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MAP OF GROTON CONSERVATION LANDS ATTACHED TO INSIDE BACK COVER

Written and published by The Groton Conservation Trust

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GROTON CONSERVATION TRUST

GUIDE TO PROPERTIES

ABOUT THE TRUST

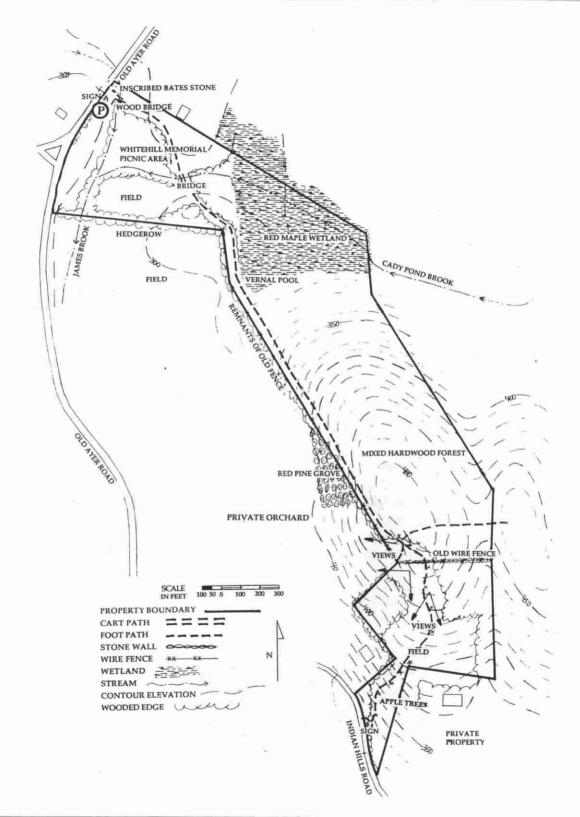
The Town of Groton has many undeveloped tracts of woodlands, open fields and wetlands as well as rivers, lakes and streams. The GROTON CONSERVATION TRUST is a group of townspeople working with landowners, town boards and other conservation groups to protect our special resources and expand the use of these areas.

Since 1964, the Trust has acquired and conserved land which has natural, aesthetic, geological, recreational or historic significance. At present, its fourteen properties, totaling over six hundred acres, provide a variety of special attractions and opportunities for recreation.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

The Trust welcomes the public onto its lands. With this Guide, we move toward our goal of providing detailed information about individual holdings to add to the pleasure of exploring these resources. The Trust has distributed, since 1983, three editions of a map showing the locations of all Groton's conservation properties and hopes the maps and Guides will be useful contributions to the citizens of Groton.





BATES / BLACKMAN CONSERVATION LANDS

This property consists of two connected parcels, one of 38.5 acres given by Natica Bates in 1968, and the other of approximately 10 acres donated by Arthur and Camilla Blackman in 1984.

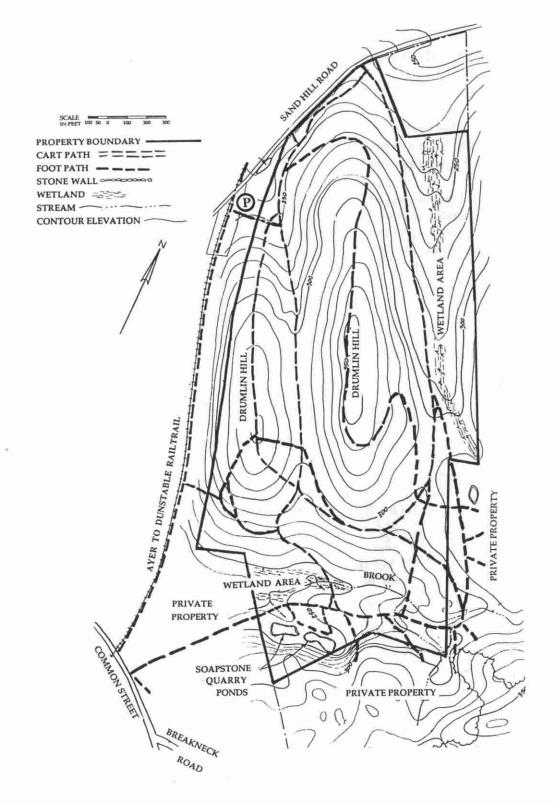
The entrance is on Old Ayer Road, a short distance from Route 119 and an easy walk or bicycle ride from the Town center. There is off-road parking for several cars. After crossing James Brook, the trail proceeds on level land past two fields, the Harvey Whitehill Memorial picnic area in a pine grove, and Cady Pond Brook. After a sharp turn to the right, the trail skirts the edge of a vernal pool before entering a steep climb of 180 feet to the top of Indian Hill. There a spectacular view opens up towards the west across fields and orchards, affording a clear view of Mt. Wachusett on a good day. As the trail progresses, views open to Temple Mountain and Monadnock in the northwest.

