

DRAFT INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE 29.6 ADDITION TO THE KRUSCH NATURE PRESERVE

To be presented at the PAKNP Committee meeting 26 March 2026 (5 pm, at the Town Offices) for review and public input. The final DIMP then will be recommended to the Selectboard.

(After Selectboard approval it goes to VLT and VHCB for final approval, necessary before the land transfer can take place)
3.16.26

I. Overview

The Town of Cambridge acquired the 51.5-acre Peter A. Krusch Nature Preserve in December 2020, with the help and guidance of the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB), which hold conservation easements on the land. First, an entrance and parking lot was built on North Cambridge Road. By October 2022, the nature trail was completed and the two bridges, bog bridging, and interpretive signage was in place. **The Long-Term Management Plan** for the Preserve was adopted by the Selectboard and approved by the VLT and VHCB 7 November 2022. The plan and its appendices can be found at:

<https://kruschnaturepreserve.org/management-plan-adopted-by-the-town/>

Thanks to a successful fundraising campaign carried out by the Vermont Land Trust and the new non-profit Friends of the Peter A Krusch Preserve, an additional 29.6 acres adjacent to the current preserve will come into Town ownership in June 2026.

Entrance to the new acreage will be through the existing Preserve entrance/ parking lot on North Cambridge Road and up the existing nature trail. The property entrance off Bartlett Road (through Fox Den Lane) will be gated and used only for property management activities, including trail construction and trail repair, and for emergency access.

The new Preserve land adjoins land owned by the Village of Cambridge for protection of their wellhead land, source of the village's water. The Trustees will allow the Town to build and use trails on a portion of the property. (See maps). *An easement agreement between the Town and the Village is pending and will be added to the appendix once it is completed.*

This draft interim management plan for the new 29.6 acre addition to the Krusch Preserve is to be adopted by the Town of Cambridge with the intention of informing the management of the new property for a year (or so) following the purchase of the property, during which time a more complete and thorough plan can be developed. This plan is intended to inform the partner organizations, the Vermont Land Trust and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, who will co-hold a conservation easement on the property.

II. Two Maps – pages 4 & 5 - *Trail routes are tentative and for discussion purposes only.*

- a. Map of current Preserve and surroundings: 29.6 new addition, Village Wellhead Property, and the Cambridge Pines State Forest/Natural Area
- b. Map of access to new land, current trails, and general tentative location of proposed new trails

The attached maps show the boundaries and relationships between the properties and the *tentative* routes of the new trails.

The final routes will depend on:

- Village Trustees' approval of routes on the Village land
- The results of the VLT ecological review of the Bormann Land and subsequent VLT and VHCB approval
- More precise potential trail routes being scouted by Krusch Preserve Committee (Liam and Mary) after the snow melts
- Expert advice from Erin Amidon (Town 4 Trails Service, LLC), the professional trail builder/designer who routed and designed the Preserve's original trails; she will come in late May to review the potential routes and give recommendations.

III. Present Conservation Easements and Management Plan for the Preserve

The full current plan and appendices are available at <https://kruschnaturepreserve.org/management-plan-adopted-by-the-town/>

- **The present Conservation Easements** will apply to the new 29.6 acres and will be a VLT restriction on the deed when the land is transferred to the Town.
- **The present Long-Term Management Plan** will apply to the new land also - with some provisions specific to it in the Land Management section.

Current Management and Stewardship Plans

These provisions will all apply to the new 29.6 addition and are copied from p. 13 and 14 of the current plan.

