TOWN OF GROTON
173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450
(978) 448-1106
Fax: 978-448-1113
conservation@grotonma.gov

November 12, 2026
Aubrey Theall, Chair
Community Preservation Committee
Town Hall- 173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450

**RE: Fiscal Year 2028 Community Preservation Proposal- Conservation Fund**

Dear Chair Theall and members of the Community Preservation Committee,

The Groton Conservation Commission is pleased to submit this draft application and proposal to the Community Preservation Committee for consideration for the 2028 Fiscal Year. The Conservation Commission is requesting funding in the amount of $400,000 for the purpose of Open Space acquisition and management.

The Conservation Fund allows the Town to move quickly in the event that a priority parcel with high ecological, open space, or recreational value comes on the market. It has been a crucial tool in the preservation of Open Space in Groton, most recently with the purchase of the C.L. Bennett Family Conservation Area in West Groton and Noonan Woods along the Nashua River. These two parcels amount to a total of 105.5 acres of permanently protected land which will be enjoyed recreationally for generations while preserving the Town's commitment to conservation and safeguarding of valuable wildlife habitat.

The Commission continues to respond to the availability of priority parcels on the market by actively exploring and pursuing all opportunities for land purchase. Having readily available funds allows the Commission to make competitive and fair offers for land purchase. The Commissioners wish to stress the importance of continuing to add incremental amounts to the Conservation Fund on an annual basis and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Steeves, Conservation Administrator

## Table of Contents

CPA Project Application Form.....x

FY28 Community Preservation Proposal- Groton Conservation Commission.....1

Proposal Summary.....1
The Conservation Fund- Recent Activity.....1
Background.....2
Benefits to the Town of Groton.....6
Finances.....8
Accounting.....8
Reporting.....8

List of Attachments.....9

# Appendix B – CPA Final Application Form

| [CPC Use Only] | Date Received: 11.12.2026 | Received By: M. Moore | Assigned CPC #: 2028- 03 |
|---|---|---|---|

This form may be copied. Please type or print clearly, answer all questions, use "N/A" if not applicable. Use additional paper as needed.

## 1-A Applicant Information

| Last Name: Steeves | First Name: Charlotte |
|---|---|
| Organization(s)(as appropriate) Groton Conservation Commission | |

**1-B Regional Project? YES ☐ NO ■** | If YES, Town/Organization:

**2** Submission Date: 11/12/2026

## 3 Applicant Address

| Street: 173 Main Streer | City: Groton | State: MA | Zip: 01450 |
|---|---|---|---|

**4**

| Phone: 978-448-1106 | Email: csteeves@grotonma.gov |
|---|---|

## 5 CPA Purpose (Check all that apply)

| Affordable Housing: ☐ | Community Housing: ☐ | Historic Preservation: ■ |
|---|---|---|
| Open Space: ■ | Recreation: ■ | |

As per MA General Law Chapter 44B, proposed historic projects that are not on the structures listed on the state's Registry of Historic Places require a determination by the Groton Historic Commission that the proposed project is of historic significance.

**6** Town Committee or Boards Participating: Groton Conservation Commission

**7** Project Address/Property Owner's Name: N/A

**8** Project Name: Conservation Fund FY 28

## 9 Additional Responsible Parties (If applicable)

| Role (specify) | Name | Address | Phone | Email |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Property/Site Owner | | | | |
| Project Manager | Charlotte Steeves | 173 Main Street, Groton MA | 978-448-1106 | csteeves@grotonma.gov |
| Lead Architect | | | | |
| Project Contractor | | | | |
| Project Consultants | | | | |
| Other: | | | | |
| Other: | | | | |

## 10 As appropriate, indicate if proposal requires:

P&S Agreement: ☐ Deed: ☐ Option Agreement: ☐ Memorandum of Understanding: ☐

Other: ☐ Describe:

**11-A** Assessor Info (Map/Block/Lot ID(s)): N/A

**11-B** Tax Classification Type: N/A

## 12 Permits required:

Zoning: ☐ Historic Preservation: ☐ Other: ☐

**13** Historic Commission Approval Signoff (When Required): | Date:

**14-A** Project Cost: $ Estimate: ☐ Professional Quote: ☐

**14-B** Requested from CPC: $400,000 **14-C** Committed from OTHER Source: $

If applicable:

Annual Anticipated Total Income: $

Annual Anticipated Total Expense: $

Anticipated Net Income (Loss): $

Name of Estimator/Company:

15 CCP Objectives - Use CODES from Section 5 to indicate all that apply

Community Preservation Plan: 5.1.1; Open Space and Recreation Plan: 9.1.1, 9.2.1, 9.3.1, 9.4.1, 9.5.1, 9.5.2, 9.7.1

16 Project Timelines

Proposed State Date: N/A

Projected Complete Date: N/A

17

Estimated Delivery Date of Completion Report to CPC: N/A

18 Project Description and Explanation (Attach Additional Sheets as Needed)

The Groton Conservation Commission is applying for CPA funds for the purpose of Open Space acquisition. The Commission is requesting the full $400,000.00, since the Commission decided to withdraw its FY 27 application. Ever since Groton adopted the Community Preservation Act in 2004, the Conservation Commission has relied on CPA funds to maintain the Town's Conservation Fund at a viable level. Historically, the Conservation Fund has been used by the Commission to purchase Conservation Restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and fee simple purchases of land within the Town of Groton. These purchases have helped the Town meet specific goals identified in its 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan, including: "prioritize open space protection; prevent disturbance of riparian areas and wetlands and encourage infiltration, water flow; protect wildlife habitat and contiguous greenway corridors; secure preservation of priority farmland; expand trail links to connect recreational areas; acquire or reserve additional land for recreational activities; identify, preserve and commemorate historic landscapes, sites and Structures." The Conservation Fund is also used for professional services related to land acquisition such as title certifications, recording at the Registries of Deeds, real estate appraisals, surveys and other steps necessary for the completion of a purchase. The Commission gives highest priority to preserving parcels that help to maintain the Town's rural, agrarian character and sustain a healthy and diverse ecosystem. Parcels that link with contiguous protected open space; parcels that protect and preserve a greenway along the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers and their tributaries; parcels where significant wildlife or corridors have been identified; parcels that preserve a sense of Groton's agriculture heritage – all of these attributes are considered when
prioritizing parcels for protection.

19 Feasibility

The Conservation Fund has been used reliably and consistently to preserve open space, recreational, and historic assets (see attached proposal).

20 List of Attachments

a) Project Proposal
b) Attachment 1: Master Plan
c) Attachment 2: Open Space and Recreation Plan
d) Attachment 3: Management Plan
e) Attachment 4: Letters of Support

## 21 Additional Information

See proposal and map figures in attachments 1 and 2.

## 22 Management Plan

See attached Management Plan for Land Protection (Attachment 3).

## 23 Signature

| | |
|---|---|
| Applicant Signature: *Charlotte Steeves* | Date: 11/12/2026 |
| Co-Applicant Signature: | Date: |
| Co-Applicant Signature: | Date: |

## FY28 Community Preservation Proposal- Groton Conservation Commission

Proposal Summary

The Groton Conservation Commission is requesting $400,000 in CPA funds for Fiscal Year 2028 to be transferred to the Conservation Fund to meet the following objectives: preservation of Open Space; protection of water resources; preservation of land for agricultural, forestry, and recreational activities; resilience to climate change and storms; protection of important wildlife habitat with high ecological value. These objectives are identified as priorities in the 2011 Master Plan and 2019 Groton Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The Conservation Fund, with allocations through the Community Preservation Act, has been a vital tool in the preservation of open space in Groton. The Conservation Commission has applied most years since the Town adopted the Community Preservation Act for CPC funds. In the past, the Conservation Fund has been used by the Conservation Commission to purchase Conservation Restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions, and fee simple purchases of conservation land within the Town of Groton. In some years the Commission has withdrawn its application or reduced the amount of funds requested in deference to other worthy projects.

The Conservation Fund is also utilized for professional services necessary for the completion of land acquisition projects, such as title certifications, recordings at the Registry of Deeds, real estate appraisals, and surveys. The Conservation Fund enabled the Commission to hire a consultant to assist in the preparation of both the Groton 2005, 2012 and 2019 Open Space & Recreation Plans. A current Plan assures the Town's eligibility to apply for state grants and guides the Commission in prioritizing parcels for acquisition. Applying for state grants enables the Commission to further leverage the funds received through the Community Preservation Act.

The Conservation Fund is also utilized for professional services necessary for the completion of land acquisition projects, such as title certifications, recordings at the Registry of Deeds, real estate appraisals, and surveys. The Conservation Fund enabled the Commission to hire a consultant to assist in the preparation of both the Groton 2005, 2012 and 2019 Open Space & Recreation Plans. A current Plan assures the Town's eligibility to apply for state grants and guides the Commission in prioritizing parcels for acquisition. Applying for state grants enables the Commission to further leverage the funds received through the Community Preservation Act. The Town has received a total of $1,752,420.00 through six successful grants from the state.

The Conservation Fund allows the Town to move quickly in the event a priority parcel with high ecological value comes on the market. The Conservation Commission wishes to stress the importance of continuing to add incremental amounts to the Conservation Fund on an annual basis. To remain competitive in the real estate market, the Commission adheres to the Select Board's General Financial Guideline # 6, which states the goal "to maintain a balance in the Conservation Fund of at least 2% of the Town's current line-item budget."

Based on the projected FY27 budget, this amounts to approximately $54,000,000.00. This balance amount as previously stated is currently being re-evaluated in response to the rising cost

of land and recent failed opportunities to conserve priority parcels. As of November 18th, 2025 the Conservation Fund balance is $1,309,252.07, however, it should be noted that of this amount, approximately $105,000 is formally set aside to purchase a Conservation Restriction on the Westford Sportsmen's Club which is in the final stages of negotiation with the State.

The Conservation Fund – Recent Activity

The Conservation Commission has been in a seemingly continuous state of negotiations with various landowners since the beginning of 2018. This has been in reaction to a number of priority parcels coming onto to the market. In 2018, the Commission purchased 21.4 acres of land in West Groton (the Patricia Hallet Conservation Area), which connects the Hemlock Grove-Lawrence Park conservation lands to the old B&M rail line and ultimately to the Town Forest. In 2019, the Commission purchased 18 acres along Martins Pond, which offered the first significant public access to the pond. In 2020, the Commission closed on approx. 40 acres, which reestablished connectivity between the Williams Barn – Sorhaug Woods Conservation Area and Martins Pond /Gibbet Hill Conservation Restriction public lands. This new connection replaces access that was formerly provided across Brooks Orchard, which is no longer open to the public. In 2022, the Commission applied for and was awarded a *LAND* Grant to assist in the purchase of 120 acres off Nashua Road (Casella Preservation), consisting of a network of ecologically important wetland and upland area. The unique geology of the Casella property provides suitable habitat for many species and promotes high biodiversity. It also provides a connection between Chicopee Row and Nashua Road. The Commission finalized this transaction in June 2023. The Conservation Commission purchased the Marsh-Lewis Memorial Grove and West Groton "Palmer" parcels, totaling to an amount of 43 acres of permanently protected land in Groton for the 2024 Fiscal Year. The Commission finalized the purchases of the C.L. Bennett Family Conservation Area in West Groton and Noonan Woods along the Nashua River, adding a total of 105.5 acres of permanently protected land to the Town.

Most recently, during its regular meeting on October 13th, 2026, the Groton Conservation Commission voted to exercise its Right of First Option, pursuant to Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 61A, section 14, to purchase parcels 221-14.2 and parcel 221-14.3for the purchase price of $550,000. These parcels comprise a total of 10.5 acres, including an access easement through parcel 221-14, and will permanently protect approximately 4.2 acres of Estimated and Priority Habitat for Rare and Endangered Species off Dale Lane. The Commission also recently acquired a parcel off Monarch Path comprising of 2 acres and both a certified and potential vernal pool. This parcel was donated to the Conservation Commission by the Noble Monarch Nominee Trust. However, the Fund was utilized for the legal aspects of the acquisition. The Fund is also anticipated to be used in an upcoming land purchase off North Street.

The Fund is also currently being used to update the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. I formed a working group comprised of members from the Trails Committee, Parks Commission, and Stewardship Committee to hire and work closely with a firm. After a competitive selection process, Resilience Planning and Design (RID) was chosen as the winning bid. The working group has been working closely with RID for the past several months and we are on track to presenting the OSRP at the Spring 2027 Town Meeting. We will be holding a Community Form

at the Groton Center on December 2nd, 2026, at 6:00 PM to welcome feedback and participation from residents of Groton. The Fund has allowed up to select a competent and talented group to work with on this update and will ultimately allow the Conservation Commission to apply for more grants in the future.

