

Roosevelt Campobello International Park Natural Area

The Natural Area of the Park was purchased by the Park Commission to protect the Roosevelt Cottage and its surroundings from commercial and other development. It comprises much that was characteristic of Campobello, and was fascinating to the Roosevelts and other summer residents of that era. At that time a system of carriage and surrey drives was established to points of interest in what is now the Natural Area.

Many of these drives have been relocated and made passable for cars, with as little change in direction and land contours as possible. Vegetation has been allowed to remain close to the drives so as to be easily observed and to retain the original character it had in the early part of the century. Very little of the forest cover of the Roosevelt Period remains, as the interim owners logged the island for pulpwood. Natural succession and recovery, however, are rapidly taking place and will be allowed to proceed with as little interference as is practicable. The process of forest regeneration will be observable for many years and is in itself an interesting feature of the Natural Area.

Cranberry Point Drive

Two drive systems have been developed in the Natural Area. These drives are located directly off the gravel Glensevern road across the highway from the entrance to the Visitor Centre and the Roosevelt Cottage. The Cranberry Point Drive begins within sight of the highway. This Drive passes through second growth woods of native trees and shrubs which have grown from logged over areas. Along the first part of the Drive, many fir trees are dead or dying as a result of severe spruce budworm infestation. The death of these trees will result in essentially the same effect as logging—the regeneration of the dominant spruce fir forest.

The first picnic site on the Drive is the Fox Farm, a former cultivated area where at one time foxes were raised or "farmed". The beach is accessible here and views include the town of Lubec and the black and white Channel Lighthouse, sometimes called the Sparkplug, or Plug Light.

Beyond the Fox Farm is Cranberry Point. There are picnic facilities and a gravel beach here, as well as views of the southern portion of Campobello Island, Grand Manan Channel, and West Quoddy Head, a Maine State Park.

Continuing from Cranberry Point, the Drive passes another small picnic site and arrives at the Upper Duck Pond. The Upper Duck Pond is really a salt water cove open to the ocean. Being sheltered, it is a favourite stopping place for migratory waterfowl and shorebirds. A miniature estuary opens into the cove; and possesses most of the features and vegetation of a larger typical estuary.

From the Upper Duck Pond, the Drive loops back to rejoin itself and return to its point of origin; a total round trip distance of 5.4 miles.

Eagle Hill Bog

On the right hand side of the road, a short distance before the Liberty Point Drive, an interpretive trail follows a wooden walkway through the Eagle Hill Bog. The walkway offers an excellent dry opportunity to explore a bog and to view the unique vegetation found there. An observation deck which provides an overview of the bog from Eagle Hill is connected to the wooden walkway by a short section of trail.

Liberty Point Drive

The Liberty Point Drive lies 1.8 miles down the Glensevern Road,

which is directly across from the Park entrance. The first picnic site on this drive is Con Robinson's Point. Picnic tables, and steps down to a fine beach are found here, as well as an excellent view of the Wolf Islands. A short distance beyond Con Robinson's Point is Raccoon Beach. A field lies adjacent to the beach and a set of steps join the two. Picnic tables and coin operated viewing binoculars are available. On clear days there are views of the mainland of Canada (Point Lepreau), the Wolf Islands ten miles away, and the North Head of Grand Manan Island. Sixty miles across the Bay of Fundy, too far to be visible from sea level, lies Nova Scotia. Eider ducks and waterfowl, shorebirds and osprey can often be observed from Raccoon Beach. On occasion it is possible to view whales.

Continuing on from Raccoon Beach, the Drive passes through both areas of hardwood and softwood forest until it arrives at beach level at the Lower Duck Pond. The Lower Duck Pond, much larger than the Upper Duck Pond, is also a salt water cove, open to Grand Manan Channel. This cove, too, is a favourite stopping place for waterfowl. Here, a cobble barrier beach separates the ocean from a fresh to brackish body of water behind it. This barrier pond is at the foot of the Lower Duck Pond Bog, a sphagnum bog fourteen feet deep, and from which a carbon 14 determination indicates the bog is 7,000 years old. The beach at Lower Duck Pond graduates from rock to sand, and even on broiling summer days offers a cool, pleasant spot to picnic. West Quoddy Head and Sail Rock (the most eastern point of land in the United States) can be seen from this location.

