

Thomas & Palmer Brook

The 267 acres of the Thomas & Palmer Brook reserve slope upward from the brook through old pasture, a wetland, and mature forest to a dramatic high point of exposed bedrock. An accessible trail through the meadow leads into the forest, winding past boulders and large sugar maple trees. The wide Woodland Trail climbs through the forest, leading to a narrow hiking trail ending at Whale Rock.

Directions: Parking area is located between 301 and 309 State Road (Route 23) in Great Barrington. Across from the Koi Restaurant.

GPS: 42.1955, -73.3370 (trailhead parking)



Photo: Gabrielle K. Murphy

WELCOME! WE INVITE YOU TO . . .

ENJOY this property on foot, skis, or snowshoes. Dogs are welcome. They must be under your immediate control and local leash laws apply. Hunting and fishing are permitted, subject to MA state regulations. No motorized vehicles are allowed.

PROTECT the trails, wildlife, and land. Carry out what you bring in, take only photos, and leave everything else just as you found it.

APPRECIATE that this land provides a home, food, and shelter to wildlife and protection for clean drinking water. Respect wildlife and keep your distance.

LEARN MORE Please visit BNRC.org or call 413-499-0596 for more information about this property, to learn about upcoming free guided walks and events here and around the Berkshires, and to support BNRC in preserving this beautiful landscape.

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Berkshire Natural Resources Council

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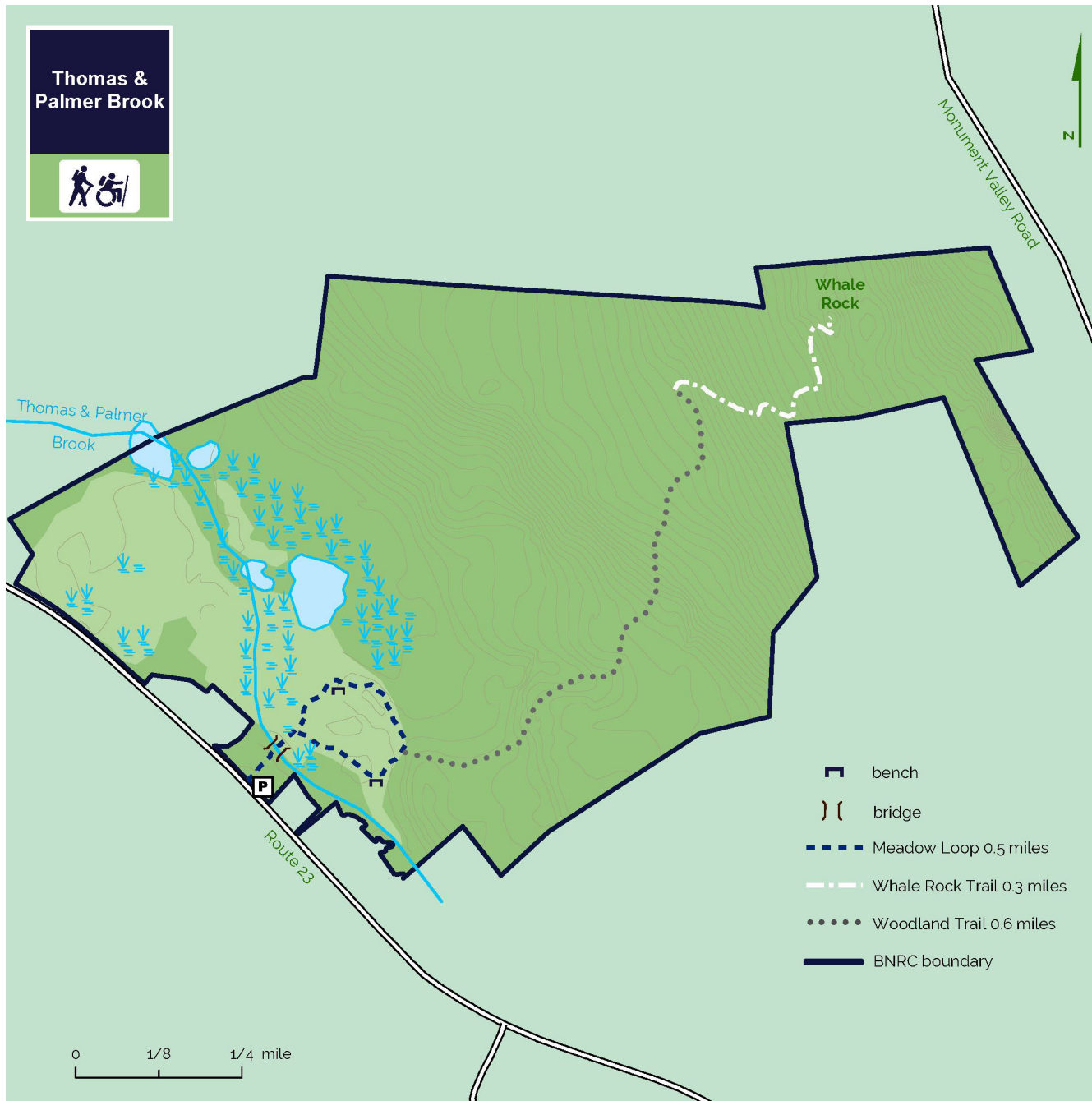
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Great Barrington



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THOMAS & PALMER BROOK TRAIL MAP



TRAIL DESCRIPTION

- Meadow Loop:** 0.5 miles, round-trip
Difficulty: Accessible (gentle slope, gravel surface)
- Woodland Trail:** 0.6 miles, one-way
Difficulty: Moderate (uneven footing, elevation changes)
- Whale Rock Trail:** 0.3 miles, one-way
Difficulty: Moderate (uneven footing, elevation changes)

From the trailhead, the path crosses a bridge that spans **Thomas & Palmer Brook**, a tributary of the Housatonic River. The **Meadow Loop** descends into a field, where hikers can choose which direction to take on the loop trail. Heading counter-clockwise the trail winds along the woodland edge and through the forest. It continues around a knoll that is an old apple orchard. Along the way, take the opportunity to rest on one of the benches, and enjoy the expansive view of the wetland habitat. The **Woodland Trail** is off the east side of the accessible trail and winds through the upland forest. At 0.6 miles the route transitions to the **Whale Rock Trail**, which gradually climbs to a unique rock feature, known locally as **Whale Rock**. Whale Rock is home to sensitive and unique habitats. Please protect this important area by staying on the trail at its endpoint.

The Meadow Loop was designed and constructed by Peter S. Jensen & Associates, LLC.; the Woodland Trail and Whale Rock Trail were designed and constructed by BNRC staff with construction support from BNRC volunteers, Greenagers, and the Student Conservation Association.

NATURAL HISTORY

The old pasture is now dense with goldenrod and milkweed, attracting many pollinators. Birds attracted by the property's diverse habitats include the American woodcock, the blue-winged warbler, the chestnut-sided warbler, the eastern towhee and the purple finch. A habitat restoration project in 2018 and 2019 removed invasive species in the apple orchard and surrounding area. The Whale Rock feature is a metamorphic rock, which formed from high heat and pressure during the mountain-building process 540 million years ago.

Accessibility Details: The Meadow Loop was designed and built in 2020 to U.S. Forest Service Trail Accessibility Standards. The trail is approximately 0.5 mile of 6-foot-wide crushed stone surfacing with a running slope not exceeding 8% and cross slope not exceeding 5%. There are two benches and viewing areas overlooking the wetland and meadow.