

I Spy Game

Greenbelt

HOW TO:

Take this document with you either printed out or just bring it up on your phone while you walk. When you find any two of the items listed below, snap a photo and post to Instagram with the hashtag: **#ispygreenbelt**

We'll pick three random winners and mail you a prize!

If you don't use Instagram, you can email us your two photos (ecga@ecga.org) or just complete the list on your own for fun! One entry per family, please!

NOTE: We don't want you to actually take anything from the property. Keep in mind the principle: Take only pictures, leave only footprints!

On the next pages, you'll find Beginner and Advanced sections. The beginner items are things you will find at this reservation all year, in abundance. The advanced items are a little harder to find, may move around, or might only be there during certain times of the year. This scavenger hunt was prepared for Barrett Reservation in early spring 2020, but could be used at any reservation in Essex County. Enjoy!



Greenbelt
Essex County's Land Trust

Beginner / Spy

Greenbelt trail marker

Before you start your hike, look for the Greenbelt trail markers on the trees. If you follow these, you will know that you are on the right path!



Acorns

Oak trees produce seeds called acorns. The acorns of different oak trees are different. Some have a shallow cap, while others have a deeper cap. Some caps are hairy and some are smooth. Look at the leaves surrounding those acorns. Are the lobes of the leaves pointy with deep grooves or rounded?



Pine Cones

Pine trees produce cones that contain their seeds. Every type of "conifer" (cone-producing tree) has a slightly different cone. The most common conifer at Barrett Reservation is the White Pine. They are tall, straight trees whose branches with needles tend to be up high near the top. If you can find a fallen branch with needles on it, you'll see that each little bundle has 5 needles. The female cones of a mature white pine tend to be about 6-8" long and slender. They contain the seeds. The male cones are small and soft. They release pollen on the wind. One white pine tree can have both male and female cones. Can you find any female white pine cones on the ground?



Club Moss/Princess Pine

On the side of the trail, you've probably seen small plants that resemble miniature pine trees. These are called Club Moss or Princess Pines, but are neither a moss nor a pine! (They are seedless plants that reproduce with spores!) This type of plant is among the oldest still in existence on the planet -- their species is over 400 million years old! During the Devonian period, the fossil record tells us that these little plants used to grow up to 150' tall! Can you spot any Club Moss along the trail?



Stone wall

Stone walls were put up as property barriers, livestock fencing, and as divisions between planted farm fields. You can often figure out how a property was used years ago by looking for clues in stone walls. If the wall contains lots of small stones along with the larger ones, it was likely surrounding an agricultural field and the stones were pulled up when the ground was plowed. If the stones are all the same size, it is more likely a boundary marker for livestock or simply marking the edge of a property. Find the stone walls in this property. What do you think they were used for?



Advanced / Spy

Fire scars

Trees can show scars from traumatic events-- disease, insect damage, scratch marks, or even fire. You can often tell when trees are fire scarred, even when there are no longer any burn marks. Look for several trees in the same area that all have a scar at the same height off the ground. Can you find any areas in Barrett Reservation that might have had a fire in the past?



Deer rubs

Bucks rub their antlers against trees during mating season (rut) to leave their scent on their territory or to rub the velvet off their antlers in fall. There tends to be rough bark splinters at the top of a deer rub, whereas if the mark on a tree is from another animal scratching, the loose bark will be at the bottom. This rubbing will often kill the tree, especially if it goes all the way around the trunk, because it removes the bark that usually protects the tree from insects and disease. Can you find any trees that show signs of deer rub at Barrett Reservation?



Glacial erratics

Around 20,000 years ago, the Laurentide Ice Cap covered the area we now call the North Shore. When that ice cap retreated as the climate warmed about 14,000 years ago. As it receded, it left behind great boulders called glacial erratics. You can see these boulders all over the North Shore. Do you see any boulders standing alone in the woods at Barrett Reservation?



Scat

Animal droppings, or "scat," can tell you a lot about what an animal eats, what kinds of animals are in your area, and what those animals are doing at this time of year. Sometimes, wild animal scat is hard to find, but many animals deliberately place their scat in prominent places. Coyotes and fox are two of these animals. They will often deposit the scat on a log, a large rock, or right in the middle of the trail to mark their territory. Coyote and fox scat often contain fur from their main foods: rabbits, mice, and other small animals. Both types of scat have tapered ends. Fox scat may have berries, insects, bird feathers, and plant remains in it. Coyote scat may be dark or may be mostly fur, slightly larger than fox scat, around 3". Can you spot any scat on the trail or along nearby logs or rocks?



Bibliography

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