

# Common Ground

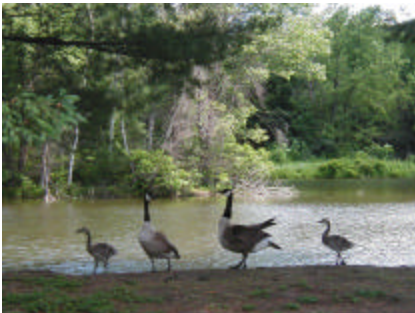
Volume 9, Issue 1

July/August 2002

Berkshire  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission

## **BRPC Focuses on Watershed Management**

Management of watershed lands for drinking water supplies is a constant activity for water suppliers. Wildlife can contribute to increased pathogen levels that can affect human health. Stormwater runoff from paved roads can transport organic compounds. Erosion and sedimentation from unpaved roads or trails can increase turbidity levels (water clarity) and can increase treatment costs. Unauthorized access on watershed lands can contribute to increased pathogen levels, contribute to erosion, and may result in damage to water supply infrastructure. Forestry on watershed lands is a double edged sword. If not done correctly forestry can degrade water quality. If not done at all the forest stand may become more susceptible to disease and fire; that could also degrade water quality. Illegal dumping on watershed lands can also be a source of pathogens and organic compounds.



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All of these items were issues BRPC identified related to watershed lands in the Ashley / Farnham Reservoir Complex serving the City of Pittsfield. BRPC is working with City officials to develop a Watershed Management Plan for Ashley / Farnham watershed lands. The development of this Plan resulted from the proposed sale of a Conservation Restriction that would allow recreational access. Funds to develop this Plan were provided by EOE. *Contact: Tom Matuszko*

## **Watershed Management at Onota Lake**

The BRPC has worked in partnership with the Lake Onota Preservation Association (LOPA) and the City of Pittsfield to acquire funding to implement *The Onota*

**Onota Continued on page 2**

## **Also Inside this Issue:**

*More Case Studies and Model By-laws: The New BRPC 2003 Planners Toolkit is Now Available (see page 2)*

*Final Draft of Berkshire County Bicycling and Walking Plan to be Available (see page 3)*

**EOEA Announces Self Help Grants Deadline (see page 2)**

## **Regional Plan Work Program – Potential Items for FY 2003**

The Regional Plan "Work Program" is a yearly attachment to the Regional Plan for the Berkshires. The Work Program specifies a limited number of actions related to the Regional Plan that BRPC proposes to make significant progress towards accomplishing within a one or two year period. The intent of the Work Program is to make the Plan a "living" resource for Berkshire communities. The items listed below are items for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2002 and ending June 30, 2003.

### **GENERAL GOALS**

1. Actively assist communities in the use of items contained in the Regional Plan Toolbox so that the Regional Plan becomes a useable document.
2. Use the information gained from the creation of Community Development Plans to assist communities in systematically implementing high priority goals.
3. Establish a region-wide land use plan that integrates the information gained from Community Development Plans. Use community and regional development goals to shape the regional transportation plan.

### **Preservation of Sensitive Environments and Open Space Goals**

1. Assist communities in the development of Open Space Plans.
2. Assist communities in complying with new requirements related to stormwater management, also referred to as EPA Phase II Stormwater Requirements.

### **Community and Quality of Life Goals**

1. Integrate housing information gained from the Community Development Plans to formulate a region-wide implementation strategy for Berkshire County.

### **Economic Development and Fiscal Responsibility**

1. Promote programs whereby communities can "share" staff services, such as a shared Health Agent and a Conservation Agent.

**Regional Plan Work Program continued on page 3**

## **Programs, Projects and Grants**

### **More Case Studies and Model Bylaws: Berkshire Planning Tools Binder Updated for 2002**

As promised, BRPC has updated the Berkshire Planning Tools 'toolbox' for 2002. Designed to provide citizen planners with tools they can use to successfully accomplish their duties, the updated binder contains ten new four-page planning tool profiles, updates of data originally contained in the Regional Plan (2000), and the Regional Plan Work Program for FY 2003.

