

Get Involved

- Hike the trails! You can gain ideas on ways to improve your own property, and enjoy the wildlife that abound because of the work done at the site
- Volunteer! Visit our site at www.greatswamp.org, and help protect your water and land by becoming a CMA hands on land management volunteer.
- Attend Public Programs hosted by GSWA at the CMA, including Vernal Pool studies and Moonlight hikes. Check out our programs at www.greatswamp.org
- Read the CMA trail guide as you hike to learn more about the site and ideas for your own backyard (trail guides available in the mail box)
- Join us! Visit our site to become a member of GSWA

GSWA: Offices
 568 Tempe Wick Rd
 Morristown NJ 07960
 (973) 538 3500

www.GreatSwamp.org

Photographs by Blaine Rothausen

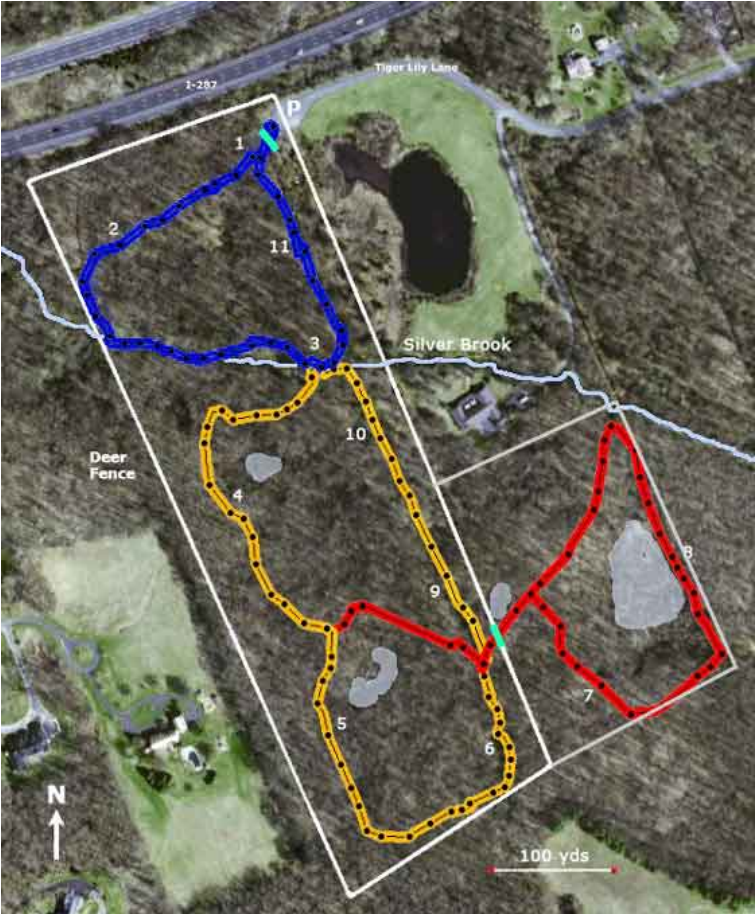


Conservation Management Area

Tour Guide



Tiger Lily Lane Harding Township



Great Swamp Watershed Association, founded in 1981, is dedicated to protecting and improving water resources in the ten towns that comprise Great Swamp watershed by monitoring local streams, advocating for intelligent land use, and educating our communities about water quality and quantity and their effect on the health and natural beauty of the local environment. The ten towns are: Bernardsville, Bernards Township, Chatham Township, Harding Township, Long Hill Township, Madison Borough, Mendham Borough, Mendham Township, Morristown and Morris Township.

Watch Out!

Poison Ivy: This plant can be identified by its three distinct leaves. The oil on the leaves results in an itchy rash when it touches skin. Leaves of three – let them be!



Ticks: Wood ticks and deer ticks are present at the CMA, so make sure to check yourself for them after walking at the site. Remember, deer ticks can be very small!



