Glebe Quest

Thetford, Vermont
Physical Difficulty: Moderate
Special Features: Big trees
Walking Conditions: Trails
Duration: 2-3 hours
Season: April-October
Bring: Your phone if you wish to use the online map.

Driving Directions
Turn into a town named Thetford
Off of the main highway
Up hill Academy Rd
Park on the Panther Way

Overview:
This Quest crosses through Thetford Academy, Thetford Hill State Forest, and Upper Valley Land Trust land. Trails in this area are maintained by Thetford Academy students and the Thetford Outdoor Program.

Along the quest you will meet different tree species, a variety of forest evidence concepts covered in Tom Wessels’ Reading the Forested Landscape, and other natural history and cultural history facts about this area. This quest will show you some interesting components of this diverse forest ecosystem, including, at the end of the quest, some of the oldest and largest trees found in Thetford.

The quest was created by students in the Environmental Studies and Outdoor Education course offered at Thetford Academy. Students enrolled in this class use project-based learning to ignite their academic curiosity and foster environmental stewardship.
Online Map
The map will be your guide to clues
Forest facts and cool trees
A link is fun, your phone to use
Navigate with new ease
Link to map

Clues:
1. Blue Numbers
   Follow the blue, to find a clue
   The size of a quarter
   They are marked with a silver hue
   Follow them in order

Extra Trees
Before you even start this quest
A couple trees to meet
Butternut and apple are best
Some rare and pretty neat

The apple is one you can spot
Butternut not so much
Use the map and look for blue dot
If these trees you must touch
2. Apple
In front of the white building search
A planted apple tree
From the branches small fruit will lurch
Just past pavement is me

3. Butternut Tree
This Vermont tree is often rare
It produces large nuts
In the winter branches are bare
The bark doesn’t have ruts

4. Start
Once you arrive at parking lot
It’s time to start your quest
To timber frame turn left and stop
Outdoor class is the best

5. Barrett Field
Cross the Barrett field to Pete's Path
Step lightly over roots
In the garden students do math
Be careful of your boots
6. Lower Loop crossing  
When you arrive at the crossing  
You can look up and see  
The forest has many of these  
The white pine comes to be

7. White Pine  
Loved for Vermont festivity  
And its pure earthy scent  
Treat it with great civility  
Time with pine is well spent

8. Ranger cabin  
Off of the Pete's Path you will find  
A cabin that is brown  
Take a right now if you don’t mind  
Walk the road, look around

9. Quaking Aspen  
Aspens quake over assassins  
Brown fur and flat tails search  
Triangle leaves fall in basins  
Upper branches like birch

10. Access Rd  
Go on this road for ⅓ mile  
Built in 1930  
The woods trail crosses all the while  
Ahead a bench that is sturdy
11. Six Corners
Many trails that come together
Fireplace Trail for us
Fireplace Quest here forever
Little trail turn a must

12. Frost Walk
Pass old granite fireplaces
Cross the old wooden bridge
Fifty paces a beech tree, you’ll see
Trees back has a deep ridge

13. Frost Crack
Winter sun can be a beast
Frost cracking hurts the trees
The sun beaming against white snow
It performs a bright show

14. Nurse Stump
A tree no more, now sits a stump
Along came a small seed
To now grow in a mossy clump
With the mothering deed
15. Eastern Hemlock
Eastern hemlock is sought after
Then adelgid attacks
Is strong and is used for rafters
What a punch it sure packs

16. Glebe Trail Turn
When you come to the Glebe trail sign
You must then bank a left
This is the Glebe trail starting line
You must carry your heft

17. Red Blazes
Now that you are on the glebe trail
The red dots lead the way
Stay on this trail so you don’t fail
Then you have a good day

18. Hop Hornbeam
Ironwood won’t float in water
Find it throughout Vermont
Dense rings if you’re a good spotter
Found more often than not

19. Coppiced Tree
Just Looking down you may find out
Coppiced trees are sublime.
They are the new growths from a stump.
Trees live after their time

20. Paper Birch
Come to see the paper birch tree
The tree known for its bark
Rotting is not their cup of tea
And make easy landmark

