

## Cross Lots

*"It is our task in our time and in our generation to hand down undiminished to those that come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours."*

— President John F. Kennedy

**Description:** Granite pillars mark the main entrance to Cross Lots, Essex's "downtown" open space. The former farm dates back to 1840 and today consists of open hilltop, wooded groves and rolling meadows along with finely-coursed stone walls topped with monolithic capstones. Cross Lots is maintained as open field bordered by hedgerow, a vanishing habitat that was once common in Connecticut. The fields are mowed each year in the Spring.

**History:** A post-and-beam barn at the West Avenue parking lot is all that remains of the farm. The main house, which was demolished, was on the hilltop. Horses and cows grazed in surrounding pastures. The 15-acre homestead was bequeathed to the Essex Land Trust by Harriet Cheney Downing, who grew up there. Downing's father, George L. Cheney, was head of Pratt, Read and Company of Deep River, maker of ivory products.

**Flora and Fauna:** Cross Lots' stone walls, grasses such as blue-stem and shrubs such as goldenrod provide food and cover for insects, songbirds and small mammals. The dogwood grove is a spectacular sight in spring, and the trees provide food for wintering birds. Silver maples and evergreens dominate the upper reaches, while red maple and winterberry border the wooded wetland.

**Pollinator Garden:** Located on the field that is beside the stone wall rising from the parking lot, there are approximately 800 plants comprising 22 different varieties of perennials and shrubs known to benefit native bees, birds and butterflies.

**Location:** In Essex – entrance at 40 West Avenue, diagonally across from the Essex Public Library.



## The Essex Land Trust

### Our Vision and Mission

The Essex Land Trust is an independent nonprofit organization supported by generous donations and managed by a dedicated group of volunteers. Its Vision is to preserve our community's open space and natural resources for the benefit of future generations.

To this end, our Mission is to acquire open space by gift or purchase and to protect the environment and the small town character of the three villages, Essex, Centerbrook and Ivoryton, which comprise the town of Essex and to provide our community with passive recreational and educational opportunities.

To fulfill these objectives the land trust conserves wildlife habitats, forests, fields, rivers, wetlands and scenic views by maintaining properties in a natural state.

### Become an Essex Land Trust Member

Members receive our newsletter, *Woods & Waters*, and receive an invitation to our Annual Meeting. Members also receive email updates about upcoming events. Conservators for Life are members who donate \$1500 in a given year. Their names are placed on the bronze Conservators Plaque located at Cross Lots.

### Giving to the Essex Land Trust

Dues enable the land trust to identify and pursue future open space opportunities, maintain the properties already acquired, and educate the community on the importance of our environmental heritage. Memberships are per family, paid annually or as a Conservator for Life.

Land acquisition fund gifts are restricted to the purchase of land or easements and to associated expenses, including surveys and engineering studies.

Unrestricted gifts for the general purposes of the land trust can be made at any time. Memorial and Legacy gifts are always appreciated.

As a 501(c)(3) Corporation, the Essex Land Trust is a qualified recipient of conservation land donations and easements.

Essex Land Trust • P.O. Box 373

Essex CT 06426 [EssexLandTrust.Org](http://EssexLandTrust.Org)

Facebook & Instagram: [@essexlandtrust.org](https://www.instagram.com/essexlandtrust.org)



