

Welcome to the Rose Preserve Nature Quest

On the Frederick P. Rose Preserve,
Cross River, NY

Sponsored by Westchester  Land Trust and
Lewisboro Land Trust, a WLT chapter

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Questers:

- Follow the clues in this booklet
- Follow the instructions at each stop
- Stay on the trail
- Enjoy your quest!

History: The Frederick P. Rose Preserve and the Rockshelter Preserve were once known respectively as the Black House Farm and the Town Farm. The Black House Farm was owned by Simeon Brady until 1867 when the Mead family purchased it. The Town Farm was probably operated as a poor house for indigents, and was also acquired by the Meads in the late 19th century. The woodlots there produced cord wood (for the family's fireplaces and stoves), chestnut posts for fencing, white oak flooring and lumber for building. The chestnut blight killed all the chestnut trees in the early 1900's, some of which can still be seen where they fell.

The Brady Farm fell into ruins after it was abandoned. Remnants of house and barn foundations are visible near the south end of the Rose Preserve. The Town Farm house is a private home on

Chapel Road. Just off the trail the foundations of an old granary are evident.

The trail runs along a road way that predates the construction of Route 121. It continued in use as a logging road until the early 20th century and shows on some old maps as "Lovers Lane."

The Rose Preserve was threatened with development but was purchased by Adam R. Rose and Peter R. McQuillan donated to Westchester Land Trust in honor of Adam's father. The Rockshelter Preserve is a portion of a property developed on Rockshelter Road by John Ciardullo and donated in 2005.

The deciduous forest is taking over the former farm land today, but the stone walls and old foundations still speak of its earlier bucolic history.

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Now find the clues to support this history: How do you know this was once a farm? What other clues can you find that tell you about the farm's activities?

1. This area was once open fields. About 75 years ago, farming was suspended and the woodlands began to grow up. The construction of overhead power lines creates a corridor through the woodlands, and an "edge," both of which are used by wildlife. (At this point, also note the dramatic change of habitat from open meadow to woodlands.)

When you find this feature, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #1.

In the open fields, we find many of these

Take stamp out of clue box and stamp here. Please return stamp

and stamp pad to box.

2. Look for the farm road on the right that meets the main carriage road – both were logging roads, used for taking out logs with horse-draw sleds or wagons. Walking on this old farm and logging road in the mid-1800's, you would have found a greater variety of trees: oak, chestnut, hickory and ash. This road was called Lover's Lane, and went from Waccabuc to Cross River.

When you find the carriage road, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #2.

Take stamp out of clue box and stamp here. Remember to return the stamp and pad.



3. Look for the unusual stone wall on the right. It is made from local stone that was split or shattered into "slate-like" slabs.

When you find this feature, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #3.

4. Go further along until you come to a stone wall, with corner, that is made almost entirely of round stones. Contrast this to the "slab" wall. Also contrast it to the newer stone wall on the hill behind it. These old walls were used to contain livestock. The old one and the newer one both contain round stones, but they were built by different masons. On the farm, the children were the masons. In the spring, they collected the stones that rose from the fields and helped build the walls.

When you find the old stone wall, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #4.

5. Continue along until you find a large rock on the left. In the 1800's, road specifications required that all roads be 14 feet wide. Measure this road's width from the large rock to the stone wall.

What is in the roadway now that would **not** have been there then?

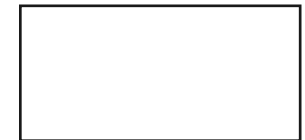
When you find the rock, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #5.

Take the measuring rope and measure from large rock to stone wall. Is it about 14 feet? _____

6. Look for a tree on the right (slightly up the hill) that has wire wrapped around it. Notice how the wire has become imbedded in the trunk over the years of the tree's growth. This wire has probably been there at least 75 years, from the early 1900's. It would have been used to fence in the livestock.

When you find this feature, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #6.

Take the stamp out of the clue box and stamp here



It will remind you of some of the critters who live here.

7. On the left, look for the fallen chestnut tree. This tree is close to 100 years old and died from a blight in the 1920's. Chestnut is a very hard wood that does not decompose easily – it is still providing habitat for birds, insects, salamanders, and small mammals.

When you find this tree, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #7.

8. Notice the stand of beech trees on the right. These can be identified by their VERY smooth bark. Notice no other trees grow around it. This stand of trees is about 40 years old. They were not part of the farm.

When you find the beech stand, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #8.

Take the stamp out of the clue box and stamp here



Please return stamp and pad to box.

9. You will soon come across a small foundation on the right. This was probably a root cellar for the farm, where they stored vegetables for use in the winter and early spring. The capstones from the top have begun to fall in.

When you find the foundation, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #9.

10. Look for the dead tree on the right that has become a wonderful home for pileated woodpecker. Old trees provide food and habitat for many creatures.

When you find this tree, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #10.

11. Look on the left for the tree that has a VERY large base and three smaller shoots (called “leaders”) growing out of it. This is evidence of logging. When the tree is cut down and the base remains, the tree sprouts two or three new shoots. The base of this tree is probably 200 years old and was here when the land was a farm.

When you find this tree, write down the letter you see there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #11.

Take the stamp out of the clue box to remind you of the name of this preserve



12. Continue on, and on the left you will find more evidence of logging (several stumps). These were cut down at a man’s chest height, by men using a cross-saw.

When you find this feature, write down the letter you find there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #12.

13. Look for the stump of the chestnut tree on the right, cut to expose its age rings. Count the rings and leave us a note in the box telling us how old you think this tree is.

When you get to the tree stump, write down the letter you find there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #13.

14. Look for the giant red oak on the right that was hit by lightning. This probably occurred about 50 years ago. We know it’s a RED oak by the size of the acorn caps on the ground.

(ALSO NOTICE THE HOLLOW TREE TRUNKS ACROSS FROM THIS TREE THAT PROVIDE FOOD & SHELTER FOR MANY CREATURES.)

When you get to the red oak, write down the letter you find there in the box at the end of this booklet corresponding to #14.

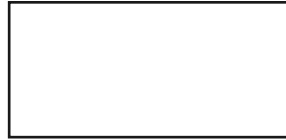
Take the stamp out of the clue box – it looks like the leaves on this tree



15. Soon you will come to a large foundation on the right. (Please be very careful, do not go close, and please do not disturb any of the stones.) This was probably a barn and grainery for the Black House Farm. Notice the two lines of stone down the center –this was the aisle. The family kept their grain and other provisions in the bottom of this barn.

When you find this foundation, write down the letter you find there in the box below corresponding to #15.

Take the stamp out of the clue box and stamp here



It will tell you what YOU are.

This is the end of the Quest. We hope you enjoyed it. On the post, you will find a book. Please write your name, address, and e-mail address in the book – we will send you a small gift for completing the Quest. As we create more quests on other preserves, we will let you know about them and will give awards to folks who complete all of them!

YOU DID IT! Congratulations on completing the Quest. Come back again next week or in another season. The Quest is available at the kiosk or online at www.westchesterlandtrust.org/quest. More quests will be developed on other preserves. Watch our website!)

Now turn around and enjoy a leisurely walk back to your car. Enjoy the natural community along the way.

OR participate in today’s special bonus hunt – take one of the plastic bags of puzzle pieces out of the container. Put the puzzle together. See if you can find the landmark pictured in the puzzle. Go to that landmark and find its clue box. Take out one of the bells that is in the box. Bring it to a land trust volunteer near the kiosk. Fill out a form with your name. (and get your photo taken!) We will have a drawing on Monday for a winner. The winner’s photo will be put up on our website and will receive a special prize!

A QUICK FACT ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE LAND:

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