Guide to Walking Trails in the Hopewell Valley

Explore Hopewell Valley’s thousands of acres of preserved open space by taking a hike — short or long — on one of the valley’s many walking trails.
Open Space in the Hopewell Valley

This map shows preserved open space in Hopewell Valley including land owned by private and public entities, conservation easements and preserved farms. The dark green preserves with a number have hiking trails described in this guide. The number is keyed to the table of contents on the facing page.

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space

The Hopewell Valley, bordered by the Delaware River to the west and the Sourland Mountain region to the north, is defined by its natural beauty and scenic vistas. The valley’s rolling hills, forests, farms, and streams are valued highly by the area’s residents.

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space is a nonprofit land trust that is dedicated to preserving the Valley’s character through open space and farmland preservation, and natural resource protection. Since our inception in 1987, we have partnered with landowners, government, and nonprofit organizations to preserve over 3,700 acres of open space and farmland.

© 2010 Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space
Other data acquired from, NJDEP and NJDOT, but this secondary map product has not been verified or authorized by those agencies.
Hopewell Valley is known and appreciated for its wide open spaces, scenic vistas, rural charm, and extensive woodlands. The public may enjoy over 10,000 acres of open space preserved largely through the State’s Green Acres Programs with the help of groups such as Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space (FoHVOS), Mercer County, Hopewell Township, Pennington Borough, Hopewell Borough, the D&R Greenway Land Trust and the Stony Brook Millstone Watershed Association. Today, approximately 70 miles of trails are open to the public at the 19 locations described in this guide.

While this preserved land has always been “open to the public,” relatively little of it was been accessible to the public until recently. In the past few years, through volunteer efforts, the number of trails on preserved open space has increased dramatically. Now it’s your turn—the public’s turn—to take advantage of these trails: for personal enjoyment, exercise, and better appreciation of our natural environment.

This guide will show you places to hike throughout the Hopewell Valley. All trails are easy walking with little grade change, except for trails on the Ted Stiles Preserve at Baldpate Mountain. Most trails are accessible year round with only a few limitations. So, go take a hike!

Walking Trails in the Hopewell Valley
(Keyed to Hopewell Valley map)

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1 Baldpate Mountain Trails

Honey Hollow Trails: there are numerous trails that vary in length from 1 to 2 miles.

**Parking**
Fiddler’s Creek Road parking lot (40 cars)
East of State Road 29 (River Road) 0.3 miles:
N40.3178, W74.8896
Pleasant Valley road parking lot, 1.1 mile west of Route 579 (Bear Tavern Road) (40 cars and/or trailers): N40.3345, W74.8948
Washington Crossing Park lot (for Honey Hollow Trails) on Brick Yard Road near Church Road (10 cars): N40.3186, W74.8662

**Location**
Bordered by Route 29, Fiddler’s Creek Road and Pleasant Valley Road

**Trails and Distances**
There are many trails totaling 12 miles.
Ted Stiles Preserve Main Trails: there are numerous trails that vary in length from 1 to 4 miles.

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The Ted Stiles Preserve stretches approximately 1,200 acres on a ridge running roughly east-west between Fiddlers Creek Road to the south and Pleasant Valley Road to the north. Baldpate Mountain offers some of the most challenging hikes in Mercer County. An extensive network of trails, old logging roads and some specially built trails, lace the southern and northern flanks of the ridge, and a 2 mile trail runs along its spine. The most popular trail, the Summit Trail, starts at the Fiddler’s Creek Road parking lot and ascends over 400 feet to the top. A dedicated band of volunteers spent months constructing this trail in 2006. After reaching the top, hikers can enjoy great views of the Delaware River to the south and even a view of the Philadelphia skyline on a clear day.

A large map of trails of Baldpate Mountain can be seen on the kiosks at the start of the Summit Trail off Fiddlers Creek Road and at the Ridge Trail off of Pleasant Valley Road. BUT do check the signs at the entrances for hunting dates. Only hunters are allowed on hunting dates. The dates are also posted on the Hopewell Township website, www.hopewelltwp.org.

The Honey Hollow trails start at Church Road just east of Fiddler’s Creek Road. Look for a very large white oak that is at the trail head. Honey Hollow was the site of a 19th-century settlement and is reported to have been occupied by some 50 families before being abandoned. Remnants of foundations and chimneys of houses still exist in the area. During the hunting season (from late October to early February) the trails
Baldpate Mountain Trails are not accessible, except on Sundays, since most of the land in this area is privately owned subject to an easement for public access.

Most of the land was preserved as open space in 1998 by a consortium of Mercer County, the State of New Jersey, Hopewell Township, and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. Ted Stiles, PhD, who died in 2007, was the long time president of FoHVOS who was instrumental in the preservation of Baldpate Mountain.

