

## BROOKSIDE: *Your Preserve*

Owned by Nassau County and managed by the South Shore Audubon Society, Brookside Preserve protects the native flora and fauna and serves as an outdoor education facility for the study of freshwater wetland and upland plant communities. It is available for biological research (by arrangement with the Society), as well as for the enjoyment of all nature lovers.

Among the volunteer projects at Brookside Preserve are regular cleanups and attempts to control introduced (non-native) species of plants. We invite your participation in this ongoing effort to maintain a piece of undisturbed nature in the midst of suburbia.

To learn more about how you can help with the management of Brookside Preserve, contact:

The Brookside Preserve Committee  
South Shore Audubon Society  
P.O. Box 31  
Freeport, NY 11520

Additional copies of this trail guide can be obtained at the Baldwin and Freeport public libraries or by contacting the South Shore Audubon Society at the above address.



NASSAU COUNTY DEPARTMENT  
OF RECREATION AND PARKS  
Thomas S. Gulotta, County Executive  
John B. Kiernan, Commissioner

### SOUTH SHORE AUDUBON SOCIETY

*Brookside Preserve Committee Chairperson* – Betsy Gulotta

South Shore Audubon Society, a local chapter of National Audubon Society, is a not-for-profit volunteer conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of open space and the protection of wildlife. This group of more than 2000 members actively supports conservation projects in Nassau County, including Cow Meadow, Twin Lakes, Hempstead Plains, Garden City Bird Sanctuary, and Brookside Preserve.

*Trail Guide Design and Production* – Jenny Krivanek

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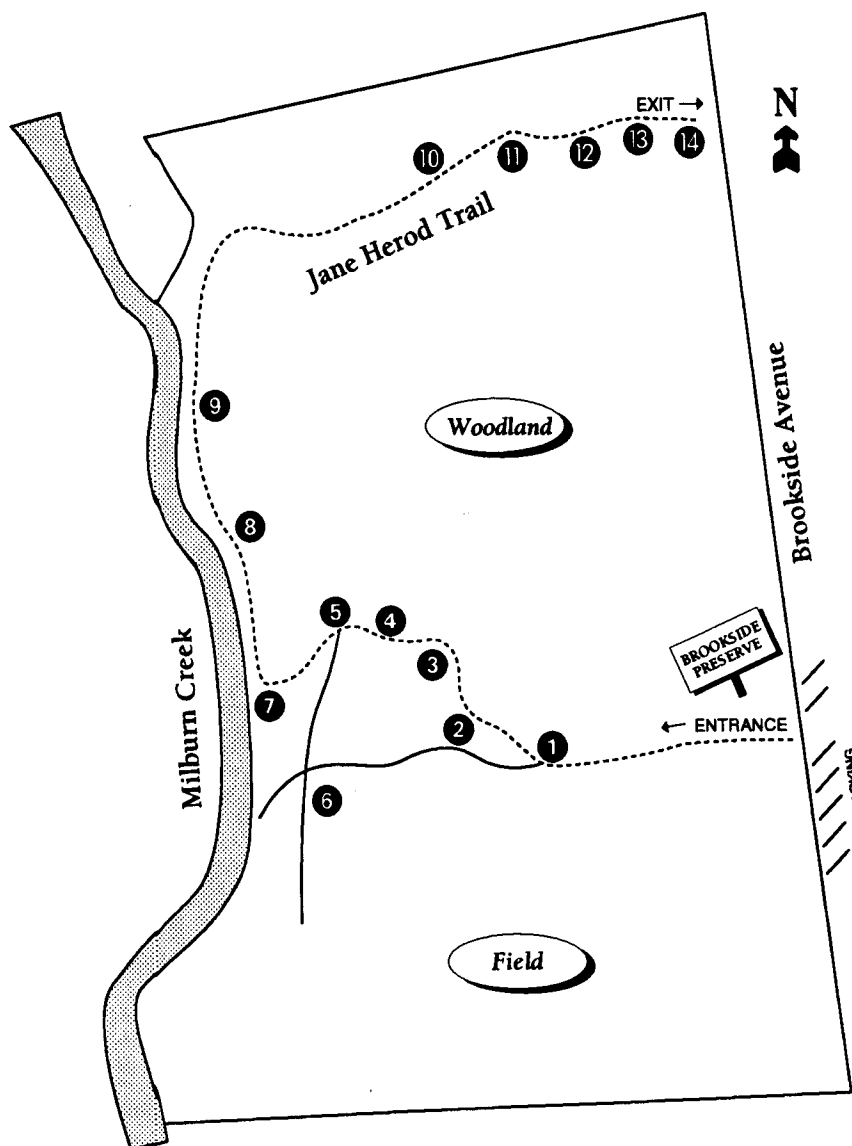
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# A TRAIL GUIDE TO BROOKSIDE PRESERVE



by  
*John Zarudsky, Paul Butkerei, and James Remsen, Jr.*  
Brookside Preserve Committee  
South Shore Audubon Society

