The Conservation Land

The Punkatasset and Estabrook Woods are rich in natural diversity, geology, and the recorded history of Concord. The name Punkatasset is an Algonquin Native American word given to the prominent hill in this conservation land, a smoothly rounded glacial drumlin formation. Other glacial evidence includes eskers, or serpentine ridges of gravel and sandy drift formed by streams under glacial ice, and glacial erratics, large boulders randomly dropped as the ice sheet retreated.

The centerpiece of the Punkatasset parcel is Hutchins Pond, a man-made pond formed for harvesting winter ice in days before refrigeration. Today the pond, inhabited by beavers, offers peaceful views on walks along the trails that loop around it. Beyond Concord's Punkatasset area are the Estabrook Woods of Harvard University, the Concord Land Conservation Trust, Pippen Tree Land Trust, and Middlesex School areas that contain many points of interest both natural and historical, all available for walking. This trail guide offers information about Punkatasset and the entire Estabrook Woods tract.

Location and Access

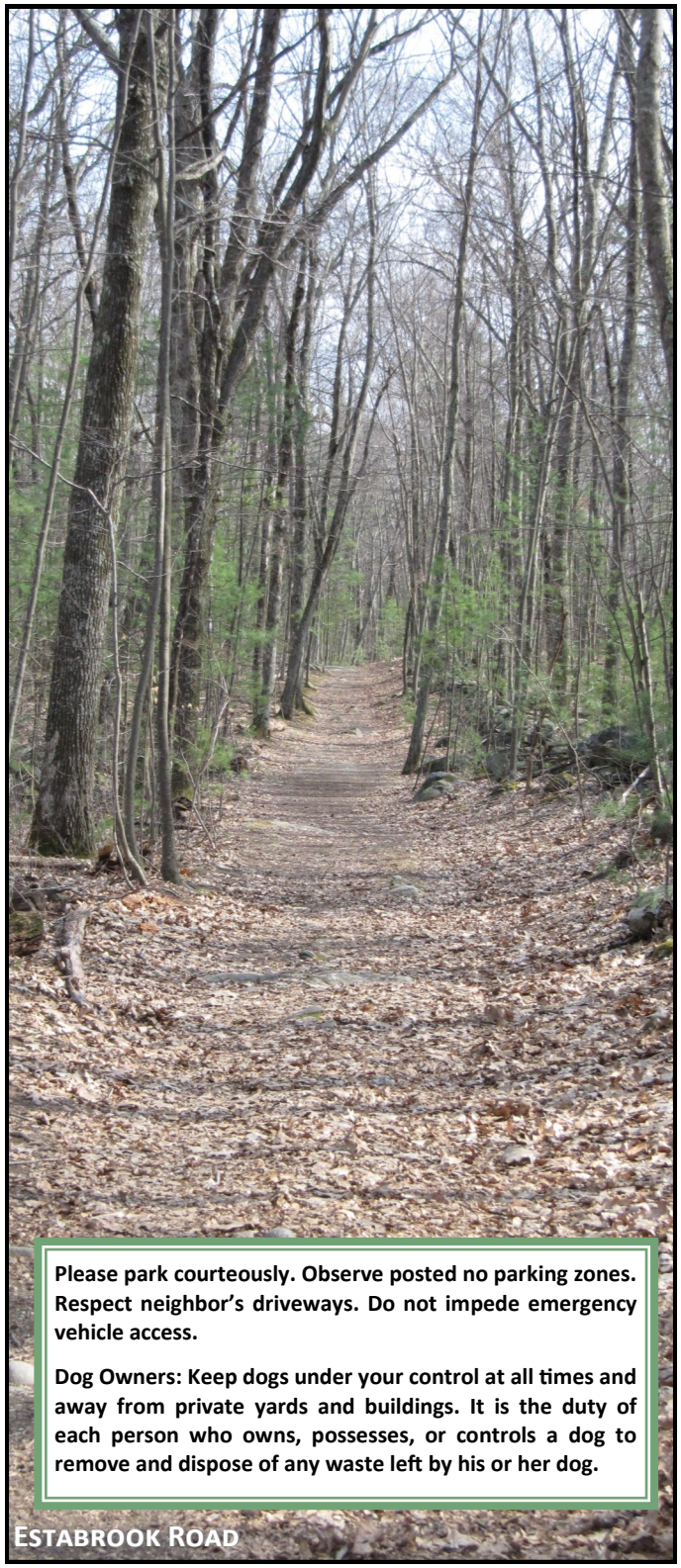
Estabrook Woods is located in both Concord and Carlisle and has multiple access points as follows.

