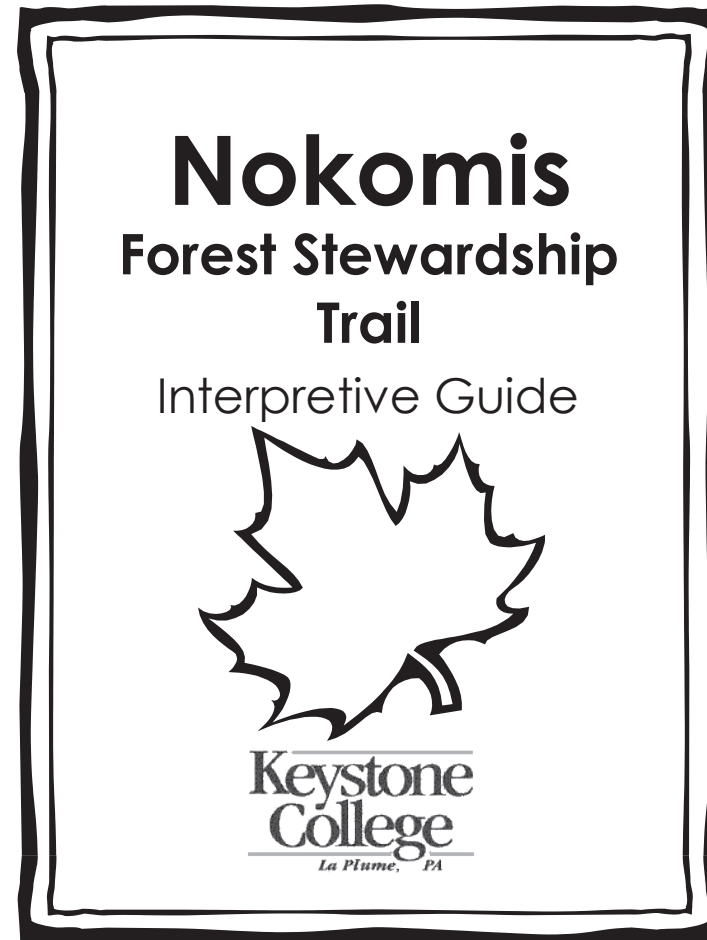


In the Fall of 2012 the trail guides and maps were edited once again to reflect changes made when the small suspension bridge by Bailey Field was removed. These edits were completed by Nora Dillon and Scott Harris.

Sponsored in part by the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Authority in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the National Park Service.



Map of the Nokomis Interpretive Trail



Acknowledgements

Many people have played a role in building this Interpretive Trail. It was the joint project of Nokomis classes through 1989. The Class of 1988 played an especially large part in developing the educational aspects of the trail:

Scott Altieri	Ben Hallman	Staff
Matt Bedine	Susan Kacer	Joe Blood
Brendan Bell	Kristen Keuter	Bill Davis
Mike Bothe	Barbara Lancaster	Howard Jennings
Jodi Coar	Megan Millett	Leigh Jennings
Mike Collins	Steve Neilson	Jude Kostage
Peter Colonna	Josh Seitz	Toni Macon

Following the flood of January 1996, the Weekender Student Government, led by Mary Oswego and Kathy Krebs, spearheaded a community effort to rebuild the suspension bridge. Al Urban supervised the construction team of students, past and present, and community members. Their efforts reopened the back campus and its trails for all to enjoy again.

In the summer of 2009, under the Direction of Howard Jennings, the original Nokomis trail was combined with the Forest Stewardship Guide to produce the current guide. Revisions were done by Samantha Watkins and edited by Nora Dillon.

Station 22 Flood Plain

Stop and take a look around, what do you notice about this area and the flat area below that you just came from? You are standing in a **flood plain**, an area bordering a river that is subject to flooding. Look ahead of you, the steep rugged terrain ahead adds to this area being highly susceptible to flooding.

This area has seen its share of flooding over the years. You can tell by the amount of trees that have been knocked over and the debris on the ground.

You made it! This is the last station of the Nokomis Forest Stewardship Trail.

Please follow the arrows ahead to lead you back to the beginning of the trail.

