

Trolley Trail, Goss & Vedder

Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the trolley was a dominant form of transportation along the shoreline. As the automobile gained dominance after World War II, the trolley was discontinued and its rails dismantled, but in many places the physical rail bed remained. In the early 1970s, David Anderson of the Branford Land Trust conceived the idea of a trail through the salt marsh and oversaw its construction with help from Boy Scout Troop 422 and the New Haven Trap Rock Co. (now Tilcon). The Trolley Trail has long been a favorite among Branford residents, offering an intimate view of the tidal wetlands and a chance to observe osprey nesting on one of the many platforms established by the Branford Land Trust.

The Trolley Trail is complimented by the Goss Preserve in Pine Orchard and the Vedder Preserve along Pleasant Point Road. The 15 acre wooded Goss Preserve was donated to the Branford Land Trust in phases in 1983 and 1986 by Nancy B. Goss, a longtime Pine Orchard resident. A short trail with gentle ups and downs encircles the property.

The 27 acre Vedder Preserve was donated in 1980. No one should miss the climb to the Vedder monument, with its remarkable views of Long Island Sound, the salt marsh, The Trolley Trail and the Thimble Islands. There is also a plaque that tells the moving story of the donor, Jennie Vedder.

Vedder grew up in Pleasant Point, where her father earned a modest living building and repairing boats. Jennie taught school in Branford and then moved to Greenwich Village, where she worked for the American News Company and attended night school at New York University. She made frequent weekend trips back to Branford, never losing her love of the place where she grew up. Whenever a piece of land on Pleasant Point came up for sale, she found a way to buy it, once even borrowing from her boss to do so. In 1963 Vedder retired and moved back to Branford, where her closest relatives were surprised to learn she harbored a secret love for writing poetry. Vedder could have sold all of the land she accumulated and lived a lavish life, but instead she chose a lifestyle similar to her modest upbringing. In 1980, she deeded 27 acres, nearly all she had accumulated, to the Branford Land Trust. She died in 1981 at age 90. A book of her poetry is available at both Branford libraries.



Photo by Branford Land Trust

Directions and Parking:

Park at the end of Tilcon Road off of Totoket Road. This is also the parking area for the Goss Preserve. Alternatively, follow Thimble Island Road into Stony Creek and make a right onto West Point Road, just past the railroad underpass. Park by the ball field.

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.

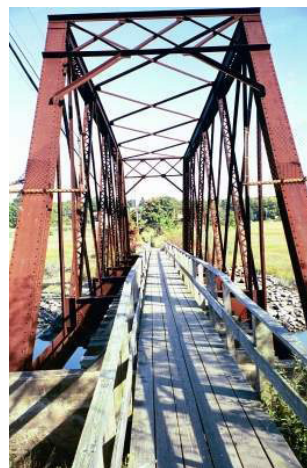


Photo by CT DEEP

Easy Hike

The Trolley Trail is a nice hike through the salt marshes of Branford. The Goss Preserve, Vedder Preserve and the Branford Trail can be easily added onto a hike for a longer walk. Please note: At the Pine Orchard end of the Trolley Trail, it is necessary to cross the privately owned Tilcon railroad. Trains do use this railroad! Please remember to stop, look and listen before crossing.

Total Trails Length: approx. 2.27 miles

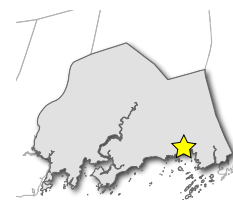
Red Trails: 1.53 miles

The Branford Trail: 0.74 miles



For more information about this walk contact:

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Trolley Trail

