

Crotched Mountain Town Forest County: Hillsborough

Enjoy multiple pastures demarcated by old stone walls, beaver ponds, erratics, outcroppings, an old quarry, vernal pools and more. An extensive trail network up, down, and around Crotched Mountain awaits.

Location: Route 136 / Greenfield Road, Franconstown, NH County: Hillsborough

Delorme Map edition and page: New Hampshire and Vermont (2018), page 74, C-2

GPS location: 42.97105, -71.84954

Directions

From U.S. 202 and Route 9 in Hillsborough, take U.S. 202 west through Antrim to Route 47 South, through Bennington to Franconstown. Take Route 136 / Greenfield Road west for 2.5 miles and park in the lot just off of Farrington Road.

Forest Data

Acreage: 900 acres

Primary Ecosystem Types: Lake and Pond, Succession Edge, Strong Hardwood

Trails: miles of hiking and more than a dozen trails crisscross the southerly and easterly portions of Crotched Mountain, from broad and easy trails to more difficult terrain.

Crotched Mountain Town Forest Overview and History

A diverse and extensive forest landscape covers the acreage. The forest contains a wide variety of ecosystems and habitats, such as swamps, vernal pools, streams, open fields, ledges, rocky outcroppings, and softwood and hardwood forests.

Habitat improvement projects have been initiated in the forest such as field reclamation, creating wildlife openings in the forest, and planting of nut and fruit producing shrubs and trees.



Trails, Hiking, and Highlights

Two trails are of special interest. Scot's Trail, named after former Conservation Commission Chair Scot Heath, is the original trail, and makes a loop of about 3½ miles over gentle terrain. The Summit Trail takes you to the top of the mountain over some fairly rough terrain, leading to expansive views.

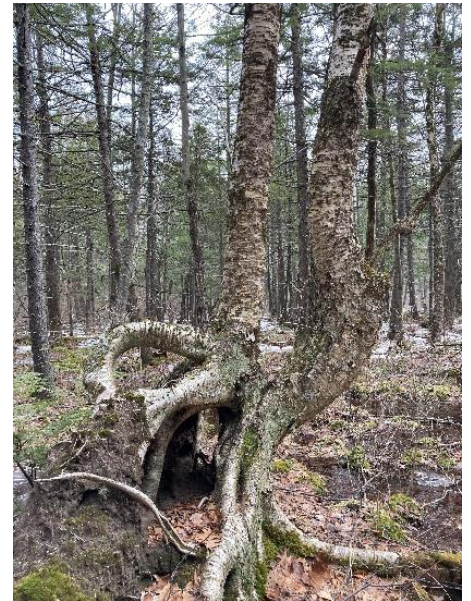
From the parking lot, the Quarry Trail, marked by wooden stakes, is an easy loop to a small, sunken quarry. Erratics, cast iron relics, and an oak-pine tree embrace are a nice diversion.

The Link Trail is a pleasant hike. Early into the trail is a picnic table and a bridge. From the bridge, look to the northeast and the southwest for views of swamps and floodplains. Continue

along the Link Trail through a mostly red oak and white pine forest, interspersed with young stands of beech and white pines.

At the kiosk with Bullard Hill Road, follow the yellow-blazed Summit Trail northwest through red and white pines. At the trail junction, continue northwest on the Summit West trail through a small hemlock grove pot marked with pillows and cradles and then to a vernal pool.

Crossing through the rock-strewn landscape, head west at the large erratic on the blue-blazed Black Gum Swamp Trail. Balance yourself on the moss-covered decaying planking through the swamp. Exploring around, you can find nurse stump trees such as yellow birch. A large boulder field graces the western slope.



Back on Summit West, head north to a grassy field and follow the trail as it winds around. Go through a small hemlock grove, cross the brook, and access the white-blazed and stonewall lined Scot's Trail. An old beaver pond undergoing eutrophication is visible along the route.

Follow Scot's Trail and cross a meandering brook several times. At the junction with the Summit East Trail, head through the reclaimed field to a wildlife blind shelter overlooking a beaver pond and dam.

Enjoy some quiet moments in the blind and then continue along the Summit East Trail south to the Bullard Hill Road kiosk. Return to the parking area by way of the Link Trail or take the more roundabout way down Bullard Hill Road and possibly the Joslin Loop Trail to Farrington Road.



Other Town Forests and Places of Interest Nearby

Francestown has six other town forests and conservation areas:

- Dinsmore Brook Conservation Area
- Driscoll Hill Town Forest
- Fire Tower Town Forest
- Lord Town Forest
- Piscataquog River Town Forest
- Shattuck Pond Town Forest.

Other local points of interest are:

- New Boston conservation lands
- Peterborough town forests and conservation lands
- Russell Abbott State Forest (Greenville).