Out walking in the frozen swamp one gray day, 
I paused and said, "I will turn back from here. 
No, I will go farther - and we shall see."...

from The Wood-pile
Guide to

The Robert Frost Trail

Amherst Conservation Department
and
Amherst Area Trails Committee
Amherst, Massachusetts
~ 2004 ~
TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW MAP 4
THE ROBERT FROST TRAIL 5
TRAIL REGULATIONS 5
TRAIL SYMBOLS 6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 6
1. HOLYOKE RANGE WEST 7
2. CENTRAL HOLYOKE RANGE 9
3. HOLYOKE RANGE EAST 10
4. LAWRENCE SWAMP 11
5. AMHERST WOODS 14
6. ECHO HILL-HARKNESS BROOK 15
7. AMETHYST BROOK-MT. ORIENT 16
8. ATKINS RESERVOIR-MT. BOREAS 19
9. CUSHMAN BROOK 19
10. EASTMAN BROOK 20
11. LEVERETT KNOBS 22
12A. MT. TOBY SOUTH 23
12B. MT. TOBY NORTH 26
13. STODDARD HILL 26
13A. STODDARD HILL ALTERNATE 26
14. SPAULDING BROOK-DRY HILL 28
MILEAGES 31
ROBERT FROST TRAIL GUIDE 2004

The Robert Frost Trail (RFT) is one of the five largest hiking trails in Massachusetts. A recent extension along the south side of the Holyoke Range to a point near the Connecticut River brings the current trail length to 47 miles. A possible future extension northwesterly toward the Deerfield River will appear in later guides to the trail.

The RFT crosses through ten towns and is located on a mixture of state land, town conservation and watershed land, private easements, private land by license agreements or handshake permission, and town or state roads. The long-range goal is to relocate the trail away from roads and to establish more secure protection for the sections of the trail that cross private land. As new subdivisions are built adjacent to some parts of the trail, it may become necessary to relocate those sections to avoid friction with residents.

Maintenance of the trail is handled jointly by the Amherst Conservation Department, volunteer members of the Amherst Area Trails Committee, summer seasonal crew funded in part through the Kestrel Trust, and others. To report necessary trail work or to join the Trails Committee, call the Amherst Conservation Department at 413-256-4045 (2nd floor Town Hall).

TRAIL REGULATIONS

Motorized vehicles are prohibited from the entire trail. Horses or mountain bikes should NOT be used on the trail unless the ground is completely firm and dry. Some sections are off limits to horses and mountain bikes because of permanently wet ground.

Camping is strictly prohibited.

Dogs must be kept under control at all times.

Please respect private property. Do not open gates or damage fences, do not leave trash, do not park on private land, and protect all wildlife and vegetation. Your cooperation is mandatory! We rely on the good will of private owners in keeping the trail open.

We remind users that private owners are not liable for any accidents that may result from public use of the trail. Chapter 21, section 17C, of the Massachusetts General Laws states: "An owner of land who permits the public to use such land for recreational purposes without imposing a charge or fee thereof, or who leases his land for said purposes to the Commonwealth or any political subdivi-
sion thereof shall not be liable to any member of the public who uses said land for the aforesaid purposes for injuries to persons or property sustained by him while on said land in the absence of willful, wanton or reckless conduct by such owner, nor shall such permission be deemed to confer upon any person so using said land the status of an invitee or licensee to whom any duty would be owed by said owner.

TRAIL SYMBOLS

The Robert Frost Trail is designated by orange paint blazes, Conservation Commission trails by yellow blazes, new trails in the Amherst Literary Trails System by red blazes, the KC Trail by blue blazes, and the Metacomet-Monadnock (M-M) Trail by white blazes. A turn in the trail is indicated by two blazes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank the scores of trail crew members and volunteers who have worked on various sections of the trail since its inception in 1982. We also sincerely thank landowners whose permission makes the trail possible.

We continue to rely on users and volunteers in the nine towns crossed by the trail route to help maintain the trail and keep it clean and free of trash, windfalls, and debris. We also gratefully acknowledge the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Kestrel Trust, and the many employees, volunteers, and trail groups in this area who have helped with trail construction and maintenance.

