

# Kingfisher Pond Trail

The Kingfisher Pond Trail runs parallel with the eastern edge of Kingfisher Pond, connecting with the Beaver Pond Trail on the northern end. It is an easy hike with a beautiful view of both the forest and the pond. The trail is just over a quarter of a mile and is a great trail for beginners and small children.

Some seasonal plants and migratory wildlife mentioned in this self-guided brochure may be scarce from December through February.



We certainly hope that you enjoy your walk on Kingfisher Pond Trail. Please return this guide to the Admissions Desk.

We look forward to your next visit!  
[www.chattnaturecenter.org](http://www.chattnaturecenter.org)  
(770) 992-2055

## 6. Forests Are Like Onions, cont'd.

Next, notice the lowest growing plants along the edge of the trail. This “herbaceous” layer is an essential food source for some animals of the forest. Can



Eastern Box Turtle  
*Terrapene carolina*

you name a plant-eating animal that would need to find its food close to the ground?

The “shrub” layer is composed of bushes and shrubs. Identify this layer by looking for dense foliage and many small leafy branches growing close together. Some you will see in this area are native sumac, azalea and sweetshrub.

The “understory” is made up of the trees that never quite make it to the top of the forest such as dogwoods, red maples, and American beech. Many



Red Maple  
*Acer rubrum*



Tulip Magnolia  
*Liriodendron tulipifera*

understory trees have to fight for enough sunlight. Look way up to the tops of the trees and you will be peering at the “canopy” of the forest. These trees get the most direct sunlight of all of the species in the forest. Trees you will find in *this* canopy are oaks, tulip poplars, pines, hickory, and sourwoods.



# Kingfisher Pond Trail

*a self-guided tour*

Please respect nature as you hike on the Kingfisher Pond Trail; take only pictures and leave only footprints. **To enjoy this trail, please follow the blue blazes (a spot/mark on a tree) that can be found along the trail. Numbers are marked with blue paint on stones.**



Belted Kingfisher  
*Ceryle alcyon*

### 1. Living on the Edge

Stop for a moment underneath the power lines and take a look around. What kinds of things might live here?

A surprising number of plant and animal species can be found here. This is an *edge habitat*; many plant species have taken root due to land disturbances. Many animal species use the protective cover of the woods and the open space to hunt.



Thistle  
*Cardus sp.*

Why else might animals prefer this area?

### 2. Who Lives Here? (Spring and Summer)

Keep your eyes open for a variety of species that call this transition area home. Plants and animals you may find here include:



Eastern Tiger Swallowtail  
*Papilio glaucus*



Northern Cardinal  
*Cardinalis cardinalis*



Red-shouldered Hawk  
*Buteo lineatus*



Woodland Sunflower  
*Helianthus sp.*



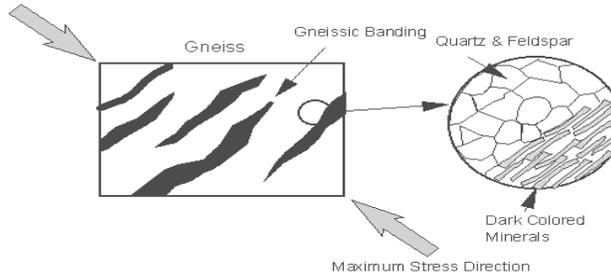
Butterfly Weed  
*Asclepias tuberosa*



Blackberry  
*Rubus sp.*

### 3. Mean Rock!

No, these are actually gneiss rocks. Gneiss (pronounced “nice”) rocks are metamorphic, which means that they have been pressed and heated in the earth for millions of years until they changed into this kind of rock. Look closely and you will notice the bands and swirls in the rock that were formed by heat and pressure.



If you look even closer, you might see colorful patches growing on the surface of the rocks. These are living things called moss and lichens which are important in making new soil. They produce an acid which slowly breaks down the rock on which they are growing. So, these gneiss rocks are not only nice, but helpful as well.

### 4. Kingfisher Pond

Wildlife is easy to view around this spring-fed pond if you know where to look. You may see kingfishers and herons searching for fish to eat, or ducks and geese gracefully swimming across the water. On sunny days turtles are commonly seen basking in the warmth of the sun on fallen logs in or near the water. Abundant insect life in the pond attracts species of frogs, lizards, and other birds.



Mallard Duck  
*Anas platyrhynchos*

### 5. Soil Horizon



Take a few moments to stop and observe an example of soil horizons (or layers.) Georgia Piedmont forest is made up of pines and hardwoods and has very different soil

than you would find in northern maple forests or in western redwood forests.

The soil here even has a special name—*rión sandy loam*. Look closely at this cross-section and see if you can find all four soil layers.

### 6. Forests Are Like Onions...

...they have lots of layers—five to be exact. The leaves, pine needles and other organic matter covering the soil make up the “leaf litter” layer. Animals such as insects, reptiles, amphibians and even mammals depend on this layer for coverage and camouflage.



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