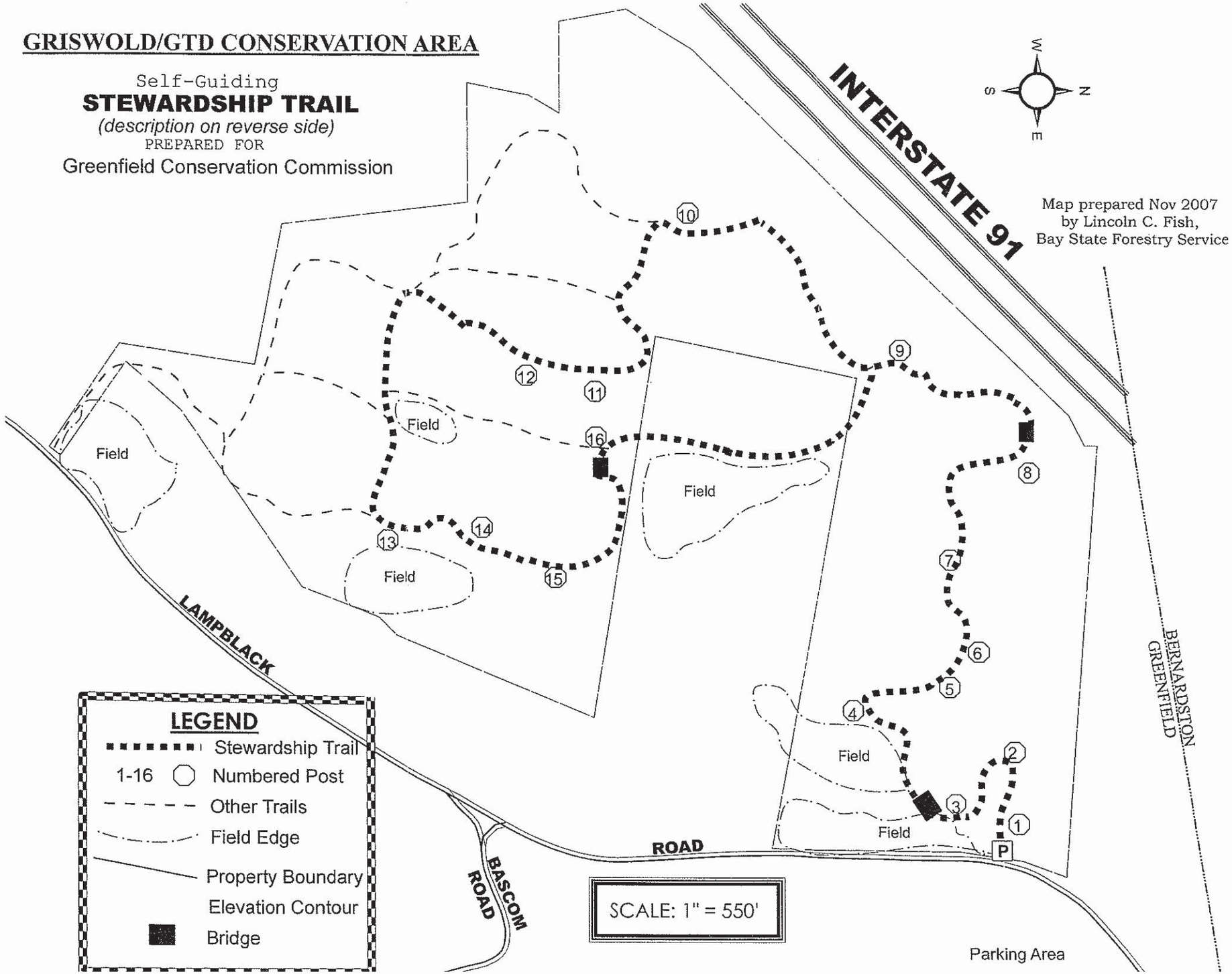
GRISWOLD/GTD CONSERVATION AREA

Self-Guiding
STEWARDSHIP TRAIL
(description on reverse side)
PREPARED FOR
Greenfield Conservation Commission



GRISWOLD
GTD
CONSERVATION
AREA

-Self Guiding-

STEWARDSHIP TRAIL MAP

This 200-acre conservation area was donated to the Town of Greenfield by the Griswold Family and the Greenfield Tap and Die Corporation.

We hope that you find your visit both enjoyable and educational. Improvements and maintenance are funded by revenues from the planned, periodic harvesting of forest products, without the expenditure of tax dollars. In times of tight budgets, we feel that we have developed a workable model for the improvement and maintenance of woodlots and conservation properties. Please contact the Greenfield Conservation Commission for further information: (413) 772-1548.

STEWARDSHIP TRAIL

This brochure and map will guide you through our two mile long Stewardship Trail, which contains 16 numbered stops, marked by posts, to be matched with the numbered descriptions below. Each stop showcases a demonstration of land stewardship. Follow the yellow diamond-shaped signs. Additional trails are available for longer or shorter hikes (see map).

1 Native Shrubs Most forestland contains native shrubs that provide wildlife food in the form of nuts, berries and seeds. Many have flowers or foliage that make them attractive as landscape plantings. Using native species avoids the degradation to our wildlife habitat caused by exotic-invasives such as burning bush and Asiatic bittersweet. Look for descriptive signs in front of each native shrub species.

