

# HIDDEN VALLEY RESERVATION

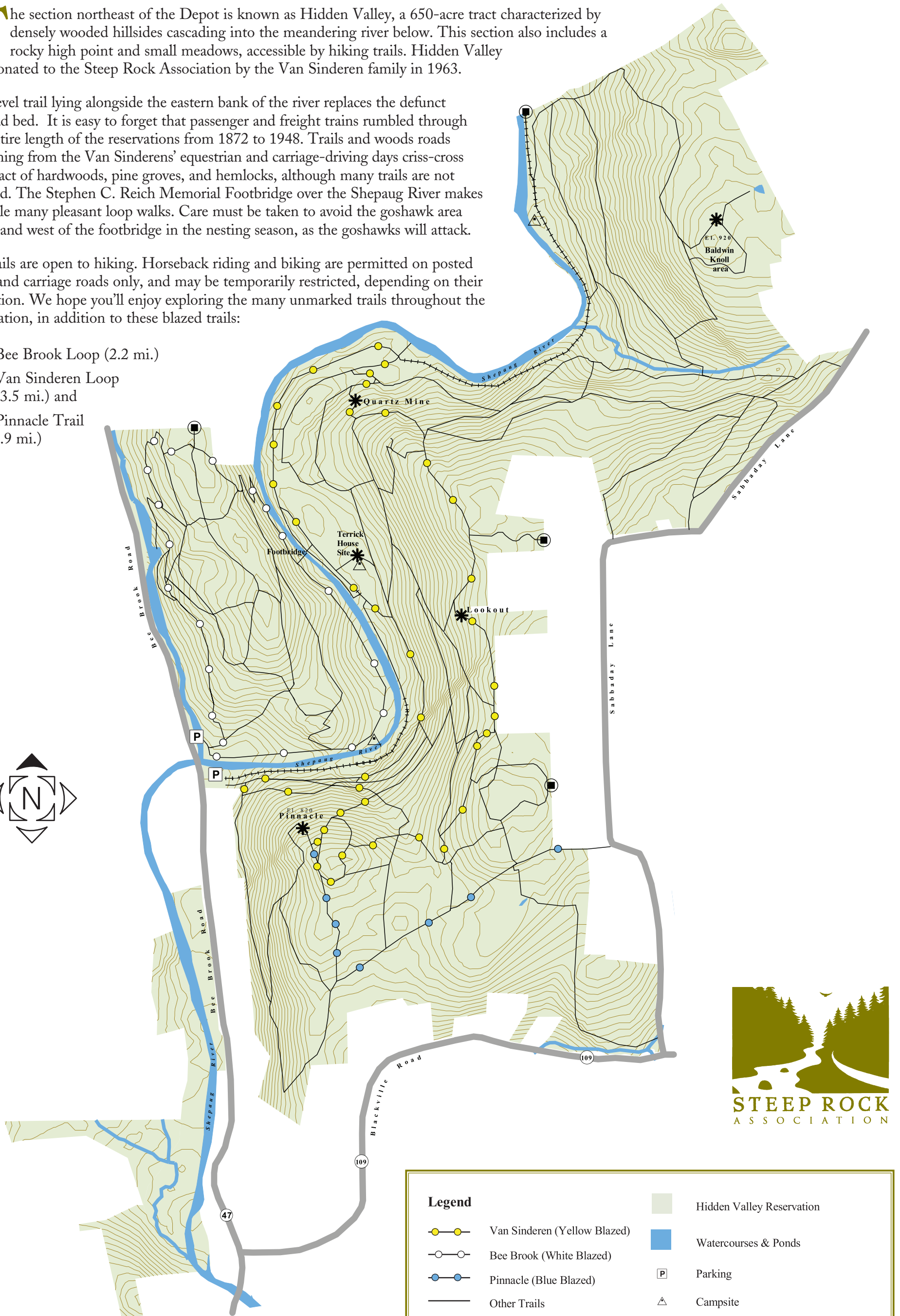
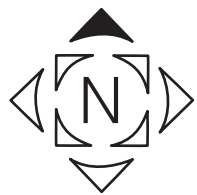
## STEEP ROCK ASSOCIATION

The section northeast of the Depot is known as Hidden Valley, a 650-acre tract characterized by densely wooded hillsides cascading into the meandering river below. This section also includes a rocky high point and small meadows, accessible by hiking trails. Hidden Valley was donated to the Steep Rock Association by the Van Sinderen family in 1963.

