

1. Pitch Pine / Scrub Oak Forest Type

Approximately 220 acres of the Town Forest consists of the globally rare pitch pine / scrub oak forest type. The NH Natural Heritage Inventory lists New England pitch pine / scrub oak barrens as an ecosystem of concern. Typically located on sandy soils, this forest type provides habitat for a variety of rare moths, butterflies, songbirds, and a variety of wildlife. The dense scrub oak understory provides nesting for a variety of songbirds.

2. Beaver Pond

This approximate 2 acre beaver pond was formed by beavers building a dam within Cold Brook. Beavers dam a brook to create a pond in which to store food for the winter months near the beaver lodge they live in. Hardwood saplings are stored on the floor of the pond to be retrieved under the ice from an underwater entrance into the beaver lodge, or house. The pond provides important aquatic habitat for a variety of fish, wildlife, insect, and amphibian populations, including native Eastern brook trout.

3. Old Beaver Pond

This area was once flooded by a dam that beavers constructed. However, when the beaver's food supply of small trees and bushes was exhausted, they abandoned the pond and moved to more suitable sites. This area then reverted to grasses and new woody growth which now provides habitat for numerous species of wildlife. Over time beavers may return and re-establish the pond.

4. Cranberry Bog

Unlike commercial cranberry bogs in New England, this wild cranberry bog has taken many years to develop due to a combination of soil type and ground water level. These wild bogs are unique and berries are consumed by numerous species of wildlife.

5. Early Successional Habitat Patch Cut

This is one of many "patch cuts" in the forest. The objective is to remove larger diameter trees to encourage the establishment of aspen / white birch saplings which provide preferred habitat for a variety of wildlife species, especially ruffed grouse. The large diameter stems that remain on the forest floor are an important source of coarse woody debris that are utilized by wildlife and help enrich the soil. USDA cost share funding and NH Fish & Game Grants Program provides some of the funding for these projects.

6. Selection / Improvement Thinning

Areas like this are thinned in accordance with the Forest Stewardship Plan developed for the management of the Town Forest. Poor quality and defective trees are harvested to allow the remaining better quality trees to be healthy and grow more quickly. Note the lush growth established within the understory providing wildlife browse and cover.

7. Trout Pond

Trout Pond, approximately 21 acres in size, is classified as a great pond and is designated as a trout pond by the State of NH. It is located on a mountainous plateau at 700 ft of elevation and is fed

7. cont.

by springs and seasonal runoff. The average depth of the pond is 10 ft with a max of 21 ft. The pond is surrounded by a well developed shoreline shrub community, comprised mainly of highbush blueberry and mountain holly. A population of beaver is evident by the beaver lodges located at the west and east ends of the pond. The State of NH Fish & Game Department stocks the pond annually with Eastern brook trout. The pond also provides waterfowl and wetland habitat, and is the focal point of the Freedom Town Forest. In June of 2011 a Loon Nesting Raft was placed in the north end of the pond.

8. Permanent Wildlife Opening / Log Landing

During intentional forest thinning (see #6) log landings like this are intentionally oversized to provide upland cover and feed for deer, mice, partridge, rabbits, woodchuck and other wildlife. As grass and shrub grow in these areas it provides a nesting habitat for a variety of wildlife. Many landings like this can be found throughout the forest. USDA cost share funding helps defray some of the costs of these projects.

9. Outlet of Trout Pond

The outlet of Trout Pond is controlled by a series of beaver dams. The outlet drains into Shawtown Brook, and eventually into Danforth Pond and Ossipee Lake. Near the outlet a shrub swamp of sweetgale, sphagnum moss, and sedges has formed. The quiet backwater near the beaver dams provide preferred waterfowl habitat for a variety of species including the wood duck.

10. Mary's Mountain

Mary's Mountain was named after Mary Shaw, a member of the Shaw family which settled in the area of the property north of the mountain in the mid 1800's. The mountain is approximately 940 ft elevation. The exposed ledge outcrops at the summit allow for unobstructed views of the surrounding mountains and hills. Shawtown and Danforth pond are located to the southeast, Green Mountain to the south, and Ossipee Lake and the Ossipee Mountains can be viewed to the west.



The Town Forest is supported by funds from the sale of the Conservation Plate (Moose Plate) under the NH State Conservation Committee program.

The Scrub Oak Scramblers Snowmobile Club has permission to use the forest trails in the winter. Cross country skiers and snowshoe hikers are encouraged to share these packed trails.



FREEDOM TOWN FOREST



2,661 acres of woods, fields, mountains, streams and ponds