2 Wetland Wildlife This swampy tangle of wildlife food and cover plants includes elderberry, blueberry, arrowwood and winterberry. Rich leaf litter under the alder shrubs is preferred feeding habitat for woodcock. Dead snags provide nesting and foraging habitat for woodpeckers. Look for swamp-loving birds such as herons, flycatchers, song and swamp sparrows, red-shouldered hawks and screech owls.

3 Road Stabilization Good stewardship often involves investing in access. This road provides access for hay-cutting, forestry and trail mowing. In 1994, crushed stone was placed on this road to reduce erosion. A bridge will be added in 2008 to further reduce impacts to the brook. These fields are maintained for wildlife as well as hay through an agreement with a local farmer.

4 Brushy Habitat Brushy thickets are required habitat for many forest species, yet we are losing brushy habitat as abandoned fields revert to forest or become developed. Our fastest-declining group of bird species is dependent on brushy habitat. Examples: rose-breasted grosbeak, blue-winged warbler. Brushy habitat adjacent to grassy habitat will increase wildlife use of both, so this excellent location will be maintained as brushy habitat with additional cutting.

5 Oak for Wildlife Oaks are arguably the most important wildlife trees in the Massachusetts forest. They are widespread and their fruit (acorn) is nutritious and durable. Acorns have a tremendous impact on wildlife populations. Competing trees were removed in 1994 around the large-crowned oaks on this hillside in order to increase acorn production.

6 Dark Woods Contrast This hemlock stand has not been cut in many years. Its dense shade provides an interesting contrast to areas recently harvested. The relative lack of understory trees and plants creates conditions favorable to some species. Look for brown creeper, red-breasted nuthatch, black-throated green warbler.

7 Improvement Thinning This silvicultural treatment involves removing competing trees adjacent to desirable trees, which will then develop in response to the increased sunlight. The stand grows rapidly and concentrates growth on good quality trees. This stand was thinned in the 1970's and 1994. The large-crowned white oaks and straight pines provide excellent wildlife habitat and produce high-quality timber. Some hollow trees were left as wildlife dens.

8 Nesting, Denning, Perching and Roosting A nest box for small owls (screech and saw-whet) was erected in 2007 about 15 feet high on the right hand side of this large pine. Dens and nests may also be formed as woodpeckers excavate a dead snag, created by girdling a large tree. Dead branches will be perching habitat for fly-catchers and hawks. Loose bark clinging to dead trees provides roosting sites for bats.

9 Mast Trees This site supports a remarkable variety of "mast"-producing trees. *Mast* refers to fruits and nuts utilized as food by wildlife. If trees have enough space to develop large, spreading crowns, mast production can increase dramatically. Species identified by numbers: 1.Red Oak, 2.Black Oak, 3.White Oak, 4.Beech, 5.Hickory, 6.Blackgum, 7.Ironwood, 8.Hop Hornbeam.

10 Regeneration Harvest This 6.5-acre area was thinned in the 1970's, 1986 and 1994, establishing advance pine and oak regeneration. Most of the overstory was removed in 2006 in order to release these seedlings. Pine, hickory and oak are better adapted to full sunlight than partial shade. Many thousands of seedlings per acre will compete for space. When mature, an acre of trees will number 100 to 200 individuals.

11 Old-field White Oak This huge white oak at the end of the short spur trail is worth a special trip to see. The spreading growth habit indicates it is a relic from open pasture conditions. Note the cavity, which probably serves as a squirrel den.

12 View of Notch Mountain This vista was cleared in the 1970's, 1994 and 2008. The mountain with the steep eastern slope is Notch Mountain in Northfield, which blocks our view of Mt. Monadnock.

13 Wildlife Habitat Nest boxes have been erected at the edge of this field for kestrel and bluebird. More than 40 wildlife species in our area utilize tree cavities, and many will accept nest boxes as substitutes.

14 Regeneration These young trees started growing in response to a harvest in 1984. Competing saplings were cut in 1994 and in 2007. These pine, oak and hemlock seedlings are now ready to be released (provided with adequate sunlight and space to grow) by a partial harvest of the overstory.

15 Wolf Tree A large multi-stemmed pine found among smaller, straighter trees, a "wolf" pine provides sites for raptor nests and roosting turkeys. The wolf pine and the old hedgerow of spreading hardwoods along the trail suggest that the area below the trail was pasture within the past 60 years. Note the large, downed black birch tree to the right of the post. Rotting logs on the forest floor provide necessary habitat for ground dwelling mammals, amphibians and invertebrates.

16 Drumming Log The moss-covered log halfway up the opposite slope was felled in 1995 as a ruffed grouse drumming log. Male grouse will use such a log in brushy areas for "drumming" with their wings to attract a mate. Also note the small pile of flat rocks at the base of the slope, built as basking habitat for snakes. Snakes, being cold-blooded, need sunny areas where they can warm their body temperature, yet be able to quickly hide from predators.

The return trail now crosses a section of private property thanks to the generosity of the owner. Please be respectful, remain on the trail and on the uphill side of the fence.