

Vinalhaven Land Trust

Founded in 1986, Vinalhaven Land Trust (VLT) offers over 15 miles of well-maintained trails on our preserves.

In 2011, we celebrated our 25th anniversary by gaining accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance; only the fourth land trust in Maine to be so recognized. In addition to our role as stewards of these properties we also offer educational programs and guided walks throughout the year. For more information, visit our kiosk to find maps, schedules of events, and detailed preserve brochures. It's located in Skoog Park, just 2/10 of a mile west of the ferry terminal along Sands Road. Feel free to enjoy our picnic table overlooking Sands Cove where you can relax with your lunch.

VLT's work relies on the generosity of our members. For more information on how to support our work, please contact us.

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Vinalhaven Land Trust promotes the conservation and appreciation of our island's significant plant and wildlife habitat, our water resources, and scenic or traditionally valued spaces in order to preserve the character of the community for generations to come.

Watershed Preserve



History

This preserve comprises two parcels; the largest, donated to VLT by owner Jean Scudder in 2003, consists of roughly eighty acres of forested land. It was a stated condition of her gift that the land be conserved to protect the quality of Vinalhaven's water source, and virtually all of this piece lies within the watershed that supplies Vinalhaven's drinking water. The town's water main from the Folly Pond pumping station crosses the property.

In 2010, VLT purchased a nine-acre parcel with frontage on Otter Pond to "square off" the Scudder gift. These two parcels in turn are surrounded by other large blocks of conservation land owned by the Vinalhaven Water District and Maine Coast Heritage Trust. Collectively, the three organizations now protect several hundred contiguous acres around Folly and Round Ponds, helping ensure the quality of the town's water supply for generations to come.

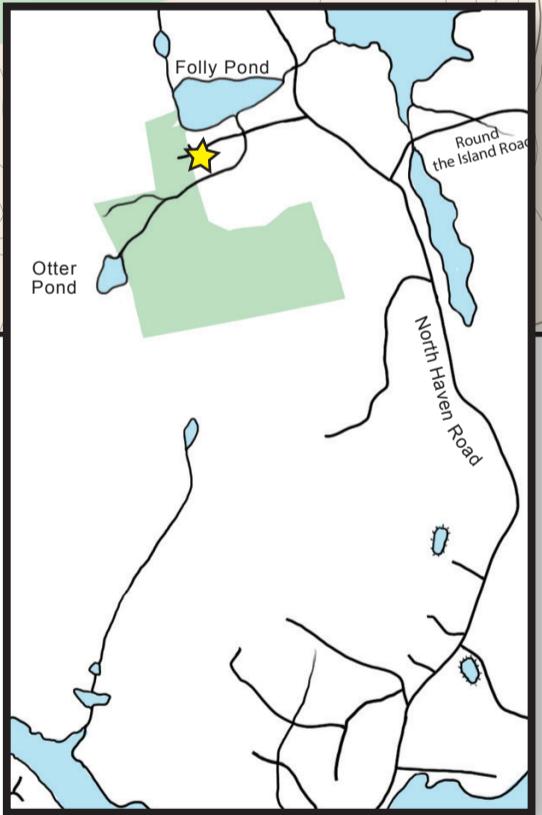
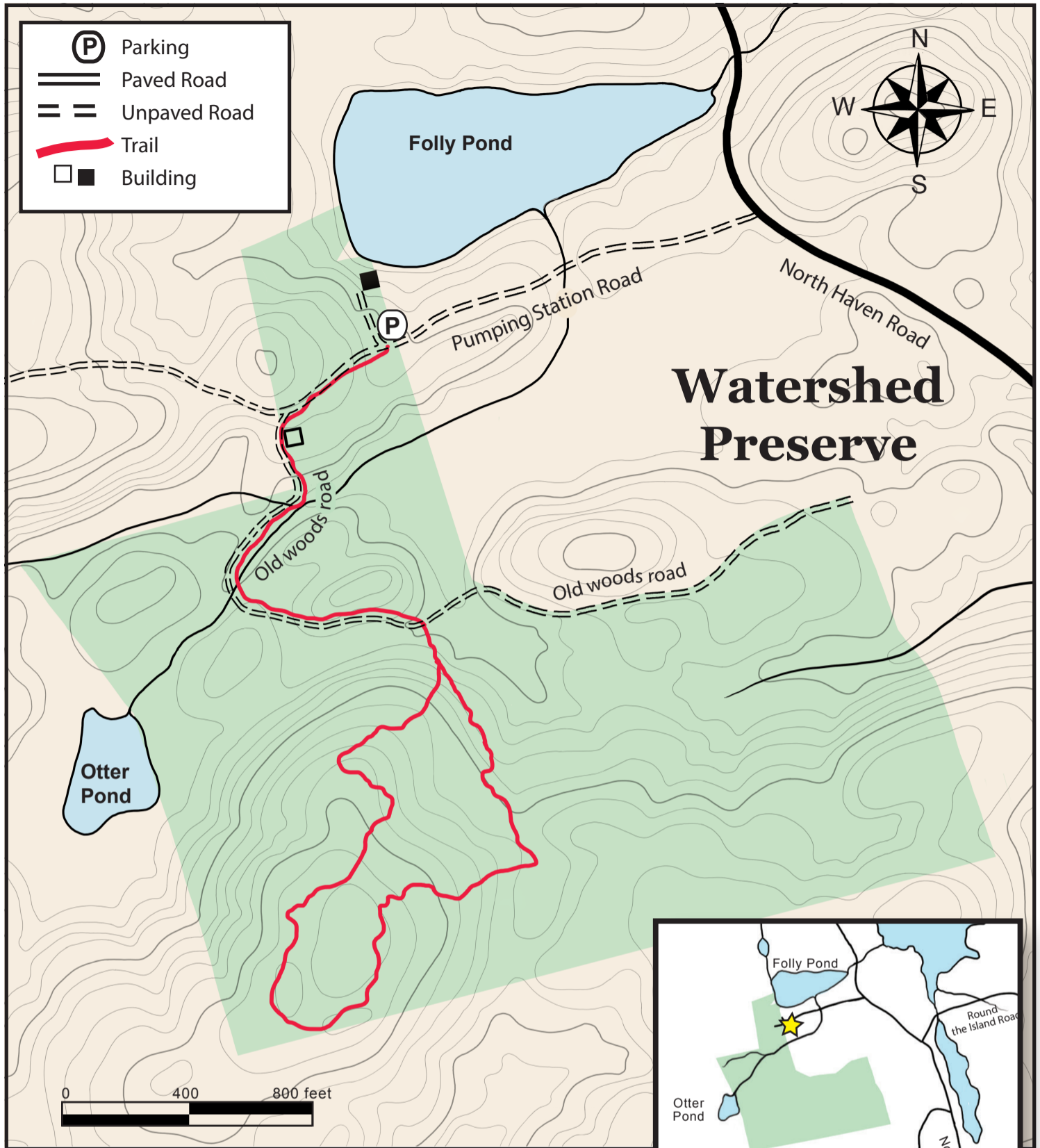
Visitors to the preserve can park in a gravel lot overlooking Folly Pond, and set off on a mile-long hike that takes you over old woods roads, then up onto a granite dome rising to 175' above sea level. From this high point, the trail then loops back down onto itself and returns. The walking is mostly level and easy while on the woods road, but becomes steeper and a bit more challenging as you climb and then descend from the summit of the dome.

