



# PHILLIPSTON 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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## PROJECT TEAM

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### Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr, *Commissioner*

Joe Orfant, *Director, Bureau of Planning & Resource Protection*

Patrice Kish, *Director, Office of Cultural Resources*

Wendy Pearl, *Director, Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative*

Jessica Rowcroft, *Preservation Planner*

### Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Adam Burney, *Associate Land Use Planner*

### North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership

Jay Rasku, *Partnership Coordinator*

### Project Consultants

*Dodson Associates, Ltd.*

Peter Flinker, *Principal*

Sarah la Cour, *Project Manager*

Reid Bertone-Johnson

Hillary King

*Public Archeology Laboratory (PAL)*

Virginia Adams

Holly Herbster

### Local Project Coordinator

Kevin Flynn

### Local Heritage Landscape Participants

David Bramhall, *Community Preservation Committee (CPC),  
Cultural Council*

Daniel Flynn

Rose Frizzell, *Conservation Commission (Con Comm.) & CPC*

Richard Hamel, *Historic Commission*

Bonnie House, *Open Space Committee, CPC, Cultural  
Council, Historic Commission*

Linda Langerin, *Historical Society*

Thelma McMahon, *CPC & Historic Society*

Dawn Odams, *Con Comm. & Open Space Committee*

Kim Pratt, *Con Comm., Historic Commission & Open Space  
Committee*

Karen Probst, *Open Space Committee*

Richard Valcourt, *Police Chief, CPC*

Nathan Williams

Sterling Whiting, *Planning Board*



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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS • EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600  
Boston MA 02114-2119  
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax  
[www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr)



Deval L. Patrick  
Governor

Timothy P. Murray  
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive  
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner  
Department of Conservation & Recreation

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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

Containing a varied topography and drained by many small streams, the town of Phillipston is located northeast of the Quabbin Reservoir between Athol and Petersham on the west and Templeton on the east. Queen Lake, near the south end of town, has played an important role in Phillipston since prehistory, when the shores likely served as a seasonal base camp for Native Americans while they hunted and fished in the area.

Phillipston was originally included within the boundaries of Templeton and Athol. The soils of the area were favorable for growing crops and grazing cattle, and it developed as a dispersed agricultural community. A town meetinghouse was built in 1785, where it stands today as the Congregational Church on the common. One year later, Phillipston was incorporated as Gerry, named for Congressman Elbridge Gerry. The town petitioned to change its name to Phillipston in 1814, after then Lt. Governor William Phillips whom the community admired.



*Centennial Celebration on the Common in 1886. Photo from The Spirit of Phillipston, from the Phillipston Historical Society's collection*

By the middle of the 19th century, the town consisted of a small residential village at its center, two small mill villages and dispersed farms. The Powers Mills were built on the Kendall Brook and cut timber from surrounding forest lands. Ignatius Goulding and Samuel Damon built three textile mills on a brook northeast of Queen Lake, an area now known as Goulding Village. Phillipston Center included a store that attracted business from many surrounding towns; from southern New Hampshire to Northfield and Winchendon, Athol, Orange and Dana.

The Vermont-Massachusetts Railroad was built through the north end of town in 1847 but Phillipston did not have a stop or station. New development began to focus in other communities around the new transportation system and by 1879 only two chair factories at Goulding Village remained in Phillipston. The town's economy remained in agriculture, producing butter and crops for the neighboring manufacturing villages.

With the opening of the streetcar service in the 1890s, Queen Lake became a vacation destination for people living in nearby cities. Vacation homes and a girl's camp developed along the lake's shores by the early 20th century. Many of these homes still exist and are being converted into year-round residences.

Today most of Phillipston's residents commute out of town for work. The town's main employers include Red Apple, the King Phillip Restaurant and Motel, and other, smaller businesses

along Route 2A. Although its population continues to increase steadily, Phillipston remains quite rural. Approximately sixteen percent of Phillipston's land is protected from development, and the town center still contains many 18th century structures. The community is, however, experiencing significant growth pressure and the adoption of strategies and tools for heritage landscape preservation will help to maintain the rural character while accommodating new development.



*Cotton Mill in Goulding Village around 1800. Photo from The Spirit of Phillipston, from the Phillipston Historical Society's collection*



## PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Phillipston 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 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 Phillipston'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.

### Phillipston Town Center



*Town Pound and Library on Templeton Road*

Starting with the first permanent settlers in 1751, the town began to develop rapidly in the second half of the 18th century. This growth called for a community center of activity to which all residents could easily travel and the first Meetinghouse/Church was built in 1785. Land for the building to be constructed on was donated by Dr. John Williams, who also provided the land adjacent to it for the town common. This building still stands, although in an altered form, and remains the Congregational Church.



*Residence built in 1770 sits across from the common*

Primarily serving utilitarian purposes into the late 19th century, the common was once bisected by Templeton Road when it was known as the Knox Trail. In 1884, the rocks and trees were cleared for the Phillipston's Centennial Celebration. It was at this time that the common was first formally landscaped with a variety of shrubs, including hydrangeas, and ornamented with lighting and a flagpole. The common retains its open quality although the landscaping has changed over time.

Several 18th century residential dwellings from this initial settlement period still surround the town



*The Congregational Church faces the Common*



*Large cellar hole remains adjacent to a home on Templeton Road*

common and vicinity. These include a home built in 1760 south of the common on Petersham Road that used to be the town's Post Office, and a house built in 1770 on the corner of Church Street and Baldwinville Road. A house built in 1790 on the corner of Barre and Templeton Roads still stands and next to this are the foundations of another home and barn built at approximately the same time. With the community's growth and development of the late 18th century also came the construction of local schools. Schoolhouse #1 was built in the town center along Templeton Road in 1790 and is now the Phillips Free Public Library.

