

Randolph Township's Trails and Parks

Randolph was once a rural community made up of farms. Over the years much of the area evolved into neighborhoods. What has not been developed, nature has reclaimed into meadows and woodlands.

Today the township has an outstanding park system connected by a network of over 16 miles of trails. If you want to get out of the car and feel comfortable walking/running/biking, the trails are a wonderful to not only explore Randolph, but to also stay in shape. Since sidewalks are only in occasional neighborhoods, the trails are a great way to get around Randolph. Rather than risk getting hit by a car when I am walking, I choose to go somewhere safer than the side of the road... the trails.

Want a challenge? Try to experience all the trails in a month. You can also increase your pace each time. The trail system runs a 16-mile course traversing five parks! It deserves some exploring.

The trails from shortest to longest are:

The Green Trail (2.1 miles) For increased difficulty—start at Brandywine Court. Be aware that there is no parking lot. Instead you can park at the Randolph library and walk alongside the road to get to the trail if you really want parking and do not want to park in a neighborhood.

The Red Trail (3.88 miles) For increased difficulty—start at Shongum school instead of Cohn Farm.

White Trail (6.5 miles) At the intersection right before the Mt. Freedom Post Office (this is if you start from the Comb Hollow side of the trail), there are two VERY steep hills that go to the left and right. These will take you off the path (they also go nowhere) but, if you want to walk up a big hill for extra exercise—try this trail.

Blue Trail (7.3 miles) For increased difficulty—start at Radtke Road. Be aware that there is no parking lot though. For an easier trip—start at Heistein park. Also, you can split up the trail and only do one segment at a time.

You should **be prepared when you go**. Stay safe and bring:

- **A full water bottle**—to prevent dehydration.
- **A cell phone**—in case something happens and you need to call for help.
- **A buddy**—you do not need to but, it is nice to have someone there in case something happens like an injury or if you get lost. Also, if you are younger, it is better to be with an adult and not be alone.
- **A snack**—just make sure to take your garbage with you!
- **A map**—whether its physical or online you still should have an idea where you are and how to get to where you want to be.
- **A mask**—required when near people.

The Red Trail:

total: 3.88 miles

Starts at Cohn Farm (located where Centergrove Road and Castle Court intersect)

Ends at Shongum Elementary School

Takes about 3.5 hours to complete (at a medium walking speed)

Cohn Farm → Freedom Park

When you arrive, there is a trailhead and plenty of parking space. Then, there is a paved path that is under tree coverage that is adjacent to a big clearing. The meadow is filled with wildflowers in the spring and summer time and a couple trees are planted on either side of the path when you reach the clearing. Once you go past the meadow, the trail becomes gravel and goes into the woods. There you can either go to a path on the left that brings you to Centergrove Road but if you continue straight you will find yourself on a path that becomes paved again and will lead you to Freedom Park.

History and Things to Note:

- Cohn Trail used to be known as Cohn Farm and was home to orchards, organic vegetables, beehives, and chickens.
- Randolph Township purchased this land with open space funds in 2002.



To get to the second park of the red trail, you will have to cross Millbrook Avenue to go to Freedom Park. The continuation of the red trail is found right next to the football field on the paved path.

Freedom Park → Shongum Elementary School

If you are starting from Freedom Park the opening to the trail is next to the football field and is accessible by a paved path. Once you go into the woods turn left and then there is a sign that says that you can either go straight (that path leads to the town hall) or right which leads you deeper into the woods and to Shongum Elementary School. Once you turn right, there is only one path to follow and you will not have to stress about major directions anymore. The gravel path has trees on either side of you and makes you feel more in tune with nature. There are plenty of benches along the way to allow a quick (or leisurely) sit. Each time you visit this trail, you may learn something new. Did you know that there is a 9/11 plaque dedicating the Shongum trail in memory of the four Randolph Township residents lost in the World Trade Center? In addition, there are plenty of small streams that I never noticed until I walked the trails a couple times.

You can also bike on this trail, but it is quite hilly at points and except for only a small section, the whole trail is gravel. For safety reasons, one of the really steep hills is paved so people don't slip easily.



Picture from the trail that is after Freedom park

The Green Trail
Starts at Brandywine Court
Ends at Leslie Avenue

Total: 2.1 miles

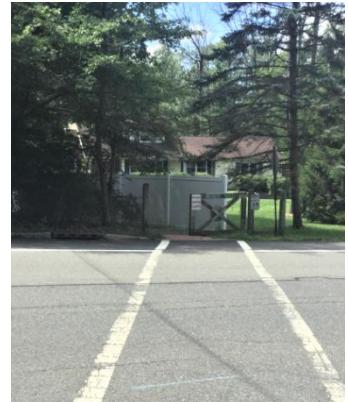
Takes about 2.5 hours to complete (with a medium speed walking pace)

Brandywine Court (Near Randolph High School) → Brundage Park

If you cannot find the actual start of the green trail (or do not want to start in a neighborhood) you can rejoin the trail at the high school.

