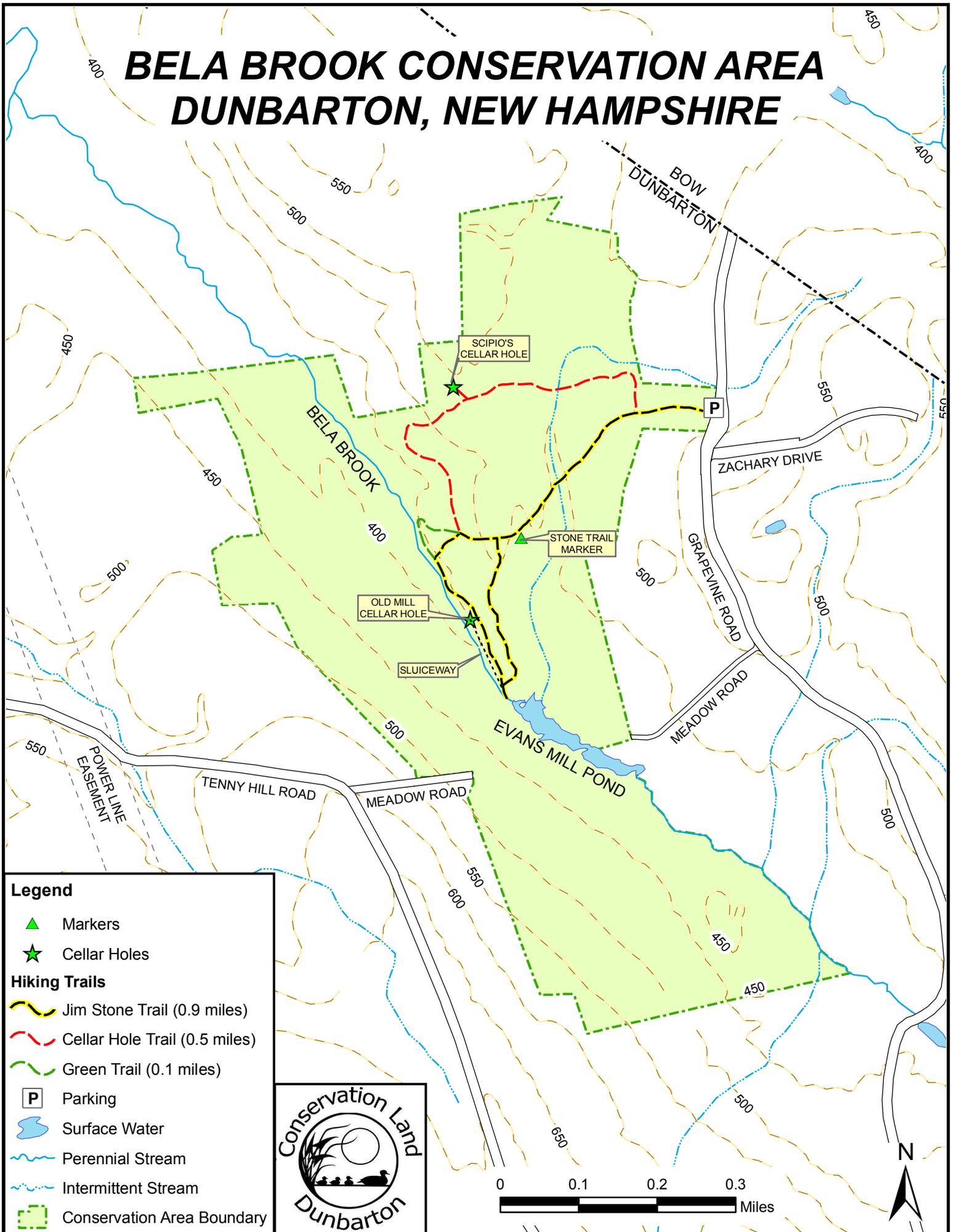
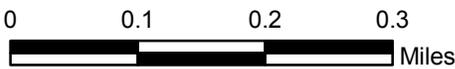