## Background

Prior to the Town's adoption of the CPA, the Groton Conservation Fund was funded by warrant articles at the Annual Town Meeting. After the Town's adoption of the CPA in 2004, the Conservation Commission has relied on CPA funding to replenish the Conservation Fund. Through good times and bad, the Town's voters have shown a willingness to spend some of their hard-earned money to help preserve and protect the Town's open space resources. Table 1 on the next page shows Town appropriations to the Conservation Fund from FY 1996 through FY 2026.

Voters at Town Meeting approved CPA funding in the amount of $185,000 in 2005; $200,000 in 2007; $100,000 in 2008; and $100,000 in 2009 to be allocated to the Conservation Fund. A request in 2010 for $30,000 and another request in 2011 for $150,000 were not approved at Town Meeting. In October 2012, Town Meeting approved an additional $25,000 in CPC funds, as well as an article to purchase the 106-acre Walker-Cox parcels on Chicopee Row for $716,000.

In 2013, the Conservation Commission withdrew its request for FY14 CPA funding to enable the Park Commission to proceed with their request for $350,000 unimpeded. In 2014, the Conservation Commission's request for $200,000 was reduced to $100,000 by the CPC and approved by Town Meeting. In 2015, the Commission's request for $200,000 was approved by Town Meeting. The Commission was awarded a modest amount in 2017 and was denied funding in 2018. The Conservation Fund was funded for $25,000 in FY19 and $100,000 in FY20. In 2020, the CPC generously recommended that the Commission's requested amount be increased and ultimately the Conservation Fund was appropriated $221,000 (up from the $200,000 which was applied for). In 2021 and 2022, the Conservation Fund was funded for $350,000 and $400,000 respectively. The Conservation Fund was also approved to receive $400,000 in 2022, which significantly helped bring the Fund back into a balance to be competitive in the real estate market. The Commission voted to reduce its funding request from the usual $400,000 for FY 2026 to $200,000 and was subsequently awarded the funding.

***Table 1: Town Appropriations to Conservation Fund – FY 1996 through FY 2027***

| **Fiscal Year (July 1 through 30 June)** | **Fiscal Year (July 1 through 30 June)** |
|---|---|
| 1996 | $10,000 |
| 1997 | $100,000 |
| 1998 | $50,000 |
| 1999 | $100,000 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 2000 | $200,000 |
| 2001 | $300,000 |
| 2002 | $200,000 |
| 2003 | $75,000 |
| 2004 | $125,000 |
| 2005 | $185,000 |
| 2006 | 0 (Surrenden Farm) |
| 2007 | $200,000 |
| 2008 | $100,000 |
| 2009 | 0 |
| 2010 | $100,000 |
| 2011 | $75,000 (Spring); $25,000 (Fall) |
| 2012 | 0 |
| 2013 | 0 (withdrawn) |
| 2014 | 0 |
| 2015 | $1000,000 |
| 2016 | $200,000 |
| 2017 | 0 |
| 2018 | $25,000 |
| 2019 | 0 |
| 2020 | $100,000 |
| 2021 | $221,000 |
| 2022 | $350,000 |
| 2023 | $400,000 |
| 2024 | $400,000 |
| 2025 | $400,000 |
| 2026 | 0 |
| 2027 | $400,000 |

**Table 2** below shows some of the most significant purchases made in recent years with monies from the Conservation Fund.

***Table 2: Conservation Fund Critical to Success of Significant Open Space Protection***

| **Year** | **Parcel** | **Method of Preservation** | **Acres Protected** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1997 | Williams Barn Sorhaug Woods | Purchase at auction $220,000 | 93 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1998 | O'Neill/ Fairview Orchards Old Ayer Rd. | Agricultural Preservation Restriction $35,000; remainder paid by the state | 28 |
| 1998 | O'Neill/ Whitman Rd. | Agricultural Preservation Restriction $35,000; remainder paid by the state | 80 |
| 1999 | O'Neill/ Lawrence Higley & Farmers Row | Agricultural Preservation Restriction $30,000; remainder paid by the state | 45 |
| 2000 | Shattuck Homestead/ Baddacook Pond Viewshed | Conservation Restriction $100,000; Water Dept. and Groton Conservation Trust also contributed funds to complete project. | 36 |
| 2002 | Gibbett Hill & Angus Hill | Conservation Restriction $500,000 of $3.5 million purchase price; remainder paid by state & donation of conservation restrictions by Groton Conservation Trust | 250 |
| 2002 | Hurd Property/ Skyfields Dr. | Fee simple purchase of $279,000 w/state (Self-Help) reimbursement of $161,820 & remainder from Conservation Fund | 32.7 |
| 2006 | Surrenden Farm | Project completed w/local, state, Groton School, & GCT funding; Conservation Fund ($11,813) used to purchase title certification & insurance as part of Self-Help reimbursement process | 360 |
| 2009 | Fuccillo property | 60% ($93,600) reimbursement grant through state LAND grant program – for $150,000 purchase | 7 ± |
| 2011 | Baddacook Pond NEFF parcel | LAND grant reimbursement of 60% ($236,100) | 52 |
| 2013 | Walker-Cox parcel Area | $716,000 purchase; LAND grant reimbursement $400,000 | 106 |
| 2018 | Patricia Hallet Conservation Area | $85,000 purchased in fee | 21 ± |
| 2019 & 2020 | Preist Family Conservation Area | $635,000 purchased in fee | 60 ± |
| 2022 & 2023 | Casella Preservation | $601,500 purchase; *LAND* grant reimbursement $360,900 | 120 |
| 2023 | Reedy Meadow Road "Marsh-Lewis Memorial Grove" | $30,000 purchased in fee | 15± |
| 2023 | West Groton "Palmer" land | $400,000 purchased in fee | 28± |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2024 | "C.L. Bennett Family Conservation Area" | $635,5000 purchased in fee, supplemented by a private donation | 98± |
| 2024 | "Noonan Woods" | $137,500.00 purchased in fee | 7.5 |

As mentioned in the Proposal Summary above, the Conservation Commission has successfully leveraged some of these monies by getting a total of $1,391,520 in reimbursements through the State's Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant program (formerly known as the Self-Help Grant).

For example, in 2009, the Conservation Commission purchased the 7± acre Fuccillo property on Lowell Rd. for $150,000 from the Conservation Fund. Of this amount a successful LAND grant application resulted in a state reimbursement of $90,000. In 2011, the Conservation Commission negotiated with the New England Forestry Foundation for the purchase of 52± acres on the east shore of Baddacook Pond for $393,500. Groton received a LAND reimbursement of $227,621. In 2013, the Conservation Commission received a $400,000 LAND reimbursement grant upon completion of the Walker-Cox parcels. The Town received an additional $360,900 in LAND Grant reimbursement funds in 2023 for the purchase of the 120-acre parcel off Nashua Road ("Casella Preservation").

The Conservation Fund allows the Town to move quickly in the event a priority parcel comes on the market. The foreclosure auction at which the Williams Barn Sorhaug Woods property was purchased is a prime example. The Town's willingness to contribute toward the purchase of development rights on farmlands moved the O'Neill parcels up in the state's queue for APR acquisitions. The fact that the Town had already set aside funds specifically for conservation purposes helped convince the state to also contribute funds to the permanent protection of 250 acres on Gibbet Hill and Angus Hill in 2002. In the past, the Town has exercised its right of first refusal for parcels taxed under M.G.L. Ch. 61. The 120-day window of opportunity is a difficult proposition, for which the Conservation Fund can serve as a ready funding mechanism. However, maintaining an adequate balance in the Fund is critical. Between 2018 and 2020, Town missed out on the potential to conserve two significant parcels that came out of Ch. 61 status due to insufficient funds.

Benefits to the Town of Groton

In early 2004, when the Town first began to seriously investigate the Community Preservation Act, the Conservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend that Town Meeting adopt the CPA. One argument in favor of adopting the CPA was that the Town would become eligible to receive a significant match from the Commonwealth by funding its Conservation Fund though the CPA. This leveraging of our conservation dollars enabled the Town to commit $5.6 million to the Surrenden Farm project. Town Meeting overwhelmingly endorsed the concept. The

Commission received assurance at that time from the CPC and the Town Tax Collector that there remained sufficient CPC funds to continue to fund other CPC-approved projects that might arise in future years. This proposal represents the fulfillment of the expectation that the CPA would be used to leverage the appropriations to the Conservation Fund that the Town would likely have voted for even without the CPA.

Besides the financial leveraging advantages described above, the Groton Conservation Commission believes that there are three more compelling reasons for funding the Conservation Fund though the Community Preservation Act process:

1. Placing CPA funds into the Conservation Fund makes them instantly available to the Conservation Commission for acquiring open space that may be available for purchase for only a short period of time. As noted above, this is true of Chapter 61 purchases where the town has only 120 days in which to arrange appraisals and exercise its right of first refusal. If the monies remained in the Community Preservation Fund, these short-term opportunities could only be realized if a Town meeting could be quickly held so that the purchase could be approved.

2. Through years of administering the Conservation Fund, the Conservation Commission has developed expertise in the areas of identifying, appraising, negotiating, purchasing, and maintaining open space in the Town. The Commission has successfully applied for state grants to offset the cost of acquiring open space. The voters in Town have shown their confidence in the Conservation Commission to handle these matters by consistently voting to support the Conservation Fund.

3. The workload on the Community Preservation Committee will be reduced by having the Conservation Commission be responsible for the acquisition of open space for the Town. The process of negotiating and purchasing open space can be time consuming and span many years. Relying on the expertise of the Conservation Commission in the area of open space acquisition will allow the Committee to focus more of its attention on the new activities of historic preservation, recreation, and community housing.

The 2011 Master Plan (see excerpt, Attachment 1) and 2019 Groton Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP; see excerpt, Attachment 2) outline some of the goals and objectives for the protection of open space, as well as the issues surrounding a ranking system to prioritize open space acquisitions and the development of alternative funding source.

The following Master Plan goal is addressed by this proposal:
*Goal: Ensure that Groton's agricultural, forested, and recreational open spaces are protected, enhanced, and expanded for present and future generations.*

The following OSRP goals are specifically addressed by this proposal:
*Goal 1: Promote the preservation of important land resources.*

- Objective 9.1.1 – Prioritize open space protection.
- Objective 9.1.3 – Engage the public to support natural resource protection.

*Goal 2: Protect water resources.*

- Objective 9.2.1 – Prevent disturbance of riparian areas and wetlands and encourage infiltration, water flow, and wildlife movement in rivers and streams.

*Goal 3: Promote resiliency to climate change and sustain biodiversity.*

- Objective 9.3.1 – Protect wildlife habitat and contiguous greenway corridors.

*Goal 4: Support local agriculture.*

- Objective 9.4.1 – Secure preservation of priority farmlands.

*Goal 5: Provide recreational facilities to meet Groton's needs.*

- Objective 9.5.1 – Expand trail linkages to connect recreational areas.
- Objective 9.5.2 – Acquire or reserve additional land for recreational activities.

*Goal 6: Enhance Groton's community identity.*

- Objective 9.7.1 – Identify, preserve, and commemorate historic landscapes, sites, and structures.

Additionally, this proposal addresses the following Community Preservation Plan (CPP) objective: *5.1.1 – Continue to seek funding for reuse and preservation of Town-owned historic resources.*

The 2019 updating of the Town's OSRP has provided the Commission an opportunity to fine-tune its list and definition of priority parcels. Currently the Conservation Commission has several parcels under specific consideration. All properties under consideration provide exemplary opportunities for scenic views, recreational uses, and wildlife observation. Negotiations with landowners are sensitive and apt to be prolonged and typically involve real estate and legal expertise. The Commission requires one, if not two, professional appraisals before contemplating land acquisitions. The Commission is familiar with the paperwork and process necessary for State and Federal grant applications and has previously used and will continue to utilize this technique to further leverage Town funds.

The Commission gives highest priority to preserving parcels that help to maintain the Town's rural, agrarian character and sustain a healthy and diverse ecosystem. Parcels that link with contiguous protected open space, parcels that protect and preserve a greenway along the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers and their tributaries, parcels where significant wildlife habitat or corridors have been identified, parcels that preserve a sense of Groton's agricultural heritage – all of these attributes are considered when prioritizing parcels for protection.