In Concord:

- Access to Punkatasset is from Monument Street with parking available on the west side of the road. The entry walkway is on a gravel drive, walk straight ahead to an information board for the conservation land.
- Access From Estabrook Road off Barnes Hill Road, with parking available along the west side of Estabrook Road, approximately 100 yards before reaching the end of the paved road. Estabrook Woods is reached by following Estabrook Road beyond a chained gate where Estabrook Road continues through the woods as a wide gravel path.
- Access with parking is available from Lowell Road north of Hugh Cargill Road at the "Chamberlin Woods" sign. The trail is entered through a break in the stone wall that leads to a path around the north side of a field then soon enters the Chamberlin Woods of the Concord Land Conservation Trust.

In Carlisle:

- Access with parking is available through the Davis Corridor at the corner of Stearns St. and Two Rod Road.
- Access with parking is available through the Malcolm Preserve on Stearns Street.



Please park courteously. Observe posted no parking zones. Respect neighbor's driveways. Do not impede emergency vehicle access.

Dog Owners: Keep dogs under your control at all times and away from private yards and buildings. It is the duty of each person who owns, possesses, or controls a dog to remove and dispose of any waste left by his or her dog.

Town of Concord

Punkatasset & Estabrook Woods Trail Guide

Hutchins Pond

CONCORD TRAILS

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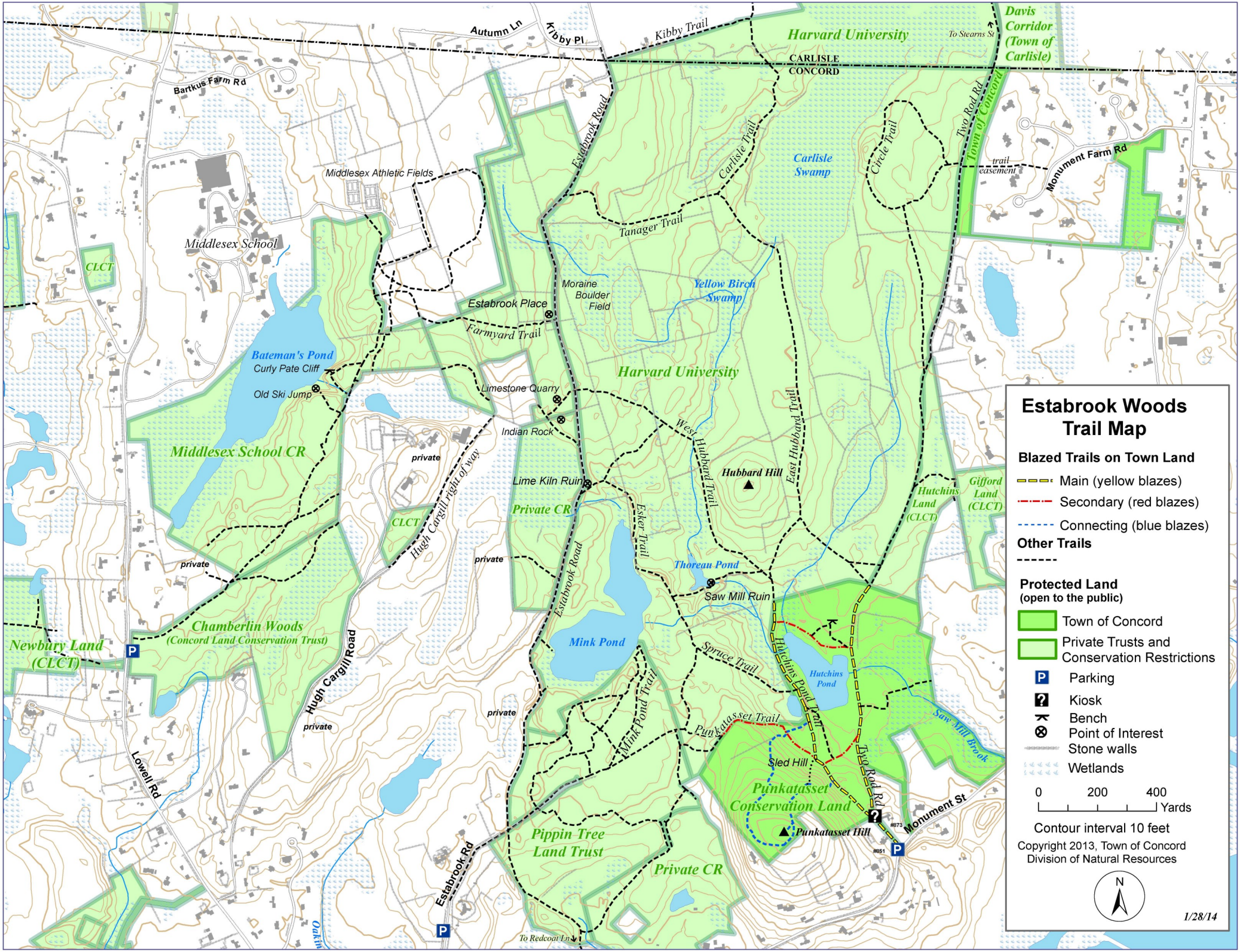
Prepared by the Division of Natural Resources, 2015


