

CHANEYSVILLE-COVE
POINT PLEASANT SCHOOL
NATURE TRAIL

SOUTHAMPTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2022



Trail History

This trail was established in 1985 by Carol Sirko of the Bedford County Conservation District. She worked with Tag Beck, Keith Stuart, and Rick Duffey from the Bureau of Forestry in the actual construction of the trail. It was designed for public usage. In 2000, Christopher Gruitt, a Boy Scout from Troop 477, Everett, reconstructed the trail. Mark Maser and Dan Cornman from the Bureau of Forestry, as well as Mike Jackson aided him.

Please abide by the trail policies. You will see more, hear more, and enjoy your walk more, in attractive, natural surroundings, if every person who uses this trail is considerate enough to:

- Leave all wildflowers and berries for others to see
- Talk in a low voice
- Put no marks on trees or other plant life
- Walk AROUND animal tracks for others to see
- Pick up litter you see
- Don't LEAVE litter for others to pick up
- And the most important... take only PICTURES, and leave only FOOTPRINTS.

With your back to the road, the trail starts to the right of the old white school and ends just to the right, behind the school. It is an easy trail to follow, and is almost perfectly level. You will walk through an open wood area, a dense hemlock section and along a marshy meadow. The trail also follows a section of a trout stream. Various sites are numbered with a sign and a number. Refer to information in this booklet for more information regarding the site. There are also arrows on the trail marked with yellow paint that will guide you through the trail.

You can hike this trail in under one-half an hour or study the information at each site in several hours... your choice.

And remember, TAKE ONLY PICTURES, LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS!

Old School House

Before entering the trail, take a gander at the old white school building. This was the original Point Pleasant Elementary School, a two-room school. Students attended here up to the 8th grade. The building is over 100 years old and was in use until the mid-1950s, when the present Chaneyville-Cove Elementary School was built across the road. The building is presently used for storage and nesting sites of paper wasps and phoebes.

The Paper Wasp constructs an open comb paper nest wherever protection from rain is assured. Notice under the eaves of the roof where the nests are located. The paper for the nest is made by chewing weathered particles of wood from fences and buildings and mixing it with saliva. The wasp is not vicious unless provoked or annoyed. They are of some economic importance because of their ability to destroy other insects. Insects and nectar are fed to the young.



The Eastern Phoebe nests in a crevice, on a wall, in a gorge, under a bridge, on a porch, or in an abandoned building. The nest is made largely of mud covered with marshes. The phoebe eats gypsy moths, ants, crickets, grasshoppers, ticks, and many kinds of caterpillars. The phoebe is beloved by many people because of its habit of nesting about old country homes.

Beginning The Trail

Just before you enter the woods, notice the large evergreen tree to your right. It is a White Pine tree. Its height may reach 220 feet. The trunk is rarely 6 feet in diameter. It has graceful, partly drooping branch tips. The tree is fast growing and the wood is used for cabinets, shingles, and walls. Bark beetles often attack it as it grows older. This attracts woodpeckers that may make their home in the trunk.

The leaves of the white pine are in the form of needles. It has a cluster of 5 needles. You may be able to remember this by remembering that the word "white" has 5 letters, just as there are 5 needles on the cluster of the "white" pine. The needles are mildly poisonous to cattle if eaten.

Start the trail until you reach Site 1.

SITE 1

As you enter the trail, remember: the forest is more than just trees. Trees are the framework, but around them is woven an unbelievably complex fabric of life, including mice, bees, birds, beetles, worms, wildflowers, weeds, mushrooms, squirrels, and much more.

Notice the tree to the right of Site 1. It is our state tree, the eastern hemlock. The hemlock may grow to a height of 100 feet. The trunk may be 4 feet in diameter. The eastern hemlock is very common, mostly on upland ridges or scattered through broad-leaved forests. The wood is commonly used for coarse construction providing it isn't used to the weather. The inner bark can be used for tanning leather. The wood is not very good for firewood because it can throw sparks.

The hemlock is an evergreen with soft needles having two white stripes on the underside of each needle. Turn over a branch to see this. Tea can be made from the needles. Deer, rabbits, and red squirrels eat the tender twigs.

