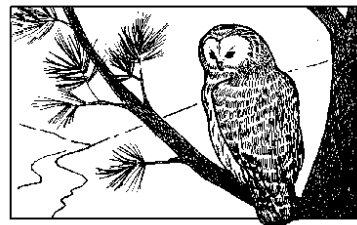


WALKING GUIDE THETFORD, VERMONT



THETFORD



CONSERVATION
COMMISSION

FEBRUARY 2009



INTRODUCTION

Starting in April of 2007, the Thetford Conservation Commission began sponsoring a monthly "Second Saturday Stroll." Handouts which outlined the history and features of many of the public lands in Thetford, as well as public access trails residing on private lands were produced for these walks. This Walking Guide is a compilation of the information prepared for the Strolls. In addition, several Valley Quests (many of which were created by Thetford school children) have been included in this guide along with a walking tour of Post Mills prepared by the Thetford Historical Society. The Thetford Historical Society has a separate brochure with walking tours of 3 of Thetford's villages which is available at their library.

Most of the photos were taken by Li Shen. The cover photo shows a winter ascent of the Bill Hill Trail. Comments and corrections can be addressed to Heather Carlos at 785-4853 or hac@dartmouth.edu or any member of the Conservation Commission. Hard copies of this guide are available at the Town Hall and a pdf is available for download at <http://www.thetfordvermont.us/conscomm.htm>

VALLEY QUEST

Valley Quest is an award-winning program that uses treasure hunts to celebrate community, natural history, cultural heritage and our special places. "Valley" refers to our shared region; while "Quest" refers to a treasure hunt made by children and adults working together, and leading to a treasure in the community. Over the past decade, more than 200 Quests have been created across 50 Upper Valley towns, with the participation of over 2000 students. One of four programs of Vital Communities, you can learn more about Questing by visiting www.vitalcommunities.org



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BILL HILL

HISTORY

In 1963, New York City writer Noel Perrin bought the Bill Hill property and began a dual life as academic and part-time farmer. The farm was originally established in the early nineteenth century and cleared for the purposes of cultivation, pasturage, and hayfields. These early farmers were likely caught in the “sheep fever” that hit the area between 1810 and 1840, with the introduction of the Merino sheep from Spain. Excerpts of Perrin’s witty prose tell the story of his relationship with Bill Hill: “Bill Hill is a large lump of glacial debris behind the pasture across the road. I own it. Insofar as a thing as small as a human being can claim to own a thing as big as a hill.” (*First Person Rural: Essays of a Sometime Farmer*). Over four decades, Bill Hill gave Perrin much of the material for his successful books. He spent much of his time working with Ellis Paige, Floyd Dexter and other knowledgeable neighbors to keep the views open at the top of Bill Hill, chasing his errant “guest cows” and constructing/rebuilding 900 feet of stone walls, which he called his greatest physical accomplishment.

Perrin was famous for loving a good trade, and during these wall-building days he had an ongoing barter with Dexter’s daughter Lorraine Carbino, who traded him homemade donuts in exchange for stones for her garden.

Perrin was an avid supporter of land conservation and, in 1984, decided to place his property—54 acres of hardwood and mixed forest and 28 acres of open fields—under a Grant of Conservation Restrictions with the town of Thetford. Fifteen years later, Perrin renewed his commitment to land conservation by transferring the grant to a conservation easement with the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT), adding a provision for public access to Bill Hill. To this end, UVLT opened the Bill Hill Trail, built and maintained by Steve Glazer of Valley Quest, in 2003.

DIRECTIONS

From Route 113 in Thetford Center: turn onto Tucker Hill Road. Take an immediate left into the first driveway after the covered bridge. Trailhead parking is on the right just past the sugarhouse.

From Route 132: turn onto Tucker Hill Road. Just before the Covered Bridge, turn right at the sugar house. Trailhead parking is on the right just past the sugarhouse.

FEATURES

The short (approximately one half mile one-way) but relatively steep trail starts at Perrin’s sugarhouse, built by hand in 1970, then leads visitors past picturesque stonewalls and pastures, up the honeysuckle and raspberry-covered hillside, to a peaceful spot to sit on a rock and take in the view from 800 feet up. Bill Hill provides open hilltop views of the surrounding area. The Bill Hill Trail begins within close proximity to one of Thetford’s two remaining covered bridges, and a series of waterfalls on the Ompompanoosuc River.

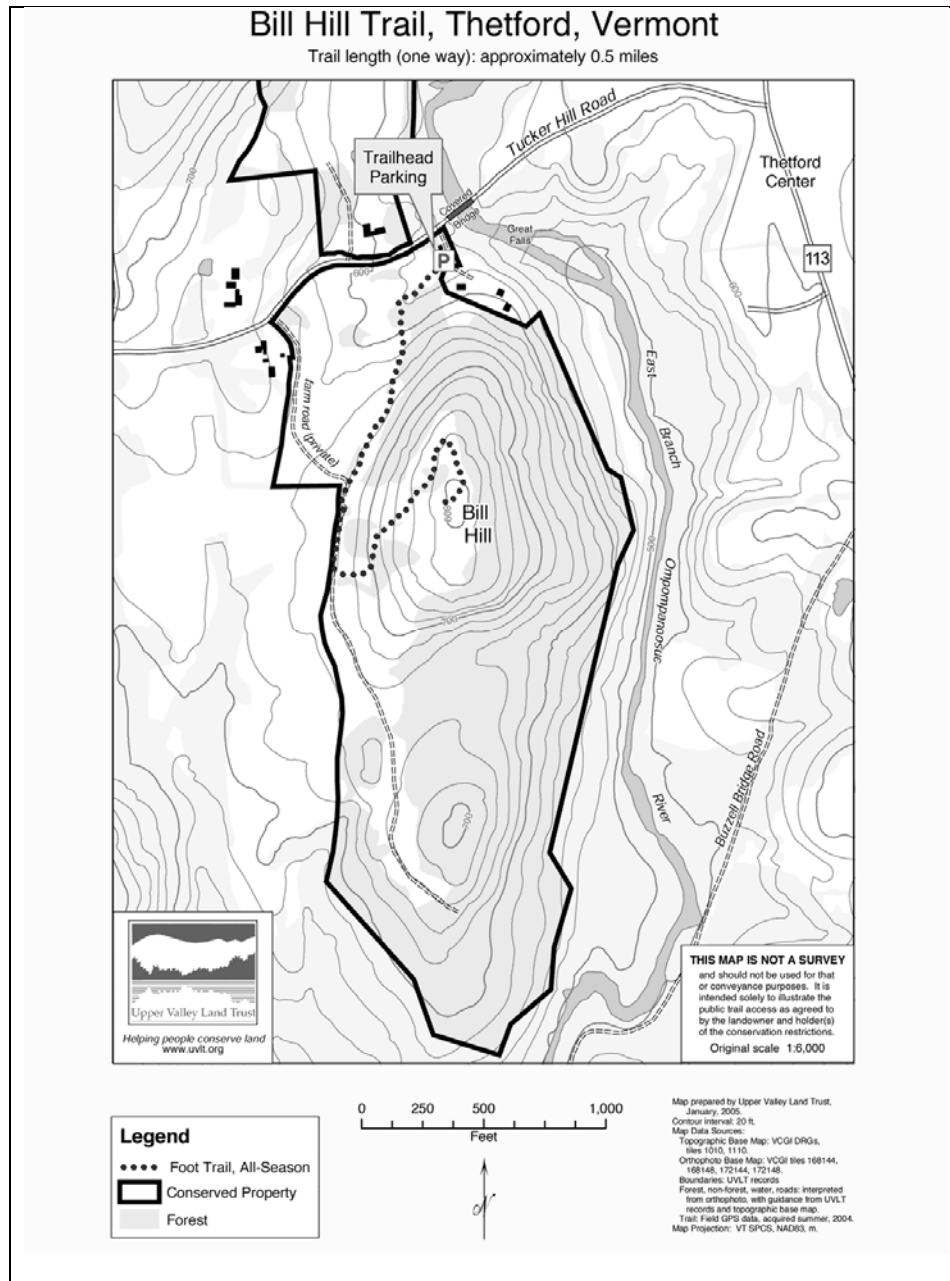
The visibility of the stonewalls surrounding Bill Hill is a reminder of why we call our area “New England” as it recalls the open fields in England and Ireland crisscrossed by stone walls. At this point in our evolving landscape, Bill Hill is a bit of an anomaly, as a majority of the 120,000 miles of stone wall in New England have been buried in forest for over a century. A handful of red oak and sugar maple are likely as old as the farm itself and owe their continued health to Perrin’s harvesting of ruthless competitors such as red maple.

MANAGEMENT

Bill Hill is private property with a conservation easement held by the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT). The trails are available for community use. More information can be found at http://www.uvlt.org/html/bill_hill.html.

TRAILS AND RECREATION

There is a maintained trail approximately ½ mile long. It follows stonewalls and pastures before tackling a short, moderately steep slope which leads to the top of Bill Hill. The map shown below was provided by UVLT.



BILL HILL QUEST

This Quest was created by Inge Trebitz in 2004. It begins in the parking area just south of the covered bridge in Thetford Center.

The farm on Bill Hill was established in the early nineteenth century and cleared for cultivation, pasturage, and hayfields. The existence of stonewalls on the property is evidence that previous farmers of Bill Hill got caught in the “sheep fever” that hit the area between 1810 and 1840, after the introduction of Merino sheep from Spain. With the general exodus to the west sheep fever died out and former pastures slowly reverted back to forest.

In 1963, Thetford writer Noel Perrin bought the Bill Hill property and, leaving his New York City roots, began a dual life of teaching and part-time farming. Over the following four decades, Perrin learned from his land as he worked to shape it, harvest from it, and maintain the open view from the top of Bill Hill that he loved so much.

