



2019
VOLUNTEERS
ORGANIZING MEETING



Welcome!

Today's Agenda:

- Meet & Greet
- Presentation
- Form up action teams
 - By Property
 - By Activity

This Meeting's GOALS:

Ready to bump up the trail system for 2019!

Before:



After:



Grafton Open Space At a Glance

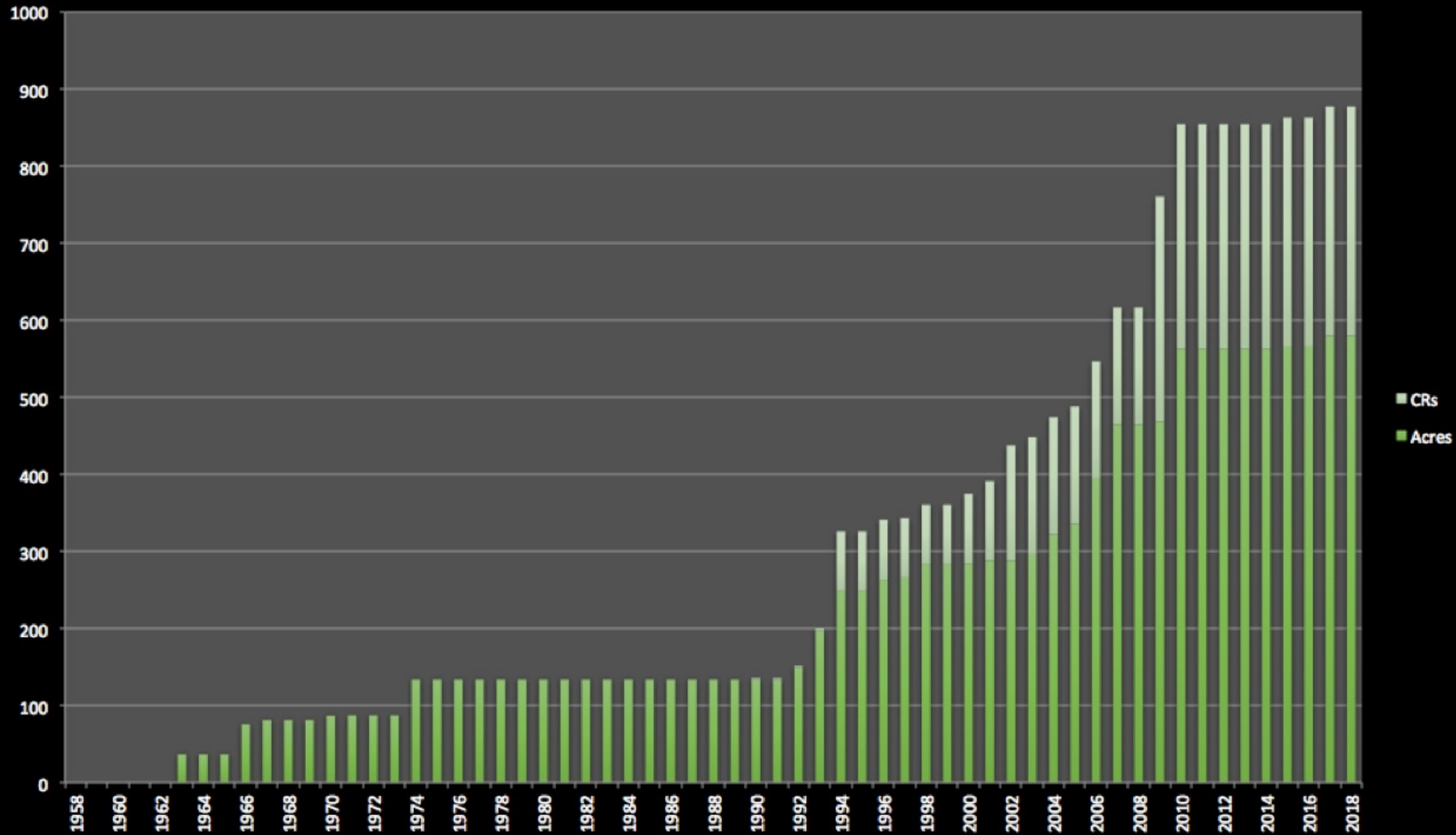
- ~600 acres owned by Grafton Land Trust
- ~300 acres in Conservation Restriction (CR) easements held by GLT
 - Some public, some private
- > 1000 acres owned by Town of Grafton

