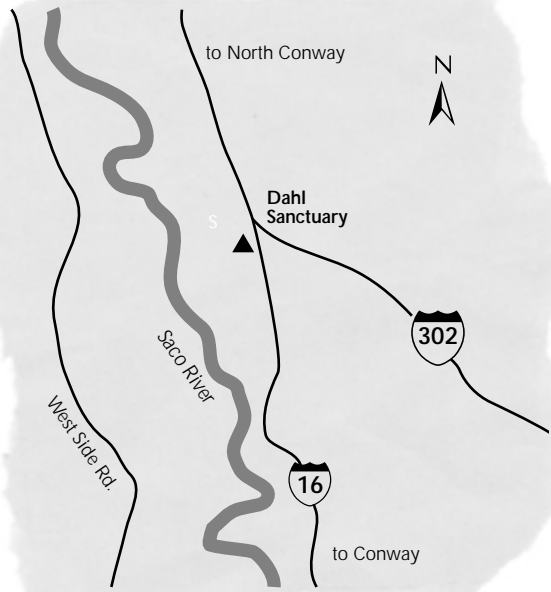


Directions



How to get to the Dahl Sanctuary:

The Dahl Sanctuary is located on the west side of Route 16 just south of the intersection of Routes 16 and 302. Parking is in a lot on the north side of the Sanctuary; look for the ASNH Sanctuary signs.

If you do not want to keep this guide, please return it to the mailbox at the trailhead.

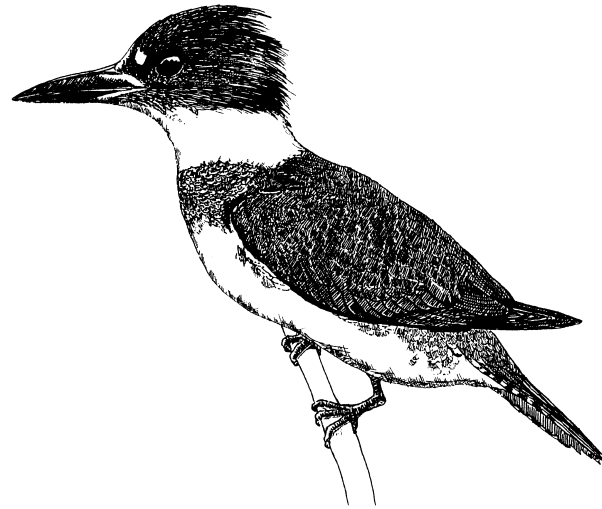


Printed on recycled paper.

Cover art of Belted Kingfisher by Iain MacLeod.

Trail Guide

Dahl Wildlife Sanctuary North Conway, New Hampshire



Audubon Society of New Hampshire

About the Sanctuary

The Dahl Sanctuary, located on the east side of the Saco River, includes 54 acres and 1800' of unspoiled shoreline and a wide sandbar on the river. Donated to the Audubon Society of New Hampshire in 1988 by Helen and Ruth Dahl, longtime residents of the Mount Washington Valley, the Sanctuary is a small gem of varied elevations and diverse habitats that support a wide variety of wildlife.

The Sanctuary offers fascinating examples of how the forces of nature drastically change the landscape. During a short walk through the property, you can see how the glaciers, which once covered the region, and the Saco River, which is the western boundary of the Sanctuary, have shaped the land. There are also spectacular views of the Presidential mountain range and other peaks in the White Mountain National Forest from the parking area and, in winter, from the sandbar.

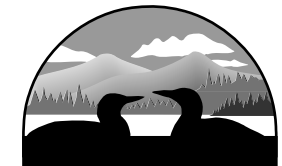
Sometime during its history, the Sanctuary was used for timber harvesting and grazing, as there are still stone walls and barbed wire on the property. Today, in part thanks to those human activities, the Sanctuary has many different types of habitats, from open fields to floodplain forest to sandbar beach. Because of the wide variety of habitat available, the Sanctuary has a diverse wildlife population.

