

# Southwick Reconnaissance Report

Connecticut River Valley Reconnaissance Survey

Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program



June, 2009

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Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission  
Franklin Regional Council of Governments

## PROJECT TEAM

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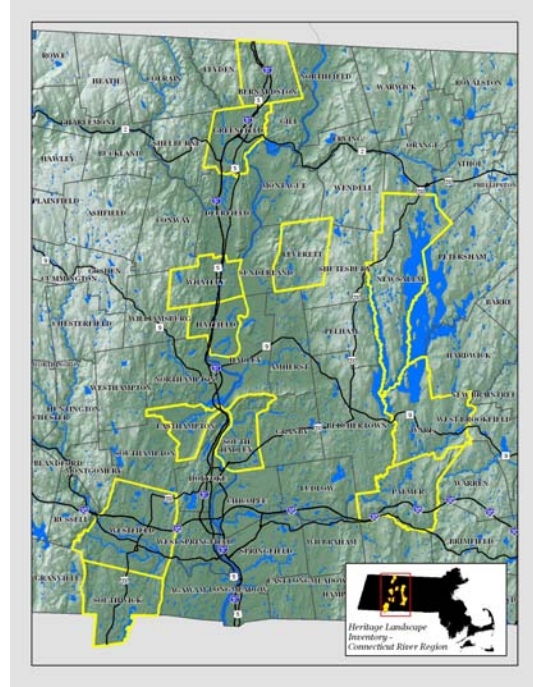
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## INTRODUCTION

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 Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program to twelve communities in the Connecticut River valley region of 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.



Connecticut River Valley Heritage Landscape Inventory Project Area

The communities within the Connecticut River valley region of Massachusetts are diverse in their settlement patterns and economic histories. What they hold in common is a foundation built on agriculture that was carried out in communities traversed by a series of major waterways and tributaries, from the Connecticut River to the Deerfield, Sawmill, Green, Millers, Quaboag, Swift, Mill and Ware Rivers. This region contains significant cultural and historic resources and uncommon natural beauty. For some of the communities, industry developed alongside agriculture, so that today the heritage landscapes reflect both agrarian and industrial pasts while providing recreational and educational opportunities. 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 complex history.

### **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 identified and prioritized the natural and cultural landscapes within town that embody the community's unique character. This meeting was followed by a fieldwork session led by the project team, including the local project coordinator and staff of FRCOG or PVPC, accompanied by interested community members. During the fieldwork session the Priority Heritage Landscapes were assessed and opportunities for preservation were explored and discussed. The final product for each community is an individualized Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report. This report outlines the community's landscape history, describes the priority heritage landscapes along with associated opportunities, issues, and recommendations, and concludes with implementation strategies.

## **PART I: HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY**



Southwick Free Public Library, ca. 1900.

### **LOCAL HISTORY**

Southwick is in the watersheds of the Westfield and the Farmington Rivers and is a town with highly varied terrain. It has mountainous sections, a string of low-lying, freshwater lakes, and, in between, a landscape of rolling hills. At one time entirely under Lake Hitchcock, the area of Southwick has rocky gravel soil in the uplands and sandy soil in

the lowlands, a fact that has had an impact on its development. It is bordered by Suffield and Granby, Connecticut on the south, Westfield on the north, Agawam on the east and Granville on the west. The largest of the mountains that make up vistas in the town is Sodom Mountain on its west border at an elevation of 1126 feet. Native Americans are thought to have concentrated their settlement around the Congamond Lakes in the eastern half of the town during the Pre-historic and Contact Periods for its good soil and fishing. The Native American groups may well have gone into the uplands for hunting west and north east of the Lakes, and trails led into Westfield (Woronoco). Route 10 (College Highway) going north and south, and Vining Hill Road going east and west were the major routes established by these early occupants.

Southwick was the common land for Westfield during the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and settlement in the area began in the 1730s when Westfield opened it up for sale to the growing population. The area was surveyed and laid out in lots with room for houses and contiguous tilling and pasture land, unlike many other of the early Connecticut River Valley towns that were laid out as linear street villages whose pasture and tilling lands were not contiguous with the house lots. Settlement was slow: by 1754 about 34 families had arrived. In just two decades, however, their number had risen to 841. At 86 College Highway one of the houses remaining from this period, the Joseph Moore House, ca. 1751, is a fine example of the town's early architecture.

Settlers to the southern part of Southwick mainly came from Hartford and Windsor, Connecticut and were more affluent than those who settled in the northern section of town. Because of this distinction the northern part of town was referred to in the 1700s as "Poverty Plains" and the Jog area was called "Mooretown".



Joseph Moore House, built ca. 1751. M.Barker photo.

Due to the late date of its settlement, there was no prolonged period during which the settlers focused on farming in Southwick. Rather farming was carried out simultaneously while the rivers were being used for powder mills, saw and gristmills. In fact, the town's first industry was established at the same time that it was being settled as a farming community. By 1775 Captain Matthew Laflin had built up to five powder mills on his property along Two Mile Brook in Southwick and into Westfield. Getting quickly to work, he sold his powder to the patriots throughout the Revolutionary War and local historians record that it was used specifically at the Battle of Bunker Hill. Reflecting its use, Two Mile Brook became known as Powder Mill Brook, later Great Brook. According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Reconnaissance Survey of



1982, Laflin's powder mill industry was the most extensive known operation of its kind in the Connecticut River valley in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It has been claimed that slaves were used to handle the twenty or so kegs of powder produced each day from these mills.

The area's road system improved considerably from the 1760s as settlement began to increase, and gradually a town center formed in the early 1770s on Route 10 at its intersection with the County Road (now Klaus Anderson) and College Highway. It was here that the first meetinghouse was built in 1773. While some families were settling and beginning farms, others were active as land speculators, and one of the places where their efforts were concentrated was around the Congamond Lakes. There speculators proposed draining the water to expand the area of fertile soil that was around and under them for sale.

Western Massachusetts gradually became more prosperous after the Revolutionary War, and Southwick was part of this pattern. Between 1776 and about 1810, the town's farmers continued to practice their mixed agriculture, but then two developments improved their prosperity significantly. First, broomcorn and tobacco were introduced as cash crops in the 1810s. The second was construction of a canal through the town that enabled farmers to ship their extra produce to markets in more urban Connecticut. The Hampshire and Hampden Canal was built in Southwick during this period connecting Connecticut's Long Island Sound at New Haven by the Farmington Canal to Westfield in 1829. In 1835 the Hampshire and Hampden canal was opened to Northampton passing through Southampton. After 1836 the two canal companies merged and became the New Haven and Northampton Company. The canal enabled farmers to intensify their cultivation of tobacco and increase production of market garden produce and dairy.

A measure of the town's prosperity is the selection of Isaac Damon as architect of the large and well-detailed new meetinghouse at 488 College Highway in 1824.



Congregational Church and School, 1920s postcard.

Further north on College Highway than the first meetinghouse, the new meetinghouse location was on Southwick Hill, which soon became the town's center. Architect Isaac Damon occupies a central role in western Massachusetts architecture. He was active in Northampton designing his own home, the First Congregational Church at 50 Elm Street in Springfield and the First Congregational Church in Blandford before coming to work in Southwick. His first commission about 1820 in Southwick appears to have been the Methodist Episcopal Church at 222 College Highway at Gillett Corner. Gillett Corner is the intersection of Vining Hill Road and College Highway and was named for the Gillett

family that occupied three of its four corners for most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After construction of the church, the Corner grew to become a secondary village.

Beside the new meetinghouse (the Congregational Church), the Center grew between about 1790 and 1840 with a Baptist Church and Federal and Greek Revival style houses along College Highway.



Methodist Episcopal Church by Isaac Damon, built ca. 1820.

The Hampshire and Hampden Canal proved an expensive form of transportation for Southwick with high maintenance costs for repairs, winter icing and even muskrat damage. Despite the efforts by its investors, including the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the canal was doomed. In 1848 the canal was closed and the canal company was authorized to construct a railroad, the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, commonly known as the Canal line. They used portions of the canal as their route, but did not adhere to it fully.

By 1860 the town Center extended east down Depot Road to a railroad station, which had been built for the Canal Line. Until construction of the railroad, Depot Street was known as Broad Street and was where those who had made wealth in the powder mills settled. Greek Revival, and Italianate style houses were built on both College Highway and Depot Road further adding to the architectural richness of the Center.

The dominant economic activity in Southwick remained tobacco cultivation during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many people began making cigars to supplement their incomes, and one of the biggest cigar makers was Charles J. Gillett from Gillett Corner. He, and the people who worked for him, made cigars in a cottage industry. Gillett then collected and distributed them to stores, hotels, and at events and public auctions where large groups of people met. Eventually most cigar-making in the region took place Westfield where it was industrialized, but it persisted as a cottage industry in Southwick through the Civil War. Tobacco itself continued to be grown at increasing levels, however. Some residents made gun powder or started making whips or whip lashes during the period, mostly as second jobs, but without a large river as a source of water power, Southwick could not become an industrial town as did Westfield and agriculture remained dominant.

By the turn-of-the-century, Swedish, Austrian, Italian and Polish joined the Irish who had previously settled in town when the canal and railroads were being built. The new immigrants were mainly farmers, and many also worked in Southwick's businesses and small factories. On the farms tobacco was the chief crop and farmers built drying sheds and stripping sheds where they processed their leaves and prepared them for shipment to the cigar factories. With the introduction of shade tobacco, competition with the Sumatran tobacco increased, and more barns were built throughout town to handle the larger crops.



Southwick tobacco workers, photographed ca. 1880.

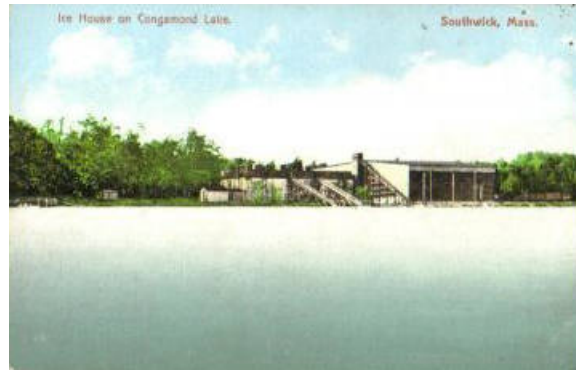
At the Congamond Lakes people began coming from the cities to spend their summers, and several hotels, a few boarding houses and entertainments were built to accommodate them. A railroad station near the Lakes made it convenient for summer guests to travel to the Lakes. The New Haven and Northampton railroad passed along the west shore of the Lakes and it became important in winters for the ice harvesters who were able to cut and ship the ice relatively quickly and efficiently. Southwick's was the largest ice harvesting enterprise in New England with ice shipped out on the railroad year round to New York, and from there by ship to places further south.



