

GREAT ELMS



The 60 acre Great Elms conservation land was transferred to the Conservation Commission by vote of the 1987 Town Meeting. The land was acquired by the town through the purchase of the 133 acre Hayes property in 1985. Seven building lots were sold to finance this conservationally sound project. Approximately 16 acres of pasture along Stow Road is in a permanent conservation restriction. Great Elms was sold to the Harvard Conservation Trust with restrictions to maintain five apartments at moderate rents. The Great Elms project remains an excellent example of land use planning.

Access is by way of a 25 foot easement off Murray Lane. The trail will take you through an overgrown field into second growth woodland with marshy areas past the

AT&T easement. Continuing on higher ground through typical Harvard hardwoods and then descends through a rocky area above a brook.

A secondary trail takes you on to the Brehm land and an eastern portion of the Great Elms land. The trail leads to a pond surrounded with wetland vegetation such as summersweet and swamp azalea, circles back across stone walls, through upland oak forest and passes interesting rock outcroppings along the way. The Harvard Conservation Trust purchased the Brehm land in 1999, sold one lot to finance the purchase and placed the remaining 13.56 acres in conservation. The Trust secured access to the Brehm land through a walkway easement off Stow Road.

Approximate walking time main trail: 1.5 hrs. - moderate to difficult with some steep sections