A photograph of a forest path. The path is covered in brown pine needles and leads into a dense forest of tall, thin trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating dappled light on the ground. The trees have dark trunks and green foliage.

Pepperell Trail Guide

Nashoba Conservation Trust
and the
Pepperell Conservation Commission

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Introduction

The Pepperell Trail Guide describes sixteen conservation areas and almost 20 miles of trails. The conservation land described in the Guide is open to the public for walking, biking, horseback riding and other activities. Importantly, these protected open spaces also provide vital habitat for a wide variety of flora and fauna, including several listed as rare and endangered species.

Using the Guide

For each conservation parcel included in the Guide, the following information is provided:

- Land protection history
- Trail names and associated description(s)
- Trail mileage(s)
- Directions to the parcel and parking areas
- GPS coordinates for the parking area, as well as a hyperlink to Google Maps
- A map of the parcel with trail, parking and other reference points marked

Please note that many parcels have an abundance of trails to explore. This guide describes only one, or at most a few, of the trails within each parcel.

Map parcel colors:

- Light green designates the parcel area being described
- Brown designates NCT, Conservation Commission or other Town parcels described elsewhere in the Guide
- Dark green designates Fisheries and Wildlife parcels
- White designates private property, except as otherwise noted

Trail markings and colors:

A number of trails in Pepperell now have markers, which correspond to trails in the Guide, as follows:

- The Jeff Smith Trail, a seven-mile trail that crosses multiple parcels, is marked with blue-paint hashes on trees. The Guide maps show the Jeff Smith trail in blue dots along with the trail name.
- The Keyes Farm, Town Forest, Bemis, Pepperell Springs, Heald Pond, Keyes Parker and Linkel parcels have one or more trails marked with red, blue or gold T.O.P. markers. The Guide maps show the trails in the designated color of the T.O.P. markers and the associated trail name.

- The Mt. Lebanon trails are marked with wood signs. The Guide map shows the trail names.

Trail and Conservation Land Guidelines

For the enjoyment of all and the protection of wildlife and natural habitats, please adhere to these rules and regulations:

- No motorized vehicles are permitted on Conservation Commission or Nashoba Conservation Trust land.
- No person shall cut, remove, deface, defile, or mis-use any structure, fence or sign, or have possession of any part thereof.
- No dead or growing trees, shrubs, flowers or other living or non-living matter shall be defaced, cut or removed.
- Trails shall not be cut or marked, nor any structure constructed, without permission of the Conservation Commission or Nashoba Conservation Trust.
- Wildlife shall not be harassed.
- No alcoholic beverages are permitted.
- All trash and litter generated by users must be removed.

Individuals entering NCT properties do so at their own risk.

Hunting

Hunting is permitted on NCT properties, except where posted. All Pepperell Conservation Commission properties are open for hunting with the exception of:

- Keyes Parker Conservation Areas on Oak Hill Street
- Nissitissit Meadows Conservation Area on Prescott Street
- The Heald Street Orchard on Heald Street is open for archery hunting with a special permit available from the Conservation Commission.

Acknowledgements

The Nashoba Conservation Trust Board of Directors and the Pepperell Conservation Commission wish to thank the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation and the Norcross Wildlife Foundation for providing funding for the Guide. We also thank Jason Stanton and Gail Coffey for their contributions to the Guide's maps and text, respectively.

Pepperell Trail Guide

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This map depicts the open space parcels included in the Trail Guide, as well as the approximate location of trail heads.

Click on any parcel name in the map to link to the associated property description, trail map and directions.



NCT History

In 1969, a group of dedicated, like-minded individuals shared a common vision - the need to protect Pepperell's rural character and its natural resources - and together formed the Nashoba Conservation Trust (NCT). NCT's founders included George T. Keyes and Erik Stromsted, who both have conservation lands bearing their names, along with Mary L. Haueisen, George Hayes, Paul Dishong, Robert Smith, Nancy Powell, Judith Holloway, and Carolyn South.

Nashoba Conservation Trust's first protected property, a 7.5 acre parcel on Gulf Brook, was donated by Mary L. Haueisen, one of NCT's founding members. Mary's donation laid the foundation of Pepperell's land conservation movement, and was the keystone to the protection of the Gulf Brook watershed, stretching from dirt Jewett Street to the NH state line. The Gulf Brook watershed is a primary water source of Pepperell's drinking water supply, and is a tributary to the Nissitissit River, a cold water fishery and a Natural Heritage Priority Habitat for five listed species.

As current stewards of the land, the NCT board is forever appreciative of the Trust's founding members who had the foresight to recognize the value of preserving our open spaces.

Today, NCT's ability to steward of over 400 acres of open space, and to acquire and protect new land, is made possible through the support of our community. Your contributions help NCT fulfill its mission to protect natural habitats, provide recreational green-space for the public and preserve Pepperell's rural character. To donate to NCT please visit www.nashobatrust.org.



1. Mt. Lebanon

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

The Mt. Lebanon Property offers many places to observe wetland birds, painted turtles and small animals. A trail loops around 54 acres of woodlands and wetlands. Enjoy the tranquility of the small farm pond or explore a large maple swamp adjacent to the trail. Green Herons, painted turtles, minks, and other wildlife can be seen in the swamp. The rich soils on the property support large sugar maples and shagbark hickories. This is a place to slow down and fully enjoy the natural world.

Land Protection History

Erik Stromsted, one of the original founders of Nashoba Conservation Trust, donated 54 acres on Mt. Lebanon Street to the Trust over a 24-year period. Erik donated the first parcel of 17.5 acres in 1973 and a final 2 acres in 1997. Erik planned to develop a small portion of his property and donated the land surrounding his house and a subdivision to ensure that most of the forest and wetlands in the area were conserved and enjoyed by the public.

Trail Description

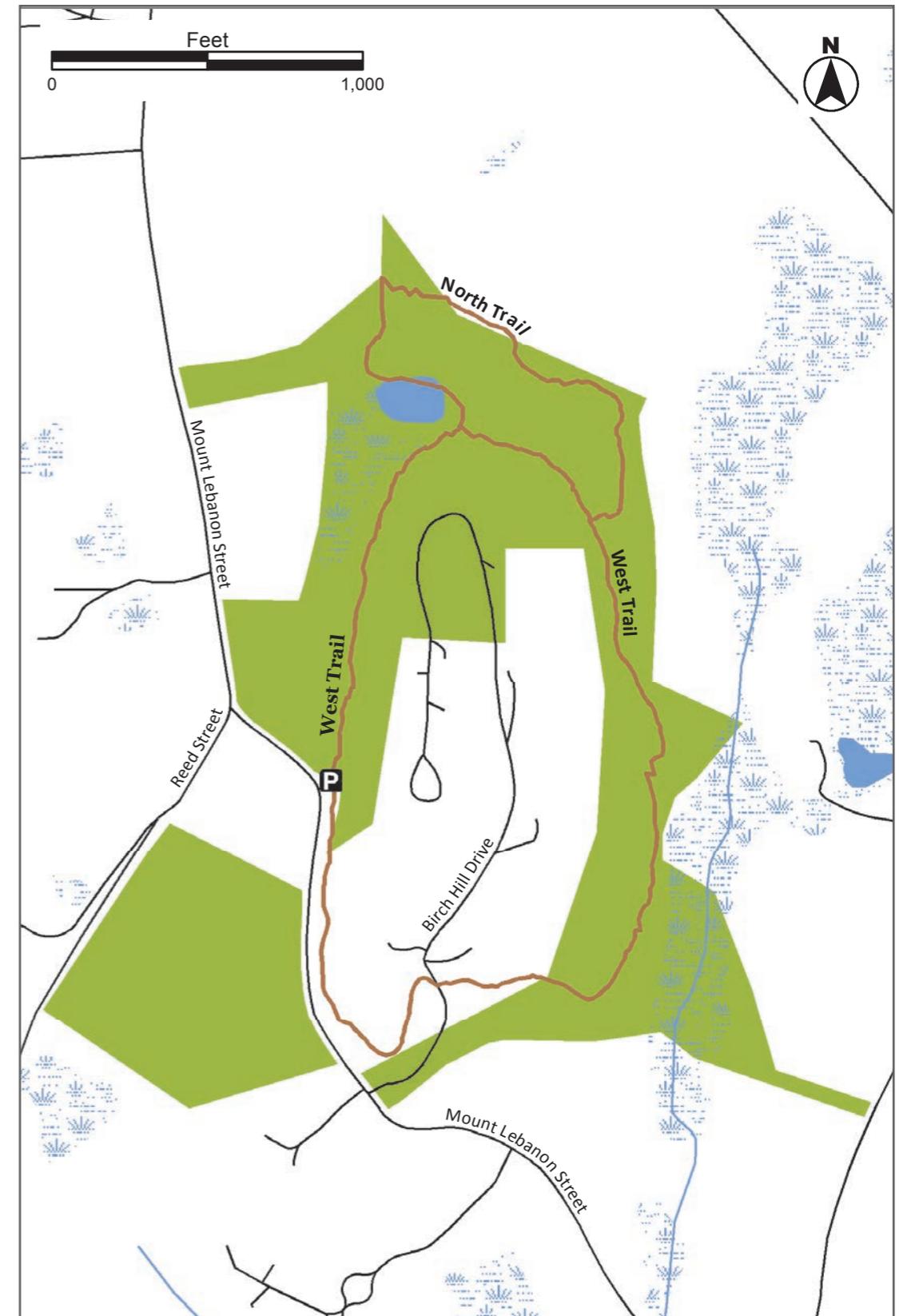
The West Trail begins on Mt. Lebanon Street near the NCT sign. It loops around the base of Mt. Lebanon and winds through a forest of oaks, sugar maples and hickories. It passes a large wetland offering views of herons, turtles and many songbirds. The trail continues past the wetland to an intersection with Birch Hill Drive. Turn right up the road and then left through a grassy area that follows Mt. Lebanon St. back to the trailhead.

Trail Mileage

The West Trail is 1.2 miles; the North Trail loop is .38 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall take Route 113 west for 1.5 miles to the second left onto Mt. Lebanon Street. Go approximately 2 miles to where Reed Street intersects Mt. Lebanon and take a sharp left. Look for NCT sign on left. Park along the road. The trail begins about 50 ft. to right of sign. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.648077; Longitude -71.610309



2. Keyes Farm

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

Keyes Farm offers a diversity of forest, field and wetland habitats and a great network of trails to enjoy. Woodlands, riparian areas, and fields create rich habitat for a variety of wildlife. The farmland provides a spectacular scenic approach to the town center from the south and important agricultural land for the community. It abuts the 90-acre **Town Forest** and another 40 acres of town conservation land on Elm Street making it ideal for longer hikes.

