



From top (1-4): Falmouth Community Park hiker; Tidewater Gardens; Falmouth Community Park; Mt. Washington from Suckfish Brook Trail. Photo credits: Doug Zlatin (1,4); Andy Cadigan (2); Carrie Aube (3)

From the Wellness Committee: Falmouth's Fabulous Trails

by Doug Zlatin, Community Wellness Committee member

"In every walk with nature, one receives far more than he seeks." - John Muir

From the half-mile **Suckfish Brook Bog Trail** to over twelve miles of **Cross-Falmouth Trail**, there's something for everyone in our town's amazing trail system: Casco Bay views, vast acres of woodland, beautiful meadows, open fields, scenic rivers, Tidewater Farms' tidal estuary, and even a few modest waterfalls. Delightful vistas, interesting wildlife (especially birds), and incomparable peace and serenity await your steps! For a town of its size, Falmouth has an abundant amount of land available for public use: more than 2,700 acres of open space under stewardship (nearly 15% of its total acreage) with 30 trails covering approximately 55 miles. Most every resident lives within a half-mile of open space!

Residents interviewed for this article are very familiar with town trails due either to their long-standing experience with trail use and development and/or roles with Falmouth Land Trust or Town departments that plan and maintain use of public space. "We're blessed with the best, largest, and easiest-to-access trail system in all of southern Maine," said Tommy Johnson. His personal favorite is **Falmouth Nature Preserve**, which he appreciates for the peace and quiet it offers just a few steps from his densely populated Foreside neighborhood.

Caleb Hemphill draws his knowledge, in part, from many years volunteering in trail blazing, marking and maintenance. He is particularly fond of hiking in **Falmouth Community**

Park, enjoying the unique forest views the trail offers as it follows a meandering tributary stream. If you're looking for a great property to walk in every season with fascinating historical aspects as well, Lucky D'Ascanio favors **River Point**. "Although it's close to "civilization" you feel like you are miles away in the wilderness," she said.

Richard Bicknell is a fan of **Morrill-Stillings**, a relatively new trail and bird sanctuary offering unparalleled meditative peacefulness. Mila Plavsic's favorite (one shared by this author) is the **Suckfish Brook Conservation Area**. "I enjoy the meditative serenity of the beaver dam and pond at the start of the hike and the incredible views of Mount Washington and the Presidential Range from the ridge trail above a Christmas tree farm," she said.

Rick Scala, who has led dozens of walks over the years, particularly likes **Underwood Springs Forest Preserve** with one of the trail system's newer paths. "Despite being surrounded by the most densely settled part of Falmouth, once on the trail you feel as if you're in the least densely populated area in all of Maine," he said.

Recommendations for particular types of trails include:

- **Family-friendly** – Suckfish Brook Bog, Falmouth Nature Preserve, Tidewater Farms, River Point, Community Park, Woods Road Community Forest
- **Wildlife viewing** (birds, in particular) - Hurricane Valley Farms, Morrill-Stillings, River Point, Tidewater Farms, Gilsland Farms (Audubon Society)
- **Biking** – Blackstrap Hill Community Forest, North Falmouth Community Forest
- **Scenic views** – Suckfish Brook Conservation Area, Tidewater Farms, Mill Creek Preserve, Blackstrap Community Forest, Falmouth Nature Preserve

Resources to learn more about our trails and guided trail walks include:

- Falmouth Land Trust's monthly guided walks: <https://falmouthlandtrust.org/events>
- Senior Outdoor Adventures in Recreation (SOAR) guided walks for the 55+ crowd every other Thursday: <https://www.falmouthme.org/parks-and-community-programs>
- Audubon Society's weekly bird walks at Gilsland Farms (seasonal): <https://maineaudubon.org/events/>
- Information about Falmouth trails and open space, including links to maps: <https://falmouthlandtrust.org/properties-1> or <https://www.falmouthme.org/parksandpubliclands>

Falmouth Community Wellness Committee and Falmouth Land Trust invite one and all to **Falmouth Trails Day**, Saturday, October 8, (rain-date, October 9) to explore one or two fabulous trails on easy-to-moderate, one-hour guided hikes. [See below](#) for more information or visit: www.falmouthme.org/community-wellness-committee