It is important to not use this section of the trail during school hours because it intersects with two schools

There is a path that goes around the soccer turf field (on the left side of the upper parking lot—on the side next to Centergrove Elementary School). If you follow this path it will take you through the back of the elementary school. You just have to go across the parking lot and across the street there will be a trail opening marked by a gate. This path also overlaps with the red trail. This part is paved but the rest of the trail is gravel. The next intersection has an option of going right or straight. There is a sign that gestures to the right, which is the correct path. All you have to do is continue on that path and you will get to Brundage Pond. While walking through the schools, there is no shade until you cross into the woods.



History and Things to Note:

- Randolph's highest point can be found along this trail- there is a bench along the trail and a marker at the high point.

The entrance to the green trail (seen from Shongum School)

Brundage Park → Leslie Avenue—This trail ends in a neighborhood off Morris Turnpike.

To stay on the path, go right at the pond. Most of the trail that goes through the park is paved and not super hilly. If you continue the path you will get to a 4-way intersection. Take a left and continue straight for the rest of the trail. This trail is interesting because once you cross a street to stay on the path you pass by this meadow that looks like it has an old pole that was common for farms. At one-point Randolph was mostly farms. After the meadow, the trail ends, and you end up in a neighborhood that is easy to get out of. There is no parking at this end.



Right after this bridge, there is the road that you need to cross to get to the meadow.

The Blue Trail:

Total 7.33 miles

Starts at Heistein Park (Located on Doby Road, off Dover-Chester Road)

Ends at Radtke Road (Right near Shongum Lake)

Takes about 3.5 hours to complete (at a medium walking pace)

Heistein park → Right next to the Mt. Freedom Post Office

You can start the blue trail at the Heistein pond, which is marked by a large sign, located next to Heistein Park on Doby Road. To continue on the correct path, you will have to stay on the sidewalk that is next to the street, walking left of the pond sign. Once you get to the end of Doby Road when it intersects Combs Hollow Road, you will see a small parking lot that is marked with a wooden gate. There is a trail head and a parking lot. Most of the trail is pretty level but there are multiple deceiving hills that do not look steep until you actually begin walking up them. In addition, the majority of this segment of the blue trail is gravel, with the exception of a couple of paved parts. This trail is also in full shade (thanks to the lovely trees) and is really quiet for a peaceful walk.

It has 3 intersections with options to go left, right, or straight. To stay on the correct path, you need to stay on the path going straight for all 3 intersections.

History and Things to Note:

- Combs Hollow is one of the six registered National Historic Places in Randolph
- This segment takes about 1 hour and 15 min to complete when walking at a medium pace

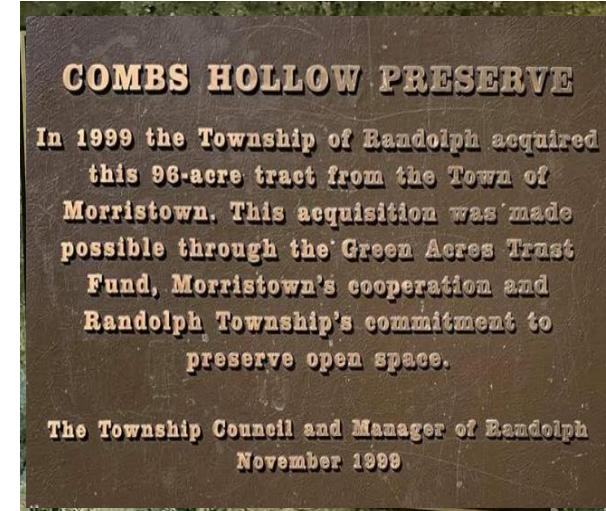


From left to right: the path next to Heistein Park that leads to the blue trail.

The parking lot for the Combs Hollow Trail head (also where the blue trail continues).

The opening/exit for the blue trail is right next to the Mt. Freedom Post office.

A history of the Combs Hollow Preserve



To get to the next segment of the Blue trail you will have to look across Sussex Turnpike (next to Mt. Freedom Golf) to see the next trail wooden gate. It is labeled "Randolph Trails" with a green sign.

Right next to Mt. Freedom Golf → Brundage Park

The path next to Mt. Freedom Golf is a straight one with only one intersection. If you do not want to wander neighborhoods and stay on the correct path, TURN LEFT. A little later you will have to turn left again. Look for a marker sticking out the ground with a green square. If it is another color (excluding reflectors) you have gone on another trail by accident. Walk to Brundage Park and make your way to the pond by making a right.



