

Middlesex Fells Letterboxing and Passport Program

Whip Hill Treasure Hunt

Trail head

Greenwood Park parking lot (across the street from Stone Zoo), Stoneham

Directions to the letterbox

1. From the playground, there are three possible entrances into the forest; go through the entrance on the far left.
2. You will soon reach a T in the trail, and a sign for Crystal Springs Trail. If you are here anytime from May- October, you will see patches of Jewelweed (orange/ yellow flowering plant) growing on either side of you. *Liquid from the stem of Jewelweed is used as a natural treatment for poison ivy- both plants are common in the Fells.* Go Left at the T.
3. Walk another 30 (small) steps and veer right up the hill to stay on Crystal Springs Trail .
4. The trail brings you to a small clearing and a patch of Hemlock trees at the top of the hill; continue straight, keeping an eye out for red blazes that mark the trail.
5. Walking past a standing dead tree that has been bleached by the sun, find a balance beam of sorts composed of five logs- walk along the logs as an alternative to slogging along in the mud if it's been raining!
6. At the fork, turn right to stay on the Crystal Springs Trail.
7. Cross Whip Hill Path (which is marked) and head up the hill to stay on Crystal Springs Trail.
8. The trail will start to get rocky, and if you look for it, you will soon find a tree on the right side of the trail that has been stripped of its bark. *What type of animal could have stripped the bark at this height? What could have created the holes that have been drilled into the tree?*
9. Continue straight along the well marked trail (red blazes).
10. Nearing the top of the next hill, you'll find a patch of haircap moss on the left- *these are very absorbent plants and were used by Native Americans in diapers.* Continue straight along the trail, which is marked by red blazes on the rocks as well as the trees.
11. The trail briefly splits, and then rejoins before passing between two red cedar trees and descending downhill. From the cedar trees, count 35 small steps to the next tree marked with a red blaze.
12. About 2 meters to your right, you'll see a large boulder abutting an oak tree. Circle around the boulder to find the box nestled between the boulder and the tree.
13. **Stamp your notepad and leave your mark (a signature or stamp of your own) in the notebook.**
14. **Please leave the box exactly as you found it for the next adventurer to find!**
15. Return the way you came, or follow these directions to make a loop back to the parking lot.
16. Continue downhill along the trail. At the bottom of the hill, jog left and take an immediate right to stay on Crystal Springs Trail.
17. At the next intersection, go right to get off Crystal Springs Trail, and on to Saddleback Trail (Saddleback is not marked in the forest but is labeled on the map).
18. At the next intersection, go take a sharp right to get on Whip Hill Road. After walking about 4 meters on Whip Hill Road, there is a partially hidden wooden sign on the left, marking that trail.
19. Continue straight (you will pass a turn off to the right and another to the left). After about 5-10 minutes, you'll reach the sign for Crystal Springs Trail where you came in. Go left and walk for a couple of minutes to reach the playground and parking lot.