

BRIMFIELD RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

BLACKSTONE VALLEY / QUINEBAUG-SHETUCKET LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



**Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor
Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor**

PROJECT TEAM

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Jessica Rowcroft, Preservation Planner
Division of Planning and Engineering

Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers National Heritage Corridor

Robert Levite, UMass Extension

Project Consultants

Elizabeth Vizza, Elizabeth Vizza Consulting
Electa Kane Tritsch, Oakfield Research
Daniel Wells, Hyla Ecological Services Inc.

Local Project Coordinator

Judith Sessler

Local Heritage Landscape Participants

James Adams, Jr.
Dorothy Barr
Sumner Barr
Pamela Beall
Joyce Beaton
Carol Childress
John Curtis
Howard Fife
Jane Freeman
John Freeman
Lee Goodspeed
Carolyn Haley
Shirley Hicks
John Hilker
Sue Hilker
Charlotte Hudson

Thomas Keough
Dave Leons
Matt Lewis
Kitty Lowenthal
Gina Lynch
Ian Lynch
Loretta Medeiros
Jen Ohop
Mrs. A. Ozolins
Bernard Samek
Judith Sessler
Laurel Stalker

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Cover Photographs: view south from Steerage Rock
Lake Sherman
Little Rest residence

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INTRODUCTION

The 22 Massachusetts communities within the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (BRV) and the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (Q-S) are linked by a common heritage of agriculture and industry powered by the rivers and streams that dominate the landscape of south central Massachusetts. River Corridor towns extend from Mendon on the east to Brimfield on the west. While they range in size from the city of Worcester to the compact town of Hopedale, each is equally shaped by the interaction of nature and culture over time.

Heritage landscapes are special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. 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 the two National Heritage Corridors (BRV and Q-S) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program to communities in south central Massachusetts. The goals of the program are to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected, and to provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a pilot project conducted in southeast Massachusetts and refined in Essex County. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land*, which has provided guidance for the program since its inception. In summary, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-BRV/Q-S consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting during which residents and town officials identify and prioritize the landscapes that embody the community's character and its history. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, accompanied by interested community members. This group visits the priority landscapes identified in the meeting and gathers information about the community.

The final product for each community is this Reconnaissance Report. It outlines the community's landscape history; discusses broader land planning issues identified by the community; describes the priority heritage landscapes and issues associated with them; and concludes with preservation recommendations. Two appendices include a list of all of the heritage landscapes identified at the community meeting and a reference listing of land protection tools and procedures.



PART I

BRIMFIELD'S HERITAGE LANDSCAPES



BRIMFIELD'S LANDSCAPE THROUGH TIME

Brimfield is a rural town in the Connecticut River Valley highlands. It lies on the watershed divide between the Quinebaug and Quaboag Rivers. In addition to the rivers, two natural ponds – Little Alum and Sherman – and the flood-control reservoir in East Brimfield are the town's major water features. Brimfield State Forest occupies over 3,000 acres in the southwest corner. The soil, loamy in the central area of Tower and Marsh Hills, turns rocky to the east and west, and to the south it becomes increasingly sand and gravel. Present-day Brimfield is bounded by Holland, Wales, Monson, Palmer, Warren, Brookfield, and Sturbridge. Route 20, running east/west, and Route 19, running north/south, bisect the town center.

In the precontact period there was a network of native trails through the area, including what became known as the Bay Path running northeast/southwest from the vicinity of Quaboag Pond in Brookfield toward the Chicopee River and into Connecticut. Another major east/west route followed the Quinebaug River along what is now Route 20. Quaboag Old Fort, a Contact/Plantation period stronghold, was reputed to have been located in the same vicinity as a documented Contact Period village, between Sherman Pond and Marsh Hill (also called Indian Hill), while other Nipmuc planting fields may have been situated along the flat river valley.

Brimfield was the earliest Anglo-American town established on the east rim of the Connecticut River Valley. English colonial settlement in the 1720s and '30s was concentrated around the present town center, at the junction of present Routes 20 and 19, and included a meeting house (1722; replaced in 1847) and cemetery (1721). The community of dispersed farmsteads remained primarily agricultural through the 19th century since the rivers and streams did not provide enough fall for significant industrial development. Small mixed industrial and craft settlements did develop around mill sites at East Brimfield on the Quinebaug River and at Fentonville on the Quaboag as well as at Little Rest, a neighborhood on East Brook. The Western Railroad, an early rail connection between Worcester and Springfield, began service in 1839 and its route along the Quaboag River through Fentonville encouraged further development.

Small-scale textile manufacture continued throughout the 19th century, supplemented by a tool and die works in East Brimfield and a brickyard at West Brimfield. Agriculture continued to be essential to the town's economy as local farmers turned to commercial dairying, carting their milk to the Brimfield Cheese Factory which, by the end of the century, was producing about a quarter of the county's cheese. In 1908 an electric trolley line that linked Sturbridge to Palmer was routed through the town center. The ill-fated Grand Trunk Railway constructed a parallel railbed, and parts of both lines are still visible through town.

The 20th century saw small-scale cottage colony development around Sherman and Little Alum Ponds. The trolley was abandoned in favor of road improvements geared toward private auto traffic, which in turn supported limited commercial development along Route 20 through the center and into West Brimfield. At mid-century, the Army Corps of Engineers began an ambitious flood control project on the Quinebaug, which inundated East Brimfield village and created the East Brimfield Reservoir. Today the town is known primarily for the seasonal antiques flea markets that are its primary commercial enterprise, and for its recreational opportunities at the reservoir and in Brimfield State Forest.

COMMUNITY-WIDE HERITAGE LANDSCAPE ISSUES

Concern for heritage landscapes is not new to Brimfield. The local historical commission, following a period of inactivity, was reorganized a decade ago. A comprehensive community survey project, conducted by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, documented many of the town's historic resources in 1996, and the town received its first National Register District designation just a year ago.

Brimfield's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by interested residents including many representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on February 1, 2007. During the meeting, residents compiled a lengthy list of the town's heritage landscapes, which is included as Appendix A of this report. As the comprehensive list was being created, attendees were asked to articulate the value of each landscape and identify issues relating to its preservation.

Residents emphasized broad issues related to heritage landscapes and community character. These issues are town-wide concerns that are linked to a range or category of heritage landscapes, not just to a single place. In Brimfield, three issues stand out.

- **Open Space:**
Residents want guidance on ways to protect this major character-defining feature of the community, which ranges from open fields near the village center, to extensive forestland elsewhere in town.
- **Agriculture:**
At issue are ways to protect and promote continued agricultural production.
- **Historic Resource Preservation:**
Of particular interest are ways to encourage adaptive re-use of many historic structures in the town.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Based on information gathered at the community meeting, attendees identified a group of priority landscapes for the consulting team to focus on, through field survey, documentation and planning assessment. Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued and contributes to community character. None of them has any permanent form of protection.

Brimfield's priority landscapes range from a hidden pet cemetery to a lakeside settlement. The iconic landmark on the town seal and a hillside farm are indicative of the town's ridge-top settlement and strong agrarian roots, while a small neighborhood that once supported manufacturing echoes Brimfield's historic reliance on water-powered industry.

The landscapes which were given priority status by Brimfield's community meeting represent a range of scales and types of resources. They also represent other, similar properties in the town and each demonstrates the multiple layers of significance that are common to most heritage landscapes.

Natural and cultural features, individual and civic histories, combine to present property owners and concerned citizens with a complex combination of present-day issues and opportunities. The descriptions and recommendations that follow are intended to be first steps and constructive examples for what needs to be an ongoing process: to identify what is valued and irreplaceable in the community, and develop strategies that will preserve and enhance Brimfield's landscape heritage.

Steerage Rock and Adams Field

Description: At the center of the Brimfield town seal is an image of a massive boulder and the words *Steerage Rock*. This icon has traditionally best been viewed from Adams Field, a broad, sloping hayfield on Warren Road that is the most noticeable part of a 121.5-acre parcel of land stretching west from the road to the base of the ridge that Steerage Rock sits on. The Rock, a glacial erratic cracked by weathering, crowns West Mountain, earlier identified as Wodaquodic or Wottaquottuck Mountain. Steerage Rock is actually the larger of two boulders perched on a long, granite ridge that shows significant glacial scarring. The ridge area in general is covered by small-caliper second growth birch and other deciduous trees and a small, recently built cabin stands at the south end of the ridge. Steerage Rock is surrounded on two sides by the chain-link fence that protects a radio tower owned by the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority. An additional 1.8 acres at the crest, including remains of a fire tower, also belong to the Turnpike Authority.

At least 165 acres surrounding the summit of West Mountain is part of 305 acres in Brimfield presently owned by Hull Forest Products of Pomfret, Connecticut, which has been protected by a Conservation Restriction (held by the New England Forestry Foundation) since 2000. The Hull Forest property is also under Chapter 61 as a "working forest." The cabin and 0.45 acres surrounding it are not bound by the Restriction. Other parcels of land on the mountain are private property, including the lower stretch of the road and right-of-way to the summit.



Background: Steerage Rock is noted as the highest elevation along a major Indian trail (known to settlers as the Bay Path) that extended from the south shore of Massachusetts to the Connecticut River. The Bay Path followed a Native American trail through Brimfield from Tantusques in Sturbridge, past Little Alum Pond, over East Hill and around Lake Sherman, to a Quaboag settlement on Indian Hill. From there the path climbed Tower Hill and hit its highest point at Steerage Rock before descending to the Quaboag River where the trail split, with branches toward Agawam and Holyoke.

West Mountain itself is generally steep and extremely rocky. It was owned by the George Sherman family in Brimfield by 1900. In 1911 a fire tower with glass-enclosed viewing platform was erected on the mountain top. Two years later, Sherman and his two sons decided to capitalize on their view, and constructed a carriage road to the top, opening it to the public. Sherman built two cabins near the fire tower, and sold refreshments to those who came to take in the 40-mile view of the surrounding landscape. Both Sherman cabins are gone and the fire tower has lost its viewing platform, and is in serious disrepair.

Adams Field was part of a farm owned by Jonathan Brown from about 1739, and is presently owned by James Adams Jr., a Brown descendant. The field, which borders Warren Road at the Tower Hill intersection, is the best-known part of a much larger, 121.5 acre parcel. A path crosses the field and over a stream, up a gradual slope to Mountain Brook and then a in steep climb to the crest of Steerage Rock.

