

Baseline Documentation Report

Cave Hill Conservation Area

Owner of the Cave Hill Conservation Area: Leverett Conservation Commission

Holder of the Conservation Restriction: Rattlesnake Gutter Trust

September 2014

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Appendices to the Report (in separate documents)

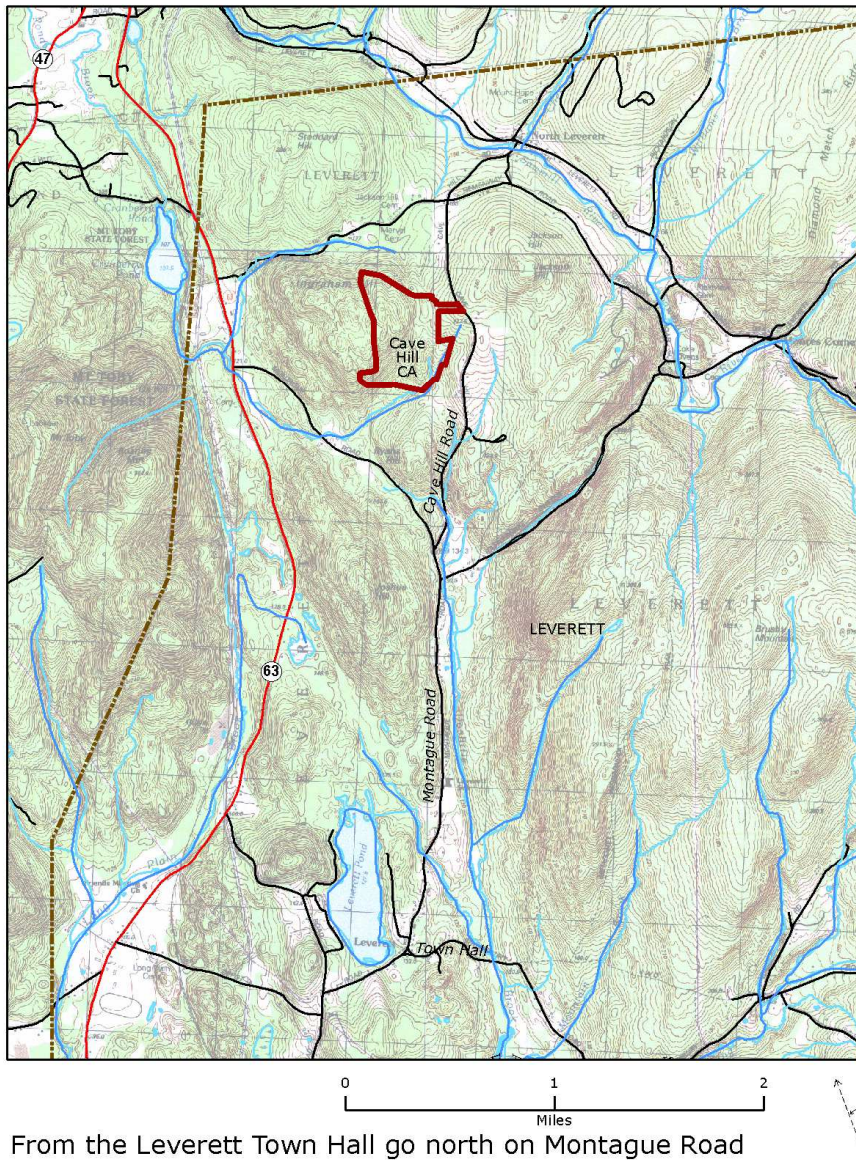
Appendix I: Abutter Deeds

Appendix II: Historic Deeds

Appendix III: Chronology, Assessor's Maps, Inventories

1. Location and Directions

Cave Hill Conservation Area: Directions



From the Leverett Town Hall go north on Montague Road about 1.8 miles.

Turn right/east on Cave Hill Road and continue about 1.3 miles to the top of the hill.

There is a signed parking area on your left/west.

2. Brief land description

Address: Cave Hill Road, Leverett, MA 01054

Acreage: 102 acres

Structures: None

Physical Description: 102 acres on the west side of top of Cave Hill Road. Eastern portion is rolling/hilly; the higher western (larger) portion is a series of north-south ledges/cliffs.

Special Habitats: Two certified Vernal Pools (third Vernal Pool has been submitted for certification); headwaters of at least 4 seasonal streams; diverse forest habitats from wetlands to ledges.

Special species: Bird inventory not complete, but 20 species of nesting forest birds were documented, deer common, porcupines winter in overhanging ledges.

Special views: View east from above the first series of cliffs (just off the Upper Cliff Trail) of the Peace Pagoda and Brushy Mountain; view from the southwest cliffs to the southeast of Brushy Mountain and Joshua Hill; view within the property of cliffs from the western section of the Cave Hill Loop Trail.

Special other:

Property abuts a 111-acre Conservation Restriction to the southwest (held by MA DCR) which in turn abuts a 130-acre Conservation Area owned by MA DFW.

