



## DIRECTIONS

From the intersection of Route 195 and Route 44, head west on Route 44 for 1.8 miles. Turn left onto Bone Mill Road. Go .4 miles and turn left onto Birch Road. Go .3 miles; parking is on left.

## Suggested Park Activities



Hiking



Picnicking

## Prohibited Park Activities

Unleashed Dogs  
Mountain / Motor Biking  
Camping / Camp Fires  
Horseback Riding



**Mansfield  
Parks &  
Recreation**

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# Shelter Falls Park

Mansfield, CT

Shelter Falls Park is a 75-acre wooded tract containing both Nelson Brook and Cedar Swamp Brook. A section of Cedar Swamp Brook becomes a waterfall near a sheltering rock formation; hence the name Shelter Falls. North of Birch Rd. is a 48-acre parcel owned by the Ct DEP and leased to the Town. This parcel is also wooded and contains trails along Nelson Brook. Shelter Falls Park connects to the University of Connecticut's (UConn) North Eagleville Tract to the south and to the bike path along Hunting Lodge Road.



# trail guide

There are 1.7 miles of blazed hiking trails within the park boundaries, plus trails on the UConn parcel. The trails are blazed in white and wind through the following points of interest:

**1. Old Property Boundaries** - While many of the old stone walls signify the edges of crop fields or pastures, they were also used to mark the edges of ownership. Here the stone wall follows the edges of the park, indicating this was a long-time property boundary.

**2. Hardwood Forest** - Upland hardwood forests such as these are dominated by maples and oaks with an understory of shrubs and saplings.

**3. Fern Passage** - The abundance of ferns along the trail indicates high soil moisture content. Although this area is alongside a brook, frequently 'fern passages' such as this one can be found in the middle of the woods indicating the same amount of soil moisture as found here.

**4. Wetland View** - As the trail follows Nelson Brook, note how the brook opens into a large wetland. The dead trees left standing in the water indicate that this wet area was once dry. The area then was flooded (probably due to damming of the brook by beavers), and then the trees died.

**5. Wetland Forest** - A change in soil moisture content is signaled by the birches with an understory of ferns and high bush blueberries. Vegetation such as this prefers wetter soils with flatter topography.

**6. Former Mill Site** - The entrance path is on a former road along Nelson Brook leading to a former mill site at the junction of Nelson and Cedar Swamp Brooks.

**7. Shelter Falls** - As the trail winds uphill along the east side of Cedar Swamp Brook, note the falls created by the large rocks and boulders in the brook. The size and flow of the falls is relative to the amount of run-off and melt-off that has occurred recently.

**8. Trail Connections I** - Taking the right fork of this trail will connect you to a trail system through the North Eagleville Forest Tract owned by the University of Connecticut. The left fork follows the brook to the Hunting Lodge Road entrance.

**9. Shelter Rock** - At the falls note the large ledge next to the brook. This natural 'shelter' is a wonderful spot for a picnic or rest and allows for scenic views of the brook from above.

**10. Riparian Corridor** - The surrounding vegetation is in a wetland that is part of the brook's corridor through the forest. The skunk cabbage, trillium, and violets found on the forest floor indicate the high soil moisture content of this area.

**11. Forest Fungi** - While following the trail through the forest, note the diversity in size, shape and color of the mushrooms and other fungi found on the trees, debris, and forest floor.

**12. Pond** - Part of this wetland area was excavated in the 1900's to create a pond for the former Dalavalle farm. Note the abundance of invasives found atop the berm, such as barberry and multiflora rose.

**13. Trail Connections II** - Following the trail the rest of the way to Hunting Lodge Road will lead you to a paved bike path. To the left the path leads to Mansfield's Four Corners and to the right to the University of Connecticut campus.

