

The Wies Preserve

Vivian N. Wies gave the Land Trust her beloved “Meadow Island,” an 11 acre gem of upland and salt marsh, in 1998. The trail which runs around the perimeter of the island is easy going and offers one of the most intimate walking experiences in Branford.



Photo by Branford Land Trust

The property is an oval “island” in a tidal wetland. Access from the road is over a grass covered berm lined by a freshwater wetland where skunk cabbage sprouts in the spring. Phragmites, winterberry and cedar also line this access path. On the island itself, the flora changes dramatically in response to the dry, rocky soil, consisting mainly of oaks, pitch pine, mountain laurel, blueberry and shadbush. The shadbush, also known as Juneberry, offers a special treat when its white flowers briefly appear in late April. These two common names are fitting, since the flowers bloom when the shad are running in the rivers and the berries appear in June. Vivian Wies especially treasured this land for its profusion of flowering lady slippers in mid-May, but their numbers are now declining for unknown reasons. These plants should not be disturbed in any way. A series of exposed granite ledges that overlook wetlands, the narrow Pine Creek and distant upland areas that adjoin Pleasant Point Road are found on the island’s west side.

On the southern tip of the island, a spur trail takes you to the edge of the salt marsh. Near some old dock pilings are mudbanks that are covered with fiddler crabs during the warm months. If you approach too loudly, they’ll all scurry down into their holes. All year, masses of mussels can be seen along the river banks. Osprey, turkey vultures, belted kingfisher, herons, egrets, mallard and deer all frequent the area in and around this small and secluded haven.



Photo by Peter Marteka of the Hartford Courant

Directions and Parking:

The Wies Preserve is located on Stony Creek Road (Route 146) about 0.2 miles west of the intersection of Stony Creek Road and Leetes Island Road. Look for a small grass pull-off and a Branford Land Trust trailhead marker across from a yellow hydrant.

Permitted/Prohibited Activities:

Properties are open during daylight hours plus one hour before and after. Stay on the trails and please carry out everything you carry in. Hunting or the use of BB guns and air rifles is prohibited. No open fires or camping. Motorized vehicles are strictly prohibited and violators will be prosecuted. Follow the classic counsel to leave a place or trail better than you found it.



Photo by Peter Marteka of the Hartford Courant

Easy Hike

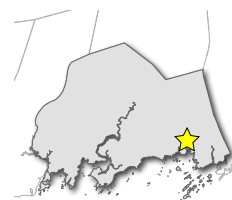
The Wies Preserve has a short walk around a beautiful preserve. There are many opportunities to see different types of flora and fauna. The short hike also gives views of the completely surrounding salt marshes on every side of this property except the route leading in. From the “Meadow island” there will be several chances to view many different species of wildlife that inhabit the area.

Total Trails Length: approx. 0.30 miles



For more information about this walk contact:

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