

Location & Parking Access Points

Brickyard Road: Take Tolman Pond Road to Brickyard Road. From the turn go **0.4** miles to the parking lot entrance marked on the left with the sign “Partridge Woods”. This is the main entry point and trailhead with parking for 10-15 cars. There is a kiosk here with information about Partridge Woods and the trails.

Trail Access: You can access the entire property and its connecting trails from here via Ethan’s Way.

North Parking: A new parking lot was added in 2022 on Old Stoddard Road giving access to Partridge Woods from the north. It is located 2.3 miles from the Nelson Road and 1.9 miles from Rte. 123 in Stoddard. It provides 8-9 parking spaces and hiking access via Priscilla’s Path and the Holt Trail.

Trail Access: The North Parking lot gives access to Partridge Woods trails from the north and to the Kulish Ledge Trail. Take Priscilla’s Path to the junction. Left goes along the beaver ponds to connect with the Kulish Ledge Trail. Right goes up the Holt Trail to Osgood Hill and will connect to the Kulish Ledge Trail and the Ridge Trail at the hilltop.

The original Kulish Ledge and Bailey Brook trailheads start at a location east down the road from the North Parking lot. The trailhead is on the south side of Old Stoddard Rd. 3 miles east of Nelson Village. Baily Brook is another few yards down the road. It is permissible to park along the road, but out of respect for our neighbors, please park well out of the traveled way and downhill from the trailhead.

Trail Descriptions

Partridge Woods area is 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, walk all the loops, and return to your original trailhead.

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
- 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 properties.

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 parking lot off Brickyard Road it follows a 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 at the junction.

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 branches off the Hurd Hill Trail and follows a 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 then crosses the Wheeler Trail and climbs gently to a large clear cut area that features a beautiful view of Mount Monadnock. In another 0.4 miles the trail ends at the summit of Osgood Hill, which is also called City Hill.

Wheeler Trail

Yellow blazes. The trail traverses Partridge Woods for 1.0 miles along an abandoned town road that once served the homestead of Jacob Wheeler in 1774. It runs from the Ridge Trail southeast to Ethan’s Way, then on to the junction for the Link Trail. It then continues to a private road. Here the trail goes down the hill to Brickyard Road at Greengate. Turn right here and follow the road back to the Partridge Woods main parking lot.

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 to the Holt Trail, which goes to the North Parking lot on Old Stoddard Road.

Kulish Ledge Trail

Yellow blazes. The trailhead for Kulish Ledge is 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 2.3 miles from the Village at the North lot. You may also park well off the road down the hill from the trailhead. From the trailhead mailboxes follow the old road. Turn 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 East Pinnacle where there is a view of Spoonwood Pond and Nubanusit Lake. The trail then continues to Kulish Ledge where there is another view. Continuing past the Ledge the trail intersects with the 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 a loop from Old Stoddard Road, to Osgood Hill, to Kulish Ledge, 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 at the junction of Priscilla’s Path, which goes to the Partridge North parking lot. Continuing up the trail takes you along Bailey Brook and then climbs 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 Hill and coming down the Holt Trail is 4.2 miles.

