

Quincy Bog Notes

A twice-yearly newsletter of information, announcements, and news about the Quincy Bog Natural Area and Pemi-Baker Land Trust

Winter 2011-2012

Volume 19 Number 2

Quincy Pasture Forest—What's New?

Widge Kent

Quincy Pasture Forest has been buzzing with activity this past season: bio-studies, trail work, timber management, a new parking lot, opening of mountain vistas, discoveries of rare plants, and much more.

As you may recall from previous articles,* Quincy Pasture Forest (QPF) is property on the southern slope of Stinson Mountain under the co-management of Quincy Bog Natural Area and The Nature Conservancy. QPF is a 92-acre rectangular lot along East Rumney Road in Rumney, NH. The entire property is on a slope that increases in steepness as the property runs north. It was the lower half of the property that has been the recipient of most of the activity this summer and fall.

New Loop Trail: The newly developed trail throughout the property is a double loop or the shape of a fat figure eight. The lower portion of the loop trail, marked in blue blazes, takes less than an hour to hike and is a more strenuous walk than the trail around Quincy Bog. The entire lower loop might be too much for kids younger than four or five. Younger hikers might enjoy an out-and-back trip along the lowest portion of the trail that would include a beautiful and fun stream crossing and some large boulders. The trails are easier in the east-west direction across the slope of the site. The slope on the north-south portions of the trail challenge the hiker. The trail is new and has not yet been well traveled so a hiker in the near future will need to remain cognizant of the blazes. As QPF becomes more popular for hiking, the trail will improve with use. The accompanying map (see insert) shows the lower loop and its inter-sections with the upper trail.

Bring your hiking sticks if you plan to hike the upper portion of the loop trail. This trail, marked with red blazes, is quite steep, rising from about 800 to nearly 1200 feet. In the north-



east corner of the loop slightly off the trail there is a rocky outcrop that overlooks Loon Lake. The trail crew has future plans to develop a short spur to highlight this feature. A second spur, in the works,

is to a picturesque rocky gorge-like area along the western side of the trail. The upper portion of the trail is rockier and along a hardwood ridge. There are a few small wetlands that provide water and habitat for small mammals such as porcupine, weasels, fishers, chipmunks and mice, as well as amphibians. The wetlands also provide the possibility for a moose wallow. These wetlands are the source of the main stream through the property and are part of the watershed that feeds Quincy Bog.

Exciting Discovery: Over the last 18 months plant surveys have been undertaken on QPF. In a previous article, the discovery of American cancerroot was reported.* Late this summer, an even more exciting plant was found - small whorled pogonia! QPF is now one of about 40 locations in NH where this federally threatened species is known to occur. (See article on right for more details.)

The diversity of flora at QPF is impressive. In addition to cancerroot and small whorled pogonia, other noteworthy species that have been identified include large coralroot, Clinton's wood fern, pitch pine, and cut-leaved grapefern.

At one time the lower portion of QPF was pastureland - hence the name Quincy Pasture Forest - probably for sheep. White pine and hemlock are the primary trees having taken over the pasture since the turn of the 20th century. There is evidence that thick stands of hemlock have provided wintering habitat for deer and moose. Red oak, paper birch and red maple are abundant. There are examples of "pasture pines," large, old white pines with hefty low branches that grew in the open perhaps along the edges of the pasture. A substantial number of white pine are infected with a white pine canker that weakens the trees and can eventually cause their death.

Timber Management: Forestry and wildlife experts suggested a timber management plan for the lower portion of QPF that would improve habitat and increase the diversity of native plants and wildlife. A written, management plan was developed that could serve as a model for sustainable, ecologically sensitive forestry. Of the approximately 42 acres in the lower portion of

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Small Whorled Pogonia

Christine Perron

How does one find a new population of one of the rarest orchids in eastern North America? Sheer luck!

Near the end of August, Betty Jo Taffe and I walked the lower portion of Quincy Pasture Forest (QPF) where the planned timber harvest would be taking place in the coming months. Our goal was to determine if any unusual plants were growing in the locations marked for cutting. We honestly did not expect to find anything out of the ordinary, but, less than 30 minutes into our survey, a plant that looked a bit like Indian cucumber root was spotted. There were four stems, three of which had seed capsules indicating that the plants had blossomed this spring.

After consulting with the NH Natural Heritage Bureau, the identity of the plant was confirmed as small



whorled pogonia (*Isotria medeoloides*). A few days later, John Williams, a local naturalist, found two more plants nearby, both with seed capsules. Chris Mattrick, a Forest Service botanist, was consulted to determine how to best protect this plant given the planned timber harvest. He reassured us that this species can do well in managed forests and that the harvest could help the population by providing more light to the forest floor. The QPF forester took measures to ensure that direct impacts were avoided during logging.

