BERKLEY RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

TAUNTON RIVER LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Taunton River Wild & Scenic Study Committee

Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District

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INTRODUCTION

Heritage landscapes are places that are created by human interaction with the natural environment. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of the community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. This wealth of landscapes is central to each community's character; yet heritage landscapes are vulnerable and ever changing. For this reason it is important to take the first steps towards their preservation by identifying those landscapes that are particularly valued by the community – a favorite local farm, a distinctive neighborhood or mill village, a unique natural feature or the Taunton River corridor.

To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) and the Taunton Wild & Scenic River Study Committee have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program (HLI) to selected communities along the Taunton River. The primary goal of the program is to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected. The focus is on landscapes that have not been identified in previous survey efforts in a given community. Another important goal of the program is to provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a pilot project conducted in three southeast Massachusetts watersheds in 2002. This project is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land*. Experience from the 15 communities in the pilot project provided guidance for a similar program in 24 Essex County municipalities. Now the program has been extended to six communities along the Taunton River: Berkley, Fall River, Freetown, Raynham, Somerset and Taunton.

Each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-SRPEDD consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting at which interested residents and town officials offer community input by identifying potential heritage landscapes. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, usually accompanied by other community members. This group visits the priority landscapes identified in the meeting and gathers information about the community. The final product is the Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; identifies the resources and documentation that provide background information; provides a short description of the priority heritage landscapes visited; discusses planning issues identified by the community; and concludes with a brief discussion of survey and planning recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix.

BERKLEY HISTORY

Before European settlement Berkley was occupied by the Pocassets who were members of the Wampanoag tribe. They called the remote area Shawomat, meaning Out Lot. Assonet Neck at the junction of the Assonet and Taunton Rivers was a popular Native American fishing ground and gathering place because it included freshwater and marine food sources, proximity to good agricultural land and water routes for transportation.

English settlers arrived in the Berkley area by 1675 but settlement was slow due to the threat of attack from Native Americans during King Philip's War. The area initially functioned as an outlying part of Taunton. Settlers were drawn to the vicinity by the same resources that had attracted the Native Americans – abundance of food and other natural resources, and ease of transportation along the rivers.

Berkley was established as a town in 1735 from parts of Dighton and Taunton. It was sparsely settled through the colonial period, with only 787 residents in 1776. After the Revolutionary War agriculture remained the primary economic activity, although there was increased emphasis on farming for commercial, rather than personal, production. There were also marine-based activities, including shipbuilding along the Taunton River and a few small mills. Several potters were active on Assonet Neck in the early 19th century. Lack of available waterpower from running streams and brooks limited other industries.

After the Revolutionary War, Berkley increased its land area, annexing Assonet Neck from Dighton in 1799 and parts of Taunton in 1810 and 1842. The Taunton River continued to be the principal route for communication with the outside world although construction of the first Berkley-Dighton bridge across the Taunton in 1806 made access to the west easier. Berkley remained largely a farming community with linear settlement along colonial roads. In 1800 there were 115 houses in town. Center Village, North Burt Neighborhood (Burt's Corners) and Assonet Neck were small villages during this period. Shipbuilding continued in West Berkley (Bridge Village) in the first half of the 19th century, but the town remained primarily agricultural. There was considerable out migration in the late 18th and 19th century due to the remoteness of the area and later to the availability of industrial jobs in nearby communities such as Fall River. Population increases occurred primarily through annexation of territory from Dighton and Taunton.

By the end of the Civil War, Berkley was still a farming community with 129 farms producing Indian corn, potatoes and various fruits. Industries included shipbuilding, although at a reduced rate from earlier periods, shoemaking and sewing braid for straw hats. The first Berkley-Dighton Bridge was torn down in 1853 with a new one constructed in 1873. The present one was built in 1896. The population of foreign-born residents, including many of Portuguese descent, increased by the end of the 19th century. Many of Berkley's extant institutional

buildings – town hall, Congregational church, schools – date to the late 19th century.

In 1879 Berkley annexed the village of Myricks from Taunton, almost doubling the population of the community. Two railroads constructed through Myricks in the early 1840s had made the village an important junction although it never developed a significant commercial or industrial base. The Bristol County Central Cattle Show and Fair was held there from 1858 to 1876.

