

Some Wilton residents may remember this park as Belden Hill Park. It was renamed Leonard J. Bradley Park in 1972 as a tribute to one of Wilton's outstanding citizens, Leonard J. Bradley. A lifelong resident of the Town, he devoted his energies to the study and understanding of the natural world and contributed much of his time in community service to the Town of Wilton.

Bradley Park was acquired by the Town in 1968 and 1969 as a result of a recommendation made by the Allen Organization in the Comprehensive Plan for Recreation, Conservation, and Open Space prepared in 1967. Previous plans for the area included a golf course, skating pond and ski slope. For both economical and aesthetic reasons, these plans were not implemented. Today the park remains in a natural state with hiking trails and a short section of an equestrian trail.

A major feature of Bradley Park is the boardwalk trail which allows visitors to walk into the heart of a red maple swamp. A variety of ferns and shrubs including tall cinnamon fern, fragrant sweet pepperbush and showy swamp azalea can be readily observed.

Other trails pass through various woodland communities ranging from swampland to a dry ridge top. The arboretum trail is the longest and roughly follows the perimeter of the park. From the Oak Ledge Lane entrance, the trail heads westward. Following the topography, the trail rises sharply up and then quickly descends down. Oaks dominate the uplands whereas more moisture tolerant species such as maples and tulip poplar occur in the lowland areas.

As the orange/orange-white trail approaches the western boundary of the park, it turns and heads north. The northwest portion of the park supported a former red pine plantation. The red pine, planted south of its natural range, makes this an interesting area. Susceptible to red pine scale (*Matsucoccus resinosae*) the pines experienced an

infestation resulting in complete mortality of the planted pines. A new forest, primarily sugar maple, has established itself among the dead pines.

As one leaves the red pine area, the trail heads in an easterly direction along the northern end of the park. Impressive rock ledges may be seen throughout the mixed hardwood forest. The trail crosses a small stream, the outlet for the boardwalk trail wetlands swamp. Shortly after this crossing the trail bends, heads southward and eventually joins the entrance trail. Within this attractive park, shorter loops may be made by using the blue cross trail.



Directions: From Wilton Center go south on Route 7 for 1.1 miles to Wolfpit Road for 0.6 miles to Oak Ledge Lane. Park entrance is at the end of Oak Ledge Lane on the west side.

Acreage: 82.634

Parking: Adjacent to main entrance.

Access: Main entrance on Oak Ledge Lane; also from Woodchuck Lane, Old Farm Road, Graenest Ridge Road and River Road.

Trails:	Arboretum	1.16 miles	orange
	Cross	0.30 miles	blue
	Nature	0.36 miles	white
	Bridle	0.65 miles	white
	Viewpoint	0.05 miles	red
	Access trails	/	yellow

Ownership: Town of Wilton

