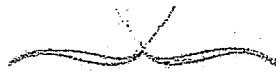


ROERWOOD

NATURE
CENTER

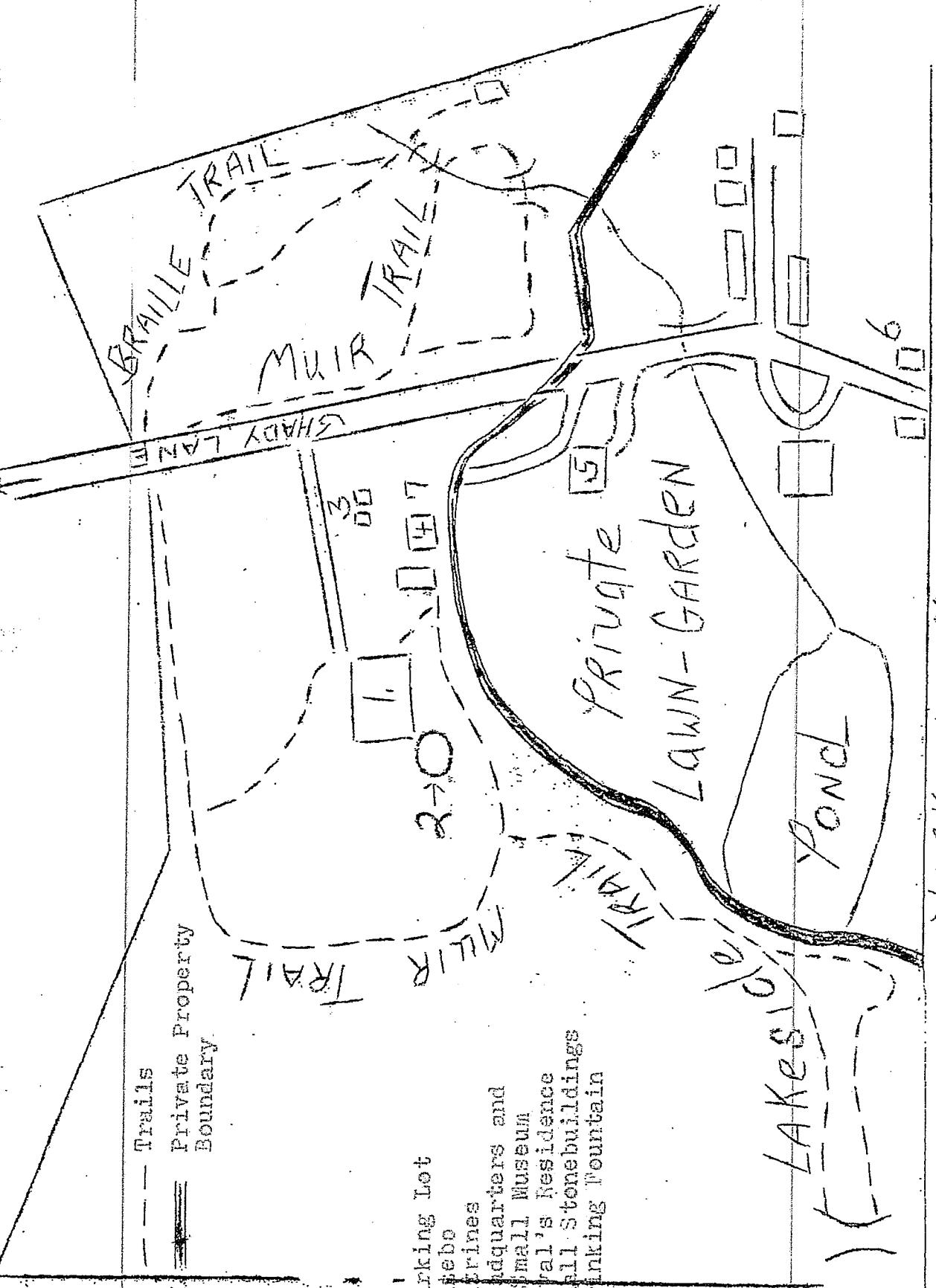


SELF-GUIDING TRAIL BOOKLET

Oerwood Nature

Center

Board
Foot



--- Trails
 === Private Property Boundary

1. Parking Lot
2. Gatebo
3. Latrines
4. Headquarters and Small Museum
5. Koval's Residence
6. Small Stonebuildings
7. Drinking Fountain

YORK TO MANCHESTER

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most single unique thing about Oerwood is the way in which it developed into a nature center. Through the efforts of the Ecology Club of Northeastern High School the area in which you will be wandering was cleared, trimmed and maintained. Since early December, 1967 the club members gave of their weekends and holidays to develop this beautiful piece of land into a use ful and educational nature laboratory. As you walk the trails or stop at the wayside stations keep in mind that a handful of teenagers made it all possible. The funds needed for the roads, markers signs, etc. were raised by the club which receives not abit of outside help. During the winter months there are several feeding stations along the trail for your added enjoyment and also during the migration period in the spring and fall there will be banding operations in progress on weekends so that you cann see in action the work of the club and the federal government. You are invited to make use of this wild areaduring all months of the year and if you feel that your trip has been worthwhile we would k appreciate; your broadcast-

ing your enthusiasm to your friends. If you feel that you would like to become more involved in the centers workings you are invited to become a member of the club, which is certainly not limited to students of Northeastern Highschool. Any donations of time and/or materials from your side would be greatly appreciated. Feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

J. Brett, director

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Oerwood is a private nature center maintained and managed by the Northeastern Ecology Club. The foregoing rules and regulations are intended for your safety and for the total preservation of the natural environment. We hope you will make wise use of this natural area so that the generations yet unborn can enjoy them as you have.

