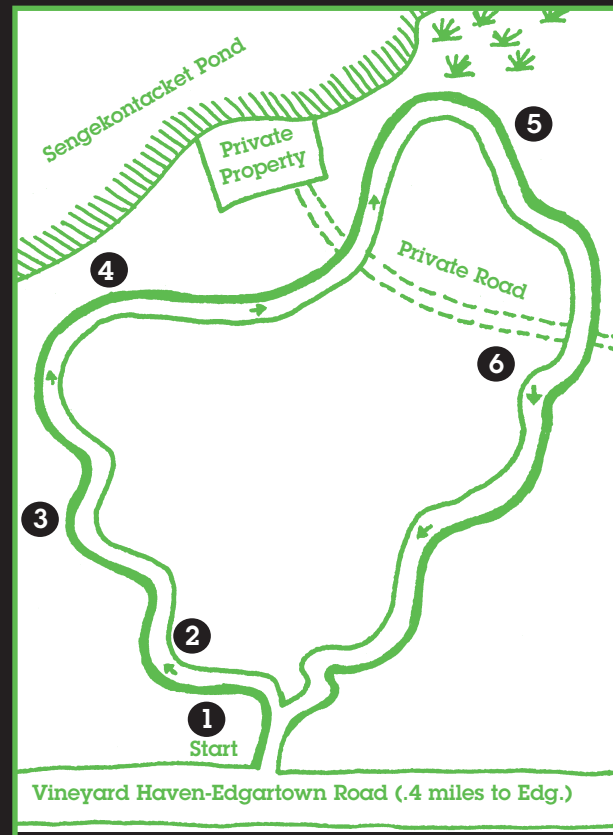


GARRETT FAMILY TRAIL GUIDE



CAROLINE TUTHILL PRESERVE



SHERIFF'S MEADOW FOUNDATION

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Early in his life Henry Beetle Hough began a love affair with Martha's Vineyard. In 1959, when questions arose about the preservation or development of Sheriff's Meadow Pond behind his home in Edgartown, Henry and his wife Betty purchased it to preserve forever one of the precious small places on this Island. Thus was Sheriff's Meadow Foundation born.

Sheriff's Meadow grew dramatically over the next two decades. The simplest explanation for this is that an increasing number of people who acquired property on the Vineyard shared Henry's concern to protect natural areas "to serve as a living museum." Although other, larger conservation organizations were readily available, Sheriff's Meadow was Island-based and had a brilliant spokesman in Henry Hough.

Today, Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, guided by Henry's vision, has preserved over 2600 acres in more than 150 parcels ranging in size from a half acre to 150 acres.

These properties span the Island from Chappaquiddick to Aquinnah, and are located in all six Vineyard towns. Several of the larger properties have walking trails which invite public use: Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary (West Tisbury), Nat's Farm (West Tisbury), Brightwood Park (Tisbury), West Chop Woods (Tisbury), Middle Road Sanctuary (Chilmark) and the Caroline Tuthill Preserve (Edgartown). All offer the opportunity for walking or nature study in an unspoiled natural setting. These and other Sheriff's Meadow Foundation properties showcase Martha's Vineyard at its best, and we hope you will take the time to become better acquainted with one or many of them.

CAROLINE TUTHILL PRESERVE

The Caroline Tuthill Preserve includes over 150 acres of oak-pitch pine woods, wetlands, salt marsh and open fields lying between Sengekontacket Pond and Beach Road to the north and the Vineyard Haven-Edgartown road to the south. The Preserve was given to Sheriff's Meadow Foundation by John and Nora Tuthill in the years from 1972 to 1983, and is the largest single gift of land in the Foundation's history. This self-guided nature walk follows a walking trail through a portion of the Preserve which is primarily oak-pitch pine woods, with expansive views across Sengekontacket Pond and a large salt marsh.

The land from the eastern shore of Lagoon Pond to Edgartown Harbor, including the Caroline Tuthill Preserve, was formed by the Cape Cod lobe of the Late Wisconsin glacier when glacial meltwater spread sand and gravel outwash over the terminal moraine deposited earlier during the southernmost advance of the glacier. The knobs and kettle holes which produce the distinctive topography of the Caroline Tuthill Preserve reveal this glacial origin.

The plants growing on the Preserve are adapted to the dry, sandy soil formed from the glacial outwash. Fire and strong salt winds also influence which plants will grow here. Naturally, the plants play a key role in determining which animals live in or migrate through the area. Commonly observed woodland birds include crows, blue jays, chickadees, towhees, pine warblers, white-breasted nuthatches and red-eyed vireos. Common mammals include white-tailed deer, deer mice and the ubiquitous striped skunk. These woods also provide habitat for several species of rare invertebrates including the spectacular imperial moth, which has disappeared from almost all of New England except Martha's Vineyard.

As you walk this woodland trail, try to keep in mind the complex relationship between soil and plant and animal, and how they interact with each other.

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Caroline Garrett Tuthill

The Garrett Family Trail is dedicated to the memory of Caroline Tuthill, and to her foresight in acquiring this open land so close to the town of Edgartown.

Caroline Garrett came here with her family in the early 1900s. She developed a lifelong love for the Vineyard and a commitment to preserving its culture and physical beauty; a commitment shared by her sisters, Stella Garrett Lee and Josephine Garrett Brown, and other members of the Garrett family.

The Garrett Family Trail is a self-guided nature walk. The numbers in this brochure correspond to numbered markers along the trail. To follow the nature walk, head north along the trail and go left at the first fork. About 150 feet later you will see the first marker on the left side of the trail. The total length of the trail is about 1.3 miles. You should allow at least one hour for a leisurely walk.

MARKER**1**

The ground in front of this marker is covered with small spiky greenish-grey “plants.” These “plants” are actually lichens, the classic example of symbiosis discussed in most introductory biology textbooks. Literally translated, symbiosis means “living together,” and lichens are actually two separate organisms which live together for mutual benefit. One partner is a fungus, which provides support and retains moisture. The other, an alga, provides nourishment through photosynthesis, the process of using the sun’s energy to combine inorganic compounds into energy rich foods.

The combination allows lichens to survive in inhospitable places where most organisms would not be able to live. The spiky lichen growing on the ground along and around the trail is a species of *Cladonia*, often mistakenly called reindeer moss. *Cladonia* varies from sharp and brittle to soft and spongy, depending upon the amount of moisture it has absorbed.

As you continue along the trail you will see that many of the tree trunks are festooned with a colorful array of lichens, including *Usnea*, which Parula warblers often use in their nests.

Lichens are generally very sensitive to air quality and will not grow where the air is badly polluted. The profusion of lichens on the Vineyard is living testimony to the quality of the Island’s air.

MARKER**2**

Near the second marker are several clumps of evergreen sprouts. A quick look at the base of these sprouts will reveal that each clump surrounds a stump where a pitch pine was cut down. These stump sprouts represent an adapta-

tion to frequent fires. Pitch pines have large root stocks just below the ground where they store energy. Although a severe fire may consume the above-ground portion of trees and shrubs, the roots often survive. The energy stored in the root stocks enables pitch pines to resprout quickly and take advantage of the open spaces created by fire.

Pitch pines also have two types of cones, one of which will not open until subjected to intense heat. Once they have been heated these serotinous cones open, spreading seeds over the soil newly enriched by ash from the fire. Scrubby trees with a large number of tightly closed cones are a sign that an area has been subjected to frequent fires.

MARKER**3**

When conditions are right, the woods along this stretch of trail support a large stand of pink lady slipper orchids (*Cypripedium acule*). These beautiful orchids, which on the Vineyard generally bloom from mid-May through early July, are one of the most spectacular flowers growing on the Island.

Orchids are generally long lived and, when pollinated, produce thousands of small seeds in a prominent green seed pod about 1 1/2 inches long. However, if at the end of the summer you look over a typical stand of pink lady slippers, you will see very few seed pods.

Despite its showy flower, pink lady slippers do not provide any nectar for pollinators. Instead, they depend upon bumble bees mistakenly entering the flower to transfer their pollen from plant to plant. Of course, the bumble bee must make the same mistake twice for pollination to occur, which may explain why so few of them produce seeds each year.

For the pink lady slipper orchid to grow, the seed must connect with a symbiotic root fungus which helps it absorb nutrients from the soil. This

makes pink lady slippers very difficult to propagate or transplant and they are best enjoyed in their natural surroundings.

MARKER**4**

This is a good place to observe the transition from oak woods to wetland plants, predominantly sweet pepperbush (*Clethra alnifolia*), but also swamp azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*) and other shrubs, as the ground slopes down towards the pond. In winter and early spring two evergreen plants are also obvious along the trail, their green color providing a welcome contrast to the generally somber hues of the winter woods. Teaberry (*Gaultheria procumbens*) is a small plant with shiny, waxy dark green leaves and sometimes a bright red berry. Teaberry leaves and berries contain oil of wintergreen which gives them a distinct taste and smell. It is often referred to as wintergreen, although it is actually a member of the heath family.

Sheep laurel (*Kalmia angustifolia*), an evergreen shrub standing 2 to 3 feet tall with drooping leaves growing in whorls of three, is also found in this area. The leaves are pale green in spring, but in winter have a brown or reddish hue. Sheep laurel is also a member of the heath family. The leaves are said to be poisonous to sheep and other livestock, although others report that deer and rabbits seem to eat them without any ill effects.

As you continue you will cross a dirt road which leads to a private residence; please respect the privacy of the neighbors and stay on the trail, which curves gradually to the right.

MARKER**5**

The low, flat area in front of you is a salt marsh, one of the most productive but also most abused natural communities on earth. The plants and algae growing in salt marshes produce a tremendous amount of vegetative matter, some

of which is eaten and some of which dies and breaks down into small pieces. This detritus washes into adjacent bays and harbors where it nourishes fish, crabs and other organisms. Salt marshes also provide protection for the young of many species of fish, help reduce flooding and provide a buffer against storm waves.

The ditches in the salt marsh were intended to drain water and control biting insects. Unfortunately, many scientists now feel that ditching does more damage to the salt marsh than to the populations of mosquitoes and greenhead flies which it is supposed to control.

Follow the trail until it crosses the road again.

MARKER**6**

If you look carefully along this section of the trail you will find another small evergreen plant which has white pigment along the veins of the leaves. Often called spotted pipsis-sewa (*Chimaphila maculata*), it also is known as striped wintergreen, which seems a more appropriate name since the white color is more striped than spotted and it is a member of the Pyrolaceae, the wintergreen family.

You will also see a healthy stand of poison ivy in this area. Despite its evil reputation, poison ivy actually plays an important ecological role. In the fall it produces numerous small white berries with a high fat content. The high levels of fat make the berries very nutritious and many species of birds feast on them. However, the fat also causes the berries to spoil rapidly, so it is important that the birds find them soon after they ripen. You probably have noticed that poison ivy leaves turn a beautiful deep red color in the fall. The bright colors are a signal to fruit-eating birds that nutritious berries are present. The birds eat the berries and distribute the seeds in their droppings, helping the poison ivy spread into new habitat.

At this point the trail goes up and down a hill and through a stand of pitch pine before completing the loop. Turn left where the two paths meet, from there is a short walk back to the parking area.