

Recreation Park / Utley Preserve Trail System

Columbia, Connecticut

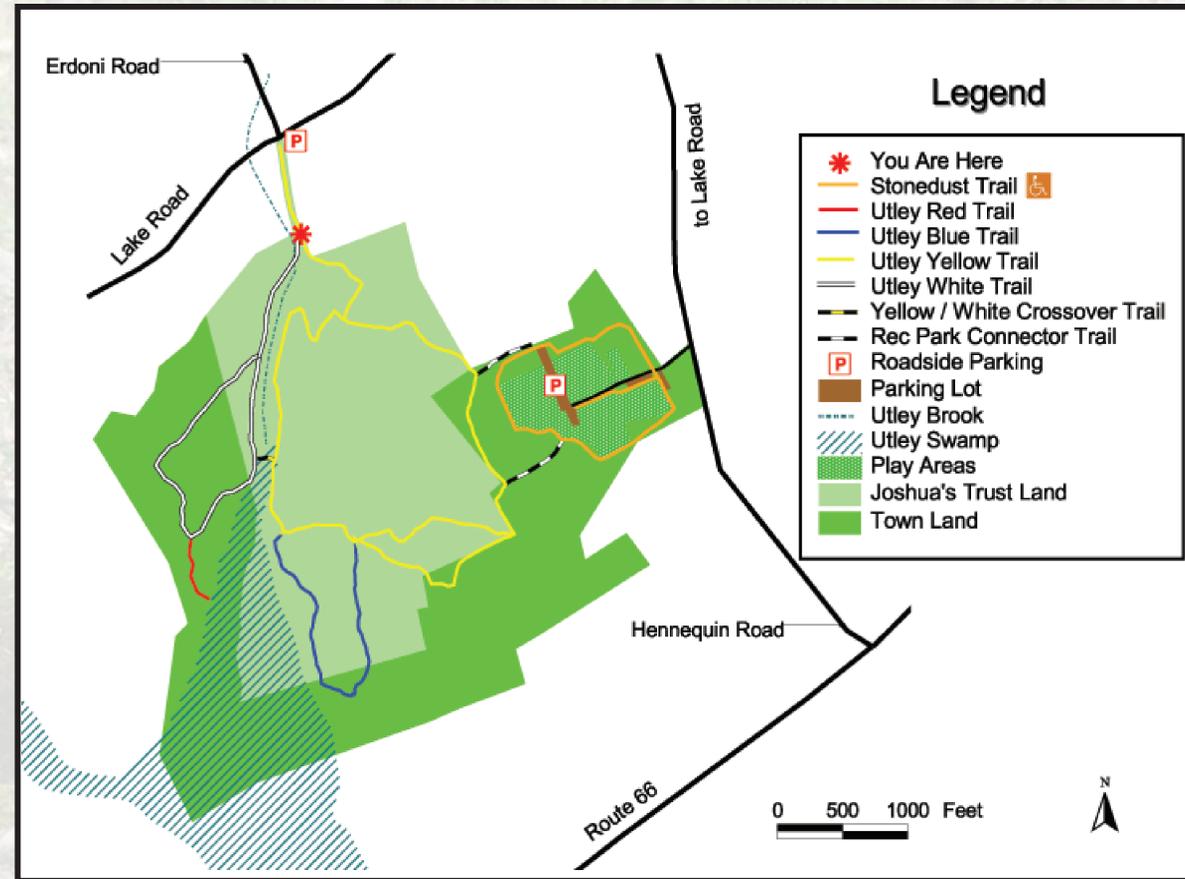


Town of
Columbia,
Connecticut



Joshua's Tract
Conservation and
Historic Trust, Inc.

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General Information

This trail system lies on 150 acres belonging to the Town of Columbia and 125 acres belonging to Joshua's Trust. While the Recreation Park portion includes active recreation facilities, the wooded portions serve as protection for the Columbia Lake watershed and as home to a considerable variety of wildlife. At the heart of the area is Utley Brook, a scenic watercourse which features 19th century mill ruins, beaver dams, several pond-like impoundments, and an extensive swamp. Please help protect these important features by taking only photographs, leaving only footprints, and following the guidelines below.

Suggested Activities

Hiking
Birdwatching/Nature Study
X-C Skiing

Prohibited Activities

Unleashed Dogs
Motor Vehicles of Any Kind
Camping/ Camp Fires
Hunting

Trail Guide

There are a total of 4 miles of blazed hiking trails within this area. Please do not stray from the paint-blazed woodland trails, as hunting does occur on adjacent private land.

Utley Yellow Trail – This loop is 1.25 miles long. It may be reached from either Columbia Recreation Park or a 1/4 mile access path from Lake Road. It is sign-posted at main intersections and includes part of an old road that follows the southeastern bank of Utley Brook with views of beaver work and a swamp. In the upland areas, it passes many stone walls that once bounded farm land dating back to colonial times.

Utley Red Trail – This short, 100-yard trail leads from the farthest point of the White Trail down to the edge of Utley Swamp and provides an ideal spot for wildlife watching.

Utley White Trail – This 1-mile trail begins at the end of the Lake Road Access Path. It crosses Utley Brook on an old bridge of large stone slabs and passes several old mill sites before dividing into the loop portion. The trail gently climbs and descends the slopes northwest of the Utley Swamp with signs of former granite quarrying.

Utley Blue Trail – This nearly level 1/2 mile trail provides an extension to the Yellow Trail. It follows the edge of Utley Swamp and then returns through upland forest to the Yellow Trail near its division into two alternate routes. As this area is less traveled, there are good opportunities for seeing wildlife.

Stonedust Trail - This level, 3/4 mile trail loops around the perimeter of the playing fields in Columbia Recreation Park. Its firm surface makes it suitable for strollers and wheelchairs.

Yellow/White Crossover Trail - This trail connects the Yellow and White trails just below the open water areas of Utley Swamp. Rock-hopping across the brook is required and may be difficult in high water conditions.

Rec Park Connector Trail - These two short white-blazed trails provide access from the Stonedust Trail to the Yellow Trail. One lies at either end of the rear parking lot in Recreation Park.

