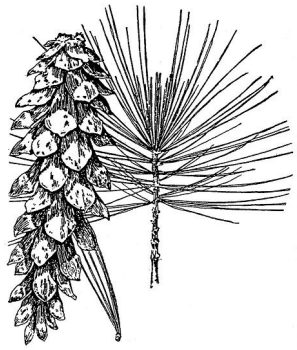
Tranquility Trail

Pittsfield State Forest



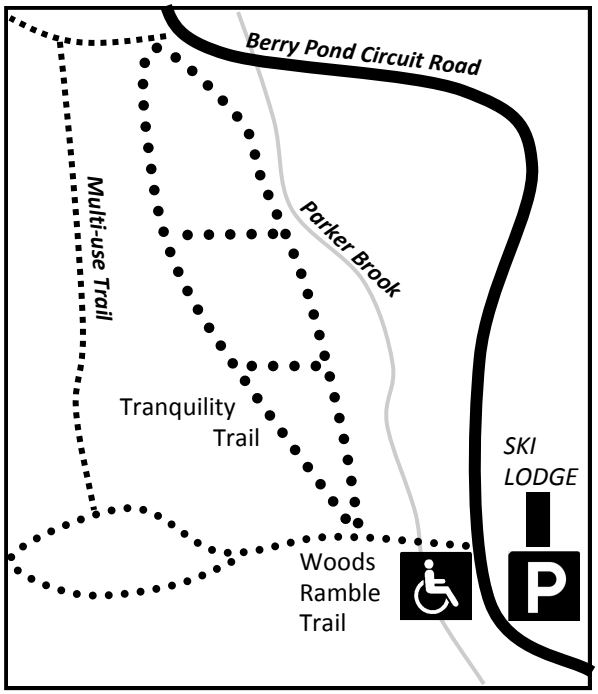
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE SELF-GUIDED TOUR



Welcome to Pittsfield State Forest, an 11,000 acre property managed Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Located along the Taconic Mountain Range, the forest has almost 40 miles of hiking and multi-use trails, camping and day-use picnicking. Berry Pond, atop Berry Mountain is the highest natural body of water in the state at 2,150 ft. elev.

Two self-guided trails, the Tranquility Trail and the Woods Ramble begin across from the rustic ski lodge on Berry Pond Circuit Road. The Tranquility Trail is one of many wheelchair -accessible trails, and a *Healthy Heart Trail*, to promote healthy outdoor recreation, found at many DCR parks state-wide.

*Please remember to **carry-in, carry-out** all your belongings, including trash. Please leave wildflowers in their natural environment for all to enjoy. Thank you.*



*Tranquility Trail is **one half-mile long**, paved, and accessible to all visitors. Expect to spend about **40 minutes** to complete it. The trail is marked with **red arrows** and red numbered sign posts which correspond to the numbers in this self -guided brochure.*

1) WHITE PINE The growth pattern of trees reveals a lot about the history of an area. Notice that the branching on this White Pine occurs fairly close to the ground. This indicates that it once grew where the lower branches could get enough space and sunlight. This area may have been a farm field at one time. Can you smell the sweet pine needles?

2) JEWELWEED A plant that often occurs in clusters, Jewelweed's tubular flowers are especially adapted for pollination by hungry hummingbirds and butterflies. The stem, when crushed, makes a juice to relieve the itch of poison ivy, stinging nettle and even athlete's foot. In late summer all it takes



Hummingbird and Jewelweed

is a gentle touch to eject the seed from its pod, inspiring the name " touch-me-not".

3) SUGAR MAPLE

Imagine the daunting task this Sugar Maple has to perform in order to survive. It must send water absorbed by the roots all the way up to the leaves, which produce sugar used as food for the tree. As early as July the tree starts to store this food in the roots for use next spring. The sap, or food, will start to flow on warm days in February. It takes approximately 40 gallons of maple sap to make one gallon of syrup.