1

In 2005, GSWA put up a fence surrounding 23 acres of the property to exclude deer. Deer populations in the area exceed 100 deer/square mile, while carrying capacity is closer to 10 deer/square mile. Excluding deer will improve the area as a wildlife habitat.

This is also an educational and scientific opportunity to see the effects of deer by comparing species found within the fenced portion of the site to those on the outside.

Look at the oak seedlings successfully re-establishing themselves inside of the fence as compared to the lack of them on the outside.

2

Look for smaller fenced enclosures within the larger one. One contains the state endangered species Swamp Pink (*Heliotis bullata*). It is endangered because more than 50% of wetlands in this country have been lost and it is difficult to establish it in areas where it hadn't existed previously. This area has also been planted with Cardinal flower, Turtlehead and Buttonbush. Wetland systems have been shown to contain higher levels of biodiversity, and therefore it is important that they are protected.



3

If you stand on our bridge, you can see the effects of erosion. Erosion is a direct result of the high velocity of the water, and you can see the difference between this section of the stream, and a section later on in the walk. There, the water is very clear and there is a layer of vegetation that is able to survive due to lower velocity.

GSWA has planted shrubs and vegetation along the banks in order to control erosion, and also to provide shade for the creatures living in the streams.

Look for animal tracks along the banks, as otter, muskrat, fox, and raccoon drink from the stream.

4

Vernal pools are filled with water in the Spring, but typically dry out completely by the late summer. They play an important role in the lives of many amphibians, which use them for the reproductive stage of their life. Frogs, salamanders and toads can breed and lay eggs without fear of predatory fish and insects. The wood frog is especially fond of these pools.

A biological inventory is being done in the hopes of finding a population of blue-spotted salamanders, a state endangered amphibian whose habitat closely resembles that of the CMA.



5

Sedge marshes are maintained by girdling trees, since trees shade the sedges and use the water present. The area remains damp for most of the year, and the dominant plant is a sedge that takes the form of clump-like mounds. Look for Spring ephemeral wildflowers that compress their life cycle so that they bloom before the canopy shades them.

Sedge marshes are very valuable for biodiversity, and they attract animal species such as turtles.



6

The cuttings left over from the removal of invasives are put into brush piles. These act as excellent sources of cover for small mammals and songbirds, for protection from predators and for shelter from the heat and cold. Have you thought about creating brush piles on your property? It's a valuable, environmentally sound land-management tool.



7

Although the history of the property is unknown, there are clues regarding past land use. Look for ferns, may apple and a thick layer of leaf litter, which suggest old forest. Widely branched trees grew up in sunny fields. We care about past land use since it influences what occurs now. Less disturbance of land in the past results in fewer invasive species gaining a foothold in the habitat.

8

This cattail marsh is a wet depression in an open area with no canopy cover. Years ago it may have been a much deeper pond that has gradually filled in. This spot has become home to Great Blue Herons, green frogs and spring peepers.



Songbirds, white-footed mice, and insects all make use of the downy flower head to line their nests and provide refuge from the cold.

It is very beneficial to have microhabitats within an area of land, since it creates more structure and can sustain more species of animals and plants. Transitional zones between the microhabitats promote diversity.

9

The ditches were created by the mosquito commission in the sixties, to help with drainage. The ditches both connect to the Silver brook. Spotted, snapping and wood turtles have all been seen there. The Wood turtle (*Clemmys insulpta*) is a state threatened animal.



Look for fish — red-finned pickerel and the mudminnow have both been spotted.

10

Many invasive species thrive in the CMA, including multiflora rose, Tatarian honeysuckle, Japanese stilt grass, privet, and garlic mustard. These plants are able to out-compete most other native species, therefore reducing biodiversity and creating a less healthy environment.

Thanks to volunteers, GSWA has replaced many of the non-native species with a variety of native plantings, marked with pink ribbon. This diversity strengthens and stabilizes the system.

11

GSWA has built boardwalks and trails for the benefit of visitors, and has also put up informative signs throughout the trail system. Hopefully this will lead to increased visitation and concern with the health of the watershed.