

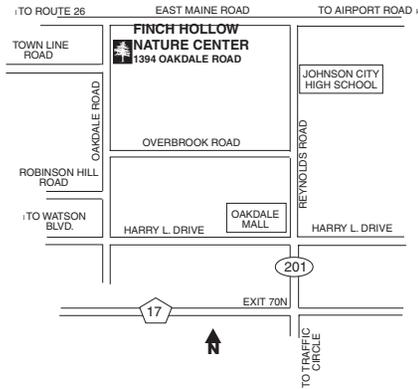
Thousands of people visit Finch Hollow Nature Center each year. Help preserve its beauty by following a few simple rules:

- For your safety, please stay on the marked trails.
- Picking or collecting of any natural item, living or non-living, is prohibited.
- No hunting, trapping, swimming or boating is allowed. Fishing, from shore, is permitted.
- Bicycles, horses, and all motorized vehicles must remain in the parking lot.
- Fires, including hibachis, are not permitted.
- Trash cans are provided for visitors' convenience. However, all items which are recyclable in Broome County must be taken home.
- Dogs, cats, and other domesticated pets must be kept on a leash not more

than 8 feet long, and may not be left unattended. Proof of current rabies inoculation is required. All solid waste left by pets must be removed.



## HOW TO FIND FINCH HOLLOW NATURE CENTER



Broome County Parks and Recreation offers opportunities to enjoy the natural world throughout the county. Greenwood Park, Upper Lisle Park, Nathaniel Cole Park, and Hawkins Pond Nature Area feature trails which take visitors through an impressive variety of natural areas. A paved walking and bicycle trail at Otsiningo Park winds around the pond and along the banks of the Chenango River. Maps of Broome County Parks nature trails are available by calling (607) 778-2193. A general brochure, outlining special features and facilities found at all Broome County Parks locations, is also available.



BARBARA J. FIALA  
Broome County Executive

Finch Hollow's interpretive building, a converted two-classroom schoolhouse, includes approximately 25 display cases, featuring exhibits of birds, mammals, fish and other natural history topics. Also included is a variety of hands-on displays, for fun, participatory learning.



### HOURS

Trails and grounds are open daily, during daylight hours, year-round. No appointment is required to use the trails, however, large groups are requested to call ahead, to avoid scheduling conflicts.

**Finch Hollow Nature Center's museum building hours vary. Drop-in visitors, without an appointment, are welcome if the building is staffed and other activities do not pose a conflict. Calling ahead is always suggested.**

For further information, contact:  
FINCH HOLLOW NATURE CENTER  
1394 OAKDALE ROAD JOHNSON CITY,  
NY 13790 (607) 729-4231  
[www.gobroomecounty.com](http://www.gobroomecounty.com)

### SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

- \* Nature interpretive programs for educational institutions, at Finch Hollow, at school (within Broome County), or at any other Broome County Park location.
- \* Programs for any organized group (10 or more participants)
- \* Workshops for teachers and youth leaders
- \* Year-round programs for the general public
- \* Nature area development/program planning assistance

### INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY VISITS

Individuals are welcome to walk the trails any day during daylight hours, and view the museum displays during open hours at the Interpretive Building. The grounds and building are open free of charge.

Finch Hollow Nature Center offers a wide variety of programs year-round, for ages 3 through adult. The Center's newsletter, the Naturalists' Notes, details upcoming programs and special events.

### GROUP VISITS

Groups are requested to make an appointment before visiting, to avoid scheduling conflicts. Groups of 10 or more people may schedule a guided program, by appointment, for a fee.

### SCHOOL VISITS

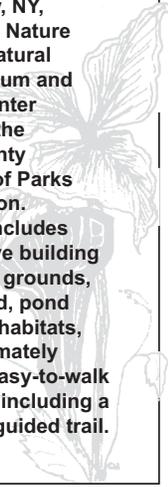
Periodically, information regarding school programs and registration procedures is sent to area teachers. For more information, call (607) 729-4231.

