



Welcome to the



Highlighting the Best of
Cape Elizabeth, ME



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Introduction to the Cross Town Trail

The Cross Town Trail is an 8.2 mile hike in the town of Cape Elizabeth, Maine, owned or under easement by the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust (CELT) and the Town of Cape Elizabeth. It stretches from Portland Head Lighthouse in Fort Williams Park to Kettle Cove State Park, highlighting popular Cape Elizabeth landmarks along the way. The trail is mostly flat and can be used for a variety of different activities in all months of the year, including hiking, running, birding, snowshoeing, and photography.

The following guide, the Cross Town Trail Map and the small, round, light blue markers should keep you on track. The trail passes through several different trail systems with their own systems of signage, so always be watching for the round light blue markers. The trail can be hiked in either direction, and parking is available at either end.

History

The idea for a Cross Town Trail in Cape Elizabeth first surfaced in 1974, 11 years before the Land Trust was founded. Through the years, the trail has been completed through a patchwork of different types of conservation land, including land owned by CELT or the Town, land with easements held by CELT or the Town, former “paper streets,” land set aside to offset development, state owned lands, and even a utility easement. Many sections along the trail have their own fascinating histories, some of which are explored in our “Points of Interest.”

In 2015, the Cape Elizabeth Conservation Commission hired Nicole Holmes, a student at the Maine College of Art, to design the CTT trail logo, in collaboration with CELT.

Trail Rules and Etiquette

Please cherish and help care for the natural areas along the trail:

- Leave trails as you found them and carry out all trash.
- Limit trail use to daytime hours only.
- Stay on marked trails and respect adjacent private property.
- Please no:
 - Foraging
 - Commercial use of property
 - Motorized vehicles
 - Fires and camping
 - Alcoholic beverages or illegal substances

For Cyclists:

- Most of this trail is maintained for both pedestrian and mountain bike use.
- Sections of the trail may be closed to bicycles during some wet parts of the year.

For Dog Owners:

- Sections of the trail require dogs to be *on-leash only*, particularly where the trail passes through private property or on public sidewalks. Otherwise, please keep dogs within sight and under voice control at all times.
- Remove all pet waste.
- Keep dogs out of sensitive habitat areas, including streams.
- No commercial dog walking at any time on CELT properties.
- Maine law requires dog license and rabies tag on collar at all times.
- Refer to the [Town ordinance page](#) for more information.

Trail Map

Cape Elizabeth Land Trust periodically publishes a trail map highlighting trails, conservation properties, and other points of interest. It is available as a [free PDF](#) download or in [printed form via mail order](#). A small copy of this map is included on the next page.

The Town of Cape Elizabeth also maintains an [online map](#) of public trails, conservation properties, and selected trail descriptions.

CAPE ELIZABETH Town and Trail Map



CAPE ELIZABETH LAND TRUST

LEGEND

- Walking or Hiking Trail
- Fort Williams Bicycle Loop (15 miles)
- Beach-to-Beacon Running Route
- Cross Town Trail
- Parking
- Trail Description
- Point of Interest
- Wetlands
- CELT OWNED
- CELT EASEMENT
- TOWN OWNED EASEMENT
- Scenic
- Swimming
- Farmstead
- Birding
- Lighthouse
- STATE OWNED
- FEDERAL OWNED

Trail Directions: South to North

Parking: There is a public parking lot at Kettle Cove State Park, as well as some street parking in nearby neighborhoods.

Start at Kettle Cove State Park and walk down Kettle Cove Drive toward Route 77.

Mile 0.5 - Bear (R) at the fork at Crescent View Ave and cross Route 77 (Bowery Beach Rd). Take a (L) along road and watch for trail signs in about 50 ft on your (R).

Mile 0.7 - Trail bends a sharp (L) before last house in this neighborhood

Mile 1.0 - Reach look-out over Great Pond. Watch for trail which turns sharply (R) at lookout. Follow trail along the edge of the pond, descend the granite steps, and then follow the boardwalk at the base of the stairs.

Mile 1.4 - After exiting the boardwalk, keep on the trail, which climbs a small rise, and watch for a sharp (L) turn. Continue along trail.

Mile 1.7 - Do not take the footbridge on right. Continue straight to cross a bridge in roughly 75 ft.



Mile 1.8 - As you enter canoe storage area, you will pass a small canoe launch trail on your left. Trail will continue in a relatively straight direction here, will climb a small rise and bear (L).

