

# **BOLTON RECONNAISSANCE REPORT**

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## **FREEDOM'S WAY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY**

### **MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM**



**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation**

**Freedom's Way Heritage Association**

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### **Cover Photos**

Wilder Road Panoramic View Looking Northwest  
Bolton Center-Main Street  
Bolton-Lancaster Railroad Bed

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## INTRODUCTION

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The Freedom's Way Heritage Association includes 37 Massachusetts communities that are linked by historic events that helped to shape America's democratic form of governance and the intellectual traditions that underpin American freedom, democracy, conservation and social justice. Freedom's Way communities extend from Arlington on the east to Winchendon on the west. They represent a wide range of cities and towns, each shaped by the relationship between nature and culture.

Heritage landscapes are special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. The wealth of landscapes is central to each community's character, yet heritage landscapes are vulnerable and ever changing. For this reason it is important to take the first steps towards their preservation by identifying those landscapes that are particularly valued by the community – a favorite local farm, a distinctive neighborhood or mill village, a unique natural feature or an important river corridor. To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Freedom's Way Heritage Association (FWHA) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program (HLI) to communities in the Freedom's Way area. The primary goal of the program is to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected. The focus is on landscapes that have not been identified in previous survey efforts in a given community. Another important goal of the program is to provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a pilot project conducted in southeast Massachusetts and refined in Essex County. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land* which has provided guidance for the program since its inception. In summary, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-FWHA consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting at which interested residents and town officials offer community input by identifying heritage landscapes. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, often accompanied by other community members. This group visits the priority landscapes identified in the meeting and gathers information about the community. The final product is this Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; describes the priority heritage landscapes; discusses planning issues identified by the community; identifies planning tools available in the community; and concludes with preservation recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix.

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## **BOLTON HISTORY**

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The town of Bolton is one of several communities that evolved from the purchase by the Bay Colony in 1643 of the Nashaway Plantation, the first land granted by the General Court in the central Massachusetts region. In 1653 Nashaway was incorporated as the town of Lancaster, from which Bolton was set off as an independent town in 1738. Bolton's original 35 square miles were reduced over time by the formation of Berlin in 1784, and further altered by the annexation of part of Marlborough in 1829, and by the formation of Hudson in 1868.

Bolton is located directly east of the Nashua River. West of the Nashua, the Nashua group of the Nipmucs had permanent camps in what are now the towns of Lancaster and Sterling. There may have been smaller, temporary or seasonal camps in the Bolton territory, with native fishing sites at the ponds and along the streams. Evidence of occupation that is perhaps 5,000 years old from the Late Archaic period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) through the Woodland Period (3,000-450 B.P.) has been found in Bolton.

After the Lancaster purchase some English farmers utilized the Bolton territory for hunting, mowing, pasturage and other transient activities. However, the threat of Indian attack, particularly after settlers in Lancaster were slain and buildings burned during King Philip's War (1675-76), slowed permanent settlement in Bolton until well after 1700.

Between the time of its incorporation in 1738 and the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Bolton evolved into a community of dispersed farms, with only a small cluster of buildings near the meetinghouse at the center of town. Early industrial activity of gristmills, sawmills, fulling mill and tanneries served both a local and regional population. A significant lime quarry operated in the east part of town from the early 1730s through the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two brickyards were in operation on the east shore of the Nashua River before the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Bolton was situated on a major east-west highway between Lancaster and Boston, the Lancaster Road (today's Route 117 which is known as Main Street and was referred to as Great Road in the 20<sup>th</sup> century), and several inns and taverns began operating as early as 1718.

The number of local mills increased through the third quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the earliest of three colonial tanneries operated east of the center beginning in the 1750s. Beaver hats were manufactured at the center in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. In that era during the winter months many farm families turned to shoemaking, and some established comb shops or took part in straw hat-making. After the Revolution more inns opened along the Lancaster Road, and in the later Federal period several mail routes and a major stagecoach line converged at one of the largest inns in the region, the Holman Inn.

The secondary village of Fryville in the south part of town grew from a small community of Society of Friends members who had settled there in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Fryville comprised a significant

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community of farms and artisans' shops near the Berlin border, with their own meetinghouse, school and two burying grounds.

Bolton was bypassed by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century regional railroads, and by 1870 most industry in town had died out. The community returned to a largely agricultural economy through the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Farming was diversified, with milk production predominating and orcharding and lumber production also significant activities. Poultry raising increased around 1900 and continued into the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century dairying declined, but orchards expanded. Apple orchards still dominate Bolton's surviving agricultural landscape today, forming a backdrop for the town's many historic farmsteads and residences.

Bolton's agricultural base was greatly reduced over the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however, and much of the town has been transformed into a residential community of substantial single-family houses, most on large lots, providing homes for people who work outside the town's borders. With this shift came unprecedented growth in the population from under 2,000 in 1970 to 4,680 in 2004. This shift was in part due to the construction of Route I-495, which spurred business and industries in surrounding areas, after its opening here in 1964.



### **PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES**

Bolton's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by approximately 20 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on February 15, 2006. During the meeting residents compiled a lengthy list of the town's heritage landscapes, which is included in the Appendix. Once the comprehensive list was created, attendees were asked to articulate the

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value of each landscape and the issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members identified a group of priority landscapes to be visited by the consulting team during the fieldwork. Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued, contributes to community character and is not permanently protected or preserved. These landscapes, which are listed alphabetically, represent a range of scales and types of resources from railroad and river corridors to specific rural neighborhoods of Bolton. The descriptions and recommendations included here are an initial step in identifying resources valued by the community and suggesting action strategies.

Six of these priority landscapes describe areas that demonstrate the layering of heritage landscapes. This means that each of these areas is a combination of heritage landscapes that appear in the identification meeting chart in the Appendix. Such layering shows the complexity and interdependence of most heritage landscapes. These same areas also are described in Bolton's Preservation Plan as historic landscape study units to emphasize the interconnectedness. From east to west these areas are West's Pond, Century Mills, Town Center, Old Bay Road, Wilder Road and Still River – Bolton Flats. They are nearly contiguous and encompass a large number of significant resources with a high level of integrity. Each area has a piece of the industrial and agricultural history that shaped this community.

### **Bolton Center**

Bolton Center is located along both sides of Main Street extending from Route 495 west to Harvard Road. The civic buildings in this linear district are just east of Wattaquodock Hill Road and about a mile west of Route 495. Main Street, formerly known as Great Road, passes through Bolton in a more or less east-west direction except in the center where it dips south to pass through the geographic center of town. Great Brook also meanders through Bolton following an east-west route generally crossing back and forth under Main Street. It is along these two corridors – Main Street (formerly Great Road) and Great Brook – that the historically linear pattern of development occurred. Great Road became a major transportation route connecting Boston with Lancaster. Great Brook was the site of mills and good soils for agricultural pursuits. Thus Bolton Center comprises layers of heritage landscapes – historic dwellings, farms, mill sites and civic buildings. A narrow linear district has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Through most of Bolton Center, Great Brook is south of Main Street where it meanders through some of the most historically diverse landscape with mill and dam remnants, agricultural fields, the former Bolton Fair Grounds and brook crossings, with stone bridges and culverts, a discontinued 19<sup>th</sup> century road, a cart path and raised railroad bed. The former ca. 1738 William Sawyer Farm (part of this landscape), includes many acres now mown by the town: Pond Park (designed by Alfred Stone in 1905); the Sawyer mill pond, dam, and tailrace remnants on Great Brook; three large stone slab bridges (one carrying an old cart path over the brook); remnants of the Bolton & Lancaster Railroad; and the upland fields known as the Derby area which were leased yearly to the Bolton



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Fair. From time to time, this landscape changes due in part to beaver dams on Great Brook. The western end of this landscape comprises the original mowing sites when Bolton was part of Lancaster. This is an important feature of the agricultural history here as freshwater hay was harvested from the meadows along the brook. The opportunity for Native American archaeological sites on the former Sawyer Farm is high. This area is documented on an MHC Landscape form entitled “former Sawyer Farm/Great Brook Landscape.”



Also at the center is a remnant of the Old Common, the Town House (1853), the First Parish Church (now Federated Church, 1928), the 1812 Powder House and a remnant of Old Town House Road, an old wagon path that led northeasterly from the Town House. Many other commercial, institutional and residential buildings make up the linear landscape on Main Street.

At the most eastern end of Bolton Center is the Samuel Blood Farm, now owned by Delta Equity Services Corporation, which has revitalized the property and uses the farm buildings. The 18-acre property, which includes a ca. 1793 Federal/Colonial Revival house, 19<sup>th</sup> /early 20<sup>th</sup> century barn, early 20<sup>th</sup> century stable, a wagon house, poultry house and small cottage is an important agricultural landscape that survived the scar of Route 495.

There are a number of challenges at Bolton Center, many of them traffic related, to preserving integrity of the historic resources and the fragile ecological balance of infrastructure so close to Great Brook and the multi-layered heritage landscape south of Main Street.

### ***Recommendations***

This area has been well documented by the Bolton Historical Commission and a narrow corridor along Main Street has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition it is the focus of one of the historic landscape study



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units in the Bolton Preservation Plan. The next steps include protection, which will be best organized by the Historical Commission working in conjunction with other public and private town organizations.

- Study the area for local historic district designation which would be an important tool in preserving this relatively intact linear district through town.
- Work with Conservation Commission to properly manage town land south of Main Street, balancing wildlife habitat and the ecology of the water system with preservation of the historic and archaeological resources in this sensitive area.
- Work with Park and Recreation Commission to develop trails while taking into account the fragility of this landscape.
- Work with all boards to prepare a master plan for Derby Area and Town Fields, particularly since the Bolton Fair will no longer use the site.

### **Bolton-Lancaster Railroad**

The short-lived 1873 Bolton & Lancaster Railroad ran from Hudson in a westerly direction through the center of Bolton to Lancaster. Its eight and one-half mile route was built on a raised railroad bed that cut through the meadows and fields and passed through Bolton Center south of Main Street. However, due to economic failure this line was used only once before becoming abandoned. Other railroad lines passed through Bolton but only along the southern edge of the town, requiring transportation from farms or mills to remote depots; hence the regional railroad system was not a strong factor in shaping the landscape of this community. Remnants of the old railroad bed including stone culverts, a sheep tunnel and the abutments of an old bridge that crossed Great Brook remain as evidence of this transportation route that never supplanted road travel. This line never showed up on historic maps so it has gone relatively unnoticed; however the remnants mentioned above, the most prominent extant evidence, are located south of Main Street at Bolton Center near the Sheep Pasture, an area that was leased to the Bolton Fair for many years. According to a Bolton Conservation Trust booklet on the area the land is owned by the town and marked as *Derby Area and Town Fields* on a map.

### ***Recommendations***

This resource has gone unnoticed for the most part, mostly due to the location away from a road. Access to the remnants noted above is by foot only. The Historical Commission, Conservation Commission and Parks and Recreation Commission may work together to develop a trail.

- Compile documentation and add information to tell the story of this short-lived railroad. Portions of the raised railroad bed are included in the former Sawyer Farm/Great Brook Landscape form.

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- Plan and develop a trail along the railroad only by moderate cutting of voluntary growth and by finding a non-invasive solution to crossing Great Brook.
  - Prepare a short brochure with trail map.

### **Century Mills Area**

The Century Mills Area is located in the southeastern part of Bolton. It is the location of a mill complex, a miller's house and agricultural resources that supported the miller's farming activities. The focus is Century Mills at the intersection of Century Mill and South Bolton Roads, both designated scenic roads. The Century Mills Area is broader than this main intersection and is important for its scenic quality and its geological features. At the intersection, mills are reported as early as ca. 1700 operated by Thomas Sawyer and succeeding generations throughout the entire 18<sup>th</sup> century. The saw and grist mills were operated by Captain Amory Pollard for the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Pollard built a house (197 Century Mill Road) and operated a saw and grist mill on Wattaquaddock Brook (now referred to as Mill Brook), which is downstream from Century Mill Pond, thought to have first been dammed in ca. 1700 by Sawyers. The pond's two stone dams remain and have been reinforced with concrete. On the miller's house lot there also are barns and an old ice house from the days when the miller/farm also harvested ice from the mill pond.

Century Mills Area was at the edge of the secondary village of Fryville but became separated with the construction of Route 495. One of the Bolton Preservation Plan's historic landscape study units is "the Quaker Landscape at Fryville" an area split in two by the highway. Within the broader area, a number of eskers have been located in the regions swamps. Near the main intersection at Century Mill there are two eskers in the wetlands of Mill Brook. South Bolton Road was constructed over one of these eskers and the other is west of South Bolton/Spectacle Hill Road, where there also is a kettle hole, another geological feature.

East of the Pollard Farm and mill site (mill pond and raceway) which is Century Mill, the land rises to the north through woods and pasture land up to Pine Hill. This stretch of Century Mill Road, constructed in 1872 to provide a more direct route between Stow and southeast Bolton, has an impressive tree canopy that has not suffered the cutting generally necessary when trees interfere with utility wires. The reason is that here two power companies meet; therefore there is a section where there are no wires and service is not interrupted. This in turn has preserved the tree canopy.



### ***Recommendations***

This area has been well documented by the Bolton Historical Commission and the Communitywide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey. The next steps include recognition and protection which will be best organized by the Historical Commission. The intact mill complex including miller's house is likely eligible for National Register listing. In addition the immediate area including mill remnants could be protected by the formation of a small local historic district.

- Complete National Register nomination for a small Century Mills district after consultation with the MHC.
- Study the area for local historic district designation.
- Discuss mill remnants with property owners to potentially obtain preservation restrictions and to develop interpretive plans.

### **Old Bay Road**

One of Bolton's oldest roads is Old Bay Road, a designated scenic road, which was a section of the Old Bay Path, laid out by European settlers over old Native American trails or paths. The Old Bay Path cut through Bolton in an east-west direction with some variation and more or less followed Wilder Road, Old Bay Road, Town Farm Road, South Bolton Road and Spectacle Hill Road into Hudson and then easterly through Sudbury.

The corridor along Old Bay Road, a segment of the old path, retains its rural agricultural landscape. This scenic road is important for its vistas, its historic houses and farms that line the route, and the trees and stone walls that contribute to the rural character. Sections of Old Bay Road are lined with sugar maples and other areas have stone walls along the road as well as perpendicular to the road separating farmland. One of the best preserved landscapes is the 250-acre farm

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at the intersection of Old Bay Road and Wattaquadock Hill Road. It was originally the old Wheeler-Howe Farm, and now is known as Townshend Farm. The scenic meadows and pastures run along the ridge of Wattaquadock Hill. The land has been farmed for nearly 270 years, first by Wheelers, later by Howes who turned the farm into a country retreat. Now it is a successful horse farm. In addition to the rolling fields separated by stone walls and board fencing, there are a number of historic buildings including a Georgian style ca. 1740 house, a farm manager's house, a New England barn and other utilitarian structures. Next to Townshend Farm is Prospect Farm, which is equally as picturesque with pastures and meadowland sloping down from West Berlin Road towards Old Bay Road.

Several other farm remnants add to the scenery of Old Bay Road from Randall Road northwest to Wilder Road. In addition to Townshend Farm, the section of Old Bay Road near the Wattaquadock Hill Road intersection up to Wilder Road has other farms that are intact and presumed to be eligible for the National Register. A Federal house, New England barn and some land (225 Old Bay Road) probably belonged to Asa Holman in the 1830s; the Hammond House (1876), barn, cottage and surrounding farmland (267 Old Bay Road) have orchards established here; and the Hillside Parsonage, small barn and eight acres (369 Old Bay Road) was once part of Grassie Lea, a 300-acre farm just north of this property.



