

MENDON RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

BLACKSTONE VALLEY / QUINEBAUG-SHETUCKET LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor

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INTRODUCTION

The 22 Massachusetts communities within the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BRV) and the Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (Q-S) are linked by a common heritage of agriculture and industry powered by the rivers and streams that dominate the landscape of south central Massachusetts. River Corridor towns extend from Mendon on the east to Brimfield on the west. While they range in size from the city of Worcester to the compact town of Hopedale, each is equally shaped by the interaction of nature and culture over time.

Heritage landscapes are special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of a 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 step toward 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 an important river corridor.

To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the two National Heritage Corridors (BRV and Q-S) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program to communities in south central Massachusetts. The goals of the program are to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected, and 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 southeast Massachusetts and refined in Essex County. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land*, which has provided guidance for the program since its inception. In summary, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-BRV/Q-S consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting during which residents and town officials identify and prioritize the landscapes that embody the community's character and its history. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, accompanied by interested community members. This group visits the priority landscapes identified in the meeting and gathers information about the community.

The final product for each community is this Reconnaissance Report. It outlines the community's landscape history; discusses broader land planning issues identified by the community; describes the priority heritage landscapes and issues associated with them; and concludes with preservation recommendations. Two appendices include a list of all of the heritage landscapes identified at the community meeting and a reference listing of land protection tools and procedures.



PART I

MENDON'S HERITAGE LANDSCAPES



MENDON'S LANDSCAPE THROUGH TIME

Mendon, a rural town situated on rolling hills that rise to 500' above sea level, is bordered by Hopedale, Bellingham, Blackstone, Millville, Uxbridge and Upton, and is the "mother town" of all of them. The town center is located on a central plateau west of the Mill River, which flows north to south on a low, level floodplain, draining into the Blackstone River. Lake Nipmuc, Mendon's one sizeable water body, lies in the southwest. Mendon's soil is glacial till, much of it best suited for orchards, pastures and woodland. The richest agricultural land lies on the central plateau, and along the Mill River's floodplain. In the pre-contact period, this area was used for seasonal hunting, fishing and agriculture.

In 1667 Mendon, originally Quinshapage Plantation, was established as a town; its initial grant (1659) was eight miles square but its boundaries retracted over the next two centuries as neighboring towns were set off. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Mendon was a dispersed agricultural community, its farms lying primarily to the north of the centrally located meetinghouse. Two important roads were established during the Federal Period (1775-1830): the north-south post road from Worcester to Providence (now North Avenue/Main Street/Providence Street), and a turnpike running from Connecticut to Boston (now Route 16, or Milford Street/Hastings Street/Uxbridge Road).

Much of Mendon's subsequent history was determined by its water resources and the consequent locus of industrial development. Despite its name, the Mill River's width and slowness could not provide the water-power for major industry. Instead, the real industrial development took place on the powerful Blackstone River in the southern part of the original town. A large cotton spinning mill and village were built there in 1800. By 1828 the Blackstone Canal, running beside the river, provided cheap and efficient transportation, further encouraging growth of the mill villages. Meanwhile, the chief economic focus of the center of Mendon continued to be farming, with associated cottage industries such as shoes and straw goods.

When Mendon's industrialized south parish separated as the town of Blackstone in 1845, the population of Mendon dropped from over 3,500 to 1,300. Railroads followed industry, and the 19th century rail lines bypassed Mendon in favor of her industrial neighbors. Without the textile mills, Mendon's industry consisted of small-scale wood and leather manufacturing. More important to the town, economically, were its forest products and an important shift to dairy farming. Milk, firewood, and building timber were all in high demand in the mill towns surrounding agrarian Mendon.

During the Late Industrial Period (1870-1915) trolley service linked Uxbridge to Hopedale and Milford, running through the center of Mendon. Recreational cottages began to be built around Lake Nipmuc, and in 1882 Lake Nipmuc Park, a lake shore recreational area, was established by the trolley company. Streetcars were introduced in 1901, bringing thousands of visitors to the park, with its ballroom, dining room and beach, and providing new jobs for the town. By the time the streetcars were discontinued in 1928, the main local roads had been improved for automotive traffic, making Mendon attractive to an increasing number of commuters from neighboring towns. From that time to the present, Mendon has continued to be a residential and farming community. Much of its landscape is characterized by hillside orchards, pastures and hayfields for dairy cattle, and an overlay of residential neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY-WIDE HERITAGE LANDSCAPE ISSUES

Concern for heritage landscapes is not new to Mendon. The town's Growth Management Strategy, prepared in 1996, clearly expressed the community's priorities to protect the town's rural character, open land particularly its farms, and views. These themes have been reiterated with every subsequent planning study.

Mendon's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by interested residents including many representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on February 5, 2007. During the meeting, residents compiled a lengthy list of the town's heritage landscapes, which is included as Appendix A of this report. As the comprehensive list was being created, attendees were asked to articulate the value of each landscape and identify issues relating to its preservation.

Residents emphasized broad issues related to heritage landscapes and community character. These issues are town-wide concerns that are linked to a range or category of heritage landscapes, not just to a single place. In Mendon, four issues stand out.

Farmland Preservation

Mendon's agricultural landscape is the most significant defining feature of the town. Its rural character has also made it a desirable place to live, and the town has experienced intense development pressures. Mass Audubon's 2003 report, Losing Ground: At What Cost identified Mendon as one of the top ten Sprawl Hot Spots in the state. Many farms have never been placed in Chapter 61A; others have been removed from Chapter 61A. Some are deteriorating, and in shaky financial circumstances.

While Chapter 61A is a good incentive for owners of agricultural land, it does not provide a permanent level of protection. Multiple approaches to farmland preservation need to be called upon. Part II of this report lays out several mechanisms that address agricultural preservation in particular.

Open Space Corridors

Mendon has large tracts of open space that contribute positive scenic and environmental benefits to the town. The town recognizes that contiguous open space is more valuable as wildlife habitat than isolated parcels, and there are opportunities to strengthen greenway corridors in town. It is important that the town's goal to identify the most critical areas for protection be promoted to the public in order that this window of opportunity not be lost.

Traffic Pressures

Mendon experiences significant regional traffic pressures. Approximately 85% of the regional traffic from Route 495 passes through Mendon, and it has had a major negative impact on the experience and safety of the town center. The state has expressed interest in widening Hartford Avenue East from Route 140 to its intersection with Providence Road, which could exacerbate the traffic problem in Mendon Center and impact the experience of the road itself as well as heritage landscapes along its route. Town boards should refer to DCR's publication Terra Firma 3: Identifying and Protecting Historic Roads, for support relative to protecting roads from inappropriate treatment, particularly p. 6, Lack of Awareness and Understanding.

Historic House Preservation

Mendon Center has a wealth of significant historic structures. With an accelerated housing market and a number of key parcels in the town center up for sale or land lease, some important houses have unfortunately been victims of demolition just this summer. Documentation of the remaining significant historic structures in the Center is critical, followed by promotion of preservation strategies. Part II of this report lays out several mechanisms that are very effective in addressing this issue, the most effective of which is establishment of a Local Historic District.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Based on information gathered at the community meeting, attendees identified a group of priority landscapes for the consulting team to focus on, through field survey, documentation and planning assessment. Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued and contributes to community character. None of them has any permanent form of protection.

Mendon's priority landscapes range from the heart of the town to an undeveloped open space corridor of extraordinary wildlife significance. Farms and scenic vistas are striking expressions of the agricultural heritage that exists to this day.

The landscapes which were given priority status by Mendon's community meeting represent a range of scales and types of resources. Each landscape is also representative of other, similar properties in the town, and each demonstrates the multiple layers of significance that are common to most heritage landscapes.

Natural and cultural features, individual and civic histories, combine to present property owners and concerned citizens with a complex combination of present-day issues and opportunities. The descriptions and recommendations that follow are intended to be first steps and constructive examples for what needs to be an ongoing process: to identify what is valued and irreplaceable in the community, and develop strategies that will preserve and enhance Mendon's landscape heritage.

Mendon Center

Description: Mendon Center encompasses a remarkable mix of the village and rural characteristics of the town, with the municipal and business heart of Mendon in close proximity to expansive farm fields and scenic views. The center is one of the best-preserved Federal/Greek Revival hilltop village centers in the state, and was designated a National Register Historic District in 2003. The compact center, formed by the triangle of Maple, Hastings and Main Street, is dense with monuments and buildings, including Town Hall. The majority of the center's structures are residential, built between the mid-18th century and the mid-20th century. The Second Unitarian Church on Maple Street is also a strong physical presence in the Center. Federal Period dwellings are generally large scale and reflect the prosperity and prominence of Mendon Center during the early 19th century. The original meetinghouse and town common were located at the southwesterly corner of the intersection of Main and Hastings Streets, now memorialized as Founders' Park.