Go on to Site 2.

SITE 2

If you look around, you can see tree stumps with flat tops. Why is this? In the 1940's, people came to this area and 'logged' it, cutting down the big trees and hauling them to make them into lumber. Processing wood makes many jobs. Trees are extremely important and are renewable sources. Think of all the things in

your home and school, like furniture, paper, pencils, and tables that are made of wood. Plastics, medicines, charcoal, turpentine, cardboard, and other products can also be made from wood. Other evidence of logging will be seen later on the trail.

Follow the trail until you reach the next directional marker.

Directional Marker

Follow the directional marker but notice the ferns to the right of the trail after the trail turns left. There are two species of fern here: the woodfern and the Christmas fern.

The woodfern's fronds are lacy and delicate looking. It grows readily in rich woodlands with shady slopes. Ferns reproduce by means of 'spores', which are found on the underside of the fertile fronds. These fronds are often used for decoration, but this practice should be discouraged.

The Christmas fern is evergreen, and also used for decoration. However, these ferns are better left in their natural setting. Christmas ferns grow almost anywhere except where there is a lot of sunlight. It is easy to identify the Christmas fern because its leaflets look like a Christmas stocking.

Start walking to Site 3. As you approach Site 3, notice on the ground near the trail is a small trailing plant. This is partridgeberry. The dark-green, shiny, evergreen, light veined, rounded leaves are only $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long. The plant produces two red berries in the autumn, which, to some people, remind them of the eyes of a partridge.

SITE 3

Notice the rocks 'growing' out of the ground? Actually, they aren't growing out of the ground. Lift one up and see for yourself. Replace the rock to the same position you found it. It might provide protection for a salamander, spider, or other ground dwelling creature. Soil erosion removes soil from around the rocks and they appear to grow.

Soil erosion is caused by wind and water. Soil is carried downhill, usually to a stream, pond, or lake by water. The wind carries bits of dirt high into the air where they might come down miles away. Erosion is the NUMBER ONE cause of pollution in Pennsylvania and soil is the NUMBER ONE pollutant.

How do you think soil might be better protected from wind and water erosion? Think about this while you walk to the Site 4.

SITE 4

In this area, there are a number of different kinds of ferns. Ferns can best be identified by the way their spores are produced. Can you find the woodfern? How about the Christmas fern?

Look for another kind of fern that has not been mentioned in this booklet yet. It may be yellow or brown if there has been a frost recently. The leaflets are wide and wavy on the edges. This is the Sensitive fern.



Its fronds are like coarse feathers and are held almost vertically. It is named the sensitive fern because it will die soon after being cut. It is said to be poisonous if eaten.

If you look ahead, you will see a shrub with dark green leaves. It is wild rhododendron. It is a native of eastern woods, along streams, and in mountains. It has rose-colored flowers in June, and can grow rather tall for a shrub, up to 40 feet. When the weather grows cold, the leaves curl tight and point straight down. The leaves contain a poison, which may be fatal to animals that eat it. Honey from bees feeding on the nectar of the wild rhododendron is reported to be poisonous as well. It provides year-round cover and hiding places for wildlife. To your left is another collection of rhododendron shrubs.

Continue down the trail until you come to a low spot in the trail with a pipe underneath the ground. You notice how different the ground feels at this spot? This area of the trail is usually swampy, so small stones and a drainage pipe has been placed across the trail. This open area of the woods allows grasses and plants to grow. Insects, such as grasshoppers, are attracted to the plants.

This is a good area to see a wild turkey. The turkey is our largest upland game bird. Some male turkeys (gobblers) may weigh over 20 pounds. The 'beard' of the gobbler is really modified feathers, not hair. It is even found on hens. The gobbler struts and gobbles to attract hens, fanning his tail and dropping his wings to the ground. The young are called poults. Turkeys prefer to run to escape predators but are powerful fliers. Turkeys roost at night and are sometimes killed on the roost by great-horned owls.



