

AN INTERPRETIVE WALK THROUGH FOSS & MacCORNACK-EVELYN FORESTS



This walk starts in Foss Forest and leads to a bench in MacCornack-Evelyn Forest. Along the way are 8 unmarked stops that provide a glimpse into the natural, as well as human, history of the land. See the map below for the locations of the different stops.

The route follows the lower part of the Schaller Trail (green blazes) and then turns onto the MacCornack-Evelyn Trail (red & white blazes). It is a moderate walk with a total round-trip mileage of 1.2 miles and about 250 feet of elevation gain.

From the kiosk, walk back a few steps toward the parking area until you come to a large white pine tree on your right.

Stop 1: The black box mounted high up on the pine tree is a bat house. It was installed to provide a shelter where bats can roost and live during the summer months. Bats are beneficial because they eat large quantities of insects each day, thus providing a natural form of pest control.

Return to the kiosk and then proceed on the Schaller Trail (green blazes) until you come to the Schaller trail sign on a tree to your right.

Stop 2: The Schaller Trail is named after Carl Schaller, a long-time ACT member who served as the rector of All Saints Episcopal Church in Littleton for many years and worked tirelessly on environmental issues in the North Country. Carl helped to build this trail, which makes a nice loop through Foss Forest and meets up with other trails in the Bronson Hill Conservation Area.

Continue up the trail, bearing left where the loop starts, until you come to a junction with 3 arrows on a tree (green, white, and red & white) on your right. Look for some rusted pieces of metal in the woods near the tree.

Stop 3: These metal pieces are from a disc harrow, a type of farm equipment used in fields to break up the soil and prepare it for planting. We aren't sure how they ended up here since the land at this spot is too steep for planting a crop. Possibly they were found elsewhere on the property and then left here, but we will probably never know for sure what happened!

Turn onto the MacCornack-Evelyn Trail and follow the red & white blazes. Look for a cairn (a pile of small rocks—see photo) on the right side of the trail and stop here.



Stop 4: Foss Forest has been certified by the American Tree Farm System and is an official "Tree Farm". This means that Foss Forest is a working forest being managed in a responsible and sustainable manner for the purposes of water, wildlife, wood, and recreation. As part of its management of the forest, ACT did what is known as a "patch cut" in the area on the right side of the trail in 2014 and 2015.



Continue along the trail, cross the road, and stop when you come to an orange ACT marker on a tree on your left and a large rock on the side of the trail to your right.

Stop 5: This is an ACT boundary marker, indicating that this is the boundary line between Foss Forest and MacCornack-Evelyn Forest. Take a couple of steps along the trail beyond the marker and then look to your left and right. Although it is only faintly visible now, this is the old post road which once ran from Sugar Hill to Landaff and was used to deliver the mail and newspapers to residents in the area.

Proceed until you come to a collapsed building and some large holes (which may sometimes be filled with water).



Stop 6: The building, concrete slab, and holes you see here are the remains of springs and spring houses that once existed on this spot. Small buildings (like the one seen here) covered the water in the springs and kept out leaves, debris, and animals. Water was piped from here down to a field adjacent to MacCormack-Evelyn Forest and possibly to homes along Post Road and Pearl Lake Road.

Continue descending on the trail and look for the stone wall (surrounded by ferns in the summer).

Stop 7: This stone wall is one of many stone walls that crisscross the Bronson Hill Conservation Area. Like the disc harrow seen earlier on this walk, these walls are evidence that much of Bronson Hill was once cleared and used for agriculture. Most likely the land adjacent to this wall was a pasture for grazing sheep, whose fleece was used in the region's textile mills in the 1800s to produce wool. Eventually the pasture grew back to forest, leaving only the stone wall as a reminder of the land's agricultural past.

Proceed to the end of the trail and the bench.

Stop 8: As noted on the plaque on the bench, Doug Evelyn was a trustee of the Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust from 2008 to 2017. Doug, his wife Martha, and Martha's brother Frederick MacCormack donated the 95 acres that comprise the MacCormack-Evelyn Forest to ACT in 2005. In doing so, they were fulfilling the wishes of Martha and Rick's parents, who wanted this land kept in its natural state and not developed.

Follow your route back to the parking area. If you want a longer hike, you can complete the Schaller Trail loop or detour down the Foss Path on the way back to the parking area.