At the top, the trail opens to the south as well, affording one of the finest panoramas in eastern Massachusetts with views spanning from Monadnock to the ridges in Harvard and toward Boston in the southeast. The trail then opens into a broad field and continues on the southerly slope along markers down a mowed path through the field, past a few old growth peach and apple trees to Indian Hill Road. To return to the entrance, one can turn right and walk along Indian Hill Road to the intersection with Old Ayer Road and, turning right, follow that road back to the parking place.

The distance from the parking area to the top of the hill is 0.8 miles; a circuit walk returning via Indian Hill and Old Ayer Roads is a total of 1.8 miles.

The Bates / Blackman lands, with their variations in elevation, exposure and openness, support a wide range of animals, birds, reptiles and vegetation. Deer, coyote, fox, porcupine, hawk, heron and spotted salamander are just a few of the possible sightings.

Bridle Path, Hiking, Nature, Picnicking, Vista, Wildlife Habitat.



SHEPLEY HILL CONSERVATION LAND

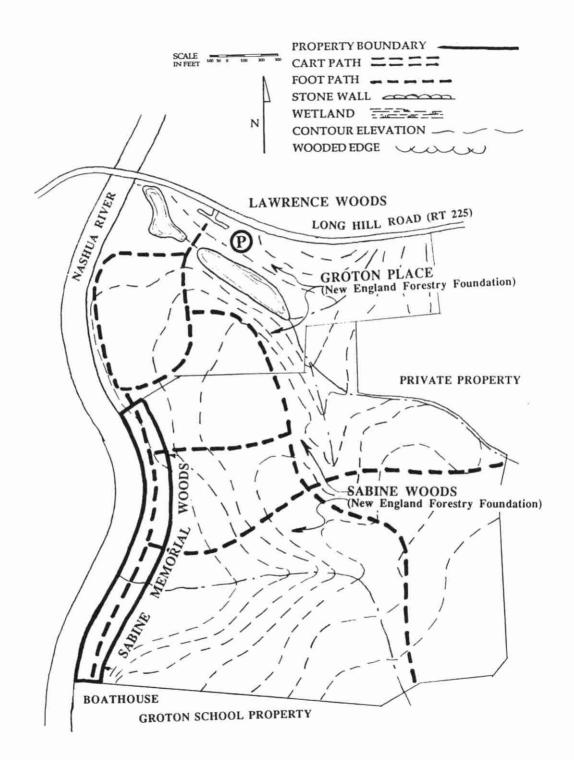
The preservation of Shepley Hill is special for several reasons. Not only is the land a wonderful place to walk or ski, it is also used for major horse riding events. Moreover, the process through which the property was protected has become a model for the conservation of land threatened by imminent development. The land had been owned by Mrs. Charles Eliot Ware; it was her granddaughter, Anna Gould Lenos, who encouraged the Trust to become involved in trying to protect the property. The Trust worked with Mrs. Ware's estate to arrange that a small portion would be developed and the most sensitive portion would be donated for conservation uses in 1990.

Most of the land is crossed by a network of pleasant bridle trails and the only restrictions on walking are during the spring and fall Equestrian Trials. The forest is open with a high canopy and a plentiful bird population, and the terrain is easy with glacial features such as drumlins. Best of all, there is a secret beauty in two grottos at the southern end which take on a different aspect with each season.

One entrance is on Sand Hill Road where there is a Trust sign. Parking is available on the abandoned railroad bed off Sand Hill Road, from which a small footpath leads into the property to a bridle path. Turning right leads over a drumlin hill, but proceeding straight leads to an intersection with other bridle paths where on turns right. Bearing right at the next fork, then left, the trail crosses Nod Brook and winds through wetlands. Off to the right are the soapstone quarries, used a century ago for the prized soft material for bed warmers, ink wells, stoves and sinks, etc. This interesting section features grottos, lush with ferns and moss, and water dripping into pools.