The great-horned owl stands almost two feet high with a four-and-a-half foot wingspan. It has conspicuous feathered ear tufts and great round yellow eyes. It is often called the 'tiger of the air' because of its predatory habits. It often nests in hollow trees but may remodel a crow or hawk nest. It nests mainly during the winter. It eats a large variety of small animals, particularly rats and mice but can attack and kill larger mammals such as rabbits, skunks, and porcupines.

If you listen closely, you might hear a gray squirrel. You might even see one scampering in nearby trees. Its nickname is 'bushytail' because of its fluffy tail, which is almost as long as its body. The tail is used for balance when leaping from one tree to another. It is sometimes referred to as 'nature's little forester' because of its habit of burying acorns and nuts for a later meal. Many nuts that it buries may never be dug up, and could even grow into a tree. The squirrel has an exceptional sense of smell. The gray squirrel is sometimes seen in the black phase or even the albino phase on occasion. It may build a temporary nest of leaves and twigs but spends the winter in a hollow tree. It does not hibernate.



and can be seen scampering through some snow in search of food it buried months earlier. The meat is edible.

Walk on, and stop when you enter a grove of hemlock trees.

Hemlock Tree Thru

Notice how much cooler and darker this area is as compared to the rest of the trail thus far? The sunlight has trouble reaching the forest floor due to the dense canopy of overhead branches. This condition prevents many plants from sprouting from the ground and therefore this area is not as valuable to wildlife for shelter or food as an area with thickets, weeds, bushes, and small shrubs.

Birds like the ruffed grouse might roost in this thick stand of trees since it is near a food supply (insects and berries). Notice our state bird is not pronounced 'ruffled.' The male attracts a female in the spring by 'drumming' or rapidly beating his wings while standing on a favorite log. Young are able to run when hatched. Adults can fly 22 mph. It has a crest on its head like a cardinal. It is known to dive headlong into a snowdrift when temperatures are frigid to stay warm. The meat is excellent. Other names include the partridge mountain pheasant, and drumming grouse.

Look around to see if there is a small tree with bark rubbed off and distributed at its base. This could be a buck rub. A white-tailed deer, our state animal, came by here and decided to mark his territory by rubbing his antlers along this tree that was small enough to "light back" when he pushed on it. This activity helps strengthen the buck's neck muscles and provides a sign to other bucks that they are trespassing on the buck's property. If bucks do battle over the female (doe), it usually is a brief shoving match. The victor of the match mates with the female. The size of the tree often indicates the size of the deer. Smaller deer tend to rub smaller trees. This rub is NOT used to rub the velvet off as many people believe. The velvet falls off weeks before the 'buck rubs' ever appear in the woods. One buck may



make 20 or more rubs in his territory. The buck will shed his antlers in the winter. Their main purpose is for defending territory and sometimes for protection. Deer normally rely more on their keen senses of hearing or smelling and can escape enemies by running. Deer have been clocked at 30 mph and can be observed jumping 30 feet in a horizontal jump. A buck grows a new set of antlers each spring and they take until early fall to complete their growth. Antlers are often called 'horns' but animals with horns never shed them. Therefore antlers and horns are not the same.

Continue on until you reach Site 5.

SITE 5

See the unusual man made structure in the stream? This is a Jack Dam. It was built because the stream was once low and wide, which provided little protection for fish. Also, it prevents further erosion on the sides of the creek. Notice how the water flowing over this jack dam has carved a deep hole in the creek bed. The flowing water also helps to aerate (add oxygen) to the water to help fish breath. Look closely below the dam in the deep pool - you might catch a glimpse of a trout as it dashes for cover!

The brook trout, or 'brookie' as it is often called, is Pennsylvania's state fish and only native trout. The rainbow and



brown trout have been brought from other states. The brook trout has wormlike markings on its back and has white, black, and orange coloration on the lower fins. Brookies eat insects, crayfish, snails, and smaller fish. They can survive in streams with temperatures to 75°F but prefer temperatures around 66°F. A 12-inch trout in this small stream would be considered quite a catch. The flesh is firm and good to eat. They are often caught with worms, artificial flies, or small minnows.

