

Hauser Nature Preserve Litchfield 54.95 Acres

Easy walking. May be wet. Yellow Trail round trip from parking about 1 mile.

Hauser Nature Preserve was created in the mid-1970s by Gustave and Rita Hauser and was a decisive step to preserve some of Litchfield's highest and most developable land. Much of the land is under a no-cost agricultural lease. While the defining character of the Preserve is a hayfield, there is even more woodland, especially with the addition of Mr. and Mrs. George Weston's gift of 36 acres at the northeast corner of the Hauser's gift.

Higher than Litchfield's village center, the hayfield looks out to the high points of the Litchfield Hills including Mohawk Mountain in Cornwall. By virtue of the poorly drained soils, the hayfield usually can't be cut until after mid-July. This has been a saving grace to one of Connecticut's last strong population of bobolinks, which are a declining species. They are distinctive looking birds that require un-mowed meadow to breed before migrating to Argentina- farther than any other songbird. In addition to the breeding grounds, the hayfield appears to be a major pre-migration staging area for bobolinks that are displaced by mowing from their attempted breeding grounds elsewhere in the area. Timothy and reed canary grass seeds fatten them for their long journey. Bobolinks can be seen here from mid-May through July.

While it is satisfying to explore the hayfield, the woodland on the north offers the Ed Eveleth Memorial Trail, which loops through the headwaters of a brook with exposed stones reflecting the unique geology buried under most of Litchfield. Milky quartz appears here with the tease of potential gold deposits. This area is contiguous with Topsmead State Forest so wildlife thrive here.

Ed Eveleth was a major influence in keeping the lives of busy Litchfield County people healthy and in touch with the environment. He volunteered for many organizations and outfitted thousands of locals and visitors with the equipment and the knowledge to enjoy the beauty of the region. Weantinoge hopes you will feel his energy on this path and use it to look beyond the every day to be, like Ed, a true steward of this special area. To reach the Eveleth Trail walk along the left (north) side of the hayfield past the crest of the hill and watch for yellow trail blazes.

CONTACTS:
As with a visit to any Weantinoge preserve, if you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call the Weantinoge office at **(860) 927-1927** or email us at **info@weantinoge.org**. Become a member or volunteer today and support your local land, water, and wildlife conservation. For more information, please visit our website at **www.weantinoge.org**. We look forward to hearing from you!

