



Suggested Hike: Exploring the Heart of the Forest

A typical loop through Peabody Town Forest might take **60–90 minutes**, depending on your pace. Because the property is less visited than others in town, hikers will experience a sense of **solitude and untouched wilderness**, despite walking through land shaped heavily by human hands over generations.



1 Entrance to Peabody Town Forest
Photo By Marc Duquette

Highlights Along the Way

- **Stone walls** marking long-abandoned 19th-century pastures
- **White pine & red oak stands** showing decades of healthy regeneration
- **Seasonal streams** and potential **vernal pools** alive with amphibian activity in spring
- **Powerline views** and prime wildlife habitat
- **Quiet interior trails** bordered by beech, birch, maple, and hemlock

Yellow Loop + Powerline Connector (≈1 mile): A great “full sampler” of Peabody Town Forest. This route includes upland woods, wetlands/vernal pools, and the open powerline corridor—excellent for wildlife viewing and spotting old stone walls. Wide, smooth footing makes it family-friendly and comfortable.
Route: Start at Briarwood Road → follow the Yellow Trail → take the Powerline Connector for view and wildlife → rejoin Yellow to complete the loop.

Alternate Hikes

1. White Pine Discovery Loop (≈0.6 miles • Easy): Perfect for families, young kids, and Junior Ranger activities. This gentle loop on the White Trail passes through some of the tallest, straightest white pines in the forest. Soft footing and a wide trail make it an ideal introductory walk.

2. Vernal Pool & Wetlands Explorer (≈1.4 miles • Easy–Moderate): Designed for wildlife enthusiasts. Start on the Orange Trail, connect to Yellow, and circle past several seasonal wetlands and vernal pools. A short connector brings you back to the main loop.

3. Big Forest Loop: Powerline, Oak Ridge & Wetlands (≈2–2.5 miles • Moderate): A longer outing with varied scenery. Follow the Yellow Loop, explore the open powerline corridor, then continue into the oak ridge. Add the Blue Trail extension for a quieter interior-forest experience.

Sponsored by: Pelham Pathways Inc.

Have an idea we should consider?
Want to join our active team? Reach out to us

Email: Pelhampathways@gmail.com
Web: Pelhampathways.com

Community Trail Coalition Presents Arthur H. Peabody Memorial Town Forest



Located off Briarwood Road in Pelham, NH, 03076
Conservation Area open dawn to dusk

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

Peabody Town Forest – 155 Acres of Working Forest & Wildlife Habitat

A Forest Shaped by People and Nature: Peabody Town Forest is one of Pelham’s best examples of a “working forest”—a place that grows healthy trees, supports wildlife, and is cared for over time. The land we see today has been shaped by both people and nature for nearly two centuries. In the mid-1800s, much of this area was cleared for sheep farming during New England’s Merino wool boom, and the stone walls crisscrossing the woods mark the boundaries of those long-ago pastures. When sheep farming declined, the open land slowly grew in with white pine, and over the decades, oak, beech, maple, and hemlock filled in, creating the mixed woodland we see today.

The land officially became town-owned in 1980—not through a purchase, but because several small, landlocked parcels were taken over after their owners stopped paying taxes. Before the town stepped in, the property was used informally, including by a local motorcycle club whose old camp remnants are still visible. Once the town conducted a major cleanup and began developing a forest management plan, the area was formally named the Arthur H. Peabody Memorial Forest in honor of Arthur H. Peabody (1890–1979), a respected Pelham leader who served as Police Chief, State Representative, Cemetery Trustee, Moderator, and more. Naming the forest for him was the community’s way of recognizing his decades of service.

Today, the Pelham Forestry Committee—working closely with a professional forester—continues to steward the forest through careful, selective cutting and ongoing habitat improvements. Their work keeps Peabody Town Forest healthy, diverse, and rich with wildlife, ensuring this special landscape remains vibrant for generations to come.

Topography, Water, and Wetlands: Peabody Town Forest has gentle hills, areas of exposed ledge, and a mix of dry and wet soils. “Uplands” are the higher, drier parts of the forest where pine and oak grow well. “Wetlands” are the lower, wetter places that hold water for much of the year and support mosses, ferns, birches, and wildlife that need soggy soil.

