

WELCOME TO THE 12 TOWN AIRLINE STATE PARK MASTER PLAN WORKSHOP



SAVE THE DATES
AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL 12 TOWN WORKSHOP SERIES
5:30 - 6:30PM - CT RC&D ZOOM ROOM

JANUARY 10, 2023 - THE TRAIL
Existing Conditions & Resources

JANUARY 12, 2023 - BUILDING SYNERGY
Infrastructure & CTDEEP - Town Partnerships

JANUARY 17, 2023 - COMMON PURPOSE
Town by Town Regional Collaboration

JANUARY 19, 2023 - TRAIL TOWNS
Layout & Recommendations



Air Line State Park Trail

Mission

Evaluate & recommend methodology to restore Air Line State Park Trail's economic significance & value to the twelve towns of the region with focus on conservation and collaboration

Process

27 separate consultants contributing to collection knowledge and recommendations

Findings to date:

- Based on SCORP utilization estimates statewide there is a potential pool of more than 900k trail **users**. UConn counts estimates 805,000 **uses** for 2021.
- Important of adjacent influence areas/partners
- Estimated revenue increase generated from potential increase in trail users: \$2.56 million to towns annually.
- Resources to support users need to be expanded and coordinated: accommodations, wayfinding, consistent continuity in trail conditions for the season
- Town/Stakeholders are working independently

March 2023
Public Workshop
for Draft Plan

Publication
April – May 2023



Photo:
Stan Malcolm

12 TOWN ALSPT MASTER PLAN PRIMARY MISSION

*EVALUATE CONDITIONS & RECOMMEND ACTIONS TO RESTORE
AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL'S ECONOMIC BENEFIT TO THE REGION'S TWELVE TOWNS*



Inventory of Adjacent Town
Land Use, Planning,
Economic Strategies
Develop Regional
Collaboration Options Based
on Best Practices



Support Rural and Tourism
Based Economy Through
Preservations of Natural
Resource Amenity Assets



Strategies for Town
Economic Growth to
Educate and Create New
Small Recreational
Supportive Business



Support and Funding
Toward Ongoing
Maintenance and New
Infrastructure



Support Where Possible for
Regional Share Service
Options and Efficiencies



Natural Resource Inventory
to Highlight and Map Critical
Areas for Maintenance
Concerns, Infrastructure
Installation as well as
Promoting Eco-Tourism and
Education



Enhanced Marketing and
Branding to Include Town
Amenities, Air Line Trail
Events and Trail Information
New Website with Links to
CTDEEP and Planning for Cell
Phone Based Apps



Coordinate Regulatory and
Design Objectives for
Adjacent Land Use to
Protect Scenic Integrity of
the Corridor

GOALS OF THE CTDC&D STRATEGIC PLAN



PLANNING PERSPECTIVE

AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL USERS

AIRLINE STATE PARK STAKEHOLDERS

CTDEEP and CTDEEP BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

BENEFITS OF THE TRAIL

NEEDS ANALYSIS: TRAIL COUNT & SURVEY

CONSERVATION RESOURCES

INFRASTRUCTURE & MAINTENANCE

COORDINATION TO PROMOTE AND CONSERVE

INFLUENCE AREAS and MARKETNIG

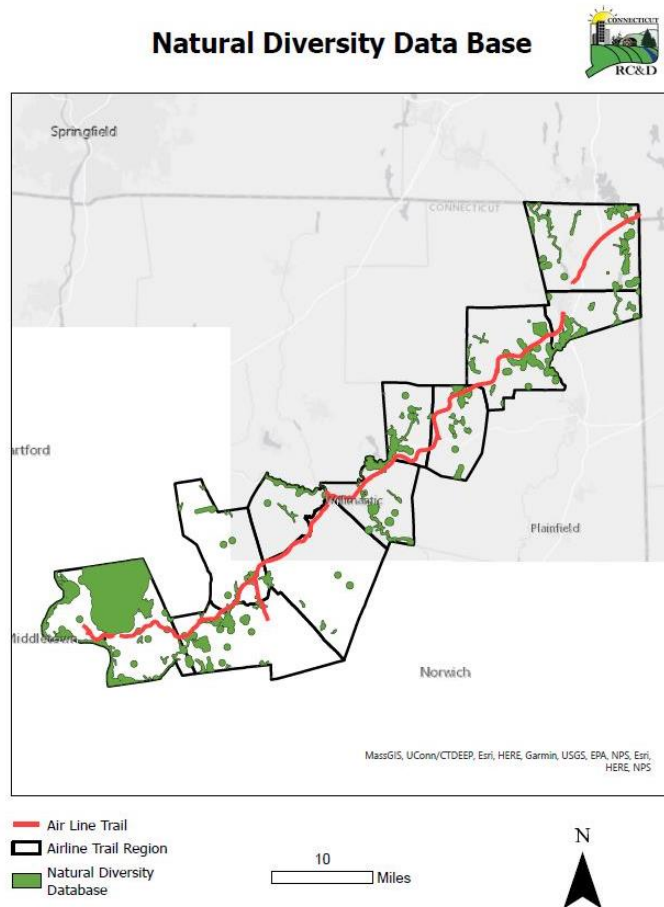
TRAIL RESOURCE AND INVENTORY PLANNING

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND SURVEYS

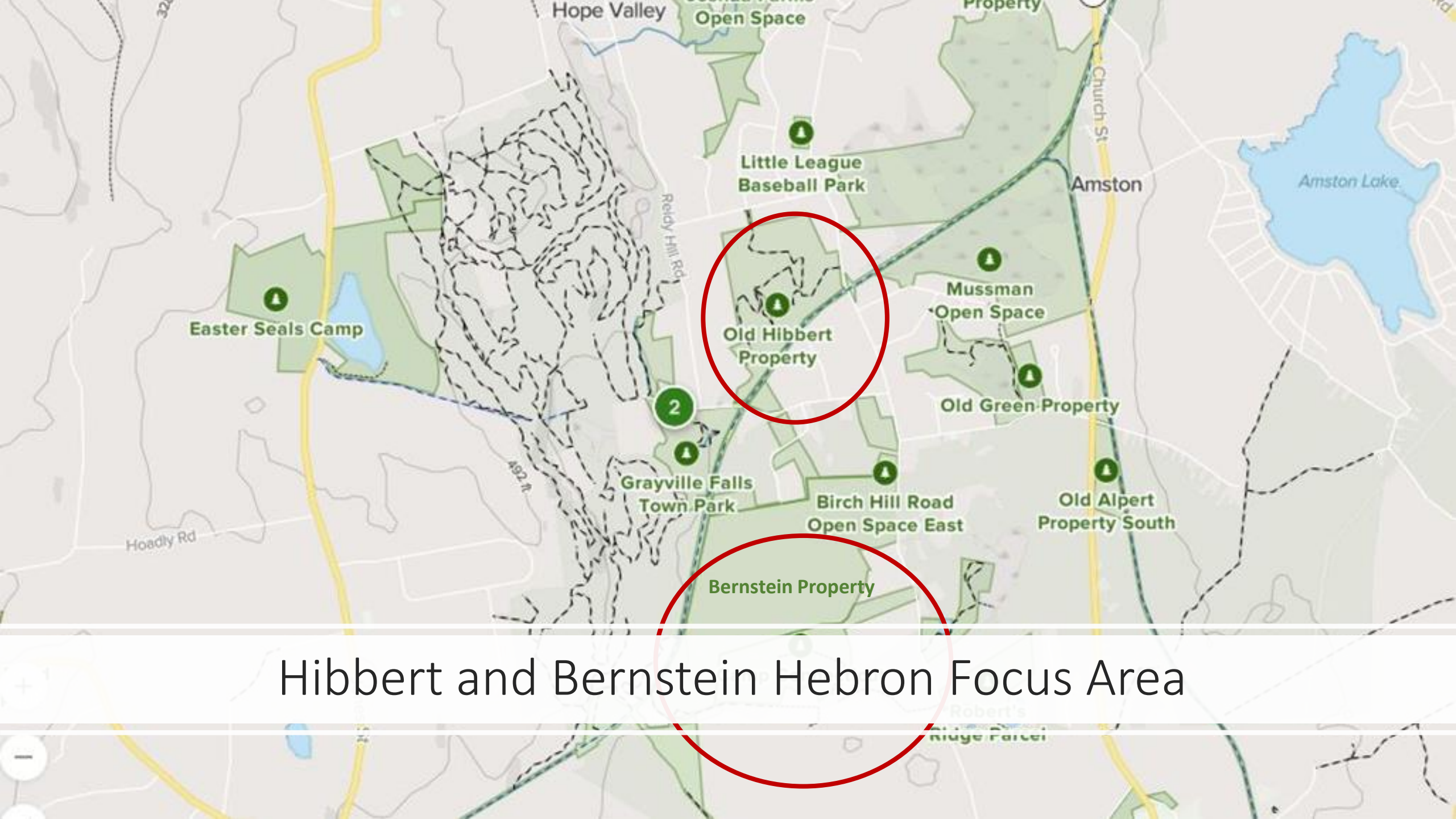


- Inventory of 12 towns trail stakeholders and trail support network
- Engage community trail stakeholders toward collective leadership
- Assessment of adjacent land use and zoning implications
- Economic findings
- Large scope assessment of conservation resources & connections with an in-depth analysis of two focus areas
- Connections to town centers, amenities and land trust trails

