



Beaver Dam Creek County Park

This park, located in Point Pleasant on the north-west corner of the Route 88 and Bridge Avenue, offers something for everyone.



There's a Self-Guided Nature Trail, tennis courts, six acres of soccer and softball fields, a basketball court, picnic tables, two children's playgrounds, an open playfield and plenty of parking.



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Beaver Dam Creek County Park

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Beaver Dam Creek County Park Self-Guided Nature Trail

1 You are in a freshwater wetland that is in the watershed of Barnegat Bay. The rain that lands on the ground here makes its way into the Beaver Dam Creek, which then flows into the Barnegat Bay about two miles away. The ground is very wet which determines the kind of plants that grow here. The majority of the trees around you are **blackgum**. The nearby shrubs include blueberry and sweet pepper bush.



Blackgum

2 This is the Beaver Dam Creek. Here the creek is tidal and the water is somewhat salty. This was not always so. The stumps that you see in the water belong to Atlantic White Cedar, a tree that cannot live in salty water. Gradual sea level rise has pushed bay water further up stream to this point, killing off the cedars.

The reeds around you are known as phragmites. They are an invasive species. These non-native plants have caused the decline of saltwater and freshwater plants.

3 In front of you is a wild black cherry tree. They are known as pioneer species—plants that are the first to grow in an area that has been cleared. Other



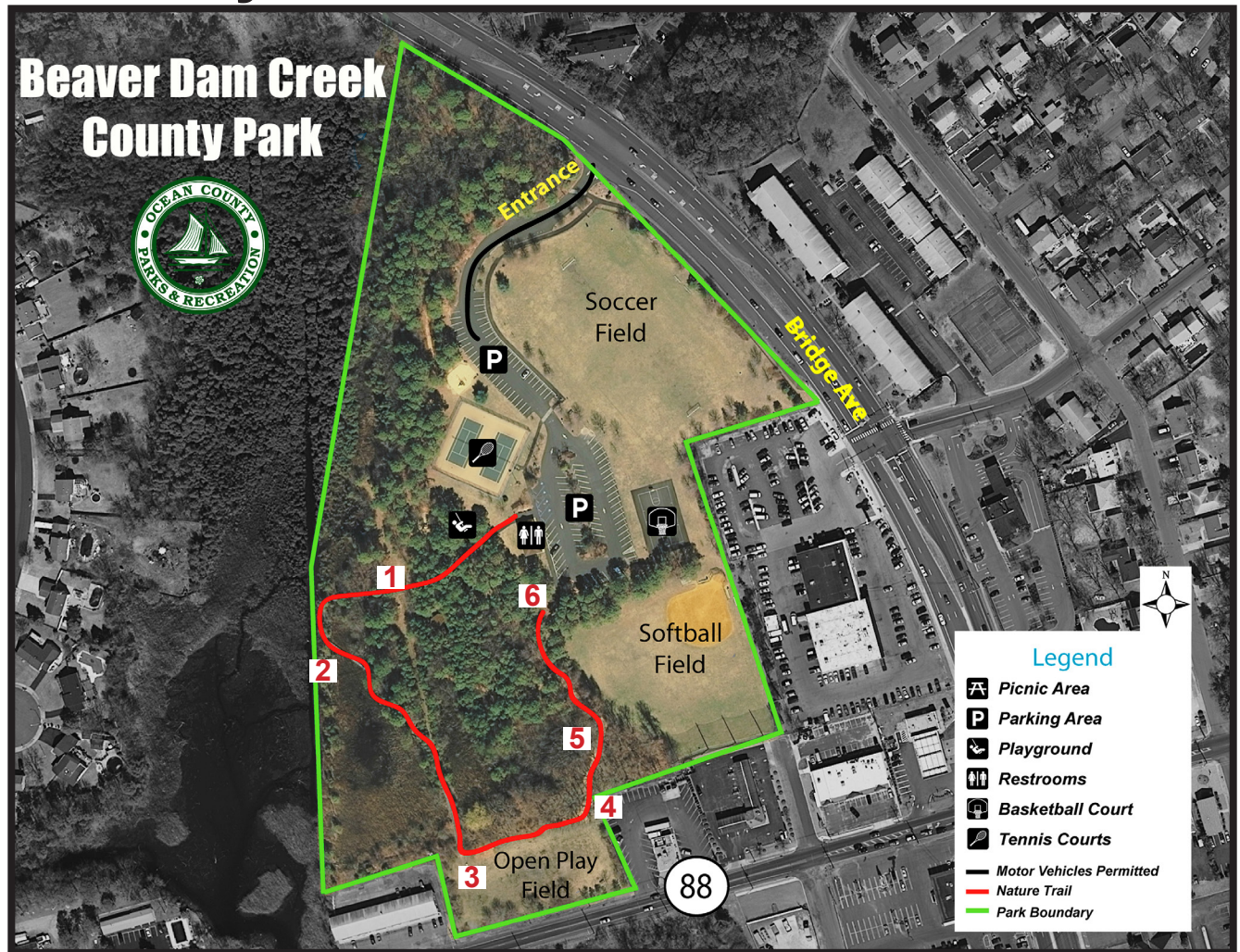
Sassafras

pioneer trees include **sassafras** and **eastern red cedar** which grow elsewhere in the park. If the open field behind you was no longer mowed, these pioneer species would begin to grow there eventually taking over the area.

4 The common tree in this area is **Tree-Of-Heaven** an invasive species that was brought to the United States from Asia. The rain that runs off of the pavement can carry fluids from cars and chemicals used in landscaping. This is known as non-point source pollution. The wetlands in the park will help filter the water before it gets to the Beaver Dam Creek.



Tree-Of-Heaven

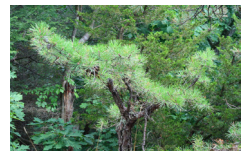


5 This is a freshwater pond surrounded by the swamp-loving **red maple**. It is not influenced by the salty water from the tidal Beaver Dam Creek and will be dry in times of drought. Ponds like this are perfect homes for frogs and toads. In the evening you may hear the high-pitched call of the spring peeper, a small tree frog that is native to this environment.



Red Maple in Autumn

6 In front of you are two upland trees common to this area of New Jersey, the white oak and **pitch pine**. These trees grow well in dry sandy soil where fire is a common occurrence. The pine has thick bark to guard against fire and the ability to resprout quickly. The oak is not as well protected. In areas where fires are frequent, pines outnumber oaks and form the area known as the Pine Barrens.



Pitch Pine