



Pepperell Trail Guide

Nashoba Conservation Trust
and the
Pepperell Conservation Commission

Copyright © 2021 Nashoba Conservation Trust, Inc.

All rights reserved

For information about permission to reproduce sections of this
book email contact@nashobatrust.org

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 passive recreational 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

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.

Parcel boundaries are only approximate; they do not represent surveyed or GIS derived locations.

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 7.2 mile trail that crosses multiple parcels, is marked with blue-paint blazes on trees. The Guide maps show the Jeff Smith trail in blue blazes along with the trail name. Map 17 provides an overview of this trail.
- 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.

Conservation Land Rules and Regulations

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

- No motorized vehicles, except with prior permission.
- No dumping and no littering.
- No fires without written permission of NCT or the Conservation Commission.
- No overnight camping without written permission of NCT or the Conservation Commission.
- No cutting, breaking, removing, defacing, defiling, ill-using, or possessing any structure, fence, or sign, or parts of them.
- No cutting, breaking, removing, defacing, or possessing dead or growing trees, bushes, plants, flowers, or other matter living or non-living. However, picking ripe fruit such as cranberries, blueberries, huckleberries, or apples for personal use is allowed.
- No constructing dams or other structures, including, but not limited to, lean-tos, bridges, towers, or handrails.
- No digging and no use of metal detectors.
- No harassing wildlife.
- No alcoholic beverages.
- No engaging in business, selling or exposing for sale, or giving away any goods, wares or circulars.

For a complete list and description of Town of Pepperell Conservation Land rules and regulations please visit the Town website <https://town.pepperell.ma.us>

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.

Tree stands are permitted. On NCT parcels usage must comply with NCT and MA Fish & Wildlife regulations. Please see the NCT website for details. On town parcels, the Town of Pepperell Conservation Commission requires compliance with MA F&W hunting regulations for tree stand usage.

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, Carlin Andrus and Gail Coffey for their contributions to the Guide's maps and content.

NCT History

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

The 1960s was a time of increasing environmental awareness, especially the importance of clean water and air to wildlife and to our health. It also was a period of unprecedented growth in Pepperell, which the NCT founders believed could compromise the town's important natural assets and its rural character. NCT's charter reflects these sentiments, pledging to "acquire and preserve natural resources and wildlife areas for the use and enjoyment of future generation...and to educate the public about the wise use of natural resources."

NCT's first protected property was donated in 1974 by Mary L. Haueisen, one of NCT's founding members. This 7.5 acre parcel on Gulf Brook not only helped protect this important coldwater fishery and source of the town's drinking water, it laid the foundation of Pepperell's land conservation movement.

In the fifty-plus years since its founding, NCT has helped protect over 2,000 acres of land in Pepperell, 400 acres of which it owns and manages outright. NCT's ability to steward this land, 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.



Copyright 2006-2007 Ken Hartlage

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, beeches and shagbark hickories. This is a place to slow down and fully enjoy the natural world.

Land Protection History

Erik Stromsted, one of the 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 sub-division 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. Heading north from the trail head, the West Trail 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.

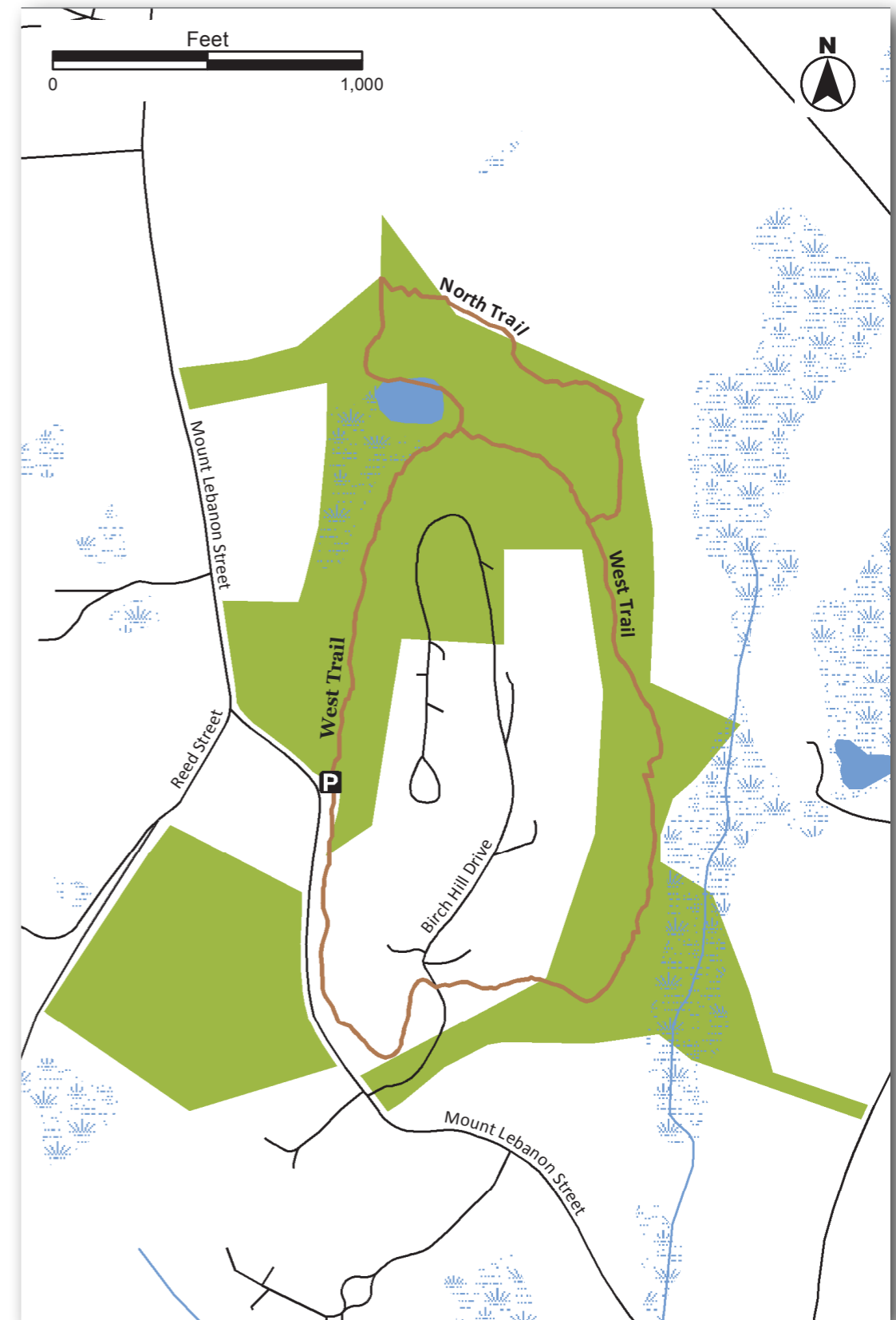
The North Trail is an offshoot of the West Trail, and is marked by signs. A section of this trail runs alongside a farm and offers nice views of pastureland.

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 the right of the 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

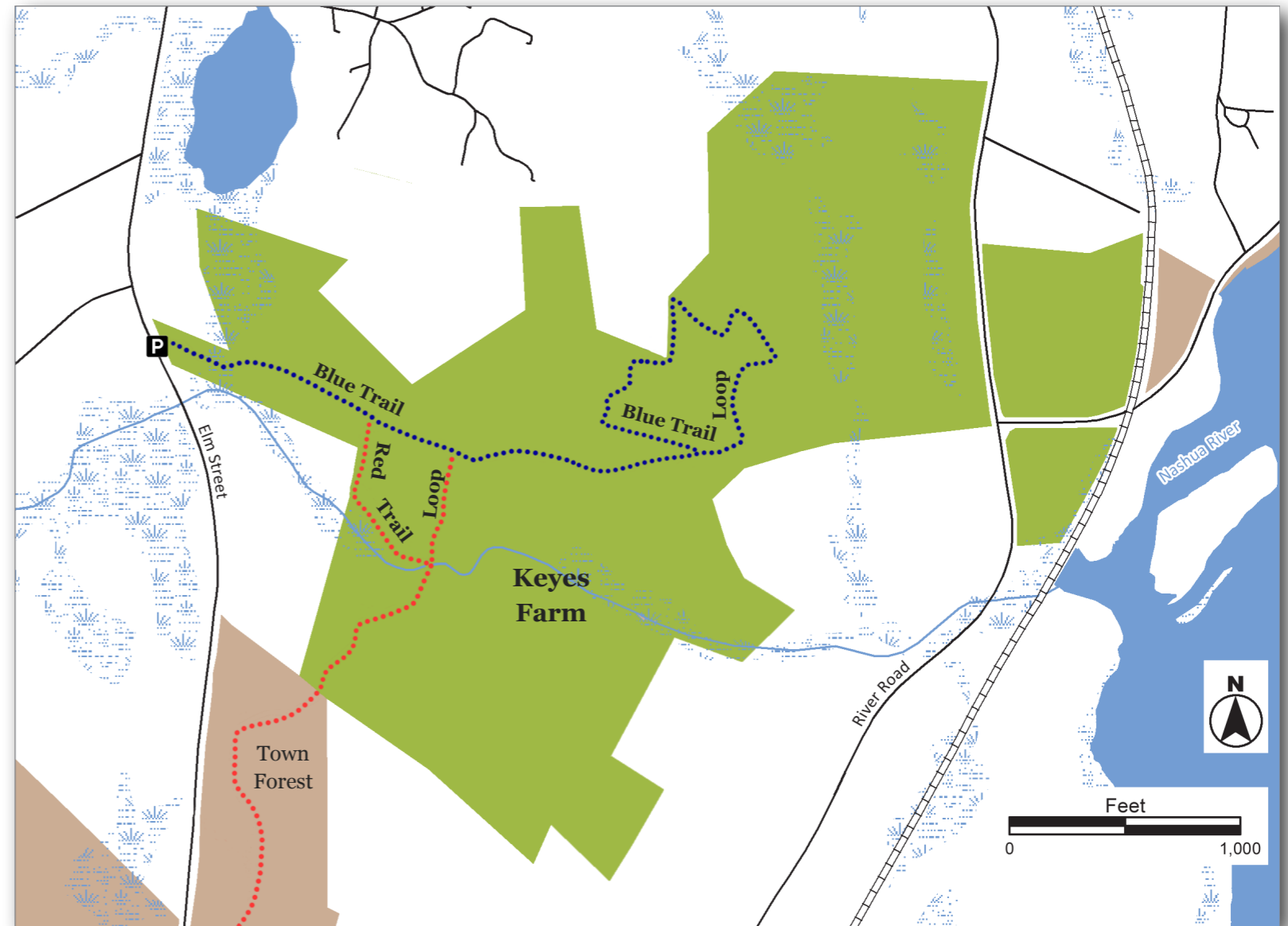
Keyes Farm has two main trails, both of which are designated with color-coded T.O.P trail markers: (1) Blue Trail. The Blue Trail winds through a small wetland with American hornbeam trees and continues through a mixed forest of beech, maples and oaks. At .45 miles, the trail turns left and goes up a hill to a driveway. Cross the driveway and look for trail markers in the white pine forest (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, or continue on the Red Trail to the Town Forest.

