

Reservations Mini-Plan

Weir River Farm Turkey Hill Whitney & Thayer Woods

August 16, 2000

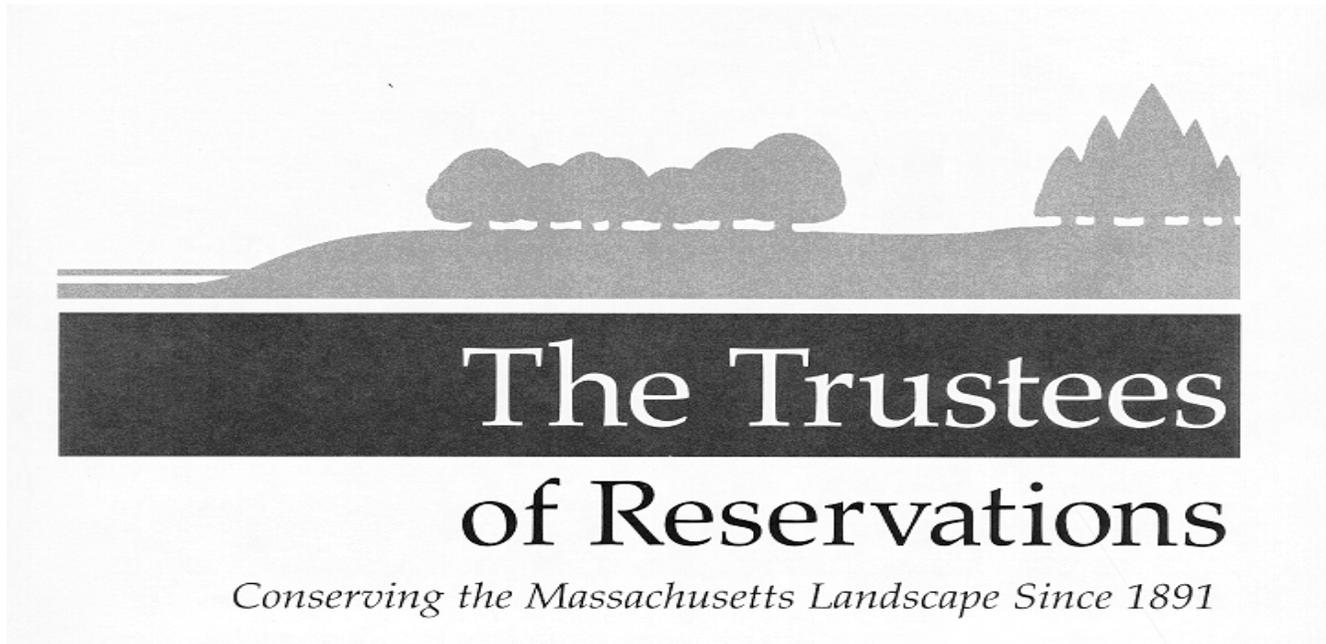


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Reservations Mini-Plan

Weir River– Turkey Hill - Whitney & Thayer Woods

Reservations	Weir River Farm (WRF) Turkey Hill (TH) Whitney Thayer (WTW)	Completed by	Russ Hopping Tom Foster Al Yalenezian Lisa Vernegaard Rick Bachand
Location	Hingham & Cohasset	Date	August 16, 2000
Acreage	900+	Considered for management	900+
Supporting reports and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1999 Botanical Survey and Plant Community Analysis by Garret F. VanWart • 1967 Whitney Woods Study by Nathan Bates • The Trustees' Ecological Management Guidelines • The Trustees' Ecological Criteria • 1995 Black & White ortho aerial photography 1:5000 • 2000 MA Natural Heritage Rare Species, Priority Habitat & Certified Vernal Pools data • 1985/91 Mass GIS Land Use data • 1998 Mass GIS Open Space data • USGS topographic map, 7.5x15 Weymouth quad • 1999 Weir River Farm Management Plan by T. Foster and A. Yalenezian • 1998 Color infrared aerial photography 1:12000 • 1989 Soil Survey of Norfolk and Suffolk Counties, Massachusetts • 1969 Soil Survey, Plymouth County, MA • Wompatuck State Park: Guidelines for Operations and Land Stewardship • Weir River: Fisheries Information Summary, Steve Hurley, MADFW, 7/2000 • 2000 Breeding Bird Survey, TTOR (Bob Deegan, report in progress) • WRF Proposal for Management of Open Space Woodland and of Mrs. Thayer's Garden Pathway • Turkey Hill Land Use and Management Plan, 1997 • Early post-contact history of Turkey Hill (Memo Becky Siebens 5/15/96) • Gardner, R.H. 1996. Last Royal Dynasty of the Massachusetts. <i>Bulletin of the Mass Archaeological Society</i>, 57:1. • Pratt, B.J., 1956. A narrative history of the Town of Cohasset Massachusetts. Volume II; University Press of Cambridge, Inc. Boston, MA. 		

Step 1. Property Profile

(Introduction, Property Narrative, Ecological Features, Historic Features and Associations, Scenic Features, Land Use History, Visitor Use & Services, Buildings & Structures, Economic Considerations)

Introduction

This mini-plan describes and analyzes the significant features associated with three contiguous Trustees' properties: Weir River Farm (WRF), Turkey Hill (TH) and Whitney and Thayer Woods (WTW). Based on this information, management goals and objectives are proposed. This process is being conducted to ensure that historic, cultural and ecological values associated with the properties are conserved and perpetuated for the enjoyment of the public for generations to come. While this plan takes a broad – brush perspective, it does specify programmatic and management activities through a series of action steps intended to achieve identified goals and objectives. In some cases, this will require further planning (i.e. farm management plan, forest management plan), including gathering additional data and conducting a more in-depth analysis.

The decision to combine these three properties into one plan was based on the realization that effective implementation of management policies/actions for one property would require coordination with similar policies/actions on the adjoining Trustees' properties. In effect, these properties are functioning as a single open space. In addition to this “boundary-less” approach for our properties, the flexibility of this planning framework allowed us to look beyond our borders to define a regional context for the property and its features while identifying abutter issues and potential threats to those resources The Trustees of Reservations works to preserve.

