

Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire
BRCF Management Committee Meeting

September 20, 2021

6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Zoom Video Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85654121785?pwd=dDMxY0lsNFp3QUdXS25FWdVlbHphUT09>

Meeting ID: 856 5412 1785

Passcode: 565689

- 1) Welcome (5 min)
- 2) Approval of April, 2021 minutes (5 min)
- 3) Updates (30 min)
 - a) MMRG
 - b) Events that have occurred
 - c) Powder Mill Snowmobile Club
 - d) Status of 2021 trail work
 - e) Trails Committee
 - f) Mowing at cabin
 - g) Stell & Young addition management planning
 - h) NRCS funding received
- 4) Planned work remaining for 2021 (20 min)
 - a) Birch Ridge trail
 - b) Upcoming events
- 5) Historical signs requested by Cathy Orlowicz (20 min)
- 6) Horses (15 min)
 - a) Recommended trails
 - b) Timeline for allowed use of trails
- 7) Begin to think about 2022 work (30 min)
 - a) Trails work
 - i. Accessible trail
 - ii. South Shore connection including Lions Camp Pride
 - b) NRCS funded work
 - c) Stell & Young
 - d) Events
 - e) Cabin
- 8) Other business (10 min)
- 9) Next meeting October 20th 6 – 8 pm – likely Zoom

**Birch Ridge Community Forest
Management Committee Meeting – 2nd Meeting**

13 April 2021
6:00 - 8:30pm, Zoom video

Draft Minutes

Participants: Charlie Bridges (Chair), Debbie Goard (SELT), and Parker Shuermann (SELT) Lee Alexander, Lorrie Drake, Ronda Fernald, Mike Gelinas, Brad Helfer, Matt Murphy, Emma Tutein, and Russ Weldon. Public listening: Jim Matthews

1. Welcome

Charlie Bridges welcomed participants (11 in total).

2. Approval of 1 December 2020 minutes

Accepted with no changes.

3. Updates

a. Conservation Easement

Charlie briefly described the synopsis of conservation easement purposes, limitations and reserved rights that was distributed before the meeting. There were no questions.

b. Powder Mill Snowmobile Club

Mike Gelinas provided a brief update of this past winter's activities. There were approximately five (5) weeks of snowmobiling. BRCF had some of the best trails in the area. Only a few ATVs encroached on the trails.

Russ Weldon asked about ongoing trail maintenance. This matter was discussed later.

c. BRCF expansion (Stell & Young tracks)

Debbie provided a brief update about this additional acquisition to BRCF. Final closing should occur by early May.

d. Recent workshops (SELT/MMRG)

Debbie and Mike described the annual "family snowmobile day/poker run" that included the Corridor 22 trail and a stop at the Cabin. A number of family groups enjoyed the day.

Emma reported that UNH Coop Ext hosted a winter wildlife snow track event in January. It included people who had not visited BRCF before. Seeing a bobcat track was a particular highlight.

Laurie mentioned MMRG sponsored a vernal pool field trip on last 10 April.

4. Planned work for 2021

a. Review of 2020-2022 work accomplished & planned

Debbie briefly reviewed the "Work Plan": 2020-2022 work accomplished & planned summary distributed before the meeting.

Russ asked about horseback riding, and if current/new trail work for this type of activity was planned (e.g., Corridor 22). Debbie responded that the steering committee identified horseback riding as a use needing more information. The trails working group has begun this discussion. Also, the bridge on the Rattlesnake trail to corridor 22 will allow horses.

Russ also asked about budget planning for the Class 6 Birch Hill Rd. maintenance. Parker briefly explained the current agreement with Steve Edwards. Russ pointed out that

MMLA donated last year for road improvement/maintenance. The current arrangement was explained about when the temporary cable might be up at the beginning of the class VI road (e.g., during mud season). Russ recommended that a more formal road maintenance agreement be developed between SELT and Mr. Edwards. Parker said he is working on an agreement now. Matt and Parker briefly discussed monitoring use of the parking lots, including a time stamp.

b. Final 2021 budget (distributed before the meeting)

Debbie referred to the list of activities that were associated with the 2021 Budget (see slide #3 - #8 in PP Pres)

SELT uses a calendar year budget. Debbie explained that both capital and SELT land operational/management funds are shown. Staff cost are not listed.

c. Forestry & Wildlife habitat (summary 2021-2023 projects sent out before meeting)

Parker described the management approach for Management Unit 1 (MU-1). When asked why MU-1, he explained that the focus on one unit at a time was “to not disturb wildlife”. Also, NRCS is more inclined to approve just one MU per grant proposal. He mentioned the creation of a blueberry barren/oak savanna on the north side of Birch Ridge, and timber stand improvement (TSI) on other areas that had been heavily harvested. Charlie further explained the overall strategy for this MU. In particular, prior to timber harvesting most of the MU-1 area had high-quality red oak and birch. Lee provided some additional comments about the objectives for some of the key habitats. Parker mentioned that NRCS announcement of awards should occur in May.

Lee asked about the slash piles that remain downslope of the Cabin area following the “bronto work” that was performed last fall. Parker explained this was done to “benefit wildlife habitat.”

d. Trails

Debbie discussed the current location of trails (as shown on a trails map) and will be working with Lew. In addition to Russ and Mike, there will be an intern from UNH for trail work. There will be an effort to determine the best public access from South Shore Rd. Charlie asked about the federally required archeological studies.