Issues:

- Lack of visibility of Steerage Rock: formerly visible from the Adams Fields, reforestation of West Mountain in recent years has erased all sight of Steerage Rock.
- Access and ownership debate: The Town of Brimfield thinks of Steerage Rock as public property, belonging to the residents. Over the years there have been a number of activities and land transfers that encouraged this belief but in fact the top of the ridge, as well as almost all the land on its slopes, is privately held. One land parcel was donated to the town some years ago in the belief that it included the Rock site, but later survey determined that the land was situated partway down the hillside.

Concerning access: the owner of the parcel that includes the lower end of the access road to Steerage Rock holds that the roadway to the top is a “private right of way” on his land, unlike the “public right of way” that dead-ends shortly after its turn-off from Dunhamtown-Brimfield Road. He has entered into an agreement

with MassHighway to allow them access to the radio tower they have erected at the top of the ridge over this disputed right of way, but refuses to grant public access to the area. Wording in a series of deeds pertaining to the property is obscure.

- Municipal concern about development and management of West Mountain acreage owned by Hull Forest Products, which is a commercial lumber company.
- Long-term preservation of Adams Field as open space. The present farm plan for the property extends to 2017. The property is intended to eventually be passed to the owner's children.



Recommendations:

- Share the findings of this project with the property owners of Steerage Rock and of Adams Field. They need to know that this pairing of heritage landscapes is highly valued by Brimfield's citizens.
- Contact the present owner of the Steerage Rock ridge directly concerning clearing around the landmark for long-distance visibility.
- With the Steerage Rock ridge owner and with the access road owner, explore a range of possibilities for occasional public access to this extraordinary viewpoint. Once a year, for instance, the Brimfield Historical Commission and Hull Forest Products might cosponsor a "walk to the top" or similar activity.
- Consider the possibility of engaging legal counsel to conduct a definitive title search of Steerage Rock and of the presence or absence of public right of way to the Rock, should informal discussion of the access issue prove unsuccessful.
- Encourage the owner of Adams Field to discuss with his family the placement of some form of permanent protection, such as a Conservation Restriction, on his important parcel of land.
- Follow up on Mr. Adams' offer that, during his lifetime, he would "encourage and permit a hiking path" to Steerage Rock through his land.

The following four landscapes – Little Rest, Indian Hill Farm, Sherman Lake, and the Sherman Estate – are geographically contiguous properties, and each one impacts the others in a variety of ways described below. The four landscapes share many of the same issues; however others are different, as are some of the recommendations. Consequently the parcels will be discussed separately. Readers are encouraged to consult the map that accompanies this report to understand the close affinity among the four.

Little Rest

Description: Little Rest is a small neighborhood of houses and farms ranging along Little Rest Road off Brookfield Road. It is limited topographically by the Great Swamp to the north and east, out of which flows the brook that provided waterpower to this once-active manufacturing community. East Hill defines its southern limit. Little Rest Road parallels East Brook (also known as Sessions Brook) north of Lake Sherman. The area today, as documented in Brimfield's 1995-96 Historic Resources Survey, includes four historic houses ranging in date from 1785 to 1840, and the Morgan Mill waterpower infrastructure. It also includes the foundation of the Little Rest schoolhouse (pre-1831) located on private land, and a few, more recent residences.



Background: According to local sources, Little Rest Road was a segment of the Bay Path. The development of Little Rest as a pre-industrial mill village began with Colonel Aaron Morgan constructing a grist and sawmill on East Brook, possibly as early as 1785, but certainly before 1795 when it was noted on a town map. The Morgan family continued to operate a lumber and shingle mill at Little Rest into the twentieth century, and a boarding house was erected for mill workers upslope from the present pond and dam remnants. The War of 1812 spurred additional industrial activity on the stream, focused on ironworking. Gun barrels, rifles, and the more mundane but essential machine-cut nails, as well as wagon wheels and harness irons, were all produced during the 19th century along the short street that defines Little Rest. At the height of its industrial activity, during the 1870s, the village of Little Rest included twelve houses, three shops, two mills and a school house.

Today Little Rest presents some of the only remaining evidence of historic industrial activity in Brimfield, as the town's major mill concentration, in East Brimfield, was inundated by the East Brimfield Dam project during the 1960s. The Historic Resources Survey report observed: *Little Rest is a nearly architecturally intact area which, as an early industrial-crafts center, played a significant role in Brimfield's economic development.* The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission recommended Little Rest for designation as a National Register Historic District under criteria A & C.

Issues:

- Lack of public appreciation: the historic significance of Little Rest is unknown to most Brimfield residents.

- Conflicting interests of conservation and farming: two agricultural enterprises in the area have been under scrutiny by the Conservation Commission, concerned about disturbance of wetlands and leaching of nutrients into East Brook and Lake Sherman.
- Lack of permanent protections for historic buildings and neighborhood.

Recommendations:

- The Historical Commission and neighborhood residents should pursue National Register designation for this district. The designation process will provide additional documentation of the structures, landscapes and activities in the area. This information, in turn, will provide material which can be used in school programs, newspaper articles and other public information sources.
- Consider establishing Little Rest as a Neighborhood Conservation District (this designation is further described in Appendix B, No. 6). An NCD is a locally-monitored form of protection that can preserve the distinctive characteristics of this unusual neighborhood.
- Discuss with schoolhouse site owner the possibility of a roadside historic marker noting the history of the Little Rest School, and encourage them to place a Preservation Restriction on that part of the property that includes the site, possibly from the cellarhole to the road.
- Neighborhood landowners need to be made aware of and sensitive to wetlands issues and the potential adverse effects of activity around them, especially as it might affect private wells and the aquifer.

Indian Hill Farm
(161 Brookfield Road)

This farm sits at the intersection of Little Rest, Brookfield, and Marsh Hill Roads and overlooks the north shore of Lake Sherman. It includes 69 acres of open fields and pasture which contribute to the rural aspect of the lake front, but which also present some ecological challenges. A two and a half story, vinyl-sided gable-end house with single story ell stands close to the road on the north side, and a cluster of shelter sheds is located south of the corner. The property has been under Chapter 61A since the 1980s.



Indian Hill Farm was included as part of the Little Rest area in the Historic Resources Survey completed by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission in 1996. As such, it was

included as a contributing property in their evaluation that Little Rest should be considered for designation as a National Register Historic District under criteria A & C.

Background: Indian Hill Farm was originally part of the colonial Marriot Farm, which included land on both sides of Marsh Hill Road to the top of Indian (aka Marsh) Hill. The original part of the farmhouse was likely constructed about 1810 by Benjamin Elwell, although its present Greek Revival appearance dates to the 1830-1845 period, with later 19th century detailing. A large 19th century barn which stood on the corner where present shelter sheds are located has been torn down. The Morin family, who purchased the property in 1967, maintained a dairy operation here for many years, but currently the owner is raising a small herd of Black Angus beef cattle.

Issues:

- Preservation of views and historic buildings characteristic of a traditional farm landscape of central Massachusetts.
- Owner intentions: there is currently no form of permanent land protection in place on the family parcels. While the acreage is under Chapter 61A, this is not a permanent restriction.

Recommendations:

- Share the findings of this project with the property owner. The owner needs to know that this open-space parcel is highly valued by Brimfield's citizens.
- Update the MHC Survey form (BRI.32) to include the heritage landscape associated with the buildings.
- Explore options for permanent preservation with the owner, including putting a Conservation Restriction (CR) or Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) in place.
- Brimfield needs to explore the potential of encouraging the owner to transfer development rights to the parcel, or transfer the property outright to the town. Either of these mechanisms would be easier to accomplish financially if the town were to adopt the Community Preservation Act.
- The Town should consider forming a Local Agricultural Commission, which would help spark a mutual dialogue between farmers and the town, to deal with the issues regarding use of farmland and the impacts on the lake.
- The town should consult with the Dept. of Agricultural Resources for technical assistance on successful examples of towns negotiating the impacts of farming activities on nearby natural resources.

Lake Sherman Area

Description: Also known as Sherman Pond and earlier as Brimfield Pond (1831 map), this 76.5 acre natural pond lies at the foot of Marsh (Indian) Hill and is fed by three major streams as well as a number of seasonal brooks that flow down from the surrounding highlands. Lake Sherman is one of two natural, brook-fed Commonwealth Great Ponds in Brimfield, Little Alum Pond being the other. Despite significant residential use of its shores, the lake's water quality has consistently tested excellent, and property owners have improved septic systems as necessary within the development. The lake is home to a wide variety of common fish and waterfowl, and is visited by herons, osprey, mergansers and an occasional eagle.

Brookfield Road skirts the west side of the pond and provides narrow access to a boat launch area as well as views across the pond to cottages and the Indian Hill Farm fields. Approximately 70 acres on the east side of the lake is thickly settled with mid-twentieth century cottages on a series of lanes that form rising tiers above Cubles Drive. A few buildable lots remain in the neighborhood. A majority of the cottages have recently been expanded and/or winterized, and many are occupied year round by second – and third – generation family members. The Lake Sherman Association (LSA), a lakeowners’ group, maintains a communal swimming beach, pavilion and boat access with uses governed by published “Beach Rules” and the Massachusetts Environmental Police guidebook “Boat Massachusetts”.



Background: There is some indication of precontact camp sites along the pond’s shoreline, as is true of most good-sized inland ponds. The pond is shown on Brimfield’s earliest maps, but with no indication of mill activity, and was therefore a likely center of agricultural activity for the town at least thru the 19th century. A Boy Scout camp established in the 1920s occupied the whole east shore of the lake until 1947, when it was sold and the acreage developed as a summer cottage colony with communal lakefront access.

Issues:

- Funding for maintenance and upgrading of lakefront facilities
- Milfoil and other aquatic invasives. A recent website posting described the issue as follows: *Eurasian Milfoil is a threat to the aquatic ecosystem. The plant aggressively replaces native vegetation and the organisms that have evolved to live on and around them. Dense milfoil beds degrade water quality (dissolved oxygen, water temperature, pH) to the point that many fish species cannot survive in areas colonized by this plant. [www.aquatechnex.com].* Milfoil is a recurring problem. The lake was completely cleared of the plant in 1968, but it has recently returned to the water system. Its presence possibly coincides with hydro-raking that may have stirred up the lake bottom and any remaining agricultural run-off.
- Impact on wildlife and on community character of use of motorized vehicles on the lake. At present, boat motors are permitted on the lake in accordance with “Boat Massachusetts” guidelines and there is some use of Skidoos and snowmobiles on the ice in winter. There is some indication that boaters are ignoring the speed restrictions now in place.