From the quarries one can follow a loop trail around the property, returning to Sand Hill Road through varied topography and vegetation. There are many side trails, so reference to a trail map is necessary for a full exploration of this unique property.

Bridle path, Cross-country skiing, Hiking, Nature, Vista



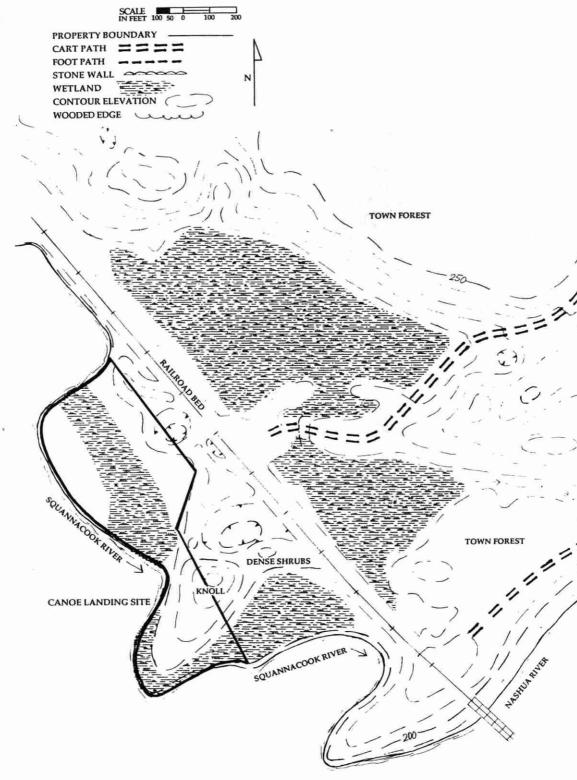
SABINE MEMORIAL WOODS

In 1971 Steven and Mary Sabine gave the Trust this narrow, ten-acre strip of land which follows along the eastern bank of the Nashua River for about 2000 feet. A path runs the length of the property, originating at the most southerly extension of the Groton Place trail system, proceeding southward and terminating at the Groton School boat house. The public access ends there and trail users must retrace their steps. The path offers fine views of the Nashua on the west; along its eastern border is a series of vernal pools. In the early spring, while it may be muddy, the path is also a great place to hear a tree frog serenade.

The Sabine Memorial Woods are adjacent to two other conservation properties owned and managed by the New England Forestry Foundation: another Sabine Woods and The Groton Place. The former has a network of foot paths; The Groton Place, besides its trails, is distinguished by its planned areas, monuments, careful plantings and maintenance as a park-like nature preserve. Across Route 225, also bordering the Nashua, lies the Lawrence Woods; when the four areas are considered together they form a 236 acre conservation area. Parking for the entire area is located in front of the gates to The Groton Place at the bottom of Long Hill on the south side of Route 225.

Bridle Path, Canoing, Fishing, Hiking, Picnicking, Nature





HOLLINGSWORTH CONSERVATION LAND

This is one of the smaller Trust properties and also one of the most remote. Its 3 acres along the Squannacook River are without trails and are bug-infested during the insect season. For the determined and dedicated nature enthusiast, however, exploring this unspoiled area brings many pleasures and discoveries,

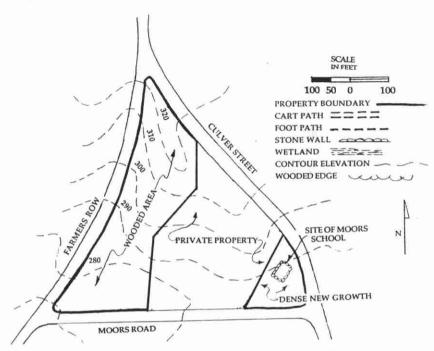
The land was given by Mark Hollingsworth in 1982. It can be reached either from the south over the railroad bridge coming from Ayer near Route 2A or from the north through the Town Forest to the same railroad bridge. The protected land starts several hundred yards north of the Groton side of the railroad bridge and lies between the rail bed and the several meanders of the Squannacook just before its confluence with the Nashua. The area can also be approached by canoe when the river water level is normal or higher.

