



# HANOVER CONSERVANCY

*Protecting land & water  
in our community*

## HANOVER HIKE OF THE MONTH

**January – Hudson Farm & the AT**

*A loop hike on two historic trails.*

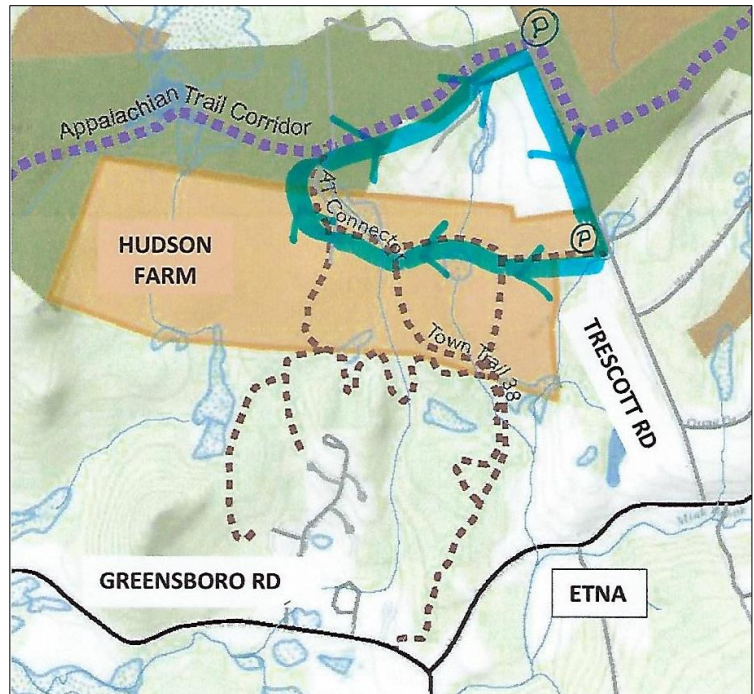
**Hiking distance:** 1.75 miles round trip

**Elevation gain:** 150 feet

**Time:** 1 hour

### Driving directions:

- From Etna, take Trescott Road north for 0.5 miles to the junction with Partridge Road.
- Park in the new parking area on the L side of the road (if it is plowed) at the blue sign reading “Old Highway 38 Trail.”
- If the parking area is not accessible, continue up Trescott Road for another 0.4 miles to the AT parking lot on the R, just before a fence at the Trescott Water Supply Lands boundary. Your hike will end just across the road. To begin your hike, walk down Trescott Road to the new parking area at Old Highway 38.
- Today’s hike is a loop through the Hudson Farm’s fields and forest on an historic highway and the famed Appalachian Trail, highlighted on the map at R.



### What you should know:

- ❖ You’re about to visit one of Hanover’s newest conservation properties! The National Park Service has purchased the Hudson Farm, owned for many years by Dartmouth College, to permanently protect it as part of the Appalachian Trail corridor. The conservation project is a partnership between the Trust for Public Land, Hanover Conservancy, and Town of Hanover, celebrated in June, 2017. In addition to major federal funding, many local contributions made the farm’s protection possible. Over the years, the property was eyed as a site for everything from a housing development to a cemetery and golf course. We like it just the way the bobolinks and deer do.
- ❖ The Appalachian Trail Conservancy manages care of the land. Trails on the property are maintained by Berrill Farm neighbors and Hanover Trails Committee volunteers. The beautiful meadows will be kept open for their spectacular views and grassland bird habitat.
- ❖ Dogs are welcome but must be under your control; please pick up after your pet.
- ❖ Snowmobiles, ATVs, and bicycles are not permitted.

### HIKING DIRECTIONS

- Begin your hike where the Old Highway 38 Trail meets Trescott Road. The Town of Hanover constructed a new parking area here, opposite Partridge Road.



