



Above left, compacted and eroded soils along the House Site Trail. Above right, an example of a FSTAG-compliant trail in Greenfield, NH.

At present, the trails between the Walden Pond Visitor Center and the Thoreau House Site do not provide a safe, self-guided trail experience for visitors with physical and sensory disabilities. To address this issue, DCR will make accessibility improvements to an existing trail to the House Site. Located along the north shore of Walden Pond, the House Site is where author and transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) lived for two years, two months and two days between July 1845 and September 1847. The House Site is not only central to the visitor experience at Walden, it is a pilgrimage for first-time Walden visitors.

U.S. Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines

These improvements will meet U.S. Forest Service Trail Accessibility Guidelines (FSTAG), a series of best practices to maximize accessibility within forested settings, while preserving woodland character. The standards allow unpaved surfaces and greater flexibility to meet steep grades without handrails. Grading and stabilization measures will be undertaken, and the trail will be surfaced with crushed stone. The trail width will not be increased, and in some cases will be reduced. Signage and benches will be added to facilitate trail use for all.

Protecting Walden Pond's Water Quality

The work will also close two existing trail sections near the Thoreau House Site that are redundant and heavily compacted. These sections are unable to absorb rainwater during storm events. By revegetating these areas, Walden Pond's water quality will be improved. The project will also remove catch basins from the 1950s, restoring the natural environment of the area.

During construction, alternatives to the Thoreau House Site will be provided. Additional information can be found, from public meetings on the project at: www.mass.gov/dcr/past-public-meetings

Thoreau House Site Trail Accessibility Improvements

February 2020

Location:

Walden Pond State Reservation
Town of Concord

Phase:

Construction (Summer 2020)

DCR Partners:

Walden Pond Advisory Board
Walden Woods Project
Town of Concord

Consultant Team:

Crosby | Schlessinger | Smallridge
Peter S. Jensen & Associates

Projected Investment:

\$425,000

Project Timeline:

July to September 2020

Thoreau House Site Trail Improvements



TOTAL TRAIL LENGTH: 2,650 FT
TOTAL LENGTH OF STEEP GRADES:
 5% - 8.3% FOR 50' ± 75 FT (2.8% OF TRAIL)
 8.3% - 10% FOR 30' - 150 FT (5.6% OF TRAIL)
TREES REMOVED: 0



TYPICAL TRAIL SECTION



3' TRP

3' TRP

3' TRP

Use Gravelled Boardwalk to Permit
 Open Access to the Site