

WINDSOR TRAIL 5 & 10K TRAILS
Y2955-2022 Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club AVA-784

“PRE-AMBLE”:

City/State	Windsor, CT
Event Name	Windsor in Hartford County Founded as a trading post in 1633, the town features a typical colonial center green in addition to a recently developed woodland trail along the Farmington River.
Event Type	OSB Seasonal Walk (2022/Y2955) 4/1 – 12/31/2022
Award	IVV Credit Only
Rating	5k:2B / 10k:2B – 1A
Distance	5k and 10k
Strollers	Medium
Wheelchairs	Medium
Pets	Yes
Restrooms and Water	Yes. In restaurants in center of town, south of Start Point
Sponsoring Club	Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club
POC	Lee West, LFWest@sbcglobal.net , 860-721-1185. P.O. Box 251, Glastonbury, CT 06033
Start Point/Driving Directions	WEB REGISTRATION ONLY, using the AVA Online Start Box. From I-91S: Take Exit 38 for Rt. 75 toward Windsor/Poquonock. Left onto Rt. 75/Poquonock Ave. (<i>Alt: Take Exit 36 for Rt. 178/Park Ave. toward Bloomfield. Right onto Rt 178 E/Park Ave.</i>) Left onto Rt. 159N/Palisado Ave. Windsor Center River Trail parking lot is at 41 Palisado Ave. From I-91N: Take Exit 37 to Rt. 305/Bloomfield Ave., toward Windsor Center. Right onto CT 305E/Bloomfield Ave. Right onto Rt. 75S. Left onto Rt. 159N. (<i>Alt: Take Exit 42 to Rt. 159 toward Windsor Locks. Right onto Rt. 159S/S. Main St. Right on Rt. 159S.</i>) Windsor Center River Trail parking lot is at 41 Palisado Ave. GPS Coordinates: 41 51'0.36"N 72 38'29.852" W
Event Information	Trail Highlights: Both routes feature a short and easy multi-purpose paved path along the Farmington River in a wooded area, as well as the original meeting house, a walk around the Palisado Cemetery (graves of Connecticut notables Oliver Ellsworth and Gov. Roger Wolcott) and houses dating from the 17 th .C.,18 th C. and 19 th C. around the Green. In the center of town is an interesting old train station. The 10K route additionally goes through the Loomis Chaffee campus, a private co-ed boarding school.
Hours	Dawn to dusk
Special Programs	Rockin' Around the Clock, Walking with American Vets, Town Halls/City Halls, Walk the USA A-Z
Comments	

“POST-AMBLE”:

Be sure to log back into the OSB system to “finish/complete” your online registration after doing the walk. The OSB system does not deduct any walking fee from a walker’s Event Bank until they have submitted walk completion info., including the date the event was walked, the distance walked, and the selection of applicable special programs that walker is participating in. (Nevertheless, a fee of \$2 for a downloaded PDF is deducted from the user’s Event Bank when the PDF is downloaded. Later, any PDF fees are credited back to a walker’s Event Bank when he/she submits the walk completion info as a paying for credit walker. Note, however, the \$2 coupon for the downloaded PDF will expire in 60 days.)

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AVA Special Programs: *Rockin' Around the Clock, Town Hall/City Halls, Walking with American Vets, Walk the USA A-Z*

FOR IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, CALL 911. LOCAL CLUB POINT OF CONTACT: Lee West, 860-721-1185. **AVA NORTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR:** Wayne Knapp, 518-469-7298.

