

GENERAL PLAN
FOR THE SUBDIVISION OF
PLANTER'S HILL AND WORLD'S END
HINGHAM, MASS
THE PROPERTY OF JOHN R. BREWER ESQ



SCALE OF FEET
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70
F. L. OLNSTED & CO. LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
BOSTON, MASS
1890



**Frederick Law Olmsted's 1890
subdivision plan for Planter's
Hill and World's End.**

COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE, FREDERICK LAW OLNSTED
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

PROPERTY BELONGS
TO NANTUCKET.

NOTE

The large figures designate the boundary. The smaller figures below them indicate the approximate area in square feet, estimated from actual measurements. Dotted lines and accompanying figures are the heights above the Sea Level.

Visualizing Past, Present & Future

For 125 years, the art and science of mapping have helped shape Trustees' stewardship of open space.

BY NANCY WHITE

In 1890, Frederick Law Olmsted, the foremost landscape architect in the U.S. at the time, designed a high-end subdivision in Hingham. The 250-acre peninsula that would be home to this array of 163 housing lots juts out into Hingham Harbor and its two prominent hills boast sweeping views of Boston and Hingham Bay – an incredible property and a prime piece of real estate.

Olmsted set to work creating a housing development that took advantage of the property's natural topography and features, which we know thanks to the detailed map drawn by his Brookline landscape architecture firm. He drew plans for a grove at the top of one of the hills and carefully laid out five miles of carriage roads. The then-owner, John R. Brewer, began to implement Olmsted's plans, which included planting hardy shade trees, building stone walls, and creating the wide roads. But the development itself – thankfully – never came to fruition.

The peninsula continued to be used for farming and agriculture during the early part of the 20th century, and for some time was home to a prized herd of Jersey cattle. It was not until after World War II that this critical land became threatened with development again, first being considered as a site for the United Nations and later for a nuclear power plant in the mid-1960s.



Aerial survey photograph of Planter's Hill and World's End used in 1946 "World's End Estate" real estate brochure.

TRUSTEES ARCHIVES & RESEARCH CENTER

In 2016, this inspired place – World’s End – will draw thousands of visitors to walk along Olmsted’s carefully considered roads and experience for themselves those spectacular views. Acquired by The Trustees in 1967, World’s End stands as an achievement in open space preservation, and the maps of Olmsted’s subdivision serve not only as historical record, but also as a reminder of the ever-encroaching potential for development of a desirable landscape and a striking example of what could have been.

“Maps tell stories and, like the Olmsted subdivision map, capture a point in time and illuminate issues of cultural, political and historical significance,” says Stephanie Cyr, Assistant Curator at the Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library. They also represent something that’s very personal. “Maps give people a deeper insight into home and that’s a really great gift for people,” Cyr says. “At the Map Center, we want visitors to have a greater understanding and appreciation for these cultural treasures that are part of their home.”



Trustees uses GIS to create maps for a variety of uses in land stewardship. This 2003 map outlines several conservation efforts at World's End, including grassland management and salt marsh restoration.

The Trustees’ Archives & Research Center, located in Sharon, holds hundreds of historical maps — from deeded property maps to trail maps to ecological maps – that tell

the stories of the 114 Trustees properties across the state. Whether casually sketched or taking hundreds of hours of precision and craftsmanship, these hand drawn maps are

works of art in their own right, adding a visual layer to the historical narrative of our reservations. These maps can, for example, help identify objects and evidence of the past that remain on our properties today — such as what buildings were associated with the old foundation we see or where what is now a trail might have been a long-unused road.

Nowadays at The Trustees – coincidentally born just one year after Olmsted’s plans were drawn – maps continue to play a critical role in the stewardship of our more than 25,000 acres in the Commonwealth. No one knows this more than Vin Antil, The Trustees’ very busy GIS Manager. “The real difference between now and Olmsted’s time is maps are now working documents,” Antil says. Today’s maps, created in a sophisticated Geographic Information System (GIS), translate complex data sets into a useable, visual format, and help guide decision-making in the care for Trustees’ properties.

