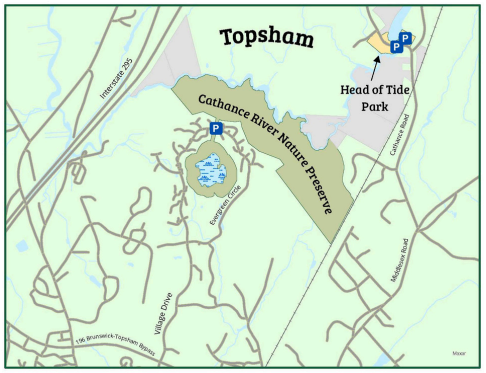
CATHANCE RIVER

The **Cathance River Nature Preserve (CRNP)** in Topsham is a 230-acre conservation property protecting nearly 8,000 feet of river shoreline. Open to the public, it features over five miles of trails with views of rushing rapids, quiet flatwater, and the expansive heath fen. Just minutes from town, the preserve offers a peaceful escape into nature.

The Cathance River is one of six rivers flowing into Merrymeeting Bay, a tidal freshwater ecosystem of global importance. Its marshes provide critical habitat for fish, migratory birds, and raptors. Hiking the Cathance trails, visitors can explore heath fens, tidal marshes, and vibrant forests while experiencing the wild, remote character of this hidden gem.

The preserve was established in 2001 through a conservation easement donated by John Wasileski, alongside the community vision of John and Carla Rensenbrink and the founding of the Cathance River Education Alliance (CREA). For two decades, Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust (BTLT) and CREA partnered to manage trails and offer outdoor learning programs before merging in 2023 to strengthen their shared mission of connecting people to nature.

Today, the preserve is part of a larger Cathance River Conservation Corridor, with over 1,200 acres protected. Over six miles of trails link to **Head of Tide (HoT) Park**, a collaborative project of the Town of Topsham and BTLT that BTLT holds an easement on, where visitors can enjoy a dramatic 15-foot waterfall, picnic areas, restrooms, parking, and hand-carry boat access to both tidal and freshwater sections of the river. Together, the preserve and park highlight the beauty and importance of the Cathance River.



DIRECTIONS TO CRNP PARKING

CRNP is located at the Highland Green development in Topsham. From Route 201 in Topsham, take Route 196 east to the first set of lights. Turn left at the lights into Highland Green on Village Drive and continue straight to where Village Drive intersects with Mountain Road and Evergreen Circle. Continue straight on Evergreen Circle at the intersection with Mountain Road past the Community Center and continue approximately .8 miles to the Ecology Center parking area on your left. No parking is allowed on the streets of Highland Green.

DIRECTIONS TO HoT PARKING

Follow the Cathance Road in Topsham to where it crosses the river. Parking is located at the Park on both the north and south sides of Cathance Road. The trailhead is near the bathrooms and kiosk on the northern side of the road.

TRAIL USE RESTRICTIONS

- Open dawn to dusk.
- No dogs permitted at CRNP (west of Clay Brook Bridge). On-leash dogs permitted east of Clay Brook Bridge.
- No off-road vehicles, bicycles, snowmobiles, or horses.
- No fires or camping.
- Stay on marked trails.
- No hunting or trapping.