While small, its varied terrain includes small hills and depressions as well as extensive wetlands along the river boundary. This whole area contains prime wildlife habitat due to the river/wetland environment, extended forest area, and its remote, undeveloped nature. River activity includes beaver, muskrat and possibly otter. Birds spotted have included great blue heron, hawk and a wide variety of song birds.

This scenic refuge should be enjoyed quietly, taking only pictures and leaving nothing but footprints.

Canoeing, Fishing, Nature, Picnicking, Wildlife Habitat

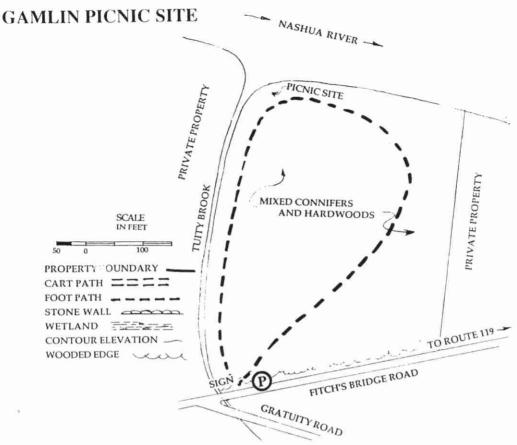




"From the year 1789, dates the beginning of Number Two school as a district school, for which the inhabitants of that part of town were taxed for its maintenance. It is recorded in 1790 that there were sixty-six children of school age in "Major Moors District No. 2." from Edward Adams Richardson, Moors School at Old District No. 2.

This land was given to the Trust in 1968 by Steven and Mary Sabine. There are two parcels, separated by a house lot, in the triangle formed by Farmers Row, Culver Street and Moors Road. At present the school site is wooded and overgrown with brambles. However, one can find the foundation blocks of the Moors Schoolhouse by walking into the site from the intersection of Culver Street and Moors Road. In 1977 there was a citizen effort to save the Schoolhouse. However, that winter the roof fell in under the weight of a heavy snowfall and the effort was abandoned. The Trust plans to clear the site and put up a marker to commemorate the School District's historical importance to the town.

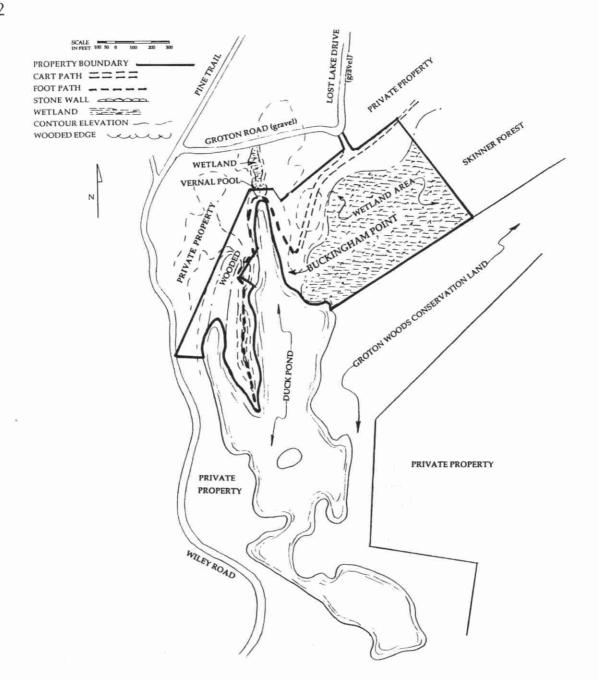
The wooded parcel along Farmers Row provides a view of undisturbed woodlands near the entrance to town.



This small but very beautiful property, given by Robert Gamlin in 1988, may be entered from Fitch's Bridge Road, near the intersection with Gratuity Road. It lies at the confluence of Tuity Brook and the Nashua River and has an excellent picnic site with a great view of the Nashua. Like some other tributaries of the Nashua, such as the Nissitissit and Squannacook Rivers, Tuity Brook generally flows toward the Nashua at the "wrong" angle, providing evidence that the Nashua once drained southward, rather than flowing northward as it does today.

A short trail provides a loop through the Gamlin property, with the picnic site along the Nashua at the trail's midpoint. Launching a boat from this point is difficult but the site can be approached by water. The woods contain a fine mix of conifers and deciduous trees, with tall white pine predominant, supported by an understory of hardwoods. Here maple, red oak, young white oak, ash and horsechestnut are abundant.