Just beyond the civic core, farms and open space parcels make a significant contribution to the landscape of the Center. The most prominent open spaces in the district are the Vincent Farm and the abutting Cox property—which together total over 200 acres of open space—and the 78-acre town-owned property at the northwest edge of the Center. The majority of the Vincent property is within "core habitat" on the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program BioMap. There are also three cemeteries in Mendon Center, with Old Cemetery at Main, Providence and George Streets forming a highly visible historic landmark at the village's southern gateway. The consolidated, rural setting of the village is dramatically evident when approaching from the east, north and south, particularly from the area on the plateau west of the Center which has been heavily developed.



Background: At the end of the 18th century, Mendon was settled into a pattern of farms radiating in all directions from the town center focused on the meetinghouse, and today the irregular street plan reflects this. The significance of this district was established in the early decades of the 19th century, a period of growth and prosperity for the town and the region, and the Center reached virtually its present dimensions and density by about 1840. The break-off of the town of Blackstone and, by the last half of the 19th century, the end of boot and shoe making in Mendon is reflected by the near absence of buildings constructed in the Center between 1860 and 1900. This economic downturn, however, allowed Mendon to continue as a viable rural town. The early 20th century interest in Mendon as a rural retreat had a modest physical impact on Mendon Center, with residences and summer cottages, but mid-century saw greater development in the Center as the town became a bedroom community.

Recommendations were made in the 1996 Growth Management Strategy report for improvements in Mendon Center to address zoning issues, pedestrian safety and environment, parking needs, and traffic speeds. Some but not all of these have been implemented.

This August, the Silas Dudley House (1840) and the Simeon Doggett House (1820) were demolished. Rumors are that the structures will be replaced by a CVS. In response to this, a grass roots group of concerned citizens formed Preservation Mendon, an organization whose mission is to protect the special nature of the town while also nurturing development.

Issues:

- **Tear-Down and Replacement of Historic Buildings:** This is a serious issue for Mendon. The Silas Dudley House and the Simeon Doggett House were two significant and contributing buildings of the Center. Other important properties are up for sale or land lease, including the historic Dr. Metcalf house (1831), and the Taft house (1835). The Comstock House (1850) is also at risk of being torn down. The majority of structures in the Center are residential and privately owned, and the risk of their loss is therefore high. Further demolitions will cause the serious erosion of the features that define the Center's character.
- **Traffic Impacts:** High traffic volumes and the threat of road widening negatively impact the center.
- **Risk of Loss of Agricultural Land:** Several important farm parcels in Mendon Center are not permanently protected, and therefore at risk.
- **Founders Park Character:** This important site appears like a leftover abandoned space, with trees haphazardly placed, a boulder plaque as well as a sign on a post, and an incompatible billboard-like sign. It should be improved to play a more positive role in Mendon Center.

Recommendations:

- Implement a Demolition Delay Bylaw, described in Part II, to provide a waiting and negotiating period that can help to prevent the further loss of historic structures.
- Revisit the proposal for a Local Historic District for Mendon Center. Initiate a town-wide discussion about the importance of protecting the essential features of the Center, and about how LHDs can support private property values while preserving community character. Part II describes the benefits of local historic districts.
- Publicize the history and significance of the Center's historic structures, including articles and letters in the Town Crier, Journeys, and Milford News. It is critical to educate citizens about these important resources, to build a base of support for their protection.
- Build on successes, such as the purchase of the 78 acres in northwest Mendon Center, to develop creative responses to properties for sale that may mean loss of historic structures.
- Implement recommendations in the 1996 Growth Management Strategy that have not yet been pursued, which details a village development strategy in the Mendon Gift Barn area, a Village Capital Improvements investment program, and streetscape improvements for Mendon Center.
- Work with farm owners to encourage them to consider stronger forms of protection for their properties, including Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and Conservation Restrictions.
- Review DCR's publication Terra Firma #3 to learn about state-wide historic road issues and strategies for dealing with them.
- Plans for design improvements to Founders' Park are underway. Improvements may include the removal of selected trees, planting new trees, installing a path and re-locating the plaque boulder to a new location on the site. Strong consideration should be given to redesigning and/or finding a new location for the large, town events sign, which detracts from the park's character. In addition, care should be taken to ensure that work at the park does not affect any archaeological remains; it may be advisable to complete in-depth research into the history of the site and an assessment of its archaeological potential prior to undertaking the planned improvements. Knowledge

gained from such research could affect the placement of new trees and path(s), and could be incorporated into interpretive signage for the site.

Farms

The history of farming in Mendon is long, and widespread, and the town still shows evidence of that legacy in the number, size and beauty of its farms. Two farms were selected as priority landscapes because of their scale, visual qualities, and environmental values. Issues related to these farms are common to other farms in Mendon, and the recommendations are likewise applicable to agricultural landscapes throughout town

VanderSluis Farm

Description: VanderSluis Farm is a 101-acre farm on North Avenue north of Mendon Center. The farmhouse sits close to the road, facing south and forming an L-shaped barnyard with the farm's large main barn. There is a large Norway spruce in the front yard, and there are several outbuildings nearby. Stone walls and white fences mark the boundaries of fields. Of the total acreage, the eastern portion of the property is currently actively used for agriculture, with 30 tillable acres and 20 in pasture, while the rest is woodland composed primarily of mixed oak/hickory forest.



The property abuts several hundred more acres of undeveloped land, creating almost 500 acres of contiguous open space which includes the town-owned Fino property in Mendon Center. The farm is completely within designated “core habitat” on the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Program BioMap. VanderSluis Farm is a contributing property within the North Avenue Rural National Register Historic District, which includes portions of North Avenue, Trask Road, and Hopedale Street.

The owners have created a sanctuary for abandoned farm animals, and they provide education about the farm industry. Sanctuary animals include horses, cows, llamas, pigs, chickens, and goats.

An ecological assessment of the VanderSluis property was conducted in 2006 by Metacomet Land Trust. The land was determined to have exceptional conservation value, with great habitat diversity relative to the size of the property. The conclusion was that protectable parcels of similar size and equivalent conservation value are uncommon in the region and likely to become more so in the future.

Background: VanderSluis Farm has a legacy of active agricultural use as evidenced by extensive stone walls, old farm roads and a small farm pond impoundment. An 18th or early 19th century Cape-style residence, likely the original farmhouse, stands directly across the road. By the mid-19th century all of the upland acreage had probably been converted to agricultural use. Agricultural abandonment of the forested land appears to have occurred piecemeal, over a long period of time. At one time it belonged to the Taft family, and it has been in the current owner's family for several generations. The current owner's father worked the property as a dairy farm, milking 50-60 cows, processing the milk on site and delivering it throughout the town. The dairy operation was continued by the family for a number of years, but stopped in 1993. They are currently applying for nonprofit 501(c)3 status for the sanctuary.

Twin Elm Farm

Description: Twin Elm Farm is a 691-acre farm on Bates Street. The property abuts several hundred more acres of undeveloped land, creating over 1000 acres of contiguous open space. The land is also almost completely within "core habitat" on the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program BioMap. There are two major zones of farm buildings. The farmhouse sits off Hartford Avenue East near a cluster of barns and corrals for the registered polled Herefords that the farm raises, as well as horses and donkeys. The barns appear to be in excellent condition. The Twin Elm Farm property is an expansive site. It comprises three of the four corners of the nearby Bates/Bellingham Road intersection, and strongly defines the identity of this area.



Another cluster of outbuildings, including a large-scale former chicken coop now used as storage for hay, is located on Providence Street. Rolling fields with stone walls, post-and-wire fencing, and a farm pond combine with the outbuildings to create a beautiful agricultural landscape, one of the views also identified in the Scenic Vistas priority

landscape, below. The old town pound sits at the Providence Street edge of the farm, with a wooden sign that says it was built in 1670.

Issues

- **Lack of Permanent Protection:** Like many farms in Mendon, neither of these two farms are permanently protected. The VanderSluis' considered an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) several years ago, but the state did not think it was a good candidate for the program because of concern that there would not be a farmer who could work the farm when the owners died. The Metacomet Land Trust is exploring various foundation grants for a Conservation Restriction (CR), which the owners would welcome.
- **Scale of Property and Development Threat:** The east side of Mendon has the good, sandy soil that supports farming as well as development. The sheer scale of Twin Elm Farm, combined with its contiguous open spaces, poses a major threat to the town if it were to be developed.

Recommendations:

- Share the findings of this project with the property owners. They should know that these heritage landscapes are valued and appreciated by Mendon's residents.
- Continue efforts to obtain a CR for the VanderSluis property
- Work with the owners of Twin Elm Farm to explore protection options, including placing a APR or a CR on the property
- Document the farm properties according to MHC standards, completing and submitting Area forms with the local historical commission and MHC
- Form a local Agricultural Commission to help advocate for measures that will support the viability of farming in Mendon.
- Establish an Open Space or Cluster Zoning Bylaw, which allows greater development density in an effort to permanently protect open space, if farmland becomes subject to development.

