



# SPENCER RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

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## UPPER QUABOAG WATERSHED AND NORTH QUABBIN REGION LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

### MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission  
North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership**

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## Spring 2008

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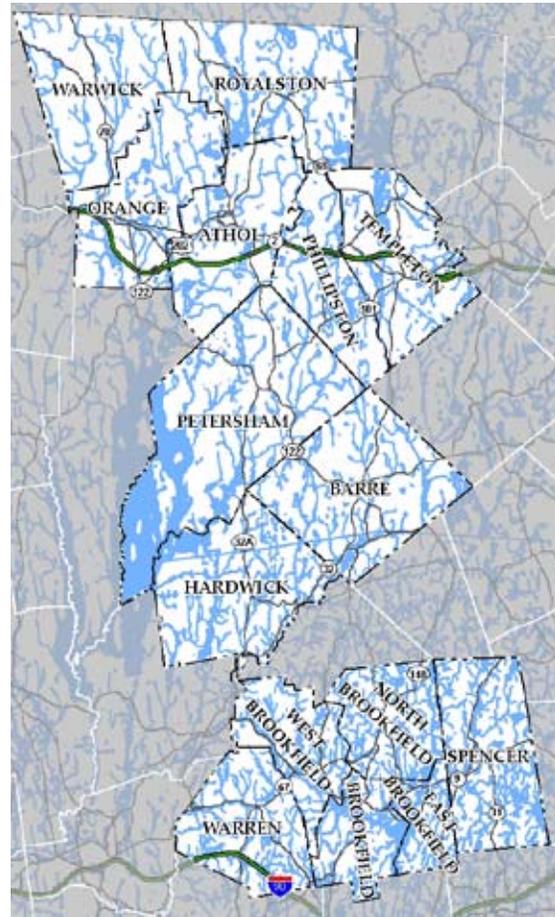
## INTRODUCTION

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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, reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place. They show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns and 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 its regional partners, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP), have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program to fifteen communities in 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 communities within the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin region of central Massachusetts share a common dispersed settlement pattern as well as an early agricultural economy and later shift into manufacturing. Developed along a series of major waterways and their tributaries, including the Millers, Quaboag and Ware Rivers, this region contains vast cultural and historic resources and uncommon natural beauty. The heritage landscapes in the participating communities reflect the agrarian and industrial past while providing recreational and educational opportunities for today. From scenic town commons and natural areas to civic buildings and burial grounds, the heritage landscapes within the region collectively tell the story of their varied and often turbulent, history.



*Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region  
Heritage Landscape Inventory project area*

## **Methodology**

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a pilot project conducted in southeast Massachusetts. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land*, which has provided guidance for the program since its inception. In summary, each community organized 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, accompanied by interested community members. The final product for each community is an individualized Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report. This report 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.

## PART I: HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

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### LOCAL HISTORY

Spencer's many hills and stream valleys have determined its history and growth from Native American times to the modern era. There are no known major Native American settlements here, but the Seven Mile and Cranberry Meadow Rivers were likely used as major thoroughfares and for seasonal hunting and harvesting.



*View of St. Joseph's Abby fields from Northwest Road*

The land that is now Spencer was purchased from the Native Americans by a group of settlers from Boston in 1686. Originally part of Leicester, the Town of Spencer was incorporated in 1775. Nathaniel Wood was first to settle the area in 1717, on a 100-acre lot on the western border of town. The original village was formed at the geographic center of the town with a meetinghouse in 1743, followed by other institutional buildings and a tavern. Most of the residents lived on large farm tracts dispersed throughout the Town.

In the mid- to late-18th century, water-based industries emerged on Spencer's streams and rivers, and by the early-19th century, two more villages developed. Starting at the turn of the 19th century, Upper and Lower Wire Villages manufactured wire along Turkey Hill Brook corridor, which at one time contained 7 dams, 11 factories and 26 buildings. Also during this time, textile, boot and shoe manufacturing developed in the center of town.

The arrival of the Western Railroad in 1841 expanded Spencer's economy and population and another village, Spencer Depot, developed southwest of the Center. During this period there was a decrease in agricultural production as some farmers turned to work in the factories, and many fields reverted back to woodland. Dairying, however, remained a large part of Spencer's economy through the early-1900s.

By the 1890s, electric streetcar service was running along Main Street leading to Worcester in the east and Brookfield and Warren in the west. This marked the early suburbanization of Spencer, enabling residents to travel outside of town for work. Many of Spencer's factories closed during the Depression or soon after. Two of three textile mills closed by 1931, and the mills throughout

the Wire Villages were discontinued by the 1940s. Although several small wire manufacturers remained in business, the town experienced a decrease in population during this time.

With the age of the automobile, however, roads were improved and the Town's population grew again as people were moving out from more urban areas. Cottages were built on ponds throughout Spencer, which sparked an increase in regional tourism. Residents and visitors were attracted by the Town's rural scenic character and quality of life.

Today the town is primarily residential although some industry and agriculture remain. St. Joseph's Abbey is the home of the Trappist Preserves processing plant and there are several dairy farms still in operation. Recreational and tourist opportunities in Spencer include Howe State Park, Camp Marshall, the Buck Hill Center and the MidState Trail, the Depot Trail, the Snowbirds and snowmobile trails.

## PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Spencer is experiencing significant growth pressure and will need to determine how it will affect the rural character of the community and the heritage landscapes that the community finds valuable. In the public identification meeting, participants identified priority landscapes in town that define the heritage of the community. These heritage landscapes provide a cross section of the types of landscapes that contributed to the historical development of the town and together tell the story of Spencer's past. The following text describes the unique value that each of these landscapes provides to the community and a set of recommendations for its preservation and protection.

### Green Property and Schoolhouse #3

#### *Green Farm*

In the same family for over 150 years, the Green farm is located on 11.9 acres on Main Street in the center of Spencer. Richard Green still lives in the farmhouse built in 1856 by his great-grandfather who also owned the yellow house to the west with the associated greenhouses. Although in need of repair, the farmhouse contains original 1856 wallpaper that was damaged by the 1938 hurricane and an original ice box in the kitchen. As a working farm, the land behind the farmhouse was originally open from the house to the shore of Lake Whittemore. Over time, woodlands have started to encroach on the farmland from the lakefront. Only about half of the property remains open including several horse paddocks directly adjacent to the house. Although not currently an allowed use in the town center other than by Special Permit, the horses kept on the property are grandfathered under the terms of the 1975 conservation restriction deeded to the Town by Herbert Green, Richard Green's grandfather.



*Rear yard of Schoolhouse #3, Green home in the distance*

The Green property abuts the Town-owned Luther Hill Park along a portion of its western boundary from the shore of Lake Whittemore running south. According to the 1975 Conservation Restriction, an easement allows for public use of the 10-acres running up from the lakefront for recreational purposes and nature study. Trails may be laid out and maintained by the Spencer Conservation Commission. Although not utilized in recent years, Mr. Green recalls High School classes using the area as an outdoor classroom. In addition to the farmhouse, the property contains the original barns as well as historic landscape features such as stone walls, hedge rows and orchard remnants.



*Historic photograph showing schoolhouse #3 with the Green Home in the background*

### ***Schoolhouse #3***

Built by the Green family in 1857, Schoolhouse #3 is located on  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre that the Green family subdivided out of their farmland. It was purchased by the Town and operated as a school until it was sold back to Green family in 1924 when the schools were consolidated. From that time until the present, the Green family has maintained the property and it has had a variety of uses including serving as an emergency hospital, in case of air raids, during WWII. The building is currently un-occupied and used for storage.

Although structurally sound, the building has no running water or electricity and is in need of rehabilitation. The interior of the building still retains the original school blackboards. The Schoolhouse is on a separate parcel, under different ownership than the farmhouse, and is currently for sale. The open field behind the Schoolhouse, also originally part of the Green farm, is a separate parcel owned by Richard Green's stepdaughter and is also currently on the market. Both of these parcels run along Park Street and adjoin the Luther Hill Park to the North. Stone pillars and a gate into the Park are located at the end of Park Street but they have been closed to vehicular access. Neither of these parcels was included in the 1975 Conservation Restriction deeded to the Town.

