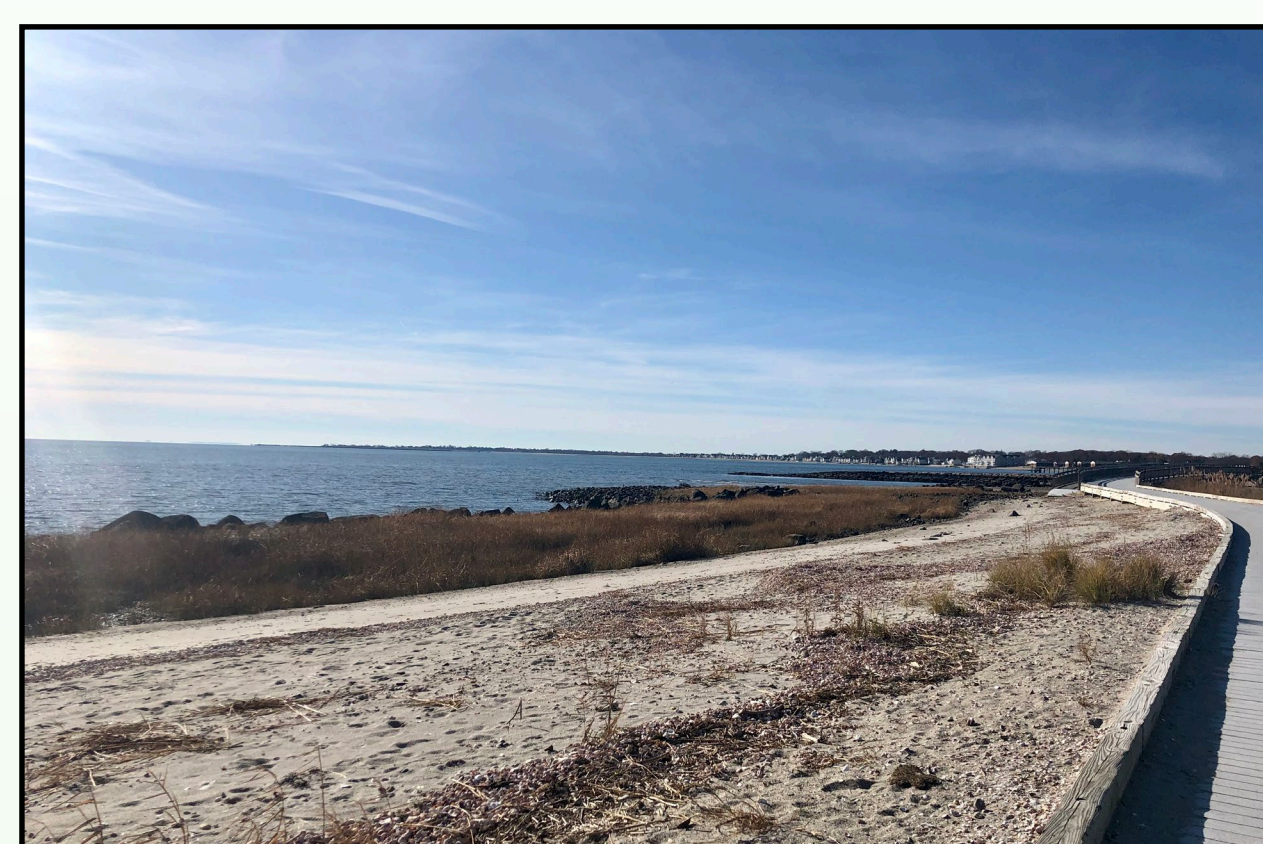




Google Maps Meets Nature: Mapping the Silver Sands/Walnut Beach Boardwalk in Milford, CT

Introduction

- The Silver Sands/Walnut Beach Boardwalk is located in Milford, CT and extends from the city-owned Walnut Beach area through the neighboring Silver Sands State Park, just over three quarters of a mile long.
- The area is heavily used by tourists and beach-goers year round; consequently the landscape and environmental wellbeing of the area is often overlooked.



Left: View down the Silver Sands shoreline standing on the boardwalk



Right: View looking down the boardwalk path in Walnut Beach

Project Goals

Create an interactive Google Map trail that visitors can use in an effort to:

- Bring awareness to this important and unique piece of property by allowing the general public to engage with the environment around them.
- Showcase the diverse plant and animal life in the area to demonstrate how valuable environmental sanctuaries, such as a state park, can be.

Project Methods

The following apps were used to create an interactive and accurate map:

- Track Kit: A GPS enabled app that allows users to record their walking trail and take note of interesting waypoints
- Google Maps: Popular GPS mapping software accessible on most mobile phones

Data from Track Kit was imported in to Google Maps for a user friendly experience accessible through the Google Maps app on any smartphone.



