

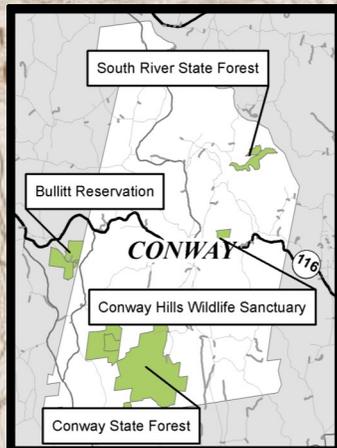
# Trails of Conway, Massachusetts - An Historic Perspective -



Conway State Forest—Photo Michael Madole

The Town of Conway, Massachusetts, (est. 1767) is home to a rich natural and historical legacy. Many areas showcasing this legacy are openly accessible to local residents. The Conway Parks, Recreation, and Trails Committee, in cooperation with the Conway Historical Commission and MassLIFT Americorps, has developed two trail maps to help better inform people of their heritage. Both areas featured are maintained by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

In the mid-late 1800s, Conway was a bustling mill town, with multiple factories churning out a variety of goods from the banks of the South River. Scattered through the then mostly-cleared hillsides were numerous small farms, schoolhouses, and churches. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, an electric trolley ran from the center of town to two steam railroad stations next to the Deerfield River, from which residents could catch trains to Greenfield and beyond.

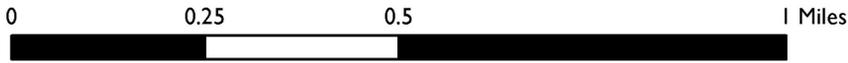
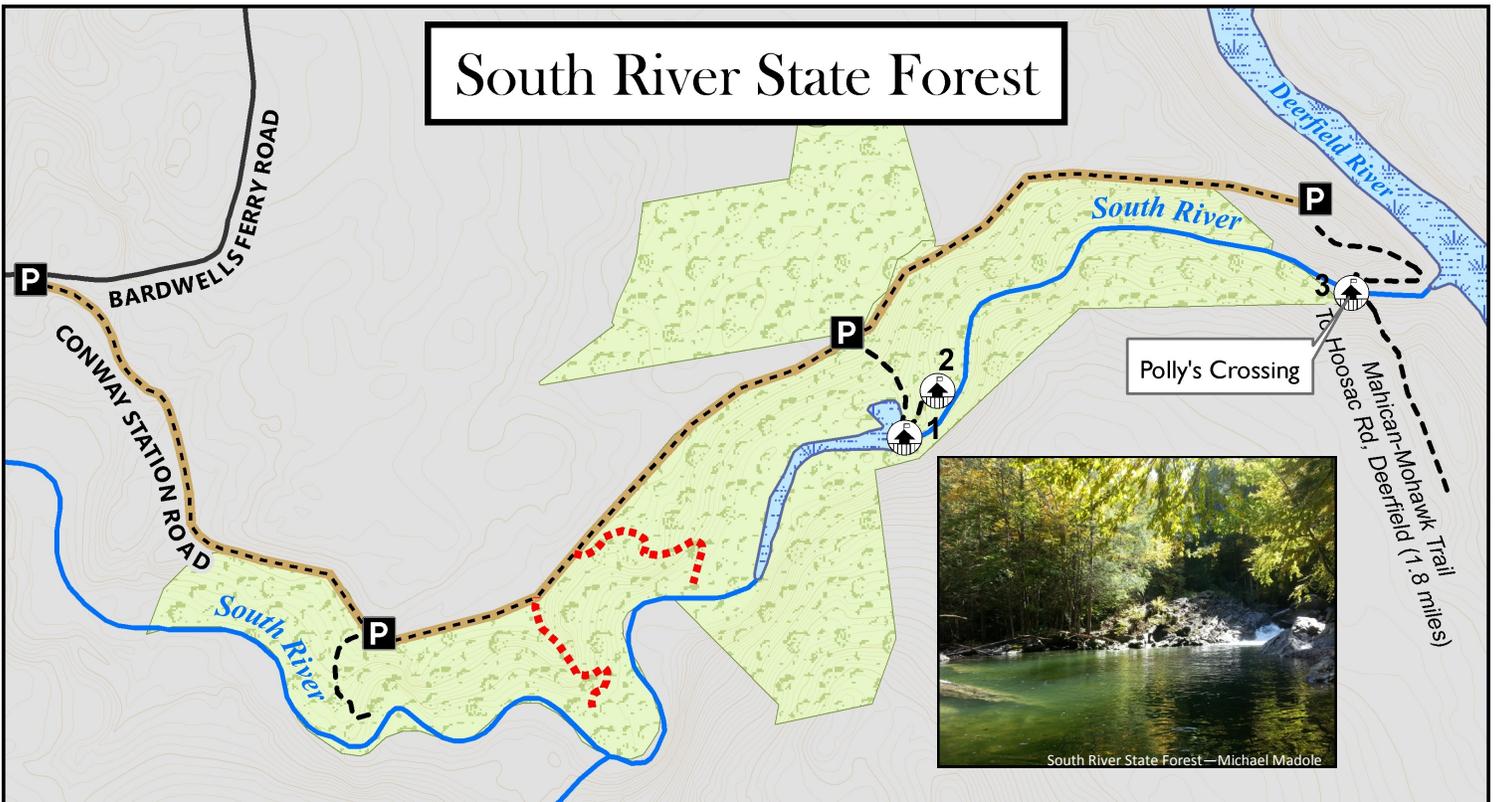


