

Access to Off-Road Recreation/Walking Orange, MA

Recreation Type

- Snowmobiling
- Hiking
- Cross-Country Skiing
- Snowshoeing
- Hunting
- Mtn. Biking

Franklin County Bikeway

0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Sources: Map produced by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department. GIS data sources include MassDOT, MassGIS, Mass Fish & Wildlife, FRCOG, Franklin Land Trust, Trustees of Reservations, New England Forestry Foundation, North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce, and the Town of Orange. Depicted boundaries are approximate and are intended for planning purposes only, not to be used for survey.



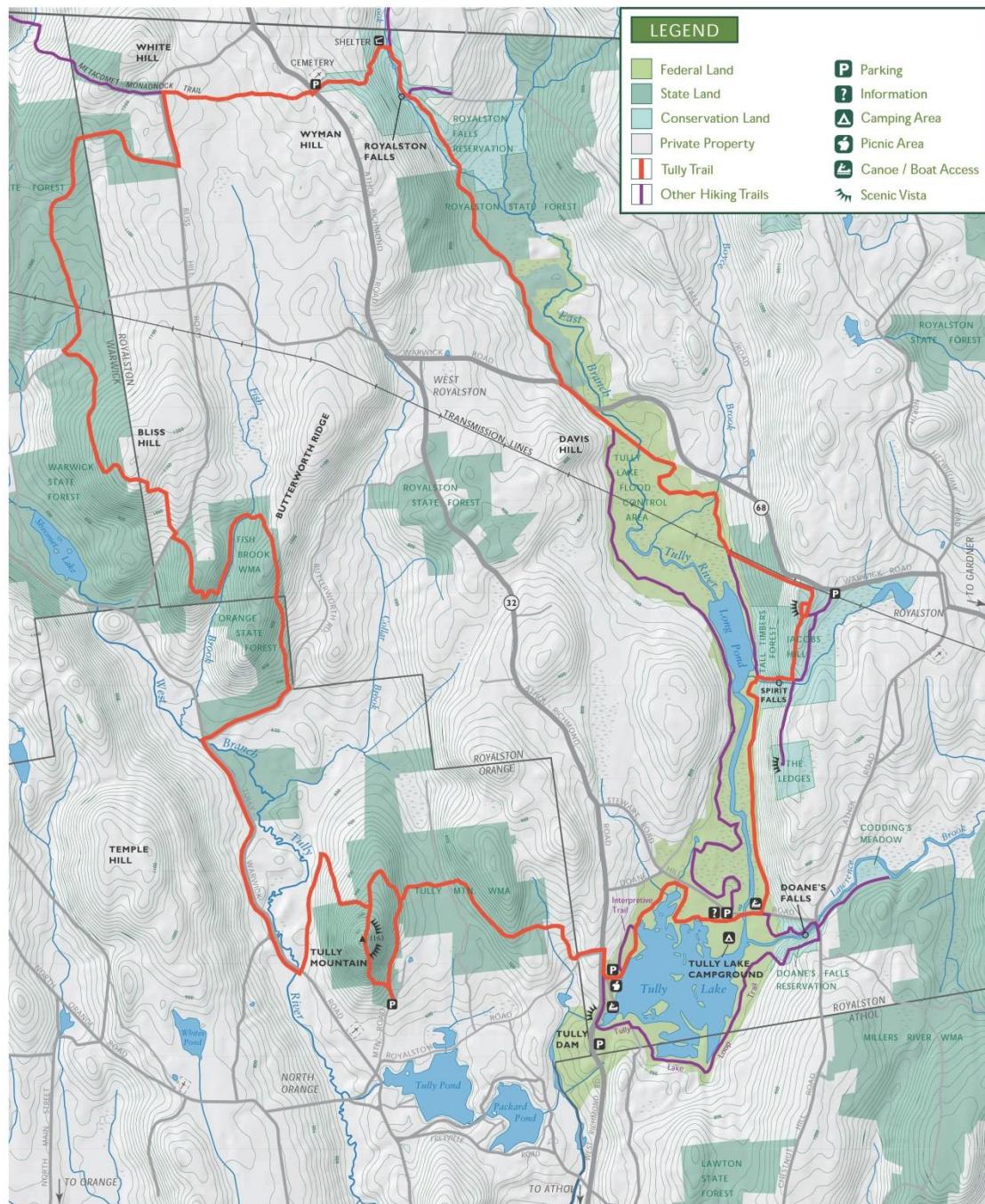
Franklin Regional Council of Governments



