

## Sanford Farm, Ram Pasture and the Woods

Welcome! The Sanford Farm, Ram Pasture and The Woods properties contain 780 acres of grasslands, shrub thickets, and woodlands that have a rich cultural history and provide habitat for many species of rare plants and animals. These properties are owned and managed by the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, a membership-supported, nonprofit organization that is dedicated to permanently conserving, maintaining and managing natural areas and habitats and encouraging an appreciation of and interest in the island's natural resources. The protection of these important conservation properties is the result of fundraising efforts that involved the participation of many island residents and visitors over multiple years. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all those who generously assisted in these purchases.

## The Walking Trail System

The Sanford Farm, Ram Pasture and The Woods contain more than six miles of trails for visitors to explore and enjoy. Interpretive signs that identify and explain the significant natural, geologic and historic features are found along the major trails. These signs numerically correspond to the map located in this brochure. Mileage and directional information are provided on the signs at key intersections as well.

### ❁ The Northern Loop

MARKERS 1 TO 13

**This circuit is 1.7 miles long, round-trip.**

An enjoyable 45-minute walk known as the Northern Loop (markers 1 through 13) provides visitors with a chance to experience Sanford Farm and the northernmost part of Ram Pasture and The Woods.

### ❁ The Barn Walk

MARKERS 1 TO 7 & 14 TO 18

**This route is 3.1 miles long, round trip.**

A second popular walk leads to one of the high points on the property, located about two-thirds of the way to the ocean. The most direct route passes markers 1 through 7 and 14 through 18. On a clear day, a breathtaking panorama of Nantucket's south shore, stretching from Cisco Beach to Madaket can be observed from the barn at Ram Pasture.

### ❁ The Ocean Walk

MARKERS 1 TO 7 & 14 TO 26

**This route is approximately 6 miles long, round trip.**

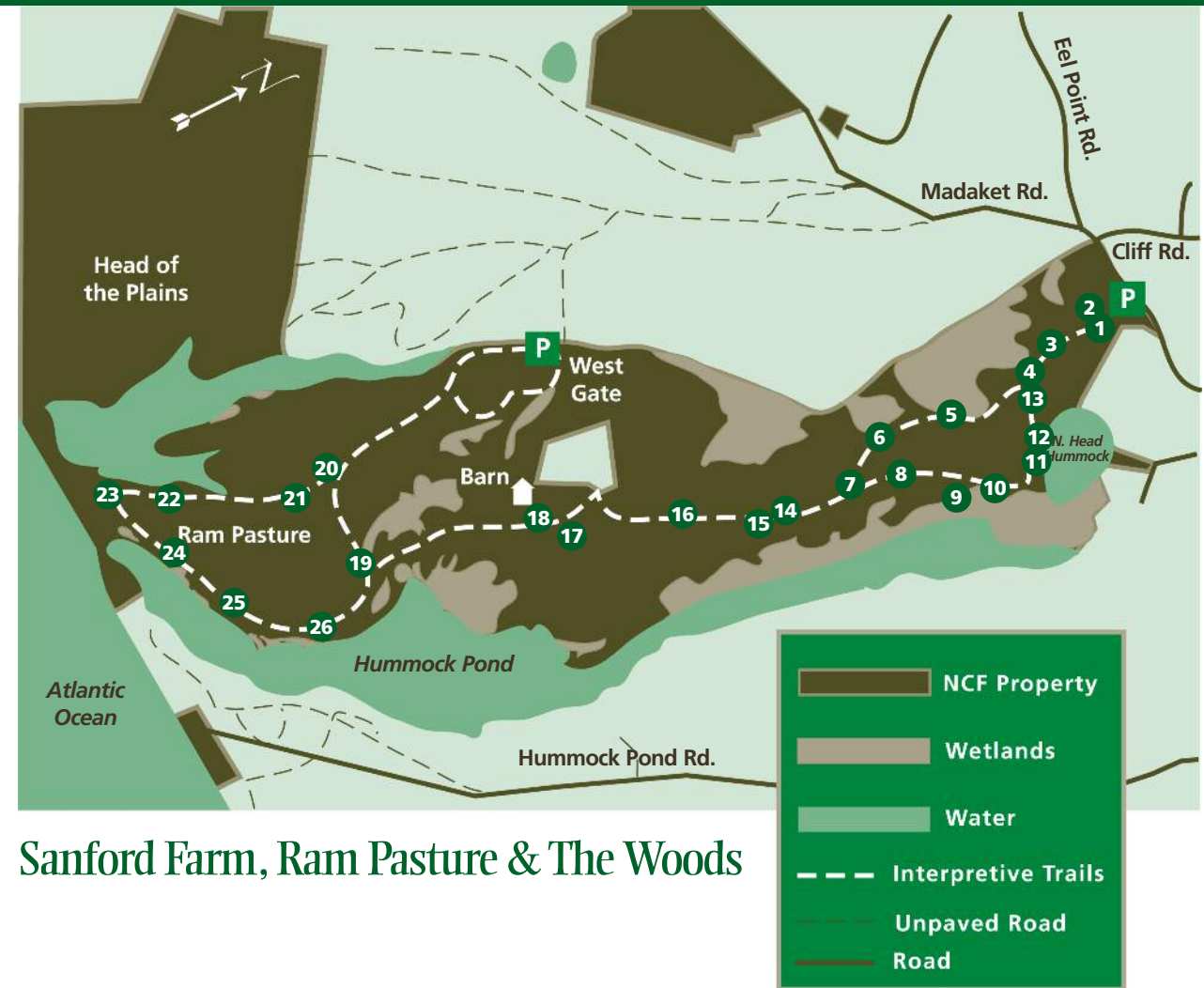
Avid walkers will enjoy the trip from the Madaket Road entrance to the Atlantic Ocean, at the southern edge of the property. It combines the Barn Walk with a circuit along the edge of Hummock Pond, and incorporates interpretive markers 1 through 7 and 14 through 26.

