

Reading the Landscape - Geology & Soils

Although not seen immediately on the property, nearby rock exposures are of thinly layered metamorphic rocks that geologists group into the Waterville Formation of Silurian age (419-443 million years old). The rocks were originally ocean sediments that were squeezed between colliding continents and turned on edge. At the close of the last ice age, when sea level was temporarily higher than today, these rocks were covered by a thick veneer of glacial-marine mud that geologists call the Presumpscot Formation. Among the more prominent features of this property are the deeply incised and meandering stream valleys that were eroded into the mud of the Presumpscot over the last 15,000 years.

Where are the Stone Walls?

North Acre's sandy loam soils formed over thousands of years from marine sediments (the soil parent material) and as organic matter (plant and animal) decomposed. Generations of farmers have found these stone-free Hartland and Scio soils valuable for pasturing livestock and growing hay and apple trees. As you look around you, note the absence of stone walls, which in many other places in Maine were built from rocks left behind in glacial till.

During its heyday, the Lee family pastured 70 sheep, 41 Morgan horses, and cattle (dairy/beef cross), all of which had free range over today's woods and fields, including the edges of the brooks. In 1990 Trudie and Deb received conservation funding that allowed them to fence off the brooks and protect the streams and riparian habitat.

The field edges provide resources for many pollinators, with abundant numbers of aster and goldenrod species. In addition, this area is ideal habitat for American woodcock (*Scolopax minor*).



A Partial List of Wetland Plants & Birds

The North Acres riparian corridors and their narrow floodplains are dominated by black ash, white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), red maple (*Acer rubrum*), and eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*). Areas adjacent to the streams feature speckled alder (*Alnus incana* ssp. *rugosa*), Canada bluejoint grass (*Calamagrostis canadensis*), and reed canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). The large non-native tree willow (hybrid of *Salix alba* & *S. fragilis*) is abundant along the stream edges. In the southeast along the Bond Brook floodplain, scrub-shrub wetlands feature speckled alder, Bebb's willow (*Salix bebbiana*), pussy willow (*Salix discolor*), and withered viburnum (*Viburnum nudum* var. *cassinoides*). American elm (*Ulmus americana*) is also abundant.



These wetland areas and stream corridors and the surrounding fields and woods provide valuable habitat for many species of birds, including the following:

Sharp-shinned, Coopers, Red-tailed, Rough-Legged, and Broad Winged Hawks; Northern Harrier, Osprey, Kestrel, Great Blue Heron, Sand Hill Crane, Killdeer, Woodcock, Snipe, Ruffed Grouse, Belted Kingfisher, Eastern Kingbird, Great Crested Flycatcher, Barn and Tree Swallows; Brown Thrasher, Eastern Bluebird, Red-eyed Vireo, Prairie Warbler, Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlark, Snow and Indigo Buntings; Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Eastern Towhee, Purple and House Finches; Cedar Wax Wings, and Pileated, Red-bellied, Downy, and Hairy Woodpeckers

Conservation History and KLT

Trudie's parents purchased North Acres in 1962 when they were living on Western Avenue in Augusta. With a large herd of sheep and dairy cattle, the family needed additional pasture and hayfields. For ten years they moved animals back and forth from Western Avenue to the North Acres pasture. In 1969 they finally purchased a farmhouse near today's North Acres. Trudie's earliest memories of the property were of picnics at Bond Brook; building crude water wheels out of sticks, bark, and tough swale grass; and riding her spirited Morgan horse, Kate, through the woods and fields. With those memories in mind and at the time of their donation to KLT, Deb and Trudie noted:

*We give this land to KLT in memory of
Ruth & Richard Lee and
William & Carolyn Plengey.*

*May the wildlife thrive and the community continue to
enjoy its diversity and beauty.*