The top of Baldpate Mountain was home to Strawberry Hill, the country estate of the John Kuser family in the early 20th century. The main house and nearby lodge were restored by Mercer County in 2008.
This property consists of a combination of open fields and woodlands covering 116 acres at the edge of the Sourland Mountains. There is a kiosk at the trailhead to explain the wildlife and bird life found on this preserved land.

The trail runs parallel to the Stony Brook quite close to the stream and on the southern side of four fields, each defined by hedgerows. These fields are cut every few years to maintain meadow habitat. The trail continues past old fields until it splits at about .5 miles. Turning right, the trail climbs moderately through a stand of mixed evergreen trees. It then follows the small ridge through a mixed oak-hickory forest. After passing through a stone wall, the trail starts downhill through the forest and back to the fields. A new trail spur has been added by an Eagle Scout and is shown through the wooded area.

The Cedar Ridge Trail is a preservation project of D&R Greenway Land Trust a non-profit organization based in Princeton Township dedicated to preserving open space and restoring the ecological health of our forests and meadows. For further information and to learn more about D&R Greenway visit their website at www.drgreenway.org.

D&R Greenway Land Trust began preserving land in this region in 1991. The Fullam Family first donated a conservation easement on the property and then came back 10 years later to donate the land to the D&R Greenway Land Trust.
The main entrance to Curlis Lake Woods is off S. Main Street at the southern end of Pennington Borough. A small Green Acres sign marks the entrance. A secondary entrance is at the end of Oak Street to the east of Pennington in Hopewell Township. The main trail, Howe's Lane, extends from the main entrance to the Oak Street entrance. About 500 feet from the main entrance there is a large color map displaying all trails. Access to Curlis Lake Woods can also be made from the Mercer County Equestrian Center on Federal City Road. Entrances to the Woodland Trails can be found to the right of the fences.

Starting at South Main Street, Howe's Lane runs through a thicket of rose, shrubs and young trees. The trail is broad and easy to follow. A side trail from Howe's Lane is the Redwood Trail which passes by a grouping of dawn redwood trees planted by Howe's Nursery. A nearby bridge was constructed as an Eagle Scout project in 2010.

Howe's Lane and the Redwood Trail lead to a small brook which can be crossed on stepping stones. At this point, hikers enter a mature woodland that changes from beech near Curlis Lake to oak and hickory on the slope extending up from the lake. The Lake Shore Trail hugs the edge of Curlis Lake its entire length. The Woodland Trails form a network on the slope up from the lake. One of these trails, the Red Trail, passes by the County Equestrian Center. Hikers can traverse the Equestrian Center and fields beyond to get to Rosedale Park.

Curlis Lake Woods was part of Howe's Nursery in Pennington. Some of the non-native trees, such as the dawn redwoods, date back to Howe's Nursery. Mercer County acquired the site in 1993 following a public campaign and the urging of Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space to save the area once proposed for the “Pennington Bypass.”
4 Eames Preserve Trail

**Location**
On Harbourton-Woodsville Road, about one mile west of Marshall’s Corner-Woodsville Road

**Trail Distance**
1.5 miles

**Parking**
Small parking area off of Harbourton-Woodsville Road (3 cars): N40.3646, W74.8226

This trail is a long narrow loop through open woods and one field. It borders on a pretty section of Woodsville Brook and winds through a mature grove of American beech trees.

The first section of the trail follows an old road as it passes the site of a former house on the west side of the trail. The woods here are very open with red maple, white ash, some large black cherry trees, sassafras, tulip poplar and hickory. There are scattered stands of dying red cedar indicating that this was once an open field. As the trail continues down a gradual slope you enter a mature forest dominated by American beech, oak and hickory. At the bottom of the slope the trail swings to the west at the end of a meadow. For a short while, it follows along the meandering Woodsville Brook, skirts a slough filled with skunk cabbage and then begins to climb back toward the south uphill through the large stand of climax forest dominated by American beech, oak and hickory.

For many years, this was a farm with a house, animal sheds and a greenhouse. The property was purchased by the State of New Jersey and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space in 2007.

Trail guides are available at the start of the trail and on the website, www.fohvos.org. FoHVOS conducts a deer management program on the preserve to improve forest health. Hiking is not allowed when hunting occurs. Please check the website or the sign at the entrance of the preserve for specific hunting dates.
5  Elks Preserve Trail

**Location**
Crusher Road, one quarter mile east of Route 654, (Pennington–Hopewell Road)

**Trail Distance**
1.2 miles

**Parking**
Small parking area off of Crusher Road (2-3 cars):
N40.3777, W74.7799

This is an especially pleasant walk in autumn when the red maples and other trees are at their most colorful states. In early spring when the maples are a haze of red flowers this area is also beautiful, but the trail is likely to be muddy in spots.

The loop trail passes through lowland woods of predominately red maples with elm, white ash, beech and oak scattered throughout. In the southeast section the trail enters a dense stand of red cedar. This stand is so dense that there is no undergrowth or ground cover. Look for muscular, wildly artistic grape vines looping and climbing to the tops of the trees. Near the half way point, the trail crosses a small stream where a bench has been placed. The trail then continues through the lowland forest and returns to the parking area. There is also a connector trail that leads to the Mount Rose Trail system on the Stony Brook–Millstone Watershed Preserve.

The property was farmed until 1973. Since then, the farm fields have succeeded, first to brush and then to the young forest you see. The property was used as a hunting preserve by the Elks Club of Hopewell until 2002 when the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space purchased the property. The loop trail was constructed by volunteers in 2007.

Trail guides are available at the start of the trail and on the website, www.fohvos.org. FoHVOS conducts a deer management program on the preserve to improve forest health. Hiking is not allowed when hunting occurs, which includes selected dates from early September through mid-February. Please check the website or the sign at the entrance for specific hunting dates.
Location
Featherbed Lane one mile north of Hopewell Borough on Route 607 (Hopewell-Wertsville Road)

Trails and Distances
There are three connecting trails on the South side of the Sourlands.

- Featherbed Meadows West Trail: .75 miles
- Sourlands Foothills Trail: 1.1 miles
- Double Crossing Trail: 1.1 miles

Parking
Two parking areas on Featherbed Lane

- Featherbed Meadows West Trail—small lot on Featherbed Lane about .75 miles west of Hopewell-Wertsville Road (4 cars): N40.4047, W74.7887
- Sourlands Foothills Trail—small lot on Featherbed Lane just east of Hopewell-Wertsville Road (4 cars): N40.4105, W74.7773
The 90-square-mile Sourland region includes parts of three counties and seven municipalities in central New Jersey, encompassing a complex ecosystem of forest, wetlands and grasslands. Its mosaic of habitats is home to an incredibly rich diversity of animal and plant species, many rare or endangered. As the surrounding area grows and changes rapidly, the Sourlands are increasingly in jeopardy. The magnificent old forests, boulder fields, and extensive grasslands of the Sourland Mountain region are unique in central New Jersey. Working farms, historic homesteads, and extensive parkland complement its wild abundance. The resulting balance between natural and cultural heritage give this area its special character. The Sourland Mountain is a rich landscape for people and wildlife alike.

The area of the Featherbed Lane Trails is primarily woodland comprised of a mix of mature forest and forested wetlands to the north with areas of younger forest to the south. The preserve also includes areas of early successional wet meadow. A headwater stream corridor to the Stony Brook crosses a portion of the preserve near the meadow. The fields are dominated by goldenrod where they are dry and sedges where they are wet. The forested areas contain a number of mature hardwoods like pin oak and beech. A variety of animal species can be found such as deer and raccoons as well as many bird species including hawks soaring overhead and songbirds in the forest.

**Featherbed Meadows West Trail**

This trail is part of a much larger trail system that begins in Hopewell and continues into Hunterdon County. It goes through a preserve that is co-owned by D&R Greenway Land Trust and Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. It begins in a wet meadow and takes you into a mature forest of the Sourland Mountains. It then threads through a wet, early successional red cedar/red maple wooded area with little understory. Further north the trail enters slightly older red maple/white ash/pin oak woodland. The trail intersects with the Double Crossing Loop trail at the crossing of the Stony Brook. At this point you can return to the parking area, hike the Double Crossing Loop or get to the Sourlands Foothills trail via Double Crossing.

**Sourlands Foothills Trail**

The Sourlands Foothills Trail starts at the parking area near the intersection of Featherbed Lane and Hopewell–Wertsville Road. It traverses property that is owned by Mercer County, the State of New Jersey, and the D&R Greenway Land Trust. The first section of Sourlands Foothills Trail parallels Hopewell-Wertsville Road. It threads through a wet, early successional red cedar and red maple wooded area. After crossing Hopewell-Wertsville Road, the trail enters slightly older red maple/white ash/pin oak woodland. The trail then enters mature woodlands. The trail crosses and follows a small tributary for a short section where large American beech and shagbark hickory trees grow. The trail then turns north and parallels and sometimes follows an old logging road. There are several sections of old stone walls and the quality of the woods improves as the trail continues further up the Sourland ridge.

**Double Crossing Trail**

This trail gets its name because it crosses the Stony Brook twice along the route. It is primarily in mature forest but you will notice that it surrounds one private residence with ducks, chickens and pigs. Although ATV’s are no longer allowed on the preserve you may notice some trail damage from days past. One of the highlights of the trail is a stunning grove of American beech. The double crossing of Stony Brook via boulders is the fun part of this trail and you’ll find yourself saying, “It doesn’t get any prettier than this.” In spring, look for wood ducks in quiet pools in the brook, and stoneflies on beech tree trunks during the hatch in April. The trail lies on two preserved parcels of land, one is owned by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space and the other by D&R Greenway Land Trust. Double crossing ends at Mountain Church Road but you can cross the road and hike the trails of D&R Greenway’s Northern Stony Brook Preserve in Hunterdon County.
Heritage Preserve Trail

Location
Reed Road, one quarter mile north of I-95, and one mile south of Washington Crossing–Pennington Road

Trail Distance
1.5 miles

Parking
Small parking area off of Reed Road (2–3 cars): N40.2928, W74.7973

This trail is a long narrow loop that begins by going through a former farm field. It continues through young red maple forest and then a mature beech bottomland forest. This preserve has outstanding spring wildflowers. There are a number of vernal pools, small streams and old farm drainage swales. As the trail meanders through the forest, there may be some wet spots in spring and after rain.

