



## Section 5 Trails

### Trail Categories:

The Grater Woods *Trail* System currently includes four categories of *trails*. Each category will be representative of the type of usage the *trail* was designed to support. Mis-use or abuse of Grater Woods or its *trail* system will be reported to local authorities. Each category is identified on the *trail* map using a unique graphic line format and color. The color used on the map to identify each category will be used to mark the *trails* themselves. By using a unique graphic on the map, the *trail* category can be distinguished even when the map is printed in black and white. The use of different colors to mark the *trails* will assist the less experienced users in understanding where they are within the woods. Posts are placed at critical junctions with *trail* names, directional arrows and, in some cases, special “street signs” in order to make the large forested area as user-friendly and compatible with the primary MCC Master Plan goals.

The *trail* categories are:

**Category A – All Users** - Designated with Yellow Rectangular markers. Category A *trails* will generally be wide, cover gentle slopes and be easily followed. Foot traffic will have the right of way.

All users are permitted including foot traffic and pedaled bikes, dirt bikes, ATVs, *snowmobiles* and horses. *ORV* traffic would not be permitted. These *trails* are limited to locations of selected upgraded logging roads.

**Category B – Walking Trails** - (non-motorized) Designated with Light Blue Triangular markers. Category B *trails* may be located in the woods and may contain moderate slopes, wide enough for one or two people to walk side by side and require more skill and energy to traverse. Short unnamed dead-end *trails* to view special features and to provide resting spots will be indicated and marked but not named in most instances.

*Trails* are open to foot traffic and pedaled mountain bikes.

**Category C – Special Use** - (non-motorized) Designated with Red Circular markers. Category C *trails* may be challenging to navigate and will often have minimal *trail* markings making it harder to stay on the *trail* unless the user is experienced in the woods. Users of these *trails* should be able to follow a *trail* in the woods and be able to judge seasonal conditions.

*Trails* are open to foot traffic and pedaled mountain bikes. Category C *trails* may only be open seasonally when ice conditions allow crossing of frozen ponds and/or *trails* that may only be accessible during the drier seasons.

