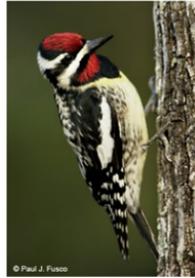


## Birds of Note

**Bufflehead** (*Bucephala albeola*): Males of this species are white and black, with a glossy green/purple tint at the front of their head and a large white patch at the back. Females are gray-brown with a white patch on the cheek. These birds nest in old woodpecker holes by the waterside. Both male and female will care for the young, but they do not mate for life. Their name comes from their wide, flat head resembling a buffalo.



**Yellow-bellied sapsucker** (*Sphyrapicus varius*): A smaller woodpecker, the male has red plumage on the front with white and black edging. He has a black mask over the eyes, and back feathers are speckled with gray. The female has similar, less vibrant markings. These birds drill shallow, broad holes in trees to access to their main source of food, tree sap.



**Great horned owl** (*Bubo virginianus*): Rarely seen but often heard in Basswood, this species is distinguishable by its repetitive, deep hooting call, usually heard at dusk as a territorial warning. Their diet consists of small animals. They do not make their own nests, instead using small ledges, caves, or abandoned birds' nests.



**Pileated woodpecker** (*Dryocopus pileatus*): About the size of a crow, the pileated woodpecker is our largest woodpecker. Males and females have a red plume at the top of their head and white stripes down the sides of their head and neck. They drill into dead trees in search of carpenter ants, creating unique rectangular holes.



## Basswood Pond State Forest Self-Guided Blue Trail Map

Basswood Pond State Forest is managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation



### Basswood Pond State Forest Directions

**To south end/fishing area:** Take NY 80 West out of Cooperstown. In Burlington, make a right onto County Route 16. Approximately 1.5 miles, make a left onto Basswood Road. Make first right and proceed to day use area, just on your right.

**To north end:** Continue on County Route 16 about 3 miles, turn left onto Jacobs Road, near the scrap yard. Continue about 2 miles until you see the sign.

Guide created by the Otsego County Conservation Association, Basswood trail stewards.



Cover photo by Edmund Ressler, enyhiking.com

## About Basswood Pond State Forest

Basswood Pond State Forest encompasses a total of 711 acres with five miles of hiking trails that form a rough figure eight. Basswood Pond itself covers 16 acres. The southern Beaver Pond is about six acres. Basswood Pond was the sixth forest of its kind created in Otsego County.

The forest was created from abandoned farmland in the 1930s, part of a statewide reforestation effort aimed at securing future timber production, protecting watersheds, and flood prevention. More than half of the acreage in Basswood Pond State Forest is comprised of Norway spruce and red pine plantations, species selected because of their durability, rapid growth, and ability to tolerate poor soils.

The pond was originally created as a fire guard and water reserve. It has been converted to a recreational area and is stocked with hundreds of brown trout every year in the middle of April.

**Activities allowed in the forest:** Fishing, hiking, picnicking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and horseback riding. Overnight camping and ice or bait fishing are not permitted.

**Entering the Forest:** There are three ways to enter the trails. The main entrance off of Conservation Road has a parking and picnic area, restrooms, and is wheelchair accessible. The Jacobs Road entrance provides access to both the south and north ends of the trails, and has a parking area and kiosk. The third entrance is on the south end of the trails, on Basswood Road. It has a small parking area.

## Plants of Note

**Sugar maple** (*Acer saccharum*): This variety of tree is often tapped for sap, which is then boiled into syrup. You can use its triangular leaf points and the clear sap in the leaf to distinguish this maple from other maples. The seeds disperse by twirling down to the ground, like a helicopter's propeller.



**Queen Anne's lace** (*Daucus carota*): Introduced from Europe, this plant is related to the carrot. The blooms form a flat circle of tiny white flower clusters, giving the plant a lacy look. The name is derived from Queen Anne, who pricked her finger and bled a drop on the lace she was making; the dark purple flower at the center resembles this blood drop. The large taproot is edible and its seeds have been used as a contraceptive.