The land of the Heritage Preserve was farmed for many, perhaps hundreds of years. The 1930 aerial photographs show that a little over a third of the land was forested. As you walk the trail you can easily identify the old forest by the large mature trees. About half of the rest of the property in 1930 was fields for crops and the remainder was pasture. Aside from two hayfields, farming ended in the late 1970’s. At that time the former fields and pastures began to succeed, first to shrub land and then to forest. Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space purchased the preserve from the Heritage Conservancy in 2008 with State Green Acres funds.

Trail guides are available at the start of the trail and on www.fohvos.org. FoHVOS conducts a deer management program on the preserve to improve forest health. Hiking is not allowed when hunting occurs. Please check the website or the sign at the entrance for specific hunting dates.
8 Hopewell Borough Trails

Location
Columbia Avenue,
Hopewell Borough

Trail Distance
There are various trails from .25 to 2 miles in length

Parking
On Columbia Avenue:
N40.3882, W74.7610
In the Hopewell
Elementary School parking lot

Hopewell Borough Park is owned and managed by Hopewell Borough. The park is also known as Gazebo Park, after its most prominent feature. It could be said that the park has two distinct areas. The first is the developed area at the north end off Columbia Avenue. This part has a playground, picnic tables, benches, as well as a gazebo that hosts musical performances during the summer months.

The park also has a larger, less developed part. It contains several walking trails that wind along the Beden Brook and into an old farm pasture.

It is a surprisingly good place to see birds. The wooded corridor along the stream hosts Baltimore orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, yellow warblers and the usual assortment of titmice, chickadees and nuthatches. The lower fields are a good place for observing woodcocks on an early March evening and later in spring meadowlarks have been heard singing.

The park forms a portion of a greenbelt surrounding Hopewell Borough.
9 Jacobs Creek Trail

Location
Along Jacobs Creek from Pennington–Titusville Road to Pennington–Harbourton Road

Trail Distance
1 mile each way

Parking
Parking: Pull over parking is located near trail entrances.
Pennington-Titusville Road, 2.4 miles west of State Road 31 (3 cars): N40.3182, W74.8382
Pennington-Harbourton Road, 1.9 miles west of State Road 31 (2 cars): N40.3310, W74.8336
Note: the contour intervals on this map are 10 feet.

Jacobs Creek Trail offers delightful close up views of the historic creek (General Washington used this route on the march to Trenton) as well as panoramic views from a ridge high above the creek. The trail traverses mature woods on the ridge and younger successional woods on lowland sections closer to the creek. Much of the area was farmed many years ago and remnants of old farm roads still exist. One historic feature of note along the trail is the ruins of an old saw or grist mill. A large section of a five foot high stone wall, presumably built for the mill’s foundation, still exists on either side of the creek. Nearby is what appears to be a small quarry where stone for the mill was produced.

A second phase of the Jacobs Creek Trail is proposed to continue south of Pennington–Titusville Road to connect with Hopewell Township’s Alliger Park on Washington Crossing–Pennington Road.

The entrances to the Jacob Creek Trail are marked with green signs saying “Jacobs Creek Trail.” Major portions of the trail go through private property on which easements for public access are held by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. These easements were acquired in 1998 and 2010. Hunting activity is variable on the private land in the mid-section of the trail, so please look for signage that indicates changes in hunting activity. On land owned by FoHVOS along the northern section of the trail, bow hunting for deer is allowed on selected days from early September through mid-February. Please check the website for specific hunting dates (look under ‘Nexus Preserve’). Hunting occurs on portions of private easements from October through February (except Sunday afternoons). Refer to www.fohvos.org.
Kates Trail is on a 60-acre conservation easement acquired by D&R Greenway Land Trust in 2000. The area of the easement with the trail and public access covers 20 acres. The remaining 40 acre easement does not allow public access, but will remain as permanent open space. The distance from the road to the Stony Brook is .25 miles. Another .25 miles of the trail closely follows the Stony Brook. Many species of birds in season can be seen along the trail including great blue herons, wood ducks, scarlet tanagers, and Baltimore orioles. Amphibians and reptiles including the Eastern box turtle can also be found along the stream.

The upper part of the trail follows a ridge above the Stony Brook. Large tulip trees, swamp white oak and pin oaks can be found here. The lower section of the trail lies in the Stony Brook floodplain and can be wet at times.

Kate's Trail is dedicated to the memory of Kate Gorrie. There is a kiosk at the start of the trail with more information about Kate and a map showing the trail route.
The Mount Rose trails are on a 240-acre section of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association Reserve along Moore’s Mill-Mt. Rose Road. The area consists mostly of early successional fields, but also contains a mature oak-hickory forest, skunk cabbage swamp, vernal pools, the unique geological formations of the Mt. Rose Ridge and the headwaters of the Honey Brook.

After parking, access the trailhead to the right of the information kiosk. Please use caution when crossing the road and keep any dogs on a leash. The Mt. Rose Ridge trail wanders through mature oak-hickory forest. A connection to the Forest Loop on the left is reached at .15 miles. The Forest Loop offers a stroll through the oak-hickory forest with an observation platform overlooking a skunk cabbage swamp.

Continuing on the main trail, a meadow is reached at .23 miles. From here the West Loop heads to the left where it meanders through thickets of multiflora rose and Eastern red cedar and then returns to the Mt. Rose Ridge trail. At the northwest corner of the West Loop there is a short trail that allows access to a trail on the adjacent preserve owned by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space. The Mt. Rose Ridge trail reunites with the West Loop at .44 miles. From here, the trail heads through younger, denser forest until it crosses Crusher Road. The trail reaches the top of the Mount Rose Ridge at .64 miles where a large rocky outcrop offers an overlook of farms in the Hopewell Valley and views of the Sourland Mountains to the left. The trail continues along the ridge and then turns right, heading down the ridge. As the trail levels out, it wanders among towering tulip, oak and ash trees. The trail continues to CR 654 ending just outside Hopewell Borough.

For further information and to learn more about the Watershed Association, please visit their website at www.thewatershed.org
12 Nayfield Preserve Trail

This is a very pleasant walk through many different habitats including farm fields, mature oak-hickory forest, red maple forest, some red cedar woods, and a pine grove. Parts of the trail may be swampy or muddy in the spring. A portion of the trail runs along a tributary of the Stony Brook which has a bed of large flat rocks. Stream flow is high in the spring and you can watch the water cascading over the rocks at several vistas. Spring woodland flowers include jack-in-the-pulpit, mayapple, dogwood and large areas of trout lily. In summer the forest canopy closes providing abundant cool shade. In fall the preserve hosts a multitude of colors from wildflowers in the wet meadow and trees in the hardwood forest. In winter the meadow provides a valuable source of food for winter resident birds and the snow stands in stark contrast to the dark trees and grapevines.

The preserve was acquired by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space and the State of New Jersey in 2005.

Trails guides are available at the start of the trail and on the website, www.fohvos.org. FoHVOS conducts a deer management program on the preserve to improve forest health. Hiking is not allowed when hunting occurs. Please check the website or the sign at the entrance of the preserve for specific hunting dates.
The Pennington Loop Trail extends north of the Borough to Baldwin Lake. Hikers have a choice of taking a short loop which begins and ends at Kunkel Park in Pennington or a long loop which can be accessed either from Kunkel Park or from N. Main Street where it turns to go over the railroad tracks. Hikers can complete a full circle that connects both ends of the trail at Kunkel Park and N. Main Street by walking along streets in Pennington Borough. A continuous sidewalk can be followed on N. Main Street, E. Franklin Street, Eglantine Street, and King George Road to Kunkel Park.

Starting from Kunkel Park, the trail crosses the Lewis Brook which hikers can usually step across or walk across on two utility poles. The trail closely follows the Stony Brook in mature woodlands on its way to Baldwin Lake. Since the first section of the trail is within the Stony Brook floodplain it can be wet at times. The upper portion of the trail above the Stony Brook floodplain follows the south shore of Baldwin Lake and traverses a field.

Baldwin Lake was created to impound flood waters in the Stony Brook watershed and is owned by the State’s Division of Fish and Wildlife. Canada geese are the most prevalent wildlife in there but swans and beavers can occasionally be spotted.

This area has been a popular place for hikes and dog walks for many years. The trails were made by nearby residents before the area was finally preserved. The preserved area is 41 acres, with most of the area having been acquired or protected by D&R Greenway Land Trust in 1995. In 2006, a local Eagle Scout candidate, Christian Thompson, marked the trails. In 2009, Pennington Girl Scout Troop 71853 constructed a bridge over a gully on the lower section of the Short Loop Trail.
Rosedale Park encompasses 472 acres that includes a 38 acre lake stocked with trout. The land on which the park stands was originally three farms. The dam for the lake was built by the Soil Conservation Service starting in 1969. The lake was filled in 1971 and stocked for fishing. Around the lake area are two picnic areas with a dozen picnic tables, two playgrounds, and areas for playing volleyball and baseball. This is also an excellent area for kite flying, fishing, and bird watching. Restroom facilities are provided.