DIRECTIONS	COMMENTARY
10K Directions	
1 From Windsor Center River Trail parking lot, proceed to trail sign at back of lot and take right immediately, which leads to Mechanic St.	This multi-purpose trail begun in 1996 along the Farmington River consists of a loop to the east of Rt. 159 and a spur under and west of Rt. 159 to the 19 th C. Farmington River Railroad Bridge. Walkers will cover the entire trail (less than 2 miles) in two segments as part of the 10K walk.
2 Pass the pedestrian bridge on your left, continue straight and follow the trail as it bends right out to Mechanic St. (no sign). A small pond and an apartment building beyond will be on your right.	This section of the Windsor Center River Trail used to be "Rowland Ln." and was part of the main route between Windsor and Hartford in colonial days. It continued to the north, via a ferry across the "Rivulet" (Farmington River), up to the original town center on Palisado Ave. and south (you'll see the wooded turn-off shortly before you reach Mechanic St.) on Batchelder Rd. through the Loomis Chaffee campus.
3 At Mechanic St., turn left.	
4 At Batchelder Rd., cross the street on the crosswalk and turn left.	
5 After crossing over bridge, with body of water to the right, proceed to sign for Loomis Chaffee School (and roads leading into campus). Turn left. Where sidewalk ends, proceed up hill to right past the brick smoke stack. Follow Batchelder Rd. along the playing fields to your left.	<p>Loomis Chaffee School, chartered in 1874 as the Loomis Institute, was a gift of five wealthy siblings of Col. James Loomis and Abigail Chaffee, who, having all lost children younger than 21, wished their legacy to be the education of children in the future. The Loomis School opened in 1914 to 39 boys and 13 girls (Nathaniel Batchelder was first Headmaster), and in 1926 the girls moved to a separate school, The Chaffee School, on the old Windsor green north of the Farmington River. (You will see the buildings later in the walk.) In 1970, the schools combined to form the present-day Loomis Chaffee school, with over 700 students enrolled (2/3 board at the school).</p> <p>The white timber 17th C. Loomis Homestead (built by Joseph Loomis, who came to America from England in 1638) can be seen to the right as you turn left after crossing the bridge.</p> <p>The Farmington River is in the distance to the east beyond the athletic fields and leads to the Connecticut River at this point. On a nice cool morning, the sun on your left will be welcome!</p>
6. The road loops clockwise around to Island Rd., with athletic fields to your left. At intersection, turn left onto Island Rd. and proceed between fields and across active train tracks (Hartford-Springfield Line) to main road: Rt. 159, here called Windsor Ave. to the south and Broad St. to the north.	<p>Note the gray house on Island Rd. with an interesting evolving sort of design to your left, built by Nancy Beckwith in 1822.</p> <p>Throughout this walk, you'll see many brick buildings. Brickmaking was one of two key components (the other was tobacco) of Windsor's economy since around 1675. Bricks were especially needed for chimneys, and importing them from England was slow, labor-intensive and expensive. The 2 to 5-mile-wide clay deposit that ran between Windsor Locks to the north and current-day Wethersfield to the south proved a great resource for the brick industry (clay+water+sand=high quality bricks). There were over 40 brickyards in Windsor by the mid-19th C., with the last one disappearing in the 1960s after concrete and steel took over as building materials.</p>