Southwick men preparing to cut ice on Congamond Lakes, ca. 1900

The size of a football field, some of the ice house foundations are known still to be under water. One ice-related building remains at 108 Congamond Road, now the Red Riding Hood's Basket restaurant.





Postcard of ice house on Lakes, ca. 1920.

If there were little building in the previous period, Southwick more than made up for it with building in the Center during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A new Consolidated School (1928), a new Firehouse and commercial buildings all appeared in the Center where College Highway and Depot Road intersect. New construction also took place at Congamond Lakes where summer cottages were built in the 1930s along its shores and in a concentrated development north of North Pond. Accordingly, new businesses to support the large summer population went up in the area. Recreational businesses like golf courses and boat rentals appeared along with restaurants in this part of Southwick.

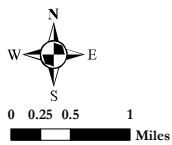
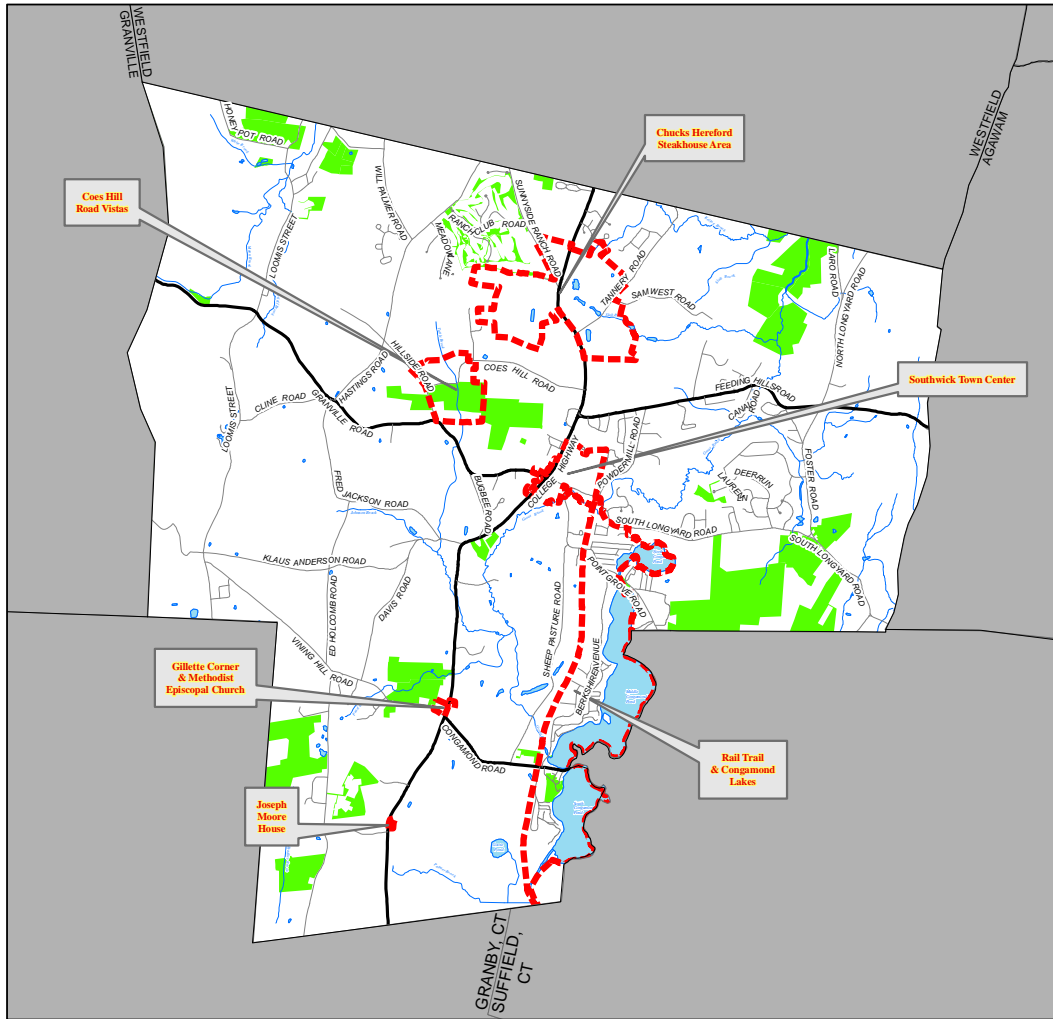


Postcard view of Lakes, ca. 1920.

Meanwhile tobacco growing among farmers remained strong, and one of the results of this strength was that farms were not broken up for development, as they often were in neighboring manufacturing towns. The Great Brook Valley was the prime tobacco-growing area. The business consolidated and grew more commercial when farmers contracted with one of several tobacco corporations to sell exclusively to them. Often the corporations had their names painted on the barns of their growers. Mechanization of farming and the corporation system allowed the farmers to produce greater quantities and to sell in a more secure manner buffered from the vagaries of the market.

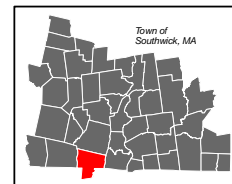
After World War II Southwick grew rapidly but haphazardly. Commercial buildings were mixed with residential buildings and poorly designed buildings were put up alongside historic homes. Housing subdivisions provided greatly needed homes for growing families, and a fair amount of farmland was split up for new neighborhoods. Today, however, Southwick retains historic features from many of its most significant periods of development. Farms and farmland, sometimes adjacent to commercial centers

and institutional centers, characterize much of the town, which has become a desirable place to live with easy access to Springfield and Hartford. The population grew by 25.3 percent to 9,603 between 2000 and 2006. Farmland with 4,042 acres dominates residential land with 3,159 acres. Most people (78%) commute out of town to work, but there is an employment base in town for retail sales, small manufacturers and service jobs. The Congamond Lakes account for 460 acres of Southwick's 20,267 total acreage, and are the recreational center of the town with swimming, fishing and boating activities. The town has three golf courses. A portion of a six-mile bicycle rail trail through town is slated to be opened in 2009 with the remainder completed in 2011.



## Town of Southwick

*Heritage Landscape Inventory Project,  
Connecticut River Valley*



- Historic Landscapes
- Permanently Protected Open Space



**Map Sources:**

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2009.  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Massachusetts Highway Department,  
and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, MassGIS.

**Funding:**

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment  
Department of Conservation Resources

## PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

In a public meeting on November 13, 2008, eighteen people were in attendance, including members of the Southwick Historical Society, Inc.; the Southwick Town Planner; the West Hampden Historical Society; Board of Selectmen; Town Planning Board; and residents, several of whom noted they were life-long. During the meeting audience members created a master list of forty-three heritage landscapes that fell within ten landscape categories, and then selected among those landscapes their priorities taking into account integrity, level of threat, public support, and accessibility. The six priority landscapes chosen by the meeting members were the **Town Center**, the **Moore House** in The Jog, the former **Chuck's Steak House Area** (also known as Slab Brook Plain), **Gillett Corner**, a **view of Sodom Mountain**, and the **Railroad Line at Congamond Lakes**.

### Gillett Corner



Gillett tobacco buildings, sorting shed/warehouse on left, converted barn on right, 2009.

The heritage landscape defined as “Gillett Corner” consists of the northwest lot at the intersection of College Highway and Vining Hill Road and the Methodist Episcopal Church at 222 College Highway. On the corner Gillett lot is the Greek Revival style house of Socrates Gillett built ca. 1835, a ca. 1880 cigar factory, two ca. 1880 tobacco barns, a 20<sup>th</sup> century storage building, and an 1872 stripping shed/warehouse. The complex of buildings is the only remaining tobacco processing site in Southwick. On the site are also the foundations of a ca. 1794 house of Rodolphus Gillett. He replaced that house with a second in 1800, and the latter was dismantled and moved to 73 Vining Hill Road in the 1980s. Rodolphus and Socrates Gillett were both farmers but there is no evidence that tobacco was among Socrates’s crops. It was his son Charles Gillett, born in the 1835 house, who introduced tobacco to the farm and became one of Southwick’s biggest growers and cigar makers in the 1870s, and for about sixty years thereafter he grew tobacco, processed it, and some of it he used for cigar-making. At first Gillett made cigars in his home; he then expanded and hired neighbors to make cigars in their homes. He sold the cigars from his horse and wagon and took them to private homes, and local gathering places for sale such as the Lakes, and cattle shows. Gillett took on salesmen and eventually began selling under a series of tobacco labels. Competition came from Sumatran tobacco and business slacked but then shade-grown tobacco was

introduced, cigar production picked up, and Charles Gillett's tobacco business grew enormously. For all of this he needed proper buildings so that the tobacco could be stored and stripped in barns, sorted by size and color into boxes in the sorting shed/warehouse, then shipped to manufacturers. In 1872 he built the first tobacco sorting shed/warehouse at Gillett Corner followed by two tobacco barns and a cigar factory. Since its heyday as a tobacco complex several of the buildings on the Gillett Corner have served commercial uses such as car repair, and storage.



Charles Gillett and family at Gillett Corner, Socrates Gillett House

The Methodist Episcopal Church is about a block north of Gillett Corner on the east side of College Highway. It is set closely to the highway on a slight rise. The church was built ca. 1820 and is attributed to architect Isaac Damon in a letter written by telescope lens inventor Amasa Holcomb, who was a Southwick resident at the time. It is a Federal style church with its gable front and shallow projecting gabled porch. The church lost its steeple about 1890 and had its fenestration altered to create a two-story interior rather than a single-story interior with a gallery. It has been vinyl sided and a triple door entry reduced to a single door entry.



Methodist Episcopal Church, Gillett Corner, ca. 1900 with its steeple and original entrances.