Natural Resources

Visitors to this preserve will see four different forest types. Most of the area is low-lying terrain, which favors communities like Red Maple Alluvial Swamp and Spruce-Fir Cinnamon Fern Forest. Assorted species of mosses form an important component of these forests, and serve double duty: they retain moisture in the forest floor, and they also filter impurities from surface water as it runs into Folly Pond.

As the ground rises slightly higher, the cover shifts to Maritime Spruce-Fir Forest, the plant community most commonly seen on Vinalhaven. Lastly, on the granite ledges of the preserve's highest land you will pass through an exemplary Pitch Pine Woodland, with fantastically-shaped gnarled pines emerging from seams in the granite ledges. Under the pines, low woody shrubs like huckleberry, juniper, sheep laurel, and crowberry share the scanty available topsoil and sprawl out over the bare ledges.

The ample sunshine and many openings of a pitch pine forest make it a rewarding place to watch for birds and butterflies. Here, you can find a shady, needle-cushioned seat under a pine tree and become part of the landscape. Then just wait and watch for flashes of color and movement... usually, you'll have time to raise binoculars or camera and record a sighting. If things get dull, try making a few squeaking noises by kissing the back of your hand; often this will bring curious birds out to have a look at you.

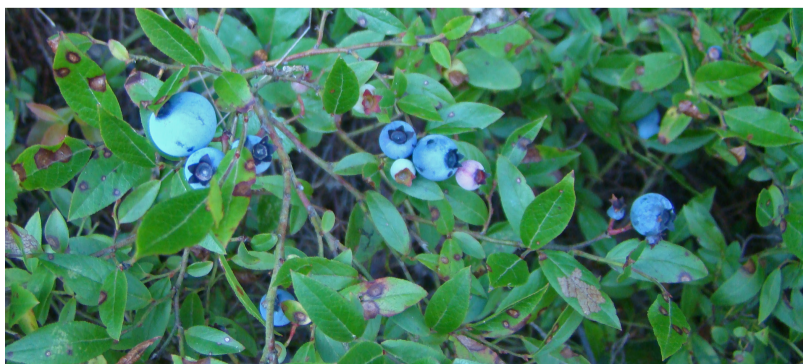


Size: 89 acres

Trails: One out-and-back with a loop section; total distance about 1 mile

Features: Forested wetlands, pitch pine forest

Be Aware: Some of the healthiest insect populations on the island are found here; many hikers will want to use repellents here from mid-May through early July. Because this preserve is surrounded by large tracts of forested land, people or pets who wander off-trail can easily lose their bearings.



Directions: From ferry, go left on Sands Rd. for 0.4 miles, then right on Old Harbor Rd. for 0.3 miles, then bear left onto North Haven Rd. for about 2 miles. The gravel road to Folly Pond will be on your left; the parking lot is about 0.3 miles in at the end of this road.