

# MALAGA LAKE PARK Franklin Township NJ

## Walking Trail Map and Points of Interest

Malaga  
Lake

Malaga Lake  
Park Dr.



Parking  
Lot



# Malaga Lake Park

The trail is marked by white disks affixed to trees at about a 6 foot height.

## 1—Atlantic White Cedar

This tree is actually a cypress, rather than a cedar. It is the only representative of its genus on the East Coast. This evergreen is an important food for deer during harsh winters. The species was once more abundant but was over-harvested because of its high value wood.



## 4—Malaga Lake

Malaga Lake, an impoundment made by damming Scotland Run which is a branch of the Maurice River, is a popular recreation area among the residents of Franklin Township. The lake is known by fishermen as a hotspot for bass and other fish.



*Small-mouthed bass*

## 7—Ditch

The origin of this ditch is mysterious. It could have been dug for a number of reasons, most likely to connect the depression you can see in the distance. This depression may have been a cranberry bog.

Malaga Lake Park was once a farm. In earlier centuries trees were felled in forested areas throughout the east and the land was converted to farms. As the farms were abandoned, forests returned.

## 2—The Wetlands

The area you are in has wetlands on the stream side and uplands to the right of the path. Wetlands are known for their moisture-saturated soil and are the home to many wetland-dependent plants and animals. Red maples dominate a portion of the wetland forest.



## 5—American Holly

American Holly, New Jersey's only broad leafed Evergreen tree, is an abundant understory tree in the park. The red berries are an important survival food for birds, but can be poisonous to humans. Only female holly trees have the red berries. Male trees lack berries.



## 8—Trash

You probably saw trash along the trail. This is the result of dumping before municipal trash collection was available although, unfortunately, some people still dispose of truckloads of trash in our forests. Littering harms the plants and wildlife and distracts from the park's natural beauty. Do your part and please properly dispose of your waste.



## 3—Endangered Species

Along the lake, you may see threatened or endangered species such as American mistletoe, which is a parasitic plant that grows in clusters, in blackgum trees.



If you are lucky, you could even see a Bald Eagle flying over Malaga Lake!

## 6—Oaks, Pines, Mountain Laurel and Redcedars

Oaks are deciduous trees (trees that drop their leaves in fall) that grow acorns. Pines are evergreen trees and have needles. Together, Oaks and Pines form the canopy of most Franklin Township upland forests. Mountain Laurels are shrubs that often grow in thickets, with lower-growing huckleberries and blueberries, beneath them. The laurels produce colorful, star-shaped flowers. Redcedar trees are the non-needle evergreens with bluish berries. They are younger trees but grow rapidly and can become quite tall.

## 9—Periglacial Depression

In front of you is a circular depression in the land. This was created during the time of the last glacier by extreme cold temperatures and/or extreme winds. The glacier did not reach into South Jersey but a polar desert existed below it, in this area. As the glacier retreated, early people used areas like this as a source of water and a location to hunt game that sought the water.

## 10—Historic Houses and birds

There were once several houses in this area. These cabins were built in the mid- 20th century, primarily for summertime use. However, they were abandoned and torn down before the park was created.

The clearings made by the housing became sites for the growth of pitch pine trees, a tree that grows rapidly. The pines are young trees. Older deciduous trees around the cabins still stand. This mix of older broad-leaved trees and younger evergreen trees attracts various smaller perching birds such as the black-and-white warbler, pine warbler, Carolina chickadee, tufted titmouse, Carolina wren, and gray catbird, which you may see or hear at this spot.

## 11—*Lycopodium*

Commonly known as ground pine or ground cedar, this interesting plant produces yellowish, powdery spores. These flammable spores were once used for flash photography and even fireworks.



Lycopodium is part of an ancient group of plants that arose long before conifers and flowering plants and even dinosaurs, at the time that insects and primitive reptiles also appeared.

## 12—Well House

Notice the remains of a structure in front of you. This was once part of a well house. Well houses were important features in the past, when plumbing and running water were not yet introduced. Even today, with the aid of electric pumps, we still draw all our water from wells in Franklin Township.



Thank you to the following  
for the generous donations of  
materials and time

**Colucci Lumber Company**

**Franklin Township Environmental  
Commission**



Gray catbird



Tufted titmouse



Carolina wren

If you or your group would be interested in “adopting” the park to help with cleanups, restocking trail guides, and other activities, please contact the Environmental Commission through the Franklin Township Clerk’s office at 856-694-1234 x7.



Troop 123 Eagle Scout  
Project of Phillip Bagienski



Malaga Lake Park,  
Franklin Township, NJ