

# MCLEAN GAME REFUGE

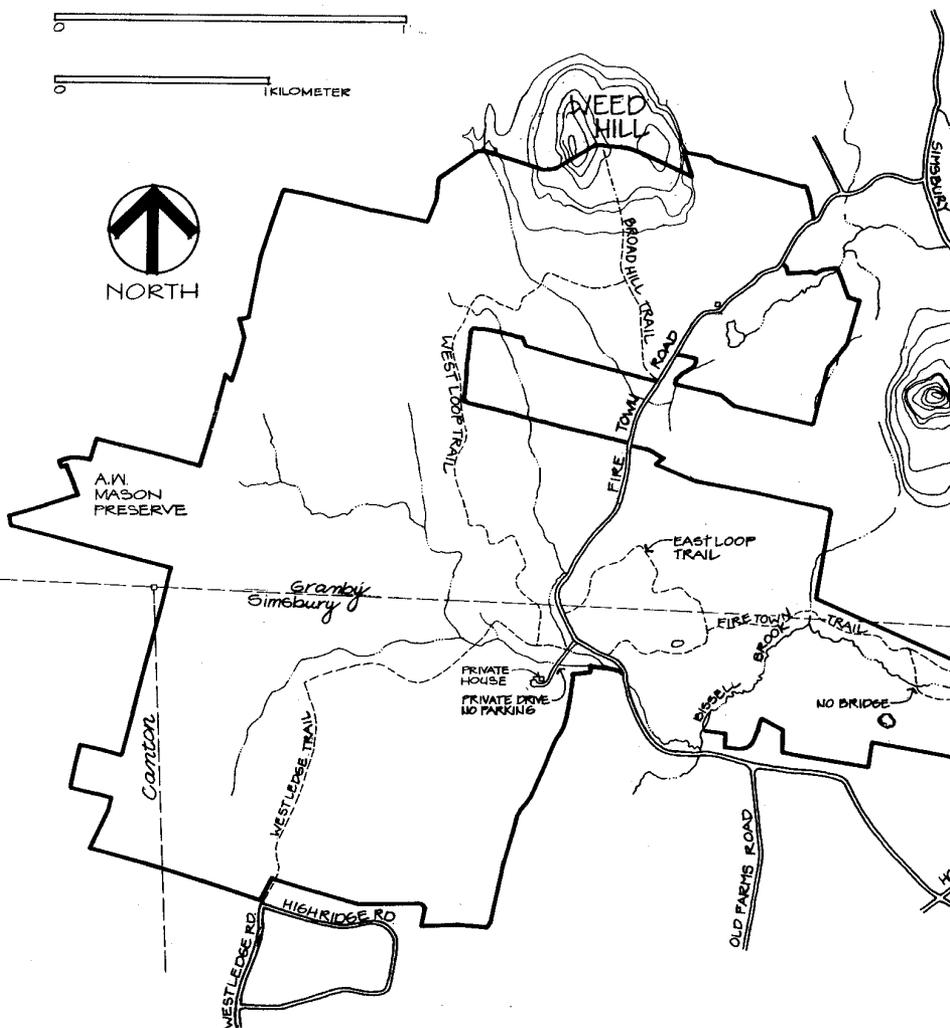
## LEGEND

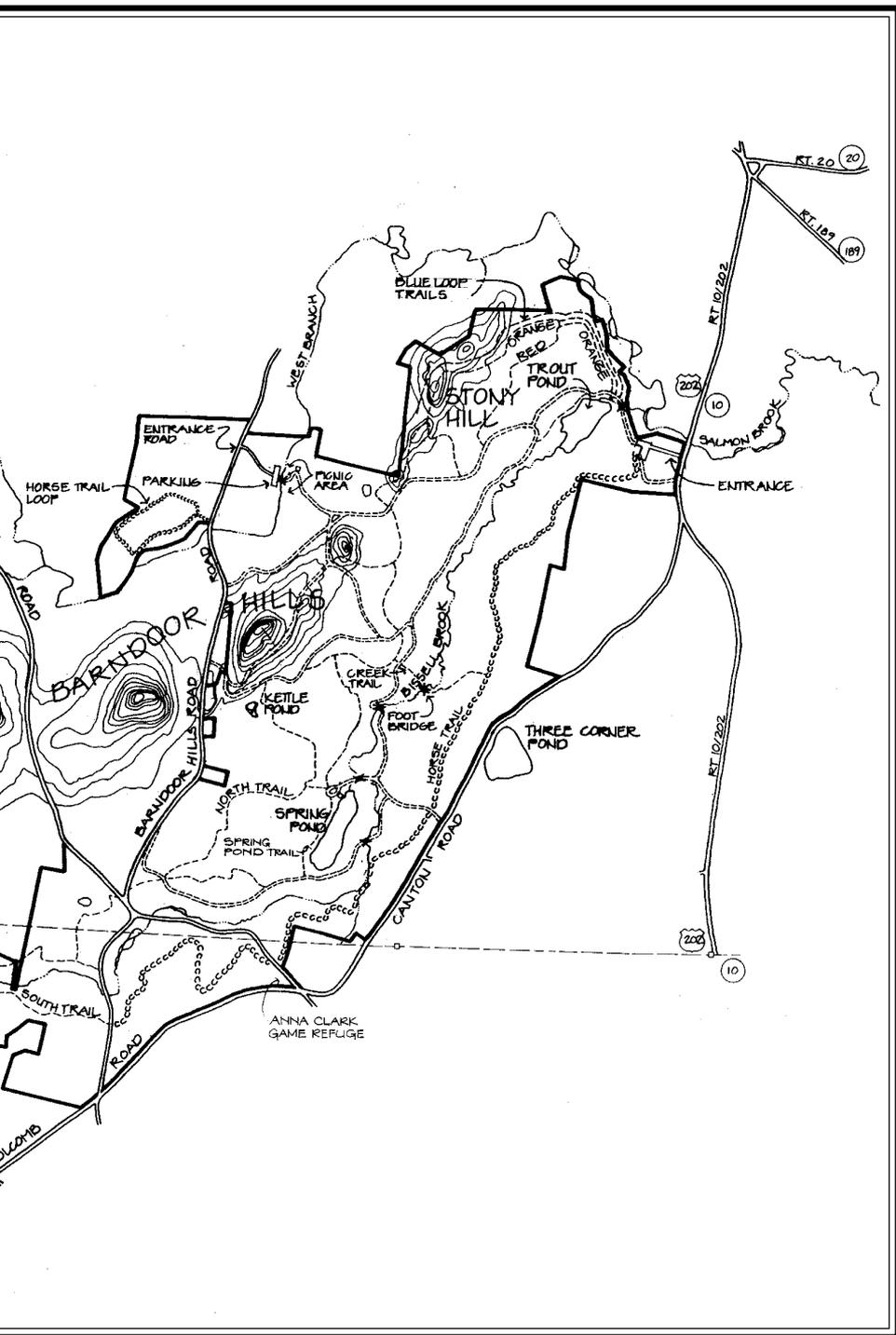
- WOOD ROADS =====
- LOOP TRAILS (RED, ORANGE, BLUE) - - - - -
- HORSE TRAILS ~~~~~
- BLUE TRAILS (AS LABELED) - - - - -
- BRIDGES 
- NATIONAL NATURAL LANDMARK AREAS = DARK GREEN
- BARNDOOR HILL SUMMIT IS DESIGNATED A CONNECTICUT NATURAL AREA.

NOTE: IN SEVERAL AREAS OF THE REFUGE YOU MAY NOTICE UNAUTHORIZED/UNBLAZED TRAILS, USE CAUTION  
TRUSTEES OF THE MCLEAN FUND 1990



NORTH





## MCLEAN GAME REFUGE

Straddling the towns of Simsbury, Granby, and Canton, the McLean Game Refuge consists of 4,300 acres of forests and meadows. This is a diverse ecological and geologic area containing over twenty miles of well marked trails through a variety of terrain, most of which are easy to hike.

There are several points of access to the refuge, with the two main entrances offering plenty of parking. One of these is off Route 10 near the Simsbury-Granby line; the other is on Barndoor Hills Road. Visitors will find a picnic area at the latter site.

The refuge was established in 1933 under the terms of the will of George P. McLean, the former Governor and U.S. Senator, for the protection and preservation of indigenous plants and wildlife. Governor McLean grew up locally and part of the refuge includes his family land. Today the refuge's Board of Trustees encourages passive recreation and nature study in portions of the site.

The McLean Game refuge offers a wealth of diverse opportunities for observing nature. It contains distinct examples of three major types of geologic terrain: the western highland section contains Paleozoic metamorphic rock; the bedrock (Trap-Rock) ridges to the east (Barndoor Hills) are from the Triassic; and the surrounding sandy plains were left behind by the retreating Pleistocene glaciers.

