



Suggested Hike



Merriam Farm boasts 2 easy walking trails, the Field Trail is a gently graded 0.7 mile trail that skirts the edge of the field as it passes by the Bluebird Sanctuary managed by the Pelham Bluebird Society and ends at a viewing bench overlooking Beaver Brook. The Beaver Brook Trail is a 0.4 mile trail that follows Beaver Brook where you can enjoy watching water fowl and the gently flowing brook as this Prime Wetland area winds around the edge of the property. There is also a short path to a fishing spot along the river.

Observations along the way: In the large field, look for bluebirds nesting in houses. As urban development continues to encroach on our natural landscapes, creating safe havens for local wildlife becomes increasingly important. **The Pelham Bluebird Society** is dedicated to providing food, forage and shelter for our feathered friends, particularly the **Eastern Bluebird**. Species that rely on field habitat, such as ground nesting birds are facing extinction due to habitat loss. As you stroll through Beaver Brook wetland, check out the fascinating **Lily Pad**, a crucial component of aquatic ecosystems. Lily pads provide essential food and shelter for wildlife, regulate water temperature by providing shade, and oxygenate the water, maintaining a healthy environment for fish and other aquatic life. Lily pads add beauty and ecological balance to their habitats. Culturally significant in Buddhism and Hinduism, and famously depicted by Claude Monet, lily pads are not just visually stunning but vital for environmental health. Keep an eye out for these remarkable plants, which quietly support and shape our ecosystem.



Contact Us

Have an idea we should consider? Want to join our active team? Reach out to us via the contact information below:

Email: Pelhampathways@gmail.com.

Web: Pelhampathways.com

Community Trail Coalition Presents

Merriam Farm Conservation Area



Mammoth Road
(Across from Sherburne Rd)
Pelham, NH 03076
Park open dawn to dusk

Welcome to Merriam Farm

Conservation Area

Merriam Farm, consisting of 46 acres of field, woodlands, and prime wetland is a very special habitat for wildlife **due to** its 16-acre Field Habitat. Currently only about 4% of our landscape is grasslands causing a decline in habitat for the many species of birds, mammals and reptiles that need fields and grasslands for their survival. Unless maintained by humans, these habitats will grow back into shrubs and small trees, reverting eventually to forest. To maintain the biodiversity of this habitat, one third of the 16-acre field is mowed annually, approximately 5 acres, each year in the fall, after the birds have finished nesting for the season, to avoid destruction of nests and eggs. Mowing later in the fall also allows late-flowering wildflowers such as aster, goldenrod, and milkweed, to provide nectar for migrating butterflies. This staggered mowing schedule allows a diverse array of grasses and wildflowers as well as young shrubs to flourish that will provide the food, shelter, and nesting areas for many species of wildlife. In addition to birds, many mammals also inhabit these fields such as field mice, foxes, opossums, raccoons, rabbits, deer, groundhogs, squirrels, skunks, moles chipmunks, turkeys, and snakes. A copy of the Forest Management Plan for this and all other Pelham Town Forests can be found on Pelhamweb.com.



New England Cottontail Rabbit is a state endangered rabbit. Habitat loss due to urban development has made it hard for New England Cottontails to find mates. But there's hope! Conservation groups are working to protect and restore their habitats. For instance, Pelham's Forestry Committee has helped by creating suitable habitat for **New England Cotton Tail rabbits** at Gumpus Pond Conservation Area

GRASSLAND MAMMALS: The **Groundhog or Woodchuck** is a large rodent known for its burrowing habits and important role in maintaining healthy soil. Groundhogs are skilled diggers, creating extensive burrow systems that provide shelter for various animals and improve soil aeration. They mostly feast on wild grasses, berries, and crops. Despite their solitary nature, groundhogs communicate using high-pitched whistles when sensing danger, earning them the nickname "whistle-pig." These fascinating creatures hibernate in winter, surviving off body fat, and are famous for their role in the annual Groundhog Day tradition. Visitors might spot these alert animals standing on their hind legs, watching for predators, or see their burrow entrances around open fields and woodland edges.



Groundhog



Gray Fox

The **Gray Fox**, smaller than the red fox, is unique for its retractable claws and ability to climb trees, often found in southern New Hampshire. Distinguished by a gray streak down its back and a black-tipped tail, this omnivorous predator eats rabbits, squirrels, birds, insects, and fruit. Fascinatingly, gray foxes use the Earth's magnetic field to hunt, aligning themselves with the field to make precise pounces on prey. Breeding from mid-January to February, they have 3-6 pups, which stay in dens for 4-5 weeks. Foxes generally avoid humans but may approach if they associate people with food, so it's important not to feed them and secure your garbage. Observing these creatures on our hike can aid their conservation and enhance our understanding of their behaviors