### *Opportunities:*

- Gillett Corner has the only remaining complex of tobacco barns and processing facilities in Southwick, a facet of the town's agriculture that is historically very important.
- The buildings are in fair to good condition.
- The sorting shed/warehouse and cigar factory is the only example of this building type in Southwick and among the oldest in the region.
- Southwick adopted the Community Preservation Act and recently voted to make CPA funding available to move the warehouse to prevent its demolition on the

site that is slated for commercial development. Moving will save the town's only 19<sup>th</sup> century stripping/shed warehouse/cigar factory.

- The Methodist Episcopal Church is in good condition on the exterior, and it has an active congregation.
- The Church is one of two in town by architect Isaac Damon, so it is an important architectural feature of the town although it has been altered considerably.

*Issues:*

- The other three corners have big-box and strip mall developments, leaving the Gillett tobacco complex the only commercially undeveloped lot.
- The cost of moving the sorting shed/warehouse is substantial. The Socrates and Charles Gillett House - a Greek Revival style house with a cottage industry history of cigar-making house - has been left out of the moving plans because of the additional cost along with several tobacco barns.
- Loss of the tobacco buildings and house at Gillett Corner will leave the Church more vulnerable to subsequent loss and removes much of the historical setting that gives the Church its early 19<sup>th</sup> century context.

*Recommendations:*

1. Since preservation of the Gillett house and tobacco barns on their site is probably no longer an option, it is recommended that the house and barns together with the sorting shed/warehouse be thoroughly documented through photography on the interior and exterior before moving and demolition take place.
2. It is recommended that the move be undertaken by a mover with successful experience in moving historic frame buildings.
3. It is recommended that once the town moves the tobacco shed/warehouse, that a preservation restriction be placed on the building, and then that it be offered for leasing. Preferably it would be leased to a farmer as an agricultural building, but leasing it out for other purposes that would not compromise its integrity would be suitable. The purpose would be to provide an income that would serve as a maintenance fund for the warehouse.
4. Due to the significance of architect Isaac Damon, the Methodist Episcopal Church should be the subject of an historic structure report (HSR). The Church's physical history and documentary history should be researched as part of the HSR so that the town can support the church in a restoration project that would remove the siding and replacement windows that obscure its age and architectural details, and bring the exterior of the building closer to



its ca. 1820 elevations. Documentation through photographs and historical texts will be critical.



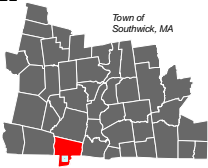
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- Historic Landscape
- Other Historic Landscapes
- Permanently Protected Open Space



## Gillette Corner & Methodist Episcopal Church

*Town of Southwick, Massachusetts,  
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project,  
Connecticut River Valley*



Map Sources:  
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2009.  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Massachusetts Highway Department,  
and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, MassGIS.  
Funding:  
The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment  
Department of Conservation Resources

## Joseph Moore House, 86 College Highway, in The Jog



First floor chamber with paneling and original paint colors, built ca. 1751.

The Moore House is located in the southern third of the town facing west on College Highway. It was built soon after Joseph Moore bought its original plot of land in 1751. At the time of the purchase the land was part of Massachusetts but in 1774 a boundary dispute with Connecticut arose and the area became part of Connecticut. In 1786 it was put within the town boundaries of Granby, Connecticut when that town was created out of Simsbury, Connecticut and the entire area was called The Jog for its step down into Connecticut. By 1804 The Jog returned to Massachusetts jurisdiction as it has remained, but not without an occasional dispute flare-up. The change in ownership of The Jog at the time of the Revolution caught Joseph Moore, so he served in the 18<sup>th</sup> Connecticut regiment, rather than for Massachusetts.

After the Revolution, the next generation of the Moore family, Roger Moore, occupied the house until the 1840s. It was owned briefly by a series of unrelated families until Robert and Mary Nicholson bought it in 1875. The Nicholsons were Irish immigrants from County Down and their family owned the house until the mid-1930s, about sixty years. During their tenancy one wall of the center chimney was removed and the original main entry door surround was removed and replaced. The house and land then suffered a period of neglect. In 1988 then owners Richard and Ruth Waterman divided the house from the land and left the house on a 40,000 square foot lot. In 1991 the Southwick Historical Society, Inc. was given the house, bought the land surrounding the house, and began its restoration. They also added an acre to its property on the north in 2003. Since beginning its work, the Society has uncovered stenciling and original paint colors on the interior. The house is significant as a fine example of a center chimney Georgian house and as a house dating from the settlement period in Southwick. It is also a document of mid-18<sup>th</sup> century construction techniques and decoration, so is a regional, as well as a local historical resource. A wing added to the house ca. 1835 is in the Greek Revival style, its porch resting on fluted Ionic columns. This wing is rented out as a single unit and provides security and some income to fund maintenance, if not restoration of the house.



Nicholson family in front of Moore House, photo ca. 1880.

### *Opportunities:*

- A partially restored 1751 house is being responsibly cared for by the Southwick Historical Society, Inc.
- Land formerly part of the Moore farmstead has been retained as open fields north, east and south of the house and they are in Chapter 61A protection. An application to place the land in the Agricultural Preservation Restrictions program is in process, which would provide permanent protection from development.
- The wing of the house is rented out, which brings in maintenance income and provides security, without compromising the historic interior of the main house.
- The house's neglect for decades meant that most of its significant interior features were not removed. In fact, the house has a great deal of its interior finishes from original stenciling, evidence of its early paint colors, paneling, and flooring. Structural information on its rare plank framing has also become known.
- Southwick adopted the CPA and preservation funds from this program may properly be directed to the Joseph Moore House restoration.

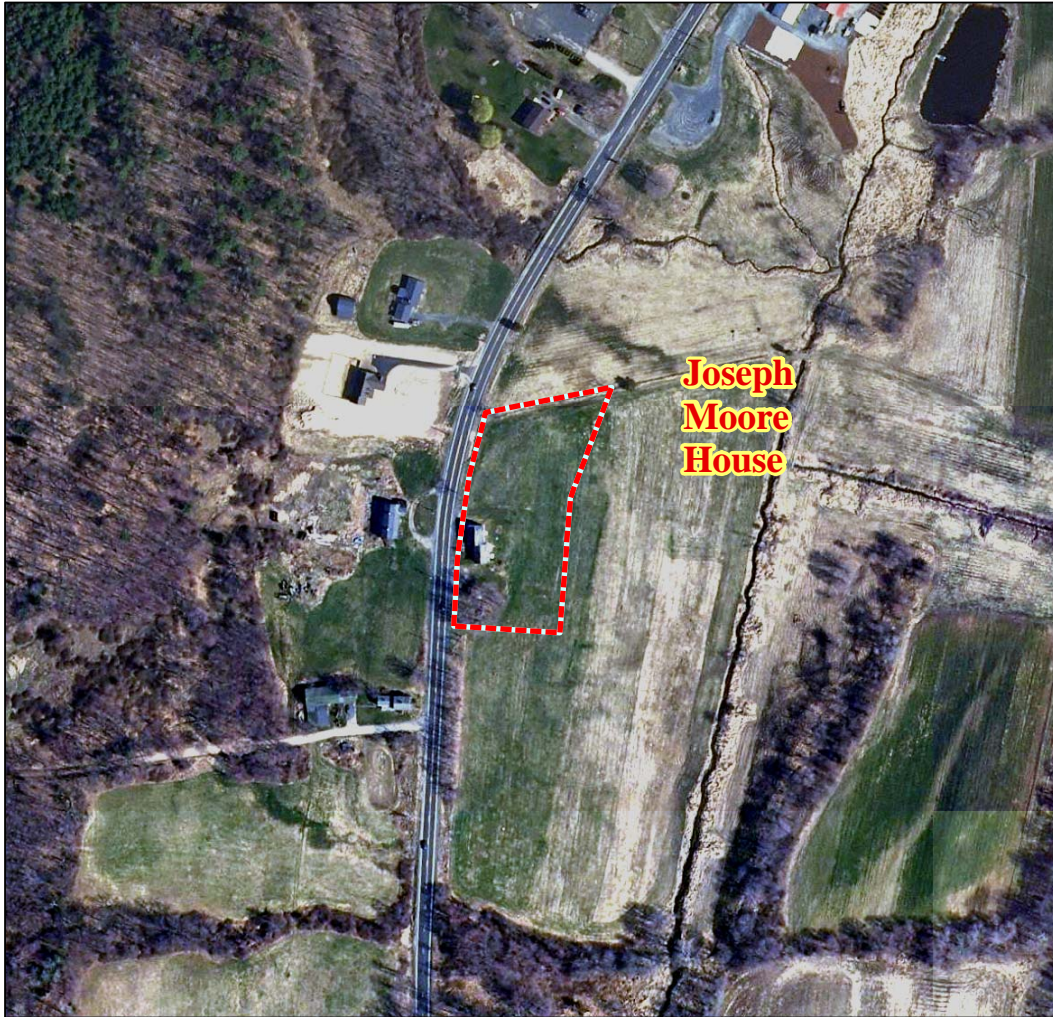
### *Issues:*

- The Society depends on bequests to further its restoration efforts, which are incomplete. This funding source, though welcome, is irregular and unpredictable.
- The house is not permanently legally protected. If the Historical Society ever has to sell the house, new owners could tear it down.
- The roadway, state Route 10, could be widened taking more of the already very limited land in front of the house, which would imperil its integrity.
- Unless the surrounding open land is protected through the Agricultural Preservation Restrictions program, there is a possibility that its owners could take it out of Chapter 61A, sell or otherwise develop it, if Southwick couldn't buy it. The heritage landscape associated with the Moore House could be lost.

