

Information on the folklore, uses, and habits of the trees noted in this trail guide come from

Trees of the Eastern and Central United States and Canada
by William M. Marlow.

This trail guide was originally written by Barbara H. Thomas and produced by the Town of Chenango. The town would like to thank the following volunteers for their dedication and hard work which made this trail and trail guide possible:

*Chenango Valley Lions Club
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Chenango Bridge Garden Club*

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Town of Chenango



Trail Guide

Introduction

In 1971, Mr. Richard W. Wolfe, a local businessman, donated 182 acres of land to the Town of Chenango for use as a public access park. In 1981, the Youth Conservation Corps designed and built the first nature trail. Additions and improvements have been made since then, but the basic trail is still the same.

Station 1-The Beginning

This is a 10-station, half-mile long circular trail that returns to this point. Please respect the environment. Leave wild flowers and plants for others to enjoy. Stay on trails to limit erosion and please do not litter. Have a great hike!

Station 2-Who's Been Putting Holes In This Tree?

A Pileated Woodpecker has been at work here. These birds are about 16 inches from the top of their crested heads to the tips of their tails and are the largest type of woodpecker. They put holes in trees for three reasons: to make nest cavities, to reach insects that live in dead trees, and to make noise that tells other Pileated Woodpeckers that this area is occupied. Standing, dead trees are vital to woodpeckers as well as to many species of insects and mammals that use them for food and shelter. Can you think of some?

Station 3- Grand Canyon of Wolfe Park

This creek is a tributary of the Chenango River. Notice the steep banks that drop almost straight down to the water. At one time the river was probably level with the ground you are walking on, but gradually the water wore away the rock and soil, a process known as erosion.

Station 4-American Chestnut

At one time this species was one of the most common in the Northeast. Now it is all but extinct. In the early 1900s a disease known as Chestnut Blight was introduced to this country, possibly from Asia. It kills the Chestnut tree before it is old enough to produce nuts. The small trees that still grow in the forest are growing from the roots of the trees that were here before the blight. Chestnut trees were economically important, as the wood was prized for its resistance to decay and its beautiful grain.

Falls Overlook- this side path overlooks a small waterfall. Stop, relax, and enjoy this scenic area.

Station 5- Hemlock Stand

The trees here are Eastern Hemlocks. Notice how there is no vegetation under these trees due to the fact that little sunlight penetrates through the evergreen boughs. The small cones on the Hemlock are a source of food for many creatures, from birds such as Black-capped Chickadees and Blue jays, to mammals such as White-tail deer, red squirrels, and Eastern Chipmunks. Deer also eat the twigs and needles during the winter and shelter under the trees in bad weather.

Station 6- Stone Pile

At one time, Wolfe Park was a farm. The stone wall that remains here probably divided the cultivated field from the forest. You can still see the plow furrows. The rocks used to make the stone wall were ones that were turned up when the farmer was plowing the field.

Station 7- Forest Opening

This open area has younger trees than the area you have been walking through. The forest here must have been disturbed in some way that removed the older trees. Large trees may have been blown down, logged, or cleared for farming. Now the forest is slowly returning. This process of gradual change is known as succession, the natural progression of an area toward a mature or climax community. As you move toward the next station, notice that you will be entering a forest with many young trees—a slightly older successional stage than what you see here.

Station 8- Shag Bark Hickory

Notice the distinctive, large, plate-like bark of this tree. It is very easy to remember the name of this tree and identify it only by its bark. Insects live and hide behind the large bark-plates. Birds such as woodpeckers, chickadees, and nuthatches search for and eat these insects. Large birds such as wild turkey, ring-necked pheasant, ruffed grouse, and wood duck eat the hickory nuts that fall to the ground. Native Americans used crushed hickory nuts to make medicinal oil and as flavoring for venison. Because hickory wood is strong and flexible, it became prized for wheel spokes in carriages and cars. It is still highly valued for axe handles. As firewood, the Shag Bark Hickory has the best heat value of any tree in North America. Coals can be made into charcoal, and the ashes are useful as potash in soap making.

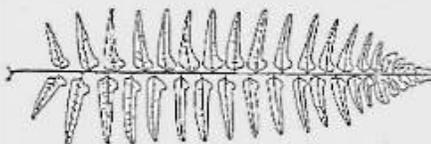
Station 9- Sugar Maple Stand

This stand of young Sugar Maples indicates that the area is wetter than the area near Station 8. Oak and Hickory trees are usually associated with drier sites, while Beech and

Maple trees are usually found in moister areas. The Sugar Maple is New York State's official state tree, both for its beauty and its utility. A Sugar Maple has beautiful fall color and is a wonderful shade tree. Maple syrup and maple candy are made from the spring sap, while the wood is prized for everything from fine furniture to canoe paddles.

Station 10- Christmas Fern

Look around your feet. Can you use the illustration to find a Christmas Fern? Please don't pick any (this is a protected plant) but look closely at the frond (leaf).



Notice the shape of the small "pinnae". Do they look like miniature Christmas stockings? Christmas Fern is unusual as it is an evergreen fern, just as trees such as spruce and pine are evergreens. Whether the name "Christmas Fern" came from its being green at Christmas or from the shape of the pinnae is not clear. What do you think?

This brings you back to the start of the trail. We hope you enjoyed yourself and that you will come back again soon!

Wolfe Park Trail Map Town of Chenango

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