



Cedar Circle Farm Quest

Super Quest 2021: Climate Connections



This Quest is one of 12 Quests featured in this year's Super Quest challenge to reflect on ways in which climate change is affecting the Upper Valley and how our communities are addressing these changes. **Cedar Circle Farm** is employing regenerative practices to their farm to combat climate change and improve the health and productivity of their farm.

This year's **Climate Connections Super Quest** examines the ways climate change is affecting the Upper Valley—from plants, insects, and other animals moving here from the south due to warming temperatures; to more frequent and more powerful storms; to people moving here from other places experiencing even greater climate-induced changes. The Super Quest also looks at ways we're preventing or adapting to climate change, including flood control through land preservation; green energy technologies; and regenerative agricultural practices.

Thetford, Vermont

Physical Difficulty: Easy

Special Features: Farm, Historical, Natural

Walking Conditions: Trail

Duration: 0:45

Bring: Boots, Money for Farmstand and Cafe

To get there: From I-91: Take exit 14, Thetford. Turn east on Hwy 113 and go 1 mile to village of East Thetford & intersection of Rt. 5. Turn Right (south) on Rt. 5. Just past Mobile Station, turn left at Cedar Circle Farm sign onto Pavilion Road. Cross RR tracks, go ¼ mile, and farm is on your left.

Overview:

Before this land was farmed by the folks at Cedar Circle Farm—before it was even called Cedar Circle Farm--it was inhabited by the very first stewards in the area. The people indigenous to our region are known as the Abenaki People, part of the Wabenaki Nation which makes up what is now commonly known as New England.

The first buildings on the land known as Cedar Circle Farm were built in 1847 by a man named William Heaton. The property is named for a circle of cedar trees that was planted by Arthur Wilmont long ago. His gravestone can be found in the East Thetford Cemetery. This land has changed hands many times. It was once a dairy farm before strawberries, vegetables and flowers became the farm's main crops. Today the land is a certified organic farm and non-profit education center.

Note: Welcome to Cedar Circle Farm and Education Center! We're happy you're here visiting, and in order to make sure it's fun for everyone, please remember that you are on a real working farm, with real working tractors and other farm vehicles. It's easier for you to see the tractors than it is for the tractors to see you, so **please use caution when walking in the road**. The best way to stay safe around moving tractors is to move onto the side of the road, stop, and wave until they've passed by!

Clues:

1. Welcome to Cedar Circle Farm
A beautiful place full of charm.
Protecting this land is a must,
And it is! Thanks to Vermont Land Trust
No housing construction here can be done
Just tending to crops and having fun.

The Abenaki People lived on the land here
And are thankfully still present for future years.
They were the first to steward this land
When people and nature all stood hand-in-hand.

Today the earth needs an assist
So the animals, plants, and us can again co-exist in bliss!
As you walk around to find your next clue
Let's consider how we can help—you can do it, too!

2. Begin in the Farmstand's upper parking lot
Notice flowers filling baskets and pots.
At the tall wooden kiosk is where you'll start your Quest
Follow your nose (and the gravel path) to where the coffee and cookies
smell the best.

3. Here you can find Greenhouses 1, 2, and 3

Growing flowers and veggies for you and me.
 But these flowers help other things buzzing in the breeze
 Those necessary pollinators: birds, bats, and bees!

Responsible for producing one-third of our food,
 To not thank them would be oh-so-rude!
 So, for every third bite of food that you bite
 Be sure to thank a bee as it takes flight!

4. With the fields ahead, look left and look right
 If no tractors or cars are coming, you have the green light!
 Cross the dirt road and down the steep hill
 You can walk, run, or roll until you've had your fill!

You are now at the Education Garden plot
 Young people help to grow plants in this very spot
 Take a moment and explore with your nose, hands, and eyes:
 And share with your neighbor some observations that arise.

5. Keep the flowers on your left as you walk on.
 On your right is the parking lot that looks like a large lawn.
 Passing all of these flowers, we almost require
 That you stop and smell them and really admire.

6. You'll notice a large log that's a perfect place to rest
 And from here you'll be able to see it the best:
 The field in front of you is full of plants growing,
 But into the Farmstand is *not* where they're going.

This is what farmers call "Cover Crop,"
 Used so that the cycle of growing plants never stops.
 Cover crops hold onto and feed the soil,
 So farmers and plants together toil (that means work!).

What's also important, we think you should know,
 Is that we want more and more plants to grow!
 Even if some of the plants grown are not to eat,
 These plants store carbon right under our feet!

7. Turn left and walk past the Strawberry Shack
 Towards those large brown mounds that no farm should lack.
 You sometimes might hear this stuff called "black gold"
 Because of the valuable nutrients that this compost can hold!

To decaying matter these piles play host
 As bacteria, invertebrates, and fungi create organic compost
 Food waste turned to treasure fills our farmers' needs
 All this life gets recycled to help start new seeds.