4) CHRISTMAS FERN

If you look closely, each leaflet of this fern look like a tiny Christmas stocking! An easy way to remember the name of this fern and a reminder that this fern tolerates the cold, short days and long nights of winter. Large fronds covered with snow lie flat on the forest floor. In spring comes fresh growth while new fronds replace last year's fronds which decompose on the forest floor.



Christmas Fern

5) ROTTING STUMP

When this tree was alive, "tubes" in the center of the trunk allowed water and nutrients to flow from the roots to the leaves. Over a period of years , the center of the stump has rotted and been occupied by fungi, carpenter ants and beetles. These creatures in turn, have provided food for larger animals. These cavities in dead trees are important as hiding places and homes for many animals.

6) STREAM BED

This stream bed is a reminder that Pittsfield State Forest part of a watershed. A watershed is an area of land from which water, starting out as rain, then drains in to a water body, a stream, river or lake, and ultimately into the ocean. In spring, when winter snow melts, these mountain streams run swift and clear. This stream feeds into Onota Lake and then the Housatonic River, ultimately into Long Island Sound, 100 miles away. In summer months it usually dry unless it is fed by underground springs. What watershed do you live in? Can you hear the water flowing?

7) EASTERN HOPHORNBEAM

This species of tree is a common one in the eastern U.S. forest. Because it grows very slowly the wood is extremely dense and has been used for fence posts and tool handles. The nutlets and buds are food for rabbits and grouse. Its fruit clusters resemble hops, another plant used to make beer. Try feeling the muscular ridges on a branch which also give it the name "muscle wood".



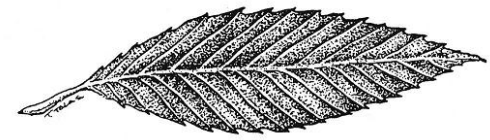


Eastern Hophornbeam

At this point in your walk you have a choice: ***A) shorten your walk.*** *Turn left and follow the red arrows to continue on the self-guided trail tour, or* ***B) extend your walk****. Go straight to find a section of trail that has been left relatively undisturbed, which at the end of this 10-minute loop you'll rejoin the self-guided trail at stop #10.*

8) OAKS

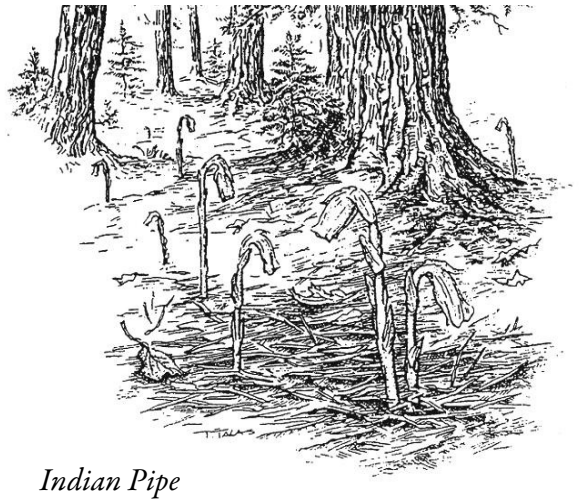
Oaks have been an important source of both food and wood. The seed of the oak, the acorn, is a major source of protein for deer, bear, and other wildlife preparing for winter. Native Americans made bread from some types of acorns by first boiling them to remove bitter tasting tannins. Then dried kernels were ground into a flour. Oaks were the dominate hardwood in the eastern U.S. in colonial times, used in shipbuilding, farming and structures. Today's furniture industry's demand for high-quality oak makes this tree one of the most valuable timber species in Massachusetts.



9) AMERICAN CHESTNUT

Look ten feet to your right and you'll see a stump with many small branches (called suckers) growing from it. The stump is from the once common but now rare American Chestnut. A fungus was first discovered in 1904 in New York City and spread rapidly. Within several decades it had destroyed stands of this once large and sturdy tree. These young sprouts continue to grow from the still living root systems, until they become infected and die. A blight resistant strain of American Chestnut is being developed with the hope that one day mature Chestnut trees will spread their foliage over the Eastern U.S. forests once again, and provide abundant quantities of edible nuts. Visit *www. acf.org* for more information.