- Preservation of cottage community character of the lakeshore.

Recommendations:

- The lakeowners association (LSA) should review 1986 and 1989 studies of Lake Sherman for procedures and possible updates.
- The LSA should continue to seek advice from the such organizations as the Lakes and Ponds Association of Western Massachusetts (LAPA West), which has advised them in the past concerning milfoil management, and from the Central Massachusetts Waterways District. DCR’s Lakes & Ponds program (see Appendix B) can also be contacted for technical advice on invasives.
- Control of milfoil and other aquatic invasives is an ongoing problem. It will best be managed by developing a concerted effort between the lakeowners and the Conservation Commission, and coming to a mutually agreeable arrangement with any upstream farm owner concerning field fertilization and nutrient run-off.
- Discuss with Indian Hill Farm owner the possibility of municipal purchase of the fields closest to Lake Sherman, to be preserved as conservation land. The fields would then serve as buffers between the farm and the lake.
- The LSA needs to review and enforce its policies concerning motorized vehicles on the lake, seeking support from local safety authorities if necessary. The association should seek to weigh recreational gain against loss of wildlife.
- In order to encourage the sense of community that has defined the Lake Sherman neighborhood for decades, the LSA might promote the concept of Lake Sherman as a year-round recreational resource, including such seasonal events as a winter carnival and a summer boat regatta.
- Consider creating a “Friends of the Lake” group to develop funding for desirable communal projects.
- The Historical Commission and the LSA should consider designating the Lake Sherman cottages a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD) to protect the historic qualities of the area while still allowing for controlled development and change.
- See Part II of this report: Brimfield’s Open Space Plan recommends adopting a pond overlay district and a seasonal conversion bylaw to protect Lake Sherman and Little Alum.

Sherman Estate (63 Brookfield Rd)

Description: The imposing 17-room Second Empire style residence known locally as “Dr. Sherman’s house” stands on 9.5 acres on Brookfield Road. The house is two and a half stories with a high-pitched slate mansard roof and projecting center entry bay with cupola. A wrap-around porch with paired columns extends to a porte-cochere on the south side of the building. Formally laid dressed-stone walls define the yard area and flank both sides of Brookfield Road. Remnant estate plantings, including mature spruce trees and peegee hydrangeas, hint at the extensive gardens that were once associated with the property. At present the aluminum-sided building is unoccupied and in disrepair, although it appears to be sound and weather-tight.

At the north end of the property, another dressed-stone wall defines a public right-of-way that extends from Cubles Drive (by Lake Sherman) past the Sherman House and up Sheep Pasture Hill. At an earlier period this path connected to Warren Road and was likely part of an early east-west cart road through town.

Background: This parcel is a remnant of Captain John Sherman's (1683-1774) proprietary grant, which he took up in the new community of Brimfield in 1724. A plaque was erected on the property by the Sherman family in 1930, commemorating the site's historic association with John Sherman.

The present residence was originally constructed as a summer house in the Second Empire style by Elijah T. Sherman, a New York manufacturer of safes, in 1876. The property originally included a massive barn with a cupola. Before the vegetation at the intersection of Brookfield Road and Cubles Drive was allowed to grow up, the house had a view of Lake Sherman. After severe fire damage in 1910, the residence was restored in its original form, but with less elaborate, more Colonial Revival detailing. A five bay carriage/car shed may have been constructed at the same time.

Elijah Sherman's son, Dr. Irving Sherman, sold the property in the 1940s to the Hicks family. In later years the estate housed a number of functions, including the Lakeview Tea Room in the late 1940s, the Brimfield Nursing Home from 1956 to 1976, Sister Juliette's Shelter run by the Sisters of Providence and, most recently, a Russian Orthodox retreat center. Today the Sherman Estate is privately owned, and is being considered for use as a bed & breakfast.



Issues:

- Historical significance of this landscape to Brimfield residents: homestead of a town father; 19th century house of successful native son; 20th century adaptation of estate for recreational and charitable purposes.
- Owner intentions and ability to absorb the cost of restoring and adapting this property for commercial use.
- Building condition: the presence of aluminum siding, which appears to be as much as fifty years old, increases the danger of extensive damage in the event of fire.

Recommendations:

- Share the findings of this project with the property owner. The owner needs to know that this historic parcel is highly valued by Brimfield's citizens.
- Encourage the owners to seek National Register listing for this property. Such listing, although not a quick process, would make the owners eligible for

investment tax credits for adaptive reuse of the property as a commercial enterprise (bed & breakfast).

- Recommend that the owners consider placing a Preservation Restriction on the property, to protect the many features of this heritage landscape from future insensitive development.

Horse Cemetery (38 Brookfield Road rear)

Description: On a recently reforested hillside east of Brookfield Road, a line of spruce trees marks the entrance to a half-acre grassy clearing, in the center of which is a 100-foot diameter, foot-high stone wall in the shape of a horseshoe. This is the burial place of six horses, two goats and an unknown number of neighbors' pets. The wall is topped at measured intervals by raised stones representing the calks of an iron horseshoe. A memorial stone stands in the center of the space with a plaque headed *Faithful Friends*, listing the names and ages of the first four horses to have been buried there.

Background: This small hillside parcel was set off by James A. G. Hoyt, a retired sawmill owner, as a burial plot for four of his horses. At Hoyt's death in 1951, the plot, together with a public right-of-way for access from Brookfield Road, was willed to the town with a \$400 perpetual care fund. Two friends' horses and his sister's pet goats were interred there in later years. It is now under the care of the Brimfield Cemetery Commission.



Issue:

- **Public access:** the public right of way that extends a quarter mile from Brookfield Road, past the garage of the front lot's present owner, follows what may have been an earlier wood road and includes a causeway over a small brook. In about 2000, a beaver dam downstream flooded the area, creating a wetland estimated to have been four feet wide; three feet deep at the most. More recently, beavers have constructed a new dam upstream of the earlier one, using the causeway itself as the dam foundation. The wetland now extends 300 feet along the right of way, making the cart path completely unusable and the cemetery publicly inaccessible.
- **Maintenance:** routine maintenance of the cemetery is being carried out on a volunteer basis, due to the inability of town equipment to access the property.

Recommendations:

- Investigate alternative routes that might be acquired by the town to provide public access to the cemetery. It should be noted, however, that public access is a two-sided issue, since ease of access also means ease of vandalism. At present the Horse Cemetery is at a discreet distance from public consciousness. The Historical and Cemetery Commissions need to consider both pros and cons of significantly altering that situation for an animal graveyard.
- The Historical Commission, Cemetery Commission, and neighboring landowner might consider cosponsoring an annual or semi-annual cemetery tour, with permission to cross through the private property. Alternatively the issue of public access may resolve itself naturally in the course of the next decade or so, since beavers normally abandon their dam/lake areas as preferred food sources become scarce. Following their departure, the present wetland is likely to return to pre-beaver accessibility.

Grand Trunk Railway and Trolley Line

Description: Remains of two transport routes, frequently parallel or convergent, wind across Brimfield from the East Brimfield Reservoir to the western border. Much of the route is effectively invisible due to highway and residential development, but the roadbeds are more or less intact east of Brimfield center to the East Brimfield Reservoir. This linear landscape was the route of the Hartford and Worcester Street Railroad, an electric trolley line, and the intended later route of the unfinished Grand Trunk Railway. Brimfield's Historic Resources Survey describes the condition of the streetcar line as: *tracks demolished, roadbed abandoned, Holland Road bridge fair*. The trolley bridge and a trestle over what had been a stretch of the Quinebaug River have been inventoried for the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Other visible evidence of the trolley line includes several stretches of the embankment and road bed, plus deep rock cuts and filled areas in West Brimfield.

The Grand Trunk rail bed is in somewhat different condition, for track was never laid along this line. While the trolley line paralleled Route 20 across the town, the Grand Trunk route swung north when it came to the steepest gradient of Brimfield Mountain, eventually entering Palmer just south of the present Massachusetts Turnpike. Three sections of the Grand Trunk rail bed – two shared by the trolley line – are relatively intact. The upper portion of support piers for an imposing trestle, visible above the waterline of the East Brimfield Reservoir, have been inventoried for MHC.

Most of both transport routes are under private ownership, while the eastern end of the line, through East Brimfield village, was inundated by the USACE East Brimfield Dam in 1960.

Background: The Hartford and Worcester Street Railroad opened through Brimfield in 1907, providing inexpensive transportation between Worcester and Springfield without a need to change cars. Although it ran through rural areas in the east part of town, Brimfield's citizens insisted that the trolley be routed down the main street of town for much of its distance, providing easy access and, not coincidentally, significant improvements to the streetscape. The trolley line closed down in 1927, unable to compete with the increasing numbers of private automobiles.

The Grand Trunk, legally chartered in Massachusetts as the Southern New England Railroad, was part of a much more ambitious project by the Canadian Grand Trunk Railway, to extend their northern lines south to Providence, Rhode Island, an ice-free port. The line's president and chief proponent, Charles Hays, died on the *Titanic* before work was begun. Much of the rail bed and many embankments proceeded to be constructed, however, between 1912 and 1915, following a meandering route laid out to minimize grade through eleven towns between Palmer and Providence, but operational track was never laid. Because of Brimfield's hilly terrain, the route through town was longer than for any other town in Massachusetts. During the 1930s the unused rail line was sold off to private buyers. Parts of the 85 miles of rail bed can still be seen in Quinebaug and Blackstone Heritage Corridor towns including Brimfield, Sturbridge, Southbridge, Webster, Dudley, Douglas, Uxbridge, Millville and Blackstone, where their characteristic steep-sided embankments and massive earth-moving feats testify to the deep pockets and grand visions of the railroad's owners.



Issues:

The issues here center on use of these rail lines as recreational walking or bike trails.

They include:

- Public access
- Improvement and clearing of sections in order for them to be useful. A section of GTR line that crosses Five Bridges Road is a good example of this.
- Connection with other regional rail trails

This is clearly a situation where regional planning and cooperative action are worthwhile. While the trolley line is essentially local, and much of its bed has been removed or reused, the Grand Trunk cuts across at least seven towns in the region, and Heritage Landscape Inventory participants in a number of those towns have expressed a similar interest in developing this already-laid-out, pre-engineered pathway as a recreational asset. Partially or completely finished sections of trail include the following.

