

BIRCH RIDGE COMMUNITY FOREST



TRAIL GUIDE



Trailheads and Parking

Merrymeeting Trailhead - North of Merrymeeting

Lake Road and Brackett Road in New Durham

Birch Hill Road Trailhead - End of Birch Hill Road in
New Durham at the top of the Class 6 Road

2,663 acres • 19.38 miles of trails



A Forest For All to Enjoy!

In 2019, the Merrymeeting community, through a partnership of SELT, the Merrymeeting Lake Association, and Moose Mountains Regional Greenways, rallied to acquire the initial 2,000 acres of the Birch Ridge Community Forest (BRCF) after an aggressive timber harvest and expected sale for ridge line development.

BRCF subsequently expanded in 2021 with the addition of the 636-acre Stell and Young tracts. And in 2024, SELT is now working to raise the remaining private funds to add 600+ acres located on the adjoining Mt. Jesse. All three phases were supported with significant private funding and grants from the US Forest Service's Community Forest and Open Space Program, as well as the NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program.

Birch Ridge contains rich woodlands, valuable wildlife habitat, and a sprawling network of public trails, while protecting more than 21% of the Merrymeeting Lake watershed. SELT owns and manages BRCF as a community forest, guided by a management plan developed and approved by a locally appointed and volunteer led Management Committee, who representative the greater New Durham community. Recreation opportunities include hunting, fishing, hiking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing. Snowmobiles, mountain bikes, and horses are allowed on designated trails. Trails are managed to reduce their impact to wildlife and water quality.

Trail Descriptions

- **Birch Ridge (Moderate) 0.94 mi.**
From Corridor 22, climbs a moderate grade to a cul-de-sac view point looking over Merrymeeting Lake and then heads southeast towards the height of land. A mix of old woods road and new hiking corridor, the first 1/3 of a mile from Corridor 22 is also shared with horses and snowmobiles depending on the season.
- **Cabin Trail (Easy) 0.40 mi.**
From the Birch Hill parking area, this trail travels west to Corridor 22 and the cabin. An old skid road, the trail is wide and gentle.
- **Lion's Camp Pride Trail (Moderate) 2.42 mi.**
Leaving from the edge of a large landing area on Corridor 22, goes north and east for about a mile to boundary of BRCF, descending the northern slope with some moderately steep sections. Trail traverses east across the campus of Lion's Camp Pride, and then climbs again back to Corridor 22 on the Mt. Jesse tract. (The section on Camp Pride's Land is closed June 1 to August 31 yearly for camp operations.)

● **Corridor 22 (Moderate) 9.05 mi.**

The backbone of the trail system, Corridor 22 is our main woods road through the property. There are many varied sections of trail, with some long, moderately steep climbs but the whole trail is 12 feet wide and fairly level.

● **Fall Line (Hard) 0.22 mi.**

A short, very steep section of an old woods road. The trail corridor is wide but there are many large rocks in the tread to negotiate.

● **Lake Trail (Moderate) 1.0 mi.**

A woods road that connects the Merrymeeting Lake public beach parking area to Rattlesnake, Mt Eleanor, and Corridor 22. A few climbs, but at easier grades than others on the property. This trail allows access to the trail system from the lake for horses and snowmobiles as well.

○ **Merrymeeting Trail (Moderate) 1.0 mi.**

A woods road that connects the Merrymeeting Road parking area to the Lake Trail, Rattlesnake, and Mt. Eleanor. One moderately steep climb near the Rattlesnake Trail junction, but generally easy travel. This trail allows horse access to the trail system from the Merrymeeting Road parking area, which is the recommended trailer parking area.

● **Mt. Eleanor Trail (Hard) 0.75 mi.**

Steep compared to other trails on the property, this trail climbs to the summit of Mt. Eleanor from either end. The trail is narrow, traverses many rock ledges, and some corners have poor sight-lines, so travel is restricted to hiking and snowshoes.

● **Rattlesnake Trail (Hard) 0.86 mi.**

The climb from Merrymeeting trail is steep in sections, then mellows into a nice ridge walk with views to the southwest. Bikes are allowed on this trail, but please be cautious on the descents as some corners have limited sight-lines.

● **Scenic Loop (Moderate) 1.06 mi.**

A mellow woods road walk, trail travels northwest from the cabin through open fields and onto the gentle slopes below. As the forest regenerates from the previous clear cutting, a great way to view young forest habitat.

● **South Ridge (Moderate) 0.63 mi.**

An old woods road that traverses the southeast slope of Birch Ridge, this trail allows for horse riders to return on a shorter loop to the Birch Hill parking area or back to Corridor 22. The climb from the end of Fall Line to the end of Birch Ridge is fairly long and moderately steep.

● **The Lookout Trail (Easy) 1.05 mi.**

Created in 2023 to get around a very steep section of Corridor 22, this trail connects two old woods roads with a new section of trail. Trail is wide and gentle, allowing year round access to the northeast section of the property.

Enjoy the Trails!

Birch Ridge Community Forest is owned and managed by SELT and is open for public enjoyment. Please follow these visitation guidelines:

- Carry out what you carry in.
- Leave things where and as you find them – no cairns, rock art.
- Stay on marked trails, respect designated trail uses and prohibitions and use only designated trail head parking.
- Respect wildlife.
- Respect other users of the trails and our neighbors.
- Control your dog(s). Be aware where they may be required to be on leash or any areas they may not be allowed.
- Hunting is allowed on most SELT lands. Be aware of hunting season and wear blaze orange for your own safety.

