

THE NEW BOSTON TRAIL: DESCRIPTION and HISTORY

LOCATION

The main trailhead for the New Boston Trail is located in the north end of the parking lot adjacent to the Transfer Station and across from the recreational ball fields on Old Coach Road. The trail is marked with blue tags and numbers for location identification. **In an emergency, note the nearest locator number on the trail tag and call 911.** A large version of the trail map is posted on the kiosk, built in 2014 by Eagle Scout Tyler Ruggiero and his team from Troop 123, next to the trail entrance. Individual copies of the map are located in the mailbox attached to the kiosk or can be obtained in the Town Hall lobby or at the Town web site, Forestry Committee section, New Boston Trail (<http://www.newbostonnh.gov>). There is one additional trail access point on Old Coach Road with limited parking (signs are posted) and one on Cochran Hill Road at the entrance to the town sand pit and the Sherburne Forest. (Park out of the way of traffic as the sand pit is active.) The mile-long woods road (separate from but connected to the New Boston Trail) in the Lydia Dodge West Lot is accessible by the yellow gate on Old Coach Road and is marked with orange and yellow tags. Do not block the gate.

HISTORY OF THE FORESTS

The Lydia Dodge Forest, 244.7 acres, was acquired by the Town on July 2, 1928 from Sydney and Lydia Dodge as a trust set up to care for their cemetery lots. The town landfill (now the Transfer Station) and a gravel pit were carved out for town needs. The O'Rourke Forest, 51.98 acres, was purchased in 1989 because of the possibility of the landfill leaching across Old Coach Road. A section of this forest was used to create the recreational ball fields. The forest was renamed the Bob Todd Forest in 2017 in recognition of resident Bob Todd's long history of dedication and work in the town forests. The Sherburne Lot, 70 acres, was initially purchased in 2001 to take advantage of the 10-acre sandpit contained in the 17-acre kame terrace along Cochran Hill Road. In 2003, the people voted to create a new town forest, the Sherburne Forest, with the remaining 53 acres. All of these forests have management plans administered by the Forestry Committee. Much of the land surrounding these forests is either in conservation or current use. These forests and the land around them create a greenway for wildlife, wetlands, recreational trails and hunting for the enjoyment and benefit of the people of New Boston.

THE TRAIL

The New Boston Trail has been a labor of love. The idea of a trail started with the committee members in 1996, shortly after the town voted to establish Town Forests under RSA 31:110-114. Committee members Jon Brooks, Dave Allen and town volunteer John Macentee worked on the trail for several years, along with University of NH intern Jeff Hoffman, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts. Permits were filed, trail grants applied for, bridges built, trail markers nailed up and sign posts installed. In all, 2.8 miles of trail were cleared. This trail has recently been augmented by a new mile-long extension circling the entire Sherburne Forest. In 2012, Troop 123 Boy Scouts cleared a section of trail in the southeast quadrant of the forest. In 2013, Eagle Scout Cody Paquette and his team from the troop built a walking bridge across the brook running south from the northern beaver pond on the property. In April 2014, volunteers from the local trails maintenance group, Piscataquog Area Trailways (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit), completed clearing the entire circuit of the forest.

The New Boston Trail winds its way through 3.8 miles and 350 acres of Town Forests: Lydia Dodge West, Lydia Dodge East, Bob Todd and Sherburne. The trail goes through varying terrain, across stone and wooden bridges, up hills and into valleys and meadows, crossing near wetland areas such as Clark Swamp and the Sherburne meadow, created and maintained by active beaver populations. Many different species of birds, mammals, reptiles, wildflowers and trees are commonly observed along the trail. Blue herons and wood ducks may be seen from the Clark Swamp overlook, if one is quiet so they are not disturbed. In Lydia Dodge West, beautiful man-made rapids constructed long ago cascade from north to south along the trail in spring next to giant rocks left from ancient glaciers. The forest trees range from black gums growing in or near marshes in the south to the extensive hemlock, white pine and red pine seen throughout the four forest areas. Hardwoods such as red oak, white oak, beech, birch, black birch and ash are scattered throughout the area where soils allow.

The trail varies in difficulty depending on the terrain. The Bob Todd section is easy; Lydia Dodge West and Sherburne are moderate; Lydia Dodge East is moderately difficult due to several rock stream crossings and varying terrain.

RESTRICTIONS

The use of wheeled motorized vehicles is not permitted on town forest land, with the exception of individuals needing handicapped access. Camping and fires are not

permitted unless authorized by the Forestry Committee and Selectmen. Target shooting in the sand pit surrounded by the Sherburne Forest is NOT permitted. Please do not litter: carry in, carry out.

Hunting is allowed in all town forests.

Please respect abutting private lands and trails.

The New Boston Trail is open from dawn to dusk year-round.