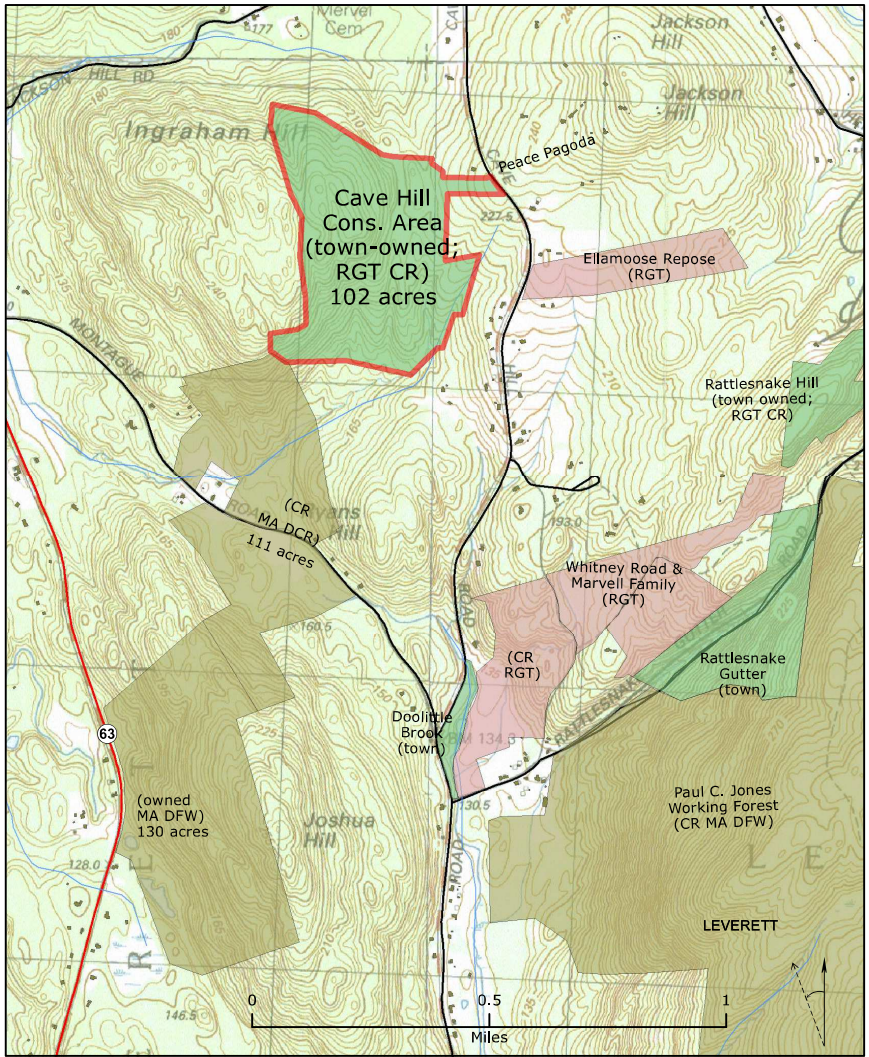
The Property includes a series of north-south ridges. The rocks that make up these cliffs mark an important geological boundary between a microcontinent that was once part of Africa and rocks formed on the North American continental margin.

Long history of land use includes Native American ceremonial landscape and being part of the Town Farm (1866-1890).

Property has established, well-used trails. A new entrance trail and parking lot will provide continued public access.

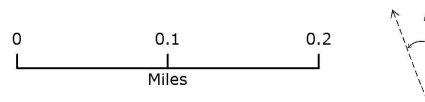
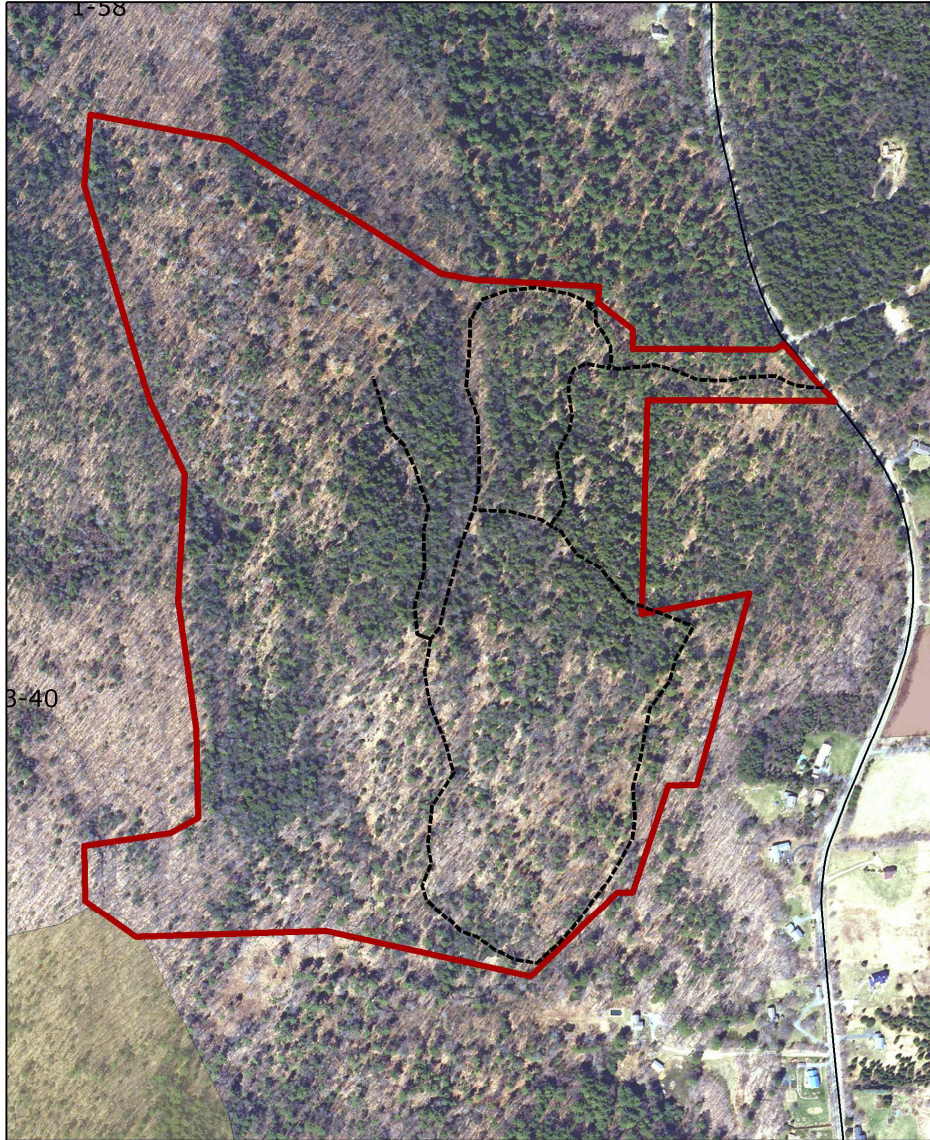
3. Maps of the Cave Hill Conservation Area