Though the landscape has changed, evidence of this history still abounds throughout the hills and along the creeks and rivers. Please respect this legacy, of which you form a part, and leave these special places as you found them.

Other trails in the area include:

- Bullitt Reservation, property of the Trustees of Reservations
- Conway Hills Wildlife Sanctuary, property of Mass Audubon

# South River State Forest



- State Forest (DCR)
- Forest Road/Trail
- Trail

- Dirt Road / Seasonal
- Parking
- Historical Feature

— Elevation contours (3 m / 10 ft.)



These trails abut private land  
Please respect all  
boundary markers and signs



New Haven R. R. Bridge, Conway, Mass. Florence R. Howland's Series

The high trestle bridge (175 feet above the water) that crossed the South River near the confluence of the South and Deerfield Rivers.



Conway Station in Conway



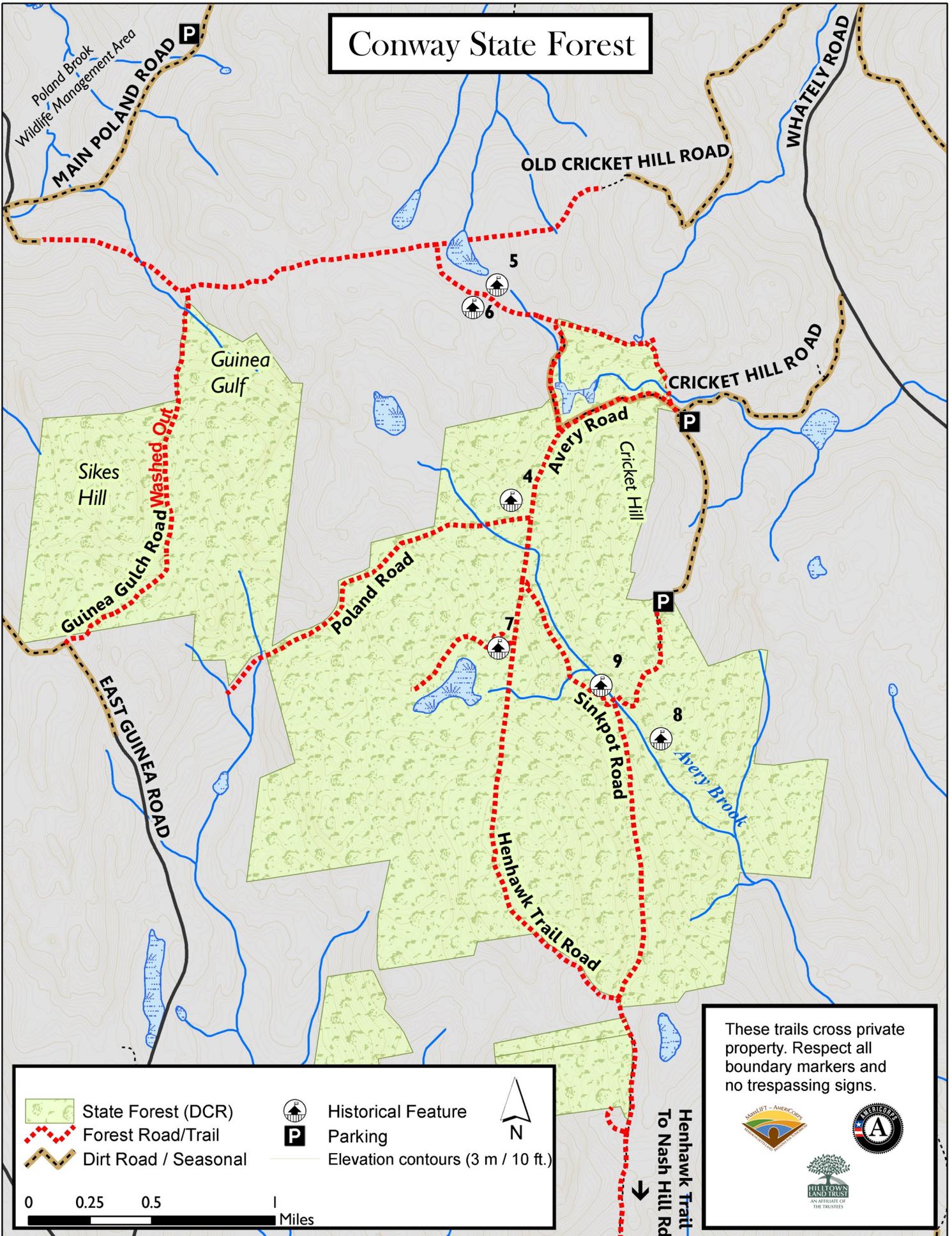
South River Station in Deerfield



Courtesy Conway Historical Society

Another view of the high trestle bridge. The stone piers visible in this photo still remain. Conway Station is out of view on the right side of this photo.

