



A TEMPORARY FOREST

The strip of open land along which this sign is located is a right-of-way for a sewer line. As you look up and down the right-of-way you will see that you are standing on a slightly elevated portion of this property. The forest vegetation in the vicinity of this sign consists of tree species that are different than those growing in the lower, wetter areas.

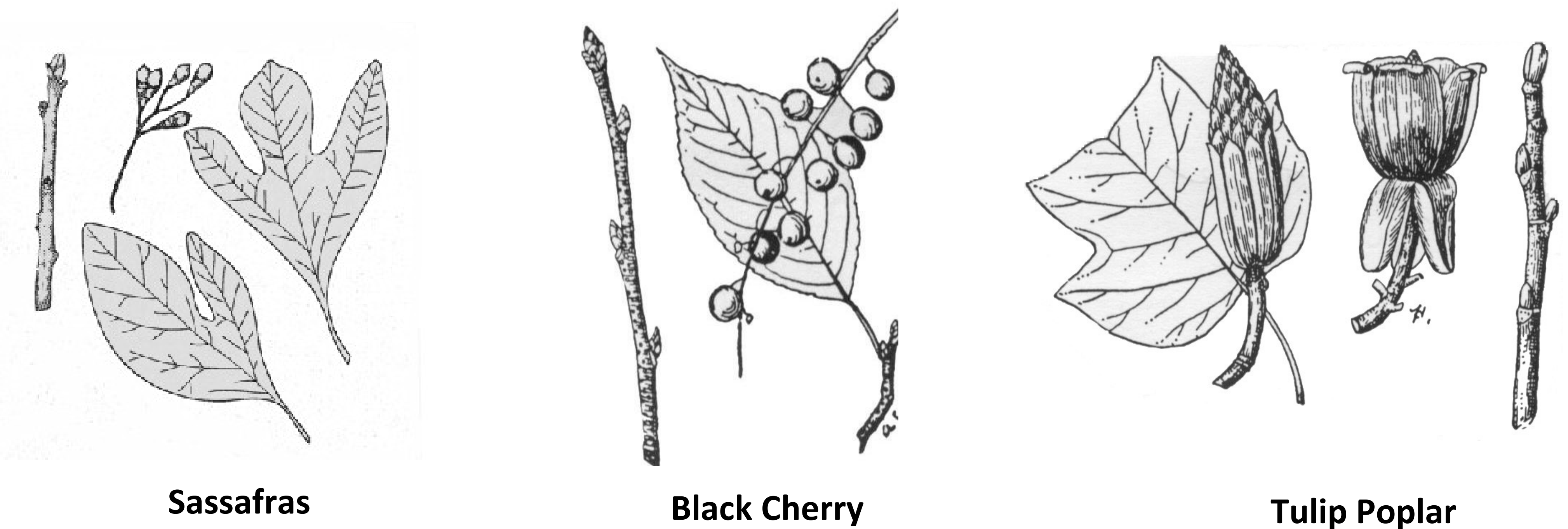
A Beech forest covered this site in the early 1800s. Among local tree species, the American Beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) is best adapted to growing in moderately drained soil. An early owner cut down the original Beech forest in order to establish a farm field on this area.

The farm field was abandoned in the mid 1900s, and soon the site became covered by pioneer tree species such as Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), Black Cherry (*Prunus serotina*), and Tulip Poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) growing from seeds carried here by wind and birds. Beechnuts were likely carried into the field by mammals, but Beeches did not thrive in the sunny, dry area.

Sassafras, Black Cherry, and Tulip Poplar continue to dominate this woodland. These sun-loving species, however, do not reproduce well in their own shade. As these trees grow old and die, shade-tolerant Beeches will replace them and the area will again become a self-sustaining Beech forest.

The replacement of one woodland community by another is known as forest succession, where short-lived, sun-loving pioneer trees are succeeded by long-living, shade-tolerant species.

At this sign, the trail turns right and proceeds along the low ridge through the forest.



**Ecological Succession
- from disturbance to a
mature forest**

