wildlife.

History is abundant along the trail as it passes near old CCC Camp Fernow (1933-1942) and through General Nathaniel Lyon Memorial Park (first General to be killed in the Civil War). A short northern section also coincides with the Old Connecticut Path traveled in the 1630s by settlers (driving over 100 cattle) from the Boston area to the Hartford area in one of the first major inland migrations of America by European settlers. The blue/yellow-blazed CCC Trail (2.8 miles) offers a nice loop opportunity along the Natchaug River.

J OTHER INFORMATION


The Natchaug Trail begins at the **Goodwin Conservation Center** in James L. Goodwin State Forest. The Center is jointly managed by CFPA & DEEP and offers extensive educational programs. The incredible trail system in the Forest is managed and maintained by the Friends of Goodwin Forest. Many trail loop opportunities exist around Pine Acres Lake, including the blue/white blazed Pine Acre Loop Trail. These offer additional exploration opportunities off of the main Natchaug Trail.

Hunting occurs in the State Forests, please take necessary precautions during hunting season.

Notice a trail problem? Report it to CFPA [at this link](#).




K TRAIL MANAGER

For more information, visit the CFPA [website](#) or contact:



Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA)


16 Meriden Rd
Rockfall, CT 06481
860-346-TREE
info@ctwoodlands.org
[View website](#)

L CURRENT WEATHER

JUNE 18, 2021

74°F




Today's High: 81°F
Today's Low: 52°F
Outlook: Clear Sky
Forecast: Clear Sky


View weather map on [OpenWeather](#)


M TRAIL TIPS

Plan Ahead and Prepare
Use common sense. If it seems like a bad idea, it probably is.


N DOWNLOAD


 [Download Trails \(lines\)](#)
[Download Points of Interest \(points\)](#)

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[Download Points of Interest \(points\)](#)

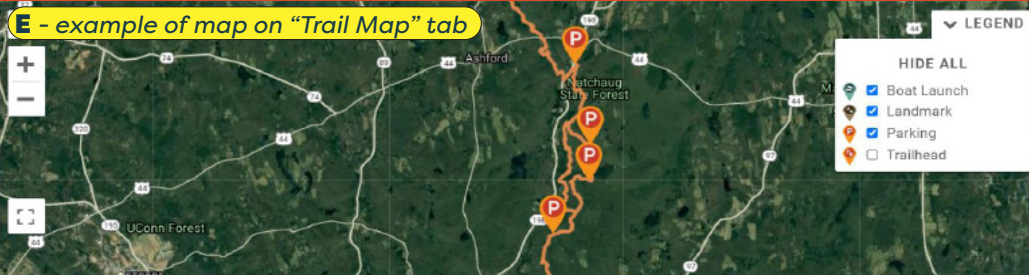
O  Find geocaches near Natchaug Trail [Geocaching.com](#)

Q SHARE THIS TRAIL



PRINT THIS TRAIL 

E - example of map on "Trail Map" tab



Guidelines & Tips for Developing New Postings

The guidelines and tips below are intended to help you develop a detailed trail description that is complete and consistent with other trails listed in Connecticut Trail Finder. We suggest referencing the information on these pages while using the *Connecticut Trail Finder Posting Template*.

Key Information

- **Trail System Name(s):** Each trail has a unique name that corresponds to the featured trail (e.g., Farmington Canal Heritage Trail) or to the trail network or host site (e.g., Penwood State Park).
- **Compiler Information:** Contact information for you (the trail compiler) to facilitate our work together developing the final trail listing.
- **Maintained Uses:** Identify all activities for which the trail is maintained and managed. *A couple of notes:*

Hiking vs Walking: A hiking trail is narrow, has a natural surface and follows natural topography (think of the Appalachian Trail, for example) while a walking trail is wide, often with added surface to smooth the trail and either naturally flat or graded to reduce slope (think of a rail trail, for example). Although some trail networks can have both types of trails, we want to differentiate as much as possible to help people find the best experience for them.

Bicycling vs Mountain Biking: Although you can use a mountain bike on many types of trails, we would like to differentiate between trails specifically built for mountain biking (usually single-track), from multi-use trails that allow biking and can accommodate many types of bikes. Please only choose one option unless your trail network has both rail-trail-type trails and singletrack trails.

- **Town(s) and County(ies):** Identify all of the town(s) and county(ies) where the trail is located. If you're not sure, or the trail is very long and crosses many jurisdictions, don't worry, we'll check!
- **Surface:** List all surfaces that a user would encounter on the trail or trail network.
- Are **Pets** welcome (permitted/not permitted/only on leash)?
- Are there **Fees** to use the trail (yes/no/out-of-state residents only)? Additional information should be elaborated on in the **More Information** text box (see below).
- **Accessibility:** If the whole trail is accessible to wheelchairs, check "Yes." If there is one section of the trail within the network that is accessible, check "Partially" and describe which trail is accessible.

Specifically for the accessible section, list the **surface**, **width** and **max slope**, if known. If there are multiple surfaces or variable widths, please note.

Barriers: When thinking about the trail, even if it fully conforms to ADA guidelines, are there any sections that might pose a challenge to people who use wheelchairs or have other disabilities? It is better to give more information than not enough. Think broadly.