Property Narrative

Weir River Farm

Weir River Farm is a scenic 82 acre property located in Hingham and is framed by East Street (Route 228) to the north and Turkey Hill Lane to the south. Situated on the slope of a drumlin, the property rises gently from the Weir River to an elevation of 128 feet. At the summit, one can enjoy views of the Blue Hills, Massachusetts Bay, and the Boston Harbor Islands. The farm includes some 10 acres of fields and approximately 58 acres of managed woodlands. A garden path planted with flowering shrubs and perennials runs north to south along the western boundary.

The farm came to The Trustees as a generous gift in fee from Polly Thayer Starr. Mrs. Starr's parents originally assembled the property in the 1920's and built a summer house there in 1929 complete with formal gardens, swimming pool and croquet court. Mrs. Starr inherited the farm in 1960 and at that time transferred ownership of the main house to The New England Friends for use as a retirement facility. She continued to spend summers on the farm and in the house

she built in the 1940's until 1996. Currently the property, specifically the Barn and out buildings, function as the Maintenance facility (office space, workshop, etc.) for the Trustees' South Shore and Cape Cod Management Unit.

Turkey Hill

Turkey Hill is a coastal drumlin and one of the highest spots along the South Shore. Similar to WRF, this highpoint reveals to its visitors a panoramic view of Boston Harbor and points west. The 55 acre property is bounded by Route 3A to the north, WRF to the west and by WTW to the east and south. The landscape consists of grassland, pine forest and red maple swamp. Presently a farmstead (the current residence of the South Shore Superintendent) with out buildings and a remnant cinderblock building from past military activities occupy this property.

Turkey Hill was acquired in 1997 through the cooperative efforts of a partnership formed by The Trustees of Reservations, Town of Hingham, Hingham Land Conservation Trust, Town of Cohasset, Cohasset Conservation Trust and self-help monies from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. The property is actively managed by The Trustees, although policy and management is guided by the Turkey Hill Management Committee. This committee is comprised of one member from each of the original cooperating agencies. Per terms of the self-help grant, a Land Use and Management Plan was prepared by this committee in May of 1997 and remains the relevant document for the Turkey Hill property. It is important to note that this Reservation mini-plan does not supercede that plan, and any new initiatives set forth by this process would require approval prior to implementation by the Turkey Hill Management Committee.

Whitney & Thayer Woods

This 800+ acre reservation is located in the towns of Cohasset and Hingham and is the core of the three reservation complex. More importantly, the 3,500 acre Wompatuck State Park shares a common boundary with the reservation. Together these lands form the largest undeveloped tract of land on the South Shore. The Bancroft Bird Sanctuary, given by the Federation of Bird Clubs of New England, is an isolated parcel north of Route 3A that includes a small pond. As it's name implies, Whitney & Thayer Woods is mostly forested. Oak-Pine, Hemlock, red maple swamp and mixed oak forests are common. Brass Kettle Brook flows from west to east toward the southern portion of the property supplying water to Lily Pond, a drinking water supply for the Town of Cohasset. Milliken path, a popular attraction for visitors, winds through the southern edge of the reservation. This pathway was designed by Harlen Kelsey using exotic plants from Southern Appalachia. A defunct rail bed that was used to transport naval munitions during the second World War bisects the reservation along a roughly northeast-southwest direction.

As stated above, the Bancroft Bird Sanctuary (directly northeast of Scituate Hill) is an isolated parcel of WTW reservation that was transferred to The Trustees by the Federation of Bird Clubs of New England in 1935. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Bancroft donated the pond (known at the time as Smith's Pond), eleven acres of woodland and an additional five acres to the Federation (Pratt 1956). The pond is impounded and is the headwaters for James Brook, which flows east through Cohasset to its outlet in Cohasset Cove. While the area does not receive regular visitation, a proposal to use a part of the property as emergency access for the proposed

Greenbush Commuter Rail Line may impact the property. The cultural and ecological values of this isolated parcel are not well understood at this time.

Ecological Features

1. Summary

Forests

Forests are primarily post-agricultural mid-successional, mixed deciduous forests with some red cedar and white pine. Some later successional forest, dominated by oaks and white ash occurs on the western side of WRF and throughout WTW. Hemlock occurs at several locations within WTW. Forests are primarily even-aged. "The grove" west of the avenue at WRF has been managed historically as woodland with an open understory for scenic values. American holly is occasional in the understory at WTW with one "stand", referred to as the holly grove, covering perhaps 1/4 acre. American holly dominates the understory in this stand. For a more complete description of plant communities see VanWart 1999.

Wetlands

Red maple swamps are common throughout the reservations with the great majority occurring at WTW. This community covers more than 170 acres alone at the "Great Swamp." Transitional red maple swamp also occurs in the Great Swamp and is one of the more interesting wetland communities. This community supports stunted red maples and is more open than the other red maple swamps on the reservations. As a result, interesting plant species such as sundew, a carnivorous plant, are found growing here. This wetland should be further investigated since additional species of interest may occur. Temporary pools throughout the reservations are providing vernal pool habitat and thus support obligate vernal pool species (e.g. wood frogs (*Rana sylvatica*) and spotted salamanders (*Ambystoma maculatum*). Wet meadow, a declining community type, occurs along the Weir River. This meadow is maintained through annual mowing and supports a unique community type found nowhere else on the reservations.

Grasslands

Approximately 50 acres of grassland occur collectively at TH, WTW and WRF. Composition of plant species varies greatly between fields but cool-season grasses dominate. Fields at TH support more forbs and woody plants than those at WRF and WTW. Grasslands are mowed annually and livestock also graze the fields at WRF. Forests, roads, trails, and hedgerows fragment grasslands, thus habitat is compromised. Despite this, these grasslands may be regionally important since grassland habitat is uncommon and declining. Bobolinks (an obligate grassland breeder) nested at the reservations in recent years. However, surveys conducted during the 2000 breeding season did not detect these or other obligate grassland birds (Deegan, 2000).

In 1999, The Trustees initiated work through a cooperative effort with the Massachusetts Forest Stewardship Program to expand grassland habitat at TH and WRF. Seven acres of forest was cleared to link grasslands previously interrupted by forest. While expanding grassland habitat, the Forest Stewardship project was careful to also emphasize the importance of protecting

contiguous forest at WTW as regionally-important forest interior habitat. The project is about ¼ complete and is expected to continue as resources allow.

Soils & Geology

Soils in the area are acidic and typically well drained, with some prone to erosion (mostly due to slope). Bedrock is near the surface and fragipan soils can produce seeps at the surface, especially at lower slope positions. The fragipan limits percolation of water downward through the soil profile and can “perch” water above this layer resulting in subsurface lateral flow on sloping terrain. WTW contains fine examples of glacial erratics that dot the WTW landscape. While active erosion is not significant on any of the properties, there are minor exceptions due to improperly built or maintained rouge mountain bike trails that are eroding due to improper construction and active use.