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 **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

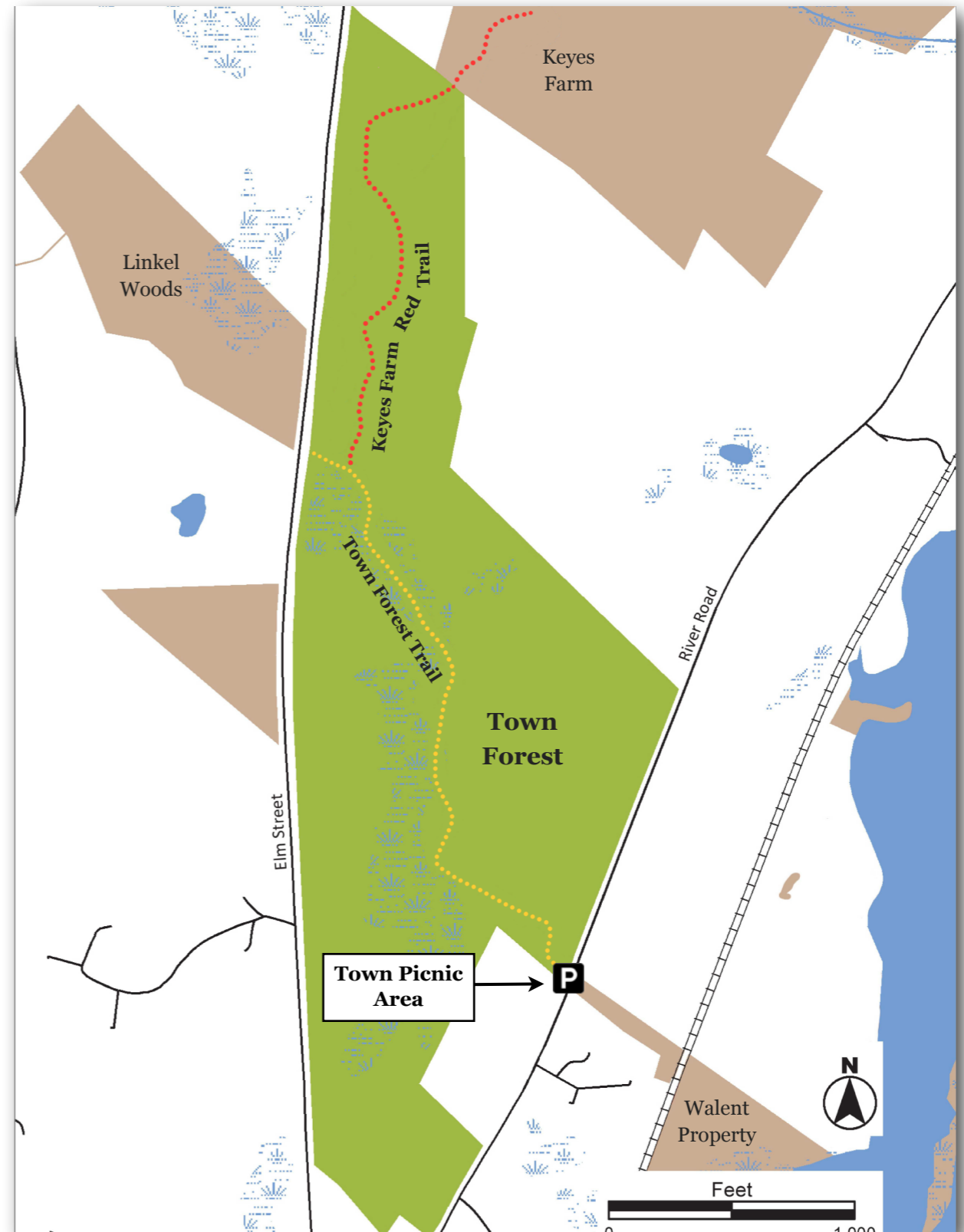
There are two starting points for the Town Forest Trail: Elm Street and the Town Picnic Area. This description originates at the Town Picnic Area: The trail begins on the north side of the Picnic Area, and is marked with gold trail markers. At .05 miles, cross under the power lines, and follow the trail 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 south about 1.2 miles at which point there is a sign just off the road marking the entrance to the trail. There is no designated parking area; however, parking is permitted along Elm Street. 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

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

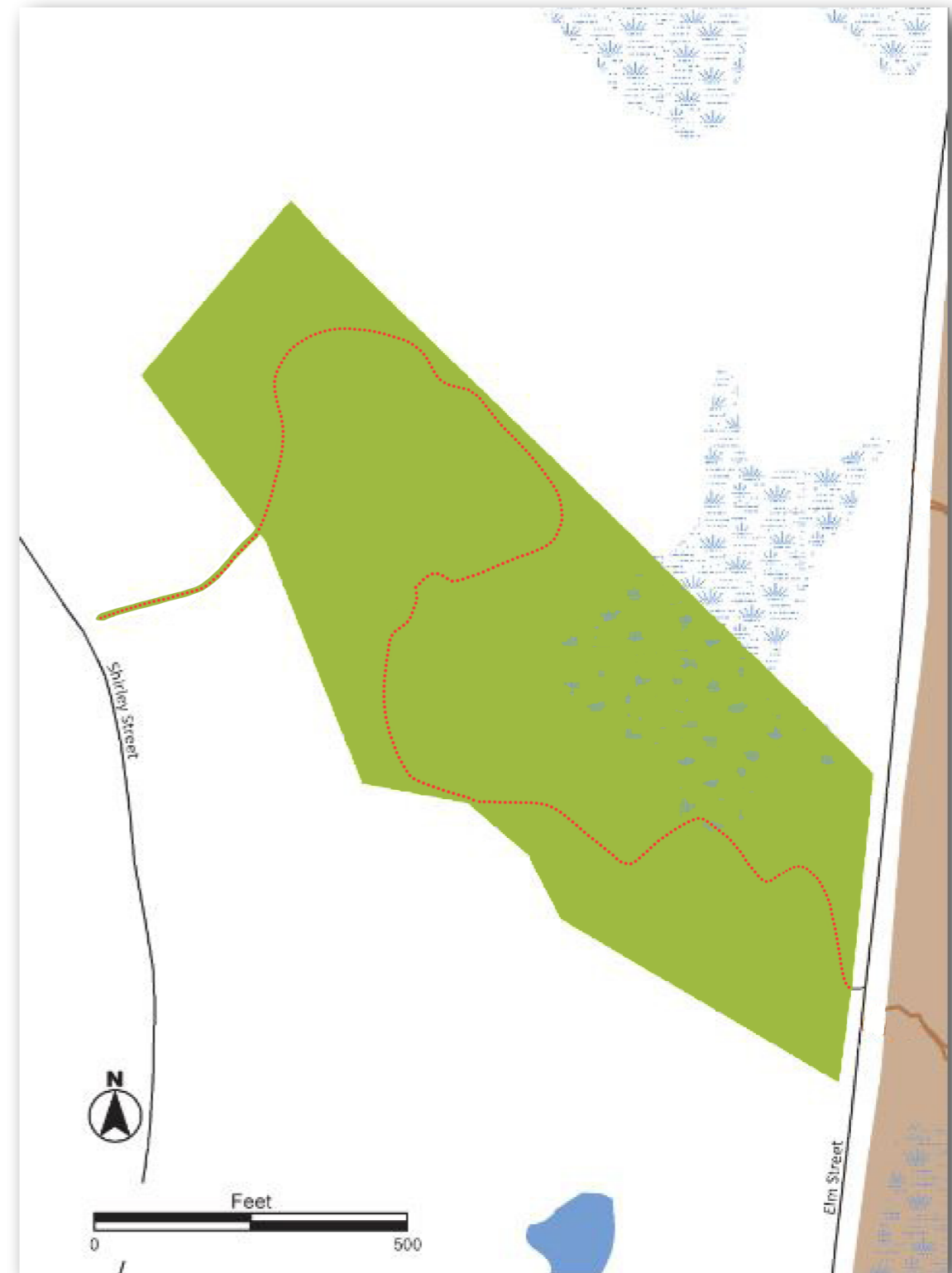
The Linkel Woods Red Trail is marked with red T.O.P markers. The trail is an easy hike through a hardwood forest of maples, oaks, and white pines. It begins near a small brook off Elm Street and heads northwest through the forest towards the brook. After crossing over a lovely stone bridge the trail will briefly emerge from the woods at about .10 miles into the walk. Continue north along the woodland edge looking for the red trail marker to re-enter the woods at about .18 miles. 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 .52 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall take Elm Street south about 1.2 miles at which point there is a sign just off the road marking the entrance to the trail. There is no designated parking area; however, parking is permitted along Elm Street. The GPS coordinates for the street **parking area** are: Latitude 42.64944; Longitude -71.59731.



