

## Shade Swamp Sanctuary Blue Trail 1.3 miles



Shade Swamp Shelter is listed on the NRHP  
It was removed in the winter of 2022.

Shade Swamp's sanctuary 1934- 1960



The Shade Swamp Sanctuary, Blue Trail takes you by structures built in 1934 by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the Great Depression. Parking ( 41.704278 -72.859258 ) is next to the former Shade Swamp Shelter, a post-and-beam structure that was placed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) on September 1986. In the first 0.1 miles of the Blue Trail you pass by a number of abandoned cages from an old zoo that was also built by the CCC. It was designed as a sanctuary for endangered or injured native birds and animals. Since it was called a sanctuary, people in the 1930's brought non-native species in a hope for a better home. The zoo was offered monkeys, alligators, and parrots for a number of years. The zoo was abandoned in the 1960's. The trail also takes you to a ridge that was part of a glacial deposit that blocked the southern flow of the Farmington River creating a large glacial lake, 12,000 years ago.

In 1955 this 1.3 mile loop hike became part of a nature trail booklet that identified 14 natural features. In 1995 the Trail Guide was updated and the 14 numbers on the above map are described on pages 17-25. In 2022 the Trail Guidebook became a PDF that can be downloaded from Farmington's Historic Hikes website. Pages 1-4 and 26-32 of the Guide provides great additional information.

Most of the 1.3 mile hike is on rolling glacial terrain, which is also good for bird watching. The trail starts to the right of the large wooden sign and shortly comes to a "T" junction. Turn left and then a quick right to discover the remains of the zoo cages. A short distance past the last cage, you pass by the "T" junction of your return trail. There are a several other trails that cross, but continue straight looking for a painted blue blaze and the 14 numbers. Just past #3 you will turn right to cross a short and narrow bridge. At 0.5 miles you will ascend a glacial deposit to reach a junction with the short loop on this glacial kame terrace. Go slightly left and continue to ascend to #7 at the top. 12,000 years ago you would have had a great view of a large glacial lake. (note the hike for the Farmington Flats Loop). The Blue Trail now starts to steeply descend and returns to the junction at #10. The trail follows this ridge back heading southwest. At 1.1 miles, it bends to your right (northwest) to reach the only 90° left turn at the "T" junction you passed earlier. Turn left and return to your car passing the zoo site.

A link to the Shade Swamp Sanctuary <https://www.ctmq.org/shade-swamp-sanctuary/>

A link to the Abandoned Zoo <https://www.damnedct.com/shade-swamp-sanctuary-the-abandoned-zoo-farmington/>

A link to the CCC [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian\\_Conservation\\_Corps](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civilian_Conservation_Corps)