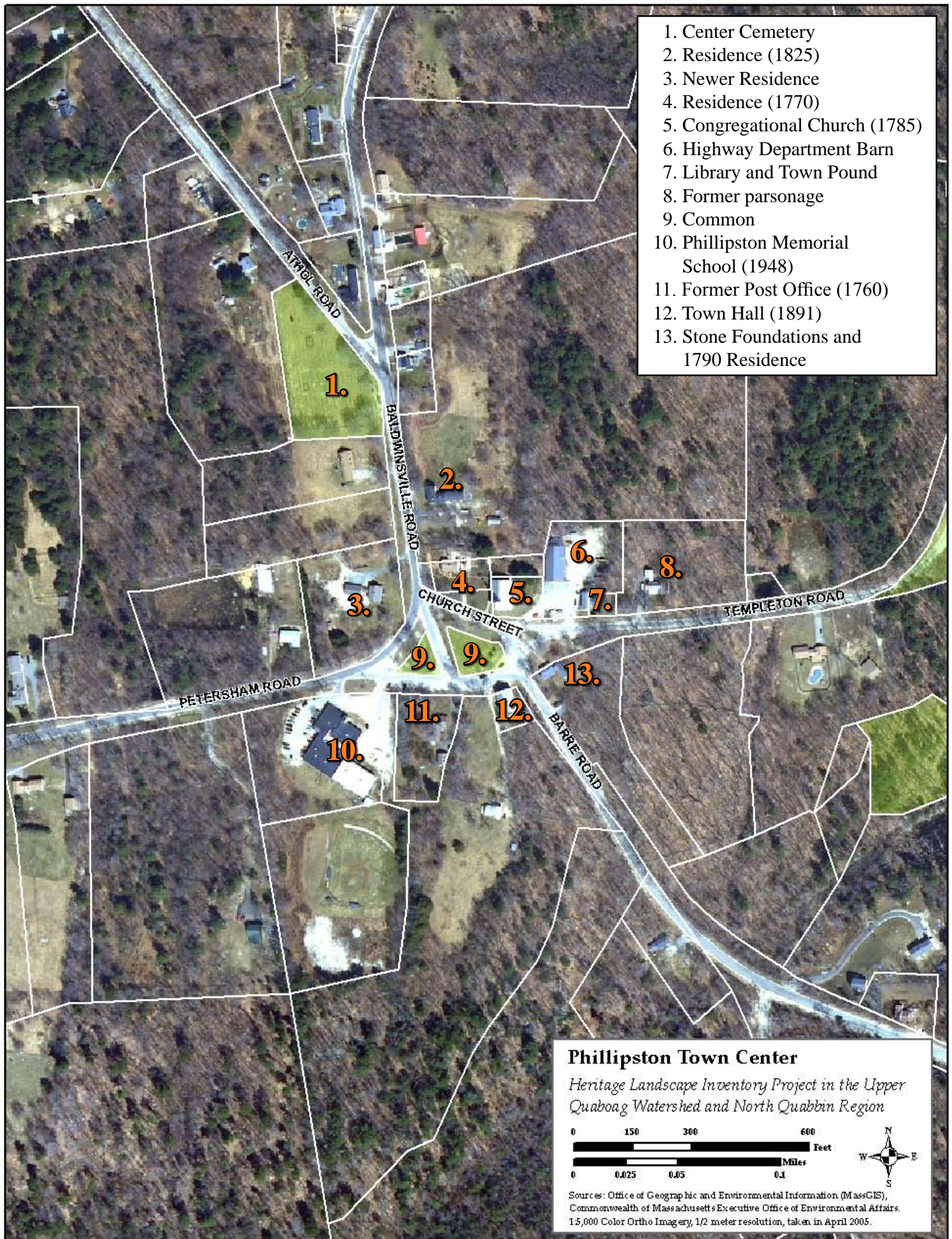
The early 19th century brought additional settlers to the community that increased the need for amenities and services. In 1803, the town purchased land from Zacheus Green along Baldwinville Road for the Center Cemetery, the first burying ground in town. One year later, Mr. Green erected stables on his land between the church and Schoolhouse #1 to provide parishioners a place to keep their horses and carriages during services. The town eventually purchased these structures from Mr. Green and a portion of these remain as the Highway Department Barn. Zacheus Green also sold the town a small bit of land behind Schoolhouse #1 to serve as the town pound. This structure is still in existence and remains in relatively good condition.

In 1891 an official Town Hall was built on the common opposite the church. This whitewashed clapboard building housed the Selectmen's offices, the library and a kitchen/dining room for special events. Stones for the foundation were brought from local farms and slate was used for the roof. Still standing, the Town Hall continues to provide space for the town's municipal offices and large meeting space.

The Phillipston Town Center was listed as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999. This designation is honorary in nature and does not provide any protective measures for the heritage landscapes and historic buildings within the district. The town center was also identified as a "Place of Historic Interest" in the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

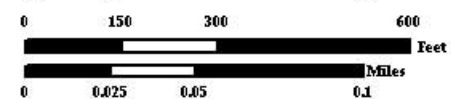


1. Center Cemetery
2. Residence (1825)
3. Newer Residence
4. Residence (1770)
5. Congregational Church (1785)
6. Highway Department Barn
7. Library and Town Pound
8. Former parsonage
9. Common
10. Phillipston Memorial School (1948)
11. Former Post Office (1760)
12. Town Hall (1891)
13. Stone Foundations and 1790 Residence



### Phillipston Town Center

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



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 15,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.



*Opportunities:*

- The town center retains a large collection of 18th century structures that provide a unique early American character
- The common has remained relatively intact and continues to provide a community gathering place

*Issues:*

- Vehicular circulation and parking through the town center is unclear to visitors and unsafe for pedestrians; this causes issues related to school traffic during certain times of the day
- The small triangular portion of the common at Templeton Road has been cut off from the rest of the common

*Recommendations:*

1. The town should form a Local Historic District (LHD) Committee to pursue the adoption of an LHD for the Phillipston Town Center, to provide protection for the significant historic resources within this area (see page 32 for more about LHDs).
2. Consider the adoption of a Demolition Delay Bylaw that will allow for the pursuit of alternatives to demolition for historic buildings (see page 32 for more about this bylaw).
3. Prepare a Preservation Plan that addresses the future of the center as well as issues of parking and pedestrian circulation conflicts.

