

Map and Guide to Shapleigh Town Forest Nature Trail

Prepared by the Shapleigh Conservation Commission 1998

1. Start from the parking lot for the Town Beach. Take the snowmobile trail heading north across the street from the parking lot. Walk the snowmobile trail up the hill until the Town Forest walking trail branches off on the right. The walking trail heads east across what was an agricultural field in the nineteenth century. When it was abandoned the tree seedlings last edible to livestock were the pines. Therefore, the pines got a head start. The field became a pine forest.
 - a. The white pine stand was first thinned and the best trees pruned to seventeen feet about 25 years ago. It was commercially thinned for the first time by the Town Forest Trustees about fifteen years ago. Ramon Day from Porter did the thinning mostly by himself but sometimes with his son. He used two pairs of oxen to haul out the logs. Profits from this and all other harvesting operations are put back into the Town Forest Fund for future use by the Town Forest Trustees.
 - b. You will have to walk over a number of dead, fallen trees. These trees were blown down in a storm since the woodlot was thinned.
2. The trail continues on the other side of Town Farm Road. The first item of interest is the cellar hole of what was the Boston Family Farm which became the Town Farm. Deed research indicates the property actually passed to the neighboring Hasting family before being conveyed to the Town for a Town Farm. The trail circles around the cellar hole and then passes by the barn cellar hole before heading east again through the woods.
 - a. The Boston farm became the Town Farm in 1849. A Town Farm was a place where people who needed public support could live. In return for their labor they received bed and board. We know from the U.S. Census that in 1850 twelve people lived at the farm and two children. In 1860 there were nine plus the farmer and a governess. Of them seven were under the age of 18.
 - b. There is a stand of white pine trees to the north of the cellar holes which was so thickly seeded that the trees could not grow very tall. It was thinned about four years ago to enable the trees left standing to grow taller and bigger. The trees were hauled out on a skidder road. The trees in the stand are 40 to 60 years old.