Marie Litterer drew the illustrations, Pete Westover wrote the text, and Ineke Dickman prepared the original maps for this booklet. Many others contributed to the material contained in the guide.
1. HOLYOKE RANGE WEST

Note: this section is still under construction as of the date of publication, and is scheduled to open August 2004.

Location: Route 47 to Notch Visitors Center
Distance: Approximately 6.5 miles (mile 0 to mile 6.5)
Hiking Time: 3 hours 15 minutes
Starting Elevation: Approximately 200 feet
High Point: Bare Mountain, elevation 1,000 feet
Ending Elevation: 500 feet

This section of the Robert Frost Trail is the only one still incomplete as of July 2004. The tentative route is as follows: Starting near Route 47 (*see M-M Trail Guide description from Route 47*), the RFT leaves the M-M Trail where the M-M first reaches the rocky ridgetop. From that point it descends steeply, levels out and crosses two old trails, then heads easterly to a crossing of Dry Brook. After another half-mile of rugged ups and downs, it reaches the beautiful Lithia Springs Reservoir, no longer an active water supply source. The reservoir is on a portion of the Range purchased in 2003 by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (then DEM) as part of the Mount Holyoke Range State Park.

The trail skirts the north edge of the reservoir and continues east, sometimes following old woods roads and a yellow-blazed trail route. At a junction at the foot of Bare Mountain, the RFT turns left (a right turn leads out to a small parking area near Route 116) and ascends steeply up a narrow, scenic ridge, through a beautiful bowl-shaped ravine near the ridge, and on to a junction with the M-M Trail at the ridgetop. From that point it coincides with the M-M route as far as the DCR Notch Visitors Center, continuing east over Bare Mountain with fine views out into the valley both north and south, and then steeply down to the Notch and the Visitors Center at Route 116 (at approximately 6.5 miles).
1. Holyoke Range West
2. CENTRAL HOLYOKE RANGE

Location: Notch Visitors Center to Harris Mountain Road
Distance: 5.1 miles (mile 6.5 to mile 11.6)
Hiking Time: 2 hours 30 minutes
Starting Elevation: 500 feet
Summit Elevations: Rattlesnake Knob 813 feet. Long Mountain 920 feet
Ending Elevation: 385 feet

Rattlesnake Knob is an infrequently visited but dramatic point midway along the eastern part of the Holyoke Range. Three separate but nearby ledges on the Knob allow views north to Mt. Toby, east to the Pelham Hills, and south to a deep valley between the Knob and Long Mountain. Further to the east, the summit of Long Mountain is a significant hawk-watching point, with 360-degree exposure and a good vista back westerly to Mt. Norwottuck, the Connecticut River Valley, and Mt. Tom.

The trail follows rolling terrain through deep woods from the Notch Visitors Center to the saddle east of Norwottuck, then drops steeply down the south side of Rattlesnake Knob and continues with a series of ups and downs over sometimes slippery traprock cobbles to the summit cone of Long Mountain. From the Notch trailhead to Rattlesnake Knob, the trail is suitable for cross-country skiing. Many old woods roads connect with the RFT from both the Granby (south) side and the Amherst side.

Parking for the RFT is at the Notch Visitors Center of the Mt. Holyoke Range State Park, just north of the Amherst-Granby line on Route 116. The parking area for the center is on the east side of the road 200 yards north of the Lanec tromp quarry headquarters and weighing scales.

Behind (east of) the visitors center building, the trail heads east from a trail signpost and almost immediately drops off the plateau and descends to the old trolley right-of-way, now a woods road. A left at the road and then an immediate right put you heading east on a gravel-surfaced road that leads under a set of power lines. After another 300 yards, the trail takes a left fork; the M-M Trail takes the right fork, heading southeasterly up Mt. Norwottuck.

