

Francis C. Carter Memorial Preserve



Why You Should Visit

The Carter Preserve is one of the largest protected areas in Rhode Island, and boasts more than 5 miles of well-marked hiking trails. Visitors are treated to a variety of beautiful landscapes, whether exploring the rocky woods or walking the edge of a wide open meadow.

The preserve is a key link in an 11-mile chain of protected open spaces, and provides habitat for many forest birds, reptiles, and amphibians.

What To See

Just steps from the parking lot on Route 112 is a large vernal pool with an observation platform. Depending on what time of year you visit, you may see a pond, brimming with tadpoles and water bugs, or a dry meadow of grasses and wildflowers, with colorful dragonflies patrolling the air. An inviting trail offers several routes through a forest of oak and huckleberry.

In summer, listen for the musical “*ee-o-lay*” of the wood thrush and the ringing “*teach-ER, teach-ER*” of ovenbirds defending their territory. The woods go fairly quiet in winter, but fresh snow accents the preserve’s giant granite boulders and the centuries-old pasture walls.

The preserve’s 35-acre field is a favorite destination of local birdwatchers, and is most easily reached from Old Mill Road. A farm lane lined with ferns and mountain laurel leads visitors down a winding hill before flattening out and emerging into the open. See if you can find an old picnic grove – now nearly forgotten – down a short, side path under the pines. A one-mile, family-friendly loop will take you around the field on an easy, grassy trail.



Did you know that box turtles can live to be over 60 years old? Look for one in oak-pine woodlands during your visit.

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On either side of the grassland, The Nature Conservancy is restoring habitat for bluebirds and other species that prefer open shrubby edges to the deep woods. This also improves the open appearance of the field and permits deeper looks into the forest.



In mid-summer, monarch butterflies visit the grassland at the Carter Preserve, feeding on milkweed nectar. You might see up to 17 other species of butterflies as well!

© Geoff. Dennis

Tips for your visit

The Preserve is open from sunrise to sunset for passive recreational use, including hiking, bird watching, and nature observation. Horseback riding is permitted on designated trails only.

Please help us protect the fragile ecology of the preserve by complying with the following guidelines.

Foot Travel Only! Motorized vehicles or bicycles cause excessive wear on trails and are disruptive to wildlife and visitors.

Horseback riding is permitted on designated trails only, indicated on the trail map.

Please keep dogs leashed or leave them at home.

Be aware of bird nesting season in the grassland (May 1 – Sept. 1). In order to minimize disturbance to birds and other wildlife. Please stay on trails along edge of the grassland.

Take only pictures, leave only footprints and remove any trash you create.

Be aware of deer ticks and wear light clothing.

Location: Charlestown, RI

Size: 841 acres



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Directions to the Preserve

From I-95, take Exit 3A - Route 138 East. Follow Route 138 East to the intersection with Route 112, at the Richmond School. Bear right onto Route 112 and follow south through Carolina. Continue straight through the intersection with Route 91 and over the railroad bridge. Travel approx. 1/2 mile, and the preserve entrance will be on the right, marked by a sign.