The path that is next to Mt. Freedom Golf

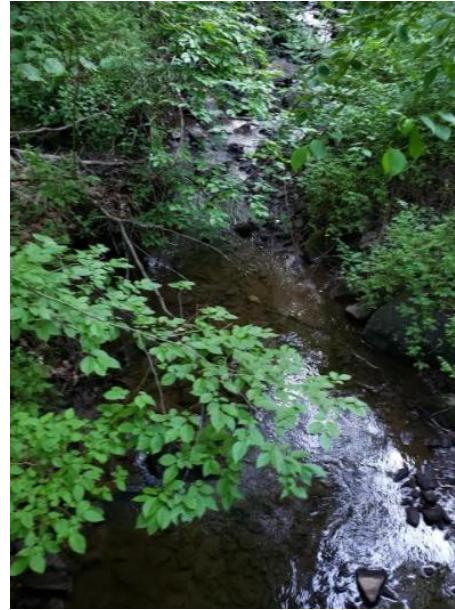
The opening that you will have to look for is right across from the Brundage pond (located next to Brundage Park and on Carrell Road).

Opening on Carrell Road → Freedom Park → Radtke Road (Near Shongum Lake)

After crossing the road safely, you are on the green trail with a straightforward path and no forks in the road. This **gravel path** will take you to a point that is across the road from the Freedom Park entrance. **This section of the green trail is in full shade, flat, and a short easy path.**

To rejoin the trail for the next segment, you must walk past the playground, to a path between the football field and the basketball court. Take a left when you reach the woods, go straight, and continue to go straight at the intersection. Turning right will lead to the red trail (which goes to Shongum Elementary School). Then you continue the same path until you will have to go right. While on the blue trail, you will go through the Hidden Valley Trail head. This is a good sign that you are getting closer to the end of the trail. The rest is straightforward and except for a steep downward hill at the end, it is also flat. On a positive note for all those who dislike hills or are worried about falling—the very steep hills are paved instead of being gravel. However, the majority of this trail is gravel.

The Hidden Valley Trail head (with the path being the rest of the blue trail)



The White Trail
Starts at Hidden Valley
Ends at Combs Hollow Road

Total 6.5 miles

Takes about 3 hours to complete at a medium walking pace.

This trail is almost identical to the Blue trail, except that it starts in a different place and ends a little earlier. Technically, the trail ends at the Hidden Valley Trail Head. It starts further down Combs Hollow Road and meets up with the blue trail and is a small distance from the Combs Hollow Trail Head. Refer to the Blue trail information above.

Orange Trails:

These are just connector trails from other roads/trailheads to one of the main trails previously listed. There are:

- Church Road → blue/white trail (0.1 miles)
- Municipal Building (Town Hall trail head) → blue/white trail (0.3 miles)
- Calais Road (Mendham) → blue/white trail (0.75 miles)
- Melanie Lane → red trail (0.1 miles)
- Lamalfa Road → red trail (0.75 miles)

Heistein Park and Heistein Pond:

If you are looking for a park with lots of open fields or to have a picnic, Heistein Park is a wonderful choice. While there is not any shade on the main fields, there is a pavilion with seating available that can be a nice spot when you want to stay out of the sun. Similar to Brundage Park, there is a pond located right next to the main park. Its marked by its own sign and can be used for fishing. You can also walk around the pond and admire all the greenery. The length around the pond is 0.4 miles

If you continue on the paved path that is alongside Doby Road (which also happens to be lined with trees), you can then go onto the Combs trail.

In the park, there are many fields commonly used for soccer, along with baseball fields that are sometimes occupied with camp during the summertime. However, in the evening (around 5:30 pm) the majority of people leave, and the park is relatively quiet. Also, if you are looking for a spot with a playground, there is a playground that is complete with swings.

This park is located on the edge of Randolph Township in the Ironia section. It's nice that there are so many parks as Randolph Township is a fairly large town and unless you know the Township you may feel you have crossed into another town.



Freedom Park:

If you are looking for a park with plenty of activities, Freedom Park is for you. Not only does it connect with multiple trails, but it also has a playground, football field, two baseball fields, soccer field, basketball court, a pavilion, and a volleyball sand pit. While there is some shade, most of the park is out in the open.

There is a short, paved path that loops around the park. It has easy hills and only takes 20 minutes to complete at a slow pace.

