

Glacial Deposits

About twelve thousand years ago, as glaciers receded from a great ice sheet that overtopped New England, a variety of sand and gravel deposits were left behind. The many undulations of the Sweatt Preserve are largely due to these deposits, covered now with layers of organic material from decaying leaves and other vegetation.

Scattered throughout the preserve are occasional massive boulders. Known as erratics, these are huge chunks of bedrock that were broken off and carried by the powerful migrating glacial ice. Left far from their origins, many erratics today sit like lonely outposts, all by themselves. Along the trail, you will see labeled several of these boulder erratics. Two of them sit quite close to each other, just as they were left thousands of years ago. In time they will slowly weather away. This won't happen soon, though, since the boulders here are all granitic rocks (composed of the minerals feldspar, quartz, and mica) that don't decompose rapidly.

Bedrock Below

The underlying bedrock, forming the foundation beneath the surficial glacial deposits, consists of a mass of granite and granodiorite that welled up from deep within the earth during the early Devonian Period about 370 million years ago. Geologists refer to it as the Kinsman Formation, a mass of bedrock more commonly found in the White Mountains far to the north.

A Brook to Heaven

Quietly tumbling easterly across the preserve is a small unnamed brook, with several tributaries feeding into it. Deep within a grove of hemlock, this brook flows into nearby Dolf Brook, which in turn flows northerly alongside Briar Hill Road into the

Contoocook River. Watch for small fish as they dart from pool to pool, from shadow to shadow, through dappled sunlight. They, like all the animals and plants that inhabit this hidden central New Hampshire forest, play a small, but integral role in the landscape's ecological web of life. Their world is our world, and ours theirs—all of us inexplicably intertwined within the mystery of the wondrous island planet that we call home.

Animals to Watch For

As you walk the trail across the brook to the far reaches of the property, the trail forks into a closed loop section. Following it either way will bring you back to the start of the loop. Along the way, you might spot a pileated woodpecker, or hear a barred owl, or see a white tail deer disappearing around a bend. Or perhaps you may simply find delight in soaking up the silence of this deep forest, a landscape left to grow back after long-ago timber harvesting operations, a wooded landscape that will now remain protected for future generations.

Thanks to Many

Five Rivers Conservation Trust thanks all trail users for leaving the pathway and surrounding forest free of any trash. Your thoughtfulness is appreciated by all those who come to enjoy this preserve.

Five Rivers is also grateful to those who provided support for this trail-building project. Notably, Northeast Utilities/Public Service of New Hampshire provided generous financial assistance through a grant that served as an important catalyst for this special community environmental and recreational project. Other support came from Five Rivers trustees, members, and volunteers who gave of their time to work on this trail project so that it can be enjoyed for many years to come.

THE SWEATT PRESERVE



NATURE TRAIL GUIDE AND MAP

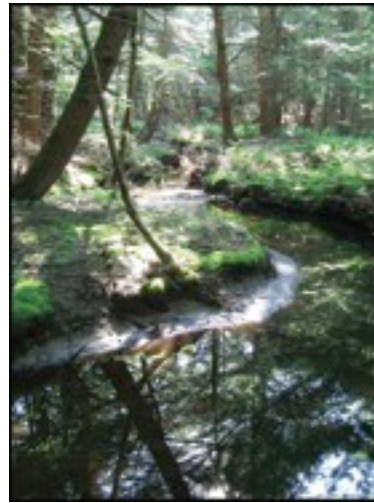


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The Sweatt Preserve Nature Trail

Welcome to the Sweatt Preserve Nature Trail on Old Stagecoach Road in Hopkinton, New Hampshire. The trail was created in 2007 by Five Rivers Conservation Trust, a Concord-based nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting special open space landscapes throughout New Hampshire's capital region. To become a member, call (603) 225-7225 or visit www.5RCT.org.

This 73-acre property was generously given to Five Rivers Conservation Trust in 2003 by Nancy N. Sweatt in loving memory



maple, red oak, white oak, cherry, beech, and both white and grey birch.

White pines are often multi-trunked. This characteristic is generally created because pine crown weevil larva bore into the center top of the growing trunk. The primary trunk tippet dies, leaving the surrounding branches to compete to become the tree's new main trunk. Oftentimes, competing branches grow upward with sufficient strength and girth to become nearly-equal-sized trunks—hence the multi-trunk white pines.

THE SWEATT PRESERVE NATURE TRAIL

of her late husband, Robert A. Sweatt. Born and raised nearby, Robert was a decorated veteran of World War II. During his many years in the service, he lived in various locations around the globe. Yet his love for his boyhood town of Hopkinton and for his land on Old Stagecoach Road never diminished. He and his wife Nancy were committed to preserving this land, and, after his passing, the property's long-term conservation was ensured through Nancy's wonderful gift.

The nature trail on the Sweatt Preserve is for all to enjoy. Please take care when using it, staying on the marked pathway. Your help in keeping it free of litter and other trash is very much appreciated.

A Variety of Trees

A number of tree species grace this forest. Many are quite large, forming a cathedral-like canopy in several places along the trail, typical of a mature forest. As you move along the trail, you will notice that some of the trees are labeled. They include white pine, red pine, hemlock,



Red pines and hemlocks are equally fascinating trees. Straight and proud, red pines are so named because of their red bark. Hemlock, with its coarse wood, was a tree ignored when the prime eastern forests were cut over in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Now it has become an acceptable timber tree used for construction and pulpwood. The bark is rich in tannin. The hemlock's short, flat needles create a quiet, shady forest, one frequented by red squirrels and chipmunks which dine on the tasty seeds of the smallish hemlock cones.

You'll note that some sections of the forest shows signs of timber harvesting, with old stumps now covered with lichens and mosses and with the growth of smaller intermediate tree species like grey birch. Most of this timbering was conducted decades ago. Left alone, these sections of the property, like the rest of the property, will be gradually transformed into a mature, climax-stage forest.