Finances

The Commission adheres to the Select Board's General Financial Guideline # 6, which states the goal "to maintain a balance in the Conservation Fund of at least 2% of the Town's current line-item budget". The Conservation Commission continues to stress the need for the Town to set

aside funds each year in order to spread out the tax burden over several years rather than creating a tax spike in any one fiscal year or adding to future debt service. This money earns interest while set aside. Some towns have succeeded in using the Conservation Fund as a kind of endowment fund, using earned interest to offset debt service in future years. The Commission has actively sought other sources of funding, such as state and federal grants, to leverage CPA funds to the fullest extent.

## Accounting

Chapter 44B of the Massachusetts General Laws specifies the uses for which CPA funds can and cannot be expended. In general, funds used for open space acquisition cannot be used for the maintenance of acquired land unless the land was acquired with CPA funds. Conservation Fund monies are not similarly restricted. The fact that the Community Preservation Funds are more restricted in their use requires that CPA funds be segregated from the non-CPA monies in the Conservation Fund. At this point, all money in the Conservation Fund is treated as CPA funds and treated accordingly. To address funding needs for projects not appropriate for CPA funds, the Commission created a dedicated Land Management Revolving Fund, which is funded by land use activities (e.g., agricultural license fees, forestry revenues).

## Reporting

The Conservation Commission office maintains a database of protected open space held by the Town and managed by the Commission. In most cases these records provide the date of acquisition, a copy of the deed, acreage, survey plans, history of acquisition (including appraisals), flora and fauna information, as well as management strategies. A packet of this information would be conveyed to the Community Preservation Committee as land acquisitions or protection efforts are completed. Monthly reports on the Commission's land acquisition activities are given to the CPC by the Commission's representative. Written reports are provided as requested by the CPC.

## Management Plan

The process of acquiring open space and conservation restrictions in the Town of Groton is performed using a team whose talents come from both members of the towns staff and members of the Commission itself. Typically, two members of the Commission are authorized by the Commission to reach out to interested landowners to determine their level of interest in having their land preserved, what their expectations are and their anticipated timeline. The Commission members will walk the land and discuss, in executive session, the ecological and recreational merits of the property. The seller's timeline is important because longer timelines allow the Commission to apply for and receive state grants which reduces the acquisition cost for Groton residents.

If the property is shown to have sufficient merit, the next step is usually to hire a licensed land appraiser to determine the "highest and best" use of the land and appraise it accordingly using a method outlined in the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services' requirements. The appraisal is typically the starting point for negotiations with the land owner that, if the negotiations are successful, result in Town Counsel drafting a purchase and sale (P&S) agreement. The Commission and Town Counsel will draft the new deed, conduct a title search and arrange for title insurance. The Commission will arrange for an on-the-ground survey and the installation of bound markers where appropriate.

The team of negotiators, appraisers, grant writers and Town Counsel is overseen by the members of the Commission who conduct their business by majority vote. Early activity is usually done in executive session and the minutes of those meetings are released to the public upon completion of the acquisition.

The Groton Conservation Commission often leverages partnerships with other town committees and boards to manage and enhance Conservation-owned parcels. The Groton Stewardship Committee (a sub-committee of the Groton Conservation Commission), along with the Trails Committee, are often responsible for the long-term land management aspects of Conservation parcels in the town. The Stewardship Committee often develops management plans for maintenance and monitoring to ensure that the ecological and recreational value of the parcels remains in-tact. In some cases, management plans involving the removal and treatment of invasive species are enacted. In the past, the Commission has partnered with the Groton Invasive Species Committee to identify areas of concern and create action plans for restoration and removal of invasive plants. The Commission aims to continue these partnerships in FY 25 to ensure that land purchased with CPC funds remains well-maintained and thriving with native biodiversity.

## List of Attachments

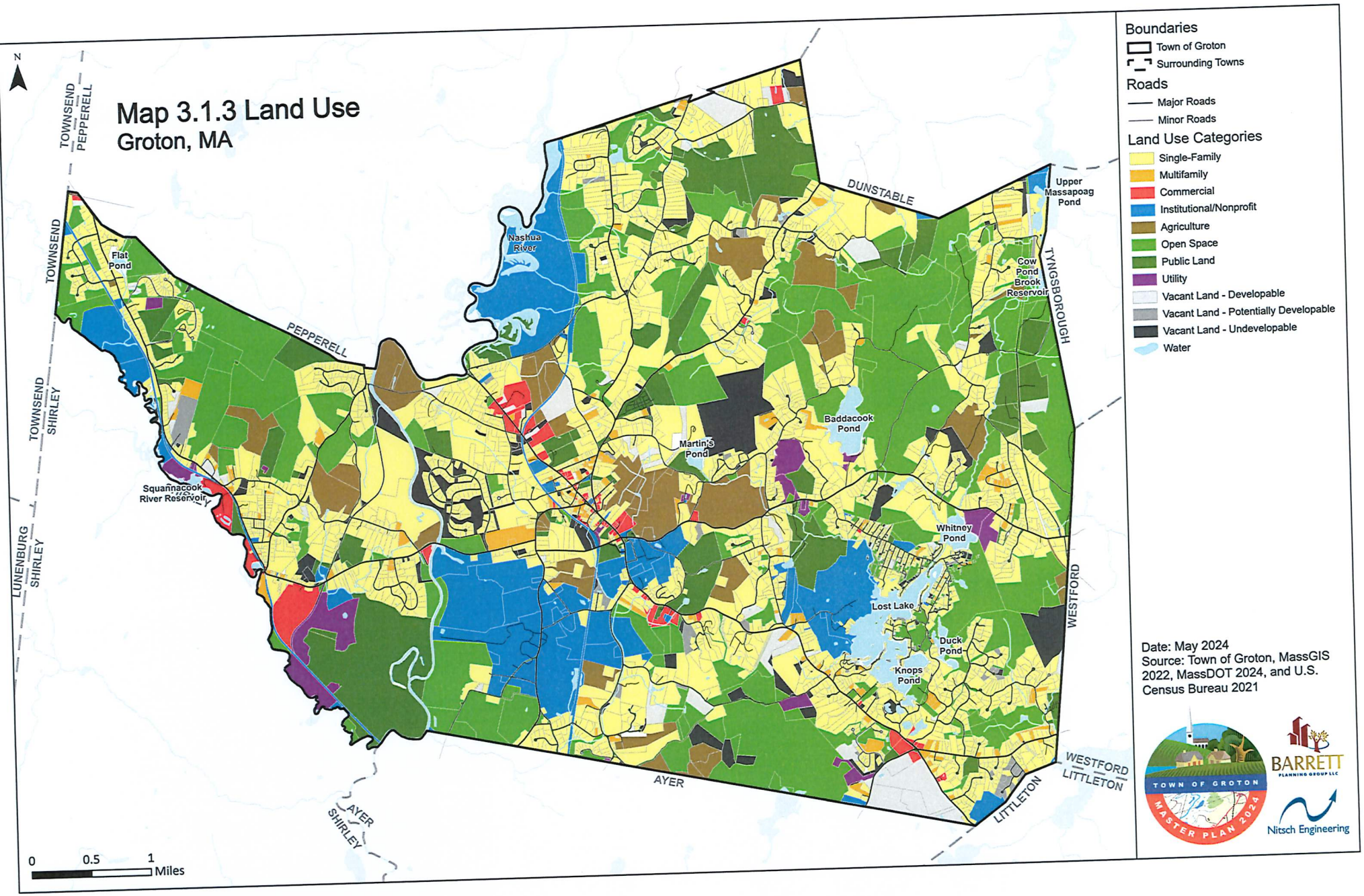
- Attachment 1: 2024 Master Plan Excerpt
- Attachment 2: OSRP excerpt
- Attachment 3: Management Plan
- Attachment 4: Letters of Support (PENDING)

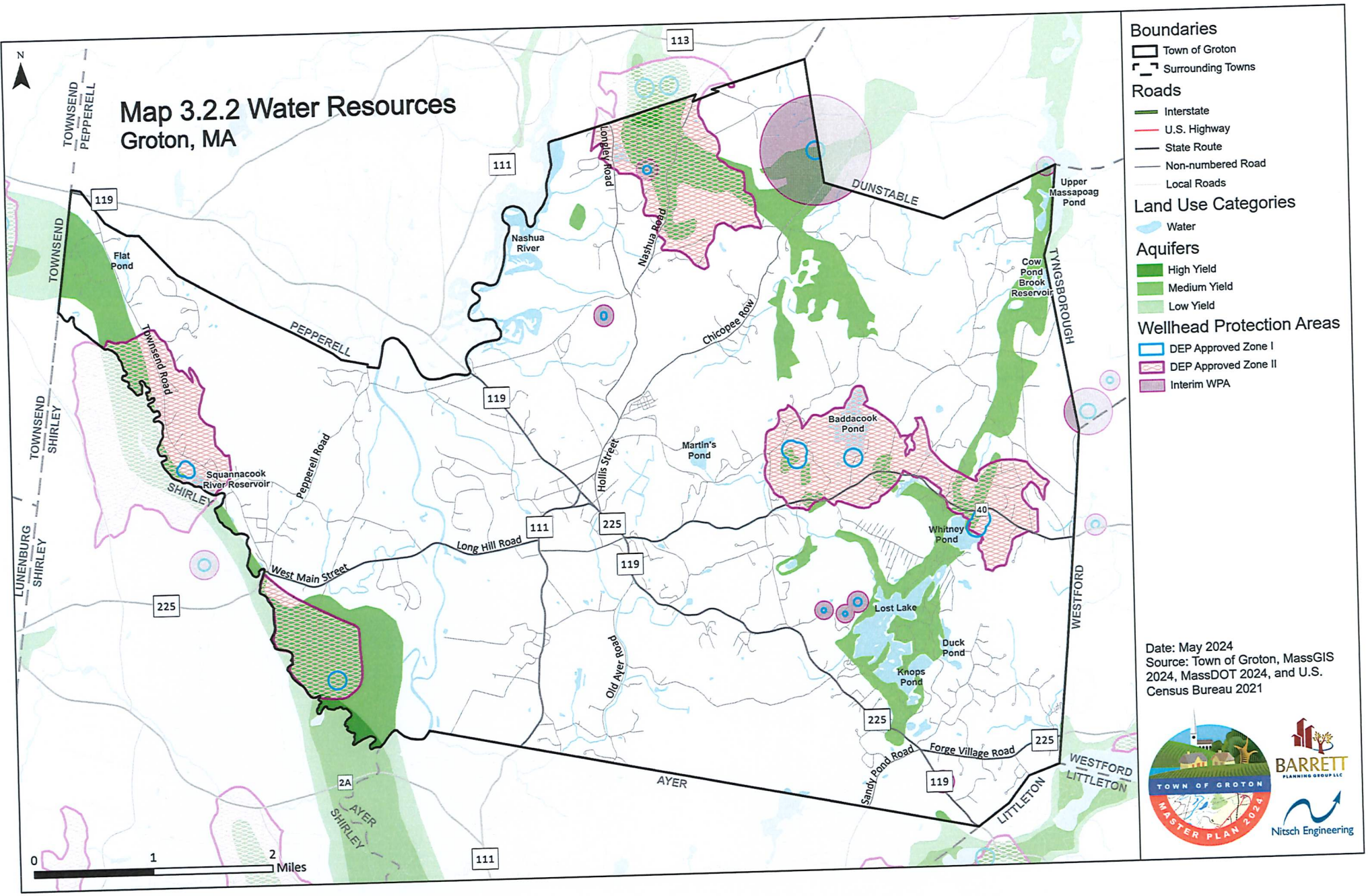
## FY28 Community Preservation Proposal – Groton Conservation Commission

