



### Station 12: Depression in the Ground

To the right of you, you will see a depression in the ground. It is thought that it might have been the root cellar back when this land was a farm. The use of this as a cellar of a building is unconfirmed. Ahead you will return to the beginning of the trail. Be wary of the sharp slope on the side of the trail.

The Self Guided Trail was created in 2017 by Troop 1 Diamond Hill for Paul-Hugo Arcand's Eagle Project

Florence Sutherland Fort &  
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## Fort Nature Refuge



### Self Guided Trail

*On your hike, please stay on the trail to avoid contact with Poison Ivy, its leaves, and its hairy vine, which may cause allergic reaction.*

*Also, check yourself for ticks after your hike, to prevent Lyme disease.*



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### Station 1: Ferns

During the summer, you can see a sea of ferns, these are mostly cinnamon and hay-scented ferns. If you have missed this sea of ferns due to seasonal differences, you will be able to notice holly plants and blueberry plants along the trail. Holly plants are evergreens and they produce red berries that birds eat. However, they are poisonous to humans.



### Station 2: Owl Box

At this point of the trail, you might be able to see a box nestled in the trees. This box was created to house a Screech owl or a Northern Saw Whet owl. Watch and see if it has any inhabitants!

### Station 3: Woonasquatucket

If you gaze off the trail to the right you will notice some wetlands. These wetlands are the headwaters of the Woonasquatucket River. Wetlands are very important to the environment because they filter debris, toxins, and excess nutrients from the water while mixing oxygen and nutrients into the water. They also prevent flooding by absorbing overflow. In the spring, you might also smell the skunk cabbage that populates this area, phew!



### Station 4: The Chestnut Trees

This portion of the trail has plenty of American Chestnut trees. These trees used to populate mature New England forests but due to the "Chestnut blight" they have been severely reduced. These magnificent trees, once they reach a certain size, start showing signs of the disease but it takes years for them to die. Look around. You should be able to see chestnuts on the ground. These nuts are covered with a thick spiky husk.

### Station 5: Stream

During the spring, the channel before you fills with water and becomes a stream. You can also hear spring peepers and the quacking of wood frogs. You can see many wild flowers in the fall.



### Station 6: Vernal Pool

The pools you see here are known as *Vernal pools* or ephemeral pools. These pools are a temporary pool of water that provides a habitat for distinct plants and animals. These pools form from water that has pooled in a depression but dry up by season's end. Some of these pools stay full for years at a time. These pools shelter many different types of animals such as salamanders, fairy shrimps, wood frog, and spadefoot toad. These are truly a unique part of the ecosystem!

### Station 7: Pond Intersection

At this intersection, you have two choices. One is to continue the trail, the other is to turn right and go to "Pond One", which we would recommend. At the pond you have the opportunity of seeing herons and beavers foraging and swimming in the water. There are also duck boxes which will occasionally shelter a family of wood ducks. If you miss the opportunity of seeing any animals, you can take a relaxing break by the pond.



### Station 8: Intersection

To continue the self-guided trail, take the trail to the left. This route is also commonly referred to as the blue trail short cut. In front of you, you will notice large rocks. These rocks are glacial deposits. The massive layer of ice that once covered the region carried these rocks along and dropped them here as it melted.

### Station 9: Mosses and Lichen

In front of this post you should notice a large rock. This rock is adorned with various mosses and lichen. People often mistake mosses and lichen as being the same thing but in actuality they are quite different. Mosses are plants classified for having the most basic leaves, stems, and root system. Lichens are known as being a composite symbiotic organism made up of a fungi and an algae.



### Station 10: Tree Changes

At this point in the trail, you will find the forest has changed to a more coniferous forest. This indicates that the forest is younger and that there was once a field or clearing at this present location. These pines will one day give way to oaks and maples, and the pine trees will disappear. You can tell the age of the baby pine trees by counting the whorls of branches. Each spiral of branches from the ground to top of trunk signifies that the new tree has survived one year (e.g. 10 whorls = 10 yr old sapling).



### Station 11: The Resting Bench

Near this post you will find a bench. Take a rest and contemplate the beauty of nature.