The 200 acre Alder Meadow Pond/Wolf Hill Sanctuary is located on Fomer Road in Southampton. It features a wide variety of wildlife habitats including a vernal pool, hillside wetland, small streams and seeps, rock cobbles, fields, and the Pond. Alder Meadow Pond covers 27 acres with 2/3 of it lying on the property. The southern portion of the parcel bears traces of a colonial era road and the original Searle homestead. This property has been in the Searle family and farmed and logged since before the Revolution. Nathaniel Searle was one of the original 14 settlers of Southampton, and the foundations for his homestead and several others dot the property. The original county road from Northampton to Westfield passes by the Pond and is still visible.

Abutting the western and northern edge of the Searle parcel and extending to the north are 4,956 contiguous acres of protected water supply land owned by the Holyoke Water Works around the Tighe-Carmody and White reservoirs. The parcel falls within the Berkshire Plateau Forest Legacy Area and is part of the Nature Conservancy’s eleven intact forest areas. On its south border the sanctuary abuts ninety-acres of farmland which was once a part of a larger farm and is now protected by an Agricultural Preservation Restriction. Moose, bear, coyotes, deer, wild turkeys and Great Horned Owls, Little Green Herons, Great Blue Herons and beaver are found on the parcel. The upland portion is known as Wolf Hill, in reference to Zophar Searle’s killing of a wolf there in the 1700s. In addition, the adjacent 4,956 acres of protected water supply lands provide connectivity to additional habitat, sufficient for larger mammals requiring extensive un-fragmented range.

A Conservation Restriction was purchased by the Town for this property in June of 2010 from Edward C and Genevieve N. Searle with support from the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services [LAND Grant] and the Community Preservation Commission. It is managed by the Conservation Commission. The purpose of this Conservation Restriction is to assure that the property will be maintained in its current condition in perpetuity in a natural, scenic and undeveloped condition. The residents of the Town have access to the property during daylight hours for non-motorized recreation.