



August 31, 2017

REGIONAL TRAIL MAP AND CONNECTIVITY ASSESSMENT



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The Housatonic Valley Association

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Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA), under contract with the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG), with grant funding provided to the NHGOG by the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT).

The authors wish to thank the Selection Committee of the NHCOG for recommending HVA's bid for this contract and the members of the NHCOG for awarding it to us.

We are grateful to the staff of the NHCOG, in particular Rick Lynn, *Executive Director*; Jocelyn Ayer, *Community & Economic Development Director*; and Joanna Wozniak-Brown, Ph.D., *Regional Planner* for their support, which included contacting members and the local land trust community to request trail information, convening meetings, and many other services that allowed this project to be completed in the short time available.

The ad-hoc Trails Committee of the NHCOG provided careful review of our work, shared trail data, and brought a wealth of knowledge about individual trail locations, conditions and plans for expansion. Its members are:

Curtis Rand, *1st Selectman*, Town of Salisbury
Craig Nelson, *1st Selectman*, Town of Warren
Rista Malanca, *Zoning & Wetlands Enforcement Officer*, City of Torrington /
Co-Chair, Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee
Dan Bolognani, *Executive Director*, Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area
Dan McGuinness, HouBike Committee / *Board Member*, Heritage Land Preservation
Trust
Michael Lloyd, *Board Member*, Steep Rock Association
Clare Cain, *Trails Stewardship Director*, Connecticut Forest & Park Association
Paul Elconin, *Director of Land Conservation*, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust

The 21 municipal members of the NHCOG made trail information available and helped identify additions to our growing trail database. We gratefully appreciate the public availability of many digitized trails that have not previously been digitized and accompanying us in the field as needed.

Finally, local users of the running and cycling GPS social network Strava™ made it possible for us to crowd source data collection for the extensive trail system at White Memorial Foundation and other locations that would have been otherwise difficult to include in our trails database.

Project Description and Deliverables

The Housatonic Valley Association (HVA) was selected through a competitive bidding process by the Northwest Hills Council of Governments to provide a Regional Trail Map and Connectivity Assessment for the 21 towns and cities in its service area. This report constitutes one of the main deliverables under that contract, in addition to which the consultant has prepared both a static trails map with index and an online map viewer, referenced herein. This project was made possible with funding through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CTDOT) per a NHCOC-CTDOT Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Planning Agreement.

Tim Abbott, HVA's *Reginal Land Protection and Greenprint Director*, led the consulting team, along with Connie Manes, *Greenprint Manager*, and Ryan Williams, *Project GIS Coordinator*. They were assisted in the final month of project by Stacy Deming, newly hired as HVA's *GIS Manager*. The NHCOC convened an ad-hoc Trails Committee shortly after the contract was awarded, comprising elected officials, federal and municipal employees, non-profit land trust board members and staff with detailed knowledge of specific trails and expansion projects in the region.

The term of the project was slightly more than 90 days, to conform to fiscal year funding requirements. The consultant is pleased to have completed all draft deliverables within that compressed time period and to submit them to the NHCOC for its consideration on July 6th, 2017. The final deliverables include:

- **A Regional Trail Index Map** (Map 1 in the Appendixes) that records the location and routes of the Appalachian Trail, CT Blue Blazed Hiking Trails, other official trails on state properties, municipal trails, and trails on land trust holdings where the public access is encouraged across the 21 town service area of the NHCOC.
- **An Excel spreadsheet** with entries for each trail that appears on the Regional Trail Index map, with additional data on trail ownership, official parking areas, and any associated regional trail network.
- **A Priority Regional Corridor Map and Written Assessment** of opportunities and constraints to enhancing connectivity along major trail corridors. This report constitutes that written assessment, and the Regional Corridor Map appears within the body of the document.
- **An online map viewer** built using ArcGIS Online depicting the trails from the Regional Trail Index Map, together with photographs of trailheads and locations of official parking areas, together with the general routes of certain regional expansion projects. Additional information about each trail may be found using the query function, which also provides a link to the owner or manager of the trail in question. This deliverable was initially considered an additional component of the contract, but it was possible to construct the map viewer at the same time that the consultant was building the trail database in GIS and Excel. This feature has captured the imagination of the Trails Committee and its possible enhancement is discussed in the findings.

Data Collection Methodology:

The Consultant and the NHCOC reached out to their respective partner networks requesting data on recreational walking and hiking trail locations in their communities, including those for which digital, GIS compatible files are available, as well as others that are represented in .pdf. or other formats or which have never been accurately delineated. HVA was able to mobilize its 24 land trust members of the Litchfield Hills Greenprint to identify the extent of local trails owned and managed by those conservation organizations and the availability of digital data. We created an Excel Spreadsheet for each trail section that we entered into ArcGIS, assigning “parent” trails to related sections and attribute tables including trail length, surface, location of trailheads and official parking areas, ownership and website information. We also identified trails that would require accurate GPS data to include them in our database. Our methodology for digital data collection for trail routes included collection by the consultants and trained volunteers using either hand held Garmin Etrex units or the route tracking App Strava™, and a crowd-sourcing effort using Strava™. We built the interactive map viewer in ArcGIS online concurrently with our trail data collection efforts. We shared our progress with the ad-hoc Trails Committee and at a regular meeting of the NHCOC and incorporated their feedback.

Disclaimers: While the regional trail map and database we created is the most complete and comprehensive ever compiled for these recreational resources within the 21 town service area of the NHCOC, it may not include every trail that exists and is open to the public. Certain trails were omitted from this report at the request of a NHCOC member or the owner of the trail. These include two of the discontinued and abandoned town roads in Sharon over which the town retains a recreational access easement; the extensive privately owned trails of Great Mountain Forest in Canaan and Norfolk and Aton Forest in Norfolk and Colebrook. We also omitted trails that have been without management for such a long period that they are difficult to find and may be unsafe to use. We did not intentionally include any informal trails on State or water company lands constructed by the public without official sanction. Finally, there were one or two areas with trails that we learned about too late to include in this report but which do not materially impact its findings. These last few trails can easily be incorporated in the online map viewer in a future update. Trails that are largely confined to roadways and those whose primary uses are motorized access were beyond the scope of this project and are only considered in this report where they contribute to expanding and connecting the regional walking and hiking trail network.

Neither the Consultant nor the NHCOC make any representation as to local trail conditions, signage, and current level of stewardship or degree of difficulty. The Public use these trails at their own risk. Some trails are located on private land. Users are asked to respect private property rights and remain on the marked trails, not following unmarked or unofficial trails that may be encountered while on one of the trail sections included in this project and its work products.

