

A BRIEF HISTORY AND TOUR OF THE WAYNE COLLEGE NATURE TRAIL

From the day Wayne College opened its doors in the summer of 1972, biologists and other faculty members have utilized the rural landscape for field trips and collecting. The first biologist at Wayne College, Scott D. Hagen, especially used the pond and spring area for collecting specimens for Microbiology and Principles of Biology classes. Upon his passing in 1984, the ponds along the Nature Trail were designated the Scott D. Hagen Aquatic Area.

In 1975, biologist Forrest Smith began to use the grounds for botany and ecology classes, birdwatching and other field experiences. Beginning in about 1978, he began to plant the plants in the arboretum for use in botany and field study classes.

In 1984, Emily Rock became part of the biology faculty at Wayne College and uses the area of the ponds and Nature Trail to collect specimens for biology classes and for an ecology "scavenger hunt". The Nature Trail area is a natural for the collection of biology specimens.

In 1992, Wayne College sold some trees for lumber and used the money for the design and implementation of Phase I of the Nature Trail. That was completed in October of 1994. The dedication at that time included the Student Senate Amphitheater, the Wetland Viewing Deck, the bridge, and the Stream Viewing Deck. At that time also, twenty-two brass plant identification signs and four large illustrated educational signs were unveiled. These four signs include habitat description signs concerning lawn, wetland, and successional ecosystems as well as a sign describing the Hagen Aquatic area.

This Phase II dedication included the replacement of the old plastic signs in the arboretum with brass ones similar to those along the trail, a stone Nature Trail sign, and new directional signs. Furthermore, a number of new plant species were planted along the trail and are now able to be seen. In the spring of the year, more than a hundred wildflowers of more than ten species bloom along the trail.

Today, the trail consists of an arboretum area which includes more than two dozen species of trees and shrubs which are native or live in similar environments to northeast Ohio. The arboretum which lies south of the main parking lots of Wayne College connects across the lawns to two woodland walks. The southernmost (nearest Smucker Rd.) consists of a mixture of black cherry trees along with red and sugar maples, ashes, and even a few dogwoods. The floor of this woodland is covered with poison ivy and Virginia Creeper. The woodland to the north is lower, wetter and younger than the one to the south. This woodland is dominated by a mix of black cherry and black locust trees. Both woodlands are spotted with honeysuckle shrubs.

To the east of the woodland walks, and behind the Barnet-Hoover log farmhouse is the Hagen aquatic area. The easternmost part of the aquatic area is the Wetland Area, dominated by cattails and other wetland species. A number of wildflowers and wetland plants naturally occur and have been planted in the aquatic and wetland areas. These include watercress, waterlilies, lizard's tail, forget-me-nots, wild irises and many others. Numerous waterfowl and other migratory and nesting birds visit this area regularly.

Please feel free to visit the Nature Trail and Arboretum any time the school grounds are open. Guided tours for groups can be arranged in advance. Hiking, birding, picnicking, and other activities are encouraged. Please be a thoughtful visitor and "take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but footprints". Enjoy the Wayne College Nature Trail and Arboretum.



WHAT YOU WILL FIND ALONG THE NATURE TRAIL



Along the almost half-mile Wayne College Nature Trail, you will find a number of habitats. At the western end of the trail is the Wayne College Arboretum. In the

Arboretum are planted several dozen named and labeled tree and shrub species. These range from native plants such as the sweet gum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*) to the more exotic such as the swamp willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) and the Dawn Redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*). All of these plants were purchased at or donated by local garden centers and are often used in decorative landscaping in northeast Ohio. A large educational sign describing lawn ecosystems lies along the nature trail near the Arboretum.

To the east of the Arboretum, along the trail, are two areas of young woodland. Most of this forest is dominated by black cherry (*Prunus serotina*) and black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), both early successional trees. Other species of hardwoods including various maples and ashes are moving into the area. In not too many years, the cherries and locusts will be replaced by these and other later successional species. The walk through the woodland is covered with pea gravel. Along the trail here are one large educational sign and several signs identifying species of trees and vines.

Continuing to the east and along the nature trail are several other sites of interest. These include the Barnet-Hoover Log House, originally constructed in 1818. Between the woodland walk and this log home is a small scent garden comprised of several species of sweet-smelling shrubs. Directly east of farmhouse lies the Amphitheater, an outdoor classroom which seats up to seventy-

five, financed by Wayne College Student Senate when the Nature Trail was first built. The Student Senate Amphitheater lies in the Scott Hagen Aquatic Area, named in memory of a respected Wayne College Biology Professor who passed away suddenly in 1984. This aquatic area is made up of several old farm ponds and is home to numerous fish, frogs, and aquatic birds.

The third, and easternmost, of these ponds was partially drained in the early 1980's, and has become home to a narrowleaf cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) marsh and is now home to a wetland rather than a deep water pond habitat. An educational sign near a large viewing deck describes the characteristics of a wetland as it is defined by the federal government. At the extreme eastern end of this former pond is another, and smaller, viewing deck which lies near the small stream which drains most of the Wayne College watershed. In the vicinity of the aquatic and wetland areas are also a number of species signs which identify native trees, shrubs, and vines.

