

Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust

works with local communities and landowners to protect land for all who live in New Hampshire’s North Country, now and in the future. As a nationally accredited land trust we strive to serve our communities by conserving the farms and working forests that are at the foundation of our region’s economy and character. As part of our work, we also strive to kindle a love of the natural world through education and events, connecting our communities to the land and each other.

ACT respects the natural beauty, history, and traditional uses of our lands as regionally and nationally significant resources to be protected for future generations.

To support trails like this one as well as ACT’s other local conservation work, make a one-time donation or become a member by texting **Whipple** to our toll-free number, (844) 416-0043. Standard text & data rates apply.



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SEND MAIL TO: PO BOX 191 • (603) 823-7777 • ACT-NH.ORG



The land that Polly’s sits on was settled in the early 1800s by Brigham Hildreth. He ran it as Hildreth Farm and operated his cobbling shop on the property. His son, Chester, took over the farm and had a daughter Lucy.

Lucy married Wilfred “Sugar Bill” Dexter and the farm was renamed to combine their last names (Hildreth and Dexter): Hildex Farm. Wilfred turned maple into one of the main crops of the farm and began to ship maple products all over the country. When Lucy passed away, Wilfred remarried Pauline “Polly” Taylor. In 1938, during the great depression, they devised a way to highlight their maple products by opening a tearoom and serving pancakes! “Polly’s Pancake Parlor” was born.

POLLY’S PANCAKE PARLOR 672 Route 117, Sugar Hill, NH 03586

An ENORMOUS thanks to Zach...

and the entire Gilbert family from all of us at Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) for their passion for this project. Led by Zach as part of his bar mitzvah project, they raised funds, collected information, and worked with ACT staff to create this pamphlet.

Zach has loved Sugar Hill and the North Country his entire life. Whether skiing, ice skating, kayaking, or hiking, the beauty of the White Mountains captivates him. This trail and educational brochure were developed to allow everyone to experience this special place. Please enjoy your nature walk and learn something new!

About the Herbert G. Whipple Farm Conservation Area:

The Herbert G. Whipple Farm Conservation Area, or Whipple Farm, has a rich and diverse community of plants and wildlife. ACT preserves and protects unique places like Whipple Farm as a way to ensure that open spaces in the North Country remain available for all to enjoy. Everyone is always welcome to wander, wonder, learn, and enjoy.

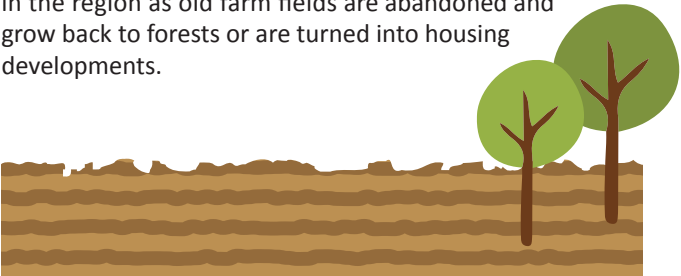
The trail is easily accessed behind Polly’s at the back of the upper parking lot. Look for the kiosk and path leading through the stone wall. For those coming for a walk during business hours and not grabbing a bite, we ask that you kindly use the overflow parking area (the lower lot) at Polly’s.

Conservation History of the Whipple Farm

The 20-acre Whipple Farm property is the last piece of undeveloped land from one of Sugar Hill’s early farms. With generous public support, ACT purchased the property from Whipple heirs in 2005.

The land, cleared in the mid-19th century, has been maintained as field since. At its northern edge the property abuts a large beaver pond and marsh, most of which has also been conserved.

ACT maintains the land as it is today, mowing the fields in the fall to protect the habitat of field nesting birds and other wildlife that require grassland for foraging, shelter, and breeding. Native grassland is a disappearing type of habitat in the region as old farm fields are abandoned and grow back to forests or are turned into housing developments.



