

# Mauserts Pond Loop Trail

## Clarksburg State Park



### SELF-GUIDED INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

**WELCOME** to Clarksburg State Park. Managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation this 368 acre northern hardwood forest offers swimming, picnicking, non-motorized boating and camping from May-October, and hiking year-round.

Pick up a park trail map at the headquarters if you choose to hike any of the other park's trails. Interpretive stations are found on numbered posts along the Mauserts Pond Loop Trail which correspond with this guide.

#### MAUSERTS POND LEGEND

Mauserts Pond is a shallow, 45 acre man-made pond with a curious story. Though not documented a legend has been passed down through the generations. Before the pond this was once 52 acres of meadow that early settlers used for farming. Legend has it the settlers, to have a diversion from their routine and mundane lives, created a carnival atmosphere in the meadow featuring horseracing. This "sinful" pastime shocked the faithful folks in town. Having enough influence, the crusaders forced the venture to end by damming the brook and flooding the area so that it would not happen again.

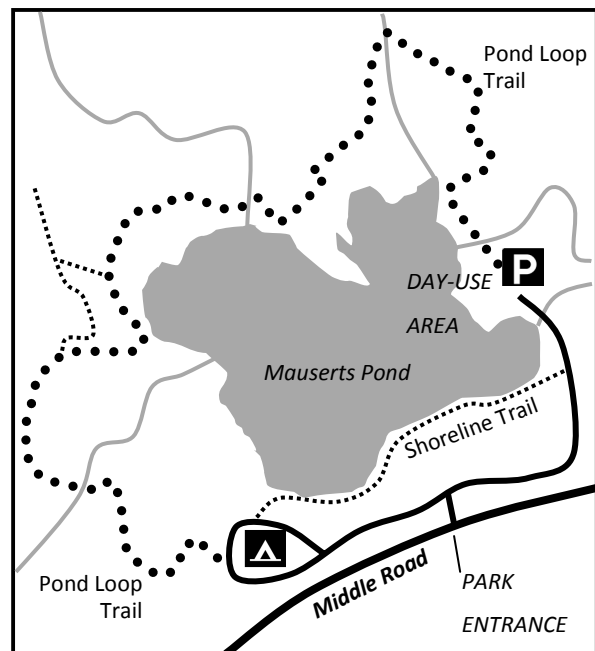
*Please remember to **carry-in, carry-out** all your belongings and trash. Leave no Trace of your visit. Please leave wildflowers in their natural environment for all to enjoy. Thank you.*

#### 1) BIRD'S EYE VIEW

From here, you might see the largest heron in North America, the Great Blue Heron. This tall, bluish-grey colored bird sports a black stripe above each eye extending to the back of the neck as a plume. Great Blue Herons are prehistoric-looking in flight, with a wing span of up to 6 feet. Other water-loving birds found at Mauserts Pond include Canada Goose, Mallards, and Hooded and Common Mergansers.

#### 2) MEDLEY OF LIFE

This shallow pond (average depth of 6 feet) is a perfect habitat for warm freshwater fish like Yellow Perch, Pumpkinseed, and Common Shiners. The buzzing insect damselflies and dragonflies make for a



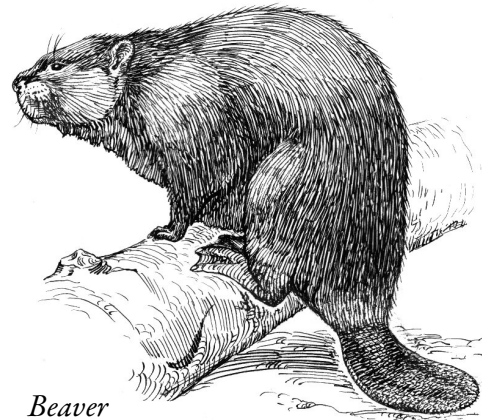
*Mauserts Pond Loop Trail begins at the beach-picnic day-use area. Total route length is **3 miles**. Hike is **easy** with little elevation change. Footing may be wet and uneven in places. Plan on **1.5 to 2 hours** hiking at a moderate pace. Follow the **blue blazes** and trail signs.*

tasty meal for other pond dwellers such as bullfrogs, Snapping Turtles, Spring Peepers, and Painted Turtles.

Plants growing around the pond include Boneset, which was once used as a treatment for broken bones; and Jewelweed, a soothing remedy for irritations from poison ivy and insect bites.