SIGNS ALONG THE NATURE TRAIL AND ARBORETUM

Two kinds of signs are used in the Wayne College Nature Trail and Arboretum. The smaller and more common of these signs are species identification signs.

On these signs are drawings of the leaves and sometimes flowers of the species, a common name, and the scientific name. These drawings were made by Wayne College students, Katie Kramer and Angie Keefer.



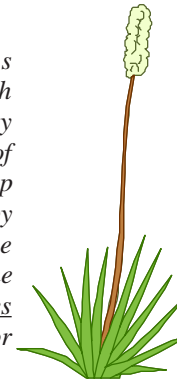


The second sort of sign along the nature trail is a larger educational sign. At this writing, there are four such signs: The Lawn Ecosystem, The Successional Ecosystem, The Scott D. Hagen Aquatic Area, and the Wetland Ecosystem.

The pictures on these signs were drawn by a former Wayne College student, Anne Brush, and the text was written by Forrest Smith, Professor of Biology. Each of them contains a description of nearby ecosystem, its development, and what sorts of organisms are likely to be found there. The drawings support and amplify the text.

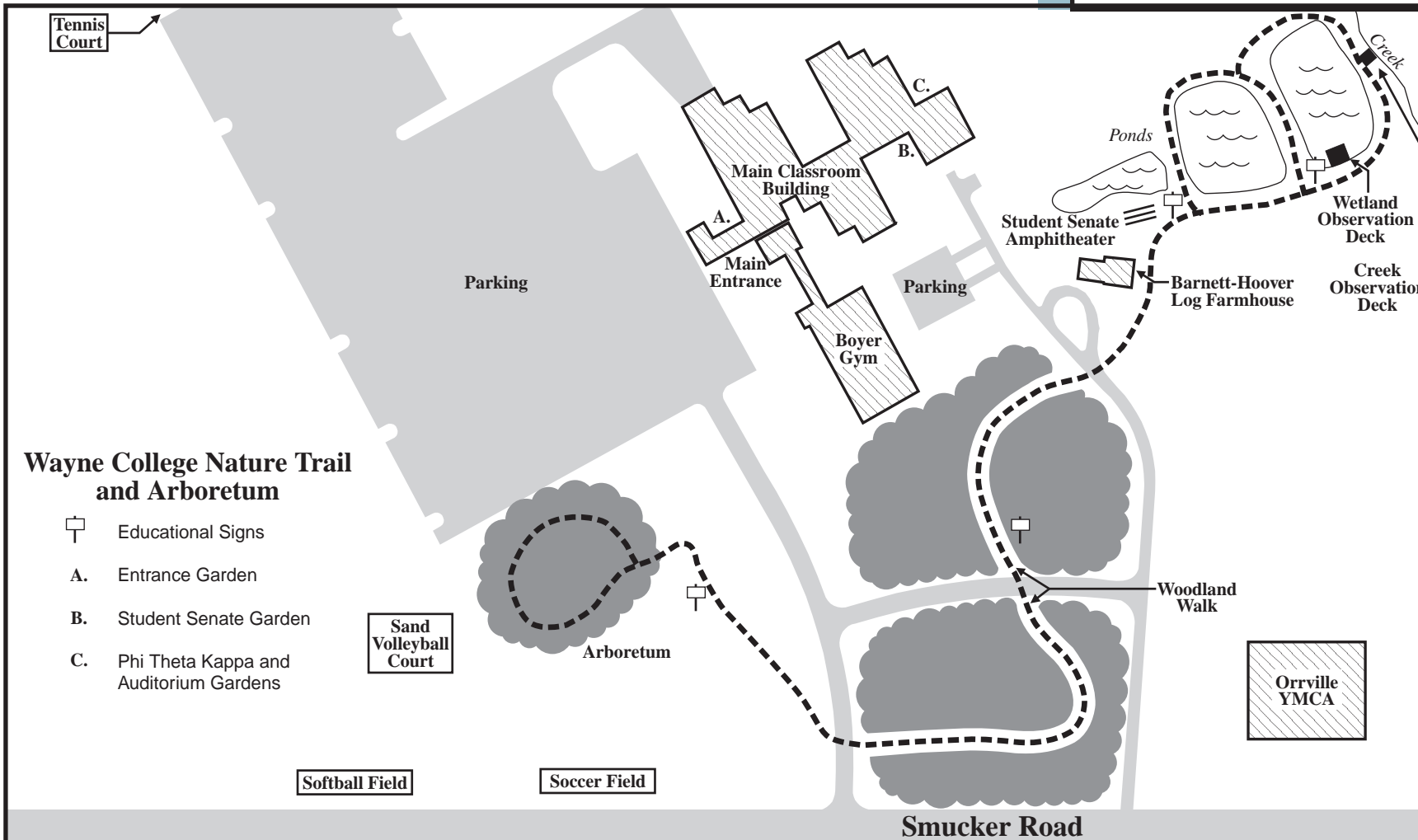
THE MAP

The map below was produced digitally by Joseph Stoll and the Cartography Laboratory at The University of Akron. Funding for this map and brochure was secured by Wayne College student Leslie Baus and from the sales of the *A Brief Survey of the Chordates* by Forrest J. Smith, Professor of Biology



Welcome to

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