

Mink Brook Nature Preserve

Map and Guide

This Nature Preserve is managed by the Hanover Conservancy's Mink Brook Stewardship Committee. We welcome volunteers to help monitor and care for trails, manage invasive plants, and plan community activities. Thank you to our partners — Dartmouth College, Upper Valley Land Trust, and the dedicated neighbors who help to make Mink Brook a wonderful place for all.

The Hanover Conservancy is a private, non-profit membership organization dedicated to the conservation of land and water in our community. Your support keeps our natural areas open for all to enjoy and allows us to offer guided trips here and elsewhere in Hanover. Please consider becoming a member and making a gift to the Mink Brook Stewardship Fund.



Hanover Conservancy

16 Buck Road
Hanover, NH 03755
(603) 643-3433



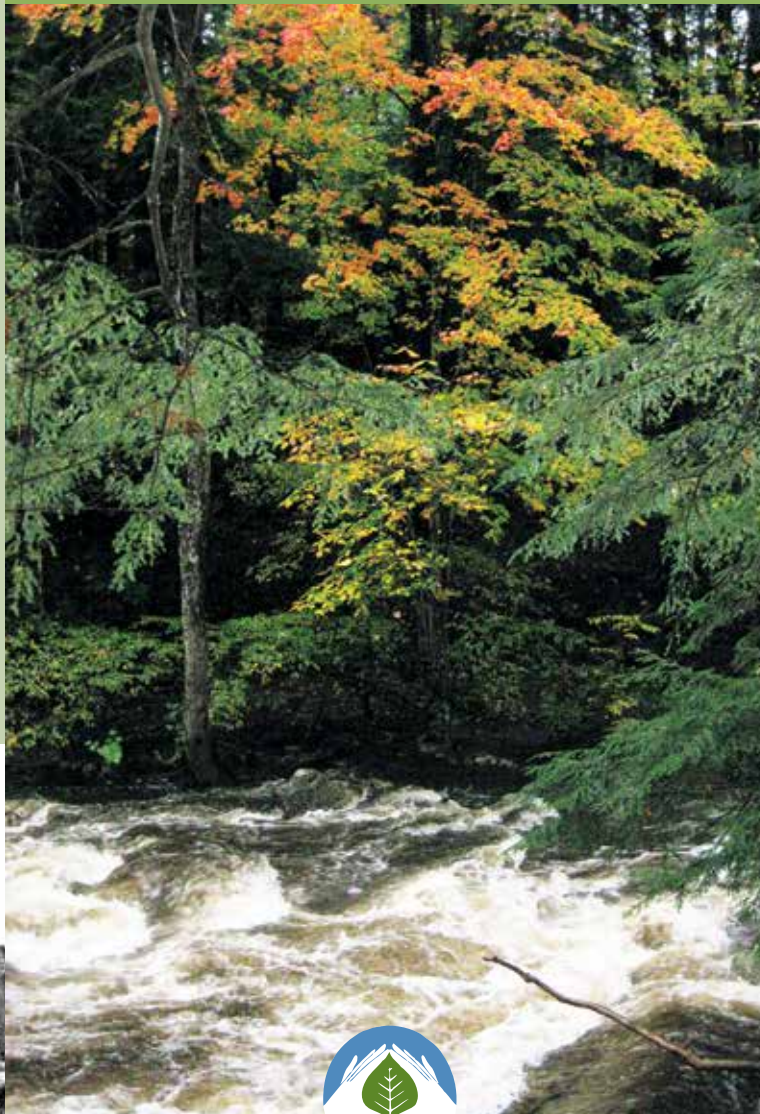
www.hanoverconservancy.org

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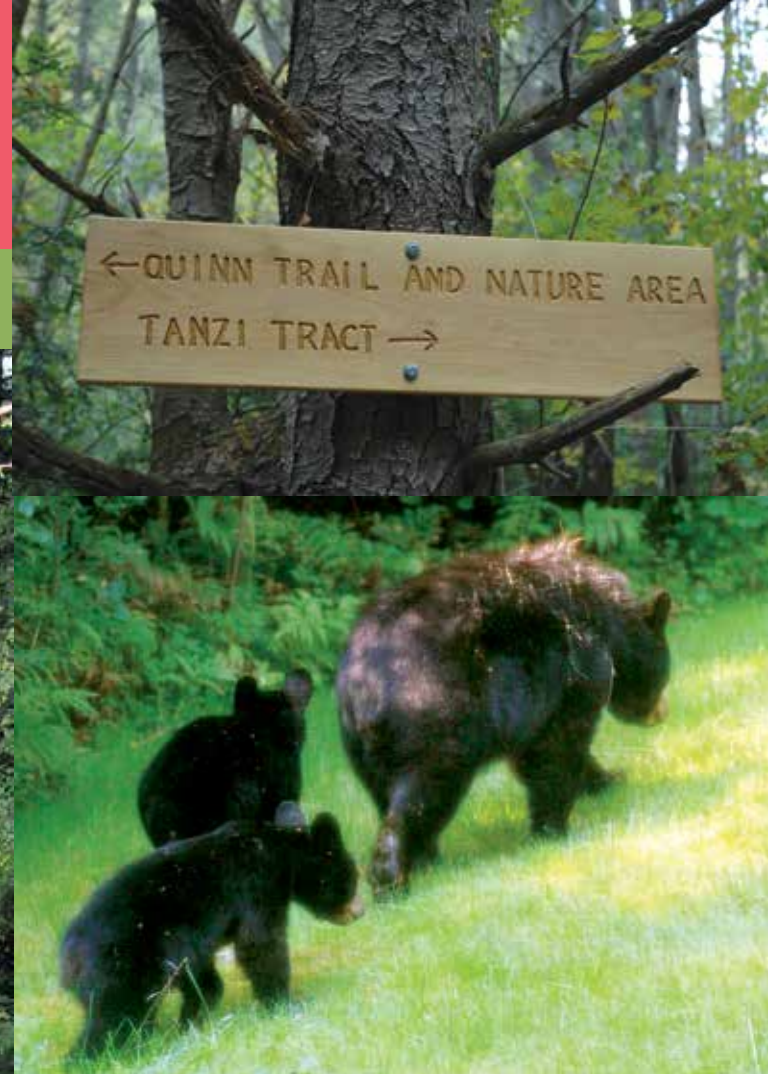
February, 2015

Photo credits: Bear family: Bryan Marquard; Historic photo: Frank J. Barrett, Jr.; Other: Hanover Conservancy staff and archives

Mink Brook and the Benton Farm, c.1867



HANOVER
CONSERVANCY
Hanover, New Hampshire



The **Mink Brook Nature Preserve** protects habitat for wild brook trout, bears, and many other creatures while offering a natural retreat within walking distance of downtown Hanover. Owned by the Hanover Conservancy, this 112-acre preserve is the result of deep generosity and community spirit. Substantial gifts from Dartmouth College and an anonymous donor, acknowledging the significance of this place to the Abenaki, joined 450 others to protect the land in 1999. The Upper Valley Land Trust assisted in the purchase and holds the conservation easement. The Preserve links other protected lands — UVLT's brook-side parcel and the Town-owned Angelo Tanzi Tract, Mink Brook West, and South Esker — a total of over 180 acres.

