

Viney Hill Brook Park

"After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality and so on...what remains? Nature remains." - Walt Whitman

Description: This 104-acre open space was developed for both active and passive recreation. The pavilion and barbecues, horse-shoe pit and Paw Park are overseen by Essex Parks & Recreation Commission. The Essex Conservation Commission manages and maintains the trees and trails. Of important ecological value, this urban wilderness is bottom land, sandy, rocky and wet. It sits atop the Mud River. The clean water in the streams, ponds and vernal pools percolate and recharge the town aquifer.

History: Beginning in the 1950's, Stanley Wollock, for whom the circular trail and large pond are named, extracted sand and gravel here for decades. The two ponds are a result of the excavation process. The Town of Essex acquired the property in 2001 and established a swimming hole and beach in the active area. Nature had other plans. Beavers returned to the water and native grasses eroded the beach. Today visitors come to hike and enjoy the varied terrain, bodies of water and wildlife.

Flora, Fauna and Outcroppings: Copses of Aspen, Red Maple, Grey Birch and a rejuvenated Cedar Grove provide forest diversity. Resource inventories identify 22 tree, 25 shrub and 25 wildflower species. The regional mean annual temperature is about 51 degrees, the highest in the state. Interesting glacial boulders also remain to view. Other highlights include: beaver lodges, sunning turtles, an evolving pollinator meadow, numerous resident and migrating bird species notably warblers, vireos, flycatchers, hawks, nesting Indigo Buntings, and an occasional Great Horned Owl.

Trails and Access Location: Its six trails extend 2.9 miles and are easy to moderate in difficulty. In Essex, Cedar Grove Terrace: parking and passive recreational trail entrances. Hillside Drive: parking and active recreational entrances; the Pavilion parking lot is closed in winter months.



Conservation Commission

The Essex Conservation Commission (ECC) is responsible for managing and maintaining three town-owned nature preserves: Bushy Hill, Viney Hill Brook, and a portion of Canfield Meadow Woods. Its seven members are volunteers who actively engage in inspecting, cutting and clearing to keep trails free of obstructions. Members are appointed for three-year terms by the Board of Selectmen.

Working in conjunction with other land use commissions, including Planning & Zoning, the Inland Wetlands Commission, and the Essex Land Trust, the ECC reviews proposed developments and may make recommendations on their possible impact on the preservation and conservation of open spaces. It may also recommend and oversee forest management projects considered necessary to sustain the long-term health and resiliency of its preserves.

The ECC meets on the second Thursday each month at the Essex Town Hall. All residents are welcome to attend.



Park & Recreation Commission

The Essex Park & Recreation Commission oversees the northern third of Viney Hill Brook Park, including Wollock's Pond, the picnic pavilion and the Dog Paw Park. It is the mission of the Essex Park and Recreation Commission to create recreational opportunities for growth and enhancement by developing diverse services and programs that promote citizen involvement and a keen sense of community while striving to increase the social, cultural, and physical well-being of its residents and visitors.

