



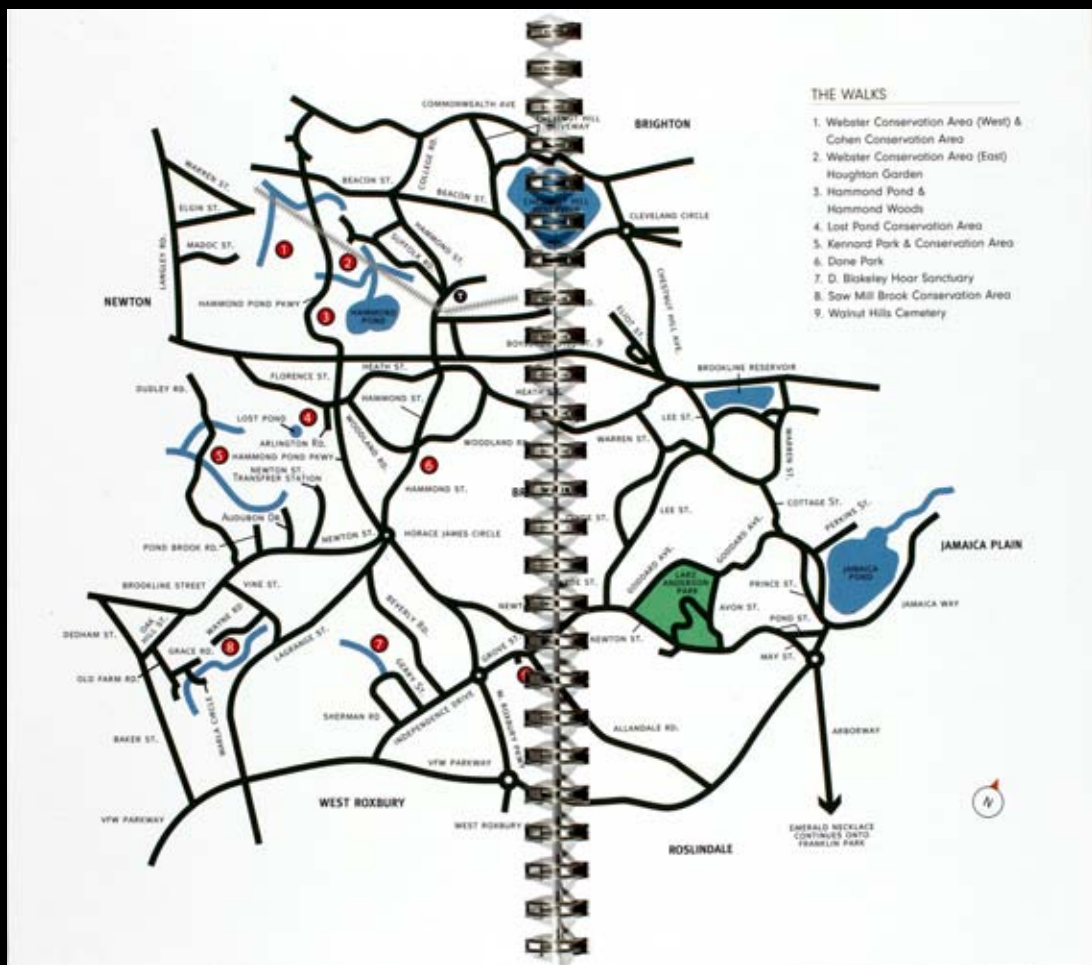
# chestnut trails

nature walks in chestnut hill

presented by the Chestnut Hill Garden Club

# chestnut trails

nature walks in chestnut hill



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chestnut Trails has been the project for the Conservation Committee of the Chestnut Hill Garden Club from 1997 to 2001. We have walked the walks and researched the sites to make these special areas available to all.

Along the way, we have met with wonderful people who have been generous with their knowledge, time and enthusiasm. Among all of them we wish to give particular thanks to Al Baik, Graphic Designer, who put it all together. In Newton, Helen Heyn whose involvement in procuring and maintaining many of these spaces is amazing; Martha Horn, the Environmental Planner; and Lawrence Kaplan, Emeritus Professor of Biology at University of Massachusetts, Boston; in Brookline, Erin Chute, now head of Parks and Recreation, and Gail Fenton, Conservation Commissioner all deserve our thanks. Father James Skehan, Emeritus Professor at Boston College, guided us through Dane Park explaining the geology. Also, Frances Clark, consulting biologist and board member of the New England Wildflower Society, Gail Weisner from the Beacon Hill Garden Club, Sally Abrahms and Corliss Engle were all wonderful resources.

My committee members who have come to meetings, done research, and proof read drafts; Sukie Amory, Carla Benka, Mimi Bennett, Abby Coffin, Catherine Hill, Elisabeth Mundel, Nan St. Goar, Klaudia Shephard, Jensie Shipley, and Louisa Smith.

Thank you all,

Marjorie Greville

Conservation Chairman, 1997-2001  
The Chestnut Hill Garden Club

October, 2001

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## INTRODUCTION

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What is Chestnut Hill? Once a distinct area of farms and country estates, today it is essentially a zip code that includes parts of Brookline, Newton and Boston (Brighton). This varied community is clustered around the original Chestnut Hill hill, the shopping areas lining Route 9/Boylston Street and Hammond Street, including the MBTA line and Post Office.

But did you know that the communities of Chestnut Hill maintain over three hundred and fifty acres of park and conservation land, with miles of marked trails? These public green spaces offer remarkable diversity within Chestnut Hill's three square miles. They include magnificent stands of Hemlocks rising from pudding-stone ledges in Hoar Sanctuary; paths winding through a historic woodland "wild garden" at Houghton Garden; a great pond; streams and babbling brooks in Webster and Saw Mill; a quaking bog in Lost Pond that provides spring breeding grounds for spotted salamanders; and Walnut Hills Cemetery, one of the fine 19th century cemeteries - like Mount Auburn and Forest Hills - designed to create a naturalistic parkland of paved walkways, lawns, and mature trees.

We are fortunate to have such varied and beautiful park and conservation land, all within a half-hour of downtown Boston. But even an established community like Chestnut Hill is not immune to the pressure of development that may swallow up open spaces that appear vacant or unused to the untrained eye. And as becomes clear as you walk these lovely spaces, our community is an integral part of the great Charles River Watershed. How we treat our local landscape has repercussions for the health of the larger environment, as water moves to the Charles River to Boston Harbor to the Atlantic Ocean.

We hope this booklet will help inspire both residents and visitors to both enjoy and watch over our precious natural world, starting in our own backyards. We can all go for walks, learn about our native trees and shrubs, observe our birds and other wildlife. In this way we can come together as stewards of our land, protecting and enhancing it for future generations. There are many opportunities to join our local conservation and friends groups. We urge you all to enjoy, observe, participate and preserve.

### SOME THINGS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU VISIT

Conservation Land is land held in trust for the public in order to protect indigenous species and native habitat. This means, except for narrow pedestrian trails, there is no active management except where necessary for the safety of visitors. The trails are in place to protect the natural world from the intrusion of people stepping on plants and disturbing the habits of small animals. Also dogs are excluded (Brookline) or to be kept on a leash (Newton) to protect small species such as salamanders, frogs, chipmunks, and other animals.

Parks are lands set aside for recreation, both active and passive. The natural world is managed to provide comfort and beauty.

Cemeteries are sacred places, often privately owned. Each cemetery has its own list of rules, usually posted at the entrance. Most do not allow dogs, bicycles, food, or loud music. Please be respectful and visit to enjoy the restful contemplative atmosphere.

1

**Webster  
Conservation  
Area (West)  
& Cohen  
Conservation  
Area**



Time: 30+ min.

Distance: 1-2 mi.

