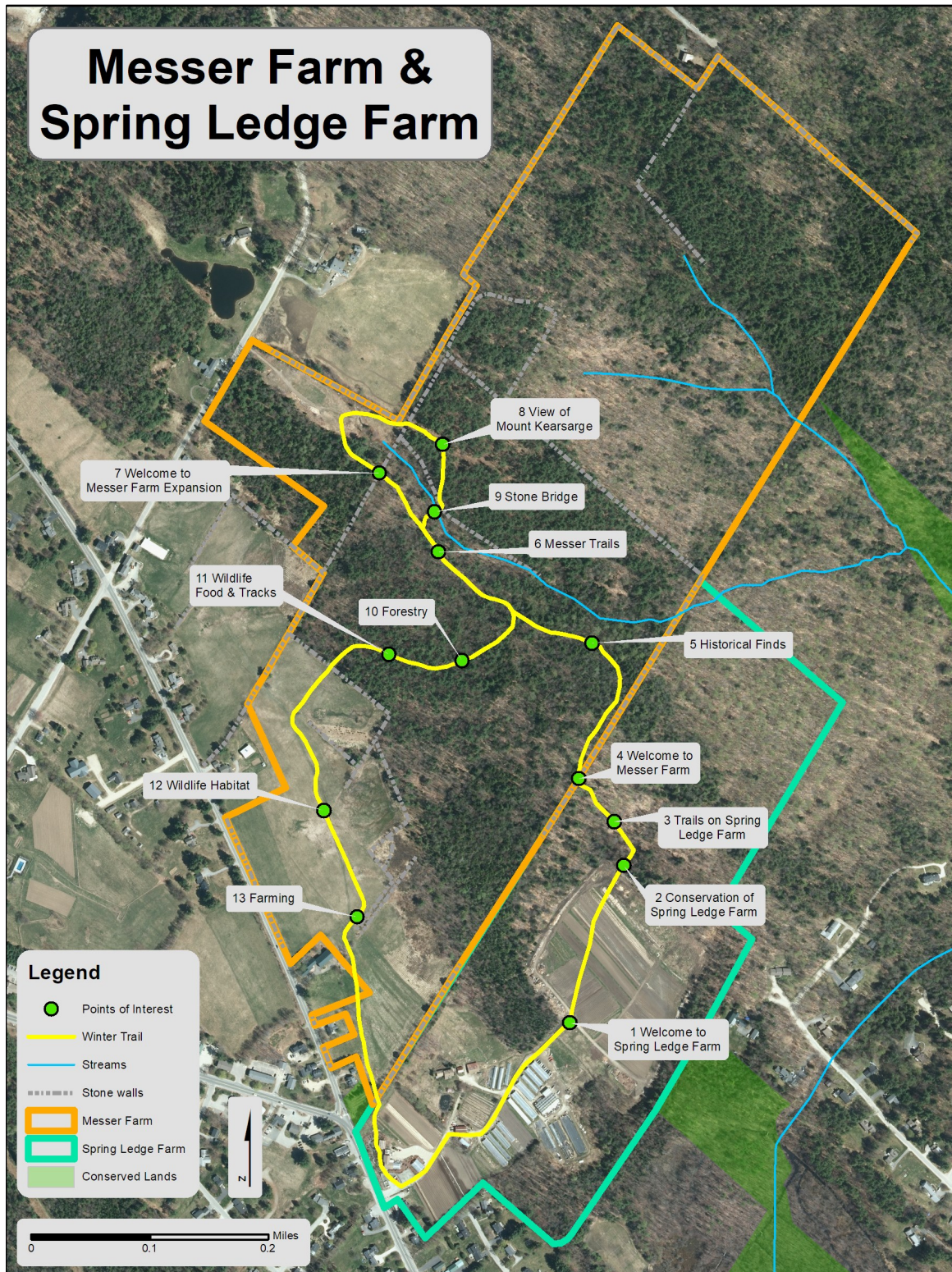


# Messer Farm & Spring Ledge Farm



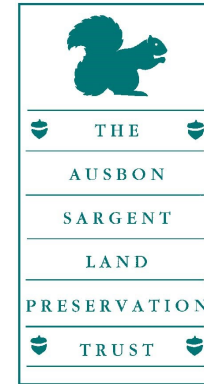
In the event of an emergency on the trail, please call: 603-526-6253

Short loop  
= 1.3 miles

Long loop  
= 1.7 miles

# Winter Farm & Forest Tour at the Messer Farm

Presented by:



February 6, 2022

1pm—4pm

An Ausbon Sargent  
35th Anniversary Special Event



# Let's Explore Together!

*Go at your own pace but stop along the way to learn a bit about the Messer farm and forest*

**1. Welcome to Spring Ledge Farm** - The Farm is a family operation, started and grown by John and Sue Clough for 30 years. Greg Berger purchased the Farm in 2005 after working alongside the Cloughs for 20 years.

