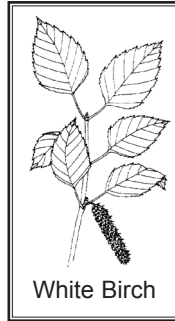


6. Send in the Pioneers

In front of you was once a farm field. Thomas and Ezekiel Jobe may have grown crops or pastured livestock here. Just as the Jobes were pioneers, old growth forest has its pioneers too. Look around the field and you will see them. Can you spot the papery bark of the White Birch and the corky bark of the Red Ash? These species are aggressive colonizers but cannot maintain their dominance over the landscape. As young pioneer trees grow, they make conditions unfavourable for their own kind, requiring full sun. Later arrivals fail to grow because of the shade produced by the original "pioneers." In time, new shade-tolerant species arrive. An open field is thus transformed into a "young" forest. If allowed to remain for several hundred years, a young forest such as you see now will transform itself into an old growth forest.



7. Plain Plantations

You are standing in an artificial forest called a plantation. The trees here were originally planted in neat rows. Plantations are common at Presqu'île. Originally they were established as windbreaks to keep Presqu'île Bay a calm haven for boat traffic. Now they've matured but their simple nature allows for little structural diversity. If the park were a giant plantation, this would present many problems for many creatures.

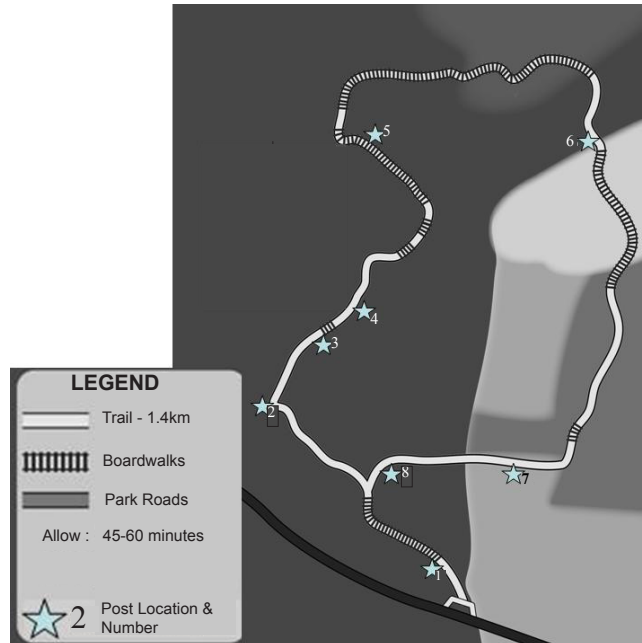


Consider the Pileated Woodpecker. Without large, mature, partly rotten

trees to feed and nest in, the species would have to live elsewhere. Consider, too, the Redback Salamanders. These creatures could not survive without dead logs lying on the ground in which they hunt and feed. Now the planted conifers are dying and the deciduous seedlings that are growing will eventually take over. Just as the old farm fields seen earlier are being reclaimed, so too is this artificial forest.

8. There's More Than Meets the Eye

As we have seen, an old growth forest is more than just big trees. We've met many creatures that require the special conditions of this habitat to survive and there are many more we haven't seen. From nesting hawks above to fungal growth beneath our feet, there is more here to discover. Thank you for talking this guide on your walk today. If you don't want to keep it please return it to the dispenser at the trailhead for someone else to use.



Jobs' Woods Trail is an easy 1.4 km walk through a combination of Old Growth Forest, regenerating farm fields and old plantations. The numbers and information in this guide correspond with numbered posts along the trail.

For more information about Presqu'île or its programs, contact:
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Presqu'île's
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Presqu'île



An Interpretive Guide to the Jobs' Woods Trail

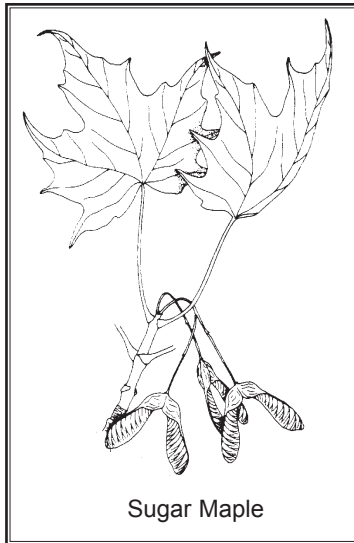
Jobs' Woods Trail

Soon you will be walking on land settled by Thomas and Ezekiel Jobs in 1835. The Jobs family cleared and farmed some of the land but also left portions largely untouched.