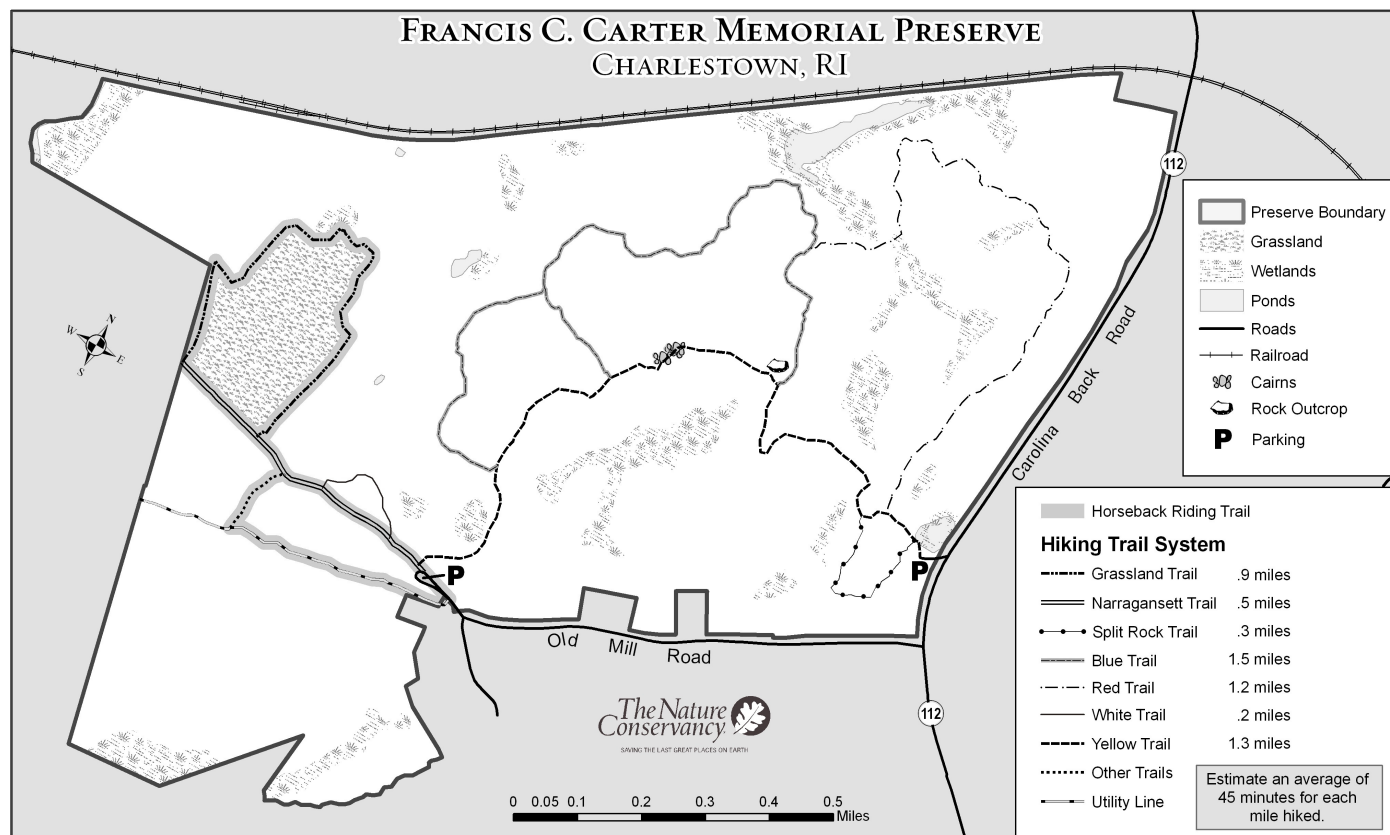
Alternative entrance: Continue on Route 112 past the preserve sign and take the next right onto Old Mill Road. Continue 3/4 mile on Old Mill Road until the road curves sharply to the left. Look for a preserve sign, and follow the driveway to the parking area.

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The Rhode Island Chapter

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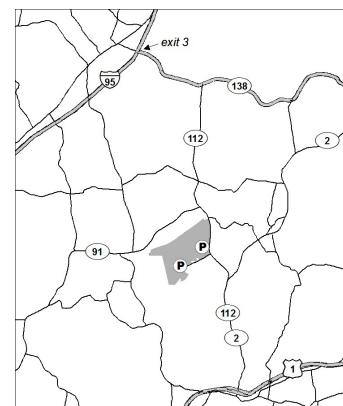
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Remembering Francis Carter

This preserve is dedicated to Frank Carter, a Rhode Island land protection hero. As Director of The Champlin Foundations, Mr. Carter built a lasting partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the State of Rhode Island, setting the stage for conservation of more than 25,000 acres of open space. These scenic, productive, and green lands, gracing every corner of our state, are his legacy to us and future generations.

After his death in 1999, the property that is now the Carter Preserve was purchased with major contributions from The Champlin Foundations, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, and the Cove Point Foundation.



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