



2016 Connecticut State BioBlitz June 3 & 4



ctbioblitz.uconn.edu – check periodically for updates, maps, etc.

COUNT AREA: The 2016 Connecticut State BioBlitz area is bounded by a ca. 5.5 mile radius extending out from Two Rivers Magnet Middle School, 337 East River Drive, East Hartford, CT.

MAPS: An interactive map is available on ctbioblitz.uconn.edu, with the major parks and access points highlighted. In addition, we will have a limited number of hard copies available at the event. We are covering a very large area, so we recommend you scope out the sites beforehand via Google to decide how to distribute your TWiG's efforts.

SIGNAGE: Add signage to any traps that are left unpeopled. We will have small signs that you can affix to a surface near your trap (at check in), but you can download and print them yourself from ctbioblitz.uconn.edu. These will have room for you cell number and name. Bring your own Sharpie.

ROAD MAPS: Again, we are covering a large area and the best sites are separated by as much as 30min drives. Bring your favorite road maps to navigate, or use your smart phone.

THINGS TO BRING:

- Change of clothes and towel; long pants to help avoid poison ivy
- Sleeping bag and ground pad
- Mosquito repellent; think about treating your pants with permethrin before you come
- Headlight and flashlight
- Laptop if you need one for your work
- Any special collecting equipment
- We will provide food and beverages
- * Friday dinner is at 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM

SAFETY ISSUES:

- * counters should collect in groups of 2 or more
- * arrange to have or borrow a cell phone
- * charge your phone before you come; bring your car charger (too)
- * leave your cell phone number at the check-in table.

Ken Metzler (State Geological and Natural History Survey, Retired) helped identify the following habitats as especially worthy of sampling:

1) Keney Park and Matianuck State Natural Area. This is a large park that would require a month of BioBlitzes to sample completely. The 692 acres include a pond, ancient dune, rudimentary grassland/pitch pine barren, numerous fields, small creeks, and acres of rich upland and bottomland forests. This city park is highly impacted at its southern end but transitions to a state natural area on its

northern end. The park itself can be accessed from many sites—again there is extensive habitat, parking etc. Areas north of Tower Ave., and especially south of Route 218 are very good. Matianuck State Natural Area is best accessed from the north: park at the Park and Ride near jct of Columbia Rd. and 218. You can also park in the southwest corner of Mt. Saint Benedict Cemetery (a trail to the rudimentary pitch-pine habitat begins at the southeast corner of the mowed lawn of the cemetery). We do not recommend going to the city park (Keney Park) at night, but if you do, it is best to park at the pond house parking lot, 323 Edgewood street, or at the MLK school parking lot at 25 Ridgefield street.

2) Folly Brook Natural Area. City of Hartford. No special permits will be necessary. This is a silver maple floodplain forest. Evidently there are some sandy beach areas along the Connecticut as well as a small area of freshwater tidal wetland. Dike is grassy and open—decent but not great for early successional species. Principal access is along dike. Drive past Days Inn to the end of Brainard Rd and park near the water treatment plant; walk to the dike.

3) Keeney Cove State Wildlife Area. City of Glastonbury. No special permits will be necessary. This is the most expansive site in the circle. There are freshwater tidal wetlands, sandy beaches, mud flats, impenetrable tangles, floodplain silver maple floodplain forests, and agricultural fields. Historic record of burbot (deep water fish) from this site. Two historic plants (*Saggitaria cuneata* and *Ludwigia polycarpa*) from this part of River. Easiest access will be by boats—DEP will have boats to shuttle teams to and fro on Saturday.

4) Hockanum River Linear Trail. City of East Hartford. Decent potential with several access points. Trail begins behind East Hartford Town Hall and extends east to Martin Park. One nice access point (with parking area) is near the intersection of Elm and Central streets. Nice silver maple-pin oak floodplain forest with boardwalk. Very open forest, scenic, good place to direct friends, family members, and public. Forest species include hackberry, black gum, dogwood, azalea, and, unfortunately lots of poison ivy; good stands of *Carex typhina*. The steep escarpment to the north harbors a number of rich woods species and should be explored. A bit insularized and impacted.