TULLY TRAIL

Doane Hill Road • Royalston, Massachusetts
978.248.9455 (off-season) • 978.249.4957 (in-season)
central@ttr.org • www.thetrustees.org • www.tullylakecampground.org

A PROPERTY OF THE TRUSTEES OF RESERVATIONS



SWIMMING



BIRD
WATCHING



PICNICKING



WALKING / HIKING
(EASY)



CANOEING /
KAYAKING



SAILBOATING /
BOATING



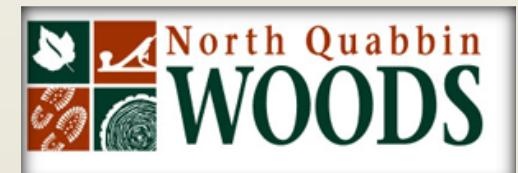
CAMPING



FISHING



MOBILITY-IMPAIRED
ACCESS



(A) The 75-acre Fittz Family Memorial Forest is adjacent to the Orange, Town Forest and other protected land and provides a valuable link in the North Pond Ridge Trail, itself a link in the larger Chestnut Hill Trail system. The memorial forest's trail begins in a stand of mixed hardwood, proceeds along a ridge dominated by oak and pine, and then descends through a hemlock woods to a lovely stream. Recreation, forestry, and scientific and educational activities are the management goals of the New England Forestry Foundation for this land.

(B) The 1½-mile North Pond Ridge Trail, blazed in yellow, begins in the Fittz Family Memorial Forest in Orange, descends to a stream, then climbs to and proceeds along North Pond Ridge. This ridge affords evidence of past hurricanes, bent trees serving as witness. About halfway along the trail is a short spur west that leads to a woodland bench and a gorgeous view of Chestnut Hill Ridge. Near the southern end of the ridge, the path connects with the white-blazed Bullard Farm Loop, another section of the Chestnut Hill Trail system.

(C) This area consists of two parcels donated by two different families, the 187-acre Hosmer Woods and the 49-acre Webb Forest. Low-quality hardwoods were taken over after a 1920s logging operation, but under NEFF's active management, the forest today is dominated by wonderful stands of white pine. The haul roads through the parcels also serve as inviting trails for visitors.

(D) The Orange Wildlife Management Area has over 1,500 acres in several parcels, the largest encompassing a beautiful beaver pond of about 80 acres on North Main St. The area also includes forested tracts of mixed hard- and softwoods, brushy fields, open fields, and several small streams and wetlands. Deer, bear, turkey, coyote, beaver, raccoon, woodcock and various non-game species visit or make their homes here.

(E) The magnificent 22-mile Tully Trail traverses forested sections of the WMA and follows the public road along the meadow. The long-term plan is to relocate the trail off-road, a project that will require a lengthy footbridge across Collar Brook. Tully Meadow is the dedication site of the North Quabbin Bioreserve, where a combination of state and private agencies and willing private landowners have protected over 120,000 acres - truly a landscape-scale conservation project.

(F) Tully Lake Recreation Area protects about four miles of the Tully River, including Long Pond, where the river widens, and the 200-acre Tully Lake, created by a flood-control dam. The wetlands and the forest support a wide variety of flora and fauna, lists of which are available online. The land and the lake offer numerous recreational opportunities, including camping, picnicking, boating, fishing, and hiking. A one-mile interpretive trail introduces visitors to both natural and cultural history; another trail loops around the lake and connects to scenic vistas and waterfalls. Part of this loop constitutes one leg of the Tully Trail. This scenic and ecologically diverse area of 1,200 acres in several parcels encompasses Tully Mountain itself, 3,000 feet of frontage on the West Branch of the Tully River and one of its tributaries, Collar Brook; and Tully Meadow, where beavers have engineered parts of the river into a rich wetland. Incredibly diverse, the area boasts at least 13 habitat types, including various kinds of forests, swamps, seeps, talus slopes, and open bedrock slabs. The river is stocked with trout and the old fields with pheasant, and deer, bear, bobcat, coyote, turkey, raccoons, snakes, woodcock and numerous other species visit or make their homes here.

This information has been provided by the North Quabbin Community Coalition @ www.northquabbinwoods.org

MILLERS RIVER BLUE TRAIL

ATHOL & ORANGE SEGMENT

Paddling Options

The Athol & Orange segment of the Millers River accommodates paddlers of all ages and skill levels, and can be enjoyed from either direction and for varying distances.