5. Westside Trail

www.nashobatrust.org

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

The Westside Trail is one of the hidden gems in the Pepperell Pond area of the Nashua River. This area of the river is a migratory stopover for waterfowl heading north in spring and, in recent years, a Bald eagle has been nesting in the area.

Land Protection History

In 1982 the Kemp family donated the peninsula where the restored canoe/kayak launch site and parking is located, as well as the right of way to access it. Further south, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation acquired 46 acres from the Walent family in 2002; NCT contributed \$20,000 toward this purchase, which is now part of the J. Harry Rich State Forest. Also in 2002, the Pepperell Conservation Commission purchased the one-mile rail bed with funding from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services under the former Self-Help Program. In 2019 NCT acquired 18 acres along the Nashua River and named the parcel the Marion Stoddart Conservation Area in honor of Marion's decades long commitment to protecting the river.

Trail Description

Starting from the canoe/kayak launch site parking area and following the blue trail markers, walk south along the river and enjoy spectacular scenery and wildlife views. Presently, you will arrive at a 3-acre field on the right. The trail continues south hugging the riverside and enters a wooded area that brings you to the Walent property and the second parking area. From the parking area look for the blue trail markers to guide you to the old railway bed, on which the trail continues. The trail passes through two splendid oxbow areas of the Nashua River and ends at Rte 119.

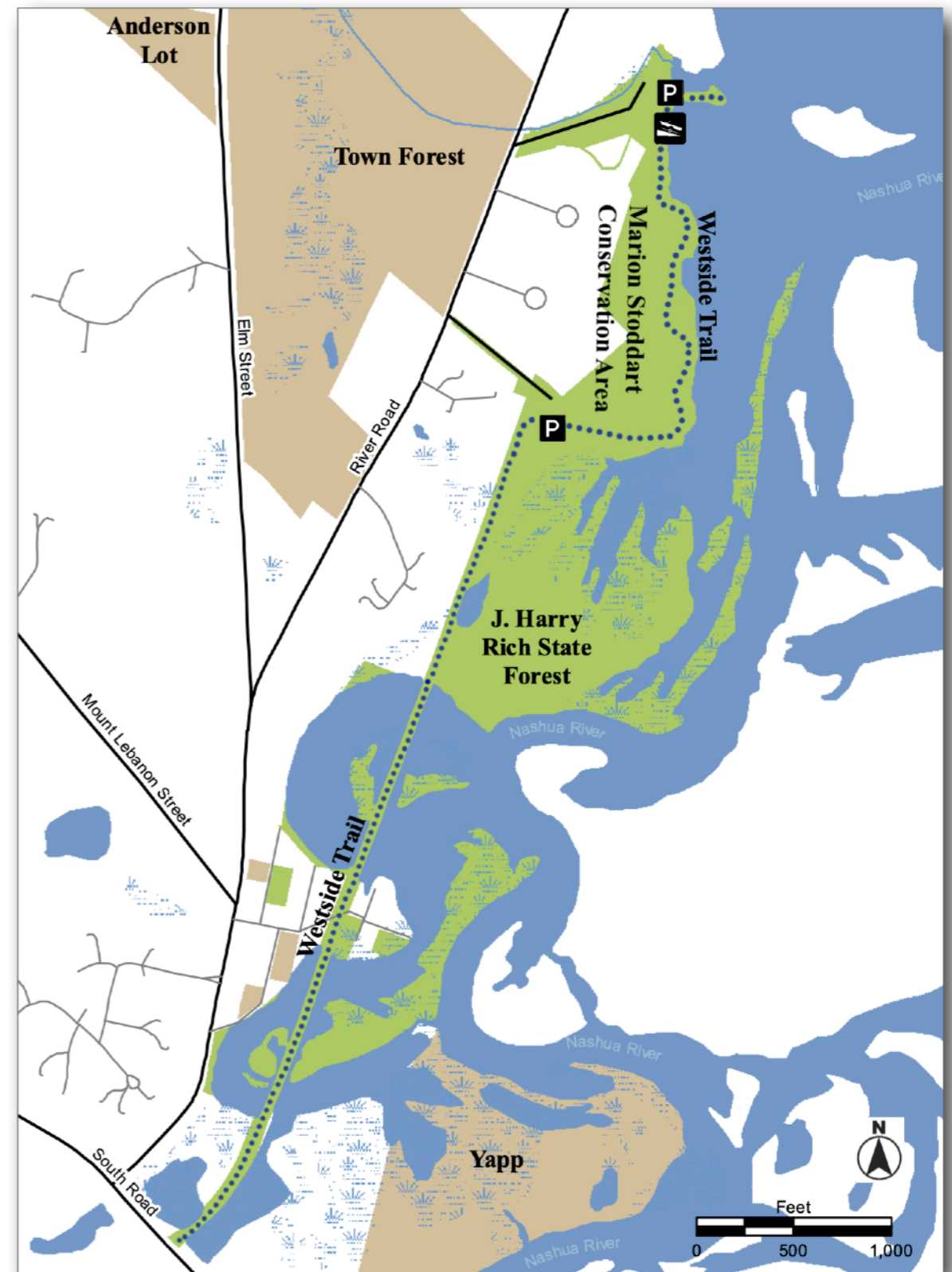
Trail Mileage

From the Canoe/Kayak site parking area, the first segment of the Westside Trail to the Walent parking area is .5 miles; the remaining southbound segment to Rte 119 is 1 mile.

Directions

To the Town of Pepperell Canoe/Kayak launch site 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 at the TOP Canoe/Kayak launch site sign. **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 TOP Canoe/Kayak site 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 shrub-land 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, a cranberry bog and sandy soils. This one-time gravel pit is now an early successional forest of young aspen and birch along with sweet fern, bracken and Pennsylvania sedge. 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.

