

Town of Bristol Outdoor Recreation, Gateway to the Green Mountains

Bristol is in northeastern Addison County, at the western foot of the Green Mountains. The New Haven River flows out of the mountains and through town.

Parks

- Bristol Town Green- Center of town with a fountain and bandstand. [Link for history- Bristol Core](#)
- Bristol Veterans Memorial Park- Wooded park with paths across a roaring waterfall. [Link for history- Bristol Core](#)
- Sycamore Park-A day use recreation area, swimming and fishing. [Link for history- Bristol Core](#)
- Eagle Park-handicapped access, picnic tables.
- Bartlett's Falls- (New Haven Gorge or known as the Toaster) Waterfalls and slab rocks to lounge on.

Biking

Bristol is the home of VBT [Vermont Bicycle Tour](#) and a stopping way for [Sojourn](#) and [Backroads](#) bike tours.

The mountain biking is being cultivated, there is the VMBA chapter of Addison County Bike Club which has a focus in Middlebury. Most trails in Bristol area are privately owned and maintained.

The Watershed Trail [link](#)

Green Mountain Family Campground [map](#)

Hinesburg Town Forest trails [map](#) (14mi from town)

Water Sports

Bristol Pond is great for canoeing, Stand Up Paddleboarding, fishing, and kayaking

New Haven River is known for white water kayaking and part of the [New Haven Ledges Race](#), bringing kayakers from all over New England to drop over the Bartlett's Falls.

- [Baldwin Creek](#)
- [Bristol Pond](#) (Winona Lake)
- [Monkton Pond](#) (Cedar Lake)
- [Lake Dunmore](#)

Hiking

Bristol is the Gateway into the Green Mountains, there are many trails that surround the town and there are more to come.

- Watershed Trail [link](#)
- Bristol Cliffs [map](#)
- Coffin Trail – In the development stages [link](#)
- Trail around Bristol – In the development stages

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Bristol Ledges Trail

Round trip hiking distance: 3 miles

Difficulty: Easy

The Bristol Ledges Trail is the perfect hike for when you're looking for something short and close by, but with super sweet views.

The hike is about 3 miles round trip, with ledges at the top facing out towards downtown Bristol. This is a great spot to watch the sunset; bring a picnic and some friends. There is no parking at the trailhead, so park in town (the parking lot of Shaw's works well). From Main Street going east, turn left on Mountain Street, then the first right on Mountain Terrace. At the end of the road, look for a gate that has a sign for Bristol Ledges Trail. Happy Hiking!



Source: middmountainclub.com ; Alltrails.com

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The Watershed Center

Round trip hiking distance: Up to 4 miles

Difficulty: Easy

The Watershed Center is a non-profit corporation supported by local citizens. It was founded in 1995 to promote conservation and stewardship of the land. TWC provides public access to over 1,000 acres of healthy, beautiful, productive land – the 664-acre Waterworks Property, the 94-acre Lost Pond Forest, the 194-acre Middle Forest, the 50-acre Merritt Heights, and the four-acre Edith Stock Community Forest in Bristol Village. Enjoy the land!

Directions:

The public access to the Waterworks property as well as the Lost Pond and Middle forests is on Plank road in Bristol. The parking lots is located 3.4 miles west on Plank Road from North Street in Bristol Village.

The address of the parking area is: 4783 Plank Road.

The parking area is limited, so please carpool when possible. If the parking lot is full please park off the side of the road on the straight section. Please do not park along the curve at the entrance to the parking area.

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Sycamore Park

Round trip hiking distance: >1 mile
Difficulty: Easy

Sycamore Park is located on a prominent meander bend of the New Haven River. The park property includes 8.4 acres and was acquired as part of an agreement between the Town of Bristol and the Federal Emergency Management Agency after a summer flood ravaged the area in 1998. Under the terms of this agreement, Sycamore Park will remain forever as a natural area.

Sycamore Park is currently managed as a day-use recreation area through the collaborative efforts of the Bristol Selectboard, Bristol Recreation Department and the Bristol Conservation Commission. It was named in 2004 for the vigorous growth of sycamore trees on the property, which are rarely found in abundance this far north.

Sycamore Park Interpretive Sites

Site marker Base photograph dated 2000

Visit the Stream Team website, hosted by Mt. Mansfield High School!
http://www.mtma3122.org/stream_team/
www2.mtma3122.org/

View additional copies of this brochure at the Bristol Conservation Commission website:
<http://www.bccommission.com/4493022>

1 1998 Flood Chute

Site 1 overlooks a 300-foot long depression in the floodplain caused by the New Haven River during the flood of June 1998 (flood chute). One of the two houses in Palmer's Court was located on this spot prior to the flood. Compare this location on the 2000 photograph above with the same position on the 1990 photograph on the reverse side of this brochure.