1. Keep posted as to times of opening and closing of the center. There will be a time schedule at the entrance.
2. If you are with a group please stay with your group leader and REMAIN ON THE TRAILS....
3. Do not under any circumstances make camp or picnic fires in the center.
4. Follow the trail map and do not wander on private lands outside the center.
5. Do not litter the trail with paper or bottles.
6. Since this is an area of wildlife protection we should leave it as we found it. DO NOT REMOVE ANY SPECIMENS, PLANT OR ANIMAL, FROM :THE CENTER.

A GOOD RULE TO FOLLOW IS:

TAKE ONLY PICTURES

LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS....

THANKYOU AND HAVE A GOOD
TRIP

THE NORTHEASTERN ECOLOGY CLUB

THE TRIAL IS APPROX. THREE QUARTERS OF A MILE LONG AND BEGINS AT THE SOUTH END OF THE PARKING LOT. EACH BOOKLET DESCRIBES 20 POINTS OF INTEREST, EACH POINT IS IDENTIFIED BY A NUMBERED POST.

- #1. If the lawn were not kept mowed to the edge of the woods the woods would "march" out at the lawn. Locust, sassafras and maple-the small trees now at the edge-are among the first to extend the woods. (Trail turns right here)
- #2. The locust trees to your left are the most common in Oerwood. It is supposed that the local Indians used the wood for bows. In more recent times it was used for "tree nails" (sowels for holding together wooden ships). The area to your left is a favorite cottontail rabbit habitat. Note the thickness of the cover. Rabbits may have as many as five litters a year, beginning in very early spring. A cupshaped nest is dug, and lined with fur from the mothers body. Young are blind at birth remain in the nest about two weeks. There are usually four to five young in each litter. Before you go on to the next marker, notice the large tree directly in front of of marker #2. This is a Ginkgo tree. It is a very ancient species imported from the orient hundreds of years ago.
- #3. The old cherry trees on both sides of the trail may appear to be of no value, but it is far from finished in its role with nature. The tree is slowly being turned back into the soil by the forest's decomposers. Under the bark (take a peek) you will find a myriad of life forms. There will be carenter ants, sowbugs, beetles centipedes, millipedes, and millions fo other organisms, microscopic insize which are feeding on the dead plant tissue. In a few years the trees will be returned to soil to make food for future trees. (Trail turns right ahead)
- #4. Many of the Oerwood mammals (furry animals) are seldom seen because they come out at night. Others are very secretive and hide as you walk along the trail. We can be sure that

mammals live here by observing their signs--droppings (waste material), food remains, tracks, trails through the grass, and holes. Look for tracks along this old lane in the soft mud.

(Trail continues straight ahead)

- #5. Trees are certainly "friends of the earth". Their shelter from the wind, softens the biting blow. Their overhead canopy gives shade from the sun and trees add moisture and oxygen to the air. Later, their decaying leaves, trunks and roots make the soil fertile. Many animals live in the woods. Worms, insects, and moles in the soil. Look for burrows of moles along the trail. Squirrels, owls, and woodpeckers live in the many hollow trees along the trail; groundhogs, chipmunks and rabbits in underground burrows--all these animals find food and shelter in the woods. Many of them help the trees by eating numerous insects, improving soil and spreading trees seeds. Each plant and animal benefits the community in which it lives.

- #6. The grassland in front of you and the left, if untouched, would some day be a forest. The young sun-loving trees that are growing out in front would soon kill the grasses. Eventually forest trees would invade the area. At that time raccoons, woodpeckers and meadowlarks that are presently found here. (Trail turns right across the road--watch for traffic)

- #7. You are passing through a very moist damp area. If you look carefully you will notice ferns and mosses growing on rocks along the trail. Listen carefully and you might hear the cat-like calls of the catbird. To your left there used to be an old orchard which is now almost gone. The fallen trees are decomposed and now form humus, nature's fertilizer. Nothing in nature is wasted.

