

Dover Stone Church Acquisition

The Dover Stone Church property is listed in the New York State Open Space Plan as an important site to preserve.

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 Dutchess Co. Open Space and Farmland Protection Matching Grant Program, the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation helped with the acquisition and for improvements to restore the former maple tree-lined right-of-way and to install a footbridge.

Matching funds were raised by the Friends of Dover Stone Church and the Dutchess Land Conservancy with the generous support of numerous residents, businesses and area supporters.

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.

This historical site is now owned by the Town of Dover and open to the public. Enjoy your visit.

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

Park Rules / Safety tips

Site is open dawn to dusk, weather permitting

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 be supervised.

Call 911 in case of emergency.

We welcome visits from groups and organizations. Please contact the following organizations to arrange a guided tour of the Stone Church :

Friends of the Dover Stone Church
(845) 832-6111

Dutchess Land Conservancy
(845) 677-3002



The Dover Stone Church Visitor's Guide



*Welcome to the Town of Dover
and the "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 and a site protected and preserved by
town residents for you and future generations.*

*Route 22
Dover Plains, New York,*

Directions

From Northeastern Dutchess County:

Take NYS Route 22 South to Dover Plains, NY.

From Southeastern Dutchess County, Putnam and Westchester Counties and NYC:

Take NYS Route 22 North to Dover Plains, NY

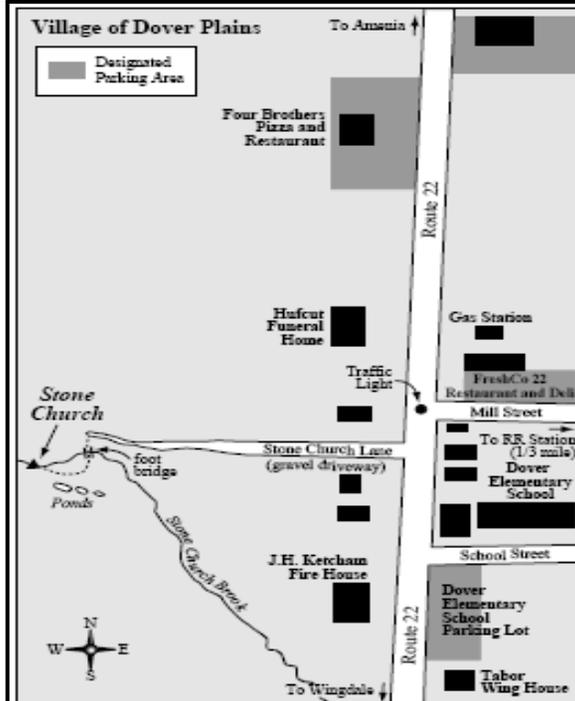
From Poughkeepsie, and points west:

Take Route 44 East and continue on to Route 343 East at Millbrook, NY. Stay on Rt. 343 for eight miles to Dover Plains to the junction of Route 22 South. Turn right onto Route 22 South to Dover Plains, NY.

See Map for Parking Locations

From Metro North's Dover Plains Station:

Walk from Market St. to Mill St. and turn right. Take Mill St. to traffic light at Route 22. Entrance is a gravel driveway off of Route 22 on the right side looking south just below the traffic light.



Parking Locations (See Map)

Dover Elementary School –

when school is not in session (after 3:00PM), weekends and holidays.

The Tabor Wing House

(3128 Route 22, Dover Plains, NY)

Four Brothers Restaurant

All within a short walking distance to the right-of-way lane leading to the Dover Stone Church.

Entrance

First right after the traffic light going south (*there is a sign post at entrance to private gravel driveway*). **No vehicle access or parking is allowed at this location - see map.**

The right-of-way traverses private property.

Please respect the privacy of adjacent property owners. Follow the gravel path through the field.

The entire hike is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ m.

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 Mashantucket Pequot Indian sachem, Sassacus, who, with his warriors, hid in the cave to escape capture and death by the English 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, engraver and landscape artist sketched the site in 1847 and was a central figure of the Hudson River School of Art.
- Benson Lossing, distinguished author and historian in the 1800s resided in the Town of Dover and was the author of *The Dover Stone Church* and *The History of Dutchess County*.

- "The Family Magazine" N.Y. published 1835-6 described the Stone Church as a "singular and interesting curiosity" and reports that the site was a popular attraction drawing thousands of visitors many of whom stayed at the Stone Church Hotel.
- During the Great Depression, Arthur Powell and other landscape artists painted the site through the WPA (Works Program Administration) enacted by President Franklin Roosevelt.

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 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 resident 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.

Planned Site Improvements

Hiking trails, nature walks, sitting areas, historical programs & environmental studies.

Other Hiking Locations

- Nature Conservancy Nellie Hill Preserve, Route 22, Dover Plains
- Nature Conservancy Roger Perry Memorial Preserve, Sand Hill Road, Dover Plains