

HANSON
OPEN SPACE &
RECREATION PLAN

2009-2014

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

HANSON

2009-2014

*Prepared by
The Hanson Open Space and Recreation Planning Team
and
MapWorks
for the
Hanson Conservation Commission,
Hanson, Massachusetts*

February 23, 2009

Cover photo: Wampatuck Pond by Dave Harris

MapWorks

P.O. Box 505 NORWELL MA 02061
781-635-5732

P.O. Box 1505 HARWICH MA 02645
508-255-3358

MAPSatWORK@aol.com



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Deval Patrick
GOVERNOR

Timothy Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian Bowles
SECRETARY

Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181

March 26, 2009

Herb Heidt
Mapworks
P.O. Box 505
Norwell, MA 02061

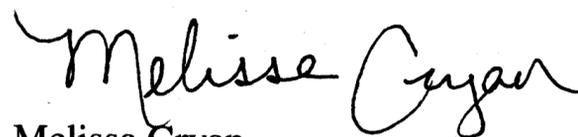
Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Mr. Heidt:

Thank you for submitting Hanson's Open Space and Recreation Plan to this office for review for compliance with the current Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. I am pleased to write that the plan is approved. This final approval will allow Hanson to participate in DCS grant rounds through December 2013.

Congratulations on a great job. Please call me at (617) 626-1171 if you have any questions or concerns about the plan.

Sincerely,


Melissa Cryan
Grants Manager

cc: Board of Selectmen
Recreation Department
Conservation Commission

Hanson Open Space and Recreation Plan

Table of Contents

1.	Plan Summary	1
2.	Introduction	2
	A. Statement of Purpose	2
	B. Planning Process and Public Participation	3
3.	Community Setting	4
	A. Regional Context	4
	B. History of the Community	4
	C. Population Characteristics	5
	D. Growth and Development Patterns	7
4.	Environmental Inventory and Analysis	10
	A. Geology, Soils and Topography	10
	B. Landscape Character	11
	C. Water Resources	12
	D. Vegetation	16
	E. Fisheries and Wildlife	17
	F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments	19
	G. Environmental Challenges	22
5.	Lands of Conservation & Recreation Interest	25
	A. Private Parcels	26
	B. Public and Nonprofit Parcels	27
6.	Community Vision	28
	A. Description of Process	28
	B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals	28
7.	Analysis of Needs	29
	A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs	29
	B. Summary of Community Needs	31
	C. Management Needs	32
	D. Potential Change of Use	33
8.	Goals and Objectives	34
9.	Five-Year Action Plan	35
	A. Reviewing Accomplishments	35
	B. Funding Sources	36
10.	Public Comments	37
11.	References	39
12.	Appendices	41
	A. Questionnaire and Results	
	B. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest	
	C. Maps	
	D. ADA Administrative Information	
	E. Conservation Scorecard	
	F. Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Chapter 61 Lands	

SECTION 1. PLAN SUMMARY

The 2009 Hanson Open Space and Recreation Plan is a five-year planning document based on the 2008 requirements of the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. It provides information on the town's regional context, geographical and geological features, natural resources, and recreational opportunities. It outlines specific actions that should be taken in the next five years to advance the realization of the following vision as taken from the 2008 Master Plan:

Hanson is known by its citizens and neighbors as a 'very nice town,' where the serenity, green appearance, open space and aesthetic characteristics, which contribute to the quality of life, are maintained and enhanced for future generations;

Its residents recognize that they are the Town's most important asset, and, therefore, diversity, quality education, access to the arts, lifelong recreation, and learning are emphasized in planning for the future;

The citizens will work together to improve Town government and provide safe circulation and convenient access to recreation areas and open space for all age groups.

The planning process fostered public participation and communication among town boards. The Five-Year Action Plan lays out specific objectives and actions, and identifies responsible parties to lead to implementation on the following main goals that pertain to Open Space and Recreation:

1. Preserve and Enhance Hanson's Rural Character and Scenic Quality
 - *Permanently protect open space, protect Hanson's cultural heritage, and plan for appropriate residential growth.*
2. Expand and Improve Recreational Opportunities
 - *Provide a linked system of open space that is tied to adjacent communities, improve the management of Hanson's Recreation programs, improve signage, and maintain adequate recreation facilities to meet town needs.*
3. Protect Natural Resources and Biodiversity
 - *Protect ground water supplies, protect surface waters, and preserve important wildlife habitats.*

SECTION 2. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Purpose

The town of Hanson values its open space and recreational resources and understands the important role these features play in preserving the town's character and quality of life. As a result, there have been multiple planning efforts that relate to Open Space and Recreation through the years, including the last state-approved Open Space and Recreation Plan dated 1996-2001. Other relevant planning documents include the 1988 Bay Circuit Trail/Open Space Plan, a draft 1999 Open Space and Recreation Plan, a 2004 Community Development Plan, the 2005 Camp Kiwanee Master Plan, the 2008 Hanson Master Plan and the 2006 "Massachusetts Outdoors" Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.



*Wampatuck Pond
Photo by Dave Harris*

This updated Plan reviews the goals and objectives from previous plans and examines shifts in priorities with respect to Open Space and Recreation Goals. The end result incorporates all of the goals that are still relevant in a focused and concise format for improved readability. Actions listed in this Plan that also appear in other plans are so noted.

The town of Hanson understands that in order to be eligible for Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services grant programs, it must have a state-approved Open Space and Recreation Plan. Hanson passed the Community Preservation Act in May of 2008 and expects to take advantage of both funding sources to further its open space and recreation goals.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

This Plan was prepared by MapWorks, a small consulting group based in Harwich, MA. MapWorks was contracted by the Town of Hanson's Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee whose members were actively involved in all parts of the Plan's development. Partial funding for this Plan was provided by "Green Hanson" and The Taunton River Watershed Alliance.

Conservation Commission members and staff:

Philip R. Lindquist, Chair
Frank Schellenger, Vice Chair
John Kemmett, Clerk
Ronald Grattan
David Harris
Philip Clemons (Associate)
Howard Dillon (Associate)
Richard Vacca, Conservation Agent
Rebecca Nehiley, Conservation Assistant

Hanson Open Space Committee members:

Philip Clemons, Chairman
Howard Dillon, Vice Chairman
James A. Egan
Ron Grattan
Philip R. Lindquist

Additional Planning Team members included:

James A. Egan, Selectmen and Open Space Committee member
William Clay, Parks and Fields
Anne Marie Bouzan, Former Admin. Assistant Hanson Recreation Dept
Noreen O'Toole, Town Planner
Bill Straight, Recreation Department
Maria McClellan, Recreation Department
Cindy Long, Assessor/Appraiser

MapWorks:

Herb Heidt, Principal
Alison Demong, Environmental Planner/Editor
Eliza McClennen, Cartographer
Alan McClennen, Jr., Planning and Development Consultant

The Planning Team solicited public participation through two public Visioning Sessions held in January and March 2008 and by distributing a survey in February 2008 in the local paper, at the Town Library and at the Town Hall. A copy of the survey can be found in the Appendix. There were 191 surveys returned for a return rate of nearly 10%.

SECTION 3. COMMUNITY SETTING

A. Regional Context

The Town of Hanson, located in Plymouth County, was incorporated on February 22, 1820. It is 16.07 square miles in size and was formerly the west precinct of Pembroke. Hanson's population is about 10,000 residents. Located 25 miles southeast of Boston, it is accessed by routes 58, 27 and 14, and a commuter rail that connects to Boston's South Station was reopened in 1997. Originally a strictly agricultural community, Hanson today consists of several small centers and residential subdivisions. It is semi-rural in character, with little industry and few businesses. Hanson is bordered on the east by Pembroke, on the south by Halifax, on the west by East Bridgewater, on the north and west by Whitman, and on the north by Rockland and Hanover. The amount of developed land has increased steadily from 23 percent of the town's acreage in 1984 to 54 percent in 2005.

Hanson is in both the North River Watershed and the Taunton River Watershed. It has a varied landscape of forest, open agricultural cranberry bogs, large house lots and small pond-side cottages which were once summer residences converted for year-round living. It is a quiet community but larger subdivisions are becoming more common.

Hanson has an open Town Meeting form of government structured by a Town Bylaw. It is headed by a part-time five member Board of Selectmen, and assisted by a full time Town Administrator. It is located in the 6th Congressional District, the 2nd State Senatorial District and is one of few towns in Massachusetts that is divided into two US Congressional Districts: 9th and the 10th. The Regional Planning Agency for Hanson is the Old Colony Planning Council.

B. History of the Community

In 1662, Major Josiah Winslow purchased territory around what was a Native American crossway between two small Algonquin settlements. Residents of the area established a preserve for the native population of the area on 1,000 acres of land at that time. In 1712 the new Town of Pembroke was "set aside" from Duxbury and included what is now most of the Hanson area. The General Court of Massachusetts granted the incorporation petition of Hanson as an individual Town in 1820.

The area's abundant natural resources attracted early settlers. Early settlers farmed and lumbered, setting up the first saw mill in 1695 on the Indian Head Brook near the present Town Hall. Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, wood lots and cedar swamps provided wood products, meadows were drained for

hayfields, and one of the first fishways in the colonies was built in the area now known as Wampatuck Pond. The introduction of wetlands cranberry cultivation in the late 19th century reinforced the agricultural orientation of the Town. A number of small industries were active in the early centuries including several sawmills, an iron forge, and a manufacturer of porcelain parts used in electrical appliances. Later, the Litecontrol Company was founded in 1936 as a manufacturer of light reflectors and light fixtures, and is still in operation today.

Lumbering, shingle making and cranberry growing dominated the Town's economy in the 19th century. In 1912, a large cranberry packing house was built in South Hanson by a Boston lawyer named Marcus L. Urann, who earned a reputation as the "Cranberry King" by selling his popular cranberry sauce in tins. He named his company the Ocean Spray Preserving Company which has expanded into the national corporation it is today. By 1915 there were 21 cranberry growers and 20 poultry farms in the town.

The cranberry industry continued to expand and thrive over the next 40-50 years, but suffered from the 'amino trizole' scare of 1959. Just before Thanksgiving of that year, the government announced that amino trizole, an herbicide used primarily on the west coast, was carcinogenic. Even though the chemical wasn't even used in Massachusetts, public perception and fear drove down sales. The industry slowly recovered and became a very profitable business up until the year 2000, but then dipped again when supply excessively outweighed demand and prices dropped. The industry is now steadily recovering and there are at least four major growers in Hanson.

Passenger rail service started in 1845 but stopped in 1959 with the opening of the Southeast Expressway. The rails were rebuilt and passenger service started up again in 1998, which spurred a surge in new home building for several years. The home building industry has continued to thrive over the last 100 years.

In 1966, Shaw's Supermarket opened at the intersection of Rt. 58 and Rt. 14, allowing residents to stay in town for their grocery shopping, and attracting other retailers to set up business in Hanson. Today, Hanson is home to many retail shops, several small independent machine shops that make specialized products, and a few auto repair businesses.

C. Population Characteristics

At the time of Hanson's incorporation on February 22, 1820, the population was reported at 917. Growth was slow and steady, increasing by about 100 people every decade. The state census of 1865 provides us with a picture of population statistics of the time: the 1,195 residents were in 294 families, indicating an average family size of four. The 272 houses in town at that time suggest a small number of multi-family occupancies. Towards the end of the 19th century, growth slowed, reaching 1,265 in 1875 and then 1,490 in 1905. The rate of growth since

1980 has been moderate, going from 8617 in 1980, to 9028 in 1990, and to 9495 in 2000, with an average increase in population of 439 persons each decade.

The rate of growth in the Town of Hanson is not as rapid as many of its neighbors. This can be attributed to zoning, greater accessibility, and more vacant buildable land available in the faster growing towns. Hanson's population increase, in percentage, was slower than all but one of its neighbors - Whitman - which lost population. In total numbers Hanson's increase was greater than only Plympton and Whitman. This may be attributed to the town's recent rail accessibility being offset by the quality and location of its limited buildable land, and a 3-year moratorium on new water service connections. Statistically, Hanson is the 180th most populated town in the state, and the 154th most densely populated (out of a total of 351 cities and towns).

As reported in the 2000 Census, the median age of Hanson residents was 36.1 years. This figure was up from 1970, when the median age was 25.8 years. This increase in median age follows the trend in the rest of the country, which can be attributed to a number of factors also affecting many other communities. One factor is that families are having fewer children than in the past, and these children are born to parents who, on average, are older.

In the decade between 1990 and 2000, Hanson's elderly population continued to rise, to 8.6 percent of the total population, up from 8.2 percent a decade earlier. At the same time, the percentage of the population under age 18 also grew by just under one percent. As the result of continuing changes in demographics, the needs of residents can be expected to change in relation to transportation, public facilities and services, economic development, and recreation as well as housing.

Employment, Jobs and Income:

In February 2005 the state Department of Employment and Training reported that Hanson had a total labor force of 5,399 of whom 300 (5.6 percent) were unemployed. Unemployment dropped from a high of 11.4% in 1991 to a low of 2.7% in 2000 and then increased, reaching to 5.6% in 2005. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, most people (62.5 percent of all workers) worked either in "management" positions or in "sales/office" positions. When looked at by industry, "education, health and social services" accounted for the highest number of employees (1,059), followed by "retail trade" (715). The 2008 Master Plan emphasizes the development of local businesses in Hanson, especially retail businesses and services, to offer opportunities for part-time employment, local services, reduced travel time for workers and customers, and increased Town recognition. The estimated median household income was \$82,980 in 2007, up from \$64,896 in the year 2000.

D. Growth and Development Patterns

Patterns and Trends:

Hanson's residential land use pattern remains one of low density "sprawling" residential development along existing roads and in small subdivisions. Historically, most residential development occurred on relatively high ground along existing roads, largely on the east side of the town near the Pembroke line, with the greatest concentration in the Monponsett neighborhood. Trends indicate a considerable increase in single-family housing from 1036 acres in 1965 to 5588 acres in 1999; a 439% increase. Two-family and multi-family have increased from 8.5 acres to 51.62 acres (over 5 times) in the same period. Business acreage has more than doubled from 30.5 acres to 69.3 acres.

Over 90% of Hanson homes are single-family houses. The median sale price for single-family houses in Hanson in 2007 was \$359,900, a rise from \$215,000 in 2001. Today Hanson has 113 units of state-qualified "affordable" housing, which is about 3% of its total housing stock.

Commercial and industrial development has always been limited in Hanson. By 1971 business was concentrated in the present shopping center and small scattered nearby sites along Liberty Street (Route 58) and along Main Street (Route 27) in South Hanson. This pattern continues through 2008 with the greatest concentration in the Center, and increased amounts of retail and service activity along local roads with a small concentration at the junction of Route 27 and Union Street/Mattakesett Street in Bryantville on the Pembroke line. Very few commercial uses are shown in the business- zoned strip of Monponsett Street in the Monponsett neighborhood on the Halifax line.

Infrastructure:

In 1845 the Old Colony Railroad first came through Hanson, followed in 1900 by the electrified Brockton and Plymouth Street Railway. However, the increasingly popular automobile spelled an early demise for the electric railway. Eventually, native trails became the region's highways. The primary east-west road developed into Bridgewater Path, now Main Street (Route 27), and Maquan-Liberty-County-West Washington Streets (Route 14). Passenger service on the Old Colony Line, discontinued in 1959, was restored by the MBTA in 1997.

The only municipal infrastructure is the public water supply system. The Town began its first groundwater testing program in the 1960's in response to a severe water drought. At that time, Hanson had become water dependent on the Abington-Rockland and Brockton water supply. In 1979, it became evident that the City of Brockton's water supply would not adequately service Hanson's growing demands. The next several years were dedicated to conducting surveys and investigations in determining feasibility of ground water development in the

Franklin/Main Street area which directly abuts the Town of East Bridgewater. In 1983, Hanson's first water supply system was placed on line.

Today, most of the town is serviced by the Crystal Springs well field which is 30 acres along Poor Meadow Brook in the southwest portion of town. The water supply and quality is good. However, a small portion of the town, primarily along Main Street, continues to buy water from Brockton. The quality of this water is not as high as the Crystal Springs water and both Hanson and Brockton would like to discontinue this situation in the future. The New Pleasant Street well field at the extreme southern end of town borders on the Great Cedar Swamp and is a proven viable water supply source but is not currently on line.

There is no public sewerage in any part of the town. However, in order to address pond degradation and eutrophication, it may be necessary to sewer densely populated areas around some of the ponds.

Long-Term Development Patterns:

There are six zoning districts in town: Agriculture-Recreation, Residence A, Residence AA, Residence B, Business, and Commercial-Industrial. Residence A covers most of the eastern half of town, and Residence AA is primarily the western part of town. The Business districts are along Route 58 and 27 and the Commercial-Industrial is along the railroad and western section of town. There are three Overlay Districts: Flexible, Adult Entertainment, and Aquifer Protection Districts. There are six sub-areas to the Aquifer Protection District.

Zoning District	Minimum Lot Size
Agricultural, Recreation, and Residence AA	40,000 square feet of land area per dwelling unit
Residence A, Residence B	30,000 square feet of land area per dwelling unit, except for units on special permit. (multi-family on special permit: 60,000 square feet for the first unit and 5,000 square feet for each additional until to a total of eight units)
Flexible Zone	35,000 square feet of land area per dwelling unit with exceptions for some uses on special permit (see above)
Commercial-Industrial	44,000 square feet of land area per dwelling unit

Until the town can get its affordable housing stock percentage up to 10%, Hanson is subject to subdivisions coming in under the state's Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit process. This permit entitles the developer to seek waivers from local bylaws and regulations so long as at least 25% of the units are

affordable (as defined by the state). Hanson only has one partially completed 40B project, “Dunham Farms” which is restricted to residents over the age of 55. As of October 2008, 35 of the proposed 52 units are either fully occupied or under construction. A 70-unit “Depot Village” rental project was approved in 2003 through Chapter 40B, but is not yet under construction.