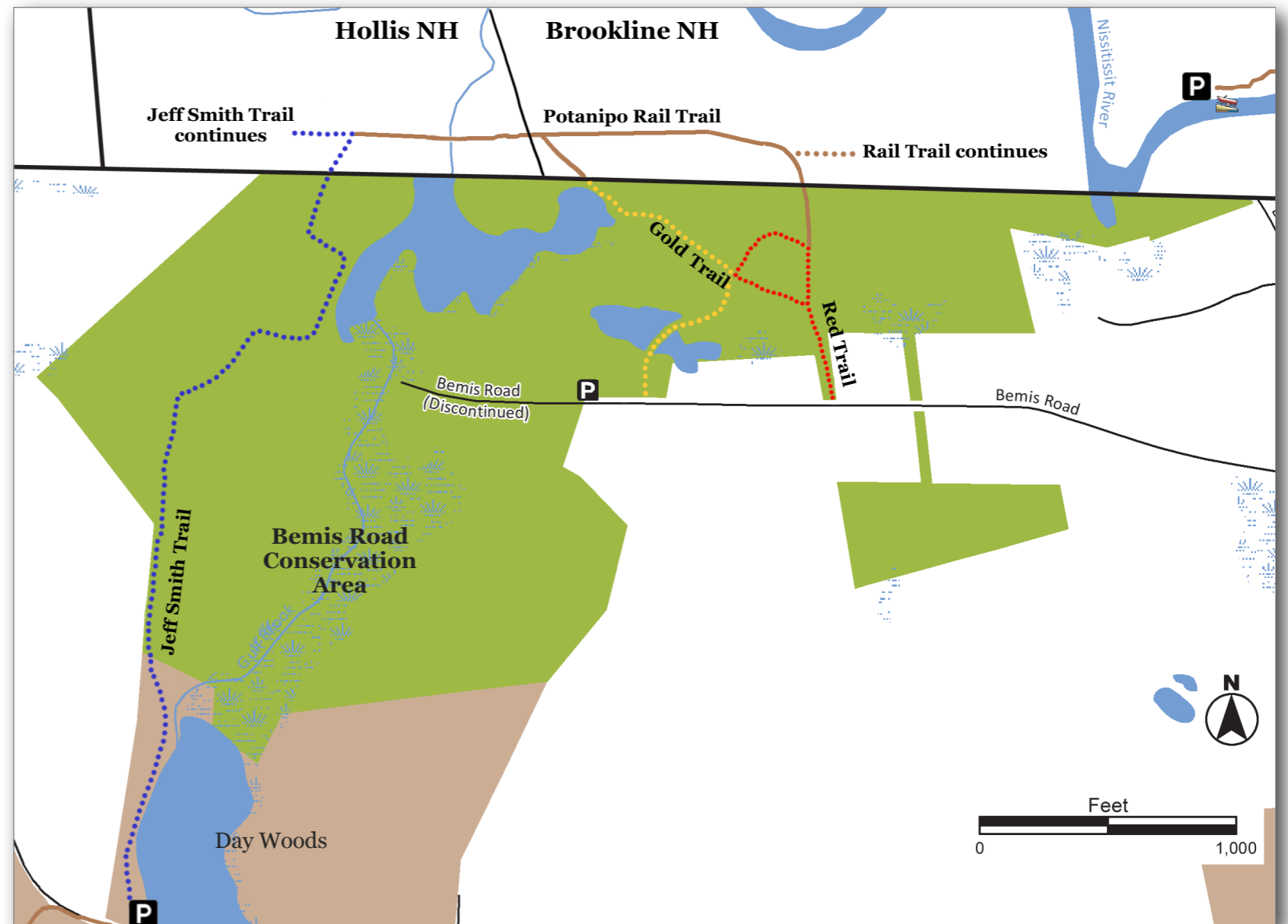
The Gold Trail starts near the parking area at the end of Bemis Rd. The trail first descends into a wetland with a pond to the left and a cranberry bog to the right. The Gold Trail joins up with the Red Trail at .13 miles and turns west, crosses a large sand pit and then borders another wetland before meeting 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 on 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

www.nashobatrust.org

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

The 36-acre Day Woods property is located where Stewart Brook merges with Gulf Brook and flows into a wetland and extensive shrub swamp. The brook continues through the remains of an old sawmill dam, into the Town of Pepperell's Water Division lands and then empties into the Nissitissit River.

Gulf Brook is an aquifer-fed coldwater fishery with populations of brook trout and several species of freshwater muskells. 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. 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

From the parking area gate, the Jeff Smith Trail (JST) passes alongside a wetland bounded by a mixed forest of hemlock, white pine and oak. At .13 miles arrive at the site of the old William Henry Shattuck mill and the wetland viewing area where several benches are located. Shortly past the dam site, a short spur trail goes down to Gulf Brook, which, during the growing season is resplendent with mosses, ferns and wildflowers.

Returning to the JST, the trail merges with the Bemis Road Conservation Land at .29 miles. This section of the JST winds through a dense mixed forest dominated by hemlock and pine, skirts a sand pit and eventually links up to the Potanipo Trail on Beaverbrook Association land.

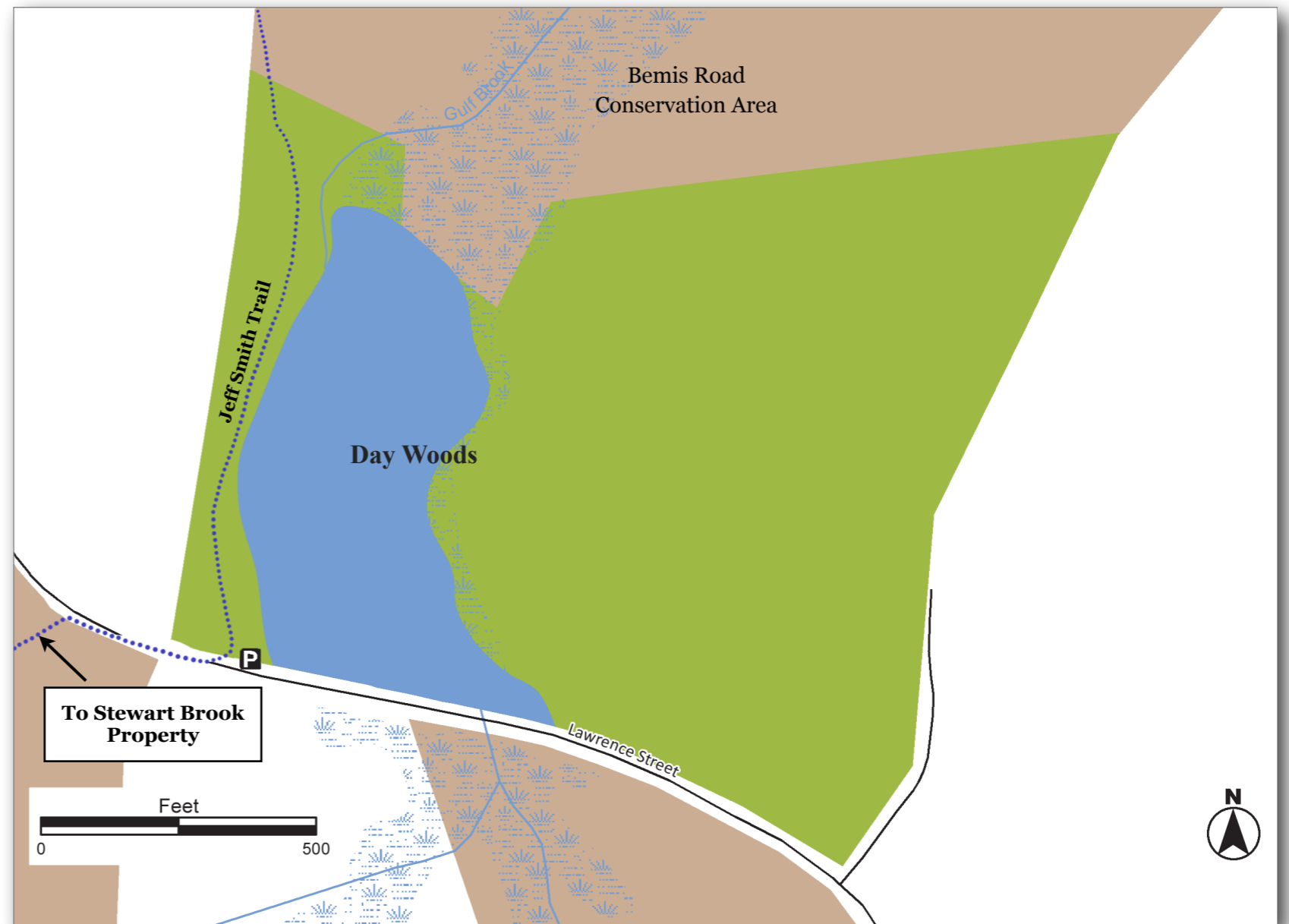
Note: The paved section of this trail meets US Forest Service accessibility standards.

Trail Mileage

From the parking area to the dam site viewing area is .13 miles. To the the Potanipo Trail on Beaverbrook property, it is .79 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. 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

