Town Forest Survey

Responses: 278

Please answer the questions below.

1. Do you use the Town Forest?

Answered: 278 Skipped: 0

- Yes (234)
- No (44)

2. If you do not use the Town Forest please tell us why not:

Answered: 37 Skipped: 241

- Unaware it exists (4)
- Do not know where it is (20)
- Have no interest (13)

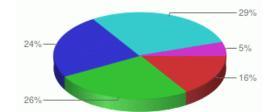
If you use the Town Forest please answer the following questions. If not, please skip to question 17.



3. How often do you use the Town Forest?

Answered: 235 Skipped: 43

- **Daily (38)**
- Weekly (61)
- Monthly (57)
- A few times a year (68)
- For special events only, e.g. organized hike, camping (11)



4. When do you use the Town Forest?

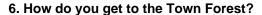
Answered: 233 Skipped: 45

- Primarily on weekdays (22)
- Primarily on weekends (89)
- Both (122)

5. What time of day do you use the Town Forest?

Answered: 231 Skipped: 47

- Early or mid-morning (146)
- Midday (111)
- Mid- or late afternoon (146)
- Evening (59)

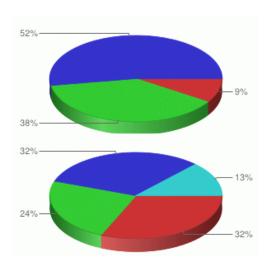


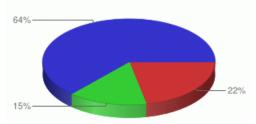
Answered: 231 Skipped: 47

- Walk (65)
- Ride bike (44)
- Drive (192)



Answered: 210 Skipped: 68





- Lynn Village Way (5)
- Grove Street at Strout Avenue (189)
- Wood End Elementary School (34)
- Sunset Rock Lane (13)

8. Which activities do you do?

Answered: 235 Skipped: 43

- Bird watching / nature viewing (87)
- Walking (without a dog) (142)
- Walking a dog (116)
- Group tour or hike (51)
- Running (39)
- Mountain biking (45)
- Cross-country skiing / snowshoeing (47)
- Camping / cookout (63)
- Fishing (5)
- Picnicking (15)
- Geo-caching (24)
- Other (13)



Answered: 14 Skipped: 264

scouting events

have slept out with scouts and hiked with girl scouts

Letter boxing

Airsoft

photo

Boy scouts

Journaling, Photography

monitoring

Activities with Cub and Boy Scouts, including service projects.

meeting friends

Scout events

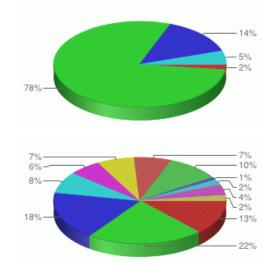
Play in the open field

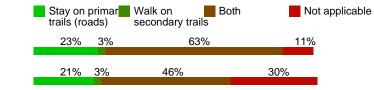
Leaves and compost

XC skiing

10. Which trails or roads do you use?

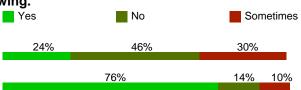
- a. When in the Town Forest (without a dog) where do you go?
- b. When in the Town Forest with a dog where do you go?





11. If you walk a dog in the Town Forest, please answer the following.

- a. Do you walk your dog on-leash?
- b. Do you pick up after your dog?



12. If you walk a dog, how many do you usually walk?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 159

One (88)

Two (23)

Three (3)

Four or more (5)



Answered: 233 Skipped: 45

Place to connect with nature (65)

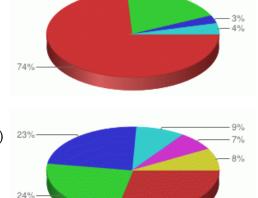
Opportunity for passive recreation (walking, running, XC skiing, etc.) (56)

Place to walk dog (54)

Camping / cookout (22)

Habitat for plants and animals, watershed protection (17)

Other (19)



28%

14. If you answered "Other" above, please explain.

Answered: 19 Skipped: 259

place to hold overnight scouting and recreation events.

It is great place to connect with nature and walk your dog. That is the main reason why so many people enjoy walking with their dogs in the tf.

Get away for the hussle and bussle of everyday life

With the exception of camping, my answer is "all of the above." The Town Forest is a great place to be out in nature without excessive regulation, and where the vast majority of users recognize Common Courtesy as the rule, with or without dogs.

Nice walk with friends that have a dog or just want a nice get-away close to home

A place where people can go to see nature and experience nature where nature is safe and will not be disturbed or harmed in any way. It is a place with no fumes from cars or street noise. It is a bit of wild in our developed town. it is a hardcore airsoft field

can't pick just one, it's a place to be in and connect with nature and for family recreation in my town, and a habitat for plants and animals

What I value about the Town Forest is that it is quiet and a place to de-stress while I am connecting with nature with my dogs.

Exposing children to natural habitats

1,2,4&5

I value all of the above (except the camping). I walk my dogs there but it is also important to have a natural place to walk and to protect habitat. I value the peace and quiet and natural surroundings on our walks.

I can't just pick one! I go there to connect with nature, walk, observe the plants and animals (I'm a biology teacher) and walk my dog.

Boy Scouts have been such a benefit to the ecology and vibrance of this special area.

It's close to home.

I walk my dog there almost every day but would love the place even if I didn't have a dog. It's a beautiful place, I love the forest for it's trees, birds, the river and everything else. It's an asset for Reading!

Opportunity for passive recreation (all those items) WITH a dog

A place to bring my children to foster an appreciation for nature and all it has to offer. photography

15. Would you be willing to pay a fee to use the Town Forest if the fees were used to maintain the Town Forest?

Answered: 235 Skipped: 43

No (90)

Yes, for special events such as camping (145)

16. Should private vehicles be allowed in the Town Forest?

Answered: 234 Skipped: 44

No (130)

Yes on a limited basis, e.g. special events (91)

Yes in unlimited numbers for special events (13)

All respondents please answer the following questions.

