

Bradbury Mountain State Park

Summit trail, Northern Loop Trail, Bluff Trail, Ski Trail. 1 mile, easy.



Just like animals leave footprints, scrapes, and nests in a forest, people also leave their mark on a landscape. Can you tell that Bradbury Mountain was once part of a farm? Let's see what signs of people we can find!

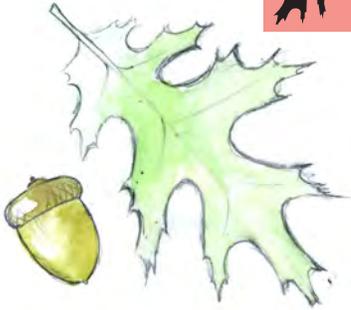
Instructions: Each icon on the board below represents a feature visible from the trail in Bradbury Mountain State Park. Use the attached map and descriptions to find each feature. When you find a feature, cross off all pictures of it on your board. When you've crossed off five in a row, you've won!





The Last Tree Standing

Red oak trees have leaves that are longer than they are wide, and acorns as their fruit (see picture). Find a red oak tree that has a much thicker trunk than the trees around it.



Why is this tree so much bigger than the trees around it? Many years ago, when Bradbury Mountain was part of farm, almost all of the trees were cleared for pastures. Only a few of the trees, like this red oak, were left behind to give the cows a shady place to rest or to mark the edges of neighbor's property. When farming ended in this area, forests grew back where the pastures were. Younger trees quickly surrounded this big, old oak; we can tell them apart because they are smaller. In fact, this old oak is probably the "parent" of many of the nearby oak trees because it was one of the only sources of acorns when trees started returning to the pasture.



Making Hides into Leather

Hemlock trees have short needles and cones the size of marbles (see picture). Find a hemlock tree.



How did our ancestors make animal hides into leather? First, they would cut down hemlock trees, like this one, and strip off the bark. The bark would be ground up into small, oatmeal-sized bits and soaked in water. The water would turn brown like tea as the tanning chemicals came out of the bark. People soaked animal hides in the brown water as a first step in the tanning process.



Animal Homes

Just beneath the summit of Bradbury Mountain, look for overhanging rocks where animals, or people, can hide.



Gray fox

Pretend you're a porcupine. Rocky crevices are a great place for you to make your den, or home. From here, you can search for leaves, grasses, and fruits to eat in the summer, and climb the nearby hemlock trees to eat the wood, buds, and needles in the winter.



Gray squirrel

Though this forest is still recovering from historic farming, it's a great home for plenty of animal species. This ledge is too busy with human traffic to house a porcupine, but chances are, there are a few porcupines living in Bradbury Mountain State Park, as well as plenty of squirrels, deer, foxes, and songbirds. In the spring, the summit is a great place to watch migrating hawks as they ride the rising currents of air in front of Bradbury Mountain.



Trees with Twins

Find a tight group of trees growing close together.



These trees grew back from the stump of one tree. When some types of tree, like red oak or red maple, are broken by wind or cut down by people, their roots stay alive! Clusters of new trees, called stump sprouts, can grow out of a single stump. As the trees get older, the stump rots away, leaving behind the unusual clustered trees. Stump sprouting is often a sign that people have logged the forest.



Keeping the Cows In

Find a stone wall.

Why are there stone walls in the woods?

An escaped cow could do a lot of damage to a neighbor's farm or garden. In fact, runaway cows were such a problem for Maine's first towns that many towns made laws that farmers must keep their cows inside walls at least four and a half feet high! That's probably taller than you!



A Home for Lost Cows

Find the cattle pound, a small pen surrounded by tall stone walls. What was this used for?



Imagine you found a cow in your garden eating your vegetables. What would you do? Two hundred years ago, people would lead or chase the lost animal to this square pen (cattle pound). The cow would be kept in the cattle pound until the owner paid for the damage that the animal had done to his neighbor's garden. When the fine was paid, the farmer was allowed to take the cow back to his farm.



An Abandoned Mine

Look for a short spur trail that leads to an L-shaped quarry.



Why were people digging here? Bradbury Mountain is a good spot to find a special mineral called feldspar. Feldspar is ground up and mixed into clay. After the clay is shaped into plates, bowls, or other pottery, it is fired in special ovens (kilns) to make it hard and watertight. The feldspar mined here helped potters by letting them fire their pottery at lower temperatures.



Make our Forest Healthier!

With your parent's help and permission, collect a piece of litter from the trail. When you return to the parking lot, throw it in the nearest trash can.

Picking up trash doesn't just make our forest prettier, it also makes it healthier! Like the stone walls that zig-zag through this forest, litter can stay in the landscape for a long time. Garbage is a lot more dangerous to our environment than a stone wall, though. A piece of plastic will take hundreds of years to break down, and even then it will continue to exist as tiny particles that can hurt animals if they are eaten.



