

Discover Sherrin Woods

– Be Part of Boston's Celebration of World Wetlands Day –

Wetlands are highly complex natural systems that are an important part of climate resiliency. They provide water filtration, aid drainage, and protection from stormwater and flooding. Wetlands are a place of outdoor recreation, exploration and beauty and a valuable habitat for wildlife, birds and fish. Neighborhood residents are working to restore Boston's often overlooked wetlands. World Wetlands Day 2021 commemorates the 50th anniversary of the International Convention on Wetlands, a treaty recognizing the ecological, economic, cultural, scientific and recreational value of wetlands.



Sherrin Woods is the 2nd largest urban wild site, located between the MBTA rail tracks and Austin St, just north of West St. The northern half is dominated by a rocky outcrop, known as Pine Rock, and forest comprised primarily of mature oaks, hickory, cherry, birch, and hemlock. The southern portion is mostly filled-in stream channels and wetlands. There are trails traversing the northern portion of the site. Along the eastern edge is a right-of-way for the Stony Brook Conduit, replacing the now buried Stony Brook.



The Green Team. Southwest Boston CDC has sponsored the Green Team job readiness and environmental stewardship program since 2009. The Green Team has employed over 150 Boston youth to maintain Sherrin Woods and other Urban Wilds by building trails, removing invasive plants and planting native species. Youth help educate the community about proper use of urban wilds and monitor pollution levels in the Neponset River.



Address: Austin and Marston Streets, Hyde Park

Parking: Park on Austin St. (Do not park on Marston St.)

Bus: Route 50 or Route 32

Level of Difficulty: Easy to moderate. Much of the trail is flat and groomed. There are a few spots with moderate inclines, but for very short distances

Further Information: Perla Lara at 857-269-7708

World Wetlands Day
2 February 2021
Wetlands and water



Take a self-guided walk at Sherrin Street Woods as part of Boston's World Wetland Day Celebration! Visit nearby wetland areas, such as Canterbury Brook or the Roslindale Wetlands. Please wear your mask, sturdy shoes and warm clothes (it's winter) and practice social distancing.

SHERRIN WOODS

History of Sherrin Woods

Neighbors on Marston Street say the area in the 1950's was rolling hills, orchards and a pond where people skated. In the 1970's part of Sherrin Woods was owned by James McGreevy. Based on their research, Parks Dept. believes most of the damage occurred in the 60's and 70's, when the southern portion of the site was cleared and used by the owner and his business as a dumping ground for construction debris; and the wetlands were partially filled. Oral history from neighbors indicates that the intention was to flatten the site and build houses. The houses were not built, yet dumping occurred.

In a 1974 study by the City of Boston, Sherrin was identified as worthy of protection for conservation. In the early 1980's Boston Natural Areas Network negotiated the purchase from the owner and worked with the city to seek grants to acquire it. Sherrin Woods was then transferred to the Boston Conservation Commission and since then has been managed by the Boston Parks Dept.

Prior to the 2018 renovation the southern half of the site was highly degraded and impenetrable with heavy thickets of invasive plants and piles of construction debris (some of which are still visible). The roadway edges were also heavily trashed by decades of residential yard waste dumping. Under the guidance of Paul Sutton, Parks Open Space Manager, Friends groups and Corporate volunteers, and the Green Team have done their best to build and maintain trails; remove yard waste, trash and invasive plants; and report illegal activity.

2018 Renovation

With federal and city funding the Parks Department began a major renovation of the site. Goals were to:

- Remove monoculture of invasive Norway maple trees and construction debris that were degrading the soil and economically (grass is cheaper to install than trees) introduce a new wildlife meadow that would provide greater plant diversity and enhance wildlife habitat (bird habitat, bat habitat, and insect habitat). Note the trailhead sign on Marston St.
- Promote woodland that is healthier and more accessible to residents via walking trails, meadow; + Pine Rock for recreational climbing. Woodlands provide CO₂ uptake, oxygen, air purification, & reduce urban heat.
- Protect, and eventually fully restore wetlands, which are the key for survival of amphibians (frogs, salamanders and turtles). Wetlands also filter storm water pollutants, and help with flood control. Wetlands also help regulate the climate by storing carbon.

What types of activities can damage Sherrin Woods

Unleashed dogs can damage wetlands, kill fragile and rare native plants and discourage others walkers from entering the woods. Dumping trash, yard waste (such as leaves, weeds, and branches), construction debris and making fires all degrade the soil and damage wetlands and woodland.

What is required to keep the woods healthy and accessible?

There is no line item in the city budget for ongoing maintenance (removing downed trees, invasive plants, yard waste, trash; restoring trails, planting and pruning trees/native plants) so the Parks Dept. relies on youth groups, friends groups and corporate volunteers, under the guidance of Open Space Manager Paul Sutton. Given the size of Sherrin Woods and the 34 other urban wilds around the city (seven more of which are in Hyde Park) volunteers cannot possibly manage all the maintenance that is required.

How can neighbors help?

- Contact City Councilors & the Mayor – tell them we need a budget line item for ongoing urban wild maintenance, not just for big capital improvements. Playgrounds and ball fields have maintenance line items, but urban wilds, which are so critical to protecting our neighborhoods from climate change, do not.
- Expand our Friends groups and other volunteers who can join us for spring and fall community workdays to remove trash, plant and prune native trees, remove invasives trees and plants.
- Help educate neighbors about not dumping yard waste and trash, keeping dogs leashed, using trails.
- Report any violations of these rules to 311. Report illegal activity (drug use, fires, etc. to 911).

Inseparable

Water, wetlands and life.



Join us - visit WorldWetlandsDay.org #RestoreWetlands

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