Estabrook Woods
Trail Map
Blazed Trails on Town Land
Main (yellow blazes)
Secondary (red blazes)
Connecting (blue blazes)
Other Trails
Protected Land
(open to the public)
Town of Concord
Private Trusts and Conservation Restrictions
Parking
Kiosk
Bench
Point of Interest
Stone walls
Wetlands
0 200 400
Yards
Contour interval 10 feet
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Division of Natural Resources
N
1/28/14
Autumn Ln
Kibby Pl
Kibby Trail
Harvard University
CARLISLE
CONCORD
Davis Corridor (Town of Carlisle)
To Stearns St
Bartkus Farm Rd
Estabrook Road
Carlisle Trail
Carlisle Swamp
Circle Trail
Two Rod Rd
Town of Concord
trail easement
Monument Farm Rd
Middlesex Athletic Fields
Middlesex School
CLCT
Tanager Trail
Moraine Boulder Field
Yellow Birch Swamp
Estabrook Place
Farmyard Trail
Bateman's Pond
Curly Pate Cliff
Old Ski Jump
Limestone Quarry
Indian Rock
Middlesex School CR
private
Hugh Cargill right of way
Lime Kiln Ruin
Private CR
West Hubbard Trail
East Hubbard Trail
Hubbard Hill
Hutchins Land (CLCT)
Gifford Land (CLCT)
Esker Trail
Thoreau Pond
Saw Mill Ruin
Chamberlin Woods
(Concord Land Conservation Trust)
Newbury Land (CLCT)
Hugh Cargill Road
Mink Pond
Spruce Trail
Hutchins Pond Trail
Hutchins Pond
Saw Mill Brook
Mink Pond Trail
Punkatasset Trail
Sled Hill
Punkatasset Conservation Land
Punkatasset Hill
Monument St
#873
#851
Lowell Rd
Pippin Tree Land Trust
Estabrook Rd
Oak Hill
To Redcoat Ln

Punkatasset - Estabrook Woods

Points of Interest

Punkatasset Conservation Land

The original Punkatasset conservation area consisted of 92 acres acquired by the Town in 1971. The eight acres of the Saw Mill Brook land were purchased in 1990. Together these form the current Punkatasset Conservation Land blazed with Concord Trail markers. The largest area of Estabrook Woods is private property, including the 678-acre tract owned by Harvard University. In all, more than 900 acres in Concord are permanently protected from development.

Hutchins Pond and Saw Mill Brook

Hutchins Pond was built in the early 1900s by Gordon Hutchins by damming Saw Mill Brook. Originally used as an ice pond to supply cooling for Hutchins' dairy products before the use of refrigeration, it is today the centerpiece of Punkatasset. A concrete foundation at the outlet of the pond into Saw Mill Brook is all that remains of the cutting and storage of blocks of ice. Once a popular summer swimming spot, the habitation of the pond by beavers has made that a health risk from waterborne diseases.

Hutchins Pond in winter

Old Orchard

The remains of an apple orchard can be found north of Hutchins Pond off the red blazed Trail. The trees are very old, bearing few apples. But the orchard is a restful place to sit on the bench conveniently placed for relaxation.

Punkatasset Hill and Winter Sledding Slope

The drumlin called Punkatasset by native Americans played an important part in the American Revolution. When the Bristish regulars marched into Concord on April 19, 1775, the colonials gathered at the rally point on Punkatasset Hill, a vantage point for observing the town as the land was cleared of trees at that time. When smoke was seen rising above Concord, and fearing the whole town had been put to the torch, Colonel Barrett advanced his minutemen from this hill to engage the British at the North Bridge.

In modern times the hill has been a winter favorite of youngsters for sledding. Ski teams even practiced here at one time.

Punkatasset Hill

Estabrook Woods

Brooks Clark House Site

Left of the gate to the Estabrook Road entrance there is a large private residence, once the circa 1760 Stratton Tavern, which was relocated here from Northfield, Massachusetts in the 1980s. In Thoreau's time this was the site of the Brooks Clark farm. After Thoreau left his cabin on Walden Pond, an unsuccessful attempt was made to move it the short distance to Thoreau's bean field. The cabin was purchased by James Clark and moved here in 1849, his intent to live in it as Thoreau had on Walden Pond. Instead it became a storehouse for grain, eventually deteriorated and was dismantled for use in other farm buildings. The roof became part of a pig pen, an ignominious end for such a storied structure.