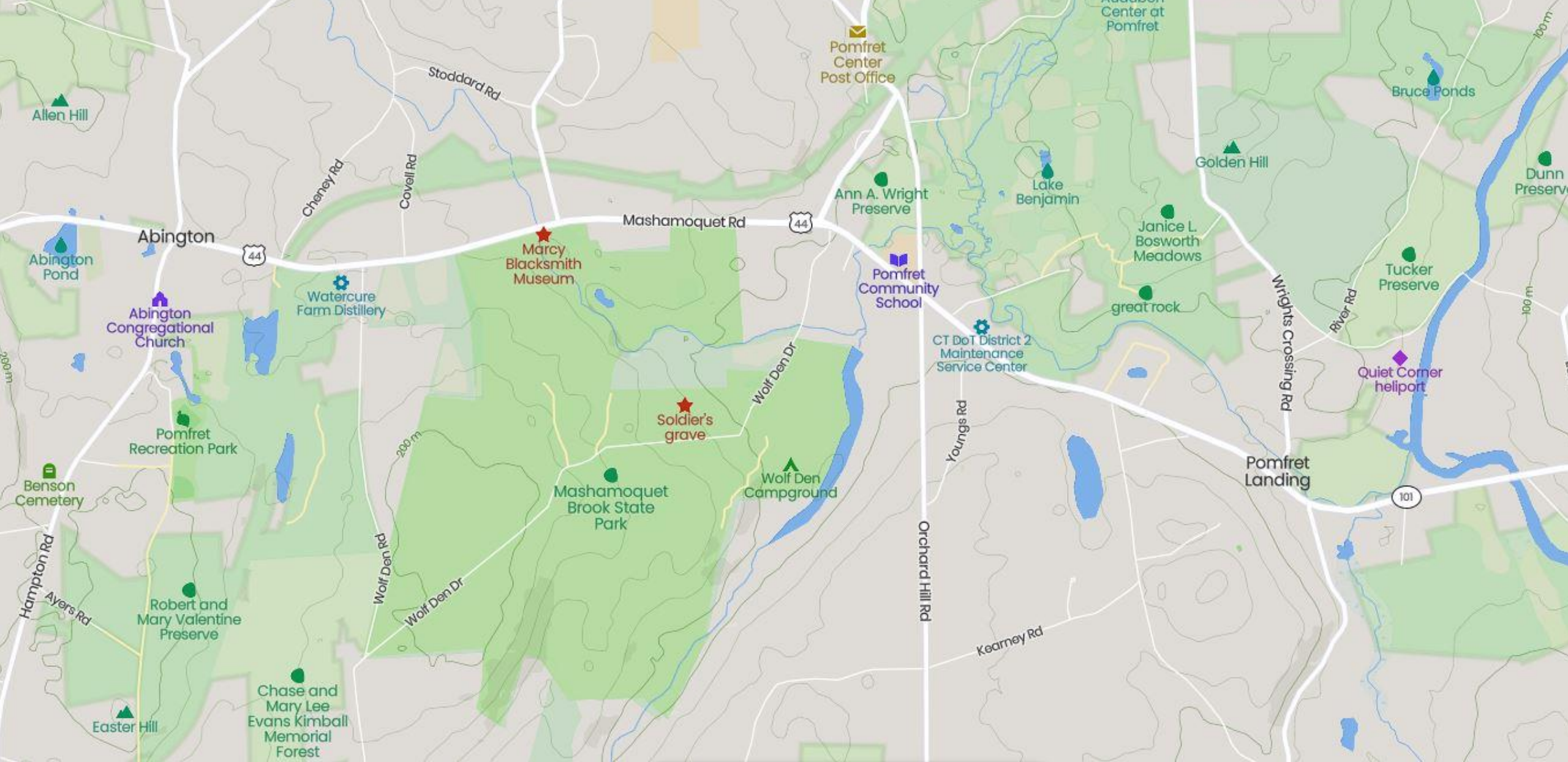
Conservation Overview



- Watersheds
- Natural Diversity
- Geology
- Herpetology
- Historic/Archaeological
- Land Use
- Forest Continuity
- Watersheds
- Soils Wetlands
- Wildlife
- Focus Areas
 - Hebron
 - Pomfret



Hibbert and Bernstein Hebron Focus Area

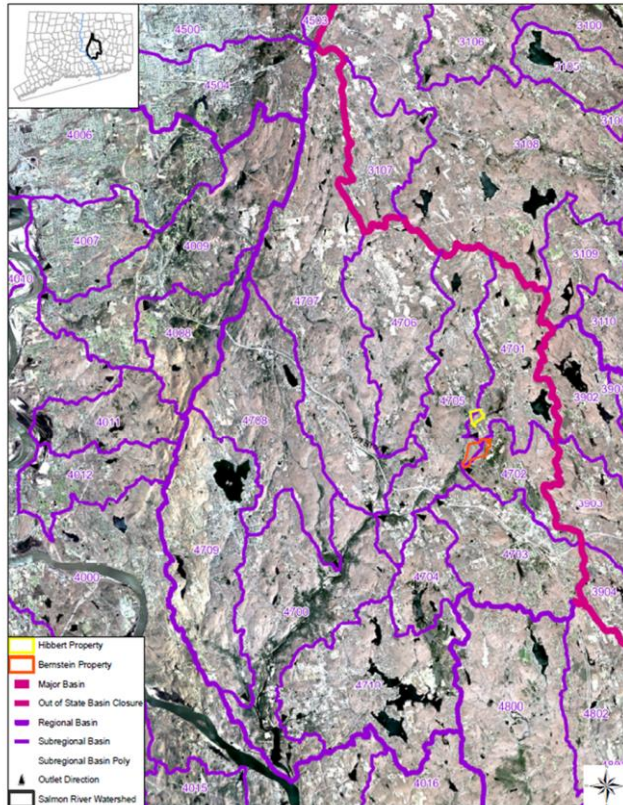


Pomfret Conservation Block Focus Area

WATERSHED

Hebron Hibbert – Bernstein Focus Area

Location of the Hibbert and Bernstein Properties in the Salmon River and Subregional Basins
4705 Jeremy River Watershed
4701 Raymond Brook
4702 Judd Brook



“In any watershed, an increase in development and changing landscapes have one of the biggest impacts on water quality. When an area is developed, the natural drainage changes, impervious surfaces concentrate the stormwater, preventing infiltration and increasing the amount of water that is flowing across the ground surface, picking up pollutants and sediment that will eventually flow into receiving waters

The Jeremy River, Judd Brook, Raymond Brook, Meadow Brook, and Pine Brook subregional basins.

The majority of the basin where the properties are located is forested (65-75%), followed by developed (15.1-20%), impervious cover (6-10%), agriculture fields (4.1 -8%), and turf and grass (3.1-8%).”

Kelly Starr, Natural Resource Specialist
CT River Coastal Conservation District



WATERSHED

Pomfret Conservation Block Focus Area

- “The southernmost connection to the ATSP starts out almost perpendicular to the slope. Erosion was noted on parts of the trail. Installation of water bars across the grade on an angle is recommended to dissipate any accumulated flow to reduce trail erosion. Due to the existing condition of the trail, it is not recommended that the trail be promoted for mountain bike travel
- Recreational activities, such as hiking, will have minimal impact the watershed ecology. Use of mountain bikes on the trail, especially steeper sections, will increase the potential for soil erosion. The landscape surrounding the trail includes early successional habitat and young deciduous trees. Wildlife viewing opportunities in this type of habitat that is in decline statewide is an additional benefit to less site disturbance
- These wetlands drain into a chain of ponds associated with an unnamed headwater stream. The benefit of blazing a new trail with a wetlands crossing may not outweigh the environmental benefit of maintaining the undisturbed riparian vegetation currently in place.

