

## First Day Hikes Cape Cod

Monday, January 1, 2024

### Calendar of FREE Events

*(as of 12.5.23.23– events are subject to change)*

**First Day Hikes Cape Cod 2024** is the third annual collaborative effort inspired by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) state parks First Day Hike program, which encourages people to get outdoors with free guided walks and activities to explore Cape Cod's parks, trails, and natural resources on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Primarily celebrated in state parks across the nation, **First Day Hikes Cape Cod** is the only regional model of its kind that launched three years ago. This year it has grown to represent 15 conservation/environmental organizations and featured 18 free events. Event registration can be found on individual websites where required. A full schedule of events can be found online at [www.blr.org/firstdayhikescapcod](http://www.blr.org/firstdayhikescapcod) in addition to below. Please contact Sue Dahling Sullivan, Barnstable Land Trust, at [sue@blr.org](mailto:sue@blr.org) with questions!

#### 6:30 am

##### **Sunrise Mindful Beach Stroll with Andrea Higgins**

*Host:* Harwich Conservation Trust [www.harwichconservationtrust.org](http://www.harwichconservationtrust.org)

*Location:* Red River Beach, Harwich: parking at the east end of the parking lot

Celebrate the first light of the first day of the New Year with Harwich Conservation Trust on a Sunrise Mindful Beach Stroll. Join Naturalist and Mindful Outdoor Guide Andrea Higgins at Red River Beach in South Harwich to witness the Earth waking up to a new day, a new year, and a new beginning. Enjoy a gentle stretch, a slow beach stroll to admire the gifts of the sea, and a mindful outdoor experience while connecting with nature, self, and each other as we start the new year. This walk will be approximately one mile, mostly in soft sand. Please register [here](#).

#### 6:45 am

##### **First Sunrise Walk at West Dennis Beach**

*Hosts:* Dennis Conservation Land Trust [www.dennisconservationlandtrust.org](http://www.dennisconservationlandtrust.org) and Friends of Bass River [www.friendsofbassriver.org](http://www.friendsofbassriver.org)

*Location:* Public Parking Lot at 1 West Dennis Beach Rd, West Dennis

Start 2024 off right – outside! – for the year's first light. Join the Dennis Conservation Land Trust and the Friends of Bass River at West Dennis Beach for the first sunrise of 2024. Walk along the barrier beach for views of Nantucket Sound and Bass River while learning about the natural and cultural history of the area. The 1-mile walk will start at 6:45 AM and proceed along flat, sandy substrate. Registration is limited. Email [info@DennisConservationLandTrust.org](mailto:info@DennisConservationLandTrust.org) for more info or to reserve your spot.

#### 6:45 am

##### **Sunrise at Sandy Neck**

*Host:* Barnstable Land Trust [www.blr.org](http://www.blr.org)

*Location:* Sandy Neck Beach Park Parking Lot; 425 Sandy Neck Road, West Barnstable; walk starts promptly on the beach but leader will be in the parking area by 6:30 am

Ring in the New Year with a sunrise hike at Sandy Neck Beach, a barrier beach and park. Watch the sky come alive as the world awakens to 2024 and join Barnstable Land Trust's Executive Director, Janet Milkman, as she guides you across smooth sand, rolling dunes, and marshland trails. This endangered area is comprised of freshwater wetlands, a salt marsh, and has been recognized by the state of Massachusetts as an area of critical environmental concern. Please note, this hike will cover 1.6 miles of moderate to difficult terrain, consisting of mostly loose sand and last approximately 1.5 hours. Please only register if you are an experienced hiker and bring layers, water, and anything else you need for a successful hike. Hike will last approximately 1.5 hours. Pre-registration is recommended through [www.blт.org](http://www.blт.org).

