

Trail Guide made possible through  
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The Last Green Valley, Inc.



# Albert E. Moss Sanctuary

Mansfield, CT

The 135-acre Albert E. Moss Sanctuary is a natural area between South Eagleville Road and Birchwood Heights Road. It offers two loop trails through a variety of forest settings and around a pond. It is named in honor of Professor Moss, the inspiring educator in UConn's Forestry Department from 1914-1942. He developed the first curriculum in forest management at UConn in (1924) and in wildlife management (1932).

For more up-to-date trail information or to download maps click on [www. Mansfieldct.org/trailguides/](http://www.Mansfieldct.org/trailguides/)



## DIRECTIONS

The Moss Sanctuary is located near the intersection of Routes 275 and 195, directly behind the Mansfield Apartments. Please park across the street at the Mansfield Community Center/Town Hall. Walk across the street past the bus shelter to the stairs that bisect the apartments to the sanctuary entrance. A limited amount of parking passes are available to sign out at the Mansfield Community Center if there is a need to park closer.

## Suggested Park Activities

-  Hiking
-  Fishing
-  Picnicking

## Prohibited Park Activities

Unleashed Dogs  
Biking  
Camping  
Horseback Riding  
Alcoholic Beverages



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# trail guide

There are 2.15 miles of walking trails in the Albert E. Moss Sanctuary. The trails are blazed in white and wind through the following points of interest:

**1. Park History** -This land was a farm dating back to at least 1840, which had a house that once stood at the corner of Route 195 and Birchwood Heights Road. Past owners include both the Tift and Sullivan families. The University bought the property through a series of property exchanges completed in the 1950s, and in 1989 designated the land as the Albert E. Moss Forest, Wildflower and Wildlife Sanctuary in honor of Professor Moss. In 2010, the Town of Mansfield purchased the Sanctuary to preserve its diverse habitats and to serve as a "village woods" offering walking trails for many nearby residents. The CT Forest and Park Association holds a conservation restriction on the land to ensure its preservation as forest and wildlife habitat.

**2. New Woodland** -The area at the beginning of the trail was once a dense grove of red pines, which have died and been cut down. Now the open area is filling in with young trees and invasive non-native plants, such as barberry and autumn olive. At 200 feet from the entrance, the 1.3-mile perimeter loop trail enters on the right.

**3. Majestic Evergreens** -The trail enters a grove of tall white pines, which were planted in 1932 by Professor Moss's students to celebrate George Washington's 200th birthday. Along with other large evergreen trees, such as hemlocks, the pines create a cool, shady path as you approach the pond.

**4. Tift (or Sullivan's) Pond** -This five-acre pond is a scenic and restful spot to enjoy listening to the dam's waterfall and watching for wildlife in and on the water. Although the names have been used for years, neither Tift nor Sullivan owned the pond. It was created between 1846 and 1866, as an auxiliary water source for the silk mill, owned by John and George Hanks, located a mile downstream. The original silk mill (1810) is reportedly the first such mill in the U.S. and is now at the Henry Ford Museum located in Dearborn, Michigan. Although it is possible to cross the top of the dam, following the trail across the bridge below provides better footing and a view of this historic stone dam.

**5. Root Cellar** - Once past the dam, the pond-side trail branches off to the right. Beyond this junction, look for an old root cellar just off the trail to the left. During the winter, this underground stone structure maintained a temperature just above freezing, which kept the farm's crops, such as potatoes and cabbages, from spoiling. After a short distance farther along the trail, another trail (the perimeter trail) branches off to the right and climbs the hill.

**6. Around the Pond** - As you enjoy a walk around the pond, note the bridges and boardwalks that cross the streams flowing into the pond. They were constructed by the CT Forest and Park Association's roving trail crew and the Mansfield Mustangs, a middle-school community service group sponsored by Mansfield Parks and Recreation Department. Funding for the trail improvements was provided by a grant from The Last Green Valley, Inc.