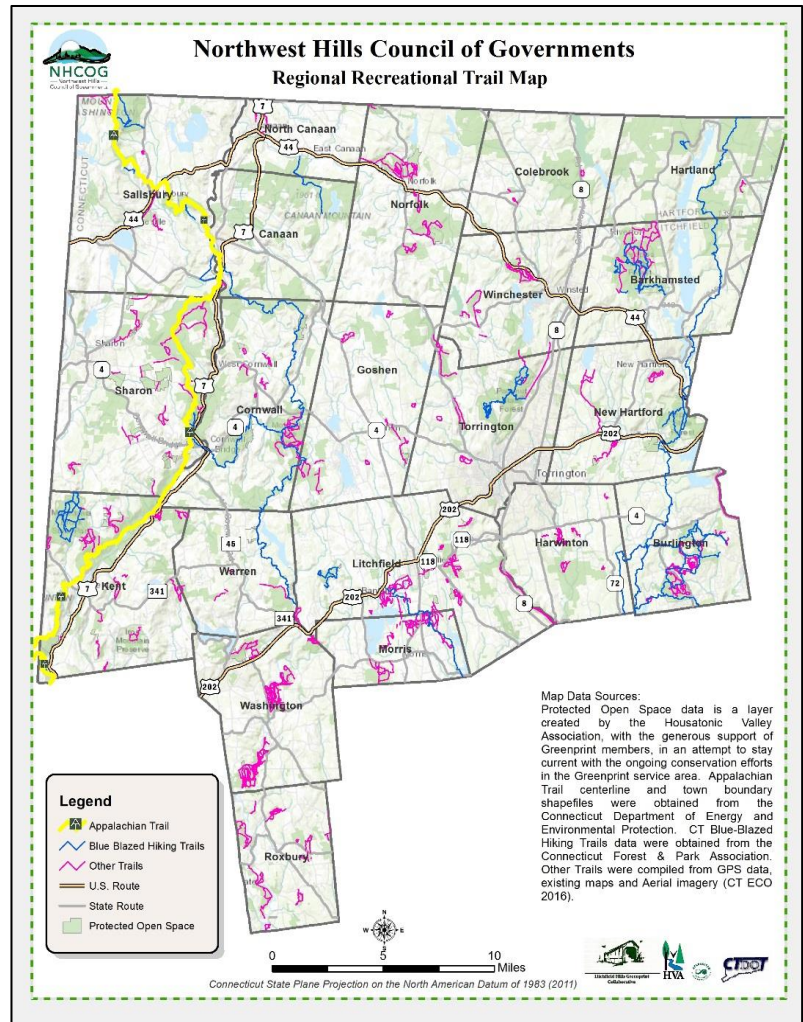
None of the trails indicated in this report or its work products was surveyed with the degree of accuracy necessary for precise location or conveyance. There is a margin of error of 20 feet for the trails digitized with Strava™. Locations should be considered close but approximate.

Findings:

Regional and Local Trails Open to the Public

The 21 towns and cities within the NHCOC service area contain an astonishing number of public walking trails: nearly 540 miles in all. Some are of national and regional significance, including 47 miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (shown in yellow, at right), and an additional 163 miles of the Connecticut Blue Blazed Hiking Trail network (shown in blue, at right).

These regional trails comprise 40% of the recreation trails in the NHCOC service area and together form the backbone the long distance hiking trail system in Northwest Connecticut.



The remaining 60% are local trails, (shown in purple, above) ranging from shorter paths on a single preserve to densely packed networks within popular recreation areas like those of the White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield and Morris, and Steep Rock Association's preserves in Washington. Land trusts - charitable organizations that are qualified to hold full and partial conservation interest in land -protect properties containing 126.8 miles of trails. Other state trails that are not part of the Blue Blazed system, municipal trails and those on private lands other than land trust holdings, account for more than 200 miles.

In addition to their own trails, nonprofit conservation groups also assume management responsibility for an astonishing 238 miles of federally or state owned hiking trails, providing a major stewardship service.

Distribution:

Naturally, 540 miles of recreational walking trails are not equally distributed across the NHCOC region. Nor do they afford the same conditions, accessibility to population centers or user experience. Some are challenging, uphill climbs, while others are low gradient. Some are open to non-motorized recreational use, including horses and mountain bikes. Others do not permit these activities. Some have well maintained, relatively smooth surfaces, especially those constructed over old rail beds. Others are rugged and minimally maintained. There is a great variety of trail experience available, but not of every sort in every town and city.

Town	Miles of Local Trails (Not BT)	Total Miles of Trails
Barkhamstead	16.8	38.4
Burlington	23.8	56.4
Canaan	0.4	7.9
Colebrook	1.7	1.7
Cornwall	16.1	43.1
Goshen	12.86	13.96
Hartland	0.9	10.3
Harwinton	10.4	14.5
Kent	25.4	54.2
Litchfield	36	41.7
Morris	21.3	25.6
New Hartford	11.7	25.7
Norfolk	21.4	21.4
North Canaan	1.6	2.8
Roxbury	23.9	23.9
Salisbury	14	29.8
Sharon	26.4	41.1
Torrington	12.2	23
Warren	3.1	10.1
Washington	44.2	44.2
Winchester	12.9	13
Total	333.5	539.2



Trail Running in Dean's Ravine,
Mohawk Blue Blazed Hiking Trail

Table 1: Miles of Local Trails and Total Trail Miles Per Town

Regional Trails:

Except for a few miles where the Appalachian Trail enters Connecticut in Sherman, the rest of its 47 mile length in the Nutmeg State falls within three NHCOC member towns: Kent, Sharon and Salisbury. The Appalachian Trail has numerous local branch trails, particularly in Salisbury, allowing access and egress for day hikers. In Kent, more than five miles of the Appalachian Trail follow the Housatonic River – the longest riverine section in its entire length from Georgia to Maine – with local access from Dawn Hill Road in Sharon. Much of the scenic landscape through which the trail passes has been permanently protected in recent decades by both public and private conservation groups through acquisition or easement.



Three long distance Blue Blazed Hiking Trails, in addition to the Appalachian Trail, pass through or are entirely within the NHCOC region. The Mohawk Trail complements the Appalachian Trail East of the Housatonic River with 24.46 miles of hiking trail, offering connections to the Appalachian Trail in Sharon as well as extensive hiking opportunities from Canaan/Falls Village to Warren. Almost 21 miles of the Mohawk trail lie within Cornwall, and the capstone of this network is Mohawk Mountain State Forest.



The Tunxis Trail runs North to South from Hartland to Burlington and beyond, with a total of 33.8 miles within the NHCOC area. It passes through and connects with other trails in Nepaug State Forest in New Hartford and Nassahegon State Forest in Burlington.

The Mattatuck Trail enters Morris and Litchfield from the Southeast and runs through the vast 31 mile trail system maintained by White Memorial Foundation. It once connected the Mohawk Trail to White Memorial, and one day could do so again.

The longest one-way hike that it is currently possible to make on trails within the NHCOC region comprise two long sections of the Appalachian Trail and a former section that is now part of the Blue Blazed Mohawk Trail in Cornwall (See Figure 1). The longest loop trail combines that same part of the Mohawk Trail with the remaining section of the Appalachian Trail in Sharon offering a 35 mile hike with lots of elevation gain (Figure 2).