Charlie explained the strategy for the future trail from the Birch Hill Rd parking lot to the Cabin. Lew Shelly is finalizing the design for a “universally accessible trail” in this general area. Final design and funding are being addressed.

Mike and Charlie described an alternate trail proposal that would provide access to BRCF from Lions Camp Pride (see slide #11 in PP Pres). There was strong support by the MC for this route and to proceed. A site visit for Debbie and Parker is tentatively scheduled for 16 April (this site visit was postponed due to weather).

Mike described PMSC’s plan to re-locate the trail groomer to a new facility that would be built at Russ Weldon’s land on Brackett Rd. This new location will provide easier access to Corridor 22 within BRCF.

Mike also explained the need to make a short reroute on Corridor 22 away from a vernal pool. The MC supported this plan.

e. Start update of management plan for Stell & Young (forestry/wildlife & recreation)

Debbie explained that the MC will be asked to prepare a draft. It will include input from Jon, Lew, Charlie, and Lee. Jon will conduct a more traditional forest inventory on these properties. Goal is to complete a draft plan by August, and final plan by November 2021. The plan for the new parcels will be rolled into the original BRCF management plan.

5. Events

a. Public events planned for 2021

Zoe Aldag (SELT) is currently on maternity leave. Lorrie mentioned the desire to have another hawk watch this Fall. Debbie asked for further suggestions for outdoor events, particularly wildlife.

Russ mentioned the “mushroom walk” last fall sponsored by MMLA that was quite popular. Lorrie asked about an effort to deal with “invasive species.” Parker will look into this.

Lorrie also asked about parking (e.g., Town Beach parking lot).

Ronda suggested a botany field trip for her outing club & other Prospect Mtn students.

Lee and Charlie will consider organizing a field walk around the beaver impoundment (singing songbirds).

Russ & Matt noted that Cathy Orlowicz, town historian, had suggested historical/cultural walks. The cellar hole on the Young track could be an archaeological/historical field trip site.

Mike mentioned the PMSC’s poker run as an annual event.

b. Management Committee field trips

Charlie encouraged MC members to suggest and participate in site visits they felt would be beneficial.

Russ mentioned some VIP tours he has done or could do in the future (e.g., potential donors).

Charlie will follow up with Debbie on a possible MC field trip to the BRCF this Spring..

Parker mentioned there will be another “working” trail workshop sometime this summer.

6. Working Groups

a. Trails Working Group (TWG)

- Charlie briefly summarized the outcome of first meeting of the TWG.

- Charlie described the PMSC Proposal for a relocation of the Camp Pride Trail. Matt is in favor and pointed out that this route would also enable an access point from South Shore Rd. Brad is in favor as well. It would also satisfy MMLA as well. MC is in favor of this proposal.

- Short reroute on Corridor 22 to move away from a vernal pool– Charlie feels this is a good thing to do. MC is in favor.

- Rattlesnake trail connector to Corridor 22 – Needs to be evaluated before making a decision

- X-country ski loop from Birch Hill Rd. parking lot – Charlie and Russ feel this is a good idea at a good location and would be used by families & youth. Debbie cautioned that this should be looked at from a broad perspective, and that there are other considerations. The MC is in support of moving forward. Parker feels that other X-Country ski locations should be considered as well.

- Charlie mentioned that it may be desirable for the TWG to meet on a regular basis, and to have a WG Chair. They would study trail proposals and bring recommendations to the MC on what was needed and how to move forward with new proposals. It would also be beneficial if the MC were to meet 3 times a year to deal with these proposals. Debbie felt that this would be useful for finalizing the proposed SELT budget.

b. Education Working Group

Debbie briefly explained what was contained the Management Plan and what is needed to be successful. Russ suggested that Cathy Orlowicz should be contacted. Lorrie is interested in

participating. Debbie suggested that it would be good to ID and reach out to other persons (e.g., Caitlin Wollack is the 4H Coordinator in Strafford County).

c. Mountain Biking

Ronda stated that the Prospect Mountain Outing Club is interested in mountain biking, as well as trail construction. Brad offered information on area biking groups, particularly in Wolfeboro. Parker will follow-up with Ronda.

7. **BRCF Management Committee meeting schedule**

Rather than holding two (2) meeting per year (March & October), it was proposed there be three (3) meetings:

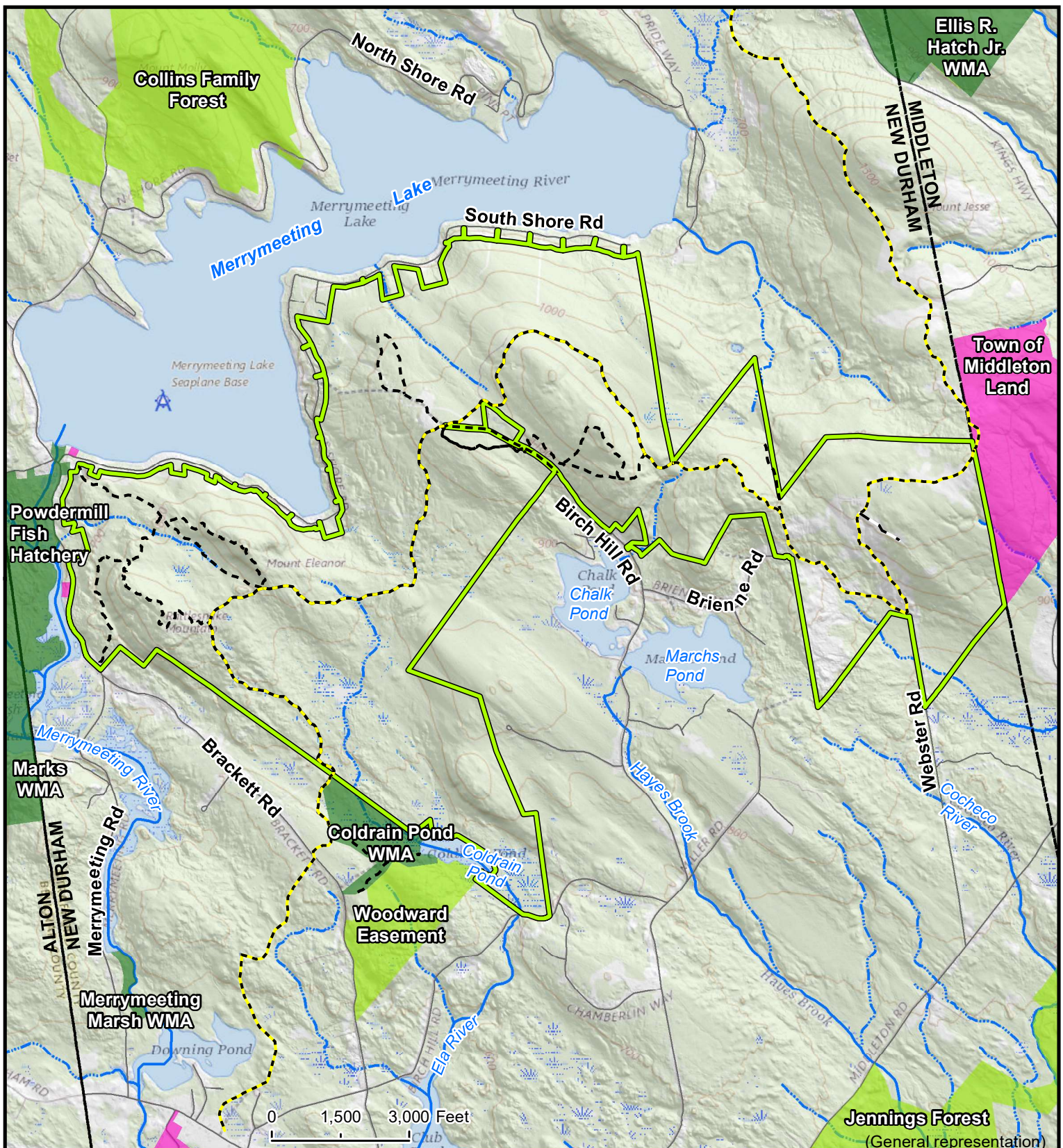
March/April (start of field season)

September (discussion about next year's work)

October (finalize proposed work and budget for next year)

8. **Other business** - None







9. **Next meeting early September 2021** – To be scheduled & hopefully in person!



Birch Ridge Community Forest Trails

New Durham, NH

1:35,000

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Birch Ridge Community Forest |  State |
|  Snowmobile Corridor #22 |  Town |
|  Trail |  Other Conservation Lands |

Map prepared by
Southeast Land
Trust of NH
August, 2021

Boundary and
feature locations
are approximate.
Property boundary
based on tax maps.