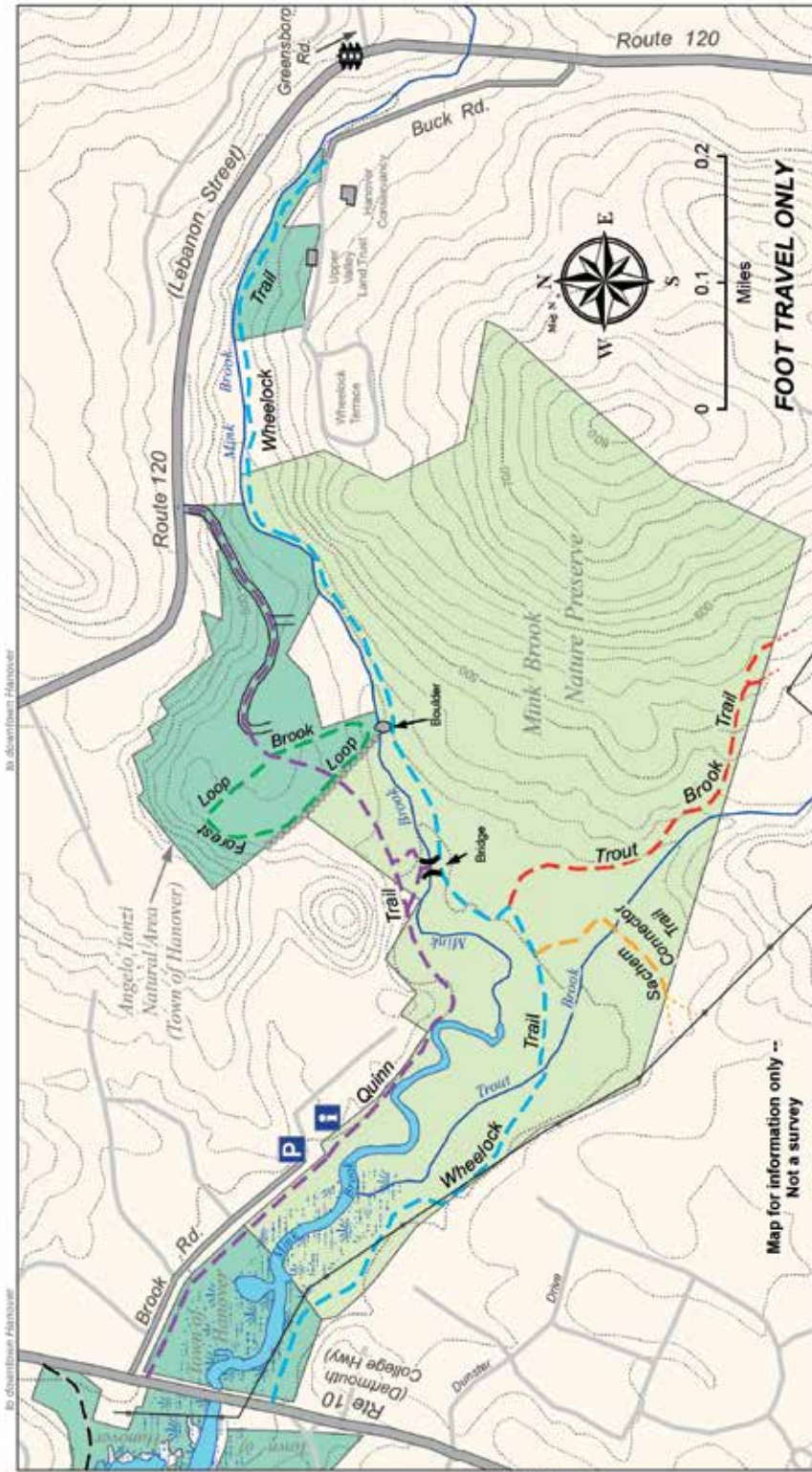
History

Through the millennia, Mosbasak Sibosis ("Mink Brook" in Abenaki) has been an important center of life for Native Americans and remains so today.

In 1761, Royal Governor Benning Wentworth reserved this land for himself when he chartered the Town of Hanover. In 1770 the Proprietors of the new town gave this land to Rev. Dr. Eleazar Wheelock, the founder of Dartmouth College, as part of a larger contiguous land offer, hoping to persuade him to choose Hanover as Dartmouth's home. Wheelock soon built a mill on the brook whose foundations can still be seen. From the time of Dartmouth's founding, Abenaki and other Native families lived in this area to support their children enrolled in the College or at Moor's Charity School.

The Benton family farmed the land (1840 brick homestead still standing on Route 10), succeeded by the Stone family, who ran a dairy farm here until 1949. The Barrett, Ransmeier, and Granger families then began to develop homes on part of the farm and the forest returned to cloak the former fields.

