

# ZENA CORNFIELD

## SELF-GUIDED NATURE WALK

Peter Koch & Sara Lynn Henry. 8/9/14

DO STAY ON MOWED PATHS AND ROAD because of poison ivy and nasty bugs.

### 1. From the Picnic Table.

What is the view? –see field, woods, mountains, sky?

What is the character of the mountains, compared to the Adirondacks, Rockies or any higher mountains you know?? *Our Catskills were actually formed by the erosion of a plateau and are very old, therefore soft and rounded.*

### Looking at the woods behind the Picnic Table.

What are woods like at the edges of fields?

*Because of the sunshine there are more bushes, undergrowth; it is a place for birds, insects, and small animals. Above are oaks, maples, elms, basswood, and ash trees. Looking across the road you can see darker, denser woods, less undergrowth, with Cathedral-like vertical trees and light shining through from beyond.*

**2. The two streams.** Walk on the road to the left toward the bridge and small house. You will see left and right at the bridge the small stream—**the Fontayne Kill**, a tributary of **the Sawkill**. Where does it join the Sawkill? Look right, *turn right and about 40 yards down find the rocks on the right and the view. There are steps you can go down at the end of the rocks.* You can see the convergence of the two streams. What is it like?

**3. Retrace steps to the picnic table.** On the way notice the big spray of grape vines to your right.

### 4. At the table join the nature path to the far right to walk along the field.

Just beyond the first big telephone pole, find a huge stand of **mugwort** with its silvery backed leaves. Close up it has a slightly sage-like smell. *Mugwort is an invasive species. What does that mean? Invasive species are plants that have been introduced from outside, propagate very fast and edge out the native flora.*

See down below to the right of the mugwort, the lovely **clematis vines** with tiny white flowers.

### 5. Between the two telephone poles, find the numbered 5 spot.

See how many different kinds of vegetation you can count. You may find **chickweed** (*with tiny white flowers that look like a daisy; it is called "chickweed", because chickens like to eat it*), **jewelweed** (*with tiny orange flowers*), and the taller **milkweed** (some with pods as you go; *lots of the shorter plants in the field, which has been mowed.*)

**6. By and beyond the second telephone poll.** Find the **American hornbeam birches** with grey bark and fluted trunks, draped with **grape vines**, which fall over the path and curve up gracefully, growing up under the trees.

*As you walk further you will see more views of the Fontayne Kill to your right and another big stand of mugwort.* Follow the path going right through the mugwort. What do you hear?

As you walk beyond that how much more of the mountains can you see?

**7. A young white pine tree.** Walking beyond the mugwort, come upon the medium sized white pine tree on the right with its spray of needles at the end of every branch. *White pines can become 100 feet tall and live 200 to 250 years. There are some that live to 400 years old. White pines and cedars are the first come into open spaces as early species in the development of a forest.*

**8. Walk quite a ways to the last view spot of the Fontayne Kill.**

You will see lots of bushy **multiflora rose bushes** along the way with their prickly branches. *They are pleasant when they flower but are another invasive species.*

At the mowed look-out spot, find to your right an **American winterberry tree** with its green berries. *These berries will turn red in the fall!*

Looking at the stream you can see stream grasses and a stony island.

*From here you can continue on the path to the end where it curves around and returns. Or you can retrace your steps until you find the path that directly leads to the other main events. (You will have to cross a bit of unmowed meadow to get to that cross path)*

ENJOY!!