## Brookside Preserve



### ➤ DIRECTIONS

Brookside Preserve is located on the west side of Brookside Avenue at the Freeport-Baldwin border, just north of Sunrise Highway.



## Welcome to Brookside

Brookside Preserve comprises 20 acres of natural woodlands and freshwater wetlands, accented by a winding creek.

This trail guide is an introduction to the natural components of this woodland ecosystem. The main nature trail begins on the east side of the Preserve, at the Preserve sign on Brookside Avenue, and exits onto Brookside Avenue north of the starting point.

To start your exploration of the Preserve, proceed along the trail to Site 1. You will find numbered markers along the trail that correspond to the map on the left and to the following descriptions of what you can expect to see at each site.

### 1 MIXED TREE SPECIES; TRAIL DIVIDE

A grouping of herbs, mosses, shrubs, and trees is called a plant community. The variety of trees at this point indicates the presence of a diverse plant community comprised of wetland and upland species. Red maple and tupelo, typically found in moist to wet soils, also occur on higher ground, showing their adaptability to varying site conditions. This phenomenon may be observed throughout the Preserve.

The tree species seen here will also be discussed further along the trail.

**American beech** – behind marker

**Black cherry** – at the base of the site marker

**Red maple** – to the left, on the edge of the trail

**Tupelo** – behind American beech

**Oaks (northern red and white)** – to the right and further in

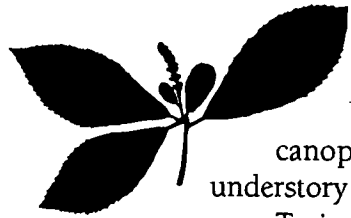
The trail divides here. The left (yellow) trail on higher ground leads to a field undergoing succession (Site 6). The right (green) trail leads through low woodland to Milburn Creek, parallels it heading north, and eventually returns to Brookside Avenue via the Jane Herod Trail.

## 2 NORTHERN RED OAK (*Quercus rubra*)



A hardwood tree species and one of several oaks found throughout the Preserve. Ranging further north than any other eastern oak species, the Northern red oak is an important lumber species, as well as a shade and street tree. It grows rapidly, is easy to transplant, and can survive cold winters and city conditions. It may be identified by its rounded crown and rough, dark grayish-brown bark furrowed into ridges.

## 3 SWEET PEPPERBUSH (*Clethra alnifolia*)



Forests exist in layers. In many places, one finds an understory between the forest floor and the canopy overhead. Sweet pepperbush is an understory shrub with fragrant white flowers in summer. Typical of moist to wet woodlands, it is common along this trail.

## 4 Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*)



A shrub typical of moist to wet soils, bearing blue berries. It is a member of the heath family (*Ericaceae*), grows six to twelve feet tall, and has leaves that turn red in autumn.

## 5 WHITE OAK (*Quercus alba*); OPEN AREA



As you enter the clearing, on the right is the white oak. Observe the rounded lobes of the leaves in contrast to those of the northern red oak which are pointed. The wood of this tree is useful for all purposes, and its acorns are fed upon by wood ducks, blue jays, and squirrels. The white oak has a rounded crown and a trunk divided irregularly into thick horizontal branches. Its bark is light gray, divided into long scaly plates or ridges.

The open area or clearing seen here allows various plant communities to invade and compete for sunlight. Note the small trees on the edge of the clearing; these are tupelo or black gum. In spring and summer, cinnamon ferns are also present as an understory plant.

From this site, either continue on the green trail to the stream or take the yellow cross trail slightly uphill to Site 6.

## 6 FIELD UNDERGOING SUCCESSION

Plant succession is a natural process during which areas with little or no plant life are colonized by pioneer species which in turn are replaced by other species over time until a mature or climax state is reached.

Present here are a variety of grasses, shrubs, and invading trees: winged sumac, black cherry, largetooth aspen, Ailanthus or tree-of-heaven, multiflora rose, love grass, and Queen Anne's lace. Ultimately there will be mostly trees on this site.

