The Whitesbog Driving Tour: Introduction

Welcome to the Whitesbog Driving Tour. The next couple miles you are about to drive—but more importantly the sites you will see along the way—will teach you about the natural and man-made environments of Whitesbog, as well as the histories surrounding these environments. Before we can get there, however, we’ll have to go back a few hundred years.

Early during the Quaker colonization of New Jersey, the Pinelands remained largely unsettled and unharvested. During the mid-eighteenth century, however, people began to open sawmills to harvest the timber, which would remain an industry in the Pines until the twentieth century. As the sawmills processed more and more cedars, other industries sprung up in the Pines—the most dynamic and important, but ultimately the most destructive, of which was the iron industry. Like sawmills, the iron industry requires the harvesting of forests, in this case to produce charcoal to fire the furnaces. However, the iron industry also requires dredging wetlands in search of bog iron and diverting water from its natural flow towards the furnace bellows instead. While these activities had a devastating effect on the land, they created perfect conditions for the cultivation of the cranberry.

The story of Whitesbog begins with these effects on the land at the Cranberry Run-Pole Bridge Branch property owned by Hanover Iron Furnace. During the mid-1800s, Colonel James Fenwick, a farmer from New Lisbon, New Jersey, had been experimenting with a small cranberry bog at a site called Skunk's Misery. After experiencing encouraging results, he began to search for more properties at which to cultivate cranberries. After he had visited Cranberry Run-Pole Bridge Branch, he realized the potential market for the cranberry. He wrote, "There have been seen at one time as many as sixty covered wagons with horses hitched to trees around the edges of these meadows. These wagons brought farmers' families who were busily engaged picking cranberries. Surely there can be no place better adapted to their cultivation than this."

Thus, in 1857, Fenwick purchased 108 acres of this land, including the former canal and canal pond that fed Hanover Furnace during its production of iron. Fenwick fenced off the land and began cultivating it for cranberries. By the 1860s, Colonel Fenwick's efforts had proven successful, and the cranberry boom began. Land that had been worthless since the demise of the iron industry was suddenly very valuable.

In 1869, James Fenwick's daughter Mary married Joseph Josiah “J.J.” White, an inventor, engineer, and owner of the Rake Pond Cranberry Company. By the late 1800s, J.J. had become manager of Fenwick's farm; later, through his wife, he inherited it and expanded the bogs, becoming the first grower to actually dig bogs and cultivate cranberries where they did not grow naturally. By the early 1900s, Whitesbog, with 3,000 acres of watershed land and 600 acres of cranberries, was the largest cranberry operation in New Jersey, with Whitesbog Village at its center.
Whitesbog did not remain solely in the cranberry business, however. In fact, it was here that Elizabeth C. White, J.J. White's oldest daughter, cultivated the first marketable blueberry in 1916 after five years of efforts with Dr. Frederick V. Coville. At its production peak, Whitesbog had 90 acres of blueberries under cultivation and shipped fruit and bushes nationwide.

Instructions

The Whitesbog driving tour is a 3½-mile automobile loop around a system of bogs, blueberry fields, canals, reservoirs, and forests. This guide explores the natural and man-made environments at Whitesbog and the impact of the past timber, iron, and agricultural industries on the land.

The tour begins in the Whitesbog Village commons, the grassy area across the road from the water tower. The first marker is at the side of the commons nearest the pond. Arrows mark the loop at slight turns, and numbers indicate each of the 15 stations along the way. Please allow 60 minutes or longer for the tour. Refer to this guide for a the tour map and helpful information about the sites and wildlife to see here.

Road Conditions and Disclaimer

Before starting your tour, the Whitesbog Preservation Trust requests that you stop at the kiosk and register at the sign-in box. The kiosk also contains information on Whitesbog and the interpretive programs and events sponsored by the Whitesbog Preservation Trust.

Although four-wheel drive is not necessary, your vehicle must be able to drive on sand roads. As you move along the counterclockwise loop, please be on the watch for oncoming traffic and stay on the marked tour route. If a vehicle approaches from ahead, please do not try to pull to the side of the road near the bogs, as these banks are soft, and in some places offer little or no support. Instead, please move forward or back up until a secondary road allows you or the other vehicle room to pull off and make room for one vehicle to pass the other. Please also note that because the roads are sand, they may be messy—or even impassable—during wet conditions.

