



# HANOVER HIKE OF THE MONTH

## MARCH- Trescott Water Supply Lands

*An easy and invigorating 1 ½ hour walk on historic roads, offering extraordinary views. This is the perfect hike for Mud Season, when most trails can be too soft and vulnerable as frost leaves the ground.*

**Hiking distance:** 2.6 miles round trip  
**Vertical gain:** 360'

### Driving directions:

- **From Downtown Hanover and the Green**, drive east onto East Wheelock Street and up the hill 1.7 miles to the junction of E. Wheelock, Grasse, and Trescott Roads. The Balch Hill trailhead will be on your L. Bear R to continue on Trescott Road and drive 1.2 more miles to the Trescott gate where the road makes a sharp bend.
- **From Etna village**, turn west onto Trescott Road and drive 1.3 miles to Trescott gate at bend in road.
- Park at the marked trailhead parking area near the kiosk. Please do not block the gate.

### What you should know:

- **Welcome to your water source!** Drinking water for much of Hanover and for Dartmouth College comes from these lands, so special rules apply for recreational use.
- Take a moment to check the kiosk display to acquaint yourself with these rules, and pick up a trail guide.
- Dogs are welcome but *must be leashed at all times*; please pick up after your pet.
- You may encounter forestry vehicles; they have the right of way.
- Hiking times are approximate. Plan on 1 ¼- 1 ½ hours; longer if you plan to spend time enjoying the views.
- Most current hiking routes in the Trescott lands make use of historic and/or logging roads.



### HIKING DIRECTIONS – route outlined in green

- After visiting the kiosk, take the short (still rough) newly cut path to the R that leads around the fence. This takes you to Knapp Road, where you turn L to begin your walk.
- **Knapp Road** was laid out Nov. 13, 1793, named for Lt. Peter Knapp of Hanover's Revolutionary War-era militia. You will pass the site of his homestead.
- After 5 minutes' gentle downhill walk, **Parker Reservoir** comes into view. A sign at the road's edge asks you to remain on the road as you walk through the reservoir's 250' protective buffer zone. To safeguard the water supply, the public (dogs included) is not permitted within 250' of the water (or ice) except on Knapp Road. State law protects these waters.
- Built in 1924 by damming Camp Brook, Parker Reservoir is the second in a string of three reservoirs that collect water to send to Hanover homes. The oldest and lowest is **Fletcher Reservoir**, near Reservoir and



Grasse Roads. Together, they hold 425 million gallons of water. The third is the **Hanover Center Reservoir**, in the Mink Brook watershed. Its water is diverted to flow into the Parker Reservoir.

- From this point, look ahead for an open area on the hillside above. This is your destination.
- Continue on Knapp Road below the earthen dam and cross **Camp Brook**. Note the semi-circular stone structure on the R, part of the early earthworks.
- Camp Brook flows out of a concrete spillway in the earthen dam near three venerable maples. One wonders if these might once have been dooryard trees for a farmhouse that once stood nearby. All structures of the ten farms that once existed on this land were removed by 1912.
- Continue on Knapp Road; avoid the maintenance access leading to the spillway.
- 15-20 minutes from your car, you'll reach **Mason's Four Corners**. Look for a sign posted on a tree to your right indicating your location (*photo at R*)
- Now a log landing, the Four Corners was once a major intersection. Here, the historic **Wolfeboro Road** crosses Knapp Road. Colonial Governor John Wentworth proposed this road in 1770 so he could attend commencement exercises at Dartmouth College. He and his party supposedly traveled it from his home in Wolfeboro in 1772. The historic road is easily viewed looking west; to the east, it is obscured by brush.