### ***Recommendations***

This area has been well documented by the Bolton Historical Commission. The next steps include recognition and protection which will be best organized by the Historical Commission. All of the properties mentioned above are thought to be eligible for National Register listing. Old Bay, Wattaquadock Hill and Wilder Roads all are listed as scenic roads. For additional information about preservation of these landscapes refer to **Agricultural Landscapes** and **Scenic**

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**Roads** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

- Complete National Register nominations for a district or individual property listings after consultation with the MHC.
- Work with land owners and local land trusts (such as Bolton Conservation Trust) to explore options for acquisition of preservation/conservation restrictions (MGL Chapter 184, Sections 31-33) or agricultural preservation restriction. As a last resort explore options of land purchase.
- Consider zoning measures that will help to protect scenic vistas and historic structures such as scenic overlay zoning or a flexible development bylaw in the event that development is the only course.

### **Still River – Bolton Flats**

The Still River – Bolton Flats, part of an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), is in the northwest corner of Bolton framed by the town borders, Still River Road on the east and Main Street (Route 117) on the south. The area has been designated an ACEC for its concentration of wetlands, rivers, aquifers, wildlife, rare and endangered species, agricultural and archaeological resources.

The Still River is a tributary of the Nashua River and flows through the northwest corner of Bolton, nearly parallel to the Nashua River. Each river flows in a northeasterly direction and the Still River joins the Nashua just north of Bolton in Harvard. The flat lowland between the Nashua River and the Still River is called Bolton Flats and is the result of the receded glacial Lake Nashua. The area is protected by the Commonwealth as the Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area, which is in Harvard, Bolton and Lancaster. At the Bolton entrance to the Bolton Flats Management Area there is a modest early 20<sup>th</sup> century cape with a gambrel roof barn, owned by the state. On the property there is a river crossing where there are many bricks scattered around in the mud on the riverbanks.

The Still River and its environs are part of the Nashaway Landscape study unit described in the Bolton Preservation Plan. Its favorable geology, including soils and water sources, is the reason for its rich archaeological and cultural heritage. Potential and known Native American archaeological sites from 5,000 years ago make this a highly sensitive area. In addition, mill sites along the Still River and tributaries, brick houses, farm complexes and agricultural land all contribute to the high level of interest in this landscape. North of Main Street (formerly called Great Road, now Route 117) are two brick Federal style houses; one at the intersection of Main Street and Still River Road and one farther north on the west side of Still River Road. One of them, the Haynes House (304 Still River Road), is believed to have been built with bricks made at the Haynes Brickyard on the Still River. The Haynes built other houses in the area; farmed the rich land; and ran a brick yard from the late 18<sup>th</sup> to the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.



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It is reasonable to assume that this western edge of Bolton will see a fair amount of development in the near future. The sensitivity of the resources and the potential ill effects of development on water supply are reasons to consider taking protective measures. For instance, land at the intersection of Main Street (Route 117) and Still River Road (Route 110) is sandy and flat, and the area is ripe for development. The recently published draft of the 2006 Master Plan recommends that the underground aquifer at Bolton Flats be protected and that a study to identify future needs and sources of water be funded.



### *Recommendations*

This area has been well documented by the Bolton Historical Commission and in the Community-wide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey. The next steps include recognition and protection, which will be best organized by the Historical Commission. Some of the properties along Still River Road are potentially eligible for National Register listing. The more challenging issue is to preserve the water and archaeological resources in the development process. For areas south of Main Street some of the recommendations contained under **Agricultural Landscapes** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report may apply. Other issues will take coordination among the Historical Commission, Conservation Commission and Board of Health to develop review processes during the planning and permitting of new construction.

- Complete National Register nominations for a district or individual listings after consultation with the MHC.
- Establish an Archaeological Review Committee (such as has been done in Medfield) that has the authority to review development proposals that may impact potential archaeological sites that are shown on the Sensitivity Map prepared as part of the Community-wide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey. Contact the archaeology staff of the Massachusetts Historical Commission for guidance in possible approaches.
- Support land use boards and commissions in identifying and preserving “vast underground aquifer” at Bolton Flats.

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## **West's Pond Area**

This heritage landscape is located east of Rte 495 in the section of town known as “the Pan” centered around the Route 117 (Main Street) intersection of Long Hill and Hudson Roads on the south side and Burnham Road on the north side of the road. A main feature of the area is West's Pond which is situated south of Main Street between Hudson Road to the west and Long Hill Road to the northeast and east. The pond itself and the natural and cultural resources surrounding it make up this heritage landscape.

West's Pond, one of the largest ponds in Bolton, was formed by damming a tributary of Great Brook, which flows north of Main Street through this part of Bolton. Bolton's first tannery was located on the Baker-Sawyer property (392 Main Street) close to the outflow of the pond, and mills were established downstream north of the road by John Sawyer on the property at 401 Main Street.

Farms with fields and historic houses are on the east side of the pond, modern mid 20<sup>th</sup> century housing on the west side. The best known of the farms is Long Hill Farm, which has a large Federal style brick house attributed to Ephraim Osborne and lived in by generations of Whitcombs. Long Hill Farm conveys one of the town's most accurate pictures of Bolton's rural past. Meadows with stone walls and wood fencing on both sides of Long Hill Road articulate the rural agricultural landscape on West's Pond. Also on Long Hill Road is the 18<sup>th</sup> century Old Settler's Tomb, which may have been used as a holding tomb during bad weather when the closest burial ground was in Lancaster. Bolton was part of Lancaster until 1738; after Bolton's incorporation, a burial ground was laid out south of the center.

On the north side of Main Street are remnants of Benjamin Sawyer's grist and saw mills including dam, building foundations and tailraces. These are behind the ca. 1827 John Sawyer House and barn, on a property of 35 acres that is believed to be the same land that John Sawyer got from his father in 1827. On the west side of Burnham Road is part of an old cranberry bog that was made by diverting Great Brook to flood the meadow. It now is conservation land in which there are pitcher plants.

## ***Recommendations***

This area has been well documented by the Bolton Historical Commission and the Community-Wide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey. The next steps include recognition and protection, which will be best organized by the Historical Commission. In addition, access to West's Pond is an issue that would potentially require acquisition. Some of the properties on Main Street and Long Hill Road are potentially eligible for National Register listing. For areas south of Main Street some of the recommendations contained under **Agricultural Landscapes** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report may apply. Other issues will take coordination among the Historical

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Commission, Conservation Commission and Park and Recreation Commission to potentially preserve some of this area.

- Complete National Register nominations for a district or individual listings after consultation with the MHC.
- Study the area for local historic district or neighborhood architectural conservation districting (as per Preservation Plan).
- Discuss mill remnants with property owners to potentially obtain preservation restrictions, develop interpretive plans and provide a trail easement to the remnants.



### **Wilder Road Area**

Wilder Road, a designated scenic road, extends from Main Street (Route 117) southwesterly to the town of Lancaster. The Bolton Preservation Plan describes the Wilder Road area with its orchards at one end and protected Twin Spring's Golf Course (295 Wilder Road) at the other end as part of the Nashaway Landscape. It is the region south of the Still River area described above. Wilder Road runs south of and nearly parallel to Forbush Mill Road, where there are a number of kettle holes and some mill sites on Saw Mill Brook. The road has important connections historically with other transportation routes. It is Bolton's most western part of the Old Bay Path connecting Lancaster to the west with Boston to the east. The foot of the road near Main Street was also the beginning of the Lancaster & Bolton Turnpike which opened in 1807 and ran northwest over Captain Caleb Moore's land. He was a turnpike shareholder, owner of the Federal brick mansion at 52 Wilder Road and a store at 41 Wilder Road.

The Bolton Orchards on the old Reed Farm are located on the south side of Wilder Road where the land rises to the south and extends between Main Street and Old Bay Road. On the 230-acre orchard property are the early 19<sup>th</sup> century

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Reed farmhouse, a Craftsman cottage built in ca. 1900 by subsequent owners and the orchard landscape. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the Bolton Fruit Company established one of Bolton's largest orchards here, where they planted apple, peach and pear trees. Following the Great Depression the company failed and the orchards were purchased by John A. Davis & Sons of Sterling, and became Bolton Orchards which remains in business today.