17. Do you live in Reading?

Answered: 271 Skipped: 7

Yes (261)

No (10)

18. What sort of housing do you live in?

Answered: 272 Skipped: 6

In a duplex or tri-plex (3)

In an apartment building (4 or more units) (4)

In a condo or townhouse (11)

In a single family home (254)

19. What is your gender?

Answered: 267 Skipped: 11

Female (121)

Male (146)

20. How old are you?

Answered: 270 Skipped: 8

18-29 (25)

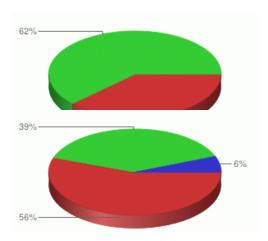
30-39 (35)

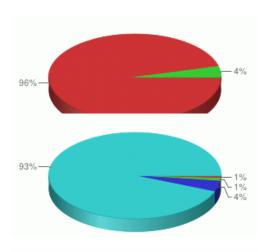
40-49 (76)

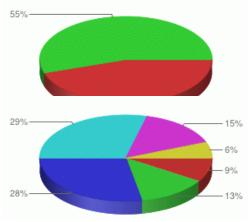
50-59 (79)

60-69 (40)

70+ (15)







21. Please take a moment to provide us with your thoughts on any issues facing the Town Forest.

Answered: 155 Skipped: 123

Issues facing: possible use as a ballfield?

Where would you provide parking for such activities as Little League? Pave areas of conservation land?

One issue is the aggression with which drivers to the compost navigate (or rather want to run over) pedestrians and dogs. That roadway has no path to keep people safe. Drivers are straight up RUDE and OBNOXIOUS, revving their engines and not minding the speed limit. There should also be signs posted to people to pick up after their dogs.

dogs vs man. Dog owners vs. non-dog owners. Hope both can co-exist. Strong desire not to have to walk through a mine field of dog doo.

Great place for dog walking. I already pay for a license so I don't think additional fees are appropriate. Don't see many none dog walkers and there isn't much to attract people other than serious nature types. Which is fine. Don't see the point in the town spending much money to change things there. Already too many surveys.

would be willing to pay a fee to maintain the forest as long as people can continue to walk dogs off leash.

The Town Forest is a perfect place for dog walking. Due to the fact there is no offical dog park in town where people can let their dogs off leash. Dogs need to be dogs, they have four legs not two. So, they need to run and play with other dogs. The town forest is the only place in town where dogs can do just that. If it is decided to stop dogs owners from taking their dogs there. You should have some kind of back up plan.

I love the town forest for walking my dog, but think the open field in front of the forest could be put to better public use. I am NOT in favor of taking any Town Forest land for sporting fields--the forest should be left as it is--a forest!

Leave it alone

I am concerned with the fact that there might be a field being put in the town forest. It is a great place to walk dogs off leash and to connect with nature. Also where they are thinking about putting the parking spaces is where all of the animals that use the vernal pools cross the street and where the vernal pools are located. If people are able to bring in food then the dogs might eat that food or steal it from children and the owners would possibly be punished and lose the privledge of allowing their dogs to be off leash.

The town forest should remain open to all at no cost.

Perhaps you should have the Chronicle do a long piece on the forest listing activities available and where to get a "trail map".

There needs to be footpath access to the TF from Grove St. It is very dangerous (and unpleasant) when people have to walk on Strout Ave with cars coming & going from the compost ctr. With no sidewalk on Strout Ave, and heavy brush on either side, people (often including small children) and cars compete for the same space. It would be a great Eagle Scout project to build a footpath that starts on Grove beyond Strout ave and connects into Strout at a point past the Compost ctr exit, thus avoiding traffic. Also, the 2 mountains of road debris & rubble need to be removed. This is impervious coverage of the Ipswitch River watershed, in glaring violation of Town laws requiring watershed protection. I feel that the Town Forest Committee should work with the groups like the Boy Scouts that use the facilities 2-4 times a year and the people who use it more often to come up with a parking solution and a freindly non rude way of co existing. I am concerned that the Town Forest may be developed into something more than a natural habitat. I feel strongly that Reading has many other parks and ball fields to meet recreational needs, and the town forest should remain as it currently is, a place where people may connect with nature, and walk their dog off-leash if they wish.

I do not have any comments regarding the town forest but I wish some trees could be planted on Main St. between downtown and route 128 it is so ugly.

Love it. Enjoy the trails, bridges

- 1) Tailoring consultant/Audobon general inputs to Reading Town Forest's (RTF's) specific needs and opportunities.
- 2) Providing more children with (quasi-) wilderness immersion since such experiential learning is in rapid decline (see "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children From Nature-Deficit Disorder").
- 3) Ensuring that higher impact users (such as our Boy Scouts) reduce their ecological footprints, (e.g. by back-packing instead of car-camping).
- 4) Retaining (and perhaps enhancing) RTF's nominal wilderness character-- as development continues along boundaries.
- 5) Linked to 4) above, envisioning RTF management within a larger context of regional land use and conservation of forest mosaic.
- 6) Multiple use that's both sustainable and equitable (e.g. restricting mountain bike use during March thaw when soils are more vulnerable).

don't pave over paradise

I feel as though adding a baseball field or any other things like that would disrupt not only the dog walkers and regulars who use the forest, but the wildlife. Any nature-watchers would have a very hard time watching with the noise that might come from a ball park. I believe it would have a very negative outcome.

It shouldnot be further developed

Town forest on other side of town so have to drive - parking is an issue. Also high amount of bugs (ticks, mosquitos, etc) is a significant issue and reason why the forest is an unacceptable replacement for a dog park. Only a truly fenced and (as much as possible) tick-free area will work for a dog park. Town forest will never have that option unless an area is cleared, and then it isn't a forest. Please consider a fenced, grass park at one of the other town recreation areas. It is a wonderful resource. I just wish people would keep their dogs on a leash

The only issue I have is the mosquitos, and limitedparking

Some of the red pine the Scouts planted are dying, and it may be wise to harvest some of them in a sustainable way to make way for new growth. Hopefully the forester has made some recommendations on this. Another issue is access. It is dangerous to walk on the road while the compost area is open. There should be a separate entrance with more parking for recreational users

Keep the dogs out

I am 55 and grew up in Reading, TF is great asset that has become inaccessible for so many. Can't reasonably take my aging parents or new grand babies, too hard to get to the nice areas from parking on Grove. Place was wide open to vehicles for so many years but town clamps down on everything, believe me it's not working to solve societies problems. Open it back up. Let people have this small freedom back. Put in a toll both if you are that hard up and charge for peace and nature.

