



Jim French pauses at the bridge over the Wekepeke Brook, installed by Eric Starbard in 2019.



# ALLENWOOD TRAIL

## PARKING AND TRAIL LOCATION

The trailhead is located on the east side of Heywood Road, 0.3 miles from Rowley Hill Road that connects with the center of Sterling With care, the parking area should accommodate 4 to 5 cars.

## UNIQUE FEATURES

Scenic vistas towards farms and fields, later on views over Lynde Basins. Observe dams, gate houses and spillways as the visible remaining parts of the former Clinton Water Works. Crossing the Wekepeke Brook offers views out over beaver-created wetlands.

## LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY

The round-trip distance is 4.1 miles, and the trail has several short hills, some of which are moderately steep. The difficulty is rated *moderate*.

## 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, as well as mountain biking and horseback riding. All motorized vehicles are prohibited.

## TRAIL DESCRIPTION

- 0.00 miles:** Trailhead and kiosk
- 0.04 miles:** Crossing stone wall
- 0.06 miles:** Left turn, paralleling stone wall and forest boundary
- 0.20 miles:** Trail junction marked by a wooden post; make right hand turn;
- 0.22 miles:** Open view towards the Crystal Brook Farm and fields
- 0.28 miles:** Stone in memory of Charles Allen
- 0.35 miles:** Wooden post at the right side of the trail
- 0.39 miles:** Continue straight where faint trail goes off to the left
- 0.43 miles:** Bridge across wetland and a small stream. Trail continue uphill and slightly to the right
- 0.46 miles:** Trail ends at junction with larger forest road; turn left. Note short side trail to the right goes to vista point.
- 0.55 miles:** Keep left at trail junction, identified with a cluster of trees in the middle. Trail becomes narrower
- 0.65 miles:** View out over Upper Lynde Basin
- 0.77 miles:** Follow side trail that goes along the edge of Lower Lynde Basin

- 0.91 miles:** Trail makes a moderately sharp turn to the right, away from the basin
- 1.01 miles:** Trail junction. Continue on large trail to the right. Observe spillway from lower Lynde Basin
- 1.12 miles:** Gatehouse #4 to the left controlled water flow from the settling basin into Spring Basin. Continue straight, note the Spring Basin on the right
- 1.24 miles:** Path comes in from the right, leading to Gatehouse #5. In late May, flowering trilliums can be found in this area
- 1.30 miles:** Trail re-enters a wooded area and 0.1 mi later turns left in front of Gatehouse #7, the chlorination station for the Clinton Waterworks
- 1.43 miles:** Side trail from left, continue straight. At the next trail junction, continue on smaller trail straight ahead. Ignore wider trail turning left and uphill
- 1.51 miles:** Trail junction with side trail to the left, after a short and moderately steep downhill. Continue straight, followed by curve to the right
- 3.09 miles:** Steep section of the trail, with some erosion. In 0.2 of mile, at trail junction take a right turn onto a larger road, continuing downhill
- 3.40 miles:** Slight left turn at trail junction to continue on wide side trail
- 3.47 miles:** Beginning of a fairly long downhill section of the trail followed by a small vernal pool



- on the left.
- 3.70 miles:** At the curve of the path, turn left onto small side trail, to return to the Allenwood trailhead. Note that junction is located next to side trail with views over farmland.
- 4.17 miles:** Return to trailhead

## CHARLES ALLEN AND THE STERLING LAND TRUST

The Allenwood Trail is named for Charles Allen who grew up on Crystal Brook Farm on Tuttle Road. He worked full time on the family farm, taking the reins upon the death of his father in 1939. Crystal Brook Farm was mainly a dairy farm, but apple orchards were also part of the farm's operation. In the 1980s, Crystal Brook Farm along with the adjacent farm owned by his brother Ralph, were among the first in the state to enroll in the Mass. Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program, thus preserving the land for agricultural use in perpetuity.

In the mid-1990's Charlie Allen retired from farming and his grand nephew, Eric Starbard, took charge of the farm. Charlie built a new home on a large wooded tract that was part of the original Crystal Brook Farm. In 2001, Charlie donated 27 acres of the land to the Sterling Land Trust, an action for which he was awarded the 2004 Conservation Advocacy Award by the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

He was an avid bird enthusiast. In addition, he made a thorough study of the many varieties of trees, wild-flowers and wild animals native to the New England area. He spent his retirement years perfecting his woodcarving skills in the production of numerous beautifully carved and painted birds. He also devoted time outdoors, clearing and developing a system of marked trails through the woodlands around his house and on the Sterling Land Trust tract. He walked those trails daily to maintain his physical

condition and especially to enjoy the beauty of the nature around him. And thanks to him, you can do the same.



## FLORA AND FAUNA

The meadows and fields bounded by stone walls frame a scenic view to Crystal Brook Farm on the first part of this trail. Watch for meadowlarks and bluebirds in the meadows. The forest is mostly oaks and white pine with some black cherry (note burnt potato chip-like bark), maples, black birches and hemlock. You'll first hear, then see nuthatches, chickadees and titmice in the woods. Oblong holes in dead trees indicate pileated woodpeckers, a crow-sized bird, at work. Enjoy the views of Lynde Basin and the wetlands along Wekepeke Brook. In spring, listen for frogs, spring peepers and wood frogs near vernal pools and other wet areas. In the summer, you'll notice the summer-sweet's fragrant white blooms. An abandoned beaver pond surrounded by beaver chewed stumps on the slopes is at the



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**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.