# Conway State Forest



These trails cross private property. Respect all boundary markers and no trespassing signs.

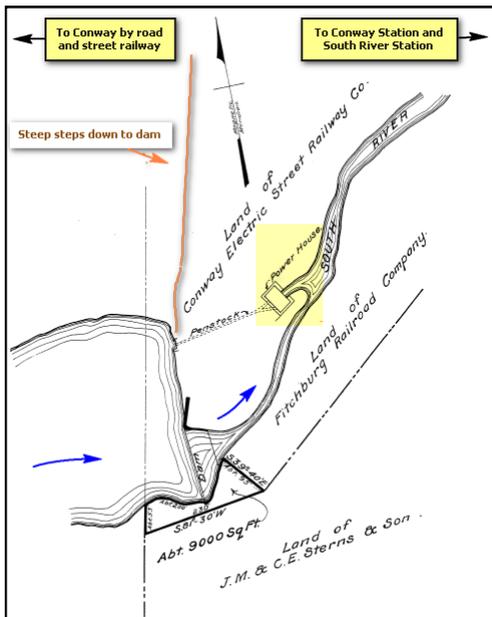
1. A 132-foot-long dam across the South River, built of logs c1897, and replaced with a concrete dam in 1910 by B&M Railroad, at a cost of \$40,000. The dam provided electricity to the Conway Electric Street Railway line (established in 1894 and constructed 1894-1895 and 1897), and later to homes in town via the Conway Electric Light & Power Co. The locally-established Electric Street Railway traveled 5.9 miles from downtown Conway to two separate "steam road" railroad lines reached via stations on opposite sides of the Deerfield River. The New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad's "Conway Station" was on the west side of the Deerfield River in Conway, at the terminus of Conway Station Road, and the Boston & Maine Railroad's "South River Station" was on the east side of the Deerfield River in Deerfield, which the Street Railway cars reached by crossing a bridge high above the Deerfield River.