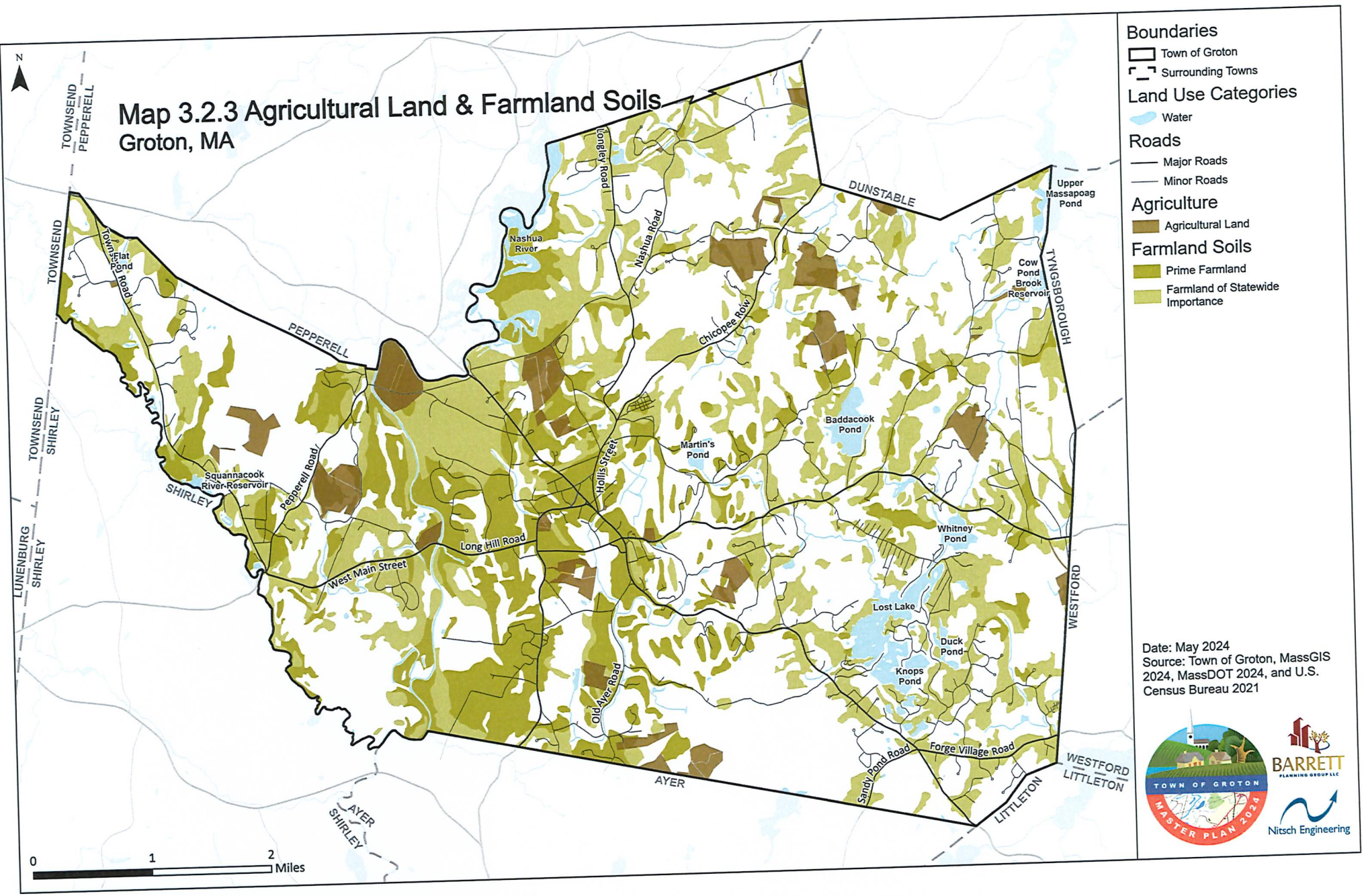
## ATTACHMENT 1

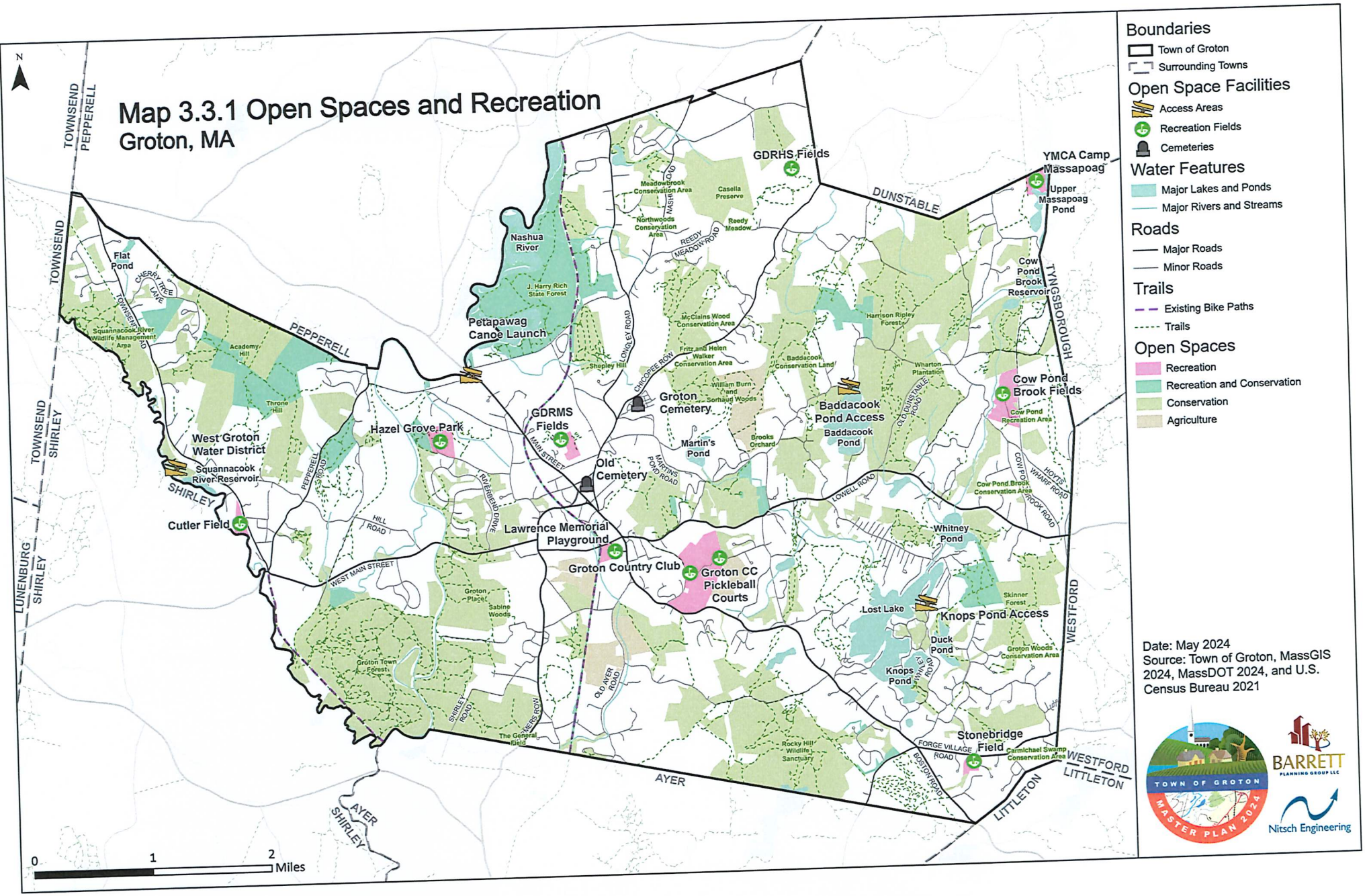
Excerpts from 2024 Master Plan:

- Map 3.1.3 – Land Use
- Map 3.2.2 – Water Resources
- Map 3.2.3 – Agricultural Land & Farmland Soils
- Map 3.3.1 – Open Spaces and Recreation


Map 3.1.3 Land Use
Groton, MA
N
TOWNSEND
PEPPERELL
TOWNSEND
PEPPERELL
TOWNSEND
SHIRLEY
LUNENBURG
SHIRLEY
DUNSTABLE
TYNGSBOROUGH
WESTFORD
WESTFORD
LITTLETON
LITTLETON
AYER
AYER
SHIRLEY
Flat Pond
Nashua River
Upper Massapoag Pond
Cow Pond Brook Reservoir
Baddacook Pond
Martin's Pond
Squannacook River Reservoir
Whitney Pond
Lost Lake
Duck Pond
Knops Pond
0
0.5
1
Miles
Boundaries
Town of Groton
Surrounding Towns
Roads
Major Roads
Minor Roads
Land Use Categories
Single-Family
Multifamily
Commercial
Institutional/Nonprofit
Agriculture
Open Space
Public Land
Utility
Vacant Land - Developable
Vacant Land - Potentially Developable
Vacant Land - Undevelopable
Water
Date: May 2024
Source: Town of Groton, MassGIS 2022, MassDOT 2024, and U.S. Census Bureau 2021
TOWN OF GROTON
MASTER PLAN 2024
BARRETT
PLANNING GROUP LLC
Nitsch Engineering


Map 3.2.2 Water Resources
Groton, MA
N
TOWNSEND
PEPPERELL
119
TOWNSEND
Flat Pond
PEPPERELL
Townsend Road
TOWNSEND
SHIRLEY
Squannacook River Reservoir
SHIRLEY
Pepperell Road
LUNENBURG
SHIRLEY
225
West Main Street
Long Hill Road
111
225
119
Hollis Street
Martin's Pond
Nashua River
Nashua Road
Longley Road
111
113
DUNSTABLE
Chicopee Row
Baddacook Pond
Upper Massapoag Pond
Cow Pond Brook Reservoir
TYNGSBOROUGH
40
Whitney Pond
Lost Lake
Duck Pond
Knops Pond
WESTFORD
Old Ayer Road
225
Forge Village Road
225
Sandy Pond Road
119
AYER
WESTFORD
LITTLETON
LITTLETON
2A
AYER
SHIRLEY
111
0
1
2
Miles
Boundaries
Town of Groton
Surrounding Towns
Roads
Interstate
U.S. Highway
State Route
Non-numbered Road
Local Roads
Land Use Categories
Water
Aquifers
High Yield
Medium Yield
Low Yield
Wellhead Protection Areas
DEP Approved Zone I
DEP Approved Zone II
Interim WPA
Date: May 2024
Source: Town of Groton, MassGIS 2024, MassDOT 2024, and U.S. Census Bureau 2021
TOWN OF GROTON
MASTER PLAN 2024
BARRETT
PLANNING GROUP LLC
Nitsch Engineering


Map 3.2.3 Agricultural Land & Farmland Soils
Groton, MA
N
TOWNSEND
PEPPERELL
TOWNSEND
SHIRLEY
LUNENBURG
SHIRLEY
SHIRLEY
AYER
SHIRLEY
AYER
LITTLETON
WESTFORD
LITTLETON
WESTFORD
TYNGSBOROUGH
DUNSTABLE
PEPPERELL
Townsend Flat Pond Road
Nashua River
Longley Road
Nashua Road
Upper Massapoag Pond
Cow Pond Brook Reservoir
Chicopee Row
Baddacook Pond
Martin's Pond
Hollis Street
Squannacook River Reservoir
Pepperell Road
Long Hill Road
West Main Street
Whitney Pond
Lost Lake
Duck Pond
Knops Pond
Old Ayer Road
Sandy Pond Road
Forge Village Road
0
1
2
Miles
Boundaries
Town of Groton
Surrounding Towns
Land Use Categories
Water
Roads
Major Roads
Minor Roads
Agriculture
Agricultural Land
Farmland Soils
Prime Farmland
Farmland of Statewide Importance
Date: May 2024
Source: Town of Groton, MassGIS 2024, MassDOT 2024, and U.S. Census Bureau 2021
TOWN OF GROTON
MASTER PLAN 2024
BARRETT
PLANNING GROUP LLC
Nitsch Engineering