After another 1/2 mile, the orange-blazed RFT turns right, leaving a state park trail marked with blue triangles, and crosses a small stream. For the next mile, the trail traverses the north slope of the range through open hemlock-hardwood forest. At mile 8.1, the route enters Amherst conservation land; after a right turn here, ascend steeply to a saddle where the trail rejoins the M-M Trail. The latter has been relocated to follow the RFT to Rattlesnake Knob.
A few yards south of the saddle, a sharp left leads steeply up to the ridge. Follow the ridgeline 250 yards through a stand of hickory and chestnut oak, then turn right on the Rattlesnake Knob Trail and continue east 150 yards. (At this junction the RFT briefly joins the KC Trail, which heads right to its Rattlesnake Knob terminus or left to Bay Road and on northward in the Plum Brook watershed to Old Farm Road.) Just before the Rattlesnake Knob overlooks, take a sharp right and descend 300 feet in elevation to the valley floor.

At the bottom, turn right (southwesterly) on another woods road. In 200 yards, turn left (east) on yet another woods road, and then in another 330 yards (mile 9.0) turn right to start the ascent of Long Mountain. The next 1.4 miles to the summit involve a series of ups and downs over minor traprock knobs, making use of the network of old mountain roads in the area. One quarter mile before the peak, a steep, narrow footway diverges left from the main woods road, allowing the hiker to avoid erosion gulleys caused by off-road vehicles on the southern slope of the mountain. (State park regulations prohibit vehicles from this area and from the rest of the park.) From the summit (mile 10.4) the views are outstanding.

Continue east over the eastern summit of Long Mountain and descend steeply through open hardwoods interspersed with dense patches of hemlock to Harris Mountain Road (mile 11.6). Some of this section is on steps installed recently by an AmeriCorps crew.

3. HOLYOKE RANGE EAST

Location: Harris Mountain Road to Goodell Road
Distance: 1.3 miles (mile 11.6 to mile 12.9)
Hiking Time: 45 minutes
Starting Elevation: 385 feet
High Point: 530 feet
Ending Elevation: 215 feet

This is an attractive, meandering woods walk at the eastern end of the Holyoke Range followed by a stroll down a lightly-trafficked country road to the edge of the Lawrence Swamp.

Leave Harris Mountain Road near the Granby town line, about 0.4 miles south of Bay Road. The route heads east through open woods, slants off to the left (northeast) and joins the power lines that lead north to Bay Road. Continue north across Bay Road to Hulst Road (which becomes Orchard Street), then turn right and follow Hulst Road to Warren Wright Road.
3. Holyoke Range East

The route follows Warren Wright Road north from Orchard Street over Hop Brook and up to an open field on the left (W) across from Goodell Road (mile 12.9).

4. LAWRENCE SWAMP

Location: Goodell Road to Station Road
Distance: 3.4 miles plus 0.4 miles on Station Road east to New England Central Railway (mile 12.9 to mile 16.7)
Hiking Time: 2 hours
Starting Elevation: 215 feet
Ending Elevation: 180 feet
Restrictions: No horses or mountain bikes on this section.

The 1,000-acre Lawrence Swamp is one of the major wildlife habitat and water supply areas in the region. The route through this mixture of wooded swamp, bottomland forest, and meandering streams is more or less level for its entire distance. It is probably best enjoyed during the spring bird migration in late April and May, in the fall, or during the colder parts of the winter when the swamp is frozen and skis or snowshoes can be used. The swamp is more challenging during mud season (usually March and early April) and bug season (June and July).
4. Lawrence Swamp

Head westerly from Warren Wright Road across from the terminus of Goodell Road, following a farm road along the edge of an open field. The road enters a second field and turns northerly, crossing a small stream at a hedgerow and continuing to a left turn into the woods. From here, an old forest road continues westerly, then after 0.3 mile turns northerly and at mile 14.3 reaches the Amherst town Well No. 4.

At the cinder-block well building, the trail turns left and follows a gravel road west. Just north of the road between the well and the Hop Brook crossing is a fine old-growth forest, many of whose larger white pines, white and red oaks, and hemlocks exceed a century and a half in age. An unmarked loop trail traverses this woods, coming close to open marsh and deep swamp located northerly of the stand. At mile 15.0, just before the gravel road leaves the woods (it continues west past the Baby Carriage water pump station to South East Street), the trail turns right (N), leaving the road.
The next section offers views west into the scenic Atkins Flats grasslands. The trail passes through dense hemlocks and crosses a group of bog bridges, then at mile 15.4 it crosses a beaver dam. At mile 15.5 it crosses a stream and a woods road (on private property by the owner's permission), then at mile 15.6 crosses a stream twice and then crosses a woods road. At mile 15.9 the walker will be able to look west into the MacLeod Field, with views northwesterly toward the South Amherst Common.

