



# FENTON TRACK



**LEGEND**

- Black Trail
- ==== Cyan Trail
- Dark Green Trail
- Magenta Trail
- New Trail
- Orange Trail
- Red Trail
- Unofficial Trail
- White Trail
- Yellow Trail
- Connector Trail
- Roads
- Major Powerline
- Trail Heads
- Parking Lots
- Buildings
- Forest Border
- Water

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet

Projection: CT State Plane ft NAD 1983 | Data Sources: CLEAR, University of Connecticut, Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, CT Department of Environmental Protection, Garmin Vista CX, USDA Geospatial Data Gateway, Rich Mrozinski/UConn Facilities, TIGER 2007, Soil Water Conservation Society | Map created by: Kyle Drennen | Graphic Design by: Sue Schadt | Date: 11/18/2010



# The UConn Forest: A living tool for teaching, research and outreach

For more information about the UConn Forest contact:

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The 580-acre Fenton Tract is the largest contiguous parcel of the UConn Forest. It is located east of campus along the Fenton River. The forest communities range from 30 to 110 years in age. Currently the Fenton Tract and other forest parcels are managed by the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment at the University of Connecticut.

Trails run through environmentally sensitive areas of the UConn Forest and are not suitable for all types of trail use. These trails include the Nipmuck Trail (hiking), Forest Management Demonstration Trail (hiking), many others designated for multiple use (hiking, biking, horseback riding, etc).

The UConn Forest comprises several separate parcels of land in Mansfield, South Willington, and Coventry, and is open to the public for recreational purposes, such as hiking and cross-country skiing. For the University, it is an important resource for research, teaching, and outreach.

Forestry has been taught at UConn since the early 1900s, but it's only in the past 20 years or so that the University has begun intensively managing its forested land-holdings for demonstration purposes.

Comprehensive inventories are now compiled regularly and form the basis of long-term stewardship plans.

The trees are a mix of hardwoods and softwoods – especially oak and hickory, but with maple, birch, and ash, as well as some conifers including Eastern white pine and hemlock.

Many of the trees in the 1,400-acre Forest are about 80 to 100 years old, because much of the Forest has grown back since the area was cleared, first for farming and then, in the late 1800s, to provide charcoal to fuel iron production.

The Forest has managed to maintain a wide diversity of plant communities and habitats so there is a variety of outdoor classrooms for students and the Extension community and to support faculty research.

Current research in the UConn Forest includes studies by natural resources management and engineering faculty in forest ecology, the dynamics of tree movement, water resources, groundwater, climatology, wildlife, the American woodcock, and fish biology, as well as a study of

invasive species in the Forest by a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology.

### Managing the Forest

The UConn Forest, juxtaposed with the developed and cultivated portions of the UConn campus, is typical of land use patterns in the region. It provides an ideal laboratory in which to study current land use issues. Today, about 60 percent of Connecticut is forested, and 90 percent of that land is privately owned by about 115,000 individuals or groups.

### Land use issues

The UConn Forest is also used to teach students and members of the public about contemporary resource issues, such as the value of open space and the role of the forest in maintaining the water supply. It is critically important in our suburbanizing environment to maintain significant tracts of forest relatively unfragmented, to protect wildlife and protect the water supply.

The majority of the UConn Forest is in the Fenton River watershed, which supplies water to the University and the town of Willimantic. UConn does not plan to develop the Fenton tract of the Forest. In a Master Plan update in 2003-04, the 440-acre tract was designated as part of a preservation area, meaning that no development will occur there.

Excerpted from the UConn Advance  
by Elizabeth Omara-Otunnu



*“It’s wonderful having such a nice outdoor laboratory within walking distance of the University. It’s very unusual. We’re fortunate to have it.”*

— **David Schroeder**, professor emeritus and former head of the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment.