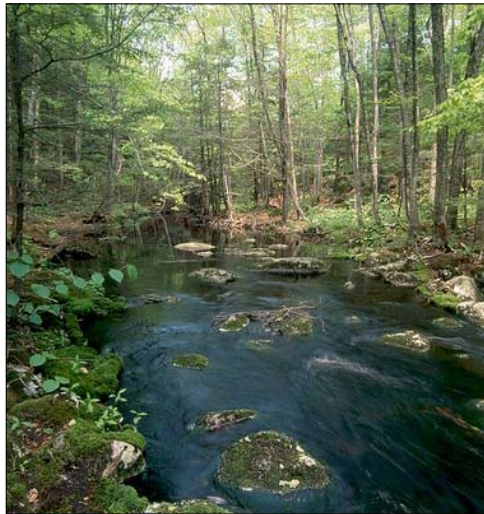




ROYALSTON RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

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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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS • EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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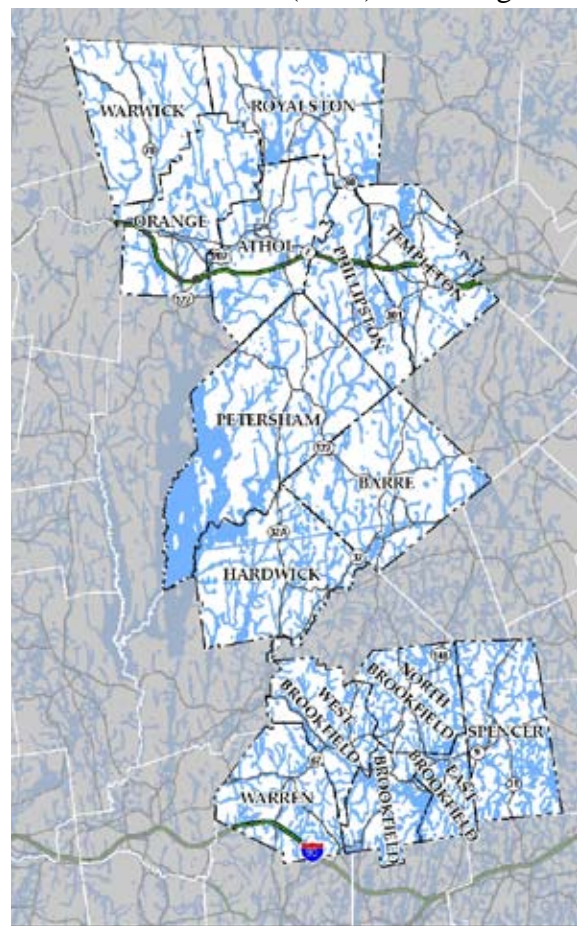
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INTRODUCTION

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

Royalston was the last territory in Worcester County to be parceled out by the colonial government through the early system of grants and charters. Some 2,300 acres was given out in five grants, and in 1752 the remaining 23,357 acres were sold at auction to a group of nine proprietors. Originally called Royal-shire, in honor of one of the proprietors, Isaac Royal, the town was not settled until the first six families arrived in 1762, after the end of the French and Indian War. In 1765, the town was incorporated as Royalston, and by 1767 counted 40 families. Along with the rest of the region, the town experienced rapid growth in the years following the Revolutionary War, growing from 617 in 1776 to 1243 in 1800. Tanneries, grist and saw mills were constructed to process the forest and agricultural products harvested from nearby hills and valleys.

As with most Massachusetts towns settled before the revolution, the proprietors were supposed to settle sixty families and a minister before the town could be incorporated. Following colonial guidelines, they laid out sixty 100-acre lots for settlers, and three others for the minister, the church and the schools. A site for the meetinghouse and common was chosen on the plateau in the center of the town. In the early days of the town the village probably saw little activity except on Sunday, when everyone was required to attend services. By the early 1800s it was becoming a real village, with gristmills, brick yards, tanneries, a hattery and cabinet shops that stretched from the common to Doane's Falls, where there was a small manufacturing complex.

The village of South Royalston grew up along the banks of the Millers River early in the 19th century. Anchored by the Royalston Cotton and Wool Manufacturing Company Mill, built in 1812, the village attracted other enterprises in furniture manufacturing and hat making. By the



Aerial view of Royalston Center. Photo from Microsoft VirtualEarth, <http://maps.live.com>

1820s South Royalston residents established a Methodist Church, and a second Congregational Church was founded in 1837. Construction of the Fitchburg Railroad along the Millers River provided the village with its own depot, which is no longer extant, and reinforced its importance to the town as a center of transportation and shipping.

Like most towns in the region, Royalston began a slow decline in population after the Civil War, as economic opportunities opened up in the agricultural lands of the western states and the booming cities of the east. Small farms continued to provide the backbone of the local economy: the Census of 1875 reported 172 farms in town, with 224 horses, 410 cows and 176 sheep, but farming began to decline by the 20th century. After peaking in 1840 with 1,667 residents, by 1900 the population had fallen to 998. By 1900, manufacturing was in serious decline in South Royalston; while



Whitney Hall, the town's municipal building overlooks the Millers River and historic mill ruins.

American Woolen was still building new structures in 1910, over the following decades they also ceased operations.

By the 1930s, Royalston's population had reached a low of 774 people, and grew only slowly over the next forty years, gradually evolving into the quiet town it remains today. This has been reinforced by preservation of land by state, federal and non-profit groups. Flood control projects by the Army Corps of Engineers took thousands of acres for the Tully Dam and Birch Hill Dam, creating well-used

recreation areas. The Trustees of Reservations manages a campground at Tully Lake, and has preserved the three waterfalls in Royalston: Doane's Falls, Royalston Falls and Spirit Falls. With its waterfalls, Tully Lake, Long Pond, the 21-mile Tully Trail, and several state forest and wildlife management areas, Royalston has become a popular destination for recreation and tourism. Over 16 square miles of land has been permanently protected (nearly 40% of the town), ensuring that much of what is special about Royalston will be preserved for future generations. As described on the following pages, many other areas remain vulnerable to future change – especially the landscape surrounding the Center Village, South Royalston and its context, and the many beautiful areas that line Royalston's historic road network.

Historical Sources: History of Worcester County, Massachusetts. C.F. Jewett and Company, Boston, 1879; Tom Musco, Royalston Open Space & Recreation Plan, 2004; Massachusetts Historical Commission Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, 1984.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Royalston is experiencing significant growth pressure and will need to determine how it will affect the rural character of the community and the heritage landscapes that the community finds valuable. In the public identification meeting, participants identified priority landscapes in town that define the heritage of the community. These heritage landscapes provide a cross section of the types of landscapes that contributed to the historical development of the town and together tell the story of Royalston'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.