Wilder Road is named for the Wilder family who settled here before Bolton was incorporated as a town. In ca. 1814 a later Wilder, S.V. S. Wilder acquired an old Richardson family farm and inn (on the Old Bay Path) and turned it into a French inspired "country seat" (as it was advertised) with spectacular hilltop views. The Wilder Mansion once was surrounded by over 600 acres of land. Today the property is substantially reduced in size, but this Bolton treasure still commands a presence on the hill top overlooking the orchards to the south.

Some of the land north of Wilder Road has been subdivided; however there still are a couple of large tracts of farmland that would provide a link between protected land in the Still River valley and Twin Springs Golf Course at the western end of Wilder Road. The soils are rich, the land has some interesting geological features, there are spectacular views and there is high potential of Native American sites, particularly in the flat lowlands along Saw Mill Brook.

### ***Recommendations***

This area has been well documented by the Bolton Historical Commission and the Community-Wide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey. The next steps include recognition and protection which will be best organized by the Historical Commission. The Bolton Preservation Plan addresses some of the issues, particularly the need to protect the frontage along Wilder and Forbush Roads. In addition, this is an area of conservation interest that has been identified in the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Some of the properties on Wilder Road are potentially eligible for National Register listing. Information about preservation of farm land and orchards is included under **Agricultural Landscapes** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report. Other issues will take coordination among the Historical Commission, Conservation Commission and the Bolton Conservation Trust.

- Complete National Register nominations for a district or individual listings after consultation with the MHC, particularly for the Wilder Mansion.
- Develop an acquisition plan that may include outright purchase of some properties and conservation and preservation restrictions on others.

### **CRITICAL CONCERNS**

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In addition to the priority landscapes listed in the previous section, residents also identified critical concerns related to heritage landscapes and community character. These are town-wide issues that are linked to a range or category of



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heritage landscapes, not to a particular place. They are listed in alphabetical order. Community members also expressed interest in learning about preservation tools and strategies that have been effective in other Massachusetts communities and in identifying sources for preservation funding.



## **Farms**

The agricultural landscape is one of the most significant defining features of Bolton. It includes hay meadows, pasture land, orchards, farm complexes, historic houses, farm houses, stone walls and fences. Preservation of these resources is perhaps the most important interest and concern for Bolton residents. This type of landscape reflects the history, the present character and, one hopes, the future of Bolton. Thus a top priority of those attending the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting is to find ways to perpetuate farming and orcharding in Bolton and to preserve the agricultural landscapes associated with these uses. There are many excellent examples and it seems difficult to select some farms to illustrate the high quality of integrity over others.

The six historic landscape study units discussed in the Bolton Preservation Plan cover most of the town and each has agriculture as a primary theme. Other patterns of development are apparent in these landscapes, but the agricultural theme is ever present as is the industrial theme, particularly because many farmers also engaged in industrial activities in winter months to supplement their farming income. The Preservation Plan also addresses ways in which to preserve farms; therefore this Reconnaissance Report confirms the recommendations of the Preservation Plan by reiterating and emphasizing much of the work of the Preservation Plan. The level of documentation of many of these historic landscapes is high. Now it is time to consider the heritage landscapes as a whole made up of many layers; a principle of the Heritage Landscape Inventory program as well.



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## Geology of Town

According to the Community-wide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey completed in 2001, Bolton lies in a transition area between crystalline granitic rock to the east and fine-grained metamorphics. The bedrock striations run in a north-south direction so that both types are found in Bolton. The weathering of this plateau bedrock led to sandy well drained soils near water sources, which supported Native American activity as well as provided good farmland for European settlement of Bolton. In addition the water sources of Bolton, including the Nashua River in the northwest corner, its tributaries and ponds and the tributaries that flow to the Assabet River to the east, all are part of the geology of the town that have influenced the development. There are also a number of geological features throughout the town such as eskers and kettle holes. These natural features helped shape Bolton's landscape. In the course of development many of the features are lost or ruined; particularly eskers but also bogs and marshland near rivers and ponds. The general public is often unaware of the land formation, leaving its protection to a few who are not heard unless they develop far reaching educational programs.

## Scenic Roads

Roads are the public face of Bolton, the threads that tie the community together and the corridors from which the landscape is viewed. Bolton has been fortunate to retain the traditional character of its rural roadways. Many still reflect their original alignment, width and corridor characteristics, with extant stone walls, farm fences and roadside trees. The rural landscapes bordering the scenic roads comprise views of agricultural fields, historic dwellings and farm complexes. In most areas curb cuts remain limited, another important factor in retaining rural character. On many of Bolton's secondary roads, traffic consists of local residents and speeds are low enough to permit use by farm vehicles. In a Massachusetts landscape that has become largely forested, distant views offer a sense of larger context and connectedness with the land. Bolton is fortunate to have some of the region's most spectacular long distance views, especially those looking east towards Boston from Prospect Farm on West Berlin Road.

Bolton has a scenic roads bylaw that requires a public hearing for the potential removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Forty-two roads have been designated as scenic under this bylaw. This includes nearly all roads in Bolton with the exception of modern subdivision roads. Among the topics of concern regarding the scenic quality of these roads are road improvements that add pavement, resulting in the removal of trees and stone walls in spite of the hearing process and the development of land that is part of the many vistas. The Preservation Plan's discussion of the six major historic landscape study units includes the scenic roads as part of the character of these areas. The Preservation Plan's approach and recommendations is consistent with the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. See **Scenic Roads** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

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## **EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS**

Bolton already has important planning tools in place to document current conditions within the town; identify issues of concern to town residents; and develop strategies for action. This section of the Reconnaissance Report identifies some of the existing planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program.

### **Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets**

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

According to the MHC, Bolton's inventory documents over 400 resources dating from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the intensive survey was completed by a preservation professional. Many properties are documented on area forms giving a broader context than generally is accomplished in individual resource forms.

In 2001 a survey titled *Community-Wide Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey of Bolton Massachusetts* was completed, an undertaking that should be commended and has not been done in many communities in the region. In this document the archaeology of the region was discussed, as well as the kind of sites that are likely to be found in Bolton. Over 100 known sites – ranging from Native American encampments to 19<sup>th</sup> century mill sites – were identified and 49 were visited by the archaeological consultants who wrote the report. Many of the historic sites had some documentation completed on forms identifying architectural resources; however archaeological site forms had not been done on most. These are in addition to the approximately 400 resources noted above in the open files of the MHC. Archaeological site forms and sensitivity maps are not available to the public for the protection of such sites.

### **State and National Registers of Historic Places**

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Bolton's National Register (NR) program began with its 1997 nomination for the Bolton Center Historic District which accounted for over 100 properties. In 2002 the Whitcomb Inn and Farm on Old Sugar Road was listed individually. All National Register listings are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

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Also listed in the State Register are those properties protected by a preservation restriction, drawn up in accordance with MGL Chapter 184, Sections 31-33. A preservation restriction (PR) runs with the deed and is one of the strongest preservation strategies available. All properties that have preservation restrictions filed under the state statute are automatically listed in the State Register. In Bolton two properties are protected by PRs: the Bolton Town House, which also is listed in the NR as part of the above mentioned district; and the Moses Wilder House at 185 Main Street for which there is a PR but no NR listing.

### **Planning Documents and Tools**

In 1998 the Bolton Historical Commission completed the *Preservation Plan for the Town of Bolton*. This plan was drawn up in concert with the Open Space and Recreation Plan of that year and discussed an “Historic Landscapes Preservation Strategy” of looking at the town in six segments each having multiple resources that are interrelated. The philosophy discussed in the Preservation Plan is similar to this Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. An action plan was included with recommendations for documentation, regulation, acquisition and public education and advocacy. Once again Bolton should be commended for this broad approach to preservation.

In 2005 Bolton adopted the *Bolton Open Space and Recreation Plan*, an update of the 1998 Open Space Plan. A revised draft of the *Master Plan – 2006* was completed in May and is now under review. The chapter on “Natural and Historic Resources” recommends creation of local historic districts, nomination of properties to the National Register, protection of the water sources at Bolton Flats and maintenance of scenic road. The chapter on “Land Use” recommends a mixed use village overlay district bylaw, design review committee, transfer of development rights, strengthening of site plan review and improvement of the Farmland and Open Space Planned Residential Development Bylaw.