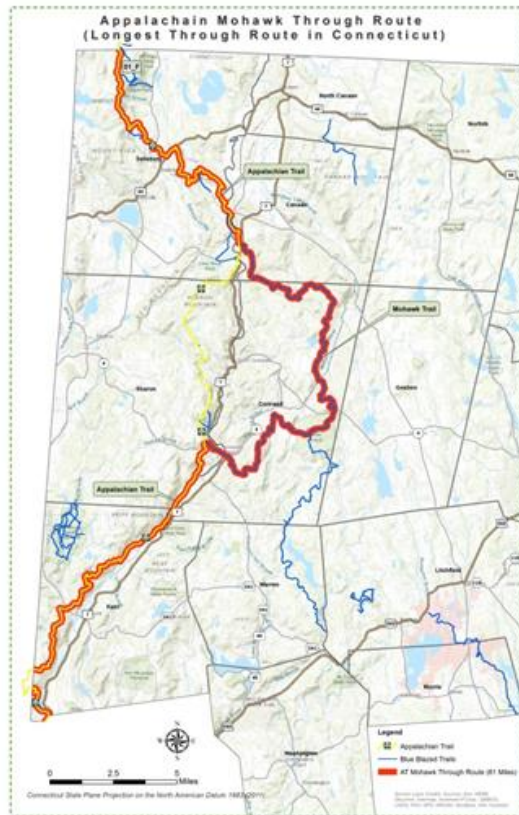


Figure 1

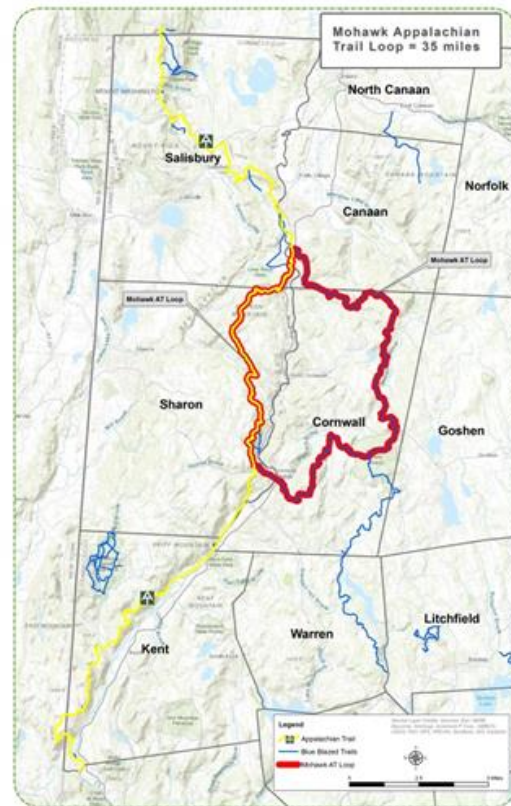


Figure 2

Local Trails:

Not all Blue Blazed Hiking trails are regional. Some exist as local trail networks within State properties, such as Macedonia State Park in Kent, Nepaug State Forest in Torrington and People's State Forest in Barkhamsted. Others are shorter but significant linear trails, such as the Iron Trail that ascends Canaan Mountain near Beckley Furnace Historical Monument in North Canaan and enters Housatonic State Forest in Canaan/Falls Village. The Connecticut Forest & Park Association maintains the entire Blue Blazed Hiking Trail system statewide and is its leading advocate. <https://www.ctwoodlands.org/blue-blazed-hiking-trails>

The owners and managers of local trails beyond state holdings tend to be municipalities, local land trusts, other private groups, or some combination of all three. Indeed, some localities have envisioned and started to implement an integrated trail network on public and private conservation land within their communities. This is particularly true in New Hartford, Goshen, Burlington and Harwinton, but is not limited to these communities. In other places, land trusts provide most of the local recreational trails within a given municipality.

Proximity to Local Population Centers:

The concept of park equity, that each neighborhood or residential area should be within a short walking distance of public open space, has led to planning tools to identify gaps and expand access for underserved communities. Although it has largely been considered for urban applications, the need for village centers with access to walking trails is just as significant in rural communities. Here in Northwest Connecticut, there are limited options in some of the NHCOG communities for those who live in our villages as well as urban center to take a walk on a pedestrian trail without having to drive to it.

While it was not within the scope of this project to conduct a comprehensive, quantitative trail equity tool, the Consultant did measure proximity of trails to local population centers. By buffering recognized villages and urban centers by one mile (for most people less than a 30 minute walk), we were able to look at trails and trailheads falling within that distance and compare these across communities.



Figure 3: Trail Equity for Salisbury and Lakeville

The villages of Salisbury and Lakeville represent communities with a high degree of trail equity. The 2.1 Mile Railroad Ramble owned by the Town of Salisbury connects the two villages and is a valued local resource, while the village of Salisbury is within walking distance of both the Appalachian Trail and the 2.3 mile Dark Hollow trail system on land conserved by Salisbury Land Trust.

Other towns and villages have fewer local walking and hiking trail options. There are no dedicated walking trail systems within a mile of the center of the City of Torrington, although there are ambitious plans to expand both the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway and Naugatuck Greenways that could one day provide such amenities to downtown residents. Sharon has no walking trail within a mile of its village center, and neither does Northfield in Litchfield. Even those that do have trails within that distance may not have trailheads allowing access to them.

Some communities have very few local trails at all, or trails that see very little use and deserve to be known more widely. Although most of the hiking trails in our region are blazed and reasonably maintained, there are also a few that lack stewardship resources and have become overgrown and difficult to follow.

Communities like Burlington, Kent, Washington and Cornwall each have well over 40 miles of trails, about evenly divided between regional or blue blazed trails and local trails. Other towns like Winchester, Morris, Litchfield and Goshen have well developed local trail infrastructure but very few miles of regional trails. The ratio is reversed in Towns like Canaan/Falls Village, where almost all the recreational trails are regional and, with the exception of the Appalachian Trail, far removed from the village center. Colebrook has no Blue Blazed Hiking Trail at all, and just 1.7 miles of local trails where the public are encouraged to go. These local trails are farther away from the nearest trail system than any other trail in the 21 Towns of the NHCOC service area: 3.5 miles from hiking trails in People's State Forest, 2.5 miles from the northernmost trails in neighboring Winchester.

People in rural communities often use roadsides, or even lightly travelled gravel roads themselves, as hiking trails. In some communities, the provision of additional sidewalks to facilitate access to walking opportunities in the countryside is a priority for local trail advocates.

Mixed Use Passive Recreation Trails Open to the Public

Although this study focused primarily on walking and hiking trails, the Consultant also noted trail section surfaces (unimproved, improved – unpaved, improved – paved) and included these details in the ARCGIS map viewer. There are some woods roads that, while closed to vehicular traffic, are open to non-motorized transportation, including horses and mountain bikes. Although to a comprehensive assessment of trail conditions, this report can make general observations about mixed use recreational trail options within the 21 Towns of the NHCOC service area.

A.D.A. Accessible, paved surface:

Very few land trust trails and only a limited number of state or municipal trails are A.D.A.

accessible. Just two are paved: the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway between Torrington and Winchester and the Farmington River Trail in Burlington. While not constructed to A.D.A. guidelines, there are several wide, low gradient trails, including some of Steep Rock Association and White Memorial Foundation's woods roads, Salisbury's Railroad Ramble, Norfolk's sections of old rail bed, and certain wider trails on State parks.

Equestrian Trail Riding:

There is a strong trail riding culture in the southeastern towns of the NHCOC. Burlington and Harwinton in particular have miles of state forest roads that are well used by equestrians, as well as designated trails within White Memorial Foundation and Steep Rock Association. To a lesser extent, this also takes place on state forest roads in Cornwall and on Canaan Mountain, but for the most part horseback riders in the northwest corner of the State stick to quiet, rural roads.

