

Parts of Baker Woods provide perfect habitat for **Ruffed Grouse** (*Bonasa umbellus*) who are at home in brushy woodlands. In the spring, courting males can be heard "drumming" from atop a log or rock. 8-15 precocious chicks are thumb-sized when they leave the nest and can fly at five days old. Grouse dine on a wide variety of leaves, fruits, insects and even small salamanders and frogs. They survive on buds in winter.



The Baker Woods Preserve has over 50 acres of **Red Pine** (*Pinus resinosa*) plantation, planted in 1953. Conscientious forestry practices employed by Doris and Norman Baker have allowed this former monoculture to develop into a diverse ecosystem. Native to northeastern North America, red pines have tall straight trunks and grow 66–115 ft. high. The bark is thick, gray-brown at the base of the tree but flaky and reddish in the upper crown. These self-pruning trees have branchless trunks.

Baker Woods Preserve A Place for Nature & People

The Baker Woods Preserve is a complex mosaic of habitats – upland forest, managed pine plantation, deep open water, emergent wetlands, vernal pools – that create a diverse ecosystem which is home to a variety of species. This complex ecology relies on our protection of existing habitat and water quality and the thoughtful management of human activities. Visitors who look and listen closely will be rewarded with the everyday and the rare wonders that nature offers.



Snowshoe Hares (*Lepus americanus*) are nimble, fast and larger than rabbits. They have extra large, furry hind feet that prevent them from sinking in deep winter snows. The hare's fur changes from rusty brown in summer to snowy white in winter to camouflage them from predators. Hares eat grass, ferns and leaves in summer and twigs, bark and buds in winter. Be sure to look for their prominent tracks as you ski and snowshoe on the preserve.

Large oval holes in snags are clear evidence that **Pileated Woodpeckers** (*Dryocopus pileatus*) feel at home here. The birds drill holes in their quest for insects and for nesting. These cavities also provide crucial shelter for a variety of birds and mammals including threatened bat species. Listen for the raucous call and loud drumming that announce the presence of New York's largest woodpecker. Red-bellied, Hairy and Downy woodpeckers also thrive in Baker Woods.



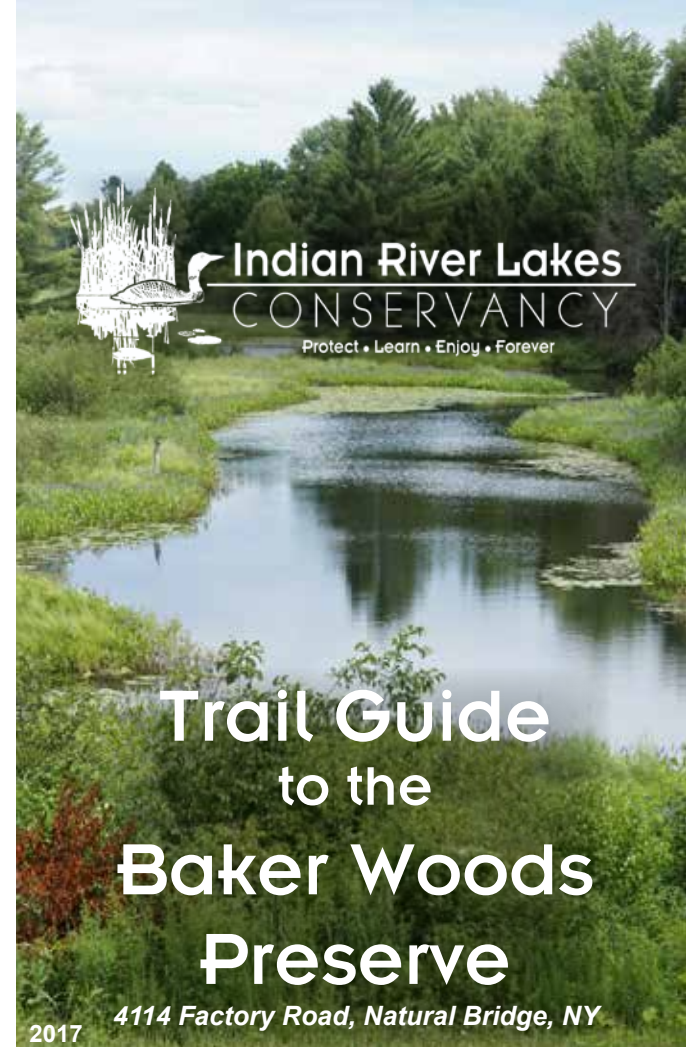
One of the most charming fungi found at Baker Woods Preserve is the **Chanterelle** (*Cantharellus cibarius*). Chanterelles, golden mushrooms with the aroma of apricots, are prized by chefs around the world. Look for these beauties as you walk the trails, but harvesting specimens of any sort is not allowed in the Preserve. Chanterelles can be easily mistaken for poisonous mushrooms. Without the help of an expert, eating any mushroom can lead to severe intestinal discomfort or worse.



