



*Wooded swampland along
Cassadaga Creek.
Photo by Solon Morse.*

Cassadaga Creek Preserve

Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy

What

Forests, wetlands along
Cassadaga Creek

Where

Town of Stockton,
Chautauqua County, NY,
off of Route 380, southwest
of the Village of
Sinclairville

USGS Quadrangle(s):
Ellery Center

Why

Birding, canoeing, wildlife
watching

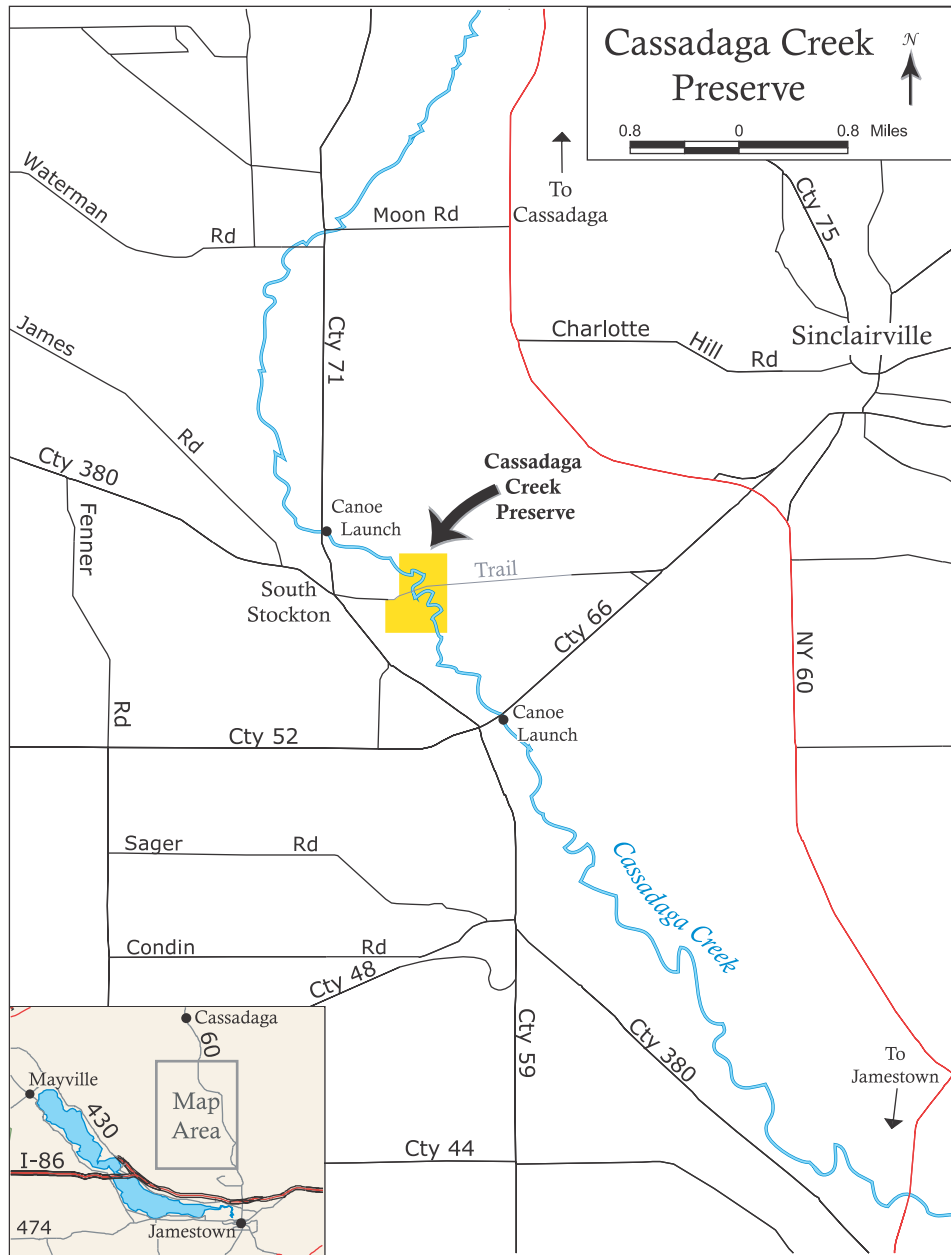
The 125-acre Cassadaga Creek Preserve consists of wetlands and floodplain forest covering over ½ mile of Cassadaga Creek. It lies just east of Cty 380 in the southeast corner of the Town of Stockton, close to the village of South Stockton, in Chautauqua County.