Royalston Center

The location of Royalston's Center was established in 1762, when ten acres were set aside by the proprietors for the meeting house, burying ground and training field. The first meetinghouse was constructed in 1764, and replaced in 1797. The first school was built in 1777. Other than a few residences for nearby farms, there was probably little else around the common until a real village began to grow there in the early 1800s. From early days, a small mill complex was located around Doane's Falls, south of the center.

Growth hit a high point from the 1830s to the 1850s, with infill on Main Street and extension north on Frye Hill road and east on South Royalston Road. A third meetinghouse and a town hall were both built in 1841. The meetinghouse was replaced with a Greek Revival structure with Doric portico, pilasters, and tower with spire after a fire in 1851. The town hall was replaced by a Second Empire structure in 1867. A Greek Revival gable end schoolhouse built in 1835 now serves as the post office and offices for the town's Historical Society.

As the 19th century waned, the center became less important as a commercial focus, though it remained the center of the town's civic and social life. Prominent families like the Bullocks expanded and improved older structures, celebrating their success in commercial and political life. A Ladies' Benevolent Society was formed, and supported the construction of a public



First Congregational Church on the Common in Royalston Center



Town Hall on the Common in Royalston Center

library in 1880. The current library was built in 1911. At this time the Common itself had changed from a utilitarian space into a public park. Many of the maple trees now reaching the end of their life spans were set out in this period.

The common today is linear, with vehicular paths cutting through it. Many of the maple trees now reaching the end of their life spans were set out in the early 20th century. Royalston Center is listed both as a National Register Historic District and a Local Historic District, the latter of which has helped to protect the overall character of the village center.



Maple Trees on the Common in Royalston Center

Opportunities:

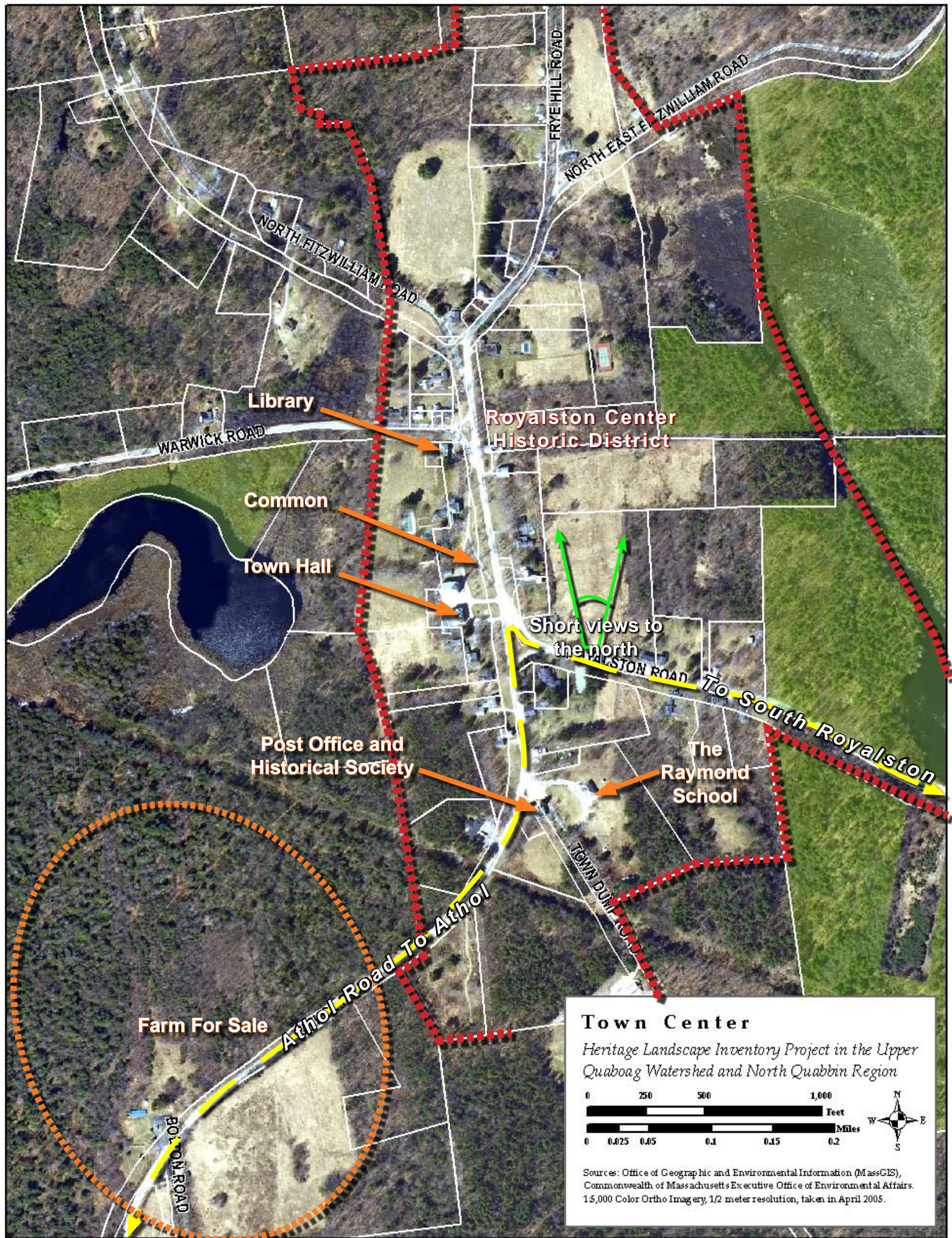
- Two-thirds of the houses are occupied year round, stabilizing the permanent population of the center village.
- The common is surrounded by a spectacular collection of historic structures, and most have been well-maintained.

Issues:

- The visual context of the center is threatened by potential development of unprotected land on the edges of the village.
- The old farm just south of the common and just beyond the boundaries of the historic district is currently for sale. Two frontage lots have already been split off, and the owner is willing to sell to whoever will meet the asking price.
- The edges of the common are eroded in many places, with uneven grass cover - probably due to informal parking arrangements. The road through the common advocates “informal parking.”
- Telephone poles and utility wires cross the common and detract from its period ambiance.
- Many trees are reaching the end of their lives and need to be replaced.
- The second floor of Town Hall is not accessible.