**Hawthorn** (*Crataegus oxyacantha*): This tree tends to grow in moist areas. It is a dense, shrubby tree, with thorns about ½ inch long, white flowers in the spring, and dark red berries in the fall. Its leaves are lobed and rounded. One of the oldest medicinal plants, it was used to treat heart disease by dilating arteries, and could increase heart muscle strength.



**Striped maple** (*Acer pensylvanicum*): As a sapling, its bark is smooth with striking green, white and gray lines running vertically. When the tree ages the brightness of the colors diminish, but the stripes are still recognizable. Its leaves are broad and soft. A person in a desperate situation can use this leaf as replacement for toilet paper.



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## Locations and Landmarks

### 1) Basswood Trees (*Tilia americana*) and

**Fishing Access:** This tree has heart-shaped leaves and white to yellow flowers and is commonly known as a “bee tree.” Bees often make their home in hollow basswoods and collect nectar from their flowers. This area is the main parking access to Basswood Pond and the lower trail, featuring picnic tables and barbeque grills.



**2) Basswood Pond:** Expanded in 1959 to provide recreational fishing opportunities, the pond covers approximately 16 acres in surface area and has a maximum depth of 15 feet. In addition to rainbow and brown trout, the pond attracts other wildlife, particularly birds such as geese, ducks, kingfishers, and herons.

The small cement square at the far end of the dam allows excess water to move out of the pond. It feeds into the stream on the south side of the berm.

**3) Woodpecker Damage:** The excavation holes on this tree have been made by woodpeckers searching for food. Woodpeckers chisel away at the bark and outer layers of wood in search of grubs, larvae, and invertebrates feeding on the tree. Mice, flying squirrels, red squirrels, and birds such as chickadees and screech owls will often use these larger cavities for nests.

Follow the blue markers to continue with the tour.

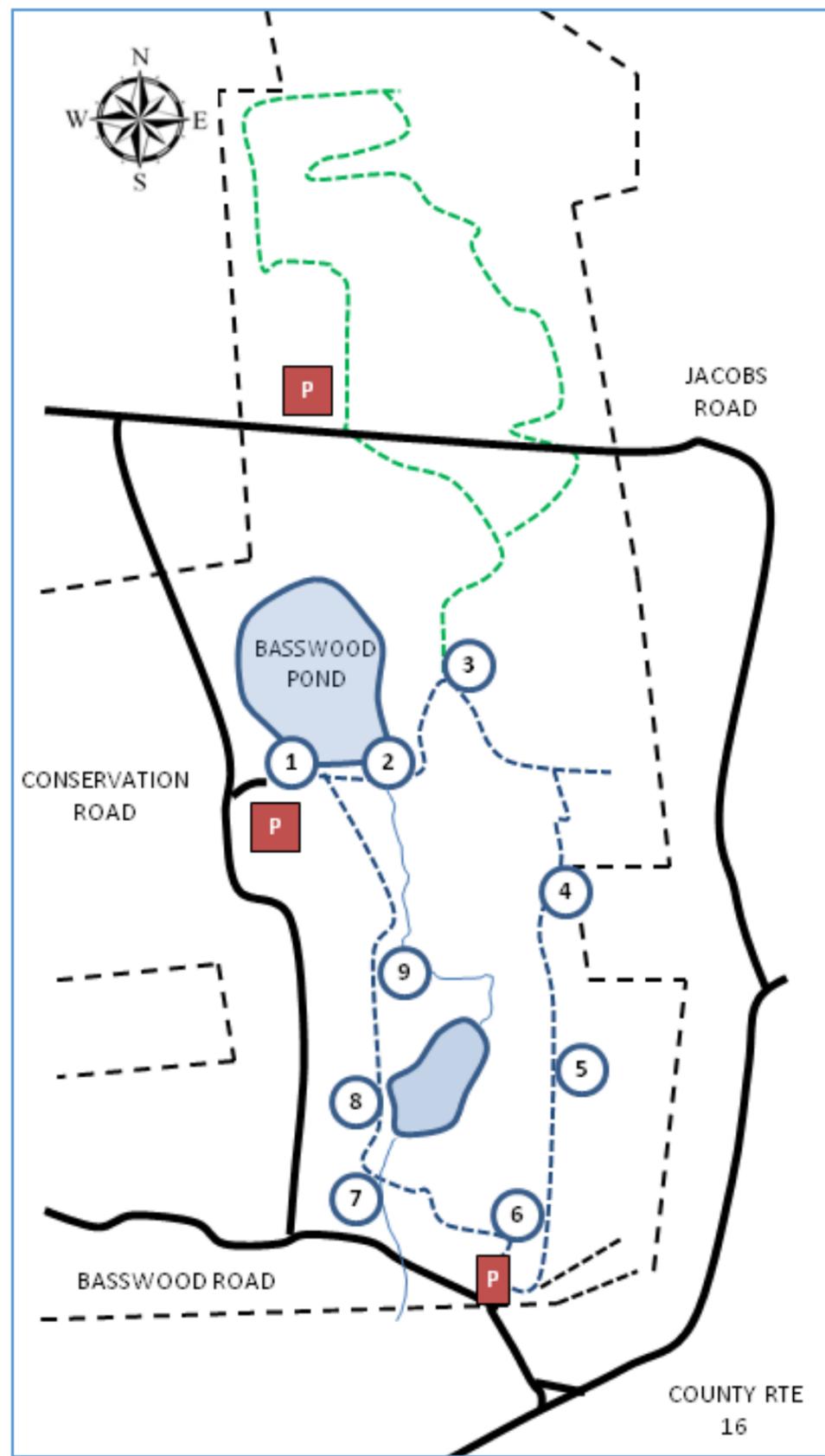
**4) The Edge Effect:** On the left is private property, maintained as a hayfield. Note how the trees along this property line tend to lean a little over the field, and how the branches on that side are thicker as they grow more rapidly with more light. The edges where two different habitat types meet often have a greater diversity of plants and animals.

