



VIRTUAL GUIDED NATURE WALK

LISA TOLMAN WOOTON NATURE PRESERVE



Noah Blaster settled at what is now the Lisa Tolman Wotton Preserve on Little Deer Isle near Swains and Blastow Coves. Born in Ireland, Blaster served in the British navy in the American Revolution. Three generations later the family changed the name to Blastow, supposedly more dignified, more English like the names on Deer Isle itself. Neighbor William Swain also served the English, in the garrison at what is now Castine.



White spruce, a good colonizer, has repopulated the edges of the field here. It grows near the shore and has a pale color not quite like that of the more common Red Spruce inland on the island.





It is apparent that this was once a farm although today the farmhouse is no longer here.



At the edge of the field you can see cedar trees for which this preserve is known. Look at the browse line which the deer have made.



A closer look shows us that the needles are flattened as if they had been run through a pasta machine. This tells us that these are Northern White-Cedar, *Thuja occidentalis*.



Just before the trail enters the forest you - and the deer - will find an apple tree, another sign that this land was once farmed.

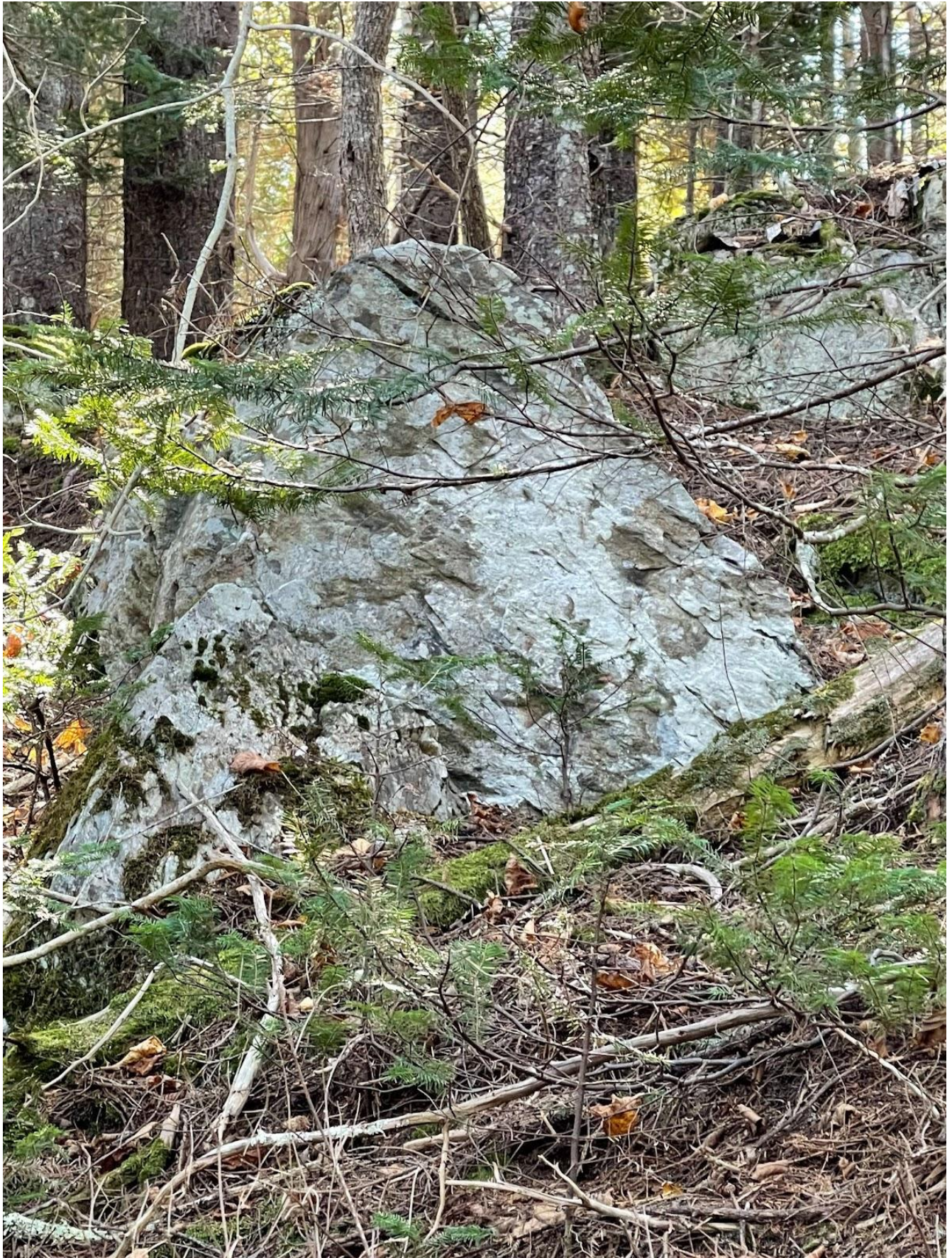






This preserve is a great place to learn to recognize tree species. The larch, or tamarack, is a conifer that loses its needles. In Fall they will be a lovely pale gold. In Spring these trees will have dark red new cones.





The rocks of the stone wall edging the field and the ledge beyond are certainly not granite.

Mountain Maple, a small understory tree, can be distinguished by the leaves' three large peaks, and large coarse teeth on the edges of the leaves.





This grove of trees will give you practice in identifying several of our common tree species. In the distance is a big yellow birch with the graceful arc of a mountain maple in front. Young red spruce and balsam fir are in the foreground.



Now that we have come farther away from the bay, the common spruce is red spruce with its spiky needles and red-brown twigs. Note the flat needles of the nearby balsam fir.





Deer do not like the taste of these ferns, but you can often see that the deer are happy to use them for bedding down at night. A well-used deer trail winds nearby.