The ski lodge here at the state forest was built in 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps using the American Chestnut timber before the large trees totally disappeared.



Indian Pipe

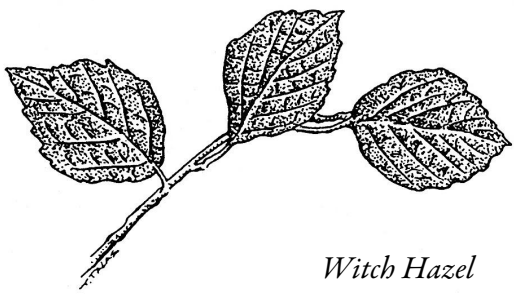
10) SAPROPHYTES

Notice how this stand of Eastern Hemlocks screens out most of the sunlight passing though it? Few plants are able to tolerate such shady conditions. In late summer or fall you may see mushrooms and Indian Pipes popping up through the dead leaves and needles.

Unlike green plants that need sunlight to make their food, mushrooms obtain food by decomposing dead plants. Some grow on fallen logs and branches. Other grow in the "rich " litter on the forest floor. Look for the ghostly, white Indian Pipes, one of the few flowering plants called *saprophytes*, capable of living on dead and decaying organic matter. Take a deep breath to smell the decay on the forest floor.

11) WITCH HAZEL

Late in the fall, after most trees dropped their leaves, Witch Hazel's yellow flowers appear. The petals have the ability to curl back into a bud when the temperature drops and to expand again when it gets warmer. When the fruits ripen, the seeds can shoot as far as 20 feet away. The bark and leaves have long been used as an astringent, while dowsers sometimes trust the branches for locating water sources.



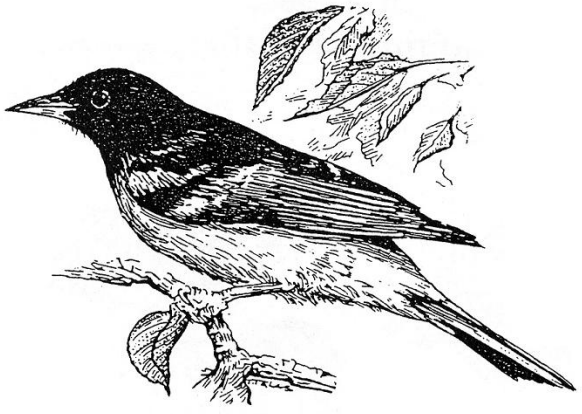
Witch Hazel

12) AMERICAN BEECH

Although this American Beech was cut down several decades ago, the stump produces shoots that may grow into mature trees someday. In some parts of New England, trees which mature in this way are called *"wolf trees"* because of their ability to successfully complete with other trees and grow quickly as a "pack". American Beech is easily identified by its smooth, gray bark. The nuts are a favorite food of the Wild Turkey and Black Bear. Touch the smooth bark.

13) SUGAR MAPLE

Up the slope to your left, Sugar Maples tower upward, shading out the pines below. In years to come the pines may totally cut off from sunlight and die. These tall, beautiful maples with expansive top-branching limbs dominate the canopy of this forest. They provide a niche for a variety of birds including the sparrow-sized **Red-eyed**



Baltimore Oriole

Vireo, whose red iris, prominent eye stripe and blue-grey cap help distinguish this bird. From May to July listen for its non-stop, robin-like song: *seewee, seewit, seowit, seeyee.* Other birds of the canopy include the colorful Scarlet Tananger and the Baltimore Oriole.

We hope your visit was pleasant and explore Pittsfield State Forest again. Please return this brochure to the box unless you choose to keep it.

PITTSFIELD STATE FOREST
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Massachusetts



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