Land Protection History

George and Lucy Keyes were ardent conservationists who donated and helped protect hundreds of acres of land in Pepperell and surrounding towns. George Keyes was a founding member of NCT and donated a 39-acre conservation restriction on his property in 1987. The Trust for Public Lands (TPL), Nashoba Conservation Trust and the Town of Pepperell worked with the Keyes Family to protect 145 acres of farmland and forest. TPL purchased the property and transferred ownership of 106 acres of forestland and farmland to NCT and the remaining 39 acres of forestland to the town.

Trail Description

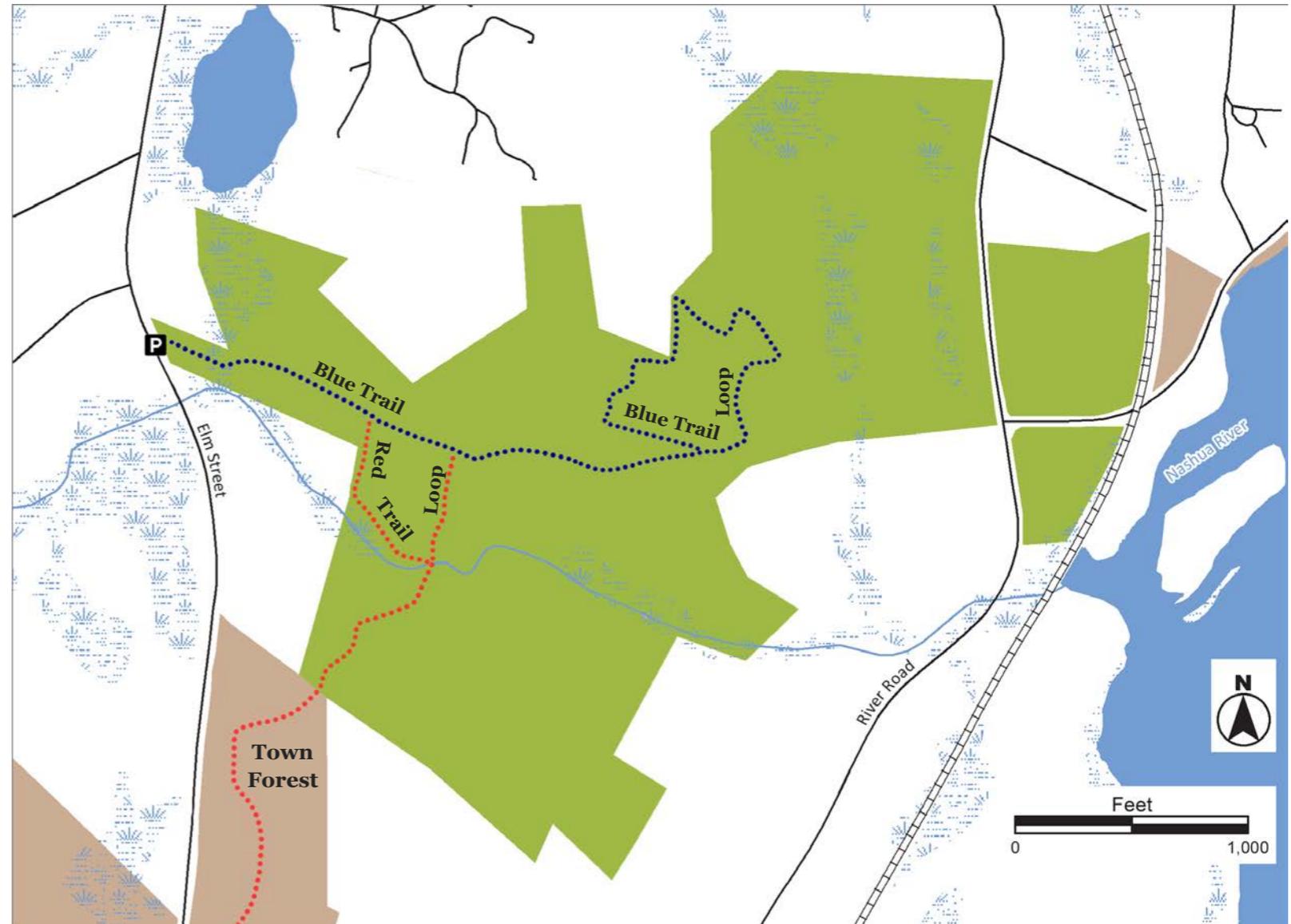
Keyes Farm has two main trails, both of which are designated with color-coded T.O.P trail markers: (1) Blue Trail. The Blue Trail winds through a small wetland with American hornbeam trees and continues through a mixed forest of beech, maples and oaks. At .45 miles, the trail turns left and goes up a hill to a private driveway. Cross the driveway and look for trail markers in the white pine forest (the driveway is private property and only can be crossed to follow the trail. Please do not walk up or down the driveway). The trail continues around a field and, after crossing the driveway again, returns to the main Blue Trail. (2) Red Trail. Starting from the parking area, the Red Trail starts with a right turn off the Blue Trail and follows a stream to a bridge. Arriving at the bridge turn left and return to the Blue Trail.

Trail Mileage

From the parking area the Blue Trail to the start of the Blue Trail Loop is .45 miles; the Loop adds .48 miles. The Red Trail Loop is .43 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, follow Elm St. past Shirley St. to gravel parking area on left. The trailhead is behind the kiosk. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.657445; Longitude -71.597513



3. Town Forest

The Town Forest comprises 90 acres of white pine forest with extensive wetlands throughout. It's home to deer, a nesting pair of red-tailed hawks and dozens of other bird species during summer breeding season. Importantly, the Town Forest connects to three other conservation areas: the **Walent/West-side Trail**, **Linkel Woods** and **Keyes Farm**.

Land Protection History

In 1925, the Town Forest Committee (a Committee that was formed in response to the Board of Selectmen's 1922 request to establish a Town Forest) purchased over 100 acres (90 acres on River Road and an additional acreage off of Jewett Street) for \$500 for the "Purpose of "Reforestation". The Commonwealth provided 5,000 white pine seedlings to any community who established a Town Forest of 100 acres or more. The white pine seedlings were planted by local groups including scouts and school children.

Trail Description

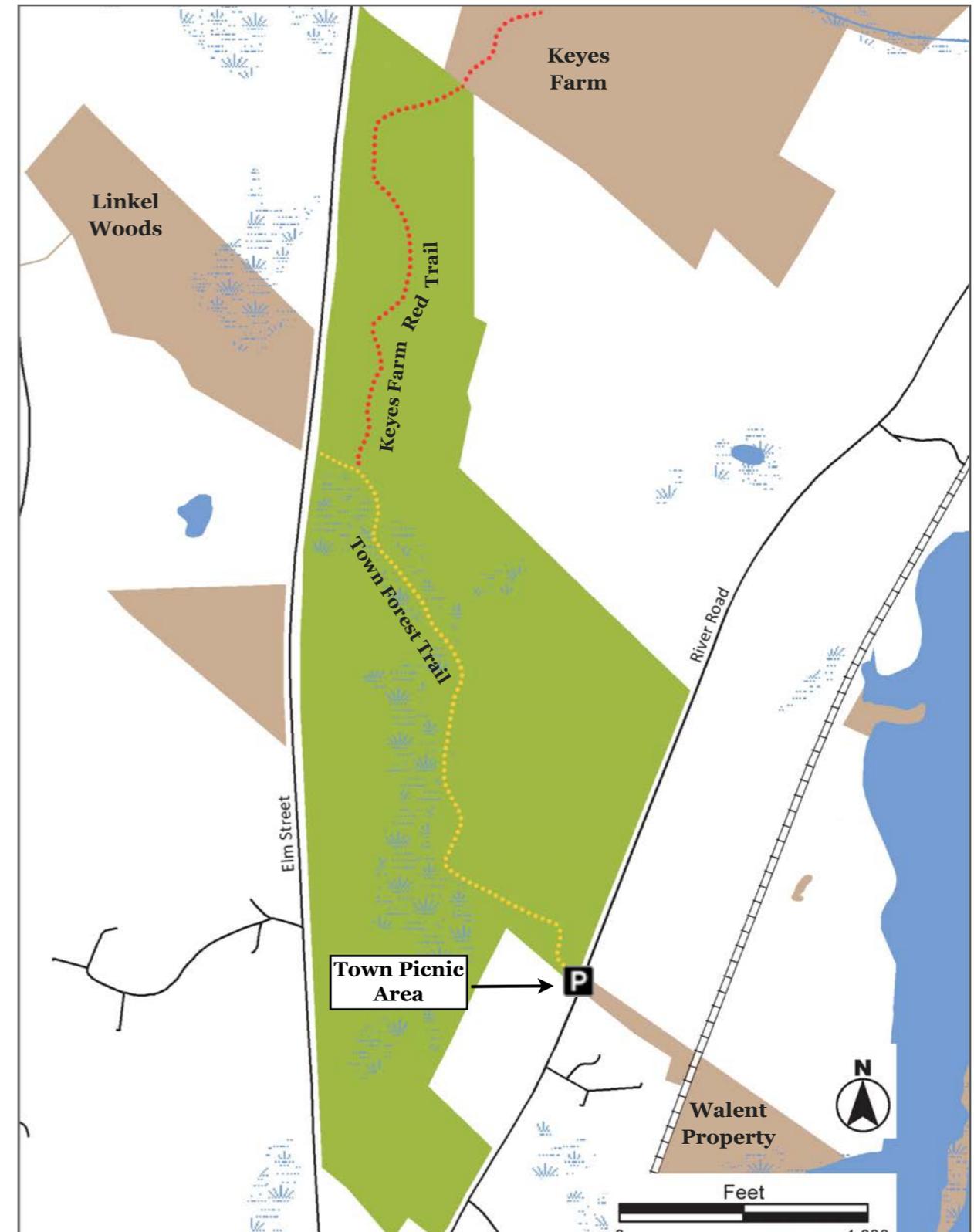
There are two starting points for the Town Forest Trail: Elm Street and the Town Picnic Area. This description originates at the Town Picnic Area: The trail begins on the north side of the Picnic Area, and is marked with gold trail markers. At .05 miles, cross under the power lines, and follow the trail markers to the fire road; the Town Forest trail follows the fire road another .50 miles to the Elm Street entrance.

Trail Mileage

From either trail head the Town Forest trail is .51 miles. From the Picnic Area the Town Forest trail intersects with the Keyes Farm trail, designated by red trail markers, at .40 miles. From there it is another .50 miles to the Keyes Farm entrance on Elm Street.