# FINCH HOLLOW NATURE CENTER



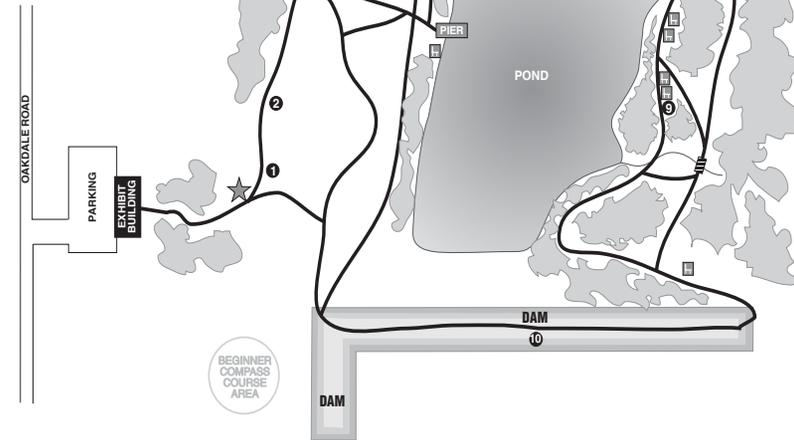
Located on Oakdale Road in Johnson City, NY, Finch Hollow Nature Center is a natural history museum and education center operated by the Broome County Department of Parks and Recreation.

The Center includes an interpretive building and adjacent grounds, featuring field, pond and wooded habitats, with approximately one mile of easy-to-walk nature trails, including a marked self-guided trail.



# FINCH HOLLOW NATURE CENTER TRAIL GUIDE

- TRAILS
- ① - SELF-GUIDED TRAIL MARKERS
- - BENCHES
- ▣ - BRIDGES
- ★ - TRAIL REGISTER



## 1 The Field

The trail begins at the edge of a common, and often underappreciated habitat. The field habitat is home to numerous plant species, many of which might be considered "weeds". A kinder and more accurate term to describe these plants is "wildflowers". These plants provide food and cover for red fox, field mice, rabbits, snakes, and many kinds of insects and birds. Many of these plants have a long history of folklore, and medicinal use which has led to the development of many prescription medicines used today. In our lawns or gardens, these plants might be weeds; in the field, they are vital to the survival of wildlife.

## 2 Welcoming Wildlife

Though the field plants provide food and cover for wildlife, this may not be enough to attract and keep an animal in an area. In early spring, when male Eastern Bluebirds return to Broome County seeking a place to raise a family, an open field such as this is the perfect place if a suitable nesting spot can be found. Bluebirds are "cavity-nesters" and will only nest hidden within a hole in a tree or a similar cavity. In addition, the cavity must be located within an open field. The bird houses you see in the field were designed specifically for eastern Bluebirds. Without the addition of these houses (or "nesting boxes") bluebirds and other cavity-nesters, such as tree swallows, would be unable to call this home.

## The Life of a Dead Tree

3 Though no longer living, this large white pine has not lost its usefulness. A hungry hawk, surveying the field for a mouse meal, might use this tree as a perch. Insects may invade the dead wood, tunneling to create a home. The insects may then become food for a woodpecker. The woodpecker's drilling creates cavities in the wood that might later provide a nesting spot for a bird (perhaps the woodpecker itself) or a home for an animal such as a raccoon or squirrel.

(JUST AHEAD, THE TRAIL APPEARS TO FORK. FINCH HOLLOW'S TRAIL IS ON THE RIGHT ONLY. PRIVATE PROPERTY IS ON THE LEFT.)

## Red Pines

4 These large evergreen trees are Red Pines. Like other evergreens, Red Pines keep their needle-like leaves year-round, regularly shedding a few leaves but never losing all of the leaves at once. Red Pines bear long sturdy needles that are attached to the twig in pairs. Small, almost round cones contain the seeds that can create the next generation of Red Pines, or become food for a bird, chipmunk, or squirrel. (Nearby White Pines bear long, thin needles in bundles of five; Scotch Pine needles are short, twisted, and attached in pairs.)

## Wetland Indicators

5 Groups of tall, slim Black Willow trees dominate this area near the edge of the pond and stream. Willows grow best where the soil is wet, and their presence can therefore reveal the presence of water nearby. The tall, slim leaves and stalks of cattails, with their flowers which look like a cigar or a hot dog on a stick, also indicate wet soil areas.