*North Acres Donation to KLT - Nov.18, 2021
Trudie Lee (left) & Deb Plengey*

*KLT Lands Committee members:
Norm Rodrigue (left) & Howard Lake*

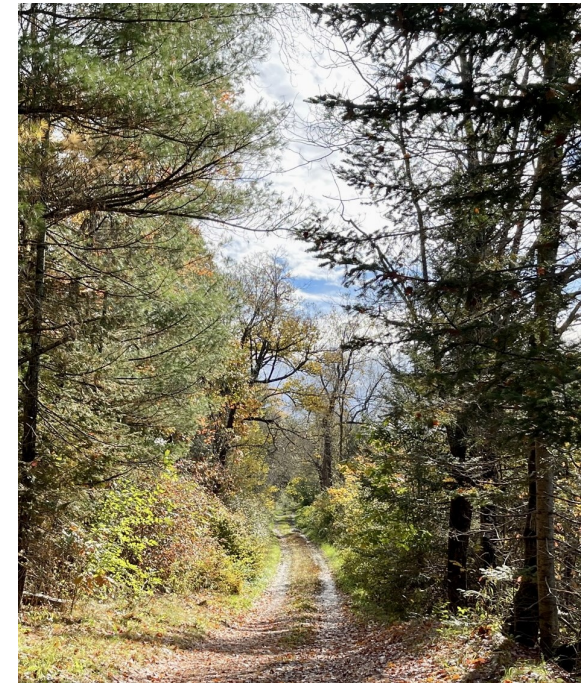
*Thanks to those who contributed expertise and time for this brochure:
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Robert Marvinney, Marie Ring, Norm Rodrigue, Jean Luc-Therault,
Janie Matrisciano, Tyler Keniston &
Samuel N. Howes, Archivist III ~Maine State Archives.
Text: April 2022 ~ TK*

NORTH ACRES WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREA

132 acres ~ Manchester, Maine

Property Dedication

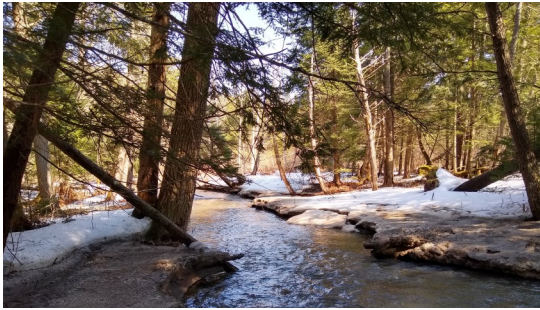
April 28, 2022 5 p.m.



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Welcome to Kennebec Land Trust's North Acres Wildlife Conservation Area

We hope you enjoy your visit!



Just outside of Augusta, in a region with increasing development pressure, the ecologically diverse 132-acre North Acres Wildlife Conservation Area features cold water brooks, extensive riparian areas, productive hayfields, and conifer and hardwood woodlands. Trudie Lee and Deb Pleney established a conservation easement with the Maine Farmland Trust in 2020 on land adjacent to North Acres. Combined, the two tracts create a 200-acre conservation property that will forever benefit Maine's wildlife and people.

Trudie and her family and Deb Pleney have been haying and pasturing animals on this land and exploring the surrounding woods and brooks since 1962. As you hike the farm road above the Tanning Brook wetland to the confluence with Spring Brook, we hope you will pause at the bench or table to enjoy the diversity and beauty around you before climbing to

view the expansive hayfields. Listen to sound of Bond Brook as it flows eastward to the Kennebec River. Also known as Mill Brook,

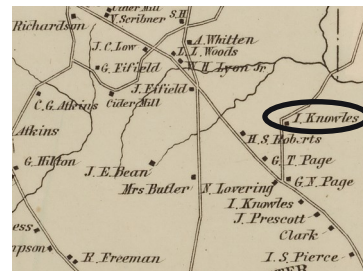


Bond Brook provides critical habitat for one of the strongest brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) populations in the capital region, and for many other species of insects, birds, and mammals. These streams are fed by an exceptional cold water groundwater source that's the key to a healthy brook trout habitat.

