

WRENTHAM MASSACHUSETTS

GUIDE TO OPEN SPACES

AND

CONSERVATION LAND



Third Edition - 2013

NOTES:

**FOR EMERGENCIES CALL THE WRENTHAM
POLICE AT 508-384-2121.**

WRENTHAM GUIDE TO OPEN SPACES AND CONSERVATION LANDS

Third Edition, 2013

Wrentham Conservation Commission

Members: Barry Kassler, Dianne Demarais, Michael Mavrides,
George Smith Jr., Maria Jomides, and Leo Immonen, Chair.
Lee Ann Tavares, Secretary and Darryl Luce, Agent

**This book was generously funded
by a grant from the Sweatt Fund.**

The Third Edition of the Wrentham Guide to Open Spaces and Conservation Lands is available in portable document format (PDF) at wrentham.ma.us/conservation-commission. You may contact the Wrentham Conservation Commission at (508) 384-5417.

© 2013 Wrentham Conservation Commission

Cover Photo: Great Blue Heron nesting at Wollomonopoag conservation area lower beaver pond. Photo courtesy of Cat Luce.

Contents

RULES & REGULATIONS.....	4
HISTORY OF CONSERVATION IN WRENTHAM.....	5
NATURAL RESOURCES TODAY	10
OPEN SPACE IN WRENTHAM.....	12
MAP OF OPEN SPACE IN WRENTHAM.....	16
BIRCHWOLD FARM.....	18
JOE’S ROCK.....	19
HOMER CROCKER POND	21
WOLLOMONOPOAG.....	23
SWEATT BEACH & BOAT LANDING.....	24
EAGLE BROOK CORRIDOR.....	25
TROUT POND and KNUCKUP HILL	26
WRENTHAM CENTER	28
ATHLETIC FIELDS	29
STATE FORESTS	29
F. GILBERT HILLS STATE FOREST.....	30
WRENTHAM STATE FOREST.....	31



Great Blue Herons nesting at Wollomonopag

Dear Wrentham Residents:
September 1, 2013

We are pleased to offer you this third edition of the Wrentham Guide to Open Spaces and Conservation Lands, originally published in 1988. We encourage you to use the guide to explore the numerous open space properties in town.

This guide briefly describes 8,000 years of Wrentham's history. The guide also describes Wrentham's natural resources and current "public lands." These lands were purchased by or donated to the Town or State for conserving land, providing for outdoor recreation, or protecting public water supplies. Open space developments have also preserved more than 374 acres at no cost to the Town. These "public lands" are located throughout town—enabling citizens to have access to some unique parcels in close proximity to their homes.

The Wrentham Conservation Commission, the Recreation Committee, the Wrentham Department of Public Works, and the Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation jointly manage the various properties. Birchwold Farm, Joe's Rock, Wollomonopog, and the state forests are the most frequently visited properties.

So that everyone may have a safe and enjoyable experience, please follow the Rules and Regulations. We encourage you to explore our natural heritage and discover for yourself the wealth of resources available in our own neighborhoods.

Sincerely,
Leo Immonen
Chair, Wrentham Conservation Commission

RULES & REGULATIONS

Regarding the Use of Open Space & Conservation Properties

1. No motorized vehicles are permitted outside of specified parking areas.
2. Fishing is allowed in season with proper licenses in accordance with applicable laws. Hunting is not allowed.
3. Intoxicating beverages and disorderly acts are prohibited.
4. Open fires and liquid fuel require a fire permit from the Conservation Commission and from the Wrentham Fire Department. Please contact the Conservation Commission at 384-5417 or in writing c/o Town Hall, 79 South Street, Wrentham, MA 02093.
5. All cans, bottles, litter and garbage are to be taken away or placed in receptacles provided.
6. Overnight camping will usually be permitted to organizations having adult supervision present at all times. Permission must be secured in writing from the Conservation Commission (See item 4).
7. No plants, bushes, or flowers are to be defaced, cut, removed, nor paint applied.
8. The Conservation Commission, alone, may authorize trails to be cut or marked, dams to be built, or construction of any type of structure.
9. Permission to use the area may be denied for any reason relating to health, safety, morals, fire danger, overcrowding, or prior violation of these regulations.
10. The Conservation Commission does not patrol, and cannot assume, for the Town of Wrentham, liability for injuries, damage to property, or other losses. Those persons using the conservation areas assume all risks involved.
11. Conservation areas are open at sunrise and close at sunset, except as noted in item 6 above.
12. Animals under verbal control need not be leashed on Conservation Commission controlled properties.

When using conservation land please stay on marked paths. Be respectful of others property and do not trespass onto neighboring properties under any circumstance.

Regardless of the time of year – ALWAYS – check carefully for ticks as they can be as small as a period in this sentence. Untreated tick bites can have serious health consequences.

If you have any questions about poisonous plants or other common, natural hazards on open space lands, please call the Commission. The staff will be glad to help.

HISTORY OF CONSERVATION IN WRENTHAM

“Wrentham is a favored place, flattered by Nature and smiled upon by Man,” read the opening lines of the town's official history. “The town is set in an area that boasts the best of natural facilities: excellent ponds and thus a good natural supply of water, good level land and yet some gently rolling hills to relieve what otherwise might have been a monotonous landscape, good marshland which would attract all manner of animal and bird life and provide marsh hay, and plenty of woods, where game roamed and from which a good supply of lumber for construction and wood for fuel might be obtained,” the author continues, setting a scene that is, fortunately, still familiar today.

Those of us who live here now are but part of a long line of residents who were attracted by the area's natural attributes. After the glaciers retreated 13,000 years ago the Native Americans recognized and depended on these resources as well. Evidence exists of at least three primitive civilizations living in the town's northwest corner near Eagle Dam over a period of several thousand years, as far back as 6500 B.C.

Archeological historian Stephen Keighley describes the Eagle Dam area as a good source of spring water for drinking and cooking, clay beds nearby for the manufacture of utensils, and abundant game in the woodlands. It was the descendants of the last of these indigenous groups who gave the area the name Wollomonopoag,

"Place of Shells," and who were living here when the first Europeans settlers came in the 1640s. These colonists were attracted by the rich meadows around the lakes, which they needed to feed the growing herds of cattle that formed the basis of the Puritan economy in the early 1600s.

The land was purchased in 1660 from the local Native American leader, King Philip Sachem, for a total of 41 pounds, 10 shillings and 8 pence. When the town was officially established in 1673, separating itself from Dedham, it was renamed "Wrentham," after a small village near the coast in East Suffolk, England. Natural resources was one of the first concerns of the new residents in 1671 as one of the earliest measures passed by the town meeting was to regulate the felling of cedar trees, the use of lumber, and by levying penalties for wasting lumber and fuel wood.

All but two of the young town's homes were burned during King Philip's War (both homes were believed to be infected with smallpox) in 1675 - 1676. The colonists returned to Wrentham in 1680, with the men drawing lots for the land, choosing timberland, meadowland, home lots, and wood lots with care. In 1685 the first lots of land were set aside for common use. Not surprisingly, one of the parcels was the fertile "land between the two ponds" (what is now Lakes Pearl and Archer), also four-plus acres near the meeting house (in the village center), and miscellaneous land for the "encouragement of a school."

