

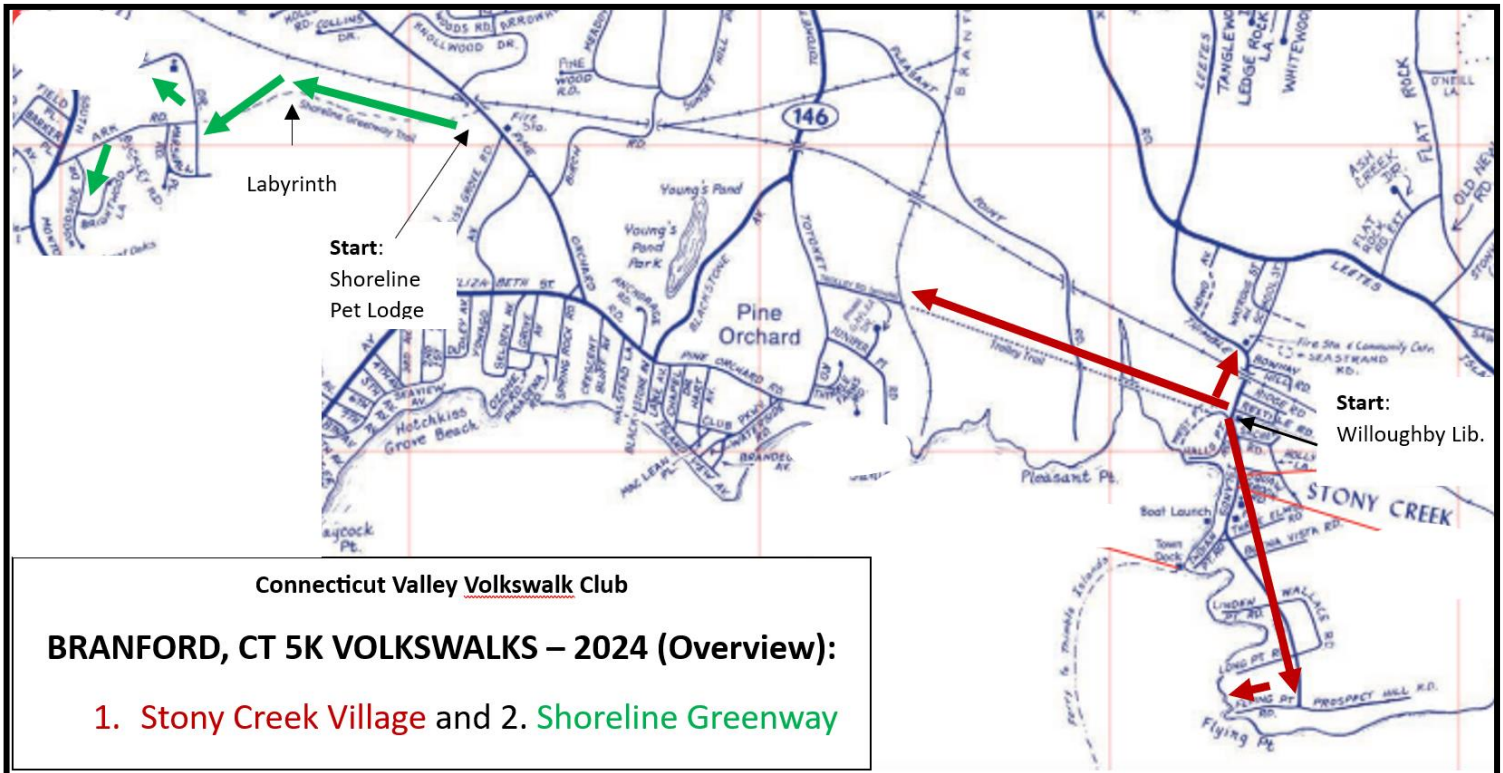
Branford TRAIL –5K/6K and 5K (possible total 10K/11K)
Y3408-2024 Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club

“PRE-AMBLE”:

City/State	Branford, CT
Event Name	Branford – Stony Creek and Shoreline Greenway in New Haven County <small>("Optional" and "County" fields in AVA)</small>
Marketing Pitch	Scenic seaside village (famous for its pink granite quarries) on Long Island Sound with old Trolley Trail Footbridge over a salt marsh, plus a Greenway trail featuring Branford Labyrinth and Chet’s Pond.
Event Type	OSB Year-round Walk (1/1 – 12/31/2024)
Award	IVV Credit Only
Rating	Stony Creek: 2B Shoreline Greenway: 1B
Distance	5K and 6K (Stony Creek) and 5K (Shoreline Greenway)
Strollers	Medium
Wheelchairs	Medium
Pets	Yes
Restrooms and Water	Yes, at the Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library at Stony Creek start point and porta potties along the way. No restrooms on the Shoreline Greenway trail.
Sponsoring Club	Connecticut Valley Volkssport Club
POC	Eileen Anderson, eilande@comcast.net , 203-314-5401.
Start Point/Driving Directions	<p>WEB REGISTRATION ONLY, using the AVA Online Start Box.</p> <p>STONY CREEK WALK: Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library, 146 Thimble Island Rd., Branford, CT</p> <p><u>From I-95N:</u> Take exit 56 (Leetes Island Rd./Stony Creek) and continue on Leetes Island Rd. straight (through Stop sign) to Thimble Island Rd. At Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library, take left onto Rextile Rd. (faded street sign) just past Legacy Theater. Park on one of the streets near the library (it’s free).</p> <p>SHORELINE GREENWAY WALK: Parking Lot next to Shoreline Pet Lodge, 157 Pine Orchard Road, Branford, CT</p> <p><u>From I-95N:</u> Take exit 54 for Rt. 1 to Short Beach/Rt. 146. Turn right onto Cedar St. Turn left onto Main St., which curves right to S. Main and right to Rt. 146. In 0.2 mi., turn left onto Pine Orchard Rd. In another 0.5 mi., turn right to stay on Pine Orchard Rd. In 0.6 mi., turn right and in 250 ft., turn left. The Shoreline Greenway trail is right next to the Shoreline Pet Lodge (set your GPS for Shoreline Pet Lodge).</p> <p>SHORELINE GREENWAY WALK:</p> <p><u>From STONY CREEK Walk (Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library):</u></p> <p>Head west on Rextile Rd., from Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library parking lot, to Thimble Island Rd. Turn right onto Thimble Island Rd. and take left onto Rt. 146W/Stony Creek Rd. Continue onto Damaschas Rd. Take left onto Pine Orchard Rd. and turn right into parking lot next to Shoreline Pet Lodge.</p>

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Event Information	<p>Trail Highlights: Two 5K walks and a 6K walk, separated by an 8-minute drive.</p> <p>STONY CREEK (5K/6K) is a village on Long Island Sound which was a summer vacation location with old Victorian hotels. This walk offers a shoreline with views of the Thimble Islands. Many foundations are made of the pink granite that was produced in Stony Creek and which was used in the foundation of the Statue of Liberty.</p> <p>The SHORELINE GREENWAY trail, in the Pine Orchard section of Branford, features a beautiful labyrinth. It runs alongside the railroad that once ran through this area. The route proceeds west into the attractive Cemetery which originally served quarry workers from Sweden.</p>
Hours	Dawn to dusk
Special Programs	Walk the USA A-Z; a-MAZE-ing Labyrinths, Rails-to-Trails
Comments	



Connecticut Valley Volkswalk Club

BRANFORD, CT 5K VOLKSWALKS – 2024 (Overview):

1. Stony Creek Village and 2. Shoreline Greenway

“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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FOR IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, CALL 911. LOCAL CLUB POINT OF CONTACT: Eileen Anderson, 203-314-5401. **AVA NORTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR:** Carol Giesecke, 302-399-6334

The Branford event consists of two non-contiguous walks, separated by approx. 3.5 miles. Walkers can do either or both walks:

- 5K/6K Stony Creek
- 5K Shoreline Greenway

for a possible total distance of 10K/11K.

We suggest doing the Stony Creek walk first, and then proceed to the Shoreline Greenway.

STONY CREEK 5K/6K Directions

1. Park on any of the streets (it's free) near the **Willoughby Wallace Memorial Library** START POINT on Rextile Rd. (Library address is 146 Thimble Islands Rd.)