Jean Pillo - Watershed Conservation Project Manager, CPSEC
Eastern Connecticut Conservation District



Southern access to Gellert/Valentine Preserve showing trail erosion and recommended erosion control practice to reduce trail erosion.

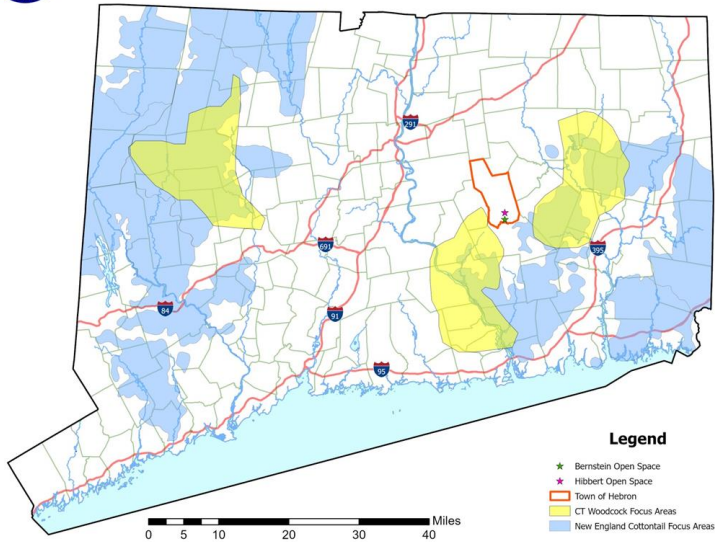


WILDLIFE

Hebron Hibbert – Bernstein



CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection
American Woodcock and New England Cottontail Focus Areas



“These habitats are situated within a larger landscape of relatively undeveloped properties with important wildlife populations throughout the watershed including Salmon River State Forest and Raymond Brook Marsh Wildlife Management Area.

Additional surveys are necessary to determine species presence on the Bernstein and Hibbert properties; however, regardless of species presence, these properties are part of a larger system of interconnected habitats that support a wide variety of organisms on neighboring properties including several state-listed species (endangered, threatened, special concern, State of Connecticut Endangered Species Act) and Species of Greatest Conservation Need (GCN) as identified in the 2015 Connecticut State Wildlife Action Plan (CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection 2015).

The neighboring Blackledge Block of Salmon River State Forest has known occurrences of eight species identified as state endangered or of special concern, including one bird, four reptiles, two freshwater mussels and one freshwater fish.

The Bernstein and Hibbert properties are in close proximity to one of three focus areas designated in the Management Plan for American Woodcock in Connecticut (CT DEEP 2012, unpublished report; Figure 1). “

Ann Kilpatrick and Brian Hess, Wildlife Biologists
CTDEEP Wildlife Division



What are the single most importance conservation resources on the trail?

Are there concerns about eco-tourism impact to natural resources?

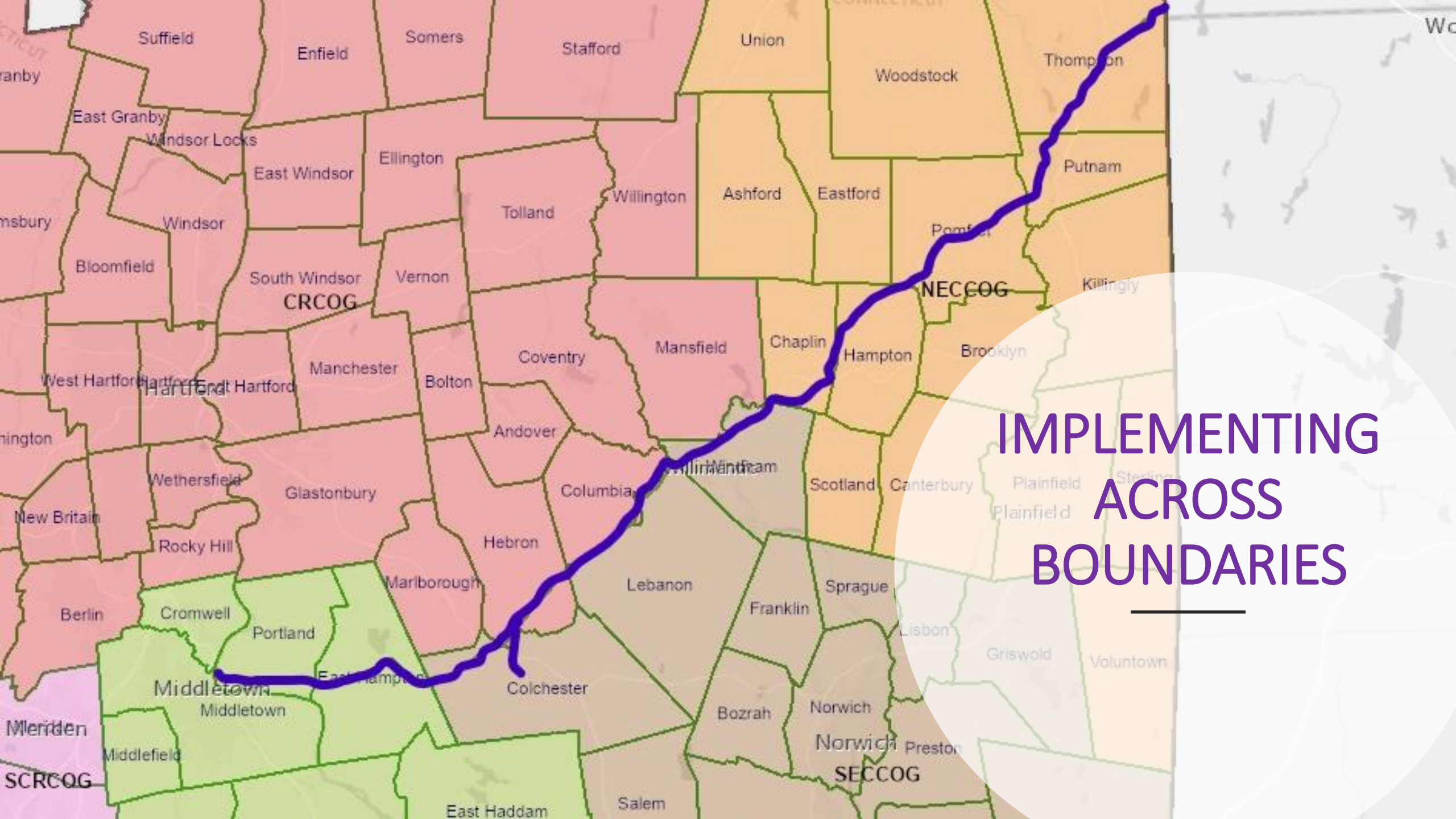


Photo:
Stan Malcolm



COMMENTS INSIGHTS

Photo:
Stan Malcolm



IMPLEMENTING ACROSS BOUNDARIES

LAND USE CONSISTENCY

Air Line State Park Trail

- Nearly every POCD along the trail explicitly mentions the Airline Trail as a key asset
- Several communities mention expanded tourism as a key economic development initiative
- A few communities singularly mention the Airline Trail as a development asset for recruiting talent and businesses

