

Sharon, NH - Natural Resources Plan

The Natural Resource Assessment and Management Plan: was completed in 1996 by Rick Van de Poll, professor and wildlife biologist from Antioch New England Graduate School, in Keene.

The Conclusions and Recommendations of this study are as follows:

Conclusions:

"The above findings from the natural resource inventory of the Sharon Town Forest revealed a valuable biological resource for the Town. Significant deer wintering areas were identified, a small residential population of moose was recorded, several den sites and numerous cavity nest trees were located, a complex of streamside and upland wetland areas were noted, and several unique plant communities were documented and mapped. At least 22 species or roughly half of the mammal species that occur in the Monadnock Region were observed through sight or sign. Sixty-three species of birds were recorded or approximately 33% of those that occur regionally. All of the frogs that are found in the area were noted and 50% of the salamanders. Both reptiles and fishes were poorly represented owing to poor habitat, secretive habits, and limited field time. A good representation of fungi and lichens were observed (75 species), in spite of the dry year. Finally, at least 328 plant species were recorded; all but 8 of these were vascular species which represented approximately 75% of the woodland flora that is typically found in the Monadnock Region.

On the whole, the most striking characteristic about the Sharon Town Forest was the central wetland complex along Meadow Brook. This was augmented in structural and genetic diversity by the adjacent seepage slopes in compartment D, and the scattered perched wetlands in compartment G and H. In spite of the generally young forest, several pockets of older growth trees were found that added to the variety of cover types. In addition, several of these areas held high hard mast potential for a number of wildlife species.

The agricultural and silvicultural history of the Town Forest has left its mark on the land. However, the hurricane of 1938 and the subsequent fire had a more devastating long-term effect on the character of the forest than any act done by human hands. The forest is slowly aggrading towards a mix of northern hardwoods and hemlock types, although scattered oak-pine associations are still quite common near the property's periphery. While several areas have been intensively managed for sawtimber in the recent past, a very high potential exists for continued harvesting of a mixture of high quality softwoods and hardwoods."

Recommendations:

#1. Maintain a no-cut zone in the following areas: a) within any wetland area, especially those associated with Meadow Brook; b) the old growth northern hardwoods-hemlocks in compartment F; c) the mature beech-hemlock stand southwest of Barnes Meadow; d) within 100 ft. of the nearest immediate watershed of any vernal pool, whichever is further, e) within 50 ft. of any permanent stream.

#2. Maintain a seasonal cutting restriction on the following areas: a) during winter in the wintering deer area as indicated on the Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) map; b) during spring and early summer in or near any significant den or cavity nesting tree or area as indicated on the SEA map.

#3. Conduct active timber management activities in the potential oak mast regeneration sites as indicated on the SEA map.

#4. Plan on a biomass harvest of the "short-term hardwood stand" indicated on the SEA map.

#5. Consider active timber management in the areas shaded in green on the attached map; consider long-term, infrequent management of all other areas.

#6. Clear, upgrade, and/or maintain the trail system within the Town Forest.

#7. Conduct and maintain an active research program to further the knowledge of the following natural biological areas within the Town Forest:

a) the wintering deer areas; b) the vernal pools, especially those that were preliminarily identified; c) the larger wetland areas for wildfowl nesting; d) the potential nest and/or cavity tree areas for confirmed raptor nesting.

Sharon residents are welcome to borrow Van de Poll's full report upon request from the Conservation Commission.