Public Library on the Common in Royalston Center



Recommendations:

1. The town should prepare a master plan for the common itself, including plans for maintenance and improvements to the road system and pedestrian areas, shade trees replacement, and turf management. If passed, Community Preservation Act funds could be utilized to fund the planning and subsequent work (see page 26 for more about CPA).
2. The town should explore options for hiding utility wires, for instance, by hiding them behind houses or burying them.
3. The Planning Board, Open Space Committee, Historical Commission and Historic District Commission should jointly prepare a plan for conserving the contextual landscape surrounding the common.
4. The town should protect parcels that are important gaps in the town's open space network. The Open Space Committee should work with local non-profit land conservation organizations to pursue Conservation Restrictions for key properties, and also with landowners, such as the owner of the farm just south of the common (see page 26 for more about CRs). If economics will not support outright preservation of properties, pursue limited-development plans that could locate several house sites in areas with the least impact on the public value of the property.
5. The Open Space Committee should explore the feasibility of creating trails to link the town center to the Jacobs Hill Reservation and the Ledges.



"The Bastille" - a historic home on the Royalston Common. It was purchased several years ago and restored to period.

South Royalston

South Royalston was created from portions of Athol and Gerry (now Phillipston) early in the 19th century, to take advantage of water power from the Millers River. The largest operation was the mill built by the Royalston Cotton and Wool Manufacturing Company in 1812, which was destroyed in a fire. The company replaced the burned building with a two and a half story stone mill in 1834. This mill had a gabled roof and clerestory, and a side tower, but the operation was destroyed by fire again in 1892. Part of the foundation remains. American Woolen built a new factory in 1908, and added to it in 1910. Operations had ceased by the 1930s, and the structures have since been torn down.



Municipal building in South Royalston



View up the Millers River from the bridge on a closed portion of King Street in South Royalston



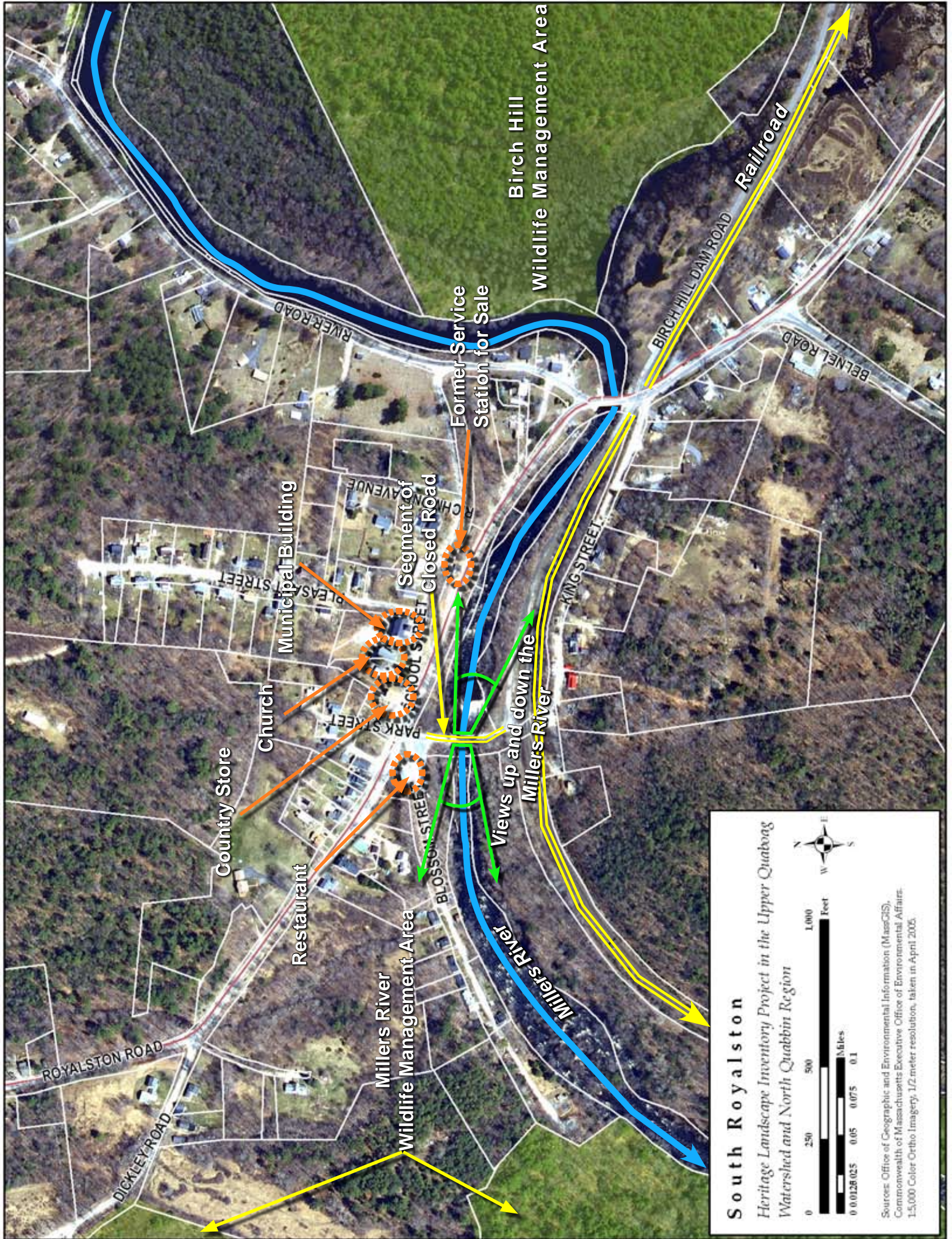
Second Congregational Church (top) and Country Store (bottom) in South Royalston

Chair manufacturing started in the 1830s, and smaller shops and factories joined the larger concerns. Housing for the workers was built on the hill north of the river on Blossom Street and south on River Street. The mills first employed Yankees from the surrounding farm country, and later waves of Irish. In the late 19th century a significant wave of Finnish immigrants settled in the village.

Several churches served the community over the years, including the Second Congregational Church (1837, rebuilt in 1906) and the Methodist Church (1847). Whitney Hall was built as a school and now serves as town offices. Several commercial structures were also built in the 19th and early 20th centuries to meet the needs of village residents.

Opportunities:

- The river is fishable, but is not well-used due to limited access and parking; it is stocked for fishing, and there is some kayaking in the spring.
- Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife has management areas along the river in Royalston and Athol, much of which is largely inaccessible. This could be the site of a nature, history and recreation trail.



South Royalston

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.

- South Royalston, including the King Street Bridge, Congregational Church and Whitney Hall, has been documented on Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory forms.
- Pete & Henry's Restaurant and the Country Store represent most of Royalston's commercial enterprise.
- South Royalston is the only area of town with water and sewer service, built in the 1970s and upgraded recently with funding from the Farmer's Home Administration. This could support somewhat denser development.

