



North Springfield Bog Quest

Springfield, Vermont

Physical Difficulty: Easy

Special Features: Natural

Walking Conditions: Trail

Duration: 0:20

Bring: Binoculars, Field Guide

To get there: Take I-91 south to exit 7. Take a right off the exit and go through Springfield on Rte. 11. Take Fairground Road on the left past Riverside Middle School heading north. Keep the Black River on your right for just over 2 miles. Look for a dirt pull-off on the left, just around a bend...it's just before the town garage and old Army National Guard armory building. A large boulder is carved with the word "BOG" and marks the head of the trail.

Clues:

Leave your car near the place where town trucks are parked;

Look for the boulder marked "BOG" where your journey will start.

A path up a hill leads to a kettle bog

Where you could spot salamanders and maybe a frog.

(A kettle bog is a contained body of water that has no inlet stream and no outlet; all the water in the bog comes from precipitation! It's a self-contained ecosystem, a world unto itself, and the water can often have fairly low levels of dissolved oxygen and a high pH - that means it can be more acidic than the average pond.)

Pass through a "gate" made of moss-covered wood;

When you pass through the clearing, you'll know you've done good.

(This area is home to ruffed grouse and turkeys, you may spot something camouflaged in the nearby forest.)

A sign on the right starts the loop trail;

Stop to read what it says, you will learn a fine tale.

(The bog was a hidden gem in the woods, ringed by blueberry bushes and used by local naturalist and junior high biology teacher Marita Johnson to take her students on field trips. Over time, with the partnership of the Town of Springfield, Ascutney Mountain Audubon Society, and the tireless efforts of Mrs. Johnson, the unique kettle bog was protected, a floating boardwalk installed, and a trail established around the perimeter and marked with blazes. The original Bog Quest was written by Mrs. Johnson & her students at Riverside Middle School; many of the trees used as landmark features & clues have since deteriorated or fallen, so a new set of clues was needed.)

**Turn left from the sign, keep the bog on your right;
The watery wonder will soon be in sight.**

(Take some time to explore the floating path out onto the bog's surface; thousands of rare, carnivorous pitcher plants abound here, along with bog blueberries, mosses, lichens, and much more. Be ready for your toes to possibly get wet, as the boardwalk is buoyant, but you might sink an inch or so! Peek below the surface wherever there is open water, see if you can spot a frog or salamander - there are smaller creatures in here, too...do you spot tiny bundles of plant material that seem to move on their own? Those are the cases of caddisfly larvae, little aquatic caterpillar-type creatures that spin a silk and use it to "sew" together bits of plant to make camouflaged homes.)

**Make a hard right when you're back on dry land.
Follow the shore as originally planned.**

**Watch out for raised roots as you follow the path;
An overhead feast leaves an interesting aftermath.**

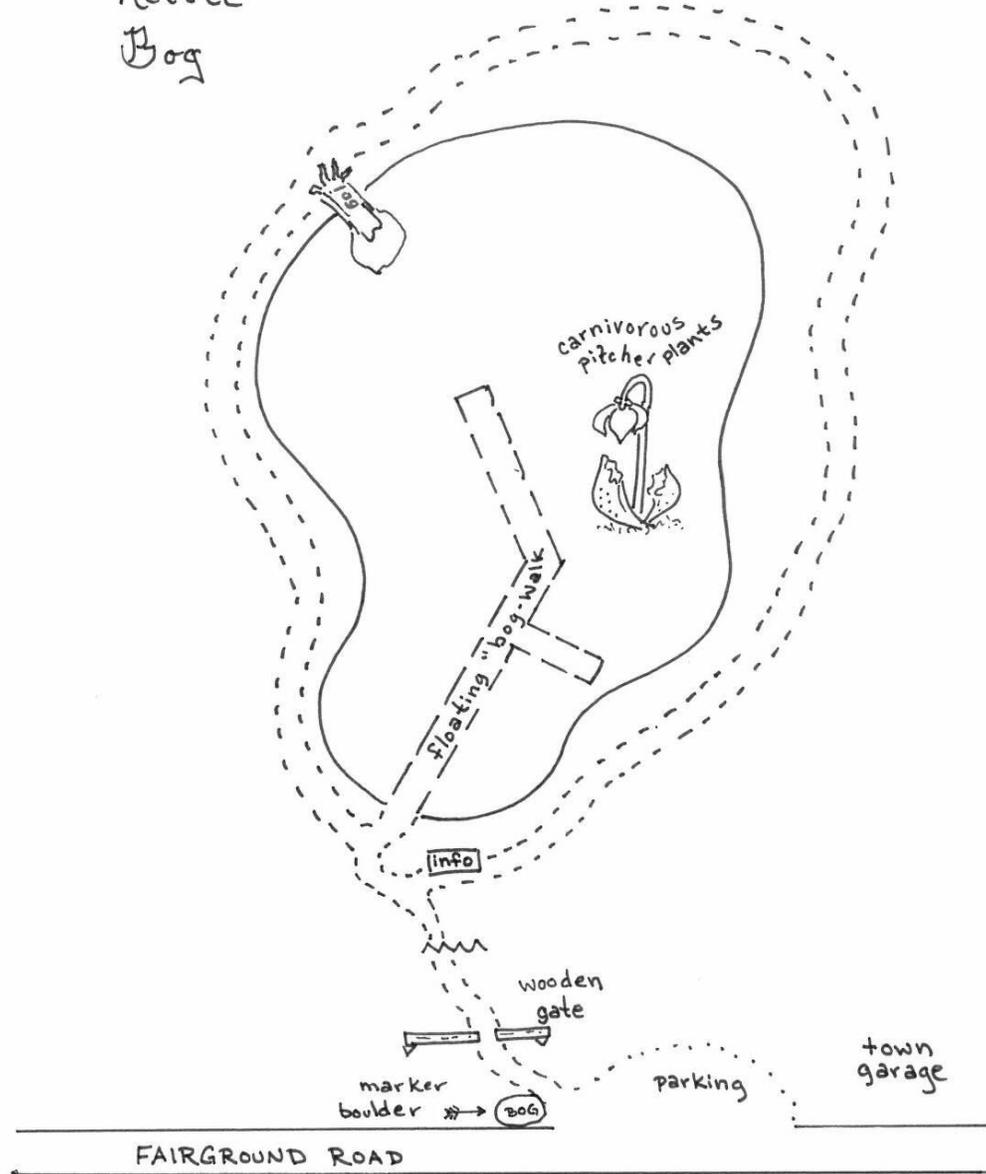
(As you avoid stumbling over a root or two, you may also notice pinecones that have been stripped bare of their scales as squirrels and other animals perch in the branches above to enjoy a picnic.)

**As the path turns west, find the treasure you seek
At the end of the log - go on, take a peek!**

(A fallen log forms a sort of natural bridge to its own stump; within the cavities of the stump lies the Quest Box! After you stamp your own notebook and sign the Quest book, please return the closed box in the sealed bag to its hiding spot for the next Quester. Return the way you came or follow the shoreline and tree blazes around the remainder of the Bog Loop back to the sign at the top of the hill. Thanks for participating!)

**With walkways that float
And plants that eat meat,
A visit to the bog
Is always a treat.**

North
Springfield
Kettle
Bog



This bog is a fragile, protected ecosystem. The insectivorous pitcher plants are an endangered species. Please respect this special environment. Thank you.

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 100+ 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.