

A Guide to the Open Spaces of Orange, Connecticut



Orange Conservation Commission
<http://www.orange-ct.gov/govser/conservation.htm>



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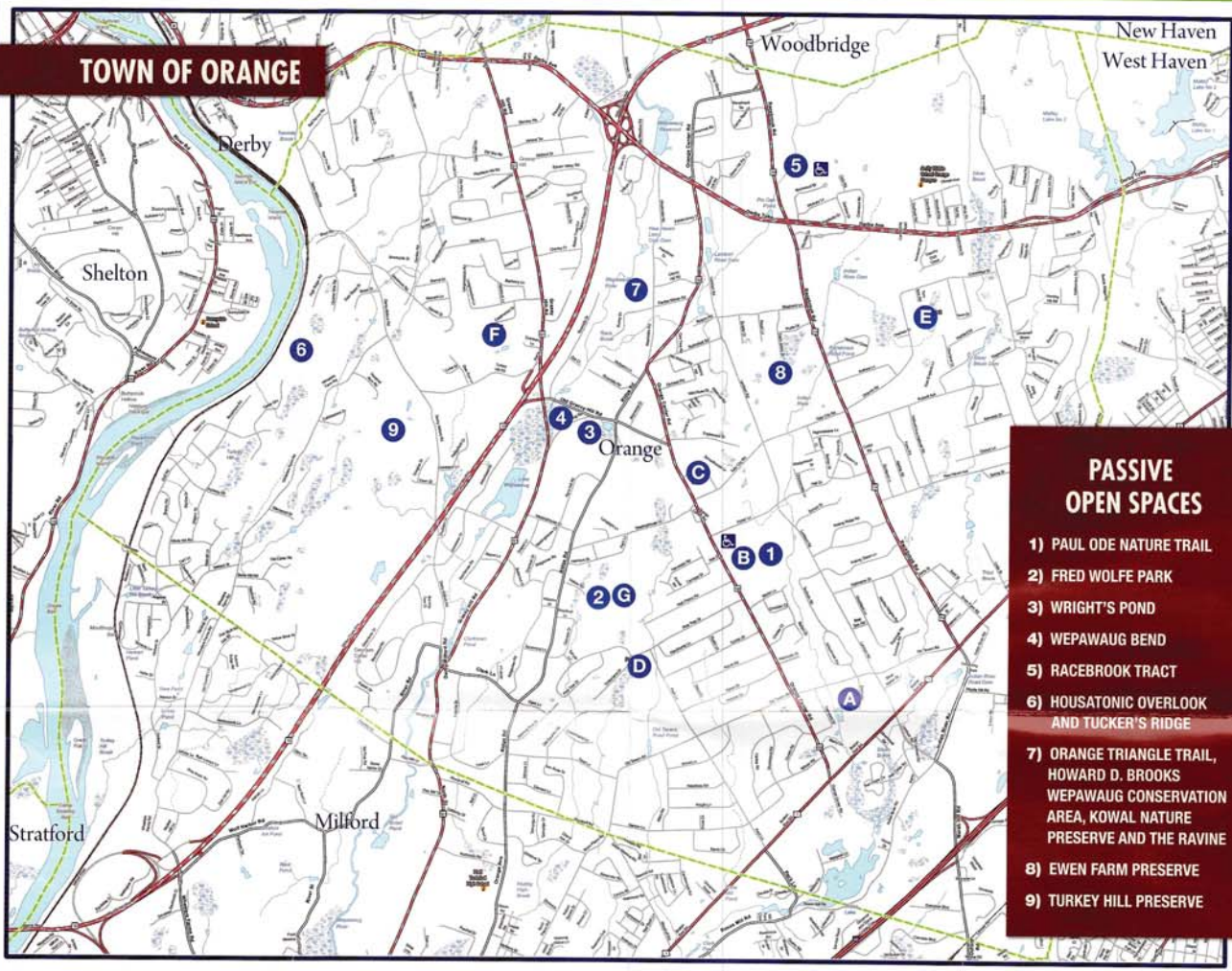
Sincere thanks to the following organizations for their assistance.