“ Allowed Activities for Visitors

- *All types of non-commercial, non-motorized, non-mechanical recreation and educational uses, including walking, running, hiking, nature observation, birdwatching, photography, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing.*
- *Use during dawn to dusk hours.*
- *Parking is allowed only in the Preserve parking lot at the entrance on North Cambridge Road.*
- *Visitors are required to keep dogs leashed and to pick up and pack out dogs' waste. (Town of Cambridge ordinance)*

Allowed Uses for Maintenance

- *Building and maintaining nature trails and bridges according to approved plans*
- *Maintenance of existing fields/open areas*
- *Identification and protection of natural communities and other ecologically sensitive or important area*
- *Common sense to be used in managing blowdowns or hazardous trees, with the priority being to maintain trail access*
- *Placement of benches for educational programs and trail-side benches for walkers*
- *Placing interpretive and directional signs for the nature trail*
- *Identification and protection of natural communities and other ecologically sensitive or important areas*
- *Delineating the Preserve's border where necessary*

Not Allowed

- *No recreational use of motorized vehicles, including ATVs, dirt bikes, snowmobiles etc. (Note: ATVs & dirt bikes are prohibited in the conservation easement).*
- *No wheeled recreational vehicles (such as mountain bikes and fat tire bikes).*
- *No Foraging. Do not pick ferns, fungi, flowers etc. The Preserve is a small area, and its natural environment needs protection.*
- *No camping or open fires.*
- *No horseback riding (because of erosion damage to narrow walking trails).*
- *Streams cannot be manipulated except as reasonably needed for bridge crossings.*

Hunting is not prohibited.

- *Hunters must be aware that the Preserve is open year-round to visitors*
- *Visitors must be aware that hunters may be active during the hunting seasons.*
- *Visitors are strongly advised to wear suitable bright orange clothing during the hunting seasons ”*

Land Management Section of Current Long-Term Management Plan

Most of the new 29.6 acres is forested, and somewhat different in composition from our current Preserve's forest. We advise having an inventory of the forest done and developing management recommendations specifically for the new land. Also, the Krusch Preserve Committee would like to seek advice of experts (foresters and naturalists) to explore the possibility of creating some open areas (perhaps clearing a half-acre area of trees) to allow young growth, as habitat for a diversity of animal, insect, and plant species.

There is a very large and old Yellow Birch on the border of the new Preserve acreage and the Village Wellhead property. Working with experts, careful recommendations need to be developed to allow people to view the tree without potential damage to the tree or root structure.

IV. Process

The Town's Krusch Preserve Committee will present a draft plan to the public on 26 March 2026 and, after public input, finalize it to present to the Selectboard. hopefully at their meeting 7 April. Then it goes to the VLT and the VHCB for approval.

It must be approved before the land transfer can take place.