Issues:

- There have been unsuccessful efforts to establish a National Register Historic District in South Royalston; the story of the mills and the Finnish community remain an important part of the town's history.
- The old school is used for town offices, but is in need of renovations.
- The 1937 King Street Bridge has been closed to traffic, standing unused and blocked off

Recommendations:

1. The Historical Commission should seek National Register status and a Local Historic District Committee should explore the feasibility of establishing the village as a Local Historic District (see page 27 for more about LHDs). It is especially important to document the history of South Royalston now while there is still an opportunity to get first-hand stories about the place from people who were around before the mills closed down. The benefits of National Register designation - including access to grants and tax credits - should be well explained to residents.
2. Explore zoning mechanisms that would encourage some commercial and residential development, and promote adaptive reuse, while protecting the visual character of the area. These could include a Village Center Zoning or a Local Historic District (see pages 28 and 27 for more about these mechanisms). The boundary of a South Royalston LHD should include the remaining historic elements like mill sites, dams and roads. Village Center boundaries should include a larger area, comprising the surrounding lands suitable for development that's compatible with the historic village.
3. The Open Space Committee and Historical Commission should work with Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife to prepare a Master Plan for enhancing access to the river and celebrating its natural and cultural history; this could include physical improvements as well as plans for interpretive signage, guided tours, safety zones, etc.
4. The King Street Bridge could continue in pedestrian use. It could possibly be used as a Bridge of Flowers, as in Shelburne Falls.
5. If the Community Preservation Act passes, funds could be used in South Royalston to fund a National Register nomination, conversion of the bridge for pedestrian use, and funding master plan efforts (see page 26 for more about CPA).

Tully Lake and Context

Tully Dam was built by the Army Corps of Engineers in 1947 to provide flood control on the Tully River, a tributary of the Millers River. In 1966, the dry flood control reservoir behind the Dam was purposefully flooded to create Tully Lake. From 1955 through the 1990s, The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management leased part of the area for recreation, and established a campground at the north end of the property. The campground was closed for several years due to state budget cuts, but in 1999 the Trustees of Reservations began leasing the 30 acre campground site from the Army Corps and have been running it ever since. The surrounding 1,250 acre property includes a day use area near the Tully dam, boat launches at both ends of the lake, a mountain bike trail, and numerous hiking trails. The area also provides a starting point for hiking on miles of trails around the ponds and beyond, including the 21-mile Tully Trail.

Among the most beloved features in town are Royalston's three waterfalls. Doane's Falls, near Tully Lake and once the site of an early mill complex, is just off Athol Road at the entrance to the area. A mile and a half north, Spirit Falls cascades down from the shoulder of Jacobs Hill. About five miles north of Doane's Falls, close to the New Hampshire border, is Royalston Falls, on Falls Brook. All of the falls are connected by the Tully Trail, which loops west into Warwick State Forest and South to Tully Mountain before returning to Tully Lake.

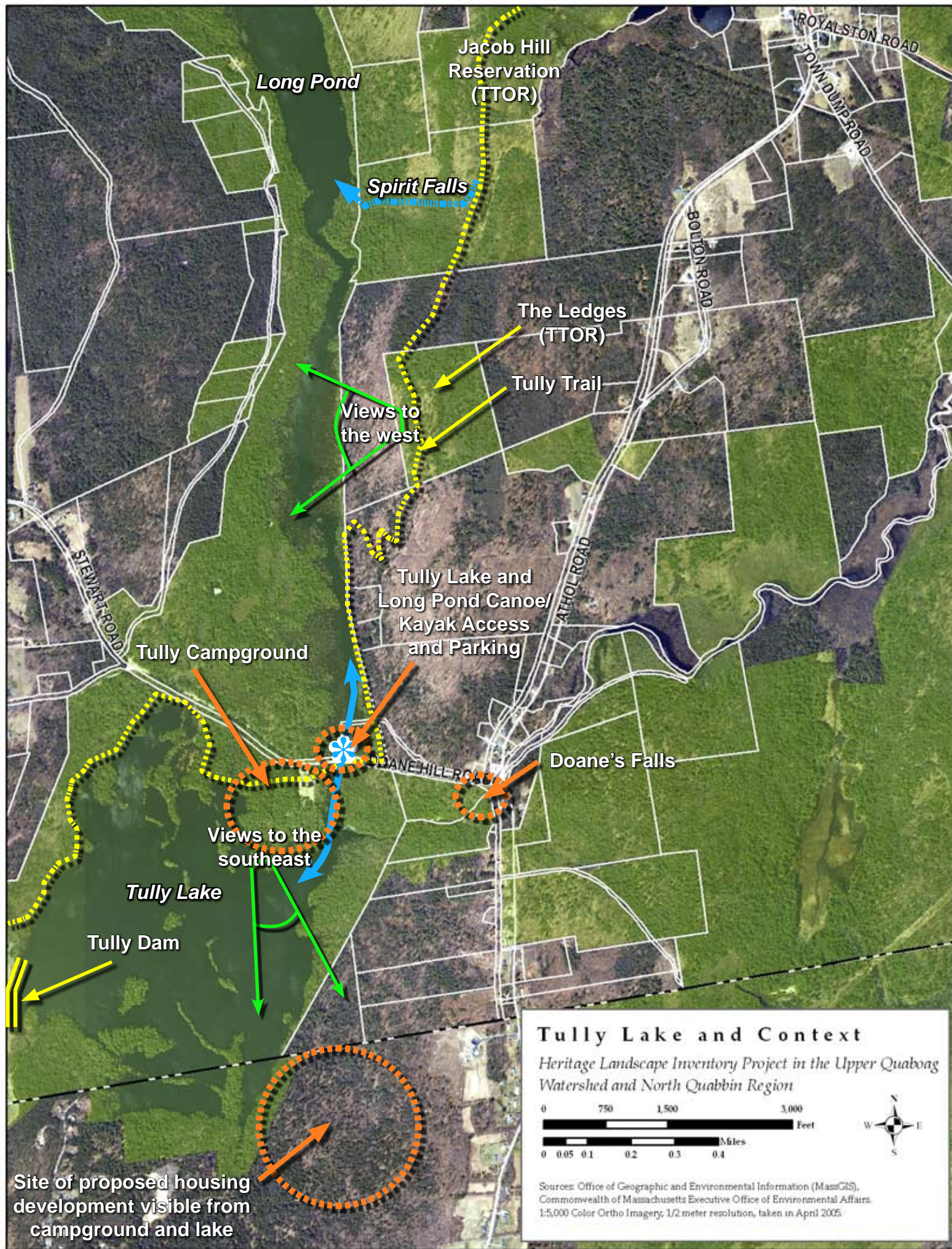
Today it is easy to overlook the long history of industry at Doane's Falls, which was the site of mills since the earliest settlement of the town. Taking advantage of a steep 200 foot drop in elevation along Lawrence Brook from where it is crossed by Athol Road, the site supported a whole complex of mills, which benefited from the relatively short distance to both Athol and Royalston Center. The proprietors of the town commissioned the first saw and grist mills at Doane's Falls in the