... other properties are being sold & developed all the time

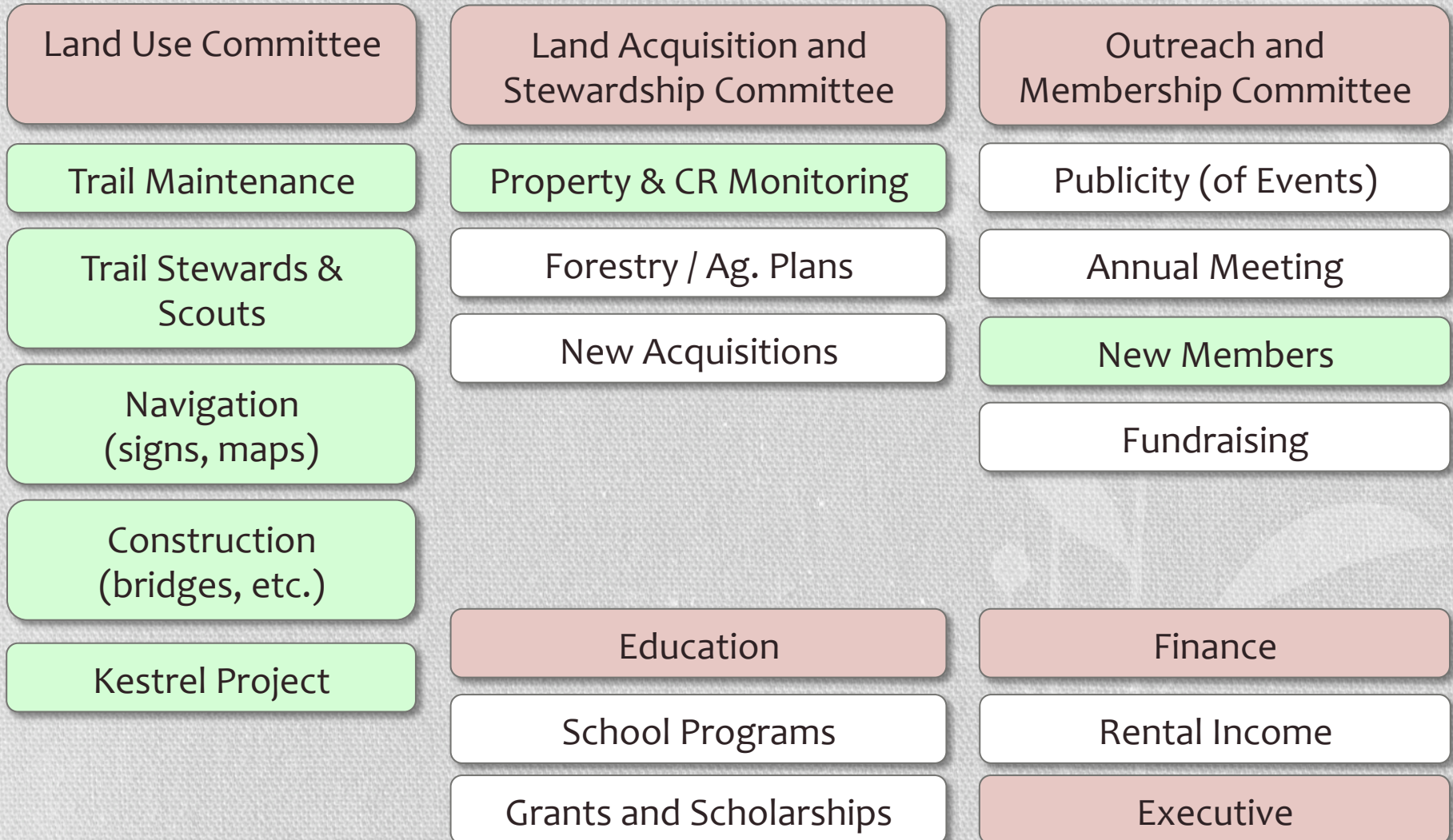
In addition to acquiring new open space, GLT needs to **take care of the properties we own**

Growth of Open Space Over Time

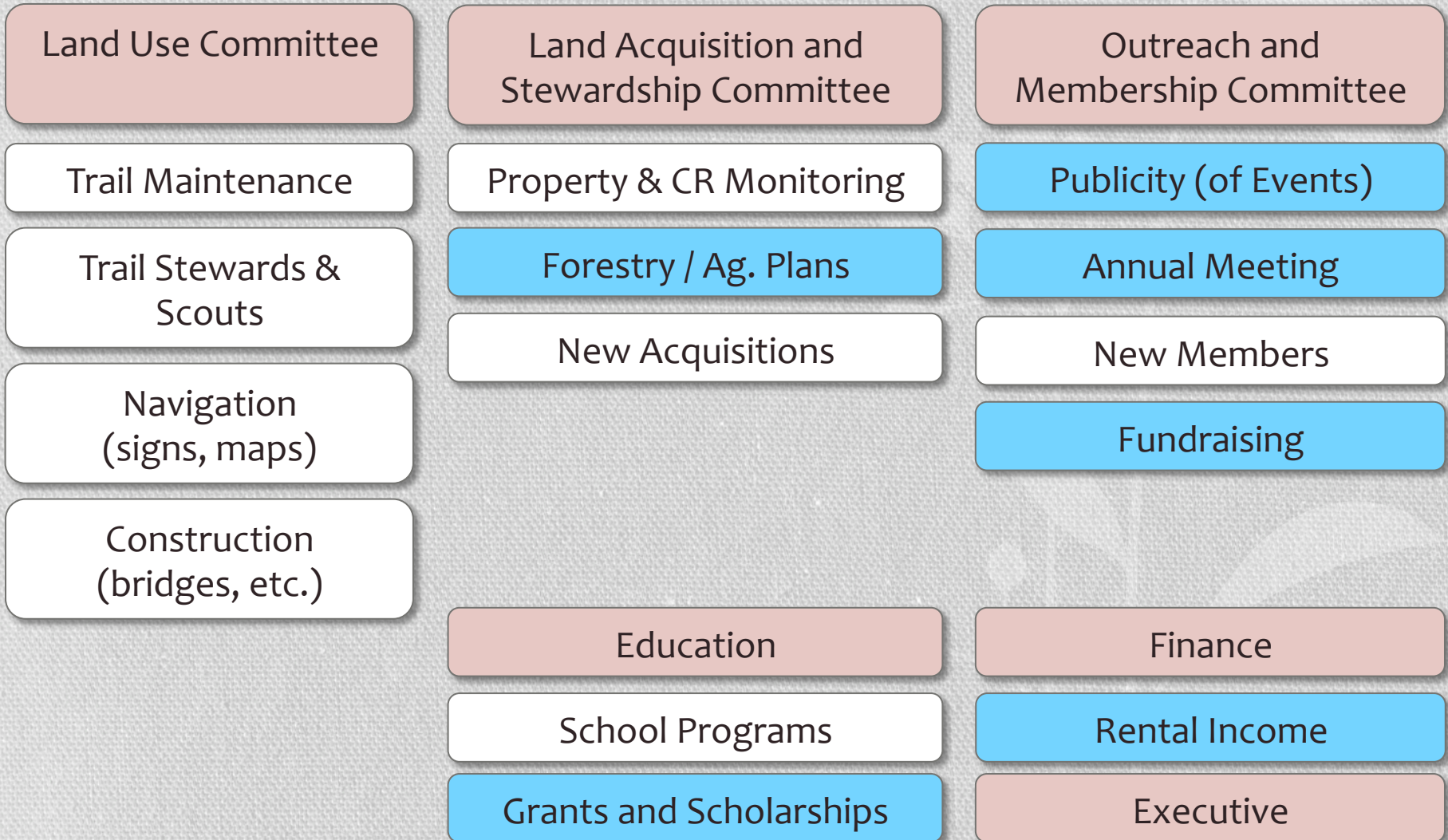
Grafton Land Trust Protected Acres



GLT Relies on Volunteers – Today in GREEN



Future – Additional Roles Available



Topics

- Trail Maintenance
- Story Book Trail
- Signs and Navigation
- Trail Construction and Bridges
- Conservation Easement Monitoring
- Kestrel Project



