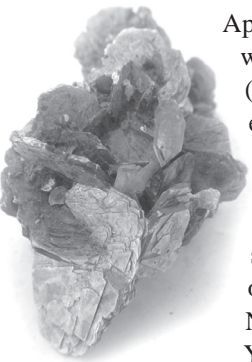


**POST #1:**

The river birch, with its peeling red bark, is one tree that likes moist soils. The alders nearby, with their little cones and feathery-veined leaves, are another. Find the river birch and the alder trees.

Water is one nonliving (abiotic) factor that determines which plants and animals can live here. *Can you think of any other nonliving factors that determine what lives here? How many different types of plants can you count on this land between the waters?*

**POST #2:**

These rocks tell an old story. During Appalachian mountain-building, they were pushed, pressed and moved (possibly hundreds of miles), and experienced so much heat and pressure that they re-crystallized into metamorphic rocks, mainly gneiss (pronounced 'nice'), and schist. The last mountain up-thrust occurred when Africa collided with North America!

You can see individual minerals in this gneiss outcrop. Find some

sparkly mica winking at you, some glassy-looking milky quartz crystals, and some white blocky chunks of feldspar.

*Looking across the lake can you see a building made of rock?*

**POST #3:**

Rhododendron and Mountain Laurel are two evergreen shrubs associated with the mountains. Use the dichotomous (pronounced 'dikotomous') key to find them (a dichotomous key separated items into 2 possible groups. Scientists use this system to figure out what something is). Start by looking at one of the shrubs by the post, and see if statement #1 describes this shrub. Follow the directions from there.

#1. Woody shrub with simple green leaves. If yes, go to #2.

#2. Leaves at least as long as your hand. If yes, it is a rhododendron. If no, go to #3.

#3. Leaves all shorter than your hand. If yes, it is a mountain laurel.

*Think about the word "evergreen." What does it mean?*

*There are other evergreens nearby, with needles for leaves. What are they called?*

Psst. On the way to Post #4, look for some gnawed-on tree stumps where beavers have given the stumps a pointy conical shape (like a birthday party hat).

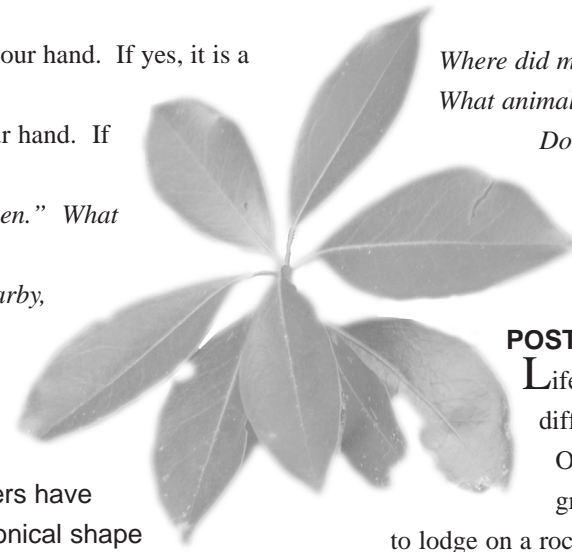
**POST #4:**

Has anyone here found their niche (rhymes with rich)? An animal's niche is all the roles or jobs that an animal has in its habitat. For example, one of the spider's jobs or niches is to eat insects. A spider's niche is also to be food for the bird called the Carolina Wren, and to make webs that hummingbirds use to make their nests. Every living creature is important to other creatures here.

*Looking out over the lake, can you see any signs of animal life? Name 2 lake animals and tell at least one type of niche (job) of each animal.*

**POST #5:**

Ah, the sound of rushing water that quickens the soul! Visionary planners had this dam built in 1898 to create Lake Placid, one of four lakes in the park, to provide water for the city of Greenville. Mountain Creek flows into the lake. As far as we know, the stones you see are the original stones. The land that makes up Paris Mountain State Park was protected to protect the drinking water. Forests slowly filter water, preventing muddy run-off and flooding, and they also absorb pollutants carried by rainwater.



*Where did most of the water for the lake come from?*

*What animal in the park makes dams in the streams?*

*Do you think there would be a park here today if the land was not protected and the lake was not made one hundred-plus years ago?*

**POST #6:**

Life abounds, even when it would seem difficult.