The trail merges with the Jan Dizard Trail at mile 16.0, skirts the east edge of MacLeod Field, turns left at the next trail junction, and arrives at Station Road at mile 16.3. A right turn along the road leads east across Hop Brook at Heartland Farm and on to the New England Central Railway crossing and the Station Road parking area for the Norwottuck Rail Trail (mile 16.7).
5. AMHERST WOODS

Location: Station Road to Route 9
Distance: 1.5 miles (mile 16.8 to mile 18.3)
Hiking Time: 40 minutes
Starting Elevation: 180 feet
Ending Elevation: 280 feet

This section runs through the Amherst Woods subdivision and along the former town landfill, passing through some interesting bird habitat, particularly along the edge of Pomroy Pond. This section is largely over private land by permission or permanent easement; please be considerate in using the trail, taking care not to leave trash or damage soil or vegetation.

The trail leaves Station Road just east of the CV Railway crossing, heading north along a farm road that parallels the railroad tracks. At mile 16.9, turn left to follow the south edge of the last, small open field into the woods. Continue to Woodlot Road, then turn left and follow the street 200 yards northerly, passing the end of Teaberry Lane and turning right (E) up a steep hill. After another 100 yards, cross Teaberry Lane and continue along a cleared easement, turning right and then left before reaching Wildflower Drive (mile 17.5).

Turn left (W) and follow Wildflower Drive 0.1 mile to a right turn into the woods. With the revegetated old town landfill on the left and, after 300 yards, Pomroy Pond on
the right, continue to Old Belchertown Road. The alert walker will often see migrating waterfowl or resident herons at Pomroy Pond, and the area near the pond is good for warblers and other songbirds in migration.

A left on Old Belchertown Road leads west 250 yards to Route 9 across from the entrance to the closed town landfill and one-half mile northwest of the Pelham town line. To start the next section of the trail, cross Route 9 and continue NW along the road 120 yards; the trail turns right down a steep bank along the western edge of the landfill property (mile 18.3).

6. ECHO HILL-HARKNESS BROOK

Location: Route 9 to Pelham Road
Distance: 2.1 miles (mile 18.3 to mile 20.4)
Hiking Time: 1 hour
Starting Elevation: 280 feet
Ending Elevation: 205 feet
Restrictions: No horses or mountain bikes on this section.
This section includes a mix of suburban landscape and wooded back country. It passes through the Harkness Brook Conservation Area, past scenic woodlands of farmland located along the Fort River, and along the edge of the closed town landfill near Logtown Road.

Leave the northeast side of Route 9, 120 yards northwest of the landfill entrance, descend a short grade and skirt the landfill with its flocks of gulls and turkey vultures. A left (W) at the northwest corner of the landfill leads down a grade into the Harkness Brook area and then across two log footbridges. Turn left again, then right just before another brook. (Across the brook is a well-used path to the Rolling Green area). A steep ascent to a narrow ridge leads to an open wooded area overlooking the dramatic Harkness Brook ravine. Pass the junction with the Emily Dickinson Trail on the right and, after another 200 yards, turn left on Stony Hill Road.

Follow Stony Hill Road westerly for one-half mile around a gradual curve and past Garehouse Road to a left turn off the road across from Thistle Lane (mile 19.3). Descend gradually through open oak woods, cross a stream, and turn left (W). At mile 19.6, a right turn marks the start of a new section of trail through swampy woods. Passing below the Echo Hill Tennis Court and pond located off Oak Knoll, the trail continues north to emerge at the end of Ward Street 200 yards south of Pelham Road and the Amethyst Brook parking area (mile 20.4).

7. AMETHYST BROOK-MOUNT ORIENT

Location: Pelham Road (Amherst) to Pratts Corner Road (Shutesbury)
Distance: 4.8 miles (mile 20.4 to mile 25.2)
Hiking Time: 2 hours 30 minutes
Starting Elevation: 205 feet
High Points: Mt. Orient, 957 feet; southwest slope of Poverty Mountain, 770 feet
Ending Elevation: 405 feet
Restrictions: No mountain bikes from November 1 through April 30.

