



How do you identify a white pine?

While you're walking, look for pines with the following characteristics:

- The pine's dark gray bark is fairly smooth, particularly in young trees, unlike the thick, protective bark of fire-tolerant pines such as loblolly.
- The tree's feathery, white-tinged needles grow in bundles of five.



TLC's mission is to protect important open space — stream corridors, forests, wildlife habitat, farmland, and natural areas — to help keep our region a healthy and vibrant place to live and work. TLC is a private, nonprofit land trust serving Chatham, Durham, Johnston, Lee, Orange and Wake counties.

Since 1983, TLC has protected 10,000 acres in scores of sites across the Triangle region. These sites enhance the quality of life in the Triangle by protecting wildlife habitats, water quality, recreation areas and open space.

TLC is a member-supported non-profit organization. To support TLC or for more information, please visit our website at www.triangleland.org or contact us at:

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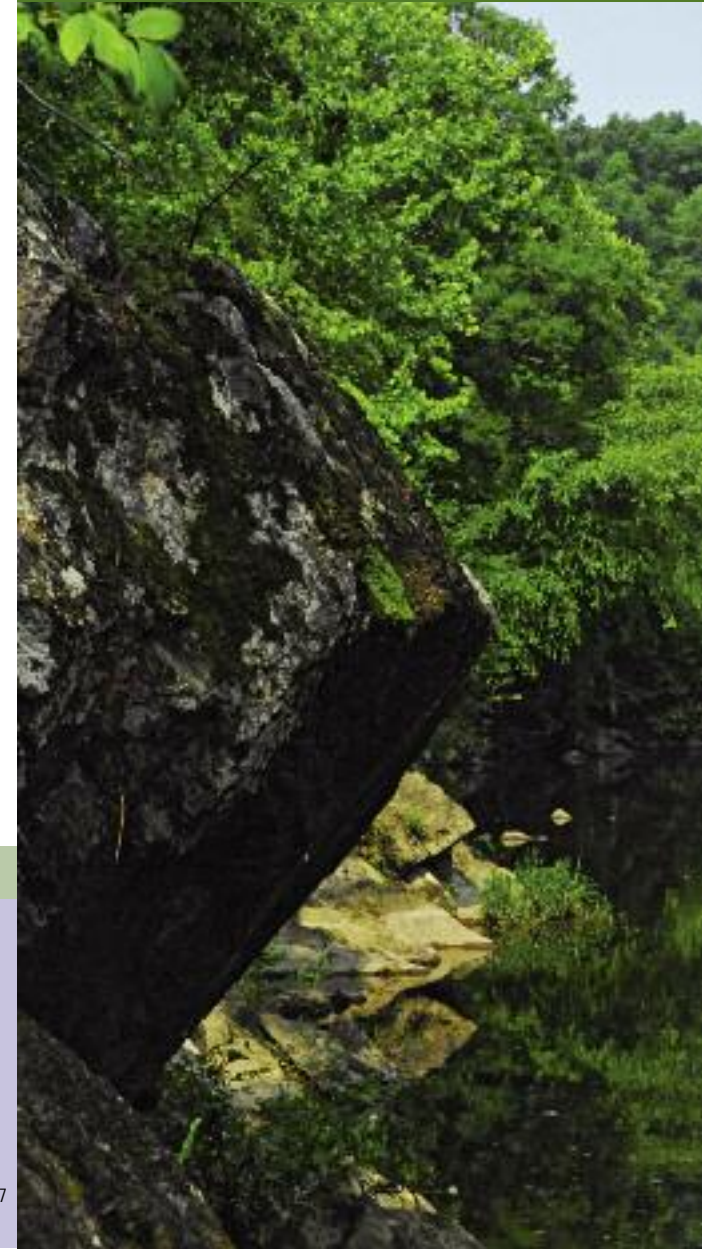
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WHITE PINES PRESERVE

Preserve Guide



Welcome to White Pines Preserve, the first nature preserve established by Triangle Land Conservancy.

This mountainlike sliver of the Piedmont provides a refuge for a curious collection of mountain, piedmont and coastal plain flora and fauna. Located on a promontory bounded by the Rocky and Deep rivers, the preserve is renowned for its isolated stand of white pines (*Pinus strobus*). As you hike these steep slopes and wander among the towering white pines and 200-year-old beech trees you may feel like you've been transported to the mountains. We hope you enjoy your visit to one of the Triangle region's natural wonders.



An Ice Age Holdover

During the last Ice Age some 10,000 years ago, the Piedmont's climate was much cooler and the region was forested in species now associated with the mountains such as spruce, fir, hemlock and white pine. When temperatures warmed at the end of the Ice Age, most cold-adapted plants and animals retreated from the Piedmont, but a few populations lingered in pockets where favorable topography and climate created cool, moist refuges.

