



# ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE

## PRESERVE GUIDE & TRAIL MAP



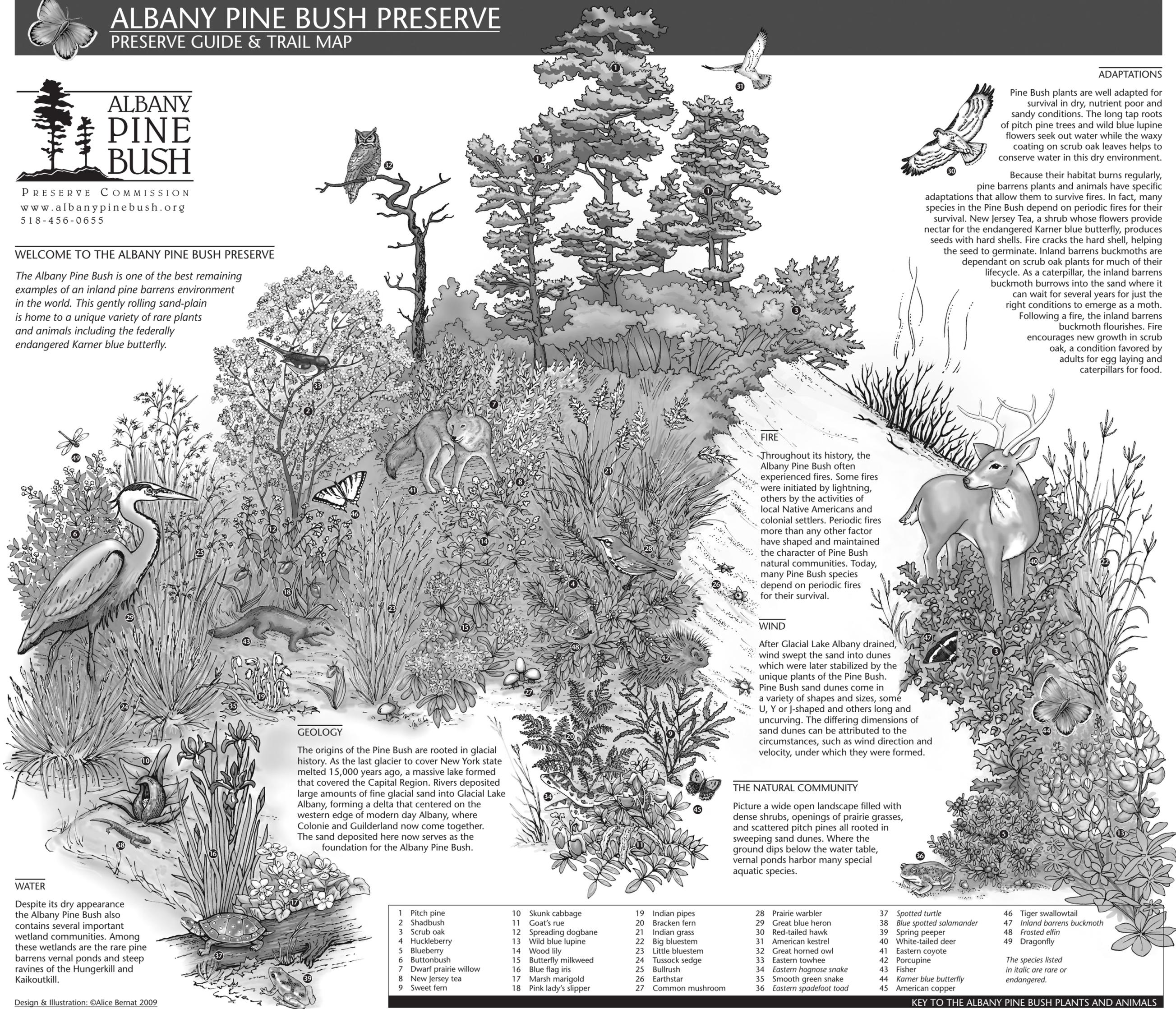
### WELCOME TO THE ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE

The Albany Pine Bush is one of the best remaining examples of an inland pine barrens environment in the world. This gently rolling sand-plain is home to a unique variety of rare plants and animals including the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly.