*#4 Schoolhouse; Knapp Road in foreground*

- At the northwest corner of this intersection stood the one-room **District #4 schoolhouse** (1807). Lt. Knapp's home (c. 1793) stood across the way on the northeast corner. Knapp was one of three school district commissioners for District 4. You can find the remains of his house's cellar hole by looking (carefully!) through the brush. By 1855, J. J. Mason lived here, followed by Charles Mason by 1892. The 160-acre **Mason Farm** had a 100-tree apple orchard and 200-tree sugarbush. Mason also kept 12 dairy cows and 70 Merino sheep. The water company purchased his farm by 1903 for \$4000.
- After imagining the busy neighborhood that once existed here, continue up Knapp Road. In a few minutes you'll notice another sign on the right, indicating the **trail to Dogford Road**.
- Continue up Knapp Road. In a couple of minutes you'll reach the top of a small rise. Look for a **cellar hole** on the right among a clump of trees near a large maple. Views are beginning to open up.
- The **Town Poor Farm** stood not far from this spot, on the west side of Knapp Road. Several large foundations, a well, and a curious piece of farm equipment can still be seen. In 1840, the Town of Hanover purchased the James Tisdale Farm for \$4250 to provide a place where the community's orphans and other unfortunates could live and work to help support themselves. Unlike other towns, Hanover did not send its poor to the Grafton County farm when it opened in 1864, keeping this farm operating until 1903, when it was sold to the water company for \$4000. Interpretive signage is planned for this site.
- Is your **dog still on its leash**? Give yourself a gold star and know that there are porcupines nearby.
- Having caught your breath, continue your march up Knapp Road. The road is lined with stately old maples, but the hillsides beyond are partly open and are being replanted. These lands experienced major blowdowns during the **2007 Patriot's Day Windstorm**. Two million board feet of logs and 3,100 cords of pulp were salvaged. This storm hit heaviest in the plantations, leaving natural stands largely unaffected. The forest management plan calls for creating more natural, uneven-aged stands rather than even-aged plantations.

- Continue up Knapp Road, which now climbs more steeply. Pass over two sets of grates covering water diversion channels to protect the steep road from erosion and protect the reservoirs below from sediment. The grates were paid for with a grant from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.
  - Note the **stone walls** that follow the road in this area. The small size of the stones used to build them is a clue that the nearby land was cultivated at one time. One imagines the Poor Farm's residents picking stones and adding them to the walls.
  - At a little over half an hour from your car, Knapp Road levels out. You'll see another sign on a tree at 11 o'clock. Before heading to the hike's big reward (the view!) take a moment to visit another historic site.
  - Continue straight on Knapp Road for 90-100 paces and approach a log landing. Just before reaching it, look off into the woods to the right; about 20 paces off the road is **another cellar hole**. This one is L-shaped. We do not know who lived here or when. (We're looking for volunteers to discover the history of these places! Get in touch if you'd like to help)
  - Return to the intersection sign and turn R (west), taking care to stay on the road, not the skid trail that heads off to the R.
  - After about 100 paces, turn L toward a gap in the pines.
  - Walk a short distance through a pine plantation, currently being thinned. The path brings you to an open hillside with **dramatic views**. We suggest taking a few steps to the left into the field for the best view, taking care not to trample recently planted red pines.
  - The panorama before you is among the most beautiful in Hanover. Far below is Parker Reservoir; you can pick out Knapp Road curving around on the southwest side (your route back to your car).
  - **Mt. Ascutney** dominates the scene, of course. Just to the right, the prominence in the near distance is **Velvet Rocks**. Ski areas in Vermont are also visible farther west.
  - Resolve right now to return in mid-October! The many sugar and red maples in this scene put on their own spectacular show at that time of year.
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- After you've inhaled the view, return the way you came.
  - Walk back up through the plantation and turn R on the far side of the pines
  - Turn R again onto Knapp Road.
  - As you walk down Knapp Road, enjoy the view of some of **Etna's surviving high fields and pastures**, visible off to the L. These are remnants of the much more open landscape of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when the native northern hardwood/white pine forests had been cleared for agriculture and thousands of sheep, later cattle, grazed on these hills. In the days before the Civil War, **Hanover was one of the four top sheep towns** in the state of New Hampshire (with Walpole, Lyme, and Lebanon).
  - Knapp Road takes you past Parker Reservoir and back to your car.
  - For more about the Trescott Water Company Lands, including a downloadable trail map, visit [www.hanoverconservancy.org/calendar/council-updates-2/water-co-land-info/](http://www.hanoverconservancy.org/calendar/council-updates-2/water-co-land-info/)

*The Hanover Conservancy, New Hampshire's oldest local land trust, is a private, non-profit membership organization independent of the Town of Hanover. Visit us at [www.hanoverconservancy.org](http://www.hanoverconservancy.org).*