Trail Crews in 2018! (more! ... not pictured)

North St. Gang:



Roots In Nature:



Webber Crew:



Gebeleins:



BV NEMBA Chapter:



Trail Crews: Field Roles

In conjunction with GLT board members:

- **Saw crews**
 - Be safe
- **Scouts**
 - General conditions, look for missing signs
- **Trail Stewards**
 - Organizing & communicating with other volunteers on same property:
 - Scouting for maintenance issues – e.g., request chainsaw crews
 - Anyone can reports findings using Trail Forks, trail steward gets notice

New for 2019:

- Bridge construction & mud control
- Signs & Navigation
- Property Monitoring
 - Monitor property boundaries for encroachment using phone app or GPS

Trail Crews: Managing GLT-Owned Properties

- Crews authorized for GLT-owned properties only
- Clearing trails
- Putting up and taking down MUD SEASON signs
- Identifying problems: TrailForks free app

Do not alter these properties without permission:

- Town of Grafton (Conservation Commission & BoS properties)
- Martha Deering (MA State Dept. of Fish & Wildlife)
- Private Property (e.g., Williams Preserve CR is private property)

If you want to work town/private property, GLT can help arrange contact

Project & Event Volunteers



Story Book Trail Project



Kestrel Project



Grafton Celebrates the Holidays



Annual Meeting





Trail Navigation: a Four Layer System

1) Parcel Signs:
(Sm & Lg)

2) Trail Heads, Kiosks,
online linkage:

3) Blaze system:



4) Temporary:



Signs

- Several projects available
 - Gold Award
 - Eagle Scout



2018 Survey– Measured Usage “The Old Way”

Goal: Identify the following






















- Top trails and parking spots
- Priorities for improvements
- Under-utilized “great trails”

Sampling of Uses for Results:

- Comments help reveal the “why” behind popularity
- Promote UNDER-UTILIZED parcels
 - Take some load off of over-utilized properties
- Prioritize improvements by type, site (signs, bridges)

NOTE: THE TRAILFORKS APP SHOULD MAKE THIS EASIER

* Please choose your favorite 3 hiking spots in Grafton.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
Williams Preserve (137 Brigham Hill Rd)			36	48.6%
Gummere Wood & Marsters Preserve (5 Wheeler Rd)			24	32.4%
Hassanamesit Woods (incl Oakmont Farms, Hohman, Prescott, Salisbury, Platt, etc)			30	40.5%
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Lambert Property (behind Willard St to west)			1	1.3%
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Ekblaw Landing			11	14.8%
Chestnut St Town Forest			2	2.7%
Lion's Club Black Oak trail (oldest tree in Grafton)			16	21.6%
Other (View all)			3	4.0%
			Totals	74
				100%

Trail Maintenance was the Top Concern

3

Please sort these improvements from 1 = MOST important to 6 = LEAST important.

1 = Most									
Answer	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Responses	Ranking Score*	
Trail improvements (e.g., bridges or drainage)							70	2.6	
Trail maintenance (remove trees)							70	2.5	
More Parking							70	4.4	
More markers & signs							70	3.0	
Smart phone Hiking Apps with GPS Maps, Reviews, and Ratings							70	4.5	
Updated Printable Maps							70	4.0	

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

[View comments \(10\)](#)

(Note: SHORTEST bar is MOST Important)

Trends:

- Trail maintenance & bridges are top wishes
- Parking is OK? ... BUT the top spots are ones w/parking! Circular reasoning?
- Hiking app at bottom ... BUT getting lost a complaint at prior feedback sessions

New Way for 2019: EASY Navigation, Discovery, Maintenance

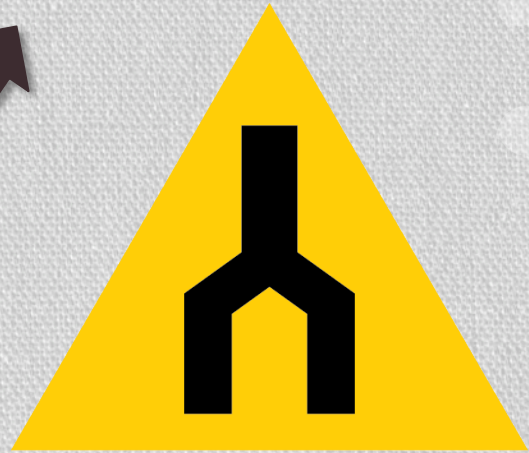
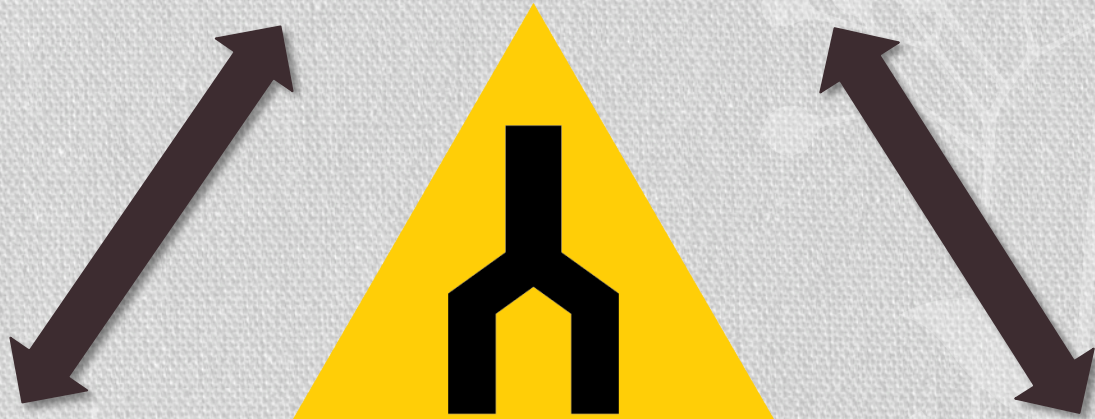
- Help people discover trails
 - Easy to use for newcomers
 - Build confidence to “not get lost”
 - Problem & condition reporting
 - Crew notification / summaries
 - Popularity monitoring “heat map”
-
- GLT is using TrailForks free app in 2019
 - Project Sponsor: Willie Jakobsz



Multi-use Trail Management System
for
Hikers, Runners, Riders, Equestrians
Trail builders
Trails associations
Land managers

What is Trailforks?

