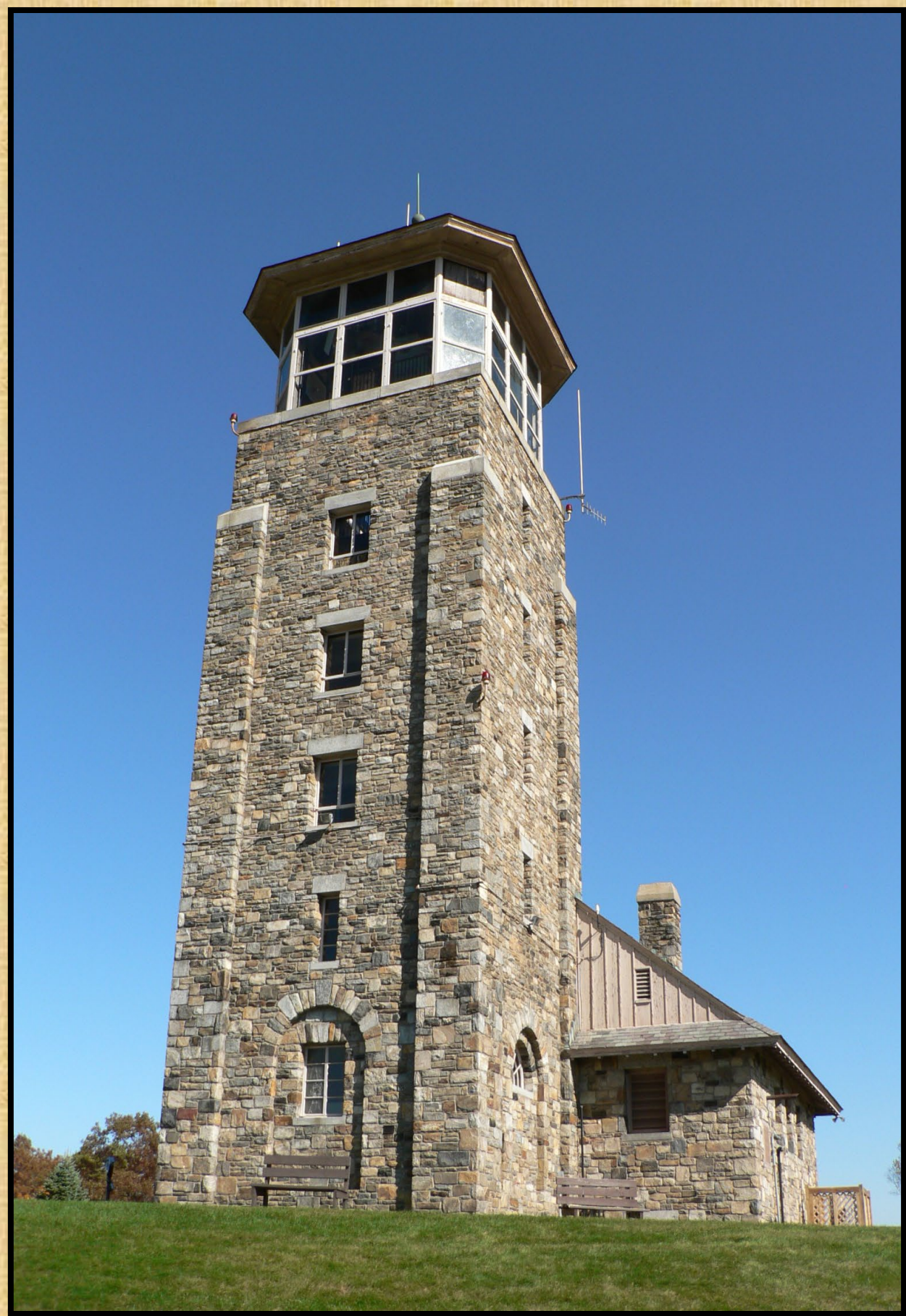


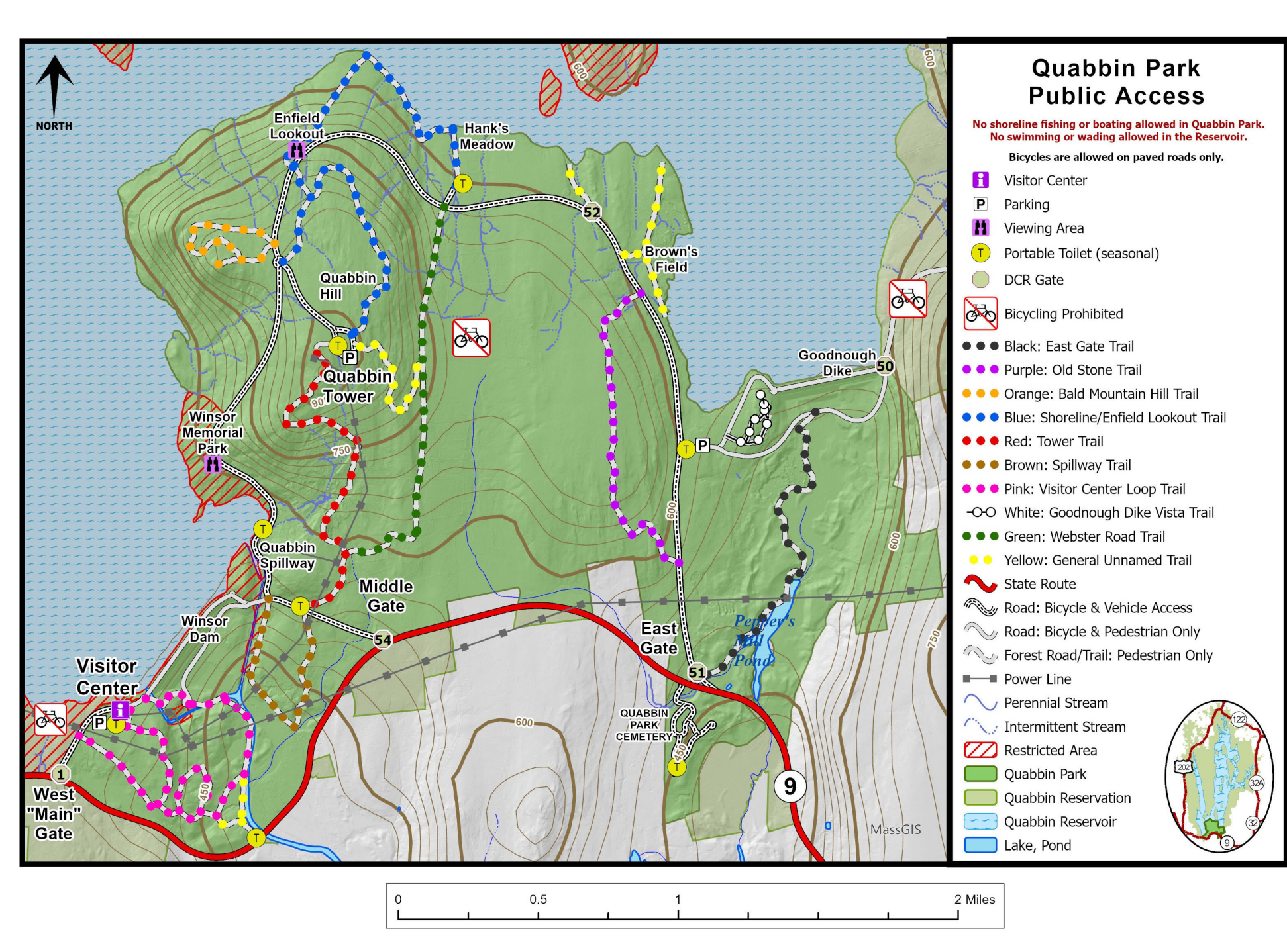
# The Quabbin Observation Tower



The Observation Tower sits atop Big Quabbin Hill

When planners designed the Quabbin Reservoir in the 1920's and 30's, there was a deliberate decision to create a special portion of the vast Quabbin watershed as an area for the public to visit and marvel at the engineering feat. A 3,200 acre section of land at the southern end of the reservoir was designed to showcase some of the project's features. When the area opened to the public in 1946, access was provided along 10 miles of the Quabbin Administration Road that took visitors over the Winsor Dam and Goodnough Dike (both closed to motor vehicle traffic after 2001) to the Spillway and Waterfall, Winsor Memorial, Enfield Lookout, Hanks Meadow and to the summit of Big Quabbin Hill, the site of the Quabbin Lookout Tower.

Built between 1940 and 1941, the Quabbin Lookout Tower sits at an elevation of 1,033 feet above sea level at its base and rises an additional 84 feet in height, which is nearly 600 feet higher than the reservoir surface. It was designed as a multi-purpose structure as a forest fire lookout, base for communications equipment, utility building and observation feature for the public. H. P. Cummings Construction Company from Ware, MA was awarded the contract for \$71,165.00 which included construction of the public bathrooms adjacent to the parking lot. The access road and parking lot work was a separate contract, awarded to the G. Rotondi & Sons construction firm.