TrackKit mobile app logo

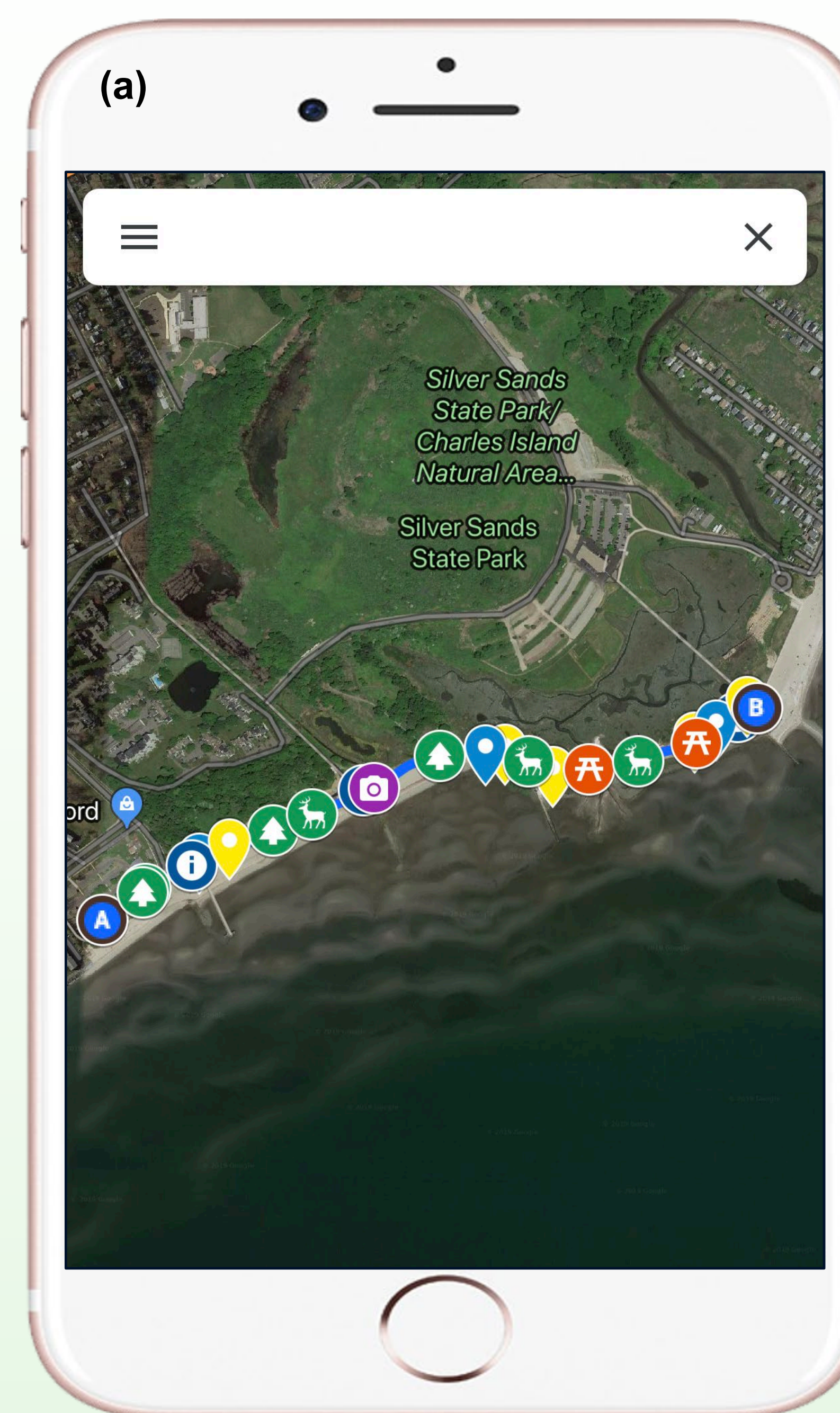


Boardwalk in Silver Sands State Park Area



Google Maps mobile app logo

Map Details



- The completed boardwalk trail is a user-friendly, interactive map that visitors can physically follow as they walk through the area.
- The map marks the location of points of interest including 4 plant species, 3 common wildlife species, GPS Enabled Wildlife Camera Photos, 6 informational highlights, 4 posted placards marked along the trail and multiple seating areas for visitor convenience.

The completed map trail can be found through this link:

<https://tinyurl.com/milfordctboardwalk>

Or by scanning this QR code:



- (a) A view of what the map looks like on the mobile Google Maps App
(b) The description menu accompanying the map on the mobile Google Maps App

Legend/Key

- Seating Area
- Informational Highlight
- Information Sign/ Posted Placard
- Start/End Point
- Wildlife Camera Photos
- Identified Animal Species
- Identified Plant Species

Map Details: Wildlife Camera Photos



A purple camera icon marks the location of a wildlife camera on the boardwalk.

A wildlife camera is a specialized camera that captures a series of burst photos when a motion sensor is triggered by a passing animal.

A trail camera was set up along the boardwalk for three weeks in September/October 2019.

The images it captured are embedded in the Google Map route for visitors to see.

- Top:** Wildlife camera photos of a White Tailed Deer next to the boardwalk in Walnut Beach
Middle: Ring-Billed Gull
Bottom: Wildlife camera photo of a flock of Ring-Billed Gulls on the shoreline of Walnut Beach

Conclusion

This waterfront area is valuable to the nature around it, but is also vulnerable to us humans who use it. This project aims to educate visitors and help protect the Silver Sands State Park and the Walnut Beach area for years to come.



We now open up this educational tool to the public in the hopes to shed more light on the advantages of having such a beautiful state park.

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