

Merrimack River Greenway Trail

Access to the Trail:

To access the Merrimack River Greenway Trail, take Exit 14 off of I-93. Turn east onto Loudon Road and cross the river, then make the first right onto Gully Hill Road (the entrance to the commercial center at 6 Loudon Road). A large kiosk marking the trailhead is visible at the southern edge of the parking lot facing Loudon Road. Parking is available for patrons of Gully Hill Rd establishments with additional parking available across Loudon Road at the Everett Arena.

The Trail:

Hiking travel time: about 1 hour

Distance: about 1.8 miles roundtrip from the kiosk to the edge of the wetlands and back.

The Merrimack River Greenway Trail will ultimately be a 4-season paved off-street path that follows the Merrimack River from Pembroke to Boscawen and will serve bicyclists, pedestrians, skiers, snowshoers and wheelchairs. Completion is still a few years away, but a beautiful section of the trail can be enjoyed by residents in its current dirt-path form affording generous views of the river and the cityscape beyond it.

Starting at the large kiosk, the trail follows the farm road along the perimeter of the fields. The trail starts at the kiosk and parallels the edge of the field until it reaches the tree-lined shore of the river. Either continue along the farm road or walk along a footpath among the giant silver maples (some with a 9' girth). This footpath can be easily accessed from the farm road after passing the utility easement. I-93 can be seen and heard from the trail, but it is largely hidden by trees on the west side of the river and serves as white noise as you enjoy the view of the NH State House's gold dome among steeples and brick buildings.

At the southern edge of the cornfield there is a row of evergreens, six-tenths of a mile from the kiosk, and the trail continues until the ground

gives way to wetlands. This area is a rare natural plant community known as a *Silver maple – false nettle – sensitive fern floodplain forest*. The plant species here are well adapted to seasonal river flooding, which maintains this community typified by dense fern growth under widely spaced silver maples, green ash and willow trees. The floodplain forest, and the adjacent open fields and other wetlands attract numerous migrating bird species as they follow the river north to nesting grounds and south to wintering areas. In winter when the river is frozen, the wetlands can be traversed by snow shoes and cross-country skis to reach Terrill Park.

History:

The cornfield was known as the "Middle Intervale" and recognized by the early settlers of Concord as prime agricultural land. The property was once divided into individual farm plots which were later consolidated when residents no longer needed to grow their own food. The fields are owned by the City of Concord. Between 2007 & 2010 Conservation Commission purchased the land to preserve the prime agricultural soils. The fields are now leased to a local farmer.

In March 2011, a feasibility study for the Merrimack River Greenway Trail was prepared. As a result, Friends of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail (FMRGT) was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the objective of the development, maintenance, stewardship and promotion of the Merrimack River Greenway Trail.

The Trail will eventually connect to the Northern Rail Trail terminus in Boscawen and the Salem to Concord Bikeway in Pembroke. The first phase of construction is the section between the northern edges of the cornfields (south of Loudon Road) to Terrill Park.

The Trail will be funded through private donations and grants, which FMRGT will provide to the City of Concord. The City will then build, own, operate and maintain the Trail. For more information, please go to www.mrgt.org.

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Concord Trail System

Merrimack River Greenway Trail



***Friends of the Merrimack River
Greenway Trail***

Conservation Commission