This is a rugged, wilderness-like section of the trail that starts at the Amethyst Brook Conservation Area and continues through private land over Mt. Orient and Poverty Mountain in Pelham, finally descending to the headwaters of Adams Brook in Shutesbury. Fine views to the south and west are available from the Mt. Orient ledges, and the trail crosses several small but attractive brooks.
7. Amethyst Brook-Mt. Orient
Beginning at the Amethyst Brook parking lot on Pelham Road, the trail follows a farm road north and then east along the edge of town community garden plots and into the woods. The main trail soon crosses a wooden bridge over an old diversion canal once used to feed an ice pond near Pelham Road, then in another 100 yards turns left across a second bridge to the north side of Amethyst Brook.

The route follows the north bank of the brook east into Pelham, then ascends first steeply and then more gradually toward Mt. Orient, following a woods road. After joining the M-M Trail at mile 21.6, it angles up to the open rock slabs of Mt. Orient (mile 21.9) and then onward to the wooded summit (mile 22.5). The remainder of the route to Pratts Corner Road can be negotiated on skis, as it follows old roads and trails at a fairly gentle angle.

The trail crosses Heatherstone Brook at mile 22.2 and continues around the south slopes of Poverty Mountain and then down to a 4-way junction. Here a U-turn left leads back south to Amethyst Brook and a right follows an old woods road; carefully follow the orange blazes more or less straight ahead to stay on the RFT. The route continues to Pratts Corner Road at mile 25.2, where the trail crosses the road to a new section leading along Adams Brook. The M-M Trail diverges right here, heading toward Brushy Mountain in Leverett. There is limited parking on the gravel roadside here.
8. ATKINS RESERVOIR-MT. BOREAS

**Location:** Pratts Corner Road to Flat Hills Road  
**Distance:** 1.3 miles (mile 25.2 to mile 26.5)  
**Starting Elevation:** 405 feet  
**High Point:** north saddle of Mt. Boreas, 550 feet  
**Ending Elevation:** 510 feet

This is a short but attractive section through open pine woods and past Atkins Reservoir, part of the Amherst water supply. Goshawks have nested near the trail on Mt. Boreas, and migrating waterfowl frequent the main reservoir, which resembles a lake in Maine or Minnesota.

Begin at Pratts Corner Road in Shutesbury, 100 yards east of the Adams Brook road crossing. After a right turn just beyond the Adams Brook footbridge, the trail follows the west bank of the brook. A left turn up the hill leads to a logging road and a right turn (N) onto the main woods road leading to Atkins Reservoir. The route traverses a beautiful open stand of tall pines to a junction with Market Hill Road (mile 25.5). The trail follows Market Hill Road 1/2 mile northwest along the edge of the reservoir, then turns left off the road through a section of Amherst Watershed Land and up Mount Boreas. At mile 26.5, the path reaches Flat Hills Road.

9. CUSHMAN BROOK

**Location:** Flat Hills Road to Pulpit Hill Road  
**Distance:** 1.6 miles (mile 26.5 to mile 28.1)  
**Hiking Time:** 45 minutes  
**Starting Elevation:** 510 feet  
**Ending Elevation:** 335 feet

The trail descends from Flat Hills Road through open woods to Market Hill Road, then enters the Mill River Conservation Area and follows Cushman Brook past Puffer's Pond and back up to Pulpit Hill Road a few hundred yards east of the Town's Cherry Hill Golf Course. The walk along the various cascades is refreshingly chilling in the heat of the summer.

From Flat Hills Road at a point 0.3 mile south of its junction with Market Hill Road, head westerly through an attractive forested area. At mile 27.1, cross Market Hill Road to a short ascent under a power line, then continue northerly to a steep drop high above a scenic bend of Cushman Brook. The trail crosses Bridge Street just south of the Silver Bridge (mile 27.3), then follows the steep side of the Cushman Brook ravine over the railroad and above some lovely cascades.
9. Cushman Brook

The path crosses the New England Central Railway tracks at the south end of the Cushman Brook trestle, then descends to the wheelchair-accessible section of the trail and, at mile 27.6, the Robert Francis Bridge; a 70-foot steel truss bridge spanning the main brook. In a few more yards, turn left on State Street, then immediately right on a trail that skirts the east edge of Puffer's Pond. A right turn at an old service road leads east up to a left turn up a wooded grade and on to Pulpit Hill Road near the road's high point. (The Helen Hunt Jackson Trail diverges from the RFT at the bottom of the service road and continues around the pond.)

