

If CEDAR RIDGE could tell its story it would start with a vast ice-cap that stretched down from the North Pole to here. When a wide river had previously cut deep channels into the sandstone and shale bedrock, the melting glacier left millions of cubic yards of sand, gravel and stone. CEDAR RIDGE is a pile of such glacial till. The rounded boulders that form most of it were rolled and dragged from igneous mountains far to the north. One prominent exception is the giant piece of traprock by the pond.

CEDAR RIDGE was bought from its original occupants -- Indians -- in 1699.

The work of the early colonists is still to be seen on CEDAR RIDGE. The stone fences, speaking farmers' hopes for plowable fields, are mentioned in deeds of the 1740's, as are the giant trees you will wonder at. CEDAR RIDGE was not good farmland, but it was logged again and again, for timber to build Newark and the other cities. The uphill, drier parts were good for orchards or pasture, so CEDAR RIDGE gave two products to Newark's famous leather industry -- steerhides and the oak bark for tanning them. This was done in a major tannery on the Squier property just to the north.

Once the pastures were cut over the cattle would keep them cleared of all trees except the prickly cedars. When the cedars grew large enough, they were cut. Their rot resistance gave them another long life as fence posts.

CEDAR RIDGE has not been lumbered in twenty years -- since the Essex County Park Commission acquired it.

Nature on CEDAR RIDGE stands before you in unusual variety: its soils, glacial till in most places, are peaty in the bogs, and show the river's gifts of sand and clay along the flooded plain.

Study the natural amounts of water, which are the main grace of CEDAR RIDGE. The Passaic River, although polluted, is a real river. Then there is a pond, a variety of wooded and open bogs, several kettles and numerous small trickling springs. Some of these vary little the year round; others dry up completely in the summer.

Vegetation on CEDAR RIDGE grows in great variety. Some kinds grow in sunlight, some in shade; some in wet places, some in dry; some kinds can stand flooding, some drown. Some come in quickly when a forest is cut down; climax types more slowly. All these variations await your discovery.

While animals are less visible, there are tracks, burrows, and splashing as evidence that they enjoy life on CEDAR RIDGE.

We hope you enjoy it, too.

The Livingston Conservation Council is a group of citizens active in Livingston to protect and enhance our natural environment. This hiking trail is but one of its numerous activities.

You may support these activities by sending your membership dues to Miss Ruth Wheeler, 56 Beaufort Avenue, Livingston, N.J. 07039. Dues are: Family - \$5; Individual - \$3; Student - \$2.

PRESIDENT: Robert Werthing
TRAIL CHAIRMEN: Eric Muller & Sid Stein

ADDRESS: 48 Glendale Avenue
Livingston, N.J. 07039

CEDAR RIDGE TRAIL

LIVINGSTON, N. J.

A Project of the
LIVINGSTON CONSERVATION
COUNCIL

in the WEST ESSEX PARK of the
ESSEX COUNTY PARK COMMISSION
and the grounds of
NEWARK ACADEMY

OPENING JUNE 19, 1971, 2 P. M.

CEDAR RIDGE TRAIL

Nature study in Cedar Ridge has so many aspects that a choice of emphasis must be made. This tour guide will dwell on plant ecology - the factors that favor the success of one species over another, particularly shade and the amount and constancy of water. Nothing is tagged; bring your own expert or field book.

You will find much evidence of animals, mainly tracks and burrows. Seeing the mammals themselves is a matter of luck. You will see more birds, particularly during the spring and fall migrations.

Three suggestions for your comfort: There are several wet places, so wear old or water-resistant shoes; there are a few patches of poison ivy, so wear slacks. In a bad mosquito season, there will be some here; you may wish to carry a repellent.

Start at entrance and follow one loop or the other counter clockwise.

HIDE SWAMP. A storm drain from Walnut Street passing under the reservoir keeps this field under water half of most years. About how many kinds of plants grow here?

POISON IVY. Look for groups of three shiny leaves, (bright red in fall). Don't touch. What kind of places do you find it?

PASSAIC RIVER. Essex County's only river was beautiful only a generation ago. At this point it is badly polluted by incompletely treated sewage from upstream. Visible muddiness is mostly silt washed in from construction sites.

FLOOD PLAIN. Along the river's banks low places are covered by flooding every spring. If this space were built up for use, all that water would have to go downstream at one time, making worse floods there. Can you locate the ordinary flood level by the plants?

WOODED SWAMP. Spring fed, this swamp stays wetter in summer than the one at the entrance; the overhead trees are older too. When iris are in bloom, come here to find wild, yellow ones.

