Pelham Pathways

Suggested Hike

Trails at Kirby-Ivers Town Forest: The area features trails suited for all skill levels, making it an excellent destination for both hikers and bikers.

Hiking Trails: The trails at Kirby-Ivers are generally rated as **moderate**, with some rocky and rooted terrain. Expect small tree roots and medium-sized stones (not exceeding 2 inches above the trail base), along with the occasional larger rock or fallen log to step over.

- **Yellow Trail** – Begins with a steep uphill climb that can be challenging but levels off at the top. When the trail splits, taking the clockwise route to the Blue Trail and then looping back to Yellow Trail provides a well-balanced hike. Expect rolling hills and elevation changes throughout.
- **Blue Trail** – Mostly flat and easier to navigate, though it can become overgrown in the summer months.

While the trails are well-marked, hikers should be mindful near the 'Stone Sitting Spot' (noted on the map), the path may appear to veer left unexpectedly. A brisk walk on the Kirby-Ivers trails provides an excellent cardio workout while immersing visitors in the natural beauty of the forest.

Mountain Biking at Kirby-Ivers Town Forest: Offers a rewarding mountain biking experience, blending smooth forest paths with technical terrain. Riders should be prepared for varying conditions, including switchbacks, steep ascents and descents, and occasional rocky sections. Ranked **#71 of 114** mountain bike trails in New Hampshire and **#14,315 in the world**, this 86-acre northern hardwood forest features scenic stone walls, large ledge outcroppings, and wetland areas. The trails offer a mix of **singletrack, doubletrack, and 4x4 sections**, providing an engaging ride for all skill levels.

Trail Overview:

- **Papillon's Path (Yellow Trail) – 1.0-mile lollipop loop**
  - Starts at the parking area and ascends a hill via the trail stem.
  - Crosses a historic stone wall before entering the main loop.
  - Features moderate climbs and descents with varied terrain.
- **Tom's Trail (Blue Trail) – 0.4-mile loop**
  - Branches off the east side of Papillon's Path.
  - Can be ridden independently or combined for a figure-eight loop.
  - Offers technical challenges with elevation changes.

Both trails can be ridden in either direction, creating a different experience with each ride. By respecting conservation guidelines and staying on designated trails, you help preserve the beauty and ecological integrity of this cherished woodland for future generations.

Sponsored by: Pelham Pathways Inc.

Have an idea we should consider? Want to join our active team? Reach out to us at **Email: Pelhampathways@gmail.com** **Web: Pelhampathways.com**

Community Trail Coalition *Presents*

KIRBY-IVERS TOWN FOREST

Windham Road
Pelham, NH 03076
Park open dawn to dusk

Mountain Biking, Hiking, Horseback Riding, Hunting, Leashed Pets Permitted

Why Does New Hampshire Have So Many Rocks?

New Hampshire's rugged landscape is filled with boulders, rock formations, and endless stones scattered across fields and forests. But why? The answer lies in the state's deep geological history.

Over 400 million years ago, New Hampshire was shaped by powerful geological forces, including volcanic activity and shifting tectonic plates. The Appalachian Mountains, among the oldest in the world, formed as landmasses collided, creating immense pressure that turned sediments into the granite bedrock we see today. The nickname "The Granite State" reflects this ancient foundation.

The most dramatic transformation came during the Ice Age. Over the past two million years, massive glaciers covered the region, acting like slow-moving bulldozers. These glaciers scraped away topsoil, exposed bedrock, and transported boulders—called glacial erratics—far from their original locations. As the ice sheets melted about 12,000 years ago, they left behind rocky debris, reshaping the landscape into what we see today.

Frost heaves, another key factor, continue to shape New Hampshire's terrain. Each winter, freezing temperatures cause underground water to expand, pushing rocks to the surface. This process repeats annually, ensuring that even land cleared centuries ago remains littered with stones. Today, the rocky terrain makes for beautiful natural landscapes and unique hiking experiences. Next time you explore the trails, take a moment to appreciate the incredible forces that shaped New Hampshire's rocky landscape over millions of years!

