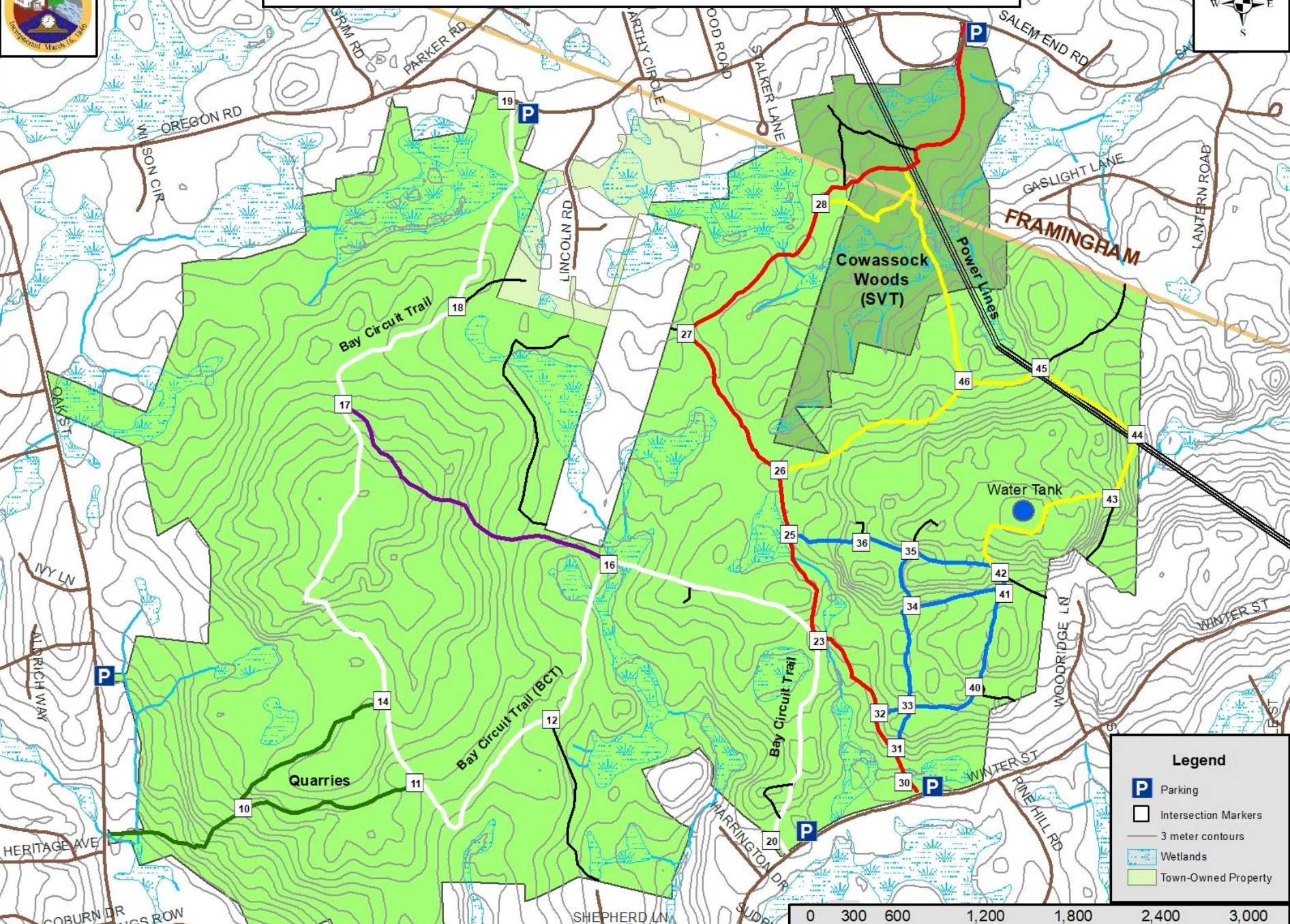




# ASHLAND TOWN FOREST & COWASSOCK WOODS TRAIL MAP



**Legend**

- Parking
- Intersection Markers
- 3 meter contours
- Wetlands
- Town-Owned Property



2020



## **Ashland Town Forest & Cowassock**

### **Woods**

Ashland Town Forest and Cowassock Woods is a 660-acre parcel of open space located in Ashland and Framingham. The Ashland Town Forest / Cowassock Woods area has a natural wealth of granite outcroppings, upland and lowland swamp, vernal pools, mixed hardwood forest and several open pit quarries.

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

**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 three 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. 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 white rectangles painted on trees. Colored diamond markers identify the rest of the trail system. There are white numbered location markers at each intersection in the Town Forest to orient hikers to corresponding numbers on the trail map.

**History** - The Ashland Town Forest was established in 1942 by the acquisition of 508 acres of land with 16 acres transferred to the town at no cost. It was previously a hunt club associated with the riding clubs of the Salem End Road section of Framingham. When purchased, the forest was



primarily hardwood, 20 to 25 years old. In 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 strong evidence of prehistoric habitation as well.

The Colonial history of the area is the stuff of legend. The families of the Towne Children - Rebecca Nurse, Sara Clayes, Mary Esty, and Edmund Towne- fled the Salem witch hunt and established the Salem End settlement of Framingham in 1693. (Salem End Road follows the original 17th century Native American trail.) Legend has it that the now-collapsed caves in the town forest, just south of the water tower, were the first refuge for the Towne families.

Located in the southwest portion of the Town Forest 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, coyote, and a wide variety of birds including pileated wood-pecker, woodcock, wood thrush, turkeys, red-tailed hawk, turkey-vulture, and ruffed grouse. An inhabitant of special interest is the rare, blue-spotted salamander.

### **Rules and Regulations**



For more information go to:

<http://www.ashlandmass.com/308/Town-Forest-Committee>

<http://www.svtweb.org/>