Did you know that the **American Beaver** (*Castor canadensis*) is New York State's official mammal? Renowned for their construction skills, beavers use mud, branches and rocks to build dams and lodges. The deep water generated by beaver

dams protects the lodge from predators and creates wetlands. These new wetland habitats increase species diversity and provide many other ecological benefits. Beavers eat mainly plants and their larder may include over a ton of food to get them through the winter.

If size matters, then **White Pines** (*Pinus strobus*) rule the day in Baker Woods Preserve. White pines can grow to over 180 feet tall, have few horizontal branches and an irregular crown. Bald Eagles often nest in the tops of these lofty giants. White pine bark is smooth in young trees, but dark and deeply furrowed in mature specimens. As you look out over the Indian River from Doris's Deck, the tallest trees you see are white pines.



Trail Guide to the Baker Woods Preserve

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The Indian River Lakes Conservancy is a 501 (c)(3) not-for-profit corporation created in 1998 to conserve, protect and encourage the sustainable management of the water, land and biological resources of the Indian River Watershed for the benefit and enrichment of future generations. This remains our abiding purpose and commitment.

Visit our website to learn more about hiking trails at Redwood Hill Preserve, Grand Lake Reserve and Boyd Pond.

IRLC trails are maintained by volunteers. Visit our website, call, or email us if you are interested in becoming a trail steward or helping on a trail work day.

Coniferous Trees of Baker Woods Preserve

Coniferous trees abound on the Preserve. Can you identify these conifers along the trails?



White pine (*Pinus strobus*) has 5 long, flexible needles per fascicle, just as there are 5 letters in the word white.

Firs have short, flat needles with rounded tips. Although they look similar to spruce, fir needles will not roll between your fingers.



Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) has 2 long, stiff needles per bundle. The needles will easily break when bent.

Spruce trees have short, square, sharp needles. You can easily roll a spruce needle between your fingers.



Scotch pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) has 2 short, twisted needles per fascicle. This naturalized pine is native to Eurasia.

Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) has short, flat, soft needles. They grow in level, flat sprays on the lower limbs of the tree.



Northern white cedar (*Thuja occidentalis*) is also known as arborvitae. Its scale-like leaves form flat, fan-like branchlets that grow horizontally from the main branch.

Welcome to the Baker Woods Preserve

Doris N. and Norman H. Baker cared for the property that is now the Baker Woods Preserve for forty years. This peaceful slice of wilderness served as the Baker's home away from home and retreat from their more cosmopolitan lives in Manhattan.

Doris and Norman were longtime stewards of the land, friends of the community and well-loved neighbors. In 2015, Doris decided to donate this land to the Indian River Lakes Conservancy to be preserved forever and responsibly shared by all.

The Baker Woods Preserve comprises 354 acres spanning the upper reaches of the Indian River. The land is home to abundant wildlife, including black bear, trout, blue heron and the occasional passing moose. The Preserve contains extensive river and wetland habitats, a red pine plantation in transition and native coniferous and hardwood forests.



Why Conserve this Land?

Baker Woods Preserve includes 172 acres of wetland habitat. In addition to providing important stopovers for migrating waterfowl, wetlands perform a number of critical ecological functions. Wetlands slow flowing water preventing erosion, allowing sediments to settle out and giving time for water to infiltrate soils. Wetland plants filter excess nutrients and other chemicals, improving water quality. Wetlands also provide ideal nesting and breeding habitat for a wide variety of reptiles, amphibians, insects, mammals and birds.

The Baker Woods Preserve's upland forests also play a very important role in protecting water quality. Forests slow the flow of flood waters, reducing sediments that may be introduced to wetland habitats. The trunks and roots of forest trees and shrubs create pathways that allow water to sink deep into soils, reaching and recharging aquifers. Forests also provide key nesting habitat for songbirds and other woodland wildlife. Moreover, large contiguous tracts of forest provide safe corridors for wildlife to move from place to place.

