



1 The two ponds you see before you are man made. They were created by the damming of Hazel Brook, a stream that drains the wetlands northeast of here. Similar ponds have been built for a variety of reasons since Colonial times. One common reason for creating ponds like these was to offer a watering source for farm animals. Many small man made ponds in New England were also used to power mills. Water leaving the dam would turn a waterwheel, which in turn powered a mill that could be used for a variety of purposes. Today, the ponds are used for fishing and skating and they draw different species of wildlife to the area than a stream. Look for Great Blue Herons, ducks and geese. Do you see signs of beavers as well? As you walk to the next point, look for a short post on the right of the trail, marking the second stop.

2 Notice the broken tree in front of you. Large trees are common targets of lightning because they are the tallest objects in the area and the moisture in them conducts electricity better than air. Three common scenarios can occur when lightning strikes a tree. When a tree's exterior has been thoroughly soaked by rain, it often escapes unharmed. Electricity chooses the path of least resistance, and in this case, it travels around the tree and doesn't harm it. The second scenario that may occur is scarring. Most trees contain moisture in the form of sap and water just beneath the bark. Moisture, being a better conductor than wood, offers a path for electricity to travel through the tree. As the lightning travels through the tree, a strip of bark is blown off. The tree often cannot heal itself and will not survive long. In the third scenario, which occurred here, the tree may be totally destroyed. In some trees, moisture is concentrated in the core so the path of least resistance is through the center of the tree. In this case, the tree is blown apart, splitting the tree in two, and sending debris flying.

3 Notice the unusual growth, or burl, on the tree in front of you. A burl is a round growth deformation found on tree trunks or branches. The growths vary in size and are caused by abnormal layering of tissue in the tree's cambium. The abnormal cell develop-



ment and ensuing growth is the result of an infestation of fungus, insects or bacteria, and can also be hastened by environmental changes. Often, after a tree develops a burl the cause spreads, eventually killing the tree. Growths such as these are relatively rare and so they are prized by artists who manipulate the unique ring patterns to create sculptures such as bowls, clocks or even furniture. Removing burls most often causes the tree to die, so artists generally wait until the tree is dead before they harvest the burl.

4 Many of the stone walls in New England were built by farmers during the post-Colonial period, primarily from the years 1775 to 1825. These walls were constructed by farmers to maintain property boundaries and fence in animals. Before stone became popular the most common fencing material was wood. As deforestation due to farming increased, wood became less abundant. Wood was also susceptible to rot. Stone was an ideal material for fencing because of its abundance and durability. Most of the stones were dug out of New England's notoriously rocky soil by farmers when they plowed their fields. The three types of rock most commonly used were granite, limestone, and gneiss, which were deposited by melting glaciers at the end of the ice age. The fact that thousands of miles of stone walls still exist across New England is a testament to their strength and durability.

5 As evidenced by your walk so far, there are many signs of our human history on the land in New England. A stand of mostly white pines, like the one before you, is often a sign of recently abandoned fields. As you walk further along the trail, notice the different tree types around you. As you approach a stream and the land becomes wetter, do you notice different species of trees? As you progress deeper into the forest, do the types of trees change from what you saw at the edge of open areas? Look at the younger plants growing on the forest floor as well, what differences do you notice? As time goes by, what might this mean for the composition of mature trees in the forest? When large trees are knocked over by wind or destroyed by lightning, what new species of trees might succeed in filling in the resulting holes in the canopy?

