

Ashland Town Forest & Cowassock Woods

Ashland Town Forest and Cowassock Woods is approximately 660 acres of forested open space located in Ashland and Framingham. The area has a natural wealth of granite outcroppings, upland forest and lowland swamps, vernal pools, variety of forest types and several open pit quarries.

Location and Access - The Ashland Town Forest and Cowassock Woods are located in the northeastern Ashland and southwestern Framingham. There is a 10-car parking lot on Winter Street by Harrington Drive and four small parking areas on Winter Street, Oak Street, Oregon Road and Salem End Road.

Trails - There are over 6 miles of trails within the Town Forest and Cowassock Woods. Most trails are level or of moderate grade. The trails are rocky and sturdy footwear is recommended. In the spring be prepared for wet trails. You will find 2 types of trail markers. The Bay Circuit portion of the trail system is marked by round white BCT markers on trees. Colored diamond markers identify the rest of the trail system. There are numbered rectangular location markers at intersections and other points along the trails that correspond to numbers on the trail map for orientation and a guide to your location if injured.

History - The Ashland Town Forest was established in 1942, a gift of 508 acres from Henry Warren. It was farmland in colonial days, and as farming moved west, trees replaced pastureland. Prior to its purchase it was a hunt and riding club and consisted primarily of young hardwood, 20 to 25 years old. During the next 8 years, more than 40,000 trees were planted by the Boy Scouts.

Cowassock Woods was created when Sudbury Valley Trustees acquired 7.54 acres of land off Salem End Road in November 1984. In 1992, the abutting 43.5 acres were purchased (16.6 in Framingham and 26.9 in Ashland).



"Cowassock" means "the place of pines", and the area was the spring and summer campground of the Magunkook Indians. Brooks, forests, and fields met in ideal combination for fishing, hunting, and nut gathering, and planting. There is evidence of prehistoric habitation as well.

The Colonial history of the area is the stuff of legend. Following the executions of her sisters Rebecca and Mary for witchcraft, and having also been convicted, Sarah Towne Cloyes and her husband Peter fled Salem and sought refuge in the now-collapsed caves in this forest. After receiving a gift of 800 acres from Thomas Danforth (one of the original judges in the witch trials) they were joined by Towne family members and established the settlement of Salem End in 1693. (Salem End Road follows the original 17th century Native American trail.)

Located in the southwest portion of the Town Forest, off of Oak Street, are several quarries that provided granite blocks for Ashland building projects.

Habitat - Flora include many ferns, jack-in-the-pulpit, Canada lily, blue flag iris, sweet pepperbush, spicebush, swamp azalea, black gum, highbush blueberry, virgin's bower, marsh marigold, lady's slipper, starflower, Indian cucumber root, Indian pipes, birds foot violets, shinleaf, pipsissewa, partridge berry, nodding trillium, and basswood. Two stars on the list are large whorled pogonia and

American black currant, both considered relatively rare in Massachusetts. Animal life include deer, red fox, grey fox, coyote, fisher and a wide variety of birds including pileated woodpecker, woodcock, wood thrush, turkeys, red-tailed hawk, turkey-vulture, and ruffed grouse. An inhabitant of special interest is the rare, blue-spotted salamander.

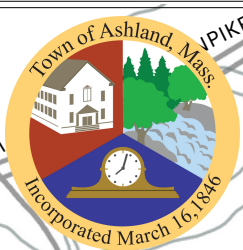
The Ashland Town Forest is managed by the Ashland Town Forest Committee (ATFC). The Cowassock Woods is owned and managed by the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT).