View North to Long Pond from Tully Lake Canoe and Kayak Access Point



Tully Lake Canoe and Kayak access on Doane Hill Road



1760s and for the next 150 years the site supported a series of sawmills, as well as wood product manufacturing, fulling mills and woolen textiles. The last mill on the site collapsed in 1911. By that time, Edward Bragg was in the process of assembling over 1600 acres in Royalston, including Doane's falls, for development of hydroelectric power. Bragg's dream was never realized, and his descendants eventually sold the site to the Trustees of Reservations, paid for largely with a gift from Richard Bullock.

Opportunities:

- 3,000 – 4,000 visitors per year at the Tully Lake Campground; generally booked up well before the season starts.
- The Tully Trail provides a 21 mile loop connecting lakes, waterfalls and forests throughout Royalston and into Warwick.
- The area boasts a rich cultural history, both as a site of colonial industry and agriculture, and later as an early example of “eco-tourism.” During the 1890s a trail from the center of town was developed, along with stairs down to Spirit Falls, which provided a local escape into the town's natural and recreational landscape.



View looking South towards Athol from the Tully Lake Campground

Issues:

- Subdivision of a parcel on the Athol side of Tully lake could affect pristine views from the lake and campground. Despite a zoning change and denial of a curb cut permit upheld by the Land Court, some development is still possible.

Recommendations:

1. The town should study parcels south and east of Tully lake and evaluate continued threats from future development. The Open Space Committee should work with landowners and local non-profit land conservation organizations to pursue Conservation Restrictions for key properties to preserve land outright or influence the design of projects to limit visual and physical impacts on the lake (see page 26 for more about CRs).
2. The town should pursue regional partnerships, including the Army Corps of Engineers and The Trustees of Reservations to prepare plans and implement strategies to protect regional resources like Tully Lake.
3. The town should develop additional interpretive materials, including signage, maps and guidebooks, to engage visitors in the rich history of the area.

Heritage Roads

Much of Royalston is accessible only via a network of narrow roads, lined with stone walls and tall trees, that have been improved only modestly since the 19th century. Some of the most beloved are unpaved dirt and gravel roads such as North and Northeast Fitzwilliam Roads and Butterworth Road. Even more primitive, unmaintained routes wind through some of the protected areas, and make ideal historic/nature trails. Protecting the scenic and historic value of these old roads will require a partnership between the town, which owns and maintain the rights-of-way, and private landowners who abut them. For example, the town controls road maintenance and can specify the amount of disturbance that is acceptable during improvements such as the current bridge reconstruction on Northeast Fitzwilliam Road – but needs the support of landowners at Town Meeting. Similarly, the character of the rural road system is dependent on the continuation of active and economically viable farming, forestry and other rural activities in the adjoining landscape that help provide some of the scenic qualities. The end of goat farming on Butterworth Road when a barn collapsed in a snow storm was mentioned by one resident as the kind of challenge the town faces in trying to keep marginal agricultural uses going. At the same time, there are working farms in town. There is an Alpaca farm on Brown Road, and a sheep/beef operation on Taft Hill Road.

Opportunities:

- Royalston's rural roads exhibit an essential part of the town's character.
- While requiring some additional annual maintenance, unpaved dirt roads are easier on the environment and can be cost effective for the town over time.
- Royalston has adopted a Scenic Roads Bylaw and has designated all of the roads in town as scenic.



Rural vista from North Fitzwilliam Road

Issues:

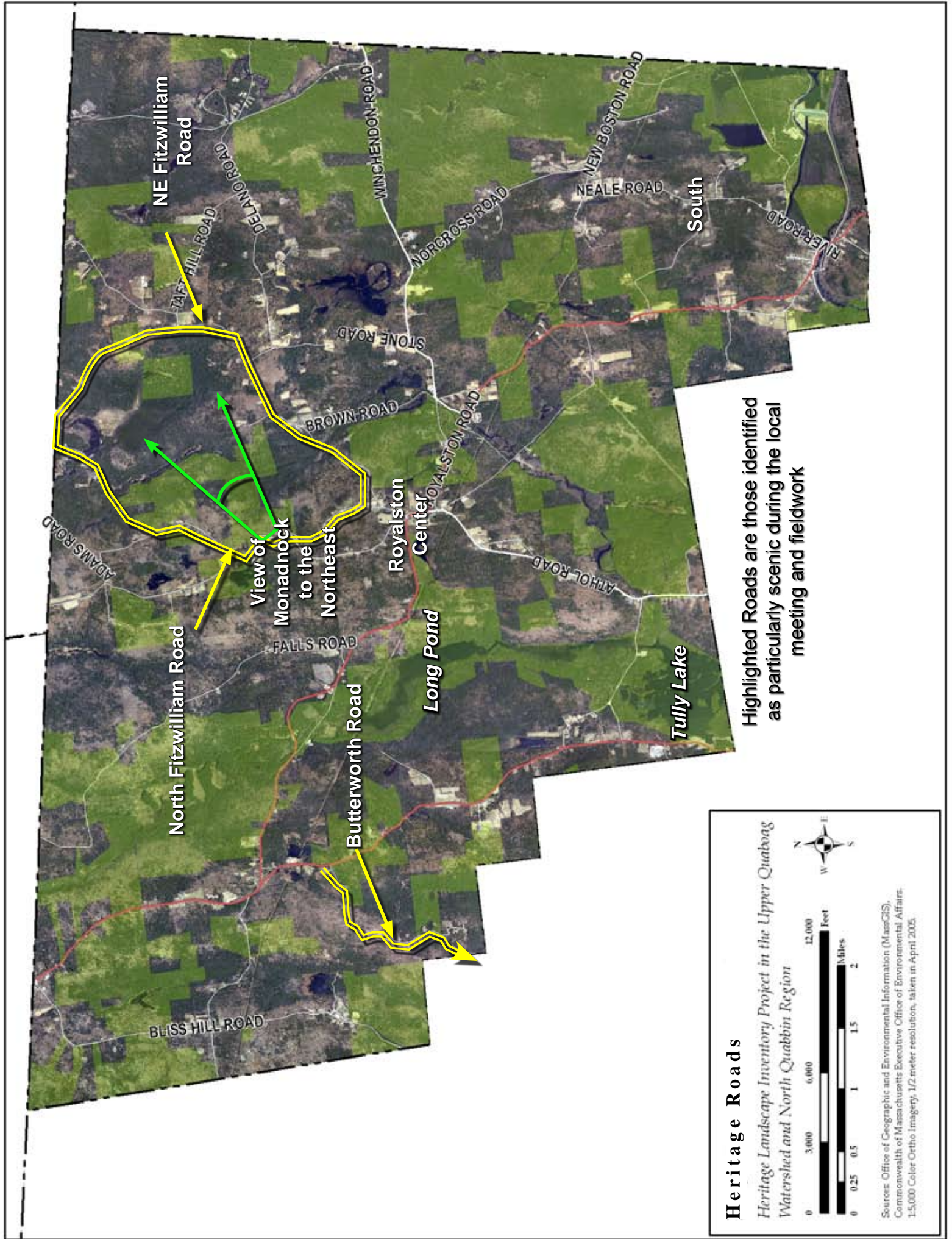
- Regular maintenance requirements and seasonal issues mean additional upkeep challenges for dirt and gravel roads.
- There is pressure from new residents to improve roads.
- Desire to improve drainage can lead to road widening and potential loss of trees and stone walls.
- There are several roads in town that are considered to be discontinued, but the legal discontinuation process has not actually occurred.

