

Welcome to the Crooked Creek Trail!

This walk consists of 10 sites of interest on an approximately 3 mile trail. The trail has been made possible by gifts from the Macsherry family and friends to honor Dick and Mary Macsherry, life long summer residents, on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary. The Macsherrys have always been active sportsmen with a strong interest in preserving the natural beauty of the area.

1. The importance of wetlands

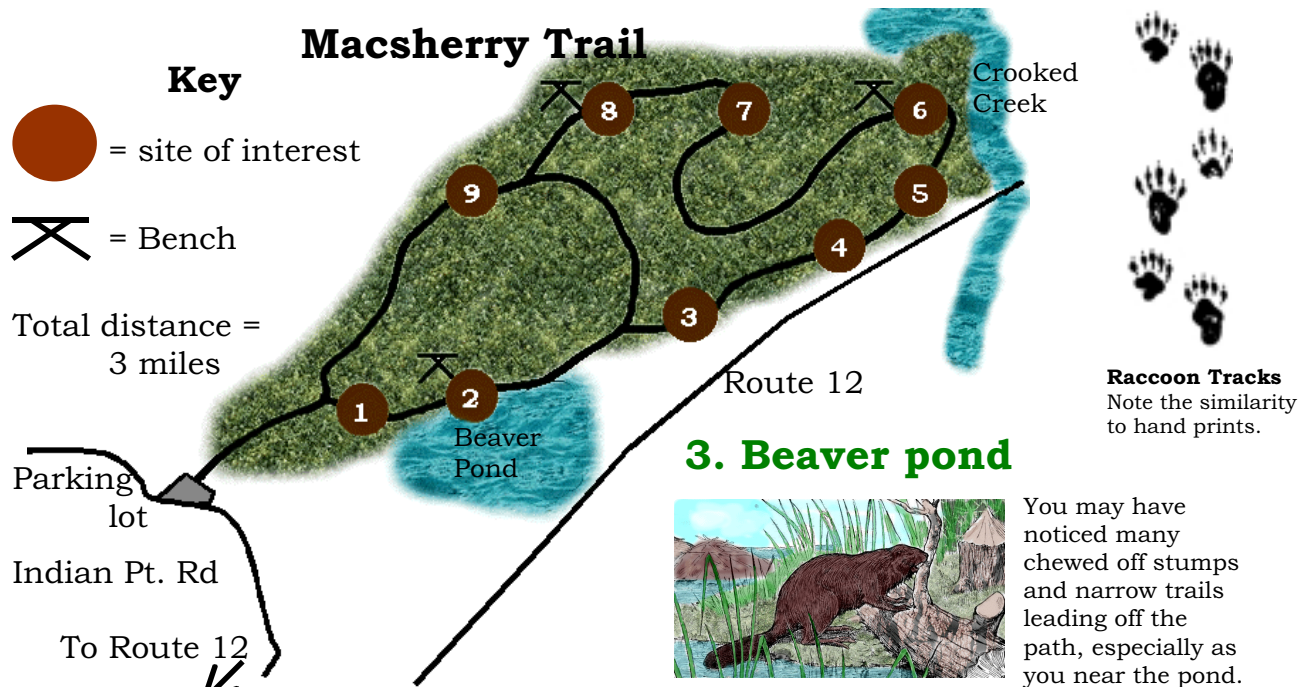
This trail travels through examples of wetland habitats that are found along the St. Lawrence River. In years past, the importance of preserving wetlands was not understood. They were believed to only be havens for mosquitoes and other offensive creatures. Since the 1950's scientists have developed a greater appreciation for the significance of wetlands. They provide areas for water to collect and slow down in times of flooding, thus preventing erosion. Wetlands are also a natural filter; particles of silt and sand settle out of the water as the current decreases. Aquatic plants and natural chemical processes remove harmful pollutants from the water thereby improving water quality. Wetlands also provide prime habitat for many animals. Waterfowl including ducks and geese use wetlands as nesting sites and feeding grounds. Amphibians (frogs, toads and salamanders) lay their eggs and their tadpoles mature in the rich pools.

Please enjoy your walk along the Crooked Creek Trail. Watch for trail markers along the path that follow along with the information in this guide.



Red-winged Blackbird

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Raccoon Tracks
Note the similarity to hand prints.

2. Open woodlands

Have you ever been surprised on the edge of the woods by a bird taking off right under your feet? There are several possibilities, but it was probably a Woodcock or a Ruffed Grouse. These two birds nest on the ground in shrubby areas and spend most of their time there rather than in the trees. The woodcock is the smaller of the two and has stripes going across its broad head and a very distinctive, long bill. The Ruffed Grouse is a larger, chicken-like, mottled brown bird. During mating season, the end of March to mid June, the Ruffed Grouse males beat one of their wings on a log, producing an accelerating drumming sound, to attract the females. The peak of this activity is in early April.



Woodcock



Ruffed Grouse on a log

3. Beaver pond



You may have noticed many chewed off stumps and narrow trails leading off the path, especially as you near the pond. The beavers use the wood for food, to trim their teeth and to rebuild their dams. The beaver's teeth, like those of all rodents, grow continuously. Gnawing on hard materials keeps this growth in check. The tree's inner bark is a source of food, especially in the colder months. Willow and birch are among their favorites. Beavers also eat plants with non-woody stems called herbaceous plants, these include aquatic plants and sedges that are plentiful during the warm summer months.

