

Punkatasset Conservation and Recreation Area

During his lifetime, Gordon Hutchins extended a warm invitation to all who appreciated the natural beauty of Punkatasset Hill, Hutchins Pond, and his fields and woodlands, to share the recreational enjoyment which they offered in season for walking, riding, skiing, skating and nature study. When he died last September, ⁽¹⁹⁰⁶⁾ it seemed appropriate for Concord's Natural Resources Commission, the Recreation Commission, the Concord Land Conservation Trust and interested friends and neighbors to make a coordinated effort to give the town an opportunity to acquire about 106 acres of these old farming lands so that present and future generations of appreciative citizens might continue to enjoy this superb recreational resource and semi-wilderness area. With careful management it could provide enjoyment for all ages throughout the seasons for many years to come.

The land under consideration is an odd shaped piece of property lying back from the road off the north-west side of Monument Street approximately two miles from Monument Square. The boundaries of this unspoiled area are irregular and its topography is varied. To facilitate a description of the lay-out, it has been divided into three parcels as follows:

1) The southern section of about 32 acres contains one of the highest spots in Concord, Punkatasset Hill, rising to an elevation of 317 feet. Those who have walked up to the top via the ski slope or through the old pine woods already know what a glorious site this is. One can see to the north for miles over the fields and distant woods. Yet there are few houses in sight as most of the adjacent land, the Estabrook Woods, is maintained in its natural state by the Museum of Comparative Zoology of Harvard University.

2) The middle section of about 59 acres lies just north of the foot of this hill. It contains several large open meadows, a stream, and on the west side, a pond which is hidden in the woods. This is Hutchins Pond, a favorite haunt for nature lovers, well described long ago by Thoreau. It is a shallow man-made ^{post 1906} pond of about 7 acres. Saw Mill Brook runs through it, flowing easterly across the meadows, under Monument Street and on to the Concord River.

3) The third section is to the north. It forms a beautiful narrow glade containing 14 acres extending about a half mile toward Carlisle. This section like the two others, is well protected on its western boundary by the M.C.Z. An old cart road, Two Rod Road, runs from the far end of this area in a southerly direction all the way back to Monument Street. Other paths join the old road leading around the pond, through the woods and up Punkatasset Hill. Thus one can walk from one end of the property to the other by various routes.

This area lends itself traditionally and naturally to passive recreation such as walking, riding, skiing, skating, fishing and nature study. These activities would be encouraged. As now contemplated, the use of this land in a town recreational program would be for individuals and small groups with a minimum of formal organization. The cabin at the foot of the ski hill would be maintained as a base for small-group use and for nature study. Instructional activities such as nature study could be included in the summer playground, in school, and in adult