## Mill Ruins

There are many mill ruins throughout Phillipston that reflect the town's industrial past. Three major concentrated areas of mill sites are discussed here.

### *Goulding Village*

Developed in the early 19th century, the mill village at the juncture of Barre and Riley Switch Roads was the earliest industrial center of the community. Built by Ignatius Goulding and Samuel Damon, several large cotton and woolen mill buildings employed many laborers throughout the early part of the century. In the late 19th and early 20th century the Goulding and Damon mills were adapted for the manufacturing of cane seat chairs and a paint factory.

Water, from what is now Queen Lake, powered these mills through a canal and large pipes. A collection of millstones near the intersection of Barre and Riley Switch Roads is a remnant of this once booming village. On privately owned land near the center of Goulding Village, the remains of a water wheel structure, stone tunnel, mill pond and dam also remain.



*Water wheel structure at Goulding Village*

### *Powers Mill*

One of the largest saw mills in early 19th century Phillipston was the Powers Mill located on the west side of Baldwinville Road. Developed by Edward Powers along Kendall Brook, this mill was used for cutting timber from area forests. These Mills were powered by water from Bates Reservoir via Kendall Brook. The ruins of the 200 foot long, 30 foot high stone dam are still visible as well as the former mill pond and mill foundations. The mills were powered by water from Bates Reservoir via Kendall Brook. Upstream on Kendall Brook there were additional smaller dams and holding ponds for the mills, some of which are still visible along Route 2A.



*A path exists atop the old dam at the Power Mills site with a small pond to the west*

The Powers mill ruins are located near the Historic Society on private property with approximately 750 feet of frontage along Route 2A. The approximately 17-





*Old dam alongside Athol Road on Kendall Brook*

acre site is primarily wooded although there are several small open fields at the road edge. Kendall Brook runs through the middle of the site from northwest to southeast. No access to the site is available from Baldwinville Road as the property only hits the road where Kendall Brook crosses.

There is another set of ruins that exist on Kendall Brook south of Athol Road near the Bates Reservoir but it is unknown if these relate to the Powers mill or another early mill operation. Kendall Brook was identified as one of the “Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest” in the 2007 Open Space and Recreation Plan. It has also been occasionally stocked for fishing.



*Stone bridge and mill ruins alongside Burnshirt Road*

#### *Burnshirt Road*

Starting in the mid 18th century, the Sawyer family operated first a grist mill and then saw mills along the Burnshirt Brook off of Burnshirt Road. There were once several large mill buildings on either side of the Road heading down into Templeton where there is a stone bridge at the brook crossing. According to Carole Gariepy and Jane French in their book *The Spirit of Phillipston*, Silas Sawyer used the millstones from one of the earlier mills to build the foundation of his new home in 1800. Now known as “the 1800 House”, this building stands at the intersection of Burnshirt and Petersham Roads.