Perrin wanted to assure that his land will exist in its undeveloped state in perpetuity. In 1984, he decided to place his property under a Grant of Conservation Restrictions to the town of Thetford. Fifteen years later, he transferred the grant to a conservation easement under the Upper Valley Land Trust. To provide public access to his conserved property, he allowed the Bill Hill Trail to be built in 2004.

Before you start just look around
 What near this Quest trail can be found?

Until you reach a rocky cleft.
 Twin spruce trees guard it on your left.

A sugar house, ready to go
 Which might be envied by Thoreau!

The trail climbs up along barbed wire,
 Then joins the stone wall a bit higher.

In feet, it counts eight by eleven,
 In syrup, sometimes twenty-seven

These walls, once built to keep sheep in,
 Restored they were by Noel Perrin.

Gallons per year for Mr.Perrin,
 Who for the maple trees was caring.

Stumps on the left are soft and spongy;
 How many years the tree rings tell ye?

Across the driveway steps lead down
 (Invasive knotweed covers ground),

Beyond the metal gate in the wall,
 A stand of red pines straight and tall

And straight ahead, without a hitch
 You see the falls and the covered bridge.

Was planted on the steeper slope.
 The trail goes round it and your hope

This path follows the river’s bends.
 And at Union Village Dam it ends!

For better views is soon rewarded:
 The open pasture does afford it!

But YOU go back: The Trailhead Parking leads
 To an old gearbox in the weeds.

Caused by a fungus, you’ll soon see
 A “Black Knot” on a cherry tree

Who used it? Maybe Henry Bill,
 Who gave the name to our hill?

Before the upper field you round,
 Where weeds, berries & wild flowers abound.

No, he lived in the eighteen hundreds.
 The land was cleared and sheep here wandered.

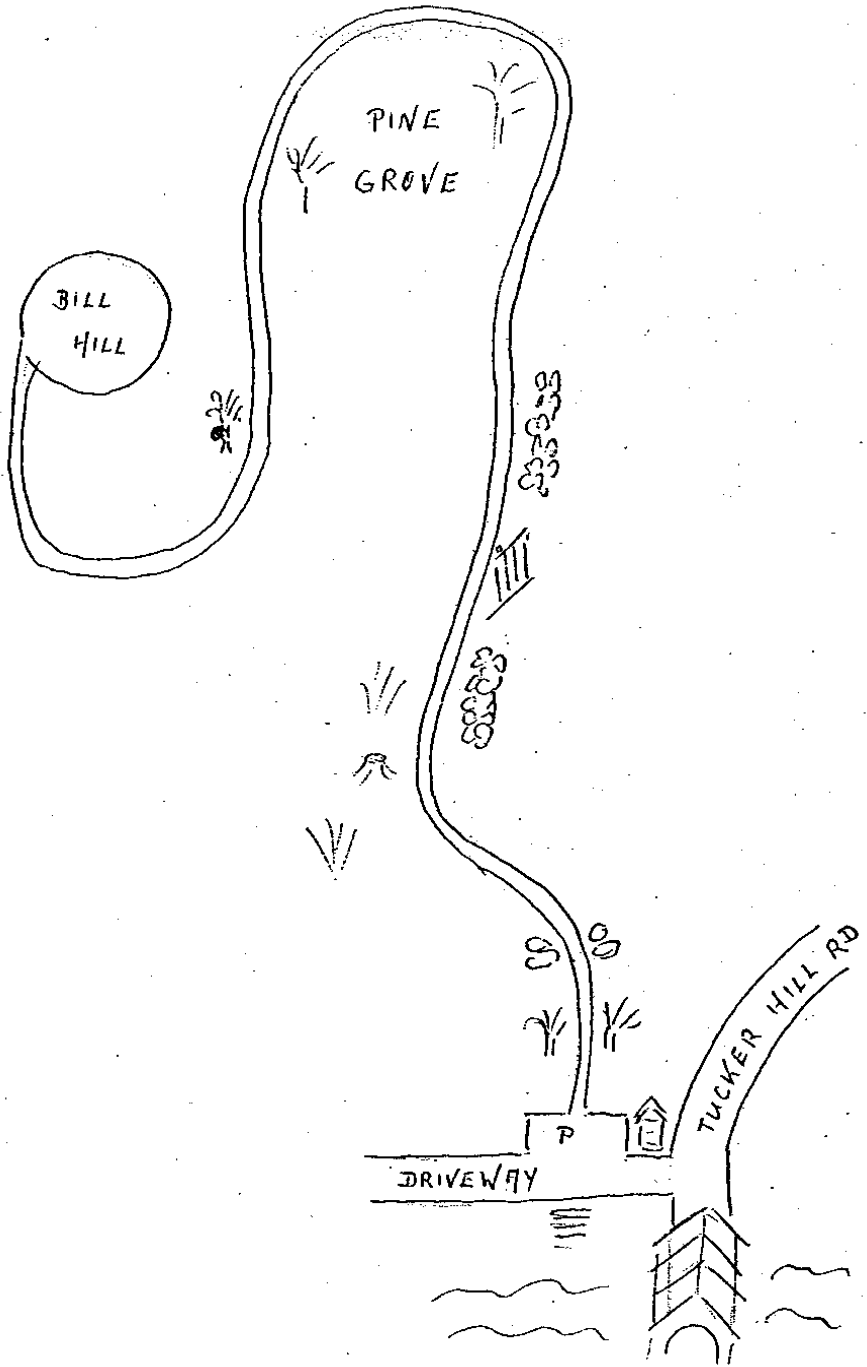
“A lump of glacial debris” way up on top
 Marks where your questing will stop.

Now start your Quest where you can name
 “White Pine” and “White Birch”, they form a
 frame.

T’was Noel Perrin’s favorite view,
 Conserved for people just like you,

Light blue blazes you will have to follow.
 They guide you through a grassy hollow

Who wander up and always will
 Enjoy the sights from old “Bill Hill”.



HUGHES FOREST

HISTORY

The Hughes Forest is approximately 270 acres that were the summer residence of Thetford Center's Charles Hughes (his winter residence was the white house across the street from the Two Rivers Clinic). Mr. Hughes, a music teacher from New York, died in 1999 (at age 99) and left the land to the Nature Conservancy. He also bequeathed the Thetford Center town green and the Thetford Hill Hughes Barn Museum to the town. The Nature Conservancy donated the land to the town of Thetford under a conservation easement with the Upper Valley Land Trust in 2005.



Resting after a lifetime of hard work

DIRECTIONS

The property can be accessed from the junction of Poor Farm Road North and Sawnee Bean (~3/4 mile up Sawnee Bean). There is a small parking area just below the junction.

There is also access from Tucker Hill Road although parking is extremely limited. From Tucker Hill Road, turn onto Whippoorwill Road, a narrow dirt road. Follow this until it takes a right hand curve, where a rocky jeep trail (leading to Poor Farm Road South) comes in from the left. There is a parking notch at this junction that holds one car.

FEATURES

Most of this property lies on either side of Poor Farm Road North and continues a short distance along the north side of Whippoorwill Road. In addition the property includes a small section of Barker Brook on the north side of Sawnee Bean Road.

The sections of Poor Farm Road and Whippoorwill Road which cross the property are lovely walking trails in themselves.



Outlet from the Beaver Pond

As you enter Poor Farm Road North from Sawnee Bean Road, you will see a wetland, which used to be a large pond. This pond was contained by a historic stone dam, which was installed to run a sawmill operation, now long abandoned. In recent decades the dam was fortified and its height increased by the resident beaver population. A thicket of alders and many trees surrounding the pond gradually disappeared, felled by the beavers for food and dam building material. The beaver dam broke in 2006 after extended rains, and the pondwaters burst out and flooded all the way down through the woods, across the road, and to the Ompompanusuc River, closing Sawnee Bean to traffic for several days.

As you continue south on Poor Farm Road, you will see the former summer residence of Charles Hughes—a small farmhouse and old barn close to the road. These are now privately owned, as are the fields that surround them. The Hughes Forest surrounds the fields and extends to the south. Further along the road, in the woods on the left, is an old stone wall enclosure. Over a century ago this surrounded a vegetable garden that provided food for the original farmers who maintained pastures here. There are also the remains of stone foundations in the woods just past the field on the right and an old, hard-to-find, stone well.

Behind the Hughes farmhouse the land rises through hemlock forest (a deer yard) to a series of rocky ledges and cliffs, culminating in a ridge top. The western boundary of the land follows this ridgeline. To the east side of the road the land drops through mixed hardwoods and conifers into a small, steep valley. The brook in this valley leaves the Hughes property and joins the stream leading from the breached beaver dam.

If you continue on the well-traveled section of the road, it turns into Whipporwill Road, and leads to Tucker Hill Road. If you bear right on the rocky jeep trail, you will continue on Poor Farm Road South, which also intersects Tucker Hill Road further to the west.

MANAGEMENT

The Thetford Conservation Commission oversees the management of the property at the direction of the Selectboard and under the terms of the conservation easement with the Upper Valley Land Trust. A draft management plan is currently under review by the Selectboard.



The overall management objective is to provide Thetford *Aerial view of the Hughes Forest*

residents with the kind of low-impact and dispersed recreational opportunities that are typical and traditional to Vermont in an undeveloped tract of northern hardwood forest. To help develop management strategies, natural communities and geologic and historic features existing on the property are being inventoried. Constraints may be placed on use of areas that are easily degraded or sensitive to disturbance, for instance vernal pools, wetlands, rare plant communities and ledges that may shelter bobcat may be accessed on foot only, and not subjected to timbering.

TRAILS AND RECREATION

The conservation easement allows for public access for all types of non-commercial, non-motorized, dispersed recreational purposes though none of these activities may compromise the goals of the forestry and wildlife management plans. Development of recreation trails of all types will be guided by the natural features identified by the forest and natural community inventories.

VAST maintains a snowmobile trail through the property

MIMI'S TRAIL

HISTORY

Mimi's Trail is named in memory of Mimi Morton, a long-time Thetford resident. As a young mother, Mimi loved gentle family-friendly walks that were close to home. This makes Mimi's Trail a perfect tribute to her.

The original idea for the trail came from Tom Kinder, pastor of the nearby Thetford Congregational Church and it was designed by Mimi's husband, John Morton. Planning for Mimi's trail was started in 1998, though it didn't open for several more years due to the logistics of getting ten landowners (whose land the trail crosses) to agree on the plans.

DIRECTIONS

The entrance to Mimi's Trail is directly across from the Thetford Elementary School Parking lot on Route 113 on Thetford Hill. Park at the elementary school. (Do not park at the Post office or the American Legion Hall). The trail starts beside the road between the VFW building and the Post Office. There is a small yellow sign beside the trail near the entrance.

FEATURES

The trail skirts the edge of the field and enters a pine grove. The wide, well-groomed trail then winds gently uphill for a total of 2.6 miles through open woods of mixed deciduous and coniferous trees. Several steeper switchbacks challenge skiers at the top before opening to a spectacular view from the summit of Houghton Hill.



Hints of fantastic views are visible through the trees.

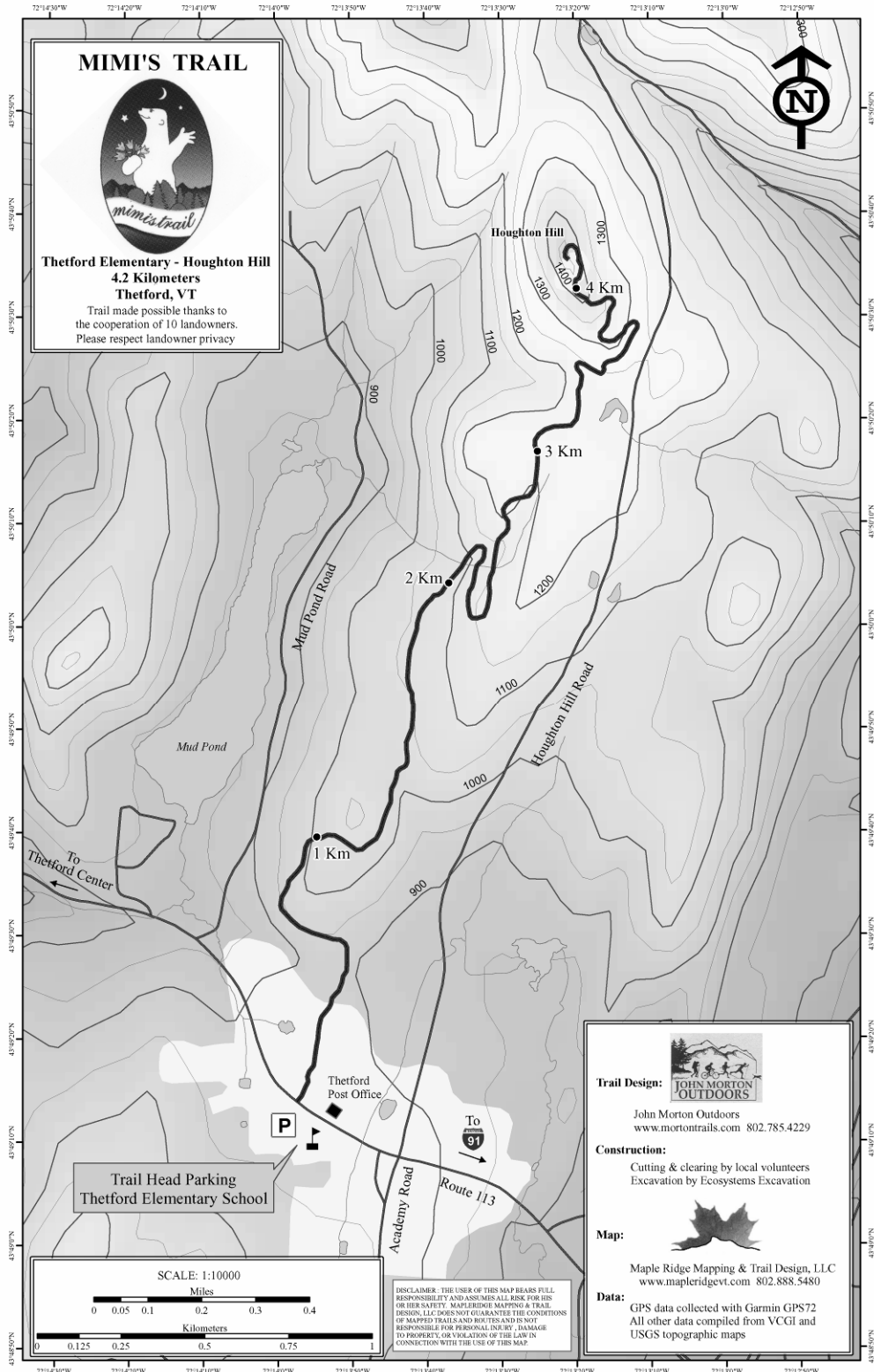


The trail climbs gently through a mixed forest.

TRAILS AND RECREATION

The Trail is well marked by blazes depicting a polar bear. The landowners have generously allowed the public to cross their land provided they do not use motorized vehicles or horses.

The trail is suitable for walkers, runners, skiers and snowshoers.



POST MILLS NATURE AREA

HISTORY

The Post Mills Nature Area (PMNA) is a 104-acre parcel owned by the Town of Thetford and covered by a conservation easement held by the Upper Valley Land Trust. The PMNA abuts the Upper Valley Regional Landfill (which is closed and capped) and was acquired through an agreement with the State of Vermont, the Upper Valley Regional Landfill Corporation and the Town of Thetford in August, 2000. The easement provides for a watershed protection area, protects natural communities and wildlife habitat while providing public access for benign, non-motorized recreation and educational uses.

DIRECTIONS

The Post Mills Nature Area is located on Route 113, approximately 4 miles north of Town Hall. The access is on the right as you enter Post Mills from Thetford Center and is the old landfill site just before "Sunshine Corner" and the Malmquist Mill.

FEATURES

There are four ecological communities within PMNA – open fields, a riparian zone, an alder thicket and upland forest.

The northern half of the property occupies a broad, flat valley bottom which formed as lake bottom deposits under an enlarged post-glacial Lake Fairlee. Soils on this portion are primarily prime agricultural soils and much of the area is now open fields which reflect the historical agricultural use.



View of the fields and riparian zone

The outlet stream from Lake Fairlee runs through the field, creating a “riparian” area—a transition zone between moving water and the land that surrounds it, rich in ecological diversity. The wooded stream corridor is 200 to 300 feet wide and bounds the PMNA for ~one mile, just below the confluence with the East Branch of the Ompompanoosuc River.



Members of the Conservation Commission pruning the alder thicket

The southern half of the PMNA is forested upland in a north-facing amphitheater. The property rises abruptly out of the old lakebed and climbs moderately and rather uniformly a couple of hundred feet, extending to a boundary stonewall close to the broad crest of the adjoining ridge to the south (maximum elevation is about 830 feet). The western third and the northeast corner of the woodlands are primarily white pine forest; the middle portion is hemlock and mixed hardwoods. Several small streams (some seasonal) cut down the slope; the largest of these splits the eastern portion of the fields with a wooded gully.

Between the fields and the forest is approximately one acre of alders. These trees are important woodcock habitat.

MANAGEMENT

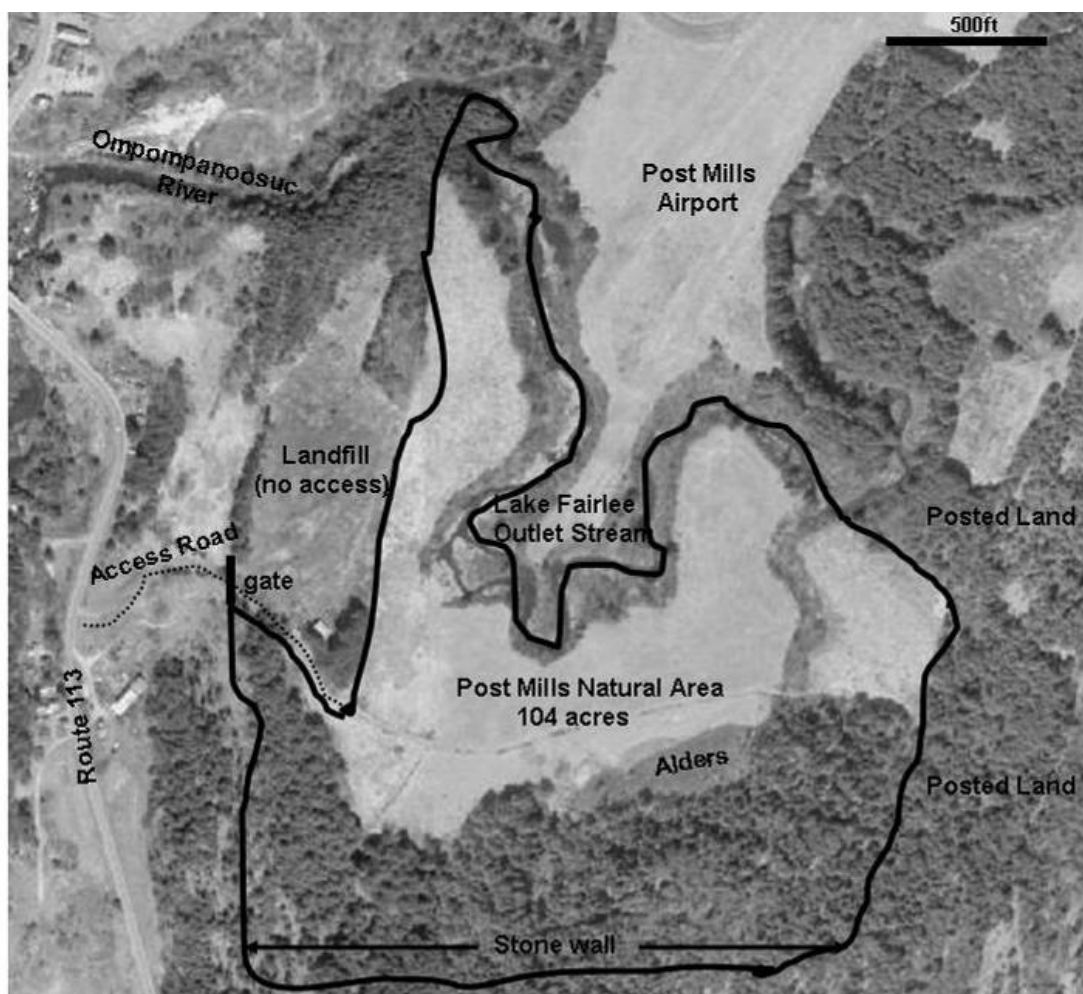
The Thetford Conservation Commission, at the direction of the Selectboard, oversees the management of the property in accordance with a Management Plan which was approved in December 2003.

