

## Take Your Own Trail Walk: Elm Brook Conservation Area from Railroad Av., by Ralph Hammond, Bedford Trails Committee

This walk starts at the Minuteman Bikeway Extension (MBE) parking area on Railroad Av., and goes west on the MBE to the Elm Brook CA. The **Elm Brook CA** contains a continuous loop trail through the Conservation Area and along the Elm and Mongo Brooks. This is a peaceful, wooded area, home to various wildlife including duck, deer, and woodpeckers. Raccoon tracks may be found in the muddy bed of Mongo Brook. The trail is shaded by white pine and red maple and is very colorful as the seasons change.

**Elm Brook Conservation Area (CA)** was at one time part of several tracts of farm land specifically for vegetable production. Even as late as the 1950's, there were still 7 active dairy farms, and there were actually more cows in Bedford than there were school children. At that time there were at least 6 active apple orchards, and 2 active green houses where flower production was clearly a sustaining business. The vast majority of farm land was vegetable production--along what is now Elm Brook CA, the large parcel of land that is now The Great Road Shopping Center, and much of the land along North Road where the "farm stands" remain. The other large tract of land for vegetable production was on both sides of Rt. 62 near Burlington, now used by the MITRE Corporation on one side, and Flatbread, Panera, Bamboo and other businesses on the other side. Very clearly Bedford prior to the 1950's was a dynamic and thriving agricultural community.

By checking on the Bedford MA Wetlands Map (see: <https://www.bedfordma.gov/conservation-commission/pages/wetlands-finder>), one can still see the 18 land parcels where the farmers from the 1650's to the early 1900's harvested the highly prized naturally growing "river grass" which is totally maintained by the normal annual river flooding. Although no longer harvested, several of the grass sections remain to this day.

**Difficulty Level:** **Low-Moderate.** This should be a fun walk for people of all walking abilities. The walk is mostly flat all the way, but with some tree roots, uneven terrain, and bog bridges, and may be wet and muddy. The walk is about 1.1 miles and takes about 30-45 minutes.

**Driving Directions:** From the Bedford Pubic Library at 7 Mudge Way, turn right on The Great Road (Routes 4/225/62) and continue 0.2 miles. Turn right on South Road and continue 0.4 miles. Turn right on Railroad Av., and continue 0.3 miles. The parking entrance is on the left, just before the sharp right bend (Google maps address: 25 Railroad Av.).

**Parking:** Please park at the MBE parking area on Railroad Av. (see map)

**Walking Directions:** From the MBE parking area, follow the directions on the map.



# ELM BROOK CONSERVATION AREA

TRAIL MAP



Town of Bedford  
Massachusetts



to Hartwell Rd (3/4 miles)  
Concord Rd (1 1/2 miles)

Richard Rd  
Winchester Dr

Private Land

0.2 mi

Mongo Brook

Minuteman Bikeway Extension

Wooded Swamp

Middle School  
Athletic Fields

Washington St

Elm Brook

Elm Brook  
Conservation Area

0.7 mi  
loop



Park Here

to  
School Campus  
and Town Center  
(1/2 miles)

Railroad Ave

to Depot Park  
and Minuteman Bikeway  
(1/4 miles)

to South Rd  
(1/4 miles)

Miller-Moore  
Conservation  
Restriction

Private  
Land

## Legend

- Main Trail (Blue Blaze) 0.9 mi
- Secondary Trail (Orange Blaze)
- Access Trail (Yellow Blaze)
- Other Trail (No Blaze)
- Bog Bridge
- Bay Circuit Trail
- Property Boundary
- Bridge
- Kiosk / Sign
- Parking Area
- Wet Area / Wetland

Map by Bedford Public Works  
Revised December 2018

**Note:** Note that all walks at your own risk. Depending on the time of the year, ticks may be out, and poison ivy may be active. Please wear comfortable, closed-toe walking shoes or boots that can handle wet or mud, and ice and snow in the winter. Children and dogs on leash are welcome.

*Please follow the latest Bedford COVID-19 Data, News and Announcements at*

*<https://www.bedfordma.gov/bedford-board-of-health/pages/covid-19-coronavirus>*

*Please observe Massachusetts "Governor's COVID-19 Order . . . requiring all persons to wear face-coverings in all public places, even where they are able to maintain 6 feet of distance from others," see: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/covid-19-order-55/download>*

**Prior "Take Your Own" Trail Walks:** see <https://groups.google.com/group/bedfordma-trails>

**To Join:** Go to the Bedford Trails page <https://groups.google.com/group/bedfordma-trails>

If you already have a Google account, click "Join Group to Post"

If you don't have a Google account, please send an email to [BedfordMA.trailwalks@gmail.com](mailto:BedfordMA.trailwalks@gmail.com) and you'll be added to the Group.

*Bedford MA Trails is on **Facebook**, just click here*

