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# 1990 Boston Urban Wilds Report

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*Boston Natural Areas Fund*





**N**ature in the city  
must be cultivated and integrated  
into the varied pursuits and purposes  
of human beings; but first  
it must be recognized and  
its power to shape human enterprises  
appreciated.

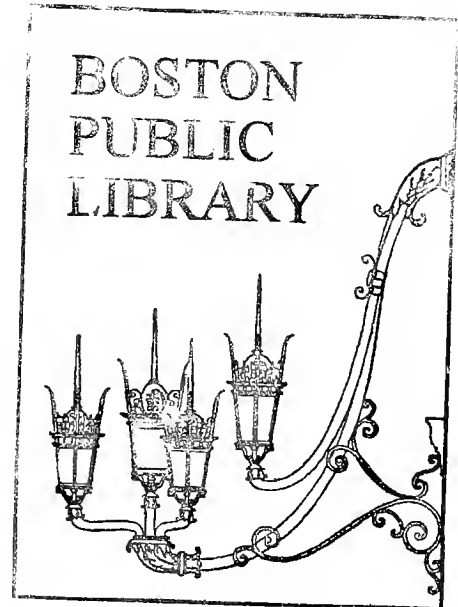
*Anne Whiston Spurr  
"The Granite Garden"*

Cover Photograph:  
Leatherbee Memorial Woods, West Roxbury,  
Protected Urban Wild, owned by BNAF.



**Boston Natural Areas Fund**

**1990 Boston Urban Wilds  
Report**



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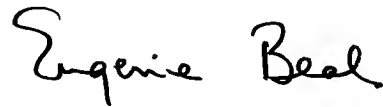


FOREWORD

**F**ourteen years ago, a small group of what were then thought of as environmental zealots had a vision. We thought the rural remnants named and identified as Urban Wilds should be saved. We naively thought the task could be completed in a few years.

The big change that has occurred since 1977 is that the mainstream has shifted toward our position. Making Boston neighborhoods, new and old, more enjoyable to live in now is seen as a reasonable goal, partly achieved.

Boston Natural Areas Fund takes pride in having played a central role in this shift in belief as well as having carried out some of the particular actions documented in this report.



Eugenie Beal  
President



## I N T R O D U C T I O N

**A** salt marsh in East Boston, woodlands in West Roxbury, a quiet rocky overlook in Roxbury — these and 37 other areas of natural beauty are now permanently protected as places for all to enjoy and explore as a result of an open space initiative begun 15 years ago by the Boston Redevelopment Authority and carried on by public agencies, non-profit organizations and community groups. The BRA's landmark report, "Boston Urban Wilds: A Natural Area Conservation Program," designated 143 sites of environmental and natural significance. The concept of Urban Wilds — unprotected natural areas of beauty and environmental significance — was a new and important way to look at Boston's neighborhood and the city's natural resources. After a citywide survey, Urban Wilds were found in 10 neighborhoods — East Boston, Charlestown, Allston-Brighton, Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill, Roxbury, Dorchester, Roslindale, West Roxbury, Hyde Park and Mattapan. There were no wilds in the Back Bay, Downtown, Chinatown, the South End, the North End, South Boston or the Fenway. Lands were deemed Urban Wilds regardless of ownership. Natural significance was the only criterion.

Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the BRA undertook the Urban Wilds survey with two purposes in mind. Robert T. Kenney, BRA director at the time, wrote that the first goal was "to inventory all of Boston's unprotected natural areas in order to analyze their use and importance and develop a strategy for their protection." The second goal was "to increase public awareness of the nature of Boston in order to generate support for Urban Wilds preservation efforts." The Wilds, Kenney stated, "are a valuable, even irreplaceable resource for the city and its residents; they afford great beauty, provide environmental and recreational amenities, and often are critical to the ecological balance of their surroundings."

In its report, the BRA quoted from William H. Whyte, landscape architect and social observer, in his The Last Landscape. His observation bears repeating as we look at what has been accomplished and what we have left to do:

"The land that is still to be saved will have to be saved in the next few years. We have no luxury of choice. We must make our commitment now and look to this landscape as the last one. For us it will be."

The BRA's Urban Wilds Report was issued as a planning document; it had no accompanying resources for land protection, and Wilds designations were without legal force. That did not deter open-space advocates in government and the communities; they embraced the report and began to find ways to implement it. The Boston Conservation Commission enthusiastically supported the plan. Boston Natural Areas Fund was created by a group of environmentally minded individuals in 1977 as a non-profit organization with a



**Belle Isle Marsh, East Boston,  
Protected Urban Wild, owned by MDC**

mission to protect and preserve urban natural areas and a focus on Boston's Urban Wilds. The Metropolitan District Commission, as the state open space agency working in Boston, looked to the Urban Wilds Report to shape and support its acquisition plans along Boston Harbor, the Neponset River and its existing reservations. The Urban Wilds Report informed and alerted community people to the resources in their neighborhoods.

In the past decade and a half, there has been good news. Wilds have been saved, plucked from the path of development in a booming city. There also has been bad news. Pieces of Wilds, even whole ones, have been lost, either by being built on directly or by being so extensively crippled by waste dumping that they can no longer serve the environmental functions that won them recognition in the first place. Others still exist in part, but building has elbowed its way so close that they are almost invisible.

Because of the good news and despite the bad news, the Urban Wilds are an invaluable asset of living in Boston. The remaining Wilds are effectively Boston's last chance to keep these open, breathing, green spaces in the neighborhoods that make the city so distinctive and vital. As the last chance, though, every success will be cause for celebration and will deserve recognition. Land-saving actions will have to be creative, often tailored to the specific Wild, and cooperation and good citizenship — stewardship — will be the theme running through the successes.



## THE 1990 URBAN WILDS REPORT

### Boston Natural Areas Fund

**T**he Boston Natural Areas Fund proposed this project and undertook it with the generous two-year support of the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust and with support from the City of Boston Environment Department and from BNAF's individual, corporate and foundation donors.

The Boston Natural Areas Fund was formed in 1977, only months after the issuance of the original BRA report on Boston's Urban Wilds. Realizing the difficult challenge of protecting the Urban Wilds and the potential benefits that a private non profit organization would bring to the effort, a group of citizens, Eugenie Beal, Norman Byrnes, Richard Fowler, Cecile Gordon and Katharine Kane, came together and formed BNAF. As the first Board of Directors this group was drawn from both the public and private sectors. With initial 3 year funding secured from the Sarah Hyams Trust, the Mabel Louise Riley Trust and The Permanent Charities Fund (now the Boston Foundation), the BNAF Board hired John Blackwell as Executive Director. In 1987, Valerie Burns succeeded him in that post.

BNAF has worked consistently to protect and preserve Boston's Urban Wilds by being alert for threats of development and for opportunities for preservation and by developing trusted relationships with public agencies and community groups. Working together in a public-private partnership, Boston Conservation Commission and Boston Natural Areas Fund began in 1978 to use state and federal funding programs and foundation and corporate grants to acquire and protect Urban Wilds. Working together, BNAF and the city bought six Wilds, totaling 48 acres, for \$1,033,690, of which more than 80 percent was reimbursed from state and federal conservation programs. The Urban Wilds purchased by BNAF and turned over to Boston Conservation Commission are Mother Brook I (2.8 acres) and Mother Brook II (5.8 acres), in Hyde Park; Stony Brook in two parcels totaling 25.2 acres in Hyde Park; Allandale Woods (5.6 acres) in West Roxbury, Condor Street Beach (6.3 acres) in East Boston and Railroad Avenue along the Neponset (2.5 acres) in Hyde Park. BNAF owns the 7.9 acres Mary H. Leatherbee Memorial Woods (Hancock Swamp Urban Wild) which was donated by William Leatherbee, Barry Hoffman and Melvin Newman in 1978 and named in memory of Mr. Leatherbee's mother.



Leatherbee Memorial Woods,  
West Roxbury, Protected Urban Wild,  
owned by BNAF

In 1988, BNAF devised a multi-year program to develop new tools and strategies for its work with the Urban Wilds in light of the diminishing level of resources for ongoing acquisition. A new outreach and education program was developed to help build and support a constituency for the Wilds. The "Discover Boston's Urban Wilds" project of four annual newsletters and eight annual guided walks was implemented and continues. The 1990 Urban Wilds report and the two-year survey and analysis on which it is based make up an important part of this program. The report and its supporting database provide an important tool for BNAF, public agencies, community groups and other non-profit organizations to make land-use decisions. This report is the first comprehensive study of the Urban Wilds since the original survey in 1974-76.

BNAF is doing this project at this time because the city — the people, the government agencies, and the corporate citizens — need new and expanded information to understand the Wilds in the current context and to do what we need to do to protect them. The organization also saw a need to re-introduce the city as a whole to the Wilds and their value. This report goes beyond the 1976 document by developing more detailed information about the Wilds themselves and about ways of protecting the ones that remain.

## Findings

**More than 600 acres of Wilds have been lost since the 1976 report listed a total of 2033 acres. That is more than 40 acres every year, and about 30 percent of the original area.** The figures are approximate because it sometimes is difficult to recreate from BRA survey maps exactly where Wilds boundaries were. Nonetheless, there has been substantial loss.

**By BNAF's assessment, 32 Wilds — including the largest one, Governor's Island Cove in East Boston — have been lost altogether.** Another eight have been lost in part, and each of those has been irretrievably hurt by the change. Most of these 40 have had buildings put on them or have been paved for parking lots. Wilds have been lost in every neighborhood where they were found, with the percentage of sites lost ranging from 13 to 66.

**Twenty-six Wilds have been protected in their entirety, and pieces have been protected at 10 others.** In 15 instances, control has been moved from other city agencies to the Boston Conservation Commission or BNAF has worked with the city to buy them from private owners. The state Metropolitan District Commission has acquired all or portions of 16 Wilds as part of its park plans. Parts of three sites are considered to be protected by conservation restrictions. The two approved restrictions are along Mother Brook at the Blake Estates in Hyde Park and on part of the Allandale development adjacent to the Allandale Woods Urban Wild.

**More than half of the original 143 Wilds — 84 — remain in whole or in part and are unprotected.** They are at least partially in the conditions they were a decade and half ago, but that is not ground for complacency. Until they are protected, there is no more guarantee today than there was yesterday that they will be open spaces tomorrow. They remain at risk. There is no protection for any of the Wilds in Charlestown, Allston-Brighton and Roslindale.



**Railroad Right-of-Way along Neponset Marshes, Dorchester, Unprotected Urban Wild, owned by CONRAIL.  
July 1990 BNAF Walking Tour**

**Ownership by government agencies is not enough to assure protection.** Many city and state agencies have no mission to preserve or protect open space. In fact, being under the control of those agencies may mean a Wild is being held specifically for development. Or it may mean that a site goes unmaintained and use by the public is not encouraged. Neither is what should happen to a Wild.

**Better maintenance and management is needed.** City agencies have made recent strides in beginning to care for the Wilds in BCC or Parks and Recreation Department custody, but their efforts need to be supported and enhanced. State management is focused on a few of the MDC's properties. Public understanding, appreciation and use of the Wilds depend on management and maintenance.

**Access is a necessary goal for privately owned Wilds.** Government is unlikely to afford to buy all Wilds sites. Rights of access, with attendant restrictions if necessary, must be secured from private owners of unprotected Wilds. While some Wilds may be significant mainly for the natural, scenic quality they give their neighborhoods, all Wilds must have access to be thoroughly enjoyed.

**Environmental education needs natural classrooms.** Wilds provide a setting in which educators can respond to the demand for more teaching about the construction and functioning of ecosystems that support life on the planet.

**Wilds remain a valid concept in the urban environment.** Consciousness about environmental affairs has risen sharply since the first Urban Wilds report. People demand more environmental quality in their lives and are less willing to have open space and functioning ecosystems dismissed as "amenities" and considered only after the demands of the built environment.

### **Recommendations**

- The 15 unprotected Urban Wilds of greatest citywide significance and the 21 unprotected Urban Wilds of greatest neighborhood significance should be the focus of aggressive protection efforts by public agencies, community groups and non-profit organizations.
- The City, through its land planning agencies of the Boston Redevelopment Authority and Public Facilities Department and through the Boston Conservation Commission should pursue conservation restrictions, leaseholds or less-than-fee agreements in perpetuity on all privately owned Urban Wilds whenever possible.
- The Urban Wilds controlled by the Massachusetts Port Authority should be transferred to the Metropolitan District Commission.
- The City of Boston should transfer all unprotected Urban Wilds under its various departmental jurisdictions to the Boston Conservation Commission.
- Year-round maintenance and management plans should be developed for all BCC and MDC Urban Wilds.
- The emerging relationship of the Boston Conservation Commission and City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department regarding the Wilds should be formalized and

enlarged to include BPRD ownership of certain Wilds with additional legal protection of the natural features (conservation restrictions) remaining with the BCC.

- The Metropolitan District Commission should develop interim plans for its Dorchester Shores Urban Wilds to make these areas usable by the public in light of delays in master plans as a result of reduced state funding.
- Environmental education programs for the Urban Wilds should be developed by Boston Conservation Commission, Boston Parks and Recreation Department and Metropolitan District Commission. BNAF will be glad to assist them.

**Most Important Unprotected Urban Wilds  
of City Wide Significance**

01-08	Wood Island Bay Marsh	East Boston	Massport
08-09	St. John's Seminary	Brighton	Roman Catholic Archdiocese
09-01	Harvard Quarry	Mission Hill	Harvard University
09-12	Lawrence Farm	Jamaica Plain	Private
09-13	Bussey Brook	Jamaica Plain MBTA	Harvard University/City/
09-14	Parker Hilltop	Mission Hill	New England Baptist Hospital
09-18	Hellenic Hill	Jamaica Plain	Greek Orthodox Church
11-14 11-15	Right of Way Shores/ Penn Central Railroad	Dorchester	Conrail
11-23	Calf Pasture	Dorchester	Boston Water & Sewer Commission
13-12 13-13	Roxbury Latin School/ West Roxbury Quarry	West Roxbury	Private School/BFI
14-04,05	Boundary I and II	Hyde Park	Private owners/City
14-11	Euclid Street	Hyde Park	Patriot Paper Corp.



**Most Important Unprotected Urban Wilds  
of Significance to Their Neighborhoods**

Site #

01-01	Don Orione	East Boston	Sons of Divine Providence
01-04	Bayswater Street	East Boston	Massport
08-04	The Cenacle	Brighton	Religious order
08-12	Foster Street Rock	Brighton	Roman Catholic Archdiocese
09-02,03	Alleghany I and II	Mission Hill	mixed owners
10-01	Dudley Cliffs	Roxbury	Boston Redevelopment Authority
10-03	Alpine Street	Roxbury	Roman Catholic Archdiocese
10-06	Warren Gardens	Roxbury	Boston Redevelopment Authority
10-10	Cedar Street	Roxbury	City of Boston
11-09	Eldon Street	Dorchester	City of Boston
12-06	Boston State Hospital	Roslindale	State of Massachusetts
13-03	Souther	West Roxbury	Faulkner Hospital
13-04	Hancock Woods	West Roxbury	Chestnut Hill Realty
13-09	Rivermoor	West Roxbury	mixed owners
13-11	New Haven Street	West Roxbury	MBTA
14-06	Dell Avenue Rock	Hyde Park	City of Boston
15-01	Gladeside I	Mattapan	City of Boston
15-05	Woodhaven	Mattapan	City of Boston

### Methodology

The chief tool for gathering data about the Wilds in 1990 was a field survey that expanded the original survey and examined vegetation, topography, geology, hydrology, current uses and accessibility. The survey was developed with assistance from an advisory group that included David Omdahl, a BRA landscape architect and planner; Lisa Morrison, a planner for the City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department; Helga Burre, naturalist with the Massachusetts Audubon Society and a tour leader for BNAF-sponsored walks in

the Urban Wilds; and Bryan Glascock, secretary of the Boston Conservation Commission.

Because vegetation indicates both current ecological conditions and site history, data were gathered on the variety and extent of species of flowers, shrubs and trees. The extent of ledge and the kinds of rock involved were recorded. The slopes of sites were estimated, and the extent and type of wetlands. Numerous visits in 1989 and 1990 produced information on current uses, whether for recreation, education or as a dumping ground or parking lot. The survey also noted whether there is sanctioned public access to the Wilds, informal access or only visual access by passers-by who can see a pleasant sight.

BNAF commissioned programming of a computer database for the survey information. The database will be supplied to the BRA, the Boston Environment Department and to the Boston Parks & Recreation Department to facilitate ongoing attention to the Wilds and continual updating of information about them.

Black-and-white and color photographs were taken of all the sites. A schematic plan showing location, boundaries and prominent features also was done for each surviving, unprotected Wild.

BNAF also conducted ownership research on many Urban Wilds sites, working from the best available information about which parcels the original Urban Wilds team believed should be included. As a result, discussing the fates and futures of the Wilds means discussing as many as 165 properties, because at least 15 Wilds involve multiple owners. The Back of the Hill Urban Wild, for example, is divided two ways. Rivermoor, in West Roxbury, is one Wild but includes four ownership parcels. In such cases, a protection strategy appropriate for one part-owner (an individual, perhaps) may not be appropriate for another (a city agency, perhaps). It is not an unusual problem in protecting natural resources, because nature does not follow man-made boundaries.

In this report, BNAF uses the 1976 Urban Wild site numbers, which the BRA assigned by neighborhood. Some of the neighborhood designations may seem incorrect to readers. This is because neighborhood boundaries, as defined by city agency maps and by public sentiment, change over time. BNAF has kept the BRA's designations for the sake of clarity and continuity.

In 1976, the BRA assigned Priority Action Numbers to each Wild, with the highest designation going to sites believed to be imminently threatened with development. Trying to predict the fate of real estate transactions is chancy, however, and the predictions proved only moderately successful. No similar attempt is being made here, though it should be noted that there currently are serious discussions under way for actions that would degrade the Mt. St. Joseph's and The Cenacle Urban Wilds in Allston-Brighton, the Pendergast Preventorium in Mattapan and the Hellenic College site in Jamaica Plain.



**Bussey Brook, Jamaica Plain,  
Unprotected Urban Wild,  
owned by Harvard University.  
February 1991 BNAF Walking Tour**

### **The Challenge**

No one familiar with the demand for land expects that vacant property in Boston will face any less pressure in the future. Sometimes that pressure comes from the private sector and is motivated by profit. Sometimes it comes from the public sector and is motivated by a desire to provide needed services or a desire to get “fallow” land into tax-producing uses by the private sector. Any of those scenarios represent a decision, conscious or subconscious, that leaving open space through our neighborhoods is not the best use of the land. BNAF believes, as the BRA appeared to believe in creating and publicizing the Urban Wilds concept, that there can and should be another outcome.

Some of the Urban Wilds were publicly owned at the time of the original survey, but none were in the hands of agencies with a mission of preserving open space. Many were in the hands of private owners who were bound to feel ever-increasing temptation to build or to sell as the premium rose on remaining open land. Even institutions that few would ever think of as developers and that were fixtures in their neighborhoods — churches and schools, for example — were going to feel the need for funds and see opportunities for sale, or they would need their open spaces for their own purposes.

The Boston Natural Areas Fund has taken on the challenge of looking back over the Wilds to see what has been accomplished in protecting them, which ones are gone and what Wilds remain as opportunities for those who want to keep construction from covering every space where market forces would have it. Knowing that, we can renew our resolve as Boston citizens to do right by ourselves and the land.



## THE URBAN WILD IDEA

**B**oston's Urban Wilds are a special collection of open spaces that give beauty and comfort to the neighborhoods; that tell us something about the history of the city, its landscapes and its geology; that are too often unused, unappreciated and unprotected. Some are huge emeralds of woodland. Some are dark stone masses formed far back in the earth's history. Many are like diamonds of unbuilt, pleasant spaces locked in the surrounding rock of a busy, dense, bustling cityscape.

Speaking of how Wilds in any urban setting provide a sort of botanical exhibit of an area's natural trends and likes and dislikes, Anne Whiston Spirn in "The Granite Garden" wrote, "They place the city in its regional context and differentiate it from other cities, rather than setting it apart from the surrounding landscape." The remnants of native plants and the examples of plants that people introduced "represent unexploited resources in most cities," Spirn said. They are, she added, "frequently more expressive of the special character of a particular city — its geological origins, topographic setting, indigenous vegetation, and history — than are its manicured parks."

To add some definition to the idea of Wilds, it may be useful to define them by what they are not. Urban Wilds are not parks. Parks provide greenery and open space in urban settings, but they are designed and sculpted. The Urban Wilds are natural landscapes. Either they are what nature has shaped through deposition, erosion, glaciation and other processes, or they are what nature has fashioned in taking back landscapes people had made for farming, for their estates, or in quarrying stone to raise the built city. Parks are designed by people for people, for people's games and pastimes. Little that shapes a park happens by accident, whether the lay of the land or the species of trees. Urban Wilds are taken as we find them, because they are places where nature can shape us.



**Puddingstone Garden, Roxbury,  
Protected Urban Wild,  
owned by Boston Conservation  
Commission.**

The Urban Wilds of Boston are like the city itself: too diverse for an all-encompassing physical description. They are natural landscapes — sometimes a few hundred square feet, sometimes dozens of acres. In them, one can see bits and pieces of Boston's geological, topographical or economic history. Some Wilds are woods. Some are ponds. Some are meadows and swamps. Some are rocks. Some are valuable for what is in them, some because one can see so much from them, and some because one can see them. Many are part of open space networks that are vital to their neighborhoods.

Where Wilds include rock outcrops, we can peek at the foundation nature put under the land we colonized. Those that include wetlands perform numerous tasks for us and for the wildlife with which we share the city. Some include old farm fields that are becoming wooded now — are doing a new job — but whose shapes and old stone walls hint at the centuries when skyscrapers along the waterfront were beyond the wildest dream and food was grown out in countryside towns such as West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain. Ponds have formed in hollows where growling, icy glaciers scooped out the earth.

Wilds are not wilderness. In fact, many need human attention to trim undergrowth and make paths so that people can enjoy them easily. But they are not cut and filled and shaped and

paved and equipped in the manner that marks the traditional urban park. Like parks, though, Wilds are for people. They provide a place to sit or walk or watch or listen. Sometimes they are barely removed at all from the concrete and bustle of urban streets, but even small Wilds tucked into neighborhoods heavy with human infrastructure can be home to birds or wildflowers or a few trees. And all of them provide the visual and psychological relief of being someplace that is not more of the same built environment. For that, the small neighborhood Wilds are all the more valuable.

The larger Wilds, such as the Metropolitan District Commission's holdings along the Dorchester Bay shores or the city Conservation Commission's Allendale Woods in West Roxbury, encompass dozens of acres and offer the chance to get off the street and into the fields or woods. Others, such as the privately owned St. John's Seminary grounds in Allston-Brighton and Hellenic Hill in Jamaica Plain, are backdrops of greens and browns in summer and reds, purples and golds in autumn that set the character of the neighborhoods around them.

The Urban Wilds concept is Boston's special treasure. In the city famed for having the first public open space in America, Boston Common, it is appropriate to have this inventory of special green spaces that are something other than parks. The Urban Wilds mark Boston's commitment to having special places throughout its neighborhoods.

### **Making a Network**

In several cases, the Wilds mimic Frederick Law Olmsted's woven greenbelt. Seen on a map, many Wilds connect, either literally or with only a block or two between. In Jamaica Plain's Mission Hill neighborhood, Urban Wilds climb the hill through the Harvard Quarry, cross the summit through Parker Hilltop and descend through Alleghany I and II. Not far away, behind Jamaica Pond, the large Wild at Hellenic College defines the backdrop for that jewel in Olmsted's necklace. In Allston/Brighton, the fields and groves of St. John's Seminary, the groves of The Cenacle and Crittenton Hospital and the terraces of the former St. Sebastian's School are a patchwork of scenery. In Dorchester, there is a chain of waterfront Wilds along Boston Harbor and the Neponset River. Upriver, in Hyde Park, Wilds are studded along the river, Mother Brook, and the public forests of Stony Brook Reservation.

### **Teaching Tools**

Among the 103 Urban Wilds that have survived in whole or in part, many are significant because of the rock outcrops they reveal. Boston was heavily quarried; builders seem to have dug wherever they found hills underlain by the stone they wanted for the office buildings, churches, civic buildings and monuments of the 19th century. In Wilds from Hyde Park to East Boston, we can see hints of the rock that is under the city and in its buildings.

Some Wilds teach geology. Some are ecology classrooms. Others give lessons in economic and social history. Neighborhoods evolved. The Souther Estate Wild in West Roxbury and Roxbury's Warren Gardens are from the days of large country estates and farms. Allendale Woods in West Roxbury tells another piece of the same story, this time about landed gentry who had working farms along with their landscaped grounds.

### **Wilds as Respite**

Wilds can be beneficial even if the public cannot walk the land. A green hilltop or a dense neighborhood woods can set a restful tone simply because it can be seen, and what the eye sees is not more of the same built environment. Hellenic Hill in Jamaica Plain and Dudley Cliffs in Roxbury work that way. Green spaces can cool an urban neighborhood in summer, alleviate air pollution, buffer winter winds, brighten spring days with bird song, and color the autumn

without any one having to set foot into them. They are part of the atmosphere of their neighborhoods as much as the styles and colors of buildings and the width of streets.

#### **A Distinctive Look**

Every Urban Wild contributes to the character, the look and the feeling that make its neighborhood distinct. Several also are important for all city residents because of what they show us about our land and our history. Parker Hilltop in Jamaica Plain, the balcony of the city, and the former farmlands of St. John's Seminary in Brighton exemplify the latter. Some Wilds are open fields where children play, birders watch, families picnic, or classes learn biology or geology or zoology. Some Wilds are rock outcrops that reveal the geological history of their areas. Others are wetlands that feed streams, filter the water, soak up excess water to prevent floods and provide habitat for wildlife. A Wild can be dozens of acres or it can be a small garden. What matters is that the Wild has been in place, has been part of the city's environment, longer than any generation that wants to change it. Wilds are our past and, if we preserve them, our future. They contribute to the sense of place, and changing them changes the street and the neighborhood and the city. We must be good stewards of what we inherit.

