



2014 Launching Series-Van Vleck Farm and Nature Sanctuary

Church Hill Rd., Woodbury CT

Planted by Two Adventuring Ladies

Hike time: 1 hour

Hike length: 1 mile

Introduction:

Note: This is one of the eight Launching Series letterboxes originally posted only on the Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust website when created by The Two Adventuring Ladies in the summer of 2014. It was brought to Flanders' attention that a letterboxer had posted "add-ons" to the Launching Series on both Atlas Quest and Letterboxing North America. Many of these add-ons begin by using wording identical to the Flanders Launching Series hikes. Because the posted letterboxes used the same titles as those on the Flanders website, the Two Adventuring Ladies have posted all the Flanders Launching Series hikes with new titles. All Flanders hikes will have clue sheets with the Flanders Logo and include a checklist for young hikers. We hope this helps avoid confusion. Flanders is thrilled that the trails are being discovered by so many letterboxers!

A map of Van Vleck Farm and Nature Sanctuary and its location can be downloaded at:

http://www.flandersnaturecenter.org/flanders_places/hiking_trail_maps.html

The 2014 Launching Series is a set of eight letterboxing trails created to spread the word about the family friendly properties with trails at Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust. The clues for this letterbox are written so that first time letterboxers will be successful and this positive experience will leave them eager to hike more trails and find more letterboxes. Since we expect families to be hiking with children, we have added a few questions and comments to keep everyone engaged. One of the letterboxes on each trail will contain a rubber stamp for a letter: F, L, A, N, D, E, R or S.

Additional letterboxing hikes are planned for the properties at Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust.

Flanders has created a passport to use when hiking the trails planted by the Two Adventuring Ladies. Anyone who hikes twelve of Flanders' letterboxing trails should go to the Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust office, present their passport with the twelve letter stamps from those trails and sign their Trail Name on our poster of Successful Flanders Letterboxers. They will receive a prize. The office is open Monday-Friday from 9 until 4.

The Flanders Passport and all the trails with hidden letter stamps can be downloaded at:

<http://www.flandersnaturecenter.org/letterboxing.html>

Dogs are allowed on the trails but must be leashed.

You may not see all the plants and animals that we mention. You will see many things that the Two Adventuring Ladies have not mentioned. The observations for the 2014 Launching Series were made in the summer.

We wish you good luck on your hunt.

Clues:

Park at the Sugar House parking lot on Church Hill Rd. Walk across the road, passing under an arbor made of cedar, grape vines and bittersweet vines.

If you need to get organized, have a seat on the bench. Did you leave anything you need in the car? Bug spray? Your stamp? Your passport? A map of the trail?

Walk straight ahead. There will be a tree with a white trail blaze in front of you. As you pass this tree, the red Trail House will be on your left. Spot the blue trail marker and enter the Edmund L. Briggs trail. Ed Briggs was a devoted naturalist and essential to the development of Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust.

Continue following the blue blazes until you spot a viewing platform on your right. Being careful not to step in the poison ivy, climb the stairs and take the time to look out at the marsh. Do you see a beaver lodge? Did you actually see a beaver?

Continue along the trail until you come to a post with a map and a bench in memory of Raymond B. Packard. Look at the map and you can see where you are. You will enter a loop and will come back to this spot. Turn left at this post and continue several feet until the blue trail splits. Take the trail slightly to your left. As you walk, you will begin to go up a little hill. Look for a wide unmarked trail on the left. Follow this toward the marsh and you will find a bird blind. As you enter the bird blind, watch out for wasps. Do you see the ripped sheets? Someone put these rips in on purpose. The openings are big enough for you to look through but still hide you from the animals in the marsh. What do you see? It could be a turtle. It could be a Mallard duck or it could be a heron. Did you hear a frog? Look at the huge Cinnamon Ferns in front of the bird blind.

Look beneath the sheet on the floor of the bird blind.

You just found your first letterbox! Take it out of the building. Open it. Use your stamp to mark our log, write your trail name and the date. Now use our stamp to mark your log book. This is not a letter stamp so it does not have a special spot in your passport. Write the date near the imprint.

Did you remember to put everything back? Did you hide it in the same place that you found it? When the letterbox is hidden, continue on your way. Be careful to stay on the boardwalk. Those boards were put there to protect the fragile environment. When you rejoin the trail, turn to your left. Notice the power lines. When you have completed the loop and have come back to the map on the post and the bench, turn left. You will walk along the edge of a field and pass the wilderness trail on your left. Notice that the blaze for this trail is a different color (red). You stay on the blue trail. Continue, passing the geology trail (green) on the left. Stay to the right of the fork, until you come to a birdhouse on a post. Which way should you go? Now you need to find the yellow trail. Turn to your right and spot the yellow blaze on a tree at the beginning of the woods. Enter the woods and pass the tree with the yellow blaze. You will go down a gentle slope and swing to your left by a tree with a yellow blaze on your left. You will pass two trees with yellow blazes on your right.

The trail will take another swing to the left and begin to slope up hill. You will pass a tree with a yellow blaze on your left. Shortly before the next yellow blaze (which will be on your right), you will see a tree with three large vertical trunks on your right. It had a fourth trunk but that has fallen. There is a fifth smaller trunk on the back. Leave the trail and look between the trunks – you will find a letterbox.

Use your stamp in our logbook and our stamp on your passport and log book. Put everything back and continue on the yellow trail. Soon the yellow trail will end. You will turn right on the blue trail and return to the arbor.



CHECK LIST FOR THE VAN VLECK FARM AND SANCTUARY

Did you see or hear:

An arbor made of cedar, grape vines and bittersweet vines _____

Poison ivy _____

A beaver lodge _____

A beaver _____

A turtle _____

Mallard ducks _____

A heron _____

Cinnamon ferns _____

A frog _____

Power lines _____