FIELD NOTES:

BEAVER



PINE



LUPINE



ACORN



BUTTERFLY



WIND EDDY



RHUBARB



TRACKS



A PROJECT OF:  
Ammonoosuc  
Conservation Trust



**Whipple Farm** is a rich community of grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees; insects, bats, and birds; ground animals, foragers, and predators. A delicate ecosystem like this requires stewardship, maintenance, and care. Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) is committed to the preservation, protection, and accessibility of special places in the North Country for all to enjoy.

**A** Whipple Farm was a homestead for over 100 years. That means a long time ago someone lived here. Take a look around to find some clues. Your first clue is the old stone wall you walked through to get onto the field. Another is in the fertile patch of soil that was once the garden. **Can you find the rhubarb patch growing where the garden once was?**

**B** Blooming lupines are dear to Sugar Hill, evident by the annual Lupine Festival held in June. But the lupines that grow here are a non-native and invasive species. They crowd out native wildflowers, shortening their bloom season and restricting the time for pollinators like bees and butterflies to feed. At Whipple Farm, ACT is experimenting with different ways to limit the spread of non-native lupines without using chemicals that could affect other plants and animals. These experiments include changing when and how often mowing happens. Lupines are easy to spot by their “palm” of thin green leaves and a stalk of white, lavender, or purple flowers. **Can you find a lupine leaf?**

**C** Fields that aren’t mowed can quickly grow in with bushes. That means the preservation of the Whipple Farm requires lots of maintenance. To protect the homes of animals that nest in the grass or on the ground in the spring and summer, mowing and field care takes place in September.

Some of the animals using Whipple Farm as a seasonal home include field-nesting birds, like bobolink and savannah sparrow, and lots of native pollinators, including bees, butterflies, moths, and beetles. Small mammals, like chipmunks, voles, and moles also forage and make their home in the field. Raptors, like the American kestrel and red-tailed hawks, and larger mammals, like fox and bobcat, frequently hunt in, around, and above the field. **Do you see signs of any of these animals around you?**

**D** The area of wet ground between Whipple Farm and Peckett Pond is called a “riparian buffer.” The word “riparian” means land next to water. This forested riparian buffer protects the pond for beavers, muskrats, otter, frogs, turtles, and salamanders. It also provides habitat for foxes, coyotes, bobcats, bear, deer, moose, and fishers that forage in the field. ACT is planting more trees to make this riparian buffer wider for more protection and habitat. **Can you find trees visited by beavers or tracks of any of the animals who live there?**

**E** Coves, or “wind eddies” along the forest edge act as a shelter from the wind and are a place where butterflies, moths, beetles, and other insects collect. These insects attract bats and birds, who live in the high forest edge, down for a tasty meal. ACT has carefully cut along the forest edge to create these eddies.

**F** Tree “islands” provide hunting perches for birds of prey and safety for small field animals. Here you’ll find tree islands of white pine, paper birch, black cherry, and red oak. Some trees grow nuts and berries that feed birds and animals. Here the red oak trees produce acorns, an important food for bears, deer, turkeys, and lots of other animals. **Can you find a red oak acorn?**

**G** Large white pines tower over the edge of the Whipple Farm creating a supercanopy, meaning they grow much taller than the trees around them. These pines are perfect for birds of prey. From the supercanopy, these birds can hunt small animals in the field without having to fly through the thicker forest.

You can tell a white pine from other pine trees by the number of needles bunched together in what’s called a “bundle.” White pine has 5 needles in each bundle. **Can you find a white pine bundle?**

Whipple Farm highlights the delicate balance of our environment. Birds and insects pollinate fruit-bearing plants such as apple trees and blueberry bushes. These plants attract bears, turkey, fox, deer, and moose. Disrupting any element of this relationship affects the whole system. Bear scat can have the appearance of thick mud, while deer scat looks like a pile of small round pebbles. **Can you find some scat?** Another sign of animals is tracks. **Can you find tracks?**

