



## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TRUST

Without the conservation ethics of the Barton family, Eagle Pond would likely just be home sites today. 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 Trust in this \$155,000 acquisition and two of these (Elizabeth Almy and William Park) 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 a purchase for \$250,000 raised by local donors in 1992, plus a connecting link to Eagle Pond given to the Barnstable Land Trust. Next were another 7 acres given by Elihu Root and Georgia Park in 1994-95. Finally, a key scenic 2-acre farmstead, Ropes Field, at the village entrance was bought through generous gifts of \$150,000 in 1995.

In 2011, the Mary Barton Land Trust transferred ownership of all of its 152 acres to the Barnstable Land Trust, Inc., which had previously acquired another 33 acres connected to this sanctuary. BLT now owns and manages all 184 acres here near Eagle Pond and Little River.

## HISTORY & GEOLOGY OF OUR SANCTUARIES...

A retreating glacier over 15,000 years ago created the basic features of our lands and the “kettle hole” that contains our eight-acre Pond is 18 feet deep, fed by groundwater, with a half-mile of preserved shoreline. The coarse sands and gravel left by the glacial retreat also left two small “saucer ponds” straddling Cordwood Road at the north end and Little River in the valley. 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 with bearberry, lichens, and lady slippers. Please treat all these with care.

The narrow Little River flows from Lovell Pond north of Route 28 through our wetland areas, including an abandoned cranberry bog, into Cotuit Bay.

On the east side of Cordwood Road lies the 4.5 acre Almy Swamp with white cedars used for shipbuilding in Cotuit until the late 1800s.

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

Farming was common along Little River through the 1800s and cows pastured at the south and eastern sides of Eagle Pond, with a “cow ditch” at Stops # 8 and 13 as a barrier between pastures.

Historic trails include the Old Indian Trail from Eagle Pond to Cotuit Bay, Cordwood Road (1842) that carried ice from Lovell Pond to Cotuit schooners and Eagle Pond Carriage Path (1863) that circles the Pond. Eagle Pond itself has turtles and small bass and perch, but no bald eagle has been seen overhead since prior to WW II. Owls do nest in some of the larger dead trees and there are traces of both fox and coyotes and wild turkeys.

We encourage walkers, (including those with well-behaved dogs) to use all our open trails. Some trails are closed for erosion control.

Please help by picking up litter and using the Mutt Mitt installed near the Putnam Avenue parking lot. AND THANKS !

### OUR TRAIL RULES ARE SIMPLE:

- No mechanized vehicles or watercraft
- No fires or smoking
- No camping
- No hunting or shooting
- No alcohol
- Swim or skate at your own risk!
- No rope swings
- Dogs must be leashed



## WELCOME TO EAGLE POND!

**In 2011, the Barnstable Land Trust acquired 152 acres at Eagle Pond and Little River from the Mary Barton Land Trust. We hope you will join us as a dues-paying member and perhaps volunteer to join our stewardship and trail crews.**

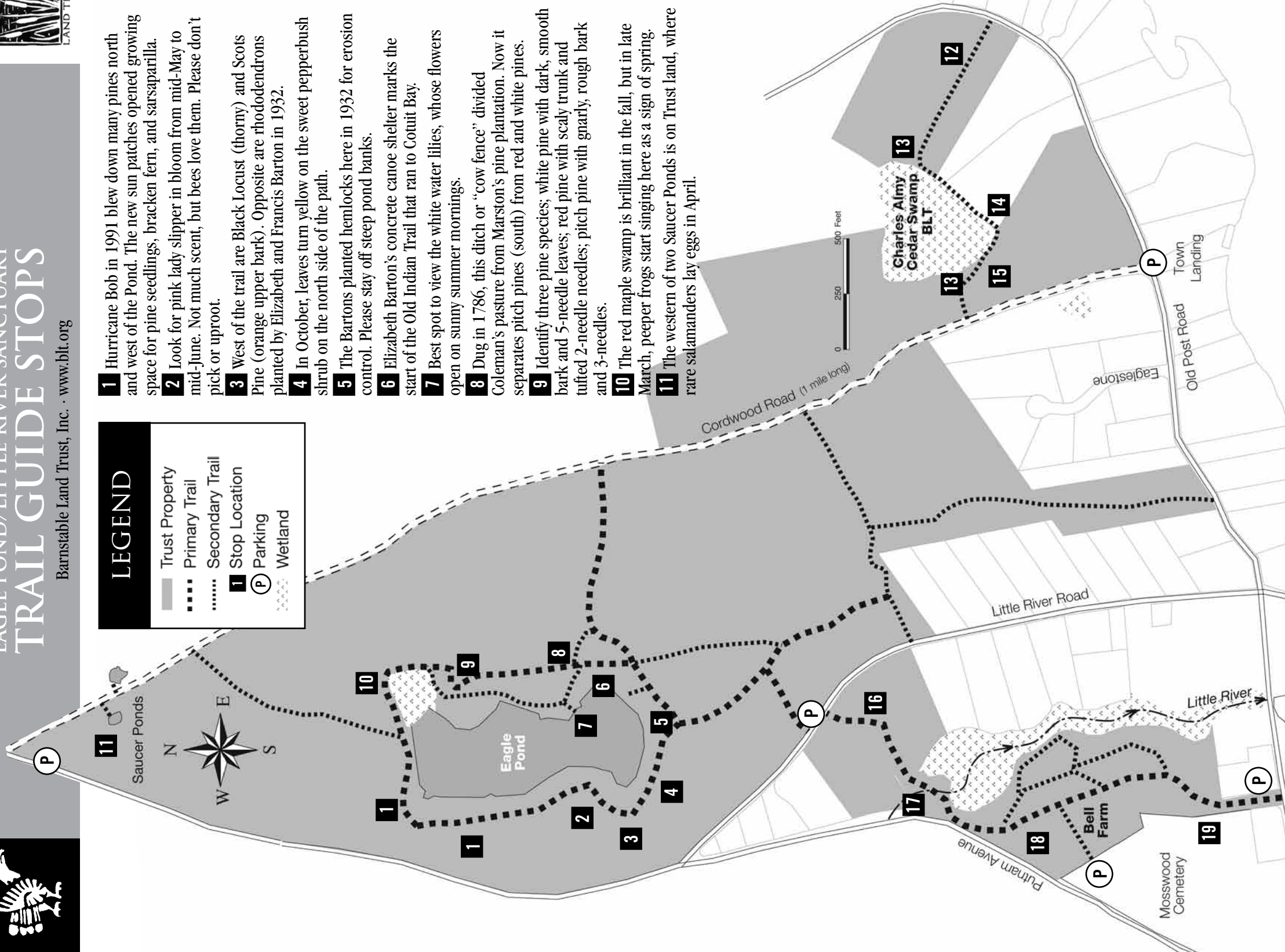
**Visit [www.blt.org](http://www.blt.org) for more information.**

