



## Wright's Mountain Quest

### Bradford, Vermont

Physical Difficulty: Difficult

Special Features: Natural, Vista

Walking Conditions: Trail

Duration: 2:30

Bring: Binoculars, Field Guide

*To get there: From Exit 16 of I-91 (this is the Bradford / Piermont exit) go northwest up the Waits River on RT 25. Continue for 4.7 miles. Turn right onto Wright's Mountain Road and head up hill for 2 ¼ miles (staying to the right as it forks). Park in the Wright's Mountain lot on your right. Your quest begins here. Plant and or tree ID guides may be helpful. Allow at least 2 ½ to 3 hours.*

**Overview:** Wright's Mountain—Bradford Vermont's highest peak—is protected by a conservation easement held by the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT). UVLT is a regional land conservancy working to protect farmland, forests, wetlands and waterways, wildlife habitats, trails and scenic areas in the Vermont and New Hampshire towns of the Upper Valley. Since 1985, UVLT has protected 530 parcels comprising 54,446 acres. UVLT is a non-profit organization and is supported primarily by contributions from local individuals and businesses. For more information visit [www.uvlt.org](http://www.uvlt.org), or call 603-643-6626.

The forest is being managed as wildlife habitat, and is also utilized by both Bradford Elementary School and Oxbow High School students as an "outdoor classroom." This Quest, which leads to a fine view of the Waits River Watershed, was created by Nancy Jones of the Bradford Conservation Commission and Heather Trillium Toulmin from the Hulbert Outdoor Center. The map was created by Oxbow High School students with support from the VIS / Orton Community Mapping Program.

*Note: this Quest counts **water bars**—logs, stones, or soil mounds crossing the trail that are used to divert water and prevent trail erosion. As you head up the trail, remember to notice and count the water bars. The logs or stones are placed on the trail at an angle, and are quite common in areas prone to intense rainfall.*

**Clues:**

- 1.**Heading up the trail notice tall,  
Straight red pine.  
With needle leaves found in clumps of two  
This plantation (planted) tree is now in view.
  
- 2.**As we hike, we want to discover  
What plants grow where and why.  
Nutrient poor soil you will learn  
Is good habitat for three-branched bracken fern.
  
- 3.** As you approach the fourth water bar—  
A simple device to divert the flow of water—  
Notice the large root system of a tipped-up tree.  
This opening in the canopy lets in the sun for the blackberry.  
  
In 2003, some trees are painted with green blazes,  
Awaiting logging in 2003-2004.  
This forest is being managed for animals:  
Turkey, white tailed deer, black bear, moose cows and bulls.
  
- 4.** Continue on, through the softwood forest,  
Looking for tracks in the mud.  
Animals and plants change over time and adapt,  
Some of these adaptations have been mapped.<sup>1</sup>
  
- 5.** The forest soon changes to deciduous hardwoods:  
sugar maples, American beech and yellow birch.  
On the left is an old stone fence  
Telling us this was pasture in days long hence.
  
- 6.**This trail, as well, was once a "maple sugaring" road  
Heading up to the Appleton's sugar stand.  
Over the years of rain and snow  
Erosion has exposed the bedrock below.

Water bar #5 is made of soil.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxbow High School Biology Students have been using GPS units to map vernal pools with the Community Mapping Project and Bradford Conservation Commission. Amphibians adapt to living in water and on land.

Look and listen over waterbars # 6 and 7.

Amphibians are animals like spotted salamanders and wood frogs.  
You'll find them in moist places like vernal pools or rotting logs.

**7.** Waterbar #8 is made of stone,

Even this strong water bar can be damaged by ATV's or trucks.

Be careful as you travel along any woodland trail.

Good ethics "leave no trace," bad choices leave a tale.

**8.** Managing plants for animal habitat is a big task.

Students, citizens, the county forester, the conservation commission  
all lend a hand.

As you head over water bars 9, 10 and 11,

Look for jack-in-the-pulpit, black bear food made in heaven.

**9.** At the fork in the trail, keep left and meander.

Uphill on the right look for cavity trees with holes in their trunks.

Hairy woodpeckers and barred owls (sometimes) make homes in the  
holes,

Barred owls are nocturnal, hunting at night for mice and voles.

**10.** Do you know what animals like to eat?

Bears and turkey enjoy acorns, seeds of the oak.

Deer and especially porcupines will nibble and browse

On tender, evergreen eastern hemlock boughs.

**11.** Pass the remains of the sugar arch

Where Appleton's boiled sap into syrup.

Trees give us lumber, nuts, shelves and swings.

We can age trees with a borer and count up the rings.

**12.** As you go along, a second fork you will find.

Bear right uphill; ahead on the left,

Can you find evidence of rich fertile soil?

Look for the maiden hair fern with purple stems that coil.

In the spring, frogs and salamanders lay eggs

In temporary pools of rain and snowmelt called vernal pools.

The eggs have hatched and tadpoles grown by fall,

But up the mountain "in season" you'll hear them call.

The wood frogs "croak,"

While pickerel frogs "snore."

Spring peepers, of course "peep."

The American toads "trill" long and sweet.

**13.** At the third fork bear left,

And listen for the soft puh-puh-puh drumming of ruffed grouse.  
How does the treadway feel underfoot?  
Is it the difference of soil, rock or root?

**14.** Along the rocky ridge,  
Find the mosses and lichens forming soil.  
Not far along you'll come to a view,  
You've reached the end, are among the lucky few!

**15.** A treasure box awaits you now,  
From the dead pine snag, take 15 steps to the right on the yellow  
blazed trail  
Now take 5 steps to the right.  
Look `round but don't go down, for the box site.

Please remember those before you,  
And respect those yet to come.  
When you've finished with the box,  
Hide it cleverly like a red fox.

On your way down, a shorter steeper option exists.  
Simply heading straight (or bearing left) at each junction  
Will return you to the parking lot.  
Many thanks to Bradford and to the Appletons—for sharing this  
sweet spot!

### **Wright's Mountain Quest Species Check List**

What did YOU see?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Red Pine           | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Bracken Fern           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Blackberry         | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> White-tailed Deer  | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Black Bear             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Moose              | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Sugar Maple            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Red Maple          | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Red Oak                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> American Beech     | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Birch           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Red Eft            | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted Salamander     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Redback Salamander | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Frog              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Jack-in-the-pulpit | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Barred Owl         | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Maiden Hair Fern       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ruffed Grouse      | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Red Squirrel           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Hermit Thrush      | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____              | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____              | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____              | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> _____                  |

**This Quest benefited from the participation of:** Nancy Jones of the Bradford Conservation Commission, Heather Trillium Toulmin from the Hulbert Outdoor Center, students at Oxbow High School, the VINS / Orton Community Mapping Program, Tim Sinnot, Ginny Barlow, Bill Shepard, the Connecticut River Birding Trail, Ted Levin, and Steven Glazer, Valley Quest Coordinator.

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**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](http://vitalcommunities.org).

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