Season: All

Accessibility: Limited

Major Interest:

puddingstone ledges

caves

natural woodland

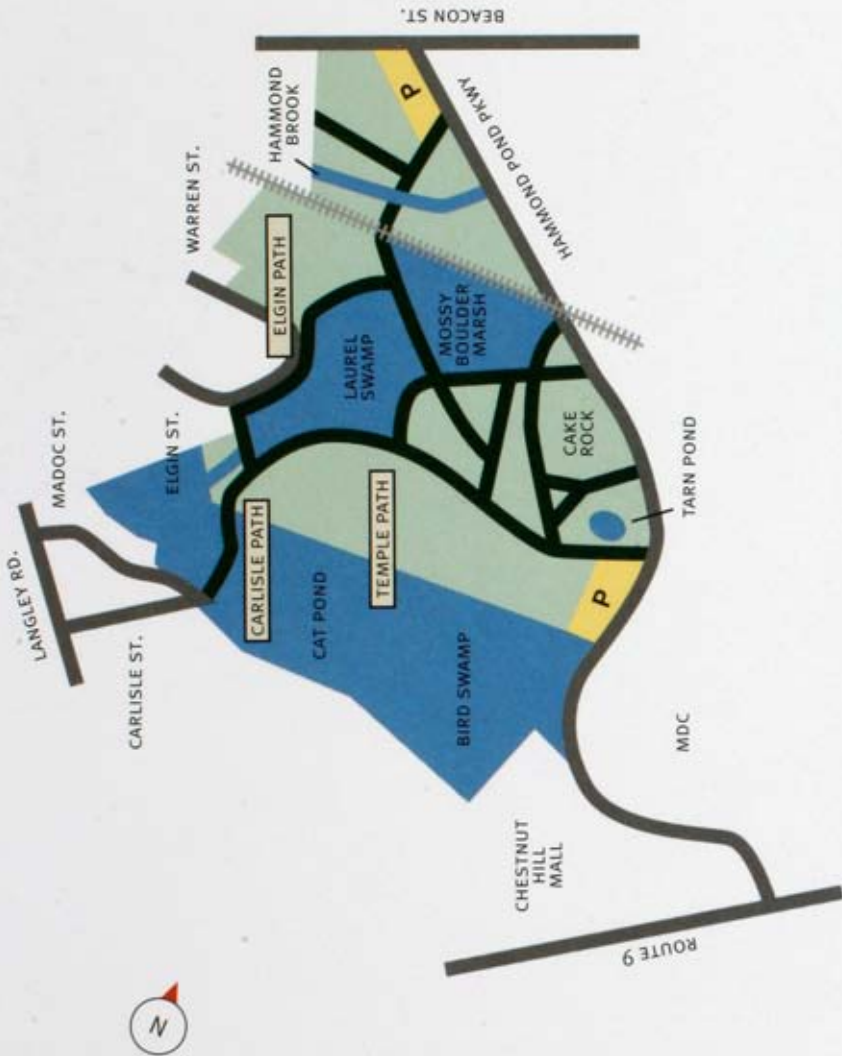
brook

swamp

pond



WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA (WEST) &  
COHEN CONSERVATION AREA



## LOCATION AND PARKING

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1. Webster Conservation Area & Cohen Conservation Area - limited parking along residential streets on western edge: Madoc, Elgin, Warren Sts. Parking in Temple Mishkan Tefila parking lot along Hammond Pond Parkway except on Fri. afternoon and Jewish holy days.

2. The Ledges section of Webster Conservation Area- limited parking along Hammond Pond Parkway just south of the light at Beacon St. intersection. Entrance marked by sign.

## DIRECTIONS

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Car:

1. From west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right hand ramp (at Barnes & Noble just before overpass) down to Hammond Pond Parkway. Take right at end of ramp, then immediate U-turn to go north on Hammond Pond Parkway past Bloomingdale's parking lot entrance. Go north through light, then left into Temple Mishkan Tefila parking lot. Go right at entrance into front parking lot.

2. From the east proceeding down Rt. 9, take right hand ramp at Bloomingdale's just before overpass. At stop sign go right onto Hammond Pond Parkway. Follow instructions above.

MBTA: This site is a short walk from the Newton Centre stop on the Green Line 'D' train (Riverside). From the tracks, go up the steps to Union St. Turn right and cross Langley Rd. Take your first left onto Warren St. and walk down to the end. The entrance is marked with a sign.

## COMMENTS

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All of Webster/Cohen is post-agricultural land in early stage succession from fields, pasture, or wood lots to becoming an Oak forest. Many pioneer species of trees and shrubs still exist, such as:

Trees- White Pine, Eastern Red Cedar, Gray & Yellow Birch, Aspen species, Chokecherry, Sassafras, Black Locust.  
Shrubs- Juniper, Sumacs, Buckthorn, Wild Grapes, Brambles, Sweet Fern, High-bush Blueberry, Huckleberry.

In some areas there are large puddingstone outcroppings with low-lying swamps or marsh areas in between. In Cohen (Webster Vale) there is the lovely babbling Thompsonville Brook. Mossy Boulder Marsh is an area strung with glacial erratic boulders covered in many cases with moss. The water table is very high - this means that sometimes the ground is very wet.

## HISTORY

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In the early 1900's a group of Brookline and Newton residents commissioned the 1908 Kellaway Plan, a north-south open space master plan that included designs for the Hammond Pond Parkway (built in 1932). At the time, the Ledges area was under particular threat from a trap rock quarry at its northern end (near Beacon Street). As a result of this effort, land was acquired by the MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) around Hammond Pond and what is now the Chestnut Hill Mall and Temple Mishkan Tefila. The Temple has a 99-year lease (until 2054) on 21 acres.

The rest of Webster/Cohen was assembled from 1968 to 1979 by eminent domain by the City of Newton. Mr. & Mrs. Bob Cohen donated additional land in 'The Vale' section.

## NATURE TRAIL

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The main section of Webster/Cohen Conservation Area has a series of marked walks - green, blue, and red - that interconnect. The green walk is the easiest and flattest and has several benches. It is accessible from Warren, Madoc, and Elgin Streets. The blue and red trails start from either the Temple parking lot or Hammond Pond Parkway and are more rugged.

The Ledges is an isolated section that has been cut-off from the main area by the MBTA line and accompanying chainlink fence. The terrain around the large rock outcropping is very dramatic and is made up of both puddingstone and earlier volcanic rock.

The path in from Hammond Pond Parkway leads past the end of the ledge and joins a path on the right that leads up along the base of the ledge. The main path continues straight across a bridge over Hammond Brook. This bridge is handmade of old fieldstone. It is a short 10-min. walk and requires retracing your steps.

### DID YOU KNOW...?

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That most of our rock outcrops in Chestnut Hill are Puddingstone - named by Oliver Wendell Holmes because he thought it looked like pudding turned to stone!

That all the water in streams and brooks in Chestnut Hill eventually flow into the Charles River?

Whenever you see a stone wall it marks where a field or other cleared land used to be?

## 2

### Webster Conservation Area (East) & Houghton Garden



Time: 30 min.

Distance: 4/5 mi.

Season: All

Accessibility: Limited

Major Interest:

wild garden

pond

stream

cranberry bog

puddingstone ledges



WEBSTER CONSERVATION AREA (EAST) &  
HOUGHTON GARDEN



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Parking along Suffolk Rd. boundary from east. Park in parking lot on western edge of Hammond Pond near trailhead.

## DIRECTIONS

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### To Hammond Pond Trail:

1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take left (U-turn) at Tully St. light. Proceed west on Rt. 9 100 yds. in right lane; bear right down ramp at over-pass near Blommingdale's. At stop sign, go right onto Hammond Pond Parkway, then immediate right into parking lots. Park opposite Hammond Pond.

### To Houghton Garden/Lowell Lane:

2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take right onto Hammond Street. Continue through first stop sign, over T-tracks to second stop sign. Take left onto Suffolk Rd. Continue down Suffolk Rd, bearing left at Woodman Rd. for .4 mi. Houghton Garden signs are on left.

## COMMENTS

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This walk has two parts. The Houghton Garden section (just under 10 acres) leads through a wonderfully designed 'wild garden' attributed to Warren Manning and previously owned and developed by Mr. and Mrs. Clement Houghton from 1906 to the 1960's. The City of Newton, aided by grants from both the Department of Environmental Management (Master Plan and construction drawings) and Massachusetts Historical Commission (Implementation) is in the process of renovating the garden.

After exiting Houghton Garden onto Lowell Lane, turn left to cross the MBTA line. This is the eastern section of the almost 114 acre Webster Conservation Area.