The economy became increasingly varied beginning in the late 1700s. Wrentham's abundant water supported a number of mills employed in the small-scale manufacture of cotton and wool cloth. The meadows provided agricultural space for growing straw which fueled a successful straw hat manufacturing center. Farming was also important, especially poultry, hay, corn, and cattle.

Beginning in the 1870's, the aesthetic and recreational values of Wrentham encouraged the first influx of summer folk, who built cottages on the lakes or boarded with local families. Many of the visitors were upper middle class families from Rhode Island or

elsewhere in Massachusetts who enjoyed the swimming and boating opportunities offered by the lakes. It was about this time that the town set aside land between Creek Street and Lake Pearl and called it George's Park. In addition to water activities, it was used as a picnic area and was popular for outdoor meetings in the summer. Late in the 19th century, the Enegren family, headed by William L. Enegren, a local banker who lived on Creek Street, began the development and expansion of the George's Park area.

Advertisements encouraged people to "avail [themselves] ...of the cool breezes and charming scenery" from the high bluff overlooking the lake. Numerous activities from boating to carousels to evening dancing attracted people from miles around for a family day at Lake Pearl. Though the list of activities has narrowed, Lake Pearl Park continues to be one of the town's best-known attractions.

The towns of Norfolk, Franklin, and Plainville, formerly part of Wrentham, separated from the Town in the late 17th to early 20th centuries and became their own communities. While some of these spinoffs developed into bustling municipalities, Wrentham itself maintained a more rural charm. For years, Wrentham continued as a sleepy little village, increasing its population about two per cent annually. After World War II, however, the town's attributes were discovered, sparking a faster pace of development. At the May 1962 Town meeting, the Conservation Commission was established to provide for a broad program of conservation, including the preservation, promotion and development of natural resources. Members of the first Commission were Marjorie E. Taylor, chairman, Louis A. Maguire, vice-chairman, Edna K. Williams, secretary, Lionel Schensnol, George E. Reynolds, Charles S. Canning, Jr., and Lawrence C. Perkins.

In the Annual Report for 1962, the Commission asked for public support of their efforts, warning that without such a program, "the town has no way to prevent the development into areas that should be kept green and would result in the spoilage of the lakes, ponds and streams and ultimately to the pollution of same." The

Commission held its first meeting September 19, 1962, and reported having met with commissions from other towns as well as seeking input from state and county conservation officials and professionals. Maps were prepared showing possible greenbelt areas, surface water features, and forest areas. Master Plan formats were distributed, and a public education meeting was held January 9, 1963.

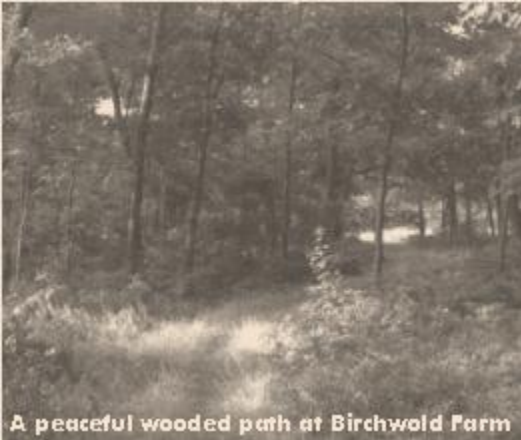
The new Conservation Commission recognized the need for the town to own and protect natural areas and began acquiring property through bargain sales and outright purchase. During the 1960's and 1970's many properties were acquired: Knuckup Hill, Burnt Swamp, Craig and Oxbox Meadows, Joe's Rock and Crocker Pond. These properties totaled over 290 acres and added to the 1,064 acres of State Forest land in Wrentham.



A view of Wrentham Center from the top of Knuckup Hill

The proposed Master Plan for Wrentham, developed in 1975, directly addressed conservation issues, pointing out that the town's natural features, in the form of open spaces, conservation areas, greenways, and parks, contribute to both the maintenance and creation of property values. It stressed the importance of addressing these needs before developmental pressures and their accompanying inherent high land values limited the possibilities open to the town.

The rapid local residential growth that began in the 1980s brought home to townspeople the need to protect those resources. Birchwold Farm was acquired through eminent domain in 1985. Since that time the increasing land values have shifted the Conservation Commission's focus for land preservation to conservation restrictions, open space subdivisions, donations, and tax takings. Since 1990 only one parcel has been bought by the Town, the 200-acre Wollomonopoag Conservation Area property, which protects the watershed of Wrentham drinking water well #5 and Lake Pearl.



The Conservation Commission began producing the Open Space and Recreation Plan required by the Commonwealth in 1985 and has updated that plan in 1995 and 2000. This plan documents the desires of the townspeople with respect to the management of existing conservation land as well as the acquisition of future properties. The last edition of the Open Space Plan, in 2000, was instrumental in obtaining the William Rice Athletic Complex and the 200-acre Wollomonopoag Conservation Area property. The Open Space Committee has since taken over the responsibility for producing the Open Space and Recreation Plan and its members plan to release a new, approved plan in 2014.

NATURAL RESOURCES TODAY

TOPOGRAPHY

Wrentham is located in a transition zone where land characteristics change from those of the basin or coastal lowlands surrounding Boston, to the broadening slope of eastern escarpment of the Worcester Plateau. The rolling topography was formed by glaciers. The area of Wrentham west of Interstate 495, Sheldonville, is generally comprised of glacial till and forms poor soils. Despite the poor soils, several of Wrentham's farms are in this area, growing in limited valley bottom areas where richer soils are found. A unique feature of west Wrentham and one of the highest points in southeastern Massachusetts is Joe's Rock (490 feet above sea level), a granite precipice that rises dramatically above a small bog pond that is popular among climbers and those looking for a quick walk that provides a panoramic view.

East of Interstate 495, the topography changes to one of eskers and outwash plains. Eskers are ancient river beds that formed under the glaciers draining to glacial lakes. Today they are sinuous ridges that are a few hundred feet wide at the bottom and narrow upwards to 40 to 80 feet in height. The Wollomonopog Conservation area has several of these features in their natural state. If not protected, eskers are mined for their sand and gravel. Near the boundary with Plainville, there are a number of high points of bedrock formations of granite and metamorphic rocks that were carved by mile-thick glaciers high. These high points are, moving westward, Pinnacle Rock (430 feet above sea level) and the Balanced Rock area (440 feet), both in Wrentham State Forest, and Knuckup Hill (410 feet) near Trout Pond. To the north of these high points Wrentham's soils are richer, lying on glacial sands and gravel that allow the soils to drain.

WATER RESOURCES

Wrentham forms the upper watershed of four rivers: the Charles, the Blackstone, the Taunton, and the Ten Mile rivers. Wrentham has several large lakes and ponds. Lake Archer, formed by an isolated block of ice as the glacier retreated, is perhaps the largest natural pond. Although Lake Pearl was a smaller pond originally (Whitings Pond), it and many other ponds are the result of dams placed on streams for water mills in the 1800's.