We love walking at the Town Forest. Pls do not allow cars in the Town Forest. I am against having a playing field there - there shd be other locations.

Would love to spend time in the forest. I don't drive so can't get there from here.:-)

It should be kept for passive recreation not full of ball fields

Dog bags should be easily accessed around the main walking trails with a waste container attached to the tree. Dog waste would be minimized on the trails and people who do not listen should be fined. Also dogs should remain on leashes and also should be enforced with a fine.

When people litter. Want to be sure wildlife is protected.

The Town should be more diligent in making sure that the road gates are locked, except during compost hours. Providing parking for vehicles inside the composting/town forest access route on Strout Av. should be limited both in numbers and time that it is accessable because of trash dumping problems and vandalism/partying will occur more often.

My dog "goes" well off of trails. If he ever goes on a trail or in the field where people might be walking I clean up after him.

The desire to develop parts of it for other than passive recreation

Would like off street parking provided to avoid being injured or killed when walking in and out of forest on very narrow Strout Ave by cars entering and leaving the compost. Would also like walkways provided for pedestrians on Strout Ave for the same reason.

Trash being left about, dogs not being picked up after

Too much vehicular traffic; high impact use by groups bringing in gas grills, generators; threat of greater use without protections/regulations in place.

The town should advertise it more. I would definitely use the forest if I was aware of it and knew where it was.

I feel very fortunate to have a place to recreate that is left natural. It cannot be made any better than it is!

I love the fact that Reading has a Forest that can be enjoyed as a FOREST. I am very concerned that we need to protect the forest from development that will take away from the beauty of our natural forest. It is a wonderful resource for scouts which I hope will can continue to encourage and promote. In terms of a fee I am confused as to why anyone would be charged to use Mother Nature's space. Please explain the thought behind this question. Are you considering a user fee like high school sports????????

I use to run in the Town Forest when I ran RMHS track, I like to run there now with my dog.It is the only place I can take her off leash that is close to home.

I pick up after my dog if it is on a trial or walkway . I would hate to see the Town Forest become a Town Park,keep it as nature created it.

Parking dog waste no high value animals to hunt

I love the Town Forest just as it is -- beautiful and quiet and natural.

Please do NOT take space for parking and/or more athletic fields....the town has precious little natural space now...there's already so much athletic space

Limited trails for biking

The forest was a place to maintain open woodlands. It is beautiful...stop trying to change it! coyotes. some fountains would be great.

Would love to see more nature programs and walks run there. The librarian, Rachel, does a terrific job with these. Instead of taking down trees and building a new field please consider referbishing the existing fields and preserve the forest.

I do not think that there should be a fee for using the town forest. This should remain a free resource. Perhaps donation boxes.

The only issue I see is that kids/teens have abused the secluded location and have inappropriately used the forest: fires, drinking, littering etc.

The Town Forest is a wonderful close-to-home resource for enjoying nature. However, several of the access trails are completely overgrown. For example, the trail head off Kiernan Road by the pumping station is very overgrown. It could be an excellent way of entering the woods with minimal impact on neighbors. I guess the entrance at the end of William Road attracted drinkers and was a nuisance to neighboring houses.

Also, the trail from that entrance (Kiernan Road) leading to the main roads in the woods is in tough shape.

Any improvements the town can do will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you.

too many people with dogs not on a leash

Keep the dogs and cars out

I do not believe cars shd be allowed in the Town Forest. I think you cd charge fees for special events i.e., camping. There has been complaining about cars during camping events, and suggestions to make people carry everything in. This will only discourage the weekend camper and for the few campouts that occur during the year, having a few cars drive in shouldn't pose an issue. The town forest belongs to everyone, not just dog walkers and runners.

My only issue would be that this survey might serve as an indication of future rules or regulations applied to dog walkers in the town forest. Such rules and regulations would only serve to anger and frustrate those residents who utilize the town forest more than anyone else, that is, dog walkers who wish to escape the bonds of a leash.

That being said, it would be nice for there to be a path which dog walkers to use, that can circumvent the compost areas, where dog walkers must come into close contact with motor vehicles.

it has become unsafe for me and my children to go there because of all the dogs not on leashes. the dog owners are rude and think they should let there dogs run around not on lashes. i have seen many pit bulls and other scarey dogs running around. one time i had to tell my kid to climb a tree to avoid a pit bull not on a leash.

The forest will take care of itself, people with the best of ententions will mess it up

I would not like to see it used for active recreation except for camping. Even then, vehicle use should be strictly limited. So many of the habitats for animals have been developed that it is important to preserve this. Having a quiet place to walk away from the congestion that is everywhere else is also very important for the quality of life of local residents.

The biggest problem that I have is with unleashed, uncontrolled dogs. I ride a mountain bike and have been chased or attacked several times. I would like to see a leash enforcement for dogs that cannot be controlled off leash.

The forest is a plantation and needs to be selectively logged to allow native regrowth. A boardwalk out into the Ipswich River marsh would be nice.

The Town Forest is a great resource

It is a valued resource to be respected and taken care of. It is inextricably linked with the Ipswich River.

I would be very upset if someone tried to develop our forest. It is the town FOREST, not the town BASEBALL FIELD. I'd like to know more about it so I dan use it.

I have enjoyed the town forest all my life and think it is a wonderful resource. Bringing kids to camp there has been great to introdce them to nature and respect it. It is fantastic to see so many people walking their dogs, hiking, ect. while we are there.

There should be a toilet with female sanitary products available.

Please don't put in that baseball field!

Too much traffic on Grove St/north of Franklin results in many near accidents and ongoing safety concerns. Grove St is only way in and out to both Town Forest and Compost Station - typically peak demand is on weekends. This traffic is compounded by heavy traffic going to/from the Golf Club. There are no sidewalks on Grove St & vehicles frequently speed. Town needs to develop another route from Franklin St to safely handle demand to/from Compost Station and Town Forest.

Our town forest is such a wonderful resource. However, several of the minor trails leading into the forest are in bad shape - for example, the trail leading in from the pumping station on Kieran Road. I would love to have this entry path cleared and maintained.