PARTNERSHIP FOR
BIRCH RIDGE
COMMUNITY FOREST



6/30/2021

Signage Proposals

Birch Ridge Community Forests



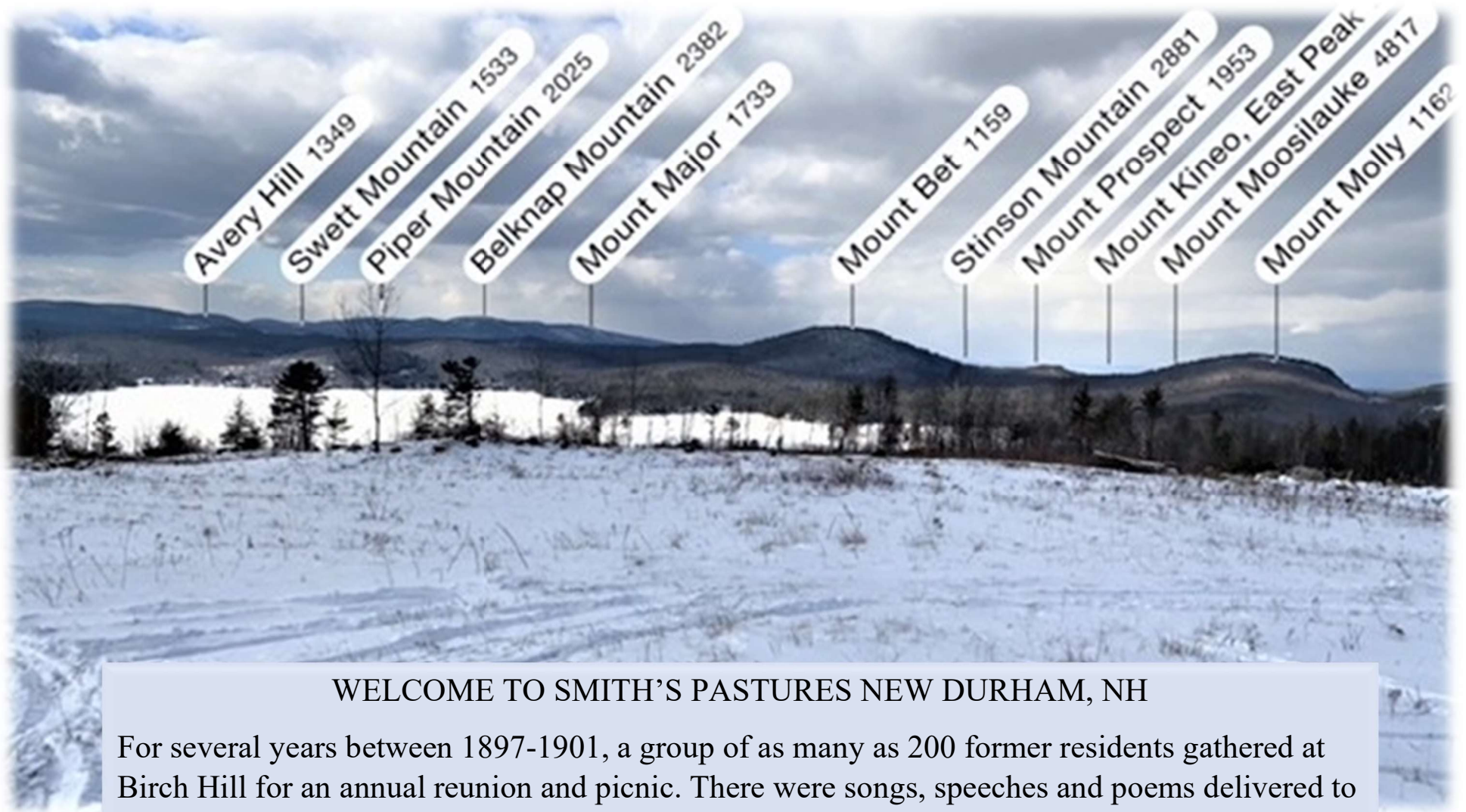
Catherine Orlowicz

TOWN HISTORIAN NEW DURHAM, NH



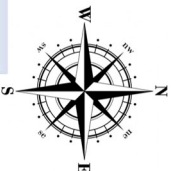
Figure 10A-30—The base design reflects the mountainous terrain. Le Conte Divide, Sierra National Forest. North Pacific BEIG Province.

Suggested signs at Smith's Pastures, the location for the cabin. A durable exterior sign, to be attached to the building's exterior North and South walls. The photographs would show the view across, with labels for the visible peaks, from the appropriate wall. I would suggest one sign feature about life in rural New Durham. The other about the history for the pasture. I have made a mock-up of one labeled "Welcome to Smith's Pastures New Durham, NH". (Note compass direction will need to be verified.)



WELCOME TO SMITH'S PASTURES NEW DURHAM, NH

For several years between 1897-1901, a group of as many as 200 former residents gathered at Birch Hill for an annual reunion and picnic. There were songs, speeches and poems delivered to reminisce about times past and long-lost friends. *“As we gained the summit of the hill.... we are struck with wonder at the beautiful scenery spread out before us. There lay the calm and peaceful Merrymeeting Lake, bounded by rugged hills and mountains, covered with forests of trees... a picture of loveliness, which no artist could portray.”* Tristram H. Fletcher



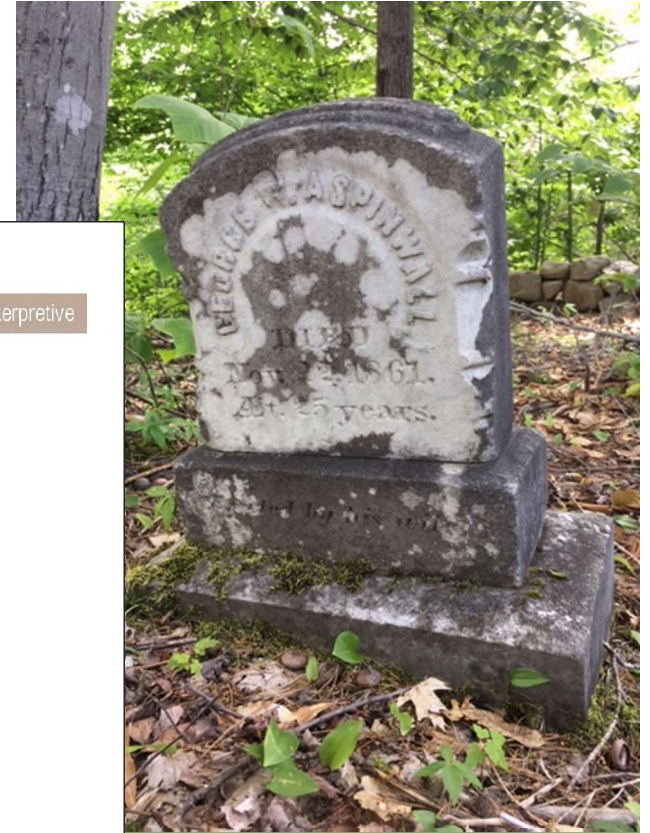


Suggested signage at the Old Family Graveyards and the old Durgin Homestead foundation.