Your use of the Whitesbog trails is strictly at your own risk. The Trust accepts no responsibility for any damage to your vehicle or injury to drivers and passengers. The trust makes no representations—express or implied—about the suitability and safety of the Whitesbog trails and areas for recreational use and driving. Anyone using the Whitesbog trails and areas releases the Trust from any damage, injury, or harm that may occur during such usage.

Of course, we thank you for exploring Whitesbog and hope to see you again soon!
The Driving Trail

1. **Whitesbog Village Commons** (mile 0)
The village pond is located to the south of this station. In the early 1900s, the pond had more open water and a clear, treeless view across the way to Old Bog, one of Whitesbog's first cranberry bogs. Today, however, much silt has filled the pond, and trees grow all the way around it, obscuring the view to Old Bog.

The Whitesbog general store is the first building to the west and once housed a post office from which Elizabeth White's blueberry bushes were shipped to farms throughout the United States. To the left of the general store are four workers’ duplexes and the berry processing section of the village, including the barrel factory, barrel storage warehouse, and cranberry packing house.

The water tower, located just behind the general store, provided fire protection for the village and a lookout platform from which to view the bogs; the road passing in front of the water tower leads two miles northwest to the site of what was once Hanover Furnace.

The building on the north edge of the commons is the boarding house. Though today it is a private residence, it once housed the village's unmarried workers. Additionally, the pay house—the small cabin at the far edge of the commons—was constructed in the mid-1800s and is the oldest in the village. The workers reported here for work. Additionally, since workers were paid in tickets based on how many berries they had harvested, they could cash in their tickets for pay here.

The two large houses on either side of the road to the east housed the farm's management and their families. On the left is the Superintendent's House; on the right is the Darlington House. Because Emlen Darlington, who briefly lived in this house, was an expert on insects, the house is also known as the Entomologist's House.

As you pass the two large houses and continue eastward on the driving tour, keep a lookout for wildlife such as white-tailed deer, beavers, wild turkeys, egrets, herons, and wood ducks. Because wildlife tends to hide from loud sounds like cars, these creatures may be difficult to spot. However, had you been here in the early 1900s, you would have had no possibility of spotting any of the creatures listed above: over-hunting had largely eliminated them from the state. Today, due to reintroduction and wildlife management programs, they are once again abundant in the Pine Barrens.

Continue straight to Elizabeth White’s house and gardens, on the right side of the road.

2. **Elizabeth White’s House (Suningive) and Her Pine Barrens Garden** (mile .1)
To your right is a section of Elizabeth White's garden, in which many of her original garden plants remain. For example, look down the path to your right and spot the large rhododendron bushes overhanging the path. You can also see a dogwood tree and a groundcover called shortia.

Suningive is ahead on your right. Between here and Suningive was a garden pond. Within this C-shaped pond grew water lilies (*Nymphaeaceae*), and surrounding it grew sphagnum moss (*Sphagnum*), pitcher plants, orchids (*Orchidaceae*), sundews, and the North Carolina Venus fly trap. A moss and pine needle path, lined with Elizabeth White's albino blueberry bushes, led from the house to the far side of the pond.

As you continue past Suningive, keep your eyes open for swallowtails and other butterflies that come to visit the garden's nectar-rich flowers.

Turn right at the marked road and you will come to station 3, located between two cranberry bogs, at the start of a short wooden bridge.

3. **Comparing Modern and Historical Cranberry Bogs** (mile .3)
   
   Little Meadow is the bog to your right, which was originally shaped by the destructive forces of the bog iron industry at Hanover Furnace. This is part of the original land that Fenwick purchased for cranberry cultivation. Although it is one of Whitesbog’s oldest bogs, it has been modernized to better suit the wet method of cranberry harvest. Unlike large, unleveled hand-dug bogs, modern machine-dug bogs are small, have no cross-ditching, and are laser-leveled. Leveling the bog's surface allows for even flooding and accommodates tractor-driven harvesters.

   Other signs of modernization include pump houses and sprinkler systems. Old bogs required slow gravity-fed flooding, and advanced planning, to protect the cranberry flowers and berries from frost. At today's modernized bogs, farmers can immediately start the pumps and sprinklers to protect the crop.