You might also find a minnow known as the black-nosed dace. Notice the dark line extending along each side of its body. It feeds chiefly on small animals, aquatic insect larvae in particular. It appears to be constantly darting about examining the bottom for food. It is easily caught in minnow traps or seine nets. It is a

favorite food of the trout. When this minnow is found in a stream, it indicates that the water is well aerated. It cannot survive in low-oxygenated water.

Before continuing, look across the stream to see more rhododendrons.

Walk along the stream now, and try to see if you can find any animal tracks in the soft mud that banks the stream. These tracks could be from a deer, opossum, fox, dog, trout fisherman, or maybe a raccoon.

The raccoon is also known as the 'masked bandit,' probably because of the black band across its face. It is known to raid garbage cans and camp food boxes. It is active at night and usually stays near water where it searches for crayfish, frogs, and fresh-water mussels. It will also eat corn, insects, fruits, and nuts. May weigh up to 35 pounds. It does not hibernate and dens in hollow trees.



Walk now to the swamp.

SITE 6

This meadow you see is really a swamp. It may have been a pond in earlier years, which eventually dried up and left only a wet depression. Decayed vegetation called peat gradually replaced the water. The soil is still water-soaked, but supports woody plants around the edges and sparsely throughout the area. Typical swamp plants here are crabapple trees, hawthorn, white pine, forbs (grasses), teasel, sphagnum moss, tulip poplar trees, and black haw (black-berried elder).

Teasel grows to a height of five feet or more. Prickles are located along the stem, and considered a weed to farmers. Cattle find its juice disagreeable to the taste. It's a biennial plant (a plant that grow for two years) and can be controlled by plowing and clean cultivation.

The stems of the sphagnum moss are weak but crowd compactly together to form great mats with the upper portion of the plant living and the lower portion in varying degrees of decay. Sphagnum moss has been used as an absorbent material in surgery, or for holding water in packing around trees that will be replanted. Peat is built by these plants at the rate of one foot every 100 years. This plant is also used to treat acid mine water.



The tulip poplar tree grows to a height of 200 feet and a diameter of 12 feet. It grows straight and tall which makes it valuable for an ornamental as well as for timber. The leaves are shaped like the tulip flower. The poplar has been known to live for as long as 300 years. The wood is used for cabinet making, boat building, shingles, and woodenware. Deer, squirrels, and rabbits eat the seeds. They are recommended for growth in ravines as future timber and as soil anchorage due to the deep wide spreading roots. Walk around the meadow and see if you can locate a tulip poplar tree. Look for the distinctive leaves.

The black-berried elder, or black haw, grows to a height of 10 feet. It is found along roadsides, in moist spots in hedgerows, and at edges of forests or marshes, in sun or out. Fruits are available from August through October. The fruits are used to make excellent pies, wine, and pancakes. They are common food of grouse, pheasant, dove, turkey, squirrel, and deer. Livestock can eat leaves. The stems had been used by pioneers, who made spiles and collected maple sap (the spile is the hollow tube put in the trunk to drain the sap). The bark may be considered poisonous.

Return to the trail, and walk a few feet until you notice a tree that has one trunk but splits into three different trees. This is a 'stump sprout'. It is formed when loggers cut down a large tree. If there are small branches left at the bottom of the trunk, they get a chance to grow again. This can grow into 2, 3, and sometimes even 4 trees out of one stump. It is technically still one tree, however.

Follow the trail

SITE 7

As you approach the stream, follow the trail upstream. Notice the triangular device filled with rocks. This is a stream deflector. It was built to keep the stream from cutting into or eroding the bank. Young streams are straight, but as they grow older, they tend to slow down and flow side to side, often times due to soil erosion. When the water flow hits the device, it is deflected back to the middle of the stream. Very large stones are used in the device so that the flood will not wash them away. The logs that make the frame are anchored into the streambed with steel reinforcement rods – like you would nail a board to the floor. As you can see by the shoal along this bank, the device has already done a good job of moving the stream back toward the middle.

