

Hiking Trails in North Pembroke

Nature & History Meet
Along The North River



Welcome!

My family and I are so very fortunate to live in a wonderful corner of the world, along the scenic North River. While I have accumulated more than 4 million miles of lifetime travel, all around the globe, I am always happiest and most at peace here at home.

My mom and dad instilled in me a love and passion for nature, my mom's affinity running straight from her father, Frederick Coes, down to me. It has become my joy in life to "pay it forward," carving out nature trails where one may wander in the woods, right down to the water's edge.

I look forward to giving you a tour of our neck of the woods and sharing with you a big dose of Vitamin "N" (nature).

This booklet is dedicated to my Mom, Carol M. Sullivan, who was a true naturalist ahead of her times and with whom I shared many moments in quiet reflection observing our neck of the woods.

A Brief History of the North River

This walk will take us over a 100-acre retreat through a truly magical landscape. Chronologically speaking, a large glacial erratic called "Rocky Reach" will take us back in time 11,000 years as the Laurentide Ice Sheet withdrew, leaving this craggy outcropping and the land as you see around it. Wanpanoag Indians lived here, seasonally, for millennia, harvesting nature's bounty during the warmer months of the year and shifting further inland when the colder days arrived. European settlement, beginning in the 1600s, disrupted that life. Though high-minded and with a belief they were humanizing the local population, the European settlers brought disease and war to these peaceful tribes who lived in harmony with the landscape. The colonists sought to tame the land and felled most of the local woodland areas for industry. Much of the cleared forested lands have returned to young first growth forests, and it's into these woods we now go.



Things to Watch For in the Woods

Pine Trees

It's hard to imagine that the towering 200 foot-tall White Pines and hardwood trees that we see here today are less than 100 years old. Those trees are home to birds of all sizes, from small Pine Warblers, to nesting Red-tailed Hawks and Great Horned Owls. Note that as they age, they discard their lower branches, when their needles can no longer capture sunlight and execute the photosynthesis process.

Stonewalls

Stonewalls erected during the 1800s made of field stone weave their way throughout the woods dividing ancient, lost pastures and marking old, now mostly moot property lines. As rocks continually pushed up through the pastures they were added to the ever growing walls. Watch for Eastern Chipmunks scurrying along the walls, and imagine the energy needed to create the walls in those earliest days.



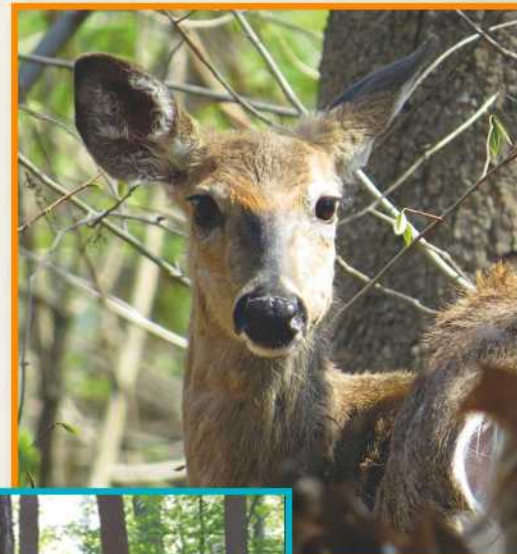
Great Horned Owl

Mammals

Our large tracts of reforested woods in the northeast have brought back native wildlife such as deer, coyote, fox, and raccoon, among many other small mammals. White-tailed Deer, perhaps due to their size, seem to be the most conspicuous, and walk the same trails day-in-and-day-out, almost predictably appearing in the same places.

Amphibians

Deep within the woods, if you are lucky enough to visit in the early spring, you may hear the clucking of Wood Frogs, an indication of the presence of a vernal pool. It's also a reminder that these woods are home to several species of amphibians, from toads and frogs to Spotted and Red-backed Salamanders.



White-tailed Deer

Red-tail Hawk



Lady Slipper

Things to Watch For Along the River

The North River

The North River runs 23 miles to the sea, but only 10 as the crow flies. Six and a half of those miles rumble through tidal marshes. 123,000 square feet comprise the North and South Rivers Watershed, all of those lands that drain into the river we see before us. The river touches five towns: Scituate, Marshfield, Pembroke, Hanover, Norwell; and seven others are in the watershed: Hingham, Whitman, Duxbury, Weymouth, Rockland, Abington and Hanson.

North River Wildlife

As we approach the North River, our wildlife changes. We may still see deer, but we are now in a world of feeding ducks and cormorants, of marsh birds like Great Blue Herons and Red-winged Blackbirds. We may see a Snapping Turtle slide its way into the river, or we may hear the song of a Willow Flycatcher.