Environmental Services

Because the reservation complex is part of the largest, undeveloped open space along the South Shore. Neighboring communities are benefiting from important ecological services provided by these natural areas including drinking water supply protection, soil conservation, groundwater recharge, and biomass production. Specifically, Whitney and Thayer Woods encompass a significant portion of the Brass Kettle Brook watershed that supplies water to Lily Pond, the drinking water supply for Cohasset. It is unlikely that current or proposed property management activities under this plan will influence these functions at the watershed scale. At the local scale however, forest to grassland conversion (forest stewardship project) is likely to increase water flow into the soil matrix and groundwater system since forested systems retain more water than grassland systems.

Weir River & Weir River watershed

The main stem of the Weir River, a perennial stream that flows through the north side of Weir River Farm, drains a watershed that includes most of Hingham. The Weir River estuary is an Area of Critical Environmental Concern. For most of the river’s watercourse, the immediate river banks and floodplain are undeveloped, with the exception of the west bank of the main stem that flows past urbanized Hingham Center. The tributaries of Weir River (Accord Brook, Fulling Mill Brook, Tower Brook and Crooked Meadow) are likewise undeveloped along its immediate banks and floodplain. The eastern portion of the watershed is less developed than the western portion. This is mostly due to Wompatuck State Park.

The river has been dredged in the past and water quality is compromised predominantly during summer months due to low flow and non-point source pollution including road runoff (Hurley 2000). Despite this, the river is known to provide habitat for six species of fish: American eel, redbfin pickerel, largemouth bass, chain pickerel, brown trout (stocked) and bluegill (Hurley 2000). Anadromous fish historically migrated up the river, though today these fish primarily use Foundry Pond. The Foundry Pond fish ladder was rebuilt in 1999 (by the Town of Hingham) in an effort to restore this historical migration route. A small alewife run is active, though a dwindling population of rainbow smelt spawn only below the Dam at Foundry Pond. White perch and striped bass have also been found below Foundry Pond. Trout, mostly non-native species, are stocked

annually though few survive due to summer water temperature above 70 degrees and dissolved oxygen concentrations less than 5 ppm (R. Hopping pers. comm. with S. Hurley). Data regarding other aquatic resources is not available at this time.

2. Describe the regional landscape, include missing ecosystems or declining habitats.

The regional landscape is characterized by human development especially in coastal areas. Though inland forests are heavily fragmented by development as well, these three reservations are largely unfragmented by development. More importantly, these reservations are part of more than 4800 contiguous acres of open space that include Wompatuck State Park and Tripphammer Pond Conservation Area. Many smaller satellite protected areas in both private and town ownership contribute to the mosaic of open space within the suburban matrix (see open space map).

In the Greater South Shore area, missing ecosystems or habitats include undeveloped barrier beaches, unaltered (not filled or ditched) tidal salt marshes, unaltered rocky shorelines, and riverine and riparian habitat (which within the area has been developed and largely channelized). Declining habitats include upland grasslands (which are declining statewide) and Atlantic White Cedar wetlands. Within WTW-TH-WRF complex, a stand of American holly along the Thayer Trail is near the northern limit of its range making it an unusual feature in this location. Wet meadows and transitional red maple swamp communities may represent management and/or restoration opportunities.

3. Are there any rare species present?

Yes, rare wetlands species. See MNHESP map for estimated habitat and property files for more information on species likely to occupy the estimated habitat. Information is on file with the southeast regional ecologist's office.

On adjacent lands?

Yes, rare wetlands wildlife estimated habitat occurs to the north of WRF on the other side of Route 3A, to the east of the main entrance to WTW on Route 3A, and just to the south of WTW in Wompatuck S.P.

4. Are there priority plant communities present?

None were identified by the VanWart (1999) plant community inventory.

On adjacent lands?

Unknown

5. Are there any uncommon or decreasing regional communities present?

- Yes, grasslands at TH supported bobolinks as recently as 1999. Breeding bird surveys conducted by The Trustees in June of 1999 and 2000 at Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm recorded 1 individual in 1999 and 0 in 2000. Since they were known to be more abundant prior to that period (personal communication with Al Yalenezian), their decline is likely associated with habitat and or management changes in recent years. Completion of the Forest Stewardship plan (clearing units 2-4) would certainly improve the potential for these grasslands to support grassland species.
- The ¼ acre stand of American holly along the Thayer Trail is near its northern limit of its range at WTW making it an unusual feature in this location.
- Wet meadows are uncommon in the area. Many of these communities are undergoing a natural transition to forested (red maple) swamps. The wet meadow along the Wier River has been maintained artificially through mowing.

On adjacent lands?

- The Cohasset Heights Landfill approximately 1 mile southeast of Turkey Hill may provide future grassland habitat as it has been, or soon will be, capped.
- Although not adjacent, Worlds End Reservation, which is mostly grassland is located ~1.5 miles to the northeast and is visible from Turkey Hill. The June 2000 breeding bird survey documented nesting & breeding bobolinks within the site (two documented nest sites, 3-5 possible nest sites based on presence of both male and female individuals). Thus, the World's End, Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm grasslands have the potential to function as a single macro site for grassland birds on the South Shore.
- Presence of American holly on adjacent lands locally is unknown.

6. How fragmented is the habitat?

- Forests are fragmented very little at WTW but moderately fragmented by grasslands, roads and buildings at TH and WRF. However, some forest patches at TH and WRF are compromising grassland habitat. The trail network through TH and WRF is fragmenting grassland habitat and could contribute to the on-going decline of grassland nesting birds.
- Wetlands at TH and WRF are limited to a small section along the Weir River. Forested wetlands and intermittent streams are extensive and intact within WTW.

How fragmented is the habitat at the landscape level?

The landscape is highly developed and thus fragmented to the north and west. It is less developed to the immediate east and very little to the south due to Wompatuck S.P. Most of the undeveloped landscape is forested. WTW and Wompatuck S.P. together represent the largest, unfragmented forest patch on the South Shore. (See Forest Patch Map).

7. What landscape ecology functions does the reservation provide?

The reservation complex supports regionally rare and declining grassland habitat that helps to sustain dependent species like grassland birds & invertebrates. At a time when fields in southeastern Massachusetts are reverting to forests or are being developed, the maintenance of early successional grasslands contributes to regional diversity from both a species and habitat perspective.