10. EASTMAN BROOK

Location: Pulpit Hill Road to Juggler Meadow Road  
Distance: 1.9 miles (mile 28.1 to mile 30.0)  
Hiking Time: 55 minutes  
Starting Elevation: 335 feet  
High Point: Pulpit Hill, 385 feet  
Ending Elevation: 315 feet  
Restrictions: No horses or mountain bikes on this section.

This section crosses the rocky knolls of Pulpit Hill, then continues through wooded and semi-open country to the fields of the Eastman Brook Conservation Area, finishing with a scenic walk into Leverett to Juggler Meadow Road. To date, there are almost no homes along this part of the trail, and the views and the bird habitat are rewarding.

Start at the high point of Pulpit Hill Road at a gate 0.6 miles east of Route 63 and head north along a woods road.
After a few hundred yards, a right turns leads uphill over the knob, then gradually heads more northerly through oak and pine woods to a power line crossing. The trial continues north and then northwest through red maple woods until it enters the fields of Eastman Brook. At the southwest corner of the first field, a small side trail diverges left to the Parsons Knoll Conservation Area. Then at the northwest corner of that field, the Ellsworth Barnard Trail leaves the RFT to the left to loop through the western part of the Eastman Brook Conservation Area.

The RFT turns right here and follows the south edge of the second field across a small bridge and to a corner near the New England Central Railroad (mile 29.2). (To reach Leverett Road, cross the tracks and continue 1/4 mile east on a farm road.) The RFT turns left just west of the railroad and follows the east side of the field on a mowed path parallel to the tracks, then crosses through a hedgerow into private land in Leverett. Note: please leash your dog in this section; take care to stay on the marked path, especially near the residences at the northern end of this section near Juggler Meadow Road. At mile 29.7, cross Juggler Meadow Road just west of the railroad bridge.

10. Eastman Brook
11. LEVERETT KNOBS

Location: Juggler Meadow Road to Bull Hill Road
Distance: 1.7 miles (mile 30.0 to mile 31.7)
Hiking Time: 1 hour
Starting Elevation: 315 feet
High Point: 471 feet
Ending Elevation: 305 feet

This section winds around and over a group of rocky knolls between Juggler Meadow Road and Depot Road, then follows country roads to the beginning of the long Mount Toby section. The open woods covering the knobs make an attractive family walk, and the knobs themselves are good picnic sites. The trail here is entirely on private property by permission; remember to use courtesy in walking here.

The trail leaves Juggler Meadow Road just west of the railroad bridge, heading north not far from the railroad right-of-way until it passes a culvert and brook. It then gradually ascends a wooded hill before dropping to cross the railroad tracks at mile 30.1. The route continues in a
northerly direction through dry woods. At Depot Road (mile 30.6), turn left and follow the road back across the railroad tracks and past a graveyard to Route 63. Take a left on Route 63 and an immediate right onto Bull Hill Road. Continue another 0.4 miles to a small pulloff and trailhead on the right at the Leverett-Sunderland town line (mile 31.7).

12A and 12B. MOUNT TOBY

Location: Bull Hill Road to Reservation Road and Cranberry Pond
Distance: 8.0 miles (mile 31.7 to mile 39.7)
Hiking Time: 4 hours
Starting Elevation: 305 feet
High Points: Bull Hill, 937 feet; north summit Bull Hill, 872 feet; Mt. Toby summit, 1,269 feet
Ending Elevation: 400 feet

The Mount Toby sections were completed by the 1987 summer Amherst Regional High School conservation crew under a grant to the Kestrel Trust from the State Department of Environmental Management (now Department of Conservation and Recreation). After crossing the summit of Bull Hill, the route makes a long, rugged ascent of Mt. Toby, then descends steeply to the Cranberry Pond area and Reservation Road in Sunderland. Views can be had from a small cleared lookout on Bull Hill, from the Mt. Toby fire tower, and from much of the upper parts of the route after summer foliage is gone. The southern part of this section is over private land, and the owners ask that special consideration be given to protecting their land and their privacy.