## TRAIL 2

The east side contains the Deer Park (not open to the public), the Old Cranberry Bog (wetland), Oak woods and puddingstone ledges, streams, and vernal pools. It ends at the edge of Hammond Pond (a Massachusetts great pond). The land immediately adjacent to the northwestern shore of Hammond Pond belongs to the MDC (Metropolitan District Commission). Bloomingdale's owns the parking lot.

## HISTORY

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Records indicate that the eastern section of Webster Conservation Area was farmed by Thomas Hammond by 1650. The Old Cranberry Bog has a dam built across the southern edge controlling water flow from Hammond Brook. Whether cranberries were actually grown there is not documented, but it was definitely used for some form of agriculture. There is also a large stone "bridge" over Rocky Run Brook just at the end of the boardwalk that may have been placed there by earlier farmers. The Edwin Websters' owned the property on both sides of Hammond Pond Parkway from around 1890. Their land continued east as far as Hammond Street where they had a large house (still existent) and garden. Their farm was along Suffolk Rd. north of Houghton Garden, and existed as a working farm selling fresh eggs, vegetables, etc. into the 1960's. The deer in the Deer Park were originally a birthday present to Mr. Webster. The Deer Park is a good example of how the land would have looked when it was used for pasture.

## NATURE TRAIL

---

It is best to access the eastern section of the Conservation Area either through the Hammond Woods trail near Hammond Pond or through either Lowell Lane or Houghton Garden off Suffolk Rd. There are marked trails maintained with bark mulch.

Be very careful crossing the MBTA line from Suffolk Rd. There is a connection across Hammond Pond Parkway to the western section, but it is a dangerous crossing.

#### DID YOU KNOW...?

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That a browse line is the upper limit deer or other herbivores can reach to eat leaves and young twigs of trees?

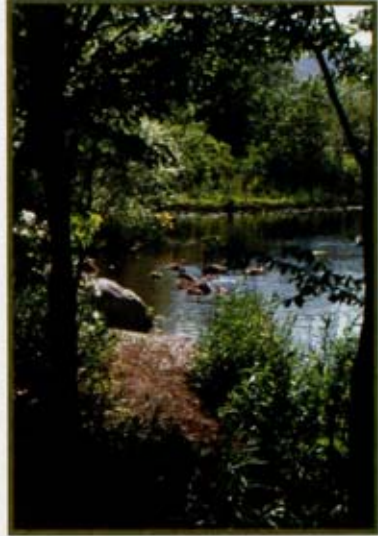
That a vernal pool is a depression in the ground that collects and holds water in the spring long enough for amphibians (frogs and salamanders) to lay eggs, and for the eggs to hatch? They are important because fish cannot live in them, so the eggs and babies have a better chance of surviving.

The Old Cranberry Bog was formed about 12,000 years ago with the retreat of the last glacier. The glacier left behind a depression filled with a large chunk of ice. The ice melted and became a lake that eventually filled in with decayed plant material, creating this bog. The soil is called peat, and extends down 21 feet to a gravel layer that marks the till (rocky bottom) deposited by the glacier. In the past century, this depression was flooded by the dam (still at the southern end) and perhaps used to grow cranberries.

Each spring the Monarch Butterfly migrates north from its winter home in the mountains of Mexico to New England - a 3,000-mile trip? The female lays her eggs only on common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*). The foliage supplies the larva with food. These leaves contain toxins that make both the caterpillar and the grown butterfly indigestible to predators. The black & orange pattern on the wings signals this danger. The butterflies feed on the nectar of flowers like goldenrod.

# 3

## Hammond Pond & Hammond Woods



Time: 20 min

Distance: 1/2 mi.

Season: All

Accessibility: Level path as far as north side of Hammond Pond.

Major Interest:

great pond

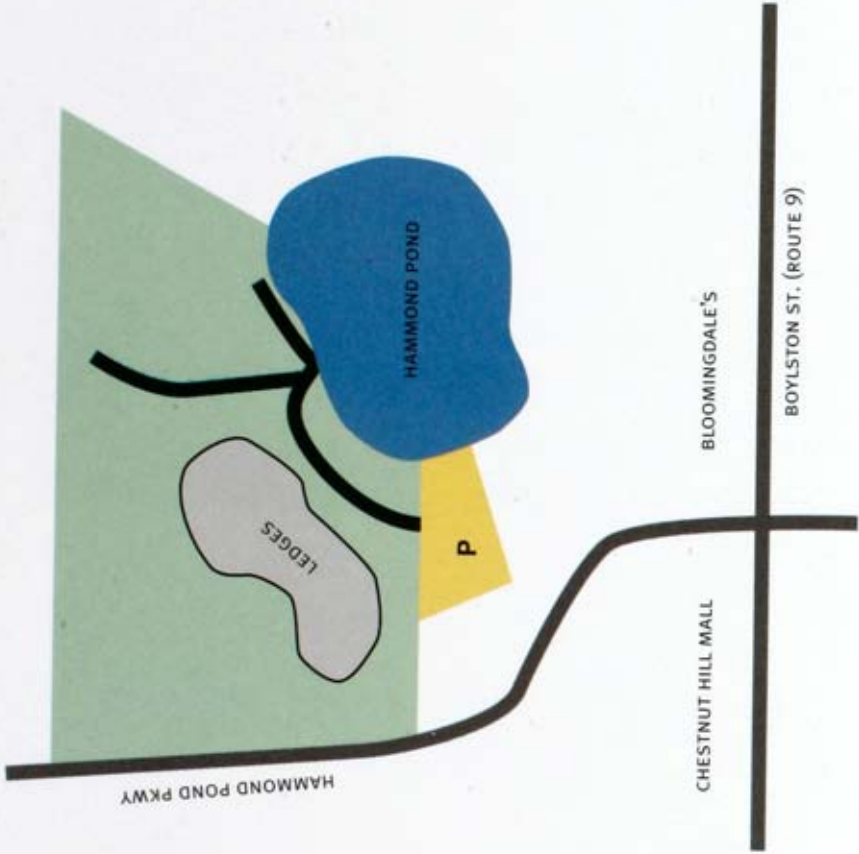
ledges

aquatic vegetation

birds



HAMMOND POND & HAMMOND WOODS



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Parking lot adjacent to Hammond Pond

## DIRECTIONS

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1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right at ramp to Hammond Pond Parkway. Go right at the bottom of the ramp. Take immediate left at U-turn. Go 100 yards and turn right into Chestnut Hill Shopping Center. Take left into parking lot at edge of pond.
2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take exit ramp at Bloomingdale's. At stop sign, turn right onto Hammond Pond Parkway. Take immediate right into Chestnut Hill Shopping Center, then left into parking lot at edge of pond.

### MBTA:

Take the Green Line 'D' train to the Chestnut Hill Station. Walk up the stairs and cross over the tracks on the Hammond Street Bridge past the Post Office. Continue down Hammond Street 200 yards, and turn right into the Shopping Center entrance. Bear right and walk through the parking lot towards General Cinema. Hammond Pond will become visible on your right. The entrance to Hammond Woods is farther on off the parking lot north of Bloomingdale's and west of the pond.

### BUS:

Take #60 to last stop at Hammond Pond Parkway and Route 9. Walk up parkway towards Bloomingdale's. Pond will be just beyond on your right.

## COMMENTS

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Hammond Pond is a registered great pond and, as such, is under the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It covers an area of about 22 acres

### TRAIL 3

and has a maximum depth of about 6 feet and an average depth of 4 feet. It is a kettle pond. It has no obvious water source other than possibly springs underneath. It is slowly filling in and if left undisturbed will eventually become a marsh. This process is known as eutrofication. It is a good site for birdwatching.

Hammond Woods is a MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) property immediately adjacent to the west and north of the pond. See Trail #1 Webster/Cohen Conservation Area for further information on the 1908 Kellaway Plan and land acquisition.

### HISTORY

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There is some evidence that early Native Americans used Hammond Pond as a food source. They fished and also harvested native plants. The rhizomes of Arrowhead, known as duck potato, and Cattails were eaten.