#### **Stewardship: New England Tradition**

Stewardship is an honored principle that goes back to the European settlers of New England and the Native Americans whom they met here. It requires that we pass on what we inherit. Certainly, changes in technology, lifestyles and the economy in which Boston lives demand different uses of the land in different times. But the Urban Wilds are history and tradition, and it is simply good stewardship to pass them on as the open spaces they were when we found them.

In 1976, the BRA said that Wilds "represent the memory of where one played as a child, where one's children play today, and where one looks for beauty, fresh air and green spaces." They are, as the report put it, "beautiful bits of Boston's natural landscape." We now have to decide whether to protect them and pass them on for future generations to enjoy.



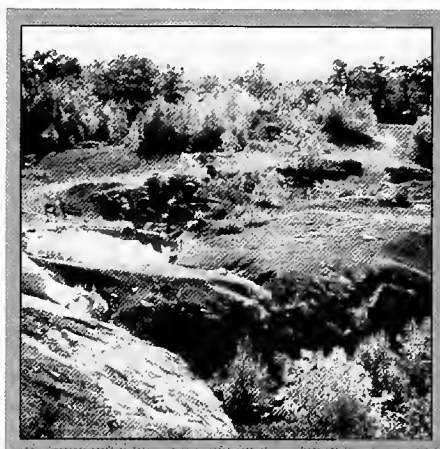
## O W N E R S H I P

**O**wnership is a critical piece of the task of protecting the Urban Wilds. Action must be tailored to owners' interests, whether public or private, for-profit or non-profit.

The 1976 Urban Wilds report listed 143 locations scattered over 10 Boston neighborhoods: East Boston, Charlestown, Allston-Brighton, Jamaica Plain-Mission Hill, Roxbury, Dorchester, Roslindale, West Roxbury, Hyde Park, and Mattapan. Sometimes, however, discussing the fates and futures of the Wilds means discussing 165 properties, because at least 15 Wilds involve multiple owners.

### **The City of Boston**

It is important to understand that the City of Boston holds title to land, but control of parcels is spread among city agencies. The first Urban Wilds report urged that 14 city-owned Wilds be put under control of the Conservation Commission, whose function under state law is to preserve the natural resources of the city. Later that year, the Public Facilities Commission transferred 14 Wilds to the Conservation Commission's control for one year. Five of those were turned over permanently in 1978, while the rest have reverted to the Real Property Department. Currently, Real Property Department controls nine Urban Wilds, including the Nira Avenue Rock in Jamaica Plain and Dell Avenue Rock in Hyde Park. However, the Parks and Recreation Department and the Environment Department are negotiating for the transfer of six of these Wilds to the Conservation Commission. The BRA holds title to three sites: Dudley Cliffs and Warren Gardens in Roxbury and part of the Charlestown Overlook. The Boston Housing Authority owns the Blue Hill Rock Urban Wild.



**Barry's Quarry, Hyde Park,  
Lost Urban Wild.**

One Wild, Gladeside II, part of the Mattapan Hospital campus, is under the jurisdiction of the Health and Hospitals Department. The School Department owns West Roxbury High School and Meetinghouse Hill in Dorchester, and the Boston Water and Sewer Commission owns the remaining Calf Pasture Wild on Columbia Point. The Parks and Recreation Department holds all of one Wild and part of another. Of the 35 Wilds in which all or part of the property is under jurisdiction of the city or its authorities and commissions, six are parts of Wilds shared with other governments or private owners. Two are the remains of Wilds that are otherwise lost.

The Boston Conservation Commission has gained control of 15 sites since the Wilds were designated.

### **The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

The Metropolitan District Commission has played a big role in the city's open-space developments ever since its predecessor's creation in 1893. Since 1976, the agency has acquired Belle Isle Marsh in East Boston; seven Dorchester sites that were in the Urban

Wilds inventory, such as the former drive-in at Neponset Circle; and the recently acquired 17.5 acres in the Boundary II Wild adjacent to the Stony Brook Reservation in Hyde Park.

As with the city, though, state ownership is not the same as protection. Seven Wilds are owned by state agencies or authorities but are not protected from development. The MDC, as a state entity, is potentially the agency that could protect those Wilds, playing a role analogous to the Conservation Commission's within city government. There is an eighth site, Canterbury II in Roslindale, that is MDC owned, but it has been degraded by paving for parking and is not considered protected in this report.

The Massachusetts Port Authority owns all or part of two Wilds, including the largest remaining Wild, Wood Island Bay Marsh in East Boston. Massport owned the largest Wild in 1976, too, but at that time the distinction went to Governor's Island Cove. Its 203 acres were lost to Logan Airport expansion.

The Massachusetts Turnpike Authority and the Department of Mental Health each own one Wild, and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority owns two.

### **The Federal Government**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is a part owner of West Roxbury's Rivermoor Urban Wild as part of its Charles River flood control work. BNAF counts that portion of the Wild as Protected because changing the Wild to any paved or built use would defeat the Corps' mission of providing wetlands to store water during peak flood periods.

### **The Private Sector**

Two dozen Wilds or pieces of them are owned by non-profit entities, either religious organizations, educational or health-care institutions. Most are used in those organizations' operations, though they own a few that are unused. Private owners whose 38 Urban Wilds parcels are on the tax rolls include development interests and several abutters to small Wilds.

There are two Urban Wilds in which some of the original area is protected by state-approved conservation restrictions (CR's). A conservation restriction becomes part of the title to the property once it has gone through a state approval process. The Blake Estates, a condominium development on the site of the former Allis Chalmers factory in Hyde Park, granted one restriction and the city controls it. In two parts, it has a 1.2 acre parcel in and along the Mother Brook behind the development and a 30-foot-wide strip along the top of the bank on one side (about 0.4 acres). Public access is allowed in the larger area, but not in the smaller one. Another restriction in the city's control was granted by the Allandale Realty Trust, in West Roxbury, for almost 19 acres of the former Bakalar property. They are part of a 43-acre parcel where housing is being built. The public can use the area from dawn to dusk.

A third restriction was drawn up for about two and a half acres of the former Souther Urban Wild in West Roxbury, near Jamaica Plain, and would be granted jointly to the city and BNAF. It has not been carried through the process to make it binding, however.





## THE CURRENT STATUS

**W**e must assess the status of the Wilds today in order to understand what we have achieved in protecting these open spaces, where and how we have failed and what tasks we have ahead. We also need to understand protection as an ever-present task, not a one-time problem that can be “solved.” We have been losing ground, and often not in large, dramatic events that are easily recognized for what they are. Changes in the land are often slow. Big projects pushed by single backers changing large tracts are the ones that get attention, but most alterations that humans wreak are small. They happen little by little and are carried out by various actors who may not even know one another. They result from small decisions, but they have cumulative effects.

The benefits of open spaces in the urban environment are not easily quantifiable. Because they are not measurable in numbers, Wilds can be nibbled away until they cease to function. There is no easy formula.

It is sometimes difficult to decide when to call a Wild lost — as difficult as pinning down in words or measurements what makes a Wild important.

It is beyond the scope of this report to say whether all the Wilds we know are smaller, larger or the same size that they were in 1976. Part of the reason is that the 1976 field descriptions were inexact. Maps prepared then are general, even though field reports list areas to the square foot.

Despite those limitations, however, the fates of the Wilds named 14 years ago can be sorted into three categories: Protected, Lost, or Unprotected. Within the last category, we have rated them as Degraded or Intact. BNAF set various qualitative benchmarks for determining the current status of each Wild (or each piece of it in the case of multiple owners).

### Lost

When is an Urban Wild “lost” to its neighborhood and to the city? In some cases, the answer is very clear. Lost Wilds have been obliterated or so altered that any small pieces that are left clearly do not do what the original Wilds did for their neighborhoods or for the city. If an apartment building or a school stands on land that was a Wild, the Wild is gone. If it has been changed but at least half of the original area remains unbuilt, however, a judgment has to be made. In its field surveys for this report, BNAF used the following standard for judging a Wild to be “lost”: It had been so reduced in size or shape that it cannot be understood to be what it was in 1976 or the natural features have been so altered by human activity as to be unrecognizable from the 1976 description.

The largest Wild in the 1976 report is in this category — Governor’s Island Cove at the northern end of Boston Harbor, in East Boston. Clearly, Logan Airport expansion outweighed the value of the Wild. West Roxbury’s Spring Street Marsh, a Wild in 1976, has been filled to make a gravel lot.



**Blue Hill Rock, Dorchester,  
Unprotected Urban Wild  
Beautification Project by  
residents of Franklin Hill.**

The chart below compares the distribution of the Urban Wilds when they were designated in 1976 and the number remaining, as determined by 1989 and 1990 field surveys:

### Losing Wilds in the Neighborhoods

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>1976 Count</u>	<u>1990 Count</u>	<u>Number Lost</u>	<u>Percentage % Lost</u>
East Boston	12	9	3	25
Charlestown	3	1	2	66
Allston-Brighton	14	11	4	29
Jamaica Plain	18	16	4*	11
Roxbury	13	9	4	31
Dorchester	25	21	5*	20
Roslindale	6	4	2	33
West Roxbury	21	15	8*	38
Hyde Park	23	18	7*	30
Mattapan	<u>8</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>13</u>
Totals	143	111	40	

(\* This number includes one or more Wilds that have been lost in part. Numbers do not add because a partially lost Wild may also be counted as being partially existent in 1990.)

### Protected

Wilds that BNAF lists as protected are ones that have been secured in whole or in part. When a Wild has been effectively protected, efforts can be directed to securing other sites. A site has to meet all of the following criteria for BNAF to deem it protected:

1. Unless accepted as a partially protected Wild, the site must have the same acreage given in the BRA survey (subject to confidence about that figure).
2. Title must be held by an agency or institution whose charter includes land protection, or there must be a legal encumbrance, such as a conservation restriction, to prevent shrinkage or degradation.
3. Natural features of the Wild have to be as they were in 1976 or have ones that evolved naturally from 1976 conditions. They cannot have been altered by human action.

There are, happily, examples large and small of protected Wilds. Belle Isle Marsh, supported by its East Boston neighbors and an active advocacy organization, is now an MDC natural area. The MDC's property is even larger than the 140-acre Wild listed in 1976.

In Roxbury, Puddingstone Garden is still the shaded, landscaped, urban half-acre that drew the attention of BRA surveyors. Held now by the Boston Conservation Commission, it could be turned from open-space use only by an act of the state legislature.

One of the greatest successes in Wilds protection came as the MDC began acquiring property for its Dorchester Shores Reservation. Ironically, however, most of the areas had been tagged in the BRA report as low-priority sites, even the 52-plus-acre School Boy

Track along the Neponset River shore. Waterfront land is more highly valued in 1990 than it was in 1976.

The chart below shows how many of each neighborhood's Urban Wilds have been protected since 1976, according to the standards above.

### Protected Wilds in the Neighborhood

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>No. in 1976</u>	<u>Protected in 1990</u>	<u>% Protected</u>
East Boston	12	4	33
Charlestown	3	0	0
Allston-Brighton	14	0	0
Jamaica Plain	18	1*	5
Roxbury	13	2	15
Dorchester	25	10	40
Roslindale	6	0	0
West Roxbury	21	8*	33
Hyde Park	23	12*	57
Mattapan	<u>8</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>13</u>
Totals	143	38	Average: 20%

(\* indicates this number includes Wilds where only part has been protected. Note: West Roxbury total include two parts of a four-owner Wild. Hyde Park total includes two pieces of a three-owner Wild.)

### Unprotected

This category is for Wilds that remain but that are susceptible to destruction, just as they were in 1976. Within the category, a distinction has to be made between Wilds that are essentially what they were then and ones that have been degraded by dumping or encroachment for human uses, such as yards or parking.

Within the "Unprotected" category, BNAF adds the labels "Intact," "Degraded," or "Altered." Sometimes, the beneficence of institutions keeps Wilds intact, as with St. John's Seminary in Brighton. For other Wilds, it may be luck that has kept development's sights from settling on them. It may be that market demand has not been strong enough yet to make it worthwhile for anyone to tackle their physical features. Whatever the reason they have not joined the 40 lost Wilds, they represent a second chance to meet the challenge of finding the will and a way to put them under permanent protection. In the meantime, another generation has benefited from them.

"Degraded" Wilds are ones that still can be recognized from their 1976 descriptions, but developed uses have chipped away at them. An example of that fate can be seen in West Roxbury, where some of the New Haven Street Wild shown on the BRA's 1976 plans is now homes and yards and other parts show the seemingly inevitable effects of having human neighbors. Dirt excavated for a swimming pool covers a wildflower field, for example.

It is new to think about Wilds' being degraded. The old way of thinking was that if they had not been built on, they were OK. This new distinction is important because it counteracts

the tendency to think that Wilds are static. It allows us to talk in a simple way about Wilds that are being lost now, rather than just about ones that have been lost or are unchanged. Loss can happen slowly, over a long time (relative to the 14 years since the BRA report). That means protection has to be an ongoing effort geared to ongoing low-level damage. Inaction is a decision to forsake unprotected Wilds.

Also in the "Unprotected" category are two Wilds that BNAF labeled "Altered" because they had been changed, though not necessarily damaged. One is Dudley Cliffs in Roxbury, where a street was cut along the base of the rock. The Wild clearly is not the same as it was in 1976, but the road cut reveals more of the rock structure that made the Wild notable. The second "Altered" site is Keystone Shoreline in Dorchester. This riverbank parcel is not the Wild that it was in 1976, but it is still a green open area. Now, it is a garden landscaped by the owners of the adjacent Keystone Apartments and available for those residents. It is changed and its access is restricted, but it did not deserve to be called "Lost."

There had been a third member of the "Altered" group, the Pendergast Preventorium in Mattapan. However, construction work began on part of that Wild even as this report was being prepared, and the Wild is now damaged. This case shows how urgently protection measures are needed.

#### Unprotected Wilds in the Neighborhoods

<u>Neighborhood</u>	<u>No. in 1976</u>	<u>1990 Intact</u>	<u>1990 Degraded</u>
East Boston	12	4	1
Charlestown	3	1	0
Allston-Brighton	14	8	2
Jamaica Plain	18	12	3
Roxbury	13	7*	1
Dorchester	25	10*	2*
Roslindale	6	3*	2*
West Roxbury	21	7*	5*
Hyde Park	23	10*	1*
Mattapan	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>1</u>
Totals	143	67	18

(\* This number includes one or more Wilds where a portion is in another category ["Lost" or "Protected."])



## CURRENT ISSUES IN THE URBAN WILDS

# W

### Protection

Without protection for Wilds, there is no other issue. They face the seemingly unending pressure for development in urban areas. The Wilds are appreciated by many, but future generations will only remember them, rather than enjoy them, unless steps to protect them are devised and carried out. There are various strategies for publicly and privately owned Wilds sites, but some form of protection for every Wild is the only way to have a chance to preserve any Wilds for future generations.

Protection is not a one-time item, either. Trespass can and often will damage any site if the owners do not enforce the boundaries and restrictions. The best way to get and keep a Wild protected is to encourage and facilitate its use. The biggest encouragement to adverse use of a Wild is the perception that it has no users. Constituencies exist for open space generally and for all the Wilds, but people must be encouraged and enabled to use the Wilds and to make their use known.

### Management and Maintenance

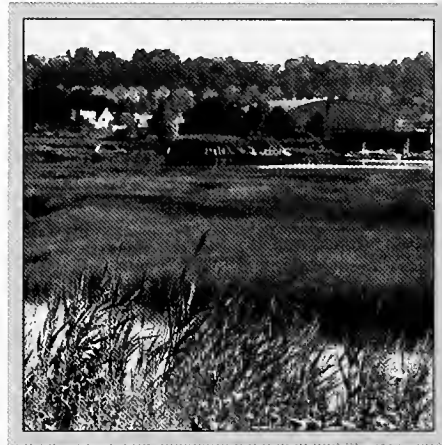
Management is closely related to protection through use. Wilds are natural areas, but they are not wilderness, and their value to humans depends on their being accessible through signs and paths. For larger Wilds, it may be necessary to have limited parking. Public transit access should be available. For areas that will be used for education, signs may be required. It may be necessary to keep some views clear through pruning.

Human management of any land brings into question the concept of "natural" areas. If "natural" areas are those in which no human factor determines outcomes, there may be no natural areas anywhere, because air and water pollution generated by humans cover the globe. If we use a restricted definition of "natural" as meaning wild within limits and without human-built structures, management and naturalness are compatible.

Maintenance, like protection, is an ongoing task. Resources are required on an ongoing basis, not a special basis. The Wilds need to be included in regular budgeting for maintenance, whether by public agencies or private owners. Certainly, the demands are fewer than they are for parks, playgrounds or other public facilities, but they cannot be ignored altogether. The tasks range from general cleanup to trail maintenance and expansion.

Lack of maintenance has plagued BCC-owned Wilds over the years. In 1989, limited maintenance began through a City of Boston Parks and Recreation Department program in 13 city-owned Wilds. In 1990, two sites were added. Maintenance consists of having a scheduled person and committed hours for machinery in the spring and supporting a youth program and volunteer projects in the summer and fall. In addition, Parks and Recreation will install signs with location and interpretive information at 12 BCC sites in the spring of 1991.

Urban Wilds under MDC jurisdiction receive various amounts of management and maintenance. East Boston's Belle Isle Marsh has been planned, developed and managed as



**Wood Island Bay Marsh, East Boston,  
Unprotected Urban Wild, owned  
by Massport.**

a nature reserve. Troy Landfill in Dorchester, known now as Victory Road Park, has been similarly supported and, like Belle Isle, gets year-round maintenance. Other MDC properties, such as Dorchester Shores, want attention. The current state fiscal crisis has seriously affected MDC's capacity to care for the its Urban Wilds.

Programming, such as environmental education or recreational outings, is a very important management tool in developing a constituency who uses and values the Urban Wilds. The Wilds abound in natural and social history lessons waiting only for interpreters to share their stories with the public. Neither the City of Boston nor the MDC now offers any regular programming of their Wilds. The MDC has over the past several years offered a good interpretive program at Belle Isle Marsh, but that program has been curtailed due to budget constraints. The BCC sites have no environmental program, although the Boston Parks and Recreation Department Urban Park Rangers could provide it.

BNAF's "Discover the Wilds" only begins to address the potential of Urban Wilds' environmental education and recreation programming. The BNAF special programs have become very popular, with audience demand well beyond capacity. Often, as many people are turned away as participate in the programs. The public interest in the Wilds exists and is growing. The public agencies must work to address this interest as well as BNAF.

#### Access

In sorting Wilds into categories, BNAF considered accessibility even though the 1976 BRA report did not clearly address that issue. Aesthetics are considered in that report, but access is essential to having Wilds protected.

The lack of discussion about access as an issue for Urban Wilds in 1976 and the current emphasis on access reflect the evolution of priorities in the city. Today, public access to all open spaces is an important topic in all development discussions, the more so along the waterfronts. It seems not to have been nearly so important in 1976, however. There is a corresponding change in the value placed on the waterfront itself. Many waterfront sites got low priorities in 1976 because they were former industrial sites whose natural features had long since been disturbed. Today, any waterfront site gets top billing from open space advocates in and outside government.

In Allston-Brighton, neighbors have informal access to St. John's Seminary, an example of how a Wild can remain in private hands but can function in the public interest.

We in Boston deserve credit for having saved what we have saved (though with the caveat that ownership is not the same thing as vigilance, and some Wilds need to have protection enforced). We should mourn for the Wilds we have lost and learn how we let them slip away and why. Energy should go in large part, however, to the difficult challenge posed in the first report, that of finding ways to protect the public's interest in what happens to privately held land.

#### Current Planning

Boston's Urban Wilds have come to have a role in the city's open-space planning. The



Hellenic Hill, Jamaica Plain,  
Unprotected Urban Wild, owned by  
Hellenic College.

Wilds are an important factor in the citywide planning advocated in the city's 1987 plan called Boston's Open Space. In the same year, the Boston Foundation/Carol R. Goldberg Seminar said in The Greening of Boston: An Action Agenda, "Boston's conservation lands and urban wilds are an integral part of the fabric of the city, potential sources of delight for young and old. Unless they are acquired or protected through cooperative arrangements, both we and our children, and the natural world itself, will lose the unique opportunities which they provide."

The city's Open Space plan states: "Where such Urban Wilds exist, it is important to preserve and enhance them. In the case of undeveloped parcels (public or private) which appear suitable for passive park development or preservation in the natural state, opportunities to pursue these strategies should be identified and acted upon."

Open space is critical in city planning. The BRA included open space as an element in Interim Planning Overlay Districts when it was devising the steps to take toward a revamped citywide plan. Open Space Plans for the neighborhoods are part of the IPOD process. And almost all Wilds, even if they have been lost, are acknowledged in IPOD areas, except for inland parts of Dorchester and in Roslindale.

Similarly, the BRA has discussed how protection of natural features might be incorporated in the zoning process. The goal would be to try to ensure that development does not destroy the features of areas where there is notable natural beauty and significance. The current commitment to create neighborhood-by-neighborhood zoning based on the best planning practices and on what residents want provides an opportunity to recognize the importance of the Wilds and to incorporate protection into the planning process.

The 1988 zoning amendment establishing an Open Space classification with Urban Wilds as a sub-category recognizes open space in its own right in the zoning code. Owners themselves must request an Open Space/Urban Wild classification to be placed on their property. Recently, the BRA, with community approval, placed several sites it owns in Roxbury in the Open Space/Urban Wild category.

The 1976 Urban Wilds report urged that the BRA and the Boston Zoning Commission recommend "Planned Development Areas" designations for 17 Wilds about to be developed as a tool to protect the sites' natural features. Although that step was not taken, the PDA process was applied to the 43-acre Bakalar Urban Wild in Jamaica Plain with mixed success.

The BRA planning process is not the only development that offers an opportunity to save the Urban Wilds. The MDC is continuing with plans for its park reservation along the shores of the Neponset River and Dorchester Bay. And, in a multi-agency effort, the city's Environment, Public Facilities, and Parks and Recreation Departments are reviewing their land holdings and beginning to develop plans to address management issues. The goal is to have valuable green spaces such as Urban Wilds handled most efficiently to give them the greatest protection.



## P R O T E C T I O N   S T R A T E G I E S

**S**trategies for protecting the Urban Wilds that we have left must be tailored to the ownership of each Wild. Public and private ownership pose different challenges, and different tools are available.

Of the Wilds that BNAF has determined remain from the 1976 list and are unprotected, 62 are in private hands and 30 belong to government agencies. Of the privately held ones, 24 are owned by non-profit organizations and are not on the tax rolls. Thirty-eight are owned by individuals, trusts or for-profit corporations and are taxable land.

Designation as an Urban Wild offers no protection in itself, though it is an important first step. The designation alerts the community, including the owner, to the special values of a site, but Urban Wild status gets no official consideration in zoning or other land use law. Designation triggers no special environmental review beyond anything invoked by the features of the site (such as wetlands) or the aspects of a proposed use (such as traffic impacts).

The most effective form of land-use control is ownership. This is true for Urban Wilds no less than it is true for any other parcel. The United States' economic and political systems presume and assure every landowner's right to some economic return from land, viewing the earth as a commodity. Thus, it would be ideal for conservation agencies or organizations to own all the Urban Wilds. That is not a practical goal, however, because many would have to be purchased from the private sector. Thus, it is necessary to discuss privately held and publicly held lands in different terms.



Allandale Woods Duck Pond,  
West Roxbury, protected by  
conservation restriction

### Public Lands

The first step in protecting publicly held Wilds should be to formally establish a program under the Boston Conservation Commission. It should include a designation in the city code that city-held lands officially designated as Wilds are conservation areas. This would afford the protection of Article 97 of the state constitution, which requires two-thirds approval in each house of the legislature for conversion to uses other than public open spaces. The program should be given resources to study, publicize, manage, and protect the Urban Wilds. The current situation is evidence that ongoing enforcement of the public interest is necessary. The Commission's duties and powers under its enabling statute, Chapter 40, Section 8C, of the general laws, make it the appropriate agency to administer an official Urban Wilds program.

If the Boston Conservation Commission is unable to assume this entire role, the Parks and Recreation Department, whose ownership also offers Article 97 protection, should be considered.

The city should determine whether Wilds would continue to be designated by the BRA, as the city land use agency, or by the Conservation Commission, as the city conservation agency, or by Parks and Recreation as the city's open space planning agency. A formal



process should be initiated for nominating and designating additional Urban Wilds.

For Wilds held by city government entities other than the Conservation Commission, title and custody should be transferred permanently to the Conservation Commission. There are 18 Urban Wilds to which title is held by a city entity whose charge does not include acquiring or securing public lands for conservation. After the 1976 report was issued, the Public Facilities Commission temporarily transferred 14 Wilds to the Conservation Commission's custody, but nine have since reverted to Real Property Department control. Those transfers should be made permanent.

At the state level, the Metropolitan District Commission is the appropriate agency to receive Wilds owned by other departments, commissions or authorities. The MDC also is in the best position to focus on Wilds along the Charles and Neponset Rivers and at the Stony Brook Reservation, where the agency has owned land since the 19th century. Wilds along the rivers mesh with MDC plans for and work toward shoreline greenways and parks. The 30 acres of privately owned woodland adjacent to the Stony Brook Reservation would complete that system of public forest land. The MDC should formally acknowledge the Urban Wilds program and commit itself to cooperate in Wilds planning.

For Wilds owned by other state agencies, the MDC should pursue land title transfers analogous to those needed for city owned lands.

Having Wilds held by the Conservation Commission for city-owned land or by the MDC for state-owned land does not guarantee forever-wild status. It does, however, send a strong signal that a public decision has been made about their fates.