Why Are Appalachian Oak-Pine Forests Important?

Appalachian oak-pine forests, with their abundance of nut-bearing oaks and hickories, provide a rich food source for wildlife such as ruffed grouse, turkey, black bear, squirrels, mice, and chipmunks. In turn, raptors such as northern goshawk feed on small mammals and find nesting and perching sites in white pines. Near water, white pines provide key nest and perch sites for bald eagles, great blue herons, and osprey.

Wildlife Found in Appalachian Oak-Pine Habitats
Many wildlife species use Appalachian oak-pine forests, including:

- **American toad**
- **American woodcock**
- **Bald eagle**
- **Black-capped chickadee**
- **Bobcat**
- **Northern goshawk**
- **Ribbon snake**
- **Spotted salamander**
- **Wood thrush**

Threatened and Endangered Species

- **State Threatened Species:** *Black racer, Cerulean warbler*
- **State Endangered Species:** *Blanding's turtle, Common nighthawk, Eastern hognose snake, Timber rattlesnake, Tricolored bat, New England cottontail, Northern long-eared bat*
- **Species of Concern:** *Eastern whip-poor-will, Blue-winged warbler*

Protecting and managing Appalachian oak-pine forests is crucial for maintaining healthy wildlife populations and preserving biodiversity in New Hampshire.

Blanding Turtle- A state endangered species

Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest at Kirby-Ivers Town Forest

The Kirby-Ivers Town Forest is part of New Hampshire's Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest, a unique ecosystem found in the eastern United States. This forest type thrives on dry, well-drained soils and is shaped by natural disturbances such as windstorms and fire, which help maintain biodiversity.

Key Features of the Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest
Tree Species: The forest is a mix of hardwoods and conifers, with dominant species including:

- **White Oak** – A long-lived tree providing food and habitat for wildlife.
- **Red Oak** – Produces acorns that sustain many bird and mammal species.
- **White Pine** – One of the tallest trees in the region, historically valued for timber.
- **Pitch Pine** – Adapted to fire-prone areas, often found in sandy soils.

Wildlife: The diverse tree canopy and understory create habitat for many species, including:

- **White-tailed deer** – Browse on young saplings and acorns.
- **Wild turkey** – Forage for seeds, insects, and acorns.
- **Eastern box turtle** – Found in the leaf litter, relying on warm, open areas.
- **Pileated woodpecker** – A large woodpecker that thrives in mature forests with dead trees for nesting.

Ecological Importance: This forest type plays a critical role in maintaining biodiversity by supporting a variety of plants and animals. Fire and other natural disturbances help rejuvenate the ecosystem by clearing old growth and promoting new plant life. Oak trees, in particular, are keystone species, producing acorns that provide food for many forest creatures. Squirrels play a key role in regenerating oak stands by burying acorns, often under stands of white pine. They also bury pine cones under oak trees. As a result, it is common to find oak in the understory of white pines, and white pine regenerating under oak.

Conservation and Recreation: The Appalachian Oak-Pine Forest is essential for clean air, water filtration, and carbon storage. The Kirby-Ivers Town Forest preserves this important habitat while offering hiking, wildlife observation, and a glimpse into New Hampshire's natural history.

The Story Behind New England's Stone Walls

If you take a walk-through Kirby-Ivers Town Forest, you'll likely come across old stone walls weaving through the landscape. These remnants of New England's past tell a fascinating story of industry, transformation, and resilience.

In the early 1800s, a booming wool industry reshaped the region. After Napoleon's invasion of Spain in 1808, the once-protected Merino sheep were exported worldwide. William Jarvis, a Vermont entrepreneur, seized the opportunity and imported thousands of these prized sheep to New England. Their soft wool quickly became a major industry, and by 1840, there were more sheep than people in states like Vermont and New Hampshire.