Small whorled pogonia is listed as a federally threatened species. Some of the largest populations in the country are found in NH. The plant is about 10 inches tall and blooms mid-May to mid-June. The flowers, which only last about a week, are yellowish-green in color. "Pogonia" is derived from the Greek word for "bearded", referring to the lip of the flower. The plant can remain dormant for two or more years. When it does flower, each plant can produce one or two flowers, which develop into capsules that contain thousands of minute seeds.

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President's Perspective

The Year in Review

Betty Jo Taffe

For most of us, December is a busy month, a time to prepare for the holidays and the winter ahead. It's also a time to look back over the past year, and to look ahead to the year to come. So it is at Quincy Bog.

As the year draws to a close, the Program Committee is completing arrangements for next summer's walks and talks, the Budget Committee is preparing a budget for the coming year, and the Nominating Committee is recruiting new directors to replace those who are leaving the board in January. And, our *Bog Notes* editors are compiling another newsletter to reach out to our many Friends who support all the good things Quincy Bog does connecting people to nature and protecting land in the Pemi-Baker Valley.

Looking back over the past year, the Board is proud of several major accomplishments. We increased protection of the Quincy Bog Natural Area by acquiring a Deed Easement that prohibits development or timber harvesting on private land adjacent to the ecologically rich ledges on the north side of the Bog. Plus it allows us to enhance our trail system by constructing a trail and observation blind at the top of the ledges.

The revised Quincy Pasture Forest Stewardship Plan was approved by the Board in March and subsequently accepted by The Nature Conservancy, which holds a conservation easement on the property. The plan outlines activities that will occur, including the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Project that took place this fall. For details, please see the lead article, "What's New?" and the article about the exciting discovery of the federally threatened small whorled pogonia during pre-harvest botanical surveys.

As this newsletter goes to press, we are poised to complete our fourth conservation easement, the largest and most complex we've accepted to date. The easement will protect an important natural habitat and ecosystem on a 375-acre property in the Texas Hill section of Plymouth and will enhance and enlarge approximately 1,374 acres of adjacent protected land, including the Walter-Newton, Green Acres Woodland and

Fauver/Plymouth Mountain properties. It conserves and protects open spaces, particularly productive forest land and some fields, provides scenic enjoyment of broad vistas, allows public access for low-impact recreation along a trail that will connect to the Walter-Newton trail, and protects the quality of ground and surface waters on the property. Look for more details about this exciting project in the spring issue of *Bog Notes*!

As 2011 draws to a close, we are grateful to you, our faithful Friends and supporters, for providing the resources that make all these good things happen. The 2012 Friends of Quincy Bog appeal is in this issue of *Bog Notes*. We hope you'll respond as generously as you can, knowing that your contributions provide funds for our projects, programs and upkeep.

In 2012 we'll also be working with a grant writer to seek additional monies for easement acquisition and stewardship, as well as funds to upgrade and extend the boardwalks and bridges at Quincy Bog and to improve access to the Nature Center. In addition, we'll be reaching out to specific donors to obtain additional contributions to support our land trust activities and to underwrite some of our program costs.

Remember that Quincy Bog is open 365 days a year and welcomes winter visitors. Come see the Bog dressed in its winter white...look for tracks in the newly fallen snow...enjoy the peace and quiet of a more solitary Bog. Have a wonderful winter and a very Happy New Year!

In addition to serving as president, **Betty Jo Taffe**, is the chair of the Program Committee.

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The population of pogonia on QPF is special because it's located on a property that will be protected in perpetuity. This population will never have to contend with development and habitat loss, two major factors in the rarity of the species. Many populations of this species are found on private property where there is no assurance that the plants will be afforded long-term protection. The exciting discovery of this rare orchid on QPF illustrates just one of many reasons why it is so important to protect special places. You never know what you'll find!

Christine Perron is chair of the Interpretation Committee and Co-Editor of *Bog Notes*.

2011 Volunteer Notes

Pat Barker

What a weird year we had in New England! Mother Nature run amok: blistering hot in July and August; hurricane Irene; Super-Flood Day; heavy rains followed by high winds; and early snows this fall. Needless to say, our Quincy Bog took a pounding. Our Trail Committee, Bog Volunteers, and "Bog Friends" who walked the loop got some unwelcome surprises and unexpected branch-clearing jobs.