As you enjoy hiking, paddling, and skiing in the Preserve:

- Stay on trails
- Leave plants undisturbed
- Keep a respectful distance from wildlife
- Carry out what you carry in
- Keep pets on a leash

Hunting, trapping, camping, fires, motorized vehicles, and collecting are strictly prohibited

Indian River Landing

0.2 miles
Easy, Level, Packed Gravel



Our Indian River Landing is near the headwaters of the river, which begins as a small trickle above the hamlet of Indian River, a dozen or so miles upstream. The river is easily accessible from the clearing just below Doris's Deck. Kayakers and canoeists willing to portage over beaver dams can put in here and will be rewarded with peaceful paddles in either direction.

Norm's Path

0.4 miles
Easy



This gently rolling trail winds through the dominant red pine forest toward Factory Road and the beginning of Woodcutter Lane. The red pine woods, planted in 1953, is rich with blackberries, raspberries, junberries, leatherwood, striped maple, beech, balsam fir and alternating leaf dogwood. Pteridophyte (fern) lovers will be impressed with the density of ferns which gives this section of woods a special character.

Woodcutter Lane / Loop

1.0 miles
Easy

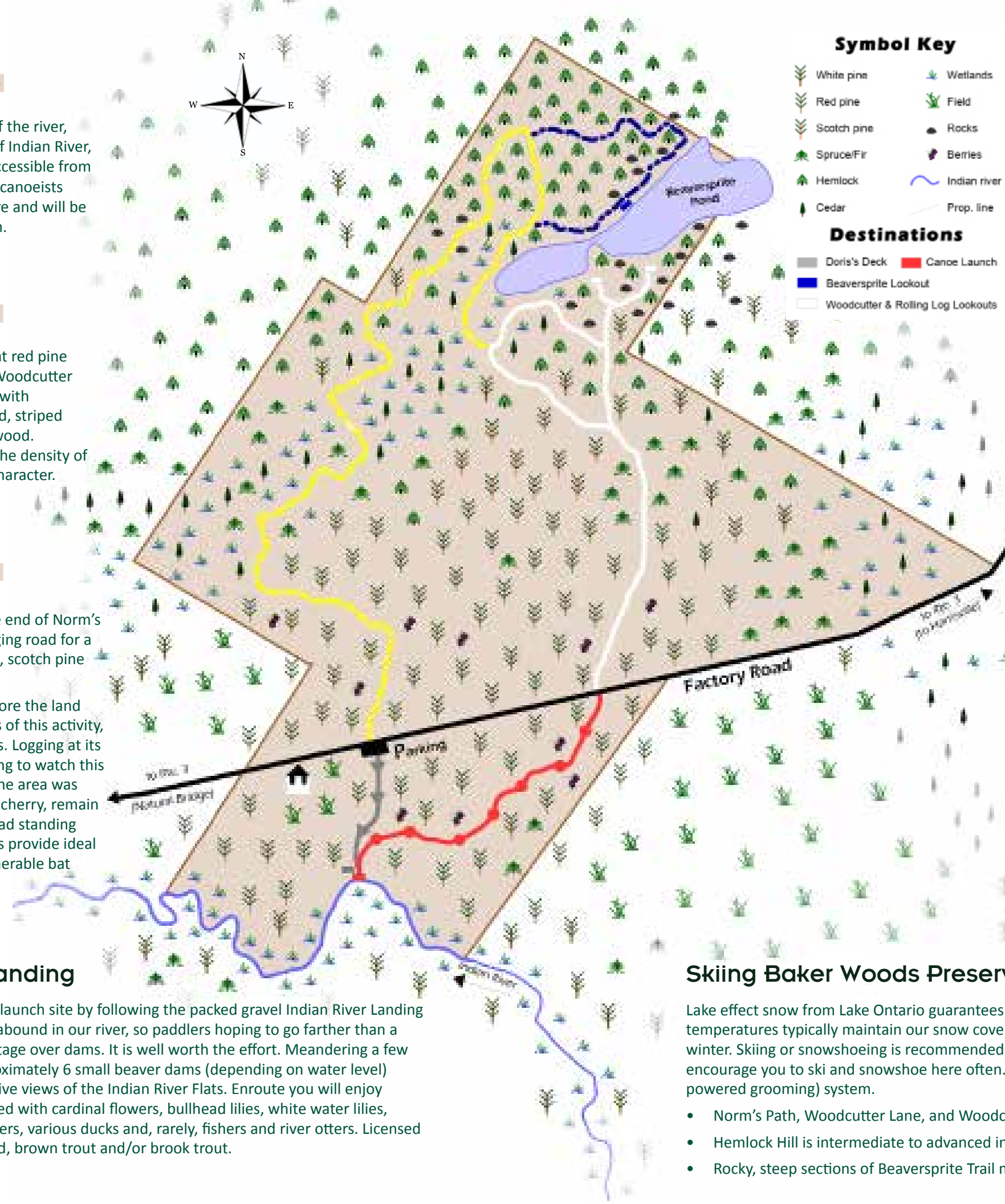


Beginning on the north side of Factory Road at the end of Norm's Path, this mostly flat trail utilizes an improved logging road for a pleasant and easy walk through maturing red pine, scotch pine and spruce forests.

The area around Woodcutter Loop was logged before the land was donated in 2015. You will notice the remnants of this activity, which was guided by responsible forestry practices. Logging at its best, though, leaves a mess and it will be interesting to watch this area regenerate and heal. You will also note that the area was not clear-cut; several important species, including cherry, remain to begin seeding a more diverse natural forest. Dead standing trees were left behind by design. These large snags provide ideal habitats for many insects and birds, as well as vulnerable bat species.

Paddling from Indian River Landing

Paddlers can easily carry or cart their boats to the launch site by following the packed gravel Indian River Landing trail just 0.2 miles from the parking area. Beavers abound in our river, so paddlers hoping to go farther than a half-mile in either direction must be willing to portage over dams. It is well worth the effort. Meandering a few miles upriver (east), paddlers will encounter approximately 6 small beaver dams (depending on water level) before arriving at the peaceful privacy and expansive views of the Indian River Flats. Enroute you will enjoy rocky ledges, wooded banks and marshes populated with cardinal flowers, bullhead lilies, white water lilies, fields of pickerel weed, great blue herons, kingfishers, various ducks and, rarely, fishers and river otters. Licensed fishermen may be rewarded by catches of bullhead, brown trout and/or brook trout.



