Beverly’s Open Spaces

Gardens and Beaches

Lynch Park Rose Garden
Brackenbury Beach
Gillis Park
Independence Park
Lyons Park or Dane Street Beach
Lynch Park
Mingo Beach
Rice’s Beach

Photos courtesy of David Brewster, Open Space and Recreation Committee member
Lynch Park Rose Garden
55 Ober Street

Size: Located within the 16-acre Lynch Park.

Parking: There is a large parking lot for Lynch Park visitors with a paved pathway leading to the Rose Garden.

Accessibility: Due to several sets of stairs, the Rose Garden is not accessible for people with physical disabilities.

Comments: The Italian Rose Garden is part of Lynch Park, which is a community-wide recreational area. The park, a former estate, is now owned and managed by the City of Beverly. Its blend of grassy fields, beaches and visitor amenities make it an invaluable asset to the Beverly community as well as visitors from around the region. The Beverly Garden Club maintains the garden.

Amenities:
- Brick walkways that surround lush flower beds,
- Benches that overlook the flower gardens and the ocean,
- Sculpture of Mercury, perhaps Beverly’s most renowned work of outdoor art,
- Covered pergola.

Best time to visit: Spring, summer or fall; the walking paths may be impassable during winter months due to snow accumulation.

Activities:
Walk/Hike: Leisurly stroll; best garden viewing in the summer.
Cycle: Bicycles are not allowed in the Rose Garden.
Bird Watch: See Lynch Park
View Wildlife: N/A
View Wildflowers: The garden is full of flowers, but they are the formal, planted type, rather than wildflowers.
Active Recreation: Strolling
Brackenbury Beach
Brackenbury Lane

Size: 49’ wide sandy strip of land located between two privately owned beaches.

Parking: Parking is extremely limited. Visitors often park on side streets in the Cove neighborhood and walk down Brackenbury Lane.

Accessibility: Brackenbury Lane is a paved street; the beach itself does not have a boardwalk or pathway. There is no designated parking.

Comments: Brackenbury Beach is a right-of-way to the ocean over a sandy beach at the end of Brackenbury Lane. There is no lifeguard on duty; swimming is at your own risk.

Magnetic Sand: Bring a magnet to Brackenbury Beach and run it through the sand. The black sand, specks of magnetite, will adhere to the magnet. In recent years, shifting currents have diluted the magnetite rich sand, but the magnet experiment still works.

Robert Rantoul wrote in 1831, “On the beach between Hospital Point and Curtis Woodberry’s point, black sand has been obtained in considerable quantities for the supply of the stationers shops, it being mined with other sand, it is separated by the use a magnet which strong attracts the black that is fit for the stationers’ use and leaves the other that was commingled.” In the 19th century wooden sand shakers, filled with black sand, were standard items on a gentleman’s desk. The black sand was ideal for blotting ink.

History of Brackenbury Beach and its Neighborhood: Richard Brackenbury came from England to Salem in 1628 with John Endicott, the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. In 1636 he was given a grant of 75 acres fronting along the shore between what are now called Hospital Point and Curtis Point. In 1686 he donated land for the lane that now bears his name.

Facing the water and looking to the east and west of the beach, one can see important sites from Beverly’s history. According to Stone’s 1843 History of Beverly, Curtis Woodberry’s point, just east of Brackenbury Beach, was the site of Beverly’s earliest English dwelling. William Woodberry, one of the five Old Planters given land grants on the Cape Ann Side of Salem in 1630, built his home there. “It was a large double house, constructed for defense against an enemy and called the garrison house. It was framed of oak after the fashion of the times, and was taken down about forty years ago.” (c. 1830)

In the late 19th century Curtis Point, as well as the area around Brackenbury Beach, became part of the North Shore’s Gold Coast. Looking at Curtis Point from the beach, one can still see the remains of a cement boat landing, once part of a summer estate. Several estates also occupied the shorefront between Brackenbury Lane and Hospital Point.
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To the west of the beach, one can see the lighthouse on Hospital Point. Once called Paul’s Head, this was the location of a Revolutionary War fort. The name was changed in the early 19th century when the town built a contagious disease hospital there.

Amenities:
  • Sandy beach

Best time to visit: Summertime

Activities:
Walk/Hike: N/A
Cycle: N/A
Bird Watch: Visitors can view shore and sea birds throughout the year. The beach is a pleasant place to view wintering ducks, loons and geese.
View Wildlife: N/A
View Wildflowers: N/A
Active Recreation: Swimming (no lifeguard)
**Gillis Park/Pleasant View/Goat Hill**

**Porter Street**

**Size:** 3.0 acres

**Parking:** There is no off-street parking available at this park. However, there is street parking along Porter Street.