White Pines Preserve is such a place. Over time, the Deep and Rocky Rivers carved 100-foot-high rocky bluffs at this promontory. The steep, north-facing slopes and the rivers' influence maintain a microclimate where the average temperature can be as much as 10 degrees cooler than nearby urban areas. These conditions allow mountainous species such as white pines to persist here. Most of the forest is a mixture of oak-hickory woodland and mixed pines and hardwoods, but white pines are scattered throughout the preserve and are reproducing and spreading.

White pines are common in the northeastern United States and extend as far southward as the Georgia mountains. This outlying population in Chatham and Lee counties is completely isolated, or disjunct, from the western population. (The nearest population of white pines is 75 miles to the northwest at Hanging Rock State Park in Stokes County.)

Nature's Intersection

As you hike the preserve's trails, you will encounter a variety of habitats, from fern-covered slopes to damp bottomlands. Mountain laurel and Catawba rhododendron cling to bluffs above the Rocky River, and in springtime wildflowers dot the slopes, with Catesby's trillium, trout lily, bloodroot, Jack-in-the-pulpit and a mountain disjunct, Dutchman's britches, emerging from the leaf litter.

This forest provides a corridor for wide-ranging birds such as wild turkey, broad-winged hawk and pileated woodpecker. The preserve offers great birding in the spring and summer: 55 species nest here, including neotropical migratory birds such as yellow-billed cuckoo, ovenbird, Louisiana waterthrush, wood thrush and prothonotary and yellow-throated warblers.



As you walk along the rivers, watch for water and wading birds such as belted kingfisher and great blue and green herons. White Pines is part of the North Carolina Birding Trail, a cooperative effort to promote birding in the state.

Characteristic Piedmont mammals also inhabit the preserve, such as white-tailed deer and beaver. Keep an eye out for warier mammals such as gray fox and muskrat. During the late winter and early spring, many species of frogs and salamanders breed in rain-fed depressions in low-lying parts of the preserve. On rainy spring and summer nights you can enjoy the sounds of spring peeper, Cope's gray treefrog and upland chorus frog, among other species.

The world's largest known population of a federally endangered minnow, the Cape Fear shiner, is found in the riffles and rock beds at the junction of the Rocky and the Deep. The preserve provides a forested buffer that helps maintain water quality for this fragile species.

Human History

Like much of the densely populated Piedmont region, the White Pines area has been altered over time as people logged the forests and cleared land for agriculture. Longtime preserve neighbors recall old homesteads and farms with houses built of white pine. They also remember 1954's Hurricane Hazel, which toppled many old-growth (200-300-year-old) white pines. As you hike the White Pines and Gilbert Yager trails, you will see signs of past human habitation, such as an old homesite marked by a crumbling mound of bricks.

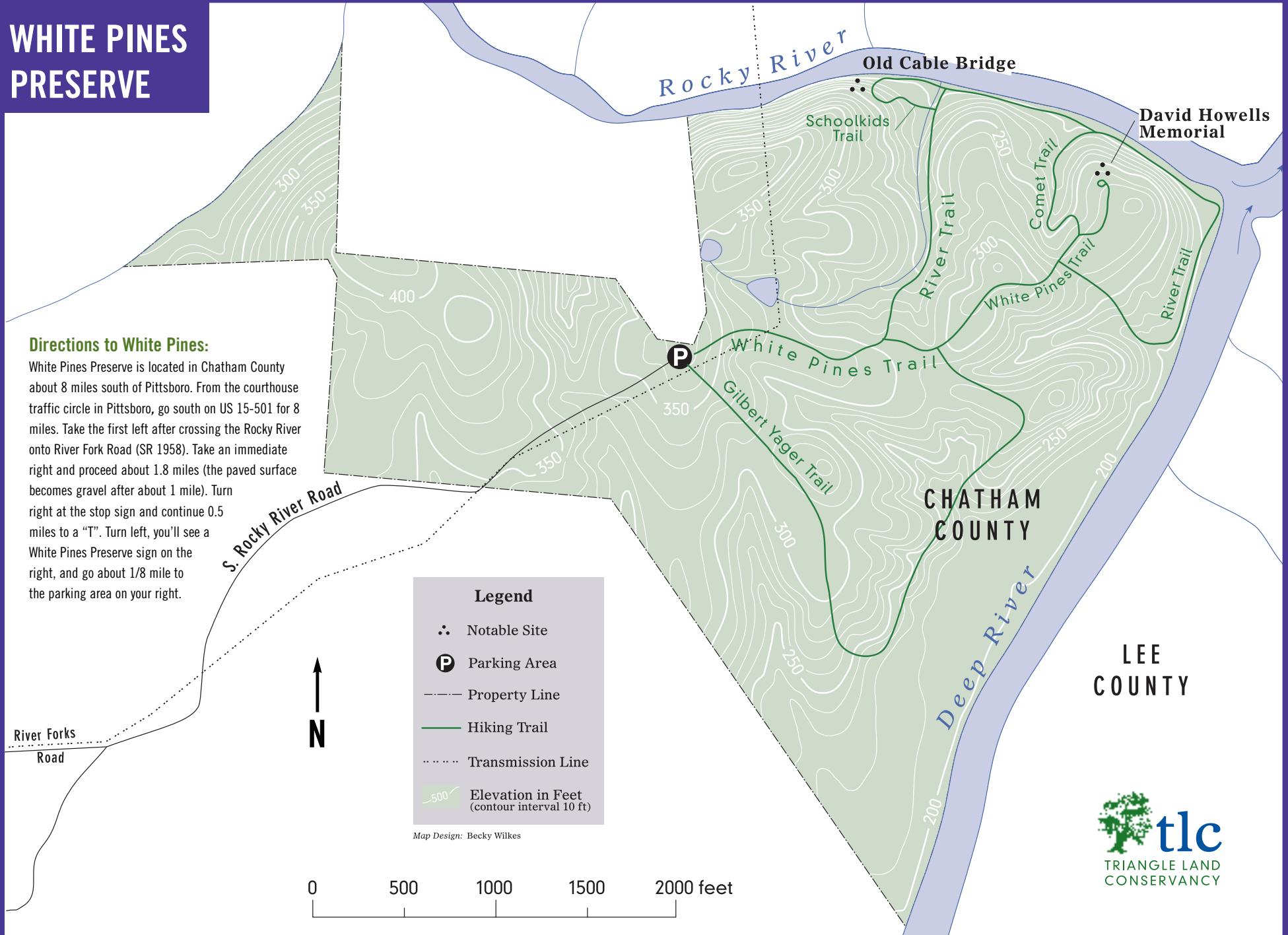
TLC launched an effort to save this natural area from potential development in the late 1980s and purchased 136 acres from two landowners in 1987 that formed the core of the nature preserve. The preserve has since grown to more than 276 acres through additional acquisitions. TLC continues to work with willing landowners to enlarge the preserve.



