



NORTH BROOKFIELD RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

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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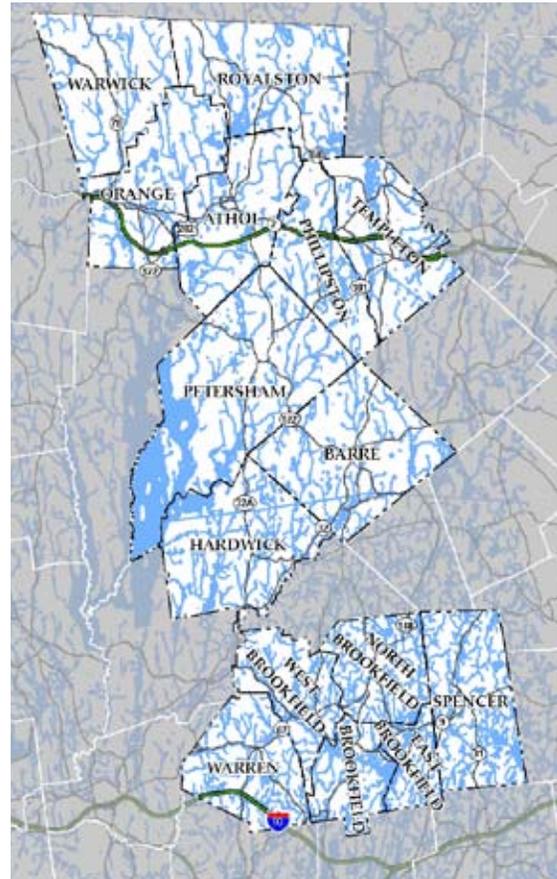
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INTRODUCTION

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

LOCAL HISTORY

Native peoples occupied lands that are now part of North Brookfield on the shores of Lake Lashaway. These sites were small and likely used by groups of native peoples who visited the area seasonally for hunting and fishing. Ipswich petitioners were granted the land on which North Brookfield sits as part of a six-mile land grant in 1660 known as Quaboag Plantation. Originally part of the township



Bates Observatory (built in 1893) and Reservoir, North Brookfield, Massachusetts - was a popular destination for travelers throughout the region.

of Brookfield, established in 1673, the area was enlarged to an eight-mile grant in 1718, at which point it included all or parts of the following towns: all of “the Brookfields,” Western (now Warren), New Braintree, and Ware.

Brookfield struggled economically at first due to continued hostilities with the native peoples of the area including conflicts during King Phillip’s War in 1675 that were centered on Foster’s Hill in West Brookfield. Once the settlers established a permanent presence and hostilities ended, Brookfield quickly became one of the leading agricultural centers of the region. The area that would become North Brookfield had some of

the best agricultural soils in the region and was, for several decades, an area of outlying fields for the Brookfield township. Agriculture would remain a strong component of the local economy through the 19th and early 20th centuries and shaped the early landscape of North Brookfield.

In 1749 residents built a meetinghouse at “Second Parish” that would eventually become the first village center of North Brookfield. A schoolhouse was built in 1759, and in 1773 residents established a five acre common for the grazing of livestock and military training exercises. Oliver Ward came to town in 1810 to begin a footwear manufacturing operation to sell footwear to Southern plantation owners for use by their slaves. Shoe and boot manufacturing would come to dominate the economy of the North Brookfield. In 1812, North Brookfield petitioned to break away from Brookfield due to the inconvenience of travel to community services and the increased economic prospects of the shoe industry.

Because of the rise of the shoe and boot industry, in the 19th century became a pivotal time in North Brookfield's history. This industrial boom brought about a shift in the civic and institutional activities of the community and a new town center developed farther north along Main Street. The population steadily increased during this period as did the development in the new downtown. In 1876 the North Brookfield Railroad opened which connected the town to the Boston & Albany Railroad and made it more accessible to the broader region. Continued industrial growth brought banks, a library, hotels and an elegant Italianate/Second Empire Town House.

By the early 20th century, with the closing of several shoe factories, the economy suffered a slight downturn but was able to revitalize by the second and third decades of the 20th century. New industries, such as the Quaboag Rubber Company, moved into town spurring new economic growth. Farming, however, did not follow the boom of the mid- 20th century and the amount of active farmland in town has decreased dramatically in recent decades. Only a handful of farms remain including the Brookfield Orchards and several small livestock and crop operations. These agricultural landscapes continue to reflect the agrarian heritage of the community and its historic settlement pattern.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

North Brookfield is a vibrant and picturesque community with a thriving downtown and outlying areas rich in natural, cultural and scenic character. 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 North Brookfield'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.

Downtown District

The current downtown district of North Brookfield is the 19th century center of development for the community based on the growth of manufacturing and industry in town. The shoe and boot industry fueled this growth and large factory buildings and associated worker housing and amenities were created. In 1824, the second meetinghouse, now the Congregational Church, was moved to this area from its location approximately a mile farther south on Main Street adjacent to the original town common. With this move, the new town center started to develop and several additional civic and institutional buildings followed including the Firehouse and several churches.

In 1854 the North Brookfield Savings Bank was organized and the Adams Block commercial building was constructed on Main Street. A new town common was designated along Grove Street in the 1860s. Located adjacent to the former Grove Street School, this is now a major open space in the center of town and contains recreational activities such as soccer and baseball fields. In 1864, a new, more formal town house was built to replace the earlier one that burned in 1862. Designed by renowned Architect Elbridge Boyden, the Italianate/Second Empire building was one of the most elegant and ornate town houses of the period and serves as a focal point for the downtown.

For many years the building housed the Municipal offices but has been vacant due to structural concerns. The Town is working toward the restoration of the building and are planning to re-open it for town offices and organizations such as the Historical Society. One of the earliest mixed-use buildings in town, its size and location make it an integral part of the landscape and it could once again become the economic, social and political anchor for the town. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001. Additional mixed-use buildings were built in the latter part of the 19th century including the recently rehabilitated, Duncan Block. Built in 1896, this