Small streams and seasonal wet spots flow through the property. Some stay wet all year, while others dry up in late summer. Among these wet areas are **vernal pools**—shallow, temporary ponds that fill with snowmelt and spring rain. They often disappear by midsummer, but while they last, they are extremely important. Because they have no fish, they are safe nurseries for wood frogs, spring peepers, marbled salamanders, and fairy shrimp. Many of these animals *must* use vernal pools to survive.

Offer Trails for Recreation & Learning: Miles of trails welcome hikers, families, birdwatchers, and nature lovers of all ages. Whether you enjoy a quiet walk, a wildlife sighting, or learning about the land’s history, Peabody Town Forest has something for everyone.

Preserve Pelham’s History: Stone walls, old farm edges, and the forest’s changing tree species tell the story of Pelham’s agricultural past. This land connects us to the people and practices that shaped the New England landscape.

A Forest for the Future: Peabody Town Forest protects both nature and community. Through careful stewardship, it ensures clean water, healthy wildlife habitat, and beautiful trails will remain for generations to come.

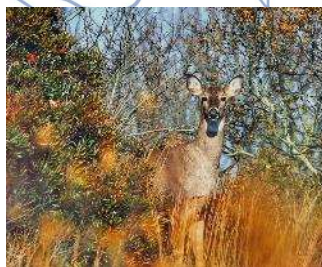
Fun Fact: Nearly **75% of New Hampshire** was once cleared for sheep pastures—now reclaimed by forests like this one.



Photo by Marc Duquette

White-Tailed Deer: Deer are most active at dawn and dusk. When alarmed, they raise their white tails to warn other deer. Bucks grow new antlers every year, sometimes adding $\frac{1}{4}$ inch per day during summer. After winter, the antlers fall off and become natural calcium snacks for mice and squirrels.

Fun Fact: Newborn fawns have almost no scent, making them nearly invisible to predators.



White tailed Deer Photo by Linda Levesque

Chicken of the Woods: If you see bright orange “shelves” growing on a dead tree, you’ve probably found **Chicken of the Woods**—one of the easiest mushrooms to spot in New England forests. This mushroom grows in big, colorful layers that look like stacked fans. The top is usually orange or peach-colored, and the underside is yellow with tiny pores instead of gills. Chicken of the Woods helps forests by breaking down dead trees and returning nutrients to the soil. It often grows on old oaks, maples, or fallen logs. Even though some people collect it to eat, mushrooms can be tricky—



Chicken of the Woods - Photo by Marc Duquette

so always admire it with your eyes unless a trained expert identifies it. This mushroom is a great reminder that even fallen trees are full of life and play an important role in keeping the forest healthy.

Why Peabody Town Forest Matters: Peabody Town Forest represents the heart of Pelham’s conservation mission. Its 155 acres protect wildlife, history, and healthy ecosystems while offering a peaceful place for people to explore.

Peabody Town Forest Helps:

Protect Wetlands & Clean Water: The forest’s streams, wetlands, and vernal pools naturally filter water, reduce flooding, and support hundreds of plant and animal species.

Provide Excellent Wildlife Habitat: From frogs in vernal pools to deer in oak stands, this forest supports animals that depend on healthy woods, open corridors, and seasonal wetlands.

Support Sustainable Forestry: The forest is managed carefully by the Pelham Forestry Committee. Selective harvesting improves forest health, supports local wood products, and encourages new growth for wildlife.

These wetlands also help protect Pelham from flooding. They soak up snowmelt and spring rains like a sponge and then release the water slowly through the year. Water that drains north eventually flows toward Little Island Pond, and water that drains south moves toward Tonus Brook, Beaver Brook, and the Merrimack River.



Spotted Salamander Photo NH Fish & Game Vic Young

Timber Harvesting – A Forest Working for the Future: Peabody Town Forest is a great example of how careful forestry can keep a forest healthy. In the 1990s, foresters removed poor-quality trees on about 100 acres. This allowed more sunlight to reach the forest floor so young oak and pine could grow strong.



Photo Chris Gallaher

That harvest produced:

- **330 thousand board feet** of timber
- **140+ cords** of low-grade firewood
- **1,100 tons** of wood chips

These actions did *not* harm the forest. Instead, they helped create a healthier mix of trees and improved wildlife habitat. Today the forest contains:

- **1.5 million board feet** of strong, healthy timber
- **1,200 cords** of pulpwood
- A thriving understory full of new growth for wildlife

Sustainable forestry also helps fund long-term care of the forest, supports local wood products, reduces wildfire risk by removing dead material, and keeps the forest diverse for many species.