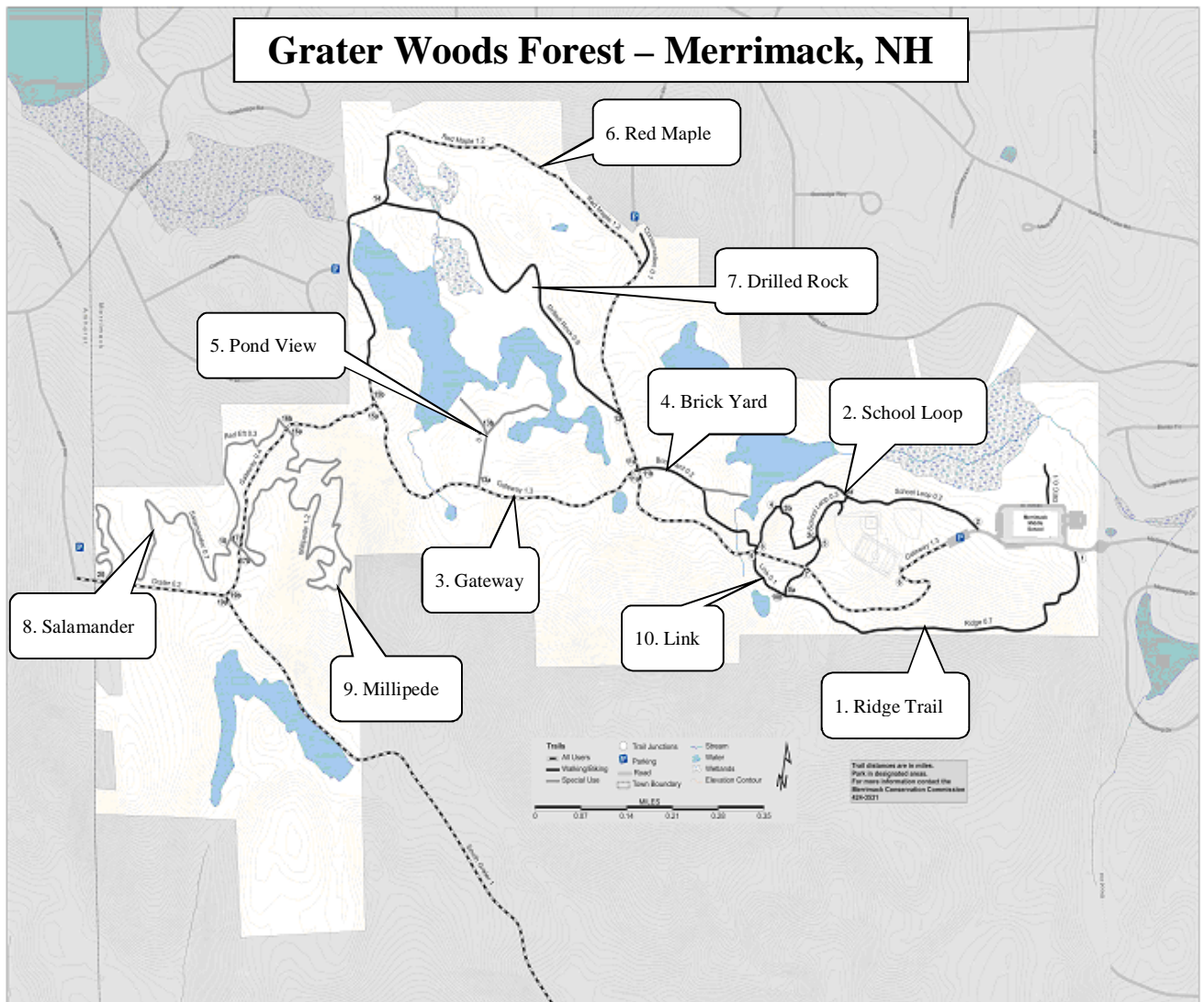
**Category D – Special Use** – (motorized) Designated with Orange Square markers. Category D *trails* will generally be narrow, cover moderate slopes and be easily followed. Foot traffic will have the right of way.



Uses permitted include foot traffic, pedaled bikes, *trail bikes*. *OHRVs*, *ATVs*, *snowmobiles* or horses would not be permitted. These *trails* are limited to selected locations removed from the general *trails*.

Trail Descriptions:

The *trails* on Grater Woods, as of April 2011, are identified in the following map and are described in this section. A larger version of this map is provided in Appendix A. The *trails* will change over time; refer to [www.merrimackoutdoors.org](http://www.merrimackoutdoors.org) for the most up-to-date *trail* map.



1. **Ridge Trail** – Category B – Begins at a retention pond on Madeline Bennett Drive near the north east corner of the school, proceeds south and west, crosses the *Gateway Trail*, and ends at the intersection with *School Loop* at *trail* point 16. This *trail* is entirely on school property.