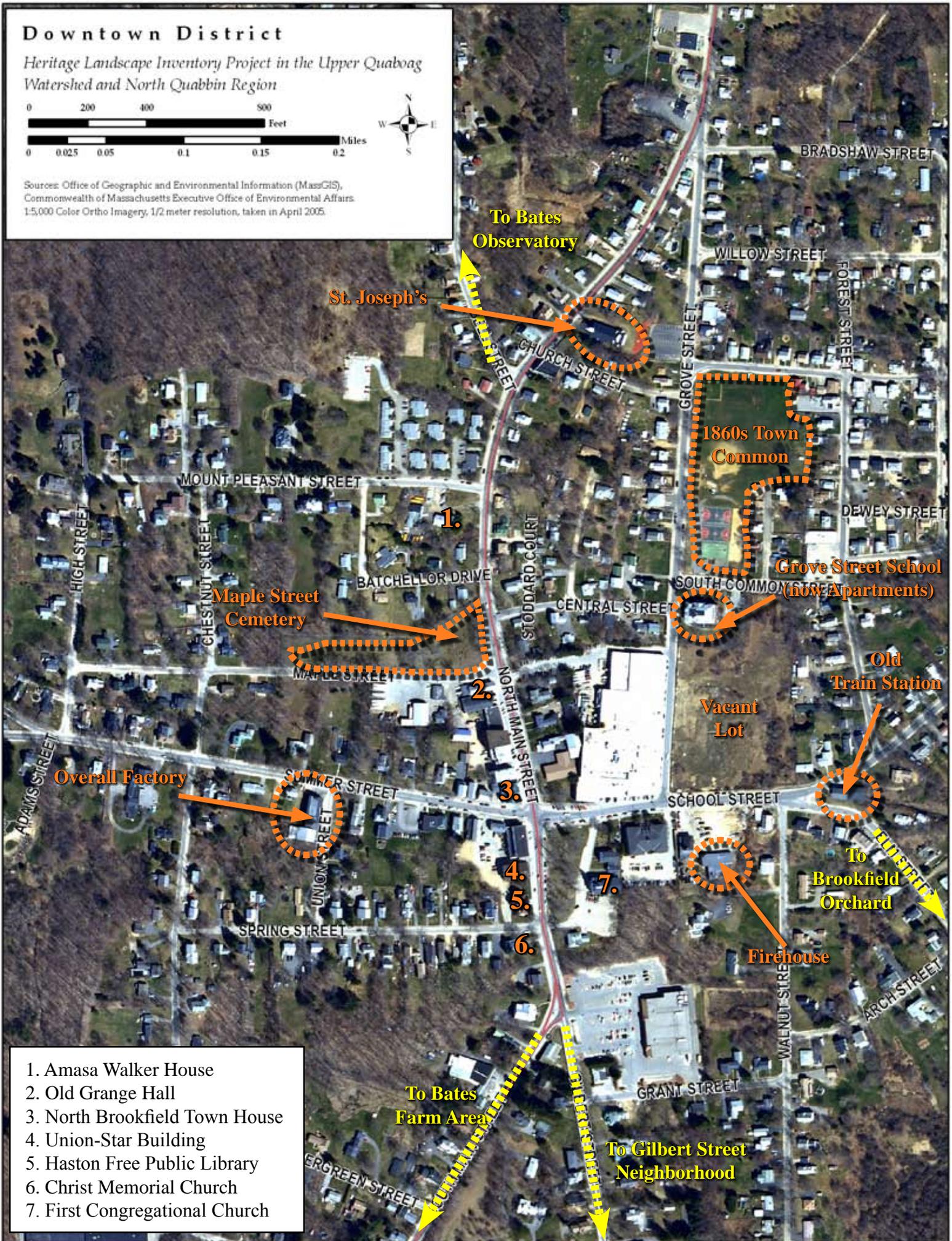
The North Brookfield Town House, circa 1864

Downtown District

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. Amasa Walker House
2. Old Grange Hall
3. North Brookfield Town House
4. Union-Star Building
5. Haston Free Public Library
6. Christ Memorial Church
7. First Congregational Church

building contains retail and commercial space on the first floor and residential apartments on the upper two floors.

Surrounding the downtown district are several early residential neighborhoods that developed with the shoe and boot manufacturing industries. Of these, the Gilbert Street neighborhood is an example of mid-19th century residential development with large, beautiful homes representing several architectural styles.



The recently rehabilitated Duncan Block, built in 1896.

The North Brookfield downtown district represents the prosperity of the 19th century. The urban landscape reflects the industrial heritage and civic pride that characterized that period in New England history. Today, the collection of historic buildings, public space and community character within the district provide the Town with a vibrant, attractive and economically viable center.

Opportunities:

- The downtown district is a thriving community center with a variety of historic and culturally significant buildings and landscapes
- St. Joseph's, The Town House, Railroad Station and several historic homes in the area are listed with the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
- The restoration of the Town House will revitalize the streetscape and character of the downtown

Issues:

- There are several 20th century buildings that have been integrated into the streetscape over time that are not compatible with the historic 19th century character of the district
- The vacant lot east of School and Grove Streets is a potential development site in the downtown area. New uses for this site should be carefully considered

Recommendations:

1. Enact Village Center Zoning that would allow for a small-scale, mixed-use and pedestrian friendly downtown district (see page 28 for more about this zoning).
2. Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw that would prevent historic buildings from being torn down without appropriate time to explore alternatives (see page 27 for more about this bylaw).
3. Form a Downtown Revitalization Committee to explore potential uses for the vacant lot east of the School and Grove Street intersection, that will fit in the Village Center Zone.
4. Consider listing the downtown area on the National Register as an historic district with significance as a 19th century settlement. Listing would make properties owned by the town and non-profits eligible to apply for Massachusetts Preservation Protection Funds (MPPF) grants from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and would make income producing properties eligible to receive investment tax credits.
5. If the area qualifies for listing with the NRHP, the town should form a Local Historic District (LHD) Study Committee to explore the feasibility of the establishment of the Downtown District as an LHD through a local historic district ordinance (see page 27 for more about LHDs)

Bates Street Farm Area

The Bates Street Farm Area is significant not only for its agricultural heritage but as the location of several features of the early settlement of the community. The original town common and the location of the first meetinghouse are on South Main Street near the intersection with Bates Street. This land area is still owned by the Town and contains an historical marker at the site of the meetinghouse. The Lower Village Pound, built in 1740, is located farther south on Bates Street as well as a privately owned barn dating from the 18th century. The barn still contains a cobblers bench from the same period, when its owner ran a shoe business here.



What remains of the original Town Common in North Brookfield

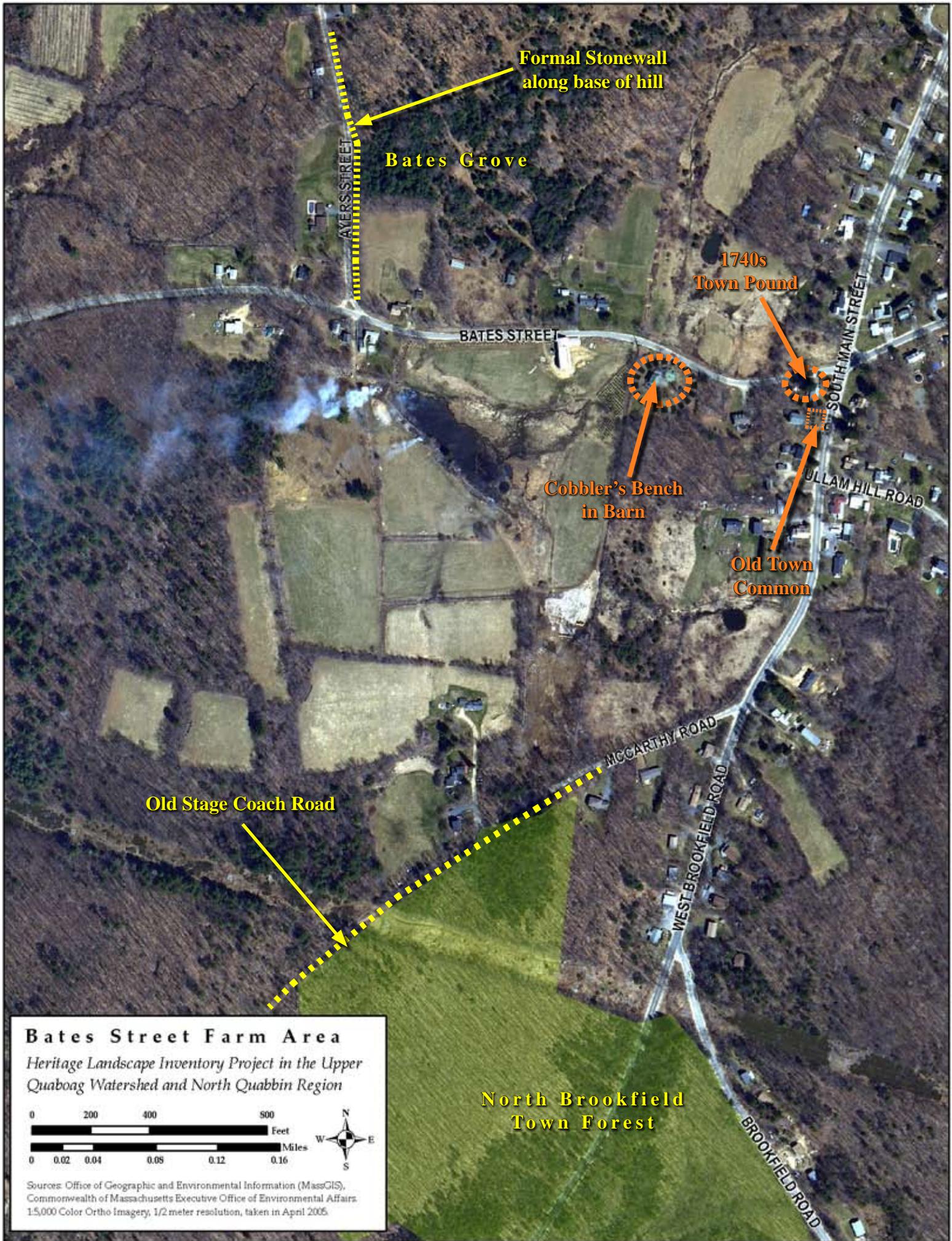
The Bates Farm originally extended over several acres on both sides of Bates Street and is shown on 1830s maps of the town. Elijah Bates first settled in this area around 1820 on approximately 30 acres and his son, Theodore C. Bates, increased the holdings over time to approximately 95 acres. Several acres of Chapter 61A agricultural fields remain open to the south and west of