There continue to be few industrial and heavy commercial uses though they are spreading in some portions of Town. Two concentrations include the former cranberry processing facilities on Main Street by the railroad tracks in South Hanson, and the larger complex on Hawks Avenue next to tracks in the Burrage area to the south. In recent years there has been further industrial and heavy commercial activity in the Hanson Commerce Park off Route 27 near Route 14, along Route 27 itself, and in the smaller Hanson Industrial Park in South Hanson.

The Regional Build Out Analysis prepared under the Community Preservation Initiative of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs found 3,510 acres of buildable land in Hanson as of 2000, with a potential for 3,907 lots under current zoning. In order to achieve the land use goals and objectives described in the Hanson 2008 Master Plan, the recommended plan for Hanson is to:

- Guide development based on the best features of the existing land use pattern.
- Preserve open space.
- Concentrate intensive development in and near the two centers.
- Reduce the potential buildout in the low density areas and to preserve the quiet green Town that the residents value.



*Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area
Photo by Dave Harris*

SECTION 4. ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

A. Geology, Soils and Topography

Geology and Topography:

Hanson's topography is relatively low and level and is part of the great glacial outwash plain of southeastern Massachusetts. Elevations range from 160 feet at Rye Hill on the Whitman Town Line and 153 feet for Bonney Hill, a glacial drumlin, in the center of town, down to 25 feet on the shore of Indian Head River at the northeast corner of Town. Most of the Town lies below 100 feet in elevation. There are similar hills in the northwest and southwest parts of Town, including a few eskers.

Soils:

Soils are an important physical characteristic to consider when determining the type and level of development a community can sustain. Soil type is a major determinant of characteristics such as drainage, degrees of flooding and frost action, susceptibility to erosion and septic suitability. Proper interpretation of various soil types is an integral part of land use planning. Please refer to Table I and Map 3 for an analysis of Hanson soils.

Soil Association/ Character	Percent of Town	Characteristics	Best Uses	Correction Needed For Other uses	Suggested Minimum Lot Size
Peat-Muck Ridgebury Whitman	41%	Poorly drained, high watertable, generally level	Wildlife, Recreation	Costly drainage, foundations and utilities	Generally not feasible
Hinkley- Merrimac (Commonly Outwash)	35%	Permeable, sloping	Less sloping areas: residence, commerce, industry, market gardening, sand/gravel	Irrigation for high yields	40,000 without water or sewer 20,000 without sewer 15,000 or less with water and sewer
Essex-Scituate (Till)	19%	Well and moderately drained; gentle hills underlain by hardpan; some water saturation	Woodland, wildlife, recreation	Remove stones for agriculture Sewer for urban uses, except low density Water for industry	40,000 without sewer 20,000 with sewer
Hinckley (Outwash)	5%	Hilly, droughty (thirsty), slope	Sand and gravel	Expensive construction	40,000 because of site limitations

The soils labeled outwash are typically full of sorted sand and gravel and are quite permeable, like the Hinkley-Merrimac association on the table. These allow development using septic systems, though treatment may be limited due to the rapid movement through the porous soils. The mapped street pattern and comparison with the land use maps indicates that the outwash areas support the most intense development, especially in the northwestern portion of the town.

The organic soils are like the peat and muck described on the chart. They are often found in wetlands, have a high water table and very poor drainage, and are the least-appropriate for development and therefore remain open without extensive alteration, as shown on the 1999 land use map.

The lacustrine (lake bottom) soils often coincide with modern wetlands and can range from sand to fine silt to muck, with significant limitations for septic systems. Thus the 1999 land use map shows these areas as still largely open.

The extensive areas of glacial till are quite varied, combining reasonably well-drained sandy loams with relatively impermeable underlying fragipans, and occasional very tight clay lenses. At the same time tills are often found in north-south running drumlins rising above the less buildable wetlands, and are sites of early roads and development like that along Hanson's High Street (Bonney Hill). This pattern is shown on even the earliest land use maps.

Due to the large areas of wetlands and soils that drain poorly, most residential development in Hanson is taking place along existing major roads. At this time, all areas of Hanson have on-site sewage disposal.

B. Landscape Character

Hanson can be described as a semi-rural town with strong ties to its agricultural history. The large amounts of wetlands in Hanson encouraged a shift from poultry to cranberry cultivation in the late 19th century. All four key elements needed for cranberries can be found in Hanson: acidic peat soils, coarse sand, a constant water supply and a long frost-free growing season. Many cranberry bogs, especially smaller ones, are now abandoned and out of production. At least one upland bog has been filled and incorporated into a residential development (Donna Drive). Despite wetlands regulations, development often times occurs right up to the gravelly edges of bogs. Cranberry bogs create some of the beautiful scenic views that many people associate with Hanson, and should be protected for their aesthetic and environmental qualities.

Nearly half of Hanson is forested, dotted with ten ponds ranging from 121 acres in size (Indian Head Pond) to 15 acres in size (Factory Pond). The larger ponds are used for fishing, boating, and other forms of recreation, and contribute to the Town's identity and special vistas.

Hanson boasts several unique cultural and recreational resources that contribute to the Town's landscape character. The rustic 62-acre Camp Kiwanee and the regional Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway are discussed in further detail in Section F. Scenic Resources.

C. Water Resources

Watersheds:

The Town of Hanson lies within two major surface watersheds: the North River and the Taunton River watersheds. There are approximately 4,600 acres in the northeast section of town which are contained in the North River watershed. Indian Head Brook serves as the only major surface drainageway in this area, flowing north from Indian Head Pond through Wampatuck Pond and Little Cedar Swamp into the Indian Head (or Drinkwater) River. Indian Head Brook has numerous intermittent and permanent tributary water courses which drain its watershed. The watershed contains many swampy areas with ridges of high ground. The Indian Head River flows in an east-west direction, ultimately tying into the North River. Most of the Indian Head River and all of the North River can be canoed.

Hanson also contains approximately 5,700 acres of the Taunton River drainage area within its border, including the Great Cedar Swamp. The major surface drainage ways in this area are the Shumatuscacant River and Poor Meadow Brook. The Shumatuscacant River flows south from Whitman into Poor Meadow Brook, which is a tributary of the Satucket River.

Surface Water:

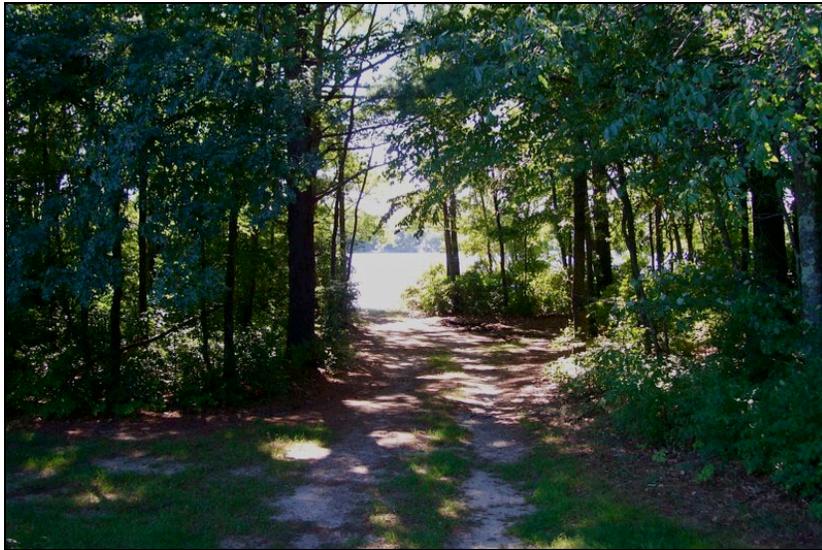
Hanson contains 9 ponds totaling 371 acres in surface area that provide the Town with approximately 10 miles of shoreline. The larger ponds are used for fishing, boating and other forms of recreation. None of the ponds are used exclusively for a public water supply, although since the 1960s the Monponsett Ponds (and Oldham and Furnace Ponds in Pembroke) have been seasonally diverted to Silver Lake and are major components of Brockton's water supply.

The following description of the ponds in Hanson is based on field work and map investigations performed by the Natural Resources Technical Team of the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service. Updated resource use information from the Old Colony Planning Council's Land/Use/Water Quality Issues 208 report for Hanson was also used.

Indian Head Pond (Great Pond)

Indian Head Pond is 121 acres in area and located on the Hanson-Pembroke town line at an elevation of 68 feet. The shoreline has an increasing number of residences and is accessible to the public off Main Street. Maximum depth is

seven feet and mean depth is five feet. The pond gives rise to Indian Head Brook and serves as a reservoir for several cranberry bogs. Boating is the primary recreation activity on the pond. There is a narrow, unpaved public boat launch called the Marcus Urann Fisherman's Landing which was created in the 1960's. As boats and trailers have become larger, boaters have expanded the boat launch area to another piece of shoreline beyond the Edgewood Bogs pump house. It is unclear if this access point is on town-owned land, and town boards are actively seeking resolution to this issue.



*Marcus Urann Fisherman's Landing
a.k.a. Indian Head Boat Launch
Photo by Dave Harris*

Oldham Pond (Great Pond)

Approximately 44 of Oldham Pond's 235 acres lie within the Town of Hanson at an elevation of 57 feet. The shoreline in Hanson has been extensively developed and contains many permanent residences. Maximum depth is 14 feet and mean depth of 10 feet. The pond, located on the Hanson/Pembroke town line, is used for boating, swimming, water-skiing, fishing and skating activities.

Maquan Pond (Great Pond)

Maquan Pond is 48 acres, located just south of Route 58 in the eastern part of town at an elevation of 74 feet. The pond has two youth camps, one of which is town-owned and operated, and a public swimming beach on its shores. The shoreline is generally high, wooded, and settled. The maximum depth of the pond is 17 feet and the mean depth of 10 feet. The uses of this pond are swimming, boating, and fishing.

Wampatuck Pond (Raised Great Pond/Town Hall Pond)

Wampatuck Pond, a man-made pond 62 acres in area lies just south of Route 58 in the center of town and provides the beautiful back drop for Hanson Town Hall. The shoreline is largely owned by public and quasi-public organizations and

offers a concrete public boat launch that accommodates both hand-carried and small power boats with parking for 3 trailers and 6 cars on Rt. 58. Camp Wampatuck, a former youth camp, has been replaced by a residential subdivision, "Kings Landing", of 7 homes. The Hanson Town Forest is located adjacent to this subdivision on the east side. The former Plymouth County Hospital site has a very small sliver of frontage on the west side of the pond, and the cemetery located off High Street also borders the pond. The pond is used extensively for boating and fishing but is unsuitable for swimming.

Factory Pond

Factory Pond is a 15-acre impoundment located on the Indian Head River at the Winter Street at an elevation of 48 feet. The site was formerly the location for a mill and had potential for a variety of recreational uses. The dam underwent renovation work in 1995 and as a result the water level was lowered to lessen the water pressure on this structure. The State has issued a warning of very high mercury levels in the Pond and the Town has posted no fishing or swimming warnings. The pond's margins consist of residential, wooded and swamp areas.

Burrage Pond

Burrage Pond is a man-made pond, 202 acres in area, which is located on the Hanson/Halifax town line at an elevation of 57 feet. The pond was formally utilized for cranberry irrigation and its shoreline has wooded and swamp areas. It is owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game.

Chandler Mill Pond

Chandler Mill Pond, located on the Hanson/Pembroke town line, is a man-made 6-acre pond, with a maximum depth of five feet. Located at an elevation of 57 feet, this water body is not used for recreation, though its location on Stetson Brook makes it part of the historic Wampanoag Canoe Passage. It is surrounded by wooded and swamp areas as well as a major roadway.

Monponsett Pond

Located on the Hanson/Halifax town line at an elevation of 52 feet, Monponsett Pond is a 528-acre natural water body. It has a maximum depth of 13 feet and an average depth of 9 feet. This pond is used for drinking water, being a diversion source for Silver Lake - Brockton's principal water source. The pond is also used for boating, swimming, water-skiing, fishing and skating. Residences, woods and swamp areas exist on the shoreline. A study of Monponsett Pond revealed an increasing count of bacteria caused mainly from overflow and, in some cases, direct discharge of sewage from bordering residential properties. The towns of Halifax and Hanson have formed the Alternative Sewage Committee to study and recommend solutions to both towns.

Reservoir

Locally known as "White Oak Reservoir", this is a man-made, 14-acre water body located just south of the intersection of Pleasant Street and South Street at an

elevation of 60 feet. It is an impoundment of White Oak Brook. This cranberry bog irrigation pond is adjacent to a major roadway and is bordered by swamp areas.

Aquifer Recharge Areas and Water Supply:

On July 6, 1990, the MA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) promulgated revisions to its drinking water regulations. In response to the Drinking Water Regulations 310 CMR 22.21 for new sources, the Town of Hanson has progressively moved forward to develop new wells and delineate new aquifer and well protection districts. In August 2002, the Board of Water Commissioners imposed a ban on all new connections to the water system. This slowed new development until new wells could be developed. The ban was lifted in October 2005.

The Town of Hanson has encountered problems with abutting towns concerning adequate protection of the Aquifer Protection Resource District. These problems have been detrimental to the town in expensive legal costs to defend its position to protect groundwater. In order to alleviate this potentially volatile situation, the Town Planner under the direction of the Planning Board and the Old Colony Planning Council, organized a Poor Meadow Brook Aquifer Protection Committee, with the towns of Halifax and East Bridgewater to explore options and develop strong relationships with neighboring towns. The impetus of the program has been to address shared water resource problems, to jointly discuss viable solutions with an open communication forum, and to encourage the most appropriate and suitable use of land in areas potentially affecting ground or surface water resources.

Wetlands and Streams:

Hanson contains many large swampy areas which are generally not covered by water except during the winter and spring months. During periods of excessive runoff, the swampy areas play an important role in flood prevention, acting as detention basins and keeping the water out of people's basements. Most of the streams in town have shallow, flat bottoms, composed of sand, gravel, or mud. Stream bank erosion appears to be minor throughout the area.

The Great Cedar Swamp constitutes a very important resource for Hanson. Its water storage capacity acts to reduce flood potential and release runoff slowly. This area sustains a wide variety of wildlife, and groundwater along its margins has the potential to be used as a future drinking water supply if needed. It flows south into Burrage and Monponsett Ponds in Halifax, and is bordered on the north by Main Street, on the east by Pleasant Street, and on the west by Elm Street.

D. Vegetation

The plant cover of any landscape is one of the most important landscape characteristics of any environment, providing benefits such as soil stabilization, water quality protection, and habitat for countless wildlife species. Vegetation may often provide a buffer zone between otherwise incompatible land uses, as well as supporting its own set of recreational opportunities such as walking, wildlife viewing, and providing open space for young people to enjoy and appreciate nature. Hanson contains a rich variety of habitats such as woodlands, wetlands, fields, bogs and orchards, collectively host a rich diversity of plant species commonly found throughout southeastern Massachusetts, including several uncommon species typically associated with Atlantic white cedar swamps.

Forests:

There are five major forest communities represented in the town: oak, white pine, red maple, white pine/oak, and white pine/ red maple. In addition, the town supports pockets of Atlantic white cedar, and patches of American beech, black birch, and American holly occur where appropriate soil and other conditions exist.

- The oak forest consists of 80% oak species and is found primarily on sandy soils. The primary species are scarlet, black and white oaks.
- The white pine/oak forest is at least 70% white pine and oak, with one or the other usually predominating. Other species such as pitch pine in a few locations, red maple and other hardwoods and woody shrubs may often be associated with this forest type. This forest generally grows where the soil is well-drained, or even on some excessively-drained soils.
- The pine forests consist of at least 80% white pine. White pine is usually found in small, relatively pure stands that often contain at least a few marketable trees. White pine prefers to grow on well-drained or excessively-drained soils.
- The pine/maple forest is typically at least 70% white pine and red maple with either species potentially dominating. This forest association prefers to grow on muck or other low, poorly-drained or wet soils.
- The maple forest is predominantly pure red maple and is nearly always found growing on muck and other low, poorly drained or wet soils.

Hanson also has a large amount of open space that can be classified as wetland, and vegetation in these areas typically includes cattails, and other emergent

species such as bulrush, water willow, water lily, and arrowhead, as well as a wide variety of grasses and sedges, button bush, several species of willow, cranberries, sundews, and several species of wild orchids.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Hanson's wildlife consists of a robust variety of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish and invertebrates. A number of these organisms are species that have adapted to an increasingly suburban environment. Obvious examples of this phenomenon include gray and red squirrels, Eastern chipmunks, woodchucks, coyotes, white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, Cooper's hawks, and a large variety of songbirds; 85+ species of which annually breed in the community. In addition to the mammals listed above other species regularly occurring in town are opossum, raccoon, striped skunk, red and gray fox, mink, long-tailed weasel, fisher, river otter, muskrat, southern flying squirrel, Eastern cottontail, and several species of mice and shrews.

Old fields and other early successional habitats support a diverse variety of species, some of which are seriously declining in New England as these ephemeral habitats gradually succeed to forests. Typical of these habitats are cottontail rabbits, ruffed grouse, and ringnecked pheasants in areas where they are periodically released for hunting. Songbirds frequenting such habitats include Eastern bluebird, brown thrasher, blue-winged and prairie warblers, Eastern Towhee, and field sparrow. Among the more important and wide-spread predators in Hanson are coyote, red fox, Cooper's, red-shouldered, and red-tailed hawks, and Eastern screech and great horned owls.

Mature forest areas provide habitat for fisher, wild turkey, and white-tailed deer; however, these species have also become well-adapted to survive in fragmented suburban areas as well. Low-lying wetlands and pond habitats provide nesting and feeding areas for Canada Geese, Mallards, American black ducks, wood ducks, and a great variety of other migratory waterfowl during appropriate seasons. Cranberry bogs and their reservoirs and Atlantic white cedar swamps offer habitat for somewhat reclusive mammals such as the snowshoe hare (introduced, but probably no longer surviving in Hanson), muskrat (reservoirs), river otter, and mink. Many species of turtles (e.g., painted, spotted, musk, snapping), and several species of frogs, salamanders and snakes are relatively common in appropriate habitats.