Cave Hill Conservation Area:
Nearby Protected Properties

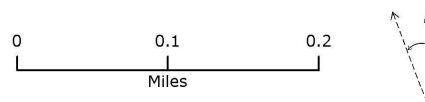
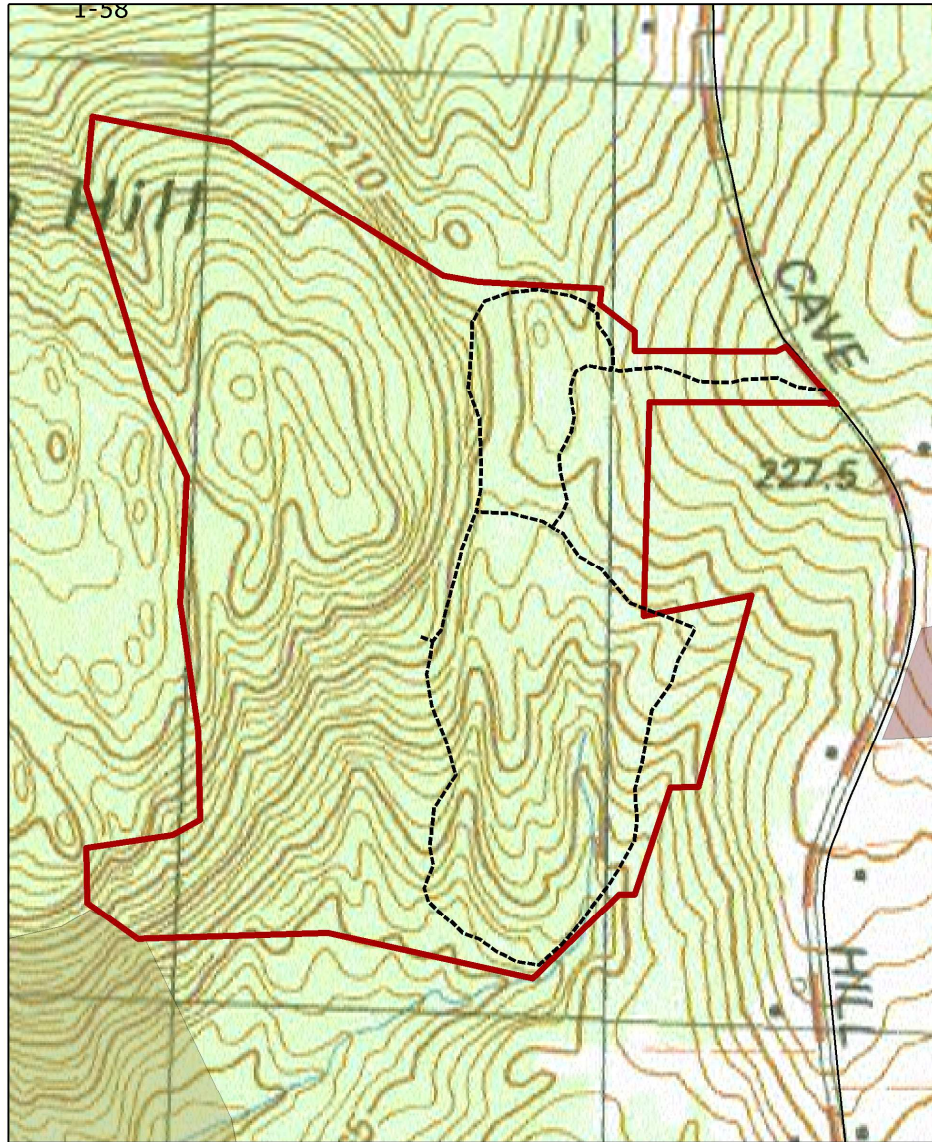


- Rattlesnake Gutter Trust (RGT)
- Town of Leverett (town)
- Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (MA DCR)
- Massachusetts Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (MA DFW)

