

Swope Park and Winant Park Connector Trail

Access to the trails:

Access is from the Swope Park trailhead on Long Pond Road (see Map 25), or the Winant Park trailhead on Fisk Road (see Map 21).

The trails:

Hiking travel time: About one hour (one way)
Distance: 1.6 miles

This trail connects the trail systems at Winant Park and Swope Park. For the ambitious hiker or runner, it also provides a trail connection on to Carter Hill Orchard, Dimond Hill Farm, and the West End Farm Trail (see Trail Map 28). However the trail is a pleasant walk in its own right, without the sustained climbs found at Swope and Winant Parks.

From Winant Park, the trail leaves the uphill side of the parking area next to the brook, and quickly crosses Fisk Road. It follows an old logging access road to a junction. Left brings one to Hopkinton Road and the St. Paul's School campus. Turning right at the junction, the trail heads toward Swope Park. It gradually climbs over exposed ledges and past an area that was recently logged before reaching a height of land and a vast hay field belonging to St. Paul's School. The trail turns left to skirt the field and eventually leaves the field behind and crosses a small but lovely seasonal brook. After the brook, the trail follows an old logging road, paralleling a stone wall and rolling across alternating wet drainages (all with trail bridges) and steep small ridges. To the left are views of Jerry Hill and Swope Park, across a recently logged Concord City conservation area. At the top of steepest and final climb, the trail leaves the old road and goes left through the stone wall. It is a short distance to Long Pond Road, but quite rocky and rugged. The trail crosses Long Pond Road at a slight diagonal and briefly parallels the road before ending just in front of the kiosk at the Swope trailhead.

History:

Much of the Connector trail follows the route of

an old St. Paul's School trail, and the public use of the trail is possible thanks to the generosity of the school. The open forest behind the school would once have been pastureland and it is easy to imagine generations of students climbing the hillside to relax on the exposed ledges and enjoy views over the school. There are remains of small scale quarrying in some of the ledges.

The very large hay field is evidence of much more fertile soil type. This is the same field visible from Fisk Road and is about 40 acres, which is quite a large field for New England. The field is owned by St. Paul's School and hayed regularly. There is a lot of ground water which seeps down and across the field, making it very productive, but also making the woods and trail at the bottom of the field noticeably wet. Unfortunately, the wet section of forest below the field is heavily infested with invasive plants. Notice the thick Bittersweet vines climbing into the trees, and the many prickly Japanese Barberry bushes.

As the trail approaches Long Pond Road it becomes strikingly rocky. Despite the abundance of rocks, there are no stone walls here. Even the industrious farmers of yore would have found this hillside too rocky to farm and make walls. Notice how angular the rocks are compared to the usual round stones seen in stone walls. This section of trail is on the back of three house lots on Coventry Road, and the trail connection is thanks to the generosity of the homeowners who gave the Conservation Commission a trail easement to cross their properties.



Concord Conservation Commission
225-8515

Map 31

Concord Trail System

Swope Park to Winant Park Connector Trail

Concord Conservation Commission