Crowd Sourced
Data Base



TRAILFORKS

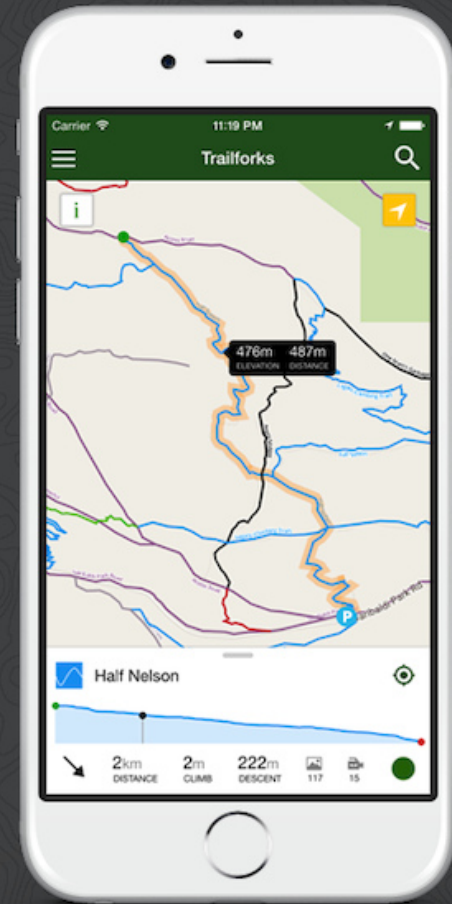


Trailforks.com
Web Site



For The App User

- Explore trail networks, trails, descriptions, difficulty, TTF's, direction, flow, photographs, videos
- Discover new trail networks and/or trails
- Off-line trail navigation with App
- Record walks, runs, rides & sync with STRAVA
- Submit “live” trail status reports, problems & trail worklogs



Off-line Navigation On The Trail

Addresses GLT and Member Needs

- Own and control your maps
- Great service to members
- Stats & trail usage data
- Trail reports
- Unauthorized trails
- Widgets
- Trail Karma (\$\$\$)
- Trail funding & sponsorship programs, membership links
- Multi-use trails (hike, run, horse, ski, snowshoe, etc.)
- Summer & winter trails

Powerful Management Tools

Why Trailforks?

- *User-friendly platform and App with off-line “follow me” trail navigation*
- *No Ads*
- *Crowd sourced BUT content controlled by local Associations/Clubs*
- *Multi-use trail database and management system & tools*
- *Powerful trail management tools for Associations/Clubs*

Totally Free – No Ads

TrailForks Online Reporting - How it Should Work

- Hiker reports tree, trash, mud
- Trail stewards see report
- Problem cleared up



Match up Trails & People

Case Study:

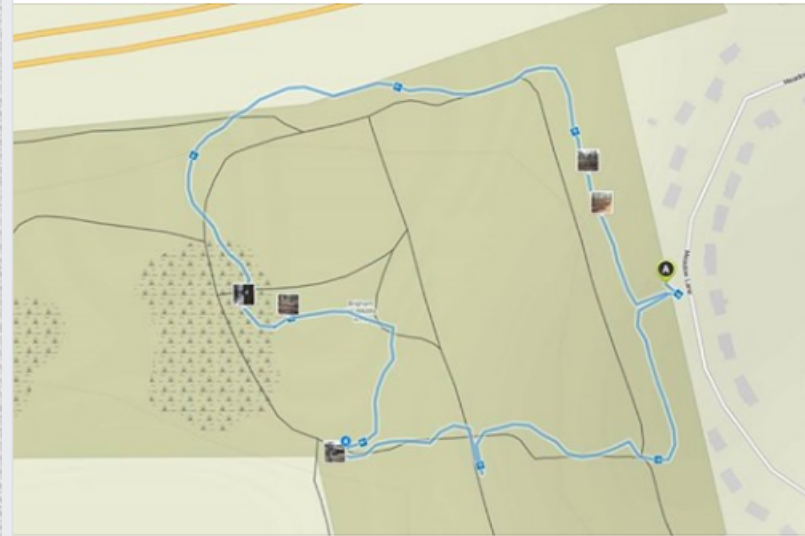
- Brigham Hill Wildlife Area is Boring?
 - Mountain bikers say yes
 - 5 year old watching trucks on the Pike – no
- TrailForks descriptions and ratings should help



Grafton Land Trust

Published by Robert Aberg [?] · December 31, 2018 · 🌐

EASY WALK: if you have a 3-7 year old and you have already visited the story book trail and the Gummere Wood trail, this walk is for you! Go to the parking area on Meadow Lane (off of Wheeler Rd) that leads to the Land Trust's Brigham Hill Wildlife Area. This property is flat and has wide trails on 46 acres. It also abuts the Pike, with a big chain link fence along the boundary, so you can watch the trucks and cars zoom by. A great combo for busy little bodies: running around in the forest and watching trucks and cars - check it out! (NOTE: many of our trails are now mapped in free Hiking Apps like Komoot, for both iPhone and Android)