Hanson ponds are home to many fish species such as Largemouth Bass, Chain Pickerel, Yellow Perch, Calico Bass, Bluegill, White Perch, Brown Bullhead (Hornpout), Pumpkinseed Sunfish, and Golden Shiner. However, Hanson may have the opportunity to someday reintroduce anadromous fish to its waterways. This type of fish lives most of its life cycle in saltwater but makes its way upstream to annually spawn in freshwater. The Indian Head Brook is a tributary to the Indian Head River, which is unique in that it provides one of the few

American Shad sport fisheries in coastal Massachusetts. Most of the fishery occurs below the West Elm Street dam in Hanover on the Pembroke line, but a fishway at that location passes shad as well as river herring, and a population has been established in the upper river. A deteriorated dam at Cross Street in Hanover (which becomes State Street in Hanson) prevents further upstream movement, but if it were removed, fish could feasibly swim up the Indian Head Brook in Hanson to Wampatuck Pond to spawn.

Hanson does have one thriving catadromous fish species, which lives in an opposite manner; the American Eel lives most of its life in fresh water but migrates annually to spawn in the ocean. This species can actually survive and move on land to avoid dams and other impoundments. Eel can be found in most of Hanson's ponds and streams.

Wildlife Corridors:

Hanson is fortunate to have a number of medium- to large-sized blocks of quality wildlife habitat. Some are upland, but the largest areas are dominated by wetlands that are connected by natural brooks and streams. These waterways and their margins form corridors between major swamps (Great Cedar Swamp in South Hanson, Little Cedar Swamp in North Hanson) and other natural areas that are strung like green beads all along Hanson's major streams. The overall result is a network of linked habitats that enable larger mammalian species, including White Tail Deer, Red Fox, Gray Fox, Eastern Coyote, Muskrat, Mink, Fisher, Otter, and Beaver, to establish viable home territories and travel considerable distances as they feed, seek mates, or disperse to new territories. One specimen of the state's growing moose population was recently spotted in Raynham, just 15 miles away, leading some observers to speculate that in the future Hanson's wildlife corridors may be traveled by this species as well.

Wild Turkey and other non-mammal species, especially turtles, frogs and salamanders during the spring breeding season, also depend on these travel routes. Live sightings, tracks and (sadly) road kills show that these wildlife corridors cross highways where waterways intersect Route 27 (Main Street), Route 14 (West Washington Street, County Road, and Maquan Street), Route 58 (Whitman, Liberty, Indian Head and Monponsett Streets), and other paved roads. As the Town continues to develop, it will be increasingly important to make land use choices that protect the rich biodiversity that currently exists in Hanson. For more information on Corridors and Greenways, see Section 7. Needs Analysis.

Rare Species:

Conservationists, naturalists, students and other interested citizens have inventoried hundreds of species of plants, animals and birds found in Town. According to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, the only endangered state-listed species known to be found in Hanson

is the Spine-Crowned Clubtail dragonfly/damselfly. However, there are several species listed as Special Concern: New England Bluet Damselfly, Bridle Shiner (a fish), Wood Turtle, Eastern Box Turtle, and the Plymouth Gentian (a flower). The Spotted Turtle was removed from the list of “Species of Special Concern” in 2007.

Vernal Pools:

A vernal pool is defined as a depression in the land with no inlet or outlet where water is confined and persists at least during the spring and early summer of most years, where there are no fish, and where various species depend for all or part of their life cycles. Some species such as wood frog, spotted salamander, and fairy shrimp are considered obligate vernal pool species, meaning that they cannot survive without vernal pools. Five vernal pools in Hanson have been officially certified by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and efforts are underway to certify more. This certification will ensure the protection of these pools and appropriate buffer areas in perpetuity.



*Vernal Pool at Crooker Place
Photo by Dave Harris*

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Hanson is a scenic, wooded community with variable landscapes that include ponds, rocky outcrops, bogs and fields. The Planning Team has identified seven special areas to highlight as they are particularly unique for aesthetic, environmental or cultural reasons. In addition to these, Map 4 depicts several other valuable open space properties that are currently unprotected.

Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway

The Bay Circuit Trail is a permanent recreation trail and greenway corridor that extends through 34 towns in Eastern Massachusetts and links the parks and

open spaces surrounding metropolitan Boston. It was conceptualized in 1929 as an 'outer emerald necklace' and has become a reality as more communities add trails to the total length. When completed, the main line will extend 200 miles from Kingston Bay, Kingston, on the south to Plum Island, Newburyport, on the north. At this time, there are roughly 150 miles of trails blazed and open to the public. Hanson and Pembroke joined the Bay Circuit Trail in June 2006 with the addition of 15 miles of trail. In 2007, the Trails Committee obtained a grant from REI to install informational kiosks at each of the trail heads in Hanson.

Plymouth County Hospital

In 1999, Plymouth County divested itself of several properties of which it could no longer maintain. The 56-acre Plymouth County Hospital property on High Street was one such site and is located in the center of Hanson. The hospital was originally built for tuberculosis patients, but over time offered more general care. Unfortunately, the town has not had the funds to properly maintain the historic Spanish-style building and it has been subject to much vandalism and several fires.

A 9-member Plymouth County Hospital Reuse Committee was formed in that same year and has since been working on a plan of action for the property; many of those actions also appear in Section 9. of this Plan. There are numerous existing trails throughout the property (mostly old roads in various states of disrepair) that can be improved to create connections for the Bay Circuit Trail, and there are opportunities to develop new recreational assets as well. At the October 2007 Town Meeting, the hospital building and an additional 7 acres were leased to the Hanson Housing Authority for reuse and redevelopment. It is the town's collective hope that the site will evolve into a vibrant center of activity.

Rocky Run Conservation Area

The Rocky Run Conservation Area comprises several parcels totaling 19 acres where Hanson, Hanover and Pembroke meet. This protected area at the confluence of Rocky Run Brook and Indian Head River is the furthest upstream section of the state-designated North River Scenic Corridor. Downstream from waterfalls at several historic mill sites, hardwood forest transitions to the cool, moist shade of an impressive hemlock grove. Here at the lowest elevation in Hanson, only 25 feet above sea level, bedrock exposed by post-glacial erosion forms a dramatic cliff-like setting, unlike any other location in Hanson.

Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area

This property of almost 2,000 acres, half in Hanson and half in Halifax, is owned and managed by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. Also known as the Great Cedar Swamp, it was historically harvested for Atlantic White Cedar timber, peat for industrial fuel, and cranberries. Fishing, hiking, horseback riding and bird watching (including an active Osprey nest) are popular along old cranberry bog roads. The local landmark called "Two Mile Dike" runs alongside what was formerly one of the world's largest cranberry bogs. The historic "Indian

Crossway” section of the Bay Circuit Trail connects Crooker Place and Elm Street, providing wide natural vistas.

Hanson Town Forest

The town’s old “Poor Farm” property was set aside in 1938 as Hanson's first conservation area. The property is managed by a three-member Town Forest Committee which oversees the implementation of a 10-year Stewardship Management Plan (due for renewal in 2010). The Forest’s 35 acres, along with 2 acres of adjacent Conservation land, protect almost half of the green vista along the Wampatuck Pond shoreline as seen behind Town Hall. Tall pines, beeches, oaks and birches dominate a biologically diverse landscape. Quiet woods, shrub meadows and wetlands provide passive recreation with the Bay Circuit Trail and other walking trails, rustic wood benches and two primitive campsites that are used by scout groups and others. The Stewardship Plan calls for selective harvesting of overcrowded trees to improve long-term forest health, to increase areas of early successional habitat, and to provide a modest revenue for the town. Harvesting is expected to begin in late 2009.

Camp Kiwanee

One of Hanson’s most treasured features is Camp Kiwanee, the town’s Open Space “Crown Jewel”. This 64-acre parcel boasts an historic and charming tree-lined entrance, leading to the two-story “Needles” Lodge that sits along a glacial ridge with commanding views of Maquan Pond. The Camp is also home to a softball field, cabins for rent, and Cranberry Cove which is used for the town’s long-standing summer swim program. The Lodge is rented out for various functions including weddings, parties and corporate events. In 2005, the Hanson Recreation Department created a Camp Kiwanee Master Plan which lists various immediate, five-year and ten-year goals to improve and preserve the Camp. Some of these are reflected in this Plan and are so noted; for further details please refer to the Camp Kiwanee Master Plan. In 2005, Camp Kiwanee was the first site in Hanson to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.



*View from Camp Kiwanee Lodge
Photo by Dave Harris*

Edgewood Cranberry Bogs

This 102-acre cranberry bog property on Indian Head Street, privately owned by Edgewood Trust, is a productive Chapter 61A agricultural resource that also provides scenic and conservation value. Straddling the headwaters stretch of Indian Head Brook, the bog's attractive four-season vista greatly enhances the local streetscape for drivers and pedestrians along Route 58. From a hilltop along its shared boundary with Camp Kiwanee, there is an excellent view across this property to Indian Head Pond, where the town-owned fisherman's landing can be reached from Indian Head Street via deeded access through the bog roads.

G. Environmental Challenges

Nutrient Impacts to Water Quality:

Perhaps Hanson's biggest environmental challenge is negative impact to surface and ground water resources. Many contributors to the problem are not unique to Hanson; lawn fertilizer run off, cranberry/farm runoff, and failing septic system leaching fields are a problem in many communities. Evidence of water quality degradation can be plainly seen in a massive algal bloom every summer at the Wampatuck Pond at Town Hall and problems are suspected in Maquan Pond as well.

In fact, five water bodies in Hanson are listed on the 2006 MA Department of Environmental Protection "Category 5 Waters: Waters Requiring a TMDL". Section 303 (d) of the federal Clean Water Act and the EPA's Water Quality Planning and Management Regulations (40 CRD Part 130) require states to develop "Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL's) for waterbodies that are not meeting designated uses under technology-based controls. The TMDL process establishes allowable loads of pollutants that a waterbody can receive and still meet the designated use. In Hanson, these waterbodies are:

1. *Factory Pond* for heavy metal contamination
2. *Indian Head River* for metals, nutrients, and organic enrichment / low dissolved oxygen
3. *Wampatuck Pond** for nutrients, organic enrichment / low dissolved oxygen, noxious aquatic plants, and turbidity
4. *Monponsett Pond** for nutrients, noxious aquatic plants, and turbidity
5. *Shumatuscacant River* for siltation, organic enrichment / low dissolved oxygen, other habitat alterations and pathogens

**Wampatuck Pond and Monponsett Pond both have been found to have exotic species which can contribute to environmental degradation if left unchecked.*

Hanson's waterways also receive negative contributions from neighboring towns. Poor Meadow Brook is downstream of the Ridder Golf Course in East Bridgewater. The Drinkwater River, Indian Head River and Factory Pond are all impacted by the Rockland wastewater treatment plant. Heavy metal contamination is a problem in some areas from the military munition manufacturing that occurred over the years in West Hanover. All of these issues result in the need to create regional watershed-wide solutions that improve all water resources.

Off-Road Vehicle Use:

The unregulated use of Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) in Hanson causes aesthetic and noise problems as well as negative impacts to sensitive resources. People come from all over the region to use ORVs in the Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area, even though use is prohibited. Enforcement is attempted by the MA Environmental Police, whose regional office is located within the BPWMA. But deep tire marks can be seen in trails in various other town-owned properties where unregulated use occurs, and steep hillsides have been severely eroded to the point where they will not recover. Hanson does not have any regulations with respect to ORV use, and acknowledges that liability and safety are concerns.

Wetlands and Watershed Awareness:

In order to better appreciate our natural resources, we need to understand their function and purpose. More often than not, people don't understand how wetlands and water resources work to their own personal and municipal potential benefit. The Conservation Commission consistently encounters a lack of public understanding of the important role that wetlands play in protecting ground water supplies, controlling pollution, providing wildlife habitat and flood control. Thankfully, chronic flooding and sedimentation are not significant problems in town due to the existence of so many healthy wetlands and bogs. It is the hope and expectation that with some public education about these issues there will be a greater motivation to protect our natural resources at the region, town, and backyard level.

Landfills, Hazardous Waste Sites, and Blighted Areas:

Hanson's transfer station on Franklin Street is sited on an old landfill that is upgradient from the town's major drinking water wellfield, but there appears to be sufficient distance and groundwater monitoring to ensure no negative environmental impact to date. There are no known hazardous waste sites, although occasional leaking underground tanks have been discovered (and dealt with appropriately). There is a privately-held 52-acre parcel on Route 27 that was the original Ocean Spray Cranberries headquarters until 1974. Unfortunately, on the developed portion of this site there are dilapidated buildings

and much solid waste. Waste, debris and trash also exist on part of the "back acreage". This property is of interest to both the town and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts due to its proximity to the MBTA Commuter Rail station and its long shared border with the Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area. These factors present some interesting possible options for developing future recreational opportunities and public access to open space.

SECTION 5. INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

The term “open space” can refer to a wide range of land uses from school ball fields to conservation land held specifically for wildlife management. This section identifies lands in Hanson that are protected in perpetuity, as well as lands that contribute to the town’s open space and recreational resources, but are not protected as such because their use can change. Please see Map 6 and the “Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest” spreadsheet for more detail.

For the purpose of this Plan, the term “protected lands” will refer only to land that is permanently committed for conservation. On the municipal level, lands that have been acquired through the Conservation Commission or Water Department for conservation purposes are protected under Article 97 of the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. To change the use of lands held under Article 97 requires a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting followed by a two-thirds vote of the state legislature, making it very difficult for a municipality to change that use for another purpose. Parcels held by a federal conservation agency are also held under Article 97. These lands include:

- Town-owned land held in fee simple by a municipality for natural resource protection (Article 97).
- Town-owned historical land with an historical restriction held in perpetuity
- State-owned conservation land. (Article 97).
- Private Land Trust-owned land, held outright or with permanent deed restrictions or Conservation Restrictions held in perpetuity.
- Private lands that have enrolled in the state’s Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR).

The term “unprotected lands” refers to properties that currently hold some conservation or recreational interest but are not protected as such in perpetuity and could be developed for another purpose. These lands include:

- Town owned land not protected under Article 97, such as lands held by the Board of Selectmen. School athletic fields are valuable as open space at the moment but may be needed in the future to accommodate buildings or other uses.
- Private lands that restrict land use for limited time period under the MA General Law Chapter 61 Program. This program restricts land use to forestry, agricultural/horticultural or recreational uses under Chapter 61, 61A and 61B respectively. Parcels must be at least 5 contiguous acres in size to qualify for the agriculture or recreation programs, or at least 10 acres for forestry. Landowners who choose to enroll their land in this program do so in exchange for a reduction in property taxes. If the landowner wishes to sell the property, the town must be given the right of first refusal. These lands are considered ‘unprotected’ because land could

be sold to a party that is willing to pay the back taxes on the property and thus remove the parcel from the Chapter 61 program. These lands are vulnerable to development and should be considered high priority for protection.



*Edgewood Cranberry Bogs
Photo by Dave Harris*

Hanson Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest are itemized, categorized and described in the spreadsheet in Appendix B and displayed on Map 6 in Appendix C.

A. Private Parcels

There are six Chapter 61 (Forestry) designations in Hanson ranging in size from 4 to 26 acres totaling 83 acres. There are fourteen Chapter 61A (Agriculture) designations ranging in size from 2 to 103 acres and totaling 507 acres. Nine of these are cranberry bogs (384 acres). There are eleven Chapter 61B (Recreation) designations ranging in size from less than an acre to 133 acres totaling 278 acres. Six of those belong to the Hanson Rod and Gun Club (51 acres). All told, the town has the right of first refusal on over 860 acres of land currently held in the Chapter 61 program.

There are numerous large undeveloped private parcels that could be considered for future open space protection through Conservation Restrictions or outright purchase. In general, large, undeveloped parcels of land provide greater environmental benefit than smaller ones by providing intact wildlife habitats that are not fragmented, and by maintaining a healthy watershed. There are seventy-three privately-held parcels over 5 acres in size, the largest of which is 90 acres. There are thirty-nine parcels between 3 and 5 acres in size, and depending on

their location and environmental attributes, could be considered valuable for open space protection. There is a total of 1,346 acres in private parcels of 3 acres or more.

B. Public and Non-Profit Parcels

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that Hanson continue to address ADA Access issues, as evidenced by continued improvements at Camp Kiwanee. The ADA coordinator is the Hanson Town Administrator and Appendix D contains Information pertaining to the Administration of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest spreadsheet in Appendix B evaluates ADA access for Town of Hanson Conservation and Recreation parcels.

Municipal:

There are fifty-eight parcels held by the Hanson Conservation Commission. These total 503 acres and range in size from less than an acre to 111 acres. The largest is the Smith Nawazelski Conservation Area which has a state-held Conservation Restriction. The Water Department has four parcels totaling 94 acres for drinking water protection and wells. There are five Parks and Recreation parcels: three small parcels, the 68-acre Camp Kiwanee, and the 37-acre Town Forest.

In addition, there are ninety-five town owned parcels that are undeveloped, not held in Conservation, and are thus 'unprotected'. Most of these are small, but there are seven parcels over five acres. The four Town-owned parcels of the former Plymouth County Hospital Property total 56 acres. An unsuccessful Article of the 2008 Fall Special Town Meeting failed to put some of this area under Conservation jurisdiction.

State and Non-Profit Organizations:

Six parcels of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area cover 968 acres in South Hanson. There are three parcels owned by Plymouth County totaling 12 acres. Two of these are along the Indian Head River and constitute part of the Hanson Rocky Run Conservation Area. As mentioned above, the state holds a CR on the Smith-Nawazelski property.

There are five non-profit land owners in Hanson. The Wildlands Trust of South Eastern Massachusetts owns the 15-acre Hunt Preserve, and The Rainbow Camp of Massachusetts holds 18 acres. The Hunt Preserve is protected in perpetuity, but the Rainbow Camp deserves close attention due to its Maquan Pond frontage and proximity to Camp Kiwanee.