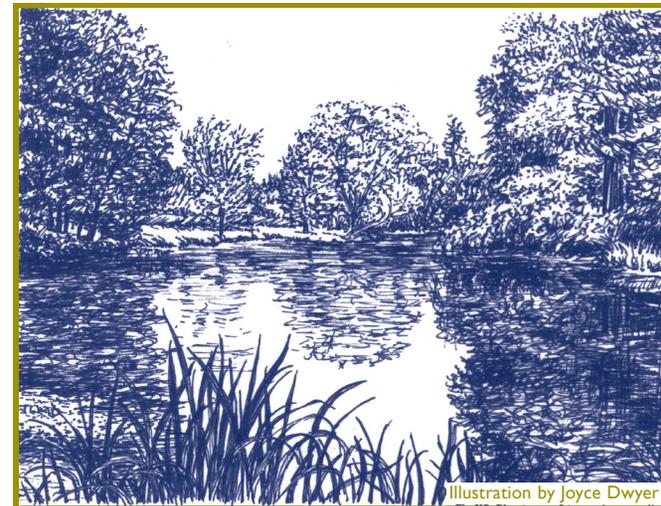


Illustration by Joyce Dwyer

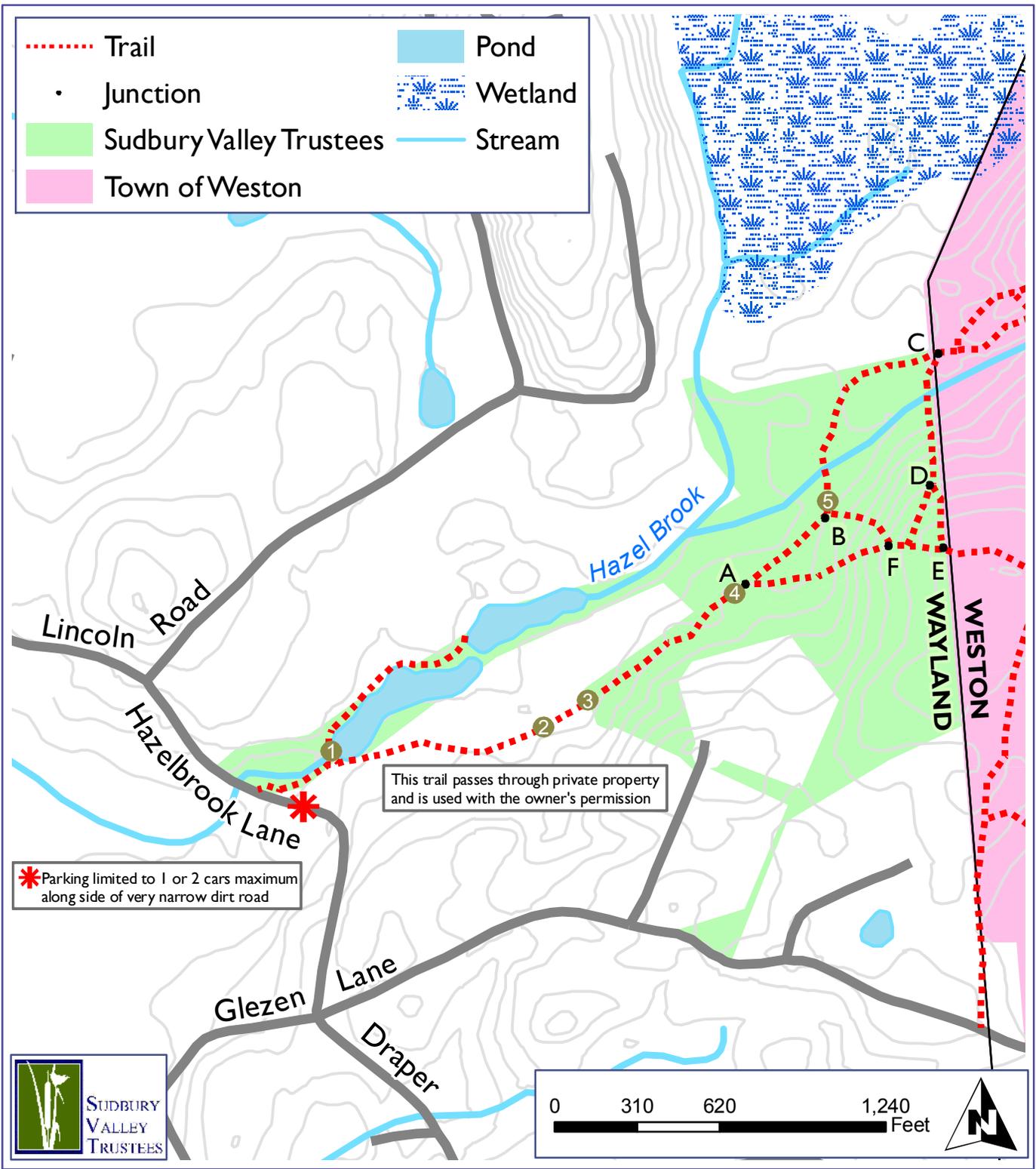
SUDBURY VALLEY TRUSTEES' Hazel Brook Conservation Area

Interpretive Trail



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Hazel Brook Reservation Interpretive Trail, Wayland, MA

In 2008, as part of his Eagle Scout Project, Jon Starr of Sudbury Troop 63 created an interpretive brochure and posted markers along the trail that correspond with the points in his writings and on this map. Materials for this project were generously donated by the Home Depot in Marlborough, Sudbury Lumber, and Townline Hardware. The work of the scouts and students who helped author, construct and install this project is greatly appreciated.

Hazel Brook Conservation Area (48.4 acres) rewards your senses almost immediately by the sound of the rushing waters of Hazel Brook, soon followed by the sight of a beautiful pond. Don't stop there, for a moderately easy hike uphill through the quiet woods leads you to a network of more than 65 miles of trails through Weston Town Forest and other public land. A figure-eight route through the property takes about one hour, plus any additional time you choose to devote to Weston town trails beyond.

Directions: From the intersection of Route 20 and Routes 126 and 27 in Wayland, go north on Route 126 (Concord Road) 1.2 mi. Turn right on Glezen Road. Go 0.7 mi (bearing left to stay on Glezen), to Hazelbrook Road, an unpaved road, and go 0.1 mi. and park on right side of road. If you reach Lincoln Road intersection, go back about 0.1 mi. There is space for two cars parallel to the road. Walk on the right side of the road about another 30 yards. An SVT sign ("Stone Pond") and trail entrance are the right.