Wrentham's drinking water comes from 5 gravel wells, three of those wells are immediately adjacent to Lake Pearl and the other two are adjacent to the Crocker Pond conservation area. All five wells are in gravel deposits fed by the surface waters of Lake Pearl and Crocker Pond, respectively.

Wrentham's four watersheds provide it with a unique relationship to a number of neighboring communities as well as to the region as a whole. Although it can boast no major rivers within its 14,515 acres, the town's abundant wetlands serve as headwaters for two drinking water reservoirs: Attleboro's Mirimichi Reservoir and Pawtucket's Cumberland Reservoir. Eagle Brook and Lake Pearl are stocked with trout and salmon by the Northeast Region of the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. Wetlands like those at Crocker Pond, Eagle Brook, Miscoe Brook, Franklin State Forest, and Burnt Swamp provide waterfowl habitats as well as storage basins to retard run-off during periods of heavy rain.

VEGETATION

In its agricultural past, the only large trees in Wrentham were the ones that stood on property boundaries or along fence lines. Farming practices and animal pastures dominated the scene. Today, trees dominate much of Wrentham making it appear largely forested from the air.

Sugar maple, ash, oak, hickory, and White Pine are the most common trees in Wrentham's woodlands. Where there is more moisture, the variety of trees increases to include red maple, black birch, black cherry and hemlock. The swamp areas may include

black gum and Atlantic white cedar. At various times in Wrentham history, timber has played an important economic role, including support of a wooden boat building business established in 1821. Among the shrubbery and groundcovers are high and low bush blueberries, dewberries, bittersweet, and winterberry. Wrentham's topography ranges from low wetlands to high, sun-baked granite ledges which fosters a wide variety of wildflowers.

Invasive, non-native plants species like Norway maple, Japanese knotweed, black swallowwort, Oriental bittersweet, as well as the aquatic nuisances such as Eurasian water milfoil degrade habitat endangering native species.

WILDLIFE

The diversity of Wrentham's natural habitat invites a variety of wild animals. Woodland species include deer, fox, raccoon, pine martins and scarlet tanagers. Although there are few meadows now, deer, fox, coyotes, woodchucks, rabbits, opossum, and turkeys have adapted to modern landscape. Wrentham's wetlands and open water bodies host beavers, muskrat, ducks, geese, and heron, including nesting colonies of great blue herons.

OPEN SPACE IN WRENTHAM

Open Space can take several forms and have many purposes. In Wrentham, open spaces provide areas for passive recreation such as hiking and bird watching and more active recreation like swimming and organized sports.

Open space preserves land in its natural state. Developed areas lack the soil profile to filter drinking water. Buildings and pavement shed water rapidly leading to water shortages. Developed areas also discourage predators which allow nuisance species such as mice, ticks, and mosquitoes to flourish. Natural areas filter and store our drinking water. Natural areas maintain wildlife diversity and keep pests under control.

Some properties have been preserved that have no, or limited, public access. Burnt Swamp and Franklin State Forest are accessible, but have no foot paths and are preserved primarily for wildlife habitat, to protect water quality and provide flood control.

Conservation Restrictions permanently preserve land, preventing any future development, but keep the land in private ownership. The Assetta Farm on East Street has permanently preserved 44 acres consisting of an open field and woods. The field is visible along East Street near Foxboro and kept as a hay field. This property protects the upper watershed of Wrentham Well #4 and helps maintain the rural appearance of Wrentham. Edna Williams, Bill Marland, and Esther Anderson have also placed Conservation Restrictions on their properties, preserving the rural appearance of Wrentham, protecting our drinking water, and providing wildlife habitat.

Open space that surrounds Open Space Subdivisions may be accessible in some areas, but serve primarily to provide natural buffers. Open Space Subdivisions concentrate the new homes in a smaller area but permanently protect natural areas. A summary of these properties and the land preserved:

<u>Parcel</u>	<u>Acres preserved</u>
Whipple Estates, off Luke Street	48
Wampanoag, off Riverside & Eastside Road	44
Badus Brook, off South Street	19
Preserve at Oak Hill, off Jenks Street	109
Toils End, off Park Street	59
Heaton Place, off Ash Street	7
Grants Mill, off Cumberland Road	5
Wamsutta Way, off West Street	7
Blackberry Hill, off West Street	17
Chestnut Hollow, off Chestnut Street	13
Wolloff Estates, off West Street	22
Pond Home, off East Street	12
John Tate Place, off West Street	12

These open space subdivisions protect more than 374 acres that the Town did not have to purchase. These areas frequently adjoin existing Conservation areas, creating additional access points.

WILLIAM H. SWEATT TRUST FUND

Established in the 1930s by William H. Sweatt, the Sweatt Fund annually awards the interest generated by its invested principal to support "luxuries" not provided by town taxes. Over the years, the Sweatt Trust fund has provided money for many recreation and open space projects in Wrentham such as the former ski hill, the ball fields, the town beach, enhancing the conservation areas, and the three editions of this book.

THE WARNER TRAIL

Wrentham is familiar to thousands of New Englanders as host to a portion of the Warner Trail, a 34-mile-long path stretching from Canton, Massachusetts to Diamond Hill, Rhode Island. The Trail was established in 1939 by the Appalachian Mountain Club. It is marked with white blazes.

Approximately 14 miles of the trail traverse Wrentham, entering the town from F. Gilbert Hills State Forest—a section of which extends into the northeast corner of Wrentham from Foxborough.

The Wrentham segment of the Warner Trail leaves F. Gilbert Hills for the Crocker Pond Conservation Area. From there it winds through the Wrentham State Forest and into Town lands on and around Trout Pond and Knuckup Hill. It then re-enters Wrentham State Forest from Beach Street, emerging on Route 1A near Wampum Corner. Turning down Route 121, it picks up an abandoned railroad bed, which it follows under I-495. The trail skirts the Wrentham Outlet mall to Green Street.

From the south side of Green Street, it follows a ridgeline and ascends Red Brush (Sunset) Hill, where good views are possible. The trail descends to Hancock Street and Burnt Swamp, re-

entering a thickly forested area and passing into Plainville briefly before going on into Rhode Island, where it ends at Diamond Hill State Park in Cumberland.

For a copy of the Warner Trail map, or to join a group hike, contact the friends of Warner Trail www.warnertrail.org or the F. Gilbert Hills State Forest at (508) 543-5850. For information about the Appalachian Mountain Club, please visit their website at www.outdoors.org.



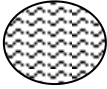
Wrentham Common in winter.

