

DONOVAN - WILDCAT CONSERVATION AREA TRAILS AND FARM FIELDS

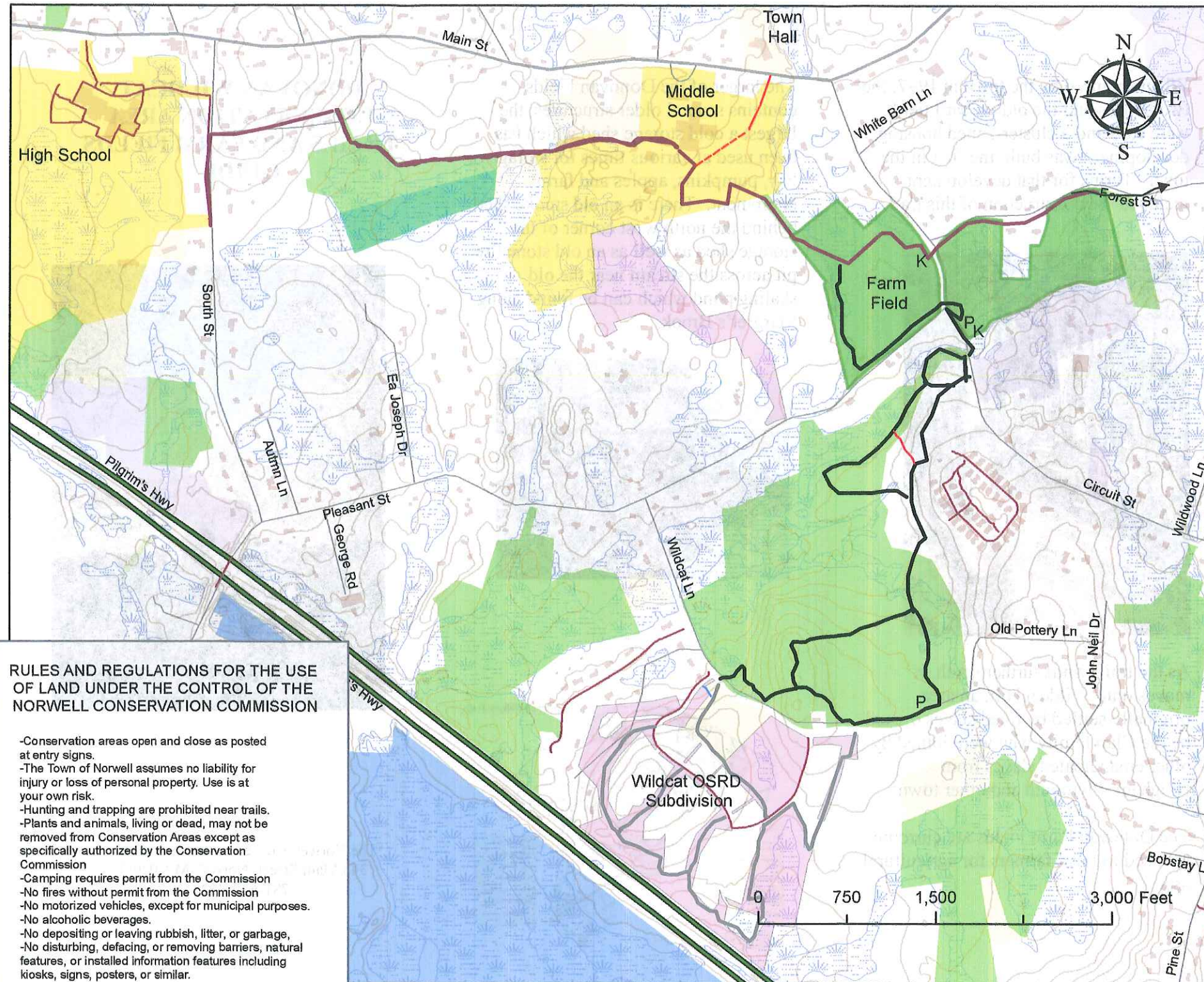
The Donovan Fields property is a 50-acre site at the intersection of Circuit Street, Forest Street and Pleasant Street. It is part of the 1997 Donovan Farm Town acquisition that also contains 100 acres of conservation land south of Pleasant Street.

From Route 123 east, turn right onto Circuit St. Proceed 0.4 mile to the intersection with Pleasant St. Parking area is just beyond the intersection on the left hand side of Circuit St. Parking area can hold about 10 - 15 cars. If turning onto Pleasant St., there is street parking for 2 cars 0.1 mile from intersection. An old root cellar and gate mark the entrance from Pleasant St. A Conservation Commission sign, erected in one of the fields marks the property.