**Accessibility:** This park is not accessible for individuals with physical disabilities; however, some of the amenities are accessible. There are no designated handicap parking spaces.

**Comments:** This neighborhood park overlooks the Danvers and Bass Rivers. The beach area is tidal and used primarily by the nearby residents; there is no lifeguard on duty, so you swim at your own risk. Gillis Park is only one block from the downtown area.

**Amenities:**
- Sandy beach with opportunity to swim (no lifeguard),
- Play structure and swing set,
- Basketball court,
- Water fountain, benches and picnic tables.

**Best time to visit:** Year-round, but especially during the warmer months so you can enjoy the beach or play basketball.

**Activities:**
- **Walk/Hike:** N/A
- **Cycle:** N/A
- **Bird Watch:** Shore birds are often seen feeding on the exposed mud flats, especially in the spring and fall. Winter on the tidal river may find coastal seaducks such as bufflehead, red-breasted merganser, common goldeneye and common loon. A resident flock of mallard may be seen patrolling the river.
- **View Wildlife:** N/A
- **View Wildflowers:** N/A
- **Active Recreation:** Swimming (no lifeguard), basketball
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Independence Park
35 Lothrop Street

Size: 2.86 acres

Parking: Street parking only.

Accessibility: Independence Park and its amenities are accessible with concrete pathways that traverse the site. There are two designated handicap parking spaces (located on the street). However, there is no access from the street down to the beach; the only accessible area is the grassy area between the beach and the street.

Comments: Independence Park has a sandy beach with breakwater and a seawall. The views from the park and the beach are spectacular as they overlook the Beverly harbor and the outlying islands. It is a very popular spot for passive recreation, walking, jogging, sitting, sunbathing and swimming (no lifeguard). Canoes and kayaks can be launched from the beach; watch for swimmers. The park is located along the heavily traveled, scenic Route 127. It is located only blocks from Dane Street Beach.

Amenities:
- Public beach,
- Benches overlooking the harbor,
- 80’ jetty into harbor, and
- Water fountain.

Best time to visit: Year-round, although, the winter cold along the waterfront can be extremely chilly.

Activities:
Walk/Hike: Leisurely strolls along the paved pathways or along the beach.
Cycle: Bicycles are allowed on the pathways; please be careful of pedestrians.
Bird Watch: Throughout the year, look for herring and black-backed gulls, cormorants, ducks and Canada geese in the water. Mocking birds, house sparrows and crows frequent the shrubs and trees. In the spring, summer and fall, check the beach for ruddy turnstones.
and migrating shorebirds. Scan the water for mergansers and migrating terns and look for goldfinches in the trees. The winter is the best time for seeing buffleheads, brant and an occasional loon in the water. Special visitors in late December have included seven-swans-a-swimming.

View Wildlife: In the winter, keep your eyes peeled for the occasional seal. In the summer and fall, look for dragonflies and butterflies.

View Wildflowers: Formal plantings provide vibrant summer color.

Active Recreation: Swimming (no lifeguard)
Lyons Park/Dane Street Beach
93 Lothrop Street

Size: 7.0 acres

Parking: There is a small parking lot as well as ample street parking.

Accessibility: Approximately one third of the benches in Lyons Park and Dane Street Beach are located along accessible pathways. Unfortunately, access to the play structure is problematic. There are two designated handicap parking spaces in the parking lot, which includes an aisle for van accessibility. The beach itself is accessible by a ramp, but caution is suggested due to sand that settles on the ramp.

Comments: The community heavily uses this attractive waterfront park. The beach overlooks Beverly Harbor and Salem’s waterfront. Lifeguards during the summer make this a safe place to swim. The large expanse of lawn between the street and the beach is a great place to picnic, relax or play impromptu games of soccer, softball and frisbee while enjoying the sea breeze. The hill overlooking the harbor has picnic tables tucked among the trees, providing a secluded place to enjoy a picnic with a view.

Amenities:
- Public beach,
- Play structure, swing set and tire swing,
- Picnic tables and benches,
- Water fountain, and
- Volleyball poles.

Best time to visit: The park is open year-round. However, the winter cold along the waterfront can be chilly. The most popular time to visit is in the summer.

Activities:
Walk/Hike: This area is very popular for its leisurely strolls along the beach with an amazing view of the harbor.
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**Cycle:** While cycling in the park is difficult due to pedestrians and sunbathers, Lothrop Street is an extremely popular route for cyclists.

**Bird Watch:** Throughout the year, look for herring and black-backed gulls, cormorants, ducks and Canada geese in the water. Mocking birds, house sparrows and crows frequent the trees. In the spring, summer and fall, check the beach for ruddy turnstones and migrating shorebirds. Scan the water for mergansers and migrating terns and look for goldfinches in the trees. The winter is the best time for seeing buffleheads, brant and an occasional loon in the water. Special visitors in late December have included seven-swan-a-swimming.