Remnant stonewall along one of the field edges of the Bates Farm - now along Bates Road

the road and many agrarian features such as stone walls, hedgerows and an old farm pond also remain. There are also several outbuildings that may remain from the original Bates Farm. On Bates Street across from the intersection with Ayers Street, is a residential building that was once the Ayers Tavern.

On Ayers Street, running north from Bates Street on the eastern side, is a long section of formal stone wall that may have been the boundary line for the Bates Farm or other private property. This wall is in good condition and is a significant historic landscape feature. To the east of the wall is an area known as the Bates Grove that was identified as an important natural landscape area in North Brookfield. Originally associated with Bates Farm, this pine grove extends over several acres and is privately-owned. To the west from Ayers Street are stunning views down the valley including what some have described as the “best sunsets in Town”.



Formal Stonewall
along base of hill

Bates Grove

1740s
Town Pound

Cobbler's Bench
in Barn

Old Town
Common

Old Stage Coach Road

Bates Street Farm Area

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.

North Brookfield
Town Forest

Opportunities:

- The original town common, meetinghouse site and town pound are all located within close proximity to each other and provide an excellent interpretive opportunity
- The open agricultural land along Bates Street reflects the long-term agrarian heritage of the community. A property on Bates Street and the property that was Ayers Tavern are both in the Chapter 61A Program.
- The North Brookfield Town Forest is located just south of the Bates Street farmland and south along West Brookfield Road; trail and linkage connections can be made

Issues:

- Other than the town common and lower town pound, all of the parcels and resources are privately owned as are the surrounding parcels other than the Town Forest

Recommendations:

1. Pursue an interpretive program for the first settlement area of the community and include the original town common and town pound as primary resources. These could be included in a brochure similar to the “Walk Through History” for the downtown area.
2. Additional research should be completed to understand the history of the Bates Farm and the relationship between the variety of resources including the Bates Grove, formal stone wall and existing buildings and farmland. The North Brookfield Historical Commission should also familiarize themselves with the DCR technical bulletin [*Terra Firma #5: Stones that Speak: Forgotten Features of the Landscape*](#)
3. The town should consider the creation of a Scenic Overlay District along Bates and Ayers Streets.
4. The town should adopt a Scenic Roads Bylaw and designate Bates and Ayers Streets as scenic roads in order to preserve their rural and/or historic character.

Coys Brook Corridor

The Coys Brook runs north to south through the southwest section of North Brookfield. The brook corridor is filled with significant natural and cultural resources and a variety of heritage landscape types. The entire corridor was identified in the local meeting as a priority landscape with significant natural resources with pockets of historic and cultural features off of Tucker Road and Cider Mill Road as well. The corridor has also been identified as a scenic area in the 2007 Master Plan. Coy Brook maintains a high water quality level, offering a habitat for the rare Wood Turtle, Marsh Hawk and American Bittern. The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife stock it annually with Brook Trout.

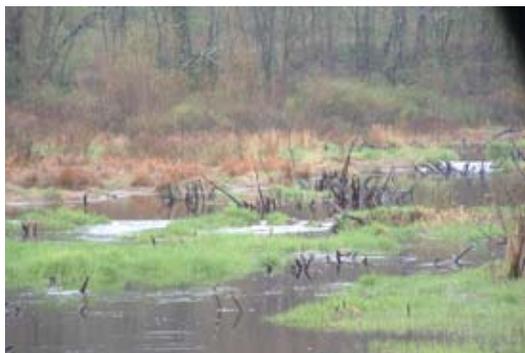


Coys Brook at its crossing under Cider Mill Road, with a relic sluiceway to the right side of the photograph



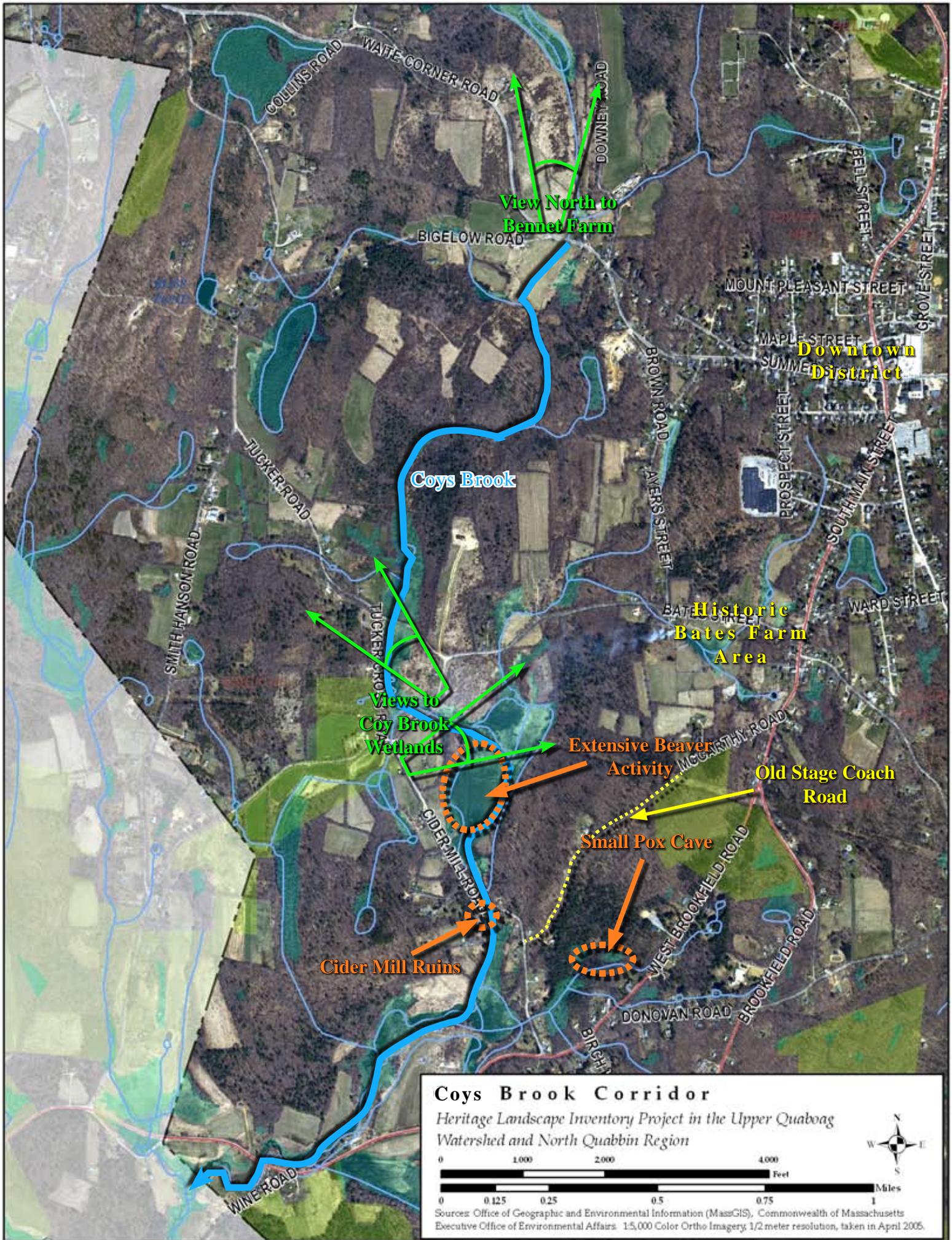
Small Pox Cave just south of the engraving, "I have small pox - April 12, 1782."