BELA BROOK CONSERVATION AREA DUNBARTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE



Legend

-  Markers
-  Cellar Holes
- Hiking Trails**
-  Jim Stone Trail (0.9 miles)
-  Cellar Hole Trail (0.5 miles)
-  Green Trail (0.1 miles)
-  Parking
-  Surface Water
-  Perennial Stream
-  Intermittent Stream
-  Conservation Area Boundary



Dunbarton's Bela Brook Conservation Area



Bela Brook runs through the northeast part of Dunbarton and into Bow, east of Pages Corner and Routes 13 and 77. The 220-acre conservation area sits along the western side of Grapevine Road and permanently protects public access to the brook.

Bela Brook and its tributaries have long been a town conservation priority. Their importance was first recognized in the town's 1972 Open Space Plan. In town master planning efforts since then, the Bela Brook corridor has ranked among Dunbarton's top conservation objectives. The brook is one of Dunbarton's most significant wetlands. Funding for the conservation area's land purchases came entirely from the Dunbarton Conservation Fund.

The conservation area includes downstream reaches of wetland, as well as a totally undeveloped stream corridor and small pond. The property is wooded, moderately steep in places, and varied. Hemlocks along the brook create a cool, dark, wild setting. Deer and turkey are abundant. Tracks, scat, and other signs of snowshoe hare are found in clearings. Fox, moose, coyote, porcupine, muskrat and beaver as well as a variety of birds have been spotted here.

TRAILS

The Jim Stone Trail (0.9 mile)

This loop trail is named in honor of Jim Stone, whose family has lived and farmed in Dunbarton for generations. Jim was vice-chair of the Dunbarton Conservation Commission and passed away suddenly in September 2013. He was instrumental in laying out Bela Brook's trails.

On its way to the brook, the trail passes a split granite block which illustrates the technique used by hardy New Englanders to hand-cut native granite from glacial boulders to make building foundations, steps, thresholds and posts. Round holes were cut about 6 inches apart in a large block of granite using a plug drill which had a V-shaped point and was rotated slightly between each blow of a heavy hammer, creating a round hole two or three inches deep. Into this hole were placed a pair of half-round steel shims or "feathers," and between these was driven a wedge or "plug" which exerted outward pressure and split the stone. (*NH Div. of Historic Resources, Granite Splitting Tools and Techniques*)

After reaching beautiful Bela Brook, the trail then climbs gradually to the former site of Samuel Evans' mill, which stood east of the brook and north of the old Meadow road in the 1800s. A sluiceway 690 feet long was made to divert water from the mill pond (now a beaver pond) downhill to the mill and can be seen to the right of the trail as it leaves the brook and before reaching the pond. Beaver inhabit the pond today.

After leaving the pond, the trail traverses logged areas before looping back onto itself. Go right to return to the Grapevine Road trailhead.

The Cellar Hole Trail (0.5 mile)

A black man named Scipio was the freed slave of Captain Caleb Page of Dunbarton and fought in the Revolutionary War. He and his wife Dinah were granted land in the area of One Stack Brook (as Bela Brook was called in Colonial Times). Interestingly, in the 1790s, Dunbarton was home to a "new Guinea" of some twenty people on Guinea Road, perhaps clustering around the family of Scipio Page. Scipio and Dinah are most likely buried in the Northeast corner of the Page's Corner Cemetery on Route 13. (*Research by Fred and Lee Mullen/Harlan Noyes/Alice Hadley*)

A spur trail leads uphill from the main trail to a set of stones, which may mark the cellar hole or well of Scipio and Dinah Page's home.

Upon returning to the main trail, follow it right to Bela Brook, or left to return to the Grapevine Road trailhead.

The Green Trail (0.1 mile)

This trail is a short loop that wends its way to the brook.