### Private Lands

Ideally, all Wilds would be held by the public for the public and would be aggressively guarded against encroachment and violation. The first portion of that ideal, at least, does not reflect the realities, however. It is unlikely in the current climate that government would be able to afford the prices that development pressures have placed on remaining open space in the city. While this report does not attempt to value the privately held Wilds, it is fair to say that the cost of acquiring them would total dozens of millions of dollars. (The MDC purchased 17 acres of swamp and ridge for \$600,000 in June 1990, for example.) The revenue climate of recent years makes such an expenditure unlikely, and other strategies are necessary to protect these privately held lands in whose fates the public has such a vital interest.

Both the MDC and the city Conservation Commission should seek donations of privately owned land to the Urban Wilds program. Donation may offer income-tax deductions for the owners, depending on the appraised values of the parcels involved and other circumstances. For the riverside parcels, the MDC should seek such donations. For the remainder of the Wilds network, the Conservation Commission should do so. The two agencies should cooperate in obtaining the best available information on the benefits to owners and in presenting it to them. BNAF can help solicit and structure such deals.



Boundary II, Hyde Park  
adjacent to Stony Brook Reservation,  
Partially protected by MDC.

If land donations or acquisitions are not possible, the Conservation Commission should pursue conservation restrictions for the Wilds that will remain in private hands. A conservation restriction is a legal document, usually permanent and always recorded in the line of title to the land, through which an owner erases most and perhaps all development rights on the land involved. Each document is drawn for the specific circumstances. A conservation restriction may result in lower property taxes for the owner if the land was being assessed as developable property. It may, however, mean no tax change if the owner is an untaxed non-profit organization. It may mean little change if land was not being taxed as potential building land.

In urban areas, where open space is at a premium, an owner may increase the value of adjacent, buildable property by guaranteeing open space through a conservation restriction. If the value added to the built land is high and can be recovered quickly, and if the cost of devising and implementing a restriction is negligible, it may be more profitable for the owner to grant a restriction than to seek the maximum build-out allowed by zoning and environmental constraints.

For the public, a conservation restriction's greatest benefit lies in its being permanent regardless of ownership and in its being enforceable by the party that holds it regardless of circumstances that would limit such action for a conventional deed restrictions.

Another option is seeking to have property taxed as recreational land under Chapter 61B of the state general law if the parcel is at least five acres. The law provides an incentive of reduced taxation for natural or landscaped lands that help preserve natural resources and for lands that are used primarily for recreation if that does not interfere with natural values. Those lands can be valued for taxes at no more than 75 percent of the fair cash value. Taxes are then assessed at the rate used for commercial property. This strategy also encourages public access to Wilds.

Another strategy is to seek cooperative agreements for public use of privately held lands. These agreements would afford less protection than conservation restrictions would, but their weaker nature may make them more appealing to owners. Cooperative agreements may be especially appropriate in instances where the city is hoping to gain permission for public access to Wilds that now are either closed or are used informally. The city may be able to offer Wilds owners indemnity against liability for users' safety or help owners understand Chapter 21, section 17C of the state laws, which limits liability for owners if they meet certain standards. Fear of liability and of the cost of defending against it in court are stumbling blocks to public access.

Another option open to the city is to adopt use in its taxing scheme of the Class 2 Open Space provisions of Chapter 59, Section 2A, of the state general laws. This provision allows municipalities to set up a tax category that acknowledges land that is "not held for the production of income but is maintained in an open or natural condition and which contributes significantly to the benefit and enjoyment of the public." That is a good definition of privately owned Urban Wilds.



Boston Urban Wilds 1990 Status  
Neighborhood Profiles of Unprotected Wilds

**T**he changes in the Urban Wilds have affected all the neighborhoods. Protection has been most prevalent in the southern and western neighborhoods, though those districts are largest and had the most Wilds to begin with. No Wilds have been protected in Charlestown, which was woefully short of open space to begin with, or in Allston/Brighton. In Jamaica Plain, part of one Wild has been protected under a conservation restriction while the vast majority of that Wild was lost.

Each neighborhood summary here includes an outline of a neighborhood's Urban Wilds as reported in 1976 and the status of those Wilds today — protected, lost or unprotected. Each unprotected Wild is described by address, acreage, ownership, natural features, condition, and context.

In cases where at least half of the original acreage remains, according to BNAF's best information, the 1976 size has been given. Shrinkage is noted in the text where appropriate. When more than half of the Wild has been lost, the best estimate of the remaining land area is given.



**The Boston Urban Wilds by Neighborhood  
1990 Status**

No.	Name	1990 Status	1976 acres	1990 acres
<b>East Boston</b>				
01-01	Don Orione	Unprotected/Intact	9.5	9.5
01-02	Tower Street	Unprotected/Degraded	0.5	0.5
01-03	Belle Isle Marsh	Protected (MDC)	139.4	152.0
01-04	Bayswater Street	Unprotected/Intact	10.0	10.0
01-05	USNaval Reservation	Lost (paved,built)	15.8	0.0
01-06	Chelsea Creek Meadow	Lost (paved)	30.5	0.0
01-07	MBTA Extension	Unprotected/Intact	0.6	0.6
01-08	Wood I. Bay Marsh	Unprotected/Intact	152.0	152.0
01-09	Condor Street Beach	Protected (BCC)	8.9	8.9
01-10	Condor Street O'look	Protected/Degraded	10.4	10.4
01-11	Gov. Island Cove	Lost (filled)	203.0	0.0
01-12	Golden Stairs	Protected (BCC)	0.2	0.2
<b>Charlestown</b>				
02-01	Mystic Overlook	Lost (housing)	0.7	0.0
02-02	Schrafft's Cove	Lost (filled)	9.7	0.0
02-03	Ch'town Overlook	Unprotected/Intact	0.7	0.7
<b>Allston-Brighton</b>				
08-01	Turnpike Overlook	Unprotected/Intact	7.2	7.2
08-02	Crittenton Hospital	Unprotected/Intact	3.0	3.0
08-03	St. Sebastian's	Unprotected/Intact	6.4	6.4
08-04	Cenacles	Unprotected/Intact	17.5	17.5
08-05	Victory Gardens	Lost (housing)	1.5	0.0
08-06	Mt. St. Joseph's	Unprotected/Degraded	6.5	6.5
08-07	Kennedy Rock	Unprotected/Intact	2.0	2.0
08-08	Leamington Rock	Unprotected/Intact	0.5	0.5
08-09	St. John's Seminary	Unprotected/Intact	42.0	42.0
08-10	Foster Street Hill	Unprotected/Intact	5.7	5.7
08-11	Oakland Quarry	Lost (housing)	2.3	0.0
08-12	Foster Street Rock	Unprotected/Degraded	5.0	5.0
08-13	Wallingford Rock	Lost (housing)	3.0	0.0
08-14	Euston Path Rock	Lost (house, cutting)	0.7	0.0
<b>Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill</b>				
09-01	Harvard Quarry	Unprotected/Intact	6.6	6.6
09-02	Alleghany I	Unprotected/Intact	0.2	0.2
09-03	Alleghany II	Unprotected/Degraded	1.0	1.0
09-04	Judge Street	Unprotected/Intact	0.4	0.4
09-05a	Back of the Hill	Lost (housing)	{8.1	0.0
09-05b	Back of the Hill	Protected (BCC)	{	3.4
09-06	Nira Avenue Rock	Unprotected/Intact	1.5	1.5
09-07	Cranston Street	Lost (house)	0.2	0.0
09-08	Sheridan Hillside	Lost (house)	0.2	0.0
09-09	Chapman Runyon	Unprotected/Intact	12.3	12.3
09-10	Showa Women's Institute	Unprotected/Intact	39.9	39.9
09-11	Daughters of St. Paul	Unprotected/Intact	11.6	11.6
09-12	Lawrence Farm	Unprotected/Intact	25.9	25.9
09-13	Bussey Brook	Unprotected/Intact	20.0	20.0
09-14	Parker Hilltop	Unprotected/Intact	4.0	4.0

**The Boston Urban Wilds by Neighborhood  
1990 Status (cont.)**

No.	Name	1990 Status	1976 acres	1990 acres
<b>Jamaica Plain/Mission Hill (cont.)</b>				
09-15	Oakview Terrace	Unprotected/Intact	0.4	0.4
09-16	Rock Hill	Unprotected/Intact	0.5	0.5
09-17a	Williams Street	Unprotected/Degraded	4.0	4.0
09-17b	Williams Street	Lost (school & prkng)	5.3	0.0
09-18	Hellenic College	Unprotected/Degraded	35.6	25.6
<b>Roxbury</b>				
10-01	Dudley Cliffs	Unprotected/Altered	1.7	1.7
10-02	St. James	Lost (playgrd,house)	0.5	0.0
10-03	Alpine	Unprotected/Intact	2.5	2.5
10-04	Juniper Terrace	Unprotected/Intact	1.6	1.6
10-05	Fountain Street	Lost (housing)	2.5	0.0
10-06	Warren Gardens	Unprotected/Intact	1.5	1.5
10-07	Puddingstone Garden	Protected (BCC)	0.6	0.6
10-08	Franklin	Lost (paved)	2.0	0.0
10-09	John Eliot Square	Unprotected/Intact	0.1	0.1
10-10	Cedar Street	Protected	0.5	0.5
10-11	St. Monica's	Unprotected/Intact	1.3	1.3
10-12	Rockledge Street	Unprotected/Intact	0.5	0.5
10-13	Glen Hill	Lost (house)	1.4	0.0
<b>Dorchester</b>				
11-01	Patten's Cove	Protected (MDC)	9.2	9.2
11-02	Savin Hill Cove	Protected (MDC)	28.9	28.9
11-03	Boston Gas Easement	Unprotected/Intact	3.2	3.2
11-04	Fernald Terrace	Protected (BCC)	0.06	0.06
11-05	Troy Landfill	Protected (MDC)	19.1	19.1
11-06	Morgan Memorial	Lost (paved)	1.0	0.0
11-07	The Humps	Unprotected/Intact	0.8	0.8
11-08	Meeting House Hill	Unprotected/Intact	2.8	2.8
11-09	Eldon Street	Unprotected/Intact	1.8	1.8
11-10	Geneva Ave. Cliffs	Protected (BCC)	1.5	1.5
11-11	R&S Machine	Lost (condos)	11.3	0.0
11-12	O.G. Kelley	Protected (MDC)	19.0	19.0
11-13	Taylor Street	Protected (MDC)	0.1	0.1
11-14	Right of Way Shores	Unprotected/Intact	6.3	6.3
11-15	PennCen RR Easement	Unprotected/Intact	3.3	3.3
11-16	Schoolboy Track	Protected (MDC)	51.4	51.4
11-17	Hallet Street Brook	Protected (MDC)	3.4	3.4
11-18	Keystone Shoreline	Unprotected/Altered	0.6	0.6
11-19	Hilltop Street	Protected (P&R)	1.0	1.0
11-20	Granite Ave. Ledge	Unprotected/Intact	0.2	0.2
11-21	Cedar Grove Ponds	Lost (filled)	3.5	0.0
11-22	Lower Mills Gorge	Lost (condos)	0.7	0.0
11-23a	Calf Pasture	Unprotected/Degraded	{89.0	20.0
11-23b	Calf Pasture	Lost (UMass, JFK)	{	0.0
11-24	Adams Rock	Unprotected/Intact	0.4	0.4
11-25	Huntoon Rock	Unprotected/Intact	0.2	0.2

**The Boston Urban Wilds by Neighborhood  
1990 Status (cont.)**

No.	Name	1990 Status	1976 acres	1990 acres
<b>Roslindale</b>				
12-01	Metropolitan Ave.	Unprotected/Intact	2.5	2.5
12-02	Canterbury I	Lost (park,school)	2.5	0.0
12-03	Grew Avenue	Lost (housing)	12.0	0.0
12-04	Eldon Street	Unprotected/Degraded	11.0	11.0
12-05a	Canterbury II	Unprotected/Degraded	{68.0	8.0
12-05b	Canterbury II	Unprotected/Intact	{	60.0
12-06	Boston State Hosp.	Unprotected/Intact	34.0	34.0
<b>West Roxbury</b>				
13-01a	Bakalar	Lost (housing)	{	0.0
13-01b	Bakalar	Unprotected/Intact	{43.0	12.0
13-01c	Bakalar	Protected (CR)	{	17.0
13-02	Brandegge(Allandale)	Protected (BCC)	10.6	10.6
13-03a	Souther	Protected (Rehab/CR)	{17.0	2.4
13-03b	Souther	Unprotected/Intact	{	14.6
13-04	Hancock Woods	Unprotected/Degraded	52.0	47.0
13-05	Waverly Road	Unprotected/Degraded	1.8	1.8
13-06	Parkway Pond	Lost (housing)	3.3	0.0
13-07	Oak Ridge	Unprotected/Degraded	0.3	0.3
13-08	Dump Shoreline	Protected (BCC)	8.9	8.9
13-09a	Rivermoor	Protected (Army COE)	{	8.2
13-09b	Rivermoor	Unprotected/Intact	{24.6	1.2
13-09c	Rivermoor	Unprotected/Intact	{	0.5
13-09d	Rivermoor	Protected (MDC)	{	14.9
13-10	Spring Street Marsh	Lost (built on)	30.3	0.0
13-11	New Haven Street	Unprotected/Degraded	9.7	9.7
13-12	Roxbury Latin School	Unprotected/Intact	76.4	76.4
13-13	West Roxbury Quarry	Unprotected/Intact	70.0	70.0
13-14	Rockview	Lost (built on)	1.2	0.0
13-15	Dragon Rock	Lost (built on)	1.2	0.0
13-16	Dana Road	Unprotected/Intact	0.9	0.9
13-17	Hancock(Leatherbee)	Protected (BNAF)	7.9	7.9
13-18	Sawmill Brook	Protected (MDC)	68.8	68.8
13-19	Centre Marsh	Lost (filling)	5.3	0.0
13-20a	W. Roxbury H.S.	Lost (school)	30.0	0.0
13-20b	W. Roxbury H.S.	Unprotected/Degraded	10	10.0
13-21	Searle Road Rock	Lost (housing)	0.6	0.0
<b>Hyde Park</b>				
14-01	Sally Rock	Lost	0.7	0.0
14-02	Sherrin Street	Protected (BCC)	30.2	30.2
14-03	Monterey Hilltop	Protected (BCC)	6.5	6.5
14-04a	Boundary I	Unprotected/Intact	{16.0	9.8
14-04b	Boundary I	Protected (P&R)	{	7.1
14-05a	Boundary II	Protected (MDC)	{44.0	17.0
14-05b	Boundary II	Unprotected/Intact	{	27.0
14-06	Dell Avenue Rock	Unprotected/Intact	1.3	1.3
14-07a	West Street	Protected (MDC)	{1.5	0.6
14-07b	West Street	Unprotected/Intact	{	0.9
14-08a	Railroad Avenue	Protected (MDC)	{1.2	1.2

**The Boston Urban Wilds by Neighborhood  
1990 Status (cont.)**

No.	Name	1990 Status	1976 acres	1990 acres
<b>Hyde Park (cont.)</b>				
14-08b	Railroad Avenue	Protected (BCC)	{	2.1
14-09	Sprague Pond (water)	Unprotected/Intact	1.4	1.4
14-10	Readville Maples	Lost (unknown fate)	2.8	0.0
14-11	Euclid Street	Unprotected/Degraded	{3.9	3.9
14-12	West & Austin	Unprotected/Intact	0.3	0.3
14-13	Pleasantview	Unprotected/Intact	0.5	0.5
14-14	Fairview Quarry	Unprotected/Intact	6.7	6.7
14-15	Belnel	Protected (MDC)	1.3	1.3
14-16a	Dana Avenue	Protected (MDC)	{1.9	0.2
14-16b	Dana Avenue	Lost (garage&parking)	{	0.0
14-17	Margin Street	Lost (fenced, paved)	0.4	0.0
14-18a	Allis Chalmers	Protected (Blake CR)	{3.4	1.6
14-18b	Allis Chalmers	Lost (condos, access)	{	0.0
14-19	Mother Brook I	Unprotected/Intact	0.4	0.4
14-20	Mother Brook II	Protected (BCC)	6.0	8.7
14-21a	Mother Brook III	Protected (MDC)	{	0.5
14-21b	Mother Brook III	Protected (BCC)	{4.5	1.8
14-21c	Mother Brook III	Lost (paved parking)	{	0.0
14-22	Neponset I	Unprotected/Intact	2.0	2.0
14-23	Neponset II	Lost (built on)	3.2	0.0
<b>Mattapan</b>				
15-01	Gladeside I	Unprotected/Intact	4.5	10.0
15-02	Livermore	Lost (school&change)	30.0	0.0
15-03	Pendergast Preventorium	Unprotected/Degraded	20.8	20.8
15-04	Willowwood Rock	Protected (BCC)	0.2	0.2
15-05	Woodhaven	Unprotected/Intact	2.1	2.1
15-06	Blue Hill Rock	Unprotected/Intact	0.8	0.8
15-07	Gladeside II	Unprotected/Intact	1.1	1.1
15-08	Baker Chocolate Seawall	Unprotected/Intact	1.5	1.5

**Boston Urban Wilds Listed by 1990 Fate  
Permanently Protected Wilds**

<b>UW#</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>1990 Fate</b>
01-03	Belle Isle Marsh	Protected (MDC)
01-09	Condor Street Beach	Protected (BCC)
01-12	Golden Stairs	Protected (BCC)
09-05b	Back of the Hill	Protected (BCC)
10-07	Puddingstone Garden	Protected (BCC)
10-10	Cedar Street	Protected (BNAF)
11-01	Patten's Cove	Protected (MDC)
11-02	Savin Hill Cove	Protected (MDC)
11-04	Fernald Terrace	Protected (BCC)
11-05	Troy Landfill	Protected (MDC)
11-10	Geneva Ave. Cliffs	Protected (BCC)
11-12	O.G. Kelley	Protected (MDC)
11-13	Taylor Street	Protected (MDC)
11-16	Schoolboy Track	Protected (MDC)
11-17	Hallet Street Brook	Protected (MDC)
11-19	Hilltop Street	Protected (P&R)
13-01c	Bakalar	Protected (CR)
13-02	Brandegee(Allandale)	Protected (BCC)
13-03a	Souther	Protected (Rehab/CR)
13-08	Dump Shoreline	Protected (BCC)
13-09d	Rivermoor	Protected (MDC)
13-09a	Rivermoor	Protected (Army COE)
13-17	Hancock(Leatherbee)	Protected (BNAF)
13-18	Sawmill Brook	Protected (MDC)
14-02	Sherrin Street	Protected (BCC)
14-03	Monterey Hilltop	Protected (BCC)
14-04b	Boundary I	Protected (P&R)
14-05a	Boundary II	Protected (MDC)
14-07a	West Street	Protected (MDC)
14-08a	Railroad Avenue	Protected (MDC)
14-08b	Railroad Avenue	Protected (BCC)
14-15	Belnel	Protected (MDC)
14-16a	Dana Avenue	Protected (MDC)
14-18a	Allis Chalmers	Protected (Blake CR)
14-20	Mother Brook II	Protected (BCC)
14-21b	Mother Brook III	Protected (BCC)
14-21a	Mother Brook III	Protected (MDC)
15-04	Willowwood Rock	Protected (BCC)
01-10	Condor Street Overlook	Protected/Degraded



## Unprotected Wilds (Intact)

UW#	Name	1990 Fate
01-01	Don Orione	Unprotected/Intact
01-04	Bayswater Street	Unprotected/Intact
01-07	MBTA Extension	Unprotected/Intact
01-08	Wood Island Bay Marsh	Unprotected/Intact
02-03	Ch'town Overlook	Unprotected/Intact
08-01	Turnpike Overlook	Unprotected/Intact
08-02	Crittenton Hospital	Unprotected/Intact
08-03	St. Sebastian's	Unprotected/Intact
08-04	Cenacles	Unprotected/Intact
08-07	Kennedy Rock	Unprotected/Intact
08-08	Leamington Rock	Unprotected/Intact
08-09	St. John's Seminary	Unprotected/Intact
08-10	Foster Street Hill	Unprotected/Intact
09-01	Harvard Quarry	Unprotected/Intact
09-02	Alleghany I	Unprotected/Intact
09-04	Judge Street	Unprotected/Intact
09-06	Nira Avenue Rock	Unprotected/Intact
09-09	Chapman Runyon	Unprotected/Intact
09-10	Showa Women's Inst.	Unprotected/Intact
09-11	Daughters of St. Paul	Unprotected/Intact
09-12	Lawrence Farm	Unprotected/Intact
09-13	Bussey Brook	Unprotected/Intact
09-14	Parker Hilltop	Unprotected/Intact
09-15	Oakview Terrace	Unprotected/Intact
09-16	Rock Hill	Unprotected/Intact
10-03	Alpine	Unprotected/Intact
10-04	Juniper Terrace	Unprotected/Intact
10-06	Warren Gardens	Unprotected/Intact
10-09	John Eliot Square	Unprotected/Intact
10-11	St. Monica's	Unprotected/Intact
10-12	Rockledge Street	Unprotected/Intact
11-03	Boston Gas Easement	Unprotected/Intact
11-07	The Humps	Unprotected/Intact
11-08	Meeting House Hill	Unprotected/Intact
11-09	Eldon Street	Unprotected/Intact
11-14	Right of Way Shores	Unprotected/Intact
11-15	PennCentral RR Easement	Unprotected/Intact
11-20	Granite Ave. Ledge	Unprotected/Intact
11-24	Adams Rock	Unprotected/Intact
11-25	Huntoon Rock	Unprotected/Intact
12-01	Metropolitan Ave.	Unprotected/Intact
12-05b	Canterbury II	Unprotected/Intact
12-06	Boston State Hospital	Unprotected/Intact
13-01b	Bakalar	Unprotected/Intact
13-03b	Souther	Unprotected/Intact
13-09c	Rivermoor	Unprotected/Intact
13-09b	Rivermoor	Unprotected/Intact
13-12	Roxbury Latin School	Unprotected/Intact
13-13	West Roxbury Quarry	Unprotected/Intact
13-16	Dana Road	Unprotected/Intact
14-04a	Boundary I	Unprotected/Intact
14-05b	Boundary II	Unprotected/Intact
14-06	Dell Avenue Rock	Unprotected/Intact

## Unprotected Wilds (Intact) (cont.)

UW#	Name	1990 Fate
14-07b	West Street	Unprotected/Intact
14-09	Sprague Pond (water)	Unprotected/Intact
14-12	West & Austin	Unprotected/Intact
14-13	Pleasantview	Unprotected/Intact
14-14	Fairview Quarry	Unprotected/Intact
14-19	Mother Brook I	Unprotected/Intact
14-22	Neponset I	Unprotected/Intact
15-01	Gladeside I	Unprotected/Intact
15-05	Woodhaven	Unprotected/Intact
15-06	Blue Hill Rock	Unprotected/Intact
15-07	Gladeside II	Unprotected/Intact
15-08	Baker Chocolate Seawall	Unprotected/Intact

## Unprotected Wilds (altered and degraded)

UW#	Name	1990 Fate
10-01	Dudley Cliffs	Unprotected/Altered
11-18	Keystone Shoreline	Unprotected/Altered
01-02	Tower Street	Unprotected/Degraded
08-06	Mt. St. Joseph's	Unprotected/Degraded
08-12	Foster Street Rock	Unprotected/Degraded
09-03	Alleghany II	Unprotected/Degraded
09-17a	Williams Street	Unprotected/Degraded
09-18	Hellenic College	Unprotected/Degraded
11-23a	Calf Pasture	Unprotected/Degraded
12-04	Eldon Street	Unprotected/Degraded
12-05a	Canterbury II	Unprotected/Degraded
13-04	Hancock Woods	Unprotected/Degraded
13-05	Waverly Road	Unprotected/Degraded
13-07	Oak Ridge	Unprotected/Degraded
13-11	New Haven Street	Unprotected/Degraded
13-20b	W. Roxbury H.S.	Unprotected/Degraded
14-11	Euclid Street	Unprotected/Degraded
15-03	Pendergast Preventorium	Unprotected/Degraded

## Lost Wilds

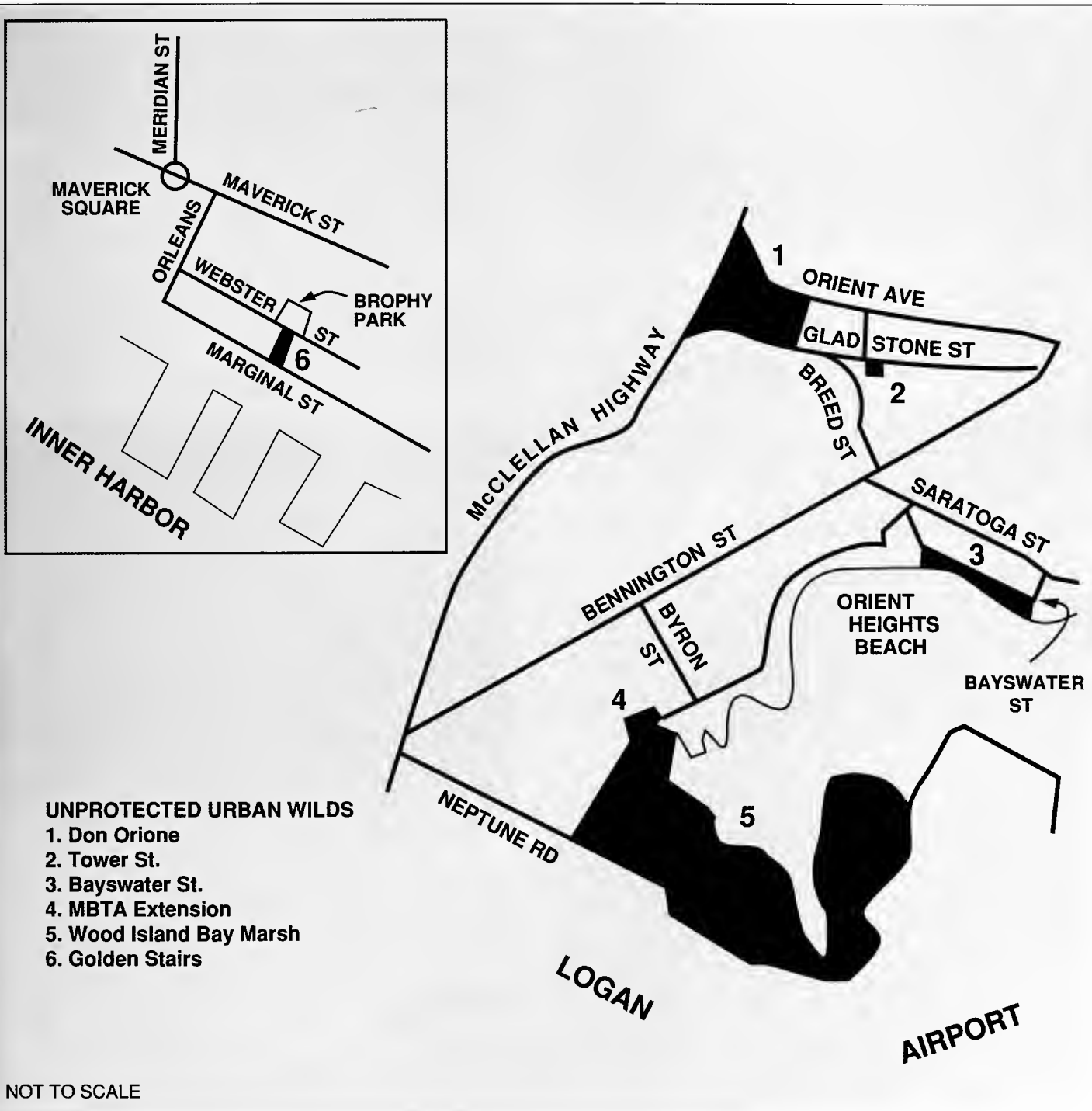
UW#	Name	1990 Fate
01-05	USNaval Reservation	Lost (paved, built on)
01-06	Chelsea Creek Meadow	Lost (paved)
01-11	Governor's Island Cove	Lost (filled)
02-01	Mystic Overlook	Lost (housing)
02-02	Schrafft's Cove	Lost (filled)
08-05	Victory Gardens	Lost (housing)
08-11	Oakland Quarry	Lost (housing)
08-13	Wallingford Rock	Lost (housing)
08-14	Euston Path Rock	Lost (house, cutting)
09-05a	Back of the Hill	Lost (housing)
09-07	Cranston Street	Lost (house)
09-08	Sheridan Hillside	Lost (house)
09-17b	Williams Street	Lost (school and parking)
10-02	St. James	Lost (playground, house)
10-05	Fountain Street	Lost (housing)
10-08	Franklin	Lost (paved)
10-13	Glen Hill	Lost (house)
11-06	Morgan Memorial	Lost (paved)
11-11	R&S Machine	Lost (condos)
11-21	Cedar Grove Ponds	Lost (filled)
11-22	Lower Mills Gorge	Lost (condos)
11-23b	Calf Pasture	Lost (UMass, JFK)
12-02	Canterbury I	Lost (parking, school)
12-03	Grew Avenue	Lost (housing)
13-01a	Bakalar	Lost (housing)
13-06	Parkway Pond	Lost (housing)
13-10	Spring Street Marsh	Lost (built on)
13-14	Rockview	Lost (built on)
13-15	Dragon Rock	Lost (built on)
13-19	Centre Marsh	Lost (filling)
13-20a	W. Roxbury H.S.	Lost (school)
13-21	Searle Road Rock	Lost (housing)
14-01	Sally Rock	Lost (built)
14-10	Readville Maples	Lost (built)
14-16b	Dana Avenue	Lost (garage and parking)
14-17	Margin Street	Lost (fenced, paved)
14-18b	Allis Chalmers	Lost (condos, access)
14-21c	Mother Brook III	Lost (paved parking)
14-23	Neponset II	Lost (built on)
15-02	Livermore	Lost (school & alteration)

**EAST BOSTON**

In 1976, when the Urban Wilds were designated, East Boston had 12 sites. Three of those Wilds have been lost. Four have been protected.