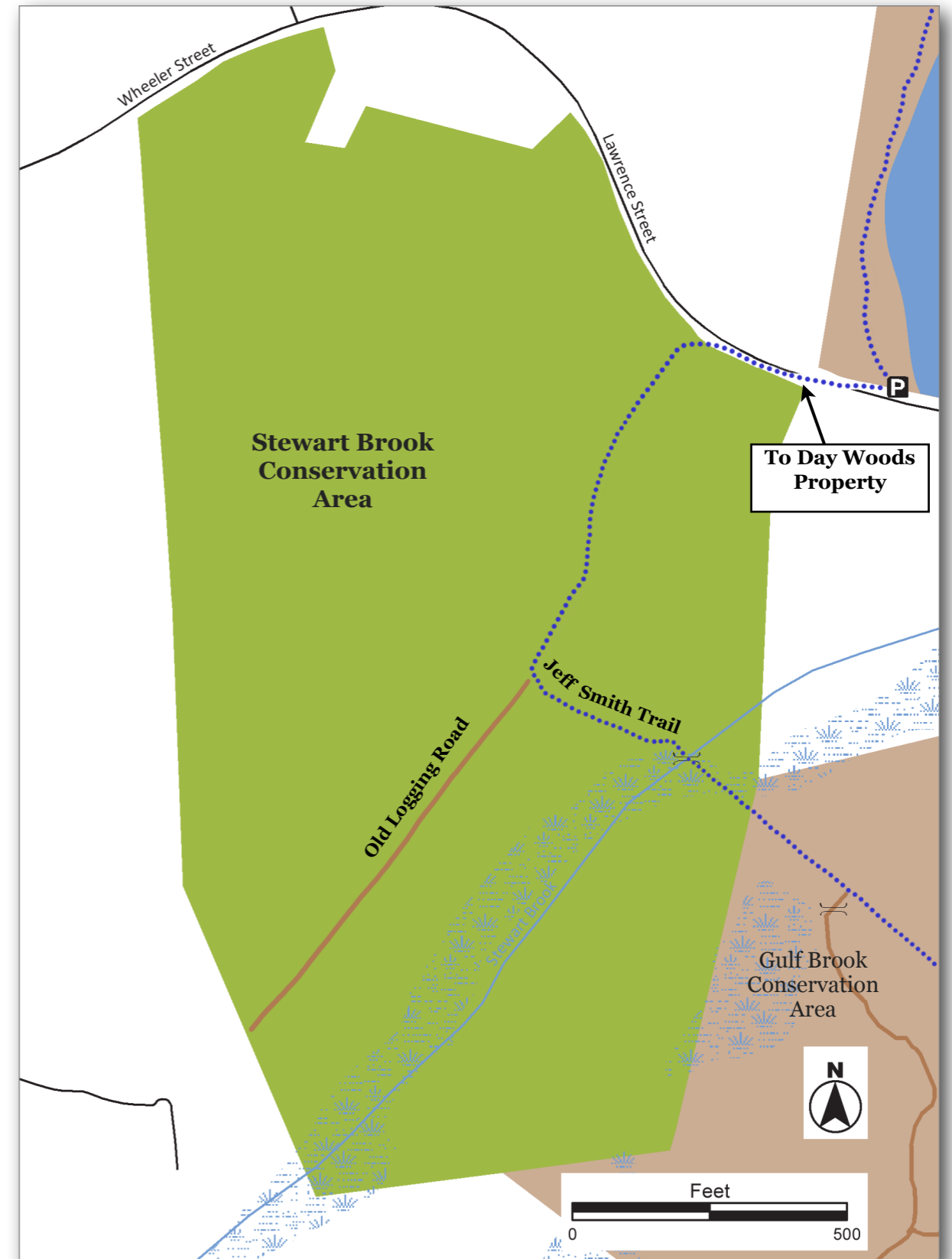
The Jeff Smith trail climbs steadily up an old logging road into a rich hemlock forest full of moss and lichens. At .13 miles, the trail divides: to the right the logging road continues another .2 miles to a vernal pool and a large glacial erratic. Alternately, turn left and follow the Jeff Smith Trail down a steep hill 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. The Gulf Brook Conservation Area 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, acquired in 1978, and the 2.7-acre Ames property, acquired in 1983, abut the town lands in this conservation area and help safeguard the Gulf Brook watershed and its habitats.

Trail Description

The Jeff Smith Trail (JST) enters the Gulf Brook Conservation Area from Oak Hill St. (see Directions). The trail passes through an eastern hemlock forest and crosses over a small stream that drains into Gulf Brook. At 0.37 miles the JST intersects with another trail originating from private property to the west. Turn right to follow the JST east toward a large wetland. At .37 miles a trail marked by a red T.O.P sign on the left indicates an alternate route to Stewart Brook. Take this trail or continue along the JST. At approximately the 1.0 mile mark the trail divides: Continue straight to follow the JST to the Stewart Brook Conservation Area, or turn left to follow the Red Trail (marked with red T.O.P markers) back to the parking area on Oak Hill.

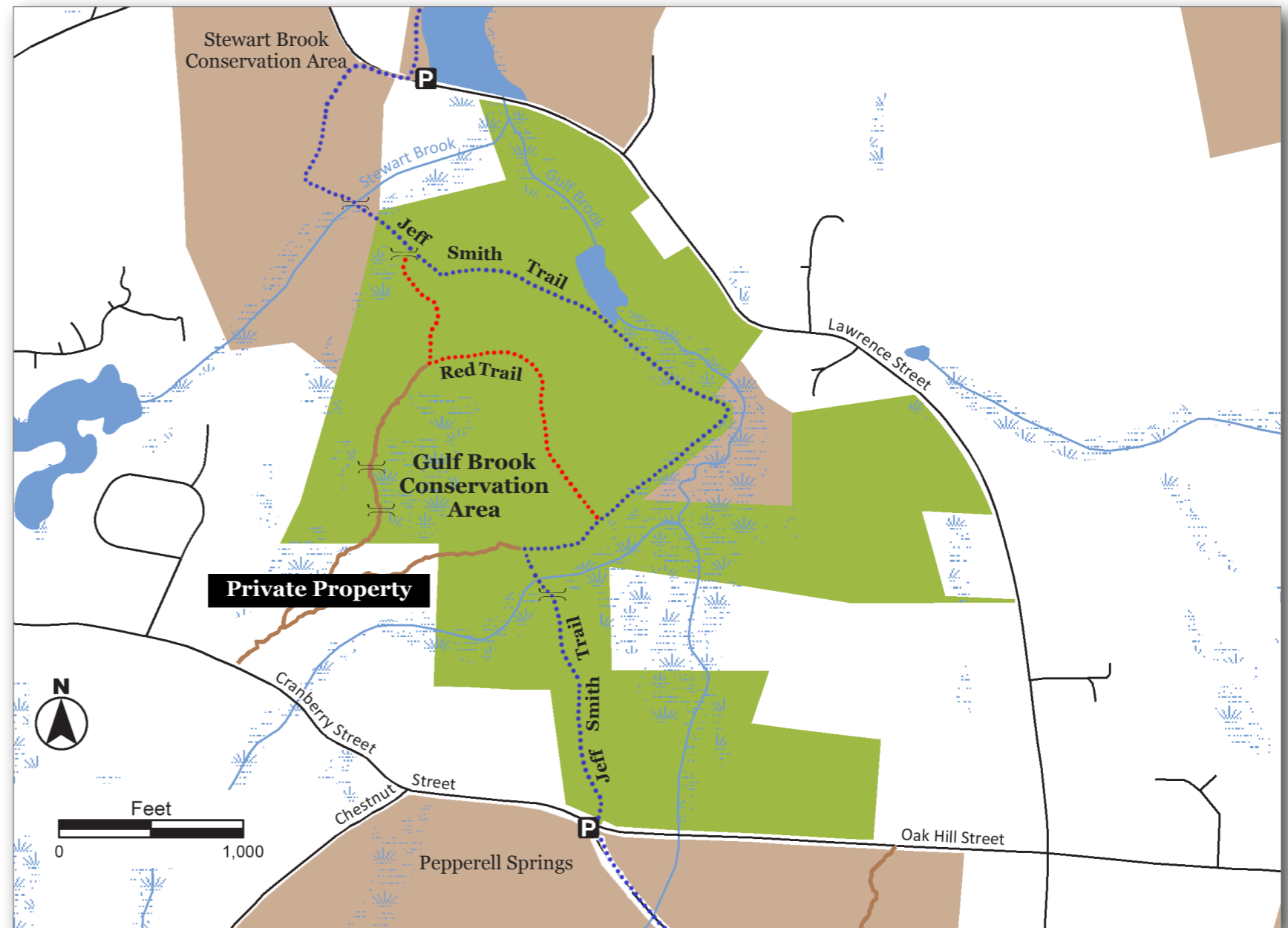
Please take note: portions of these trails are very wet year-round.

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. Although the privately-owned parcel is not posted, 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 area 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 along Gulf Brook Ravine in Pepperell Springs is like hiking through a remote, rocky section of the White Mountains of 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 (JST) 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.

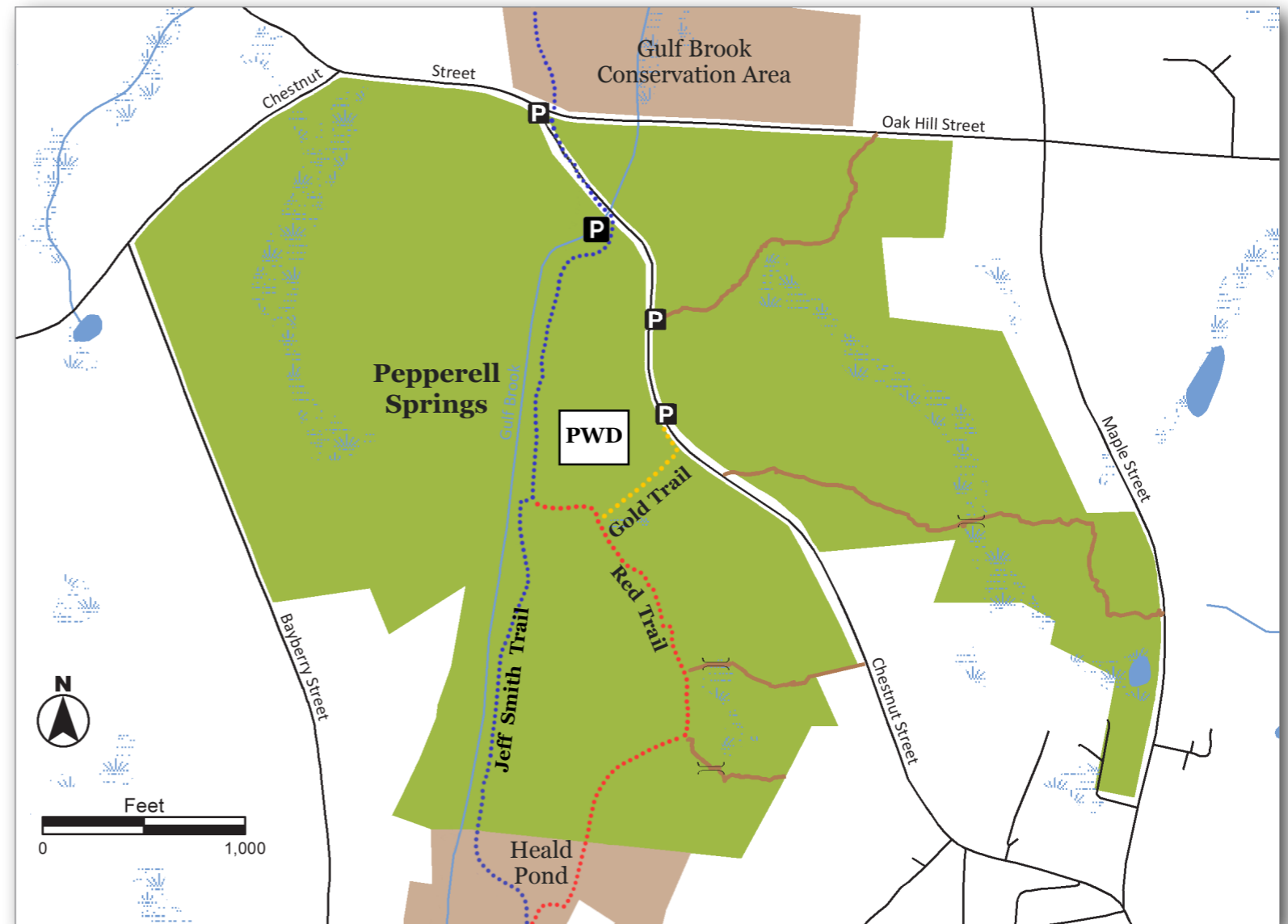
The trail crosses into the Heald Pond property, and at .71 miles intersects with the JST. Turn sharply right and follow the JST enjoying views of the ravine and Gulf Brook below. At mile 1.30 miles the trail descends into a small clearing and intersects with the Red Trail. Turn right to rejoin the Red 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