On Question 13, I would also answer "Place to conntect with nature," but the survey only allows for one answer. use of vehicles should be limited

I am very concerned about plans to "develop" the town forest - Reading's jewel. Please protect it/don't touch it/stop messing with nature. Spend tax dollars in other areas as needed. It's a wonderland of turtles and snakes, birds and ..beavers! If any restrictions, I'd like to see dog walking restricted to roads only...no trails...so as not to disturb wildlife (coyotes and nesting birds.)Ban vehicles. It seems to defy logic that kids on "camping" outings get driven to their site. I worry about fire in there. Add hydrants. Concerned about mowing grass... what happens to turles, snakes?

I am very concerned about the three proposals outlined in the Strout Ave. Project.

- 1) All of these options propose a very large number of parking places. More than the Reading Public Library! That is a huge number of parking places! Why so many?
- 2) The location of the parking places, on this document, are right in the breeding grounds of an endangered species, the blue spotted salamander. Environmentally, it is really completely irresponsible to locate the angled parking places along Strout Ave. as suggested by the Town's proposed plan.
- 3) Using the Water Treatment Plant field as a practice ball field is really a terrible idea. The Field would be hard to get to, in an extreme corner of town, and it would be just a bottle neck of traffic with soccer/baseball parents coming and going. Why not keep it as a place for people to let their dogs play together, and just enjoy the green grass and the sky? Why not keep one public space in Reading dedicated to passive recreation?

The town forest faces the issue of balancing habitat protection with public use. However, unless we allow the public free access to enjoy and appreciate the town forest, it's value will not be seen by future generations.

I think it is a great resource, but trail maps and info about access would be helpful.

I really do not like the traffic from the Compost Yard.

I use Town Forest on a regular basis to walk my dogs. In all honesty, I am somewhat unaware of what "issues" the Town Forest faces. Upkeep? Monetary crunch? It would be helpful to know what is driving this survey.

Changes in the forest use will prevent the only place to freely walk the dogs.

it is a great space for recreational walks and exploring. Not keen on all the dogs off leashes as some are fairly big breeds and I have young children.

I would not like to see a baseball field built in this area, that would take away the already limited amount of living space for wildlife in Reading.

It is a great resource available for the taxpayers and residents of Reading. With little open space available, it should be properly nutured and cultivated.

To much regulation by special interest groups; not to be confused with taking appropriate measures to protect it. I would love to see it remain as is. The town forest is one of the only places I cn connect with nature and feel at peace. I like that this is not used for "teams" and that non athletes have a place to go.

It is a fantastic place for walking a dog, exploring nature, and relaxing. We love walking our dogs there - and we love having the freedom to explore it off leash.

Parking. There is a home owner by the hydrant on grove street that does not allow parking in front of his house on his side of the street. I would appreciate someone from the town office speaking to him about the matter.

I have stopped going there as frequently because of him.

I don't own a dog. A lot of people allow their dogs to run loose in the Town Forest. I think it is nice for the animals, but

can be disconcerting for the non-dog owners, especially for people who are afraid of dogs (which I'm not). It might be nice to establish some specific times that dogs can be off-leash in the forest, it might satisfy both constituents.

I think more people would use the Town Forest if there were a better entrance from Grove St. than through compost area.

poor access from William Rd and Joseph

poor access to main trails for cross country skiing from Grove St.

The Town Forest was a sand pit and was about to be developed into an airport when citizens bought it and the Boy Scouts planted the trees (1920's - 40's). Never forget that the Boy Scouts have "sweat equity" in the Town Forest, and their needs and priorities should come first.

In my opinion vehicles should not be allowed in the town forest, except for a couple to bring in supplies for the Boy Scout campouts. It is dangerous and detracts from the natural feel of the forest.

Usage fees are not appropriate for Reading residents, since our taxes are used for its maintenance.

Please do not develop ANY part of the Town Forest - there has been so much development in Reading over he last 10 years. This is the only untouched area - please let's keep it that way. It is a real treasure in this town and is a haven for wildlife.

I am disappointed to now know that I have lived in Reading for several years, and never knew there was a town forest available to the public! It would be of great service to have more visibility into its accessibility (I.e., signage to include rules, hours, recreation available, etc.).

I've been living and walking in the town forest for 15 years. I've gone by self, with my son and for the past few years with my dog. It is a treasure and I respect it. I would hate to see it turned in to another paved place or sports field - Reading has enough of those.

Dog should remain leashed when in forest.

I think it's critical to Reading as a town to maintain the town forest for the recreation it offers and for the fact that they are conserving land as a habitat rather than building more houses.

would like the trails and roads maintained from tree falls. I strongly would like to propose that dogs be leashed except on the field. They ALWAYS jump on walkers and owners are unapologetic.

Great resource for everyone, but the scouts need an avenue to bring in and out supplies, individuals and to be safe.

The biggest issue I have seen in the Town Forest is people walking their dogs without a leash. Several times I have been chased by large dogs while the owner stood by laughing. Having been bitten before, I don't see the humor in it. If the town has a leash law, it must be enforced everywhere, particularly when many other people, including small children, are present!

Great place!

Protect it in its current state.

While I do not use the Town Forest, I do enjoy walking my dog in other locations in Reading and Wakefield. I would hope that dogs are behaving appropriately in the Town forest on the one hand, and that it remains as a resource for them on the other. I am not in favor of developing the land for other uses.

It seems there is parking on neighborhood streets or the school. Should I park in front of someone's house or where in the school yard when school is in session?

The town forest is beautiful, I hope you keep it accessible to passive recreation.

Parking on Grove could be improved.

I wish parking were better

I think Grove street should have friendlier parking with a sidewalk; likewise with Strout ave, a way to avoid compost cars. NO ball fields. Passive sports and recreation. I think the old water treatment area would be great for a dog park and bike paths for small children to learn to ride or just play in an open area. Again NO!! ball fields.

I would like it to stay as it is, without opening it to any invasive changes such as buildings, etc.

I think it would be best to leave the forest as is and not add the baseball field

n/a

I like the new design and I think the ample parking is a good thing.

Too many abusers - trash, vehicles

I have heard rumor that the large open field is being considered for athletic fields or parking. This would be a shame, as

it would truly alter the place's character. It has been a great place to introduce young Cub and Boy scouts to camping (see below) but I understand that there have been objections to the number of cars there - if the numbers must be limited, that's fine, but please don't ban the use of the Forest for these events - the Scouts are a big part of the Forests' history and, I hope, its future.