#### ***Opportunities:***

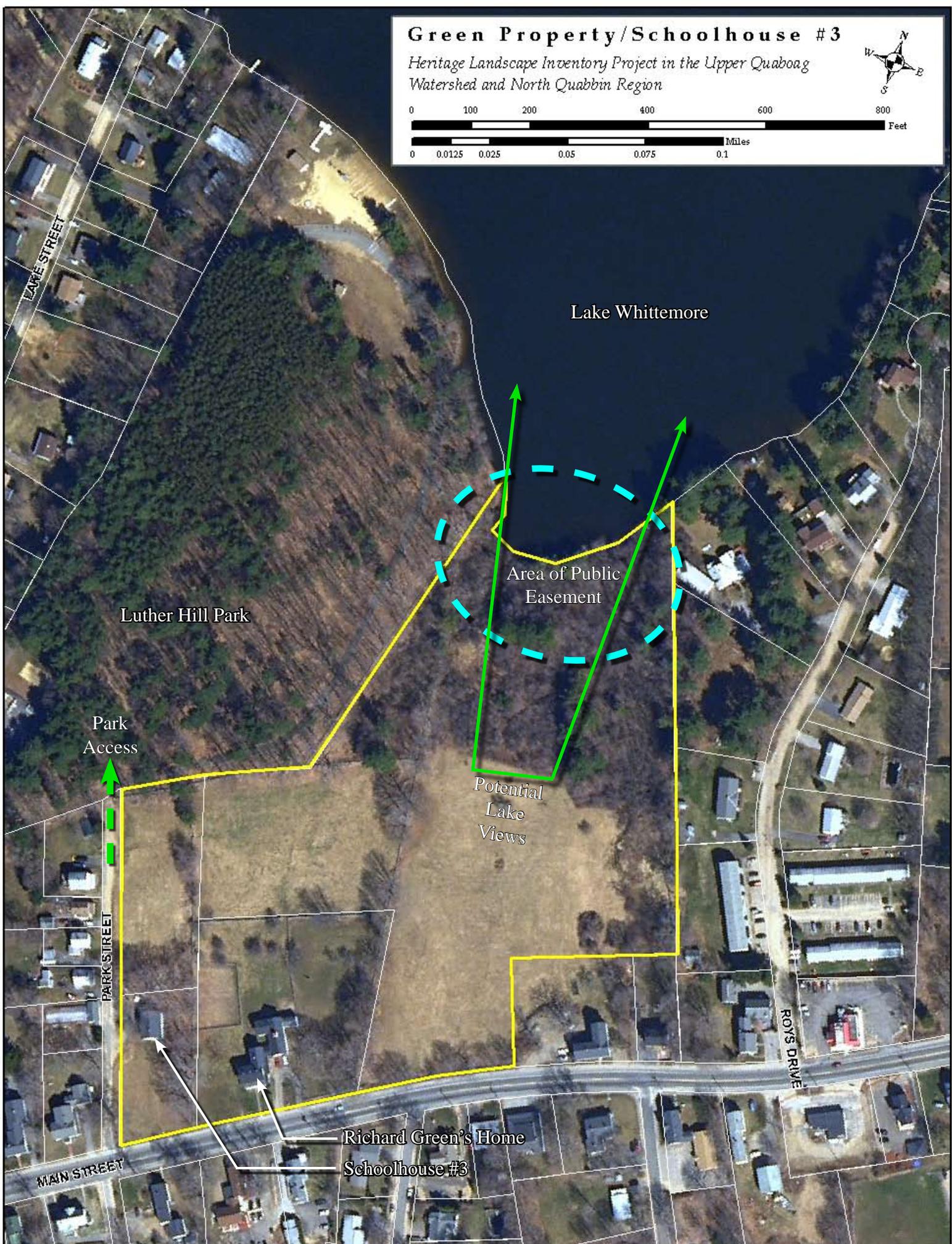
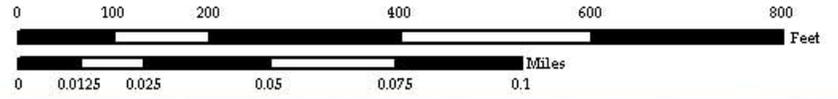
- The Town of Spencer is interested in the historical and recreational value of these sites as not many agricultural landscapes still exist so close to the center of town. Their proximity to Luther Hill Park and Lake Whittemore are also important to the town.
- The Schoolhouse could be rehabilitated for use by the Historical Society and/or Park and Recreation Commission as well as a general community room
- The Green Farmhouse has been inventoried with the Massachusetts Historical Commission

#### ***Issues:***

- The future of the Green farm and its farmhouse is unclear, as Mr. Green and his older brother are the last members of the family
- Both the Green farmhouse and Schoolhouse are in relatively poor condition and in need of rehabilitation in the near future
- The Schoolhouse site and lot behind it are currently for sale and could be sold and/or developed at any time

# Green Property / Schoolhouse #3

Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region



Lake Whittemore

Luther Hill Park

Area of Public Easement

Potential Lake Views

Park Access

Richard Green's Home  
Schoolhouse #3

LAKE STREET

PARK STREET

ROY'S DRIVE

MAIN STREET

***Recommendations:***

1. The easement allowing public access on the back portion of the Green Farm at Lake Whittemore should be utilized, opening up paths and restoring views to the lake from the Farm and Main Street, with owners permission and Conservation Commission approval.
2. The Town/Historical Commission should work with the owners of the Schoolhouse and vacant parcel to pursue a Preservation Restriction to preserve the historic character of the building and a Conservation Restriction for the associated landscape of the Green Farm (see pages 28 and 26 for more about PRs and CRs)
3. Schoolhouse #3 should be rehabilitated by the Town or other civic organization such as the Historical Society, for use as a museum or children's/community center. The town may also consider models such as the DCR Historic Curatorship Program to facilitate rehabilitation of the schoolhouse, and possibly the farmhouse in the future.
4. The parcel behind the Schoolhouse should be purchased by a non-profit organization and/or the Town Parks and Recreation Commission, making a connection between the center of town and Luther Hill Park, along with the Schoolhouse #3, the Green Property easement, and Lake Whittemore



*Photo taken in front of Green Home, with School #3 in the background*

## Sibley Farm/Wendy Warner Farm

These two farms consist of three contiguous agricultural parcels between to Route 9 and Greenville Street. The Wendy Warner Farm is in the Chapter 61 Program, and the Sibley Farm is under no protection. Totalling approximately 350 acres, the Sibley and Warner Farm properties represent one of the largest undeveloped, and most scenic, pieces of land in the center of Spencer.

The former Sibley Farm is located off of Main Street (Route 9) and is a beautiful collection of rolling hills, large tracts of forest, open hay fields and small ponds. Near the boundary along Main Street the site contains a portion of the Old Boston Post Road that locals claim George Washington rode on. Carriage ruts can still be seen at certain times of the year. The archeological remains of a schoolhouse (possibly #1) are located along the northern section of the property and the site is also said to contain the foundations of the Sibley mansion, which was blown down in the 1938 hurricane. Although no longer owned by the Sibley family or actively farmed, the current owners lease several acres to a local farmer for hay production.

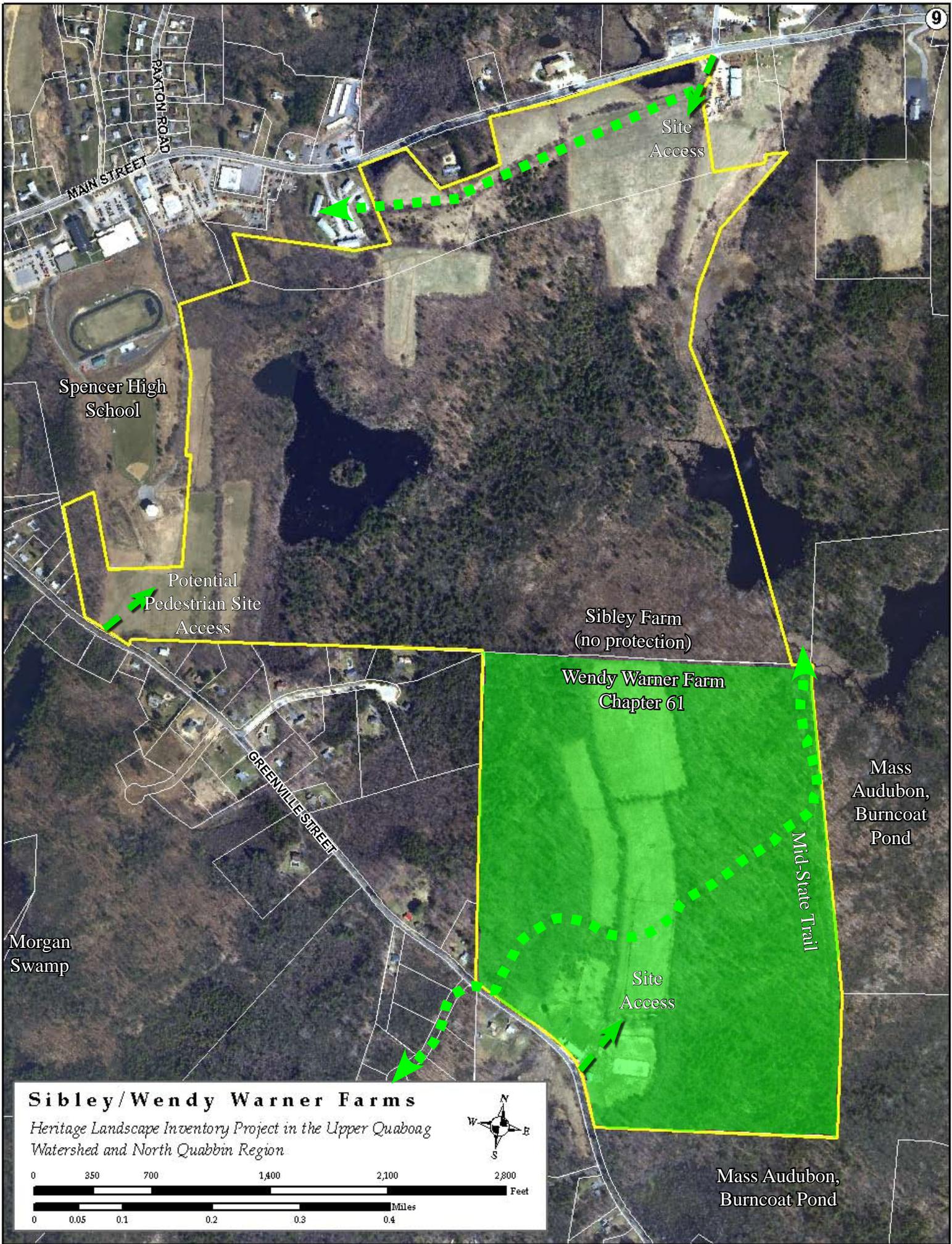
Access to the Sibley Farm parcels is from Main Street on what was the original Sibley Farm Road and through a gate on Greenville Street that also accesses the Wendy Warner Farm property. Located off of Greenville Street farther to the south, there are several buildings that remain from the Wendy Warner Farm. The buildings are late 19th and 20th century vernacular; they are not in very good shape having been vacant for some time, and their historical and architectural significance is minimal. Several acres are still open in this portion of the site and also possibly hayed.