   Lower Cranberry Run, the bog on your left, was hand-dug in J.J. White's time. With its unlevel, irregular shape; cross ditching; and stream through its center, this nearly 20-acre bog is a great example of an historic cranberry bog. Permission had been granted a few years back to modernize the bog, but then the permission was rescinded. The sandbars, covered in grasses and trees such as birches, are signs of the short-lived construction that occurred here.
We’ll talk more about the colonization of these plants on the sandbars at station 4, which is just around the bend to your left.

4. **Ecological Succession** (mile .5)

When people abandon land that they once cleared to grow what they pleased, ecological succession (the colonization of an area with native species) occurs. First, pioneer species (often weeds), which are able to quickly invade a sunny area, appear; after they take hold, bushes begin to grow; finally, trees join the mix. Many of Whitesbog's abandoned blueberry fields have succeeded to red maple and black gum swamps. Abandoned cranberry bogs, which tend to be wetter than blueberry fields, are invaded by species that can withstand periodic flooding such as wool grass, red root, leather leaf, meadow-beauty, and even Atlantic white cedars. You will see a lot of these species, as well as ecological succession in general, as you continue on the tour.

Before the mid-1960s, the dikes around the bogs and the unfarmed areas surrounding the blueberry fields were kept treeless by controlled burning in the spring while the bogs were still flooded. Because of this land management, one could stand in the midst of Whitesbog's acreage and see for over a mile in every direction. Today, however, as you can see, the forest has grown back. Here, the roadside has succeeded to a pitch pine lowland. If you look at old pictures of Suningive as well, you’ll find that the forest surrounding it is a relatively recent change.

As succession means changes in plant communities, it also means changes in animal inhabitants. Some animals—such as eastern cottontails, white-footed mice, and meadow voles—prefer open areas with a brushy cover nearby. Others, such as red squirrels, flying squirrels, towhees, owls, and woodpeckers, prefer forested areas. Many animals, including foxes, deer, and raccoons, actually prefer to live on the edges of woods, fields, and water bodies. Some birds—including whippoorwills (see above image), eastern bluebirds, tree swallows, and prairie warblers—prefer forested areas as well. Whitesbog's wildlife diversity results from a mosaic of habitats and habitat edges created by past disturbances and ecological succession.

Continue on this road to Rome Pond and station 5 on your right.
5. **Rome Pond, Aerial Acrobats, and a Beaver Lodge** (mile .6)
The water body to your right is Rome Pond, a man-made reservoir that stored water for J.J. White's cranberry operation. The village of Rome, a seasonal worker's village, once stood on the far side of this reservoir. At first, this village was home mainly to Italian workers from Philadelphia (hence the name Rome), but as the years went on, other ethnic groups joined the Italians in this village.

Scan the air above Rome Pond for aerial acrobats such as tree swallows swooping in pursuit of insects, and dragonflies darting into clouds of mosquitoes. In fact, some people call dragonflies “mosquito hawks” because they eat large numbers of these pests.

If you are especially observant, you might spot a small mustached falcon known as the American kestrel, New Jersey’s most common falcon. In breezy conditions, the American kestrel hovers in mid-air as it hunts for mice and insects. It hovers by flying into the wind and adjusting its speed to that of the same. Because it is a “wind hoverer” instead of a “true hoverer” (for example, the hummingbird), it must do its hunting from a tall perch in the absence of a breeze. When it spies its prey, it plummets from the sky for the capture. Unlike other falcons, it will often continue to the ground for the kill. It also differs from other hawks and falcons, in that it nests in cavities and birdhouses.

As you move along Rome Pond, keep your eyes open for a long, narrow bank of trees in the pond, not far from the road. Close to where you first approach the bank, you’ll find that beavers have taken up residence there. The muddy mount among the trees is a beaver lodge. Beavers, along with other burrowing animals, have also caused problems along the road: they sometimes burrow in underneath, weakening the support and causing small breaks in the road. The farmer has to be observant and work hard to add more sand to the road to keep it level and safe.

Continue straight to station 6. On your right will be the canal that feeds Rome Pond.
6. **Leatherleaf Margins and the Otto Pump** (mile 1.0)

Leatherleaf is a shrubby heath common in the Pine Barrens along the margins of ponds, bogs, and moist thickets. It is growing on the far side of the canal to your right.

