

Forest, Wildlife Management and Natural Areas

Newfield has an abundance of forest land which, along with other protected areas and agriculture, give Newfield the rural feel and character that its many residents seek. The forests are an important component, not only to Newfield's character, but to the mental, physical and economic health of Newfield residents. The forests clean the air we breathe, filter the water we drink, and provide habitat for animals we view and hunt. These areas also create opportunities for recreation and solitude; provide economic opportunities through forest management activities such as logging, maple syrup, firewood and lumber; and the forests also provide open space desired by many residents.

Newfield has not always been rich with forests. At the time of the early 1900's, Newfield was barely 20% forested. At that time agriculture was king but as time wore on, farms fell on hard times during the depression and many more were abandoned due to the newfound efficiency and productivity of Midwestern farmland; the forest slowly made its return. Currently, approximately 65% of Newfield's land base is forested, similar to the state-wide total.

Newfield forests and natural areas vary widely: from the headwaters to the Cayuga Lake Inlet, to the waterfalls of the Van Buskirk Gorge to the large tracts of forestland on Connecticut Hill and other State forestlands. The ownership of these valued lands varies just as much as the landscape itself: from State and County government to Cornell University and Ithaca College; from The Finger Lakes Land Trust to Greensprings Cemetery Association. But the majority of the forests are owned by private non-industrial forest owners; most who are Newfield residents, but many are non-residents from other communities throughout the US. This diversity adds to the richness of Newfield's landscape and culture.

There are a number of native and introduced forest pests that are threatening the very fabric of our forests: Exotic Insects such as the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Emerald Ash Borer, Beech Bark Scale Disease, Dutch Elm Disease, and the Asian Long Horned Beetle; as well as, non-native invasive plant species such as garlic mustard, multiflora rose, Japanese barberry, Japanese knotweed, and many more. To learn more about these challenges please review <http://nyis.info/>

The majority of areas identified in this chapter have already been identified by Tompkins County, Finger Lakes Land Trust and even New York State. Cornell University and Ithaca College also have a strong presence in Newfield and work closely with these other sources.

In this chapter you will see descriptions of ownership, maps, specific descriptions of our natural areas and some statistical data outlining our forest resource. You will also find descriptions and web links to these resources in our Town and other information including maps available through various other entities.

Connecticut Hill Wildlife Management Area

Connecticut Hill is the largest Wildlife Management Area in NY State, totaling 11,045 acres. It is located 16 miles southwest of Ithaca and 1 mile northeast of Alpine, astride the Tompkins-Schuyler County lines. State Route 13 provides access to the eastern side of the area. Approximately 5,747 acres are in the West side of the Town of Newfield. Property is tax exempt.

The area borders other natural areas such as Robert Treman State Park and is in very close proximity to Newfield State Forest, Cliffside State Forest, Arnot Forest and other Cornell-owned lands. It is managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation and is open to the public for many uses. A web link is below that details the area and permitted uses. www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/9331.html

Cliffside State Forest

Cliffside wins the prize as the least accessible public land in Tompkins County. The forest is located in the Southwest corner of Newfield and the Northwest corner of Cayuta, NY. It contains a total of 977 acres of which 303 acres are within Newfield. Property taxable for school taxes only.

There are no roads to the north. To the west, Morrell Road dead-ends short of the forest boundary. A narrow strip of private land separates the state forest from NY Route 224 to the south. It is contiguous to the Arnot Forest which allows the best access to the forest. <http://www.ilovethefingerlakes.com/recreation/stateforests-cliffside.htm>

Newfield State Forest

The Newfield State forest is located in the southwest area of Newfield and is comprised of 1,552 acres. It is contiguous to the Arnot Forest and Cliffside Forest. Although it seems to receive few visitors, this forest can offer pleasant and challenging hikes. It can be reached from NY Route 13 by turning east on Bull Hill Road, or by taking any of a few roads south from the village of Newfield. There are several trailheads from Chaffee Creek Road (purple arrows on the map below), most notably the pipeline access track, which forms an obvious intersection with the road. Property taxable for school taxes only and public use is permitted.