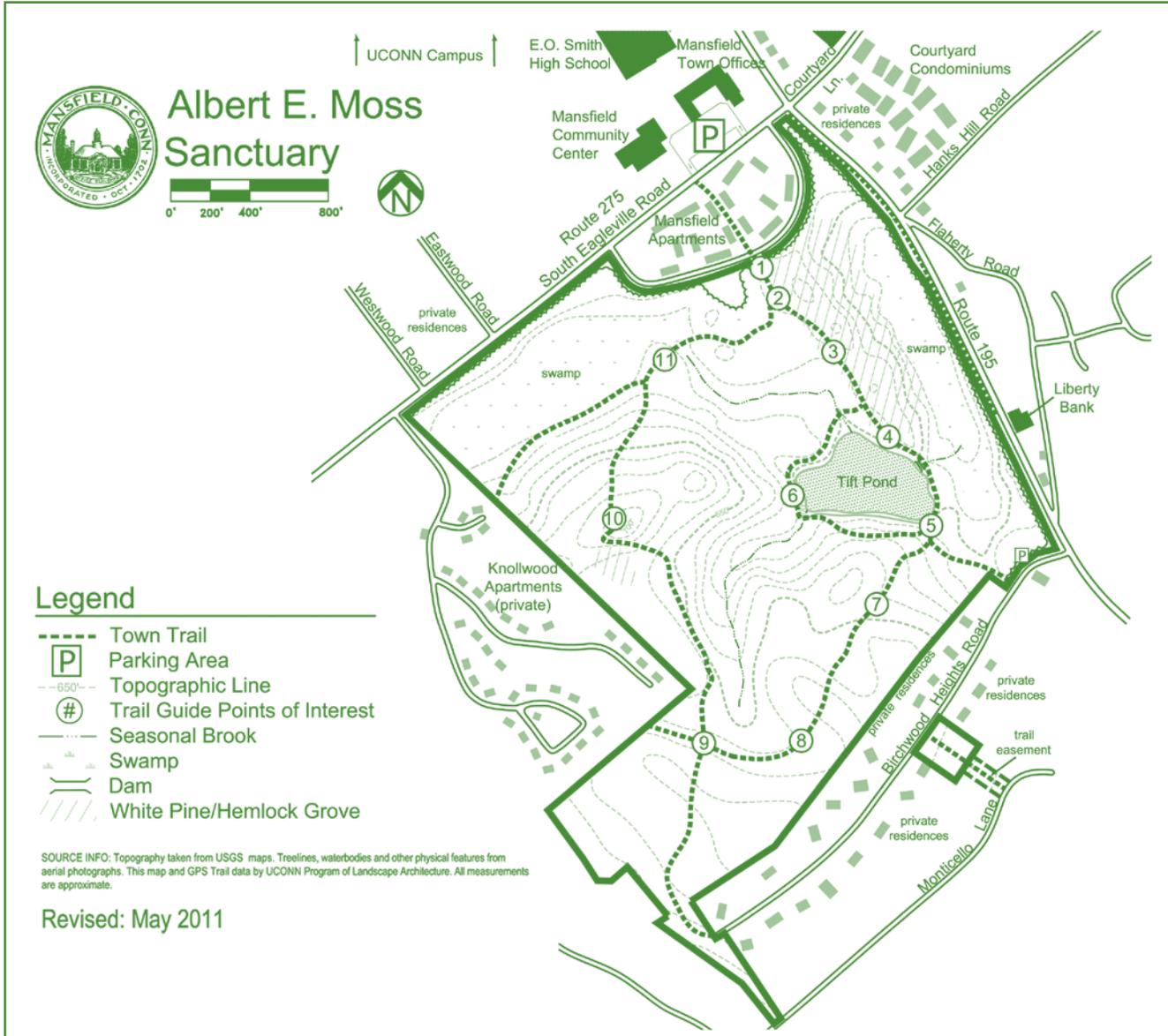
**7. Woodland Competition** -The perimeter trail climbs from the dam area up a hill with views out over the pond when there are no leaves. The trees on this hillside are competing with non-native species, as bittersweet climbs into the branches and multiflora rose makes thorny thickets that shade out tree seedlings.

**8. Old Field** -The trail levels out on a former farm field that is returning to forest. Both native and non-native shrubs and trees are slowly replacing the grassland. This brushy habitat is home to birds and other wildlife that prefer these young plants to taller trees in the surrounding forest.

**9. Mature Forest** -At the west end of the field, the trail re-enters the woods and curves to the north. At a four-way trail junction you can choose to go straight ahead to the Knollwood Apartments, or turn left onto a trail to the end of Birchwood Heights Road. To continue on the perimeter trail, turn right. The woods in this dry, well-drained area of the Sanctuary feature mature oaks and hickory trees. Seedlings of these trees are being browsed by deer, so that in the future this forest will have trees that deer do not like to eat, such as red maple and black birch.

**10. Hemlock Grove** -At the property's highest elevation (700 feet), notice a grove of eastern hemlocks slightly to the east. The eastern hemlock grows best in a cool, humid climate. A non-native invasive insect and warming climate are threatening this species.

**11. Spring Wetlands**—After descending the hill, the perimeter trail passes a path to Knollwood Apartments on the left. Continue on the perimeter trail across a brook, then look for a vernal pool on the north side of the trail. It features frogs and salamanders that gather in the spring to mate and lay eggs. On moist spring days, listen for their calls. The trail continues to the main entrance trail where you can turn left to return to Mansfield Apartments.



SOURCE INFO: Topography taken from USGS maps. Treelines, waterbodies and other physical features from aerial photographs. This map and GPS Trail data by UCONN Program of Landscape Architecture. All measurements are approximate.

Revised: May 2011