Mountain Biking:

Both the Harwinton Conservation and Recreation Area and Burlington's Nassahegon State Forest have official mountain bike trails promoted and maintained by the NW CT Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association. Certain other trails allow non-motorized use but are not specifically designed as a mountain biking course. There are also several unofficial mountain biking trails on state property that have not yet received sanction and are not included in this report.

Road Biking:

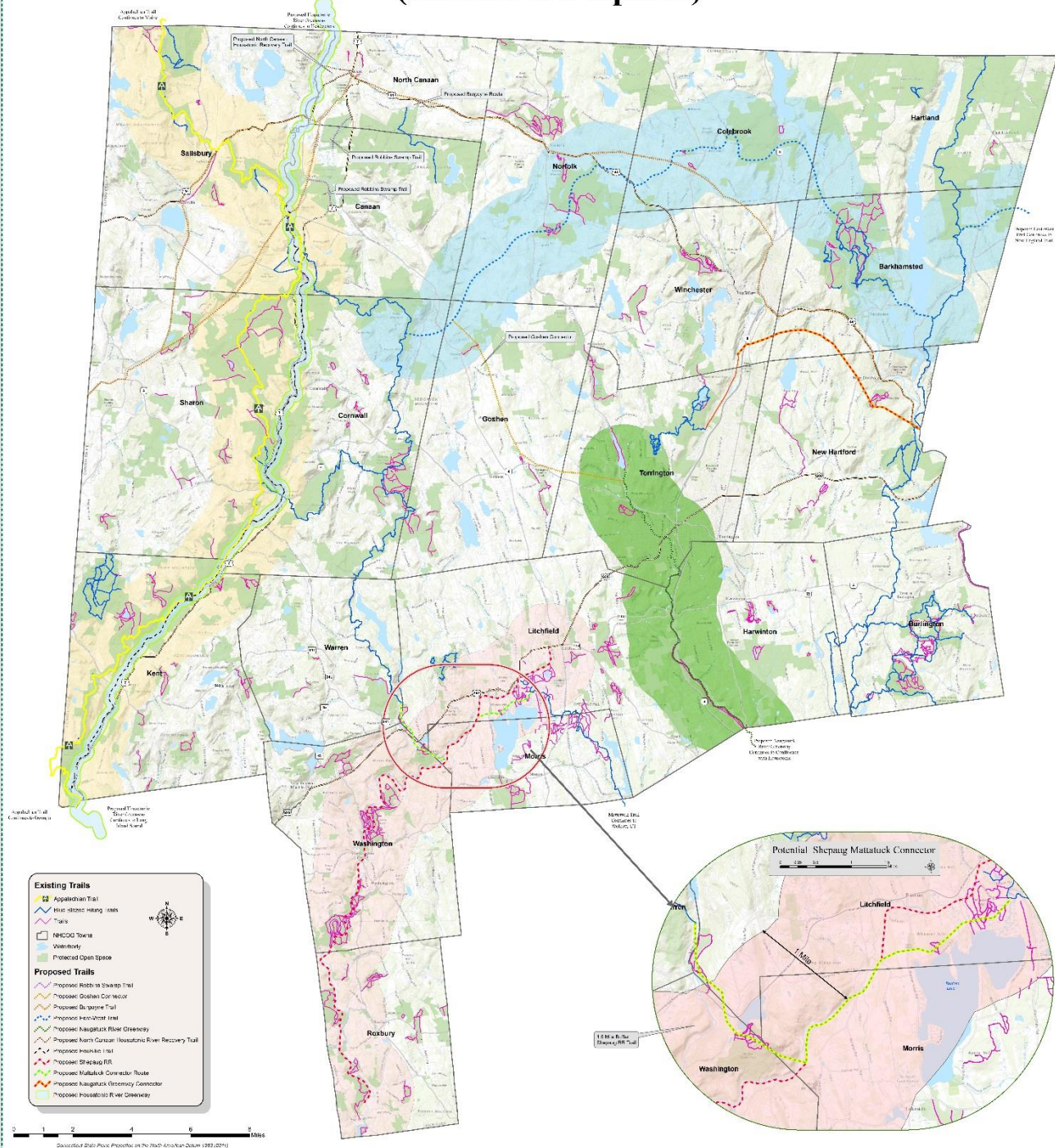
The trails evaluated for this report serve pedestrian walking and hiking interests. There is a strong road biking constituency in our region, and efforts to integrate trails and roadways to allow for regional travel. These regional efforts are discussed in the recommendations section of this report.

Recommendations for Regional Trail Network Expansion and Connectivity

A number of new or expanded recreational trails have been proposed by various groups within the study area and are in various stages of development. Analysis of current trail distribution, amenities and gaps in equity suggests additional places where trails could be expanded and connected to broaden recreational access opportunities. The following sections of this report describe these trail projects, assess feasibility and funding potential, and make recommendations for further research and trail development.

Northwest Hills Council of Governments

Regional Recreational Trail Networks (Current & Proposed)

[illegible]

This trail project was funded by The Connecticut Department of Transportation under contract with The Housatonic Valley Association. The Northwest Hills Council of Governments would like to thank its 21 municipalities and the members of the non profit land trust community including: Litchfield Greenprint and the members of the NHDG Trails Committee.

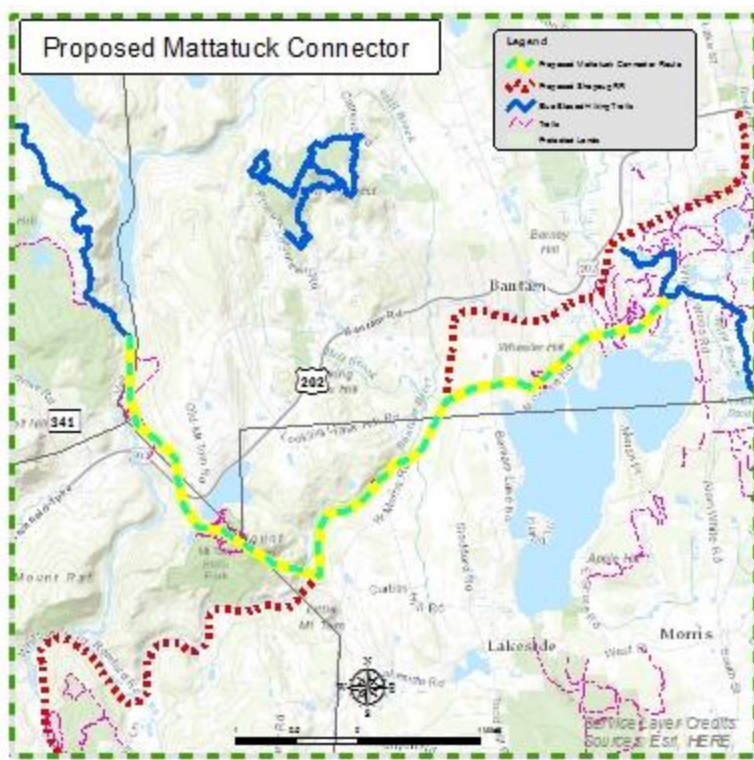
Contributing Conservation Organizations

[illegible]

- Hiking Trail Conceptual Projects, Sponsors, Status

The “East-West” Trail: Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) recognizes an opportunity to connect two of Connecticut’s National Scenic Trails – The Appalachian Trail and the New England Trail. The “East-West” trail would actually stretch fifty-three miles between the Mohawk Trail in Canaan/Falls Village and the New England Trail in Simsbury, passing through and along a section of the Tunxis Trail in Barkhamsted. Such a trail would allow users of the 215-mile New England Trail to cross over to the 2,200-mile Appalachian Trail. It would also provide the first cross county hiking trail in Litchfield County connecting its eastern and western communities, connecting Cornwall, Canaan/Falls Village, Norfolk, Colebrook and Barkhamsted within the NHCOC service area. CFPA has been planning this trail for more than a decade, and continues to scout and negotiate the trail route. It has numerous public and private partners, including Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), land trusts, municipalities, and other trail advocacy groups.