**View Wildlife:** In the winter, keep your eyes peeled for the occasional seal. In the summer and fall, look for dragonflies and butterflies.

**View Wildflowers:** Formal plantings provide vibrant summer color.

**Active Recreation:** Swimming
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Lynch Park
55 Ober Street

Size: 16.0 acres

Parking: There is a large parking lot available to park visitors. Beverly residents park for free, however there is a parking fee for non-residents during the summer season (Memorial Day to Labor Day).

Accessibility: Lynch Park has paved pathways throughout that lead to accessible play structures. There are several designated handicap parking spaces. There is a ramp that leads to a sandy/rocky beach.

Comments: This historic park, a former estate, is the principal community park serving both city residents and Essex County region because of its beauty and unique features. It has an attractive blend of trees, two beaches, ocean views on three sides, concert shell, carriage house with art guild room, concession stand, and formal Italian Rose Garden. These features make it a popular site for school groups, weddings, family gatherings, camps, a variety of ceremonies and a host of community events.

Amenities:
• Two public beaches,
• Sandy volleyball court,
• Two play structures,
• Concession stand,
• Bathroom facilities,
• Water fountain,
• Many picnic tables and benches located throughout the park,
• Concert Shell,
• Carriage House,
• Italian Rose Garden
• Large expanses of grassy areas for impromptu games of soccer, kickball, frisbee, etc
Best time to visit: Spring, summer or fall; the roads into the park are plowed during the winter, but the walking paths may be impassable during winter months due to snow accumulation. Lynch Park has one of the most popular sledding hills in Beverly. Located on a peninsula, the park gets nice breezes in the summer, but can be very chilly in the winter right near the water.

Activities:
Walk/Hike: Flat paved walkways make for easy walking
Cycling: A good place for teaching young children how to ride a bicycle.
Bird Watch: Winter brings a host of interesting waterfowl to the coastal waters.
View Wildlife: Marine life in the tide pools along the stretches of rocky shoreline are popular places to look for hermit crabs, periwinkle snails, sea stars and other marine critters.
View Wildflowers: A number of trees in the park are identified with labels.
Active Recreation: Swimming, pick-up soccer and softball, Frisbee, etc.

For more information, please visit: http://www.bevrec.com/lynchpark.html
Mingo Beach
Hale Street
Near Endicott College campus

Size: Less than 1 acre

Parking: No parking available. Visitors must walk to beach from off-site.

Accessibility: Not accessible to someone with a physical disability.

Comments: This is a public beach and swimming area. However, there is no lifeguard on duty, so swim at your own risk. The shore is rocky and can be difficult or hazardous to traverse.

Amenities:
- Public beach, no lifeguard

Best time to visit: Ocean views are breathtaking year-round. However, the cold wind coming off of the water during the winter months can be extremely chilly.

Activities:
Walk/Hike: N/A
Cycle: N/A

Bird Watch: Throughout the year, look for herring and black-backed gulls, cormorants, ducks and Canada geese in the water. In the spring, summer and fall, check the beach for ruddy turnstones and migrating shorebirds. Scan the water for mergansers and migrating terns. The winter is the best time for seeing buffleheads, brant and an occasional loon in the water.

View Wildlife: Keep your eyes on the ocean to try to spot an occasional seal that has wandered up the coastline.

View Wildflowers: This area does not have many wildflowers, but be wary of the poison ivy that dots the groundcover.

Active Recreation: Swimming (no lifeguard)
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Rice’s Beach
End of Ober Street

Size: 21,780 square feet

Parking: There is no street parking in the neighborhood.

Accessibility: Ober Street is a paved street; the beach itself does not have a boardwalk or pathway. There is no designated parking.

Comments: This is a private beach owned by abutters, but the public may use the 40-foot right-of-way over the sandy beach to the ocean. It is also a public launch site. Visitors swim at their own risk.

History: Rice’s Beach fronts on what was once called Ober Cove between Burgess Point and Hospital Point. It gets its name from Nehemiah and Josephine Rice who owned a large estate on Ober Street on the ocean side of the right of way in the early 20th century. Rice was a hide and leather dealer from Portland, Maine.

Best time to visit: Summertime

Activities:
Walk/Hike: N/A
Cycle: N/A

Bird Watch: Throughout the year, look for herring and black-backed gulls, cormorants, ducks and Canada geese in the water. In the spring, summer and fall, check the beach for ruddy turnstones and migrating shorebirds. Scan the water for mergansers and migrating terns. The winter is the best time for seeing buffleheads, brant and an occasional loon in the water.

View Wildlife: N/A
View Wildflowers: N/A

Active Recreation: Swimming (lifeguard during summer months)