12A. Mount Toby South

Leave Bull Hill Road at the Leverett-Sunderland town line. The first section of trail on Mt. Toby was relocated in 1995 by request of the landowner, and is now more rugged and more scenic. It skirts land of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) near Green Swamp, then ascends to the Bull Hill summit.

After a steep ascent from the trailhead at Bull Hill Road, the trail climbs westerly on old logging roads to the top of a small hill that overlooks the Bull Hill farm fields. It then drops down toward Green Swamp along the TNC boundary before turning right and climbing easterly to a saddle at the base of Bull Hill. Here turn left (N) to follow a steep wooded ridge up to the summit of Bull Hill (mile 33.6). Staying on the ridge, the path makes a long, gradual
descent to a saddle at the trail’s junction with South Mountain Road, an abandoned woods road. Turn right (E) here and continue to descend, crossing a stream at mile 34.8.

Cross a north-south woods road and continue northeasterly through mountain laurel and open woods, slabbing gradually downwards along a hillside to a pair of stream crossings at elevation 520 (mile 35.3). The trail climbs steeply up the east bank, passes under a high tension line and turns left (N) on a woods road. The route detours below a large blow-down, then turns sharply right (E) at mile 35.9. The trail continues to climb, turning right at mile 36.2 and following a small ravine 150 yards up to a saddle. Turn left (N) at the saddle and cross a broad, oak- and huckleberry-covered plateau, finally dropping to the remains of a small cabin (mile 36.8) and, farther down, a junction with a woods road that leads northerly to the summit of Roaring Mountain.

12B. Mt. Toby North
12B. Mt. Toby North
The main trail descends northwesterly to Roaring Brook, then turns left and ascends the well-hiked old road southeasterly, finally bending back around to the north and reaching the Mt. Toby fire tower at mile 38.0. The descent begins by following a cleared telephone line down about 1,000 feet to a junction, where the Frost Trail turns left. After 800 feet, the main trail leads left at another junction, passes through a spruce stand and skirts a small ledgy knoll. Here the main trail breaks left once more and follows the red-blazed property boundary of Mt. Toby State Forest for about 1,200 feet. The route continues right for another 800 feet to the main woods road and parking area at Reservation Road, west of Cranberry Pond (mile 39.7).

13. STODDARD HILL
Location: Route 63 to Stoddard Hill and North Leverett Road
Distance: 2.1 miles (mile 39.7 to mile 41.8)
Hiking Time: 50 minutes
Starting Elevation: 382 feet
High Point: Stoddard Hill summit, 867 feet
Ending Elevation: 334 feet

From the Reservation Road trailhead, turn right and follow Reservation Road east 1/2 mile past Cranberry Pond and across the railroad tracks to Route 63. Turn right and follow Route 63 south 200 yards to the Stoddard Hill RFT trailhead on the east side of the road (mile 40.3).

This is an attractive section with good views through open woods. The trail leaves the road heading easterly, ascending a broad ridge through open rocky woodlands. The ridge curves around to the north to reach the rock outcrops at the top of Stoddard Hill, then begins a gradual ascent through open oak forest, young cut-over woods, and then a shady hemlock grove to emerge at North Leverett Road across from the Sawmill River (mile 41.8).

13A. STODDARD HILL ALTERNATE
A slightly longer but equally scenic alternate RFT route from the Reservation Road trailhead to Stoddard Hill is due for construction in the summer of 2004. It crosses land in Sunderland and Montague newly acquired by the Massachusetts DCR and proceeds northeast to Route 63, then crosses 63 and traverses state Fisheries and Wildlife land to rejoin the main RFT near the Stoddard Hill summit.
13 & 13A. Stoddard Hill and Stoddard Hill
Alternate (proposed ....... .)

