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Celebrating National Trails Day in Connecticut

Christina Hennessy, Staff Writer

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VIEW: LARGER | HIDE

1 of 3

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Contributed photo/Janet Ainsworth Some hikers catch a break at Millers Pond State Park in Durham. On Saturday, it is expected that thousands of people will come out across the state to celebrate National Trails Day. Some activities will continue on Sunday, as well. Photo: Contributed Photo / Stamford Advocate Contributed



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If you are on the trail to find something to do this weekend, think no further than, well, a trail.

Saturday marks National Trails Day, an 18-year-old effort to encourage people to give more than just a passing thought to the country's outdoor trail system. The effort was launched by the 30-year-old [American Hiking Society](#).

The hope is that members of the public will make time to learn about and celebrate the trails in their area, whether they are the trails over which one walks, runs, cycles, paddles or trots a horse.

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Celebrating National Trails Day in Connecticut

"The concept is really twofold," said Heather Sable, the trail programs manager for the Silver Spring, Md.-based nonprofit organization. "Many of the events are aimed at introducing people to the outdoors ... but others are focused on trail maintenance work.

Participants are welcome to choose whatever they want to do."

Such variety leads to many choices, such as concerts, walks, geocaching, orienteering and educational hikes. Still others might go en masse to repair and rebuild trails or create new ones.

"The largest number of events, more than 160, are in Connecticut," Sable said. "The organizations there have done a bang-up job, considering the size of the state. It's really impressive."

The efforts here are being coordinated by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, a nonprofit organization based in Rockfall.

"I think the event continues to grow each year," said Jennifer Benner, the association's communications manager, adding that volunteers lead all the events. "It's met with a tremendous amount of enthusiasm."

It is expected that more than 2,500 residents across the state will participate in events, some of which will take place Sunday, too.

One can find a listing of events on the Connecticut

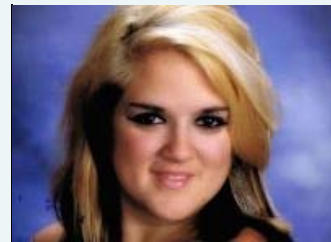
Forest and Park Association's website. Most event organizers suggest early registration.

There are many activities in Fairfield County, including multiple activities at Danbury's Old Quarry Nature Preserve and Science Center and trail maintenance in Danbury's Tarrywile Park; a hike at the Audubon Center of Greenwich; an educational walk at the Webb Mountain Discovery Zone in Monroe; a nature walk in Orange's Fred Wolfe Park; a mountain bike ride, as well as trail maintenance, at Mianus River Park in Stamford (there are actually several events in Stamford alone); and a hike in Trout Brook Valley in Easton/Weston, which is part of the Aspetuck Land Trust's lands. And, these are just a few of the things one, two or a family can do.

But for those who want a hands-on approach, there is much to be said for helping to maintain the network of trails that allows National Trails Day to flourish.

Tom Lawton, a Norwalk resident, who worked along with Bruce LePage, Aspetuck Land Trust's former executive director, to create the network of trails that loop in and around Trout Brook Valley, knows the work that goes into such a task.

"Trails don't grow on trees," he said. "It takes work to make them and work to maintain them."



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Weekend walks

Here are just a few, the rest can be found at www.ctwoodlands.org

- 10 to 11 a.m., (meet at 9:45 a.m.), Saturday; [Quarry Nature Preserve and Science Center](#) geology walk (and other walks), 5 Maple Lane, Danbury. Preregistration recommended. Call 860-354-7592, or e-mail GioOgno@aol.com.
- 11:30 a.m., Saturday, Trout Brook Valley, Bradley Road, Weston. Hike across 1,099-acre preserve. Lisa Brodlie and Bob Hamm share the history of the area on this 5- to 6-mile journey. Sponsored by Aspetuck Land Trust (aspetucklandtrust.org). Preregistration required. Contact Lisa Brodlie, 203-227-1522, lbrodlie@aol.com.
- 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., Saturday, Stratford's Downtown Historical Area. Educational 1.7-mile narrated walk. Visit www.townofstratford.com/health for more details. Preregistration required. To register, call 203-385-4090, or e-mail groberts@townofstratford.com.
- 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., Sunday, Bartlett Arboretum & Gardens, 151 Brookdale Road, Stamford. One-mile hike. Botanist [Carol Levine](#) will highlight native trees and plants. Meet at the lower parking lot gazebo. (www.bartlettarboretum.org). Preregistration recommended. Register: 203-322-6971.

Did you know?

- The Connecticut Trails Day activities are made possible with participation by a number of state agencies and organizations, such as the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, the state's Department of Environmental Protection, [Appalachian Mountain Club](#), town organizations, businesses, local and regional land trusts and other organizations.
- Fees will be waived at state parks and forest on National Trails Day, June 5, according to the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.
- The [Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection](#) has comprehensive information on the state's parks and forests, as well as the states thousands of acres of greenways that cover all of the state's counties. Fees vary at the different facilities. The state offers several special season passes, including the Charter Oak Pass, which is free to state residents 65 years or older. For more information, visit www.ct.gov/dep, click the link for Outdoor Recreation and then the link for [State Parks & Forests](#).

To download a brochure of the Connecticut Trails Day events, or to see other programs that have been added, visit www.ctwoodlands.org, or call 860-346-2372. American Hiking Society: 301-565-6704, www.AmericanHiking.org.

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