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<p>7. Turn right using crosswalk across Island Rd. onto Broad St. Keep walking north about five blocks past Batchelder Rd. and Windsor Public Library. Keep straight, with Windsor Town Green on right.</p>	<p>The Windsor Public Library occupies the 18th C. home of two generations of Mathers. The Town Hall of Windsor is situated on the right side of Green as well.</p> <p>The double-sided Windsor Town historical sign on Green describes the early history of the town. Grapevines on the Town seal represent the early Connecticut towns of Windsor, Wethersfield and Hartford. There is an ongoing friendly debate about whether Windsor or Wethersfield is Connecticut's oldest town – depends on how you define town vs. trading post/settlement: Wethersfield claims it is Connecticut's "most ancient town" (and hey, your trail master is from Wethersfield, so there!)</p>
<p>8. Turn left to cross Broad (at the crosswalk) and continue down Maple Ave. Walk several blocks to the end at Lennox Ave.</p>	<p>After passing Welch St., enjoy the grape-colored house on your right!</p>
<p>9. Turn left onto Lennox Ave.</p>	
<p>10. Cross Lennox to Washington Park, entering Park through pillars and walking left over spillway bridge. Continue around the pond clockwise and exit park back to Lennox. Cross street and proceed down Filley Rd. for two blocks.</p>	<p>Note <i>Deacon John Moore</i> 1664 house at 37 Filley and <i>William Loomis</i> 1805 house at 31 Filley.</p>
<p>11. Turn left onto Preston and take a quick right onto Elm St., continuing back to Broad St.</p>	
<p>12. Turn left onto Broad St.</p>	<p>At the corner of Elm and Broad is the current VFW building, erected on the former homesite of a prominent Windsor dairy farmer and businessman (including growing tobacco and manufacturing bricks), <i>William Horace Filley</i>. He died in 1919 and is buried in the Palisado Cemetery.</p>
<p>13. At next block, turn right across Board St. (sign says, "To Central St.") and across the Green toward the Post Office. Take left, walking past CVS store to Central St. and turn right to end.</p>	<p>Stop a few minutes in the Post Office lobby to see the 1940s wooden <i>bas relief sculptures</i> by an Argentinian sculptor, depicting the transplanting, harvesting and stringing of tobacco. Tobacco growing began in the mid-1600s, when Connecticut farmers imported tobacco seeds from Virginia to plant in Connecticut's sandy loam. Tobacco became a key industry in Windsor in the 1800s and 1900s (used for the two outer layers of cigars). Tobacco barns and the white tents that protect shade tobacco can still be seen around Windsor (e.g., along Pierson Ln. off Palisado Ave. to the north).</p>
<p>14. Turn right on Mechanic St. You will pass the apartment building and pond that you saw earlier in the walk.</p>	<p>On Central St., note the 1870-built railroad depot on your left, now owned by Amtrak and serving the New Haven-Springfield Line. The Union Street Tavern, which is north (to your left) of here (and can be reached by car from Palisado Ave.), is a good spot for lunch or dinner. (The historic building has been a fire station, police station, antique store, ice cream parlor and coffee shop!)</p>
<p>15. Turn left to re-enter Windsor Center River Trail.</p>	
<p>16. At the pedestrian bridge over the bog, turn right to proceed on River Trail along Farmington River. Pass junction on left where trail comes in from Trail parking lot on Palisado Ave. Continue straight, under Palisado Ave., crossing over the small Mill Brook bridge.</p>	<p>NOTE on Possible Flooding: This part of the trail can become quite wet and muddy when the river is high. The trail masters have always been able to walk through this area, but if it is too wet for your comfort, you can retrace your steps to the trail junction leading out to the Palisado Ave. parking lot, turn right on Palisado, and cross Palisado to Bart's just before the bridge. You can now pick up the route in the next step.</p>
<p>17. Proceed on path with Farmington River to your right to Pleasant St. and Windsor boat ramp. Walk just past arched railroad bridge, noting the beautiful construction (1867). NOTE: This is an active track.</p>	<p>Fishing is excellent in this section of the river. Windsor's spring "shad derby" has been held here since 1955. Farther north on the river near Windsor Locks is a fishway allowing the fish to get around Rainbow Dam.</p>
<p>18. Turn around and proceed back on River Trail to Palisado Ave. Turn left on Palisado Ave., crossing the bridge over the Farmington River, and above the River Trail.</p>	<p>On your right is the popular Bart's (1946), good for a snack or lunch!</p> <p>The current concrete and steel bridge was built in 1991 and replaced a steel truss bridge from 1916.</p>