Krusch Preserve New 30 Acre Acquisition Overview

Village of Cambridge Wellhead
Property 114.8 Acres

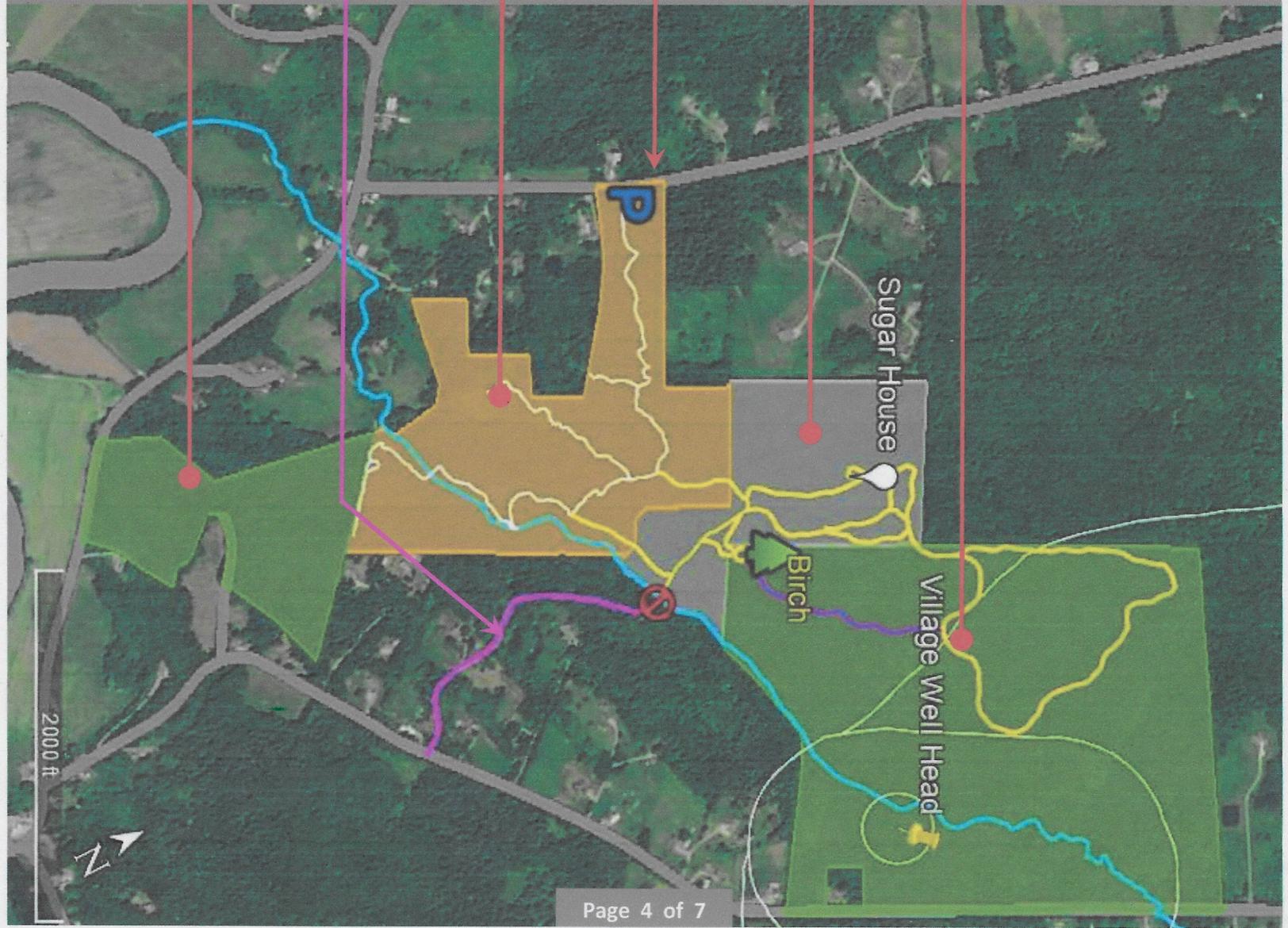
New Acquisition
29.6 Acres

Krusch Preserve
Entrance / Parking Lot

Peter A. Krusch Preserve
51.5 Acres

Fox Den Lane ROW
Emergency Access Only

Cambridge Pines State Forest
22.0 Acres



Krusch Preserve 30 Acre Addition. Conceptual Trail Layout

Conceptual Trails
(2 miles approx')

New route idea
(0.47 miles)