Essex Conservation and Park & Recreation Commissions

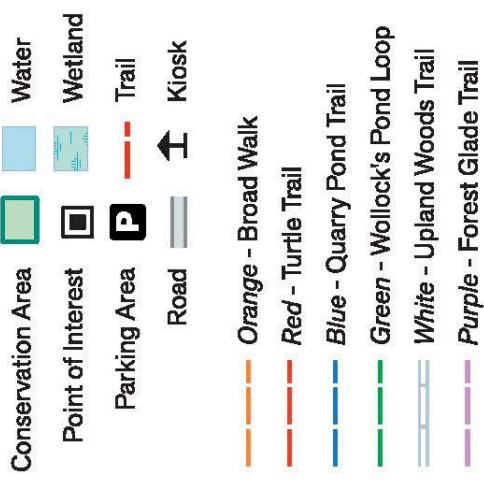
Viney Hill Brook Park

Map & Brochure



Viney Hill Brook

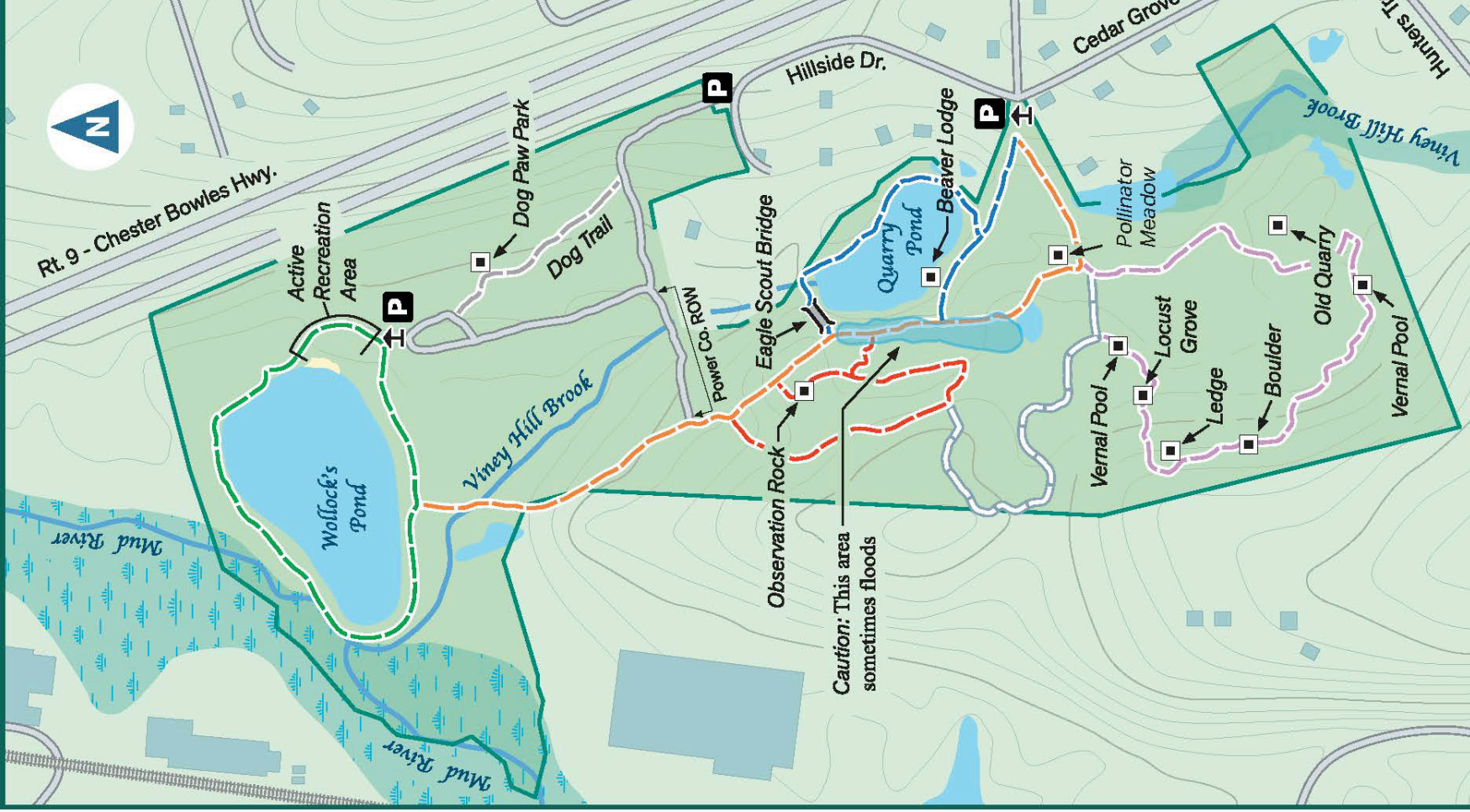
Essex, CT – 104 acres



October 2026
Source: Essex Land Trust

Viney Hill Brook is a Town of Essex Property managed by the Essex Conservation Commission and the Essex Parks & Recreation Commission.

Essex Town Hall - www.essexct.gov
29 West Avenue Essex, CT 06426



Welcome to Viney Hill Brook

- 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 be on leash. Clean up after your dog
- Leave no trace – please carry out what you carry in
- No fires, hunting, bicycles or motorized vehicles allowed
- Kiosks for Essex Conservation Commission use only
- This map is for general reference use only.