The level trail lying alongside the eastern bank of the river replaces the defunct railroad bed. It is easy to forget that passenger and freight trains rumbled through the entire length of the reservations from 1872 to 1948. Trails and woods roads remaining from the Van Sinderens' equestrian and carriage-driving days criss-cross this tract of hardwoods, pine groves, and hemlocks, although many trails are not marked. The Stephen C. Reich Memorial Footbridge over the Shepaug River makes possible many pleasant loop walks. Care must be taken to avoid the goshawk area north and west of the footbridge in the nesting season, as the goshawks will attack.

All trails are open to hiking. Horseback riding and biking are permitted on posted trails and carriage roads only, and may be temporarily restricted, depending on their condition. We hope you'll enjoy exploring the many unmarked trails throughout the reservation, in addition to these blazed trails:

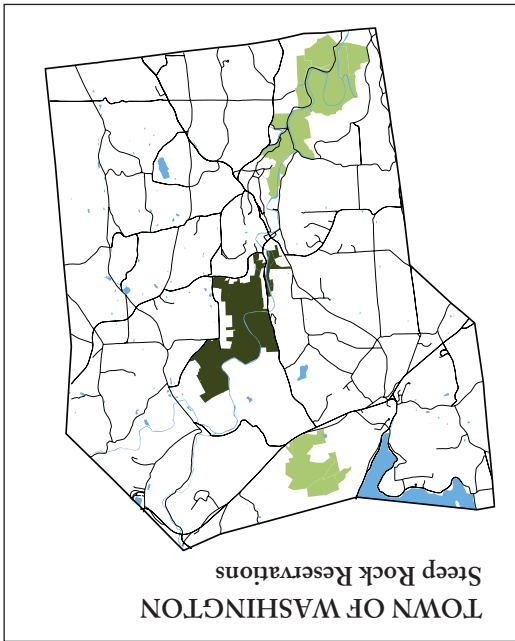
- Bee Brook Loop (2.2 mi.)
- Van Sinderen Loop (3.5 mi.) and
- Pinnacle Trail (.9 mi.)



Legend	
	Van Sinderen (Yellow Blazed)
	Bee Brook (White Blazed)
	Pinnacle (Blue Blazed)
	Other Trails
	Old Railbed
	Road
	10 - Ft Contour
	Hidden Valley Reservation
	Watercourses & Ponds
	Parking
	Campsite
	Private Property Beyond This Point

900 0 900 Feet  
**Scale: 1" = 900'; approx 2/10 of a mile**

For safe and respectful recreation, please follow the guidelines printed on the other side of this map.