For the next kilometre, Jobs' Woods Trail passes through ancient upland forests, swamp forests and old farm fields in the process of converting themselves back into forests. Numbered posts along the way correspond with this guide. Each stop will help you understand some of the unique features of an old growth forest.

1. Mighty Monarch of the East

You are standing at the base of a Sugar Maple; a tree that dominates the eastern North American forest ecosystem. The canopy of Sugar Maple leaves above you produces very shady conditions on the forest floor. Most tree seedlings die quickly after only a short time in the shade. Sugar Maples, however, are amongst the most shade tolerant of trees, able to persist for 150 years as seedlings.

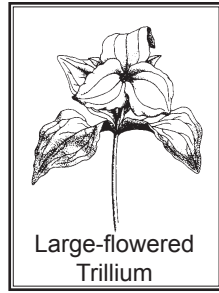


Sugar Maple

After a large tree falls, a young tree in the newly available patch of light will grow rapidly to take its place in the canopy. Once mature, a maple can produce thousands of seeds each year for 200 years or more! These seeds contain extra large amounts of stored energy, giving young maples a month or two of extra growing time over other tree seedlings competing for resources on the forest floor. These and other traits have helped the Sugar Maple assume the role of the "Monarch" of the eastern woodlands.

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2. Big Trees = Old Growth?

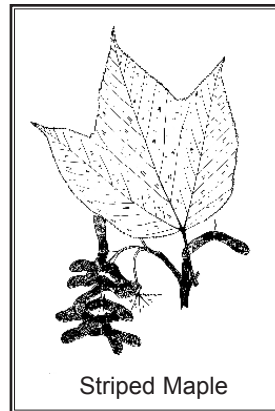


Large-flowered Trillium

In some people's minds the equation "big trees = old growth" rings true. While there's no doubt that they are an essential component of an old growth forest, big trees are just part of the picture. A mature forest will also feature "stratification" or layering. At this location there are four distinct layers: a wildflower and fern layer at your feet; shrubs and young trees at eye-level; the "understorey" of immature trees and small tree species; and, far above your head, the canopy. Keep walking down the trail and look carefully because there are additional features of old growth forest besides big trees and stratification - try to discover what they are!

3. Something Lost, Something Gained

We humans often tend to associate beauty with youth and the loss of beauty with old age. Sometimes we apply this view to the natural world. From this location you can see trees that have died and left behind branch-less, rotting trunks called "snags." As well, you can see trees that have been blown over, tearing-up gaping holes in the forest floor. As the downed trees rot, they produce lumpy mounds of soil. This is known as "pit and mound" topography. Some people feel that cleaning this up would produce a more aesthetically pleasing forest; However snags, rotting wood and pit and mound topography are essential aspects of old growth - but what are they good for? At the next several stops you'll see that there is a rich and interesting community of plants and animals that thrive best in a messy forest.



Striped Maple

4. An Odd Couple

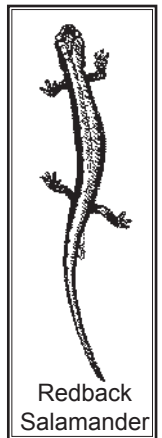


Eastern Hemlock

Five metres in front of you is an odd pair of trees. The one on the left, with its dark bark and fine needles, is the Eastern Hemlock. The dying one on the right, sporting flaky bark, is the Yellow Birch. If you look closely, you can see a small mound where these trees merge together at ground level. Mounds like this are vitally important for both species. Of the thousands of seeds produced by these trees, the few that actually survive are usually found growing on the remains of rotting logs and stumps. In such a "nursery", tiny seedlings find a secure place to start their growth. Years later, the nursery log may have rotted completely from beneath its tenants, making the mature trees appear to have legs! As you walk along the trail look for more trees like this.

5. Breathing Without Lungs

Slinking under logs and fallen leaves prowls a bizarre, worm-like animal. Close inspection of this bright red, 7cm long creature reveals four tiny legs, smooth shiny skin and a subtle rusty-red streak down its back. This is the Eastern Redback Salamander. A constantly moist environment is needed to allow this tiny animal to "breathe" through its skin as it has no lungs! The old growth forest's abundance of fallen logs and leaf litter provides salamanders with excellent hunting grounds and a stable moisture regime. Without the old growth forest's special floor, the Redback Salamander would be just one of many unique organisms that would disappear.



Redback Salamander