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Quabbin Park And Reservation

Many Waters... Many Uses

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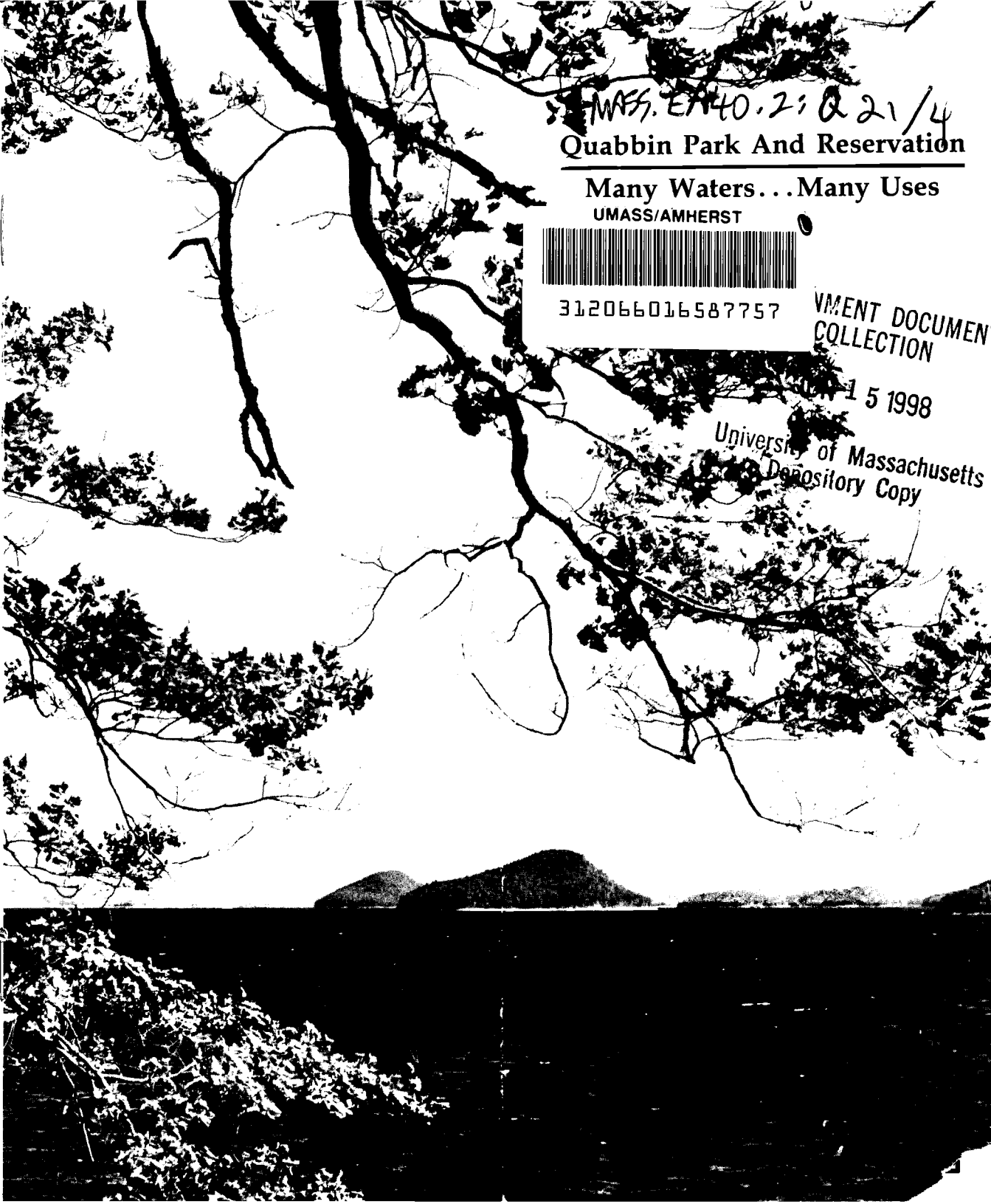