### ADAPTATIONS

Pine Bush plants are well adapted for survival in dry, nutrient poor and sandy conditions. The long tap roots of pitch pine trees and wild blue lupine flowers seek out water while the waxy coating on scrub oak leaves helps to conserve water in this dry environment.

Because their habitat burns regularly, pine barrens plants and animals have specific adaptations that allow them to survive fires. In fact, many species in the Pine Bush depend on periodic fires for their survival. New Jersey Tea, a shrub whose flowers provide nectar for the endangered Karner blue butterfly, produces seeds with hard shells. Fire cracks the hard shell, helping the seed to germinate. Inland barrens buckmoths are dependant on scrub oak plants for much of their lifecycle. As a caterpillar, the inland barrens buckmoth burrows into the sand where it can wait for several years for just the right conditions to emerge as a moth. Following a fire, the inland barrens buckmoth flourishes. Fire encourages new growth in scrub oak, a condition favored by adults for egg laying and caterpillars for food.



### FIRE

Throughout its history, the Albany Pine Bush often experienced fires. Some fires were initiated by lightning, others by the activities of local Native Americans and colonial settlers. Periodic fires more than any other factor have shaped and maintained the character of Pine Bush natural communities. Today, many Pine Bush species depend on periodic fires for their survival.

### WIND

After Glacial Lake Albany drained, wind swept the sand into dunes which were later stabilized by the unique plants of the Pine Bush. Pine Bush sand dunes come in a variety of shapes and sizes, some U, Y or J-shaped and others long and uncurving. The differing dimensions of sand dunes can be attributed to the circumstances, such as wind direction and velocity, under which they were formed.

### THE NATURAL COMMUNITY

Picture a wide open landscape filled with dense shrubs, openings of prairie grasses, and scattered pitch pines all rooted in sweeping sand dunes. Where the ground dips below the water table, vernal ponds harbor many special aquatic species.

### GEOLOGY

The origins of the Pine Bush are rooted in glacial history. As the last glacier to cover New York state melted 15,000 years ago, a massive lake formed that covered the Capital Region. Rivers deposited large amounts of fine glacial sand into Glacial Lake Albany, forming a delta that centered on the western edge of modern day Albany, where Colonie and Guelderland now come together. The sand deposited here now serves as the foundation for the Albany Pine Bush.

### WATER

Despite its dry appearance the Albany Pine Bush also contains several important wetland communities. Among these wetlands are the rare pine barrens vernal ponds and steep ravines of the Hungerkill and Kaikoutkill.

1 Pitch pine	10 Skunk cabbage	19 Indian pipes	28 Prairie warbler	37 Spotted turtle	46 Tiger swallowtail
2 Shadbush	11 Goat's rue	20 Bracken fern	29 Great blue heron	38 Blue spotted salamander	47 Inland barrens buckmoth
3 Scrub oak	12 Spreading dogbane	21 Indian grass	30 Red-tailed hawk	39 Spring peeper	48 Frosted elfin
4 Huckleberry	13 Wild blue lupine	22 Big bluestem	31 American kestrel	40 White-tailed deer	49 Dragonfly
5 Blueberry	14 Wood lily	23 Little bluestem	32 Great horned owl	41 Eastern coyote	
6 Buttonbush	15 Butterfly milkweed	24 Tussock sedge	33 Eastern towhee	42 Porcupine	
7 Dwarf prairie willow	16 Blue flag iris	25 Bullrush	34 Eastern hognose snake	43 Fisher	
8 New Jersey tea	17 Marsh marigold	26 Earthstar	35 Smooth green snake	44 Karner blue butterfly	
9 Sweet fern	18 Pink lady's slipper	27 Common mushroom	36 Eastern spadefoot toad	45 American copper	

The species listed in *italics* are rare or endangered.



