Paradise Park Quest

**Windsor, Vermont**
Physical Difficulty: Easy
Special Features: Natural
Walking Conditions: Trail
Duration: 1:00
Season: May-Oct
Bring: Binoculars, Compass, Field Guide

**To get there:** From either Exit 8 or 9 off Rte. I-91, take Rte. 5 to Windsor. Turn west onto State Street at the traffic light and (following signs to the Mt. Ascutney Hospital) travel about 0.7 miles to County Road. Turn right onto County Road and continue about 0.2 miles to the parking lot for Paradise Park on the right, just before the entrance to the hospital on the left.

**Overview:**
A walk along wooded trails to a scenic pond.

**Clues:**
Welcome to Paradise Park,
A park filled with trails and woods,
Meadows and water,
And a hidden quest box inside a tree.

Begin by going under (or around) the gate.
Walk up to the big divide – a fork in the path.
Take the carriage road to the right to
Head downhill towards the sound of water.

Cross the brook and continue on.
At the bench, pause...
Look down to the cascading falls.
How long do you think it took this ravine to form?
Continue on the carriage road to the edge of a clearing.
Find a granite bench to your left. Check out the view.
Explore the shelter in the clearing,
Or embrace the big white pines,
Or look for a quiet spot to sit and listen.

But now back to the quest!
Go to the end of the clearing and take the trail to the left.
As you walk, you'll see the ridge drop off to the side.
Look for openings in the trees for a peek of water far below.

Keep walking on the long path through a mix of trees.
Look for white birch, beech, or hemlocks above,
Ferns and mushrooms down on the ground.
Listen for the singing chickadees or laughing woodpeckers.

You'll come upon an intersection. Bear to the right,
Follow the trail downhill...
Until you have a wide, open view of Lake Runnemede,
Covered with lily pads in summer and ice in winter.

Turn back the way you came. Notice the beaver lodge
On your left. Do you see any signs of recent activity?

Walk past the lodge and take the small trail to the left
That follows the lake's edge.
Look for two more beaver lodges as you walk.
Look for summer turtles sunning on the floating logs
Or tiny springs melting ice in winter.
Watch for ducks, geese, ospreys, or eagles.

Find a bench and take a rest.
But then continue on...
Suddenly, you'll leave the woods and be in the open.
But take a last look back into the trees.
The last tree of the woods holds your quest box,
Hidden in a hole right at its roots.

Leave your mark and hide the box well!
Back in the hole it goes, under the roots.
Use bark and leaves to keep the quest a secret.

You're at the end of the quest.
But how to get back to the beginning?
For a long way, turn around and retrace your steps
Along the lake, then left up the steep path
And through the woods and across the clearing,
Left on the carriage road and back to the gate.
And at the beginning you are.

Or... for the short way!
Turn your back to the quest box tree and leave the woods.
You’ll pass a cement pump house.
Go to the next pump house, a small one made of brick.
Find the path just past it on the right, and follow it up
Through zigs and zags until you reach the clearing.

Do you recognize the shelter and tall white pines?
Cross the clearing and go left on the carriage road.
Follow it back to the gate.
And oh, so quickly, you are back at the beginning.
This Quest was created by Barbara Rhoad in 1999.

**Other things to do nearby:** Check out Boston Dreams café at 7 State Street in downtown Windsor ([http://www.bostondreams.com/](http://www.bostondreams.com/)).

**Please be a good steward of the land: leave it better than you found it and pack out any trash you find.**

Valley Quest is a collection of treasure hunts that share and teach the natural gems and cultural heritage of the Upper Valley with children, families, adults, and visitors. It is a program of Vital Communities, a regional nonprofit working to engage citizens, organizations, and communities in creating solutions to our region’s challenges. Learn more at [vitalcommunities.org](http://vitalcommunities.org).

Have a suggestion, question, comment, or idea for us? We’d love to hear from you. Reach us at valleyquest@vitalcommunities.org or 802-291-9100.