Directions

To Elm St. parking: From Pepperell Town Hall take Elm Street. Follow Elm Street for 1.2 miles until you see the sign for Altali's. Parking is along Elm St. just past the sign. The trail head is about 100 feet north of the Altali sign on the opposite side of the road.. The GPS coordinates for the street **parking area** are: Latitude 42.64944; Longitude -71.59731. **To Town Picnic Area** parking: From Pepperell Town Hall, go East .4 miles on Main St. to the rotary. Bear right onto Rte. 111 South. At 2.2 miles turn right into the Picnic Area parking lot.. The GPS coordinates for the **Town Picnic Area** are Latitude 42.64388; Longitude -71.59333.



4. Linkel Woods

Nestled next to Altali's Mediterranean Bistro off Elm Street, the Linkel Property is a beautiful woodland of maples, oaks, shagbark hickories, and white pines. A stream runs along the edge of the property and small wetlands full of cinnamon and sensitive ferns are scattered through the forest. A stone bridge crosses the stream and is a perfect spot to enjoy the brook and quiet woods. Linkel Woods connects to the **Town Forest** trail.

Land Protection History

John and Angela Linkel donated the land to Nashoba Conservation Trust in 1998. The Linkels were motivated to donate their land because they wanted to ensure the forest and wetlands on their property were conserved. The eight-acre Linkel donation combined with an abutting seven-acre parcel owned by NCT to create a 15-acre preserve.

Trail Description

The Linkel Woods Red Trail is marked with red T.O.P markers. The trail is an easy hike through a hardwood forest of maples, oaks, and white pines. It begins near a small brook off Elm Street and heads northwest through the forest towards the brook. Cross over a lovely stone bridge and follow the red TOP signs on trees along the trail. Continue along the edge of Altali's and into a small wetland of cinnamon ferns. The trail follows along a stone wall, bears to the left and intersects with a trail leading to a private residence. **DO NOT TAKE THIS TRAIL.** Remain on the Red Trail to reach the Shirley Street entrance.

Trail Mileage

From the trail head to Shirley Street is .5 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall take Elm Street. Follow Elm Street for 1.2 miles until you see the sign for Altali's. Parking is along Elm St. The trail head is about 100 feet north of the Altali sign. The GPS coordinates for the street **parking area** are: Latitude 42.64944; Longitude -71.59731.



5. Walent Property/Westside Trail

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

The Walent property and West Side Trail are hidden gems in the Pepperell Pond area of the Nashua River. Walk along the Westside Trail, which runs through the property, in early spring to see Common and Hooded Mergansers, and Red-winged Blackbirds. This area of the river is a migratory stopover for waterfowl heading north in spring. A bench at the northern tip of the trail overlooks the river.

Land Protection History

NCT worked with Department of Environmental Management (DEM) to protect the Walent property in 2002. NCT contributed \$20,000 toward the purchase of the 46-acre parcel making it possible for DEM to acquire the land from the Walent family. The Pepperell Conservation Commission purchased the one-mile rail bed in June 2002 with funding from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services under the former Self-Help Program. The Commission decided not to pave the trail and instead kept it in its rustic condition to provide a more natural experience for hiking, fishing and wildlife viewing along the river. The history of the old rail-road bed on the west side of the Nashua River in Pepperell is covered by local historian and author, Ronald Karr, in his book entitled "Lost Railroads of New England".

Trail Description

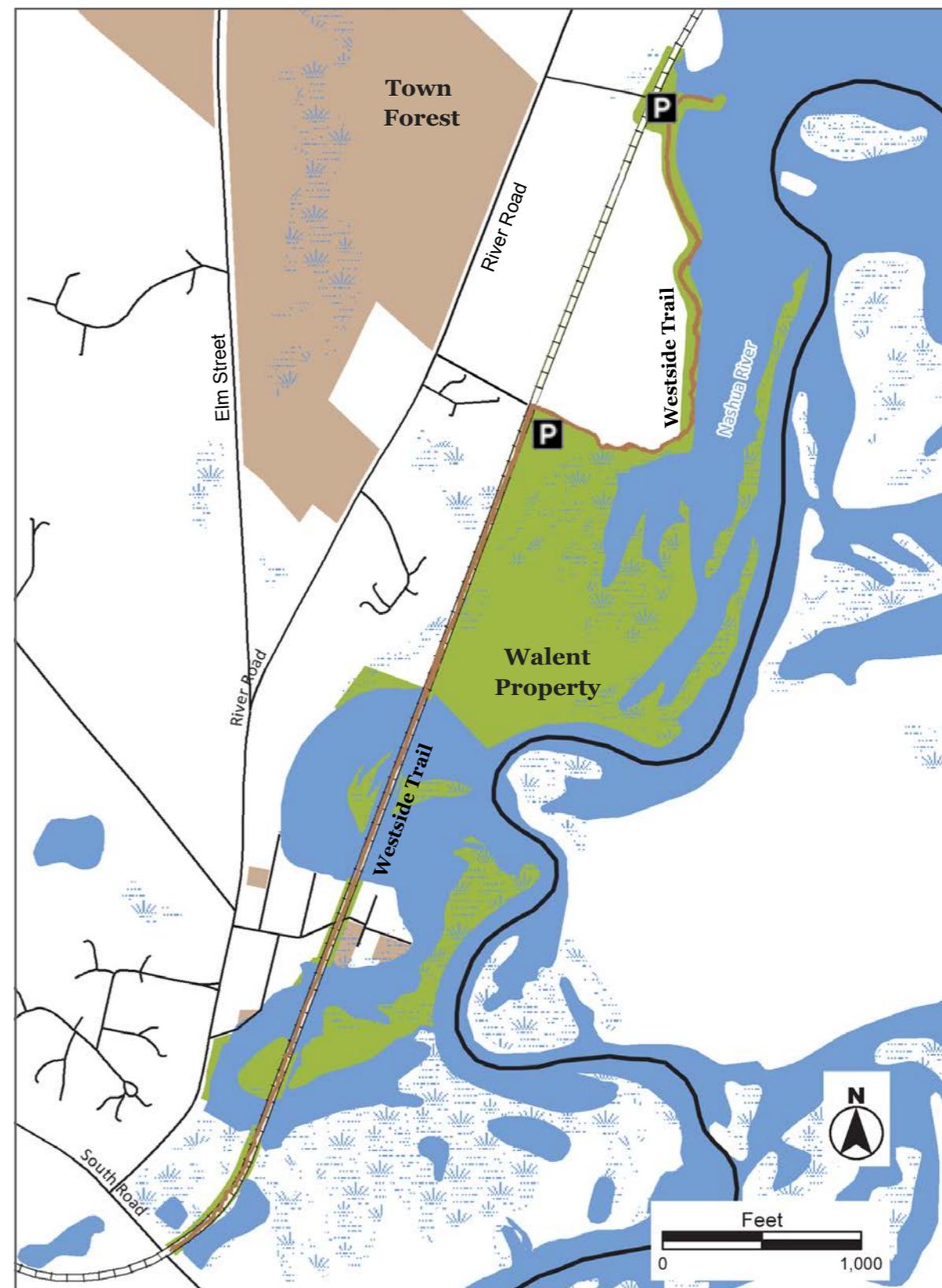
There are two options from the centrally located Walent parking area: (1) Head into the woods along the banks of the river and follow the white triangle signs north to the small peninsula, which offers wide, open views of Pepperell Pond and the islands. (2) Head south along the old railway bed, passing through two splendid oxbow areas of the Nashua River; the south-bound trail ends at Rte 119. Both the north and south-bound segments of the Westside Trail provide opportunities to spot Wood Ducks, Common and Hooded Mergansers, otters and owls.

Trail Mileage

From the Walent parking area, the northbound segment of the Westside Trail is .5 miles; the southbound segment is 1 mile.

Directions

To the Pepperell Pond parking area: From Pepperell Town Hall, go East .4 miles on Main St. to the rotary. Bear right onto Rte. 111 South. At 2.1 miles turn left on to an unmarked dirt road and follow it to the parking area. **To the Walent parking area:** From Pepperell Town Hall, go East .4 miles on Main St. to the rotary. Bear right onto Rte. 111 South. At 2.2 miles turn left on to an unmarked dirt road. Follow the dirt road past the house on the right and park in the field. The GPS coordinates for the Pepperell Pond parking area are Latitude 42.64666; Longitude -71.58916. The GPS coordinates for the Walent parking area are: Latitude 42.64190; Longitude -71.59108.



6. Nashua River Trail

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

If you are looking for a place to enjoy the scenic beauty and wildlife of the Nashua River, then visit NCT's Nashua River Trail property. Flocks of Red-winged Blackbirds, Tree Swallows and hawks soar over the adjacent fields and riverfront. Common Mergansers seek out the flat quiet water to hunt for fish and Wood Ducks are scattered throughout the oxbow areas foraging for aquatic insects. There are two benches on the trail; one looks over the wetland and the other over the river.

Land Protection History

The Hopkins family donated 4.3 acres off Shirley St to NCT in 2002 and a further section of the railroad bed extending along the Nashua River was acquired in 2004. NCT actively pursued the acquisition of the railroad property from the B&M Railroad and secured the property in 2004 thanks to major support from the Bruce Anderson Foundation.

Trail Description

The Nashua River Trail is a short hike over a railroad bed and into a small field adjacent to Wilkins Farm. The trail begins off Shirley Street and follows the railroad bed along the main stem of the Nashua River. The trail continues along the bed following the river and enters a shrubby area adjacent to agricultural fields. Grassland and shrubland birds can be found along this riparian-field habitat. The trail ends shortly before the Wilkins farm building.

Trail Mileage

From the parking area to the end point near the Wilkins farm building is .5 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, go south on Elm Street to intersection with Route 119. Follow 119 west and take the first left onto Shirley Street. Follow Shirley Street for .3 mile and pull into dirt parking area on the left. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.62975; Longitude -71.608318



7. Bemis Road Conservation Land

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

This is one of the few areas in Pepperell with pitch pine trees and unique sandy soils. Wander through the gravel pit and see the return of native plants, shrubs and trees along the edges. An early successional forest of young aspen and birch along with sweet fern, bracken and Pennsylvania sedge are returning to the area. This is a prime spot to find pine, prairie and chestnut-sided warblers. It is a great place to look for tracks of Eastern cottontail rabbits, deer, turtle and coyotes. The Bemis property abuts **Day Woods**.

Land Protection History

The Town of Pepperell purchased 72 acres of forest and wetlands surrounding the Bemis well from 1964-76. Forty-one acres were acquired in 1965 and the Rich Tree Farm and Forestry Company sold 31 acres to the town in the 1970s. The Conservation Commission then acquired 35 acres adjacent to the Water Division's pumping station in 1977.