In April and early May, look for its single rows of white, bell-shaped flowers. Leatherleaf, named for the tough texture of its leaves, is the earliest of Pine Barrens heaths to flower in the spring. When people or fires produce a pond or other area of water, dense leatherleaf shrubs grow along the edges and on small islands called hummocks.

As these leatherleaf fringes and hummocks grow slowly toward the center of the open water, they change the space from an open body of water to an area of shrubby vegetation. This resulting lowland area is known as spong. (“Spong” is pronounced as though it were spelled like “spung.”) As Atlantic white cedar seedlings gain a foothold within the spong, the shrubby wetland becomes an Atlantic white cedar swamp.

If you were to turn right at the crossroads rather than continuing straight—and we don’t recommend you do, as this stretch is sometimes difficult to drive—you would find the spot where J.J. White installed an Otto gas engine pump to conserve water during drought by pumping it back for storage. During times of plentiful water, the pump worked as planned; however, during times of drought, the porous Pine Barrens sand would soak up the water as fast as the pump could send it. Although you cannot drive to the pump, if you would like to see its foundations, you could park your car out of the way and walk a couple minutes down the road. If you do so, look to the right at the end of the road, and you’ll see short concrete walls, upon which the pump once rested. Continue straight to station 7. An abandoned blueberry field will be on your right.

7. **Ecological Succession: Grasses, Red Maples, and Cedars** (mile 1.2)

On the right you can see a prime example of the sort of succession described at station 6. Up until the 1970s, this area was a Whitesbog blueberry field. Now, however, because it has been forty years since the field was used for this purpose, you may still find blueberries, but the predominant growth consists of a number of natural species that have once more taken control of this land. In the foreground, you will see shorter plants, including grasses, leatherleaf, and young red maples;
in the background, you will see a wall of cedars, which have grown far taller than anything in the foreground.

Because of the trees, berries, and grasses, this area is a favorite for a number of migrating warblers. Birders may especially enjoy this area during the fall and spring.

Station 8 is straight down the road. Big Tank Reservoir will be on your right.

8. **Big Tank Reservoir** (mile 1.5)
On the right is Big Tank Reservoir, which is a major source of flooding for wet harvesting cranberries in the fall, and which may be drained toward mid to late summer.

Flooding is important for cranberry harvesting for one simple reason: cranberries float. Here’s how it works: Throughout the growing season, farmers manage the cranberry vines, ensuring that they are healthy and safe and receiving as much water as they need to grow. When the cranberries are ready to be harvested, farmers release water from holding tanks—in the case of Whitesbog, the water comes mainly from Big Tank Reservoir—and flood the cranberry bogs. When they flood, the farmers use machines to beat the vines, freeing the cranberries to float to the surface. Once the vines have been beaten and the cranberries have floated up, the berries can be easily collected.

Of course, flooding the bogs is not the only way of harvesting cranberries. Dry harvesting is also common. When farmers dry harvest cranberries, they use a machine resembling a lawn mower. At the bottom of the machine is a series of combs that turn as the machine moves forward, scraping the cranberries off the vines. The cranberries fall onto a belt that moves upward, where they tumble over into a sack or container.

You’ll also note as you gaze across the full reservoir that there is little vegetation growing in the water. This is because the bottom of the reservoir is very sandy. Though this sand is not conducive to growth in the pond, it is often used to amend
the soil in which the cranberries grow by making it more acidic.

Continue straight. Station 9 will be on your right once you are past Big Tank Reservoir.

9. **Frogs in an Old Borrow Pit** (mile 1.8)
   You’ll have noticed, of course, that the path you have taken has been a loopy sand road. Because these roads are sand, the farmers use sand to reinforce the sides of the roads and level them out when they become too bumpy and irregular. They get the sand by digging it out from unused parts of the farm, which become known as borrow pits. The borrow pit to the right was mined to below the water table, so it has become a natural acidic sphagnum-filled bog, as well as a diverse wetland habitat.

   Frogs are fond of this borrow pit, so you’ll very likely hear them croaking here. Listen for the leopard frog, which croaks a deep, rhythmic, rattling snore; the green frog, with a voice resembling a loose banjo string note; and the carpenter frog, whose call sounds like the pounding of nails into wood. The tiny spring Pine Barrens tree frog peeper is the first frog to start croaking in spring with a high-pitched bell-like chorus. Also listen for the famous Pine Barrens treefrog. Its duck-like "quonk-quonk-quonk" can be heard from mid-May to mid-June.

