Merck Forest and Farmland Quest

Rupert, Vermont
Easy
Historical, Natural
Pavement, Trail
Bring a pencil

To get there: This Quest is located in southwestern Vermont just 20 minutes northwest of Manchester. Take Route 30 to Route 315. You will find Merck Forest four miles up Route 315 on the left. Your Quest begins at the Visitor’s Center.

Clues:
1. Walk out the front door.
   Look up to our gray slate roof
   Find solar panels.
   Sun goes in like juice ~
   Through photovoltaic cells,
   Powers the center.

2. Now head toward the gate
   The way the old wagon points:
   East on Old Town Road.
   This forest is mixed:
   Red oak, birch, aspen, cherry.
   Find the old ‘Hope Tree’.

3. Oh, ancient red oak
   New green life on old grooved bark.
   Heartwood is absent.
   Leaving a window
   To acorns past and future.
   Saplings sprout nearby.
4. Keep on to clearing.
The farm realm is before you,
Apple trees below.

Apple tree orchard
Spring pink white celebration
Bees: start your engines!

Ten apples types
Cider, sauce, jelly or pie
Reap the sweet rewards.

5. The Valley unfolds.
Follow the road toward Spruce Peak.
Stop at the cross roads.

In eighteen fifty
Harwood family owned this site
Their house here once stood

View life of the past
The old well is all that’s left
Fire burned the rest.

6. Do you feel the wind?
Uphill, the whirling turbine:
Go east on “Stone Lot.”

Rising eighty feet
Up off the top of the hill.
Captures energy

Created by wind,
Equals sustainability:
Powering this farm.

7. East to top of gap.
Now you stand amidst fields,
Watershed Divide.

Here grows the life-blood
Be it animals or plants
Old breeds here are kept.
Randall lineback cows,
One example of the past,
Graze close to the crops.

What grows here changes
With every year that goes by
Nurturing the land.
8. Now you will go back. 
   Pass the windmill toward the barn 
   Mud covered dwelling.

   A straw bale house stands 
   Providing renewable, 
   Warm insulation.

   Home to batteries 
   Storing power from windmill; 
   Maintenance work space.

   A passive solar 
   Design on south facing roof, 
   Letting in sun light.

   Peek around corner: 
   Straw, chicken-wire, stucco, 
   A light-less window.

9. Face barn, three red doors. 
   To the human door, go. Go! 
   At pump, step downstairs.

   Old barn on your left, 
   Part of the working landscape, 
   Has seen many days.

   Look up near the top. 
   Seek out the small hole above. 
   And what is the shape?

10. Turn northwest and see 
    An outhouse. Follow your feet 
    Through window of trees.

    Nineteenth century, 
    First half, was the sheep boom... 
    Deforested land.

    Stone plied or stacked 
    Making a perimeter 
    Keep flocks of sheep.

11. Acer Saccharum ~
A.k.a. Sugar Maple
Producers sweet sap.

Find the old tapholes,
From where capped buckets have hung.
Harvest begins in March.

12. Stroll through maple grove,
Cross road, big larch deck, enter
Through sugar house doors.

Sweet tradition, old,
Once horse sleigh now taplines run...
Forty for each one.

Sap to syrup boiled.
Wood fired in this sugar house
Framed with local trees:

Rough spruce beams, and posts...
Find maple, oak, cherry red
Wrapped with pine walls.

Tap holes if you look
(Maple floors beneath your feet)
Dancer here do meet!

13. To cross roads return.
Quite right: Discovery Trail
Ramble down the road.

Fields and valley left.
Walk and walk, look for young trees:
Selected patch cut.

14. Sun feeds dense young trees
Thicket of sounds, birds abound.
Hare hides from hawk here.

15. Keep on down the road
To “Discovery Trail” sign:
Back into the woods.

Turn right a the sign.
Majestic columns of birch,
Pass through the stone wall.

Wood is a resource
For animals and people ~
Be it home or food.

16. When trail bends up, right...
Trust to just follow on straight
Along wall, old trees to ‘pile’.

Field stones on the ground
Were once hand-picked from the field.
Now here...they lay still.

Collect letters nine
With underlines, unscramble~
Where is the treasure?

In the:

___  ___  ___         ___  ___  ___  ___  ___  ___