The following uses are not permitted:

- Camping
- Fires
- Target Shooting
- Trapping
- Wheeled motorized vehicles

About SELT

The Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire is a membership-based, non-profit whose mission is to protect and sustain the significant lands in our communities for clean water, outdoor recreation, fresh food, wildlife, and healthy forests. **Join as a member or volunteer today!**



Learn more about this land!
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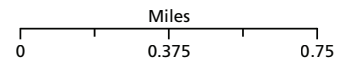
SELT

Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire

Birch Ridge Community Forest

New Durham
2,664 acres

- Birch Ridge Community Forest Boundary
- Mt. Jesse Addition – Pending 2024
- Mt. Jesse Easement Area – Pending 2024
- Forest
- Other Conservation Lands
- Forested Wetland
- Scrub-Shrub Wetland
- Cliff/Rocky Ridge
- Wetlands/Water
- Streams/ Intermittent Streams
- Trail
- Trail–Limited or winter access only
- Trail Junction/ Mileage between 0.5 Mi.
- Public Roads
- Contour Lines
- Kiosk
- Parking Area



Boundaries & features are approximate.
Source: Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire 2024

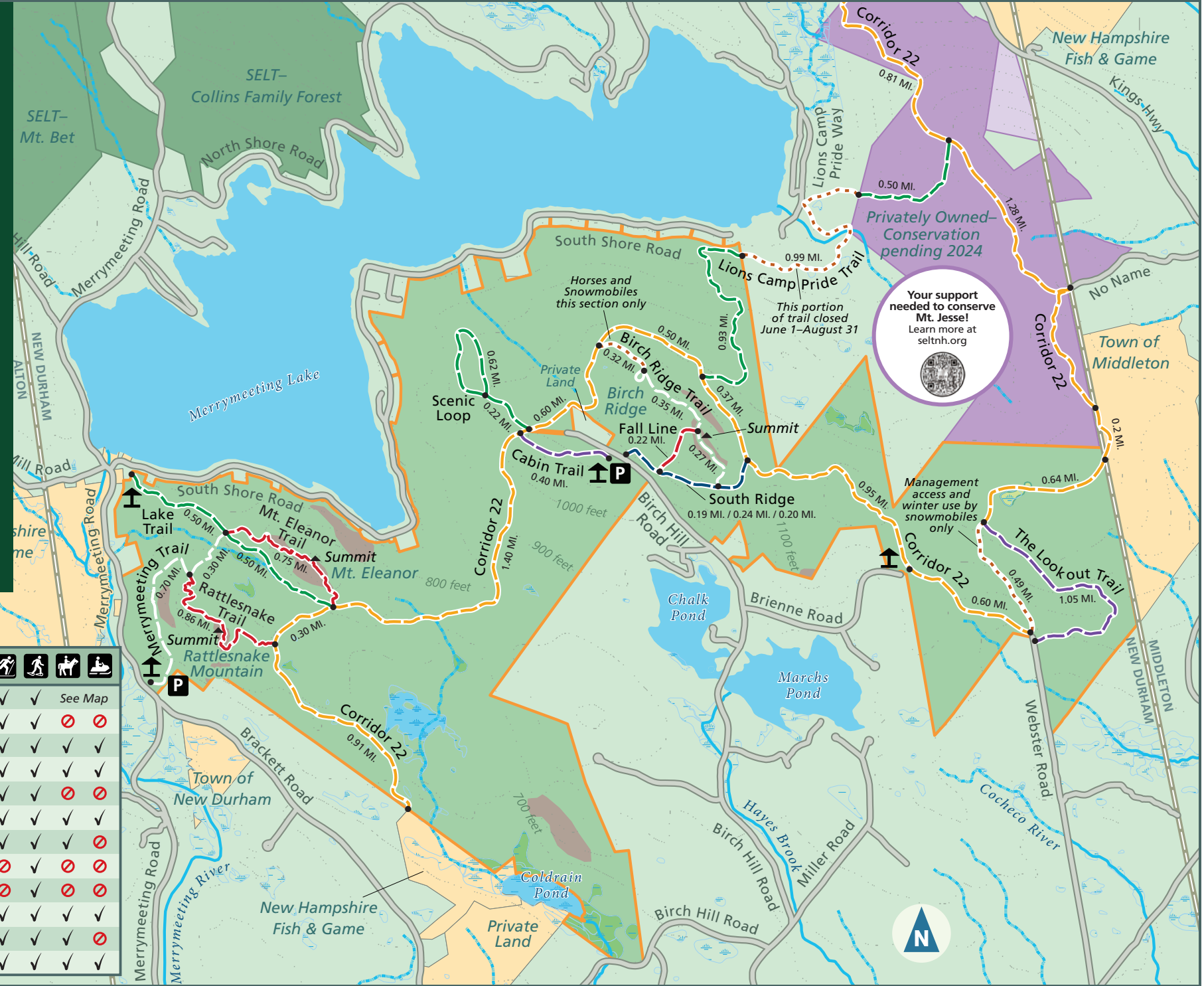
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TRAIL USES						
Birch Ridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	See Map	See Map
Cabin Trail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Lions Camp Pride Trail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Corridor 22	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fall Line	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
Lake Trail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Merrymeeting Trail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Mt. Eleanor Trail	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Rattlesnake	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Scenic Loop	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
South Ridge	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
The Lookout Trail	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



Your support needed to conserve Mt. Jesse!
Learn more at seltnh.org