SECTION 6. COMMUNITY VISION

A. Description of Process

The Open Space and Recreation Planning Team hosted two Visioning Sessions for this updated Plan. The first was held in January 2008 specifically for relevant board and committee members and was attended by 14 members representing a variety of boards including the Water Commission, Historical Commission, Trails Committee, Recreation Commission and the Planning Board. Several town employees attended including the Town Planner, Town Conservation Agent, and Town Assessor.

With input from this session, MapWorks created an Open Space and Recreation survey that was sent out to 2000 residents as a colored-paper insert in the local paper, the Hanson Express. The survey was also distributed at Town Hall and the library. The response was good with 191 completed surveys resulting in a return rate of nearly 10%.

The Open Space Committee hosted a second Visioning Session for the general public on March 5, 2008 with 10 people attending. This low turnout could be attributed to a mistake that appeared in the newspaper the week prior indicating that the meeting was hosted by the Committee to pass the Community Preservation Act. It could also be due to the fact that many people had sent in their questionnaires and felt that was sufficient. Regardless, the discussion underscored the survey results and was productive.

Prior to these recent sessions, the town has held numerous public meetings that provided the basis for existing Plans. These include a Master Plan Visioning Session on April 1, 2000, and an Open Space and Recreation Visioning Session in 1999.

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

After synthesizing existing Open Space and Recreation Goals in conjunction with other current planning initiatives, the Planning Team has determined that the overall vision of the community has remained unchanged for the past 15 years: to retain a semi-rural, attractive community that values its residents and quality of life. Thus, the goals stated in previous plans are still relevant, but have been redefined to more acutely focus efforts to preserve Hanson's community character:

1. Preserve and Enhance Hanson's Rural Character and Scenic Quality
2. Expand and Improve Recreational Opportunities
3. Protect Natural Resources and Biodiversity

SECTION 7. ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Water Resources:

When asked what factors should determine which open space should be protected, survey respondents chose “drinking water protection” and “pond and shoreline protection” as the #1 and #2 factors respectively. Ninety-four percent of those surveyed agreed that Hanson should actively try to acquire and protect more open space. The expansion of the Aquifer Protection District will help protect water supply from polluting activities, but the town should remain vigilant for any opportunities that arise to permanently protect parcels within that zone.

Hanson has several large ponds that are enjoyed for their scenic and recreational value. However, nitrogen inputs are putting the ponds at risk, as evidenced by Wompatuck Pond in the late summer. Algal blooms are becoming more intense by the year. These ponds would benefit from a water sampling program to identify specific inputs, and related public outreach programs to help curb backyard fertilizer runoff where appropriate.

Greenways:

A greenway may be defined as protected open space corridors that link diverse natural resources, historic sites, recreational trails, and/or waterways. Greenways are especially important when providing continuous wildlife habitat, but also provide cohesion and connectivity for people as well. The Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway is an excellent example of a large-scale, regional Greenway that incorporates all of the features listed above. The need for the creation and maintenance of Greenways is mentioned in previous Hanson Open Space Plans, and is highlighted in 2006 “*Massachusetts Outdoors*” Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. Hanson has several emerging Greenways in town, and all of them have connections with neighboring towns:

Indian Head Greenway

The IHG extends through the center of town, through the Plymouth County Hospital site, Town Forest, Fern Hill Cemetery, Town Hall Park, and conservation lands along Indian Head Brook to the Hanson/Hanover town line. This is a prime example of a Greenway that has great potential to be developed on a regional level with South Hanover and Northwest Pembroke. Several large Chapter 61 parcels are found in this Greenway.

Poor Meadow Brook Greenway

The PMBG links the town-owned Smith-Nawazelski Conservation Area with other parcels in the western and northwestern parts of town. This is another great

example of a regional Greenway, linking Hanson to Whitman. This Greenway could include a connection to the property of the Whitman-Hanson Regional High School, providing opportunities for environmental education and recreation.

Brett's Brook Greenway

The BBG links Poor Meadow Brook Corridor with lands further east and north. The Brian Gaffey Conservation Area is found in the headwaters and links to the Historic "Major's Purchase" property that marks the northwest corner of the 1660's land purchase of the early settlers. Several large, unprotected parcels dominate the downstream area of this possible Greenway.

White Oak Brook Greenway

The WOBG extends through wetlands on the Hanson/Pembroke Town Line along Union Street. These wetlands were converted to cranberry bogs but are now reverting back to natural wetlands through a legal settlement in the early 1980's between Cumberland Farms, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the EPA.

Stetson Brook Greenway

The SBG is a potential Greenway that passes through the extreme southeast corner of town connecting Stetson's Pond in Pembroke with Chandler Mill Pond, and Monponsett Pond in Hanson and Halifax. It is especially important as it is part of the Historic Wampanoag Canoe Passage, the Native American water trail that connects Massachusetts and Narragansett Bays. This regional, historic connectivity should be valued and protected.

Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway

The Hanson portion of the Bay Circuit Trail and Greenway is now complete, but there are many areas that could be improved upon to get users off of roads and into the woods. For the purposes of a discussion about Greenways, there are two potential 'spurs' of the BCT that should be noted here. The first is a connection between Little Cedar Swamp and the Indian Head River Greenway. All of the parcels in the swamp with frontage on Winter Street are in private ownership; the town should aim to protect frontage parcels to allow for wildlife corridors.

The second spur would link Great Cedar Swamp to the Shumatuscacant River along Poor Meadow Brook and land belonging to the Water Department. This would provide a greenbelt between Hanson's significant open spaces and those in Whitman and Abington.

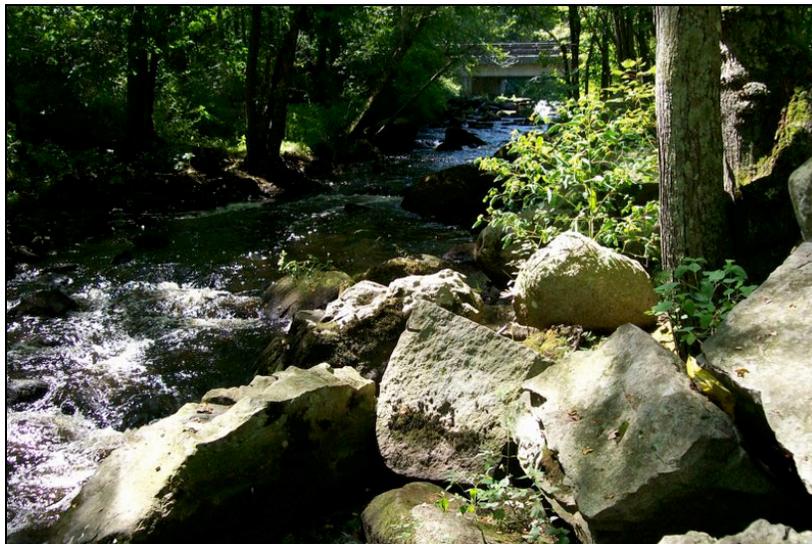
B. Summary of Community Needs

Signage:

There is a significant need for improved signage on existing trails in Hanson. When asked on the survey, “Would you use Open Space and Recreation facilities more if we had the following” the top two answers were “more marked trails” and “detailed trail maps”. Townspeople are in fact using open space already, but there are numerous locations that are significantly underutilized, and there is a desire to find them. Without proper signage, people worry that they are trespassing even if the land is publicly owned. Nearly all of the town-owned conservation land needs signage, but the top locations that should be given the highest priority include:

- The *Billings-Webster Conservation Area* has no signage at all but is a 64-acre parcel with a primitive trail network already in place. Two possible locations for signage could be on Old Pine Drive and also on State Street.
- The *Brian Gaffey Conservation Area* is a 57-acre parcel with frontage on West Washington Street. Signage could be installed on the town-owned site of the former Thomas Hall.
- *Rocky Run* on State Street at the Hanover Town Line.
- *Norcross Property* on King Street at the Hanover Town Line. This property links into an extensive Hanover trail network and borders the Drinkwater River.

In addition to the signs, respondents also seek improved trail access and parking, as well as benches and boardwalks.



*Indian Head River in the Rocky Run Conservation Area
Photo by Dave Harris*

Bike Paths and Sidewalks:

When asked what the priorities should be for new or improved recreational facilities, the top choice was “bike trails”. In fact, the creation and/or use of bike paths ranked high in all of the questions on the survey. Also, while respondents were not prompted with a choice of “sidewalks” in any of the survey questions, those who chose to hand-write in any remarks nearly always mentioned the need and desire for sidewalks in town, and the issue was also raised in the public meeting. The interest in both sidewalks and bike paths is significant enough to warrant the creation of a new committee focused specifically in this arena.

Swimming:

The Town of Hanson owns and operates successful programs for swimming lessons, swim team, boating and canoeing during the summer season. However, the facilities and waterfront are in dire need of refurbishment, specifically Cranberry Cove at Camp Kiwanee.

C. Management Needs

Modify the Recreation Commission:

Hanson’s recreation programs have traditionally been managed by numerous small special-interest volunteer groups and committees, with very little coordination at the town level. This system has been somewhat successful but there has been a steady push for consolidation by some members in town dating back to the 2004 Master Plan and espoused by the Capital Improvement Committee and the Finance Committee. The goal is to create an expanded Town Recreation Commission (either elected or appointed) that would oversee all town recreation programs, not just those at Camp Kiwanee. This will improve communication, streamline programming, and focus resources where most needed.

Land Acquisition Approach:

The Conservation Commission has historically protected property in a reactive manner by responding to opportunities as they arise, often scrambling for the time, money, consensus and leadership needed to secure a deal. This has been successful with some properties, but the town has also lost out on several significant Chapter 61 properties due to a lack of preparedness and funding sources. Now that Hanson has passed the Community Preservation Act, and will soon have a state-approved Open Space and Recreation Plan, the town will be in a much better position to both react to opportunities when they arise and seek out new opportunities as well.

To assist with this endeavor, the Conservation Commission will use a “Conservation Scorecard” to help prioritize land conservation. This scorecard was developed by the Manomet Center for Conservation Services and can be downloaded at <http://communitymapper.org/> (a copy can be found in the Appendix). The scorecard prioritizes lands for acquisition by comparing attributes and qualities of a parcel in question to those of an ideal conservation parcel, and provides an assessment of the relative conservation value. This value should be used in conjunction with social considerations such as aesthetics, cultural significance, and/or cost to help the town prioritize a parcel’s significance to the town.

D. Potential Change of Use

The Conservation Commission would like to see a portion of the Plymouth County Hospital property conveyed into Conservation. Roughly 25 acres of the 50 acre parcel were intended to be conveyed to Conservation at the 2008 Town Meeting, but the article failed. Opponents of the transfer argued that it would be unwise to ‘lock up’ the land at this time, thereby losing the opportunity for development and tax revenue. The Conservation Commission and Plymouth County Hospital Reuse Committee will work to present a more specific plan for the entire property (which will still include a large dedicated parcel to Conservation) at the 2009 Town Meeting.

SECTION 8. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In order to realize a community vision of maintaining a serene, green and aesthetically pleasing town with convenient access to recreational areas and facilities for all ages, the Open Space Committee Planning Group has stated three primary goals with the following objectives:

Goal 1. Preserve and Enhance Hanson's Rural Character and Scenic Quality

- Acquire land or conservation restrictions to permanently protect open spaces
- Protect Hanson's cultural heritage
- Implement the Camp Kiwanee Master Plan
- Plan for appropriate residential growth

Goal 2. Expand and Improve Recreational Opportunities

- Provide a linked system of open space, trails and greenways
- Improve the management of Hanson Recreation Programs
- Improve signage
- Maintain an adequate number of playing fields to meet town needs

Goal 3. Protect Natural Resources and Biodiversity

- Protect ground water supplies
- Protect surface waters from eutrophication
- Protect and preserve wildlife habitats and greenways

SECTION 9. FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

A. Reviewing Accomplishments

Since the last Open Space Plan was approved by the state in 1996, much has been accomplished. A Parks and Fields Commission has been established to focus solely on those needs and has been very active in achieving its goals in a short time. Major rehabilitation of the Hancock Street fields and the Memorial Fields complex over the past 10 years has provided the town with adequate fields to meet recreation needs. To better coordinate programs, the Parks and Fields Commission is working to rehabilitate the old police station on Indian Head Street to provide office and meeting space for Hanson Youth Sports.

The Community Preservation Act was passed on May 17, 2008 with a 1.5% surcharge rate. This translates into an annual cost of \$37.00 a year to the average homeowner in Hanson, for a total of \$140,000 to be deposited to a Community Preservation Fund. The Community Preservation Coalition estimates that Hanson should receive a roughly 65% match from the state in 2009, adding an additional \$91,000 to create a Community Preservation Fund balance of \$231,000 for the first year alone. A 9-member Community Preservation Committee has been appointed and is soliciting proposals from the community.

B. Funding Sources

Federal

1. EPA Watershed Protection Grants
2. US Fish and Wildlife Wetlands Conservation

State

1. DEP Aquifer Land Acquisition Grants, Stormwater Mitigation Grants #319, and Water Quality #604b Grants
2. DCR Recreational Trails Grant Program
3. DCS Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund
4. Mass. Riverways Program Grants
5. Mass. Environmental Trust Grants
6. Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund

Town

1. CPA funding
2. Senior Tax Relief

Private and other Resources

1. Land donations
2. Foundation Grants
3. Fundraising Events
4. Volunteers

SECTION 9. 5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

GOAL 1. Preserve and Enhance Hanson's Rural Character and Scenic Quality

Objective	Obj. #	Action	Responsible Parties	Time
A. Acquire land or conservation restrictions to permanently protect open space	A1. a § e * 8	<p>Acquire lands or conservation restrictions on parcels that are strategic to the Bay Circuit Trail, contiguous with existing open space, have unique environmental features, or buffer sensitive resources.</p> <p>Special priority should be given to parcels found in <i>Inventory of Sites Suitable for Use as Open Spaces</i> and <i>Hanson's Greenways*</i>.</p> <p><i>*see Sections 5. and 7. in this Plan, respectively</i></p>	<p>Conservation Commission</p> <p>Open Space Committee</p>	Ongoing
	A2. a § *	<p>Promote private land stewardship by distributing information and encouraging landowners to pursue Chapter 61 designations, Conservation Restrictions, and Agricultural Preservation Restriction Programs.</p> <p>Maintain a dialogue with cranberry growers to keep apprised of bog status over time.</p>	Conservation Commission	2009-2014
	A3. § * 8	<p>Support the Community Preservation Act in Hanson as well as at the state level.</p>	Community Preservation Committee	Ongoing
B. Protect Hanson's cultural heritage	B1. a	<p>Complete the historic inventory that was started in 2003 and share the information with the public to raise awareness of historic resources.</p>	Historical Commission	2009-2014
	B2. a §	<p>Apply for <i>Historic District National Register</i> status for Cape Cod Cranberry Company, Hanson Town Hall, North Hanson and Wampatuck Hall</p>	Historical Commission	2009-2014

	B3. §	Establish a local Historic Preservation District and an Historic District Commission.	Historical Commission	2009-2014
	B4.	Pass a Demolition Delay Bylaw to provide an extended period of time to consider other alternatives to the demolition of historic homes.	Historical Commission	2009-2014
C. Implement the Camp Kiwanee Master Plan/Restoration Project	C1. ◆ §	Restore the Camp's landscape and buildings.	Recreation Department	2009-2014
	C2. ◆ §	Repair dirt and asphalt roads and control erosion around property.	Recreation Department	2009-2014
	C3. ◆ §	Refurbish lodge exterior with new red cedar shingles to attract more revenue-generating events.	Recreation Department	2009-2014
	C4. ◆ §	Reclaim/refurbish the stone firehouse.	Recreation Department	2014+
D. Plan for appropriate residential growth	D1. § * 8	Adopt an Open Space Residential Design bylaw.	Zoning Bylaw Committee	2009
	D2. §	Provide access to usable open space for every new residential development.	Zoning Bylaw Committee Planning Board	2009-2014

GOAL 2. Expand and Improve Recreational Opportunities

Objective	Obj. #	Action	Responsible Parties	Time
A. Provide a linked system of open space, trails, and greenways that is accessible to the public and tied to adjacent communities	A1.	Protect key parcels to improve Hanson's portion of the Bay Circuit Trail by getting off of paved streets and into wooded areas.	Trails Committee	Ongoing
	α θ § *	<i>The 43-acre "Lite Control" parcel is the only remaining privately-held piece on the Trail. Consider and pursue various options to allow public access.</i>		2009-2010

	A2.	Create a Pathways/Sidewalk Committee to focus energy and resources in making links a priority. Create sidewalks and bike trails. <i>(specific locations include Route 58, Route 27 and High Street)</i>	Planning Board	2009-2010
	A3. α § *		Pathways Committee Green Hanson	2010+
	A4.	Clear streams and rivers to create a connected "riverway" for canoeing, including the restoration of the Wapanoag Canoe Passage along Stetson Brook.	Open Space Committee, Con Com, Taunton River Watershed Alliance, North & South Rivers Watershed Assoc.	2009-2014
	A5.	Develop additional points of public access to surface waters, and determine whether or not the town owns the land at the expanded Indian Head boat launch location.	Conservation Commission Open Space Committee	Ongoing
B. Improve the management and coordination of Hanson Recreation programs	B1. §	Review the current recreational and parks committees (Recreation, Parks and Fields, Memorial Field, Town Forest) and consider consolidation of two or more committees under the umbrella of a newly created Recreation Commission.	Board of Selectmen Town Meeting	2009-2014
	B2. ◆ α	If Action B1. occurs, hire a professional Director and adequate staff to oversee and manage recreation programs.	(new) Recreation Commission	2009-2014
	B3.	Renovate the police station on Indian Head Street to house Hanson Youth Sports.	Parks and Fields	2008
C. Implement Camp Kiwanee Master Plan to improve recreational opportunities	C1. ◆ §	Make Camp Kiwanee lodge waterfront accessible for outdoor education and boating programs by building a deck and ramp system.	Recreation Department	2009-2014
	C2. ◆ §	Repair/repave the parking lot and basketball area of Camp Kiwanee.	Recreation Department	2009-2014