2. **School Loop** – Category B – Begins and ends at the kiosk in the school’s upper parking lot at *trail* point 2. It makes a loop, intersecting with the Link *Trail* and the Ridge *Trail* at *trail* points 3a, 3b, and 3c. This *trail* is entirely on school property.
3. **Gateway Trail** – Mixed Category A/B – Designated as a *Woods Road*, this *trail* begins at the emergency fence at the top of the MMS Upper Parking lot behind the school and heads generally west, traversing almost the entire length of the property, ending at the intersection with South Grater Rd., *trail* point 19. (The Gateway *Trail* bisects the Grater Woods Town Forest and was purposely built to support Emergency Vehicles.) This is the main emergency access *trail* for the property, although the western portion of the *trail*, from the point where it goes up Gateway Hill (formerly referred to as Suicide Hill) to the end at South Grater Rd, will not accommodate emergency vehicles.
  - a. Section 1 – Category B – Starts at the emergency access fence in the MMS Upper Parking lot and continues to Wildlife Opening 1 (*trail* point 11). A large portion of this section is on School owned property.
  - b. Section 2 – Category A – Starts at Wildlife Opening 1 (*trail* point 11) and ends on South Grater Rd at the Merrimack town line. Sections of this *trail* will require gates and development plans for wetlands avoidance.
4. **Brick Yard Trail** – Category B – Begins at *trail* point 8 on the Link *Trail*, proceeds northwest, and ends at *trail* point 11b of Wildlife Opening #1. This *trail* runs relatively parallel to the Gateway *Trail* and provides access to a view of the lower Beaver Pond.
5. **Pond View** – Category B - Accessible from Wildlife Opening #2. The *trail* terminates at the waters edge of the Middle Beaver pond.
6. **Red Maple Trail** – Categories A and B – There are three distinct sections of this *trail*:
  - a. Section 1 – Category A - Begins at *trail* point 11 on the Gateway Trail and proceeds north toward Conservation Drive.
  - b. Section 2 – Category B - Turns west near Conservation Drive, generally following the northern property boundary.
  - c. Section 3 – Category B - Makes a hard left turn near the Trowbridge area to head south, ending at the intersection with the Gateway Trail near the bottom of Gateway Hill at *trail* point 15.
7. **Drilled Rock Trail** - Category B - Begins at the Red Maple *Trail* just north west of Wildlife Opening #1, it passes by the "Drilled Rock" and ends back on the Red Maple *Trail* just north of the large beaver dam near Beebe Lane cul-de-sac. This category B *trail* gives an alternative to the Red Maple *Trail* that passes through the open areas around the large drilled rock and has a great view of the beaver pond and a large wildlife opening.
8. **Salamander** - Category C - Begins at Grater Road near the Amherst/Merrimack line and winds through the woods with a series of tight turns, ending at the top of Gateway hill across from Millipede *trail*. This category C *trail* was created for *trail*



running, hiking, mountain biking, snow shoeing and XC skiing.

9. **Millipede Trail** - Category C - Begins and ends on the western most part of the Gateway *trail* (by Grater Road). Millipede winds through the woods with multiple turns and at its eastern most point borders private property. This category C *trail* was created for *trail* running, hiking, mountain biking, snowshoeing and XC skiing.
10. **Link Trail** - Category B - Begins at the western most point of School Loop, crosses Gateway and ends at the western most point of Ridge *Trail*. The *trail* contains a single bridge and a steep slope rising to Gateway. The trial then bisects a beaver pond and *vernal pool* before connecting to Ridge *Trail*.

#### Trail Guidelines:

All users are strongly encouraged to remain on the marked *trails* as shown on the “Grater Woods Forest” in Appendix A. They must avoid wetland areas and any areas designated as environmentally sensitive. Leaving the marked *trails* should not be done without a map, compass and the necessary navigational skills. Users should not rely on cell phones, as they do not work in most areas of Grater Woods. Only motorized vehicles, previously designated for maintenance or emergency use by the proper Town and/or School Officials, are permitted to leave marked *trails*. Emergency access by police and fire units are very limited due to the small number of vehicle access points and poor interior *trails*.

#### Trail Design, Future Trail Creation and Trail Modifications:

The design concept of all new *trails* must be presented to the *MCC* prior to creation. It is the responsibility of the *MCC* to review new trial requests and ensure that all proposed design elements fit within the principles and guidelines, as presented by the Best Stewardship Practices for Forestry prior to approving the new plans.

*Trails* should be created with many factors taken into consideration including but not limited to the following:

- *BMPs*
- Local, State and Federal regulations and associated governing documentation
- Loop creation around the open space
- Accessibility to new and/or existing parking areas
- Sustainability of the *trail* being added
- User demand / suggestions from the public
- Multi-user designation
- Access to new and interesting areas within Grater Woods
- *Trail* upkeep
- Impact to abutters
- Map and Stewardship plan rework