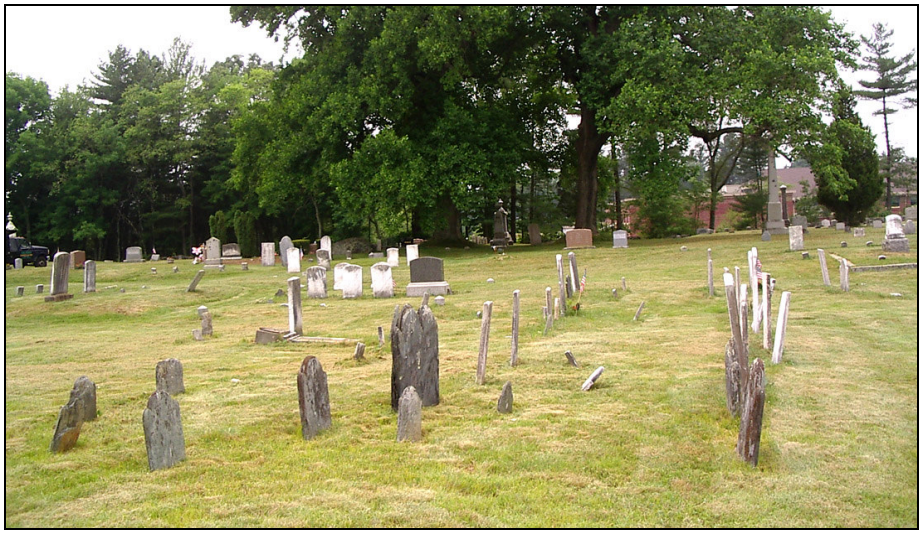
There were few changes to the community during the early 20th century. By World War I the population had increased but the town retained its rural character and agricultural economy. Construction of Route 24 in the 1950s made Berkley more accessible from both the north and the south and intensified development pressures, especially in the eastern part of the community. The current population is nearly 6,000 with a significant increase occurring in the last 20 years.

RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTATION

This section of the Reconnaissance Report identifies planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program.

Inventory of Historic Assets

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets is a statewide list that identifies significant historic resources throughout the Commonwealth. In order to be included in the inventory, a property must be documented on an MHC inventory form, which is then entered into the MHC database. This searchable database, known as MACRIS, is now available online at http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc.



The MHC inventory for Berkley documents 58 resources, primarily houses along Berkley, Elm and Main Streets in the Berkley Bridge area and around the common. Berkley Bridge and Dighton Rock are also documented.

State and National Registers of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. All National Register properties are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places. There is one National Register listing in Berkley; Dighton Rock (NR IND 1971) and a Determination of Eligibility for the Bridge Village Historic District (DOE 1987). There are no preservation restrictions or local historic districts.

Planning Documents

Berkley's Open Space and Recreation Plan was completed in May 2002. At that time the community had only 439 acres of permanently protected land, which at 4.1% was one of the lowest in the Taunton River area. The major premise of the plan is that preserving open space for resident recreation and wildlife habitat enhances the community's quality of life. The four major goals of the plan are:

- maintain rural and unspoiled character
- protect natural resources and habitats
- establish land use and development controls to manage growth
- provide more recreational opportunities

Berkley recently embarked on a Master Plan to provide further guidance in shaping the future of the community. At the first visioning session held in April 2005 attendees were asked to identify the assets and liabilities of the community.

An important regional document is the 2004 *Taunton River Stewardship Plan* prepared by the Taunton Wild & Scenic River Study Committee to substantiate the need for designation of the Taunton River as a National Wild & Scenic River. The plan includes extensive information on the hydrology of the river as well as related natural and cultural resources; identifies key river management issues; and offers detailed recommendations for river protection that have been endorsed by all communities along the Taunton River corridor. A key recommendation of the plan is to form partnerships among the watershed communities to work towards the goal of preserving and restoring the Taunton River corridor. Berkley accepted the Stewardship Plan in June 2005.

Planning Bylaws and Other Tools

Berkley has no municipal water or sewer system. Potable water is drawn primarily from private wells, while septic tanks are the primary means of waste disposal. Since the Taunton and Assonet Rivers are tidal, saltwater intrusion is a potential concern. Lack of water and sewer has traditionally lessened the appeal

of the community for large developments, although recently several 40B housing projects have been initiated in Berkley.

Berkley has a limited zoning bylaw that requires a minimum lot size of 1.5 acres for residential property and two acres for professional offices, educational facilities and government buildings. Special permits are required for all other uses and there is a basic site plan review process. The town also has a rate of development bylaw that limits each owner/developer to ten building permits per year, although this is not applicable to 40B projects.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

The Berkley Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by eight residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on June 29, 2005. During the meeting residents identified a lengthy list of Berkley's heritage landscapes, which is included in the Appendix. Once the comprehensive list was created, attendees were asked to articulate the value of each landscape on the list and the issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members identified four major areas within the community where a large number of the significant landscapes identified during the meeting are located. These four areas were visited by the consulting team and local residents during the fieldwork. Each is highly valued, contributes to community character and is not permanently protected or preserved.

The following text describes the four heritage landscape areas that are the focus of the reconnaissance work in Berkley. In most instances intensive survey work will be needed to fully document the physical characteristics and historical development of each area. The four areas, which are listed in alphabetical order, comprise many individual landscapes that represent a range of scales and types.