These reservations provide a core area of contiguous open space that together with Wompatuck State Park (3800 acres, Mass DEM) and Triphammer Pond (98 acres, Hingham Conservation Commission) encompass 4800 acres, the largest contiguous tract of open space in the south shore area. As a result, this area provides suitable habitat for area sensitive species like forest interior birds and habitat for wildlife with large home ranges (e.g. turkey). A narrow greenbelt along the Weir River may act as a corridor that links the reservations to Hingham Bay and World's End.

These reservations help protect the water quality of Brass Kettle Brook. Brass Kettle Brook flows from west to east through WTW and Wompatuck State Park. These lands are free of development, thus eliminating the potential for urban runoff and providing high quality water supply to Lily Pond which is a drinking water supply for the Town of Cohasset.

8. Are non-native or invasive species a problem?

- Yes. The typical upland invasive species are abundant, especially at TH and WRF along edges and forest margins where they can dominate the understory. Species include multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera spp.*), burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*), glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus frangula*), and others. These species may hamper grassland restoration efforts and compromise riparian habitat. The flora along the Milliken Path (a designed and landscaped path by Harlen Kelsey) was planted in part with exotic plants mostly from Southern Appalachia. The threat these exotic species pose to the native flora should be investigated.
- The impact of unleashed dogs and cats on native wildlife, though likely detrimental, is not well understood. Both unleashed cats and dogs have been observed at other Trustees' grasslands preying on birds and may have a similar impact on grassland birds at TH and WRF.

- A non-native insect, the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, has recently been observed feeding on the hemlocks on the property. Because hemlocks typically die within 4 – 8 years of infestation, it is likely that most, if not all of the hemlocks on the reservation will soon disappear, causing a significant shift in the forested landscape. In addition to this significant disturbance, the broad-leaved trees at the reservations have been impacted by leaf eating Gypsy moth. Today small localized Gypsy moth outbreaks approaching a ½ acre in size have been detected.

Historic Features and Associations

Some of the landscapes in The Trustees' care can be characterized as cultural landscapes. A cultural landscape is a geographic area, including both natural and cultural resources, associated with an historic event, activity, or person. The character-defining features, materials, patterns, and relationships that contribute to its historical significance must be present and have integrity.

At WRF, the most significant element meeting all these criteria is the pastoral landscape that represents a land use that has all but disappeared in this area of Massachusetts. The historic elements associated with this pastoral landscape (farm buildings, structures, cart paths, pasture animals, stone walls, etc.) are integral to the conservation of this landscape. A comprehensive cultural resources assessment that blends the history of all three properties would greatly aid the development of interpretive materials and would inform the preservation of historic resources.

Identified historic features include:

- Pastoral landscape.
- Named glacial deposits (erratics) (e.g. Rooster Rock and Ode's Den)
- Milliken Path (a designed and landscaped path by Harlen Kelsey using exotic plants mostly from Southern Appalachia)
- Stonewalls, some indicating the original surveyed lots when the commons of Cohasset were privatized.
- Former Nike missile site. One building remains.
- Bancroft Bird Sanctuary given by the Federation of Bird Clubs of New England
- "The Grove" west of the avenue at WRF. It was a request of the donor, Mrs. Polly Thayer Starr, that this grove continue to be maintained with an open understory.
- Pet Cemetery
- "Garden path" at WRF

Scenic Features

Summary

There are several outstanding scenic features that characterize the properties. The views from TH and WRF of the Boston skyline, Boston Harbor, Blue Hills and surrounding landscape are unique to the area and are the primary scenic feature for both properties. The pastoral landscape of WRF is unique to the area as farms have converted to forests and house lots. This view is especially appreciated from motorists driving along Route 228. The Holly stand may be unique to the region. This stand is appreciated by visitors and has been managed as a scenic feature for decades. The Milliken Path in WTW and "The Garden Path" at WRF are both designed landscapes that offer visitors an opportunity to walk through floral plantings that are colorful when in bloom. The open woodland known as "The Grove" west of the "Avenue" on WRF is a designed feature that emulates an English style woodland.

Land Use History

Summary (A brief overview of the land use histories of the reservations is provided below. It is anticipated that a cultural resources assessment of the reservations will provide a more complete and detailed analysis of land use history.)

Weir River Farm & Turkey Hill

In general, the present forest structure and species composition at these reservations is a result of past agricultural activities as far back as the 1600s. Grasslands are remnants from this agricultural past, but they have also been maintained in more recent years as design elements when WRF served as a country estate. In the 20th Century, Turkey Hill served as grounds for horseback riding and for a military Nike missile site. In fact, the cinderblock structure that stands at TH and the railroad bed through WTW (which accessed a munitions storage facility when Wompatuck State Park was a military installation) are reminders of our socio-political history from World War II through the Cold-War era. In the late 1990's these properties were acquired by The Trustees for the preservation of their scenic, cultural and ecological features.

Whitney-Thayer Woods

Much of Whitney and Thayer Woods was originally the "Common Lands of the Hingham Planters," who settled in the area beginning in 1634. Trees provided a source of wood fuel, and land was cleared for meadow hay. Many old stone walls, especially in the eastern portion of the reservation, date to approximately 1670 when the land was first divided by Joshua Fisher, a surveyor, into long strips measuring 25 feet wide by a mile long. The Hingham Planters were given parcels which they subsequently split up and traded with one another until each owned a more practical rectangle. They used the land for logging and pasturage of sheep and goats.

The land was entirely cleared and farmed over the next two hundred years. In the late 19th century, agriculture in New England was in severe decline due to large-scale farming in the fertile plains of the mid-west and the advent of cross-country railway transportation of goods. Beginning around 1904, Henry M. Whitney began to purchase parcels of former farmland to create a private estate centered around his passion for horses. He created bridle paths for horseback riding and roads for horse-drawn buggies. Whitney's transformation of the land from a working to a recreational landscape changed the use of the land forever.

Approximately 640 acres (mostly east of the abandoned railroad) were later acquired from Henry Whitney by the Whitney Woods Association, a horseback riding group based in Cohasset. Following the Great Depression, the Association gave Whitney Woods to The Trustees of Reservations in 1933 to establish a reservation. At this time, the property extended all the way to Doane Street, but, in 1941, following the outbreak of WW II, about one-third of the property was taken by the U.S. Government for a naval ammunition depot. In 1966, the land was released and became part of the 3,500-acre Wompatuck State Park. In 1943, the name of the reservation was changed to Whitney & Thayer Woods in honor of Mrs. Ezra Ripley Thayer who at that time donated a large tract of land to the west of the original reservation.

