



Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

## SANDY POINT

Transportation



*Punch your way  
around Great Bay*

Welcome to the Great Bay Discovery Center, education headquarters of the Reserve. Come visit this land, where the past meets the present. Walk in the footsteps of the Native People and European settlers who made these shores their home while living off the bounty of the Bay. While visiting today, know you are just one of many who have been fortunate enough to benefit from Great Bay's abundant natural resources. The self-guided 1,700-foot boardwalk trail begins and ends in the upland forest. Stop at benches along the way to look for birds, berries and new buds in the changing habitats. Access the shore at the boat ramp to see Great Bay up close; hold a mud-snail in the palm of your hand, listen to the wing beats of a passing flock of geese and imagine the journeys of the old Great Bay gundalow captains.

### EXPLORATION LOGISTICS

**Directions:** By road: From the Stratham traffic circle, traveling east on Route 33, turn left onto Depot Road. Continue to the stop sign, and then turn left. Road will end in a parking lot. By water: Small-boat access is possible at high tide (otherwise beware of mud); go to [www.maineharbors.com](http://www.maineharbors.com) for tide charts.

- Trail Rating:** Level, easy terrain that is universally accessible.
- Exploration Time:** Boardwalk is 1,700 feet (allow at least 30 minutes).

### NAVIGATING THE LANDSCAPE

With its abundant natural resources, Great Bay and its surrounding land was an appealing year-round dwelling place for many Western Abenaki to hunt and fish. European visitors were in Great Bay as early as 1603, with two of the first permanent settlements located on the shores of Sandy Point. Captain Thomas Wiggin built his house here in 1659. All of the rivers

Sandy Point

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coming into the Bay were quickly put to work; the first sawmill on the Winnicut River was built in 1656. Logs were drawn from 40 miles away and brought by river to these mills, where they were turned into planking, clapboards, shingles, shakes and barrel staves. Many were then brought to Portsmouth by way of gundalow to be shipped and sold. In 1650, The Gilman Mill in Exeter alone produced 80,000 boards and planks. Great Bay was a very busy place, indeed! Stand on the shore, still a public boat launch today, and you will be standing where countless others have stood before you. From birch bark canoes to gundalows and kayaks, this site has always been a landing. Locals from all over the area gathered here for business, to trade or sell their wares, catch a ride to Portsmouth, collect their mail or just exchange the latest gossip.

### WHILE YOU ARE HERE:

- Come in June and see nesting horseshoe crabs on the shore.
- Look for witch hazel, rosehips and sassafras trees.
- Bring a picnic lunch to enjoy by the ornamental waterfall.

### GEOCACHE:

Row Row Row your Boat!

### COORDINATES:

N43° 03'21.3111 W70° 53'48.0422



### WHAT I SAW:

