Little River Watershed

The Little River, with headwaters in the ponds of Putnam State Park, drains the valley contained between the heights of Redding Ridge and Redding Center. The river flows south into the Saugatuck Reservoir.

While public and former water company lands comprise only about a quarter of this watershed, very low residential density prevails throughout the remainder of the area. Crossfield, where the Little River intersects Cross Highway, has been designated as a Scenic Area.

This section describes three open space units: Samuel E. Hill Little River Preserve, Little River North Trail, and the Land Trust's Plishner Preserve. Nearby, Putnam State Park offers unpaved roads for walking, but no woodland trails.

Samuel E. Hill
Little River Preserve

Ownership: Town of Redding
Acreage: 92
Entrances: Accessway off northwest side of Tunxis Trail North turnaround off Mattatuck Trail off Newtown Turnpike. Access also from Cross Highway at Crossfield
Parking: Tunxis Trail North. Do not park in private driveways.
Cross Highway at Crossfield (parking limited)
Trails: Rivulus, 1.07 miles, white Quercus, 0.3, blue
Palus, 0.25, blue Fraxinus, 0.52, white
Apex, 0.35, blue Equus, 0.4, white
Total all trails: 2.89 miles

Background: Little River Preserve consists of four originally separate but contiguous parcels acquired by the Town in the 1970's through direct acquisition and subdivision setaside. Trails were mapped in 1980 by Clifford Emmanuelson, director of Devil's Den Preserve in Weston, and subsequently cut by volunteer crews working under the supervision of the Conservation Commission. Like so many of the areas described in this book, the preserve contains a great number of old stone walls dating to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—a reminder of Redding's agricultural heritage.

Key Features: There is this to be said for the preserve—it has more than a little of a lot of good things. A marsh in the north and a swamp in the south; the river, west; the hardwood uplands, dead center to east. The river is a scenic delight here, and may best be enjoyed along the Quercus (oak) Trail, and from overlooks along the Rivulus (little river) Trail. If it's heights you fancy, strike out for the top of Apex Trail, or scramble along the top of the northern escarpment (again on the Rivulus Trail). The Fraxinus Trail is named for the white ash, though many other hardwood species flourish along this central way. And the Palus (swamp) Trail provides a short spur around the edge of a shrubby wetland.

As for the Equus (horse) Trail, it provides the only northern access or egress for horseback riders and cross-country skiers.

Note: Where the Rivulus Trail crosses the river, there is a splendid new footbridge constructed by Stephen Santa with the help of his Boy Scout troop.
Samuel E. Hill
Little River Preserve

SCALE 1" = 400'

TRAILS
MARSH
LITTLE RIVER
HILLTOP

PALUS TRAIL

TUNKIS
TR. N.

NEWTOWN TURNPIKE

CROSSFIELD SCENIC AREA

NORTH

QUERCUS TRAIL

RIVULUS TRAIL

FRAXINUS TRAIL

APEX TRAIL

RIVULUS TRAIL

PRIVATE PROPERTY

PRIVATE PROP.

CROSS HIGHWAY

EQUUS TRAIL