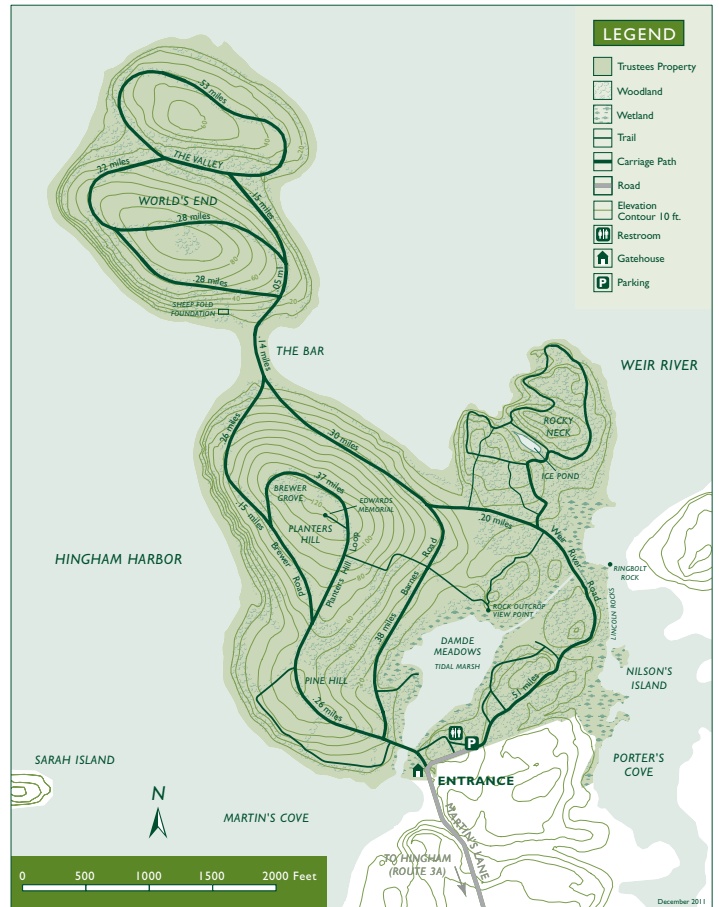
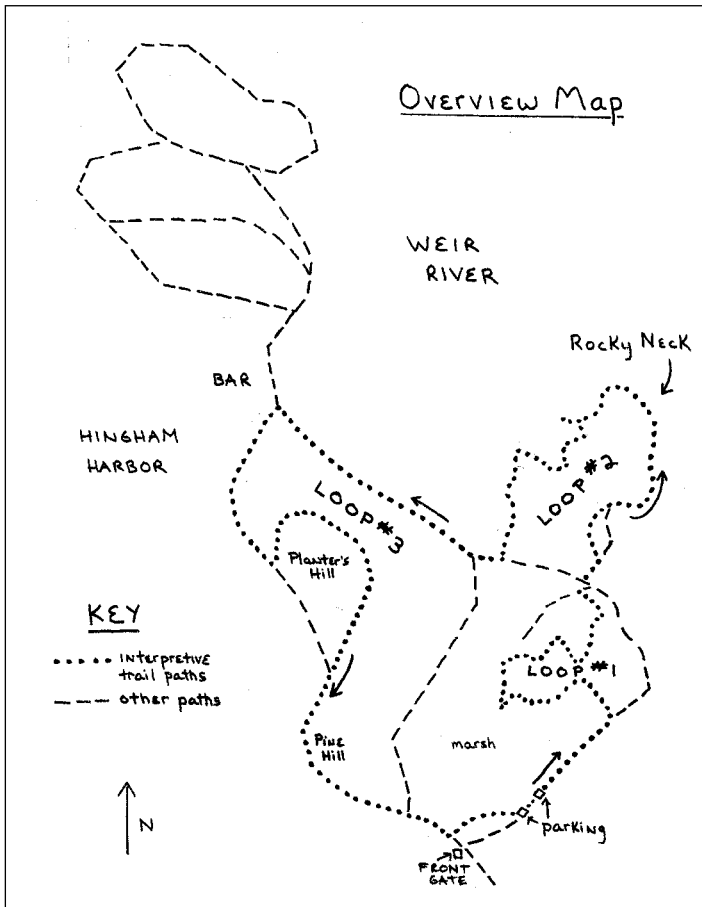
“GIS maps can be produced fairly quickly; they aren’t the works of art they once were,” notes Antil. “They are

Celebrating Trustees History Through Maps

Beginning in April, the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library hosts an exhibition entitled **From the Sea to the Mountains: The Trustees 125th Anniversary**. The exhibition – which is free and open to the public – is a partnership between the Map Center and The Trustees, and features historical maps, photographs and historical items from both Trustees’

archives and the Map Center’s collection. Among the many fascinating maps and artifacts that can be seen and studied are two topographical maps designed by Trustees founder Charles Eliot, who first asserted the bold idea to form an organization that would preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts.

We are very excited to be working with the Boston Public Library and hope that many of our members and friends will visit the exhibition during its run this spring and summer. An all-day family event is being planned for Saturday, June 11; more information is available at thetrustees.org/125.



Early Trustees trail maps for World's End were created by tracing over the Olmsted map by hand, but today's trail maps are designed using GIS, GPS, and USGS topographic map data, and provide such detailed information as the specific length of each trail, elevation contours, and boundaries for neighboring private land.

planning documents – a means to understand the present and plan for the future.” With GIS, information can be layered onto a map to more accurately represent complexities of land management. These maps don't

just show the physical landscape features, they also serve as visualizations of how humans, animals, and plants interact with the land. Antil works with Trustees' ecologists to map the habitats and nesting areas of

rare or endangered shorebirds. Alongside property managers, he'll develop maps of grasslands so effective mowing schedules can be created. The lion's share of Vin's map work includes creating trail maps for each and

every Trustees reservation to guide visitors safely up and down mountains, and through woodland trails and marshes. When a new parcel is conserved or a new trail cut, Vin is working behind the scenes to map it all out. As he emphasizes, “Beautiful places don't happen by accident!”

For 125 years, maps have guided Trustees preservation and conservation work. Visual representations of moments in time, of instructions for work to be done, or of plans made that were never realized, maps have always been and will always be a principal tool for the stewardship of open space.

Nancy White is a freelance writer based on the South Shore.

Exhibition Details

From the Sea to the Mountains: The Trustees 125th Anniversary

April 2 – August 28, 2016

Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library
Central Library in Copley Square, 700 Boylston Street, Boston
(please use Dartmouth Street Entrance)

For hours and directions, visit www.bpl.org.

Talk

Conversation with Chip Giller, Founder of Grist.org

Tuesday, May 24, 6PM

Boston Public Library, Central Library in Copley Square
700 Boylston Street, Boston

