



Broad Barn at Massabesic Center

New Hampshire Audubon



**26 Audubon Way
Auburn, NH**



[www.nh Audubon.org/center-and-events/
massabesic-center-auburn](http://www.nh Audubon.org/center-and-events/massabesic-center-auburn)



Story Map

What's Special About This Site

The Audubon's Massabesic Center is a remnant of the historic Brown Farm, which operated prior to the establishment of the Center and its surrounding wildlife sanctuary. The Center offers educational programs on nature and the environment to youth and adults. Almost two miles of easy walking trails meander through gardens, grasslands, woods, and

wetlands and connect with a larger trail network managed by Manchester Water Works to protect the watershed of Massabesic Lake. Visitors enjoy abundant opportunities to view wildlife during daylight hours. The main building houses a gift shop, wildlife exhibits, staff offices, and provides meeting and classroom space available for groups to rent.



Photo courtesy of Ryan Cutting

Barn History and Use

The Massabesic Center was originally known as the Brown Farm. Joseph Brown and his son Luther owned and operated the farm during the 19th Century. Around the turn of the 20th century, it was sold and purchased by the Parker family and became known as the Parker Farm. Livestock, produce, and timber were the Parker Farm's main commodities. Situated on Lake Massabesic, the Parker Farm also harvested ice from the lake and sold it in

Manchester during the 1950s.

Charlotte Parker Milne was the last Parker to operate the farm, and ran it until the 1970s. Later the farm was bought by Higgins. In 1996 New Hampshire Audubon purchased the farm create a wildlife education center hub for the Manchester region. Today the barn provides important habitat for the Big Brown Bat, as the attic houses a maternal breeding colony in the summer that is actively monitored.



*Historic photo courtesy of the
Massabesic Audubon Center*

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Architectural Features

The Broad Barn is a New England-style barn with the typical large barn doors at both ends. It has a stone foundation and transom windows in the front. There is evidence that a transom had been on the back entrance, based on the outline of the door. There is a lean-to cattle stable along the side. Mortise and tenon construction were used to build the barn and the wood was sawn by a circular saw. There are common rafters, major purlins,

gunstock posts, rafter ties, and a hay loft with a hay fork and track. The barn has a unique ventilation system with air ducts leading from the cupola to the stable ceiling. The roof boards run horizontally along the length of the barn. It is also built into the side of the hill and there is a half basement that would have housed farming implements. There is a six-over-six window located on the front of the barn.



*Interior photo courtesy of
Ryan Cutting*

What You Can Do Here Now

The Massabesic Center is open year-round. Special programs and events are frequently offered, and a listing of happenings is updated on their website. The trail system and gardens are open to the public from sun-up to sun-down, and the gift shop and indoor exhibits are open during posted hours.

Snowshoes and binoculars are available for rent directly from the Center. Groups can reserve the Center's meeting room in advance, and the venue is available to lease for private events like weddings and birthday parties.

For Further Reading

Field Guide to New England Barns and Farm Buildings, by Thomas Durant Visser (University Press of New England, 1997).

Barns: Their History, Preservation, and Restoration, by Charles Klamkin (Bonanza Books, 1979).

Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England, by Thomas C. Hubka (University Press of New England, 1984).

An Age of Barns, by Eric Sloane (Funk and Wagnalls, 1967).

Preserving Old Barns: Preventing the loss of a valuable resource, by John C. Porter and Francis E. Gilman (Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2019)