Grafton Land Trust

Environmental Conservation Organization

Send Message

1,666
People Reached

587
Engagements

Boost Post

Construction & Bridges – Leader: Carolyn Weeks

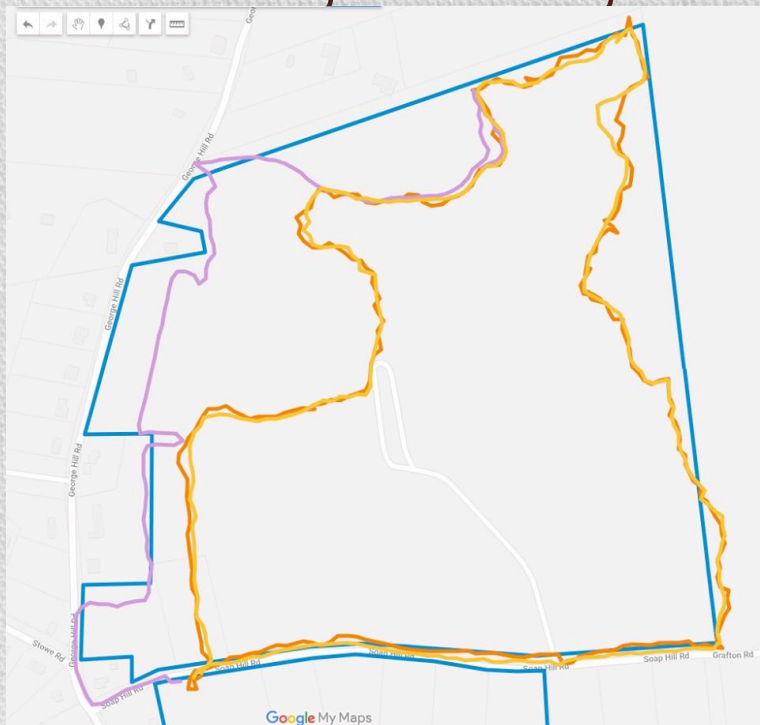
- Bridges prevent mud
- Budgeted for 2019
- Scout projects



Conservation Easement Monitoring

- Annual inspection of 8 properties having conservation restrictions
- Part of GLT's non-profit status “public benefit”
- Walk boundaries and trails, observe & report to land owner

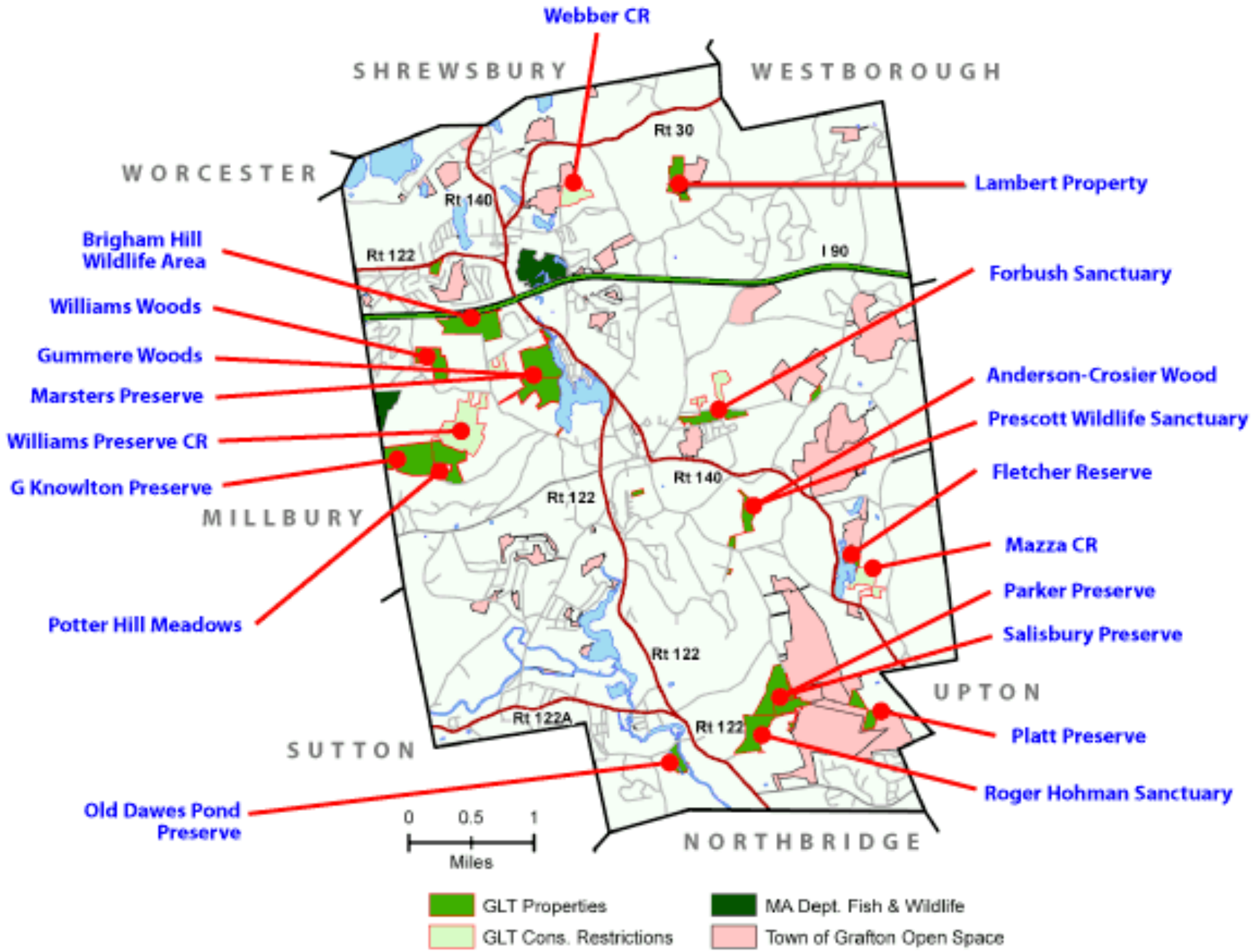
Here are a few scenes from the 2018 visit to Pell Farms on Soap Hill Rd:



Kestrel Project

- 12 nest boxes
- 28 babies banded
- Monitors: Sign up
- Project Leader: Troy Gipps to contact