*Recommendations:*

1. Develop a long-term preservation plan for the house, identifying necessary projects so that estimates can be obtained and fundraising efforts can occur with realistic goals in mind.
2. Nominate the Moore House to the National Register of Historic Places. Being on the National Register will make the property eligible for the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) and for the Johanna Favrot grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Register listing would also require Section 106 Review which would provide the opportunity for mitigation of impacts should widening of Route 10 (College Highway) occur.
3. Apply to the CPA for funding to serve as the match for the MPPF and the Trust's grant, or directly for phased work on the house.
4. Consider options such as making the house a single-property local historic district, so that it will be maximally protected and overseen for the future. Alternatively, consider placing preservation restrictions on the interior and exterior and arrange for Historic New England to hold the restrictions so they will be interpreted fairly and with expertise.
5. The town should prepare a strategy to acquire or to obtain conservation restrictions on the former Moore land now in 61A, should it not go into APR as expected. Agricultural land across the highway from the Moore House should be protected through an APR as well, to maintain the full rural setting of this important property.
6. The town should consider developing an agricultural overlay district along College Highway in The Jog where market garden and horse farms are among the remaining agricultural uses of the landscape to direct development away from the historic open spaces and quality farmland to areas of lesser visibility from the roadway, lesser quality soils.
7. The town should consider acquiring conservation restrictions on frontage property that is now in agricultural use, but otherwise unprotected, to avoid losing the roadside agricultural landscape in the area of the Moore House that is not in Chapter 61A or slated for APR. Specifically, the gambrel-roofed dairy barn and farmland directly across the road from the Moore house should be protected against loss.





**Joseph  
Moore  
House**

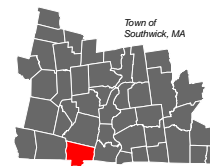


- Historic Landscape
- Other Historic Landscapes
- Permanently Protected Open Space



## Joseph Moore House

*Town of Southwick, Massachusetts,  
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project,  
Connecticut River Valley*



### Map Sources:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2009.  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Massachusetts Highway Department,  
and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, MassGIS.

### Funding:

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment  
Department of Conservation Resources

## The Rail Trail at Congamond Lakes



Rail Trail on left, nearing completion, 2009

The rail trail that passes on the west side of the Congamond Lakes extends six miles across Southwick in a north-south direction from Connecticut. It follows, in large part, the path of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad, which, in turn, had followed a portion of the path of the Hampshire and Hampden Canal. The story of this transportation corridor started in 1826 when the Farmington and the Hampshire and Hampden Canals were built to carry goods up and down between Northampton, Massachusetts and the Long Island Sound at New Haven, Connecticut. For just over twenty years, canal boats loaded with goods were pulled along the canal by horses on towpaths. These goods otherwise would have had to be carried overland to the Connecticut River or to the Hudson River for shipping to Long Island Sound. The canal was a boost for manufacturing and agriculture and proved the point that improved transportation would be beneficial to a small agricultural town like Southwick. But it was an expensive solution, so the canal was gradually closed between 1842 and 1848. Over the next ten years the Canal Company became the Northampton and New Haven Railroad, took in new investors, and began building their railroad in Connecticut reaching Simsbury, Connecticut in 1850. By 1855 they had passed through Southwick and reached Westfield. Two railroad stations were built in Southwick: one at the Lakes on Congamond Road and one at the eastern end of Depot Road. In 1887 the railroad was leased to the New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad. In 1969 it was made part of the Penn Central Railroad. With demise of Penn Central in the early 1970s, much of the line was abandoned. The Connecticut-Southwick section is now being converted to a rail trail, which is scheduled for completion in 2011.



Railroad Depot at Congamond Lakes, ca. 1852, now gone.

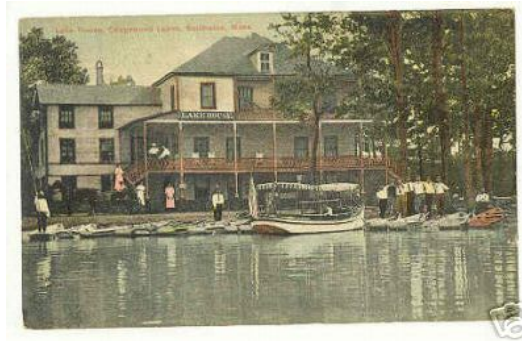


There are a number of canal and railroad structures that have not been demolished or lost, including a section of water-filled canal. Extant as well is a cattle pass that allowed cattle to be taken over the canal and later the railroad tracks, and a stone arch railroad bridge that has been strengthened to carry the rail trail. Natural history features of note include a popular bird watching area within a migratory flyway at the southern end of the trail, and a turtle breeding habitat in the area that has had restoration work done by the Conservation Commission. Although the Congamond shores have been developed with private housing, the Commonwealth-owned lakes themselves are an important natural part of this heritage landscape and provide a viewshed from many vantage points. Conserving this large water resource is part of the larger preservation picture.



Rail Trail north of Congamond Road, 2009.

The architecture that grew up around the Congamond Lakes on wooded lots and through which the rail trail will pass deserves mention as a contributing feature of this landscape, for the social and architectural history of second homes. The earliest building for the relatively well-to-do who came to the places like the Congamond Lakes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century were large hotels and amusement places such as beaches, dance halls, and roller skating rinks. According to local historian and archivist Patricia Odiorne, by 1894 three resort hotels were taking guests: the Lakes, the Pavilion, and the Lake House.



Lake House, Congamond Lakes, ca. 1890, now gone.



Ida Lee side-wheeler on Congamond Lakes.

The arrival of the automobile brought about The Arts and Crafts Era (1905-1940) when families came for whole summers. They built houses with exposed rafters at the roofline, screened in porches, used shingles and sometimes logs for the exterior siding and had fieldstone foundations and fireplaces. Simple versions of these cottages now used as year-round housing are found in the section north of North Pond.



Lake Cottages, Congamond Lakes, 2009.

The Pre-Interstate Era (1940-1955) introduced more substantial houses of minimal traditional designs that used air conditioning and fans so the porches and open feeling of the earlier cottages was replaced by tight construction in traditional but simple forms such as the one-and-a-half story Cape Cod house and the one-story Ranch house. This era of cottage housing may be seen along the shores of the Lakes often on the best lots. Then the Post-Interstate Era (1955-1968) found houses being built that could be used year round with all the amenities of urban and suburban living. They are Ranch style, and modified contemporary houses, with a few log-style homes as well. Much larger in scale than any of their predecessors, they are often landscaped and convey a suburban feel to their lots with two and three car garages, paved drives, and often little pavilions near the water. More recently, tear-downs have been taking place in which earlier cottages are demolished to be replaced with large scale, year round, lake homes.



Homes around ice-covered lake, 2009.

### *Opportunities:*

- Southwick has a soon-to-be-operating rail trail that crosses through an historic and scenic landscape. It will be a draw to many people as a recreational destination, and for interpretive materials – such as kiosks describing the former ice houses. Ice cream shops, bike shops and more may be expected to materialize and invigorate this section of the town.
- The rail trail will offer people a chance to see remains of the original canal and railroad that occupied the space from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They will be close to natural sites such as Goose Pond, an osprey and turtle habitat, and Quaking Bog that they will be able to see from nature trails, which will detour off the rail trail. Riders will have views of the Lakes without detours.
- The Lake Cottage eras of architecture will be visible and with interpretation may make today's built environment more comprehensible and appreciated. Preservation of these old cottages may find greater support among their owners.
- There is an opportunity for cyclists, runners, walkers and in-line skaters to extend their trips south into the Connecticut section of the trail and north into Westfield with the potential to go all the way to Northampton.
- The rail trail will enable residents to get around town with fewer car trips and more bike and walking trips, which will be an improvement to the environment and to public health.

### *Issues:*

- There is limited parking available for visitors to the trail, which could be an impediment to its success. An active trail is a better maintained and respected trail, so inadequate parking becomes a limitation on the use of the trail.

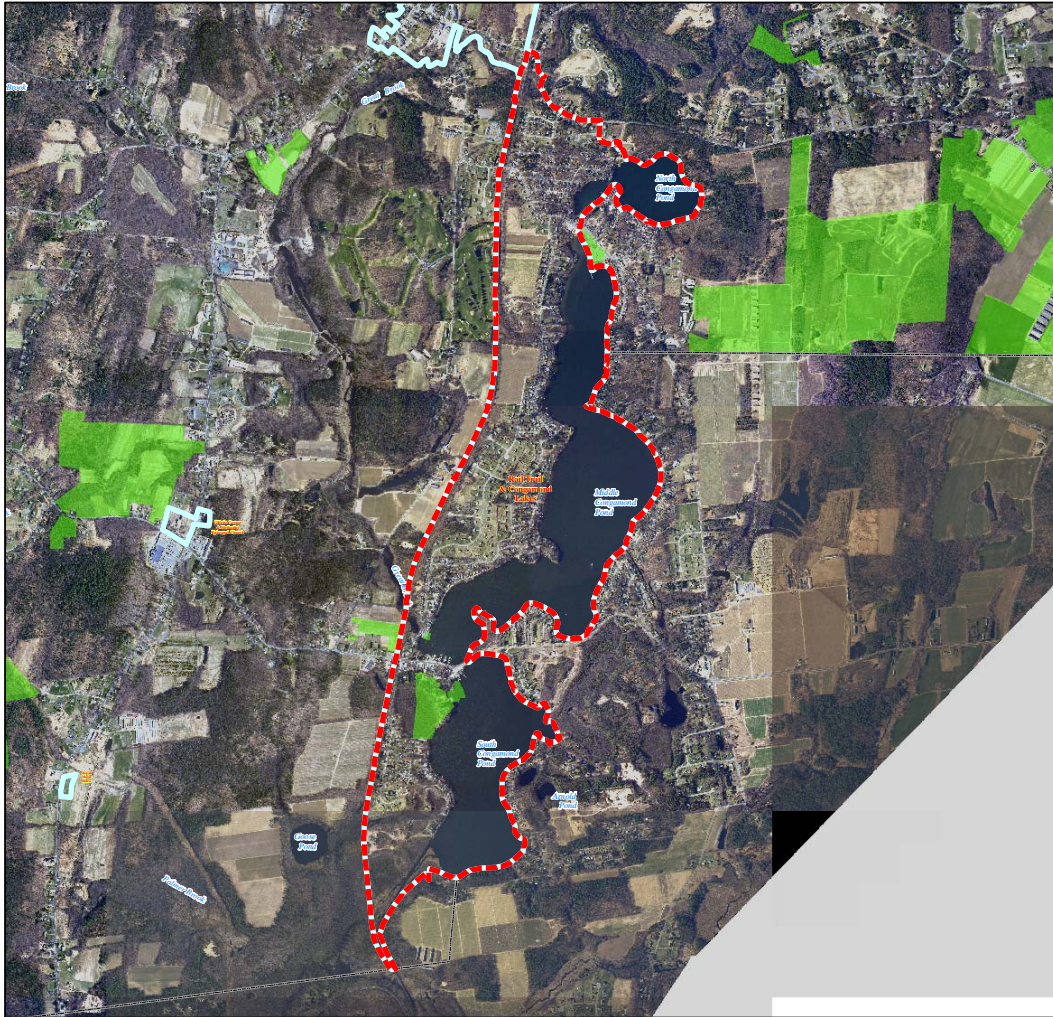
- There has been unauthorized ATV use in the wetlands at the southern end of the trail, which destroys the natural landscape and the opportunities for people to observe important habitats.
- Neighboring Westfield and Southampton have not pursued their sections of the rail trail with the same determination that Southwick has, which means that cyclists can not ride through to, or from, Northampton thereby breaking up the opportunity for a regional trail, which more people could enjoy.
- The Congamond Lakes are plagued by two invasive, non-native aquatic weeds: Eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spiratum*) and curly-leaved pond weed (*Potamogeton crispus*). The town is actively engaged in an aquatic weed management program. However, dense residential land use surrounding the lakes, coupled with very steep slopes, creates on-going conditions conducive to erosion, and to phosphorous entering the lakes.
- Early cottages are being torn down without regard to their architectural significance and being replaced by large, out-of-scale houses on small lots. Simultaneously, there is loss of the wooded roadsides, the birch groves and pine stands that characterized this part of town.

