

Symposium 2026 Procedures and Routes

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(Draft: In Process)

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Overview and Plan

- When the Symposium was announced in February, registration for walks filled quickly, indicating strong interest
- Experience shows that groups of 35–40 are too large for our setting.
 - Groups tend to fragment
 - Hearing becomes difficult
 - Overall quality of the experience declines
- We have set a target group size of approximately 25 participants
- Where demand exceeded this, sessions were expanded to 50 or 75 participants and organized as follows:
 - Each session is divided into two or three subgroups
 - The walk route is divided into corresponding subareas
 - Each subarea has a co-leader who remains there throughout the session
 - Each area segment lasts approximately 30–45 minutes
 - This ensures that all participants experience the full walk and spend time with each co-leader
- Each subgroup is accompanied by a volunteer (“wrangler”) who:
 - Remains with the group throughout
 - Guides movement between areas
 - Helps maintain timing and cohesion

Implementation

- Participants should arrive 15–30 minutes before their scheduled walk
 - Check-in should be brief, since participants are pre-registered.
- Participants should gather at the Session Tent (near the lower barn) 10–15 minutes before start time
- After the start:
 - A brief welcome is given
 - The rotation process is explained (two- or three-group format, as applicable)
- Volunteers/wranglers take positions outside the tent
 - Participants form subgroups
 - Some adjustment of groups may be made to keep numbers balanced

- Volunteers/Wranglers lead subgroups to the start location for an assigned subarea to meet co-leader and to begin the walk

Individual Session/Walks

Bird Walk

Notes: Two groups; same path, opposite starts; different options; fixed exchange point

- Start: bridge across from barn (path described from this point) or Knoll overlooking Grassland
- Lower path along the creek
 - May include Crack Willow 1 & Woodcock ground
 - Alternative: upper path along Locust Shoulder
- Cross stream below Willow Grove
- Double back East, alternate paths:
 - Along creek upstream, scenic, secluded
 - Branch North to edge Lower Verna Pool
 - South side of both Vernal Pools – fastest
 - North side of both Vernal Pools – slower but more to see (varied shrubs and tree pallet)
- Exchange Point: top of Vernal Pools, map pedestal, near lane and culvert
- Cross lane and go east side of Farm Pond
 - View pond
- Cross bridge over stream, view Arrowwood Viburnum
- Follow path along stream North, and view
 - Four Viburna species, especially Blackhaw
 - Grey Dogwood
 - American Plum
 - *Garden of Evil*
 - Speckled Alder
 - Quaking Aspen
- Visit Wet Meadow and Calamus Marsh
 - Note, especially, New York Ironweed and Silky Dogwood
- Take path to edge of grassland
- Pause at the Knoll overlooking Grassland
 - Look for nesting and soaring Kestrels

- Also Start for group 2 for the walk, opposite direction/sequence

Shrub Walk

Notes: Three groups will move through three clearly marked areas—blue, green, and yellow. Each area is led by a co-leader who remains in place throughout the session. Volunteers (“wranglers”) stay with their assigned group and guide movement between areas. Groups spend approximately 30 minutes in each area and rotate counterclockwise so that all participants experience the full route and all three co-leaders. All groups assemble at the Session Tent at the start and are led to their initial areas by their wrangler.

- Start: Area 1 (Blue) - Riparian North, just by the Lane next to Mulberry Hill
- Lower Mulberry Hill path North to Blackhaw Viburnum, note
 - Grey Dogwood
 - American Plum
 - Silky Willow
 - Arrowood Viburnum
 - Various Mulberry, mast fruit, and Hazel Nut trees
- Blackhaw Viburnum and planted cluster
- Follow path South noting
 - Aspen grove
 - Nannyberry grove
 - American Plum
 - *Garden of Evil*
 - Spicebush
 - Speckled Alder
- Segment ends at farm lane
 - Groups proceed east to Vernal Pool Exchange Point
- Start: Area 2 (green) - Vernal Pools Exchange Point by the Farm Lane
- Follow North path (lane side) past Silky Dogwood, various Shrub Willows, and both pools
- Take the branch at the lower pool behind it to wet area
- At the junction with stream path, turn left (East) and follow path past a Large Crack Willow all the way back to near the Exchange Point
- Go East across the foot bridge toward another large Crack Willow
 - Note the different ecologies under the tree and at different vertical levels
 - Also *walking* nature of willow spread
- End Green Area