November 2012

Chapter 10A Visitor Information Signing

Interpretive



Suggest free standing signs. (Posts and frames could be made of wood)
Information would be about the families buried in each old graveyard.
The Durgin Homestead site would have some information regarding them and some history about the area.



Figure 10A-30—The base design reflects the mountainous terrain. Le Conte Divide, Sierra National Forest, North Pacific BEIG Province.



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

This is the source for the signs.
C E Orlowicz Town Historian
2021

Engineering Staff • Washington, D.C. • EM7100-15 • Revised • October 2013

Sign and Poster Guidelines for the Forest Service



Figure 9-2—Examples of Cooperator posters.

Example for trail sign to help with usage etiquette.

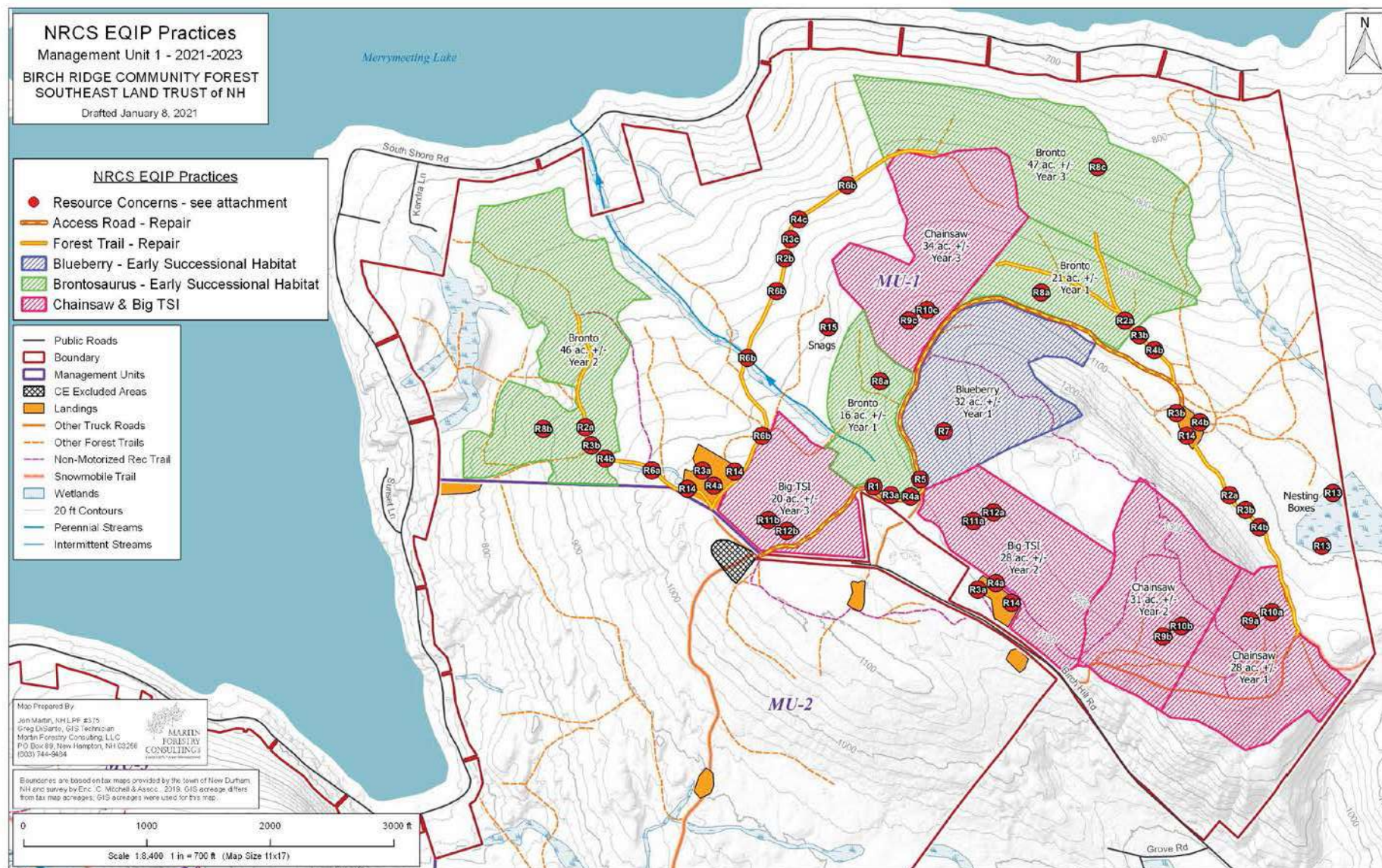


Figure 1: BRCF NRCS 2021-2023 EQIP MU-1

BRCF Work Plan: Completed 2020-2021

<u>Specific Goal</u>	<u>Sub Goals</u>	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Description -</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>	<u>Funding Source</u>
Early Successional Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife Habitat Scenic Values 	Grassland\Old Field Habitat\annual mowing	MU - 1	Landing 5 - Cabin Wildlife Opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brontosaurus Invasive Species Management Evaluate desired future 	2020	NRCS - completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Use Education & Outreach Public Access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Water Quality Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed Protection Aquatic Habitat Protection – streams/vernal pools 	Forest -wide	4 gates	Gates –	2020-2021	completed
				3 Bridges	ARM Bridge Building	2020	completed
				3 kiosks	installation	2020	completed
				3 Temp maps for kiosks	printing and installation	2021	completed
				Cor. 22 & Lake	Woods Road Maintenance	2020-2024	PMSC\SELT\
Early Successional Habitat	Wildlife Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wildlife Openings Log Landings Remediation Meadow Creation 	Forest-wide	Landings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate desired future conditions Stump\rock removal Conservation Plantings\local hay spreading Wildlife Plantings Invasive Species Management 	2021-2024	SELT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Use Education & Outreach Public Access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Water Quality Protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watershed Protection Aquatic Habitat Protection – streams/vernal pools 	Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer trainings Contractor pricing 	Mt Eleanor Trail	Aug-20	SELT
			wide		Rattlesnake Mt Trail\foot bridge	Jun-21	
					Mt. Eleanor Workshop	Aug-20	
					Connector Trail\ Bridge\ford	June 2021	
					Connector Trail Gate	Oct 2021	

BRCF Work Plan: Pending 2021