The Stony Creek 5K/6K walks consist of 3 segments radiating out of the Start Point, north, south and west. These are indicated both in the directions and on the map, which shows the turnaround points for each segment.

Bathrooms are available in library: M-Th 10 am-8pm; Fri-Sa 10 am-5 pm (summer 10 am-2 pm); Sun 1 pm-4 pm. If Library is closed, porta potties are a few minutes south of Library at Bayview Park.

You will immediately notice on the grounds of the library the ubiquitous pink granite of Stony Creek – used for decorative purposes (such as the granite sundial pillar), as well as practical reasons such as building foundations (e.g., pedestal of Statue of Liberty, Brooklyn Bridge, Columbia University, Grant's Tomb) and crushed stone walkways.

When urban centers needed fireproof buildings starting in the early 1800s, granite, marble and sandstone were used for construction. Quarrying of Stony Creek's hard granite began in 1859 (just opposite the Library, in fact), facilitated by the invention of steam-powered equipment and by the growth of railroad networks connecting Stony Creek to coastal cities. Only one of the original nine quarries is still in operation, north of Leetes Island Rd. on Quarry Rd. (south of I-95), where hiking trails offer views of the quarry.

2. **1st Segment of Walk (north):** After leaving the Library at the Thimble Islands Rd. entrance, turn right (heading north) and pass the Legacy Theater on your right.

Legacy Theater, originally a chapel in 1866, was once a silent movie theater, parachute factory, ladies garment warehouse, home to the Parish Players, and, in the 1960s, was The Stony Creek Puppet House. It is now an active 127-seat repertory professional theater.

3. Pass under the Amtrack bridge (note granite blocks) up the hill to the Stony Creek Museum, with attached Fire Department. Cross over School St. to view the front of the Museum.

Stony Creek Museum is a small one-room history museum of Stony Creek. It's free and open Fri.-Sat.-Sun., 1-4 pm. Note more of the local pink granite in the museum's foundation.

The building (1927) was formerly a Catholic church for immigrant workers (who came from Italy, Ireland, and Spain, as well as Finland, England, and Scotland), then a firehouse, polling place, community center, and Coast Guard Auxiliary. There are interesting displays on the granite quarries (including the construction of the West Point Battle Monument out of huge granite blocks), a model of the old Trolley Trail, a drum of the Stony Creek Fife and Drum Corps, an apothecary, and more.

4. TURN AROUND. Re-cross School St. and note the old train depot set back on your left. Stay on the same side of road (with sidewalk).