## 9:00 am

### **First Day Hike at Bourne Farm**

*Host:* Salt Pond Areas Bird Sanctuaries [www.saltpondsanctuaries.org](http://www.saltpondsanctuaries.org)

*Location:* Bourne Farm, 6 North Falmouth Highway, West Falmouth

Bourne Farm is not a place where important events happened or famous people lived; and it is not a place of outstanding architectural distinction. But it is a rare survivor of an endangered species, an eighteenth century farm of modest size in an area that is rapidly being swallowed up by half-acre lots and condominiums. Bourne Farm is 50-acre historic property bound by stone walls and Crocker Pond, a deep 7 ½ acre freshwater pond. The Penn Central Railroad (which is now the Shining Sea Bikeway) traverses the property from north to south, and a cattle pass that had been cut under it is still useable. The 3.7-mile loop trail begins at the parking lot of Bourne Farm. It is considered an easy route, it takes an average of 1h 12 min to complete. We ask that no dogs are on the walk today for this hike. Please pre-register via email at [spabsfal@verizon.net](mailto:spabsfal@verizon.net).

## 9:30 am

### **More Walk, Less Talk with Pat Sarantis**

*Host:* Harwich Conservation Trust [www.harwichconservationtrust.org](http://www.harwichconservationtrust.org)

*Location:* Bell's Neck Conservation Lands, Harwich

Join Harwich Conservation Trust for a More Walk, Less Talk adventure. Pat Sarantis will lead a moderately paced exercise walk to explore Bell's Neck Conservation Lands from all sides of the West Reservoir including the newest link in the emerald necklace. Peek at the tidal East Reservoir and pause at the footbridge over the Herring River. Visit the herring run and enjoy the views. Maybe even catch sight of a bald eagle which has been seen at this scenic town-owned conservation destination. This walk will cover approximately 3 miles. Directions to the *East Trailhead Parking* are: From Great Western Road, take Bell's Neck Road (dirt) south. Drive 0.25 mile and on the left will be a small trailhead kiosk and parking area or click [here](#) for Google Maps navigation. Please register [here](#).

## 10:00 am

### **Frost Fish Creek Trail Walk**

*Host:* Chatham Conservation Foundation [www.chathamconservationfoundation.org](http://www.chathamconservationfoundation.org)

*Location:* Frost Fish Creek Trail, North Chatham, MA 02633 (Directions: From the traffic light in North Chatham, travel 0.7 miles north on Route 28. The entrance to the trail is a dirt road on the left.)

Join Chatham Conservation Foundation (CCF) Executive Director Lauren Arcomano in welcoming 2024 with a guided walk along CCF's Frost Fish Creek Trail. The trail meanders along the eastern edge of Frost Fish Creek, offering walkers glimpses of an old cranberry operation which has reverted to open wetlands. Bring your binoculars to get a good view of the "winter locals" of Frost Fish Creek, including buffleheads and other ducks! Walk repeats at Noon. Preregistration is required [here](#).

### **10:00 am**

#### **Turtle-riffic Walk and Talk**

*Host:* Orenda Wildlife Land Trust, Inc. [www.orendalandtrust.org](http://www.orendalandtrust.org)

*Location:* The far end of Meadow Lane in West Barnstable; please carpool if possible, and drive slowly out of respect for our neighbors and the wildlife. Staff will be on hand to help with parking.

Join Orenda Wildlife Land Trust as we kick off the new year with First Day Hikes Cape Cod, for a turtle-riffic walk-and-talk at our Margaret Wyman Turtle Garden Sanctuary! We will trace the slow-but-steady steps of Diamondback Terrapins from our sanctuary to Barnstable Great Marsh, while we highlight the efforts of local wildlife organizations to protect the well-being of this threatened species.

We will also introduce participants to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on goals #13 – Climate Action, #14 – Life Below Water and #15 – Life on Land. Capacity/parking is limited and registration is first-come, first-served. The event is free and family-friendly, and the walk-and-talk is rated "easy," and can be modified to meet the needs of varying ages and physical abilities.

Dress for the weather and wear boots, as we will venture out to explore the marsh at low tide. This walk will be repeated at 11:30 am. Pre- registration is required [here](#).

### **10:00 am**

#### **The Gut to the Herring River Overlook**

*Host:* Wellfleet Conservation Trust [www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org](http://www.wellfleetconservationtrust.org) and Friends of Herring River (Wellfleet/Truro) [www.herringriver.org](http://www.herringriver.org)

*Location:* Herring River Overlook, Wellfleet

Join this 1st of January walk featuring Wellfleet Conservation Trust's Herring River Overlook and the Herring River Restoration project. The walk will include short talks on recent research of Native American land use in the area, geology of the area, an update on the restoration project, and the acquisition by the Wellfleet Conservation Trust of the beautiful land overlooking the river. The out and back 2-mile, 2-hour walk will be mostly on rolling dirt paths with a short section over the temporary walking bridge and on Chequessett Neck Road. Walking shoes or boots are recommended.

