

Quashnet River Access

Falmouth Mashpee

486 Acres

Latitude: 41.603 N Longitude: 70.503 W



The Quashnet River Access is 486 acres of protected open space with a variety of land ownerships. The Quashnet River is a coldwater sand and gravel bottomed stream averaging about 15 feet wide. The river flows in a steep sided valley and is bordered by shrubby wetlands (former cranberry bogs) dominated by sweet gale. The uplands in the area are the typical Cape Cod habitats of pitch pine and oak. These properties are now part of the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, a cooperative management effort.

Access

Primary access to the Quashnet River Access is a small parking area off of Martin Road (which is a loop around the river on the north side of Route 28). An informational kiosk provides information on the property. The property is also accessible from a gate off Route 28 at Whittings Road and from an unimproved road off the southern side of Route 151 on the east side of the river. Old dirt roads border both sides of the Quashnet River valley and the only crossing of the river between Route 151 and Route 28 is a road over the old bog reservoir dam and fish ladder.

History

The Quashnet River was formed as a spring sapping valley in the Mashpee Pitted Plains as the glaciers retreated. In the 1700s, a mill dam was created near Martin Road to power a grist mill. In the 1800s, the mill dam impoundment and land bordering the river was turned into cranberry bogs.

The initial purchase of open space in this area occurred in 1956 when the Division of Fisheries and Game acquired 31 acres of abandoned cranberry bog abutting one mile of the Quashnet River to protect its sea run brook trout (AKA salters). The land (Quashnet Woods State Reservation) around this initial acquisition was purchased by the state in 1988 when development associated with the Mashpee Commons project threatened Waquoit Bay and the Quashnet River. Other purchases were made by the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in 1987. The former Dawson property near Route 151 was acquired by the Town of Mashpee with a conservation restriction held by MassWildlife.

The river served as a stocking site for sea run brown trout program from the 1970s to 1994 when management focus returned to the native salter brook trout. Between the 1950s and 1975, the river channel was overgrown with shrubby vegetation (sweet gale and willow) and trout habitat declined. Thousands of hours have been spent by Trout Unlimited members under the direction of Fran Smith on improving trout habitat in the river with deflector construction, brush clearing and tree planting. These efforts have received national recognition for the volunteer efforts to improve fisheries resources. A USGS gaging station was built at Martin Road to generate information on river flow to assess the potential impact of water supply development on the river resources.

Outdoor Recreation

The Quashnet River supports a healthy wild brook trout population with some of the trout known to enter the marine areas of Waquoit Bay and become salters. ***The entire length of the Quashnet River is catch and release artificial lures only.*** Best fishing is offered during the spring and late summer using a variety of dry and wet flies. The Quashnet River is a small brook and best opportunities are dabbling with the flies from the banks. Backcasting areas are extremely limited. The Quashnet River Access area is open to hunting with the primary attractions being white tailed deer and wild turkey with woodcock, ruffed grouse, bobwhite quail, coyote and waterfowl hunting also available.

For More Information, contact:

Southeast Wildlife District, MassWildlife, 195 Bournedale Road, Buzzards Bay, MA 02532

(508) 759-3406 MassWildlife Website: www.mass.gov/masswildlife

Updated: 02/26/2009 S.T.H.