

# Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

Wells, Maine



**Coordinates:** N43° 19.926 W070° 33.313

**Geocaching.com code:** GC2V8TA

**Type of Cache:** Traditional

Estuaries are the transition between the land and the sea. These coastal ecosystems are where fresh water from rivers and salt water from the sea mix, and they are some of the most productive ecosystems on Earth. Estuaries provide important habitat for many plants and animals, they provide natural flood protection for our coastal communities, and also help to protect coastal water quality by filtering land-based pollutants from water as it passes through the estuary. However, estuaries are vulnerable to pollution, sedimentation, climate change, invasive species and other threats which can affect their health and long-term survival.

In 1984, the estuary was designated a National Estuarine Research Reserve by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve is part of a system of 28 Reserves around the country. The Wells Reserve protects 2,250 acres (910 ha) of dunes, beaches, salt marshes, freshwater wetlands, forest and fields within the watersheds of the Little River, Webhannet River, and Ogunquit River. It is a regional center for education, training and outreach, and also conducts and supports research, studies and monitoring. The Wells Reserve is open every day and offers public access to its grounds. The historic buildings of Laudholm Farm, also on the National Register of Historic Places, serve as an educational and research center for visitors and scientists.

Nearby you will also find the **Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge**. The Refuge was established in 1966 by the US Fish and Wild Service in cooperation with the State of Maine to protect valuable salt marshes and estuaries for migratory birds. It was named after Rachel Carson, a world-renowned marine biologist, author and environmentalist. In 1962, she published the book *Silent Spring*, which linked the use of post-World War II chemical pesticides and impacts to the environment and wildlife. She has been credited with launching the contemporary environmental movement and awakening the concern of Americans for the environment



## Learn more about this area:

[www.wellsreserve.org/](http://www.wellsreserve.org/)

[www.fws.gov/refuge/rachel\\_carson/](http://www.fws.gov/refuge/rachel_carson/)

**Thank you to:** geosula (cache owner), Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve

## Passport Question:

- The sign on the railing at this site refers to which exotic plant that can invade a marsh when tidal flow is blocked?

**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](http://www.gulfofmaine.org)



**Did You Know:** In 2003 and 2006, the **Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve** received grants from the Gulf of Maine Council's Habitat Restoration Program for oyster habitat establishment and for salt marsh monitoring and management at Drakes Island. The **Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve** also received an award from the Council for its excellence in science, communication, partnerships, education, and stewardship of the Gulf of Maine coastal ecosystems in 2009.