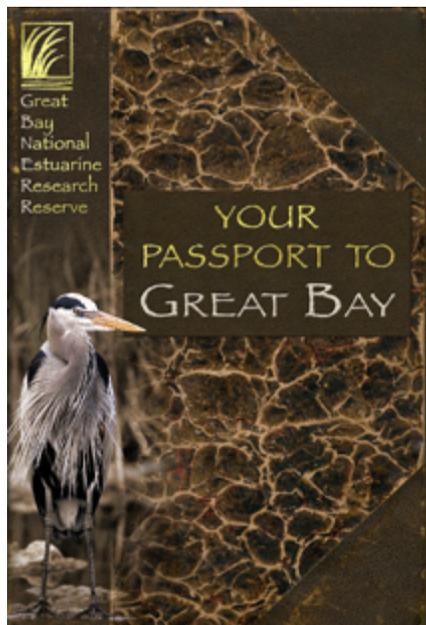


## Passports to Great Bay!



There is a guidebook to help residents and visitors alike discover and enjoy the Great Bay and its surroundings. For well over a decade, the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, in cooperation with the Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership, has acquired thousands of acres of land for permanent protection. Now held by the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, these lands range from islands to handicapped-accessible boardwalks and viewing platforms. For years, visitors have asked where they can go to enjoy these lands, and now they have the **Passport to Great Bay** to guide them.

The Passport is a sturdy booklet featuring a dozen public lands, ripe for exploration. Each page within the booklet guides the reader via an encompassing theme for each property. Interwoven into each theme is natural and cultural history information the visitor can experience firsthand.

As an example, "Turtle Quarry" is a property within the Crommet Creek Watershed, the largest unfragmented block of natural vegetation around Great Bay. In the "Navigating The Landscape" section, travelers will find a narrated journey through the property, highlighting the unique natural and cultural features of the land: *"The main trail, an old logging road, extends from the small informal parking area off Dame Road, and takes you onto the property...Look for liverworts (relatives of mosses), a simple flat plant with leathery leaves...Search for drill holes in granite, telltale signs of quarry work...This property, with its many acres of freshwater wetland, is also a recognized Blanding's turtle and spotted turtle site..."* As with "Turtle Quarry", each page of the Passport is rich in local lore and natural history information. And, as new properties are acquired, exciting new pages will be added to the Passport.

Each page of the Passport includes directions to the property, how to access the land, and interesting things to see and do while there. For those with an interest in Geocaching, latitude and longitude coordinates are listed, and will lead the reader to the cache with a punch that corresponds to the property. Visitors who find all of the caches, and use the punches to mark their Passports, will earn a Great Bay Navigator travel mug! Each page also includes boundary maps, and tips and ideas for ways to get kids connected to the outdoors and to keep them engaged, such as counting the number of muskrat houses on the marsh, looking for deer antler sheds, or discovering the date when Valentine Bunker died. A small journal section, called "What I Saw", can be used to record field observations.

You can visit the Discovery Center during normal business hours to get your Passport, or call 603.778.0015 to make other arrangements. Your journey will begin at the Great Bay Discovery Center "Trailhead."

"We are so excited about the Passport, because even some people who have lived here their whole lives don't know about these lands," said Peter Wellenberger, Manager of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Reserve. "This is a great vehicle for getting the word out about our incredible land protection efforts, as well as to introduce folks to places that make you feel like you have stepped into the deep North Woods."

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