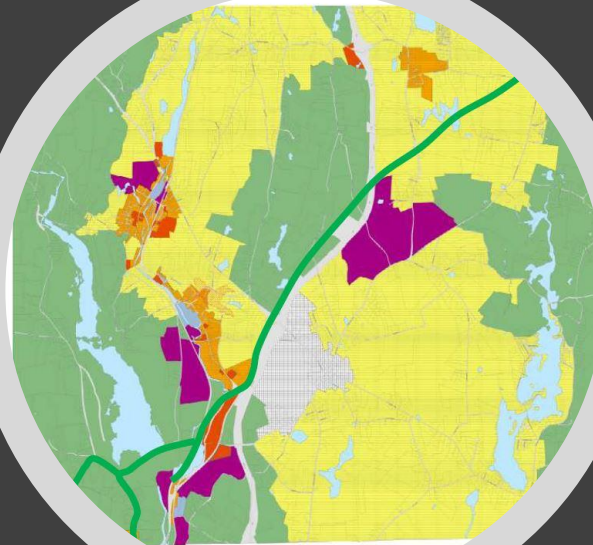
	POCD Elements				
Community	Specific Mention Airline Trail	Trails Emphasis	Bike / Ped Mobility Improvements	Outdoor Recreation	Tourism Expansion
Chaplin	X		X		X
Colchester	X	X	X	X	
Columbia	X	X	X	X	
East Hampton	X				X
Hampton			X	X	
Hebron	X	X		X	X
Lebanon	X	X			X
Pomfret	X	X	X	X	
Portland	X	X	X	X	X
Thompson	X				X
Windham	X	X		X	X



Photo:
Stan Malcolm



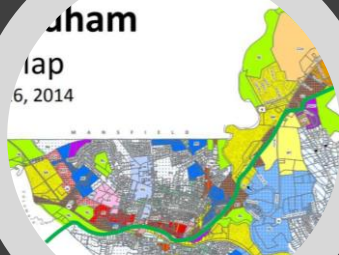
Air Line Trail in Chaplin



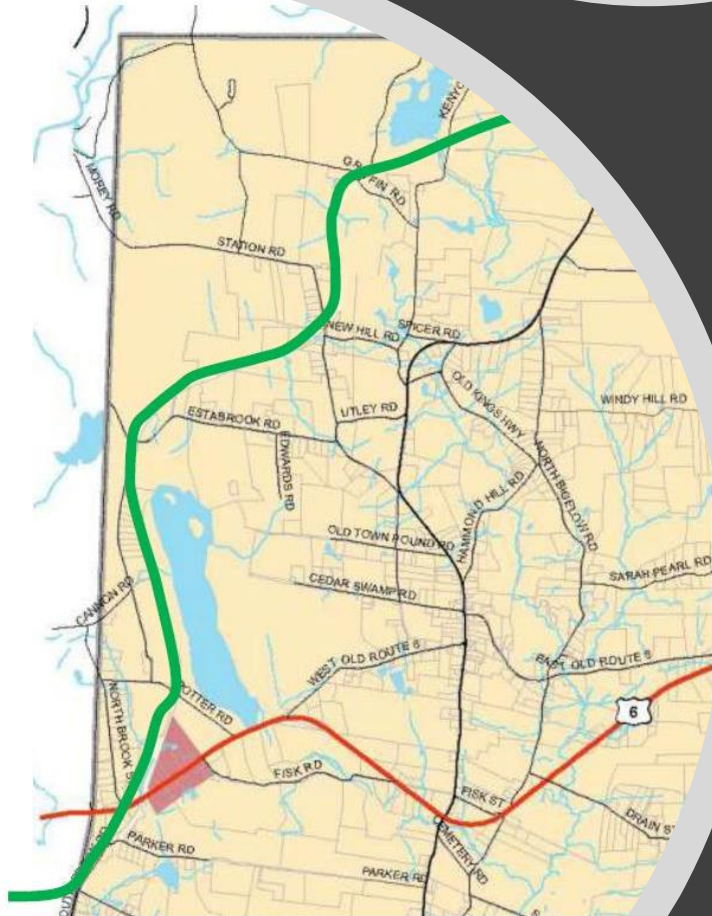
Estimated location of Air Line Trail in Thom



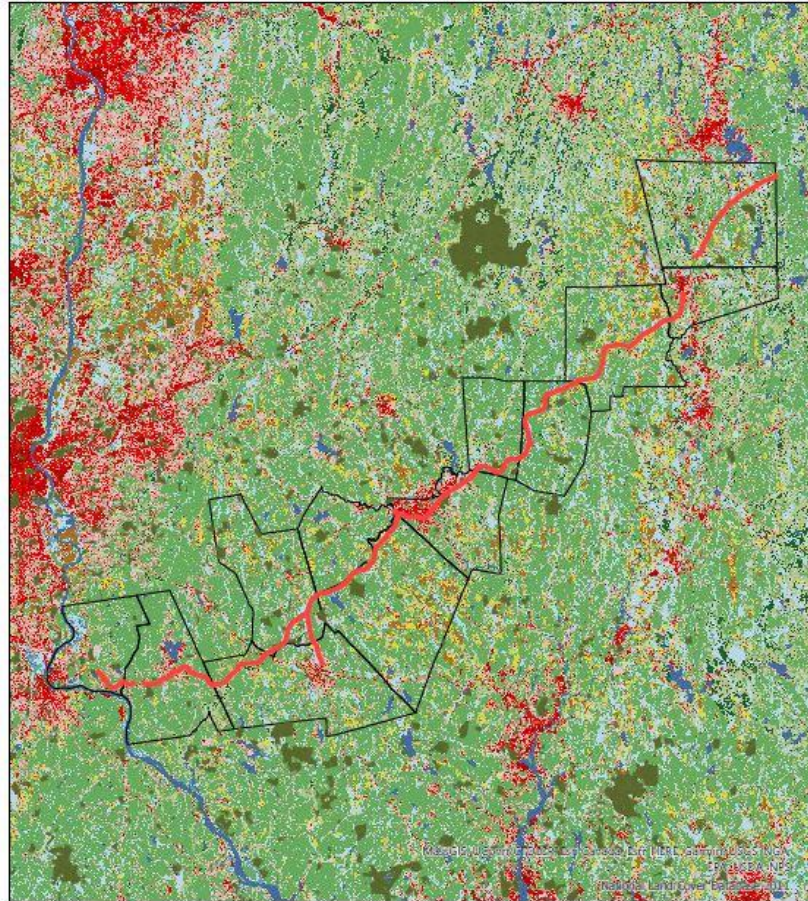
Air Line Trail in Pomfret



Capturing and Categorizing Land Use Zoning to Support the Trail



Land Cover in the Air Line Region

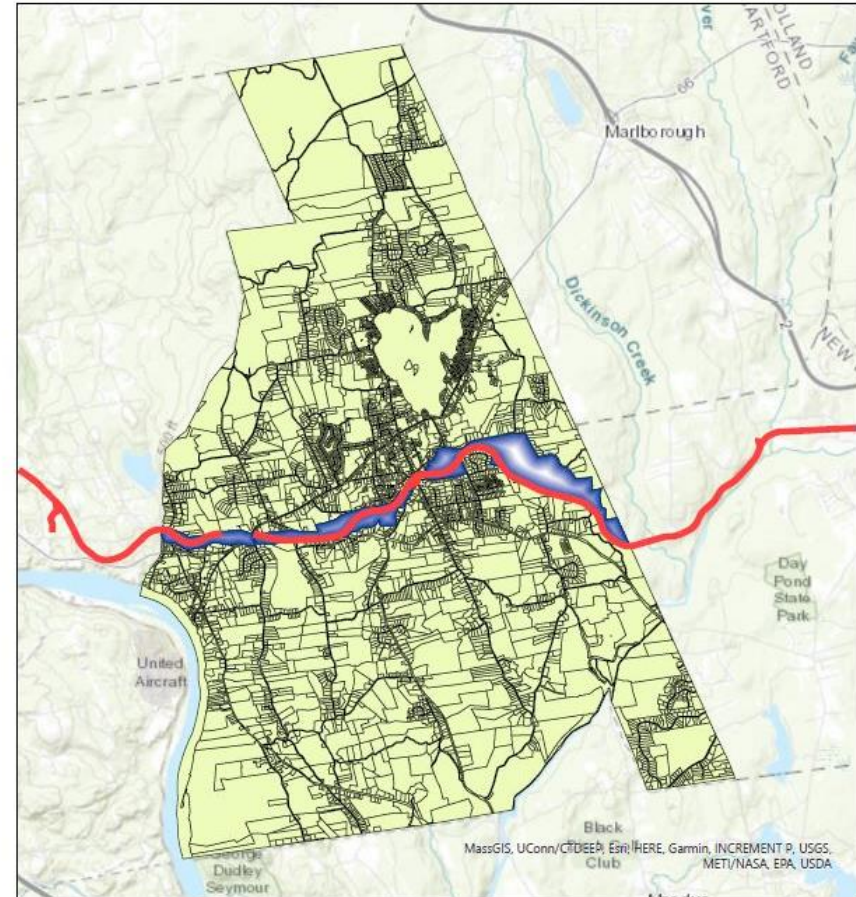


- Air Line Trail
- Forest or Shrub
- Open Space
- Developed
- Agriculture
- Grassland/Herbaceous
- Water/Wetland

10
Miles



Potential for New Zoning Along ALSPT



- Air Line Trail
- Potential New Zoning Along Trail
- East Hampton Existing Zoning

3
Miles



What is the importance of zoning and land use to the trails?