Recommendations:

1. Explore standards for rural road design and maintenance from Vermont and New Hampshire that could be applied locally. The town should also familiarize itself with DCR's Historic Landscape Preservation publication [*Terra Firma #3: Identifying and Protection Historic Roads*](#)
2. The town should familiarize themselves with the publication [*Discontinuing Town and County Roads*](#) by Lynn Rubenstein and Alexandra Dawson, and clarify the legal status of all roads.
3. The town should inventory and determine which unmaintained roads have been formally abandoned and/or discontinued by Town Meeting. Design guidelines should be established for rural roads generally, and consider specific management plans for certain roads, with input from residents.
4. The town should pursue a program to celebrate the history and character of their roads and encourage their continued use as part of Royalston's transportation network.



Stockwell Road has probably changed little in a century, with its narrow width, stone walls and trees; this area is protected by a conservation restriction (top right). An un-maintained section (left) continues into the woods. Views of Mount Grace (bottom right) can be had from the farm at the end of the travelled way.



Stone Walls and Other Stone Structures



Stone wall along Stockwell Road



Stone wall along Butterworth Road



Stone wall along North Fitzwilliam Road

There is a network of approximately 400 miles of stone walls that knits together every part of Royalston and is intimately bound to the history of the town. Together with stone faced earthen dams, culverts, cellar holes and other constructions, walls create an irreplaceable record of earlier times; much as fossil bones tell the story of the flesh and blood that once surrounded them, walls are often all that remains of a complex agricultural landscape, a cultural ecosystem that once supported thousands of residents.

Opportunities:

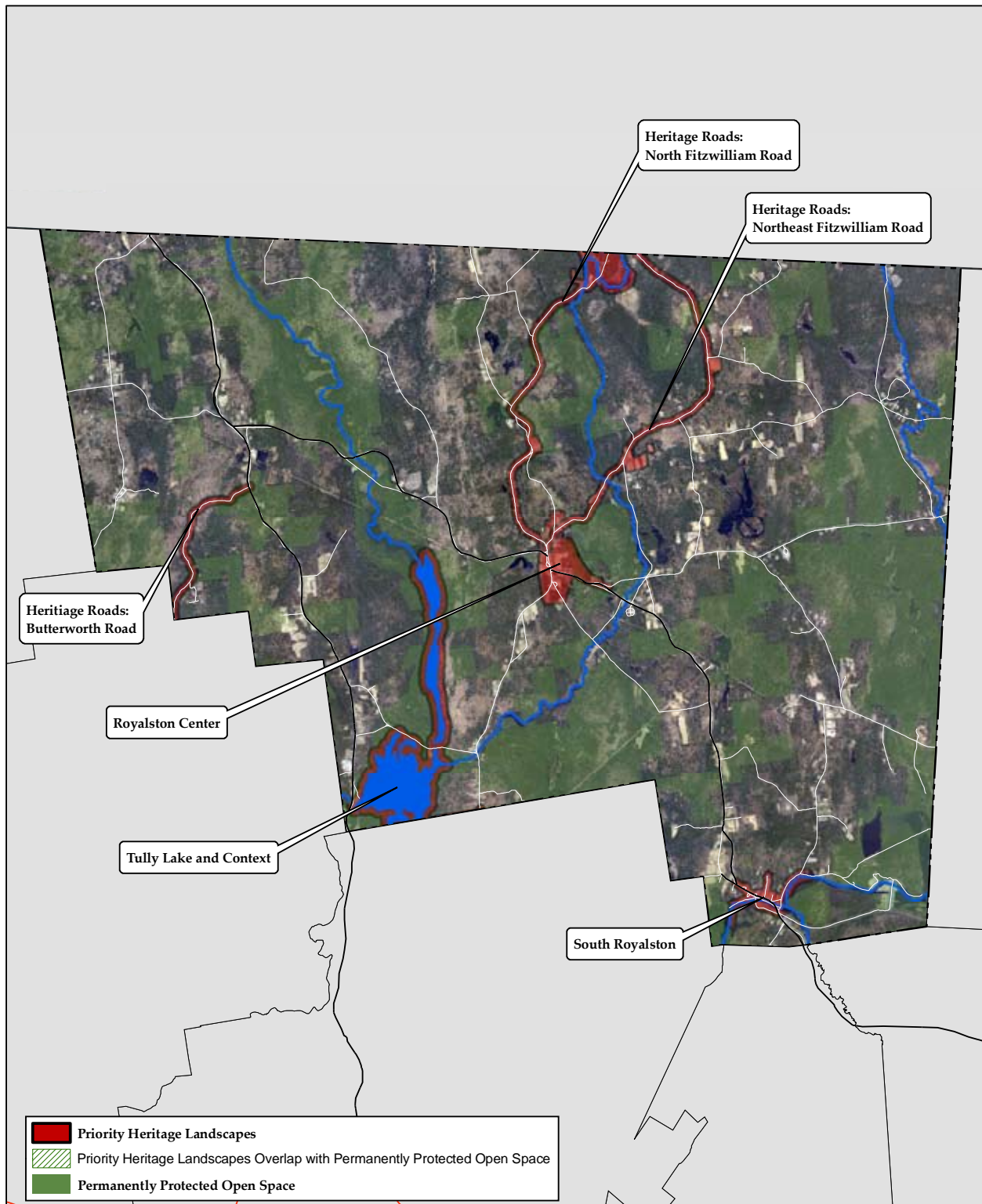
- Low density of settlement and relatively little recent development have left the old walls largely intact.
- The town's scenic roads bylaw could protect many of the stone walls within designated road's right-of-ways.
- A community member is currently creating an informal inventory of the town's stone walls

Issues:

- Time, weather and vegetation gradually pull walls down.
- Logging activities neglect stone walls, hitting and destroying any in their way.
- Perceived need for road widening and safety improvements often depicts walls as an obstacle rather than an asset.
- Walls, especially on back land, are increasingly "mined" or stolen for sale elsewhere.

