



Hermit's Haven Quest

RAVENSWOOD PARK, GLOUCESTER

THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS

Ravenswood Park is owned and cared for by The Trustees of Reservations. We are over 100,000 people like you who want to protect the places we love or who simply like to be outdoors. Since 1891, we have been committed to preserving and sharing the landmarks and landscapes of Massachusetts – a conservation effort funded solely through private support like yours.

Together with our neighbors, we protect the distinct character of our communities and inspire a commitment to special places like Ravenswood Park across the Commonwealth. Our passion is to share with everyone the irreplaceable natural and cultural treasures that we care for. **Visit us at www.thetrustees.org.**

DIRECTIONS:

Western Avenue (Route 127). From Route 128, take Exit 14 (route 133) and follow east for 3 miles until it dead ends into Route 127. Turn right onto Route 127 and follow for 2 miles to entrance and parking area on right.

HOW TO QUEST

The Quest begins at the parking area. Use the clues and map that follow to find a hidden treasure and story at Ravenswood Park. At the end of this Quest you'll find a hidden treasure box, where you can sign in, collect a copy of our Quest's stamp, and then replace the box for the next visitor. We recommend you take 1 1/2 to 2 hours to enjoy this adventure.

YOUR CLUES

Welcome to Ravenswood Park. Follow the rhyming trail clue directions to get to each STOP. Enjoy your woodland romp! The clues lead you to the Hermit's Haven and a Quest Treasure Box for you to savor!

**Leave your car behind in the lot –
Near the gate you'll find your first Quest spot.**

"Great book of Nature! – ev'ry leaf and page
teach us the wisdom that doth crown our age."

Samuel Sawyer

Stop A:

In 1889, Sawyer, a businessman,
left Ravenswood, a gift of conservation land.
Its name comes from The Bride of Lammermoor
it's for all to enjoy, forevermore.

**Beyond the gate, head up Old Salem Road,
as you walk, a Hermit's story will unfold.**

Hermit, Mason A. Walton, lived here for 33 years,
sleeping outside at Ravenswood without any fears.
He came seeking health, making friends wild and true,
in the library you can find the story of his animal crew.¹

**Travel beneath trees – tall swaying white pine,
until you come to the "Ledge Hill" trail sign.
Follow Ledge Hill trail with utmost care,
under your foot, hikers, please do beware.**

Keep your eyes open, beware of your boot,
to ensure that you don't trip over a root!
A steady pace is sure to lead you there,
the Hermit's footsteps – retrace them with care.

**As the moon will rise and the sun will set,
the land on your left sometimes gets quite wet.
At the bottom of the hill, stop your feet,
on the left, a vernal pool site you'll meet.**

Stop B:

This seasonally wet and shallow abode,
is a nursery to frogs, salamanders, and toads.²
A century ago, the Hermit lingered here,
observing this rite of spring, year after year.
This fragile habitat is under threat,
help protect it — don't let your dog get wet.

**Onward on the Ledge Hill trail go
uphill, then downhill, curvy land ho.
At # "5" multiply by 5; take a left on the trail,
take your answer in steps to learn a canine tale.**

Stop C:

Beneath a huge boulder on the right,
gapes a dark hole, home to creatures of the night.
This den belongs to one both sly and shy,
who leaves few traces for the passerby.

The Hermit had often tracked in the snow,
a fox with only three paw prints left to show.
So Triplefoot was by the Hermit aptly named,
and the thefts of local hens were on her blamed.

**Continue on passing a glacial erratic on your left.
Stay true to the Ledge Hill trail where more boulders
are kept.**

Stop D:

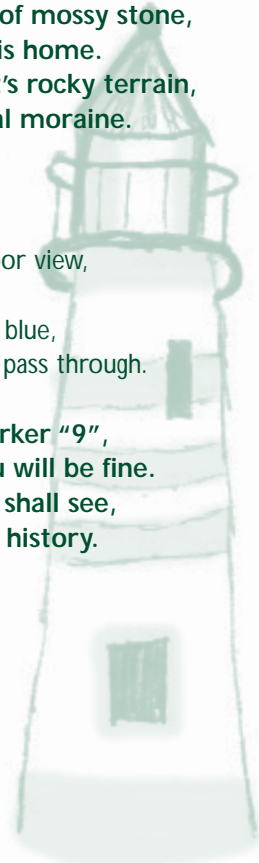
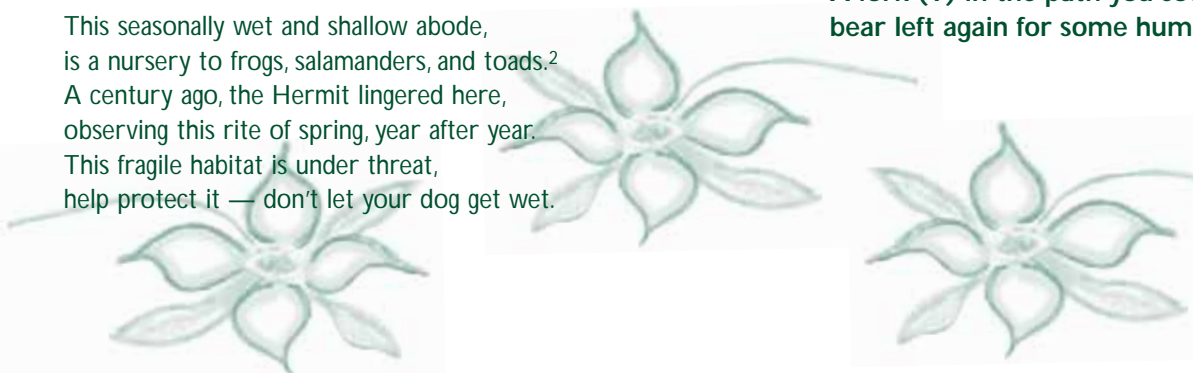
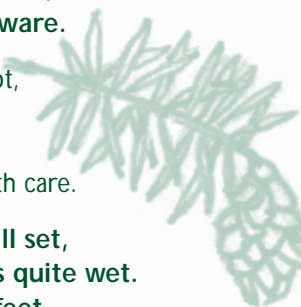
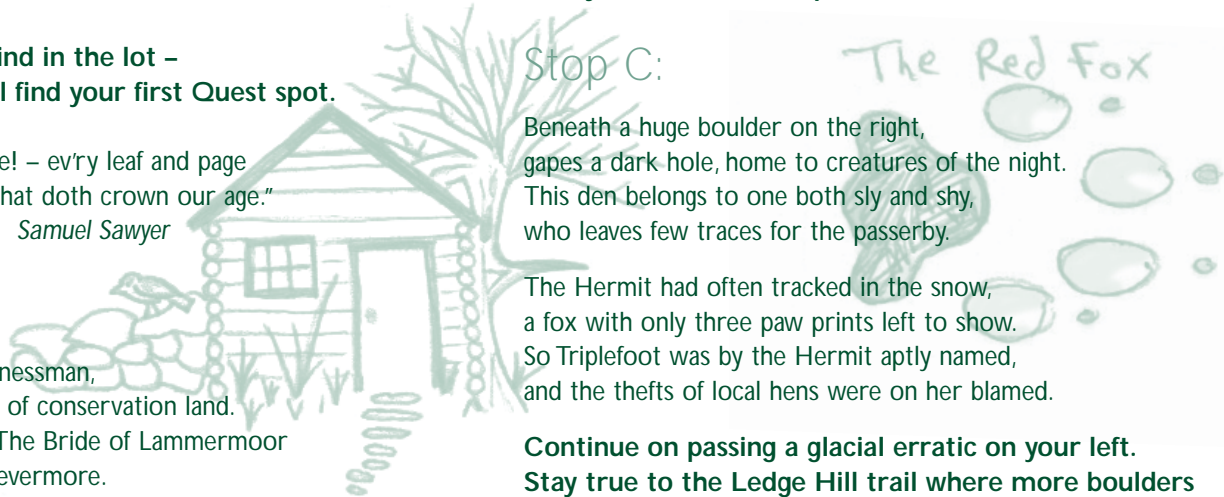
Upon the Hermit's home the ice sheet stopped,
and on the ground these rocks the glacier dropped.
Lichens break down rock so ferns can grow,
creating soil for trees their seeds to sow.