Walk the path along the stream until you notice a large tree at the split in the creek. This is a Sycamore. It has heavy, hard wood, which is difficult to split and work. Its white, shaggy bark is a familiar sight throughout Pennsylvania, particularly along streams. It is probably hollow at the bottom due to damage from ice flowing down the stream in an early spring flood which made it susceptible to decay and heart rot. It probably started growing on that spot when the stream's bed was much different, when its now tiny island was once dry land.

Lift some rocks from under the streambed. You may discover a crayfish. Crayfish can grow up to 5 inches in length. Its food is a variety of plants and animals, which may be caught and held with one of the large front claws. It can regenerate a lost claw (that is, grow one back). It sheds the outer skin, known as an exoskeleton, as it grows larger. The crayfish moves quickly by swimming backwards using quick thrusts of the tail. 200 eggs are laid at a time. Many fish, including the brook trout, eat the crayfish. People can also eat it.

While here, look for aquatic insects. The stonefly nymph might be clinging to the underside of a stone underwater in search

of food. It is found mostly in flowing streams where adults emerge even when the stream is full of ice. Adults mate soon after emerging from the water. The females lay 200-800 eggs in masses in the water where the cycle continues. The eggs hatch into nymphs, which take 1 to 3 years to reach the adult stage. It has no pupal stage. Adults may eat nothing.

The mayfly nymph may also be found in the stream, burrowing in the mud, clinging to stones, or tree swimming. It feeds primarily on plant material, which it chews. Adults eat little or nothing at all. The female lays 500-1,000 eggs in the water. There is no pupal stage. The nymph has three tails, instead of two like the stonefly. The nymph sometimes goes through as many as 21 molts from 6 weeks to 3 years before becoming an adult. Adults live only a day or two – mating in flight. Mayfly nymphs are valuable as food for fish.

SITE 8

To the left of the trail is a fallen, or uprooted, tree called a wind throw. A strong wind came across the open meadow and blew over this shallow rooted tree. There were no tall trees in the meadow and few big trees in the woods to slow down the force before it struck this tree. Eventually it will decompose and leave a pile of soil next to the hole where the tree roots were anchored. Notice the rocks, which were entangled in the tree roots.

Pause at the edge of the meadow. This might be a good place to see a Garter snake. It is non-poisonous and is the most common snake in Pennsylvania. It has 3 light yellow lines running down its back.

Snakes are not slimy. They can swallow food larger than their head because they can unhinge their jaws and stretch their skin. They flick out their tongue to detect vibrations and to pick up minute particles in the air. Therefore, their tongue acts as a hearing and smelling organ. Snakes have no eyelids. Their eyes are always opened but are protected by a clear covering. Garter snakes eat frogs, toads, insects, earthworms, and minnows. They may reach 3 feet in length. The female gives birth to 12-70 live young (but they do not hatch from eggs).