One of the reasons to visit our preserves in Autumn is the color changes which can be useful for identifications. Here pictured in summer (above) are the browned Hay-scented ferns but

now (below) we see the entire patch browned. The one small patch of an evergreen species of wood fern stands out.





When you come to the bridge, you will see the white or paper birch on the right. The teeth on the perimeter of the leaves are helpful for differentiating this from other birch species. Wide on White.

White birch also has dark scars marking where the branches once were.





The White Birch bark (below) peels in wide sheets.



Yellow birch leaves (below) are narrow, the perimeter teeth are narrow, and the bark peels in narrow strips.







In the pool under the bridge you may see the narrow leaves of the white birch and the broader leaves of the yellow birch which stands on the opposite side of the bridge. It's not always easy to tell the two birch species apart. That is why we point out that being a leaf looker and a leaf learner are two slightly different pleasures. Be sure you allow yourself to enjoy the beauty!



This bark is grayish with deep ridges and furrows which tells us this is indeed Northern White-cedar.



This fallen spruce log is hung with beard lichens. The trunk sports shelf fungus oriented parallel with the length of the trunk. This tells us that the tree has been down for quite a while. On a live tree the shelf fungi are crosswise on the trunk so their spores drop by gravity.



The glaciated terrain here has significant outcrops of the Castine Formation, metamorphized layers of lavas and other volcanic deposits.



Many of the rocks are covered with lichens, mosses, and liverworts. Color will help you initially differentiate between the pale lichens, the green mosses, and Reddish liverwort, *Frullania*,

which you will also spot on some tree trunks. Once you learn to recognize it, you will see that it is quite common here.



Even the rocks on the trails often have interesting crustose lichens growing on them.



Tree trunks such as the cedars are often covered with lichen species.



Ground cover lichens are also interesting. They are a grayer color than the mosses.



Uprooted tree stumps give us an idea of the rubble left by the glaciers and the shallowness of the soil.