Curly Pate Cliff and View of Bateman's Pond

On his walks through the Estabrook Woods Thoreau found the top of this hill to have the same rock formations as the limestone quarry. The exposed edges of stone looked to him like wavy hair on a head, or a curly pate. Whether or not the hill top looks like a pate, the view of Batemen's Pond is quite scenic from here. Just south of the hill is an old ski jump.

Estabrook Home Cellar Hole

The Estabrook family lived in a homestead on Old Carlisle Road for many generations. Capt. and Rev. Joseph Estabrook of Enfield, England came to the colonies in 1660 and was the colleague of Rev. Edward Bulkeley before becoming the fourth pastor of First Parish. His brother, Thomas Estabrook, followed him from England to Concord where he settled with his wife Sarah about 1670, on a height-of-land way, that later became Old Carlisle Road or Estabrook Road. It is from their settlement that the woods got its name Estabrook Woods. The foundation stones can still be found beside the road. Future generations of Estabrooks continued to live here until 1838. Paul Adams and Rebecca Estabrook had a farmstead west

of the road near Bateman's Pond. Rebecca, who died in 1838, was the last Estabrook to live in the woods.

Estabrook Home Cellar Hole

Hubbard Hill

Hubbard Hill is a glacial drumlin named for Ebenezer "Ebby" Hubbard, a bachelor, whose home was located here. Ebby was so unhappy that the memorial obelisk to the 1775 Battle at the Old North Bridge was placed on the east (or "British") side of the bridge with nothing on the west (or "Patriot") side that he left $1000 to the town to rectify the slight. Hubbard's patriotic generosity resulted in a second memorial, the iconic Minuteman statue by Daniel Chester French. It was placed on the Patriot side of the bridge in 1875 for the 100th anniversary of the famous battle.

Indian Rock

An automobile sized boulder, a glacial erratic located in the vicinity of the limestone quarry,

Indian Rock

was dubbed "Indian Rock" in Thoreau's journals. He reported that the Indians had camped at the rock on their seasonal wanderings.

Limestone Quarry

The Estabrook Road served for many years as the main corridor connecting Concord with Carlisle. Thoreau mentions it often in his journals. On Nov. 14, 1857 he wrote of a ride to the limestone quarry on Old Carlisle Road (now known as Estabrook Road). Remnants of vertical marbleized limestone ribbons , still visible today, were worked in colonial times to separate out the softer limestone for processing into lime. The enterprise was begun by Peter Barrett. Although not a rich source of limestone, the quarry did serve the local need for chimney mortar and wall plaster.

Limestone Quarry

Lime Kiln Site

Limestone must be heated to produce lime from the stone. A kiln was built for this purpose a short distance from the quarry where it is understood to have been in use as early as the 1690s. Cartloads of limestone ore were backed up an earthen ramp and dumped into the oven for baking. Cellar stones for the kiln can still be seen along the Estabrook Road.

Mink Pond

The area west of Punkatasset Hill was once the old Oak Meadow, one of the earliest lots chosen by settlers (as early as 1630) for its rich hay, peat, and cranberries. In the 1940s it was flooded for goose hunting and since then has been known as Mink Pond.

Thoreau Pencil Mill Site

In 1820 – 1830 Henry Thoreau's father, John Thoreau, operated a saw mill located on Saw Mill Brook to cut cedar trees from the old pastures nearby for use in the family pencil business. The mill likely predated John's use of it by many years. While nothing remains of the mill today, the site can be found northwest of Hutchins Pond.

Two Rod Road and Estabrook Road

There are two roads within Estabrook Woods that connect Concord with Carlisle to the north . Two Rod Road was built about 1697 at the request of James Blood of Carlisle so that he would have a road from his house to Concord. It was built within a right-of-way between two stone walls set 33 feet (two rods) apart. In 1735, a second, better-known road was built from Concord to Carlisle, the Old Carlisle Road which became the Estabrook Road. This road, really a cart trail, was the route used by Minutemen from Carlisle and elsewhere to join the fight at Concord, April 19, 1775. It is the only known Minuteman route-of-march that remains in its original condition.

Yellow Birch and Carlisle Swamps

To Thoreau, the Estabrook Woods was a "great wild tract", a rocky muddle of moor-like pastures, swamps and woods. Carlisle and Yellow Birch Swamps account for a sizable portion of the woods just west of Two Rod Road.

A place enjoyed by Thoreau was the Yellow Birch Cellar Hole north of Yellow Birch Swamp. A house started there by a Mr. Flint, but never finished, left a substantial cellar hole located off the trail that leads east from Estabrook Road to Hubbard Hill and out to Two Rod Road.