Trail Description

The Bemis trails are marked with red and gold T.O.P. trail markers. The Red Trail loop begins on a small foot path next to a private residence. Walk around a steel gate and at .03 miles turn left. At .1 miles the Red Trail intersects with the Gold Trail. Turn right to follow the Red Trail back to the parking area; or continue straight on the Gold Trail.

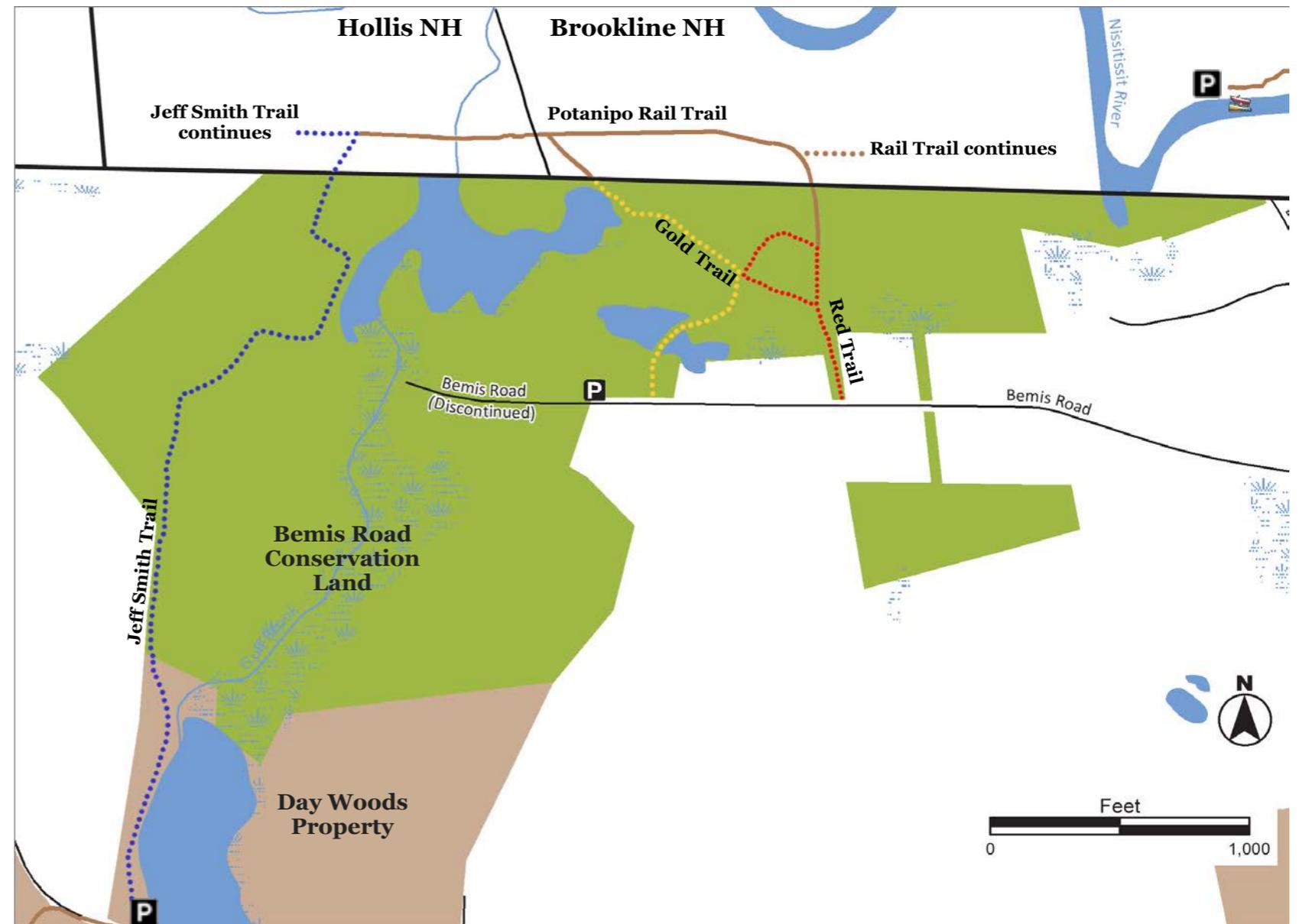
The Gold Trail starts near the parking area and first descends into a wetland before joining up with the Red Trail at .13 miles. The Gold Trail turns west, crosses a large sand pit and then follows the Nissitissit flood plain up to the Potanipo Rail Trail on Beaver Brook Association conservation land. From here you can explore hundreds of acres of conserved land around the Nissitissit River; you can also connect to the Jeff Smith Trail and explore the western side of the Bemis Road Conservation Land. (Visit www.beaverbrook.org for more information about Beaver Brook Association).

Trail Mileage

From the street parking area the Red Trail loop is .3 miles in length. The Gold Trail is .28 miles to the Potanipo Rail Trail and a further .16 miles to intersect with the Jeff Smith Trail. Turning left (south) on to the Jeff Smith Trail, the Day Woods Property parking area is another .73 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, head north on Park Street to Brookline St. Take left onto Brookline St. for 1 mile. Turn left onto Boynton St. and immediately right onto Bemis Rd. In .4 miles, look for green sign off to the right; the trail access is path next to a house. Street parking is permitted; there is also a parking area at the end of Bemis. The GPS coordinates for **street parking** near to the Red Trail head are: Latitude 42.70205; Longitude -71.62602.



8. Day Woods

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<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

The Day Woods property is located where Stewart Brook merges with Gulf Brook and flows into a beaver pond and extensive shrub swamp. The brook continues through an old sawmill dam and across the Town of Pepperell's Water Division lands. The riparian and forest habitats of the property are great places to view wildlife such as gray fox, white-tailed deer, beaver, mink, marsh and songbirds. This area of wetlands and pine forest is a great area to see wood warblers such as palm, pine, and chestnut-sided warblers. Great blue herons hunt for fish around the freshwater marshes. A bench on the trail overlooks the beaver pond. Day Woods abuts the Bemis Road property.

Land Protection History

The Day Woods Parcel was gifted in 1973 by Ted and Mimi Day who lived on Lawrence Street and were interested in helping conserve the Gulf Brook watershed.

Trail Description

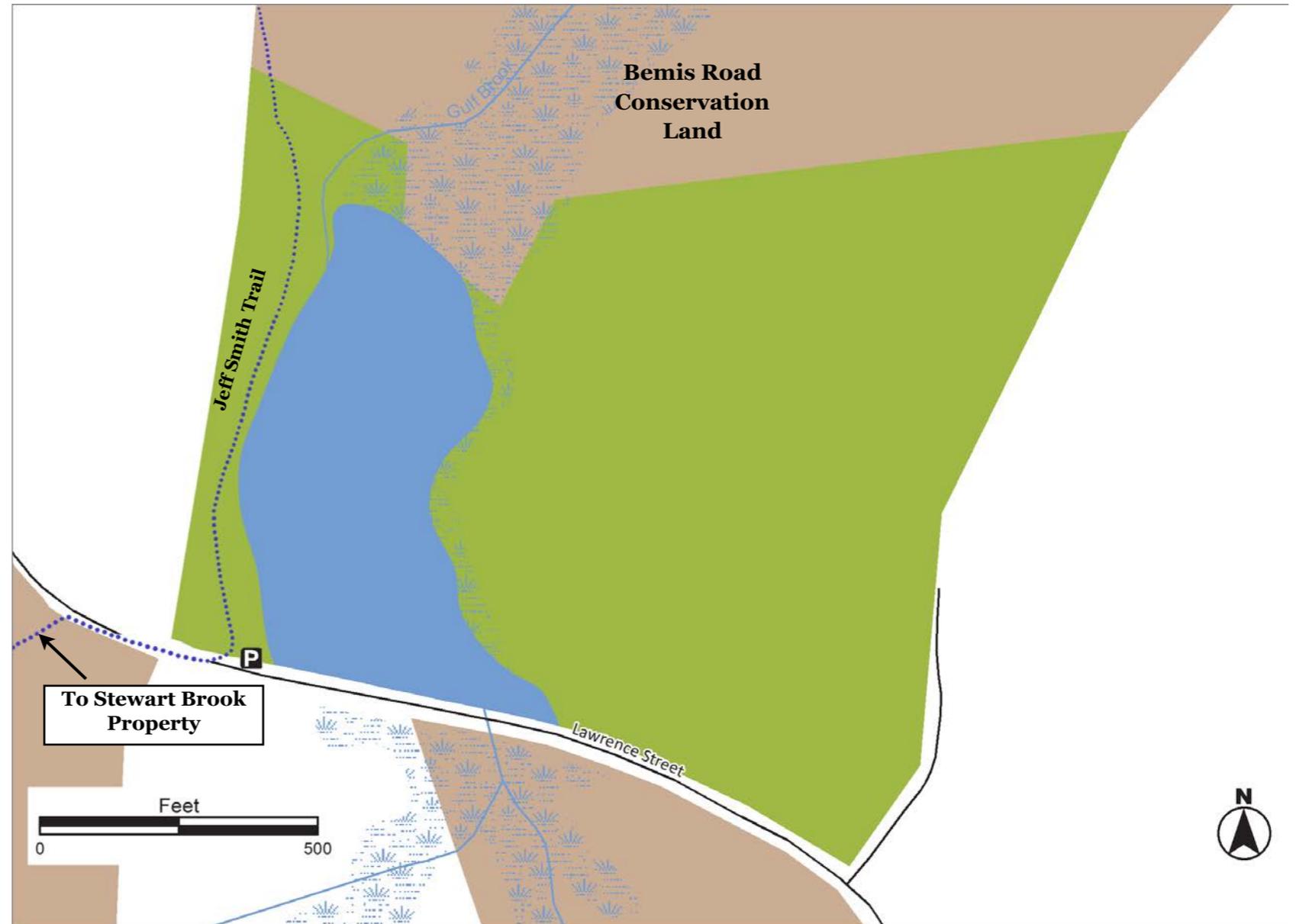
This is one of the prettiest sections of the Jeff Smith Trail, which winds through the Day Woods property through a mixed forest of hemlock, white pine, oaks and birches along Gulf Brook. From the parking area the trail passes alongside a beaver pond to the site of the old Henry William Shattuck mill at the north end of the pond. At .2 miles the trail enters the Bemis Road Conservation Land. See the Bemis Road Conservation Land map and description for more information.

Trail Mileage

From the parking area to the end of the Day Woods parcel is .2 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, follow Park St. north about 1 mile. Bear left onto Oak Hill St and follow for 1.3 miles. Turn right onto Lawrence St. and continue another 1.3 miles. Look for the wooden sign for Day Woods Nashoba Conservation Trust on the right. Park off the road near the sign. The GPS coordinates for the parking area are: Latitude 42.69637; Longitude -71.63613.