5. Turn left onto Ridge Rd.

6. Turn right onto Rextile Rd., which curves around and returns you to the Library.

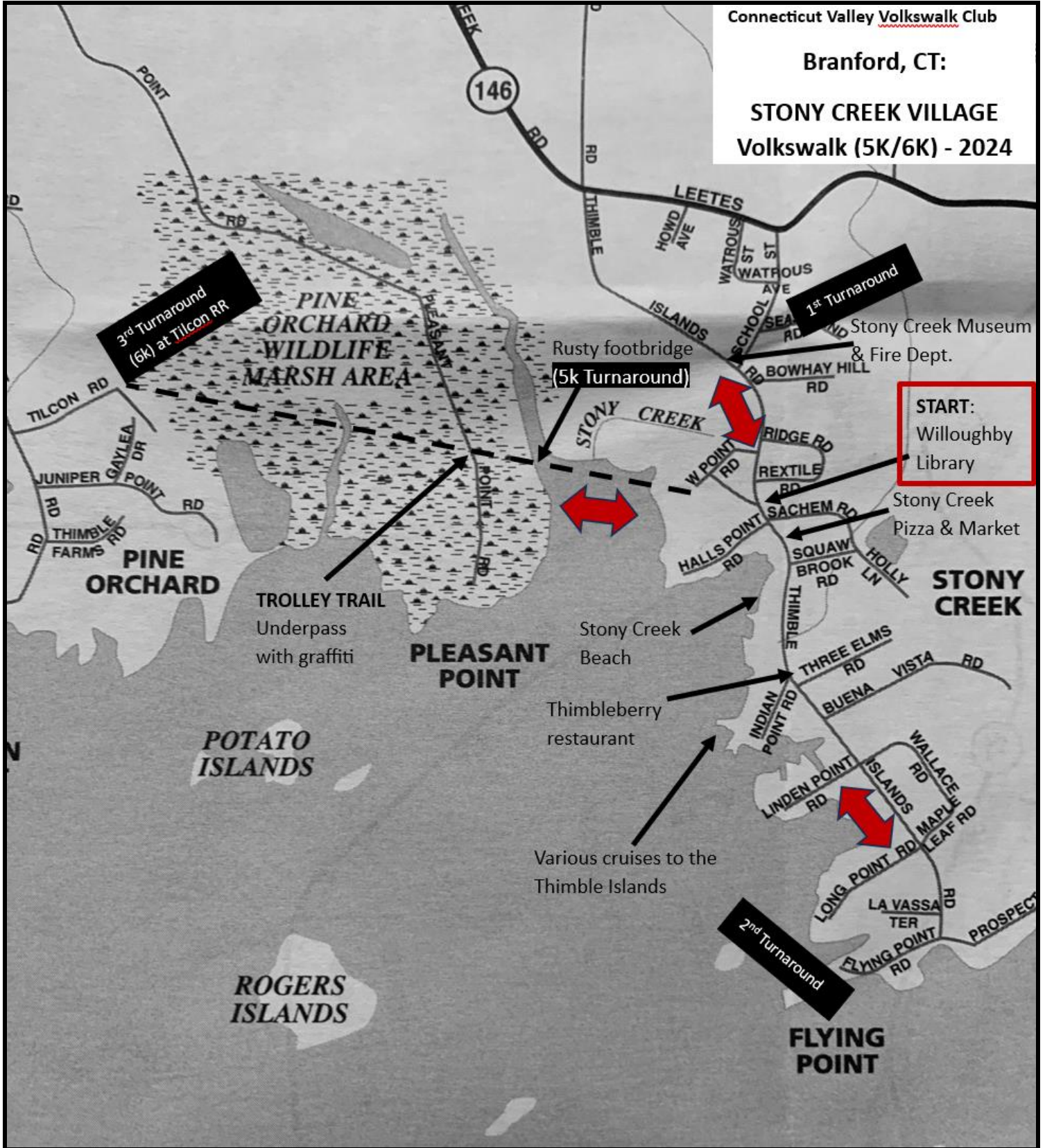
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<p>7. 2nd Segment of Walk (south): Passing in front of the Library on your left, stay left to continue on Thimble Islands Rd., the main road running south through town. (A grassy island on your right commemorates local veterans of various wars.) Pass Bayview Park and gazebo (porta potties in front) on your left, followed by a gift shop and the Stony Creek Pizza/Market.</p>	<p>One of several Little Free Libraries in town is located on the sidewalk in front of Bayview Park (blue box facing the park).</p> <p>Stony Creek Pizza/Market (cash only) has great sandwiches, fresh pastry, pizza and drinks, and offers outdoor seating facing the beach and water, with the Thimble Islands in the distance.</p> <p>The Stony Creek village was a thriving tourist destination through the 20th century (though many of its hotels burned or were torn down). People came by train, trolley and ferry boat.</p>
<p>8. In front of the United Church of Christ Church, cross the road at the crosswalk to the Stony Creek Beach and turn left. You will see another gazebo, playground and great views of some of the Thimble Islands.</p>	<p>The Thimble Islands are an archipelago of over 100 islands (some say “365”, one for each day of the year, but that depends on your definition of an island – versus a rock). The name derives from the thimbleberries (or “redcaps, a relative of raspberries) that once were abundant on the islands. All but one (Outer Island) are privately owned. Some have homes on them, most do not. They have evocative and colorful names like Governor’s Island (14 houses, was named after a very large goat or pig who guarded an oyster company’s base), Horse (the largest island, housing an ecology lab owned by Yale University), Money (29 houses, Capt. Kidd ‘s buried treasure?), Cut-in-Two, Hen, Davis (Pres. William Taft summered here for 2 years in the early 1900s), Bear (once named Goat Island after the goats that sustained Swedish immigrants who worked the island’s granite quarry), Lewis, Cat, Rogers, Potato, etc. <i>Connecticut Magazine</i> (Aug. 2023) carried a cover story on the Thimbles. Residents of Stony Creek village are called “Creekers,” whereas those who have homes on the islands are called “Islanders.”</p>