On the positive side, Belle Isle Marsh was threatened, but has been protected by the MDC. Of the four remaining Wilds that are unprotected, three are considered intact and one has been degraded.

**Protected, accessible Wilds in East Boston:** Condor Street Beach, Condor Street Overlook, Belle Isle Marsh, Golden Stairs



NOT TO SCALE

**EAST BOSTON**

**01-01 Don Orione**

**Location:** Gladstone Street, Orient Avenue; McClellan Highway and Boardman Street.

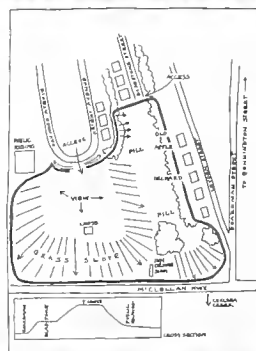
**Size:** 9.6 acres

**Owner:** Sons of Divine Providence

Don Orione, named for the shrine near the property, is an enormous hill that rises over 100 feet from McClellan Highway. It is all the open space that remains from the development of Breeds Hill into East Boston's fashionable Orient Heights neighborhood.

The highest point on the Orient Avenue edge of the hilltop affords sweeping views of East Boston, the inner Harbor, downtown Boston and – on a clear day – as far south as the Blue Hills; Revere and Winthrop stretch to the north and east, respectively. The lower slope, above the houses on Leyden Street, hints at a former use as an old orchard. Large, gnarled apple trees grow among the crowded, younger hawthorn, locust and black cherry trees.

Although filled with rubble from the construction of the Don Orione Shrine in 1978, the Gladstone Street portion of the site abounds in summer wildflowers. This is one of the largest green spaces that remain in East Boston.



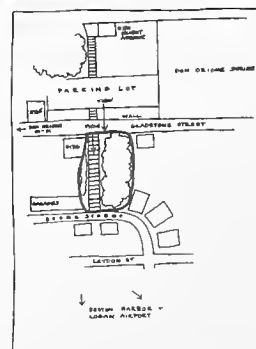
**01-02 Tower Street**

**Location:** Gladstone Street or Breed Street

**Size:** 0.5 acre

**Owner:** Sons of Divine Providence

This tiny Urban Wild beneath the towering edifice of the Don Orione Shrine on Orient Heights, provides wonderful views of East Boston, Wood Island Bay Marsh and Logan Airport. It is the only open space on the slope of Gladstone Street, and steps run down under a canopy of red maple, honey locust and American Elm, to Breed Street. The steps probably were built when the City of Boston planned to build a park where the Don Orione Home is. They would have provided access from Breed and Leyden Streets.



**EAST BOSTON**

**01-03 Belle Isle Marsh: Protected**

**01-04 Bayswater Street**

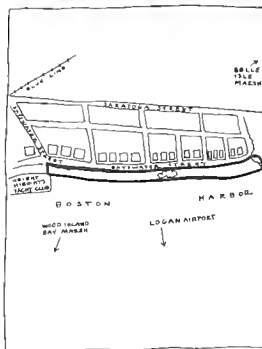
**Location:** Bayswater Street off Saratoga Street, adjacent to the Orient Heights Yacht Club and in sight of Orient Heights Beach

**Size:** 10 acres

**Owners:** Massachusetts Port Authority; also a private owner.

The upland between Bennington Street and Bayswater Street separates the Harbor from the sweeping marshes of Belle Isle Inlet. The Urban Wild of Bayswater Street forms an edge of Wood Island Bay Marsh. Whether a natural upland or filled land, the narrow, grassy banks high above the ocean water teem with a variety of grasses and flowers.

The most unusual flower, not sighted in any other wild in Boston, is the thick, white and blue flowered marsh mallow. Bouncing bet, milkweed, vipers bugloss, hoary alyssum swamp thistle, and dock also grow along the street. Multiflora rose, day lily, and chinese matrimony vine add to the variety. There is a small grove of red maples and mulberry on the site as well. This Urban Wild is on a flight path to and from Runway 22-R at Logan Airport.



**01-05 U.S. Naval Reservation: Lost**

**01-06 Chelsea Creek Meadow: Lost**

## EAST BOSTON

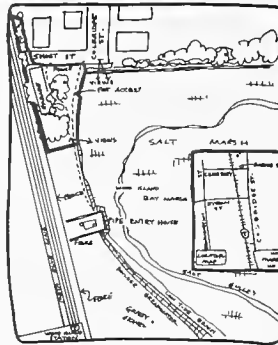
## 01-07 MBTA Extension

**Location:** Coleridge Street at Short Street. Coleridge Street is off Byron Street from Bennington Street.

**Size:** 0.6 acre

**Owner:** Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

This Urban Wild is significant despite its size, which has been shrunken over the years. It is strategically at the edge of the second-largest salt marsh in Boston, the Wood Island Bay Marsh. Coleridge Street provides the only public viewing access to the marshes. If public access to the marshes is allowed, this Urban Wild is the place to begin the tour.



## 01-08 Wood Island Bay Marsh

**Location:** On Perimeter Road of Logan Airport, with restricted access from the North Gate of the airport. The North gate is accessible from Neptune Road and Frankfort Street.

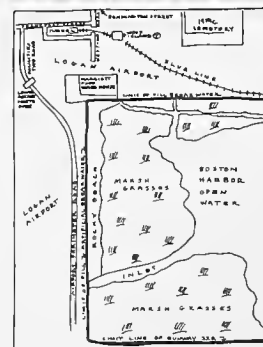
**Size:** 152 acres.

**Owner:** Massachusetts Port Authority

This is the second-largest salt marsh in Boston after the Neponset River marshes on the southernmost edge of the city. The marshes of Wood Island Bay are the remnants of Wood Island Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1891 and the pride of East Boston for half a century. The park was leveled for Logan Airport expansion in 1969.

In summer, the Wild fills with a fascinating variety of marsh grass called sea lavender, a tall, spindly, multi-stem plant with delicate purple flowers. Cotton grass and woodbine also abound. Phragmites shelter a multitude of birds, which congregate in large groups to feed and nest. The birds at Logan Airport share a relatively peaceful life with aircraft using Runway 4L.

A piece of filled land juts into the marshes about one quarter-mile from the Flight Kitchen at the end of Neptune Road. There is a concrete breakwater with two short flights of steps leading to the marshes. This is the last, tiny fragment of Wood Island Park; the steps led down to what was the beach. Across the bay is Constitution (or Orient Heights) Beach, intended to replace Wood Island Beach.





**EAST BOSTON**

**01-09 Condor Street Beach: Protected**

**01-10 Condor Street Overlook: Protected**

**01-11 Governor's Island Cove: Lost**

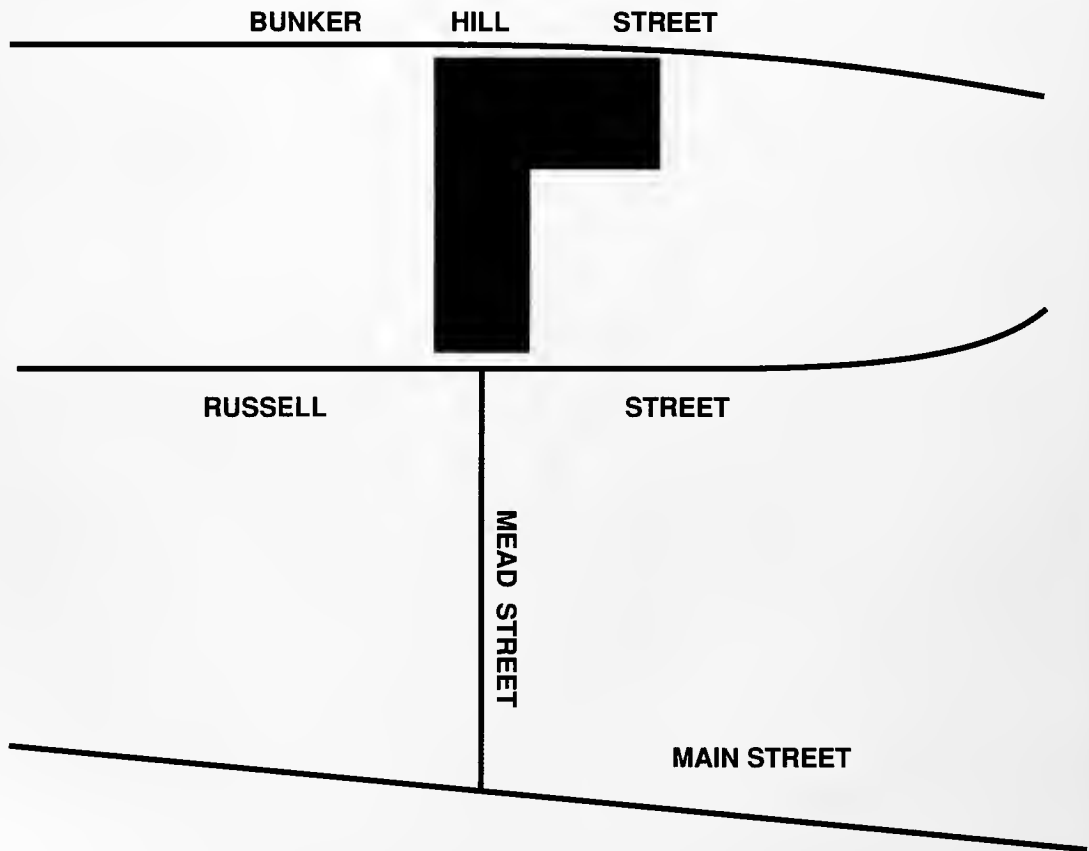
**01-12 Golden Stairs: Protected**

**CHARLESTOWN**

Charlestown had only three Urban Wilds in 1976, and two of the three have been lost. The remaining one, called the Charlestown Overlook, is considered to be intact, but is unprotected.

Protected, accessible Wilds in Charlestown: None

**UNPROTECTED URBAN WILDS**  
**1. Charlestown Overlook**



NOT TO SCALE

**CHARLESTOWN**

**02-01 Mystic Overlook: Lost**

**02-02 Schrafft's Cove: Lost**

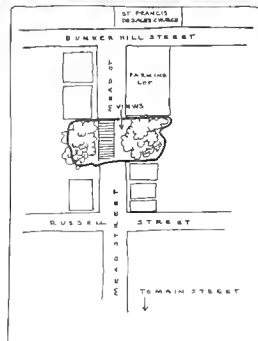
**02-03 Charlestown Overlook**

**Location:** Mead Street off Bunker Hill Street  
 Mead Street off North Main Street

**Size:** 0.7 acre

**Owners:** Boston Redevelopment Authority; also a private owner

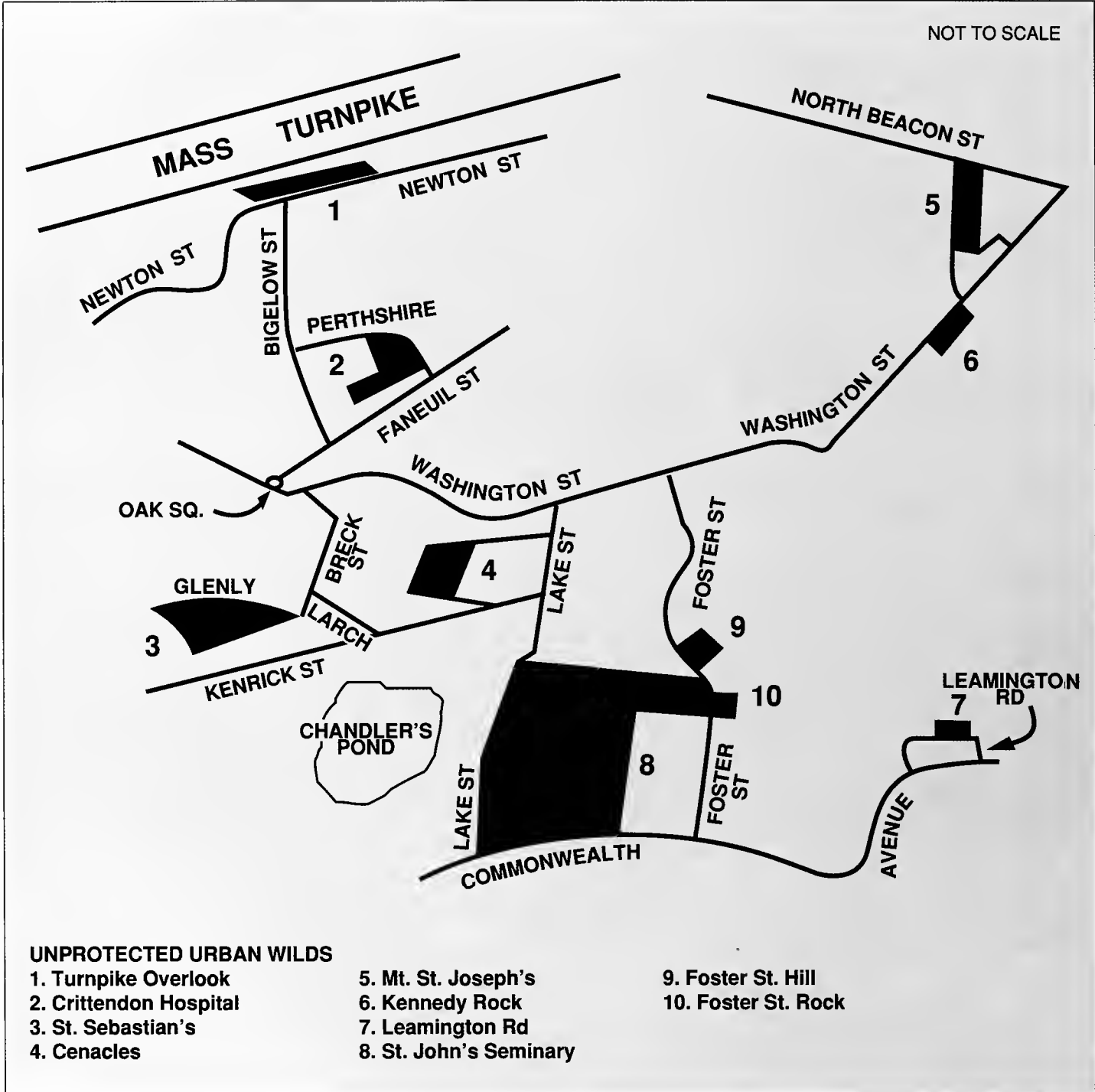
The Overlook is a steep set of steps that rise over 50 feet from Russell Street. At the top, near Bunker Hill Street, is a sweeping view of the flatlands of Charlestown.



**ALLSTON/BRIGHTON**

Allston/Brighton had 14 Wilds in 1976, and the largest ones, including the 42-acre St. John's Seminary grounds, are intact. Four Wilds were lost. Two of the remaining Wilds are degraded.

Protected, accessible Wilds in Allston/Brighton: None



**ALLSTON/BRIGHTON**

**08-01 Turnpike Overlook**

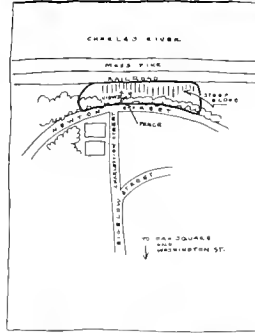
**Location:** The head of Charlesview Street at Newton Street; Charlesview comes off the curve of Bigelow Street, from Washington Street.

**Size:** 7.2 acres.

**Owners:** A private owner; also Massachusetts Turnpike Authority

Newton Street rises 75 feet from the level of railroad tracks and the speedways of the Mass Pike. Along it, Turnpike Overlook affords a stunning view of the Charles River, the Arsenal Mall, and the rooftops and tree line of Newton and Cambridge as far north as Porter Square.

The Turnpike Overlook is a valuable Urban Wild for its strategic location. The view, one of the most extensive in Brighton, creates a sense of spaciousness in the thickly settled residential neighborhood.



**08-02 Crittenton Hospital**

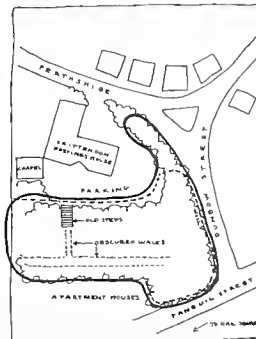
**Location:** 10 Perthshire Road; off Dunboy Street from Faneuil Street.

**Size:** 3.0 acres

**Owner:** Florence Crittenton House

Crittenton Hospital is on a former estate built on terraces that rise over 70 feet from Faneuil Street. A stone wall around the property holds up terraces thick with considerable growth of red maples, locust and ailanthus. Weed-choked steps opposite the entrance to the hospital lead to a raised driveway on which coaches or cars once carried visitors to the mansion. Hidden behind the thick border grove are trees that suggest what the estate grounds were like: an enormous black locust, a copper beech, several sugar maples, crab apples and Crimson King Norway maple. The trees obscure the hospital from all the streets, except from the vehicle entrance on Perthshire Road. Ailanthus, red and black raspberry and Virginia creeper surround the parking lot.

Having a large stand of trees on high, sloping ground like the Crittenton property creates a pleasant open and green space in the thickly settled Oak Square district of Brighton.



## ALLSTON/BRIGHTON

## 08-03 St. Sebastian's

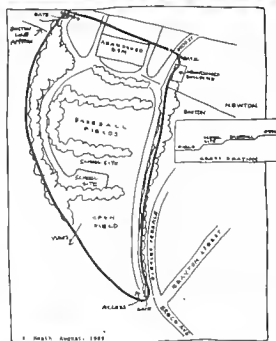
**Location:** Glenley Terrace; off Breck Avenue from Oak Square.

**Size:** 6.4 acres

**Owner:** private

This is the former site of a country day school built by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston in 1941. It burned in 1970, creating a large, open site in an otherwise thickly settled residential community. The Urban Wild is a rough triangle, with one corner at the intersection of Breck Avenue, Glenley Terrace and Brayton Road. It rises gently from there on four terraces. The lowest affords a nice view to the St. John's Seminary Wild.

The only buildings remaining are the gymnasium and a service building on the Newton city line at the uppermost terrace. Trees include lindens and maples along the approach road, white fir and yellowwood at the site, and arborvitae and black locusts near the gym. Two play fields are overgrown with milkweed, yarrow, Queen Anne's lace, ox-eye daisy and extensive pink clover. Wild raspberry also abounds.



## 08-04 The Cenacles

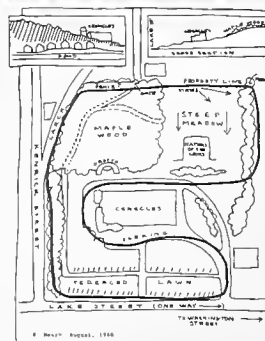
**Location:** 200 Lake Street at Kenrick Street.

**Size:** 17.5 acres

**Owner:** Boston Cenacles Society

The Cenacles is a retreat center on the grounds of what was a Paine Family estate. The retreat house was finished by 1917, and all the remaining plantings seem to date from that time. Permission is required to visit the grounds. The property is planted with a wide variety of trees and offers a grand view over Brighton to the Charles River. In Spring 1990, the owners began to talk of selling land and buildings.

The Cenacles is significant as a community green space connected with Chandler's Pond and St. John's Seminary. The high, terraced lawn is dotted with copper-leaf maple, sugar maple, copper beech and catalpa. The house looms large and imposing over the Seminary playing fields in winter and early spring. In summer and again in the glow of autumn, the mass of trees on the slope high above the neighboring housetops is an imposing sight from Chandler's Pond. Any change in the tree line would alter the entire feeling of the pond valley. Mountain ash, red osier dogwood, English hawthorn, Crimson King Arrow maple, Japanese maple, varieties of pear and apple trees, sycamore, American basswood, Norway spruce and hemlock are notable. A variety of scentless mock orange, large lilacs and a variety of azalea grow around the house.



**ALLSTON/BRIGHTON**

**08-05 Victory Gardens: Lost**

**08-06 Mt. St. Joseph's Academy**

**Location:** 605 Cambridge Street near The Taft School, directly opposite Kennedy Rock

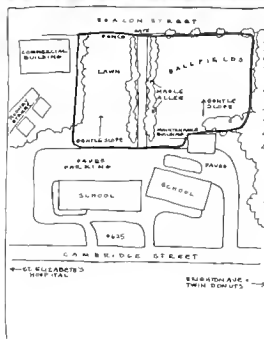
**Size:** 6.5 acres

**Owner:** Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph

The significant element of Mt. St. Joseph's Academy is the large lawn along the North Beacon Street side of the school, even though recent enlarging of a parking area on the west side diminished the amount of green space.

Like most Allston-Brighton Wilds, this is an engineered landscape. In an allee, 36 red maples march up the walk from North Beacon Street. A huge silver maple and an American elm are on the grounds.

A 1989 proposal to sell the back of the school land for construction of condominiums spawned a neighborhood meeting. The owners said selling would help the school financially. No action had occurred as of August 1990.



**ALLSTON/BRIGHTON**

**08-07 Kennedy Rock**

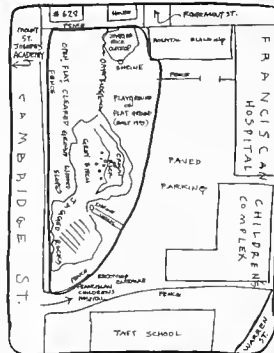
**Location:** Between Taft School and 648 Cambridge Street, at rear of Franciscan Children's Hospital Complex.

**Size:** 2 acres

**Owner:** private

The most dramatic natural feature along Brighton's busy Cambridge Street, this mass of Roxbury conglomerate rises 50 feet from the sidewalk's edge. The rock is characterized by a long, jagged ridge with two peaks. Gray birches grow out of the crevices. Along the ridge, back from the street, an oak grove shades and provides privacy for a playground.

Low ground that also is part of this Wild was cleared of secondary growth in late 1988. Opening up the view of the stone made Kennedy Rock even more dramatic from the street. This is the type of Urban Wild that can be appreciated without even stepping foot onto it.



**08-08 Leamington Rock**

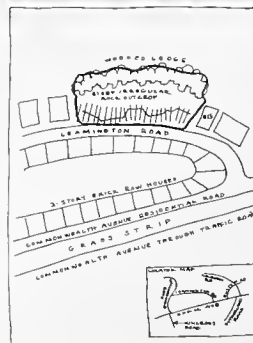
**Location:** Leamington Road off Commonwealth Avenue and Wallingford Road.