9. Stewart Brook

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

Stewart Brook flows through a large esker creating scenic views of the brook and surrounding hemlock forest. The brook heads northeast where it merges with Gulf Brook and continues on to a large beaver pond and shrub wetland. The dense and moist hemlock forest is great habitat for porcupines, fisher, and pileated woodpeckers. There are several vernal pools where spotted salamanders and wood frogs breed. The glacial history of the property is apparent from scattered large boulders and the 50-foot esker running parallel to the brook. Stewart Brook abuts the **Gulf Brook** Conservation Area.

Land Protection History

The Pepperell Conservation Commission acquired the 42-acre property from the Rich Tree Farms and Forestry Company in 1984 to protect the Stewart Brook-Gulf Brook watershed and the aquifer recharge areas of the town's Bemis Road well. The Commission felt it was important to preserve the gravel esker on the property to filter and purify water recharging the aquifer. State Self-Help grant funds enabled the town to purchase the land.

Trail Description

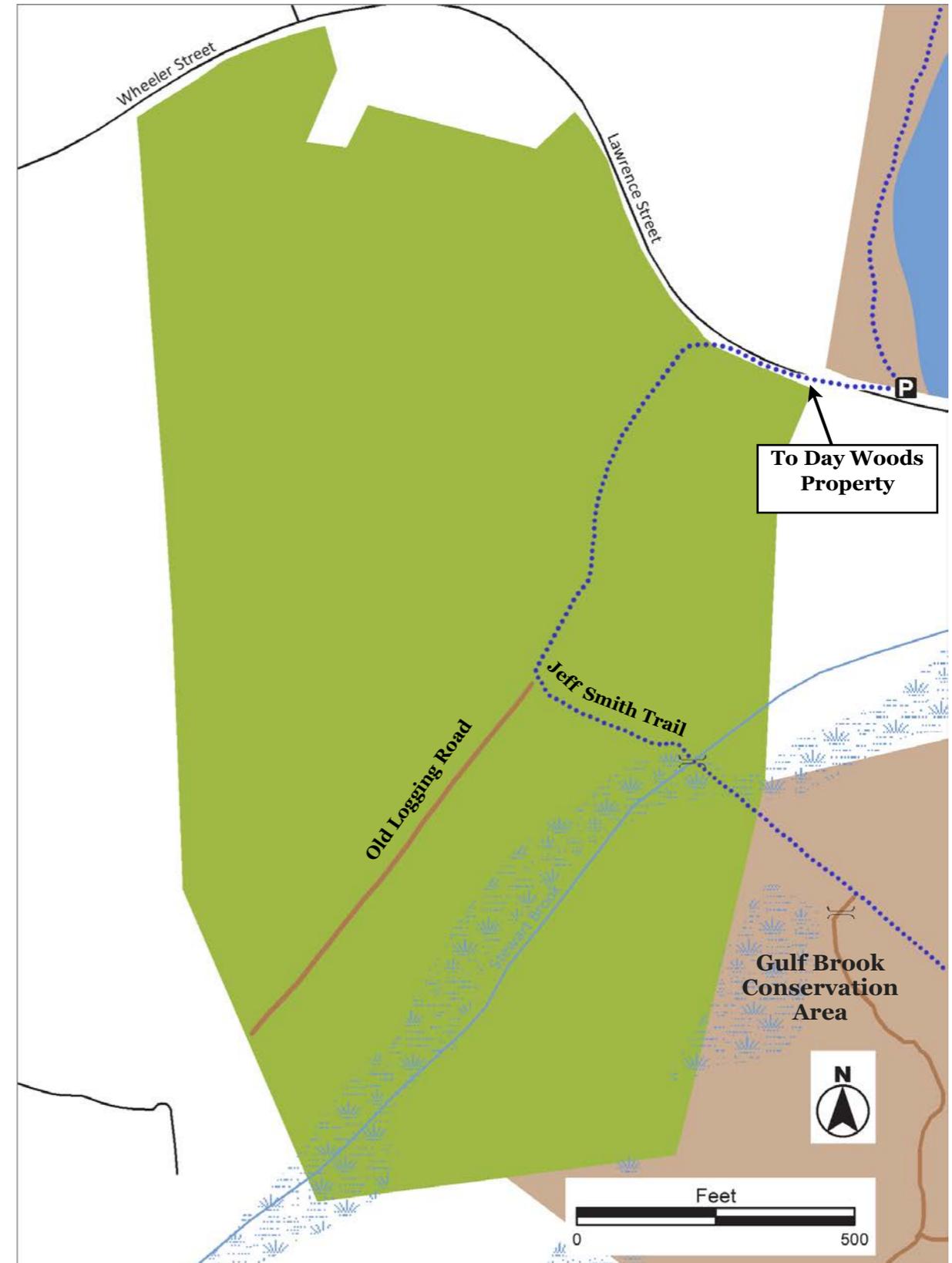
The Jeff Smith trail follows an old logging road southwest into a rich hemlock forest full of moss and lichens. At .13 miles, the trail divides: to the right the logging road continues another .2 miles to a vernal pool and a large glacial erratic. Alternately, turn left and follow the Jeff Smith Trail to Stewart Brook. Crossing the brook connects to the Gulf Brook Conservation Area.

Trail Mileage

From the street trail entrance to the Stewart Brook crossing over to the Gulf Brook Conservation Area is .28 miles. From the street trail entrance to the vernal pool at the end of the logging road is .33 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, follow Park St. 1 mile north. Bear left onto Oak Hill St and go 1.3 miles and turn right onto Lawrence St. Continue another 1.3 miles and look for NCT sign for Day Property on right. Park and head up Lawrence Street to Stewart Brook sign on left. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.69637; Longitude -71.63613.



10. Gulf Brook Conservation Area

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

The 208-acre Gulf Brook Conservation Area provides important habitat for Saw Whet Owls, Wood Thrushes, otters, mink, and beavers. Hemlocks covered with lichens, mossy rocks and boulders, gigantic cinnamon ferns, and tall white pines are some of the natural wonders in these forests. Songbirds, herons, amphibians and turtles can be found in the beaver pond. Gulf Brook abuts the **Stewart Brook** property.

Land Protection History

The Pepperell Water Division and Conservation Commission protected 193 acres to preserve the recharge area of a town well and the Gulf Brook watershed. NCT's 12-acre Dermody and 2.7-acre Ames property abut the town lands in this conservation area. NCT acquired the Dermody property in 1978 and the Ames property in 1983. Both NCT parcels help safeguard an important town water supply while protecting both Stewart and Gulf Brook watershed areas and habitats.

Trail Description

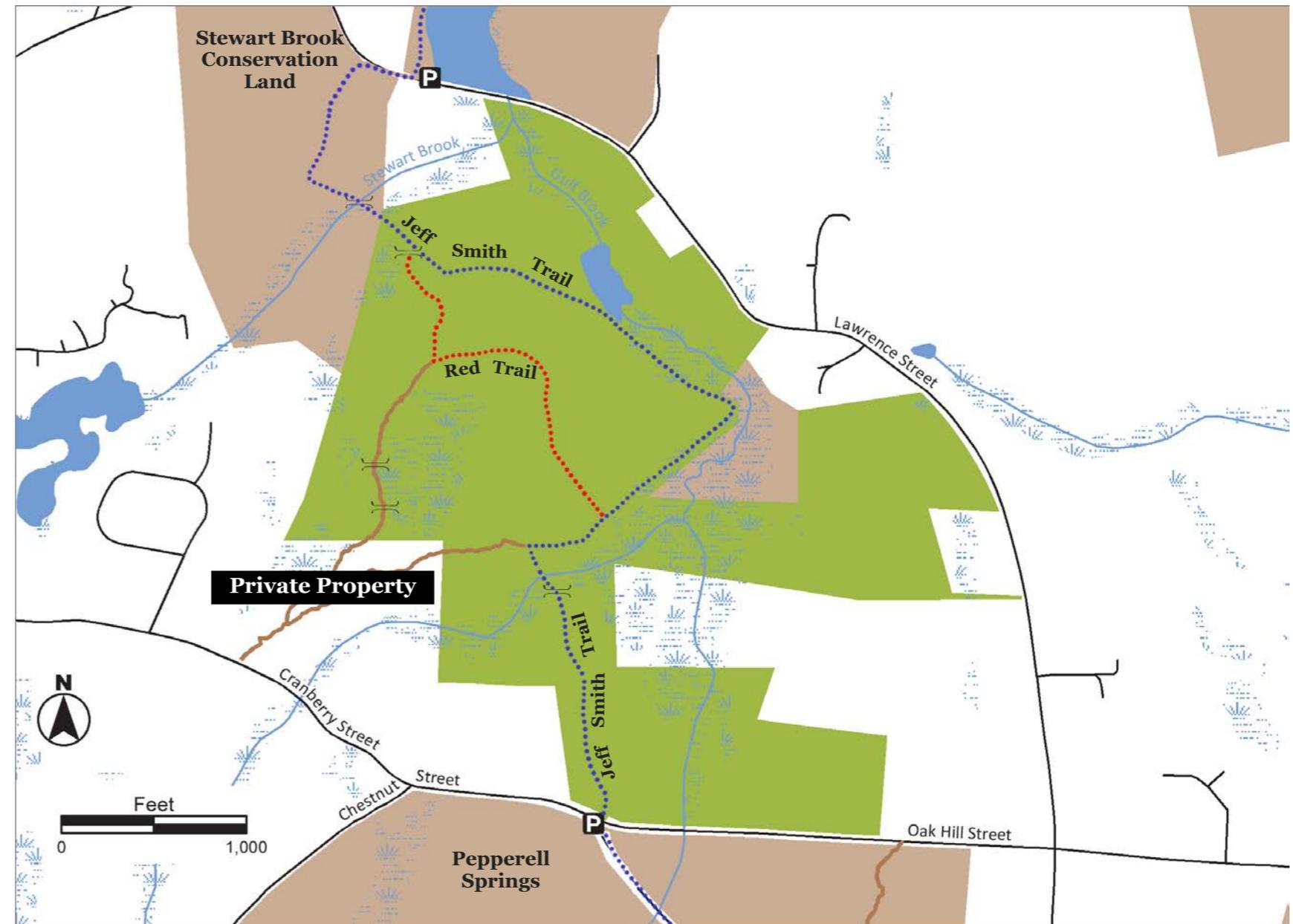
The Jeff Smith Trail continues from the Pepperell Springs property into Gulf Brook Conservation Area. The trail passes through an Eastern hemlock forest and over several small streams that drain into Gulf Brook and a large beaver pond. At 0.37 miles the trail intersects with another trail originating from private property on Cranberry Street. Turn right and head east to the beaver pond. The trail follows along the pond and Gulf Brook and then through a wetland of cinnamon ferns to the old Menshun's Pond area. At approximately the 1.0 mile mark the trail divides: continue straight to follow the Jeff Smith Trail to the Stewart Brook Conservation Land; or turn left to follow the Red Trail (marked with red T.O.P markers) back to the parking area on Oak Hill. **Please take note: portions of these trails are very wet year-round.**

Trail Mileage

From the street trail head the Jeff Smith Trail to the Stewart Brook crossing is 1.35 miles. The loop trail combining the Jeff Smith and Red Trail is 2.0 miles in length. As can be seen on the map, two trails continue from conservation land on to private property. The bounds are not posted; therefore it is advised to avoid these trails.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, go north onto Park St. north from Main St. about 1 mile until you reach a fork and take a left onto Oak Hill St. Go about 1.5 miles and look for the wooden conservation sign (above). There is a small parking areas across the street from the trail on Chestnut St. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.68533; Longitude -71.63252.