<p>9. At the end of the park, note on small island on the left the pink granite Isaac C. Lewis Fountain, whose shell basin served both people and animals.</p> <p>Porta potties are adjacent to the fountain.</p>	<p>The Lewis Fountain is a memorial to Isaac Chauncey Lewis by his daughter. It was carved in 1917 by a respected local stone cutter, John Melander, a native of Finland, who was unfortunately killed in a quarry accident a year later. Lewis was president of Meriden Britannia Co., forerunner of the International Silver Co. (Brittania is a softer form of silver, with 95.8% silver vs. 92.5% for Sterling). He was also mayor of Meriden (1870-1872) and a representative to the Connecticut General Assembly. He summered in Stony Creek, and you will see his Victorian “cottage” further down Thimble Islands Rd. past Linden Point Rd. on the right (#255).</p>
<p>10. The Thimbleberry restaurant will be in front of you, between Indian Point Rd. proceeding down to the right and the main road (Thimble Islands Rd.) on the left.</p>	<p>The Thimbleberry restaurant is open from 8:00 am - 6:30 pm. It offers a nice menu of sandwiches for take-out, eating in their small dining area, or eating outside by the harbor.</p> <p>The building next to (south of) The Thimblebury is the home base of the internationally known Stony Creek Fife and Drum Corps. The group is over 130 years old and still practices here on Thursday nights, we are told. If you ever have a chance to hear them perform at a parade or muster, go! Our CVVC President, Bob McDougall, himself a bass drummer in a Connecticut fife and drum corps, reports this group is the winner of many competitions both in the U.S. and abroad.</p>
<p>11. Proceed down Thimble Islands Rd., as it bends to the left. Just before Linden Point Rd., you will walk across a small bridge over a tidal stream, where you may see lots of crabs scampering around at low tide.</p>	<p>At #255, note the eclectic Lewis House on the right (see above, step #9) – a mix of Gothic, Stick, and other architectural styles. It was moved from across the street in 1912, using oxen.</p> <p>Another Little Free Library in town is at #297 Thimble Islands Rd.</p>