**Size:** 0.5 acre

**Owner:** private

Leamington Rock, although severely eroded, is an imposing cliff that looms over a handsome row of two-story brick row houses that characterizes Leamington Road. It is a fine-grain sand member of the Roxbury conglomerate group of stones. It is heavily fractured by continual water runoff. It is a wall nearly 60 feet tall that exposes what is beneath Nottinghill Road.

The Rock is partly hidden by red maples and red oaks and hardy gray birch. It is a neighborhood landmark whose green space breaks up the look of the densely built-up residential community.





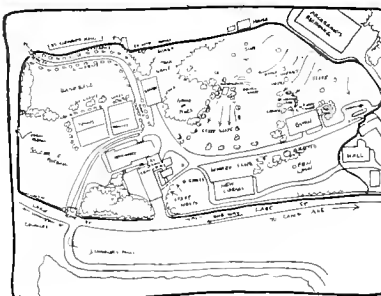
## ALLSTON/BRIGHTON

**08-09 St. John's Seminary****Location:** 127 Lake Street at Commonwealth Avenue**Size:** 42.3 acres**Owner:** Boston Ecclesiastical Seminary

The largest open space in Allston Brighton — and the only one with large landscaped spaces — is the grounds of St. John's Seminary. Although private, the seminary lands are open informally for local neighbors. The topography rises 116 feet from a ball field to high, wooded slopes from which a new library overlooks Lake Street.

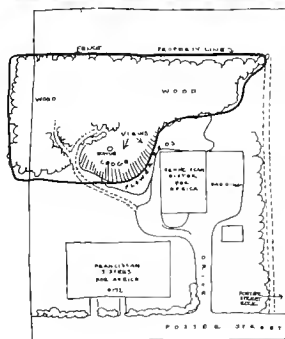
This is a cultivated Urban Wild that represents an interesting, if inadvertent, example of landscape conservation. Two old Brighton estates have been developed, but they retain the flavor of a New England farm's rolling fields dotted with cedars and apple trees. Thick shrubbery along the Chancery wall on Commonwealth Avenue has three varieties of rhododendron, azaleas, three varieties of pines, and andromeda. Cedar trees are irregularly planted around the tomb of Archbishop Williams. False cypress, arborvitae and red cedar hide a small dipping pool outside the gymnasium. Two thick groves with oak, hemlock, and maple remain from the estates.

Long views and perspectives link the site's many features and need protection from building.

**08-10 Foster Street Hill****Location:** 166 Foster Street**Size:** 5.7 acres**Owner:** Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

This Urban Wild is notable for its trees growing over rock ledge. It is behind the compound where the Franciscan Sisters for Africa used to live. It is private and inaccessible, but forms a visible as well as physical link with the Foster Street Rock Urban Wild. The wood opens up to a ledge of puddingstone 75 feet above the lawns of the estate. The views of St. John's Seminary and the spires of Boston College are dramatic.

The importance of the Foster Street Hill Wild becomes apparent from the crest of the Foster Street Rock. The wood is relatively young and includes oaks, maples and a scattering of crab apples and eastern cedar saplings. There is a rich ground cover of English ivy, wild raspberry, red and black Virginia creeper and false Solomon's seal.



## ALLSTON/BRIGHTON

## 08-11 Oakland Quarry: Lost

## 08-12 Foster Street Rock

**Location:** Foster Street opposite St. Clement's Hall, St. John's Seminary.

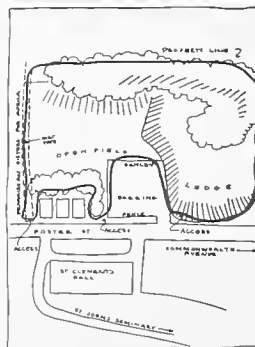
**Size:** 5 acres

**Owner:** Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston

This Urban Wild contains three distinct natural features: rock, meadow and wood.

The rock is a 30-foot-high mass of glacially polished mudstone between a parking lot and house lots. It is as smooth as any natural rock can get. A field of tall wildflowers and grasses resulted from quarrying, which also left a high ridge of broken rock at the rear. The rock is like that used in the main building of St. John's Seminary.

On the east side, trees are rapidly taking over the grassy meadow. There are oaks, gray birch, and, by the field, staghorn sumac. A parking lot has replaced tennis courts since 1976, and it intrudes on the view from the rock. Nonetheless, this is still a pleasant, passive park, of which Brighton needs more.



## 08-13 Wallingford Rock: Lost

## 08-14 Euston Path Rock: Lost

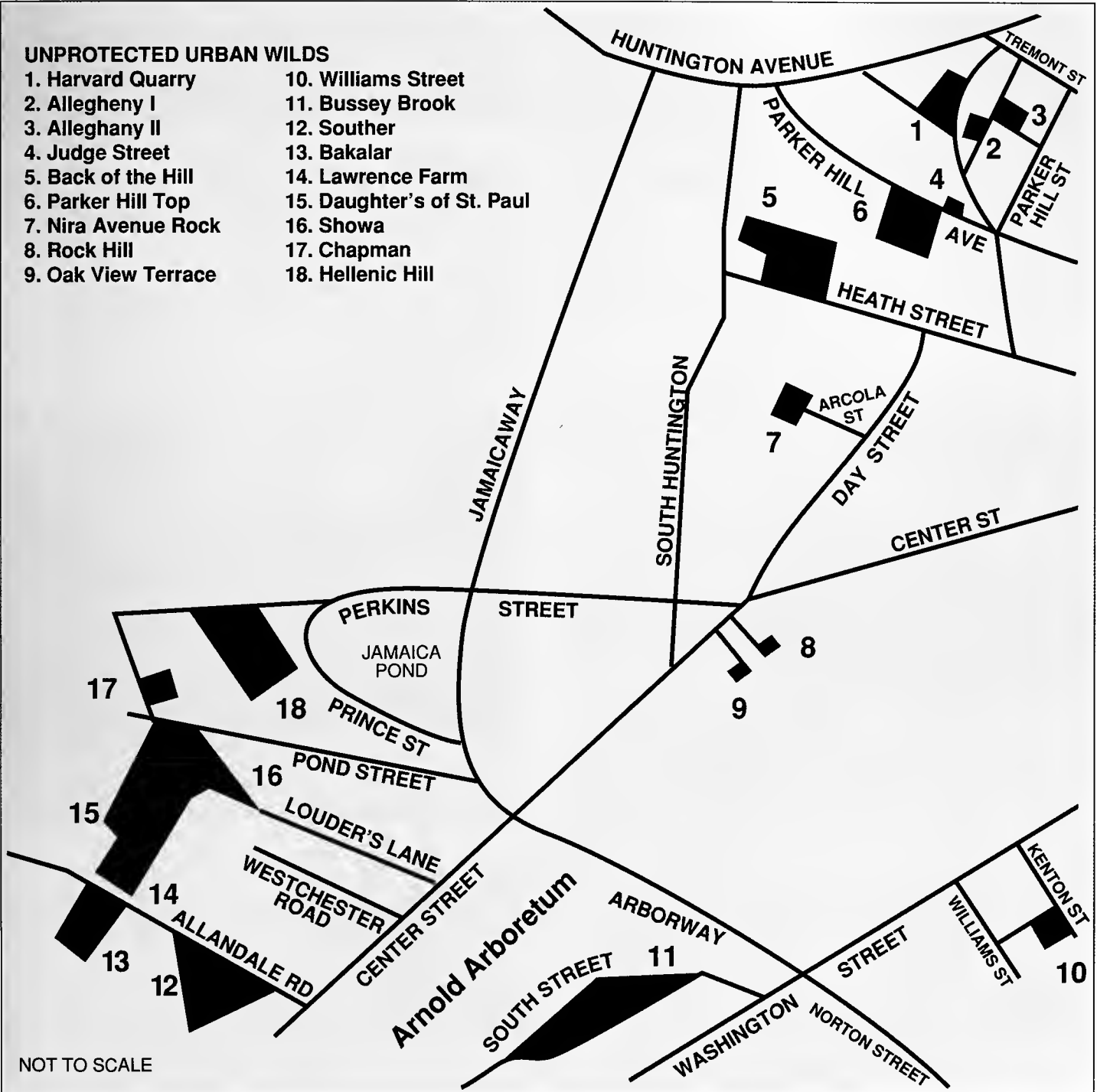
**JAMAICA PLAIN**

Two of Jamaica Plain's original 18 Wilds have been lost completely. A third Wild, Back of the Hill, has been lost in part and protected in part. A fourth, Williams Street, is partly lost and partly unprotected. All the other Wilds are unprotected. Of the unprotected Wilds today, 12 are intact. The surviving portion of Williams Street and the Allegheny II Wild are degraded, as is Hellenic Hill because of a 10-acre loss.

Protected, accessible Wilds in Jamaica Plain: Back of the Hill slope

**UNPROTECTED URBAN WILDS**

- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Harvard Quarry   | 10. Williams Street        |
| 2. Allegheny I      | 11. Bussey Brook           |
| 3. Allegheny II     | 12. Souther                |
| 4. Judge Street     | 13. Bakalar                |
| 5. Back of the Hill | 14. Lawrence Farm          |
| 6. Parker Hill Top  | 15. Daughter's of St. Paul |
| 7. Nira Avenue Rock | 16. Showa                  |
| 8. Rock Hill        | 17. Chapman                |
| 9. Oak View Terrace | 18. Hellenic Hill          |



NOT TO SCALE

**JAMAICA PLAIN**

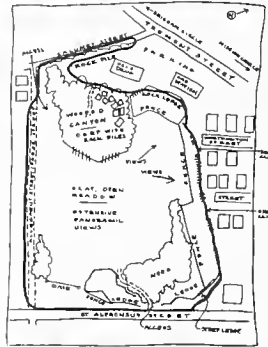
**09-01 Harvard Quarry**

**Location:** Between St. Alphonsus Street and Calumet Street, both off Tremont Street.  
**Size:** 6.6 acres  
**Owner:** Harvard University

This long-abandoned quarry was a major source of puddingstone blocks for churches (such as the Mission Church nearby), house foundations and other buildings. The corner of Calumet and Tremont Streets, where digging began, is obscured by a shopping center now, but huge blocks along Calumet Street evidence the former quarrying.

Behind a store is a thickly wooded canyon, deep and mysterious, with great puddingstone blocks scattered in heaps. The dominant trees here are quaking aspen, red maple and, on the rugged slopes of the quarry, gray birch. Happy-smelling tansy flourishes with homely burdock. Brilliant blue viper's bugloss is beautiful in early summer.

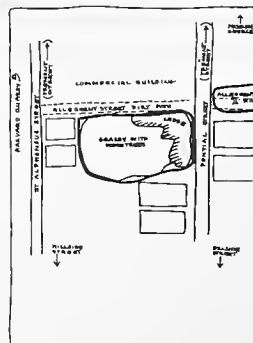
Views make this Wild significant. From a ledge off St. Alphonsus Street, one can see to the Fenway and Cambridge and over downtown Boston. The 65-foot drop of the quarry walls explains why the owners discourage visitors and have fenced off the rim, even though the sunny, flat land is a brilliant sea of wildflowers in early summer.



**09-02 Alleghany I**

**Location:** Between 51 and 35 Pontiac Street.  
**Size:** 0.2 acres  
**Owner:** Harvard University

This is an outcrop of puddingstone wedged between multi-family houses on one side and a low cinder-block commercial building. Alleghany Street, a dirt road, separates this small Wild from the commercial building. The ledges are shaded by red maple, with a spotted floor of timothy, sedges and ragweed. In this crowded residential neighborhood, this Urban Wild is a pleasant yard for the abutting residents.





## JAMAICA PLAIN

### 09-05 Back of the Hill: Partially lost, partially protected

### 09-06 Nira Avenue Rock

**Location:** Nira Avenue and Arcola Street off Day Street; near Jefferson Playground

**Size:** 1.5 acre

**Owner:** Boston Public Facilities Department.

This is a small Urban Wild with great significance and impact in a thickly settled, multi-family neighborhood on narrow streets. Arcola Street dead-ends at a grassy slope that leads to the tops of 30-foot outcrop of Roxbury puddingstone. The VA Hospital parking lot is ahead, but the steep treeline of Parker Hill and a glimpse of the Parker Hilltop Urban Wild are across Jefferson Playground to the northeast. Turning back to face Arcola Street, one can see the lantern of Blessed Sacrament Church. An adjacent open lot on Arcola Street could make a circular connection around the entire Urban Wild if it were added.

Only in spring or winter does the scale of the ledge reveal itself — especially from Nira Avenue, where a grassy field contrasts with the ragged edges of the rock. Between the rock and the hospital's fence is a narrow path that leads past fallen boulders to the top the rock. A very old apple tree is the best tree on the site. Most of the others are ones that enjoy exposed windy ground with poor soil: pin oaks, gray birch and, on the edges, black cherry, red maple and a slippery elm.

As this report was being written, discussions were under way to transfer this site as parkland to the city Parks and Recreation Department.



### 09-07 Cranston Street: Lost

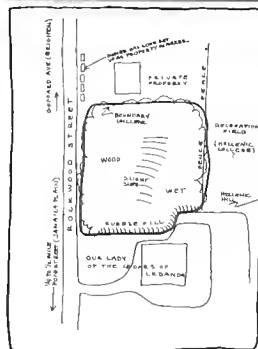
### 09-08 Sheridan Hillside: Lost

**JAMAICA PLAIN**

**09-09 Chapman-Runyon**

**Location:** Rockwood Street, off Pond Street between 65 Rockwood Street and our Lady of the Cedars of Lebanon Church  
**Size:** 12.3 acres  
**Owner:** private

This is a bit of pristine New England woodland. The wood extends down about 60 feet to the flat playing fields of Hellenic College. Beneath an oaken canopy is a carpet of Canadian Mayflower, lily of the valley, bracken fern and false Solomon's seal. Two unusual shrubs, wild hydrangea and mock orange, may be leftovers from a former estate. Amidst the oaks are sweet birch and white pine.



**09-10 Showa Women's Institute (formerly Nazareth)**

**Location:** 420 Pond Street  
**Size:** 38 acres  
**Owner:** Showa Women's Institute

**09-11 Daughters of St. Paul**

**Location:** 50 St. Paul's Avenue, off Pond Street; Westchester Road dead-ends on property  
**Size:** 19.9 acres  
**Owner:** Daughters of St. Paul Inc.

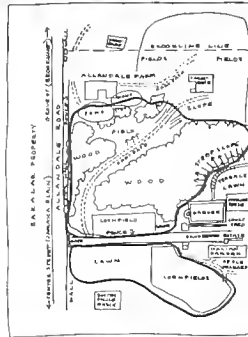
**JAMAICA PLAIN**

**09-12 Lawrence Farm**

**Location:** 259 Allandale Road.  
**Size:** 25.9 acres  
**Owner:** private

This Urban Wild is a fragment of the former Brandegee Estate, which extended into Brookline. The Wild comprises the open, uncultivated land between the greenhouses and farm stand and the great stone terrace of the Mansion House. This is the last working farm in Boston.

A dirt cart path off the main entrance to the mansion leads through two steep groves of pine, through an open field and out to a red farm house and planting fields. The field slopes down to a duck pond adjacent to the greenhouse. There is a magnificent white oak standing on the edge of this field. A small-leaved red maple, a very unusual tree, grows in a grove of oaks and hickories near the pond. Between the approach road to the mansion and the wood is a corn field.

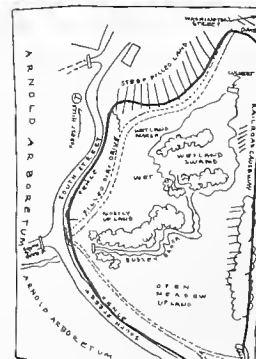


**09-13 Bussey Brook**

**Location:** South Street, opposite the Arnold Arboretum  
**Size:** 20.1 acres  
**Owner:** Harvard University

This large wetland and open meadow is bounded by one of the oldest roads in Boston (South Street) and a railroad causeway. Bussey Brook goes through on its long journey from the Charles River in West Roxbury. This stretch of unaltered, untouched nature contrasts with enhanced, gently reformed nature across South Street in the Arboretum.

Large weeping and black willows stand in the swamp. Quaking aspen, black locust, green ash and crab apples grow from the brook's bank. Yarrow, purple vetch, milkweed, tansy, Jerusalem artichoke and wild onion grass dominate the uplands. Tall stands of tickseed sunflowers appear in September. Some of the tallest wild-growing irises in Boston grow here. Raspberry vines and evening primroses grow amidst the sweet yellow and red clover.





**JAMAICA PLAIN**

**09-14 Parker Hilltop**

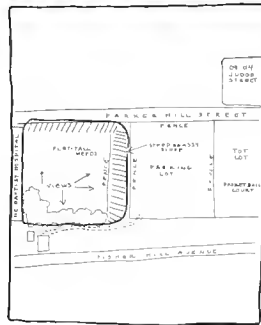
**Location:** Hillside Avenue, between a parking lot and New England Baptist Hospital.

**Size:** 4 acres

**Owner:** New England Baptist Hospital

This meadow is the filled-in site of a 19th-century contagious disease hospital. It has an inspiring view of the city. On a crystal clear day, one can see the Kennedy Library and the harbor islands as well as the wide Atlantic. Closer to home, the standpipe at Fort Hill seems close enough to touch, while the brick slabs of the Shattuck Hospital jut out of the thick tree line of Franklin Park. The Blue Hill Range runs along the southwest horizon. To the northeast are the rooftops of Charlestown.

Parker Hilltop is about 200 feet above the lowlands of the Stony Brook Valley. It is the highest of five terraces that are the remnants of the Parker Hill Reservoir. Three terraces are in the McLaughlin Playground. The fourth, just below the Hilltop, has been allowed by the city to be used for parking by the hospital. The meadow itself has a huge American barberry bush near the locust trees on its southwest side. Multiflora roses reach out over the tall and thick tansy and ragweed, requiring a real effort to walk through in summer.



**09-15 Oakview Terrace**

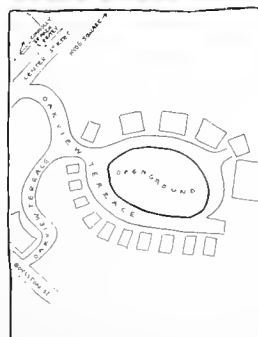
**Location:** Oakview Terrace off Centre Street

**Size:** 0.4 acre

**Owner:** private

This is a circle around which is the residential cul-de-sac of Oakview Terrace. This is the crest of the hill where a small bit of the conglomerate rock beneath peaks out through the grasses of the circle. Nearby are houses built between 1890 and 1914.

Crab apple, black cherry and glossy hawthorn make it colorful in spring, and junipers add color in winter. The dominant shade tree is red maple.

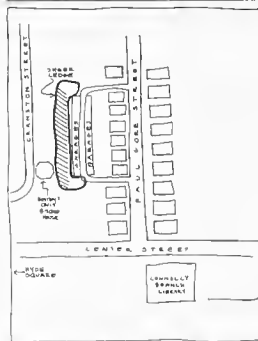


**JAMAICA PLAIN**

**09-16 Rock Hill**

**Location:** Rock Hill Street, off Paul Gore Street, off Centre Street  
**Size:** 0.5 acre  
**Owner:** private

This is a 30-foot-high, sheer cliff of Roxbury puddingstone, but ailanthus trees and a row of cinder-block-garages obscure it.

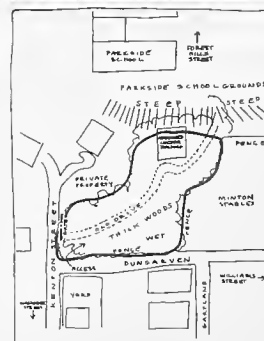


**09-17 Williams Street**

**Location:** End of Kenton Road, corner of Dungarven Street. Kenton Road comes off Washington Street  
**Size:** 4 acres  
**Owner:** Seventh-Day Adventist Church

This Urban Wild has been reduced in size by expansion of the Parkside School, but enough remains that it is not yet lost. The Wild had extended as a hardwood grove as far as Forest Hills Street, but it was cut and cleared about 1982 for a parking lot, playground and school extension. The Wild now is a woodlot behind the school's play yard and adjoining the former Williams Street horse stable.

The ground is mostly low and somewhat wet. An abandoned concrete utility building from the days when the school was a hospital sits buried in red maples draped with thick bittersweet vines. There is a hint that this may have been a landscaped ground of the former Carey Estate because there are three huge northern catalpa trees and two horse chestnut trees obscured by the red maples and ailanthus. Grape vines grow along Dungarven.



## JAMAICA PLAIN

### 09-18 Hellenic Hill

**Location:** Prince Street and Goddard Avenue, at 156 Prince Street.

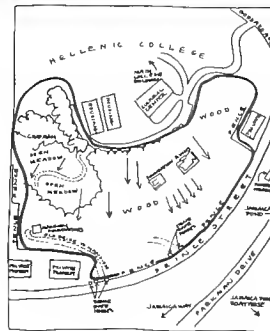
**Size:** 25.6 acres

**Owner:** Hellenic College

Hellenic Hill is the great, silent guardian of Jamaica Pond. This slope behind the pond has varied trees and crumbling foundation walls of the former Bacon estate. American beech and hemlocks are the patriarchs above red maple, black locust, green ash, haggard hickory, and red and white oak. Unusual trees include prickly ash, tulip tree and, near the Malotis Cultural Center, a handsome English oak. Just off the drive of the college is a thick carpet of five-leaf akebia, a vine seen in no other Urban Wild in Boston. At top is an overgrown field with brambles and wild raspberry vines.

Two overgrown and rubbish-choked entrance drives off Prince Street lead by faint carriage drives to the ruins of former estate buildings. An extensive view to the south is becoming obscured as the trees grow.

The college administration building and student housing built in the 1970's are strung along the top of the hill and reduced the size of the Wild by about 10 acres. A refectory, gymnasium, and offices are in a hollow west of the hill, on land that is partly in Brookline.



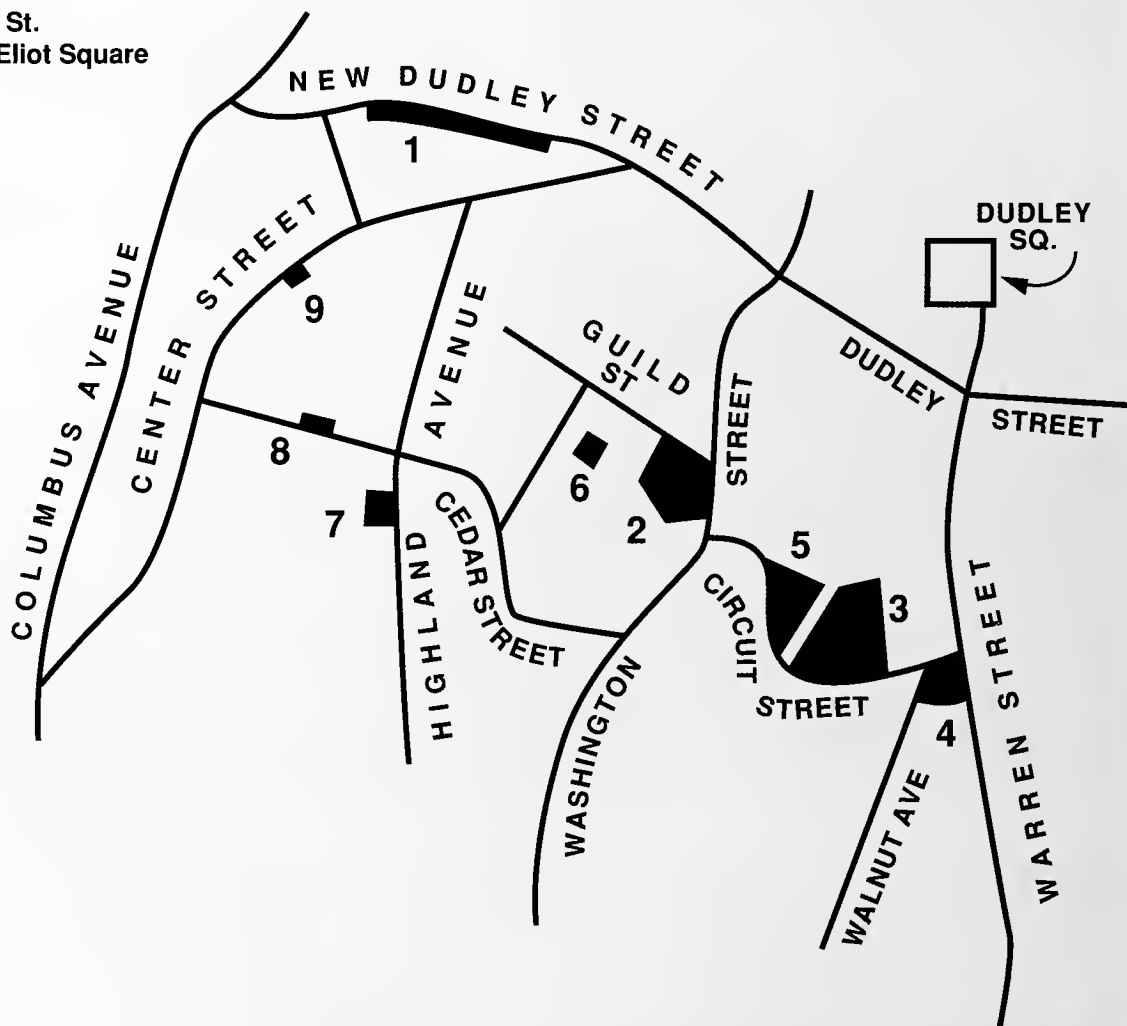
## ROXBURY

There were 13 Wilds in Roxbury in 1976, and four are lost. Two — the widely known Puddingstone Garden and Cedar Street — are protected. All the others are unprotected, and six of those seven are intact. The last, Dudley Cliffs, is labeled “altered” in BNAF’s survey because a road has been cut into the cliffs, but the change reveals more of the important natural feature — the rock face itself.

