A quaryman’s basic tool kit: pick, shovel, auger, hammer, wedge, and spoon.

3. Dog Holes
The single round hole on the face of this piece of granite is called a dog hole. Large granite blocks typically had a dog hole in one corner to indicate to the workers what part of the dog was needed to make the block easier to move. A dog hole, or a cluster of dog holes, that were splashed by water and chisel from a diamond-impregnated abrasive wheel sharpened the group of the dogs as the block was lifted from the quarry.

4. Dead Men
Large iron staples like the one in front of you were known as dead men. In the 1860s, all the quarrymen carried a dead man up to the mast and then anchored to dead men like this one, to hold a Derrick in place.

The orange-brown granite across the quarry is marked by yellow labels painted on granite blocks along the trail.

1. The Babson Farm Quarry
When quarrying ended here in 1929, man, Merrill and his crew of 90 workers moved away and the property here in 1934; the adjoining land was sold to the Town of Rockport and open for public use.

Babson Farm Quarry
Self-guided Walking Tour
Four steps through time marked by numbers painted on granite blocks along the trail.

8. Steam-powered Drills
The diameter of the drill holes in this split piece of granite, as well as their smoothness, is an indication that they were made with a steam-powered drill. When steam drills were invented in the 1860s, it became possible to cut deeper holes and thus quarry larger pieces of stone. Before steam drills came into use, even the deep holes needed for surfacing streets and public spaces were made by hand, sometimes with a 6-foot-long “iron turnover” that was swung back and forth, but they were hard to keep straight for long.

5. Working a Motion
The small body of water in front of you was once an active motion, the quarryman’s term for a small quarry. A motion was generally worked by two men who used drills and hammers and made circular holes into which half-round or oval-shaped cutting edges were struck with a hit-turn-hit-turn motion. This technique made circular holes into which half-round shims like the ones still in this stone were inserted. A motion was generally finished by a moving dog that was placed on top of the stone. Even with this improved technology, nearly 50% of the stone cut still needed to be chiseled by hand.

6. Splitting the Stone
Granite from the quarry area to the wharf at nearby Fully Cove where the stone was loaded onto specially designed ships that carried it to markets all over the hemisphere.

7. The Grout Pile
You are standing on a large grout pile, a mound of waste granite pieces that have been saved here over a period of many years. If you were to walk into the harp of the ground to your right toward the horizon, you will see a long line of granite bollards, the remains of the breakwater begun off the coast of Rockport in 1883. On both sides of this line, the granite bollards were made by hand, to protect the breakwater from storms and to make it easier for sailing ships. Lack of continued federal funding and the closing of sailing ships bought the era of granite bollards to a close. Since 1915, much of the granite from the Babson Farm Quarry went into building the breakwater which is now maintained by the National Park Service.

You are welcome to take this brochure with you, but if you are finished with it, please recycle it at the Visitors Center. If you have any questions, please visit the Visitors Center or in one of the boxes provided.

Brochure Recycling
Friends of Halibut Point State Park

The Friends of Halibut Point State Park is a nonprofit group formed in 1983 to support the park and its mission. The group’s objective is to implement and improve park facilities, enhance the park’s natural beauty, and increase the collection and preservation of artifacts related to granite quarrying on Cape Ann. A dedicated group of volunteers work to protect special places across the state.

Forests and Parks Guide to Recreation call DEM’s Office (413) 545-5353. For a free copy of the Massachusetts State Parks brochure, request. Call DEM’s Universal Access Office at (617) 727-3180. This brochure can be made available in other formats upon request.

Please, no:
- motor vehicles or bicycles
- fires
- quarry swimming
- fences
- parking
- guide dogs

The Department of Environmental Management manages the land and resources over which it holds jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It works to protect water resources, waterways and dams.

Founded in 1932, The Trustees of Reservations is a member supported nonprofit conservation organization. It protects properties of exceptional beauty, history, and scientific value in Massachusetts and works to protect special places across the state.

The Trustees of
Reservations

History

Halibut Point itself is made of sheets of 440 million-year-old granite that now shows hint of a rocky headland to the tidal pools below. An area of bluegreen soil, constant exposure to elements, and a history of frequent fires, storms and landslides have shaped the landscape, where lichen and vascular plants thrive. Today, the area is an exclusive tidal community, sensitive to development. The park includes coastal salt marsh, mudflats, wetlands and maritime forests. A variety of species of waterfowl, including loons, grebes, ducks and an occasional porpoise can be seen in the protected waters.

Take Rt. 95 north to I-295 and follow signs to Rockport. After crossing the Annisquam River bridge, proceed 1.7 miles north on Rt. 127 north (Annisquam and Peggotty Bays). At the 0.5 mile marker turn left on the north side and the Old Farm Inn onto Gott Ave. From downtown Rockport, drop off Rt. 127 approximately 9 miles, turn right on the south end and the Old Farm Inn onto Gott Ave. From the north, drive on Rt. 127 approximately 6 miles, turn left on Gott Ave.

Directions to the Park

Visitor Guidelines

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Visit the Trustees of Reservations website or call (617) 546-2997 for further information on plans and schedules. For more information on the Trustees of Reservations, call (617) 546-2997.

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Photo by Bill Byrne, Department of Fisheries and Wildlife.