

C - 4 Coonamessett Reservation

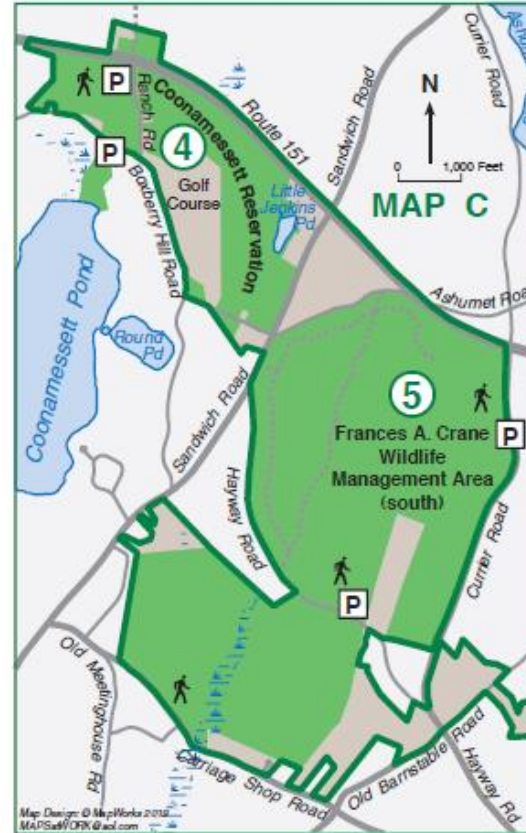
– A Cape Cod Inn

The 212 acre Coonamessett Reservation has a rich history. Eighty years ago, when Hatchville was an important dairy center, the land was part of The Coonamessett Ranch Corporation owned by the Crane family of Woods Hole. The family leased the property to Edna Harris in 1930, and under her direction the Coonamessett Inn grew in fame and prosperity. The inn was demolished in 1987. A small parking lot on Ranch Road provides access to the former polo field, as well as to trails on the other side of Ranch Road leading to Little Jenkins Pond. This area protects the Coonamessett and Crooked Pond town well sites and provides a critical link between the two sections of the State's Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area. It contains a variety of plant and wildlife habitats and guarantees public access to a beach on Coonamessett Pond, the largest pond in Falmouth. The polo field is a remnant of the now rare sandplain grasslands, one of the Cape's distinguishing critical habitats for endangered species. A new project to expand the native grasslands and create more pollinator meadows on the Reservation was initiated in 2017 by several Mashpee Wildlife Refuge partners. This will enhance the habitat for endangered and rare wildlife species of birds and provide a rich diversity of native Cape Cod plants important for pollinators such as native bees, hummingbirds, and migrating monarch butterflies.

C - 5 Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area - South

– A Landscape of History

Open habitats such as grasslands, shrublands, and young forest are an important part of the New England landscape. Fires set by Native Americans, wildfires, and later colonial agricultural practices, created extensive open habitats. As Massachusetts agricultural lands were abandoned from the 1850's into the early 1900's, and as the use of fuelwood gave way to fossil fuels, fallow fields, and abandoned woodlots became very productive wildlife habitat for species such as American woodcock, whip-poor-will, prairie warbler, eastern towhee, field sparrow, and New England cottontail. Eventually, abandoned fields and woodlots succeeded to closed-canopy forest and wildlife species dependent on open habitats declined dramatically. The 150+ acres of contiguous sandplain grassland occurring at Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area is one of the best remnants of this habitat in Massachusetts. Prescriptions for expanding the grasslands include tree removal, mowing, grading, fire, herbicide treatment, and native warm season grass seeding. Collectively, these actions will provide habitat for both state-listed species and traditional game species such as American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and cottontail rabbits.



Using fire to re-set the landscape