

MANCHESTER CEDAR SWAMP PRESERVE

Trail Map & Guide



The Nature Conservancy
New Hampshire

CONNECT WITH NATURE!



BE A CITIZEN SCIENTIST!

Help us collect valuable data at this preserve. Report your animal and plant sightings via **iNaturalist**:
<http://naturenh.org/iNaturalist>



ABOUT THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

The Nature Conservancy in New Hampshire has been safeguarding our state's most precious natural resources since 1961, conserving 290,000 acres of forests and fields and 680 miles of river and estuary shoreline. Our 29 preserves are open for hiking, fishing, skiing, hunting and wildlife viewing. We are committed to finding solutions to some of the most formidable challenges facing our natural world.

Something's Wild in the City

New Hampshire's largest city isn't where most of us think of going to explore nature. But nature abounds here at the 640-acre Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve, the largest conservation area in the city—providing residents and visitors alike with opportunities for a peaceful escape, outdoor recreation and nature study close to home.

Curious visitors who follow the preserve's easily accessible and well-maintained 1.8-mile trail system will find shady hemlock groves, giant rhododendron patches and the globally rare Atlantic white cedar swamps that are the preserve's namesake. When you're down on the boardwalk in the cedar swamp, the stillness and sense of solitude can feel like a remote wilderness. Amazing to think that in 10 minutes' time you can be off the trails and in downtown Manchester getting ready for your next adventure!

A Journey Through (Natural) History

Follow the trails and you'll find 42 acres of globally rare Atlantic white cedar-giant rhododendron swamp, one of the largest and most ecologically valuable cedar swamps in the state. Sharing the swamps with the cedar trees are uncommon black gums, among the rarest and oldest trees in New England. Scientists have estimated that some of the black gums in the preserve are more than 450 years old. This means the trees we see today began their life around the same time as Galileo and Shakespeare!



The giant rhododendron blooms in June and July © Eric Aldrich/TNC

The Cedar Loop Trail leads you through a small section of the cedar swamp, where you'll see Atlantic white cedar, giant rhododendron, winterberry, cinnamon fern and a large black gum tree. Continue your journey and you'll find giant rhododendron thickets which produce large showy clusters of pale pink and white flowers in June along the Rhododendron Loop Trail. This forest is great habitat for deer, coyote, bobcat, raccoon, gray squirrel and porcupine, while the open powerlines provide travel corridors and browse for moose, deer, small mammals, as well as warm basking grounds for snakes. Millstone Brook and other wetlands provide habitat for numerous species of turtles, as well as beavers, muskrats and river otters.

From Campus to Nature's Classroom

Take a moment to look around at the tall trees and lush greenery. Now imagine instead brick buildings and concrete surrounding you. A large portion of Hackett Hill, including parts of what is now this preserve, was slated to become The University of New Hampshire's Manchester Campus. Plans were drawn up and funding approved to start construction, with roads, granite curbs, underground power, parking lots and lighting all installed. However, before classroom construction began, the state relocated the campus into the old mills along the Merrimack River. Only the Hackett Hill improvements remain as evidence of what could have been neighboring this unique place. After the relocation of the campus, Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve was protected in 1999 with an additional 40 acres added in 2015—a donation from the City of Manchester.



Children explore one of the preserve's vernal pools © The Nature Conservancy

You Can Be a Citizen Scientist!

These lands serve not only as a unique place to hike and explore, but also as a living laboratory for student education and scientific research. For example, University of New Hampshire student researchers recently used cameras and small mammal traps to survey wildlife populations here and documented 23 mammal species including fisher, coyote and white-tailed deer. Another study used GPS to map the preserve's vernal pools.

Research like this adds tremendous value to our work and isn't limited to students and scientists. You can also participate in collecting valuable data to assist with our efforts just by using your smartphone or camera! While on your preserve hike, help us learn more about the plants and animals on the preserve by documenting what you see on our iNaturalist page (details at left). You can also visit one of our Picture Posts. Each post guides visitors to photograph a location in nine orientations. Photos are dated, geotagged, uploaded and shared online to assist in environmental monitoring. The process is easy, and instructions are located right on the Picture Post. For Picture Post locations, see the map in this guide.