Canoeing, Fishing, Picnicking, Vista



DUCK POND CONSERVATION AREA

The Groton Land Foundation acquired the original 19 acres in order to carry out a limited development project in 1994. Three building lots set back from the pond were sold to pay the cost and the remaining 14 acres have been placed in permanent conservation with the Groton Conservation Trust.

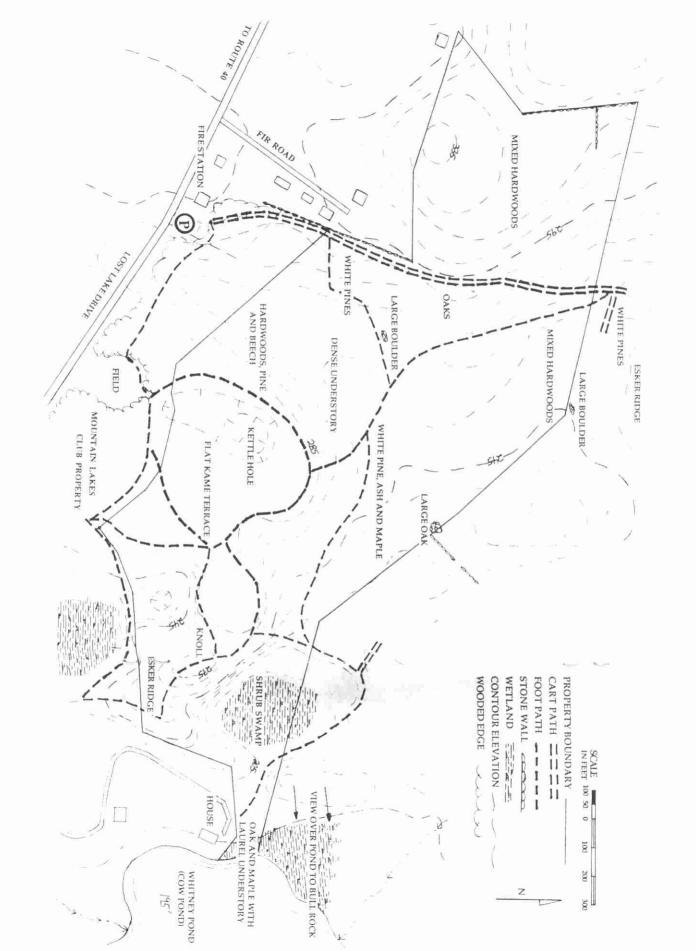
The property, including more than 2,000 feet of pond frontage, is entered by a cart path at the intersection of Groton Road and Lost Lake Drive. The path splits, with the left branch leading to the Skinner Forest, and the right branch leading through this conservation property to Duck Pond. The broad open area along the edge of the pond has been named Buckingham Point in recognition of the Buckingham family who worked with the Trust to ensure the protection of this property. This is an excellent area for picnicking, for launching a canoe or for skating in the winter.

From Buckingham Point one can walk around the northern edge of Duck Pond past a vernal pool and down along an esker which extends as a peninsula into Duck Pond. Beaver may be seen here. A walk along this peninsula provides a wonderful experience of the pond with open water on both sides.

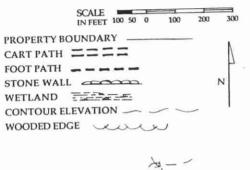
Canoeing, Fishing, Hiking, Picnicking, Skating, Vista, Wildlife Habitat



