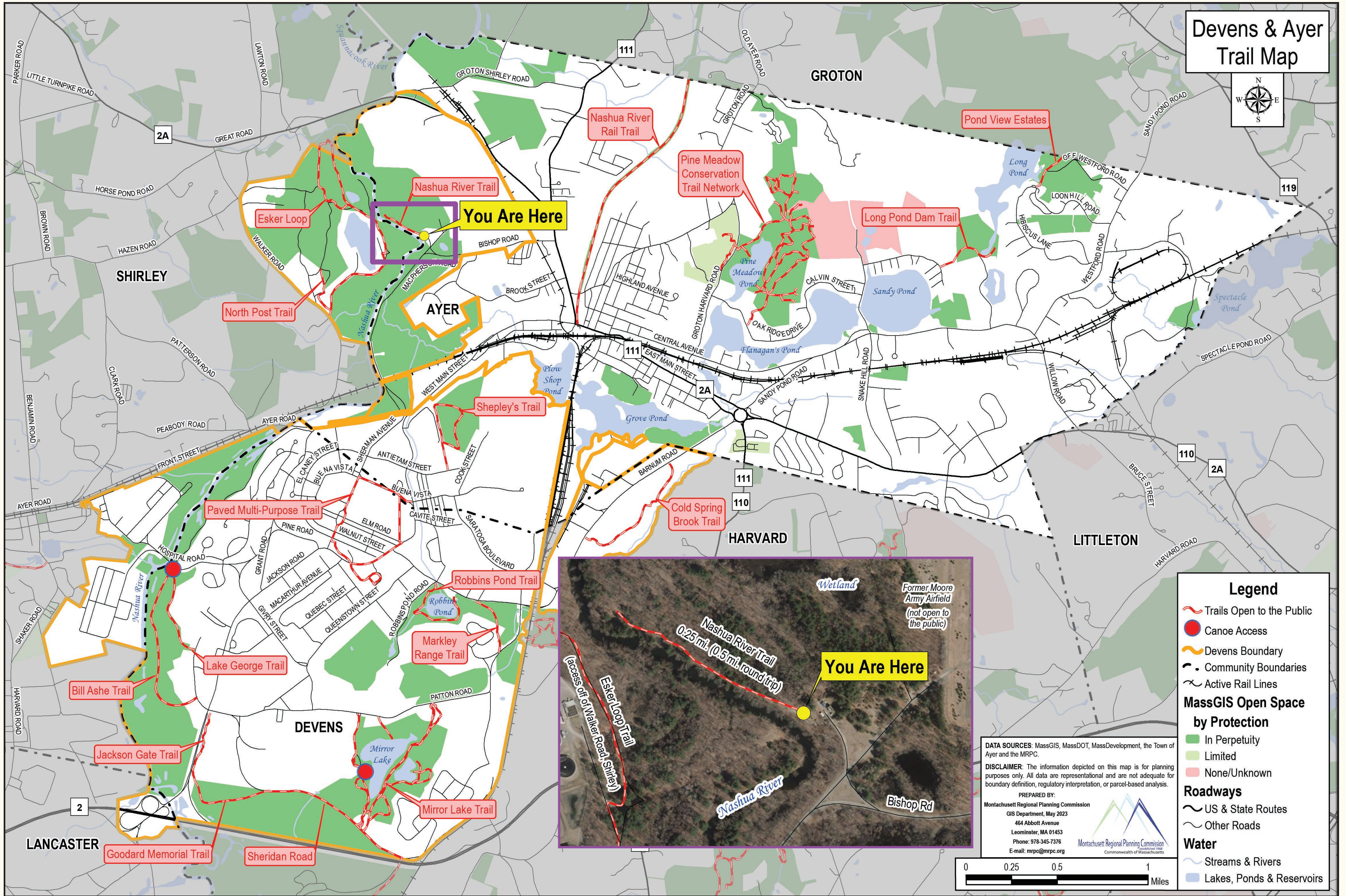


Nashua River Trail

Along the Nashua Wild and Scenic River



Follow this path along the Nashua River to look for wildlife including beautiful migratory birds like Canada geese, ducks, and the American woodcock. You may also see other residents of this area such as white-tailed deer, beaver, turkey, wood frogs, and painted turtles.

The Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge has a diverse array of habitats beneficial to wildlife, including floodplain forest, wetlands, forested uplands, old fields, oxbow ponds and of course the Nashua River. The River was officially designated Wild and Scenic by the US Congress in 2019.

