

Fern Ledge

"20 years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than the ones you did do. So, throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover"

- Mark Twain, *Autobiography*

With its steep terrain and high ledge overlooking a working farmer's field, Fern Ledge has a unique place among the parks in Essex. Trails wind through woodlands and among old stone walls, offering glimpses of Birch Mill Pond below. In winter, it affords distant, sweeping views of the surrounding countryside. Note that the trails leading up to the ledge are steep.

History: The property sits astride the Essex-Westbrook town line. When the 10-acre parcel was purchased in 2005 from the estate of August Neidlinger and Catherine Doane, it had lain idle for many years.

Flora and Fauna: The trail crosses one of the small streams feeding Birch Mill pond, vital habitat for turtles, salamanders and frogs along with ferns, Jack-in-the-Pulpit and skunk cabbage. Rare plants include Dwarf ginseng, May apple and wild leek. Look for a beaver dam in the pond. The upper reaches at Fern Ledge are home to maple trees, oaks and birch along with mammals from fox to deer.

Farm Hill Estates: is a 4-acre plot in Ivoryton and Westbrook deeded to the Land Trust when a housing development was established along Carol Drive. No Trails.

Location: alongside the Middlesex Hospital Occupational Medicine facility, off Route 153.



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, Essex Woods & Waters and receive an invitation to our Annual Meeting. Members also receive a calendar of Land Trust events, and email updates. 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 gifts are always appreciated.

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

Essex Land Trust • P.O. Box 373
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Essex Land Trust

Caring for Our World Here at Home



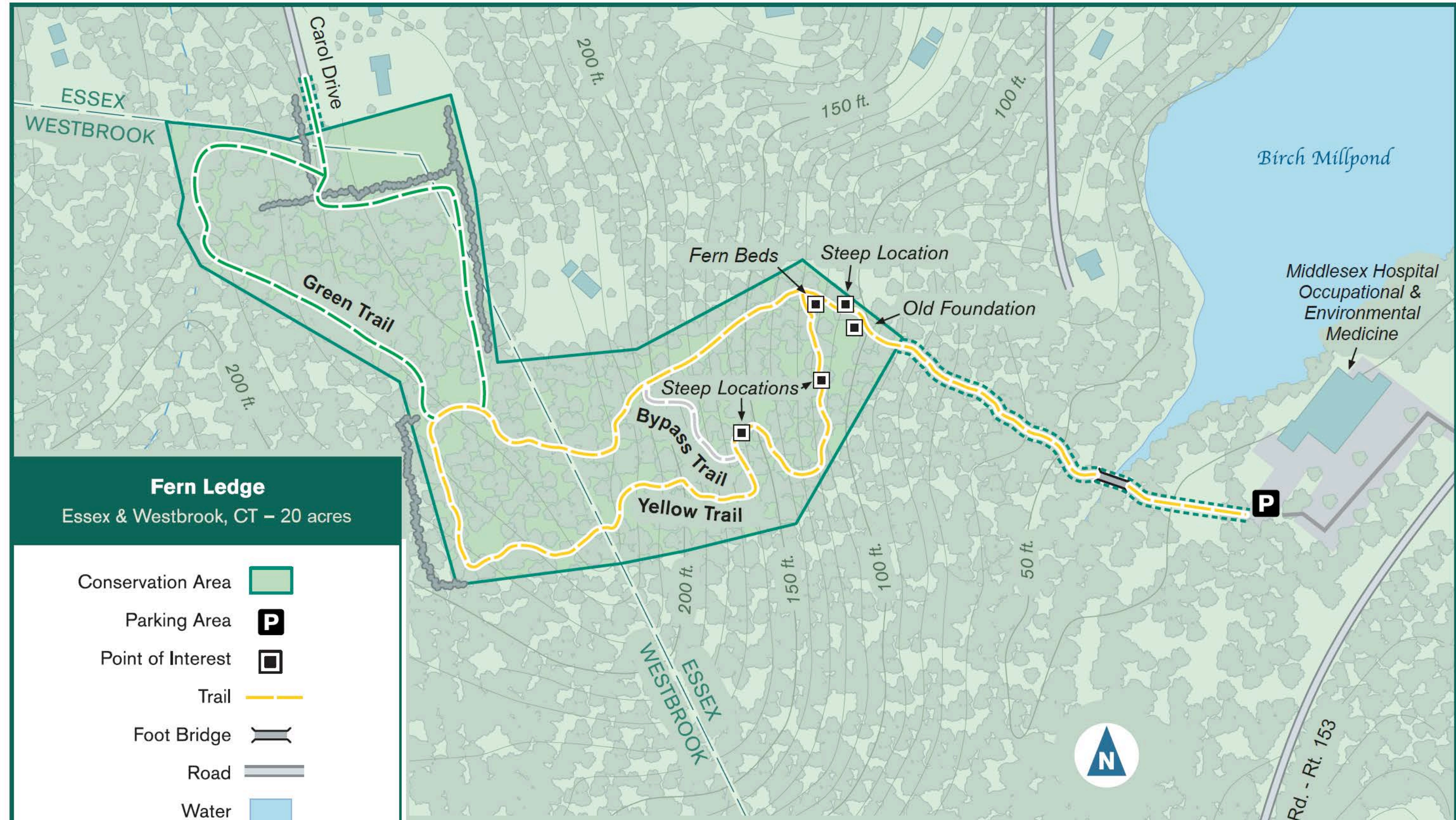
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TRAIL MAPS

Fern Ledge



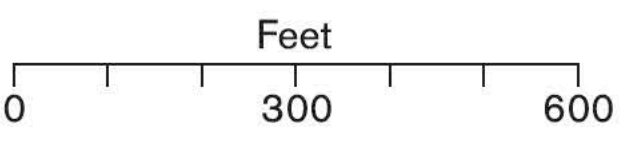
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Fern Ledge

Essex & Westbrook, CT – 20 acres

- Conservation Area
- Parking Area
- Point of Interest
- Trail
- Foot Bridge
- Road
- Water
- Contour
(10 ft. intervals)



February 2025
Source: Essex Land Trust

Welcome to Fern Ledge

- 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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