A narrow trail extends through the field to a larger site that has been planted with native wildflowers and grasses. To rejoin the main trail, proceed back to Site 5.

**7****MILBURN CREEK**

A natural spring-fed stream originating north of the Preserve flows through the Preserve, south to Milburn Pond, and eventually into Baldwin Bay.

During heavy rains, particularly in the spring and fall, overflow water spills into the adjoining low areas, helping to maintain moist to wet soils and those plants characteristic of a wet woodland.

Look for tracks of nocturnal mammals such as raccoons and muskrats that are frequently found along the stream trail. In spring or summer, listen for the ringing song of the Carolina wren from the understory and the songs of other birds from high in the canopy overhead.

Observe the three trees of the same type as you face south. They are tupelo or black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), a common tree of wet woodlands (although it may be found in other habitats). Note the branches, which extend at sharp right angles from the trunk, and the thick, deeply furrowed grayish bark. The leaves turn bright red in the fall.

Continue north on the trail which follows the stream. Common all along this section in spring, a low-growing plant called lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) forms a carpet of yellow flowers. A member of the buttercup family, each of its flowers contains eight petals. Look for other moisture-loving plants such as jewelweed and skunk cabbage.

The largest tupelo tree in the preserve is along this trail. See if you can find it.

**8****AMERICAN BEECH** (*Fagus grandifolia*)

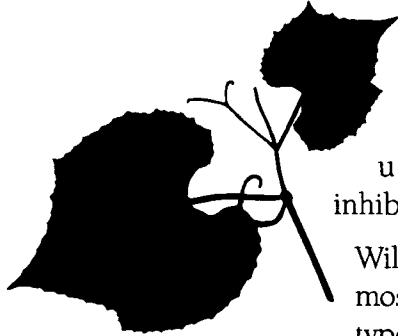
A large tree with smooth, silvery-gray bark, the American beech is common in areas where surface moisture prevails. The beech's crown is rounded; its leaves are ovate and have a paperlike texture. Some people think the base of its trunk looks like an elephant's foot. This handsome tree bears edible nuts, highly favored as food by wildlife.

**9****RED MAPLE** (*Acer rubrum*)

This tree is red throughout the year. It has red flowers in spring (attractive to migrating birds such as warblers), red leaves in autumn, and large red buds in late March/early April. Typically found in wet woodlands, the red maple may also be found growing on higher ground. Common in Brookside Preserve, it was known to the pioneers, who used an extract from its bark to make cinnamon-brown and black dyes and inks.

**10****JACK-IN-THE-PULPIT**  
or Indian Turnip (*Arisaema*)

This plant likes wet soil. It has one or two leaves, each with three parts, and bears a green clustered fruit that turns scarlet in August.

**11****VINES**

In this clearing, created by storm blowdown, longer hours of sunlight are available. Vines are common and cover large numbers of underlying trees and shrubs, inhibiting their growth.

Wild grape grows profusely and is the most common vine present. Another type that can be seen here is catbrier.

In other areas of the Preserve, Virginia creeper (clusters of five leaves and no thorns), bittersweet, poison ivy, morning glory, and introduced species of ivy are still other examples of vine plants.

**12****ATLANTIC WHITE-CEDAR***(Chamaecyparis thyoides)*

An evergreen tree of wet woodlands, with reddish-brown shredded bark. The two in the Preserve are the last remnant of an Atlantic white-cedar swamp that grew here long ago. Ancient logs of Atlantic white-cedar unearthed from swamps have yielded usable lumber. The pioneers valued the wood of the Atlantic white-cedar for building cabins, and

soldiers during the American Revolutionary War used it to produce charcoal for gunpowder.

Brookside Preserve represents the westernmost occurrence of this species on Long Island.

**13****SPICEBUSH (*Lindera benzoin*)**

An understory shrub of moist to wet woodlands. Its fragrant leaves have a lemon-like smell. Red berries, a preferred food of mockingbirds and opossums, appear in late summer and early fall. In colonial days, the leaves and twigs of this plant were used as a tea substitute.

Ground cover near this site is English ivy, an introduced species. Other introduced plants may be found throughout the area, such as rose-of-Sharon, multiflora rose, and daffodils.

**14****SASSAFRAS (*Sassafras albidum*)**

This tree is recognized by its narrow, spreading crown of short, stout branches and its lobed leaves with long slender leafstalks. The leaves are shiny green, turning yellow, orange, or red in autumn.

