

**FINDING IT** At the foot of Milton Street, Neponset Valley Parkway runs straight over Paul's Bridge. There, also, where the Parkway intersects with Brush Hill Road, look for a small parking lot on the river side. Once parked, look left to spot the DCR granite "Fowl Meadow" trail marker. Cross over some wooden planks, keeping Brush Hill Road to your left, and continue straight to access "Burma Road," a wide 2 ½-mile path through Fowl Meadow (the route is down and back, not a loop).

**DESCRIPTION** Paul's Bridge is a handsome, Quincy granite arched bridge, about 90 feet long, spanning a well-concealed Neponset River between Milton and Readville (Boston). Nearby, Fowl Meadow is a large tract of wetland in the Neponset River watershed that stretches into Sharon, Norwood, Canton, Westwood, Dedham, Milton, and Hyde Park (Boston), and is highly visible from I-95 and Route 128. Characteristic "wet feet" plants colonize and stretch into the distance on both sides of the Burma Road path: Joe Pye Weed, *Phragmites australis* (common reed), goldenrod, ferns, Queen Anne's Lace, skunk cabbage, red osier dogwood, and fragrant *Clethra* (coastal sweet pepperbush or summer sweet). Wild grapevines festoon the trees.

**STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** Citizen-action has, on several occasions, preserved Fowl Meadow and Paul's Bridge for posterity. Whether preserving environmental, historic, cultural, or architectural treasures, the responsibility to speak up, volunteer, monitor, and organize rests with all of us. Positive things happen when we do.

**HISTORY** The name, "Paul's Bridge," dates back to the early 1800's, however, a bridge has existed on this site since the mid-1700's. Rebuilt several times to accommodate more traffic, reusing much of the original stone, its last reconstruction was designed by Arthur A. Shurcliff, a famous American landscape architect, in 1932-1935. Paul's Bridge was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. Fowl Meadow almost was paved over in 1967 when the state proposed to extend I-95, an eight-lane highway, straight through it to Boston. Doing so would have bulldozed much of Fowl Meadow and located a major interchange on top of historic Paul's Bridge. A citizens' lawsuit stopped the proposal. After another citizens' initiative, the state declared Fowl Meadow (and Ponkapoag Bog nearby) an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in 1992 because of rare wetland habitat. In 2013, citizens, local organizations, state legislators, and Milton Board of Selectmen prevented the development of "Milton Mews," 276-unit housing complex, right next to Fowl Meadow on Brush Hill Road.

**ACTIVITIES** Watch/listen for birds, water fowl, wildlife; jog; walk; dog walk; bicycle; cross country ski, canoe or kayak via the boat launch near Paul's Bridge/Fowl Meadow parking lot; fish (license required); identify wild flowers, trees, and shrubs; picnic at tables provided near the parking area. Across the streets are expansive fields for games or kite-flying.