The fields are mowed on a rotating 3 year schedule in order to promote natural diversity. The forested areas will be left to progress naturally without human interference, as an educational feature, for few forests remain in Vermont that have been allowed to mature. The alder trees are cut on a rotating basis to encourage new growth for woodcock habitat.

TRAILS AND RECREATION

No formal trails exist on PMNA, however there is a clear path which runs through the fields and there are many logging roads throughout the forested area. The path starts after the metal gate and leads across the open fields. At the end of the field it crosses a small stream into a smaller field. There are trail branches that lead into the pine forest along old logging roads and eventually cross into private property.

Non-motorized recreation including walking, snowshoeing, skiing, and bicycling are allowed as well as hunting and fishing in small non-commercial groups. Snowmobiles and all terrain vehicles are not allowed, nor is camping or fires. Dogs must be leashed. The property is intended to be enjoyed short term and with very low impact. All uses are subject to available parking.



Aerial view of the Post Mills Nature Area

TAYLOR PARCEL

HISTORY

The ~36 acre Taylor Parcel was donated to the town in 1997 by Janet and Tim Taylor, owners of the adjacent Crossroads Farm. Originally, all of the land between Route 244, West Fairlee Road, the Ompompanoosuc River and Cross Road was a single, large parcel that was carved up in the 'biggest subdivision ever' in Thetford.

DIRECTIONS

Access to the parcel is via a right of way (R.O.W.) across from the intersection of Route 244 and Robinson Hill Road. This access trail curves downhill and enters an open area.

FEATURES

Upon entering the parcel, you encounter an area that was once a large deposit of gravel, left by receding glaciers, that was mined to provide material for interstate construction. This formerly denuded area is in the process of reforestation. The trail forks here and the path straight ahead leads to the Taylor farm through an area of early forest, a mix including birches, aspens, white pines and non-native Scots pine. The left fork leads towards the Ompompanoosuc River. Before the river, the trail crosses part of a wetland which is fed by a small stream from another wetland in West Fairlee. This crossing can be very wet early in the year. The trail follows the river and continues off the property.



Cut bank and point bar on an Ompomp meander



A weathered willow

Most of the parcel is a remnant of what was once a much more extensive floodplain forest that bordered the Ompompanoosuc River. Almost all of Vermont's floodplain forests were cleared to make way for agriculture or development and it is now the rarest forest ecosystem in the state. Floodplain forests are highly variable in their tree composition because they undergo frequent flood disturbance and are usually somewhere in the process of regeneration. They also vary a lot in the actual amount of tree cover for the same reason. This parcel is unusual in that it contains a high number of elms, particularly slippery elms, and ancient-looking willows punctuate the course of the river and also the edge of the wetland. The old apple trees are a legacy of past agricultural use.

The Ompompanoosuc River has left marks of historic river action. Coarse sand and silt, deposited when the river overflowed into the surrounding floodplain, make up the banks of the river, which are higher in places than the surrounding land and form natural levees. The river has also altered its course during floods, and the meanders of its old channel remain as depressions or oxbows.

In recent times, flooding has unfortunately become a vehicle for spreading non-native, invasive plants, as evidenced by patches of knotweed, bishop's weed, honeysuckle and barberry. In addition to carrying seeds or fragments of these plants, flooding creates soil disturbance that favors such invasive species.



Turtle (note the tail drag) and rodent tracks

Undeveloped areas of floodplain such as this parcel rank highly as valuable wildlife habitat. In addition to many songbirds, snipe, an unusual wetland bird in these parts, have been observed here. Beavers, raccoons, deer, moose and turtles are some of the species that range throughout and leave their tracks along the river. In addition, naturally vegetated floodplains are very important for dissipating the energy of floods and absorbing floodwaters, thus protecting downstream property. They also retain flood sediment that would otherwise diminish water quality and harm fish spawning grounds. The roots of trees excel at holding riverbanks together to resist erosion. By contrast, along the non-forested riverbank section the signs of erosion are obvious.

MANAGEMENT

The Thetford Selectboard oversees the property.

TRAILS AND RECREATION

A former snowmobile trail winds through the property and serves as a four season footpath.



Aerial view of the Taylor Parcel

UNION VILLAGE DAM

HISTORY

Construction of the Union Village Dam spanned 4 years and was completed in 1950 at a cost of \$4.1 million. The Dam provides flood protection and is considered a “run of the river” dam – it only holds back water during periods of flooding and winter months. The Union Village Dam is part of a system of 16 dams and reservoirs that work to control flooding on the Connecticut River and the related tributaries.

DIRECTIONS

There are four entrances to the dam area. The first can be reached from Route 113 via Buzzell Bridge Road (at the base of Thetford Hill). There are two entrances on Academy Road. From Route 132, turn onto Academy Road and proceed just over 0.5 miles, to a fork in the road. The left fork enters the park at the yellow gate and leads into the main recreation area. The right fork passes through a covered bridge. A second entrance is on the left, about a quarter mile uphill from the bridge. The last entrance is on Tucker Hill Road. From Route 132, turn onto Tucker Hill and the entrance is about one third of a mile, on the right. Some entrances are seasonal.

FEATURES

The ~900 acre dam area contains 5 miles of the Ompompanoosuc River including the confluence of the East and West Branches. The dam itself is an imposing structure towering high above the river. The two 7’6 x 12’ steel gates can hold back 12.4 billion gallons of floodwater. Wildlife is abundant including 5 different kinds of bats, dragonflies, birds of prey, songbirds, numerous mammals and other interesting creatures. In particular this land is listed as a site to visit on the Upper Valley Birding Trail, due

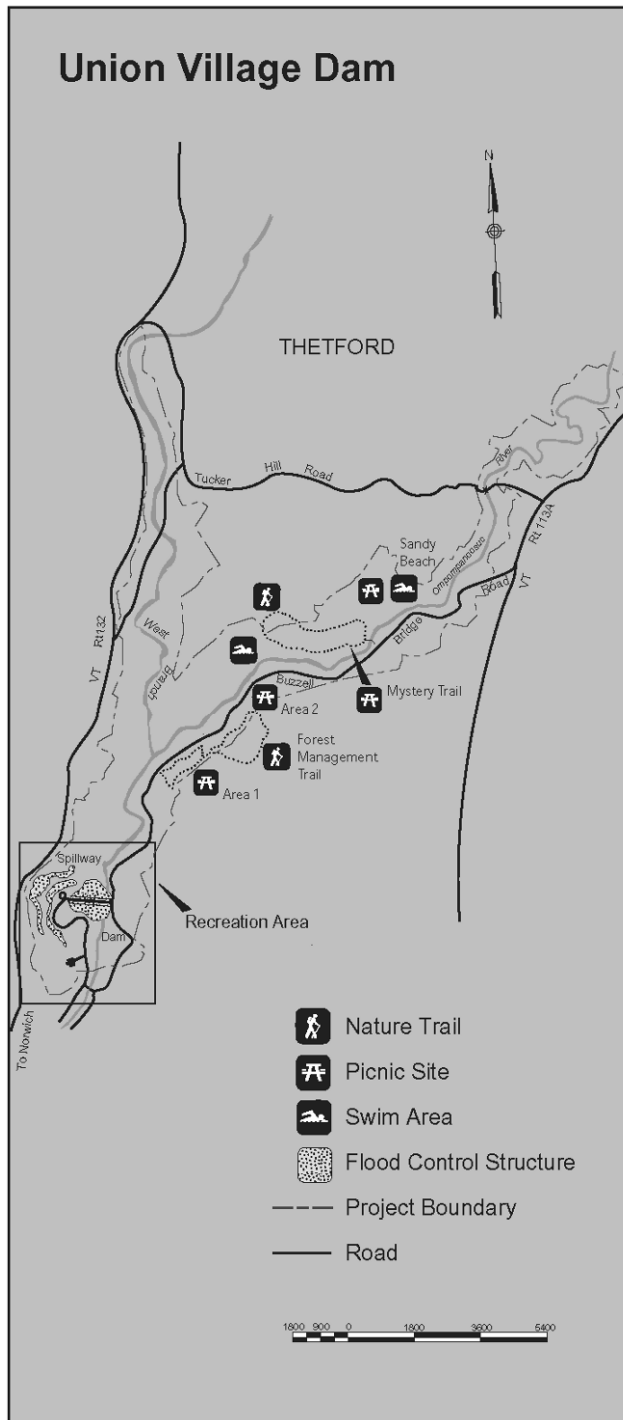


A white pine living on the edge and overlooking the Dam



Skiing on one of the many multi- use trails

to its impressive array of bird species. Over 135 species have been recorded in the whole project, including American Bittern, Green Heron, Wood Duck, Green-winged Teal, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Red-shouldered Hawk, Northern Harrier, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Common Snipe, American Woodcock, Barred Owl, Whip-Poor-Will, Belted Kingfisher, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Pileated Woodpecker, Alder and Willow Flycatchers, Great-crested Flycatcher, Brown Thrasher, Gray Catbird, American Pipit, Nashville Warbler, Northern Parula, Black-throated Green Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Swamp, Lincoln’s, and White-throated Sparrow.



