



Groton Open Space Association's



AVERY FARM EXPLORER GUIDEBOOK

EVERY FARM DESCRIPTION:

Called one of the most biologically diverse and valuable conservation sites in eastern Connecticut, this beautiful, 305-acre parcel of land straddling the Groton-Ledyard border is truly an environmental gem.

At the center of Avery Farm, old fields provide rare grassland habitat and frame the picturesque 1775 colonial home retained by the seller. On the eastern side, Haley Brook runs under an old stone bridge, flowing east into the Mystic River and on to Long Island Sound. The brook and numerous other streams feed ponds, bogs, and the large wetlands from Lambtown Road in Ledyard to Quaker Farm Road in Groton. These wetlands, in turn, support a wide variety of turtles, shore and other birds, migratory fish, amphibians, and an active colony of beavers.

Large hardwood and hemlock forests cover over half of Avery Farm, with a high ridgeline and cliffs on the western side and over 50 acres of forest brooks and seeps flowing west from the ridge into the Groton and Ledyard reservoir. For more information please visit, <http://gosaonline.org/>



EXPLORE AVERY FARM WITH YOUR SENSES

- **The best way to learn about nature is to get out and explore it!**
- **Notice what makes Avery Farm different from places you spend most of your time in. Use ALL of your senses. Find a quiet place to sit for 5 minutes - describe in words or pictures what you: See, Hear, Smell, Feel...**

SEE

HEAR

SMELL

FEEL

BE A SCIENTIST

- **Any outdoor space like Avery Farm is a place where scientists can go to understand plants, animals, and landscapes that are in a natural state, unaffected by human activities. As a scientist, you will ask a question, make a prediction (called a hypothesis), and test your hypothesis by observing the thing you asked a question about.**
- A. Go outside and find a plant or animal to observe. Describe it here with words and/or pictures:**
- B. Come up with a question about it. For example, what does this bird eat? Does this plant prefer to live in dry soil or wet?**
- C. Make a hypothesis. This is an “educated guess” about the answer to your question. For example, I think that the bird eats ...” or I think that the plant will grow in soil that is...”**
- D. Do you think the animal or plant you observed was affected by people being nearby? If so, how?**

GOSA AVERY FARM WORD SEARCH

H J U B R F B F D Y
V A I N I T E A K U
H R B E G L A R O O
D O L I I Y V M O Q
J D Y A T Q E D R G
S Y R E V A R L B K
A T T Y U W T U A U
U M H P U J B Z U H
P L A N T D U X S N
M W I L D L I F E N

AVERY

BEAVER

BIRD

BROOK

FARM

FIELDS

HABITAT

HALEY

PLANT

TRAIL

WILDLIFE

I SPY... MANY DIFFERENT LEAVES

- While exploring Avery Farm find the following leaves which have fallen from the trees around you: white oak, red oak, maple, beech wood...
- Identify the leaf in the pictures below...



A – White Oak



B – Red Oak



C - Maple



D – Beech Wood



LEAVE NO TRACE

- **Help Leave No Trace on your public lands!**
 - **Pick up three pieces of litter and put them in the trash.**
 - **Pick up a bag of litter. Separate and recycle as many items as possible. Put the remainder in the trash.**

RECYCLING is better for the Earth than putting things in a landfill, but it still takes a lot of energy to recycle. REUSE is even better for the Earth. Refill your water bottle and conserve the Earth's resources.

- **Brainstorm other ways you can recycle at home!**



STONEWALLS

- **Hundreds if not thousands of yards of stone walls, crisscross the Avery Farm property.**
- **These were built between fifty and one hundred years ago out of stones found on the property, by the farmers who lived there.**
- **Purpose for being built:**
 - **Marking property lines**
 - **Dividing land**
 - **A place to keep the stones off of the plots of land that were being allocated for agricultural purposes.**
 - **Used to keep livestock contained in an area. (A theory that has been ruled out.)**
- **Local stones such as slate, schist, granite and gneiss**



**Have you noticed the stonewalls here at Avery Farm?
What purpose do you think the walls served/serves?**

WOOD DUCK BIRD BOX

- **In the middle of the swampy/boggy area, the wooden bird box is built for wood ducks.**
- **Male wood ducks are very colorful. Their heads are green and black, with white stripes and a red eye.**
- **Female wood ducks are brown, with little bits of blue on their wings. Very similar to the mallard.**
- **The box is between 9"-14" tall, with an entrance hole approximately 2"-3" in diameter.**

Do you see any Wood ducks? Other kinds of waterfowl?

THE BEAVER DAM

- **Beavers build dams on small rivers and streams, in hopes to flood an area where they have their lodge built, for protection as well as an easy source of food.**
- **These cause a problem for people, if there are any homes or roads nearby.**
- **Beaver deceiver solution: a larger metal pipe that channels water underneath a beaver dam, preventing the brook from being entirely dammed up, and flooding surrounding land.**
- **Evidence of Beavers - Small tree stumps with sharp, pointy ends, or sticks that have sharpened ends, from beavers gnawing on them.**

What evidence of beavers did you see? Did you see any beavers?

GLACIER ERRATIC

- **Large boulders that are sitting on top of the ground, in the middle of a level area are called glacial erratic.**
- **They did not form on that spot, but from many miles away. Carved out of the earth by glaciers, and moved far away. Some of the rocks could have originated in**
- **Canada. A lot of the larger stones, found in stonewalls, got to this area in the same manner.**

Did you see any “glacier erratic”? How big was the largest boulder?

WILDLIFE

List all the different kinds of animals and insects you saw. If you do not know what kind of creatures you saw, write what they looked like, and then go home and try to see if you can figure out what it was. Look in books, on the internet, or ask a friend/parent/teacher. (Try to find at least 10)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.