Hemlock Hill Trail

1.5 miles
Easy with moderate hills



Hemlock Hill Trail begins at the far end of Woodcutter Loop and immediately enters a cedar swamp, affectionately referred to as 'the bog'. This section of the trail appears both eerily dead and decaying and, upon closer inspection, abundant with life. Mycologists will enjoy the wide variety of mushrooms and lichen that thrive here. You will cross two branches of tiny Beaversprite Creek that snakes through this magical wetland environment.

The majority of this hilly trail winds through hemlock, cedar and pine groves. Here there are some impressively large white pines, New York State's largest tree species. The final 0.3 miles of the trail crosses the red pine plantation, where acidic soils are perfect for the abundance of berries found there.

Beaversprite Loop

0.4 miles
Moderate, Rocky terrain and steep steps



This beautiful trail follows the northwest side of Beaversprite Pond. You will see many signs of the active beaver population who have painstakingly crafted this pond and shaped the landscape. The term "busy as a beaver" is an understatement as you will see evidence of their work ethic and ingenuity in the felling of hemlock trees as tall as 60-70 feet. At 0.1 miles from the lower junction you will come to a promontory with a cedar bench. From here, a patient observer can enjoy the sights and sounds of a variety of birds, including pileated woodpeckers whose work is evident on surrounding snags and trees.

At the end of the pond this rocky section of trail turns sharply left up a steep set of rock stairs. Below the stairs is a quiet sanctuary at the water's edge. As the trail veers left at the top of the stairs, watch for large trees that were downed during a damaging microburst in July 1995. Their impressive root balls provide an interesting view of the soil conditions and are valuable wildlife habitat.

Skiing Baker Woods Preserve

Lake effect snow from Lake Ontario guarantees the Baker Woods Preserve a generous helping of snow. Cold temperatures typically maintain our snow cover, allowing for skiing from December until late-March in a "good" winter. Skiing or snowshoeing is recommended only after 6 or more inches of snow are on the ground. We encourage you to ski and snowshoe here often. Please stay on the trails so all can benefit from our PPG (people powered grooming) system.

- Norm's Path, Woodcutter Lane, and Woodcutter Loop are perfect for novice skiers.
- Hemlock Hill is intermediate to advanced intermediate, steep areas can be walked down or "side slipped."
- Rocky, steep sections of Beaversprite Trail make it unsuitable for skiers; snowshoers are urged to use caution.