

Julius M. Hansen Park

A Walk over Rimmon Ridge, Hansen Park

by John McDonald

Julius M. Hansen Park in North Haven preserves a portion of an interesting geological feature of the landscape, a narrow traprock ridge that runs north from Route 17 on the North Branford-North Haven town line into Tyler Mills Park in Wallingford. The Hansen Park section of the ridge rises abruptly from the valley of the Muddy River. Its high point is an elevation of 190 feet and it is about 50 to 100 feet wide, although the walkable portion of the ridge is maybe 10 to 20 feet wide with sharp drops to the east and west. The ridge gradually loses elevation as it runs northward, approaching Clintonville Road (Route 22), which runs through a gap as the main ridge climbs again north of this thoroughfare. To the south of Hansen Park, the traprock ridge line resumes just beyond the Muddy River valley. The whole ridge is basically shaped like a bow facing westward and is composed of buttress dolerite, a different type of rock than the various types of basalt that form the principal traprock ridges in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

The Hansen Park ridge might have, at one point, been referred to as Rimmon Ridge as it resembles Beacon Falls's Rock Rimmon in shape and relation to the surrounding landscape. The nearby Rimmon Road would seem to corroborate such a supposition, although no other recorded evidence supports such a claim. Hansen Park has a trail system consisting of three blazed trails and two unmarked trails. All three blazed trails meet at the northern and southern ends of the ridge. The blue trail ascends steeply from the parking lot at Patten Road to the top of the ridge, which it follows for perhaps half a mile. The yellow trail loops around the western side of the ridge, and the red trail loops around the eastern side. There is a wide field to the east of the ridge along which flows the Muddy River. To the west of the ridge lies a swampy area and further south a former farm which is also owned by the town of North Haven. Suburban homes cluster around the northern borders of the ridge. Views from the ridge top are extensive, if obscured by trees. It is possible to see, to the west, Sleeping Giant, New Haven harbor and West Rock Ridge, and to the east, Totoket Mountain. The view to the south includes the southern continuation of the ridge and some agricultural fields. A stand of tall conifers grows on the northeast side of the ridge and provides a more boreal feel than the surrounding area.

for more information, go to John's blog at:

nassahegon.blogspot.com

Trail Description:

Easy to Moderate Hike

Julius M. Hansen Park offers four different trails through varying types of terrain. There is a picnic area available by the parking lot off Patten Road.

Total trail distance is approx. 1.59 miles

Directions and Parking:

From exit 12 off Interstate 91, turn left onto Blakeslee Avenue and follow it until it ends at Bassett Road. Take a right at Bassett Road and continue straight through the intersection with Clintonville Road (Route 22) onto Mill Road. Take a gentle left up onto Patten Road and continue east. The entrance to the park will be on the left.

Permitted/Prohibited Activities:

This is a recreational area with hiking trails and picnic areas. No motorized vehicles allowed. Dogs are welcome but must be leashed. Please pick up all waste.



Photo by Emmeline Alaconis, SCRCOG

Total Trails Length: Approx. 1.59 miles

Blue Trail: 0.47 miles. Easy to Moderate Hike

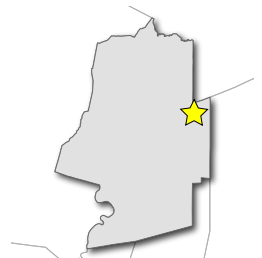
Yellow Trail: 0.59 miles. Easy to Moderate Hike

Red Trail: 0.53 miles. Easy to Moderate Hike



For more information about this location, contact:

North Haven Department of Public Works
(203) 239-5321, ext. 750



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