

# HUNTING SWAMP EARLY SPRING CONDITIONS - March 26, 2019

By Martha Butterfield

I eagerly checked the conditions of the Hunting Swamp early this afternoon and walked along the 100-foot wide right of way through the southern portion of the Town of Loudon's land, acquired in 2005. A chilly, slightly breezy day, it wasn't surprising that the snow had melted considerably since several of the Loudon Trail Cutters had previously been there March 20<sup>th</sup>. This time, the remaining snow was very hard and icy, and it was wetter in the lower areas near the marshy region. Walking was tricky, as I forgot to wear my cleats. I hope by this Friday, the 29<sup>th</sup>, the conditions will be improved, but I recommend anyone working out there on Friday to wear cleats and waterproof footwear until the last of the snow and ice have finally melted. These photos were taken today, just so you can get an idea of what the area looked like.



*Entrance to Hunting Swamp Trail*

I cleaned up a few fallen branches and tried cutting some scrubby bushes but decided to wait a bit until the ground is softer so cutting will be clean and close to the ground. The entrance to the trail is on the right side of Lovejoy Road, about a mile from No. Village Road. My land at 227 Lovejoy Road sits on the left side of Lovejoy across from the trail's entrance. The trail heads northeasterly through the forest and is marked by pink ribbons along the way. The path was icy where I had previously snowshoed, as you can see in the left photo below. The trail leads eventually to an area where the land goes downhill a foot or two to where the wetland area begins (as shown in the photo to the right), and hidden beyond the trees a shallow brook flows to the south. To reach the scenic and higher hiking areas on the west side of the Town's land (and avoid crossing private property), our goal on March 20<sup>th</sup> was to find the easiest, highest and driest crossing over the brook and cut up some downed trees blocking the way.



As I made my way through the evergreen trees, I found the snow to be rigid and somewhat slippery. The photo to the right shows an opening where the brook can be seen through the dense trees. The crossing we had in mind was to the right and northeast of that opening.



Further in, I located the tree that had fallen across a narrow part of the brook, one of several possible crossings to reach the higher ground on the other side, as shown in the left photo. The right photo shows that same tree from the opposite side of the brook. Once the snow melts completely, the best crossing point will become clearer.



From there, I headed west through the trees and came to a dug canal in the photo to the left. The right photo shows the currently wet logging trail where Dave Emerson and Joe Egan on March 20<sup>th</sup> had cut up the downed trees that blocked the trail and nicely cleared the way.