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<p>19. Turn left at First Church in Windsor (before “Exit Only” sign) and walk across grass to asphalt path that leads left to back of cemetery.</p>	<p>The First Church in Windsor (UCC) originated from a group of people who sailed in 1630 from Plymouth, England on the “Mary and John,” lead by Rev. John Warham. This is the 4th meeting house of the church (in different Windsor locations), with the first one in 1639 made of logs with a thatched roof in the center of the stockade fort or “Palisado,” and the present (4th) one built at the end of the 18th C. Palisado Cemetery: The original burying ground was within the Palisado stockade fence for settlers in the early 1600s, but no stones remain from that period.</p>
<p>20. Follow the path as it turns right, which brings you along the oldest part of the cemetery. Turn right to return through parking lot to Palisado Ave.</p>	<p>If you’re interested, find the following notable graves (see inset with approx. positioning of graves on our Trail map) ... <i>Kathern Gibbs</i> (KG) - rare flat brownstone “wolf stone” – early custom to prevent wolves from digging up bones, born 1604 in Exeter, England, d. 1660. Husband Giles Gibbs listed on Founders Monument on Green across street <i>Oliver Ellsworth</i> (OE) – marble obelisk with acorn on top. U.S. Constitution drafter, 3rd Chief Justice of U.S, U.S. Senator from CT, d. 1807 <i>Rev. Ephraim Huit</i> (EH), table-top monument - oldest surviving gravestone in CT, d.1644 <i>Roger Wolcott</i> (RW) – Governor of CT, d. 1767 <i>Nancy Toney</i> (NT) – white marble stone, former slave of the Chaffee-Loomis family, d.1857. Many of the older stones are of brownstone or sandstone quarried from the former “Stone Pit” quarry on a ridge west of Palisado Ave. toward Windsor Locks.</p>
<p>21. Exit the cemetery and turn left on Palisado and walk one block to stop light.</p>	<p>After the walk, you may wish to drive about 1.5 mi. north to the 1781 Oliver Ellsworth Homestead at 778 Palisado Ave., open to visitors on weekends – best to check www.ellsworthhomestead.org or call 860-688-8717. (This landmark was part of our former Windsor volkswalk decades ago, but the lack of sidewalks on this busy road was one reason to re-design the route.) On your drive to the Homestead, you will pass the stone 1931 Grant Memorial Bench on your right that was erected on the home site of Matthew and Priscilla Grant, possibly ancestors of Pres. Ulysses S. Grant. Matthew Grant was a surveyor and migrated to New England from England during the Puritan Great Migration (1620-40).</p>
<p>22. Carefully cross Palisado to other side of Green: North Meadow Rd. Walk south down the Green.</p>	<p>Palisado green was originally a much larger square-shaped area extending north to the Parsonage house at 160 Palisado Ave. and east to the middle of the current Palisado Cemetery. During the 1600s, the area had the first meetinghouse, blacksmith and barber shops, whipping post, and stocks. In the 1700s, it was a busy commercial center with barrels of goods from docks on “Rivulet” (Farmington River), soldiers drilling, animals grazing, etc. Note the following in the center of the green: <i>Founders Monument</i> (1930) – depicts the Mary and John ship from England, which Rev. John Warham and his congregation sailed on in 1635. Many names of early settlers can be found in the Palisado Cemetery across the street. <i>Major John Mason statue</i> – has become controversial as a Town statue, due to his role in fighting the Pequots; plans as of 2022 are to move it a short distance to the side of the Windsor Historical Society building at the south end of the Green. The left/east side of the Green (No. Meadow Rd.) is lined with 18th C. homes, such as the <i>Hooker/Sill</i> house (1765) at #118 and the <i>Dr. Hezekiah Chaffee, Sr.</i>, house (1767) at #108 (structures later becoming the <i>Chaffee School for Girls</i>, 1926-69). Tours of the Chaffee house can be arranged through the Windsor Historical Society across the road.</p>

