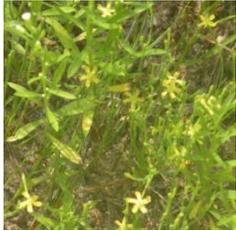


Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust



Interpretive Trail Guide:

West Meadow Conservation Land, Lowell, Massachusetts



The **West Meadow Conservation Land** is a different side of Lowell you may have never seen, a beautiful, relaxing wild habitat, a preserved variety of habitats from a shady wet land to the beautiful desert-like sandy barren. See a variety of plants and animals, including amphibians like green frogs, insects like butterflies, and common small reptiles like turtles. Small mammals pass through this green corridor. There are also a great variety of insects and other macroinvertebrates including water striders, dragonflies, amphipods, and the majestic monarch butterfly.

(1) Meadow swale with wildflowers, surrounded by white pine trees: Entering the Fern Glade Trail you will see colorful wildflowers such as goldenrod, mullein, milkweed, and Queen Anne's lace. If you look closely at the ground, you will find turtle nests. This area is surrounded by beautiful white pine trees. It is a peaceful meadow swale. The Fern Glade Trail moves from open meadow into the cool forest. Large pines dominate this area. The forest floor is covered with large ferns. This trailhead serves as an access point to the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest (LDT).

(2) Vernal pool and forest floor fern glade: The vernal pool in this area (Fern Glade Trail) is a small, shallow, dark temporary pond. It is a whole ecosystem, which includes green frogs, aquatic worms, mosquito larvae, and fishing spiders. Many beautiful small wildflowers grace the forest floor including Canada Mayflower, Gold Thread, Bunch Berry, Partridge Berry, and Lady Slipper.

(3) Sandy barren with vegetation growing in succession: The Wolf Pine Trail begins at the sandy barrens. In the sandy barrens there are colorful small flowers, including orange grass, purple spotted knapped weed, and blue curls. At the edges of the sandy areas, moss and lichens hold the sandy soil, preventing erosion along with small white pines, grey birch, and poplar trees moving in.

(4) Forest trail, leads to Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest: The trail moves back into the pitch pine and white oak forest down into a disturbed area (possibly an old sand pit). Small poplar trees, sweet fern, and spotted winter green are found here, and sometimes small toads, too. The Wolf Pine Trail continues into an oak, red maple, and white pine forest, and extends into the LDT state forest. Wolf pines (referring to a few of the historic white pines) grow near former boundary lines of farms and are identified by their "filled-out" profiles, as compared to other pines in the area.

(5) Perennial stream, stone wall and diverse forest understory: The Orchard Loop Trail wanders off the Wolf Pine Trail in this area. On this trail there is a fresh water stream. Water striders dance on the surface of the water. The ground has Indian pipes and wildflowers including Canada mayflower and star flower. Blueberry bushes and hazelnut shrubs can also be found in this area, as well as, red maple and oaks. A stone wall is a feature reminiscent of the land once being used for farming, perhaps as an apple orchard here.

This small but important wild area is a vital connection (biological corridor) between the wetland areas of Flagg Meadow Brook and the Merrimack River and the LDT State Forest. We invite you to come observe and enjoy the beauty.

This interpretive trail guide to the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust-owned West Meadow Conservation Land was created by youth in Spindle City Corps (August 2009) through LP&CT's "Stewardship Through Leadership" environmental education program, led in partnership with the Mass Audubon Society. The accompanying trail map and concise interpretive trail guide were created by LP&CT, adapted from City of Lowell GIS. "This program is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council's YouthReach Initiative."



West Meadow Conservation Land

Trail Map & Concise Interpretive Trail Guide –

- (1) Meadow swale with wildflowers, surrounded by white pine trees.
- (2) Vernal pool and forest floor fern glade.
- (3) Sandy barren with vegetation growing in succession.
- (4) Forest trail, leads to Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest.
- (5) Perennial stream, stone wall, and diverse forest understory.

Fern Glade Trail – 

Wolf Pine Trail – 

Orchard Loop Trail – 

 To Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest

Approx.
100 Feet