*View into Sibley Farm looking South*



*Vacant property, formerly Wendy Warner Farm*



Spencer High School

Potential Pedestrian Site Access

Site Access

Sibley Farm (no protection)

Wendy Warner Farm Chapter 61

Mass Audubon, Burncoat Pond

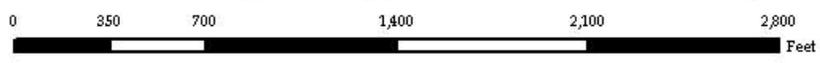
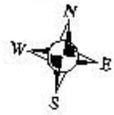
Mid-State Trail

Site Access

Mass Audubon, Burncoat Pond

### Sibley / Wendy Warner Farms

Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog Watershed and North Quabbin Region



The Mid-State Trail runs through the Wendy Warner Farm parcel connecting from the Morgan Swamp area to the Southwest, to Mass Audubon land adjacent to the East. Mass Audubon owns approximately 194 acres surrounding the Southeast boundaries of the site including a portion of Burncoat Pond. The Town of Spencer retains Conservation Restrictions on three additional parcels totaling 68 acres, located south on Greenville Street.

*Opportunities:*

- Large undeveloped parcel in center of Town with good access from both Main and Greenville Streets
- Beautiful site with rolling hills and water bodies provides an important natural resource for hydrological systems and wildlife habitats
- The Old Boston Post Road is an important historical resource
- Connections could be made to Spencer High School west of the Farm
- The MidState Trail runs through the Wendy Warner parcel
- The Wendy Warner parcel is listed under Chapter 61, Forest Tax Law, which provides a temporary form of protection and allows the Town right-of-first-refusal if it is taken out of this designation

*Issues:*

- Currently owned by a group of investors, the land (both the Sibley and Warner Farms) has been permitted for large-scale development including commercial and residential areas

***Recommendations:***

1. A development application has been permitted for this land but the Town should work with the property owners to revise the plans in a way that provides for clustered development and the retention of significant conservation land; establishing an Open Space Residential Development Zone may help to facilitate this process (see page 28 for more about this type of zoning). The town should work closely with the owner to preserve the majority of open fields adjacent to Route 9 and to re-design the new roadway/entrance to blend into the landscape as much as possible.
2. The Town should obtain a Preservation Restriction on the portion of the Old Boston Post Road, as it runs through the site, for public access and interpretation. (see page 28 for more about PRs). If the Community Preservation Act were adopted in town, funds could be used to help purchase this PR (see page 26 for more about the CPA).
3. The town should develop a strategy for acquisition of Chapter 61 parcels throughout town, should they change land use or ownership (see page 27 for more about Chapter 61 Policy).
4. The Parks and Recreation Commission should pursue a connection to the MidState Trail from Main Street through the Sibley Farm property. This could also utilize CPA funds.

## Wilson Farm



*Wilson Farm fields looking toward old farmhouse*



*Views across Wilson Farm and to the West*

The 150-acre Wilson Farm dates from the 1700's and has remained in the Wilson family since that time. The original 1740 farmhouse still stands at 115 Wilson Street although the Wilson family no longer lives on the property and it is currently vacant. All other outbuildings have been demolished but the barn foundations remain to the west of the farmhouse. Actively farmed until recently, the site was well known in the 20th century for its local produce and vegetable stand. Today the site contains large portions of forest land, large open fields, a small pond and spectacular views across the fields to the northwest.

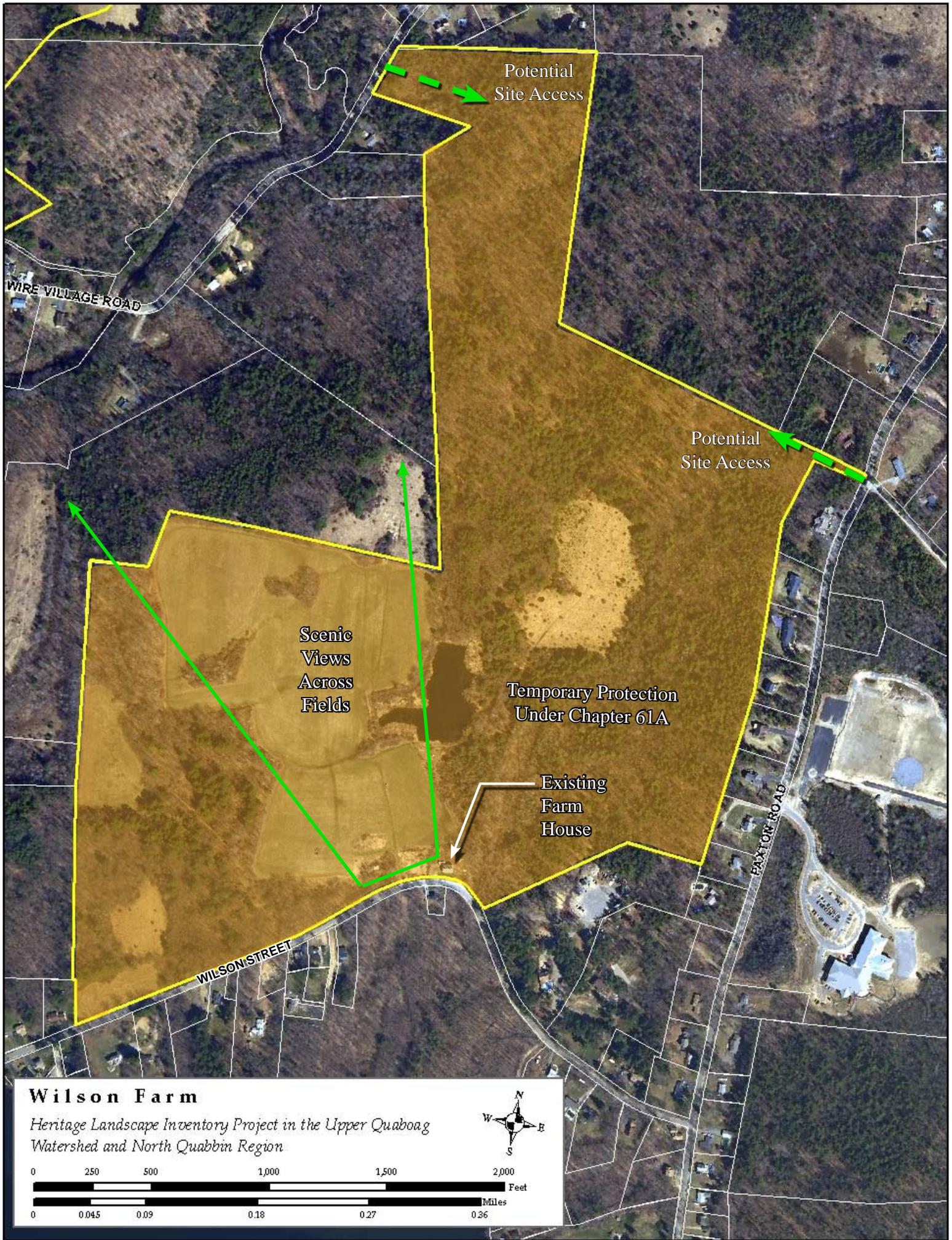
Primary access to the site is the frontage along Wilson Street. The site also abuts Wire Village Road and Paxton Road across from Donnelly Street. This portion of the site is heavily forested and there are some steep slopes. The entire parcel is currently under the temporary protection of Chapter 61A designation, but this status will soon be lost since the farming has ceased..

### *Opportunities:*

- Beautiful sloping land with stunning views to the north and west
- Large tracts of forest land that provide wildlife habitat
- Several points of access
- Chapter 61A provides the Town with the right-of-first-refusal for acquisition or the procurement of conservation restrictions
- The farm and farmhouse have been inventoried on MHC inventory forms.