Assonet Neck

Assonet Neck, located in the southern part of Berkley at the confluence of the Assonet and Taunton Rivers, has long been valued for its natural and recreational resources. The area was an important Native American gathering place and presently includes the most active farmland in Berkley. Friend Street forms the northern boundary of the Neck, with the Taunton River to the west and the Assonet River to the south and east. Bayview Avenue is the major north/south route through the Neck, with shorter roads extending to the east and west.

Assonet Neck has been farmed for centuries and portions remain in agricultural use, with some market gardening and several popular farmstands. There are still cattle at one farm and vegetables and flowers are also grown, but many of the formerly active farms are now limited to hay production with large portions of the former farmland now reverting to woodland.

Traveling south on Bayview Avenue below Friend Street there is a mix of open fields and forest with scattered 19th century buildings and some late 20th century

infill. The Fox Cemetery at the corner of Thomas Road, which has a handsome stone wall around it, has a few crude 18th century slate headstones as well as 19th and 20th century headstones and monuments.

Friend Street, which extends east from Bayview Avenue across the Assonet River into Freetown, is associated with an early Quaker community. Roughly opposite Friend Street to the west of Bayview Avenue is Hospital Hill, the site of a 19th century lepers' hospital. The site is wooded now but it is likely that there is some archaeological evidence of this unusual feature remaining. The site also has value for its proximity to the Taunton River and Dighton Rock State Park.

Immediately to the south is Dighton Rock State Park, a 92-acre wooded site which is one of the few places in Berkley where there is public access to the Taunton River. The park was established to commemorate and protect a large stone with historic inscriptions on it. There is debate as to exactly who wrote the inscriptions with attribution to various groups. The rock, which was formerly in the Taunton River, is now in an indoor pavilion at the edge of the river to protect it from natural forces and vandalism. The remainder of the park is largely wooded with hiking trails and picnic areas. There is an open field across Bayview Avenue from the park.

A short distance south of the park is Old Ferry Road which extends west to Ferry Point, one of the narrowest spots along this stretch of the Taunton River and the site of an early ferry crossing and shipbuilding area. Roughly opposite Old Ferry Road, Open Lane and Grinnell Street extend east towards Assonet Bay. Several small cemeteries are located in this area.

Just south of Grinnell Street, 42nd Street (named after the busy street in New York City) extends west towards the Taunton River. There are farm fields associated with the Houtzager land on either side of the road and stone walls along it, but the character of the eastern end of the road has changed radically with the recent construction of several modern houses. After a few hundred yards, 42nd Street reverts to being a dirt road which travels west through woods and meadows, eventually reaching a small summer cottage community at the river's edge. Whale Rock, which is visible at low tide, is located in the river at this point and there is a large puddingstone glacial erratic on the shoreline.

The tip of Assonet Neck, with dramatic regional views across the Taunton to the south and west, is more densely occupied. At the confluence of the two rivers is Conspiracy Island, a small island accessible only at low tide. There is a large boatshop along the Taunton River just north of Conspiracy Island.

Assonet Neck is rich in natural, cultural and recreational resources. Its entire border is considered an area of critical environmental concern in the Open Space Plan. It is also a fragile area that is already in transition from active farmland to hay fields, forest and residential development. While relatively remote, the area is highly desirable because of its proximity to the river. Dighton Rock State Park is the only protected land along the river to which public access is guaranteed. One farm on Assonet Neck is protected by an agricultural preservation restriction, but as more development occurs along Bayview Avenue it will be

harder for the remaining farms to continue as viable businesses. Heavier traffic along the scenic narrow roadway would also change the character of the area.

Berkley Bridge Area

The Berkley Bridge area extends from the Berkley Bridge along Elm Street east to Bayview Avenue. The present bridge across the Taunton River is the third one constructed at this location. It is a swing span bridge that was built in 1896 and is one of the oldest surviving examples of this type. It has been modified over the years and can only rotate when manually operated. It is not considered individually eligible for listing in the National Register although the Massachusetts Historical Commission has determined that it is eligible as part of a larger Bridge Village district. This determination was confirmed by the Determination of Eligibility (DOE) made by the Secretary of the Interior, the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, in 1987.

Immediately south of the bridge is the town-owned property known as 70 Elm Street, located adjacent to the junction of Chuckamucksett Brook and the Taunton River. The area, although currently overgrown, has an unusual collection of ornamental plantings. There is also a millstone on the property which has given rise to the speculation that it may once have been a mill site. The property is currently used as an informal turnaround by trucks that reach the bridge and realize that it cannot support their weight. As one of the few public access points to the Taunton River in Berkley, it is also popular with fishermen. The town is planning to construct a small informal public park on the site.

Elm Street which extends east from the bridge is a narrow two lane road with a distinctly rural character. The houses that line it date from the early 19th century through the early 20th century. Some of the houses along Elm Street were documented on MHC inventory forms in the 1980s, with documentation of additional buildings and archaeological resources in the early 2000s.

