

Self-Guiding Trails

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Cape Cod National Seashore
www.nps.gov/caco




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- Self-guiding trail folders with information on specific features are available at some trailheads.
- Flat-soled shoes (ie: sneakers) are recommended.
- In hot weather it is advisable to carry drinking water, wear a hat, and use sunscreen and bug spray.
- Boardwalks can be slippery when wet.
- Pets are prohibited on self-guiding trails year-round except for the Woods Walk at the Highlands Center in Truro. 
- Bicycles are prohibited on self-guiding trails year-round.
- Remain on trails to protect sensitive resources.

- Wildflowers and other plant material, including saltmarsh plants, may not be picked. Limited quantities of edibles may be picked within the seashore. Check at visitor centers about regulations.
- Natural and archeological features are protected by federal law and must remain undisturbed.
- Taking, feeding, or harassing wildlife is prohibited.

Remain on designated trails to prevent damage, and reduce exposure to disease-carrying insects, poison ivy, and other natural risks. Observe trail conditions while walking, and be aware of tree roots, stumps, and other naturally-occurring hazards.

Fort Hill Trail Eastham

Length: 1 mile loop, one hour.

Location: 70 Fort Hill Road. Turn off Route 6 at the brown Fort Hill sign on Governor Prence Road in Eastham. Continue to parking area on left, across from the Captain Penniman House. The trail may also be accessed from Hemenway Landing, just north of Fort Hill on Route 6.

Features: This loop trail crosses open fields, connects with the Red Maple Swamp Trail (see below), and offers spectacular vistas of Nauset Marsh area.

Conditions: Easy; solid surface; some log steps on slopes; seasonal restrooms near Hemenway Landing.

Red Maple Swamp Trail Eastham

Length: .8 mile round trip, 30 minutes.

Location: Enter this trail from the Fort Hill Trail (see above.)

Features: Boardwalk sections of this trail meander through the heart of the Red Maple Swamp. This setting is most colorful in the fall.

Sections of the boardwalk at the Red Maple Swamp

Trail have been closed due to structural deterioration and safety concerns. A small section of boardwalk through a fine example of red maple swamp is open from the junction with the Fort Hill Trail. Check at Salt Pond Visitor Center for the current status of this trail, and for your safety, remain out of closed areas.

Conditions: Moderate difficulty; seasonal restrooms near Hemenway Landing.

Buttonbush Trail, Eastham

Length: .3 mile loop, 15 minutes.

Location: Adjacent to Salt Pond Visitor Center amphitheater, 50 Nauset Road, off Route 6.

Features: This loop trail which includes guide rope, text in braille and large print, and interactive features great for kids, involves all the senses as it winds through forest, crosses over the Buttonbush Pond on

a boardwalk bridge, and traverses formerly cultivated areas.

Conditions: Easy; some log steps on the second half of the trail; moderate grade; restrooms at visitor center.



Nauset Marsh Trail, Eastham

Length: 1.3 mile loop, plus spur to Coast Guard Beach, one hour.

Location: Adjacent to Salt Pond Visitor Center amphitheater, 50 Nauset Road, off Route 6.

Features: This trail winds along the edge of Salt Pond and Nauset Marsh, crosses fields, and returns to the Salt Pond Visitor Center through a recovering forest.

There are several spectacular vistas along the way. (A minimally-maintained trail extension leads to Doane Picnic Area and Coast Guard Beach. Extension is one mile each way.)

Conditions: Easy; some log steps; moderate grade; use caution when crossing the bike trail; restrooms at visitor center parking area.

Sections may be submerged at highest tides. Check at visitor center for conditions.

Doane Trail, Eastham

Length: .6 mile loop, 30 minutes.

Location: Doane Picnic area, one mile east of Salt Pond Visitor Center on Nauset Road (leading to Coast Guard beach). Look for brown signs.

Features: This paved, wheelchair-accessible loop trail with interpretive text winds through an emerging pine and oak forest. A picnic area is adjacent to the parking area.

Conditions: Easy; wheelchair accessible grade (also good for strollers); seasonal restrooms.

Two hour parking limit.



Atlantic White Cedar Swamp Trail, Wellfleet

Length: 1.2 mile loop, one hour.

Location: 195 Marconi Station Road. At stop light, turn east off Route 6 into the Marconi Station Area, South Wellfleet. Follow brown signs to the Marconi Site and White Cedar Swamp.

Features: This trail descends through a stunted oak and pine forest into a mature woodland, leads to a

boardwalk that winds through the picturesque Atlantic White Cedar Swamp, and returns via the historic "Wireless Road" (a sand road) to the starting location.

Conditions: Moderate difficulty; some steep stairs; return route is ½ mile in soft sand; swamp portion of this trail is boardwalk; seasonal restrooms.