### *Issues:*

- Currently for sale as the family needs to secure some financial benefit from the land
- Family has few resources - would consider putting remainder in Conservation Restriction if the town can help with grants, etc.
- Vulnerable to large-scale development



Potential Site Access

Potential Site Access

Scenic Views Across Fields

Temporary Protection Under Chapter 61A

Existing Farm House

WIRE VILLAGE ROAD

WILSON STREET

PAYTON ROAD

### Wilson Farm

Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog Watershed and North Quabbin Region



0 250 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

0 0.045 0.09 0.18 0.27 0.36 Miles

*Recommendations:*

1. The Town should work with Wilson family to explore options for the development of a portion of the site while preserving the remainder of the property in a Conservation Restriction (see page 26 for more about CRs). Clustered development could be located in the eastern portion of the property with access from Paxton Road and Wire Village Road while the remainder of the site could be conserved for public access. This would provide financial benefit to the owner without the loss of this valuable scenic and cultural resource.
2. Procure a scenic easement on the view to the northwest from the Farmhouse on Wilson Street (see page 29 for more about scenic protection).
3. The Historical Commission/Society should pursue the nomination of this historic building to the National Register of Historic Places. Work with the property owner to rehabilitate the 1740 farmhouse and/or sell it with a Preservation Restriction and small portion of land (see page 28 for more about PRs). Also consider models such as the DCR Historic Curatorship Program to facilitate the rehabilitation.



*Old Wilson Farmhouse*

## Wire Village and Turkey Hill Brook



*Dam ruins at Lower Mill Village*

The Turkey Hill Brook runs along Wire Village Road, and once held an extensive wire industry which now remains only in ruins and local lore. The Upper and Lower Villages bookend the industrial area and retain a few homes from that period of town history.

### *The Upper and Lower Wire Villages*

Wire manufacturing started in Spencer around 1800 and continued until the early 1940s. The largest and longest running was the Spencer Wire Co. but there were other wire manufacturers in both Lower and Upper Wire Villages including Prouty, Hatch, and Snow. The several mills along Turkey Hill Brook in both villages changed hands many times and many were incorporated into the Spencer Wire Co. By the late 1890s, there were seven dams and 24 buildings associated with the Company.

Located at the junction of Wire Village Road and Hastings Road, Lower Wire Village was the site of Spencer Wire Co. Mill #5 which operated on the West side of Turkey Hill Brook during the 1800s. A large portion of a dam remains near the road on what was also former Spencer Wire Co. land. There are some buildings that were former mill housing going up Hastings Road to the north and a trail extends southwest from the junction along north side of the Brook. This is private property but some public access is allowed.

Upper Wire Village consists of the majority of former Spencer Wire Co. land on both sides of Turkey Hill Brook at the junction of Nugget Farm Road and Wire Village Road. This area included mills #1-3 as well as accessory buildings and the two mill ponds that were located to the north above the intersection. Various foundations are located in the woods along Wire Village Road between the road and Turkey Hill Brook in this area. The former Mill housing neighborhood ran on the East side of Paxton Road south of Nugget Farm Road and many original houses remain but have been modernized in the 20th century.



*Remains of old canal at Turkey Hill Brook Park*

### *Turkey Hill Brook Corridor*

Turkey Hill Brook runs through both Upper and Lower Wire Village and supplied the water power for the mill operations. Turkey Hill Brook Park is the site of Spencer Wire Co. mill #4

and associated outbuildings of which several foundations remain as well as part of the canal and towpath. The remains of a second dam, 15-20' high, are located where the Brook crosses under Wire Village Road.

Farther northeast along the north side of the Brook is the site of ballfields that were accessible by a foot bridge where Gold Nugget Farm lands run down to the Brook. According to local lore, these fields were built by Spencer Wire Co. and used from 1880's through 1920's by the mill workers. Since the end of the wire manufacturing business in Spencer, the Turkey Hill Brook corridor has become primarily wooded and regained a more natural state.

*Opportunities:*

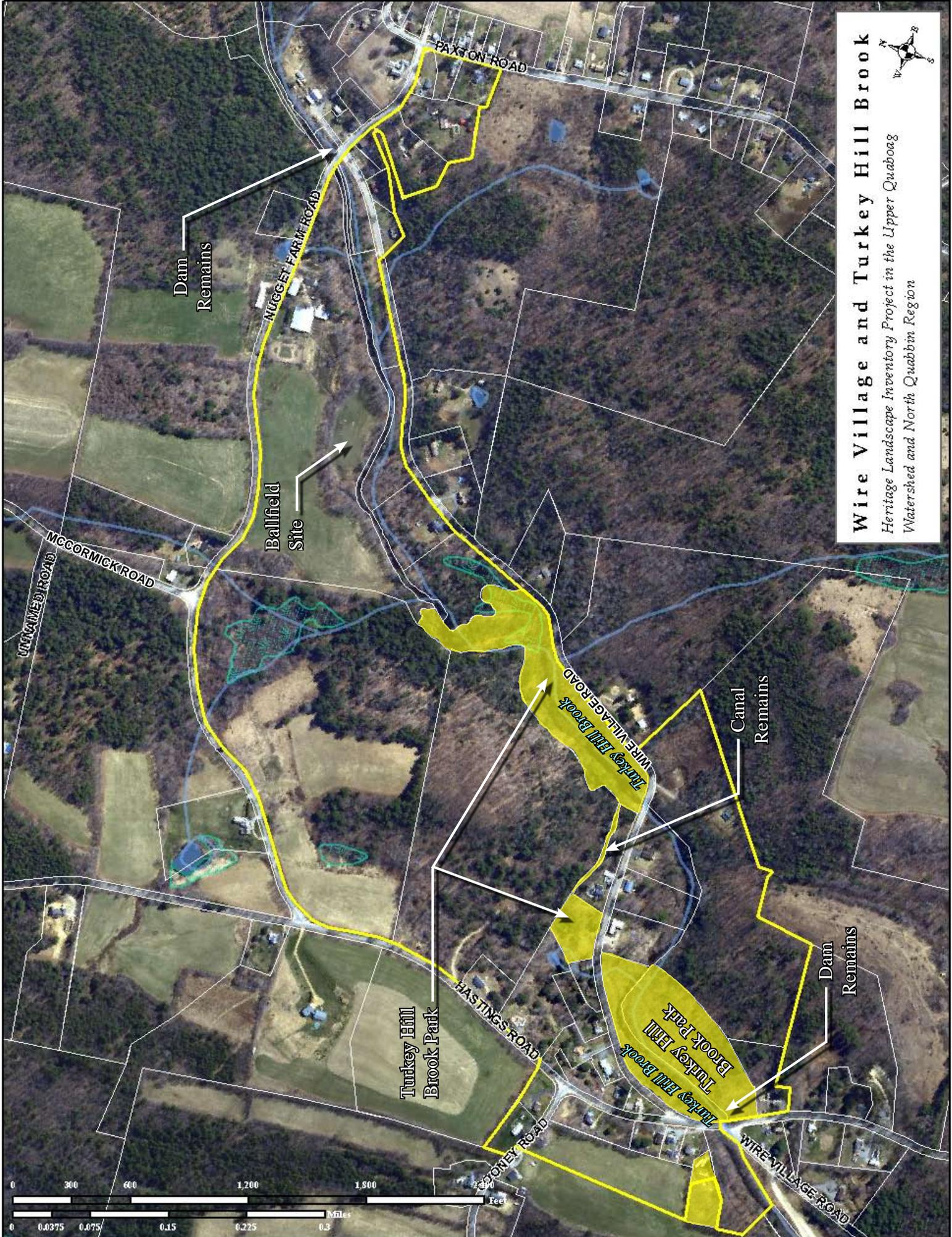
- Several parcels along Turkey Hill Brook are already protected by the town
- Many Spencer Wire Co. foundations and other structures remain within the villages and along the Turkey Brook corridor
- Much of the Brook between the two villages is still undeveloped and provides a great opportunity for trails, access, and wildlife protection.

*Issues:*

- Other than the Turkey Hill Brook Park, much of the land is under private ownership in many small parcels
- Mill ruins and remnants are fragile and will be lost to the elements before long if not documented and protected

*Recommendations:*

1. Protect the Turkey Hill Brook Corridor from Upper to Lower Wire Village as significant cultural and natural resource through a Corridor Protection Overlay District (see page 27 for more about these districts).
2. Upper and Lower Wire Villages should be nominated to the National and State Registers of Historic Places.
3. The Town of Spencer should pursue the development of a Wire Village Heritage Trail extending from Upper Wire Village, along the Brook and ending in Lower Wire Village. This could include the purchase of trail easements along the Brook as well as interpretive signage and the re-creation of the footbridge near the former ballfields. Parking areas could be located within each village hub as well as Turkey Hill Brook Park. CPA funds could be utilized in the creation of this cultural trail system (see page 26 for more about the CPA)
4. The Conservation Commission should be informed of the significance of these cultural resources, and the town should familiarize themselves with the DCR publication [\*Terra Firma #5: Stones that Speak: Forgotten Features of the Landscape\*](#)



**Wire Village and Turkey Hill Brook**  
*Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog*  
*Watershed and North Quabbin Region*

## St. Joseph's Abbey

The Trappist Monks of St. Joseph's Abbey own approximately 1900 acres of rolling farmland and forest with 360-degree views of North Spencer. Originally the Sagandorf Dairy Farm, the monks purchased the property in 1948-49 and incorporated the farm into their development of the site. Several portions of the original farm buildings still exist in portions of their complex including the remains of a windmill near the guesthouse and the former cow barn. The land was actively farmed by the brothers until the 1980s and is now leased out to several local farmers who have corn and hay operations.