People and the Land

Wabanaki

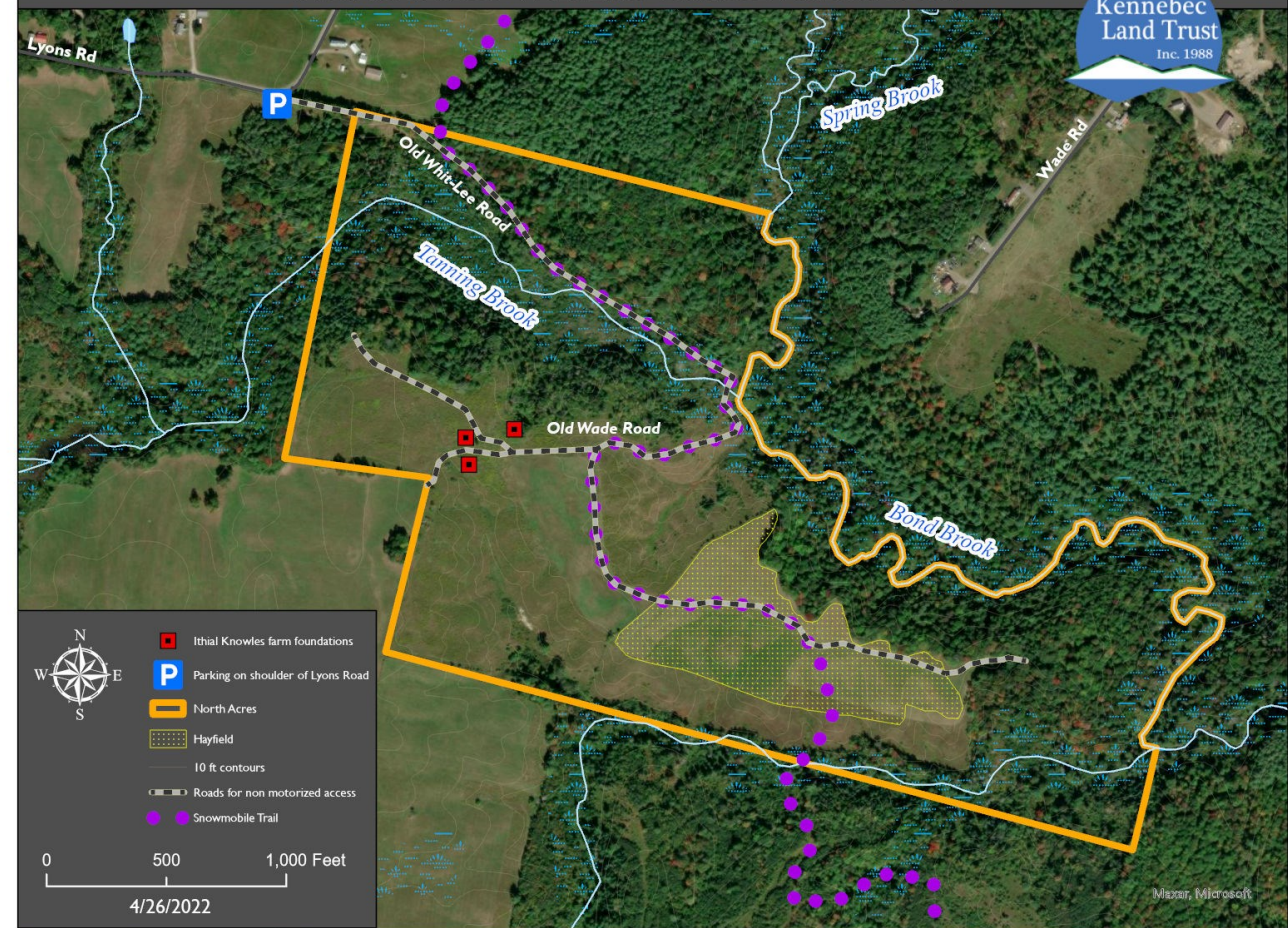
The natural environment you see around you—the wildlife, wetlands, waters, and woodlands—have long been valued by the Wabanaki, Maine's indigenous peoples. Native Americans fished, foraged, and hunted in this region long before the first European farmers arrived in Manchester in 1775. Many of the natural resources found here, including brown ash trees (*Fraxinus nigra*) and brook trout, are of cultural significance to the Wabanaki. Today we recognize the Wabanaki people's long stewardship of the lands that we call Maine and the ongoing and important role they have in shaping the future.



Ithial Knowles Family - 1879 County Atlas

In the 19th century the land now known as North Acres was owned and farmed by members of the Prescott, Knowles, Wadleigh, Brown, and Cram families. Early deeds and the 1879 map of Manchester indicate that the Ithial Knowles family lived on the "Old" Wade Road, where the foundations of the farmhouse are still visible. In 1880 Ithial and Betsy (dwelling #120 in the US Census) owned 150 acres, 3 horses, 4 milch cows, 4 oxen, 22 sheep, 7 pigs, and 20 hens. A 12-year-old "servant" resided with the family. The Knowles's farm production in 1880 included 60 tons of hay, 80 bushels of barley, 15 bushels of Irish potatoes, 6 bushels of peas and beans, and 300 pounds of butter. On two acres they were growing 100 apple trees. That's quite an impressive farmstead for the hilly land you see around you.

North Acres Wildlife Conservation Area



Stream Crossing and Trails: PLEASE note that the water levels at the Tanning Brook crossing can be very high in the spring or after rain. Crossing may not be possible during these times. **Hayfields:** Trudie Lee and Deb Pleney raise 800-1100 bales of hay per year on the North Acres fields. Please do not walk on the hayfields during the growing season in May-September. Deb, Trudie, and KLT will also have opportunities to lease this valuable agricultural land to area farmers.

Public uses: The Conservation Area is open to the public for nature observation, hiking, snowshoeing, and hunting. No motorized vehicles are allowed.

Dogs: For the protection of wildlife habitat and hikers, dogs should be under voice command or on a leash. Please pick up after your pets.

Directions and Public Access: From Route 202 in Manchester, turn north on Puddledock Road. Continue approximately two miles to Lyons Road. Turn right on Lyons Road and continue to the gate on the Old Wade Road (known more recently as the Whit-Lee Road). Please park along the shoulder of Lyons Road.