Some suggestions (distances/times approximate, depending on how long you linger):

- Rich Park, Athol (#2) downstream to Orange Riverfront Park (#22): 6 miles (3-4 hours)
- Orange Riverfront Park (#22) upstream to Daniel Shays Highway bridge and return downstream: 6 miles (3-4 hours)
- Rich Park (#2) downstream to Mass. Fish & Wildlife protected area (see map icon X near #7), return upstream to Rich Park: 4 miles (2-3 hours)

Come and be inspired!

What to look for:

Blue herons. These striking birds are often found in the ponded backwaters and coves along the trail, where they fish for food in the shallows.

Wood Turtles. Cass Meadow hosts this turtle, which is medium-sized (5.5-8 in.) and can be recognized by its sculpted shell and orange coloration on the legs and neck. It is a species of "special concern."

Dragonflies. Damselflies, including the American Rubyspot*, favor the quicker, gravel-bottomed river upstream of the Daniel Shays highway, whereas the Eastern Amberwing dragonfly (shown on reverse) likes the slower river downstream.

Mussels. The Millers River is home to five species of mussels, including the Triangle Floater*, which is "of special concern" due to its low abundance in this stretch. The Eastern Elliptio is abundant.

Fish. The river is stocked with trout. Fishermen will find bass and northern pike; some large pike have been caught.

Footprints. Keep an eye out for footprints in the mud along the river-banks. You may identify beavers, mink, otter*, raccoons or other wildlife.

Invasive plants. Along the banks in August you may see the beautiful, but non-native invasive, Purple Loosestrife, as well as Japanese knotweed, which looks like bamboo. In some coves you may see invasive aquatic plants like milfoil* and cabomba. Please report these to MRWC.

... and more

Map location

Legend

- Town centers
- State land
- River and ponds
- Streams
- Intermittent streams
- Wetlands
- Canoe/kayak access point & parking
- Paddle stops
- State highway
- Major road
- Secondary road
- Railroad tracks
- Town lines
- Points of interest – see reverse side of guide
- Ancient lake shore (#10)

About this River Guide

Rich in both natural and cultural history, as well as tranquil beauty, the inaugural Athol & Orange Segment of the Millers River Blue Trail flows undisturbed between the downtowns of two former mill towns in the North Quabbin Region of rural north central Massachusetts. Along its nearly 6-mile, gently winding length, paddlers seeking recreation, solitude and inspiration pass locations prized by Native Americans, early industrialists, 19th century pleasure-seekers and present-day naturalists. Wildlife is abundant: blue heron, otter, painted turtles and bald eagles can be observed, as can several species of less-common odonates like clubtail dragonflies.

This map guide is designed to acquaint visitors from near and far with some of this river segment's many distinguished but lesser known natural and historical features and recreational opportunities. The Millers River Blue Trail is a community partnership working to strengthen river stewardship and community vitality throughout the North Quabbin Region and the Millers River Watershed.

River Safety & Etiquette

The Millers River flows relatively smoothly between downtown Athol and Orange throughout the paddling season. However, paddlers should always be on the lookout for downed trees, rocks and other obstacles that can pose serious hazards. Wearing a life jacket is recommended—and required October through May. Highlighted Paddle Stops X may be used for brief pullouts—these stops are marked by Blue Trail signs. Stay near your boat and "leave no trace" of your visit. Please respect private property and avoid trespassing and littering at all times. Enjoy wildlife quietly and from a safe distance.

Useful Resources

Athol Bird & Nature Club: www.millersriver.net/abnc for nature programs and events calendar
North Quabbin Woods: www.northquabbinwoods.org for recreational opportunities
North Quabbin Chamber of Commerce: www.northquabbinchamber.com for local business listings
Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust: www.mountain.org for regional land protection
Millers River Trout Unlimited: www.millersriver-tu.org for fishing and habitat protection

Millers River Watershed Council, Inc.

The Millers River Watershed Council, Inc. was founded in 1970 to protect the health of the Millers River and its watershed. MRWC remains a small organization focused on providing volunteer water monitoring, as well as recreational and educational activities for watershed residents. MRWC also serves as an advocate for local concerns and works collaboratively with towns, government agencies and community members to provide effective long-term solutions.

To support the Millers River Blue Trail and other MRWC projects, please contact us at:
100 Main Street, Athol, MA 01331 • 978-248-9491 • email@millersriver.org

Visit our website: www.millerswatershed.org

Underwriters: MRWC is grateful to the following for supporting the printing of this Map Guide: Athol Savings Bank, Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, Erving Paper Mills, Rodney Hunt Company, North Quabbin Garlic and Arts Festival and Athol-Orange Rotary Club. This project is also supported in part by grants from the Athol and Orange Cultural Councils, local agencies which are supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

MCC masscouncil.org