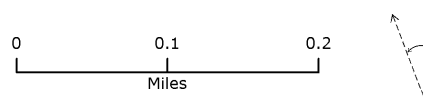
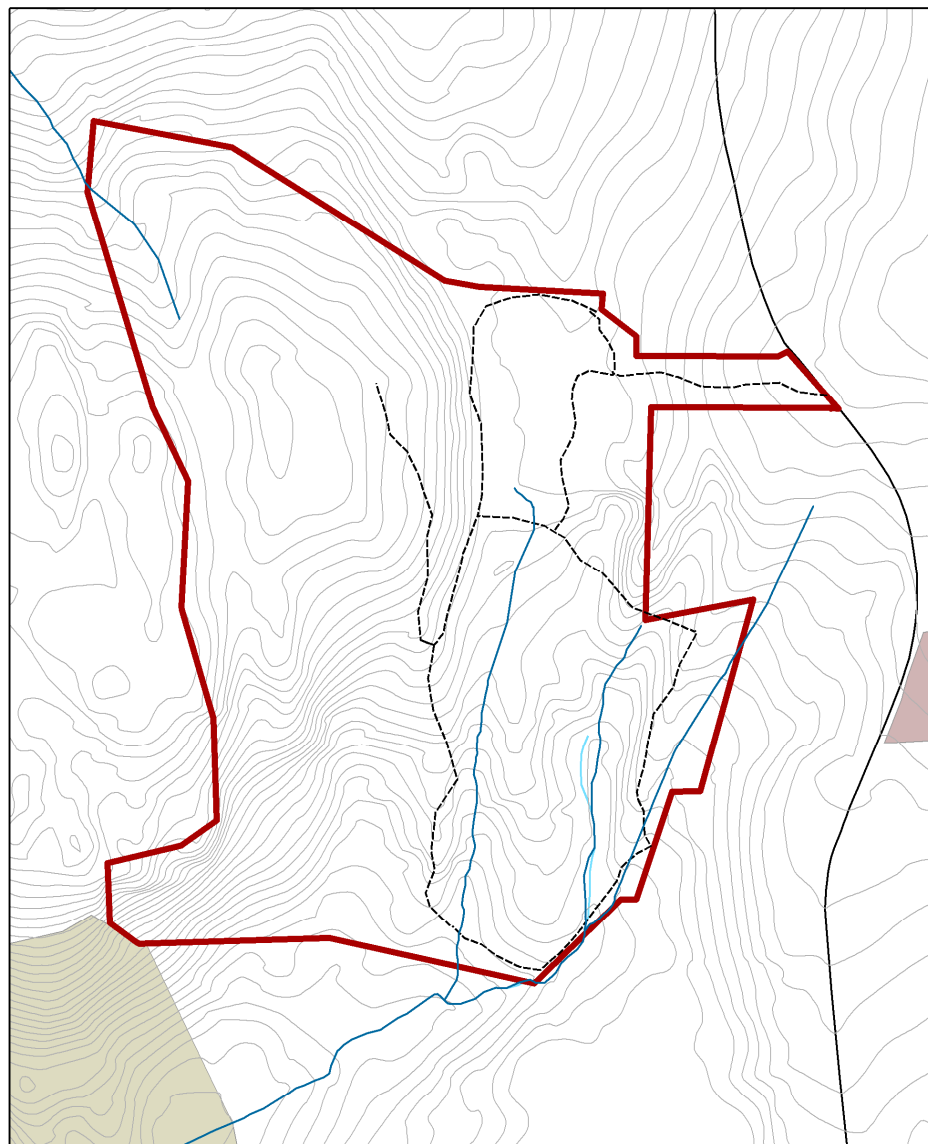
Cave Hill Conservation Area: Orthophoto