- Sturbridge: trail east of East Brimfield Reservoir (ACE)
- Douglas: "Big Fill" in Douglas State Forest (DCR)
- Dudley: Grand Trunk Rail Trail

According to ACE sources, the GTT has the potential to be a major east-west trail along the southern Massachusetts border. At present, including the 11 mile section of the

Quinebaug River Rail Trail (Southbridge to Webster), there are "in the works" 22+ miles of trail.

The most "finished" section is that part extending through the Westville Lake Recreational Park in Sturbridge. Completion of this section was a cooperative effort among the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Opacum Land Trust, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, National Park Service, Grand Trunk Trailblazers, the Towns of Southbridge and Sturbridge, and numerous trail volunteers.

Recommendations:

- Confirm the location and current ownership of all parcels along the line.
- Work with other members of the regional GT Trail Committee (composed of officially designated representatives from the Towns of Brimfield, Sturbridge, Southbridge and the local office of the US Army Corps of Engineers) to expand Committee membership and representation. DCR's Trails and Greenways program and the NPS can both provide technical assistance to the Committee.
- Sponsor public events to raise awareness of the trail and promote its recreational benefits for Brimfield in particular, as well as for regional use.
- Together with neighboring towns, seek funding support for preparation of a National Register nomination for the Grand Trunk corridor.



photo credit: <http://www.hitchcockacademy.org>



PART II

BUILDING A HERITAGE LANDSCAPE TOOLKIT



EIGHT TOOLKIT BASICS

As our communities undergo rapid land use changes, heritage landscapes are particularly threatened because they are often taken for granted. There is a broad variety of resources that communities can call upon to protect these irreplaceable resources. Below is a checklist of the basics. Each is discussed in the sections that follow and in Appendix B.

1. Know the resources: Inventory

We cannot advocate for something until we clearly identify it – in this case, the physical characteristics and historical development of the town’s historic and archeological resources. The necessary first step is to record information about the resources at the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

2. Gain recognition for their significance: National Register Listing

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation’s official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing brings a number of benefits including recognition, consideration when federally-or state-funded projects may impact the resource, eligibility for tax credits, and qualification for certain grant programs.

3. Engage the public: 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.

4. Think in context: Comprehensive and Open Space Planning

It is important that Open Space Plans and Comprehensive or Master Plans 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.

5. Develop partnerships: The Power of 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.

6. Defend the resources: Zoning, Bylaw and Ordinance Mechanisms

Effective and innovative preservation tools exist in the legal and regulatory realm. These range from a wide array of zoning, bylaw and ordinance mechanisms, to incentive programs and owner-generated restrictions on land use.

7. Utilize the experts: 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 Heritage Corridor and the Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.

8. Pay the bill: Funding Preservation

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.

BRIMFIELD'S TOOLKIT – Current Status and Future Additions

What follows is a review of the tools that Brimfield already has in place, as well as a number of additional tools that fall within some of the categories noted above. The tools already in place for Brimfield provide a good foundation for heritage landscape preservation, but their efficacy as protection for the town's natural and cultural resources can be significantly improved by strengthening existing measures and putting others in place. Appendix B includes extended descriptions of preservation measures; the specific applications of those tools to Brimfield's resources are described below. In addition, the appendix contains a full description of further avenues and creative approaches that Brimfield can consider in developing a multi-pronged strategy for preservation.

A tool that has been proven to be one of the single most valuable resources in protecting heritage landscapes has been the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Towns that have approved the CPA have been able to leverage funding for such activities as historic resource surveys, acquisition of conservation restrictions and open space, adaptive reuse of historic structures, and signage programs. More information about the CPA can be found in Appendix B under number 6 - Defend the Resources: Laws, Bylaws and Regulations and number 8 - Pay the Bill: Funding Preservation. Brimfield's 2007 Town Meeting approved establishment of a CPA study committee charged with reviewing and reporting on the act during the coming year.

These tools should be considered in combination with those recommendations made in Part I for Brimfield's priority landscapes.

1. Know the resources: Inventory

Current: According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission conducted a comprehensive community survey project in Brimfield in 1995-1996, during which 221 buildings, structures and sites were documented, including 12 historic areas and the Brimfield Center National Register Historic District. In addition, nine precontact Indian sites and 22 historic archaeological sites in Brimfield have been documented on MHC inventory forms.

Additions: Given Brimfield's documented precontact significance, it is recommended that a similar, archaeological survey be completed for the community. Known and potential precontact Native American and historic archaeological sites should be documented in the field for evidence of their cultural association and/or integrity. Funding assistance for this effort would also be available from the MHC Survey and Planning grants.

2. Gain recognition for their significance: State and National Register Listing

Current: Brimfield has 73 properties and features listed on the National Register, all within the Brimfield Center National Register Historic District (2006). All are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

There are no recorded Preservation Restrictions or Local Historic Districts in Brimfield.

Additions: Pursue National Register Listing for all of the priority landscapes discussed in this report.

3. Engage the public: Outreach, Education and Interpretation

Current: The Open Space Plan recommends that informational meetings be held for town residents who are interested in placing some form of Conservation Restriction on their open space lands. This is an excellent recommendation that should be given a high priority.

The Brimfield Historical Commission, a volunteer town board that has filled in for the disbanded local historical society, as well as fulfilling its state-mandated functions, has been very active and has contributed greatly to Brimfield's awareness of its historic legacy. In recent years the Commission has undertaken several efforts to spotlight the center village, especially to raise public awareness during the National Register nomination process. The Commission, in association with the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor fall tour schedule, offered two tours of the center village, one focusing on architecture and the other, on civic functions (especially the town hall and common). As part of this same effort, and with Quinebaug-Shetucket grant assistance, the Commission published a resource packet for teachers, families and youth groups. Finally, the restoration and rededication of the Civil War Memorial culminated the effort to engage residents with center village history.

In addition, the Historical Commission sponsors a historic marker program for houses and buildings in town, including donated signs for public and semi-public buildings within the Historic District. They have prepared a fact sheet about Scenic Roads protection, and maintain a volunteer-managed web site.

Additions: The Historical Commission has, in many ways, set its own example, seeking out cooperative educational and funding opportunities and focusing local attention on current preservation issues. They would do well to consider other areas of Brimfield for treatment and programming similar to what has been carried out in the town center. The heritage landscapes described in this report provide a good list on which to base prioritization.

The Historical Commission should also be the leading advocate for passage of the Community Preservation Act and for establishment of Neighborhood Architectural Conservation or Local Historic Districts. These mechanisms are more fully described in Appendix B, and further helpful information is available from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Brimfield's Historical Commission can utilize its web site and other public information media to spell out the details of each of these, well in advance of town meeting, to allow for full discussion of the issues by town residents.

Preservation Mass, as the statewide preservation advocacy organization, is a source of support for advocacy. They have a program that annually identifies and publicizes the 10 Most Endangered historic resources in the Commonwealth, which is a good way to advocate for resources that are imminently threatened.

4. Think in context: Comprehensive and Open Space Planning

Current: Open Space Plan 2006: Brimfield's Open Space Plan emphasizes the importance of the town's rural character and its expanses of unfragmented open space as valuable assets to residents and visitors. Three of the plan's four goals address heritage landscape needs:

- Protect the Town's critical natural, scenic and historic resources from unplanned development.
- Preserve the Town's unique rural character and agricultural heritage.
- Expand and link existing wildlife habitats to create wildlife corridors.

A number of priority landscapes were addressed in the plan, including Steerage Rock, the Grand Trunk Trail, and Lake Sherman. Specifically, the plan recommends consideration of a pond overlay district and seasonal conversion bylaw to protect the town's major water bodies, Lake Sherman and Little Alum Pond. Recommendations from the present heritage landscape report should be used in conjunction with findings from the open space plan to move forward on these vital community issues.

Additions: It will be important to follow up the planning commitments made in the Open Space Plan with implementation of the Action Plan, including preparation of a Community Development Plan to assist with exploring and passing zoning mechanisms that have proven critical for heritage landscape protection elsewhere.

5. Develop Partnerships: the Power of Collaboration

The Open Space Plan underscores the importance of collaborating with local and regional land trusts and conservation organizations in land preservation efforts. Specifically, they cite working with Norcross Wildlife Foundation, Opacum Land Trust and The Trustees of Reservations to purchase or acquire conservation restrictions on land valuable for a variety of reasons.

As discussed above, efforts to create a regional trail from the Grand Trunk alignment will require participation with the regional Grand Trunk Trail committee and cooperative work with additional partners.

The specific issues and recommendations in Part I concerning Indian Hill Farm and Lake Sherman are further examples of the need for local collaborative and cooperative efforts among boards, organizations, and individuals within the town.

6. Defend the Resources: Zoning, Bylaw and Ordinance Mechanisms

Current Mechanisms: Several recommendations made in Brimfield's 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan have been implemented since that time. The town reviewed and updated its subdivision control regulations and zoning map. Land-use planning strategies were implemented that increased the town's ability to acquire and protect valuable open space.

Brimfield currently has few formal mechanisms in place to protect its valued heritage landscapes. According to the Town Assessor, only two Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and one Conservation Restriction are on record in town; the CR on Hull Forest Products land (see Part I, Steerage Rock) is in addition to these.

The town does have an Open Space bylaw passed in 1990 (Section VI-G Bylaws). The bylaw permits clustered single-family residential development in Agricultural-Residential and Business districts. Provisions include lot size of less than 1 ½ acres, but more than ½ acre; separation of clusters from each other and adjacent properties by permanently protected open space including a 50' vegetated buffer zone along public ways. These and a number of other stipulations are designed to “maintain the traditional New England rural character and land use pattern in which small villages contrast with open space and farmlands.”

Additional Mechanisms: The 2006 Open Space Plan recommended offering incentives for use of development models such as the Open Space Communities described above, over the conventional model that is still favored by local developers.

The Plan also recommended establishing a committee to study the feasibility of creating a historic overlay zoning district to provide a higher level of protection for historic buildings and sites. Such a district might be similar to either a Neighborhood Conservation District or a Local Historic District, both of which are discussed below.

Three basic strategies have consistently proven effective as basic preservation tools in communities throughout Massachusetts, and should be given close examination by Brimfield's residents.