How do we get towns, COGs, trail committees, land trusts, nonprofit stakeholders to work together?

What is the perspective of the trail user and regional visitor?



Photo:
Stan Malcolm



Comments Insights

Photo:
Stan Malcolm

12 TOWN ALSPT REGIONAL STAKEHOLDER GROUP

118 Members and Growing Representing 12 Towns and Influence Areas

AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL TOWNS (5 of 12 towns have active trail committees)

Portland - Portland Air Line Trail Steering Committee:

<https://www.portlandct.org/airlinetrailsteering>

East Hampton - East Hampton Air Line Trail Committee

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100063655356499> 1.6K followers

Colchester - <https://www.colchesterct.gov/parks-facilities/pages/air-line-trail-state-park-colchester-spur>

Lebanon - Rails to Trails Committee (9 members) <https://www.lebanonct.gov/rails-trails-committee>

Hebron - Open Space Land Acquisition Committee: <https://hebronct.com/town-departments/open-space-land-acquisition-committee/>

Columbia – Not Specific to ALSPT – Hop River Trail Alliance:

https://www.facebook.com/hoprivertailalliance/about/?ref=page_internal 212 followers

Windham: Not Found

Chaplin - Recreation Commission

<https://www.chaplinct.org/commission.htm?id=pewvr35k>

Hampton – Not Found

Pomfret – Not Found

Putnam - Air Line Trail Committee (4 members)

<https://www.putnamct.us/government/commissions/putnam-trails-committee>

Thompson - Thompson Trails Committee:

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064283005857> 875 followers

OTHER ALSPT GROUPS

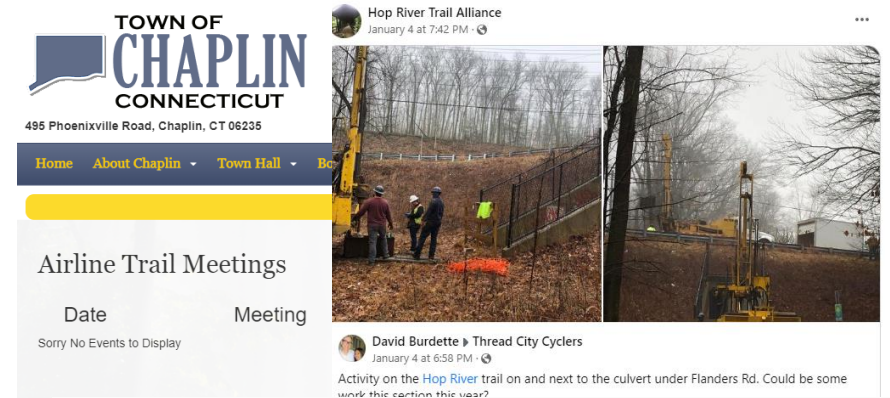
East Coast Greenway: <https://www.greenway.org/>

Friends of the Air Line Trail- North: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/airlinenorth/> (join to be a member - private)

Trail Maintenance

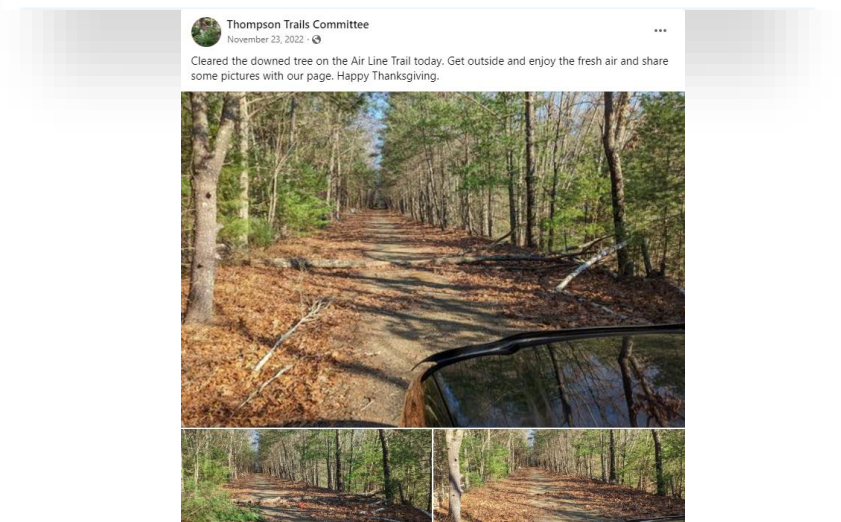
Air Line Trail Maintenance

- To report trail vandalism contact: DEEP District Headquarters at (860) 295-9523.
- To report ATV or motorcycle use on the trail, contact the DEEP Communications Center at (860) 424-3333.
- For further information, or to volunteer for trail development and maintenance, contact Naomi Davidson at (860) 456-4120.



Friends of the Air Line Trail - North

Private group · 693 members



SCORP Findings

- SCORP is the statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan
- The most recent addition covers 2017 to 2022
- Surveys indicate trails are among the highest priorities
 - Paved multi-use trails are the most important recreational asset with almost 30% ranking it either one, two or three

Q8. Please select the three facilities most important to your household to develop in municipal-owned outdoor recreation areas.

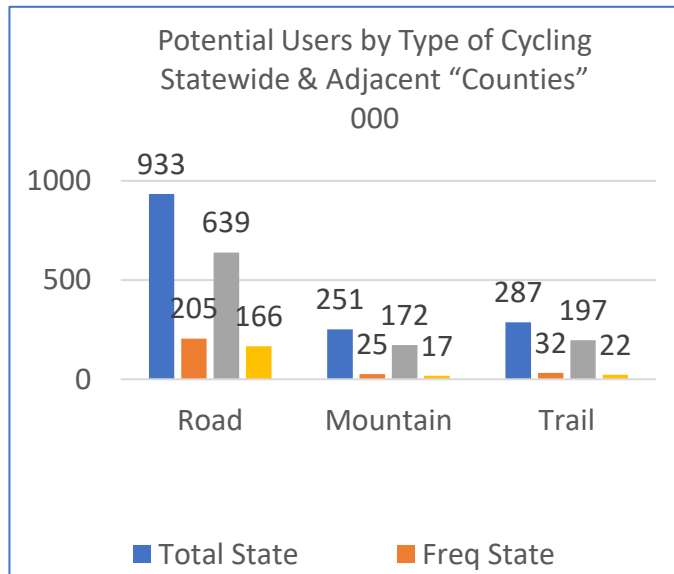
Response Category <i>Total N varies by activity</i>	Most important	2 nd most important	3 rd most important
Paved multi-use trails (N=550)	10%	8%	10%
Unpaved multi-use trails (N=333)	4%	5%	7%
Unpaved single use trails (N=207)	3%	4%	4%
ADA accessible trails (N=88)	2%	2%	1%
Cross-country skiing or snowshoeing trails (N=74)	1%	1%	1%
Off-road motor, dirt biking, and ATV areas (N=94)	2%	1%	2%
Picnic areas/shelters (N=608)	11%	1%	9%
Playgrounds (N=491)	9%	8%	8%
Inclusive accessible playgrounds (N=155)	3%	3%	2%
Baseball and softball fields (N=166)	3%	3%	2%
Soccer, football, lacrosse, and rugby fields (N=159)	3%	3%	2%
Volleyball, tennis, and basketball courts (N=205)	3%	4%	3%
Golf courses (N=138)	4%	2%	1%
Disc golf courses (N=31)	<1%	1%	1%
Outdoor pools, water parks, and splash pads (N=458)	8%	8%	7%
Freshwater/saltwater swimming areas (N=332)	6%	6%	4%
Boating access for motor boating, jet skiing, sailing, or paddle sports (N=82)	1%	2%	1%
Snorkeling and scuba diving areas (N=30)	1%	1%	<1%
Nature preserves and bird watching areas (N=310)	5%	6%	4%
Historic sites and areas (N=373)	8%	6%	4%



Photo:
Stan Malcolm

SCORP findings and user potential

- Based on SCORP utilization estimates statewide there is a potential pool of more than 900k riders.
- Assuming adjacent counties represent a total pool of 639k bicyclists with a floor of 166k
 - Identified multi-use trail users is a pool of 197k
 - Identified mountain bikers is a pool of 172k
- Similarly implies host communities (those communities through whom the Trail flows) total pool is 24k with 5k frequent users
 - 7.5k trail users with 800+ frequent users
 - 6.6k mountain bikers with 600+ frequent users
- Neighboring Massachusetts may add another 8000 potential riders



"Clear takeaway – the more pavement and higher levels of maintenance means a larger potential user pool"

Photo:
Stan Malcolm



Comments and Insights

Photo:
Stan Malcolm

NAVIGATING THE 12 TOWN ALSPT REGION

*What is happening? Where do I get information? Where can I stay?
Where can we eat?*

Things to do, places to go in the (not so) Quiet Corner!