On Coys Brook at the crossing of Cider Mill Road is the historic site of the North Brookfield Cider Mills. No architectural ruins remain but there are significant earthen structures that are most likely associated with the mill and its operation along the brook during the 19th century. Across Cider Mill Road and east into the woods approximately 200 yards is the location of the Small Pox Caves. The Old Stage Coach Road also extends through this area towards McCarthy Road off of South Main Street. Remnants of this historic feature are still visible.



Wetland area along the Coys Brook Corridor

There are several local legends regarding the smallpox cave but it is purported to be the place where at least one person stayed to recover from the disease. Originally these were actual caves but it is now only a rock outcropping. Engraved on the stones that were presumably the back of the cave, are the words "I have small pox- April 12, 1782". This resource is located on private property and access is limited to those who live nearby or are aware of the exact location.



Coys Brook Corridor

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



Source: 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.



Open fields along the Coys Brook Corridor

The Coys Brook corridor provides excellent soils and land for farming and a large agricultural area extends from Tucker Road northeast to Bigelow and Downey Roads. Within this area is the scenic Bennett's Farm that was identified by the community as an agricultural heritage landscape. The entire agricultural component of the Coys Brook valley is critical to the environmental health of the brook as well as its scenic and natural value. The rolling hills, open fields, forests and wetlands of the valley as well as the cultural features create a unique set of resources for the community.

Opportunities:

- The Coys Brook corridor is rich in cultural, natural and scenic resources
- Much of the land adjacent to the Brook corridor remains undeveloped and includes some very beautiful scenery and natural areas



Coys Brook spilling over a stonewall near its source along Downey Road

Issues:

- New development is encroaching on the wetlands and marshland buffer of the Coys Brook
- A majority of the land in this area is in private ownership and under no permanent form of protection; several parcels are in Chapter 61 but that only provides a temporary protection against development

Recommendations:

1. Designate the Coys Brook area as an Agricultural Preservation Overlay Zone to promote the practice of farming and retain the agricultural character of the area (see page 26 for more about this zoning). This was identified as a long-term land use objective in the 2007 Master Plan (see p. 152 of that document).
2. Adopt an Open Space Residential Development Bylaw to proactively plan for the preservation of open space and the concentration of new development on smaller areas and preserve the remaining land as open space (see page 27 for more about this bylaw).
3. Work with the local land trusts (Opacum Land Trust, East Quabbin Land Trust and Trustees of Reservations, among others) to identify land protection opportunities, especially related to lands in Chapter 61 (see page 26 “Chapter 61 Policy”).
4. Develop interpretive materials regarding the 19th century mill activity along the Coys Brook that was a key component of the Town’s early industrial heritage.

Bates Observatory

In 1893, Theodore Bates aided the Town with the development of a comprehensive water supply system for the community. As a member of the State Board of Health, Mr. Bates was very civically conscious regarding a healthy public water supply and was instrumental in the creation of one for North Brookfield. Bell Hill, just north of the town center with an elevation of over 1,100 feet above sea level, became the location for the new reservoir and the observatory that would bear the Bates name.



The Bates Observatory on Bell Hill, built in 1893.

Originally the gatehouse for the reservoir, the Bates Observatory is approximately 25 feet high in two stories and has almost 360-degree views of the surrounding countryside. Local lore suggests that one could see the masts of ships in Boston Harbor on a clear day. The Observatory is constructed of brick with windows on both the first and second floors and the original tin roof. A balcony originally encircled the second floor but has been removed. The windows have been boarded over and painted with a series of murals.

Still owned by the Town of North Brookfield, the structure has fallen into disrepair and the reservoir has been abandoned in lieu of a large circular water storage tank to the east. The views have been obstructed by trees in several areas but remain open to the south and southwest. The former reservoir area has also remained open and is a mowed grass surface. Access to the Observatory is via Bell Road and the surrounding land uses include open fields, forested areas and single-family residential development. The Town has been pursuing the funds to restore the building and recently acquired a significant amount willed to the project by a community member. The Observatory was listed as a Scenic and Unique Environment in the 2007 Master Plan.

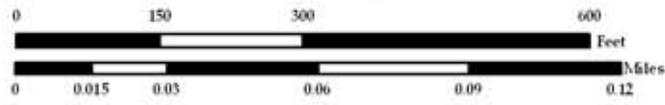
Opportunities:

- Located near the center of town, the Observatory provides a unique historic and cultural resource for the community
- Its location on the top of Bell Hill provides the potential for some of the most stunning, panoramic views in the region
- The Observatory is town-owned and is located on approximately 28 acres of permanently protected land; there is great potential as a regional destination



Bates Observatory

Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog 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 structure is in need of restoration and there is currently not sufficient funding for this endeavor
- Although located on permanently protected land, there is currently no level of protection on the building itself

Recommendations:

1. Nominate the Observatory to the National Register of Historic Places - this would provide opportunities for rehabilitation grant funds from the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
2. Actively pursue funds for rehabilitation from a variety of private and public organizations and individuals including the MPPF administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission.
3. Pass the Community Preservation Act to raise funds for observatory rehabilitation, as well as other historic preservation, open space preservation and affordable housing projects throughout North Brookfield.
4. The town should study the feasibility of the site and building as a cultural destination and scenic attraction. Several key views could be restored and a picnic/passive recreation area could be developed in the former reservoir area.