	C3. ◆ §	Renovate upstairs of Camp Kiwanee lodge for classrooms and office space.	Recreation Department	2009-2019
	C4. ◆ §	Replace Camp Kiwanee Cove dock system.	Recreation Department	2009-2014
D. Improve signage for existing recreation locations, and make signage a necessary component of any new recreation project	D1. α *	Create, distribute, and post on the town's website, a map displaying public lands with trails and other recreational areas.	Conservation Commission	2009-2014
	D2. *	Install kiosks at all Bay Circuit Trailheads.	Trails Committee	2009
	D3.	Standardize signage for all existing municipal open space.	Conservation Commission	2009+
E. Maintain an adequate number of playing fields and playgrounds to meet town needs	E1. ■ e §	Construct playgrounds and/or playing fields on town properties as needed.	Parks and Fields	2014+

GOAL 3. Protect Natural Resources and Biodiversity

Objective	Obj. #	Action	Responsible Parties	Time
A. Protect existing and future ground water supplies	A1. α §	Pursue the protection of potential future well head sites.	Water Commission	Ongoing
	A2.	Maintain a dialogue with the DEP regarding available information and continuing research about mercury and other heavy metal contamination in Hanson.	Conservation Commission Board of Health	Ongoing
B. Protect surface waters from eutrophication	B1. § *	Support ongoing, and create new, educational and research programs to measure negative impacts to waterways by working with the public schools and the local watershed associations.	Conservation Commission Board of Health TRWA, NSRWA	2009-2014

	B2. *	Put up signs along roads where streams and rivers are bridged under public roads or culverted underground to increase public awareness of water resources.	Conservation Commission Highway Department	2009-2014
C. Protect and preserve important and unique wildlife habitats	C1. ■	Deed ~ 20 acres of the Plymouth County Hospital site to the Conservation Commission for wildlife habitat and walking trails.	Town Meeting	2009
	C2. *	Improve General Bylaws to be consistent with state regulations in addressing Off Road Vehicle issues and participate in state efforts to regulate use on a regional level.	Board of Selectmen	2009-2014
	C3. *	Inventory and map known endangered species habitat and post information on the town's website.	Con Com Open Space Committee	2009-2014
	C4. *	Locate and certify all vernal pools in Hanson.	Conservation Commission Open Space Committee	2009-2014
	C5. *	Renew the 10 year Town Forest Stewardship Plan due to expire in 2010, and create new Management Plans for other large Conservation properties.	Town Forest Committee Conservation Commission	2010 2009-2014

KEY:

- ⌘ Action also appears in previous versions of the Open Space Plan
- § Action also appears in the 2009 Master Plan
- ⊖ Action also appears in the 2004 Community Development Plan
- Action also appears in the Plymouth County Hospital Reuse Committee 10 Year Plan
- ◆ Action also appears in the 2005 Recreation Department/Camp Kiwanee Master Plan
- * Action meets the goals of the 2006 "Massachusetts Outdoors" Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
- 8 Action also appears in the 2006 South Coastal Watershed Action Plan

SECTION 10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Hanson Board of Selectmen

Hanson Planning Board

Hanson Conservation Commission and
Hanson Open Space Committee

Hanson Recreation Commission

Old Colony Planning Council



Town of Hanson

Board of Selectmen



542 Liberty Street
Hanson, Massachusetts 02341
(781) 293-2131 FAX (781) 294-0884

James A. Egan, Chairman
Christopher L. Colclough, Vice Chairman
James E. Armstrong, Clerk
Stephen M. Amico
Donald H. Howard

Michael W. Finglas, Sr.
Town Administrator
mfinglas@hanson-ma.gov
www.hanson-ma.gov

December 3, 2008

Mr. Philip Lindquist
Hanson Conservation Commission
542 Liberty Street
Hanson, Massachusetts 02341

Re: Open Space Plan

Dear Mr. Lindquist:

On behalf of the Board of Selectmen, I would like to thank the members of the Conservation Commission and the Open Space Committee for their efforts in preparing the Hanson Open Space and Recreation Plan 2009 – 2014.

Please be advised that the Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to accept the plan and to support your goals and objectives to acquire and maintain open space within our community consistent with the wishes of the residents.

Once again, thank you for all the time and energy everyone has spent in crafting this document.

Very truly yours,

Michael W. Finglas, Sr.
Town Administrator

MWF/mem



Town of Hanson

office of

Planning Board

542 Liberty Street
Hanson, Massachusetts 02341

Phone (781) 293-9035

Fax (781) 294-0279

December 15, 2008

Conservation Commission
Hanson Town Hall
542 Liberty Street
Hanson, MA 02341

Dear Conservation Commission Members:

At a regularly scheduled meeting of the Planning Board, the Board voted to endorse the Open Space and Recreation Draft Plan for the Town of Hanson as prepared by the Hanson Open Space and Recreation Planning Team and MapWorks for the Hanson Conservation Commission.

The Town of Hanson has always looked to the future in the protection of its open space lands and implementation of diverse recreational uses. As stated in the Hanson Open Space & Recreation Draft Plan, there are three primary goals that address the open space and recreational needs of the town which are preservation and enhancement of Hanson's rural character and scenic quality, and the expansion and improvement of recreational opportunities and the protection of natural resources and biodiversity.

The proposed plan presents us with the opportunity and challenge to protect and enhance our natural resources as a community. The Town of Hanson is aware of the importance of preservation of our environment for future generations. Furthermore, all of the goals presented in the Open Space and Recreation Plan are of equal value concerning our future as a town.

The Hanson Planning Board wishes to thank you for all your time and energy expended on this project which delineates our future path.

Sincerely,

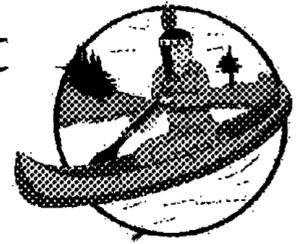


Philip R. Lindquist
Chairman



Hanson Recreation Department

Route 58 Hanson Massachusetts 02341
www.campkiwanee.com
tel - (781) 293-2333 Fax - (781) 293-4173



December 18, 2008

Hanson Open Space Committee
Hanson Conservation Commission
Town Hall
542 Liberty Street
Hanson, MA 02341

ATTN: Philip R. Lindquist, Chairman, Conservation Commission
Philip Clemons, Chairman, Open Space Committee

Subject: Open Space and Recreation Plan Support

The Hanson Recreation Commission has reviewed the 2009-2014 Hanson Open Space & Recreation Plan, and we extend our endorsement for the plan. We are very much appreciative of the fact that we were invited to be part of the planning process. We are grateful that the Plan includes reference to Camp Kiwanee which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and the inclusion of the Bay Circuit Trail.

We recognize that the Plan can and should become an "active planning" document to be used by the various town boards, committees and commissions to advance their goals and actions.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan will be a great asset to the Town, both now and in the future.

In support and appreciation for an outstanding plan and a job well-done,

Joe Baker, Chairperson
Hanson Recreation Committee

Members: David Blauss
Bill Strait
Maria McClellan
Kevin Cameron
Susan Lonergan
Francis O'Kane

HANSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION

TOWN HALL, 542 LIBERTY STREET
HANSON, MASSACHUSETTS 02341



December 16, 2008

MapWorks
P.O. Box 1505
Harwich, MA 02645

ATTN: Herb Heidt, Project Manager, Alison Demong, Lead Writer, Eliza McClennen, Map
Compilation & Design and Alan McClennen, Jr., Zoning and Regulatory Specialist

RE: Hanson Open Space & Recreation Plan 2009-2014

Dear Herb, Alison, Eliza & Alan:

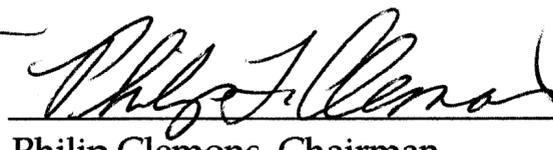
After careful review, at our regularly scheduled public meeting, held on December 16, 2008,
Hanson's Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee voted unanimously to approve
and endorse the 2009-2014 Hanson Open Space & Recreation Plan.

Please accept our thanks for an outstanding final product. We also want to express our
appreciation for all of your many months of hard work on behalf of the Town of Hanson as well
as for the knowledge and expertise that your team brought to the table.

The strategies of the 5-year Action Plan will provide an excellent framework for achieving the
goals and objectives identified in the plan and will address the concerns and expectations of our
townspeople as well as future generations.

Sincerely,


Philip R. Lindquist, Chairman
Conservation Commission


Philip Clemons, Chairman
Open Space Committee

Old Colony Planning Council

Jeanmarie Kent Joyce
President

70 School Street
Brockton, MA 02301-4097



Pasquale Ciannella
Executive Director

Telephone: (508) 583-1833
Fax: (508) 559-8768
EMAIL: info@ocpcrpa.org

December 15, 2008

Mr. Phillip Lindquist
Chairman, Hanson Conservation Commission
Chairman, Hanson Planning Board
Town Hall
Hanson, MA 02341

Dear Mr. Lindquist:

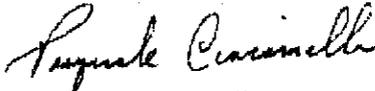
The Old Colony Planning Council has reviewed the 10/29/08 draft of the Hanson Open Space and Recreation Plan and offers the following comments:

- 1.) We are quite impressed with the Plan's compact, concise nature, well-organized, very read-able text, and clear informative maps; and with its comprehensive local and regionally-focused proposals.
- 2.) The maps are especially well done, particularly with the small boxes of text labeling significant features and proposals. However it would be good to identify all proposals specifically as well as generically, by saying "Stetson Brook Greenway" or "Indian Head Greenway" not just "Stream Corridor Protection." Then the reader would not have to go back to earlier maps and text to identify the intended acts.
- 3.) The recreation use of major water bodies is well discussed under Water Resources as is the natural use of major holdings under "Scenic Resources." However, there is no discussion of organized recreation (ballfields etc.) where these would be expected i.e., in Section 5, "The Inventory of Land of Conservation and Recreation Interest" or under Section 7, The Analysis of Needs."
- 4.) The combination of two public Visioning sessions and a printed survey gives the plan great legitimacy in reflecting community concerns.
- 5.) The Five Year Action Plan Table is quite well laid out, listing goals and objectives, the proposed actions, and the resulting proposals, as well as the responsible parties and timing. It would be good to also list possible funding sources.
- 6.) We particularly like Objective 6-2: to "Provide access to useable open space for every new residential development." Could it be expanded include all neighborhoods where feasible?

- 7) The integration with the Bay Circuit Trail is good to see, particularly in the way it ties into major holdings like Camp Kiwanee and the former County Hospital.
- 8) It is also good to see the high interest in bike paths and sidewalks and the new committee proposed to focus on these issues. The Committee might review the related proposals and discussion of opportunities for Safe Routes to School in the 2008 Hanson Master Plan.
- 9) The photographs are very good, selective, and well done.

The Council thanks you for the chance to review this draft. We wish the Town good luck in completing the plan according to the State requirements, and, most important, in implementing the Plan's imaginative proposals.

Sincerely,



Pasquale Ciaramella
Executive Director

SECTION 11. REFERENCES

Anderson, Kathleen S. and Petersen, Wayne R. "Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area, Hanson/Halifax." *Bird Observer* Vol. 32, No. 3 (2004): 153-160.

Bay Circuit Trail website: www.baycircuit.org

Community Development Plan for the Town of Hanson. Old Colony Planning Council, 2004.

Community Mapper website: <http://communitymapper.org/>

Land/Use/Water Quality Issues 208 Report. Old Colony Planning Council.

Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources website: <http://www.mass.gov/agr/programs/index.htm>

Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services. *Massachusetts Outdoors - the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*, 2006.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. *Category 5 Waters: Waters Requiring a TMDL*, 2006.

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. *Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP) Report for Hanson Water Department*, 2003.

Massachusetts Division of Watershed Management Watershed Planning Program. *Massachusetts Year 2006 Integrated List of Waters*, 2006.

Massachusetts Historical Commission. *State Register of Historical Places*, 2001.

Petersen, Wayne R. Personal correspondence, summer-fall 2008.

The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Article 97.

Town of Hanson Annual Report, 2007.

Town of Hanson Drinking Water Quality Report, 2007.

Town of Hanson Master Plan, 2008.

Town of Hanson Open Space and Recreation Plan, 1996-2001.

Town of Hanson Recreation Department Master Plan / Camp Kiwanee Restoration Project, 2005.

Town of Norwell Open Space and Recreation Plan, 2005-2010.

United States Census Bureau, *Various data sets from Census 2000*.

Watershed Action Alliance. *South Coastal Watershed Action Plan*, 2006.

SECTION 12. APPENDICES

- A. Questionnaire and Results
- B. Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest
- C. Maps
- D. ADA Administrative Information
- E. Conservation Scorecard
- F. Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Chapter 61 Lands

APPENDIX A

Town of Hanson 2008 Open Space & Recreation Questionnaire

Town of Hanson 2008 Open Space & Recreation Questionnaire Summary

Hanson Open Space Committee
Hanson Town Hall
542 Liberty Street
Hanson MA 02341



**Thank you for your help
Please return promptly**

Please Add Postage for Mail Return
OR
Return to
Conservation Office at Town Hall
OR
Use Questionnaire Drop Box
at the Town Library

Hanson Conservation Commission
Hanson Town Hall
542 Liberty Street
Hanson MA 02341

PLEASE JOIN US!
Open Space & Recreation
PUBLIC VISIONING SESSION
Wednesday March 5, 2008 7:30 PM
Hanson Middle School Auditorium

fold closed along dashed lines

TOWN OF Hanson 2008 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The Town of Hanson is updating its Open Space and Recreation Plan. Massachusetts requires that towns have approved Open Space and Recreation Plans before State Funds for the Acquisition of Open Space can be received. This survey is being conducted as part of the update in order to understand the needs and concerns of the citizens of Hanson regarding Open Space and Recreational Facilities.

Thank you for your response.

Number in household? Children: under 6 yrs. 6-12 yrs. 13-18 yrs.

Total: Adults: 18-50 yrs. over 50 yrs.

How Long have you been a resident of Hanson? # of years

Are you a registered Hanson voter? Yes No

Do you attend Town Meetings? Always Sometimes Never

Why did you move to Hanson? born here/family ties work/commute location quiet/safe rural character
 historic charm real estate affordability school system other: _____

Are you aware of the Tax Benefits for giving land or granting Conservation Restrictions? Yes No
(For further information, contact the Open Space Committee)

How do you use Town-Owned Open Space and Recreation Land? (check all that apply)

- walking jogging sail or motor boating canoeing/kayaking
 swimming xcountr y skiing skateboarding nature appreciation
 bird-watching bicycling photography organized sports
 picnics hunting fishing organized/educational children's programs
 horseback riding pickup games other: _____

Would you use Open Space more if we had the following? (check all that apply)

- more marked trails improved access/parking improved canoe/kayak access
 bicycle paths detailed trail maps handicap access
 boardwalks benches other: _____

Should Hanson actively try to acquire and protect more Open Space? Yes No

What should guide which Open Space to protect?	Priority:	High	Medium	Low
passive recreation potential (hiking, etc.)		—	—	—
creation of continuous trail linkages		—	—	—
outdoor education potential near schools		—	—	—
active recreation potential (ball fields, etc.)		—	—	—
protection of drinking water supply		—	—	—
protection of scenic views (vistas)		—	—	—
protection of forest and woodlands		—	—	—
protection of ponds and shorelines		—	—	—
protection of stream corridors		—	—	—
protection of wetland habitats		—	—	—
protection of wildlife corridors		—	—	—
protection of farmland/open fields/meadows		—	—	—
protection of cranberry bogs		—	—	—
protection of historic places		—	—	—

What are your favorite Scenic Vistas in Hanson?

Name and/or location: _____
 Name and/or location: _____
 Name and/or location: _____

Are there specific properties in Hanson that you think should be protected?

Name and/or location: _____
 Name and/or location: _____
 Name and/or location: _____

What are your priorities for new or improved Recreational Facilities?

	High	Medium	Low	where?
parking	—	—	—	_____
handicap access	—	—	—	_____
boating access	—	—	—	_____
paved bike trails	—	—	—	_____
tot-lot/playground	—	—	—	_____
tennis courts	—	—	—	_____
athletic fields/courts	—	—	—	_____
other: _____	—	—	—	_____

Please list additional activities of interest:
 (indoor crafts, table tennis, shuffleboard, billiards, strength training, community garden, hockey, yoga, etc.)