The Mattatuck Connector: CFPA has a second trail connector project within the NHCOC service area. The Mohawk and Mattatuck Blueblazed Hiking Trails once joined together in northwestern Litchfield. The current terminus of the Mattatuck Trail is within White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield. The Mattatuck Trail has recently been extended south from Cornwall through the eastern portion of Warren and is now quite near Rte. 202 near the Litchfield and Morris Town Lines. The Mattatuck Connector would link these two trail sections somewhere in the vicinity of Mt. Tom State Park. CFPA has been researching possible trail routes and consulting with partners.



The Shepaug Rail Trail Expansion: The Shepaug Railroad was once a short line railway connecting Newtown and Litchfield Connecticut. Much of the old rail bed still exists on both public and private property, and forms part of a discontinuous hiking trail network in Roxbury and Washington. Steep Rock Association has several miles of the old railroad within its trail

network and is actively working to protect lands in the northeast part of Washington that could allow extension of the trail toward Morris and Litchfield. The potential for the Shepaug Rail Trail to link with the proposed Mattatuck Connector makes this an outstanding opportunity to provide a long distance, low gradient regional hiking trail within the NHCOC service area.

The Naugatuck River Greenway: The 44 mile Naugatuck River Greenway would allow pedestrian and multi-use access between Stillwater Pond in Torrington and communities to the south as far as Derby along the Naugatuck River, the largest tributary of the Housatonic River. It is listed as the 2nd statewide significant recreational trail priority in the State of CT Recreational Plan. The former Litchfield Hills Council of Elected Officials (LHCEO) published Phase One of the Naugatuck River Greenway Assessment in 2004, with conceptual maps for trail sections in Torrington, Harwinton and Litchfield between Stillwater Pond and Rte. 118. The NHCOC continues to promote the Naugatuck Greenway and support further planning and development with its municipal members from Torrington, Harwinton and Litchfield. Since 2004 the City of Torrington has been working on 2 ½ miles of Greenway starting at Bouge Road heading north and the Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee has hired a consultant to do a final routing study from Bouge Road south through Harwinton and Litchfield to Thomaston. The NHCOC continues to partner with the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments and the Naugatuck River Greenway Steering Committee to promote the Greenway and its benefits.

The Sue Grossman Still River /& Naugatuck Greenway Connector: The Sue Grossman Still River Greenway in Torrington and Winchester is one of just two extensive paved surface hiking trails within the NHCOC service area (the Farmington River Trail in Burlington is the other). The Torrington Trails Network and Winsted Trails, affiliated with NWCT YMCA, and municipal partners from Torrington and Winchester envision a seven mile extension of the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway that would connect Winsted to the Naugatuck Greenway in Torrington. Municipal officials from Winsted, Barkhamsted and New Hartford envision the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway extending eastward from downtown Winsted into Barkhamsted and New Hartford and connecting with the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (part of the East Coast Greenway) in Canton, making the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway the connector trail from the ECG to the NRG. The section of Greenway, from Winsted through New Hartford, is still in the concept phase.

All four communities should be sure the Sue Grossman Still River Greenway is in their Plan of Conservation and Development. Barkhamsted and New Hartford should identify champions of this project within their community and begin identifying possible routes as well as what barriers need to be overcome in order for the extension of the Greenway. Construction of the portion of Greenway from Lanson Drive to Rowley Street in Winsted is expected to begin spring/summer of 2018; Winsted should continue to look for off-road opportunities to extend the Greenway from Rowley Street to Ledgebrook Plaza (Barkhamsted/Winsted Municipal border.)

Opportunities may include incorporating the Greenway into new development or road and possible easements from private property owners. Torrington is currently finalizing routing and design for their portion of the Greenway, once the Greenway is designed Torrington should look for funding opportunities to construct their portion of the Greenway.

The Housatonic Riverbelt Greenway: The State of Connecticut officially recognized the Housatonic Riverbelt Greenway in 2001, but the Housatonic Valley Association has been promoting this concept for the river in Connecticut since 1992. A mix of public and private land along the Housatonic River for its entire length in Connecticut, the Housatonic Riverbelt greenway contains formal and informal pedestrian, bicycle and boat access at various points along the river. It complements and intersects with other local and regional road and trail networks.

The North Canaan Housatonic River Recovery Trail: Alone among the NHCOG members that contain or abut portions of the Housatonic River, the Town of North Canaan has no public access to its riverfront. There is no pedestrian trail, nor any canoe access point within the town. The old Philadelphia, Reading & New England Railroad once ran west from North Canaan's historic Union Station, crossing the Blackberry River and the Housatonic before continuing on through Salisbury. There are relatively few properties along the old rail bed, and it might be possible to negotiate access easements with willing landowners to reestablish a connection between the town and the river. There is no organized effort as yet to investigate this possibility, but there are potential sources of federal funding that could help such a project get underway. These funding possibilities are discussed in a subsequent section of this report.

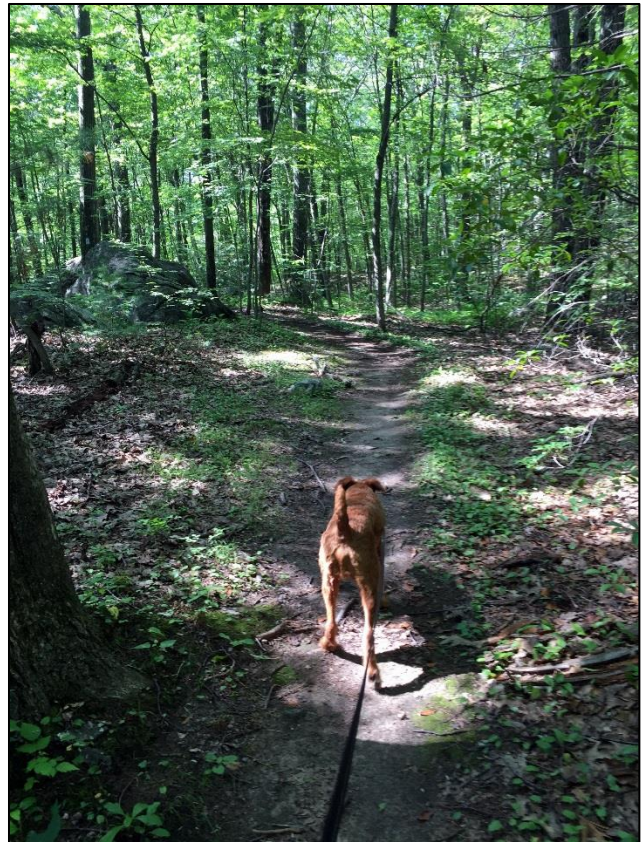
The Robbin's Swamp Trail: Robbins Swamp is the largest inland wetland in Connecticut. Neither North Canaan nor Canaan/Falls Village has hiking trail access to this extraordinary resource. The Robbins Swamp Wildlife Management Area owned and managed by CT DEEP has two parking areas with kiosks on Rte. 7 in North Canaan and Point of Rocks Rd. in Canaan/Falls Village, but no developed trail infrastructure. Although some of the wetland habitat in Robbin's Swamp is rare and sensitive, a well-conceived and properly constructed

boardwalk could be designed and implemented at either parking location.