But (!) – the early rains certainly gave us a breathtaking crop of berries: blueberries, blackberries, service berries, blue-bead Clintonia, bunchberry, partridgeberries, checkerberries, winterberry holly, grapes and on and on. What a marvelous show. I'm convinced that is why our bird feeders are ignored this fall; there is just so much food in the woods.

Thanks to our wonderful, faithful crew who were fabulous this year, despite the crazy weather. I wish six more people, just like them, would replace the six people who can no longer serve as Bog Hosts. Hopefully some of them will be able to help out next year (Dave Converse!). Please let me know about potential new volunteers. We were able to keep the doors open at the Nature Center thanks to Faith Mattison, Ginny Hutchinson, and Board members who served as substitutes.

Memories of 2011: George DeWolf found an amazing "ant farm", a white coating on an elder bush. Up close it was possible to see the ants harvesting the honey dew that the aphid "cows" were secreting. George also noted the fact that early-arriving hummingbirds feed on sap from tree bark holes that the sapsuckers "kindly provide" to fill the gap until the flowers are blooming. Candy Ports was amused by a person who approached her talking on a cell phone, passed Candy by, and faded away, still talking. Obviously the lady walks the Bog for exercise not to commune with the frogs and birds. Speaking of frogs, I learned that the "quacking" ones are Green Frogs while the "chug o' rum" ones are Bull Frogs. I'm sure everyone, volunteers and visitors, had interesting memories of 2011. See you next year – please!

Pat Barker serves as Volunteer Coordinator.



Junior Naturalist Corner

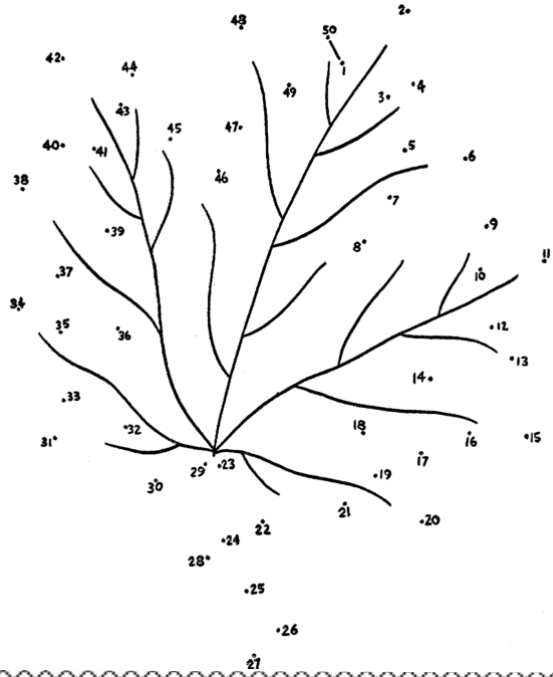
Do you want to learn more about becoming a Junior Naturalist? Visit our website quincybog.org

Check out how 3rd Graders from Thornton Central School described Quincy Bog after a recent visit:

Peaceful	Wonderful
	Soothing
Fantastic	Interesting
Quiet	
	Fabulous
Beautiful	Exciting
Fun	
	Fascinating

Wow! These Junior Naturalists obviously agree that Quincy Bog is a special place! How would *you* describe it?

Connect the dots on the right to discover a leaf from a common tree. Do you know what the tree is? Color the leaf as it would appear in the summer, fall, or winter.



Books We're Reading at the Bog

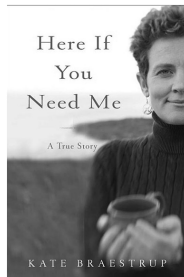
The editors encourage our readers to submit short reviews of books they feel would be of interest to other Bog Notes readers. Submissions may be sent to: bognotes@quincybog.org.

Here If You Need Me

A review submitted by Ron Reynolds

Last summer while talking about the latest books we'd read with a group of friends, someone asked if I had ever read *Here If You Need Me* by Kate Braestrup. "It's about a female Maine game warden who works with search and rescue groups," she said, knowing I had a background in backcountry medicine and rescue.

This is more than a story written by a fish cop. Kate Braestrup woke one day to the news that her husband, a Maine State Trooper, had died in a traffic accident. In the months following the accident she tries to put her and her family's life back together by continuing her husband's dream of becoming a minister. After graduating from divinity school eight years later, Kate is asked to interview for a newly formed position as of chaplain in the Maine State Warden Service. Kate asks, "What would I do as a Warden Service chaplain, bless the moose?" "Just be there for people in times of need," was the simple answer. What follows in the rest of the book are highlights of her adventures working in the Warden Service, from comforting distraught parents of a little girl lost in the Maine woods, to working with the scuba rescue team as they search for a snowmobiler who had fallen through lake ice.