I would like to see more child-friendly bike trails.

Allowing dogs off lease has made the forest unusable for my family. Many of the dog owners do not have effective control over their dogs as required. I've talked with many dog owners in the forest and they are always apologetic after their dog or large group of dogs (as is the case on the weekend mornings) run up within a few feet and bark excessively keeping our family at a standstill untill their owners come around the corner to see what is happening and run up and pull the dog(s) away. A scene similar to this was occurring several times each trip and I thought we can not let it prevent us from going, but we have since given up and longer go. Out last visit was in June. I've been told that more and more people from out of town are bringing their dogs to the forest so they can "run free", since other towns simple would not allow it because it disturbs the wildlife and prevents others from enjoying the area. I am a dog lover and it is disappointing that the majority of people who do not have effective voice control over their dogs have ruined this for the few dogs owners that can control their dogs and are a joy to see using the forest. It is the sad truth but this is why wildlife areas, such as National Wildlife Refuge areas, in general to not allow domestic pets at all since they disturb the wildlife and other visitors. Â Families and wildlife should have access to the forest without being in fear. Â Please Help!

trail maintenance, especially near swamp/wetland areas. Proximity to brush dump area - would rather have brush and yard waste processed further from any town conservation/forest land.

Informing walkers to not walk in X country ski tracks so they can be used and re-used by skiers. Need more parking near trails.

The path from William Rd and Joseph Way is difficult to access and to get by the area near the golf course. Access to the roads in the town woods for cross country skiing is bad also the parking

Walking in the forest is a way of life for me now. I go everyday possible with the exception of a blizzard, torential rains or hot, hot days. The people are friendly and I really think my quality of life is better. I'm 76 years old and believe it's adding years to my life. Today my dog got off his leash and went for a DPU truck, I can't thank the man enough for his quick action in stopping for him! The town workers are always very kind and helpful!

- 1. I believe that both TF users and the surrounding neighborhoods would benefit from more clearly defined on street parking along Grove Street and Family Circle.
- 2. As a frequent camper in the TF (with a local Scout Troop), I would strongly support a ban on the use of both gas powered generators and PA systems in the TF.
- 3. Private vehicles within the TF: I support allowing groups using the TF for approved activities (controlled/limited) vehicle access. Perhaps a system could be put in place that requires a "parking plan" for each event expecting more than a set number of cars. If groups are limited to a maximum number of cars within the TF, overnight parking should continue to be permitted along Grove and Family Circle. Exceptions should be allowed for private vehicles transporting gear and the handicapped or elderly.
- 4. I am a lover of dogs and support dog walking in the TF. With that said, I've had a number of conflicts with off-leash pets while both bike riding and walking (especially with young children) in the TF.

I absolutely love walking my dog in the woods. It is honestly the only reason I go there. However, parking out on Grove St and walking into the woods is dangerous when the dump is open. There is no safe place to walk - especially when I have my dog and my 2 year old. Either available parking beyond the dump or sidewalks would make the area much safer.

I know the water is being monitored by the MWRA but still many dog owners are irresponsible and unaware of the hazards of letting their dogs go in the water as well as leaving fecal matter behind.

I USED to visit the Town Forest, primarily to walk and to enjoy the natural surroundings. Since the is apparently no longer vehicle access for parking at the site of the former pumping station, I no longer go to the Town Forest, because I am uncomfortable with the parking alternatives – primarily because I would have to leave my vehicle in an exposed, unprotected area along Grove Street.

The town forest is really unique but it seems like it is in danger of becoming overused with people driving in and trucks

moving compost and debris around.

Please preserve this Reading treasure as is - do not interfere with space that is natural - I love to bring my kids into the forest to show them the woods. There are so few places like this left and it is important that we preserve this.

The forest is the only place in Reading I can walk my dog off leash. It is good for the dogs and good for the walkers. It gives the dogs a chance to socialize with other dogs. There is no fear of cars running into the dogs.

Wouldn't want the naturalness of it to be altered or destroyed

I feel scouts or elementary school children or groups need to be more involved seasonaly in tours etc.

I had no idea there was a Town Forest, or that there were issues...

Please keep the forest the way it is, please dont create baseball field!

I would not support the taking of any of the Town Forest property, or expansion of the golf course. The forest should be open to any youth group that wants to use it. Improvements suggested by Eagle Scout candidates, such as marking trails, elevated boardwalks, etc.

I think the forest should be left as it is. We need to protect our open spaces.

I would like to see the Town Forest remain as it is. I don't think we need additional playing fields in Reading. We need to preserve open spaces.

The Town Forest is the only place in Reading I can go to walk my dogs off the leash, and go for a run in the peace and quiet. I don't have to worry about other people who may be afraid of dogs or ask me to put my dog on the leash, because the other people that are in the woods are there to walk their dogs, view nature, and be there for the open serene space. It isn't crowded, it is the only place in Reading where we can still go to just relax and be in nature and where animals can go freely. If a baseball field were to be put in, families would crowd the area and ask to have pets put on leashes, it would scare away the nature and ruin the conservation, and it is the only area in Reading that is still woods. You have already built Wood End in the part of the Town Forest that was near my home, and it is now always crowded, noisy, busy, and there is no easy entrance to the Forest. If a field needs to be built, build it at Wood End, even though there are plenty of fields to play baseball at. Leave the forest be, and let nature still exist in Reading. I also know other people who come from out of town to use the forest for its tranquility, the nature, the water, and trails, the open field, and the peace of mind walking their pets.

I hate the impact of snow mobiles

Lack of supervision

I have been using the town forest for a very long time, and I haven't really noticed any issues with it. I enjoy going there by myself, with friends or with my dog.

One of the reasons I enjoy living here in Reading is because I feel we are a strong community. A community that cares about the well-being of all its members. We have an active Senior Center, groups such as FORR, a thriving Library – you name it. I grew up in this town, and now live here with my husband and young children.

As a child myself, I frequently enjoyed hikes in the Town Forest. Bike rides to and from and through the Forest with my friends. It was a blast. But today? Today I will no longer bring my family to the Town Forest. An area of Reading so important to me as a child is now off-reach, because of one issue.

The dogs.

Last Fall, my husband and I brought the kids twice to the Town Forest and both times faced the same issue. Off-leash dogs are a huge problem.

