

# Webster Conservation Area

City of Newton Conservation Area



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



Report an incident: Newton Police 617-796-2100

Report a trail problem: call 311 or [conservation@newtonma.gov](mailto:conservation@newtonma.gov)

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## Webster Conservation Area Access

There is easy access to miles of connected trails from the ends of Warren, Elgin, and Madoc Streets; the Mall at Chestnut Hill; and the parking lot west of Hammond Pond. There is also access from several locations on Hammond Pond Parkway, and from "Lowell Lane" adjacent to Houghton Garden and the Old Deer Park Conservation Areas.

## Webster History and Features

Webster Conservation Area (~80 ac.) is contiguous with protected open space owned by the Newton Parks and Rec. and the state's DCR. This ~230-acre area, the largest protected open space in Newton, stretches between Newton Centre and Chestnut Hill.

The area is divided into quadrants by Hammond Pond Parkway and the MBTA Green Line.

- Northwest quadrant: Cliffs, mature forest, wetland, and challenging trails
- Northeast quadrant: Houghton Garden and the Old Deer Park, and easy trails
- Southeast quadrant: Cliffs, mature forest, Hammond Pond, marshland, and a mix of trail types
- Southwest quadrant: Bare Pond (a large vernal pool), Cake Rock, Gooch's Cave, Thompsonville Brook, "the Ledges", and challenging trails.

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

In 1650, Thomas Hammond began farming here. In 1852, a railroad, now the MBTA Green line, was built. In 1896, Edwin Webster bought the land and resided at 307 Hammond Street.

In 1916, the Commonwealth purchased land adjacent to Hammond Pond. Edwin Webster gave ~100 acres to the Commonwealth and 7 acres at the end of Warren Street to the City for a playground. In 1954, the Commonwealth sold 25 acres (300 Hammond Pond Parkway) to Congregation Mishkan Tefila. In 1968, the City used eminent domain to buy 38 acres from the Webster estate. In 1972, the City bought "Webster Vale", later known as the Charles Cohen Conservation Area. In 2016, Mishkan Tefila sold 25 acres to Boston College. In 2019, by eminent domain, the City bought "Webster Woods", the "rear portion" of the Boston College parcel. In 2023, the "Old Deer Park" tract was opened to the public.

With cliffs, streams, a large pond, forests, and wetlands, this area supports a wide diversity of ecosystems and wildlife.

## Webster Cons. Area Trail Characteristics

Webster has one segment of **\*Generally Accessible Trail** at the end of Warren Street. All the other trails in the area are **\*Natural Trails**, some relatively easily navigated, others steep, rocky, and narrow.

**\*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.*