

Cultural Respect and Respectful Return

The original inhabitants of this land were ancestors of the current Wampanoag people. You can learn about their culture and history at the following websites:

Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe:

mashpeewampanoagtribe-nsn.gov

Wampanoag Tribe of Gayhead (Aquinnah):

wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov/wampanoag-history

Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe:

herringpondtribe.org/our-history

Human remains and cultural artifacts of the Wampanoag are protected under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). To learn more about the laws prohibiting unauthorized excavation, removal or sale of Native American remains and cultural items, please visit nps.gov/subjects/nagpra.

Thank you to the Native Land Conservancy (nativelandconservancy.org) for their guidance on the history and language included on this publication.

Trail Etiquette

When hiking on any trail, it's best to follow the Leave No Trace (LNT) principles. These principles include that you pack out what you bring in (including any trash or pet waste), stay on the trail, and leave natural features as you find them (rocks, plants, wildlife, etc.) If you find something extra special that you want to remember or share, take a picture or a video and leave it for others to discover and appreciate. Learn more at LNT.org.

Tick & Poison Ivy Safety

Always prepare for ticks and poison ivy.

Ticks can be active any time of year, even winter. Tuck your pants into your socks, and your shirt into your pants. Wear light colors to spot ticks more easily. Using insect repellent or treating your clothes with permethrin adds another layer of protection.

Poison ivy is most noticeable from spring through fall, but the oils can transfer from a broken leaf or branch any time of year. Washing your hands after lacing up or removing your hiking boots can help protect you from transferring the oils to skin and causing a rash.



Eagle Pond & Little River Sanctuary

TRAIL GUIDE

About Barnstable Land Trust

Barnstable Land Trust (BLT) is a community-supported nonprofit whose mission is to preserve the natural resources and special places in the Town of Barnstable and nearby areas. We have conserved over 1,100 acres, and supported the Town in protecting over 11,000 more.

To support our work, consider becoming a member!

Visit BLT.org or use this QR code to support our work today.



BARNSTABLE



LAND TRUST

Barnstable Land Trust

1540 Main Street
West Barnstable, MA 02668

Tel: 508.771.2585

BLT.org

  @barnstablelandtrust

Are you interested in conserving your land?

Contact Barnstable Land Trust at (508) 771-2585 or info@blt.org for more information.

Photographs: Eagle Pond (front cover) by Beth Greeley and Family on a Log (above) by Lillie Peterson-Wirtanen.

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BARNSTABLE



LAND TRUST

BLT.org

Eagle Pond & Little River Sanctuary

182.5 acres

The Eagle Pond and Little River Sanctuary protects various habitats such as upland pine forest, pond, river, cedar swamp, maple swamp, and field.

Barnstable Land Trust thanks the dedicated volunteers, donors, and trustees of the Mary Barton Land Conservation Trust for preserving 150 acres of this land between 1980 and 1995. Barnstable Land Trust added an additional 32.5 acres over time until assuming overall ownership and management in 2011.

Please keep the following in mind to ensure your visit is safe and enjoyable for you, your pets, other visitors, and the plants and wildlife protected here.

Use of the Sanctuary is from dawn to dusk and at your own risk.

Allowed Uses

- Passive recreation on designated paths
- Small, non-motorized watercraft use (e.g. canoe)
- Dog walking (leashed only)
- Swimming, ice skating, and fishing

Prohibited Uses

- Smoking, vaping, alcoholic beverages or drugs
- Hunting or trapping
- Littering or dumping of trash or yard waste
- Bikes or motorized vehicles
- Camping or fires
- Rope swings or storage of watercraft

Visitors with Dogs



- Dogs must be kept on-leash and on designated paths with leash in hand at all times.
- Be sure to receive verbal approval before allowing your dog to approach other dogs or visitors.
- Remove all pet waste to reduce pollution to Eagle Pond, Little River, and surrounding wetlands.

In the event of an aggressive dog encounter, collect any relevant information on the dog and owner and promptly report to the Town of Barnstable Animal Control at 508-790-6274.