Map Courtesy of US Army Corps of Engineers, New England District

MANAGEMENT

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District is responsible for managing the dam and the surrounding park. Besides maintaining the dam, the Corps of Engineers use natural resource management techniques to establish and maintain diverse wildlife habitats including wetlands, fields, and a mosaic of age classes and forest types. They are also working to reduce populations of invasive species.

TRAILS AND RECREATION

There are over 3 miles of multi-use trails as well as several very scenic swimming holes along the river. The recreation area (see map) features picnic areas, restrooms, a volleyball court, horseshoe pits, playground equipment and grills. During winter months, most of Buzzell Bridge Road is closed to traffic and turned over to skiers, snowshoers and snowmobiles. The Mystery Trail is a wonderful family walking trail covering a significant variety of natural habitats in 0.75 miles. These include: river, beaver pond, alder thickets, mature hardwood and mixed forests, old fields, and young forest. The Forest Management Trail highlights ongoing woods management practices. Hunting, fishing and trapping are allowed in the dam area in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

LONESOME PINE QUEST: AT THE MYSTERY TRAIL

This Quest was created by Bill Shepard in 2000.

Take Route 113 into Thetford Center. At the foot of Thetford Hill, turn onto Buzzell Bridge road and proceed toward the Union Village Recreation Area. Travel 0.4 miles and then park in the large lot on your left. Your Quest begins there.

Walk to your west along this peaceful country road.
The east branch of the Ompomp. may be good for a toad!
After awhile look for “Mystery Trail” signs to the right
Then follow my lead with all of your might.
Pick up a trail map guide in the box.
We are on our way, so pull up your socks!

The mystery clues do abound—they just need to be found.
Whether it is human history or giving nature a chance.
This Quest will do part of the loop; look deep and give more than a glance.
Before the bridge with buds alternate and red brown,
Look for an American Basswood, the carver’s tree.
It has heart-shaped leaves, and coppice wood
(four big stump sprouts) for you to see.
Let’s cross the river. Be sure to notice its sparkle and quiver.
Kingbird may be chief, but it is the Blue Jay who cries “thief, thief.”¹

At the fork we will bear right. Look for the Red Oaks, sturdy with might.
Having flat-topped ridges and salmon colored grooves in the bark
The leaves are big and pointy. Acorns are clues to this tree in the park.
You will pass Hemlock, with needles so tiny and green
Maybe a Red Squirrel will chatter—begging to be seen.
Thriving in soil so poor, find one that reproduces by spore,
It likes lots of sun: find this fern for fun!
It can be up to three feet high, and has 3 branching parts the same.
With fronds widest at the base it is “Bracken” by name.

From the days of yore, an old town road you roam
Look and see if you can find a few fence posts made of stone.
The quacking and peeping you may hear, may be frog’s music reaching your ear.²
Bear right at the fork for treasures are near. What could they be? Look and see!
Can you hear the “laugh” of a Robin?³ Or the “wrock” of a Raven?⁴
Both of these birds inhabit this haven.

Follow the path and you shall see a specimen from days of olde—
If only this lofty White Pine’s stories could be told!
Be they natural or human, mysteries and wonders are abundant.
Just how was the old stone farm gatepost relevant?
There are old cellar holes, a silo pad, foundations.
Being a history sleuth you will have many investigations!

¹ During the late spring and summer, the Blue Jay’s diet includes baby birds and eggs. In no way, however, are they a threat to the survival of other songbirds. They are a principal planter of acorns.

² Spring peepers can be heard here from late April until early June.

³ Robin arrives in late march, has 2 nesting cycles and departs by fall.

⁴ Ravens enjoy this setting year-round.

Now find yourself nearing the pond's soft edge
Graced with alders, with cattails and sedge.
Listen for the bubbly Song Sparrow's
"Madge. Madge, please put on the teakettle" song.⁵
Or the "wichity, wichity" of the Common Yellowthroat (a warbler)⁶.
You just can't go wrong!

Dragonflies dart and zoom. Do the milkweed dance and spin?
We have a wetland with lots of room—and Wood Duck boxes ready to go in.
Look close, for there may be a painted turtle, heron—even a migrating Green-wing Teal.
Were it me that was here, Aye, I'd surely give a squeal!
Butterflies do flutter and yearn, and have nary a care.
Tree Swallows bank and turn—the acrobats of the air.⁷
Perhaps you might find a berm built of twigs, sticks and mud?
Keep an eye & ear for the beaver, which whacks his tail with a thud.

Ah...there is so much more to this story,
Like the hillside in fall in all its glory.
So many mysteries waiting to be solved
In a place so far away from the maddening crowd.
Let the peace feel its way in... 'cause there's so little that is loud.
Spring, summer, fall—which time is the best?
Come again and again, and experience the rest.
And for the last mystery: find your treasure chest.
Remember how you looked for the "Lonesome Pine."
Make your way to that tall tree and the last clue you will find.
From that Pine make your way to another fallen tree.
To a big ole stump is where your treasure box will be!

⁵ Season: Late march through October.

⁶ Season: May through July.

⁷ Springtime visitors

WOODS TRAIL

HISTORY

The Woods Trail is the result of collaboration between Thetford Academy's former Cross-Country Meet Director Dan Grossman, and Thetford trail designer and former Olympic biathlete John Morton. The trail was developed in 1991, designed to have minimal environmental impact, and has hosted multiple Vermont and New England running championships. Hundreds of volunteers worked on it, and it is considered to be one of the finest running trails in New England. The Trail is a joint project of Thetford Academy, Vermont's oldest continually running secondary school, and the Vermont Department of Conservation and Parks.

During 2007, construction on a new athletic field altered the last quarter mile of the trail which results in yet one more "incline" on the trail.

DIRECTIONS

From Route 113 on Thetford Hill, turn onto Academy Road. One-third of a mile on your right you will see the entrance to Thetford Academy. Enter and park at the back of the lot. The entrance to the trail is to the left of the parking lot.



A lone skier attacks one of the many hills

FEATURES

12 feet wide, 3.1 miles (5k) long, the trail runs through the woods behind Thetford Academy and cuts through the adjoining Thetford State Park as well. It has a varied terrain, as it was designed to be a challenging course for competitive cross-country runners as well as skiers. The trail consists of an upper and lower loop and is primarily wooded. Its numerous hills present a challenge and a thrill for all abilities



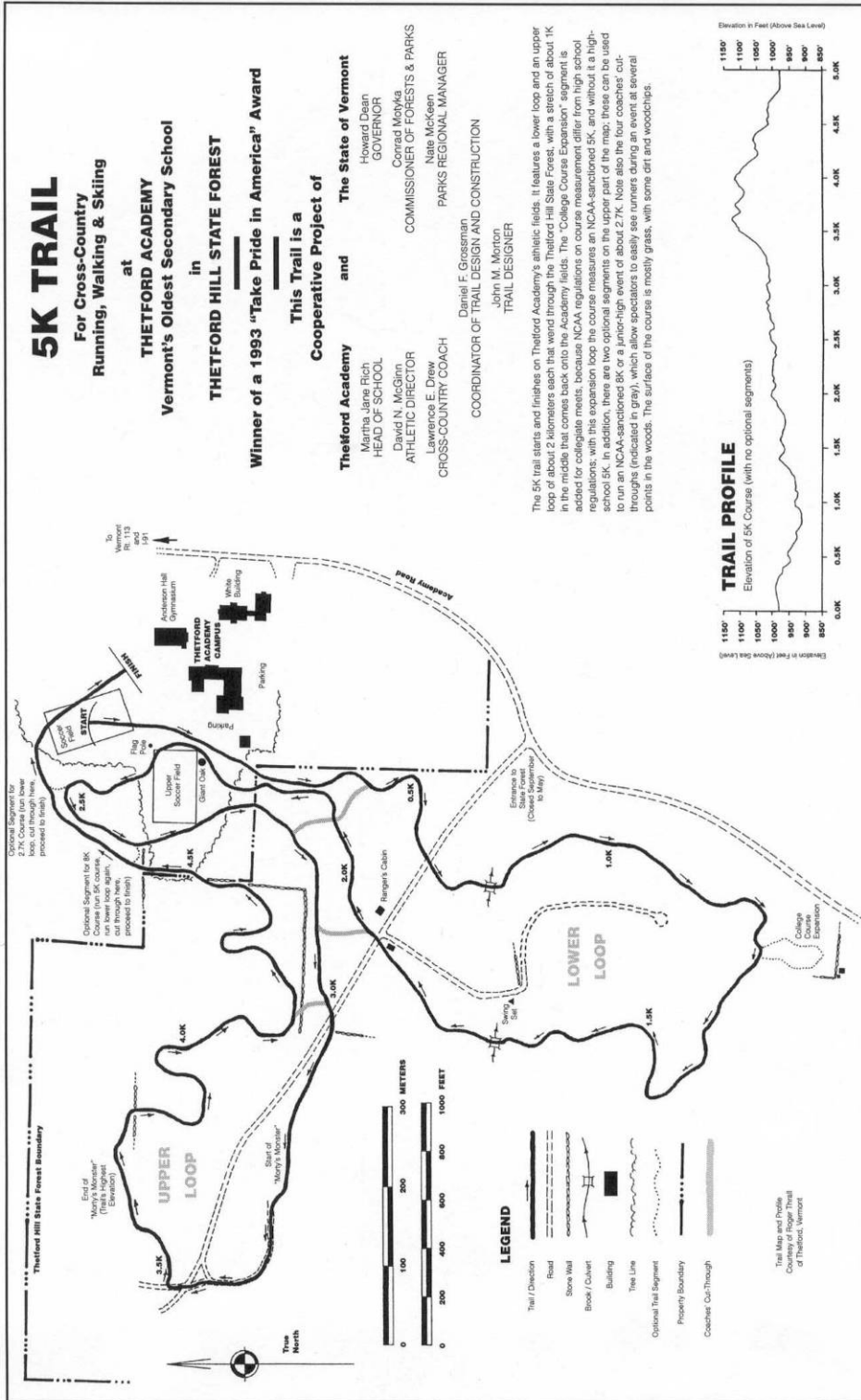
Morty's Monster, an homage to trail designer John Morton, marks the high point on the trail and the biggest challenge for competitors

MANAGEMENT

The Trail crosses from Thetford Academy Property into the Thetford Hill State Forest. Maintenance of the trail is overseen by Thetford Academy.