Photos courtesy of:

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Brochure design by:



PASSIVE OPEN SPACES

- 1) PAUL ODE NATURE TRAIL
- 2) FRED WOLFE PARK
- 3) WRIGHT'S POND
- 4) WEPAWAUG BEND
- 5) RACEBROOK TRACT
- 6) HOUSATONIC OVERLOOK AND TUCKER'S RIDGE
- 7) ORANGE TRIANGLE TRAIL, HOWARD D. BROOKS WEPAWAUG CONSERVATION AREA, KOWAL NATURE PRESERVE AND THE RAVINE
- 8) EWEN FARM PRESERVE
- 9) TURKEY HILL PRESERVE

ACTIVE OPEN SPACES PERMITTED USES*

	SOFTBALL	SOCCER	PLAYGROUND	TENNIS	VOLLEYBALL	BASEBALL	ICE SKATING	WALKING TRACK	FISHING	SWIMMING	BASKETBALL	PICNIC	FIELD FOR OPEN PLAY	DISC GOLF
✓ PERMITTED														
A OLD TAVERN ROAD PARK*	✓					✓	✓		✓					
B HIGH PLAINS COMMUNITY CENTER AND ORANGE COUNTRY FAIRGROUNDS*	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C MARY L. TRACY SCHOOL	✓	✓	✓										✓	
D PECK PLACE SCHOOL	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓							✓	
E RACEBROOK SCHOOL	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓		✓	
F TURKEY HILL SCHOOL								✓			✓		✓	
G FRED WOLFE PARK*		✓									✓		✓	

*Some facilities and activities require registration or permits. Contact the Orange Parks and Recreation Department at 203.891.4790

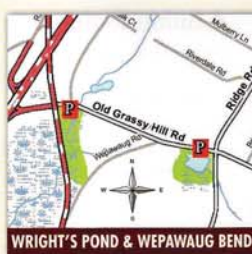
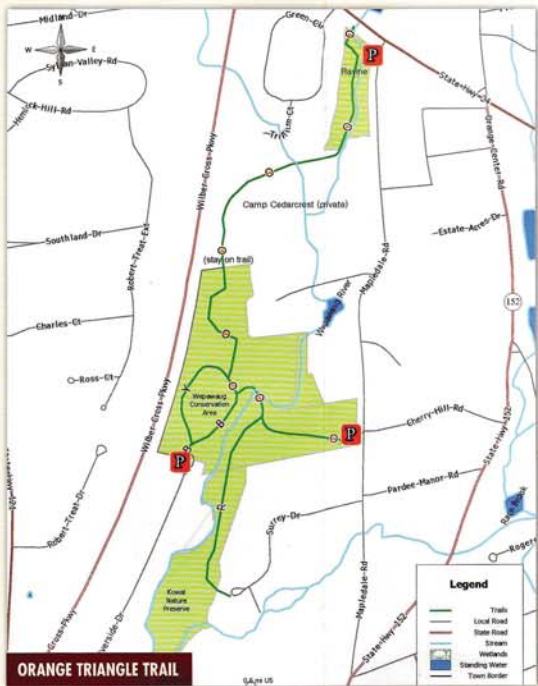
A Guide to the Open Spaces of Orange, Connecticut

Welcome to Orange's open spaces. Whether you want to enjoy a stroll through quiet woodlands, a hike along a trail overlooking a winding river, a family outing to explore a hardwood forest, climbing over rugged rock outcroppings, ice skating in winter or fishing in summer, Orange offers stunning natural sites that invite you outdoors.