Lake Nipmuc and Wildlife Corridor

Description: Lake Nipmuc (also known as Nipmuc Pond, and historically spelled Nipmuck) is Mendon's one major water body and a Commonwealth Great Pond. Located in the central western area of town west of Mendon Center on Route 16, it is spring fed, with the outflow into Meadow Brook. The town owns the island in the lake and one area of town beach along the lake's eastern shore, accessed off Taft Avenue. The rest of the shorefront is private land, with houses and some restaurants on the northwest, northeast, and southeast lake edges. Most of the houses are converted summer cottages built during the trolley era when Lake Nipmuc Park operated. The Park was located on Nipmuc Drive at the northwestern edge of the lake. Various minimal stonework remains at the site. The nearby Myriad Ballroom is adapted from the original ballroom of the Park.

The 85-acre lake serves as the largest source of water for local fire protection, since Mendon does not have town water. There is a 500-acre contiguous open space wildlife corridor stretching south from the southern shore of the lake, including the Mendon Town Forest, to the Millville line. Approximately 100 acres of the land is under Chapter 61A and 61B, and the town owns approximately 135 acres of the corridor. The land is a

combination of wetlands and upland, and contains the second largest great blue heron rookery in Massachusetts, with between 60 and 70 nests. There is no protection for the rookery, which is on private land.

Background: Lake Nipmuc was apparently smaller in the 1800s, and over time new springs have added to the water body. There are stone walls under the water, relics of former pasture land that is now submerged. The lake saw its cultural heyday in the late 19th to early 20th century, when Lake Nipmuc Park operated. This was part of the turn of the century promotional effort of trolley companies to encourage use and add to their revenues by offering trips between the city and country, with attractions at the end of the line. Leading musical and vaudeville talent of the day played at Lake Nipmuc Park, and thousands of visitors flocked to its attractions.



Issues:

- Lack of Protection: This valuable and extensive natural resource has no form of permanent protection.
- Lack of Public Awareness: Citizens are aware of the lake primarily as a residential and recreational landscape. There is little apparent consciousness of the lake's fragility as a natural habitat, nor of the wildlife corridor nearby.

Recommendations:

The following recommendations involve close cooperation among a number of local partners. Primary among them are the Conservation Commission and the lakeside property owners.

- Give serious consideration to enactment of stricter zoning or developmental control mechanisms to protect the environmental quality of the lake and its surrounding habitat. One strategy that has succeeded in other towns is a wetlands protection bylaw with more stringent requirements than those which are state-mandated.
- Work with the owner of the rookery property to explore permanent protection options for the area, in particular a Conservation Restriction placed on the site.
- Research properties within the corridor to determine where an easement could be established from Lake Nipmuc to the town forest. Work toward development of an environmentally-sensitive trail through the land with interpretation.
- Look to DCR's Lakes and Ponds Program, which works with local groups and municipalities to protect, manage and restore these aquatic resources. They provide technical assistance, monitor water quality, and provide educational materials.

Scenic Vistas

Description: Mendon is a town with a wealth of scenic vistas, created by its rolling hills and fertile land that support the farms that still exist today. The majority of land in Mendon is either designated as "core habitat" or "supporting natural landscape" on the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program BioMap. This is a significant aspect of Mendon's landscape, and another contributing reason there are so many scenic views. The map that accompanies this report shows the locations of the major scenic vistas in town. Roads are the public face of Mendon, and in most cases they provide the opportunity to view spaces and distant landscapes that would otherwise be unavailable to the general public. The character of the roads themselves also contribute to the scenic quality of views available from them. Many of Mendon's identified scenic vistas occur along North Avenue. Farms and open fields seen from the town's roads constitute the primary views, and each of the priority landscapes described above has been identified as having important views. Some vistas are breathtaking and long distance, such as the ones over the Hood property and the town-owned Inman Hill Wildlife Conservation Area where on a clear day the Prudential Center in Boston can be seen. Others are more intimate views of farmsteads with their complex of buildings, stone walls threading through open fields, and animals grazing.



Issues:

- Threats to the Landscapes that Constitute the Views: The issues that face farms in Mendon are the same ones that threaten the town's scenic vistas.
- Importance of Protecting the Character of Adjacent Roads: The character of the roads that afford the views is an important component of the scenic landscapes viewed from them.

Recommendations:

Protection of scenic vistas involves two points of concern: the features of the view itself, and the point from which a landscape is viewed.

- Implement the recommendations made above for the farms, as well as those in Part II relating to Agricultural Lands, to protect the landscapes that constitute the views in Mendon as well as those from which views are possible.
- Implement the recommendations in Part II that relate to Scenic Roads.



PART II

BUILDING A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE TOOLKIT



EIGHT TOOLKIT BASICS

As our communities undergo rapid land use changes, heritage landscapes are particularly threatened because they are often taken for granted. There is a broad variety of resources that communities can call upon to protect these irreplaceable resources. Below is a checklist of the basics. Each is discussed in the sections that follow and in Appendix B.

1. Know the resources: Inventory

We cannot advocate for something until we clearly identify it – in this case, the physical characteristics and historical development of the town’s historic and archaeological resources. The necessary first step is to record information about the resources at the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

2. Gain recognition for their significance: National Register Listing

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing brings a number of benefits including recognition, consideration when federally-or state-funded projects may impact the resource, eligibility for tax credits, and qualification for certain grant programs.

3. Engage the public: Outreach, Education and Interpretation

In order to create a community of advocates, we need to raise public awareness and broaden the base of support. This includes developing opportunities to learn about and celebrate the places and history of the town, as well as to care for them.

4. Think in context: Comprehensive and Open Space Planning

It is important that Open Space Plans and Comprehensive or Master Plans address heritage landscapes as vital features of the community, contributing not only to unique sense of place but also to environmental, recreational and economic health.

5. Develop partnerships: The Power of Collaboration

Protecting community character, respecting history, and promoting smart growth are interrelated concerns that impact heritage landscapes and require collaboration across a broad spectrum of the community. This includes communication among town boards and departments, as well as public-private partnerships.

6. Defend the resources: Zoning, Bylaw and Ordinance Mechanisms

Effective and innovative preservation tools exist in the legal and regulatory realm. These range from a wide array of zoning, bylaw and ordinance mechanisms, to incentive programs and owner-generated restrictions on land use.

7. Utilize the experts: Technical Assistance

Regulations and creative solutions for heritage landscapes are constantly changing and emerging. Public and private agencies offer technical assistance with the many issues to be addressed, including DCR, MHC, the Heritage Corridor and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

8. Pay the bill: Funding Preservation

Funding rarely comes from a single source, more often depending on collaborative underwriting by private, municipal, and regional sources. Each town also has a variety of funding sources that are locally based and sometimes site-specific.

MENDON'S TOOLKIT – Current Status and Future Additions

What follows is a review of the tools that Mendon already has in place, as well as a look at a number of additional tools. The tools already in place for Mendon provide a good foundation for heritage landscape preservation, but their efficacy as protection for the town's natural and cultural resources can be significantly improved by strengthening existing measures and putting others in place. Appendix B includes extended descriptions of preservation measures; the specific applications of those tools to Mendon's resources are described below. The appendix also contains a full description of additional avenues and creative approaches that Mendon might consider in developing a multi-pronged strategy for preservation.

A tool that has been proven to be one of the single most valuable resources in protecting heritage landscapes has been the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Mendon has been an excellent model for how a town's resources can be brought to bear on heritage landscape preservation through the program, in particular its purchase of the 78-acre Fino property. The resources made possible by the CPA should be kept in mind when considering the recommendations for priority landscapes as well as the general recommendations below.

These tools should be considered in combination with those recommendations made in Part I for Mendon's priority landscapes.

1. Know the resources: Inventory

Current: According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the town's inventory includes documentation for 295 buildings, structures and sites.

Additions: The inventory process completed in 2002 for Mendon provides a good basis for protection of the town's historic resources. However, there are other sites that should be documented, most importantly some of the priority landscapes and other key farms that have not yet been thoroughly inventoried.

It is recommended that a similar, archaeological survey be completed for the community. Known and potential precontact Native American and historic archaeological sites should be documented in the field for evidence of their cultural association and/or integrity. Funding assistance for this effort would also be available from the MHC Survey and Planning grants, as well as CPA funding.

2. Gain recognition for their significance: State and National Register Listing

Current: There are two National Register Historic Districts in town. The Mendon Center Historic District includes 224 contributing and 47 non-contributing features, while the North Avenue Rural Historic District includes 62 contributing and 9 non-contributing features. All are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Nathan Aldrich House and Resthaven Chapel was individually listed on the National Register in 2006.

There are no local historic districts and no Preservation Restrictions on properties in Mendon.

Additions: It is recommended that the Mendon Historical Commission pursue additional National Register designations with the MHC and consider prioritization of sites and areas for additional listing. Local Historic District designation for Mendon Center should be pursued.

3. Engage the public: Outreach, Education and Interpretation

Current: Mendon's sixth grade students follow a curriculum that teaches them about the history of Mendon and Upton. A field trip is incorporated into the program, and a walking tour was prepared by sixth graders including historical research, writing of text and drawing illustrations.