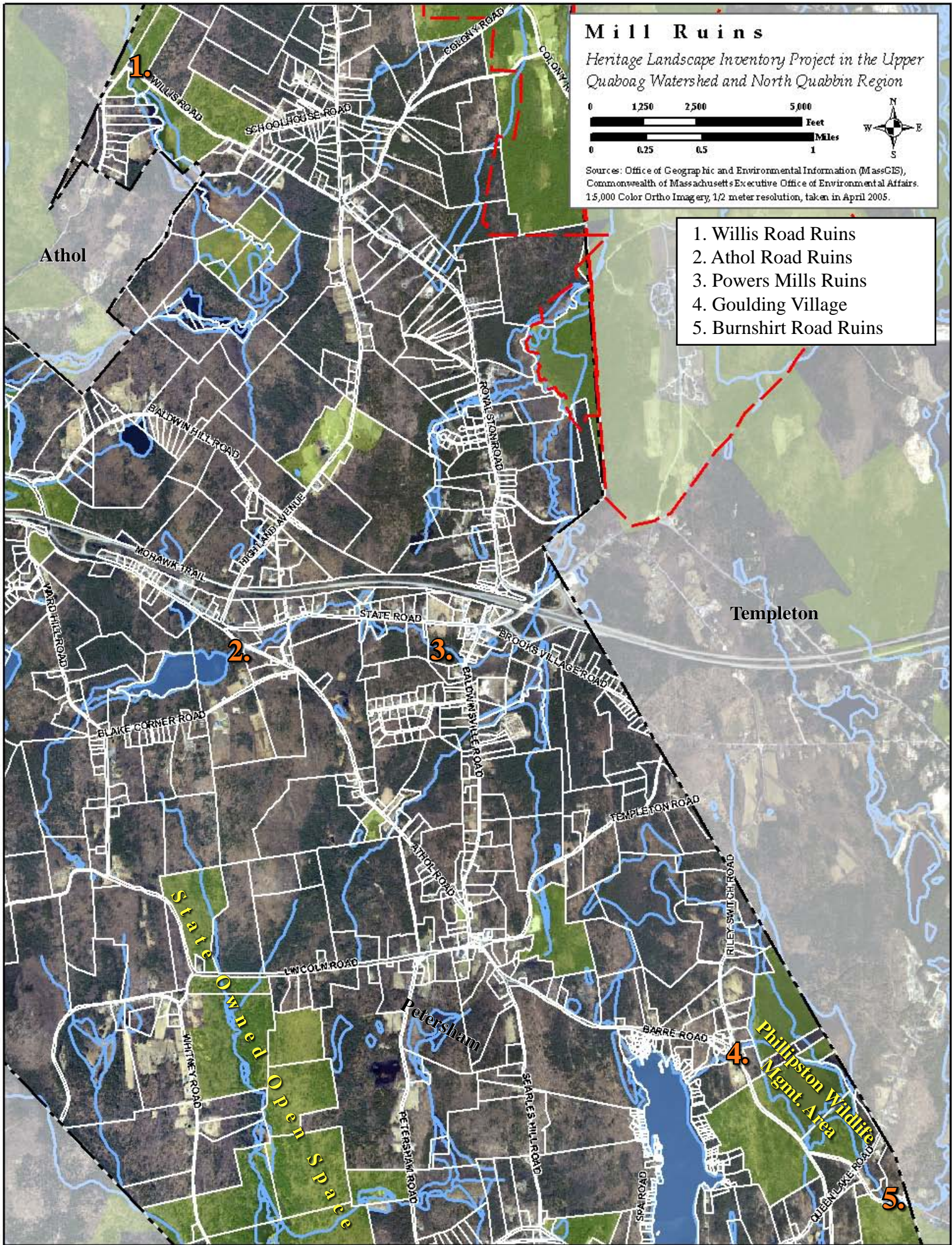


*PWMA mill ruins at the Templeton/Phillipston town line*

The Sawyer mill ruins are located in a section of Burnshirt Road between two portions of the Phillipston Wildlife Management Area (PWMA) although one of the dams that served the mills is located on PWMA

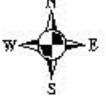
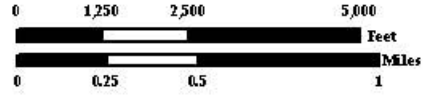
land to the north. The mill remnants are located in a wooded area along the brook and are still highly visible from the Road. Other than the aforementioned dam, all of the Sawyer mill ruins are located on private property.





# Mill Ruins

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



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.

- 1. Willis Road Ruins
- 2. Athol Road Ruins
- 3. Powers Mills Ruins
- 4. Goulding Village
- 5. Burnshirt Road Ruins



*Opportunities:*

- The community is lucky to have retained several, visibly intact, mill and dam ruins which reflect several centuries of industry within the community, and provide multiple interpretive opportunities
- Kendall Brook is an excellent recreational and interpretive venue

*Issues:*

- All of the above-mentioned mill ruins are located on private property with protective mechanisms in place
- Other than the ruins along Burnshirt Road, the majority of ruins are not easily accessible either visually or physically

*Recommendations:*

1. The Historical Commission should pursue an archaeological survey of all mill ruins within the community to document them and identify site specific protection strategies.
2. The Historical Commission should work with other town boards and the Historical Society to pursue the purchase of a Preservation Restriction and Easement on the Powers Mill site. This is a valuable resource on a site that is ripe for development. A PR would protect the site while an Easement would allow for public access and interpretation (see page 31 for more about PRs). CPA funds could be accessed to acquire these restrictions.
3. The Historical Society should consider the creation of a driving pamphlet or brochure that discusses the industrial heritage of the town and points out those that can be visually accessed.

## Bates Reservoir



*View from the south side of Bates Reservoir looking west*

Once used as the water supply for Athol, the Bates Reservoir is now a privately owned water body although the Town of Athol retains ownership of the dam. Kendall Brook runs out of the Reservoir at the east and a large expanse of wetlands extend out the western end and to the north off of Ward Hill Road. There are three major owners surrounding the Reservoir; two local families and a private development corporation.

The reservoir is named for the Bates family, early settlers in town, who owned a majority of the eastern side of the reservoir throughout the 19th century. The Bates family cemetery is still noticeable along Blake Corner Road but the graves were moved to the cemetery on Athol Road some time in the early 20th century. A local family now owns this land and has farmed portions of it for many years. The parcel, comprising approximately 34 acres has approximately 1100 feet of frontage along Route 2A and Athol Road in the north, and about 800 feet of frontage along Blake Corner Road in the south. The site is largely wooded with partially open fields remaining along the southern end. A small parcel has recently been subdivided off of the western end and a residence was built near the shore of the Reservoir.

Another private family owning property on the reservoir has placed their property in the Chapter 61 program. This includes a majority of the remaining shoreline as well as approximately 40+ acres of surrounding forested land.

Approximately 600 feet of shoreline and 80 acres of land surrounding the Reservoir are owned by a private development corporation. This developer has approached the Town regarding the subdivision of this land into residential lots. The parcel has two sections of frontage extending approximately 1000 feet along Route 2A. The site is primarily wooded with small portions of open land near the roadway.

### *Opportunities:*

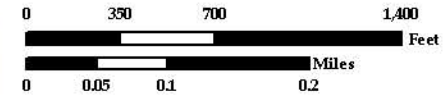
- A majority of the land remains wooded and is a valuable natural landscape
- The shoreline and land surrounding the Reservoir is in the hands of only three owners
- The largest portion of shoreline is under Chapter 61



1. Private, unprotected property
2. Private, Chapter 61 Property
3. Private Developer's Property

## Bates Reservoir

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



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. 1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.





*Issues:*

- The large parcel owned by the private development corporation is under threat of intense subdivision based on existing zoning

*Recommendations:*

1. The Planning Board should adopt a Conservation/Open Space Development Bylaw to provide the opportunity for clustered development on the northern parcel.
2. The town should develop a strategy for acquisition of Chapter 61 parcels throughout town, should they change land use or ownership (see page 31 for more about Chapter 61). The Chapter 61 land around Bates Reservoir should rate high on a priority list for future conservation.
3. The Recreation Commission and Conservation Commission should work with the community to explore the feasibility of developing a trail around the reservoir via the purchase of easements, and provide trail connections down Kendall Brook to the Powers Mill site. Wildlife habitat is of concern surrounding the reservoir, so careful consideration should be taken if the project moves forward. Community Preservation Act funds could be used to create this resource.



