

## A Sampling of Animal Life

This area is close to human habitation, and yet this area offers a rich-variety of animal life that exists and thrives here:

|                            |                 |
|----------------------------|-----------------|
| Beaver                     | Chipmunks       |
| Coyote                     | Deer            |
| Fishers                    | Fox             |
| Muskrat                    | Otters          |
| Raccoons                   | Red Squirrels   |
| Snapping Turtles           | Spotted Turtles |
| Wood Frogs                 | Spring Peepers  |
| O'Possums                  | Skunk           |
| Blue-spotted Salamanders   |                 |
| Yellow-spotted Salamanders |                 |

## A Sampling of Bird Life

Listed below is just a small sample of the birds seen along the trail – some migratory and others native:

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Blackbird        | Bob White        |
| Cardinals        | Catbird          |
| Cedar Wax Wings  | Cooper's Hawk    |
| Eastern Kingbird | Goldfinch        |
| Great Blue Heron | Great Horned Owl |
| Mockingbird      | Mourning Doves   |
| Orioles          | Red Eved Vireos  |
| Vultures         | Wild Turkey      |
| Woodpeckers      | Screech Owl      |

## Little River Watershed

The Little River weaves in and out along the trail starting as just a small stream and begins to gather strength by the time it passes by Hale Street. As humble as it starts, the Little River is an important part of the vast Great Marsh. Starting just west of Route 95 and south of Route 113 at Quills Pond, it is located at the northern most part of the Parker River Watershed and has a major influence on the water quality downstream in particular to the clam flats in the northern part of Plum Island.

Unfortunately the quality has been downgraded by the constant pressure of storm water runoff and pollution and flooding from an ever-growing area of impervious surfaces. This includes threats to wetlands and wildlife habitats that help filter and purify the watershed.

## Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are temporary bodies of freshwater that provide critical habitat for many vertebrate and invertebrate wildlife species. They constitute a unique and increasingly vulnerable type of wetland that is inhabited by many species of wildlife some of which are totally dependent on vernal pools for their survival. Massachusetts Natural Heritage is attempting to identify and certify vernal pools to ensure their protection. One of the most important in the area is located just off the abandoned Route 95 roadbed. These threatened habitats need man's protection.

## LITTLE RIVER NATURE TRAIL



In 2001, the Parker River Clean Water Association (PRCWA) proposed and received permission to construct a nature trail on land donated to the City by Mass Highway to be used for observation, exercise, jogging and cross-country skiing in the winter. It is an open invitation to explore and enjoy this relatively wild area so close to a densely developed area. It roughly follows the Little River which is a major tributary to the Parker River and contributes to the well-being of the Common Pasture and the Great Marsh.

### Trail Rules

Please enjoy your visit subject to the following rules:

- No motorized vehicles, hunting or fires
- No alcohol use
- No overnight camping
- Dogs must be under the owner's control
- Any animal waste must be removed by the owner

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