

Weston Preserves



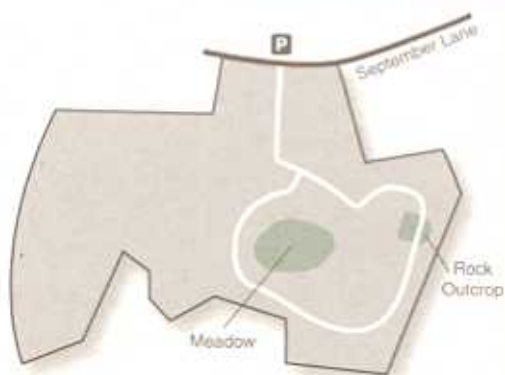
Trail maps and information



Brochure sponsored by
Fairfield County Bank

LeGallienne Bird Sanctuary

12.5 acres acquired 1969, Georgetown Road



■ **The Preserve:** The trail, occasionally steep, is about a mile long as it crisscrosses the hillside through sparse woodlands, over a small meadow, by several unusual rock outcroppings, and, of special note, the large boulder Ms. LeGallienne used to practice for her Broadway role as Peter Pan. Occasional rock piles on the hillside mark the former sites of barns or houses and indicating the probability of subsistence farming.

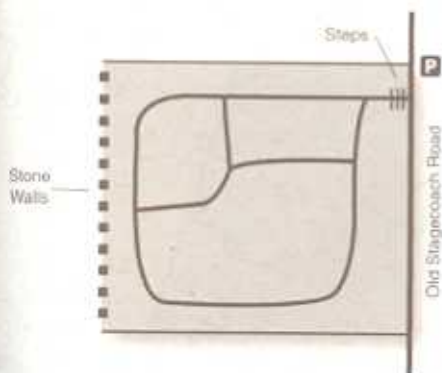
■ **Historical Nugget:** Ms. LeGallienne wrote that her home was more than 200 years old when she bought it in 1926. Her move "To this haven... helped me sustain my physical and spiritual energy... that there was not a day when one is not overwhelmed by the beauty..."

Directions: North on Weston Road (State Route 57) past Center; left at flashing light; up hill a half mile, turn right on Hillside North; then left on September Lane. Trail entrance through opening in split rail fence on right. Park along the road.



Benjamin Wildflower Preserve

4 acres acquired 1985, Old Stagecoach Road



■ **The Preserve:** A relatively formal "garden spot" amidst the rugged and random Weston landscape — just the place to enjoy some quiet time. Maintained by the Weston Garden Club, the Preserve features wood chip paths and an occasional bench in addition to more than 50 varieties of ferns, wildflowers and trees — mostly native and all identified — and a small boulder field and smaller wet meadow. An airy canopy of tall trees provides a light shade. The display of wildflowers is best in the spring.

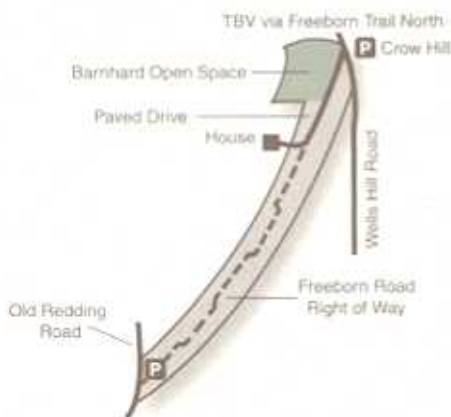
■ **Historical Nugget:** Weston was first settled in the 1720s. One of the first clusters of permanent dwellings was just south of the Preserve along the river. Weston's population grew to about 1,000 "outliers" by 1800, and hovered there for 130 years. Then "came" the Merritt Parkway and boom!

Directions: North on Lyons Plains Road; at 3-way stop, bear right and continue up Kellogg Hill Road; left on Old Stagecoach Road. Preserve entrance on left. Park along the road.



Freeborn Trail South

12.5 acres acquired 1984, 1991, Old Redding Road



■ **The Preserve:** Provides hikers and equestrians a historical passage to the extensive trail systems of the Crow Hill and Trout Brook Valley Preserves. Cut through dense forest perhaps 250 years ago, the abandoned dirt road now threads its bumpy way through recent residential developments as well as forest. The trail is three-quarters of a mile long, rutted, rocky, uphill much of the way, and much like Weston's earliest roads.

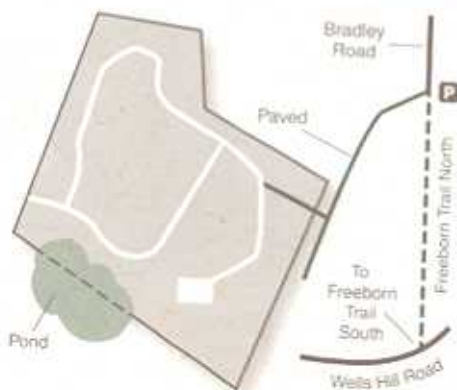
■ **Historical Nugget:** Weston was well-known in the late 1700's and early 1800's for large stands of chestnut, black walnut, oak, basswood and beech trees, often hundreds of years old. When would-be farmers found the land so unproductive, many turned to harvesting the forest, spurred on by the growing regional markets for railroad ties, bridge flooring, and charcoal.