27
Instead of following the orange-blazed route east along Reservation Road, turn left (W) and follow Reservation Road for about 1/4 mile to a woods road that leaves the right side of the road and heads northeast. Continue on old logging roads to a descent to a footbridge across Cranberry Pond Brook which puts you back into open woods and then across Route 63. The trail continues through a white pine grove, across the New England Central Railroad and an electric power line, and then on eastward up the west side of Stoddard Hill.

14. SPAULDING BROOK-DRY HILL

Location: North Leverett Road, Montague, to Chestnut Hill Road and Wendell Road, Wendell
Distance: 5.2 miles (mile 41.8 to mile 47.0)
Hiking Time: 2 hours 30 minutes
Starting Elevation: 334 feet
High Point: Dry Hill, 1,289 feet
Ending Elevation: 1,031 feet

At mile 41.8 the trail turns right (E) and joins North Leverett Road for 150 feet, then turns left (N) onto Spaulding Brook Road. Follow the road for 600 feet across the Sawmill River bridge and up a hill where the road splits (mile 42.0). Turn left and look for the trailhead on the right just after the Spaulding Brook road culvert.

The trail ascends a steep sidehill and levels off after 0.1 mile (trail mile 41.9). The path then makes a left, climbs a smaller hill, and follows the ridge along a stone wall through hemlock woods. At mile 42.1 the trail crosses the stone wall for the second time and turns right, eventually crossing a stream and heading back uphill. At mile 42.5 the trail crosses an old road, continues through hemlock and mountain laurel woods, and at mile 42.9 crosses another stream. At mile 43.2 the trail turns sharply right, descends a steep grade, crosses Spaulding Brook, and meets an old road coming in from the right. The trail turns left here, and then shortly turns right and heads uphill for some 400 feet to the first of a series of five dramatic rock outcroppings, a natural amphitheatre known as Pigpen Ledges (trail mile 43.5). The next quarter mile is steep, rocky, and possibly dangerous in wet or icy weather.

At mile 43.8, the trail intersects another old road. Turn left and follow the woods road up and around to the right for 700 feet. The trail then takes a left away from the road and follows a ridge northerly for the next 1.7 miles. At mile 45.6, the trail picks up another old road for 700 feet.
and continues through open woods to a gravel woods road. Turn right and follow the road 800 feet to cross the power line. Continue on the old road, bearing left at a road junction after the power line. The trail reaches a gravel road after another 0.4 mile. Turn left and follow the road 1/4 mile to Wendell Road (mile 47.0, the trail's northern terminus).

14. Spaulding Brook and Dry Hill
Southbound: from the Ranger Station on Wendell Road, located just west of the Ruggles Pond entrance drive, cross the main road and proceed south on a minor paved and then gravel road 0.2 mile. Turn right on a woods road and proceed 0.4 mile to a power line. Bear right and continue 800 feet to a junction where the trail leaves the old road and heads left (S) up the hill and onto the main ridge.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S to N</th>
<th>Mileages</th>
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THE AMHERST
CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

The Amherst Conservation Department has been in the trail business for several decades, and now manages more than 80 miles of footpaths. The Department takes care of some 1,965 acres of conservation land with assistance from state grants, the Kestrel Trust, Valley Land Fund, Ridgewalker Trail Adopters, donors of trail easements and gifts of land, and other volunteers and supporters. The Department and the Conservation Commission have also been involved, together with the Amherst Conservation Commission and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, in the acquisition of permanent Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) over 2,000 acres of farmland in 33 farm properties and an additional 157 acres covered by Conservation Restrictions. The Department carries out a forestry management program on 2,500 acres of Town watershed land in Amherst, Pelham, Shutesbury, and Belchertown. The Department coordinates a Town energy conservation and greenhouse gas emission reduction program; administers the Town Community Garden program; oversees operations of the Cherry Hill Golf Course, provides staffing for the Conservation Commission, Farm Committee, Public Shade Tree Advisory Committee, Amherst Area Trails Committee, and Cherry Hill Advisory Committee; and works with the Conservation Commission and other Town boards in preparing updated five-year Open Space and Recreation Plans for the Town.

For information about current trail conditions visit our web site at:
Out through the fields and the woods
And over the walls I have wended;
I have climbed the hills of view
And looked at the world, and descended...

from Reluctance