Natural History Interest

The Cassadaga Creek Preserve protects a stretch of the meandering creek as it loops along a silty, muddy bottom atop the deeply buried Cassadaga Valley. Floodplain wetlands such as those found at the preserve allow floodwater to spread out and dissipate its tremendous energy, minimizing flood damage to downstream farmlands and communities such as Gerry and Falconer.

The preserve contains oxbows, formerly parts of the creek that have since been cut off from the creek's flow to form shallow ponds and wetlands. These, along with a beaver pond on the site, provide good habitat for waterfowl and other birds and mammals such as Muskrat and Mink. Be on the lookout for possible sightings of River Otter as well. Observers have found several possible den openings and possible "slides" along creek banks that may be evidence of otters. This needs further investigation.

Black Willow, Silver Maple, Red Maple, American Elm and Green Ash are among the tree species present, all of which characterize the Northern Riverine Forest community. Eastern Hemlock shades hummocky areas.



Shrubs and understory trees typical of this site include Common Highbush Blueberry, Smooth Winterberry Holly, Silky Dogwood, Basket Willow, and Northern Arrowwood.

The forest floor and wet areas are home to many species of herbaceous plants. Ferns and fern allies that have been documented include horsetails, quillworts, and Ostrich, Lady, Cinnamon, and Royal Fern. Soft Rush and several species of sedges, including Woolgrass, Bottlebrush Sedge, and *Carex intumescens*, *C. crinita*, *C. scoparia*, and *C. vulpinoidea* have been found on the site.

Skunk Cabbage and False Hellebore are common. Canada Mayflower, Goldthread, and Partridgeberry are present in shady areas.

Preliminary bird surveys have turned up a good variety of shorebirds, waterfowl, and both woodland and grassy nesters. They have included Spotted Sandpiper, Wood Duck, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Common Yellow-throat, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Belted Kingfisher, Veery, Red-eyed Vireo, and Red-shouldered Hawk.



Autumn beech leaves. Photo by Solon Morse.

Other Notes

The preserve is located between two popular Chautauqua County-maintained canoe launches on the Cassadaga Creek Marden E. Cobb Waterway. It is also just 2.5 miles south of Kabob Wildlife Management Area.

Guided tours of the site may be arranged for youth or adult nature groups by contacting the CWC at 413 North Main Street, Jamestown, NY, 14701; Tel: 716-664-2166; Fax: 483-5007; E-mail: chautwsh@netsync.net. Web Site: chautauquawatershed.org.

How To Get There

The Cassadaga Creek Preserve is located just southwest of Sinclairville and east of Mayville, NY.

From the east: From NY 60 in Sinclairville, turn onto Cty 66 South (turn left onto Cty 66 if you are going north on NY 60 or turn right if you are going south on NY 60) and proceed approximately 2.3 miles to Cty 380. Turn right onto Cty 380 and go approximately 1.2 miles. Turn sharply right just

before Cty 71 and go 0.2 mile to the dead end barricade. Enter the preserve via the abandoned road.

From the west: From the intersection of NY 394 and NY 430 in Mayville, NY, take NY 430 east approximately 1.7 miles to Cty 54. Turn left onto Cty 54 and go approximately 6.8 miles to the intersection of Cty 54, Cty 57 and Cty 380. Proceed straight through the intersection onto Cty 380 South (do not turn left onto Cty 380) and go approximately 2.0 miles to South Stockton. Just past the left turn for Cty 71 go left and proceed to the dead end barricade. Enter the preserve via the abandoned road.

Since there are no trails in the preserve and Cassadaga Creek winds through the preserve, a great way to tour this site is by canoe or kayak. You can launch a boat from the closed bridge over the creek or from the Marden E. Cobb Waterway launch site upstream from the preserve on Cty 71. There is another county-maintained launch site downstream from the preserve on Cty 66 where you can take your canoe or kayak out.