

## NATURE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD - AUGUST 2020

Lions! and Tigers! and Bears! Oh my! Forests have often gotten a bad rap in literature -- think of Hansel and Gretel wandering through the woods or Little Red Riding Hood on the way to Grandma's. They haven't fared too well in the movies either -- who could forget Dorothy and Toto creeping through the haunted forest in the "Wizard of Oz." Oh my! Not to mention the Disney film "Into the Woods" inspired by the tales of the appropriately named Grimm Brothers. No doubt, forests can be scary. They're often dark and mysterious. Full of mischief. Ferocious animals may be lurking behind every tree. And unless there's a yellow brick road running through the trees, you could easily get lost.

But there's another side to forests, one that's less frightening and more appealing. That's because when we go into the woods, we can get away from the hustle and bustle of civilization and enjoy the tranquility and beauty of nature. And now, with COVID-19 restricting our ability to participate in other activities outside the home, there's even more of a reason to consider taking a walk in the woods.

So provided you don't have any symptoms and are not in a group where there is close contact, a walk in the woods, or anywhere in the outdoors, can help you shake off some of the boredom and anxiety and may be just what you need to feel better both physically and mentally.

**Where to go in our Neighborhood?** Here's a few suggestions taken from the Swampscott Conservancy's website ([swampscottconservancy.org](http://swampscottconservancy.org)) and Swampscott's Open Space & Recreation Plan, (linked at <http://www.swampscottma.gov/open-space-recreation-plan-committee>):

- **Harold A. King Forest** - is a beautiful, undeveloped woodland in the northwestern corner of Swampscott adjacent to Lynn and Salem. It includes 47 acres of natural forest and wetlands with abundant flora and fauna. A loop trail affords hikers the opportunity to explore these areas, as well as the boulders in the terminal moraine of the Late Wisconsin Laurentide Ice Sheet. Public access to the forest and a small paved parking area can be found at the end of Nichols Street.
- **Charles M. Ewing Woods** - Nestled in a residential area of town is this 7.3-acre parcel of conservation land adjacent to the Stanley School. The woods can be accessed from the end of the Forest Avenue extension, or from the parking lots of either the Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lynn or the Stanley School itself (whenever school is not in session).
- **Upper Jackson Park** - Included in these 12 acres of woodland are mature oaks and a lovely stand of white pines (planted as saplings by the Town in 1916). From the highest point, one can view the bay. The woods are accessible by a

right-of-way from Burpee Road through the old Machon School site as well as via the parking lot at Upper Jackson Park.

- **Phillips Beach** - is the Town's only barrier beach and is located at the end of Ocean Avenue facing out into Massachusetts Bay. On-street parking on Ocean Avenue is restricted to town residents with current recreation stickers between May 1<sup>st</sup> and October 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Palmer Pond** - and the surrounding wetlands comprise an almost 18-acre conservation area just beyond the barrier dunes of Phillips beach. This thickly reedy area features a biodiverse growth of cattails and beach plums, of cord grass and beach rose, with layers of peat that were deposited back when the area was a marsh. Palmer Pond is accessed through the end of Ocean Ave. near Phillips Beach, or from the soft, dimply sands of the Beach itself.
- **Eiseman's and Whale's Beaches** – Located off Puritan Road, this beautiful, wide crescent shaped beach, is terminated by the rocky promontory of Lincoln House Point on the west and Galloupe's Point on the east. While there is no parking area, you can park at Phillips Park (sticker required) and walk over to the beach.
- **Fisherman's Beach** -- is home to the historic Fish House, built in the 1890s to replace fish shanties, now listed on the National Register of Historic Landmarks. Fisherman's Beach includes a pier, and a sandy beach where visitors can enjoy the sandy beach and views into Swampscott Harbor, Nahant Bay and Lynn Beaches. There is a town parking lot adjacent to the Fish House.
- **Swampscott Cemetery** -- Often overlooked open space in town, is the Swampscott Cemetery, currently encompassing 30 acres, and offering large established maples, oaks, pines and shrubs and well-maintained lawns. The cemetery, part of which is on the National Register of Historic Places, started out as an 18th century burial ground includes monuments and plots for soldiers killed in wars back as far as the American Revolution.

When it's once again safe, the Swampscott Conservancy plans to lead seasonal walks in our neighborhood woodlands and other open spaces. In the meantime, we hope to see you (from a safe distance away) out and about enjoying nature in our neighborhood.

We also encourage you to share what you see by contributing your photos to our iNaturalist project - together we can bring the signs of summer to those who can't get out. Check out the Swampscott Biodiversity Project page to see what is being observed: <https://www.inaturalist.org/projects/swampscott-biodiversity>.

**OPENING SOON! FOREST RIVER CONSERVATION AREA CONNECTOR**

Working with the Department of Public Works and the Boy Scouts, the Conservancy has been busy creating a trailhead to connect with extensive trail system in Salem's Forest River Conservation Area. The trailhead is located behind the Swampscott Cemetery off Essex Street near the dog park. Stay tuned for more information on its grand opening!

### **BEWARE!**

Although there may not be lions, and tigers and bears in the woods, there are other things to beware of, such as ticks and poison ivy.

There are steps you can take to protect yourself against ticks including:

- Avoiding brushy areas and dense leafy areas. Stay on the path.
- Wearing a hat, long sleeves and light-colored pants, and tucking pants into socks in areas where ticks are a big problem.
- Checking your skin and clothes frequently for ticks.
- Using an appropriate insect repellent.
- Showering soon after being outdoors.

Also become familiar with what poison ivy looks like and then avoid any contact with it.