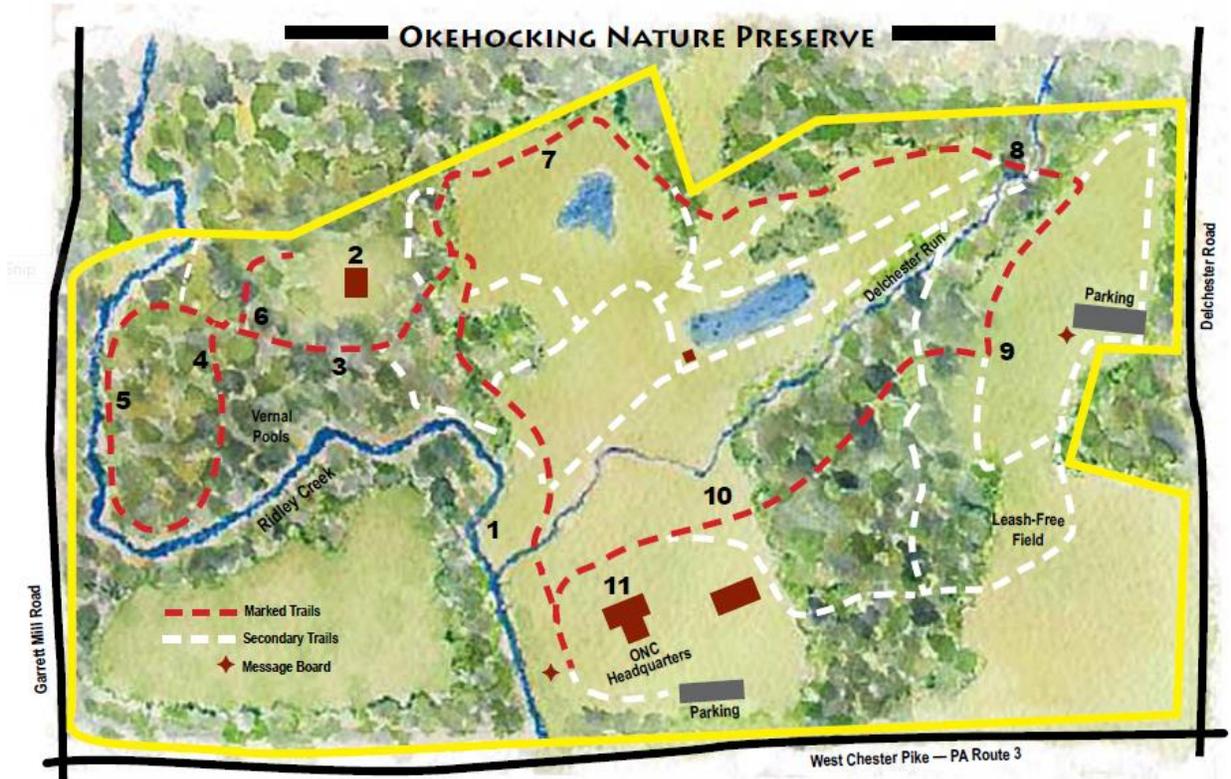


ABOUT OKEHOCKING NATURE PRESERVE

The Okehocking Preserve, owned by Willistown Township, is a 180-acre unique property that includes mature woods, meadow lands, uplands, wetlands and riparian areas along Delchester Run and Ridley Creek. The Preserve includes about 5 miles of mown and wooded walking trails.

The woodlands you can see looking south in the distance from the highest points in Okehocking Preserve are in Ridley Creek State Park. Tyler Arboretum is just beyond them. Together with Okehocking Preserve, these lands total 3,441 publicly accessible protected lands that provide critical habitat and environmental benefits as well as recreational and health benefits to the public.



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SELF-GUIDED TRAIL WALK

Please use this trail map provided by Okehocking Nature Center to enjoy the beauty and unique treasures of Willistown Township's Okehocking Preserve. Following the markers on this trail map will take you for a walk of about 2.4 miles.

