



The Esther Currier Wildlife Sanctuary Quest

Elkins, New Hampshire

Physical Difficulty: Moderate

Special Features: Natural

Duration: 1:15

Bring: Boots, Binoculars, Compass, Field Guide

To get there: Take I-89 to Exit 11. Take Route 11 east towards New London / Franklin, NH. Travel 2.6 miles. A cemetery will appear on your left and a small parking area on your right. Turn right into the parking lot for the Esther Currier Wildlife Sanctuary.

Overview: The Esther Currier Wildlife Management Area at Low Plain is preserved for your enjoyment as a result of community cooperation, including the participation of the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust, the Elkins Fish & Game Club, the New London Conservation Commission and the NH Fish and Game Department. This Department also holds a conservation easement on the property. Financial support comes from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation, Ducks Unlimited and numerous private benefactors.

The Esther Currier Quest and the Natural Communities Quest Series as a whole were made possible by generous support from the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation / Upper Valley region. For more information, please visit www.nhcf.org

Clues:

1. Esther Currier knew this land well.
She envisioned a site of nature and fun.
Our Quest starts at the gate as you walk down the path
To a haven of beauty where animals run.

2. As you walk straight ahead you'll view wonderful trees—
A garden of pine, hemlock and birch.
It could have been houses on lot after lot

But Ester saw better things out on a search.

3. Take the first path that you see to the right.
You're looking for clues of beavers and such.
Keep walking, eyes open, for chew marks and stumps
On your way to the "Overlook" which you'll like very much.

4. What kind of trees do beavers like to chew?
Using your eyes and a field guide to trees
Examine the stumps that we're sure you'll find.
The answer to this question you might answer with ease!

5. Look out to the Magical Wetland and see
Reflections of trees, of clouds and of sky.
Standing dead trunks—called snags—pierce this scene
A reminder of times when this setting was dry.

6. Head back to the main trail, then onward 100 steps
To beaver's former residence, built of mud and chew.
There, a tree like a chimney rises up high
Taking in the still waters' reflective hues.

7. 54 more steps forward, then spy to the right
(Two hundred degrees to be most precise!)
Another lodge of our friend *Castor Canadensis*..
And a sign revealing beaver's built here at least twice.

8. To continue on your Quest head east to trail
And follow path heading south to water flow.
Where the pond is held back is a wall of debris
Built by the inhabitants who homes we now know.

9. Cross the bridge, and follow the shaded path
Past spruce and fir, hemlock and white pine.
On the forest floor, note the cradles and pillows.
At "Davis Path" turn right towards Observation Blinds.

10. Beech understory, White Pine high above
Proceed towards the observation blinds.
And as you travel along this wonderful path
Keep your eyes and ears open for animal signs.

11. Immediate left past the number eight.
Do not – No, do not! – go on to the T.
Towards Marsh Point your path snakes
Please cross on the boardwalk carefully.

12. Two plus four zeros years ago
Glacier's carved this boggy bowl.

A glacial ice chunk stayed and melted.
We call this place a “kettle hole.”

13. You’re walking on a sphagnum sponge,
Sheep laurel grows on this moist ground.
Look for tamarack large and small...
The only deciduous conifer around!

14. Out of the bog, the trail goes up and down
Ancient glaciers molded these small mounds
Straight ahead spy yet another beaver lodge
But left is where your Quest is bound.

15. Now you’re at the water’s edge,
Please step inside the wooden blind
Look up, look down, look everywhere—
And see what it is that you can find.

16. Your Quest is done, but look for more lodges.
There are at least 2—and many species of duck.
If you’re patient, these all will come into view.
What else can we say but this: Good Luck!

This Quest was created by the Kearsarge Region Homeschoolers with help from friends in 2003.

Did you know?

One of the reasons that wetlands are so important is that they serve to control the possibilities of floods. The wetlands can store water and release it slowly, meaning that after a rainstorm, nearby plants won’t all be waterlogged.

Source: epa.gov

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 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.

