

Meadow, Field and Trail Maintenance In Webster

Introduction: FWT wishes to partner with the Town to institute responsible practices for maintenance of our trails, meadows and fields. The following document sets forth recommendations of the FWT board for this work.

Keeping meadows and fields open requires the removal of woody plants either by mowing or by hand. Several sources say that the health of the grass^{1,2,3} is enhanced by periodic mowing. These activities should be carried out in a manner that pleases Town resident users, nurtures native wild flowers and does not disturb nesting birds. As noted below, any mowing should occur in April or early September .

In the course of maintaining Open-Space in Webster, two types of activities are needed: keeping meadows and fields open and providing trails through grassy and weedy areas.

Mowing Trails: Trails are currently mowed by volunteers and the Town. If the town needs to take over the areas maintained by volunteers, the current schedule should be continued to keep trails open.

Trails should be close-mowed (three inches).

Table 1. Trail Mowing

Trail	Mower	Frequency^b
In Gosnell Preserve, trails through Small Meadow and around Big Field	FWT volunteer ^a Larry Yost	Up to 2 times/week
Various trails in WRNP	FWT volunteer ^a Matt Frank	Up to 2 times/week
Hojack	Parks/Rec	June, October
Chiyoda trail edge	Parks/Rec	As needed

a. At personal expense of time, equipment and gas.

b. Depending on grass growth

¹ Transforming Fields in Grassland Bird Habitat, Cornell University Cooperative Extension.

² A Plan for Conserving Grassland Birds in New York: Final Report to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Contract #C005137, Mike Morgan and Michael Burger, Audubon New York.

³ Native Prairie: Establishment and Management of Native Prairie, Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA.

Meadow and Field Maintenance: Areas of concern in the Gosnell Big Woods Preserve are the Big Field and the Small Meadow. In WRNP, there are the South Field, the North Field, the Lake View Field (at the intersection of Lake and Whiting Roads) and several meadows along the Red Trail (between the orange trail N & S).

We have chosen to designate spaces that receive mowing as ‘fields’ and spaces that receive manual maintenance as ‘meadows’.

FWT will assume this responsibility the Small Meadow at Gosnell. This area will receive no mowing, but, instead be maintained by hand.

For the remaining fields, the following guidelines should be followed:

- In order to avoid the breeding season of birds and to maximize enjoyment of blooming wildflowers, any mowing should occur in April or early September
- Edges should be mowed (or bush-hogged), as needed, to remove woody plants
- The whole field should be mowed all at once every three years, but not more frequently. Mowing should be at a height of 4-6 inches ^{Ref. 1,2}.

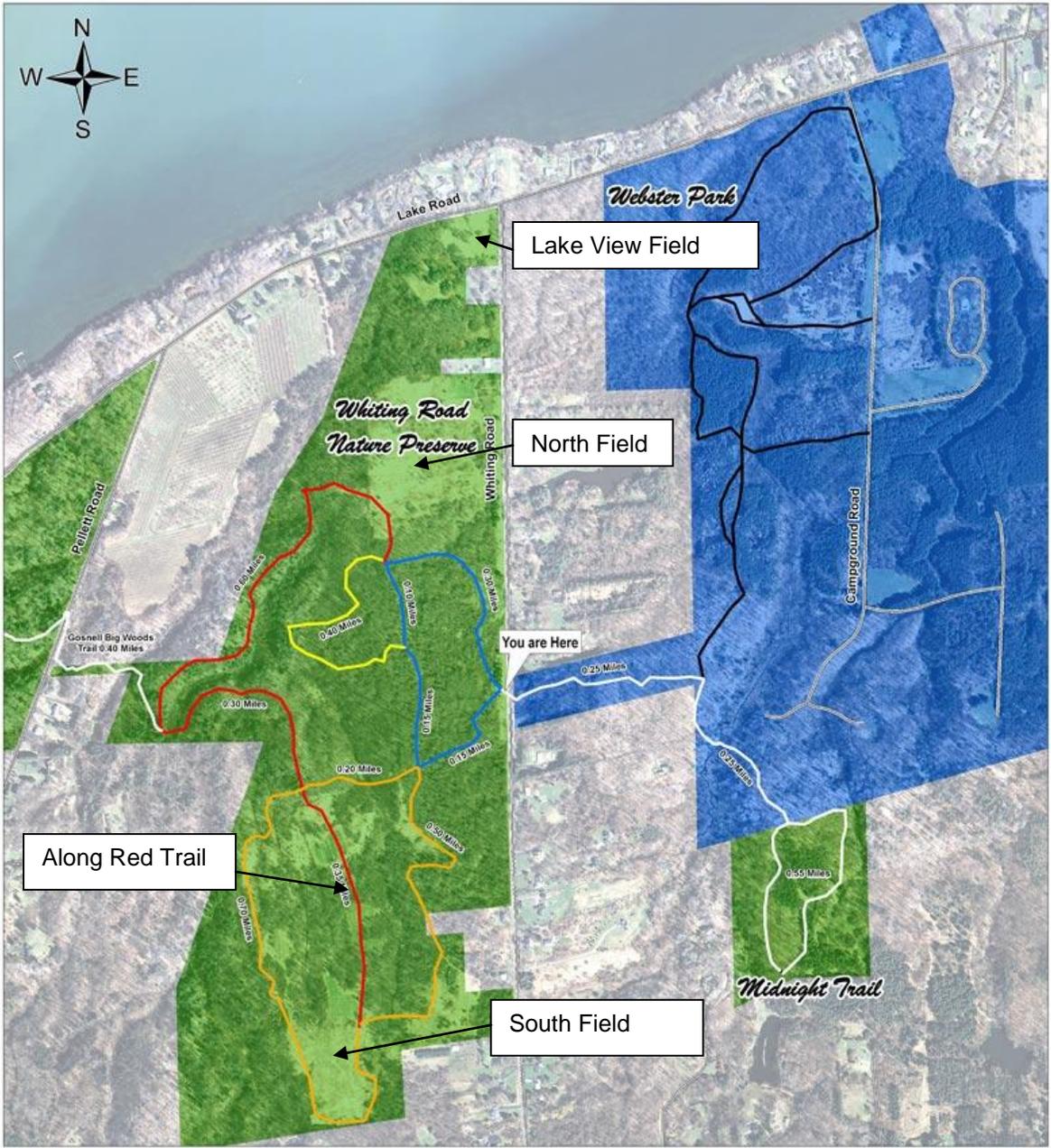
Table 2. Meadow and Field Maintenance

Area	
Small Meadow Gosnell Preserve	FWT will maintain by removing woody plants and judicious spraying
South Field in WRNP and along Red Trail	Parks/Rec; every 3 rd year ^a
Big Field at Gosnell	Parks/Rec; every 3 rd year ^b
North Field at WRNP	Parks/Rec; every 3 rd year ^a
Lake View Field at WRNP	Parks/Rec; every 3 rd year ^a
Woody edges at WRNP and Gosnell	Parks/Rec; Year 3, by arrangement with FWT

a. Move to schedule where all fields are mowed in same year, every three years: 2012, 2014, 2017, 2021

b. Move to schedule where all fields are mowed in same year, every three years: 2014, 2017, 2021

Meadows and Fields: Whiting Road Nature Preserve



Meadows and Fields: Gosnell Big Woods Preserve

