

ATTRACTIONS IN THOMPSON, CT

AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL



1. Morning Beckons Farm
343A Sand Dam Road
MorningBeckonsFarm.com

3. Quaddick State Park
818 Quaddick Town Farm Road
portal.ct.gov/DEEP/State-Parks/Parks/Quaddick-State-Park



5. West Thompson Lake & Campground
nae.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/West-Thompson-Lake/ A USACE property featuring 24 campsites, disc golf and extensive hiking trails. Picnic sites and canoe launch are also available.



2. Thompson Speedway Motorsports Park
205 E. Thompson Road
ThompsonSpeedway.com
America's first purpose-built road course and asphalt high-banked oval. Also home to the Raceway Restaurant, Bogey's Ice Cream and Raceway Golf Club.

4. Fort Hill Farms & Gardens
260 Quaddick Road
FortHillFarms.com
Offering an annual corn maze, ice cream, lavender gardens, special events and more!



6. Tee Rex Mini-Golf
274 Riverside Drive
Tee Rex is an 18 hole dinosaur-themed mini golf course. Group rates are available. Cool down with 25+ flavors of soft and hard serve ice cream before or after you play!



THOMPSON



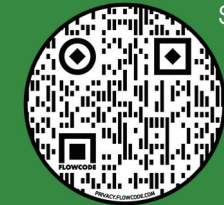
AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL THOMPSON

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Thompson

Home to family friendly events throughout the year, like the annual Makers Fair, Turkey Trot, summer concerts and more!

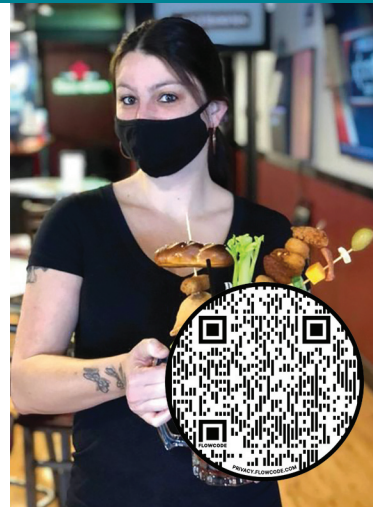
Thompson is rich in historical sites, from the Ellen Larned Museum on Thompson Common to the site of the Great East Thompson Train Wreck on the Air Line State Park Trail.



Find our calendar of events, links to the Thompson Historical Society, The Last Green Valley and all of our local attractions by visiting Thompson, CT...Find Your Way.



WHERE TO EAT



TRAIL TIPS

- Air Line Trail Head parking is located at East Thompson Road & New Road, at Lowell Davis Road and on Route 12 in Mechanicsville.
- From the East Thompson trail head, hike east to the site of the Tri-State Marker between CT, MA & RI; or take a short walk west to the site of the Great East Thompson Train Wreck of 1894.

For additional copies of this map, please email planner@thompsonct.org

AIR LINE STATE PARK TRAIL HISTORY

In the 1960s, over fifty miles of the rail bed from East Hampton to the Massachusetts border were acquired by the Connecticut State Park System to construct a recreational linear park.

This trail has a colorful past. The "Air Line" was envisioned as a direct line between New York City and Boston. It opened in 1873 and 25 miles shorter, it offered fierce competition to the shoreline rail service from New York to Boston. The mesmerizing, white-painted express train, known as the Ghost Train, made the run between Boston and New York in six hours, a record time for 1884.

The construction of the new rail line contained ambitious feats of engineering, blasting through granite hills, navigating deep valleys and rivers along the route. The Air Line Railroad's "Ghost Train" began in 1891 and was designed to attract wealthy travelers. Luxurious Pullman cars were painted white with gold trim, and the staff of the train wore formal white uniforms.



The catastrophic Great East Thompson Train Wreck on December 4, 1891 clouded the introduction of this fast new rail service. It was one of the greatest train wrecks in American history, and the only train accident to involve four trains. Still, over the next four years, successful businessmen and prominent citizens, including President Benjamin Harrison, rode the increasingly well-known Ghost Train. As it sped across eastern Connecticut, its luminescent cars were easily recognized, especially at twilight.

In the new 20th century, technology increased, railroad engines became faster, rail cars became longer, everything became heavier and after World War II, access to automobiles and interstate highways reduce the profitability of rail travel. The quaintness of the Air Line's winding grades as well as the weight restrictions of the spindly trestle bridges began to show its limitations. During its construction, the Air Line Railroad was expensive and controversial, but its operational costs would lead to its ultimate demise and abandonment. Passenger service on the Air Line ceased by 1937, and the track was completely abandoned by 1965.

Today, visitors enjoy scenic panoramas, village life, wildlife, hiking trails, and the tranquility of the rural landscape. The United States Department of the Interior recognized the southern section of the Air Line State Park Trail as a national recreation trail in 2002.

For more maps in this series, email outreach@ctrcd.org or visit ctrcd.org.



PARKING

Many parking areas serve the Air Line State Park Trail. Some primary locations are:

- THOMPSON**
 - Large parking lot at 121 Riverside Dr, (Rt 12, Mechanicsville)
 - Pull off for a few cars at Air Line trail crossing, 388 Sand Dam Rd
 - 5 car parking lot, located at 662 East Thompson Rd, near the junction of New Rd
- PUTNAM**
 - 18 Kennedy Dr, across from Canal
 - 80 Kennedy Dr, directly across from the South entrance of Simonzi Park
 - 98 Kennedy Dr
 - 165 Kennedy Dr (DMV lot)
- POMFRET**
 - 18 car paved parking lot at Pomfret Station, 13 Railroad Ave (off of Rt 169)
 - Parking adjacent to trail, in Town owned paved parking lot, west side of Pomfret Town Hall
 - Parking available in rear of Town owned paved parking lot at Pomfret Community Center, 207 Mashamoquet Rd (Rt. 44)
- HAMPTON**
 - Potter Rd 0.6 mile north of its intersection with Rt 6 in Goodwin State Forest
- WINDHAM**
 - Intersection of Beaver Hill Rd and Windham Rd (Rt 203) in North Windham, at the CT Eastern Railroad Museum and in downtown Willimantic.
- COLUMBIA**
 - Rt 87, Cook Hill Rd and Village Hill Rd
- EAST HAMPTON**
 - Depot Hill, Cobalt; Aldens Crossing (at Rt 16); Forest St (Between Hayes Rd and Childs Rd); Town Hall Rd (Off Main St.); Main Street; Watrous Street; Smith Street (at Cranberry Bog)
- PORTLAND**
 - Parking at 82 Middle Haddam Rd