Recommendations:

1. The town should familiarize itself with DCR's Historic Landscape Preservation publication [*Terra Firma #5: Stones that Speak: Forgotten features of the landscape.*](#)
2. The town should create a formal inventory of stone walls as historic resources, documenting location, current owners, and recording those that fall within road right of ways to assist with scenic roads bylaw enforcement. It was indicated at the Heritage Landscape Meeting that a community member has already begun a mapping project - he should be encouraged to work with the Historical Commission and other boards and committees.
3. The town should publicize the value of walls and share their history. This could be implemented with a map, guidebook, or website.
4. The town should consider changes to zoning and subdivision regulations that would encourage preservation of stone walls on back land.



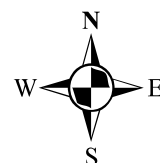
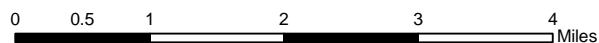
Priority Heritage Landscapes

Royalston, 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 Royalston already has in place, as well as a number of recommended actions for the future. Appendix B includes descriptions of additional preservation measures. These tools should be considered in combination with those recommendations made in Part I for Royalston'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, Royalston's inventory documents sixty-four properties from the mid 18th century through the 20th century ranging from individual homes, cemeteries and civic buildings to nature reservations and agricultural land. Many of the heritage landscape areas identified by the community as priority resources contain properties listed with MACRIS: There are more than twenty listed properties on Main Street alone, there are listings in South Royalston and there are three separate listings on Northeast Fitzwilliam Road.

The MHC also lists forty-five recorded archaeological sites within the town. Nineteen of these are prehistoric and twenty-six are historic.

Recommendations: MHC survey forms should be completed for all of the heritage landscapes identified at the Royalston 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:

Royalston's National Register (NR) program began with the listing of the Royalston Common Historic District in 1976. In 1980 Royalston expanded the district's boundaries and created a local historic district overlay based on the expanded boundaries.

Recommended Listings:

The village center at South Royalston contains several individually inventoried resources on MHC inventory forms, and the area should be considered for nomination as a National Register of Historic Places district.

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. Royalston's meeting was held on April 3rd, 2008, with fifteen 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: Royalston completed an Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and a Community Development Plan in 2004. The OSRP provides a valuable source of information for landscape character, significant natural and scenic resources, and a conservation and recreation lands inventory. This inventory includes a table of protected land, identifying the owners, levels of protection, and accessibility. There is also a table that includes a summary of the number of acres temporarily protected through the Chapter 61 program. Goals of the OSRP include preserving and maintaining open fields and working landscapes; acquiring additional properties for preservation and recreation; enhancing the recreation facilities that do exist and committing to their upgrade and maintenance; protecting clean water and air; protecting and preserving the small town character, scenic views, wildlife habitat and endangered species; and limiting the amount and location of development to help address some town preservation concerns. This plan is being updated for 2009.

Recommended Plans: 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. Royalston should pursue creation of a Master Plan for Royalston Center and South Royalston that includes information from the 2004 Community Development Plan, updated 2009 OSRP, and this Reconnaissance Report. Together these documents could provide clear guidance to the town for how to achieve its goals.

2. Zoning Bylaws, Development Regulations and Other Tools.

Effective preservation tools exist in the in the realm of zoning and development regulations, and include innovative approaches to shaping development as well as promoting conservation of sensitive resources. Many other creative approaches are available, ranging from private conservation restrictions and incentive programs to tax policies that reward private conservation efforts.

Current Zoning Bylaws and Ordinances:

Royalston has already adopted several zoning bylaws that will help to preserve the town's heritage landscapes. Royalston has bylaws in place that provide protection to their designated Scenic Roads, encourage open space/cluster development, allow flexible development and require site plan review for proposed development. Additionally, Royalston has a local historic district for the area around the town's common.

The town has received a Smart Growth grant to update its Zoning Bylaws. This process is ongoing, and the town hopes to vote on a new set of bylaws at Town Meeting next year.

Additional Planning and Zoning Tools and Techniques for Royalston's landscapes:

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. Royalston will vote on the CPA in November 2008. Many of the recommendations included in this report could be undertaken using CPA funds and this report should be used in the CPA campaign.

Conservation Restrictions (CR)

A CR is a permanent deed restriction between a landowner and a holder - usually a public agency or a private land trust, whereby the grantor agrees to limit the use of his/her property for the purpose of protecting certain conservation values in exchange for tax benefits. EOEEA's Division of Conservation Services provides assistance to landowners, municipalities, and land trusts regarding conservation restrictions and has produced *The Massachusetts Conservation Restriction Handbook* as a guide to drafting conservation restrictions. Conservation Restrictions could be a useful way to preserve the view from the road which is so important to Royalston's rural character, without requiring public ownership of roadside properties.

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. 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 selectboard 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 Mount Grace Land 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*.

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 in South Royalston.

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. Royalston already has a local historic district for the center village; a second district should be examined for South Royalston.

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.

Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw

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

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 in South Royalston where water and sewer lines have been constructed, and help the town meet its affordable housing needs.

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.

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. Providing the community with maps, guidebooks, interpretive signs, guided tours and links to information from the town's website could all be instrumental in the education of and protection for Royalston's heritage landscapes.

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 Montachusett 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

Royalston's settlement and early history was in many ways typical of towns in the region, but the rich natural beauty and sense of history that remains today is not. Protected by its remoteness from growth pressures that have overtaken other towns, many of the town's cherished features have been preserved as part of state, federal and non-profit conservation areas. Yet many of the more common rural landscapes that knit the town together are still vulnerable to future change. Ranging from the properties surrounding and connecting the town center and Tully Lake, to South Royalston and miles of stone walls and historic roads, these Heritage Landscapes are the foundation of Royalston's scenic beauty and rural character.

