

## Welcome to Merrymeeting Fields

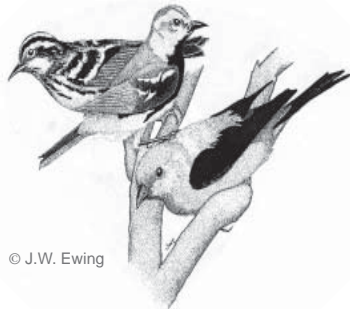
The preserve is open free of charge to the public from dawn to dusk. Help us protect what you have come to enjoy. Natural areas are delicate; foot traffic only, no camping, fires, or motorized vehicles. Leave only footprints. Please respect boundary signs and adjoining private property. Enjoy your visit.

## Ecology of Merrymeeting Fields

As you enjoy Merrymeeting Fields beautiful waterfront and forest, look for six natural features that support a wide variety of flora and fauna.

**1. Open Field** on the north slope of the ridge is maintained for nesting birds and small mammals. Once a farm pasture, fields are an increasingly rare habitat in Maine as family farms are abandoned and sold for development.

**2. Mixed Woods** Two-thirds of the preserve is forest dominated by red oak, white pine, hemlock, big toothed aspen and white ash. Winter wren, oven birds,



black throat-ed green warblers, hairy wood-peckers, and barred owls favor this habitat.

**3. Waterfront** Bedrock ledge broken by mud beaches illustrate Kennebec River ecology. Tidal erosion fells old trees freeing silt that travels with the current until it settles on mud flats, creating important substrate for aquatic plants, which become the feeding grounds for migrating water birds. Mink and raccoon browse the shore. A forested waterfront prevents oxygen-depleting run-off that lowers water quality.



**4. Kennebec River Estuary** An estuary is an area affected by marine tides. A prime striped bass spawning ground lies off Merrymeeting Fields shore in the fast-moving river waters. Clean water supports nine anadromous species, fish that spawn here but live in the ocean part of their lives.

**5. Merrymeeting Bay** A four by seven mile inland bay, the confluence of six rivers, is an outstanding habitat for black duck, blue-winged teal, Canada geese and many other species that feed on the wild rice nourished by extensive mud flats, like the Abagadasset wetlands just across the river. This is also prime bald eagle habitat; seven nests are active around the Bay.

**6. Forested Wetlands** Damp enough year round to support sphagnum moss and amphibians. Serve as a sponge to hold water and slowly release it to surrounding areas.

## Merrymeeting Fields History

**6000 B.C.** Indians visited the banks of Merrymeeting Bay to harvest shad, sturgeon and other migrating fish species.

**1607** Samuel de Champlain sails up the river to Merrymeeting Bay, initiating European fur trade with the Indians.

**1640 to 1940** Land on East Chopps Point is farmed. In the early 1900s Dexter Baker raised horses, cows, pigs, sold milk and vegetables, and put up ice so that the family had no need to travel to Bath except for flour.

**1720** Robert Temple runs a garrison on Chopps Point where he is granted 1000 acres in return for bringing 200 settlers to Cork Cove, Dresden.

**1860-1936** A public road (the wide section of the North Loop Trail) leads to the range light tended by the Baker-Temple family to guide ice boats and steam packets away from the rocks.

**1880s** Huge iron rings at the Overlook mark the spot where David Trott and his two sons moored their scows used to dredge sand from the river.

