

Location & Parking

Access Points

Brickyard Road (preferred): Take Tolman Pond Road to Brickyard Road. From the turn go **0.4** miles to the trailhead that is marked on the left with a sign “Partridge Woods”. This is the main entry point with parking for 10-15 cars. You can access the entire property from here via Ethan’s Way and its connecting trails.

Brickyard Road at Greengate: At the end of the town-maintained part of Brickyard Road there is walking access up a semi-private road that serves as a driveway for three residents. It is more often used as the exit point; but if you choose to start here, *please park at the main parking lot off Brickyard Road. Do not* drive beyond the end of the town road.

Kulish Ledge Trail Parking: From Nelson Village take Old Stoddard Road 3 miles to the parking lot. There is space for 6-7 cars parking nose toward the road. The Kulish Ledge and Bailey Brook Trails start here giving access to Partridge Woods from the north.

Trail Descriptions

This guide covers the Partridge Woods area. With part of the super sanctuary you can explore 1,000 acres owned largely by the Town of Nelson and the Harris Center for Conservation Education. The Nelson Trails Committee has worked with the Harris Center and the Nelson Conservation Commission to create over 10 miles of trails that give the public wide access to this unfragmented block of conserved land. The moderately difficult trails afford beautiful views as you hike from Brickyard Road to Old Stoddard Road. It also provides hikers the opportunity to park on one side of the area and walk the loops, returning to your original trail head.

These trails are for your enjoyment and for those who will follow you. Leave flowers, plants and natural objects as you find them. Preserve the past by not disturbing historic or cultural artifacts. Observe wildlife without impacting their quiet or their environment. Enjoy your time on the trails while respecting the private properties they pass through.

We ask that users treat our neighbors, other hikers, and the property with courtesy.

- **Please** carry out what you bring in
- Dogs must be under your control at all times
- Respect our neighbors - park only in designated areas
- **Do not** park in areas that are closed for the winter season
- **Do not** block our neighbors’ access to their property

Ethan’s Way

Blue blazes. This trail serves as the main entry for Partridge Woods, giving access to the interior of this 580-acre piece of Nelson town land. From the large parking lot off Brickyard Road it follows a substantial wood road built by Ethan Tolman and climbs steadily from **1540’** to about **2000’** over the course of 1.1 miles ending at a T junction at the Wheeler Trail. The old Wheeler Homestead cellar hole may be seen clearly here.

Hurd Hill Trail

Yellow blazes. The trail branches off Ethan’s Way about half a mile from the Brickyard Road parking lot and climbs moderately over old logging roads 0.4 miles to the top of Hurd Hill. There is a junction with the Ridge Trail at 0.2 miles and the two trails share a common path for about 200’. Hurd Hill, summit **1821’**, has been a favorite of hikers in years past, drawn there by its considerable growth of wild blueberries. There is a long-term project to restore good berrying here.

Ridge Trail

Orange blazes. This trail follows the ridge for 1.5 miles and connects Hurd Hill to Osgood Hill. The trail starts at the top of Hurd Hill (elevation **1821’**) where a view of Blacktop and Osgood Hills to the north has been cleared. It descends to a saddle between Hurd Hill and Blacktop and briefly intersects and shares the path of the Hurd Hill Trail before heading north toward Blacktop. There is a view to the west on the trail where the Nelson Town Barn, the Nelson Church steeple, the French Farm, and Stratton Mountain in Vermont can be seen. The trail then climbs by switchbacks to Blacktop (elevation **2099’**). Blacktop gets its name from the spruce trees covering much of its summit. From this summit there is a view to the east over Nubanusit Lake and to the mountains beyond. The trail now crosses the Wheeler Trail and climbs gently to an area, clear cut a number of years ago, that features a beautiful view of Mount Monadnock. In another 0.4 miles is the summit of Osgood Hill, which is also called City Hill.

Wheeler Trail

Yellow blazes. A 1774 abandoned town road that once served the homestead of Jacob Wheeler, the trail traverses Partridge Woods for 1.0 miles. It runs from the Ridge Trail southeast to Ethan’s Way and the Osgood Hill Link Trail ending at Brickyard Road at Greengate.