The town has a historic plaque program marking historic homes; markers have been placed identifying the location of early churches and cemeteries, and a plaque tells the history of Founders Park.

The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor has published an excellent walking tour guide to Mendon Center that describes the history and significance of a number of sites, as well as providing brief historical background to the town as a whole.

The Boy Scouts have camped on the town-owned Kelly Farm, and worked with a forester to blaze the borders of the property and perform selective cutting of trees to create nesting sites.

Trolley tours of the town are also conducted, which are very popular.

Additions: One of the most important resources that the newly formed organization Preservation Mendon can provide to the town is that of outreach and education. It is vital for citizens to be informed of the richness of Mendon's heritage landscapes and their contribution to the health and identity of the town. The group has discussed a range of activities, including trolley tours, walking tours, a fall Blackstone Valley weekend, and historic reenactment. They also realize that education about zoning mechanisms is equally vital, and should be made available to community members.

More opportunities to reach out to young people should be explored through the possible expansion of curricula to other grades and opportunities for supervised work on town properties. These are very effective ways to keep the values and needs of heritage landscapes in the public consciousness for young and old alike.

Preservation Mass, as the statewide preservation advocacy organization, is a source of support for advocacy. They have a program that annually identifies and publicizes the 10 Most Endangered historic resources in the Commonwealth, which is a good way to advocate for resources that are imminently threatened.

4. Think in context: Comprehensive and Open Space Planning

Current: The Mendon Growth Management Strategy, 1996. This report emphasized the importance of every one of Mendon's priority landscapes, stating that: "a critical aspect of Mendon's historic and present character is farming and

farmland. The fields, meadows and structures used in farming all help to define the Town's rural character". Of Lake Nipmuc, it stated, "Nipmuc Pond[sic] is a resource for the entire town and this body of water helps to define the entire Town's character". It also identified hill tops and views of farms and fields as favored landscapes among community members.

The Growth Strategy outlined creative steps that could be taken to protect Mendon's special character, several of which have been implemented, such as the Rate of Development Bylaw.

Current: Community Development Plan, 2004. Like the Growth Management Strategy, this report also underscored the importance of measures to protect the character of the town and guide sustainable growth. Objectives of the plan that relate to heritage landscape preservation include: determine where land preservation should be targeted, considering scenic and environmental values; determine the needs of area farmers to help them sustain the agricultural use of their land; and plan growth to preserve town's rural character and country atmosphere.

Current: Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2006. This plan includes a good historical summary of the town, and a good identification of important scenic qualities. Wildlife habitat and conservation issues are identified.

VanderSluis and Twin Elm Farms, Lake Nipmuc wildlife corridor, and the northeast portion of Mendon Center were all identified in the plan as areas of high priority for protection. The land is all identified as either core habitat or supporting natural landscape.

In 2003, the Land Use Committee worked with MassGIS to update mapping data on Mendon to identify owners of environmentally sensitive land and help target land protection priorities. This will be a valuable resource as the town works to be proactive in its protection strategies.

Additional Planning: Mendon's Growth Management Strategy document should be revisited to determine what additional strategies can be pursued. The goals laid out in both the Community Development Plan and Open Space Plan that relate to heritage landscape preservation should continue to be pursued, through the collaborative efforts of the many town boards that have an interest in these issues.

A critical next step with open space planning is to discuss the issues of wildlife habitat, conservation, and the historical values of the town's heritage landscapes as a complex of interdependent characteristics.

Mendon should hire a town planner. There have been plans developed over the years by volunteer boards and committees, which is very positive. The Town, however, would be well served by a paid professional who is focused on the important tasks of moving planning initiatives forward, acting as a liaison between town boards, and implementing the recommendations of this report. Given the threats to Mendon Center, this is a particularly critical time for Mendon to have this kind of support. Towns that cannot afford the services of a full-time planner have benefited from sharing a planner with an adjacent town,

It is vital that there be strong links between community economic development, open space, and recreation agendas in order to successfully address Mendon's environmental and development challenges. There should be regular joint meetings of the town boards involved with land-based and cultural resource issues. This scheduled interaction will help to maintain communication, coordinate planning priorities, and advance programs that support and promote community character and heritage landscapes.

5. Develop Partnerships: the Power of Collaboration

Current Status: In 2001 the town purchased land from three separate owners, helping to complete an 800-acre tract of contiguous, protected open space that straddles the Mendon–Blackstone town line. This was done in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Metacomet Land Trust, Mendon Land Use Committee, other town boards and a private donor.

Additional Efforts: Existing partnerships in town should be sustained, which have served Mendon well in the past.

Some of the recommendations in this report, such as reconsideration of a local historic district, will require the understanding and cooperation of multiple interests and boards. The accomplishments of 2001 should be used as a model.

6. Defend the Resources: Zoning, Bylaw and Ordinance Mechanisms

Current Mechanisms

Rate of Development Bylaw: Mendon passed this time-limited bylaw in 2001 and again in 2006, which allowed only 39 new building permits for residential units to be issued each year through 2006, in order for town to promote orderly growth.

Affordable Housing Overlay District: This district was approved in an area of the southeastern part of Mendon, which affects open space by helping to relieve the pressure of 40B comprehensive permits on the Town's resources.

Additional Mechanisms

Three strategies have consistently proven effective as basic preservation tools in communities throughout Massachusetts.

Demolition Delay Bylaws provide a time period in which towns can explore alternatives to demolition of historic structures. The Mendon Historical Commission should work with MHC staff to develop a bylaw that would best suit Mendon's needs. They should also work with other town groups to publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. The most valuable aspect of this bylaw is that it creates space within which to have a conversation about how private and public needs can both be met in the service of preservation. Many towns have found that a delay of one year is the most effective time frame within which to negotiate alternatives to demolition. A majority of the bylaws apply to all structures built over 50 years ago, in accordance with federal standards.

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (NACD), further explained in Appendix B, are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. The Mendon Historic Commission should work with the MHC staff to determine how an NACD can help to maintain the character of areas which have changed through time, but which retain a valued neighborhood “feel” that may be threatened by incompatible development.

Local Historic Districts (LHD), further explained in Appendix B, are also local initiatives and the strongest form of protection to preserve special areas with distinctive buildings and places. Mendon voters have voted against a proposed local historic district for Mendon center twice, fearing infringement on private property rights. Unfortunately, National Register listing provides only minimal protection for historic landscapes and structures. It should be made clear to voters that local designation can be tailored to specific community needs, often protecting private investment by enhancing property values.

Additional mechanisms specific to Mendon’s landscapes

The following recommendations focus on two important types of resources that Mendon has, and measures that should be considered to strengthen their protection.

Agricultural Lands

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities; otherwise, it simply is the preservation of land as open space. There are instances in which changing technology sometimes requires modifications to existing farm structures, or the addition of new ones. It is important to know what the features of an agricultural setting are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these settings.

Appendix B has a full list of regulatory tools that should be considered to protect agricultural land; the following highlights important measures to meet the needs of agricultural protection in Mendon.

1. Create an Agricultural Commission, a standing committee of town government created through vote at Town Meeting. This Commission would represent the farming community, promote agricultural-based economic opportunities, and work to protect and sustain agricultural businesses and farmland.
2. Prioritize parcels under Chapter 61A for future acquisition. Should the landowner choose to sell land recently withdrawn from Ch 61, the town has only 120 days to act on its right of first refusal. The need to pay fair market value creates some challenges for the town to effectively act on this right, although the CPA provides some readily-available funding.
3. Strengthen public-private partnerships to preserve farmland through purchase of APRs or CRs.
4. Develop partnerships to raise funds (including partnerships with Metacomet Land Trust) to purchase development rights on farms or to assist a farmer in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the owner would be required to donate a preservation restriction (PR).

5. Make information about the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources programs available to farmers, including the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (technical assistance, funding) and the Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (supports best management practices for agricultural operations to mitigate impacts on natural resources).
6. Adopt Open Space Zoning (also known as Cluster Zoning), which serves the dual purpose of allowing landowners to develop their property while protecting substantive parcels of open space.
7. Document farms that are considered critical to the character of Mendon's community using MHC survey forms.
8. Adopt a right-to-farm bylaw which allows farmers to carry on farming activities that may be considered a nuisance to neighbors. Refer to Smart Growth Toolkit at: http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/Right-to-Farm-Bylaw.pdf
9. Explore Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), a partnership between a farm and a community of supporters. Community members cover a farm's yearly operating budget by purchasing a share of the season's harvest. This relationship guarantees farmers a reliable market, while assuring the members high quality produce, often below retail prices.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads and the views afforded from them are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Mendon residents and visitors alike and were listed as a heritage landscape theme during the public meeting. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel and safety requirements as the only considerations. Mendon has adopted the Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) and has designated 15 roads for which there would be review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls within the right-of-way.

In addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads – the stone walls, views across open fields and the many scenic historic buildings – is not within the public right-of-way. The preservation and protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

1. Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Mendon considered scenic, including the character-defining features that should be retained.
2. Post attractive road signs that identify the designated scenic roads in town.
3. Coordinate monitoring and roadwork procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board or Historical Commission.
4. Consider a Scenic Overlay District which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws would apply to the landscapes bordering state numbered roadways, which are not protected under the scenic roads designation, as well as to landscapes bordering town roads.
5. Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the community may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards higher

than those 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 new pavement width 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 and posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

7. Utilize the Experts: Technical Assistance

A list indicating the full range of available governmental and non-profit sources of technical assistance can be found in Appendix B.

8. Pay the Bill: Funding Preservation

Passage of the CPA has provided Mendon with an important fund of resources for the Town to use on behalf of open space and historic preservation.

Mendon has been designated a Preserve America community, which makes it eligible to receive technical assistance and matching grants related to heritage tourism. More on the designation and fundable activities can be found in Appendix B.

A list indicating the full range of available governmental and non-profit sources of funding can be found in Appendix B.



Leaving for Home, Lake Nipmuc Park
(Courtesy of the Russell and Anne Dudley collection)

CONCLUSION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Mendon's residents have a strong sense of place, defined by the town's varied natural features and the historic land use patterns that grew out of them. The town has already begun to document and evaluate its most significant buildings and natural areas. It must now also look beyond these traditional resources to the landscapes, streetscapes, rural roads, neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the community's character. Like most municipalities, Mendon is facing multiple pressures for change that will have permanent impact on land-based uses and natural resources, especially its remaining farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

The Mendon Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Mendon and in developing creative preservation strategies and partnerships. Mendon will have to determine the best ways and sequence in which to implement the recommendations discussed above. The town would do well to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in DCR's publication, *Reading the Land*.

Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will benefit from further documentation in accordance with MHC guidelines. The documentation in turn will provide an information base for the local publicity needed to build consensus and gather public support for landscape preservation. Implementing many of the recommendations in this report will require a concerted effort by and partnerships among municipal boards and agencies, local non-profit organizations, and regional and state agencies and commissions.

There are no quick fixes for the challenges of managing growth and funding preservation. Many of the recommended tasks and approaches will require cooperation and coordination among a number of municipal, regional and state partners to be successful. They will require time and a good dose of patience, as volunteer schedules, legislative procedures, and funding cycles try to mesh.

Circulating this Reconnaissance Report is an essential first step. The recommendations should be presented to the Board of Selectmen, who represented Mendon in its application to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program. Copies of the report should be available on the town's web site and distributed to town departments and boards, particularly Mendon's Historical Commission, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission and will also be useful for the Mendon Historical Society, neighborhood associations, local land trusts, and other preservation organizations. Finally, a reference copy belongs in the town library. All of these circulation efforts will broaden citizen awareness, and result in increased interest and support for Mendon's heritage landscapes.

Finally, the project team suggests that the following recommendations be the top four priorities for Mendon as the town works to protect the character of its community:

1. Passage of a Demolition Delay Bylaw
2. Reconsideration of Local Historic District designation for Mendon Center
3. Passage of an Open Space Subdivision (Cluster) Bylaw
4. Hiring of a town planner, or sharing one with another community

APPENDIX A

MENDON HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Mendon on February 5, 2007 and follow-up fieldwork on April 2, 2007. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the name and location of the resource are in the first; notes about the resource are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction
LHD = Local Historic District
PR = Preservation Restriction

CR = Conservation Restriction
NR = National Register
Bold = Priority Landscape

Summary of Priority Landscapes

Mendon Center

Farms: VanderSluis Farm, Twin Elm Farm

Lake Nipmuc & Wildlife Corridor

Scenic Vistas

Agriculture	
Van derSluis Farm (Maple Farm)	101-acre farm in the North Avenue Rural NR District; abuts several hundred more acres of undeveloped land; sanctuary for abandoned farm animals, ecologically rich property; also a high priority landscape
Twin Elm Farm	691-acre farm on Bates Street; animals include registered polled Herefords; land abuts several hundred more acres of undeveloped land; scenic vistas; also a high priority landscape
Vincent Farm	see Mendon Center NR Historic District; also scenic vista Property abuts other open space, making over 200 acres of contiguous open space.
Pearson Farm (Quisset Farm)	abuts state land
Hawkes Farm North Avenue	
Denton Farm	
Former Poor Farm	Remodeled house, barn foundation, other outbuilding foundations, stone walls
Archaeology	
Powder Magazine 131 Providence Rd.	
Mill Bellingham St.	foundation of mill remains, with indication of where water wheel was located

stone foundation of old grist mill	remnants of Albees Grist Mill at Mill River on Hartford Ave. East.
Blacksmith Shop	on C. Allaire's land; foundation is built into hillside
Massacre site	early settlement with mill; burned 1675; historic marker there now; exact location disputed
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
theme: cemeteries	Swandale Cem., Revolutionary War Cem., Pine Hill Cem., George St. Cem., Quaker Cem., Gaskill Cem., Bicknell Cem., Taft/Lamonthe Cem., Locust Hill Cem., Wood Cem., Daniels Cem. Union Freeman Cem., Cook Cem., Mowry Cem., Thornton St. Cem., Old Cem., Quaker Cem.
Civic / Institutional	
First Parish Unitarian Church	within Mendon Center NR Historic District, also a high priority landscape
Town Pounds - Providence Rd. - Hartford Ave. West	stone enclosures; one on Providence Rd. adjacent to Twin Elm Farm (see above)
Commercial / Industrial	
Mendon Drive-In	Still active; one of only four active drive-ins in the state
Ammidon Tavern	Within the Mendon Center NR Historic District, also a high priority landscape
Mendon Gift Barn	Within the Mendon Center NR Historic District, also a high priority landscape
George's Surf & Turf	Drive-thru restaurant
Miscellaneous	
theme: scenic vistas -view from Rte 16, Hopedale line - view from North Ave. -view from Varney property -view to Vincent Farm from Providence Rd. or George St.	See map for locations of scenic vistas; most are of agricultural landscapes
Open Space /Recreation/Parks	
Southwick Zoo	land in family since 17 th century zoo established mid-20 th c.
Founders Park	Within the Mendon Center NR Historic District, also a high priority landscape; site of first meetinghouse
Tower Hill	also precontact archaeological; see also Tower Road

Lake Nipmuc & Wildlife Corridor	town beach = only public access to lake uninterrupted open space from town forest to lake serves as wildlife corridor and include Great Blue Heron rookery; privately owned. Also listed under scenic vistas. By lake, privately owned Phipps property near Myriad Ballroom (adapted from original ballroom of the Park)
Fino Property / Taft Orchards	Within the Mendon Center NR Historic District, also a high priority landscape
Inman Hill Wildlife Cons. Area	Former Kelly Farm/Wood property/Paddock property also includes the MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Quisset Hill open space
Town Forest	
Mill River	
Trolley Park at Lake Nipmuc	ballroom survives; summer cottages converted to year-round use nearby
Residential	
Metcalf House	in Mendon Center HD. Home of Revolutionary War widow, Mrs. Prince. Purchased by Dr. John Metcalf in 1832, who lived there until his death in 1892. Prominent physician, town clerk, town treasurer, state senator, and town historian.
Taft House	Within the Mendon Center NR Historic District, also a high priority landscape
Labastie House Thornton Street	
theme: stone houses	Resthaven (finishing school for girls); Ouillette's Farm; Old Metcalf House; on Providence Road and George Street
Transportation	
Scenic Roads	Asylum St., Bates St. (from Bellingham St. to the Bellingham town line), Blackstone St. (from Lovell St. to the Blackstone town line), Inman Hill Rd., Park St., Pleasant St., Southwick St., Thornton St., Gaskill St. (terminating at George St. and Providence St.), George St. (terminating at the Hopedale town line and Providence St.), North Ave. (beginning and including the road adjacent to the power transmission lines – USGS Blackstone, MA, RI quadrant – and terminating at the Upton town line), Miscoe Rd. (terminating at North Ave. to the end of the public right of way), Quisset Rd. (terminating at Providence St. to the end of the public right of way), Thayer St. (terminating at Bates St. to the end of the public right of way), Trask Rd. (terminating at Hopedale St. to the end of the public right of way)
Tower Road	discontinued; now hiking trail; leads to fire tower; in town forest
Old Post Road	
Trolley Railbed	
Village	

Mendon Center Historic District	NRHD 2003; commercial and civic core of Mendon see priority landscape description for specifics

APPENDIX B

GUIDE TO PRESERVATION AND PLANNING TOOLS FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Preservation planning is a four-step process: **identification, evaluation, education** and **protection**. Within the realm of protection, there is a vast array of tools that communities can call upon and that are most effective when used in combination with one another. Stewardship of these resources involves education and community support, planning with a clear set of goals, and regulatory mechanisms.

Three useful documents to consult when planning preservation strategies are:

- Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Reading the Land*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Survey Manual*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*

The following eight sections – based on the Toolkit Basics – detail the resources and strategies available for heritage landscape preservation—from documentation and evaluation, to public education, to regulating activities and finding the revenue necessary to fund the effort.