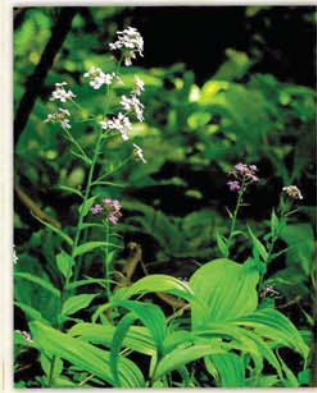
The Orange Conservation Commission, together with the Orange Land Trust, is responsible for the preservation, maintenance and management of almost 1,000 acres of public open space in the town of Orange. Working with volunteers, and with the assistance of the town's Public Works and Park and Recreation Departments, they strive to increase awareness of the importance of conserving our natural resources and to provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to experience the area's beauty through the trails, ponds, rivers, streams and geologic features of the nine unique areas featured in this guide. You can learn more about their properties and programs at <http://www.orange-ct.gov/govser/conservation.htm>

Nine of these sites are included in this guide, complete with maps, descriptions, hours, and a chart showing what activities are permitted. Additional information for most sites is available at kiosks located near the parking areas. Orange also has a variety of active open spaces, including athletic facilities, which are shown on the street map along with a listing of activities available at each location. These spaces are maintained for your enjoyment. Please help by respecting the posted regulations and exercising common courtesy.





PASSIVE OPEN SPACES PERMITTED USES*	CROSS COUNTRY SKIING						
	HIKING	ICE SKATING	BIKING	DOGS**	HORSEBACK RIDING	MOTORIZED VEHICLES	FISHING**
PAUL ODE NATURE TRAIL	✓	✓		✓		NO	
ORANGE TRIANGLE TRAIL	✓	✓		✓		NO	
FRED WOLFE PARK	✓	✓		✓		NO	
RACEBROOK TRACT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	NO	✓
HOUSATONIC OVERLOOK AND TUCKER'S RIDGE	✓	✓		✓		NO	
WEPAWAUG BEND						NO	✓
WRIGHT'S POND		✓				NO	✓
EWEN FARM PRESERVE	✓	Limited access. Facilities under development.					
TURKEY HILL PRESERVE	✓	Blazed trails are limited. Facilities under development.					



PAUL ODE NATURE TRAIL
 These two hilly trails, tucked into the woods behind High Plains Community Center, offer a variety of landscapes and plant life. The site is named in honor of the former chairman of the Conservation Commission. Both trails begin at the Rotary Cuzzocore Memorial Pavilion. The orange trail drops steeply to the Indian River, passing through a mixed hardwood and hemlock forest. Near the bottom, it bears left and returns along the Lambert Road exit road to the Pavilion. The white trail continues down to the peaceful Indian River, across a small stream, then up to cross the power lines easement. It continues through mixed hardwoods to the portal to an open field that leads back to the pavilion. Length: approx. 2 1/2 mile.
 Nearby is a 4 1/2 mile long flat walking track around the Country Fair Grounds.
 GPS address: 525 Orange Center Road

FRED WOLFE PARK
 Primarily a soccer park for organized play, Fred Wolfe Park offers the easiest walk of the open space trails. Two trails begin from the edge of the soccer fields and are marked with signs. The park was named for a man who spent many years in public service to the town.
 The blue trail wanders through a mix of immature growth and mixed hardwoods. Off the trail to the right is a clearing with a picnic table. The trail emerges onto a cultivated field, and turns left to follow an old stone wall to a path that returns to the soccer fields.
 The shorter red trail begins at the southeast corner of the playing fields and loops through mixed hardwoods and native plants along level terrain and returns to parking area.
 GPS address: 300 Hollow Road

WRIGHT'S POND
 Wright's Pond is one of the town's most popular open spaces, used in winter for ice skating, in summer for fishing, and offers an abundance of waterfowl for bird watching year-round. Benches around the pond provide a relaxing spot to enjoy the scenery. Much of the site is wetlands and not accessible. Swimming is not permitted. Please observe posted signs for ice conditions and safety tips. During dry periods, the pond level may be quite low. The pond is named for the Wright family, which owns the neighboring farmland.
 GPS address: 260 Old Grassy Hill Road

