



Benjamin Forestry Services, Inc.

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MA Licensed Forester #15



March 8, 2021

William Sullivan
Reading Town Forest Committee
Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867

Dear Bill,

I would like to follow up our February 10 site walk with thoughts on the next steps to consider as far as the red pines on the Reading Town Forest are concerned. We looked at a number of sites that day with varying degrees of red pine decline or outright mortality. Of the sites identified on the map that Jeff Lamson has created, Area 1 was one of two that makes sense to consider for management attention sooner than later. This area is identified as Stand 42 in the Forest Management Plan we prepared in 2010 and totals close to 3.6 acres. From what we could see from the trail that runs along the east margin of the area, virtually all of the red pines have died. The stand does extend further westward over the ridge, where we did not look that day, but I suspect the condition of the red pines would be pretty much the same.

The second area that warrants attention sooner than later is labelled Area 2 on Jeff's map, Stand 7 on the Forest Management Plan, and totals 1.95 acres. Although some of the red pines appear to be surviving at this point in time, it will only be a matter of time before they too succumb.

We did look at a number of additional red pine sites during our site walk, but the above two are the areas that I believe make the most sense to address first. The two stands total close to 5.55 acres, which is more than an acre more than the pilot project, and would cost substantially more than the pilot project. It is my opinion we should consider securing financial help from the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Community Forest Stewardship Implementation Grant. If funding is secured, DCR will provide approximately 75% of the total cost. This should prove very helpful with the cost of removal of the dead red pines. At the same time, funding might also be available for concurrent improvement work. We have discussed the possibility of creating pollinator habitat in portions of Area 1. DCR's funding could help with acquisition of plant material designed to attract and retain pollinators.

Although we did not take a close look at Area 2, I would expect conditions similar to those in the pilot project area where young white pines and mixed hardwoods have become established with the increase of sunlight to the forest floor. With careful removals, quite a bit of the advanced regeneration will be left in place to continue developing into the next generation of desired trees. If occasional open areas result from the removal work, then the openings could be considered for reforestation. There are a number of tree species that have been identified to do well in our area as the climate continues to change. It would be a very interesting experiment to plant some of these species with the goal of monitoring their progress over time. Once again, this could be an ideal project that DCR would be willing to fund.

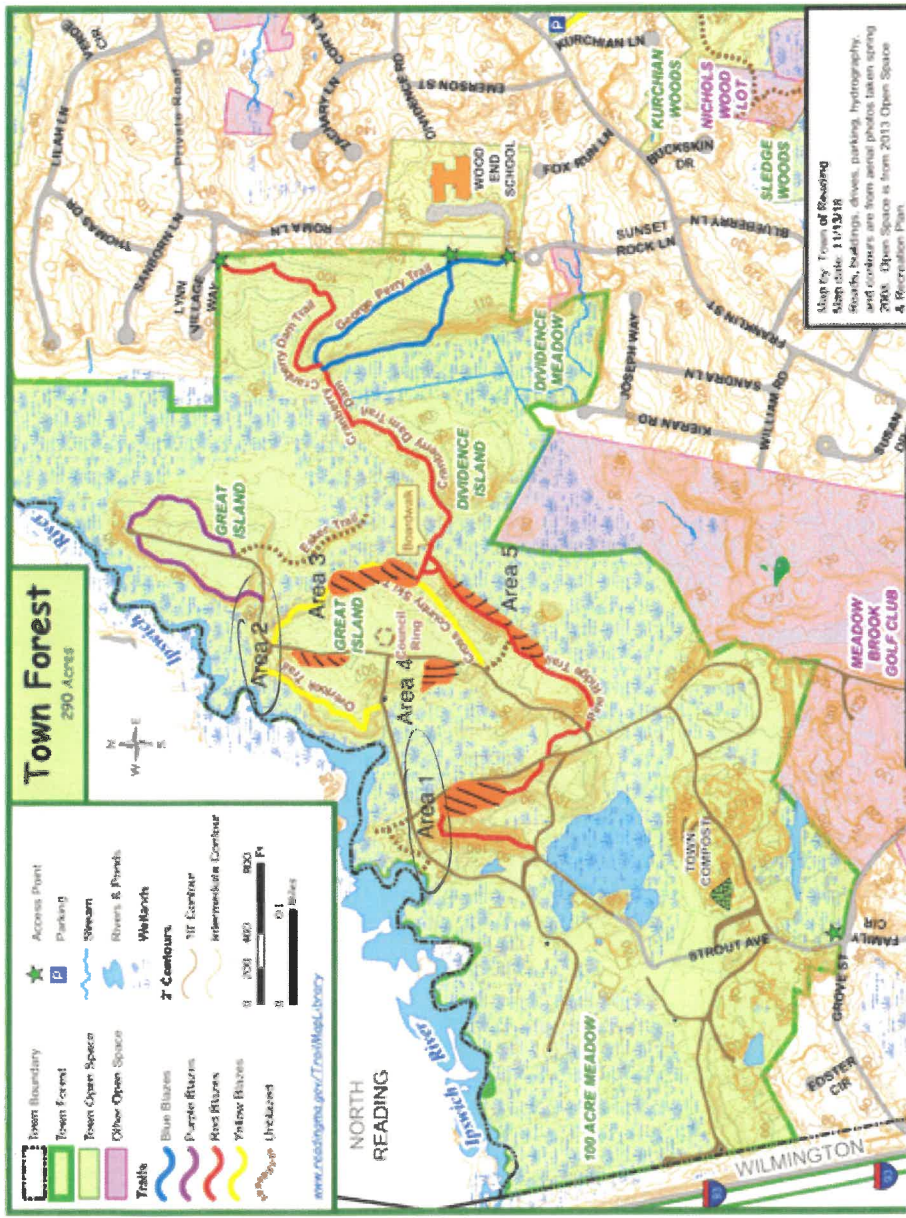
For a number of reasons, the other areas of red pine mortality that we looked at on the 10th do not warrant the same sense of immediate management attention. They are more difficult to access and the damage to the young developing trees would outweigh the value of removing the dead red pines. In areas like these, it may be more cost effective and less damaging to simply drop those dead red pines close to the trails that wind through the areas. This would minimize potential hazard trees along the trails and help speed up the breakdown and decay of the dead red pines once they were on the ground.

