



TNC Photo Archive



The star of the show at Eshqua Bog is the showy lady's slipper, a member of the orchid family. Visitation to the area generally peaks in mid-June when the lady's slippers are in full bloom. We request that visitors please stay on the boardwalk and refrain from picking the flowers.

ESHQUA BOG



When the land that is now Eshqua Bog Natural Area was put up for sale, local naturalist Graceann Ridlon called The Nature Conservancy for help. Eshqua Bog had long been recognized for its natural beauty and visited by members of the local Hartland Nature Club who wanted to see it protected. Working with the New England Wild Flower Society, the Conservancy was able to buy the 8-acre wetland and the surrounding 33 acres in 1990. The two organizations now co-own and manage the natural area.

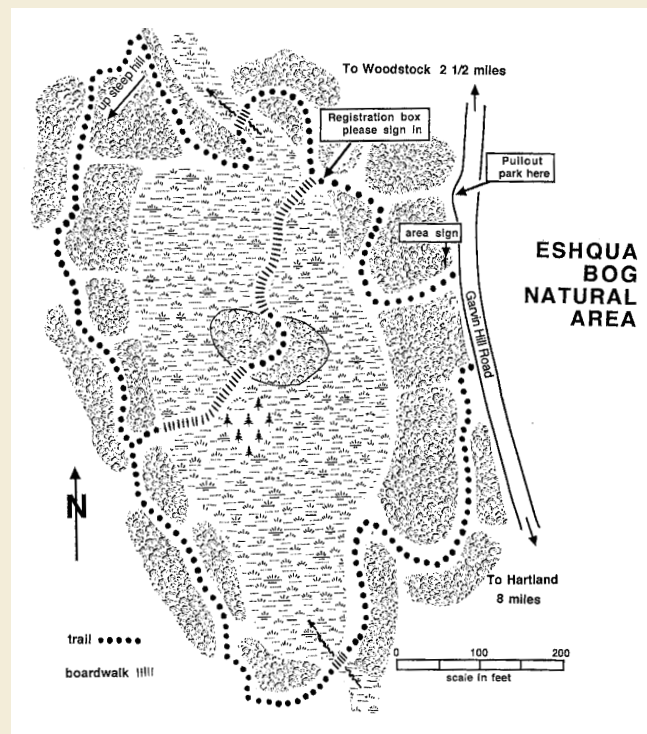
Eshqua Bog is not a bog in the strict sense, but rather a marshy depression at the base of a hill where the groundwater seeps out. Most of the area is calcareous marsh, but some sections are more fen-like, with such plants as pitcher plant, sundew, cranberry, leatherleaf, and buckbean. Especially interesting is the very large population of hundreds of showy lady's slipper and a small population of yellow lady's slipper.

A number of animals use the fen, including deer, snowshoe hare, and red squirrel. Eshqua Bog is also a haven for many species of dragonflies.

A 200-foot boardwalk is the centerpiece of a one-mile trail system, which both encircles and passes through the bog. From the boardwalk, visitors can experience the unusual and rare natural history of this plant community first hand, without impacting its fragile ecology. A memorial bench constructed by the Hartland Nature Club stands near the beginning of the trail in memory of Graceann Ridlon and her work to protect Eshqua Bog.

Driving Directions

Eshqua Bog Natural Area is located in Hartland. Traveling east on Route 4 from Woodstock village, take a right onto Hartland Hill Road. Travel about one mile until you reach a fork. Take a right onto Garvin Hill Road. Travel about one mile and look for the Nature Conservancy sign on the right. There is a small pullover on the right for parking.



Fun fact: "Bog" versus "Fen"

Scientists use the term "fen" for peatlands like Chickering Bog and Eshqua Bog. True bogs are highly acidic and low in nutrients, and they receive water only by way of rain and snowfall. Fens are less acidic and are fed by groundwater that carries important plant nutrients like calcium and magnesium from the surrounding bedrock. Also, bogs are typically dominated by sphagnum mosses while fens are characterized by an abundance of sedges and non-sphagnum mosses.