- **Demolition Delay Bylaws** provide a time period in which towns can explore alternatives to demolition. The Brimfield Historical Commission should work with MHC staff to develop a bylaw that would best suit Brimfield's needs. They should also work with other town groups to publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. The most valuable aspect of this bylaw is that it creates space within which to have a conversation about how private and public needs can both be met in the service of preservation. Many towns have found that a delay of one year is the most effective time frame within which to negotiate alternatives to demolition. A majority of the bylaws apply to all structures built over 50 years ago, in accordance with federal standards.
- **Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (NACD)**, further explained in Appendix B are also local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. The Brimfield Historical Commission should work with MHC staff to determine how an NACD can help to maintain the character of areas such as the cottage colony on Lake Sherman and the landscape of Little Rest that have changed through time, but which retain a valued neighborhood “feel” that may be threatened by incompatible development.
- **Local Historic Districts (LHD)**, further explained in Appendix B, are also local initiatives and the strongest form of protection to preserve special areas with

distinctive buildings and places. Unfortunately, National Register listing provides minimal protection for historic landscapes and structures. Local designation can be tailored to specific community needs, and often protects private investment by enhancing property values. In Brimfield, the key to tourism and at least partially to economic development, is preserving the rural character of its village center. Establishment of Brimfield Center as a Local Historic District would make a major contribution toward that end.

Additional mechanisms specific to Brimfield's landscapes

The following recommendations are organized by resource as they pertain to Brimfield, and include measures that should be considered to strengthen resource protection.

Agricultural Lands

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities; otherwise, it simply is the preservation of land as open space. There are instances in which changing technology sometimes requires modifications to existing farm structures, or the addition of new ones. It is important to know what the features of an agricultural setting are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these settings.

The Brimfield Open Space Plan recommends that the town consider supporting local farming through purchasing agricultural land and leasing it for a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program. Establishing a Local Agricultural Commission would be helpful to move this proposal forward, and planners should be in touch with other CSA groups in New England, who are aware of relevant grant funding and can be very helpful in assisting new start-ups. The challenge of funding municipal purchase of agricultural land would be eased if Brimfield adopted the Community Preservation Act, which has helped other communities throughout Massachusetts invest in landscape preservation.

Appendix B has a full list of regulatory tools that should be considered to protect agricultural land; the following highlights important measures to meet the needs of agricultural protection in Brimfield.

1. Create an Agricultural Commission, a standing committee of town government created through vote at Town Meeting. This Commission would represent the farming community, promote agricultural-based economic opportunities, and work to protect and sustain agricultural businesses and farmland.
2. Prioritize parcels under Chapter 61A for future acquisition. Should the land owner choose to sell land recently withdrawn from Ch 61, the town has only 120 days to act on its right of first refusal. The need to pay fair market value, combined with lack of readily-available funding from a program such as the Community Preservation Act, makes it difficult for the town to effectively act on this right.
3. Strengthen public-private partnerships to preserve farmland through purchase of APRs or CRs. Brimfield currently has two properties with APRs on them. Other towns in the region, most notably Dudley, have had great success in placing

farms under the APR program, and might provide guidance for more widespread application of this tool in Brimfield.

4. Develop partnerships with organizations such as the Opacum Land Trust to raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist a farmer in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the owner would be required to donate a preservation restriction (PR).
5. Make information about the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources programs available to farmers, including the Farm Viability Enhancement Program (technical assistance, funding) and the Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (supports best management practices for agricultural operations to mitigate impacts on natural resources).
6. Document farms that are considered critical to the character of Brimfield's community using MHC Area survey forms.
7. Adopt a right-to-farm bylaw which allows farmers to carry on farming activities that may be considered a nuisance to neighbors. Refer to Smart Growth Toolkit at: http://www.mass.gov/envir/smart_growth_toolkit/bylaws/Right-to-Farm-Bylaw.pdf
8. Explore Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), a partnership between a farm and a community of supporters. Community members cover a farm's yearly operating budget by purchasing a share of the season's harvest. This relationship guarantees farmers a reliable market, while assuring the members high quality produce, often below retail prices.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Brimfield residents and visitors alike and were listed as a heritage landscape theme during the public meeting. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel and safety requirements as the only considerations.

Brimfield has a Scenic Road Bylaw, and has included every road in town under its aegis except numbered routes, to which the designation cannot be applied. In addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads – the stone walls, views across open fields and the many scenic historic buildings – is not within the public right-of-way. The preservation and protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

1. Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Brimfield considered to be scenic, including the character-defining features that should be retained.
2. Coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board or Historical Commission.
3. Consider a Scenic Overlay District which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws would apply to the landscapes bordering state numbered roadways, which would not be protected under the scenic roads designation, as well as to landscapes bordering town roads.
4. Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstruction, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public

process in which the community may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards higher than those funded by Mass Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads; for example, requiring a public hearing if any new pavement width is to be added to a town road during reconstruction or repair. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted at Town Meeting through a bylaw. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths and posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

7. Utilize the Experts: Technical Assistance

See Appendix B for further information.

8. Pay the Bill: Funding Preservation

Brimfield has been designated as Preserve America community, which makes it eligible to receive technical assistance and matching grants related to heritage tourism. More on the designation and fundable activities can be found in Appendix B

A list indicating the full range of available governmental and non-profit sources of funding can be found in Appendix B.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Brimfield's residents have a strong sense of place, defined by the town's varied natural features and the historic land use patterns that grew out of them. The town has already begun to document and evaluate its most significant buildings and natural areas. It must now also look beyond these traditional resources to the landscapes, streetscapes, rural roads, neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the community's character. Like most municipalities, Brimfield is facing multiple pressures for change that will have permanent impact on land-based uses and natural resources, especially its remaining farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

The Brimfield Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Brimfield and in developing creative preservation strategies and partnerships. Brimfield will have to determine the best ways and sequence in which to implement the recommendations discussed above. The town would do well to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in DCR's publication, *Reading the Land*.

Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will benefit from further documentation in accordance with MHC guidelines. The documentation in turn will provide an information base for the local publicity needed to build consensus and gather public support for landscape preservation. Implementing many of the recommendations in this report will require a concerted effort by and partnerships among municipal boards and agencies, local non-profit organizations, and regional and state agencies and commissions.

There are no quick fixes for the challenges of managing growth and funding preservation. Many of the recommended tasks and approaches will require cooperation and coordination among a number of municipal, regional and state partners to be successful. They will require time and a good dose of patience, as volunteer schedules, legislative procedures, and funding cycles try to mesh.

Circulating this Reconnaissance Report is an essential first step. The recommendations should be presented to the Board of Selectmen, who represented Brimfield in its application to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program. Copies of the report should be distributed to town departments and boards, particularly Brimfield's Historical Commission, Planning Board, and Conservation Commission and will also be useful for neighborhood associations, local land trusts, the Grand Trunk Trail committee and other preservation organizations. Two reference copies belong in the town library at the front desk and in the Sherman Room. These circulation efforts will broaden citizen awareness, and result in increased interest and support for Brimfield's heritage landscapes.

Finally, the project team suggests that the following recommendations be the top three priorities for Brimfield as the town works to protect the character of its community:

1. Pass the Community Preservation Act.
2. Establish a Neighborhood Conservation District or Pond Overlay District to protect the Lake Sherman heritage landscape.
3. Protect and promote Brimfield's heritage landscapes beyond the town center.

APPENDIX A

BRIMFIELD HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Brimfield on February 1, 2007 and follow-up fieldwork on April 23, 2007. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the name and location of the resource are in the first; notes about the resource are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction
 LHD = Local Historic District
 PR = Preservation Restriction

CR = Conservation Restriction
 NRHD = National Register Historic District
Bold = Priority Landscape

Summary of Priority Landscapes:

Steerage Rock and Adams Field
Little Rest
Indian Hill Farm
Lake Sherman
Sherman Estate
Horse Cemetery
Grand Trunk Railway & trolley line

Agriculture	
Indian Hill Farm 161 Brookfield Rd.	Part of colonial farmstead overlooking Lake Sherman; 69 acres open pasture and hayfields; 19 th century buildings.
Cook Farm Haynes Hill	
Freeman Farm Little Alum Rd.	
Stalker Farm McIntyre Rd.	
Cheney Orchard Apple Rd.	
Archaeology	
East Brimfield	“lost settlement” under E. Brimfield Reservoir – similar to the communities now beneath the Quabbin Reservoir.
Snell Mfg. Co. East Brimfield	not threatened
Triphammer Shop East Brimfield	footings
Dunhamtown Mill Warren Rd.	foundation and dam

cheese factory 24-26 Brookfield Rd.	factory operated ca. 1870s; rectangular foundation remains.
Puffer's Carding Mill Old Palmer Rd.	foundation & part of tailrace
Indian Hill	aka Marsh Hill; reputed to have been Native American village site
theme: district schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - District 1: West Brick School, Rte 20 & Old Palmer Rd; burned 1925. - District 2: Center School, Brimfield Common on site of original schoolhouse; built 1866, torn down 1949. - District 3: East Brimfield School, Rte 20 near East Brimfield-Holland Road; in use until 1936; burned 1974. - District 4: North Brimfield School, Brookfield Rd at old East Hill Rd; remains still visible in 1950s. - District 5: Little Rest School, Little rest Rd; built c. 1837, burned after 1895. Foundation still clear on private property. - District 6: West Brimfield School, Washington Rd; second building on site in use until c. 1928. (District 7 – 9 school locations not identified)
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
Horse Cemetery 38 Brookfield Rd rear	Stone-walled enclosure established by James Hoyt as burial place for six of his horses
West Brimfield-Powers Cemetery Washington Rd.	1830-1903. Enclosed by iron fence; Powers, Shaw, Smith, McClellig, Emerson, Tiffany, Chamberlain burials.
East Brimfield Cemetery Shaw Rd.	aka Little Alum Cemetery. One of the memorial markers lists names of about 20 people whose original headstones were vandalized or destroyed.
Center Cemetery Wales Rd	land set aside 1721; 14.5 acres, still in use. This burial ground included in <i>Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries</i> (2002 publication of Massachusetts DEM, now DCR).
Civic / Institutional	
Hubbard's Hill School Tower Hill Rd.	Only one of ten 19 th century district schools still on its original site; converted to residence in 1974. (see also Archaeological)
1 st Congregational Church Brimfield Common	1847; in Brimfield Center NRHD
E. Brimfield Baptist Church	not threatened, but only building from village not flooded by reservoir
Hitchcock Academy	in Brimfield Center NRHD
Commercial / Industrial	
Foskett's Mill Elbow Brook	May have been saw mill at one time; a grist mill in same location converted into Maple Lake Arms Restaurant ca. 1972; now private residence.
Mill Pond/Mill Lane	grist and saw mill on Mill (Eaton) Pond by 1800. Grist mill burned 1875; saw mill, owned by F. Edgar Brown, operated into 20 th century. Ice also harvested from Mill Pond.