The Lookout Tower operated as a fire lookout post during periods of high forest fire danger until the early 1970's, when it was taken out of service. When the Quabbin Park area opened to the public in 1946 the Tower became one of the prime locations to take in an expansive view of the Quabbin Reservoir and the surrounding landscape. From its location perched high atop Great Quabbin Hill, the observation deck provides a commanding view of the central and western Massachusetts region. Scanning the horizon, it is possible to pick out Mt. Wachusett to the northeast, Mt. Monadnock (NH) to the north, Mt. Greylock to the northwest and the skylines of Springfield and Hartford, CT to the south. Closer by, familiar landmarks such as the Mt. Holyoke and Mt. Tom ranges, Belchertown Center, Holyoke, Ragged Mountain, the Prescott Peninsula, Gate 8 boat launch area and some of Quabbin's 60 islands are visible. Mt. Greylock, the highest point in Massachusetts at 3,491' above sea level, is also the greatest sight distance from the Tower at 62 miles.



Excavation for basement in the utility Building, looking to the northwest. 11/26/40.



Masonry and scaffolding on public restroom building, look to the northeast. 12/9/40.



Utility Building and Tower under construction 12/18/40.



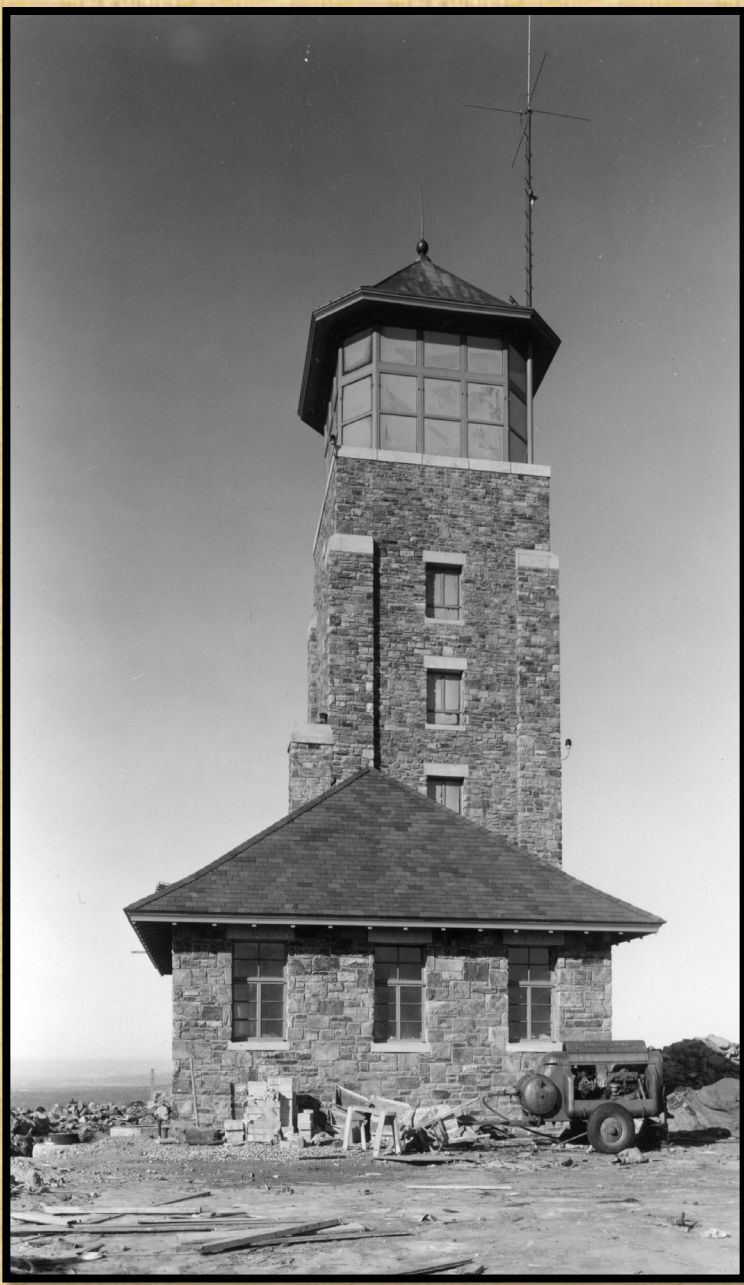
Looking northeasterly from observation floor of Tower. 4/8/41. The filling reservoir is visible in the upper left corner.



Looking southwest across parking lot at Quabbin Hill buildings. 1/6/41.