Specific Goal	Sub Goals	Targets	Location	Description -	Activities	Time Frame	Funding Source Possible
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Public Use● Education & Outreach● Public Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Community Engagement● Water Quality Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Watershed Protection● Aquatic Habitat Protection – streams/vernal pools	Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Volunteer trainings● Contractor pricing	Birch Ridge Trail	Oct 2021	SELT
			wide		Birch Ridge Trail	Oct 2021	
					Trail Maintenance	2021-2024	SELT
					Trail Junction Signage	2022-2023	
					Trail guides and maps	TBD	
				<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Consult w/trail planners & user groupResearch funding	Planning:	2021-2024	SELT
					Accessible Trail		
					South Shore Road access trail		
					Camp Lion Pride trail		
				Cor. 22 & Lake\Trails	Woods Road Maintenance\Snow Mobile Access	2020-2024	NRCS\SELT/PMS C
				information	Allowed uses	2020-2024	SELT/MMRG/
					Educational Signage	Annual	
				Cultural	Archeological work needed	2020-2023	
				Resource	Educational Programs	TBD	
				Expand Partnerships	Volunteerism to Achieve	2021-2024	
				Partnerships			

<u>BRCF Work Plan: Planned 2022 - 2024</u>								
<u>Specific Goal</u>	<u>Sub Goals</u>	<u>Targets</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Description -</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>		<u>Funding Source Possible</u>
Blueberry Barren Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blueberry Barren • Wildlife Habitat • Scenic Values • Community Engagement - Climate Resiliency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blueberry Barren\Oak Savanna Woodland • Oak Savannah - 	MU - 1	Birch Ridge NW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Management Planning • Harvest timing • Removal of Overstory to 10-20% basal area • Set up burn units • Assess local markets of wood 	TBD Funding dependent research	2022	NRCS
Forest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Habitat • Timber Stand Improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scenic View Creation & Maintenance • Silvicultural Clear Cut Monitoring - Remediation • Highgrade Area Monitoring – Remediations • Pole Size Timber Stand 	MU-1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mastication to Create View\defensible space around blueberry barren\early successional habitat • Monitor Regrowth • Understand\ Map Desired Future Condition 	TBD	2022-2024	NRCS
Growth								
Management								– other
								partnerships?
Early Successional Habitat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife Habitat • Scenic Values 	Aspen\Birch Thickets	MU-1	along trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine proper management tools • Assess local markets of wood products • Research best management 	Nov – Dec		NRCS
		Others				2022-2024		



