Three Nature Preserves in Montgomery, Vermont

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High Ponds Farm Nature Preserve, 478 Rossier Road, Montgomery VT (233 acres)

The Anderson family set out to preserve a beautiful, former hill farm that supports important natural communities and associated species. Their goal is to maintain an ecologically functional landscape through responsible stewardship, which is intended to preserve plant communities and a diversity of habitats. Once an active subsistence farm, beavers have since built numerous ponds which support fish, amphibians, reptiles, invertebrates, native plants and terrestrial species such as otter, mink, deer and moose.

Professional foresters and ecologists have made detailed inventories and assessments of the flora and fauna present. Numerous areas with rich forest soils and mature trees provide ideal conditions for woodland plants. The High Ponds Farm Nature Preserve lies within an area designated by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as a highest priority, interior forest block for conservation including surface water and riparian areas, and including habitat and riparian connectivity.

The Stewardship Management Plan emphasizes biological diversity and forest health, protection of soils, wetlands, and riparian areas, protection of habitat for interior forest birds and mammals, protecting corridor connectivity with adjacent conservation lands, and

maintenance of two small orchards and a young forest / old field / native wildflower and shrub habitat to support ground nesting birds and pollinators.

Education and Recreation: Since purchasing the property in 1995, the Anderson Family has welcomed thousands of visitors to the High Ponds Farm. Students from 40 towns in northern Vermont have come for natural science field trips organized by the Hazen's Notch Association. The HNA Summer Camp has visited every year to learn about wetlands and forest ecology and to explore the numerous trails. The public has enjoyed visiting the Moosewood Ponds and the High Meadow to enjoy the spectacular views of the surrounding mountains.

A network of trails provides opportunities for walking, hiking and nature observation in Spring, Summer and Fall. In winter, trails are closed to hiking but are open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Please observe all signs posted at the entrance to the property at the large information sign board and within the property. In Winter trail access is from the HNA Welcome Center at 1423 Hazen's Notch Road.

Motor vehicles are no longer allowed within the property. Visitors should park along the edge of the Rossier Road such that they do not block vehicular access for the owners. Do not park close to the gate. There is no parking and no access to trails from December 1 to May 21.

Fishing, Swimming, Fires, Camping, Motorized Vehicles & Bicycles are not allowed. Please do not collect plant material. Dogs must be on leash at all times but are not allowed in Winter. Trails are closed to everyone during Spring mud season, from April 1 to May 21. Hikers should limit their outings to walking local roads during Autumn hunting season and during Spring mud season. The entire area closes at sunset.
Please respect this private property and help to ensure continued access.

For complete visitor information, see these websites:

1. High Ponds Farm Nature Preserve: www.rolfanderson.net/high-ponds-farm-vermont.php
2. Hazen's Notch Association: www.hazensnotch.org/visitor-information.php

Burnt Mountain Conservation Area, 478 Rossier Road, Montgomery, VT (160 acres)

The Burnt Mountain Conservation Area in the Hazen's Notch area of Montgomery, Vermont is a privately owned woodland on the northwestern face of Burnt Mountain. The 160-acre property was purchased by Rolf Anderson in August of 1996. He conveyed a conservation easement on the property to the Hazen's Notch Conservation Trust in November 2023.

This moderately steep woodland is one of the original lots dating from the founding of Montgomery. The forest is primarily a mix of common hardwood tree species including maple, birch and beech. An outcrop of the underlying bedrock appears midway on the slope which leads to an area of Montane red spruce and balsam fir forest in the southeast corner of the parcel. This 160-acre parcel rises approximately 1,020 feet in elevation from its NW corner (1,470 ft.) to its SE corner (elev. 2,490 ft.).

The Burnt Mountain Conservation Area lies within an area designated by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as a highest priority, interior forest block including habitat connectivity and natural communities. The Burnt Mountain Conservation Area has strong natural resource values which support native plant communities, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, wildlife corridor, structural and functional connectivity, numerous woodland seeps, vernal pools, and two streams which rise on the property.

