

About the Fifty Acre Wood

In 2001, Leigh Darbee generously donated 50 acres to the citizens of Woodstock, in memory of Herbert C. and Virginia S. Darbee. Here you can enjoy birding, geocaching, letter-boxing, and hiking. The 1.5 mile long trail is easy walking,

Rock walls on the property indicate the land was once farmed. When better farmland opened up in the Midwest, many Woodstock farms like this one were abandoned, eventually returning to their naturally forest cover. This property, together with neighboring parcels, makes up a large block of forested wildlife habitat rich in wildlife and natural resources.

Vernal pools are small, isolated wetlands that hold water on a temporary basis, typically during winter and spring. They are filled by the spring's rising water table or snow melt. Because they don't have an aboveground outlet for water, they are usually gone by late summer.

Vernal pools are critical to the life cycle of many amphibians, as they are too shallow and short-lived to support fish that would eat the amphibian eggs or larvae. These pools and adjacent upland habitats support an abundance of plants, invertebrates and vertebrates not found in other areas. In springtime, look for egg masses in the water.

Snags are standing dead or dying trees that play an important role in the forest. Rotting snags can develop cavities naturally, or they may be excavated by birds and mammals.



Snags provide homes, nest sites, shelter and food for a variety of birds, mammals, amphibians, and reptiles. Look for rectangular shaped holes excavated by pileated woodpeckers. These holes can be used by other animals once the woodpeckers move on to make a new cavity.

Birds and creatures like brown bats and peepers often roost in cavities for protection from the elements and predators. Flying squirrels, wood ducks, woodpeckers and owls rely on holes in trees for nesting. Loss of natural nesting sites, along with competition from introduced species, has led to the decline of many songbirds. Artificial nesting boxes are often used as substitutes when nature's apartment buildings are not available.



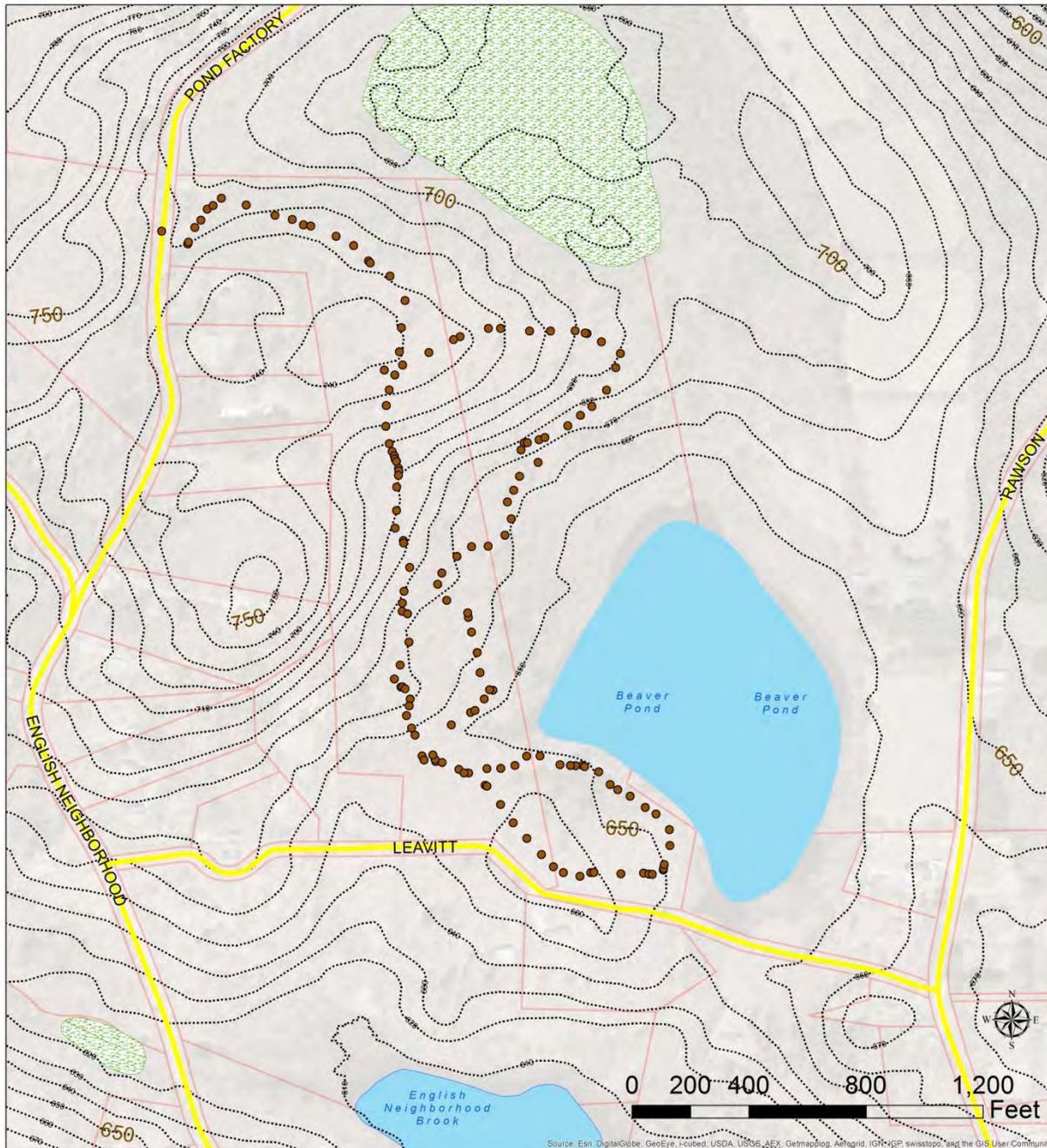
Beaver ponds and their associated **wetlands** provide habitat for a wide variety of animals, such as insects, spiders, frogs, salamanders, turtles, fish, ducks, rails, bitterns, flycatchers, owls, mink and otters.