Directions: North on Lyons Plains Road; at 3-way stop, bear right and continue up Kellogg Hill Road; left on Old Redding Road. Preserve entrance angles off on right. Park along the road. Parking also at top of Wells Hill Road.



Lillian Squires Morton Preserve

3.6 acres acquired 1991, Bradley Road



■ **The Preserve:** An open space gem that is at its best on a sunny day. The grassy path follows the perimeter of the Preserve, which once was a pasture, an "improvement" made by many early settlers, who cleared trees and rocks for a chance to raise something. The small pond (now home to a large snapping turtle) was a source of water for grazing livestock. A trail spur connects to the Freeborn Trail and the Trout Brook Valley Preserve.

■ **Historical Nugget:** Weston's soil is mostly a mix of sands and silts, mica, quartzite and granite gneisses, and on average only about 17 inches deep, a soil best suited to growing timothy, other pasturage grasses, and onions, a major cash crop in the mid-nineteenth century.

Directions: North on Lyons Plains Road; at 3-way stop, turn onto Valley Forge Road; about a mile and a half from the intersection, turn right on Bradley Road. Trail entrance is on the right. Park along the road.



Elisabeth Luce Moore Preserve

27+ acres acquired 2002-2003, Hill Farm Road



■ **The Preserve:** Part of a 75-acre estate owned by the sister of Henry Luce, founder of Time-Life, the Preserve sits on a hillside above the Saugatuck River. The easy-to-follow trails, steep in places, take the hiker over wetlands, past a spring, around what once was a tennis court where prominent guests played, and around a wisteria patch. The hike requires about 45 minutes. The house and its surroundings are still owned by the Moore family.

■ **Historical Nugget:** The first significant migration of "outsiders" to Weston started in the late '20s and continued through the '30s as the town became a haven for prominent creative people – artists, sculptors, writers and editors, actors, and musicians. The influx of these highly talented, educated and successful people marked the end of Weston as a "small and simple farm town."

Directions: North on Lyons Plains Road, Make a hard left on to Davis Hill Road, then left again on Hill Farm Road. Park opposite the Preserve entrance.



Tall Pines Preserve

14 acres acquired 1994, Twin Walls Lane



■ **The Preserve:** When combined with Taylor Woods, this Preserve provides a varied and interesting one-hour hike. The trail starts from Twin Walls Lane across from the restored twin stonewalls that marked an early Weston roadway. Follow the trail along some wetlands and over several brooks until it joins a grassy path and dotted with berries, honeysuckle, ferns and sassafras that leads into the Taylor Woods Preserve. The Preserve is named for a spectacular grove of white pines that once occupied the area.

■ **Historical Nugget:** Early Weston was notorious for bad roads. One reason: the locals refused to be taxed for construction and maintenance. In 1791, the town voted that all able-bodied Norfield men should each work one full day to help repair Fantom Hill Road.

Directions: North on Lyons Plains Road; right on Fantom Hill Road, right on Tall Pines Road, right on Twin Walls Lane. Park along the road.



Taylor Woods Preserve

22 acres acquired 1975, Fanton Hill Road



■ **The Preserve:** For a moderately challenging but short hike (45 minutes), this Preserve is perfect. Follow the white trail through a patch of woods, then down a slope to the riverbank where huge boulders provide an idyllic spot to sit and enjoy the Aspetuck as it ripples by (fishing is permitted). The trail splits, one leg continuing through woodlands, the other leg turning into a grassy path dotted with berries, honeysuckle, ferns and sassafras. Both legs rejoin and become the red trail leading to the Tall Pines Preserve.

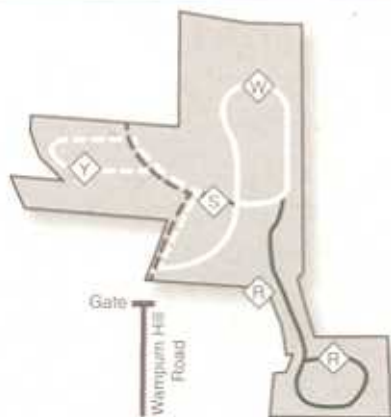
■ **Historical Nugget:** Fanton Hill Road is one of several "upright" highways laid out in 1661 along with 48 long lots that varied in width from four to 61 rods (a rod is 16 1/2 feet) and stretched from Westport to the Redding boundary, marking the beginning of Weston's "development".

Directions: North on Lyons Plains Road; right on Fanton Hill Road. Parking and trail entrance at end of road.



Honey Hill Preserve

67 acres acquired since 1968, Wampum Hill Road



■ **The Preserve:** Ideal spot for a family walk. The trails are wide and relatively smooth. The landscape offers a mix of rises, wetlands, and modest outcroppings. Rock walls thread through much of the Preserve indicating it was once a collection of woodlots harvested by early settlers to fuel their stoves and fireplaces. The two miles of existing trails will soon be extended into recently acquired contiguous acreage and town-owned open space.

