

Exploring the Coburn Trail

Elwin Coburn purchased the Coburn Farm property in 1949, and he and his wife raised five children here. In 1999, Elwin died, leaving the farm to his five children in equal shares. Reluctant to see the property sold and possibly developed, Melvin Coburn and his wife, Sue, purchased the property from his siblings for preservation. In an outpouring of community support, Strafford residents raised thousands of dollars in support of the project, supplementing a generous grant the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT) obtained from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board. Mel and Sue Coburn sold the development restrictions to UVLT at below market value, in what is known as a bargain sale, ensuring that this historic site with its beautiful views would forever remain an integral part of the charm of Strafford Village.



*Sharon Academy students
work on the Coburn Trail*

Once the land was securely protected, a group of students from the Thompson Island Outward Bound program cut the Coburn Trail and installed split rail fence around the picnic area. A local student group from Sharon Academy later built stone steps in a steep section of the trail.

The Coburn Farm abuts the Justin Smith Morrill Homestead. The trail begins on the Homestead property and runs close to its northern boundary. The Morrill Homestead is the 19th century home of U.S. Senator Justin Morrill, who served in the United States Congress and Senate for a combined total of forty-three years. Morrill strongly influenced the growth of the nation's agriculture and educational opportunities, and was perhaps best known for the Morrill Land-Grant College Act of 1862, the origin to the land-grant college system. The Gothic Revival home, garden, and agricultural outbuildings are owned and cared for by the Vermont Historic Preservation Division.

The Coburn Farm property was owned and farmed during the early nineteenth century by the Honorable Jedediah H. Harris, mentor and business partner of Justin Morrill. Harris was a prominent local figure and former judge who built the 1883 Town Clerk's Office (once the Harris Library) and the 1834 Brick Store, both across the street from the Coburn Farm. During the latter part of the 1800's the Coburn property was owned by Justin Morrill's son. The house became the residence for the caretaker of both that property and the Justin Morrill Homestead.

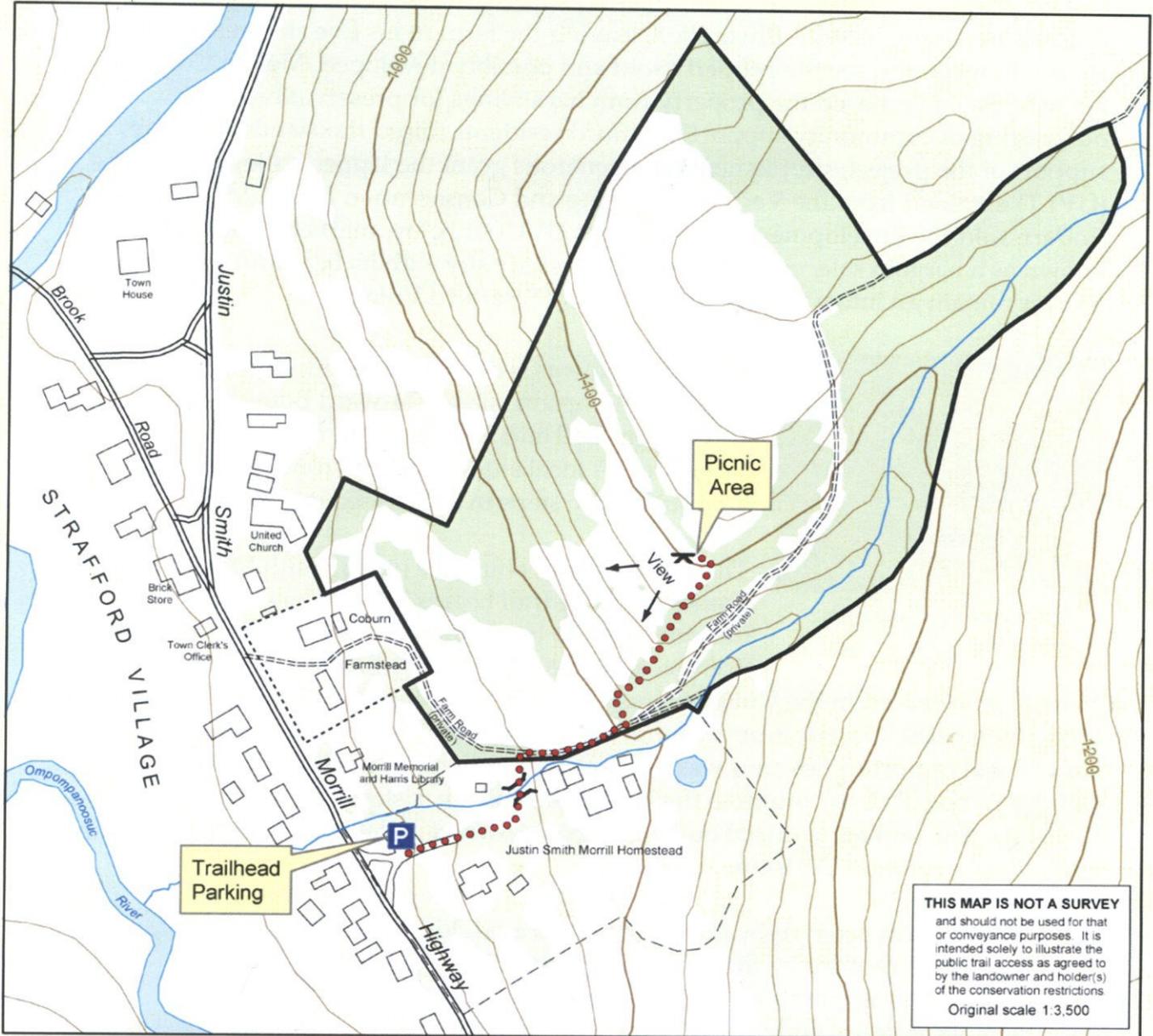


*View from the upper
meadow, Coburn Farm*



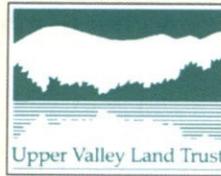
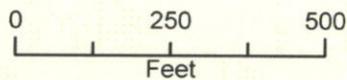
Coburn Trail, Strafford, Vermont

Trail length (one way): approximately 0.2 miles



Legend

- Foot Trail, All-Season
- Stone Bridge
- ==== Farm Road, private
- ▭ Conserved Property
- - - - Coburn Farmstead
- - - - Morrill Homestead
- Forest



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Map prepared by Upper Valley Land Trust, April, 2005.
Contour interval, 20 ft.
Map Data Sources:
Topographic Base Map: VCGI, tiles 0910, 1010.
Orthophoto Base Map: VCGI tiles 160148 (1998).
Coburn and Morrill Homestead property boundaries:
"Survey Plan Showing Conservation Land of Melvin E. Coburn, Susan E. Coburn, Vol. 58, Page 56, Strafford, Vermont, October, 2000" by Harry J. Burgess;
"Survey Plat of the Justin Morrill Homestead, Strafford Vermont", by Frank B. Larsson, November 1989, recorded April 10, 1990, Book 3, Page 80.
Forest, non-forest, water, roads, buildings: interpreted from orthophoto, with guidance from UVLT records and topographic base map.
Trail: Field GPS data, acquired July, 2004.
Map Projection: VT SPCS, NAD83, m.

For more information about trails and conservation land visit www.UVLT.org