Free registration is limited to 20 people and will be on a first come/first served basis. Please email [wct.annual.walk@gmail.com](mailto:wct.annual.walk@gmail.com) to enroll with the names of participants (maximum 4) and contact telephone number. Parking directions will be e-mailed to registrants.

### **11:00 am**

#### **Hikin' for Lichens with Tom Walker**

*Host:* Provincetown Conservation Trust [www.provincetownconservationtrust.org](http://www.provincetownconservationtrust.org)

*Location:* Beech Forest Trail, Race Point Road, Provincetown, MA,

Join the PCT and naturalist Tom Walker as we commence with our First Hike of the year by exploring the great variety of lichens in Beech Forest. Lichens are symbiotic organisms formed from the union of fungi and algae. They stabilize and add nutrients to our soils, provide nesting material for birds, shelter for invertebrates, and promote soil formation on bare rock. While they may be found all over the world and in the harshest conditions, they are vulnerable in areas with poor air quality. Alternatively, they thrive in areas with low pollution, high humidity and moderate temperatures. Cape Cod's constant sea breezes create the ideal conditions for lichen abundance and diversity. Pre-registration is required [here](#).

## 11:30 am

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*Location:* The far end of Meadow Lane in West Barnstable; please carpool if possible, and drive slowly out of respect for our neighbors and the wildlife. Staff will be on hand to help with parking.

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Dress for the weather and wear boots, as we will venture out to explore the marsh at low tide. This walk is also offered at 10:00 am. Pre-registration is required [here](#).

## 12 Noon

### **Frost Fish Creek Trail Walk**

*Host:* Chatham Conservation Foundation [www.chathamconservationfoundation.org](http://www.chathamconservationfoundation.org)

*Location:* Frost Fish Creek Tail, North Chatham, MA 02633 (Directions: From the traffic light in North Chatham, travel 0.7 miles north on Route 28. The entrance to the trail is a dirt road on the left.)

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## 1:00 PM

### **First Day Hike at Calf Field Pond**

*Host:* Brewster Conservation Trust [www.brewsterconservationtrust.org](http://www.brewsterconservationtrust.org)

*Location:* From Stony Brook Road, turn on to Run Hill Road and travel 1.2 miles where the road will dead-end into the trailhead parking lot on the left.

Are you looking forward to a fresh start in 2023? Celebrate the new year outdoors with a First Day Hike! Join Brewster Conservation Trust for a fun, informal group hike at Calf Field Pond. Calf Field Pond area is distinctly different from other trails in the Punkhorn Parklands. Geologically, it is hilly and rocky and full

of kettle holes typical of high moraines. The trail system passes through beech groves, which are unusual on the Cape and by areas where large granite boulders were quarried in centuries past. The walk covers 2.5 miles of moderate difficulty (modest hills and occasional uneven terrain). Registration is required through this [link](#).

### 1:00 PM

#### **First Day Hike at Mashpee River Woodlands**

*Host:* Native Land Conservancy [www.nativelandconservancy.org](http://www.nativelandconservancy.org)

*Location:* Mashpee River Woodlands, southern parking lot on Mashpee Neck Road (Directions: For Woodlands South—From Mashpee Rotary take Rt 28 toward Hyannis. Take first right onto Quinaquisset Ave, then right onto Mashpee Neck Rd. Parking area is 1.1 mi on right at Conservation Area Sign.)

Join the Native Land Conservancy for a First Day Hike where you will be welcomed by Gail Melix, NLC Board Member, and member of the Herring Pond Wampanoag Tribe who will share her indigenous perspective of the land, and NLC Executive Director Diana Ruiz, PhD who will share her knowledge as a conservation scientist. NLC is a Mashpee-based non-profit Native American-run land conservation organization dedicated to rescuing restoring and protecting land to foster healthy natural environments to provide safe spaces for people to re-connect with nature. The walk will last about 2 hours on easy terrain. Registration is required through this [link](#).