Summary for Today: Clean-Up is #1 Priority

- Sign Up
- Form Up
- Get out on the trails
- Learn TrailForks: TAKE PICTURES & MARK LOCATIONS
- Communicate with each other & GLT
 - TrailForks
 - Facebook
 - GLT email: volunteer@grafftonland.org
 - Requests for additional meetings

---= Begin Q & A =---



EXTRA MATERIALS

GLT-Owned Equipment

- 1 - Backpack Blower - Stihl BR550Z
- 1 - 2.5gal Fuel Container
- 5 - McLeod Fire Rake (bench cuts)
- 1 - Pulaski Axe (for digging out roots)
- 2 - 4ft Rock Bars (for moving rocks)
- 1 - Clinometer - SUUNTO PM5/360PC
- 1 - SmartTool 24" Electronic Level

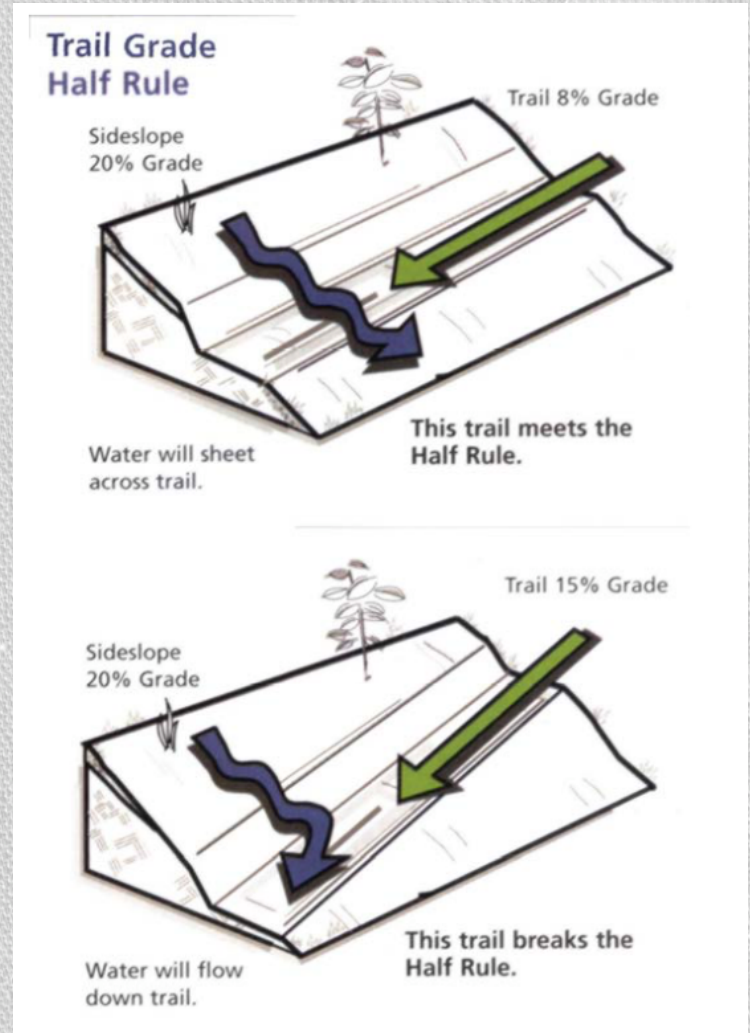


- 1 - DR Walk-Behind Field and Brush Mower - 26" wide, 17.0 HP, Electric start (mows thick brush and trees up to 2-1/2" down to 4" above the ground)

Trail Construction Standards

- We use the following documents
- Town of Grafton Trail Standards
- New York State Trail Signage Standards

... please ask info@graftonland.org if you want to read reference materials on these or other topics



Many Forms of “Taking Care of a Property”

- Trail maintenance
 - Downed tree removal
 - Mud season signs
 - Leaf blowing/raking (dries trails faster)
- Trail navigation improvements (signs, maps)
- Trail construction (bridges, mud control, new trails)
 - Often requires wetlands permits from town Conservation Commission

Land Stewardship too, for example:

- Property monitoring (encroachments, invasives, dumping, etc.)
- Land Use policies: Forestry and Agriculture Plans, etc.
- Legal protections for any eventuality, such as CRs on owned property

+300 acres of Conservation Restrictions

GLT holds “Conservation Restriction” easements on 8 properties to protect open space, but DOES NOT OWN the CR properties:

- Williams CR (Williams’)
 - Williams Woods CR (Williams’)
 - Webber CR (ToG)
 - Pell CR (ToG) – the Christmas Tree Farm
 - Mazza CR (ToG)
 - D Williams CR (D. Williams)
 - English CR (English)
 - Pond CR (The Ponds)
-
- GLT monitors these annually per the easement rules
 - In exchange for public open space, owner gets a tax abatement
 - Owner maintains property – we can offer help, but first need to ask

Conservation Easement Monitoring

Required annually for CR properties

- Boundary walk to detect encroachments
- Checklist of Prohibited & Reserved activities
- Map
- Photos

Grafton Land Trust: CR Monitoring Report

Property name:	Webber Conservation Restriction
Deed Book/Page (& parcel/lot):	28497 / 258
Street address:	71 Rear East Street, Grafton, MA
Date (month/year) CR acquired:	December 2002
Current owner:	Town of Grafton
Address:	30 Providence Road, Grafton, MA 01519
Telephone:	(508) 839-5335
Email:	https://www.grafton-ma.gov/user/14806/contact
Preferred person(s) and method to contact for monitoring:	Conservation Agent, Town of Grafton
Is there any knowledge of the property being transferred, leased or sold since the last monitoring visit?:	No

Date of monitoring visit (day month year): 12/2/2017

Time spent on property and/or with landowner: 1.5 hours

Time spent preparing for visit: 1 hour

Time spent preparing this monitoring report: 2 hours

Was the landowner or their representative contacted before the visit? yes no

If yes, who was contacted and by whom? N/A

If yes, what method of contact (check all that apply): USPS mail phone/voicemail
 email other (specify)

Did the landowner/rep: meet the monitor accompany monitor neither

Names of people present at Monitoring Visit (include affiliations):

Rob Aberg (GLT), Karen Eisenhauer (GLT)

1. Current land use: list and describe any changes in land use since last inspection.

Passive recreation on a system of forest and meadow trails, which connect to additional trails on multiple abutting properties. To the west, north, and south the abutting properties are town-owned for an elementary school, a cemetery, and a forested parcel also being used for passive recreation. Homes abut the parcel on the south boundary, and a large, forested commercially owned property abuts to the east.