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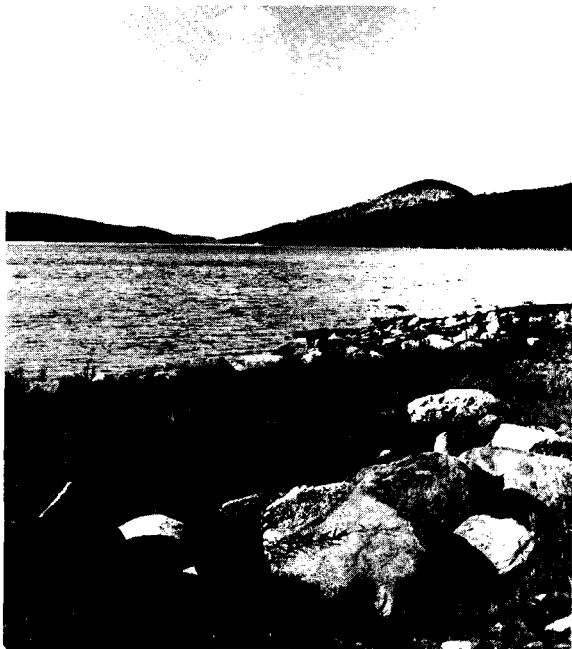


Quabbin Park: The World Within

Quabbin Park, located off Route 9 in Belcher-town, MA, is a popular attraction for local residents and tourists. It is a small corner of the vast Quabbin Reservation, a composite of the unique natural and cultural features of the area.

Visitors to Quabbin Park may enjoy a family picnic, hike along the reservoir's shoreline, fly-fishing in the catch and release area below the dam, or follow a woodland trail. Scenic overlooks and the observation tower are windows onto the reservoir, offering spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. Winsor Dam, Good-nough (Good-no) Dike, the reservoir outlet, Quabbin Park Cemetery and the Visitors' Center are all located within Quabbin Park, and are accessible by car. The Visitors' Center offers programs and information about the cultural history of the area, the management of the reservoir, watershed, and wildlife. Quabbin Park is open every day of the year, from dawn until dusk.

Every visit to Quabbin Park is special. Visitors may glimpse deer, follow the flight of a soaring eagle, or enjoy the serenity of a summer sunset. People return to the park time and again, intrigued by its history, lured by its beauty. The world within Quabbin Park is easy to enter, but more difficult to leave behind.



