

Rocky Pond Cranberry Bogs

Myles Standish State Forest



SELF-GUIDED INTERPRETIVE TRAIL

WELCOME to Myles Standish State Forest. Managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) this 12,404 acre forest offers hiking, biking, picnicking, non-motorized boating and seasonal camping.

The Rocky Pond Cranberry Bog Parking Lot (P7) is located in the northwestern section of Myles Standish State Forest, on Bear Hill Road where the powerlines cross the road. Look for the small gravel parking lot on the left side of the road as you drive up from Headquarters. Download and print a trail map at <https://www.mass.gov/locations/myles-standish-state-forest>.

The Rocky Pond Cranberry Bog is a 7-acre commercial cranberry farm within Myles Standish State Forest. This agricultural resource is managed by the DCR, farmed by the University of Massachusetts' Cranberry Experiment Station located in East Wareham, and supported by the member farmers of the Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association. It is used as a living laboratory, classroom, and demonstration area to promote low impact, but sustainable agricultural practices. It is also a for-profit farm so please enjoy the property but observe the general visitor guidelines of the park including...

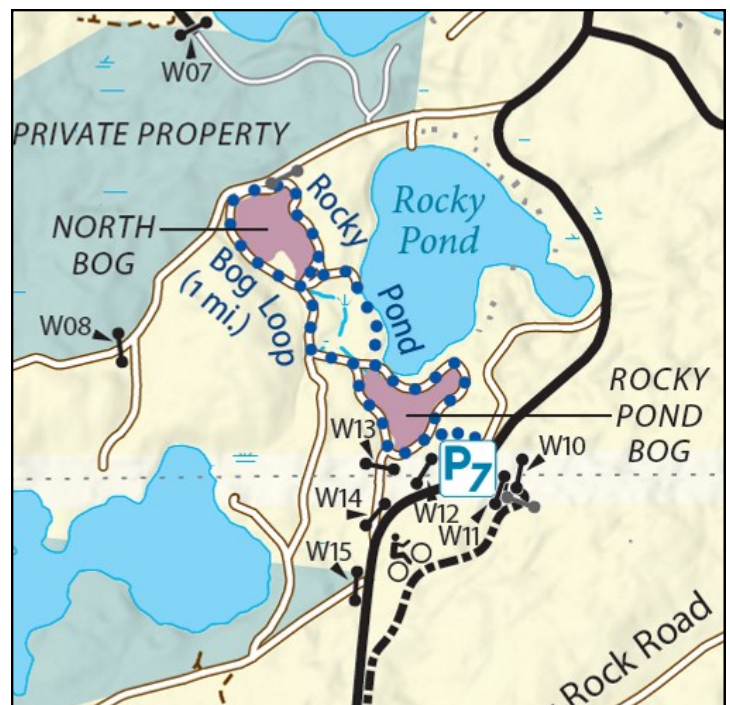
- Please stay on designated trails. Do not walk on the bog.
- Leave only footprints take only pictures.
- Do not pick the cranberries.
- Observe all posted rules and regulations.
- Be aware of hunting seasons and wear blaze orange when appropriate.
- All dogs must be leashed and pet waste should be disposed of properly.

Please remember to carry-in, carry-out all your belongings and trash. Leave No Trace of your visit. Thank you.

About the Trail

This is an ever changing ecosystem.

“Nothing is as sure as change” and the landscape is ever evolving a different look and different mix of plant communities. Those changes occur (even) without the influence of humans. A tree may fall and create an opening in a mature forest. Sunlight invigorates seedlings that may have not tolerated the shade. Low growing plants attract a different wildlife set. As the vegetation changes, so will the associated wildlife. Plant communities are always on the march, succeeding species, eventually being succeeded themselves. Everything you see is in motion.





The entrance roadway to Rocky Pond Bog begins within the dry hill-top community of pitch pine, scrub oak and bearberry, sometimes called the Cape Cod trinity. The power transmission line cuts a swath through the forest at this location and regulations forbid the planting of trees under the wires. This is a place where plant succession stands still, because vegetation is carefully controlled so as not to interfere with the transmission lines.

