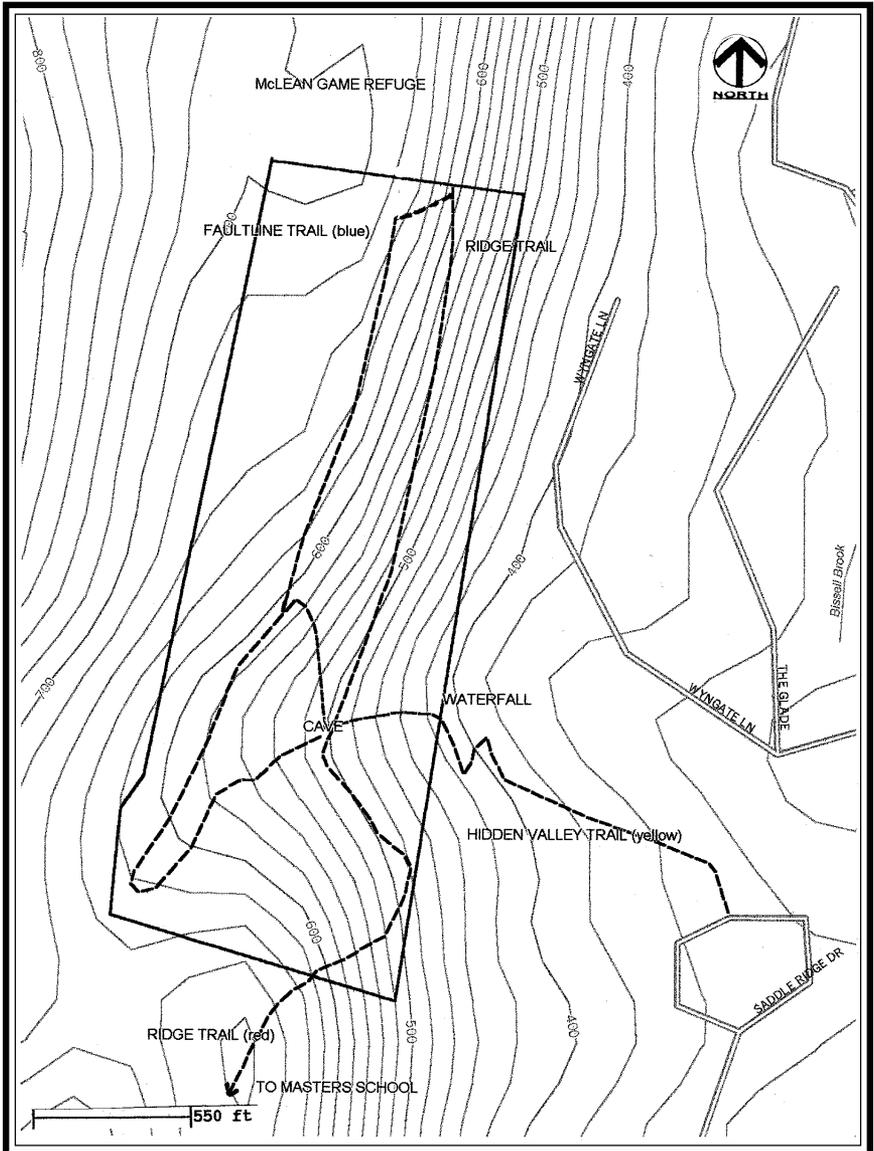


THE CATHLES TRAIL



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The Simsbury Land Trust's Cathles property consists of 47 acres nestled between McLean Game Refuge on the north and Town Open Space on the east and south. While easily accessible, this parcel is remarkably wild and tranquil. Hiking here is moderately difficult to difficult.

The property is most easily reached from the cul de sac at the end of North Saddle Ridge Road. Follow the trail through the stone markers and up around a delightful 30-foot waterfall at the end of town property. A trail continuing north from the end of the Hedgehog trail also leads onto the property.

The land consists of a "hidden valley" running north/south along the faultline. Two streams originate just above the waterfall; these collect water run-off from West Mountain. One stream drains south to the reservoir; the other cuts through the ridge at the waterfall and flows east and north to Bissell Brook. The southern section of the Hidden Valley Trail offers a fine view of one of the town's most magnificent talus fields as well as charcoal pits, cart trails, and bits of barbed wire from the days when this was open pasture. The blue-blazed trail is an extension of the Hedgehog Trail and runs north-south along the eastern ridgeline. It affords beautiful views of West Simsbury and beyond. Note the stunted growth of the cedar trees and other vegetation along the ridge-top, the result of marginal soil and exposure to winter wind. Following the trail from the fault to the ridge and back you will pass through several different habitat zones typical of trap rock ridges. These are discussed in more detail in a 1998 study by the Yale Forestry School commissioned by the Land Trust. (A copy is available at the public library.)