Dealing with adversity is the overriding theme of this memoir, from Kate's own struggle to remake her life after the death of her husband to consoling others in their time of need. This is a good read for outdoor enthusiasts or anyone involved in emergency services.

Ron Reynolds is the webmaster for the Quincy Bog website.

Saving the Boy Scout Bridge from Irene

Bob Bulkeley

While Tropical Storm Irene did little damage to the trail at Quincy Bog, the resulting flood did move the "Eagle Scout" bridge off its moorings. The end nearest the kiosk was moved downstream over 10 feet, the other end about 2 feet, and the bridge was more than 20 degrees off level. It took Board members Derek Eaton, John Serfass, Bill Taffe, Betty Jo Taffe, and Bob Bulkeley over two hours of work, in and out of the water, to draw it back in place. Two come-a-long winches, 100' of 1/4" chain, various tow straps, and a 12' beam were used. The supporting piers had not moved significantly, so the task was to draw the bridge slowly in place after disconnecting the long access ramp. There were only two trees that could be used to anchor the winches. The water was still high from Irene and the footing was uncertain, but once the straps and chains were attached, the near side moved quickly into place. The long beam was used to skid the bridge back on the cribbing. Using a tree as an anchor the bridge was drawn to its proper place on the far shore. The connecting approach ramp was reattached, the approach walkways were moved into place, and the job was done. When funds become available, the bridge will need to be replaced. A new bridge will fully span the area that has been flooded by the beavers, keeping the Bog Trail above water at its southern end.

Bob Bulkeley is the chair of the Trails Committee for the Quincy Bog and Quincy Pasture Forest.

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the site, 11 sites were selected for patch clear cuts or thinning. The area that was thinned was designed to improve the health and vigor of the remaining trees and to produce and protect new seedlings. The total acreage of the cuts was about 7 acres. The largest patch clear cut was just over one acre while most were less than a half acre. Meticulous planning minimized disturbance to the watershed and the length of skid trails through the property. Special care was taken to minimize soil erosion. (A map of the harvest can be found on the insert included with this newsletter.)

Snags and trees with cavities were left standing to provide shelter and food for the over 24 species of birds and the 16 small mammals who use these trees. The cuts in conjunction with the snags provide improved habitat for bats. Because of the seriousness of the White Nose Syndrome this is especially important.* White pines with symptoms of canker were culled to help protect the pines that are not infected. Despite the wet conditions this fall, the work was heralded by a Forest Ranger from the NH Division of Forest and Lands as a model implementation of the timber management plan. He wished all logging operations were conducted as well as the one at QPF.

A secondary benefit of the timber management plan was that the log loading and work area for the logging operations provided access to the site from the road, a small parking area and an open area in which to locate a future kiosk. Visitors to QPF no longer have to park along the road.



Where does QPF stand now? The current conditions at QPF are somewhat raw. The patch cuts look like open wounds, but new growth will begin appearing in the spring. Although the main logging roads have been seeded and covered with straw, the water-breaks and the skid trails are muddy and rough. They should dry out and firm up next summer. The access driveway from East Rumney Road and the parking area are useable when there is no snow cover. The trail around the lower portion of QPF is outside of the timber operation and is perfectly accessible with the exception of some portions where the hiking trail and the skid trails overlap on the western side of the property.

Cut #6 has opened a wonderful view to the south which has improved as the trees have lost their foliage. From the top of this cut looking south you can see Plymouth Mountain, Hoyt and Pike Hills, and Tenney, Crosby, and Fletcher Mountains. Closer and below are the fields of Look Out Farm on Quincy Road.

In the coming seasons, as new growth develops and the effects of the timber operations fade into the forest, QPF will become a marvelous addition to the "special places" that Quincy Bog Natural Area offers area citizens and visitors from away.

* The previous articles, "Quincy Pasture Forest, An Interview with John Serfass" and "American Cancerroot" were in the winter edition 2009-10, Volume 17, Number 2. An article, "An Update on White Nose Syndrome and New Hampshire Bats," was in the spring edition 2010, Volume 18, Number 1. The articles can be accessed through the website www.quincybog.org.

Co-editor of Bog Notes, **Widge Kent**, would like to give a big thanks to **Tom Hahn**, forester for the timber harvest at QPF, for his help with this article.

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