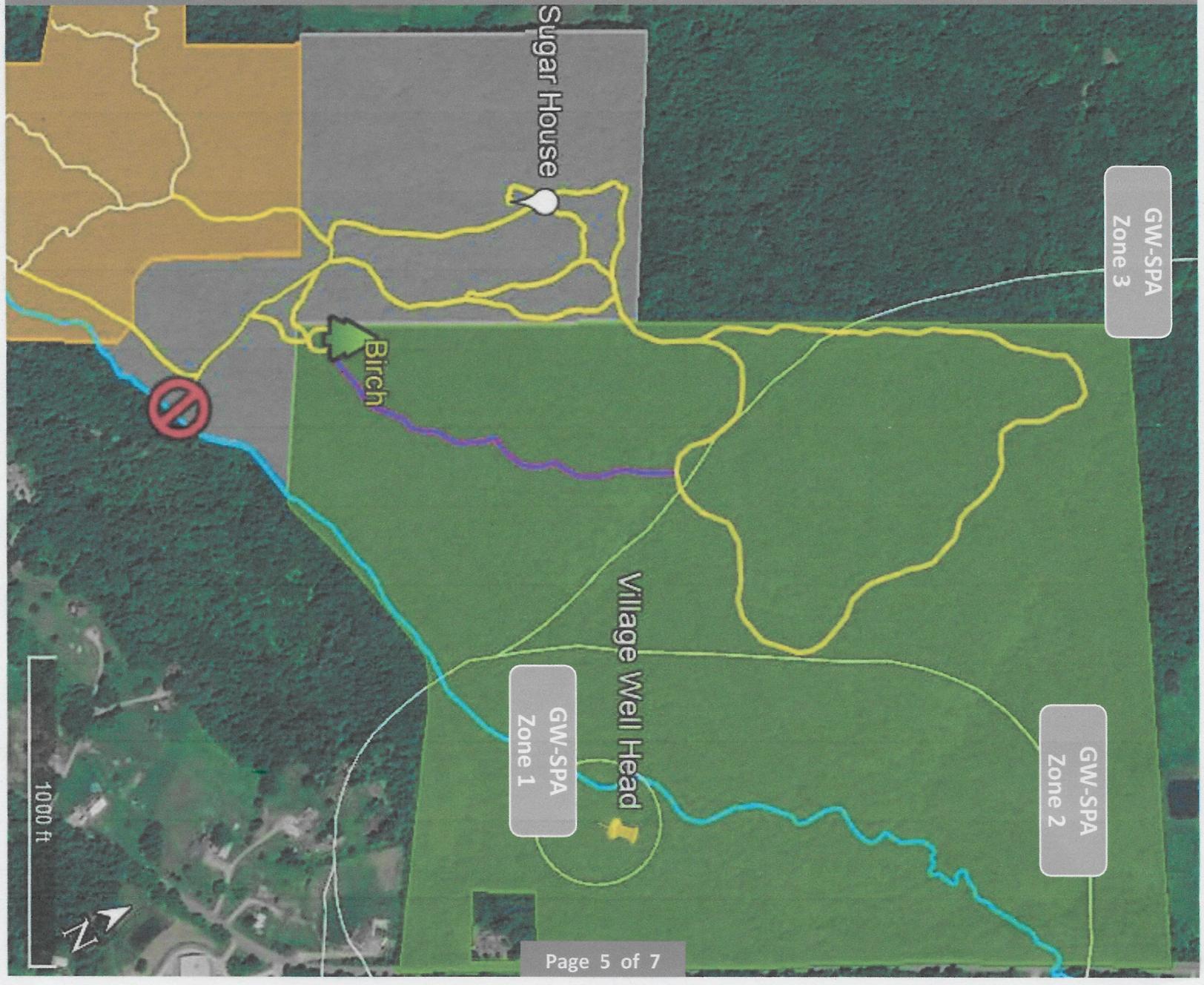
Ground Water Source
Protection Zones.

GW_SPA Zones 1, 2 & 3

Dragon Brook

Existing Trails on the
Krusch Preserve

Gate at Fox Den Lane ROW
Emergency Access Only



RECOMMENDED UPDATE TO THE KRUSCH PRESERVE'S CURRENT LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT PLAN

While the Town, the VLT, and the VHC are considering this issue, the Krusch Preserve Committee has two updates to recommend to our current Management Plan.

Thanks to a field visit and advice from Mark LaBarr of Audubon Vermont, the plan to **Maintain the Existing Field/Shrub Habitat as Open Areas (page 16 and 17 of the current plan)** should be revised to be more specific.

