



## Trout Pond Trail

Lyme, NH

[Trail Map](#)

**Uses:** *hiking, skiing, snowshoeing*

**Description:** The three-quarter mile Trout Pond Trail passes through Lyme's 385-acre Trout Pond Forest to the shoreline of wild and pristine Trout Pond. The trail provides a pleasant hike, ski, or snowshoe trip over mostly gentle to moderate terrain. The forest of mature northern hardwoods, with scattered pockets of softwoods, is a haven for wildlife and people alike. The pond's remote beauty makes it a worthy destination for bird watching, fishing, or just relaxing and taking in the view from the shoreline boulders.



The Trout Pond Forest is owned and managed by the town of Lyme, and protected under a UVLT conservation easement, to provide public recreational access, protect aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, keep the land and the shoreline of the pond free from development, and maintain traditional use of the forests, wetlands, roads, and trails by the public.

**Photo #1**, by MS Henszey: *Trout Pond*

**Directions:** From the Lyme common go east on the Dorchester Road (towards the Dartmouth Skiway) 1.9 miles, through Lyme Center, and turn left onto the Acorn Hill Road. Drive 1.7 miles, and turn right onto Hardscrabble Lane. Follow Hardscrabble Lane 0.7 mile, making sure to keep going straight at the junction with Pony Hill Lane, to a parking area marked by a blue sign. The last 0.3 mile is not plowed in winter; if necessary, park at the intersection of Hardscrabble and Pony Hill Lanes, but do not block roadways.

### Exploring Trout Pond Trail:

From the parking lot, follow the logging road to the left about 25 yards, and take a right onto Trout Pond Trail, marked by a red-lettered sign high in a tree. Go east on an old woods road over gentle terrain for about a half a mile. The trail then makes a sharp left, undulating through mixed hardwood and softwood forest. Look for occasional orange and silver aluminum trail markers on the trees. In a short distance the trail comes to a junction, where it makes a loop to the pond and along its shore. The route to the left is rocky, slightly longer, and steeper - not recommended for winter travel unless the snow is quite deep. It emerges onto the boulder-strewn southwest shore of the pond. A short scramble along the shore to your right will connect you with the east side of the loop.

The 304-acre Trout Pond Tract, an area of high conservation value, was acquired by the Upper Valley Land Trust in 1990 in a trade of properties with local developer, Bayne Stevenson. Once the trade was complete, UVLT established a conservation easement on all but ten acres at the Hardscrabble Road entry, which was designated for one or two houselots. A vote at Town Meeting, empowered Lyme Selectmen to accept, on behalf of the town, public funds to purchase the conservation land. A series of fund-raising events – a Turkey Supper, Barbecue on the Common, Silent Auction, and sales of a Trout Pond poster and Trout Pond stationary, plus contributions from 140 people raised over two-thirds of

the funds needed. The Lyme Conservation Commission and the Lyme Foundation donated the remainder of the purchase price, with an additional amount to start a management fund. An additional 79 acres was acquired subsequently by the town and is conserved under a separate easement. And in 2004 the final piece in the puzzle was completed with Lyme's purchase of a 2.5-acre in-holding along the shore of Trout Pond, which was placed under the UVLT conservation easement along with the original 304 acre parcel.



**Photo #2:** *Trout Pond Forest*

The land around Trout Pond has been a **working forest** for some two centuries, while stone walls, foundations, and barbed wire seemingly swallowed by trees indicate that the western part of the tract had an agricultural history. By 1855, several families homesteaded in the area near the present trail head. The Piper brothers, who ran a steam-powered sawmill near the outlet of Trout Pond, bought the timber lot in 1891. The Lyme Historians' 1976 history of Lyme,

*Patterns and Pieces*, edited by Luane Cole (Phoenix Publishing, Canaan, NH), includes a photograph of the Piper **lumber camp**, shown here. Two other sawmills on the brook also processed lumber that was probably cut in the Trout Pond Forest. A stack of hemlock bark, found on a ridge south of the pond, suggests this material was gathered for the leather tanning trade. By 1870, the Pliny Allen place had found its future as a cellar hole, and by 1946 so too the Gilbert/Smith place.



**Photo #3**, from *Patterns and Pieces* p. 35:  
*Piper's lumber camp at Hardscrabble near Trout Pond*

The Town continues to manage the property for multiple uses, which include income from timber harvest; always with an emphasis on maintaining the property's ecological and aesthetic values. Timber stand improvement cutting, based on a forest inventory by Ben

Hudson of Lyme, took place on parts of the tract in 1998-2000. A 200' buffer around the pond protects this sensitive area from disturbance.

The forest floor is a rich carpet of mosses, lichens, ferns, and at least five different species of clubmosses (low, herbaceous plants more closely related to ferns than mosses). **Wintergreen** (*Gaultheria procumbens*), a low, evergreen shrub with persistent, breath-freshening red berries, grows by the trailside and amongst the boulders at the edge of the pond.



**Photo #4:** *Wintergreen (Gaultheria procumbens)*

The 13-acre Trout Pond lies in a remote basin surrounded by Moody Mountain to the north, Smarts Mountain and Lambert Ridge to the east, and Demmick Hill to the south. The pond is the source of Trout Brook, which flows west to Post Pond and Clay Brook to the Connecticut River. The pond is habitat for eastern brook trout, various

amphibian species, and waterfowl, including hooded mergansers. The canopy of softwoods west of the pond provides winter shelter for deer, while the mature eastern woods offer prime habitat for bear and turkey. A rich wetland complex to the south is home to many birds, plants, and animals, including otter, beaver, and moose. At dusk you may be treated to a chorus of hooting barred owls, who favor the habitat of the hardwood swamps.



**Photo #5:** *Trout Pond at dusk*

**Links:**

Lyme Town website, with maps:

[www.lymenh.gov/Public\\_Documents/LymeNH\\_BComm/pdf/TroutPond.pdf](http://www.lymenh.gov/Public_Documents/LymeNH_BComm/pdf/TroutPond.pdf)

**Trail Use Guidelines**

- Carry out what you carry in.
- Stay on the trail and use only designated trailhead parking areas.
- Stay off trails during spring melt, when soils are soft and easily eroded.
- Be respectful of other trail users and be courteous to trail neighbors.
- Control your dog(s). Do not allow dogs to disturb livestock, wildlife, or sensitive natural areas. Pets are not allowed on some trails.
- Close farm gates behind you.
- For your safety during hunting seasons, wear blaze orange.
- Follow [Leave No Trace guidelines](#).

**Trail Maintenance Responsibility:** The [Lyme Conservation Commission](#) is responsible for maintaining this trail.

**While these trails are available for community use free of charge, their maintenance depends on the good stewardship and financial support of users.** Donations for the trail program may be sent to: Trails, Upper Valley Land Trust, 19 Buck Road, Hanover, NH 03755 or [donate online](#).

Please contact UVLT at [contactus@uvlt.org](mailto:contactus@uvlt.org) or 603-643-6626 to report trail maintenance needs or recommendations.