SELT

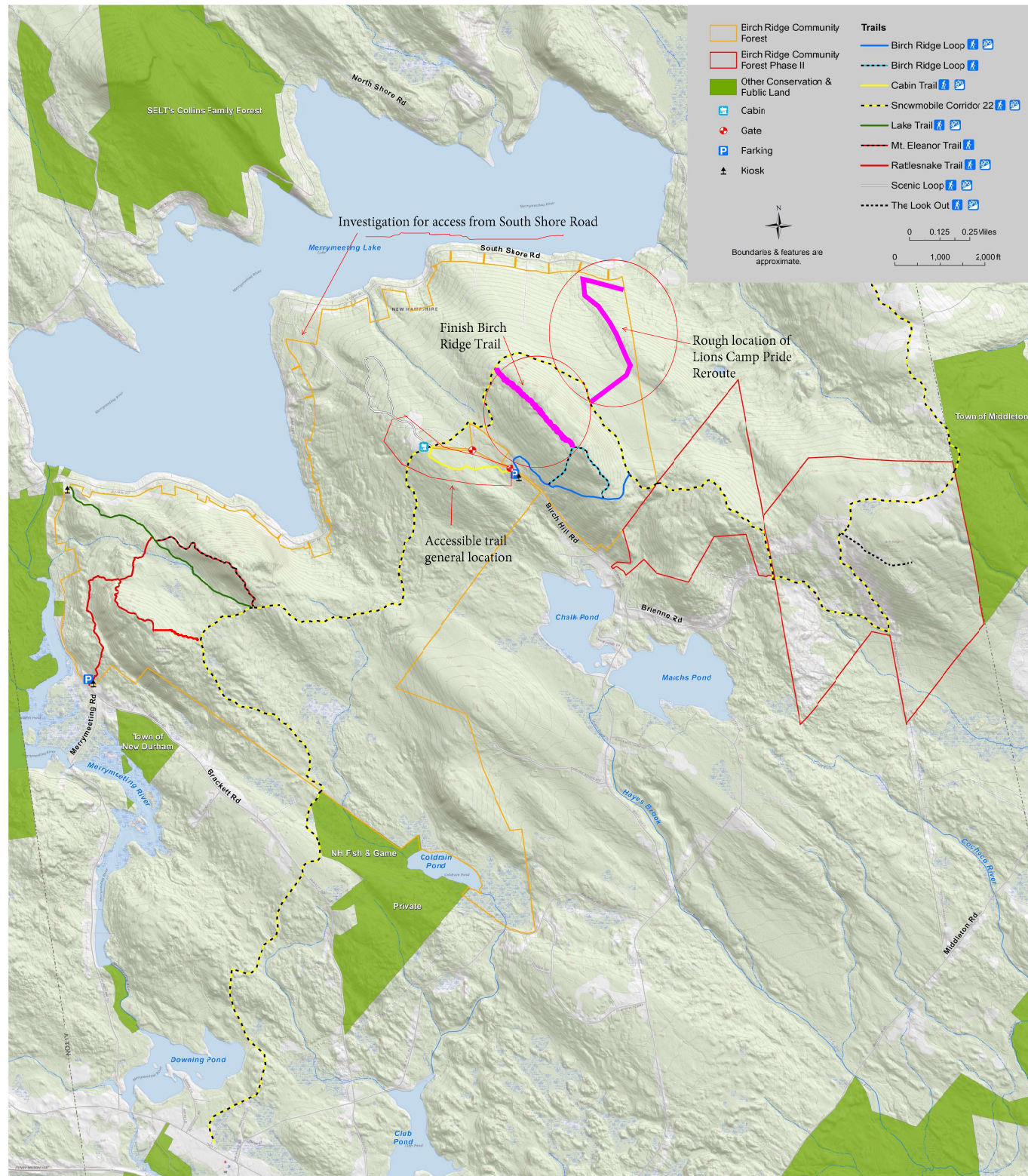
SOUTHEAST LAND TRUST
of NEW HAMPSHIRE

Birch Ridge Community Forest

New Durham, NH
2,000+ acres

- Please stay on marked trails. These routes were designed to avoid damage to soils and habitats.
- Wheeled motorized vehicles are prohibited.
- Please carry out what you carry in.
- Dogs must remain under the control of owners.
- Please carry a leash, leash aggressive dogs, and pick up after your pet.
- Hunting is allowed. Be aware of hunting seasons and wear orange.
- Please respect our neighbors' privacy.

Scan to learn more
about Birch Ridge!



MEMORANDUM

To: BRCF Management Committee

From: Deborah Goard, SELT Stewardship Director

Date: September 15, 2021

RE: Equestrian use on trails at Birch Ridge Community Forest

In the 2020 Management Plan for the BRCF that was approved by the BRCF Advisory Committee, the use of trails by equestrians was determined to be a topic for the Management Committee to gain more of an understanding of prior to allowing their use. In the 2020 to 2022 work plan, discussions were slated to begin in 2022. While this discussion has moved up slightly in the timeline of activities, with the progress made on the originally planned public trail system, a discussion at this time seems appropriate.

In addition to other trail work, over the last two years, work has been done to improve the main woods roads (Lake Trail & Corridor 22), parking has been established and a connector trail established between the parking off Merrymeeting Road and the Lake Trail.

Trails designated for equestrian use:

The following trails are offered as a starting point for discussion. These trails were those recommended for equestrian use in the trail plan created by our trail consultant Lew Shelley. The exception to this is the Rattlesnake Connector Trail which leads from the Merrymeeting Road parking lot to the Lake Trail as is further explained below. Please refer to the attached map which has the trails traced in red and the trail names highlighted for reference.

Corridor 22

- This trail was recommended as suitable for equestrian use
- Note the section from Brienne Road to the town line with Middleton is not highlighted. This is due to a few sections of the snowmobile trail that are very steep with work needed for existing erosion issues. Consideration should be made to restrict use to where Corridor 22 meets Brienne Road.

Lake Trail

- This trail was recommended as suitable for equestrian use

Corridor 22 Connector

- This trail was recommended as suitable for equestrian use
- This portion of the trail system needs some improvement including cutting brush back to make the trail passable again. There has been discussion of a workday to clear the trail which may not occur until spring 2022