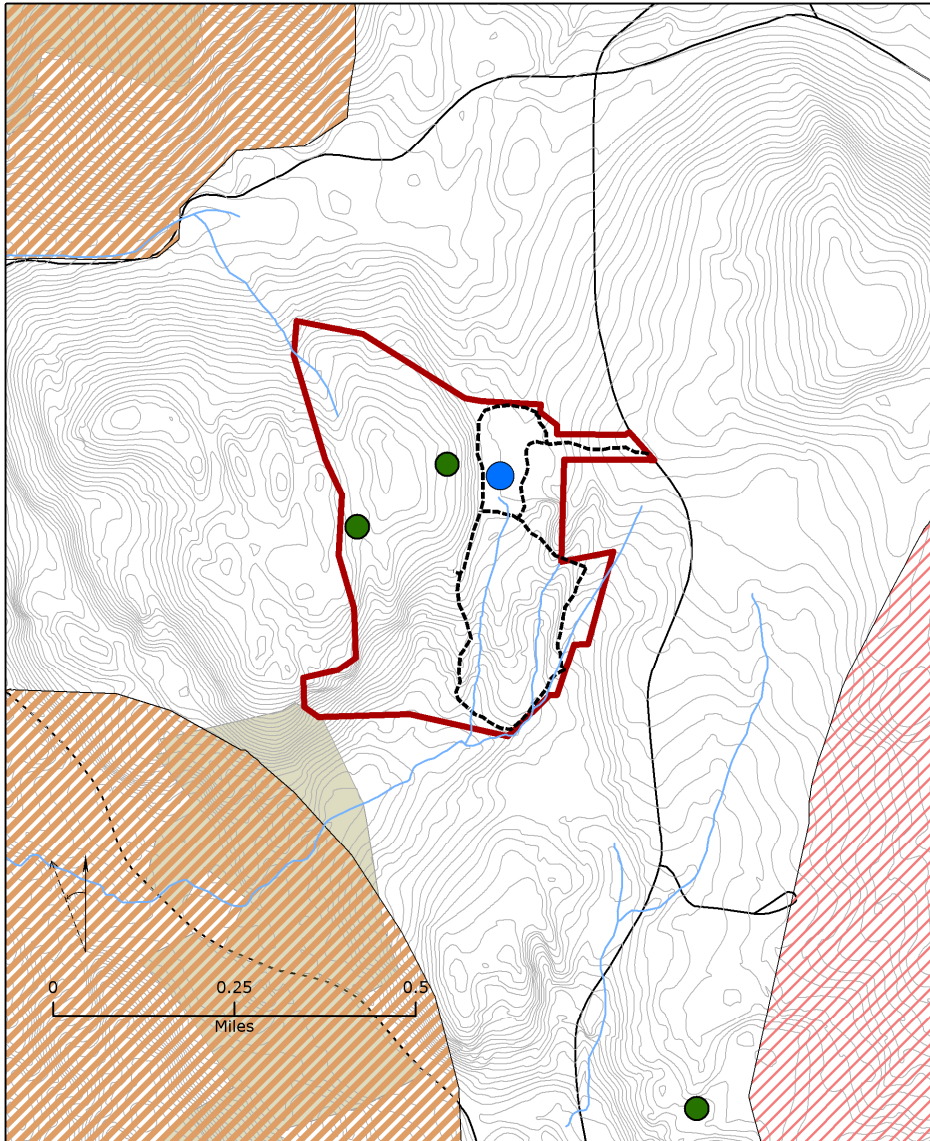
Cave Hill Conservation Area: Topo



Cave Hill Conservation Area: Contour



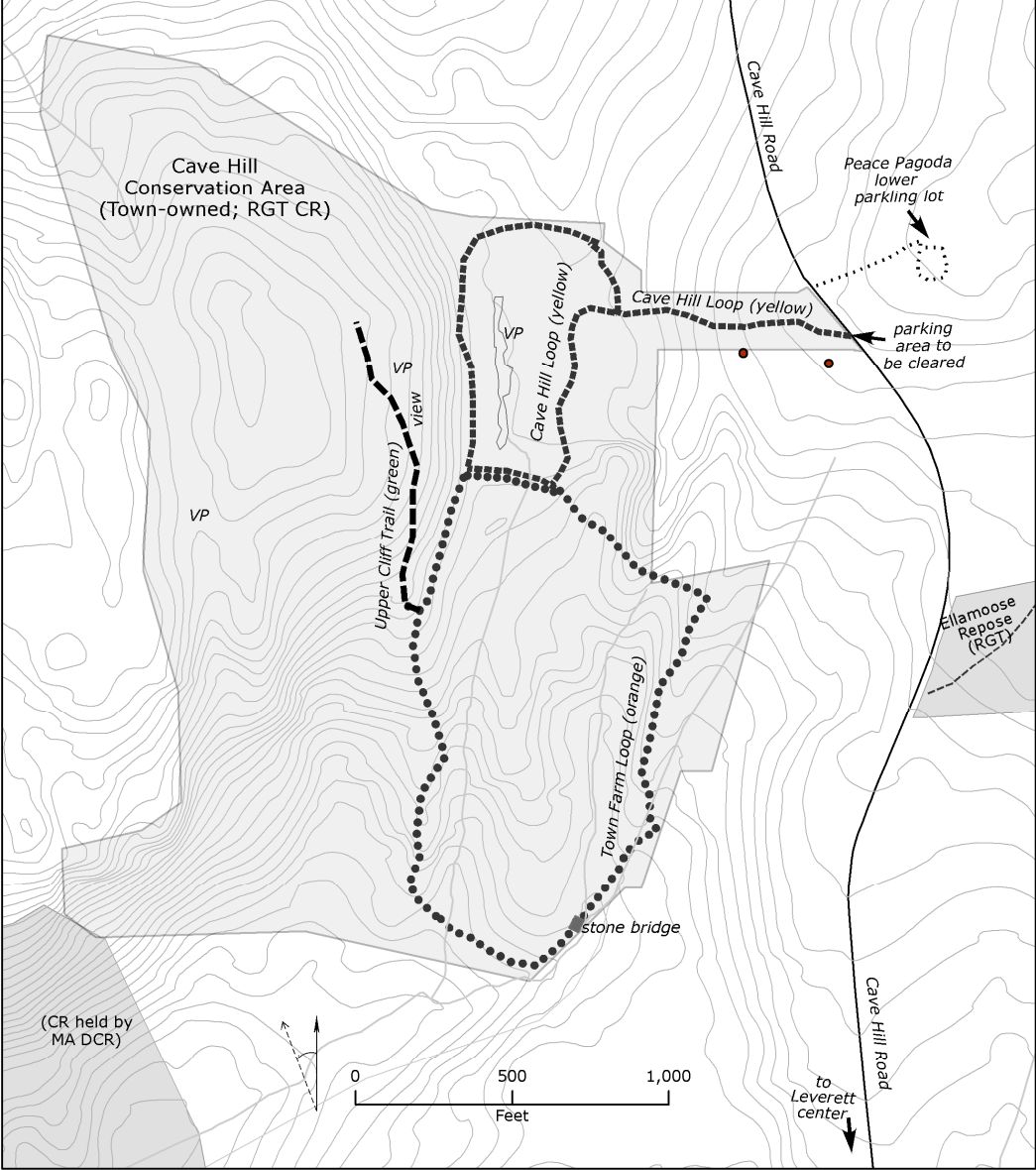
Cave Hill Conservation Area: NHESP/TNC BioMass2



