



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2024 GUIDE TO OPT OUTSIDE

STATE PARKS

Kent boasts three state parks within its borders, all of which offer stunning natural beauty and opportunities for outdoor activities. Parking fees are required for visitors with vehicles registered outside the state of Connecticut from April 1 through October 31.

KENT FALLS STATE PARK

[Visit the website](#)

462 Kent Cornwall Rd, Kent, CT 06757

Kent Falls State Park features an impressive series of 17 waterfalls cascading down from 250 feet and flowing into Falls Brook, eventually joining the Housatonic River.

Native Americans fished along the banks of this brook and mills made use of water power during colonial times. The park itself was created in 1919 with a gift of 200 acres by the White Memorial Foundation.

This scenic spot has viewing platforms and a hiking trail that loops the magnificent falls for visitors to enjoy.

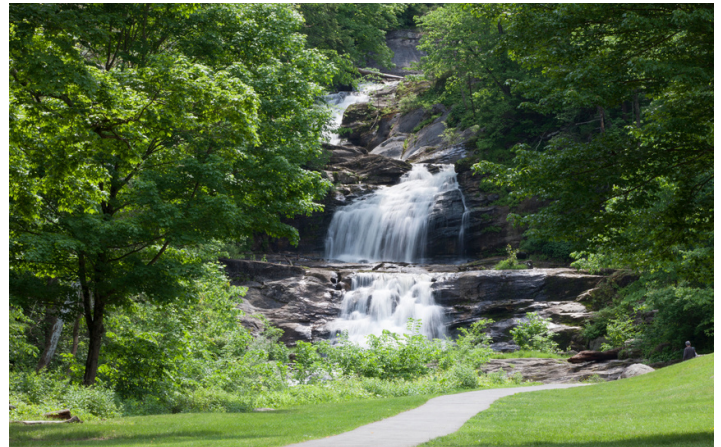


Photo by Beckerman Photography.



MACEDONIA BROOK STATE PARK

[Visit the website](#)

159 Macedonia Brook Rd, Kent, CT 06757

Macedonia Brook State Park was also created by a gift of land from the White Memorial Foundation in 1918. This area too was once inhabited by Native Americans and during the colonial era was home to industries like cider, grist and saw mills and the manufacture of iron ore. Ruins of an iron forge are still visible at the southern end of the park.

In the 1930s, the Civilian Conservation Corps, a government program that was part of then President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, maintained a camp at the park and worked to make improvements.

Today, Macedonia Brook State Park is open seasonally for camping in addition to being a great spot for hiking, fishing and cross country skiing in the winter.

LAKE WARAMAUG STATE PARK

[Visit the website](#)

30 Lake Waramaug Rd, New Preston, CT 06777

Created in 1920 and named after the Native American Schaghticoke Chief Waramaug, Lake Waramaug State Park boasts the second largest natural lake in Connecticut.

Located along the west shore, the park is a favorite place for seasonal activities like camping, picnicking, swimming along the well-maintained beach, canoeing and paddle boarding. Canoe rentals are available during the summer months in addition to a launch area for those who bring their own kayaks and canoes.



APPALACHIAN TRAIL

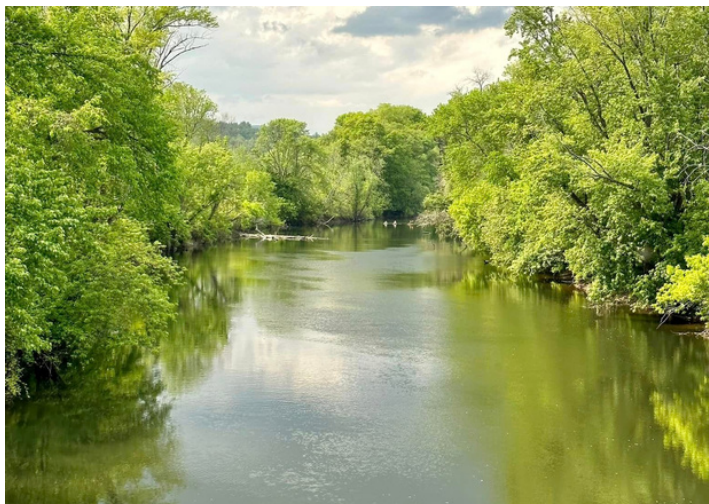
Designated America's first National scenic trail in 1968, the 2,198.4-mile Appalachian Trail was first conceived in 1921 and completed in 1937. Built by private citizens and maintained each year by thousands of volunteers, this world-class trail meanders through 14 states. Kent is located 1,461 miles from Springer, GA and 723 miles from Katahdin, ME, with a trail head 9/10 of a mile from the center of town.

For those who want to experience short sections of the trail, a walk north or south from Kent offers great beauty. For a half day hike head north, walk the trail 14 miles north to the Covered Bridge in West Cornwall and spend time along the Housatonic River; approximately 5 hours. For a shorter walk, head south slightly off the trail along the Western edge of the Housatonic for 5 miles to the Covered Bridge at Bulls Bridge; approximately 2 hours. If you feel more adventurous, a great weekend walk on the Connecticut section of the Trail goes from State line (NY) to State line (MA) for 52 miles, 11.5 miles south from Kent and 40.5 miles north.