Map 3.3.1 Open Spaces and Recreation
Groton, MA
N
TOWNSEND
PEPPERELL
TOWNSEND
PEPPERELL
TOWNSEND
SHIRLEY
SHIRLEY
LUNENBURG
SHIRLEY
AYER
SHIRLEY
AYER
DUNSTABLE
TYNGSBOROUGH
WESTFORD
WESTFORD
LITTLETON
LITTLETON
Flat Pond
Squannacook River Wildlife Management Area
Academy Hill
Throne Hill
Nashua River
J. Harry Rich State Forest
Petapawag Canoe Launch
Meadowbrook Conservation Area
Casella Preserve
Northwoods Conservation Area
Reedy Meadow
GDRHS Fields
YMCA Camp Massapoag
Upper Massapoag Pond
Cow Pond Brook Reservoir
Harrison Ripley Forest
McClains Wood Conservation Area
Fritz and Helen Walker Conservation Area
Shepley Hill
Baddacook Conservation Land
Wharton Plantation
William Burn Land
Sorhaud Woods
Groton Cemetery
Baddacook Pond Access
Baddacook Pond
Brooks Orchard
Martin's Pond
Cow Pond Brook Fields
Cow Pond Recreation Area
Cow Pond Brook Conservation Area
West Groton Water District
Squannacook River Reservoir
Hazel Grove Park
GDRMS Fields
Old Cemetery
Cutler Field
Lawrence Memorial Playground
Groton Country Club
Groton CC Pickleball Courts
Whitney Pond
Lost Lake
Knops Pond Access
Duck Pond
Knops Pond
Skinner Forest
Groton Woods Conservation Area
Groton Place
Sabine Woods
Groton Town Forest
The General Field
Rocky Hill Wildlife Sanctuary
Stonebridge Field
Carmichael Swamp Conservation Area
PEPPERELL ROAD
HILL ROAD
WEST MAIN STREET
RIVERBEND DRIVE
MAIN STREET
MARTINS POND ROAD
CHICOPEE ROW
LONGLEY ROAD
REEDY MEADOW ROAD
NASHUA ROAD
OLD DUNSTABLE ROAD
LOWELL ROAD
COW POND BROOK ROAD
HOYTS WHARF ROAD
OLD AYER ROAD
SHIRLEY ROAD
WHITNEY ROAD
FORGE VILLAGE ROAD
BOSTON ROAD
CHERRY TREE LANE
TOWNSEND ROAD
0
1
2
Miles
Boundaries
Town of Groton
Surrounding Towns
Open Space Facilities
Access Areas
Recreation Fields
Cemeteries
Water Features
Major Lakes and Ponds
Major Rivers and Streams
Roads
Major Roads
Minor Roads
Trails
Existing Bike Paths
Trails
Open Spaces
Recreation
Recreation and Conservation
Conservation
Agriculture
Date: May 2024
Source: Town of Groton, MassGIS 2024, MassDOT 2024, and U.S. Census Bureau 2021
TOWN OF GROTON
MASTER PLAN 2024
BARRETT
PLANNING GROUP LLC
Nitsch Engineering

FY28 Community Preservation Proposal – Groton Conservation Commission

ATTACHMENT 2

Excerpts from 2019 OSRP:

- Cover Page
- Section 8- Goals and Objectives (Page 101)
- Section 9- Seven-Year Action Plan Update (Pages 102-114)
- OSRP Map- Regional Context (Page 130)
- OSRP Map- Unique Features (Page 134)
- OSRP Map- Water Resources (Page 135)
- OSRP Map- Inventory of Open Spaces (Page 136)
- OSRP Map- Action Plan (Page 137)

# Section 8: Goals and Objectives

In this section the overarching goals identified in "Community Vision" (Section 6) are synthesized into specific goals and objectives that will drive the development of more specific recommendations in the "Seven-Year Action Plan" (Section 9). The goals and objectives from the previous *Open Space and Recreation Plan* were revised based on the updated "Analysis of Needs" (Section 7) and input from Town boards and staff and local residents. The following goals and objectives are not listed in rank order.

| Goals | Objectives |
|---|---|
| 1. Promote the preservation of important land resources. | • Prioritize open space protection.<br>• Strengthen partnerships between Groton Town committees, organizations, institutions, neighboring communities, and state agencies.<br>• Engage the public to support natural resource protection. |
| 2. Protect water resources. | • Prevent disturbance of riparian areas and wetlands and encourage infiltration, water flow.<br>• Prevent or reduce the impact of water pollution from local and regional sources.<br>• Evaluate and implement strategies for surface water quality and invasive plant control. |
| 3. Promote resiliency to climate change and sustain biological diversity. | • Protect wildlife habitat and contiguous greenway corridors.<br>• Ensure that activities and amenities on conservation and recreation lands are compatible with the protection of their resources.<br>• Provide resources for effective open space stewardship.<br>• Promote public awareness of natural resources and ecological issues.<br>• Plan and implement strategies for hazard mitigation. |
| 4. Support local agriculture. | • Secure preservation of priority farmlands.<br>• Facilitate agricultural use of prime farmland.<br>• Promote policies, programs, and economic development tools to support local farms. |
| 5. Provide recreational opportunities to meet Groton's needs. | • Expand trail linkages to connect recreational areas.<br>• Acquire or reserve additional land for recreational activities.<br>• Develop/improve facilities to support programming and serve future growth areas of town.<br>• Update facilities to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. |
| 6. Facilitate the shared use of recreation facilities by residents of all ages and interests | • Expand recreation programming to provide more variety.<br>• Effectively coordinate and manage recreation areas.<br>• Provide information to the public about passive and active recreation offerings. |
| 7. Enhance Groton's community identity through landscape and cultural awareness. | • Identify, preserve, commemorate, and promote historic landscapes, sites, and structures.<br>• Increase awareness of Groton's historic, natural, and community assets. |

# Section 9: Seven-Year Action Plan Update

This action plan builds on the "Goals and Objectives" (Section 8) by developing specific strategies to be completed by responsible parties, and assigning each a timeframe in which to be completed. The actions listed below are essentially steps that need to be taken to accomplish the outlined objectives. The action plan items are organized by goal and objective, corresponding with Section 8. While neither the goals and objectives nor the action items are presented in rank order, the action items in themselves suggest priority actions necessary to achieve each objective. The timeframes provide a sense of the immediacy of each action item. Many of the action items are ongoing in nature and will continue to be addressed from 2019 through 2026.

Appendix A, Map 8 illustrates the Action Plan elements that are geographically specific.

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Promote the preservation of important land resources. | 1.1. Prioritize open space protection<br><br>Funding sources:<br>- Volunteer and staff time<br>- CPA Funding<br>- DCS LAND Grant<br>- MA Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant Program<br>- Field Use fees | • Create and adopt criteria-based ranking system for open space acquisitions. | Conservation, Park | 2020 |
| | | • Update prioritized list of parcels to target for acquisition. | Conservation, Planning, Trails, Greenway | 2020 |
| | | • Continue to support funding of Conservation Fund to acquire open space and agricultural land through annual CPC application and other means. | Select Board, Conservation, Community Preservation Committee | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue to negotiate for open space preservation during permitting processes. | Planning, Conservation, Trails | Ongoing |
| | | • Identify additional funding for open space acquisition or preservation restrictions. | Conservation, Greenway | Ongoing |
| | 1.2. Strengthen partnerships<br><br>Funding sources:<br>- Volunteer and staff time<br>- Private donations<br>- State Universities | • Collaborate with land trusts and Conservation Commissions in adjoining towns, as well as the New England Forestry Foundation, Massachusetts Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife, and Mass Audubon in land protection efforts. | Select Board, Conservation | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | - Public & Private Schools (gifts) | • Continue/expand periodic meetings of environmental and stewardship organizations, institutions, and public entities to share information and facilitate collaboration. | Conservation, Greenway, various groups | Ongoing |
| | 1.3. Engage the public to support natural resource protection. | • Conduct public outreach to support conservation funding and key land acquisitions. | Select Board, Conservation, Greenway | Ongoing |
| | Funding sources:<br>- Volunteer and staff time<br>- CPA Funding<br>- Local Newspapers (good will) | • Continue to identify priorities for CPA funding, and promote the value of investment in open space and other Town assets through local revenue and state matching funds. | Community Preservation Commission | Ongoing |
| | | • Conduct public events to highlight conservation lands. | Trails, Conservation, Greenway | Ongoing |
| | | • Reach out to owners of priority parcels to identify opportunities for preservation. | Conservation, Greenway, Park, Agricultural | Ongoing |
| 2. Protect water resources. | 2.1. Prevent disturbance of riparian areas and wetlands and encourage infiltration, water flow, and wildlife movement in rivers and streams. | • Emphasize acquisition of lands adjacent to wetlands, streams, and water bodies (including 300-foot corridor along rivers and tributaries) and around well sites included in DEP-delineated Zone IIs. | Water Districts, Conservation, Select Board, Greenway | Ongoing |
| | Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• CPA funding<br>• MVP Implementation Grant<br>• Stormwater "Rain" fees<br>• Private donations<br>• In-kind: student projects<br>• NRWA | • Enhance LID regulations and promote stormwater management best practices through consistent regulation, policies, and education. | Conservation, Planning, Building, Stormwater, Sustainability | Ongoing |
| | | • Coordinate with other communities to protect shared water resources. | Conservation, Water Departments, Greenways | Ongoing |
| | | • Provide incentives for farmers to keep natural vegetated buffers along rivers and streams. | USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Consider incentives, education, or advocacy to address unregulated types of activities that might disturb riparian zones. | Conservation Stormwater, Sustainability, Agricultural | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Evaluate the need for updates to conservation regulations to reflect changes in water flow to streams, wetlands, and ponds. | Conservation, Health | 2022 or Ongoing |
| | | • Continue water conservation and education, i.e., odd/even watering. | Water Districts | Ongoing |
| | | • Provide adequate culverts and fish ladders to facilitate wildlife mobility. | DPW, NRWA | Ongoing |
| | 2.2. Prevent or reduce the impact of water pollution from local and regional sources.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• MA Works Development Grant<br>• State Revolving Loan Funds for Water & Sewer Infrastructure<br>• MassDEP Gap II Grant | • Continue to investigate non-point sources of pollution in the Lost Lake/Knops Pond area. | Great Ponds Advisory Committee, Health, Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Evaluate alternatives for sewering areas with failed sewage disposal systems. | Sewer, Health | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue to monitor landfill closures on the Nashua River and at Cow Pond Brook and consider maintaining as early successional grassland. | Select Board, Health, Greenway, NRWA | Ongoing |
| | | • Explore regional approaches to protect groundwater resources. | Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA), Conservation, Water Districts | Ongoing |
| | | • Foster public education about pollution from household chemicals such as lawn treatment or pharmaceuticals, as well as protecting and testing private wells. | Health, NRWA, Conservation, Water Districts | Ongoing |
| | 2.3 Evaluate and implement strategies for water resource surface water quality and invasive plant control.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Town<br>• NRWA in-kind | • Encourage development of comprehensive lake management plans for Great Ponds, particularly Lost Lake/ Knops and Baddacook Ponds. | Select Board, Great Ponds Advisory Committee, Conservation, NRWA | Ongoing |
| | | • Monitor where nutrients are coming from that contribute to aquatic plant overgrowth. | Great Ponds Advisory Committee, Health, Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Work regionally to improve water quality of the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers and to remove invasive species. | NRWA, Greenway, Conservation | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Groton Lakes Association fundraising | • Continue volunteer water quality monitoring program on local streams, rivers, and ponds to provide baseline data on stream health. | NRWA | Ongoing |
| | | • Install and maintain boat washes at all formal State and Town boat launches. | DCR, Conservation | Ongoing |
| 3. Promote resiliency to climate change and sustain biological diversity. | 3.1. Protect wildlife habitat and contiguous greenway corridors.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• CPA funding<br>• MA Wildlife Habitat Grant<br>• Private donations<br>• NRCS (for private lands bordering open spaces)<br>• Garden Club Federation of MA<br>• College/Student projects<br>• Neighborhood donations | • Identify likely wildlife corridors and prioritize habitat value for open space acquisition. | Conservation, Groton Conservation Trust, NHESP, Greenway | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue to acquire and link land along the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers and other identified wildlife corridors. | NRWA, Greenway, Conservation, Trails | Ongoing |
| | | • Work with land trusts and institutions to obtain CR's to permanently protect critical biodiversity or resource protection value. | Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Investigate the protection of Massapoag Pond's shore line in Groton and Dunstable. | Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Work with surrounding communities to preserve areas adjoining The Throne (including Old County Road), Reedy Meadow, and Nashua River. | Conservation, Trails | Ongoing |
| | | • Perform a wildlife and flora inventory for conservation parcels. | Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Develop and implement sustainable management and stewardship plans for conservation parcels based on resources and species present. | Conservation, Trails | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue notifying development applicants of the presence of Priority Habitat of Rare Species on their property. | Conservation, Building Inspector, Planning | Ongoing |
| | | • Work with partners such as NRWA, Merrimack River Watershed Council, NHESP to inventory, analyze, monitor, and protect habitat areas. | Greenway Committee, Conservation | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Implement strategies for removing or controlling specific invasive species. | Invasive Species Committee, Conservation, Agricultural, Park, Garden Club | 2021 |
| | | • Foster education through various avenues to encourage public participation in controlling invasive species on both private properties and conservation lands. | Invasive Species Committee, Conservation, Agricultural, Park | Ongoing, but more needed |
| | 3.2. Ensure that activities and amenities on conservation and recreation lands are compatible with the protection of their resources.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Town<br>• In-kind: student projects | • Implement a conservation and recreation sign program to improve access and appropriate usage. | Conservation, Trails | Ongoing |
| | | • Coordinate with state and conservation organizations on trail management and usage policies. | Conservation, Town Forest Committee, GCT, NEFF, DCR, MassAudubon | Ongoing |
| | | • Monitor conservation, recreation, and conservation-restricted parcels for encroachment and abuse; consider establishing new Monitoring Committee | Conservation, Town Forest Committee, Parks, DCR | Ongoing |
| | | • Identify and mark boundaries of conservation parcels for purposes of enforcement and stewardship. | Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Manage inappropriate use of public trails by motorized vehicles using public education, signage, and enforcement techniques. | Conservation, Trails, Groton Conservation Trust, Town Forest, Park, New England Forestry Foundation, Greenways Committee, DCR, Audubon, Police | Ongoing |
| | | • Consider state BioMap identifying Core Habitat and Supporting Landscapes when planning for stewardship or for recreational or other usage. | Conservation, Stewardship sub-committee | Ongoing |
| | | • Investigate methods of reducing fertilizer use on recreation fields and golf course. | Park, Country Club | Ongoing |
| | | • Pursue sustainable forestry activities on Town-owned lands | Conservation, Water Dept., Town Forest Committee, NEFF | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Consider signage and trail marking to re-direct hikers around sensitive wetland or wildlife resource areas. | Conservation, Trails | Ongoing |
| | | • Promote best practices for all types of landowners for landscaping in ecologically sensitive areas. Educate & inform townspeople of need to reduce fertilizers & chemicals on lawns | Conservation, Park, Garden Club, Stormwater, GCC, BOH | Ongoing |
| | 3.3. Provide resources for effective open space and water resource stewardship.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Athletic field user groups<br>• Other private donations<br>• MA Wildlife Habitat Grant<br>• CPA Funding | • Consider establishment of a Stewardship Committee. | Conservation, Park | 2020 |
| | | • Expand volunteer stewardship program, making available appropriate training and equipment. | Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue working with Park/DPW on periodic maintenance of Town conservation land. | Conservation, Park, DPW | Ongoing |
| | | • Investigate staffing needs for management, maintenance, and administration; identify specific roles for which additional staff support is needed. | Select Board, Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue coordination between Groton Town committees, organizations, institutions, neighboring communities, and state agencies. | Select Board, Conservation, Trails, Greenway, Sustainability, Groton Conservation Trust | Ongoing |
| | | • Consider the formation of neighborhood or homeowners association stewardship groups as part of the Planning Board permitting process. | Conservation, Planning | Ongoing |
| | | • Investigate funding opportunities for restoration or management of conservation lands, such as MassWildlife or CPA. | Conservation | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Develop and maintain a detailed database of conservation lands and priority open space parcels, including resource value, management plans, regulatory issues, recorded restrictions, or other information that can support stewardship, monitoring, and capital planning. | Conservation | 1919 |
| | 3.4. Promote public awareness of natural resources and ecological issues.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Town<br>• Boy Scouts<br>• Local Newspapers (in-kind) | • Conduct outreach through local institutions, organizations and social groups to share information and promote best practices. | Conservation, Stormwater, Library, various organizations | Ongoing |
| | | • Post interpretive signs and kiosks, and use media such as internet, newspaper, and brochures to inform people about resources and policies. | Conservation, Trails, Stormwater, Park | Ongoing |
| | | • Host guided hikes and other public events. | Trails, Conservation, Greenway, NRWA | Ongoing |
| | | • Recruit volunteers for citizen science and stewardship programs. | Conservation, Park, NRWA, NEFF, GCT, Trails | Ongoing |
| | | • Support efforts to provide environmental education for children and adults through schools or other organizations. | Conservation, Lawrence Academy, Groton School, GDR School District | Ongoing |
| | 3.5. Plan and implement strategies for hazard mitigation.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• MVP Implementation Grant | • Coordinate implementation of regional hazard mitigation plan | MRPA, Emergency Management | Ongoing |
| | | • Monitor threats to forested areas from insects, blights, drought, or flooding which might result in large-scale damage. Consider in stewardship planning. | Conservation, Invasive Species, various organizations and state entities, stewards, DPW | Ongoing |
| | | • Undertake local planning to protect and mitigate impacts from wildfires, drought, flooding, and hazardous waste sites. | Fire, Health, Emergency Management | Ongoing |
| 4. Support local agriculture. | 4.1. Secure preservation of priority farmlands. | • Assess whether there is a need to update the Town's Ch. 61 Right-of-First Refusal response assignment procedure. | Select Board, Conservation, Agricultural, Planning, Assessors | 2019 |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time | • Identify and prioritize important agricultural parcels to preserve for future farmers. | Conservation, Agricultural Commission | Ongoing |
| | 4.2. Facilitate agricultural use of prime farmland<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• CPA/Town funding<br>• School Projects<br>• NRCS Grants<br>• USDA Grants<br>• Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education | • Encourage participation in Ch. 61 special use tax program. | Conservation, Greenway, Agricultural | Ongoing |
| | | • Support sustainable agricultural activities, including licenses, on cleared conservation land suitable for farming. | Conservation, Agricultural, Sustainability | Ongoing |
| | | • Develop and maintain inventory of agricultural land that may be available for sale or lease, to assist farmers in locating opportunity sites. | Agricultural, Conservation | 2020 |
| | | • Encourage the establishment of community gardens; identify appropriate sites on Town-owned land. | Planning, ZBA | Ongoing |
| | 4.3. Promote policies, programs, and economic development tools to support local farms.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Fees | • Encourage Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and Farm-to-Table program. | Select Board, Agricultural | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue to support, expand, and promote the Farmer's Market. | Williams Barn Committee, Agricultural | Ongoing |
| | | • Support education and demonstration programs to encourage and improve agricultural practices. | Agricultural, Sustainability, Grange | Ongoing |
| 5. Provide recreational facilities to meet Groton's needs. | 5.1. Expand trail linkages to connect recreational areas.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• CPA funding<br>• MassDCR Recreational Trails Grant<br>• Private funding | • Identify areas that would help to complete the Town's trail system; and explore options for obtaining Town ownership of 40-foot trail corridors through development permitting. | Trails, Conservation, Planning | Ongoing |
| | | • Map trails that could be used as linkages to open space and gain permission for their use. | Trails, Conservation | Ongoing |
| | | • Consider old railroad bed lines to link with adjoining communities. | Trails, Conservation, Dunstable Rural Land Trust and Conservation Commission, YMCA | Ongoing |