- Cross footbridge just south of the large Crack Willow
- Start: Area 3 (yellow) – the South Meadow loop that includes south riparian areas for both streams
- Turn right (West) and follow the path to the Willow Grove
 - Note Speckled Alder
 - Shrub Willows
 - Calamus patch
 - Elderberry
 - River Birch
 - Red Osier Dogwood
- Swing back East on the upper trail
- Follow the Black Locust Shoulder below the hillside
 - Note, in addition to Black Locust
 - Redbud
 - Cranberry Viburnum
 - American Plum
 - Aternate Leaf Dogwood
 - Flowering Dogwood
- When the path intersects the original main East-West path, turn left (West)
 - Note the razed Quaking Aspen grove (producing a new-growth Woodcock thicket)
 - Note the mixed shrub planting of shrubs across the creek
 - In late summer/fall note the large Blue Vervain patch
- Exit Area 3 (yellow) by crossing the first footbridge encountered near the large Crack Willow

Insect Walk

Notes: Three groups; three areas (identified and marked) 1, 2, and 3; three co-leaders, remain in areas; volunteers (wranglers) stay with and guide individual groups; ~30-minute sessions in each area; groups rotate through areas (co-leaders remain in their areas and await next group). All three groups form at the Sessions Tent and are led to their respective areas by group volunteer.

- Start: Areas and Routes in-process:

Woodcock Habitats Walk

Notes: Two groups; same path, opposite starts; options; fixed exchange point

- Start: knoll behind the Farm House (path described from this point) or bridge in front of barn
- Observe the grassland to the East, often serving as a Woodcock singing shortly after sundown
- Turn left (West) onto the path to the Wet Meadow and follow the path around the meadow on the North side
 - Observe the Silky dogwood
 - Note the dried, tall stems of the New York Ironweed that dominate in the fall
 - This is a frequent daytime area for Woodcock
- Observe the Calamus Marsh, with its very small year-round stream, on the West side of the Meadow
 - Follow the small footpath by a corner of the Marsh; Woodcock often hangout at the Marsh corner during the day
- Emerge back onto the main path and immediately note the *Garden of Evil* on your right and the American Plum patch of your left.
- Continue on the path past Nannyberry Viburnum, Grey Dogwood, Cranberry Viburnum, Speckled Alder, and Arrowwood Viburnum – all food plants for Woodcock.
- Turn right (West) and cross the small bridge toward the Farm Pond, passing a small grove of Arrowwood, and proceed left (South) around the pond dam toward the farm lane.
- Near the lane, look ahead for a muddy area below the dam that is frequently a “feeding ground” for Woodcock as they dig into muddy soil for worms – hmmm good!
- Turn left (South) cross the lane to the Exchange Point at the top of the Vernal Pool area where you should encounter the second walk group.
 - You will Leave your current co-leader here and pick up the other co-leader for the rest of the walk
- Continue beside the two Vernal pPools on the lane/North side, noting Arrowwood Viburnum, Silky Dogwood, Shrub Willows, Speckled Alder, and various other shrubs beneath the power wires, and finally the “Tree Pallet” of species at the West end, including
 - White Pine, Swamp White Oak, River Birch, Sycamore, and Quaking Aspen

- Behind the dam of the lower Vernal Pool, turn left (East) and proceed upstream, noting abundant Speckled Alder, Aspen, River Birch and the general seclusion and quietness of the area. Also note the lower large Crack Willow near the top of the path.
- Continue up to the Exchange Area but this time continue East across the foot bridge toward another very large Crack Willow, noting both mother tree and numerous offspring.
 - You will be told about its multiple vertical ecological areas and the habits of Woodcock beneath it.
- Cross a second bridge near the Willow toward the South and observe the extensive razed former Aspen grove created several years ago to produce a new growth thicket, ideal for Woodcock.
- Proceed upstream (East) to the bridge in front of the barn, where this walk ends.

Herbaceous Walk

Notes: Two groups; different paths, different starts; options; fixed exchange point

- Start: front yard near the Farm House (path described from this point) continuing in the riparian area upstream along *Martha's Allee*.
- Cross stream on footbridge opposite Farm House to observe area of various herbaceous natives
- Continue upstream on *Martha's Allee* footpath
 - Note Winterberry grove near yard
- Along flood plain, note patches of immature (at this time of year) Canada Lily seedlings
- Note various Muscle Wood and Hophornbeam saplings overhanging the stream
- Branch off the path and cross the footbridge into another flood plane
 - Note multiple Beach trees, including sapling grove of offerings and a large “mother” tree
- Continue upstream through extensive patch of Mayapples
- At the property edge, look further East to a large, mature patch of Wake Robin (Maroon Trilliums)
- Cross the footbridge back to the main path, turn left (West) and proceed back to the starting point, this time noting extensive pollinating plants on your right (North) side in the Field
 - Echinacea
 - Native Bergamot (lavender)
 - Jopie
 - New York Ironweed
 - Penstemon
 - Native Goldenrod (multiple species)
 - Other
- Second area: in process