Enjoy the Preserve Responsibly

This area is open to the public for recreation and education. Please, for the protection of this area and its inhabitants:











- Leave No Trace—please keep the preserve clean by carrying out your trash (and any that you find).
- No camping or open fires allowed.
- Please, for your safety and the protection of this globally rare ecosystem, stay on marked trails.
- Foot traffic only; horses, bikes and motorized vehicles are prohibited.
- Pets are not permitted; help us protect wildlife on the preserve and be respectful of other hikers by leaving your pets at home.
- Hunting is allowed on the preserve, except within 300 feet of the trail. Please obey all posted signs and contact NH Fish & Game Department for dates and regulations.
- Respect the natural world around you! Do not remove or destroy plants, wildlife, minerals or cultural items.

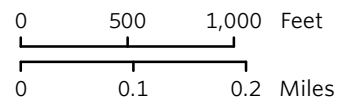
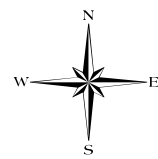
Directions to Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve

The preserve is in the Hackett Hill section of Manchester, on the west side of the Merrimack River. From Interstate 93, take Exit 10 and head south on West River Road (aka Front Street) for about 1 mile (crossing the town line from Hooksett into Manchester). Turn right (west and north) onto Hackett Hill Road. Continue 0.7 miles, and turn left (west) onto Countryside Boulevard. The parking area is located 0.5-mile down the road on the left.

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. For more information on Manchester Cedar Swamp, our work or our preserves, please contact us:

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-  Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve
-  Public Parking
-  Kiosk
-  Picture Post
-  Public Road
-  Stream/River
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Contour (25')
-  Wetland
-  Safety Zone—No Hunting



