

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy



## **Bear Run Nature Reserve (Kaufmann Conservation on Bear Run)**

**Location:** Stewart Township and Springfield Township, Fayette County; Lower Turkeyfoot Township, Somerset County

**Dates acquired:** 1963 - 2005

**Size:** approximately 5,079 acres

**Notable features:** mature deciduous forest, hemlock forest, high gradient streams

**Recreation activities (see below for details):**  
hiking, wildlife watching, camping, hunting, fishing



### **Directions:**

Bear Run Nature Reserve is located off PA Rt. 381, approximately 3 miles south of Mill Run, PA. For directions using Google maps, click [Here](#).  
Delorme Pennsylvania Atlas and Gazetteer Map 86, A-3

**Please note:** Fallingwater, which is surrounded by Bear Run Nature Reserve, is accessible only from its entrance off Rt. 381, and requires an entrance fee.

**Description:** Bear Run Nature Reserve is the flagship property of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Covering more than 5,000 acres in the Laurel Highlands of southwestern Pennsylvania, the Reserve offers hiking trails, backcountry campsites, and hunting and fishing opportunities. Bear Run Nature Reserve provides the setting for Fallingwater, the famous house designed for the Kaufmann family of Pittsburgh by architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Bear Run Nature Reserve is managed to protect, conserve, and restore land and water for the diversity of the region's native plants, animals, and their ecosystems. The Reserve is integral to biodiversity conservation in the Laurel Highlands and the mid-Appalachian region.

**Hiking and wildlife watching:** The main trailhead for the Reserve is located at the upper parking lot, behind a converted barn. From there, over **20 miles of trails** take hikers through conifer plantations (planted in the 1950s to control soil erosion), before heading to various corners of the Reserve. For instance, the popular Arbutus Trail descends into rhododendron thickets lining the Bear Run stream valley. Ridge Trail continues into the upland forests along the slope of Laurel Ridge. The steep Hemlock Trail loops through a stand of mature hemlock along Bear Run and a tributary. Snowbunny Trail is wide and level - ideal for cross-country skiing. Bear Run Trail climbs to the highest point on the Reserve, 2,478 ft. Laurel Run Trail follows the scenic Laurel Run valley. Peninsula Trail, which crosses through a portion of Ohiopyle State Park, offers glimpses of the Youghiogheny River gorge.

Bear Run Nature Reserve provides habitat for a diversity of forest-dwelling **wildlife**, including black bears, fishers, and bobcats, and rare species such as West Virginia water shrews and Allegheny woodrats. Birds identified during a 2007 breeding bird survey included ovenbird, scarlet tanager, wood thrush, hooded warbler, Kentucky warbler, black-throated green warbler, black-throated blue warbler, Louisiana waterthrush, blue-headed vireo, yellow-throated vireo, rose-breasted grosbeak, and broad-winged hawk. One notable observation was a singing male Swainson's warbler, a secretive songbird that inhabits rhododendron thickets.

The Reserve encompasses almost all of the Bear Run and Laurel Run watersheds, as well as portions of seven other drainages, including the Youghiogheny River. The waters of Bear Run cascade through rhododendron thickets, past mature hemlocks, and over rocks and boulders creating a spectacular array of rapids and waterfalls. The Bear Run and upper Lick Run watersheds on the Reserve are designated Biological Diversity Areas (BDA) due to the presence of rare species.

Over 500 **plant species** have been found on the Reserve. The plant communities range from regenerating old fields and conifer plantations to second-growth deciduous and hemlock forests. Dominant trees include tulip tree, red maple, chestnut oak, sugar maple, and black cherry. American beech is dominant in the upper Bear Run and Lick Run riparian areas. Stands of eastern hemlock occur in the major drainages, especially along Bear Run. Understory forest plants include spicebush, rosebay rhododendron, smooth azalea, witch hazel, and mountain laurel. Wildflowers include moccasin flower, trailing arbutus, painted trillium, Solomon's seal, yellow violet, and sweet violet. Overall, red maple is replacing oak in the forest canopy and understory, a trend documented throughout the Appalachian Mountains. This change in composition may be due to invasive species such as gypsy moths, deer browsing, and the suppression of naturally-sparked forest fires.