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<p>12. At stop sign, turn right onto Flying Point Rd., keeping shoreline at left. Proceed until road turns to gravel.</p>	<p>The colorful flower gardens and the views of some of the Thimble Islands are fabulous along this road.</p>
<p>13. TURN AROUND and retrace steps along Flying Point Rd. back to Thimble Islands Rd. Turn left on sidewalk at Thimble Island Rd. and walk back to The Thimbleberry restaurant.</p>	
<p>14 At sign for Indian Point Rd., take a sharp left around the restaurant and walk to the wooden bridge where the ferries and water taxis to the Thimble Islands are. Note schedules on the signs, should you want to take one later as a “walk on.” TURN AROUND and walk back to the park in front of The Thimbleberry.</p>	<p>At the end of Indian Point Rd. are the various Thimble Islands cruise boats (e.g., Sea Mist, The Islander, Volsunga IV) that are popular with tourists between late May and late Sept./early Oct. Two offer 45-50 minute narrated tours around the islands, a half-dozen or so tours per day (not Tuesdays), for about \$15 per adult. Another ferry (a water taxi) transports people to Outer Island, the only island where non-residents can go on shore, eat their picnic lunch, see the former stone home of the Well family and explore the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge trails, returning on a later ferry. Or really adventurous volkssporters might opt instead to rent a kayak to paddle out to Outer Island, imagining the original Mattabesic people who inhabited the island.</p>
<p>15. At the Lewis Fountain, take the crosswalk to the sidewalk in front of the post office and turn left. Walk back to the Library.</p>	
<p>16. 3rd Segment of walk (west): At Library, cross Thimble Islands Rd. at crosswalk and follow short paved road to West Point Rd. Follow signs to Trolley Trail.</p>	<p>Pass West Pt. playing field on right. You will cross over a salt marsh, home to many birds, such as ospreys nesting on platforms. The 1.2-mile (out and back) Trolley Trail is one segment of a network of trails maintained by Branford Land Trust, whose vision is a 25-mile greenway trail from New Haven’s Lighthouse Pt. to Hammonasset State Park.</p>
<p>17. Follow the trail and cross over the rusty Trolley Trail Footbridge. Continue until you reach a graffiti-covered bridge (Pleasant Point Rd. is overhead)</p>	<p>The Trolley Bridge is on the old route from downtown New Haven through East Haven into Branford that was in service for 30 years (1907-37). Off to your right (north) you may see Amtrak trains heading west toward New Haven or east toward Guilford and beyond.</p>
<p>18. 5K WALKERS: TURN AROUND at this graffiti bridge and skip to Step #21.</p>	
<p>19. 6K WALKERS: Pass through the graffiti-covered bridge to continue on the Trolley Trail through the Pine Orchard Wildlife Marsh Area. Enjoy the scenic views of the salt marsh and Stony Creek harbor in the distance to the left (south). You will be walking on a concrete path, which then becomes a dirt path on solid ground through the marsh grass to the railroad tracks at the end.</p>	<p>The railroad tracks at the end are used by Tilcon corporation to move stone from the quarry north of here down to the barges near Juniper Point in Pine Orchard, which then transport stone to New York City and beyond.</p>
<p>20. The railroad tracks are the 6K TURN AROUND. You’ll see lots of No Trespassing signs. Retrace your steps back to the graffiti bridge.</p>	<p>Enjoy the variety of shore birds – white egrets (might be perched up in the trees to your right), ospreys, great blue herons, kingfishers, yellowlegs, etc.</p>
<p>21. ALL WALKERS now re-trace their steps from the graffiti bridge along the Trolley Trail back to the Library on Thimble Islands Rd.</p>	<p>Congratulations! Hope you enjoyed this walk in Branford’s historic Stony Brook village.</p>