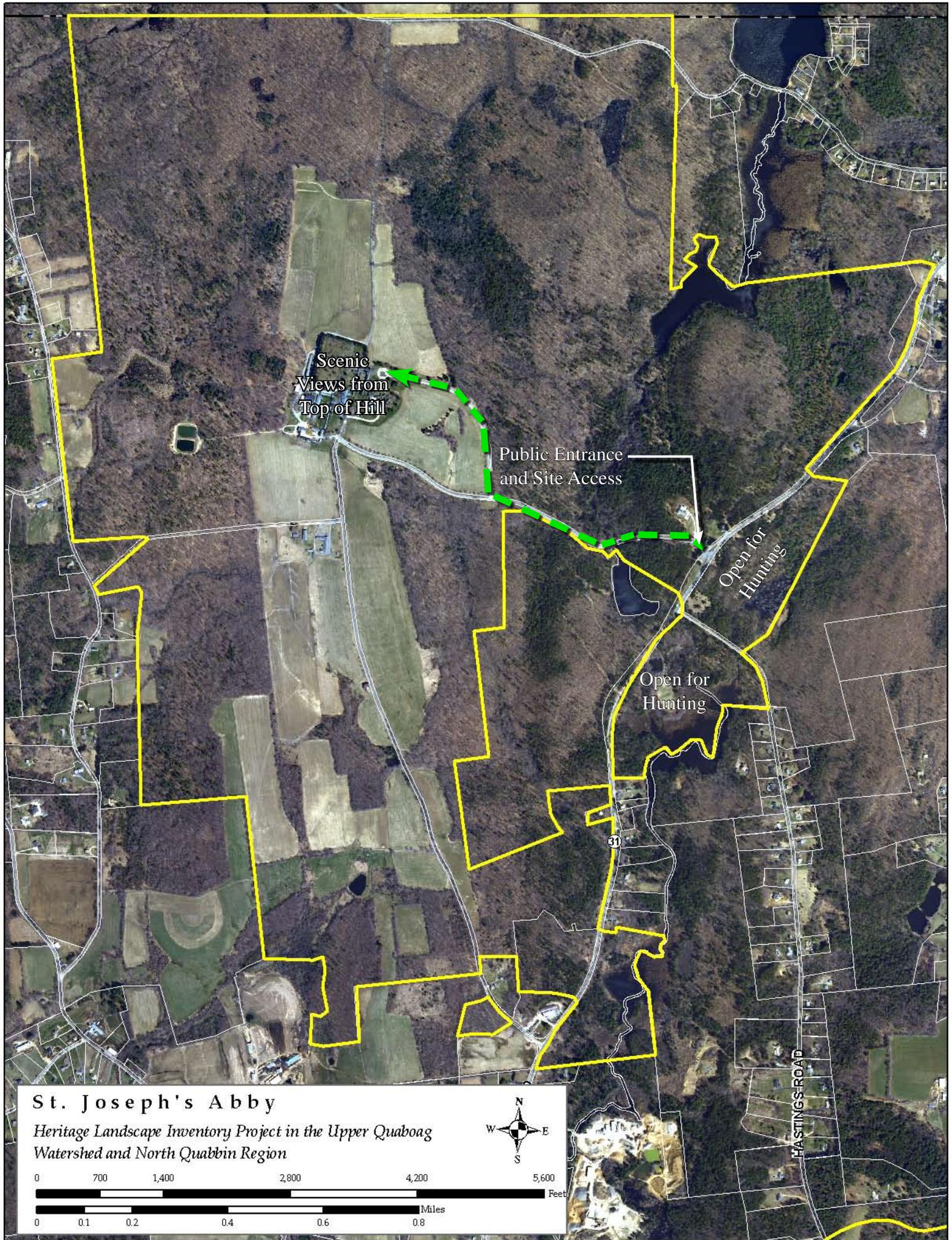
*View from Joseph's Abby guest house looking West*

The site is open to the public via the main 1-mile access road off of Route 31. Although Alta Crest Road also accesses the site from Route 31, it is no longer a Town-owned road but privately owned and maintained by the Abbey. St. Joseph's land also abuts Northwest Road to the west which the Spencer Historical Commission is seeking to have designated as a scenic road. Northwest Road is lined with stone walls, large street trees, scenic farmland and stunning views to the Abbey property.



*North-facing side of St. Joseph's Abby. The terrace leads into a garden, a few trees from an old orchard stands to the East.*

The monks at St. Joseph's Abbey also operate a jelly processing plant that produces their well-known Trappist Preserves. They prepare, package and ship these preserves around the country from the site. There are currently 60 monks residing full time on the property but they also operate a guesthouse for retreats of up to two weeks at a time. In addition to the guesthouse, living quarters and jelly plant, there are two churches within the complex as well as courtyards, landscaped grounds and a small cemetery.



Scenic Views from Top of Hill

Public Entrance and Site Access

Open for Hunting

Open for Hunting

31

HASTINGS ROAD

**St. Joseph's Abby**  
*Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region*



*Opportunities:*

- Large, beautiful piece of land with stunning views and historic, agrarian landscape
- Potential recreation or conservation opportunities

*Issues:*

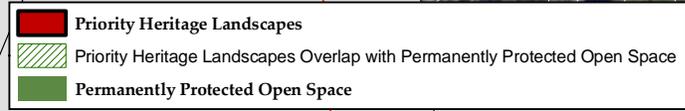
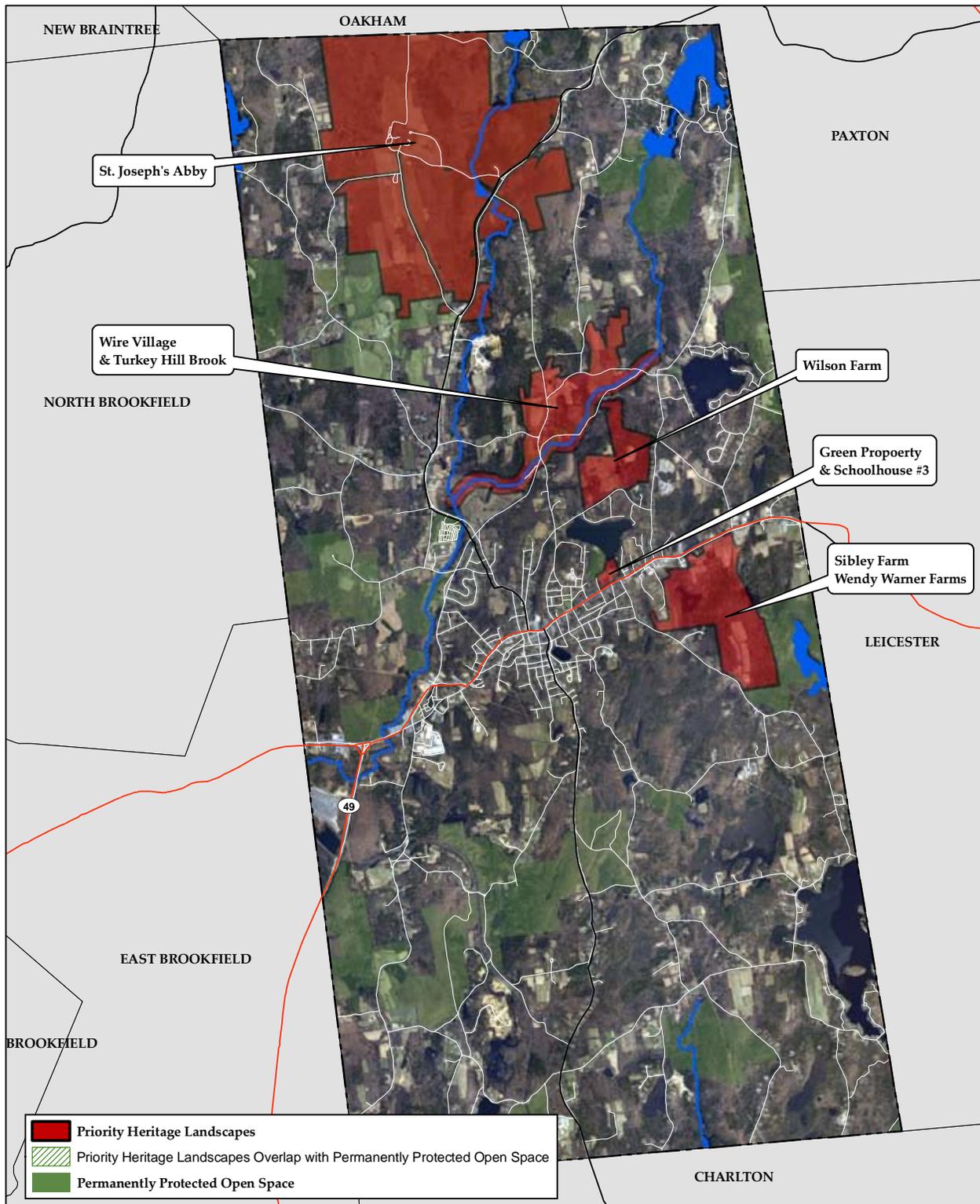
- Not currently under any form of protection
- The property has limited public access

***Recommendations:***

1. The town should pursue a Scenic Overlay District on the property in case of changes in ownership (see page 29 for more about scenic protection).
2. The town should work with the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition's [\*Religious Lands Conservancy Project\*](#) and the Abbey to identify areas that should be protected
3. The town should investigate the possibility of creating public trail access on more remote portions of the site including the two parcels located across Route 31 which are currently open to hunting. CPA funds could be utilized to create public trails (see page 26 for more about the CPA).
4. The Town should adopt a Scenic Road Bylaw and pursue designation of Northwest Road as a scenic road (see page 29 for more about this bylaw).
5. The Historical Commission should pursue the nomination of the Abbey buildings and landscape to the National Register of Historic Places and a historic district.