1. KNOW THE RESOURCES: INVENTORY

The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources on MHC inventory forms. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and the historical development.

Survey methodology has advanced since the early work of the 1980s. If a community had survey work done during that time period, it is time for an inventory update, looking at resources in a more comprehensive and connected way than may have been done at that time. Even if survey work is more recent, there may be a need to document more resources throughout the community.

Using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology:

- a. Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not thoroughly researched, beginning with heritage landscapes.
- b. Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.
- c. Make sure to document secondary features on rural and residential properties, such as outbuildings, stone walls and landscape elements.
- d. Record a wide range of historic resources including landscape features and industrial resources.
- e. Conduct a community-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey to identify patterns of prehistoric and historic occupation and to identify known and probable locations of archaeological resources associated with these patterns. Known and potential precontact and historic archaeological sites should be professionally field-checked to evaluate cultural associations and integrity. A professional archaeologist is one who meets the professional

qualifications (950 CMR 70.01) outlined in the State Archaeologist Permit Regulations (950 CMR 70.00).

NOTE: The Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth contains sensitive information about archaeological sites. The inventory is confidential; it is not a public record (G.L. c. 9, ss. 26A (1)). Care should be taken to keep archaeological site information in a secure location with restricted access. Refer to the MHC article "Community-Wide Archaeological Surveys" which appeared in Preservation Advocate, Fall 2005, and which can be found at the following MHC link: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/pafall05.pdf>.

2. GAIN RECOGNITION FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANCE: NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING

Survey work includes evaluation of whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. This will provide new information about the eligibility of properties. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluations, expand your town's National Register program.

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

3. ENGAGE THE PUBLIC: OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

The best stewards and advocates for heritage landscape protection are members of the community. There are many ways to communicate the importance of these special places to the public, and to connect their preservation with the shared values and goals that community members have already expressed in various planning documents and forums.

Think creatively about how to educate the community about the values and threats to heritage landscapes, and how each town resident benefits from these special places. Use a combination of strategies to get the word out about heritage landscapes and preservation of community character, including:

- **Festivals and Tours** – Tours are a great way to draw attention to the history around us, and to engage more people in caring for it. Consider hosting a Heritage Celebration Day including tours and family-friendly activities, or plan a celebration around a particular place or area on a meaningful date. Make sure events are well publicized.
- **Signage and Banners** – Signs are a very effective way to announce special historic sites and districts. Banners can also bring attention to the significance of an area and make a celebratory statement about its contribution to the town.
- **Written Materials** – Clear, concise and engaging written material with engaging illustrations is a reliable way to relay information about community character and heritage landscapes. Make use of fact sheets and flyers to get the word out on particular issues such as a town ordinance that protects heritage landscapes, a threat that needs to be addressed, or an upcoming event.
- **School Curricula** – Start teaching at a young age. Children are very receptive to engaging stories, and there are no better stories to excite childrens' imaginations and build pride of place than stories of their town's past and present. Teachers have an opportunity to connect history

with environmental issues through classroom study, hands-on history projects, and field exploration of a town's heritage landscapes. Subsequently, students have an opportunity to teach their parents that preservation is everybody's business.

- **Lectures and Workshops** – Use these forums to raise awareness, educate at a deeper level about the community's history and its resources, and broaden the base of interest.
- **Website** – Keep Historical Commission and local historical organizations' entries on the town's website current, and include information about issues, proposals for preservation strategies, and upcoming events.
- **Press Releases** – Use all avenues including press releases to keep the public informed when a meeting or event is about to occur. Work with local reporters to develop special interest articles that highlight landscape resources.

Remember that bringing an issue or a heritage landscape to people's attention once will have only short-term effect. Outreach, education and interpretation must be ongoing concerns that involve preservation and conservation interests, teachers and community organizations in repeated projects to attract and engage the general public.

4. THINK IN CONTEXT: COMPREHENSIVE AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING

Communities use a variety of planning exercises and documents to define their goals and vision of the future, address community-wide issues, and recommend measures to respond to them. There are state mandates for towns to prepare Comprehensive or Master Plans and Open Space and Recreation Plans.

- Comprehensive or Master Plans provide an important frame of reference for land use decisions, and incorporate all of a community's issues including economic development, housing and transportation into an integrated plan. Heritage landscapes need to be seen through the lenses of community character, historic preservation, environmental health, and economic viability and growth. Their future and the values they contribute should be addressed within these multiple perspectives, not solely as historical assets of the community.
- Like Comprehensive Plans, Open Space Plans look holistically at the community—its history, demographics and growth patterns, and current conditions—to make recommendations that protect open space and natural resources for ecological health and public benefits. The Heritage Landscape Inventory Program provides a framework for looking at these important resources, and this new understanding should be incorporated into Open Space Plans.

5. DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS: THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Because heritage landscapes encompass such a broad range of resources and issues—from preservation of town centers, scenic roads and river corridors to promotion of smart growth and economic development – stewardship of these resources involves many interests in a community. It is essential that there be good communication between the many departments and committees that address issues related to heritage landscapes. Collaboration between public and private partners is also an essential element in a successful preservation strategy. National Heritage Corridor personnel are helpful guides to partnership opportunities for projects you may have in mind.

- Broaden the base. Preservation, particularly preservation of landscapes, is not just for the Historical Commission. It is important that the cause not be marginalized by those who view preservation as opposed to progress, or to personal interests. A look at DCR's *Reading the Land* shows the range of organizations and viewpoints that value heritage landscapes.
- Nurture public-private partnerships. Friends groups, neighborhood associations, and local land trusts all have important roles to play to spread the word, and to expand the capacity of the public sector to care for heritage landscapes.
- Take advantage of forums created to share issues and ideas. For instance, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources offers a "cluster" format for monthly discussion and information exchange meetings among area farmers.
- Share resources across communities. Towns that lack funding for a town planner position, for instance, have found that "sharing" a planner with another community can be quite effective.

6. DEFEND THE RESOURCES; LAWS, BYLAWS AND REGULATIONS

A wide range of laws, bylaws and regulations is available to protect heritage landscapes. Following are brief descriptions of some of the most widely used and/or most effective of these tools, arranged alphabetically.

Adaptive Reuse Overlay District

An Adaptive Reuse Overlay District is superimposed on one or more established zoning districts in order to permit incentive-based reuses of existing built properties. These districts can be created to allow for the adaptive reuse of properties of a certain kind, or within a specified area within a community. As an overlay zone, all regulations pertaining to the underlying zone apply, except to the extent that the overlay zone modifies or provides for alternatives to the underlying requirements.

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)

This program, managed by the Department of Agricultural Resources, offers to pay farmers the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of farmland located on prime agricultural soils, in exchange for a permanent deed restriction which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability. This program is different from the *Chapter 61* program, which provides tax incentives for short term restrictions.

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act is statewide enabling legislation that allows communities to assemble funds for historic preservation, open space protection and affordable housing through a local property tax surcharge (up to 3%, with some allowable exemptions) and state matching funds. These funds can support a wide variety of activities, including inventory and documentation of historic resources, restoration and acquisition.

Conservation Restrictions (CR)

A permanent deed restriction between a landowner and a holder - usually a public agency or a private land trust; whereby the grantor agrees to limit the use of his/her property for the purpose of protecting certain conservation values in exchange for tax benefits. EOEEA's Division of Conservation Services provides assistance to landowners, municipalities, and land trusts regarding conservation restrictions and has produced *The Massachusetts Conservation Restriction Handbook* as a guide to drafting conservation restrictions.

Corridor Protection Overlay District

A Corridor Protection Overlay District is intended to promote appropriate development within a given corridor, serving to protect natural (and sometimes cultural) resources. As an overlay zone, all regulations pertaining to the underlying zone apply, except to the extent that the overlay zone modifies or provides for alternatives to the underlying requirements. The Corridor Protection Overlay District can be used cooperatively by adjoining communities to help maintain continuous protection across town lines.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

With a Demolition Delay Bylaw, requests for a permit to demolish a historic building must first be reviewed and approved by the local historical commission. Demolition Delay Bylaws are either list-based (applying only to a specific list of buildings that have been previously identified), age based (applying to all buildings that are older than a certain age – typically 50 years), or categorical (applying only to resources that meet a specific criteria, such as having been documented on Massachusetts Historical Commission forms). If the historical commission does not approve of the demolition and deems a structure significant, it can impose a delay period, during which time the property owner is encouraged to explore alternatives to demolition. Delay periods of 6 months are common, although communities are increasingly adopting delay periods of up to one year.

Design Review

Design Review is a non-regulatory process that is undertaken by a town appointed Design Review Board. The board reviews the design of new construction and additions – typically those taking place in already built-up areas. Recommendations are made to the planning board to help preserve appropriate building patterns and architectural styles, with the goal of maintaining the overall character of a given area. Design Review Boards often limit their review to exterior architectural features, site design and signage.