HAVE A GREAT HIKE!

INTERPRETATION OF MARKERS

1. Ridley Creek: A dam was removed from this portion of Ridley Creek in 2008. Removal of this and other dams along Ridley Creek have made this portion a free-flowing stream, improving water quality, habitat, and restoring the natural stream bed so that fish and other stream life can have unimpeded passage to the upper areas of the stream. Recent surveys have shown that mussels have returned. It is approximately a 1/2 mile walk from marker 1 to marker 4.

2. Goulder's Barn: This stone barn and surrounding 4.4 acres within the Preserve is owned by Willistown Conservation Trust. The Trust secured the funding and permanent preservation of this 18th century Willistown jewel.

3. Throughout this area you can see the problems caused by invasive species, such as Oriental Bittersweet, Porcelain Berry, Multiflora Rose, Japanese Stiltgrass and Mile-a-Minute Weed. Invasive plants that came from other parts of the world overpower native plants. Native plants tend to work with nature to enhance the health of the ecosystem, but invasives greatly decrease biodiversity and are considered the number two threat to native ecosystems, second to habitat destruction by development and mining.

4. This trail is the start of a 1/3-mile loop that takes you around bottom land prone to flooding along Ridley Creek. Going clockwise around the loop, you will see an area of vernal pools and duck habitat on your left. If the weather has been wet, this trail will be muddy or icy, so please be cautious.

5. The water resources of Ridley Creek are being threatened, as run off from development increases pollution, stream bank erosion, and sedimentation of the Creek and its tributaries. This Preserve with its beneficial tree canopies and riparian buffer provides important protection for Ridley Creek and its tributary, Delchester Run.

6. Going up this trail will bring you along a challenging but lovely rocky, shaded uphill climb in the midst of mature trees, including beech, shagbark hickory, red oak, white oak, tulip poplar and red maple. You may continue across the meadow, or if you prefer to avoid this climb, you can return to Goulder's Barn the way you came.

7. As you walk along this ridge take a moment to appreciate the beautiful vista. To your left you will see the two water filtration ponds making up part of the water reclamation system at work in this Preserve. Many birds can be viewed from here and throughout the Preserve, including many types of ducks as well as geese,

herons, vultures, hawks, and even an occasional bald eagle.

8. The small bridge at the bottom of the hill takes you over **Delchester Run**, which flows south and west from here into Ridley Creek. The meadow lands that you see around you provide important habitat for insects, small mammals and many resident and migratory birds. 140 different species of birds have been catalogued here by Valley Forge Audubon beginning in 2000.

9. On the other side of the split rail fences you see the spray fields that make up part of the water reclamation project carried on at this Preserve. This trail takes you west along a wooded path leading to meadows that provide critical habitat for all kinds of critters and birds. Following the fence line up the hill from this marker leads you to a leash free field, the only place in the Preserve where dogs are permitted to be off leash.

10. This trail takes you through wonderful open meadows where there is an abundance of bird activity. Delchester Run flows through the valley. Look for bluebirds, swallows, red-winged blackbirds, robins, mockingbirds, song and field sparrows and cardinals. For a complete list of birds spotted in Okehocking, go to willistownparks.org and Visit Okehocking Preserve.

11. The Garrett Farmhouse—the headquarters of the Okehocking Nature Center. Built circa 1802, the Aaron Garrett farmhouse was ideally located near Ridley Creek. The remains of the barn foundation can be seen nearby.

The acquisition of Okehocking Preserve was made possible by the Willistown Township Open Space Fund, Chester County Municipal and Land Trust Grants, PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Municipal and Land Trust Grants, the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund and the collaboration of Willistown Township and Willistown Conservation Trust. Funding for the 2008 dam removal mentioned at Marker 1 was provided DEP Growing Greener.

