

to Rte. 82

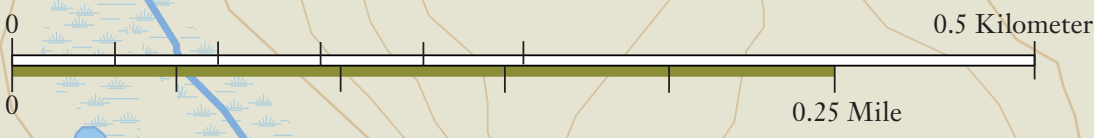
Brush Hill Rd



Lyme Land Conservation Trust

THACH PRESERVE

- APPROACH TRAIL (ORANGE): 0.3 MI
- LOOP (ORANGE): 0.3 MILE
- OVERLOOK W/BENCH (PURPLE): 0.1 MI
- YELLOW: 0.25 MILE
- PRESERVE BOUNDARY
- PARKING
- TRAILHEAD
- KIOSK
- WETLANDS



200

100

Kiosk

PICNIC TABLE

BENCH

BEAVER POND

Mitchell Hill Rd

The Preserve and Highlights

Thach Preserve: 12.7 acres

Access

131 Brush Hill Rd. Lyme. Park inside the driveway in designated parking area. The trailhead begins at the gate.

Trails

A round-trip walk on the orange trail from the parking area, around the loop, and back is almost 1 mile. The yellow trail is a beautiful 0.25 mile diversion along a woodland stream. The purple trail leads to a welcoming bench with a view.

Highlights

The orange trail traverses a variety of habitats in this portion of watershed which eventually drains into Whalebone Cove. From the parking area, you walk through mature woodlands with towering hardwood trees until you come to a dramatic rocky prominence. There are nooks and small caves in the rocky ridges that provide protection for wildlife. Take a side trip on the purple trail to a **bench** that has been placed on a ledge which provides a beautiful seasonal overlook of the pond. You can linger there, then continue on to the edge of the beaver pond to sit at the **picnic table**. Enjoy a picnic or just take a break from the stresses of life to experience the wonder of woodland wetlands. Every season has its own array of scents, sounds and sights. Dome-shaped beaver lodges of sticks and wood are visible in the middle of the pond. Beavers are nocturnal but you may see them emerge just before the sun sets or, if you get there in the early morning, just after sunrise. You might hear the slap of a beaver tail on the water to warn others of an intruder. This area is a flyway for birds. Some of the species of birds you may observe are osprey, bald eagle, egret, belted kingfisher, a variety of warblers and song birds, and ducks, such as wood ducks and mergansers. Great blue heron nest in the trees across the pond. If you sit quietly for a while, maybe you will see large mammals such as otter, deer, and coyote. The pond supports a healthy population of amphibians and reptiles, as well as dragonflies and other insects.

Beavers

Beavers are called nature's meadow makers. As the woodlands in Lyme have matured, the preserves primarily consist of forests of large trees, with spreading canopies of leaves, that prevent direct sunlight from reaching the understory. These woods are an important part of a healthy environment and certain animals prefer this habitat, but the canopy shades out emerging seedlings which provide food and shelter for many others. Species that depend upon younger forests and open meadows are unable to survive there. Beaver dams play an important role in a vibrant ecosystem by opening up the canopy as the trees in the flooded area die, allowing sunlight to reach new growth. Beavers further clear trees and vegetation to use for food and shelter. The ponds that beavers create provide a valuable source of water for wildlife. Eventually, as the beavers use up their food source in the area and move on to another location, the pond will fill in and create a meadow filled with wildflowers and berries, food and protection for many species of animals. After several years, the meadow will have provided fertile ground for an emerging young forest of trees and bushes. The forest will grow and mature into large trees, and complete the cycle. The beavers return as their food source of trees is replenished and start the process all over again. The evolving environments created by beaver activity provide habitats for an abundance of wildlife.

This cycle was broken for more than a century when beavers were extirpated from CT. When the European colonists arrived in the 1600s, beavers were common. By the mid-1800s, beavers were entirely wiped out of CT by unrestricted hunting, because beaver fur was highly prized by Americans and Europeans. By 1950, beavers had been reintroduced into the State and began to thrive again. Now CT has a healthy population of beavers.

Report any comments or problems during your visit by filling out a trail report: <http://www.lymelandtrust.org/trail-report/>

TRAILS OF LYME Thach Preserve



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

This gem of a preserve contains a variety of vibrant natural habitats on 12.7 acres. It fills a vital space, like a puzzle piece, in an uninterrupted forest block of protected properties.

The Thach Preserve was purchased by the Lyme Land Trust from Evelyn Foster in 2017, thanks to a generous contribution from a lead donor and additional funding from local community members. With this purchase, the former four-lot, 91-acre subdivision supports just three homes, with over 65 acres in protected open space.

The Land Trust named the preserve after Jim and Margaret Thach, strong advocates for open space in Lyme, who placed a conservation easement on part of the subdivision when they originally divided the property. In the ensuing years, neighbors conserved additional acreage, greatly expanding the overall protected land area.

The Thach Preserve is open from sunrise to sunset.

The hiking trail is moderately easy.

No motorized vehicles or fires are allowed.

Keep dogs leashed or under close control.

For more preserve maps, information about the Lyme Land Trust or to become a member, please visit: lymelandtrust.org or write us at P.O. Box 1002, Lyme, CT 06371.