

Hubbard County Park and the Ghost Forest

about 2 miles—unblazed

Why:

Melding pine barrens, salt marshes, and considerable history, Hubbard presents a beautiful and gentle landscape for easy exploration.

Directions:

From NY 27 Exit 65, go north about two miles on NY 24 to Red Creek Road. Park alongside RC Road in one of the many pull-off spots and walk the 1/5 of a mile in to the Black Duck Lodge.

Description:

Black Duck Lodge was built by the Hubbard family in 1838 and later was owned by financier E.F. Hutton. At present there is no public access to the building. As you face the Lodge, look to your left for a wide trail with a metal gate to bar vehicles. Walk down the trail to where it divides, and bear right. The understory is thin here, evidence of a former farm. Mill Creek appears to the west.

The trees end abruptly at a large salt marsh. Check for a sign announcing closures. This trail is often restricted in spring and early summer in deference to ospreys nesting nearby. When the trail is open, notice a band of groundsel, a shrub that denotes the high tide line. Beyond lie acres of salt hay (*spartina patens*), cordgrass (*spartina alterniflora*) and black rush (*juncus gerardii*). Look closely among the taller grasses for glasswort (*salicornia*), an edible succulent also known as pickleweed. It's easier to spot in the fall, when it turns yellow, orange, then red.

Continue to an isolated grove of trees fronting on Flanders Bay. Prickly pear cactus grows on either side of the trail. At low tide, notice the stumps of the "Ghost Forest," the remnants of Atlantic white cedars that lived when sea levels were lower and the shoreline farther out into Flanders Bay. Horseshoe crabs thrive here.

Options:

1) The left fork near the beginning of the trail, marked with black-diamond blazes, heads west across Mill Creek and into Suffolk County parkland known as the Smithers Property, which also has a trail leading to the bay, and eventually westward to Birch Creek. Round trips of four to six miles are possible.

2) From Black Duck Lodge, yellow and white blazes lead back down the entrance road to a point where the white-blazed Paumanok Path crosses. Go east (left) to cross Red Creek Road and reach Penny Pond in about a half mile. Other trails marked by the Southampton Trails Preservation Society pass through this area.

3) Follow the Paumanok Path down the Hubbard entrance road, across Red Creek Road and NY 24, and into Sears-Bellows Park. Use a Greenbelt Trail Conference map to explore a vast network of trails. For an ambitious loop, follow the white blazes westward past Sears Pond to Owl Pond, then take a yellow side trail north to NY 24 at Birch Creek. Using a map, follow trails and fire roads from Birch Creek through the Smithers Property and back to Black Duck Lodge.

Total mileage: about 6.3.

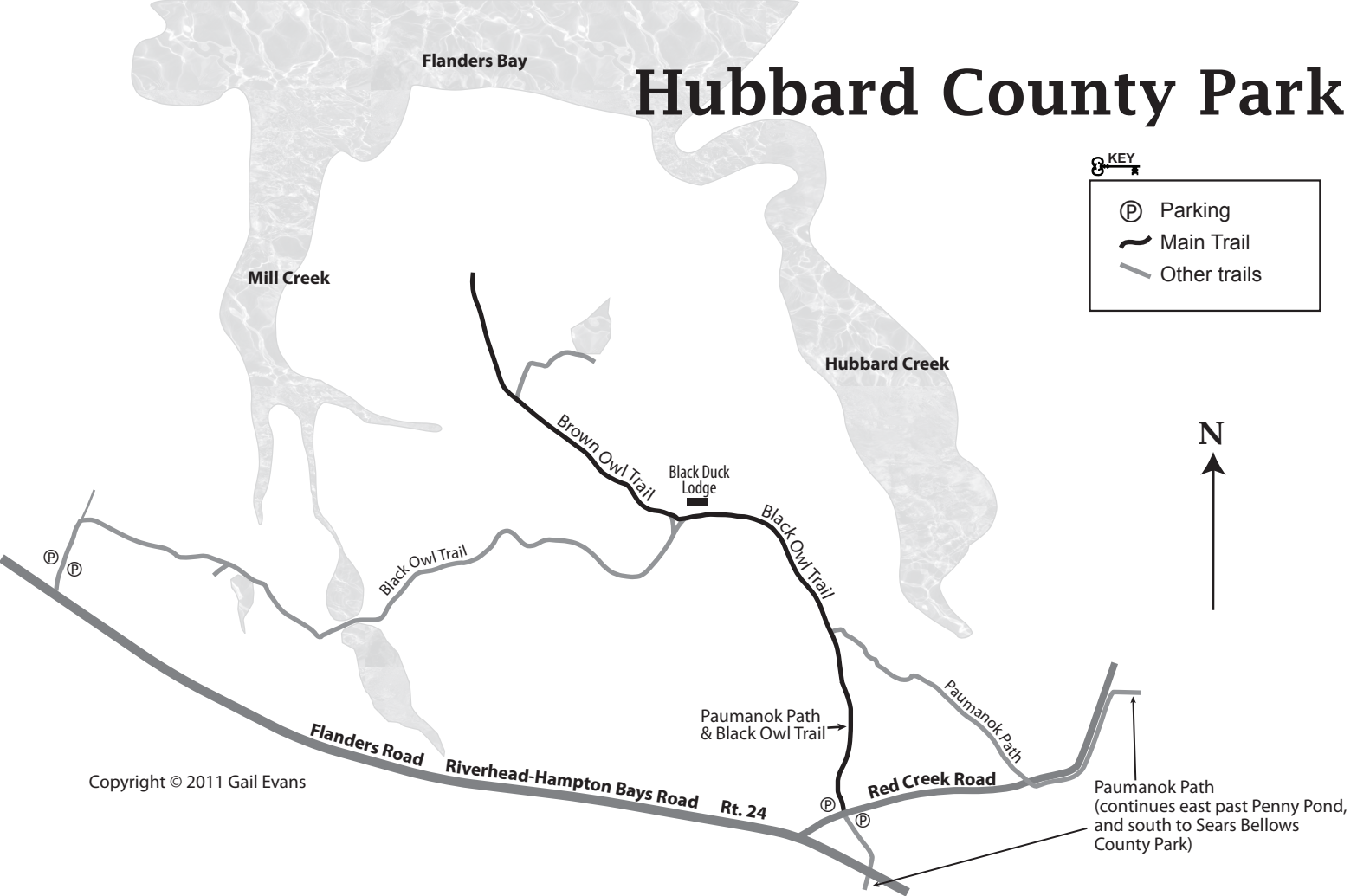
**Happy Hiking
from the
Long Island Pine Barrens
Society!**



Long Island Pine Barrens Society
547 E. Main St. Riverhead, NY 11901
(631)369-3300
www.pinebarrens.org
info@pinebarrens.org

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Hubbard County Park



KEY

- Ⓟ Parking
- Main Trail
- Other trails



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Paumanok Path
(continues east past Penny Pond,
and south to Sears Bellows
County Park)