TRAILS AND RECREATION

The Woods Trail is clearly marked with black arrows on yellow diamonds and is designed for foot traffic only. In addition to Cross-Country running meets, the Trail is also host to weekly Fun Runs in the summer and skiing and snowshoeing during the winter months.



Note: This map does not reflect the minor changes made to the Trail during 2007.

THETFORD CENTER QUEST

This Quest begins at the brick Methodist Church in Thetford Center and was created by Joe Deffner's students at Thetford Academy in 2006.

The Four Chaplains plaque is where we embark,
 Dedicated to them because they made a mark.
 100 years after this brick church was through,
 One became Reverend. Can you tell who?
 Pass this church trimmed with Revival of Greek,
 Walk to our Town Hall and have a sneak peak.

Next, on your left is the brick Town Hall,
 With walls very tall, may it never fall!
 On the right of this hall,
 Find a plaque that tells all.
 Next, move on to the Richard Wallace vault,
 Our Revolutionary hero who made the Brits halt.
 Wallace swam across Lake Champlain in 1777.
 Our Revolutionary hero has now gone to heaven.

Now look both ways—that is the rule—
 Then cross diagonally to the old white school.
 With a slide for fun and swings for glee,
 Inside this building is where people drink tea.
 Before 1900 when it was a school,
 It all burned down thanks to a fool!
 Then later rebuilt with such great care,
 Now you can look out and see a wandering bear!
 Looking through the white strips of wood,
 Find the old stone steps, they're still pretty good.
 This is Thetford's community center now.
 You can play on the swings and cry "Oh, wow!"

Run across the open town common field,
 At the road turn left, you shouldn't have to yield.
 Pass the pen where the horses are kept
 And find the house where C.E. Porter once slept.

This house with 12 windows bears
 A brand new porch with a couple of stairs.
 New residents put the porch to its rightful place,
 There, they sit & relax & enjoy their new space.

Continue west and stop by a rusty metal gate.
 You'll find some residents in a perpetual state.

Go through the rickety gate and head south
 To a wide gravestone near the cemetery's mouth.
 A tribute to Richard Wallace, an amazing man
 who helped the Americans gain their own land.
 As mentioned above, he swam Champlain Lake,
 To warn that the British were fast in his wake.
 Now depart from the gate, keep on to the west,
 To get to a house with 3 chimneys: there rest.

This is a house F.E. Stevens knew quite well.
 Porter's brick helped build this...can't you tell?
 One home powered by Charles Vaughn's dam,
 Look at the gable where electric wires did stand.
 60 paces westward down the hill
 Take the path south—the direction of Brazil.

Listen for the falls. Look for the old stone walls.
 Sit astride the bench; let your thirst be quenched.
 Mills first appeared on this site in 1773.
 Now there's cement and the water runs free.
 Grass a'top, water below,
 Look up and see a red roof glow.

I'm an old bridge built around 1843.
 Since then a lot of cars have crashed into me!
 I used to be only three planks of wood...
 Obviously that bridge design was no good!

The years have passed by and as you can see,
 The town of Thetford has rebuilt me.
 Walk across the bridge that was made sturdy.
 Then take a left to the old stairs oh-so-dirty.
 Along the dirt path which veers to the right,
 Find the fork then bear left to the old mill site.

An old sawmill site and a wheel pit you'll see,
 Destroyed by fire back in 1873.
 13 feet deep, 9 feet wide,
 17 feet long with a looped pin in the side.
 Now back up the stairs and away from the mill;
 Up left see "Milk House," at the top of the hill.

Z.E. Messer had a very nice home,
 With a big red barn, and orchard of his own.
 In 1840, the construction was finished.
 The house is still here; the orchard diminished.
 Roll back down the hill as if it's a trick.
 On the left you'll see a house also built of brick.

Built in 1819 by mill owner Mr. Moore,
 From the road you can see many barn doors.
 Civil War vet Brown lived here,
 and for the north side he bled.
 When he was around the barn was white,
 but now it's painted red.
 Later, Noel Perrin lived and wrote in this place,
 Caring for Bill Hill, which his home does face.

Continue past the driveway, follow stone walls.
 Find the next house on left: it is 2 stories tall.

Built into a hillside you will see,
A house with a pretty dogwood tree.
The brick foundation is a wonderful thing.
You can't see it now but the barn had a wing.
Under the porch, there is lattice work,
Where Joseph Matson used to lurk.
Mr. Matson owned half of the mill.
Doing his work must have been quite a thrill!
We're done with this cape, here's your next clue:
Go through the bridge to the house that is blue.

O.J. Bosworth once dwelled here.
He sold it to James Allen for \$4K one year.
Then James Allen, a bit short of dough,
Mortgaged to Tewksbury so he wouldn't go.
You're at the blue house, so here's what you do:
Skip red to the white, and learn something new.

You'll see a white house with a trim of blue,
And a tin roof that may be the defining clue.
In 1820 it was built and owned
By a kindly gentleman known as H.B. Sloane.
Then a parsonage this house became.
It never once has seen smoke or flame.
Back to the bridge, tread to the next in line,
Look around, observe and have a swell time.

Look down this driveway—way in the back,
An old barn foundation of old rocks stacked.
First owner, Mr. Goodwin, in 1868,
Once read about before his sudden fate.
Stroll past house & barn to reach bricks of red;
Making sure to pass the resting place of the dead.

This house on the corner was built in 1822,

It is a Porter house through and through!
Pride of the village, built by Hezekiah Porter,
He made bricks for Thetford, awaiting the order.

This house has a beautiful Federal plan
Over the front door is a fantastic “fan.”
Cross Route 113, and look left to the ball field.
Here, from this earth, Porter's bricks did yield.
Now skip south past a house of brick
To arrive at a house that has often been fixed.

Built in 1850 and added to in '75
This house has touched many a life.
Once a stage stop; later a producer of carriages,
This house has even survived a few marriages!

Old lore says this house was once called a ghost,
But now in fact it has a very nice host.
Keep on to the place that's known by the most
You can walk in to pick up a *Washington Post*.

This store is formed of an old crib for corn,
It arrived here in 1895—nobody mourned.
In the 1940's this store was added to,
Making one of its sections brand spanking new!

Now pretend that the store is 12 o'clock.
Turn round to 6 and begin to walk.
Cross the road and into the field...
Careful of traffic that often doesn't yield!

Keep your eyes peeled and look for a box,
On it you might find a painted fox!
Your quest is through you've found the grail!
Please sign the book before turning your tail.

THETFORD ACADEMY QUEST

This quest was created by Joseph Deffner's students at Thetford Academy, Class of 2010. Special thanks to Mr. Charles Latham and Martha Howard for their help! Begin this search at the north end of the Thetford Hill green, across from the church.

This church was built on the green in 1787.
The big bell tower reaches high, toward heaven.
The church was rolled off of the green in 1830.
Though walls may be cracked it's still sturdy.
Cut SE across the green to the tall evergreen tree
Then move south past the maples of three.

In this house, the church parson used to dwell.
Today, the building's roof isn't doing so well.
However, overall the house looks quite nice.
It was rebuilt in 1927 – after it had burned twice!

Two brick chimneys extend from the roof.
Take a look – don't be aloof.
Now that you have seen this sweet abode,
Hop just five more steps down the road.

85-1 is set upon the second door.
A Palladian window is on the second floor
The ell of the house was used in 1920
By Clara Sipprell - she sold pictures for money!

A fence once stood out front
for this house to sit behind.
Now let's continue on with this quest
To the next house we want you to find.
There's a white house for which you'll search;
On Academy Road, it's the 7th building
south of the church.

In summers an Inn,
during winters a TA dormitory
Until this house burned and became his-tory!
Now, rebuilt, twin shrubs guard the front door.
Now let's advance to the building next-door.

If you look to your right
There lies an old site,
The old Eclipse Grange
Is just in range.

On top of the Grange are 3 chimneys of brick.
In front, there's a garden– not to be picked.
The Parish Players use this building for plays,
But it belonged to Camp Hanoum
Back in earlier days.

Turn south and continue down the street.
If you pass the Slade House, you must retreat.

To your left will be a cottage that's small.
It's right across the road from Slafter Hall.

Protruding from the yard of this house is an
Ornamental Maple Tree.
This tree, along with the house,
has stood here since at least 1933.
Carl Anderson, who once lived here,
Served as TA's headmaster for 30–odd years.
Now turn southeast and keep walking that way.
Soon you should be right in front of TA.

Perched on the hill is good ol' TA
Rebuilt in 1950, it stands to this day.
Go in front of the school to a large, stone plaque.
On it you will find many a fact.
Once you have read all of the plaque,
Walk north up Academy Road to stay on track.

Herman Hosford was the one
Who built the Slade house back in 1821.
This red brick house has green shutters and trim.
It was 1837 when the Slade's first moved in.

To this day the house is owned by the Slades.
Throughout the years,
there've been minor upgrades.
Continue along the Slade house stone wall
And walk northward 2 houses – to Slafter Hall.

In '42, this TA building survived the fire.
Today, after work, the principal here retires.
Donated by Reverend Slafter
(for the school to run),
It once had two chimneys; now there's just one.
Move north along Academy Road
To the next scene – yet another abode.