Area Attractions

[Explore The Last Green Valley](#)



Eat, Drink & Be Merry

Too many to list! Discover our eclectic mix of Breweries, Eateries, Wineries and more!



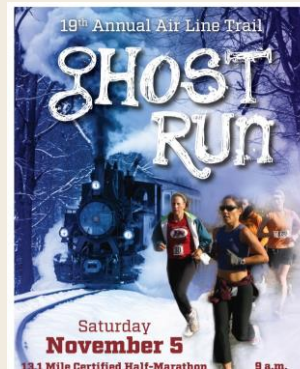
Local Happenings

[NECT Great Pumpkin Festival](#)
[Rosedale Cottage Fine Arts and Crafts Festival](#)



Rest Easy

Hotels, Inns and Airbnbs; Rest your body at a wide variety of lodgings!



- <https://tacklethetrail.org/>
- <https://thelastgreenvalley.org/explore-the-last-green-valley/walktober/>
- <https://bikenewengland.com/bicycle-rides-in-connecticut/>

ABOUT ADVENTURES RESOURCES & TRAIL

AIR LINE TRAIL, HEBRON, (B2D, MODERATE)

Date and Time
Thursday, January 26, 2023

Location
exit 16 (Rte. 148) off Rte. 2 in Colchester, Connecticut, East of River, CT

Registration
Registration is not required for this activity. However, you may wish to contact the leader(s) if you have any questions.

Overview
A 7.5-mile trail-to-trail hike on flat terrain from Rte. 2 in Colchester eastward crossing bridges over the Jeremy River and Judd Brook, through a small section of the Salmon River State Forest, passing by Grayville Falls Park, and on to the very scenic Raymond Brook Marsh area in Hebron. We will then retrace our steps back to the commuter parking lot. Since this is an in and out hike, you can turn around and go back any time to make a shorter hike. Meet @ 9:45 AM in the commuter parking lot at exit 16 (Rte. 148) off Rte. 2 in Colchester. We will have lunch along the trail. We will stop at a nearby restaurant after the hike for...

Activity
Hiking

Offered By
Connecticut

TACKLE THE TRAIL

UNIQUE race.
AMAZING place.

MARATHON - HALF MARATHON - 10K - RELAY

REGISTRATION OPENS JANUARY 1ST

10 Years of Tackle - Make Tackle Your Destination in 2023!

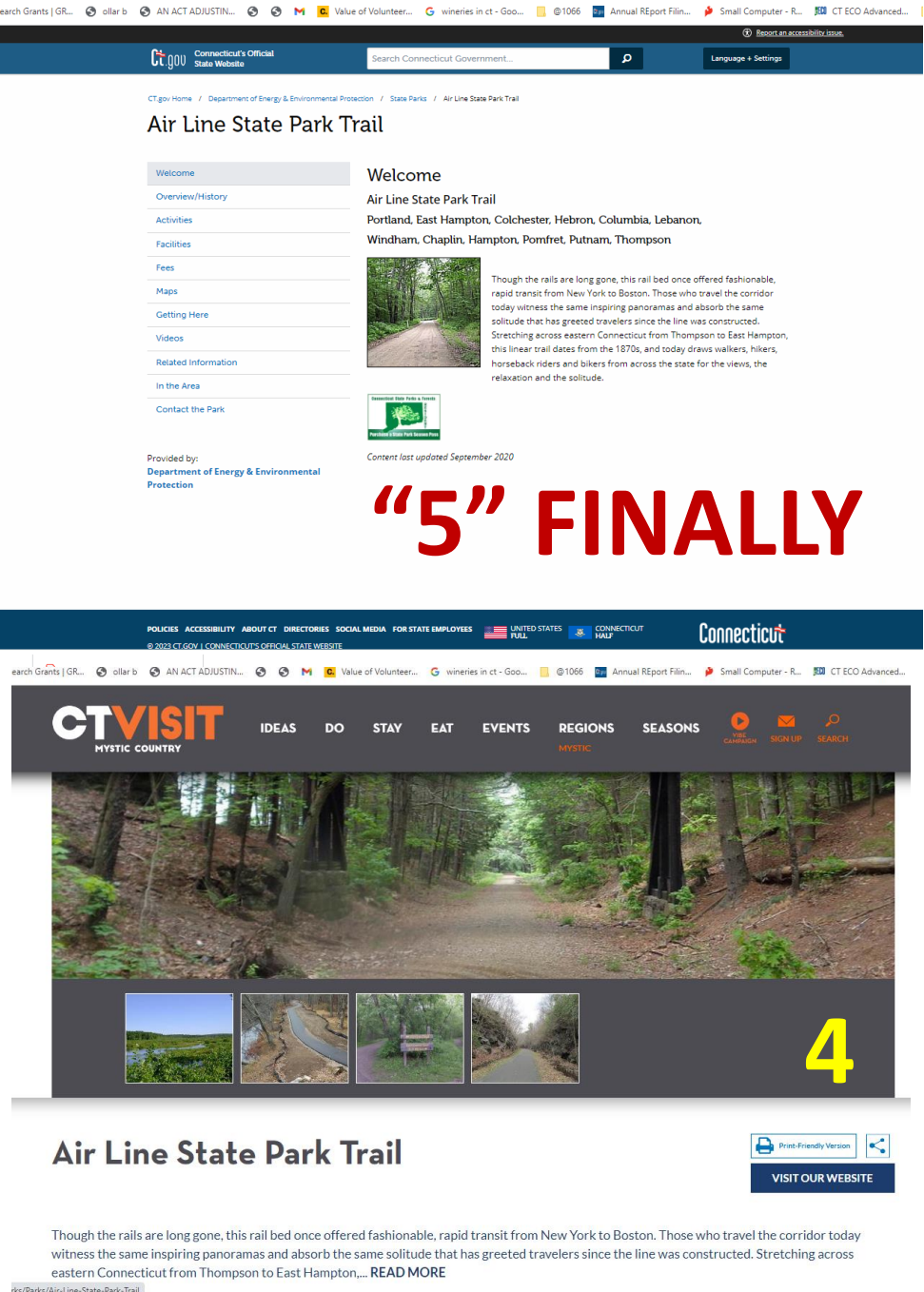
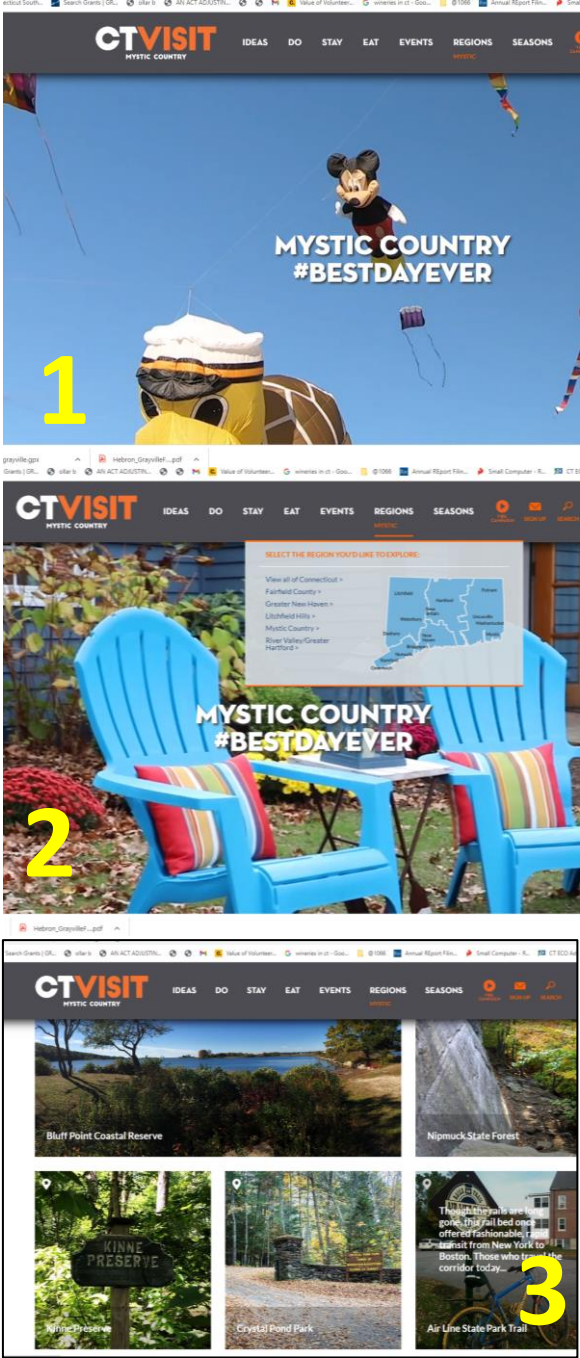
ALWAYS THE 3RD SATURDAY IN OCTOBER

