



Request for Approval of Dead Tree
Removal in the Reading Town Forest
Reading Conservation Commission September 28, 2022

Reading Town Forest Committee

Red pine trees in the Town Forest are dying due to climate change and invasive plants are widespread

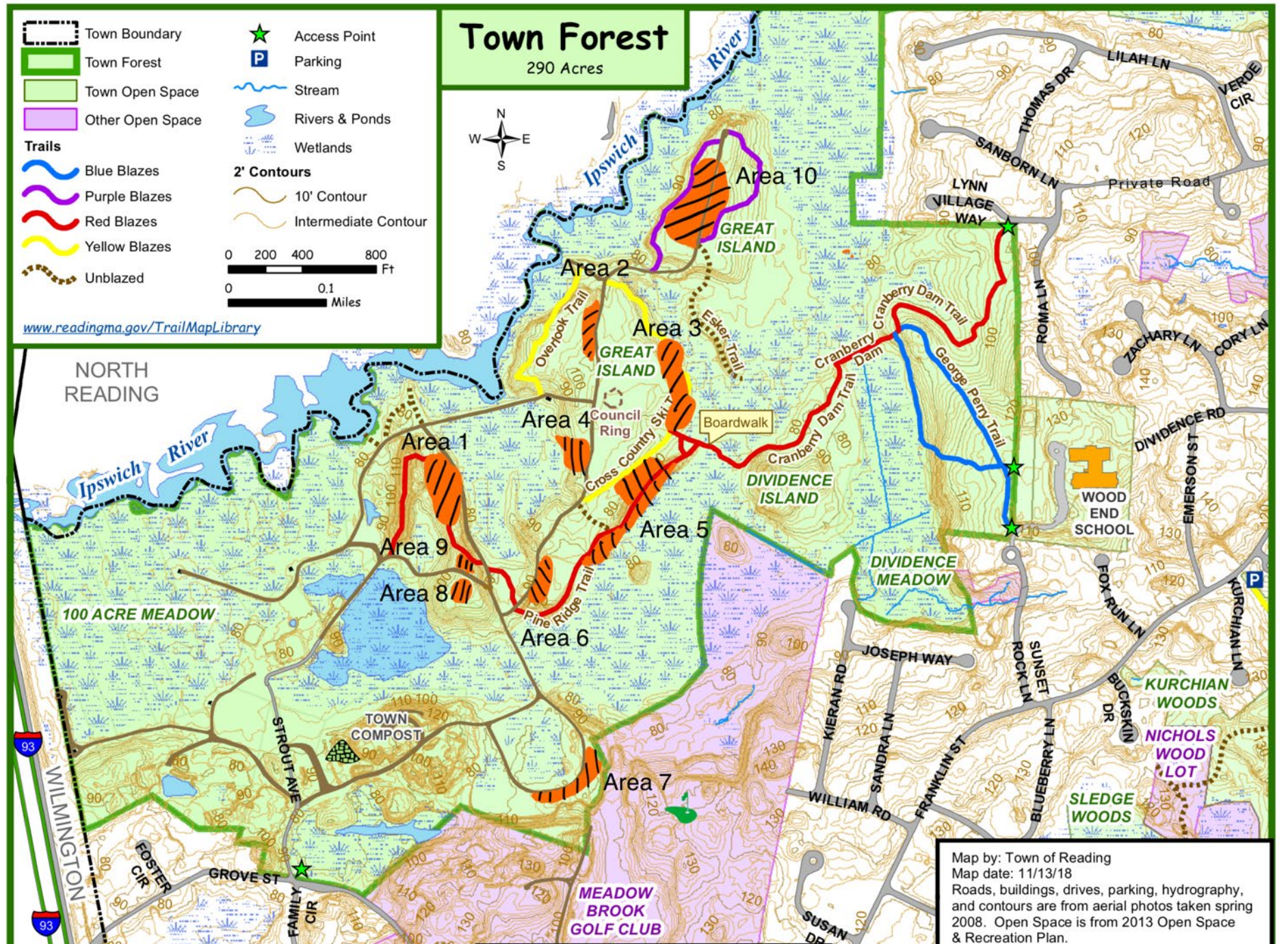


The Problem - Red Pine Trees:

- ▶ Red pine trees were planted starting in the 1930s as a resource to be periodically harvested
- ▶ Red pines are suited for more northern latitudes
- ▶ Climate change has stressed the red pines
- ▶ This stress makes the red pines vulnerable to fungus and insects such as pine scale
- ▶ Need to remove the dead trees before they fall and potentially injure users of the Town Forest or catch on fire



Red Pine Areas



The Problem - Invasive Plants:

- ▶ Invasive plants such as buckthorn, Japanese knotweed, tree of heaven and black swallow-wort have become firmly established in the Town Forest
- ▶ The adjacent Compost Area is a reservoir of invasives that will spread into the Town Forest
- ▶ If not controlled now, native plants will be crowded out and the Town Forest will be a tangle of invasive plants



Buckthorn



Tree of Heaven



Black Swallow-wort



Japanese Knotweed

Work to Date:

- ▶ Phase 1 removed dead trees on 4.5 acres in January 2020 at a cost of \$28,400
- ▶ Phase 2 removed 470 dead trees from another 4.5 acres at a cost of \$22,900
- ▶ Projects were bid and managed by Reading DPW
- ▶ Volunteers have been pulling invasive plants and a firm was hired in June of 2022 to remove Buckthorn



Next Phases

- ▶ Phase 3 will continue the removal of the dead red pines in January 2023 on 4.8 acres of the Town Forest
- ▶ Phase 4 should follow in January 2024
- ▶ The Phase 3 Forest Cutting Plan was prepared by Certified Forester Phil Benjamin for approval by the State Forester and Reading Conservation Commission. The plan was discussed with both during a site visit on August 31, 2022
- ▶ Need professional assistance with invasive plant control as volunteers are not equipped for the magnitude of the invasion
- ▶ ARPA funds were approved by the Select Board for Phase 3 tree removal and invasive plant control
- ▶ The cost of Phase 3 will determine the amount of funds available for invasive plants

Request for Determination of Applicability

- ▶ The COVID pandemic substantially increased the use of the Town Forest as residents sought a refuge in nature
- ▶ Removal of the dead red pine trees is important to prevent branches and trees from falling on people
- ▶ Reading Fire Department supports the removal of the dead trees as they are a fire hazard
- ▶ Invasive plant control will be an ongoing effort
- ▶ Replanting Areas 3 and 7 with native plants will be done
- ▶ RTFC and RDPW request a Negative Determination of Applicability and approval of the Phase 3 Forest Cutting Plan



Chief Gregory J. Burns
Reading Fire Department
757 Main Street
Reading MA 01867

Tel: 781.944.3132
Fax: 781.942.9114
www.readingma.gov

HEADQUARTERS
READING FIRE DEPARTMENT
READING, MASSACHUSETTS 01867

William Sullivan
Reading Town Forest Committee
Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA. 01667

Sir,

On July 14, 2021, I met with Mike Hannaford at the Town Forest and viewed sites that contained deceased red pines. These large areas contained trees that had already fallen or were in decay posing a significant fire hazard. The added fuel caused by these decaying and downed trees will accelerate a fire and potentially overwhelm our resources. Additionally, many of these areas encroached existing trails, increasing the safety risk to anyone using the trails.

Mike explained that there is a plan to do remedial removal of these red pines in various areas within the Town Forest starting during the upcoming winter months. For the reasons stated above, the Fire Department would be fully in favor of this work, to not only reduce the fire hazard but the potential safety hazard to the many residents that enjoy the Town Forest.

Thank you,

Paul D. Jackson
Assistant Fire Chief
Reading Fire Department
757 Main Street
Reading, MA 01867

Cc: Jane Kinsella, Public Works Director
Mike Hannaford, Parks, Forestry, Cemetery Supervisor
William Sullivan, Chair, Town Forest Committee
Chief Gregory J. Burns

"We're Your Friends for Life"

Thank you for your consideration

▶ Reading Town Forest Committee

- ▶ Bill Sullivan, Chair
- ▶ Susan Bowe
- ▶ Nancy Docktor
- ▶ Tom Gardner
- ▶ Kurt Habel
- ▶ Bill Hughes
- ▶ Jeff Lamson
- ▶ Tim Kirwan