On a large rock, find pale green lichen and green moss. These are the first living things

to lodge on a rock, making a place for soil to land, and that makes a place for other plants.

*Do any large rocks have other plants on them?*

*Find signs of animal activity in a dead oak tree. Find the feathery green needles of a cedar tree growing out of the roots of that old oak tree. Are there any nuts around that could provide life-giving food to a squirrel? Or that might somehow take root and grow into a grand old oak tree?*

**POST #7:**

With your back to the lake, can you see any structures built with stone? Where do you think the stones came from? Young men in the 1930s hauled stones found here at the park and from neighboring areas to build this shelter, and around 50 other various structures around the park. Who were these men?

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a program created in the 1930s by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to provide jobs during a time known as "The Great Depression" when there were few jobs to be found. A CCC camp with 200 young men was formed here in 1935, making it possible to build roads and structures so that Paris Mountain was able to open in 1937.



As you continue toward Post #8, look for other stone structures built by the CCC (long bridge leading to the picnic flats; the restroom by Shelter One nearby. Park Center and the houses in the park were also made by the CCC).

**POST #8:**

One white oak tree like the one here can yield up to 7,000 acorns in one year! The squirrels are likely to eat the white oak acorns during the fall, and bury the red and black oak acorns, which have a higher fat content and don't sprout as fast as the white oak acorns. Why would the squirrels bury these?

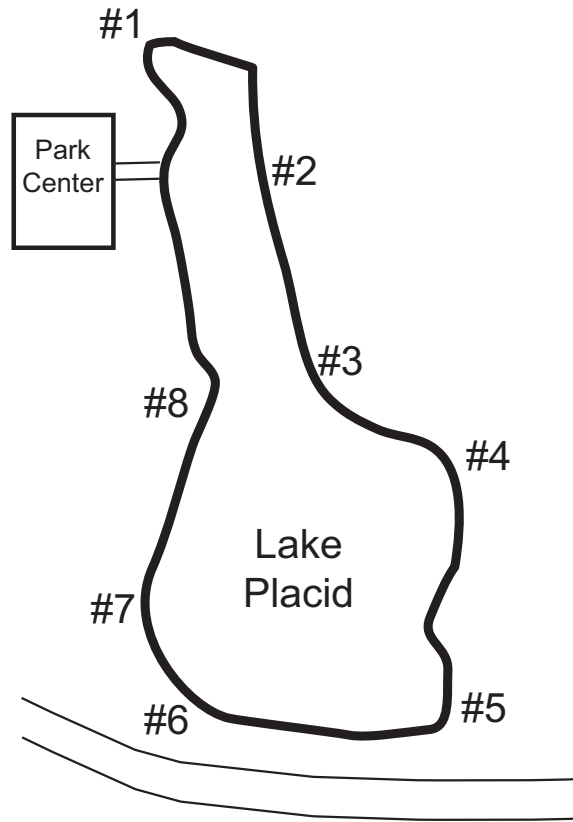


Depending on the time of year, you might find a sprouted white oak acorn under the leaves. See if you can find any acorns.

Looking around the picnic flats, figure out how many large white oak trees are here (the white oaks have rough white bark). Then figure out how many acorns they could make altogether if each tree made 7,000 acorns.

Answers to the questions:

- #1: Possible answers: temperature, type of soil, rocks.
- #2: The Park Center / bathhouse.
- #3: "Evergreen" refers to plants that keep green leaves all year. Pines have needles.
- #4: Possible answers: a niche of a fish is to eat bugs and also a fish is eaten by Great Blue Heron birds. A beaver's niche is to eat tree bark and topple trees, making new habitats for other animals.
- #5: Mountain Creek & the beaver.
- #6: Possible signs: holes, chewed places.
- #8: Possible answer: There are at least 30 white oaks, so  $30 \times 7,000 = 210,000$  acorns!



# Lake Placid Self-Guided Nature Trail

*Our Lake Placid Nature Trail takes you on a one-mile loop around the lake. This program was created according to state science standards. Stop at each of the 8 wooden posts, beginning at the bridge below the Park Center and discover what each station has to find, do or think about.*

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