



2014 Launching Series-The Fleming Preserve

Cowles Road, Woodbury CT

Planted in 2014, **Revised 2024**

Hike time: 30 minutes

Hike length: 1 mile

Introduction:

A map of The Fleming Preserve and its location can be downloaded at:

http://www.flmdPrsnaturPr.PntPr.org/flanders_olace,;/hiking trail map,;.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. 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 have not been mentioned. The observations for the 2014 Launching Series were made in the summer.

We wish you good luck on your hunt.

Clues:

Park near the Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust's kiosk in a field off Cowles Road.

Start walking on the mowed path that is in the field to the left of the kiosk. As you cross the field, notice the old apple tree. You will go through an opening in a stone wall. Go straight. You are now on the blue trail - marked by blue blazes on trees and blue arrows on trees or posts. Look at a low red building on your left. This is the old sugar house - where Flanders' volunteers used to bring the sap from the maple trees to "boil it off" and create that delicious maple syrup. Flanders now has a larger sugar house on the Van Vleck Sanctuary.

Walk around the sugar house. Peek behind a broken old door leaning against the sugar house.. You will find a letterbox.

Use our rubber stamp to mark your log book. This is not a letter stamp but it proves that you know where the old sugar house is. Use your stamp to mark our log book. Write the date and your trail name in our log book. If you would like to, write a note in our log book. Put everything back just as you found it.

Go back to the blue trail and continue to your left. Before you come to Cowles Rd, you will come to a tree with blue blazes that look like:



This means that the blue trail will turn to the left. Follow it. Pass another stone wall. Watch and listen. There are a lot of squirrels scurrying about here. Look at the ground. You **will see** a lot of "caps" (cupules) left from last year's acorns. Who do you think ate the acorns and left the "caps"?

Many trees in this area have died and fallen. Most of them are Ash trees recently killed by the invasive Emerald ash borer. The insects lay their eggs under the bark of the Ash trees. When the eggs hatch, the larvae create serpentine tunnels which block the flow of water and nutrients in the trees. Look at the logs on the ground. If the bark has fallen off, you will see the remains of those tunnels.

You will walk over a wet area on a boardwalk and once again approach Cowles Rd.. Turn around and retrace your steps. After the trail swings to the left you will see a sign on a tree on your right. The sign says "John's bench and overlook." Follow this trail but BE CAREFUL. Go Slowly.

There will be quite a steep drop in front of you. You will come to an amazing stone bench created by nature. Sit on it and pause a moment. Isn't the view into the woods wonderful? Watch the sunlight play games with the leaves as it stretches down to the ground.

The stone bench has been dedicated to the memory of John and Marlice Fleming who once owned this land.

Go back to the main trail. On your way, notice the baby oak trees.

When you return to the blue trail, turn right. As you approach the sugar house, notice the thin hoses connecting many trees. In the late winter these hoses will carry the sap from the maple trees.

After the sugar house you will come to a tree with a blue trail blaze. On the far side of the tree you will find a yellow wooden arrow. It points down a trail between two stonewalls. Take this trail.

You will wind through the woods so you will have to watch for those yellow blazes in order to stay on the path and make the correct turns. You will make a left turn and then a right turn. Both these turns are marked by offset yellow blazes. At the bottom of the hill, the trail swings to the left. There are no offset blazes here. Next, there is a right turn marked by appropriate offset blazes. At this right turn stop and look up the hill to your left. There are several LARGE rocks on the side of the hill.

Go - Climb up the hill. At the top of the hill, turn to your right. Look in a crack between two rocks.. You will find a letter box. Stamp our log book with your stamp. Write your trail name and the date in our log book. Stamp your passport and log book. Carefully refill the letterbox and put it back just where you found it.

Return to the trail. Head down hill on the yellow trail. Go through a break in a stone wall and into an open area. The trail crosses the bottom of the field and then swings to the left, up the hill and along the side of the field. As you follow it, look for daisies and black eyed susans. Do you see any butterflies?

Just before you arrive on Cowles Road, you will see a tree with a yellow blaze on the left side of the trail. Turn left. You will see yellow blazes on a trail going up the hill toward the parking area. Follow it and you will return to your car.



CHECKLIST FOR THE FLEMING PRESERVE

Did you see or hear?

An old sugar house

"Caps" from acorns

Squirrels

A natural stone bench

Baby oak trees

Hoses for maple sap

Daisies

Black Eyed Susan

Butterflies

Tunnels made by Ash borers" larvae