Various amphibians may also be seen in this area. Look for green frogs and leopard frogs (a spotted frog) hiding in the long grass, waiting for its next meal of cricket or dragonfly. Watch out for the tiny ones! The beaver pond makes a great place for the frogs and salamanders to lay their eggs. Food for the tadpoles is plentiful and fish, a predator of the tadpoles, are fewer here than in the creek or the river. Great Blue Heron and Green Heron search the shallows, trying to find their dinner of frog! Watch also for the colorful male wood ducks in the water or in the trees.



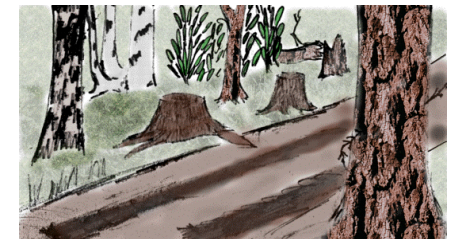
Green Frog

4. Moss

The moist vegetation under foot in the woods, is something that people rarely take the time to examine. Mosses growing on the forest floor are very important. Their structure allows them to hold water, maintaining the moisture in the soil for larger plants, and preventing the soil from drying out during the dry summer months. They also aid in the decomposition of woody vegetation and other plant materials. Mosses grow very slowly and their destruction leaves a lasting impact. Please step carefully where you see moss on the trail and try not to crush it.

5. Evidence of logging

This section of trail exhibits evidence of the logging that took place on the property as recently as the mid 1980's. Many of the tree trunks bear triangular scars where logs and sleds scraped the bark away during logging activities. This trail follows some of the old logging trails. Note the ruts from the wheels of the equipment that are still evident years after the initial damage occurred. The logging that took place here did more than harvest trees; it also uprooted and destroyed the ground cover vegetation, leaving a lasting impact on the area. If you look closely you can see where trees have grown around old barbed wire fences. This indicates that this was once pasture land.



6. Old rocks

You may have noticed that the rock in the Thousand Islands region is distinct from the rock that is seen along most of the roadsides in Northern New York. This area is part of what is called the Frontenac Arch, an exposed portion of Adirondack rock. The pink

coloration of the bedrock is caused by the presence of Potassium feldspar and the glassy white areas are quartz. The rock of the Frontenac Arch is approximately 600 million years older than the sandstones (gritty, reddish colored rock) and limestones (gray layered rocks) that are found in most of this area. The glaciers eroded the overlying, softer layers of rock, leaving only the harder rock behind.

7. The Creek

Here, at last, is Crooked Creek! Watch for a Northern Harrier, or Marsh Hawk flying high overhead. Common terns may be seen looking for a meal of fish in the creek. American and Least bitterns are two species that are also likely to be found in this area. Both



Northern Harrier

American and Least bitterns are listed on the New York State List of Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species. The American bittern is a medium-sized, striped



Common tern

bird about 24 inches long. It is also known as the "Thunder pumper" due to the "Onk Ca Chonk" call it makes. The Least bittern is a very small bird that is more often heard than seen as it feeds in the cattails. Its call is a very soft "coo-coo-coo" and may be easily missed.



American Bittern

8. Chippewa Bay toward Oak Island

The Chippewa Indians, for whom the bay before you was named, were the only Indians that Champlain met on his journey up the St. Lawrence River. Archaeologists have found remnants of pottery and stone tools on islands

in this area indicating that there was activity here. This tribe lived a simple life, trapping bullhead and eel for their own needs and for trade with other Indian tribes. They remained in a limited area, moving only a few miles from their main settlement to hunt and fish.

9. Climbing up the granite

Here is a good spot to take a moment and listen to the birds calling in the trees. Do you hear a bird call that sound like "Drink your teeeeeeeea?" This is an Eastern Towhee, a black bird about the size of a robin with a white chest and red sides. Another call that may be heard is, "Sam Peabody, peabody, peabody, pea." The white-throated sparrow generates this note. These birds prefer the more open areas that are found in the regions of granite outcrops.

10. Damage to the trees

Did you notice any holes in the trees? The holes, both round and rectangular, are the results of feeding activities of several species of woodpeckers. The shallow, round holes in rows are made by the Yellow-bellied Sapsucker looking for sap and insects.



Pileated Woodpecker

Hairy and Downy Woodpeckers make the random, deeper holes. The large, rectangular openings are made by the largest of this area's woodpeckers, the Pileated Woodpecker. This species feeds on carpenter ants that are found in the interior of dead or dying trees. You may have also noticed places where the bark was stripped off the trees. Porcupines will climb to even the smallest branches to feed on bark. Watch for any that might have come out to get a mid-day snack.

We hope you have enjoyed your "walk in the woods!"

The Macsherry trail and the surrounding property is closed during the deer hunting season. Hunting is allowed on a permitted basis only.

No Motor Vehicles are permitted on the Trial at any time.

The Thousand Islands Land Trust is a nonprofit organization that seeks to protect the scenic beauty and natural resources of the Thousand Islands for future generations. The existence of scenic places, such as forests, rocks and shoals, wetlands and meadows are all threatened by development and degradation. TILT has worked since 1985 with property owners to save the special landscape that is the 1000 Islands. Through conservation easements and acquisition the land trust has protected thousands of acres and created new recreational places for people to enjoy and enrich their lives. We invite all who love this place to join and support the efforts of the land trust in protecting this River's heritage.

Please Enjoy, Don't Destroy

This brochure was written and designed by Julie Covey. Selected pictures were created by Janelle Covey.

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Please help **TILT** continue to preserve the natural splendor of the 1000 Islands.

Enclosed is My Tax Deductible Contribution

Ⓜ **\$40.00 Annual Contribution**

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Macsherry Trail

Crooked Creek Preserve



1000 ISLANDS LAND TRUST