

Welcome to Beverly Commons

Beverly Commons History

Beverly Commons, once part of a colonial-era common land, was known as Sheep Pasture. Here on just over 1000 acres, homeowners could gather building stone for personal use, let sheep graze, and allow their pigs to feed on local vegetation. However, by the early 18th century, the lands in the Commons were no longer publicly owned. The mid-19th century brought the railroad to Beverly and an accompanying onslaught of wealthy Boston residents to the Commons to purchase land for their summer estates. Contractors Linnehan and Son and the Connolly Brothers purchased hills of granite ledge, near what is now Stone Ridge Road, to quarry. A small shantytown arose to house the workers. As you walk in this area, notice the foundation of the foreman's house and drinking well, abandoned chunks of quarried stone and remnants of the workers' homes. Traces of a fire that raged through the area in October of 1947 are still visible today. These fires ravaged much of the wooded areas of Boulder Lane, Greenwood Avenue, Wood Lane, Branch Lane, and Common Lane.

Today, much of the old common land has returned to forest and is owned by the City of Beverly and Essex County Greenbelt Association and private owners.

Acknowledgements

The 2019 Kiosk and Wayfinding Sign Update Project was generously funded by a grant from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Recreational Trails Program in collaboration with the City of Beverly and Open Space and Recreation Committee volunteers.

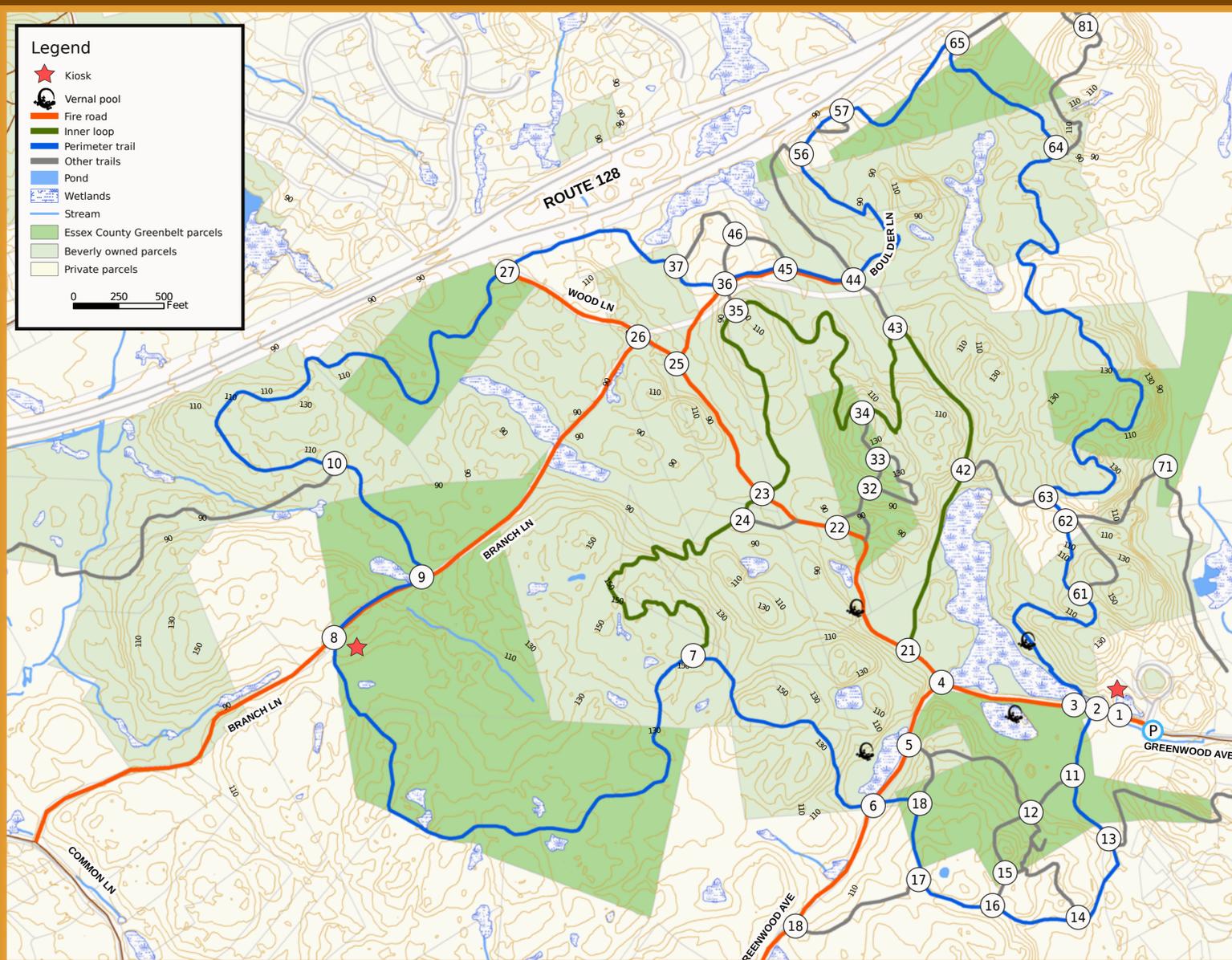
Beverly Commons Natural Features

Wildlife: The trees of Beverly Commons are alive with birds including hawks, red-bellied woodpeckers, black-throated green warbler, and hairy woodpeckers. You may even see an owl and an occasional pileated woodpecker. In addition to the birds, mammals such as squirrels, rabbits, skunks, raccoons, opossums and woodchucks roam the woods. Look closely and you may spot wood frogs and toads on the forest floor.

Plants: As you walk the trails through mixed wood, notice the hemlocks, oaks, red maples, beech, hickory, white pine and an occasional stray fruit tree. Mushrooms dot the forest floor, along with Canada mayflower, wild sarsaparilla, Jack-in-the-pulpits, starflower, spotted wintergreen and pink lady's slippers. Please be aware that there is some poison ivy in the park, as there is in most open spaces in this part of Massachusetts.

Trail Descriptions

- Perimeter trail 4.8 miles
Single track trails. Rocky, winding and undulating, the outer loop provides varied terrain for the walker, biker or runner.
- Double track fire roads
Greenwood Ave, Wood Lane, and Branch Lane. These trails provide easy passage and are kept relatively open for fire vehicles.
- Inner loop 1.6 miles
Single-track trails. These connectors provide opportunity for varying your route or further exploration.
- Peripheral trails
Single-track trails. These are great for extended rides or alternative access points.



Greenbelt
Essex County's Land Trust



Opossum



Starflower



Siberian squill



Wood frog



WARNING

Deer ticks, which can carry Lyme Disease, are found in this preserve. Take precautions to minimize contact: stay on trails and perform a full-body tick check at the end of your walk. Also check your children and pets.