

**6** To your left is an observation point. Twenty years ago this area was surrounded by water. Can you guess why there is not much water here anymore? If you guessed sediment accumulation, you are correct. This area filled



in with mud and debris over the years, primarily due to storm events. During a storm, this area is completely inundated with water. Heavy mud and silt particles settle out of the water and build up over time. What do you think it will look like 20 years from now?

Throughout the Park, especially along the Towpath Trail, watch for the tall, slender Great Egret. Standing three feet tall, with an all-white coat of feathers, the egret extends its long neck and leans forward to fish. Wildwood's wetlands provide vital habitat for egrets and numerous other birds and animals that come here seeking food, cover and rest during migration.



**7** As you leave the open, grassy marsh and return to the forest you will see dead trees scattered throughout the area. These dead trees are important habitat for birds such as woodpeckers and wood ducks and other animals. Fallen trees are left on the ground for insects and fungi to begin decomposing.

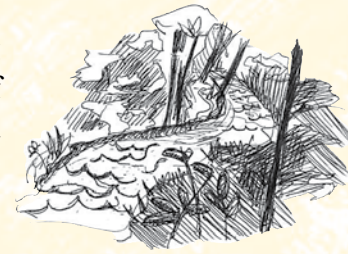


**8** This section of boardwalk parallels the main branch of the Paxton Creek. Sediment and tree debris have accumulated in this area over the years; evidence that when heavy rains fall, this area quickly becomes flooded.



**9** "We All Live Downstream" says the sign. The water cycle, the watershed and our lives are all connected. Runoff carries not only sediment but litter, pollution and debris downstream. Any action, no matter where, affects the land, water and ultimately us.

**10** This is where the Paxton Creek enters Wildwood Park. The Paxton Creek watershed is a 27-square mile area that includes parts of the City of Harrisburg and Townships of Lower Paxton and Susquehanna. The watershed includes 50 miles of streams, all of which must enter Wildwood before emptying into the Susquehanna River. Wildwood manages high waters from storm events and helps prevent flooding in Harrisburg. As you leave the Delta Boardwalk, a right turn will take you back to the Nature Center. A left turn leads you over the Paxton Creek and around the 3.1 mile lake loop.



Wildwood Park and the Benjamin Olewine III Nature Center are owned and operated by Dauphin County. Upcoming programs can be viewed at [dauphincounty.gov](http://dauphincounty.gov).

Help support educational programming and the preservation of this unique urban wetland environment through a membership and tax deductible contribution to the Friends of Wildwood, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Visit their website at [explorewildwoodpark.org](http://explorewildwoodpark.org) for more information.

The Nature Center is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10AM to 4PM. Trails and boardwalks are open from dawn until dusk.