*North-facing side of St. Joseph's Abby*



# Priority Heritage Landscapes

*Spencer, Massachusetts*

Prepared for: Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region  
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## **PART II: PLANNING FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES**

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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 landscapes. What follows is a review of the tools that Spencer already has in place, as well as a number of recommended actions for the future. The measures already in place for Spencer provide a strong foundation for heritage landscape preservation, but additional measures have been identified in the following text that will aid the development of a holistic preservation planning strategy. Appendix B includes extended descriptions of preservation measures. These tools should be considered in combination with those recommendations made in Part I for Spencer's priority landscapes.

### **INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION**

#### *1. Massachusetts Historical Commission Records*

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 archeological resources. The necessary first step is to record information about the resources at the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets is a statewide list that identifies significant historic resources throughout the Commonwealth. In order to be included in the inventory, a property must be documented on an MHC inventory form, which is then entered into the MHC database. This searchable database, known as the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), is now available online at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc>. Information on the specific locations of archaeological sites is not available to the general public in order to protect these sensitive and non-renewable cultural resources.

Current Listings: According to the MHC, Spencer's inventory documents over 400 cultural resources from the mid 18th century to the 20th century ranging from individual buildings to farms, factories and historic districts. Of the heritage landscapes identified by the community as priority resources, the Henry R. Green House, the Wilson Farm, St. Joseph's Abbey and Wire Village are all listed under MACRIS.

Spencer also has fourteen documented archaeological sites recorded with MHC. Ten of these are prehistoric and 4 are historic. These resources reflect the Native American settlement of the region as well as the early industrial development of the modern era. The number of prehistoric sites documented provides Spencer with significant archaeological potential.

Recommendations: The MACRIS list for Spencer reflects an extensive overview of historic buildings and landscapes within the community. In the future, Spencer may want to consider researching and documenting additional archaeological sites.

## *2. National and State Register Listing*

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. 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. Resources on the National Register are automatically added to the State Register of Historic Places.

Current Listings: The Town of Spencer's National Register (NR) program began with the listing of the Route 9 (Old Boston Post Road) Mile Markers in 1971. In 1986 several individual buildings including Memorial Town Hall, the Fire Station (near Town Hall), and the Sugden Block were added as well as the Spencer Town Center Historic District. The Grove Street School, the Pleasant Street School and the East Main-Cherry Street Historic District were added in 1996.

In addition to National Register listing, the Grove Street School, the Pleasant Street School, Memorial Town Hall, Spencer Fire Station (near Town Hall) and the Sugden Block all have Preservation Restrictions placed on them. All National Register listings are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

Recommended Listings: The Spencer Historical Commission should consider nominating the 1740 Wilson Farmhouse as an individual property and Upper Wire Village and St. Joseph's Abbey buildings and landscape as National Register districts.

## *3. Heritage Landscape Inventory List from Local Identification Meeting*

Each town involved in the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region Heritage Landscape Inventory held a local identification meeting to solicit input from a range of community members to identify potential heritage landscapes throughout the town. The lists were prioritized by the community, with help from the consultants, to create a list of five to ten priority areas, which were described in Part I of this report. The complete list of the town's over 120 identified heritage landscapes is included as Appendix A of this report and provides a sound resource list for future documentation activities and potential funding opportunities. Spencer's meeting was held on January 30, 2008 with approximately 20 community members present.

## PLANNING AND ZONING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

### *1. Comprehensive, Open Space and other Planning Documents*

It is important that Open Space Plans, Comprehensive or Master Plans, and other planning documents 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.

Current Plans: Spencer completed a Community Master Plan in 2003 that contains information about scenic roads, trail development and zoning recommendations as well as utilizing information created in the 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The Spencer OSRP provides a valuable source of information for landscape character, significant natural and scenic resources and a conservation and recreation lands inventory. This inventory includes a table of land ownership and levels of protection including lands in Chapter 61 and under permanent protection.

Recommended Plans: The Town of Spencer should consider updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan within the next couple of years.

### *2. Zoning Bylaws and Ordinances*

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.

Current Zoning: In 2006, Spencer amended their zoning bylaws to include Open Space Residential Development (4.8.2). This bylaw provides for the clustering of residential buildings and infrastructure in order to set aside a portion of the site for open space. In their 2003 Master Plan, the Town identified this as a technique for preserving the rural character of the community and for allowing flexibility in the design of new residential neighborhoods.

The 2006 Spencer Zoning Bylaw also added a Town Center Mixed Use District, a Village Residential District and a Lake Residential District. These zoning districts provide the opportunity for the community to provide land use controls on neighborhood areas that are unique in their development history. Spencer also has a Wetlands Protection Bylaw.

## Additional Planning and Zoning Tools and Techniques for Spencer's landscapes:

### **Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)**

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is a voluntary program managed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. It is intended to provide a “non-development” alternative to farmers and other owners of “prime” and “state important” agricultural land. When faced with the inability to actively farm and rising tax assessments, this offers the farmer the opportunity to retain the property rather than sell it for development. The State purchased a permanent deed restriction on the property for the difference between fair market value and agricultural value. The deed restriction would preclude any use of the property that will negatively impact its agricultural viability.

### **Agricultural Preservation Zoning**

An agricultural preservation overlay zone can be created that will promote and protect the practice of farming. This can help to preserve lands on which farming is most viable, lands that maintain an adequate agricultural base in town and areas that preserve the culture and landscape of farming. This can be accomplished in several ways including requiring all new large-scale residential development to be clustered on areas least suitable for agriculture and away from farms and views. An agricultural preservation bylaw can also use the site plan review process to require dedicated open space to remain as farmland and include that new development be located on least suitable soils for agriculture and be integrated into the existing landscape.

### **Community Preservation Act**

By enabling legislation created in 2000, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps communities provide funds for the preservation of open space and historic resources and the creation of affordable housing and recreational facilities. The funds are raised through a property tax surcharge ranging from 0.5% to 3% and are administered by a local Community Preservation Committee. A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues must be used for each of the three core areas: acquisition and preservation of open space, acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes and creation and support of affordable housing. The remaining 70% can be used for any combination of the above uses and for recreational uses. If adopted by Spencer, Community Preservation Act funds could be used for acquisitions such as Schoolhouse #3 and the purchase of conservation restrictions on the Wilson, Green and St. Joseph's Abbey properties.

### **Conservation Restrictions**

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. Conservation Restrictions could be pursued for the view from St. Joseph's Abbey and the Wilson Farm.

### **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. Corridor Protection Overlay Districts can be used cooperatively by adjoining communities to provide continuous protection across municipal boundaries. This type of zoning tool should be considered for the Turkey Hill Brook and the Wire Villages corridor.

### **Chapter 61 Policy**

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61 was created in the 1970s when many farmers and forestland owners were forced to sell their land due to rising property values and taxes. The legislation became known as the Forestland Act but was quickly followed by Chapter 61A, the Farmland Assessment Act and 61B, the Open Space Act. This new legislation required towns to reduce assessments on farm, forest and open space lands as long as the owners made a commitment to keep their land in that use.

A major provision of this law allows the town the right of first refusal on these lands if the lands are to be sold for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. This provision provides the town with the opportunity to match a fair market value offer for the property. Adoption of a Chapter 61 Policy would outline a response process for the town to follow when these lands come out of the program. This may include a requirement for the select board to collaborate with other town boards, conservation groups and other interested parties, and hold a public meeting. For more information about the Chapter 61 Program and to see a sample Chapter 61 Policy, please see the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website (<http://mountgrace.org/>), to download their *Chapter 61 Handbook*.

Both the Wilson Farm and a portion of the Sibley property are currently under Chapter 61 and Spencer should strongly consider exercising their right of first refusal particularly in the case of the Wilson Farm. However, given the short time frame for decision-making the Town should plan ahead for raising the necessary funds.

### **Demolition Delay Bylaw**

Demolition delay bylaws provide a time period in which towns can consider alternatives to demolition of historic buildings and structures. The local historical commission should work with MHC staff to develop a bylaw that would best suit the town and should work with other town groups to publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. Most demolition delay bylaws apply to structures that were built more than 50 years ago. The most common delay of demolition is six months; however many communities are finding that a one-year delay is more effective. A demolition delay bylaw requires a majority vote of Town Meeting.