If you or any members of the committee have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me. I understand this is the next step in addressing the management needs of the Reading Town Forest and there will be plenty of questions and discussions as you move ahead. We will look forward to working with you and the committee in planning for the next phase of the thoughtful care and management of such a special property.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philip B. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "P".

Philip B. Benjamin
Certified Forester



Jeff Lamson, BSN, RN, CEN | Director of Nursing

Forest Stand Map

Reading Town Forest
Reading, Massachusetts

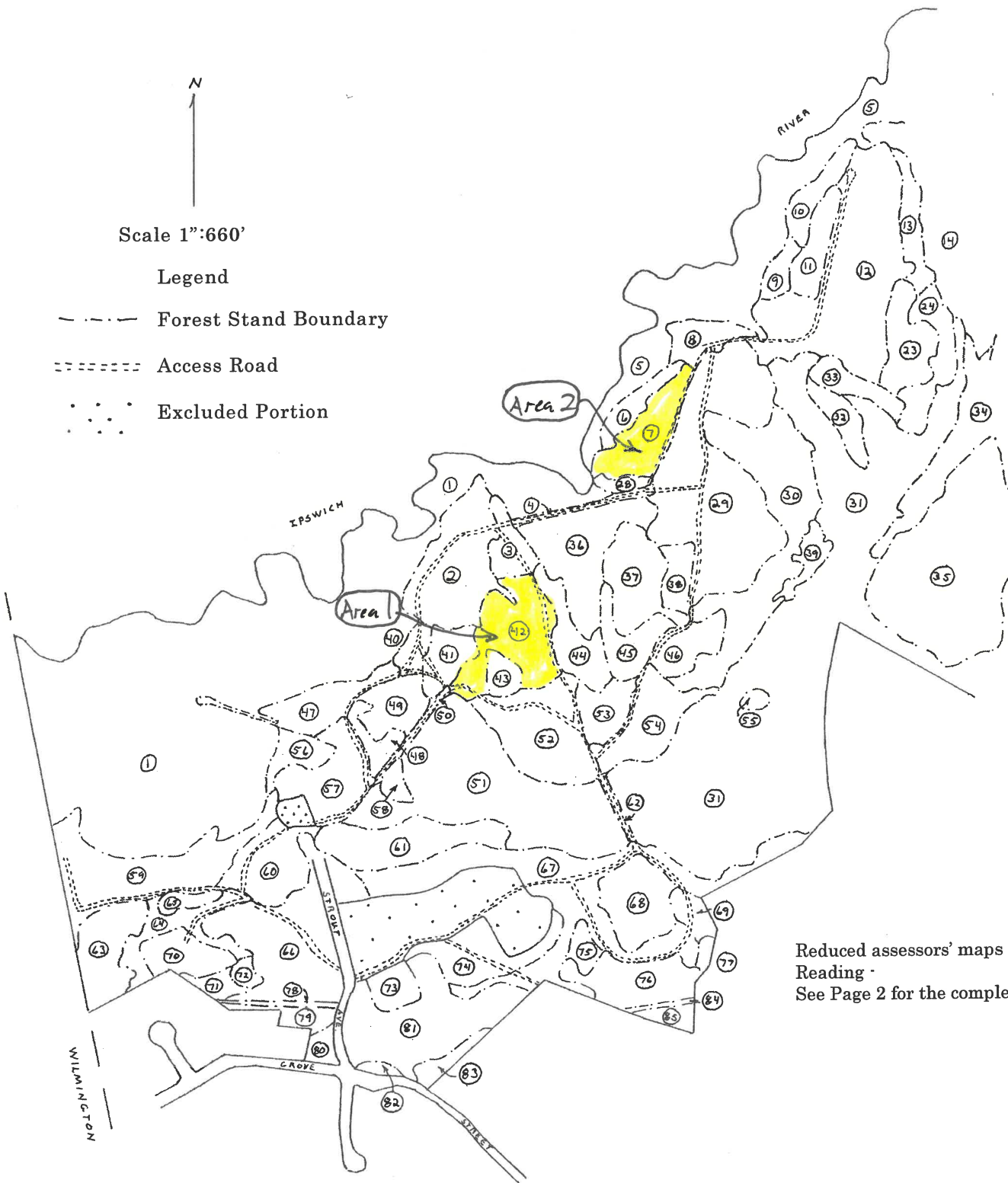
Owner: Town of Reading
16 Lowell Street
Reading, MA 01867



Scale 1"=660'

Legend

- - - - - Forest Stand Boundary
- - - - - Access Road
- · · · · Excluded Portion



Reduced assessors' maps
Reading
See Page 2 for the complete listing

Prepared By
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Benjamin Forestry Services, Inc.
So. Easton, Massachusetts 02375
May 12, 2010