As early as 1700, the Sherburne Rd. (present day Heath St.) was the main route between Boston and New York. In the 17th century, the Hammond family farmed near the pond. The Charles River Railroad line was built in 1852 just north of the pond. It is now the the MBTA line. There has been commercial activity near the pond shore since the mid 19th century. Between 1870 and 1900 three different ice companies worked on the southern edge. In 1956 the first shopping area was built. The pond was once used for community ice skating.

### NATURE TRAIL

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The edge of the pond has a boat landing adjacent to the parking lot. This location and one other at the edge of the parking lot opposite General Cinema are popular water viewing spots. Be careful of the Canadian geese and PLEASE DO NOT FEED THEM.

They have become domesticated and do not migrate. This puts added nutrients into the pond, which is speeding up the filling-in process.

The main trail starts at the northern end of the parking lot and is marked. It goes past some wonderful ledges that are popular training grounds for rock climbers. Further along there is another access to the pond edge. At this point there are two trails. The main one leads north into the Webster Conservation Area. The narrower one on the northern edge of Hammond Pond is rougher and leads eventually to the dam at the Old Cranberry Bog. It is a wonderful trail for viewing native plants such as Clethra, Highbush Blueberry, Sassafras, and Bearberry.

#### DID YOU KNOW...?

That kettle ponds were created about 10,000 years ago when a large block of ice broke off a glacier? When the ice melted, the water became a pond. Now ponds like Hammond Pond collect rain water and other run-off.

This pond will eventually fill in and become a marsh?

Not to feed the ducks and geese? Wild migratory ducks and geese need to eat foods high in fat content to build up energy to safely fly to their winter feeding grounds. The best way to take care of them is to have traditional food plants available.

Water lilies calm the water in the pond by reducing the wave action? This also reduces the amount of oxygen in the water, which causes the pond to fill in more rapidly.

4

**Lost Pond  
Conservation  
Area**



Time: 30 min.

Distance: 1/4 mi.

• Season: All

Accessibility: Limited  
(uneven surface)

Major Interest:

upland forest

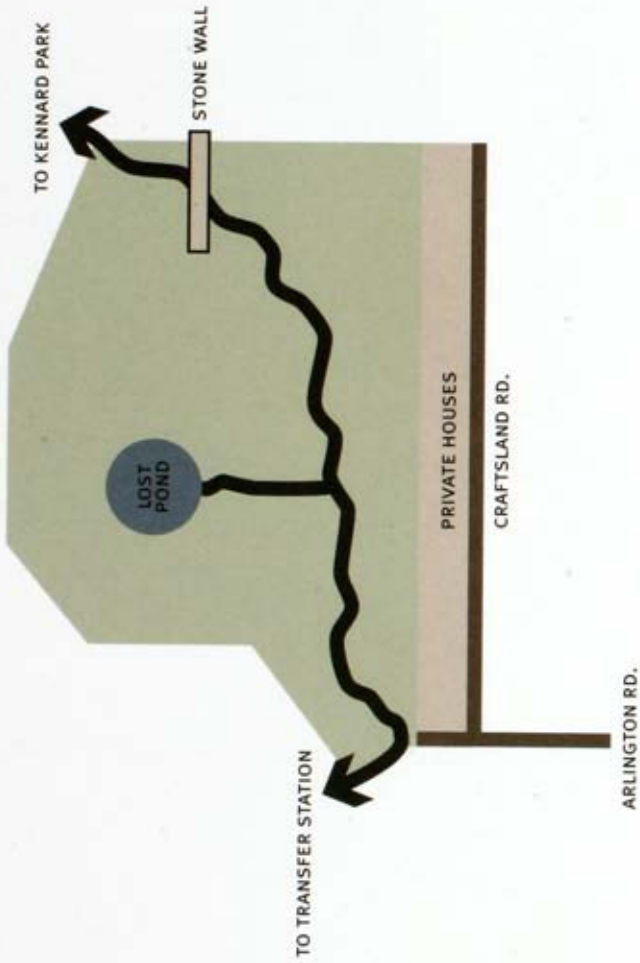
kettle pond

birds

salamanders



LOST POND CONSERVATION AREA



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Parking on street, trail sign

## DIRECTIONS

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1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right onto ramp to Hammond Pond Parkway. Go right at the bottom of the ramp. Turn right at light (Heath St.) and then immediate left onto Arlington Rd. Park at end near sign.

2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take left onto Hammond Street. Take third right on Woodland Rd. Go across Woodland Rd. and straight past stop light at Hammond Pond Parkway. Take first left onto Arlington Rd. Park at end near sign.

### MBTA:

Take Bus #60 to end at Hammond Pond Parkway and Rt. 9. Walk south on Hammond Pond Pkwy to light at Heath St./Florence. Cross over the Pkwy and walk one block. Turn left onto Arlington Rd. Entrance at end marked by a sign.

## COMMENTS

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Lost Pond, a kettle hole, has developed into a quaking bog on its northern edge - an unusual type of wetland for New England. Quaking bogs are formed by the gradual decomposition of plant material (peat) in highly acidic, poorly drained areas. This peat forms a floating mat over the water that provides a base for acid-tolerant plants, which grow in from the land on the edge of the pond. When someone walks on the mat, it moves because of the water underneath. It feels like the land is 'quaking.'

#### TRAIL 4

Generally peat bogs fill in over time. Over the past 10,000 years enough time has passed for this transition to take place. It is a mystery why Lost Pond has not filled in.

Lost Pond has no fish. As a result it is used by various amphibians, most notably the spotted salamander, for reproduction in the spring.

#### HISTORY

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In 1874 this land was privately owned. Brookline acquired the adjoining land in 1945 for a new town incinerator site, which was active from 1952 until 1975. Since 1975 that land has been used to house a transfer station for town trash. In 1982, Brookline Town Meeting voted to transfer control and management of their 30-acre parcel adjacent to Lost Pond to the Conservation Commission for conservation and passive recreational use.

This sanctuary is made up of 30 acres owned by the MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) and 30 acres owned by the Brookline Conservation Commission. It adjoins 48 acres of the Kennard Park & Conservation Area. In total there are over 100 acres of open woodland, marsh, bog, and stream.

#### NATURE TRAIL

---

From the entrance at the signpost on Arlington Rd., the pathway forks near a big tree. Take the right hand fork and proceed up the path through the woods. The path has many roots across it because of the ledges. Please watch your footing - it is easy to trip!

About 1000 feet, or after 10 minutes, you will see a path to your left near a large tree. This path will lead you straight onto the boardwalk to the edge of Lost

Pond. Proceed quietly so that you do not scare away any water birds, etc. Look to the sides for different bog plants (pitcher plants) and insects (butterflies, damselflies, etc.).

If you continue straight along the original path you will come to a second pathway leading to the left. This pathway circles back to the incinerator site. This is a pretty rough path; the weeds grow tall and are almost impenetrable in late summer. Also beware of the poison ivy.

If you continue straight on the original path instead of taking the left to look at Lost Pond, you come to a stone wall where the path jogs to the right. This is the start of Kennard Park (see Trail # 2).

#### DID YOU KNOW...?

That dragonflies and damselflies lay their eggs on a reed under water?

That some plants eat insects? Look for pitcher plants on either side of you.

Spotted salamanders are amphibians? They are born in water but live on land as adults. They have moist skins -they drink and breathe through their skin. Spotted salamanders are Mole salamanders - they live in tunnels in the ground. They are black with yellow spots and can grow up to 10" in length. They are nocturnal, secretive, and voiceless, migrating out of the surrounding woods to ponds to breed in late March. They eat earthworms, snails, insects, spiders, and particularly larval and adult beetles. If grabbed by their tail, it will drop off and they will grow a new one. Spotted salamanders can live up to 20-30 years.

5

**Kennard Park  
& Conservation  
Area**



Time: 30+ min.

Distance: 1mi.

