

COLLINS FAMILY FOREST



TRAIL GUIDE



Trailheads and Parking

14 North Shore Road, New Durham

500 acres

4.5 miles of easy/moderate trails



A Gift that Lasts Forever

In 2020, the Collins family generously donated 500 acres of scenic wonder, water and wildlife protection, public hiking trails, and one of the best views around.

The Collins Family Forest is a rich, diverse woodland that stretches from the shore of Merrymeeting Lake to encompass Mount Molly and extends all the way to the trailhead at Devil's Den. With almost the entire Collins Family Forest located within the Merrymeeting Lake watershed, the forest serves as a natural filtration system, helping maintain Merrymeeting's status as one of the cleanest lakes in New Hampshire.

The Collins Family Forest includes the slopes and peak of Mount Molly. Follow the trails to the top of Mount Molly and take in a showstopper of a view of Merrymeeting Lake and Birch Ridge Community Forest with the Blue Hills Range in the distance.

Thank you to the Collins family for their extraordinary gift and to members of the community for the outpouring of support and donations to make the Collins Family Forest a reality.

Trail Descriptions

○ **Devil's Den Direct (White) 0.7 miles - Moderate**

This trail allows hikers to access the Devil's Den trailhead without hiking up the Class IV roads. Leaving from the Valley Way, the trail descends to cross a stream and then climbs the opposite side of the valley to the height of land and out to the road. Moderate slope in both directions.

● **Mount Bet Trail (Red) 1.8 miles - Moderate**

Leaving from the Marsh Hill Road parking area, briefly follow an old logging road to the newly built hiking trail. The trail follows a moderate climbing line up and over the mountain with a short spur near the summit to a view point overlooking the western end of Merrymeeting Lake. The north end of the trail rejoins the old logging road and runs out to Chesley Road.

- **Mt. Molly Trail (Blue) 1.42 miles - *Moderate***

A moderate climb from either direction, the Mt. Molly trail follows a wide foot path from North Shore Road to the summit and an old logging road from the summit down to Devil's Den Road. The summit provides great views of Merrymeeting Lake, Birch Ridge Community Forest, and points to the south and west.

- **Homestead Trail (Red) 0.9 miles - *Moderate***

An old logging road that runs east to west across the property, this trail connects Chesley Road to North Shore Road. A moderate climb from North Shore Road connects you to the Mt. Molly Trail or allows you to cross on easy grades to the sweet fern field near Chesley Road. Near the junction with Chesley Road, you can find several old cellar holes from the Miles Chesley Family settlement.

- **Owl's Head (Green) 0.75 miles - *Moderate***

Leaving from the height of North Shore Road, this ridgeline trail brings you to the middle of the valley east of Mt. Molly. A moderate climb from either direction, a pleasant hike through young beech forest and older hemlocks.

- **Valley Way (Orange) 0.83 miles - *Easy***

Following the valley east of Mt. Molly, this trail provides a nice loop option for a summit hike. Mostly an old logging road, with a section of newly constructed trail, this is an easy walk or ride.

- **Collins Path (Purple) 0.35 miles - *Easy***

Newly constructed trail takes you from the parking lot to the Chesley Connector, where the trail turns to an old logging road to take you up to the Homestead Trail. An easy walk or ride- can be part of a short loop hike on Chesley road or connect you to the larger trail network!

- **Chesley Connector (Yellow) 0.25 miles - *Easy***

An old logging road that connects to the lower end of Chesley Road, a great way to create a short loop or stay off of North Shore Road while accessing the trail network.

Chesley Road and Devil's Den Road (Class VI)

While SELT owns property on both sides of these roads, they are town roads and we do not maintain them. Please use caution while traveling on these roads- they are open to vehicle traffic including cars, ATV/UTVs, and motorbikes.

North Shore Road

Many of our trails connect to North Shore Road, but please use caution if traveling on this road. This road is narrow, winding, and heavily trafficked including construction vehicles.

Enjoy the Trails!

Collins Family 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 trailhead 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
- Wheeled motorized vehicles
- Horseback riding

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,



Learn more about this land!
Tap or scan here!

seltnh.org • 603-778-6088



Southeast Land Trust
of New Hampshire

Collins Family Forest
& Mt. Bet

New Durham and Alton
Total Acres: 878.32 Collins:
498.81 | Mt. Bet: 379.51

- Collins Family Forest Boundary
- Mt. Bet Boundary Forest Other
- Conservation Lands Forested
- Wetland Scrub-Shrub Wetland
- Field Cliff/Rocky Ridge Wet-
- lands/Water

- Streams/ Intermittent Streams
- Trail
- Trail Junction/ Mileage between
- Public Roads
- Unmaintained Roads
- Contour Lines Kiosk
- Parking Area
- Bench
- Foot Bridge

Miles
0 0.15 0.3
Boundaries & features are approximate.
Source: Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire 2024

TRAIL USES						
Chesley Connector	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Collins Path	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Homestead	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Trail Mt. Molly	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Owl's Head	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Valley Way	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Mt. Bet Trail	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗

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Help SELT acquire and protect Mount Bet. Learn more/contribute at seltnh.org/mountbet