The fields are leased for agricultural purposes. The trail leaves from Pleasant St. by the root cellar. It travels along the west side of a field and Margaret's Brook to an old ponding area with the remains of an old earthen and stone dam. You can walk around the field and follow the boardwalk and bike trail or you can pick up the older walking path in the northwest corner of the field following Margaret's Brook for a bit. Eventually the trail crosses the Brook via a bridge and connects to the boardwalk where it continues to Norwell Middle School. Visitors can also walk the perimeters of both fields. Benches were installed along the trail near the old skating pond as part of an Eagle Scout project.

Legend

-  Pathways
-  Donovan Farm Fields
-  Margret Brook and Wildcat Trails
-  Side walk
-  Elevation Contours
-  Conservation managed land
-  OtherTown
-  School
-  Water Department managed land
-  WETLANDS
-  Conservation Restricted land



RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE USE OF LAND UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE NORWELL CONSERVATION COMMISSION

- Conservation areas open and close as posted at entry signs.
- The Town of Norwell assumes no liability for injury or loss of personal property. Use is at your own risk.
- Hunting and trapping are prohibited near trails.
- Plants and animals, living or dead, may not be removed from Conservation Areas except as specifically authorized by the Conservation Commission
- Camping requires permit from the Commission
- No fires without permit from the Commission
- No motorized vehicles, except for municipal purposes.
- No alcoholic beverages.
- No depositing or leaving rubbish, litter, or garbage,
- No disturbing, defacing, or removing barriers, natural features, or installed information features including kiosks, signs, posters, or similar.

Donovan Conservation Area was known as White Oak Plains in earlier times. The Donovan Fields property through which this trail winds, was part of a large land grant in colonial days to the Clap family of ministers and lawyers.

It was cleared for farming in 1820 when roads were still dirt trails and residents got around on horseback. Later, to the west of the property, where Centennial Way is now located, a horse track with sulky races operated.

By 1955, a commercial apple orchard thrived. The only evidence of the orchard today is the low brick building on the field that was used for storage and packing.



When acquired by the town in 1997, the two houses and the old orchard field were sold and a cluster-zoned housing development was built, the first in the town. Terms for that development included the construction of this trail.



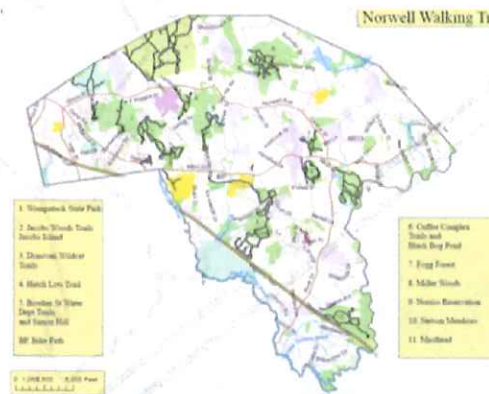
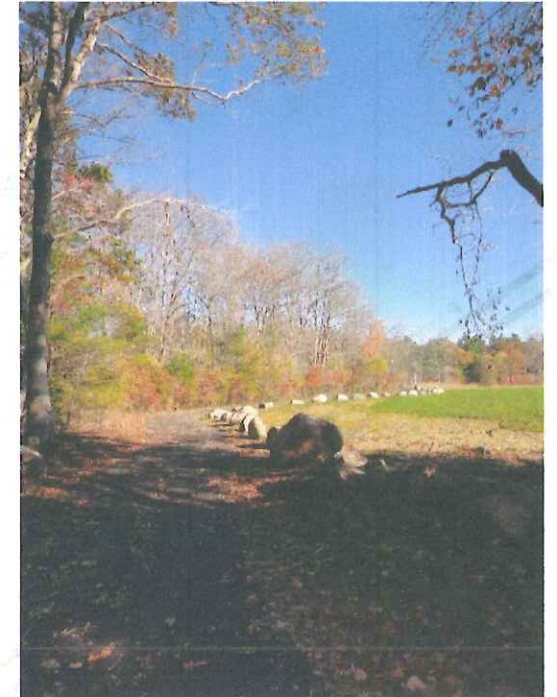
As the trail winds further south, it moves onto Wildcat Hill, an area originally settled by freed slaves owned by the Clap family who were joined by other emancipated slaves from Hingham, Plymouth and other towns.

The Donovan Farm Fields are currently licensed to local farmers for agricultural use.

The larger of the Donovan Fields contains several older structures, the largest a cold storage shed which has been used at various times for storage of hay, pumpkins, apples and farm equipment. There is an old smoke shed behind the north west corner of the storage shed as well as an old stone fire pit across the stream near the old skating pond which can be found along Margret's Brook.



DONOVAN WILDCAT CONSERVATION AREA TRAILS AND FARM FIELDS GUIDE



The Norwell Conservation Commission
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