<http://www.ilovethefingerlakes.com/recreation/stateforests-newfield.htm>

Tompkins County Forest - Newfield

The county owns various parcels of land in Newfield for the purpose of Forest Management and research. The total land area is approximately 478 acres located contiguously and in proximity to the Newfield State Forest and the Arnot Forest. The forest is managed by Tompkins County and is incorporated in their "Forest Management Plan". Property is tax exempt.

Cornell's University Arnot Forest

The Arnot Teaching and Research Forest, "the Arnot", is situated in the hilly, forested Southern region of Newfield and Northern region of Van Etten, New York. The Arnot (pronounced R-not) is owned by Cornell University and managed by the Department of Natural Resources in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CAL S). It is the largest actively managed forest owned by Cornell University. The Arnot provides a place for Cornell faculty and students to carry out elements of the three-part mission of CAL S: Teaching, Extension, and Research, in service to the citizens of New York. The current Arnot Forest is 4,075 acres of which 1,324 acres are contained within Newfield. Property is Tax Exempt and open to the public. The web link details the area and the permitted uses: www.arnotforest.info

Cornell University's Other Natural Areas – There are various parcels in Newfield utilized and managed by Cornell. These areas are tax exempt and open to public use.

Carter Creek at Connecticut Hill (426 acres) – This area is contiguous to Connecticut Hill Wildlife area and is primarily forested. www.cornellplantations.org

Fischer Old-Growth Forest (41 acres) – This area is located off of Route 13 just east of Stella's Barn. It consists of many old growth trees and is actively visited by Cornell students. www.greentieredu.wordpress.com

Ithaca College Bob Robinson Preserve

The Bob Robinson Family Preserve, located off Piper Road, features many rare ecological communities. The property consists of 77.05 acres and contains unique parts of the VanBuskirk Gorge. The goal is to assist in maintaining and improving the diverse ecological character of the area. To keep this site functioning and safeguard its biodiversity, this area will be mainly left unaltered. There will still be possibilities for student and faculty research in the area to increase understanding of this site and enhance educational experience. Property is tax exempt and not for public use.

***NOTE:** Accessing the preserve is by permit only. Contact ICNL for more information or download a permit application. No hunting is allowed. <http://www.ithaca.edu/naturallands/robinsonpreserve/>

Ithaca College Natural Resource Reserve

The Ithaca College Natural Resource Reserve is more intensely managed than the Bob Robinson Family Preserve and consists of 48.11 acres. Unlike the Preserve across the road, the Ithaca College Natural Resource Reserve will be mainly used to explore the creation of non-timber forest products like mushrooms and ginseng. This will give Ithaca College students opportunities to do field research and become involved in Ithaca College Natural Lands. There is also hope that by encouraging the cultivation of non-timber forest products sustainable economic benefits will result. In addition, this site will also be used as an educational tool for forestry and other wildlife. Areas of this reserve will be altered for research and educational purposes. Property is tax exempt and not for public use.

***NOTE:** Accessing preserve is by permit only. Contact ICNL for information. No hunting is allowed. <http://www.ithaca.edu/naturallands/icnrr/>

VanBuskirk Gulf

The two previous parcels are part of the VanBuskirk Gulf, an area that has become a Natural Feature Focus Area in the Tompkins County Plan. <http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/nffa/docs/VanBuskirkGulf.pdf>

Finger Lakes Land Trust

The FLLT has one property in Newfield located in the Northeast corner of the town. The parcel was formally owned by the Babcock family and consist 124 acres of which 81 acres are in Newfield. It is located in close proximity to Lower Treman Park. Property is tax exempt. Please visit: www.fllt.org/news/index.php?id=5

Useful websites:

Newfield from 1870 & 1970 looking at Protts Hill from Main St.:



This picture describes the significant change in forest cover which has occurred over the last one hundred plus years. More information at: www.newfieldhistoricalsociety.org/

Invasive pests' clearinghouse website:

NY Invasive Species Clearinghouse website NYIS.INFO is your gateway to science-based information, breaking news, and new and innovative tools to prevent, detect, control and manage biological invaders in New York. NYIS.INFO links scientific research, State and Federal management programs and policy information, outreach education and grassroots invasive species action to help you become part of the battle against invasive species in and around New York. <http://nyis.info/Default.aspx>

Environmental Management Council Website:

Information on the Tompkins County Unique Natural Areas (UNAs)

Here you can find many of the presentations, brochures, and other educational materials that the EMC has prepared. In addition to viewing these documents online, feel free to come browse the EMC library of over five hundred environmentally-related documents that are historical in nature. Topics such as UNA's, open burning, wind energy, Lake Source cooling and gas exploration to name a few. Newfield has 15 UNAs in the Town comprising 6,167 acres totaling 16% of our land base. http://www.tompkins-co.org/emc/educational_materials.htm

Tompkins County website:

Contains maps, GIS mapping capability, roads and a host of other information about the county and its governmental workings. <http://www.tompkins-co.org>

Tompkins County Natural Resources Inventory GIS website:

A great interactive website for mapping Tompkins County <http://gisweb.tompkins-co.org/tcimap/CORE/MAIN.ASP>

Link to information on aerial photographs for Tompkins County http://www.tompkins-co.org/planning/nri/analysis_resources.pdf

The Finger Lakes Trail Conference:

The Finger Lakes Trail System consists of the main Finger Lakes Trail (FLT) which goes from the Pennsylvania-New York border in Allegany State Park to the Long Path in the Catskill Forest Preserve as well as five branch and 14 loop trails all of which extend from the main FLT. The main FLT is 562.9 miles in length; the branch and loop trails total 236 miles. The trail system was and continues to be built and maintained by organizational as well as individual and family trail sponsors. In all cases but one (the Interloken Trail in Schuyler County which is maintained by personnel of the U.S. Forest Service) these groups and individuals are volunteers. The Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) was organized in 1962 "to promote and coordinate the building, maintenance, and protection of the FLT System." One of the organizational trail sponsors is the Cayuga Trails Club (CTC) which has as its "home" Ithaca, NY.

The entire FLT system, located almost equally on private and public land, is open for use by the general public with no fees charged for its use. It is intended for foot travel. Within Tompkins County approximately 16 miles of the main FLT is located in the town of Newfield. <http://www.fingerlakestrail.org>

Watershed Forestry Resource Guide:

This website is a central clearinghouse for all things related to forests and watersheds. There have been many recent efforts towards managing urban forests for watershed health that have resulted in a variety of highly useful tools and training materials. This site compiles these resources into a format that can be easily accessed and downloaded. www.forestrytoolkit.squarespace.com

Conserving Natural Areas and Wildlife in Your Community

Smart Growth Strategies for Protecting the Biological Diversity of New York's Hudson River Valley

Conserving Natural Areas and Wildlife in Your Community is a guide for anyone involved or interested in biodiversity conservation and local land use planning and decision-making, including elected officials, volunteer board members, and interested citizens and organizations. It describes how to find biological information about your community and the tools and techniques that local governments can use to conserve natural areas and wildlife. <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/50083.html>

NYS Open Space Plan Link

“...the State, through the Governor’s Quality Communities initiative, has embarked on a comprehensive effort in partnership with local governments, private non-profit conservation organizations and private citizens to promote local open space programs...”

“...guided by the priorities identified in the Open Space Plan and funded in large measure through the State’s dedicated Environmental Protection Fund.” <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/47990.html>

Tompkins County Assessment Department <http://www.tompkins-co.org/assessment/>

The Return of Agricultural Lands to Forest <http://www.townofnewfieldny.com/planning/Bills.pdf>