Starting from the Pepperell Water Dept. parking area, the Gold Trail/Red Trail/Jeff Smith Trail loop is 1.5 miles.

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 of Gulf Brook. 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 30 acres of land in 1967 from the Blood Family and secured two rights of way to access the property on the southerly end of Heald Pond. In 1978, Pepperell residents approved at town meeting the purchase of 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 Pond kiosk on Heald Street follow the Jeff Smith Trail (JST) south along the western edge of Heald Pond. The trail 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 JST follows Blood Brook to Jewett Street (see Map 13 for a description of this trail) and (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 and has steep slopes.**

The Pepperell Springs area, where the Jeff Smith Trail continues northward, also can be accessed from the parking areas on Heald Street. Jeff Smith Trail signs on the north side of Heald Street indicate the entrance locations.

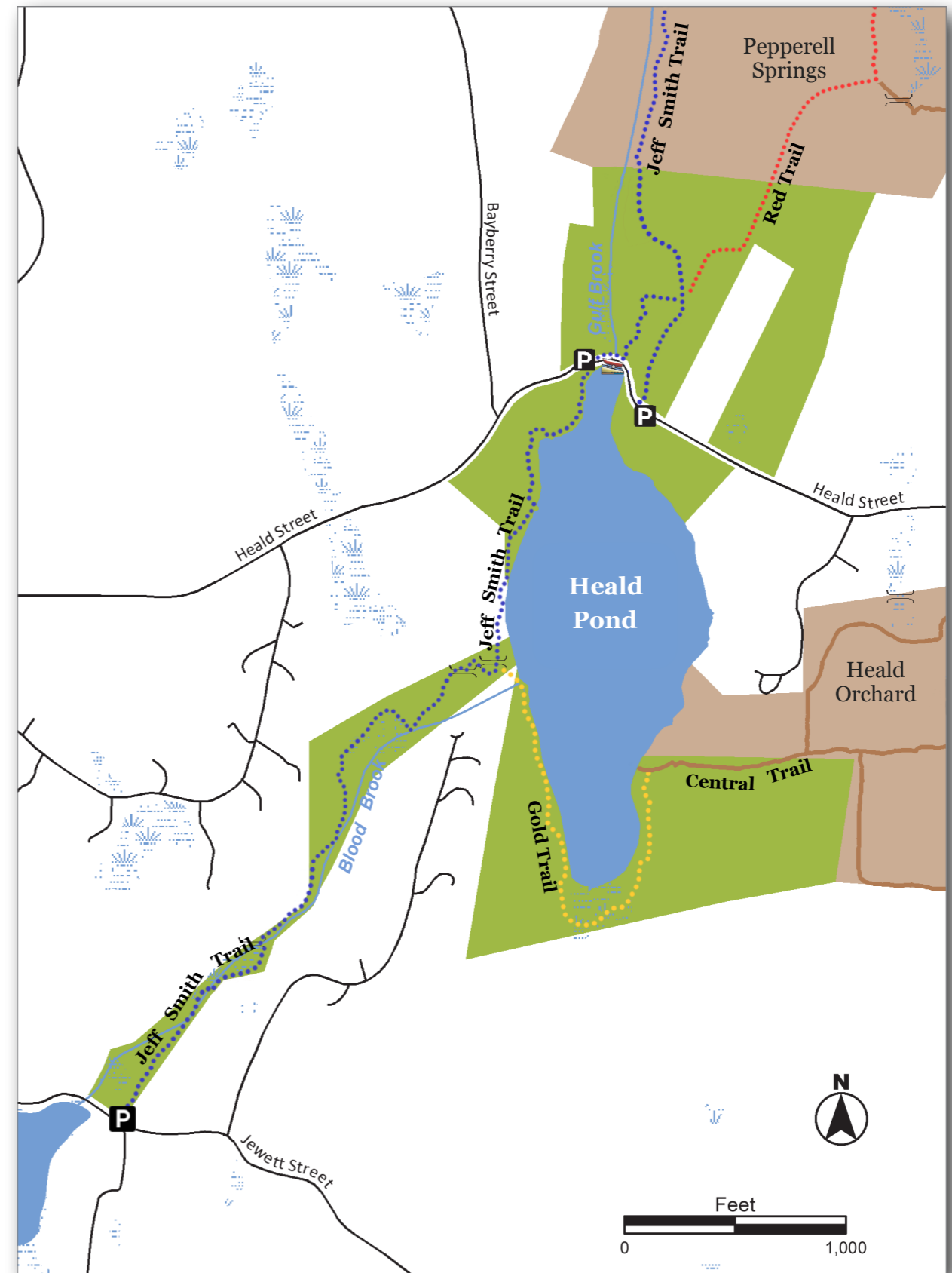
Trail Mileage

From the Heald Pond kiosk the Jeff Smith Trail to Jewett Street is 1.15 miles. From the Heald Pond kiosk to the Gold Trail and on to the Heald Orchard Central Trail, the distance is 1.12 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, take Park St. then take the first left onto Heald St. Go 2 miles and look for pond on left. The GPS coordinates for the pond-side **parking area** are: Latitude 42.67318; Longitude -71.6345.

There is also a small **parking area** on Jewett Street marking the start of the Jeff Smith Trail. The GPS coordinates for this area are Latitude 42.6638; Longitude -71.6425.



13. Blood Brook Ravine

www.nashobatrust.org

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

The trail head on Jewett Street marks the start of the 7.2 mile (one-way) Jeff Smith Trail (see Map 17). This narrow, 10-acre strip follows the Wekepeke fault line and is notable for a massive rock face, which hikers pass below, and a beautiful view of Heald Pond at the trail's terminus. The well-canopied forest of oak, maple, beech and hemlock is complemented by an understory rich in ferns and woody shrubs, such as Hobblebush and American bladder-nut. Wildflowers, ranging from the subtle pink of the Herb-Robert to the vibrant yellow of the Marsh marigold, can be found in the parcel's diverse habitat. Blood Brook Ravine abuts the **Heald Pond** Conservation Area to the north.

Land Protection History

The Pepperell Conservation Commission acquired 10.26 acres of land from James Bryanos in 1981. The Blood Brook Ravine parcel acquisition continued a decades-long effort by the Pepperell Conservation Commission and NCT to protect the Gulf Brook watershed and drinking water supply, and to create contiguous wildlife habitats.