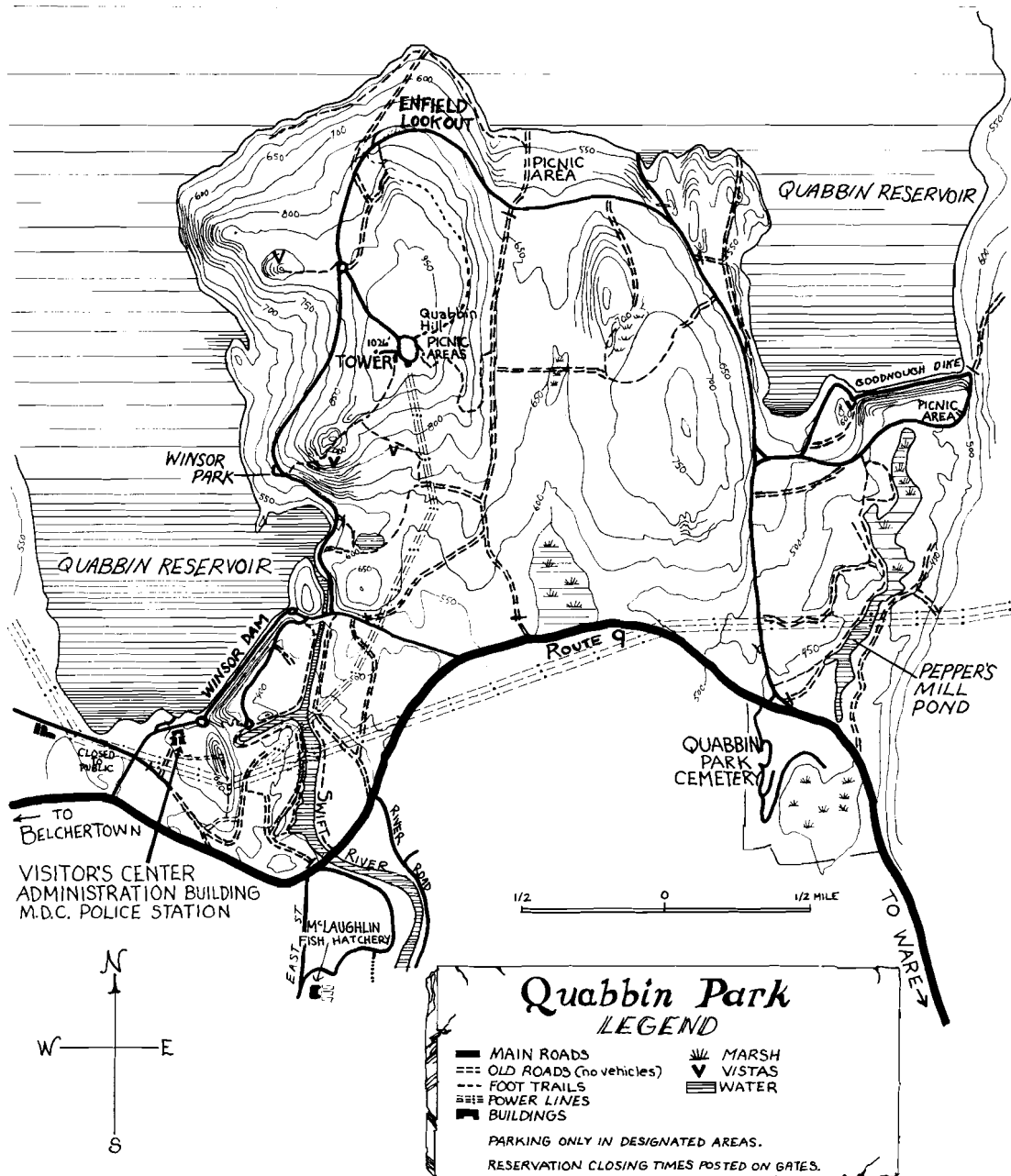
Many Waters... Many Uses

Boston's need for water at the end of the 19th century triggered a series of events which led to the organization of the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) in 1919, and to the development of the largest man-made domestic water supply system in the world, at the time. Quabbin Reservoir and its 56,000 acres of protected watershed, managed by the MDC's Division of Watershed Management, are the backbone of this system. The need to assure the availability of pure water for future generations determines which management and recreational activities the Division will allow. However, many opportunities for passive recreation arise from their management policies. The MDC recognizes that the lands acquired to protect the integrity of its water resources also provide excellent, often unsurpassed, areas where people can find unspoiled nature together with the space and quiet that nurture the human mind and spirit. Hiking, fishing, and scenic viewing are the most popular recreational uses of the area; Quabbin's vast acreage provides a unique resource for these and other interests. The reservation is also used as a research site. Environmentally sensitive timber harvesting occurs under the supervision of the forest management program in order to insure the long-term health of the forest.

Quabbin Park

This map provides a general orientation to Quabbin Park's diverse landscape. The Park contains Quabbin's most popular vistas and nine miles of paved public roads. Over twenty miles of trails and old roadways offer walking and hiking opportunities to suit most levels of ability. (A larger, more detailed edition of this map is available at the Visitor's Center.)

Restroom facilities can be found at the Visitor's Center 9-4 daily. There are facilities at Quabbin Tower, Hanks picnic grove, Goodnough Dike picnic grove, and near the rotary below Winsor Dam from May through October.



MAP BY T. LAK, 1986 FOR FRIENDS OF QUABBIN.
FIELD CHECKED BY MIKE VAN DYKE.



A team of dedicated professionals works together to manage Quabbin. The State Police stationed at Quabbin are responsible for patrolling the land and water and enforcing rules and environmental laws. The Division has a crew of foresters and a wildlife biologist who are responsible for managing the forest and wildlife. A water testing program protects the purity of the water, and a staff of engineers monitors water levels and flow. Skilled craftsmen and laborers maintain the highly used fishing areas and Quabbin Park. The combined efforts of these people protect Quabbin's very special qualities.

Quabbin comes from a Nipmuc Indian word meaning "many waters". When the Nipmucs lived in the area, numerous streams and three branches of the Swift River flowed through the valley. Today, the reservoir is the main source of the 300 million gallons of water available for use each day by nearly half the population of Massachusetts.

From River to Reservoir

When engineers began searching during the early 1900's for a site for a reservoir to quench Boston's thirst, they were drawn to the Swift River Valley. The high hills surrounding the valley would make natural boundaries for a reservoir. The valley itself was broad and deep, scoured by the glaciers that covered New England thousands of years ago. The waters of

the river and feeder streams would provide pure water to meet the city's needs.

Construction of the reservoir began in 1927, and by 1939 the waters of the Swift River were slowly rising behind the newly completed Winsor Dam, an earth-filled structure 2,640 feet long, rising 170 feet above the riverbed. Seven years later the water first flowed over the spillway. The slightly smaller Goodnough Dike dammed the waters of Beaver Brook. Together, these dams hold back over 412 billion gallons of water; twenty million gallons must be released below the dam each day to maintain the flow of the Swift River. The water is distributed throughout the metropolitan Boston area through 117 miles of pipeline and aqueduct tunneled through bedrock 200 feet below the earth's surface. Three Western Massachusetts communities are also supplied with Quabbin through the Chicopee Valley Aqueduct. The Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, created in 1984, is responsible for the treatment and distribution of the water, and the development of new water supplies.