*View from the south side of Bates Reservoir looking north*

## Willis Road and Stone Bridge



*Willis Road leads to the Stone Bridge, it used to serve as a shortcut into Athol by locals*



*View of Thousand Acre Swamp as it flows into Thousand Acre Brook; this system flows into the Millers River*

Willis Road was built around 1800 along with a beautiful stone bridge that crosses the Thousand Acre Brook near the Athol town boundary. The road is still owned by the Town of Phillipston and active to Athol but is unpaved and not well maintained. Much of the road from just northwest of the intersection with Schoolhouse Road is eroded and little used for vehicular traffic although it is easily navigable by foot.

Athol Watershed land lines nearly all of Willis Road, continuing along Thousand Acre Brook. There is one large parcel containing approximately 28 acres and 700 feet north of the road that remains unprotected. There are also several cellar holes still visible within Athol Watershed property south of Willis Road.

The stone bridge at the crossing of the Thousand Acre Brook was built as a culvert to provide drainage under the road. With the disuse of Willis Road this bridge has had little maintenance and has retained much of its original materials. This provides it with high historic value but alternatively means that it is threatened by the weight of modern vehicles and any future road

widening. The Historical Commission had weight limits placed on the bridge but there is no signage to this affect, therefore the public is unaware of these limits.

Thousand Acre Brook was once a dammed reservoir and on the northeast side of the bridge are large mill ruins with the north & east walls still standing 20' tall. These ruins are on Athol Watershed land but have not been officially documented. The natural landscape of this area is wooded along the northern portion and then opens up into marshland and meadow areas to the south of the bridge.







*Opportunities:*

- The stonework of the culvert and mill ruins is impressive and in conjunction with the natural beauty of the area, provides a unique interpretive experience
- Willis Road remains unimproved and provides excellent pedestrian access to the stone bridge site
- The cellar holes provide a cultural link with the early settlement of this area.
- A majority of the land along Willis Road is permanently protected

*Issues:*

- The stone bridge/culvert is fragile - current vehicular use is already a concern and if the road was ever widened or improved, this would greatly impact the bridge
- There is a large parcel of land along Willis Road that is currently unprotected and could be developed if the road was improved
- There is little historical documentation for the stone bridge and mill ruins in this area



*A view of the north side of the stone bridge; mill foundations are also present in this area*



*Willis Road in the early 20th century. Photo from The Spirit of Phillipston, from the Phillipston Historical Society's collection*

*Recommendations:*

1. Weight limits should be posted as soon as possible so that users are aware of the fragility of the bridge
2. The Town should consider officially discontinuing Willis Road and make it recreational access only. The residential development on the other side of the brook has its access via South Royalston Road in Athol. Review the publication *Discontinuing Town & County Roads* by Lynn Rubenstein and Alexandra Dawson
3. The town should place a Preservation Restriction on the stone bridge/culvert in order to protect it in case of road improvements (see page 31 for more about PRs).
4. Develop the stone bridge/mill ruins as an interpretive area that relates to the early industrial and settlement of the community. This can include the cellar holes along Willis Road and the road itself as a nature/interpretive trail. The scenic quality of this area provides a great place for picnics and school group outings.
5. The town should pursue listing the bridge with the National Register of Historic Places which would make it eligible for funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grants program for rehabilitation work.



## Schlicke's Farm

Robert Schlicke purchased a large farm along the ridge on Highland Avenue in the middle of the 20th century and actively farmed it for many years. The area had been farmland for centuries with many open fields and orchards. Farther south on Highland Avenue the orchards of the Red Apple Farm still remain intact and have been permanently protected through the APR Program.



*Significant views to the north exist across the fields along Highland Avenue*

Not actively farming the land anymore, Mr. Schlicke started to subdivide the farm into portions for his children. His son owns the large fields east of Highland Ave across from the original farmhouse and his daughter owns the field west of Highland Ave and the large, mostly swampy parcel west of that. There is also a large, very old tulip tree across from the farmhouse that the family has nurtured during their tenure.

The total land area owned by members of the Schlicke family includes approximately 50+ acres. Additional parcels were sold by one of the Schlicke family north of the remaining farmland. Five new homes have recently been built on this land.

### *Opportunities:*

- The land provides stunning views to the north, northeast and northwest from the top of the ridge
- Much of the former farmland remains open and retains its agricultural character
- Despite some subdivision the property remains in the ownership of one family

### *Issues:*

- Portions of the farmland have been already sold for residential frontage development
- The land is no longer actively farmed and could return to forest over time
- The Schlicke Farm parcels directly abut Athol Watershed land



# Schlicke's Farm

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



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS),  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.  
1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.

Athol Watershed Land

WILLIS ROAD

ROYALSTON ROAD

HIGHLAND AVENUE

1. Bob Schlicke's Home
2. Schlicke's Son's Lot (not developed)
3. Schlicke's Daughter's Lot (not developed)
4. Subdivided Lot



*Recommendations:*

1. The Town should pursue the adoption of a Conservation/Open Space Development bylaw. This would allow the potential for development that would not destroy the agricultural character of the area or block the significant views (see page 32 for more about this bylaw).
2. Pursue a public/private partnership between the town and the Schlicke family to discuss options for the future of the property that would not take away property rights but would enable protection of the open space. Possible options include: Transfer of Development Rights, Conservation Restrictions and Scenic and Agricultural Overlay Districts (see pages 33, 31 and 30 for these respective options).



*View of the original homestead from the eastern fields  
and across Highland Avenue*

## Historical Society



*The old Town Meetinghouse (1850) was recently rehabilitated to house the local Historical Society*

Located at 50 State Road (Route 2A), the former Methodist Church was built in 1850 when several members of the Congregational Church separated from that institution. The building was in active use as a church until the early 1990s. The building was then vacant until the Historical Society took ownership in 2000. The building was recently renovated and the Historical Society has been given additional land to the north and east to provide a septic system, well, accessible entrance and parking.