To support vast flocks, farmers cleared nearly 75% of New Hampshire's forests for grazing, drastically altering the landscape. As they worked the land, frost heaves unearthed endless stones, which farmers used to build walls—both to mark property lines and manage livestock. Constructing these walls was backbreaking work, done mostly by hand, sometimes with hired labor.

However, the sheep boom was short-lived. Overgrazing led to soil depletion, erosion, and flooding, while competition from the South and overseas drove wool prices down. By the mid-1800s, many farmers abandoned their land, allowing forests to reclaim the fields. The stone walls, however, remained—a lasting testament to this transformative period in New England's history.

Today, these walls serve as a reminder of how human activity can shape and reshape the environment. As you explore Kirby-Ivers Town Forest, take a moment to reflect on the history embedded in these stones and the resilience of nature in reclaiming the land.

Lichens: Nature's Tiny Partnerships

Look closely at the stone walls, and you'll see patches of lichen—unique organisms formed by a partnership between fungi and algae. Fungi, like molds and mushrooms, lack chlorophyll and cannot make their own food. Algae, on the other hand, contain chlorophyll and can produce food through photosynthesis. By living together, fungi provide a stable surface for the algae, while algae supply nutrients to the fungi.

Lichens play an essential role in the environment. They help break down rocks into soil, absorb pollutants, and can even survive extreme conditions—including outer space! Some, like the Arctic map lichen, are over 8,600 years old. So next time you're on the trail, take a closer look—you might just find one of nature's oldest survivors.

Marvelous Mushrooms of Kirby Ivers Conservation Area

Kirby-Ivers Town Forest is home to a fascinating variety of mushrooms. Some are delicious, while others are dangerously toxic—so knowing what to look for is essential.

One of the most striking edible mushrooms is **Chicken of the Woods**. This bright orange and yellow fungus grows in shelf-like clusters on dead or dying trees. With its meaty texture and mild flavor, it's a favorite among foragers.

Chicken of The Woods – An edible mushroom

Oyster mushrooms are another edible species found here. These fan-shaped mushrooms often grow on decaying wood and have a delicate, seafood-like taste. They're popular in cooking and are even cultivated for their culinary value.

Oyster mushrooms – an edible mushroom

However, not all mushrooms are safe to eat. The **Destroying Angel** is one of the deadliest mushrooms in North America. This beautiful, pure white fungus may look harmless, but consuming even a small amount can be fatal. Always admire wild mushrooms from a distance unless you are with an expert.

Destroying Angel- Poisonous mushroom found on the blue trail

Mushrooms play a crucial role in the ecosystem by breaking down dead plant material and recycling nutrients into the soil. The next time you explore the trails, take a closer look at these fascinating fungi—but remember, never eat a wild mushroom unless you are absolutely sure it's safe!

KIRBY-IVERS TOWN FOREST

TOWN OF PELHAM, NH
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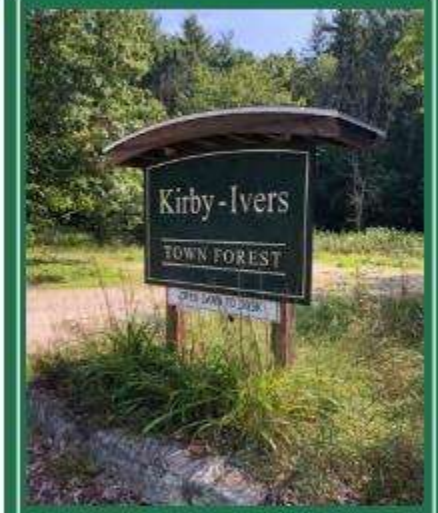
FORESTRY-COMMITTEE



PERMITTED
Walking
Bicycling - including e-bikes
XC Skiing and Snowshoeing
Pets (leashed)
Hunting (in-season and according to NH law)

NOT PERMITTED
OHRV
Camping
Fires

Please carry out all trash

For mobile navigation, download the ESRI Field Maps app to your device and search for PELHAM TRAILS

Map by NRPC