The update includes newly acquired census 2000 data, as well as several new reference tools for municipal officials. Some of these new tools include: "Implementing Vegetated Buffers", "Using a Generic Notice of Intent", "What is Affordable Housing?", "Access Management", and model bylaws for Accessory Apartments and Comprehensive Permits (Ch40B).

Together, this information will help communities plan for, rather than react to, the growth and development pressures that continue to shape the Berkshire region. The new tools are available and may be ordered as part of the complete planners toolkit or separately as an update packet. To order your toolkit or for more information, please contact Tom Matuszko or Jim McGrath.

### **Onota Continued From Page 1**

*Lake Preservation Strategy.* This strategy is a critical step in watershed management made up of three complimentary components. The strategy includes a short-term implementation component that primarily addresses the re-growth of Eurasian watermilfoil, an assessment component for obtaining the information necessary to successfully pursue long-range management objectives, and a monitoring and outreach component that includes expanding the current volunteer water quality monitoring program and citizen involvement. BRPC, LOPA, and the City committed to pursue funding to implement all of the components of the overall strategy. Funding has been awarded through four competitive grants including, the Department of Environmental Management Lakes and Ponds Grant Program, the Berkshire Environmental Fund Community Improvement Projects, the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Volunteer Monitoring Assistance Program, and the Massachusetts Environmental Trust Environmental Monitoring Program.

The partners in this effort hope to assess recommended management techniques in order to reduce the dependency on herbicides and to protect and enhance the natural environment for both current and future users. Onota Lake is a valuable environmental and recreational resource in the Berkshires. This series of projects will continue the years of watershed management and implementation activities conducted through a strong partnership between BRPC, LOPA, and the City. *Contact: Melissa Jette*

### **BRPC Evaluating Access to Technology in Berkshire County**

BRPC is completing an evaluation of how well Berkshire Connect and its partners, Equal Access Networks and Global Crossings, Ltd., are meeting the needs of the members of Berkshire Connect for affordable, world-class broadband internet access. This evaluation is being done in order to prepare for the reconsideration of the agreements between the partners that expire in 2003. A number and wide variety of businesses and other organizations in the region are members of Berkshire Connect and have benefited from this regional collaboration that is widely viewed as a national model.

*Contact: Nat Karns*

### **EOEA Announces FY03 Self Help Grant Deadline: September 6, 2002**

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) recently announced FY03 grant round for **Self Help, Urban Self Help**, and federal **Land and Water Conservation Fund** programs. The programs are competitive grants that provide financial assistance to cities and towns for the purchase of conservation land, the purchase of park land, or the renovation or development of public outdoor recreation facilities. The \$4.5 million of available funding for the programs remains contingent upon passage of the Environmental Bond Bill (H.4909). The filing deadline for these programs is September 6, 2002. Applications and additional information may be found online at the Division of Conservation Services website (<http://www.state.ma.us/envir/conservation/cpindex.htm>) or by calling the DCS at (617) 626-1010.

### **Changes to BRPC Technical Assistance Policy Beginning July 1**

BRPC receives most of its funding from grants or contracts which have specified work items and products. For BRPC's fiscal year beginning in July only about 5% of the budget is available for non-project work including technical assistance to communities, planning board training, and grant writing. These funds, BRPC's General Fund, are provided through community assessments. BRPC's policy is to provide one staff person day's worth of assistance per request for requests from municipal boards or officials. Prior to April of this year we had provided up to one-half day's worth of assistance time to non-profit organizations and one-half hour's worth of time to private consultants. Starting in April 2002 we will no longer be able provide that level of assistance to non-profits and private consultants. While responses to municipal requests will remain the same, one-person day per request, except for a "5-minute" phone call all requests for technical assistance or information from non-profits and private consultants will be billed. Rates have changed as well beginning July 1. *Contact: Nat Karns, Tom Matuszko*