21. Tree Shovel
Shovel forever bound with tree
Three bridges cross the creek
I wonder what could its use be
If only it could speak
22. Red Maple  
Let your eyes become more stable  
Acer rubrum, it’s latin name  
Glory of red maple  
Its leaves are of a flame

23. Forest Pathogen  
Microscopic tree pathogen  
Destroy roots, drink water  
Insect and parasite damage  
Finding trees to slaughter

24. Yellow Birch  
Yellow birch hovers above ground  
Stretching towards the free birds  
Perfectly balanced on its mound  
Yellow bark peels thin curls

25. Pillow  
Now that the roots rotted away  
All that’s left is a mound  
On this hill new strong trees may grow  
And there, new plants are found

26. Cradle  
A dent in the ground has meaning  
Roots of tree were once there  
They ripped up the dirt unseaming  
cradle with room to spare

27. Sugar Maple  
Sugar Maple flies at full mast  
Home the beauty bestow  
Fake syrup make you an outcast  
Springtime makes the sap flow
28. Property Lines
When in Upper Valley Land Trust
Cross a property line
Although the forest may adjust
It will make you bee-line

29. Red Spruce
The red spruce has red scaly bark
The needles have a curve
Usually not far apart
You’ll find spruce to conserve

30. American Beech
The tree is just a foreigner
It’s never out of reach
A beech around every corner
It is a common beech

31. Blowdown
A Blowdown tree, roots shimmering
The sun glistens of dun
The Tree and earth start quivering
Roots make abode for some
32. Stump
This stump is not a mystery
Before we made it fall
The tree was full of history
Hemlock that once stood tall

33. Basal Scar
Basal scars are marks left on trees
They are made by impact
They are left for people to see
The lumber gets attacked

34. Pond
Walk along till you see a pond
Festooned with cattails grass
Many beavers find very fond
A road to walk on chasse

35. Weevil Tree
This pine ahead has many shoots
An insect weevil struck
The white pine weevil is a brute
Now pine growth run amuck

36. Stay Left
From the pond turn right on gravel
About 40 yards up
A turn to the left you travel
This trail muddy buildup

37. Stone Wall
Over hills and across the plains
These walls once kept sheep caged
Through the woods like a ribboned vein
Made in 1830 they have aged

38. Painted Arrow
Look for the painted red arrow
Continue to the left
The trail will become more narrow
Soon you can take a rest
39. Stay Right
In this spot some people get lost
Keep moving to the right
If you go left you'll pay the cost
Keep the red paint in sight

40. Lollipop turn
Up a steep hill and then turn South
The trail loops its way back
160 paces count by mouth
Find Cherry of the black

41. Black Cherry
With scaly bark as black like night
A cherry sits ahead
The canopy will bring delight
Oval leaves make a bed

42. Red Oak
Shaded forests that will be seen
To others we are sprawled
Standing tall above all we lean
Red oak is what I’m called
43. After Oak
After you see the big oak tree
The trail is what you seek
Stay to the right so you can see
Big trees are at the peak.

44. Age Discontinuity
Tree age discontinuity
Young and small old and tall
Gone superficially
The age of trees was stalled.

45. Wolf Tree
Alone in the woods of the east
Stands a tree big and bold
You could say this tree is a beast
This tree is pretty old

46. White Ash Tree
The branches of the ash tree sprawl
A crown of fifty feet
The borer might soon make it fall
While it lasts it's still neat

47. Final Box
Facing the ash, turn to the right
Thirty or so paces
A forked tree reaching for the light
Don't leave any traces

48. You finished
Hey, good job you have now arrived
You may take your earned stamp
What do you know, you have survived
You did this like a champ
49. Getting home
Two ways to get back to the start
Return the way you came
Or, chose to see another part
The routes are not the same

Alternative route back

Go back to the Road near the pond
Follow down to pavement
Left on Road that we find so fond
See views with amazement

This Quest was created by Thetford Academy’s Environmental Studies and Outdoor Education class in 2021.

Other things to do nearby: Check out Sunset Hill, The Outdoor Classroom Yurt, The Torrey Mt. bike trail, the Thetford Historical Society, and the trails in the State Forest and on Thetford Academy land.

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.