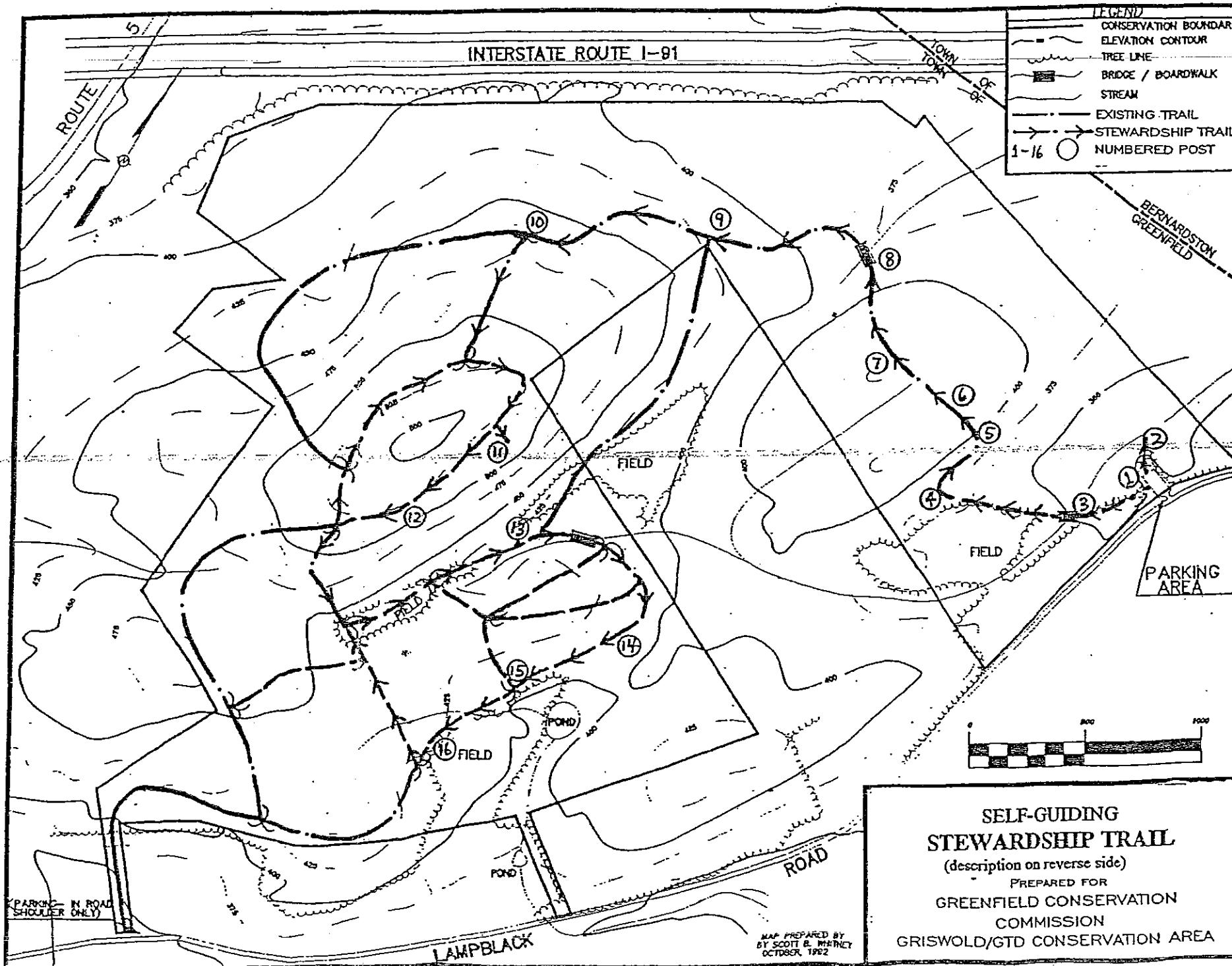


# Griswold/GTD Conservation Area

## - Self Guiding - Stewardship Trail Map



Courtesy of the Greenfield  
Conservation Commission

# STEWARDSHIP TRAIL

Welcome to Greenfield's Griswold/GTD Conservation Area. This brochure and the accompanying map will guide you through our Stewardship Trail, which contains 16 numbered stops (marked by posts) demonstrating land stewardship and wildlife habitat enhancement. The entire trail, including return trip, totals roughly 3 miles. Shorter hikes are also encouraged. See accompanying map for locations of numbered stops along trail described below.

## DESCRIPTIONS OF NUMBERED STOPS

(red diamond-shaped signs with black arrow mark the trail)

**1** Most forestland contains shrubby native plants that provide excellent sources of wildlife food. Instead of special plantings to enhance the wildlife food supply, all that is necessary is to identify these plants and give them adequate sunlight. Important food plants that we have "daylighted" along the trail are marked with tags. 1. Beaked Hazelnut, 2. Shadbush, 3. Apple, 4. Dogwood, 5. Arrowwood, 6. Choke Cherry, 7. Blackberry, 8. Elderberry, 9. Blueberry, 10. Winterberry, 11. Alder, 12. Nannyberry.