**Commission Members:**  
 NYS Department of Environmental Conservation,  
 NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic  
 Preservation, The Nature Conservancy, City of  
 Albany, Town of Colonie, Town of Guilderland,  
 County of Albany, Four Citizen Representatives

### WELCOME TO THE ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE

While the Albany Pine Bush provides a special habitat for many plants and animals, it also provides visitors with an assortment of non-motorized recreational opportunities including hiking, jogging, nature study, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, and hunting.

Approximately 20 miles of official, multiple-use trails are marked, mapped and briefly described inside this guide. Most trails are considered easy to moderate and vary from wide open sandy trails to narrow, grassy woodland trails. The topography is generally flat with gradual slopes up and down the dunes.

All unmarked paths and firebreaks are closed to all recreational uses other than by permit and are not shown on this map. Also, please respect private property that borders many Preserve lands.

### ACCESSING INTERESTING PLACES IN THE ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE

#### TRAILHEAD/INFORMATION:

**1 Karner Barrens East and West:** East - Starting at the Albany Pine Discovery Center, several miles of trails meander through dunes and some of the best pitch pine-scrub oak barrens in the Preserve. On a clear day, views from the "overlook" dune along the Blue trail provide views of the Helderberg mountains to the west and the Berkshire mountains to the east. Red trail - 1.1 mi., Blue trail - 0.9 mi., Yellow trail - 1.2 mi., Discovery trail - 0.2 mi.

West - The White trail leading under Route 155 provides access to Karner Barrens West where abandoned historical roads provide portions of the trail system. Pitch pine-scrub oak barrens and scenic forests can be enjoyed here as well. Red trail - 0.6 mi., Blue trail - 0.8 mi.

**2 Rapp Barrens:** Within a short distance of the trailhead, the trail crosses the Patroon Creek. Skunk cabbage, false hellebore and marsh marigold are only a few of the plants that prefer this marshy, streamside habitat. Trails beyond the creek reveal hardwood forests, barrens and views of Rensselaer Lake. Red trail - 1.2 mi.

**3 Rensselaer Lake Preserve and Park:** Providing access at the eastern-most end of the Preserve, this area provides developed picnic and fishing facilities as well as a short trail through a wooded pine and hardwood forest. A trail along the lake edge provides access to the eastern end of Rapp Barrens. White connector trail - 0.4 mi. Also see trailhead #2.

**4 Blueberry Hill East:** This portion of the Preserve was almost developed and shows signs of the disturbance that occurred here. Trails wind through sites that will be intensely managed and eventually restored to pine barrens. Blue trail - 0.8 mi.

