



Department of  
Environmental  
Conservation



## What's Your Footprint? Self-guided Interpretive Trail

### Introduction

Here at Reinstein Woods we've taken lessons from nature on everything from composting to building construction, in an effort to minimize our impact on "The Woods." We still have a long way to go, but nature has helped us reduce our impact and make our "footprint" a few sizes smaller. The Footprint Trail highlights some of our favorite lessons from nature. This trail is 0.6 miles long.

*We hope these lessons will inspire you to reduce your impact and leave a smaller footprint too!*

### A. My Home is Your Home

The Reinstein family decided long ago to share their home with others, by donating this property to DEC. The stone house visible across the lake was once a family retreat. Now Reinstein Woods provides a retreat for humans as well as a host of trees, plants, and wildlife.

*You can help us take care of this gift. Please pick up litter, stay on the trails, and respect the wildlife you encounter!*

### B. Good Things Come in Small Packages

Reinstein Woods protects about ½ square mile of habitat and is completely surrounded by suburbia. Amazingly, this small preserve is home to many different ecosystems. As you wander the trail, be on the look out for different habitats and the wildlife that live there. See if you can spot a few of our favorite animals:

- painted turtles and northern water snakes
- gray treefrogs and spotted salamanders
- red fox, flying squirrels, beaver, and mink
- bugs, beetles, and spiders
- more than 100 species of birds!

*What lives in your backyard? You might be surprised by what you find!*

### C. Watch Where You Put Your Feet

Humans leave footprints—some are big and some are small. Humans have even left their footprint on Reinstein Woods. The 19 ponds and wetlands which make The Woods

so unique were built by Dr. Reinstein. The evergreens along the lake shore and trails, planted in abandoned fields, are also reminders of human activity. Fortunately, these man-made footprints provide important food and shelter for wildlife.

*What kind of footprints are you leaving in your backyard—are they big or small?*

#### **D. Waste Not, Want Not**

Do you notice a large number of trees with dark, flakey bark—similar to burnt potato chips? These are black cherry trees. When we built the Environmental Education Center, cherry wood from the construction site was used for trim in the meeting room. By re-using these trees, we took a small step in reducing our footprint—decreasing the environmental impact of transporting wood over long distances to build our Education Center.

*Take your first step in smaller shoes—reuse and recycle whenever possible.*

#### **E. A Little Decomposition is Good for You**

What if all the giant logs in this part of the forest never decomposed? Thanks to the tiniest of creatures, decomposition happens quickly and these logs will eventually become part of the soil. In the Environmental Education Center, decomposition takes place underneath our kitchen sink—literally! Red worms live in a bin and break down our kitchen waste. We use this rich compost to fertilize our gardens.

*Stop by the Education Center for more information on starting your own composting project!*

#### **F. Too Much of a Good Thing**

Take a look inside the fenced area just down the footpath. Do you see the seedlings and young trees? This is how the forest floor of Reinstein Woods should look. Now look at the forest floor outside the enclosure. Something is eating more than its fair share! The culprits are white tailed deer. Their footprint—the dramatic lack of young trees, shrubs, and wildflowers—can be seen throughout the preserve.

*Give nature a hand—try to reduce your consumption and leave a supply of resources for future generations!*

#### **G. Water, Water Everywhere—but is it fit to drink?**

Reinstein Woods has an abundance of watery habitats and thanks to the cattail marsh the water is fit to drink—for wildlife that is! Cattail marshes are nature's water filter. Because of their dense vegetation, marshes slow down water movement. Pollutants—such as pesticides and fertilizers—filter out as the water moves through the marsh. The result is cleaner water and happier, healthier wildlife.

*Help maintain nature's water filters by limiting the quantities of pesticides and fertilizers applied to your yard.*

## **H. Do Your Research**

You are standing right next to a research station! A small pool of water forms here every spring and becomes prime habitat for frogs, toads and salamanders. Reinstein Woods has nine different species of frogs—and this spot is a designated FrogWatch USA research station. FrogWatch USA is a national project which monitors frog populations. Frogs are disappearing around the world and our research is helping scientists understand why.

*Get involved—visit <http://www.akronzoo.org/frogwatch> to learn how to become a FrogWatch USA citizen science volunteer.*

## **I. Do Not Disturb**

Everyone likes a little privacy—even wildlife. About 1/3 of our total acreage is set aside as a wildlife sanctuary. We limit public access to this area to give wildlife a break from human activity. Providing creatures with a space to call their own helps to keep our wildlife wild!

*Let nature reclaim a piece of your backyard and provide sanctuary for native wildlife.*

## **J. Everyone Needs a Helping Hand**

Reinstein Woods' management plan is designed to help nature thrive— sometimes it means creating sanctuary, sometimes it means intervention, sometimes it means helping nature along...but the goal is to minimize our footprint on The Woods as much as possible.

*How do you help wildlife? Stop by the Environmental Education Center for tips on how you can help the wildlife living in your backyard.*

## **K. Everything Leaves a Footprint**

Beaver leave more than tracks in the mud! Their habit of building dams can dramatically change the landscape—transforming streams into ponds and forests into wetlands. Fortunately their construction footprint is “green”. All of their building materials are locally made and biodegradable. Their beaver-made habitat also provides plenty of food and shelter for wildlife! Look ahead for an active beaver lodge at the edge of the pond.

*What color is your footprint? Is it “green” like this beaver lodge?*

## **Conclusion**

We hope you have enjoyed your walk and were inspired by nature's many lessons. You can help us keep our footprint small when you **recycle this brochure**. If you don't want to take it home with you, please return it to the kiosk at the trail head.

Be sure to visit the Environmental Education Center and pick up additional information and inspiration on how to make your footprint a positive one!

*Please visit again and remember...*

*“Let nature be your teacher.” William Wordsworth*

*Please stop by the Education Center for information on the schedule of nature walks and educational programs at Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve.*

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