© Francis Barton

Elizabeth Barton skating on Eagle Pond in January 1936

A History

The coarse sands and gravel of a retreating glacier over 15,000 years ago shaped these lands and the "kettle hole" with a half-mile of preserved shoreline, including an eight-acre groundwater-fed pond which is 18 feet deep. Two small "saucer ponds" straddling Cordwood Road at the north end and Little River in the valley were also left.

The upland sandy soils that rise to 60-foot hillocks support only acid-tolerant trees such as pitch pines or oaks, with white pines reemerging in open areas as the pitch pines die out. Shrubs such as heath, sheep laurel and rhododendron thrive alongside bearberry, lichens, and lady slippers.

Prior to European settlement, the Sanctuary was home to the Wampanoag, *People of the First Light*. A trail, now known as Cotochesett Path, was formed by the Wampanoag, connecting Eagle Pond to Cotuit Bay. As with most paths, this likely followed the game trails originally forged by animals, as they learned that the pathways led to water sources, safe environments, habitation sites (where they raise their young, eat, etc.), and more.

The Wampanoag, who are still here today, used the path to navigate between two water resources for fishing and shellfish, through woodlands ripe with berries in summer, and ample woodlands for shelter and building materials.

The narrow Little River flows from Lovells Pond north of Route 28 through wetland areas, including an abandoned cranberry bog, into Cotuit Bay. On the east side of Cordwood Road lies the 4.5 acre Charles Almy Cedar Swamp with white cedars used for ship-building in Cotuit until the late 1800's.

The northern half of Eagle Pond's forest was Prince Marston's white pine plantation from the late 1700's on; some trees reserved for British naval craft masts grew above 100 feet.

Farming was common along Little River through the 1800's and cows pastured at the south and eastern sides of Eagle Pond, with "cow ditches" as barriers between pastures. Additional historic trails include Cordwood Road (1842) that carried ice from Lovells Pond to Cotuit schooners and Eagle Pond Carriage Path (1863) that circles the Pond.

Owls nest in some of the larger dead trees and there are traces of fox, coyotes, and wild turkeys. Eagle Pond itself has turtles, small bass, and perch, but no bald eagle has been seen overhead since prior to WW II.



Without the conservation ethics of the Barton family, Eagle Pond would likely have become a real estate development.

In 1951, Mary Lowell Barton placed deed restrictions on 106 acres, including the pond, but by 1980 it was clear that permanent protection could only be assured by a Land Trust purchase. Some 25 families joined the Mary Barton Land Conservation Trust in this acquisition and two of these families subsequently gave 20 contiguous acres in 1983-1985.

Next were the 16 acres of Bell Farm/Little River, already platted for 15 homes but saved by local donors in 1992, plus a connecting link to Eagle Pond given to the Barnstable Land Trust. Another 7 acres were given by Elihu Root and Georgia Park in 1994-95.

In 2011, the Mary Barton Land Trust transferred ownership of its 150 acres to the Barnstable Land Trust, Inc., which now owns and stewards the entire 182.5 acres contained here.



Bell Farm

© Barnstable Land Trust



© Barnstable Land Trust

Self-Guided Walk

Throughout the trails you will see posts with numbers. Follow this guide to go on a tour of the natural and human history of Eagle Pond and Little River Sanctuary. Refer to the map for each numbered intersection.

These posts were placed by a local Eagle Scout in coordination with Cotuit Fire District in 2017 to locate individuals within the sanctuary in the event of an emergency. **If you find yourself in need of emergency services while visiting the sanctuary, call 911 and report the nearest numbered post to the dispatcher.**

