



Bill Hill Quest

Thetford, Vermont

Walking Conditions: Moderate

Special Features: Natural, Historical, Vista

Duration: 1:00

Season: Year Round

Bring: field guide, binoculars

To get there: From Exit 14 off I-91 follow Rt. 113 West up over Thetford Hill and down into Thetford Center. Turn left onto Tucker Hill Rd. Just past the covered bridge turn left into the driveway and park at the "Trailhead Parking" sign.

OVERVIEW:

The farm on Bill Hill was established in the early nineteenth century and cleared for cultivation, pasturage, and hayfields. In 1963, Thetford writer Noel Perrin bought the Bill Hill property and, leaving his New York City roots, began a dual life of teaching and part-time farming. Over the following four decades, Perrin learned from his land as he worked to shape it, harvest from it, and maintain the open view from the top of Bill Hill that he loved so much.

Noel Perrin wanted to assure that his land will exist in its undeveloped state in perpetuity. In 1984, he placed his property under a Grant of Conservation Restrictions to the town of Thetford. Fifteen years later, he transferred the grant to a conservation easement under the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT). UVLT is a regional land conservancy working to protect farmland, forests, wetlands and waterways, wildlife habitat, trails and scenic areas in the Vermont and New Hampshire towns of the Upper Valley. Since 1985, UVLT has protected over 530 parcels of land encompassing more than 54,446 acres. www.uvlt.org

CLUES:

Before you start just look around
What near this Quest trail can be found?

A sugar house, used years ago,
Which might be envied by Thoreau!

In feet, it counts eight by eleven,
In syrup, sometimes twenty-seven

Gallons per year for Mr.Perrin,
Who for the maple trees was caring.

Across the driveway steps lead down
(Invasive knotweed covers ground),

And straight ahead, without a hitch
You see the falls and the covered bridge.

This path follows the "Pompy's" bends.
Towards Union Village Dam it wends!

But YOU go back: The trail sign leads
To a sloping field, covered with weeds.

You start your Quest where you can name
"White Pine" – "White Birch", they form a frame.

Blue blazes you will have to follow.
They guide you through the grassy hollow

Until you reach a rocky cleft.
Big spruce tree stumps are on your left.

The trail climbs up along barbed wire,
Then joins the stone wall a bit higher.

These walls, once built to keep sheep in,
Restored they were by Noel Perrin.

Nine hundred feet of stoney wall,
Over the years, he fixed them all.

Beyond the metal gate in the right,
A stand of red pines, tall and straight

Was planted on the steeper slope.
The trail goes round it and your hope

For better views is soon rewarded:
The open pasture does afford it!

Caused by a fungus, you may see
A "Black Knot" on a cherry tree

Before the upper field you round,
Where brambles & wild flowers abound.

"A lump of glacial debris" on top
That's where your Questing now will stop.

T'was Noel Perrin's favorite view,
Conserved for people just like you,

Who wander up and always will
Enjoy the sights from old "Bill Hill".

Created by Inge Trebitz and her grandchildren in 2004.

Please be a good steward of the land: leave it better than you found it and pack out any trash you find.



Valley Quest is a collection of 170+ treasure hunts that share and teach the natural gems and cultural heritage of the Upper Valley with children, families, adults, and visitors. It is a program of Vital Communities, a regional nonprofit working to engage citizens, organizations, and communities in creating solutions to our region's challenges. Learn more at vitalcommunities.org.

Have a suggestion, question, comment, or idea for us? We'd love to hear from you. Reach us at valleyquest@vitalcommunities.org or 802-291-9100.