Willows have traditionally been used medicinally to relieve pain. Modern scientists who analyzed this plant found it contains chemicals similar to the ingredients used to manufacture aspirin.

## The Stream

6 Access to this spot may sometimes be blocked by the nearby stream that brings fresh, cool water to the pond at Finch Hollow. This stream's flow varies remarkably; in summer, the stream bed may be bone dry, while in spring the rains may bring both the stream and the pond to flood levels. Typical spring floods might leave this area submerged under up to 5 feet of water. Receding flood waters leave behind natural debris such as branches and mud, along with manmade debris. The depth of the flood can

sometimes be measured by the thin film of mud covering the plants that had been submerged.

These sudden spring floods close parts of the trail and may damage plants and trees. Nesting ducks may lose their nests and eggs in a flood. Burrowing animals may find their homes submerged. However, the receding flood waters leave behind nutrient-rich silt that renews the soil around the pond. Floods also provide transportation for certain kinds of seeds, carrying them to locations far from the parent plant, where their chances of survival may be greatly increased.

## Friend or Foe?

7 Shrubs like this multiflora rose grow wild at Finch Hollow Nature Center and similar places throughout Broome County. Clusters of small white flowers appear all over the shrub in the summer, followed by clusters of small red rosehips, which contain the shrub's seeds.

Introduced to the U.S. from Japan and Korea in the 1860's, multiflora rose was originally planted as an ornamental shrub; in the 1930's conservation agencies began to promote this shrub as a wildlife food and cover plant. The shrub has spread rapidly, and has been recognized as a problem invader in many states and a "noxious weed" in many others, rapidly invading and taking over open areas such as pastures. Multiflora rose often forms dense, impenetrable thickets. Birds which thrive upon the red fruits spread the seeds with their droppings.

In places where this shrub has not become a nuisance, it can provide food and cover for wildlife and year-round beauty for humans.

## A Dramatic Change

8 On the eastern side of the pond, the habitat changes dramatically to a mixed woodland. The trees which dominate this area provide shelter, food, and nesting spots for a variety of animals. At the same time, trees create oxygen and have some ability to fight air pollution.

Trees also create shade. The decreased sunlight creates a moister, cooler, darker habitat. Plants such as ferns and some wildflowers may be able to grow beneath the trees, but not out in the bright light of the field. More kinds of mushrooms and other kinds of fungus also call the woods their home, many growing on fallen trees and "recycling" them back to the soil.

When a forest begins to reach maturity, older, taller trees dominate, allowing almost no sunlight

to reach the forest floor. Ferns, wildflowers, and shrubs that might provide food for animals can no longer survive. The removal of some of the trees, through storms, disease, fire, or even selective cutting by man, can renew the woodland habitat for deer and other animals that require a mixed-age forest with accessible browse plants.

## The Pond

9 The pond at Finch Hollow Nature Center is home to a wide variety of creatures, from tiny insects to Great Blue Herons. Fish, both large and small, inhabit the pond along with frogs (and their tadpoles), turtles, snakes, and occasional beavers and muskrats, to name a few. Ducks and geese may stay for a few days, or settle down and build a nest among the cattails. Kingfishers swoop down to snatch small fish, while dragonflies roam through the air in search of a meal of mosquitoes.

This stretch of trail, sandwiched between pond and woods, is rich with wildlife clues. Look for woodpecker holes, beaver chews, squirrel-chewed spruce cones, or the remains of a fox's or owl's meal.

## The View From the Dam

10 The trail you are walking on crosses the top of a manmade dam. From here you can see the fields, pond, and wooded areas of Finch Hollow Nature Center, three very distinct habitats.

A stream flows through this dam, letting water out of the pond; at the same time, water flows into the pond at the other end (see #6), keeping the water level fairly constant. However, when spring rains and snow melt add large amounts of water to the pond rapidly, the excess water is held back by the dam. Though this creates temporary flood conditions at the Nature Center, this flood control system protects the homes and property of people downstream. This dam is one of a series of dams that have been built in Broome County for this purpose. The water that passes through this dam winds its way southward, toward the Oakdale Mall, and eventually enters the Susquehanna River.

From here, the trail enters the forest and winds back toward the Nature Center museum building.

