

Winter Hiking Opportunities in Bedford
By Rita Carroll
Bedford Land Trust

Do you want to get out in the woods, but don't have a lot of time? There are a variety of places to winter hike, snowshoe or cross-country ski right here in town that can be enjoyed in an hour or two --- or for an entire afternoon! The three properties listed below are owned by the Town of Bedford and are permanently protected as open space by conservation easements held by the Bedford Land Trust, for the benefit and enjoyment of all. Enjoy!*

Benedictine Land - Wallace Road The Benedictine Conservation Land is 28 acres of passive recreational property ideal for cross country skiing, sledding, snowshoeing, walking/hiking, picnicking, and bird watching. The property is home to two walking trails developed by the Bedford Land Trust. The trails, Perimeter and Cobb, are just under a mile. The Perimeter Trail follows the edge of the open fields. The Cobb Trail is a woodland trail that runs parallel to Riddle Brook after a moderately steep run through the woods, and is marked with yellow trail markers. It is often quite wet along the brook.

Parking = Benedictine Parking lot on Wallace Road

Difficulty = easy to moderate

Trail length = approximately one mile

Trail map = available in the Town Offices and printable from the Bedford Land Trust website: <http://www.bedfordlandtrust.org/Properties.html>

Joppa Hill Farm – Joppa Hill Road Of the 312 acres that make up the Joppa Hill Farm approximately 120 acres are owned by the Town of Amherst. The remaining 190 acres are owned by the Town of Bedford and preserved under a conservation easement held by the Bedford Land Trust. The Amherst Conservation Commission constructed a trail loop through both the Amherst and Bedford sections of the Farm. The trail begins at the Educational Farm in Bedford, runs through fields and woodlands to a beautiful beaver pond near Horace Greeley Road and returns to the Farm along a woods road. Plans are in the works to connect the northwestern section of the loop to the Pulpit Rock Conservation Land in Bedford. This property provides opportunities for residents to not only hike and snowshoe, but to also enjoy a wide range of activities at the Joppa Hill Educational Farm.

Parking = at the Joppa Hill Educational Farm.

Difficulty = easy to moderate

Trail length = the entire loop is approximately 2 miles in length.

Trail map = available at the Bedford Town Offices and printable from the Bedford Land Trust website: <http://www.bedfordlandtrust.org/Properties.html>

The Van Loan Preserve – Wallace Road and North Amherst Road

The approximately 1.1 mile trail loop on this property is accessible from both Wallace Road and North Amherst Road. With funding by the Bedford Land Trust, trails were constructed by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), which run through woodlands, along and over Riddle Brook. This easy hike offers some beautiful views of the book, which include an old dam and bridge over the brook that was built by the AMC from

trees felled on the property. The terrain is flat and easy to hike, except for the area under the power lines, which can be wet and tricky (stepping stones). However, because the trail is accessible from both Wallace and North Amherst Roads, it can be hiked in its entirety avoiding the power lines section. Other parts of the trail can get wet at times as well; bog bridging helps. Passive recreation is allowed such as hiking, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing & bird watching. (Only hikers, no wheeled vehicles allowed.)

Parking = Benedictine Land (Wallace Road), Muller Park (N. Amherst Road)

Difficulty = easy, except for the section under the power lines

Trail length = approximately 1 mile

Trail map = available in the Town Offices and printable from the Bedford Land Trust website: <http://www.bedfordlandtrust.org/Properties.html>

*While we attempt to accurately describe the trails and their level of difficulty, hikers' individual abilities and changes in the conditions of the trails will always exist in any outdoor activity. Wear proper footwear and take precautions. Uneven surfaces and other hazards are possible. Enjoy the outdoors with a family member or friend.