

East Concord Heritage Trail

Access to the trails:

To access conservation land along the Merrimack River, take Exit 16 off of I-93. Turn west towards the river, and then turn right onto Locke Road; park at the trailhead adjacent to the gated entrance to West Locke Road. Walk westerly along the dirt road towards the river. For the urban segments of the Heritage Trail, public parking is located at the NH Technical Institute (NHTI).

The trails:

Hiking travel time: about 2 hours

Distance: about 3 miles total

The trails consist of off-road and on-road sections. The trail segments that follow pathways or sidewalks adjacent to existing roads include the sections from West Locke Road to West Portsmouth Street and the section from Horseshoe Pond to I-393 through the New Hampshire Technical Institute. The trail segment from West Locke Road, westerly to the Merrimack River, and then southerly along the river to reconnect with West Portsmouth Street is more rural.

History:

European settlers arrived in 1726 to find Penacook Indians farming the broad, fertile floodplains of the Merrimack River. House lots were laid out along Main Street on a bluff above the interval that was divided into tillage plots. In the 1800's, this agrarian community became the State's capital, as well as the railroad center of northern New England. The Abbott & Downing Company gave Concord national stature with the manufacturing of the Concord Coach, and Concord granite was quarried (and still is!) and used in prominent buildings throughout the country. Additionally, President Franklin Pierce practiced law here. His home, office, and gravesite are located in and adjacent to the Historic District at the north end of North Main Street.

Much of the floodplain is still used for agricultural purposes. The river valley is framed by steep sandy bluffs to the east of downtown

and in the area of West Concord and Penacook. There are a number of oxbow ponds left from the river's meandering.

Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests owns a substantial area of riverfront below the Conservation Center and holds easements on Horseshoe Island. The State of New Hampshire owns land occupied by the NHTI, site of the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium, as well as farmlands associated with the State Prison, and the Sewalls Falls Recreation Area. The City of Concord owns Terrill Park and Arena Park as well as conservation lands. Boat ramps are located at the City parks, Sewalls Falls, NHTI, and at a site off West Portsmouth Street maintained by the NH Fish and Game Department.

The Heritage Trail is a proposed 230-mile walking trail from the Massachusetts line to the Canadian border, many miles of which are complete.



Concord Conservation Commission
225-8515

Map 20

Concord Trail System

East Concord Heritage Trail

(Heritage Trail Segments)



Concord Conservation Commission
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