Other Comments:

QUESTION (188 Surveys Returned)	CHOICES	TOTAL	RANK (High)	Percent of	PERCENT OF RESPONCES
HOUSE HOLD #	Child < 6	44	5	% age<6	7%
	Child 6-12	76	4	% age 6-12	12%
	Child 13-18	79	3	% age13-18	13%
	Adults18-50	240	1	% age18-50	39%
	Adults > 50	179	2	% age>50	29%
	TOTAL:	618			100%
	No Response	2		% of 188	1%
RESIDENT	# Years	4567	/178 =	AVE YRS	25.66
	No Response	10		% of 188	5%
REG VOTER?	YES	178	1	% of 186	96%
	NO	8		% of 186	4%
	TOTAL:	186		% of 186	100%
	No Response	2		% of 188	1%
ATTEND TOWN MEETING?	Always	38	2	% of 182	21%
	Sometime	107	1	% of 182	59%
	Never	37		% of 182	20%
	TOTAL:	182		% of 182	100%
	No Response	6		% of 188	3%
WHY MOVED TO HANSON	Born/Family	52	3	% of 341	15%
	Work/Commute	30		% of 341	9%
	Quiet/Safe/Rural	111	1	% of 341	33%
	Historic	15		% of 341	4%
	Affordable	75	2	% of 341	22%
	Schools	44	4	% of 341	13%
	Other	14		% of 341	4%
	TOTAL:	341			
	No Response	2		% of 188	1%
KNOW TAX BENEFITS CRs	YES	70		% of 154	45%
	NO	84	1	% of 154	55%
	TOTAL:	154		% of 154	100%
	No Response	34		% of 188	18%
HOW USE TOWN-OWNED OS & REC LAND	Walking	145	1	% of 881	16%
	Swimming	70	3	% of 881	8%
	BirdWatch	60	7	% of 881	7%
	Picnic	34		% of 881	4%
	Horse	11		% of 881	1%
	Jogging	36		% of 881	4%
	XCSki	14		% of 881	2%
	Bike	61	6	% of 881	7%
	Hunting	17		% of 881	2%
	PicUpGame	21		% of 881	2%
	Boat	7		% of 881	1%
	SkateBoard	11		% of 881	1%
	Photo	38		% of 881	4%
	Fishing	66	5	% of 881	7%
	CanoKayak	59	8	% of 881	7%
	Nature Apprec	102	2	% of 881	12%
	OrgSport	68	4	% of 881	8%
	OrgEduKidPro	38		% of 881	4%
	Other	23		% of 881	3%
	TOTAL:	881		% of 881	100%
	No Response	8		% of 188	4%

QUESTION (188 Surveys Returned)	CHOICES	TOTAL	RANK (High)	Percent of	PERCENT OF RESPONCES
USE OPENSACE MORE, IF	MarkedTrails	118	1	% of 618	19%
	BikePath	94	3	% of 618	15%
	BoardWalk	67	5	% of 618	11%
	AccessPark	76	4	% of 618	12%
	TrailMaps	100	2	% of 618	16%
	Benches	63	6	% of 618	10%
	CanuKykAces	56	7	% of 618	9%
	HandCapAces	22		% of 618	4%
	Other	22		% of 618	4%
	TOTAL:	618		% of 618	100%
	No Response	25		% of 188	13%
SHOULD HANSON ACQUIRE-OS	YES	171	1	% of 182	94%
	NO	11		% of 182	6%
	TOTAL:	182		% of 182	100%
	No Response	6		% of 188	3%
OPEN SPACE PRIORITIES					
	No Response	7		% of 188	4%
PASSIVE RECREATION	Hi	103	9	% of 181	57%
	Med	50		% of 181	28%
	Low	11		% of 181	6%
	No Response	17		% of 181	9%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
TRAIL LINKAGES	Hi	80	14	% of 181	44%
	Med	67		% of 181	37%
	Low	17		% of 181	9%
	No Response	17		% of 181	9%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
OUTDOOR EDUCATION	Hi	94	11	% of 181	52%
	Med	59		% of 181	33%
	Low	17		% of 181	9%
	No Response	11		% of 181	6%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
ACTIVE RECREATION	Hi	83	13	% of 181	46%
	Med	61		% of 181	34%
	Low	24		% of 181	13%
	No Response	13		% of 181	7%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
DRINKING WATER	Hi	165	1	% of 181	91%
	Med	9		% of 181	5%
	Low	2		% of 181	1%
	No Response	5		% of 181	3%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
SCENIC VIEWS	Hi	98	10	% of 181	54%
	Med	56		% of 181	31%
	Low	14		% of 181	8%
	No Response	13		% of 181	7%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
FOREST	Hi	138	3	% of 181	76%
	Med	32		% of 181	18%
	Low	4		% of 181	2%
	No Response	7		% of 181	4%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
PONDS	Hi	150	2	% of 181	83%
	Med	23		% of 181	13%
	Low	2		% of 181	1%
	No Response	6		% of 181	3%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%

QUESTION (188 Surveys Returned)	CHOICES	TOTAL	RANK (High)	Percent of	PERCENT OF RESPONCES
STREAMS	Hi	124	4	% of 181	69%
	Med	39		% of 181	22%
	Low	6		% of 181	3%
	No Response	12		% of 181	7%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
WETLAND	Hi	119	6	% of 181	66%
	Med	43		% of 181	24%
	Low	10		% of 181	6%
	No Response	9		% of 181	5%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
WILDLIFE	Hi	121	5	% of 181	67%
	Med	48		% of 181	27%
	Low	4		% of 181	2%
	No Response	8		% of 181	4%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
FARMLAND	Hi	107	8	% of 181	59%
	Med	52		% of 181	29%
	Low	14		% of 181	8%
	No Response	8		% of 181	4%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
CRANBERRY BOGS	Hi	92	12	% of 181	51%
	Med	62		% of 181	34%
	Low	20		% of 181	11%
	No Response	7		% of 181	4%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
HISTORIC	Hi	113	7	% of 181	62%
	Med	50		% of 181	28%
	Low	12		% of 181	7%
	No Response	6		% of 181	3%
	TOTAL:	181		% of 181	100%
RECREATION FACILITIES NEEDS	No Response	20		% of 188	11%
PARKING	Hi	54	3	% of 168	32%
	Med	43		% of 168	26%
	Low	27		% of 168	16%
	No Response	44		% of 168	26%
	TOTAL:	168		% of 168	100%
HANDICAP ACCESS	Hi	52	4	% of 168	31%
	Med	35		% of 168	21%
	Low	32		% of 168	19%
	No Response	49		% of 168	29%
	TOTAL:	168		% of 168	100%
BOAT ACCESS	Hi	29	6	% of 168	17%
	Med	40		% of 168	24%
	Low	39		% of 168	23%
	No Response	60		% of 168	36%
	TOTAL:	168		% of 168	100%
PAVED BIKETRAIL	Hi	71	1	% of 168	42%
	Med	26		% of 168	15%
	Low	29		% of 168	17%
	No Response	42		% of 168	25%
	Total:	168		% of 168	100%
TOTLOT-PLAYGROUND	Hi	45	5	% of 168	27%
	Med	43		% of 168	26%
	Low	32		% of 168	19%
	No Response	48		% of 168	29%
	TOTAL:	168		% of 168	100%

QUESTION	CHOICES	TOTAL	RANK	Percent of	PERCENT OF
(188 Surveys Returned)			(High)		RESPONCES
RECREATION FACILITIES NEEDS					
TENNIS	Hi	21	8	% of 168	13%
	Med	34		% of 168	20%
	Low	55		% of 168	33%
	No Response	58		% of 168	35%
	TOTAL:	168		% of 168	100%
ATHLETIC FIELD	Hi	67	2	% of 168	40%
	Med	34		% of 168	20%
	Low	26		% of 168	15%
	No Response	41		% of 168	24%
	TOTAL:	168		% of 168	100%
OTHER	Hi	24	7	% of 168	14%
	Med	1		% of 168	1%
	Low	0		% of 168	0%
	No Response	143		% of 168	85%
	TOTAL:	168		% of 168	100%
ACTIVITY INTEREST	INDOOR CRAFTS	15	3	% of 105	14%
	TABLE TENNIS	7		% of 105	7%
	SHUFFLEBOARD	5		% of 105	5%
	BILLIARDS	10	5	% of 105	10%
	STRENGTH TRAINING	21	1	% of 105	20%
	COMMUNITY GARDEN	19	2	% of 105	18%
	HOCKEY	5		% of 105	5%
	YOGA	15	3	% of 105	14%
	OTHER	8		% of 105	8%
	TOTAL:	105		% of 105	100%
	No Response	139		% of 188	74%
Other Comments:	No Response	147		% of 188	78%

APPENDIX B

Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Hanson Protected Municipal Conservation Land

Hanson Water Department Land

Hanson Municipal Recreation Land

Hanson Unprotected Municipal Land Without Buildings

Hanson Unprotected Municipal Land with Buildings

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Land

Plymouth County Land

Non-Profit Organizations Land

Unprotected Land suitable for use as Open Space

 Temporarily Protected Chapter 61 Lands - Forestry

 Temporarily Protected Chapter 61A Lands - Agriculture

 Temporarily Protected Chapter 61B Lands - Recreation

Unprotected Private lands 3 Acres or larger (and some smaller abutting parcels with common ownership)

APPENDIX C

Open Space and Recreation Plan Maps

- Map 1. Regional Context
- Map 2. Zoning
- Map 3. Soils and Surficial Geology
- Map 4. Unique Features
- Map 5. Water Resources
- Map 6. Open Space
- Map 7. Action Plan
- Map 7A. Open Space Actions

APPENDIX D

American with Disabilities Act Administrative Information

Chapter 41 of Acts of 2006; Establishing Hanson Town Administrator
With duties as ADA Coordinator

Americans with Disabilities Act Grievance Procedure

Americans with Disability Act Committee Public Meeting on ADA
Standards and Requirements

Hanson Conservation Commission Hearing on ADA improvements at
Camp Kiwanee

Chapter 41 of the Acts of 2006

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TOWN ADMINISTRATOR IN THE TOWN OF HANSON.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:

SECTION 1. There shall be an administrative officer in the town of Hanson known as the town administrator. The town administrator, reporting directly to and supervised by the board of selectmen, shall be the chief administrative and operating officer of the town of Hanson. The town administrator shall not set town policy but shall ensure that there is appropriate coordination in the implementation of town policy, working with the board of selectmen and all elected and appointed boards and commissions.

The town administrator shall supervise, manage and coordinate the day-to-day activities of all town departments and employees under the jurisdiction of the board of selectmen and coordinate all activities of these town departments with the activities of other departments under the jurisdiction of other elected town officials, boards and commissions.

SECTION 2. The town administrator shall be appointed by the board of selectmen solely on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications and experience. The town administrator shall be a person especially suited by a combination of education, training and professional experience to perform the duties of the office. The town administrator shall not have served in elective office in the town's government for at least 12 months before the appointment. The town administrator shall devote fulltime to the office and shall not hold any other public office, elective or appointive, nor engage in any other business or occupation during the term, unless that other service is approved in advance by vote of the board of selectmen. The office of town administrator shall not be subject to the personnel by-law, and the board of selectmen shall fix compensation for the office within the amount appropriated by the town. The board of selectmen may enter into a contract with the town administrator setting forth the terms and conditions of the town administrator's employment.

SECTION 3. The town administrator shall be responsible to the board of selectmen, and shall be accountable to the board, for the efficient and orderly conduct of the departments, offices, and functions placed in the charge of the town administrator by this act and for the proper execution of the following powers and duties:-

- (a) Oversee the efficient administration of all offices and departments appointed by the board of selectmen and report on any matters requiring the board's attention;
- (b) Attend all regular or special board of selectmen meetings, unless requested or allowed to be excused, and have the right to speak but not vote;
- (c) Attend all sessions, annual and special, of town meeting and be prepared to answer all questions concerning warrant articles that are directed to the town administrator and which relate to matters under the general supervision of the town administrator;
- (d) Implement town meeting votes regarding articles under the control of the board of selectmen and provide written progress reports quarterly to the board of selectmen as to the

status of implementation of all prior town meeting votes;

(e) Under the direction of the chair of the board of selectmen, prepare and distribute agendas for board of selectmen meetings;

(f) Work in conjunction with the chair of the board of selectmen and with town counsel regarding any litigation or other legal matters in which the town has an interest, act as liaison between town counsel and the board of selectmen and affected town departments or officials, review and approve new requests, other than board of selectmen requests, for use of town counsel on new matters, and provide the board of selectmen with monthly status reports on legal issues and concerns;

(g) Serve as the personnel director of the town, responsible for the administration of all personnel matters, including personnel by-laws and all personnel policies and regulations that the board of selectmen may adopt. This shall include the enforcement of personnel policies, rules and regulations and managing personnel costs, including salaries, benefits, overtime, and use of town-owned vehicles for employees under the jurisdiction of the board of selectmen;

(h) Recommend the appointment or removal, subject to the civil service law where applicable, of the following positions to the following appointing authorities:

- (1) Town accountant, board of selectmen
- (2) Treasurer/collector, board of selectmen
- (3) Building commissioner, board of selectmen
- (4) Animal control officer, board of selectmen
- (5) Veterans agent, board of selectmen
- (6) Burial agent, board of selectmen
- (7) Director of elder affairs, board of selectmen
- (8) Camp Kiwanee caretaker, recreation commission
- (9) Conservation agent, conservation commission
- (10) Assessor/appraiser, board of assessors
- (11) Inspector of animals, board of health
- (12) Librarian, library trustees
- (13) Planner, planning board
- (14) Health agent, board of health

(15) Water superintendent, water commission

(16) Administrative and clerical employees in the offices and departments under the jurisdiction of the board of selectmen and town administrator;

(i) Recommend appointments or removals based on merit or ^ffitness alone. All recommendations are subject to an affirmative vote of the relevant body as the appointing body;

(j) Evaluate, at least annually, the job performance of all town officers and department heads after seeking input and recommendation from the relevant body and any appointive committee served by those officers and department heads. Evaluations will be reviewed with the town officer, town administrator and a representative selected by the relevant body;

(k) Serve as the town's Americans with Disabilities Act director and affirmative action officer, and administer the town's affirmative action program;

(l) Exercise a general day-to-day supervision over all town agencies consistent with the policy and direction of the relevant body;

(m) Fix the compensation of all town officers and employees within the limits established by existing appropriations and adopted policies and procedures;

(n) Administer all applicable general or special laws, all applicable by-laws, and all applicable regulations and implement all goals and policies established by the board of selectmen;

(o) Be responsible for keeping full and complete records of the administrative activities of the town, and render a full report to the board of selectmen at the end of each fiscal year and otherwise as the board may require;

(p) Keep the board of selectmen informed as to the financial condition and needs of the town and make recommendations to the board of selectmen that the board considers to be necessary or expedient;

(q) Have access to all town books and records necessary for the performance of the duties of the office;

(r) Keep a full and complete inventory of all property of the town, both real and personal;

(s) Serve as the chief procurement officer responsible for purchasing all supplies, materials and equipment for all departments and activities of the town, excluding schools;

(t) Serve as arbiter of grievances and chief union negotiator for all collective bargaining agreements under the jurisdiction of the board of selectmen, but the board of selectmen shall provide guidelines, advice, and direction to the town administrator;

(u) Facilitate crisis intervention in emergency situations working with the key administrators in town including the chair of the board of selectmen, police chief, fire chief, highway surveyor, water superintendent, superintendent of schools and town counsel;

- (v) Establish and maintain positive community relations with community organizations and groups and with individual citizens;
- (w) Receive and act on questions and complaints filed with the board of selectmen or the town administrator and report back to the board of selectmen regarding resolution of complaints or questions;
- (x) Prepare press releases for the board of selectmen, or its designee, for review and approval as directed;
- (y) Prepare written reports for the board of selectmen on outstanding matters from time to time as directed; and
- (z) Perform any other duties required by the by-laws or votes of the town meeting or the board of selectmen.

SECTION 4. The town administrator shall have the following budgetary powers and responsibilities:-

- (a) Prepare, assemble and present annually to the board of selectmen for its review, approval and recommendation to the finance committee, detailed budgetary estimates of the amounts necessary for the administration of all town boards, officers, committees and departments, for the ensuing fiscal year, including both capital and expense items, with the exception of the water and school departments;
- (b) Insure that complete and full records of the financial activity of the town are maintained in accordance with state and federal laws and town by-laws, and render monthly reports to the board of selectmen; and
- (c) Seek out, prepare, coordinate, and file applications for state and federal grants.

SECTION 5. During a temporary absence, the town administrator shall designate by letter filed with the board of selectmen, a qualified administrative employee or officer to exercise the powers and perform the duties of town administrator. If the town administrator fails to do so, or the person appointed fails to serve to the satisfaction of the board of selectmen, the board of selectmen may appoint a qualified administrative employee or officer to so serve. In the event of suspension of the town administrator or a vacancy in the office, the board of selectmen shall appoint an acting town administrator.

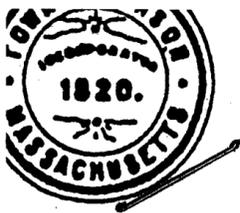
Approved March 15, 2006 .

Return to:

List of Laws passed in 2006 Session

General Court home page, or

Commonwealth of Massachusetts home page.



Town of Hanson

HANSON, MASSACHUSETTS 02341

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMMITTEE

September 21, 1993

Mr. Arthur Leanos
Hitching Post Restaurant
Hanson Businessmen's Association
48 Spring Street
Hanson, Ma. 02341

Re: Americans with Disabilities Act requirements concerning Public Accommodations,
Title III.

Dear Arthur:

There has been a meeting scheduled on September 30, 1993, Thursday, at 7:00pm, at the Hanson Library/Senior Center, to discuss Americans with Disabilities Act requirements regarding Public Accommodations, Title III.

The meeting will focus on the ADA standards, requirements and issues which affect all of us. Mr. Bruce Bruneau, Massachusetts Office on Disability, will emphasize the importance of physical accessibility and the barriers which are encountered by the disabled citizen.

This workshop will be intended as a guide for the private sector business person to increase awareness in dealing with disabled individuals on a daily basis.

If you have any questions regarding this meeting, contact the ADA Coordinator at 293 9035. Your attendance is appreciated.

Sincerely,

Noreen O'Toole
ADA Coordinator

cc: Board of Selectmen
ADA Committee



Town of Hanson

HANSON, MASSACHUSETTS 02341

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMMITTEE

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

The following Grievance Procedure was established by the Americans With Disabilities Act Committee to meet the requirements of the American With Disabilities Act. It may be used by anyone who wishes to file a complaint alleging discrimination on the basis of disability in employment practices and policies or the provision of services, activities, programs and benefits by the Town of Hanson.

The complaint should be in writing and contain information about the alleged discrimination such as name, address, and telephone number. Reasonable accommodations, such as personal interviews or a tape recording of the complaint, will be made available for persons with disabilities who are unable to submit a written complaint.

The complaint should be submitted by the grievor and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than sixty (60) days after the alleged violation to the department head in authority, and to the ADA Coordinator stating where the violations are alleged to have occurred.