Visitor Use & Services

1. What are the primary visitor activities?

Walking / hiking is the primary activity (includes dog walking) at TH and WTW. Horseback riding and mountain biking occurs at these properties but to a much lesser extent. A visitor use survey is being conducted throughout the summer of 2000 to better understand visitor uses, recreational demand, and potential visitor conflicts.

2. Are there prohibited activities?

Yes, hunting, motorized vehicles, (see appendices for regulations)

3. Are there visitor issues including visitor conflicts?

Conflicts have arisen between hikers/walkers and dog walkers when dogs have been off leash. Litter at the trailheads is a persistent problem. Litter occurs in the form of users depositing "mutt mitts" at the trailhead bulletin board, dumping of small quantities of trash or yard waste, and beer bottles from illegal gatherings. Mountain bikers have been spray-painting trail markers on trees to extend their network from Wompatuck State Park, though overall, vandalism is not reported to be a serious problem. A paved bike path has been proposed for the old railroad bed that bisects WTW. There is a concern that this will greatly increase access to the core of WTW thus increasing management demands.

4. Trails: what are their condition and how many miles?

There are approximately 14 miles of trails throughout WRF, TH and WTW. The Trustees have published an updated trail map in 2000 but this map does not show all trails that currently exist. This is especially true for many of the rogue trails that were created by mountain bikers. An inventory of all trails and their condition has not been completed and is warranted. Following this complete trail assessment, it will be necessary to formally close all trails not shown to avoid confusion by visitors, especially those not familiar with the site. Another issue that requires attention is the matter of the trail junctions at WTW which are disjointed and confusing to some visitors. Increasing signage at trailheads, trail junctions and closed trails could significantly improve the ability of visitors to navigate the properties.

Formal trailhead parking is located at three locations. Two parking lots are located on Route 3A (once across from Sohier St., the other approximately 1 mile to the north on 3A) and one at Turkey Hill proper accessed from Turkey Hill Ln. The table in question 5 describes the status of presentation elements at each lot.

5. What presentation elements exist?

Essentials:	Turkey Hill	Sohier St.	Route 3A	Should it Exist?
Entrance sign	Y	Y	Y	
Information bulletin board	Y	Y	Y	
Welcome sign	Y	Y	Y	
Property map	Y	Y	Y	
"Rules and Regulations" sign	Y	Y	Y	
<i>Join us!</i> Brochure dispenser	Y	Y	Y	
Other: (Mutt Mitt dispenser)	Y	Y	Y	
Trail makers or other signs...	Y	Y	Y	
Cultural and natural history interpretive signs	Y	N	N	Grassland restoration interpretation at top of TH.
Other brochures or printed material	N	N	N	Yes, Trail Maps
Suggestion box	N	N	N	
Donation tube/cylinder	N	Y	N	
Roadside directional signs	N	N	N	Sohier entrance difficult to see
Guide/ranger station	N	N	N	
Interpretive visitor center/museum	N	N	N	Yes, at WRF

6. Are there facilities including restrooms?

No facilities exist at this time.

7. What interpretation, if any, exists?

- Trail map contains interpretive material on land use history of WTW
- Temporary signs on grassland restoration are in place at WRF.

Buildings & Structures

1. List and describe each building.

Regional Director's House

This house was Mrs. Starr's summer residence. It has been updated and now serves as a residence for the Regional Director.

Superintendents House (Farm House)

This house is currently undergoing significant repair and updating. When ready, it will serve as the South Shore Superintendent's house.

Main Barn

This barn more than any other structure characterizes the pastoral landscape. The main barn is in excellent condition and currently serves the organization as a maintenance facility for its South Shore & Cape Cod Management Unit

Carriage Barn

Mrs. Starr has given a life interest in this structure to her daughter, Victoria Starr, who has lived in France for the past 20 years. This life interest is being provided so that Vicki could have residence when she wishes to be in Hingham. Presently the structure is being converted to a year round residence by Ms. Starr per the terms of the donation.

Chicken House

This one-story structure is 100' long by 20' wide and in recent years has been used by Trustees staff to house a variety of livestock including cattle, sheep, pigs, goats, and chickens for which they own.

House & garage at TH

This house will be living quarters for Trustees staff. It is currently occupied by the South Shore Superintendent but will soon be occupied by the Visitor Services Coordinator when the Farm House is finished.

Nike building

A cinderblock building is the only surface feature that reflects the role of this property during the Cold War. Historically Turkey Hill was utilized as a Nike Defense military installation to protect the Boston area against the threat of missile attack during the height of the Cold War period. The Turkey Hill Management Committee has recommended that the structure serve as an interpretive pavilion that would feature maps, photographs and other educational materials to tell the history of the site. However (recognizing the effort and fundraising required to realize that desire), the committee suggests demolition of the structure if prospects remain poor after a 5 year period from 1997.

2. List and describe each structure.

At the present time it is anticipated that a cultural resources assessment will identify and describe significant cultural features. Those structures that are likely to be integral to the character of the farm are listed below. It is unknown at this time if detailed information (design plans, architectural drawings, etc.) is available for these structures.

"The avenue"
Camel pillars
Entrance pillars
Stone bridge
Stone walls
Garden pool

Donor's Wishes

It was the wish of Mrs. Starr that the farm continue to be managed in a way that will preserve three key landscape elements: the open fields, the garden path, and the open understory of the grove located west of the avenue.

Economic Considerations

1. What activities generate income? List activities with approximate \$s

None

2. Other economic considerations?

It is likely that WRF will be a very "high profile" property for The Trustees. While the property as envisioned will not produce significant, direct revenue of any kind, it is likely that the visibility of and access to the property will generate a sense of goodwill in the form of membership, donations, and other indirect income from the public.

Building maintenance is costly and staff maintains the fields since no local farmer exists that is willing to cut the fields.

Anything else?

Consideration of Turkey Hill Mgmt Committee. This Committee needs to be aware and involved in any policy and management specific to the Turkey Hill property.

