



Bill Hill Quest

Thetford, Vermont

Moderate

Historical, Natural, Vista

Trail

1:00

Please bring binoculars, and a field guide

To get there: From Exit 14 off I-91 follow Rt. 113 West up over Thetford Hill and down into Thetford Center. Turn left onto Tucker Hill Rd. Just past the covered bridge turn left into the driveway and park at the "Trailhead Parking" sign.

Overview:

The farm on Bill Hill was established in the early nineteenth century and cleared for cultivation, pasturage, and hayfields. In 1963, Thetford writer Noel Perrin bought the Bill Hill property and, leaving his New York City roots, began a dual life of teaching and part-time farming. Over the following four decades, Perrin learned from his land as he worked to shape it, harvest from it, and maintain the open view from the top of Bill Hill that he loved so much. Noel Perrin wanted to assure that the land would exist in its undeveloped state in perpetuity. In 1984, he placed his property under a Grant of Conservation Restrictions to the town of Thetford. Fifteen years later, he transferred the grant to a conservation easement under the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT). UVLT is a regional land conservancy working to protect farmland, forests, wetlands, and waterways, wildlife habitat, trails and scenic areas in the Vermont and New Hampshire towns of the Upper Valley. Since 1985, UVLT has protected over 380 parcels of land encompassing more than 34,000 acres. www.uvlt.org.

Clues:

Before you start just look around
What near this Quest trail can be found?

A sugar house, ready to go

Which might be envied by Thoreau!

In feet, it counts eight by eleven,
In syrup, sometimes twenty-seven

Gallons per year for Mr.Perrin,
Who for the maple trees was caring.

Across the driveway steps lead down
(Invasive knotweed covers ground),

And straight ahead, without a hitch
You see the falls and the covered bridge.

This path follows the river's bends.
And at Union Village Dam it ends!

But YOU go back: The Trailhead Parking leads
To an old gearbox in the weeds.

Who used it? Maybe Henry Bill,
Who gave the name to our hill?

No, he lived in the eighteen hundreds.
The land was cleared and sheep here wandered.

Now start your Quest where you can name
"White Pine" – "White Birch", they form a frame.

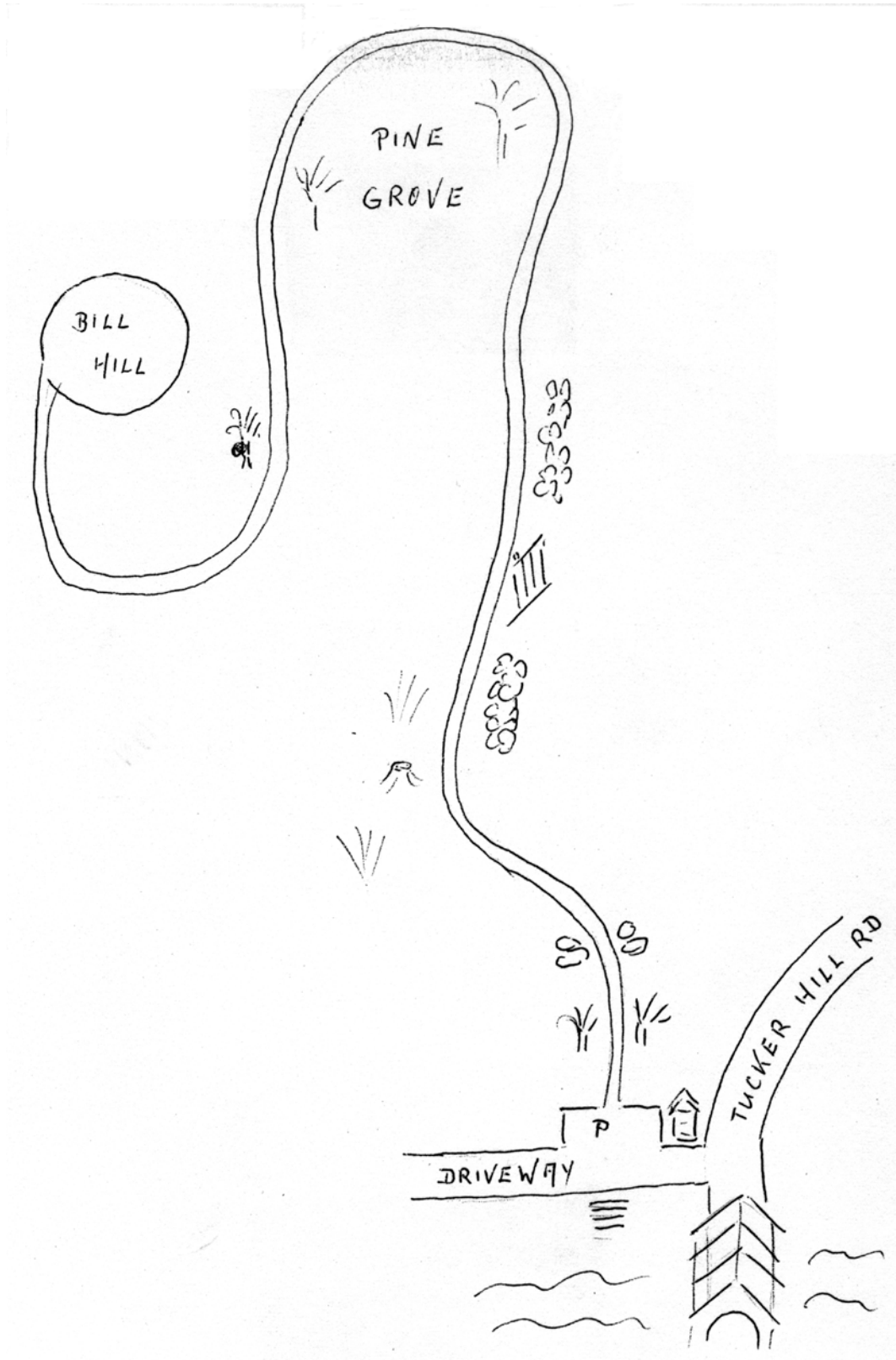
Light blue blazes you will have to follow.
They guide you through a grassy hollow

Until you reach a rocky cleft.
Twin spruce trees guard it on your left.

The trail climbs up along barbed wire,
Then joins the stone wall a bit higher.

These walls, once built to keep sheep in,
Restored they were by Noel Perrin.

Stumps on the left are soft and spongy;
How many years the tree rings tell ye?



Beyond the metal gate in the wall,
A stand of red pines straight and tall

Was planted on the steeper slope.
The trail goes round it and your hope

For better views is soon rewarded:
The open pasture does afford it!

Caused by a fungus, you'll soon see
A "Black Knot" on a cherry tree

Before the upper field you round,
Where weeds, berries & wild flowers abound.

"A lump of glacial debris" way up on top
Marks where your Questing will stop.

T'was Noel Perrin's favorite view,
Conserved for people just like you,

Who wander up and always will
Enjoy the sights from old "Bill Hill".