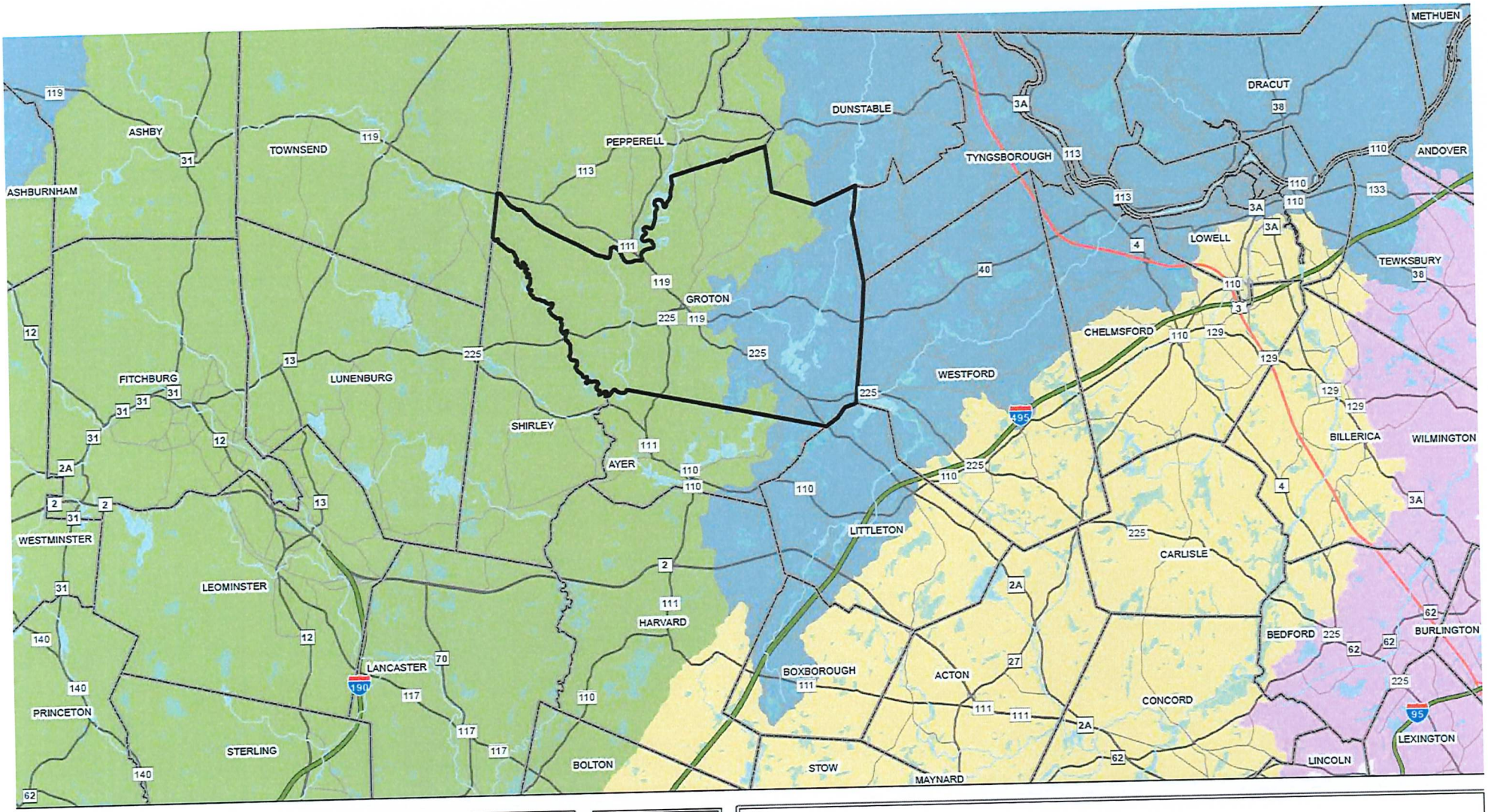
| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Friends of Groton Elders | • Explore developing a river walk along the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers. | Select Board, NRWA, Greenway, Trails, Park, Conservation, Planning | Ongoing |
| | | • Provide information to the public about potential links and trail improvements to encourage support and cooperation. | Trails, Conservation | Ongoing |
| | 5.2. Acquire or reserve additional land for recreational activities.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• CPA Funding<br>• Private fundraising<br>• Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Grant Program | • Evaluate existing Town-owned parcels to determine if there are sites that would be feasible and appropriate to convert to active recreational uses. | Park, Conservation, Select Board | Ongoing |
| | | • Request dedication of land and/or provision of recreation facilities by private developers when permitting larger development projects. | Park, Planning | Ongoing |
| | | • Acquire additional land for active recreation fields. | Select Board, Park | Ongoing |
| | 5.3. Develop/Improve facilities to support programming and serve future growth areas of town.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Private fundraising<br>• CPA/Town funding<br>• Community fundraising groups | • Identify specific facilities and improvements needed to support the demand for athletic fields, courts, and recreational programs. | Park | Ongoing |
| | | • Target population and growth areas for development of neighborhood recreation facilities (Lost Lake, West Groton). | Park, Planning | Ongoing |
| | | • Install artificial turf on additional fields to increase their capacity for use. | Select Board, Park, GDR School District | 2024 |
| | | • Add irrigation systems, lighting or other improvements to Town fields without them. | Park, DPW | Ongoing |
| | | • Explore partnerships and other funding opportunities for recreation facilities improvements. | Park, GDRSD, Groton School, Lawrence Academy, Country Club, Grotonwood | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Identify appropriate location for seasonal skating rink | Park | 2020 |
| | | • Explore alternatives to expand swimming or other water-based recreation opportunities. | Recreation | Ongoing |
| | 5.4. Update facilities to improve accessibility for people with disabilities.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• CPA funding<br>• Private fundraising<br>• Municipal ADA Improvement Grant<br>• Establish dedicated ADA fund. | • Incorporate Section 504 recommendations into capital improvements for Town recreation and conservation properties, as well as school associated facilities and complete. | Select Board, School, Commission on Accessibility | Ongoing |
| | | • Identify additional areas to provide accessible trails, picnic areas, and recreational opportunities that can be used by people with disabilities. | Trails, Parks, Commission on Accessibility, Seven Hills Foundation | Ongoing |
| 6. Facilitate the shared use of recreation facilities by residents of all ages and interests | 6.1. Expand recreational programming to provide more variety.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Fees<br>• Town | • Identify recreational activities that are desired by residents which could be provided or expanded. | Park, Country Club, GDRSD | Ongoing |
| | | • Identify venues for developing new recreational programs among existing committees, departments, or organizations. | Park, Select Board, GDRSD, Friends of Prescott, Council on Aging, Library | Ongoing |
| | | • Continue relationships with private schools, regional school district, Council on Aging, and other entities to support use of facilities. | Select Board, Park | Ongoing |
| | | • Establish capacity to recruit and coordinate volunteers to support recreational programming, trail management, stewardship, and other community needs. | Park, Trails | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Evaluate whether additional staff capacity is needed, under an existing department or through reinstatement of a recreation department, to facilitate recreational programming, and/or volunteer coordination. | Select Board, Town Manager, Park | 2021 |
| | 6.2. Effectively coordinate and manage recreational areas.<br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Fees | • Evaluate staffing needs for park and recreation maintenance and administration. | Select Board, DPW, Park | 2021 |
| | | • Consider process for capital planning for recreational facilities with community input. | Select Board, Park | Ongoing |
| | | • Investigate potential for establishing private management entities for other parks similar to Hazel Grove Association. | Park | Ongoing |
| | 6.3. Provide information to the public about passive and active recreation offerings.<br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time | • Integrate list and locations of conservation areas and Town trails maps on Town website. Provide information about facilities such as handicapped accessibility and picnic tables, and policies with respect to dog walking, hunting, or other activities. | Conservation, Trails, website | Ongoing |
| | | • Conduct public outreach for recreation areas and resources; publicize resources such as www.grotontrails.org | Conservation, Trails | Ongoing |
| 7. Enhance Groton's community identity. | 7.1. Identify, preserve, and commemorate historic landscapes, sites, and structures.<br>Funding sources: | • Install interpretive signs describing historic elements of parks, conservation lands, and other public spaces. | Conservation, Parks, Historic (three groups) | 2021 |
| | | • Support community events commemorating Groton's heritage. | Williams Barn, Cultural Council, Commemorations | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | • Volunteer and staff time<br>• Town<br>• Private fundraising<br>• CPA Funding<br>• Freedom's Way<br>• MA Preservation Projects Fund | • Identify and preserve archeological and historic sites. | Conservation, Historic groups, Planning | Ongoing |
| | 7.2. Increase awareness of Groton's natural, cultural, and community assets.<br><br>Funding sources:<br>• Volunteer and staff time<br>• Town<br>• Private Fundraising<br>• Freedom's Way | • Construct a centrally-located kiosk with a map of popular attractions and brochures with more information about what to see/do in Groton. | Business Association, Trails, Historic Commission | 2024 |
| | | • Post way-finding resources (maps, brochures, etc.) in public places such as Library and Town Hall. | Business Association, Trails, Historic Commission | 2024 |
| | | • Develop and maintain a website and/or brochure locating recreation, historic, cultural and natural resources, as well as local businesses. | Conservation, Planning, Trails, Historic Commission, Business Association | Ongoing |
| | | • Improve portal for visitor information and maps on Town website. | IT, Trails, Conservation, Historic | 2020 |
| | | • Consider self-guided bike tours to highlight interesting areas. | Complete Streets | Ongoing |
| | | • Identify state resources and/or local institutional partners to support ecotourism marketing efforts. | Select Board, Conservation, Rotary Club, Groton Business Association, Economic Development Committee, MRPC, Freedom's Way, National Park Service | Ongoing |
| | | • Maintain a regular program of conservation walks and talks to encourage familiarity with available conservation land. | Conservation, Trails, Prescott | Ongoing |
| | | • Coordinate with organizations and groups to support educational programming and events pertaining to Groton's natural and cultural assets. | Conservation, NRWA, Library, Friends of Prescott, Grange, History Center, others | Ongoing |

