



# BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

• ESTABLISHED 1979 •

## Sowams Woods: An Introduction

Sowams Woods is a 12.3-acre parcel owned and managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, part of the Trust's 300-acre network of preserved open spaces in town. It took four years and two-million dollars, with support at the neighborhood, town, state, and federal level, to protect the property forever. The effort earned the John H. Chafee Award for Conservation in 2010. The trails are maintained by Land Trust volunteers.

The property is part of the ancestral lands of the Pokanoket people, which covered all of the East Bay and parts of Seekonk, Swansea and Rehoboth. In Pokanoket, the word "Sowams" refers to the southern section of their homeland. The Pokanoket people of today played an essential role in preserving Sowams Woods, which they consider a sacred area. The seven colors of the trails represent the colors of the Pokanoket's Rainbow Shield. The Pokanoket people have long been environmental stewards who believe in respecting the creations of the Earth and in the value of their connection to the land.

The Walnut Trail meanders through a woodland dominated by white and red pines adapted to well-drained, low-nutrient glacial soils of the area. From the Revolutionary War era until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this section was primarily a walnut grove. In 1911, the Rhode Island Country Club acquired the land and cut down the walnut grove to make way for a golf course. They did not ultimately use this section for the golf course, so they planted red pines to replace the walnut trees. In a strange twist of nature, the walnut trees left a surprise: naturally occurring chemicals produced by walnut trees led to red pine scale, which caused most of the red pines to die. White pines grew up in their place. Along this trail, you'll find an information kiosk built by local Boy Scouts.

The Vernal View Trail and Peeper Trail feature vernal pools. Depending on the season, these small freshwater wetlands may be wet or dry. Fish are unable to survive in these ponds, making them perfect for frogs, salamanders and other small creatures which might otherwise be eaten by fish. Vernal means spring. This is when water levels are typically the highest and there is the most activity at the pools. They are one of the most endangered of habitats. Frogs and salamanders need at least 1,000 feet around the perimeter of a vernal pool for shelter and food. When development encroaches too near a vernal pool, these species lose their habitat and may not survive.

Along the Ridge Trail, you'll see Echo Lake beyond the trees, with its active bird life and spectacular views. A fish ladder for herring, located just outside of Sowams Woods on Echo Lake, was installed with a grant obtained by the Rhode Island Country Club.

*For more information about the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, or to support our efforts with a donation or volunteer time, visit [www.blct.org](http://www.blct.org) or email [cindyelder@blct.org](mailto:cindyelder@blct.org). Thank you!*

**PLEASE NOTE: Dogs must be kept on leashes to prevent distress to wildlife in this protected area.**



Street parking on Spinnaker Drive **P** No on street parking Washington Road **P** Street parking on Lighthouse Lane **P**

### SOWAMS WOODS - Barrington Land Conservation Trust



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- Preserve Boundaries
- Parking Area
- Kiosk
- Hiking Trails
- Public Roads
- Vernal Pool



#### Sowams Woods guidelines:

- Respect our neighbors' privacy.
- Stay on marked trails.
- See map above and trailhead markers for permitted trail uses.
- Dogs are welcome but must remain on leash per town ordinance. Please pick up after your pet.
- Leave no trace - please carry out what you carry in.
- Enjoy and share your feedback at [www.blct.org](http://www.blct.org)

To help support the stewardship efforts that maintain this property please visit [www.blct.org](http://www.blct.org) to make a donation, or e-mail [info@blct.org](mailto:info@blct.org) if you are interested in helping us maintain other BLCT properties.