

# Home & Garden

## Greenway trails get community in step with nature

**O**NE OF THE MORE RECENT additions to the greenway trail system in South Central Connecticut is the Shoreline Greenway Trail.

This work in progress is slated to run 25 miles, from Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven through East Haven, Branford and Guilford to Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison.

Greenway trails are corridors managed for recreational purposes. Ideally, they traverse open spaces following natural land patterns, passing near water features while connecting parks, preserves, cultural attractions and neighborhoods. In densely populated areas, the greenway trails will sometimes run parallel to roads to make

these linkages.

Greenway trails are designed to support nonmotorized transportation (except motorized wheelchairs), such as walking, running and biking, and are handicapped-accessible where possible.

Southern Connecticut is blessed with an extensive variety of current and planned recreational trails and greenways.

The most established is the Blue Blazed Hiking Trail system, managed by the Connecticut

Forest and Park Association.

This statewide system, traversing 800-plus miles throughout Connecticut, is represented in our area by the Westwoods Trails and Stony Creek Quarry Preserve trails in Guilford and Branford, as well as the Quinni-

piac Trail in Hamden.

The Farmington Canal Heritage Greenway will cover 84 miles from New Haven to Northampton, Mass., following the historic canal route. Much of the route is complete through Cheshire and Hamden, and work is under way in New Haven.

The Harborside Trail will connect the West River to Lighthouse Point Park, closely following the New Haven Harbor shoreline. It will incorporate off-road and roadside routing to showcase the variety of water-dependent activities in New Haven.

This trail links the East Coast Greenway (which extends from Florida to Maine) into the Farmington Canal Greenway and the Shoreline Greenway Trail.

The board of directors of the

Shoreline Greenway Trail is focused on the environmental dimensions of the trail's design. The Shoreline encompasses a variety of ecosystems and geological features, from tidal rivers and marshes to glacial rock formations. The greenway will highlight this diversity and, with public participation, maintain and support these environments.

Twelve principles are guiding the development, addressing important issues such as landowner stewardship; honest, open, long-term relationships with adjacent landowners; protecting the natural features; and minimizing disturbance.

Where necessary, the width and surface material of the trail path will vary to accommodate the terrain or landowner agreement.

The professionalism of this volunteer group is demonstrated by its approach. In addition to the development principles, it uses regular

maintenance volunteers to assure that the Shoreline Greenway Trail becomes and remains an important part of the community.

Funds for the Shoreline Greenway Trail come from many sources. So far, the federal government (\$2.65 million), state (\$665,000) and more than 2,000 families and businesses have supported the design and initial construction work.

Additional funds will be raised over the next few years to complete the design and continue construction. Several dedicated members of the Shoreline Greenway Trail have created a "Double Your Money" fund to match any contributions made in support of the trail through April 30.

Details about the fund and walks held the first Saturday of each month and the trail are available at [www.shorelinegreenwaytrail.org](http://www.shorelinegreenwaytrail.org).

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