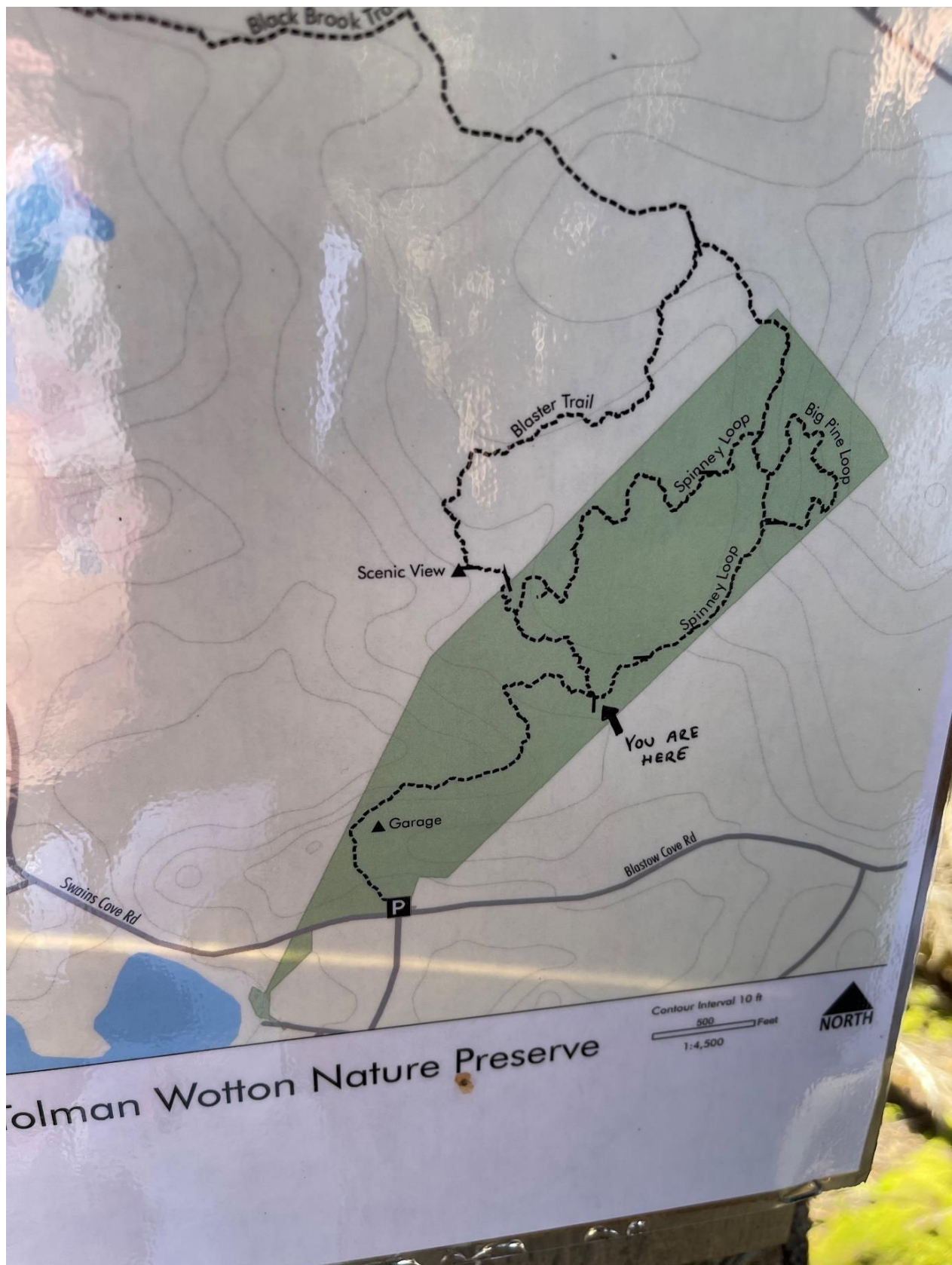


The full complement of dead branches on some of the dead spruces show that they grew up in full sunshine. Was that the result of long ago lumbering in the past or wind storms?



You have already met several large yellow birches found at LTW Preserve which have extensive root systems spreading along the top of the meager soil. Trees which did not manage that have clearly fallen victim to windthrow.





There are several choices at this point. One loop takes you circling a wetland basin and eventually reaches a height of large white pines.



The Spinney Loop trail circles the bog complete with cotton grass and the white cedar swamp nestling in a basin well off the trail. Not a place for visiting.



The Big Pine loop and a bit of scrambling up the heights will take you to these five-needled white pines.

When you have completed the Spinney and Big Pine loop and returned to the main trail, You will want to venture on to an intesting overlook.



Continuing on will take you up some rather challenging ground. But a rope railing is provided!



Bright hardwoods on the hillside stand out among the dark conifers.



A bit of Swains Cove is just visible.



The unusual plant community here, called Low-elevation Bald, is found on coastal hilltops. Lichens, blueberries and three-toothed cinquefoil are found on the bare rock.



Three-toothed cinquefoil.



Among the unusual lichens you find here is a small black rock tripe.

Whether you hike on further or return the way you came, you can enjoy all the plant life here while staying on the path to protect the fragile environment.



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