

Features to explore in CT:

Week 2 of the Great Outdoor Pursuit 2021 starts June 12, 2021

Feature 2 is a Forest-explore an area where there are many trees. Forests are known as the lungs of the planet. This is because they supply a huge amount of Earth's oxygen, which animals need to breathe. The trees of a forest give off oxygen as part of a process called [photosynthesis](#). Forest trees also help to protect soil from [erosion](#). They block the forces of wind and water that wear away the land. In addition, forests offer a peaceful place for [hiking](#), [camping](#), [bird-watching](#), and exploring nature ([forest activities for children](#)). ([Definition from Britannica Kids](#)).

CT State Forest Facts: 1) There are 32 State Forests, comprising nearly 170,000 acres of state land; 2) While the oldest State Forest is over 100 years old, the youngest (Centennial Forest) is less than 10 years old; 3) State Forests include a variety of vegetation types; 4) All State Forests are managed for a wide range of goals. As a result, on Connecticut's State Forests, you can see everything from maintained wildlife meadows to mature hardwood forest. One benefit of getting out into the State Forests is to see the results of these various management activities; and 5) Connecticut's State Forests are located throughout the state, with Forests in each of the eight counties. This makes these Forests accessible to just about everyone in the state.

CT DEEP State Forest Suggested Location(s):

- [Cockaponset State Forest](#) in Chester and Haddam, [various Maps](#) (read about the [history](#) of this forest)
- [Nehantic State Forest](#) in Lyme, East Lyme, [Forest Map Lyme](#), [Forest Map East Lyme](#) (read about the [history](#) of this forest).
- [James L. Goodwin State Forest](#) in East Hampton, [Forest Map](#) (read about the [history](#) of this forest)
- [Mattatuck State Forest](#) in Harwinton, Litchfield, Plymouth, Thomaston, Waterbury, Watertown, [Forest Map](#) (read about the [history](#) of this forest).
- [Shenipsit State Forest](#) in Stafford, Somers and Ellington, [aerial Map](#) for Forest, [various Maps](#) (read about the [history](#) of this forest)
- [American Legion and Peoples State Forests](#) in Barkhamsted, [Forest Map](#) (visit the 200 year old white pine picnic groves in the Matthies Grove and Whittemore Recreation Areas). Read about the [history of the forests](#) at this location.
- [Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area](#) in Burlington, [Session Woods Wildlife Management Area Trail Map](#) (visit the Forest Meadow Trail, Cross-cut Trail, and Tunxis Trails to see demonstration sites, new forest that is being generated, and the Sessions Woods Forest) and use the [Session Woods Tree Identification Trail Guide](#) to identify the trees you see.

Activities to participate in at one of the recommended forest locations above, or visit a forest area local to you:

- 1) Sit in a quiet forest area and observe nature. Write down or draw a picture of what you see and hear or write a nature-based poem. Use the Project Learning Tree Activity [Poet Tree](#) to assist you. **Share a photo of your families poetry.**
- 2) Explore the forest by hiking or walking on a local trail or on a [State Park or Forest Trail](#). Use this [Forest Scavenger Hunt](#) list to see how many of the items your family/team can find. **Take a photo of your family hiking/walking and exploring in the Forest.**
- 3) Please visit the [UCONN Trail video series](#)-Hiking 101 Basics in English and Spanish before heading out on the trails.
- 4) Also visit one of our partners pages, Connecticut Forest & Park Association for [Hiker Resources](#).
- 5) While in the forest, try [letterboxing](#) with your family.
- 6) For more fun activities relating to forestry and trees, visit the [Family Activities](#) page on the Project Learning Tree website.

Family Book Suggestions:

[We Planted a Tree](#) by Diane Muldrow YouTube Read-Aloud

[The Boy Who Grew a Forest: The True Story of Jadav Payeng](#) by Sophia Gholz YouTube Read-Aloud

Special Event this weekend

Great Outdoor Pursuit families are invited to participate in the [CT Open House Day](#) on Saturday June 12, 2021. The purpose of this event is to inspire Connecticut residents to learn about all the experiences in their own backyard, anticipating that this will convert them into ambassadors who will recommend these experiences to other visitors.

Visit a DEEP facility of your choosing or one of the over 140+ virtual and in-person experiences available.