MAP OF OPEN SPACE IN WRENTHAM

Symbol Key



Roads



Lakes, Ponds



Streams



Trails



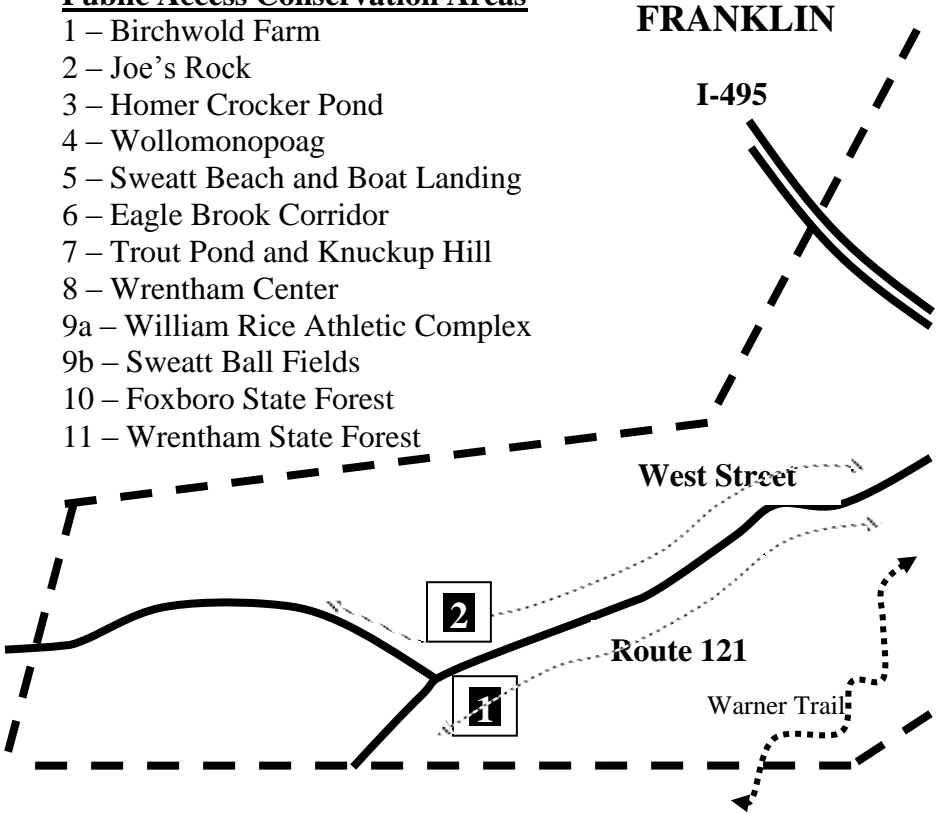
Boundaries



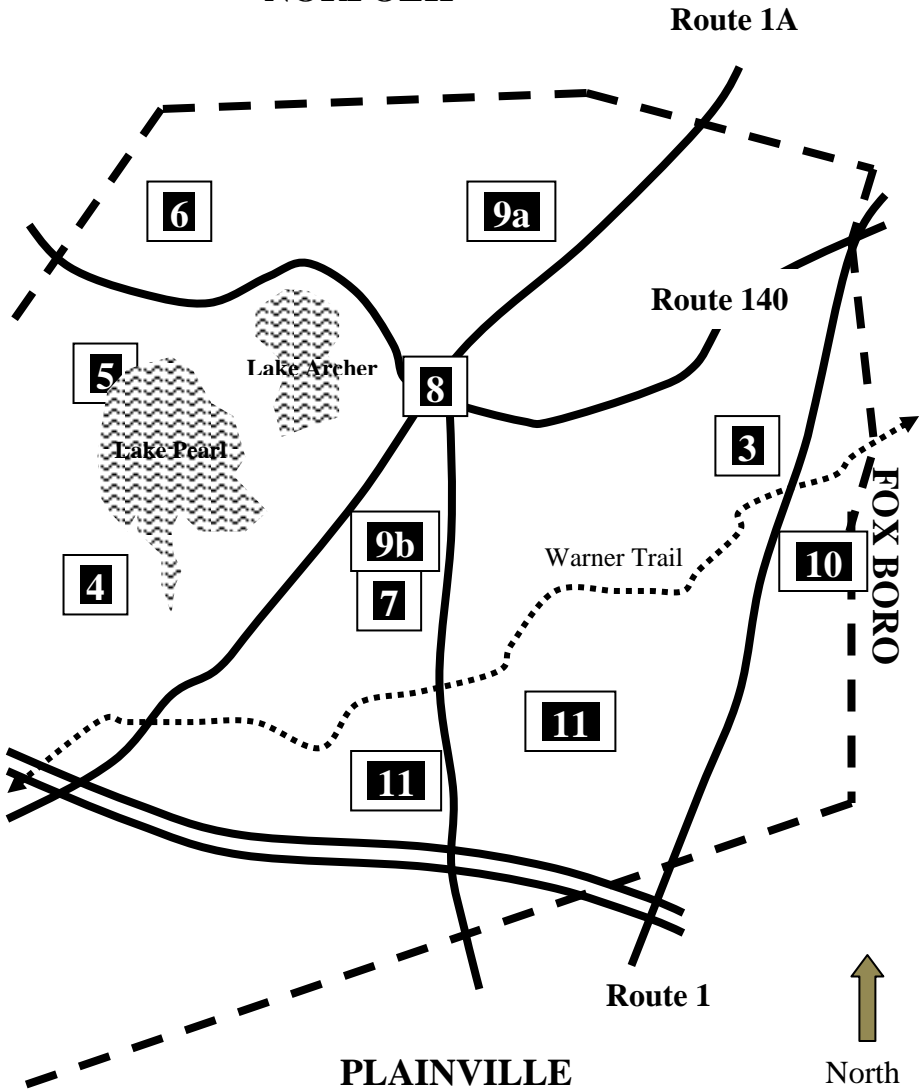
Conservation Areas with Public Access

Public Access Conservation Areas

- 1 – Birchwold Farm
- 2 – Joe’s Rock
- 3 – Homer Crocker Pond
- 4 – Wollomonopoag
- 5 – Sweatt Beach and Boat Landing
- 6 – Eagle Brook Corridor
- 7 – Trout Pond and Knuckup Hill
- 8 – Wrentham Center
- 9a – William Rice Athletic Complex
- 9b – Sweatt Ball Fields
- 10 – Foxboro State Forest
- 11 – Wrentham State Forest



NORFOLK



OPEN SPACES AND CONSERVATION LANDS

Below are descriptions of the open space properties that have been developed for public use. Where appropriate, a map has been supplied to orient the user and point out features of interest and parking areas. These maps are schematic and do not show accurate property lines. More detailed maps for some of these areas are available from the Conservation Commission. Respect others private property and stay on marked trails.

The Symbol Key shown for the Map of Open Space in Wrentham will be used for the maps shown below.

BIRCHWOLD FARM

Parking: Off-street parking entrance (42.0261° N, -71.4057°W) at the sign approximately 300 feet northeast from where West Street and Route 121 separate. The parking area is unpaved and can be rough. It is sufficient for small horse trailers and many cars. In winter this lot is not plowed, but Joes Rock, across the street, has paved parking and may be plowed.

Features: A large open meadow and miles of trails over a variety of terrain for walking, horse riding and, in winter, cross-country skiing. Picnic tables are available in the field.

Cautions: Stay on marked trails outside of the field area. Do not trespass onto private property nearby. Report the use of off-road vehicles to the Wrentham Police 508-384-2121.