Season: All

Accessibility:

Conservation Area-

Limited (uneven surface)

Major Interest:

upland forest

ledges

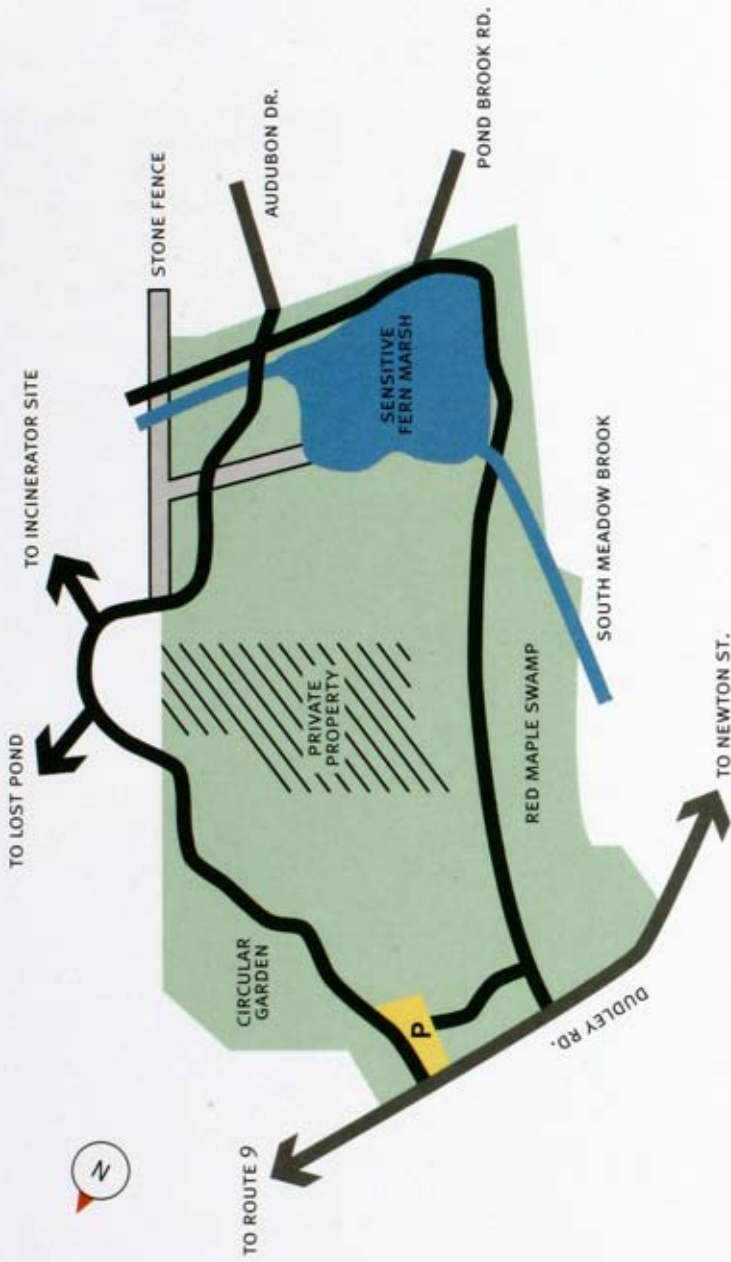
ferns

birds

post-agricultural landscape



KENNARD PARK & CONSERVATION AREA



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Parking on Dudley Rd. and at entrance to park (limited)

## DIRECTIONS

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1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right onto Dudley Rd. (Church of Newton sign on corner) Go .5 mi. Entrance to park on left between stone piers.
2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take left onto Hammond St. At Horace James Circle, take second right onto Newton St. Go .7 mi.; take a right onto Dudley Rd. Go 1 mi.; park is on right, entrance between two stone piers at 246 Dudley Rd.

## COMMENTS

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Kennard Park and Conservation Area are part of an early 20th century gentleman's estate. The park preserves portions of the circular perennial garden and the orchard. The Conservation Area contains interesting topography of postagricultural land allowed to revert to natural woodland (Oak, Pine, & Hemlock) on the hillside, a Red Maple swamp, and a shrub marsh (Sensitive Fern Marsh) where South Meadow Brook flows above ground. There are good examples of stone fences. The two wetland areas are especially rich in birdlife.

## HISTORY

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The Kennard family purchased the land in 1906. At that time it was largely agricultural, with only a few large trees. The existing stone fences originally separated functions such as pasture or cropland. They date back perhaps to colonial times. The area that is now Sensitive Fern Marsh was the Kennards' skating pond. The hill on top is called Pigeon Hill. In the 19th century

## TRAIL 5

local farmers used to shoot passenger pigeons, pack them in barrels, and send them to Faneuil Hall Market. The Conservation Area (32.28 acres) was a City of Newton acquisition in 1978. The Park (15.78 acres) was a bequest in 1982.

### NATURE TRAIL

---

The best way to approach this walk is through the gates to the park. If you turn right after entering and walk down the gently sloping grass, you will see remnants of the orchard. At the end, a shrubby section blocks your progress. Turn left and look for the Conservation Area sign and trail that leads down to the main trail from Dudley Rd. Go left at the junction, The trail is well marked.

At the top of the hill where the path goes through a stone wall, bear left until the path again crosses a stone wall back into Kennard Park. On the right is the trail into Lost Pond. In the middle are private residences.

DID YOU KNOW...?

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That someone here saw a Great Horned Owl holding a squirrel while perched on a tree limb? And it was in broad daylight.

That ferns have spores? You can see them on the back of the leaves in summer.

That passenger pigeons used to 'darken the sky' there were so many of them when they passed over during migrations in the 19th century?

6



## Dane Park

Time: 15 min.

Distance: 1/4 mi.

Season: All

Accessibility:

Northern Lot- Unlimited

Southern Lot

(near Town Garage)-

Limited by steep terrain.

Major Interest:

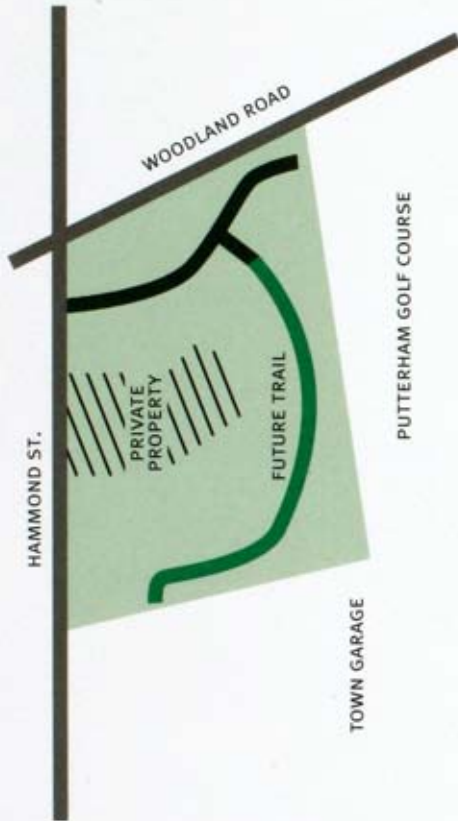
Brighton volcanic ledges

vernal pool



DANE PARK

---



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Parking on right hand side of Woodland Rd. near Hammond St. corner. Park sign and entrance on Hammond St.

## DIRECTIONS

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1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right onto Hammond St. Park on Woodland Rd. at corner of Hammond St.
2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take left onto Hammond St. At intersection with Woodland Rd., turn left and park near corner.

### MBTA:

Take Green Line 'D' train to Chestnut Hill stop. Go up steps to Hammond St. and head south down Hammond St. crossing Rt. 9 to Woodland Rd. Beaver Country Day School is on your right. Entrance to park is on the left side just past Woodland Rd.

### Bus:

#60 get off at the Chestnut Hill Shopping Center stop. Go to corner of Hammond St. and cross Rt. 9. Continue south on Hammond to Woodland Rd. intersection. Beaver Country Day School is on right. Park is on the left corner after Woodland Rd.

## COMMENTS

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Dane Park is unique because of the geology of its rock ledges. Once part of the micro continent Avalon, these ledges show clearly their volcanic origins, believed to be approximately 575,000,000 years old.

The park has not been maintained and is currently under study. The road in from the present gate is used

for maintenance by the Town of Brookline for Putterham Golf Course.

## HISTORY

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Dane Park was once part of the Ernest Dane estate "Roughwood" (now Pine Manor College). The Town of Brookline acquired Dane Park in two parcels in 1953 from Mr. Dane to be used for recreation and/or education. Lot A (on Woodland Rd.) was bought, and Lot B was donated. The total area is 17.23 acres.