Trail Description

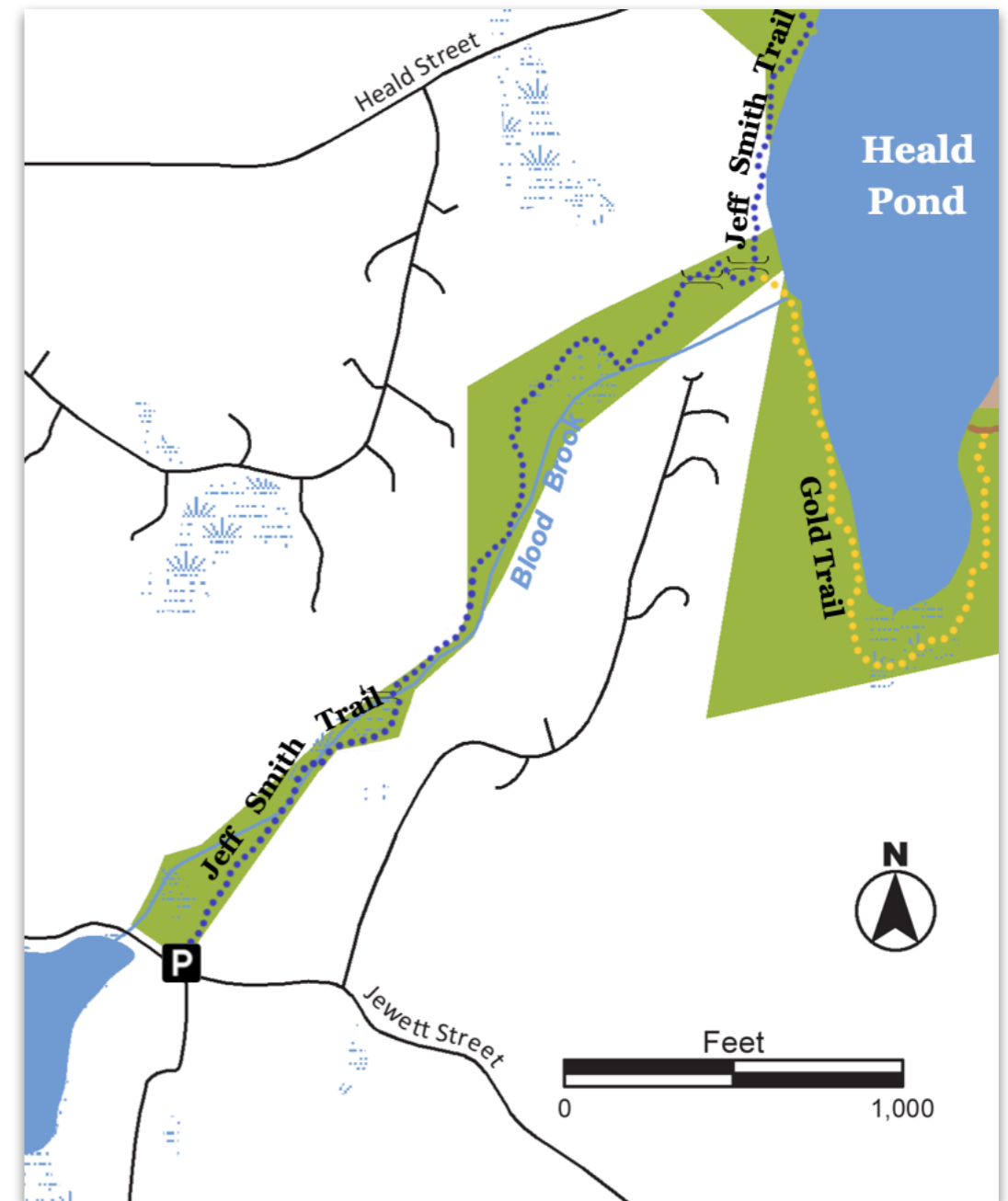
The trail starts along the eastern side of Blood Brook and crosses at .24 miles to the western bank. From there the trail climbs up and along a ridge and then descends down to the brook once again. At about .35 miles the trail passes along a massive, 100 foot high rock face and then enters a forested area for the final descent to Heald Pond. Options at this point are to return to the trail head, continue on the Jeff Smith Trail along the western shore of Heald Pond or take the Gold Trail along Heald Pond's southern shore (see Heald Pond map for details). **Please take note: This trail has steep slopes and portions can be wet year-round.**

Trail Mileage

From the Jeff Smith Trailhead to the intersection with the Gold Trail at Heald Pond is .58 miles.

Directions

From Pepperell Town Hall, head west on Townsend St./Rte 113. At .5 miles turn right onto Willow St. then turn immediately onto Jewett St. Travel approximately 2 miles and there will be a small **parking area** on the right marking the start of the Jeff Smith Trail. The GPS coordinates for this area are Latitude 42.6638; Longitude -71.6425.



14. 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 but 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 Heald Orchard East 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 on the left, identified by the kestrel box sitting atop a tall pole. 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, to the west, another field managed for ground-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.

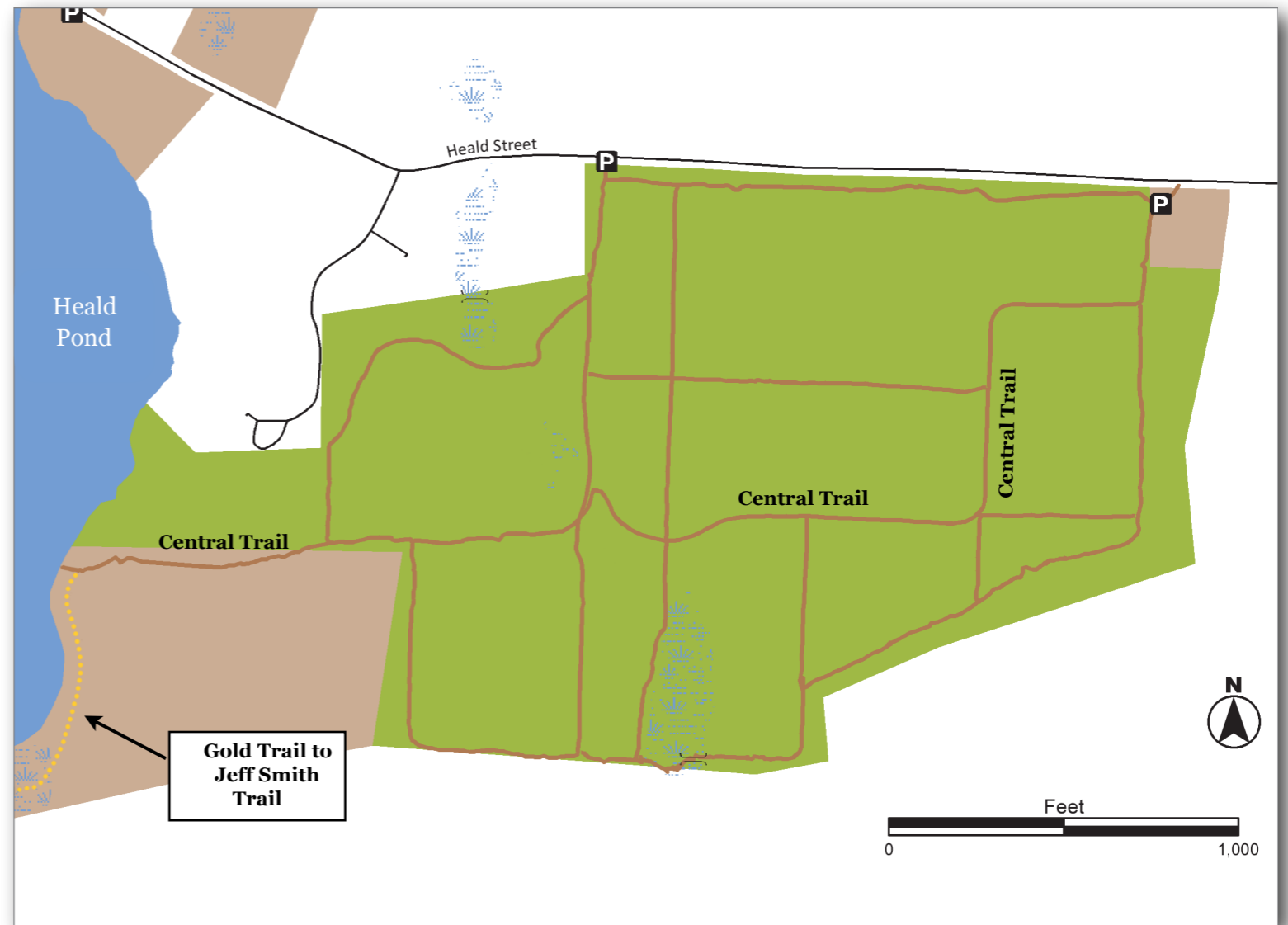
Please take note: the Heald Orchard fields are managed for ground nesting birds in Spring and Summer. Please stay to the mowed paths.

Trail Mileage

From the Heald Street East 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 Heald Orchard East parking area is on the left. The GPS coordinates for the **parking area** are: Latitude 42.67099; Longitude -71.62231. Street parking is also available approximately .3 miles west of the Heald Orchard East parking area. Look for a gate and Heald Orchard West kiosk, which indicate the entrance to the orchard.



