



OCTOBER FARM  
RIVERFRONT

Existing trails  
available for use

PARKING

Town of Concord  
future well site

Private

Concord River

Private

Private

HOLDEN HILL

BAKINS HILL

BALL'S HILL

Concord River

Brewster's  
canoe house

Great Meadows Nat'l  
Wildlife Refuge

North



## October Farm Riverfront Property Description

### Ecology

With 80 acres of ample water and topographic and vegetative diversity, this land is outstanding wildlife habitat and is a part of a larger natural vegetative area. Spotted salamanders, wood frogs, spring peepers, and blue spotted salamanders, a state-listed species of special concern, breed in the ponds and vernal pools. A wide variety of waterfowl, shore birds, birds of prey, and warblers and other songbirds abound there during the summer and the spring and fall migrations.

Important in its own right as wildlife habitat, the property is even more important as part of a much larger whole. Along the opposite, eastern bank of the Concord River, extending for several miles upstream and downstream, is the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. The October Farm Riverfront is also a critical link with the more than 1,600 acre Estabrook Woods to the west, and serves to connect these two large and ecologically important areas. As a keystone in this network of open space, the landscape provides intact and unfragmented forest cover that buffers critical habitats and allows movement between them.

### History

The forested landscape of hills, ponds, and riverfront we see today was formed fifteen thousand years ago at the end of the last Ice Age, when the retreating glacier left its mark on the land around Ball's Hill. Deposits from glacial streams formed a line of hills that parallels the Concord River along the property's southern and eastern boundaries. At the southwestern edge, Holden Hill rises sharply from the river, followed by Dakin Hill—lower and with four distinct summits—and finally Ball's Hill, the highest and last of the hills.

At the beginning of the last century, the property became a focus for the observation of wildlife, particularly birds, and the preservation of their habitat. William Brewster bought Ball's Hill in 1891 to preserve a stand of large white pines and, over a period of years, acquired a total of 300 acres between Monument Street and the Concord River to the north and south of Ball's Hill Road, naming it "October Farm." Brewster loved looking at birds and listening to their songs. He was the founder of the Nuttall Ornithological Club and the American Ornithologists' Union, the first president of the Massachusetts Audubon Society and the long-time curator of the ornithological collection at Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology.

Although the farm's main house was located on Monument Street, Brewster often stayed in a cabin he built on the riverbank at the base of Ball's Hill. There, we can still see the stone foundation of his cabin and the remains of his fireplace, canoe sheds, and the small boat landing dug into the bank. "It is my custom," he wrote in his journal, "when sleeping in the cabin to open a little window by the side of my bed when I first awake to enjoy the early morning singing without the trouble of rising at an inconvenient hour." Brewster's many volumes of birding journals, excerpts from which were published posthumously in book form as *October Farm and Concord River*, make the area around Ball's Hill of special significance.



## Welcome to the October Farm Riverfront

A joint project of the Concord Land Conservation Trust and the Town of Concord, with partial funding through the Community Preservation Act and a Mass. Energy and Environmental Affairs LAND grant

**Please park in the interim parking area and not on Ball's Hill Road.**

**Please respect our neighbors and stay on public land and off trails marked 'private'.**

Rules of use:

- Area is open dawn to dusk
- No hunting is allowed
- Dogs must be under control of their owners and owners must pick up and carry out dog waste
- No motorized vehicles

We look forward to making more trail and parking improvements beginning in Spring 2017.

Questions, concerns or suggestions? Contact the Concord Division of Natural Resources at (978) 318-3285

Or

the Concord Land Conservation Trust at (978) 369-6526 or [info@concordland.org](mailto:info@concordland.org)