**Essex Land Trust**

*Caring for Our World Here at Home*



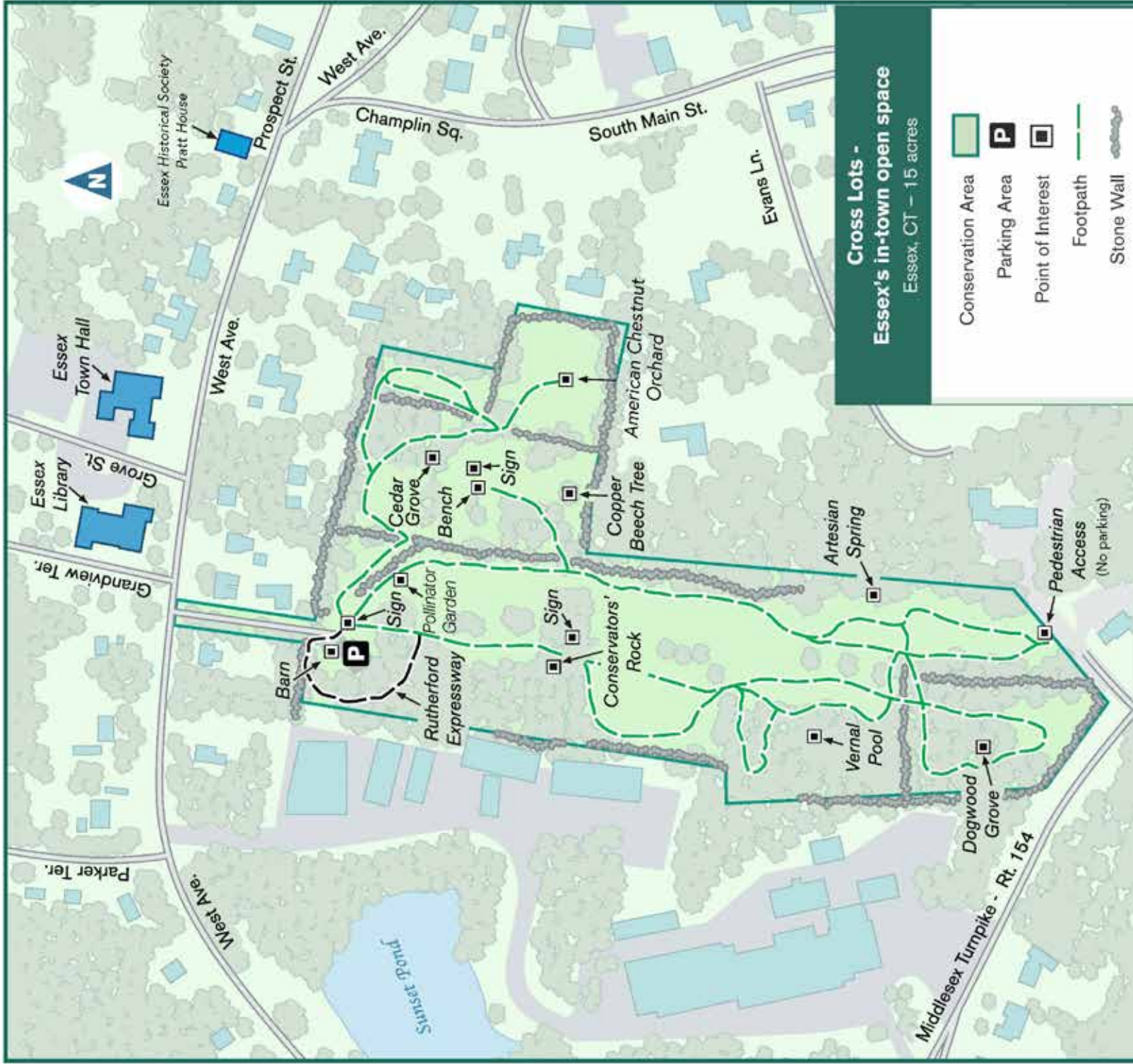
**Essex Land Trust**

TRAIL MAPS

**Cross  
Lots**



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### Welcome to Cross Lots - Essex's in-town open space

- Open sunrise to sunset
- Please respect the privacy of our neighbors
- Stay on marked trails to avoid damage to soil and habitats
- Do not remove or destroy plants, trees
- Dogs are welcome but must remain under control of owners
- Clean up after your dog
- Leave no trace - please carry out what you carry in
- No fires, hunting, bicycling or motorized vehicles allowed
- This map is for general reference use only



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Source: Essex Land Trust