### 1:00 PM

#### **First Day Hike at Great Neck Wildlife Sanctuary**

*Host:* Wareham Land Trust [www.warehamlandtrust.org](http://www.warehamlandtrust.org)

*Location:* Great Neck Wildlife Sanctuary at Stockton Shortcut. Directions: From Exit 39 off Rt 195, go southeast on Rt 28 towards Wareham. Stay right before the light onto Tremont Road and follow as it merges with Main St., curves right, and becomes Rt 6 through downtown. Stay left on Rt 6 over bridge to the light. Turn right onto Narrows Rd. Take the 2nd right onto Indian Neck Road, which becomes RD Stillman Memorial Dr. At the T-intersection, turn right onto Great Neck Rd and follow for 1.4 miles. Turn right onto Stockton Shortcut, keep straight and continue on paved driveway past the stone walls. Follow this one-way road to the parking area.

Join the Wareham Land Trust for a walk around the Great Neck Wildlife Sanctuary with a beautiful scenic view of Buzzard's Bay. Relax after the holiday rush in the peaceful pine forest while getting a head start on those New Year's Resolutions to be more active and get outdoors. Dress in layers for the weather and wear sturdy walking shoes. The walk is approximately 1.8 mile, and is easy to moderate difficulty. Registration is required through this [link](#).

### 1:00 pm

#### **New Year's Hike in Beebe Woods**

*Host:* 300 Committee Land Trust (Falmouth) [www.300committee.org](http://www.300committee.org)

*Location:* Park and meet in the Hiker's Lot for Beebe Woods in Falmouth. Take Depot Avenue to Highfield Drive. Go past both Highfield Hall and the Cape Cod Conservatory, continuing to the large mostly unpaved lot for Beebe Woods. The trailhead and kiosk are to your left.

Join The 300 Committee Land Trust (T3C) for a New Year's trek in Falmouth's beloved Beebe Woods. T3C's walk leaders will guide participants on leisurely-paced hikes over a variety of trails. Each group will

go in a different direction, with everyone experiencing the delights that Beebe Woods has to offer. There will be several options: Moderate, 3 miles; more challenging, 3 miles; mostly flat, 1 mile; more challenging, 1.25 miles. (Hiking poles are recommended for the more challenging loops. Please leave dogs at home.) No registration required.

### 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

#### **First Day Family Fun: Open House and Campfire**

*Host:* Barnstable Land Trust [www.blt.org](http://www.blt.org)

*Location:* Barnstable Land Trust Conservation Center, 1540 Main Street, West Barnstable

Kick-off 2024 on the right foot with some fun, family-friendly activities during BLT's First Day Open House! Add your wish for 2024 to BLT's first "Wishing Tree," have fun exploring nature through special games and hands-on crafts, and enjoy s'mores by a roaring campfire (weather permitting). This program is supported in part by Cape Cod 5. NOTE: No need to register for this drop-in event which lasts from 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

### 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

#### **First Day Family Fun: GeoCaching 101**

*Host:* Barnstable Land Trust [www.blt.org](http://www.blt.org)

*Location:* Fuller Farm, 995 Route 130, Marstons Mills

Discover the two newest geocaches on Cape Cod! Meet Liz and Cassie, two Cape Cod champions who will share how they play the Geocaching game with their own families while exploring nature trails across the Cape. We recommend downloading the app (AppStore [here](#) or Google Play [here](#)) and creating a user name in advance so they can show you how easy - and fun - it is to log your first 'find' of the new year! Rain or shine, this dynamic duo will guide you through an interactive exercise so that you can be among the first to discover Fuller Farm's newest 'hidden treasures.' This program is supported in part by Cape Cod 5. NOTE: No need to register for this drop-in event which lasts from 1:00 – 3:00 pm.

### 3:00 pm

#### **First Day Hike: Portanimicut Greenbelt**

*Host:* Orleans Conservation Trust [www.orleansconservationtrust.org](http://www.orleansconservationtrust.org)

*Location:* Portanimicut Greenbelt in Orleans; Parking information will be provided to registrants.

Join OCT for a short, easy walk to celebrate the new year. Part of First Day Hikes Cape Cod, we'll start at the new trailhead at the recently preserved Portanimicut Greenbelt, and we'll meander about half a mile through old fields, wooded forests, and along the edge of a white cedar swamp on the Town-owned Christian Conservation Area. Group size will be limited and registration is required through this [link](#).

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