### *Opportunities:*

- The recently renovated building provides a great interpretive and educational center for the community
- The adjacent land area is well-suited for the development of parking and site infrastructure such as a well and septic system

### *Issues:*

- The concrete and granite slabs outside of the front entry are in need of rehabilitation; these have been causing drainage problems for the building and could affect the integrity of the structure as well as public safety

### *Recommendations:*

1. Have the entry evaluated by an historic architect and develop plans and specifications to correct the drainage issues and repair the entryway.
2. The Historical Society should pursue listing this building with the National Register of Historic Places which would make it eligible for funds from the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund grants program for rehabilitation work.
3. Pursue Community Preservation Act funds for the rehabilitation of the front entry concrete and granite area.





**Historical Society  
Building**

**Approximate new  
parcel boundary**

STATE ROAD (Route 2A)

ROYALSTON ROAD

BALDWINSVILLE ROAD

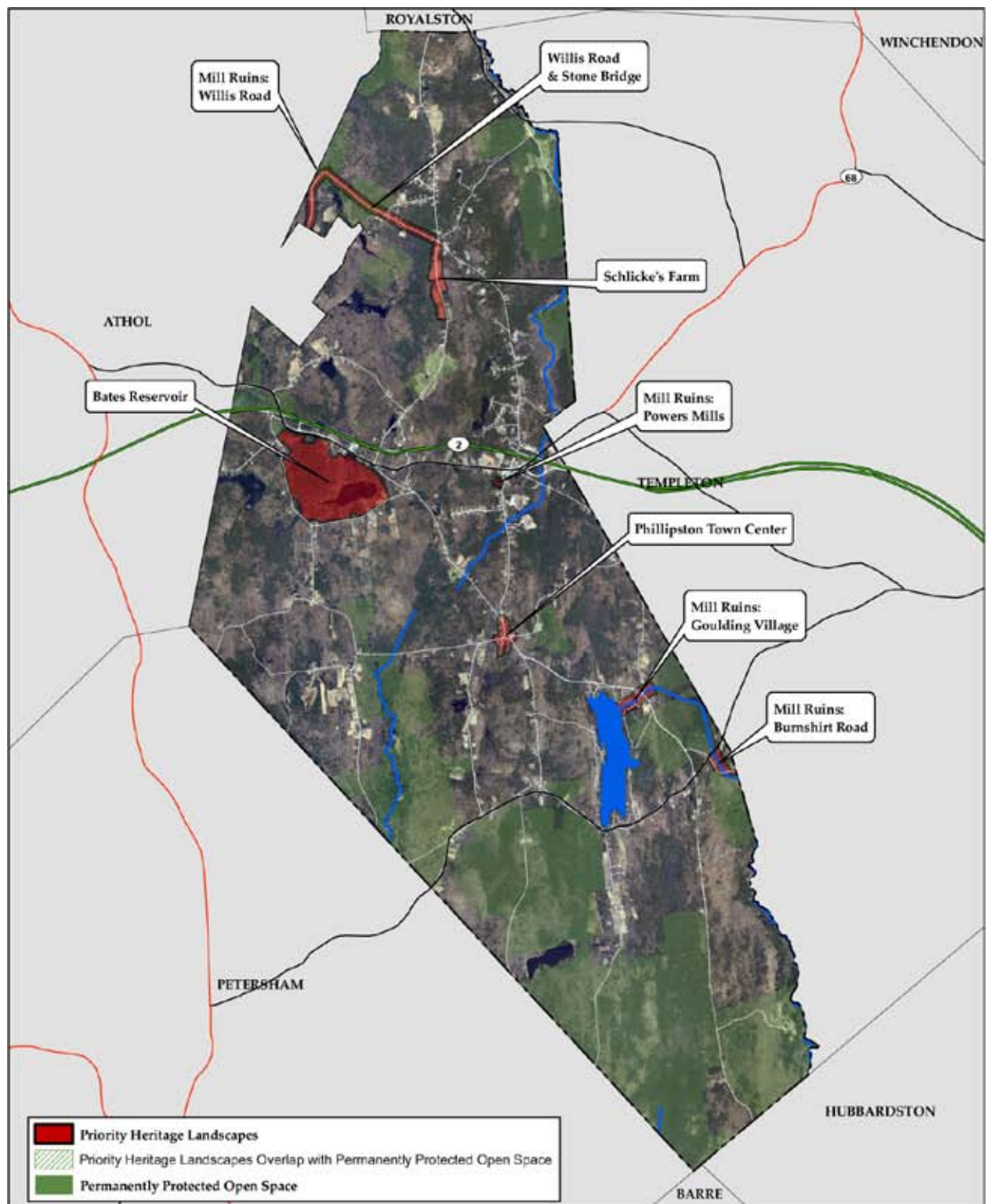
## Historical Society

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



Sources: Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS),  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.  
1:5,000 Color Ortho Imagery, 1/2 meter resolution, taken in April 2005.





## Priority Heritage Landscapes

### *Phillipston, Massachusetts*

Prepared for: Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quaboag Watershed and North Quabbin Region

Prepared by: Dodson Associates, Ltd., Landscape Architects and Planners  
Ashfield, Massachusetts

25 June 2008



"Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs"  
MassGIS 2005 Orthophotos

**For Planning Purposes Only**

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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 Phillipston already has in place, as well as a number of recommended actions for the future. The measures already in place for Phillipston 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 Phillipston'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, Phillipston's inventory documents over 70 cultural resources from the mid 18th century to the 20th century ranging from individual homes and civic buildings to barns and agricultural land. Of the heritage landscapes identified by the community as priority resources, the Town Common and many of its surrounding buildings including the Congregational Church, Schoolhouse #1 and the Town Pound are listed with MACRIS. Additionally, there is one prehistoric archaeological site recorded with MHC.

Recommendations: A comprehensive archaeological survey should be completed for the historic mill ruins/sites within the community. Funding assistance for this effort may be available from the MHC Survey and Planning grants, as well as CPA funding.



## *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 “Phillipston Center Historic District” is listed with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). It was listed in November of 1999 as the area around The Common, Baldwinville, Petersham and Templeton Roads and includes 42 properties. The Templeton Farm Colony, which is partially in Phillipston, was listed on the National Register as a part of the Massachusetts State Hospital and School National Register Multiple Property Submissions in 1994.