Natural Wonders of the Park

Eastern Box Turtles are a rare, but fascinating sight in southern NH, particularly around Hudson, Derry, and Windham. These small turtles are known for their distinct, highly domed shells adorned with intricate brown, black, and yellow patterns. Despite their vulnerability due to habitat loss and other threats, these turtles display remarkable resilience; their shells can regenerate, and they can store sperm to produce fertilized eggs for up to four years after mating. With a strong homing instinct, they live their entire lives within a square mile, making any displacement potentially dangerous. Conservation efforts by the NH Fish & Game Department are crucial for their survival. Keep an eye out for these elusive creatures and contribute to their conservation by reporting any sightings! **Bees** are essential for our food and gardens, pollinating about one in every three bites of food we eat and contributing over \$200 billion annually to global agriculture. While honeybees are not native to New Hampshire, local heroes like bumblebees, mason bees, and carpenter bees are crucial for pollinating our gardens, orchards, and farms. New Hampshire is home to around 16 bumblebee species, but many, including the Rusty Patched Bumblebee, have declined dramatically. Bumblebees are vital pollinators. You can help by planting native plants like Milkweed, Beebalm, and Goldenrod, which attract these important insects and support their populations. Protecting bees ensures the health of our ecosystems and food supply.



Eastern Box Turtle



Half Back Bumblebee (42%)



Introduction to Beaver Brook: Beaver Brook is a 30.7 mile-long river that starts in Chester, New Hampshire, and travels all the way to Lowell, Mass. In Pelham, Beaver Brook is an important part of our water system. Water is crucial for our community. Surface water, like Beaver Brook, helps with storm drainage, stores water, recharges groundwater, provides habitats for wildlife, and offers places for recreation. Over 35 miles of streams flow through Pelham. Pelham's streams, which include Beaver Brook, Golden Brook, Island Pond Brook, and Gumpas Pond Brook, form an important network that supports both wildlife and people. Although they may represent a small portion of the Town's land area, because of the extensive network they form, they are an important resource to consider relative to the Town's existing and future growth. Adjacent to Beaver Brook is a **riparian forest buffer**. What is a riparian forest buffer? It is a wetland that contains trees, shrubs and other perennial plants. One of the important reasons to maintain a riparian forest buffer is water quality improvement. Riparian forest buffers filter nutrients, pesticides and animal waste from agricultural land runoff helping to maintain water quality. Agricultural runoff happens when the water from rain, melting snow or irrigation doesn't sink into the soil for proper absorption. Instead it moves along the ground, picking up natural and artificial pollutants along the way. Eventually these contaminants get deposited in streams like Beaver Brook and even into underground sources of drinking water.

Park History



Merriam Farm Conservation Area: Welcome to the Merriam Farm Conservation Area, a slice of Pelham's agricultural heritage now preserved for future generations. Here's a glimpse into the rich history of this beautiful land.

Early Beginnings: The Cutter Farm at 93 Mammoth Road, established in the early 1800s, was a vital source of trees, shrubs, fruits, vegetables, seeds, and milk for the Lowell market. Virginia (Cutter) Merriam and her husband Clifton (Cliff) Merriam took over from Virginia's brother, Benjamin Cutter.

Expanding the Farm: In 1922, Cliff expanded the farm by purchasing land from Charles Lovett, stretching nearly 0.7 miles to Beaver Brook. While the historic barn on this land was never used for cows, it stored hay and farm machinery, and Cliff harvested hay to feed his dairy cows and pay for his children's college expenses.

Adapting Through Adversity The devastating Hurricane of 1938 damaged many old trees, which were milled into lumber and stored for future use. In the 1940s, Cliff and his neighbor Harry Jack upgraded the bridge over Gumpas Brook to support new Ford tractors, improving farm efficiency.

Park History Cont.

A Community Effort: Harvesting hay was a family affair, and by the late 1950s, more efficient hay baling equipment was brought in. Cliff planted Christmas trees and red pines, although the latter were recently cut down due to disease. The farm was also home to wildlife, including a turtle pond and an abandoned apple orchard.

Legacy and Preservation: Cliff Merriam passed away in 1962, but his dedication to the farm left a lasting legacy. The Nietupski family helped maintain the fields, keeping the land productive and scenic. In 2019, the Merriam Farm Conservation area, once used for agriculture, was purchased by the Pelham Conservation Commission and voted as a Town Forest in 2022, ensuring its preservation as a conservation area. Today, you can explore the trails, enjoy the open fields, and witness the legacy of a family farm that played a vital role in the community for over a century. Special thanks to the Merriam family, Pelham Conservation Commission and Paul Gagnon, for working together to preserve this beautiful land. Enjoy your visit to Merriam Farm, where history and nature come together for all to enjoy!



Merriam Farm Grand Opening - October 17, 2022

MERRIAM FARM CONSERVATION AREA

TOWN OF PELHAM, NH
PELHAMWEB.COM/FORESTRY-COMMITTEE



PERMITTED

Walking
 Bicycling - Including e-bikes
 XC Skiing and Snowshoeing
 Pets (Leashed)

NOT PERMITTED

Hunting
 OHV
 Snowmobiles
 Camping
 Fires

Please carry out all trash



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

Map by: **NRPC**