**Remember...Leave Only Footprints,
Take Only Pictures.**



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Welcome...

... to the Nokomis Forest Stewardship Interpretive Trail! Along this 1 mile trail numbered posts mark educational stations dealing with natural and local history and information stations give information on various aspects of Forest Stewardship. The first stop is across the suspension bridge to your right at the stream's edge.

The suspension bridge is the gateway to Keystone's Woodlands Campus and the rest of the trail. *Be careful* ... it's as bouncy as it looks! Construction of the trail has been ongoing since 1981. Over the years the trails, steps, bridges, benches and erosion control devices were built and maintained by Nokomis* and Keystone College Students.



**From 1980-1989 Professor Howard Jennings directed Nokomis, a Keystone summer program for pre-college students modeled after the very successful Youth Conservation Corps.*

Station 17 **Maple Sugaring** (See Station)



Station 18 **Wildlife Management** (see station)



Station 19 **Water Resource** **Management** (See Station)



Station 20 **Invasive Species** (See Station)



Station 21 **Recreation** (See Station)



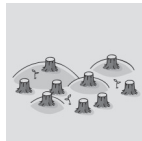
walked to the suspension bridge to cross over to attend Keystone Academy.

The railway lasted only until 1932 when a variety of factors (including the popularity of the automobile and the paving of Lackawanna Trail Road) drove the company into bankruptcy. On other parts of campus, the former railbed makes an excellent hiking and cross-country ski trail.

Station 14
Timber Management
(See Station)



Station 15
Clear Cutting
(See Station)



Station 16
Wood as Energy
(See Station)



***The next station, **17 Maple Sugaring**, is a seasonal station during January-March. It is not included on the physical trail map, however, if you'd like to have a visit, follow this trolley bed down the hill to the station marked 17.*

Station 1
The Nokomis Creek: An Angler's Paradise

Riding the current, a leaf passes under the suspension bridge. Where did it come from and where is it going?

Nokomis Creek (*officially known as the South Branch of Tunkhannock Creek*) has its origin in several lakes in Wyoming and Lackawanna Counties. A few miles downstream it empties into the Susquehanna River, on its way to the Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Ocean.

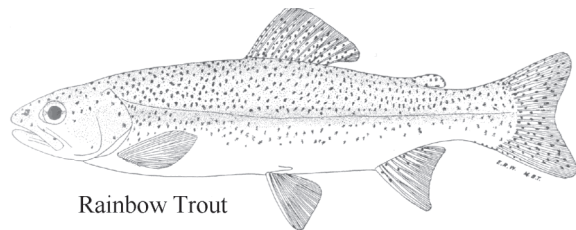
Its flow past this bridge is little more than a trickle during the hottest, driest summers. However, in January 1996, a raging flood washed the bridge away. In a wonderful display of community spirit, volunteers untiringly raised funds and physically rebuilt this replacement structure.

It is sometimes hard to realize that our actions may have consequences hundreds of miles away. The Chesapeake Bay is presently experiencing environmental problems. Poor water quality and lack of oxygen have decimated fish and shellfish populations in this huge estuary. Much of the blame is due to water draining into the Bay via tributaries like the Susquehanna River, which is the **major**

source of pollutants. **Farming and soil conservation practices in Pennsylvania and New York State are the reason.**

The view from the middle of the bridge is magnificent yet serene. The gurgling water and overhanging trees are home to a diversity of aquatic life. Excellent water quality here allows the stream to be designated by the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission as 'Delayed Harvest-Artificial Lure Only' with restrictions on the take of trout. Such status is conferred only on very healthy waterways.

Rainbow, Brown, Brook, and Palomino Trout are regularly stocked in these waters. Otherwise, the trout populations would quickly decrease because they do not breed here. This area provides habitat for many kinds of aquatic organisms, such as insect nymphs, crayfish, birds, and fish. Whether fishing, bird-watching or appreciating the scenery, this area permits recreation year round!



Rainbow Trout

Such 'girdling' is only one of the problems facing beech trees in these woods. Another equally lethal one is beech blight, a fungal disease that slowly weakens the tree by rotting away the core, its heartwood. Infected trees often have sparser foliage than their healthy neighbors, but their symptoms go much deeper. They are the 'living dead', awaiting the gusts of a storm to snap them off and expose their hollowness. Luckily, this specimen doesn't appear to be blighted yet. Look for the many others nearby that are infected.