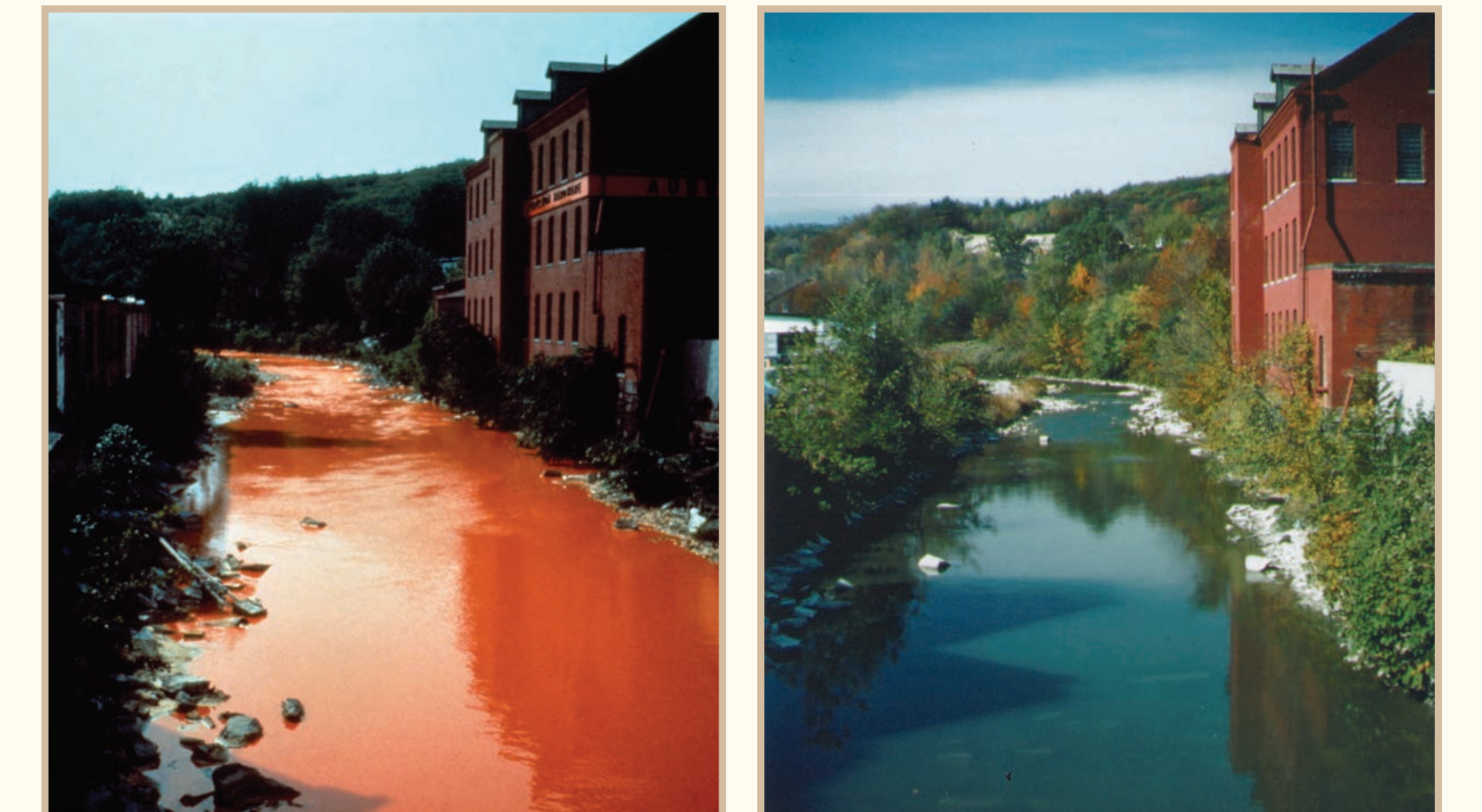
Trail Information: The Nashua River Trail is approximately 0.25 miles one way, and you will return on the same path. The terrain is flat and relatively level. The Nashua River Trail is part of a larger regional trail network in the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge and Ayer, Harvard, Shirley and Devens. The creation of the Trail and this sign were supported by a grant from the Nashua Rivers Wild & Scenic Stewardship Council.



Area History: This area is on the traditional lands of the Nipmuc people. Nipmuc means the People of the Fresh Water. Post-colonization, the fresh water of the Nashua and the living things that depend on it were significantly threatened, as the River was a dumping ground for industry in the nearby mill towns. It took decades of environmental policy and action to clean up the River so that it can be enjoyed again today. This portion of Ayer was part of the US Army's Fort Devens from 1917-1996. The trail occupies a formerly disturbed area of the military base used as a tank road.

Old Bailey Bridge

Along the edge the river, you may notice remains of old bridge abutments where the Army constructed a Bailey bridge – a portable, prefabricated bridge used for military and temporary crossings. In 2008 this bridge was deemed structurally unsafe and was removed.



>> Before >> After

The Promise of Restoration

Prior to river protection efforts the color of the Nashua River changed depending on what paper and textile mills dumped into the water. Here you can see "before and after" clean up photos of the North Nashua River in Fitchburg. Photo credit: Nashua River Watershed Association Archives

Leave no trace and stay safe!

- Stay on the trail.
- Be aware some plants like poison ivy cause skin irritations.
- Keep an eye out for ticks. After your hike, check yourself.
- Be aware of the hunting season.
- Keep a safe distance from wildlife and leave pets at home.
- Bicycles and ATVs are not allowed on the trail.
- Pack it in, pack it out.