## Transportation Update

- The **draft Berkshire Bicycling & Walking Transportation Plan** will be available in mid-July and will be the focus of a Berkshire Transportation Forum (BTF) meeting on **Thursday, July 25<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm**. If you have received BTF mailings in the past, you will receive information, or contact Zoe Neaderland.
- The **BTF meeting** will also include introductions to various other projects (including the major revision of the Regional Transportation Plan) and an update to the Public Participation Plan.
- The annual update of the **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)** will be available for public review in July. The update this year has generated some lively debate. Contact Charlie Cook for a copy.
- The **Origin-Destination Study** was on hold as of June 13<sup>th</sup> pending approval to proceed from MassHighway. While part of this regional data gathering effort could still be done this summer, much of it will now need to wait until schools are back in session in the Fall.
- Wave if you see Traffic Planner Raymond Wong & Intern Ravi Chepuri out laying traffic counters and doing pavement inventories, or Intern Deidre Fogg assessing bicycling and walking conditions. *Contact: Zoe Neaderland*

### Transportation Term of the Month: **Berkshire Transportation Forum (BTF)**

The BTF is the place for all citizens, interest groups, and elected officials to find out about transportation projects and participate in shaping them. No technical knowledge is required. Contact BRPC to be on the mailing list for information and meeting notices.

### Highlights of Bicycling & Walking Plan

By mid-July the public draft Berkshire Bicycling & Walking Plan will be available for review. It reflects input from review by a Technical Advisory Committee. Participation in reviewing these documents is always helpful, but here are a few highlights. As has been previously reported, the supply of shoulders and sidewalks for walking and bicycling, and then the demand for them (or potential demand) was evaluated. Places where the supply is in poor condition and demand is high would tend to be the most efficient places to consider improvements. Possible improvements for communities to consider include repaving eroded road shoulders and adopting guidelines regarding when sidewalks are appropriate in new developments. A range of ways to make priority sections of road safer and more pleasant, approximate costs, model bylaws, and potential funding sources are included in the Plan.

<b>Highest Priority Areas to Consider Improvements:</b>			
Road	Town	Priority	Description
First St.(Rt. 7)	Pittsfield	11.97	Between Tyler & North
North St.	Pittsfield	11.00	Between West & Depot
Columbia St (Rt. 8)	Adams	10.82	Between. Harding & Upton

## GIS Update

It is anticipated that BRPC will soon receive full color, 1-meter resolution orthophotographs (digital aerial photographs) that were taken during the spring of 2001. In related news, BRPC will serve as a regional distributor of pictometry images and software recently purchased by the state. Pictometry images are color oblique images. High altitude (community level) images will be available for the entire county and low altitude (neighborhood level) images will be available for North Adams, Adams, Pittsfield, Lenox and Lee. The neighborhood level images will provide 4 to 8-inch resolution from an oblique angle. The Pictometry software will allow horizontal and vertical measurements as well as the ability to link to BRPC's existing GIS software. Pictometry images should be available late in the summer.

GIS work has been occurring on the Pittsfield Watershed Plan, along with the EPA Phase II Storm Water Mapping and Phase II of the Resource Area Mapping. Community Development Plan mapping is also progressing with several towns currently involved in the development suitability mapping portion of the plan. *Contact: Mark Maloy*

## Regional Plan Work Program (continued from page 1)

### Efficient Land Use Development and Management

1. Continue to provide a supporting and coordinating role to direct future growth in areas of concentrated development. Develop appropriate planning tools (i.e., accessory apartment bylaw, mixed-use bylaw, village center bylaw, infill housing bylaw) and programs (Berkshire Brownfields) to promote and enhance the reuse and redevelopment of structures and developed areas.
2. Implement Corridor Access Management Guidelines by working with at least three communities to adopt appropriate techniques to improve safety and minimize conflicts between through traffic and adjacent land uses along major corridors while protecting and enhancing community character.
3. Promote efficient residential growth. Continue to develop mechanisms to monitor and shape the development of ANR and multi-unit residential subdivisions in outlying areas. *Contact: Jim McGrath*

## Clearinghouse Reviews

The following comments were submitted by the BRPC under the direction of the Clearinghouse Review Committee between 4/20/01 and 6/14/02.