For many years a working dairy, Birchwold Farm now provides over 100 acres for wildlife viewing, hiking and horseback riding. Located at the intersection of Route 121 and West Street in Sheldonville, its features include the large open field visible from the road, as well as a small pond, wetlands, hardwood groves, and an abundance of flora and fauna. Birchwold Farm was purchased by the town in 1985, following eminent domain proceedings, from

the heirs of its much-respected owner, Phillips Wheeler. Maintenance of Birchwold's open agricultural land through occasional mowing is done to control invasive plant growth and provides wildlife habitat. In late winter and early spring the area is known for congregations of bluebirds and Woodcock perform courting flights.

JOE'S ROCK

Parking: Off-street parking within the fenced area at the sign on the north side of West Street, (42.02675° N, -71.40523°W), which is nearly across the street from Birchwold Farm. The parking area is paved and can take several cars.

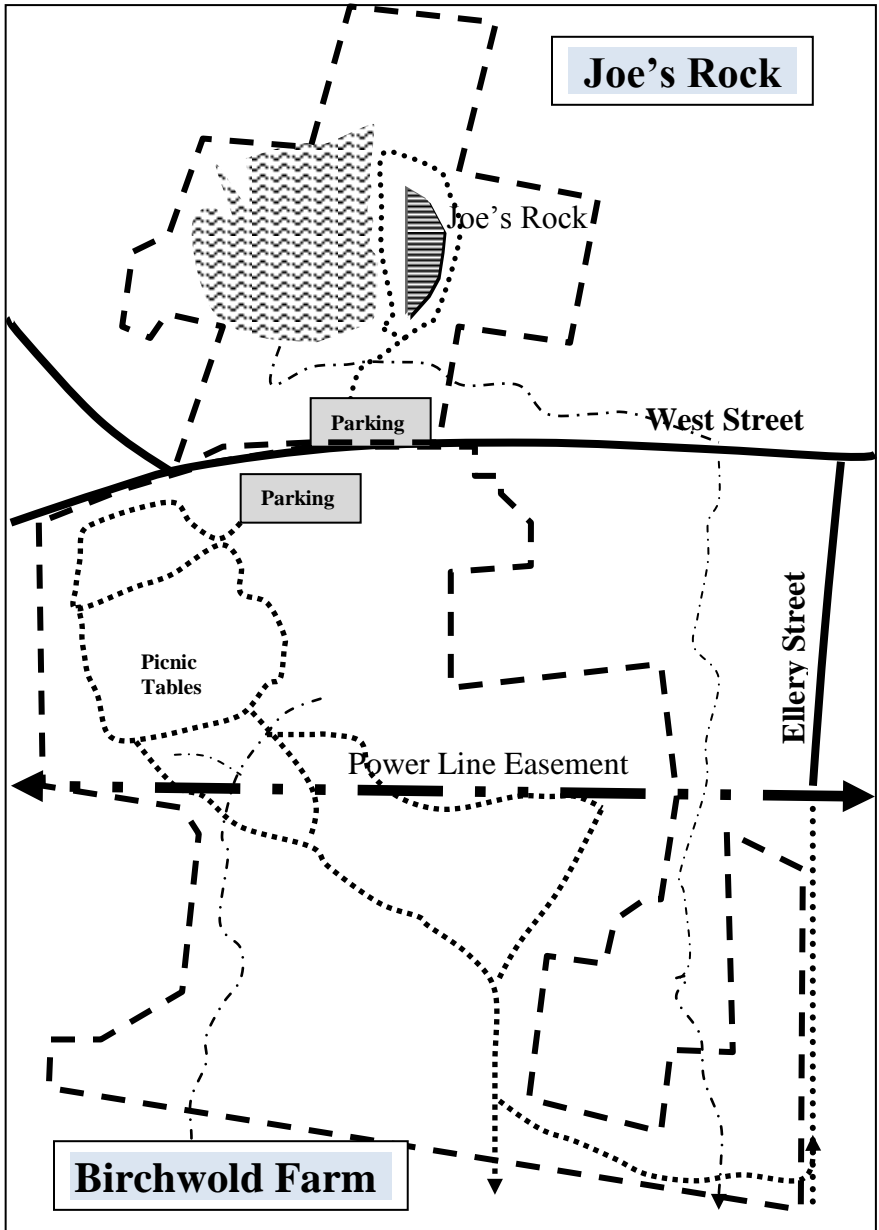
Features: Scenic views, climbing, picnic tables, and in winter, ice skating.

Cautions: Use caution in the area of the cliff, in addition to fall hazards, broken glass may be present. Report *any* inappropriate behavior to the Wrentham Police 508-384-2121.

This 60.25-acre property combines the tranquility of a 5-acre bog pond with striking 220-degree views to the northeast and the Rhode Island countryside to the southwest. These breathtaking views are visible from the dramatic cliffs that rise 150 feet from the pond's edge. The rock's 490-foot elevation is the highest in Wrentham.

A trail leads from the small parking lot to the bog pond. The pond, once a cranberry bog, is quite shallow and frequently dries up. Water overflows from the pond, southward to the Pawtucket Reservoir. In the warmer months, one can enjoy the area's abundant wildlife and wetlands flora. In the winter, the pond affords excellent ice skating. Passing along the side of the meadow, the trail rises through a 35-acre hillside to the top of the massive rock outcropping which gives the area its name—said to come from a Native American legend dating back to the days of King Philip Sachem's encounters with the English settlers in the 1670s. The rock is accessible via two trails, one of which winds gradually while the other is a shorter, steeper route. The parcel

was purchased for \$25,000 by the town in 1970 from Anna L.T.Massie and the Wentworth Massie estate. In 1992, Ms. Massie sold to the Town an additional 5-acre parcel that directly abuts the Joe's Rock parcel and West Street.



HOMER CROCKER POND

Parking: A few unpaved off-street parking spaces at the end of Myrtle Street before Route 1.

Features: Hiking (Warner Trail), scenic views, small boating and canoeing, fishing, and picnic tables.