Downtown Revitalization Zoning

Downtown Revitalization Zoning seeks to encourage businesses to locate in downtowns. Zoning of this nature is typically written to be attractive to businesses of a certain kind that would work well within the given infrastructure and transportation needs, but can also incorporate some of the same elements as Village Center Zoning (see below), such as encouraging mixed use development at a pedestrian-friendly scale, with minimal setbacks and offsite parking.

Flexible Development Zoning

Flexible Development Zoning allows for greater flexibility and creativity when subdividing land, to conform and work with the natural and cultural resources of a site and minimize alteration or damage to these resources, rather than follow standard requirements of subdivision regulations. While this does not prevent land from being subdivided, it does allow for the protection of some features, serves to preserve some undeveloped land, and promotes better overall site planning.

Local Historic Districts (LHD)

LHDs recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and their settings are preserved. They offer the strongest form of protection available for historic resources. LHDs are administered by a Local Historic District Commission (distinct from the community's Local Historical Commission), which reviews proposed exterior changes to buildings within the district. The kinds of changes that are reviewed vary according to the terms of the local bylaw.

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (NCD)

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (sometimes known as Neighborhood Conservation Districts) are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of the neighborhood are important. They are less restrictive than Local Historic Districts in

that they focus on a few key architectural elements and massing, scale, and setback in an effort to embrace overall neighborhood character. As in Local Historic Districts, changes are reviewed by a Neighborhood Architectural Conservation District Commission.

Open Space Zoning

Open Space Zoning – also known as Cluster Development Bylaw, Open Space Communities Zoning, Open Space Development Overlay District, Open Space Preservation Subdivision, or Open Space Residential Development – allows greater density than would otherwise be permitted on a parcel, in an effort to preserve open space. Typically, construction is limited to half of the parcel, while the remaining land is permanently protected under a conservation restriction.

Rate of Development Bylaw

A town may slow the rate of its growth within reasonable time limits to allow the community to engage in planning and preparation for growth. This measure must be used for the purpose of conducting studies and planning for rational development, and not for restraining the rate of growth for a period of unlimited duration.

Right to Farm Bylaw

A Right to Farm Bylaw asserts the rights of farmers to pursue agricultural activities, provides community support for farming activities and requires dispute resolution so that abutters cannot make nuisance claims. Agricultural landscapes are widely considered to be significant heritage landscapes for which there is constant concern of potential development. This bylaw serves to help active farmers remain just that - active.

Scenic Overlay District Zoning

Scenic Overlay District Zoning protects scenic vistas by providing for a no-disturb buffer on private lands, thereby helping to maintain specific viewpoints. This type of zoning is more far-reaching than a Scenic Roads Bylaw (see below) and may be applied to numbered routes.

Scenic Roads Bylaw

The Scenic Roads Bylaw requires that a public hearing be held prior to the removal of any trees or stone walls that fall within the public right of way on a designated scenic road. Depending on how it is written, the bylaw may apply to a predetermined list of roads or encompass all roads in a community (other than numbered routes). The bylaw applies whenever there is any public or private impact to trees or stone walls within the right of way, including activities such as road widening, utility company work or creating private driveways.

Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw

Scenic Vista Protection Bylaws require additional design criteria for any proposals for new construction in areas that are determined by the town to be a scenic vista. Vistas may encompass natural, cultural and historic features.

Shade Tree Act

The Shade Tree Act is a part of MGL Chapter 87, which defines all trees within the public way as public shade trees. The municipal Tree Warden is responsible for the care, maintenance and protection of all public shade trees (except those along state highways). Trimming or removal of any public shade trees greater than 1.5” in diameter requires a public hearing. Chapter 87 applies to all communities; however, some communities have adopted their own Shade Tree Act Bylaws that provide stricter regulations than those mandated in Chapter 87.

Site Plan Review

Site Plan Review provides the planning board (and other boards and committees, depending how the bylaw is written) with an opportunity to consider a variety of community concerns – such as impacts to vehicular circulation, scenic vistas, topography and natural resources – during the permit process. Boards may comment on site plans and request changes to the design. Site Plan Review is typically limited to large scale projects and tied to the special permit process.

Smart Growth Zoning – Chapter 40R

Smart Growth Zoning (Chapter 40R) provides financial rewards to communities that adopt special overlay zoning districts allowing as-of-right high density residential development in areas near transit stations, areas of concentrated development, or areas that are suitable for residential or mixed use development. Such zoning can help direct compact growth to areas that are already developed – such as historic village centers – thereby discouraging growth in less suitable areas.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

TDR is a regulatory technique that allows a landowner to separate building or development rights from the property and sell them, receiving compensation for preserving land and allowing for the development to occur in areas selected for higher density projects. In essence, development rights are "transferred" from one district (the "sending district") to another (the "receiving district"). As a result, development densities are shifted within the community to achieve both open space preservation and economic goals without changing overall development potential.

Village Center Zoning

The goal of Village Center Zoning is to meet the needs of a small-scale, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area by encouraging compact development. New construction is required to be built at a scale that is compatible with the neighborhood and to have a reduced (or no) setback from the street. Parking may be directed to discourage large lots in front of buildings. Village Center Zoning shares many similarities with Traditional Neighborhood Development, and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

Wetlands Protection Act and Bylaws

The Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40) protects wetlands by requiring a careful review by local conservation commissions of proposed work that may alter wetlands. The law also protects floodplains, riverfront areas, land under water bodies, waterways, salt ponds, fish runs and the ocean. Communities may also adopt their own Wetlands Protection Bylaw, providing stricter regulations than those mandated in Chapter 131.

7. UTILIZE THE EXPERTS: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Beyond DCR and the Heritage Corridor, technical assistance is available from many governmental and non-profit sources, most often free of charge to municipalities and non-profit organizations.

- [American Farmland Trust](#): Clearinghouse of information supporting farmland protection and stewardship.
- [Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission](#): The regional planning agency charged with assisting communities with local planning efforts in this region.
- [Citizen Planner Training Collaborative](#): Provides local planning and zoning officials with training opportunities and online information; they also hold an annual conference to support land use planning.

- [Green Valley Institute](#): Provides technical assistance about land use planning to communities within the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor. Web site and publications contain information of use to communities throughout the region.
- [Massachusetts Historical Commission](#): Provides technical assistance as well as grants to municipalities and nonprofits for preservation planning and restoration projects.
- [New England Small Farm Institute](#): A non-profit dedicated to providing technical assistance, information and training to farmers.
- [The Trustees of Reservations](#): Offers conservation and landscape protection workshops, publications and connections through the **Putnam Conservation Institute**. The Trustees also manages a unique **Conservation Buyer Program** that links interested sellers with conservation-minded buyers and assists with establishing permanent property protection mechanisms.
- [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#) is the state agency dedicated to supporting the agricultural activities in the state through special initiatives, programs and technical assistance.
- [The Trust for Public Land](#) is a national non-profit that assists municipalities with land conservation efforts.
- University of Massachusetts Extension
- DCR's [Lakes and Ponds Program](#) works with local groups and municipalities to protect, manage and restore these valuable aquatic resources. They provide technical assistance to communities and citizen groups, help to monitor water quality at various public beaches to ensure public safety, and provide educational materials to the public about a range of lake issues.
- [Massachusetts Agricultural Commissions](#) has recently launched a new website that includes helpful information both for communities with Agricultural Commissions and for those learning more about forming one.
- **UMASS extension (NREC)** – Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation) can provide assistance on issues related to land and water resource protection, smart growth/sustainability measures and forestry and farming management,

8. PAY THE BILL: FUNDING PRESERVATION

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing strategies to protect heritage landscapes. There are local, state, regional, national and non-profit funding programs and resources that can assist communities in preservation and land conservation-related issues. The availability of such assistance varies from year to year and private property is not always eligible for funding. Examples include:

Local Funding Assistance

- Towns that have adopted the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth makes the CPA worthy of consideration. Such projects include MHC inventory, National Register nominations, cemetery preservation, open space acquisition and preservation and restoration of public buildings. The CPA (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) establishes a mechanism by which cities and towns can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Local funds are collected through a 0.5% to 3% surcharge on each annual real estate tax bill. At the state level, the Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA. The amount of the surcharge is determined by ballot vote at a local election.

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 city or town believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Additional information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

- Municipalities can establish **land acquisition funds**, increasing their revenue from sources such as an annual fixed line item in the municipal budget; income from forestry, farming and leasing of town-owned land; gifts and bequests; grants and foundation funding; and passage of the CPA, detailed above.

State Funding Assistance

Funding for a variety of preservation projects, primarily for municipalities and non-profit, is available through the [Massachusetts Historical Commission \(MHC\)](#), the EOEEA [Division of Conservation Services](#) (DCS), the [Department of Conservation and Recreation](#) (DCR) and other state agencies. Further information on these programs is available on the agency websites.

