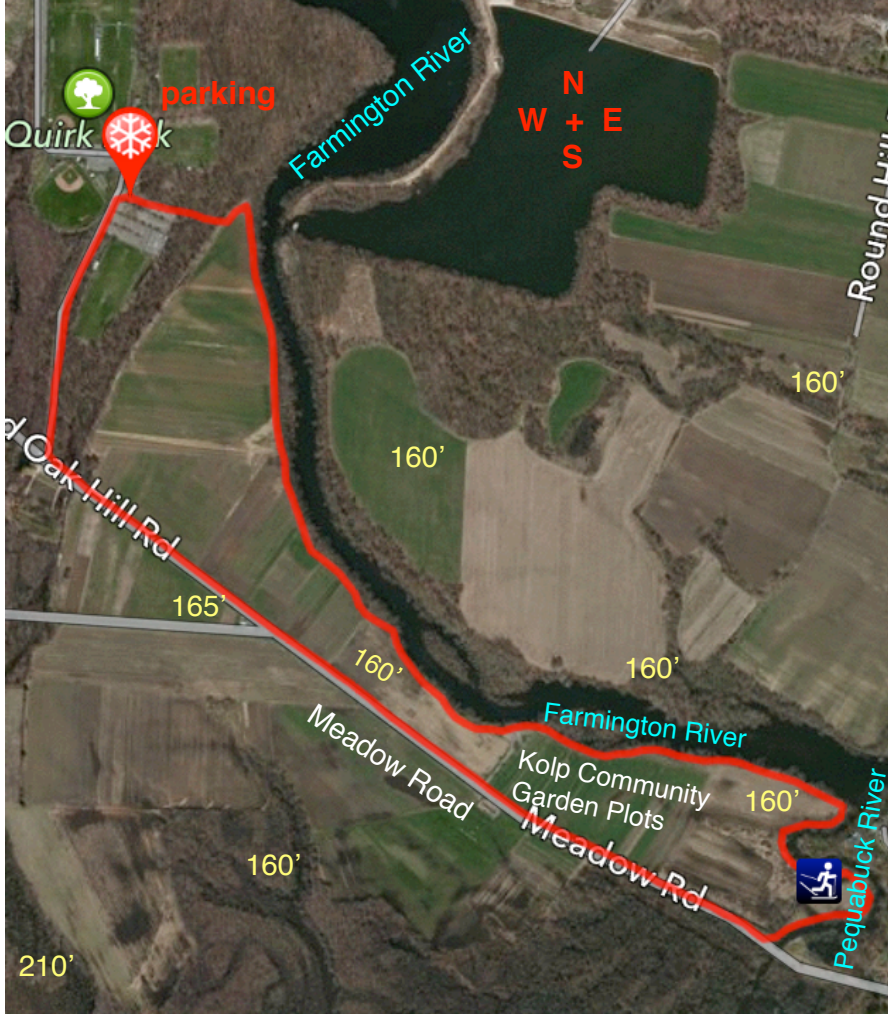


## Farmington Flats Loop Trail 3.1 miles



This loop hike follows the bottom of a glacial lake created 12,000 years ago which is now great for farming.

This trail is paved for 1.4 miles, cinder pack for 0.3 miles, and a wide dirt trail for 1.4 miles.

Alan M. Perrie 10 / 11 / 22

The Farmington Flats is a local term that is known as a great area for farming due to its deep, rich, level topsoil that seems to be missing big rocks. It is also the location where the Farmington River stops flowing south and turns to the north. Many years the Flats get flooded by the Farmington River, which adds a new layer of topsoil and an even better area for farming, as long as it doesn't happen in the growing season. In 1645 the town was incorporated and named Farmington because it was such a great farming town. The reason for this goes back a few years.

In pre-glacial times, the Farmington River flowed south from here to join the Quinnipiac River and emptied into Long Island Sound. As the glaciers advanced, they pushed a mass of glacial till to the front and sides of it. When the climate changed and became warmer, the glacier stopped moving and deposited a terminal moraine to the south. The Farmington River could no longer flow south, so a lake began to form. The lake became quite long because the volcanic Metacomet Ridge to the east had no weak areas until it reached the Tariffville area of Simsbury. The flooding every year brought new rich sediment that had no place to go but the bottom of the lake. The elevation of the Flats is about 160 feet above sea level and is mostly surrounded by lands with an elevation above 200 feet. The lake at the Flats was about 40 feet deep. The weak point in the east was a red sandstone deposit in the present area known as Tariffville Gorge. The Farmington River now had a new outlet as it now flowed into the Connecticut River. The lake slowly started to drain and left behind the rich flat soil from here to Simsbury. Today, the elevation of the Farmington River in Unionville is 180 feet and at the start of Tariffville Gorge it is 130 feet. At the Farmington Flats the down stream flow changed to the north, when the Gorge got eroded to below 160 feet. The elevation of the Connecticut River in Hartford is near 0.

The Farmington Flats Loop is 3.0 level miles, perfect for hiking, running, and dog walking, but you better move faster than a glacier or you will never make it home for dinner. Park at the northwest corner of the first parking lot on the right in Tunxis Mead Park ( 41.729261, -72.854519 ). Follow the parking lot to the wide trailhead in the northeast corner that shortly merges into the open fields. Turn left to the Farmington River and follow it downstream to the confluence with the Pequabuck River, where the Farmington River turns to the north. The trail now merges with the Nancy Conklin Trail that follows the Pequabuck River to the parking lot on Meadow Road. Follow the paved bike path west to Tunxis Mead Road and back to your car. On your walk back, make note the height of the former lake frontage that rises about 50 feet above you and the lake bottom that extended over 15 miles north past Simsbury.

Ice Age in Connecticut link: <https://timescavengers.blog/2019/02/02/memories-of-a-glacier-in-the-connecticut-river-valley/>

Farmington's Historic Dams: <https://collections.ctdigitalarchive.org/islandora/object/660002:4551>