Step 2: What are the most significant features of the reservation based on Step 1:

Weir River Farm and Turkey Hill provide a snapshot in time of a past landscape when agricultural use transformed the landscape into a pastoral setting with open vistas that revealed the entire South Shore area. Today, the pastoral landscape and vistas are all but gone from the area, thus highlighting the significance of TH and WRF as a cultural and scenic resource. The presence of significant conservation or ecological features like the grassland habitat at Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm, forest interior habitat of Whitney & Thayer Woods, and large size of the reservations underscore the property's regional ecological importance. The presence of American holly, especially the "holly grove", at the northern limit of its range is significant as a scenic and ecological resource. The addition of significant designed landscape features like the Milliken & Garden Path distinguish these unique properties. In summary the significant features of the reservation are:

- Pastoral landscape of Weir River Farm
- Grassland habitat at Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm
- Contributes to the largest parcel of protected open space on the South Shore
- Forest interior habitat of Whitney and Thayer Woods
- Vistas from the top of Turkey Hill and Weir River Farm and views from Route 228 into Weir River Farm
- Forest stand of American Holly at Whitney & Thayer Woods
- The Milliken Path
- The Grove (managed woodland at WRF) west of the Avenue and the Garden Path

Are there important management opportunities associated with the reservations (including, opportunities to enhance or create significant values)?

- Opportunity to enhance grassland habitat (both in size and condition)
- Opportunity to expand scenic vistas
- Opportunity to enhance the pastoral landscape.
- Opportunity for visitors to learn about The Trustees, the reservation and our management. The Weir River Farm is ripe for interpretation related to agriculture. This could include coordination with local groups (i.e. 4-H). Likewise, the former Nike site at Turkey Hill presents an interesting interpretive opportunity
- Opportunity to optimize the ecological values associated with a large protected landscape that includes Wompatuck State Park. By working cooperatively and coordinating management efforts, The Trustees and DEM can work to protect the interior habitat associated with this ~4,500 acre landscape. A coordinated management effort will also ensure that the organizations are pursuing compatible goals, whether for resource protection or visitor services.

Step 3: What are the real or potential threats to the scenic, historic, and ecological resources of the Reservations?

For each of the following types of threats, note which type of resource is at risk and provide a specific description of the threat:

E = ecological, H = historic, S = scenic, B = buildings & structures, V = visitors

Type of threat	Resource Category	Specific Description
Fragmentation	E, S E	Clearings within forest at WTW TH & WRF trail network bisecting grassland habitat
Pollution	E E S S	Agricultural activities could pollute Weir River Leachate and runoff from landfill threaten water quality in wetlands and waterways at WTW Litter at WTW trailheads (including mutt mitts w/dog waste) Mountain bikers spray-painting trail markers
Invasive/non-native species	E, S, H E	Many species invading understory of WTW at margins and edges (VanWart 1999), and along Weir River corridor. Unknown whether exotics at Milliken Path may be invasive (needs to be investigated)
Disease/infestation	E, S S, H E, S	Woolly adelgid has infested native hemlock stands, native stands likely to have significant die-back Hemlock (Eastern and Carolina) as a cultural feature of Milliken Path are likely to die-back if untreated Gypsy moth defoliation in WTW. Long-term effects of gypsy moth defoliation are poorly understood
Cutting	E E	The mowing of a trail network through open grassland may be negatively impacting grassland habitat at TH. Only if it leads to fragmentation of forest at WTW
Recreational use	E	Unleashed dogs in Turkey Hill grasslands or WTW forests may be disturbing wildlife especially ground nesting birds Mountain bikers have been developing

	E	unofficial trails causing erosion and extending the trails beyond the recognized network.
Vandalism/collecting/ Theft		
Succession	S E	If fields were allowed to revert to forest the grassland habitat and scenic vista would be lost. The wet meadow by Weir River on Rte 228 is naturally succeeding to a shrub and red maple wetland. If this continues without management, the view from 228 would become obstructed and grassland habitat would be degraded.
Encroachment/ Abutter issues	E, S E, S E	Subdivision abutting Sanctuary Pond (septic system, sand & salt storage, legal issues) Jarvis Webb inholding (possible development) Cohasset Heights Landfill (leachate and runoff into wetlands and waterways)
Storm damage	E, S, H E, S, H	A severe hurricane could significantly alter forest structure at WTW A severe hurricane could alter the structure of the open woodland area that Mrs. Starr has requested to remain as such.
Past neglect		
Fire		
Environmental conditions (humidity, temp, light)		
Other:	E V V	Bird feeders at TH. This would attract predators (rodents) and edge-adapted, non-grassland avian species. House sparrows and starlings greatest threat although other predators including house cats and raccoons will also be drawn to these feeders Dogs off leash as a threat to visitors and staff Poison ivy

Additional Comments:

Dog policy varies across the three properties and may confuse visitors. WRF will have a “no dog” policy in order to avoid potential conflict between dogs and farm livestock. Dogs are required to be on leash at WTW. The Turkey Hill dog policy is governed by Town ordinance that mandates owners to restrain dogs at all times (this does not imply on leash, verbal command is a recognized form of control).

Step 4: What are the management goals based on the above?

Goal 1: Preserve the pastoral landscape and scenic vistas at Weir River Farm & Turkey Hill.

Objectives:

- Maintain and enhance vistas at Weir River Farm and Turkey Hill.
- Maintain structural elements at WRF that characterize the pastoral and scenic landscape (e.g. barn).
- Maintain livestock as element of pastoral landscape (Note: breed selection, numbers, as related to management & interpretation, will need to be determined).

Goal 2. Preserve important ecological features.

Objectives:

- Understand ecological resources and identify conservation targets
- Promote and enhance grasslands habitat at TH & WRF for obligate grassland nesting birds, other obligate grassland wildlife, and grassland plants.
- Maintain unfragmented forest to provide interior forest habitat at WTW
- Maintain American holly stand at Whitney and Thayer Woods.

Goal 3. Preserve significant cultural features and designed landscapes (not listed in Goal 1).

Objectives:

- Understand cultural resources and identify conservation targets
- Maintain "the grove" as a woodland and garden path at WRF in compliance with donor's request.
- Maintain the designed landscape at Milliken Path in WTW.

Goal 4. Increase interpretation and visitor services at each property to enhance visitor enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the property's natural and cultural heritage.

Objectives:

- Maintain a trail network that balances the demands of a variety of trail users and is compatible with the environment and surroundings.
- Enhance visitor experience through interpretation of natural and cultural history, with emphasis on agricultural heritage at Weir River Farm.
- Raise awareness of The Trustees, our mission, and property management goals.