- **MHC Survey and Planning Grants** support survey, National Register and a wide variety of preservation planning projects.
- The **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)**, administered through the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- Towns that have a local historic district bylaw may apply for **Certified Local Government (CLG)** status which is granted by the National Park Service (NPS) through the MHC. At least 10% of the MHC's yearly federal funding allocation is distributed to CLG communities through Survey and Planning matching grants. To become a CLG, the town completes an application; after being accepted as a CLG, it files a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings, and decisions; in return the town may apply for the matching grant funding that the MHC awards competitively to CLGs annually. Presently 18 cities and towns in Massachusetts are CLGs. **NOTE:** CLG status is dependent in part on a municipality having at least one [Local Historical District](#) as evidence of the community's commitment to historic preservation.

Open Space Plans, with a requirement of updating the plan every five years, make a community eligible for **Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) grants** and technical assistance programs through the Department of Conservation Services.

- The [Massachusetts Self-Help Program](#) of DCS assists local conservation commissions in acquiring land for the purposes of natural and cultural resource protection and passive outdoor recreation.
- The [Massachusetts Urban Self-Help Program](#), another DCS initiative, is geared toward assisting towns and cities in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes.

- DCS [Conservation Partnership Grants](#) assist non-profits in acquiring interests in land for conservation or recreation, and have also been used in the past to help protect active agricultural lands.
- The [Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), distributed through the DCS, can support heritage landscape protection by providing up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition or renovation of park, recreation or conservation areas. Municipalities, special districts and state agencies are eligible to apply.

The **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)** administers a variety of grant programs that can help with heritage landscape preservation:

- [Urban and Community Forestry](#) grants fund projects which will result in sustained improvements in local capacity for excellent urban and community forestry management.
- The [Recreational Trails Grant](#) Program provides funding on a reimbursement basis for a variety of recreational trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects.

The **Department of Agricultural Resources** [Farm Viability Enhancement Program](#) works with farmers to develop sound business plans and funding assistance to implement them.

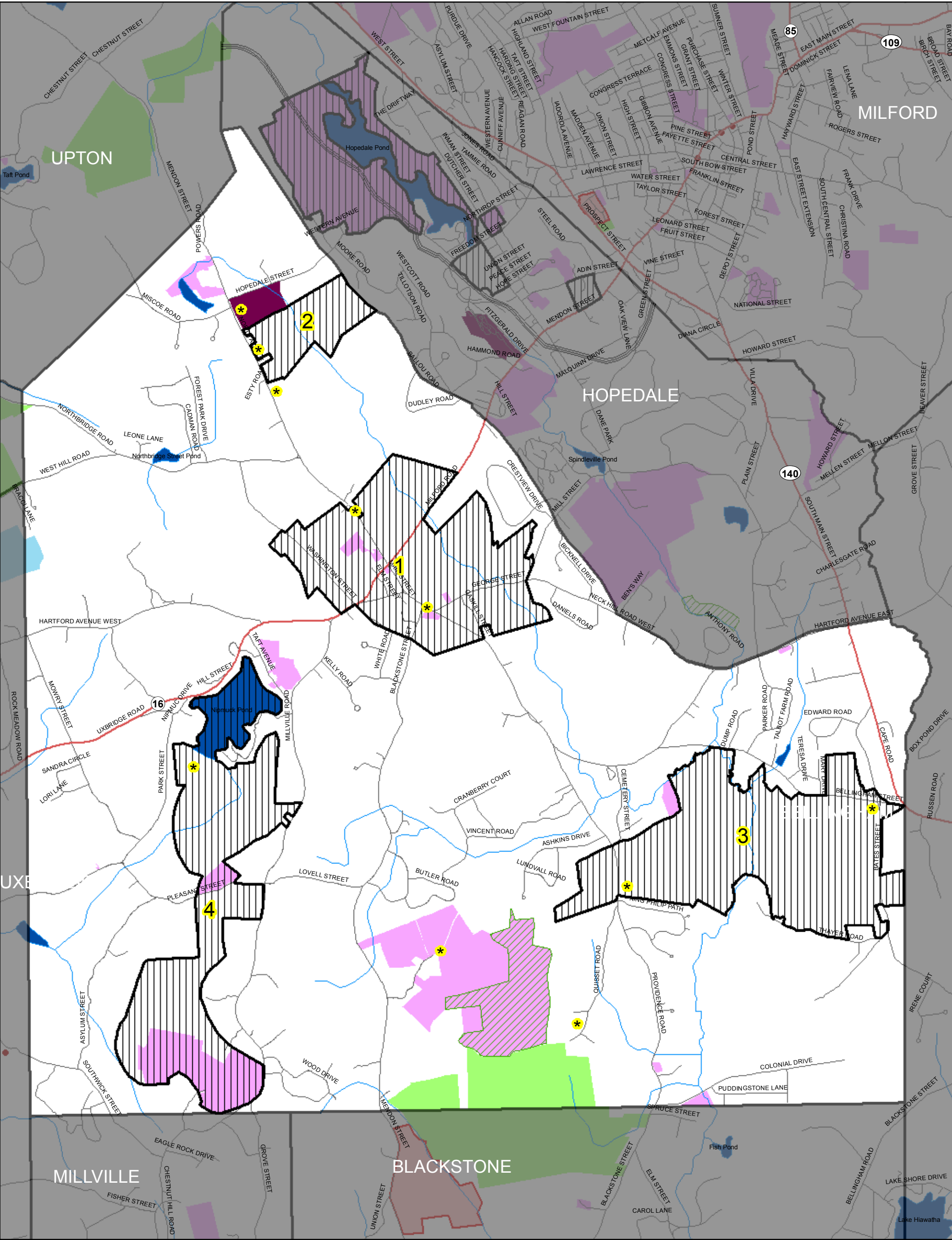
Regional and Non-Profit Funding Assistance

- The [John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission's Heritage Partnership Program](#) supports projects in corridor towns that further the Corridor goals of historic preservation, community revitalization, ecological restoration, land use planning, riverway development and educating people about the Valley's heritage. Communities and organizations located within the Corridor are eligible to receive funding, subject to availability.
- [Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers National Heritage Corridor](#) provides mini-grants to member towns, supporting preservation of heritage landscapes including projects involving sustainable agriculture, river clean-ups, open space planning and natural resource conservation.
- The [Greater Worcester Community Foundation](#) provides grants to non-profit organizations for community enhancements.
- [The Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands and other natural places. TPL helps communities identify and prioritize lands to be protected; secure financing for conservation; and structure, negotiate and complete land transactions. TPL's New England Office recently launched the [Worcester County Conservation Initiative](#), to accelerate the pace of land conservation in central Massachusetts by helping communities plan and finance conservation projects.
- The [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) offers a variety of financial assistance programs. Based on the availability of funding, the National Trust awards more than \$2 million in grants and loans each year for preservation projects nationwide.

- The [Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission \(CMRPC\)](#) does not administer grants, but can work with communities to write grants or help them find funding.

Federal Funding Assistance

- The [Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program](#) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has protected 85 farms to date in Massachusetts on 6,335 acres with matching funds. Eligible organizations are federally recognized Indian tribes, states, local government, and non-governmental organizations. They are required to provide 50-50 matching funds for purchase of conservation easements in land with prime, productive soils that are subject to a pending offer, for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses of the land.
- All of the communities within the Blackstone Heritage Corridor have been designated [Preserve America](#) communities, making them eligible to receive technical assistance and matching grants related to heritage tourism. Eligible grant activities include research, documentation (e.g., historic resource surveys and National Register nominations), interpretation and education (e.g., signage, exhibits and itineraries), planning, marketing and training. (Communities within the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor may want to pursue Preserve America designation in order to take advantage of these funding opportunities.)
- The National Park Service's [Rivers & Trails Program](#) provides technical assistance to community groups and government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. The program does not offer grants, but can provide staff to help identify needs, assist partners in navigating the planning process, and help with organizational development and capacity building. The program can serve as a catalyst for successful trail development and conservation efforts.



MENDON HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY



Priority Landscapes

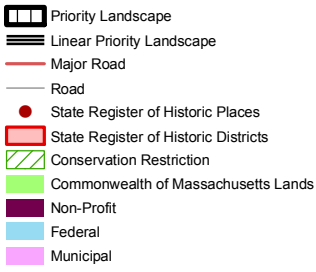
- 1. Mendon Center
- 2. VanderSluis Farm
- 3. Twin Elm Farm
- 4. Lake Nipmuc and Wildlife Corridor
- ★ Scenic Vistas

Map Created By:
Hyla Ecological Services, Inc.
(978) 371-1222
www.hyla-ecological.com

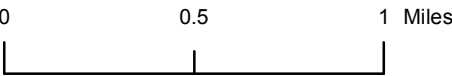
HYLAecological

NOTE RE BOUNDARIES: Priority Landscape outlines are not legal parcel boundaries; they indicate local focus of concern. All other GIS data were obtained from MassGIS and may not include 2007 updates.



- Priority Landscape
- Linear Priority Landscape
- Major Road
- Road
- State Register of Historic Places
- State Register of Historic Districts
- Conservation Restriction
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Lands
- Non-Profit
- Federal
- Municipal



0 0.5 1 Miles