## Land Use History

This region of Nantucket was part of approximately 29,000 acres on the island that was set aside as "common land" by the 27 original shareholders, who settled Nantucket in 1659. It was used during the 17th and 18th centuries by these settlers and their descendants for grazing sheep and cows, farming, and harvesting wood.

It was Nantucket's long history of grazing and farming that created the unique vegetation communities that are well-represented on this property. The clearing of fields for agriculture and constant grazing pressure from sheep and cows removed trees and tall shrubs, thus allowing grasses, sedges, wild flowers and low shrubs to proliferate once farming practices ceased. Consequently, this area of the island now supports some of the best examples of sandplain grassland and sandplain heathland habitats on Nantucket. Sandplain grasslands are characterized by open, grassy plains interspersed with small patches of low-growing shrubs and herbaceous plants. Sandplain heathlands contain many of the same plant species as the grasslands, but have a larger component of shrubs.

Sandplain habitats support ecologically significant concentrations of rare and endangered plants, including New England blazing star, sandplain flax, bushy rockrose, and sandplain blue-eyed grass. These species can be found interspersed amongst Pennsylvania sedge and little bluestem (which are common in the Midwestern prairies), alpine reindeer moss (a lichen that is more abundant in colder climates), numerous aster species, and false heather or poverty grass. Other co-occurring species include low-growing shrubs such as black huckleberry, lowbush blueberry, and bearberry.



## Sanford Farm, Ram Pasture & The Woods

### The Sanford Farm

The northernmost portion of this conservation area is known as Sanford Farm. Beginning in 1985, the Nantucket Conservation Foundation and the Nantucket Islands Land Bank Commission (a county level governmental agency) participated in a cooperative effort to purchase 300 acres of property once owned by Mrs. Anne W. Sanford from the beneficiaries of her estate for \$4.4 million to protect the land from the threat of development. The western portion of this tract, known as West Sanford Farm, contains 166.5 acres that is now owned by the Land Bank Commission, while the Sanford Farm contains 133.5 acres that is owned by the Nantucket Conservation Foundation.

Sanford Farm was an operating dairy farm up until the early 1920's. The remains of a silo are located on a small hill on the western side of the property and mark the former location of a barn and farmhouse. It was last farmed by Randolph Swain, who later sold the property to Charles and Anne Kimball (later known as Anne Sanford) in the 1930's. Mrs. Sanford had the stone house across from the Head of Hummock Pond built as a replica of an English farmhouse from her native country. She was a staunch supporter of the Foundation's work and one of its founding members. The property is now named in her memory.

## Ram Pasture and The Woods

Bordering the Sanford Farm to the south are 634 acres of property collectively known as Ram Pasture and The Woods. Purchased in 1971 for \$625,000, this area was the object of the Foundation's first fund-raising campaign. Although the property had attracted the attention of developers in the late 1960's, the owners at the time—Harold E. Anderson, Robert D. Congdon, Ernest H. Menges, and Albert L. Silva, Sr.—elected to sell it to the Foundation for a price that was well below market value.

For most of its history, Ram Pasture was a peninsula surrounded by Hummock Pond on three sides (east, south, and west) with a densely-vegetated freshwater wetland known as Trots Swamp to the north. However, the southern end of Hummock Pond, a horseshoe-shaped body of fresh water, filled in with sand due to severe coastal erosion during the blizzard of 1978. Since then, Hummock Pond has been separated into two distinct branches, which are the remnants of glacial rivers that flowed through the area just after the end of the last ice age approximately 12,000 years ago.

Ram Pasture was formerly known as "Nanahuma's Neck," named for the Native American Sachem (chief) who lived there in the 1600's. The name "Ram Pasture" came from the practice of using the lower part of the peninsula for grazing rams to keep them isolated from ewes. This management practice controlled breeding to ensure that no lambs were born during the coldest winter months. The rams were herded to the pastures from other grazed lands along the south shore of the island over a bridge that once spanned the narrowest portion of the east branch of Hummock Pond.

Historic names for the area located between Ram Pasture and Sanford Farm include "The Long Trees," "Long Woods," and "The Woods," which refer to the dense trees and shrubs found in the vicinity of Trots Swamp. Due to high amounts of clay in the soil of this region, it is poorly drained and moist throughout much of the year. Species that are

adapted to growing under these conditions occur here, including hawthorn, swamp azalea, sweet pepperbush, shadbush, and highbush blueberry.

## Property Regulations

Visitors are welcome in Sanford Farm, Ram Pasture and The Woods from sunrise to sunset. Please stay on the roadways and established trails in order to minimize erosion of soils and damage to rare plants. Motorized vehicles, camping, hunting, and all commercial activities are prohibited. Pets must be under the control of their owner. Please note that there are no public buildings, telephones, water fountains, or restroom facilities anywhere on these properties.



**We hope that you enjoy your visit.**

**Please consider recycling this brochure by returning it to the box at the beginning of the trail. Thank you!**



**Nantucket Conservation Foundation**

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[www.nantucketconservation.org](http://www.nantucketconservation.org)



**A TRAIL GUIDE TO**

# Sanford Farm Ram Pasture & The Woods



**Nantucket Conservation Foundation**

*Nantucket, Massachusetts*



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