Management Objectives and Recommended Actions

Abbreviations for Personnel described under the "Who" column:

RD Regional Director; **DPE** Director of Planning & Ecology; **SERE** Southeast Regional Ecologist; **NRPA** Natural Resources Planning Assistant; **SSS** South Shore Superintendent; **VSC** Visitor Services Coordinator; **TEAM** All of the above

Goal 1: Preserve the pastoral landscape and scenic vistas at Weir River Farm & Turkey Hill.

Objectives	Action Steps	Required Resources	Who	Completion Date
Maintain & enhance vistas at Weir River Farm and Turkey Hill	Expand current footprint of fields and maintain as grassland	See Goal 2 below under implement forest stewardship plan	SERE, NRPA, SSS	see goal 2
	Develop and implement farm mgt. plan	Staff time	SERE, NRPA, SSS	2001
	Conduct interim management until plan is developed, maintain grasslands following TTOR grassland management guidelines	Staff time	SSS & Staff	On-going
Maintain structural elements at WRF that characterize the pastoral and scenic landscape (e.g. barn).	Conduct Cultural Resource Assessment	Consultant ~ \$3,000	DPE will contract	12/2001
	Provide routine maintenance	Staff time and additional resources as necessary	SSS & Staff	On-going
	Conduct management necessary to maintain, enhance or restore important features identified in the Cultural Resource Assessment	Staff time and additional resources as necessary	SSS & Staff	On-going
Maintain livestock as element of pastoral landscape (Note: breed selection, numbers, will need to be determined as related to management & interpretation).	Develop Farm Management Plan that includes but is not limited to the following:	TTOR Staff Time	SERE & Team	2001
	Determine the need for livestock as part of an interpretive program	TTOR Staff Time	VSC, SSS, SERE	2001

	Determine if grazing or browsing is desired as a management tool	TTOR Staff Time	SERE, NRPE, SSS	2001
	Develop animal husbandry standards	TTOR Staff Time	SERE	Fall 2000

Goal 2. Preserve important ecological features.

Objectives	Action Steps	Required Resources	Who	Completion Date
Understand ecological resources and identify conservation targets	Conduct invasive species assessment at each property	~4 days in field & ~ 3 days for planning, mapping & summarizing	SERE	8/2001
	Conduct Critical lands ecological assessment.	Aerial photos Parcel data	SERE & Land Cons staff	12/2001
	Conduct BBS in potential grassland conversion areas at TH and WRF.	~4 hours in field	SERE	June 2001
	Conduct breeding bird surveys for all 3 properties to evaluate mgmt.	Contract \$ for initial 2000 survey, subsequent surveys tbd	SERE & DPE	2000 survey complete
	Inventory & Certify Vernal Pools at WTW.	SERE w/ help from Volunteer or consultant	SERE	5/2001
	Monitor on-going abutter issues, (encroachment at Sanctuary Pond) act to prevent resource damage.	Staff Time	SSS & RD	on-going
Promote and enhance grasslands habitat at TH & WRF for obligate grassland nesting birds, other obligate grassland wildlife, and grassland plants.	Develop & implement grassland management plan, as part of the Farm Management Plan, that explores the various options available (i.e. mowing, grazing, herbicide, burning).	TTOR Staff time, possibly some additional funding for information gathering	SERE	2001
	Conduct interim management until plan is developed, maintain grassland following TTOR grassland mgmt guidelines.	Staff time and mowing equipment?	SSS & Staff	on-going, 2000

	<p>Implement Stewardship Plan:</p> <p>Clear unit 2 (~3.5 acres, WRF) Clear unit 3 (~5 acres, TH) Clear unit 4 (~10 acres, WRF)</p> <p>Consider seasonal closure of trails during breeding season (May - July).</p> <p>Continue to assess causes of grassland breeding bird decline</p>	<p>Clearing may cost \$1000 - 2000 per acre.</p> <p>Signage, staff time related to implementation. Signs could cost \$35 –\$50.</p> <p>Staff time</p>	<p>SERE, NRPA, SSS</p> <p>SERE, SSS</p> <p>SERE</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>4/2001</p> <p>4/2001</p>
<p>Maintain unfragmented forest to provide interior forest habitat at WTW.</p>	<p>Prepare a forest management plan for WTW and forested areas of Turkey Hill & WRF. This plan should examine all current issues relevant to forests.</p> <p>Maintain forest canopy at Whitney Thayer Woodlands.</p> <p>Monitor on-going non-native infestations of Hemlock Woolly Adelgid and Gypsy Moth. Take management action when appropriate.</p> <p>Conduct trail inventory to identify rouge or redundant trails (and close) or those in need or maintenance.</p>	<p>Staff time</p> <p>No additional resources needed unless management issues develop (i.e. multi-layer management)</p> <p>Additional funds to purchase insecticide treatment, ecology staff time. May need pesticide Applicators License @ \$85 plus annual renewal cost of \$25.</p> <p>Volunteer(s)</p>	<p>SERE, SSS,</p> <p>SERE, SSS</p> <p>SERE, SSS,</p> <p>SERE, SSS & Staff</p>	<p>12/2001</p> <p>on-going</p> <p>on-going</p> <p>by 4/2001</p>

	<p>Work with DEM on planning collaboration to maintain forest interior habitat at Wompatuck S.F. and forest canopy along the "bike path".</p> <p>Examine dog issues, feral cats, and other threats to the objective.</p>	<p>Organizational commitment & Staff time</p> <p>Organizational commitment & Staff time</p>	<p>SERE, RD, SSS</p> <p>SERE</p>	<p>2001 - Ongoing</p> <p>on-going</p>
<p>Maintain American holly stand at Whitney and Thayer Woods.</p>	<p>Research American Holly needs to determine climate and edaphic relationships, as well as natural forest dynamics that promote holly?</p> <p>Develop and implement a Holly management plan specifically for the "Holly stand".</p>	<p>1 of 2 days university library work plus writing time</p> <p>Staff time</p>	<p>SERE</p> <p>SERE & SSS</p>	<p>2001</p> <p>2001</p>

Goal 3. Preserve significant cultural features and designed landscapes (not listed in Goal 1).

