

ABOUT THIS TRAIL:

This short interpretive trail was designed by the Randolph Community Forest Commission and constructed by the Randolph Mountain Club in 2015. The trail is a 3/4-mile long loop that starts and ends at the Community Forest Trailhead. It includes 150 feet of elevation change and offers visitors an opportunity to gain a greater understanding about the ecology and natural resources of the area, as well as historic land uses. There are two overlooks, which provide spectacular views of the Northern Presidentials and Pine Mountain. This trail guide provides an overview of the three primary goals of the Randolph Community Forest: sustainable timber harvesting, ecological protection, and outdoor recreation.



Flat-topped Aster

Front cover: Nodding Trillium

ABOUT THE RANDOLPH COMMUNITY FOREST:

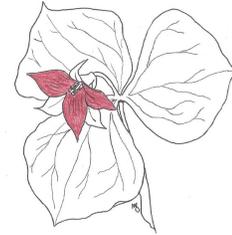
The Randolph Community Forest is a ten thousand-acre tract of working forest owned and managed by the Town of Randolph. It is located in the northern-third of the town, and includes 1,106 acres in neighboring Jefferson. It provides an important ecological corridor, linking two units of the White Mountain National Forest—the Kilkenny to the north, and the Presidential Range to the south. On the Forest, one can find several peaks over 3,000 feet, over 26 miles of woods roads, dozens of miles of hiking and snow-machine trails, wetlands and streams, and a variety of flora and fauna representative of the region. Randolph's natural resources are abundant year-round. These include numerous species of leaf budding and needle bearing trees, wildflowers, mammals large and small, song and game birds (such as rough grouse) and, of course, often no shortage of insects!

The Randolph Community Forest is open to the public for traditional uses, including hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, dog-sledding, hunting, fishing, and bird watching.



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A GUIDE TO THE
**RANDOLPH
 COMMUNITY FOREST
 INTERPRETIVE TRAIL**



RANDOLPH COMMUNITY FOREST
 COMMISSION



Randolph's natural resources are abundant year-round. This interpretive trail will offer you hours of joy observing numerous species of leaf budding and needle bearing trees in the spring, numerous wildflower species in the summer, a teeming forest and meadow of insects, song and game birds, and small and large mammals fattening up in the autumn. And don't be shy: cross country ski during the snowy months to observe snowshoe hare, deer, moose, field mice, and hardy birds overwintering here.

ECOLOGICAL AND NATURAL FEATURES ALONG THE TRAIL:



WALK AND LEARN: A GUIDE TO THE RANDOLPH COMMUNITY FOREST INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

1 TRAIL WORK FEATURES

The next ten yards feature trail work performed by the Randolph Mountain Club (RMC), the designated "Activity Manager" for hiking trails on the Community Forest. Trail work is necessary to protect natural resources. Here, you'll observe a "puncheon," designed to keep hikers off sensitive areas, a rock water bar to drain water from the trail, step stones to help hikers through a wet area, and a rock staircase for hikers to travel without causing soil erosion. The rocks on the side, called "scree," guide hikers to use the trail structures and to hike on the trail "treadway."

2 MULT-USE ROAD

The woods road you are walking along is one section of 26 miles of Community Forest roads. These roads have been a very important feature of the north country, back to the early 1800's and before. This particular road is used by logging crews to access the Forest for timber management, including removal of harvested timber. It is also used for recreation by hikers, snowshoers, cross-country skiers, mountain bikers, and snowmobilers. Various wildlife also find these forest roads convenient—so watch for deer, moose, bear, game birds and other creatures.



3 MEADOW

At this point, you enter a meadow ecosystem—originally a log landing left from a timber harvest during the winter of 1998-1999, and now managed by the Forest Commission as a wildlife opening. To provide a variety of wildlife habitat, the Forest Commission reclaims the log landings after timber harvests are complete, seeds them as wildlife habitat and mows them during scheduled road maintenance on the Forest. Meadows are mowed after mid-August, to allow ground-nesting birds and other small mammals ample time to raise their young.