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Coordinator will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within fifteen (15) calendar days after the complainant meeting, the ADA Coordinator will respond in writing, and whereas appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as audiotape. The response will explain the position of the Town of Hanson and offer options for substantive resolutions of the complaint.

If the response by the ADA Coordinator does not satisfactorily resolve the issue, the complainant and/or his/her designee may appeal the decision of the ADA Coordinator within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the response to the Board of Selectmen or their designee.

Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of the appeal, the Board of Selectmen or their designee will meet with the complainant to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions. Within fifteen (15) calendar days after this meeting with the Board of Selectmen or their designee will respond in writing, and whereas appropriate, in a format accessible to the complainant, such as audiotape, with a final resolution to the complaint.

Upon completion of the Grievance Procedure, all records in connection with the grievance shall be delivered to and maintained by the ADA Coordinator.

**HANSON CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC MEETING OF AUGUST 8TH, 2006
TOWN HALL, 542 LIBERTY STREET, HANSON, MA**

Called to Order at 7:30 PM under M.G.L. Chapter 131, s.40 and the Hanson By-Law 3-13, s.5. by Philip R. Lindquist, Chairman, in Meeting Room A on the top floor at the Town Hall.

Members Present: Philip R. Lindquist, Chairman
Frank Schellenger, Vice Chairman
Ron Grattan, Member
Dave Harris, Member
John Kemmett, Clerk

Absent: Dave Harris, Member

Others Present: Janine Delaney, Conservation Agent
Rebecca Nehiley, Administrative Assistant

Appointments

7:30 PM Recreation Department – Waterfront Project presentation – located in the Selectman’s Meeting Room

After the Conservation Meeting was opened, the Commission proceeded downstairs and Ms. Nehiley posted a note on the door. Peter Jackson of Park Planning Associates made the presentation for the enhancement of accessibility to the waterfront from the lodge at Camp Kiwanee. He explained that the Recreation Department wanted to expand options for the public such as boating lessons for able bodied as well as people with disabilities. However, it is a difficult site with a 30-foot difference in elevation. The concept included a series of ramps and stairways. The work will take place within the buffer zone of a Bordering Vegetated Wetland. Ms. Delaney stated that a Notice of Intent would be required. She asked if heavy equipment would be utilized on the slope. Mr. Jackson answered that a bobcat would be used and they are looking at ways to minimize impacts. The Commission re-convened upstairs.

Approval of Minutes:

July 25th, 2006

Motion to approve: Ron Grattan
Second: Frank Schellenger
Vote: 3-0-1 (John Kemmett abstaining)

Public Hearings

8:00 PM Continued Request to Accept a Revised Plan at 255 Rear Liberty Street, Assessors Map 82, Lot 6-1 for Dennis Leary, Trustee for Hudson Park Associates, N.T., 2 Columbia Rd., Pembroke, MA 02359 (DEP #175-0433)

APPENDIX E

Conservation Scorecard

Landscape Factors

Vegetation

Aquatic Resources

Rare Species

Legal Protection

Potential for Development



Conservation Scorecard

A Tool for Prioritizing Land Conservation

Developed by Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences

In Southeastern Massachusetts, the need to protect open space and to set aside land for conservation is far greater than the funds available. Because of this, acquisition efforts must focus on protecting the most important parcels of land. From a conservation perspective, this means protecting those lands with the greatest ecological value. But how can we identify these lands?

This Conservation Scorecard prioritizes lands for acquisition by providing a single value for each parcel evaluated. It does so by comparing the attributes and qualities of your parcel to those of an ideal conservation parcel. The evaluation process integrates ecological information developed specifically for this Scorecard with existing ecological and regulatory information, to provide an assessment of the *relative conservation value* of any parcel of land in the region. This Conservation Value may be used in conjunction with social considerations (e.g., aesthetics, cultural significance, cost) or by itself to prioritize open space acquisition.

This Scorecard was developed specifically to provide land trusts, open space and recreation committees, community preservation committees, conservation commissions, regional planners, and foundations that support land acquisition with an objective, science-based tool for prioritizing land acquisition. This Scorecard may also assist Smart Growth efforts by identifying those parcels most appropriate for development (i.e., those with low conservation values.)

HOW TO USE THIS SCORECARD. You will need one copy of the Scorecard for each parcel being assessed, and access to the Internet. In addition, we strongly recommend that you visit each parcel and review your municipality's planning documents. Although neither the site visit nor familiarity with planning documents is necessary to complete the Scorecard, your parcel will likely receive a lower Conservation Value than if you visit the site and review the appropriate documents.

For each of the Scorecard's 18 questions you will see two or more possible answers, information on what map layers (if any) provide you the information needed to answer the question, and a point value for each possible answer. Much of the information that you need to answer these questions is provided for you on the Conservation Scorecard thematic map on ConservationMapper (www.conservationmapper.org.) In a few instances you will benefit from site-specific information not available on ConservationMapper. For these questions the Scorecard assumes worst-case conditions until you provide additional information.

Begin by answering question 1 A. Knowing your parcel's size, find the correct answer to the question,

identify the number of points associated with that answer, and enter the resulting value in the corresponding "Score" box. For example, if you are buying a 14 acre parcel, your answer to this question is worth 5 points, and you would write the number 5 in the "Score" box.

To answer most other questions you will need to use the "Conservation Scorecard Viewer" feature on ConservationMapper. First, zoom in to the location of the parcel being assessed. Next, display the information needed to answer the question by checking the "Visible" box(es) associated with the question that you wish to answer, then click the "Refresh" button. The information needed to answer your question is now displayed. For example, to obtain the information needed to answer question 3 B, you would check the boxes next to the two layers that are labeled 3 B, then click the "Refresh" button. The map now displays both the 100 and 200 foot wetland and waterway buffers near your parcel. Use this information to answer question 3 B.

Continue in this manner until you have answered all of the questions.



Need Help? Manomet provides no-cost assistance with the use of this Scorecard. Call us at (508) 224-6521



LANDSCAPE



FACTORS

1. The size, shape, and location of a parcel of land affect its conservation value. Neighboring parcels of open space, and their proximity and connection to your parcel, also influence the conservation value of your parcel. Because of this, you must consider the parcel as part of a broader landscape.

The following three questions address your parcel from a landscape context. The first two questions each deal with size, the size of your parcel and the size of the undeveloped patch of land in which your parcel occurs. The third question deals with the concept of "Landscape Integrity." Landscape Integrity considers a variety of factors, including the shape of your parcel, distance to the nearest protected conservation lands, and the number and type of connections between your parcel and protected conservation lands.

Measurement	Map Layer	Answer	Points	Score
A. What is the size of the parcel being considered for purchase?	N/A	> 100 acres 10–100 acres 1–<10 acres <1 acre	10 5 2 1	
B. What is the size of the patch of undeveloped land (i.e., land with natural vegetation) in which the parcel occurs?	1B	> 100 acres 10–100 acres 1–<10 acres <1 acre or not indicated on map	3 2 1 0	
C. What is the Landscape Integrity Value for the area in which your parcel occurs?	1C	High Medium Low Not indicated on map	20 10 5 0	
Subtotal				

VEGETATION



2. The preservation of biodiversity is best accomplished by preserving multiple, intact examples of every natural community type (i.e., recurring groupings of plants.) For this reason, a parcel's conservation value is greatly influenced by its vegetation. Parcels that contain rare natural communities, vegetation classes not protected or under-protected in current conservation lands, lack invasive species, and require no stewardship provide the greatest benefit to conservation. The following questions assess the conservation value of vegetation on your parcel.

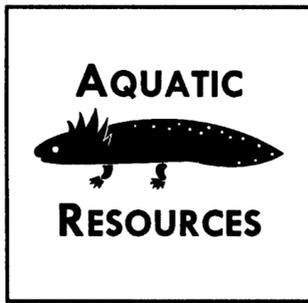
Measurement	Map Layer	Answer	Points	Score
A. Are any of the vegetation classes on the parcel under-represented in existing conservation lands?	2A	Yes No	6 0	
B. What is the rank of the rarest (i.e., lowest numbered) natural community present on the parcel? [From field visit.]	N/A	S1 S2 S3 S4 or S5*	6 5 4 1	
C. How many classes of <u>natural</u> vegetation occur on the parcel? [From ConservationMapper or field visit.]	2C	3 or more 2 1 0 (only human altered vegetation)	3 2 1 -10	
D. Does the parcel require stewardship to be restored to a natural, undisturbed condition? If so, are funds and labor currently available? [From field visit]	N/A	No – Parcel is currently in natural, undisturbed condition Yes – \$ and labor available Yes – \$ and labor not available*	5 0 -5	
E. What is the abundance of invasive plants on the parcel? [From field visit]	N/A	None Single Plant Single Patch or Evenly Sparse Multiple Patches Dense Throughout*	3 2 1 0 -5	
Subtotal				

* Use this answer for your score unless you have visited the parcel.



To learn more about Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, please visit us at www.manomet.org.



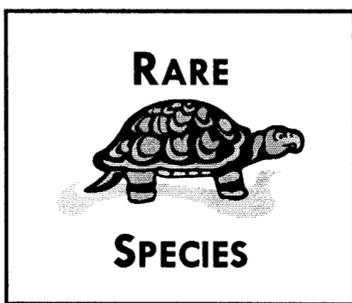


3. Water is critical for the maintenance of aquatic communities. Land use practices that interrupt the flow of surface waters or prevent the recharge of groundwater are harmful to aquatic communities. In contrast, land use that promotes groundwater recharge and maintains surface water quality is beneficial to aquatic communities.

The following questions consider the relationship between your parcel and aquatic plant and wildlife habitat. Parcels that contribute to the protection of surface and ground waters are considered to be of greater conservation value than those that do not.

Measurement	Map Layer	Answer	Points	Score
A. Has the area beneath the parcel been identified as an aquifer?	3A	Yes No	6 0	
B. Does the parcel provide a natural vegetated buffer to a stream, river, pond, or lake? If so, what is the extent of the buffer?	3B	Yes – 200 or more feet Yes – 100– <200 feet Yes – Less than 100 feet No	6 3 1 0	
C. Do one or more vernal pools occur in the parcel?	3C	Yes – Certified vernal pool Yes – Potential vernal pool No	2 1 0	
D. Does the parcel provide a contiguous, natural vegetated buffer to a vernal pool? If so, what is the extent of the buffer?	3D	Yes – 100 or more feet Yes – Less than 100 feet No	2 1 0	
Subtotal				

Note: A low score in the Aquatic Resources category does not automatically mean that your parcel is of low conservation value. Even high-quality upland sites may score low in this category. Parcels that score high in all other categories should be considered for purchase.



4. There are 448 plants and animals officially listed as endangered, threatened, or a species of special concern in Massachusetts. Although currently protected open space may provide habitat for one or more of these rare species, it is not sufficient for their conservation. Acquisition of additional properties that contain rare species habitat is necessary for the survival of these species in Massachusetts.

The following questions address the presence, or potential presence, of rare species on your parcel. Parcels with known occurrences of rare species are considered to be of high conservation value, and should receive priority for protection.

Measurement	Map Layer	Answer	Points	Score
A. Is your parcel located in BioMap habitat, or has Natural Heritage verified the presence of a terrestrial, State-listed species since the release of BioMap?	4A	Yes – Core Habitat Yes – Supporting Landscape Yes – Recently verified rare species No	6 3 2 0	
B. Is your parcel located in or near Living Waters habitat, or has Natural Heritage verified the presence of an aquatic, State-listed species since the release of Living Waters?	4B	Yes – Core Habitat Yes – Adjacent to, or immediately upstream of, core habitat Yes – Recently verified rare species Yes – Critical Supporting Watershed No	6 3 2 1 0	
C. Does your parcel occur within an area designated as “Priority Habitat of Rare Species” by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program?	4C	Yes No	3 0	
Subtotal				





5. The conservation value of your parcel may be enhanced by legal protection afforded it, and/or to its surroundings. Parcels that occur in areas already designated as environmentally sensitive or important to conservation may be subject to increased regulation, or increased availability of funds for acquisition and stewardship. The legal protection that you place on your parcel will determine if the parcel remains in conservation, or if it will be converted to another land use at some future time. Parcels that occur in one or more regulatory overlays and those with multiple layers of legal protection are of higher conservation value.

Measurement	Map Layer	Answer	Points	Score
A. Does your parcel occur within the political boundaries of an environmental regulatory overlay (e.g., Area of Critical Environmental Concern, wellhead protection area, etc.?) This includes all federal, state, regional, local, and privately designated areas.	5A (in part)	Yes No	1 point for each "Yes" answer, up to a maximum of 3 points	
B. What type of legal protection will your parcel have after purchase? The following terms are used to answer this question. A97 = Article 97 interest, other than CR* CR = Conservation restriction Fee = Fee simple ownership by town or land trust	N/A	2 or more CRs, <u>or</u> A97 with 1 or more CRs Either A97 <u>or</u> CR Fee only	5 3 1	
			Subtotal	

* Article 97 of the Amendments to the Massachusetts Constitution includes CRs.



6. Once purchased, conservation land may be protected from the direct impacts of development but not the indirect impacts. Development of areas adjacent to protected lands decreases the conservation value of those protected lands. Because of this, you need to consider if the land surrounding your parcel is likely to be developed. In general, parcels in areas in which development is unlikely maintain their ecological value longer than parcels in areas where development is encouraged. One indicator of the likelihood, and type, of future development is the designated land use, as identified in your towns planning documents.

Measurement	Map Layer	Answer	Points	Score
A. Does the parcel occur within an area designated as "lands that are most suitable for development" in your municipality's Community Development Plan, or an area zoned for commercial or dense residential development in your municipality's Master Plan?	N/A	No No plans exist Yes*	5 0 -5	
			Subtotal	

* Use this answer for your score unless you have reviewed planning documents.

Parcel Name: _____ Date Evaluated: _____

Conservation Value The Conservation Value of your parcel is the sum of your six sub-totals. The higher the Conservation Value, the greater that parcel's contribution to conservation. <i>Remember, this is a relative value that is to be used to compare multiple parcels being considered for acquisition.</i>	Scorecard Category	Total Points Possible	Sub-total Value
	1. Landscape Factors	33	
	2. Vegetation	23	
	3. Aquatic Resources	16	
	4. Rare Species	15	
	5. Legal Protection	8	
	6. Potential for Development	5	
Total		100	



A quick rule of thumb for interpreting your score!
(Based on pilot studies)

0-20 Little to no conservation value	20-40 Poor to moderate conservation value
40-60 Moderate to good conservation value	60-80 Good to excellent conservation value
80-100 Outstanding conservation value (Only pristine, ideal parcels fall into this range.)	

APPENDIX F

Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Chapter 61 Lands

Chapter 61	Forestry
Chapter 61A	Agriculture
Chapter 61B	Recreation

"Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Forest Land in Massachusetts"

CHAPTER 61

INTRODUCTION

The forest land classification program under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61 is designed to encourage the preservation and enhancement of the Commonwealth's forests. It offers significant local tax benefits to property owners willing to make a long term commitment to forestry. In exchange for these benefits, the city or town in which the land is located is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner when the land is removed from classification and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for non-forestry uses.

QUALIFICATIONS

A Parcel must consist of at least 10 contiguous acres of land under the same ownership and be managed under a 10 year management plan approved and certified by the State Forester in order to qualify for and retain classification as forest land under Chapter 61.

Buildings and other structures located on the parcel, as well as the land on which they are located and any accessory land, do not qualify for classification and continue to be assessed a regular local property tax.

APPLICATIONS

For a parcel to be classified as forest land under Chapter 61, the property owner must submit a written application to the State Forester **before July 1 or the year before the start of the fiscal year*** for which taxation as classified land is sought.

The application must be made in accordance with all rules and regulations established by the State Forester. The State Forester will certify whether the parcel qualifies as forest land and is being managed under an approved 10 year forest management plan.

The owner must then submit **before September 1** of the same year a written application for classification to the Board of Assessors of the city or town in which the parcel is located. The application must include the State Forester's certification and a copy of the approved forest management plan. It must also be accompanied by payment of a products tax equal to 8% of the stumpage value of all forest products cut during the 2 years prior to classification, as determined by the State Forester.

Classification of the parcel as forest land will be effective as of January 1, and taxation of the parcel under Chapter 61 will begin on the following July, which is the start of the next fiscal year. The parcel will remain classified as forest land provided the owner files with the assessors a new certification by the State Forester and an approved forest management plan every 10 years, and the land otherwise continues to qualify under Chapter 61.

*The fiscal year of cities and towns begins July 1 and ends the following June 30.

LIEN

Once an application for classification is approved, the local assessors records a statement at the Registry of Deeds indicating that the parcel has been classified as forest land under Chapter 61. That statement will constitute a lien on the parcel for all taxes due under Chapter 61. The owner must pay all fees charged by the Registry for recording or releasing the lien.

APPEALS

If the local assessors refuse to classify land certified by the State Forester, the owner may file and appeal with the State Forester. Appeals must be made in writing and must be filed with the State Forester, with a copy to the assessors, by December 1. The State forester must notify the assessors and the owner of his decision by March 1 of the following year. The assessors and the owner may appeal that decision by notifying the State forester by April 15. The appeal will be heard by a three person regional panel convened by the State Forester by May 15. The assessors and owner will be notified of the decision within 10 days after the conclusion of the hearing. The panel's decision may be appealed to the Superior Court or the Appellate Tax Board. This appeal must be filed within 45 days of receiving notice of the panel's decision. All notifications under this appeal procedure whether by the owner, assessors or State Forester, must be made by certified mail.

In addition, the State Forester may remove the land from classification if he believes it is not being managed according to the approved management plan or does not otherwise qualify for classification.

ANNUAL RETURN

The owner must file a return with the local assessors each year, by May 1, that states the amount of forest products cut from the parcel during the prior calendar year. The assessors will notify the owner annually by April 1 of this filing obligation and provide a return to complete. A penalty of \$5 is charged for each day the return is overdue.

