



A C L O S E R V I E W O F W A C H U S E T T M O U N T A I N

OLD-GROWTH FORESTS ARE DYNAMIC ECOSYSTEMS THAT CONTAIN NOT ONLY OLD TREES, BUT TREES OF ALL AGES AND SIZES THAT ARE IN A CONSTANT STATE OF FLUX.



What is an Old-Growth Forest?

A universal definition for an Old-Growth Forest does not exist because forests differ around the world. In the northeastern United States experts agree that Old-Growth Forests are: **ONE:** At least ten acres in size, which is large enough for them to be self-sustaining. **TWO:** Contain trees that are greater than 50% of the maximum known age for a particular species. **THREE:** Have not been cleared for agriculture or timber harvest.



BECAUSE OF THE HARSH GROWING CONDITIONS, THE SIZE OF THESE ANCIENT TREES ISN'T THAT REMARKABLE FOR THEIR AGES.

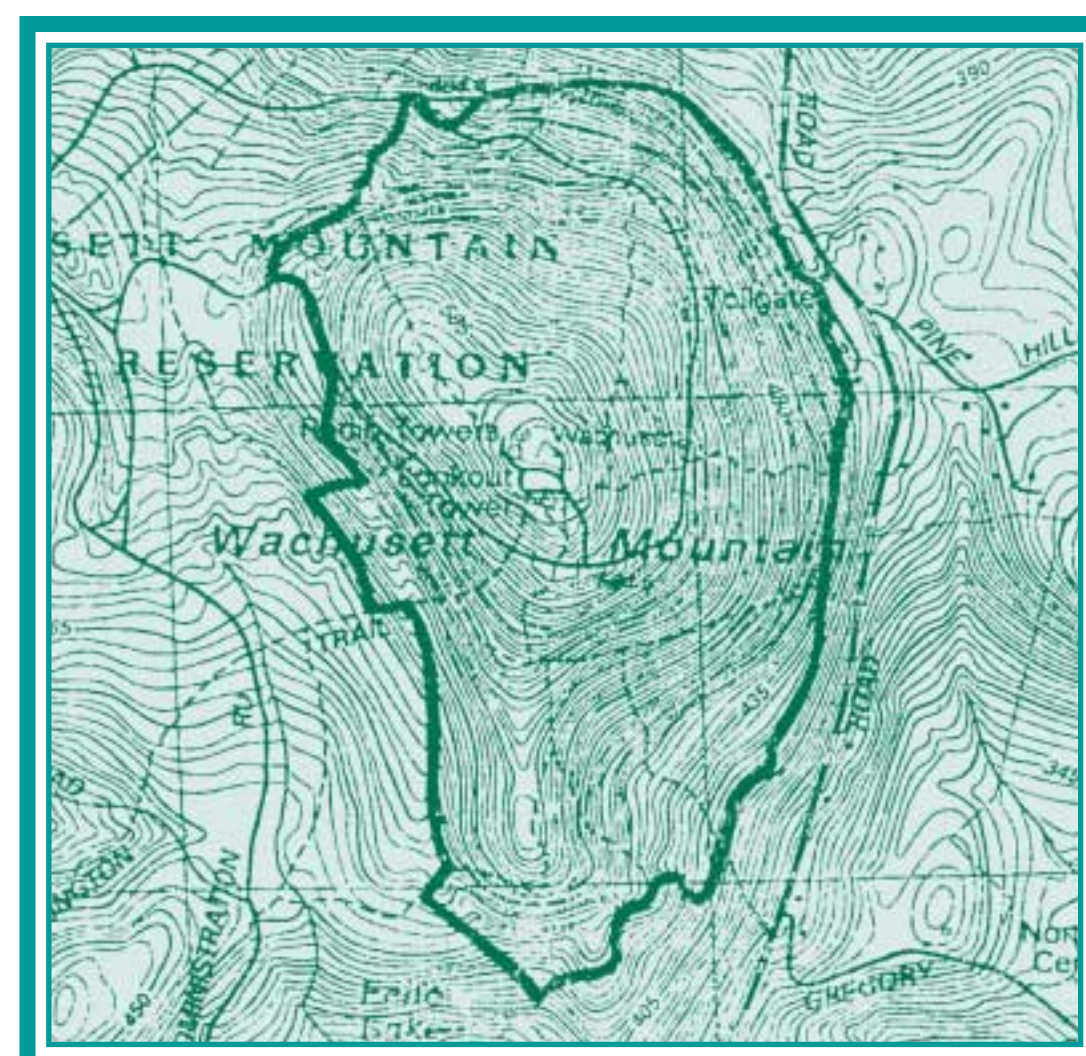
Stewards of the Forest

The Old-Growth Forest at Wachusett Mountain, managed by the Department of Environmental Management, is entirely within Wachusett Mountain State Reservation. We are all its stewards and have an obligation to understand and protect our environment. The best way to protect the forest at Wachusett Mountain is to follow all posted rules and regulations especially:

STAY ON MARKED TRAILS

DO NOT DISTURB PLANTS, SOIL, STONES OR STRUCTURES

This is a fragile and rare environment that deserves everyone's respect.



THE OLD-GROWTH FOREST STAND ON WACHUSETT MOUNTAIN COVERS MORE THAN 160 ACRES, AND INCLUDES SEVERAL DIFFERENT FOREST TYPES.

Our Living Heritage

The Old-Growth Forest at Wachusett Mountain is a part of our natural heritage. Part of our past is preserved in this living time capsule. From it we can learn of past weather events and other forest disturbances. It is of great value to us because it offers us:

- A historical connection to our landscape.
- Rarity. These trees are among the oldest in the eastern United States.
- Research and educational opportunities. We can learn how forest ecosystems develop over long periods of time.
- Spiritual values.

What Will You Find In Our Old-Growth Forest?

Many free interpretive programs are offered at Wachusett Mountain State Reservation. For information about them or for info about guided tours call us at Wachusett Mountain State Reservation (978) 464-2987.



How Old is Old?

Researchers determine the age of a tree by taking a core sample with an increment borer at breast height (4½ feet above the ground). The rings are counted (1 per year) and this figure is adjusted to account for the time it may have taken the tree to reach breast height. The ages for some of the oldest and most abundant trees at Wachusett are listed here. (All dates are as of Spring of 2000.)

