



VERMONT WOODLANDS ASSOCIATION

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TOUR OF VERNON'S UNIQUE BLACK GUM SWAMPS TO BE OFFERED

On Thursday, July 16, Windham County Forester Bill Guenther will lead a walking tour of the famous black gum swamps located on J. Maynard Miller Memorial Town Forest in Vernon. This outing will be sponsored by the Woodland Owner's Association and the Vermont Woodlands Association.

This is a unique forest that supports a fairly extensive system of several swamps that include black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*). This species is not rare 400 miles to the south, but in Vermont it is a fluke from the past when the climate was warmer. There are some trees here that are purported to be over 400 years old. We will walk a fairly easy loop trail around the main swamp and explore the unique ecology that this forest offers. The walk will be held rain or shine. In fact, this one is almost better in the rain as the forest has what Bill has always felt to be a medieval-like quality.

Maynard Miller, a local dairy farmer, for whom the forest is named, convinced the town back in the early 70s of the importance of this tract and persuaded the town to buy it to ensure its permanent protection. Unfortunately Mr. Miller passed away in the late 90s. We'll miss his presence as he usually accompanied groups out to his beloved forest.

We will meet at 5:30 and depart at 5:45 sharp at the cul-de-sac parking at the Miller Forest. To get there, travel south on Rt. 142 from Brattleboro, going through Vernon Village. After going a bit over a mile from the Village, make a RIGHT turn onto Pond Road (under the train overpass). Travel down Pond Road to Huckle Hill Road (town swimming pool is on your left) and make a RIGHT onto Huckle Hill Rd. Go out Huckle Hill Road and when you come to a "Y" fork, go RIGHT onto Basin Road and go to its terminus at the paved parking lot where you'll find the sign for the Miller Forest. While the trail is a fairly easy walk, we always encourage participants to wear sturdy walking shoes or boots. We will complete our walk around 7:30 p.m.