5) Hockanum River and Hockanum Pond is best accessed at from behind Town Hall. City of East Hartford. It is about a 200m walk down a few stairs to the pond. Another option is to leave a car at Town Hall but put in at Martin Park. The Hockanum River is sandy (and clean) enough that some good aquatics should turn up. Evidently there is a sizeable mussel bed at east end of Hockanum Pond.

6) Martin Park. City of East Hartford. Very restricted upland woodland, but a place you'll find red oak and other upland woodland plant species. Entrance to park is off of Burnside Road (= Route 44) across from KFC. Continue to back of park (south end); woods near park dump and bridge over Hockanum River have promise.

7) Department of Public Works City of East Hartford. This is merely the western reach of the Martin Park woodland mentioned above and another access point for Hockanum River linear trail. Both floodplain woodland (mostly silver maple and pin oak) and some open weedy fields may be accessed. Watch for Department of Public Works sign off of Burnside Road (= Route 44) (just west of Martin Park), turn south on Ecology Road.

8) Rentschler Field. City of East Hartford. Exceptional sandplain grassland (for Connecticut anyway) transitioning into woodlands. The heart of the grassland, on the Pratt Whitney Property, will be inaccessible and off limits. But we should be able to sample around Cabellas and Rentschler Field.

9) Police and Fireman Association property east of Rentschler Field. This is very good habitat and a good target site for those seeking different shrub and tree species. There is a picnic table or two and even a small pavilion in case it rains. The moth collectors will want to have lights here all night. There is a small man-made freshwater pond with sandy beaches. The road running into the association's property includes some early successional habitat, a wet forest with alder and willow on one side and drier oak forest on the other. Enter off of Silver Lane immediately beyond eastern fence line of Rentschler Field, across from Silva's Restaurant. Drive south into woods to pond/pavilion area.

10) East Hartford dike marsh. The area west of Prospect Avenue is undeveloped (and mostly unexplored). *Extensive* floodplain forest and wetlands. Good birding area. A dike runs from the north end SW to Buckley Bridge; as well as a lower trail (closer to river) along forest edge. There appears to be a riverside trail with multiple access points to Connecticut River. Easiest access to shore of Connecticut River is at south end. A promising unexplored area is the section east of the jct of Greene Terrace and Rose. Within a short walk there are wetlands, a powerline, etc. Visit in GoogleEarth (41.783040°, -72.641788°). Access: a few parking spaces at intersection of Rose and Greene Terrace Streets. Southern access: north on Charles Street and Cedar—there's lots of parking along dike behind Adcom Worldwide (12 Cedar St., Unite 12E) and other businesses there.

11) Connecticut River sandbars. We will have 2-3 (bass) boats to shuttle teams to and fro on Saturday. Sand bars are likely candidates for interesting dragonflies, mussels, etc. Most extensive areas are to north and south of the Bissell Bridge. Plan to park and access boats/river from Great River Park, just NW of Two Rivers Magnet School on East River Drive.

12) Riverside Park and floodplain forest north of parking area looks promising. City of Hartford. Extensive unexplored area. There is a trail that heads north from boathouse. Boat ramp here for those that are interested. Easy access to river. The river is low now so you might be able to access a sand bar upriver. Access via exit Hwy 91 at Jennings Road and then follow signs to Park (basically head back south on frontage road).

13) Powerline near Manchester Community College. Sandy spots with lichen crusts and patches of shrubs; lots of rodent holes, potential for snakes. Park along Ramey Rd. and follow trail along the powerline either north or south. West of parking lot is a nice dry meadow that may be worth exploring as well.

14) Laurel Marsh. Nice trails but heavily impacted and overrun by invasives in places; may be ok for birding. Aside from stream and marsh habitats there is also access to the powerline and some wooded, partially wet habitats. There is a parking lot on the south side of Rt. 6 & 44 across from Cheney Technical School and a little west.