2. The South River dam's power house was located deep in a ravine 200 feet below the dam. The isolated power house was manned in his youth by Malcolm Laidley, later a long-time B&M Railroad employee, a son of Conway Electric Street Railway entrepreneur and busy local doctor John B. Laidley. Dr. Laidley was a "mainspring" behind the Street Railway and dam enterprises. Electricity generated by the dam's water power was supplied to the Electric Street Railway line (established in 1894 and constructed 1894-1895, with an 1897 extension across the Deerfield River), and, by November, 1900, the power house began supplying electricity to homes in town for the first time, in the evening and again at dawn for several hours a day.

3. A footbridge built on the stone piers of the high, steam railroad trestle bridge of the New York, New Haven, & Hartford Railroad, that in the late 1800s crossed 175 feet above the South River. The bridge was the highest in the state at the time, and carried traffic south and east from Conway Station, which was located on the point of land at the confluence of the South and Deerfield Rivers in Conway, where vehicles now park.

4. Foundation of the Avery home owned by Deacon William Avery and his descendants from 1782 until 1853, and apparently never lived in by another family. Deacon Avery, of Dedham, MA, bought Original Proprietor Lots 50 & 51, totalling 300 acres, in 1782. In 1853 William's grandson Deacon Joseph Avery ("noted for his unostentatious benevolence and piety, for showing his faith by his works") sold the home and the remainder of the land to David Crittenden (son of Medad & Mary Boyden Crittenden), who moved to Maple Street, rather than to the farm, until his death in 1866, after which the property was sold to John B. Packard by David's son George Crittenden.

5. The private Maynard family burial ground, established by Malachi & Elizabeth Maynard, whose Conway farm abutted both sides of this road (the 1766 county road from Hatfield to Ashfield). The home site was across the road. Malachi moved to Conway by 1770 (soon followed by several of his brothers), and purchased the east end of Lot 53 from Original Proprietor David Burt. Elizabeth died at 36, in 1785, after which Malachi married Anna Hale, and added part of Lot 52 to the farm - on which they made their home until his death in 1824. Anna died in 1825. Of Malachi & Elizabeth's four children, three were stillborn, and may be among those buried here.



Map of railway dam and power house



Courtesy Field Memorial Library

Fidelia Nash Field

John Field and Fidelia Nash Field

6. Site of a home originally built in or soon after 1771 by Malachi Maynard, who was born in Westborough in 1745 and moved to Conway by 1770. Maynard's first wife Elizabeth died young in 1785, after which Malachi married Anna Hale. Maynard represented Conway in the Massachusetts Legislature for three terms, and was town treasurer for 26 years, despite having only six weeks of formal schooling. Maynard once carried two pigs and 19 shad, in bags, on foot from Hatfield to this farm, resting at midnight against a tree on Poplar Hill, a mile southeast of here. This property is now owned by the Town of Conway, which bought it from a Maynard grandson in 1889 to use as the (last) town poor farm.

7. The foundation of a home built about 1800 by Elijah Nash, who moved to Conway from Williamsburg and owned Original Proprietor Lot 49 from 1794-1839, as well as part of Original Proprietor Lots 87 & 88 beginning in 1802. Nash married Pollina/Paulina (Polly) Warner in 1796, and their daughter

Fidelia, born in 1806, was the mother of Chicago merchant Marshall Field, a grandson. The last owners to reside in the Nash-built home were Lyman & Electa Smith, who bought the farm in 1845, and moved to Amherst in 1859. The town road passing the home (south to the Williamsburg town line) was discontinued in 1875.

8. Foundation of a large pre-1830 water-powered mill (apparently a sawmill) on Avery Brook, on or near Original Proprietor Lot 87.

9. Foundations of a home and pre-1830 water-powered mill on Avery Brook, on or near Original Proprietor Lot 87, where the road crosses the brook. .



Courtesy Bradford/Osgood family

Conway Road and Buggy