

The Hockomock Swamp  
By Joseph M DeAndrade  
Leader of the B.T.E.T.

FEB 2 1989



To: The Bridgewater Public Library,  
From: Joseph M DeAndrade  
Leader of the B.T.E.T.

It is the largest swamp in Massachusetts. It's 5,000 acres of land lies within the boundaries of six towns; Bridgewater, West Bridgewater, Raynham, Taunton, Easton and Norton. This swamp was formed at the end of the Glacier Age some 2,500 years ago. When the ice started melting, the water was trapped in a basin called the Leverett Sea. As the years went by, the bed of this sea gradually became a soggy, swampy wetland full of quicksand, rivers and murky reed-infested pools.

The value of this wetland today as a water storage area is said to be very incalculable. This swamp acts as a sponge, soaking up the rainfall, allowing the water to build up in this swamp, and then to slowly flow out through the Town River. The water storage capabilities of this wetland area maintain the ground water table at a high level. This swamp serves as a haven for many species of wildlife. 169 species of birds have been observed in this swamp, including 6 species of owls and 9 species of hawks, 37 species of mammals and 24 species of fish. "Plus some oversized spiders.

The ice that forms through the winter months in some areas of this swamp is insulated and shaded from the warming spring sun. Gradually, during early summer it melts, and the resulting cooler temperatures offer a refuge for sub-arctic plants and animals not indigenous to this area. The drainage of this swamp has been disturbed by the development of Elm St and Rt 24. Plus if any apartment complexes, shopping centers, sanitary landfills, cluster dwellings along with the associated pollutions are allowed to continue, it means disaster for this swamp unless the state can prevent it. If not, it could be lost forever as a refuge for wildlife and as a water storage area that is said to be indispensable to us.

For thousands of years, local Native American Indians have recognized the very extraordinary reputation of this swamp, and their history is filled with its lore. For them this swamp has been especially sacred and sometimes extremely dangerous. Several years ago, an expedition of Massachusetts archaeologists discovered an 8,000 year old Indian burial site on Grassy Island in this swamp. It's reported that when the graves were opened, the red ochre within the tombs bubbled and mysteriously dissolved, and every photo taken of the site failed to develop. The Indians have named this swamp; "The Devil's Swamp. & "The place where spirits dwell. It's been said that many who've ventured deep in this swamp, "have never returned. Many people have claimed to hear and see some very strange things in this swamp. Some have actually claimed to see: A huge black dog with red eyes, a huge black panther, a huge black snake as wide as a stovepipe, a huge prehistoric looking black bird about 7' tall with an 8' to 12' wingspan. Plus many types of UFO. But "Bigfoot" has been seen by most people most often. Some people have insisted that they're sure that satanic activity has, and is still occurring deep in this swamp by evil people. Some have also claimed to hear horrifying screams of pain from deep in this swamp, "that sounded very human to them.

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