Trant's Automobile Junkyard	Business operated 1923-2000; Carl Trant, owner from 1965, involved in protracted legal battle over storage of large number of tires on site.
Open Space/ Recreation/ Parks	
Steerage Rock/ Adams Field	Rock on town seal; reputed to be Indian landmark; 1920s road put through for fire tower – popular picnic spot; now access is blocked; view from Adams field (Warren Road) is spectacular.
Lake Sherman	aka Great Spirit Lake, Indian Lake, Sherman's Pond; 74 acres with limited public access; view across lake to Indian Hill Farm; winterized cottage colony on shoreline. See also Sherman Estate.
Wales Brook	aka Erwin's Brook; brook and surrounding wetlands are vital natural habitat and watershed; once had carding mill near Rte 20; windmill (still extant) used to pump water from brook to Catholic church rectory.
Brimfield State Forest	includes Civilian Conservation Corps camp
Flea Market fields	both sides Rte 20; privately owned. Original farm and hay fields of Brimfield settlement; today the antiques fair held here three times a year is a major focus of community identity.
East Brimfield Reservoir	Army Corps of Engineers flood control project; reservoir covers 1671 acres including the mill village of East Brimfield.
Prospect Hill	
Springfield Boys Club Camp 145 Sturbridge Rd.	
Little Alum Pond	5 th cleanest lake in Massachusetts, has 20 th century cottage community around perimeter.
Quaboag River	
Charles Brook	headwater of Thames (leads to Blackstone) River
Residential	
Sherman Estate 63 Brookfield Rd.	1876, house restored after 1910 fire. On site of early 18 th century Col. John Sherman homestead. (MHC #29).
Fairbanks House 30 Apple Rd.	c. 1785; owner invented the Fairbanks scale
Town Farm Haynes Hill Rd.	Originally known as the Old Fort – 150 acres land with fort built “for protection against the Indians.” Became home for “dependent poor” in 1836; closed 1921.
Transportation	
Grand Trunk Railway & trolley line	Grand Trunk was part of unfinished rail line supposed to extend from Montreal to Providence; much of railbed now on private property. Visible, including trestles, crossing what is now East Brimfield Reservoir. Trolley line of Springfield-Worcester Electric Railway parallels railbed in some areas.

theme: scenic roads	Residents especially noted the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hollow Rd. - Mill Lane - Tower Hill Rd - Prospect Hill Rd. - Haynes Hill Rd. - Morse Road - Little Rest Road
Village	
Little Rest Little Rest Rd.	18 th – 19 th cen. neighborhood of pre-industrial mills and craft shops; presently farm and residential area.
Dingley Dell	Small neighborhood, vicinity of Sutcliffe Rd. A bridge and remains of a dam existed in 1900.
Brimfield Center Historic District	NRHD 2006

APPENDIX B

GUIDE TO PRESERVATION AND PLANNING TOOLS FOR HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Preservation planning is a four-step process: **identification, evaluation, education** and **protection**. Within the realm of protection, there is a vast array of tools that communities can call upon and that are most effective when used in combination with one another. Stewardship of these resources involves education and community support, planning with a clear set of goals, and regulatory mechanisms.

Three useful documents to consult when planning preservation strategies are:

- Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Reading the Land*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Survey Manual*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*

The following eight sections – based on the Toolkit Basics – detail the resources and strategies available for heritage landscape preservation—from documentation and evaluation, to public education, to regulating activities and finding the revenue necessary to fund the effort.

1. KNOW THE RESOURCES: INVENTORY

The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources on MHC inventory forms. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and the historical development.

Survey methodology has advanced since the early work of the 1980s. If a community had survey work done during that time period, it is time for an inventory update, looking at resources in a more comprehensive and connected way than may have been done at that time. Even if survey work is more recent, there may be a need to document more resources throughout the community.

Using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not thoroughly researched, beginning with heritage landscapes.
- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.
- Make sure to document secondary features on rural and residential properties, such as outbuildings, stone walls and landscape elements.
- Record a wide range of historic resources including landscape features and industrial resources.
- Conduct a community-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey to identify patterns of prehistoric and historic occupation and to identify known and probable locations of archaeological resources associated with these patterns. Known and potential precontact and historic archaeological sites should be professionally field-checked to evaluate cultural associations and integrity. A professional archaeologist is one who meets the professional

qualifications (950 CMR 70.01) outlined in the State Archaeologist Permit Regulations (950 CMR 70.00).

NOTE: The Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth contains sensitive information about archaeological sites. The inventory is confidential; it is not a public record (G.L. c. 9, ss. 26A (1)). Care should be taken to keep archaeological site information in a secure location with restricted access. Refer to the MHC article "Community-Wide Archaeological Surveys" which appeared in Preservation Advocate, Fall 2005, and which can be found at the following MHC link: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/pafall05.pdf>.

2. GAIN RECOGNITION FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANCE: NATIONAL REGISTER LISTING

Survey work includes evaluation of whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. This will provide new information about the eligibility of properties. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluations, expand your town's National Register program.

- Develop a National Register listing plan, taking into consideration a property's or area's integrity and vulnerability. Properties in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.

3. ENGAGE THE PUBLIC: OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION

The best stewards and advocates for heritage landscape protection are members of the community. There are many ways to communicate the importance of these special places to the public, and to connect their preservation with the shared values and goals that community members have already expressed in various planning documents and forums.

Think creatively about how to educate the community about the values and threats to heritage landscapes, and how each town resident benefits from these special places. Use a combination of strategies to get the word out about heritage landscapes and preservation of community character, including:

- **Festivals and Tours** – Tours are a great way to draw attention to the history around us, and to engage more people in caring for it. Consider hosting a Heritage Celebration Day including tours and family-friendly activities, or plan a celebration around a particular place or area on a meaningful date. Make sure events are well publicized.
- **Signage and Banners** – Signs are a very effective way to announce special historic sites and districts. Banners can also bring attention to the significance of an area and make a celebratory statement about its contribution to the town.
- **Written Materials** – Clear, concise and engaging written material with engaging illustrations is a reliable way to relay information about community character and heritage landscapes. Make use of fact sheets and flyers to get the word out on particular issues such as a town ordinance that protects heritage landscapes, a threat that needs to be addressed, or an upcoming event.
- **School Curricula** – Start teaching at a young age. Children are very receptive to engaging stories, and there are no better stories to excite childrens' imaginations and build pride of place than stories of their town's past and present. Teachers have an opportunity to connect history

with environmental issues through classroom study, hands-on history projects, and field exploration of a town's heritage landscapes. Subsequently, students have an opportunity to teach their parents that preservation is everybody's business.

- **Lectures and Workshops** – Use these forums to raise awareness, educate at a deeper level about the community's history and its resources, and broaden the base of interest.
- **Website** – Keep Historical Commission and local historical organizations' entries on the town's website current, and include information about issues, proposals for preservation strategies, and upcoming events.
- **Press Releases** – Use all avenues including press releases to keep the public informed when a meeting or event is about to occur. Work with local reporters to develop special interest articles that highlight landscape resources.

Remember that bringing an issue or a heritage landscape to people's attention once will have only short-term effect. Outreach, education and interpretation must be ongoing concerns that involve preservation and conservation interests, teachers and community organizations in repeated projects to attract and engage the general public.

4. THINK IN CONTEXT: COMPREHENSIVE AND OPEN SPACE PLANNING

Communities use a variety of planning exercises and documents to define their goals and vision of the future, address community-wide issues, and recommend measures to respond to them. There are state mandates for towns to prepare Comprehensive or Master Plans and Open Space and Recreation Plans.

- Comprehensive or Master Plans provide an important frame of reference for land use decisions, and incorporate all of a community's issues including economic development, housing and transportation into an integrated plan. Heritage landscapes need to be seen through the lenses of community character, historic preservation, environmental health, and economic viability and growth. Their future and the values they contribute should be addressed within these multiple perspectives, not solely as historical assets of the community.
- Like Comprehensive Plans, Open Space Plans look holistically at the community—its history, demographics and growth patterns, and current conditions—to make recommendations that protect open space and natural resources for ecological health and public benefits. The Heritage Landscape Inventory Program provides a framework for looking at these important resources, and this new understanding should be incorporated into Open Space Plans.

5. DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS: THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Because heritage landscapes encompass such a broad range of resources and issues—from preservation of town centers, scenic roads and river corridors to promotion of smart growth and economic development – stewardship of these resources involves many interests in a community. It is essential that there be good communication between the many departments and committees that address issues related to heritage landscapes. Collaboration between public and private partners is also an essential element in a successful preservation strategy. National Heritage Corridor personnel are helpful guides to partnership opportunities for projects you may have in mind.

- Broaden the base. Preservation, particularly preservation of landscapes, is not just for the Historical Commission. It is important that the cause not be marginalized by those who view preservation as opposed to progress, or to personal interests. A look at DCR's *Reading the Land* shows the range of organizations and viewpoints that value heritage landscapes.
- Nurture public-private partnerships. Friends groups, neighborhood associations, and local land trusts all have important roles to play to spread the word, and to expand the capacity of the public sector to care for heritage landscapes.
- Take advantage of forums created to share issues and ideas. For instance, the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources offers a "cluster" format for monthly discussion and information exchange meetings among area farmers.
- Share resources across communities. Towns that lack funding for a town planner position, for instance, have found that "sharing" a planner with another community can be quite effective.

6. DEFEND THE RESOURCES; LAWS, BYLAWS AND REGULATIONS

A wide range of laws, bylaws and regulations is available to protect heritage landscapes. Following are brief descriptions of some of the most widely used and/or most effective of these tools, arranged alphabetically.

