

# The Supply Ponds & Queach Preserves

The Supply Ponds Preserve is the oldest open space recreation area in Branford and the Queach Preserve is the newest. These two properties, when combined with the town's Pisgah Brook Preserve and Saltonstall Mountain Preserve, comprise more than 800 acres of contiguous open space protecting much of the watershed of the Branford River. The many trails that cover these two properties are favorites among birding, hiking and mountain biking enthusiasts. The ponds are also popular among local fishermen.

The ponds were created in the late 19th century, when Queach Brook was dammed by the New Haven Water Company to create a water supply source. They were taken out of use in 1932 after Lake Gaillard was created in North Branford, but the property remained in the hands of the water company until 1969, when it was bought by the town for open space. This was Branford's first open space acquisition!

The Queach property was acquired in 2006. After a decade of contentious opposition to a proposed development, generous contributions from the Branford Land Trust and the Prizker-Schwartz-Vlock family foundation enabled the town to offer the owner an acceptable price and to acquire the most sensitive 150 acres of the property.

A new feature of the Supply Ponds Preserve is a fish ladder, installed in 2005 by the Branford Land Trust alongside the 17 foot dam that created the ponds. Funded by a wide variety of private and government sources, the fishway allows anadromous fish, species who live in saltwater but reproduce in freshwater, to reach the productive spawning habitat provided by the quiet water of the ponds and Queach Brook. Be sure to visit the fishway on your next trip to the Supply Ponds and in April, look for the migrating river herring.

Around the ponds are the many remnants of human activity. Some, like cellar holes and escaped ornamental plantings, are easily discerned; other, like sugar maples planted side by side in honor of a marriage, less so. Two Branford residents, Jane Peterson Bouley and Jane Dougherty, elucidate these remains in a fascinating history of the Supply Pond Property. *The Supply Pond* may be purchased at either of the town libraries.



Photo by Branford Land Trust

## Easy Hike

The hike around the Supply Ponds is an easy walk. It can be extended into the Queach Preserve. The area attracts different types of birds to the ponds to be watched from the shore.

## Directions and Parking:

From Route 1 take either Mill Plain Road to Short Rocks Road or Chestnut Street north to the main parking area. There are plenty of places to park along North Chestnut St and Short Rock Road.

## Permitted/Prohibited Activities:

Properties are open during daylight hours plus one hour before and after. Stay on the trails and please carry out everything you carry in. Hunting or the use of BB guns and air rifles is prohibited. No open fires or camping. Motorized vehicles are strictly prohibited and violators will be prosecuted. Follow the classic counsel to leave a place or trail better than you found it.



Photo by Emmeline Alaconis, SCRCOG



## For more information about this walk contact:

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