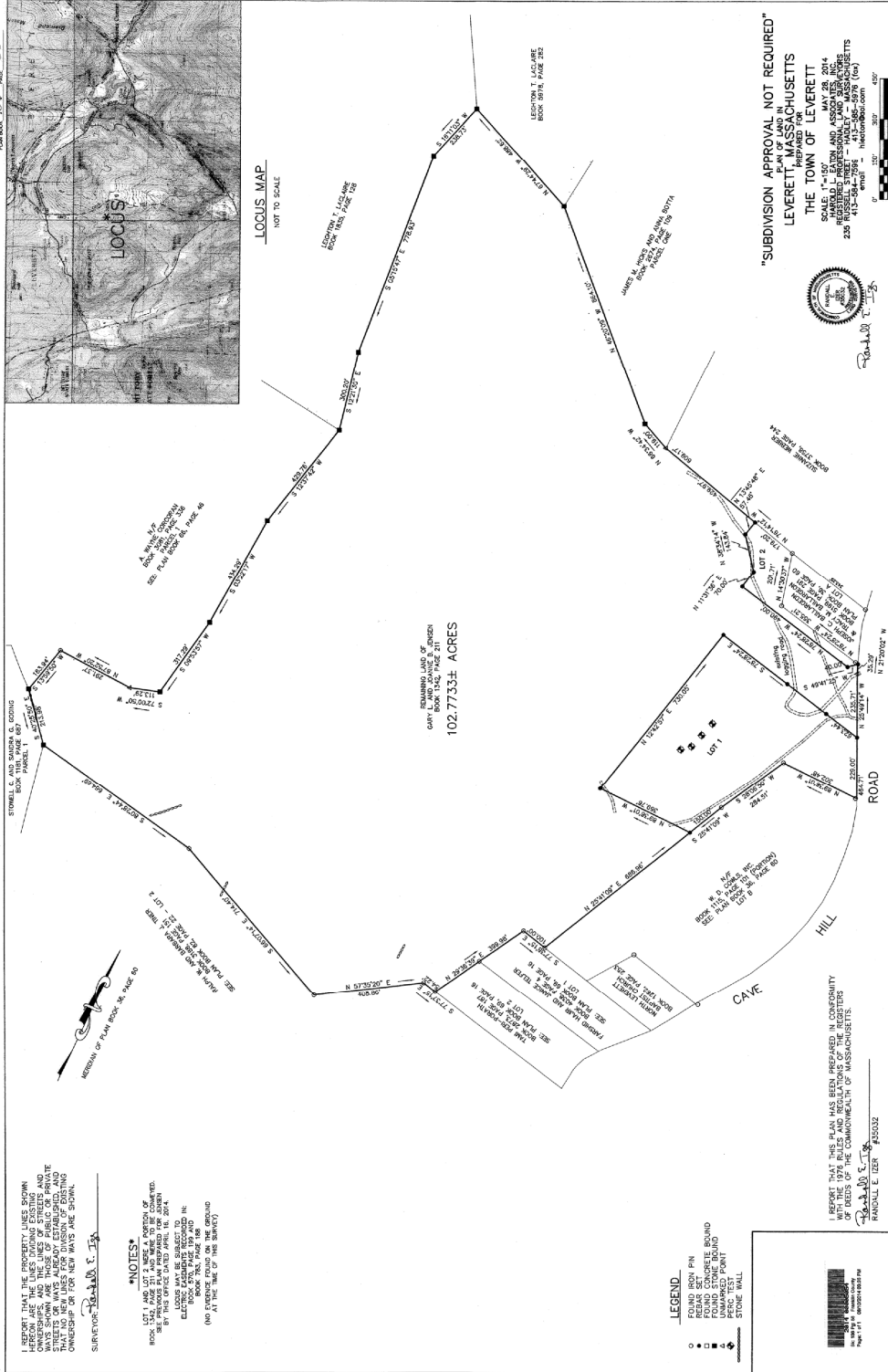
red striped area = BioMap2: Critical Natural Landscape
orange striped area = Biomap2: Core Habitat

Green dots are certified Vernal Pools (MassGIS Dec 2013)
Blue dot is Vernal Pool #3, application submitted 6/27/2014

Cave Hill Conservation Area Trails (status 9/1/2014)



VP = Vernal Pools
 September 2014
 Until the parking lot is complete, please continue to use the Peace Pagoda lower parking lot.
 To help with this or other trail networks: concom@leverett.ma.us
 For print copies of this map: Leverett Library or www.rattlesnakeguttertrust.org/trails

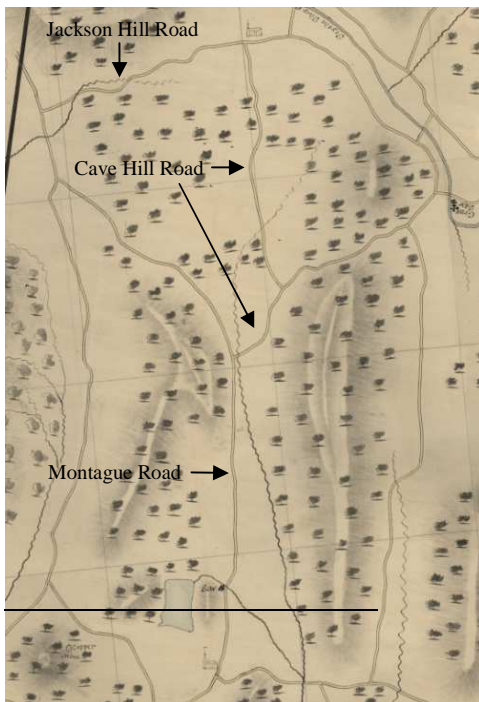


4. Brief History

History of the Cave Hill Conservation Area

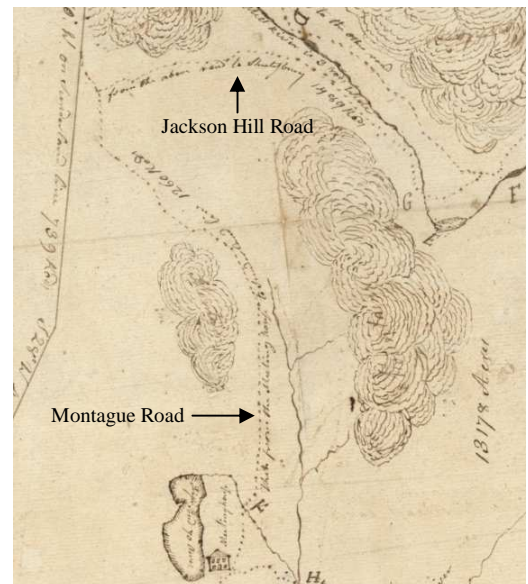
This property has a long history of use. Leverett falls within the area of the Pocumtuck federation, one of the Algonquin-speaking Tribes in New England, whose area encompassed the Connecticut River Valley in what is now Massachusetts. There are a number of confirmed encampment areas within Leverett that are listed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, one within approximately a mile of the Cave Hill Conservation Area. Identified by the National Register of Historic Places in a 2008 eligibility decision¹, all of Leverett falls within an area identified as a Tribal ceremonial district based in Turner's Falls. Representatives of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) and the Narragansett Tribe Historic Preservation Offices have identified numerous ceremonial landscape stone structure features in Leverett². Stone features typical of ceremonial landscapes have been identified on the Cave Hill Conservation Area property. Mapping of these features is underway on the property in order to identify ceremonial features in conjunction with Tribal Historic Preservation Office representatives.