Wildlife & Habitats of Peabody Town Forest

Habitats Along the Powerline Corridor : The powerline corridor creates a long, sunny opening that grows differently from the shaded woods around it. Tall grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and young trees fill the open area, forming **early-successional habitat**—a rare and important habitat type in New Hampshire. Many animals rely on this sunny, shrubby area for food and shelter, including:

- Towhees, bluebirds, and other songbirds
- Small mammals
- Butterflies and native bees
- Deer and other browsing wildlife

Because it is so open, this corridor is one of the best places for wildlife watching—especially at sunrise and sunset.

Fun Fact: Bluebirds love open, sunny areas because they hunt insects from low branches or tall grasses!

Amphibians of the Vernal Pools: Shallow, temporary **vernal pools** appear throughout the forest in spring filling with snowmelt and rain. These small wetlands are safe nurseries for species that can only survive where fish are absent. Look and listen for:

- **Wood Frogs** and their duck-like “quack” calls
- **Spring Peepers**, the tiny frogs that sing loudly in early spring
- **Marbled Salamanders**, hiding under logs and leaf litter
- **Fairy Shrimp**, delicate crustaceans whose eggs survive dry summers

Please view vernal pools from the edge—they are easily disturbed.

Fun Fact: Wood frogs can freeze solid in winter and thaw out in spring—then hop away!



Fairy Shrimp photo by Alice Abela



Photo by Linda Levesque

Birds of the Canopy & Understory: Peabody Town Forest’s mix of pine, oak, and hardwoods creates a perfect home for a wide variety of birds. Watch and listen for:

- **Great Horned Owls**, calling at dusk
- **Pileated Woodpeckers**, carving big rectangular holes in trees
- **Eastern Bluebirds**, often found along the powerline corridor
- **Warblers, Chickadees, Nuthatches, and Sparrows** flitting through branches

This forest is a year-round birdwatching hotspot.

Fun Fact: A Pileated Woodpecker’s tongue can be up to **5 inches long**—perfect for catching ants deep inside trees!



Pileated woodpecker

Mammals of the Forest Floor: The forest supports many mammals, both big and small, including:

- **White-tailed deer** feeding in oak stands
- **Red and gray squirrels** racing across pine branches
- **Raccoons, foxes, and coyotes** moving quietly near streams
- **Chipmunks and rabbits** hiding in the powerline corridor

Even when you don’t see them, footprints in mud or snow offer clues to their presence.

Coyotes: Wild Neighbors of Peabody Town Forest: Coyotes are smart, adaptable animals that help keep the ecosystem healthy by controlling mice and rabbits. Slim and dog-like, with long legs and black-tipped tails, coyotes usually avoid people.

To coexist safely:

- Never feed wildlife
- Keep pet food indoors
- Leash small dogs at dawn and dusk

If a coyote comes close, simply wave, clap, or shout it will quickly run away. **Fun Fact:** Coyotes mate for life and older siblings sometimes babysit the pups!