The bridge is over one hundred years old and has received little maintenance in recent years. Traffic is currently limited to one-way traffic for automobiles only. Although there are signs indicating that the bridge is closed to trucks and other large vehicles, many trucks reach the bridge and either turn around or take the

risk of crossing. The bridge is clearly a limiting factor for traffic between Berkley and Dighton, and has substantially affected the lack of build out of these two communities. This has been an important factor in the preservation of heritage landscapes in the late 20th century when so many surrounding communities have been experiencing unprecedented growth. Discussions regarding the possibility of a new bridge have been ongoing for years. Mass Highway has done preliminary designs for a new bridge that would cross the river slightly south of the present bridge. Construction of a new bridge would have major implications not only to the immediate bridge area but would require wider roadways on either side of the bridge and would dramatically alter the pastoral landscape and would open the area between the bridge and Route 24 to heavy vehicles.

Berkley Common Area

Berkley's village center, located in the north central portion of the community, surrounds the common located at the intersection of Main, Porter and Locust Streets. The common is a narrow triangular shaped parcel. The land is generally flat and while there are some trees, it appears that many have been lost. The town library and a former town hall that is now used as a community center are located on the common. There is also a tot lot, a baseball field and several parking lots. While the common retains the "bones" of a historic New England village green, the parking lots detract from its character. The buildings surrounding the common date primarily from the early 19th through the 20th century.

Main Street forms the western edge of the common. Slightly north of the common on the west side of Main Street is Berkley Cemetery, established in 1775 which contains primarily 19th and 20th century headstones and monuments in a range of styles and materials, from early slate to marble to granite. There are several small commercial buildings along North Main Street, as well as four documented 19th century houses and a former early 20th century school that functions as the present town hall. There is also a farmstand. On South Main Street is the Congregational Church, as well as six documented historic houses.

Porter Street, which runs along the eastern edge of the common, also has several 19th century houses, as well as a farm field that contributes significantly to the rural character of the area. Along Locust Street, which forms the northern edge of the common there are 19th century houses, including a farmhouse with agricultural buildings associated with the farm field east of the common.

The Berkley Common area retains much of its 19th century character. Buildings surrounding the common are primarily residential, with a few institutional and commercial buildings. The roadways in the area are narrow and relatively rural. Porter Street and South Main are part of the main route from Route 24 to the Berkley Bridge. While heavy traffic is not currently a major issue, it could become so in the future.

Myricks

Myricks, located in the eastern part of Berkley, was initially part of Taunton and was annexed to Berkley in 1879. In the 19th and early 20th century Myricks had a number of cottage industries including hatmaking, carpentry and a mill. Fires destroyed many buildings in 1922 and 1923. Today Myricks is less densely settled than it was in the 19th century with little of the former town center remaining. The church is the major institutional building, along with the old Myricksville School which is now the American Foreign Legion Post. Other features of interest include the Myricks airfield and a small burial ground on Church Street. There are some late 19th and early 20th century houses along Myricks Street, scattered among newer residences. There are several farms in Myricks, including the Stetson Farm which is protected by an agricultural preservation restriction (APR). The Route 140 interchange has brought strip commercial development to the northern end of Myricks Street. The railroad tracks that made Myricks a bustling place in the 19th century are not currently active but may be in the future.

PLANNING

Preservation Strategies

Berkley is one of the most rural communities in eastern Massachusetts.
It has only one stoplight (at the Berkley Bridge) and there is little commercial or industrial development. It also has a rich array of natural and historic features that include the Taunton River as well as other waterbodies, forests, farmland and historic villages. There are still a number of farms in town, but Berkley like many Massachusetts communities has changed dramatically in the past 20 years and will continue to change as development pressure intensifies. Berkley has no comprehensive zoning bylaw and has not adopted any traditional preservation strategies. Through the Heritage Landscape Inventory program, Berkley is looking beyond the traditional historic resources to the landscapes, neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community.

Planning Issues

At the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting attendees expressed concern about the changing character of the community, which is directly related to the rich heritage landscapes that were discussed. Each of the critical planning issues affects at least one of the priority landscapes. These issues are arranged in alphabetical order.

Agriculture

Berkley residents place strong value on the rural/agricultural character of their community. There is a range of farming activity in Berkley including animal husbandry, riding stables, hay farming, flowers and market gardening. There are

several popular farmstands. Crops include vegetables, fruit, cranberries, flowers and nursery products. Most farms are small and family owned. There are three agricultural preservation restrictions totaling about 175 acres as well as 676 acres under Chapter 61A. Loss of farmland is an important issue for Berkley residents. The community, once dominated by farmland, now includes only scattered farms and most are farmed less intensively than in the past. Many farms are only used for hay while other fields are becoming overgrown.