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Connecticut Valley Volkswalk Club
Branford, CT:
STONY CREEK VILLAGE
Volkswalk (5K/6K) - 2024

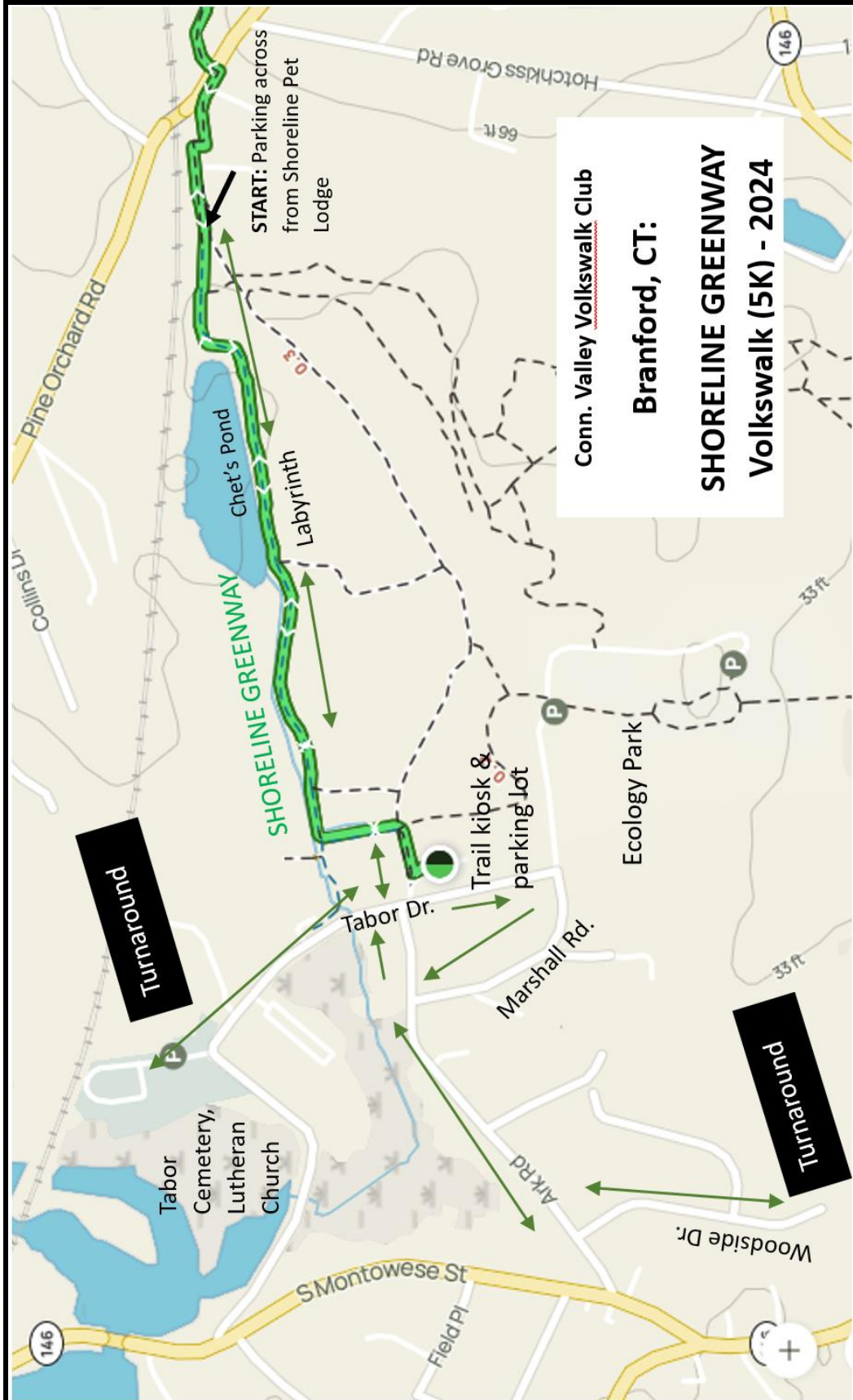
START:
Willoughby
Library

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DIRECTIONS	COMMENTARY
SHORELINE GREENWAY 5K Directions	
1. Park in lot by the trail next to the Shoreline Pet Lodge.	The trail you will be taking to the west is the Tabor section of the Shoreline Greenway. (The Shoreline Greenway continues east on the other side of Pine Orchard Rd. through wooded areas eventually to Stony Creek.)
2. Walk to Labyrinth, keeping Chet's Pond on right.	
3. Take a meditative stroll around the Labyrinth to its center and back.	
4. Continue left (west) on Greenway to a trail juncture and turn right (do not go straight, which goes to Ecology Park). The trail will go past a small parking lot on left and end at a trail kiosk.	This is the western end of the Shoreline Greenway..
5. Turn left at the Greenway kiosk onto Tabor Dr.	
6. Follow Tabor Rd.to the end. Turn right onto Marshall Rd. (no sign) and follow it to end (Ark Rd.). You will be going through residential neighborhoods.	Opposite your right turn onto Marshall Rd., you will see the road to Ecology Park, which formerly was the town landfill (dubbed "Mt. Trashmore" or "Mt. Garbage" by locals). In 2014 the area was converted to a grassy park on top with a pavilion and views of the Sound, with access from Tabor Rd. and from the Greenway. However, we don't recommend exploring this area due to reports of vandalism.
7. Turn left onto Ark Rd. Follow it to Woodside Dr.	
8. Turn left onto Woodside, walk to a cul-de-sac. TURN AROUND and walk back to Ark.	
9. Turn right on Ark and walk to end where it meets Tabor. Turn left onto Tabor and proceed to the Tabor Cemetery. Bear right into the cemetery.	The Tabor Lutheran Church is across the street from the cemetery.
10. Walk around the paved outer loop of cemetery which curves to left and returns back out to Tabor.	As you walk through the cemetery, you will notice many Swedish names: Anderson (over 50 of them), Carlson (about 30), Damberg, Engstrom, Erickson (40+), Gustafson, etc. – you see the pattern! Immigrants from Sweden worked the Stony Creek granite quarries in the mid-19 th century. Nine granite quarries operated in the area, peaking around WWI and continuing for about 150 years.
11. Follow Tabor back to the Greenway kiosk and turn left to re-enter Greenway.	
12. Retrace your steps on the Greenway back to your car, passing the Labyrinth on your right and Chet's Pond on your left.	Congratulations! Hope you enjoyed Branford's Shoreline Greenway and Tabor residential neighborhood walk!

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