

Trail Guide: Lake Siog Pass & the Grand Trunk Trail

Trail Head: Lake Siog, Pond Bridge Road, Holland, MA

Lake Siog was a center of American Indian culture in pre-colonial times, and arrowheads were so numerous, that settlers supposed that a great battle might have taken place there. More likely the area had been settled for hundreds of years as the open meadows provided good hunting, the sandy soil was easy to work, and the pond had plenty of fish, especially pickerel for which the Nipmuck name was Siog.

In time the area became a center for summer residents in the town with numerous summer cottages as well as year-round homes. The shores of Hamilton Reservoir, in contrast, were scantily populated, because the dam, constructed in 1865, was used, not for recreation, but to ensure a supply of water to the mills in Southbridge. In the summer months the water would be released, and the lake would be reduced to mud flats.

Holland was altered forever in August of 1955 when 19 inches of rain caused the old stone dam to fail resulting in widespread flooding. The dam was replaced and a series of flood-control dams was installed by the Army Corps of Engineers. In Holland, about 170 acres was purchased by the federal government so that the land could be flooded when necessary. The houses and cottages were either moved or torn down. You will be traveling chiefly through the flood-control area.

Cross Road (approximately .2 miles)

From the parking lot by the canoe launch head down the old road which follows the river. Notice signs that this area was once inhabited. The end of Cross Road passes through private property. Please do not leave the trail.

Morse Road (approximately .1 miles)

Turn left on the paved road. This is a public road, though rarely traveled.

Old Morse Road (approximately .3 miles)

Continue to follow the road which also passes through private property. Beyond the gate you will be back on flood control land. At the bridge look for beaver lodges. You may also see a great blue heron. Just beyond the bridge and to the right, there is a loop around an area known as Curtis Island. Oddly, it is not a true island, rather a hill bordered by the Quinebaug River and wetlands, and it is named for a person who only spent a few hours there.

In July of 1675, Ephraim Curtis, accompanied by six men, arrived to assess the attitudes of the native population for the Governor of the Commonwealth. Forging the river where the bridge now stands, he confronted 200 hostile Indian warriors who cried out,

he later reported, "till the air rang," but in the end, the elders of the tribe, who were opposed to war with the English, prevailed and Curtis was permitted to depart.

Old Holland Road (approximately .3 miles)

Old Morse Road ends at an old paved road. Turn right. This was once the main road from Holland to Brimfield, but, following the '55 flood a new road was relocated to the west.

5 Bridge Road (approximately .4 miles)

Turn right on the unpaved country road. Traffic is limited, but you may encounter a car or two.

5 Bridge Crossover (approximately .3 miles)

The Grand Trunk Trail crosses the road. Turn right. Notice that there are two parallel trails. The one you are on follows the trolley line which connected Brimfield and Sturbridge. There are several loops off the main trail. These follow the roadbed of the Grand Trunk Railway. Begun in 1910, it was never completed.

Trail Head Parking Lot

Pass through the parking lot, taking the trail to the left.

Quinebaug River (approximately .8 miles)

Continue on the trail through the magnificent rock cut and all the way to the river. You can see that the trail continues on the other side, but since the bridge is in the planning stage, it is time to turn around.

5 bridge Crossover (approximately 1.1 miles)

Retrace your route or explore some of the Grand Trunk loops. The trail is rougher, but there are nice spots to rest and enjoy the river and the meadows and woods along it.

Route 20 Trailhead (approximately 1.2 miles)

Continue across 5 Bridge Road to the parking lot. There is another optional Grand Trunk loop to your left. At the southern end of the trail, you will witness some of the tornado's devastation. At the parking lot you have gone as far as you can.

Lake Siog Trailhead (approximately 2.5 miles)

Retrace your route. At 5 Bridge Road, take a right. After the bridge, turn left on Old Holland Road. Watch for the trail on your left. It is marked by a large stone and is just after the field to your right. As you head up Morse Road, look carefully for Old Cross Road. It is just before the first house on your right.