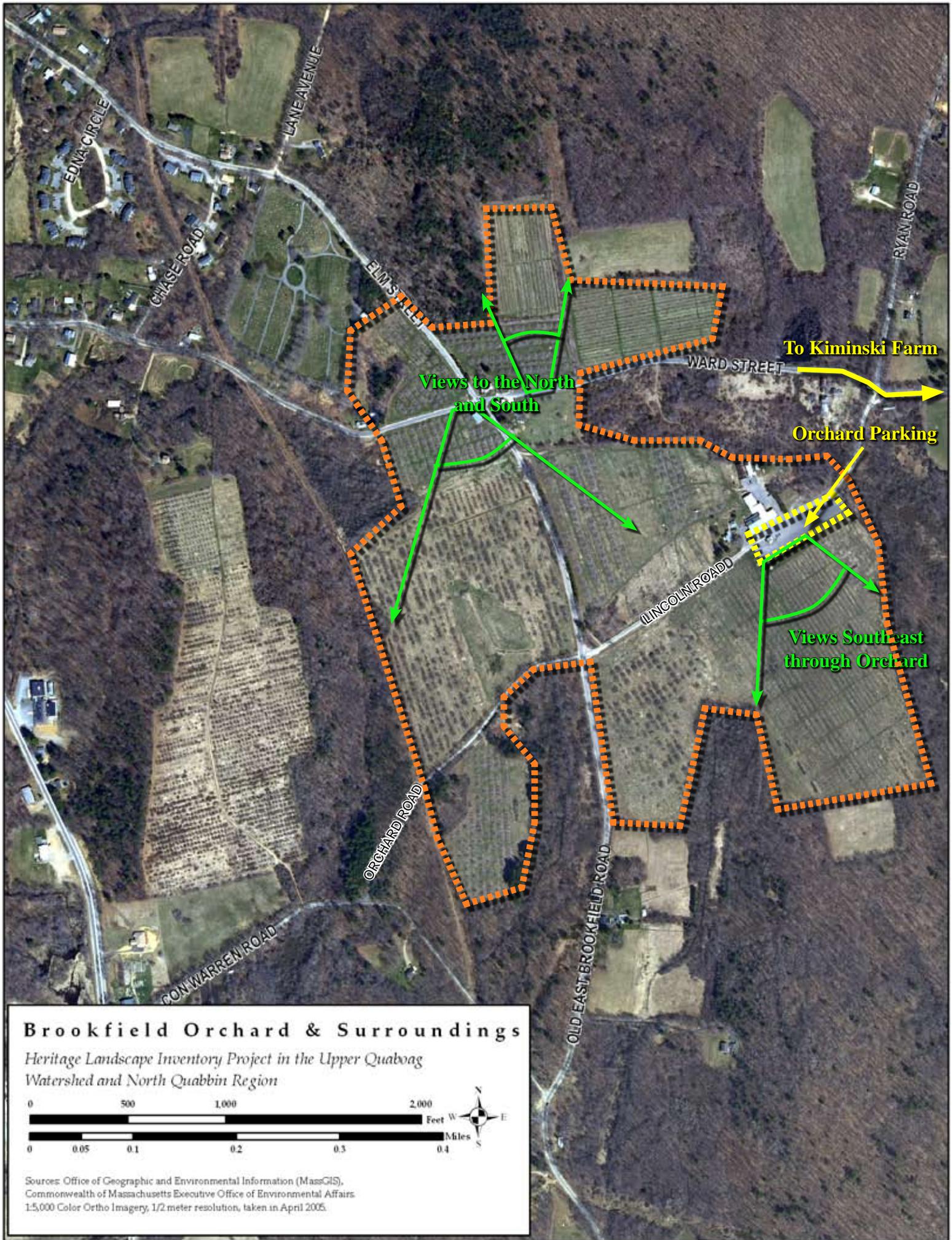


Brookfield Orchards in North Brookfield - over 240 acres of orchards and open land.

Brookfield Orchard & Surroundings

Located on Lincoln Road near the center of town, Brookfield Orchards is a stunning scenic and agricultural landscape that provides a valuable resource for the community. In operation by the same family since the 1920s, the over 240 acres of orchards and open land are an important component of the agrarian heritage of North Brookfield and the largest remaining agricultural operation in town. Brookfield Orchards currently consists of a retail shop, snack bar, family activities and many acres of apple orchards. From the parking and shop area there are beautiful views to the southeast through the rows of trees. The land slopes from here down to the shores of Lake Lashaway.

Brookfield Orchards lands run along both sides of Lincoln and Orchard roads and contain large tracts of forested land as well as open, cultivated land. Extending south and east of the property are additional large undeveloped parcels of forested land in other private ownership. The Orchard agricultural land is currently under Chapter 61A providing it with temporary protection from development through a property tax break. If removed from this program for a change in use or ownership, the taxes would need to be reimbursed in full and the Town has the right-of-first-refusal on purchase of the property. The Orchard is listed in the 2007 Master Plan as a Scenic and Unique Environment and tourist attraction.



Brookfield Orchard & Surroundings

*Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog
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.

Opportunities:

- The Orchard is located approximately ½ mile from a large protected natural resource area along the Five Mile River off of Ashley Road.
- As the largest, remaining agricultural land in town, this is a significant part of the cultural history of the community.
- The Orchard lands provide a significant connection between the Five Mile River Access land and the 560 acres of APR land on the Brookfield border (this land is part of the Elm Hill historic area in Brookfield).

Issues:

- With its location near the center of town and frontage along four different roadways, this land is ripe for development.
- The family has already sold a portion of the property .

Recommendations:

1. The Town should plan now how it might be able to exercise its Chapter 61A right-of-first-refusal should the property owners consider a change in use or ownership (see page 26 on “Chapter 61 Policy”).
2. If not planning to sell, the property owners should pursue an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) on the property in order to permanently protect it from development (see page 25 for more about APR).
3. Work with the Brookfield Orchard owners and adjacent property owners to protect the scenic quality of the agricultural land and the significant views to the southeast. This can be accomplished through a Scenic Easement or a Scenic Overlay District (see page 28 for more about this type of zoning).
4. The town should adopt an Open Space Residential Development Zone to address the development pressures on the area (see page 27 for more about this type of zoning).
5. The town should form an Agricultural Commission and adopt a Right-to-Farm Bylaw to support the remaining agricultural activities in North Brookfield (see page 28 for more about this bylaw).

Kiminski Farm

On Green Road east of Brookfield Orchards, the Kiminski Farm is one of the most beautiful in town, with farmland sloping from the east toward the Five Mile River valley. Stone walls run along the road and open land and there are significant views to the southeast. A large tract of forested land extends farther south toward the river corridor and Lake Lashaway. There is an original farmhouse and several outbuildings including an historic red barn with interesting adjacent stonework. The fields are currently hayed by the family.



Barn at Kiminski Farm off of Ward Road near Brookfield Orchards

Permanently protected land owned by Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife runs along the northern side of the farm across Hines Bridge Road. This land is access to the Five Mile River corridor and provides a valuable natural resource area for wildlife habitats and water supply protection.

Opportunities:

- A significant agricultural resource in close proximity to Brookfield Orchards and the Five Mile River corridor and access
- The farm is currently under Chapter 61A
- Beautiful views to the southeast and the river valley

Issues:

- Chapter 61 is only a temporary protection for the farm.
- With the profitability of farming declining, there are concerns about the viability of future agricultural activities on this property

Recommendations:

1. The Town should plan now how it might be able to exercise its Chapter 61A right-of-first-refusal should the property owners consider a change in use or ownership (see page 26 on “Chapter 61 Policy”).
2. If planning to continue actively farming the land, the owner should consider putting the property under an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (see page 25 for more about APR)
3. Explore the potential for trail connections through this property to both the Five Mile River and Brookfield Orchards and a broader, town-side trail network. The town should adopt the Community Preservation Act, as funds could be used to develop these trails (see page 27 for more about CPA).
4. The town should adopt an Open Space Residential Development Zone to address the development pressures on the area (see page 27 for more about this zone).
5. The town should form an Agricultural Commission and adopt a Right-to-Farm Bylaw to support the remaining agricultural activities in North Brookfield (see page 28 for more about this bylaw).

