

## **DIRECTIONS TO FOREST BIRD MONITORING PROGRAM SITE AT MERCK FOREST, RUPERT, VT**

Site established by Chris Rimmer circa 1989.  
Updated by Ron Payne and Ian Worley 2013.

To reach the Merck Forest site take Route 315 west from Route 30 north of Dorset. Go past the main entrance of Merck Forest and Farmland Center and turn left onto Route 153. Turn left onto East Street (Hunt Hollow Road) in the town of West Rupert (across from the general store). Take East Street (Hunt Hollow Road) --- which shortly becomes Kent Hollow Road --- for 2.3 miles and turn left onto Hidden Valley Road (the road sign was missing in 2013). Take this road past the last house (on the left hand side) to a schoolbus turn-around by a sturdy, maple sap collection shed. Park there out of the way. There is no need to drive farther and park at the Merck Forest kiosk and gate.

**Transect layout:** Bearings and distances are computed by Google Earth using Lat/Long coordinates. All bearings are listed as True North (T). If your compass is NOT adjusted for True North, add 15 degrees.

**POINT #1 (43.242327, -73.200692)** – Take the Masters Mountain Trail which begins right behind the maple sap collection shed. Follow it up and around the first switchback and walk for about 15-20 minutes. At the very start of the next switchback (which turns sharply to the east), leave the trail and angle downhill at 295° T for approximately 45 meters to Point #1. The station is identified on a **4” dbh hophornbeam**, marked with blue flagging and a metal treetag inscribed with “VINS MF #1.” About four meters north of the hophornbeam is a three-trunked red oak that is large and healthy (as of 2013).

**POINT #2 (43.243019, -73.197618)** – To reach Point #2 travel 265 m in an easterly direction (72° T). The path will cross the Masters Mountain Trail three times (in this area the trail is incorrectly mapped on the topographical map provided). The tag is on a small 8-10” dbh **Sugar Maple** marked also with flagging.

**POINT #3 (43.243711, -73.194587)** – To reach Point #3 travel 255 m in an easterly direction (73° T). The tag is on an **8” dbh Sugar Maple** marked also with flagging. Ignore blue and yellow paint on trees between points #2 and #3.

**POINT #4 (new location: 43.24188, -73.19421)** – Head southward (171° T) a distance of 218 m. A **6” dbh Hophornbeam** tree was newly tagged (MF 4A) and flagged in 2013. The tree is ten feet west of a multi-trunked Red Oak tree with one living trunk and three dead trunks ... beyond which are three large trees standing close to each other in a row. In 2014 this location was just west of a major junction of large, black maple sap hoses. (*The original location at 43.244184, -73.191519 was abandoned due to the previous observer finding the site too steep and slippery for safe travel.*)

**POINT #5 (43.242424,-73.191240)** – To reach Point #5 head easterly (76° T). The tag is on a **9” dbh Red Maple** along with blue flagging. It is the only red maple in the vicinity. Nearby are two cherry trees, one 20” dbh and the other 18” dbh. Down slope from Point #5 about 3-4 m is a healthy 6” dbh hophornbeam. There is a 22” dbh red oak right beside the Point #5 tree, on the upslope side. (Sizes and conditions of trees as of 2013.)

**NOTE:** Surrounding each point count station are 3 vegetation plots (15 in total) also marked with tree tags. The vegetation points are described in the previous edition of these directions as being “25m away from each point count on compass bearings of 105, 225, and 345 degrees. Their labels follow the point count labeling system with the letters B, C, and D indicating the bearing (e.g. Point #1 vegetation plots are labeled “VINS MF #1B, 1C, and 1D respectively.”