   If you are visiting this area on the first Monday of December, please be wary of hunters, as they are permitted to hunt deer on this day.

   Continue straight and then around the bend to the left. Station 10 and Upper Reservoir will be on your right.

10. **Upper Reservoir, Job’s Swamp, and Waterfowl** (mile 2.0)
    Look closely along the shallows and edges of Upper Reservoir, the body of water to your right, for wading birds such as the great blue heron, the green-backed heron, and the great egret. These graceful birds tend to stand motionless, poised for a quick strike at a fish or frog. Also scan the reservoir's surface for waterfowl such as Canada geese, wood ducks, green-winged teal, American black ducks,
mallards, northern pintails, blue-winged teal, and ring-necked ducks.

Upper Reservoir, created in 1896, is the reservoir farthest upstream on Cranberry Run, a stream that cuts through the middle of the bogs. Upper Reservoir's water comes from two sources: a canal running from Gaunt's Brook Reservoir on the north, and natural flow from Job's Swamp on the east. Job's Swamp, which you can see in the distance behind the reservoir (look for the pointed tops of the cedars on the right side of the reservoir), is a remnant of a large cedar swamp. Before creating Upper Reservoir, J.J. White purchased a 500-acre portion of the swamp to protect his water supply. Job's swamp is only a remnant of a larger swamp because the swamp used to be logged for cedar wood. As a result, hardwood trees have replaced many of the cedars, limiting the space that can be called a cedar swamp.

Follow the road along Upper Reservoir, keeping your eyes open on the left for a post with a trashcan and a left-pointing arrow on it. Make a left at this post and continue to station 11, located at the crossroads.

11. A Borrow Pit Turned Pine Forest and Home (mile 2.4)
The pine forest you see to the right hasn't always been there. In fact, this location used to be another borrow pit on Whitesbog's acreage. However, just like the out-of-use borrow pit we saw earlier, this one has also turned into a perfect growing ground for trees, giving rise to the forest that you see today.

The sandy soil of South Jersey is an excellent soil for trees like pitch pines, which predominate this area, and it is also helpful for germinating seeds in the first place. So, once this borrow pit was no longer used and the sand no longer disturbed, seeds from nearby trees could find their way into the old borrow pit, take root, and grow into the adult trees you see today. As the original trees matured, they began to produce seeds as well, many of which would drop directly into the old borrow pit. As a result, there would be an older generation of trees, followed by a younger generation of trees, and so on. Today, then, you see a number of mature trees here, creating dense foliage.

This dense growth creates a safe environment for birds, as it enables them to hide from other animals and people. Therefore, a number of species make their homes here. For example, owls (like the great horned owl) can sometimes be spotted along the road in the evening. Closer to the reservoir, you might hear ducks quacking and see them paddling through the water. You might even see them dabbling for prey. When they dabble, they subvert the front half of their bodies so that their bills can snap at little fish, while the back half of their bodies, including their tails, emerges from the surface of the water. In this instance, the duck's feet are usually parallel to the surface of the water.

Bird species are not the only ones to thrive in this area, however. You might spot
different sorts of butterflies and moths here as well. The eastern buck moth, for example, is common here. Buck moths usually have dark wings (ranging from brown to black) with a white stripe down the center; within each of these stripes there are usually two circular dark spots as well.

In addition to the above, the borrow pit also affords shelter for burrowing animals, like snakes, foxes, coyotes, and groundhogs: From within the borrow pit, such creatures can burrow into the sides to create their dens. For them, the borrow pit makes it so that half their construction is already done.

Station 12 is a short distance ahead on the left, near the water.

12. Turtles, Ducks, and the Dry Bogs (mile 2.7)
As you move forward and look to the left, you might be thinking, “Dry bogs? I see nothing but water!” Yes: although it seems unbelievable, these expanses of water are known as dry bogs.

They are called dry bogs because, in their natural state, they contain very little water. In fact, the water that you see here is diverted there by man. If the water weren’t stored here, this expanse would be simple marginal wetlands and uplands. The wetlands, of course, give rise to water-loving species, like leatherleaf; the uplands contain oaks, pitch pines, and other larger growth. The water that is diverted here is stored for use in other bogs.