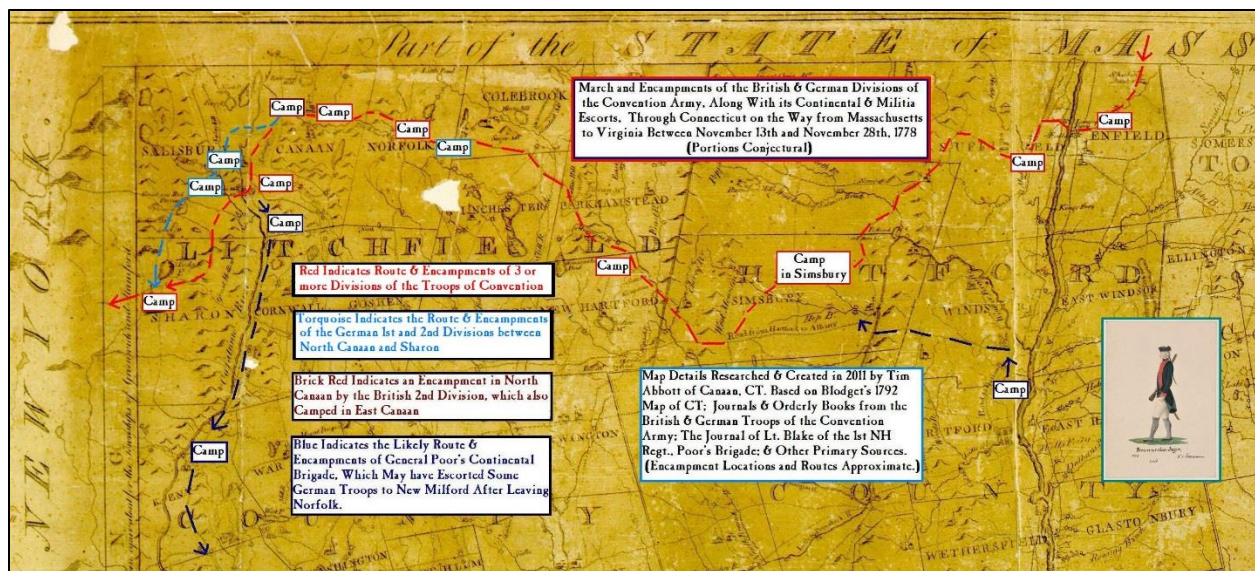
The Goshen Connector: The topography of Northwest Connecticut lends itself to North/South travel through its river valleys rather than East/West travel over its peaks and uplands. The Town of Goshen and Goshen Land Trust have developed a local trail system that allows for nearly continuous travel along 3.3 miles in the southeastern part of town. Our analysis suggests that it might be possible to identify one or more routes that could continue this trail network and bring it into Torrington, possibly connecting to the Naugatuck Greenway. More research is needed but the benefits of such a trail connector would be a substantial increase in trail equity for both communities.

- Additional Recreational / Historic Trails

The HouBike Trail: Divided into 10 segments, the 45 mile HouBike Trail passes from the Massachusetts/Connecticut line to New Milford, Connecticut. Sponsored by the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area, the HouBike Trail makes use of secondary roads and trails for most of its length. A 7.15 mile stretch between Cornwall and Kent is presently under consideration for rerouting off Rte 7 and onto a mix of public and private property. The potential for rails with trails along the Housatonic Railroad corridor has also been considered.



The Burgoyne / Convention Army Trail: In 1778, more than 4,300 British and German prisoners from the Battle of Saratoga were marched through Connecticut to an internment camp in Virginia. Local militia and Continental soldiers escorted these soldiers, who had surrendered under the Saratoga Articles of Convention and were therefore known as “Convention Troops”, through Northwest Connecticut between Enfield and Sharon. A 2010 report to the State Archeologist entitled “Documentary Evidence of the Route and Encampments of the Convention Army in Connecticut” provides an excellent foundation for the creation of a Burgoyne / Convention Army Trail similar to the Rochambeau Trail further to the south in Connecticut. It would follow existing roads and include interpretive signs in each community where the prisoners camped. Tim Abbott, the primary author of this paper, is also the primary researcher of the Burgoyne/Convention Army Trail. His paper has been accepted for inclusion in the collections of the David Library of the American Revolution.



Feasibility, Funding

- Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants: The U.S. Department of Transportation still maintains its TIGER grant program, first initiated as part of the federal stimulus package in 2009. TIGER Grants may be used for greenways, rail trails, and other substantial recreational infrastructure projects, and can mean millions of dollars for recipient projects. Although the process is competitive, the NHCOC and its trail partners should consider submitting a 2018 TIGER Grant for one or more of the substantial trail infrastructure expansion and connectivity projects described in this report.

<https://www.transportation.gov/tiger>

- Recreational Trails Program: The National Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was formerly a useful source of pass-through Department of Transportation funding for Connecticut administered through DEEP's Recreational Trails Program. Although authorized nationally through 2020, Connecticut withdrew from the program, citing the desirability of creating its own recreational trail program with funding from the bond commission. The current state budget eliminates funding for the State recreational trails program. It is hoped that Connecticut will reinvest in the program in the near future.

- Transportation Alternatives Grant Program and Community Connectivity Grant Program: Both of these grant sources from Connecticut Department of Transportation could provide revenue to assist with trail expansion and connectivity in this region. The Transportation Alternatives / Trail Implementation Program <http://www.ct.gov/dot/cwp/view.asp?a=2303&Q=536574> provides block grants for projects including pedestrian and bicycle facilities and recreational trails. The Community Connectivity Grant Program <http://ctconnectivity.com/> places special emphasis on connecting walking and biking trails to residential centers.

- Conservation Easements That Require Public Access: Although not specifically funding sources for recreational trails, most federal and state grants to purchase conservation easements on private property require provision for public access. Municipalities and land trusts are eligible to apply for Open Space Watershed and Land Acquisition (OSWLA) grants from DEEP for both fee and easement purchases. The Land Trust community in Northwest Connecticut has been successful in securing both OSWLA grants and federal Highlands Conservation Act funding, often totaling 90% of the purchase price of protected lands or easements. As long as DEEP continues to have annual OSWLA grant rounds, carefully drafted applications have an excellent chance of being funded. Those in Northwest Connecticut working to expand and connect trails by acquiring conservation interest in land could make use of these grant programs to accomplish their projects, though actual trail development funding would have to come from other sources.