Recommended Listings: The Phillipston Historical Commission is currently working with MHC to place the South Cemetery and the Shepard Cemetery on the National Register. The Commission is next planning to nominate the Willis Road stone bridge which is a recommendation in this report. It is also recommended that the Historical Society building on State Road be nominated to the National Register.

## *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 nearly 70 recognized heritage landscapes is included as Appendix A of this report and provides a sound resource list for future documentation activities and potential funding opportunities. Phillipston’s meeting was held on March 18, 2008 with 14 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: Phillipston completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) in 2001 with an update in 2007. The document 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 protected land, identifying the owners and levels of protection including lands in Chapter 61.

Objectives of the OSRP include preserving more open space, establishing a town-wide trail system and maintaining the rural town character. A five-year action plan outlined a number of objectives and steps to take between 2007 and 2012. Actions such as establishing an Open Space Committee and accepting the Community Preservation Act (CPA) have already been accomplished. The CPA passed in May of 2007.

Recommended 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. It is recommended that Phillipston undertake the completion of a Comprehensive Plan.

### *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 Bylaws and Ordinances: Phillipston is zoned Residential-Agricultural, with a Commercial-Industrial Zone about 2000-feet wide on either side of Routes 2 and 2A. There are also two Recreation Zones; one surrounds Queen Lake and the other includes Reservoir #2.

The Town adopted the Massachusetts Scenic Roads Act, General Laws Chapter 40, Section 15C in 1975, designating thirteen scenic roads: Templeton Road, Petersham Road from Templeton Road to Lincoln Road, Lincoln Road, Prospect Hill Road, Burnshirt Road, Searles Hill Road, Baldwin Hill Road, Riley Switch Road, Ward Hill Road, Athol Road, Baldwinville Road from Athol Road to the Center, Williamsville Road, and Narrow Lane. Though many of its roads are designated, there is some concern about the enforcement of this bylaw. The Planning Board and Highway Department should re-familiarize themselves with the bylaw and review the DCR publication [\*Terra Firma #3: Identifying and Protecting Historic Roads\*](#).

#### Additional Planning and Zoning Tools and Techniques for Phillipston's heritage 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.

##### **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 the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs. An Archaeological Survey should be conducted for the mill ruins throughout town especially along Kendall Brook and the Burnshirt River, and a plan developed for their protection.

### **Conservation Restrictions (CR)/Preservation Restrictions (PR)**

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. The Town/Historical Commission should pursue a PR on the Powers Mill site and the stone bridge on Willis Road.

### **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.

The Town of Phillipston currently has approximately 264 acres under Chapter 61A (agricultural) and an additional 1,030 acres under Chapter 61 (forest). Some of the Chapter 61 forestland surrounds Bates Reservoir as identified in the priority landscape discussion. These parcels are significant and the Town should consider its right-of-first-refusal if they become available.

### **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. This historic preservation tool will be invaluable throughout town but will be most useful in the Town Center in order to preserve the collection of 18th century buildings and general historic character.

### **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. The Town Center should be considered as a local historic district.

### **Land Trusts**

A Land Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of open space in local or regional areas. Land Trusts protect open space by acquiring land outright or by holding conservation restrictions that were either purchased from or donated by the landowner. Land Trusts are very effective at protecting open space resources in Massachusetts and across the country. The regional land trust in this area is the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust located in Athol. The Town of Phillipston should consider working with Mount Grace to evaluate the viability of the protection of additional lands in the Thousand Acre Swamp along Willis Road, the lands surrounding the Bates Reservoir and the scenic area and value of the Schlicke Farm.

### **Open Space/Conservation Development Zoning**

Open Space/Conservation Zoning, also known as Cluster Development Bylaw, allows greater density than would otherwise be permitted on a parcel, in an effort to preserve open space. The open space is either owned by the municipality or a non-profit organization and continues in use for agriculture, recreation, scenic views, the protection of archaeological sites and other benefits. Open Space development can be more economical because there are shorter streets and less utilities and infrastructure. This approach to development can be utilized on the Schlicke Farm and on the site adjacent to the Bates Reservoir.



### **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 in the form of a scenic overlay district or address specific portions of a viewshed such as above a designated elevation and visible from public areas. A scenic protection bylaw is generally administered through site plan review and the development application process.

### **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.

### **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*

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, Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership.

### *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.



## CONCLUSION

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The Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report for Phillipston provides an initial preservation-planning document that identifies priority heritage landscapes and discusses strategies for their long-term protection. Phillipston contains a rich diversity of heritage landscape types ranging from its water systems and correlating archaeological mill sites to the 18th century village center. These landscapes reflect the strong history and character of the community and are tangible pieces of the Phillipston 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 additional MHC inventory forms and survey work. The information provided and further research will allow 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.

Many in Phillipston are already moving forward with a variety of initiatives and projects that advance the celebration and preservation of its heritage landscapes. The community completed an updated Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2007 whose purpose is to guide development while protecting the open space characteristics of the Town. The plan identified “places of historic interest” and “lands of conservation and recreation interest”; many of these were also identified through this program as priority heritage landscapes.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to various municipal boards and commissions involved in making land use decisions will assist Phillipston with the development of 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. Recommendations for heritage landscape preservation include additional National Register of Historic Places nominations for the stone bridge and historical society, and the establishment of a Local Historic District Ordinance. Also recommended are the adoption of new zoning regulations including a Demolition Delay Bylaw and an Open Space/Conservation Development Bylaw. These are regulatory tools that not only allow for the preservation of historic and scenic resources but provide guidelines for compatible new development that will not detract from the community character.

Public outreach that educates the local population regarding the community's heritage landscape resources is also an important tool for increasing awareness and support for their protection. This report provides an important first step for Phillipston's preservation planning program and can provide the foundation for future historic preservation, conservation and recreation planning activities. The commitment of the citizens of Phillipston to their heritage is apparent in the historic landscape character and fabric that makes the town the beautiful and peaceful place that it is.