| Goal | Objective | Action | Responsible Party | Timeframe |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | • Establish a portal for information about organizations, Town committees, civic groups, and volunteer opportunities, consider establishing an annual event to recognize volunteers. | Council on Aging, GDRSD, Town Clerk, Library, others? | 2022 |
| | | • Provide welcome packet and/or orientation program to enable newcomers to connect with local activities and volunteer opportunities. | Economic Development Committee, Voter Registration | Ongoing |




0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

Disclaimer:
Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for official use.
Data Sources:
Community Opportunities Group, Inc. MassGIS, Town of Groton.
Prepared by: Courtney Starling 10/9/18

**Major Hydrography**

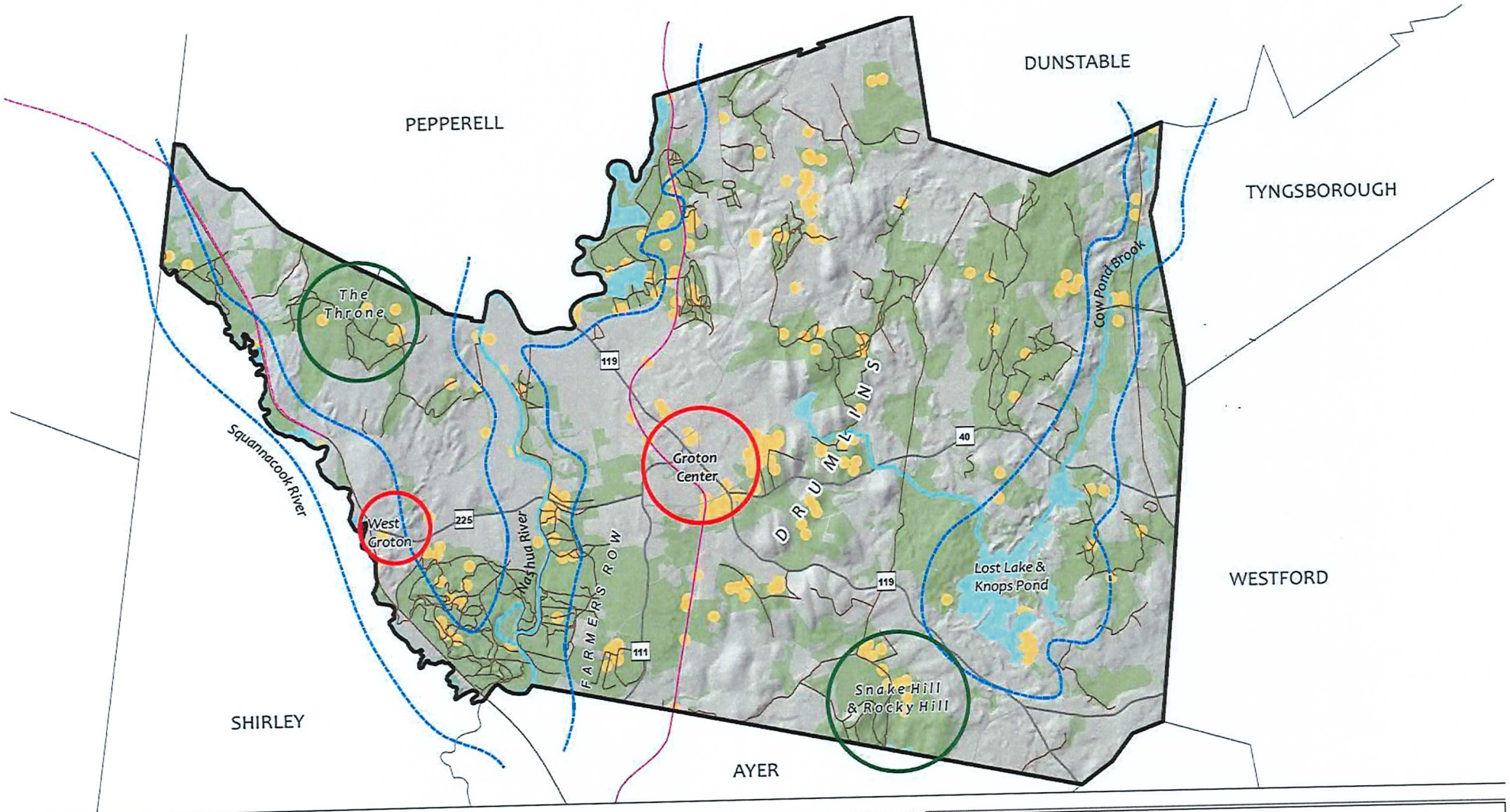
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds

Watershed

- Concord
- Merrimack
- Nashua
- Shawsheen

## Groton Open Space & Recreation Plan 2019-2026

## Map 1: Regional Context




0 0.5 1 2 Miles

Disclaimer:
Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for official use.
Data Sources:
Community Opportunities Group, Inc. MassGIS, Town of Groton.
Prepared by: Courtney Starling 12/3/18

**Legend**

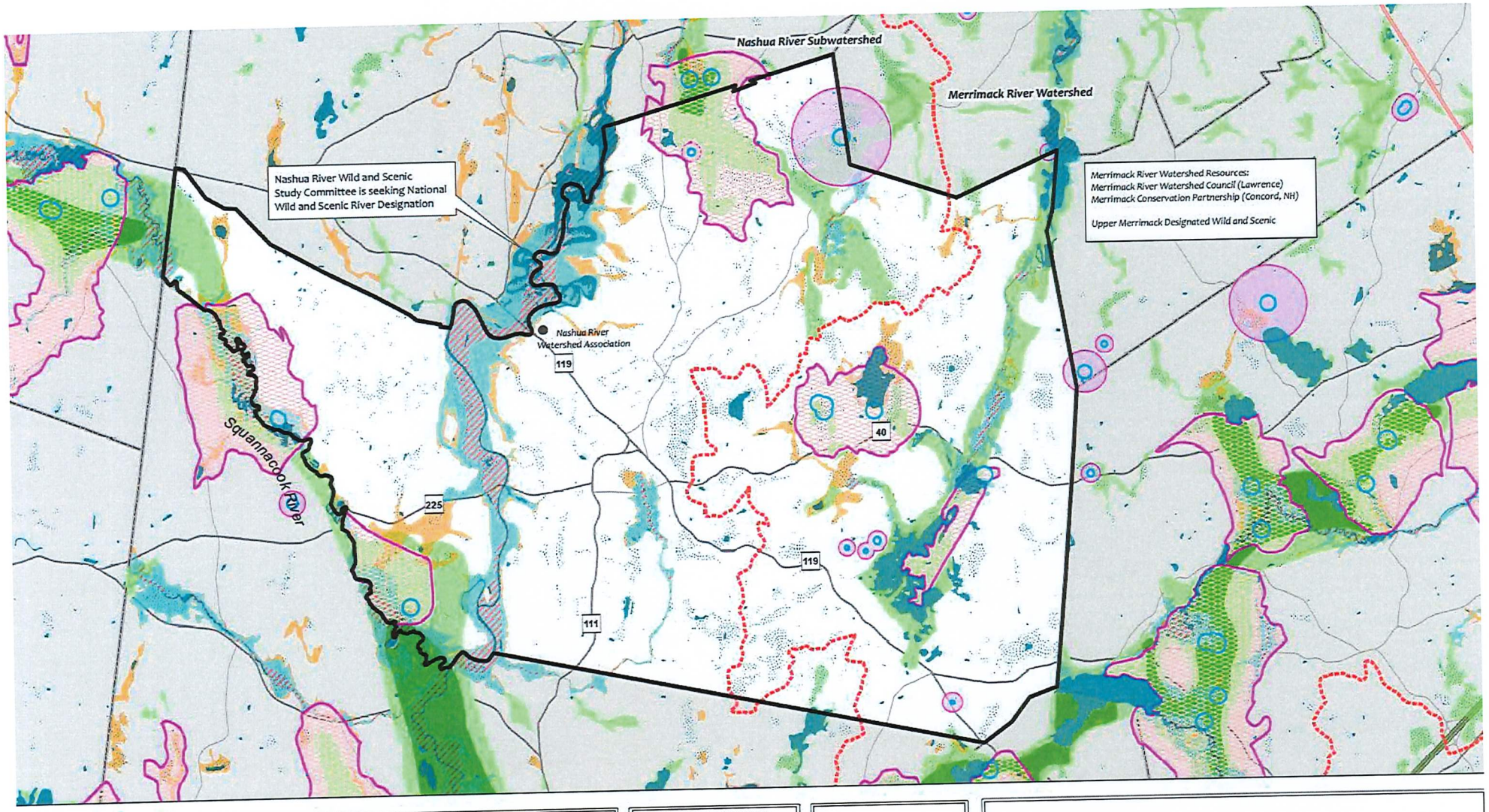
Shaded Relief (1:5,000)
Value
High : 255
Low : 0