**2. Conservation of Spring Ledge Farm** - The Farm is protected by a conservation easement held by the Town of New London, which was done with assistance by ASLPT. Both original owners of the farm, John and Sue Clough, were founding board members of the land trust.

**3. Trails on Spring Ledge Farm** - Trails on the Farm are maintained in partnership with the New London Conservation Commission (NLCC). These trails will eventually connect to the old trail system on the Messer Farm land that we are working to restore and improve.

**4. Welcome to Messer Farm** - In October of 2020, ASLPT became the owners of this 144-acre forest and farm. Notice the boundary markers: stone wall, barbed wire, and conservation boundary signs with Seymour and our phone number.

**5. Historical Finds** - Messer Farm has had many uses over the years, farming, forestry, and pasture for cattle. To the north of the trail here, most likely under the snow, is an old sugar house foundation. Looking around the forest you can see the older sugar maples in this area that used to be tapped for sap and boiled to make syrup. **Turn left just beyond this point for small loop. Look for signs!**

**6. Trails** - While Messer Farm trails are currently not maintained, we are working with a professional to create a plan to improve the sustainability of the trail network, and help balance human use and the needs of wildlife utilizing the property. The design will take into consideration connections to Spring Ledge Farm

and working with volunteers and the NLCC when our trail system plan is ready!

**7. Welcome to Messer Farm Expansion** - In April, 2021, ASLPT purchased this additional property to connect the Messer Farm to Morgan Hill Road, allowing for another access point. ASLPT hopes to utilize this access for recreational use and future forestry and habitat management. The stone wall is the boundary.

**8. View of Mount Kearsarge** - Enjoy the view!

**9. Stone Bridge** - Walk back in time along this path over a stone bridge. This bridge was most likely built while the property was pasture for cattle to cross the headwaters of White Brook.

**10. Forestry** - A recent timber harvest thinned the forest to create age diversity of the trees. By having trees of different species and ages throughout the forest, we improve the resiliency of the forest to be protected from pest outbreaks and storm damage. ASLPT will continue to actively manage the Messer Farm with timber harvests to maintain a diverse and healthy forest.

**11. Wildlife Food and Tracks** - The open rows where trees were harvested have started to grow back. Some of the first plants to arrive are blackberry and raspberry bushes. Covered in thorns, they are difficult for us to walk through, but the bears and deer feast in these areas. Can you spot any wildlife tracks?

**12. Wildlife Habitat** - Between the forest and cultivated fields, we have started a rotation of late-season mowing to allow these areas to grow taller with grasses and flowers for wildlife to forage. This transitional habitat of tall grasses, flowers, shrubs, and young trees provides food for pollinators, birds, and large mammals too.

**13. Farming** - Messer Farm has a long history of agricultural use, dating back to the late 1700s. To continue this use, ASLPT has leased the open fields to Spring Ledge Farm to allow their agricultural operations to grow, harvesting vegetables and flowers. Can you spot piles of stones that have been removed from the field along the edges?

## Scavenger Hunt Checklist

*Find the following along the trail. Take a photo to document your findings!*

- ◇ Apple Tree
- ◇ Ausbon Sargent Sign
- ◇ Barbed Wire
- ◇ Beech Tree
- ◇ Blue Bird Nesting Box
- ◇ Hemlock Tree
- ◇ Leaf
- ◇ Mount Kearsarge
- ◇ Pine Cone
- ◇ Stone Wall
- ◇ Sugar Maple Tree
- ◇ Thorns
- ◇ White Brook
- ◇ White Pine Tree
- ◇ Wildlife Tracks:
  - Bobcat
  - Coyote
  - Deer
  - Squirrel
  - Turkey
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Share your nature photos with us by emailing:  
kheath@ausbonsargent.org.

Tag us on social media!  
@ausbonsargent or #ausbonsargent