

I Spy Game

Greenbelt

HOW TO:

Take this document with you either printed out or just bring it up on your phone while you walk. When you find any two of the items listed below, snap a photo and post to Instagram with the hashtag: **#ispygreenbelt**

We'll pick three random winners and mail you a prize!

If you don't use Instagram, you can email us your two photos (ecga@ecga.org) or just complete the list on your own for fun! One entry per family, please!

NOTE: We don't want you to actually take anything from the property. Keep in mind the principle: Take only pictures, leave only footprints!

On the next pages, you'll find Beginner and Advanced sections. The beginner items are things you will find at this reservation all year, in abundance. The advanced items are a little harder to find, may move around, or might only be there during certain times of the year. This scavenger hunt was prepared for Echo and Elizabeth How Reservation in early spring 2020, but could be used at any reservation in Essex County. Enjoy!

Beginner / Spy

Greenbelt trail marker

Before you start your hike, look for the Greenbelt trail markers on the trees. If you follow these, you will know that you are on the right path!



Eastern White Pine Trees

These tall, straight trees were harvested for ship masts in the Colonial era and are often used cut down for lumber. Their outline is easy to spot in a forest. They are also identifiable by the 5 long, pliable needles in each cluster. White Pine does not tolerate shade well, so you see them growing tall and competing for the direct sunlight at the top of the canopy. In some areas, you can see damage done by the White Pine Weevil. This insect will lay its eggs in young saplings, killing the shoot that would become the trunk of the tree. Can you spot any white pines near the trail?



Stone wall

Stone walls were put up as property barriers, livestock fencing, and as divisions between planted farm fields. You can often figure out how a property was used years ago by looking for clues in stone walls. If the wall contains lots of small stones along with the larger ones, it was likely surrounding an agricultural field and the stones were pulled up when the ground was plowed. If the stones are all the same size, it is more likely a boundary marker for livestock or simply marking the edge of a property. Find the stone walls in this property. What do you think they were used for?



Tree Stumps

Along the trail, you might see tree stumps like these. Many conserved properties in our area were once used for timber or firewood by the families that owned the land. Sometimes, you can still see the evidence of that use as you hike. There may be other reasons a tree fell, too. Maybe a wind storm took it down, or perhaps disease or pests weakened it. Take a close look at any tree stumps you find and you might be able to tell what took the tree down and even how long ago it fell. What clues do you see as you hike today?



Advanced / Spy

Club Moss/Princess Pine

On the side of the trail, you've probably seen small plants that resemble miniature pine trees. These are called Club Moss or Princess Pines, but are neither a moss nor a pine! (They are seedless plants that reproduce with spores!) This type of plant is among the oldest still in existence on the planet -- their species is over 400 million years old! During the Devonian period, the fossil record tells us that these little plants used to grow up to 150' tall! Can you spot any Club Moss along the trail?



Beaver Activity

Beavers were once hunted for their fur almost to extinction by the settlers of the region. Now, they are protected by regulations and have made a great comeback. You can see evidence of beaver activity on many conservation lands in Massachusetts. Look for trees that have been nibbled through, stumps left in a conical shape, the beaver "lodge" which is their home in the pond, and the beaver "dam" which slows the water draining from the area, creating a larger, deeper pond for the beaver's habitat.



Scat

Animal droppings, or "scat," can tell you a lot about what an animal eats, what kinds of animals are in your area, and what those animals are doing at this time of year. Sometimes, wild animal scat is hard to find, but many animals deliberately place their scat in prominent places. Coyotes and fox are two of these animals. They will often deposit the scat on a log, a large rock, or right in the middle of the trail to mark their territory. Other animals keep their scat off main trails because they don't want to be found by larger predators. If you look very closely in the woods, you may find a pile of little oval-shaped pellets (deer scat, shown below) or lighter-colored, individual pellets that are more spread out (rabbit scat). Keep an eye out on the trail and off to the side in the bushes!



Bibliography

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