### 3) BEAVER MEADOW

About ten years ago, beavers built a dam where this boardwalk is sitting. The rising water drowned the trees, some of which are now standing dead. Eventually the beavers moved on, no longer maintained their dam. Waters drained to form a wet meadow. If it continues to dry out, this wet meadow may return to a forest like the one surrounding it.



### 4) WITCH'S BROOM

Acid-loving High-bush Blueberry is a shrub growing up to ten feet tall with clusters of small, bell-shaped, white flowers in May. Find it with many bright green stems, simple ovate green leaves turning bright red in the fall, and delicious berries from July to early -September. Save some for the birds!

Look for a small clump of sticks growing out of the middle of a branch *Witch's Broom* is a disease or deformity in a woody plant where the natural cell structure of the plant is changed. A dense mass of shoots grows from a single point, with the resulting structure resembling a broom or a birds nest.

### 5) MAUSERTS' MOOSE

Moose are a majestic sight at Mauserts Pond. The largest member of the deer family, moose can weigh up to 1,200 pounds and live to be 25 years old. Look for their large hoof tracks in the mud along the side of the trail. Along with moose, there are plenty of deer, beaver, and otters leaving their tracks too. If you spot the

### 8) GLACIAL ERRATIC

Where did this huge boulder come from? At the end of the last ice age, about 13,000 years ago, the kilometer-high glacier that covered this area retreated or melted. Surface material that had been picked up and churned during the advance of the glacier was then dropped by the melting ice. These boulders are called *glacial erratic* because they likely originated from other geologic locations. How much do you think this granite rock weighs? Each square foot weighs about 200 lbs! Keep your eye out for more as you walk the trail.

### 9) SURROUNDED BY MOUNTAINS

The summits of the Hoosac Range loom to the east providing a beautiful backdrop for Mauserts Pond. The Hoosac Range is a southern extension of Vermont's Green Mountains. To the south the Hoosacs become the Berkshire (Hills) Plateau. Opposing to the west is Mount Greylock and the Taconic Range. All these mountain ranges form a broad, *longitudinal* (north-south) ridges. The mountains are formed mainly a complex of hard *phyllite*, *quartzite*, *gneiss* and *mica schist* bedrocks, overlying soft *marble* valley eroded by the Hoosic River.

## 10) A WALL OF HISTORY

Abandoned stone walls in the woods of New England have a long and fascinating history. Before they began to tumble down many stone walls were built by farmers using stones heaved up from the subsoil over time. The transformation of forest to farm created great changes in the soil. The most important change due to farming was the loss of organic mulch and black topsoil that had previously helped insulate the winter's cold. Loss of the insulating subsoil from layer coincided with an interval known as the *Little Ice Age* (c1600-1850), during which winters were generally colder than today. The combination of bare soil and cold climate enhanced the rate at which stones were heaved upward, out of the soil, by frost.

For a generation of farmers, stones continually appeared at the surface like magic. Every year the stones were removed either by hand or with the assistance of oxen and draft horses and a *stone boat*; seldom hauled any further than necessary, usually the nearest fence or property line. Over the years these stone walls were forgotten as farming declined in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Now they are a testament to a long ago farmer's fortitude.

## 11) SCRATCH AND SNIFF

Reach out and rub your hands on this lush carpet of ferns. Does the smell remind you of a freshly mowed hay field? That is where this fern, *Hay Scented Fern*, got its name. This is a very common fern found throughout New England. See if you can find it in other areas.

## 12) BEAVER CREEK

Listen to the meditative sound of Beaver Creek as it gently cascades through the forest on its journey to Mauserts Pond. Mauserts Pond drains into the North Branch of the Hoosic River. The journey of water continues north as the Hoosic River flows into Vermont, then west to New York state where it joins the Hudson River, eventually flowing south to the Atlantic Ocean at New York City.

## 13) NURSING NEW LIFE

Fallen and standing dead trees, known as snags, may appear lifeless. A closer inspection will, in fact, reveal that they are teeming with life. Countless insects, larva, mosses, bacteria, and fungi all rely on fallen trees for food. Long after a tree dies it will continue to sustain the habitat as nutrients are recycled back into the soil. Not only are these decomposing trees food for the forest, they also are home to many creatures including snakes, salamanders, newts and small mammals.

*Mauserts Pond Loop Trail ends at the campground. You may return to the day-use area parking area along the park road, using caution, or the **Shoreline Trail**.*

*We hope your visit was pleasant and explore Clarksburg State Park again. Please return this brochure unless you choose to keep it.*

CLARKSBURG STATE PARK  
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(413) 664-8345 (May-Oct.)



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