SKITAPET CONSERVATION LAND



T CONSERVATION LAND





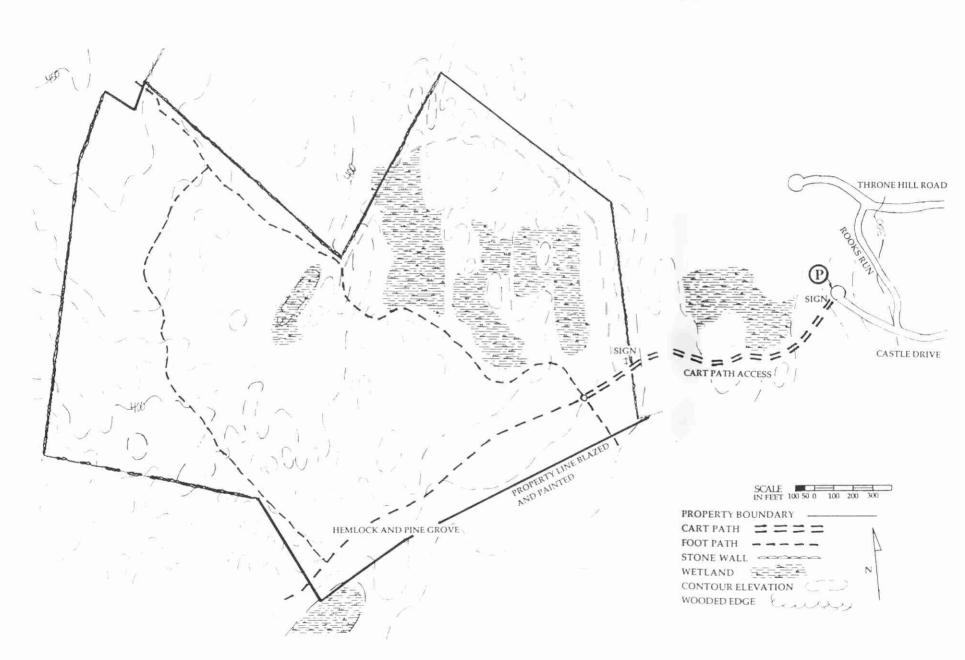
Joseph and Jeanne Skinner donated these 72 acres in 1983 and 1989, providing an opportunity to walk in a landscape that contains many features of a classic glacial outwash. Dramatic examples of kettle holes, esker ridges and a flat kame terrace can be seen on a short walk. Matching the steep grades on the sides of some of these features, a few of the walking paths are steep; others are relatively flat. The land is located off Lost Lake Drive 0.7 mile from its intersection with Route 40, approximately 2.5 miles from Groton Center.

There is parking adjacent to the Lost Lake Fire Station. From there a cart road runs north to the boundary of the property and a path runs to the east across Mountain Lakes property to the area with the more dramatic glacial features. Following the paths near the perimeter of the property with stops to view the landscape features or the wildflowers and birds will take about an hour. On the eastern boundary, Cow Pond can be seen from the high ridges, particularly in fall and winter. Vegetation on Skitapet ranges from shrub swamps to mature white pine and hardwoods.

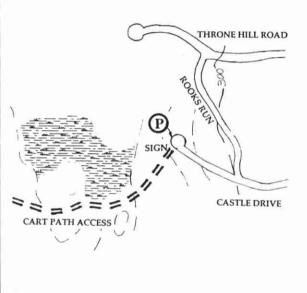
The glacial features were formed when the last advance of the glacier stagnated here 10,000 years ago. Glacial rivers formed in the fissures where steep sided deposits of sand and gravel formed today's eskers. The last blocks to melt left areas with deep depressions known as "kettle" holes. The glaciers left their history written in this landscape, making it a fascinating place to walk.

Cross-country Skiing, Hiking, Jogging, Nature, Picnicking, Vista, Wildlife Habitat