**Protected, accessible Wilds in Roxbury:** Puddingstone Garden

### UNPROTECTED URBAN WILDS

1. Dudley Cliffs
2. Juniper Terr.
3. Fountain Hill
4. Warren Gardens
5. Alpine
6. Rockledge
7. St. Monica’s
8. Cedar St.
9. John Eliot Square



NOT TO SCALE

**ROXBURY**

**10-01 Dudley Cliffs**

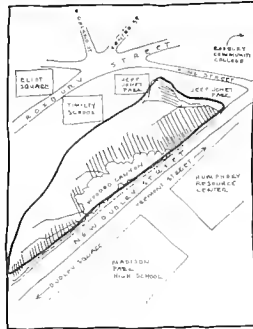
**Location:** Dudley Street opposite Humphrey Resource Center and Madison Park High School

**Size:** 1.5 acres.

**Owner:** Boston Redevelopment Authority

A 75-foot-high mass of Roxbury puddingstone starkly reveals what makes up the Fort Hill drumlin and the rock foundation of The First Church and of Jeep Jones Park. Until the middle 1960s, a maze of smokestacks, factories and tenements obscured the cliffs. That is all gone now, leaving the sleek, low, concrete complex of the Humphrey Center and Madison Park High School at the base of the hill. New Dudley Street was cut between the long-erased Linden Park and King Street in 1973, coming out at Roxbury Crossing.

Forty feet of the cliffs were blasted out for the new road, leaving the sheer face of rock that is so dramatic today. The cliffs become concave near their center, and a cool, shady grotto has red maples, quaking aspen, a variety of grasses, and buckthorn in summer. Mostly the cliffs are dotted with clumps of gray birch. The rocks become fractured, with considerable veins of iron showing as the cliffs dwindle down at their east edge.



**10-02 St. James: Lost**

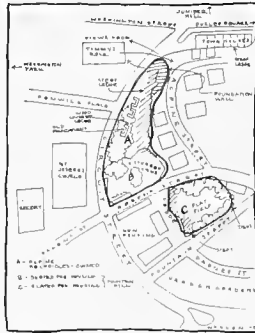
**ROXBURY**

**10-03 Alpine Street**

**Location:** Circuit Street, from Washington Street to Fountain Street  
**Size:** 2.5 acres  
**Owner:** private

This Wild takes its name from the street that crosses the high ground above Circuit Street. It is a very steep and rocky hillside 65 feet above Circuit Street. Today, there are thick stands of red maple, red oak, green ash and black cherry, but lilac and privet and an American basswood tree growing near a crumbling foundation hint at the houses that once were along the street.

At the extreme end of the Wild, the rocks become a sheer cliff facing Washington Street. This is Tommy's Rock, named after a freed slave who in the early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century opened a stage coach stop on Washington Street. The overlook at the sharp curve of Alpine street on the crest of Tommy's Rock, has wide views down Washington Street and across to St. Joseph's Church. Like Dudley Cliffs, this slope of solid rock is only the visible edge of an extensive formation of Roxbury puddingstone.



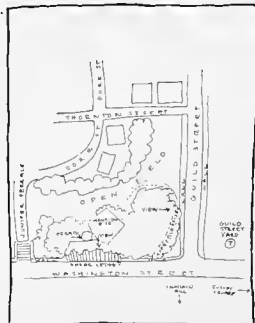
**10-04 Juniper Terrace**

**Location:** Washington Street at Guild Street  
**Size:** 1.6 acres.  
**Owner:** private

This Urban Wild is the abandoned estate of a wealthy Roxbury mill owner and dates back two centuries. The mansion house was razed during urban renewal of the late 1960s. The carriage drive is still visible, running up 50 feet past two granite posts and a towering American chestnut tree. A rugged ledge high above the street is "held up," as it were, by a stone wall around the estate. This is the most important feature of the Wild from the street. It is visually connected to the Alpine Street Urban Wild across the street, and together they form a green arc at the southern edge of the Dudley Square business district.

Most of the ground is grassy and open. Around the edges are clumps of red maple, black locust and ailanthus. The fields include the summer wildflowers typical of disturbed land like St. John's-wort, purple giant hyssops, red clover, tansy and daisy fleabane.

For Washington Street improvements, 12 feet will be cut from the Wild for 375 feet along Washington Street. This will remove the wall, the stone gate posts and the chestnut tree. Work is scheduled for 1992.



## ROXBURY

### 10-05 Fountain Street: Lost

### 10-06 Warren Gardens

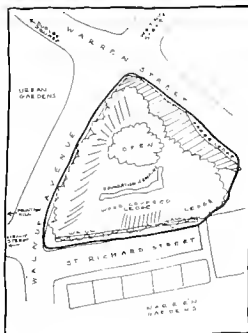
**Location:** Walnut Avenue and Warren Street opposite Circuit Street

**Size:** 1.5 acres

**Owner:** Boston Redevelopment Authority

This is the last fragment of Teacher John Eliot's 17<sup>th</sup>-century pasture, which covered 30 acres between the ancient way of Walnut Avenue to the present-day Lewis School. In 1876, Boston dry good merchant Isaac Fenno built a huge mansion on the highest ridge on the grounds and called it Buena Vista. The foundations of the house and the retaining wall that once encircled the estate are visible on this Urban Wild. The rocky, wooded outcrop was willed to the City of Boston with a mandate that it remain open as a last vestige of Old Roxbury. In 1967, Walnut Avenue was rebuilt, shaving 10,000 square feet from the nose of the Wild, and the attached row houses on St. Richard Street were built as part of the Warren Gardens Urban Renewal Project.

The cliffs along Warren Street opposite Whiting are distinctive. The hill, which rises 50 feet above the street, gradually tapers down to Walnut Avenue under a canopy of thickly growing red maple, black locust and black cherry. Near the summit, the jagged puddingstone foundation wall creates a cool grotto. Nearby, a small, grassy field opens up and is dotted with various grasses and milkweed. There are three varieties of buckthorn on the grounds — common, alder and lanceleaf.



### 10-07 Puddingstone Garden: Protected

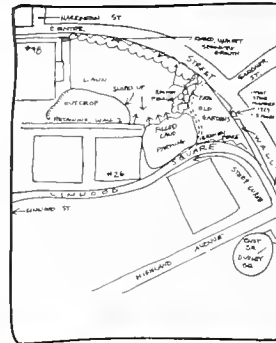
### 10-08 Franklin: Lost

**ROXBURY**

**10-09 John Eliot Square**

**Location:** Centre Street at Linwood Square Extension  
**Size:** 0.3 acre  
**Owner:** Boston Real Property Department

This Wild is 12,473 square feet of vacant land a few blocks west of First Church in Eliot Square. It comprises six parcels that once were part of 48 Centre Street. A stone wall borders part of the site, and in it is set a 1729 marker noting, "Boston, 3 miles." A bit less than half the Wild has been dug up for parking, and a vacant lot across the street gives the site a view to Kenmore Square, including the famous Citgo sign. The remainder has been taken over as a private garden.



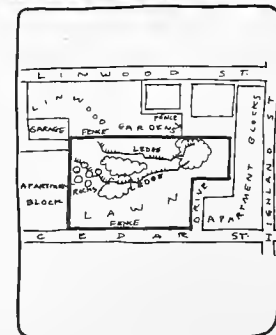
**10-10 Cedar Street**

**Location:** 107 Cedar Street  
**Size:** 0.5 acre  
**Owner:** Boston Public Facilities Department/BNAF

This Wild combines steep stone outcrops, shady groves and a grassy lawn, all on the site of a brick apartment building that was razed during the era of urban renewal. The Wild is connected to the Linwood Street Gardens, and the same rock formation that holds up the gardens pokes above in the Wild.

The puddingstone is obscured by black locusts and red maples. One stand of maples is known as the "Seven Sisters" because seven trees grow from the same root system. The ledges are so cool and shady in summer that area residents use them for cookouts.

The Wild is expected to be transferred to the Boston Natural Areas Fund for development of community gardens, a picnic grove and a walk to the gardens.





## ROXBURY

**10-11 St. Monica's**

**Location:** Highland Street between Fort Hill Avenue and Cedar Street

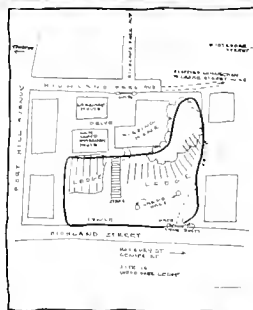
**Size:** 1.3 acres

**Owner:** St. Margaret's Society

This Urban Wild is the cultivated grounds around "Rockledge," the 19th-century estate that famed abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison occupied in his last years. In this century, the house, with a modern addition, has been St. Monica's Nursing Home.

The Garrison House sits on a 50-foot-high rolling mass of puddingstone. The rock has created a cool dell presided over by two enormous and magnificent oaks, one white, one red. Deep in back, near where the carriage drive once curved up the slopes, are thick stands of green ash, red maple and a black cherry. A hackberry grows outside the Nursing Home. At the rear of the property, at Highland Park Avenue, are two large oaks.

St. Monica's Nursing Home was instituted in 1888 by the Sisters of St. Margaret. The order intends to build a large building on the site. The Society has declined to consider any conservation restriction on its unbuilt land.

**10-12 Rockledge Street**

**Location:** Rockledge Street, off Juniper Terrace

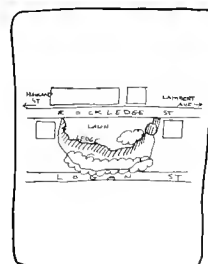
**Size:** 0.5 acre

**Owner:** Boston Real Property Department

This half-acre cove of puddingstone shaded by red maples on a tiny residential street is immaculate and is planted with borders of lilies and irises against a ledge and with a center oval of flowers that enjoy the sun.

Red maples predominate in the tree cover, although there is a handsome sycamore and large black cherries. Near the far corner is a stand of black locusts. Gray birches, perched like mountain goats, grow in the crevices in the rock.

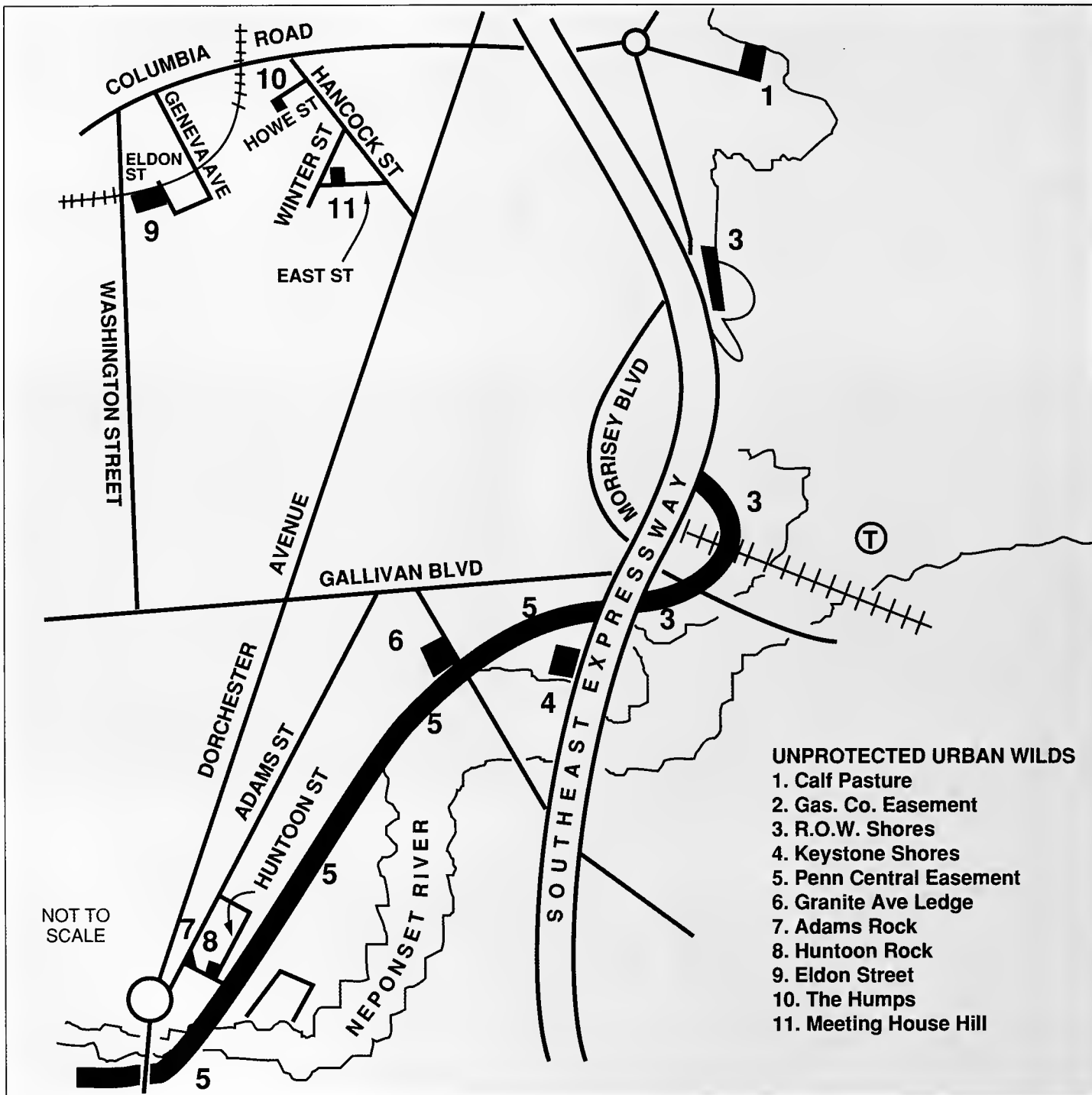
Neighbors have long cared for this site, which was left unbuilt when the neighborhood was developed in 1928.

**10-13 Glen Hill: Lost**

**DORCHESTER**

The BRA reported 25 Wilds in Dorchester for its 1976 report. All of four and most of a fifth have been lost. Ten have been protected: seven by the MDC, two by the Boston Conservation Commission, and one by the Parks and Recreation Department. Of the other Wilds, one is labeled "altered" in this report, the remainder of the partially lost Wild is degraded, and the others are substantially intact. The altered Wild is Keystone Shoreline, which now is a planted garden, rather than natural shoreline, adjoining the residential transformation of the former Keystone manufacturing building. The partially lost Wild is Calf Pasture, formerly Columbia Point.

Protected, accessible Wilds in Dorchester: Patten's Cove, Savin Hill Cove, Fernald Terrace, Troy Landfill (Victory Road Park), Geneva Avenue Cliffs, Schoolboy Track, Hilltop Street, O.G. Kelly, Taylor Street



## DORCHESTER

**11-01 Patten's Cove: Protected****11-02 Savin Hill Cove: Protected****11-03 Boston Gas Company Easement**

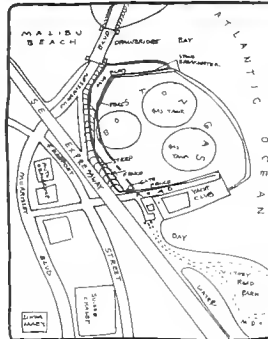
**Location:** Victory Road at Freepoint Street

**Size:** 3.2 acres

**Owner:** Boston Gas Co.

The Boston Gas Co. Dorchester tanks sit on about 30 acres of a roughly square peninsula called Commercial Point. It juts out where the Southeast Expressway crosses over Morrissey Boulevard. Victory Road, from Morrissey Boulevard, is the only access to the peninsula, which the tanks share with the Old Colony Yacht Club. A tongue of land that extends south from the peninsula is the MDC's 19-acre Victory Road Park, which was built atop an illegal landfill.

This neck of land is between public lands along the Dorchester, and it had long been desired to have a connector across the Boston Gas property. The 3.2 acres were designated as an Urban Wild after sustained efforts by BNAF and the city Environment Department.

**11-04 Fernald Terrace: Protected****11-05 Troy Landfill: Protected****11-06 Morgan Memorial: Lost**

**DORCHESTER**

**11-07 The Humps**

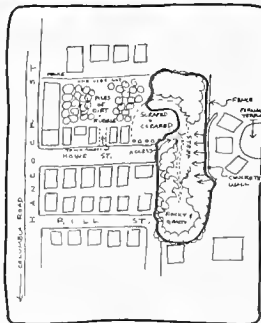
**Location:** Howe Street, off Hancock Street

**Size:** 0.8 acres

**Owner:** private

The Humps is an example of “leftover” land: It is the last fragment of the old Free Consumption Home that stood where Fernald Terrace is. The land was left unbuilt when the hospital site was developed into two-family houses in 1927 and 1928. The site is deeply wooded and steep; it literally forms the land on which Fernald Terrace was built. Adjoining it, behind houses on Howe Street, is a one-acre open meadow. Some neighbors have prepared garden plots on a corner of the meadow. It is an open and green corner of a thickly settled residential neighborhood.

All but 6,000 square feet of this Urban Wild is privately owned. It also is an example of how things can change an unprotected Urban Wild. In six months, between two site visits, dozens of piles of rubble and earth were dumped on the open meadow.



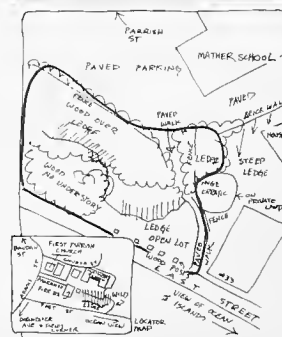
**11-08 Meeting House Hill Overlook**

**Location:** Parish Street & East Street off Adams Street, at Mather School and First Parish Church in Dorchester

**Size:** 2.8 acres

**Owner:** Boston School Department

This is a steep, rocky woodland below the Mather Elementary School. A paved walk along the edge of the Wild connects the school to East Street. The thick grove of trees has an interesting variety of green ash, hackberry, red oak, black locust, Norway maple, American elm and Big Leaf Linden. These grow on top of and below a ledge of puddingstone and create a cool and quiet area in a thickly settled neighborhood. A fire station adjoins the Wild on Parish Street. The Wild is best seen from East Street. Just below the Wild, looking east affords a panoramic view of the harbor and the islands. This land is part of the city’s Mather Elementary School property.



**DORCHESTER**

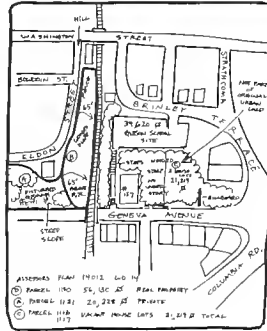
**11-09 Eldon Street**

**Location:** Eldon Street, off Washington Street, Geneva Avenue, off Columbia Road.

**Size:** 1.8 acres

**Owner:** Boston Real Property Department

A steep slope carries Eldon Street above the depressed right-of-way of the MBTA commuter rail Midlands Branch. The site is fenced along Eldon Street, but is accessible from Geneva Avenue near the stone bridge abutment and by a gate in the fence on Eldon Street. Red maple, gray birch and green ash are the dominant trees. The slope toward Geneva Avenue has been excavated, leaving it bare and eroded. The slope along the railroad at Eldon Street is owned by the City of Boston.



**11-10 Geneva Avenue Cliffs: Protected**

**11-11 R&S Machine: Lost**

**11-12 O.G. Kelley: Protected**

**11-13 Taylor Street: Protected**

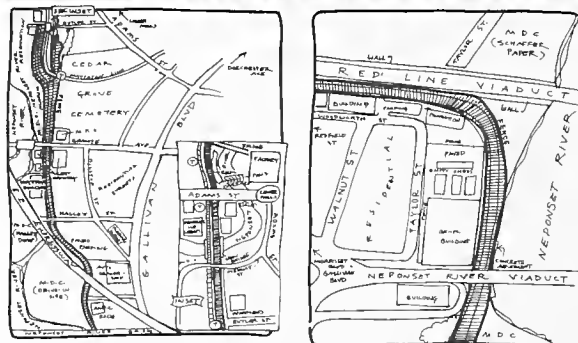
**DORCHESTER**

**11-14 & 11-15 Right of Way Shores & Penn Central Right of Way**

**Location:** From Redfield Street south to the Neponset River railroad crossing in Lower Mills  
**Size:** 6.3 and 3.3 acres, respectively  
**Owner:** Consolidated Rail Corp. (Conrail)

These Wilds are pieces of the rail corridor that once linked Port Norfolk to Lower Mills and neighboring Milton. Between the Redfield Street bridge over the tracks and the former Neponset Drive-In, Right of Way Shores hugs the Neponset River where it opens into Dorchester Bay. North of a bridge under the Southeast Expressway, the portion known as Penn Central (for its now-defunct owner) has urban industrial surroundings with little respite from the noise of traffic on the neponset River Bridges, the Expressway and local streets. South of Granite Avenue, however, the sweep of the Neponset River marshes greets the eye.

Beyond the marshes, the route (once part of the Old Colony Line) skirts a residential neighborhood and parallels the MBTA's Mattapan trolley line. The rail line unites the river's salt-water estuary and the freshwater portion above Lower Mills. It also links three other MDC properties: the marshes, the drive-in site (Urban Wild 11-16) and the Hallet Street dump (Urban Wild 11-17).



**11-16 Schoolboy Track (Neponset Drive-In): Protected**

**11-17 Hallet Street Brook: Protected**

**DORCHESTER**

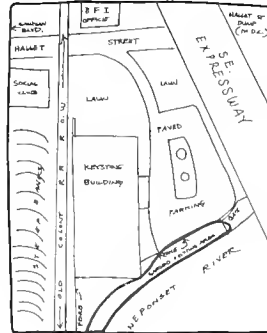
**11-18 Keystone Shoreline**

**Location:** 151 Hallett Street, off Galvin Blvd.  
at Keystone Apartments

**Size:** 0.6 acres

**Owner:** Keystone Apartments Co. LPS

This Urban Wild is a tiny fragment of the shore of the Neponset River used currently as a sitting area and gardens for the residents of the Keystone Apartments. Its value lies in its connection between The Penn Central Rail Corridor (behind the apartment building) and the M.D.C.-owned Hallett Street dump site. It forms an overlook of the river as well. If permission were granted by the owners, it would be possible to walk with ease along the Neponset River shore from Taylor Street in Port Norfolk to the rail line using this bit of riverbank.



**11-19 Hilltop Street: Protected**

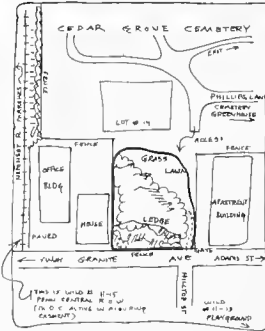
**DORCHESTER**

**11-20 Granite Avenue Ledge**

Location: Granite Avenue opposite Hilltop Street  
 Size: 0.3 acre  
 Owner: private

This rather small Urban Wild — within the grounds of Cedar Grove Cemetery — contains a fascinating variety of trees and shrubs. There are no fewer than 14 varieties, the most significant being American basswood, pignut hickory, hackberry, sassafras and gray birch. Among the understory are common buckthorn, Russian olive, common privet and rosa rugosa. The main feature is a natural wall of Roxbury puddingstone, which very much dominates the street, even in summer. The gray birch grows out of the base of the rock at the sidewalk level. From the cemetery grounds, there is a grassy lawn dotted with eastern red cedar saplings.

This lawn has been added in the past 15 years by the removal of a house. It adjoins Phillips Lane, which leads to the cemetery greenhouse.



**11-21 Cedar Grove Ponds: Lost**

**11-22 Lower Mills Gorge: Lost**

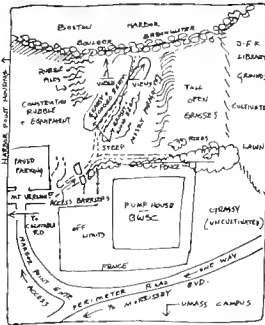


**DORCHESTER**

**11-23 Calf Pasture**

**Location:** At the End of Mt. Vernon Street, in the Harbor Point Development. Adjacent to the Kennedy Library  
**Size:** 20 acres  
**Owner:** Boston Water & Sewer Commission

Calf Pasture (formerly listed as Columbia Point) is the historic name for this last remaining patch of open, vegetated shoreline of Dorchester Bay. The name comes from a time when farmers let cattle graze on salt marsh hay. Columbia Point, where Calf Pasture is, later was filled with demolition rubble from the City of Boston. The Wild exemplifies a transition zone where upland trees and flowers meet seashore plants that tolerate salty air and heavy winds. A huge 19th-century sewage pump house dominates the site. Near it, two long gravel berms form a canyon that leads to the open sea from Mt. Vernon Street. The berms offer sweeping views of the Bay, the harbor islands, South Boston and the downtown skyline. On the berms are lombardy poplars, quaking aspen and black locust, as well as staghorn sumac. Rugosa roses share the adjacent meadow with grasses, Queen Anne's lace and tansy. The shoreline is huge blocks of stone laid as a breakwater to prevent erosion.



**11-24 & 11-25 Adams Rock and Huntoon Rock**

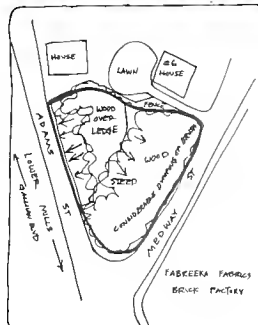
**Location:** Adams Street, corner of Medway Street: Medway Street, corner of Huntoon Street  
**Size:** 0.2 acres each  
**Owner:** private

These are two dramatic outcrops of puddingstone at either end of a block near Dorchester Lower Mills. Each is owned by the abutter, but the similarity ends there. Adams Rock has been used as a dump for leaves and brush, whereas Huntoon Rock has been incorporated into the neighboring yard.

Adams is more prominent because it is at the corner of busy Adams Street and Medway Street. The conglomerate is obscured by maples, oaks, slippery elm and vines. Much of the stone is invisible in summer, but then the dumped leaves and brush appear. At the other end of the short block of Medway Street, on Huntoon Rock, maples grow up and moss covers some of the rock, but the top and back side support a lawn. Huntoon is part of the neighborhood's small allotment of open space; Adams gives the impression of being just leftover space.



