

The Randolph Forest Day and Annual Tour

The Randolph Forest Commission

Ten years ago next December, the Town of Randolph received from the Trust for Public Land (TPL) the title to 10,198 acres of land once owned by the Hancock Timber Resources Group: The Randolph Community Forest was born.

This year the annual Forest Day will be a celebration of the anniversary. It will be held, as usual, on the first Saturday in August, which this year is August 6th. In looking back over the ten year management history of the Community Forest, there are many specific achievements and accomplishments which might be recognized. But one element stands out above all others. It is therefore wholly appropriate that the theme of this year's anniversary forest tour will focus on the close working relationship which has grown up between the Town and the United States Forest Service (FS).

The celebration will begin at 9:00 a.m. at the new parking lot at the western end of the Pond of Safety Road. The parking lot can be easily reached by car by turning off U.S. Route 2 in the Town of Jefferson onto Ingerson Road almost immediately opposite the Six Gun City amusement park. Drive in about one mile to reach the intersection with the Pond of Safety Road where Ingerson Road veers left. Drive straight for a couple of hundred feet on the Pond of Safety Road. Then, just past an open gate, turn left into the parking lot.

Participants will be welcomed by the Randolph Forest Commission which will begin the event with the installation of a new sign, commemorating the Community Forest and all of the financial and technical assistance the Town received to make it possible. A brief description of the relationship between the Town and the Forest Service and how it came about will be followed by comments from members of the Forest Service and from some of the other people and organizations that played key roles in the establishment of the Community Forest.

The field trip will begin around 10:30. It will move up the Pond of Safety Road led by the professional Forestry Team, which has provided excellent programs in previous years. Members of the Forest Commission and of the Forest Service will be on hand for questions and discussions. The stops will be used to describe aspects of recent management activities which have been, or are being, carried out. A recently created permanent opening will provide the backdrop for a discussion of the need to increase softwoods for animal habitat and a description of the permanent transects being established in the Forest, and how they will work.

A second stop at a recent timber harvest site will offer an opportunity to discuss the role in the forest ecosystem of wetlands and beaver ponds and how water quality is maintained. A third stop on a recently installed road bridge will be used to illustrate the extensive road network in the Forest and highlight the cooperation between the Town and Forest Service in maintaining it. The final stop will be at the Pond of Safety, where the Forest Service is expected to make an important presentation.

All are welcome to participate. Feel free to come to the parking lot but not go on the field trip or to join the field trip at 10:30 after the initial celebration. The field trip will not involve any long hikes, but those who go on it are reminded to wear shoes appropriate for moderately rough terrain and to bring a lunch and mosquito repellent. Children as young as 6 years of age should enjoy the experience. For more information or directions contact David Willcox at (603) 466-5104 or by e-mail to dlw@ncia.net.