Osgood Hill Link Trail

Blue blazes. This 0.3 mile trail connects the Wheeler Trail with the Kulish Ledge Trail. It gives access (via the Kulish Ledge Trail) to the summit of Osgood Hill as well as the parking lot on Old Stoddard Road.

Kulish Ledge Trail

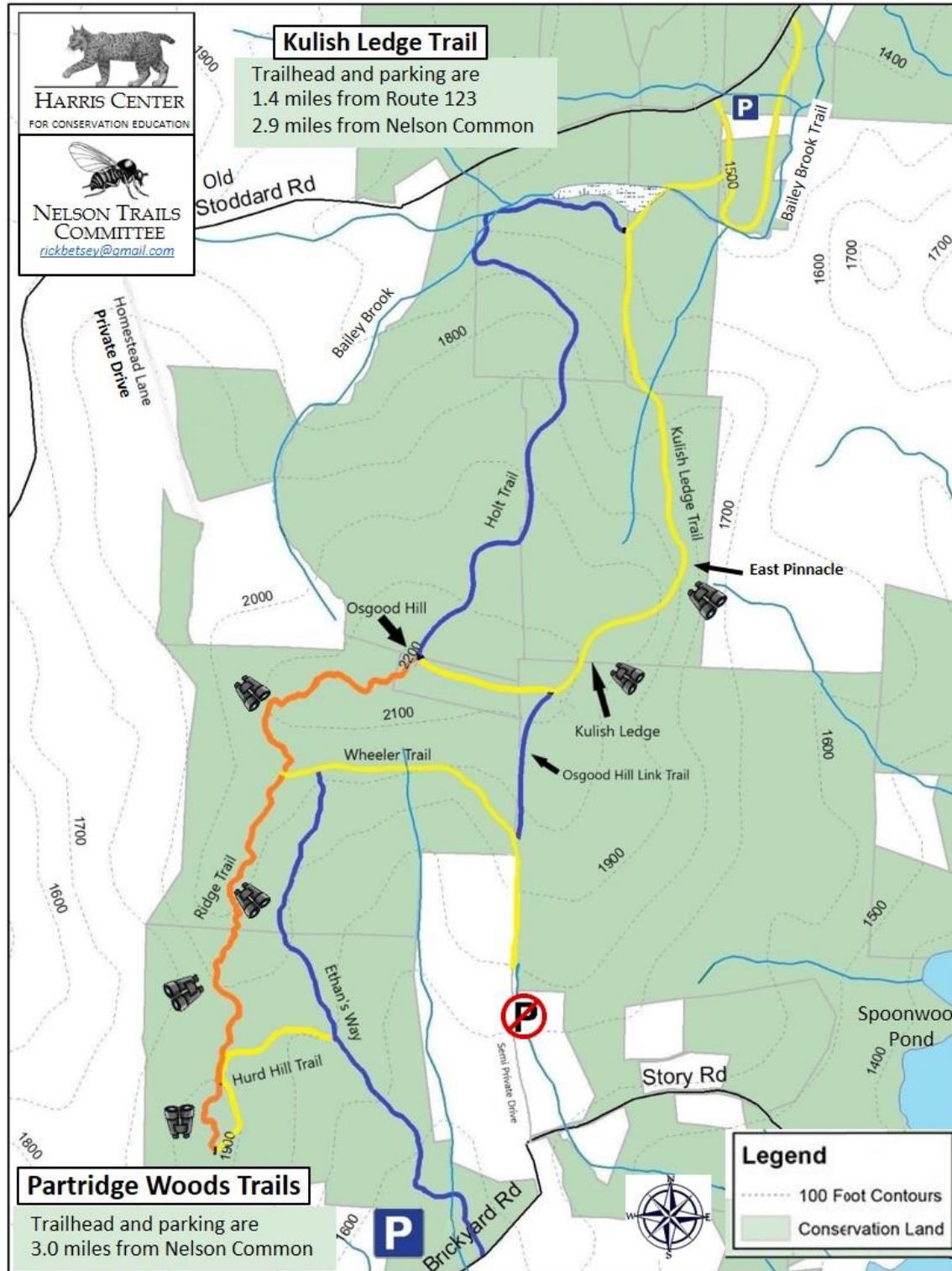
Yellow blazes. The trailhead for Kulish Ledge is at a small parking lot on Old Stoddard Road 3 miles from the Village of Nelson and is a moderate climb of 2.1 miles to the top of Osgood Hill. Parking is limited and we ask that you respect our neighbors by parking in the lot (nose to the road) or well off the road down the hill from the trailhead. From the parking area the trail shares the path with the Bailey Brook Trail before turning right at the sign for Kulish Ledge. The trail crosses a bridge over Bailey Brook below a beaver pond. At the beaver dam it turns south skirting the pond before beginning a moderate and steady climb to a view of Spoonwood Pond and Nubanusit Lake at the East Pinnacle. The trail then continues to Kulish Ledge where there are more views. Continuing past the Ledge the trail intersects the Osgood Hill Link Trail (**blue** blazes) that connects to the Wheeler Trail. Passing the link trail, it is a short hike (0.3 mi.) to the Osgood Hill summit (**2233’**).

