



The Exemplary Natural Community System & Old Growth at Mt. Sunapee State Park

At Mount Sunapee State Park, the state has identified a 484-acre exemplary natural community system that includes rare old forest. Mount Sunapee has the only northern hardwood conifer forest system that is exemplary in the state of New Hampshire. Surrounding the remnant old forest is mature forest, which is integral to the natural community system. The mature forest contributes to the long-term integrity and viability of the old forest and with time will acquire old-growth characteristics if left intact.

- “Old-Growth Forests: ... known as old-growth, virgin, primeval, or ancient forests, have escaped harvesting or other significant human modification over the last 350 years, and cover less than a tenth of one percent of the state.” (“The Nature of New Hampshire: Natural Communities of the Granite State”)
- “RSA 217-A:3 defines exemplary natural communities as a viable occurrence of a rare natural community type or a high-quality example of a more common natural community type as designated by the Natural Heritage Bureau based on community size, ecological condition, and landscape context.” (New Hampshire Natural Heritage Bureau)
- “Exemplary natural communities represent the best remaining examples of New Hampshire’s biological diversity (aka biodiversity) NH Natural Heritage Bureau identifies and tracks exemplary natural community occurrences to inform conservation decisions.”

The location of Mount Sunapee State Park and its public hiking trails make its forests more accessible than many other old forests in the state. They have an immeasurable impact on the human spirit, fostering personal exploration, health, and well-being.



A Rare Old Forest

Old forests represent valuable and endangered eco- systems and are extremely rare. They represent less than one-tenth of one percent of New Hampshire forests.

The opportunities for protection, research, and education make the exemplary and old forest at Mount Sunapee State Park unique in southern New Hampshire. Preservation of the forest provides valuable benefits.

- Protection of wildlife habitat and species diversity
- Carbon sequestration and temperature moderation to address climate change
- Preserving water quality and stormwater infiltration
- Less air and noise pollution
- Maintaining scenic hiking trails

Why is permanent protection needed?

Through the years, ski area development has cut into and diminished Mount Sunapee’s old forest. And if future resort development proceeds as planned, more fragmentation and threats to the forests will result. NOTE: The Natural Heritage Bureau evaluation (1999) of the Mount Sunapee ski lease area recommended:

“The best conservation approach would be to protect in perpetuity the entire mosaic of forest types, including old growth to protect the assemblage of forest conditions...”

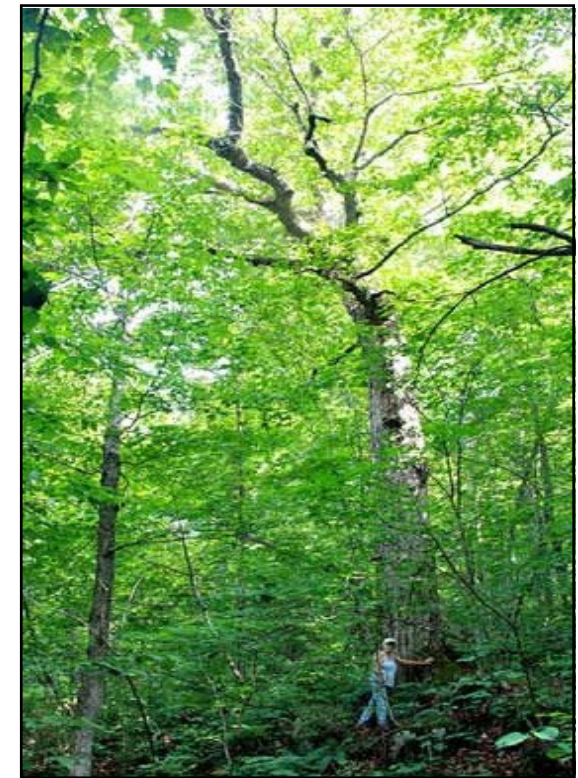
How You Can Help

- Advocate for permanent protection!
- Help with outreach and programs!
- Support our work with a donation!

Mount Sunapee State Park’s Rare Old Forest And Hiking Map

In Mount Sunapee State Park is an exemplary natural community system that encompasses a rare old forest.

This forest is an irreplaceable part of New Hampshire’s natural and cultural heritage, which deserves and requires permanent protection.



FRIENDS OF MOUNT SUNAPEE

A Legacy to Protect

Old forests represent valuable and endangered eco- systems and are extremely rare. They represent less than one-tenth of one percent of New Hampshire forests.

Mount Sunapee’s conservation legacy goes back to the early twentieth century. At the time, the timber industry was clear cutting on the mountain. In 1909 conservationist Herbert Welsh, working with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, led an effort to preserve the mountain’s primeval forest ... “for all people to all time.”

The Mount Sunapee Reservation, the Forest Society’s first reservation, eventually grew to 1185 acres. In the creation of Mount Sunapee State Park in 1948, the Forest Society ceded the land to the state.

Published state studies since 1999 confirm: **Mount Sunapee State Park hosts rare old growth within a forested exemplary natural community system.**

Friends of Mount Sunapee is a citizens group working to preserve the essential public values and irreplaceable natural heritage of Mount Sunapee State Park.



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FOMS is a New Hampshire non-profit organization and federally recognized 501.c.3 charitable organization.