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

Berkley has several cemeteries of varying sizes. Berkley Cemetery is town-owned, the rest are private. While some are well maintained, others are nearly forgotten, especially small family burial grounds that are away from main thoroughfares. Maintenance of cemeteries is costly and the responsibility for private burial grounds is often unclear; however deferred maintenance leads to more expensive repairs in the long run.

Scenic Roads

While Berkley does not have designated scenic roads, community residents value the narrow rural roadways found throughout the town, many of which are lined with trees and stone walls and offer views of adjacent farmland. Route 24 carries the majority of the north-south through traffic, including trucks. There is little east-west through traffic because the Berkley Bridge cannot accommodate it, and there is relatively little in-town truck traffic. Proposed rebuilding of the Berkley Bridge would significantly alter not only the Bridge Street area but would increase regional traffic, including large vehicles, from the Route 24 interchange through town to the bridge.

PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Preservation planning is a three-step process involving identification, evaluation and protection. Four useful documents to consult before beginning to implement

preservation strategies are the Massachusetts Historical Commission's *Survey Manual* and *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances;* the Department of Conservation and Recreation's *Reading the Land;* and the Taunton Wild & Scenic River Study Committee's *Taunton River Stewardship Plan.* Each publication provides necessary information for the identification, evaluation and preservation of the rich cultural heritage of a community. Priority recommendations are listed first, followed by other recommendations.

Berkley will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations presented here. One approach that might help Berkley begin the process is to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in *Reading the Land*.

Priority Recommendations

Priority recommendations are the first steps that Berkley must take to establish an effective historic preservation program that includes all types of cultural resources including heritage landscapes. Priority recommendations that apply to a broad range of resources are discussed below. They are listed in the order in which they are most logically addressed when applying the three-step preservation planning process as described above. Thus the goal will be to (1) identify, (2) evaluate and (3) protect.

Inventory of Heritage Landscapes and Other Historic Assets

The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about them. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and the historical development. New procedures that are more comprehensive and link properties in a more coherent way than in the past may enhance Berkley's survey, most of which was completed 35 years ago. Thus, using Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology, record Berkley's heritage landscapes and other historic resources.

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, beginning with the priority heritage landscape areas: Berkley Common, the Berkley Bridge area, Assonet Neck and Myricks.

- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with threatened areas.

- Make sure to document secondary features on residential properties, such as outbuildings and stone walls.

National Register Program

Once survey work is completed National Register evaluation will be required to provide information about the eligibility of properties that can be listed in the National Register. Thus to develop Berkley's National Register program:

- Prepare a National Register listing plan, taking into consideration a property's integrity and vulnerability. Properties that are in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.

- Complete National Register nomination for the Berkley Bridge area Historic District which has already been determined eligible for listing.

Neighborhood Character

Nearly all preservation strategies address neighborhood or village character in some manner. As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. There are two traditional preservation tools: local historic district designation (MGL Chapter 40C) and demolition delay, both may be applicable in Berkley. Local historic districts are the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. They recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. Local historic districts are a local initiative, adopted by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting and administered by a district commission, appointed by the Selectmen. A demolition delay bylaw provides a time period in which the town can consider alternatives to demolition.

- Areas with a high level of historical significance and integrity should be considered as potential local historic districts. Determine whether historic neighborhoods such as Berkley Common and the Berkley Bridge area would be appropriate local historic districts.

- Adopt a local historic district bylaw and designate historically significant neighborhoods as local historic districts to preserve individual properties as well as neighborhood character. In a local historic district, any proposed changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public right-of-way are reviewed by the locally appointed historic district commission.

- Adopt a demolition delay bylaw to apply to all properties that are 50 years old or more and to give the Berkley Historical Commission authority to invoke a delay of demolition of up to one year. Publication of demolition requests reminds residents of historic resources and reinforces the value of local historic resources; therefore include a publication requirement in the bylaw.

- Engage the Berkley Historical Society and other preservation organizations in developing brochures, presentations and website information to increase awareness of Berkley's historic resources.

Specific Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for specific resources that were identified as priority heritage landscapes. While they may repeat information given in the priority recommendations, these offer a check list and reminder for each step necessary for each area of Berkley.

Assonet Neck

Assonet Neck has been identified by the community as an important heritage landscape. It has not been documented on an MHC inventory form.

- Identify key features by completing MHC inventory forms using the heritage landscape methodology.
- Work with local farmers to preserve agricultural land.
- Work with the Taunton Wild and Scenic River Committee to preserve waterfront area and provide public access.

Berkley Bridge Area

The character of the Berkley Bridge Area is worthy of preservation. For this reason the highest level of protection should be pursued.