WHITE PINES PRESERVE

Directions to White Pines:

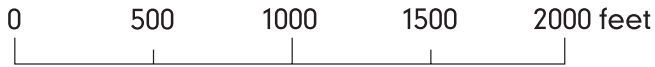
White Pines Preserve is located in Chatham County about 8 miles south of Pittsboro. From the courthouse traffic circle in Pittsboro, go south on US 15-501 for 8 miles. Take the first left after crossing the Rocky River onto River Fork Road (SR 1958). Take an immediate right and proceed about 1.8 miles (the paved surface becomes gravel after about 1 mile). Turn right at the stop sign and continue 0.5 miles to a "T". Turn left, you'll see a White Pines Preserve sign on the right, and go about 1/8 mile to the parking area on your right.



Legend

- Notable Site
- P Parking Area
- Property Line
- Hiking Trail
- Transmission Line
- 500 Elevation in Feet (contour interval 10 ft)

Map Design: Becky Wilkes



LEE COUNTY





Take a hike at White Pines

The preserve's interconnected trail system takes hikers through a variety of habitats. The trails are moderately strenuous. Please note that trail distances are approximate.

The preserve's main trail, the 1/2-mile **White Pines Trail**, follows an old jeep road once used by anglers and takes you through the heart of the preserve.

The 1-mile **River Trail** makes a loop from the White Pines Trail to ramble along the Rocky and Deep riverbanks. A favorite stop is the point where the waters of the Rocky and the Deep meet. Look for the preserve's largest known white pine next to the trail on the slope between the White Pines Trail and the Deep River.

The **Schoolkids Trail**, a small loop off the River Trail, leads to the site of a cable bridge that provided a passage across the Rocky River in the 1920s for people visiting neighbors and children walking to school.

The 1-mile **Gilbert Yager Trail** meanders through several distinct forest types: dry oak-hickory forest on the ridge, Piedmont bottomland forest in the Deep River floodplain and several stands of native white pines. The trail is named in honor of Gilbert Yager, one of TLC's early board members and a champion of protecting White Pines. (GlaxoSmithKline generously provided funding to build the trail.)

The **Comet Trail** is a short connector that takes you down a steep ravine and passes by scenic slopes covered in beeches, ferns and old white pines.

When to visit: The preserve is open to the public year-round from dawn to dusk. No fee is required.

Special tips: There are no restroom facilities at White Pines Preserve. During the spring and summer, you should be wary of poison ivy growing near the trails along the river. Be aware that ticks, chiggers and other insects may be active during the warmer months. Please take precautions against biting insects (i.e. use insect repellent, wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts and tuck your pant legs in your socks).

Preserve rules: While you are visiting TLC's property, we ask that you follow a few simple guidelines to make your trip safe and enjoyable.

- Stay on the designated trails.
- During deer hunting season, wear brightly colored clothing, preferably blaze orange. If possible, do not wear white.
- No motorized or non-motorized vehicles are allowed on the preserve.
- Keep your pet on a leash.

We hope your visit is educational, fun and safe!