You, too, can compost right where you live
 So that instead of creating waste you can give
 Your food scraps and yard waste another go
 At helping the cycle so plants can grow!

8. Head back the way you came but turn right at the shack
 And onto the strawberries—you're on the right track!
 See if you can notice a few different ways
 We've grown our strawberries over the days.

These strawberries are grown without digging up the ground
 So we don't harm tiny living things way deep down.
 Our goal with this farming method known as "no-till"
 Is keeping the soil healthy and alive— and it will!

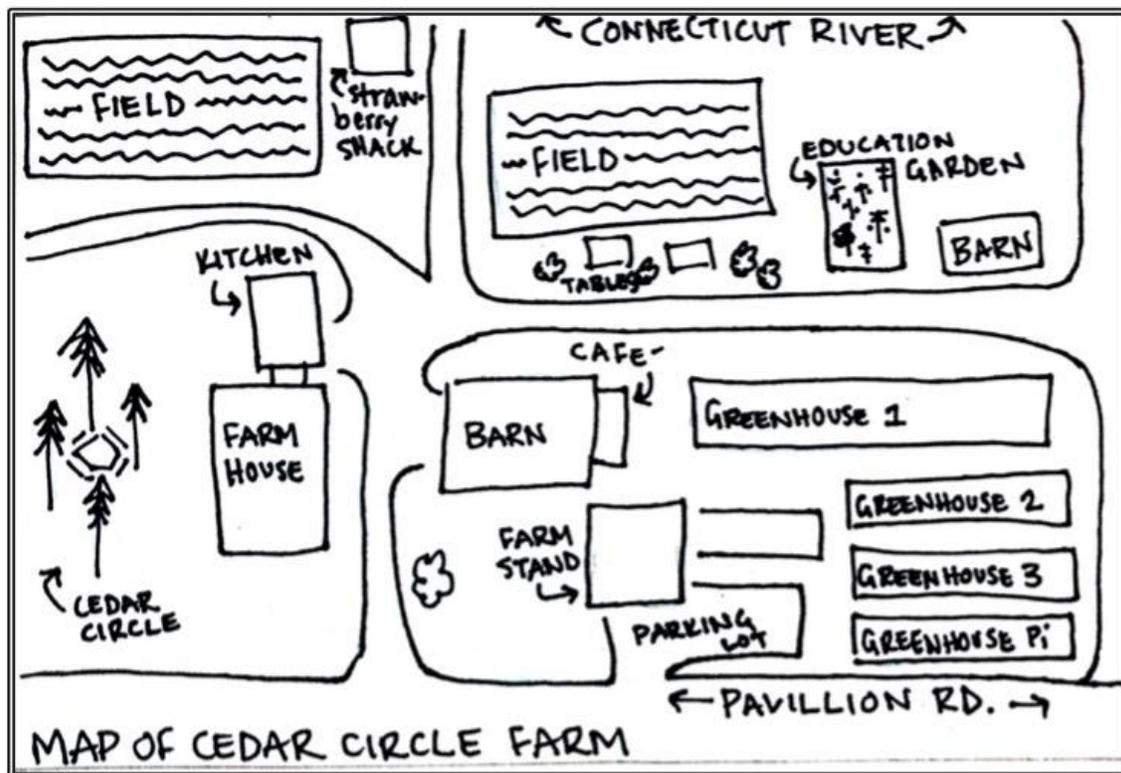
9. Walk down the dirt road towards a foresty spot
 You'll see a ring of trees we refer to a lot!
 Here is the home to our circle of cedar trees
 Sit in their shade and touch their bark if you please!

10. Along the grass walk back to where you began
 Towards the Education Garden—we hope you're a fan!
 But before you get there, to your right you will see
 An important step in sharing food with the community.

Here, attached to the big red barn
 Is the vegetable prep spot for the farm
 Big sinks with hoses, baskets, and crates
 Are being used to clean produce and help it taste great.

11. Relax, take a moment, look over the fields
 Admire the produce that hard work yields
 Continue your Quest towards garden supplies under a roof
 You've almost made it—here's the proof.

12. You'll find big bags of compost for people to buy
 To keep our land healthy, we all must try.
 You'll find the Quest Box here so sign and stamp away.
 And please come and visit us another day!



Created by: In 2007 Rebecca S. Bogdanovitch, Valley Quest Summer Intern, with the support of Kate Dueterberg and the staff of Cedar Circle Farm revised the original Quest of 2004. In 2021 Meredith Rivlin, Education Programs Manager of the Farm, did a complete revision.

Other things to do nearby: Stop in at the Farmstand or the farm's Hello Café for some tasty treats or ingredients for your next feast! Looking for a stroll through nature? We suggest the following beautiful spots, none too far away: Lower Slade Brook Natural Area, Union Village Dam Recreation Area, Thetford Hill State Park, and Zebedee Wetland—all four of which feature Quests!

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 160+ 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 ext. 205.