- Update inventory of resources using heritage landscape methodology combined with traditional MHC survey methodology.
- Complete National Register nomination for the Berkley Bridge Historic District which already has been determined eligible for listing.
- Form a local historic district study committee to potentially recommend a bylaw and adoption of a local historic district.
- Engage the Berkley Historical Society and other preservation organizations in developing up-to-date tours, brochures, presentations and website information to draw interested residents and visitors to Berkley.

Berkley Common Area

The character of the Berkley Common area is worthy of preservation. For this reason the highest level of protection should be pursued.

- Update inventory of resources using heritage landscape methodology combined with traditional MHC survey methodology. Seek a determination of National Register eligibility for the Berkley Common area.

- Complete National Register nomination for Berkley Common if it is determined eligible.

- Form a local historic district study committee to potentially recommend a bylaw and adoption of a local historic district. Prepare design review guidelines that specifically address the resources in the common area.

- Amend zoning bylaw to reflect preservation strategies particularly for a village district.

- Engage the Berkley Historical Society and other preservation organizations in developing up-to-date tours, brochures, presentations and website information to draw interested residents and visitors to Berkley.

Other Preservation Strategies

The following preservation strategies are recommendations for specific types of resources that may be helpful once Berkley's preservation program is developed and documentation and evaluation of the resources has occurred. Some strategies require Planning Board and Conservation Commission input.

Agricultural Landscapes

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of farming activities; otherwise, it simply is the preservation of land as open space. It is important to know what the features of an agricultural landscape are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these landscapes. Some preservation tools are available that can assist communities in preserving the actual farming activities. The following strategies may be applicable to the remaining farms. Consider the following options.

- Form an agricultural commission to address farm preservation in Berkley.
- Adopt a right-to-farm bylaw which allows farmers to carry on farming activities that may be considered a nuisance to neighbors.
- Revise the town's zoning bylaw to require buffers between new development and existing farmland.
- Raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist farmers in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the farmer would be required to donate a preservation restriction.
- Continue public-private partnerships to preserve farmland through purchase of farms or purchase of conservation restrictions on farms.

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

Berkley has many small burial grounds, some of which are family owned and are off the main roads. Only the town-owned Berkley Cemetery near the common has been documented on an MHC inventory form. The primary concerns for all burial grounds are long term stone maintenance and general burial ground care. The DCR publication *Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries* provides guidance on developing preservation plans for burial grounds including identification and evaluation of the resources as well as preservation strategies. Using this guide Berkley should:

- Update existing or prepare new survey forms for all burial grounds and cemeteries that have been in use for more than 50 years.
- Develop a preservation and management plan for Berkley Cemetery taking into consideration repair of stone markers, stone walls and

stone fencing related to cemeteries, repair of iron work, removal of invasive growth and on-going maintenance of plant material.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Berkley residents and visitors alike. Yet roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Under the Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) Berkley can adopt a scenic roads bylaw that addresses the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the public right-of-way. In addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads – the stone walls, views across open fields – is not within the public right-of-way. Furthermore, numbered routes cannot be designated scenic roads under this bylaw. Thus preservation and protection of scenic roads requires more than one approach.

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Berkley including the character defining features that should be retained.

- Review and amend zoning measures that minimize the impact of commercial and residential development along gateway roads by considering setbacks, screening and height requirements.

- Adopt a scenic roads bylaw and add design criteria to consider when reviewing removal of trees and stone walls and other criteria such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Designate rural and village roads that are scenic such as those that have significant trees. Coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.

- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the town may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by Mass. Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads, for example requiring a public hearing if any additional pavement is to be added to a town road during reconstruction or repair. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted at Town Meeting through a bylaw. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths, posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

- Consider a scenic overlay district to preserve certain vistas on properties along the roadways.

Water Resources

The primary goals are to control pollution and provide waterfront access. The coalition that has been established to advocate for the designation of the Taunton River as a National Wild & Scenic River already knows the important strategies for preservation of this rich resource. Continue to work towards solutions in the following ways.

- Define ownership of each segment of the waterfront including beaches, wetlands and marshes.
- Define public ways and parking areas for access to the river and the landings.
- Form public-private partnerships with neighborhood groups and Boy Scouts (or similar community groups) to develop stewardship programs for access points.
- Develop a public landings brochure to remind abutters and town residents of the public access to these landings, particularly the town-owned landings.
- Adopt and enforce strict conservation and zoning bylaws that regulate pollution. These may be strategies such as wastewater treatment and stormwater run off that is more restrictive than is minimally acceptable under Title V.

Funding of Preservation Projects

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. Both the MHC and the DCR have had funding programs to assist communities in preservation related issues including:

- Survey and Planning Grants administered by the MHC support survey, National Register and preservation planning work.

- The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) administered by the MHC funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.

- The Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLPGP) administered by DCR funds planning, rehabilitation, education and stewardship projects focused on historic landscapes, including cemeteries.