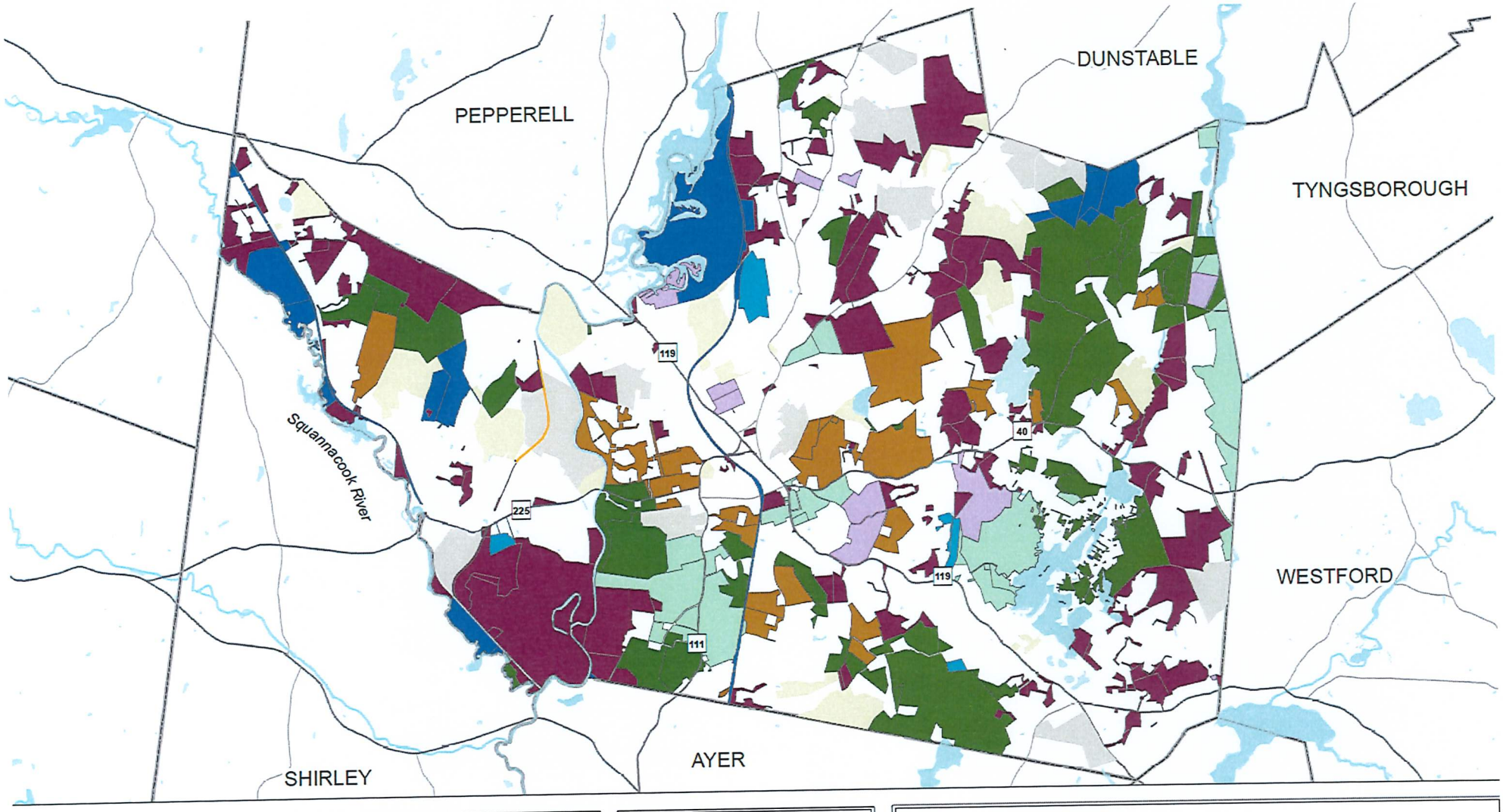
- Water Resource Areas
- Natural Resource Areas
- Historic Village
- Hiking Trails
- Rail Trail
- Proposed Rail Trail

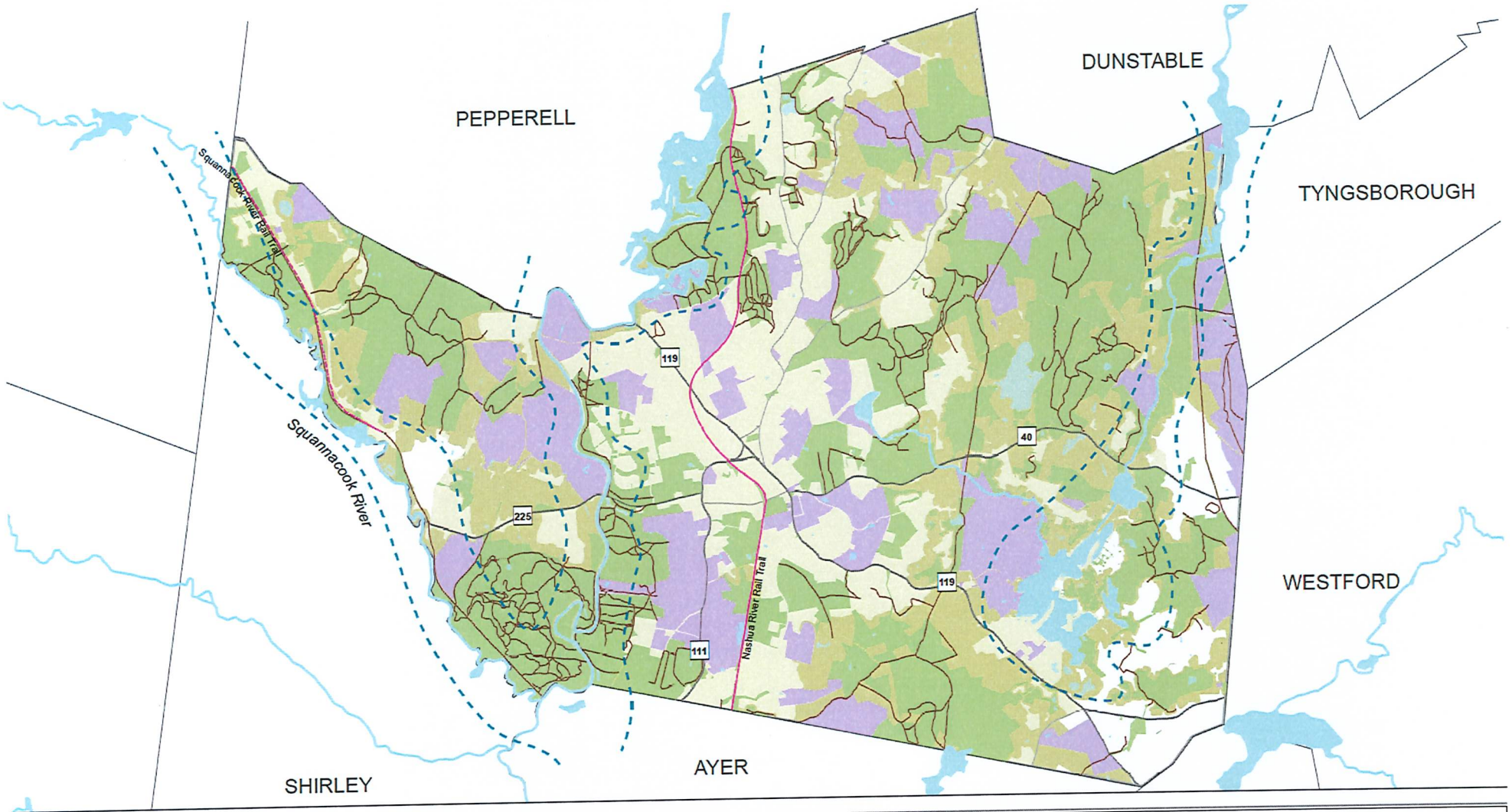
- Special Places
- OpenSpace
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds

## Groton Open Space & Recreation Plan 2019-2026

### Map 5: Unique and Scenic Features


Nashua River Subwatershed
Merrimack River Watershed
Nashua River Wild and Scenic Study Committee is seeking National Wild and Scenic River Designation
Merrimack River Watershed Resources:
Merrimack River Watershed Council (Lawrence)
Merrimack Conservation Partnership (Concord, NH)
Upper Merrimack Designated Wild and Scenic
Nashua River Watershed Association
119
40
225
119
111
Squannacook River
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
Disclaimer:
Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for official use.
Data Sources:
Community Opportunities Group, Inc. MassGIS, Town of Groton.
Prepared by: Courtney Starling 12/3/18
N
Flood Zone Designations
A: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, no BFE
AE: 1% Annual Chance of Flooding, with BFE
AE: Regulatory Floodway
X: 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding
Wellhead Protection Areas
DEP Approved Zone I
DEP Approved Zone II
IWPA
Aquifers
High Yield
Medium Yield
Watershed Boundary
Surface Waters
Wetlands
Groton Open Space & Recreation Plan
2019-2026
Map 6: Water Resources


DUNSTABLE
PEPPERELL
TYNGSBOROUGH
Squannacook River
119
40
225
119
111
WESTFORD
AYER
SHIRLEY
0 0.5 1 2 Miles
Disclaimer:
Map is for planning purposes only and is not intended for official use.
Data Sources:
Community Opportunities Group, Inc. MassGIS, Town of Groton.
Prepared by: Courtney Starling 12/3/18
State Protected
Municipal Protected
Nonprofit
Institutional Protected
Private Protected
Municipal Unprotected
Institutional Unprotected
Private Unprotected
Ch. 61, 61A, 61B
Parcels larger than 50 acres
Groton Open Space & Recreation Plan 2019-2026
Map 7: Inventory of Open Spaces




## *Groton Open Space & Recreation Plan 2019-2026*
## *Map 8: Action Plan*

FY28 Community Preservation Proposal- Groton Conservation Commission

## ATTACHMENT 3
## MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LAND PROTECTION

SELECT PROPERTY

Based on the criteria outlined in the CPC application (parcels that link with contiguous protected open space, parcels that protect and preserve a greenway along the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers and tributaries, parcels where significant wildlife habitat or corridors have been identified, or parcels that preserve a sense of Groton's agricultural heritage), the Conservation Commission will evaluate the merits of each opportunity and, by majority vote, select an appropriate parcel.

DETERMINE WILLINGNESS OF THE SELLER

Occasionally a landowner will approach the Commission or the Groton Conservation Trust with an interest in doing something that would protect his or her land from future development. At other times, the Commission becomes aware that a significant parcel is on the market or the Town is notified of its right to first refusal on a parcel under the M.G.L. Ch. 61 tax program. The Groton Conservation Trust is also a source of information on important parcels.

IDENTIFY SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING ALTERNATIVES

The Conservation Commission identifies appropriate Federal and State supplemental funding sources, i.e., Forest Legacy, Land Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program, Community Partnership, and Source Water Protection grants. Nearly all grants require a local match and/or strong partnership with like-minded conservation organizations. The funding match may be available through the Conservation Fund, the Community Preservation open space monies, and/or a Town Meeting vote.

OBTAIN PROPERTY APPRAISALS

With landowner consent, obtain bids for appraisal(s) after providing deed, assessors' records and maps, as well as applicable zoning and wetland regulations. The cost of individual appraisals is likely to be between $3,000 and $5,000, depending on the size and complexity of the project. Many supplemental funding sources require property appraisals as part of the application process. Coordinate with Town Council and Board of Selectmen to research deeds and obtain warrant articles as required by state LAND Program or other supplemental funding organizations.

RECEIVE CPC APPROVAL/TOWN MEETING VOTE: As required, make presentation at Town Meeting in support of required warrant articles. FY21 Community Preservation Proposal Groton Conservation Commission Attachment 3 – Management Plan.

WRITE GRANT PROPOSAL, IF APPLICABLE, for supplemental funding. Acquisition of property may include survey and legal consultants to prepare a purchase and sales agreement or do title research. The Conservation Fund can be the source of funding. To protect acquired land in perpetuity, the land must be subject to Ch. 40 §8C, the Conservation Commission Act, which is reflected in the deed to be recorded at the Middlesex Registry of Deeds. To qualify for state grants, the parcel's title must be certified by Town Counsel.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Conservation Administrator or other person (s) designated by the Conservation Commission maintains a database on the property that includes the deed, description of the flora and fauna or other significant natural features, management objectives, installation of signing or parking as appropriate, and specific management tasks. With LAND grants, the Town is required to prepare a Baseline Documentation Report and Land Management Plan for individual parcels. On land having a Conservation Restriction, it is necessary to perform on-going monitoring activities to assure there is no encroachment.