Objectives	Action Steps	Required Resources	Who	Completion Date
Understand cultural resources and identify conservation targets	Conduct comprehensive cultural resources assessment for all three properties.	Consultant, ~\$3000	DPE	12/2001
	Implement additional management necessary to maintain, enhance or restore important features identified.	Unknown at this time. Process required to evaluate & prioritize management action.	Team	On-going
Maintain “The Grove” woodland at WRF	Develop and implement mgmt. prescription, as part of Farm Mgmt. Plan that is based on the original design, maintains open understory character as requested by donor, and it retains sufficient understory regeneration to replace old and dying trees and protect against major disturbance (e.g. hurricane damage).	In addition to Cultural Resource Assessment, additional TTOR staff time for planning & monitoring	SSS & SERE	2001
	Continue routine maintenance until prescription is developed.	Staff time & equipment	SSS & Staff	On-going
Maintain the “Garden Path” at WRF & t <u>Milliken Path</u> in WTW	Develop and implement a landscape enhancement plan as part of Farm Mgmt. Plan based on the original design and that maintains the feature’s integrity.	In addition to Cultural Resource Assessment, additional TTOR staff time for data gathering & planning	SSS & Staff	2001
	Continue routine until landscape plan is developed.	Staff time & equipment	SSS & Staff	On-going
	Protect and treat Eastern and	Additional Staff time (planning	SERE, SSS, DPE	Evaluate Fall 2000 & Spring

	Carolina Hemlocks along Milliken Path against Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.	and monitoring) and funding related to purchasing insecticide, renting equipment or contracting, etc. Ravenswood was done for \$2500 which included 3 acres & 100 trees. Cost figure is for multi-year, not to exceed ~3yrs.		2001
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Goal 4. Increase interpretation and visitor services at each property to enhance visitor enjoyment, understanding and appreciation of the property's natural and cultural heritage.

Objectives	Action Steps	Required Resources	Who	Completion Date
<p>Maintain trail network that balances the demands of a variety of trail users and is compatible with environment and surroundings</p>	<p>Conduct trail assessment to identify maintenance needs and set priorities.</p>	<p>Staff or volunteer time</p>	<p>SERE & volunteers.</p>	<p>4/2001</p>
	<p>Conduct survey to assess trail needs by visitors and incorporate into planning.</p>	<p>Staff time, partly completed</p>	<p>DPE staff, Visitor Task Force</p>	<p>On-going</p>
	<p>Close trails not shown on public distributed map. Clearly mark trails to help visitors from getting lost or confused while trying to keep signage to a minimum.</p>	<p>Materials (signs) for trail closure Staff time for planning and implementation. Signs could cost \$150 - \$180 each.</p>	<p>TEAM</p>	<p>6/2001</p>
	<p>Develop monitoring program to evaluate future trail conditions.</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>SERE & volunteers</p>	<p>Yearly after 4/2001</p>
<p>Enhance visitor experience through interpretation of natural and cultural history, with emphasis on the agriculture heritage of Weir River Farm.</p>	<p>Identify interpretation goals based on identified significant values.</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	<p>VSC</p>	<p>5/2001</p>
	<p>Develop and implement interpretive program.</p>	<p>Staff Time</p>	<p>VSC</p>	<p>6/2001</p>
	<p>Encourage volunteers to actively participate in the implementation of interpretive programs</p>	<p>Staff Time, meeting facility at WRF</p>	<p>VSC, SSS, SERE</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Raise awareness of The Trustees, our mission , and property management goals.</p>	<p>Assess trailheads for existing, presentation elements, etc. Develop interpretive plan for trailheads that implement objective.</p>	<p>Staff time</p>	<p>VSC & SERE</p>	<p>5/2001</p>

	<p>Implement recommendations from C&M re: Presentation Elements including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Install Entrance Sign for WRF at Rt. 228 entrance?2. Construct and install Bulletin Board (regular) at main entrance, replacing temporary notice board.3. Post property map on bulletin board as soon as bulletin board is installed.4. Construct and install Bulletin Board Brochure Rack.5. Install Welcome To Sign on post at TH parking lot and the WTW rt. 3A lot.6. Install Regulations Signs at both lots. Regulations should support property management goals.7. Develop interpretive materials on natural resources, land use history and property management for placement on the bulletin board.8. Review regulations on a regular basis and modify as needed.9. Update address and logo on rules and regulations.	<p>Staff time, construction and interpretive materials</p>	<p>VSC, SSS & Staff</p>	<p>5/2001</p>
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Are there other limitations to achieving objectives?

Additional monies will be needed to convert units 2- 4 to grassland habitat.
Turkey Hill planning will need to involve the Turkey Hill Management Committee.

Is a more detailed management plan needed?

Yes. The complexity of the property warrants that additional planning be done to guide management especially relative to interpretive planning, grassland management, and forest management.

Other comments:

This draft reflects the vision and expressed input from a team of managers, planners and ecologists.

APPENDICIES

Reservation Complex Locus Map

South Shore Land Use Map

South Shore Forest Patches

Forest Stewardship Restoration Units

Whitney and Thayer Woods Rules & Regulations

Whitney and Thayer Woods Rules & Regulations

Regulations:

Motorized vehicles are prohibited on the Reservation except in designated parking areas.

The density of surrounding woodlands, and the generally dry condition of the forest floor, make the use of fire hazardous. All fires are prohibited.

Cutting or removing vegetation is prohibited. Trees, shrubs and wildflowers are of scientific interest – all are a part of the beauty of the landscape.

Camping is prohibited for public health reasons.

Old stone walls and rail fences are a vital part of the historic interest of the Reservation. Removing or loosening these artifacts is prohibited.

Disturbing, removing, defacing, cutting or otherwise causing damage to a natural feature, sign, poster, barrier, building or other property of the Reservation is prohibited.

Littering is prohibited. Use containers provided for refuse.

Firearms are prohibited on the Reservation

Horseback riding is prohibited on the Reservation except on designed bridle paths only.

Conduct which disturbs the tranquility of the Reservation or its enjoyment by others is prohibited.

Reservation closes at sunset. Entering or remaining on the property after that time is prohibited.

Whitney and Thayer Woods is a property of The Trustees of Reservation. Visitors are welcome, but on the understanding that they use the area at their own risk, and that they will comply with all the above regulations. Whoever disregards or violates any of the above conditions is hereby forbidden to remain upon these premises, and is subject to arrest, fine and imprisonment as provided by law. The Trustees of Reservations cannot assume responsibility for injuries or loss of personal property.

The Trustees of Reservations, 224 Adams Street, Milton, Massachusetts 02186.