WEPAWAUG BEND
 Anglers enjoy this quiet area on the banks of the Wepawaug River on Old Grassy Hill Road just east of its intersection with Grassy Hill Road. A small parking area on the south side of Old Grassy Hill Road leads to a slightly sloping walk to the edge of the river. Shoals in the winding river make this spot popular with photographers. Fishing is permitted, subject to state licensing requirements.
 GPS address: 324 Old Grassy Hill Road

RACEBROOK TRACT
 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. 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, pin 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).
 GPS address: 839 Racebrook Road

HOUSATONIC OVERLOOK AND TUCKER'S RIDGE
 Set along the 200-ft. eastern palisade of the Housatonic River, Tucker's Ridge offers dramatic views of the Housatonic Valley and a variety of scenery along five beautiful trails. The red trail lies between a utility pipeline and the river, with the town of Shelton to the west, and Two Mile Island and the town of Derby to the north. During winter, bald eagles can be seen soaring over the water or sitting in trees on either side of the river. At the point where the trail merges with the pipeline easement, it becomes quite steep, descending brook before crossing a small stream and then climbing up to a level inland trail through a forest punctuated by picturesque rock outcroppings with an understory of Mountain Laurel that blooms in early summer. The inland trails all can be accessed from the red trail. There is a large wetland in the northern section that may be muddy during wet periods. Deer frequently are seen in this area.
 There are two parking areas that access Tucker's Ridge. The north area is at the end of Cedar Grove Road west of Derby-Milford Road. The south area is at the end of Cedar Grove.
 GPS address: North entrance: 672 High Ridge Road. South entrance: 688 Cedar Grove

ORANGE TRIANGLE TRAIL, HOWARD D. BROOKS WEPAWAUG CONSERVATION AREA, KOWAL NATURE PRESERVE AND THE RAVINE

A variety of trails traverse this area linking land owned by the Orange Land Trust, the Town of Orange and Camp Cedarcrest. The Triangle Trail follows the course of the Wepawaug River and connects the Kowal Nature Preserve, the Wepawaug Conservation Area, the Whitney Tract and the Ravine. The best access is from the Conservation Area parking lot off Mapledale Road between Orange Center Road and Derby Road (Route 34). There also is a very small parking area just south of Derby Road near the Ravine.
 The orange trail goes through a majestic hemlock forest to a bridge over the Wepawaug River. Just before the bridge, a left turn leads to the red trail leading to the Kowal Nature Preserve. Continuing on the Orange Triangle trail across the bridge leads to the blue and yellow trails that include quiet forested areas, a vernal pool and frequent wildlife sightings. The Orange Triangle trail leads through Camp Cedarcrest (private) and winds over rocky and tree knolls and through a relatively young forest.
 At the Whitney Tract there is another hemlock forest before the trail crosses over into the Ravine, with dramatic rock outcroppings creating stunning white water rapids and falls. On the east bank of the river is the remains of the foundation of an old mill that manufactured cloth for Union uniforms during the Civil War. You can return to the parking lot by reversing your route along the trail or walking back along Mapledale Road.
 GPS address: Wepawaug parking: 842 Mapledale Road
 Ravine parking: 974 Mapledale Road
 Riverside Drive entrance: 817 Riverside Drive

EWEN FARM PRESERVE
 This pastoral site represents Orange's farming heritage. Part of a farm owned by the same family since 1820, these 43 acres include old deep woods, meadows, ponds, wetlands, and fields that attract migrating birds. Access is limited until completion of bridges and trails.
 GPS address: Approx. 648 St. John's Drive

TURKEY HILL PRESERVE
 The largest open space site in Orange, these 376 acres also offer the most varied experiences for the visitor. An old growth cone forest is dotted with ledges, ridges, vernal pools, gorges, streams, ponds, shallow waterways, and a 100-ft. hill that is steep but hikeable. It is populated by a wide variety of plant life and wildlife. Trails are limited and are subject to change while uses for the site continue to evolve.
 GPS address: 700 Derby-Milford Road

*Parking lots and trails are open from 1/2 hour before sunrise to 1/2 hour after sunset.
 **Dogs must be leashed per town ordinance. Please bag and remove dog waste.
 ***State license required