



## “Nature in the Neighborhood”

the sea is sparkling bright.  
seagulls are squawking about life.  
crabs are walking around.  
-Kathleen Nohelty

The children headed back to school in September. Off they went to their brick and mortar classrooms where they'll learn reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic ... Writing poetry, however, is best done, not in a building, but outside where imagination and inspiration abound. The poet's classroom is found in nature. That's why the Swampscott Conservancy, teaming up with the North Shore Sprouts and the Girl Scouts, invited Swampscott's Poet Laureate, Shelli Jankowski-Smith, to lead children on an exploration of the Town's coastline through the lens of Haiku poetry. (As you may recall, Haiku is a traditional form of Japanese poetry composed of 3 lines, the first and last lines having 5 syllables and the middle line having 7.)

seashells, grey and white  
big and small, smooth and crusty  
Kiki loves seashells!  
-Kiki Andrinopoulos

The “*Green Poetry for Kids*” event was held on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, a bright and sunny Sunday, and was one of Essex National Heritage's annual Trails & Sails programs. With adults looking on, twelve or so children walked along the shoreline and tidepools at Eiseman's Beach with Shelli, Sierra Munoz of the North Shore Sprouts, and Maeve Hitchcock and Lillian Pulaski of Swampscott Senior Girl Scout Troop 75284. With their help, the children then crafted their own Haiku to reflect what they observed – and felt!

a squirmy hermit  
curls up in its tough shell,  
and then comes out.  
-Juliette Hale

Fast as an eye blink  
I was scared he would pinch me  
Eyes looked everywhere  
-Vivienne Profis

a crab snip snip snip -  
it almost pinched me - Ouchie!  
thankfully not - Phew!  
-Irina Andrinopoulos



“Haiku encourages us to look deeply at nature, paying attention to the smallest of details,” commented Shelli, “It’s a wonderful way to open the natural world to children -- and adults alike!”



This event was one of the many that the Swampscott Conservancy hosted this past year. The Conservancy is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with a mission to help support the Town of Swampscott in the preservation of its conservation land and open spaces through education, research, and active stewardship. For a small volunteer-run organization, we've covered a lot of ground this year: trail maintenance, a Bioblitz at Eiseman's Beach, a Story-Walk at Ewing Woods, building and maintaining a pollinator garden at Town Hall, a meadow restoration at the Middle School ... and this only partially lists the Conservancy's efforts. We've also been busy with our educational programs that have included the following presentations: “Atlantic White Sharks,” “Living with Coyotes,” “Geologic Evolution of Phillips Beach,” “Nibbling on Natives in Your Backyard and Beyond,” “Eelgrass: A Problem or a Solution?”, and an owl education lecture with live birds by Wingmasters.

We appreciate the support we've received from town representatives and residents and look forward to hosting more events. For instance, we'll be hosting “Living with Wild Turkeys” lecture on November 7th. We're also working with representatives from both the Town and City of Salem to create a trailhead behind the Essex Street cemetery that will lead into the expansive network of trails in Salem's Forest River Conservation Area.

We look forward to getting more people involved in our activities – both designing as well as participating in them. We ask our existing members to renew their memberships (renewal membership for 2020 began in September) and, if you're not a member, we hope you'll consider signing up. Information on our organization, what we are doing, and how to support us is found on our website: [swampscottconservancy.org](http://swampscottconservancy.org) You can also contact us by email at [swampscottconservancy@gmail.com](mailto:swampscottconservancy@gmail.com) or by mail at PO Box 637, Swampscott, MA 01907.

In the meantime, we hope you'll be inspired to pick up a pen, a piece of paper, and head outside and write some Haiku of your own!

the waves were loud  
a bed for sand dollar  
the sand was so soft  
-Freddie Nohelty

Thanks for reading this, our first "Nature in the Neighborhood" article which will be a monthly feature on the website as well as in the [Swampscott Reporter](#),

Toni Bandrowicz, President  
The Swampscott Conservancy