Professional foresters and naturalists have made detailed inventories and assessments of the flora and fauna present. Numerous areas with rich forest soils and mature trees provide

ideal conditions for woodland plants. The Stewardship Management Plan emphasizes biological diversity and forest health, protection of soils, wetlands, and riparian areas, protection of habitat for interior forest birds and mammals, and protecting corridor connectivity with adjacent conservation lands. The conservation easement held by the Hazen's Notch Conservation Trust includes requirements and restrictions relating to forest management activities on the property.

Two trails have been conserved for pedestrian recreation with the conservation easement. A one-quarter mile portion of the Notch Trail is a remnant of a historic log-hauling road dating from the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. This woods road was used to haul logs from Hazen's Notch to a mill which once stood at the foot of the Reagan Road. The second trail is a restored woods road which leads to a footpath laid out by Rolf Anderson in the 1990s so that the public could hike or snowshoe to the summit of Burnt Mountain which lies a short distance to the south of the property.

Access: Pedestrian only. Visitors may access the property by way of trails and woods roads on the adjacent High Ponds Farm, a private property which is open to the public. Please observe all signs posted at the entrance to the property, at the large information sign board at the High Ponds Farm and within the property.

For complete visitor information, see these websites:

1. Burnt Mountain Conservation Area: www.rolfanderson.net/burnt-mountain-vermont.php
2. Hazen's Notch Association: www.hazensnotch.org/visitor-information.php

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Bear Paw Pond Conservation Area, 1000 Hazen's Notch Rd, Montgomery, VT

(99 acres)

The Bear Paw Pond Conservation Area lies within an area designated by the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife as a highest priority, interior forest block for conservation including habitat connectivity. This nature preserve has strong natural resource values which support native plant communities, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, wildlife corridor, structural and functional connectivity, numerous woodland seeps, vernal pools, and two streams which rise on the property.

The 99-acre property was purchased by Rolf Anderson in April of 1990. He will convey a conservation easement on the property to the Hazen's Notch Conservation Trust in late 2026.

Professional foresters and naturalists have made detailed inventories and assessments of the flora and fauna present. Numerous areas with rich forest soils and mature trees provide ideal conditions for woodland plants. The Stewardship Management Plan emphasizes biological diversity and forest health, protection of soils, wetlands, and riparian areas, protection of habitat for interior forest birds and mammals, protecting corridor connectivity with adjacent conservation lands. and maintenance of an adjacent old field / native wildflower and shrub habitat to support ground nesting birds and pollinators. Audubon Society guidelines for improving conditions for forest birds have been incorporated into the Stewardship management plan. The largest live elm in a forest setting in Franklin County grew in a portion of the property where rich soils support some very large and healthy trees to this day.

A network of trails provides opportunities for walking and nature observation in spring, summer and fall and cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in winter. In winter trail access is from the HNA Welcome Center at 1423 Hazen's Notch Road. Starting at the Hazen's Notch Welcome Center, the Woodfern Trail leads on a gradual, uphill traverse to Coyote Meadow,

to Woodfern Loop and other trails on the Bear Paw Pond Conservation Area. Please observe all signs posted at the parking area, within the property and at property boundaries.

Visitors outside of the winter season may park in the parking area at the entrance to the property at 1000 Hazen's Notch Road. Fishing, Swimming, Fires, Camping, Motorized Vehicles & Bicycles are not allowed. Dogs must be on leash at all times but are not allowed in Winter. Trails are closed to everyone during Spring mud season, from April 1 to May 21. Although hunting is not allowed, hikers should limit their outings to walking local roads during hunting season and Spring mud season. The entire area closes at sunset.

Please respect this private property and help to ensure continued access.

For complete visitor information, see these websites:

1. Bear Paw Pond Conservation Area: www.rolfanderson.net/burnt-mountain-vermont.php
2. Hazen's Notch Association: www.hazensnotch.org/visitor-information.php