Leave No Footprints

Don't venture into the woods. Stay on the trail for the entire hike.

Walking in the woods can be fun in your backyard, but Bradbury Mountain gets far more visitors than your yard does! Too many feet wandering off the trail can hurt plants and scare animals. If you stay on the trail for your entire visit to Bradbury Mountain State Park, cross off the footprint square on your card.

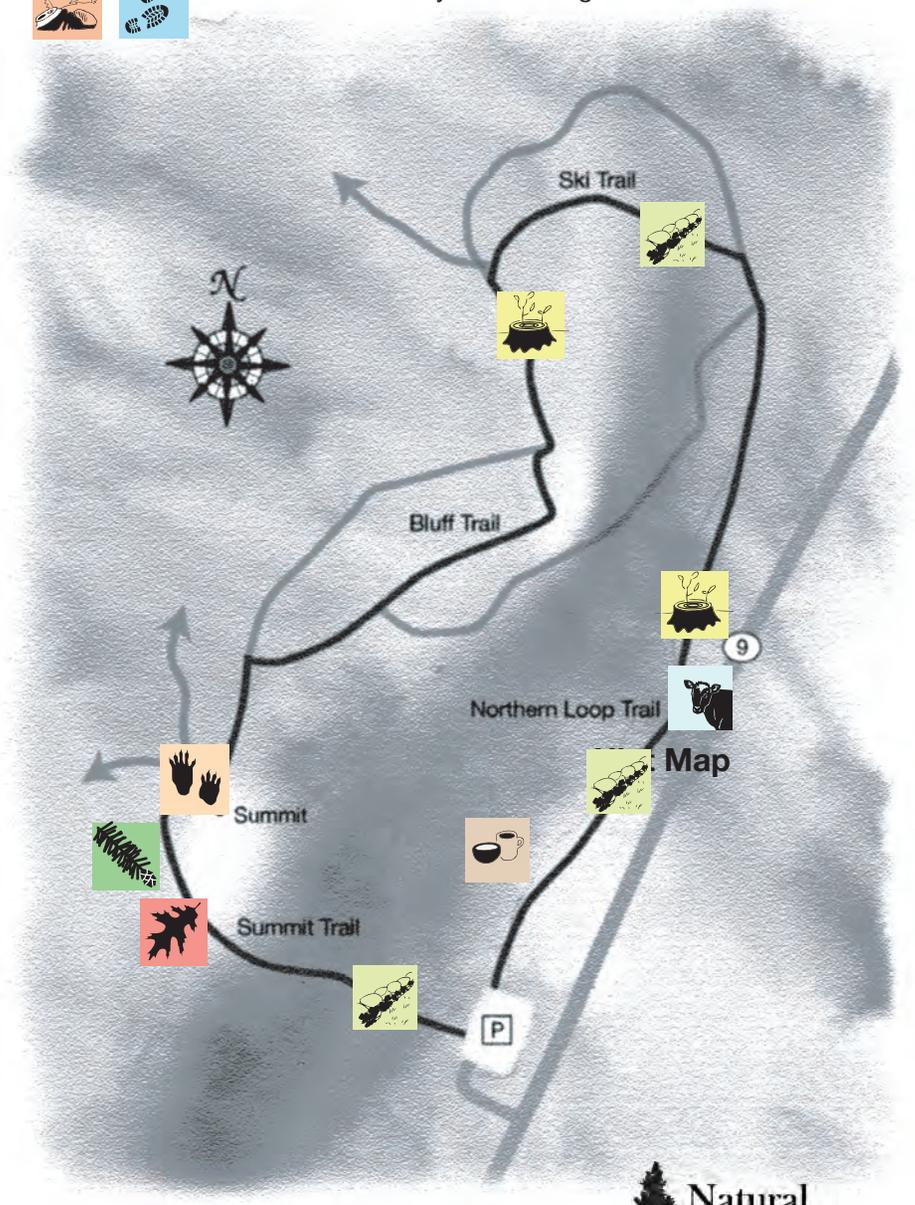
Bradbury Mountain State Park Maps

Don't make a wrong turn! Use this trail map to help you stay on the right track during your treasure hunt!



Having trouble finding something? Use this hint map to help you! Fold the paper in half to keep it hidden until you need it.

  Can be satisfied anywhere along the trail.



Natural Heritage Hikes is a project of the Maine Natural Areas Program in partnership with the Maine Trail Finder website. For more Natural Heritage Hikes, please visit www.mainetrailfinder.com. Written by Kelly Finan, University of Vermont Field Naturalist Program.

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