Rules and Regulations

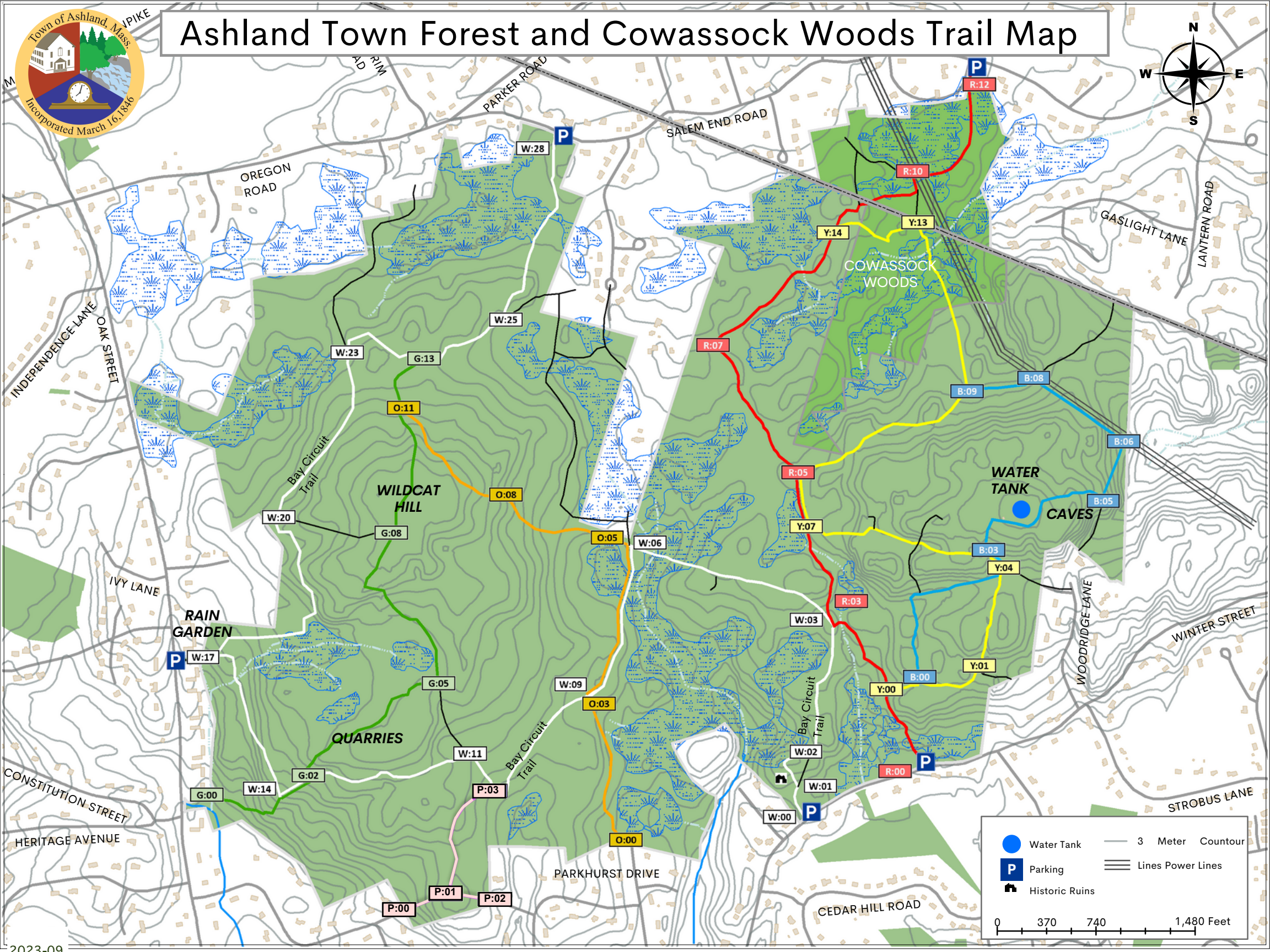


To Contact the Forest Committee: email.
TownForest@AshlandMass.com

For more information go to:
<http://www.ashlandmass.com/TownForest>
<http://www.svtweb.org>



Ashland Town Forest and Cowassock Woods Trail Map



	Water Tank		3 Meter Contour
	Parking		Lines Power Lines
	Historic Ruins		

0 370 740 1,480 Feet