Look out on the surface of the water. Often, logs can be found floating here, and upon these logs, turtles, basking in the sun. Turtles bask for a number of reasons: it helps prevent algae growth on their shells; it helps warm their bodies; and it permits them to rest and regain oxygen. Occasionally, you might also see a water snake, perhaps hunting for fish, in the shallower parts of the reservoir.

Then, return your gaze to the banks of the reservoir and the strips of land dividing each section. The strips of land dividing each section were once used as a land bridge across the water so that farmers could get from one side to the other easily. Some of these strips of land are still used for this reason. However, most of these strips have not been used for this purpose in so long that they are overgrown with plants like the ones we’ve explored already: leatherleaf, for one, and assorted grasses. As these water-loving plants continue to grow and spread, their dropped leaves decompose into the soil and amend it for the growth of trees like red maples, many of which you can find growing between the reservoirs.

Don’t forget to listen for frogs again! Stop your car, cup your hand over your ear, and listen for their croaking: with all the different varieties of frogs to be found here, you’re bound to hear a symphony of varying croaks, ranging from deep to high-pitched and slow to fast.
On the right, you’ll see more trees surrounding an abandoned blueberry field, which has become part of Ditch Meadow. From late spring through fall, grasses in shades of yellow and light green draw the eye to this meadow, which is hidden behind a layer of trees and underbrush. The trees here include pitch pines, oaks, and red maples, most of which are significantly older and bigger than the ones growing between the reservoirs.

Station 13, Ditch Meadow, is just a short distance ahead on the right.

13. **Ditch Meadow: Observing Spong and Birds** (mile 2.8)

Ditch Meadow, which you see to your right, was once a series of bogs, known as the Ditch Meadow Bogs. Of course, as bogs, they were naturally wet places to begin with, and on top of that they were flooded regularly for the growth and harvest of cranberries. After the bogs were abandoned in the 1960s, water-loving species reclaimed the area, and spong began to form. Once spong took hold and spread as the water-loving plant species spread, other species were able to join. As the old foliage of the various species decomposed on the ground, it created more fertile soil, eventually giving rise to the mixed wetlands forest you see today: cedars, red maples, and even pitch pines in the drier parts of the meadow.

We met spong earlier, at station 6. As a reminder, spong is a soft ground that forms as water-loving plants begin to grow in shallow waters, taking over the space and creating a soft, though traversable, surface.

South Jersey lore has it that spong got its name from a mispronunciation of “sponge”—used, of course, to describe the soft ground. Apparently, many years ago, people of the region referred to such grounds as sponge; however, somewhere along the line, the lore has it, the word was mispronounced or misheard as “spung.” No matter the origin of the word, it has stuck around, so such ground is still called spong today.

As already mentioned, spong is not the only point of interest in these parts, however. Here in Ditch Meadow, we have another mixed wetland-species forest, including red maples, cedars, and even some pitch pines. Much like in the case of the last forest, birds appreciate the shelter that this forest affords as well. The warbling vireo, a common North American bird, is one bird that makes its home here. The song of the warbling vireo, which is a fast, high-pitched warble, is one of the most commonly heard birdsongs at Whitesbog; in fact, it is so common that by this point you might not even notice it anymore—it might seem like just a natural sound of the background as you drive along.

Along with the warbling vireo, the rufous-sided towhee is also extremely common in these parts and the Pine Barrens as a whole. Its song sounds as though it were saying, “Drink your tea,” with “drink” and “your” each pronounced as one quick count, and “tea” being a longer, more drawn-out count, and somewhat vibrato.
As you focus your ears on the birds, you might also hear the booming sounds of gunfire in the background. Do not be alarmed: this is only military practice at nearby Fort Dix.

Station 14 is a bit farther away. It is about halfway along the bank of Union Pond, which will be on the right.

14. Union Pond (mile 3.4)

The expanse of water you see to your right is known as Union Pond, which was once used a reservoir to hold the water to flood Ditch Meadow Bogs. Interestingly, however, part of it was not always a pond: parts were once used as a borrow pit, which eventually opened up to the pond and enlarged it. Today, fishermen are the main visitors to Union Pond, as well as Whitesbog’s other reservoirs, as they are home to the chain pickerel—the Pinelands’ only large native fish.

