

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut does not include any sites greater than 40 acres that researchers are now agreed are old growth. We describe below one controversial site and several sites with lesser old-growth acreage.

Metzler speculates that the trap ridges in Connecticut's central valley likely support old-growth Eastern Red-cedar. The trap ridges were created from basaltic rock by volcanic eruptions during the Triassic period, 200 million years ago. "Trap" means "stair," and describes the step-like arrangement of the very dry, exposed rock. Some of the trees are quite gnarled, yet only two inches in diameter. As of early 2002, nobody had cored the trees to determine their age (Metzler 2002).

A cedar swamp in North Madison supports a stand of some thirty acres of closed-canopy, dense, almost pure Atlantic White-cedar. The cedar is 150 years in age or older. The stand has been owned by the regional water authority since the 1920s (Siccama 2002).

Cathedral Pines, northwest Connecticut (Litchfield County)

A 42-acre preserve of uncertain status. Thirty-four acres were leveled by a tornado in 1989. The Nature Conservancy, which owns the site, wisely refused to salvage cut the acreage, and it is gradually recovering. The 8 acres that were not blown down have a super-canopy of White Pine under which hemlocks and hardwoods grow. Metzler has described Cathedral Pines as the "result of old field succession" (1990). Kershner and Leverett characterize it as a mixture of second growth and old growth. They note that the oldest hemlocks and pines at the site were growing before settlement around Cornwall, but that most of the pines that survived the tornado are only 200 to 225 years old. They believe that these pines grew up after fire, blowdown, or logging in the late 18th century (2002). Tom Siccama reports that Yale School of Forestry has studied the site and has sections from three pines that were 300 years old and that experienced "a huge release" 200 years ago. Other trees that the researchers examined were 200 years or younger (2002). If the origin of the younger trees were known to be natural fire or blowdown, we would regard the site as old growth; but if the trees grew up after logging, we would not. The hemlock adelgid has reached the site (Siccama 2002).

Sage's Ravine, northwestern Connecticut (Litchfield County)

In the Taconic range, a ravine with old-growth hemlock, oaks, and other species. Tom Wessel estimates the old growth in the ravine as 100 or more acres. However, the ravine straddles the Connecticut/Massachusetts border, and much, if not all, of the old growth is actually in Massachusetts. Additional ravine systems in the Taconic range that Wessel has seen from a distance appear to contain old growth. The Taconic range has experienced a great deal of fire, but the fire did not reach into the ravines; and at least some of them were too steep to log (Wessel 1993, Kershner and Leverett 2002).

Great Mountain Forest, northwestern Connecticut (Litchfield County)

--**North Forty**. Some 10 acres of old growth within a 45-acre area of hemlock and northern hardwoods with White Pine, within the Great Mountain Forest, 6500 acres of land owned by Starling Childs. The entire 45 acres have generally been regarded as old growth (Winer and Childs 1956, Metzler 2001). However, Childs gave us the 10-acre figure in 2002. The Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker (*Picoides arcticus*) winters in the 45-acre area.

--**Bigelow Pond**. A hemlock stand on about 5 acres “on the lower part of a very rocky site, sloping westerly to Bigelow Pond, a former swamp that has been flooded by damming” (Winer and Childs 1956).

Logging takes place outside the old growth, on a sustainable basis; but the Childs family has long protected the forest from development and uses it as an area for research and public education (Childs 1993). In return for officially giving up development rights, the family received two grants through the federal Forest Legacy fund in 2000 (Spokesperson for Johnson 2001).

Mount Riga Incorporated, northwestern Connecticut (Litchfield County)

A stand of 8 acres of White Pine, Eastern Hemlock, American Beech, and Yellow Birch that Curtis Rand believes was never logged because of inaccessibility. The stand is within an extensive tract owned by private individuals who are collectively known as Mount Riga Incorporated (Rand 1993, Combes 1993). The 8-acre stand appears to be the same as a Mount Riga stand described by Metzler as on a plateau in an area that was a boulder field. The corporation has granted a conservation easement to The Nature Conservancy (Metzler 2001).

Bear Mountain, northwestern Connecticut (Litchfield County)

Three small stands of old-growth hemlock with scattered Sweet Birch on the 2322-foot high Bear Mountain. The old growth is located in a ravine on the southeast slope. Kershner and Leverett have not completed their research on Bear Mountain, but give 5 acres as a preliminary total for the old growth. Tiny, twisted Pitch Pine, presumably ancient, grow on exposed rock ledges on the mountain (2002).

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