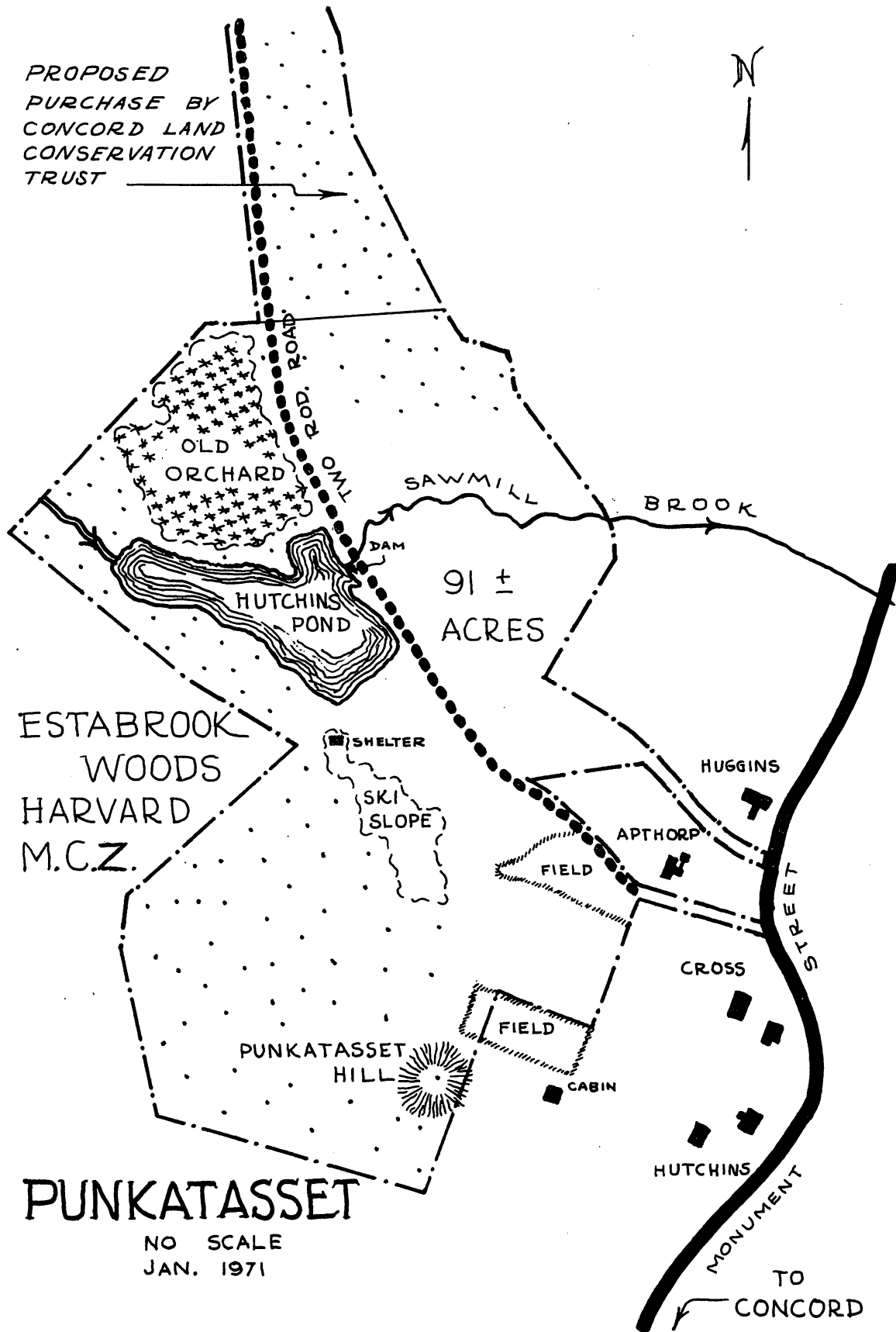
education programs. It is important that such an area be managed in a manner that will insure the protection of the environment. Therefore there will be restrictions on the use of firearms, motorized vehicles, and the building of fires.

A major consideration in the importance of this acquisition is that this land forms a natural buffer along the southern and eastern boundaries of Harvard University's 650 acre Estabrook Woods "Biological Research Preserve". It provides convenient and natural access to Harvard's land. If this land were extensively developed it would disturb and diminish the value of the Harvard's property for its intended purpose, conservation and biological research; if acquired by the town it will protect and preserve this priceless resource acquired by Harvard's Museum of Comparative Zoology in 1968.

Since October, with the cooperation of the Hutchins family heirs, who have placed the disposition of this property in the hands of Hunneman & Co., a Boston based real estate company, there has been a major effort to work out a feasible plan of acquisition. Hunneman & Co. has prepared a map and established a price for each tract based on an estimate of the value of developed land less estimated development costs. The resulting price range is about \$2,600 per acre for land in parcel 1, \$3,500 per acre for land in parcel 2 and \$2,100 per acre for land in parcel 3.

At this stage, the acreage and prices are not firmly established, but they represent the best estimates now available. The total price for the tract of approximately 106 acres is about \$318,000. The Trustees of the Concord Land Conservation Trust have agreed with Hunneman & Co. to buy the 14-acre tract in parcel 3 for \$30,000. They have this money in hand and intend to raise funds to replenish those committed to this acquisition. The price of the 92 acres to be acquired by the town is about \$288,000, which does not include additional costs such as legal fees, appraisals, and other expenses. It is anticipated that state matching funds can be obtained which will reduce this cost by approximately one-half. This offers a wonderful opportunity to preserve a priceless heritage and although it is a large commitment, we believe it is well worth accomplishing and in the best interests of all citizens of Concord.

PROPOSED
PURCHASE BY
CONCORD LAND
CONSERVATION
TRUST



PUNKATASSET

NO SCALE
JAN. 1971