

Headwaters Quest

Start: The kiosk at the Headwaters park trailhead.

Over 100 years ago in this peaceful land
Several families make their homes, with a helping hand.
Far to the left, homes and barns they did make
And directly in front, held by a dam, was a local lake.

Cross Bridge #1 and step right or left of the #2 maple tree
Follow to the end, where meets the paths of three
Turn right and stroll until the first left
Stop on the bridge over the creek; keep watch for red effs!

Once a lake used for swimming and boating
Winter ice was harvested for refrigeration; in the spring, ice was floating.
The dam created to hold the water back
Was blown apart long ago by a flood of water the day the sky went black

At the end of the bridge bear a quick right
Two bridges more, find a hemlock that lost its head in a fight.
Wind, rain, all weather has incredible power —
It is wise to keep your eye to the sky, no matter the hour.

The Werner family, farmers of both animals and land,
Used this area for pasture; how strong the trees stand!
Herding cows for milk and cheese, growing orchards, too.
Both plant and animal wandered and grew throughout these trails marked in blue.

Along this path continue to follow
the trail through the tree-lined hollow.
To the right the creek always flows,
Despite high heat or subzero temps and snow.

The outdoor classroom is ahead.
A great place for listening to rain, rustling leaves, and whatever is being said.
Across the trail from the room and a few feet away, nestled at the base of the hemlocks,
Carefully look for the trillium in spring, tucked in among the rocks.

Make your way along and take the first trail heading east
As you walk, take note of the difference in size of trees

Use this rhyming poem full of clues to find your way through the Mill Creek Flood Quest! The verses alternate between directional clues and information about the Park and its history. At the end, look for the Quest box and sign the log book 😊

Their age is a clue to the history of the land.
Younger, smaller trees show where the forest began to expand.

Continue forth across the boardwalk
Back onto the trail covered in various sizes of rock.
The different sizes keep the trail stable
They fit snugly together, keeping the trail above the water table.

On your left, pass the Grandfather trees
How many years have they lived through a freeze/thaw/freeze?
The younger, newer trees are on the right
Notice how they let more light?

You will see more light straight ahead as the forest breaks
Into the meadow — a great habitat for birds, insects and snakes
As we near the wetland, the animals and plants will change
The habitat is different — a new range

Wetlands work hard to filter pollutants from water
It teems with life when the weather turns hotter
Cattails love to have wet "feet"
Feathery, tall phragmites, though invasive, thrive on salty water that runs off of the concrete.

The tragic flood of 1915 all began here.
Nearly 9 inches of rain fell within 3 hours, causing intense fear
Trees and debris created a dam within the city of Erie; there was nowhere to hide
The dam finally blew apart, creating a wall of water about 40 feet tall and 200 feet wide.

Turn left at the crossroads
Watching for spittlebugs and American toads
Careful, left again down the sloped path and across the creek
Spy the ancient black willow; to find the box, around the tree take a peek.

Much was learned from the flood that night.
The community pulled together to set things right
Now a beautiful public park is here to stay
For all to hike, enjoy, meditate and play.

*For more information about the Mill Creek Flood of 1915 or how to help keep our natural water clean, please visit our staff inside the Conservation District office.