Funding for these programs varies from year to year. When planning Berkley's heritage landscape inventory program, contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding currently is available.

Towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects; however Berkley first would have to adopt the Act. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth is worthy of consideration. The CPA establishes a mechanism by which towns can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Funds are collected through a .5% to 3% surcharge on each annual real estate tax bill. The Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA.

Adoption of the Community Preservation Act, by a majority vote on a ballot question, fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists and affordable housing advocates. At least 10% of the funds must be used to preserve historic resources; at least 10% must be used to protect open space; and at least 10% must be used to advance affordable housing. The remaining 70% must be used for one of these three uses as well as recreational needs and can be distributed in varying proportions depending upon the projects that the town believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality.

CONCLUSION

The Berkley Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Berkley and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. However, it is only the first step in the planning process. Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms. The documentation in turn can be used in publicity efforts to build consensus and gather public support for their preservation. Implementation of recommendations will require a concerted effort and partnerships with municipal boards and agencies, local non-profits, and state agencies and commissions.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to town land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Berkley in preserving important features of the community's character. The tasks that are recommended will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Berkley's Historical Commission, the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee. It also is advisable to present this information to the Board of Selectmen. Finally distribution of the report to the Berkley Historical Society, neighborhood associations and other preservation minded organizations will enhance Berkley's heritage landscapes.

APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list is a summary of all landscapes discussed at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Berkley on June 29, 2005 and follow-up fieldwork the same day. This is a working list and can be updated by the community. **There may be other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** Landscapes are grouped by type. The chart has two columns – the name of the resource and the location are in the first and notes about the resource are in the second.

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction
LHD = Local Historic District
PR = Preservation Restriction
CR = Conservation Restriction
NR = National Register
* = Priority Landscape

Agriculture	
Assonet Neck * Bayview Avenue	Assonet Neck, located in the southwestern part of Berkley is at the confluence of the Taunton and Assonet Rivers. It includes much of the remaining agricultural land in Berkley. Many of the agricultural properties listed below are in Assonet Neck and the Neck itself was identified as a priority landscape.
Bay Brook Farm Bayview Avenue	Also known as Howard Farm, raised cattle in the past. In Assonet Neck area.
Chamberlin Farm 12 Friend Street	APR, 59 acres. Also known as Townline Farm. On Freetown/Berkley border in Shoves Neck. Has farmstand and grows cranberries. In Assonet Neck area.
Dillingham Farm Friend Street	APR. Working farm, primarily hay fields this year although frequently grow pumpkins. In Assonet Neck area.
Fernandes Farm Jerome Street	Market garden in northern part of town, sells flowers. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.
Fournier Farm Locust & Porter Sts.	Large field adjacent to town common.
Hill and Hollow Bayview Avenue	APR. Working farm along both sides of Bayview Avenue. In Assonet Neck area.
Houtzager Farm Bayview Road	Hay farm in Chapter 61A located along west side of Bayview Avenue on either side of 42nd Street. Includes cluster of historic farm buildings and stone wall along 42nd Street. In Assonet Neck area.
Hyde Farm North Berkley Street	APR. Located on the Taunton River in the northern part of town. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.
Moskal Property Bayview Road	Hay farm next to Dighton Rock State Park. In Assonet Neck area.
Stetson's Farm Myricks Street	APR, 42 acres. In Myricks just north of church. Has farmstand. Open space across from it will soon be developed. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.

Archaeological	
Almshouse Site Bayview Avenue near Friend Street	Area known as Hospital Hill, site of former leper hospital. Buildings no longer extant, may be some remnant walls and/or foundations and a cemetery. Area is currently wooded and has value as potential open space because of its proximity to the Taunton River and Dighton State Park. Berkley resident, Allen Raymond has information on this site.
Bear Swamp Site East of Berkley St.	Reported location of archaeological resources. Information on this is at Somerset Historical Society.
Dillingham Property Bayview Avenue	Reported archaeological site with potential for development.
42nd Street Site	Reported location of Native American campsite. Research done by Warren Goff.
Burial Ground/Cemetery	
Algerine Street Cemetery Algerine Street	Small family cemetery in very poor condition.
Berkley Cemetery North Main Street	Municipal cemetery just north of common and village center. About one acre. 18th – 20th century headstones and monuments with low curbing around a few family lots. Surrounded by stone wall, which has been reconstructed with mortar in the front. Forested at rear. In Berkley Common area.
Burt Cemetery East Plain Street	Small family cemetery.
Fox Cemetery Bayview Road and Thomas Street	Private cemetery, owned by a trust. Still active. Several acres, range of 19th and 20th century headstones and monuments. Surrounding area has recently been developed. In Assonet Neck area.
Padelford Street Cemetery Padelford Street	Small private cemetery.
Center/Village	
Berkley Bridge * Area Elm Street	NR DOE for Berkley Bridge Historic District including the houses and the Berkley Bridge. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.
Berkley Common * Main Street	Center of original village. Includes common, library, town hall, Congregational Church, houses, a few commercial buildings, farmland east of the common and Berkley Cemetery. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.