Quabbin Reservation protects over 120 square miles of land and water. The pristine qualities of the watershed are a source of enjoyment for thousands of visitors, and are valuable to the numerous wildlife species found here. Quabbin Park and Reservation are natural resources unequalled in New England; careful management and use will protect them for the future.

The Silent Valley

The waters of Quabbin Reservoir cover many traces of the four towns and numerous villages that once prospered in the Swift River Valley. All that remains of Dana, Enfield, Prescott and Greenwich (Greenwich) are cellar holes, stone walls, and roads that disappear beneath the waters of the reservoir. The story of these towns is similar to that of most small New England communities...except for the last chapter.

Nipmuc Indians lived in and hunted throughout the valley before European settlers began clearing the land and farming the valley's rich soils in the early 1700's. The Indians left their camps behind as the land became unable to support the two cultures' differing lifestyles.

By the later part of the 19th century the towns were lively and productive. A branch of the Boston and Albany railroad carried passengers between Athol and Springfield. Known as the "Rabbit Line" because of the number of stops, or short hops it made, the train took three and

a half hours to complete the fifty mile trip. Inns and taverns catered to travelers, while industries such as the Swift River Box Company provided work for local residents. Palm-leaf hats, Shaker bonnets, and soapstone footwarmers were made in Dana. Dana and Greenwich were popular with summer visitors, and residents of Prescott relied on farming to provide their incomes. Enfield was originally part of Greenwich; many mills were located there, and it was considered the wealthiest town in the valley.

Westward expansion and industrialization caused the decline of many rural New England towns, and those in the Swift River Valley did not escape the economic hardships and decrease in population as businesses and residents were drawn to the opportunities offered elsewhere. Dana, Enfield, Prescott and Greenwich were dealt a final blow when rumors implying the towns would be flooded began to circulate. Property values decreased, and the Great Depression added its financial strain to the problems facing these small communities.



Although the decision to flood the towns met with some local resistance, these people had few options. Systematically, the valley was transformed. The 2,500 residents left their homes, with prized possessions and memories, and started over in other towns. Their empty houses were razed or moved; factories were demolished; large tracts of land were clear cut and burned; roads were relocated. The 7,500 bodies buried in the towns' 34 cemeteries were removed, most were reinterred at Quabbin Park Cemetery in Ware.

The final chapter of the lives of these towns was completed on April 28th, 1938, the date of their official demise. Some people still recall their childhood memories of life in the valley. The Swift River Valley Historical Society in New Salem preserves the history of the region, books have been written about the towns and exhibits in the Quabbin Park Visitors' Center illustrate the changes that have occurred. The valley is silent now, but not forgotten.

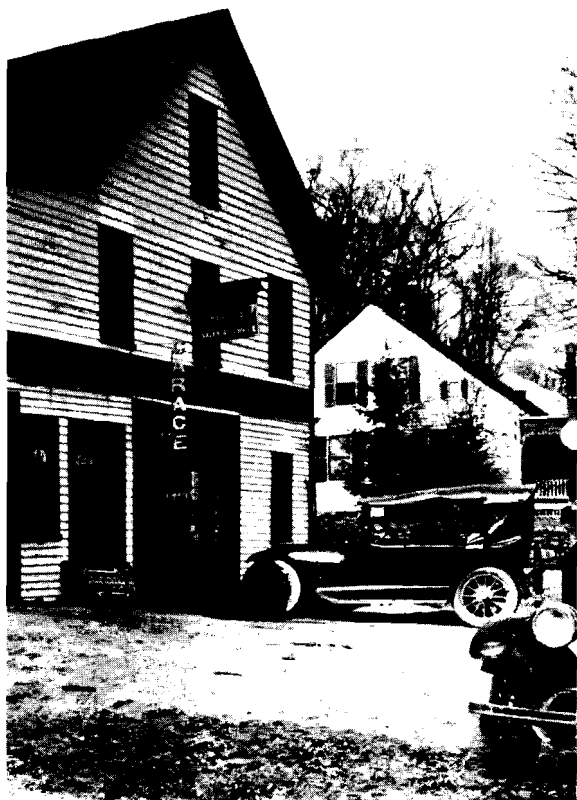


A Reservoir of Life

Providing pure drinking water and protecting the cultural and natural resources of Quabbin Reservation are major responsibilities of the Division of Watershed Management of the MDC. These goals are accomplished through a program of watershed protection and land management.