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HIGHLAND GREEN

BRUNSWICK-TOPSHAM LAND TRUST

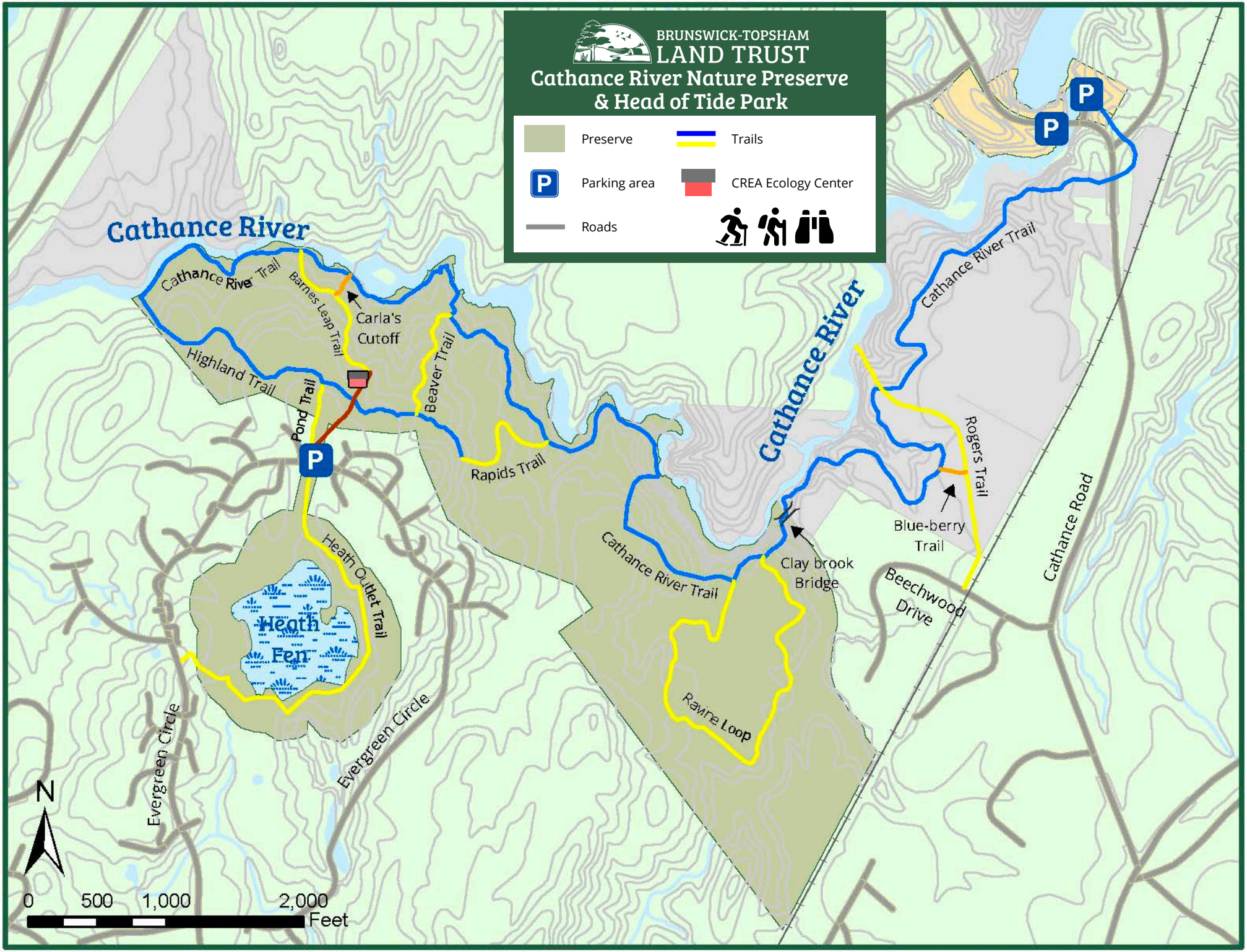
Cathance River

Cathance River Nature Preserve & Head of Tide Park

TRAILS

Online maps available at www.BTLT.org/trailmap

Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust's mission is to conserve and steward vital natural areas, support a vibrant local food system, and connect people with the natural world through inclusive education and recreation programs.


BRUNSWICK-TOPSHAM
LAND TRUST
Cathance River Nature Preserve
& Head of Tide Park
Preserve
Trails
Parking area
CREA Ecology Center
Roads
Cathance River
Cathance River Trail
Barnes Leap Trail
Carla's
Cutoff
Highland Trail
Pond Trail
Beaver Trail
Rapids Trail
Heath Outlet Trail
Heath
Fen
Evergreen Circle
Evergreen Circle
Cathance River
Cathance River Trail
Clay brook
Bridge
Ravine Loop
Cathance River Trail
Roger's Trail
Blue-berry
Trail
Beechwood
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Cathance Road
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