

J. Maynard Miller Municipal Forest

Vernon Vermont's 469 acre municipal forest was purchased by the Town in 1973 from Jacques Delmarre for \$175,000.00. It was known by a number of names--the Basin Property, Delmarre Property, or Black Gum Swamp. At the 1981 Vernon Town Meeting, Selectman Antonio Abbiati made the motion to remove the various unofficial titles and rename the property the J. Maynard Miller Forest.

Mr. Miller (1905-1998), a local dairy farmer, spent countless hours working with foresters outlining timber management plans, as well as mapping out and building recreational trails. The Town Meeting motion and subsequent renaming of the property was most certainly a fitting tribute.

Today the forest is used for recreation, as a source for firewood and timber, and for habitat protection. The current 3.25 mile trail system, maintained by the Vernon Recreation Department, takes visitors through a variety of habitats, including two of the black gum swamps. Two picnic areas with views to the east are also located along the trails.

For more information:

Town of Vernon
Recreation Department
567 Governor Hunt Rd
Vernon, VT 05354
802-254-9251
recreation@vernonvt.org



Vernon's Black Gum Swamps

The Vernon Black Gum Swamps are amazing places where large, rare, and ancient black gum trees (also known as tupelo trees) tower above a vibrant green forest floor covered in sphagnum mosses. The swamps are a natural community rare in Vermont, found here at the northern edge of their normal range, and contain some very old trees (a few black gums are over 400 years old).

The swamps are home to seven rare and uncommon plants and one rare animal (rare species are imperiled or vulnerable in the state and have a high risk of extirpation, or local extinction).

The crowns of the old black gum trees and the scars along their trunks are records of the weather events (wind, snow, ice, and fire) that have shaped the swamps over time.

Sphagnum mosses grow on a deep layer of peat that is up to 11 feet deep in places. The moss ground cover is interspersed with hummocks of ferns; cinnamon and royal ferns dominate. This pronounced hummock-and-hollow topography, due to fern rootstocks and rotting logs, creates a mosaic of water and light regimes, allowing a range of species to inhabit the swamps. Mountain laurel, a shrub uncommon throughout the rest of Vermont, is abundant in some of these swamps. The very rare smooth holly (a shrub) and the rare narrow blue-eyed grass are also present in some of the swamps, as are ten species of amphibians. The waters of the swamps are highly acidic.

- text adapted from Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's Vernon Black Gum Swamps brochure.

*Map and brochure created by
Windham Regional Commission
February 2019*

J. Maynard Miller Municipal Forest

Vernon, Vermont

*Home of the
Black Gum Swamps*




Trails of the J. Maynard Miller Town Forest Vernon, Vermont

Loop trails:

- (R)— **Red Loop, 0.75 miles**
red markers; leads to one of the black gum swamps
- (W)— **White Loop, 1.6 miles**
white markers; a longer walk around the perimeter of the trail system

Other trails:

- (G)— **Millers Crossing, 0.25 miles**
green markers
- (T)— **Footbridge Trail, 0.1 miles**
tan markers
- (B)— **Delmarre Divide, 0.25 miles**
blue markers
- (Y)— **High Point Trail, 0.25 miles**
yellow markers
- (O)— **State Line Loop, 0.4 miles**
orange markers

 Picnic table and vista

 Black gum swamp

0.1 mile
500 feet