**5) Light Gaps:** When a tree falls in the forest it may not be heard, but the effects can easily be seen. The space in the canopy allows sunlight to reach the forest floor. This sets off a race to the top. When the gap closes and shade prevails, the understory will again thin out — until the next tree falls.

## Basswood Pond State Forest Self-Guided Blue Trail Map

1. Basswood Trees and Fishing Access
2. Basswood Pond
3. Woodpecker Damage
4. The Edge Effect
5. Light Gaps
6. Spruce Groves
7. Hornbeams and Hawthorns
8. Beaver Pond
9. Nurse Logs

Map Key	
Road	
Trail	
Park Boundary	
Water	
Stream	
Parking area	



**6) Spruce Groves:** Native to northern Europe, Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) was planted extensively in New York in the 1930s to prevent soil erosion and promote forest regeneration. Norway spruce grows fast, up to three feet per year when it's young. The wood is used for lumber and paper. Red squirrels are voracious consumers of spruce seeds, leaving stripped cones in large piles throughout the woods. The extensive stands of Norway spruce in this forest are more than 70 years old and will likely be harvested soon. DEC's management plans call for encouraging native growth when these stands are cut.



Proceed into the small parking area. To continue, walk to the right and pick up the blue trail at the edge of the lot. Follow the trail over a footbridge.

**7) Hornbeams and Hawthorns:** Just past the footbridge to the left is a stand of American hornbeams (*Carpinus caroliniana*). Sometimes called musclewood because of the appearance of its bark, American hornbeam is a small tree that prefers moist soil and shade.

On the right-hand side are hawthorns (*Crataegus spp.*). Related to apples, roses and plums, hawthorns have showy white flowers in late spring. The small, bright red fruit is eaten by many birds and other animals. Watch out for this plant, as it has long, sharp thorns!

**8) Beaver Pond:** Beavers dammed the stream to create this pond. They harvest trees from the surrounding woodlands to maintain the dam and their lodge; they feed on aquatic plants that grow in the pond. The wetlands beavers create are important habitat for a variety of birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians, and can provide humans with valuable recreation opportunities.

**9) Nurse Logs:** These two massive fallen trees illustrate both how good tree roots are at holding soil and how, even in death, trees support life. Plants and fungi take root on the wood while all kinds of animals find shelter within. Over time, physical, biological and chemical processes will convert these logs to soil.