

Marlborough-Sudbury State Forest

Summary: A quiet forested trail on state land abutting the new (but still closed) National Wildlife Refuge and the Massachusetts Firefighting Academy. The terrain is level, except for a brief, easy climb up to the elevated loop segment. This hike takes about an hour.

Trailhead Location: Several cars can park along the north side of Sudbury Road, 0.2 miles northwest of the junction of Sudbury Road and State Road. The trail leaves from this southeasterly parking area (P1 on map); a larger off-road parking area (P2) is a short distance northwest along Sudbury Road.

History: The State Forest was given to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management by the US Department of the Interior over 20 years ago, under the provisos that a parking lot be built and a sign be provided to mark it.

The adjacent Assabet River National Wildlife Refuge is a 2750-acre site acquired by eminent domain in 1942 by the U.S. Government for use as an Army ammunition storage point during World War II. Since that time it has been used for ordnance research and development, field-testing of military materials, and troop training. 58 years as a military installation prevented general development on the property.

Following environmental cleanup work in the 1990s, approximately 2205 acres of the now-clean site were transferred to the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 2000. The Service is working towards opening the site for appropriate public use in the near future. The refuge, which borders the Assabet River, is 70% forested with 476 acres designated as wetlands.

Nature to look for: The sandy soils in this area result from glacial outwash, and support plant species such as sweet fern, blueberry and red pine. Wildlife include deer, fox, coyote, fishers, birds of prey such as red tailed hawk, and several species of woodpecker.

CAUTION

Hunting is permitted in the State Forest, except where posted near the Firefighter's Academy. Hunting season is approximately October to December. For safety, wear bright orange clothing.

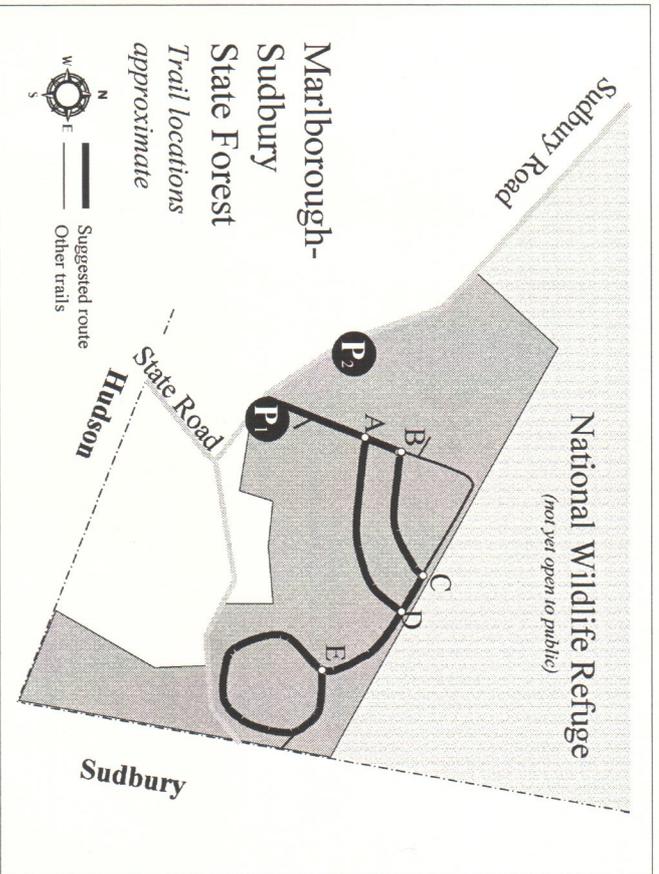
Suggested Route: From parking area P1, follow an occasionally-paved dirt road (formerly White Pond Road) north into the woods, to the right of the State Forest sign. An open, grassy area lies to the left of the trail. Just past the end of the field, turn right on a narrower path (junction B on map).

Turn right at C. National Wildlife Refuge land lies to the north of this section of trail, beyond a chain-link fence. At the crest of a hill, turn right at E and pass by the first of a variety of exercise stations along this loop. Please keep off those that are posted for use by firefighters only.

The trail soon curves downhill away from the MFA, now running roughly parallel to State Road. At a Y-junction by the Pole Climb station, bear right, then stay right again as a trail comes in at an angle from your left. The trail continues downhill. At a T-junction, with a metal gate at the roadside to your right, bear left away from the road. Continue straight as side trails head off to your left and right.

The trail climbs back uphill. Near the top of the rise, pass by a small concrete-block shed to your right. The trail curves left past a line of white boulders to return to E, completing the loop. Turn right to head back downhill the way you came. After the trail levels, turn left at the next trail junction (D). At junction A, turn left to return to the parking area.

If you turn right along Sudbury Road, then left onto Kingland Drive, 0.1 miles along to your right you will find a dirt track leading into the woods. This track leads north to **Pine Bluffs Town Beach**, about 10 minutes away.



A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

The Ancient Mariner – Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772–1834)