*Recommendations:*

1. Investigate additional parking for rail trail at the skating pond near Congamond Road, Feeding Hills Road, and on town-owned land at Point Grove Road to increase future use of the rail trail.
2. When events are planned for the rail trail invite City Council members from Westfield and Selectmen from Southampton to attend and ride the new trail. Attend City/town meetings in those two communities and advocate for completion of the trails for the positive regional effects they will have on commerce, tourism, recreation, and health.
3. The wetlands area would be a good target area for school biology fieldwork, which would reinforce its appreciation among students.
4. Continue design and construction of structural storm water management systems to treat runoff and improve water quality in the Congamond Lakes.
5. Enact Wetlands Protection Bylaw further to protect the wetlands bordering the rail trail from ATV use. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Small Grants provide funding for wetlands conservation and may be a good source for on-going attention to this area.

6. Continue watershed-wide education and outreach about residential best management practices to reduce pollutant loading of the lakes. Of greatest concern is to reduce nutrients, pesticides and herbicides from residential land care and to promote practices that are lake-friendly such as those described by the organization Greenscapes: [www.Greenskapes.org](http://www.Greenskapes.org). Encourage restoration of a native species vegetated buffer around the lakes, focusing on parcels with lawn to the water's edge. Vegetated buffers naturally filter pollutants from storm water runoff, control erosion and function as important wildlife habitat.
7. Consider enacting a Lake Cottage Overlay District that would limit new construction to footprint of existing cottage, or a percentage above it, to limit tear-downs and subsequent building of large scale houses on small lots.
8. Create a Southwick Design Review Board that would review all new construction and alterations in Lake Cottage area north of North Pond and on lakeside lots. This is an advisory Board only, but would work with owners to maintain character of the cottages and homes at Congamond Lakes. The Board would make recommendations to the Planning Board after its review.
9. Rehabilitate the section of the canal that remains so that it can be interpreted for visitors with wayside signs or kiosks. Consider reconstructing the railroad depot of 1852 to provide a visitors's center where the transportation corridor could be interpreted.





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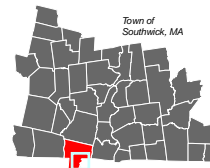
- Historic Landscape
- Other Historic Landscapes
- Permanently Protected Open Space



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## Rail Trail & Congamond Lakes

*Town of Southwick, Massachusetts,  
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project,  
Connecticut River Valley*



### Map Sources:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2009.  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Massachusetts Highway Department,  
and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, MassGIS.

### Funding:

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment  
Department of Conservation Resources



## Town Center



Town Center, west side of College Highway at intersection with Granville Road, ca. 1930, with street trees.

Southwick's Town Center is located on Southwick Hill along College Highway, Route 10 and Depot Road. Its focal point is the intersection of College Highway with Depot Road and Granville Road.



East side of College Highway at Depot Road, 2009

Southwick Center is about a half-mile section of College Highway approximately between numbers 526 and 435 College Highway and Depot Street from the intersection with College Highway and 36 Depot Street. It is an area of commercial, institutional and residential uses and its focal point is the Congregational Church.

This is the second Center in Southwick's history, the first being south on College Highway at the intersection with Klaus Anderson Road where the first meetinghouse was erected in 1793. The centrality of the meetinghouse in the town's civic and religious life is responsible for the early 19<sup>th</sup> century shift of the Center to its present location. Church and state were not separated until the 1830s and until then both functioned in the new 1824 meetinghouse and its meetinghouse lot that is now leased by the town as the town green. The meetinghouse is a Greek Revival style building with a front gable.

Two Georgian style houses remain in the Center from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. They are the Graves House, 457 College Highway, pre-1762; and the Heaton-Granger House, 5 Depot Street, ca. 1775;

Other buildings remaining are Federal style houses and a store that had been built in the Center prior to the meetinghouse. They include the R. G. Loomis House at 449 College Highway, ca. 1800; the Rockwell-Fletcher House, 17 Depot Street, ca. 1822; Reed's General Store, 478 College Highway, ca. 1800; the Roland Laflin House, 28 Depot Street, ca. 1820; and the Laflin-Phelps house at 20 Depot Road, ca. 1821.

The Greek Revival style was sparked by the 1824 meetinghouse but it was joined by Greek Revival style buildings that reinforced the Center's importance as a residential area. The Carmi Shurtleff House, 462 College Highway, ca. 1840; the Malone Homestead, Depot Street, ca 1845; the Cooley-Griffen House, 476 College Highway, ca. 1840; and the Gothic Revival main block of the Mills Law Office at 36 Depot Street, ca. 1800 and 1835.

The Center continued to attract new buildings during the later 19<sup>th</sup> century periods of the Italianate and Queen Anne styles, into the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the Colonial Revival and Art Deco. The O. A. Granger House 435 College Highway of 1870; the Edward Gillett House 467 College Highway, 1875; and the former John Boyle House 526 College Highway, 1875 are three examples of the Italianate style, although altered. The Queen Anne style is finely represented by the former Free Public Library, 475 College Highway, 1892; and its neighbor at 479 College Highway, the Southwick Inn, of 1906 has elements of both the Queen Anne and Colonial Revival styles. The former Saucony Gas station/Walt's garage represents the early 20<sup>th</sup> century's commercial construction on College Highway and the former Consolidated School, 456 College Highway, of 1927 in the Art Deco style is one of the Center's 20<sup>th</sup> century institutional buildings.

*Opportunities:*

- Southwick Center has preserved buildings from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that represent the Georgian through the Art Deco styles.
- The Center's four corner intersection of College Highway, Granville and Depot Roads has its four original buildings intact and includes a portion of the meetinghouse lot that has become Veteran's monument green.
- The 1824 meetinghouse that is now the Congregational Church is an outstanding example of the work of early American architect Isaac Damon.
- The Town has set a good example for reuse of historic buildings placing town offices in the Consolidated School and the preservation guidance that led the Westfield Bank to reuse the Carmi Shurtleff House when it was threatened with demolition.

- The Congregational Church as an organization is in good order with steady membership.
- The Town enacted a Business Restricted Zone on College Highway.
- The Community Preservation Act has been established.

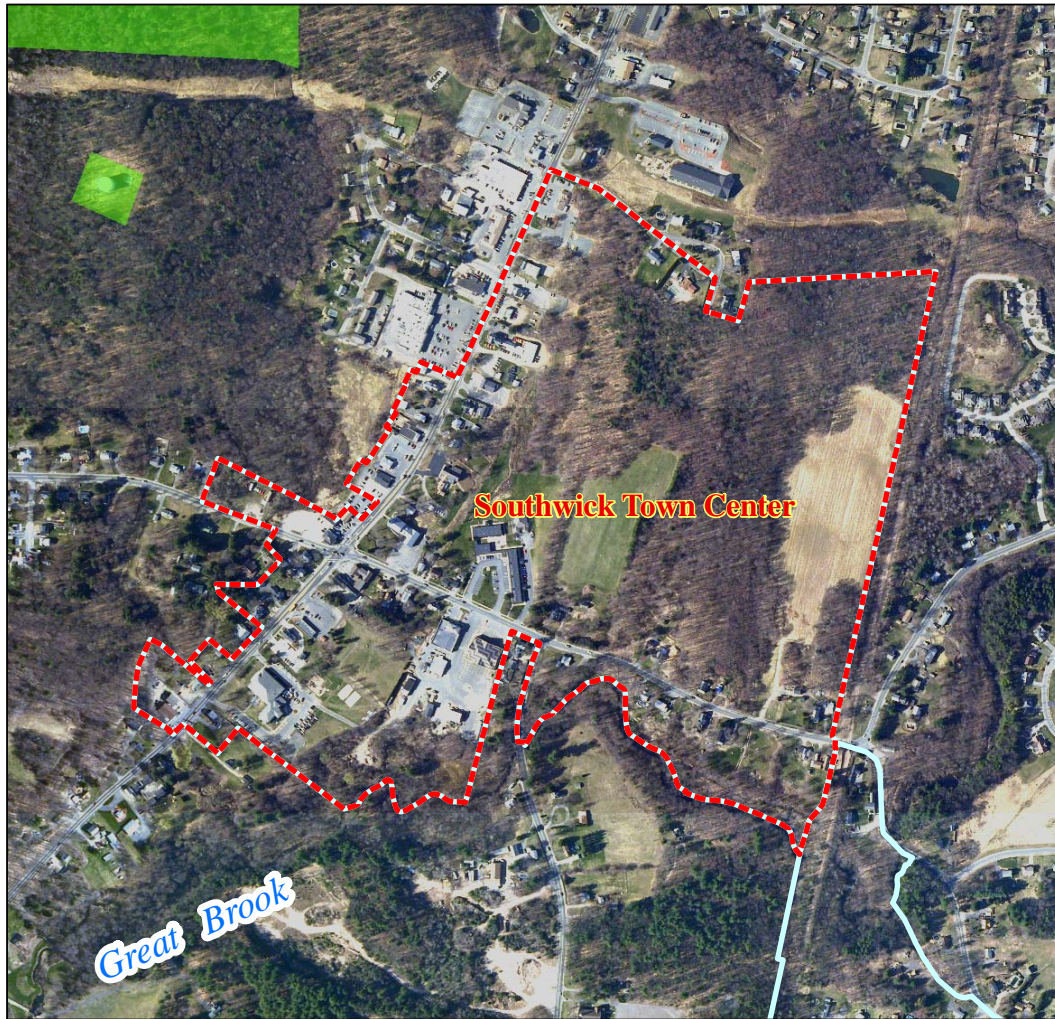
*Issues:*




- There are no preservation protections in place in the Center.
- Until recently, College Highway has been allowed to develop with little regard to the impact of development on its historic buildings. Commercial buildings were allowed cheek-by-jowl with historic houses; parking lots and drives, signs, mini-malls and manufacturing buildings have proliferated at the expense of the historic character of the Center.
- The Congregational Church has been partially vinyl-sided.
- A proposed State Highway widening in 2010 will have an impact on the Congregational Church, the Veteran's monument green, the Southwick Inn, the Free Public Library, Reed's General Store and other historic buildings set close to the road by taking additional land. Loss of any space between the buildings, green, and the roadway would be highly detrimental to these historic places.
- There has been a noticeable loss of street trees that formerly shaded the Center. The loss of these trees makes for a more barren commercial landscape and heightens the contrast between new and old.
- The Green has been used as a place on which to place public monuments so that it has lost much of its value as an open space.