Preservation strategies already adopted by Bolton include a Scenic Roads Bylaw with 42 roads designated and the Demolition Delay Bylaw. Buildings that are 75 or more years old are subject to review if there is an application for demolition and the demolition can be delayed for up to six months.

Bolton has a Farmland and Open Space Planned Residential Development Bylaw which requires a minimum of 33% of the land to be preserved as farm land or open space when developing a property under this bylaw.

About 700 acres of Bolton are included in the Central Nashua River Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). It is located in the northwest part of town and comprises the Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area in part. ACECs are places in Massachusetts that receive special recognition because of the quality, uniqueness and significance of their natural and cultural resources. These areas are identified and nominated at the community level and are reviewed and designated by the state’s Secretary of Environmental Affairs. DCR administers the ACEC Program on behalf of the Secretary and closely

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coordinates with other state agency programs in implementing the goals of ACEC designation. Within ACECs, projects with state agency actions, permits, or funding require closer scrutiny through the MEPA environmental review process to avoid, minimize, and mitigate damage to the environment. Local and regional stewardship of ACEC resources is achieved through the shared efforts of citizens and public and private partners and groups who work together. For more information, see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/index.htm>.

## **GENERAL PRESERVATION PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Recommendations pertaining to priority heritage landscapes can be found beginning on page 3. This section of the Reconnaissance Report offers more general recommendations relevant to preserving the character of the community that would be applicable to a wide range of community resources.

Bolton's residents place high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its varied natural features and land use patterns that made use of the fertile land. The town has already taken measures to document and evaluate its most significant buildings as well as many of the heritage landscapes such as farm complexes, old mill sites and fair grounds. It is now looking beyond the traditional types of historic resources to the landscapes, rural roads, rural neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most municipalities, Bolton is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its remaining farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

Preservation planning is a three-step process: **identification, evaluation and protection**. Four useful documents to consult before beginning to implement preservation strategies are:

- Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Reading the Land*
- Freedom's Way Heritage Association, *Feasibility Study*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Survey Manual*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*

Recommendations that apply to a broad range of resources are discussed below. These recommendations are listed in the order in which they are most logically addressed when applying the three-step preservation planning process as described above. Thus the goal will be to (1) identify, (2) evaluate, (3) protect.

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## **Inventory of Heritage Landscapes**

The goals and methodology of Bolton's 1997 historic resource inventory project were similar to those of the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program and in some cases have addressed the resources in a similar fashion. Many resources will appear on both lists. 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. The resources discussed in this Reconnaissance Report that have not been documented should be included in the next inventory project. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, 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 and pre-historic resources including archaeological sites, landscape features and industrial resources.

## **National Register Program**

Survey work will require an evaluation as to whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluation, Bolton should expand its National Register program.

- Develop a National Register listing plan, taking into consideration a property's integrity and vulnerability. Properties that are in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.
- Consider potential district National Register nominations for East Bolton, The Pan, Old Bay Road farms and other areas.

## **Village and Rural Neighborhood Character**

Nearly all preservation strategies address village and neighborhood character in some manner. As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. Two of three traditional reservation tools that may be applicable to Bolton's historic areas are local historic district designation (M.G.L. Chapter 40C) and neighborhood architectural conservation



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district designation. The third is a demolition delay bylaw which already has been adopted by Bolton's Town Meeting.

- A **demolition delay** bylaw, as the town knows, provides a time period in which the town can consider alternatives to demolition. The Bolton Historical Commission should consider extending the delay period from six months to one year which will require a Town Meeting vote to amend the existing bylaw. Towns that have taken this step have found that the longer delay is more effective.
- **Local historic districts**, adopted through a local initiative, recognize 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 the Town Meeting and administered by a district commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The MHC staff can assist the Bolton Historical Commission in developing the necessary study report to determine appropriate local historic district designation.
- **Neighborhood architectural conservation districts** also are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. They are less restrictive than local historic districts but still embrace neighborhood character. Neighborhood architectural conservation district designation is appropriate for residential neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed. The Bolton Historical Commission should work with MHC staff to determine how a neighborhood architectural conservation district can help to preserve Bolton's village areas at The Pan for example.

### **Agricultural Landscapes**

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities, particularly in Bolton where farms are integral to the community's character as well as its economy. It is important to know what the features of these agricultural landscapes are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these farms. Some preservation tools are available that can assist communities in preserving the actual farming activities. Bolton recently assembled the Agricultural Steering Committee which is drafting articles to establish Bolton's Agricultural Commission and a right-to-farm bylaw for a Special Town Meeting.

- Document additional farms using MHC Area Forms. Some farms have already been documented on B-Forms which focus on the main house but a more comprehensive approach is needed to document the full ranges of features that characterize many of Bolton's farms.
- Establish an agricultural commission to advocate for farming.

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- Adopt a right-to-farm bylaw which allows farmers to carry on farming activities that may be considered a nuisance to neighbors.
  - Develop partnerships to raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist a farmer in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the owner would be required to donate a preservation restriction (PR).
  - Continue public-private partnerships to preserve farm land through purchase or conservation restrictions (CRs) or agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs).

### **Scenic Roads**

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Bolton residents and visitors alike and were listed as a critical issue. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Bolton already has adopted the Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) and designated 42 roads for which there must be review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads – the stone walls, views across open fields – is not within the public right-of-way. The preservation and protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Bolton including the character defining features that should be retained.
- Amend the Scenic Roads Bylaw by adding design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls. Add other design criteria such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.
- Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws also could be written to apply to the numbered routes, which are not protected under the Scenic Roads Bylaw.
- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions (which sometime impact cow passes), which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the community may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by Massachusetts Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads, for example requiring a public hearing if any additional pavement is to be added to a town

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road during reconstruction or repair. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted at Town Meeting through a bylaw. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths, posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

### **Funding of Preservation Projects**

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

- **Survey and Planning Grants**, administered by the MHC, support survey, National Register and preservation planning work.
- The **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)**, administered by the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- The **Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLPGP)**, administered by DCR, funds planning, rehabilitation, education and stewardship projects focused on historic landscapes, including cemeteries.

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

Towns that have adopted the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects; however Bolton first would have to adopt the Act. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are currently benefiting across the Commonwealth make the CPA worthy of consideration. Bolton projects eligible for CPA funding would include MHC inventory, National Register nominations, cemetery preservation, open space acquisition and preservation and restoration of public buildings and landscapes. In addition a preservation restriction program could be established using CPA funds. 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 .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 as a ballot question proposed at a town 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 town

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believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Additional information about the CPA can be found at [www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org).

## **CONCLUSION**

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The Bolton Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Bolton and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. Bolton will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed above. One approach that might help Bolton begin the process is to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in *Reading the Land*.

Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms. The documentation in turn can be used in publicity efforts to build consensus and gather public support for their preservation. Implementation of recommendations will require a concerted effort of and partnerships among municipal boards and agencies, local non-profit organizations, and state agencies and commissions.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to the municipal land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Bolton in preserving important features of the community's character. The recommended tasks will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Bolton's Historical Commission, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Steering Committee and Bolton Conservation Trust. It also is advisable to present this information to the Board of Selectmen, which was the applicant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on behalf of the town. Finally distribution of the report to the Historical Society, neighborhood associations, and any other preservation minded organizations will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Bolton's heritage landscapes.

## APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification Meeting held in Bolton on February 15, 2006 and the follow-up fieldwork on April 5, 2006. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the names and locations of resources are in the first; notes about resources are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

ACEC = Area of Critical Environmental Concern  
BCT = Bolton Conservation Trust  
LHD = Local Historic District  
PR = Preservation Restriction  
+ = Part of a Priority Landscape

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction  
CR = Conservation Restriction  
NR = National Register  
\* = Priority Landscape

Agriculture	
<b><i>Ben Wood Farm</i></b> 186 Long Hill Rd.	1874 house replacing older house that burned. Connected to Lord's Orchard.
<b><i>Bolton Fairgrounds</i></b> Off Main St.	The Bolton Fair leased land on which to hold the annual fair throughout the 20 <sup>th</sup> century until 2004. The sheep field (town-owned land) was the location of all of the sheep related fair events and probably was part of the original Sawyer homestead area and tied to the mowed area. The horse ring was east of and well below (in elevation) the sheep field due to excavation of gravel for the construction of Route I-495.
<b><i>Bolton Orchards +</i></b> 76 Wilder Road	The former Reed farm where the Bolton Fruit Company established orchards which failed and then bought by J.A. Davis & Sons of Sterling, hence Bolton Orchards. (MHC Area Form H) One of three large orchards. The early 19 <sup>th</sup> century Reed Farmhouse and ca. 1900 Wyman farm cottage are surrounded by orchards and fields where vegetables are grown. Part of Wilder Road Area Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Bolton Spring Farm</i></b> 115, 159 Main St.	Two adjoining farms purchased in 1937 by Howard Stephenson are the foundation of Bolton Spring Farm orchards (MHC <u>Area Form C</u> ). In Bolton's East End. One of three large orchards. Includes 1937 Howard Stephenson House.
<b><i>Houghton House - Colby Property</i></b> 159 Golden Run Rd	Originally part of the large holdings of the Houghton family for 250 years, this is the oldest Houghton House extant, built in ca. 1722 in the Georgian style. Known as the Colby property for Warren Colby who owned a 100-acre farm here from the mid 20 <sup>th</sup> century until the 1980s. Colby was a founder of the Bolton Conservation Trust in the 1970s. Of the former 100+ acre farm the property now includes the house, outbuildings and 61.5 acres. In 1992 the farm was subdivided: the remaining property has 61.5 acres consisting of a 12-acre house lot and 49.6 acres under agricultural use. Setting includes open meadows and woods on both sides of the road.
<b><i>Cranberry Bog</i></b> Burnham Rd.	Remnants west of Sawyer's mill site in East Bolton. Used to be flooded for skating. Most of the bog was lost to construction of Rt. 495; however a small part remains and is in conservation now.
<b><i>Crispen Farm</i></b> 310 Green Rd.	Atherton-Jewett House, a ca. 1770 Federal house, New England barn and sheds and about 20 acres of orchards and pasture land. Reduced from 60+ acres in early 1900s to 42 acres in mid 20 <sup>th</sup> century.

<b><i>Fry Farm</i></b> 385 Berlin Road	Poultry Farm in Fryville. Center chimney Georgian mid 18 <sup>th</sup> century John Fry House. The Frys were Quakers.
<b><i>Houghton Property</i></b> 116 Bare Hill Rd.	A ca. 1800 center chimney dwelling with modern attached barn (1998) on 27+ acres. The house is attributed to F. Houghton.
<b><i>James Keyes Farm</i></b> 258 Hudson Road	Ca. 1728 Georgian farmhouse that was added to over 200 years and stuccoed in the early 20 <sup>th</sup> century. Presently being restored. Pre-1850 English barn, hay barn and tractor shed and some meadow, but most of 50 acre farm no longer part of property.
<b><i>Lord Orchards</i></b> Annie Moore Rd.	Adjacent to Ben Wood's Farm.
<b><i>Materosian Property + Main Street</i></b>	Between Wilder Farm and Forbush Road. Part of the Wilder Road Area Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Moore-Newton House +</i></b> 299 South Bolton Rd.	Formerly owned by a horticulturalist. The Moore-Newton House is an early 19 <sup>th</sup> century Greek Revival Cape. Mid 20 <sup>th</sup> century owner William and Dorothea Cary had a nursery business, Bolton Nursery, and established gardens and woodland trails here. Locally known as the Suzy Becker House. Part of Century Mills Area Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Nashoba Valley Winery</i></b> 92 Wataquadoc Rd.	APR. Formerly known as Valley View Farm and Upland Farm, consists of ca. 1929 Clemens House (Arts & Crafts), a barn/garage and barn/shed surrounded by about 40 acres of orchards.
<b><i>Prospect Farm</i></b> 22-58 W. Berlin Rd.	Also known as Taylor Farm and Philbin Farm East slope of Wattaquodock Hill. Includes the ca. 1800 Pollard House, the S.C. Pollard House of ca. 1805/1847, and Capt. Curtis Pollard barns and outbuildings. Pollard was farmer and wheelwright. Congressman Philip Philbin, who had dairy farm here, owned property from 1942-1971
<b><i>Samuel Blood Farm +</i></b> 579 Main St.	Part of Bolton Center NR District. The ca. 1793 Federal/Colonial Revival house, 19 <sup>th</sup> /early 20 <sup>th</sup> century barn, early 20 <sup>th</sup> century stable, wagonhouse, poultry house and small cottage remain on 18 acres now owned by Delta Equity Services Corporation which has revitalized property and uses buildings. Part of Bolton Center Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Schartner Farm</i></b> 211 W. Berlin Road	APR. 95.2 acres comprising two parcels in Randall Hill area of town. Moore-Sawyer-Walcott Farm from 18 <sup>th</sup> to 20 <sup>th</sup> century with an 18 <sup>th</sup> century house, a mid to late 19 <sup>th</sup> century barn, 20 <sup>th</sup> century silo, shed/greenhouse and the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century Schartner Farmstand make up this farm landscape.
<b><i>Schultz Farm</i></b> 49 Sawyer Rd.	Haynes-Wheeler-Schultz farm is now owned by the International Golf Club which is reported by the Bolton Historical Commission to be placing a preservation restriction on the ca. 1790 house. (The MHC should be contacted about this process in order for it to have the protections of Chapter 184, Sections 31-33 of M.G.L.) The property retains farm setting with fields, mill pond and stone dam.
<b><i>Smith Property +</i></b> 197 Century Mill Rd	The property of approximately 40 acres has at its core the Captain Amory Pollard House built in ca. 1811 in the Federal Style. Pollard operated the old Sawyer's mills here from the 1790s to 1844. Property is a horse farm with several outbuildings, pastures and paddocks. Part of the Century Mills Area Priority Heritage Landscape.

<b><i>Taggart Property</i></b> Forbush Mill Rd.	This property, a wooded plateau with a large kettle hole, comprises 37 acres of backland east of Forbush Mill Road. An abutting landlocked property is state-owned and has a beautiful pond, as well as a large strip of town land with much frontage. A section of the Bolton-Lancaster railroad bed is located on the Taggart property. This property is vulnerable to development.
<b><i>Toth Farm</i></b> 218 Sugar Rd.	The J.P. Houghton Jr. House, a late 18 <sup>th</sup> century Federal house, is the center piece of this farm. During the 1940s Frederick Burnham purchased this farm just before selling the Wilder Mansion which he had owned and where he had run a dairy.
<b><i>Townshend Farm +</i></b> 202 Wattaquadock Hill Rd.	Morgan horse farm with barn, trails important to overall community character. Morgan horses have been raised here since 1958. Retains its historic Georgian ca. 1740/1805 house known as the Wheeler-Holman House, the ca. 1862 Howe Farm Managers House (Greek Revival) and 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> century barns and outbuildings. Described in MHC Area Form L as the old Wheeler/Holman/Howe/Cunningham Farm.
<b><i>Wetherbee Farm</i></b>	At Fiddler's Green.
<b><i>Wheeler Farm</i></b> 47 Wheeler Rd.	Abel and Thomas Wheeler House of ca. 1800-1810. Abel Wheeler was a Quaker. Center chimney farmhouse.
<b><i>Whitcomb Inn – Phillips Property</i></b> 43 Old Sugar Rd.	NR property including David Whitcomb's Inn and New England barn. The inn is the oldest tavern in Bolton dating to ca. 1700. Includes contiguous conservation land that was part of the historic property.
<b><i>Wilson Farm +</i></b> 96 Long Hill Rd	Also known as Long Hill Farm and included both sides of road with sheep fields that run down to West's Pond. The ca. 1815 Osborne/Whitcomb House is a brick Federal –Style house made of Bolton bricks. Was a dairy farm converted to poultry farm. There is a kettle hole on the property. Part of the West's Pond Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Windy Hill Farm</i></b> 116 Sawyer Road	APR on 82 acres. This farm is in the Wattaquadock Hill section of town. Houghton-Hastings-Sawyer House, better known as Sawyer Farm. House is pre- 1783 and ca. 1839. Orchards. One of three large orchards growing apples, peaches, pears and vegetables.
<b>Archaeological</b>	
<b><i>Sawyer Mill Sites *</i></b> Main St.	Saw mill on Great Brook in "The Pan" purchased by Benjamin Sawyer in 1791 and grist mill added. The mills were at the overflow of West's Pond which feeds into Great Brook. Part of West's Pond Area Priority Landscape.
<b><i>Still River Area +</i></b>	Prehistoric sites in Bolton Flats.
<b><i>Stone Structures</i></b>	Stone piles at Spectacle Hill and foundations and other structures off Wilder Road associated with Napoleon's cabin, a small hiding place that was offered to Napoleon as a refuge but he never came.
<b>Burial Grounds and Cemeteries</b>	
<b><i>Eastwood Cemetery</i></b> Wilder Rd.	Established in 1876 and designed by Horace Cleveland. Most of the cemetery is in Bolton but owned by Lancaster and often referred to as the Lancaster Cemetery.