Cave Hill Road was not one of the earliest roads in Leverett. On the 1794 Town Plan map, which shows some land features and roads (typically not named), the roads now known as Montague Road and Jackson Hill



1830 Town Plan Map

Road are present. Cave Hill Road does not appear until the 1830 Town Plan map.

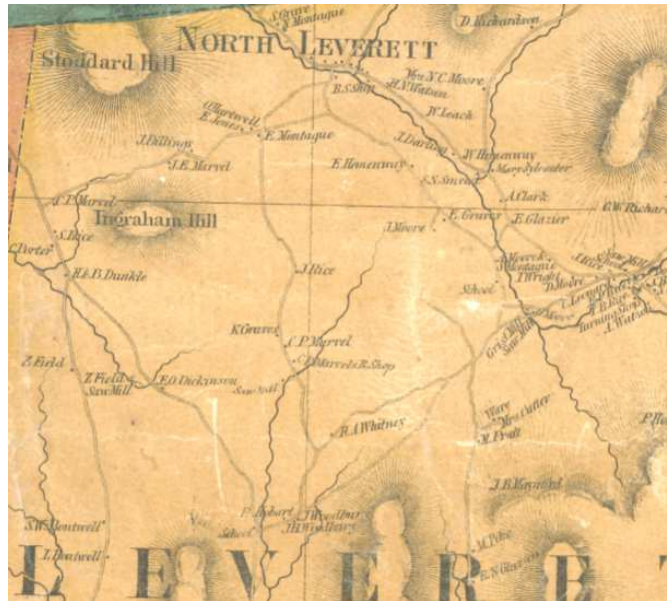


1794 Town Plan Map. Note that the dotted lines on the map refer to roads, while the solid lines indicate streams.

On the 1830 Town Plan map, additional roads that connected Leverett Center to both North Leverett and Moores Corner are seen. What is now the southwest end of Rattlesnake Gutter was at that time the beginning of Cave Hill. After passing the farmsteads (now #6 and #13 Rattlesnake Gutter), Cave Hill Road headed uphill

to the north where it ended at the junction of Jackson Hill and Hemenway Roads. The home of Richard Montague near the junction was used as a meetinghouse, represented by a church on the map. (Rattlesnake Gutter Road was not constructed until later in the 1830's.)

Information gained from deed research indicates that Moses Graves, who owned a parcel that probably included part of the current Cave Hill Conservation Area prior to 1803, was an active purchaser of land being sold for taxes beginning around 1788. Moses was one of the selectmen elected at the organizational meeting for Leverett on March 24, 1774³. He sold the property to his son Enos Graves in 1803. His son also acquired quite a bit of land in his life, in some cases, taking land for failure to pay mortgage debt. Enos sold the same land to his son Kellogg, with the deed signed in 1816, but not registered until 1864 - after Enos's death.) The 1858 Walling Map, which included both house locations and names, listed K. Graves on Cave Hill Road. The Walling Map shows the extension of Cave Hill Road from the junction of Jackson Hill and Hemenway Roads to North Leverett, meeting Old Mill Road before it crossed the Saw Mill River.



Kellogg Graves sold land, which was probably a combination of his father's/grandfather's property and additional land he had purchased, to the Town of Leverett in 1868, to be used as the Town Farm, as shown on the 1871 Beers Atlas Map. The Town Farm sought to provide care for the indigent population of the town, with the residents working the land to pay for the farm's operations. The system did not work well, though, as many of the residents were physically unable to work; When the farmhouse burned in 1889, it was not rebuilt. None of the outbuildings remain, but the well is preserved at 53 Cave Hill Road.



The Town of Leverett sold the land to Edward F. Ingram in 1890, who then sold the land to Ralph N. Marvell in 1915. The land passed to Ralph's children, Pascal H. and Alberta L. (Marvell) Cronen. During their ownership, sections of the larger property were sold, including the house lot. W.D. Cowls Lumber Company bought the land in 1960, at which point the deeds indicate that various other sections were sold and perhaps some sections added. W. D. Cowls sold the 110-acre property to Gary L. and Joanne B. Jensen in 1973.

Barbed wire on the west boundary is a clear indication that the land was once pastureland sometime after the invention of barbed wire in the 1870's. Under Cowls Lumber Company and Jensen ownership, the land was periodically logged. There is no indication that physical structures, including barns or outbuildings, were ever present on this land.

¹National Register of Historic Places/National Historic Landmarks Program, Determination of Eligibility: The Turner's Falls Sacred Ceremonial Hill Site, 2008.

² See *The Great Fall: Discovery, Destruction and Preservation in a Massachusetts Town*. Film by Ted Timreck prepared with Tribal representatives as evidence for the National Register.

³ *A History of Leverett, Massachusetts: With a Genealogy of Early Inhabitants*, Ruth Ellen (Nickerson) Field, 1966

5. Relevant Deeds (*historic deeds in Appendix II*)

Bk: 06535 Pg: 340



2014 00005057
Bk: 6535 Pg: 340 Franklin County
Page: 1 of 3 08/10/2014 03:35 PM

**Affected Premises: 102.7733+ Acres of Land on Cave Hill Road,
Leverett, Franklin County, Massachusetts, 01054**

QUITCLAIM DEED

KNOW ALL MEN BY THE PRESENTS, that We, GARY L. JENSEN and JOANNE B. JENSEN, husband and wife, both of 220 Ridge Trail, Bozeman, Montana, ⁵⁹⁷¹⁵ for consideration paid, and in consideration of TWO HUNDRED TEN THOUSAND AND NO ONE-HUNDREDTHS (\$210,000.00) DOLLARS grant to the CONSERVATION COMMISSION FOR THE TOWN OF LEVERETT, a Massachusetts municipality, having a principal place of business at 9 Montague Road, Leverett, Franklin County, Massachusetts, with QUITCLAIM COVENANTS

The land in Leverett, Franklin County, Massachusetts, being more particularly bounded and described as follows:

Please see Exhibit "A" for description of real estate known and designated as Parcel of Land located Cave Hill Road, Leverett, Franklin County, Massachusetts, for a more particular description

Bk: 06535 Pg: 341

14

2014.