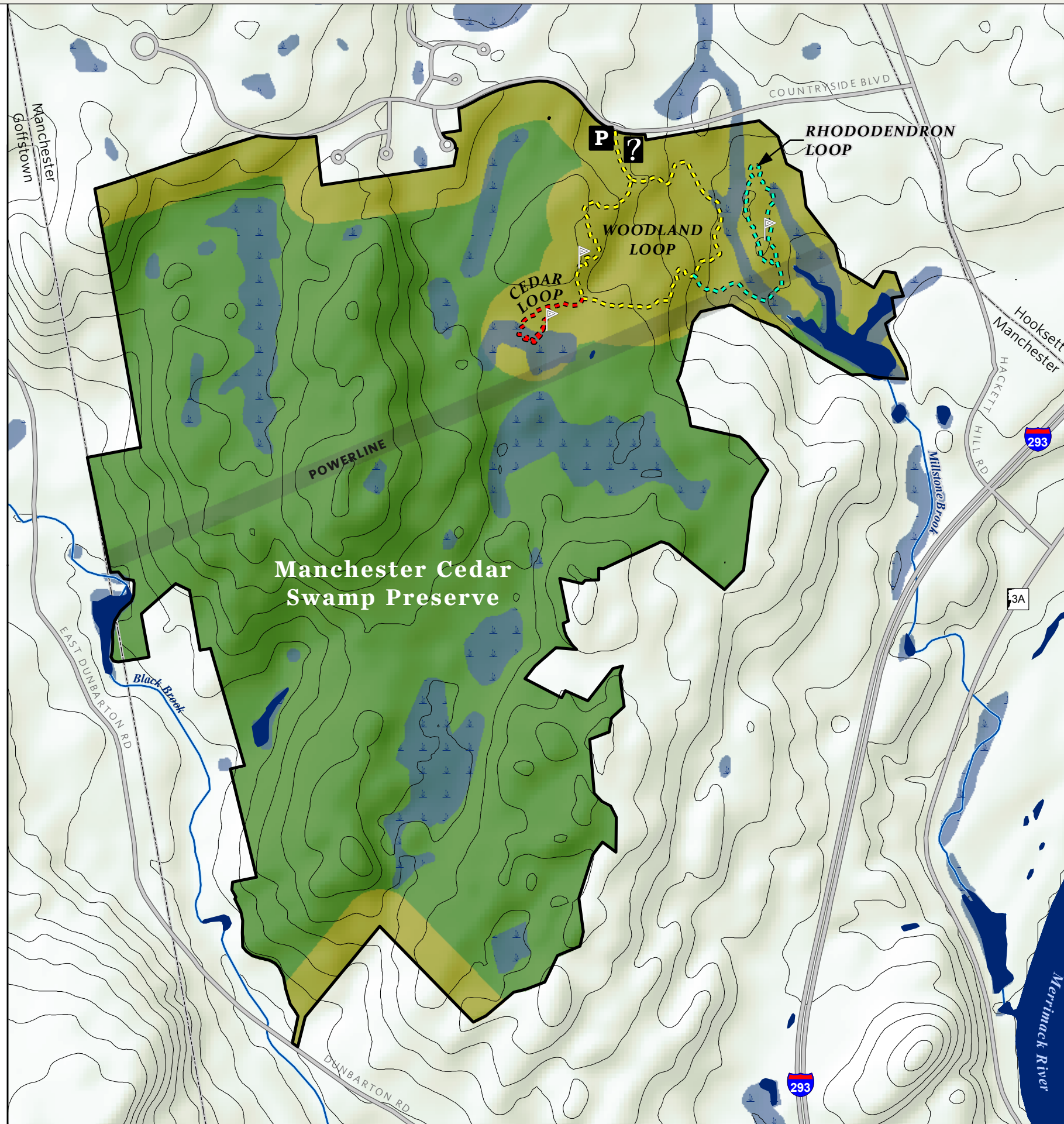
Scale 1:10,800

Permitted Use



*** No Dogs Please**

Notes:
Map Produced March 2017 by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Preserve information mapped by TNC. All other data from NH GRANIT. Contour lines are at 25-foot intervals, extracted from a 10-meter digital elevation model.



Trails of Manchester Cedar Swamp Preserve

The entire trail system (Woodland Loop and two off-shoot loops) is 1.8 miles long. These trails travel over moderate terrain with some hills and uneven footing. In places, the trail system joins discontinued trails—be careful to watch for Nature Conservancy trail markers at these junctions.

Woodland Loop Trail (yellow blazes)—This trail winds through boulder-strewn, open oak forests that are unique in the number of chestnut re-sprouts that can be found. Hidden under the soil are the roots of ancient giant American chestnuts—a tree that once dominated the forests of the Northeast. These grand old trees repeatedly attempt to sprout up new, courageous, young stems from these ancient roots, only to succumb to the chestnut blight, a fungus that decimated the chestnut population across its range in the early 1900s and remains persistent in the soils. In addition to these re-sprouts, look for low-growing wintergreen, partridgeberry and trailing arbutus along your journey.



American chestnut



Atlantic White Cedar

Cedar Loop Trail (red blazes)—This short loop leads through a small cove of a much larger cedar swamp. In the swamp, you'll see Atlantic white cedar and red maple, as well as shrubs and herbs such as giant rhododendron, winterberry, mountain laurel, highbush blueberry and cinnamon fern, all growing in a lush carpet of peat mosses. There's a large black gum tree (it's labeled with a sign) near the trail as you cross the inflow to the cedar basin. Black gum trees, recognizable by their deeply furrowed bark ridges, are uncommon in New Hampshire and are New England's oldest trees.



Black Gum

Rhododendron Loop Trail (blue blazes)—Leaving the Woodland Loop, this trail passes through a damp, cool hemlock forest with mossy rocks. Take note of the temperature drop that occurs



Giant Rhododendron

when you enter the forest here! The trail passes several thickets of giant rhododendron, a shrub that grows in large interwoven colonies. Giant rhododendron blooms in early to midsummer, producing large, showy clusters of pale pink or white flowers above the broad evergreen leaves. You will cross Millstone Brook and later see a beaver dam and wetland. Notice

the standing dead trees—called snags—drowned when the area was flooded. Snags provide good habitat for birds and other small animals. The trail traverses a ridge and passes more giant rhododendron in a mixed hardwood forest.

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