Adaptive Reuse Overlay District

An Adaptive Reuse Overlay District is superimposed on one or more established zoning districts in order to permit incentive-based reuses of existing built properties. These districts can be created to allow for the adaptive reuse of properties of a certain kind, or within a specified area within a community. As an overlay zone, all regulations pertaining to the underlying zone apply, except to the extent that the overlay zone modifies or provides for alternatives to the underlying requirements.

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR)

This program, managed by the Department of Agricultural Resources, offers to pay farmers the difference between the "fair market value" and the "agricultural value" of farmland located on prime agricultural soils, in exchange for a permanent deed restriction which precludes any use of the property that will have a negative impact on its agricultural viability. This program is different from the *Chapter 61* program, which provides tax incentives for short term restrictions.

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act is statewide enabling legislation that allows communities to assemble funds for historic preservation, open space protection and affordable housing through a local property tax surcharge (up to 3%, with some allowable exemptions) and state matching funds. These funds can support a wide variety of activities, including inventory and documentation of historic resources, restoration and acquisition.

Conservation Restrictions (CR)

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

Corridor Protection Overlay District

A Corridor Protection Overlay District is intended to promote appropriate development within a given corridor, serving to protect natural (and sometimes cultural) resources. As an overlay zone, all regulations pertaining to the underlying zone apply, except to the extent that the overlay zone modifies or provides for alternatives to the underlying requirements. The Corridor Protection Overlay District can be used cooperatively by adjoining communities to help maintain continuous protection across town lines.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

With a Demolition Delay Bylaw, requests for a permit to demolish a historic building must first be reviewed and approved by the local historical commission. Demolition Delay Bylaws are either list-based (applying only to a specific list of buildings that have been previously identified), age based (applying to all buildings that are older than a certain age – typically 50 years), or categorical (applying only to resources that meet a specific criteria, such as having been documented on Massachusetts Historical Commission forms). If the historical commission does not approve of the demolition and deems a structure significant, it can impose a delay period, during which time the property owner is encouraged to explore alternatives to demolition. Delay periods of 6 months are common, although communities are increasingly adopting delay periods of up to one year.

Design Review

Design Review is a non-regulatory process that is undertaken by a town appointed Design Review Board. The board reviews the design of new construction and additions – typically those taking place in already built-up areas. Recommendations are made to the planning board to help preserve appropriate building patterns and architectural styles, with the goal of maintaining the overall character of a given area. Design Review Boards often limit their review to exterior architectural features, site design and signage.

Downtown Revitalization Zoning

Downtown Revitalization Zoning seeks to encourage businesses to locate in downtowns. Zoning of this nature is typically written to be attractive to businesses of a certain kind that would work well within the given infrastructure and transportation needs, but can also incorporate some of the same elements as Village Center Zoning (see below), such as encouraging mixed use development at a pedestrian-friendly scale, with minimal setbacks and offsite parking.

Flexible Development Zoning

Flexible Development Zoning allows for greater flexibility and creativity when subdividing land, to conform and work with the natural and cultural resources of a site and minimize alteration or damage to these resources, rather than follow standard requirements of subdivision regulations. While this does not prevent land from being subdivided, it does allow for the protection of some features, serves to preserve some undeveloped land, and promotes better overall site planning.

Local Historic Districts (LHD)

LHDs recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and their settings are preserved. They offer the strongest form of protection available for historic resources. LHDs are administered by a Local Historic District Commission (distinct from the community's Local Historical Commission), which reviews proposed exterior changes to buildings within the district. The kinds of changes that are reviewed vary according to the terms of the local bylaw.

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (NCD)

Neighborhood Architectural Conservation Districts (sometimes known as Neighborhood Conservation Districts) are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of the neighborhood are important. They are less restrictive than Local Historic Districts in

that they focus on a few key architectural elements and massing, scale, and setback in an effort to embrace overall neighborhood character. As in Local Historic Districts, changes are reviewed by a Neighborhood Architectural Conservation District Commission.

Open Space Zoning

Open Space Zoning – also known as Cluster Development Bylaw, Open Space Communities Zoning, Open Space Development Overlay District, Open Space Preservation Subdivision, or Open Space Residential Development – allows greater density than would otherwise be permitted on a parcel, in an effort to preserve open space. Typically, construction is limited to half of the parcel, while the remaining land is permanently protected under a conservation restriction.

Rate of Development Bylaw

A town may slow the rate of its growth within reasonable time limits to allow the community to engage in planning and preparation for growth. This measure must be used for the purpose of conducting studies and planning for rational development, and not for restraining the rate of growth for a period of unlimited duration.

Right to Farm Bylaw

A Right to Farm Bylaw asserts the rights of farmers to pursue agricultural activities, provides community support for farming activities and requires dispute resolution so that abutters cannot make nuisance claims. Agricultural landscapes are widely considered to be significant heritage landscapes for which there is constant concern of potential development. This bylaw serves to help active farmers remain just that - active.

Scenic Overlay District Zoning

Scenic Overlay District Zoning protects scenic vistas by providing for a no-disturb buffer on private lands, thereby helping to maintain specific viewpoints. This type of zoning is more far-reaching than a Scenic Roads Bylaw (see below) and may be applied to numbered routes.

Scenic Roads Bylaw

The Scenic Roads Bylaw requires that a public hearing be held prior to the removal of any trees or stone walls that fall within the public right of way on a designated scenic road. Depending on how it is written, the bylaw may apply to a predetermined list of roads or encompass all roads in a community (other than numbered routes). The bylaw applies whenever there is any public or private impact to trees or stone walls within the right of way, including activities such as road widening, utility company work or creating private driveways.

Scenic Vista Protection Bylaw

Scenic Vista Protection Bylaws require additional design criteria for any proposals for new construction in areas that are determined by the town to be a scenic vista. Vistas may encompass natural, cultural and historic features.

Shade Tree Act

The Shade Tree Act is a part of MGL Chapter 87, which defines all trees within the public way as public shade trees. The municipal Tree Warden is responsible for the care, maintenance and protection of all public shade trees (except those along state highways). Trimming or removal of any public shade trees greater than 1.5” in diameter requires a public hearing. Chapter 87 applies to all communities; however, some communities have adopted their own Shade Tree Act Bylaws that provide stricter regulations than those mandated in Chapter 87.

Site Plan Review

Site Plan Review provides the planning board (and other boards and committees, depending how the bylaw is written) with an opportunity to consider a variety of community concerns – such as impacts to vehicular circulation, scenic vistas, topography and natural resources – during the permit process. Boards may comment on site plans and request changes to the design. Site Plan Review is typically limited to large scale projects and tied to the special permit process.

Smart Growth Zoning – Chapter 40R

Smart Growth Zoning (Chapter 40R) provides financial rewards to communities that adopt special overlay zoning districts allowing as-of-right high density residential development in areas near transit stations, areas of concentrated development, or areas that are suitable for residential or mixed use development. Such zoning can help direct compact growth to areas that are already developed – such as historic village centers – thereby discouraging growth in less suitable areas.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDR)

TDR is a regulatory technique that allows a landowner to separate building or development rights from the property and sell them, receiving compensation for preserving land and allowing for the development to occur in areas selected for higher density projects. In essence, development rights are "transferred" from one district (the "sending district") to another (the "receiving district"). As a result, development densities are shifted within the community to achieve both open space preservation and economic goals without changing overall development potential.

Village Center Zoning

The goal of Village Center Zoning is to meet the needs of a small-scale, mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area by encouraging compact development. New construction is required to be built at a scale that is compatible with the neighborhood and to have a reduced (or no) setback from the street. Parking may be directed to discourage large lots in front of buildings. Village Center Zoning shares many similarities with Traditional Neighborhood Development, and the terms are sometimes used interchangeably.

Wetlands Protection Act and Bylaws

The Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131, Section 40) protects wetlands by requiring a careful review by local conservation commissions of proposed work that may alter wetlands. The law also protects floodplains, riverfront areas, land under water bodies, waterways, salt ponds, fish runs and the ocean. Communities may also adopt their own Wetlands Protection Bylaw, providing stricter regulations than those mandated in Chapter 131.

7. UTILIZE THE EXPERTS: TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Beyond DCR and the Heritage Corridor, technical assistance is available from many governmental and non-profit sources, most often free of charge to municipalities and non-profit organizations.

- [American Farmland Trust](#): Clearinghouse of information supporting farmland protection and stewardship.
- [Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission](#): The regional planning agency charged with assisting communities with local planning efforts in this region.
- [Citizen Planner Training Collaborative](#): Provides local planning and zoning officials with training opportunities and online information; they also hold an annual conference to support land use planning.
- [Green Valley Institute](#): Provides technical assistance about land use planning to communities within the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor. Web site and publications contain information of use to communities throughout the region.

- [Massachusetts Historical Commission](#): Provides technical assistance as well as grants to municipalities and nonprofits for preservation planning and restoration projects.
- [New England Small Farm Institute](#): A non-profit dedicated to providing technical assistance, information and training to farmers.
- [The Trustees of Reservations](#): Offers conservation and landscape protection workshops, publications and connections through the **Putnam Conservation Institute**. The Trustees also manages a unique **Conservation Buyer Program** that links interested sellers with conservation-minded buyers and assists with establishing permanent property protection mechanisms.
- [Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources](#) is the state agency dedicated to supporting the agricultural activities in the state through special initiatives, programs and technical assistance.
- [The Trust for Public Land](#) is a national non-profit that assists municipalities with land conservation efforts.
- University of Massachusetts Extension
- DCR's [Lakes and Ponds Program](#) works with local groups and municipalities to protect, manage and restore these valuable aquatic resources. They provide technical assistance to communities and citizen groups, help to monitor water quality at various public beaches to ensure public safety, and provide educational materials to the public about a range of lake issues.
- [Massachusetts Agricultural Commissions](#) has recently launched a new website that includes helpful information both for communities with Agricultural Commissions and for those learning more about forming one.
- [UMASS extension \(NREC\)](#) – Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation) can provide assistance on issues related to land and water resource protection, smart growth/sustainability measures and forestry and farming management,

8. PAY THE BILL: FUNDING PRESERVATION

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing strategies to protect heritage landscapes. There are local, state, regional, national and non-profit funding programs and resources that can assist communities in preservation and land conservation-related issues. The availability of such assistance varies from year to year and private property is not always eligible for funding. Examples include:

Local Funding Assistance

- Towns that have adopted the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth makes the CPA worthy of consideration. Such projects include MHC inventory, National Register nominations, cemetery preservation, open space acquisition and preservation and restoration of public buildings. The CPA (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) establishes a mechanism by which cities and towns can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Local funds are collected through a 0.5% to 3% surcharge on each annual real estate tax bill. At the state level, the Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA. The amount of the surcharge is determined by ballot vote at a local election.