2 Floodplain Forest

To the north and east of Site 1 is a pocket of mature floodplain forest which includes sugar maple, white ash, and basswood, with a diverse understorey layer dominated by orchids fern. These are tree and plant species that would be expected in other areas of the park, if these lands had not been previously cleared for agriculture and residential use. The natural succession clearly relies on occasional overbank flooding from the river to supply fine sediments and organic materials that support development of rich, frequently flooded soils. Due, in part, to channel management and land use changes in the upstream watershed that have occurred over several decades, the river channel has cut downward, leaving some connection to the surrounding floodplain. As a consequence, the river only rarely accesses the floodplain—it now takes a large swing like the flood of 1998.

3 Tributary Confluence

Walk out to the river's edge from the site marker. At typical high-water conditions which are achieved once every year to two years (bankfull), water will reach nearly up to the site marker. At low water you can walk out onto the beach of sediments. Note the size of pebbles carried by the river and deposited on the inside of this bend in the channel, which is called a point bar. This point bar has grown considerably since the 1998 flood as the channel shifts to the east. Sediment is coming from actively eroding areas upstream of the park. On the opposite side of the channel, onto the understorey plants of sediments carried into the New Haven River by the North Brook tributary. Upstream land clearing, removal of buffers, and leisure activities in the North Brook watershed contribute to sediment loading at this tributary confluence.

4 Farming a New Floodplain

Walk to the river's edge from the site marker (follow the path through the Japanese Knotweed). Streambank monitoring (SJM.org) was installed on the opposite bank following floods of the mid-1970s, to protect the fields beyond and attempt to keep the river in a fixed position. During the flood of 1998, this rip-rap was obliterated by the raging flood waters. (Look for apple trunks submerged in the middle of the channel). In recent years the channel has become wider and shallower. Flow rates have decreased, and sediment has deposited to create a self-channel flow, which causes flows to split and the channel to widen even more. Over time, the river will choose a single flow path and the deposited sediment will become vegetated, forming a new floodplain at a lower elevation than the park lands. The new floodplain can be accessed more frequently by the New Haven River to dissipate the high energy of floods. This is also an area of active deposition where the river can store sediment in the process of forming the new floodplain.

5 Bankfull Channel

The bankfull channel is the typical high-water condition that occurs on average once every one to two years—usually in the spring of the year. Two markers have been placed at Site 5. It is located near the edge of the bankfull channel that existed in 1991 when the river was located further to the southeast. It is situated at the narrow bankfull channel (2000). These two markers help to demonstrate how far the channel has shifted in those 10 years.

6 A Shifting Channel

Site 6 is above normal flood stage and provides a relatively protected vantage point from which to observe this changing river channel. Recall this site is different seasons, at different flow stages of the river, and through the years, to see how the landscape and the river change!

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Sunset Ledge

Round trip hiking distance: 2 miles

Difficulty: Easy

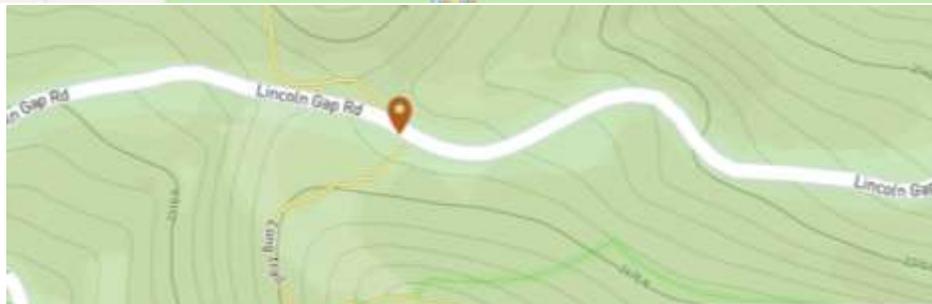
An excellent short hike to a dramatic spot. A well-established trail climbs a total of 500 feet over the course of 1 mile. Viewpoints include impressive vistas of Lake Champlain, the nearby countryside and The Adirondacks.

Directions: Drive to Lincoln Gap Rd, park and walk South along the Long Trail.

Address: Lincoln Gap Road, Warren, VT 05674

Latitude/Longitude: 44.095198, -72.928172

This is a summer-time activity, as the Lincoln Gap Road is closed from late October till mid May.



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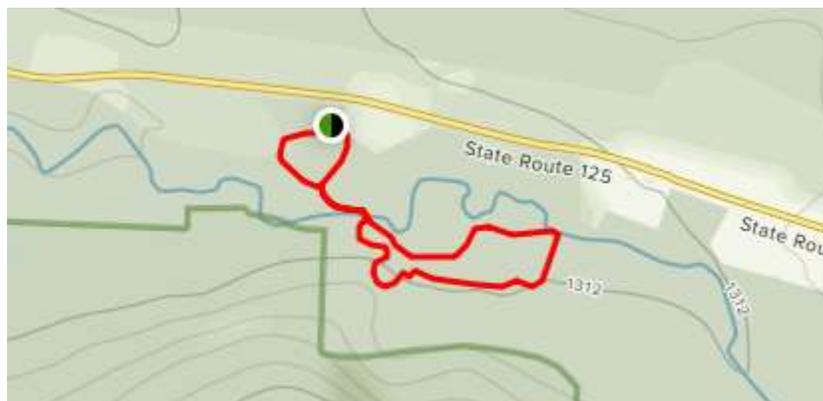
Robert Frost Trail

Round trip hiking distance: 1 mile

Difficulty: Easy

This is an easy one mile stroll through the beautiful fields and woods of the Breadloaf wilderness area. The loop trail is punctuated with information on local flora and poems by Robert Frost.