Holt Trail

Blue blazes. The Holt Trail completes the loop from Old Stoddard Road to Kulish Ledge, to Osgood Hill, and back. If starting at the beaver pond, the trail branches right off the Kulish Ledge Trail 0.4 miles from the road. It then heads west past several beaver ponds before turning south along Bailey Brook and then climbing by switchbacks to a nice view to the north. Soon the trail enters an old logging cut nicely growing in with spruce trees. It passes the cellar holes that were the homes of Thomas Holt and his father, Daniel. The trail flattens out and goes west to the cellar hole of Stephen and Mary Parker, follows an intermittent brook that goes to Bailey Brook, and then goes on to the top of Osgood Hill. The trail passes the north end of the Ridge Trail just before reaching the summit. Distance from Old Stoddard Road to Osgood Hill 2.1 miles. The total loop of Kulish Ledge to Osgood and coming down the Holt Trail is 4.2 miles.

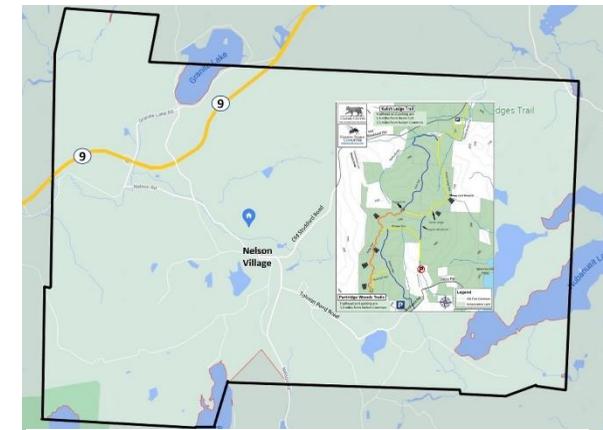
Bailey Brook Trail

Yellow blazes. This 1.2 mile loop trail is particularly well suited to families with young hikers. The grades are easy and is best hiked clockwise. From the Kulish Ledge parking lot, follow Old Stoddard Road downhill and east a few hundred yards. Here at the yellow blackfly sign is the trailhead. It turns into the woods and follows Bailey Brook upstream past a waterfall and along a rushing brook until it comes to another, larger waterfall – the location of a sawmill ruin. The stone dam and towering mill foundations are what remain of a mill built by Stephen Osborne about 1815. Just above the dam, the trail crosses an old town road and enters the woods following Bailey Brook for a few hundred yards before turning up an old cattle lane to join the old town road that once served the Osborne Farm. The stone ruins of the homes and barns are fun to explore. A nice, flat walk returns you to the beginning, the parking lot.



PARTRIDGE WOODS TRAILS

Hiking Guide



Town of Nelson and Partridge Woods

Produced by the
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<https://nelsonincommon.org/trails/>