Mile 1.9 - Trail exits onto Fenway Road. Walk straight down Fenway to Fowler Road.

Mile 2.0 - At Fowler Road, turn (L) and walk about 50 paces, then cross road and access trail, which leads to a boardwalk. Trail is through a pedestrian easement across a privately owned lawn, so watch

carefully for signs and please respect property.

Mile 2.1 - At end of boardwalk, bear (R) at the Y intersection and continue on the trail for about a tenth of a mile.

Mile 2.2 - Bear (R) at intersection.



Mile 2.3 - Reach a T intersection, turn (R) and follow to reach a footbridge in approximately 100 ft. Cross footbridge and turn a sharp (L) to access a boardwalk area, which is mostly continuous for about half of a mile.

Mile 3.0 - Bear (R) at cleared intersection.

Mile 3.1 - Avoid trail on left. Correct trail climbs straight up over rise, then takes a sharp (R) at a 4-way intersection to reach the boardwalk over a large marsh area. At approx. 50 feet after exiting boardwalk, trail turns (R).



Mile 3.2 - Trail opens to a wide grassy trail and continues straight, following the marsh on the right.

Mile 3.4 - Trail bears (R) towards an area of houses and skirts the backyards of neighborhood houses.

Mile 3.6 - Trail reaches the back of the Cape Elizabeth High School campus. Traveling in a diagonal course to the (L), walk up the hill to reach the fence bordering the football field, turn (R) at the fence corner, and travel past the tennis courts, keeping the fence on your left.



Mile 3.8 - Reaching the end of the tennis court fence, follow the paved path across a small bridge to the high school parking lot. Exit the (R) side of parking lot and cross to the sidewalk by the high school. Follow the high school entrance road towards Route 77.

Mile 4.0 - Take a (L) at the stoplight at the intersection of the school entrance road and Route 77 and walk through the Pond Cove Shopping Center parking lot. Continue down Ocean House Road. You will pass the Land Trust building on the (R), as well as the Town Hall building.

Mile 4.3 - Cross Scott Dyer Rd and continue on Route 77. You will pass Cumberland Farms on the (R).



Mile 4.4 - Cross Route 77 and enter the Cape Elizabeth United Methodist Church parking lot on the (R).

Mile 4.5 - Pick up the Cross Town Trail at the back left corner of the parking lot. Enter trail and bear (L) at first intersection.

Mile 4.7 - Follow the trail, keeping left along a stretch of electric fence and rock wall.

Mile 4.8 - Trail passes through an opening in the rock wall, then turns (L). Continue on the trail, which is comprised of path and boardwalks.



Mile 4.9 - Cross small aluminum footbridge.

Mile 5.0 - Turn (L) at intersection and watch for an aluminum footbridge on right.

Mile 5.1 - Cross footbridge and continue to follow the trail, which travels along the left side of Robinson Pond.



Mile 5.4 - Cross divided bridge over the inlet of Robinson Pond and continue to follow the trail, which skirts a large pasture area on the right.

Mile 5.7 - Cross gravel road and pick up trailhead on the other side .

Mile 5.8 - Take (L) at T intersection and continue straight to reach a boardwalk along a vernal pool.

Mile 6.1 - Turn (R) at intersection and cross a sensitive wetland.

Mile 6.2 - Take (L) at T intersection and bear (R) in approx. 50 ft, reaching a footbridge in another 200 ft. Cross footbridge and bear (R).

Mile 6.6 - Cross longer footbridge.

Mile 6.7 - Do not go left. Go straight up the ramp and take a (R) on the bridge.

Mile 7.1 - Bear (L) and cross footbridge over stream, stay (R) at next intersection and continue on the trail.

Mile 7.2 - Do not turn right. Continue straight on the trail.

Mile 7.4 - Cross footbridge over stream and bear (L). Follow trail for approx. 100 ft, turn (L) at intersection and cross 2nd footbridge over stream.

Mile 7.6 - Exit trail onto sidewalk at Shore Rd. Turn (R) and in 50 ft, use crosswalk to access gate into Fort Williams. Follow short paved path from gate to larger paved drive and turn (R) onto the drive. Stay straight at the first intersection, but follow a bend in the drive through an area of underground bunker ruins. Continue straight at the 2nd intersection also and followed the gravel path down toward the water and along the cliff path to the lighthouse.

