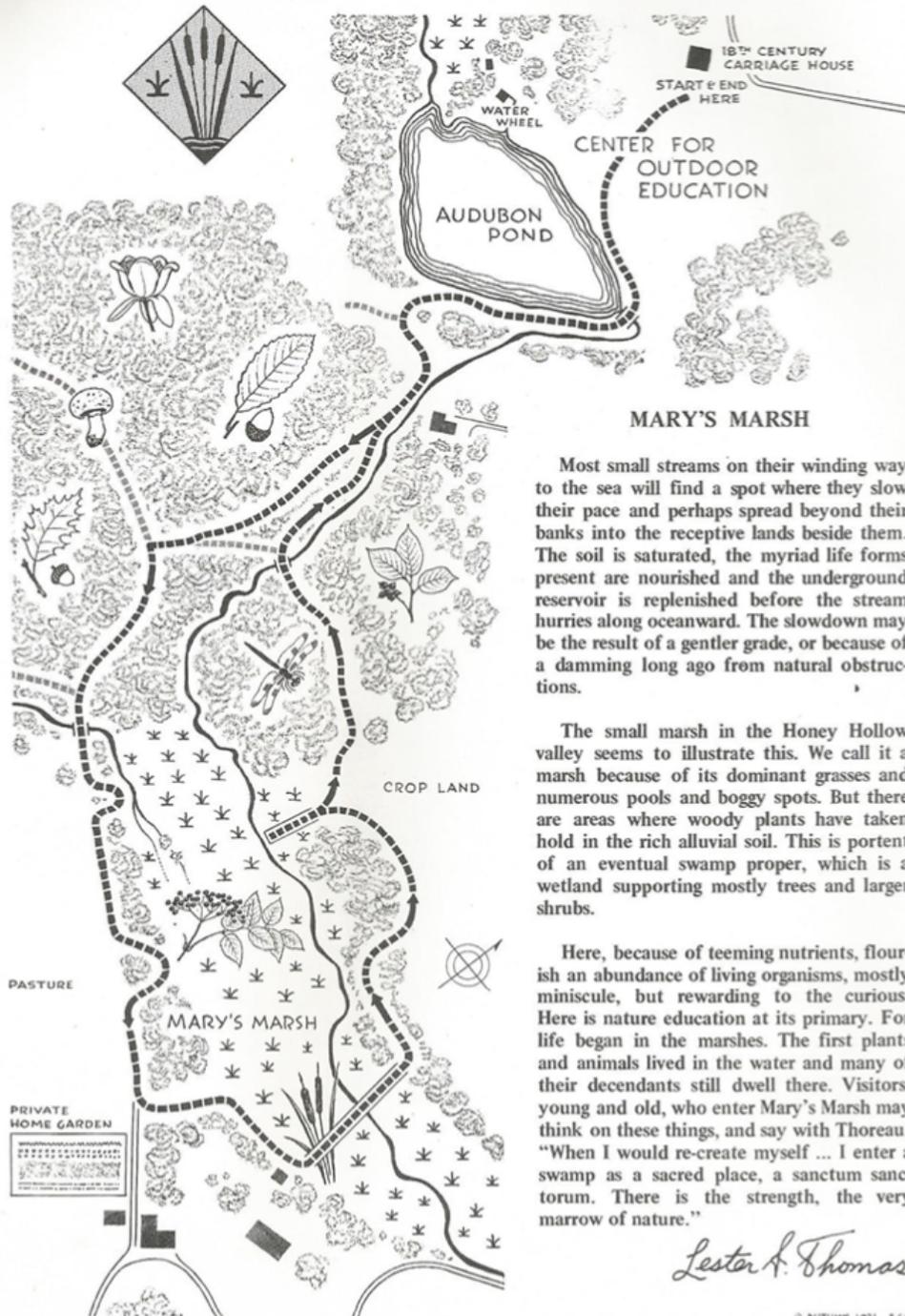


# HONEY HOLLOW WATERSHED MARSH TRAIL



## MARY'S MARSH

Most small streams on their winding way to the sea will find a spot where they slow their pace and perhaps spread beyond their banks into the receptive lands beside them. The soil is saturated, the myriad life forms present are nourished and the underground reservoir is replenished before the stream hurries along oceanward. The slowdown may be the result of a gentler grade, or because of a damming long ago from natural obstructions.

The small marsh in the Honey Hollow valley seems to illustrate this. We call it a marsh because of its dominant grasses and numerous pools and boggy spots. But there are areas where woody plants have taken hold in the rich alluvial soil. This is portent of an eventual swamp proper, which is a wetland supporting mostly trees and larger shrubs.

Here, because of teeming nutrients, flourish an abundance of living organisms, mostly miniscule, but rewarding to the curious. Here is nature education at its primary. For life began in the marshes. The first plants and animals lived in the water and many of their descendants still dwell there. Visitors, young and old, who enter Mary's Marsh may think on these things, and say with Thoreau: "When I would re-create myself ... I enter a swamp as a sacred place, a sanctum sanctorum. There is the strength, the very marrow of nature."

*Lester A. Thomas*