



## Letterboxing at Fuller Craft

Fuller Craft Museum is the only museum in New England dedicated to the exhibition and collection of contemporary craft. Fuller Craft houses a growing collection of craft, educational programs, changing exhibitions, and a museum shop featuring handcrafted work by regional artists. One of the Museum's most cherished assets is its natural landscape on the fringe of the Alfred L. Olmstead Associates designed D.W. Field Park. This series of letterboxes takes you down Caroline's Pathway, the nature trail at Fuller Craft Museum, and along the Fuller Craft grounds. Look carefully and you'll discover them as you travel through our lovely campus. Also, this series is fairly easy for first timers and kids. Check our website at for other fun activities and programs for families.

**Museum Hours:** Fuller Craft is open daily, 10am - 5pm. We are also free on Wednesday evenings from 5 to 9pm. For more information on the Museum and its programs, visit [www.fullercraft.org](http://www.fullercraft.org).

### Directions to Fuller Craft Museum

Take Rt. 24 to exit 18B. Turn right onto Rt. 27 North (Pearl Street). At the second light, turn right onto Oak Street. Fuller Craft is located approximately 1 mile on the left past a large church.

### Beginning your search

Park in the lot nearest to the Education Entrance on the lower level of the Museum. In the lower parking lot to the left of the building you will see a path into the woods labeled as Caroline's Pathway. The path is approximately ¼ mile long and has some uneven, rocky terrain. Three letterboxes are located on or near the path. Be careful of poison ivy which is prevalent in the woods off the path. Begin your journey here.

### Nature trail guide

A guide to the flora of Caroline's Pathway is available inside the Education Entrance. This guide can be helpful in your search, but the descriptions listed below should aide you well enough to find that which you seek. If you borrow a nature trail guide, please be sure to return it.

### Basic rules of letterboxing

- Look carefully before sticking your hands into a hole. Animals and insects might be living there.
- Dress appropriately with proper footwear and long pants/shirts during tick season.
- Go with a friend if you are in a remote place like the woods. Children should always be accompanied by an adult.
- Always tightly close and re-hide the boxes thoroughly so they are not accidentally discovered by animals, people or ruined by the weather.

# Fuller Craft Letterboxes

## box #1 The Sneaky Snake

There are practically no venomous (poisonous) snakes in Massachusetts, so rest assured that our "sneaky snake" will not harm you. There are several varieties of snakes that live around ponds and wetlands including the garter snake, eastern ribbon snake and water snake. Our snake has colors like no other and likes to hide.

Enter Caroline's Pathway, passing a large group of sweet pepper bushes on your right. Walk to the first set of stone benches. Look for a less traveled path behind the bench on the left and follow it in to the woods. Find the rock with the mysterious carvings-is there a snake here? Ponder the meaning of all as you turn around to face the path. Walk four paces to a thin oak tree on your left (1 pace = 1 full step with both feet). The Sneaky Snake is hiding somewhere here.

## box #4 The Playful Pup

You can often see dogs of all sizes on Fuller Craft's property as people bring their pets over for some exercise and playtime. Fuller Craft welcomes neighborhood dogs and their owners to its grounds as long as everyone makes sure to keep the campus clean for other visitors to enjoy.

The Playful Pup loves to romp in the grassy areas of Fuller Craft. As you leave Caroline's Path, you will reenter the lower parking lot. Look for the set of stairs. Climb the stairs and at the top turn right. Walk to the start of a row of large boulders. Count to the sixth boulder and look in this area for the Playful Pup.

## box #2 The Sassy Tree

There is a wide variety of flora on Caroline's Pathway. Among the commonly found trees are the Sassafras and the Red Maple.

The sassafras tree is North America's only indigenous spice, and is often used in Creole and Cajun cooking. It can grow as tall as 40 feet, but many in our forest are 4-5 feet. It is easily distinguished by its leaves that grow in three different shapes: the leaf, the "ghost" and the "mitten". It can have a lemony odor and its root oil is used as a flavoring to make a root beer-like tonic. The sassafras has been used in the past for medicinal purposes, but today is considered to be carcinogenic (cancer-causing).

The red maple is one of the first trees to flower in the spring and the first to color in the fall. Leaves in the spring are green on top and gray underneath; in the fall they turn yellow, then red. The tree's bark is smooth and gray. Maple trees give excellent shade and produce bright red flowers in the spring. The wood of this tree is often used for furniture, musical instruments, cutting boards and tool handles as well as fuel.

## box #5 The Lonely Heron

Several kinds of water fowl make Porters Pond in D.W. Field Park their home, including mallard ducks, swans, blue heron and Canadian geese. If you visit Fuller Craft in the late spring, you will be treated to a parade of goslings, ducklings and baby swans.

A single blue heron has resided on Porters Pond for a number of years. Reportedly, his mate was killed several years ago, and he has remained. You can often see him fishing near the Museum on summer mornings, standing as still as a statue until a fish swims a little too close by.

From the Playful Pup, turn back the way you came and continue to follow the drive around the side of the Museum. You will come to a circular drive and the entry bridge to Fuller Craft's main entrance. Facing the bridge, look to your right for a set of stone stairs. Follow them to seek "sanctuary." When you have found "sanctuary", walk behind it and look to your right for two rocks set closely together. Walk between them to an even large rock formation. You will find the Blue Heron waiting patiently here.

From the Sneaky Snake, continue walking down the path. Look for the painted tree on the right side of the trail. Just past this tree will be another large rock formation on a trail to the right. Walk up to the rock and look up. You should be looking at the three different leaf formations of the sassafras tree (if it is winter, use your imagination). Look at the base of this tree for your treasure.

## box #3 Nutty the Squirrel

Our forest is full of a variety of oak trees including the red oak. The wood of the red oak is often used in construction, and is a common nesting tree for many birds and tree mammals such as squirrels. Its acorns are an important food source in the winter when other trees' acorns have already germinated and become unavailable to animals as food.

From the Sassy Tree, return to the path. Walk approximately 26 paces to a five foot high boulder that juts out into the trail. Across the trail from the boulder will be a large oak tree. Nutty the Squirrel loves to hang out near this tree.

## box #6 Snappy the Turtle

On warm days in the spring and summer, you can watch a variety of turtles sunning themselves on the rocks in Porter's Pond. Common among them is the snapping turtle.

We have seen snapping turtles in this pond nearly as big as a car tire. The females come up on land in June to lay their eggs in sandy areas. Many of the eggs are immediately eaten by raccoons and foxes, but sometimes in the summer, you can have the reward of observing the miniature babies (about the size of the quarter) making their long walk back to the water.

*NOTE: Snapping turtles are dangerous: their necks can reach nearly to the back of their shells and their jaws are strong enough to bite off fingers and toes. Never try to pet, touch or move a snapping turtle with your hands. However, they are an important part of Porter Pond's ecosystem and pose no threat to humans if not disturbed or threatened.*

From The Lonely Heron, return to the entrance bridge to the Museum. Look for a gravel path on the left of the bridge. Follow it down and then walk eight paces under the bridge to a large scarred tree. Snappy the Turtle is waiting here for you.