Mink Brook Nature Preserve Trails



Mink Brook Trails	Other Trails	Stone Wall
Quinn Trail	Utility Line	-----
Wheelock Trail	Parking	-----
Trout Brook Trail	Information Kiosk	-----
Sachem Connector Trail	Bridge	-----
Tanzi Tract Trails	Wetland	-----

Directions and Parking
 From the Dartmouth College Green follow Route 10 south for 0.5 miles to Brook Road. Turn left onto Brook Road and proceed for 0.1 miles. Parking is available on the right.

The Upper Valley Land Trust assisted in acquisition of the Mink Brook Nature Preserve and holds the conservation easement on the property.

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Mink Brook Nature Preserve Guidelines

- Foot travel only except on the Quinn Trail, where strollers and wheelchairs may be used
- Leave no trace — please carry out your own trash
- Dogs should be leashed; please pick up after your pet
- Cross wooden bridges with care, a few at a time
- Leave wildflowers, mushrooms, and wildlife undisturbed
- No hunting without special permission
- No camping or fires
- No motorized vehicles without special permission

Why no bikes? To protect an area important to Native Americans and wildlife, the Mink Brook Nature Preserve was created with the understanding that trails would be open only for foot travel and quiet use. A bicycle rack is provided at the Brook Road gate.

Parking: Off Brook Road at a sharp turn by the Preserve gate. Visitors may also park at the Hanover Conservancy offices at 16 Buck Road to enter the east end of the Wheelock Trail.



The Trails

Mink Brook's foot trails vary from easy to moderate. Trails are marked with signs at trailheads and junctions and with blazes. Look for an informative kiosk at the Brook Road trailhead. For more on nearby connecting trails, see the Hanover Trails Map. Trails leading off the preserve are not always well marked beyond the boundaries.

- ▶ **Quinn Trail** – 0.4 miles from Brook Road to Tanzi Tract and then to Route 120; easy, with two steep sections. Most sections passable by strollers and wheelchairs. Named for Allie and Brian Quinn, valued friends of the Preserve.
- ▶ **Wheelock Trail** – 1 mile from Route 10 to Buck Road; named for Eleazar Wheelock. Narrow and rocky in some places. Blazed in blue.
- ▶ **Trout Brook Trail** – 0.4 miles, easy to moderate, follows Trout Brook. Connects to trails to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, Indian Ridge, and Boston Lot Lake in Lebanon. Blazed in orange.
- ▶ **Sachem Connector Trail** – 0.2 miles, easy. Connects to Sachem Village in Lebanon. Blazed in red.

Natural Features: What to Look For

Streams: Hanover's largest watershed drains through the Preserve, where Mink Brook gathers the flow from 18 ½ square miles. The brook carries rain and snow falling on the west slopes of Moose Mountain, the Etna valley, and Greensboro area to the Connecticut River. East of the log bridge, 1/4 mile up the Wheelock Trail, you will find a rocky gorge and a small dam built in the 1920s to create a small pool. Trout Brook enters from the south.

Fish: Wild brook trout find high quality habitat in Trout Brook. In spring, longnose suckers run from the river up the brook to spawn. Other fish include black- and longnose dace, creek chub, and occasional reintroduced Atlantic salmon.

Birds: The Preserve offers excellent bird-watching, especially during the spring and fall migrations when waterfowl and other birds traveling the Connecticut River seek rest here. Eighty species have been recorded here, making it a favorite birding spot close to town. Common birds include herons, ducks, and kingfishers as well as many types of songbirds.

Mammals: Look for the brook's namesake, the mink, hunting along the water's edge. Its larger cousins, the fisher, otter, and weasel, may visit. Black bears have made their home here for thousands of years, and a mother bear may use "babysitting trees" near the trails as safe perches for her cubs. You may also see white-tailed deer, red fox, coyote, raccoon, porcupine, skunk, beaver, muskrat, squirrels, rabbits, shrews, bats, mice, and voles.

Flowers and Ferns: More than 130 native herbaceous plants and 20 species of ferns grow in the Preserve. Look for wood fern, New York fern, and evergreen Christmas fern. Common wildflowers include starflower, Canada mayflower, jack-in-the-pulpit, and purple trillium. A major effort to remove invasive plants in the last decade is aimed at restoring native vegetation.

