

Selden Creek Preserve and the Ravine Trail

HOURS: Dawn to dusk

LOCATION: Parking on the west side of Joshuatown Road about 4 miles north of the intersection of Joshuatown and Rte 156 in Lyme. There is also parking on Mitchell Hill Road at the entrance to the Ravine Trail.

ACTIVITIES: We invite you to hike the properties on both sides of Joshuatown Road. **Mountain biking is not allowed on any trails on this preserve.**

FEATURES: One of the most biologically significant sites on the lower Connecticut River, the **Selden Creek Preserve** in Lyme takes the name of the creek that divides it from 600-acre Selden Neck State Park. With wooded hills and pristine freshwater tidal marshes, it provides vital habitat for many plants and animals, including songbirds, shorebirds and rails, and is also a critical site for wintering bald eagles. Spectacular vertical cliffs along the marshes provide dramatic vistas of the marshes and the creek.

Starting from Joshuatown Road, **The Ravine Trail** follows an old farm road near wetlands with a vernal pool and then passes through abundant mountain laurel. Further in, stone seats on either side of the trail provide respite for the hiker near a very large boulder on the right, with common polypody fern growing on its top. One may take the yellow trail for an easy loop or continue on the more challenging section of the red trail with rocky terrain and some steep hill climbs.

On your way back to Joshuatown Road on the yellow trail, be sure to take a side trip onto the blue trail for a moderately easy route to an outstanding overlook of the beaver meadow.

Continuing on the red trail, steep cliffs tower on either side of a small tributary stream which eventually flows into the Connecticut River to the south. This section of the Ravine Trail follows a set of north-south fractures that are common in the bedrock of Lyme. There is a well defined drainage divide in the “ravine section” where water flows north to Whalebone Cove on one side, and south to Joshua Creek the other side. The forest consists primarily of hemlocks and hardwoods, including red oak, white oak, yellow birch, and sugar maple. With the demise of the hemlocks due to the wooly adelgid, the hardwood trees have begun to thrive as more light infuses the forest. High above the Beaver meadow, a short blue spur trail allows views from an overlook. The beaver meadow was formed when a beaver dam enlarged a swamp. The dam was abandoned years ago and an early successional forest of young birch trees is emerging. As the trail nears Mitchell Hill Road, it parallels the stream draining the swamp. This section of trail follows an east-west set of bedrock fractures that are also common in Lyme

Report any problems during your visit to The Nature Conservancy at ct@tnc.org or the Lyme Open Space Coordinator at openspace@towlyme.org.