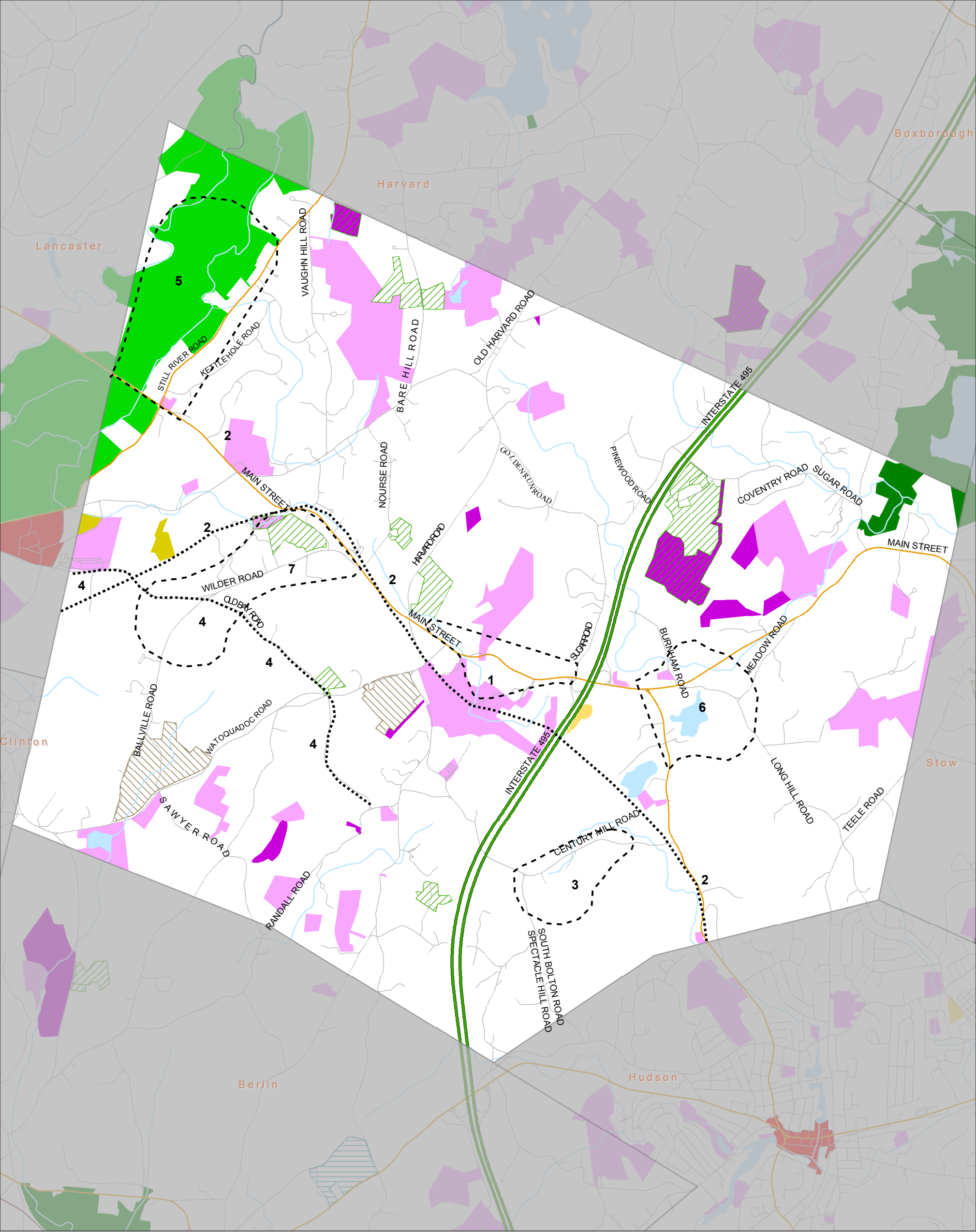
<b><i>Friends Burying Ground</i></b> Berlin Rd.	Second Friends cemetery, established in 1844.
<b><i>Old Fry Burying Ground</i></b> Berlin Rd.	Ca. 1767 Quaker Cemetery in Fryville.
<b><i>Old Settlers' Tomb</i></b> 30 Long Hill Rd.	18 <sup>th</sup> century.
<b><i>Old South Burial Ground</i></b> South Bolton Rd.	Land donated in 1738 by William Sawyer who was the first recorded burial in 1741. Bolton's oldest burying ground.
<b><i>Pan Cemetery</i></b> Main St.	Established in 1822 and first called the East Burying Ground. Slate and marble markers. Problem with large trucks parking in front of wall.
<b><i>Smallpox Cemetery</i></b> Sugar Road	Two burials from 1845, on private property on west side of Rt. 495. The burial sites are surrounded by a granite post and iron rail fence. One grave is the burial site of J. Hatch.
<b><i>West Burying Ground</i></b> Green Rd.	Established in 1822 when town bought land for cemetery at the same time as Pan Cemetery established.
<b>Civic</b>	
<b><i>Bolton Center *</i></b>	Fine views in different directions. Including brook, pond, powder house and landscape to the south and west. Mechanic Street was laid out in the 1700s. An old road or cart path crosses three stone bridges (#1 is NR listed), which branches off of Main Street and runs roughly parallel to Mechanic Street used to return to Main Street. Land to the west was the original mowing sites when Bolton was part of Lancaster. Great Brook passes through here and was straightened. Changing landscape in part due to beavers. Illustration from the 1830s shows the meadows south of Main Street. Also at the center is a remnant of the Old Common, the Town House, the Federated Church, the Powder House and Old Town House Road.
<b><i>Fryville</i></b>	Quaker section of town with residential and agricultural heritage landscapes such as the John Fry House and the Friends Burial Ground.
<b>Industrial</b>	
<b><i>Button Factory</i></b>	Southwest part of town in Fyfehire Conservation Area.
<b><i>Century Mills Area *</i></b>	Active mills up to the 1960s. Hog Swamp, Pollards Mills, Bacon's Mills, site of saw and grist mills here from the 1700s. Man-made pond that may have been called Sawyer's Mill Pond and Dam and kettle holes. Part of Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Dam and Mill</i></b> Nashaway Rd	Top of Nashaway Road with vistas of note. The actual dam and mill are east of Nashaway Road and south of Vaughn Hill Road.

