

# Norumbega Conservation Area

City of Newton Conservation Area



To accommodate other users and to protect wildlife, vegetation, and trails:



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## Norumbega Conservation Area Access

Located in Auburndale off Commonwealth Avenue, there are trail heads at the end of Woodbine Street and Islington Road.

## Norumbega History and Features

Norumbega, like all of Newton, was once occupied and cared for by the Massachuset tribe, descendants of whom still live and make new history in the area.

Norumbega Park opened in 1897 as a 27-acre privately owned facility, hosting canoeing, an amphitheater, a small zoo, and a deer park. In the early 1900s this "Lakes District" was the most actively canoed section of the Charles River. By 1930, the park's offerings included amusement park rides (including the Lindy Loop, and the Caterpillar), and the Totem Pole; which became a famous ballroom bringing in the nation's best swing bands and attracting large crowds for its affordable entertainment. ABC, NBC, and CBS all broadcast live performances from the park. Even after 1942, when many similar attractions closed due to the War, the Totem Pole continued, with different offerings and owners, until 1963.

When the land was eyed for development, conservation advocates convinced the City to acquire 13 acres for conservation purposes. The remaining land was developed as the Boston Marriot Newton Hotel.

Trails wind over wooded knolls, along the Charles River, and around an old meadow (now being restored as forest), making this a favorite local attraction. Planted "arboretum" trees dot the periphery of the old meadow. Keep a look-out for remaining features of the amusement park such as stone walls and paved pathways.

## Norumbega Trail Characteristics

Norumbega has one central loop trail around the old meadow that is **\*Generally Accessible**. It can be accessed from Woodbine and Islington Roads. Other trail segments are **\*Natural Trails** with more steepness and challenging footbed conditions.



**Trail Surface:** Mostly firm soil. In places: rocky, muddy, steep, stairs



**Trail width:** The main loop is generally 6 feet; side trails are considerably narrower



**Trail length:** 5,000 feet or 0.9 miles



**Cross slope:** Generally level. In places: >5%



**Obstructions:** In places: steps, steep trails, and narrow trails.

**\*Newton's Generally Accessible Trails** are relatively flat, they have a firm, level footbed, and are mostly free of tripping hazards. They are wide enough to accommodate many mobility devices.

**Newton's Natural Trails** are unimproved and may have steep, uneven, or rocky/rooty footbeds; elevated plank "bog bridges", or other obstacles that make the trails challenging to negotiate.

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*Newton Conservation Land is cared for by professional land managers, City staff, and volunteer Stewards. To report a problem or become a Land Steward, please contact the Newton Conservation Commission 1000 Commonwealth Ave, Newton, MA 02459 / Conservation@NewtonMA.gov / 617-796-1152.*