



ALLOWED AND PROHIBITED TRAIL ACTIVITIES

Note that a significant part of this trail is located on land belonging to Maplebrook Farm. Dogs are allowed, but must be leashed at all times. Passive recreational activities allowed on the trail: Hiking, snow shoeing and cross-country skiing. Also mountain biking and horseback riding. All motorized vehicles are prohibited.

TRAIL DESCRIPTION

0.00 miles: Trailhead is at the yellow gate. The path starts level, wide and open (note a cellar hole to the left), and then enters the woods.

0.10 miles: A side trail from the right follows the edge of the Lower Lynde Basin. Keep left, observing the spillway for Lower Lynde Basin, with Gatehouse #3 on the dam. Shortly after the spillway, take the path to the left, along a fieldstone water channel.

0.29 miles: Wet area.

0.32 miles: To the left is Gatehouse #4 that controlled water flow from the settling basin into Spring Basin. There is a side road to the right. Continue straight and note the Spring Basin on the right.

0.44 miles: Path comes in from the right, leading to Gatehouse #5 and in a short distance see Gatehouse #6 to the right. In late May, flowering trilliums can be found in this area.

0.50 miles: After a rather wet and swampy area, the trail re-enters a wooded area. Within 0.1 of a mile, the trail bears left in front of Gatehouse #7, which was the chlorination station. From here water was piped underground to Clinton and Lancaster.

0.63 miles: A side trail comes in from the left. At the next trail junction, continue on the smaller trail straight ahead. Do not take the wider trail turning left and uphill.

0.71 miles: After a short and moderately steep downhill there is a trail junction, with side trail to the left. Continue straight, followed by curve to the right.

0.89 miles: Trail crosses 3 intermittent wet areas over the next 0.1 miles.

1.05 miles: Turn left and downhill at the trail junction on a spur trail, for the opportunity to view a beaver pond and to walk close to the Wekepeke Brook.

1.08 miles: Arrive at the Wekepeke Brook, the location of a historic ford and a large beaver pond. The trail curves to the right and follows Wekepeke Brook.

1.18 miles: Trail comes to an end at a stone wall, bordering a posted and privately owned meadow. Respect the landowner by not going any further.

1.27 miles: Trail is back to ford, turns left and uphill.

1.29 miles: Trail junction with outbound trail route. Continue straight and a moderately steep uphill.

1.33 miles: Trail turns sharply to the left, with small trail to the right. Shortly afterwards, the trail turns sharply to the right, with side trail straight ahead.

1.40 miles: Steep section of the trail, with some erosion. In 0.2 of mile, take a right turn at trail junction onto a larger road, continuing downhill.

1.71 miles: Slight left turn at trail junction to continue on side trail.

1.78 miles: Beginning of a fairly long downhill section of the trail followed by a small vernal pool on the left.

2.01 miles: Short trail to the left offers views to fields and Crystal Brook Farm on Tuttle Road.

2.10 miles: At the trail junction with a cluster of trees in the middle, go to the left and soon see views of Upper Lynde Basin. Trail is winding, somewhat narrow, with protruding roots in some areas.

2.29 miles: Trail follows the edge of a smaller part of the Lower Lynde Basin and around an arm of the basin.

2.42 miles: Trail makes a moderately sharp turn to the right, away from the basin.

2.52 miles: Trail approaches the dam at the end of Upper Lynde Basin.

2.55 miles: Trail reaches the spillway.

2.59 miles: Trail junction with trail from the left.

2.70 miles: Return to the yellow gate at the trailhead.

LYNDE BASIN TRAIL

PARKING AND TRAIL LOCATION

The trailhead is located at a yellow gate on the east side of Heywood Road, between the intersection of Upper North Row Road and Rowley Hill Road. The trailhead is 1.1 miles from Rowley Hill Road and 0.25 miles from Upper North Row Road. Parking is available for 3–4 cars.

UNIQUE FEATURES

This trail offers several interesting man-made and natural features. The trail passes by dams, gate houses and spillways, part of the former Clinton Water Works. In terms of natural scenery, it offers views to lakes and basins, crosses wetland areas and passes by the Wekepeke Brook with beaver activity.

LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY

The round trip distance is 2.7 miles, and the trail has a number of short hills, some of which are moderately steep. The difficulty is rated moderate.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WEKEPEKE

The name “Wekepeke” comes from the Nipmuck name, *Wickapicket*, for the Wekepeke Brook (this name also appears on older maps). It is likely that the name means “the place where linden (or bass wood) trees are.” Bass wood was an important material for the Nipmucks, e.g., the long fibers in the bark were used for making rope and strings.

By the 19th century, the Wekepeke Watershed area was predominantly an agricultural region, to which smaller, water-powered commercial activities were added. A chair factory owned by J. Lynde was situated at Lower Lynde Basin. In the late 1800’s, Clinton was growing rapidly, and the local water sources were insufficient to meet the water needs. Piping gravity-fed water of excellent quality from the Wekepeke Brook was the chosen solution, and to achieve this Clinton acquired the land in Sterling. The resulting



system of ponds, dams, gatehouses and pipes is referred to as *The Clinton Water Works*.

On January 1, 1883, the first version of the Wekepeke water system was completed, which only drew water from the lowest reservoir, Spring Basin. Soon afterwards, efforts were underway to connect the other three basins (Fitch Basin; Upper and

Lower Lynde Basins) to the system.

By 1926, after the Heywood Dam was built, only the Heywood Reservoir was used by Clinton. After the Wachusett Reservoir was completed



and Clinton was allowed to draw drinking water from it, the Clinton Water Works were obsolete. By the 1960s the system was no longer in use.

FLORA AND FAUNA

This trail passes by open water bodies, a beaver pond, a vernal pool and across some intermittent streams surrounded by forests of pine, oak, hickory and other hardwoods. In the wetter areas are jewel weed, cattails

and a variety of ferns. Flowering trilliums are blooming in spring, and large groves of laurels put on a display in late June. Watch for poison ivy along the pond and some parts of the trail that get more sunlight. Some hemlock groves are suffering from needle loss due to the wooly adelgid an aphid-like invasive insect. Note the small round white egg masses on the underside of hemlock needles. Ducks, geese may be spotted on the water and kingfishers can be seen diving for fish. Check muddy shores for animal tracks and frogs hopping into the water. Forest birds such as thrushes, blue jays, woodpeckers and wood warblers can be seen or heard. Deer, bobcats, coyotes and bears are in the area, but the most commonly seen mammals are chipmunks and squirrels.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The establishment of the *Lynde Basins Trail* was made possible through the access granted by the Town of Clinton. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife holds a conservation easement on this property, providing public access for wildlife-related and other passive recreational activities.

LYNDE BASIN TRAIL



Open Space Implementation Committee (OSIC) Sterling’s OSIC was established in 2003 as a permanent town committee, to broaden awareness and enhance access to significant open space, cultural and recreational resources.