

SALT ISLAND OVERLOOK

WALKING TRAILS

There are eight numbered trails that pass through a variety of habitats connecting some of the most interesting parts of the preserve. These include: fields of waving grasses and wildflowers, forest thickets, a thriving tidal marsh, coastal hardwoods, and a storm damaged inland wetland woodland.

[1] Main Trail - Loops around perimeter; at rocky knoll (Overlook is 34' above sea level) trail slopes down gradually through fields, then flat through mixed forest dominated by Sassafras, Black Cherry, Alder and Red Maple, past marsh, salt meadow and shaded bolder-edged forested inland wetland, then slight climb back to Overlook

[2] Cedar Trail - Narrow trail, detours from [1] past early successional Red Cedar, Siberian crabapple, and the invasive Autumn olive (control work on-going). Oxford Academy borders the preserve on west side.

[3] Upper Field Loop - Short, relatively flat trail through field of grasses planted to attract and support wildlife. The hard to control invasive plant, Multiflora rose, is prevalent along parts of the trail, despite control cutting.

[4] Alder Loop – Short trail past a large glacial erratic and unique multi-stem Alders whose seeds are relished by birds. Trail tends to have ponded water in spring or after storms due to poor soil drainage.

[5] Lower Field Trail – Flat, dominated by wildflowers, particularly Golden Rod, attracting many species of pollinators. Field is being naturally restored to coastal forest by encouraging regeneration and controlling invasive shrubs and vines.

[6] Poplar Loop – Trail takes you under several large poplar trees that were blown, partially uprooted by Storm Sandy in 2013. Climate change causing sea level rise increasing storm severity may claim this area for inland tidal marsh advancement.

[7] Salt Marsh Overlook – Very short trail to thriving tidal marsh ringed with the invasive non-native common reed *Phragmites australis* which is cut for viewing purposes. The seven-acre salt marsh is a tidally flooded wet meadow, of the kind often referred to as a salt hay meadow. Across the marsh is an Osprey platform, whose occupants in season, will let you know they are caring for the next generation.

[8] Cattail Trail – A one way trail to where fresh water meets tidal salt water. The resulting brackish water supports the prolific invasive common reed *Phragmites australis*. Cattails thrive in the sun drenched, mostly fresh water washed marsh where an uprooted, stormed downed red maple has created a small fresh water pond.