

The Woodcock Nature Center is located on a large tract of land owned by the State of Connecticut. The land was acquired by the State over a period of about 15 years for the purpose of flood control following the devastating effects of the 1955 floods. A flood control dam constructed in 1972 at Spectacle Brook impounds water during heavy rains.

The bulk of the property lies in Wilton, with the remaining acreage in Ridgefield. The land is primarily wetlands; however, a small portion of the site, located at the north end of the property, is uplands. It is on this part of the land that the Nature Center building and trails are located.

The Nature Center Administration Building sits on a rocky knoll and looks out over a pond. The trail system is located to the west of the parking lot and building. The main trail (red) runs on a north/south slope axis along a small ridge. From this trail several loops spin off in different directions.

The Yellow Trail branches west and south of the Red Trail and leads the visitors out to a boardwalk that heads deep into a red maple swamp. The wetlands of the Woodcock Nature Center are among the loveliest in the area. Sweet pepperbush, alder and swamp azalea abound. Large clumps of royal fern are also present. Because the wetlands are large and undisturbed, they offer refuge to animals that are seldom seen elsewhere in Wilton. Wood duck regularly nest here, and otters have been sighted on several occasions.

The trail meanders along the edge of wetlands and along it there is an abrupt transition between the wetlands and the surrounding uplands. The uplands comprise a second-growth stand of mixed hardwoods. Stone walls crisscross and are clues that this area was once pasture land. Note worthy along this section of the trail are several relatively mature beech trees.

The Yellow Trail loops back to the Red where it meets the Green, another loop. A dramatic ledge outcrop looms to the right of the trail as one heads north. A grey fox has dened in the rocks which undoubtedly offers shelter to other animals. After passing the largest outcrops, the trail descends through an area with abundant mountain laurel before rejoining the red trail. The red trail itself follows a ridge line. Tree growth is primarily mixed hardwoods, while towards the southern end, a number of large red cedars remain. These trees were probably the first to seed when the land was abandoned as pasture .

There is great diversity along these trails as they rise and fall with the terrain. There is much to see, to photograph and to study. In early spring, the air is filled with the chorus of wood frogs and peepers, in summer the shade of the dense trees provides a cool retreat, in fall the change in color of the hardwoods makes excellent viewing and winter can bring a fun outing to track animals or cross country ski.



- Directions:** From Rte. 7 take Ridgefield Road (Rte.33) north for 4 miles to Millstone Road on the right (east). Follow Millstone 0.7 miles to Deer Run Road on the left. Take Deer Run north for 0.9 miles to Nature Center entrance, 56 Deer Run Road.
- Acreage:** 146
- Parking:** Small parking area in from to Administration Building.
- Access:** Deer Run Road.
- Trails:** Approximately 2.5 miles of loop trails for nature study, hiking and passive recreation
- Ownership:** State of Connecticut/leased by WNC Board of Directors.

LEGEND

B Blue Trail
R Red Trail
WB White/Blue Stripe Trail

Trail ————
 NRWA Trail ———— **WB** ————
 Pond ————
 Stream ————
 Wetlands ————
 Boardwalk ————

