



Dear Friends,

What is your source of light in a dark time? Family? Friends? For many of us in this fortunate country community, connection with the natural world is another source of uplift. An unfettered walk along one of Leverett's trails feels doubly precious when much of the nation has endured months of shuttered existence. We've been gratified to find that Leverett's trail system has been in heavy use during the pandemic and we hope this resource has provided people with comfort as well as pleasure.

We'd like to recommend two easily accessible trails that offer stunning vistas. The shorter is the Friendship Trail, which begins just west of the boat launch on Leverett Pond and follows the pond's edge to Cider Mill Road. Lush with ferns, it offers a shaded level walk that provides birders with a glimpse of a wide variety of avian species. This is a compact (9.5 acres) space with weekly changes in flora and fauna during the growing season. The bench dedicated to long-time RGT Board member Mary Alice Wilson affords an open view east across the water. The bench was carved out of a slab of local sugar maple, its holes chronicling years of sap drilling.

For a very different prospect, head on to Long Hill Natural Area, approximately half a mile to the north. The trail's pull-off area is on Camp Hill Road. The main trail up Long Hill is an old logging road that offers joggers a good running opportunity. As the trail winds up the hill there's a soundtrack. This is a heavily wooded area, dense with hemlock and white pine. Long Hill has an elevation of 662' and updrafts are constantly created as wind hits the hill and is deflected upward. The sea-sound of the swaying trees is punctuated by the snap of tightly packed branches colliding. At the summit, sit down on the bench dedicated to the memory of Laurel Kahn and take in the spectacular view. The pond and Leverett Center are laid out below; look south and you can see the Holyoke Range. Continue on along our new Summit Loop Trail which provides a 360-degree glimpse of the surrounding area.

What if we could create a town-wide, connected trail system that would provide hikers with an uninterrupted walk from North Leverett to the town's southern edge? Imagine the possibilities for birding, for exploring diverse habitats, for simply enjoying. Your support as we consider these possibilities is appreciated.

Julie Anne Collier, Rocky Adriance and Sarah Todd for the Board

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