

# Kelley Environmental Education Center

## Self-Guided Nature Trail

1. Welcome to the self-guided nature trail. Look for these can lids on trees to know where to stop and read. This trail will lead you through Three Point, up the yellow and double yellow Buxton Trail, and back via the red trail. Enjoy the hike!
2. Litter. Be sure to keep an eye out for litter and pick up any that you may come across in order to preserve Yawgoog and this trail for future campers to enjoy. A scout is courteous and clean.
3. In front of you is Yawgoog Pond. 380 million years ago, this entire area was mountainous and only had patches of soil. The area is so different today because of erosion and the glaciers moving over the area breaking the mountains down and depositing sediment in the area.
4. Welcome to the dam, a popular fishing spot. If you look closely at the nearby rocks you will be able to spot glacial grooves and scratches formed 30,000 years ago. As the glaciers moved over these rocks, it took large chunks with it leaving behind fractures and scratches.
5. Look around to locate a *witch-hazel* tree. These trees grow primarily in the understory of the forest and are very dense. The aromatic extract from the leaves, twigs, and bark is often used in skin lotion. A myth of witchcraft held that a forked branch of witch-hazel would point to underground water.
6. The trail you are walking on used to be a logging road. Trees were cut from Cooning Orchard (sign 8) and processed for human use. Please turn onto the Buxton (double yellow) trail.
7. You are standing on Devils Slide. It is a slab of granite that slopes down beneath the water of Yawgoog Pond. If you look at the slide from King Phillip's Island, you will notice two black streaks on the rock, which form the "slide".
8. This open area is Cooning Orchard. Trees here were selectively cut for building materials. If you look up you will see the canopy, which is the high tree branches and leaves. The ecosystem up there greatly differs from the understory, the trees that live underneath the canopy.

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9. The rock formation here is called Rustlers Hideout. The Moss growing around the edges of the rock will eventually cover it up. The fibrous moss will catch dust, which will form a thin layer of soil. When that happens, grass will begin to grow. This process is called “succession”; eventually pine and leafy deciduous trees will grow here. These are called pioneer species.
10. The low, gnarled branches and shiny, lance shaped leaves of *mountain laurel* grow abundantly around June, and is one of the most beautiful native species in the Northeast. It prefers to grow in acidic soil and the foliage is poisonous to livestock. It is also believed that honey from its flowers is poisonous. If you were to pull a leaf and it were to rip, the resulting edge would be as straight as a blade.
11. These two rocks that are close together is called the Keyhole. Note how the two rocks seem to fit together like a puzzle piece. It is possible that 30,000 years ago when the glaciers dropped this rock off, it split in half creating this formation today.
12. The pond you see beyond the forest is not Yawgoog but actually Wincheck Pond. The pond is covered with water lilies; this is the beginning of pond to forest succession, a slow process that will eventually turn the pond into a forest floor. Dead organic material will accumulate on the bottom of the pond and eventually rise to the surface, creating a marsh, then a swamp, which will dry into a field, which will then turn into a forest.
13. Take a look around. Notice the rock formation to the left. Think about the age of this camp, and what this area may have been used for. Over the years, Yawgoog has evolved to fit the needs of whoever has camped here. These are the remains of an old campsite called the Eagles Roost.

Thank you for participating and hiking the Self-Guided Nature Trail. Feel free to go to the Nature Center and fill out a hike evaluation form or make suggestions on how the trail can be improved. Have a good summer!