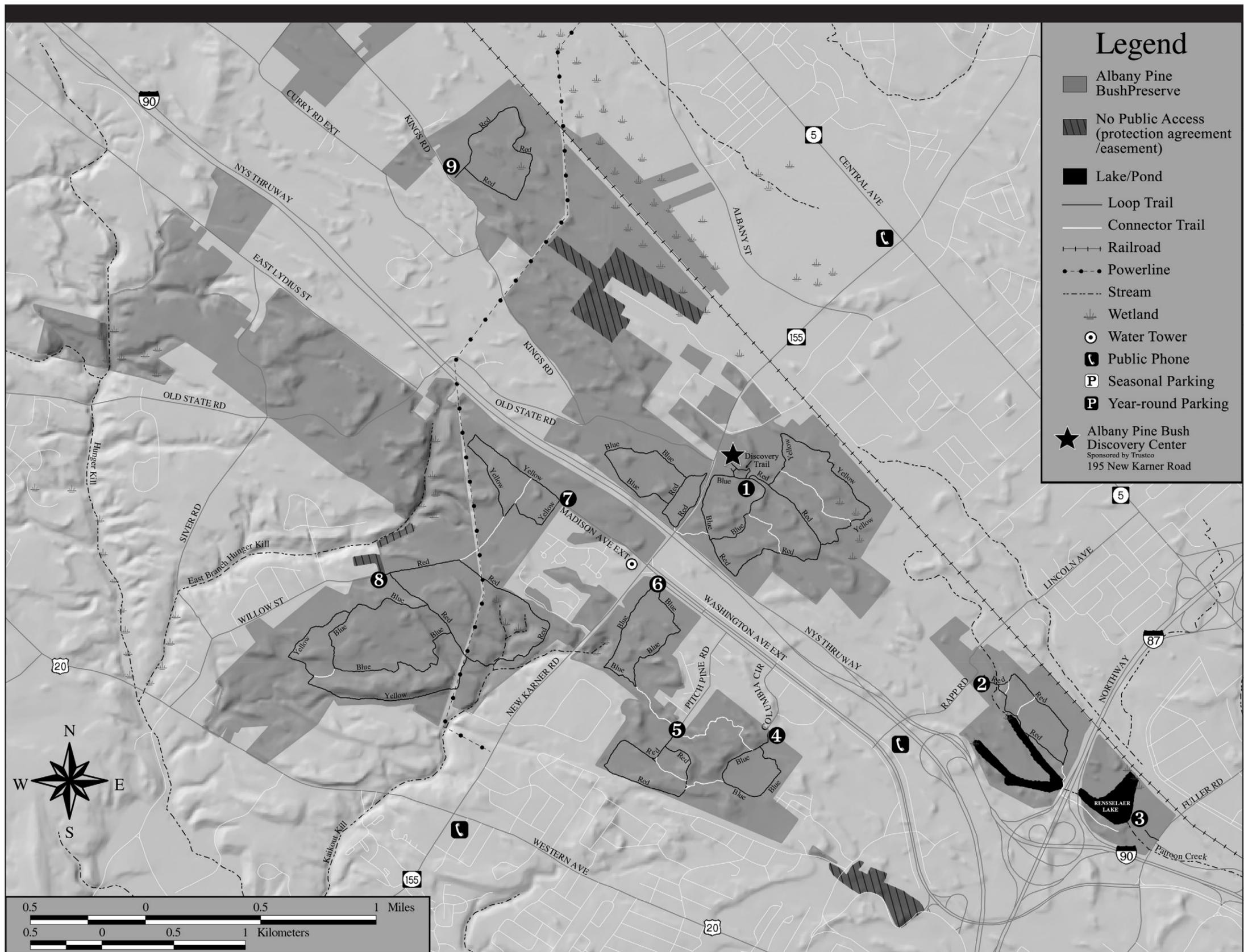
**5 Blueberry Hill West:** An appealing area for a short walk or a longer hike, the diversity of topography and vegetation offer scenery guaranteed to keep the attention of any visitor. A dune top view provides beautiful views to the south and west. Inland barrens buckmoths may be seen flying here in late September. Red trail - 1.1 mi.

**6 Kaikou Kill Barrens:** The Blue loop trail is most easily accessed from the western end of frontage road and provides a diverse experience including dense pine barrens, rolling dunes and a large, steep portion of the Kaikou Kill ravine that provides water to the Kaikou Kill west of Route 155. Blue trail - 1.2 mi.

### DIRECTIONS TO THE ALBANY PINE BUSH PRESERVE

Central to the Capital District of New York State, the Albany Pine Bush Preserve is easy to access from both I-87 and I-90.

- From I-90: Take I-90 East or West to I-87 (Northway) North, follow directions for I-87.
- From I-87 North or South: Take I-87 to Exit 2W (Route 5 West). Travel west approximately 2 miles and turn left at light onto Route 155 South (New Karner Road). Travel approximately 1 mile to the second light.
- Turn left for the Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center and Trailhead #1 located at 195 New Karner Road (Route 155).



