

**Town of Sprague Letterboxes**  
**Mukluk Series**  
**#2: “Chipmunk Picnic”**



Placed: March 30, 2007

Last Maintenance: October 12, 2009

Moderate distance (1 hour round trip); nice flat open path and a wee bit of off-road walking

It's 2 hours and still easy, if you choose the Ridge Walk return trip to find the “Bobcat” letterbox.

1 pace = 1 long stride

It's Spring and the Chipmunks have decided to take their families on an outing. Can you find their picnic spot?

**To get to the Sprague Land Preserve (formerly Mukluk Preserve):** From Rt. 207 in Baltic going towards Franklin, take Holton Road which is a dead end road, and go 8/10 mile to sign on the right that says “Welcome to the Sprague Land Preserve.” This is the Preserve entrance and is a right of way for 7/10 of a mile. The Preserve is owned by the Town of Sprague and maintained by the Sprague Conservation Commission. Go down this dirt road, which is passable most of the year; in muddy or snow conditions you will need a 4x4; otherwise any car will do the trick. (Please use common sense in bad conditions—people HAVE gotten stuck here!) You will see a big sign that notifies visitors that we are conducting lead remediation (removal) on the property, and to stay out of the 16-acre area in which we will be working. This area is clearly marked by a yellow fence and signs.

You will see another sign at the official entrance to our property in 7/10 mile; bear right at the fork and go up a hill. You will see a cabin on your right and a regulations sign/kiosk on the left in front of the former skeet range/field. Park here off the road by either the cabin or the sign.

**COMPASS:** You will probably need a compass for this walk (unless you're good at knowing which direction you're facing).

**Start:** Walk back down the road until you get to the fork, and go down the road around the big green gate. At this point you will be walking on a dirt road that is the main access road to the Preserve. You will notice that there are signs posted warning of lead contamination, and for about 200 feet you will have a plastic yellow fence on both sides of the road. You are passing through the contaminated area, so don't dawdle. You'll go over a culvert and on your left at the little silt pond you may hear some bullfrogs and maybe see Big Mike DuBois, our resident engineer and the largest beaver in southeastern Connecticut.

After you pass the yellow fence you will then pass an abandoned gravel quarry on your left, and then pass under the power lines. On your left you will probably see and hear a little brook running parallel to the road; it might be just a trickle in summer, though. But it will soon cross the road under a culvert and you will begin to see many hemlock trees on your right, and finally off to your right you will see the Shetucket River, which has been there all along, just a little farther away and out of sight. Feel free to wander off the road and look at the neat toadstools and riverbank activity, but come back to the road, and keep walking; up ahead you will see an old campsite/fire pit on the right, Directly across the road is another campfire area as well, with some log seating placed around it (gotta love the Boy Scouts).. From the green gate to this point is about a leisurely 20-minute walk.

When you get to the twin campsites you will see a path leading about 15 feet to the river. Go look at the river for a minute before you start your hunt. Isn't it pretty? We will soon be improving this site and getting a new picnic table (the old one collapsed; it used to be a letterbox landmark but no more), but it still is a nice spot to stop and rest. The chipmunks think so too, and they have their own picnic area just a little ways from here.

Stand in the middle of the main road. Take a compass reading of 230 degrees and walk SW 80 paces (behind the fire pit with logs around it) through the woods (you will see that you are on a cleared “path” of sorts) to a big hemlock tree directly ahead of you. Go behind this tree about 15 feet (7 paces) and you will see two fallen logs in the shape of an “L.” Look around you: isn't this a nice sunny spot for the chipmunks to have a picnic of their own? In the corner of the “L” in a hollowed out hidey-hole is your surprise.

**To continue the Series and go to “Bobcat” via the Ridge Route from Chipmunk Picnic:**

Back on the main access road, look for the white trail markers near the river-side campsite that mark the ridge trail that hugs the river. This trail was done in 2007 by Philip Salvo, our fabulous Eagle Scout as part of his trail maintenance project that includes two bridges on this trail as well. Go over both of them, up a hill and keep to the ridge. When you come to a stone monument at the foot of a tree on the river side of the trail, follow the directions for “Bobcat.” This point is about a leisurely ½ hour walk from the river camp.

We would love to hear from you regarding how we can improve our letterboxes. Please write to [grants@ctsprague.org](mailto:grants@ctsprague.org) if you have any questions or suggestions.