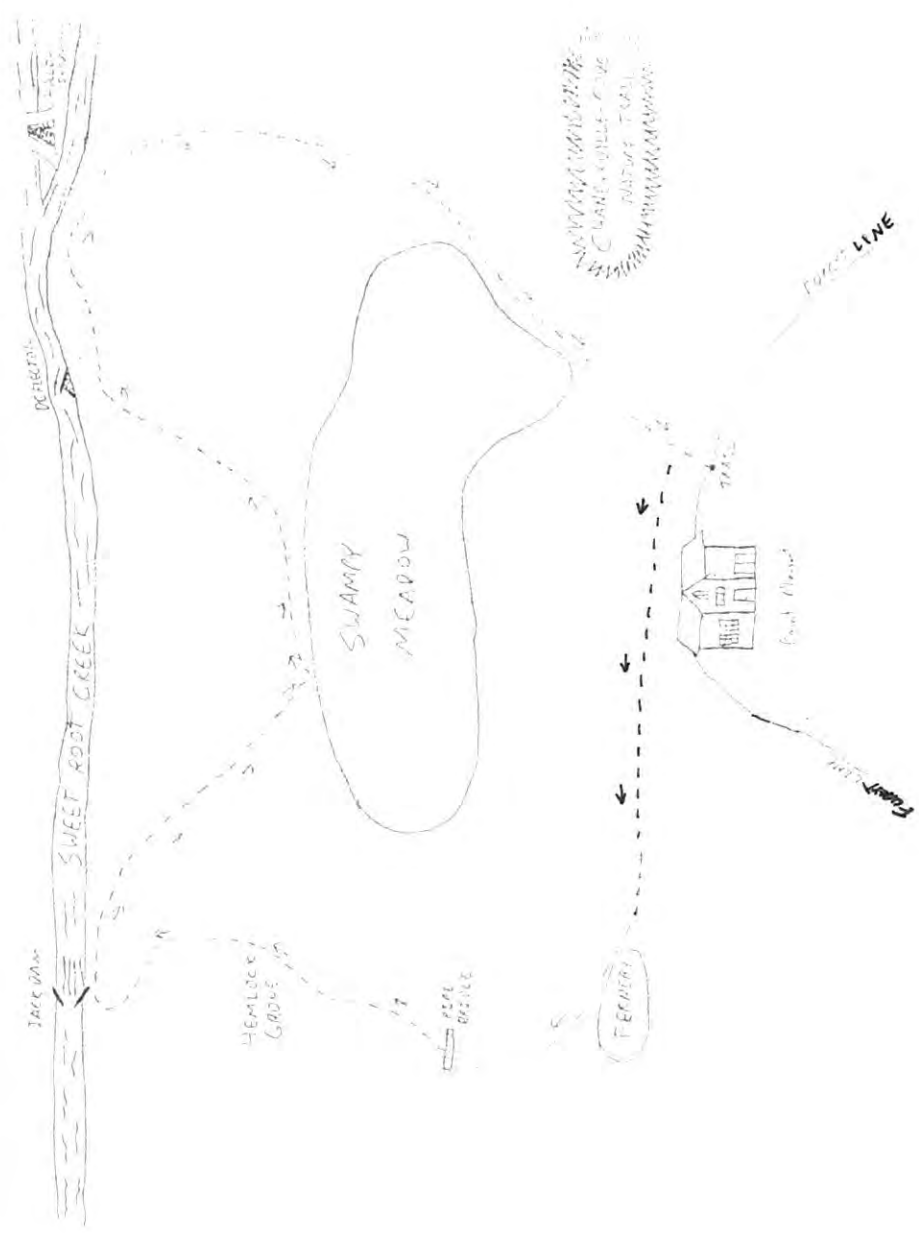
Another cold-blooded reptile that might frequent this meadow is the wood turtle. The upper shell might be 9 inches in length. It is roughly sculptured with concentric rings like those of a tree; thus the likeness of wood. It eats plants including fruits, berries, leaves, and mushrooms but also insects, earthworms, slugs, snails, and carrion. It has an unusual ability to climb. The wood turtle seldom bites. The legs and neck are a bright orange. The flesh is edible, but the animal is so scarce and small that law should protect it. One individual lived 58 years in captivity.

The other turtle likely to inhabit this meadow is the Eastern Box turtle. The upper shell is about 5 inches long. The male is easily identified by his red or pink eyes. The female has brown eyes, though sometimes red or yellow. It eats plant material and worms, slugs, snails, and insects. It is protected by its shell which closes tightly like a box; hence, its name. It hibernates in soft soil below the frost line. The box turtle is completely harmless. It is known to live for 40 years in captivity.

Another animal to be found in this habitat is the Ring-Necked Pheasant, another of Pennsylvania's game birds. The male, or cock bird, has strong spurs, brilliant coloration, a white collar, and red wattles. The female, or hen, is brown, making her well camouflaged while sitting on her 6-12 eggs. The pheasant is a native of Asia and was first successfully stocked in 1915. It eats at least 56 species of plant foods and many types of insects. It is quite fond of corn. Pheasant meat tastes good to most pheasant hunters.

Continue the trail until you reach the edge of the woods and exit behind the old Point Pleasant Elementary School. Congratulations! You have completed the Chaneyville-Cove Nature Trail.







*Reprinted in March 2001 by the Bedford County
Conservation District.*

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