

WELCOME TO BEAR SWAMP STATE FOREST - 3,411 acres.

Bear Swamp State Forest was named after the large Bear Swamp wetland complex. The State Forest was established to reduce soil erosion, to protect water quality, to produce forest products, and to provide future recreational opportunities. Land clearing and farm settlement peaked around 1860. Marginal soils led to a slow decline in farm acreage until the Great Depression when economically unsuccessful farms were abandoned. When the State acquired the property in 1931, more than three quarters of the property had been pasture or tilled acreage and was suffering from poor farming practices. The wooded sections of the new state forest showed signs of poor management. The Conservation Department immediately started planting the open farm land with tree seedlings. Some of the planting was done by the Civilian Conservation Corps from nearby camp S-96 in Sempronius. These seedlings grew to become the Norway spruce red pine and white pine plantations that can be seen today. Through good forest management the forest soils have improved, and today the land has recovered from the past mis-management. Bear Swamp State Forest is now a mixture of hardwoods and maturing softwoods.

MANAGEMENT

DEC foresters have the responsibility of managing Bear Swamp State Forest and are guided in the management by the Hewitt-Cayuga Highlands Unit Management Plan. The management goal of Bear Swamp State Forest is to maintain a healthy forest ecosystem, to provide recreational opportunities, and to improve the forest for future generations. Forest product sales are one of the instruments land managers use to implement actions to meet many of the goals and objectives. There is now a rich, diverse and productive forest which is available for a variety of activities. Eco-system based management principles are being employed to ensure the biological improvement and protection of the forest ecosystem and to provide the public with many benefits of forest land.

RECREATION

Bear Swamp State Forest is a popular destination for recreationists. The scenic swamp, abundant wildlife, challenging terrain and miles of trails have made the area a great place for bird watching, cross-country skiing, fishing, geo-caching, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, mountain biking, orienteering, snowmobiling and trapping. The 14.3 mile Bear Swamp State Forest Trails are a multiple use trail system. All trails are designated by color and are marked with circular DEC trail marker signs (see map on reverse). The trails have been designed to offer family-based cross-country skiing, hiking, horseback riding and mountain biking. Trails are available to serve beginners and intermediate users. There are 12.5 miles of snowmobile trails on Bear Swamp State Forest. The trails include 2.5 miles of corridor trail and the 10-mile Bear Swamp/Ridge Road loop trail.

Red Trails - 3.8 miles - The trails starts on the flat land off of Rt. 41A, loops downhill to Bear Swamp Creek and then climbs up hill back to the trail register on Harnett Road. Trail sections & their lengths are: Red 1 - 1.4 miles, Red 2 - .8 miles, Red 4 - .4 miles, Red 5 - .5 miles & Red 6 - .4 miles. Snowmobiling is allowed on part of Red 1 & on Red 3&6.

Blue Trails - 4.1 miles - The trails offer a contrast between easy travel on the lower parts of the trails and tougher uphill climbs to the higher parts of the forest. Entrance

to these trails can be gained from the Curtin Road parking lot. . B5 is a .2 mile dead end trail that offers a spectacular view of Bear Swamp. Along side trail B-2 is the high point in Cayuga County with an elevation above 1,860 feet. Trail sections and their lengths are: Blue 1 - 1 mile, Blue 2 - .8 miles, Blue 3 - .5 miles, Blue 4 - .2 miles, Blue 5 - .2 miles, Blue 6 - .4 miles & Blue 7 - .7 miles. Snowmobiling is allowed on part of trail Blue 1.

Yellow Trails - 6.4 miles - The trails offers the ease of traveling on level ground along with the challenge of hill climbing. Trail sections and their lengths are: Yellow 1 - 1.3 miles, Yellow 2 - .8 miles, Yellow 3 - .7 miles, Yellow 4 - .2 miles, Yellow 5 - .3 miles, Yellow 6 - 1.7 miles, Yellow 7 - .2 miles, Yellow 8 - .2 miles & Yellow 9 - 1.0

GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS

State Forests are open for public use. For protection of the resource and all users, the following guidelines and regulations must be followed:

- *Stay on the trails marked with DEC trail markers. These trails have been properly located where the soil will support intense use. The trails should be serviceable for many years with minimum maintenance.
- *Do not make new trails or use un-signed trails. There are many logging roads that are unsuitable for intense recreational use. Every effort has been made to minimize soil erosion on the marked recreational trails.
- *Unauthorized cutting of live trees is prohibited.
- *Camping is not permitted within 150 feet of open water, roads or trails. Smaller groups do less damage to the environment. A camping permit is required for groups of 10 persons or more.
- *Cooking is more efficient with a camping stove. If you must use an open fire, use only dead wood which has fallen down. Make sure the fire won't spread. Afterward, pour water on the fire and stir the coals until they are cold to the touch.
- *Please help keep this area as natural as possible. If you pack it in, pack it out.
- *Streams and springs are our water supply. Don't put anything in them you wouldn't drink. Don't wash dishes in them.
- *Nature will take care of human waste. Dig a shallow hole in the forest floor 4-6" deep at least 150 feet from water, trails and campsites. Cover with leaf litter and dirt.
- *In consideration of others, especially horse and mountain bike users, please keep your pets under control. Restrain your pet on a leash when others approach. Clean up and bury droppings away from trails, camping areas and water. Keep your pet away from drinking water sources. Bring water to your pet.
- *Treat all other users with respect. Mountain bikes and hikers should yield to horses. Horses can become skittish or spooked by sudden movements, leading to the injury of the rider and the horse. Do not attempt any activity which could put others at risk.
- *Motorized vehicle use on Bear Swamp State Forest trails is prohibited. This includes cars, trucks, ATVs, and motorcycles.
- *Snowmobile use, except where marked on Trails B1, R1, R3 & R6, is prohibited on the Multiple Use Trails.

Comments and questions on the Bear Swamp State Forest are always welcome.

Please send comments to New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Lands & Forests, 1285 Fisher Ave., Cortland, NY 13045--or call (607) 753-3095