ANNUAL TAXATION

Under Chapter 61, the owner still pays an annual property tax to the city or town in which the classified land is located. However, the tax is based on the commercial property tax rate for the fiscal year applied to 5% of the fair market value of the land, with a minimum value of \$10 per acre, rather than its fair market value as would be the case if the land were not classified. The owner must also pay a products tax annually based on 8% of the stumpage value of the forest products cut from the parcel during the prior calendar year.

The products tax is due on October 1 of each year, or 30 days after the annual tax bill is mailed, whichever is later. The land tax is due in the same number of installments and at the same time as other local property tax payments in the city or town. Interest is charged on any overdue products or land taxes at the same rate applicable to overdue local property taxes.

ABATEMENTS

The owner may contest the annual land or products tax by applying to the local assessors for an abatement. Applications for abatement must be made in writing on an approved form and must be filed with the assessors within 60 days of the date the owner is notified of the tax. If the owner disagrees with the

assessors' decision, or the assessors do not act on the application, the owner may appeal to the Appellate Tax Board within 30 days of the date the owner was notified of the assessors' decision, or 3 months from the date the abatement application was filed, whichever is later. The assessors cannot grant any abatement if the owner does not comply with all application deadlines and procedures.

MUNICIPAL OPTION TO PURCHASE

The city or town has an option to purchase any classified land whenever the owner plans to sell or convert it to a residential, commercial or industrial use. The owner must notify by certified mail the mayor and city council or the selectmen, assessors, planning board and conservation commission of the city or town of any intention to sell or convert the land for those uses. If the owner plans to sell the land, the city or town has the right to match a bona fide offer to purchase it. If the owner plans to convert it, the city or town has the right to purchase it at its fair market value, which is determined by an impartial appraisal. The city or town may also assign its option to a non-profit conservation organization. The owner cannot sell or convert the land until at least 120 days after the mailing of the required notices or until the owner has been notified in writing that the option will not be exercised, whichever is earlier.

This option is not available to the city or town and the notice requirement does not apply if the forest land certification is simply discontinued, or the owner plans to build a residence for his or her use, or the use of his or her parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother or sister, the surviving spouse of any of those relatives, or an employee working full time in the forest use of the parcel.

WITHDRAWAL TAX

The owner must pay a withdrawal penalty tax whenever any land is withdrawn or removed from classification, whether or not that land is subject to the purchase option and notice requirement.

The withdrawal tax is imposed for those years since the last certification by the State Forester under Chapter 61 or the immediately preceding 5 years, whichever period is longer. If the land is voluntarily withdrawn at the end of a certification period, the tax is the difference between the amount the owner would have paid in annual property taxes on the land if it had been taxed at its fair market value during the withdrawal penalty period and the amount of both the land and products taxes he or she paid under Chapter 61 during the same time. If the land is removed or withdrawn from classification for another reason or at another time, the tax is the difference between the amount the owner would have paid in annual property taxes on the land if it had been taxed at its fair market value during the withdrawal period and the amount of only the land taxes he or she paid under Chapter 61 during the same time. Interest at the same rate applicable to overdue state taxes is also added to the withdrawal tax.

*Chapter 61 information presented here is from the
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Property Tax Bureau's
"Taxpayer's Guide to
Classification and Taxation
of Forest Land in Massachusetts"
Brochure dated October 1997*

["Taxpayer's Guide to Chapter 61A"](#)

["Taxpayer's Guide to Chapter 61B"](#)

For more information, contact the Property Tax Bureau at (617) 626-2300, or, visit Massachusetts General Laws web site for the complete text of Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B:

[M.G.L. Chapter 61](#)
[M.G.L. Chapter 61A](#)
[M.G.L. Chapter 61B](#)

"Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Agricultural/Horticultural Land in Massachusetts"

CHAPTER 61A

INTRODUCTION

The agricultural and horticultural land classification program under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61A is designed to encourage the preservation of the Commonwealth's valuable farmland and promote active agricultural and horticultural land use. It offers significant local tax benefits to property owners willing to make a long term commitment to farming. In exchange for these benefits, the city or town in which the land is located is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner when the land is removed from classification and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for any other purpose than to continue raising farm products.

QUALIFICATIONS

Property must consist of at least 5 contiguous acres of land under the same ownership and be "actively devoted" to agricultural or horticultural land use under Chapter 61A.

Land is used for agricultural or horticultural purposes if it is used primarily and directly to raise or grow the following for sale in the regular course of business:

1. Animals, including, but not limited to dairy cattle, beef cattle, poultry, sheep, swine, horses, ponies, mules, goats, bees and fur-bearing animals, or products derived from the animals.
2. Fruits, vegetables, berries, nuts and other foods for human consumption, feed for animals, tobacco, flowers, sod, trees, nursery or greenhouse products.
3. Forest products under a forest management plan approved by the State Forester.

Land is also used for agricultural and horticultural purposes if it is used primarily and directly in a manner related to the production of the animals or crops and that use is necessary and incidental to the actual production or preparation of the animals or crops for market.

For the land to be considered "actively devoted" to a farm use, it must have been farmed for the two fiscal years prior to the year of classification and must have produced a certain amount of sales. The minimum gross sales requirement is \$500 for the first 5 acres of productive land. That amount is increased by \$5 for each additional acre of productive land being classified, unless the additional acreage is woodland or wetland. In that case, the amount is increased by only \$.50 for each additional acre.

The minimum gross sales requirement for land being used to cultivate or raise a farm product that takes more than one season to produce its first harvest is satisfied if the land is being used in a manner intended to produce those sales within the product development period set by the Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission* for the particular crop or animal.

Buildings and other structures located on the parcel, as well as any land on which a residence is located or regularly used for residential purposes, do not qualify for classification and continue to be assessed a regular local property tax.

*The Farmland Valuation Advisory Commission is a state board made up of a representative from the Department of Food and Agriculture, Department of Revenue, University of Massachusetts College of Food and Natural Resources, Executive Office of Communities and Development and a local Board of Assessors.

APPLICATIONS

For a property to be classified as agricultural or horticultural land under Chapter 61A, the property owner must submit a written application to the Board of Assessors of the city or town in which the land is located by **October 1 of the year before the start of the fiscal year*** for which taxation as classified land is sought. If the city or town is undergoing a revaluation for that fiscal year, the application deadline is extended until 30 days after the date the year's tax bills with the new values are mailed.

The assessors must approve or disapprove the application for classification within 3 months of the filing date. If they do not act within that time, the application is considered approved. The assessors must notify the owner by certified mail whether the application has been approved or disapproved within 10 days of their decision. Classification and taxation of the land as agricultural or horticultural land under Chapter 61A will begin on the following July 1, which is the start of the next fiscal year.

The owner must file a separate application by October 1 (or extended deadline if applicable) each year for classification of the land to continue into the next fiscal year. The land cannot be classified as agricultural or horticultural if the owner does not comply with all application deadlines and procedures.

*The fiscal year of cities and towns begins July 1 and ends the following June 30.

LIEN

Once an initial application for classification is approved, the local assessors records a statement at the Registry of Deeds indicating that the property has been classified as agricultural or horticultural land under Chapter 61A. That statement will constitute a lien on the land for all taxes due under Chapter 61A. The owner must pay all fees charged by the Registry for recording or releasing the lien.

ANNUAL TAXATION

Under Chapter 61A, the owner stills pays an annual property tax to the city or town in which the classified land is located. However, the tax is based on the commercial tax rate for the fiscal year applied to the value of the land for agricultural or horticultural purposes, rather than its fair market value as would be the case if the land were not classified. The value of the land for agricultural or horticultural purposes is determined by the assessors based on the range of values published annually by the Farmland Valuation Advisory commission, as well as their own appraisal knowledge, judgment and experience.

The property tax is due in the same number of installments and at the same time as other local property tax payments in the city or town. Interest is charged on any overdue taxes at the same rate applicable to overdue local property taxes.

MUNICIPAL OPTION TO PURCHASE

The city or town has an option to purchase any classified land whenever the owner plans to sell or convert it to a residential, commercial or industrial use. The owner must notify by certified mail the mayor and city

council or the selectmen, assessors, planning board and conservation commission of the city or town of any intention to sell or convert the land for those uses. If the owner plans to sell the land, the city or town has the right to match a bona fide offer to purchase it. If the owner plans to convert it, the city or town has the right to purchase it at its fair market value, which is determined by an impartial appraisal. The city or town may also assign its option to a non-profit conservation organization. The owner cannot sell or convert the land until at least 120 days after the mailing of the required notices or until the owner has been notified in writing that the option will not be exercised, whichever is earlier.

This option is not available to the city or town and the notice requirement does not apply if the agricultural or horticultural use is simply discontinued, or the owner plans to build a residence for his or her use, or the use of his or her parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother or sister, the surviving spouse of any of those relatives, or an employee working full time in the agricultural or horticultural use of the land.

PENALTY TAX

The owner must pay one of two alternative penalty taxes whenever any of the land is no longer "actively devoted" to agricultural or horticultural purposes, whether or not that land is subject to the purchase option and notice requirement.

The owner must pay a roll-back tax for a 5 year period if the use of the land changes to a non-qualifying use. If the change of use occurs when the land is classified, the tax is imposed for the current fiscal year and the 4 prior years. If the land is not classified at that time, the tax is imposed for the 5 prior years. In either case, the roll-back tax is the difference between the amount the owner would have paid in annual property taxes on the land if it had been taxed at its fair market value and the amount of taxes he or she paid under Chapter 61A during the same time.

However, the owner must pay the alternative conveyance tax instead if the land is sold for a non-qualifying use within 10 years of the date the owner acquired it, or the earliest date of its uninterrupted use by that owner for agricultural or horticultural purposes, whichever is earlier, or is converted to a non-qualifying use within 10 years of the date the owner acquired it, and the conveyance tax is greater than the roll-back tax that would be due. The conveyance tax is based on the conveyance tax rate applied to the sales price of the land, or if converted, to the fair market value of the land as determined by the assessors. The conveyance tax rate is 10% if the land is sold or converted within the first year of ownership, 9% if sold or converted within the second year, and so on with the rate declining each year by one percentage point until it is 1% in the 10th year of ownership.

APPEALS AND ABATEMENTS

The owner may contest decisions made by the local assessors to disapprove all or part of an application for classification by applying for a modification of the decision. The owner may also contest the annual property tax or any penalty tax assessed under Chapter 61A by applying for an abatement.

Applications to modify a decision or abate a tax must be made in writing and must be filed with the assessors within 60 days of the date the owner is notified of the decision or tax. If the owner disagrees with the assessors' decision, or the assessors do not act on the application, the owner may appeal to the Appellate Tax Board within 30 days of the date the owner was notified of the assessors' decision, or 3 months from the date the abatement application was filed, whichever is later. If the appeal concerns an annual property tax, it must be paid for the owner to maintain the appeal. The assessors cannot modify any decision or grant any

abatement if the owner does not comply with all application deadlines and procedures.

*Chapter 61A information presented here is from the
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Property Tax Bureau's
"Taxpayer's Guide to
Classification and Taxation
of Agricultural/Horticultural Land in Massachusetts"
Brochure dated October 1997*

["Taxpayer's Guide to Chapter 61"](#)

["Taxpayer's Guide to Chapter 61B"](#)

**For more information, contact the Property Tax Bureau at (617) 626-2300, or,
visit Massachusetts General Laws web site for the complete text of Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B:**

[M.G.L. Chapter 61](#)
[M.G.L. Chapter 61A](#)
[M.G.L. Chapter 61B](#)

"Taxpayer's Guide to Classification and Taxation of Recreational Land in Massachusetts"

CHAPTER 61B

INTRODUCTION

The recreational land classification program under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 61B is designed to encourage the preservation of the Commonwealth's open space and promote recreational land uses. It offers significant local tax benefits to property owners willing to make a long term commitment to preserving land in an undeveloped condition or for use for outdoor activities. In exchange for these benefits, the city or town in which the land is located is given the right to recover some of the tax benefits afforded the owner when the land is removed from classification and an option to purchase the property should the land be sold or used for any other purpose other than to maintain it as open space or for recreational use.

QUALIFICATIONS

Property must consist of at least 5 contiguous acres of land under the same ownership in order to qualify for and retain classification as recreational land under Chapter 61B. The land must fall into one of the following two categories to qualify:

1. It must be maintained in a substantially natural, wild or open condition or must be maintained in a landscaped condition permitting the preservation of wildlife and natural resources. It does not have to be open to the public, but can be held as private, undeveloped, open space land.
2. It must be used for certain recreational purposes and must be open to the public or members of a non-profit organization.

Recreational purposes include land used primarily for any of the following outdoor activities, so long as they do not materially interfere with the environmental benefits of the land: hiking, camping, nature study and observation, boating, golfing, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, skiing, swimming, picnicking, private non-commercial flying, hang gliding, archery and target shooting.

Buildings and other structures located on the land, as well as any land on which a residence is located or regularly used for residential purposes, do not qualify for classification and continue to be assessed a regular local property tax.

APPLICATIONS

For a property to be classified as recreational land under Chapter 61B, the property owner must submit a written application to the Board of Assessors of the city or town in which the land is located by **October 1 of the year before the start of the fiscal year*** for which taxation as classified land is sought. If the city or town is undergoing a revaluation for that fiscal year, the application deadline is extended until 30 days after the date the year's tax bills with the new values are mailed.

The assessors must approve or disapprove the application for classification within 3 months of the filing date. If they do not act within that time, the application is considered disapproved. The assessors must notify the owner by certified mail whether the application has been approved or disapproved within 10 days of their decision. Classification and taxation of the land as recreational land under Chapter 61B will begin on the following July 1, which is the start of the next fiscal year.

The owner must file a separate application by October 1 (or extended deadline if applicable) each year for classification of the land to continue into the next fiscal year. The land cannot be classified as recreational

land if the owner does not comply with all application deadlines and procedures.

*The fiscal year of cities and towns begins July 1 and ends the following June 30.

LIEN

Once an initial application for classification is approved, the local assessors records a statement at the Registry of Deeds indicating that the property has been classified as recreational land under Chapter 61B. That statement will constitute a lien on the land for all taxes due under Chapter 61B.

ANNUAL TAXATION

Under Chapter 61B, the owner stills pays an annual property tax to the city or town in which the classified land is located. However, the tax is based on the commercial tax rate for the fiscal year applied to the value of the land for recreational purposes, rather than its fair market value as would be the case if the land were not classified. The value of the land for recreational purposes is determined annually by the assessors and cannot exceed 24% of the fair market value of the land.

The property tax is due in the same number of installments and at the same time as other local property tax payments in the city or town. Interest is charged on any overdue taxes at the same rate applicable to overdue local property taxes.

MUNICIPAL OPTION TO PURCHASE

The city or town has an option to purchase any classified land whenever the owner plans to sell or convert it to a residential, commercial or industrial use. The owner must notify by certified mail the mayor and city council or the selectmen, assessors, planning board and conservation commission of the city or town of any intention to sell or convert the land for those uses. If the owner plans to sell the land, the city or town has the right to match a bona fide offer to purchase it. If the owner plans to convert it, the city or town has the right to purchase it at its fair market value, which is determined by an impartial appraisal. The city or town may also assign its option to a non-profit conservation organization. The owner cannot sell or convert the land until at least 120 days after the mailing of the required notices or until the owner has been notified in writing that the option will not be exercised, whichever is earlier.

This option is not available to the city or town and the notice requirement does not apply if the recreational use is simply discontinued, or the owner plans to build a residence for his or her use, or the use of his or her parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, brother or sister, the surviving spouse of any of those relatives, or an employee working full time in the recreational use of the land.

PENALTY TAX

The owner must pay one of two alternative penalty taxes whenever any of the land is no longer maintained as open space or used for recreational purposes, whether or not that land is subject to the purchase option and notice requirement.

The owner must pay a roll-back tax for a 10 year period if the use of the land changes to a non-qualifying use. If the change of use occurs when the land is classified, the tax is imposed for the current fiscal year and the 9 prior years. If the land is not classified at that time, the tax is imposed for the 10 prior years. In either case, the roll-back tax is the difference between the amount the owner would have paid in annual property taxes on the land if it had been taxed at its fair market value and the amount of taxes he or she paid under Chapter 61B during the same time.

However, the owner must pay the alternative conveyance tax instead if the land is sold for or converted to a

non-qualifying use within 10 years of the beginning of the fiscal year it was first classified and the conveyance tax is greater than the roll-back tax that would be due. The conveyance tax is based on the conveyance tax rate applied to the sales price of the land, or if converted, to the fair market value of the land as determined by the assessors. The conveyance tax rate is 10% if the land is sold or converted within the first 5 years of classification and 5% if sold or converted within the 6th through 10th year of classification.

APPEALS AND ABATEMENTS

The owner may contest decisions made by the local assessors to disapprove all or part of an application for classification by applying for a modification of the decision. The owner may also contest the annual property tax or any penalty tax assessed under Chapter 61B by applying for an abatement.

Applications to modify a decision or abate a tax must be made in writing and must be filed with the assessors within 60 days of the date the owner is notified of the decision or tax. If the owner disagrees with the assessors' decision, or the assessors do not act on the application, the owner may appeal to the Appellate Tax Board within 30 days of the date the owner was notified of the assessors' decision, or 3 months from the date the abatement application was filed, whichever is later. If the appeal concerns an annual property tax, it must be paid for the owner to maintain the appeal. The assessors cannot modify any decision or grant any abatement if the owner does not comply with all application deadlines and procedures.

*Chapter 61B information presented here is from the
Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Property Tax Bureau's
"Taxpayer's Guide to
Classification and Taxation
of Recreational Land in Massachusetts"
Brochure dated October 1997*

["Taxpayer's Guide to Chapter 61"](#)

["Taxpayer's Guide to Chapter 61A"](#)

**For more information, contact the Property Tax Bureau at (617) 626-2300, or,
visit Massachusetts General Laws web site for the complete text of Chapters 61, 61A, and 61B:**

[M.G.L. Chapter 61](#)
[M.G.L. Chapter 61A](#)
[M.G.L. Chapter 61B](#)

