

## Pasture Ridge Focus Area

### Phippsburg

#### *Description:*

Pasture Ridge is a relatively broad, low ridgeline of uneven topography that forms a mosaic of **pitch pine woodlands** within a forest of mixed mid-successional oak-pine woods. At over 200 acres, this is the one of the largest pitch pine woodlands in the state. In the relatively open pitch pine woodland, low-growing pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) is dominant in the overstory and averages 25% cover, and white pine (*Pinus strobus*) and red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) occur infrequently. The stand may have originated after pasture (there are a few old stone walls) and/or fire, although no evidence was noted of recent fire. Pitch pine regeneration, in the form of seedlings and saplings, is rather sparse. The understory is dominated by huckleberry (*Gaylussacia baccata*), low-bush blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*), sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), broom crowberry (*Corema conradii*), and lichens (*Cladonia* and *Cladina* spp.). Overall, however, there is very little soil development, and what little soil exists is very acidic (pH 3.7).



*Pitch Pine Woodland near Merrymeeting Pond, Phippsburg*

*MNAP file photo, Andy Cutko*

Bedrock outcrops are frequent, and where the bedrock forms small basins, water is seasonally pooled. Some of these seasonal depressions may serve as vernal pools and should be checked in the springtime for breeding amphibians.

***Rare Species/Natural Communities Summary Table for the Pasture Ridge Focus Area:***

Common Name	Latin Name	State Status	S-Rank	G-Rank
<b>Exemplary Natural Communities</b>				
Pitch Pine Woodland		n/a	S3	not ranked
<b>Rare Plants</b>				
none found				
<b>Rare Animals</b>				
none found				

***Other Resources Mapped by MDIFW:***

None.

***Protection Status:***

This Phippsburg Land Trust has protected about 46 acres in two parcels on the east side of this focus area. The town of Phippsburg owns 10 acres on the northeast side.

***Conservation Considerations:***

- Most of this area is in a single private ownership.
  
- At nearly 2,300 acres, the Pasture Ridge block is one of the largest unfragmented blocks in Phippsburg. Development of the interior may eliminate or diminish the quality of the pitch pine woodlands. In addition, pitch pine woodlands require periodic fire or a similar disturbance. Use of fire as a conservation tool has not occurred in these areas, and it may be difficult because of the proximity to residential areas.