- #8. Plant cover helps to keep rain where it falls. An inch of rain on an acre of land amounts to more than 27,000 gallons of water. Roots lead some of the rainfall underground. Brooks, springs, wells, crops and natural vegetation benefit from such water storage. (Trail turns left ahead)

- # 9. You are now standing in front of what used to be an old rubbish dump. With wise conservation and a few tons of topsoil, you can see that there is now vegetation growing. Erosion is a constant problem with nature, but it can be halted with the planting of grasses or trees which hold the soil in place. As you walk a few yards ahead you will get some idea of the way in which this area used to look.
- #10. The field you are looking across has changed greatly in the past 25,000 years and is still changing. At one time this area was one of the highest areas in the world, with a mountain system as high as the present Rockies. The land was eventually worn down by rain and ice until it was a level plain. It was again uplifted to form the Newer Appalachians (now evident along River at Harrisburg.) Again erosion took over to begin the leveling process. When the pioneers roamed this area they cut down the huge stands of timber and began farming. Now it is returning to a wooded area, which will take many more years.
- #11. The small creek originates from springs just north of Gerwood and flows into the pond on the southside of the sanctuary, which in turn flows into the Corderus Creek near Emigsville. Life is abundant and varied. Water striders skim over the surface in search for food. Insect larvae of many species crawl along the bottom. Minnows, tadpoles and small water insects called water boatmen can swim. Many of these seek shelter and food among the leaves of the submerged plants. On warm spring nights frogs and salamanders lay eggs and glowworms (larvae of the fireflies) "glow" along the water's edge where muddy banks hold footprints of larger animals that came for food and water. (#12. lies just a few yds. to the left of the bridge.)
- #12. The conditions for life here are quite different than in shady areas. The sunlight and wind are very intense, and plants and animals that live here have adjusted over a long period of time to these extremes. Rabbits, meadow mice, crickets and grasshoppers seek shelter and food among the tall grass and herbs. Hawks, snakes and seed-eating birds by day, owls and foxes by night, come to hunt.

Under the soil are earthworms, ants and numerous minute animals, plants and roots. These burrow in the soil with the result that they loosen, aerate and make it fertile. A grassland can support only a limited number of plants and animals. Where there are too many of one kind, some must die for lack of food, living space; and shelter.

(Go back to the creek and continue on the trail. If you try the rope bridge--ONE AT A TIME)

- #13. Water is flowing 37 inches under your feet. A spring emerges just off to the right and flows to the pool down the hill. This is a favorite haunt of the Wood Thrush, a rather uncommon bird in these parts, but plentiful in the sanctuary. Listen for its flute-like EE-O-LAY, and its call, a rapid pip-pip-pip-pip.
- #14. Groundhog (woodchuck) burrows are valuable in providing homes for other animals. Rabbits, skunks, raccoons, opossums, pheasants and snakes are found living in them in the summer or seeking refuge there in winter. A small pool is just ahead. Be quiet and you may see an unusual bird washing or drinking along the banks. Stay on the rocks so that you don't sink into the mud.
- #15. This small marshy area is a very special place. The shallow water warms up quickly in the early summer. Soon it is teeming with microscopic forms of life. On the bottom is a layer of soft material called "muck" consisting mostly of dead plant and animal remains. Water plants are rooted in this muck and many creatures seek shelter and food there. Mayflies, caddis-flies, snails and tadpoles crawl across the bottom. On occasion box turtles and painted turtles can be seen. Green frogs, with only their heads above water waiting for passing insects. Colorful dragonflies whiz by, like jets, in search of gnats and mosquitoes. (Be careful in crossing the dam)
- #16. Two kinds of plants are found climbing the trees in

this area. The one with three leaflets is poison ivy. The one with five leaflets is woodbine or Virginia creeper.

Remember: "Leaflets three--let it be"

"Leaflets five--stay alive"

The small white berries found on poison ivy are eaten by 27 kinds of birds at Oerwood. The berries, leaves and stems are fed upon by muskrats and rabbits.

#17. Down the hill of the left are the remains of an old mill. Just the foundation is left as testimony of a prosperous grinding operation of a hundred years ago. At one time Raccoon Run was a fast moving stream, fast enough to turn the wheels of the mill, which milled grain for the local farmers.

(Trail turns right here)

#18. Leave ferns and wildflowers alone so that all visitors to Oerwood may enjoy them. Some of the summer wildflowers growing in the area are mullein, with tall stalks of yellow flowers and fuzzy leaves, queen anne's lace, goldenrod, thistle, milkweed, phlox, and these jewel weed or touch-me-not in front of you. These plants produce a seed-pod which when touched will explode propelling seeds in all directions. Trail turns left across the road ahead.

#19. OMITTED

#20. As you walked along the trail you have seen how the earth's most important natural resources--soil, water, plants, and animals--are dependent upon each other. Not one of the four can exist without the other three. Man himself cannot live without the four resources. His enjoyment of life and even his survival depend on his ability to understand and to use wisely these essential resources.

We sincerely hope you have enjoyed your journey with nature on our trails. We are in our infancy and many problems and plans have yet to be ironed out. We welcome any suggestions or comments that you may have for our improvement and your added enjoyment. We do not wish to develop to the point of commercialism. We want to keep what is wild now wild in the future. The headquarters building is open for your rest and relaxation and someone is there most of the time to assist you and answer any questions you may have. If you feel you have some special talent or resource that will help in our development as a total educational facility we beg you to speak up. It is only through cooperation and close communication with you that we can expect to crawl from infancy to maturity.