

The Dover Stone Church property is listed in the New York State Open Space Plan and the National Register of Historic Sites and Places.

When the privately-owned 58.5-acre property was offered for sale in 2002, the Town of Dover moved to purchase this historical natural area so closely entwined in the town's history and culture.

The acquisition and preservation of the Stone Church site was the result of a collaborative effort between the Town of Dover, the Dutchess Land Conservancy and the Friends of the Dover Stone Church, a local citizens group.

Grants secured from state and local sources helped restore the former maple tree-lined right-of-way, build a path from the village, and install a footbridge over the Stone Church Brook.

In 2009, neighboring property owners graciously donated a conservation easement on 50 acres adjacent to the historic right-of-way and subsequently donated 63 acres in fee along the land's southern border to the Town to expand the Stone Church Preserve and further protect the site's natural beauty and ecology.

In 2014, the Town of Dover, with grant funding from the Dutchess Land Conservancy acquired an additional 52 acres of land adjoining the southern border of the preserve. Three miles of nature trails were blazed and opened in the summer of 2015 to enjoy the unique rock outcroppings, scenic vistas and fauna of the West Mountain ridge and appreciate the Stone Church's age-old ecological history.

**Take Only Memories...
Leave Only Footprints...**

A Brief History of the Dover Stone Church

The first reference to the Dover Stone Church comes from legend dating back to the mid-1600's when Pequot sachem Sassacus who, with his warriors, hid in the cave to escape capture and death by the British Army.

The Stone Church has been visited and sketched by famous artists and authors in the 1800's and 1900's that included:

- Asher Durand, a prominent engraver and landscape artist, sketched the site in 1847 and was a central figure of the Hudson River School of Art.
- Benson Lossing, a distinguished author, illustrator and historian in the 1800's, resided in the Town of Dover and sketched and engraved the cave. He published sketches of interior and exterior views of the cave entrance in the booklet, *The Dover Stone Church*.
- In the 1835-36 edition of "Family Magazine," it mentioned the Stone Church as a "singular and interesting curiosity" that drew thousands of visitors to the site, many of whom stayed at the (former) Stone Church Hotel.
- During the Great Depression, Arthur Powell and other landscape artists painted the site as part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) to employ artists and skilled workers on public works projects.

Park Rules / Safety tips

Site is open dawn to dusk, weather permitting.

Dogs on town property must be leashed.

Hike at your own risk. Rough terrain, water hazards, trail and rocks may be uneven and slippery. Wear sturdy footwear.

Accessible to hikers only. No motorized vehicles or bicycles allowed.

Watch for ticks and snakes.

Stay on the designated paths and marked nature trails to respect the privacy of adjacent private property owners.

No rock climbing allowed.

No swimming allowed.

Do not pick flowers, disturb plant life or wildlife.

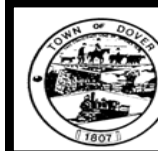
No alcoholic beverages, firearms, camping or fires allowed in the park.

No garbage disposal available – **carry out** what you bring in.

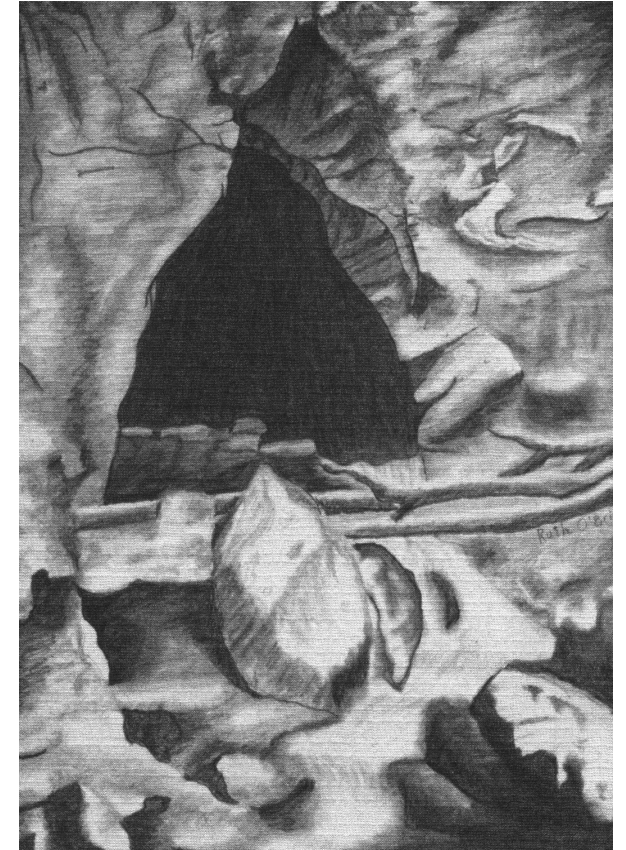
Children must always be supervised.

Call 911 in case of emergency.

**Enjoy and respect our
incomparable park!**



The Dover Stone Church Visitor's Guide



*Welcome to the Town of Dover
and the "Dover Stone Church"*

*A remarkable geological and historical landmark,
located on the Stone Church Brook.*

*Enjoy a glimpse back into the early history of
Eastern Dutchess County at a site protected
and preserved by town residents for you and
future generations.*

IMPORTANT NOTICE:

The Dover Stone Church Park has no on-site parking and no Route 22 street address.

At the traffic light in Dover Plains, there is signage and a gravel right-of-way about 200 ft. south of the traffic light.