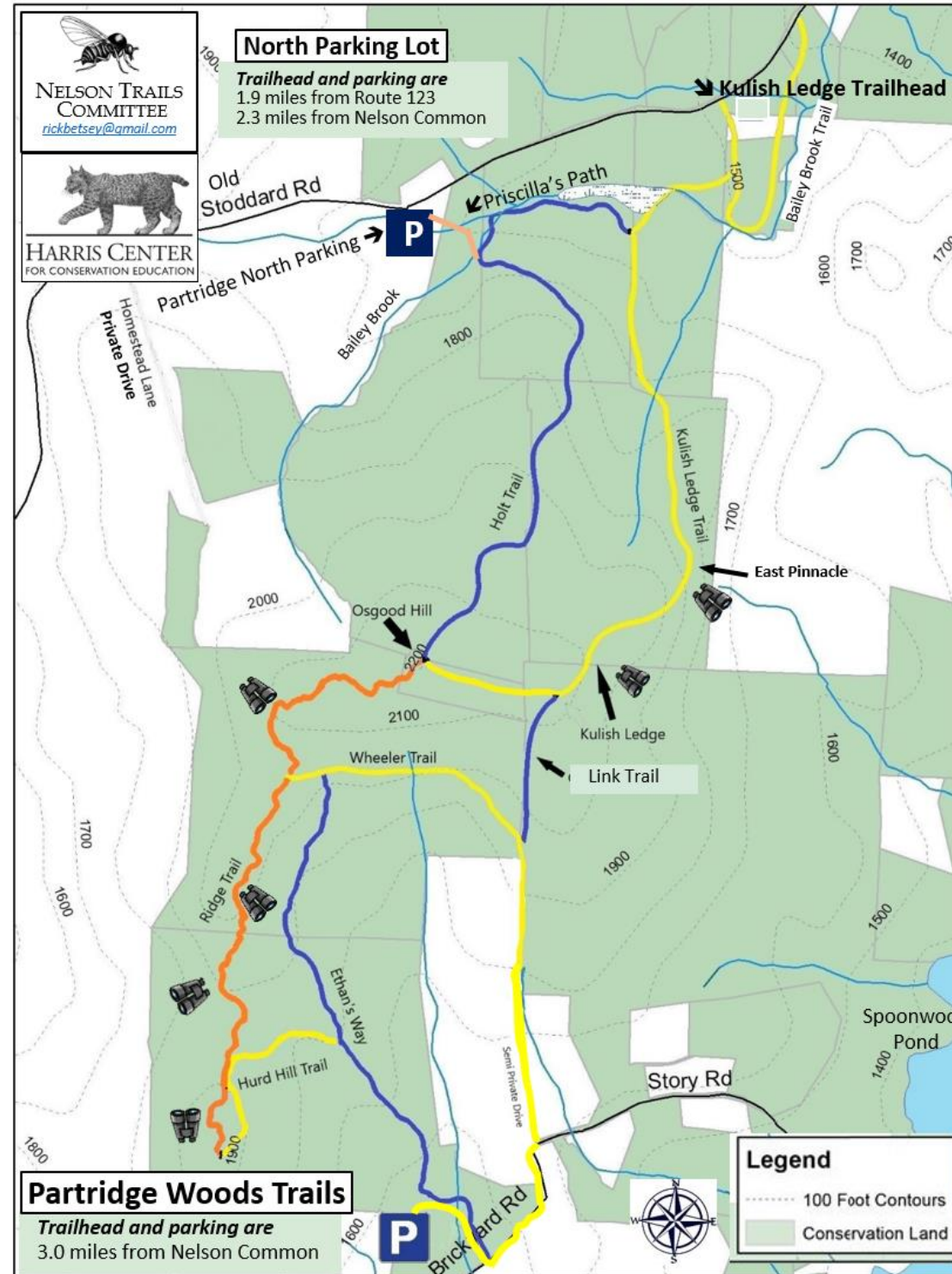
Bailey Brook Trail

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 Partridge North Parking lot, follow Old Stoddard Road east downhill a few hundred yards. The trailhead mailbox is here at the yellow blackfly sign. A few hundred yards further down Old Stoddard Road is the actual trailhead. Turn right into the woods and follow Bailey Brook upstream past a waterfall and along a rushing brook until the trail 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 at this location are fun to explore.

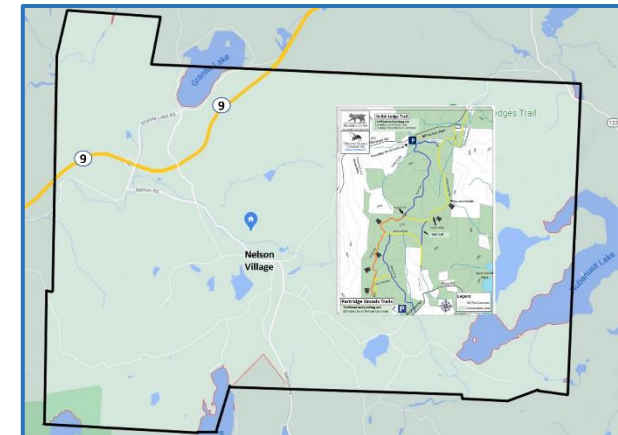
A nice, flat walk returns you to the trail mailboxes.



PARTRIDGE WOODS

TRAILS

Hiking Guide



Town of Nelson and Partridge Woods

Published by the
Nelson Trails Committee
June 2023
<https://nelsonincommon.org/trails/>