Huntoon Rock



Adams Rock

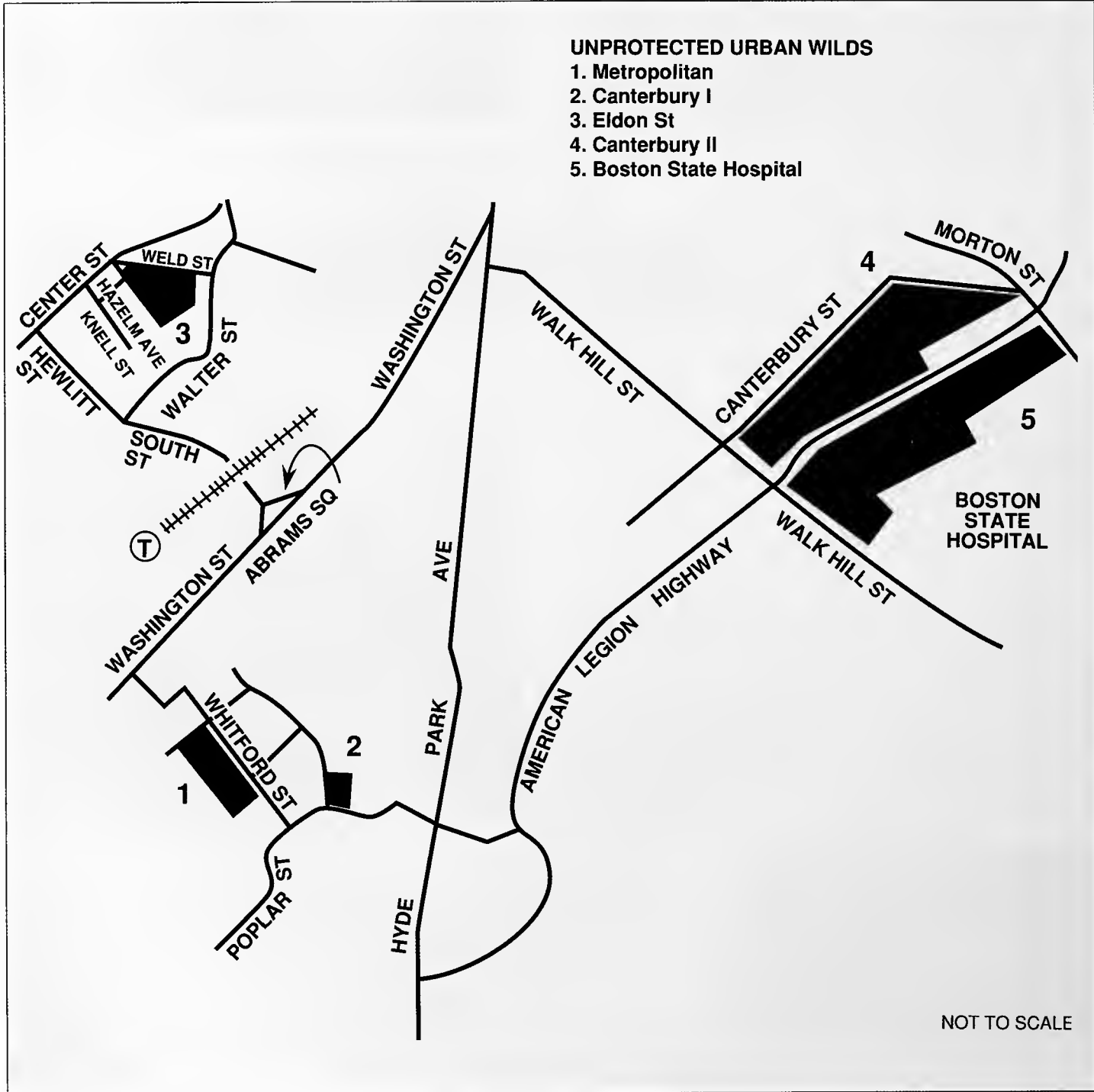
**ROSLINDALE**

Roslindale had six Wilds listed in 1976. Two have been lost. None of the remaining sites are protected. Eldon Street and part of Canterbury II have been degraded. The rest are intact.

Protected, accessible Wilds in Roslindale: None

**UNPROTECTED URBAN WILDS**

- 1. Metropolitan
- 2. Canterbury I
- 3. Eldon St
- 4. Canterbury II
- 5. Boston State Hospital



## ROSLINDALE

**12-01 Metropolitan**

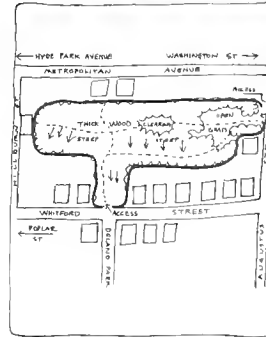
**Location:** Metropolitan Avenue, Hillburn Street, Whitford Street, and Augustus Street; access from Whitford and Augustus Streets

**Size:** 2.5 acres

**Owner:** private

This wooded tract, nestled behind the comfortable back yards of a suburban residential community, is a fragment of woods that dominated the local hills as recently as 60 years ago. The land is steep, and there is a wide variety of trees: red maple, gray birch, red oak, pignut hickory, American beech, a variety of apple, and a large European linden at the Whitford Street access lot opposite Delano Park.

The tree canopy opens up for two small meadows, the larger one being nearest Augustus Street. Hay-scented fern, butter and egg, pink flower spirea, wild raspberry, vetch, timothy, and deptford pink decorate the meadows. The presence of more domesticated vegetation such as English ivy, witch hazel, and Virginia creeper suggests the close proximity of the private yards.

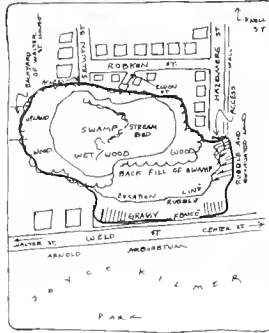
**12-02 Canterbury I: Lost****12-03 Grew Avenue: Lost**

## ROSLINDALE

**12-04 Eldon Street**

**Location:** Hazelmere Road, off Knoll Street, off Centre Street  
**Size:** 11.0 acres  
**Owner:** private

The two-thirds of this Wild that remain from its earlier days is a swamp through which a stream flows before disappearing in the rubble of drastic filling over the past decade. The mucky ground beneath red maples is thick with a carpet that includes no fewer than three varieties of ferns: common, hayseed and oak fern. Buckthorn and witch hazel shrubs perch on tufts of dry ground. The Wild backs up against the yards of single-family homes on Robken and Hazelmere Roads.

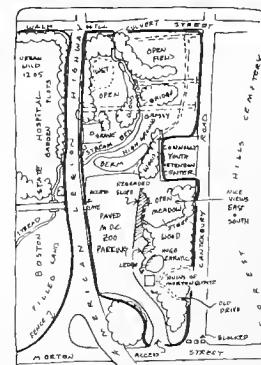
**12-05 Canterbury II**

**Location:** American Legion Highway, Walk Hill Street, Canterbury Street.  
**Size:** 68 acres  
**Owners:** Metropolitan District Commission, Italian Catholic Cemetery Association

This is one of the largest unprotected Urban Wild on dry land; only the Wood Island Bay Marshes of East Boston are more extensive. Canterbury II is in two parcels: the MDC owns 57 acres, and the Italian Catholic Cemetery Association owns 11 acres at the Walk Hill Street end. About eight acres of the MDC property were paved in 1989 for Franklin Park Zoo parking, but most of the Wild remains as it was. Virtually all the level ground in the MDC parcel is covered with excavate from the Dorchester Tunnel aqueduct. For these reasons, the remainder, though owned by the MDC, is considered unprotected.

The high ground on the state property contains the ruins of the Joseph Morton estate and is highlighted by an enormous cake rock. There is a stand of red oak, cottonwood, pitch pine and sumac, while gray birch covers one area as the wood thins into a green meadow.

Two graded dirt roads cross the less-disturbed parcel owned by the cemetery association, and one spans a brook via a concrete bridge. Both have entrance gates on Canterbury Road. From a flat, grassy meadow near the state's neighboring Connelly Youth Center there is a nice view southeast over Wellington Hill in Mattapan.



## ROSLINDALE

## 12-06 Boston State Hospital

**Location:** American Legion Highway, Walk Hill Street; primary access is from Walk Hill Street at the University Road Gate.

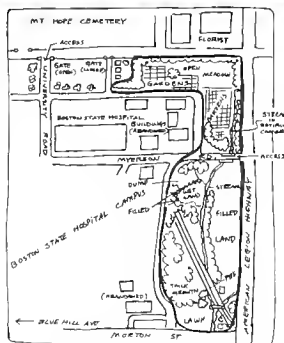
**Size:** 34 acres

**Owner:** Massachusetts Department of Mental Health.

This Urban Wild is approximately one-third of the 108-acre west campus of the Boston State Hospital, and three parts of the Wild wrap around abandoned institutional buildings and campus roads. The three sections are: urban gardens, which cover about 15 acres and are most visible from American Legion Highway; a marsh; and a long, level strip of gravel between a channeled stream and American Legion Highway.

Extensive dumping has abused the marsh, but it is thick with staghorn sumac that favors small mammals and birds. Gravel remains from excavation between 1969 and 1975 for the Dorchester Tunnel, an aqueduct 200 feet below the surface. The variety of trees and shrubs reflects the cultivation of the hospital grounds: Norway spruce, red oak, hemlock, black locust, European beech, eastern cottonwood, quaking aspen, sugar maple, Scotch pine and hackberry, for a start. The stream banks have alder, buckthorn, and sumac. Cattails, knotweed and purple loosestrife grow in the wetlands. The garden fields are alive in summer with wildflowers such as potted knapweed, St. John's-wort, milkweed, tansy, pasture thistle, and daisy fleabane, and multiflora rose.

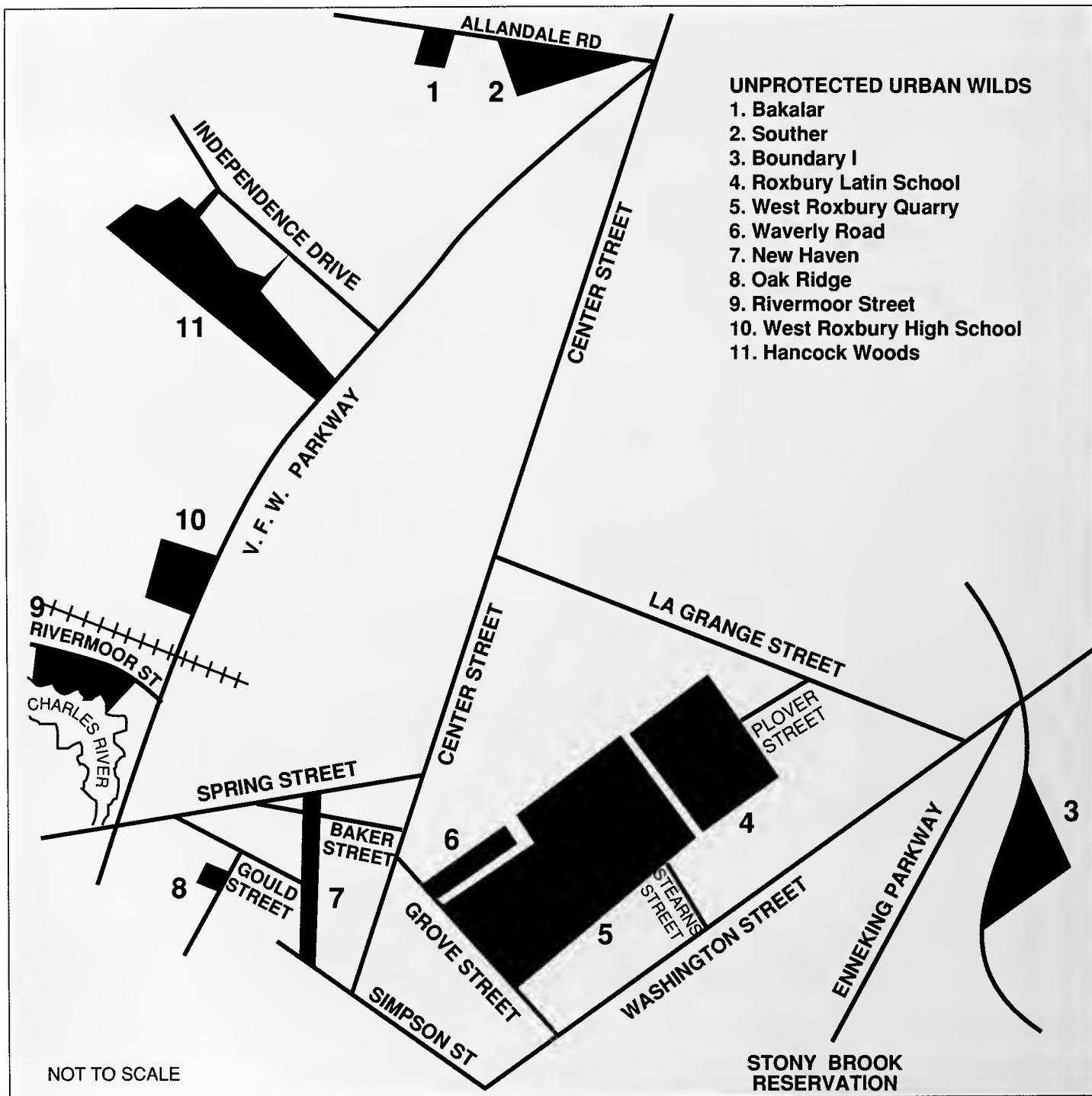
The gardeners work under a lease from the state Department of Food and Agriculture. Legislation for redevelopment of the hospital grounds could protect the gardens.



**WEST ROXBURY**

Six of the district's 21 Wilds have been lost completely, and pieces have been lost from two others. Three are wholly protected properties because the MDC or Boston Conservation Commission hold title to them. Portions of two Wilds are covered by conservation restrictions. One Wild is partially protected through government ownership, and one is protected because BNAF owns it. The others are intact but unprotected. Five Wilds have been degraded.

Protected, accessible Wilds in West Roxbury: Bakalar Conservation Restriction, Allendale Woods, Dump Shoreline, Rivermoor, Leatherbee Woods, Sawmill Brook



**WEST ROXBURY**

**13-01 Bakalar: Partially lost, partially protected (restriction), partially unprotected**

**13-02 Brandegee: Protected as Allandale Woods**

**13-03 Souther**

**Location:** 44 Allandale Street, opposite entrance to Faulkner Hospital

**Size:** 17 acres

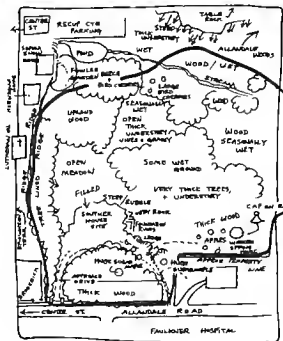
**Owner:** Faulkner Hospital

Bordering the Allandale Woods Wild, this is the remains of a former estate that once had a large house on highly cultivated grounds complete with greenhouses and orchards. It has been abandoned for more than two decades, and nature is reclaiming the land. Grazing fields with Alexander apple trees have been taken over by raspberry vines, multiflora roses, and apple trees, willows and aspen.

The site of the mansion was filled with surplus earth from the new Faulkner Hospital Building. The driveway, on the west side, is just barely visible, but a sugar maple with a 60-foot spread and a 75-foot-tall red oak mark its edge. From the oak, a walk once led to an octagonal spring house that is still in place, but dilapidated.

On the land, honeysuckle, black-eyed Susan, mullein, sweet clover, crown vetch, wood vine, dame's rocket, and touch-me-not. White pines grow on a ridge, and the border woodlands are mostly oak, beech and locust.

The protection of this Urban Wild is doubtful because the owner and its tenant plan to build an elder-care facility on it.



**WEST ROXBURY**

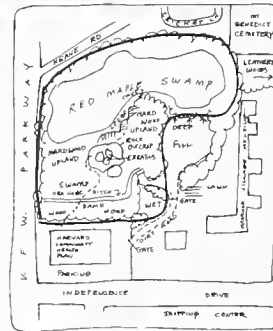
**13-04 Hancock Woods**

**Location:** VFW Parkway at Independence Drive; Sherman Road off Independence Drive  
**Size:** 47 acres  
**Owner:** private

A huge red maple swamp, which seemingly extends endlessly when seen from the highest dry ground in the center, is formed by very high uplands, principally Mt. Benedict Cemetery.

Two rocky ledges are like peninsulas extending into the swamp. The high one is scattered with groves of oak. A huge rock is a geological landmark on one ridge, while the other has two large jumbles of puddingstone. There are hayscented ferns, marsh ferns and backen ferns in clumps of grasses and skunk cabbage beneath the trees. Clethra and upland low-bush blueberry grow on the Wild also. The protected Urban Wild now called Leatherbee Woods borders this Wild, as does the Hancock Village housing complex and a Harvard Community Health Plan center built on three acres that were part of the Wild.

In 1989, there were plans to build on the two ledges and filled land — approximately one quarter of the site and all of its most interesting topography. The cooling development market appears to have stalled that scheme, however.

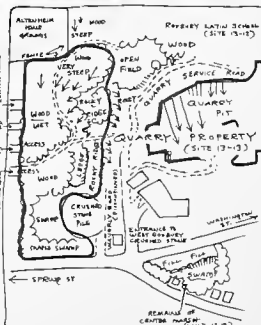


**13-05 Waverly Road**

**Location:** Centre Street at its elbow with Grove Street; adjoining West Roxbury Crushed Stone Co.  
**Size:** 1.75 acres  
**Owner:** private

This is an attractive Wild on the inside, but the edges have been damaged. It is best arrived at through the end of Center Lane.

At Centre Street, a red maple swamp is gray with stone dust from the adjacent quarry. The dust cakes the mud like frosting. An enormous pile of crushed stone has covered some of the swamp. The woods are cut off by pushed up piles of rubble and rock, and the main work road of the quarry leads past this Wild. Past the disfigured fringes, however, there are water willow, oaks, birch, pignut hickory, butternut and cherry. Gullies and ledges where this Wild borders the one at the the Roxbury Latin School are very picturesque.





**WEST ROXBURY**

**13-06 Parkway Pond: Lost**

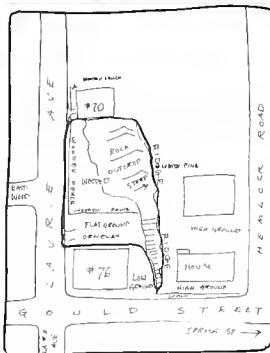
**13-07 Oak Ridge**

**Location:** Laurie Avenue at Gould Street; Gould Street is off Spring Street

**Size:** 0.2 acre

**Owner:** private

An 18-foot ledge of puddingstone dominates this Wild behind a private house. It is dotted with red oak, black cherry and white pine.



**13-08 Dump Shoreline: Protected**

## WEST ROXBURY

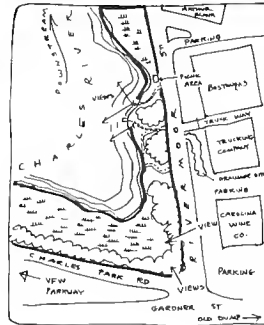
### 13-09 Rivermoor

**Location:** Rivermoor Street, corner of Gardner Street and Charles Park Road; off VFW Parkway opposite West Roxbury V.A. Hospital

**Size:** 24.6 acres

**Owners:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, City of Boston Real Property Department, MDC, private owner

This is a precious river-front strip that gives the impression it is holding at bay the surrounding concrete buildings and their parked cars and asphalt. It makes one side of Rivermoor Street, a wall of black willows, weeping willows, white oaks, eastern cottonwoods and maples. Silver maple and European white birch also grow here near a very unusual chestnut oak. The understory is thick with waist-high stinging nettles, wild raspberry and grapevine. There are several tiny paths to the river's edge. Wonderful views upstream and down from there reward a visitor. The tree line stops and a wet meadow opens up at the end of Rivermoor Street.



### 13-10 Spring Street Marsh: Lost

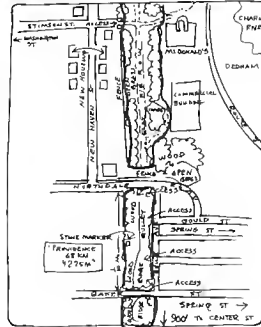
**WEST ROXBURY**

**13-11 New Haven Street**

**Location:** Belle Avenue from Baker Street to Northdale Road, end of Stimson Street to Jewish Cemetery  
**Size:** 9.7 acres  
**Owner:** Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority

The original Urban Wild was confined to New Haven Street, which connects Northdale Road and Stimson Street. There are new houses (built about 1987), but the main attraction is the old railroad right-of-way that parallels New Haven Street (and gives it its name). From Stimson Street, one can walk all the way to Spring Street. From the Jewish Cemetery to Northdale Road, the right-of-way is flat and could easily be a dirt road, past Northdale, the path becomes a gully next to Belle Avenue. At Baker Street, it begins to rise where a bridge once was, and the path is on a causeway from there to Spring Street.

The path is lined with oak, Norway maple, red maple, black locust, pignut hickory, green ash, quaking aspen, chestnut oak and silver maple. There are numerous shrubs, flowers and a wonderful batch of everlasting peas near Stimson Street.

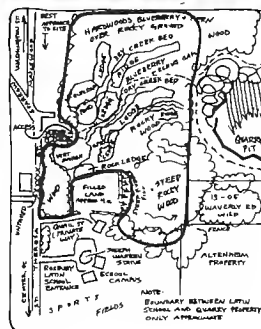


**13-12 Roxbury Latin School**

**Location:** St. Theresa Avenue off Centre Street; best access is from Plover Street, off Maplewood Street, from Washington Street  
**Size:** 76.4 acres  
**Owner:** Roxbury Latin School

This Urban Wild is the uncultivated half of the school property. It is a rocky and wooded ground of granite ridges, some of which are 90 feet above the ravines. The maze of ridges, canyons, marshes and pools is a microcosm of the MDC's Stony Brook Reservation, which is to the north.

Plover Street is the ideal public access and leads to a pool sheltered by high, rocky ribs covered with mosses, lichens, blueberry and oak. A tiny brook from the pond leads to a marsh. A deep ravine takes the brook from the marsh to the great yawning hole of the adjacent stone quarry. The ledges on the land afford astounding views. The forest is mostly oaks, but the understory is varied because fires have opened holes in the cover and numerous plants have moved in.



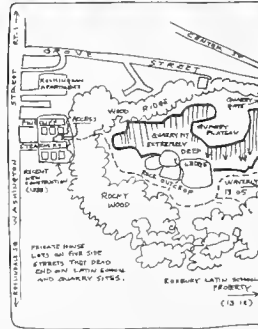
**WEST ROXBURY**

**13-13 West Roxbury Quarry**

**Location:** Off Grove Steet  
**Size:** 70 acres  
**Owner:** private

Of five quarries that once operated in Boston, this is the only one still going. On a map, the Quarry and the Roxbury Latin School are one, continuous open space. A person can walk due east from the school on a quiet Sunday and quite suddenly find that the tree line breaks and one faces the breathtaking sight of a vast stone pit 200 feet deep. Along the rim of the quarry are only scrub oak and gray birch. On the surrounding land is a variety of clover, spotted knapweed, meadowsweet, and tansy.

Stearns Road affords the best and easiest entry. It is a dead-end street built up into the property in the past few years. A quarry service road moves past rocky ridges, then climbs, and the entire pit opens up.



**13-14 Parkview: Lost**

**13-15 Dragon Rock: Lost**

## WEST ROXBURY

**13-16 Dana Road**

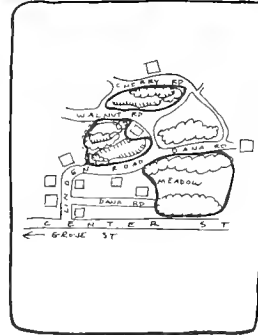
**Location:** Linden Road off Centre Street nearly opposite Fairlane Road

**Size:** Two parts: 0.9 acre

**Owner:** private

The exact area of the Urban Wild in this area is unknown. Dana Road is a narrow dirt road that follows a maze of cartpaths uniting a former vacation colony called "The Grove." Laid out after 1910, the area is tucked behind the houselots of Centre and Grove Streets and is accessible by only three narrow, nearly invisible roads – Cottage and Linden Roads off Centre Street and Briar Road off Grove Street. In 1989 there were dozens of city-owned parcels in The Grove, where more than 60 individual parcels range from 6,000 square feet up to 14,000 square feet.

The survey looked at two city-owned sites, one on Linden Road and the other on Cherry Road. The Linden Road parcel is about one acre of wooded ridge bisected by a gully. The one on Cherry Street is a wooded ridge with a steep rocky face on Walnut Road. The topography is more interesting than the trees and shrubs. There is an interesting wildflower called smooth hawk's beard.

**13-17 Hancock Swamp: Protected as Leatherbee Woods****13-18 Sawmill Brook: Protected****13-19 Centre Marsh: Lost**

## WEST ROXBURY

**13-20 West Roxbury High School**

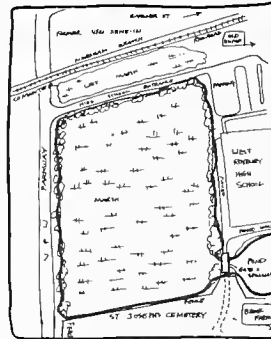
**Location:** VFW Parkway between St. Joseph's Cemetery and the MBTA Needham Branch Commuter Rail tracks

**Size:** 21 acres

**Owner:** Boston School Department

This is handsome marsh and pond left after construction of West Roxbury High School, which took up more than half of the original 43 acres. The 190-foot-long approach drive to the school isolates a small patch of marsh beneath the railroad causeway.