Visitors must park at one of the parking locations below:

- Dover Elementary School
9 School St., Dover Plains
- Tabor Wing House
3128 Route 22, Dover Plains
- Freshco 22 Deli & Restaurant
3156 Route 22, Dover Plains

Entrance to the Dover Stone Church right-of-way is by foot traffic only from Route 22

There is a sign posted at the bottom of a gravel driveway just south of the traffic light in the Dover Plains hamlet.

(south of the intersection of Route 22 and Mill Street in Dover Plains)

No vehicle access or parking is allowed on the gravel right-of-way.

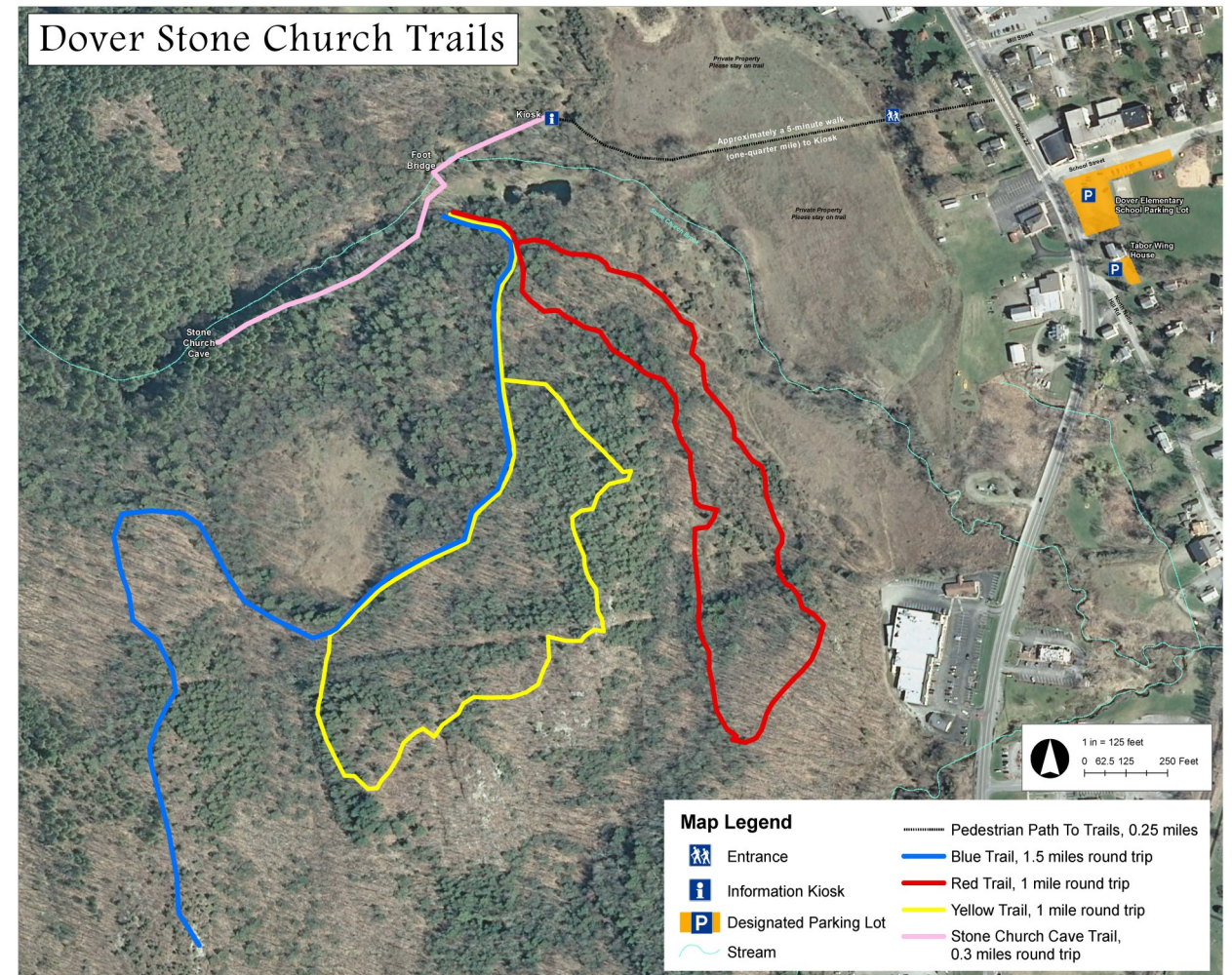


The right-of-way traverses private property. Please be respectful.

Please respect the privacy of right-of-way property owners. At the end of the gravel right-of-way, there is a Dover Stone Church sign (image below) and granite stairway. Follow the path through the field.



Dover Stone Church Trails



Features of the Dover Stone Church

Entrance: Large metamorphic rocks converge to form the entrance in the shape of a church's cathedral window. The gothic appearance of the cave entrance gave rise to the name "Stone Church."

"The Pulpit:" Inside the cavern is a rock ledge, affectionately given this name by Richard Maher, a Dover Plains resident and former town clerk who wrote the book, *Historic Dover* in 1908.

Stone Church Brook: This brook which flows through the Stone Church cavern is a tributary of the Ten Mile River. The Ten Mile River flows southeast and is a branch of the Housatonic River in Connecticut.

Waterfall: Inside the cavern, there is a 30-foot waterfall cascading into a pool of water that flows through and out the cavern entrance and continues as the Stone Church Brook.