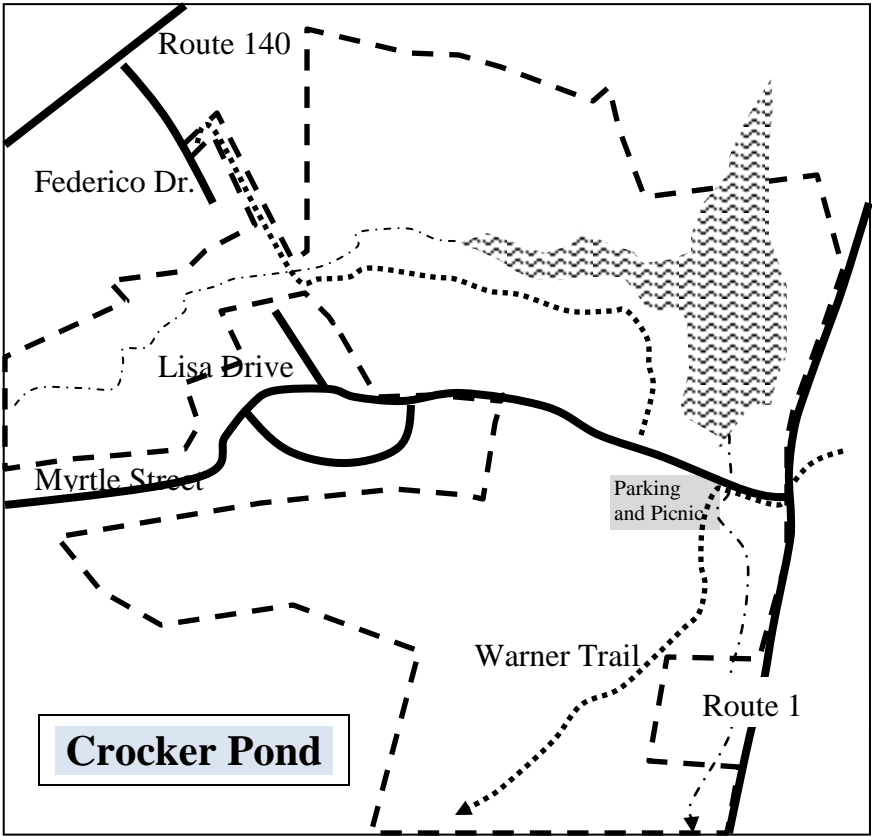
For many years the original 122.31 acres of this property were the summer home and campgrounds for the Crocker family of Brookline. The pond area, originally the site of historic grist and saw mills, had reverted to meadow when the Crockers first leased it in 1924. They restored the pond and subsequently ran a summer camp on the property during the 1920s and 1930s. The pond and walking trails provide opportunities for canoeing, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and enjoying nature. In 1988, a picnic and hiking area on the south side of Myrtle Street was developed in memory of the late Lionel Schensnol, a founding and long-time member of the Conversation Commission.

Crocker Pond serves the dual purpose of preserving a beautiful area for local recreation while protecting the headwaters of Lake Mirimichi, a major Attleboro water supply. Crocker Pond is also the upper watershed for Wrentham's well number 4. The pond, meadows, and original camp building, which was destroyed by a fire, were purchased jointly by the Town of Wrentham and the City of Attleboro in 1966 from Constance and Richard Crocker.

Additional parcels have been added to Crocker Pond over the years. Among these are 15.81 acres that were acquired from Frank E. and Virginia A. Dicks in 1975, which include a 20-foot right-of-way along the northeast side of Myrtle Street. In 1978, the town transferred to the Commission an 11.2-acre parcel west of Crocker Pond along Meadow Brook, which flows into the north end of the pond. The area is generally marshy, with a small pond near Myrtle Street. This was originally part of the estate of Mrs. Jesse Jenson.

The Warner Trail enters Wrentham after Crossing Route 1 and continues southward through the Crocker Pond area on land

donated in 1988, a gift of 32.91 acres from the Salvatore B. Simeone family and on 57.8 acres managed by the Department of Public Works for Wrentham's Drinking Water Well #4. Foot access to the Crocker Pond area is also possible from Federico Drive via a fenced-in and marked easement granted to the town by the developer of the property and graciously maintained by the neighbor.



WOLLOMONOPOAG

Parking: Off-street parking at the end of Elysium Street on a narrow, unpaved lot. Elysium Street is off Route 140 a few hundred feet before entering Franklin.

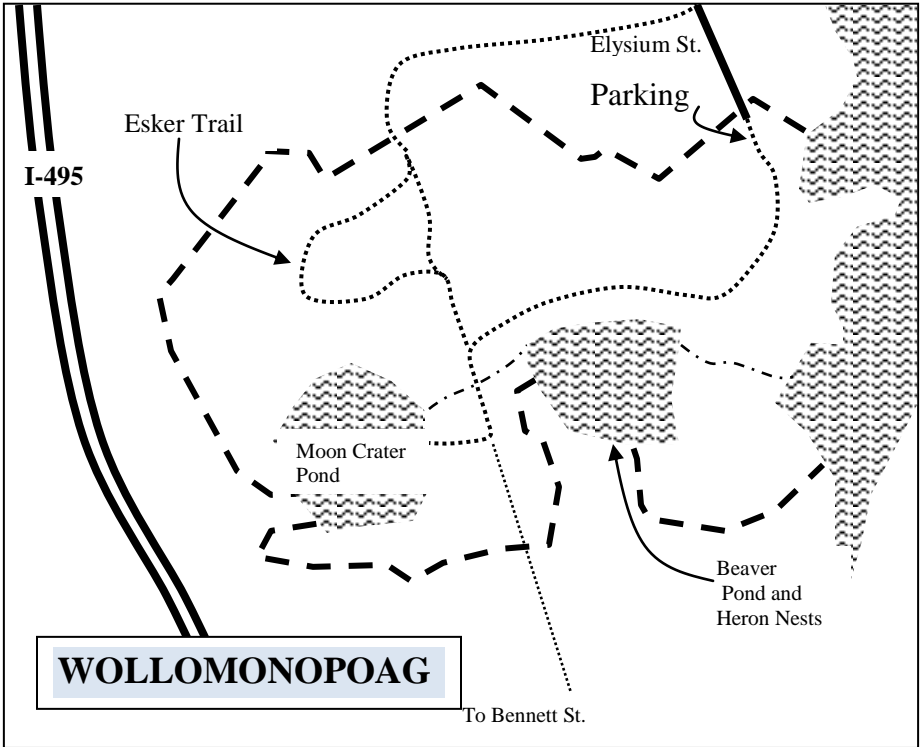
Features: Miles of hiking trails through wooded areas, wildlife viewing, and areas of interest for glacial geology.

Cautions: Report off-road vehicle use to the Wrentham Police 508-384-2121.

Wollomonopoag, which means “Place of Shells,” features miles of trails, large eskers, several beaver dams, extensive marshes, and a mature White Pine forest. Eskers are the remnants of river beds which ran beneath glaciers more than 13,000 years ago. As the glaciers melted, flood waters ran beneath the ice in tunnels, which contained enormous loads of gravel and boulders. Eskers today commonly appear as sinuous, steep ridges. They are comprised of gravel which is typically mined and taken away as fill. Therefore, eskers are becoming increasingly scarce in eastern Massachusetts. From a historical perspective, it is not hard to imagine that Native Americans found this area attractive, close to water and with the natural defensive positions that the eskers formed.

Wollomonopoag lies on the upper reaches of the Mill River and Charles River watershed. The area is important to water quality on a regional level. Locally, Wollomonopoag is the keystone in over 600 acres of open space in this portion of the watershed. Downstream, the towns of Wrentham, Franklin, Norfolk, Millis and Medway have well fields that depend on the water quality from this watershed. The mixed hardwood and pine forests of Wollomonopoag are home to scarlet tanager, deer, beaver, pine martin, coyote, and wild turkey. The Town acquired this property by eminent domain in 2001.

In two places the trails run off the property. The public may use these trails, but stay on the trail and be respectful of adjoining property.



SWEATT BEACH & BOAT LANDING

Parking: Both areas are accessed from Elysium Street that is off Franklin Street. The boat landing is the first left on Elysium (a gravel road) and Sweatt Beach is on the second left (Woolford Road).

