



2014 Launching Series-Hetzel Refuge

506 Breakneck Hill Road, Middlebury, CT

Planted by Two Adventuring Ladies

Hike time: 1 hour

Hike Length: 1-2 miles

Introduction:

Note: This is one of the eight Launching Series letterboxes originally posted only on the Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust website when created by The Two Adventuring Ladies in the summer of 2014. It was brought to Flanders' attention that a letterboxer had posted "add-ons" to the Launching Series on both Atlas Quest and Letterboxing North America. Many of these add-ons begin by using wording identical to the Flanders Launching Series hikes. Because the posted letterboxes used the same titles as those on the Flanders website, the Two Adventuring Ladies have posted all the Flanders Launching Series hikes with new titles. All Flanders hikes will have clue sheets with the Flanders Logo and include a checklist for young hikers. We hope this helps avoid confusion. Flanders is thrilled that the trails are being discovered by so many letterboxers!

A map of Hetzel Refuge and its location can be downloaded at:

http://www.flandersnaturecenter.org/flanders_places/hiking_trail_maps.html

The 2014 Launching Series is a set of eight letterboxing trails created to spread the word about the family friendly properties with trails at Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust. The clues for this letterbox are written so that first time letterboxers will be successful and this positive experience will leave them eager to hike more trails and find more letterboxes. Since we expect families to be hiking with children, we have added a few questions and comments to keep everyone engaged. One of the letterboxes on each trail will contain a rubber stamp for a letter: F, L, A, N, D, E, R or S.

Additional letterboxing hikes are planned for the properties at Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust.

Flanders has created a passport to use when hiking the trails planted by the Two Adventuring Ladies. Anyone who hikes twelve of Flanders' letterboxing trails should go to the Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust office, present their passport with the twelve letter stamps from those trails and sign their Trail Name on our poster of Successful Flanders Letterboxers. They will receive a prize. The office is open Monday-Friday from 9 until 4.

The Flanders Passport and all the trails with hidden letter stamps can be downloaded at:

<http://www.flandersnaturecenter.org/letterboxing.html>

Dogs are allowed on the trails but must be leashed.

You may not see all the plants and animals that we mention. You will see many things that the Two Adventuring Ladies have not mentioned. The observations for the 2014 Launching Series were made in the summer.

We wish you good luck on your hunt.

Clues:

You will arrive at a brand new Flanders kiosk at the entrance to a field. Drive into the field and park.

Walk back to Breakneck Hill Road and turn to your left. While walking on the road, you will pass a red barn and a red house that was built in 1738.

Immediately after the house you will see a path between two stone walls leading to your left. A mailbox in front of you is labeled 506.

Turn left and stroll between the stone walls.

As you enter this path, there will be a red blaze and a small white Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust sign on trees to your right.



At the end of this “corridor” you will see a double red blaze.

When the blazes are offset, you turn in the direction of the top blaze. This offset double blaze tells you to turn left.

When you arrive beside a pond, look and listen. You will hear frogs croaking but you may also hear hundreds of little frogs jumping into the pond as you approach –hundreds of them were jumping when the Two Adventuring Ladies walked on the trail.

Look for dragonflies and insects called “skaters” or “common water striders” skimming across the water.

As you approach this small pond, a trail with an orange blaze will go off to your right. Eventually you will turn on to the orange trail, but that will not be until you are at the end of a larger pond named Mirey Dam Pond. Look at your map. Stay with the red trail – next to this small pond. Listen for the rushing water at the outlet (if the water is high enough to spill into the drain). Where does the water go?

Look for a tall pole that looks like it might be a flagpole. This is actually a pole the Hetzel family used for stringing lights for nighttime ice skating on the pond. Pass this pole and head into the woods on the red trail. Move quietly and you may see a group of woodpeckers.

You will go up and down small hills. You will pass the orange trail again. Stay on the red trail. At the bottom of one hill, when you can see Mirey Dam Pond slightly to your right, you will have a choice: continue on the red trail over a small stream on your left or turn to your right and start on the orange trail.

The red trail continues a short distance and comes to the edge of Flanders’ property where you would turn around and return to the same red/orange junction. There are no letterboxes on that part of the trail. However, it is fun to pick your way across a stream on rocks and logs.

Whichever choice you make, eventually you will join the orange trail at this spot. Then Mirey Dam Pond will be on your left. Do you see any turtles basking in the sun? Count how many kinds of ferns you find at this spot.

The orange trail will swing to the right and then to the left. As it does this, you will pass several areas on your right that look as though they were once excavated by humans. Just past the last of these, turn off the trail to your right. Approximately 38 feet off the trail you will find a letterbox between rocks on your right.

Stamp your logbook with our stamp and stamp our logbook with your stamp. Neatly repack and replace the letterbox.

Continue on the orange trail. You will come to a fork. Look at your map. At this point the orange trail is behind you, to your right (look carefully and you will see an orange blaze on a tree quite a way down the trail to your right) and straight ahead of you. You want to go straight.

As you walk listen for crows and hawks.

The orange trail will make a sharp right turn marked by an offset pair of blazes. Someone's driveway is in front of you. Two yellow signs mark the edge of Flanders' property. Go through a break in a stone wall and turn right with the orange trail. Watch carefully. There will be an orange blaze on a tree on your left. There will be a stone wall and a small swamp on your right. A short distance after the end of the swamp there will be an opening in the stone wall. Go through it. You will have to go around a tree that is growing in the middle of the opening. Immediately turn to your right and look in the stone wall.

The letterbox here contains a letter stamp so be sure to stamp your passport as well as your log. After doing all your stamping and replacing everything, return to the orange trail.

Note: if you are walking along looking for the opening in the stone wall and you come to an orange blaze on a tree on your right, you have gone too far. Back up about 71 feet and look again.

When you are back on the orange trail you'll see a pond on your left. Approach quietly. You might see a Great Blue Heron. Just past the pond, a green trail goes to your left. You will return to the orange trail, but take the green just far enough to explore the edge of the pond. Do you see water lilies? Do you hear another outlet? Do you hear another frog?

Return to the orange trail and turn left. This trail will dead end in the red trail. Turn left and return to Breakneck Hill Road.



CHECK LIST FOR THE HETZEL REFUGE AND TRAILS

Did you see, hear or count:

Crows _____

Hawks _____

Frogs – croaking or jumping _____

Two water outlets _____

A tall pole by a pond _____

A woodpecker _____

A turtle _____

A Great Blue Heron _____

Water lilies _____

How many kinds of ferns did you count? _____