

Schenck's Island, though technically not an island, receives such a designation due to the fact that the Norwalk River on its west and south sides and the railroad tracks along its eastern boundary isolate it like an island.

The land once belonged to Ernest and Grace Schenck who purchased the land from the Betts family in the early 1900's. The Schenck's used the land primarily for farming and grazing livestock. The Town purchased the "island" in 1961 with the intent to relocate the railroad station to the site. However, a later Town Plan of Development recommended the station be sited at Wolfpit Road near the interchange for proposed Super 7. Schenck's Island would eventually be considered a potential site for the post office. However, a water resources survey showed all but four acres of the "island" lie within the designated floodplain. Therefore the town rejected the idea.

A number of other plans were put forth in the intervening years; however, none were carried forth. In 1984 the Wilton Conservation Commission developed a management plan for Schenck's Island. The management plan recommended it be maintained as an open space park and suggested improvements to the property include restoration of the meadows and a swing set in the picnicking area.

The main trail system at Schenck's Island leads visitors in a loop around the island. There is also a side trail that parallels the Norwalk River. Clearings made along the River provide excellent sites for fishing, picnicking or relaxing by the water's edge. The eastern portion of the main loop trail passes through an upland area that is in a mid-successional stage. Red cedar, gray dogwood and grasses comprise the dominant vegetation. Big bluestem, Indian grass and little bluestem once grew profusely on the island, however succession and the establishment of non-native invasive species have reduced the extent of the grasses.

The southern tip of Schenck's Island belongs to the Wilton Land Conservation Trust, and a trail connecting to the main loop leads one down to the River and along the southern boundary.

Schenck's Island is an oasis in a densely developed part of Wilton. Wildflowers bloom continuously from early spring until late fall. Many species of birds nest in or visit the park. Herons and kingfishers are often sighted along the river. An ambitious hiker can exit Schenck's Island over the footbridge and follow an easement trail into Bradley Park that starts on River Road immediately north of the driveway to Glen River Condominiums.

Schenck's Island has benefited from multiple instream fisheries habitat improvements since 2000, contributing to the site's draw on fishermen. Likewise, efforts to manage the upland vegetation have and will continue to take place.



Directions: From Wilton Center go south on Old Ridgefield Road 0.3 miles to River Road. Turn left (east) and cross the bridge. Park entrance is south of the bridge.

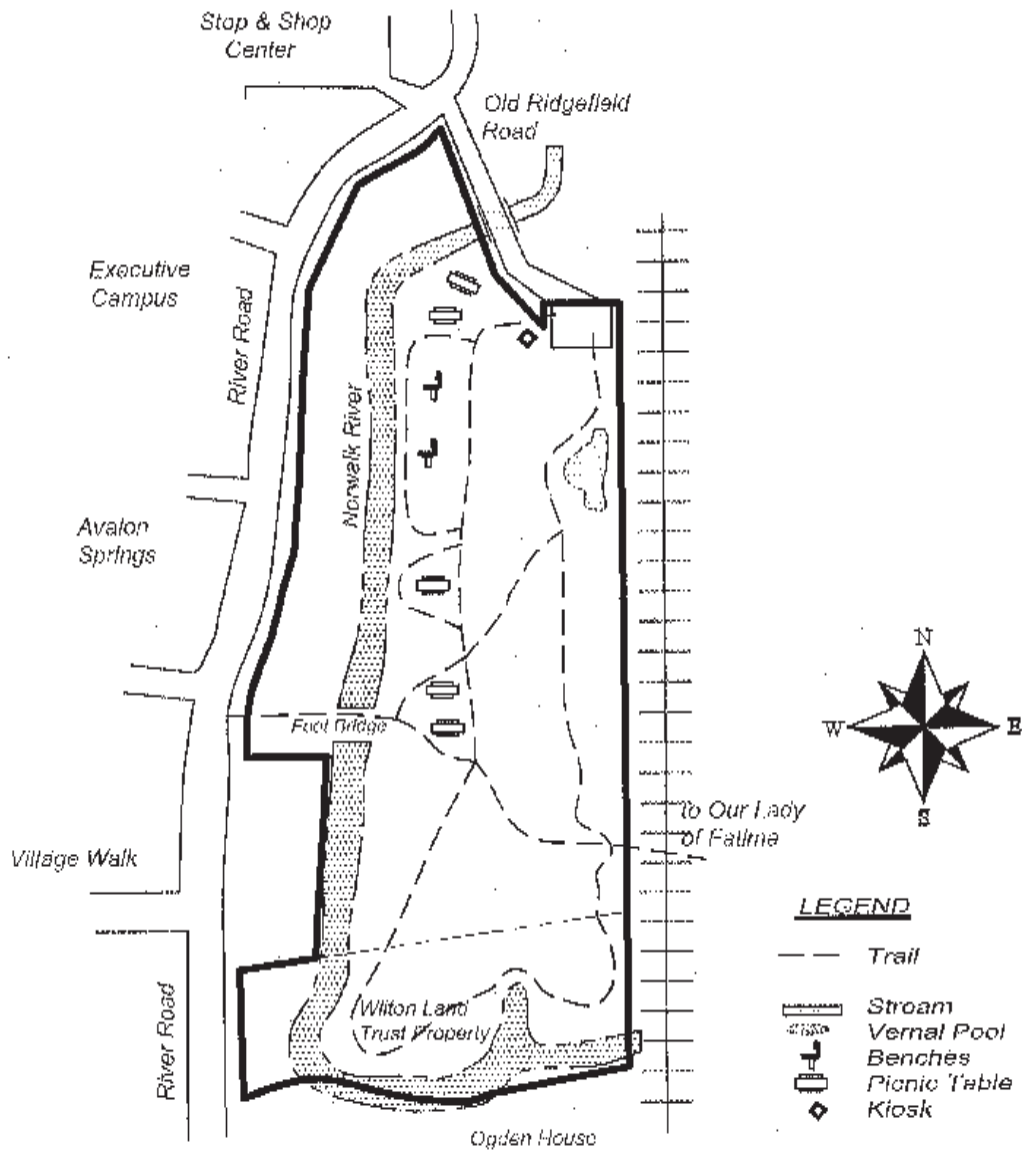
Acreage: ±17.366

Parking: At north end of Island, south of bridge.

Access: From parking lot and from footbridge at River Road.

Trails: ±1 mile for hiking.

Ownership: ±14.3 66 acres Town of Wilton
±3 acres Wilton Land Conservation Trust



Map not to scale