Further Research and Development

Many trail users love a “rugged” trail: a low-traffic footpath, unknown to the crowds, the very definition of “off the beaten path.” These users will find their trails regardless of the tools we create.

For those who enjoy more defined trails and visitors to our region, our analysis focuses on enhancing opportunities and user experience for the rest of the general public:

- (i) enriching communities through enhanced connectivity within town centers and from town centers to trails
- (ii) enriching tourism through expansion and creation of longer, landscape-traversing trails

- (iii) enhancing trail experience by addressing on-the-ground needs including parking, accessibility, trail markers and surface (unimproved, improved/unpaved, paved).
- (iv) increasing opportunities for non-foot use including ADA, bike, equestrian and water trails
- (v) enhancing trail experience and economic development benefits associated with trails and greenways through improved mapping and web-accessibility

This report identifies current and conceptual trail networks that could be further developed with additional research and funding support. Local trail equity could be further evaluated through public engagement in communities with few local recreational trails in proximity to town centers to determine whether providing such amenities would be welcome. A TIGER grant for 2018 offers a tremendous opportunity for the region but will require coordination and active preparation to be successful. The interactive map viewer prepared by HVA as the final deliverable under this contract could be further enhanced with Apps that allow for handheld navigation against a preserve map and other features.

The consultants wish to thank the members of the NHCOC, its ad hoc Trails Committee, and our conservation partners for the opportunity to work together on this project, and look forward to continuing to build on these recommendations in the future.

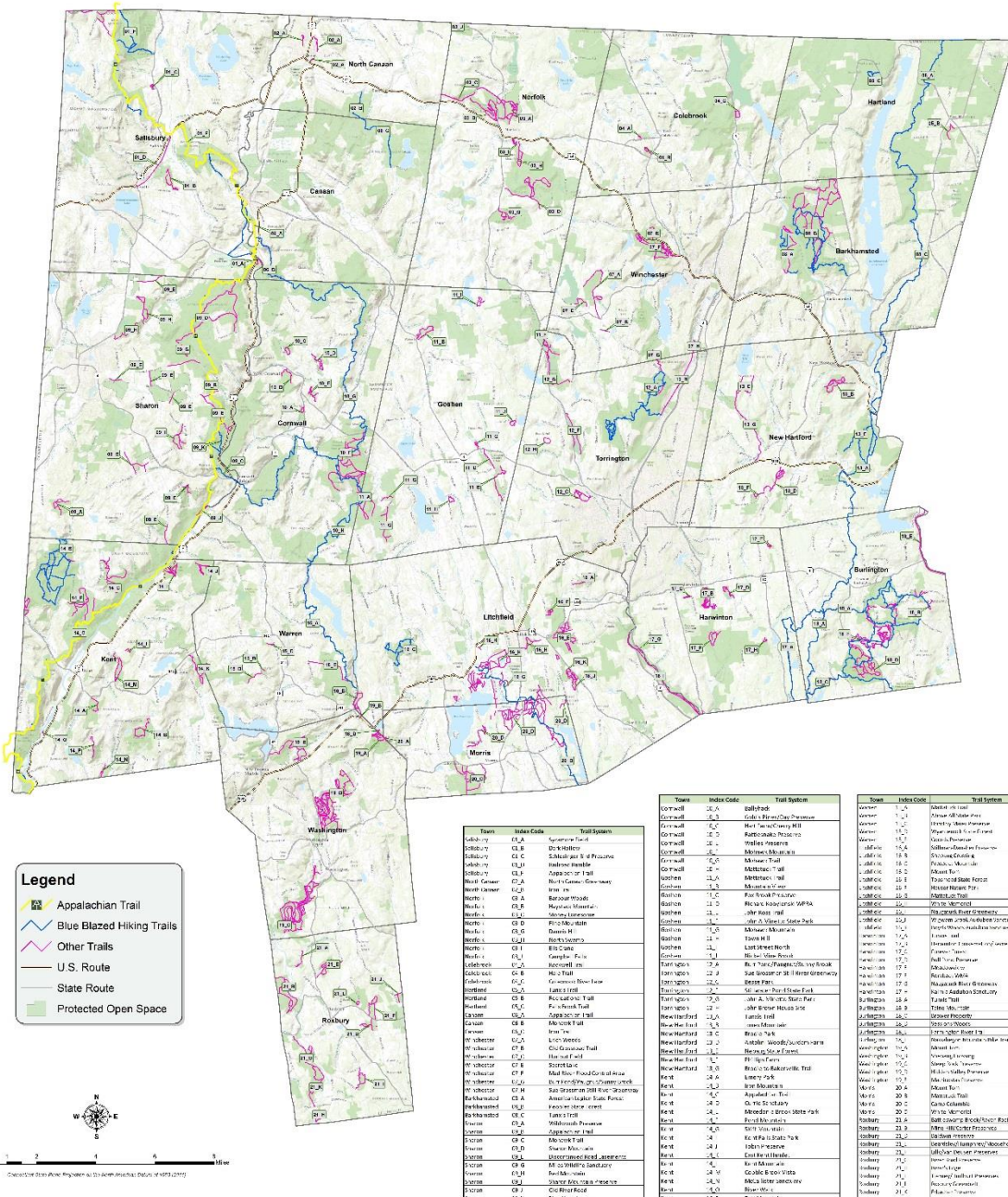


Macedonia State Park, Cobble Mountain

Appendixes



Northwest Hills Council of Governments Regional Recreational Trail Map



Map Data Sources:
Topographic data is a layer created by the Geographic Information System (GIS) of the Department of Transportation, in an attempt to stay current with the changing terrain, the GIS Department is unable to provide the most current data. The Department of Transportation is unable to provide the most current data. The Department of Transportation is unable to provide the most current data.



The trail map was created by the Connecticut Department of Transportation under contract to the Northwest Hills Council of Governments. The Northwest Hills Council of Governments is a non-profit organization that provides a variety of services to its member municipalities. The map was created by the Connecticut Department of Transportation under contract to the Northwest Hills Council of Governments.

Town	Index Code	Trail System
Colebrook	10.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.2	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.3	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.4	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.5	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.6	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.7	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.8	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	10.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.2	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.3	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.4	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.5	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.6	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.7	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.8	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	11.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.2	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.3	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.4	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.5	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.6	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.7	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.8	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	12.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.2	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.3	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.4	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.5	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.6	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.7	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.8	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	13.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.2	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.3	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.4	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.5	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.6	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.7	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.8	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	14.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	15.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	15.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	15.2	Appalachian Trail
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Colebrook	15.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	16.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	16.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	16.2	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	16.3	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	16.4	Appalachian Trail
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Colebrook	16.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	17.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	17.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	17.2	Appalachian Trail
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Colebrook	18.4	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	18.5	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	18.6	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	18.7	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	18.8	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	18.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.0	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.1	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.2	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.3	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.4	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.5	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.6	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.7	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.8	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	19.9	Appalachian Trail
Colebrook	20.0	Appalachian Trail

Local Trails and Equity Analysis

(Village town centers were determined by Post Office Locations and local knowledge.)