Great Island Trail, Wellfleet

Length: 3.9 - 8.8 miles round trip (3.9 for tavern loop round trip to parking area; 8.8 for round trip to Jeremy Point overlook including tavern loop.)

Allow three to five hours to explore Great Island.

Location: Corner of Griffin Island and Chequessett Neck Road. From Route 6, follow green signs to Wellfleet Center; turn left onto East Commercial Street (follow signs to Wellfleet Harbor); continue along the shoreline from town pier via Chequessett Neck Road to the Great Island parking area. (Keep water view on left after leaving Route 6.)

*** BEACH ACCESS VIA DESIGNATED TRAIL ONLY. Do not traverse dune to reach beach (enforced). Stay on designated trails to protect fragile resources.**

Temporary detours and closures may be in effect during shorebird nesting periods.

Features: This trail follows sandy stretches between the elevated heights of Great Island and Great Beach Hill. Its higher elevations punctuate spectacular vistas which emerge from an even-aged, pitch-pine forest. Part of this trail leads to a colonial-era tavern site (no remains visible). Other sections skirt salt marsh embayments. A picnic area is adjacent to parking area.

Conditions: The park's most difficult trail; mostly soft sand; some log steps; portions are submerged at high tide; hats, sturdy footwear and drinking water advised; portable toilets.

Pamet Area Trails, North Truro

Length: .6 miles each way, plus extensions, 45 minutes. Adjacent fire roads offer additional miles of walking opportunities.

Location: 11 North Pamet Road. Take Truro Center/Pamet Roads exit off Route 6 in Truro. Proceed 1½ miles on North Pamet Road to the end. Trail begins at the parking area adjacent to the Environmental Education Center (a hostel in summer).

Features: The Bearberry Hill overlooks offer spectacular views of the Pamet landscape, with views of the Atlantic and the glacial terrain of the Pamet valley, and a former boghouse from the era of commercial cranberry harvesting. Outdoor exhibits and a folder keyed to trail markers describe the area.

Conditions: Moderate difficulty; log steps; steep grade to overlook. No restrooms.

Woods Walk at Highlands Center, North Truro

Length: 1 mile, 30 minutes

Location: 43 Old Dewline Road. Take Route 6 to the Highland Light Exit in North Truro. Go East on Highland Road. Turn right onto South Highland Road. After 0.6 miles, turn left onto Old Dewline Road. The Highlands Center is at the end of the road.

Features: This trail winds through the back woods of the emerging Highlands Center for arts, science, and education. It offers a glimpse of the Cold War past amidst forest, heathlands, and dramatic ocean bluffs.

Conditions: Moderate difficulty; paved and unpaved roads; sections with fairly steep terrain. No restrooms. Leashed dogs are permitted.

Small's Swamp Trail, North Truro

Length: .6 mile loop, 30 minutes.

Location: Turn right off Route 6, 1.2 miles past the brown Head of the Meadow Beach sign, at the Pilgrim Heights area sign. Walk begins and ends at the covered shelter.

Features: Chosen by Native People for living sites for thousands of years for water, protection, and food

sources, early-European settlers also sought to make a living on this landscape. Gradually, the soil gave out, farms were abandoned, and the landscape began its slow recovery. The forest here now hides most, but not all, of the former land uses in this area.

Conditions: Easy; some log steps; moderate grade; short boardwalk surface; picnic area and seasonal restrooms in adjacent parking area.

Pilgrim Spring Trail, North Truro

Length: .7 mile loop, 30 minutes.

Location: Turn right off Route 6, 1.2 miles past the brown Head of the Meadow Beach sign on the right, at the Pilgrim Heights area sign. Walk begins at the covered shelter. Upon exiting the trail near restrooms, proceed ahead across the parking area to your vehicle.

Features: Path leads to a site representative of where

the Pilgrims drank their first fresh water in New England. This short loop trail winds through the recovering pine and oak forest, and passes a marker which commemorates the Pilgrim's initial exploration of this area.

Conditions: Easy; some log steps; moderate grade; picnic area and seasonal restrooms in parking area at end of trail.

Beech Forest Trail, Provincetown

Length: 1 mile loop, (pond loop ¾ mile, extension loop ¼ mile), one hour.

Location: 36 Race Point Road. Turn right off Route 6 at traffic light onto Race Point Road. Proceed approximately ½ mile to the Beech Forest parking area on left.

Features: Journey into the heart of a picturesque beech forest, and enjoy great bird watching opportunities, especially in spring and fall. It skirts the shallow Beech Forest Pond.

Conditions: Easy; extension loop has steep log steps; some soft sand; picnic area and seasonal restrooms at trailhead; Province Lands bicycle trail can be accessed from parking area.

Salt Pond Visitor Center, Route 6, Eastham, MA 02642
508 - 255 - 3421, open year round

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Province Lands Visitor Center, Race Point Road, Provincetown, MA 02657
508 - 487 - 1256, open May through October

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