

Cloverdale Farm County Park



Within the boundaries of this 90-acre park, you will find the diversity of the Pine Barrens wetlands, uplands, and the beauty of 20 acres of cranberry bogs all year long.

The early settlers of New Jersey referred to the Pine Barrens as “barren” because traditional crops grew poorly here. Other types of agriculture were later established in the region. This trail will allow you to experience the natural beauty of the Pine Barrens and delve into its rich historical and agricultural past.

The Ocean County Natural Lands Trust Fund Program acquired Cloverdale Farm in 2004. The park was the site of the Collins’ family farm, which several generations of the family operated, going back to the early 1900s.

As you meander along the bog edges be sure to keep your eye out for different species of flora and fauna. You might just find one of our native carnivorous plants luring in ants with its false nectar bribes or be amazed by the sheer beauty of mountain laurel in bloom. As you wander, keep your eyes and ears open or you might miss a red-tailed hawk as it cries soaring overhead or a bluebird on its morning forage for insects.



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Cloverdale Farm County Park

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609-607-1861



www.oceancountyparks.org

Public Use

Cloverdale Farm County Park is open to the public from dawn to dusk every day. We encourage all visitors to stop in and tour our interpretive center, open Friday through Sunday. If you need special assistance, please call the Cloverdale Visitors Center at 609-607-1861 prior to your visit.



Photos by Park Volunteer Frank Langella.

Volunteers

Volunteers are key in the continued progress, development, and the park's overall success.



If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please call Cloverdale Farm County Park or visit our website and download an application.

www.oceancountyparks.org

Group Use



We request all organized groups looking to come to Cloverdale Farm County Park for the day to contact our Visitor's Center by calling 609-697-1861. Our staff is available for naturalist led tours for all community and school groups.

How to Schedule a Visit

- Call 609-607-1861 to set a date.
- Please be prepared with the following information:
 - Group name, address and phone number.
 - Grade level and program
- We strive to maintain a ratio of no more than 25 students to one park staff.
- Let us know in advance if any members of your group have special needs so we can serve you better.
- All scheduled groups will be mailed a confirmation letter along with rules and regulations, and in certain cases, pre-trip activities.
- All group programs are free of charge.

History

The Cloverdale Farm property has been continuously run as a cranberry farm since the late 1800s. The property was purchased from Katherine Collins in 2004, who operated the cranberry bogs and tree farm on the property for over 50 years with her husband William.



The Visitors Center opened in May of 2015, and contains exhibits that highlight the natural beauty and historical significance of the park. The sorting building was restored in 2018.



SELF-GUIDED NATURE TRAIL

1.VISITOR CENTER

The original farmhouse was built during the 1870’s, and lost to a fire in 2010. The visitors center was rebuilt in 2013. Notice the use of cedar shingles; a common method of pine homes in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s. The outhouse standing behind the building is a vestige of the days before indoor plumbing.

2. BLUEBIRD NESTBOXES

Cranberry farms are an ideal habitat for Eastern Bluebirds. The vast, open space of the bogs with its surrounding low vegetation allows the bluebirds to easily fly and catch their primary summertime food, insects. In the wild, bluebirds nest in hollow tree cavities but will readily utilize man-made nest boxes.

3. CRANBERRY SORTING HOUSE

Originally this was used as a bunk house. The cranberries were hauled to Penn Producing Company in Barnegat. Later, this structure was converted to a cranberry sorting house and was the center of activity during the cranberry harvest. Note the rustic timber beams supporting the roof. The sorting house is home to a Hayden Separator, which was the first step in sorting the berries. The firm berries are bounced down a series of angled wooden boards, while the soft berries are diverted to a bin at the base of the machine to be discarded. The firm berries then traveled down a conveyor in the loading dock where the berries were loaded onto trucks and shipped to market.



4. ROOT CELLAR

Before the modern day refrigerator, past generations used root cellars to store their food. During warmer times of the year, the root cellars could be 30 to 40 degrees cooler than outdoor temperatures because they were built into the surrounding soil. Root cellars usually held turnips, potatoes, carrots, preserved meat, milk and cream, as well as other fruits and vegetables. This root cellar was used until 1957 when electricity was first run from Bay Avenue to the farm.

5. CRANBERRY BOGS

Man-made cranberry bogs are situated along natural stream corridors. These lowland areas are cleared of any vegetation and leveled. Ditches are dug throughout the bog to allow drainage. Raised dikes are built around the outside edges of the bog, into which sluice gates are built to control the flow of water into and out of the bogs.