*Recommendations:*

1. The core of the Center, focusing on the municipally-owned resources and non-profit institutions should be listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district. This would enable the Town and non-profits to undertake restoration and rehabilitation work using Community Preservation Act funds as matching funds. Important to its preservation, National Register listing will trigger a Section 106 Review of the impact of state road widening on the historic properties.
2. Once a National Register Historic District is in place for the Center, or one has been found eligible, the Town can encourage owners of income-producing buildings that contribute to the historic district to consider rehabilitation using the 20% federal investment tax credits. Examples of eligible buildings would be the Southwick Inn, Reed's General Store, and possibly Wilderness Experience.

3. A preservation plan should be made for the Center that would address protection of the green associated with the Congregational Church from any additional monuments or objects. It is the open green space that marks the borders of the meetinghouse lot and constitutes the only green or common land in the Center. It is recommended that the Town place a moratorium on adding monuments to the green until a preservation plan has been prepared for it and a policy developed for future memorials.
4. A second municipal site for monuments and commemorative objects should be designated for the future.
5. It is important for a preservation plan to be developed for the Free Public Library, which is not in active use. This building is one of the anchors of the Center and to lose it would seriously undermine the Center's historic character.
6. The Town might adopt an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District for the Center to encourage reuse of existing buildings for new uses. Both Wilderness Experience and the Westfield Bank provide good examples for the benefit to Southwick Center of such an overlay district. Incentives to the business owners can help find new uses for existing buildings and maintain much of the character of the Center.
7. The Town should consider establishing a Local Historic District minimally to include the Congregational Church, the Veteran's Monument Green, the Southwick Inn, Reed's General Store, and the Free Public Library building. With the preservation funding from the Community Preservation Act, it would be possible to offer owners – private, non-profit, and municipal - of these buildings low-interest loans or outright small grants to maintain and restore the buildings according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Such a district and its accompanying financial support might enable the Church, for instance, to paint rather than vinyl side its extensive elevations, or, for instance, assist the Inn to maintain its architectural trim and paint.
8. The Town should gradually improve the Center by planting street trees, working with business owners to design landscape improvements to their parking lots and frontage. The trees and landscaping will set off the Center with an improved "village" appearance and help mitigate the effects of previous commercial choices.
9. By creating a Smart Growth Overlay District on College Highway at the outskirts of the Center, new development may again be directed to appropriate areas without spreading to open space and farm land.



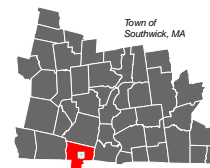
-  Historic Landscape
-  Other Historic Landscapes
-  Permanently Protected Open Space



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## Southwick Town Center

*Town of Southwick, Massachusetts,  
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project,  
Connecticut River Valley*



### Map Sources:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2009.  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Massachusetts Highway Department,  
and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, MassGIS.

### Funding:

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment  
Department of Conservation Resources



## Chuck's Steak House/Slab Brook Plain



Tobacco Barns viewed from College Highway.

The heritage landscape identified in the public meeting as Chuck's Steak House Area might better have been identified as the tobacco fields, barns and open space in Slab Brook plain. Chuck's Steak House is a former dairy barn on College Highway that was converted to restaurant use in the 1970s. Currently vacant, the 20th century gambrel-roofed barn and a silo on the lot contribute to the agricultural theme of the heritage landscape surrounding it.

Slab Brook Plain extends to the east, south and north of the intersection of College Highway and Sunnyside Road with Tannery Road cutting across it. This section of town was originally the outer commons belonging to Westfield settlers who had adequate land within their township. The first settler only appeared in 1734, but as additional farmers arrived they settled along College Highway, and then along Feeding Hills Road. A map dating 1809-1824 surveyed by Amasa Holcomb of Southwick indicates that Tannery Road had not been constructed by 1824, and as late as 1895 there was only one farm on Tannery Road. In contrast, there were six farms on College Highway between Tannery Road and Feeding Hills Road. This does not mean that the area wasn't cultivated prior to the 1890s but that a few farmers owned most of the land. By 1870 Tannery Road had three farms and there were four farms south of its junction with College Highway.

Never densely settled, today Slab Brook Plain consists of the property of the Southwick Golf Course with frontage on College Highway, and two sections of agricultural land that surround Chuck's Hereford Steak House on both sides of College Highway.

In 1926 the 18-hole Southwick Golf Course opened on former Fowler farmland at 439 College Highway stretching between Tannery and Sunnyside Roads and abutting the north boundaries of agricultural land now in private ownership. The golf course is in Chapter 61B and the abutting agricultural land is in Chapter 61A. There are six tobacco barns on one of the properties. The third section of agricultural land is located on both sides of College Highway and South of Tannery Road. It is privately owned, unprotected tobacco acreage traversed by Slab Brook, and on it are six more, well-preserved tobacco barns.

*Opportunities:*

- The open fields at each side of College Highway populated with well-preserved tobacco barns are the most scenic and vivid features of the Town's agricultural past and part of its on-going, though diminished, farming life.
- The Southwick Golf Course bordered with woodland contributes to the rural appearance of this section of town.
- More than half of the land that makes up this heritage landscape is under Chapter 61 protection.
- The Steak House, already converted to restaurant use, is on the market and may attract a new owner, rather than be demolished. It is a local landmark.
- Southwick has adopted the Community Preservation Act.

*Issues:*

- One lot at the corner of College Highway and Tannery Road has already been taken out of Chapter 61A.
- Land along Tannery Road is privately owned and zoned industrial. It is a sand-and-gravel soil, which in certain economic circumstances could push it out of agriculture use and into industrial or commercial operations.
- There is no protection on the major portion of agricultural land on the east side of College Highway.
- The Steak House is in private Connecticut corporation ownership, is unprotected and vulnerable to demolition if not sold in a timely manner.
- The Golf Course is in private ownership and could be removed from Chapter 61 and its land developed.

*Recommendations:*

1. The Town's Agricultural Commission should continue to advocate for farmers, to assist them in gaining access to state agricultural programs such as the Farm Viability program, and to act as an information center on farmland when it comes up for sale, so that those who want to establish farms in the community will have an opportunity to buy or lease land.
2. The Town should be in on-going contact with the owners of the Steak House, so that it might offer assistance to potential new owners in permitting and preservation of the buildings and structure on the site. Identifying a restaurant-

owner who uses local produce and livestock to support the agricultural community might be a good fit.

3. The Town should work with the owner of the unprotected agricultural land to place the land in the APR program, and failing that, to place it in Chapter 61A. The Town should consider developing a Chapter 61 policy so that it may exercise its right of first refusal to purchase the land or to purchase conservation restrictions on it.
4. The Town should consider working with the owners of the agricultural land and tobacco barns on Tannery Road and College Highway to create a National Register Historic District. The Investment Tax Credits could act as an incentive for their participation as might the ability to protect their land from additional widening of College Highway.
5. The Town should be prepared to acquire any of the Chapter 61 land if it is to be taken out of the program, or to acquire conservation restrictions on the land prior to its being sold. The Town, in this regard, should maintain its connections with the Winding River Land Conservancy, which can act as a financial and administrative ally in conserving land.
6. The Town, alternatively, should work to acquire conservation restrictions on the frontage of the unprotected land, to forestall its sale and development along College Highway. The town might consider then, implementing a Back Lot Subdivision bylaw that would apply to this property and keep some of the open space at the roadside, with any development further back on the lots as they were divided.
7. The Town's Open Space Committee should work with the Southwick Conservation Director and land owners in protecting ecologically sensitive parcels and wetlands around Slab Brook and elsewhere in town. The Town should consider adopting a Scenic Overlay District for this heritage landscape that could work in tandem with their existing Open Space Residential Development Bylaw. Together they would help assure that if it were to be developed, new construction – residential or commercial - would be located out of view of the roadways, maintaining as much of the open space as possible.



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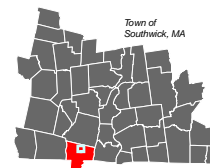
- Historic Landscape
- Other Historic Landscapes
- Permanently Protected Open Space



Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## Chucks Hereford Steakhouse Area

*Town of Southwick, Massachusetts,  
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project,  
Connecticut River Valley*



### Map Sources:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2009.  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Massachusetts Highway Department,  
and  
the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, MassGIS.

### Funding:

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment  
Department of Conservation Resources



## Coes Hill Road Vistas



View to east on Coes Hill Road with mountains in distance, 2009.



View to west on Coes Hill Road of agricultural fields on hillsides, 2009.

Soon after leaving College Highway and traveling west on Coes Hill Road, one enters a landscape of agricultural fields, farmhouses and barns of 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Southwick, with a few contemporary homes along the roadside. These are the rolling hills of the town, cultivated not for tobacco but for dairy and livestock farms for generations and there is a westward vista of hillsides and fields and at the highest point a view of Sodom Mountain, considered a heritage landscape by Southwick residents.