The main trail in Rosedale Park is the Red Trail. It makes the longest loop and connects to most of the other trails. It starts at the picnic area, crosses over the dam, and goes around Rosedale Lake where it enters the area of woods and thickets on the northeast side of the lake. It connects to both ends of the White Trail and proceeds around a small lake that is filled with wildlife (look for frogs, snakes, ducks, geese and osprey). On the east side of the lake, the trail heads straight south toward the old Hunt house on Blackwell Road.

The White Trail descends from the Red Trail to the Stony Brook and follows the brook through a beautiful beech woods before it ascends to rejoin the Red Trail at the dam of the small lake.

The Yellow Trail starts at the Red Trail by the small lake. It follows the lake shoreline then turns away from the lake to enter a young forest that is sprinkled with stands of red cedar. Other connecting trails include the Blue, Orange, and White Trails.

The trails link to other nearby trails in Curlis Lake Woods and the Pole Farm section of Mercer County Park Northwest (south of Blackwell Road). There is a large trail map for Rosedale Park at the Blackwell Road parking area.
**Location**
A large preserve between Hopewell–Princeton Road and Aunt Molly Road

**Trail Distance**
As of May 2011 the trails are to be planned and constructed.

**Parking**
As of May 2011 there is room for 4 cars on Aunt Molly Road .8 miles south of Route 518: N40.3843, W74.7407

A large parking area is planned for Hopewell–Princeton Road: N40.3836, W74.7548

The St. Michaels property is officially preserved! The 6 year preservation effort ended in January 2010 when the 340 acre St. Michaels Preserve was purchased from the Diocese of Trenton. Together with adjacent lands protected by the D&R Greenway in 2005, a total of 400 acres of permanently preserved land will anchor the southeast corner of Hopewell Borough in green. As of this printing plans are underway to identify trails through the non-agricultural open space portions of the property for walking, horseback riding and nature study. D&R Greenway requests that anyone who wants to see the property stay on existing farm roads until trails have been marked and informational signs posted.

The D&R Greenway Land Trust has already constructed the Charles Evans Overlook, a special place for celebrations and for solitary reflection. The overlook is easily accessed from Aunt Molly Road and sits at a high point of the preserve where a panoramic view of the protected land can be appreciated. The overlook is named after Charles Evans, a visionary

and entrepreneur. Mr. Evan recognized the enormous economic and environmental benefits that land preservation provides to communities.

Please visit during daylight hours. Please keep your dog on a leash due to the presence of ground nesting birds. Dogs can and will hurt ground nesting birds. Thank you for your help in protecting the wildlife that exists on the preserve.

Wrinkle-leaf Goldenrod
(Solidago rugosa)
Start at the parking area and follow the trail up a slight rise through a wood of cherry, dogwood, hickory and pin oak. Note the large cedars, a reminder that this was once an open field. As the trail goes east the trees are larger and older. Look for large old grapevines climbing the trees as the trail nears the turn into the meadow. The mowed trail then loops through two meadows separated by an old hedgerow of mature elm, cherry, maple and ash. The field plants include goldenrod (shoulder high in the late autumn) asters, mullein, some young cedars and scattered small islands of multiflora rose. These fields are alive with birds during the fall migration. A variety of sparrows, finches and warblers can be found as well as hawks circling overhead. On the mowed trail, look for signs of deer, fox and woodchuck.

On the far northwest corner of the loop there is a short spur that leads down toward Woodsville Brook. This is an excellent place to look for birds taking shelter in the little valley cut by the brook. The mature trees and vines, along with little thickets of wild rose interspersed with raspberry bushes make good hiding places for the birds and mammals as evidenced by the nests in the trees and bushes.

Trail guides are available at the start of the trail and on the website, www.fohvos.org. FoHVOS conducts a deer management program on the preserve to improve forest health. Hiking is not allowed when hunting occurs. Please check the website or the sign at the entrance for specific hunting dates.
The Main Reserve is a well-blended combination of forests, fields, streams, ponds and wetlands allowing for a wide array of plants and animals. The fields are wonderful places for wildflowers and butterflies. The combination of open fields with edges provides habitat for many birds including prairie warblers, field sparrows, bluebirds, and tree swallows. American kestrels, northern harrier and red-tailed hawks are common birds of prey seen visiting the fields during daylight while great horned and screech owls hunt in the evenings. Red fox, white tail deer, woodchucks, and meadow voles are just a few of the mammals that frequent the fields.

The forests of the reserve are predominately oak-hickory, although some of the early successional forests are still dominated by eastern red cedar. Spring beauty, mayapple and cut leaved toothwort blanket the forest floor in early spring and wood thrushes, ovenbirds and scarlet tanagers provide musical background during the summer months.

Both the Stony Brook and Four Seasons Trails lead to Stony Brook where great blue and green herons share the brook side feeding with kingfishers. The brook also hosts an abundance of macroinvertebrates. Stoneflies, mayflies, water pennies and hellgrammites all are indicators of excellent water quality. Sunfish, bass,
After your hike, visit the Buttinger Nature Center, the one story red building on the reserve. The Nature Center houses a number of interpretative displays, a small shop and bathrooms. Center is open Tuesday–Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and most Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Reserve is owned and managed by the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association. The association is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring clean water and the environment throughout the 265 square miles of land drained by the Stony Brook and the Millstone River. For further information and to learn more about the Watershed Association, please visit their website at www.thewatershed.org.

The Reserve headquarters sits on the site of the former Brookdale Farm. The farmhouse and barns date back to the early 19th century. The reserve is the result of the vision of an extraordinary woman, Dr. Muriel Gardiner Buttinger. Dr. Buttinger purchased the Brookdale farm in 1940 and began buying the surrounding farms as their owners looked to sell. In 1965, Dr. Buttinger made her first gift of 400 acres of land to the Watershed Association, followed by several more gifts of land from 1969–1984. Today, with additional Green Acres purchases made by the Association, the main reserve totals over 600 acres.

creek chubs and shiners can be found in the riffle areas and the slower moving pools of the brook.

The Pond House area offers outstanding birding from great egrets and great blue herons to kingfishers, Baltimore orioles and a host of waterfowl. Several species of amphibians can be found including spring peepers, bullfrogs, green frogs and pickerel frogs. Painted turtles are often seen basking on logs along the shore and occasionally a snapping turtle can be seen rising to the surface.
The trail is a loop that starts out alongside agricultural fields then splits after about a quarter mile. The left fork leads through the forest where you will see young hardwood trees like oak, maple and ash. The trail overlooks a tributary of the Stony Brook while in the forest. The trail then enters a wetland that follows the main branch of the Stony Brook and has many views of giant sycamore trees on the banks. Once you leave the wetland, you return to the forest up a small hill. The trail takes you through restored meadows and you will see native wildflowers and grasses. It then runs along the northern edge of one of the farm fields and back to the parking area.

The three fields (17 of the 57 acres) in the southwestern portion of the preserve are farmed by Honey Brook Organic Farm. They are improving the fertility of the land with organic materials while being pesticide free.

In the summer of 2010, two overgrown fields totaling 8.5 acres were prepared for a restoration project. The meadows of native wildflowers and grasses that you see are a result of that restoration. Numerous species of animals can be found here, including deer, fox and birds like blue jays, woodpeckers and juncos. Also, amphibians like frogs and toads can be found in the wetlands.

This preserve was purchased by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space in 2002. Trail guides for the Thompson Preserve are available at the start of the trail and on www.fohvos.org. FoHVOS conducts a deer management program on the preserve to improve forest health. Hiking is not allowed when hunting occurs. Please check the website or the signs at the entrance for specific hunting dates.
From Thorns to Flowers

A special feature of the Thompson Preserve trail will be an 8-acre wildflower and native grass meadow. Aside from offering a pleasant hiking experience, the wildflower meadow will become critical habitat and foraging areas for many species of birds, butterflies and bees. Planted from seeds in May, 2010, the wildflowers are expected to bloom for the first time in the summer of 2011.

Before the meadow could be planted, a mass of thorny multi-flora rose which covered the entire 8 acres had to be removed, not an easy task. It was accomplished thanks to a staff member of the New Jersey Forest Fire Service who drove a GytroTrac mulching machine through 12-foot-high multi-flora rose thickets. After these tickets were reduced to mulch, the soil was later tilled and the seeds planted. The entire operation was funded with grants from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. The Washington Crossing Audubon Society provided additional funding for wildflower planting along the perimeter of 17 acres of nearby farmland on the preserve.
Washington Crossing has several trails within its 1400 acres and most of them are level to gently rolling. The trails take you through mixed hardwood, old growth and secondary forests along with meadows and park like areas. On the trails you may see cooper's hawks, pileated woodpeckers, wild turkeys and a large variety of songbirds. Black bears are an occasional visitor to the park. The dominant tree in the park is oak, followed by maple and hickory. The under story consists of flowering dogwood, spicebush and multiflora rose. In the spring, the woods are carpeted with early wildflowers, like trout lily, spring beauty, mayapple and jack-in-the-pulpit. Several of the trails follow the Steele Run, which feeds into the Delaware River. The Steele Run is usually dry in the summer, but flows nicely in the spring and after heavy rains. You may find a variety of macroinvertebrates if you explore the gravelly bed of the Run. In the fall, the maples, hickories, oaks and dogwoods put on a wonderful display of color and in the winter, the evergreens make a nice contrast against the snow.

