

THE McCANN FAMILY FARM

THE RULES

McCann's is open to the general public for passive recreation during daylight hours on weekends and holidays. Land Trust members are welcome throughout the week. Campfires are prohibited as are wheeled or motorized vehicles such as mountain bikes, dirt bikes, ATV's and snowmobiles. Dogs are welcome but must be kept leashed in the parking area and along the access trail as far as Gulf Stream and under control beyond. Hikers are free to explore off the trails but must stay out of the hayfields and away from the vernal pools.

PARKING LOT AND TRAIL HEADS

The parking lot is on the edge of a hilly hayfield on the south side of Route 190 (Main Street) in Somers, CT. It is about 0.7 mi. east of the light at Route 83 or 0.5 mi. west of the light at Gulf Road. The trailheads for both trails leave the southeast corner of the parking lot.

THE TRAILS

Two trails are open to the public. Both are maintained, well marked with plastic diamonds and both finish back at the parking lot. The 1.95 mile Shady Brook Trail (blue diamonds) stays in the northern two-thirds of the property while the 3.0 mile Escarpment Trail (yellow diamonds) visits the southern boundary area. Both run together until reaching Shady Brook hence both yellow and blue diamonds are present on the trees on those sections.

A trail touring part of the Whit Davis Bird Sanctuary is under development but is not yet blazed. It starts on the south side of the Gulf Stream bridge and follows the stream before crossing the farm road. It then loops through the western fallow field before ending in a stand of white pine onto the blue-yellow blazed trails near where the farm road approaches the upper hay fields. A left turn would bring you back to the parking lot after a hike of about 0.6 miles.

INTERPRETATIVE WALKS

Free interpretive walks are offered occasionally by **NCTLT** volunteers from May through October. While specific topics are stated for each, e.g., birds, spring wildflowers, summer ferns or fall foliage, all tend to include broader themes such as natural history, conservation and environmental issues. Visit the **NCTLT** website www.northernctlandtrust.org for the schedule and details.

THE FARM

The beautiful, hilly 84 acre McCann Family Farm stretches from near the center of Somers on Highway 190 almost to Mountain View Road on the northwestern slopes of Soapstone Mountain. About one third of the acreage is used to produce hay. The rest exhibits a wide variety of habitats.

These habitats include streams (both intermittent and perennial), vernal pools, wetlands, fallow fields, early successional stands, mixed forest, and pine plantations, making it a delight for hiking and a valuable resource for teaching about natural history related subjects. More than 300 species of trees, flowers, ferns, and other plants have been identified thus far and more than 120 species of birds have been recorded. Bluebird, Kestrel and Wood Duck nesting boxes plus bat roosting shelters have been placed and are monitored regularly.

THE BIRD SANCTUARY

Three separate areas, all adjacent to the hayfields, have been designated as a bird sanctuary. This sanctuary is named in memory of Whitlock Davis, a life resident of Somers, an avid birder, and a highly valued active member of the land trust's Board of Directors through most of its early history.

THE VISION

The farm would not be open to the public were it not for the vision and generosity of Mary McCann who loved her land and wanted it to remain in a natural state. Following nearly 10 years of intermittent discussions with her the property was donated to the **NCTLT** after her passing. Her niece, Kathy Dufraigne, and Kathy's husband, Walter, shared Mrs. McCann's vision and generously granted a right-of-way on their land for a parking lot and an access trail for visitors. We owe a debt of gratitude to them all.