THRONE HILL CONSERVATION



THRONE HILL CONSERVATION LAND



PROPERTY BOUNDARY

CONTOUR ELEVATION

CART PATH FOOT PATH

WETLAND

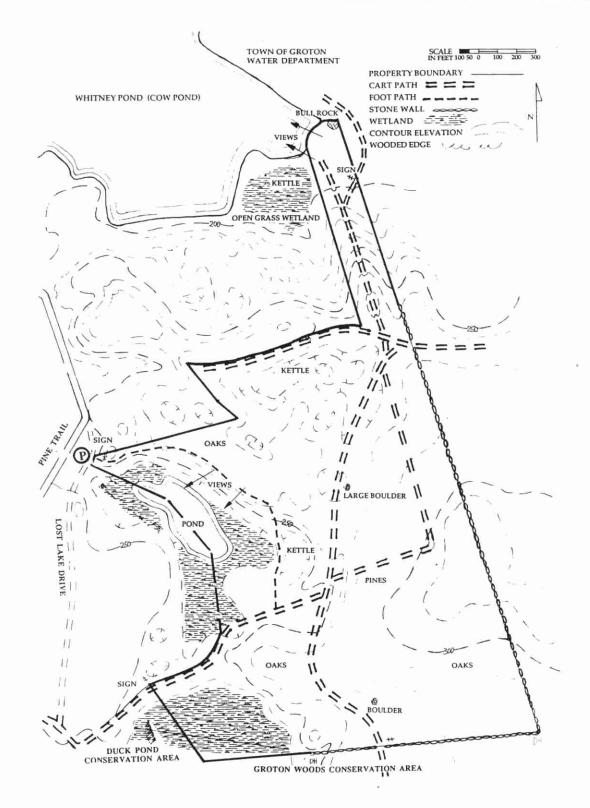
WOODED EDGE

Throne Hill, or "The Throne," is a 120-acre woodland donated by L & S Builders in 1984, and is the TRUST's largest parcel of land. It is not so much an obvious hill as anf area of higher elevation where the underlying bedrock is near the surface. Access to the property is gained on a 0.3 mile path beginning at the cul-de-sac at the end of Castle Drive, off Pepperell Road in West Groton. Park around the cul-de-sac and look for a sign pointing to a path between two houses that leads to the Throne Hill land

There is a recently completed and clearly marked Loop Trail on this land, so there is no longer a need to double back on the trail as in the past. The terrain is uneven, but there are no major hills, and a walk through the property would be classified as "easy." The area has been logged in the past and the secondary growth has produced a beautiful and varied woodland that includes oaks. white pine maples, hemlocks, and a stand of mountain laurel. Much of the property has stone walls at the boundaries and there are small pockets of wetland at various places adjacent to the trail. This is a prime area for wildlife due to the large amount of as-yet-undeveloped land in the vicinity. Also, unfortunately, it is a prime area for insects as well; be sure to bring along repellent during late spring and summer.

A walk from the cul-de-sac back to the Throne Hill property, around the Loop Trail and return covers a distance of approximately 1.9 miles.

Bridle Path, Cross-country Skiing, Hiking, Nature, Wildlife Habitat



The Skinner Forest was given to the Trust by John and Virginia Taplin in 1986 in memory of Joseph Skinner, a longtime active supporter of conservation and land use planning in Groton. The 100-acre parcel is made up of many smaller parcels dating back to the 1920s promotion of the Knops Pond/Lost Lake area as a seasonal recreation destination for Boston residents. Old plans, which were never realized due to the Depression, show the present forest area being criss-crossed with streets and many small building lots.

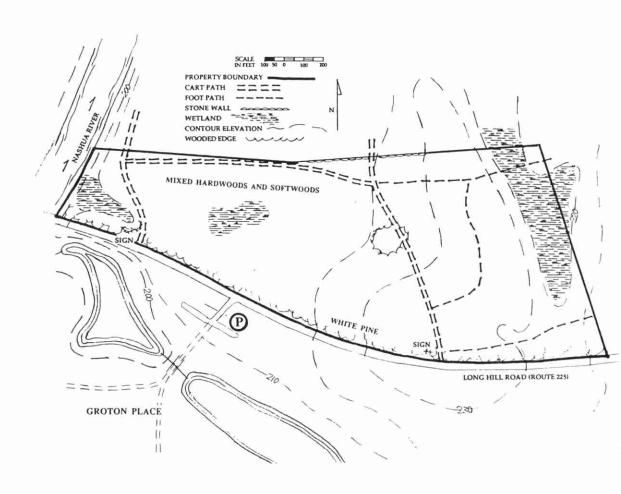
Entering from Lost Lake Drive, the trail overlooks a charming pond. The expanse of bordering wetland fluctuates seasonally. Look for muskrat and raccoon signs here. There is a network of cart paths joining with the main one which runs north to south. The southern end connects with the Groton Woods Conservation Area, and the northern end runs by Whitney (Cow) Pond, a Groton town water source, and onto the Groton Water Department Well Site property. Great Blue heron can be seen visiting the little island in Cow Pond during the summer.

The forest consists of oak and associated hardwoods with scattered white pine. Glacial features are of special interest, including several deep kettle holes and a large glacial erratic called "Bull Rock".

Limited parking is available off Lost Lake Drive 200 feet past its intersection with Pine Trail.