2) Prohibited Acts and Uses

If you answer yes to any of these questions, attach additional details, maps, photographs, and illustrations if helpful.

Did you observe any of the following prohibited acts and uses since the last monitoring visit? Answer (Mark with "X")

ph	Description	map	direction
jpg	Chairs near southern boundary	Red dropper 1	South
jpg	Boundary marker at trail by housing	Red dropper 4	North
jpg	Boundary marker (drill hole) on eastern boundary	Green dropper 8	East
jpg	Campsite with debris and fire pit (tarpaulin and sleeping bag remnants)	Black dropper 9	West
jpg	Small amount of trash	Red dropper 10	North
jpg	Western boundary of property at trail	Red dropper 13	East

boundary



southern boundary



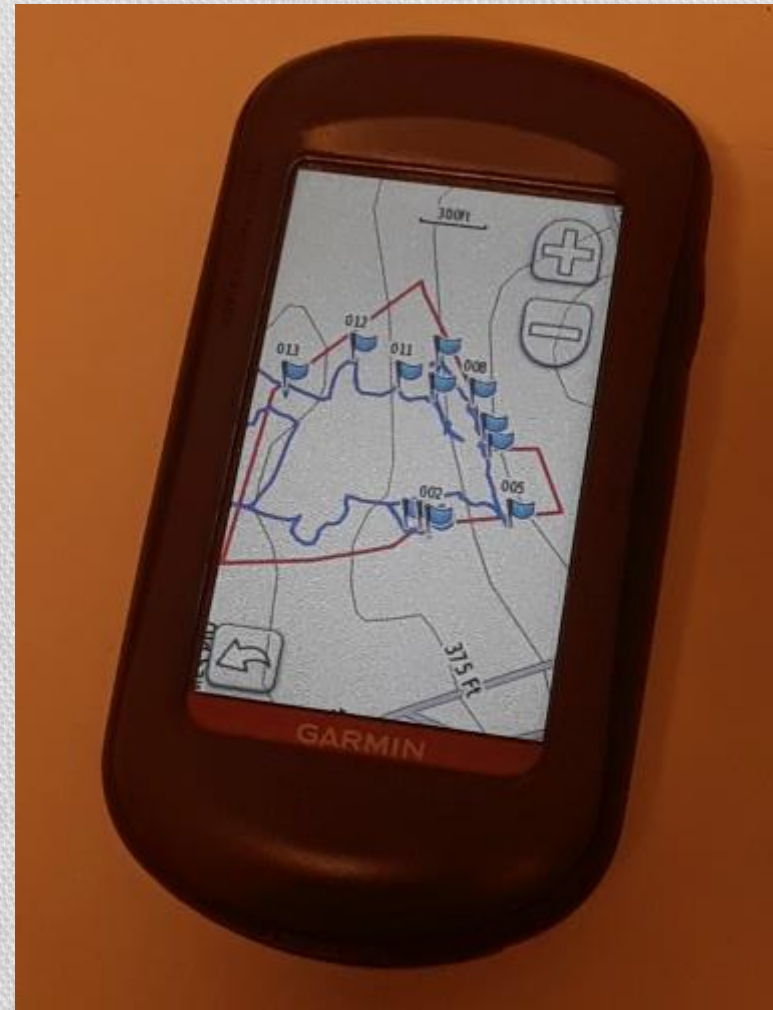
GPS for Monitoring

- Pre-work: download parcel boundary to GPS
- Follow the boundary
- Record your track
- Use waypoints to mark “interesting” spots
- Take pictures with GPS labeling turned on

- Obtain Property Boundary files from GLT

Also Possible:

- Kommot
 - All Trails
- ... free apps record track





Improvements to signage,
use standards for blazes

TRAIL MARKING PLANS

Trail Signage: A Four Layer System

1. Standard Parcel Signs

- For property boundaries, not really for trails









2. Major Signage at trailheads, forks

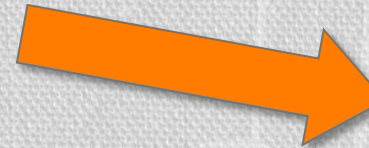
- Includes Property Names, trail names, possibly URLs
- QR code to bring up online trail maps – try it!
- Sample Android App: QR Code Reader



3. Blazes

- Along trails to increase confidence
- Avoid damaging trees w/nails, screws

CONTINUE STRAIGHT 	START OF TRAIL 	RIGHT TURN 
SPUR LEADING TO A DIFFERENT TRAIL 	END OF TRAIL 	LEFT TURN 



4. Temporary signage, e.g., Mud Season



2018 Survey Results – “The Old Way”

Goal: Identify the following






















- Top trails and parking spots
- Priorities for improvements
- Under-utilized “great trails”

Sampling of Uses for Results:

- Comments help reveal the “why” behind popularity
- Promote UNDER-UTILIZED parcels
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Chestnut St Town Forest			2	2.7%
Lion's Club Black Oak trail (oldest tree in Grafton)			16	21.6%
Other (View all)			3	4.0%
			Totals	74
				100%