Rattlesnake Connector

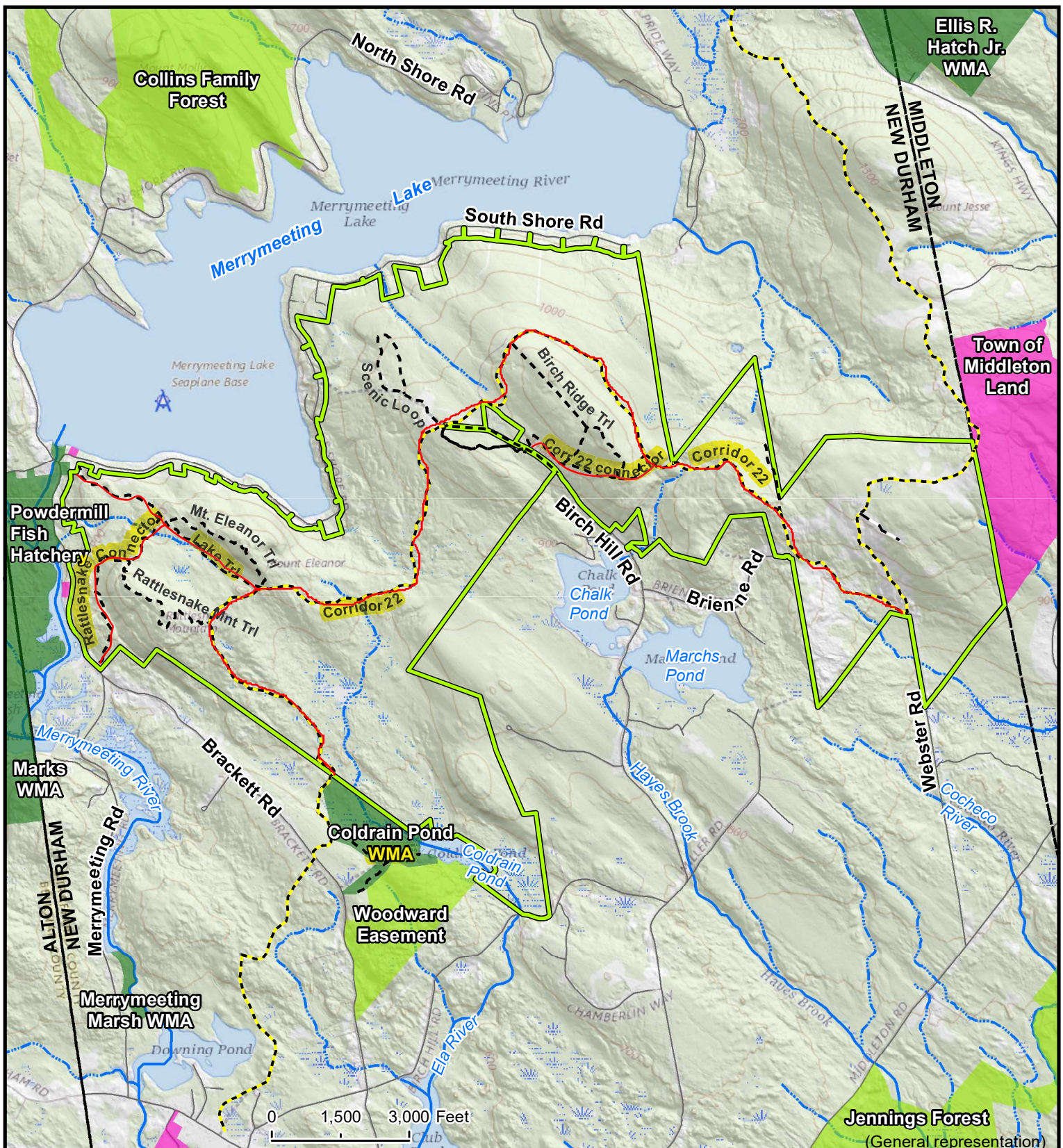
- This trail was not originally anticipated to be constructed for equestrian use. However, in subsequent discussions, parking at the Merrymeeting Road parking lot may make the most sense as a location for horse trailers to park. In constructing the trail, a stone ford was installed alongside the bridge over the stream just before the Lake Trail. The bridge is not designed to hold horses and will be signed as such. Instead, the decision was made for the stone ford to provide for horses to cross the stream should the trail be designated for equestrian use.

For all trails, the following should be noted







- Work is still needed in some locations to address erosion as well as wet areas – it should be understood that trail use by horses may need to be temporarily restricted if trail conditions become such that their use is impacting the use of the trails by pedestrian users, or water quality.
- As we see how the trails hold up to all uses over the coming years, some restrictions may need to occur during mud season or other times of the year trail conditions may not be suitable for heavier use
- A discussion with the equestrian community should be scheduled to determine how they can contribute to the upkeep of the trails on which equestrian use is allowed.

Timing for allowance of equestrians on trails

It is understood that some members of the equestrian community are eager to use the trails at BRCF. We have made a lot of progress on the trail system in the last two years with the installation of the last originally anticipated public trail scheduled to begin in October of this year. In order for staff to continue to focus on the remaining work scheduled to be done in 2021 we would ask that equestrian use of the trails be set to begin in spring of 2022 after the snow melts/mud season. This would allow us time to finish scheduled and needed work, update maps, and work with the PMSC to better understand and make plans to address areas that may still be problematic. This would also get us through the process to update the Management Plan for the Stell & Young Tract, which will include designated trail uses on those parcels. This Management Plan update must be approved by the USDA Forest Service with the final plan due to them by the end of April 2022.



Birch Ridge Community Forest **Trail Map to use for Equestrian Discussion** **New Durham, NH**

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Birch Ridge Community Forest |  State |
|  Snowmobile Corridor #22 |  Town |
|  Trail |  Other Conservation Lands |

Conservation Ownerships & Easements

1:35,000

Map prepared by
Southeast Land
Trust of NH
August, 2021

Boundary and
feature locations
are approximate.
Property boundary
based on tax maps.

PARTNERSHIP FOR
BIRCH RIDGE
COMMUNITY FOREST