In the 1960's the park was developed and contained play equipment and bar-B-Q grills. Due to vandalism, the play equipment was removed and the land allowed to revert to a natural state.

Recently a 'Friends of Dane Park' has been formed to reclaim this valuable land for public use.

## NATURE TRAIL

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As you enter the park, 100 yards in on the right is marked site #1, a lava dome. This dome was formed when molten lava was hurled out of an active volcano crater (similar to what happened at Mt. St. Helens in 1975).

Further on the path, still on the right, Site #2, lava pillows. These formations result when hot lava flows reach the edge of the existing dry land and drop into the sea. The sudden change in temperature causes the molten lava to cool quickly into a teardrop shape.

Across the path Site #3 shows examples of hardened volcanic ash.

Site #4, located near the fence on Woodland Rd., illustrates volcanic rock encasing different forms of volcanic debris, principally silica, a hard glassy mineral

found in quartz, that sparkles in the sunlight. In the future it is hoped there will be a nature trail across the rear of the park joining the two lots and exiting onto the Town Garage driveway.

#### DID YOU KNOW...?

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That the American Chestnut tree (*Castanea dentata*) wiped out by a blight over 50 years ago, still grows from the roots of old trees? You can see lots of young shoots growing from old stumps.

That blueberries (*Vaccinium*) are a native plant and come in two forms: highbush and lowbush? Birds and other wildlife like to eat them as much as we do. You can see them on both sides of the main walk.

Avalon is the name given to one of several terranes in Massachusetts made up of distinct rock formations. Avalon was originally part of a volcanic island chain near the South Pole. With continental drift, over millions of years, this volcanic formation moved north to what is now New England.

That poison ivy is a native plant? The early colonialists thought it was so pretty, that they took it back to England.

7



## D. Blakeley Hoar Sanctuary

Time: 45 min.

Distance: 3/4 mi.

Season: All

Accessibility: Limited

Major Interest:

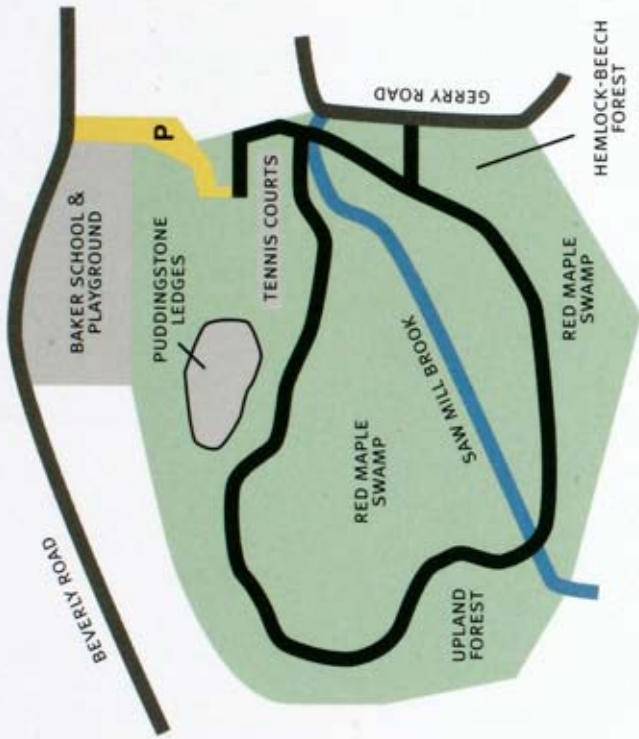
Red Maple swamp

Roxbury puddingstone ledges  
& erratics

Hemlock-Beech forest  
upland forest (climax)



D. BLAKELEY HOAR SANCTUARY



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Park on Beverly Rd. near the Edith C. Baker Elementary School, or on the street at Gerry Rd. Access to the trail starts near the entrance to the tennis courts behind the school.

Visit Town of Brookline website for a virtual tour.  
[www.townofbrookline.com/conservation/sanctuaries](http://www.townofbrookline.com/conservation/sanctuaries).

## DIRECTIONS

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1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right onto Hammond Pond Parkway. At Horace James Circle take second right onto LaGrange St. Take first left onto Beverly Rd. Baker School is on your right. Park on the street and walk behind the school and down the steps to the tennis court area. The trail starts at the Gerry Rd. entrance to the tennis courts.

2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take left onto Hammond St. At Horace James Circle, take third right onto LaGrange St. Take first left onto Beverly Rd. Baker School is .4 mi. on right. (See instructions under #1).

## COMMENTS

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This 25 acre sanctuary contains three different ecosystems: Hemlock-Beech forest, Red Maple swamp, and wooded upland. The wooded upland is made up of hardwood trees such as Oak, Elm, and Black Birch. This area is a climax forest, which continues to regenerate itself. The Red Maple swamp is dominated by wetland species, mainly Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*). Common shrubs are Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*) and Sweet Pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*). The south branch of Saw Mill Brook flows through from east (near the tennis courts) to west. (See Trail #8)

## TRAIL 7

The Hemlock-Beech forest has grown up on what used to be fields and pastures.

### HISTORY

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D. Blakeley Hoar, a noted Brookline lawyer and conservationist, stipulated in his will that income from a portion of his estate be used to establish a bird sanctuary in Brookline. In 1961, 40 years after his death, this bird sanctuary was established for public enjoyment.

The Brookline Conservation Commission manages the sanctuary with help from the Friends of D. Blakeley Hoar Sanctuary.

### NATURE TRAIL

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The entrance to the trail is near the entrance to the tennis courts. As you face the courts with Gerry Rd. at your back, go left through the Hemlock-Beech forest. The temperature changes and it feels the way the original American forest must have felt in colonial times. Notice the puddingstone outcrops.

After the forest the trail dips down and through a Red Maple swamp. On the left this area adjoins Leatherbee Woods (City of Boston Conservation Land). At the end of the trail, you cross a bridge over the Saw Mill Brook channel that flows into the west branch of the Saw Mill Brook (see Trail # 8). From here the trail starts to climb to higher land, and you will start to see Oaks and other upland vegetation.

Continuing along the trail you come to a dense stand of Hemlock and magnificent large puddingstone ledges.

The trail then winds back toward the tennis courts.

**DID YOU KNOW...?**

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That a Red Maple swamp is a wet-land often with standing water? This means that some trees like oaks cannot live there.

That an erratic is the name for a large boulder that was left by the glaciers a long time ago?

The material the boardwalk is made out of is recycled wood fiber and plastic by Trex easy-Care Decking?

# 8

## Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area



Time: 30 min.

Distance: 1/2 mi.

Season: All

Accessibility: Limited

Major Interest:

stream

wetlands

puddingstone ledges

wildflowers



SAW MILL BROOK CONSERVATION AREA



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Parking lot & trail sign on Vine St.

## DIRECTIONS

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1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right onto Dudley Rd. At T-junction, go right onto Brookline St. Take first left onto Vine St. Parking lot on right just past Wayne Rd.
2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take left onto Hammond St. At Horace James Circle take third right onto LaGrange St. Take third right (sharp angle) onto Vine St. Entrance and parking lot 300 yards on left just before Wayne Rd.

## COMMENTS

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Here the Saw Mill Brook runs through a natural woodland and wetland complex where it is important to respect nature and leave only footprints, not disturbing any of the natural features. There is a section that is owned by NSTAR and is private land.

This area contains wonderful conical knolls and conglomerate ledges and glacial erratic boulders. There are also good examples of historic conglomerate stone fences. The area is completely wooded with both older Oak forest and the newer Maple woods reclaiming 19th century fields and pastures.

Be sure to notice the wildflower plantings by Newton volunteers. They are labeled. Please, do not pick.

## HISTORY

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The Saw Mill Brook Conservation Area was open agricultural land and/or pasture as recently as 50-60 years ago. One way to tell this is by the presence of Red Cedars (*Juniperus virginiana*). These trees grow in open sun-flooded conditions and germinate best in thick pasture turf. Natural succession is returning it to woodland. It will take at least another one hundred years before virgin forest conditions begin to return.

## NATURE TRAIL

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From the parking lot, proceed down the path to the stone steps. This is the first good view of the stream, a beautiful babbling brook. Walk past the brook following the trail through the stone wall and on up along its length. Notice the native plants and flowers that have been reintroduced by the City of Newton.

