

Welcome

We hope you'll enjoy your visit to the Plainfield Town Forest and spread the word about this wonderful town resource. According to the management plan adopted by the select-board, these are the allowed and prohibited uses:

Permitted Uses

Walking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and hunting

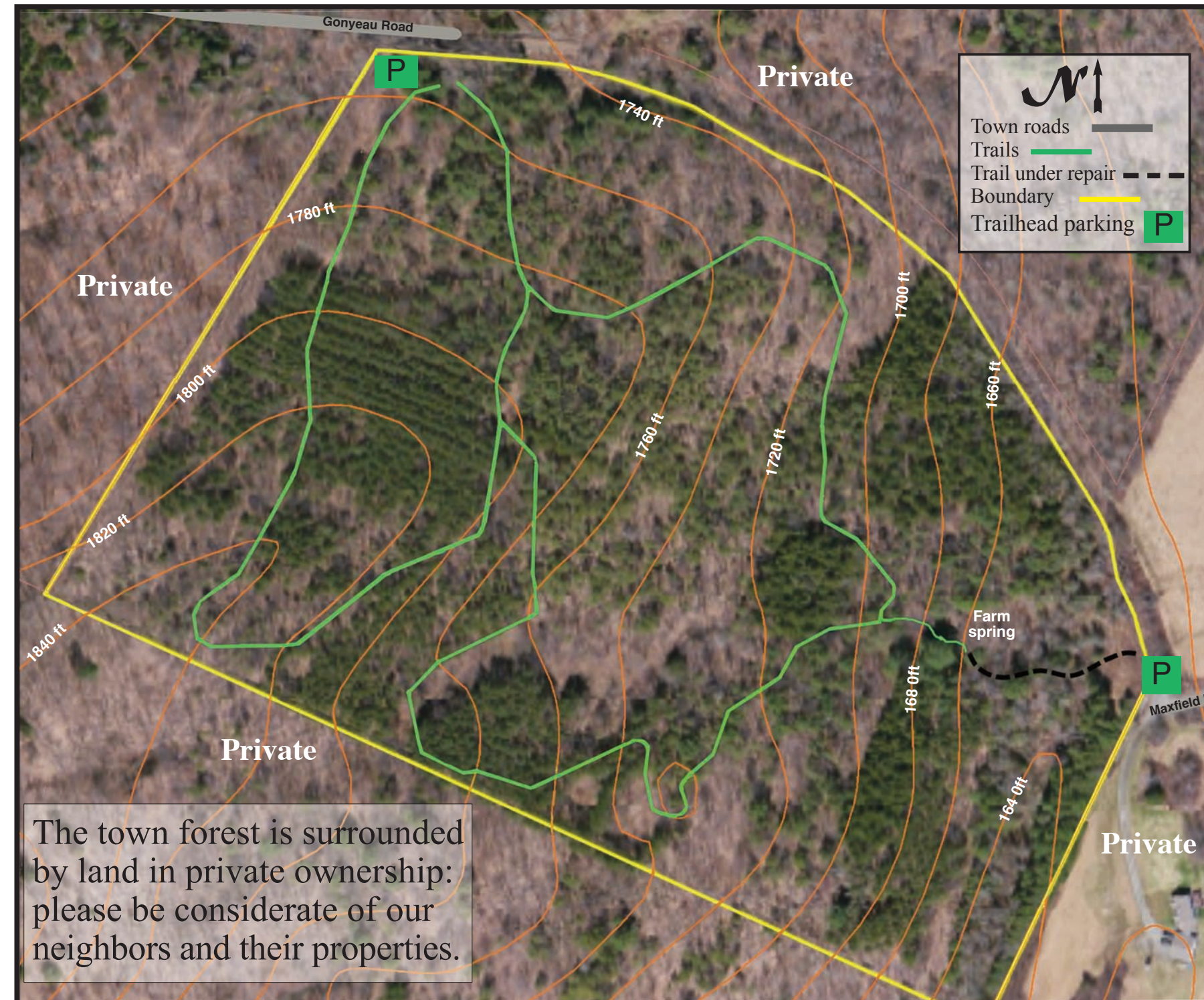
Not allowed

Motorized vehicles, including snowmobiles
Also, because of steep slopes, wet soils and potential erosion, bicycles and horses are not permitted.

For the safety of all visitors and in order to protect wildlife and vegetation, please follow these guidelines:

- Park in designated areas only; do not block roadway.
- No fires or fireworks.
- The town forest and parking area are open between a half hour before sunrise to a half hour after sunset; no overnight parking or camping allowed.
- Carry out all trash.
- Avoid walking on wet trails during rainy periods or spring mud season.
- Respect neighboring properties.

Thank you!



Background of the Town Forest

If you're wondering why you never noticed a town forest in this location before, there's a good reason: until 2006, this 28 acres belonged to Allen Soule, a Calais resident who acquired it during the 60s when it was still mostly old pasture, formerly used for sheep grazing (*see photo*).

Norway spruce and Scotch pine had already been planted as a means of returning the land to productive use and he then planted thousands of Red Pines at the upper elevations of the property, following the common advice of county foresters at that time.

The original town forest: In 1950, the same Cutler family who donated the library property to the Town of Plainfield also gifted 22 acres of land as a town forest. However, because the gifted land was in Calais, most townspeople were unaware of its existence or location, and except for some timber harvesting, the Town made no use of it.

Fortuitously, Allen Soule lived adjacent to our former town forest in Calais and offered to exchange it for his woodland on Gonyeau Road in Plainfield. Discussion with town officials ensued; finally at the 2006 Town Meeting, voters agreed to the swap.

There are multiple goals for the town forest: the primary objective is to provide the residents of Plainfield with a trail network for non-motorized recreational uses including hiking, wildlife observation, skiing/snowshoeing, and hunting. The town forest will also be used to demonstrate responsible forest management practices.

Motorized vehicles and bicycles are not allowed be-

cause of the potential for erosion on the steep slopes and wet soils; also horses are not allowed because of erosion issues and the potential for spreading invasive species through weed seeds in their feed.

The goal in the coming decades is to remove most of the planted softwood trees while encouraging the forest to revert to its natural community type, a hemlock-northern hardwood forest. This will be done through active forest management, following the silviculture plan drawn up by our forester (*see below*).

The first tree harvest and thinning was done in 2015; already you can see the herbaceous growth and small saplings springing up in the space left behind. The changes in the forest cover will be dramatic over the next several years, as it moves through early successional species like aspen, birch and cherry, to the maple, ash and beech hardwood saplings.

Sources:

Plainfield Town Forest Management Plan

Approved by selectboard on Sept. 26, 2011, the plan describes the goals and proposed uses of the town forest and how future management activities occur.

Forest Management Plan for Land Belonging to the Plainfield Town Forest

Prepared by Redstart Forestry, December 2013

The silviculture plan maps the groupings of tree species that make up the town forest and proscribes how the different tree stands should be managed to achieve long-term forestry goals.

These documents are available for viewing at the town offices or on the town website. Please contact the Plainfield Conservation Commission for further information.

Photos courtesy of Allen Soule