Wildlife species are closely tied to habitat conditions. Enhanced by management, Quabbin's relative freedom from human disturbance, diversity of habitats, and size, have resulted in varied and abundant wildlife communities. Observant visitors may see white-tailed deer, beaver, or wild turkeys. Numerous small species, including rodents and birds, provide food for larger predatory species, such as fox, bobcat, coyote, hawks, and perhaps even cougar. Eagles, loons, and other uncommon species are also found at Quabbin, benefiting from the protection.

The MDC recognizes the importance of a healthy, resilient forest cover on its watershed lands. Forest Management activities are focused on forest stand improvements in order to encourage a diversity of tree species and age classes. Much of the operations occur in the pine and spruce plantations which were originally established in the 1930's and '40's on open land surrounding the reservoir. Careful thinning operations promote a diverse forest community which benefits both water quality and wildlife.



The Division of Watershed Management receives management information and support from a number of sources. Local academic institutions and other professional agencies conduct valuable research projects. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife provides a highly productive fisheries program, and has re-established bald eagles in Massachusetts. The U.S. Geological Survey has studied the effects of forest management on water quality yields. The U.S. Forest Service researched the impacts of deer browsing on forest regeneration. Several studies have focused on the effects of acid precipitation. The results of such research projects are incorporated into management plans to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the watershed management program.

The variety of wildflowers, trees, and shrubs found within the watershed have great appeal. Pure and mixed conifer and hardwood forests, meadows, and wetlands are found throughout the reservation. Many favorite wildflowers, such as mayflower, lady's slipper, and cardinal flower blossom here. The reservoir is full of life. Why not stop and enjoy it?

For more information

**Metropolitan District Commission
Quabbin Park Visitors' Center**
Quabbin Administration Building
485 Ware Road
Belchertown, MA 01007
(413) 323-7221

Weekdays 8:30 A.M.-4:30 P.M.
Weekends 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

Exhibits, Publications, Programs,
Fishing and Recreation Information

**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Metropolitan District Commission**
Public Information Office
20 Somerset Street
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 727-5114

David B. Balfour, Jr., Commissioner

Weekdays 9:00 A.M.-4:30 P.M.

