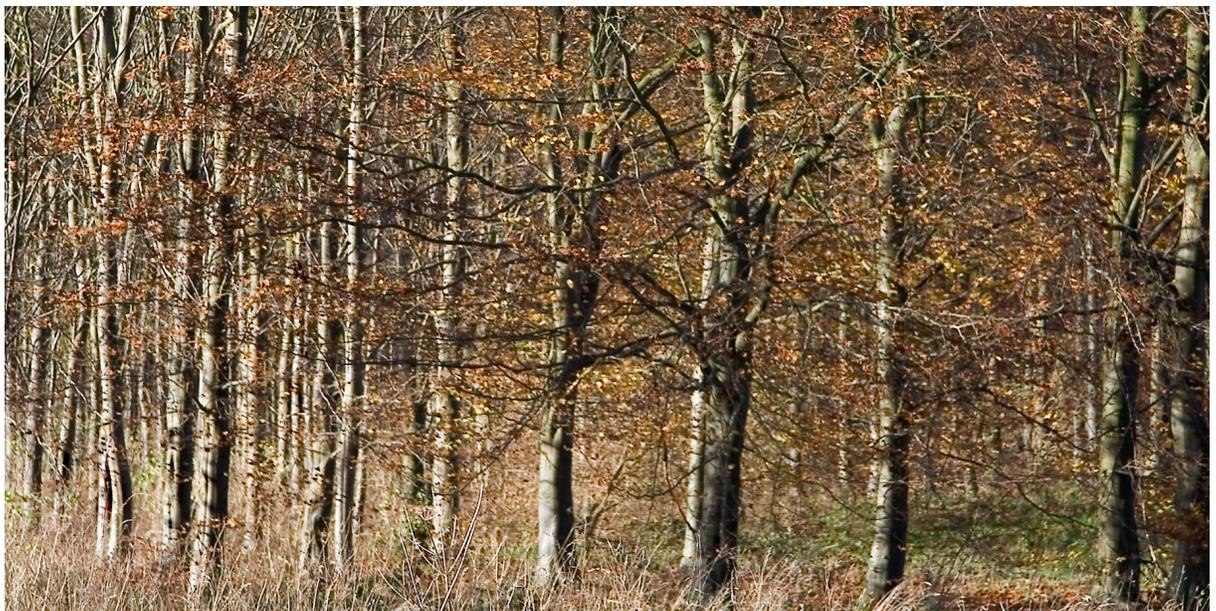


The 23 acre Harrison Smith Preserve combines the beauty of a New England woodland with historical glimpses of Wilton in a bygone era. Created in 1974 when the Smith family generously donated the land to the Wilton Land Conservation Trust. The northern most section of the Smith Preserve borders Quarry Head. Smith Preserve and Quarry Head together, give citizens of Wilton a combined area of nearly 60 acres of open space, with interconnecting trails for passive recreation and spiritual refreshment.

The Preserve, like Quarry Head, contains numerous rock outcroppings and cliffs, albeit less imposing in character. The property is part of the same geological formation as those in Quarry Head, being composed of medium to coarse grained gneiss, that extend back to the Devonian Period (about 400 million years ago). In the Harrison Smith Preserve with the rock formations exposed only at lower elevations, commercial grades of rock were undoubtedly wanting. The limited quarrying that can be seen suggest use only for local building needs such as barn foundations and bridge footings. Other past uses of the land included farming, particularly the raising of livestock. Many pasture and pen enclosures formed by stone fences attest to a once open landscape where now exists deep forest. Still in existence along the Preserve's eastern boundary is a natural spring which more than likely provided reliable water for grazing.

The mixed hardwood forest of today is everywhere evident with several species of oak, maple, birch, ash, and beech predominating. In rough terrain where grazing and/or wood cutting were restricted, very large trees may be seen. Near the main cliff ramparts to the northeast for example, magnificent specimens of tulip poplar, white ash, red oak, and sugar maple are almost an overwhelming sight. The different habitats throughout the preserve such as wet areas bordering streams and low spots, well-drained slopes, and dry crests support numerous species of understory shrubs, small trees, ferns and wildflowers. Diversity of life abounds in this very special area of the town.



Directions: From Wilton Center, go north on Route 33 (Ridgefield Road) for ±3 miles to Keeler's Ridge Road. The park entrances are found off the south end of Keeler's Ridge Road and just north of the northern Keeler's Ridge Road entrance on the right.

Acreeage: ±23

Parking: On Keeler's Ridge Road; from Quarry Head.

Access: Best through Quarry Head; off Ridgefield Road and off Keeler's Ridge Road.

Trails: Scenic woodland trails for hiking and horse back riding. Distance not available.

Ownership: Wilton Land Conservation Trust