Heritage landscapes cannot be understood, celebrated and preserved as isolated elements; they are all connected to each other, to the past and future of the town, and to every citizen. They are living landscapes that are home to vibrant plant, animal and human communities, and which continue to evolve and change over time. For planning purposes,



it is useful to think of these heritage landscapes as functioning systems, analogous to natural ecosystems, which need to be preserved intact if their essential functions are also to be preserved. By protecting villages, scenic roads, important viewsheds, stream corridors and working landscapes as an intact system, social and economic change can continue without destroying Royalston's unique sense of place.

This Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report for Royalston is an initial preservation-planning document that identifies priority heritage landscapes and discusses strategies for their long-term protection. It provides a starting point for thinking about strategies that combine traditional historic preservation tools with creative approaches to planning and zoning. As time goes on, protecting what is special about Royalston will increasingly require a collaborative effort between town boards, elected officials and private citizens,





rooted in a shared process of understanding both the existing landscape and alternatives for the landscape of the future.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to various municipal boards and commissions involved in making land use decisions will assist Royalston 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. Sharing this information, providing public education on the importance of heritage landscapes, and promoting consensus in support of conservation strategies will all be important to moving forward.

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

1. Continue to work to adopt the CPA, as it has already passed Town Meeting and will be on the November 2008 ballot.]
2. Strengthen the local Scenic Roads Bylaw or consider a Scenic Overlay District or Vista Protection Bylaw
3. Develop a local historic district for South Royalston. If this proves impossible, work to get more South Royalston structures into the Mass Historic Commission database and/or National Register of Historic Places.
4. Develop a targeted Master Plan for maintenance and enhancement of the Town Center and South Royalston. The latter is particularly important as potential CPA projects focus on South Royalston and there is already some planning and visioning work done for the South Royalston Waterfront.



APPENDIX A: ROYALSTON HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

| Agricultural | |
|--|--|
| <i>Prospect Hill</i> | |
| <i>Bodman Farm</i> | |
| <i>Salmon Estate</i> | Vars Property on NE Fitzwilliam Rd |
| <i>Peterson's Dairy and Context</i> | Adjacent to Royalston Center and also identified as an Open Space/Recreation landscape |
| <i>Bolton Land</i> | |
| <i>Elliot-Chase</i> | Byers Land |
| <i>Frye Hill</i> | |
| Archaeological | |
| <i>Network of Approx. 400 miles of Stone walls</i> | Located throughout town along roadways and in the interior forest |
| <i>Beryl Hill Mine</i> | |
| <i>Tavern Cellar Hole</i> | Part of the Lawrence Brook corridor |
| <i>Doane's Falls</i> | Property of TTOR |
| <i>Tully Brook Mill Sites</i> | |
| <i>Newton Hallow</i> | Part of the Lawrence Brook corridor |
| <i>Priest Brook Mill Sites</i> | |
| <i>Putney Mill</i> | old foundation |
| <i>Tannery Foundation</i> | |
| <i>Baptist Church Cellar Hole</i> | |
| Burial | |
| <i>Town Hearse and Context</i> | Within the Royalston Center Historic District Boundary (NRDIS and Local Historic District) |
| <i>Gale and Gates Cemetery</i> | |
| <i>Under the Hill Cemetery</i> | In South Royalston |
| <i>Newton Cemetery</i> | near Royalston Falls |
| <i>Stockwell Road Cemetery</i> | "Way off Dump Road" |
| <i>Maples Cemetery</i> | On Rt. 32 |

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

| Civic | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Royalston Center</i> | Including Town Hall, the common, and the maple trees; Royalston Center Historic District Boundary (NRDIS and Local Historic District); also identified as a residential landscape |
| <i>South Royalston</i> | Including Whitney Hall; also identified as archaeological landscape, including foundations adjacent to Miller's River and Finnish Methodist Church |
| <i>Raymond School</i> | Within the Royalston Center Historic District Boundary (NRDIS and Local Historic District) |
| <i>West Royalston</i> | |
| Industrial | |
| <i>Putney Mill</i> | |
| <i>Stone Quarry</i> | At the top of Pleasant Street; in South Royalston |
| Institutional | |
| <i>Camp Caravan</i> | Re-opening as a school; adjacent to South Royalston |
| <i>Historical Society Building</i> | Also the current Post Office; Within the Royalston Center Historic District Boundary (NRDIS and Local Historic District) |
| <i>First Congregational Church</i> | Royalston Center Historic District Boundary (NRDIS and Local Historic District) |
| <i>Second Congregational Church</i> | In South Royalston |
| <i>Catholic Church</i> | |
| Military | |
| <i>Priest Brook Land Grant</i> | Local lore suggests it was originally given to Priest for service to military |

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

| Natural | |
|--|---|
| <i>Millers River</i> | In South Royalston, also identified as an Open Space/Recreation landscape |
| <i>Tully Lake, Long Pond, & Jacob's Hill</i> | Also identified as an Open Space/Recreation landscape |
| <i>White Hill</i> | |
| <i>Lawrence Brook & tributaries</i> | Also identified as Archaeological and Open Space/Recreation landscape |
| <i>Priest Brook</i> | |
| <i>Tully River & Tully Brook</i> | Also identified as Archaeological and Open Space/Recreation landscape |
| <i>Falls Brook</i> | Also identified as an Open Space/Recreation landscape |
| <i>Frye Hill</i> | |
| Open Space/Recreation | |
| <i>Maxine's Skating Pond</i> | Adjacent to the Royalston Center Historic District Boundary (NRDIS and Local Historic District) |
| <i>Tully Trail</i> | |
| <i>Carbone's Land</i> | Vista of town and Mt. Monadnock |
| <i>Vista from Prospect Hill</i> | |
| <i>View from Wayne's Field</i> | N. Fitzwilliam Rd |
| Residential | |
| <i>Oldest Houses in Town</i> | Located in West Royalston circa 1775 |
| <i>Bolton House</i> | On Bolton Rd. - Built in 1762 as one of the originals |
| <i>Pleasant Street</i> | In South Royalston |

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

| Transportation | |
|--|---|
| <i>Butterworth Road</i> | Representative of gravel roads and country lanes |
| <i>Substantial network of unmaintained roads</i> | also recognized as an open space landscape |
| <i>Town Dump Road</i> | |
| <i>Loomis Road</i> | |
| <i>Wiley's Road</i> | |
| <i>Turnpike Road</i> | |
| <i>Falls Road</i> | More than half is unmaintained |
| <i>Bridge Abutment</i> | On Winchendon Road |
| <i>Bridge Abutment</i> | on Pike Road |
| <i>Doane's Falls Bridge</i> | |
| <i>Railroad</i> | Remains active - played a critical role in town in the past; in South Royalston |
| <i>Discontinued Railbed</i> | In South Royalston |

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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