Bridle Path, Cross-country Skiing, Hiking, Jogging, Nature, Wildlife Habitat





LAWRENCE WOODS

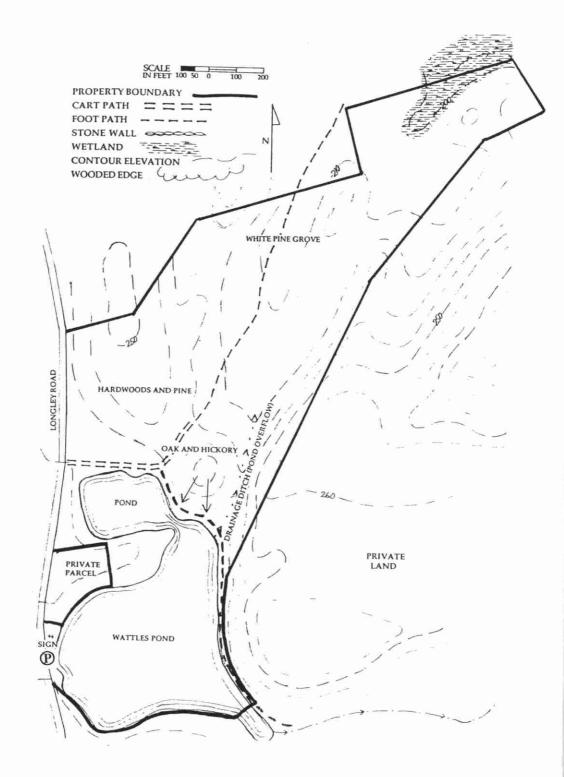
The Lawrence Woods offer a conveniently located place to walk under a canopy of white pines or to cross-country ski or hike along the picturesque Nashua River.

Given to the Trust by John and James Lawrence and Dorothy Lawrence Mackenzie in 1976, the pareel contains 26.6 acres of wooded land on Long Hill Road across from Groton Place. The parking site for Groton Place is the best place to park for Lawrence Woods as well. The area can be entered anywhere along its half-mile road frontage, but there are Trust signs near trails on both the east and west sides. Taking the easterly trail, go straight ahead (north) until it turns left and runs parallel to a stone wall and reaches the river trail. Turning north, the Trust property is left behind and the trail runs beside the river in protected land as far as Fitch's Bridge, a distance of 1.5 miles.

The Lawrence Woods provide a variety of wooded conditions including dense white pines toward Long Hill Road. In several areas of regeneration where limited logging has occurred in the past, more open areas provide variety in wildlife habitat, particularly for song birds, grouse and browsers such as deer. A low wet area is located in the northeast corner of the woods; otherwise the land is fairly flat, being part of the Nashua River flood plain.

Bridle Path, Cross-country Skiing, Hiking, Jogging, Wildlife Habitat





WATTLES POND CONSERVATION AREA

Located on Longley Road just south of the Pepperell town line, these 42 acres were donated by Peter and Dorothy Rinaldo and Anne and Marion Manderson in 1980. The history of the pond reveals that it was used to harvest ice and there is the site of an old ice house on private land on the peninsula. From the road, Wattles appears to be two ponds because the narrow knolled peninsula juts into the pond, almost bisecting it. It has become a popular fishing and skating spot. Small canoes can also easily be accommodated at its gently sloping banks. Several cars can be parked at the Trust sign just off the road or at the northernmost cart path.

Hiking or cross-country skiing is best started from the northern cart path alongside of the pond. At the back of the pond a footpath goes off to the right. One of the few black tupelo trees in Groton (Nyssa Sylvalica) is located on the pond side of this path. In the fall this medium sized tree can be distinguished by the brilliant red color of its plain glossy elliptical leaves. In the winter its horizontal gnarly branches are distinctive. Big silver maple trees line the back edge of the pond.

The foot path along the back of the pond should only be hiked if one is well covered since poison ivy is abundant here. There are picturesque views and lovely spots where one can rest and contemplate. Behind a large fallen tree one can see an overflow ditch which keeps the pond from flooding Longley Road after heavy rain. The pond has no surface outlet and, as a result, its level rises in the spring to cover the path and drops in the fall. The foot path dead-ends at a stream on the south side of the property. A trail branch to the new subdivision provides a link to Nashua Road.

If one bears left at the back of the pond past a small knoll, the trail gently slopes down through woods of white pine and mixed hardwoods. This trail is used by equestrians since it links bridal trails in both directions outside the property. After a 10 minute hike one arrives at an intersection on private property. The trail to the right crosses a brook onto Pepperell Town land. The shortest way back is to retrace one's steps.

Among the wildlife observed at Wattles Pond are mallard ducks, Canada geese, frogs, painted and snapping turtles, piliated woodpeckers and barred owls.

Bridle Path, Canoeing, Cross-country Skiing, Hiking, Jogging, Skating, Wildlife Habitat