At the end of the stone wall, several very large puddingstone outcrops create an arresting formation as the path winds past them and up to the top of the ridge. From the ridge you can look down into St. Joseph's Cemetery in the winter and early spring before the leaves fill out.

The path continues along the ridge, and then dips sharply to a steep set of steps down to Marla Circle.

This trail does not double back, so you must turn around and retrace your steps back to the parking lot. The view returning changes what you notice, and is well worth the second look.

## DID YOU KNOW

That Cardinal Flowers (*Lobelia cardinalis*) were named because the bright red color reminded people of vestments worn by Roman Catholic Cardinals? The long tube shapes of the flowers mean they are pollinated by hummingbirds.

That Trillium roots were gathered and eaten by American Indians?

That Saw Mill Brook got it's name from being used for a saw mill?

9

## Walnut Hills Cemetery



Time: 30 min.

Distance: 1-2 mi.

Season: All

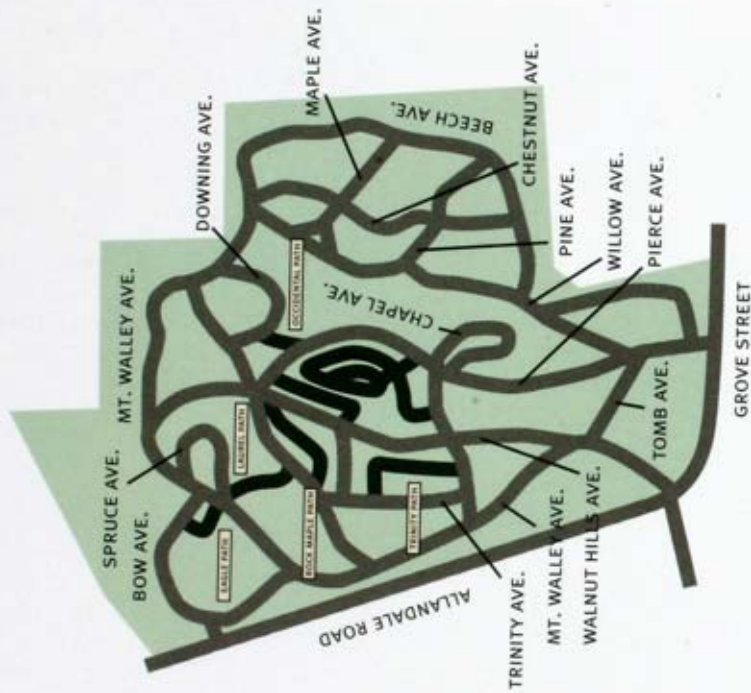
Accessibility: Easy

Major Interest:

naturalistic landscaping  
reflecting the 19th century  
ideals of picturesque



# WALNUT HILLS CEMETERY



## LOCATION & PARKING

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Parking lot at Grove St. entrance.

## DIRECTIONS

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1. From the west proceeding east on Rt. 9, take right onto Lee St. Go down Lee St. to end (T-junction) and bear right onto Newton St. Go through stop light. Newton St. becomes Grove St. Entrance to cemetery is on left just after Allandale Rd.

2. From east proceeding west on Rt. 9, take left onto Lee St. at the Brookline Reservoir. Go to the end of Lee St. (T-junction) and bear right onto Newton St. Go through light, Newton St. becomes Grove. Entrance on left just after Allandale Rd.

3. Take Bus #61 and get off at Grove St. stop.

## COMMENTS

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45 acres of well-maintained parkland with paved roads, lawns, and beautiful mature trees. There is a handsome hedge of tall Hemlocks. This natural oasis is part of the Charles-to-Charles plan linking the green areas of Larz Anderson Park and the D. Blakely Hoar Sanctuary.

## HISTORY

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The Cemetery was opened in 1875, the Centennial year of the start of the American Revolution. It was designed by Ernest W. Bowditch in the new rural style of "wild beauty and quiet charm". The graves were placed alongside puddingstone outcrops and local trees. There were no fences allowed around the graves so as not to break up the vistas. In 1886 limits were placed on monuments; no white marble, mausoleums,

## TRAIL 9

or elaborate sculptures. Many of the graves are marked by simple bronze insets into existing pudding-stone ledges.

## NATURE TRAIL

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There are maps and brochures at the entrance. Any roadway or path is picturesque. Walnut Hills Ave., Bow Ave. and Mt. Waverly Ave. have particularly nice scenery and some of the older gravesites.

DO YOU KNOW ..?

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Famous people buried here:

Charles Sprague Sargent -First director of the Arnold Arboretum from 1871 to 1926.

Henry Hobson Richardson -Architect of Trinity Church, Boston.

Guy Lowell - Landscape Architect and Architect, designed the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

## OTHER OPEN SPACES TO VISIT

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There are many other green spaces to explore within a short distance of Chestnut Hill. Some like the Emerald Necklace system of parks and parkways are world famous, while others are lesser known. The following areas are listed and described with the hope that they will be visited often and will benefit from the ongoing appreciation of the contributions that they make to both our relationship with and our enjoyment of the natural world.

### BOSTON

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#### **1. Brook Farm Reservation (National Historic Site)**

670 Baker St., West Roxbury  
(1/3 mile west of VFW Parkway)

Parking available on site near entrance and near Gethsemane Cemetery

This is the site of the Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture & Education, a utopian community/cooperative farm founded in 1841 by New England Transcendentalists. Later the site served as a training ground for Union soldiers during the Civil War.

Once open farmland, these 179 acres include orchards, meadows, marshes, Red Maple swamp, upland forests, old fields and open hillsides overlooking the Saw Mill Brook and the Charles River. Unpaved trails through the Reservation invite hikers. Occasional interpretive walks are offered by the MDC, which has managed the site since 1988.

#### **2. Chestnut Hill Reservoir**

Beacon St. between Cleveland Circle and the Boston College Stadium.



Accessible via B, C, or D Branches of the Green Line

The Chestnut Hill Reservoir was built by the Metropolitan Water Authority from 1866-1870 as Boston's first pastoral park. Originally it comprised two basins -Bradlee & Lawrence, a carriageway and landscaped paths. In 1880's and 1890's the two pumping stations and support buildings across Beacon St. were added. This facility functioned as the main water supply to the City of Boston up until the 1940's. In 1949 the upper basin was sold to Boston College and filled in.

The remaining reservoir, Bradlee Basin, covers 87 acres, with an average depth of 20 feet and has a filled capacity of 550,600,000 gallons. It is still a backup water source and is managed by The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. The associated 1.7-mile dirt jogging track, exercise course and greenbelt are now managed by the MDC (Metropolitan District Commission) and are open to the public. Chestnut Hill Driveway, built along the original dam between the two basins, contains a section of the original roadway circuit. Plans are underway to retire the reservoir and convert the whole property into parkland.

### **3. Letherbee Woods (Hancock Swamp)**

Access from D. Blakely Hoar trail or unimproved access from LaGrange St.

Walking past the Hemlock grove at D. Blakely Hoar Sanctuary, a short bridge leads off to the left across a drainage area onto a boardwalk. Proceed cautiously as some of the boards have rotted. This Red Maple swamp is a Boston Natural Areas Fund site, 6.9 acres protected as an Urban Wild. The land was given in memory of Mary H. Leatherbee (1908-1975) for conservation use and enjoyment by all people forever.

#### **4. Millennium Park (West Roxbury)**

Gardner Rd., west of the intersection of the VFW Parkway and Charles Park Rd.

Parking available on site

One of Boston's newest parks, Millennium Park, 105 acres, was created on the site of the former Gardner St. landfill. Because it is so new, its appearance is quite stark. Within its borders are five miles of paved bike paths/pedestrian trails, 20 acres of playing fields atop a 120-foot high hill, picnic tables, tot lot, and handicapped accessible canoe launch. This park is dedicated to active recreation. There is a small bridge over the Saw Mill Brook that connects Millennium Park's paved paths to Brook Farm Reservation.

### **BROOKLINE**

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#### **1. Amory Woods and Hall's Pond Sanctuary**

Located behind 1120 Beacon St. and east of Amory St.