There was dog excrement everywhere. At the entrance. On the trails, off the trails, it was awful. Because the Town Forest allows owners to bring their dogs off-leash, the owners we saw let their dogs run wild all over the forest. When a dog gets so far away from its owner, it is neither controllable nor is it easily visible to the owner when the dog makes a mess. Either that, or the owner just doesn't care to clean up because it's clearly "acceptable― not to.

On our first visit, when my family was leaving, a woman was walking down the Grove Street entrance toward the Forest with two dogs off-leash running ahead of her. These dogs charged my children and my husband and I had to scoop up

our screaming kids in our arms to keep the dogs from attacking them. We had words with the woman, who did not care how scared my children were, and refused even when she finally caught up to her dogs to hold them back or clip them on a leash. Instead of apologizing, she shouted at us that her dogs had every right to run wherever they wanted. It traumatized my kids. And took me months to get them comfortable around dogs again.

I was going to report this incident, but then I did some research and found out that dogs are indeed allowed off-leash in the Town Forest. Though we were technically just beyond the Forest, we were close to the entrance.

As a child, I visited the Town Forest by myself or with my friends many times over the years I spent here in Reading growing up. Not once did I have a problem with uncontrolled dogs. Or find dog feces all over the place when I just wanted to enjoy being out in nature, in what should be a nice community setting for everyone.

I'm not sure if anyone who works for the Town is aware of this problem. Giant dogs, small dogs, the Town Forest has turned into a no-leash no-clean-up-after-your-pet dog pen, and because of that, I can no longer take my young kids there to enjoy all the Forest has to offer. This saddens me.

And as a long-time Reading resident, this frustrates me. I spent years volunteering in various capacities for this town as a Girl Scout. Cleaning, recycling, holding blood drives, collecting donations for a tree to be planted in the Town Square -- this town means something to me. And I feel that because of the number of irresponsible dog owners who have polluted our Town Forest, and do not watch over their dogs, it is not a place I can safely take my children.

I thought a lot about submitting my response here in this survey. I don't want to limit the park from the many responsible dog owners who also live here in Reading. I am certain there are many happy families who take care to keep their dogs from charging young children, and who clean up after their dogs' messes.

However, as I see this survey is being conducted in part for the Massachusetts Audubon Ecological Extension Service, and as my family is a Mass Audubon member, I am aware that many Audubon offerings, sites, trails, and conservation areas prohibit dogs. There are good reasons for this, not the least is to protect the lands and ensure that everyone who wants to visit and enjoy them may do so in peace.

I would hope that our Town Forest would at the very least adopt an on-leash policy for dogs. With some sort of system in place to enforce the policy. And to perhaps look somewhere else in town to create an actual "off-leash park" where dogs can happily run free, and where families can enjoy time with their pets without taking advantage of an isolated area in Reading where no one is going to complain if there is dog excrement everywhere.

In the end, it is disheartening to see the Town Forest as such a mess. I care about this town, and I care that public areas are respected and welcoming for all.

The Town Forest is a great place to be able to take our dog and let him run off leash. It is one of the few places that I know of, anywhere, that allows this type of use and is an incredibly valuable resource.

Because of the town's lack of planning of green space, and its bias towards creating ball fields instead of natural areas, the pressure on the Town Forest has become immense. Attitudes by a few have shifted to an all or nothing mentality -- yet the Town Forest could continue to be a multi-use space, accommodating most needs if someone bother to understand the needs of the residents and individuals using it. This survey is a start, but it is shallow and designed for confrontation between user constituencies. It is not about multi-use and sharing; it is about confrontation and justifying user fees.

Improper use

Maintenance

leave it alone

I fully recognize that dog walkers need to take better responsibility for their dogs.

Please leave motor vehicles out of the Town Forest. When cars were allowed in there it became a haven for underage

drinking and unsafe driving. There was a girl killed up there as a result of drinking and driving in the Town Forest. Leave the Town Forest the way it is. The only work that should be done in there is primary trail maintenance. Way too many cars in there for events. A limit should be places on the number of cars for an event.

None

More information about access and what is available would be helpful

I wish there were a dog park in Reading for dog owners to go to so that their dogs wouldn't jump on me and slobber on me when I'm trying to enjoy my walk. The leash law is not respected in the town forest.

I know that sometimes when walking my dogs in the town forest I sometimes see other peoples dog poops on the main trails. I think if you provided a place throught out the forest with dog poop bags and a place to throw it away then I think that would help the dog poop problem.

I am not aware of any issues.

The maps online do not properly depict where parking is available - the Strout ave is a residential street. The School parking looked to be the best, but where when school is in session? parking, trail maps/marking

22. Please take a moment to provide us with your thoughts on opportunities provided by the Town Forest.

Answered: 112 Skipped: 166

The forest is a wonderful place for bikers, joggers, bird-watchers and dog walkers. Please keep it as such. see above

The town forest, like I said above provides the residents of Reading a place to take their dogs and let them run and play off leash. It is a great place to be, where everyone can get in touch with nature.

I would like to see better investment in the open field. A dog park? A baseball field? Something that would act as a congregation point for reading residents to meet and get to know each other. I love the new dog park in arlinton, ma and think it is a good example of what reading public areas should aspire to be.

Build a ball field where the pumping station once was

I think that it is very valuble that people are able to walk their dogs off leash in the town forest. This is the only place in Reading where it is legal. Also there are many species of plants and animals that flourish in the town forest. These species need to be protected. The vernal pools are ecosystems in them selves and you need to keep those ecosystems alive and thriving.

Improve signage.

Increase the width of the road to the compost.

Build a dock to launch a row boat in the river

The Town Forest is a tremendous asset to the town. It is a place for people to become one with nature and all its beauty. It also provides an chance for the youth of our town to experience nature while camping in a leave no trace environment. Trust me if you have never taking a silent night hike in the Town Forest in completed darkness and just listened to the world around you you are missing alot.

A wonderful asset for the whole community!

Over time Reading has developed to the point that there are very few natural areas where wildlife can thrive. The Town Forest has an opportunity to remain natural, where Reading's citizens can enjoy wildlife and the peacefulness of a walk through the forest.