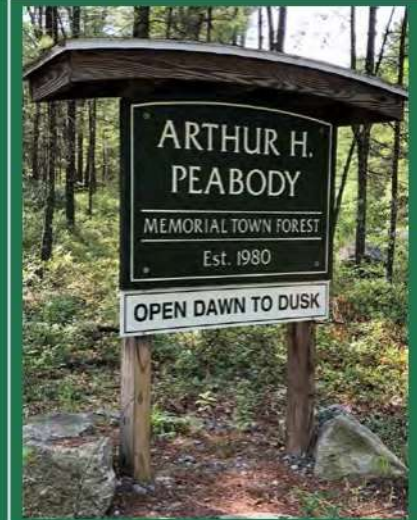
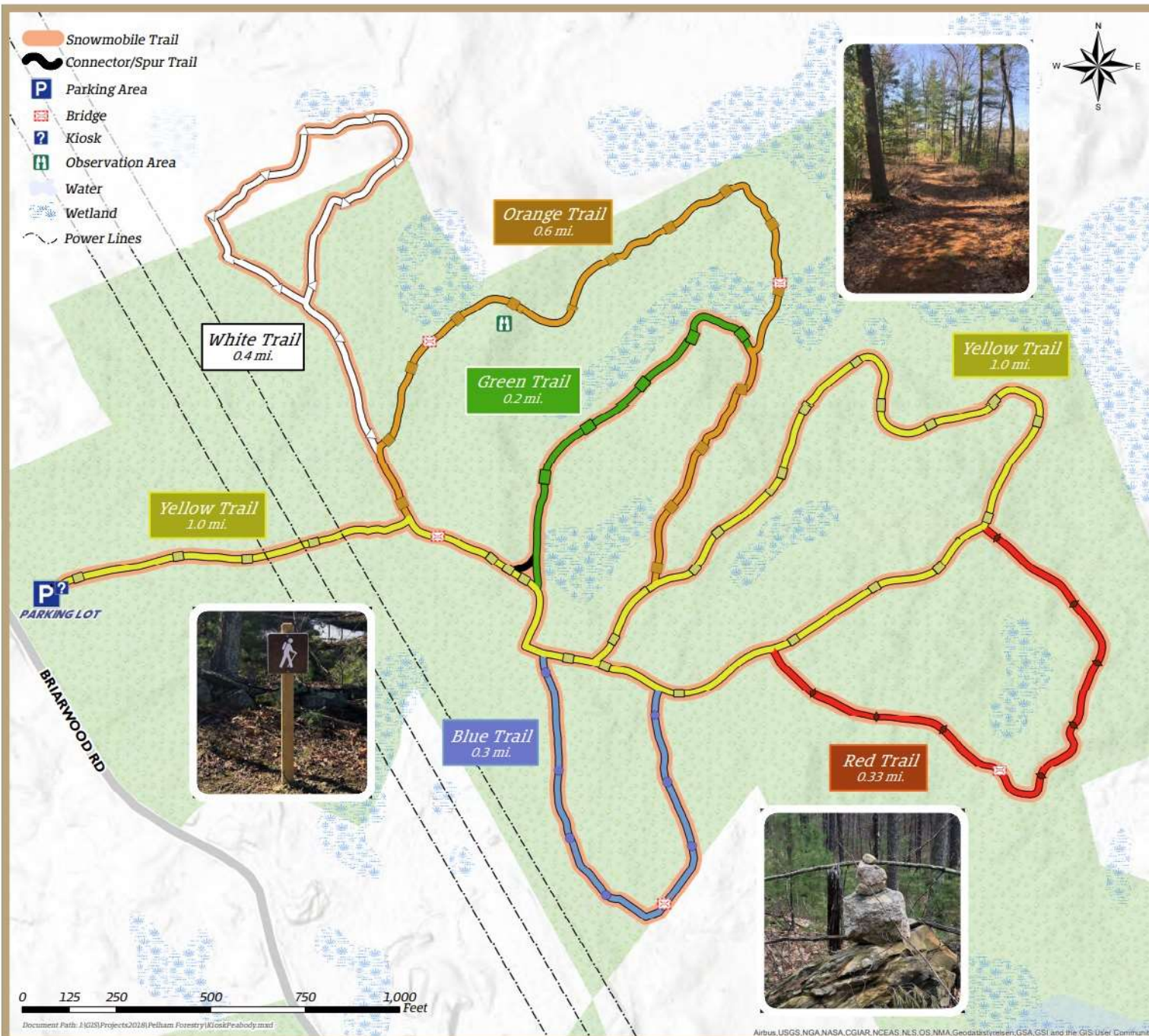
Eastern Coyote Photo by Bob Metcalf

Wild Turkeys: Wild turkeys are common and entertaining to watch. Males, called **toms**, fan out their tail feathers, while females, or **hens**, quietly forage for acorns, berries, and insects. Turkeys are fast on foot—running up to **25 mph**—and can burst into short flights to escape danger.

Fun Fact: Turkeys have **better daytime vision than people** and can see in

ARTHUR H. PEABODY MEMORIAL TOWN FOREST

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



NOTE: Trail intersection marker posts show route to trailhead as the top arrow

PERMITTED

Walking
 Bicycling - including e-bikes
 XC Skiing and Snowshoeing
 Pets (leashed)
 Hunting (in-season and according to NH law)
 Snowmobiling (only on designated trails)

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**