1. *Under the opening paragraph (top of p 16) insert*

The meadow and the sandblow can best be maintained as open habitat by selective cutting every few years to encourage the current cover and by vigorously controlling the invasive species. NO MOWING should occur on either area. See the below detailed recommendations from the Audubon Vermont expert on maintaining open areas (meadows and shrublands) for biodiversity,

2. *Under Sandblow Meadow/Shrub Area, the final point on page 16 should be replaced as follows:*

This area should not ever be mowed or brush-hogged, as it exposes the sand. Selective cutting of the larger trees should be done every few years to keep the area open. (add the detailed recommendation to the appendices)

3. *Under Grassy Field Above the Parking Lot the second point (which starts Mow the fields..." should be replaced as follows:*

The field should be kept open by selective cutting of pines and other trees that come up in the grass. See appendix for details.

4. *Add to appendices*

Plan for Sandblow and Meadow Accepted by Krusch Preserve Committee 1.30.25

(shown on next page)

Krusch Preserve Management
Plan for Sandblow and Meadow: Accepted by the Preserve Committee 10.30.25

OVERVIEW: The Krusch Preserve Management Plan (approved by Vermont Land Trust and adopted by the Town of Cambridge 7 November 2022) specifies that these areas should be kept open to provide varied habitat for our mostly-forested Preserve.

Recommendation to add to our current management plan:

The meadow and the sandblow can best be maintained as open habitat by selective cutting every few years to encourage the current cover and by vigorously controlling the invasive species. DO NOT MOW either area. See the below detailed report on the recommendations from the Audubon Vermont expert on maintaining open areas (meadows and shrublands) for biodiversity.

Mark LaBarr of Audubon Vermont, an expert on managing grassland and shrubland for biological diversity, made a site visit on 12 September 2025 to advise us on the two PAKNP open areas. Mark observed excellent habitat in both the meadow above the Preserve entrance and the Sandblow. He finds our invasive species problem controllable. He advises NOT to mow either area. Selective cutting of trees will keep areas from reverting to woodland. Additional advice is below.

MEADOW MANAGEMENT:

This pristine old pasture habitat should not be mown. The native grasses are thick and sturdy enough to prevent most incursions. Trees in the field should be removed when they grow large enough to shade the meadow. The recommendation is to do selective removal every few years after marking the trees to be removed. Drop and leave as is, girdle, or cart wood away. Encourage a soft buffer between woodland and meadow. If we want to plant additional shrubs, add grey birch, native viburnums, hawthorn shrubs, grey stem dogwood, and red osier dogwood. Preserve all the native hawthorns.

- Keep the trail well mowed to discourage the spread of Reed Canary Grass.
- Milkweed - Encourage distribution by shaking seeds from pods in the fall.
- Hawthorn – an excellent species for bird and insect diversity. Keep all
- Asian Honeysuckle and Buckthorn - Control annually.
- Reed Canary Grass – Keep it on the south side of the trail. If it spreads, chemical application can be applied to the stem to kill the roots.
- White pines - should be encouraged on the south side of the trail to shade the Reed Canary Grass.

SANDBLOW MANAGEMENT:

The sandblow plant cover is stable and will remain so with minimal intervention. **Do not mow** - the soil is fragile. The raspberry bushes (Rubus) are valuable shrubland habitat cover. Selective annual cutting will keep trees from dominating. The perimeter is currently a good transition zone, a soft buffer between forest and field.

- Native Hawthorn is highly desirable - Do not cut.
- Asian Honeysuckle and Buckthorn - **Control annually**. Attention near the sign.
- White pine -Thin the trees while a manageable size. Cut a few trees annually after the first cut.
- Boxelder - Control the new trees now before it becomes too dominant. Some may stump sprout. Keep the large old tree.
- Poplar - Cut as needed. Every 5 years remove large poplars. It grows from the roots and will come back.
- Mullein – an excellent cover on the lower slopes.
- Sumac – the bushes below the asparagus patch need surveillance to stop expansion. The area by the butternut is at maximum height and may remain.
- Willow - Encourage growth at the bottom of the trail
- Labyrinth. Leave the small pine. Every few years flag small poplars for removal. Maintain raspberry bushes between paths at reasonable height. Remove blackberry shrubs.

Approved by the Krusch Preserve Committee and Attached to the Minutes of the 10.30.25 Meeting