

Data Rescue Is Now Underway!

By Matthias Sirch

Months of coordination culminates this week as we officially launch the next phase of our data preservation effort. After hearing back from many researchers and land managers across the region, we have identified several dozen projects that contribute substantially to our understanding of the Northeastern forests. For each, we have begun digitizing and archiving all datasets and reports that have not yet found a permanent and secure home. Here are summaries of my data retrieval trips for the month of July.

Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge Habitat Surveys, VT

This past week, Riley sat patiently with me as I scanned habitat surveys taken during the 70's and 80's throughout the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge. Many of the older studies from the refuge were conducted only to inform management practices at the time with no real thought toward the future. Luckily, land managers are now able to use this information as baseline data to monitor how distributions of plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates may have changed over the years.



Riley, one of the many office dogs at the Missisquoi National Wildlife Refuge.

Massachusetts Continuous Forest Inventory, MA

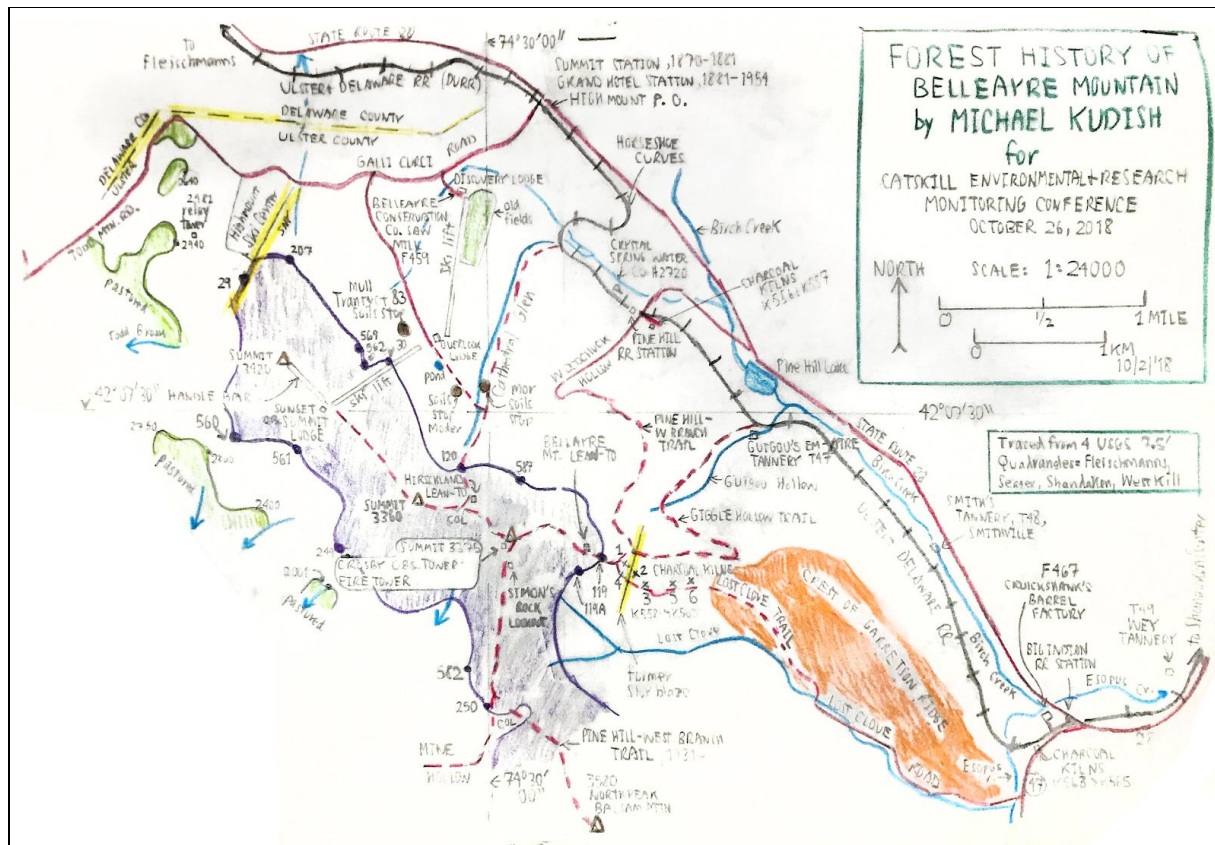
With strong partnership from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, the FEMC has been lucky enough to spend this month working closely with the Massachusetts state archivist and personnel from the Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry. Much of our efforts will focus on digitizing records from the Continuous Forest Inventory program which began in 1960. This program tracks measurements from the same trees year after year. As data collection protocol for the inventories have changed often over the years, we hope to document these changes to provide a resource that can eliminate confusion when interpreting any results related to Massachusetts forests. Additionally, protocol documentation will also help us link Massachusetts Continuous Forest Inventories to inventories conducted in other states.



Boxes of Continuous Forest Inventory data and reports from the Bureau of Forest Fire Control and Forestry.

Catskills Field Notes, NY

Fifty years ago, treasured naturalist of The Catskills Center, Michael Kudish, began what was to become an impressive collection of thousands of pages of field notes from the Catskills forests and beyond. As a part of a broader effort, the FEMC is excited to work with the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies to preserve these notes in digital form. Among his colorful hand-drawn maps are valuable records of bog plants and fossils, spring water characteristics, evidence of historical Native American fires and agriculture, and how glaciers have affected composition of soils, to name a few.



Map drawn by Michael Kudish of Belleayre Mountain on October 26, 2018.

Throughout this process, I have certainly appreciated talking to such a great group of knowledgeable professionals from such a variety of natural resources disciplines. What an inspiring and informative glimpse into the work you have undertaken over the last few decades! And I know it is only scratching the surface.