

Station 1 – On Your Hike

Welcome to the Camp Lewis Nature Trail. The goal of this trail and pamphlet is to help in your discovery of the natural world that is a part of this camp. The goal of Scouting's conservation program is to help Scouts of all ages not only discover the natural world, but also to understand the processes that are at work there, and to understand man's role in his environment and the enlightened way to make decisions that affect the environment.



Wildlife is an important part of the environment, and there is a good chance to see many different animals during your hike if you follow certain rules. Almost all wildlife avoid noise and commotion. So, the quieter your group is, the better chance you have of seeing wildlife. What sorts of wildlife may you see? All sorts of birds, snakes, chipmunks, squirrels, deer, bear, insects, frogs, toads, and lizards all make their home at the camp.

Station 2 – Poison Ivy

Take careful note of the hairy vines growing up this tree. These vines are poison ivy. Poison ivy leaves, vines, roots, berries, and sap all contain an oily poison that causes skin irritation. The oil is difficult to wash off, and is often spread to other parts of a person's body even before a person notices.



Luckily for everyone, poison ivy is very easy to identify and avoid. First, each leaf is made up of three leaflets -- "Leaves of three, let it be!" Secondly, the vines climb up trees, shrubs, rocks, or anything else by attaching with those hairs -- "Hairy rope, don't be a dope!" And lastly, poison ivy is one of the very few vines or shrubs that have white berries -- "Berries of white, die of fright!"

Station 3 – Stone Rows

Take a look at the stone walls (or stonerows) in this area? Who built them and why are they here? Stonerows are one of the many ways to tell what an area was used for in the past. Many years ago, the land in this area was farmed. A farmer and his family would remove rocks from farm field in order to make planting easier. The simplest thing to do with the rocks was to make these stonerows out of them.

The stonerows would separate adjacent farm fields. In addition, sometimes when a field was close to the property line, the farmer would make a stonerow right on top of the boundary line. This is why many people came to associate stonerows with boundary lines, because this practice was so common.

Station 4 – Evergreen trees and wildlife habitat

Wildlife needs four very important things in its habitat in order to survive: water, food, shelter and

living space. Habitat means "where plants and animals live." Common animals (like squirrels and robins) can live just about anywhere. Some animals, such as ruffed grouse, golden-winged warbler (both birds) have very specific habitat needs – they will only live in certain places.

Take notice of the evergreen trees growing to the right. These evergreen trees provide cover (shelter) for many types of birds during the winter, especially on cold, windy days. In dense branches, the bitter winter winds are held back. For other birds, these needles hide them from predators. For many types of birds, this is a very important type of habitat.

Station 5 – Grape Vines

Take a good look at these vines. They look completely different from the poison ivy you saw before. This vine has different leaves, it has shaggy instead of hairy bark, and it has grapes instead of white berries. This plant is called a fox grape.



Do you think that fox grape is good or bad? The tree that the vine is climbing probably would think that the vine is bad, because the vine's leaves are catching the sunlight that the tree's leaves would otherwise be catching. In this way, the vine is killing the tree. The animals that eat the grapes could disagree because the foxgrape is providing food. Unless vines are completely taking over an area, the camp tends to leave them alone.

Station 6 – Bedrock

The large rocks that are part of the ground that you just walked over are called "bedrock." Bedrock is the foundation that the soil and trees and houses and everything else is built on. All soil in this part of New Jersey has some kind of bedrock if you dig deep enough.

If the bedrock is very close to the surface, it means that the soil is very thin. When the soil is very thin, that means there is less space for tree roots. It also means that there is probably not many nutrients in the soil to help the tree grow. Only certain kinds of trees can grow in conditions like that, such as the oaks and black birches that you see around you.

Station 7 – Food for Wildlife

Again, wildlife needs four things from the habitat they live in, in order to survive: water, food, shelter and space. The oaks and hickories in this area produce very important food for wildlife. Oaks produce acorns, and hickories produce hickory nuts as seed. This type of food is known as "hard mast." A wide variety of animals depend on nuts and acorns, including squirrels, chipmunks, and wild turkeys.

The black gum trees in this area produce berries that are also important to wildlife. This type of fruit is called "soft mast" and includes berries, grapes, and other fruit that are fleshy and moist. This is compared to the "hard mast" that is hard and crunchy. By having many

different kinds of trees and shrubs and plants, there can be food for more types of wildlife.

Station 8 – How old is this tree?

Take a look at the great big tree that is growing near the lean-to's. How old do you think this tree is? How can you tell how old any tree is? Some people think you can tell the age of a tree by measuring how thick the trunk is, but that's not how it works. You could have a very skinny tree that is over 60 years old. Also, you could have a thick tree that may only be 30 years old.