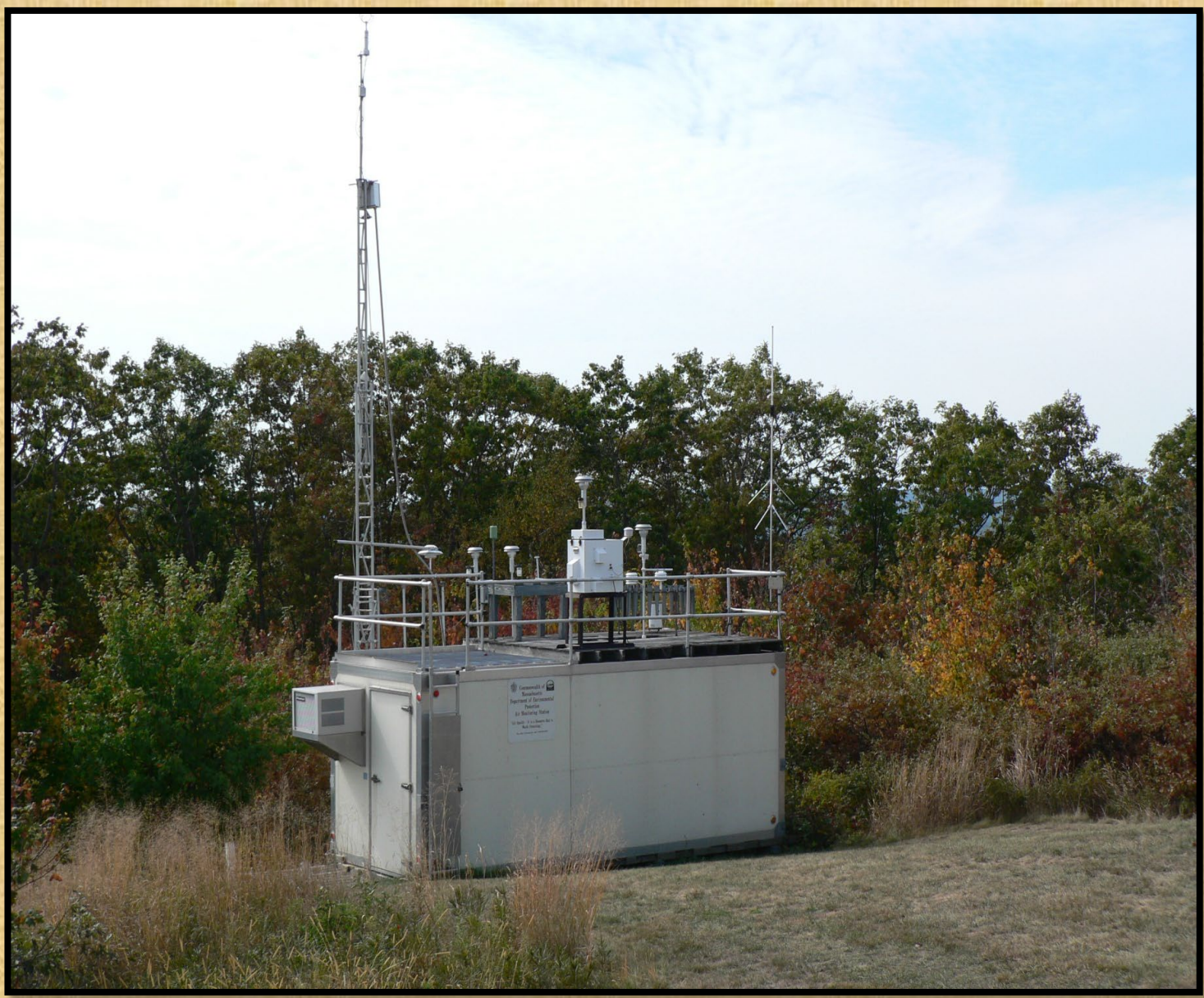
Looking southwest across parking lot at nearly completed restroom and Tower buildings. 4/8/41.



Nearly completed Tower and adjacent Utility Building 1/6/41.



View of Tower and Utility Building 9/26/10.



Air Assessment Station on Big Quabbin Hill.

Since 1985, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has operated an air quality monitoring station in the small building 100' south of the Tower. Part of a larger network of sites operated by DEP throughout the state, the station was originally established to study and monitor acid deposition/air pollution problems in Massachusetts. Since that time the facility has broadened its monitoring to include all aspects of air assessment. This station measures 15 different air quality parameters and provides valuable information on air assessment in the northeast United States.