15. 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

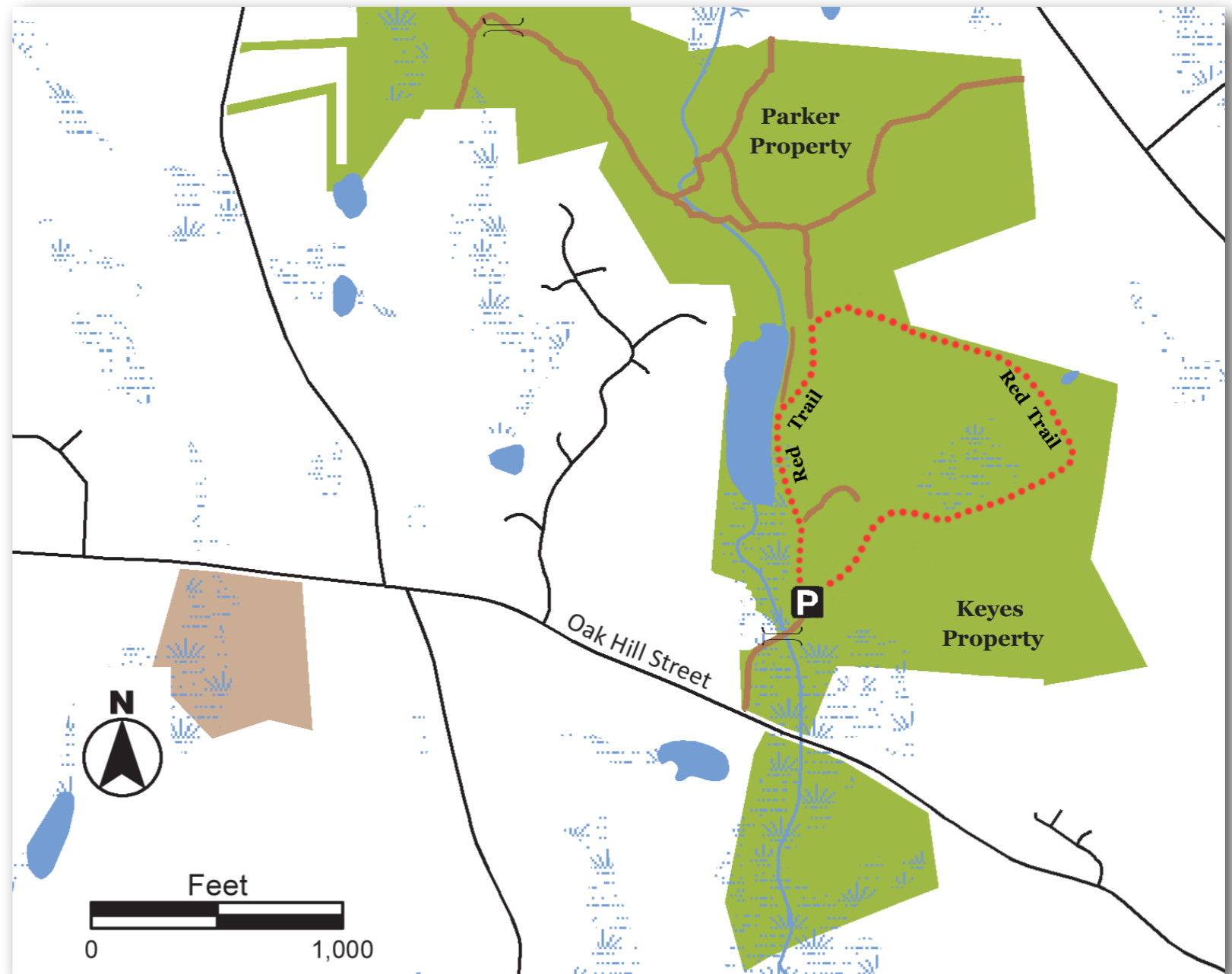
This description is for the Red Trail, which forms a loop from/to the parking area and is marked with red T.O.P. trail markers. Head north, pass through the steel gate and follow the dirt path toward the pond. The trail continues along the pond and at .11 miles heads uphill into a pine and hemlock forest. 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. Turn right and follow the field perimeter down to the 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.



16. Nissitissit Meadows

www.nashobatrust.org

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

Walking through Nissitissit Meadows during late spring, you hear male Bobolinks sing 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 describes 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.

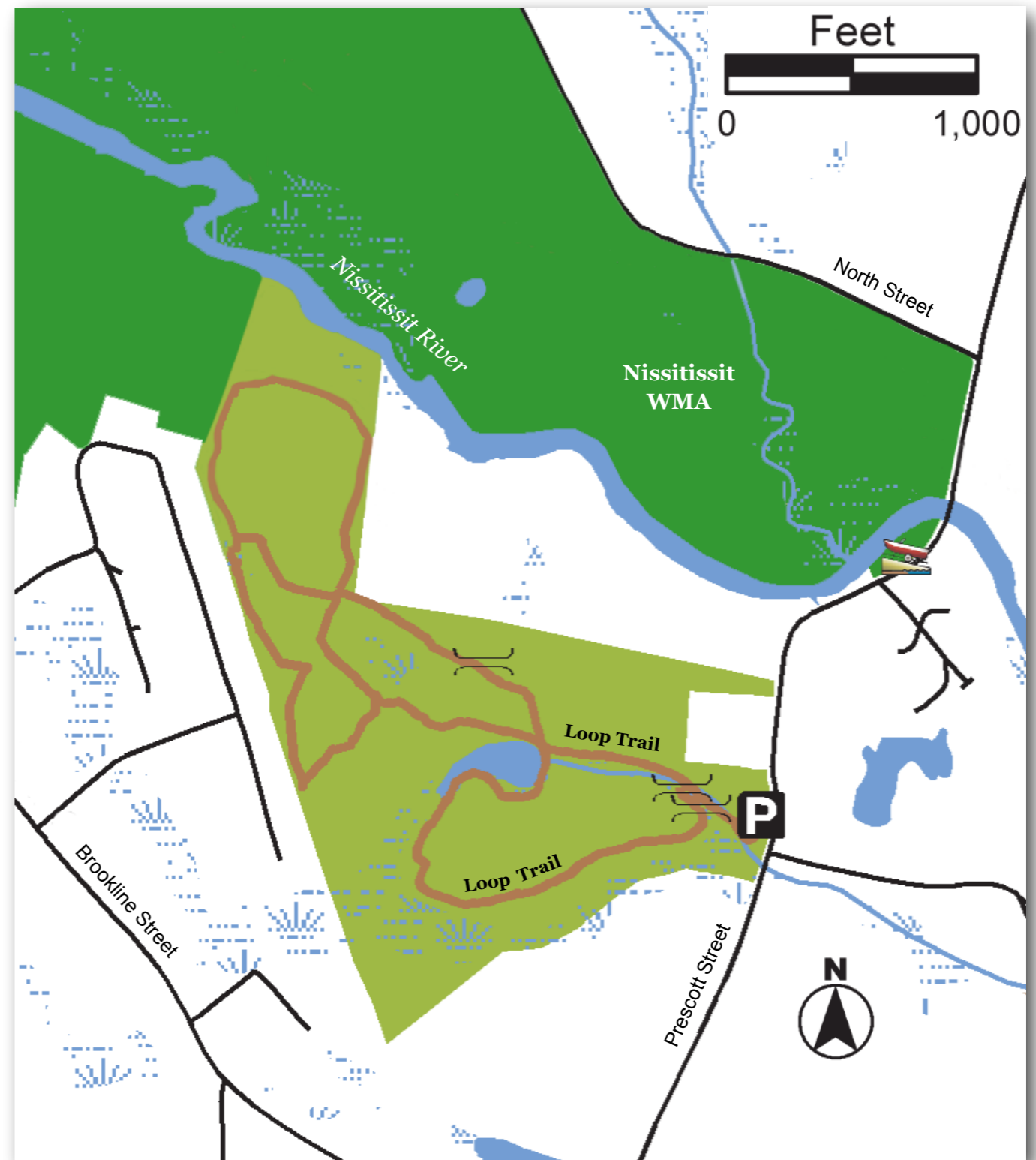
Please take note: the Meadow is managed for field nesting birds in Spring and Summer; please stay on mowed paths.

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.



17. Jeff Smith Trail (JST)

www.nashobatrust.org

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

Jeffrey P. Smith was a local farmer, forester and conservationist who, along with his cousin Hollis Nichols, established the Beaver Brook Association in 1964. Jeff also was a founding member of the Nissitissit River Land Trust (NRLT), which was established to protect the river and its resources. In recognition of Jeff's conservation work, the NRLT laid out the trail bearing his name. With the exception of several street crossings, the JST is entirely routed on conservation land. The trail location was selected to cover properties Jeff helped conserve, or are owned by organizations with which Jeff was affiliated.

Trail Description

Individual segments of the JST in Pepperell MA are described in this guide: Blood Brook Ravine, Map 13; Heald Pond, Map 12; Pepperell Springs, Map 11; Gulf and Stewart Brooks, Maps 10 and 9; Day Woods and Bemis Conservation Area, Maps 8 and 7. See map at right for approximate locations of these segments along the JST. In MA the JST is marked with blue paint blazes on trees. In NH the trail is marked by signage.

Please take note: Sections of this trail have steep slopes and can be wet year round. See individual maps for more detail. Also, be advised that approximately 4.3 miles from the Pepperell MA trailhead *the JST crosses the Nissitissit River, which is impassible without a watercraft* except in extremely low-flow conditions. Hikers wishing to do the full route or the section crossing the Nissitissit should check river conditions in advance.

A map of the JST on Beaver Brook land can be accessed here :

<https://www.beaverbrook.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/BBA-Hollis-Trail-Map-e1521057796810.jpg>

Trail Mileage

The JST is 7.2 miles one-way.

Directions

To the JST trailhead in Pepperell: From Pepperell Town Hall, head west on Townsend St./Rte 113. At .5 miles turn right onto Willow St. then turn immediately onto Jewett St. Travel approximately 2 miles and there will be a small **parking area** on the right marking the start of the Jeff Smith Trail. The GPS coordinates for this area are Latitude 42.6638; Longitude -71.6425.