At the junction of Coes Hill Road and Hillside Road the vista towards the east includes fore- and middle ground of open fields, and background of distant mountains. Much of the value of this landscape is attributable to its private owners who at the eastern end of the road have put their land in Chapter 61A, and some of the most critical middle-ground land into the APR program.

Much of the land of northern Southwick was the common land for Westfield's residents during the Plantation Period (1620-1675) but was not used until much later when the population increased to the point that subsequent generations need it for settlement. The first settler in the northern section of Southwick in 1734 in what was known as Poverty Plain was Samuel Fowler. Gradually farms were established after the Revolution along



the main roads College Highway, Granville Road, and Feeding Hills Road and from the 1830s through 1870 many of the east-west connector roads were put in and laid out as farms, including Coes Hill Road. By 1870 the valley crossed by Coes Hill Road was being farmed by three families and a fourth family was farming the hillside at the western end of Hillside Road.

Immigration at the turn of the century brought many farmers into Southwick who started out working on tobacco farms and in tobacco warehouses and gradually bought their own land. Several generations of these farming families have since cultivated this area of Southwick.

*Opportunities:*

- There are vistas of considerable beauty to both east and west on Coes Hill Road and include Sodom Mountain to the west.
- Some of the most important land in the foreground of the vista is protected under the APR program. Other sections of land along the eastern end of the road are in Chapter 61A.
- There are historic farmsteads on both Coes Hill Road and Hillside Road dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which are in active agricultural use.

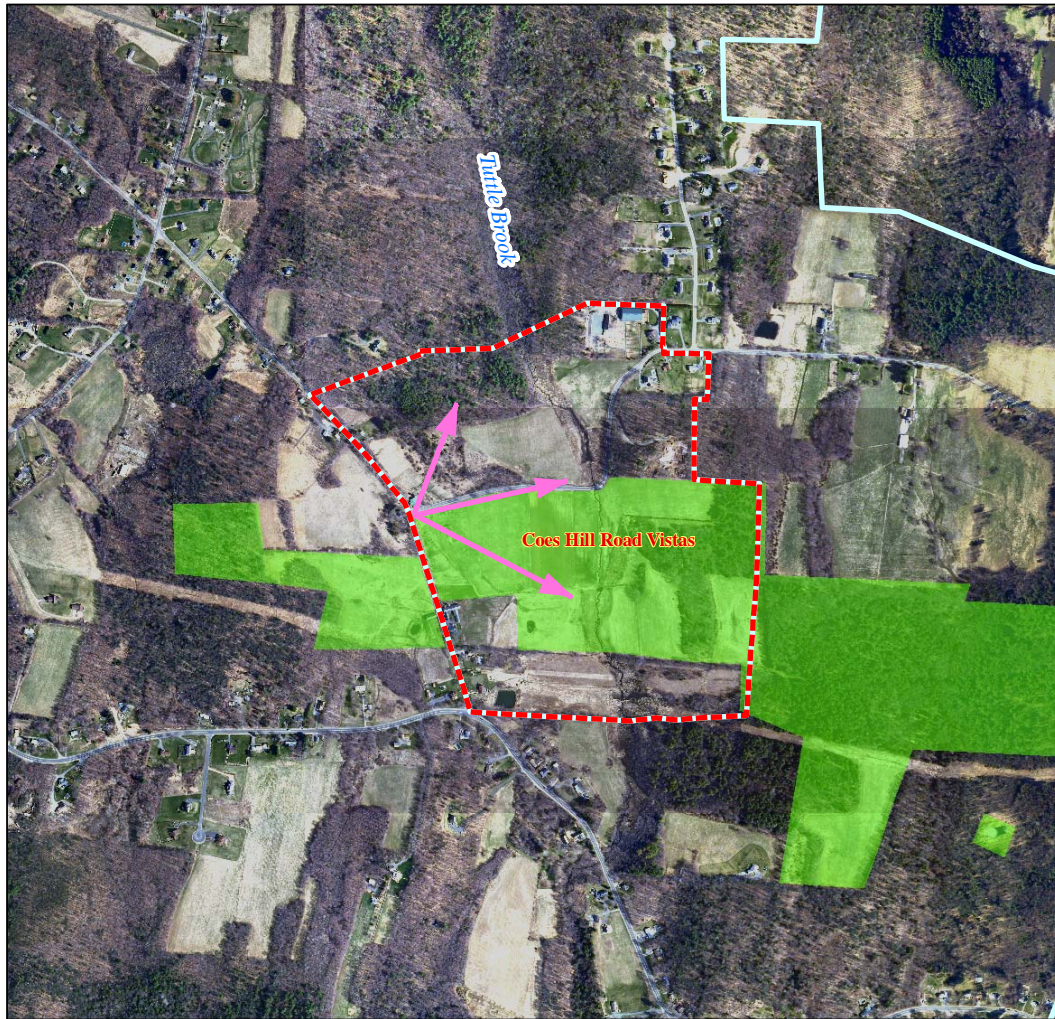
*Issues:*

- There is unprotected land in private ownership on Coes Hill Road whose sale and development would have an adverse effect on the vistas in both directions.
- The land in Chapter 61A could be taken out of its protective status. If the Town couldn't buy it, it could be developed and the pristine vistas lost or severely compromised.

*Recommendations:*

1. Coes Hill Road should be designated as one of Southwick's Scenic Roads.
2. The Agricultural Commission could advocate for the farmers of Coes Hill Road (and elsewhere in town). The Commission would work with them to identify the major threats to their on-going farming, come up with solutions used elsewhere across the state, bring up alternative crops, barn reuse ideas, and introduce new supportive programs when they are generated. The Commission would encourage farmers to protect their land and help them make program applications.
3. The Town should work with the owners of the unprotected land to encourage them to put the land in the APR program, or Chapter 61A, if appropriate, or to place conservation restrictions on the land in return for tax deductions for charitable contributions.

4. The ability to transfer their development rights from the landscape of Coes Hill Road to other commercially developed or developing sections of town would be a benefit to the farms along the road at the same time as it would help to preserve the vistas from view-blocking buildings.
5. Southwick should consider enacting a Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw that would protect the vistas in both directions on the road by reviewing any new construction for an adverse effect on the vistas. The Bylaw could help protect as well the historic farmsteads on the road.
6. Alternatively, Southwick might consider adopting an Agricultural Overlay District Bylaw that would require any new subdivisions be clustered on the land that is least suitable for agriculture, screened by vegetative buffers, and that existing views of open agricultural land be preserved.
7. Coes Hill Road properties should be nominated as an historic district to the National Register of Historic Places.
8. The Town could publicize the Investment Tax Credit program for properties that contribute to the National Register historic district, which would allow income-producing buildings such as barns to receive major rehabilitations and to deduct 20% of the value of the rehabilitation from their owners' taxes.



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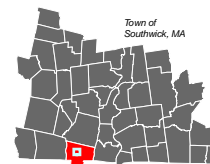
- Historic Landscape
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Pioneer Valley Planning Commission

## Coes Hill Road Vistas

*Town of Southwick, Massachusetts,  
Heritage Landscape Inventory Project,  
Connecticut River Valley*



### Map Sources:

Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2009.  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation, Massachusetts Highway Department,  
and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment, MassGIS.

### Funding:

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and the Environment  
Department of Conservation Resources

## PART II: PLANNING FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

### INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION

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

Current Listings: Southwick has recorded 70 inventory forms at the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). They range in date from 1751 to 1948 and only three houses from the 20<sup>th</sup> century have been surveyed. They have, however, surveyed seven agricultural landscapes with tobacco barns. There is inventory work in progress at the time of this report which will approximately double the number of properties in their inventory.

Recommendations: Southwick needs to continue to apply for funding through the Survey and Planning Grant to further their inventory work. Use of the Community Preservation Act preservation funds as a match for this grant program is one mechanism available to the Historical Commission. It is recommended that the Southwick Historical Commission survey the post-World War II subdivisions in their community, several streets of which retain their integrity and represent well this period in architectural history. They should also begin to inventory the 1930s Lake Cottages which have retained a measure of integrity and they could complete archaeological forms for the Ice House remains under the Lakes. The remaining one-room school houses should have forms completed as should all the farmhouses and the two covered bridges on the master heritage landscape list.

#### *2. National and State Register Listing*

Current Listings: Southwick has one property on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, the Laflin-Phelps Homestead at 20 Depot Street, which was listed in 2005.

Recommendations: The Moore House and early homes throughout the town need to be listed individually on the Register. Moore House is a top priority. After the Moore House, the Southwick Center should be listed as an historic district, but it should be carefully limited to the concentration of historic buildings, so that it is a successful nomination. Other potential historic districts that should be considered are Coes Hill Road and the Chuck's Steak House/Slab Brook Plain area. It is recommended that Southwick undertake a preservation plan to provide for its remaining historic neighborhoods, agricultural areas, town center and Lakes area.

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

Each town involved in the Connecticut Valley 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 provides a sound resource list for future documentation activities and potential funding opportunities.

- Agricultural
- Civic
- Transportation
- Residential
- Archaeological
- Industrial
- Natural
- Commercial
- Burial
- Institutional
- Open Space and Recreation

## TOWNWIDE PLANNING AND ZONING TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Detailed descriptions of planning tools and techniques can be found in the Department of Conservation and Recreation Terra Firma #7 – Taking Action: A Toolkit for Protecting Community Character (2009). This document includes the following sections: Municipal Roles in Landscape Preservation; Thinking in Context: Comprehensive and Open Space Planning; Engaging the Public; and Defending the Resources: Laws, Bylaws and Regulations. This document should be used in conjunction with this report as a guide to acting on the specific recommendations for Priority Heritage Landscapes included in Part I.

The following Community Planning Checklist provides an overview of planning and zoning that currently exists within the town of Southwick, zoning changes that are currently underway, and recommendations for further changes that were included in this report and other planning documents.