Five Mile River

The Five Mile River runs through the east side of North Brookfield and its watershed extends into four other communities: Spencer, Oakham, New Braintree and Rutland. The river provides a valuable natural, scenic and recreational resource for the region and within North Brookfield is book-ended by two significant water bodies- Brooks Pond and Lake Lashaway. The river meanders between these water bodies and unlike many, disperses into large marsh and wetland areas in areas rather than one linear movement of water. This provides valuable habitats for wildlife and botanical resources.



Brooks Pond at the northern end of the Five-Mile River Corridor is privately owned but remains a popular scenic and recreational destination for residents of North Brookfield and Spencer.

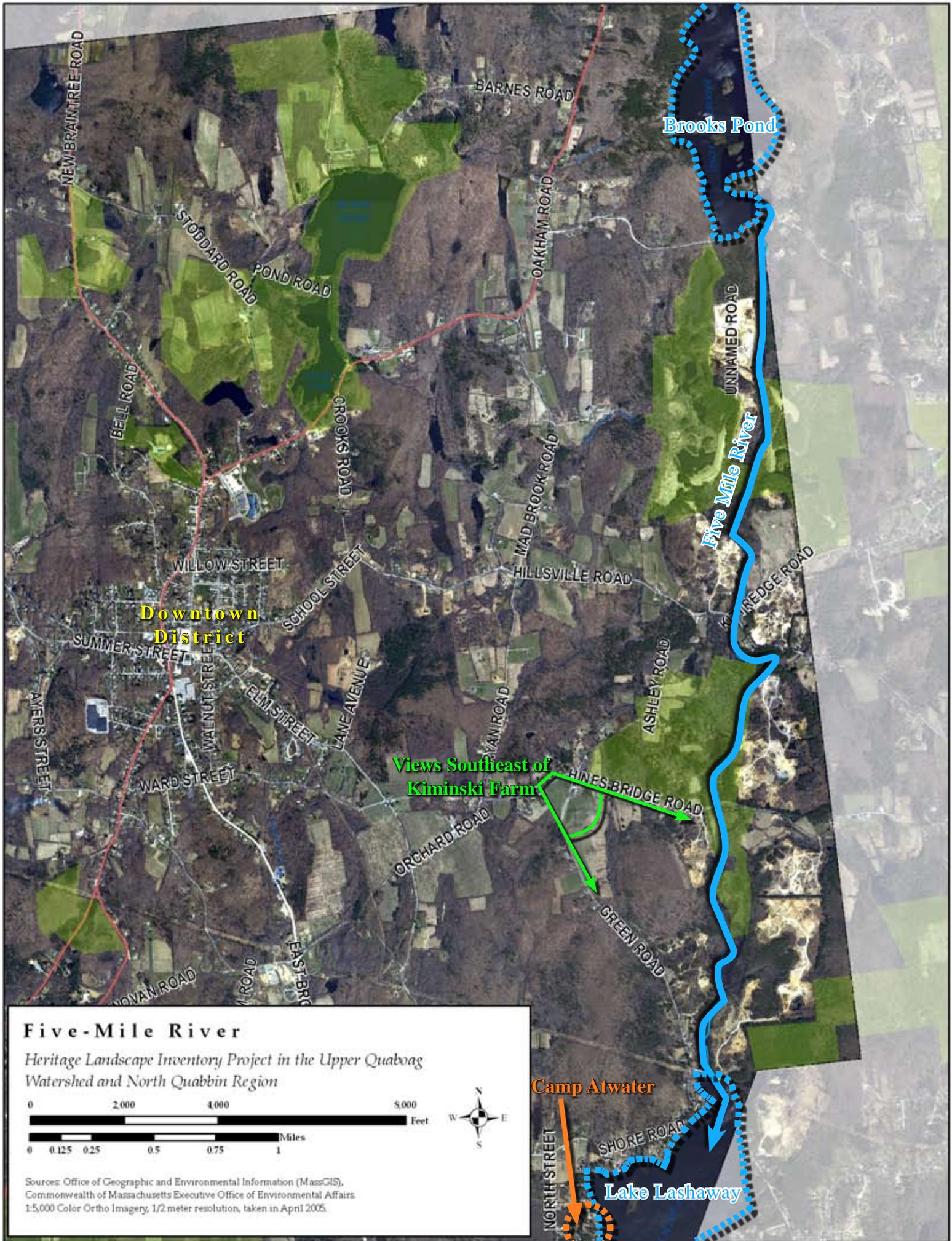
The river has also become a prime habitat for beaver and many dams have been created that disrupt the water flow and change habitats and wetland areas. These dams also make the river difficult for recreational activities such as non-motorized boating. Fishing, however, remains a popular activity along the river and the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife (MDFW) stock it with Brook Trout. There are also several large areas of permanently protected land owned by MDFW that allow access to the river and protect its valuable resources.

At the northern end of the river corridor in North Brookfield and portions of Spencer and Oakham, is Brooks Pond, a privately owned water body. Approximately 104 acres, the pond is rich in scenic quality and natural resources. There are 16 small islands within the pond that provide important habitats for wildlife and migratory waterfowl, and the open water is an important link in the regional watershed system. A private beach is located on the North Brookfield side of the pond where the owners have historically allowed public access for swimming and non-motorized boats. It has become increasingly difficult however, for the owners association to continue this policy due to vandalism, management and liability issues.



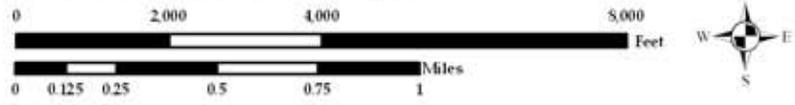
Camp Atwater remains a summer destination for inner-city children of Western Massachusetts.

On the southern end of the Five Mile River in North Brookfield is Lake Lashaway. Currently a key part of the regional hydrological systems and a primary recreational



Five-Mile River

Heritage Landscape Inventory Project in the Upper Quabog 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.

Camp Atwater
Lake Lashaway

resource for the towns of North Brookfield and East Brookfield, the lake originally served a more utilitarian purpose and was identified as the “J. Stevens Mill Pond” on an 1830 map. It apparently changed names once again in the later half of the 19th century as an 1894 map indicates it as Furnace Pond. Though none were mentioned throughout this project, based on these water body names, the area potentially holds historic archaeological mill remnants.

Throughout the 20th century, Lake Lashaway provided recreational opportunities with many summer cottages surrounding its shores and the historic Camp Atwater, a National Register of Historic Places District. Many of the homes are turning over to year-round use but a variety of recreational opportunities remain for the general public. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns and operates a public boat launch on the lake and there is a town beach shared by the two communities but located in the Town of North Brookfield. The Lake provides a valuable recreational area for fishermen, boaters and swimmers as well as serving an important natural and environmental role in the regional ecological systems of the Five Mile River corridor.