**7 Madison Avenue Pinelands:** Dense forests of pitch pine trees contrast with wide open barrens throughout this area. Wide sandy trails provide an easy hike or ski over the rolling dunes. Wild blue lupine wildflowers, the exclusive food of the endangered Karner blue butterfly larvae, can be seen in bloom along some of the trails in this area in May and June. Yellow trail - 1.2 mi.

**8 Great Dune:** Diverse forest communities and pine barrens adorn rolling sand dunes including the Great Dune that is over one mile long and as much as fifty feet tall. The red trail crosses a more southern portion of the Kaikou Kill, whose steep slopes and damp floor support dense masses of ferns and

other moisture loving plants. Red trail - 1.8 mi., Blue trail - 1.4 mi., Yellow trail - 1.3 mi.

**9 Kings Highway Barrens:** A loop trail allows visitors to enjoy the forests and rare vernal ponds found in this region. The historic Kings Highway that linked Albany and Schenectady is located adjacent to this part of the Pine Bush Preserve. Red trail - 1.0 mi.

### Preserve Rules and Regulations

In order to protect the natural beauty and ecology of the Preserve and assure that all visitors have a safe and enjoyable visit, please observe the following rules.

1. All public use of unmarked paths, closed trails and fire-breaks is prohibited without a valid permit.
2. Bicycle and horse use is permitted on officially established and marked trails only.



3. Pets must be restrained at all times by an adequate collar and leash and must be kept under complete control. Pet owners must remove their pets' feces from the trails.

4. Preserve visitors may not collect, deface, injure or remove any plant, animal, sand or other living or non-living feature from the Preserve except as otherwise authorized by the Commission/Department.

5. Research projects proposed for the Preserve by any individual or group must be submitted in writing and approved by the Commission.

6. Motor vehicles of any kind including ATVs, snowmobiles and motorcycles are prohibited on Preserve lands and waters, except vehicles used by those with mobility impairments as allowed by permit.

7. Groups of 25 or more visitors must notify the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission at least 5 days before visiting the Preserve, and obtain a permit.

8. Hunting, trapping and fishing are allowed during times designated as

### THE FOLLOWING ARE PROHIBITED IN THE PRESERVE

- Motor vehicles
- Littering or dumping
- Fires
- Camping
- Feeding wildlife



New York State's open hunting, trapping and fishing seasons and in accordance with the provisions of 6 NYCRR parts 1-188, and not withstanding any other provision of the Preserve regulations.

Complete Preserve rules and regulations are available upon request.

### For Your Safety

**Deer Ticks** - Although most common from April through October, Deer Ticks can be found in the Pine Bush anytime of the year. Please take proper precautions to prevent tick bites and check yourself thoroughly for ticks after visiting the Preserve.

**Weather** - Although the trails are never especially far from the trailheads, visitors should be prepared for abrupt weather changes and extremes in temperature. Summer can be especially hot in the open barrens with temperatures exceeding 100°F and winters can be quite cold.

**Emergencies** - In an emergency locate the closest public phone or use a cell phone to dial 911. To report non-emergency situations please contact the Albany Pine Bush Preserve Commission at (518) 456-0655 Monday thru Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. To report a violation contact the NYSDEC ranger at (518) 783-2036.

### Legend

- Albany Pine Bush Preserve
- No Public Access (protection agreement / easement)
- Lake/Pond
- Loop Trail
- Connector Trail
- Railroad
- Powerline
- Stream
- Wetland
- Water Tower
- Public Phone
- Seasonal Parking
- Year-round Parking
- Albany Pine Bush Discovery Center  
Sponsored by Trustco  
195 New Karner Road

### WHAT TO BRING DURING YOUR VISIT

- Drinking water
- Trail map
- Rain gear
- Sunglasses and sunscreen
- Day pack
- Comfortable hiking boots
- Snack foods
- Camera