- 1 In front of you lies a saucer pond, where rare salamanders and wood frogs lay eggs in April.
- 2 Head toward Eagle Pond through the remnants of Prince Marston's Pine Plantation. Started in the late 1700's, the trees consisted of white and red pine. Red pines were introduced to Cape Cod for lumber, but the conditions on the Cape were not suitable for them. Many died but left traces behind.
- 3 Take a rest at this bench and admire the size of the surrounding trees. Many of these white pines are over 100 years old, remnants of the Pine Plantation.
- 4 The red maple swamp is brilliant in the fall, and provides valuable breeding grounds for spring peepers.
- 5 Take the Pond Path for a higher viewing vantage of Eagle Pond and the maple swamp.
- 6 Dug in 1786, this ditch or "cow fence" divided Coleman's pasture from Marston's pine plantation. Now shallow, this ditch was once much deeper. As cows feared stepping in steep ditches, this was a cheap way to 'fence-in' pastures.
- 7 This is the best spot to view the white water lilies, whose flowers open on sunny summer mornings.
- 8 Look to the east to view lichen and grass covering the ground. Remnants of Coleman's pasture, pitch pines and huckleberry are slowly moving in, transitioning it into pine-oak forest.
- 9 Enter onto the historic Eagle Pond Road trail, laid out in 1836 for recreation by landowner Augustus Perkins.
- 10 Now terminating at Eagle Pond Road trail, the Cotochesett Path originally led to Eagle Pond.
- 11 The Bartons planted hemlocks in this area in 1932 to help with erosion control. Their needles are short and flat. Can you spot them?
- 12 Rhododendrons on the north side of the trail were planted by Elizabeth and Francis Barton in 1932. Visit in summer to spot them in bloom, with aromatic sweet pepperbush blooming soon after.
- 13 Look for pink lady slippers in bloom from mid-May to mid-June. Please leave intact for others to enjoy and for pollinators to gather nectar.
- 14 Hurricane Bob in 1991 blew down many pines north and west of the Pond and the damage is still evident today.
- 15 Formed by the Wampanoag, *People of the First Light*, the Cotochesett Path originally connected Eagle Pond to Cotuit Bay.
- 16 Perkins Path was once a road, built in 1836 by landowner Augustus Perkins for recreation purposes.
- 17 Take the Pine Trail for a side adventure through classic pine-oak woodlands. Owls nest in these woods and will leave subtle clues of their presence, such as owl pellets at the base of trees.



- 18 Take a rest at this bench and listen for woodpeckers and other wildlife that call the sanctuary home.
- 19 Cordwood Road was initially used to transport ice from Lovells Pond south to Cotuit's schooners from what is now Cordwood Landing. The historic road was formally named in 1842 as portions of the sanctuary were being used as woodlots for lumber.
- 20 Collect some pine needles from the trail and take a rest at this bench to examine them. Notice that pitch pine needles are in clusters of three, while white pine needles are in clusters of five.
- 21 Carved by glaciers over 15,000 years ago, this depression offers a nice change in terrain compared to the flatter northern section of the trail.
- 22 Enter this trail, once a 'cow-fence' ditch, to proceed toward Charles Almy Cedar Swamp.
- 23 Atlantic white cedars tower over the swamp. Cotuit has five classic examples of this now-rare habitat.
- 24 The woodlands surrounding the cedar swamp have both huckleberry and low-bush blueberry. Both produce edible berries for mid-July picking.
- 25 Ahead lie remnants of the Ames cranberry bog, Cotuit's first in 1861.

- 26 Little River is a shallow stream that flows from Lovells Pond to Cotuit Bay. Built in 1992 by Mary Barton Land Conservation Trust volunteers, the Little River trail bridge leads to Little River Road connecting to Eagle Pond Sanctuary.
- 27 Bell Farm, where Tennessee Walking horses were kept from 1939-1987, is now managed by BLT as an open meadow for wildlife. Had the area not been saved, 15 houses might be sitting here today.
- 28 Mosswood Cemetery (1819) began as a graveyard for Little River residents such as the Handy, Goodspeed, and Sturgess families. A slate marker along the fence marks Mary Lowell Barton's grave, with her children laid beside her. We all owe a debt of thanks to this conservation-minded family.
- 29 Historic Lovells Lane (1843) connects Bell Farm to the site of Frieda Lander's Little River Turkey Farm (1925-1962).



Water Lily: © Beth Greeley, Frog: © Doug Lyon