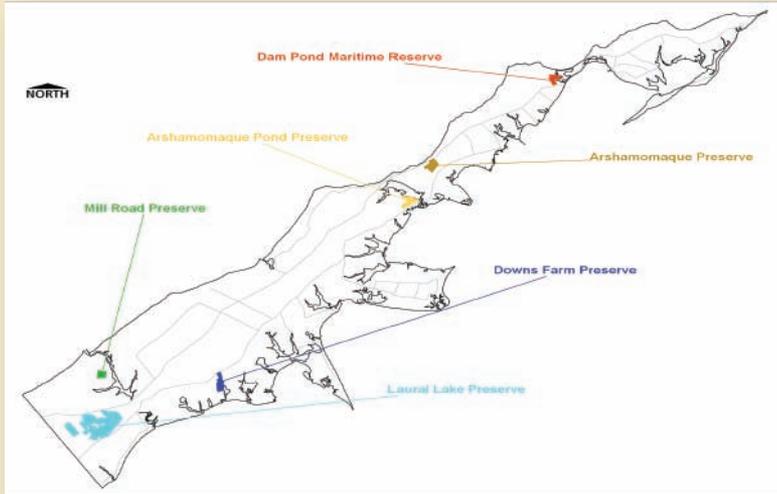


Laurel N. Y.



Welcome to Laurel Lake Preserve:

The Preserve is a complex of properties owned by the Town of Southold, Suffolk County Parks Department, Suffolk County Water Authority and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The Preserve encompasses approximately 400 acres surrounding Laurel Lake. The Peconic Land Trust facilitated the acquisition of the properties and the NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation funded the development of the trail system. The Preserve is part of the Long Island Pine Barrens Maritime Reserve and was included in the NYS DEC Open Space Plan, the Special Groundwater Protection Plan, the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Plan and the Southold Town Community Preservation Plan.



Help protect and maintain the natural beauty and wildlife habitat of the area.

Please:

- Stay on designated trails.*
- Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints.*
- Leash your dog.*
- Check carefully for ticks after your walk.*



Educational content provided by the Marine Program of:
Cornell University
Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities

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PRESERVE

Town of Southold



PO Box 1179
Southold N.Y. 11971
631-765-1800
<http://southoldtown.northfork.net>

Trail Guide



The Laurel Lake Preserve is open to the public year-round from dawn to dusk.

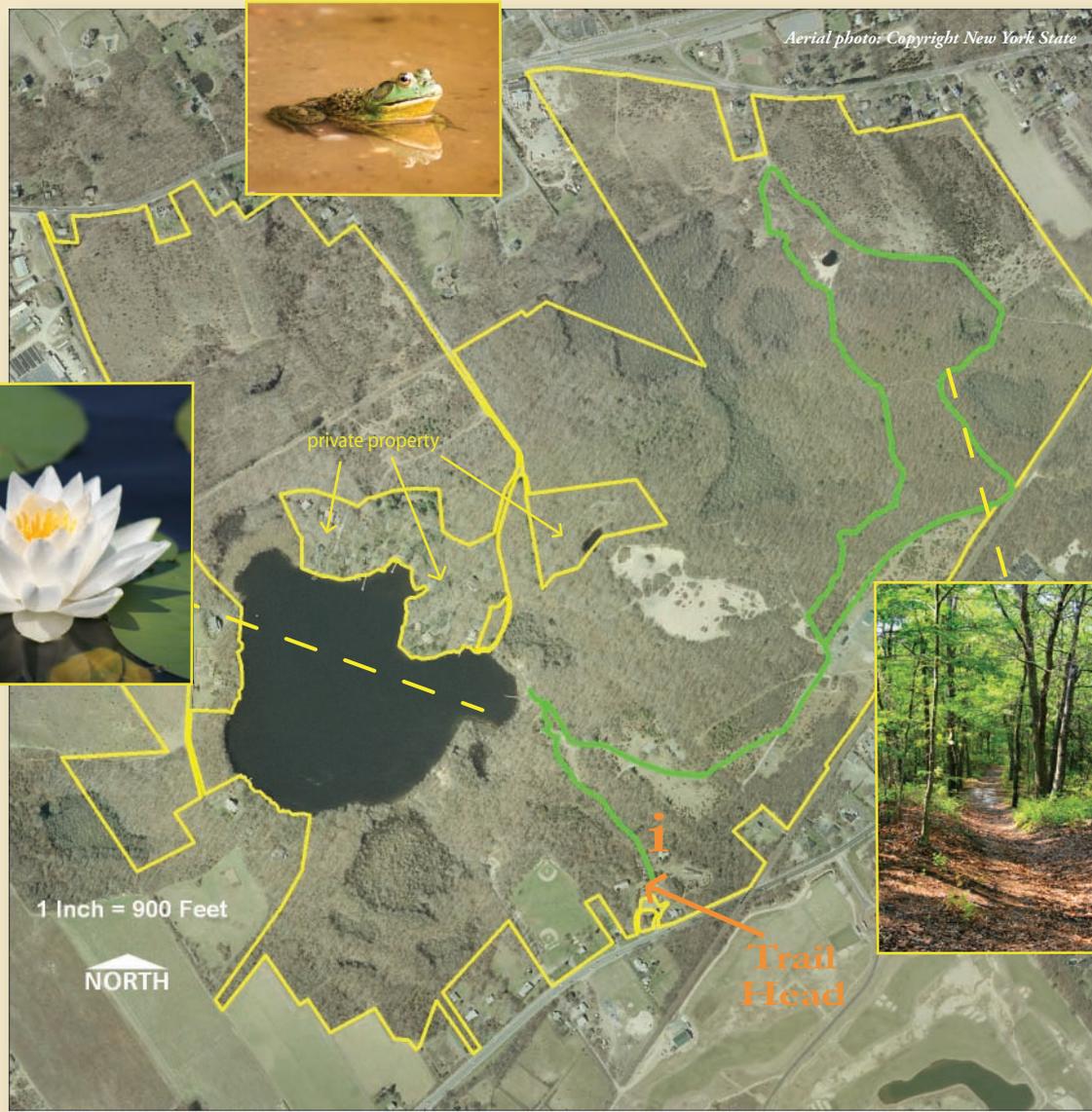
Habitat and Wildlife:

Laurel Lake Preserve is the largest preserve in the Town of Southold. The primary community type is mixed hardwood forest dominated by oaks, hickories, beeches and maples. Many areas of forest represent communities that are at the mature, climax stage of development, as evidenced by the ease of travel through the sparse understory. These areas consist of a dense canopy structure with an understory of low to medium height shrubs including low-bush blueberry, sheep and mountain laurels, and witch hazel. Several species of woodpeckers inhabit the forests and can be frequently heard hammering on trees in search of food. Other wildlife that may be found in the forest include the American woodcock, owls, fox, woodchucks, deer and squirrels. Make sure to keep a lookout for the area of mixed species forest, where evergreen species including eastern red cedar, northern white cedar and pitch pine mix with the hardwood species. Over time, these areas may convert completely to hardwood forest, but for now, they contribute to the diversity of the preserve.

Laurel Lake Preserve includes large areas that were once farmed or cleared for human use. These old field successional communities are common on Long Island. They are readily identified by areas of warm season grasses including little bluestem, orchard grass and broom sedges, interspersed with small eastern red cedars and stands of black locust. Most of the old field areas at Laurel Lake are found north and west of the lake, although some areas exist in the south and east around the Suffolk County Water Authority property. In several of the old field areas, bluebird and purple martin houses have been erected to encourage these species to nest in this area. These areas also support small coveys of quail. Deer, cottontail rabbits, red fox and woodchucks may be seen in the old field areas as well. Be sure to look above as hawks and falcons frequently soar over the open areas of the preserve hunting for small rodents and birds.

The Preserve encompasses a relatively large wetland component. Besides the 30-acre kettle hole lake that the Preserve is named for, there are several red maple and scrub-shrub swamps, vernal pools and emergent marsh wetlands on the property. The lake is a popular fishing area for largemouth bass, sunfish, chain pickerel and brown bullhead catfish. Additionally, brown and rainbow trout can be fished here as they are stocked by the NYS DEC. The vegetated wetlands provide habitat for waterfowl, amphibians, and reptiles. As a result, wood ducks, black ducks, bull frogs, green frogs, and snapping turtles live here. To further encourage the nesting of wood ducks, wood duck boxes have been set up in several of the wetlands.

Several areas of meadow are maintained in the preserve to provide open space and to restore the warm season grasslands that were once common in the Northeast. These areas are mowed seasonally to discourage growth of shrubs and trees. Meadows support a wide range of flowering plant species such as butterfly weed, oxeye daisy, asters, and goldenrod. With their abundance of wildflowers, meadows attract a variety of butterflies and the occasional hummingbird. The meadows, along with the old field community are the most common areas where hunting hawks can be spotted.



Key:

- i = Trail Head
- Preserve Border
- Trail Path



For more information about this and other recreational opportunities in the Town of Southold, please contact:

Town of Southold 631-765-1800
 PO Box 1179 or:
 Southold NY 11971 <http://southoldtown.northfork.net>