In 1997, the Saunders Family offered to ASNH the opportunity to purchase, at a discount, a seven-acre parcel adjacent to the Sanctuary. Today, that parcel provides parking and additional habitat for the Sanctuary. It is truly an oasis for wildlife and for people along busy and ever-growing Route 16.

Visitor Information

1. Only foot travel is permitted in the sanctuary. No horses, bicycles, or motor vehicles are allowed.
2. Swimming, camping, hunting, and trapping are prohibited. Picnicking is allowed, but fires are not.
3. Please keep to the marked trails and do not collect or in any way disturb any plants or animals in this sanctuary.
4. Please respect private property.
5. No pets are allowed in the sanctuary.
6. Please carry out all trash and litter.
7. Be prepared for country walking.

The Audubon Society of New Hampshire is a statewide membership organization that is independent of the National Audubon Society. It operates seven nature centers throughout the state where there are educational programs for children and adults, protects almost 10,000 acres of land through several dozen sanctuaries, and monitors many of the state's endangered species. For more information, contact:



The Audubon Society of New Hampshire
3 Silk Farm Road
Concord, NH 03301-8200
PHONE (603) 224-9909 FAX (603) 226-0902
EMAIL asnh@nhaudubon.org
www.nhaudubon.org

Trail Information

Pine Trail

Red markers
Approximately .5 mile, 20 minutes round-trip)

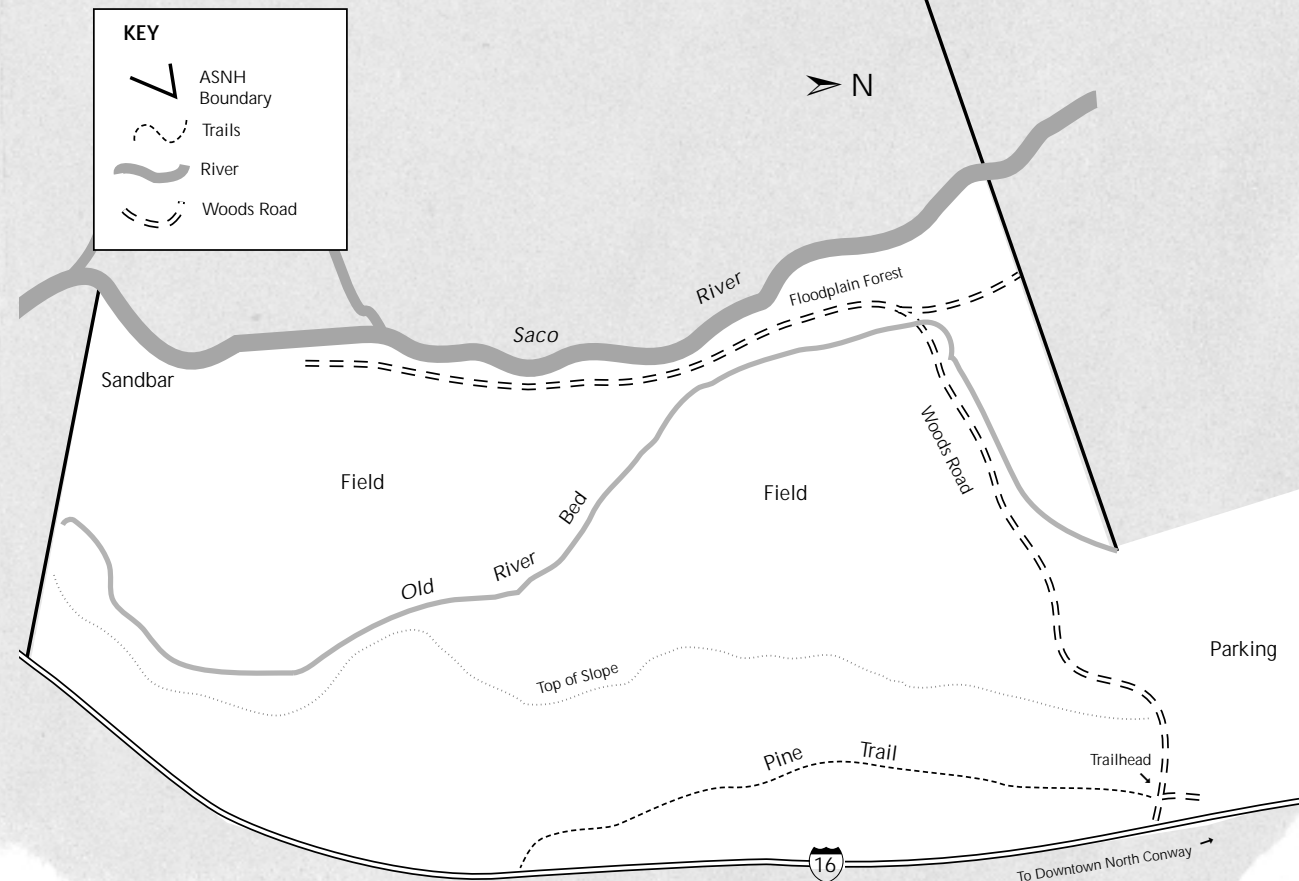
This short, relatively level trail follows the height of ground through a forest habitat. When you look down on the rest of the Sanctuary and the river valley, you are standing on the remnants of the sediment left by the last ice age about 10,000-12,000 years ago. The river has washed away much of the sediment within its reach, thus lowering the depth of the valley floor from the original glacial fill on which you are standing. This gradual erosion process still continues.