15) Wickham Park. Typical Connecticut Valley oak woodland. **Access:** park entrance is off Middle Turnpike (Rt 44) just WNW of I-84. There is a modest admission/parking fee on weekends.

16) Vibert Road and Linear Park This site is extremely promising with hundreds of acres of fields, woodlands, and an enormously complex of wetlands with ponds, stream, wet meadows, etc. Great potential for aquatic species. There is direct access to the Connecticut River with a lot of parking. Interesting birding area that includes areas with flooded alluvial sloughs. We are still working on permissions—we will have specific updates on the site (where you can walk and where you cannot) on the web and at check-in. Vibert Road is off Main Street in South Windsor, immediately north of the Wood Memorial Library.

17) Newberry Road. This site is a candidate for the most intact and biodiverse habitat in our circle. Much of it is Hartford Audubon property. There are dry fields, a bog, floodplain forest, and dry sandy habitats. Newberry Road is off Main Street in South Windsor, 0.4 miles north of Wood Memorial Library. The road is wet and is a walking trail--do not take your vehicles too far down Newberry Street.

18) Cedar Hill. Hartford. Park at the CT Humane Society (we have permission). There is an extensive trail system that can be picked up behind the Humane Society. Despite the no trespassing signs, it is public land. Some poison ivy and degraded in parts, especially close to the parking lot, but the habitat improves into dry and upland forest. There is also an overgrown meadow. You can also drive up Russell Rd. from the south until Schoolhouse Crossing across from the old Cedarcrest State Sanatorium. The road is then blocked with no trespassing signs. Finally, you can access Russell Rd. from the north by driving down Jordan Ln in between Cedar Hill and Emmanuel Cemeteries from Berlin Turnpike. Signs are posted with "Authorized Vehicles only" and there's a gate close to Berlin Tpke. but the gate seems to be open during the day. You can drive all the way down Russell Road to the south end of the quarry where there is a gate. There's a fence along the edge of the quarry, but the road runs right along the fence. Plenty of spots to park alongside the road.

19) Cedar Hill Cemetery. Large property. Gate closes at 8PM but we are working on getting a nighttime permission. In the front part of it, there is a pond with lots of aquatics, and some unmown meadows. At the back of the cemetery is some nice woods edge. Cemetery is very old and relatively undisturbed, could have some interesting species interspersed.

20) Great Meadows. Gates along N. Meadow Lane and Elm St. are marked closed sunset-sunrise and we are working on a nighttime permission. Lots of places to pull off along the roads, small parking lot at N. Meadow Lane gate. Some nice wetlands and vernal pools, high quality habitat, especially for birders. Access along Elm St. Exd.; C. Ln. is roped off and impassable. Some no trespassing signs and active agricultural fields throughout.

21) Hale Farms Open Space. Glastonbury CT. Park at east end of Cul-de-sac at end of Eastern Blvd. At about 1/3 mile the walkway crosses what appears to be an underground gas pipeline. This could be good for early successional species. To the east this row joins N-S running transmission line corridor.

23) South Windsor Powerline north of I-291 and Luckow Farm. This short powerline section crosses a small area of post glacial sand dunes. We are mostly interested in the powerline west of Ellington Road (Route 30). We can access from three sites. The primary access can be the abandoned drive-in theater off of Chapel Road just east of Route 5. This is not posted and likely a good place to sample/trap through the night.

24) Wilkus Farm. This is an abandoned farm with tall grass old fields and some wetlands. Signs posted along Willow St. say it's open 8 AM - Sunset. May be a bit too insular, but there could be some good plants/birds. Barely room for 2 cars to park on Willow St. but there's an Elementary School half a mile north along Willow St.

25) Windsor Meadows. Bottomland forest and marsh, but there's a lot of poison ivy. Some invasives but habitat isn't too bad and there is river access.

26) Veterans Memorial Park. Some sandy dunes/barrens with prairie species. There also is a clay pit/phragmites marsh.