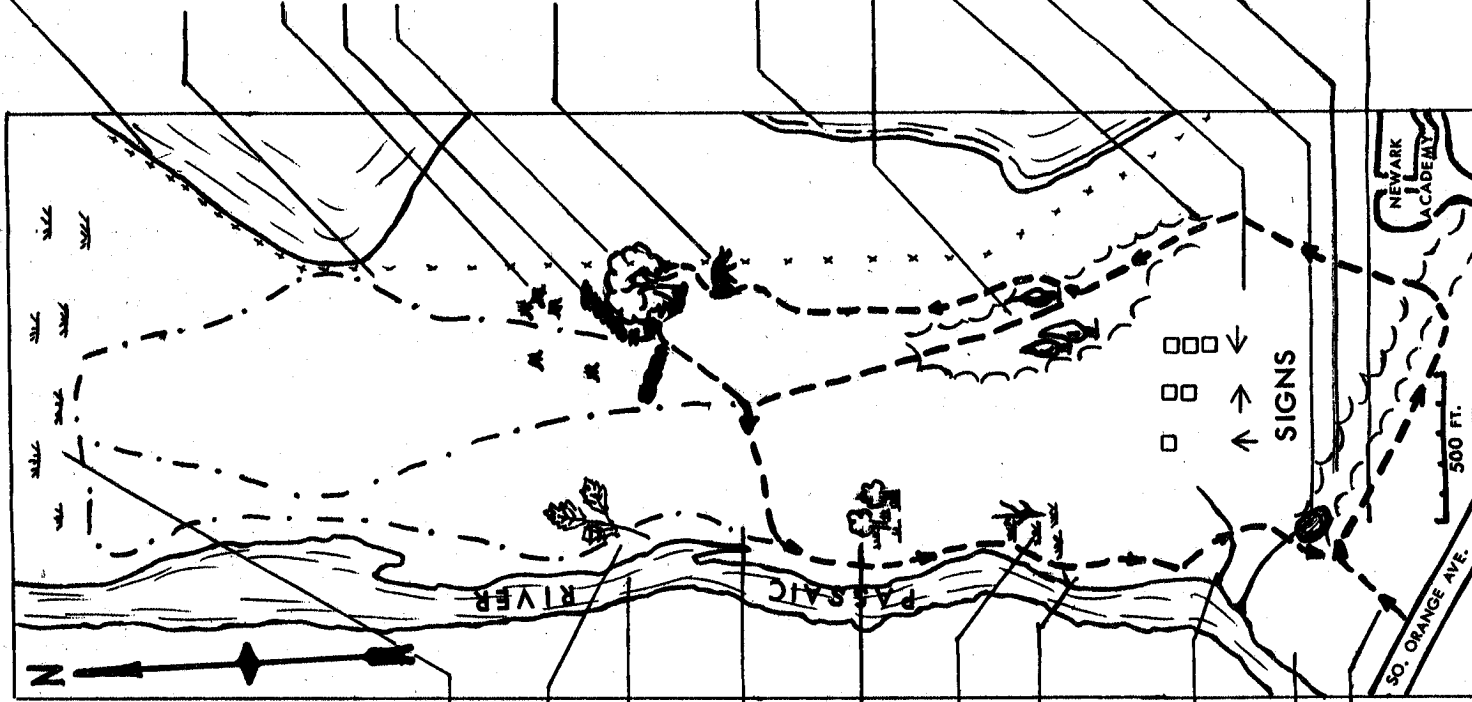
DROWNED FOREST. Springs keep this place very wet. Look at the trees. How long do you think this condition has existed?

MOSQUITO DITCHES. New Jersey used to be famous for its mosquitoes. Ditches like these drain the swamps and dry up breeding areas. It also changes the rest of the ecology - trees, small plants, animal life, fish breeding places, and water percolation into the subsoil. Before a change is made in the ecology, all its effects should be considered.

SOIL IN THE FLOOD PLAIN. Look at the layers of soil cut by the ditches. Fine clay silt is carried by slow water, dropped when it slows still more. Sand is carried only by fast water.

FISHING AREA. A popular place to sit, fish, and get your mind off your troubles.

ENTRANCE



HIGH DIKE. This valley was first dammed by beavers, then by farmers for an ice pond, finally by Commonwealth Water Company in 1957 for a reservoir. The dam holds water up to about 214 feet above sea level and about 50 feet above the Passaic. Look at the rocks in the dike. Are they glacial? Why is this shape rock better for building dikes? Where do you think they came from?

VIEW POINT. Across Livingston's only lake, to the right of the church, is the large old Crane house, whose owners worked CEDAR RIDGE before the American Revolution.

CEDAR FOREST. cut down at least 20 years ago. Why haven't the stumps rotted?

STONE FENCE. Why build this kind? Wouldn't a split rail fence have been easier?

OLDEST TREE. This magnificent white oak was a border marker in early deeds. Why did it grow squat while the oaks in the forest around it are tall and straight?

SHORT TRAIL TURNS DOWNHILL TO THE LEFT. Northern trails, shown . . . are under construction.

KETTLE, a giant pot hole where a piece of glacier broke off and slowly melted while sand and stone drifted around it. In it grows arum, a pond plant. Few things live in the water because decaying leaves use up the oxygen.

GROUND PINE. Can you find any cones on this little evergreen? This is really a club moss, a much older, simpler kind of plant than a pine tree.

COMMONWEALTH RESERVOIR NO. 3. Come in March, as the ice melts, to see many different migratory ducks, geese, and gulls. The reservoir covers 150 acres, holds almost 2 billion gallons of water and is filled by pumping from the Passaic River and Canoe Brook.

CEDAR MEADOW. In steps of succession, the forest is taking over. How many kinds of trees can you name? Can you find fruit trees? What do the cedars prove?

HAGON ROAD. This track was used to haul out timber. A trickle crosses it. In the spring you can see why the bit of paving was needed.

DEEP WOOD. How thick the vegetation is at the entrance how much less inside! Why? Look for mayapple, wild grape, Virginia creeper, lily-of-the-valley. Are there any birches?

POND. What forms of life do you see? Do you think they stay over the winter? Study the big rock to compare it with others along the trail. Why can the phragmites reed-grass grow so tall in a year?

SHATH. Do you think this wide clearing is natural or man-made? Can you name the young trees? These are types that grow rapidly in sun; they are the first in the succession as the forest comes back. Later, slower growing maples and oaks will shade them out.

WOODY BOG. This low, poorly drained area has trees that don't mind wet feet--swamp maple, basswood, slippery elm. There's a carpet of skunk cabbage punctuated with cinnamon fern. Thick moss covers rotting trees. What does the shape of the stones say?