

Belle Isle Marsh

East Boston, Massachusetts

Coordinates: N42° 23.508 W070° 59.413

Geocaching.com code: GC48HCH

Type of Cache: Traditional



The 241 acre (97 hectare) Belle Isle Marsh is the largest surviving salt marsh in Boston, a true gem in the midst of the large urban center. Belle Isle Marsh exemplifies the type of wetlands that once lined the Massachusetts Bay shore and showcases plants and wildlife now rare to the Metropolitan area. With saltwater, freshwater, and meadow areas, this coastal marsh is a critical habitat for diverse wildlife and vegetation. Tall reeds provide cover for muskrats, opossums, snapping turtles, and garter snakes, and the grasslands are home to meadow voles, monarch butterflies, and songbirds. The protected waters are nurseries to fish and shellfish and are critical habitat to many salt marsh plants and wildlife rare to the area.

The marsh has a long history of human use. During the 1600s, the marshlands were used as pasture land for livestock and the salt marsh grasses were harvested for hay. By the mid-20th century, parts of the marsh had been filled and developed with a few homes, businesses, industrial structures and a fuel tank farm. The Suffolk Down race track and the Suffolk Downs Drive-in theatre were also built on filled marshland. In 1986, a substantial wetland reconditioning program was begun.

In the late 1970s, 152 acres (62 hectares) of the marsh was acquired from the Massachusetts Port Authority and established as the Belle Isle Marsh Reservation. The reservation is administered by the Massachusetts Dept. of Conservation and Recreation. The public park, which opened in 1985, allows visitors to stroll along Belle Isle Marsh's winding pathways, sit quietly and enjoy the natural surroundings, or take in the wide ocean view from the observation tower. The park is open year-round from 9:00 a.m. to dusk.

Learn more about this area:

www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/massparks/region-north/belle-isle-marsh-reservation.html
friendsofbelleislemarsh.org/

Thank you to: Bumble! (cache owner), Prassede Vella (MA Office of Coastal Zone Management)

Passport Question:

- How many steps are there going up the tower?
- How many benches are there between the walking bridge and the tower?



The Gulf of Maine Council on the Marine Environment's (GOMC) 2012-2017 Action Plan identifies goals for three broad issues that benefit significantly from regional collaboration:

1. Restore and conserve habitat
2. Environmental and human health
3. Sustainable communities

More information on the GOMC, its partners and its activities can be found at www.gulfofmaine.org