Aside from the fishermen, shore birds—particularly during the summer months—visit Union Pond in search of fish as well. These birds include gull-billed terns, oystercatchers, yellow-legs, sandpipers, plovers, herons, and egrets.

Turtles and snakes also make their homes here, and may be seen in particularly large numbers during wet conditions. Some of the common Pine Barrens turtles that make their home here include red-bellied turtles, painted turtles, stink pot turtles, mud turtles, and snapping turtles. These turtles are most commonly seen in the pond, especially gathered on logs, but they might also be seen crossing the road. Should you see a turtle crossing the road, please be careful not to drive over it—in fact, you might consider getting out and moving it to the side of the road toward which it was walking to get it out of harm’s way. When you pick up a turtle, hold it on each side of the shell (and note that it has sensation in its shell), behind the front legs. Depending on the size of the turtle, it might still be able to scratch you; however, most will remain tucked away safely inside their shells. Of course, if you suspect that a turtle might be a snapping turtle, do not attempt to touch or move it, as its snap is powerful enough to sever fingers. On top of that, it moves its head and neck with fluid mobility, so it is known to strike quickly.

Station 15 is a short distance ahead on the right, located at a crossroads.

15. Old Blueberry Field Turned Mixed Wetland Forest; Florence (mile 3.6)
The wooded area on the right, just past Union Pond, was once a blueberry field. Today, it is another great example of ecological succession here at Whitesbog.

Rather than the blueberries that once grew here, today you’ll find mixed wetland species, as in a number of other locations at Whitesbog. Throughout the forest, for example, you’ll see red maples and cedars, enjoying the wet spots where water rests. Along the edges, however, where it is drier, you can find young oaks. If you look lower, between the trees, you’ll notice viburnum bushes, which flower white in summer. They are a beautiful sight.

Aside from the trees, you can also spot large quantities of leatherleaf lining the road. If you look down the slope at the edge of the road, another spot where water collects, you’ll see bracken ferns, varieties of lilies, and assorted grasses.

You might also consider parking your car and taking a walk down the sandy road to the right. This leads to the old settlement of Florence, named so for the number of Italians who worked at Whitesbog a century ago. Although nothing of Florence’s buildings exists, you might find some non-native species once planted by the workers, now spreading wildly. Some of these remaining species include apple trees, blackberry bushes, and trumpet vine. They are an interesting reminder of Whitesbog’s past.

A Thank-You

Thank you for exploring the Whitesbog driving trail. If you are interested in seeing more of Whitesbog’s environment, you might consider picking up the guide to the Old Bog trail in the General Store as well. At any rate, we hope to see you again soon!

Scientific Names of Plant Species, Including Trees, Herein Noted

The following is a list of the common and scientific names of the plants noted in this guide, listed in the order in which they appear in the text.

• Rhododendron: *Rhododendron maximum*
• Dogwood: *Cornus florida*
• Shortia: *Shortia galacifolia*
• Water lily: *Nymphaeaceae*
• Sphagnum moss: *Sphagnum*
• Orchids: *Orchidaceae*
• Sundew: *Drosera*
• North Carolina Venus fly trap: *Dionaea muscipula*
• Red maple: *Acer rubrum*
• Black gum: *Nyssa sylvatica*
• Wool grass: *Scirpus cyperinus*
• Red root: *Lachnanthes tinctoria*
• Leather leaf: *Chamaedaphne calyculata*
• Meadow beauty: *Rhexia virginica*
• Atlantic white cedar: *Chamaecyparis thyoides*
• Pitch pine: *Pinus rigida*
• Oak: *Quercus*
• Bracken fern: *Pteridium*

**Acknowledgments**

Martha Windisch, Whitesbog Preservation Trust, originally wrote the Whitesbog driving trail guide in 1997. Edward J. Horan, a Masters student from Stockton University, readapted and revised the guide in 2015. The illustrations are by Michael Nastuk, and the photographs are courtesy of J.J. White, Inc.

A special thanks goes to Len Little, Ginette Day, Bernie Knaupp, Albertine Senske, and Susan Phillips for lending their vast knowledge of Whitesbog history and environment to the 2015 revision of this guide. They have been a tremendous help and an invaluable source of information.

**A Note About the Guide**

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