

# Quest for the Baker Woods

~~~~~

*Created by 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at the Lura Libby School working with Mrs. Ford*

---

**Background:** You may need a few guides for this Quest. We suggest a Maine or Northern New England tree guide (*Forest Trees of Maine* by Maine's Forest Service is a good one) and *A Field Guide to Wildlife Habitats of the Northeastern United States* by Janine Benyus. Both are available at most local bookstores and libraries. This trail is a section of the Georges Highland path, which winds through the Georges River watershed from Montville to Thomaston. This section of the path is in a nature preserve named for Mr. Jack Baker. Jack Baker was interested in providing access points for people to hike in the forest's natural state. Mr. Baker and his family foundation bought the land and gifted it to the Georges River Land Trust. Local citizens founded the Georges River Land Trust (GRLT) in 1987, as a non-profit organization dedicated to working with local communities to conserve the special character of the Georges River watershed region. This fine organization has protected more than 1,000 acres in the region and created the Georges Highland Path to help people appreciate it.

**Directions to Start:** From Route One North in downtown Thomaston: At the intersection of Beechwood Street and Route One (at the stoplight), take a left onto Beechwood Street. Go North on Beechwood for 2 miles. The Baker Woods Preserve comes up quickly on your left after a sharp curve to the left. Please park your car or bike in the preserve's parking lot. Our Quest begins at the trailhead. There you will see GRLT's kiosk.

**Estimated Time:** 45 minutes

**Terrain:** Moderate

**Extra Challenge:** n/a

---

**1. Start at the kiosk**  
**Blue marker in front of you**  
**Stop at fourth marker**

**On a skinny fir**  
**Make sure to look to your left**  
**Your Quest is beginning**

Red maple like it wet  
Red maple trees most common  
Leaves have v-shaped notches

Look at this wet place

Young trees left by past loggers  
Lots of fallen trees

**2. Count markers again**  
**Fourth blue marker on fir tree**  
**Walk toward large oak tree**

Acorn is its fruit  
Northern red oak is common  
Acorns fall off oaks

Gall wasps make oak galls  
Galls aren't harmful to oak trees

Galls are called oak apples

Farmers kept pasture oaks  
Animals lay under them  
Keeping them quite cool

Land starts to slope down  
The land goes down to a marsh  
Water flows downhill

**3. The land slopes downhill  
Keep walking to the wood  
planks  
One short plank, one long**

Stop along longest plank  
You are part of the watershed  
Wetland shape flows down

Vernal pools, no fish  
These pools are temporary  
They have lots of mud

Sphagnum moss, with it  
Maine Indians lined diapers  
Absorbs water weight

**4. Now get off the plank  
Count two planks then a lone  
plank  
Walk again not done**

**The planks start again  
Count 13 sections of planks  
Marshy wonderland**

Winding through the marsh  
We hope you enjoy nature  
Stop along the planks

Huge leaves rise from ground  
Skunk cabbage smells horrible  
When you break the leaf

**5. Get off the plank path**

**Notice the land going up  
Try to find a rock**

Rock is on the path  
Behind rock, a split maple  
Blue marker on it  
Land is not so wet  
Pine needles are everywhere  
You're on higher ground

**6. Count five blue markers  
Start counting after the rock  
Is that mother fir**

Firs are conifers  
Conifers are evergreens  
Fir needles are flat

Fir needles fragrant  
Cones grow upright on fir branch  
Find the mother fir

**7. Go past three plank paths  
Walk awhile through the woods  
Animals live here**

**Find a split maple  
It has a red mark on it  
Bark sure looks furry**

**Go past the marked tree  
Forward to the old tote road  
Stop at the tote road.**

Why is the road there  
Was it an old logging road  
Made for hauling wood

Signs of animals  
Owl pellets are around  
Antler scratching too

You may see a nest  
Animals like the wetland  
Woodpecker holes here

**8. Make sure to walk right  
Onto a winding tote road  
The land goes downhill**

**Go over plank path  
Follow road to the split rock  
Close to final clue**

Ice glaciers in Maine  
25,000 years past  
Left its rock debris

Glacial erratic  
Ice melted leaving behind

Split Rock is its name

Beside the split rock  
You will find a chopped down  
stump  
And a white birch tree

**9. Go straight on the path  
25 to 30 steps  
Look over to right**

*On right inside woods  
Tree that looks like backwards L  
Find your Quest box there!*

BAKER WOODS QUEST MAP

# Baker Woods