**Snake your way through a field of mossy stone,
lichen and polypody fern call this home.
Upward on through the Hermit's rocky terrain,
to a harbor view atop the glacial moraine.**

Stop E:

Enjoy the forest clearing with a harbor view,
a famous fishing port and a city too.
Beyond Eastern Point lies the ocean blue,
a lighthouse stands sentry and ships pass through.

**Descend to turn left at trail marker "9",
keep on Ledge Hill trail and you will be fine.
A fork (Y) in the path you soon shall see,
bear left again for some human history.**



Stop F:

Through the 19th century this place was busy, with many working for the quarry industry. Cape Ann's granite was second to none, when construction needed to be done. Bridges, tunnels, and monuments were things, built in the days when granite was king.

First light glitters on a quarry pond, then an old cellar hole lies just beyond. Quarry Road go left is your destination, wander, breathe deep – fresh air – rejuvenation.

You'll meet "Ridge" and go right at a healthy hemlock stand, these trees on your left – sprayed for adelgid – still look grand.

Stop G:

Bark rich in tannin, twigs used to make tea by woodsmen living in their teepee. Hemlock needles are now browsed by deer and red squirrels like Bismarck, so dear.

At "19", peer to the right, sickly branches abound where the invasive wooly sapsucker can be found.

Hermit gained strength from a sapling grove and cured his disease and lived till he was old. This now mature stand relies on our care, to heal what healed the Hermit only seems fair.

Returning on trail, from "19" you'll go left on "Evergreen." The road is lined with boulders on the right, large oaks & white pines – a shipwright's delight.

The oldest fishing port in the western hemisphere, no longer are trees taken for schooners made here. The Hermit wandered down each morning to the port, and ate breakfast before his day's work of some sort.

The Old Road of Salem follow it downhill, stone walls and woods – timeless, quiet and still. Find scratched birch trees at the magnolia swamp, where the catamount had its mythical romp.

Stop H:

Picking the sweetbay flower was a tradition but went against our Hermit's mission. In his efforts for swampland preservation, this naturalist had quite an imagination. A myth of a mighty beast with protective power, stopped the harvest of magnolia's fragrant flower.

Wander up and down the trail, home for a slug or maybe a snail. Take a deep breath, you're almost there where the Hermit would bathe with care.

A few more yards along Old Salem Road a memorial plaque marks the Hermit's abode. Up and over the stone wall — looking behind, discover the Quest box you've come to find.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!

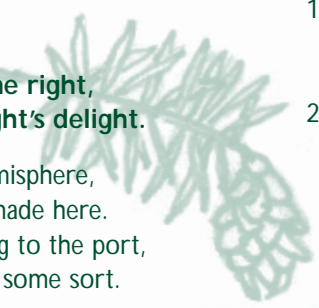
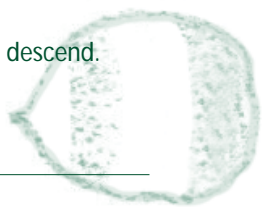
Open the box to learn more about our Hermit and sign your name, then discreetly return it.

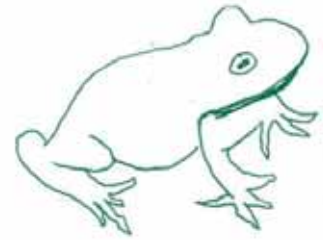
We hope you've enjoyed your Ravenswood romp! When done meeting our Hermit, turn around and go Old Salem Road back to the parking area. (It takes about 30 minutes).

The plaque should be on your right to descend.

¹ A *Hermit's Wild Friends* was published in 1903. Sawyer Free Library was also Samuel's community gift.

² The Trustees offer seasonal vernal pool programs. For program listings visit www.thetrustees.org.





BISMARCK



CHEWINK



- Ⓐ SAWYER PLAQUE
- Ⓑ VERNAL POND
- Ⓒ FOX DEN
- Ⓓ TERMINAL MORAINE
- Ⓔ VISTA
- Ⓕ HEALTHY HEMLOCKS
- Ⓖ DYING HEMLOCKS
- Ⓗ CATAMOUNT SWAMP
- ★ HERMITS PLAQUE