*Pictured: Elizabeth Barton skating on Eagle Pond in January, 1936.*



# EAGLE POND/LITTLE RIVER SANCTUARY TRAIL GUIDE STOPS

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- Hurricane Bob in 1991 blew down many pines north and west of the Pond. The new sun patches opened growing space for pine seedlings, bracken fern, and sarsaparilla.
- Look for pink lady slipper in bloom from mid-May to mid-June. Not much scent, but bees love them. Please don't pick or uproot.
- West of the trail are Black Locust (thorny) and Scots Pine (orange upper bark). Opposite are rhododendrons planted by Elizabeth and Francis Barton in 1932.
- In October, leaves turn yellow on the sweet pepperbush shrub on the north side of the path.
- The Bartons planted hemlocks here in 1932 for erosion control. Please stay off steep pond banks.
- Elizabeth Barton's concrete canoe shelter marks the start of the Old Indian Trail that ran to Cotuit Bay.
- Best spot to view the white water lilies, whose flowers open on sunny summer mornings.
- Dug in 1786, this ditch or "cow fence" divided Coleman's pasture from Marston's pine plantation. Now it separates pitch pines (south) from red and white pines.
- Identify three pine species; white pine with dark, smooth bark and 5-needle leaves; red pine with scaly trunk and tufted 2-needle needles; pitch pine with gnarly, rough bark and 3-needles.
- The red maple swamp is brilliant in the fall, but in late March, peeper frogs start singing here as a sign of spring.
- The western of two Saucer Ponds is on Trust land, where rare salamanders lay eggs in April.

- These Cedar Swamp woods have both huckleberry (waist-high, light dotted leaves) and low-bush blueberry (knee-high, dark green leaves) for mid-July picking.
- More cow fences where cows feared stepping in steep ditches; cheaper than fencing too.
- Atlantic white cedars tower over the swamp, best explored in winter when frozen. Cotuit has five classic examples of this now-rare habitat.
- This twisted pine shows the ingenuity of a tree to reach sunlight!
- In Bell Farm, the Ames cranberry bog (Cotuit's first in 1861) has grown up with red maples and white cedars since abandoned in 1876.

- The Little River bridge, built in 1992, crosses the shallow stream never runs dry. The stream flows from Lovell's Pond to Cotuit Bay.
- If you walk south along Lovell's Lane (1843) you move from Bell Farm pasture (1939-1987), where Tennessee Walking horses were kept, to Frieda Lander's Little River Turkey Farm (1925-1955). Annual mowing is needed to prevent the field from growing up in pines and oaks.
- Mosswood Cemetery (1819) began as a graveyard for Little River residents such as Handy, Goodspeed, and Sturges. A slate marker along the fence marks Mary Lowell Barton's grave, next to her daughter, Ellen (1900-1921), her son, Francis L. Barton (1903-1999) and daughter-in-law Elizabeth H. Barton (1903-1982). We all owe a debt to this conservation minded family!

*The Barnstable Land Trust thanks the dedicated volunteers, donors, and trustees of the Mary Barton Land Conservation Trust for preserving most of this land between 1980 and 1995. BLT assumed ownership and management of all 184 acres in 2011. Photo by Francis Barton; Design by Wildcat Design, Brewster MA*