

## Station 3: Pond Critters and Chestnut

This pond is home to a wide variety of plants and animals, and serves as the main water source for inhabitants of this forest. For a more in-depth introduction to the history of this pond, keep an eye out for Station 11, located at a beautiful vantage point on the opposite shore.

These are common reptiles/amphibians found in the pond:

Green Frog- green body, brown spotted legs

Bull Frog- large, dull green

Pickerel Frog- tan, hind leg undersides are bright orange-yellow

Wood Frog- brown, prominent black "mask"

Spotted Turtle- dotted with yellow or orange spots

Painted Turtle- green carapace with yellow stripes

Northern Water Snake- gray, black horizontal stripes

Eastern Ribbon Snake- reddish brown, dorsal stripes



As you continue up the hill towards Station 4, note the American chestnut sapling on your left. The American chestnut tree was once abundant throughout the Appalachian Mountains, from Maine to Mississippi, prior to the turn of the 20th century. Its bark was used in dyes and medicines, and the nuts roasted or boiled for consumption. However, populations have been decimated by a fungal blight. The smooth bark of the young trees will begin to show rust colored vertical cracks with the onset of the blight, which does not allow them to mature enough to send out seeds. Now the survival of the species is based [mainly] on the fact that new growth sprouts from old stumps with living roots. Scientists have long been attempting to grow blight resistant chestnuts in hopes of saving this important species; as of 2023, this has been achieved by scientists who inserted a single wheat gene (OxO) into the American chestnut, creating the genetically modified “darling chestnut”, but this project is still in the experimental stages.

