



Mast Road Natural Area

The 531-acre Mast Road Natural Area is located in the southeast corner of Epping. This property features outstanding ecological diversity. Two-thirds of the land is classified as wetlands including vernal pools, floodplain forests, black gum basin swamps, fens, and a pitch pine heath swamp. Mast Road Natural Area boasts more than a mile of frontage on the Lamprey River and nearly 500 feet of frontage on the Piscassic River. 150 acres of the property are managed upland hemlock hardwood-pine forest. The property is also rich with history.

At one time this property was considered a potential site for a golf course, as well as residential and commercial developments. Easy access and wet soils led to extensive misuse of the property for a long period of time. SELT acquired the land in 2011 with funding from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Lamprey River Advisory Committee.

Since purchasing this land, SELT has carried out extensive habitat and restoration work. More than a mile of deeply rutted OHRV trails has been restored and approximately 20 acres of early successional habitat have been created. Access is now restricted by gates and guard rails, limiting unauthorized vehicular use.



Barred Owl
CREDIT: KEVIN MARTIN

Trail Descriptions

Gate 3 Entrance: This is the primary public entrance to the western portion of the property. A kiosk is located here and the Black Gum Trail begins at this location.

Gate 4 Entrance: Public parking is available across Mast Road at the intersection of Birch Road.

● **Black Gum Trail** This trail is named for a tree that is uncommon in the state but found throughout the wetlands of the Mast Road Natural Area. In fact the largest known black gum tree in NH is found on this property. From Gate 3 this nearly level trail winds through the forest on the edge of extensive wetlands that extend east from this trail to

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SELT serves 52 communities of southeastern New Hampshire to conserve special places for the public benefit through conservation easements and land ownership. Once land is conserved, SELT ensures the conservation goals are met through our landowner stewardship program and through sustainable management of SELT-owned lands. *Join as a member or volunteer today!*

About SELT

- Horseback riding
 - Wheeled motorized vehicles
 - Trapping
 - Target shooting
 - Fires
 - Camping
- The following uses are **not** permitted:
- Dogs are welcome but must remain under the control of owners. Please carry a lease, leash aggressive dogs, and pick up after your pet.
 - Hunting is allowed. Be aware of hunting seasons.
 - See map inside and trailheads for permitted uses.
 - Stay on marked trails.
 - Respect the privacy of our neighbors.
 - Leave no trace. Please carry out what you carry in.
- This land is owned and managed by SELT and is open for public enjoyment.

Enjoy the Mast Road Natural Area!

Birch Road. There are several small bridges on this trail, the last of which provides views of a large active beaver pond. **(Universally Accessible)**

● **Old Piggery Trail** Beginning just west of the beaver pond, this trail was once a road that serviced a large pig farm located on the Mast Road Natural Area and the abutting Camp Hedding until about 1970. The piggery site is a partially open area with remnant concrete foundations on the abutting Camp Hedding property. Note the boundary line is very close to the trail and the Camp Hedding property is posted. Camp Hedding is a Methodist owned property with privately owned homes that began as a religious campground in 1862. The Old Piggery Trail continues on to Gate 2. There is no public access beyond the SELT boundary line located at this gate. **(Universally Accessible)**

● **Beauschesne Farm Trail** The beginning of this trail is on an old sulky track where horses once trained for harness racing. The Beauschesne Farm Trail utilizes portions of the sulky track to loop around an open sandy area which is being managed for early succession habitat. Please stay on the trail so as to protect sensitive habitats. From here the trail climbs a short gentle hill edged by a field that was created in the restoration work. The trail ends in an adjoining field that was once a small outdoor movie theater. **(Universally Accessible)**

● **Lamprey River Trail** intersects the Old Piggery and Beauschesne Farm Trails. This gently sloping trail follows old farm paths that at one time connected the dry upland pastures with the fertile tillable soils along the Lamprey River. The trail goes through a parcel owned by the Town of Epping. There is short spur trail to an overlook at the edge of the Lamprey River. From here the trail follows along the edge of floodplain forests before looping back to the Beauschesne Farm Trail at the old sulky track.

● **Hedding Spur Trail** This trail is located partially on the path of the Hedding Spur Rail Line, which historically provided rail access to the Camp Hedding property from a railroad station on Mast Road. SELT has created three patch clearcuts along this trail to provide habitat for wildlife that depend on early succession forest, such as snowshoe hare. In the drier seasons, one can walk out Gate 5 onto Route 87 and loop back by way of Birch Road. Winter users should note that snowmobiling is allowed on this trail. **(Universally Accessible)**