### COMMUNITY PLANNING CHECKLIST TOWN OF SOUTHWICK

IMPLEMENTED	BUILDING BLOCK	NOTES
*	Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND)	
	Transit Oriented Development (TOD)	
✓	Mixed Use Village Districts	
*	Planned Unit Development (PUD)	
*	Adaptive Reuse and Infill Development	Town Center
*	Tax Incentive Programs and Business Improvement Districts	
✓	Open Space Residential Development	Add provisions for backlot development
*	Accessory Apartments	
	Inclusionary Zoning	
*	Home Based Business Bylaw	
*	Brownfields Inventory	
	Brownfields Redevelopment Projects	
*	Transfer of Development Rights	Agricultural Overlay District for College Highway/ Joseph Moore House/ Coes Hill Road
✓	Agricultural Committee	
*	Right to Farm Bylaws	Town-wide
*	River Protection Overlay District/Wetlands Protection Bylaw	Rail Trail at Congamond Lakes
✓	Community Preservation Act	Relocate Gillett Corner buildings;



		Methodist Episcopal Church Historic Structure Report; Joseph Moore House
*	Scenic Upland-Vista Overlay District/ Lake District Zoning	Rail Trail at Congamond Lakes; Chuck's Steak House Area; Coes Hill Road
*	Bike and Pedestrian Features	
*	Traffic Calming Measures	
✓	Water Supply Protection District	
*	Low Impact Development	
✓	Stormwater and Erosion Control Bylaw	
	Stormwater Utilities	
✓	Commercial Site Plan Review	Expand to residential construction and alterations in Congamond Lakes area
*	Commercial Performance Standards	
*	Urban Growth Boundaries / Limits of Sewer and Water Extensions	
*	Green Building Standards	
	Municipally Owned Renewable Energy	
*	Adoption of Smart Growth Zoning Districts (Ch. 40R)	Town Center and College Highway
✓	Intergovernmental Compact+	Valley Vision MOA
*	Local Historic District / National Register of Historic Places	Joseph Moore House; Town Center; Chuck's Steak House Area; Coes Hill Road
	Architectural Preservation District	
	Demolition Delay Bylaw	
*	Scenic Roads Bylaw/Designation	Coes Hill Road

- ✓ Successfully Implemented  
 □ Currently Considering  
 \* Should Consider Adoption

### *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: Southwick has three current plans. There is an Open Space and Recreation Plan, from February of 2009 that is conditionally approved; a Local Natural Hazards Mitigation Plan, dated January of 2008; and a Community Development Plan, from June of 2004.

Recommended Plans: It is recommended that Southwick prepare a new comprehensive or master plan. Comprehensive planning provides an important frame of reference for a town's land use decisions and incorporates all of a community's issues into an integrated plan. Heritage Landscapes need to be made a part of the comprehensive plan since the town uses the plan to guide its activities related to community character, historic preservation, environmental health, economic viability and growth. The future of the

Heritage Landscapes and the values they contribute should be addressed within multiple perspectives, not solely as historical assets of the community.

## **IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

### *Outreach, Education and Interpretation*

In order to create a community of advocates, we need to raise public awareness and broaden the base of support. This includes developing opportunities to learn about and celebrate the places and history of the town, as well as to care for them.

### *Collaboration*

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

### *Technical Assistance*

Regulations and creative solutions for heritage landscapes are constantly changing and emerging. Public and private agencies offer technical assistance with the many issues to be addressed, including DCR, MHC, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Pioneer Valley 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.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Heritage Landscape Reconnaissance Report for Southwick has undertaken an analysis of the priority heritage landscapes identified by the community, their place in the town's history and how the town might approach their preservation and conservation. But many of the report's recommendations can also be applied to the landscapes forming the master list, and – as the master list is by no means exhaustive – to those heritage landscapes that are yet to be identified.

One of the most important starting points for protecting Southwick's heritage landscapes is to do further research on all the properties that have been identified. And the best way to do that, is to bring the inventory up to date. Once the inventory work has been sufficiently established the overall context in which the landscapes exist are more easily described and their importance conveyed to town residents, town government members, and to the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

Southwick has several strong advocates for preservation and they have accomplished some important projects in the recent past. The Southwick Historical Commission was

instrumental in placing the Laflin-Phelps house on the National Register and members have been advocating for preservation of tobacco barns, of a tobacco sorting warehouse; they helped in the passing of the Community Preservation Act and the Scenic Roads Bylaw. The Historical Society deserves commendation as well for the work it has accomplished on the Moore House. Additionally, the town accomplished several of the goals of its 1997 Master Plan including establishing the position of town Conservation Director, adoption of the CPA, and developing an alliance with the Winding River Land Conservancy. Finally, individuals have put their land into APR and the Chapter 61 program and have taken private measures to maintain their historic buildings.

To capitalize on the work in progress, it is important to use this report to alert town government members, committees and commissions to the existence and value of the town's heritage landscapes, so distribution and discussion of the report will be an important next move.

This is all part of generating community support, and community support is essential to preserving the town's heritage, be it tobacco barns, cottages, Congamond Lakes or the fields that have been worked for several hundred years. Publicizing the report through a series of articles, presentations, and making it available to residents will be an important effort. Creating public awareness is public education and it can be approached through the schools, through the press, on-line and at special events. Above all, leading the community to recognize that it does indeed have heritage landscapes and that they make up the town's attractive character is a goal that this report can help accomplish.

Among the top three recommendations are that Southwick should invest in a new Master Plan. A number of recommendations from the 1997 plan have been accomplished and it is a good time to bring new techniques to bear, as well as to review the recommendations that were not accomplished. The second recommendation is use of the National Register to provide some protection for buildings in the Center, and for the Moore House against forthcoming highway work. Third, the town should consider developing a Chapter 61 policy that prioritizes parcels. The Town could utilize its right-of-first-refusal option under Chapter 61 to purchase these parcels if they become available. The right-of-first-refusal provides the Town with the opportunity to match a fair market value offer for the property or transfer the right to a public agency or conservation organization to protect the property. At the same time, when possible, protecting agricultural land through the APR program is recommended for the town's remaining farmland, which provides so much of its character.

## **RESOURCES**

Reading the Land Massachusetts Heritage Landscape a Guide to Identification and Protection, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, 2008.

Terra Firma #1- An Introduction to Historic Landscape Preservation Department of Conservation and Recreation Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, n.d.

Terra Firma #3- Putting Historic Landscape Preservation on Solid Ground: Identifying and Protecting Historic Roads, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, n.d.

Terra Firma #5 Putting Heritage Landscape Preservation on Solid Ground: Stones that Speak: Forgotten Features of the Landscape, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, n.d.

Terra Firma #7 - Taking Action: A Toolkit for Protecting Community Character  
Department of Conservation and Recreation Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, 2009.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances, Draft Copy March 11, 2009, typescript.

\_\_\_\_\_. MHC Reconnaissance Survey Reports, typescript,

## APPENDIX A

### SOUTHWICK HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

The following chart presents the master list of Heritage Landscapes selected by Southwick residents at the public identification meeting. Please note that the landscapes with asterisks were those identified as the Priority Heritage Landscapes at the meeting.

HERITAGE LANDSCAPES	NOTES
<b>AGRICULTURAL</b>	
Brozska Farm	On Hillside Road
Calabrese Market Garden	
Deveno stables and tobacco farms	South side of College Highway
*Slab Brook Plain	Tobacco barns and agricultural land around Chuck's Steak House
Arnold farm land	
Sussman's farmland	
Feldman Farm	
"Flats" or Calabrese-Tuckahoe land	on South Longyard Road
Putnam Farm or Blossoming Acres	
Old Lambson Farm	
<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL</b>	
Ice house foundations	Under water at Congamond Lakes
Monk Cave/charcoal kiln/root cellar at Honey Pot Road	Actual purpose is unknown
Stage Coach Inn foundations	
Powder mills on Great Brook	18 <sup>th</sup> century
<b>BURIAL</b>	
Coes Hill Road cemetery	Some of town's long-term farming families here.
Old Cemetery	Early town burials.
<b>CIVIC</b>	
*Town Center Library Griffen House Southwick Inn Holcomb House Dr. Finsen House Barnes House Old Day Care House Baptist Parsonage Congregational Church Green Balch/Reed's Store Walt's Texaco Keenan House	Concentration of the town's historic properties are located in the Town Center.



Town Hall Gillette Flower Farm Office Police Station Mason Store	
The Jog	Of historical interest for boundaries & ownership
<b>COMMERCIAL</b>	
Walt's Texaco	Early town gas station College Highway
Saunders boat house on Lake	Long-owned by same family
Congamond General Store	
*Gillett Corner with house, stripping barn, cigar factory and two barns	Area slated for development
<b>INDUSTRIAL</b>	
Dam at Logi Pond	
Blacksmith shop	on Depot Road
<b>INSTITUTIONAL</b>	
One-room school houses at : the Jog, Klaus Anderson Road, Hillside, and North Longyard Road	
<b>NATURAL</b>	
Goose Pond Area	Next to the rail trail
View across Calabrese farm to Sodom Mountain	
*View on Coes Hill Road of Sodom Mountain	
Sodom Mountain (view and mountain for mica deposits)	
View from Edgewood Golf Course	recreational and natural landscape
Pando-Prifti property Sodom Mountain View	
King's Beach area on North Pond	
Vista on Mort Vining Road	Agricultural road
Vista from behind 20 Depot Street of Southwick Hill	
Brass Rail vista at Cove	On Congamond Lakes
<b>OPEN SPACE</b>	
Congamond Lakes	
Powder Mill Brook at Longyard	
<b>RECREATIONAL</b>	
Radwilowicz Landscape	first 9-hole golf course
<b>RESIDENTIAL</b>	
*Joseph Moore House	in Jog area
Cottages at Lakes	1930s development at North end of Lakes

Jack Karlstrom farm	On Klaus Anderson Road
19 <sup>th</sup> century homes on Depot Road	Formerly Broad Street
Governor Ely's House	
Crane Company Horse Barn and Dairy Farm	On Sunnyside Road, now a subdivision development
Pierce Farm and barn	On John Mason Road
Fernwood Park neighborhood	Between railroad tracks and Powder Mill Road, 1950s subdivision intact
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	
Sodom Mountain Road	
Klaus Anderson Road	
Nicholson Hill Road	
Two covered bridges: Kellogg property and behind Bryzinskis off College Highway	
West end of Coes Hill Road	Transportation and natural chosen Priority as Natural vista
Hampshire/Hampden-Northampton Canal	South end of South Pond near rail trail
*Rail trail/rail line for vistas and near ice houses and tobacco fertilizer warehouse	Rail trail through town