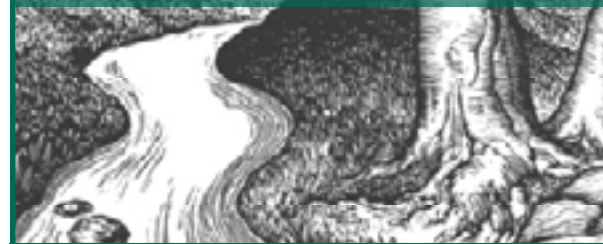
TRAILS OF LYME

Selden Creek Preserve

The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter

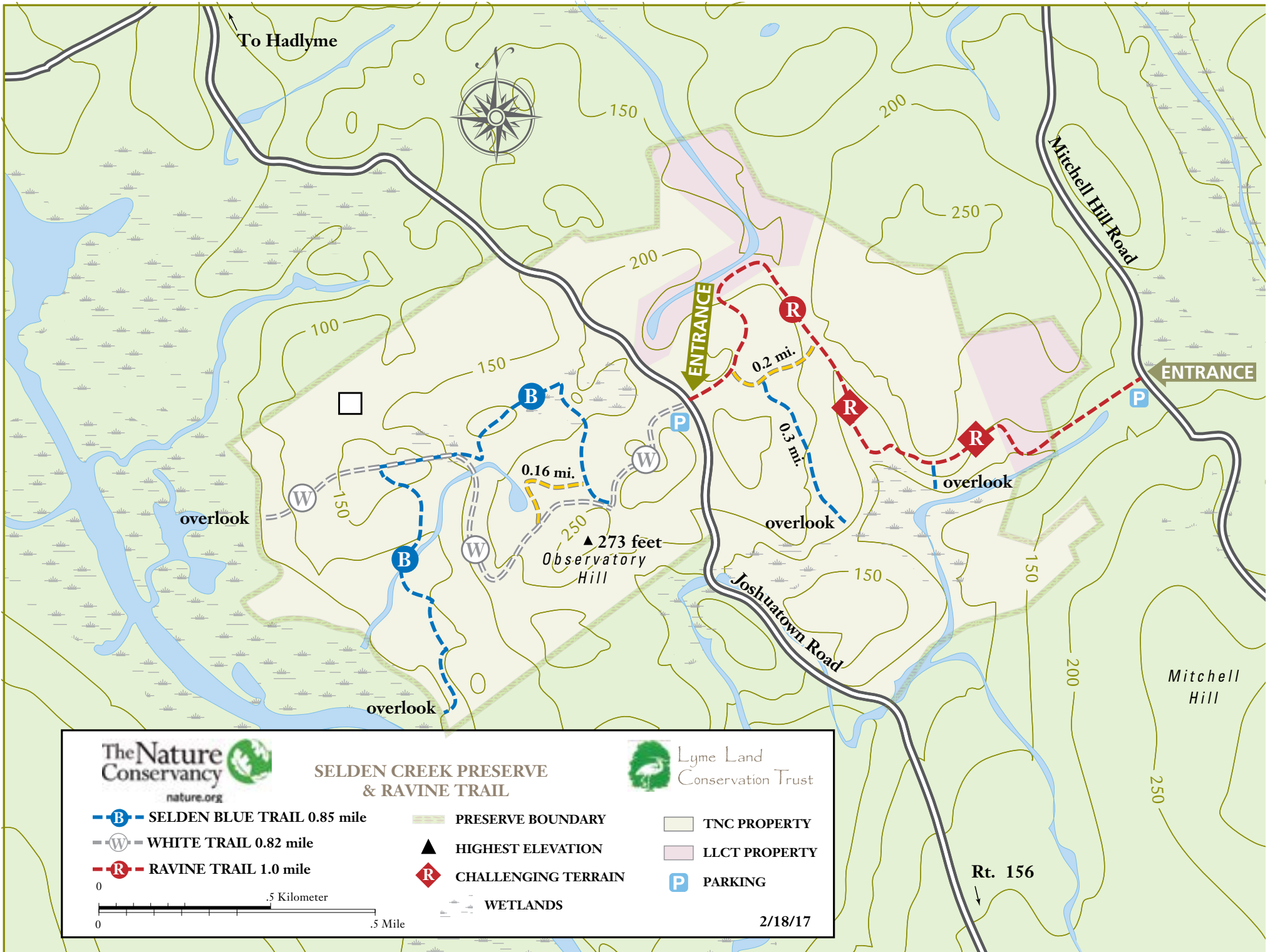
& The Ravine Trail

Lyme Land Conservation Trust



Thomas W. Nason, *The Brook*. Florence Griswold Museum; Lyme Historical Society

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) created the original 101-acre Selden Creek Preserve in 1986 through a purchase of 55 acres and the donation of an adjacent 46-acre conservation easement by the late Ferdinand W. Coudert. In 1991 the Lyme Land Conservation Trust (LLCT) received a donation of 13.1 acres across Joshuatown Road from the original Preserve. In 1995, TNC purchased 207 acres that fronts the tidal marsh. In 1998 Ron Phillips donated 9.35 acres off Mitchell Hill Road to the LLCT as part of the Josie Perkins subdivision approval, which allowed the LLCT to develop the Ravine Trail. Abutting this parcel is the 70 acres that TNC purchased in 2000, in a bargain sale, from Tai Soo Kim and Stanley Fellman. The preserve reached its current size of 394 acres with the purchase of 6 acres in 2001 from Dr. Clement E. Marks Jr. and the estate of Michael Mercurio.



To Hadlyme



150

200

250

Mitchell Hill Road

ENTRANCE

ENTRANCE

0.2 mi.

0.3 mi.

0.16 mi.

overlook

overlook

overlook

overlook

▲ 273 feet
Observatory Hill

Joshuatown Road

150

Mitchell Hill

250

Rt. 156