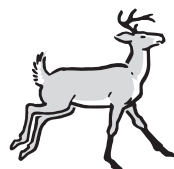
Station 13 Factoryville Station

Only the concrete platform and cinders underfoot remain of the Factoryville railway system. Built in 1906 to give Scrantonians easy access to the developing countryside, the trolley had its maiden trip to Dalton on July 1, 1907. The next year the route was expanded to serve Lake Winola and Factoryville (the latter branch later extended farther northward). Preparation of the railbed here required much blasting, digging, and filling. This station served as the junction of those two lines. The run from downtown Scranton to Factoryville took one hour, and the trip to Lake Winola took twice as long. Passengers disembarked here and

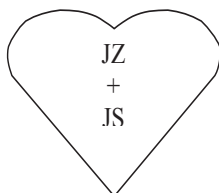
Station 10
Tools of Forestry
(see station)



Station 11
Deer Population
(See Station)



Station 12
Lovers are Loving



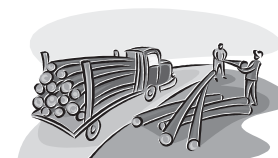
... this beech tree to death!
 With its smooth bark as a
 tablet, and the tendency for
 carvings to expand as the
 tree grows, the beech has
 always been a favorite
 place to profess one's love
 (or ego). However, close

under the bark is the phloem, a major
 component of the tree's distribution system.
 Even superficial cuts will gouge this layer, the
 lifeline of the tree. And, if there are cuts all the
 way around the tree (these don't even have to
 be at the same level!), its ability to move
 nutrients can be completely cut off.

Station 2
Forest Stewardship
(See Station)



Station 3
Forest Resources
(See Station)



Station 4
Hayscented Ferns
(See Station)



Station 5
Forests Pests
(See Station)



Station 6 Lake Nokomis

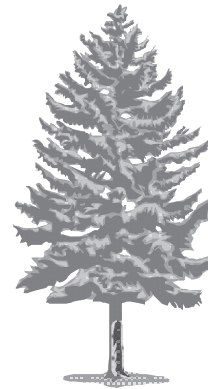
The bench provides a marvelous overlook of the stream (and a great place to eat lunch).

Can you image that the area below was once a lake? Shallow Lake Nokomis filled the valley, impounded by a dam located about one-third mile downstream. The lake backed up to the bend you can see to the right. Fishing, swimming, canoeing, and ice-skating were activities enjoyed by students and the local community. The Boating Club kept three boats here. Eventually the deteriorating dam was breached and the lake drained, leaving the current Nokomis Creek (South Branch of the Tunkhannock).



Station 9 Ice Age Refugees

At least a trickle of water flows year round in this ravine, keeping it cooler and moister than anyplace else on the trail. It is obvious, though, that the trickle must have been a



torrent at other times to have carved this gorge. Hemlocks, typically a northern species, grow tall and straight on the sides of the gorge. When our climate was cooler, hemlocks were far more common. Since the retreat of the glacier about 12,000 years ago, they are often restricted to spots like this, away from the drying heat of the sun.

Rivalling the hemlocks as the tallest specimens in this ravine are several arrow-straight basswood trees. They are remarkable 'self-pruners', losing branches as they grow to yield an extremely straight trunk.

Station 8 Restful Thoughts

As you are resting here watching the stream and smelling the woods, let us share with you some thoughts of Wallace Stegner:

"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books...; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or into extinction; if we pollute the last clean air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence so that never again will Americans be free from noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong to it."



Station 7 Swinging Bridge

These concrete abutments are all that remain of the first suspension bridge at Keystone. That bridge (pictured below) was 300 feet long and spanned the ravine and Nokomis Creek until the 1940s. It served passengers of the Northern Electric Railroad which stopped nearby dropping off students from Scranton to attend Keystone Academy, which became Keystone Junior College in 1934, and Keystone College in 1999. During the snowy winter months, daring local residents used the steeply sloping bridge as a sledding run!