[CLICK HERE FOR 2022 RACE RESULTS](#)

[CLICK HERE FOR 2022 RACE PHOTOS](#)

FROM THE PUBLIC (user) PERSPECTIVE

“But I still didn’t get the answers to my questions!”



Air Line STATE PARK TRAIL

For additional maps, please contact _____ at _____

PARKING

Many parking areas serve the Air Line State Park Trail. Some primary locations are:

THOMPSON

- Large parking lot at 121 Riverside Dr. (Rt 12, Mechanicsville)
- Pull-off for a few cars at Air Line trail crossing, 358 Sand Over Rd.
- 5 car parking lot located at 802 East Thompson Rd. near the junction of New Rd.

POMFRET

- 18 car paved parking lot at Pomfret Station, 13 Railroad Ave. (off of Rt 158)
- Parking adjacent to trail in town owned paved parking lot, east side of Pomfret Town Office, 455 Mashamoquet Rd (Rt 44)
- Parking available in rear of town owned paved parking lot, at Pomfret Senior Center, 207 Mashamoquet Rd (Rt 44)

HAMPTON

- Porter Rd 2.5 mile north of its intersection with Rt 5 in Looden State Forest

WINDHAM

- Pull-off for a few cars at the intersection of Shaker Hill Rd and Windham Rd (Rt 203) in northeast Windham

COLUMBIA

- Rt 51, Cook Hill Rd and Village Hill Rd

PUTNAM

- 18 Kennedy Dr. across from Canal
- 80 Kennedy Dr. directly across from the South entrance of Somers Park
- 185 Kennedy Dr.
- 165 Kennedy Dr (DMV lot)

PORTLAND

- Limited parking at 82 Middle Haddam Rd

AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL HISTORY

The trail takes its name from the imaginary line drawn from New York to Boston through the "air" so to speak, to illustrate the shortest possible route between these two major east coast cities. Building a completely new rail line however proved economically infeasible in the 1830s. Instead, the "Air Line" as it came to be called, used existing rails from New York to New Haven and began its journey to the northeast from there. On its way to Boston, the Air Line overcame numerous obstacles in Connecticut's rugged highlands including ridges, valleys and of course, politics.

Construction began in the late 1830s and by 1870 the first construction milestone back from New Haven to Middlebury, was celebrated. Three years later, in 1873, the line was completed as far as Windham. This was an especially challenging run because of the landscapes which demanded a winding or serpentine rail bed. Despite being limited to the technology of the day, thousands of cuts through the hillsides were accomplished by contractors with equally massive "blows" in the valleys to keep the rail bed at grade. Nowhere was this more apparent than at the expensive bridges, or viaducts, over Flat Brook and Dedden Brook in East Hampton and Colchester respectively. Only 1-2 miles from each other, these sixteen valleys were first crossed by trestle bridges. The Rapids viaduct needed 800 feet of length to cross Flat Brook, and the Lumen Viaduct, just to the east, needed 1,000 feet to span Dedden Brook.

Further west, another arduous led the rails from Windham to the Connecticut border for the connection with Boston. Here a major obstacle was the crossing of the Quinebaug River in Putnam. But the construction was complete in August of 1872 and, within a year, the reality of the original plan had come to fruition.

Immediate rail traffic for passengers built up until 1878 when the first dedicated passenger run was scheduled. But it could only be effected if it offered time savings from the pre-existing stagecoach route. Slowly, incrementally, time was trimmed from the Air Line travel schedule and by 1885, with an hour savings on the six hour coastal run from New York to Boston, the New England Limited was established. The success of the Limited led to the delivery of new luxury cars by the Pullman Company in 1891. These new cars, white in color and highlighted in gold trim, prompted the railroad to paint the buildings of rail cars white and the legendary Ghost Train was born.

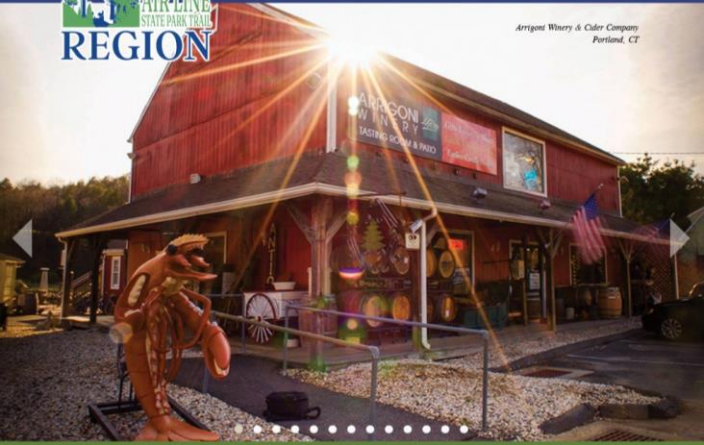
Successful businessmen and prominent citizens, including President Benjamin Harrison, rode the notoriously well known line that had earned its name as it sped across Eastern Connecticut with its seemingly luminous cars being easily recognized - especially at night.

As time marched onward to a new century, technology increased, railroad engine accidents became more frequent, and everything became heavier. The steepness of the Air Line's winding grades, and the weight restrictions of the spindly trestle bridges built for an earlier era of travel, began to show their limitations. As a result of these limits, traffic began to taper off. Though local runs and intermittent passenger trains continued to run along the line, passenger service of the Ghost Train was concluded on May 17, 1962 when service defaulted to the shore line rails.

Once the faster passenger trains moved to the shore, it was the slower freight trains and local passenger traffic that kept the rail line alive for many years afterwards. In 1912, to accommodate growing weight requirements, the two viaducts were strengthened by filling out their bents with 20 months worth of dumped sand, densely covered with cotton's debris in winter. This work of 150 years ago provided the massive support to see still use today.

Disasterous flooding of August, 1955 washed out critical bridge work in Putnam precipitating a string of route cancellations and section closures that, in retrospect, systematically crippled the line from ever regaining its usable status. The construction of the interstate highway throughout the 1950s sealed the fate of any future form of rail travel.

Now that's collaboration ... but can we do better... This is a paper map!



DISCOVER THE 12 TOWN REGION OF THE AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL

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EXPLORE THE REGION

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EXPLORE



FINDING YOUR WAY

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VIEW MAPS



TRAIL TALES

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12 Town Air Line State Park Website

Promoting the Trail
Promoting the Towns
Promoting Experience for the Visitor

Who owns it?
Who manages it?
How is it funded?
Will CT Visit Endorse and
link?



THOMPSON, CT

Home to family friendly events throughout the year, like the annual Makers Fair, Turkey Trot, summer concerts and more! Thompson is rich in historical sites, from the Ellen Larned Museum on Thompson Common to the site of The Great East Thompson Train Wreck on the Air Line State Park Trail.

Find our calendar of events, links to the Thompson Historical Society, The Last Green Valley and all of our local attractions by visiting Thompson, CT. Find Your Way.