11. Pepperell Springs

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

Hiking through Gulf Brook Ravine is like hiking through a remote, rocky section of the White Mountains in New Hampshire. The ravine is a fault line known as the Wekepeke Fault that runs from Worcester MA to NH. Steep, rocky ledges rise up on either side of Gulf Brook which flows through the moist, rocky ravine. The Jeff Smith Trail follows the edge of the ravine offering fantastic views of the brook and gorge. Pepperell Springs abuts **Heald Pond** to the south and connects to **Gulf Brook** to the north.

Land Protection History

Pepperell Springs was formerly a spring water source for the Pepperell Spring Water Company, started in 1893. Protecting this 265-acre property was truly a community effort. NCT, the Town of Pepperell, The Trust for Public Lands, the Nissitissit River Land Trust and the Nashua River Watershed Association collaborated on the project. Many months of organizing and fundraising came to fruition at a Special Town Meeting in September 2004 where Pepperell residents voted to purchase the land. The land is now owned by the Pepperell Conservation Commission with a conservation restriction held by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

Trail Description

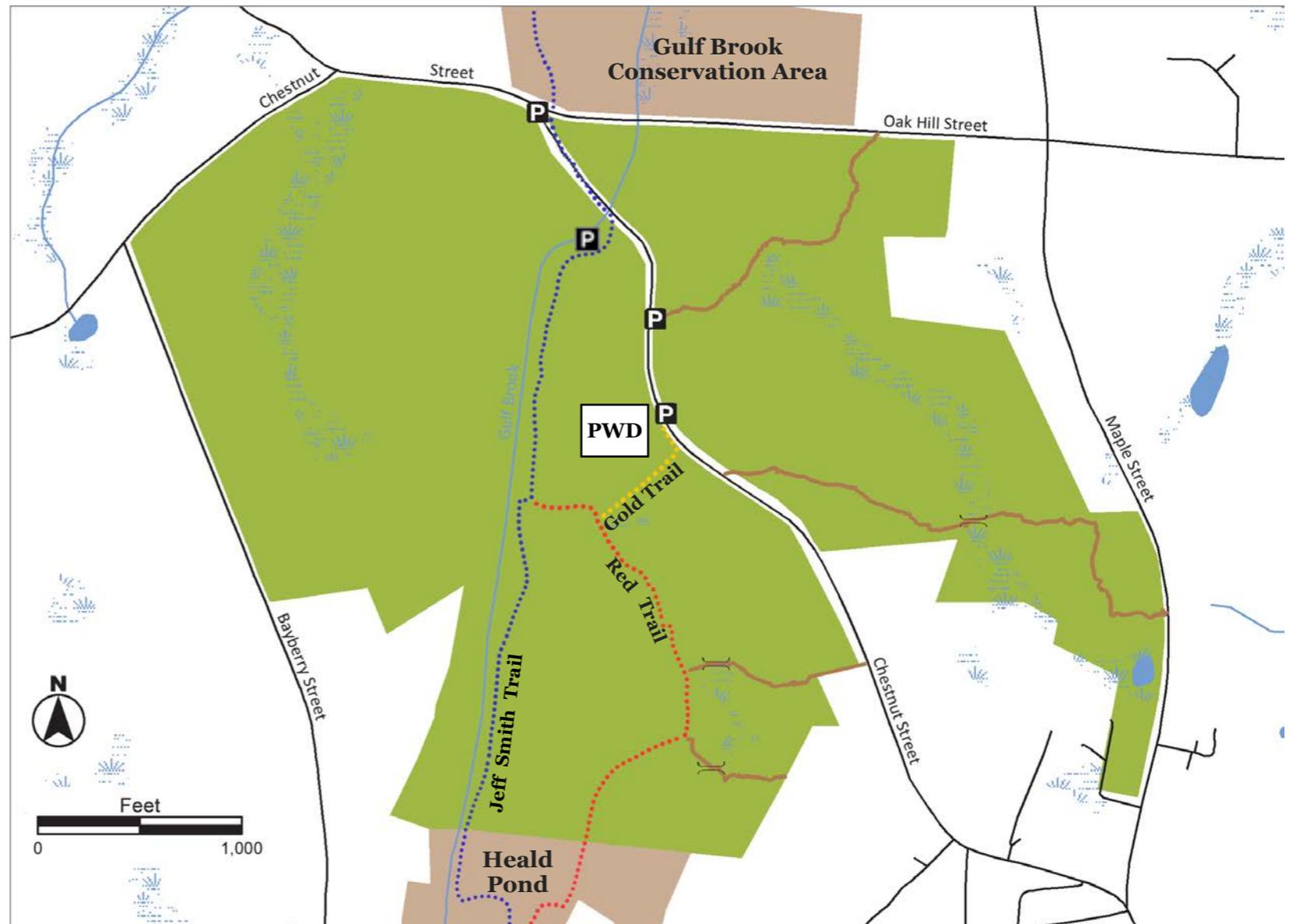
This is a description of a loop trail combining the Gold, Red and Jeff Smith Trails. The Red and Gold trails are marked with color-coded T.O.P. trail markers; the Jeff Smith Trail (JST) is marked with blue paint hashes. From the parking area opposite the Pepperell Water Division (PWD) building, cross over to and up the PWD driveway to the Gold Trail entrance. At .14 miles the Gold Trail terminates at the Red Trail. Turning left the Red Trail continues through a mixed forest with large tracts of mountain laurel. The trail crosses into the Heald Pond property, and at .71 miles intersects with the JST. Turn sharply right and follow the JST enjoying views of the ravine and Gulf Brook below. At 1.30 miles the trail descends into a small clearing and intersects with the Red Trail. Turn right to rejoin the Red Trail and head back to the parking area via the Gold Trail. Alternately, you can continue on the JST to Chestnut Street and walk up the road to the parking area. **Please take note: portions of the Jeff Smith Trail trail are on a high ridge with a steep drop-off.**

Trail Mileage

The Gold Trail/Red Trail/Jeff Smith Trail loop is 1.5 miles out from and back to the parking area.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, head north to Park St and left onto Heald St. Go 1 mile then right onto Maple St. at intersection of Maple and Chestnut take left onto Chestnut. Follow Chestnut for .5 miles to gravel road. Park across from the Pepperell Water Division building and walk down road to the Jeff Smith trailhead, or cross the street to access the Gold Trail. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.68135; Longitude -71.63048. You can also head north on the Jeff Smith Trail from Heald Street (see the Heald Pond map for details).



12. Heald Pond

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

Looking for a place to kayak, fish, swim or enjoy the beauty and tranquility of a woodland pond? Heald Pond is surrounded by acres of forest and fields and is the headwaters for Gulf Brook which flows through the pond into a rocky ravine. A rocky ledge along the western edge of the pond offers fantastic views of the pond. The pond glows with white lilies during the early summer and beavers maintain a large lodge on one of the pond's small islands. Heald Pond abuts **Heald Orchard** to the east, and connects to **Pepperell Springs** to the north.

Land Protection History

The Pepperell Conservation Commission acquired the first tract of land in 1967 from the Blood Family for \$9,000 and secured two rights of way to access the property on the southern end of Heald Pond. The Commission negotiated to purchase an additional 50-acres of land from Ray Hoffard. This land is known as Blood Brook Ravine which begins at Jewett Street and ends where it empties into the pond. In 1978, the commission bought an additional 32-acres which included land on the north side of the pond. The town received financial assistance from two state Self-Help grants to buy these properties.