**2** This swampy area supports a remarkable tangle of wildlife food and cover plants, including elderberry, highbush blueberry, viburnum and winterberry. In addition, the rich leaf litter under alder shrubs is preferred feeding habitat for woodcock, due to the high earthworm populations. Several of the red maples have been girdled (bark cut in ring to kill tree) in order to provide full sunlight on this small area of swamp shrubs. When the maples die, the dead snags will provide denning and foraging habitat for woodpeckers and many other species.

**NOTE: AT THIS POINT THE TRAIL DOUBLES BACK THROUGH THE PARKING LOT AND CONTINUES ALONG THE SIDE OF THE HAYFIELD.**

**3** Good stewardship means investing in proper road construction and stabilization. This road provides access for both hay cutting and forestry work. Stone was placed in the wheel tracks to stabilize the road bed, preventing erosion and siltation of the stream. This hayfield is managed for wildlife as well as agriculture. Each year, the field is cut late, in July, to allow ground nesting birds time to raise young. The second cutting is done early, by mid-September, to allow time for growth of forage and winter cover before the onset of cold weather.

**4** Brushy thickets are required habitat for many forest species. Thickets will also increase populations of many wildlife species that use adjacent older forest. Since there is very little brushy "seedling" habitat on this property, we created this 1.5 acre clearing. Herbaceous, and later woody growth, will invade this clearing over the next couple of years, creating the desired thicket habitat. Locating brushy habitat adjacent to grassy habitat will increase wildlife usage of both. Another objective in creating this clearing was to accentuate the presence of this magnificent sugar maple hedgerow. The logging slash was piled in order to create mammal denning habitat and wildlife cover. Look for other wildlife slash piles along the trail.

**5** Oak is arguably the most important wildlife tree in the Massachusetts forest. Successfully regenerating oak usually involves getting direct sunlight on the forest floor. Oak is a "shade-intolerant" tree that regenerates well after large disturbances such as fires or hurricanes. This harvest has created conditions favorable for oak regeneration. The large white, red and black oaks were left for seed production. Most of the rest of the stand was cleared to provide sunlight on the forest floor.

**6** This hemlock stand has not been cut

in many years. The dense shade provides an interesting contrast to areas recently harvested.

**7** This productive stand was treated in the mid 1970's with a pre-commercial thinning. Low quality trees were girdled in order to give more sunlight to straighter, better-quality stems. Low quality logs and fuelwood were removed in 1994. The residual large-crowned white oaks and straight, small-knotted white pines are now poised to grow vigorously for the next 15+ years. You may also see some cavity trees in the area, left because of their high wildlife value.

**8** A nest box for screech owl was erected high in the large white pine. A small area was cleared to release the old apple tree. Girdled trees were left as perching habitat for hawks, owls and flycatchers.

**9** This site supports an exceptional variety of nut and "mast" fruit-producing trees, a gourmet treat for many species of wildlife such as ruffed grouse, flying squirrels, turkey, songbirds, deer, and bear. Mast production will increase dramatically if trees have enough sunlight to develop large, spreading crowns. Species present, identified by numbered signs are: 1. Red Oak, 2. Black Oak, 3. White Oak, 4. Beech, 5. Hickory, 6. Blackgum, 7. Ironwood, 8. Hop Hornbeam.

**10** This area was thinned in the 1970's, producing fuelwood. White pine and oak regeneration were established at that time. Some logs and more fuelwood were removed in 1986. In 1994, overtopping trees were girdled on four acres to increase the sunlight available to this regeneration. The dead snags will be left for their wildlife habitat value.

**11** This huge white oak, to the right at the end of this short spur off of the main trail, is worthy of a special trip all by itself. Note the cavity, which probably serves as a squirrel den.

**12** A vista was cleared here in the 1970's and reopened in 1994. The mountain with the steep right-hand slope is Notch Mountain in Northfield. It blocks our view of Mt. Monadnock.

**13** This is the bottom of the slope cleared for the vista, which will also serve as a brushy thicket for wildlife. The large hemlock log upslope was left as a ruffed grouse drumming log. Male grouse will use such a log for "drumming" with their wings to attract a mate. A pile of flat rocks was created in the foreground as basking habitat for snakes.

**14** Brush and small trees were cleared along this lane to bring out the visual impact of this hedgerow. Note also the huge "wolf" pine with 5 trunks in the woods behind the hedgerow. A wolf pine is a large limby and often crooked pine found in the forest. This growth habit shows that it spent its early years growing in an open field. These large trees with spreading crowns have important wildlife as well as visual qualities.

**15** Overtopping trees were cut in 1994 to release this pine regeneration. The objectives are to grow high-quality pine as well as to create a pleasing visual scene of large, mature pines towering above pine regeneration.

**16** Nest boxes were erected at the edge of this field for kestrel and bluebird. More than 40 wildlife species in our area depend on tree cavities for denning, nesting and/or cover. Many will use nest boxes as substitutes.

The improvements conducted in 1994 for recreation and wildlife on this property have been funded in part by forestry revenues and by a grant from the Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program, and demonstrates a workable model for the maintenance and improvement of woodlots and conservation properties.

*Please contact the  
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further information: (413) 772-1548*