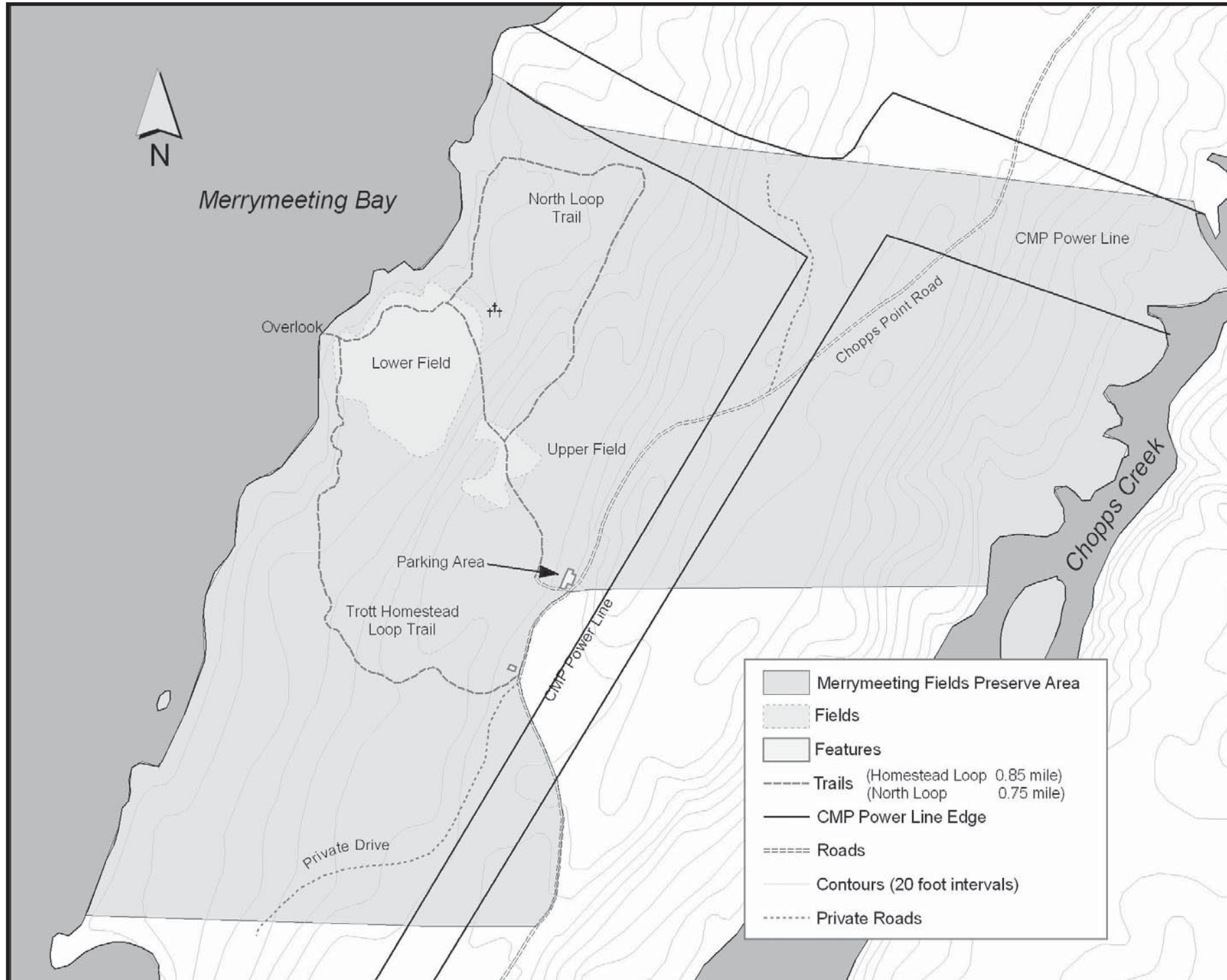
**1930s** Portable steam-driven lumber mills harvest the old pine trees.

**1942** The Baker-Temple family, stewards of the land for four generations, sells to George Reynolds.

**1952** Reynolds sells to Walter A. and Eleanor B. Burke, who name their homestead Merrymeeting East.

**2003** Eleanor Burke dies, leaving her beloved property to the Lower Kennebec Regional Land Trust with instructions "to maintain the property's open space, forests, woodlands and varied habitats. No hunting, trapping or motor vehicles allowed."

**August 13, 2006** Merrymeeting Fields Preserve opening celebration.



# Merrymeeting Fields Preserve Trail Map

Chopps Point Road  
Woolwich, Maine



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REGIONAL LAND TRUST

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