

To start your walk on the trail, we suggest that you use the trail to the right. Moving downhill, you pass through mixed forest, mostly of pine, oak and black cherry. At the lowest point is a roughly 1/4 acre wetland with freshwater-loving plants that host a variety of birds and other small animals. A bench here enables a leisured enjoyment of the vista.

Moving back upland, the mixed forest gives way to open terrain, covered in native bearberry and reindeer moss. Walking ahead, you approach the ridge that parallels the Herring River. These steep slopes are very fragile and subject to erosion. Three benches placed strategically along the top of the ridge encourage savoring of varied views, looking up and down the Herring River and across the river to Griffin Island. From the most southwesterly bench, you can see the tombolo ("The Gut") linking Griffin Island with Great Island and beyond is the Cape Cod Bay. The Herring River has its source headwaters on the east side of Wellfleet from ponds like Gull and Herring, and from groundwater. The Herring River hosts an ever-changing range of avian life all year long. A highlight of this trail is the ability to observe the avian life from above. Binoculars are helpful to observe the Great Blue Herons, Canada Geese, American Black Ducks, Common Goldeneye ducks, Bufflehead ducks, Double-crested Cormorants, Mute Swans, Ospreys and other raptors, Belted Kingfishers and many other birds. The tidal restriction at the dike on Chequessett Neck Road was completed in 1909, however the original objectives of mosquito control and agricultural development of the wetland

were never fully achieved. The dike's blockage impairs water quality both above and below the structure, harming shellfish and finfish.

The National Park Service and the Town of Wellfleet have developed a plan to restore Herring River's natural tides and water quality by replacing the dike with a long-span bridge. This will allow far greater tidal flow and eventually lead to salt-marsh restoration of over 1000 acres. To date, this is the largest wetland restoration in New England. As this project is incrementally implemented, the invasive Phragmites and deciduous hardwood trees will gradually be replaced by native salt-marsh grasses and forbs. Schools of herring, that once supported a rich food web, and also served as a food source for animals and people, are expected to recover. Recreational opportunities for boating and fishing will be enhanced. The Herring River Overlook Trail provides a unique vantage point and rare opportunity to witness the recovery of an estuary.

Please stay on the trails to protect fragile plants and habitat in the area and to respect private properties. Be vigilant about poison ivy and ticks!

Total Length of Trail: 1 mile

Extent: 18.3 acres

The land was graciously donated by Ms. Jacquelyn Fouse, a local resident, to the Wellfleet Conservation Trust in 2020 and is open to the public.

July 2021



Herring River Overlook Conservation Land & Trail

Area Description and summary:

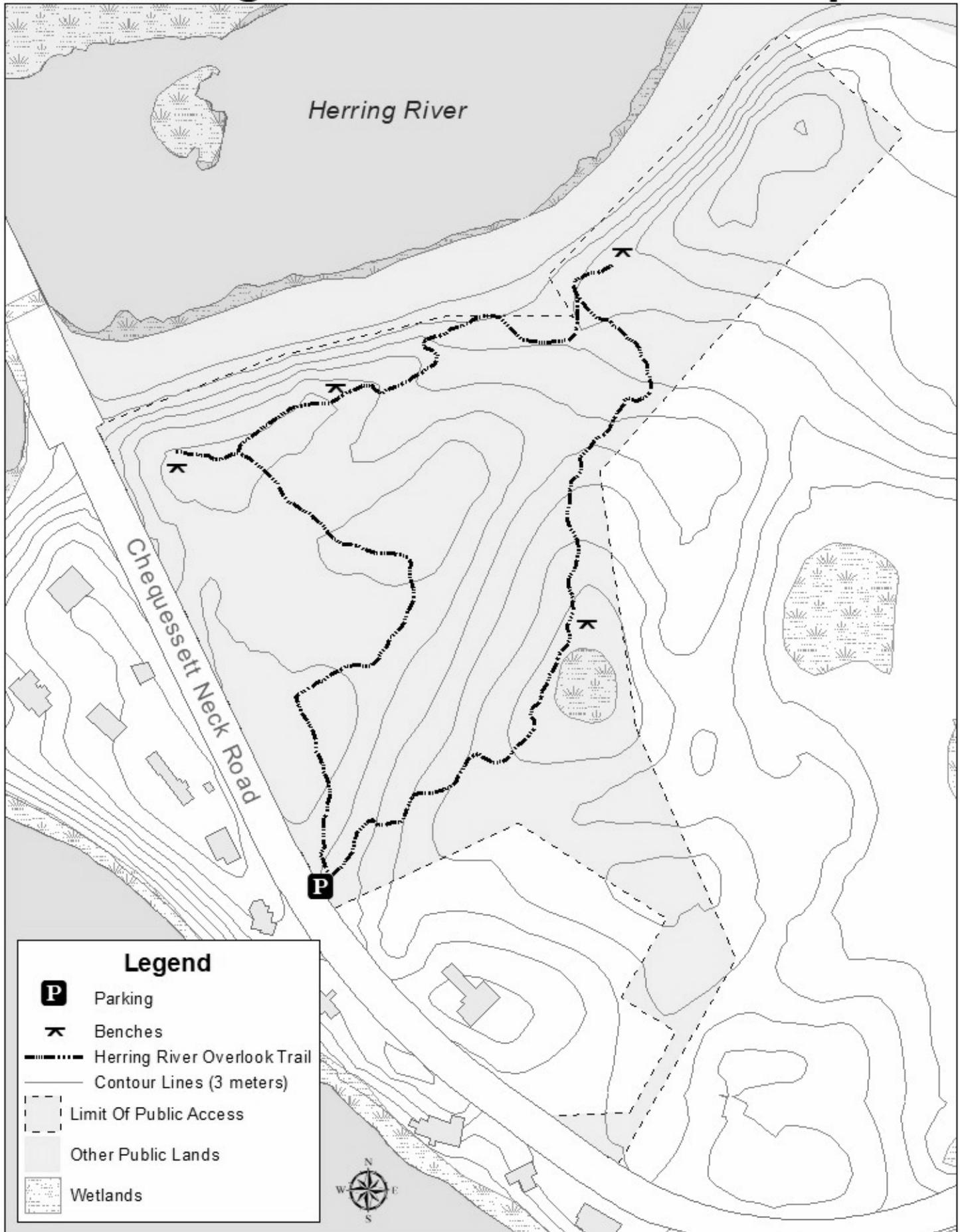
This beautiful 18.3 acre uplands property is a typical coastal heath that is succeeding to a pine-oak woodlands. It hosts about a 1 mile walking trail loop which starts and ends at the parking area. In the northwestern stretches, the ridge offers spectacular views of the Herring River, Griffin and Great Islands and into the Cape Cod Bay. Previously the land had been part of the surplus land holdings of the Chequessett Club, known for its golf, sailing and tennis activities. The Trustees of Chequessett Club had a strong preference to see the land in conservation and open to the public. This land has never been inhabited in modern times. Geologically, the land is an outwash plain, a remnant of the last glacial age of approximately 25,000 years ago.

Location: GPS 41.92820° N, 70.06226° W
1000 Chequessett Neck Road

Directions:

Exit Route 6 on Main Street; follow to the end of the commercial district; Left on Holbrook Ave; Right on Chequessett Neck Rd.; follow 1.9 miles.

Herring River Overlook Trail Map



Updated June 2021

0 250 500 Feet