Parking on Beacon St. and at Amory Playground.

Hall's Pond and the surrounding conservation land (5.06 acres) was originally part of Cedar Swamp and drained directly into the Charles River through a small brook (now culverted). Purchased by Brookline in 1975, the site is currently undergoing restoration to provide for improved water quality, wetland management and protected wildlife habitats. Broadwalks make the wetland handicapped accessible. Good spot for birding and nature study.

## **2. Brookline Reservoir**

Boylston St. between Lee and Warren Sts.

Parking on Warren and Dudley Sts.

Admired every spring for the display of flowering cherry trees, the Brookline Reservoir was built in 1848 to supply the City of Boston with drinking water. In 1903 the Town of Brookline purchased the reservoir and its surrounds, 32 acres, partially with the \$150,000 raised among its citizenry. A favorite walking and jogging route, the stone dust path around the water's edge is dotted with benches for resting and admiring the scenery.

## **3. Holyhood Cemetery**

Heath St. at Holly Lane

Parking on site.

A 36.2 acre, privately owned cemetery founded in 1857, Holyhood, with its outcroppings of puddingstone, reflects the mid 19th century Romantic landscape movement. The Gothic Revival style chapel, St. Patrick's, listed in the National Register of Historic Places, was built in 1862. The perimeter stonewall was built around 1875. Holyhood contains the graves of prominent Irish political figures including Boston mayors Patrick Collins and Maurice Tobin. Also to be found here are the graves of Joseph P. and Rose Kennedy and John Boyle O'Reilly, Irish patriot, poet, and editor of The Pilot.

#### 4. Larz Anderson Park

Goddard Ave. and Newton St.

Parking in lot off Goddard Ave. and along access road.

Bequeathed to the Town in 1949 by Isabel Anderson and named for her husband, part-time Brookline resident and American Ambassador to Japan and Belgium, Larz Anderson, this park, at over 60 acres, is the Town's largest. Its most notable feature is a 290-foot high drumlin, a hill formed of glacial rock and clay, which offers commanding views of Boston and its harbor. The Park also contains smaller hills, numerous footpaths, a man-made lagoon, skating rink, picnic area and play structure, playing fields and community gardens.

Also within its borders are the Museum of Transportation, located in the estate's original carriage house, and Putterham School, a one-room schoolhouse dating from 1768.

#### 5. Walnut Street Cemetery (The Old Burying Ground)

Walnut and Chestnut Sts.

Parking on street

One of two cemeteries in Brookline owned by the town, this cemetery dates from 1717, just 12 years after the incorporation of Brookline. For over a century, it was informally maintained, with a local farmer being allowed to cut hay on its grounds in exchange for taking care of the wooden fence which surrounded it. In 1840 a stone wall replaced the wooden fence and the entrance was moved to Walnut St. At this time its design was formalized and ornamental trees planted. Members of some of Brookline's most prominent families (Boylston, Goddard, Pierce, Devotion, Corey, Aspinwall, and

Philbrick) are buried here as are the slaves of the Sewall and Davis families.

## NEWTON

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### 1. Bullough's Pond

Entrance on Dexter Rd.

Parking on street

Old mill pond owned by the City of Newton and jointly managed with the Bullough's Pond Association. Fishing, birdwatching, benches, boat launch, ice skating when weather permits.

### 2. Cold Spring Park

Entrances off Beacon St. (west of Walnut St.) and Duncklee St.

Parking at Beacon and Duncklee St. entrances.

Cold Spring Park, 67 acres, has two distinct parts: one comprises playing fields, a playground, tennis courts and, in summer, a Farmers' Market, the other a walking (and exercise trail) which leads through wooded areas and wetlands. A footbridge on the main trail, which begins at the Duncklee St. entrance, leads to the ball fields. The park was once part of a 150-acre swamp and peat bog (Alcock's Swamp).



### **3. Crystal Lake**

Bathhouse entrance on Rogers St.

A 33 acre great pond providing swimming and fishing. Benches and passive recreation along periphery.

### **4. Edmands Park (Cabot Woods)**

Main entrance off Blake St. Also accessible from Boston College Law School, and Rochester and Westchester Sts.

The property was a 33-acre gift of the Edmands family in 1913. It contains a glacial esker, Edmands Brook, wetlands and woodlands in dramatic terrain. It is a good site for nature study, birdwatching, hiking, jogging, and cross-country skiing. Parts of the pathway can be steep and unstable.

### **5. Nahanton Park**

Parking access on Winchester St. (between Charles River Country Club & Jewish Community Center) and on Nahanton St. (between Wells Ave. and Charles River)

This park contains 57 acres of woodland, open fields, freshwater marshes and ponds, wildflowers and garden plots. At Nahanton St. entrance there is a Nature Center, canoe landing and handicapped accessible Florie's Path along the Charles River. It is known for good birding, particularly fall migration and spring woodcock courting displays.

**6. Newton Cemetery**  
791 Walnut St.

Parking on site

Newton Cemetery is privately owned and dates from 1855. Situated on nearly 100 acres of carefully maintained grounds, it features rolling hills, meandering brooks and other water features crossed by picturesque stone footbridges. There are many mature plantings of deciduous and evergreen trees and flowering shrubs. Wildlife includes Canada geese, foxes, mallard ducks, and sometimes blue heron.

Visitors to the cemetery are reminded that dogs and other pets must remain in cars, bicycles, motorcycles, and rollerblades are not permitted, and children under 15 years of age must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

**7. Ordway Park**  
Corner of Gibbs and Everett Sts.

Parking on street

This small (1/2 acre), unassuming green space was willed to the City of Newton in 1971. It is dominated by an American Beech tree and has two paths which lead the visitor past examples of Dogwood, Flowering Quince, Viburnum, Witch Hazel, and Yellow Wood.

## GLOSSARY

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**aquatic:** living in water

**brook:** a small stream, usually smaller than a river

**climax:** mature growth forest

**conical:** in the shape of a cone

**coppice:** trees with more than one trunk growing from their root system; multiple trunked.

**drumlin:** a deposit of glacial till that has a recognizable elongated shape

**erratic:** a block of rock transported by a glacier to a location removed from where it originated

**esker:** a long narrow ridge of sand and gravel, probably once a stream bed under or in a glacier

**eutrofication:** the process of gradual filling in of a water body with organic matter

**evergreen:** a plant that remains green all year

**habitat:** the natural abode or surroundings of a plant or animal.

**herbaceous:** a plant that dies back to the ground at the end of the growing season

**kettle hole:** a bowl shaped depression originally filled by a block of ice from a glacier

**knoll:** a hillock or mound. The top of a hill.

**lava:** molten rock erupted on the face of the earth

**ledge:** a projecting ridge of rock

**marsh:** type of wetland dominated by emergent (herbaceous) plants growing in shallow water for all or most of the growing season, often characterized by one or few species.

**muck:** highly decomposed organic matter

**organic soil:** composed mostly of the remains of plants

**outcrop:** places where the underlying rock is exposed

**peat:** relatively undecomposed organic matter, usually highly acidic

**perennial:** plant that lives for many years, usually supported by underground parts

**pioneer:** in reference to plants, species that colonize abandoned agricultural land, usually in sunlight, providing the environment for other species to develop

**snag:** a standing dead tree

**surface water:** water above ground

**swamp:** type of wetland dominated by woody vegetation (trees or shrubs)

**terrane:** group of rocks formed at the same place and time

**topography:** the lay of the land, the steepness and direction of the slopes

**tuff:** volcanic ash solidified into rock

**vernal pool:** shallow, often seasonal pond (typically surrounded by upland woodlands) that serves as a breeding ground for salamanders and woodland frogs, usually devoid of fish

**volcanic ash:** fine particles of lava that have been ejected from a volcano during eruption

**watershed:** land and associated surface-water drainage network above a stream, river, lake, or other body of water that contributes water to that body

**water table:** level of the soil that is saturated with water, typically varies seasonally.

**wetland:** any area where the presence of water for extended periods exerts a controlling influence on the plant community, soil properties, and animals living in or using them.

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Cover photo: maple leaf, one of our most prominent native trees  
Internal photos by Marjorie Greville