A sign that "GODDARD,"
sits above the front door.
This old TA dormitory has uneven floors.
This house was moved across the road:
roof, foundation, and sides.
Now TA's Dean of Students here resides.
Head north up Academy Road
to a brick foundation.
Once there, you've reached your
next Quest destination.

The house was built in 1808.
 Don't the fans above the doors look great?
 Judge Short lived here 'till he passed away.
 He was a founding father of TA.

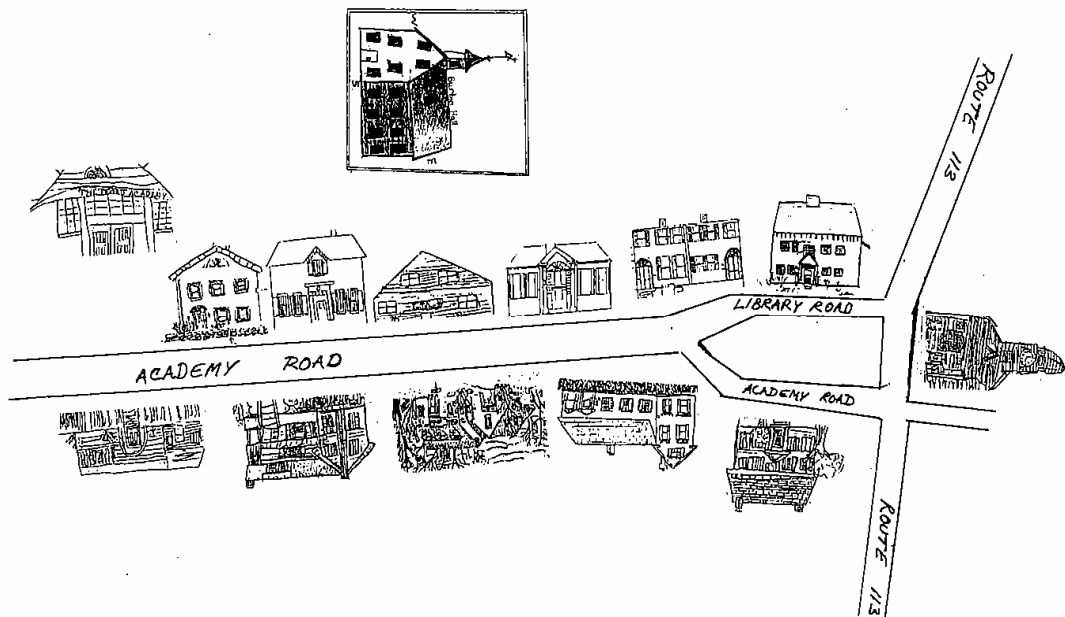
Take a walk from the Judge's abode,
 And proceed farther down the road.
 Stay to the left or you may get in trouble.
 Continue toward the next house – it's a double!

The "Double House" is now quite near
 With its 2 doors & green shutters,
 it may seem queer.
 Built three years before 1820,
 This house has windows aplenty.
 The green fans set over the doors
 Remind us of shells found on seashores.
 Now continue heading north, then take a left.
 You'll skip a house, and find Fowle's old nest.

Judge Reed was a fairly respected fellow.
 He lived in this house (which once was yellow).
 A founder of TA who lived here
 Around the year 1-8-4-0,
 In dispensing justice, he dealt a firm blow!

Continue down the street to
 Peter's house of books.
 Where your treasure awaits in a
 secret, hidden nook!
 Look in the back, where stairs go down.
 Up overhead your treasure will be found!

Take down the box, and to let us know you came
 Sign into the book with your first & last name
 Then take a copy of the stamp; place it below:
 Re-hide the treasure box; then off you go!



UNION VILLAGE HISTORIC QUEST

This Quest begins in front of the red brick church in Union Village and was created by Joe Deffner's 7th Grade Class at Thetford Academy in spring 2004.

A white bell tower is perched
Upon this red brick Methodist church.
On the wall is a plate;
1836 is the date.
Samuel Richardson was the first pastor's name
And in 1928 electric fixtures came.

Back to the front door
And turn southwest
'Til you face the old carriage shed
Where six horses used to rest.

Too bad for the poor
And the ones who lived close,
'Cause the rich and the far
Had first pick for their horse.
In a shed with only six stalls to spare,
Everyone else had to leave their horse bare.

From where the horses used to lie,
Make a right and walk ten paces.
Buried underneath are a lot of lonely faces.
Walk southwest to the back
where the cemetery ends
And where the LaPierres' pink tombstone bends.

Surrounded by a wrought iron fence,
families buried side by side,
The cemetery was started around 1-8-1-5.
So much of UV's history here resides.

As you look at the cemetery,
You turn to your right.
Now the Union Village Schoolhouse
Will be in sight.

A black "91" stares you in the face,
The old Union Village Schoolhouse,
Not in its original place.
The schoolhouse once stood
Across the road
Until 1925, when it was towed.

Across the street you'll notice a house,
White with green shutters,
A river out back,
For the windows there is no lack.
Now move your feet to the house,
Where flowers are kept real neat.

On the right side,
Between two maple trees,
There was once a blacksmith's shop,
But it no longer can be seen.

From the side porch,
Walk north across the street.
A red brick house,
With wood that looks weak.

This house is very old.
The old school site was just across the road.
For chimneys there are three.
The shutters are white as you can see.

In 1877, M.J. Walker lived here.
To the town line the house is near.
He was the treasurer of the church.
Behind his house is a tree of birch.

From a brick house by the road,
Go northeast and you'll pass a shady grove.
Now cross the street east,
Pieced together and painted white
You'll see a house that's right in sight.

This house used to be next to the dam.
You'll see a fence and # 237 by the door.
Inside, lives a kid named Sam.
His house is so close to the
Ompompanoosuc River's shore.

Walk across the street
And follow the road the direction
birds fly in the spring.
Don't worry, the walk isn't too far,
Now in the yard of the yellow house
You can see identical trees,
Are they swaying in the breeze?

In 1877, G. Benton lived
Across the river from this house,
Which at the time was owned by Mrs. L. Hall.
Surprisingly enough, it stands in the same spot:
Road, foundation and all.
To finish this Quest you must be on the ball.

Walk up the street and look to your right,

There is a big maple tree in plain sight.
The white house right there has black trim,
Is the house that D. Turner settled in.
It's been modified since 1877,
Now the house can comfortably sleep 11.

Start at the house with many-a-point,
Walk northwest across the street.
You'll be standing on the lawn of the D's,
With a sprawling silver maple ready to greet.

In 1977, this belonged to the late T. Jenks.
This two-story house included a gable.
You'll notice a rounded corner on the 2nd floor,
And did we mention that the silver maple
Is supported by a wire cable?

You're at the house with a silver tree,
Face northeast and cross the street,
There there is an old foundation.
This was J.K. Blaisdell's old store
And gas station.

This store is just south of the mill.
Here you could buy 5 pounds of coffee
For just 60 cents.
The old store lay half on a hill,
For horses and safety
There was a railing and fence.

Across the street and up on a hill,
A yellow old house sits opposite
From the now gone wool mill.
Next to the house, there is a barn
With a red window sill.

M.J. Walker settled here in 1830,
In this yellow house with white trim.
There is a barn north of the house,
Brown like a mouse.
This house is two stories, but it's still rather slim.

Look for a sign saying Union Village Bridge.
Start walking northeast to it and look around.
You should see windows and wooden beams.
Beneath you is the flowing river.
Can you hear the sound?

This is one of 2 covered bridges in Thetford.
It was built in 1888 and rebuilt in 2002.

Walk through the bridge, look closely and see
That on one of the wooden beams there is a key.

Go back out of the bridge
Turn to the right.
Look for the house,
With a gold '77' on white.

This house once belonged to Mr. Clough.
This house with blue paint and red on the door,
With circles around the trim.
Continue now to learn more.

Turn around and face the road.
Do the hokey pokey twice!
Look both ways before you cross,
Then head towards the stone wall that looks nice.

F.W. Morse lived here with his cows in 1877.
"We use the Delavel Milker"
Is boasted above the barn door.
In the back yard there is a Buddha at peace.
On the door at the far right
There's a whale from the ocean shore.

Stay on this side of the street.
Walk to the gray house with yellow shutters.
You'd better not go in the house,
Or the Quest will open to no others!

This house is close to the road and built in 1877.
It was paid for by a man called A. West.
There are three different kinds of foundations;
Stand in front of the porch to see them the best.

Go north from the residence of A. West.
Follow this road to meet your fate
Up the road and across the brook
Until you reach the yellow gate.

It can hold more than 12 billion gallons,
This dam was created to control flooding.
Now it has a recreational area.
You can now picnic, go swimming, or running.

Pass the yellow gate and head towards the water.
Do you see bird houses? We think you ought-er.
Look round for a small house marked TA
There your Valley Quest is done for the day.



POST MILLS WALKING TOUR

Like Thetford Center, the village of Post Mills began because there was a mill site there. In this case the Vershire branch of the Ompompanoosuc met a brook which was the outlet of Lake Fairlee. The first mills of the village, a sawmill and a gristmill, were erected about 1779 by Eldad Post (1733-1810). Born in Hebron, Connecticut, where most of Thetford's early settlers came from, Post came first to Lyme, where his brother Peter had built a mill, and then to Thetford.

In 1782 Post sold the mill rights to his sons Aaron and Israel. The outlet to Lake Fairlee provided a second site for a mill, and there was a sawmill at the outlet by 1780. In 1797 the site was improved when Aaron Post got permission to build a dam at the outlet "So as to raise the waters in said lake two feet up." A road from Thetford Center to Post Mills was voted in 1781, and from this time on a cluster of mills developed at both sites. Through the 1800s these mills produced lumber, flour, harness, linseed oil, lath and shingles, corded and fulled wool, and fishrods. There was a brickyard in town, providing material for an unusual number of brick houses.