The marsh is contained in a manmade basin, with the high school on a berm to the northwest and the VFW Parkway to the southeast. St. Joseph's Cemetery completes the east side. A spillway and a pond fed by Saw Mill Brook are hidden between the cemetery and the school's service area. The spillway is a favorite spot for ducks and geese. The marsh can be glimpsed through overgrown pin oaks, crab apples and maples from the parkway, though it is best seen in summer from the school approach drive. Shrubs, flowers and ferns are plentiful.

**13-21 Searle Road Rock: Lost**

## HYDE PARK

In Hyde Park, the BRA found 23 Wilds for the 1976 survey. Of those, four are lost altogether. Parts have been lost from three. The remaining portion of one of the partly lost Wilds is protected by a conservation restriction. Five Wilds — Sherrin Street, Monterey Hilltop, Railroad Avenue, Belnel and Mother Brook II — have been protected outright through ownership by state or city agencies. BNAF's survey showed another seven protected parcels lie in six Wilds. Another 11 parcels, making up all or part of 11 Wilds, are unprotected. One is degraded, the rest intact.

Protected, accessible Wilds in Hyde Park: Sherrin Street, Monterey Hilltop, Boundary I portions, Boundary II portion, West Street, Railroad Avenue, Euclid Street (part), Belnel, Dana Avenue (part), Blake Estates shoreline conservation restriction (accessible from water), Mother Brook II, Mother Brook III

### UNPROTECTED URBAN WILDS

1. Pleasant View
2. Euclid Street
3. West Street
4. Rail Road Avenue
5. Dell Avenue Rock
6. Mother Rock
7. Blair Estates
8. Margin Street
9. Dana Road
10. Neponset I
11. Neponset II
12. Sprague Pond
13. Mother Brook
14. Fairview Quarry
15. Boundary II
16. West and Austin



## HYDE PARK

## 14-01 Sally Rock: Lost

## 14-02 Sherrin Street: Protected

## 14-03 Monterey Hilltop: Protected

## 14-04 Boundary I

**Location:** Blue Ledge Drive at High Point Village. East Boundary Road of Stony Brook Reservation

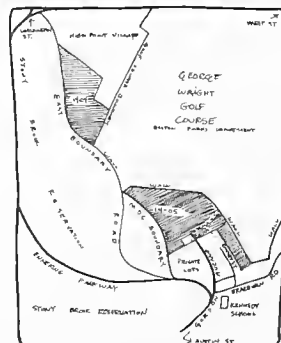
**Size:** 16 acres

**Owners:** private, Boston Parks and Recreation Department

This is rocky, wooded ground wedged between the East Boundary Road of the MDC's Stony Brook Reservation and the cluster housing development of High Point Village. Topographically, there is no logical boundary between it and the reservation. Indeed, the boundary cuts through a pond full of cattails and bird life. Most of this ground is relatively flat, though it drops dramatically nearly 40 feet into the canyon. East Boundary Road runs along the rim of the canyon. The pond is on a privately owned parcel of slightly more than nine acres. A second parcel covers seven acres owned by the Boston Parks and Recreation Department.

The vegetation mirrors the reservation — oaks and gray birch. Leaf fires that plague the reservation have not spared the Urban Wild. There is a very pretty stand of swamp azalea. Both sides of the Boundary Road along the pond banks are lined with pale green pussy willow in early spring.

The geology is also much like the reservation, although at this end it is more pink Dedham (or Westwood) granite. There is one huge erratic of Roxbury puddingstone.





**HYDE PARK**

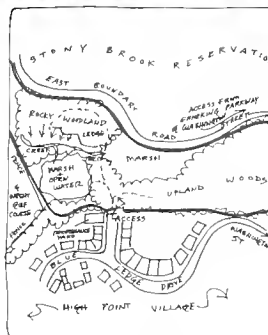
**14-05 Boundary II**

**Location:** End of Gordon Avenue off River Street  
**Size:** 21 unprotected, 17.5 protected (MDC)  
**Owners:** private, City of Boston

A majestic Urban Wild with ridges of solid granite that rise over 40 feet above canyons and marshes, this is one of the highest pieces of ground in the vicinity. From the highest ridge, one can see only treetops and the rising dome of Great Blue Hill in the southeast.

Like the adjoining MDC Stony Brook Reservation, this Urban Wild is a portion of the complex geology of the Neponset River Valley. It is a classic syncline topography, three huge troughs of stratified rock that form rocky beds. In the beds have formed marshes and creeks that drain southeast toward Stony Brook.

The understory varies widely. Low-bush blueberries and sweet ferns grow out of cracks in the puddingstone. Bracken fern, oak fern and cinnamon fern dot the low land. There are also witch hazel, swamp azalea, sweet pepperbush and wild raspberry. The trees are mostly oak, with white pine mixed in. One tree is a shadblow, and there are an American chestnut and some American mountain ash saplings.



**14-06 Dell Avenue Rock**

**Location:** Hyde Park Avenue at Dell Avenue  
**Size:** 1.3 acres  
**Owner:** Boston Real Property Department

Dell Avenue Rock is a steep, rocky bluff of Mattapan volcanic rock that juts up nearly 40 feet from the street where three residential streets converge on Hyde Park Avenue. The vegetation is confined to the base of the rock. The top is wind-blown and the soil is thin, so vegetation is limited to grasses, moss, and low-bush blueberry. The view from the crest is a surprisingly scenic vista of Bellevue Hill and the woods west and south of Stony Brook Reservation. A well-worn footpath leads easterly up the side of the hill from Lincoln Street. Black cherry and common choke cherry and gray birch are the dominant and most interesting trees, growing thickly along the rock base at Hyde Park Avenue and Lincoln Street. A grove of oaks shades the rock from the Dell Avenue side.



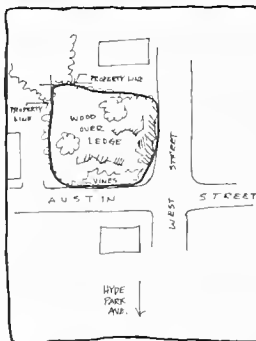
**HYDE PARK**

**14-07 West Street**

**Location:** West Street off River Street  
**Size:** 1.5 acres  
**Owners:** Metropolitan District Commission, abutters

The wooded shoreline of the Neponset River just above the Tileston Dam is the West Street Urban Wild. It is mostly back yards of homes, but a large parcel is the MDC's Doyle Playground. The MDC also is entrusted with the river's shore at the playground. The important river frontage is blocked by a wall of vegetation at the bank.

This Wild abuts the Patriot Paper Co. factory and dam, both of which have a long history in Boston. The site was the William Summer mill in 1786.



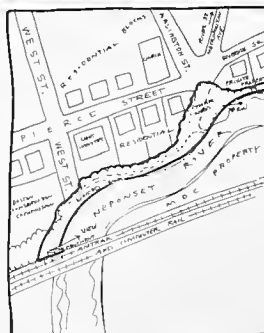
**14-08 Railroad Avenue**

**Location:** West Street and Metropolitan Avenue off River Street  
**Size:** 1.2 acres  
**Owners:** abutters, Metropolitan District Commission, Boston Conservation Commission

This extremely rare piece of open Neponset riverfront is tucked between the ends of Metropolitan Avenue and West Street. The MDC has jurisdiction over a slim stretch of riverbank as well as a sewer easement through land off Metropolitan Avenue. The Boston Natural Areas Fund bought 94,000 square feet of former lumber yard at Pierce and West Streets, against a rail line. That parcel subsequently was taken by the Boston Conservation Commission. There are six house lots on the Pierce Street side.

The river bends abruptly at that point, and there is a grand view downstream from the point where the railroad tracks cross the river. At times, especially summer, it is possible to loose oneself here because the steep, wooded banks block the signs of urban life. The Wild would make a fine boat dock or canoe landing if a half-acre parcel at Metropolitan Avenue could be acquired for public use.

The BCC site is mostly open. Flat, filled and thick with quaking aspen, the city land should be joined with the MDC property so a riverside promenade could be made for Hyde Park neighbors.



## HYDE PARK

**14-09 Sprague Pond**

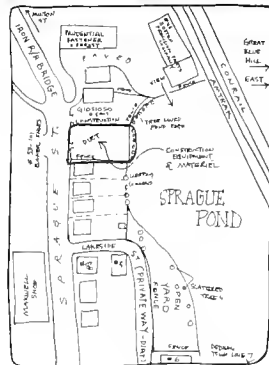
**Location:** Sprague Street at Lakeside Avenue on the Dedham line

**Size:** 1.4 acres

**Owner:** City of Boston Public Facilities Department

On the border between Dedham and Boston, Sprague Pond is an oval sheet of water amidst light industry and a wide Amtrak railroad causeway. During the Civil War, it was in the center of famous Camp Miags, where the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment mustered.

The pond is, at present, inaccessible, but would afford a grand view of the dome of Great Blue Hill. The only view of the Pond is at a fenced-in yard that adjoins a house at 6 Lakeside. The pond is significant for the surprise it offers when one finds a natural pond behind all the pavement.

**14-10 Readville Maples: Lost**

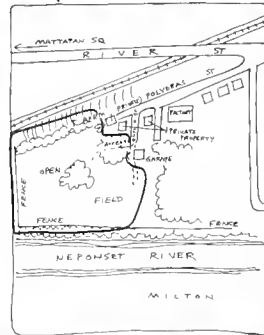
**HYDE PARK**

**14-11 Euclid Street**

**Location:** Euclid Street off Poydras Street off River Street  
**Size:** 3.9 acres  
**Owners:** private, Metropolitan District Commission

Euclid Street is a dirt road through an oak and locust wood past one private home. It opens out to a meadow along the swiftly moving Neponset River. This is a rare spot in Hyde Park because the Neponset can actually be seen without going through back yards of houses or businesses. Railroad tracks cross the Neponset at the James River Paper Co. near this Urban Wild, and pass atop a steep embankment that forms one edge of the meadow.

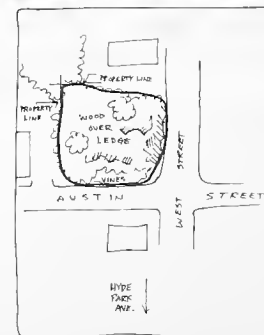
The meadow is over 50 feet from the river and in summer is full of meadowsweet, clumps of multiflora rose, groves of black locust, soft rush, sedge and wild raspberry. Along the top of the riverbank are paper birch, gray birch and red maple.



**14-12 West and Austin Streets**

**Location:** Corner of West and Austin Streets at 126 Austin Street  
**Size:** 0.3 acres  
**Owner:** Boston Real Property Department

This outcrop of puddingstone, barely a quarter-acre, rises 50 feet from the streets of this residential neighborhood. It is overgrown with green brier, poison ivy and buckthorn, making it almost invisible in summer. A thick oak canopy makes it very shady. This is a typical wood-over-outcrop Urban Wild with a thick understory of roiling green briars.

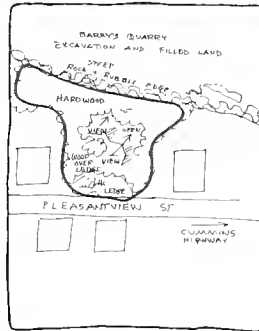


**HYDE PARK**

**14-13 Pleasantview**

**Location:** Opposite 36 Pleasantview St. near Cummins Highway  
**Size:** 0.5 acres  
**Owner:** Boston Real Property Department

Though one could not tell from the street, Pleasantview is a fragment of the once immense Barry's Quarry, which has been filled. The tan Mattapan volcanic (or possibly breccia) stone rises into a rugged rock shaded by oak, gray birch and cherry with a floor of low-bush blueberry, sweet fern and moss. The sweet fern growing out of the gnarls and knuckles of the stone is particularly attractive.



**14-14 Fairview Quarry**

**Location:** Upton Street at Turtle Pond Parkway  
**Size:** 6.7 acres  
**Owner:** private

The yawning pit of this former gravel quarry is slowly being taken over by stands of quaking aspen and gray birch. The floor is covered with wildflowers that like disturbed land, such as wild indigo, yarrow, goldenrod and deptford pink. Twenty feet above the pit are rocky ledges of puddingstone with a thick sturdy tree cover of oak, scotch pine and scrub oak. Low-bush blueberry and bayberry cover the rocky high ground. The views to the east are magnificent showing the Blue Hills and the tree tops of Hyde Park.

The construction of the Stony Brook Reservation parkway spawned use of the site as a quarry. No roads led to it before about 1905. The quarry has been closed for a generation. It abuts the Fairview Cemetery, a City of Boston property. The severe erosion of the pebbly gravel walls of the quarry makes it possible that this side of the cemetery could wash down in a few years.



**HYDE PARK**

**14-15 Belnel: Protected**

**14-16 Dana Avenue: Partially protected, partially lost**

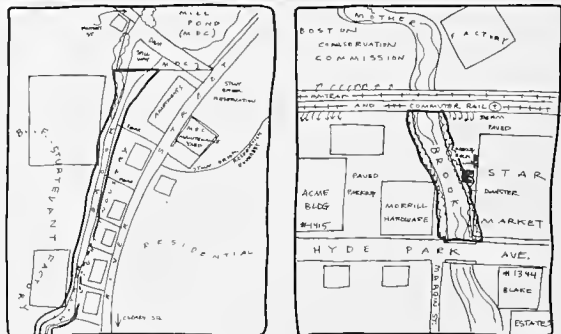
**14-17 Margin Street: Lost**

**14-18 Allis Chalmer: (Now Blake Estates), partially protected, partially lost**

**14-19 Mother Brook I**

**Location:** Hyde Park Avenue at the Star Market  
**Size:** 0.4 acres  
**Owner:** private

Squeezed between a Star Market/Osco Drug shopping center on one side and a hardware warehouse on the other, this Wild is a sliver of the Mother Brook's course between Hyde Park Avenue and a railroad right of way. There is no public access on either side of the brook here because the buildings are so close to the banks. One narrow area that could provide passage is blocked by a truck dock and a dumpster. The banks are covered with rubbish and debris.



**14-20 Mother Brook II: Protected**

**14-21 Mother Brook III: Mostly protected, some lost**

**HYDE PARK**

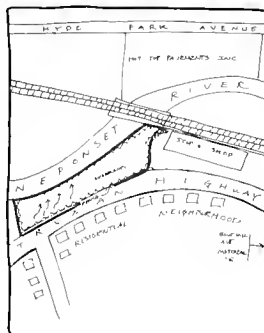
**14-22 Neponset I**

**Location:** Truman Highway, just north of Fowl Meadow  
**Size:** 2.1 acres  
**Owners:** private, Massachusetts Department of Public Works

Neponset I is a thickly overgrown woodlot along the Neponset River. The dense growth is obscured, however, by a chain-link fence that is covered with grape and other vines. The woodland also is 15 feet below the sidewalk level.

Where it borders the Stop & Shop complex, the Wild is at the river's edge. The chocolate brown water twists around the Wild in a S curve. Farther along, the woods open up into a thick stand of maples, river birch and other trees, some covered with bull-brier. It is impossible to ascertain beyond that because the fence at the street makes access impossible. There are handsome English oaks, the only ones sighted in Urban Wilds.

Truman Highway was built in 1936, and the shopping center is the only riverfront construction here. Neponset I buffers the road from omnipresent noise from an asphalt plant across the river.

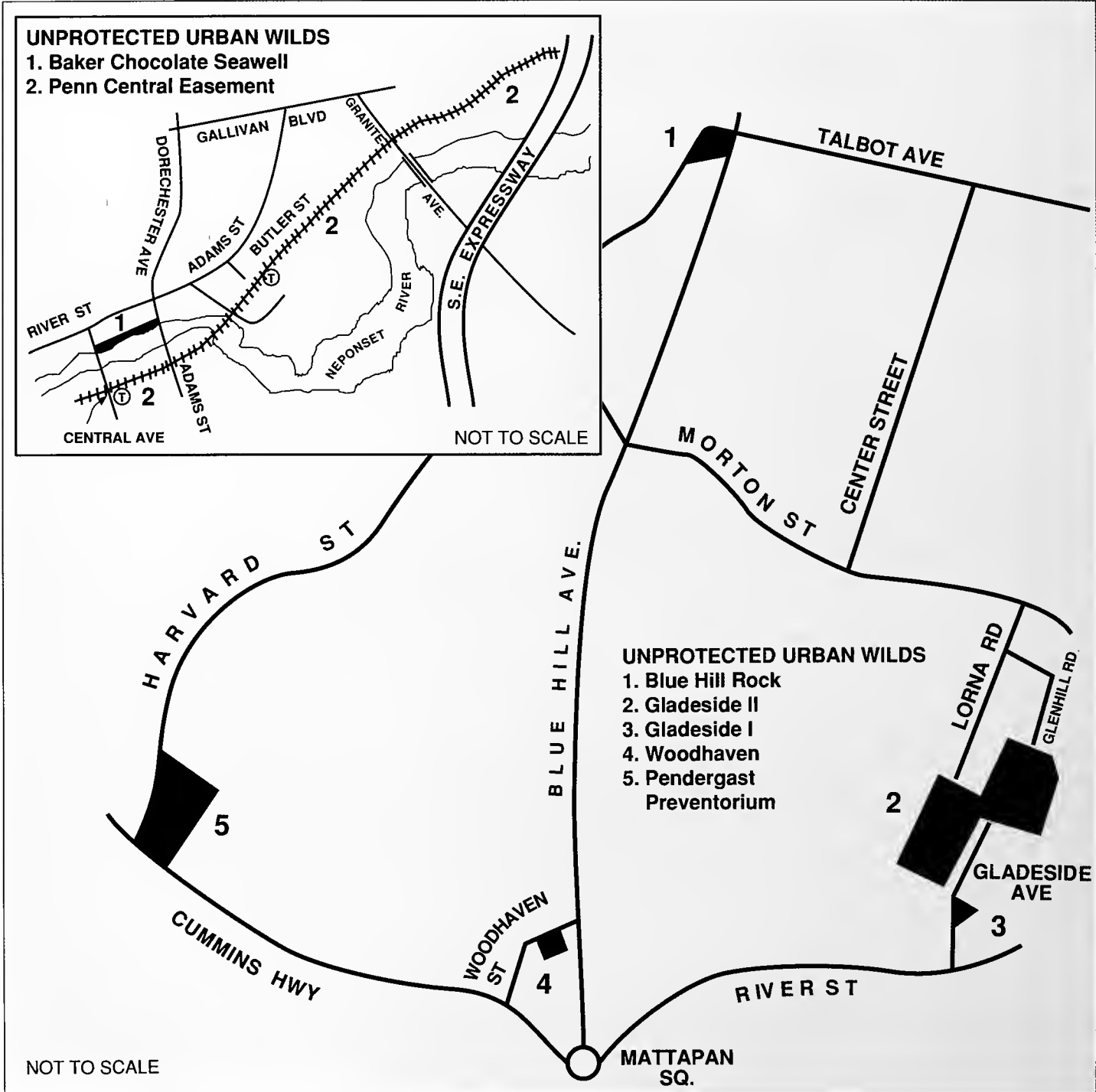


**14-23 Neponset II: Lost**

**MATTAPAN**

Mattapan had eight Urban Wilds. One is gone through construction. Willowood Rock is protected by Conservation Commission custody. The remaining six are unprotected, with five of them intact and one degraded. One unprotected Wild, Gladeside II, is on the Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospital grounds owned by the city. Another, Blue Hill Rock, seems to have been incorrectly sized in 1976, and the acreage listed here is correct.

Protected, accessible Wilds in Mattapan: Willowood Rock





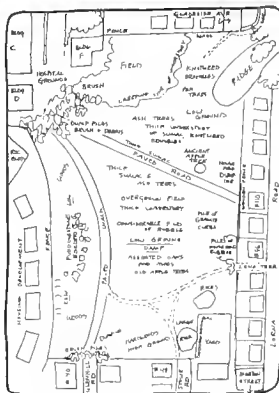
**MATTAPAN**

**15-01 Gladeside I**

**Location:** End of Lorna Road, off Morton Street  
**Size:** 10 acres  
**Owner:** Boston Department of Health and Hospitals

This ground of hardwoods, swamp and rock is on the extensive grounds of the city-owned Mattapan Chronic Disease Hospital. Like the nearby Gladeside II, this Urban Wild shows what the land was like 40 years ago. The Urban Wild is connected to another 10-acre parcel between the Morton-Gallivan Development and Lorna Road. Taken together, they form the largest open and undeveloped area in Mattapan.

The high ground of oak and pine, sweet birch and pignut hickory twists onto ridges that go around a picturesque swamp dotted with puddingstone boulders. There is a wide variety of understory shrubs: sweet pepperbush, buttonbush, bayberry, false indigo and a flowering variety of alder. Cattails and arrowheads thrive in the swamp. Behind the Wild is a steep ledge on which are the houses of Constitution Road.



**15-02 Livermore Street: Lost**

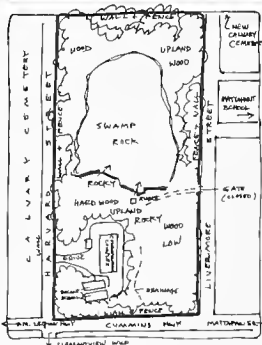
**MATTAPAN**

**15-03 Pendergast Preventorium**

**Location:** Harvard Street, Cummins Highway and Livermore Street  
**Size:** 20.8 acres  
**Owner:** private

In Boston, there were several large sanitoriums at the time when diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza spread easily through crowded urban blocks. One of those was the Pendergast Preventorium, which was built more than 60 years ago on densely wooded rolling land dotted with puddingstone rocks and a wet swamp area full of cinnamon, sweet and bracken ferns. In 1931, a stone wall was built around the property and topped with a chain-link fence. In the mid-1980s, the hospital building was converted to condominiums and called Puddingstone Estates. The rest of the site remained as wild as ever, though 28 more units of housing will be built on five acres.

Sweet birch, gray birch, white pines, American beech, red oak and hickory trees create a dark and cool urban forest. Swamp azalea grow among the ferns and low-bush blueberry, and there is blue-flowered vinca among the old oaks.



**15-04 Willowwood Rock: Protected**

**MATTAPAN**

**15-05 Woodhaven**

**Location:** Woodhaven Street, between Cummins Highway and Blue Hill Avenue.

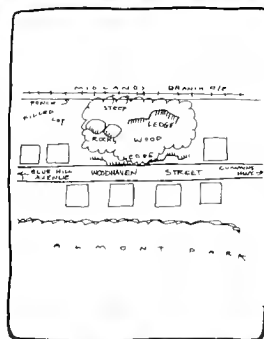
**Size:** 2.1 acres

**Owner:** Boston Real Property Department

This site displays no fewer than four types of rock. It backs up to the right of way of the MBTA commuter rail lines. Along Woodhaven Street, between single-family houses, is a prominent outcrop of purple-gray Mattapan volcanic rock that has red and white oaks growing over it. Green smudges of algae indicate this is a sheltered and moist location. At the rear of the Mattapan volcanic is a stone called breccia, often found in volcanics. This has purple-pink or ashen white pebbles in it like puddingstone.

On the far side of the woods is a huge boulder of Roxbury puddingstone atop a cracked Mattapan volcanic, exactly as a glacier dumped it thousands of years ago. In the bottom land dotted with bracken ferns is a heavy rock, called basalt, with a lot of iron in it.

Argyllite or mudstone is another type of rock found in the Woodhaven Wild, although in small quantities and somewhat obscured by leaves and grasses.



**15-06 Blue Hill Rock**

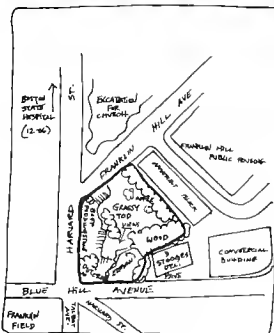
**Location:** Harvard Street and Blue Hill Avenue

**Size:** 0.3 acre

**Owner:** Boston Housing Authority

Blue Hill Rock is a highly visible, buff-colored puddingstone ledge that extends back into Franklin Hill and the Franklin Hill Development apartments as they sit high above Blue Hill Avenue. This highly fractured, heavily weathered puddingstone appears almost like rotted wood rather than stone, and the rusty brown color — almost tan — indicates a very high iron content. Severe cracks at steep angles suggest this rock may be on a fault line.

Gray birch trees cling on the ledges, and windswept red oaks grow on the brow of the rock. A mazzard cherry is well-established at the Blue Hill Avenue corner, and an old apple tree has grown out of the grassy ground at the back of the Wild, where there is more soil. The residents of the development have begun a beautification project for the Urban Wild.

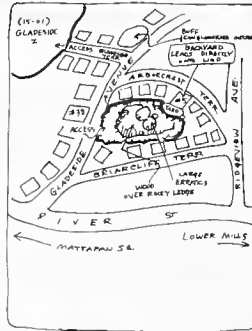


**MATTAPAN**

**15-07 Gladeside II**

**Location:** Gladeside Avenue, at Briarcliff Terrace, off River  
**Size:** 1.1 acres  
**Owners:** abutters

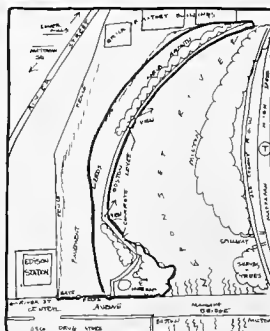
Contrasting with its neighborhood of single-family houses, this Urban Wild is a remainder of the wide-open pasture land of the Mattapan of 60 years ago. A huge puddingstone outcrop rises more than 20 feet, and a jumble of erratics on top, seemingly dropped out of the sky, form little caves. Oaks predominate among the trees, and dark green polytrichum moss covers the jagged face of the puddingstone.



**15-08 Baker Chocolate Seawall**

**Location:** North bank of the Neponset River, east of Central Avenue in Milton and behind River Street properties  
**Size:** 1.5 acres  
**Owner:** Private

This Wild is a platform for views downstream toward the Lower Mills dam and the former factory buildings of Baker Chocolate. This area was open in 1976 and, though paved, provided access to the river shore. Access has been restricted now, and the area is used as parking for condominiums in the former factory. Some excavation and grading was done in 1988. The Wild is a short walk from the Central Avenue stop on the Mattapan High Speed Line trolley of the MBTA's Red Line.





NOTES



NOTES

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