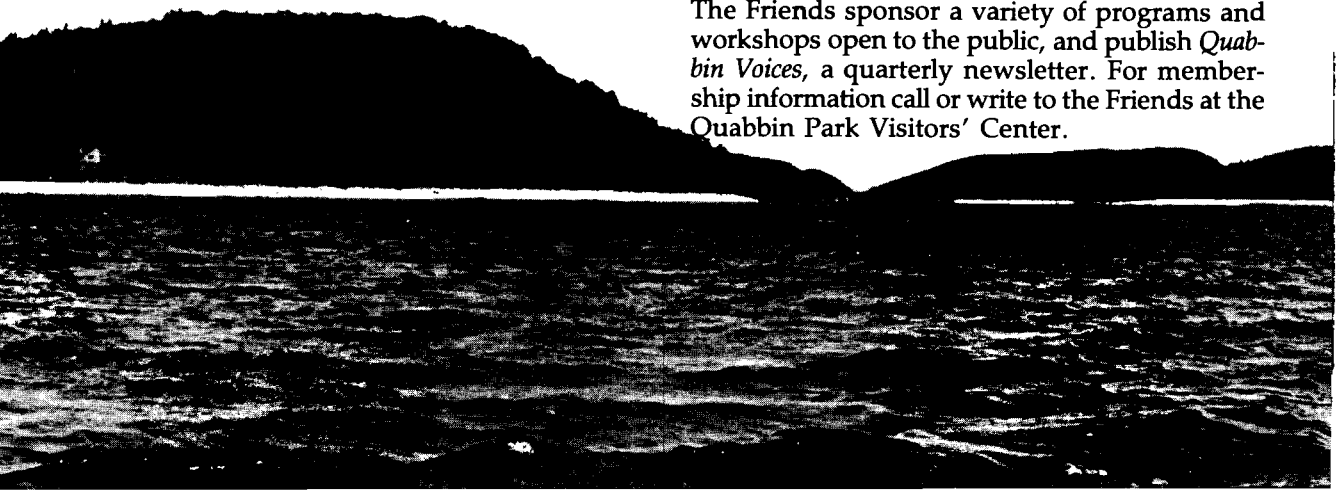
MDC general information

Swift River Valley Historical Society
Box 62, New Salem, MA 01355
(508) 544-6807

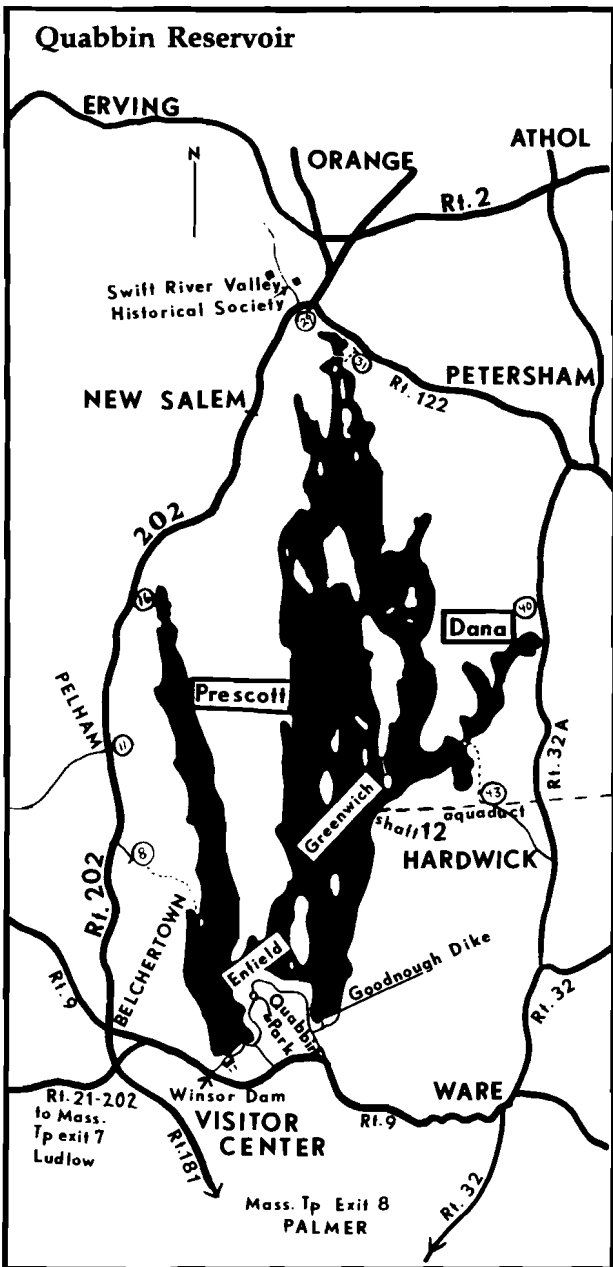
Friends of Quabbin, Inc.

A non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing public knowledge, enjoyment and appreciation of Quabbin's unique natural and cultural resources.

The Friends sponsor a variety of programs and workshops open to the public, and publish *Quabbin Voices*, a quarterly newsletter. For membership information call or write to the Friends at the Quabbin Park Visitors' Center.



Quabbin Reservoir



Rules

For the Protection of the many special resource values of the Quabbin Reservation and its watershed such as: Public Water Supply, Forestry, Wildlife Sanctuary, Historic Site and Artifacts, the following are

STRICTLY PROHIBITED:

- Disposing of human waste, refuse, or litter anywhere except where appropriate receptacles are provided.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Swimming and wading.
- All fires.
- Horses, dogs, and all other domestic animals.
- Camping, skiing, hunting, trapping, and firearms.
- Trespassing in posted restricted areas and on the ice.
- Removal of historic artifacts or natural resources.

ACCESS IS RESTRICTED TO HOURS POSTED AT GATES AND ENTRANCES.

ALLOWED IN DESIGNATED AREAS:

- Fishing
- Bicycling
- Hiking
- Picnicking (without fires or grills)

PROTECT YOUR ACCESS PRIVILEGE BY OBEYING THE ABOVE RULES. PLEASE REPORT ALL VIOLATIONS TO STATE POLICE AT 413-323-7561.

This brochure is published by:

The Friends of Quabbin, Inc. as a service to the Metropolitan District Commission.

Suggest Donation-\$\$.25

Prepared by:

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Les Campbell; including historical reproduction from MDC files.



PureWater

A Service of the
Metropolitan
District
Commission

