

Westford's East Boston Camps Camp Facilities & Services Fact Sheet

History of the East Boston Camps

Isabel and Sara Hyams, seeking to help Boston and Chelsea children at a time when tuberculosis was a grave concern, purchased the land around Burge's Pond in 1937 for a "Fresh Air Camp." The 1938 hurricane took down many trees and threatened the opening of the camp the following summer, but the East Boston Social Centers, Inc. has run the camp continuously since 1937.

Originally, there were three overnight camps; one for the 6-9 age group of boys and girls, a separate boys' camp for 10-15 year olds, and another girls' camp for ages 10-15. There were four two-week sessions in July and August. Approximately 80-125 children would attend each session.

Existing Facilities and Programs

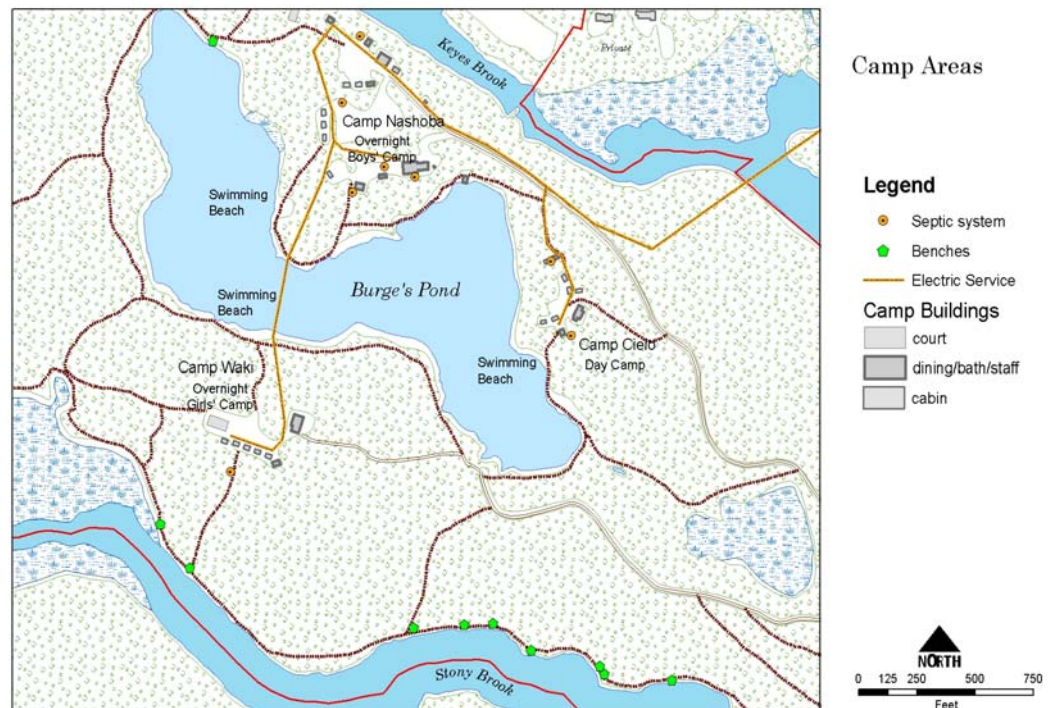
Programs: There are now seven weeks of camp, seven one week sessions of day camp, and three one-week and two two-week sessions of overnight camp. The one-week day camp sessions at Camp Cielo serves boys and girls aged 6-14, including children from Westford and surrounding communities. Girls, aged 8-14, attend Camp Waki, the overnight camp for girls. Camp Nashoba, the overnight camp for boys, also serves ages 8-14. Close to 350 day and overnight campers attend each summer.

The East Boston Social Center also hosts a

Senior Picnic and weeklong Senior Camp the last week of June, where seniors are the "kids", and they spend a week following the model of summer camp! They participate in many activities, including arts and crafts, swimming, and nature walks. The East Boston Social Centers has also run a Playschool summer camp, a day camp for children in their city program.

Traditionally, the camps have been used by Westford's 5th grades for a very popular weeklong nature day camp. The capacity for the overnight camps is about 88 people and the day camp capacity is about 50. Sessions generally run below this capacity.

There is family camping on Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day weekend, where cabins are rented to families from East Boston. Some families have been coming for over 25 years, and their children now bring their own kids. There is also a counselor-in-training retreat and alumni retreat. Times other than



these weekends are also available for rent by groups that have historically used the facility in the spring and fall. Rental income directly supports the East Boston Camps program.

In addition to the camp use, walkers and picnickers have used the site for years on an informal basis. In March 2005 the Town of Westford purchased the site from the Hyams Foundation and public use has increased. Boaters, swimmers, fishermen, dog walkers, horseback riders, mountain bikers, and hikers have all been enjoying the increased accessibility.

Facilities: Camp Cielo, the day camp, has 9 buildings including a Dining Hall/Activities Building, Bath, five Cabins, a Store, and the Director's Residence; with a total of 4,094 square feet. Camp Waki, the girls' camp, has 7 buildings including a Dining Hall, Bath, and five Cabins totaling 4,395 square feet. Camp Nashoba has 17 buildings including the Boathouse, Main Lodge, Infirmary, Office, six Cabins, Bath, Cook's Residence, Staff Duplex, Activities Lodge, and three storage/ maintenance buildings, with a total of 11,191 square feet. All together there are 19,680 square feet of buildings, as well as a tennis court and a basketball court, both in poor condition.

Considering the buildings are seventy years old, they are in relatively good condition, but still it should be noted that none of the buildings would meet current accessibility requirements. Building systems, such as



plumbing, electricity, windows and doors, etc. were found to range from poor to good condition when evaluated by a consulting firm.

There are three swimming beaches at the camps—one each at Camp Cielo, Camp Nashoba, and Camp Waki. None are intended for use as a public beach. Each beach is semi-circular in shape and about 4,000 square feet in area. Each has floats and benches.

Trails: There are currently a total of 6.6 miles of official trails—5.3 miles of woods trails and the two camp roads provide an additional 1.3 miles of walking. In addition there are a few little-used, unofficial trails. The only trail that is named is “Ginnie’s Trail” that runs from the Camp Waki to Stony Brook where it joins the trail that runs along the brook. It



was named for a former president of the East Boston Social Centers, Ginnie St Cyr.

The site also has ten granite benches that memorialize or honor individuals that have had an association with the site.



For Additional Information:

- ◇ Contact the Town Manager's Office at 978 692-5501
- ◇ Visit the Westford East Boston Camps Master Plan Website (www.ebcwestford.net/).