The bog is then planted with cuttings from cranberry vines, which are dispersed over the bog and pressed into the soil. It takes approximately three to five years for the cranberry vines to produce their first crop of berries.

6. CRANBERRY: EARLY BLACK VARIETY

The Cranberry, *Vaccinium macrocarpon*, is a low growing vine which can be found growing in wet meadows, bogs, and along stream banks of the Pine Barrens. This early black variety is the most popular and easiest to grow in the U.S., and is also cultivated in Canada and Chile. The fruits of “Early Black” aren’t actually black - starting off bright red, they will ripen to a deep purple-red that can easily be mistaken for black. This cranberry lives up to its “early” name since harvest begins late August.

7. SAW MILL

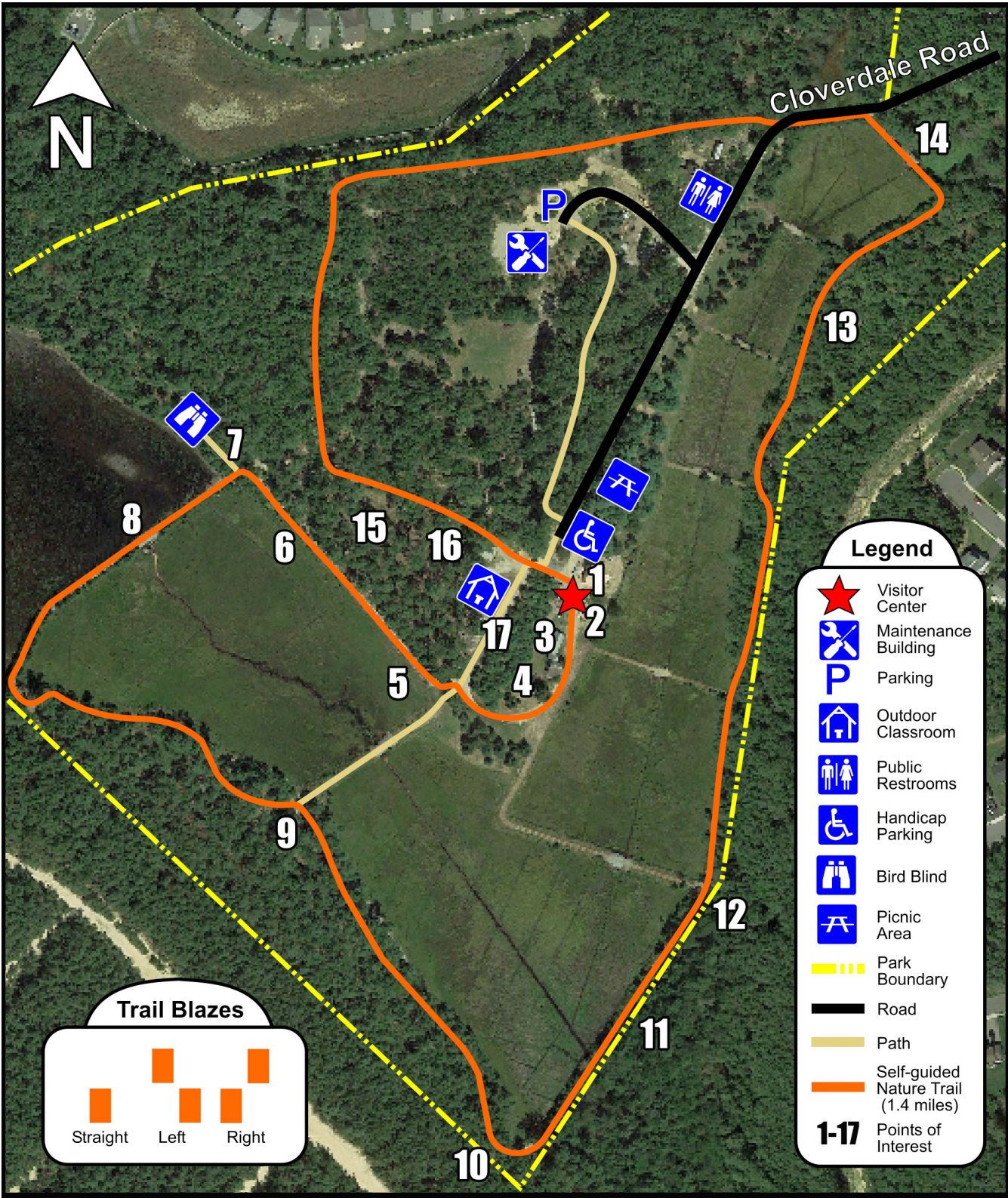
This location is the site of an old sawmill that burned down by the mid 1900’s. Many cranberry farms also operated a sawmill, which provided lumber used for farm buildings, shipping crates and floodgates.

8. RESERVIOR

A supply of natural, unpolluted water is essential for the success of any cranberry bog. Cranberry growers rely on this freshwater resource to irrigate the bogs and to flood them in the winter to protect them from frost. The water is then drained off in the spring months so the cranberries can flower and produce berries.

9. UPLANDS FOREST

Composed predominantly of various species of oak and pine trees, the upland forest occurs on the drier land surrounding the cranberry bogs. The understory hosts a variety of shrubs including scrub oak, huckleberry, lowbush blueberry, and mountain laurel. Teaberry is an interesting groundcover found here, and was once extensively used for brewing tea and as a flavoring.



10. BORROW PIT

A borrow pit is an area where sand or gravel is dug for use at a nearby project. Many cranberry farms had an area where the grower mined sand to build and repair dikes. Sand was also spread across the bog every few years to stimulate cranberry growth.

11. FOUR MILE BRANCH

The creek running through the Cloverdale bogs is known as Four Mile Branch. The Four Mile Branch eventually joins Mill Creek in feeding into Manahawkin Lake, and is part of the Barnegat Bay Watershed.

12. FORESTED WETLAND

The plant community round downstream of the cranberry bogs is known as a forested wetland. Common species include: Atlantic White Cedar, Red Maple, Sour Gum, Swamp Magnolia, Highbush Blueberry and Sweet Pepper Bush.

Wetlands serve a variety of important functions including providing habitat for rare plant and animal species, such as the Pine Barrens Tree Frog and Swamp Pink

13. FOREST SUCCESSION

A disturbed or abandoned site will go through a “succession” of changes in plant communities. The young trees at this site are Pitch Pines, which occur at the earlier stage of this succession. They require more sunlight, and are faster growing than oak trees. Oaks, which can grow in more shaded conditions, can become established beneath the pines, and eventually replace them unless another disturbance sets succession back again.

14. SLUCE GATE

Sluice gates are typically constructed with wooden boards, which slide into a grooved frame set into the side of a dike. The gates are used to regulate water levels in the cranberry bogs.



15. PRESCRIBE BURN SITE

While fire is a natural component of the Pine Barrens ecosystem, it can threaten human life and property. Prescribed Burning is a tool that the New Jersey State Forest Fire Service utilizes to protect developed areas from wildfire. By burning built up leaves and underbrush in the winter, potential fuel for a wildfire can be reduced.

16. SPHANGNUM MOSS SHED

Sphagnum Moss, a low-lying plant frequently found in dense, extensive mats in cedar swamps and bogs, has been harvested by generations of Pine Barren residents. This absorbent plant was raked up, dried, and baled. It was then sold to florists for keeping floral arrangements moist and to plant nurseries for wrapping around the bare roots of seedlings for shipping. Sphagnum moss was also used as diaper material by Native Americans and by the military for wound dressings during the World Wars..

17. CHRISTMAS TREE FARMING

In 1979, the Collins family planted Christmas trees to subsidize the family farm income after the cranberry harvest. The species planted included Norway Spruce, Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir and White Pine. They also planted Japanese Black Pine as a nursery planting. These were popular on nearby barrier islands due to their resistance to salt spray.

DIRECTIONS TO CLOVERDALE FARM COUNTY PARK
34 CLOVERDALE ROAD,
BARNEGAT TOWNSHIP, NJ

FROM THE NORTH:

Take the Garden State Parkway south to Exit 67-B (Barnegat). Make right onto Route 554, West Bay Ave. Travel about 1 mile through 3 traffic lights. After the 3rd light make a left onto Cloverdale Road which is a dirt road. Follow to the Park.

FROM THE SOUTH:

Take the Garden State Parkway north to exit 67. Make a left off the exit (at the traffic light) and travel through three traffic lights. After the 3rd light make a left onto Cloverdale Road which is a dirt road. Follow to the entrance of the park.