DOWNLOAD BROCHURE

ALONG THE TRAIL



Point of Interest

Address
Domain name

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam.



Point of Interest

Address
Domain name

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Point of Interest

Address
Domain name

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Point of Interest

Address
Domain name

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Point of Interest

Address
Domain name

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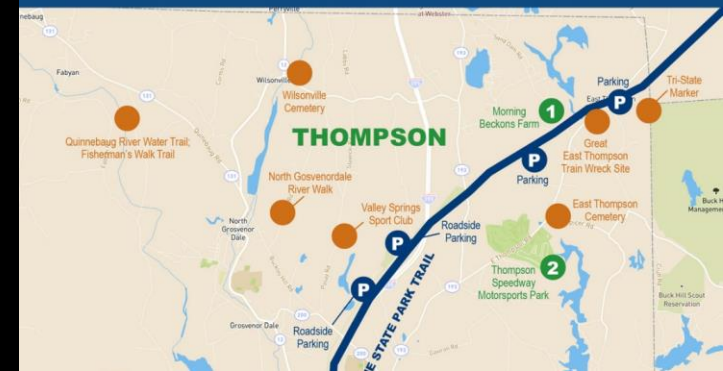


Point of Interest

Address
Domain name

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EXPLORE THE TRAIL



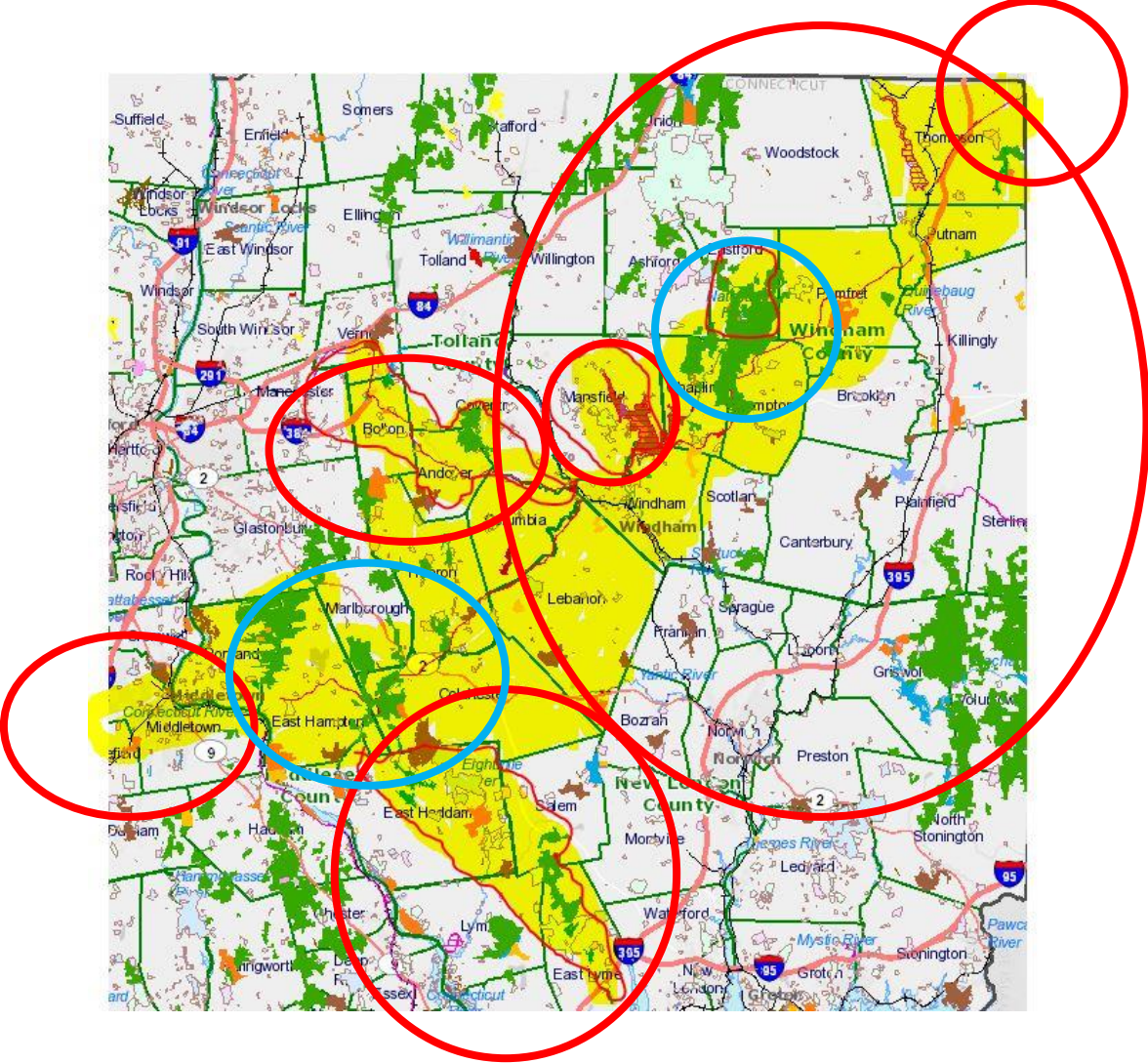


Comments and Insights

Photo:
Stan Malcolm

INFLUENCE AREAS

Hop River Trail Alliance, UConn Storrs Campus, Southern New England Trunkline Trail, Eight Mile Wild and Scenic, the Last Green Valley, East Coast Greenway and open Space Continuity BloCKs



East Coast Greenway Map

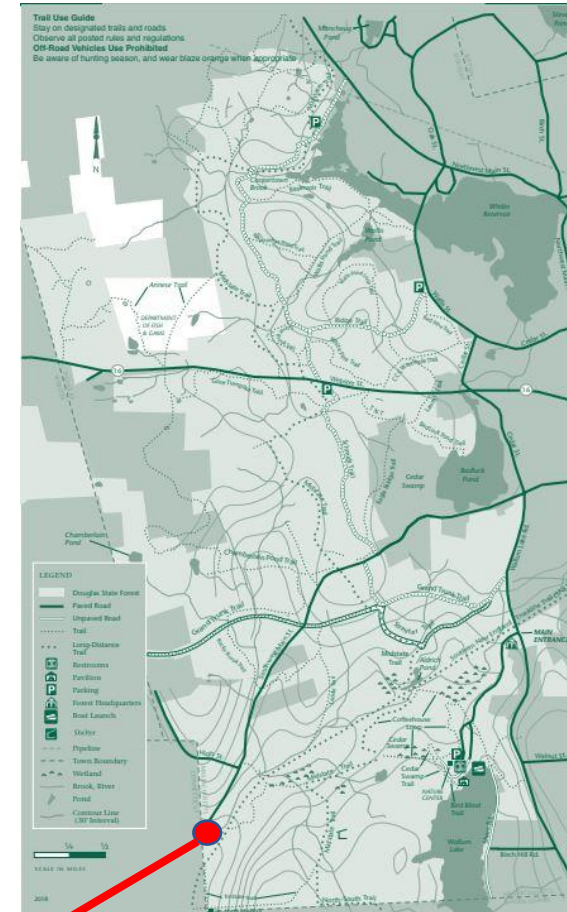


Douglas State Forest Southern New England Trunkline Trail



The Southern New England Trunkline Trail runs 22 miles from Douglas State Forest to Franklin State Forest. The trail is one of the longest trails in Massachusetts, running through 6 towns. You can find marked trail entrances at each of these towns. The trail is popular to bicyclists, cross-country skiers, equestrians, and hikers. The SNETT is not contiguous, and there are two areas where roads are used to connect the trail sections, one in Uxbridge and the other in Blackstone

<https://www.franklinbellinghamrailtrail.org/>





Final Comments and Insights

Photo:
Stan Malcolm

NEXT WORKSHOPS:

Infrastructure: **January 12th 5:30 – 6:30pm**

Collaboration & Marketing: **January 17th 5:30 – 6:30pm**

Collective Insights: **January 19th 5:30 – 6:30pm**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
PARTICIPATION AND SUPPORT!

“Vision-building can be a tool to garner support for the potential that the trail network can deliver, capturing and channeling people’s imaginations for what their community could look like; what it could feel like to have nearby access to walking and biking routes that offer transportation to important destinations; and the experience of having accessible and safe spaces to be active outside, right in their neighborhood.”
Rails to Trails



Photo:
Stan Malcolm