

Silver Threads

A column created especially for people spending their golden years in Falmouth, written by these same senior citizens.

“Tiptoe, Through the Tulips . . .”

By Alison Robb

“Tell me of a trail in a conservation area in Falmouth that is not challenging to an older person,” a friend asked me last week. “Oh, I can think of a few,” I answered. “These come to mind right away:”

Peterson Farm is in the Quissett area, a farm that now belongs to the town of Falmouth and open to visitors. There are open fields that are inhabited by twenty or so sheep and their lambs that are watched over by Scamp, the llama who keeps dogs and coyotes away. Some afternoons around two pm. you might see sheep dogs being put through their paces, herding the sheep under the direction of their owner. The sheep graze on the vegetation -- no need for mowing.

There are dirt roads that surround the main field, and there are also trails into the woods, some of which are not difficult to walk.

Directions: From Woods Hole Road, turn in to McCallum Drive, take a quick right up the hill and park down by the field straight ahead.

River Bend. “This varied and interesting parcel combines level grassy fields, freshwater marsh, red maple-blueberry wetlands along the river, abandoned cranberry bogs, and a wooded slope leading down to the water.” It is off of Sandwich Road about 2 miles south of Rte. 151.

The Bartolomei Conservation Area is just across Sandwich Road from River Bend with another view of the Coonamessett River. “The 300 Committee has established the town’s first handicapped accessible trail on this level ground, with benches and a picnic table that accommodates wheelchairs, where visitors have a lovely view of

the water. In addition, a trail for able-bodied visitors has been established at the back of the parcel, which dips down and up through a spring-sapping valley. “

Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. has many trails on the west side of Salt Pond. which can be reached from a small parking area off Elm Road, where it crosses the bike path. The trail from Elm Road leads north and east toward the pond, and as one nears the pond the wildflowers and bushes go gradually from upland species to wetland species at the shores of the pond. The view over the pond toward the east includes the osprey nest on top of the platform off-shore in the pond. One can be quite close and observe the activities of the ospreys.

Beebe Woods at the top of Highfield Drive is full of trails, some of which are carriage roads built by the Beebe family for their afternoon rides as they showed their guests the many acres of woods on the glacial moraine. Other trails have been established by people walking across from Sippewissett to town or from south to north, and others made by animals on their daily (nightly) treks. After visiting the gardens and beech trees near the Hall, one can begin a walk behind Highfield Hall through the rhododendron grove or one can start beside the Cape Cod Conservatory and walk north toward the Punch Bowl, the beautiful kettle hole pond. As the trails become less flat one might choose to return to the starting point and leave the narrow, rough trails for another day. There is a trail map available at Highfield Hall or The 300 Committee office.

Crane Wildlife Management Area in Hatchville provides miles of dirt roads running between acres and acres of fields all on flat terrain. One can go as far as one wishes without challenges to one's footing. The fields in Spring and Summer provide nectar for butterflies -- it is known as one of the best butterfly sites on Cape Cod -- and insects for birds. The wildflowers include thistles, bird-foot violets, mountain mint, black-eyed susans, asters, wild indigo, and on and on. The butterflies are here all summer, and the birds summer and winter.

*The quotations in this article are from the 300 Committee descriptions of those conservation areas found on its website: www.300committee.org
Thanks to the 300 Committee, Falmouth's land trust, for providing many of these opportunities for enjoying well-cared-for open lands. You, dear reader, may find many more conservation areas in Falmouth than are listed here by going to their website where you will find descriptions and trail maps of all the conservation lands in Falmouth. Just reading the descriptions takes you out into the open, an adventure into nature.*

Neighborhood Falmouth is a nonprofit, membership organization, operating since 2009 to help Falmouth seniors live safely and comfortably in their own homes. For more information on joining, volunteering, and donating, call 508-564-7543; or visit www.neighborhoodfalmouth.org.