- Beyond the trailhead kiosk, an opening in the trees beckons. Follow this path, keeping the tree line on your left, to an open field. Winter is a good time to visit this expansive rolling field, which is alive with nesting bobolinks in spring and summer.
- Continue up the rise along the tree line. A second field comes into view on the L, where the line of trees marks an old stone wall. You are walking through one of Hanover's iconic historical farm landscapes.
- Seven minutes' walk from the trailhead, you'll reach the far corner of the field. Here you'll notice a brown and yellow trail sign where two mown paths meet, directing you to the right. Instead, turn L through an opening in the stone wall to the second field.
- Stop for a moment to enjoy the expansive view. Straight ahead, the open hillside of Storrs Hill in Lebanon stands out when covered in snow. At R are Rix Ledges, some of the most interesting terrain and wildlife habitat in Lebanon.
- Approach the small white pine growing by itself in the field, 20 paces away. From this vantage point you can see Mount Ascutney rising in the distance, to the right of Rix Ledges.
- Return to the brown and yellow trail sign. From here, you have a good view of the Adams Farm house, a late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century white cape with a single chimney. This was likely home to the family that once owned the abandoned farmland you are exploring today. To the R, amid a clump of trees, is a 20<sup>th</sup> century home built by later owners. Archer Hudson, a retired architect, constructed the house as a country retreat and burned down the farm's barn--the foundation of which remains. Dartmouth College later purchased the property and carved off the house for resale, keeping the land. While the College has long referred to it as the "Hudson Farm," this is historically inaccurate as the property ceased to be a farm before the Hudsons acquired it.
- Now follow the tree line down to the lowest point in the rolling field, where the Old Highway 38 Trail enters the woods. Suddenly you're surrounded by huge, open-grown "pasture pines" – white pines that grew up on abandoned agricultural land, with many lower branches. Some of them are monsters!
- Town Highway 38 has a murky history. Laid out in 1795, it originally led from Greensboro Road through this land to Trescott Road. In time it became a Class VI highway, but its exact route was so hard to trace that when planning began for the Berrill Farms neighborhood, the town agreed with the developer in 1979 on a route to be called the "Old Highway 38 Trail."
- A patch of much smaller trees on the right indicates a nearby wetland, and soon you'll ford its drainage on a crossing built in 2018 by Hanover Trails Committee volunteers. Protecting such headwater wetlands and streams from the erosion and runoff that comes with development is another reason to conserve this land – and will ultimately benefit water quality and trout habitat in Mink Brook from Etna to the Connecticut River.
- Soon you'll encounter a stone wall on the R, another reminder that this land was once open pasture. Fresh blue blazes mark your path. Continue as the trail flattens. A blue sign at R indicates you are heading toward the Appalachian Trail. Continue straight as the trail heads uphill on a gentle to moderate grade.



→ 25 minutes' walk from the trailhead, you reach a T intersection. Above to the L, a tree seems to be gnawing on a blue arrow. Turn R and head downhill toward a big "wolf" pine.

→ You'll soon reach the boldly yellow-blazed boundary of the federal land embracing the Appalachian Trail corridor. Continue on the trail, now marked with older blue blazes. Watch for ice underfoot as you cross a small drainage.

→ Keep an eye out for an amusing piece of "cultural debris" – a sap bucket, and then a few steps farther, the remains of a hunter's easy chair, parked in a convenient spot with evidence of his last refreshment. This is a good time to note



that hunting is permitted on the AT and federal land surrounding it, so it's wise to wear orange if you're out between Sept. 15 and Dec. 15.

- A few minutes after passing the hunter's perch, the famed Appalachian Trail crosses your path. While it is well marked with fresh white blazes, it can be easy to miss as the old trail continues straight. Turn R onto the AT and head for Mt. Katahdin (or maybe just your car). This is your second historic trail of the day. Benton MacKaye conceived of the regional trail in 1921, and after overcoming many obstacles including the 1938 Hurricane, World War II's drain on trail maintainers, and the kind of political intransigence that is all too familiar, his vision became the National Scenic Appalachian Trail in 1968.
- Hemlocks shelter the trail here; if weather conditions are right, it's easy to see how their stiff needles and short branchlets capture and hold snow before it can fall to the ground. Deer and other wildlife take advantage of the shallower snow depths under hemlocks, where it's easier to move around. Wildlife managers call such hemlock groves "deer yards" for this reason.
- Soon you leave the hemlocks behind as the AT heads up a gentle knoll dominated by northern hardwoods. Continuing back down the north side, the trail enters evergreen forest again.
- About 50 minutes into your hike, you'll encounter another wetland. The log crossing may be buried in snow – watch your footing.
- Four minutes later you'll reach Trescott Road at the Dartmouth Outing Club's orange sign for the Velvet Rocks Trail. The AT parking lot is visible to the L across the road.
- If you left your car here, it's time to end your hike. If not, turn R on Trescott Road and walk the 0.4 miles back down toward Etna and your car.

*The Hanover Conservancy, New Hampshire's oldest local land trust, is a private, non-profit membership organization independent of the Town of Hanover.*

