

# Curious Cape Cod: Huge overlook hike in Sandwich — an amazing and fun challenge

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SANDWICH — I was yodeling across the marsh and enjoying the mass exodus of perplexed wildlife when an odd coyote harmony wafted my way on the spring breeze. "Sour yodel man," it seemed to say, "please leave this place and go enjoy the incredible overlook at the Maple Swamp Conservation Area in Sandwich."

Well, that shut me up. Big views are a magic elixir, especially when recommended by in-the-know canines. I whistled for the Curious Prius and we hurtled toward a rendezvous with destiny and a delicious vista. But you never know if it will pan out until you take a gander into the yonder.





**Curious Cape Cod:**The state park that time forgot

Still, I was a bit apprehensive pulling into the parking lot off the Service Road. I would be hoofing it to the roof of Cape Cod, over 200 feet above sea level. This was like going to the Alps, and I had forgotten my Gore-Tex lederhosen!

I probably should have digested the trail map, but luckily there was a big sign that said "Swamp Thing" and "To Overlook," so I headed out, and up. And here's where I must congratulate the folks who designed these trails, because they curve back and forth beautifully through the forest, gaining altitude without a ton of steepness.



And the trail signs made me laugh. I jumped on one called "The End Is Nye," and skipped one called "Spinal Tap," which is an excellent movie, but an uncomfortable procedure. I definitely avoided the trail called "Snake Milk,"

but was surprised to learn that according to [CareerExplorer.com](http://CareerExplorer.com), "A snake milker is someone who extracts, or 'milks', venom from poisonous snakes in order to create antivenom used by hospitals and laboratories."

## How to capture the perfect shot

Having found my next career, I moved up the mountain. Now, almost in the clouds, I was closing in on the overlook. Around the bend, and there it was! And they weren't kidding — the overlook deck is beautiful!

Giddy with delight, or altitude sickness, I clambered onto the deck and looked out over Cape Cod Bay. This is one of the most spectacular long vistas on Cape Cod and the lovely deck makes it better. It even has seats, and you can sit down and rest a bit while you take it all in. Or in my case, lie down and sneak a spring-sun siesta.



On the far blue horizon, I could see a teeny smudgy needle. "That can't be Provincetown," I thought. So I cranked up the zoom lens on my camera and aimed it 26 miles over the bay. It was the [Pilgrim Monument!](#) I yelled "Hey!"

wicked loud and someone fell off MacMillan Pier with a startled splash. That is a joke.

But this Maple Swamp Conservation Area trail system is no joke. It is an amazing and fun challenge over a big chunk of terrain. Looking at the trail map, I could see I had just scratched the surface of the hiking possibilities out here. And if I ever make the jump from my one-speed bike to a real mountain bike, I bet there's a lot of fast fun to grab.

**Curious Cape Cod:** A high-altitude hike in Yarmouth

Thanks to the grab of gravity, the way back down was quicker than the way up. I could hear peepers in the distance and the sun was warm. I had a silly grin on my face, the kind you get when spring arrives on Cape Cod and you're outside and everything seems new and fresh and nothing is impossible. I'll be back here to explore more, and maybe we can all meet on the deck for a vista sing-along!

What do you want to know about Cape Cod? To ask a Curious Cape Cod question, email me at [ewilliams@capecodonline.com](mailto:ewilliams@capecodonline.com). I'll do my best to figure things out!