

Racebrook Tract

The Racebrook Tract encompasses 230 acres in Orange and 181 acres in Woodbridge. The Tract was purchased from two farmers, Asa Alling and Sylvester Colburn, by the New Haven Water Company early in the 20th century. The stone walls which crisscross the Tract are the original farm fences. The management of this forest was put under the direction of the Yale School of Forestry early in the 20th century and continued until the early 1950's when water company foresters took over. This was one of the first professionally managed forests in the country.

Because of its large size and its proximity to open space all the way to the Maltby Lakes, this is a marvelous wildlife area. The varied habitats: stream belts, forests, wetlands, meadows, and brush make this attractive to a variety of animals and songbirds. Many species of reptiles and amphibians find the habitat to their liking and even avian predators such as the Great-horned Owl can occasionally be seen.

Four blazed trails meander across fairly level land, passing through mixed hardwoods and impressive stands of white pines. Wetlands along Race Brook offer year-round birdwatching. Near the entrance to the red trail is the Orange Arboretum that features indigenous flowering species and a variety of existing red and white oak, pine oak, large, white and Norway spruce and birch trees. Each tree has a marker plate with its Latin and common names.

A handicapped accessible trail leads from the northeast corner of the parking area. The paved asphalt trail slopes to a boardwalk that makes a loop over the wetlands within the brook's floodplain. The large graded parking area is accessed in Orange from Racebrook Road just north of Derby Avenue (Route 34).



Photo Provided by OCC

Trail Description:

Easy Hike

One of the largest open space sites is the Racebrook Tract with 230 acres in Orange and 181 acres in Woodbridge. Four blazed trails meander across fairly level land, passing through mixed hardwoods and impressive stands of white pines. A handicapped accessible trail leads from the northeast corner of the parking area. The paved asphalt trail slopes to a boardwalk that makes a loop over the wetlands within the brooks floodplain.

Total trails distance is approx. 3.61 miles

Directions and Parking:

The Racebrook Tract parking area is located just off Racebrook Road (Route 114) in Orange just north of Derby Avenue (Route 34). Route 34 can be accessed via the Wilbur Cross Parkway. Off-street parking is available off Racebrook Road just north of Derby Avenue.

Permitted/Prohibited Activities:

Permitted activities include hiking, cross country skiing, bicycling, horse back riding and fishing in Race Brook and Colburn Brook. Special rules for the latter two activities are posted in the kiosk near the trail entrance. Dogs must be leashed. Please bag and remove any dog waste. Motorized vehicles are prohibited. Mountain biking off trail is prohibited.



Photo Provided by OCC

Total Trails Length: Approx. 3.61 miles

Red Trail: 1.26 miles. Easy Hike

Purple Trail: 0.74 miles. Easy Hike

Green Trail: 0.55 miles. Easy Hike

White Trail: 0.52 miles. Easy Hike

Unblazed Trails: 0.38 miles. Easy Hike

Brown (Nature Trail): 0.16 Easy Hike



Orange Conservation Commission



For more information about this location, contact:

Orange Conservation Commission
(203) 891-4768

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