Snags killed by flooding provide preferred nesting habitat for colonies of great blue herons, and cavity-nesting birds like wood ducks and hooded mergansers. Beaver ponds also filter and trap sediments and excess nutrients, serve as water storage and recharge areas, and provide opportunities for canoeing, fishing and wildlife observation.

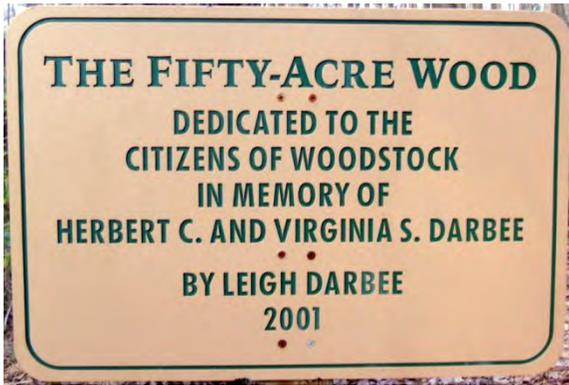
The beaver is the largest rodent found in North America. Adults can weigh between 30 to 65 pounds and measure from 24 to 36 inches, plus a tail of 12 to 18 inches. With its webbed hind feet with clawed toes, thick brown fur (which is both waterproof and insulating) and a paddle-shaped, scaly tail, the beaver is well adapted to living in a semi-aquatic environment.



Look for signs of beaver and muskrat (lodges and recently gnawed branches), otter, mink, and wood ducks and other waterfowl that use this pond.



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, i-cubed, USDA, USGS, AeroViz, GeoMapbox, AerialGrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community



Open to the public dawn to dusk.
 Limited parking is available by the kiosk on Pond Factory Road.
 For more info on trails, wildlife and natural resources in Woodstock, see www.WoodstockConservation.org



At the request of the donors, **motorized vehicles and hunting are prohibited** on this property.
Dogs must be leashed.
 Please do not litter this lovely land.