EXECUTED as a sealed instrument on

June 3,

EXHIBIT "A"

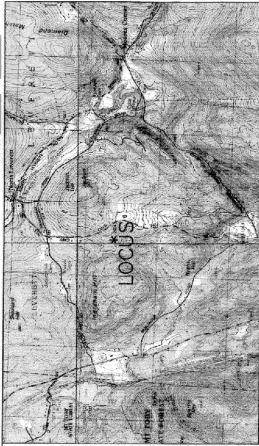
The land located in Leverett, Franklin County, Massachusetts, on a Plan of Land in Leverett, Massachusetts, prepared for the Town of Leverett, dated May 28, 2014, prepared by Harold L. Eaton & Associates, Inc., described as the remaining land of Gary L. and Joanne B. Jensen, Book 1342, Page 211 containing 102.7733+ acres which Plan is recorded in the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book of Plans 176, Page 56, to which Plan reference may be had for a more particular description.

SUBJECT to a twenty-five foot (25') right of easement granted by Ralph N. Marvell to the Western Counties Electric Company to enter from the premises of O.C. Marvell and extends in a Northerly direction across said premises (known as the Old Town Farm property) dated October 20, 1931 and recorded in the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 783, Page 88, to the extent the same may be enforce and may affect the premises

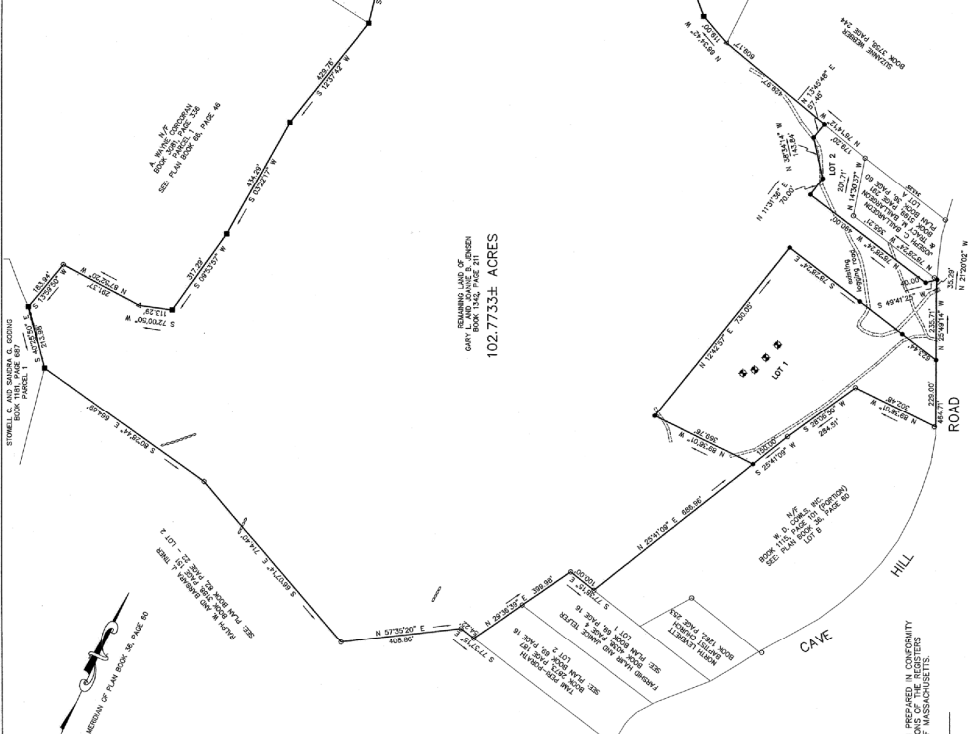
The Grantors herein do not reserve a right of way over the premises conveyed herein.

BEING a portion of the same premises conveyed to the Grantors herein by Deed of W.D. Cows, Inc. dated April 12, 1973 and recorded in the Franklin County Registry of Deeds in Book 1342, Page 211.

ATTEST: FRANKLIN, Scott A. Cole Register



LOCUS MAP NOT TO SCALE



I REPORT THAT THE PROPERTY LINES SHOWN HEREON ARE THE LINES DURING EXISTING AND WAYS SHOWN ARE THOSE OF PUBLIC OR PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OR FOR NEW WAYS ARE SHOWN.

NOTES

- BOOK 133, PAGE 576, AND 577, AND BOOK 136, PAGE 211, SHOWING THE JOINT SURVEY OF THIS PROPERTY AND ADJACENT PROPERTY.
- LOCUS MAP WAS SUBJECT TO THE SURVEY OF BOOK 133, PAGE 576 AND 577.
- (NO EVIDENCE FOUND ON THE GROUND AT THE TIME OF THIS SURVEY)

- FOUND IRON PIN
- REBAR SET
- FOUND STONE FOUND
- FOUND STONE FOUND
- PERC. TEST POINT
- STONE WALL

I REPORT THAT THIS PLAN HAS BEEN PREPARED IN CONCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATUTES OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.

RANDALL E. IZER #25032

"SUBDIVISION APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED" LEVERETT, MASSACHUSETTS

PREPARED FOR THE TOWN OF LEVERETT

SHAROLD L. LEVON AND ASSOCIATES, INC. 235 WASHINGTON STREET - LEVERETT, MASSACHUSETTS 01848-1001 413-684-7895 FAX: 413-684-5878 (6m)



RANDALL E. IZER



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