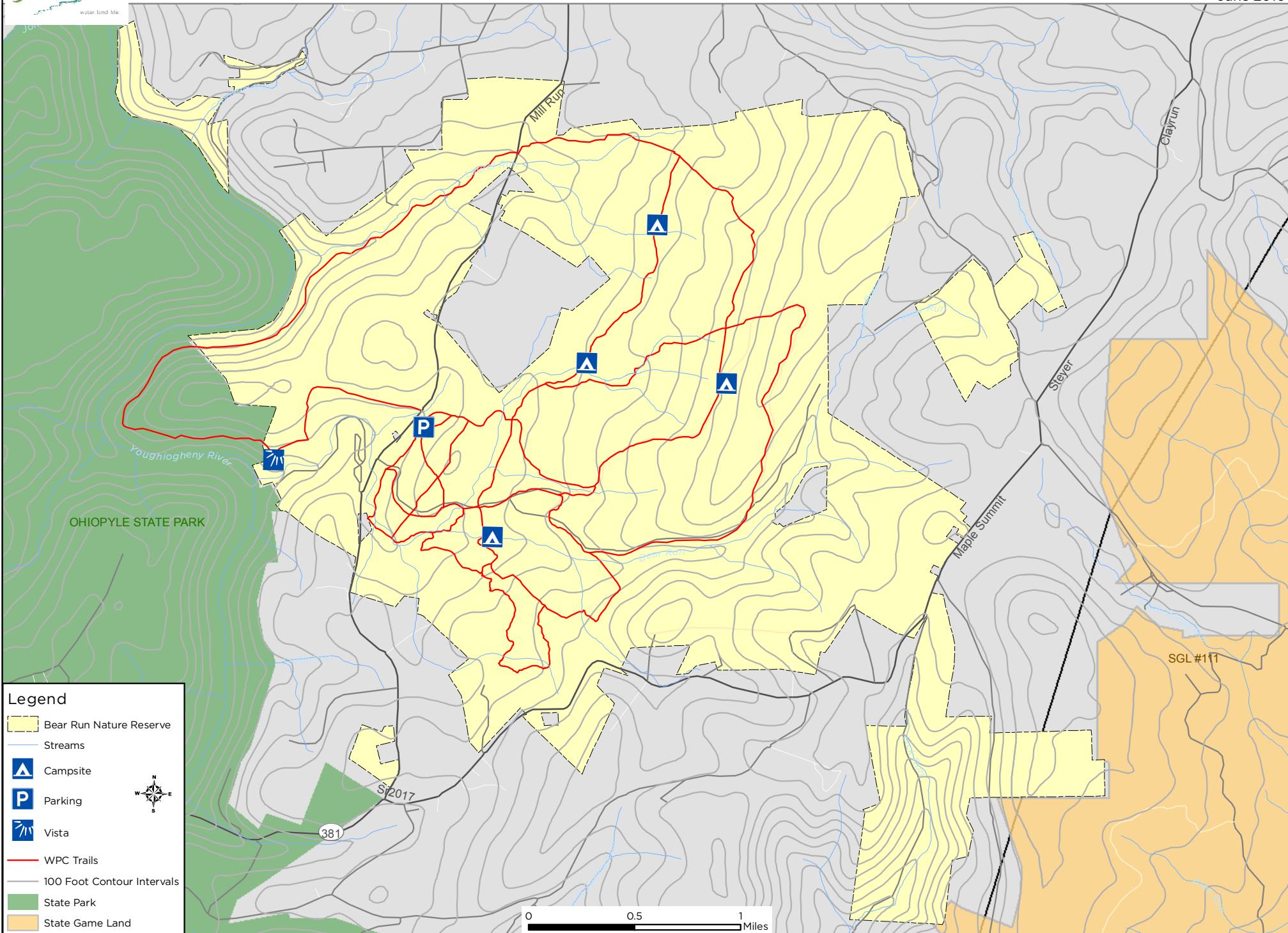
**Camping:** Camping on the Reserve is permitted only at a limited number of primitive campsites. Camping is on a first-come first-served basis. Campsite registration forms must be completed at the trailhead kiosk.

**Hunting and fishing:** Hunting on the Reserve is permitted, but hunters must first acquire a free permit from the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. Fishing is permitted with the exception of the reach of Bear Run from the Rt. 381 bridge downstream to the culvert under the railroad adjacent to the Youghiogheny River.

**Background:** The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy received Fallingwater and the core parcels of Bear Run Nature Reserve from Edgar Kaufmann, jr. in 1963. Since then, additional tracts have been acquired, resulting in a current total of over 5,000 acres.

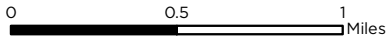
**For more information on Bear Run Nature Reserve and Fallingwater, please contact:**

**Western Pennsylvania Conservancy  
P. O. Box R  
Mill Run, PA 15464  
724-329-8501  
info@paconserve.org  
waterlandlife.org**