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<p>23. Continue on North Meadow Rd. down small hill to end, facing the Farmington River. Retrace steps up hill back to Green to the Windsor Historical Society and left out to Palisado Ave.</p>	<p>As the road bends to the left, you will pass the bank in which once was an ice house, and the home (for a dozen years) of one of Windsor's founders <i>Maj. John Mason</i>. In 2016, your trail master participated in a CT Office of State Archaeology's field school in a filled house cellar, presumably of John Mason. The dig yielded many artifacts from the 1600s, as well as from the 100 years or so of habitation by the <i>Marshall family</i> in the 1800s. Imagine finding in the ground up to your left fragments of pipe bowls and stems, a brass cloak clasp, bright blue German Westerwald stoneware, scratch-blue English white salt-glazed stoneware, decorated Delftware, a medicine bottle, small button, slip-decorated earthenware, and more! At the end, on the opposite side of the road are the homes of Capt. <i>Samuel Cross</i> (1730) at #44, near where a ferry crossed to connect with the former Rowland Ln. heading south and <i>Jonathan Alvord</i> (1786) at #36 (which later had a store in the basement in the mid- 1800s.) Farther up the road on the left are the <i>Elisha Strong</i> house (1780) at #10, who operated a tannery for generations, and the house of Return Strong, Sr. (1699), who was a tanner and great grandfather of John Strong, a couple houses northwest. The next house, the 1899 <i>Fred Morgan</i> house at #8, is an excellent example of high Victorian Gothic architecture.</p> <p>Note the <i>John and Sarah Strong</i> house (1758) between No. Meadow Rd. and Palisado Ave. It was originally built on land granted to Lt. Walter Fyler in 1640 for his "service" in the Pequot War (same war that John Mason fought in, giving rise to the current debate about his stature/statue). It was a general store and Windsor's first post office. It also was the home of the Stiles sisters in the 19th C., and was often visited by their cousin, author Henry R. Stiles, as he worked on his book, <i>The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor</i>. Stiles also wrote a comprehensive history of Wethersfield. The building, together with the modern extensions, houses the Windsor Historical Society (open Wed.-Sat. 11 am-4 pm), whose free museum and gift shop (and rest rooms) are worth a visit.</p>
<p>24. Turn left on Palisado Ave and cross bridge. Return to FINISH at Windsor Center River Trail parking lot.</p>	<p>On your left at #76-78 Palisado Ave. is the <i>Fenton</i> house (1850), which was a store into the 1900s. Hope you enjoyed your stroll through both nature and history today!</p>

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2. Turn right immediately at trail junction in the direction of Mechanic St. (though you will not proceed as far as Mechanic St.)	This section of the Windsor Center River Trail used to be "Rowland Ln." and was part of the main route between Windsor and Hartford in colonial days. It continued to the north, via a ferry across the "Rivulet" (Farmington River), up to the original town center on Palisado Ave. and south to Batchelder Rd. through the Loomis Chaffee campus.
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<p>12. Retrace steps up hill back to Green to the Windsor Historical Society and left out to Palisado Ave.</p>	<p>Farther up the road on the left are the <i>Elisha Strong</i> house (1780) at #10, who operated a tannery for generations, and the house of Return Strong, Sr. (1699), who was a tanner and great grandfather of John Strong, a couple houses northwest. The next house, the 1899 <i>Fred Morgan</i> house at #8, is an excellent example of high Victorian Gothic architecture.</p> <p>Note the <i>John and Sarah Strong</i> house (1758) between No. Meadow Rd. and Palisado Ave. It was originally built on land granted to Lt. Walter Fyler in 1640 for his “service” in the Pequot War (same war that John Mason fought in, giving rise to the current debate about his stature/statue). It was a general store and Windsor’s first post office. It also was the home of the Stiles sisters in the 19th C., and was often visited by their cousin, author Henry R. Stiles, as he worked on his book, <i>The History and Genealogies of Ancient Windsor</i>. Stiles also wrote a comprehensive history of Wethersfield. The building, together with the modern extensions, houses the Windsor Historical Society (open Wed.-Sat. 11 am-4 pm), whose free museum and gift shop (and rest rooms) are worth a visit.</p>
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