Barkhamsted: Total Miles of Trails: 38.4. Local Trails: 16.8 Miles

Barkhamsted/Riverton has 1 trail system within a mile of town:

Trail Name: Peoples State forest

Trail Length: 30 miles of multiple loops

Burlington: Total Miles of Trails: 56.4. Local Trails: 23.8 Miles

Burlington has multiple access points to The Tunxis Trail within a mile of town:

Trail Name: Tunxis Trail and many side loops

Trail Length: 40 miles of trails within the town boundary with looping side trails also access to Tunxis through Trail

Canaan / Falls Village: Total Miles of Trails: 7.9. Local Trails: 0.4 Miles

Falls Village has two trails within a mile of the center.

Trail Name: AT

Trail Length:

The trail is a through trail

Trail Name: Universal Access Route

Trail Length: .4 Miles, when looped with the AT it is 1.1 Miles

Colebrook: Total Miles of Trails: 1.7 Local Trails: 1.7 Miles

Colebrook has 2 trails within a mile of town center (both loops)

Trail Names: Hale Trail

Trail Length: .7 miles

Trail Name: Rockwell Trail

Trail Length: .3 miles

Cornwall: Total Miles of Trails: 43.1. Local Trails: 16.1 Miles

Cornwall Bridge has two trail systems within a mile of the center:

Trail Name: Mohawk Trail

Trail Length: 20 mile through trail

Trail Name: Mohawk Trail (to AT)

Trail Length: .9 miles to AT

Cornwall Village has two trail systems within a mile of the center:

Trail Name: Ballyhack Trail

Trail Length: .5 miles (loop)

Trail Name: Mohawk Trail

Trail Length: 20 mile through trail

West Cornwall has one trail system within a mile of the village center:

Trail Name: Day Preserve

Trail Length: 1 mile one way trail

Goshen: Total Miles of Trails: 13.96. Local Trails: 12.86 Miles

There are two trails within a mile of Goshen town center:

Trail Name: Richard Kobylenski WPRA

Trail Length: .9 miles (one way trail)

Trail Name: Fox Brook Preserve

Trail Length: .6 miles of loops

Hartland: Total Miles of Trails: 10.3. Local Trails: 0.9 Miles

West Hartland has no trails within a mile.

East Hartland has one trail within a mile:

Trail Name: Unnamed

Trail Length: .9 mile loop

Harwinton: Total Miles of Trails: 10.3 Local Trails: 14.5 Miles

Harwinton has three trails within 1 mile of town center:

Trail Name: Harwinton Conservation/Recreation Area

Trail Length 5.3 miles of multiple loops

Trail Name: Forever Forest

Trail Length: .75 miles of loops

Trail Name: Bull Pond Preserve

Trail Length: 1.3 Miles of loops

Kent: Total Miles of Trails: 54.2. Local Trails: 25.4 Miles

Kent has one trail within a mile of town center: (Cobble Brook Vista is about 1.2 miles)

Trail Name: AT

The trail is a through trail, well-traveled, well-marked, well-known, promoted and cared for, parking mostly adequate.

Opportunities:

- A trail from town center on land trust land– about 2 mi of flat land on east side Rte 7 terminating local farm with farm stand. Trail could accommodate bikes and be ADA.

Litchfield: Total Miles of Trails: 41.7. Local Trails: 36 Miles

Bantam has two trail systems within a mile of town center:

Trail Name: WM Apple Hill

Trail Length: 2.15 miles (loops and ow)

Trail Name: White Memorial (various Trails)
Length in Bantam: 4 miles of loops

Litchfield has two trail systems within a mile of town center:

Trail Name: White Memorial (various Trails)
Length in Bantam: 4.3 miles of loops

Trail Name: White Memorial (Vineyard Trail/River Trail)
Length in Bantam: 1.5 miles of loops

Northfield has no trails within a mile of town center:

Morris: Total Miles of Trails: 25.6. Local Trails: 21.3 Miles

Morris has two rails within a mile of town center:

Trail Name: WM Solnit-Skilton Trail
Trail Length: .8 miles OW trail

Trail Name: Camp Columbia
Trail Length: 4.2 miles of loops

New Harford: Total Miles of Trails: 25.7 Local Trails: 11.7 Miles

New Hartford has one trail system within a mile of town:

Trail Name: Jones Mtn
Trail Length: 3 miles of loops

Bakersville has two trails within 1 mile of the village:

Trail Name: Brodie to Bakersville Trail
Trail Length: 2.7 mile trough trail

Norfolk: Total Miles of Trails: 21.4. Local Trails: 21.4 Miles

Norfolk has four trail systems within 1 mile of town center.

Trail Names: Ells Crane (.8 mile loops)/North Swamp (1.7 mile loops)/Haystack Mtn (2.5 miles loops)/Barbour Woods (4.8 miles of loops)

North Canaan: Total Miles of Trails: 2.8. Local Trails: 1.6 Miles

There are three trails/trailheads within a mile of Canaan that are all part of the N Canaan Greenway

Trail Name: North Canaan Greenway

Length: 1.5 miles accessible from center

East Canaan Trail Locations:

Trail Name: Iron Trail

Trail Length: 3.5 Miles into the Town of Canaan on Canaan Mountain.

It is a one way hike.

Roxbury: Total Miles of Trails: 23.9. Local Trails: 23.9 Miles

Roxbury has one trail system within a mile of town center:

Trail Name: Tierney Loop

Trail Length: .35 miles loop

Salisbury: Total Miles of Trails: 29.8. Local Trails: 14 Miles

The village of Lakeville has one trail within a mile of the village center.

Trail Name: Railroad ramble

Trail Length: 2.1 miles

The trail is one way connecting to the AT

The village of Salisbury (Rt 41/45 Intersection) has three trails within a mile:

Trail Name: Railroad ramble

Trail Length: 2.1 miles

The trail is one way connecting to the AT

Trail Name: AT

Trail Length:

The trail is a through trail

Trail Name: Dark Hollow Trail System

Trail Length: approx. 2.3 Miles

The trail is a series of loops

Sharon: Total Miles of Trails: 41.1. Local Trails: 26.4 Miles

Sharon has no trails within a mile of town center:

Torrington: Total Miles of Trails: 23 Local Trails: 12.2 Miles

There are no trail systems within a mile of Torrington city center:

Warren: Total Miles of Trails: 10.1 Local Trails: 3.1 Miles

Warren has three trail systems within a mile of town center:

Trail Name: Wyantenock State Grassi Road

Trail Length: .7 mile one way trail

Trail Name: Above All State Park

Trail Length: .2 miles one way

Trail Name: Coords Preserve

Trail Length: 1.9 miles one way connecting to The Mattatuck Trail

Washington: Total Miles of Trails: 44.2 Local Trails: 44.2 Miles

Washington has one rail system within a mile of town center:

Trail Name: Hidden Valley Preserve

Trail Length: 18.9 miles

Washington Depot has one trail system within a mile of town center:

Trail Name: Steep Rock (various Trails)

Trail Length: 18.8 miles of loops

Winchester: Total Miles of Trails: 13. Local Trails: 12.9 Miles

There are no trail systems within a mile of Winsted center.