Adoption of the Community Preservation Act, by a majority vote on a ballot question, fosters **partnerships** among historic preservationists, conservationists and affordable housing advocates. At least 10% of the funds must be used to preserve historic resources; at least 10% must be used

to protect open space; and at least 10% must be used to advance affordable housing. The remaining 70% must be used for one of these three uses as well as recreational needs and can be distributed in varying proportions depending upon the projects that the city or town believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Additional information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

- Municipalities can establish **land acquisition funds**, increasing their revenue from sources such as an annual fixed line item in the municipal budget; income from forestry, farming and leasing of town-owned land; gifts and bequests; grants and foundation funding; and passage of the CPA, detailed above.

State Funding Assistance

Funding for a variety of preservation projects, primarily for municipalities and non-profit, is available through the [Massachusetts Historical Commission \(MHC\)](#), the EOEEA [Division of Conservation Services](#) (DCS), the [Department of Conservation and Recreation](#) (DCR) and other state agencies. Further information on these programs is available on the agency websites.

- **MHC Survey and Planning Grants** support survey, National Register and a wide variety of preservation planning projects.
- The **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)**, administered through the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- Towns that have a local historic district bylaw may apply for **Certified Local Government (CLG)** status which is granted by the National Park Service (NPS) through the MHC. At least 10% of the MHC's yearly federal funding allocation is distributed to CLG communities through Survey and Planning matching grants. To become a CLG, the town completes an application; after being accepted as a CLG, it files a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings, and decisions; in return the town may apply for the matching grant funding that the MHC awards competitively to CLGs annually. Presently 18 cities and towns in Massachusetts are CLGs. **NOTE:** CLG status is dependent in part on a municipality having at least one [Local Historical District](#) as evidence of the community's commitment to historic preservation.

Open Space Plans, with a requirement of updating the plan every five years, make a community eligible for **Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) grants** and technical assistance programs through the Department of Conservation Services.

- The [Massachusetts Self-Help Program](#) of DCS assists local conservation commissions in acquiring land for the purposes of natural and cultural resource protection and passive outdoor recreation.
- The [Massachusetts Urban Self-Help Program](#), another DCS initiative, is geared toward assisting towns and cities in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes.
- DCS [Conservation Partnership Grants](#) assist non-profits in acquiring interests in land for conservation or recreation, and have also been used in the past to help protect active agricultural lands.

- The [Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund](#), distributed through the DCS, can support heritage landscape protection by providing up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition or renovation of park, recreation or conservation areas. Municipalities, special districts and state agencies are eligible to apply.

The **Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)** administers a variety of grant programs that can help with heritage landscape preservation:

- [Urban and Community Forestry](#) grants fund projects which will result in sustained improvements in local capacity for excellent urban and community forestry management.
- The [Recreational Trails Grant](#) Program provides funding on a reimbursement basis for a variety of recreational trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects.

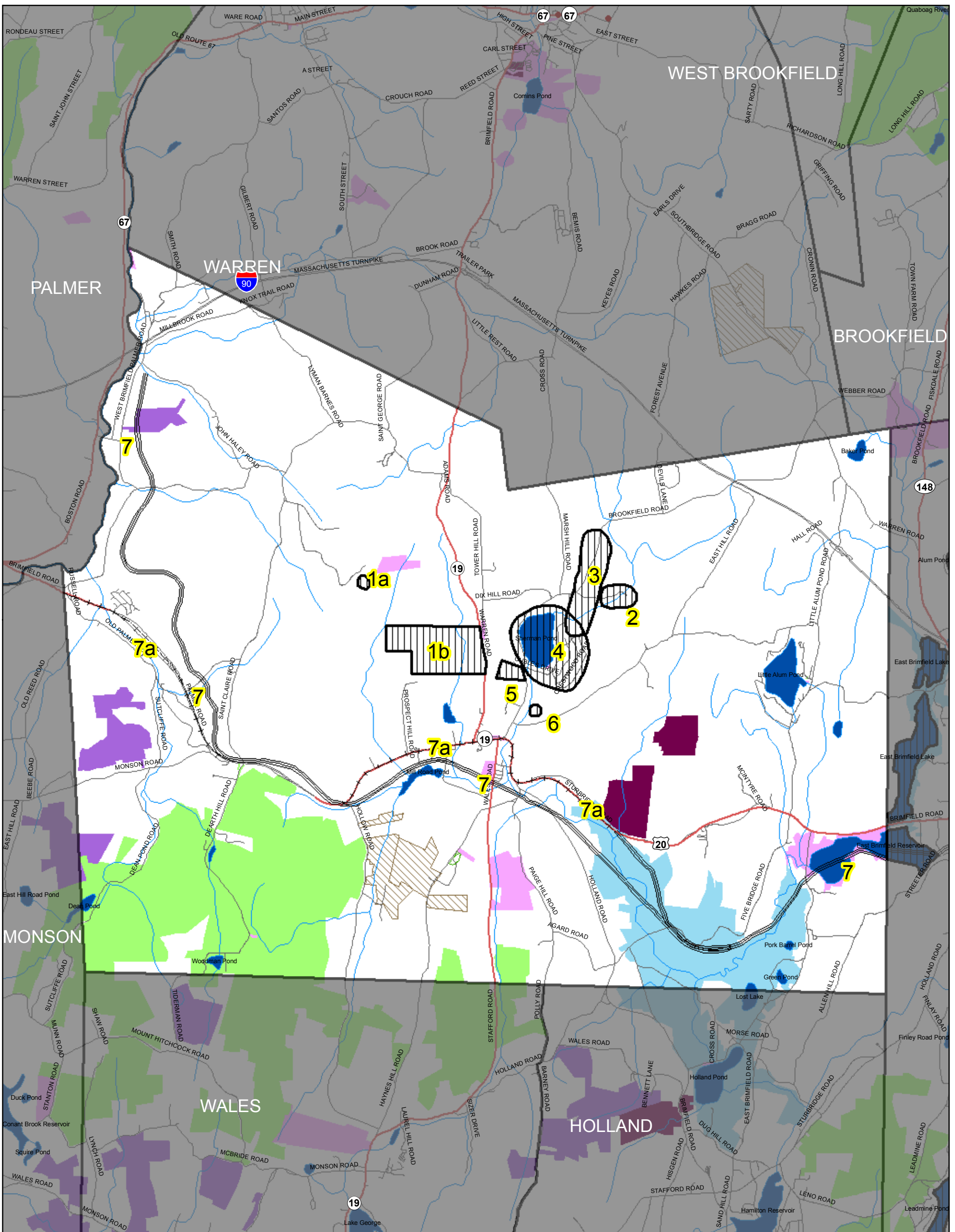
The **Department of Agricultural Resources** [Farm Viability Enhancement Program](#) works with farmers to develop sound business plans and funding assistance to implement them.

Regional and Non-Profit Funding Assistance

- The [John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission's Heritage Partnership Program](#) supports projects in corridor towns that further the Corridor goals of historic preservation, community revitalization, ecological restoration, land use planning, riverway development and educating people about the Valley's heritage. Communities and organizations located within the Corridor are eligible to receive funding, subject to availability.
- [Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor](#) provides mini-grants to member towns, supporting preservation of heritage landscapes including projects involving sustainable agriculture, river clean-ups, open space planning and natural resource conservation.
- The [Greater Worcester Community Foundation](#) provides grants to non-profit organizations for community enhancements.
- [The Trust for Public Land](#) (TPL) is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands and other natural places. TPL helps communities identify and prioritize lands to be protected; secure financing for conservation; and structure, negotiate and complete land transactions. TPL's New England Office recently launched the [Worcester County Conservation Initiative](#), to accelerate the pace of land conservation in central Massachusetts by helping communities plan and finance conservation projects.
- The [National Trust for Historic Preservation](#) offers a variety of financial assistance programs. Based on the availability of funding, the National Trust awards more than \$2 million in grants and loans each year for preservation projects nationwide.
- The [Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission \(CMRPC\)](#) does not administer grants, but can work with communities to write grants or help them find funding.

Federal Funding Assistance

- The [Farmland and Ranchland Protection Program](#) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture has protected 85 farms to date in Massachusetts on 6,335 acres with matching funds. Eligible organizations are federally recognized Indian tribes, states, local government, and non-governmental organizations. They are required to provide 50-50 matching funds for purchase of conservation easements in land with prime, productive soils that are subject to a pending offer, for the purpose of limiting conversion to non-agricultural uses of the land.
- All of the communities within the Blackstone Heritage Corridor have been designated [Preserve America](#) communities, making them eligible to receive technical assistance and matching grants related to heritage tourism. Eligible grant activities include research, documentation (e.g., historic resource surveys and National Register nominations), interpretation and education (e.g., signage, exhibits and itineraries), planning, marketing and training. (Communities within the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor may want to pursue Preserve America designation in order to take advantage of these funding opportunities.)
- The National Park Service's [Rivers & Trails Program](#) provides technical assistance to community groups and government agencies so they can conserve rivers, preserve open space, and develop trails and greenways. The program does not offer grants, but can provide staff to help identify needs, assist partners in navigating the planning process, and help with organizational development and capacity building. The program can serve as a catalyst for successful trail development and conservation efforts.



BRIMFIELD HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

Priority Landscapes

- 1a. Steerage Rock
- 1b. Adams Field
- 2. Little Rest
- 3. Morin Farm
- 4. Lake Sherman Area
- 5. Sherman Estate
- 6. Horse Cemetery
- 7. Grand Trunk Railroad and Trolley Line
- 7a. Former Railroad and Trolley Line Route



NOTE RE BOUNDARIES: Priority Landscape outlines are not legal parcel boundaries; they indicate local focus of concern. All other GIS data were obtained from MassGIS and may not include 2007 updates.

- Priority Landscape
- Linear Priority Landscape
- Former Railroad and Trolley Line Route
- State Register of Historic Places
- State Register of Historic Districts
- Major Road
- Road
- Conservation Restriction
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- Commonwealth of Massachusetts Land
- Non-Profit
- Federal
- Municipal
- Conservation Organization

0 0.5 1 Miles