Sweatt Beach and the Boat Landing are managed by the Wrentham Recreation Committee. Beach permits are available for a modest fee on a seasonal or daily basis and an area for swimming is staffed with lifeguards during summer hours. Permits for the boat landing are available at the Selectmen's office. These areas are contiguous with about 56-acres of town Water Department land.

Approximately 2500 feet of the western shoreline and dam of Lake Pearl are open for walking and shore fishing. Access may be from

either the boat landing or from the parking lot on Route 140 for the Eagle Brook Corridor. The dam has accommodations for anglers and boaters. Any licensed fisherman may fish on the lake which is stocked regularly with trout. Ice-fishing is especially popular with the local lunatics in winter. Downstream of the dam the west bank, which has one of the Town Water Wells, is Town land and may be traversed.

EAGLE BROOK CORRIDOR

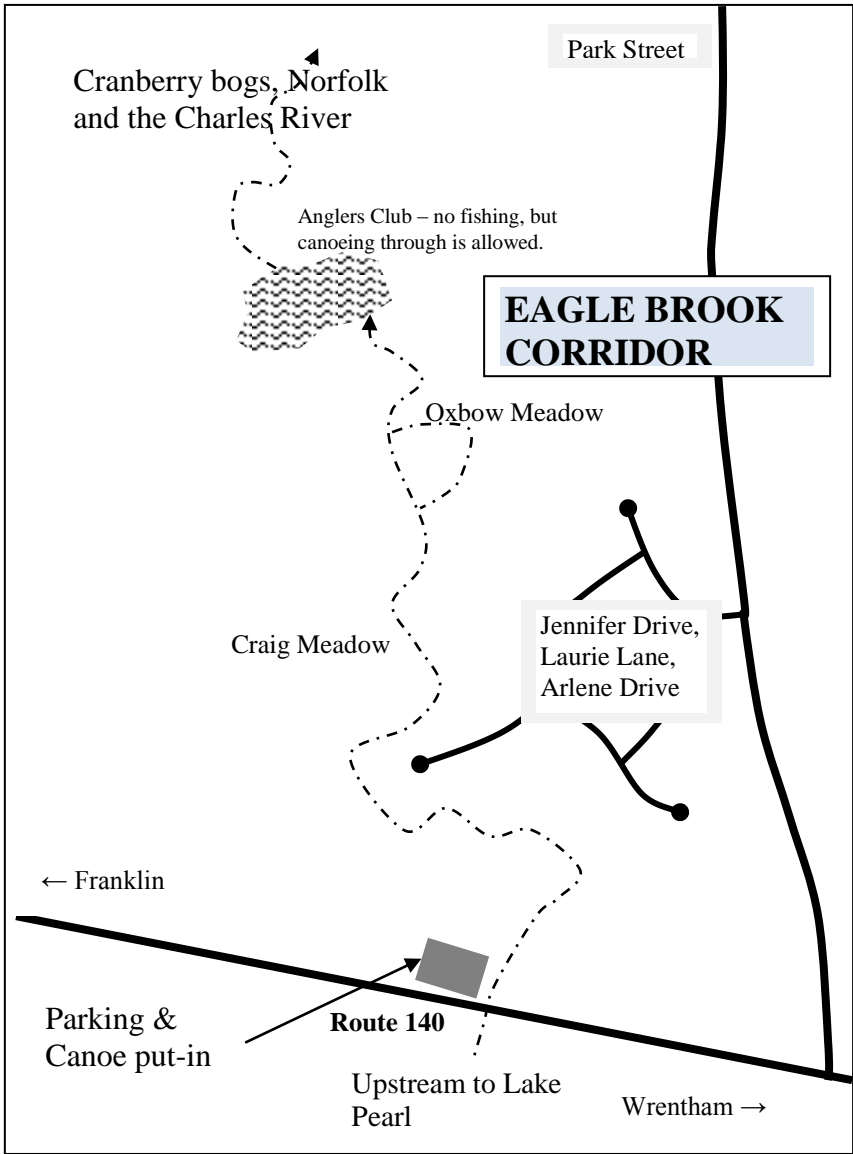
Parking: Off-street parking on Franklin Street adjacent to Eagle Brook, 42.0730° N, -71.3492°. The parking area is paved and can take several cars.

Features: Canoeing, kayaking and fishing.

Eagle Brook runs northward from Lake Pearl and ultimately to the Charles River. The Conservation Commission manages more than 100 acres scattered along the brook that consists mostly of wetlands and a few trails. However, the entire stream may be canoed from the parking lot northward to Lake Pearl and southward to Norfolk. Canoeists may pass through the Anglers' Club and the Cranberry Bog by virtue of the Chapter 91 law that allows boating traffic on navigable waterways. The key parcels in this corridor are the 15-acre Oxbow Meadow and the 10-acre Craig Meadow. The Oxbow Meadow parcel was purchased in 1964 from Joseph A. and Margaret L. Hunchard and Frederick C. and Lois M. Hyldberg for \$1,000. Craig Meadow, which is primarily wetland, was acquired shortly after Oxbow, in 1964, from Harry J. Webb for \$350.

Oxbow Meadow is named after the U-shaped backwater that has since been cutoff. It consists primarily of wetlands and adjoins marsh and mill pond property belonging to the Wrentham Anglers' Club. Foot access to this area is limited, but it can be approached through a path off the parking area, as well as from a steep deeded entry off Laurie Lane.

There are several trails that eventually lead to Franklin and Norfolk near the Park Street cranberry bogs. A detailed trail map is being developed for this area.



TROUT POND and KNUCKUP HILL

Parking: Off-street parking is available at the Wrentham Senior Center and Building Inspectors Office off Taunton Street.

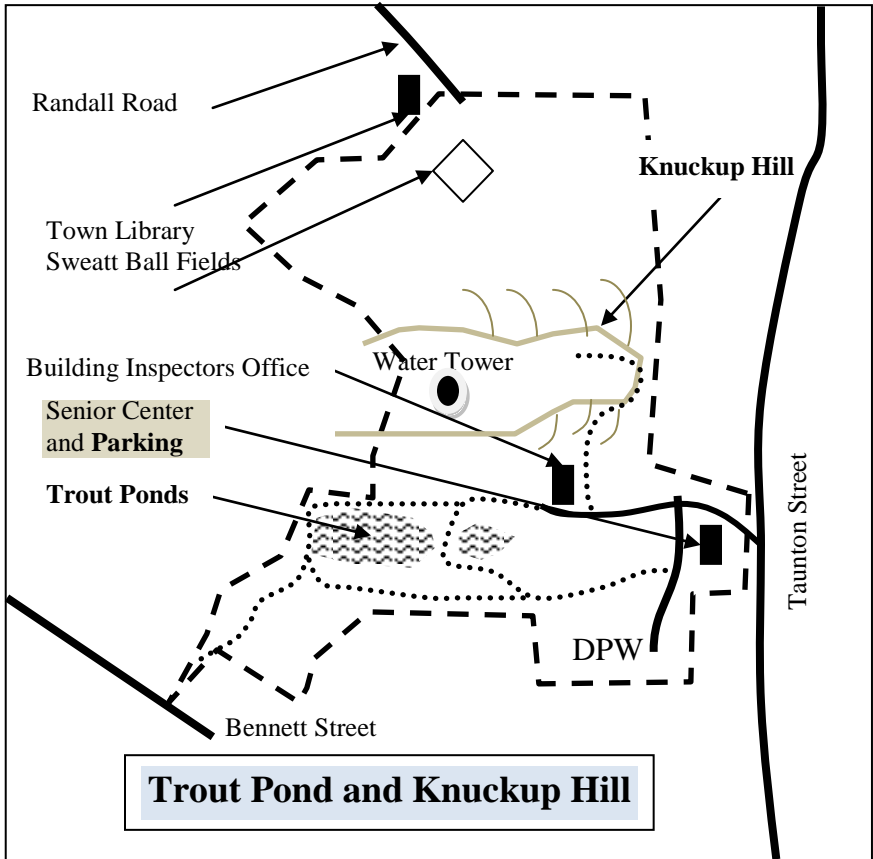
Features: Scenic views, fishing, hiking with excellent views.