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

1. Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw.
2. Adopt an Open Space/Conservation Development Bylaw.
3. Form a Local Historic District (LHD) Committee to pursue the adoption of an LHD for the Phillipston Town Center



## APPENDIX A: PHILLIPSTON HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Landscape Name	Landscape Notes
<b>Agricultural</b>	
<i>Schlicke's Farm</i>	Highland Avenue, view of Mt. Monadnock, significant tulip tree
<i>Mill Stone Preserve</i>	Petersham Road, still cuts hay
<i>Shaw's Sheep Farm</i>	Narrow Lane, Farmhouse is one of oldest in town
<i>Connor's Farm</i>	Lincoln Road, abuts Harvard Forest
<i>Specht's Farm</i>	Blake Corner Road, near Bates Reservoir, also identified as an archaeological landscape (unique stone wall/pen)
<i>Whiting Farm</i>	Whitney Road
<i>Whitney Farm</i>	Royalston Road
<i>Sterbinsky Farm</i>	Royalston Road, owned by lawyer
<i>Haughton Apple Farm</i>	Baldwin Hill Road, holds cell tower, old cemetery (town owned) near property, significant views, holds Sugar Maple - largest tree in town
<i>Recos Tree Farm</i>	Highland Avenue, next door to Schlicke's
<i>Giampa Alpaca Farm</i>	Petersham Road
<b>Archaeological</b>	
<i>Old Mills</i>	Burnshirt Road, stone foundations
<i>Powers Mills</i>	off Rte 2A
<i>Goulding Village</i>	off of Barre Road
<i>Quarry Site</i>	
<i>Indian Grinding Stone</i>	off Barre Road
<i>2 Dams</i>	on Kendall Brook
<i>Schoolhouse #4 Foundation</i>	Ward Hill Road
<i>Schoolhouse #5 Foundation</i>	Route 2A

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

<b>Burial</b>	
<i>Searles Hill Cemetery</i>	Searles Hill Road, oldest in town, from Revolutionary War
<i>Center Cemetery</i>	Also known as Upper Cemtery, on Baldwinville Road, first town burial ground
<i>Valley Cemetery</i>	Also known as Lower Cemetery, on Athol Road
<i>Shepherd Cemetery</i>	off Royalston Road
<i>Lamb Grave</i>	Royalston Road/Highland Ave, Single Grave for small pox victim - on Private Property - Banes
<i>Baldwin Hill Cemetery</i>	Haughton Farm
<b>Civic</b>	
<i>Town Common</i>	hosts town events
<i>Library</i>	used to be 1 room Schoolhouse #1, on common
<i>Old Schoolhouse #6</i>	Schoolhouse/Royalston Roads, private residence
<i>Town Hall</i>	on Common
<i>Town Pound</i>	Templeton Road, adjacent to library on common
<i>Schoolhouse #3</i>	Route 101
<i>Highway Department Barn</i>	used to be church carriage house, on town common
<i>Fire Tower</i>	Prospect Hill Road, on Harvard Forest Property
<b>Industrial</b>	
<i>none identified</i>	
<b>Institutional</b>	
<i>Congregational Church</i>	on Town Common
<i>Historical Society</i>	on Route 2A, former Methodist Church, drainage and rain splash issues
<i>Memorial School</i>	original portion built 1949
<b>Military</b>	
<i>Henry Knox Route through town</i>	Lincoln/Whitney Roads, cart roads with stone walls remain
<i>Artemis Ward House</i>	Ward Hill Road, presently owned by Twohey's. Built 1809, significant views east

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



<b>Natural</b>	
<i>Bates Reservoir</i>	access from Rte 2A, also identified as an archeological landscape (tannery remains)
<i>Thousand Acre Swamp</i>	near Red Apple Farm
<i>Skunk's Misery Swamp/Great Meadow</i>	On Barre Road, near Goulding Village. Some in town know this as Thousand Acre swamp as well.
<i>Popple Camp Brook</i>	Contains a Beaver Dam
<i>Queen Lake</i>	Formerly Jackson's Pond
<i>Secret Lake</i>	off Ward Hill, formerly Reservoir #2
<i>Lamb City Brook</i>	
<i>Thousand Acre Brook</i>	North side of town behind Red Apple Farm, runs toward Athol from Thousand Acre Swamp
<i>Schlicke's Tulip Tree</i>	on Schlicke Farm land
<i>Riley Switch Road</i>	holds 2nd largest tree in town (Maple)
<i>Kendall Brook</i>	endangered species, designated Natural Heritage area
<b>Open Space/Recreation</b>	
<i>Queen Lake Beach</i>	town owned
<i>Horse Farm</i>	on Route 101
<i>School Fields</i>	behind school, used for Little League
<i>Lamb City Campground</i>	Royalston Road
<i>Cart Roads</i>	used for hiking and snowmobiling throughout town
<i>Queen Lake Girl's Camp</i>	1920s camp, private land no longer a camp
<b>Residential</b>	
<i>Bowker House</i>	1857 State Road
<i>Probst House (name of current owner)</i>	built 1790, Common/Templeton Roads. Garage was wheelwright shop
<i>Homes on Town Common and Baldwinville Roads</i>	includes Arena and Mosher Houses
<i>Charlie Davis House/Poor Farm</i>	Templeton Road, built 1783
<i>Silas Sawyer House</i>	Queen Lake Road (Rte 101), AKA "1800 House"
<i>Hearse House</i>	Baldwinville Road
<i>The Grove</i>	resort community, some cabins remain though main building is gone
<i>Queen Lake Summer Homes</i>	

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

<b>Transportation</b>	
<i>Stone Bridge</i>	on Willis Road
<i>Stone Bridge</i>	on Burnshirt Road, more of a stone "culvert", part of old mill ruins
<i>Additional Scenic Roads</i>	Current bylaw is not well enforced. New designations should include Whitney road, Colony Road, Willis Road

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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