- 1) Active refuge, e.g. as recipient site for transplanted at-risk species, such as Lady Slipper orchids transplanted from outside.
- 2) Increased learning opportunities for public through interpretive field walks lead by invited outside experts.
- 3) Linkage to naturalist activities in other towns, such as Peter Alden's biodiversity censuses in Concord area.
- 4) Demonstration project for sustainable forest management.
- 5) Habitat diversification potential, when management of over-mature portions eventually becomes advisable.
- 6) Small scale nursery potential for disturbed areas (e.g. adjoining driving range, or by old water treatment plant) to facilitate greening of town lands (e.g. sorely asphalt-dominated railroad station parking areas).
- 7) Engagement of local university students (e.g. UMass Lowell, Tufts, BU) in related conservation science and policy issues.

A place to walk your dog, get away from daily life, and enjoy the beauty that the whole entire forest has to offer.

The town forest provides a place for people to walk/run/bike not on roads, and is the only one within Reading. The wildlife has a habitat that is fairly un disrupted and I think that is very important to our town.

A paved trail might make use possible with less ticks (like Breakheart). Parking lot only necessary if other significant changes made but not as-is.

It should be left as is for anyone to enjoy. Being a dog owner and walker it is a great place to have a controlled dog off leash. As it is now and the people that use it,(primarily dog walkers there is no litter, it is respected and no environmental impact on wildlife or foliage.

The town forest is perfect for those of us who need a place to walk their dogs in a safe ansecure area.

The town forest is one of the only places to walk in a natural setting in a rapidly urbanizing area, and the only place in Reading to allow a dog to get a really good run. It is a great place for Cub Scouts to get their first taste of camping out, and the river adds so much in terms of diversity of wildlife.

Nice trails

Great place to enjoy nature - hope this is preserved.

We enjoy walking our dog in the town forest. It provides many opportunities also for walkers, nature lovers, bird watchers, joggers, cross country skiers, and bicylists. We have met many interesting people on our jaunts in the forest and hope that we can continue to do so.

It's pretty much perfect for passive recreation just the way it is. I am for leaving it alone.

I believe it should remain a place for passive recreation and li mited vehicle access. We need this open space.

I would like to keep the forest open for dog walkers as there are no other areas where dogs can walk and play freely.

Great place to walk with or with out a dog and view wildlife, open space that isnt developed

Largest conservation area, should be passive activity only; parking should be restricted to existing compost area; water treatment area should be transferred to town forest land to increase protection and regulate use

It would be a great place to go hiking, walking, and running.

The opportunity that it provides to recreate in a natural, peaceful setting is wonderful.

I would like to see the scouts have more use and for the town to let the public know about the easy access to our own gem. I have seen white swans, lady slippers, nesting turtles etc just by taking a walk through the forest.

Open space

This question makes me anxious. What I love best about the Town Forest is that it hasn't been exploited. It's geared to people (and dogs) on foot, making their own way.

see above

Good for hiking or camping or biking with kids

Keep it as it is......

We love the town forest!

The Town Forest is a wonderful place for people to participate in various exercise and nature activities.

Maybe advertise more--I wasn't aware of the other entry locations prior to this e-mail although I haven't looked that hard either:)

amazing natural resource right here in Reading; our home actually directly borders the Town Forest (Roma Lane), and we spend many afternoons in Fall/Winter walking and/snowshoeing in the Town Forest with my wife and son; we're incredibly lucky to have such a beautiful recreation area so close by

Access to fishing would be nice

I love the Town Forest. I take my dog - off leash under voice command and leash him when other dogs are around. I clean up after my dog and I help clean up the trails. I appreciate being able to walk my dog at the Town Forest. THANK YOU!

The Reading town forest serves as this poster's primary means to escape the pressures and annoyances of industrialized life, to return to a world where peace and placidity might reign, only to be disturbed by the incessant barking of my dog. This transcendental experience could only be undermined by useless rules and regulations.

PUT A LEASH LAW IN PLACE AND ENFORCE IT!!!!

OR, designate a portion of the park that is dedicated to dogs with no leashes.

make a parking lot at the end of the road in the park near the water pumpig station, or in teh compost area.

The forest is a small space where you can go to relax and enjoy the quiet. obsevre nature and think without being disturbed. Who gets to see this? #23 why don't you just ask who we are

I would like to see single-track mountain bike trails created.

I went there in the 60's as a boy scout when I lived in Reading and found it rather boring. I've never been back as there was nothing of interest there.

Maintained not "developed" so it retains as much as its natural character as possible. Keep trails clear, wet-season walkable, and well marked.

The town forest is a place where anyone can go to enjoy nature doing what they want, respectively. I love that there is a bit of Reading that is not developed, and I use it to bike, run and walk my dog like many others that I know. Filling it with traffic and more roads than it already has would be devastating. It would wrongly show that Reading is just like any other town and would rather take care of humans than preserve habitats and forest for animals.

Wish there was more of a way to introduce residents to this resource.

Town Forest should be left in its natural state - there should be no improvements that would amplify demand on this location - have heard rumors of "destination points" being developed, eg athletic fields. This would result in choking Grove St with traffic and attendant safety issues. Lack of sidewalks and current vehicular traffic from Compost Sta, Golf Club & Forest, often at excessive speeds, present real safety problems to the neighborhood - a serious accident can happen at anytime on this section of Grove St

A wonderful resource for residents to enjoy nature without getting in the car and driving any distance.

Our town is incredibly lucky to have the Town Forest. When my husband and I moved to Reading in 1987, we were so thrilled to discover this wonderful tract of land set aside for passive recreation. What kind of special town was this, to value this land?? Cross Country skiing in the winter, and woods walks in all the other months, I have long been appreciative of this peaceful space in the midst of a busy suburb of Boston. Also, as you well know, this is the only place in Reading, where we can legally let our dogs run off leash, and let me tell you, our dogs love the Town Forest as much as we do!

The Town Forest's accessibility provides a unique opportunity to educate younger generations to appreciate wildlife and its habitat, learn camping and hiking skills, and to learn how to protect and preserve open space.

I'd really like to use the town forest for XC-skiing, biking with my kids, picnicking, canoeing, but I haven't had much success finding information about where to park, trail recommendations, what is available etc. It would be great if this info were more readily available, or perhaps where were an online message board for asking questions and reading other people's trip reports. I would also love to see more nature walks / learning opportunities for families with young children (like the Audubon sanctuary in Topsfield, but closer!) I would also be interesting in family volunteer days to do trail maintenance etc.