As you walk the trail, notice how the forest changes from a mix of white and red pine on the north end to an oak/pine mix with a hemlock understory at the southern end. This habitat is attractive to woodland birds, such as chickadees, ovenbirds, and red vireos. There are also wildflowers here: Canada mayflower and starflower are both common residents.

The trail ends at Route 16; to return to the trailhead, you must return by the same trail.

Identifying Markers

Pine Trail: red markers
Woods Road: yellow markers



Woods Road Trail

Yellow markers
1 mile, 1 hour round-trip

This trail descends into the valley and takes you through a variety of habitats, ending up at a sandbar by the Saco River. The trail follows an old woods road west down the steep slope through a remarkably mixed forest: red and white pine, birch, ash, oak, maple, and beech

can all be found here. Continue straight on the old road until you emerge into a field with birch and poplar growing in it. (Warning: stay on the mown path along the edge of the field here and watch for ticks in the spring and summer.) This property was once used for farming, but the overgrown field is now used by white-tailed deer, butterflies, and dragonflies. Also keep an eye out for birds that like early successional habitat for nesting, such

as chestnut-sided warbler, song sparrow, and indigo bunting. Wildflowers such as goldenrod, yarrow, meadowsweet, virgin's bower, wild grapes, and milkweed are also present.

The trail then enters a floodplain forest, where it turns left (the road to the right leaves the Sanctuary). One of the dominant trees here is the silver maple, a common floodplain resident that is able to handle the periodic inundation of water to the area. Major flooding occurs every five to ten years, with most flooding taking place during the spring.

From the floodplain forest, the trail enters another field. (Warning: stay on the mown path and watch out for poison ivy!) This more open area follows the course of the Saco River – as you look over to the other bank, keep your eye out for bank nesters such as kingfisher and bank swallows.

The trail ends at the river. This ever-changing sandbar is a great place in all seasons to look for mammal tracks. Both red fox and coyote have raised young in the Sanctuary. Other tracks to look for at the river include white-tailed deer, river otter, beaver, mink, and raccoon. In winter, there's a spectacular view north to the Presidential Range.

The trail ends at the sandbar; to return to the trailhead, you must return by the same trail.