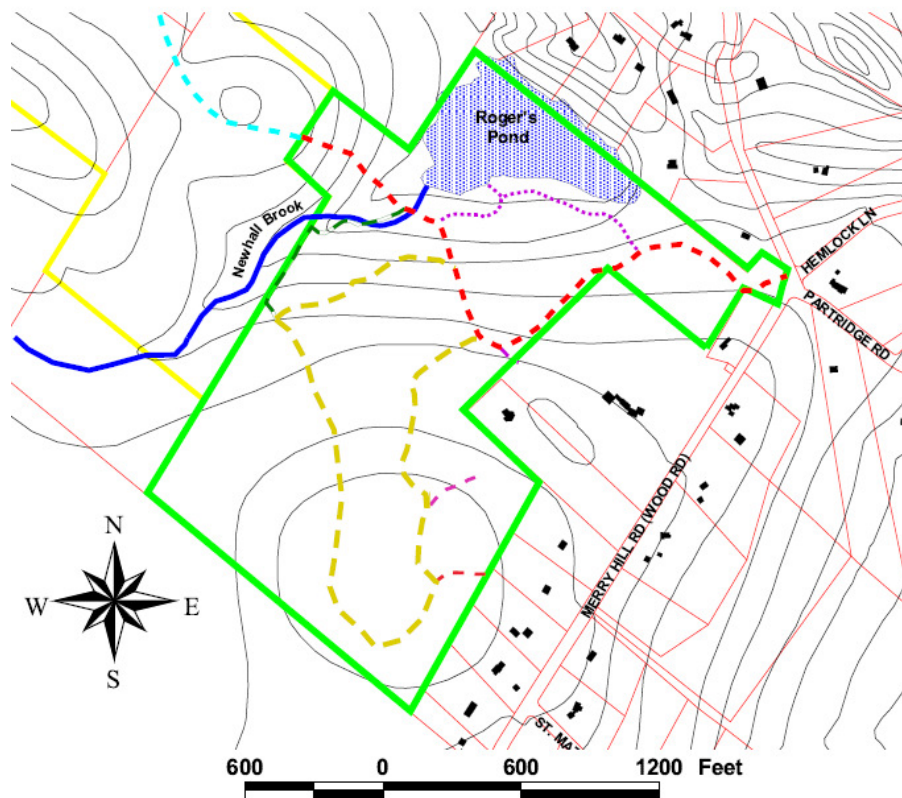


Newhall Easement Trails



-  Forest Trail
-  Wood Lot Loop
-  Pond Trail
-  Newhall Brook Trail
-  Brook Trail (SELT)
-  Newhall Easement
-  Stonehouse Forest (SELT)
-  Tax Map 2016
-  Buildings

*Study nature, love nature, stay close to nature.
It will never fail you.*

Frank Lloyd Wright

NEWHALL CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Trail length: About 2 miles of trails
Difficulty: Easy, some wet spots
Location: Merry Hill Rd.
Activities: Hiking, snowshoeing
Parking: Along the road
Acreage: 80

**Hunting or use of motorized wheeled
vehicles is prohibited.**

A property with hiking trails open to the public that is not owned by the town is the Newhall Conservation Easement. This land was generously put into conservation by Patricia Newhall in 2003, and she wanted to let the public enjoy it forever.



Patricia Newhall

Directions to the Newhall Trail: The trail head is on Merry Hill Road. From the intersection of Merry Hill Road and France/Young Roads (near Swains Lake), go 1.6 miles on Merry Hill Road. The trail head is opposite the intersection of three roads: Merry Hill Road, Hemlock Lane, and Partridge Drive. From Route 4 take Merry Hill Road about 3/4 mile to the intersection. There is no formal parking; park out of the way of traffic on the roadside.

To find the trail head, look for the biggest rock among those bordering the land. Just beyond that big rock you will see a trail sign.

Trails: Start down the Forest Trail, which is an old logging road and easy to walk, with no climbing required. About 200 feet in there's a box with trail maps should you need one (please replace it when you're done). Soon thereafter you will see a sign for the Pond Trail to the right. If you do not take the Pond Trail, after a short way, note the huge pine tree on the right side of the trail. This is a 'wolf' or 'weevil' pine, so called because early in its development a small beetle (weevil) invaded its main vertical stem. The side branches kept growing, rendering the tree pretty useless as timber, but attractive. In the woods on the opposite side you will see "Monument Rock," a huge boulder about 100 feet off the trail. It is a glacial erratic rock, brought down from Canada over 10,000 years ago and left behind when the glacier retreated.

Bear right where you see it blocked off to the left, and the trail soon comes to a T. Walking on the land to your left is prohibited, so follow the sign and make a sharp right to follow the Forest Trail. The Woodlot Loop will be on the left.

The Forest Trail continues down to an old bridge across Newhall Brook. The other entrance to the Pond Trail is on the right about 100ft before the bridge. Just before the bridge on the left there is an old spool of barbed wire hanging from a tree branch, a testimony to the land's agricultural history. Other artifacts and the many stone walls that run through the property also indicate that it was once open land, most likely sheep pasture.

Crossing the bridge, you will immediately see the Newhall Brook Trail going off to the left.



Newhall Brook

The Newhall Brook Trail, marked with white plastic blazes, is a footpath along this beautiful, babbling brook. It crosses the brook over a small bridge lovingly constructed by the Trails Committee in 2018.



Trails Committee members Charlie Tatham, Anne Melvin, and Doug Winter finishing the bridge

Shortly after crossing, you may notice pieces of orange plastic pipe nailed to trees. These were the boundary markers put up by Bill Newhall, a frugal yankee farmer, in the 1960s. Blazes painted red mark the boundary of the Stonehouse Forest, and should not be confused with trail blazes.

The Newhall Brook Trail ends when it hits the Wood Lot Loop. If you keep straight at this point you will walk through some nice beech/hemlock forest, and eventually back to the Forest Trail. A couple of side trails go straight where the trail goes sharply to the left and lead either to the backyard of an abutting house, or peter out shortly. Please do not follow these.

If instead of turning on to Newhall Brook Trail you had stayed on the Forest Trail after crossing the old bridge, you would continue on to the **Stonehouse Forest** property (see page 74).

At many places on the property you will notice American Beech trees that are afflicted by **Beech bark disease**. It is caused by an insect that damages the bark and allows infection by fungi. Fortunately, some trees are resistant – you can spot some here – and so beeches will likely remain a part of New Hampshire’s forests.



Bark of an infected Beech

Should you turn left on the Wood Lot Loop you will also go back to the Forest Trail. On the way, look to your left and you might spy a large, very shaggy red maple tree: it was for a time the largest known in Stafford County. The old, shaggy bark on it could almost make one mistake it for a shagbark hickory.

When you get back to the Forest Trail you can return via the same route you came in on, or you can go left and then take the Pond Trail to your right. It will take you close to the beaver pond, an excellent spot for birding. The beavers had abandoned this pond some time in the early 2000s, and by 2009 their dam had breached and the pond was nothing more than a large mud flat, on which vegetation started to grow. However, around 2015 beavers returned, restored the dam, and the pond is now back to its former glory.



Roger's Pond

The Pond Trail eventually turns away from the water and takes you back to the Forest Trail not too far from Merry Hill Road.