Largest among the early mills was one owned by the Hinckley family which produced linseed oil. In the late 1860s this mill was bought by Thomas H. Chubb, a Confederate and former Galveston, Texas pilot who came to Post Mills and began to manufacture high-quality fishing rods. The factory, rebuilt after a flood in 1869 and fires in 1875 and 1891, provided a major source of employment in Post Mills until 1933.

After the Civil War, Post Mills began to use its position on Lake Fairlee to attract summer visitors. T. H. Chubb's father and fellow Confederate, Commodore Thomas Chubb, built the Commodore House in the village, and Nathan Davis and I.M. Guild each ran a hotel and boat livery at the south end of the lake. Later still, summer cottages and summer camps added to the seasonal population. At one time there were eight summer youth camps on Lake Fairlee. There are still four today. Campers attended church in Post Mills, participated in village fairs, and can still be seen today lined up for ice cream at King Cone at Baker's store.

WALK No. 1

From the mill bridge to the bridge on Route 244. Round trip 0.9 miles. To begin this walk, you can park near the mill building at the bridge on Route 113. Begin the walk with the house just south of the bridge.

1. **Thomas H. Chubb House** (Fisk-Davey). Chubb lived here as he ran the fishrod factory in the 1870s and 1880s. Notice the arched window in the wall gable with returns, and the pillared porch. There used to be mineral springs in front of this house.
2. **Bridge** From 1875 to 1891 there was a covered bridge here directly connected to the Chubb mill. North of the bridge the Pompanoosuc River and Lake Brook come together and then go over a falls. This was the main mill site in Post Mills.
3. **Chubb-Malmquist Mill** This building dates from 1891, rebuilt after the second fire. By 1889 the mill used steam power in addition to water power. After the fishrod factory closed in 1933, the mill produced bobbins, pallets, concrete forms, and other wood products.

Now look at the houses on the bank above the mill.

4. **Knight-Marston House** (Cook) A red house with a steeply sloped wall dormer which makes it Gothic Revival.
5. **Lyman Hinckley House** (Glaser) This brick house, on the center-hall plan, was built about 1827 by Deacon Lyman Hinckley. Lyman was a determined abolitionist, and there is clear evidence that he used this house as a station on the underground railroad. Escaped slaves were brought here from Lyme, N.H., and then sent on to Chelsea, where they were received by Wilder Dearborn. Notice the wide overhang on the porch, the double doors, and the moldings over the windows.

6. **Joseph Hinckley House** (Lyons). This house was built by Joseph Hinckley about 1808. Notice the fan over the door with its sidelights, and the moldings over the lower windows.

Across the street is a road leading down to the former mill sites. The white house on the left is the

7. **C A. Adams House** (Woodsum) Clinton A. Adams, postmaster, selectman, and state representative, lived here from about 1890 to 1942. His first wife was Phoebe, daughter of T. H. Chubb. On the lot between this house and No. 6, he owned a large two-story building with a store downstairs and upstairs apartments and a G. A. R. Hall, which was a town social center.

On the left, high above the road, is the

8. **H. H. Niles House** (Tillinghast). This red brick house, built about 1817, belonged to Dr. H. H. Niles (1807-1881). His father, Samuel Niles (1783-1827), was the first doctor in Post Mills. Notice the returns and small windows in the gables, the arched recesses over the windows, and the wide overhang of the roof.

9. **Schoolhouse/Baker's Store** This schoolhouse was built in 1940, and used for twenty years until the town's schools were consolidated in 1962. Before 1940 there had been two smaller schools, serving different parts of the village. The store is on the lower level of the building.

10. **Odd Fellows Hall** (Young) Notice the belfry, the Italianate porch, and the wide overhang of the roof.

11. **Dodge House** (Brooks) This white Greek Revival house, with a triangular opening in its pedimented gable, belonged to Harvey Dodge (1821-1912), a farmer and livestock dealer who served in the state legislature and as a side-judge.

12. **Peabody Library** Built in 1866-1867, this is the oldest library building in Vermont. Money to build it was given by George Peabody (1795-1869), who spent some of his boyhood in Post Mills with his grandfather, Jeremiah Dodge, and then went on to found the company which became J. P. Morgan. He also is responsible for several Peabody Museums, notably those at Harvard and at Salem, Massachusetts. Notice the beveled quoins on the building, the tall windows, the circular window in the pedimented gable, the moldings over the doors and windows, and the wainscoting on the bases of the two-story columns. The library is open in the afternoon and evening on Tuesday and Wednesday. Be sure to go in and look around if it is open.

Just across the street is

13. **David Bruce House** (Polli), a brick house of about 1818 with a center hall and side chimneys, and with arched recesses over the door and the lower windows.

Passing a more recent house, you see on the left

14. **Pratt House** (Palmer). J. Pratt had a harness shop here in 1858. A brick house of a story and a half, greatly rebuilt, this has an arched doorway, and small windows at the corners of the eaves.

You are now at the corner where Route 244 joins Route 113.

Just beyond the Pratt House on the left is where Commodore Thomas Chubb built his **Commodore or Green Mountain House**, (Boeri-Boyce) the village's first summer hotel. On the 1877 Beers Atlas map of Post Mills, the hotel's croquet court is included. The unused court still exists nestled within a ring of cedar trees. The mound in the front yard marks the spot of the hotel's fountain.

Across the street on the northwest corner is

15. **Welton house** (Chatot). In the mid-19th century, this belonged to Jeremiah Welton, who had a harness shop in the rear. Because he once put up a sign, "Honi for sale" he was locally known as Honi Welton. Old photographs show that this house used to face a driveway that came in on the right. Note the pilasters beside the door, the moldings over the windows, and the overhang of the roof.

If you go a few feet down Route 244 to the 16. **Bridge**, you can see the Ompompanoosuc coming down from Vershire. Here, until 1952, there used to be another of Thetford's covered bridges, constructed in 1878 at a cost of \$543.

WALK No. 2

From Post Mills Church down Airport Road to Lake Brook; along Lake Fairlee to Lake House corner; back along Route 244. Total distance 1.4 miles. You can park beside the church, or around the triangular green in front of it.

A. Post Mills Congregational Church This church was built in 1818, as church and state separated in the Town, and as Post Mills grew to need a church of its own. For a number of years the building was shared (uneasily) by Baptists and Congregationalists. The original church had square pews, side galleries, and a very high pulpit. The double-decked cupola was on the original church. In 1855 the windows were enlarged, and new bench pews installed. The doors of the old box pews were made into a frieze around the building under the eaves. From 1867 to 1908 the church was painted brown.

Crossing Route 244 and heading down the gravel road to the right, you pass

B. Post Mills Cemetery, with the graves of many local notables including Eldad Post and T.H. Chubb, and

C. Post Mills Airport. This airport, founded in 1945, serves many small private planes, and is a center for hot-air balloons and gliders.

D. This red house used to be a **blacksmith shop** until fairly recent times.

E. C. F. Guild house (Lickvar) This Italianate house, built in the 1860s, was owned in 1877 by C. F. Guild, who made coffins and caskets.

F. Slack-Wallace house (Hadlock) This classic cottage, with sidelights on the door and a wide overhang, was owned by D. Slack in 1858 and by Mrs. N. Wallace in 1877.

Passing modern houses, you come on the right to

G. S. M. Ladd house (Clark). This big white house, four bays deep with an Italianate porch, was built in the 1860s and was owned in 1877 by S. M. Ladd, who ran a mill on Lake Brook which produced lath, shingles, and other wood products. Note the returns on the gables and the bay window at the side.

Going past the next house, you come to

H. Lake Brook. Water flowing from the lake provided a mill site here just south of the road. Just past the brook, I. M. Guild in 1877 had a big house by the lake, and also ran a boat livery and a steamboat landing. In 1921, the site became Camp Neshobe, and after that Camp Norway for boys, which lasted until the 1980s.

Now turn back, and take the road along the lake (Lakeshore Drive). Most of the houses are modern. About halfway on the right is (I), an old-fashioned **bungalow** (Stedman) of the type first used around the lake, a square shingled box surrounded by a wide veranda.

As you come to the end of the road and turn left on Route 244, back to the church, you see on the right

J. Lake House. (Budzyn) Built in 1871 by Nathan Davis, this was the second summer hotel in the village. During the late nineteenth century a frequent visitor here was the well-known Boston painter William Bartholomew. Just down the road at the lake, Davis maintained a boat livery and sold beer and spirits.

One rainy afternoon in 1882, an accident happened near here. Two doctors from Lyme, Doctors John C. Marshall and Abram A. Dickey, were driving a two-horse covered carriage along the lake. Somehow the conveyance strayed into deep water, and the men were trapped under the top and drowned. The carriage was recovered by scuba divers in 1966, and is in the Historical Society museum.

On the left, under tall pines and somewhat hidden by grass, is

K. A stump fence. In other parts of Thetford and New England, the fields were full of stones, which were made into stone walls. On the sandy plain at the foot of Lake Fairlee, early settlers found the land obstructed by huge pine trees. As these were cleared, their stumps were made into fences, of which this is one of the last remaining.

L. Ransom Aldrich house (Snyder?) This white house, with barns behind, has a steep roof and a wall dormer which make it Gothic revival. In 1858 it was owned by Ransom Aldrich, and after his death in 1873 by his estate.

M. Williams-Wilmot house (Solger) This yellow house has a barn with a hay door facing the road. The original house is Greek Revival, with wide gable returns, heavy moldings, and pilasters on the corners. The wing to the left, with its wall dormer and cozy porch, is Gothic Revival. Bushrod W. Wilmot, who lived here in the late nineteenth century, had a paint shop in the rear.

N. Former Congregational Parsonage (Keegan-Scotford) This white house on the right, at the corner of the side road, was for a long time a church parsonage, and then was used by the church's Ladies Benevolent Society. In 1858 it was owned by H. Worthen.

Now you are back to the church and your car. Baker's Store back in the village will probably be glad to sell you something to cool you off. We hope you have enjoyed your visit.

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