What are your top 3 places to PARK when you drive a car over to a hiking spot?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Responses	Response Ratio
NONE - I walk from my house			30	42.2%
46 Adams Rd / old cinder block building for Hennessy			3	4.2%
54 Brigham Hill Rd for Gebelin Sanctuary			1	1.4%
137 Brigham Hill Rd for Williams Preserve CR			22	30.9%
180 Brigham Hill Rd for Williams Woods			8	11.2%
5 Wheeler Rd (at Route 14) for Gummere/Marsters			15	21.1%
37 Wheeler Rd (Community Barn) for Brigham Hill Wildlife Area or Gummere/Marsters			8	11.2%
111 Worcester St (Ekblaw Landing) for Ekblaw Landing or Gummere/Marsters			12	16.9%
40 Meadow Lane for Brigham Hill Wildlife Area			0	0.0%
64 Potter Hill Rd for Potter Hill Meadows / G Knowlton / Rita Martin Preserves			5	7.0%
90 Potter Hill Rd for Potter Hill Meadows / G Knowlton / Rita Martin Preserves			6	8.4%
16 Salisbury Street for Hassanamesit Woods / Oakmont Farms et al			16	22.5%
9 Chipper Drive for Hassanamesit Woods / Oakmont Farms et al			3	4.2%
99 Merriam Rd for Merriam District Conservation Area			2	2.8%
38 North St for Forbush Sanctuary			0	0.0%
67 Old Upton Rd for Anderson-Crosier Wood / Prescott Preserve			2	2.8%
9 Nantucket Place for Silver Lake / Fletcher Island / Mazza Farms CR			11	15.4%
20 Soap Hill Rd for Pell Farm Conservation Area			3	4.2%
12 George Hill Rd for Great Meadow Conservation Area			3	4.2%
146 Waterville St (N. Grafton Elem. School) for Webber CR trails			6	8.4%
Other (View all)			5	7.0%
Totals			71	100%

Trail Maintenance is the Top Concern

3

Please sort these improvements from 1 = MOST important to 6 = LEAST important.

1 = Most	1	2	3	4	5	6	Number of Responses	Ranking Score*
Trail improvements (e.g., bridges or drainage)							70	2.6
Trail maintenance (remove trees)							70	2.5
More Parking							70	4.4
More markers & signs							70	3.0
Smart phone Hiking Apps with GPS Maps, Reviews, and Ratings							70	4.5
Updated Printable Maps							70	4.0

*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

[View comments \(10\)](#)

(Note: SHORTEST bar is MOST Important)

Trends:

- Trail maintenance & bridges are top wishes
- Parking is OK? ... BUT the top spots are ones w/parking! Circular reasoning?
- Hiking app at bottom ... BUT getting lost a complaint at prior feedback sessions

Please choose your next adventure - a place you want to try, but have never visited

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Chestnut St Town Forest			0	0.0%
Lion's Club Black Oak trail (oldest tree in Grafton)			8	10.6%
Other (View all)			1	1.3%
No Responses			6	8.0%
Totals			75	100%

Text answer(s) for:

5

What is your favorite hiking trail system outside of Grafton and why?**49 Responses**

Answer
Great Meadow, Nice walk nice open areas.
Raleigh, NC. Trails were in excellently maintained condition (similar to williams). Well marked and the app was great.
Metacomet-Monadnock trail system
Blackstone River Walk, Northbridge, as it is easily accessible and has good parking
Probably the trails along the river from Lookout Rock down to the visitor center on Hartford Ave. Mostly just for the river!
Fitchburg has a Rail Trail that has some lovely views and is handicap accessible.
Wachusett!
Skinner State Park in Hadley. Paved road or off-road trails. CLEARLY marked. Well-maintained. Great views from the Summit House.
Purgatory chasm, because of the variety of rock trails
Williams for hunting
Off of Sean Mikeal Way because it's close and I don't have to drive.
Purgatory in Sutton.
Mt. Wachusett. Trails are well defined and there is sufficient acreage to get off the trail network and enjoy the old growth forest, scenery and wildlife.
Upton State Forest. Because I can run from my house, connect through Pell Farms to the Warren Brook conservation area and then through the Upton state forest. What a great trail system!!!
Upton forest
Major Moore State Park in Paxton. It is accessible, great parking, beautiful vistas, variety of terrain (hillside, treed, meadow, lakes side, waterfall, covered bridge with chairs, brook, an old house for visitors, just very pleasant, enjoyable year round and my dog is welcome which is nice! They have a doggie kiosk for poop bags:-) Joyce
Upton State Forest -- Variety of trails accessible from a single location.
Blackstone River Heritage State Park. Large, multi use area with many trail options in one place.
Upton State Forest - close by and my wife likes it
Rock House Reservation in North Brookfield has varied terrain and nice trails.

Text answer(s) for:

5

What is your favorite hiking trail system outside of Grafton and why?

49 Responses

Answer

Westboro Charm Bracelet at Mill Pond. Nice variety of trails and near water, swans, kayaking. Mostly nicely marked

Wachusett, challenge

Purgatory chasm- parking, marked, safe with kids

Crowell Park in Northboro, can bring dog and let off leash

Purgatory Chasm. Plenty of parking Various length and terrain trail types. Well marked.

Quabbin Trails, fun to explore!

Mount Greylock reservation. Grew up there.

White Mountains national Forest. Diversity and quality trail systems.

Upton State Forrest. Variety, big, well marked, parking

Martha Dearing. Great trails for horse back riding

state parks -

Wachusett mountain. Familiarity and proximity

Carney Park Northborough- dog friendly and close

I like the midstate trail. Easy to divide on manageable sections.

Upton State Forest

Uxbridge trails on both sides of the Blackstone river--great views, well-marked trails (mostly) and great parking

AMC

AMC Fire Trail to Tuckerman Ravine. Spring skiing

Shirley, MA. Public land and hunting allowed

Buffumvill and Hodges village dams in Oxford. Extremely well maintained and great parking. I feel safe there. Responsible dog owners are the norm.

West Hill Dam, Uxbridge, Ma.

[◀ Back](#)

Text answer(s) for:

5

What is your favorite hiking trail system outside of Grafton and why?

49 Responses

Answer

Yosemite

Hopkington State Park - lots of well-labeled easy hiking

White Mountains - Scenic and well maintained, marked trails

Acadia National Park because of the clearly marked trailheads, trail markers, and trail maintenance.

Mt Wachusett state park. Lots of choices and well marked. Lots of parking.

none

Many of the AMC trails in NH, well marked and challenging.

White Mountains in NH.

Westborough Charm Bracelet - <http://westboroughcharm.org/index.php>

Trails are well-marked and when I have let them know about maintenance, they get someone right on it. There is a series of letterboxes that you can get only by visiting all the trails. ;)