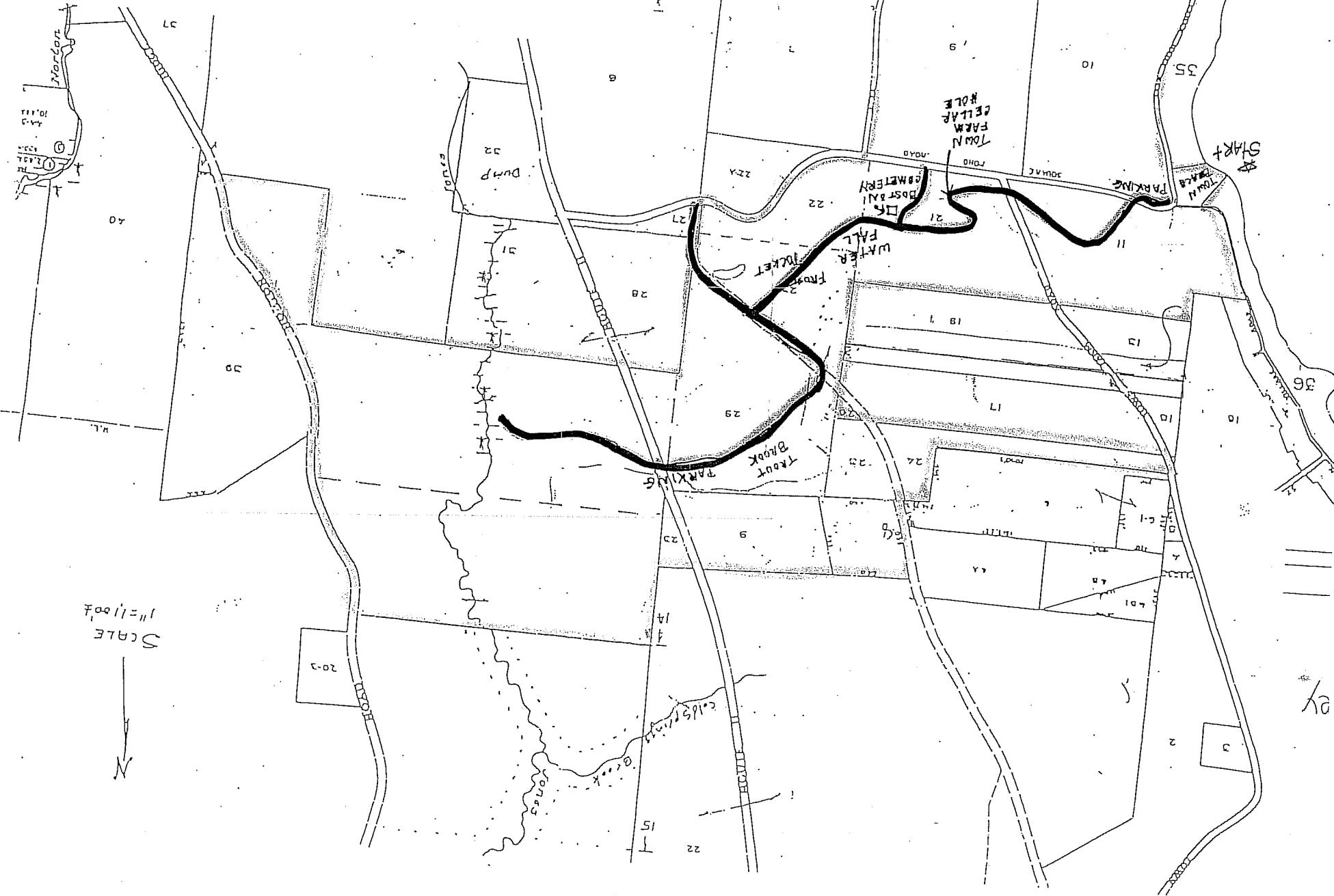
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3. From the homestead the farm inhabitants had to cross a wet area to reach fields and pasture further to the east. They built a causeway over that wet area of piled stones which allowed water to flow through the rocks. The path crosses the causeway before turning to the right to follow an intermittent outlet stream downhill.
4. When you follow near the intermittent stream you will come to a junction where the main trail goes left and a side trail crosses the stream. Take the right hand trail if you wish to return to the parking lot by way of the Square Pond Road, or if you wish to visit the Boston cemetery. The cemetery is across the stream on the left side of the trail. It is walked on all four sides and several very large sugar maple trees spread their limbs over head.
5. To continue on the trail recross the streambed, or turn left at the intersection mentioned above, and continue in a northerly direction through a pine stand. At least some of the trail in this section follows a game path through the woods.
6. The trail then descends into an area called a treeless kettle hole or frost pocket. It is a bowl filled with low bush blueberries. The bowl was formed by a big chunk of ice left there by the glaciers when they receded. When the bowl is treeless you know there are sandy subsoils under your feet. Sandy soil cools off very quickly after the sun goes down. Therefore, hard frosts are frequent in these depressions into mid and late June. The tree most suited to sandy soils in this area is scrub oak; but scrub oak cannot withstand late frosts year after year when their leaves are young and tender. So the trees die off, leaving only the blueberries to carpet the sandy bowl floor and an occasional pine.
7. When the trail ascends out of the bowl it brings you to the Great Hollow Road. This road used to connect Shapleigh Center to North Shapleigh and beyond. At this point you can either retrace your steps or turn right and follow the road to the Square Pond Road. You will pass a pool of water on your right and an interesting old stone culvert on your left.
 - a. Once on Square Pond Road turn right, or west, and head back to the parking lot area.

Rules for the Town Forest

- No fires without proper permits and written permission from the Forest Board of Trustees
- No unauthorized harvesting of any trees, shrubs or other plants.
- No motorized vehicles on any hiking trails (Please Note, Snowmobile trails are hiking trails in summer).
- Snowmobiles are allowed on marked trails only, during snow months.
- No launching of boats at the Town beach.
- No “Group” activities at the beach or in the forest without prior authorization from the Forest Trustees.
- A beach sticker is required to use the town beach and parking area for the beach. Beach stickers are available at the Town Clerk’s office at no charge.
- No dumping of any refuse or any other material on any Town Forest land.
- No overnight camping or tenting on Town Forest land without permission from the Forest Trustees.
- The Town beach and parking areas are closed after sunset and before sunrise.
- The Town forest and beach are for the use and enjoyment of Shapleigh residents, taxpayers and accompanied guests only.
- The Town forest and beach are a real asset and value to all the people of the Town of Shapleigh and will continue to be so only with everyone’s help and caring. Put trash in its place. Please help keep our forest and beach clean and beautiful. Control your pets if they poop bring a scoop!

Shapleigh Community Forest.



SCALE 1"=1000 F



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