**Legend**

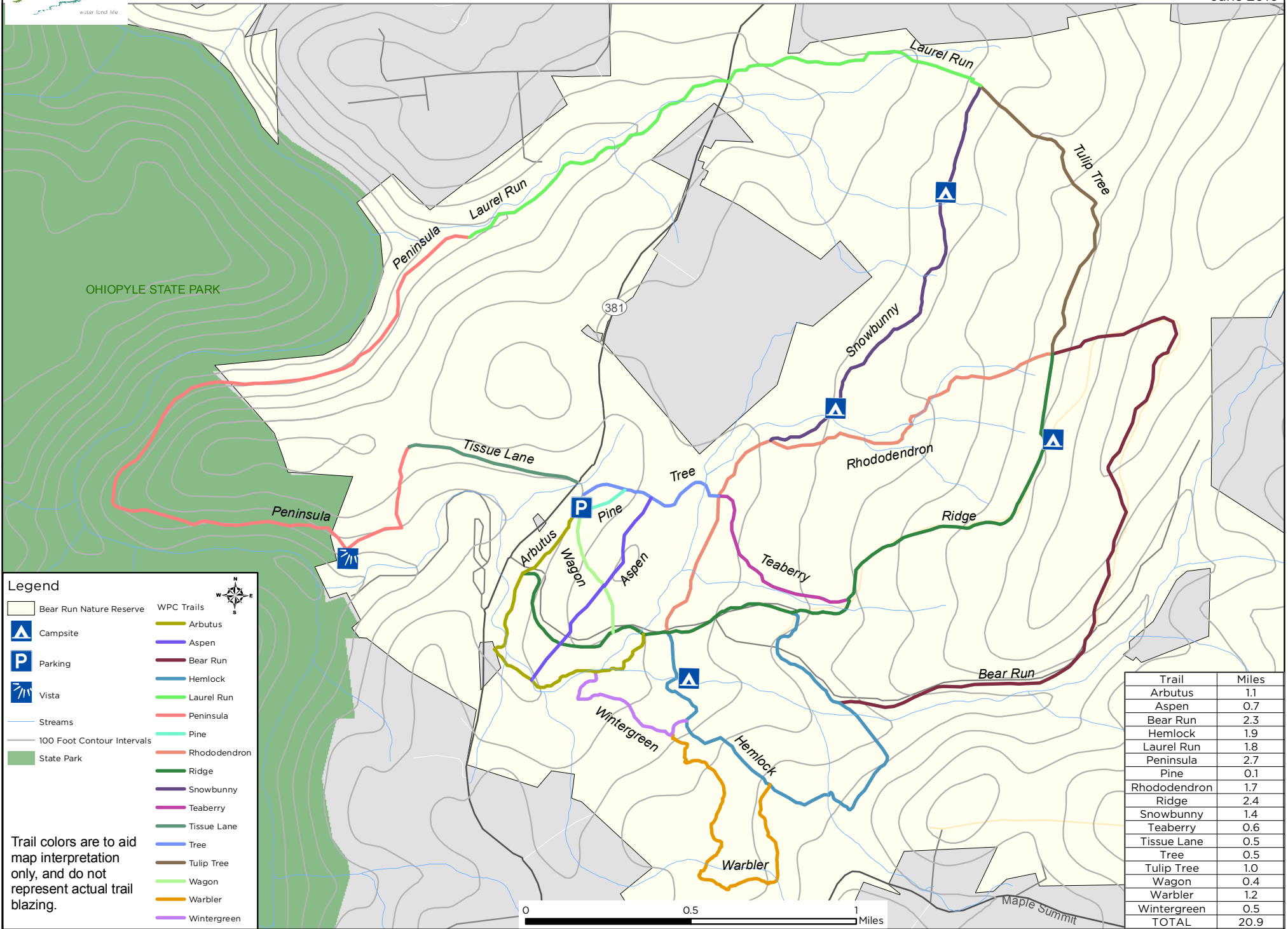
- Bear Run Nature Reserve
- Streams
- Campsite
- Parking
- Vista
- WPC Trails
- 100 Foot Contour Intervals
- State Park
- State Game Land



# Bear Run Nature Reserve Trail Map

39.905920, -79.459783

June 2010



**Legend**

- Bear Run Nature Reserve
- Campsite
- Parking
- Vista
- Streams
- 100 Foot Contour Intervals
- State Park

**WPC Trails**

- Arbutus
- Aspen
- Bear Run
- Hemlock
- Laurel Run
- Peninsula
- Pine
- Rhododendron
- Ridge
- Snowbunny
- Teaberry
- Tissue Lane
- Tree
- Tulip Tree
- Wagon
- Warbler
- Wintergreen

Trail colors are to aid map interpretation only, and do not represent actual trail blazing.

Trail	Miles
Arbutus	1.1
Aspen	0.7
Bear Run	2.3
Hemlock	1.9
Laurel Run	1.8
Peninsula	2.7
Pine	0.1
Rhododendron	1.7
Ridge	2.4
Snowbunny	1.4
Teaberry	0.6
Tissue Lane	0.5
Tree	0.5
Tulip Tree	1.0
Wagon	0.4
Warbler	1.2
Wintergreen	0.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20.9</b>