### **Local Historic Districts (LHD)**

Local Historic Districts are designated through the adoption of a local ordinance that recognizes special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by the designation. These districts are the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. They are adopted by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting and are administered by a district commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen.

Both the Spencer Town Center National Register District and the East Main- Cherry Street National Register District may benefit from local historic district designation that provides stronger protection through local bylaws designed to protect the important features of the buildings within the district. National Register districts have no such controls.

### **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.

### **Preservation Restrictions**

Preservation Restrictions protect historic and archaeological properties from changes that may be inappropriate. A Preservation Restriction (easement) on a property restricts present and future owners from altering a specified portion of that building, structure, or site. A restriction can run for a few years or in perpetuity and may be included as part of the property deed. Preservation restrictions can be donated or purchased by a government body or private preservation organization and are enforced by the holder of the restriction. Charitable donations of easements on historical buildings or archaeological sites may qualify for federal income tax deductions. A preservation restriction should be pursued for the historic Old Boston Post Road located on the Sibley Farm.

### **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 Vista Protection Bylaw**

This is a preservation planning tool that seeks to protect the scenic qualities of mountains, hills and rolling terrain by requiring additional design criteria for new construction in these visually sensitive areas. A scenic vista protection bylaw can be created as a scenic overlay district to protect a larger area or can address specific views such as those only visible from a certain area or above a certain elevation. A scenic protection bylaw is generally administered through site plan review and the development application process.

### **Scenic Roads Bylaw**

Local roads, owned and maintained by the Town, can be designated as Scenic Roads in order to preserve their rural and/or historic character. A scenic roads bylaw is an effective tool for the preservation of these significant heritage landscapes. Adopted as part of the local zoning bylaws, the scenic roads ordinance requires a public hearing by the planning board before any work is undertaken in a public right-of-way that would involve the cutting of trees or the destruction of stone walls. This bylaw only applies to trees and stone walls within the town-owned right-of-way and to local roads and not state routes. The Town should pursue the designation of Northwest Road as a Scenic Road.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### *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.

### *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.

### *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, and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

### *Funding Opportunities*

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.

A list outlining options for the above strategies can be found in Appendix B.

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## CONCLUSION

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The Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report for Spencer provides an initial preservation-planning document that identifies priority heritage landscapes and discusses strategies for their long-term protection. Spencer contains a rich diversity of heritage landscape types ranging from industrial corridors to 18th century farms and former one- room schoolhouses. These landscapes reflect the strong history and character of the community and are tangible pieces of the Spencer story.

This Report provides a starting point for preservation strategies but the heritage landscapes identified, especially the priority landscapes, will need additional research and documentation including the preparation of MHC inventory forms. Additional information allows for better consensus building and the support of the broader community in order to successfully implement the recommendations for these landscapes. Ultimately, preservation and protection implementation requires a collaboration of local boards and commissions, regional and state agencies and non-profit entities.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to various municipal boards and commissions involved in making land use decisions will assist Spencer with an overall strategy for the preservation of its community's character. The breadth of action steps outlined in this document will require a cooperative effort and a variety of local groups to take the lead on implementation. Included in the recommendations are several actions that can be taken by the Spencer Historical Commission including the nomination of St. Joseph's Abbey, the Wilson farmhouse and Upper Wire Village to the National Register of Historic Places. Several recommendations have been made that the Town of Spencer should pursue such as the adoption of a Corridor Protection Overlay Zone for the Turkey Hill Brook corridor and the pursuit of Conservation Restrictions on the Green and Wilson Farms.

A public outreach campaign that educates the community about its heritage landscape resources is also an important tool for increasing awareness and support for these landscape's protection. This Report provides an important first step for Spencer's preservation planning program and can provide the foundation for future historic preservation, conservation and recreation planning activities. The commitment of the citizens of Spencer to their heritage is apparent in the historic landscape character and fabric that makes Spencer the vibrant and beautiful place it is.

**The project team suggest that the following recommendations be the top three priorities for the Town of Spencer as it works to protect the heritage landscape character of the community:**

1. Adopt the Community Preservation Act.
  2. Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw.
  3. Purchase Conservation Restrictions on the Schoolhouse #3 parcel and the vacant parcel behind it.
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## APPENDIX A: SPENCER HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Landscape Name	Landscape Notes
<b>Agricultural</b>	
<i>Wilson Farm</i>	Also identified as archaeological, natural, residential, and scenic landscape
<i>Sibley Farm</i>	Also identified as archaeological, residential, and scenic landscape
<i>Sheep Farm, Curtis Farm (Paxton Line)</i>	Also identified as a scenic landscape
<i>Country Acre Fall</i>	
<i>Green's Farm</i>	Also identified as an open space & recreation landscape
<i>Bercumbe Farm</i>	
<i>Smalls Farm</i>	
<i>Jolicour Farm</i>	
<i>Alta Crest/Abby Zukas Farm</i>	
<i>Bemis Orchard &amp; Settlement</i>	Also identified as a residential landscape
<i>Gold Nugget Farm</i>	
<i>Pulling's Farm</i>	
<i>Andrew's Farm (Laurel Dale)</i>	
<i>Royalcrest</i>	
<i>Moose Hill</i>	Also identified as a natural landscape
<i>Castleberry Horse Farm</i>	
<b>Archaeological</b>	
<i>Manly Ransom Home Site</i>	Also identified as a scenic landscape
<i>"The Oven"</i>	
<i>Old Howe Mill in St Park</i>	
<b>Burial</b>	
<i>Cranberry Meadow Cemetery</i>	
<i>Old Cemetery</i>	
<i>Old St. Mary's</i>	
<i>Pine Grove (Rte 31)</i>	
<i>St. Mary's on Rte 9</i>	
<i>Indian Burial and Grainery</i>	

Note: Highlighted landscapes have been designated "Priority Landscapes" by the town or directly correspond to a Priority Landscape

<b>Civic</b>	
<i>Richard Sugden Library</i>	
<i>Congregational Church</i>	
<i>South Spencer/Hillsville - Village Center</i>	Also identified as archaeological, institutional, and residential landscape
<i>Old Firehouse</i>	
<i>Wire Village - Upper and Lower</i>	Also identified as archaeological, industrial, institutional, residential, and scenic landscape
<i>Town Hall</i>	
<i>Cherry Street Fire House</i>	
<i>Old Denny Hall</i>	
<b>Industrial</b>	
<i>Shoe factory next to Green's Farm</i>	
<i>Washington Hill House</i>	
<i>Prouty's</i>	
<b>Institutional</b>	
<i>School House #3</i>	Historically linked to Green's Farm, also identified as a scenic landscape
<i>St. Joseph Abbey</i>	Also identified as a scenic landscape
<i>David Prouty High School</i>	
<i>Northwest School House (x2)</i>	
<i>4H Camp Marshal</i>	
<i>Girl Scout Camp Laurelwood</i>	
<i>Spencer Fairgrounds</i>	
<i>Treasure Valley Boy Scout, Spencer &amp; Oakham</i>	
<b>Military</b>	
<i>Encampments</i>	near Catholic cemetery
<i>Knox Trail</i>	
<i>Prouty Park</i>	
<i>Powder Mill</i>	

Note: Highlighted landscapes have been designated "Priority Landscapes" by the town or directly correspond to a Priority Landscape

<b>Natural</b>	
<i>5 Mile River</i>	Also identified as an archaeological and a scenic landscape
<i>Turkey Hill Brook</i>	Also identified as an archaeological landscape, location of former Wire Village
<i>David's Hill</i>	Also identified as an agricultural landscape
<i>Howe Park</i>	Also identified as an industrial landscape
<i>7 Mile River</i>	Also identified as an archaeological landscape, arrowheads found here
<i>Balance Rock on Mid-State Trail</i>	
<i>Hastings Pond &amp; Mill Dams</i>	
<b>Open Space/Recreation</b>	
<i>Brook's Pond and Foundry Sites</i>	Also identified as an industrial, natural, residential, transportation, and scenic landscape
<i>Whitemore</i>	
<i>Luther Hill Park</i>	
<i>Browning Pond</i>	
<i>Sugden Pond</i>	
<i>Shaw Pond</i>	
<i>Thompson</i>	
<i>Cranberry</i>	
<i>Snowmobile Trails</i>	
<i>Small's Field</i>	
<i>Mid-State</i>	
<i>Depot Trail</i>	Also identified as a transportation landscape
<i>Ralph Warren Trail</i>	
<i>Bemis Park Trail</i>	
<i>Bemis Park</i>	
<i>Stiles Res.</i>	

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<b>Residential</b>	
<i>Prouty Carriage House</i>	
<i>Pleasant Street Historic District</i>	
<i>Sagendorph Mansion</i>	
<i>Cherry Street Neighborhood</i>	
<i>Richard Sugden House</i>	
<i>45 Ash Street</i>	
<i>Bemis Settlement</i>	
<i>Spencer Country Inn</i>	
<b>Transportation</b>	
<i>Northwest Road</i>	Identified as a scenic road
<i>Brook's Pond Road</i>	Identified as a scenic road
<i>Andrew's Old Airport</i>	
<i>Boston Post Road</i>	Also identified as an archaeological and scenic landscape
<i>McCormick Road</i>	
<i>Gold Nugget Road</i>	
<i>Browning Pond Road</i>	
<i>Buteau Road</i>	Identified as a scenic road
<i>William Casey Road</i>	Identified as a scenic road
<i>Borkum Road</i>	Identified as a scenic road
<i>Briarcliff Road</i>	Identified as a scenic road
<i>East Charlton Road</i>	Identified as a scenic road
<i>Old Depot - Arty's Rest</i>	
<i>Boston/Albany - Conrail</i>	

Note: Highlighted landscapes have been designated "Priority Landscapes" by the town or directly correspond to a Priority Landscape

## **APPENDIX B: GUIDE TO PRESERVATION & PLANNING TOOLS FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES**

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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 three sections 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. These lists are meant to cover a variety of regional areas and opportunities, all may not apply to any given community.