Directions from Ripton, VT: Travel east 2.1 miles along the very scenic SR 125. There is a parking area on the south side of the road.



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Silent Cliff Trail

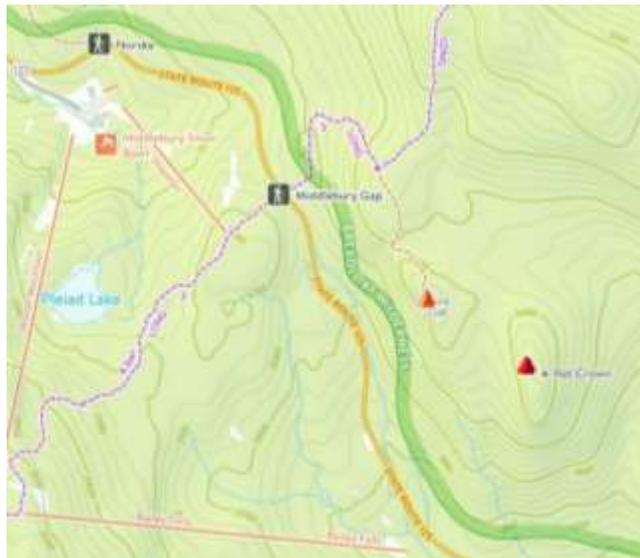
Round trip hiking distance: 1.6 mile

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

From Middlebury Gap, follow the Long Trail north into the Breadloaf Wilderness as it rises quickly to the junction with the Silent Cliff Trail at 0.4 miles. Take the spur trail east for 0.4 miles to Silent Cliff and Silent Cave. From the Cliffs there are good views south of Middlebury Gap, Monastery Gap, and the Green Mountains.

Directions:

From Middlebury, follow Route 7 south to the junction with Route 125. Follow Route 125 east for 9.2 miles to the top of Middlebury Gap. Trailhead parking is located on the right. The Long Trail north is on the opposite side of Route 125.



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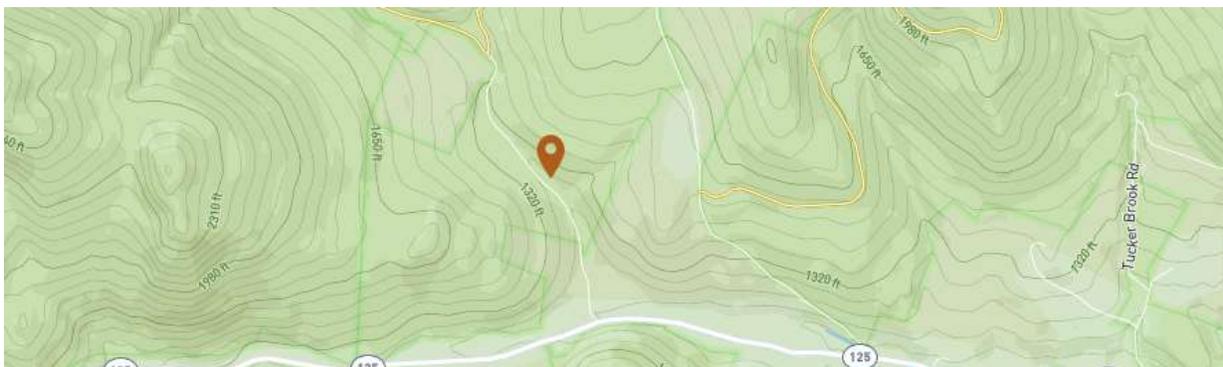
Texas Falls

Round trip hiking distance: 1.2 mile Loop Trail

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

Texas Falls is an impressive waterfall with a nice picnic area and self-guided nature trails on well-maintained paths.

Directions: From Middlebury, take Rt. 125 to Texas Falls Rd, 3 miles east of Middlebury Gap. Drive north .5 miles to a parking area.



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Falls of Lana

Round trip hiking distance: ~1 mile

Difficulty: Easy/Moderate

The Falls of Lana have carved a gorge horizontally through the face of a cliff, with mist rising up from its several cascades. Venture into its secluded swimming holes, and complete your trip with a moderate walk up a babbling brook to a beautiful high-mountain lake, dotted with private backcountry campsites.

Falls of Lana Hiking Trail is 0.4 miles long and begins at 596 feet altitude. Traveling the entire trail is 0.8 miles with a total elevation gain of 374 feet.