Trail Description

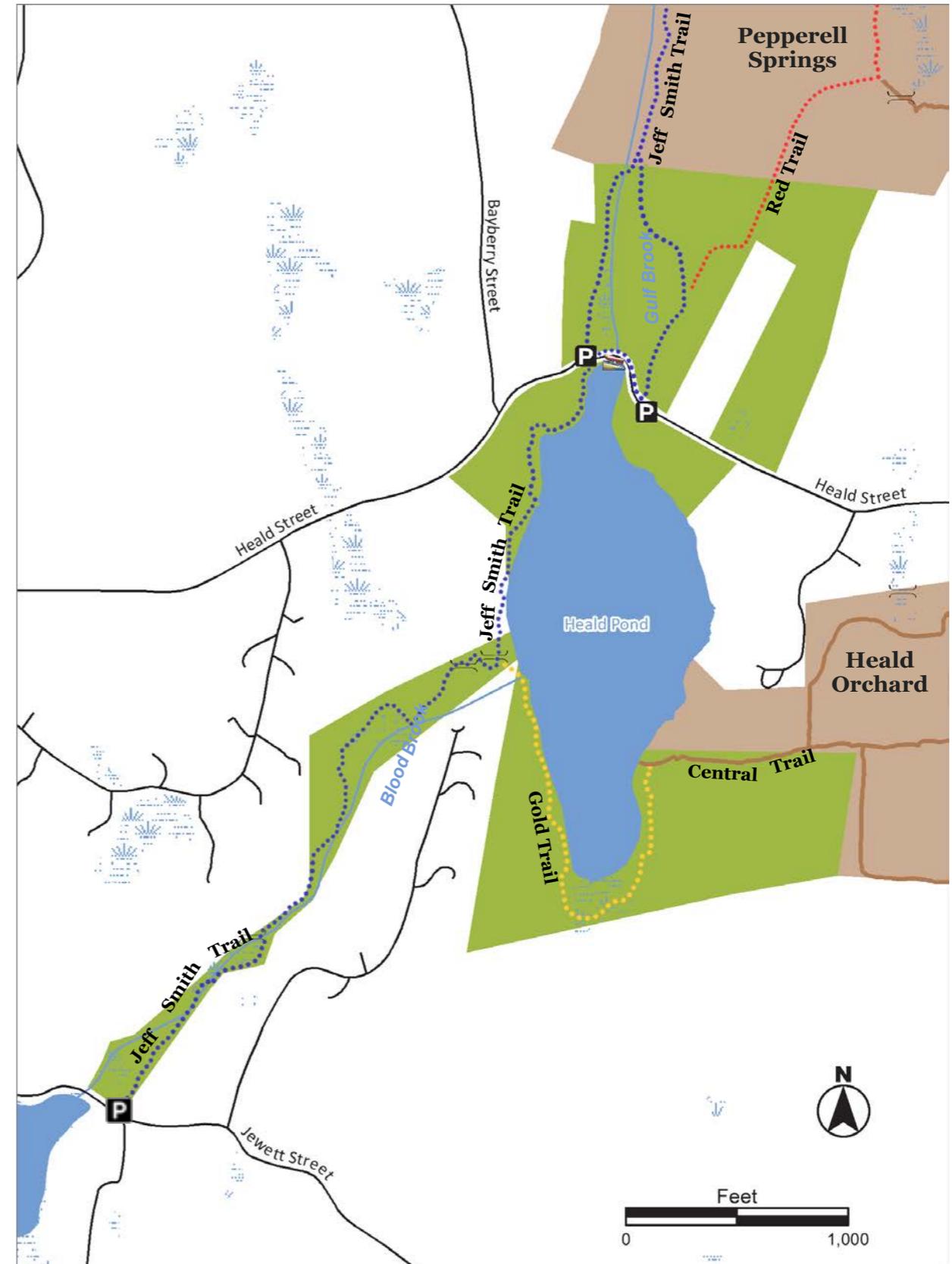
From the Heald Street kiosk follow the Jeff Smith Trail south along the western edge of Heald Pond. It meanders along the shoreline and then heads up a steep ledge offering fantastic views of the pond. At .51 miles the trail divides: (i) The Jeff Smith Trail follows Blood Brook to Jewett Street. (ii) The Gold Trail follows Heald Pond to the eastern side connecting to the Heald Orchard Central Trail. **Please take note: the trail section along Heald Pond is on a very steep slope; the trail section approaching Jewett Street can be very wet year-round.** The Pepperell Springs area also can be accessed from both of the parking areas on Heald Street. **Please take note: the trail to the west of Gulf Brook can be very wet and requires a difficult crossing of Gulf Brook over an old stone dam.**

Trail Mileage

From the Heald Street kiosk the Jeff Smith Trail to Jewett Street is 1.32 miles. From the Heald Street kiosk the Jeff Smith Trail/Gold Trail to the Heald Orchard Central Trail is 1.12 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, take Park St. then first left onto Heald St. Go 2 miles and look for pond on left. Parking is next to pond or across the street. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.67318; Longitude -71.6345. There is also a small parking area on Jewett Street near the trail entrance.



13. Heald Orchard

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

Walk along the grassy lanes through the orchard and listen to the song of Baltimore Orioles, Blue-winged Warblers, and Bluebirds. Many grassland birds can be found in the fields around the orchard. Search the frog pond for turtles and follow the path down the hill and through a hemlock forest to a sandy shoreline area of **Heald Pond**. Here there are great views of the rocky cliff on the western edge of the pond.

Land Protection History

This 80-acre property was once a working apple orchard. The Town of Pepperell purchased the orchard in 1979 for water supply protection, fruit production and open space. The Conservation Commission leased the land for commercial fruit production until 1999 then the highly-competitive agricultural markets for apples made it difficult to find a farmer to lease the orchard. A new land Management Plan was completed in 2008 with the goals of creating diverse habitats for wildlife and additional passive recreational uses.

Trail Description

The Orchard has many trails and paths. This trail description covers a main trail through the center of the orchard, known as the Central Trail. The trail is unmarked but can be followed with the map in hand. From the parking area, walk past the gate and turn right to follow the path along the edge of trees leading to the main orchard. At the "T" junction, turn left and take the second right onto a very wide trail bordering a "savannah" field. This field was designed, in part, to attract kestrels and other birds of prey. After the field, the trail dips and then ascends to a flat rocky area offering great views of the orchard and another field managed for field nesting birds. Heading west across the field the trail descends into a forest to the shoreline of Heald Pond. Upon reaching Heald Pond there is an option to follow the Gold Trail to the western side of the pond, connecting to the Jeff Smith Trail. See the Heald Pond map for more details.

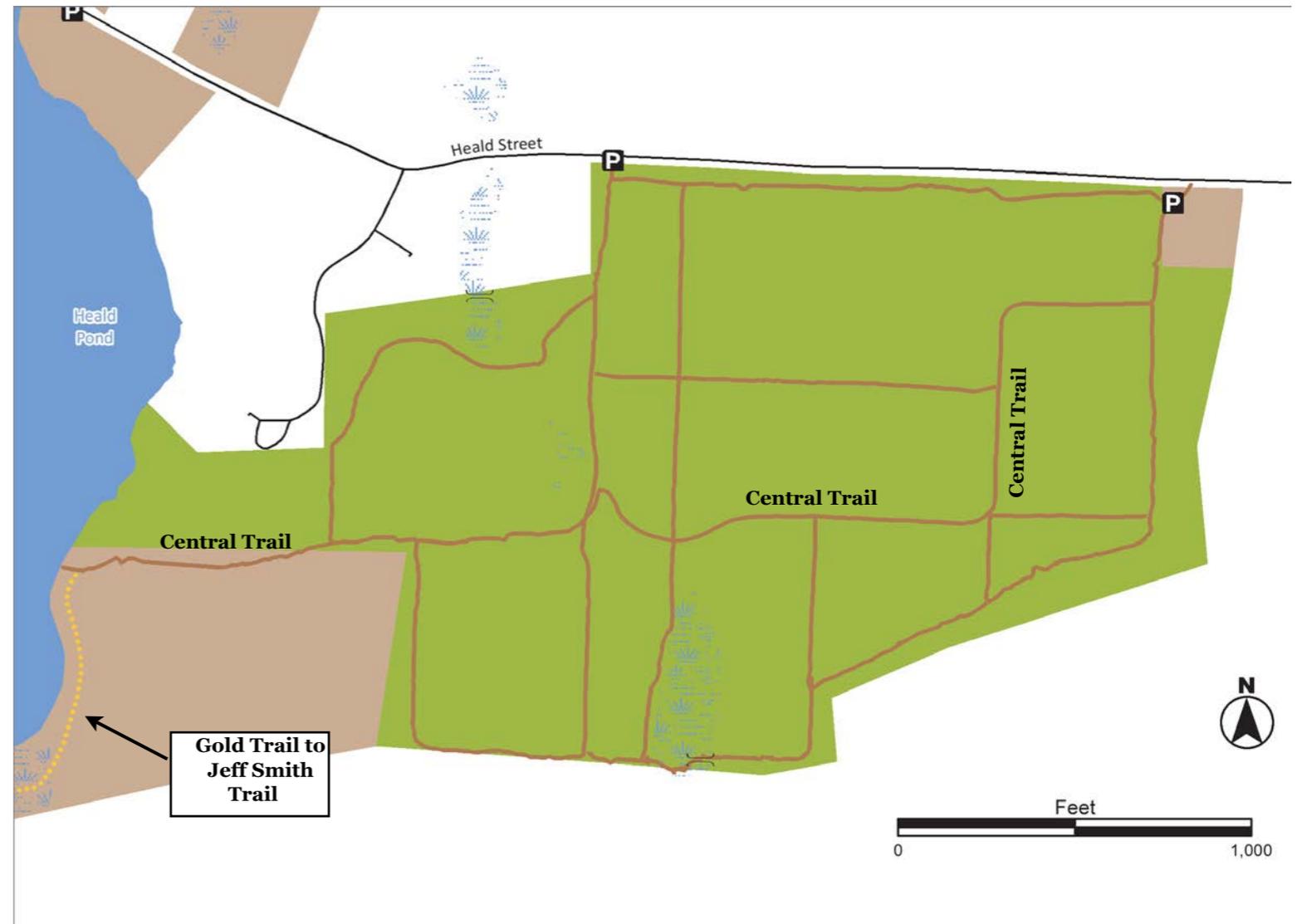
Please take note: the Heald Orchard fields are managed for ground nesting birds in Spring and Summer. Please stay to the mowed paths.

Trail Mileage

From the parking area the Central Trail to Heald Pond is .71 miles

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, head north on Park Street and take the first left onto Heald St. Follow Heald St. for 1.5 miles; the dirt parking area is on the left next to the orchard. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.67099; Longitude -71.62231.



14. Keyes Parker Conservation Areas

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

This 70-acre property includes woodlands and open fields, a pond, and frontage on Sucker Brook. There are two great hills for sledding in the winter. A walking trail leads around the perimeter of the property leading you through diverse forest and wetland habitats. Fox, weasels, kestrels, herons, bluebirds, and many songbirds can be seen in the wetland areas and fields.

Land Protection History

The 50-acre Keyes property was purchased from Nashoba Valley Hunt Club with funding from the state in 1985. As part of the sales agreement, the kennel and one acre of land were leased to the Hunt Club for 20 years. At the end of the lease, the conservation commission removed the old building and expanded the field habitat, which is managed for nesting birds.

In 2012, Richard Parker donated 19.8 acres of his land abutting the Keyes property to the Conservation Commission. The land includes a moist hemlock forest and frontage on Sucker Brook which helps further protect the brook watershed. It joins with protected land to the south to form a corridor of protected open space that begins on Oak Hill Street and continues to the state's Wildlife Management Area on Brookline Street.