Sassafras grows in moist, sandy soils. It is the northernmost representative of an important tropical tree family, the laurels (*Lauraceae*). The roots and root bark, considered a cure-all by explorers and colonists of years past, produce oil of sassafras (used to make soap) and were used to brew sassafras tea and flavor root beer. (Now, however, it is not recommended to eat any part of this plant.) The tree's unusual name is apparently of American Indian origin and dates from at least the mid-sixteenth century, when it was used by French and Spanish settlers in Florida.

Continue straight ahead along the trail and you will exit the Preserve onto Brookside Avenue, north of where you started.


## 50 PLANTS OF BROOKSIDE PRESERVE

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern white pine   | <input type="checkbox"/> Highbush blueberry   | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild black cherry      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Atlantic white-cedar | <input type="checkbox"/> Marginal shield fern | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild strawberry        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American beech       | <input type="checkbox"/> Common reed          | <input type="checkbox"/> Birdfoot trefoil       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> White oak            | <input type="checkbox"/> Bugleweed            | <input type="checkbox"/> Swamp sweetbell        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern red oak     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nut grass            | <input type="checkbox"/> Arrow-leaved tearthumb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red maple            | <input type="checkbox"/> Field speedwell      | <input type="checkbox"/> Bluecurl               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Silver maple         | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood anemone         | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue-stem grass        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Norway maple         | <input type="checkbox"/> Jack-in-the-pulpit   | <input type="checkbox"/> Canada mayflower       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black tupelo (gum)   | <input type="checkbox"/> Spearmint            | <input type="checkbox"/> Marsh violet           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elderberry           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sassafras            | <input type="checkbox"/> Common cinquefoil      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spicebush            | <input type="checkbox"/> Swamp buttercup      | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesser celandine       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multiflora rose      | <input type="checkbox"/> Rough cinquefoil     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nettle chain fern      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Skunk cabbage        | <input type="checkbox"/> Wintercress          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive fern         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garlic mustard       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cinnamon fern        | <input type="checkbox"/> Virginia creeper       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jewelweed            | <input type="checkbox"/> Lady fern            | <input type="checkbox"/> Wild grape             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> English ivy          | <input type="checkbox"/> Hay-scented fern     |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common mullein       | <input type="checkbox"/> Blackberry           |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sweet pepperbush     |   |   |

### For Further Reference

Blumer, K., *Long Island Native Plants for Landscaping: A Source Book*. 1990.  
 Brockman, F. C., *Trees of North America*. 1968.  
 Harlow, W. M., *Trees of the Eastern and Central United States and Canada*. 1957.  
 Hostek, A., *Native and Near Native Plants*. 1976.  
 Sutton, A. and M. Sutton, *The Audubon Society Nature Guide to Eastern Forests*. 1985.

## 50 BIRDS OF BROOKSIDE PRESERVE

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Duck              | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Thrasher          |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solitary Sandpiper     | <input type="checkbox"/> American Robin          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mourning Dove          | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood Thrush             |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Common Flicker         | <input type="checkbox"/> Golden-crowned Kinglet  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Red-bellied Woodpecker | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruby-crowned Kinglet    |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairy Woodpecker       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cedar Waxwing           |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Downy Woodpecker       | <input type="checkbox"/> European Starling       |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue Jay               | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-eyed Vireo          | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Waterthrush                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> American Crow          | <input type="checkbox"/> Black-and-White Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Yellowthroat  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fish Crow              | <input type="checkbox"/> Blue-winged Warbler     | <input type="checkbox"/> House Sparrow  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black-capped Chickadee | <input type="checkbox"/> Nashville Warbler       | <input type="checkbox"/> Red-winged Blackbird                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tufted Titmouse        | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Parula Warbler | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Oriole  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brown Creeper          | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Warbler          | <input type="checkbox"/> Common Grackle   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House Wren             | <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow-rumped Warbler   | <input type="checkbox"/> Brown-headed Cowbird                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carolina Wren          | <input type="checkbox"/> Blackburnian Warbler    | <input type="checkbox"/> Scarlet Tanager  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Mockingbird   | <input type="checkbox"/> Chestnut-sided Warbler  | <input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gray Catbird           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bay-breasted Warbler    | <input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak                                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Prairie Warbler         | <input type="checkbox"/> House Finch  |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Palm Warbler            | <input type="checkbox"/> Rufous-sided Towhee  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> White-throated Sparrow                                     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Song Sparrow   |



Black-and-White Warbler