From the Lower Duck Pond, the Drive continues to the Yellow Bank picnic site where from a high bank, excellent views of the Lower Duck Pond and Bog and West Quoddy Head are possible. Beyond Yellow Bank and just before Liberty Point, the Drive passes through what is often called "the fog forest" because of the great number of days it is subjected to cold fog. A look at the trees tells of the great stress they must be subjected to with limited light, low temperatures, 100% humidity, and at times wind-driven salt spray. The fog forest is carpeted with mosses; not the usual ferns found in other sections of the Natural Area.

At Liberty Point, the extreme southern end of Campobello Island, are excellent views of Grand Manan, roughly 18 miles long and 6.4 miles distant, West Quoddy Head Lighthouse, and stretches of rugged, rocky shoreline not found on the Cranberry Point Drive. From the high cliffs and ledges sea birds, seals, and on occasion, whales, porpoises and dolphins may be observed.

The Sunsweep Trail connects Liberty and Ragged Points. At the trail's end on Ragged Point is a five foot tall sculpture symbolic of international friendship. The flame finished black granite sculpture is the eastern most of a series of three such sculptures sited along the length of the Canadian - United States boundary. Additional information on Sunsweep is available at the Park's Visitor's Centre.

A round trip drive from the Park entrance to Liberty Point covers 8.8 miles.

Friar's Head Picnic Area

This head of land is given its name by the large pinnacle called the "Old Friar" at the Head's outer end, (clearly seen from the beach below the Roosevelt Cottage). Local tradition says that the British fleet, during the War of 1812, used the Old Friar as a target for cannon practice, substantially altering its outline.

From the summit of Friar's Head, a very short uphill walk from

the parking area, are some splendid views of the bay and surrounding islands. An observation deck, complete with interpretive panels, aids in identifying islands, mainland, bays and passages. Historical information is provided, and points of interest are elaborated on. Coin operated binoculars are also available.

Below the parking area, picnic tables, charcoal grills, a well with handpump, outdoor toilets, cleared fields and walking trails make Friar's Head a great place to enjoy a picnic.

Walking Trails

The 15.4 miles of Park drives are regarded as a foundation from which eight and a half miles of walking trails lead through, and to many interesting and picturesque locations. The trails are designed to offer short hikes, individually, or moderate to long hikes when travelled in combination. A circumferential hike of the Park may be made by using the Glensevern Road as one leg of the hike. To travel the trails in combination, it is sometimes necessary to walk a short distance down a drive to reach the next trail.

It is possible to follow much of the shoreline of the Park by walking along the beach. If however tidal or other conditions make this difficult, a trail can usually be found in the shelter of trees a short distance back from the shore. All trails are well maintained, clearly identified and easy to follow. Difficulty varies with the trail. Discretion should be used when allowing small children to travel the Liberty Point-Raccoon Beach, and Liberty Point-Lower Duck Pond trails, as sections of these trails are close to high cliffs and ledges. Footwear appropriate to wet conditions is recommended.

Customs House to Fox Farm-0.7 miles—a moderately difficult trail with some hills and gullies. Forest regenerating after logging.

Fox Farm to Upper Duck Pond-0.8 miles—relatively easy. Trail follows the border of a small estuary and emerges at the Upper Duck Pond parking lot, (on high running tides it may be necessary to allow the tide to fall before the beach can be followed to the Upper Duck Pond parking lot from the easterly side of the estuary).

Fox Farm to Cranberry Point-0.6 miles—one of the least difficult trails. Regenerating forest and excellent views of Lubec, FDR Bridge, and Channel Light. Trail begins two-tenths of a mile beyond the Fox Farm field.

Upper Duck Pond to Lower Duck Pond-2.0 miles—a long trail but relatively easy walking. Follows the shoreline just back from the beach for one mile. Second half of trail lies on the beach itself. Tidal flats, gravel and sand beaches. If the tide is very high it may be necessary, in order to cross the brook located at the mouth of the estuary, to wait until the tide recedes.

Lower Duck Pond to Liberty Point-0.8 miles—moderately difficult trail with several hills and gullies, beginning at Lower Duck Pond parking lot and emerging just before Liberty Point parking lot. A pleasant walk that passes through the Yellow Bank picnic site and offers excellent views of the Lower Duck Pond and Bog, West Quoddy Head Light and Sail Rock.

Liberty Point to Raccoon Beach-1.9 miles—The Park's most difficult trail. Many hills and gullies. Views of rocky headlands, rugged cliffs and ledges can be breathtaking.

Visitor Centre Parking Lot to Friar's Head-0.7 miles—for those who would rather walk, a short easy trail connecting the cottage area with the Friar's Head Picnic Area.