Snapping Turtle

Osprey

Shipbuilding

From 1690 to 1870, shipbuilders working along the North River and in Scituate Harbor launched approximately 1,025 ships of varying sizes. The woods along the North River were particularly important due to its proximity to the historic North River Bridge. As the main roadway between Boston and Plymouth ran directly over it, the bridge became an important spot for commerce, as raw materials brought into the city traveled down the coast.

The Turner Family

In the 1700s and the 1800s the Turner family built ships utilizing wood from the trees along the river, bog iron ore for chains and anchors from upstream in Pembroke, and sailcloth and other materials that crossed the North River Bridge. As we stand in the silence at the water's edge, we can only imagine the sounds from the past, the saws, the hammers, the adzes, and the joyous celebration that accompanied another successful launch.



Male Hooded Merganser



North American River Otter

The Family Legacy

The Sullivan House

The Georgian Colonial dwelling known as River House was built in 1715 by Robert Hatch. Captain Thomas Turner built ships here at least between 1801 and 1803, turning out the schooners *Mary*, *Eliza* and *Spanker*. Gerald Holmes invented the Protectowire product here in 1938. The Sullivan family moved into the house in 1980. The house, which is listed on the Department of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places, features an ancient bee hive oven in the main cooking fireplace, five working fireplaces, and 300 year-old, wide pine floors and doors.

The Horse Barn

Built in 2011 by close childhood friend David Nile, this classic post and beam construction is held together by 400 hand-carved red oak wood pegs. Its high ceilings, wide aisles and oversized stalls give it a welcoming, stately feel. Suited for high royalty, the barn is aptly occupied by four Friesian horses. Originating in Holland these beautiful draft

horses can be seen riding horseback or pulling carriages around the farm, though most commonly they are seen relaxing in the pastures. David Nile passed away prematurely in 2016 at the age of 54, but he accomplished much in his abbreviated lifetime. The barn stands as a testimony to his amazing skills as a craftsman.

Sand Pebbles

This house was designed and built in 1999 by my mom, Carol M. Sullivan. Lovingly called "Coco" by her grandkids and loved ones, Mom's passion for painting and Asian art is clearly on display through the house. This unique home is nothing short of a museum. Our dear Coco passed away in December 2016, but has left a lasting legacy and memory in this beautiful retreat. Panoramic 360 degree views of the river and woods are truly breathtaking. Coco enjoyed 16 years living in this masterpiece, fulfilling her lifelong dream. After spending time in the home one can see why she seldom traveled and enjoyed this paradise to its fullest.

Protectowire, Inc.

Gerald Holmes founded Protectowire in 1938. Mr. Holmes invented the ingenious fire system while living in the River House and developed the product line in an old animal barn which was located where our horse barn now sits. Mr. Holmes' early business partner and legal counsel was my dad, John Sullivan. The company prospered for some 70 years, advancing its facility and technology from the modest historic animal barn. The business took a big leap forward in 2010 with the construction of a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, which caps off the top of our 100 acre property. With tremendous growth both domestically and, in particular, overseas, our new location hosts visitors from around the globe and continues to be an industry leader.



River House



Horse Barn



Sand Pebbles



Protectowire Company

North Pembroke Hiking Trail Map



Legend

1. River House
2. Stillwater Farm
3. Rocky Reach
4. Stone Bridge
5. Dock
6. Garden
7. Coco's Barn
8. Sand Pebbles
9. Dock
10. Pembroke Conservation Land (Dark Green Area)
11. Seabury Point
12. Public Canoe Launch
13. Brick Kiln Shipyard
14. Sit Spot
15. Protectowire Company
16. Campsite

Please Note:
These trails are on private property
and are available for Guided Tours only.
Thank You

Acknowledgments

In hindsight I realize I grew up in an idyllic time. We lived in 14 wooded acres with many acres beyond abutting a herring run. Though over 40 years ago I have vivid memories exploring those woods alone and taking in the wildness of it all, it seems to be a far different time our children are growing up in. While there is much to embrace with all our technological advancements I hope to instill some balance in my kids (and you!) by reconnecting with nature and taking a break from our digital world.

To help keep the waters of the North River blue and its borders green, and for more information about the history and nature of the river, please contact:

The North and South Rivers Watershed Association:

www.nsrwa.org

PO Box 43, 214 South Street, Norwell MA 02061,
781.659.8168

South Shore Natural Science Center:

www.southshorenaturalsciencecenter.org

48 Jacobs Lane, Norwell MA 02061, 781.659.2559

A great read for parents of young children and adults alike: check out Richard Louv's "Last Child in the Woods".

A very special thank you to my fellow trail blazers Norman Forgit & John Galluzzo for their creative talent during this booklet's production.



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Thank You