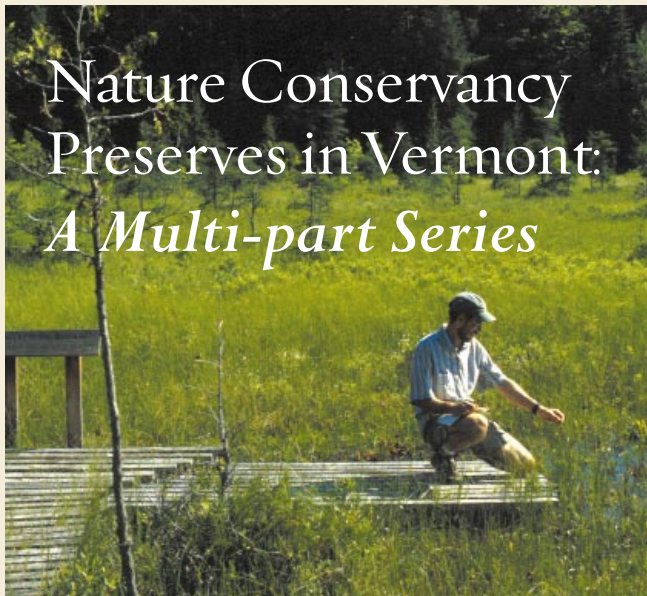




Rose Paul



Nature Conservancy Preserves in Vermont: A Multi-part Series

Nineteen preserves maintained by The Nature Conservancy of Vermont are easily accessible to the public by trails or waterways. As a member of The Nature Conservancy, your support helps us protect special places like these and many others around the state.

Over the next many issues of The Oak Log, we will bring you profiles of each of these preserves. You may also download these profiles or a copy of our preserve guide from our website at nature.org/vermont.

We invite you to visit and enjoy. But please remember that these places are sensitive and important to all of us. Tread lightly and stay on the designated paths and boardwalks so that these fragile places can last for many generations to come.

CHICKERING BOG



Chickering Bog began to form when glaciers receded from Vermont over 10,000 years ago and left behind a bedrock basin that filled with water. The pond that was formed slowly filled in with vegetation. As these plants died, they accumulated and only partially decomposed, forming a layer of peat that has continued to thicken over the years, reaching an impressive 30 feet deep in the northern part of Chickering Bog. It is the peat that gives the fen its semi-solid, “quaking” quality. A small patch of open water is all that remains of the original pond.

Many thousands of years after it began to form, the area around the peat-filled pond passed into human ownership. The Nature Conservancy first began its protection work at Chickering Bog with a purchase of 30 acres from the

Chickering Family and 28.8 acres from neighbor William Steel. An additional gift of more than 50 acres from the Chickering family in 1990 allowed the Conservancy to augment the much-needed buffer of protected land around the fen and make room for a new loop trail for visitors. When you visit the fen, please stay on the boardwalk.

Chickering Bog hosts a highly diverse plant community that includes sundews, pitcher plants, cotton grass, blue flag irises, cranberries, blueberries, and several species of orchids. Northern white cedar, larch, and white pine also grow on the open bog mat.

Frogs, wood ducks, crows, nuthatches, pileated woodpeckers, and the tracks of mammals like bear, deer, and snowshoe hare have been spotted at Chickering Bog.

Driving Directions

Chickering Bog Natural area is located in East Montpelier and Calais. To get there from Montpelier, take Route 2 east 6.5 miles to East Montpelier. Then take Route 14 about 3.2 miles to North Montpelier where you will see Riverbend Store and North Montpelier Pond on your right. Continue on Route 14 for 1.1 miles until you see Lightening Ridge Road on the left, which is marked by a sign for the Calais Elementary School. Turn left and go 1.6 miles to a private driveway on the left. Please park your car on the right-hand side of the road, not in the driveway. The Conservancy trail begins to the left of the private driveway. You have to look hard, but there is a green post with the initials “TNC.” The trail starts here and goes up the hill.