The website can incorporate photos that show up on the trail map. If there are any barriers, such as a crossing of railroad tracks for example, take a photo and share it with us. **Make sure the GPS is turned on in your phone!**

Trail Difficulty

Easy: Relatively flat and smooth trails that are often wide.

Moderate: May have a few hills or steep sections, multiple surface types, or might be narrow.

Advanced: Most advanced trails are natural surface with more difficult hills, exposed roots or slipping hazards.

Strenuous: Typically single track, natural surface, narrow trails with many hills or steep sections, tight turns, exposed roots or slipping hazards or other obstacles such as stream crossings or rocky areas to traverse.

Trail Types & Length

If you don't know the length, we can calculate it in GIS.

One-way: A single trail with no inter-connecting trails that has trailheads at either end and can be used without backtracking. Trail distance is reported for the unique trail.

Round-trip: A single trail with one primary trailhead that requires backtracking. Trail distance is reported by doubling the length of the trail.

Loop: A single trail that most often has one major trailhead and does not require backtracking. Trail distance is reported for the entire loop.

Network: Any configuration of inter-connecting trails that can be followed in multiple ways by users. Trail distance is reported by adding together the lengths of all unique trail segments.

Points of Interest - Accessible

-  Boat Launch - Accessible
-  Campground - Accessible
-  Fishing Area - Accessible
-  Group Tent Site - Accessible
-  Hut/Lodge/Cabin - Accessible
-  Parking - Accessible
-  Picnic Area - Accessible
-  Tent Site - Accessible
-  Wildlife Viewing Platform - Accessible

Guidelines & Tips for Developing New Postings

Text Fields

- **Trail Manager:** Contact information for the land owner and/or trail manager. Be sure to include a website and email if possible. Please use an email that will not change with staff turnover, such as info@____ or trails@____. Multiple trail managers can be included in each posting. Please send a digital logo for each organization for us to include on the site. If you know of a link to an already designed map of the trail, please include.

- **Trail Abstract:** This overview provides basic information about the trail and its unique features. Limit to one sentence and no more than 250 characters. The trail abstract is the first piece of information users see when searching for and reviewing trails on the website.

- **Trailhead Directions:** Begin the description from the nearest town or highway or other clearly identifiable starting point. Consider whether you need to offer directions from multiple directions (e.g., from the north or south). Use US or state highway numbers and then local street names to guide users to the parking lot. Each parking icon will also have a link to directions on Google Maps. If there are any errors in Google Maps (such as a road name), it is important to note that in the directions text.

Some trailheads may not be located next to the parking area, in which case you should provide additional directions to locate the trailhead. Some trail networks may also require descriptions to multiple trailheads. Be sure to note any parking restrictions here. Please write-out suffixes (e.g., Road, Street) as full words.

- **Trail Description:** In 2-3 paragraphs, describe the trail in terms of current trail conditions, the surrounding environment, and unique features users might encounter. Precise distances, bearings, directions, intersections or high-detail navigation tips are not necessary.
- **Additional Information:** Tell us anything else that is important for users to know about this trail which is not well represented in any of the above areas. For example: trail expansion plans, special trail rules, fee structures, temporary closures, or information about other maps created for the trail.

Photos

- We accept any type of image file (.jpg, .png, etc.). If you would like the photo geo-located on the map, let us know and make sure the GPS information is incorporated in the file!
- Please send a high quality square or round digital logo for each trail manager to be included in the trail posting.

Spatial Data

- **Trail Data:** We can accept trail data in any spatial data format including geodatabases, shapefiles, GPS files (GPX), Google Earth files (KML) and more. If you aren't sure about your format, contact us. If possible, line attributes should include trail name, blaze color, notes, and surface type. If you are actively collecting trail information, consider aligning it with the Connecticut Trail Standard for GIS data (ctgis.uconn.edu/standards). More information and instructions at ctrails.uconn.edu/trailfinder_add/.
- **Points of interest:** those listed to the right can be included in the trail map. Please provide spatial information for the points. If you don't have a GPS (gpx) file, KML, KMZ, shapefile, or list of lat/longs, please describe the locations. If there are accessible trail sections, please also make sure to indicate whether the points of interest are accessible, particularly parking areas and toilets.

Points of Interest

-  Bench
-  Bicycle Repair Station
-  Boat Launch
(put Marina/Ferry in notes)
-  Bridge
-  Campground
-  Caution
-  Cultural Attraction
-  Dam
-  Fishing Area
-  Gate
-  Group Tent Site
-  Hand-carry Boat Launch
-  Hut/Lodge/Cabin
-  Kiosk/Information
-  Landmark
-  Lean-to Shelter
-  Lookout Tower
-  Natural Attraction
-  Park Office
-  Parking
(specify lot vs. shoulder in notes)
-  Picnic Area
-  Playground
-  Portage
-  Photo (if geotagged)
-  Rapids/Falls
-  Recreation Facility
-  Scenic View
-  Store
-  Summit
-  Swimming Area
-  Tent Site
-  Trailhead
-  Waterfall
-  Wildlife Viewing