Mile 8.2 - Reach Portland Head Lighthouse.

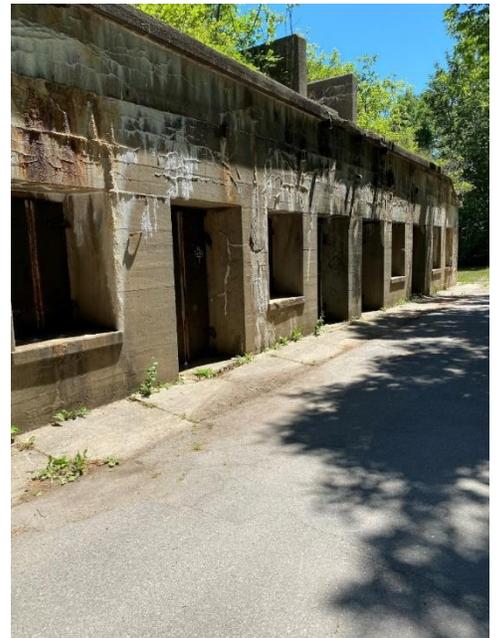


Trail Directions: North to South

Parking: Various parking lots are available at Fort Williams. A fee is required at some locations during certain months of the year.

The trail begins in front of the Portland Head Light. With your back to the lighthouse, leave the rotary, following the paved path on your left, and turn (L) on the path where it follows along the rock wall. This is part of the Beach to Beacon race trail. Pass by the crumbling underground bunkers on your left. Continue on path, which bends to the right shortly after the bunkers, and stay straight, watching for a path that branches (L) to a gate at 0.4 miles. Open the gate, which accesses a crosswalk at Shore Rd.

Cross road at crosswalk, turn (R) on sidewalk, and watch for the Cross Town Trail symbols at trail access approx. 30 feet on the left.



Mile 0.6 - Follow trail and cross footbridge and turn (R) on the trail. Cross second footbridge in approx. 100 feet. (0.9) stay straight on Cross Town Trail, crossing another foot bridge in approx. 100 feet and bear (R) to continue on the trail.

Mile 1.1 - Follow wooden boardwalk.

Mile 1.2 - Bear (L) to follow boardwalk.

Mile 1.3 - Start to cross footbridge but note that there is a ramp on the (L) about 2/3 of the way across the bridge. Turn to descend ramp, and follow trail here.

Mile 1.4 - Cross a longer, elevated boardwalk.

Mile 1.5 Bear (R) up the hill to stay on the trail.

Mile 1.6 - Bear (L) to stay on the trail.

Mile 1.8 - Cross footbridge over stream, and at the next trail intersection, bear (R).

Mile 2.2 - Follow boardwalk along the vernal pool. Trail bears (L) after the footbridge.

Mile 2.25 - Turn (R) at trail intersection, (about 100 yards from boardwalk).

Mile 2.3- Cross gravel road, turn (R) and look for trail by a gate at the pasture (Robinson Woods II Pond Trail).

Mile 2.7 - Cross short, divided bridge (Robinson Pond is on your left) and follow the trail and boardwalks along the edge of the pond for about 0.25 miles. Watch for the aluminum footbridge/boardwalk on left at end of pond. Trail bends left shortly after crossing the aluminum bridge.



Mile 3.1 - Take (R) at T-intersection.

Mile 3.3 - Follow path through rock wall and stay on the trail to (L), following rock wall and electric fence property boundary.

Mile 3.5 - Bear (R) at Y fork.

Mile 3.6 - Trail opens to Methodist Church parking lot. Walk across parking area to road (Route 77), cross carefully, and follow the sidewalk to the left. Continue walking across Scott Dyer Rd., staying on sidewalk. You will pass the Town Hall building on your (L).



Mile 4.1 - Cross Jordan Way, walking through parking lot of Pond Cove Shopping Center. You will pass the Land Trust building on your (L).

Mile 4.2 - Continue along Ocean House Road and turn (R) on the access road leading to Cape Elizabeth High School. Follow the access road to the (R) around the school, then continue to follow at the first (L), then cross into the large parking lot on right just before the tennis courts.

Facing the tennis courts, follow the path out of the parking lot, over the small bridge, and toward the tennis courts. Walk straight, keeping the tennis court fence on your right. At approx. 50 ft before the end of the tennis fence, bear (L), walking down the hill and keeping the football fence on your left. Continue walking past the end of the football fence, walking diagonally down the hill towards the marsh, and pick up the trail. The trail will hug the marsh and pass through an area that skirts the backyards of some houses.



