

Native Orchid Conservation Inc.
Foresters' Footsteps Field Trip, June 18, 2016

The Forester's Footsteps trail loops through a natural forest and a jack pine and red pine plantation. Most of the trail follows old logging roads, except the last third which goes up a granite rock ridge. The effects of the 2007 windstorm on the original harvest and plant of the 1970s can be seen here. This area is the result of silviculture (Latin: forest, to till), the art and science of growing trees or cultivating a forest.

About 100 years ago a fire blazed through. It cleared the land and melted the sticky, binding resin on jack pine cones, releasing their seeds. The jack pine has needle pairs about 4 cm long.. When the cones are closed, the ends curl to make them look like the letter J. The average jack pine tree can make 367 newspapers.

The red pine has reddish bark that breaks off in slabs. At one time red pine was a favourite for plantations because it grew quickly and could be cut into good straight lumber. It was used a lot for telephone poles. But it is easily affected by drought and diseases, like root rot, which can wipe out a young plantation. Now red pine is only planted where it is native or grows naturally.

The Alf Hole Goose Sanctuary began with four Canada goose goslings found near Rennie in the spring of 1939. The foundlings were taken to Alfred Hole, an independent mink rancher and outdoorsman, who lived nearby. During their third summer Mr. Hole obtained an old gander and was successful in getting it to mate with the lone female from the brood. She laid four eggs which eventually hatched. From that time on, the goose sanctuary was a success. The four goslings were banded and released on the pond. By late summer they were fully grown and when northern-bred geese flew overhead going south, the Alf Hole geese joined the migration, leaving their parents behind. Despite the threat from natural predators, accidents and hunters, all four geese returned the next spring and continued to do so annually. Hundreds of geese stop at this sanctuary during their spring and fall migrations. Those passing through in spring find nesting sites in boreal forest wetlands east of Lake Winnipeg. The winter destination for some Alf Hole geese is the Rock Prairie refuge in southeast Wisconsin.

Amphibian species: northern spring peeper, green frog, mink frog, wood frogs, boreal chorus frogs, gray tree frogs, northern leopard frogs.

Waterfowl: common loon, red-necked grebe, ring-necked duck, lesser scaup, common goldeneye, bufflehead, hooded merganser, common merganser, mallard, green-winged teal, American widgeon, blue-winged teal, wood duck, American black duck (rare).

Dragonflies, beavers, northern pike, snapping turtles, western painted turtles, foxes and coyotes feed on mice and voles.

Species List

Forester's Footsteps trail:

Moccasin flower (pink lady's-slipper) (*Cypripedium acaule*)
Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)
Creamy peavine (*Lathyrus ochroleucus*)
Wild rose (*Rosa* spp.)
Saskatoon (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)
Pussy toes (*Antennaria parvifolia*)
Spinulosa sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis* L.)
Hoary puccoon (*Lithospermum canescens*)
Spreading dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*)
Lily of the valley (*Maianthemum canadense*)
Red pine (*Pinus resinosa*)
Jack pine (*Pinus banksiana*)
White spruce (*Picea glauca*)
Aspen (*Populus tremuloides*)
Northern starflower (*Trientalis borealis*)
Richardson's alumroot (*Heuchera richardsonii*)
Juniper (*Juniperus communis* or *horizontalis*)
Twining honeysuckle (*Lonicera dioica* var. *glaucescens*)
Downy arrowwood (*Viburnum rafinesquianum*)

Goose Sanctuary trail:

Spotted coral-root (*Corallorhiza maculata*)
Moss phlox or moss-pink?
Cut-leaf buttercup
Gooseberry (*Ribes* spp)
Palmate coltsfoot (leaves) (*P. palmatus*)
Purple vetch
Ground pine (rare) (*Lycopodium obscurum*)

Bluets (*Centaurea* spp.)
Waterlilies
Ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
Sage
Dewberry (*Rubus pubescens*)
Pink wintergreen (*Pyrola asarifolia*)