

Wildlife Sanctuary



About the Sanctuary

The Amherst College Sanctuary is located on Nonotuck land.

The Sanctuary was first established in 1933; today, the sanctuary has grown from 60 acres to over 500 acres. The sanctuary includes open fields, wetlands, woods, ponds, and more. It is a popular site for research, athletics, and recreation on campus. Over one hundred species of birds, a number of tree species, and endangered turtles are among the other species that call the sanctuary home.

There is a network of trails in the sanctuary, which connect to other regional trails and the Norwottuck rail trail. The trails are popular for walking, running, and cross-country skiing. The Sanctuary Stewardship Committee is working to make the trail system more accessible to all students and members of the campus and broader community, ensuring that students enjoy the health, spiritual, and social benefits of the sanctuary.

Many Amherst students and faculty members also use the sanctuary for local biological research, with a particular emphasis on ecology.

Ideas for Class

- Complete an inventory of the trees in the sanctuary; this could be a mega-lab collaboration across multiple classes or departments!
- Study the ongoing relationships between the Kwinitekw's Indigenous nations and the native flora and fauna found in the sanctuary
- Use the sanctuary as a space for artistic movement and performance
- Join the annual Bio Blitz to document biodiversity in the sanctuary; compile survey data over multiple years to track changes
- Go on a walk in the sanctuary and discuss the mental health benefits of being outside
- Discuss structural racism and the ways natural spaces have been sites of exclusion or violence for many communities. Discuss ways to enhance inclusion and community decision-making in conservation

Who to contact:

The Sanctuary is open to campus community members. Please do not disturb any nest boxes, equipment, or other research projects. Please contact Kenneth Lauzier, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds, with questions about use. For ideas about class projects, contact Wes Dripps, Director of Sustainability