The way to tell how old a tree is would be to count the growth rings. Growth rings can tell you other things, too. If a tree's growth and health are reduced, one can see this best by looking at the growth rings of a tree. When a tree has been weakened, less wood is produced and the growth rings are closer together. A severe drought may cause a temporary slowing of growth. Foresters have special tools to drill out a small part of the trunk so you don't have to cut down a tree to count the growth rings.

Station 9 – Trail markers

You have been following blue trail markers for the entire trail so far. Have you figured out what the different types of markers mean? A single marker, or blaze, means that the trail continues straight. Two trail markers mean that the trail turns. The trail markers you see on the tree mean that the trail is about to turn left.

CONTINUE STRAIGHT 	START OF TRAIL 	RIGHT TURN 
SPUR LEADING TO A DIFFERENT TRAIL 	END OF TRAIL 	LEFT TURN 

Station 10 – Soil Erosion

Soil provides tremendous benefits to people, plants, and wildlife. First, soil provides a place for plants of all kinds to grow: herbs, shrubs, trees, and vines. Those plants provide habitat for all kinds of wildlife: birds, bats, insects, mammals. Those plants also provide food for people and wildlife: crops for people, leaves and fruit for wildlife. In addition, the soil itself is habitat for all kinds of stuff, like insects, worms, groundhogs, fungus, and bacteria.

For all of these reasons, but particularly because of the crops and other plant products people use (like wood) depend on soil, people should protect soils by stopping soil erosion. Erosion is what happens when soil moves from one place to another. In this part of the country, water is the greatest cause of soil erosion. Here on the trail in front of you, you can see the damage that erosion can do to the soil.

Station 11 – Water Quality and Wildlife



As you cross the stream on the bridge, did you notice the living things under your feet? Perhaps looking closer, you could find crawfish or salamanders under the rocks, or perhaps tadpoles or the immature larvae of black flies swimming in the water, maybe if you were still and quiet you might see a deer or fox walk to the stream and drink. Looking closely, what about the moss or slimy algae on the surface of the rocks? All animals require water, food, shelter, and living space in order to survive. Some animals require particularly clean water.

Many important species of fish need cool water in order to survive and thrive. Forest shade is important for reducing stream water temperature as much as 10-15 degrees during the summer. Many fish can't live in water that has been made muddy from soil erosion. Water diversion devices such as waterbars are put on forest roads to keep water from flowing down the roads and causing erosion.

Station 12 – Water Quality and People

People require very clean drinking water. This forest has been providing clean drinking water for years and years. Today, the water that leaves this area flows into the Split Rock Reservoir, which provides drinking water for Jersey City. People protect water quality by protecting stream banks, avoiding activities which may muddy the water, and by harvesting overmature trees in stream corridors, which would otherwise die and contribute unwanted nutrients into the water.



By protecting soils in camp, you can help keep people's drinking water clean many counties away. That's a mighty big responsibility. It helps us all understand that so many things in the natural world are connected. So keep in mind that by following the Outdoor Code in camp can help people back in Hudson County!

For further information, please visit
www.nnjbsa-conservation.org

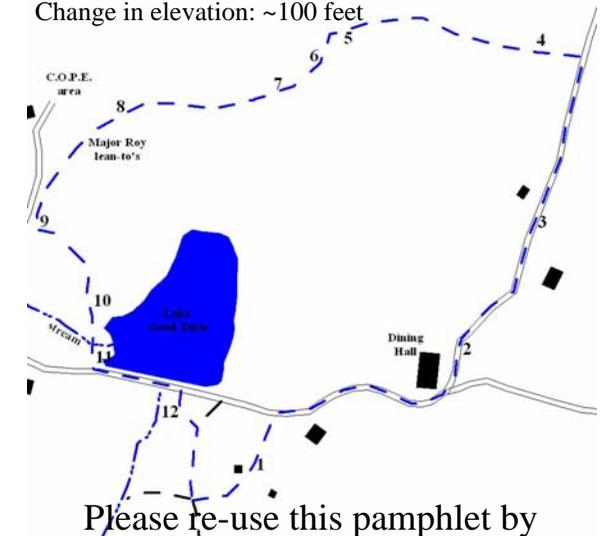
Camp Lewis

Nature Trail

Follow the blue trail from the Nature area, past the dining hall, out to the chapel, around Major Roy campsite, across the bridge at the lake, and pass the water pump, returning to the Nature area.

Distance: ~0.7 miles

Change in elevation: ~100 feet



Please re-use this pamphlet by returning it to the trailhead. Thanks!

Written and edited by Northern NJ Council, BSA Conservation Committee (Last revised June 2007)

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