HOUSATONIC RIVER

Kent is nestled in the valley of the majestic Housatonic River. The river's name comes from the Mohican phrase "usi-a-di-en-uk," translated as "beyond the mountain place."



The river stretches 149 miles long from its source in the Berkshires in Massachusetts south to the Long Island Sound at Stratford and Milford Points in Connecticut. The river's watershed encompasses just under 2,000 square miles, and its total fall from source to Sound is 1,430 feet.

Humans first came to live on the land surrounding the river about 10,000 years ago. The land was once home to Native Americans. They used the river as a thoroughfare and food source.

The first European settlers arrived in 1639 where they settled in Stratford at the mouth of the river. The river provided vital water power to fuel the industries of the 18th and 19th centuries. The remnants of dams, mills and furnaces can still be found on the river's banks. During the booming iron ore production era in the second half of the 1800s and ending after the turn of the century, water from the river was used to cool finished iron utensils, tools and armaments.

Today, there are five hydroelectricity dams located along the river, one of which is at Bulls Bridge. Built in 1903, the dam generates over 39,000 megawatts per hour of electricity annually.

In 2023, a stretch of 41 miles of the Housatonic River from the Massachusetts border to the Boardman Bridge in New Milford received the Wild and Scenic River federal designation. This section of the river is now a member of the National Park Service's Partnership Wild and Scenic Rivers Program, a federally funded consortium designed to protect and enhance rivers throughout the country.

The Housatonic River is a well-known and sought-after destination for kayaking, canoeing, whitewater paddling, fly fishing and wildlife observation. Additionally, it provides walking and hiking opportunities; a 5-mile section of the Appalachian Trail runs parallel directly next to the river. The river's stunning natural beauty is truly a treasure.

FAVORITE SPOTS

POND MOUNTAIN NATURAL AREA 120 Fuller Mountain Road

pondmountaintrust.org

Pond Mountain Natural Area is one of Kent's best kept secrets. Boasting 800 acres of land with forests, open fields and a crystal-clear glacial lake, this is certainly a gem for those seeking the serenity of nature with several easy to moderate hiking trails, including one that circumnavigates the lake, and viewpoints atop mountain peaks.



ST. JOHN'S LEDGE Accessed via River Road

For those seeking a challenging trek, St. John's Ledge is the place to go. This is a popular place for both advanced hikers and rock climbers. The steep hike or climb to the top of Caleb's Peak offers rewarding views of the Housatonic River and area below. A sign on River Road marks the start of the trail.



BULLS BRIDGE RECREATIONAL AREA 261 Bulls Bridge Road

Bulls Bridge Recreational Area offers spectacular views of the rapids as water plummets from the hydroelectric dam. There is also a trail leading to the confluence of the Housatonic and Ten Mile Rivers before eventually connecting to the AT. A picturesque overview of the surrounding area can be found atop Ten Mile Hill.



OUTDOOR PARTNERS

CT AUDUBON SOCIETY AT DEER POND FARM Audubon Society

ctaudubon.org
860.799.4074

Spans 835 acres with 20 miles of hiking trails open to the public daily dawn to dusk.



NORTHWEST CONNECTICUT LAND CONSERVANCY Land Trust

ctland.org
860.927.1927

Works to preserve natural areas, fish and wildlife and working farmland. Eighteen miles of hiking trails.



KENT LAND TRUST Land Trust

kentlandtrust.org
860.488.9185

Works to protect Kent's natural beauty and resources. Hiking trails on over a dozen preserves.



HOUSATONIC VALLEY ASSOCIATION Nonprofit

hvatoday.org
860.672.6678

Works to protect the entire Housatonic River watershed.



HIKING SAFETY TIPS

As you trek through the great outdoors in Kent, observe the following safety tips to be sure your experience is safe and enjoyable.

- Tell a family member or friend when and where you'll be hiking. Give them a quick call or text before you set out and when you return.
- Always have a printed copy of the map of the trail you'll be exploring with you.
- If there is a registration booklet at the beginning of your trail, be sure to write down your name(s), date and time of your hike and notate your checkout once you've finished.
- Be sure your phone is fully charged before setting out.
- Wear appropriate footwear such as comfortable sneakers or hiking boots. If you're trekking in the snow, wear snowshoes or crampons.
- Dress for the weather—wear layers (synthetic fibers and not cotton are better for cold-weather hiking), bring a sunhat, sunblock, rain coat, winter coat, gloves and whatever else you'll need to be comfortable in the weather conditions you'll be hiking in.
- Stay hydrated by bringing plenty of water. Keep your energy level up by bringing snacks.
- Bring a small first aid kit with you.
- Stay on clearly marked paths. If you're unsure of where to go next, stop, turn around and go back.
- In case of emergency, call 911.