The Red Dot trail is a good trail to take if you want to see a majority of the park. It runs from the Nature Center to the Visitors Center, while intersecting many other trails along the way. The Red Dot trail takes you through different forests within the park, over the Steele Run and through a wonderful spicebush thicket.
The multi-use trails run along the fields in the eastern portion of the park and the woods in the northern portion. The fields are mowed periodically and can be wet at times. For hikers it is a great place to observe birds that thrive in a grassland environment. Just be aware that you may encounter bicycles or horses. The multi-use trail along the northern end of the park and the Red Trail run through the Natural Area. This area of the park cannot be altered in any way without permission from the Office of Natural Lands Management. Many of the trails provide an opportunity for cross country skiing or snowshoeing in the winter.

**Delaware and Raritan Canal Towpath**

**Trail Distance**
30 miles

**Parking**
Parking for the Towpath can be found in the Washington Grove picnic area along the Delaware River. In the summer, the parking area fills very early in the morning, especially on weekends. You can also park at the Ferry House within the main park and take the pedestrian bridge over Route 29 to Washington Grove.

The Towpath runs from Trenton to Frenchtown. A very small section passes through Washington Crossing State Park. It is level and the surface is crushed stone, great for strollers and bikes. The entire towpath runs along the D and R Canal. Geese, ducks, great blue herons, muskrats, turtles and snakes can be seen in the canal and on the path.

The Red Trail, which starts at the Nature Center, is a loop trail with several smaller trails branching off from it. It takes you by the stream and one of the branches leads you to the Wildlife Blind. Here you can watch several species of birds at the feeders and observe other animals in the stream just beyond.
General Trail Use Guidelines

While you are hiking, be sure to protect yourself from poison ivy and ticks. Wear solid, light colored clothing with pants tucked into socks. This will help prevent a tick from attaching to your skin and will also make sighting a tick easier. Examine yourself frequently for ticks while in tick-infested areas and perform a full-body exam on yourself, children, and pets after leaving tick habitat.

For more information on ticks, you can visit the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov/ticks/avoid/index.html.

For the protection of both wildlife and people not comfortable with dogs, all organizations that manage the listed preserves require that dogs be kept on a leash at all times while walking the trails. Even the best-behaved dogs, by their canine nature, are impulsive creatures. A dog chasing a squirrel could accidentally crush the eggs of ground nesting birds or disrupt the incubation cycle.

The organizations that maintain the preserves listed in this guide have deer management programs to sustain or improve the health of the forest ecosystem. Each organization has rules for use of the preserve during hunting season. Prior to hiking during hunting season you should check the organization’s website to determine when hunting activity is occurring. Even if there is not hunting at the preserve, it is a good idea to wear blaze orange when the statewide deer hunting regulations allow hunting (between early September and mid-February).

This guide is intended to cover hiking trails in Hopewell Valley. With very few exceptions (some trails at Baldpate Mountain and a couple at Washington Crossing State Park) horses and bicycles are not allowed on the trails listed in this guide. Most of the trails are wet in the spring and after heavy rains. Horses and bicycles have a severe impact on the trail and results in erosion. In general, motorized vehicles (ATVs, dirt bikes, etc.) are not allowed on any of the trails listed in this guide. Please check with the preserve management organization to see their policy regarding motorized vehicles.

New Jersey is one of the most populated states in the union yet we in Hopewell Valley are very fortunate to have preserved 25 percent of the acreage as open space. Heavy use can adversely impact the trails and ecosystems within the preserves. Therefore, all users of the trails should follow Leave No Trace practices. As the old saying goes “Take nothing but photographs and leave nothing but footprints.”

A Note on the Trail Maps

The parking areas in this guide all have the GPS coordinates as well as their physical location and size. With one exception, the contour intervals for the trail maps in this guide are 20 feet; the Jacobs Creek map has contour intervals of 10 feet.

Map symbols used in this guide

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Acknowledgements

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Credits

Much of the text and trail maps for this guide were taken with permission from the NJ Trails Association whose website, www.njtrails.org, provides a wealth of information for most of the trails in this guide.

The illustrations were provided by Heather Lovett and graphic design by Mahlon Lovett.

Cartography

Cartography and data for the maps on pages 1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 19 was by the D&R Greenway Land Trust.

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Cartography and data for the maps on pages 9, 16 and 18 was by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space.

Cartography and data for the map on page 8 was by the GIS Center and D&R Greenway Land Trust.

Cartography for the maps on pages 4 and 7 was by the D&R Greenway Land Trust using data provided by Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space.

Web Links

Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space — www.fohvos.org
D&R Greenway Land Trust — www.drgreenway.org
Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association — www.thewatershed.org
New Jersey Trails Association — www.njtrails.org
Washington Crossing Audubon Society — www.washingtoncrossingaudubon.org
Mercer County — www.mercercounty.org
Hopewell Township — www.hopewelltwp.org
Cedar Ridge Trail includes forest and meadow

The Stony Brook near the Pennington Loop Trail

View from the top of Baldpate Mountain looking South to the Delaware River