Myricks * Myricks Street	Village in eastern part of Berkley. Initially part of Taunton, annexed by Berkley in 1879. Site of mill. Was commercially active in 19th century due in part to railroad. Trees along Myricks Street. Nineteenth century houses and commercial buildings. Legion Post in old school. Depot was located here. There is a published history of Myricks.
Institutional	
Bay State Beagle Club Point Street	One of the largest holdings in the western part of Berkley is the Bay State Beagle Club which owns approximately 120 acres on the southern side of Point Street. The largely wooded site is used to train beagles for hunting. Club owns additional acreage on Shove's Neck. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.
Berkley Congregational Church South Main Street	Established 1737. Located just south of the common. Important visual landmark in town and one of two churches in Berkley.
Miscellaneous	
Bobbett Stone Berkley Street	Historical marker (boulder with bronze plaque) located 6/10 mile north of the corner of Elm and Berkley next to the road on the right hand side. Inscription reads" In memory of Edward Bobbett slain hereby Indians June 25, 1675 and buried near this spot." The current marker dates to 1911, the original stone is located at the Old Colony Historical Society. Former Bobbett land is located across from the marker.
Five Town Marker Myricks Street	Near intersection of Myricks Street and Woodedge Road on east side of street. Granite marker delineating municipal boundaries.
Natural Features	
Assonet River	Tributary of Taunton River located along southern edge of Berkley. Widens into Assonet Bay in its upper reaches. River shoreline is identified as an area of critical environmental concern in Berkley's open space plan. In Assonet Neck area.
Cedar Swamp	Swamp is mostly in Lakeville with small portion in Berkley. Drains into the Assonet River. Lakeville identified the swamp as a priority landscape in their heritage landscape inventory.
Chuckamucksett Creek	Tributary of Taunton River. Site of historic blacksmith shop. Used to be a dam on east side of Berkley Street. Remnants of wharf or landing jut into creek at confluence with Taunton River.
Conspiracy Island	Island near the junction of Taunton and Assonet Rivers. Native American meeting place. Includes dramatic regional views of the Taunton and Assonet Rivers. In Assonet Neck area.
Cotley River	Small, narrow tributary of Taunton River. Flows through northeastern part of Berkley. Public access is extremely limited because the Cotley flows mostly through private land. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.

Dillingham Rock Taunton River	Glacial erratic visible from west side of Taunton River.
Grassy Island Taunton River	Small island and surrounding tidal flats in the Taunton River west of Hospital Hill. Important Native American meeting place.
Quaker Brook	Begins near Bryant Hill and flows south into Forge Pond. South of Friend Street the brook forms the Berkley/Freetown border for a short distance before emptying into Assonet Bay.
Rock House Hill S. Main & Elm Sts.	Reported site of cave and spring. House no longer extant?
Taunton River	Tidal river running along the western edge of Berkley. Important to land use and economy since Native American times. Entire river shoreline is identified as an area of critical environmental concern in Berkley's Open Space Plan. Wild and Scenic Study Report recently completed and designation by Congress is pending.
Open Space/Parks	
Berkley Common Main/Locust Streets	Traditional town common at center of community. Includes library, former town hall (now a community center), also ballfields and tot lot.
Dighton Rock State Park Bayview Avenue	NR. Dighton Rock is significant for its petroglyphic graffiti. Dighton Rock State Park (92 acres) includes trails and picnic areas. It is important for public access to the river. In Assonet Neck area. Listed as a priority landscape in town's Open Space Plan.
70 Elm Street	Town-owned parcel adjacent to Berkley Bridge. Millstone in the woods. Site of early ferry and possibly of shipbuilding activity, many ornamental plants. Currently overgrown and used by fishermen. Town proposes to construct a small informal park here.
Hospital Hill Bayview Avenue	Hill is 78' above sea level and is the site of a former leper hospital. There are no extant buildings but some foundations and stone walls reportedly exist, as well as a burial ground. Hill is now wooded and in private ownership. Its location near Dighton Rock State Park and the Taunton River make it potentially desirable as open space. In Assonet Neck area.
Transportation	
Berkley Bridge Berkley Street	NR DOE as part of Berkey Bridge Historic District. 1896 one-lane swing span bridge over Taunton River. New bridge is proposed. Part of Berkley Bridge Area.
Ferry Point Ferry Lane	Site of former ferry across the Taunton River. It is likely that there was also shipbuilding in this area. There may be archaeological resources.
Myricks Street	Scenic road valued for its trees.
Myricks Airport Holloway Street	Small private airport, 52.8 acres. Listed as a priority landscape in town's open space plan.