

Quick Information

This loop will take you through several habitats ranging from flat wide dirt paths and open fields to small trails winding through trees and streams, returning down a steep hill adjacent to power lines.

Distance: ~2.5 miles

Difficulty: Moderate

*Dogs are allowed, but must be kept on leash.

Remember to bring:

- Good shoes that can get muddy, have decent traction, and are comfortable.
- Long pants (Recommended)
- Water
- Trail map or GPS

*Please be careful to check for ticks after hiking.

Linbrook Woodlands is a 168-acre parcel adjacent to Linbrook Park and located within the Franklin Park municipality. The sloping, wooded property has frontage along Big Sewickley Creek with deep wooded ravines, trails, and many springs. A historic cemetery and church foundation alongside Hopkins Church Road are reminders of earlier developments on the land. Check the Linbrook Woodlands Project on www.iNaturalist.org for examples of the diverse wildlife observed here.

More information can be found at:
alleghenylandtrust.org



Allegheny Land Trust is a land conservation non-profit helping local people save local land in the Pittsburgh region since 1993. Currently protecting more than 2,100 acres of green space in Allegheny and Washington Counties, ALT continues to work on protecting land of significant value to our region's unique scenic landscape, biodiversity, and water quality.

Land protection, stewardship, and education

are three core areas where ALT directs staff efforts to protect land, maintain and improve its quality, and educate community members on its valuable attributes. With a conservation area within 12 miles of every Allegheny County resident, ALT has created convenient access to outdoor recreation and scenic beauty.

Join us and make a difference

Become a member, volunteer, or attend an expert-led event at one of our conservation areas.

Contact information: 412-741-2750,
info@alleghenylandtrust.org

Created by Nadine Oury as part
of her Girl Scout Gold Award
project.

Download map at: bit.ly/lbhabitatloop



Habitat Hike

of the
Linbrook Woodlands Conservation Area



Trailhead located on Hopkins Church Road
0.3 miles south of Big Sewickley Creek Road

GPS: 40.606367,-80.154316



**ALLEGHENY
LAND TRUST**

Points of Interest

Streams: A variety of species reside in the habitat created by running water. Many small aquatic creatures can only survive in very clean water with a neutral pH. Small changes in the water condition could eliminate these species from the area. Unfortunately, a stream can easily become polluted. Erosion, which clogs streams with sediment, is caused by humans clearing out plants that hold the soil together with their roots. Runoff from nearby roads introduce harmful substances and pollutants into streams, which are carried downstream to harm more habitats throughout the forest.

Cattails: The wet and rainy nature of this area combined with soil that does not readily drain provides the perfect habitat for cattails. Nearby you may find a large diversity of species characteristic of wetlands. These habitats result from the natural climate of the area combined with manmade clearings that decrease water drainage. Unfortunately, abundant rain, hills, and loss of strong rooted plants also promotes erosion, decreasing nutrients in the soil and clogging streams, further decreasing proper drainage.

Hemlocks: The hemlock is Pennsylvania's state tree. As you walk around this loop you will notice several hemlock groves. Like most conifers, they have needles instead of leaves and do not shed them in the winter. In order to survive the cold weather they make a chemical that acts like antifreeze in their needles. This allows year round sun absorption, but puts them at greater risk to breakage under the weight of snow and wind. To compensate they grow very straight with narrow crowns.

Power line: As you continue down the old road bed, look right at the path that was clear cut for power lines. The absence of trees provides opportunities for grasses and smaller plants to flourish under the readily available sunlight. As you return under the power lines to complete the loop, close your eyes and listen. You may hear the quiet humming of the electricity carried by the lines. Be sure to look around as you walk down hill. The cleared area provides a great opportunity to see some amazing views.

Vernal pools: As you look along the sides of the trail you may notice puddles. Spare some time to look more closely. In late spring to early summer you may see dozens of small tadpoles in different phases of developing into an adult frog. Depending on the type of frog, it could take anywhere from a couple of weeks to a few months to completely transform. Despite seeing many tadpoles, many kinds of frogs are actually close to extinction*. Many other animals like to eat them, from their time as an egg well into frog adulthood. An estimated 90% die before they undergo metamorphosis to become a frog. Other leading reasons include overall habitat destruction, the spread of fungal diseases and water pollution.

* Reptiles and amphibians are going extinct at 10,000 times the rate of other organisms.

Meadow: Close your eyes, listen for the birds that typically surround the clearing. Look closer at the grass, can you spot any tiny wildflowers? Small species of flowers and grass flourish here under the bright sunlight. This area attracts and shelters a variety of insects, specifically those that help pollinate nearby ecosystems. The meadow also acts as a safe space for many species during mating seasons. It provides shelter to animals that cannot seek refuge in the woodlands, such as rabbits. You may be able to spot the nests or holes that they call home, and even old skeletons. Trees bordering open spaces get more access to nutrients and light. These benefits are then shared through an underground network of roots that can support other trees throughout the forest.