It's a great place to walk. I enjoy being able to birdwatch and identify native plants while also walking my dogs. Basically my use of the Town Forest has always been associated with Boy Scouting. I am no longer very active in Boy Scouting but someday I may tag along for one of those bird watching expeditions.

ideally one portion of the forest would be fenced off for off-leash dog park.

I enjoy having a town forest that I can walk in and observe the peaceful environment.

it's an oasis that is working perfectly the way it is. The biggest opportunity I see is to leave it alone and not destroy it's wonderfulness.

The town forest is a great resource. Serving two valuable purposes, acting as a animal habitat and watershed and a local recreation area.

Private motor vehicles should not be allowed in the park.

Trash cans would encourage people to pickup after their dogs.

Reading is fortunate to have a Town Forest, built by the local Boy Scouts over several decades. The hiking, camping, picnicing, and other passive recreation opportunities are a true gift. The Town Forest has a little more freedom of use than the Conservation Areas, and should remain so.

We have the opportunity to preserve a piece of open space, which is becoming more and more rare in this area. It should be used for passive recreation and habitat preservation.

The Town Forest campground fire circle is a unique and much used resource.

Please leave it as is - not every resource needs to be an "opportunity".

I am all for a town forest, as it promotes conservation, clean air, green space, one last refuge for wildlife, and opportunities for outdoor activities.

I would like to see more of an effort to clean up the downed trees and broken walk ways. Also, I don't see the need to allow the boy scouts to drive in so many vehicles for an overnight.

I'm an avid geocacher, and maintain several caches in the forest, which encourages people to use the forest for hiking and biking.

I love walking and biking there and the convenience to my house, which is a short walk away, makes it so much better. I love being able to hike and run in the town forest. It is a treasure.

one of the reasons I continue to live in this town is the availability of the town forest for my walks and bike rides.

The town forest is a great space that you don't often find in other towns. It is a good place for nature is I'm glad that it is so far untouched by suburban development.

It is not suppose to be a plan, but a sustainable respectful community escape.

I enjoy having a place where I can trail run and mountain bike. I would love to see more trails blazed. We as a community need to preserve the Town Forest and generate more public awareness of the opportunities it provides.

I have used the town forest for years, almost always as a solitary undertaking. It renews and restores me.

It is a gift to have such a peaceful beautiful and relatively safe open space to walk right here in Reading.

It's wonderful to have such a large natural area so close to home.

It's a great place to cross-country ski!

The town forest is a gem and the only place the dog can run free in town.

An area free of motorized vehicles to walk, cycle, or just enjoy the guiet setting.

The forest is a wonderful place to have, so many interstings thing srouting, birds and other animal fleeting about and a bit of fresh air too.

If you'd like to increase the use of the forest I'd like to suggest getting NEMBA.ORG involved. This forest has some potential for MTB trails that has not been explored yet I am sure.

the town forest is my favorite place in Reading

n/a

Unlike other parks, it is truly a place of multiple uses and I am not aware of any "lighting-rod" issues as of yet; users and the Town have thus far been tolerant. It has proven to be a fantastic place to introduce children to outdoor recreation - camping, hiking, skiing/snowshoeing and mountain biking.

I am interested in camping as a resident. I know the area has been used by organized groups, but can it also be reserved for individual families?

Increased fitness and awareness of nature and need to preserve it, as well as the importance of environmental issues including global warming.

I think more people would use it if they could push strollers and ride bikes through it like Breakheart Reservations paved Trails. Also there is a lot of fear of getting Lyme's Disease from ticks so many people don't utilize it.

When I moved back to Reading three years ago, I was looking forward to spending time in the Town Forest – until I discovered the no-longer-acceptable parking situation.

Opportunity to turn this into even more of a gem for people to hike and nature walk

passive recreation, nature, safe place for dogs to play together off leash

grew up down the street from it, learned alot about nature, and respect for it.

same answer as 21

This is the only legal place to take my dogs off leash, I feel safe there and people are very responsible with there dogs. The town forest is an incredibly valuable resource and one the things that makes the town so great. It exposes hundreds of kids to the value of nature every year. I think one of its primary purposes should be to support scouting, cub scouts, girl scouts, and boy scouts. They are good shepards.

I am opposed to playing fields and /or expanded parking near the forest. We have a great resource here, let's keep it for future generations to enjoy.

The Town Forest is a chance for people to interact with nature and to enjoy a relatively unspoiled area. We need to keep it that way.

Instead of ripping down the Town Forest, you should utilize Memorial Park, Sturges, or Castene, which is already a place for sports, to build any fields. We already have enough Condos in Reading. Leave the land. With the technology we have today, we could come up with a way to build a field that could have multiple uses, in a different location.

I love the town forest...a hidden gem...adds to the value of living in Reading.

It is a treasure to protect for future generations in a natural state.

I think the town forest is a really great place to go to be in nature, and it is really convinent that it's right here in Reading. I wouldn't want anything to change about that. I take full advantage of having a lovely place to go to be outdoors.

Keep it the way it is. Try to obtain more land to connect to other open areas

Our youth are under siege...they spend next to no time outdoors unless in a structured sports activity. Scouting provides them with this. It helps them appreciate the outdoors. They should not have to leave their own town to get closer to nature. And efforts by a vocal minority on this issue are an attack on Scouting.

Passive recreation

keep it the same

I love walking here and appreciate the opportunity to be in an undeveloped space within reading.

I value living in a town that provides its residents access to an undeveloped, natural habitat where my family can enjoy being outdoors and reconnecting with nature. Natural animal habitats are dwindling. I feel it is important to maintain current, undeveloped areas as such.

None

As someone with a high-energy dog, the town forest is vital. Nowhere else in Reading is as rewarding for a dog to run off leash as the town forest. It is safe and provides ample opportunity for dogs to sniff, swim, and generally do what dogs do!

I would be very upset if the Town Forest was reduced in size. It is critical to maintain a natural environment for wildlife and plants and families to enjoy.

I enjoy letting my dogs run off the leash, and they look forwarded to it too.

I am an active adult member of Boy Scout Troop 704, Reading and we utilize the Town Forest for campfires and weekend campouts many times during the course of the year. open space, family activity destination

23. Please provide us with your email address if you would you like to be notified of an upcoming public meeting on Town Forest use .