Opportunities:

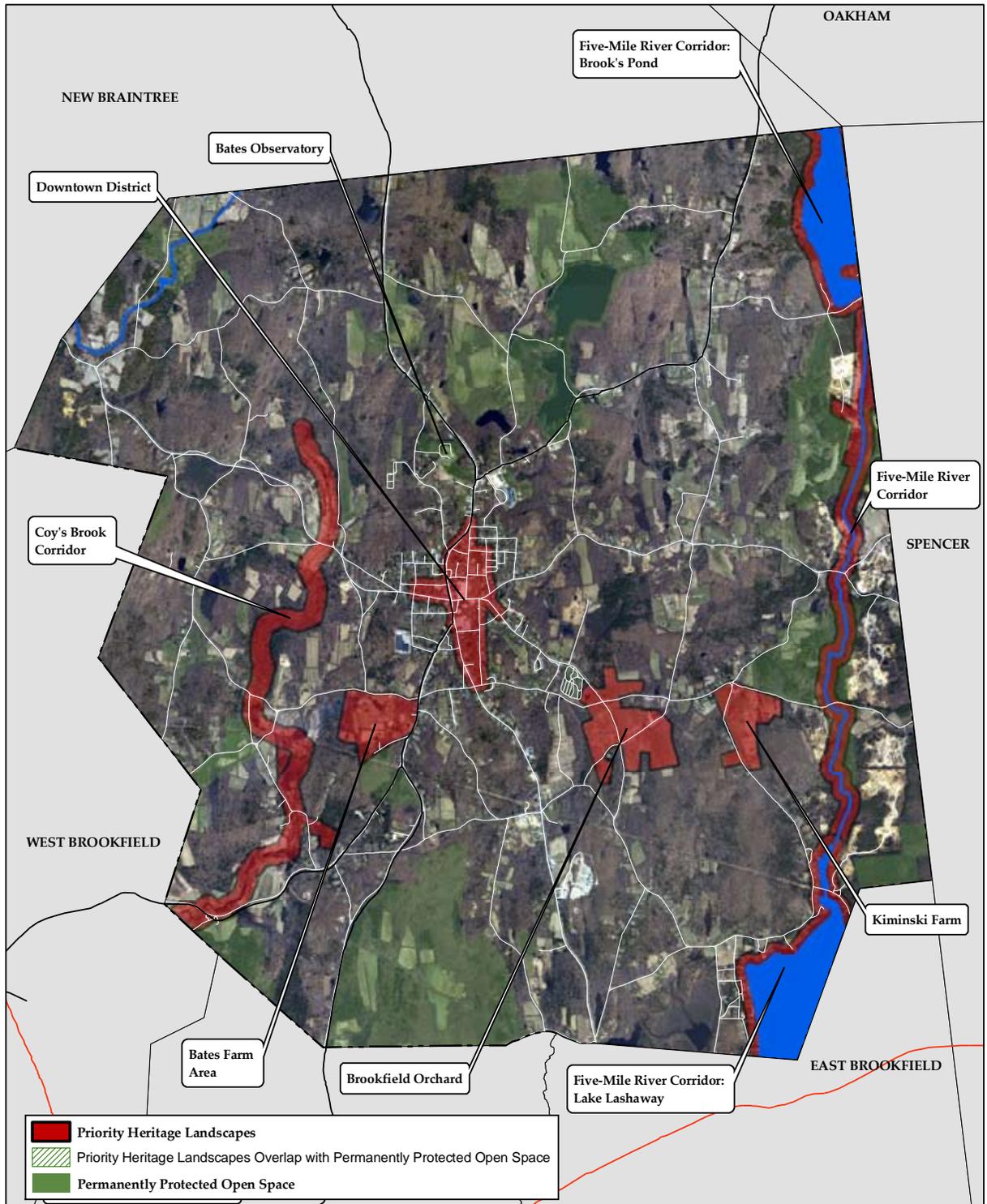
- The Five Mile River valley is one of the most scenic areas and provides a variety of recreational experiences
- The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns several large areas of permanently protected land that provide public access to the river
- Lake Lashaway is a regional recreational destination as well as containing significant scenic and cultural resources

Issues:

- Brooks Pond is owned by a private association that is concerned about the continued public use of its facilities and resources
- Several large, undeveloped areas of land along the river corridor are currently unprotected

Recommendations:

1. Create a town-wide Recreation Commission to oversee all recreation issues in the community.
2. Prepare a Recreation and Public Access Plan for the Five Mile River, Brooks Pond and Lake Lashaway in North Brookfield.
3. Develop a partnership between the Town of North Brookfield and the Brooks Pond Owners. The Association should identify strategies and policies for the collaboration of funds and management that would allow for continued public access to the pond.
4. Consider the adoption of a Scenic District Overlay Zone for the Five Mile River Valley that would protect the views and high scenic quality of the resource (see page 28 for more about this zone)..



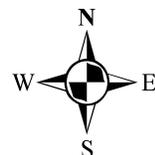
Priority Heritage Landscapes

North Brookfield, 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

PART II: PLANNING FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

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 North Brookfield already has in place, as well as a number of recommended actions for the future. The measures already in place for North Brookfield 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 North Brookfield'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, North Brookfield's inventory documents eighty properties from the mid 18th century through the 20th century ranging from individual homes and civic buildings to private camps and agricultural land. Each of the heritage landscape areas identified by the community as priority resources contain properties listed with MACRIS: There are thirty-eight listings related to Camp Atwater on Lake Lashaway and several more within the Downtown district.

The MHC also lists eleven recorded archaeological sites within the town. Six of these are prehistoric and five are historic.

Recommendations: MHC survey forms should be completed for all of the heritage landscapes identified at the North Brookfield meeting that are not already listed.

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:

North Brookfield's National Register (NR) program began with the listing of Matthews Fulling Mill Site in 1975. In 1982, Camp Atwater on Lake Lashaway was added as a National Register district, and in 2001 the Town House was added as an individual listing.

Recommended Listings:

The downtown area contains several individual listings with the MHC and should be considered for nomination as a National Register of Historic Places district. The Downtown District should be listed as a district and the Bates Observatory on Bell Hill should be considered for an individual listing, which would make them eligible for MPPF funding.

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 heritage landscapes is included as Appendix A of this report and provides a sound resource list for future documentation activities and potential funding opportunities. North Brookfield's meeting was held on April 1st, 2008, with eighteen 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: North Brookfield completed a Community Master Plan in 2007. The plan 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 permanently protected lands, identifying the owners, acreage, condition, and recreational potential. The plan mentions that the town contains 160 parcels with over 4000 acres of land in Chapter 61 temporary protection, but these parcels are not identified on a map. Objectives in the Master Plan related to heritage landscapes include creating and protecting open space; improving the vitality and aesthetic character of the downtown area; and protecting waterbodies - with special mention of Brook's Pond, Lake Lashaway, and the Five-Mile River that connects them. The Open Space and Recreation Plan was prepared as a 'stand alone' chapter of the 2007 Master Plan.

Recommended Plans: A Recreation and Access Plan for the Five Mile River Corridor would help to develop strategies specific to Brooks Pond, the Five Mile River, and Lake Lashaway.

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:

North Brookfield adopted revised zoning bylaws in 1990 that encourage the preservation of "natural features" during the development of subdivisions. The town only has one subdivision and no others are planned as of this writing.

Additional mechanisms for North Brookfield's landscapes:

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)

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

negatively impact its agricultural viability. The agricultural lands of Brookfield Orchards should be considered for the APR program.

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. An agricultural overlay district should be considered for the Coys Brook agricultural area.

Conservation Restrictions (CR)

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

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. North Brookfield should review the Chapter 61 land in town and develop a policy for determining priorities for acquisition if land becomes available. 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. The Town should also maintain a good working relationship with the Opacum Conservation Trust as they may be able to offer some guidance with these preparations. 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*.

Community Preservation Act

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

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 tool could help protect historic structures within the Downtown District from demolition.

Land Trusts

A Land Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection of open space in local or regional area. 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 spaces resources in Massachusetts and across the country. Regional land trusts in the North Brookfield area include the Opacum Land Trust, the East Quabbin Land Trust and the Trustees of Reservations.