Trout Pond and Knuckup Hill are located off Taunton Street and offer trails that run through forests and over varied terrain on approximately 100 acres within a mile of the Town Center. This area consists of a chain of public uses that connect several features of the Town. From north to south: Town Hall, the Town Library, Sweatt Ball Fields, up Knuckup Hill and over to the Trout Ponds.

The Trout Pond area, which is managed by the Town Water Department, has large areas of forest with paths leading from its Taunton Street entrance to Beach Street. Two ponds lie at the center of the Trout Pond area and have long been used for fishing and skating. The Trout Pond area began with a 42.5-acre gift to the town in 1908, when the state authorized the taking of the ponds and surrounding land for the town's first water supply. The donors were Ellen F. Mason, Mary A. and Maria F. Smith, Fred E. Gilmore, George W. Porter, and Daniel Brown. This was the site of the original Town well #1 which was exhausted in the 1960s. Trout Pond's natural beauty still shines through, although the area is currently in need of rehabilitation.

Knuckup Hill lies on the north side of the Trout Pond area and has trails running to the top of the Hill. The top of the hill offers a sweeping vista to the northwest and is quite beautiful in Autumn. The hill is the site of Sweatt Ski Hill, abandoned since the early 1980's. At one time the hill offered local skiing for 50¢ per day after school. A short walk down hill to the ballfields demonstrates the challenge this small hill offered skiers. West of Knuckup Hill and north of Trout Pond are 19 acres of open space from the Badus Brook subdivision. This area has several trails that wind over interesting terrain, but need to be marked and mapped. Knuckup Hill is also the site of one of the Town's water towers and is crossed by the Warner Trail. The property is contiguous on its south side with the Trout Pond area off Taunton Street. The parcel

was put together from a number of small pieces purchased with town Conservation Funds in 1964 for recreational use.



WRENTHAM CENTER

Parking: Off-street parking is available across from the Congregational Church, but on-street parking is available as well.

Features: Bandstand, common area, park and tennis courts.

TOWN COMMON

Wrentham's two-acre Town Common has long provided a tranquil focal point for the town center, having been among the first properties set aside for common use in 1685. With its benches,

bandstand, gazebo, and tall shade trees, it provides a daily oasis as well as a convenient and scenic location for many civic activities throughout the year.

SWEATT MEMORIAL PARK AND TENNIS COURTS

This three-quarter acre park with two tennis courts is located below street level at the junction of Franklin and South Streets. The tennis courts are available to all Wrentham residents without a permit, and are lighted for evening use. The courts were built by the Works Project Administration in 1932-1933, utilizing Sweatt Fund money

ATHLETIC FIELDS SWEATT FIELD COMPLEX

This area is immediately adjacent to the elementary school and the Town Library. It consists of several baseball fields, picnic tables, a concession stand, and batting cages located at the bottom of Knuckup Hill. There is off-street parking at the end of Randall Road.

WILLIAM A. RICE ATHLETIC COMPLEX

Wrentham purchased this 88-acre parcel for active recreational use in 2001. There are several multipurpose athletic fields as well as fields dedicated to specific sports. This area is on Emerald Street, which is off Shears Street west of the Town Center. There is ample public parking.

STATE FORESTS

Wrentham State Forest, F. Gilbert Hills and Franklin State Forests cover more than 1,200 acres in Wrentham. The 60 acres of Franklin State Forest in Wrentham are inaccessible, used primarily for flood control on the Charles River. But Wrentham State Forest and F.Gilbert Hills offer many outdoor activities.

Detailed information about these properties is available from Forest Fire Headquarters in Foxborough; informative and basic trail maps are available there. To reach the headquarters, take Route 140 toward Foxborough. Go right on Thurston Street; cross Route 1, where Thurston Street eventually becomes West Street in Foxborough. Follow West onto Mill Street and continue for one mile to the headquarters building on left. Foxboro State Forest Headquarters may also be reached at (508) 543-5850.

Trail maps are also available on-line:

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/region-south/f-gilbert-hills-state-forest.html>

F. GILBERT HILLS STATE FOREST

Access: There is no off-street parking in Wrentham. Parking is available in Foxborough off Thurston Street and other locations.

Features: Scenic views, climbing, picnic tables, ice skating in winter, limited ATV use, hunting in season (check with State Forest). More than 23 miles of multi-use trails.

One hundred and fifty acres of this 810-acre State Forest lie within Wrentham's boundaries, making it readily accessible to local residents. The Warner Trail traverses F. Gilbert Hills on its 34-mile path from Canton to Cumberland, RI. Much of the land is steep and rocky. Already permitted within forest boundaries are hiking, horseback riding, orienteering, snowmobiling (on specially marked trails), cross-country skiing, camping and picnic areas, bicycle trails, off-road vehicle use (check for availability). F. Gilbert Hills State Forest was purchased by the Commonwealth in the 1930s for \$5 an acre.

WRENTHAM STATE FOREST

Parking: Off-street parking adjacent to Taunton Street near the Plainville Town line at 42.0391° N, -71.3217°W.

Features: Hiking, horseback riding, and mountain biking. The State does allow off-road and ATV vehicles, check with the State Forest Headquarters for details.

Wrentham State Forest, managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, comprises roughly 1,064 acres in the southeast corner of Wrentham, west of Route 1 and largely north of I-495. It is characterized by its high, rocky cliffs, including Pinnacle Rock (430 ft.) and the Balanced Rock area (440 ft.). There are also several small waterfalls, wetlands and numerous sidepaths. The Warner Trail passes through the Forest. The area is unique in that it lies in the middle of a highly-developed residential area.

Access to the forest is available from any number of points, along Madison, Taunton, Beach, and Berry Streets. The property was purchased in the 1930s for five dollars an acre by the State Department of Natural Resources. At the time, the mostly abandoned farmland and forest had been extensively cut for firewood.



Path at Trout Pond.
Happy Trails!

Notes:

**WRENTHAM EMERGENCY 508-384-2121.
CONSERVATION COMMISSION 508-384-5417.**

**Third Edition of the Wrentham Guide to
Open Spaces and Conservation Land – 2013**

**Funded by the Sweatt Fund and Produced by the
Wrentham Conservation Commission.**