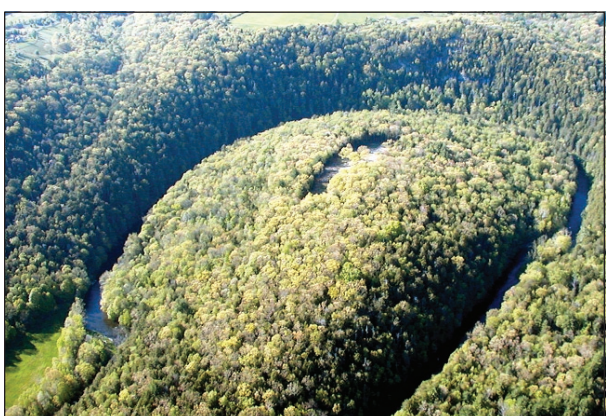
## HIDDEN VALLEY RESERVATION



### HISTORY

In the Spring of 1889, just as he was about to break ground on his own country house in Washington, Connecticut, the architect Ehrick Rossiter discovered that the wooded hillsides in his dramatic view to the west were slated for clear cutting. For him, there was only one thing to do. Using the money intended for the house's construction, he bought the threatened land from the timber company and saved forever the hundred acres that now form the heart of the Steep Rock Reservation. During his 36 years of ownership, Rossiter built carriage roads and small river crossings, and invited his friends and fellow townspeople to enjoy the wild beauty of this section of the Shepaug River Valley.

In 1925 Rossiter donated the land, which included the Steep Rock overlook, to a group of trustees, thus ensuring its preservation. Four years later the trustees purchased the area known as the Clamshell, and in doing so preserved the view from Steep Rock. With little of the



*Aerial view of Steep Rock clamshell.*

fanfare that sometimes surrounds such efforts today, these ten individuals quietly established a public land trust long before the idea of land protection became common. Since then, many landowners have given additional tracts to the Steep Rock Association.



*View from Hidden Valley pinnacle.*

Today the reservations are an extraordinary natural resource valued for their wild beauty, seclusion, and recreational and educational opportunities. Steep Rock's holdings now comprise over 2,426 owned and 2,348 eased acres, most of which lie along the glacially carved, rock-strewn Shepaug River. Except for a brief interruption in Washington Depot, the reservations extend almost the full length of the township and include three main sections:

- Steep Rock, 974 acres just southwest of Washington Depot;
- Hidden Valley, 650 acres just northeast of the Depot, and the
- Macricostas Preserve, 370 acres north of the junction of routes 47 and 202.



Steep Rock Association  
P. O. Box 279  
Washington Depot, CT 06794

- Hidden Valley offers tranquility and beauty for people, and varied habitats for wildlife. Please respect it as a setting for passive recreation, reflection and peace. Help us protect the natural beauty and integrity of the reservation by not removing or destroying plants or wildlife.
- Please note: there are no sanitary facilities in the reservation.
- Motorized vehicles are prohibited.
  - No hunting.
  - No alcoholic beverages.
  - No loud noise or music.
  - Dogs must be leashed at all times.
  - Horseback riding is permitted according to posted signs, except when or where seasonally prohibited.
  - Tent camping is by permit only, in designated sites. Call 868-9131 for a reservation, two weeks in advance.
  - Fires are permitted only in the provided grills. Ground/camp fires are prohibited.
  - Do not litter; please carry out what you carry in. There are no waste barrels.
- ### Mountain Bike Rules
- Stay on the designated trail and please obey seasonal postings. In Hidden Valley, follow the yellow blazed trail to the railroad bed, to the property line barway and then back. No bikes allowed on the west side of the river.
  - Do not speed! Speed limit is 15 mph.
  - Dismount when approaching horses.
  - Always yield to people on foot.
  - No more than four riders in a group.
- ### Winter Trail Rules
- Cross-Country Skiers: Please set tracks on one side of the trail only.
  - Hikers, Snowshoers and your dogs: Please respect ski tracks by keeping to the other side of the trail.

### STEEL ROCK RULES



*View across Macricostas Preserve.*

### SUPPORTING STEEL ROCK

One of the oldest land trusts in Connecticut, the Steep Rock Association is a non-profit corporation governed by a volunteer board of trustees. To maintain over 36 miles of trails, manage three large reservations and monitor dozens of conservation easements, we are entirely dependent on individual contributors and a modest endowment. If you would like to contribute and become a member, please send a check, payable to Steep Rock Association, Inc. to:

Steep Rock Association  
P. O. Box 279  
Washington Depot, CT 06794

For more information, visit our Web site at [www.steeprocksoc.org](http://www.steeprocksoc.org) or call the office at **860-868-9131**.