The sandy plain contains a number of wide, flat trails which are very pleasant to hike. Trout Pond and Spring Pond are gorgeous artificial lakes with floating masses of vegetation. The trails lead hikers through an enormously varied selection of plant life influenced not only by topography but by previous land usage such as farming and pasturing. The trail between Bissel Brook and Spring Pond runs atop a very large esker deposit—the result of gravel being deposited by a glacial meltwater stream. Also formed by glaciation are the densely vegetated kettle ponds. These steep depressions were formed by large blocks of melting glacial ice and hold varying levels of water throughout the year.

Centrally, Barndoor Hill is reached by a steeper yet very manageable trail and offers a terrific vista, especially in the fall. The west-



ern portion of the refuge is wilder and the trails steeper and more rocky. The Westledge trail, beginning off of Westledge Road, partially follows a 1700s stagecoach route from Hartford to Albany (along the “Garrett Stairs”). A walk on this trail is all the explanation necessary for the name. Along the way you will pass stone foundations, all that remains of the once thriving village of Pifershire and once the site of up to fifty homes. Access to the western portion can also be found along Firetown Road. The loop trails here are secluded and challenging. The vegetation at the summit is predominantly chestnut oak with lower brush of huckleberry and blueberry. Further down the slopes visitors will find mixed oak and other hardwoods, including beech, birch, maple, and hemlock. In large areas mountain laurel is dense enough to limit hikers to the trails. Many of the hardwoods of this area are “sprout hardwoods,” meaning that they have arisen from the root systems of trees long ago cut to provide charcoal.