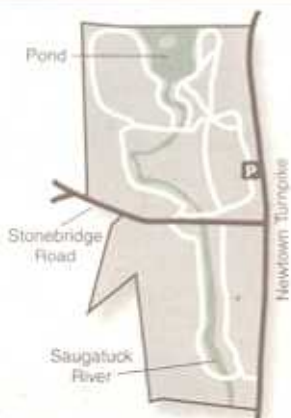
■ **Historical Nugget:** The "outliers" who settled in the area around 1750 soon discovered the soil was too poor to farm for an income, so they became part-time tradesmen – cobblers, tanners, black smiths. This helped create among them a strong sense of community, self reliance, and independence that would shape Weston's future.

Directions: Georgetown Road (State Route 57) north; left on Cannondale Road; right on Wampum Hill Road, left on Honey Hill Road, and left onto Mayapple Lane, Park at the end of the Lane. The trail entrance is at the end of the paved portion of Wampum Hill Road.



Stonebridge Preserve

21 acres acquired 1969, Newtown Turnpike



■ **The Preserve:** Bring a camera and a fishing pole. The mile-long trail (sometimes rocky) wanders through a rolling meadow and dense woods, skirts marshes, and follows the river. Along the way there are several excellent fishing holes, a small pond that attracts waterfowl, an unusual stepping stone bridge, small but splashy waterfalls, and vivid displays of marsh iris, loosestrife, and flowering fruit trees.

■ **Historical Nugget:** While there were no skirmishes in Weston during the Revolutionary War, Weston men served in the local militia defending New York City, crossing the Delaware at Saratoga, and chasing Tyron's Danbury raiders down Route 33 (just west of the Preserve) and back to their boats at Compo Beach.

Directions: Newtown Turnpike just south of the junction of Norfield Road. Park in the fenced area on the west side of the Turnpike. Enter north parcel trail from the parking area; enter south parcel trail from Stonebridge Road.



Walter Wagner Preserve

12.6 acres acquired 1986-1987, Pheasant Hill Road



■ **The Preserve:** Another many-faceted gem, this inviting Preserve is located on the eastern rise of the Saugatuck River Valley. The trail is easy and takes about 20 minutes. Along the way you'll follow a meandering creek and see a small pond with gold fish, an old field pasture, a plot of tall bush blueberries, a patch of woodlands, and several spots to relax and soak up the serenity.

■ **Historical Nugget:** Serene as the Valley is today, it once was a beehive of manufacturing activity. Strung along the river, and drawing on its power, were several saw and grain mills, a button factory, a tanning operation, a cigar maker, two or three foundries and forges, machine shops, and the Bradley Sharp Edge tool factory, which at one time employed 70 Westonites and shipped its tools to customers around the world.

Directions: North on Lyons Plains Road, right on Pheasant Hill Road. Trail entrance is at junction of Pheasant Hill and Partridge Lane. Park along either of the roads.



Singing Oaks Preserve

18 acres acquired 1991, Equestrian Trail



■ **The Preserve:** For the ardent hiker, and well worth it. The Preserve is a powerful display of nature's raw beauty – dramatic rock outcroppings, cliffs, ridges, meandering streams and boulder fields connected by a weary, two-mile trail that is narrow, rocky and steep. Vernal pools and deep woods add to the lure. The chance of spotting wildlife is good.

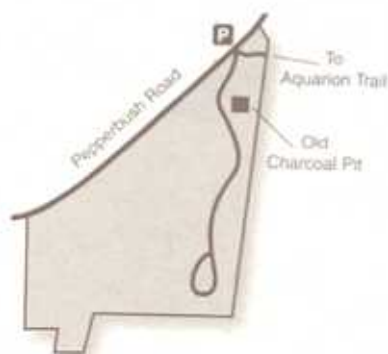
■ **Historical Nugget:** In the late 1600's, the area was an overnight stopping point for the Paugussett Indians making seasonal treks between their upland and coastal camps. In more recent times, the flatter environs were the site of a former, well-known day camp.

Directions: Newtown Turnpike (State Route 53) north; right on Singing Oaks Drive; right on Equestrian Lane to a three car parking area at end of the Lane. Trail entrance marked by a sign in wood about 50 feet east of the parking area.



Jennings Woods

11 acres acquired 1987, Pepperbush Road



■ **The Preserve:** A glimpse of how much of Weston may have looked to the first English settlers 300 years ago. The red trail is a 20 minute walk around and over marshy wetlands, and through unusually dense woodlands. The trail reveals a diverse mix of plant life, including a pervasive undergrowth of laurel. A singular knoll covered with specimen beech trees marks the trail's end. The white trail connects to the extensive Aquarion trail system along the Saugatuck Reservoir.

■ **Historical Nugget:** Weston was not home to any of the five nomadic clans that made up the Paugausett tribe. But Weston, with its blackberries and currents, and magnificent stands of chestnuts and walnuts was a choice area for their hunting and gathering forays.

Directions: Newtown Turnpike north to Godfrey Road East, right on Godfrey, right on Catbrier, left on Pepperbush. Preserve entrance marked by sign on right Park along Pepperbush.