### **INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION**

#### *Massachusetts Historical Commission Records*

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:

- ◆ Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not thoroughly researched, beginning with heritage landscapes.
- ◆ Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.

- ◆ Make sure to document secondary features on rural and residential properties, such as outbuildings, stone walls and landscape elements.
- ◆ Record a wide range of historic resources including landscape features and industrial resources.
- ◆ 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).

### *National and State Register Listing*

Survey work for the National Register of Historic Places, a program of the National Park Service includes evaluation of whether resources meet the qualifications for its 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. All sites listed on the National Register are automatically added to the State Register.

## **PLANNING AND ZONING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES**

### *Comprehensive, Open Space and other Planning Documents*

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.
- ◆ Many communities have other plans that have been prepared as well.

### *Zoning Bylaws and Ordinances*

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)**

The Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program is a voluntary program managed by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources. It is intended to provide a “non-development” alternative to farmers and other owners of “prime” and “state important” agricultural land. When faced with the inability to actively farm and rising tax assessments, this offers the farmer the opportunity to retain the property rather than sell it for development. The State purchased a permanent deed restriction on the property for the difference between fair market value and agricultural value. The deed restriction would preclude any use of the property that will negatively impact its agricultural viability.

### **Agricultural Preservation Zoning**

An agricultural preservation overlay zone can be created that will promote and protect the practice of farming. This can help to preserve lands on which farming is most viable, lands that maintain an adequate agricultural base in town and areas that preserve the culture and landscape of farming. This can be accomplished in several ways including requiring all new large-scale residential development to be clustered on areas least suitable for agriculture and away from farms and views. An agricultural preservation bylaw can also use the site plan review process to require dedicated open space to remain as farmland and include that new development be located on least suitable soils for agriculture and be integrated into the existing landscape.

### **Archaeological Resource Protection**

Archaeological sites are non-renewable cultural resources that can be permanently altered or destroyed through unauthorized digging, artifact collection, and development. Protection of archaeological sites can occur through a number of different strategies and mechanisms. An important first step is the development of a town-wide archaeological resource protection plan. Based on a professional reconnaissance survey of resources in the community, this plan would recommend steps for their preservation. Options for protection include acquisition, preservation restrictions, site plan review, an archaeological review bylaw and public education. Reasonable thresholds for local review of archaeological resources should be developed in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and interested groups such as Native Americans. Reasonable thresholds for local review of archaeological resources should be developed in consultation with the Massachusetts Historical Commission and interested groups such as the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs.

### **Community Preservation Act**

By enabling legislation created in 2000, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) helps communities provide funds for the preservation of open space and historic resources and the creation of affordable housing and recreational facilities. The funds are raised through a property tax surcharge ranging from 0.5% to 3% and are administered by a local Community Preservation Committee. A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues must be used for each of the three core areas: acquisition and preservation of open space, acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes and creation and support of affordable housing. The remaining 70% can be used for any combination of the above uses and for recreational uses.

### **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. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) 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.

### **Chapter 61 Policy**

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61 was created in the 1970s when many farmers and forestland owners were forced to sell their land due to rising property values and taxes. The legislation became known as the Forestland Act but was quickly followed by Chapter 61A, the Farmland Assessment Act and 61B, the Open Space Act. This new legislation required towns to reduce assessments on farm, forest and open space lands as long as the owners made a commitment to keep their land in that use.

A major provision of this law allows the town the right of first refusal on these lands if the lands are to be sold for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. This provision provides the town with the opportunity to match a fair market value offer for the property. Adoption of a Chapter 61 Policy would outline a response process for the town to follow when these lands come out of the program. This may include a requirement for the select board to collaborate with other town boards, conservation groups and other interested parties, and hold a public meeting. For more information about the Chapter 61 Program and to see a sample Chapter 61 Policy, please see the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust website (<http://mountgrace.org/>), to download their *Chapter 61 Handbook*.

### **Demolition Delay Bylaw**

Demolition delay bylaws provide a time period in which towns can consider alternatives to demolition of historic buildings and structures. The local historical commission should work with MHC staff to develop a bylaw that would best suit the town and should work with other town groups to publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. Most demolition delay bylaws apply to structures that were built more than 50 years ago. The most

common delay of demolition is six months; however many communities are finding that a one-year delay is more effective. A demolition delay bylaw requires a majority vote of Town Meeting.

### **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 off site parking.

### **Expedited Local Permitting - Chapter 43D**

Expedited Local Permitting (Chapter 43D) provides an efficient process for municipal permitting and grants for up to \$150,000 for such things as professional staffing assistance, local government reorganization, and consulting services. Participating towns benefit from marketing of their site and online promotion of their pro-business regulatory climate. In order to pursue Expedited Local Permitting, a town must have commercial and/or industrial zoning in place for the site, and there must be space for a building of at least 50,000 square feet of floor area.

### **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)**

Local Historic Districts are designated through the adoption of a local ordinance that recognizes special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by the designation. These districts are the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. They are adopted by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting and are administered by a district commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen. For more information review the Massachusetts Historic Commission's (MHC) guidebook, [\*Establishing Local Historic Districts\*](#), available on the MHC website.

### **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.

### **Preservation Restrictions**

Preservation Restrictions protect historic and archaeological properties from changes that may be inappropriate. A Preservation Restriction (easement) on a property restricts present and future owners from altering a specified portion of that building, structure, or site. A restriction can run for a few years or in perpetuity and may be included as part of the property deed. Preservation restrictions can be donated or purchased by a government body or private preservation organization and are enforced by the holder of the restriction. Charitable donations of easements on historical buildings or archaeological sites may qualify for federal income tax deductions.

### **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**

Local roads, owned and maintained by the Town, can be designated as Scenic Roads in order to preserve their rural and/or historic character. A scenic roads bylaw is an effective tool for the preservation of these significant heritage landscapes. Adopted as part of the local zoning bylaws, the scenic roads ordinance requires a public hearing by the planning board before any work is undertaken in a public right-of-way that would involve the cutting of trees or the destruction of stone walls. This bylaw only applies to trees and stone walls within the town-owned right-of-way and to local roads and not state routes.

### **Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw**

This is a preservation planning tool that seeks to protect the scenic qualities of mountains, hills and rolling terrain by requiring additional design criteria for new construction in these visually sensitive areas. A scenic vista protection bylaw can be created as a scenic overlay district to protect a larger area or can address specific views such as those only visible from a certain area or above a certain elevation. A scenic protection bylaw is generally administered through site plan review and the development application process.

### **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 & 40S**

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. Chapter 40S provides State funding for any net-added school costs that come from children living in newly developed housing within a Smart Growth District.

### **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.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### *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.

### *Collaboration Opportunities*

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.

- ◆ 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.

## *Technical Assistance*

Beyond DCR, the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership, 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.
- ◆ Regional planning agencies are charged with assisting communities with local planning efforts:
  - Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Barre, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, North Brookfield, Spencer, Warren and West Brookfield.
  - Franklin Regional Council of Government serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Orange and Warwick.
  - The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Athol, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, and Templeton.
- ◆ The North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership provides assistance and small grants to help protect ecologically, historically, economically, and culturally significant open space within the North Quabbin Region.
- ◆ The Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust is a regional non-profit organization that assists with conservation efforts of productive farm and forest land in parts of central and western Massachusetts.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Massachusetts Historical Commission: Provides technical assistance as well as grants to municipalities and non-profits 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.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ The East Quabbin Land Trust provides assistance to protect ecological and historic landscapes through the conservation and stewardship of the farmlands, woodlands and waters of 8 Central Massachusetts towns
- ◆ Opacum Land Trust provides assistance to protect ecologically and culturally significant open space within 13 south-central Massachusetts towns.

### *Funding Opportunities*

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](http://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 LAND 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 PARC 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 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.
- ◆ Regional planning organizations do not administer grants, but can work with communities to write grants or help them find funding:
  - Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Barre, Brookfield, East Brookfield, Hardwick, North Brookfield, Spencer, Warren and West Brookfield.
  - Franklin Regional Council of Government serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Orange and Warwick.
  - The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission serves the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program towns of Athol, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, and Templeton.
- ◆ The North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership offers a Small Grants Program to eligible organizations. More information can be found at: <http://www.nqpartnership.org/sgp.htm>. The Partnership also provides technical assistance.

### **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 nongovernmental 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.
- ◆ 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.

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