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. This zoning can help in planning for the preservation of open space within areas like the Coys Brook Corridor,

Brookfield Orchard, and Kiminiski Farm, while still allowing for new development within North Brookfield.

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, like the Kiminskis and Brookfield Orchard, remain just that - active.

Scenic Roads Bylaw

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

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. Scenic Overlay Districts have been recommended for the Bates Street Farm Area, Five Mile River, and the views seen from the Bates Observatory. A scenic protection bylaw is generally administered through site plan review and the development application 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. This tool could encourage appropriate mixed-use development to increase the vibrancy of the Downtown District.

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. This zoning technique has been recommended for the Downtown District in the 2007 Master Plan.

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. The Historical Society has already published a *Walking Guide for Historical Downtown North Brookfield*; they, or other town organizations, should consider completing similar guides or other interpretive programs for other heritage landscapes within the town. These should include the Bates Street Farm Area, as the first settlement of the community, and Coys Brook's early industrial heritage.

Collaboration

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

Technical Assistance

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

Funding Opportunities

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

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

CONCLUSION

The Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report for North Brookfield provides an initial preservation-planning document that identifies priority heritage landscapes and discusses strategies for their long-term protection. North Brookfield contains a rich diversity of heritage landscape types ranging from the natural and scenic Five Mile River corridor to the historic buildings and urban landscape of the downtown district and the 19th century agricultural landscapes of the Bates Road/Coys Brook areas. These landscapes, as well as the Bates Observatory and Brookfield Orchards, reflect the strong history and character of the community and are tangible pieces of the North Brookfield story.

This report provides a starting point for preservation strategies but the heritage landscapes identified, especially the priority landscapes, will need additional research and documentation including the preparation of MHC additional 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 North Brookfield are already moving forward with a variety of initiatives and projects that advance the celebration and preservation of its heritage landscapes. With its “Walk Through History” brochure, the North Brookfield Historical Society has brought the past to life for the downtown district. Other organizations, such as the Friends of the North Brookfield Town House are working on individual sites. There have also been successful partnerships with regional and state agencies including the CMRPC, which helped the community complete a Master Plan in 2007.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to various municipal boards and commissions involved in making land use decisions will assist North Brookfield with an overall strategy for the preservation of its community’s character. The breadth of action steps outlined in this document will require a cooperative effort and a variety of local groups to take the lead on implementation. Included in the recommendations are several suggested zoning changes that were initially identified in the Master Plan, such as Village Center Zoning and an Open Space Residential Development Bylaw. It is also recommended that the Community Preservation Act be adopted as well as a Demolition Delay Bylaw and the formation of a town Recreation Commission. The town should also work with local land trusts for help with Conservation and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions for key landscapes including Brookfield Orchards, the Kiminski Farm and the Coys Brook corridor.

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 North Brookfield's preservation planning program and can provide the foundation for future historic preservation, conservation and recreation planning activities. The commitment of the citizens of North Brookfield to their heritage is apparent in the historic landscape character and fabric that makes the town the vibrant and beautiful place it is.

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

1. Establish a Recreation Commission.
2. Adopt an Open Space Residential Development Zone.
3. Adopt a Demolition Delay Bylaw.

APPENDIX A: NORTH BROOKFIELD HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Landscape Name	Landscape Notes
Agricultural	
<i>Bates Farm Area</i>	Old Quaboag Spring on site
<i>Brookfield Orchards</i>	Apple orchard with snack bar, retail shop and family activities. Town-valued scenic and agricultural landscape
<i>Kiminski Farm</i>	On Green Road; town-values as one of the most beautiful remaining farms in town.
<i>Hanson Farm</i>	
<i>Smith Farm</i>	
<i>Crawford's Farm</i>	
<i>Bennetts Farm</i>	
<i>Longview Farm</i>	
Archaeological	
<i>Small Pox Caves</i>	Cider Mill Road
<i>Wolcott Tavern</i>	
<i>Slab City Mill Pond</i>	East Brookfield Road
<i>Town Pound</i>	Bates Street
<i>Batcheller Mill Runs</i>	Oakham Road
<i>Mill Sites on 5-mile River</i>	
<i>Cider Mill Ruins</i>	Cider Mill Road
Burial	
<i>Maple Street Cemetery</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Indian Cemetery</i>	On Old West Brookfield Rd.
<i>Walnut Grove Cemetery</i>	Elm Street
<i>Old French Cemetery</i>	Elm Street
<i>St. Joseph's Cemetery</i>	Bell Street
<i>Cutter Cemetery</i>	Smith Hanson Road

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

Civic	
<i>Town House</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Library</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>North Brookfield Firehouse</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Bate's Observatory</i>	Late 19th century gatehouse for an old town reservoir (reservoir now mowed grass surface)
<i>Old Town Common on Main Street</i>	Part of the Downtown District
<i>Grove Street Common</i>	
<i>Old Town Center</i>	Marker at South Main and Bates Road
Industrial	
<i>Overall Factory</i>	Summer Street; Within the Downtown District
<i>Quabaug Rubber Co.</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Bates Street Barn</i>	18th century, contains a cobblers bench of the same time period
Institutional	
<i>Congregational Church</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Union/Star Building</i>	Former church and theater; Within the Downtown District
<i>St. Joseph's</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Episcopal Church</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Baptist Church</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Grove Street School</i>	
<i>Old Schoolhouse</i>	The Newcastle's House

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

Military	
<i>Civil War Monument</i>	On grounds of Congregational Church; Within the Downtown District
<i>World War I Monument</i>	On grounds of the library; Within the Downtown District
<i>World War II Monument</i>	On grounds of the library; Within the Downtown District
<i>Korea/Vietnam Monument</i>	On grounds of the library; Within the Downtown District
<i>Marker on Slab City Road at site of massacre of a family just after King Phillip's War</i>	
Natural	
<i>Bate's Grove</i>	On Ayer's Street, also an agricultural landscape
<i>Coys Brook</i>	Town-valued natural resource with early industrial historic significance
<i>Five-Mile River</i>	Holds scenic and recreational interest for the town
<i>Lake Lashaway</i>	Five Mile River runs into this waterbody; Contains a public boat launch and town beach; Camp Atwater is located on the western shore
<i>Brook's Pond</i>	Feeds Five Mile River; contains privately owned beach
<i>Horse (North) and Doane's Ponds</i>	
<i>Perry Pond</i>	
<i>Town Forest</i>	
<i>Rod & Gun Club</i>	
<i>Bennett's Hill</i>	
<i>Ayer's Road Vista</i>	

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

Open Space/Recreation	
<i>Camp Atwater</i>	
<i>Town Beach on Lake Lashaway</i>	
Residential	
<i>Amasa Walker House</i>	North Main Street; Within the Downtown District
<i>Gilbert Street Neighborhood</i>	Within the Downtown District
<i>Little Canada</i>	French-Canadian neighborhood near Forest Street
<i>Summer Street Neighborhood</i>	
<i>School Street Neighborhood</i>	
<i>Cooke's Residence</i>	
<i>Walker Block</i>	Downtown residential over commercial
<i>Ayer's Tavern</i>	Oldest House in town
<i>Duncan Block</i>	
Transportation	
<i>Train Station</i>	On School Street in the center of town; Within the Downtown District
<i>Old Railroad Bed</i>	
<i>Stagecoach Road</i>	Remnants remain visible
<i>Old Bay Path Road</i>	Slab City Rd

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

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.

- ◆ 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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