Riverbend

Riverbend, a beautiful 15-acre property on the Ipswich River is now our home, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of Dr. Joseph (Bob) Petranek who gave us his house and land in Ipswich. The property includes a trail, green building, green roof, water-wise demonstration gardens, offices, canoe dock and future visitor center.

Riverbend. Riverbend is situated on a glacial moraine. The land rises steeply from the river bank and the moraine redirects the river on a northward bend. In the bank, one can find evidence of ocean creatures that died 10 millennia ago. Around the bend and downstream is a classic Floodplain Forest with silver maples and swamp white oaks. This riparian habitat is key to the movement of wildlife, shading the river from the summer’s heat and absorbing the energy of floods.

Trails. Two trails take you to the river. One starts from the picnic bench and a lovely ½ mile trail spirals from our Welcome Kiosk around the moraine to the river.

Paddle. Some people say this is the most beautiful and unfrequented part of the river. Portage your boat to the put-in or become a member and use our boats for free. Paddle 1 mile downstream (to the Ipswich Mills Dam) or upriver, perhaps for miles depending on the water level.

Green Building and Gardens. Thanks to many donors and volunteers, we installed ultra-efficient toilets and appliances, green roof, permeable paving, cistern, and rain gardens to demonstrate sustainable water use. The gardens feature native perennials and shrubs including Sedum Autumn Joy, Purple Dome Aster, Gayfeather (Liatris), Purple Coneflower, Moonbeam Coreopsis, Virginia Sweetspire, Fothergilla, Northern Bayberry and Winterberry. Come visit, at any time of year.

Programs. We offer paddle trips and programs on gardening with native plants, fly-fishing, restoring trout to the Ipswich River and more, as staff and funding allow.

Hours. The gardens, trail, dock and property are open to visitors for canoeing, kayaking, walking, birding, observing nature and simply getting a breath of fresh air from sunrise to sunset, year-round. Dogs are welcome if you clean up after them. Staff are usually at Riverbend weekdays from 9:00 – 3:00 (and often more).

Get Involved. If you can help with gardens or trails, property management, or outreach, please let us know. Funds are needed to complete renovations, build trails and make the property visitor friendly. We can use your help!

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