Freedom Park is nice because it is in the middle of the township. It also connects with trails that go to Shongum Elementary School, Brundage Park, the town hall, and Cohn trail. **It is located on Millbrook Avenue. Parking areas can be found on both sides of Millbrook.**



Brundage Park and Brundage Pond:

Brundage Park is a park with a lot to offer. It has tennis courts, multiple baseball fields, a basketball court, a skate park, a playground, a playhouse, a pond, and plenty of short trail routes. There is a blown-up section of this area on the regular map so that it is easier to navigate the Brundage trails.

While the whole township is connected by mile-long trails, Brundage is nice because not only does it connect itself with Freedom Park with trails but there are also pathways that you can take for a short walk that circle the park. At medium speed it takes about 1 hour to walk through all of them. You also can easily walk around the park on trails that are not 100% visible from the park but are not deep in the woods. If you want to walk with tree coverage, it is about 50% in the shade. Almost all of the trails are paved as well. With the exception of 2 hills, all of them are flat. It is also easy to go on an alternate route to avoid them.



The trail on the left is exclusive to Brundage Park. The picture below is the playground.



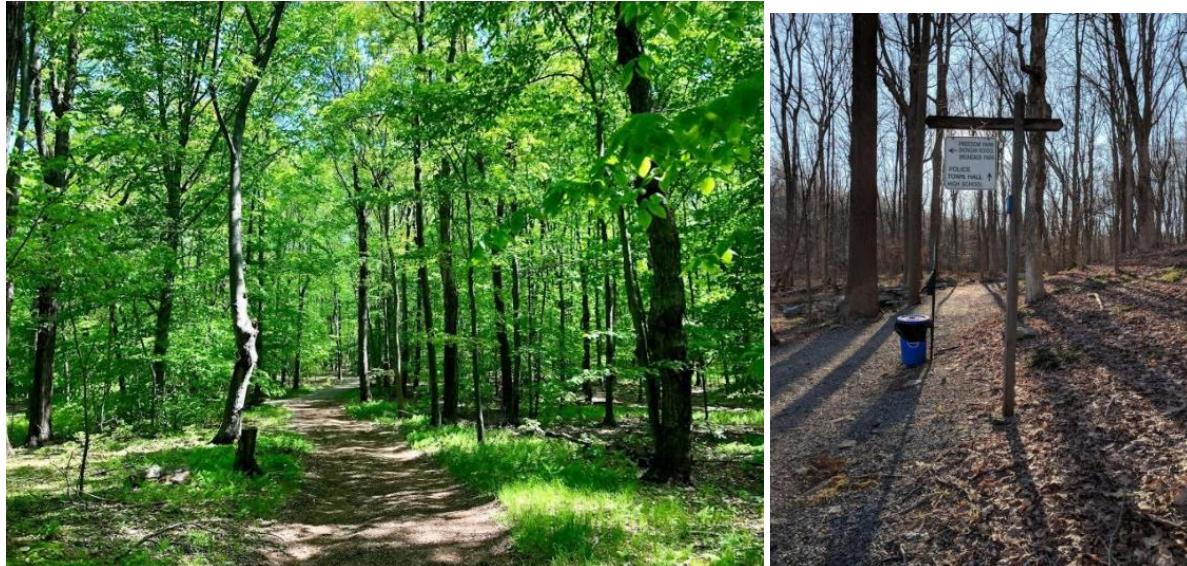
James Andrews Memorial County Park

Access Points:

- Millbrook Avenue, Randolph Township, Parking Area
- Everdale Road, Randolph Township, Parking Area

The park has a total of 588.89 acres with 5.7 miles of trails in the park. There are four trail heads, or access points to James Andrews Memorial County Park. They are Freedom Park on Millbrook Avenue; Town Hall on Millbrook Avenue; Hidden Valley Park on Everdale Road; and on Radtke Road.

The first parcel of land was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Brundage on May 1, 1956, and the park was dedicated on October 12, 1960. The 75-acre parcel was the first acreage listed on the newly formed Park Commission land inventory. The trail section in James Andrews Memorial County Park were the first of many in the ever-expanding network of the Randolph Trails System. The Brundage Family requested that the park be named after a local milkman who was a great community-spirited man. Further information can be obtained through Randolph's Parks and Recreation Office. The Morris County Park Commission has worked closely with Randolph Township since 1999 to establish a trail system throughout the park.



Veterans Community Park

Located on Calais Road down the road from the library, this park recently had its dedication in October 2020. It has pickleball courts, restrooms, a paved lighted walking path, a great lawn with a band shell, and a community garden.

There are paved trails from Veterans Community Park that connect to the Heistein Park on Doby Road and to the neighborhood on Trout Brook Lane. There is also a quarter-mile paved walking path within the park that is lit at night. .



Veterans Community Park



Randolph Community Garden



Gazebo near Community Garden