

Raymond Brook Preserve

This adventure takes us to the 116-acre Raymond Brook Preserve! The Preserve can be accessed from Church Street, Kinney and Millstream Roads where ample parking is available. Let's take the Church Street entry to this peaceful, pastoral setting.

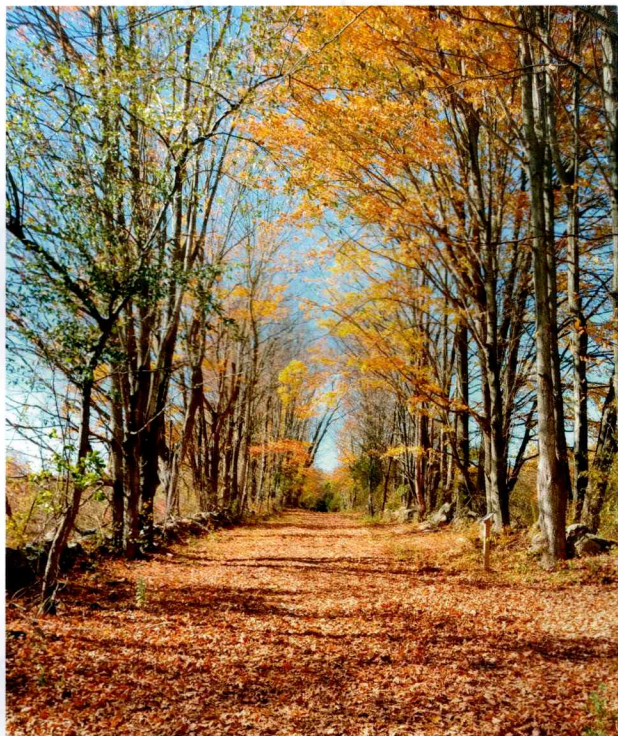
Our journey begins by following the path to the Preserve's scenic pond where native pollinator plants greet the visitor. Continuing along, we cross a bridge that leads the adventurer into the heart of this beautiful, town-owned open space property. We pass by an open field as we approach an ancient laneway, embroidered by stonewalls on each of its sturdy sides. Anchoring this landmark, we observe elder Sugar Maples, living links with Hebron's earliest settlement days.

Let's take the trail as it bends sharply right. A gaze over open field to our left leaves us to wonder what we'll encounter next. Huh! An opening in the tree line on our right encourages us to take a peek. Slowly stepping forward, we come upon an open meadow wetland. Earlier bursting with purple blooming native ironweed, now proffering seed for winter forage. Quite a late summer sight, this field can be quite wet, so watch your step!

Back to the trail, ahead of us, a canopy of crabapple trees gracefully arch over our way forward. In spring, these naturalized giving trees delight the adventurer with clouds of white/pink, super fragrant blooms. In fall, a dazzling display of bright red berries adorn these trees, a bird's dream entree.

Providing nourishment and year-round shelter, this bird haven is awaiting your visit!

Winding our way along, we next encounter the largest expanse



of open field. A relaxing view and an area of respite. Notice the specimen hickory tree to one's right. Another giving tree with its autumn nut produce a-plenty.

Continuing our adventure, let's follow a spur of the looped trail system. Heading east leads us into the forested section of the Preserve where the gentle babble of a trickling stream lures us forward. This tributary is welcomed by Raymond Brook shortly downstream which we encounter next! At last! The glistening Raymond Brook. A newly constructed bridge allows for access across this pristine watercourse.

Let's take a break at the brookside picnic table and appreciate efforts to preserve and enhance our experience here at the Preserve!

Returning to the loop trail, we trek alongside the large open field that leads the adventurer to the opposite end of the historic laneway encountered earlier. To complete the loop trail adventure, let's head right to the Kinney Road parking lot. Look at what we have here! A demonstration Pollinator Pathway Garden, complete with labeled native plants for our pollinator friends. Enjoy!

Ok, time to head back. Observing the Preserve's protected agricultural fields on both sides of the trail, we return to the pond where we started our adventure. One last suggestion. Walk along the pond's edge to a picnic table overlooking the scenic pond. Taking a seat here, let's soak in our adventure's encounters and appreciate all that lives around us!

Frank Zitkus,
Secretary of, and Planning and Zoning Commission Representative

to, the Hebron Open Space Land Acquisition Committee

Author's note: A trail map of Raymond Brook Preserve is available at <https://hebronpaths.org>.