

## Little Harbor Walking Tours to Benefit Sustainable Marblehead in 2021

~ Celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day a year late !

Throughout 2021, guided individual coastal walking tours around the shoreline of Marblehead's Little Harbor at the end of the mainland peninsula will benefit the local environmental non-profit Sustainable Marblehead, while providing an enjoyable social-distanced outdoor activity for individuals, families, or small groups of friends.

**The walks are a great way to continue Sustainable Marblehead's 2021 "Outdoor Challenge,"** giving people an opportunity to spend time outdoors savoring the beauty of our coastline while learning about the history of the islands and coastal region, and the role of Marblehead's original smaller harbor in the town's 400-year heritage.

The benefit tours are a belated celebration of last year's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day, which became lost in the covid pandemic.

**With its rocky coves and beautiful off-shore islands, Marblehead's northeast coastal zone** is a particularly scenic and popular recreational area. It is also very historic as the region where Marblehead's earliest settlement began in 1629, after centuries of seasonal habitation by Native American communities.

But it is environmentally fragile as well, with a threatened lobster hatchery, dwindling sea life, and underwater vegetation that are all increasingly impacted by chemical runoff and warming waters.

**The walks are led by Judy Anderson of Marblehead Architecture Heritage and Tours,** April through October.

**They cover just one half mile, with easy terrain.** With a slow pace to enjoy the scenery (and sit occasionally), they can take up to two hours — which always pass quickly ! (However, no restrooms are available.)

**Meet at Grace Oliver's Beach** (on Beacon Street at Crowninshield Road) and end at Gas House Beach (at the end of Gas House Lane off Orne Street, one block below the entrance to the Burial Hill) or at Franklin Street.

Consider lunch or dinner on the main harbor afterward, or take-out from the Lobster Company on Beacon St. on your walk back to your car, to benefit some of the town's local businesses.

**Tours are by donation and require advance reservations.** They can be individually scheduled at a mutually convenient time for the guide and the people taking the tours (maximum of six people together). Call 781-631-1762 or email [MarbleheadTours@aol.com](mailto:MarbleheadTours@aol.com). Guided historical walks in other parts of town are available as well.

**Visit [www.SustainableMarblehead.org](http://www.SustainableMarblehead.org)** for other education, programs, and ideas that can help to improve our local environment and mitigate our human impact on the earth, locally and beyond.

The Little Harbor was Marblehead's main harbor for several generations, from the early settlement in 1629 until the town grew dramatically in the 17-teens and 1720s, when the main harbor became thronged with vessels — mostly schooners and a few brigs, rather than sailboats and lobster boats as it is now. By the mid-1700s, Marblehead was (perhaps surprisingly) British North America's tenth most populous metropolis — a thriving international seaport engaged in an overseas Atlantic trade based on fishing, until the American Revolution began in 1775 and devastated the town's nearly 5,000 people and 1,000 families, both socially and economically.



The Little Harbor coastal walking tours were inspired three years ago, when the **Trustees of Reservations**, a land trust that now owns, protects, and preserves the two islands in Little Harbor, needed to raise funds for a maintenance endowment for both islands in 2017, when **Gerry's Island** (originally "Maverick's" Island in "Maverick's Cove") off Gas House Beach was donated by Ted and Julie Moore. The other island, traditionally called **Brown's** but now called **Crowninshield** by the Trustee (in Doliber's Cove) had been owned by the Brown and Crowninshield families in the 1800s, then was consolidated into full Crowninshield ownership in 1918. It was donated to the Trustees of Re. by Louise DuPont Crowninshield in 1958.



The tours brought \$400 to the Trustees of Reservations, toward its maintenance endowment for both off-shore islands. The next year, they benefited the Marblehead Conservancy. **Now schedule a tour and help Sustainable Marblehead !**

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Earth Day (even if a year late)

**On April 22<sup>nd</sup> in 1970**, a little over a year after that first iconic and transformative photograph of the fragile planet Earth suspended in the darkness of space in December 1968, a socially turbulent year, as this one is, when 20 million Americans — 10 percent of the U.S. population at that time — took to the streets as the first Earth Day was launched.

Later that year, with bi-partisan support AND a Republican president, the Environmental Protection Agency was formed. And within two years, pivotal laws to curb the relentlessly growing pollution of the globe fortuitously followed in succession: the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, and a national law to save endangered species — all with broad bi-partisan endorsement.

Think how awful the world's condition would be now without all three of those laws !

Just two decades later, in 1990, Salem Sound Coastwatch was established to bring further attention to the waters, shorelines and watershed of Salem, Beverly, Danvers, and Marblehead, which all border and impact Salem Sound, a small south-west portion of the larger Gulf of Maine — whose waters are actually now warming faster than many others.

And in 2016, when our country was about to do the opposite and withdraw from the Paris Climate Agreement, Sustainable Marblehead was established to set environmentally favorable goals for the Marblehead community in reducing carbon emissions and waste.

Our communities and their by-products impact the waters around Marblehead and the many species of life within them. And while those waters bring countless benefits to the many residents and water-based businesses in the coastal communities, the health of the Sound and its underwater creatures is vulnerable to our behaviors in a variety of ways.

**However, beneficial actions and activities have had a positive impact, nationally and locally — and they will continue to.** Education and advocacy are key. And in our community, that is one of the many valuable roles of **Sustainable Marblehead**.

On this 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary, think how much better this coastal North Shore environment, and indeed the globe, can be again with a renewed broad commitment to the planet's well-being for the benefit of people's health — finding more and more ways to reduce the toxic byproducts of so many aspects of today's world, and expanding business and personal practices that help preserve the planet while also sustaining current businesses and developing new jobs in the renewable energy sector and so many others, here in our own community and beyond.

Environmental concerns are even greater now, given the dramatic changes over the past half century, and the traumatic year just past, with its health crisis, economic ramifications, and social justice needs.

And, due in part to the giant pause the globe took in so many ways (even though difficult) as a result of the pandemic, photographs and human experience in its first months show what can be possible.

Hopefully, as the economy and its devastating social impact improves, people will continue to recall the things that had a healing effect during the sequestering time — valuing and protecting health, staying close to family (and now friends too, with masks), getting outdoors for exercise and renewal, and being connected to the natural world.

And perhaps, from this unprecedented time of shutdown and reflection — and of social change that is vital for so many — a healthier society and rejuvenated globe might be the collective result.

**Keep Sustainable Marblehead's "Outdoor Challenge" going through 2021 and beyond !**