Trail Description

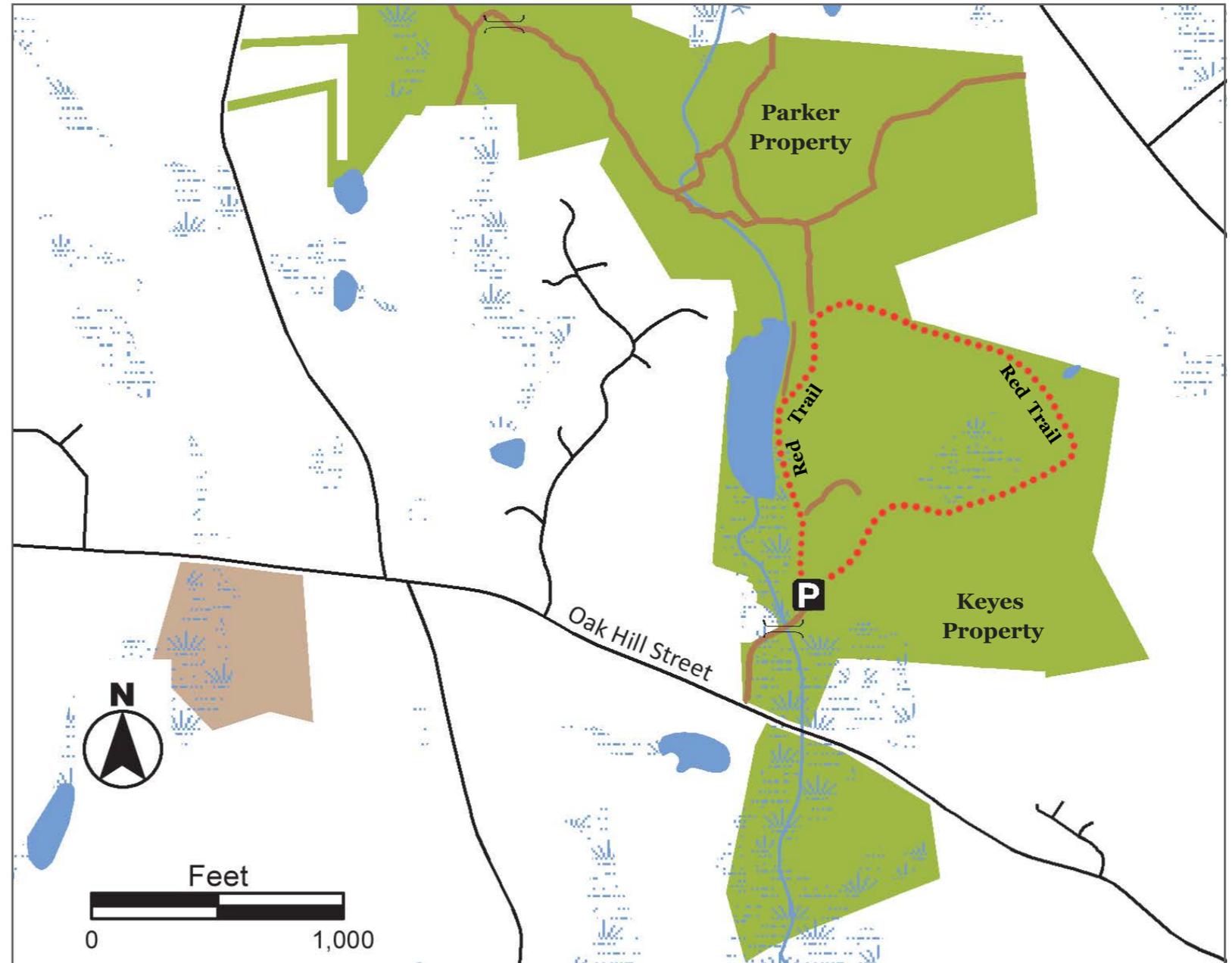
This description is for the Red Trail, which forms a loop from/to the parking area and is marked with red T.O.P. trail markers. Head north, pass through the steel gate and follow the dirt path toward the pond. The trail continues along the pond and at .11 miles heads uphill into a pine and hemlock forest. At .36 miles the trail enters a field. Turn right and follow the field perimeter along the edge of the woods. The trail then follows a cart path through a smaller woodland and at .60 miles opens to the larger field adjacent to parking area. ***Please take note: the fields are managed for ground nesting birds in Spring and Summer. Please stay to the mowed paths along the field perimeter, as indicated.***

Trail Mileage

From the parking area the Red Trail is .72 miles in length.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, follow Park St. north about 1 mile. Bear left onto Oak Hill St and after .5 mile. turn right on dirt driveway and follow road to parking lot on right side of the drive after crossing Sucker Brook. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.68403; Longitude -71.60928.



15. Friends Way

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

The Friends Way property is a lovely and bright forest full of white birches, aspens and a few large white pines. Birch branches dangle over the trail making it feel like one is traveling through a natural tunnel. Ruffed Grouse enjoy the birch and aspen seeds and buds, and Eastern Towhee and American Redstarts love the shrubby understory in the forest. The property connects with the Old County Road trail in Groton providing an opportunity for a much longer hike and exploration of the Throne Hill area of Groton.

Land Protection History

The acquisition of Friend's Way came about as a conservation purchase. In 1988, when a 46.93 acre parcel of land on South Road became available, a group of conservation minded investors formed The Friends of the Land Trust as an adjunct of NCT and purchased the property with the intent to limit development and create open space connecting to the Old County Road. 30 of the 46.93 acres was to be set aside as conservation land for NCT, and the rest used to create 5 house lots to be sold. The land was purchased from the LePoer family, and by 1995 all of the 5 lots had been sold and the 30 acres deeded over to NCT. At the end of the project, Mrs. LePoer and her daughter Doreen Morse significantly reduced the note on the property still held by the Friends, and NCT was able to finalize the purchase with a small contribution on their part.

Trail Description

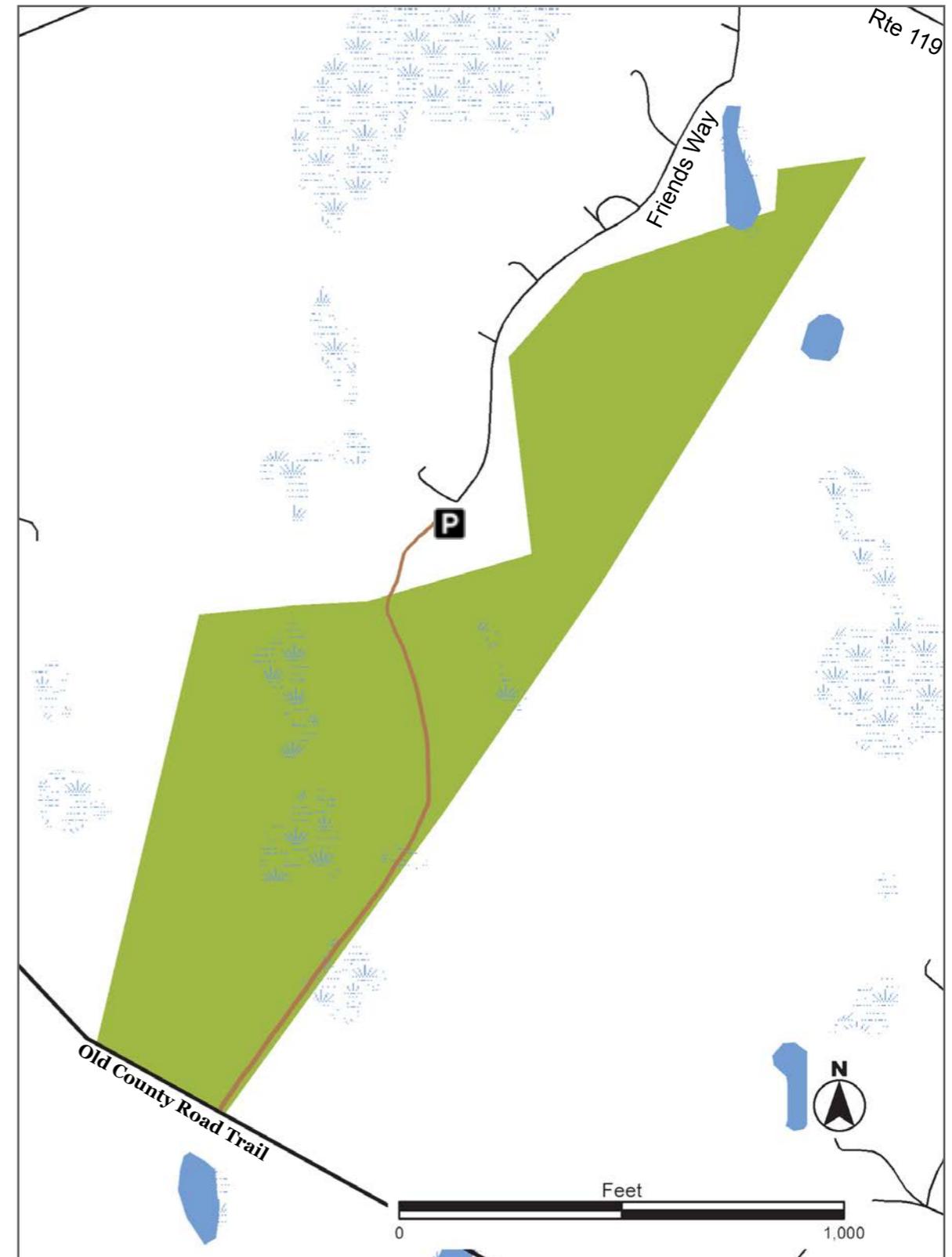
The trail begins to the right of a grove of birches and aspens and is marked by red dots. It heads southwest into the woods through the beautiful birch forest and passes a small wetland or vernal pool on the west side of the trail. It continues through more birch and pine forest to its connections with the Old County Road trail in Groton from which you can explore the Groton Conservation Trust's vast Throne Hill Complex. Visit www.gctrust.org for more information on Throne Hill.

Trail Mileage

From the parking area to the Old Country Road trail is .2 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall head west on Route 113 to intersection with Rte 119. Go left on Rte 119 for 1/10 of a mile and then take a right onto Friends Way (look for sign). Drive down the common drive to end and park in grassy area. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.64258; Longitude -71.63768.



16. Nissitissit Meadows

www.nashobatrust.org

<https://town.pepperell.ma.us/trails>

Walking through Nissitissit Meadows during late spring, you hear male Bobolinks singing their bubbling and chaotic mating songs as they fly around the fields. Marsh marigold and blue flag iris grow along the edges of an intermittent stream and bluebirds swoop into nest boxes to feed their young. This special place transports you back to a time when life was less hectic and a summer day could be spent picnicking and enjoying nature beside the pond.

Land Protection History

In 1996 NCT led a community grassroots effort to protect the 63-acre Nissitissit Meadows property from development. The Meadow is strategically located along the Nissitissit River and abuts the 800-acre Nissitissit Wildlife Management Area. NCT acquired enough signatures to hold a special town meeting at which over 300 people attended with a majority voting to acquire the property for conservation.

Trail Description

This description is of a loop trail around the meadow, as seen on the map. The trail begins at the parking area and continues along a stream and small wetland area. Follow the field edge for a .61 mile loop trail or continue along the field and stream edge to the pond. Two woodland trails, starting at the northwest end of the meadow, connect with the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Nissitissit River Wildlife Management Area trails (map sections in dark green) and on to the Nissitissit River. ***Please take note: the Meadow is managed for field nesting birds in Spring and Summer; please stay on mowed paths.***

Trail Mileage

The Meadow Loop Trail is .61 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, take Park St. north and turn right onto Prescott St.. Follow Prescott across Brookline St. and in .3 miles the parking lot is on the left next to the field. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.68937; Longitude -71.59395.