<b><i>Forbush Dam</i></b> Forbush Mill Rd	Pond and Dam on Saw Mill Brook. Dam has long retaining wall of flat field stones.
<b><i>Powder House</i></b> Old Town House Rd.	Behind Town House at 663 Main Street. Built in 1813 it is a brick structure. The bricks came from the Job Howard Brickyard on the Still River.
<b><i>Tanning Pits</i></b> 392 Main St.	At the Baker-Sawyer House where in ca. 1750 Judge Samuel Baker built a sawmill and tanyard at about the same time as the house. In 1765 Baker sold the tanyard to his neighbor, John Pierce, who also was a tanner.
<b><i>Whitcomb Lime Quarry and Kiln</i></b> Main Street	Quarry and kilns at Moses Wilder House established in 1730s and appeared on historic maps from 1790 through 1857. Lime quarry re-opened for short time in 1930s. Town-owned part of Lime Kiln Conservation Trust.
<b>Natural</b>	
<b><i>Esker +</i></b> South Bolton Rd	In Century Mill Area. Part of Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Fyfeshire</i></b>	A 31-acre conservation area of trails, ponds, and restored button mill, dam at junction of Ballville and Wattaquaddock Hill Roads.
<b><i>Geological Formations</i></b>	Kettle holes, eskers, etc. Throughout the town particularly on Wilder Road, Century Mill Area, and West's Pond.
<b><i>Kettle Holes +</i></b>	West's Pond is a kettle hole at Wilson Farm, south of the meadow at Long Hill junction of Kettle Hole Road. Part of West's Pond Area Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b>Open Space /Parks</b>	
<b><i>Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area</i></b> Still River Road	State-owned land along Still River and Nashua River in Lancaster, Harvard and Bolton that is part of the Central Nashua ACEC. Visitor entrance is in Bolton.
<b><i>Fiddler's Green</i></b> Harvard & Green Rds.	Agricultural area.
<b><i>Horton Property</i></b>	Land-locked, wooded. Near Pan Cemetery.
<b><i>Persons Park</i></b>	Town-owned beach, cottage, and 5.5 acres conservation land on the east shore of Little Pond, off Hudson Road.
<b><i>Pond Park +</i></b> Main St.	It is an early 20 <sup>th</sup> century designed park incorporating an old mill site, dam, and pond. Served as a model for its landscape design. Also part of a mill system. Part of Bolton Center Priority Heritage Landscape.

<b>Other</b>	
<b><i>View from Goodhue Property</i></b>	Now Bethke property. A ca. 1900 property that has scenic views of Wachusett Mountain from Old Bay Road. It is adjacent to Wilder Road from Old Bay Path.
<b><i>Views from Prospect Farm</i></b> West Berlin Rd.	Views of Boston from Prospect Farm on West Berlin Road.
<b>Residential</b>	
<b><i>Moses Wilder House</i></b> 185 Main St.	Ca. 1795 center-chimney house. Includes exact scale replica of stone c. 1810 blacksmith shop which was moved to OSV in 1957. There were two forges; one for wheel repair as this was a stage coach stop; the other for the farrier. Part of area called Lime Kiln and Quarries Conservation Area.
<b><i>West's Pond Area Dwellings *</i></b>	Judge Samuel Baker House (392 Main Street, later owned by Benjamin Sawyer and more commonly known as the Estabrook property) the former Esther Whitcomb homestead (moved to 48 Hudson Road in 1960s by Whitcombs, also known as the Polley-Sawyer-Kimmens-Whitcomb House), John Sawyer House and barn (401 Main Street, now known as the Skinner property) and Long Hill Farm (96 Long Hill Road, also known as Wilson Farm – see below). West's Pond feeds into Great Brook and overflows at Benjamin Sawyer Grist Mill Site.
<b><i>Wilder Mansion</i></b> 101 Wilder Rd.	Ca. 1738 and ca. 1814 Federal twin chimney house with hipped roof. Lafayette stopped here in 1824. A stone arch at rear of property marks the spot where oral tradition states Napoleon Bonaparte was offered refuge if he decided to come, which he did not. Wilder had built a small log house there, which he called Tadmor, meaning “refuge in the wilderness.” He also paid for the building of the Hillside Church at the intersection of Old Bay and Wilder Roads. In the second quarter of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century the property was owned by Frank Burnham who ran a dairy which he called Meadow Fair Farm.
<b>Transportation</b>	
<b><i>Bolton-Lancaster Railroad *</i></b>	Old railroad bed with tunnel under the railroad, stone culvert, bridge abutments, and a livestock pass. The short-lived 1873 Bolton & Lancaster Railroad ran from south Lancaster through Bolton to Hudson on a raised railroad bed that cut through the entire town. That part at Bolton Center is on town-owned land of meadows and fields south of Main Street near Great Brook corridor.
<b><i>Cart Path</i></b> over Great Brook	This path runs south through the Great Brook landscape from a stone culvert on the Bolton Historical Society land at 676 Main Street.
<b><i>Century Mill Road +</i></b>	Particularly the stretch with tree cover and no power lines. There is a gap in the power lines where two companies' services meet providing a stretch with no wires between poles. The road was constructed in 1872 and provided a more direct route between Stow and southeast Bolton. Part of the Century Mill Area Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Golden Run Road</i></b>	In the northern part of town where the Houghtons were farmers from the early 18 <sup>th</sup> century.

<b><i>Mechanic Street Extension</i></b>	A broad dirt road southeast of the Emerson and Florence Sawyer Schools. Lined with trees and stone walls, it was in place by 1875.
<b><i>Old Bay Road *</i></b>	Part of the original Bay Path. Important for vistas, older houses and farms such as Townshend Farm.
<b><i>Old Sugar Road</i></b>	Whitcomb Inn, the oldest inn is located on this road. Also the smallpox cemetery was located on Old Sugar Road until Rt. 495 built – it ended up on the west side of the highway. Likely to be a remnant of Old Town House Road.
<b><i>Old Town House Road</i></b>	Connected north part of town with the meetinghouse and the Town House at the center.
<b><i>Sand Road</i></b>	Off Forbush Mill Road and Main Street. It was a county road which crested at top where present landfill is and went down through area of soccer fields near Eastwood Cemetery.
<b><i>South Bolton Road</i></b>	On way to Spectacle Hill.
<b><i>Spectacle Hill Road</i></b>	Trees, particularly 100 year old pines.
<b><i>Stone Bridges +</i></b>	Three bridges crossing Great Brook near mown area at Bolton Center.
<b><i>Water Trough</i> Main St.</b>	Late 19 <sup>th</sup> century granite. This is the only remaining public watering trough for horses along the Lancaster & Bolton Turnpike. It was saved by Dante Bonazzoli.
<b><i>Wilder Road +</i></b>	A scenic road with important views of farms including historic houses and land.
<b>Waterbodies</b>	
<b><i>Great Brook and Wetlands</i></b>	Meanders west to east through most of the town paralleling Main Street, which crosses it at several points. Wetlands – a large area south of the center village stretching east from Wattaquodock Hill Road nearly to Rte. 495, formerly part of 18 <sup>th</sup> c. William Sawyer farm.
<b><i>Hog Swamp +</i> So. Bolton Rd.</b>	At Century Mill.
<b><i>Little Pond</i></b>	Also known as Keyes Pond perhaps because it is half way between the houses of former Bolton residents Joseph Keyes (ca. 1760 house) and James Keyes (ca. 1728 house). Town Beach here.
<b><i>Nashua River</i></b>	Winds through northwest corner of Bolton. Part of Central Nashua River Valley ACEC.
<b><i>Pond Park Mill Pond +</i></b>	At Pond Park which is part of Bolton Center – a Priority Heritage Landscape.
<b><i>Still River *</i></b>	Bolton Flats. Native American sites (See Archaeology). Master Plan recommends formation of a water resource protection area. Part of Central Nashua River Valley ACEC.

<b><i>West's Pond +</i></b>	Antique houses and farms located on West's Pond including Long Hill (Wilson) Farm, Baker-Sawyer (Estabrook) and Kimmens-Whitcomb houses, Sawyer mills behind the John Sawyer House (Skinner property) on the overflow of the pond. Part of the West's Pond Area Priority Heritage Landscape.
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# BOLTON OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES

## High Priority Heritage Landscapes

- 1. Bolton Center
- 2. Bolton - Lancaster Railroad
- 3. Century Mills Area
- 4. Old Bay Road
- 5. Still River - Bolton Flats
- 6. West Pond Area
- 7. Wilder Road Area

Note: Default Legend, all categories may not appear on the map.

DCR

DCRS/DFG

DFG

Other State

County

Municipal

Federal

Land Trust

Non-Profit

Conservation Restriction

Agricultural Preservation Restriction

CR/APR Combination

Other Legal Interest

State Historic Resources

Interstate

State

Local Road

N

dcrcr  
Massachusetts

00.51

Miles