# SELF-GUIDED TRAIL

## FOR THE DELTA BOARDWALK



### AT

# WILDWOOD PARK

Artwork provided by Lara A. Mullins



DAUPHIN COUNTY  
PARKS & RECREATION  
WILDWOOD PARK &  
BENJAMIN OLEWINE III  
NATURE CENTER

100 Wildwood Way ■ Harrisburg, PA 17110  
717-221-0292 ■ [dauphincounty.gov](http://dauphincounty.gov)

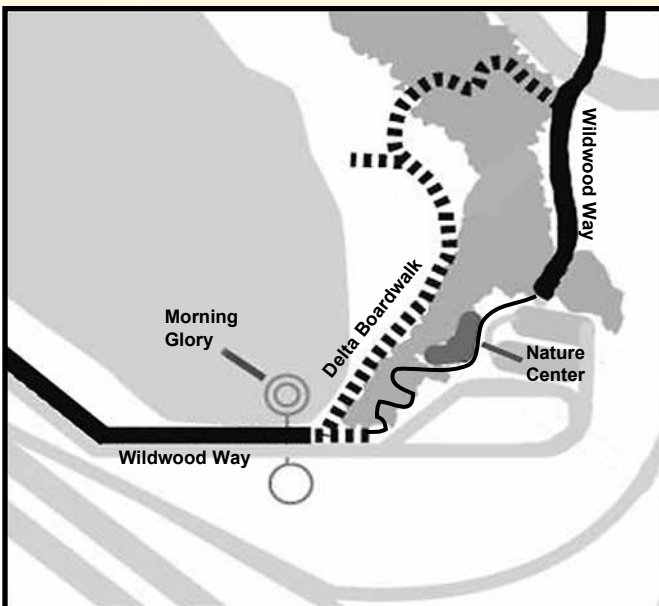
## Welcome to the Delta Boardwalk

The Delta Boardwalk is located at the south end of Wildwood Park and is part of a one half mile loop that starts and ends at the Olewine Nature Center. It gets its name from the flat, triangular piece of land that has been created where sediments accumulate as the Paxton Creek empties into Wildwood Lake.

With the help of this self-guiding brochure you will be stopping at various stations on the boardwalk to learn about the wetlands of Wildwood Park. Each station is designated with a numbered wooden sign affixed to the boardwalk. Numbers are indicated in red paint.

While you are enjoying your walk, please remain on the boardwalk and please do not remove or disturb anything. If you are walking your dog, use a leash and pick up after them.

To begin the self-guided walk, turn right as you exit the Olewine Nature Center and follow the brick walkway down the hill.



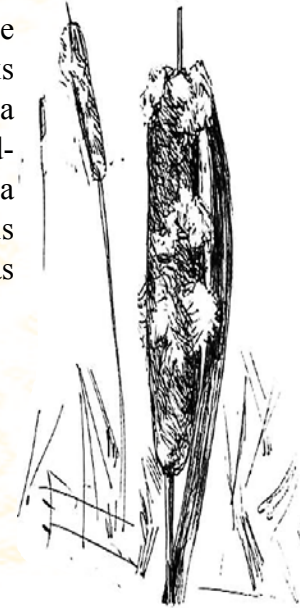
**1** The Delta Boardwalk begins below the nature center's habitat gardens. Along the winding brick walkway, native plants provide food and cover for many small animals and prevent erosion of the soil from the hillside. During the late spring months, this area provides habitat for snapping turtles who arrive annually to dig nest holes and lay eggs.



**2** The circular, concrete Morning Glory structure was installed in the early 1900s. Today it continues to provide flood control for the City of Harrisburg. You have now entered the wetlands of Wildwood Park.

There are many types of wetlands, such as, a marsh or swamp. What they have in common is water at or near the surface during part of the growing season. The soil is waterlogged and absent of air pockets. Only plants that can live in this anaerobic soil can survive in a wetland. As a result, wetlands can be recognized by the plants that grow in them.

**3** Cattails are a familiar sight in wetland areas. Their long stems are hollow, allowing air to be transported through the plant. The flower looks like a brown hotdog on a stick and its green, sword-like leaves can grow to a height of 3-4 feet. In this area, you can see cattails as well as reed canary grass.



**4** Below this bridge flows one of the branches of Paxton Creek. The area between the bridge and Nature Center is frequently used by birds for bathing and drinking.

As you walk through this area, you will notice hairy vines growing on some of the trees. These are the vines of poison ivy. The leaves aren't the only part of the plant that can give you a rash, the vines can, too. "Leaves of three, let it be" and "don't be a dope, don't touch the rope" are two children's rhymes that are wise advice for anyone who encounters this plant.



Along the edges of the boardwalk, you may see jewelweed. This succulent plant has a delicate, orange flower that blooms in late summer. Its name comes from the way water beads up on the leaves and glistens like a jewel. It is sometimes called touch-me-not because its sensitive seed pods burst open when touched, spreading the seeds up to 20 feet away.



**5** As you leave the wooded area and enter the open grassy area you can observe more cattails and reed canary grass. Red-winged blackbirds are common here during the breeding season. Listen for their "konkla-ree" call and search for the males sitting on top of the cattails. The glossy black feathers of the body and wings are accented with crimson red shoulder patches. The females can sometimes be seen low in the cattails and grasses. Their plumage is streaked with dark brown and tan to help camouflage them from predators as they build their nests and raise their young.