Moving down the slope to your left is Federal Hill which contains a stand of white pine. A white pine thinning has been completed along the lower edge to open the bog hollow for greater sunshine and air circulation. This is also part of a forest management intermediate cutting. The harvested trees have been followed by seedlings which offer browse and low cover to wildlife species that mature pine does not. Along the sandy road edges, colonies of wintergreen and bearberry anchor the sand in place. Tree cutting along the perimeter of the bog has left a “feathered” edge to allow for more diversity of wildlife habitat.

To your right and in the hollow is the first section of cranberry bog. It is encircled by a perimeter ditch, which conveys floodwater on and off the bog. Lateral ditches, which help to move the water, transect the section and there is a dike around the bog to contain winter floodwater. A brush area to the right of the bog contains wild blueberries and huckleberries for wildlife.

Please do not walk on the bog. Your footsteps will damage tender shoots and buds in the springtime, they may bruise developing fruit during the summer and early fall, and walking against the vine can damage the plants. The vines are trained to grow in a particular direction, usually crosswise so that the picking machines can comb through the vines without tearing them up. That sometimes gives the carpet a napped look like corduroy, with half of the vines on a section growing in one direction, half growing in the other direction, defined by a “centerline” running down the middle. Look for this after harvest when it is most noticeable.

Rocky Pond is just beyond the bog. A walk around the perimeter will take you to the pond edge. Rocky Pond is a good example of a kettle-hole pond: deep, clear, and spring fed. Park staff have installed a kestrel nest box high in the large oak tree at the pond edge. Kestrels, smallest of the hawks, are also known as sparrow hawks. They are the size of a robin with gray blue wings and a rust colored back. Kestrels hunt insects, mice and small birds. During nesting time, both parents tend the eggs and feed the young.



At the far end of the bog, turn onto the dirt road that travels by an abandoned cranberry bog on your right.

Look carefully through the bushes and you will see the old ditched sections and remnants of an old flume. This was a productive bog at one time, now in the process of reverting back to the wild. The plant species here are making the successional change from bog plants to shrub swamp to wooded swamp. Look for dominant species of the shrub swamp community including sweet pepper bush, blueberry, sumac, sheep laurel and leatherleaf. Also notice the bog plants being squeezed out, including cranberry vines. Make note of the invading red maple trees from the wooded swamp community. This area is particularly attractive to wildlife because it offers such a diversity of plant communities. It is an excellent place to watch for birds.

On your left you’ll come to a deep canal used to drain the bog sections. When the flume gates are opened, water moves by gravity through the canal to nearby Federal Pond, a cranberry reservoir, where Federal Furnace bogs will use the water. Behind the canal is Federal Hill, a beautiful white pine stand that is an example of commercial thinning in a managed forest. There is an understory of young trees, wintergreen, fern, and blueberries.

The second piece of productive bog, called North Bog, is up ahead on your left. This 4-acre section was renovated in 2000. The very irregular perimeter was squared-off to improve efficiencies, drainage has been improved, and the bog has been leveled, sanded and replanted with an improved variety of cranberry vines.

The sandpit is hard to miss. Sand is an important additive to a cranberry bog. Spread on the vines or on top of the ice during a winter flood, sand will anchor new shoots, keep fruiting uprights short and stocky, cover the leaf litter, reduce disease and help control insects. Fox are often attracted to the sandpit to play. Be sure to look at the sandy roads for the fresh prints of deer. They regularly pass through this way.

To get back to the parking lot you can either retrace your steps, or you can take the path from the north side of the North Bog along Rocky Pond, passing the red pump house, before it returns you back to Rocky Pond Bog.



This brings us to the end of the trail back at Parking Lot 7. We hope you enjoyed this self-guided tour.

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) oversees over 450,000 acres of state parks, forests, beaches, bike trails, parkways, watershed lands, and dams across the Commonwealth. DCR's mission is to: *Protect, promote and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all.*

MYLES STANDISH STATE FOREST

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