Mile 4.9 - Bear (L) at the Y fork and cross a long boardwalk through the marsh. Follow the trail up the hill.

Mile 5.1 - Turn (L) at the intersection.

Mile 5.2 - Bear (L) at the T intersection. Trail is winding through here.



Mile 5.4 - Start of long bridge and boardwalk area, almost continuous for 1/2 mile.

Mile 5.9 - Bear (L) at Y (about 200 feet at end of boardwalk).

Mile 6.0 - Bear (L) at Y and cross boardwalk in approx. 200 feet. Trail continues, follows a pedestrian easement through a private lawn, along the fence, to Fowler road.

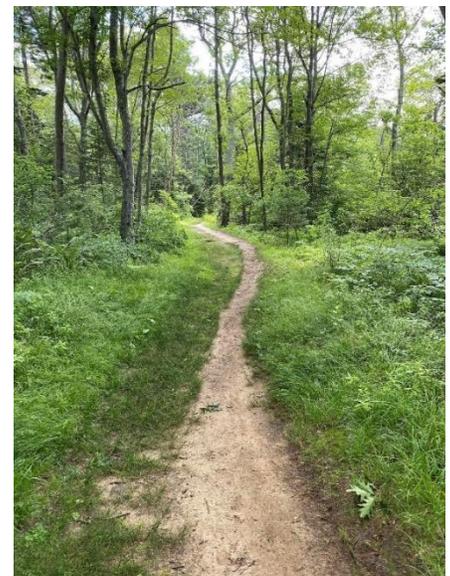
Mile 6.2 - Cross Fowler Rd. Turn (L) and take an immediate (R) onto Fenway Road. Walk straight down Fenway Rd to the end, where you will pick up the trail towards Great Pond.



Mile 6.4 - Bear (R) at intersection to enter a clearing for canoe storage. Follow trail straight through (pass the small canoe launch trail on right).

Mile 6.5 - Stay straight on the trail. Do not cross footbridge on left.

Mile 6.9 - Start crossing aluminum boardwalk.



Mile 7.0 - Climb granite steps and continue on the trail at top.

Mile 7.15 Note: Beautiful lookout/ picnic spot over Great Pond.

Mile 7.4 - Take a right just before Golden Ridge Lane, a private dirt road, and follow the path along the road until you reach Rt 77.

Mile 7.6 - Cross Bowery Beach Rd (Route 77) and turn (L) to reach Kettle Cove Drive on right. Follow road to the end.

Mile 8.2 - Arrive at Kettle Cove State Park.



Points of Interest

Fort Williams Park



In 1872, the U.S. government purchased 14 acres of farmland near Portland Head Lighthouse to use as an army fort. In the following years, the fort would expand to 90 acres. Its primary purpose was to protect nearby Portland from enemy naval action. From 1896-1946, there were six shoreline artillery batteries at the fort, and between the two World Wars, up to 1,500 soldiers were stationed there. The army closed the fort in 1962, and the land was purchased by the Town of Cape Elizabeth two years later. In the following decade, there was much debate over what to do with the land. Some supported developing the fort with hotels and restaurants, and others hoped to build a college campus. However, in 1978, it was voted to turn the land into a park.

Portland Head Lighthouse was not originally part of Fort Williams. Instead, since its 1791 completion, it was maintained by civilians until 1947, when the Coast Guard took over. They would oversee the lighthouse until its automation in 1986. Today, it is recognized as one of America's most photographed lighthouses.

Great Pond

Before Great Pond became the site of an infamous gun club incident in 1909, it was owned by the Great Pond Agricultural and Mining Company in the 1840s and 50s. The company specialized in mining peat fuel and minerals, as well as growing cranberries. Great Pond also served as a popular community gathering place, and was the site of an annual winter carnival, featuring races on the pond in which over 200 horses competed.



In 1902, the Great Pond Gun Club was founded. Owners of the club soon began insisting that the pond and its surrounding area was now their private property. This sparked considerable debate from locals who wanted to fish, hunt, and utilize the pond as they always had. The situation escalated when the gun club hired security to keep locals away, and during a tense confrontation, a guard was hit with a spent shot when he came in the crossfire of a bird hunter.

