

## MARKER #1

# UPLAND FOREST HABITAT

You are about to embark on a journey through four different habitats. Use your senses to gather information about each habitat. Examine and compare trees and plants, listen for birds and other animals, and smell the air for interesting scents. At each numbered station you will find information about that specific habitat. Hopefully this piques your interest and you want to know more!

At the beginning of the River Trail, the open, sandy-soiled forest of the Upland Forest has a diverse population of tree species. Generalists such as the red oak, red maple, white pine, and eastern hemlock are found here. This part of the trail is also home to upland specialists such as shagbark hickory, white ash, black birch, and bigtooth aspen.

With the exception of maple-leaved viburnum, the understory is populated mainly by the saplings of this habitat's tree species. The herb layer is patchy and features drought-tolerant plants such as wild sarsaparilla, wood aster, pink lady's-slipper, partridge berry, and club moss.

In spring and fall, when rainfall is most plentiful and this forest is most likely to be damp, fungi are abundant. Fungi are the forest's decomposers - breaking down organic matter and releasing it into the soil where it can be utilized by both plants and animals. In the upland forest you may see shelf mushrooms on a dead snag or turkey tail mushrooms and bright yellow witch's butter mushrooms on rotting logs.

The many seeds and nuts produced here provide food for mammals, birds, and insects. You may see mice, chipmunks, squirrels, porcupines, deer and black bear here. Predators such as hawks, owls, foxes, bobcats, coyotes, fishers, and weasels hunt the animals that come to feed on the bounty produced by these trees.

Bird species including thrushes, warblers, woodpeckers, chickadees, bluejays, and nuthatches breed and forage in this forest. Several snake species hunt the small mammals, amphibians and insects. Toads, wood frogs, spring peepers, and red-backed salamanders feed on insects and other invertebrates present in this habitat.