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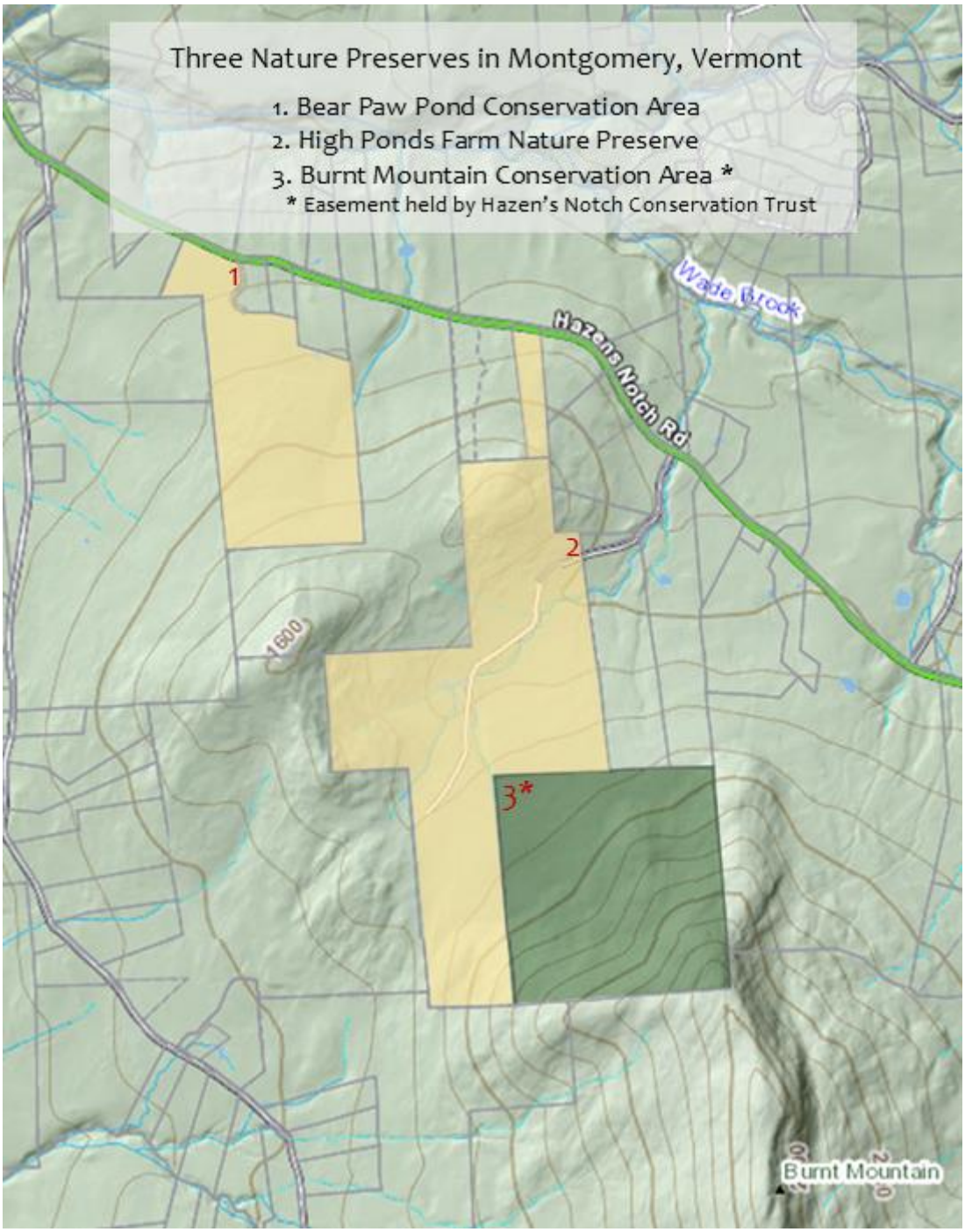
References

1. Campbell, E.B., Forester; Forest Stewardship Management Plans.
2. Benjamin, Deborah; Report: "Natural History of the Bear Paw Pond Conservation Area", "Birds of Open Shrubby Areas".
3. Benjamin, Deborah; Report: "Natural History of the High Ponds Farm, Montgomery, Vermont". September 18, 2009.
4. Sherman, Joe; Report: "The Dodge Farm", 1995, Montgomery, Vermont.
5. U.S. Census, Vermont; 1900, 1910. Hubbard-Kellogg Library, Montpelier, Vermont.
6. Montgomery, Town of, Vermont; Land Records.


Three Nature Preserves in Montgomery, Vermont
1. Bear Paw Pond Conservation Area
2. High Ponds Farm Nature Preserve
3. Burnt Mountain Conservation Area *
* Easement held by Hazen's Notch Conservation Trust
1
2
3*
Wade Brook
Hazens Notch Rd
1600
Burnt Mountain