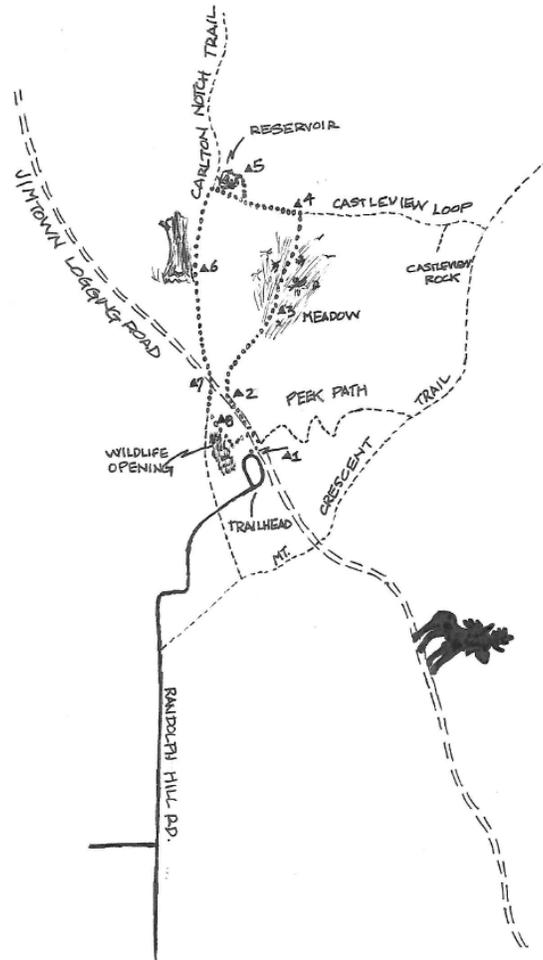


Black-capped chickadee

4 MOUNTAIN VIEW

Take a rest here, sip water or enjoy a snack, and savor the great view overlooking the meadow. Pine Mountain, at the end of the Presidential Range, is prominent in the foreground, and the peaks of the Carter-Moriah Range loom in the distance. Flip your trail guide over to see the names and distinguishing features of the peaks.

The meadow below is dominated by grasses, shrubs, wildflowers, and non-flowering emergent vegetation. This entire meadow is fringed by saplings and shrubs, and is flanked by a mature forest. If not mowed regularly, the saplings would become dominant in the meadow, followed by small trees and, over time, a mature forest. This process, known as "succession," is common to all such areas left in their natural state.



5 RESERVOIR

The trail takes a short side path here, to the former Mount Crescent Water Company Reservoir. This basin holds water from springs higher on the mountain, and has provided water for homes on Randolph Hill since the company was founded in 1907. The reservoir once served as many as 65 homes, but stricter enforcement of the state's drinking water regulation starting in 1990 prompted the water company to reduce the number of homes it supplied. Today, just 7 homes receive water from the reservoir. In its heyday, virtually all of the Mount Crescent Water Company customers were also stockholders, and stock certificates can still be found framed in many homes on Randolph Hill. The fence is in place to prevent mammals from entering the drinking water.



Meadowhawk dragonfly

6 BOULDER & ICE STORM DAMAGE

This large boulder is a "glacial erratic," left behind after the glaciers receded. Be sure to look into the immature pole and sapling forest on either side of the trail. The ice storm of 1998 caused great devastation to trees growing within the 1,700 to 2,500-elevation band in this area of Randolph. After the ice storm, this area was harvested to salvage the damaged timber. Northern forests are resilient, however, and new growth is healthy on the rich soils for which the Community Forest is known.

7 FOREST FEATURES

RMC trails on the Community Forest are blazed in orange. Forest boundaries are blazed in blue, and private lands are usually blazed in red. Look closely and you will see a "witness" tree. The tree has three cut blazes that are painted red and face a metal pin in the ground, which marks a corner of the Community Forest.

Forest transects, which are used to monitor the ecological health of the forest, are marked with the indicator shown on this post. Backcountry ski routes are marked with blue diamonds, such as the one you see here.

8 WILDLIFE HABITAT

As you near the end of your walk, you are entering one of a number of wildlife openings created by the Randolph Community Forest and maintained to offer habitat for songbirds, hawks and other raptors, small mammals, grouse and woodcock. The "edge habitat" on the border provides a feeding area for deer. In the spring, bears eat the grasses in these openings. If you come in the early morning or late afternoon, don't be surprised to see snowshoe hare, turkey, song or ground-nesting birds, voles, moles, or mice. Listen for the drumming sound of a partridge looking for a mate. If you're lucky, you might even catch a larger mammal, like a white-tailed deer, moose, or bear. Views from this point extend well into Maine!

Finish your walk by meandering through the wildlife opening to the gate on the Jimtown Logging Road, and back to the Community Forest trailhead.



Blue-bead lily