Locals soon founded the Bowery Beach Association to fight for public access to Great Pond. In October of 1910, following a decade of debate, courts ruled in favor of the town. Their decision was backed by a 1641 law from the Massachusetts General Court, which stated that, "ponds containing more than ten acres of water are free for any man to fish and fowl there, and he

may pass and repass on foot through any man's property for that end so that he trespass not upon any man's corn or meadow."

Today, Great Pond is celebrated for its ecological diversity, and is used by many for walking, fishing (including ice fishing), and exploring. The pond is home to pickerel, smallmouth bass, and is a spawning ground for Alewives.

Kettle Cove State Park

In 1849, a small hotel, the Ocean House, was built on the land that is currently Kettle Cove State Park. Just over two decades later, after new owners bought the hotel, it was renovated into an upscale destination, and remained as such until it was destroyed by a fire in 1892. Throughout the 1900s, the land was used for a variety of different purposes. A lobster pound occupied what today is a grassy hill by the beach. A restaurant, called the Kettle Cove Restaurant, stood where the parking lot is today. The land was established as a state park in 1966 and remains a popular beach destination for both locals and tourists.



Robinson Woods Preserve



Robinson Woods is a 198-acre preserve that borders Shore Road. Its uniqueness stems from both its ecological diversity, and the fact that it has remained virtually untouched for centuries due to its rough and rocky terrain, which made it ill-suited for farming. Most of the land was purchased by the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust in 2003 from John Robinson, whose family ownership of the land dated back to 1720.

Robinson sought to have the land protected permanently, so he offered to sell the property for half of its appraised value of \$1.3 million. At the time, CELT had only one part-time employee, and an annual budget of \$35,000, but after three years of fundraising and the help of the State's Land for Maine's Future Program and the Town of Cape Elizabeth, they were able to purchase the land for \$850,000. The Robinson Woods II portion of the trail was purchased in 2011 from one of John Robinson's nephews. This preserve includes 12 acres of fields and 5 acres of ponds. These open fields were once used as an air strip, as well as polo fields utilized by the Waynflete School in nearby Portland.

Given its natural state, Robinson Woods is home to a variety of plants, local birds, mammals, and amphibians. Some trees are over 350 years old! See if you can spot the Maine State Tree, the Eastern White Pine, identifiable by its needles, which are arranged in bundles of five.

Acknowledgements

This guide was created by Lila Gaudrault, CEHS Class of '21, based on measurements and directions originally created by Amos Woodward, Chris Tullmann, and other volunteers. Photos by Lila Gaudrault and Scott Dorrance (<https://dorrancestudio.com/>).

Further Resources

Cape Elizabeth Land Trust: <https://www.capelandtrust.org>

Town of Cape Elizabeth: <https://www.capeelizabeth.com>

Cape Elizabeth Historical Preservation Society:
<https://sites.google.com/site/cehistoricalpreservation/home>

Friends of Fort Williams Park: <https://fortwilliams.org>

Crescent Beach and Kettle Cove State Park:

<https://www.mainetrailfinder.com/trails/trail/crescent-beach-and-kettle-cove-state-parks>

Maine Trail Finder: <https://www.mainetrailfinder.com>

About the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust



The Cape Elizabeth Land Trust (CELT) was founded in 1985 by a group of residents serving on the Town's Conservation Commission. The group formed a non-profit organization dedicated to "preserving the rural character of the Town for future generations."

The mission of CELT is to "permanently conserve and provide stewardship for lands cherished by our community-- from shorelands to marshes, from farmlands to woodlands-- for the education, use and enjoyment of this and future generations." Today, CELT has obtained permanent conservation of 762 acres on 31 parcels of land.

About the Town of Cape Elizabeth



Cape Elizabeth, Maine, was originally part of the city of Portland (previously named Falmouth). In 1765, citizens petitioned to form their own government, and the town's boundaries were subsequently established from Portland Harbor to east of the Spurwink River. The area near the harbor experienced rapid commercial and industrial growth, while the southern end of the town maintained its rural character. The two sections agreed to separate in 1895, with the southern end becoming what is now Cape Elizabeth.

Today, Cape Elizabeth is home to over 9,000 residents, and is celebrated for its natural state, much of which has been preserved. The Cross Town trail is approximately 8 miles long. The Town maintains 4 miles of trail on town preserved open space, as well as 1 mile of trail located on town roads. The remaining 3 miles of trail are maintained by CELT.