- The Nature Conservancy's invasive plant removal project "Weed It Now" (Egremont). Comments on the ENF were submitted to MEPA on 4/25/02.
- Brodie Mountain Ski Resort expansion project (New Ashford). Comments on the ENF were submitted to MEPA on 4/25/02.
- Mead Willow Mill (Lee). Comments on the 404 Water Quality permit were submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers on 6/07/02.
- Mt Greylock Road Rehabilitation (Lanesborough). Comments on the Notice of Project Change were submitted to MEPA on 6/14/02.
- Skyline Trail Road Rehabilitation (Hinsdale, Peru). Comments on the Notice of Project Change were submitted to MEPA on 5/28/02.
- Upper and Lower Root Reservoir (Lenox). Comments on the ENF were submitted to MEPA on 6/10/02.
- Cobble Mountain Reservoir (portions of Otis and Blandford). Comments on the 120-day waiver request were submitted to DEM on 5/2/02.
- Kripalu (Stockbridge). Comments on the ground water discharge permit were submitted to DEP on 5/17/02.
- Berkshire Humane Society (Pittsfield). Comments on the bond review were submitted to MassDevelopment on 5/29/02.
- Truskowski Farm (Savoy). Comments on the APR application were submitted to MA Department of Food and Agriculture on 6/13/02.  
*Contact: Jim McGrath*

## BRPCconnections

Web Site

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Joyce McGuire

Transportation Intern

Ravi Chepuri

Planning Interns

Christian Leo; Deidre

Fogg; Kerri Neilson; Lynne

Vance

## BRPC Welcomes Summer Interns

BRPC welcomes Ravi Chepuri, Deidre Fogg, and Christian Leo to the Commission offices for the summer. Ravi is working with Raymond Wong on transportation engineering, while Deidre and Chris will be contributing to community and transportation planning efforts. The three join spring interns Kerri Neilson and Lynne Vance, who have been a great help to the commission on several recent projects.

### Date CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, July 12: "Stormwater at Your DPW Garage: Are You Prepared To Meet the March 2003 Deadline?" Quality Inn Lenox, 8:30 am, free

Thurs, July 25: Berkshire Transportation Forum: Focus on the Bicycling & Walking Plan, BRPC Main Conference Room, 1 Fenn St., 7PM.

Weds, July 31: Lenox Planning Board/Dodson Associates Presentation on Lenox Gateway project area, Lenox Town Hall, 7PM.

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**Common Ground**



## CENSUS 2000: Social, Economic, Housing Data

### Community Profile Data Released in May

Data from the Census 2000 long form questionnaires recently released for the communities, counties, and Commonwealth of Massachusetts provide a more comprehensive look at changes in social, economic, and housing characteristics since 1990. The goal of this Census insert is to focus on Berkshire County data with an overview of selected indicators from these one-page profiles (Demographic Profiles 2, 3, and 4). The full data file for Massachusetts, as well as comparative U.S. data, is yet to be released.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

##### SELECTED SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### Education:

- School Enrollment of the Berkshire County population age 3 years and over (covering preschool through graduate school programs) in 2000 was 34,081, a slight drop from the 1990 Census figure of 34,224.
- Among the county's population age 25 and over (numbering 93,339) about 85% were at least high school graduates and 26% had a bachelor's or higher degree. While the percent of those with at least a high school diploma is on par with the state, the percent having completed a bachelor's or higher degree still lags the state — at 33%.

#### Marital Status:

- In Berkshire County (52.6%) and in Massachusetts (51.7%) about half the population 15 years and older is married. Where the Berkshire region diverges from the state is in the percent of those never married — only 26% compared to the state's 31% — and in the percent divorced — 10.4% — which exceeds the state (8.3%).

A new Census 2000 question on the number of grandparents serving as primary caregivers for their grandchildren indicated that a greater percentage of Berkshire grandparents were in that role: 31.4% compared to the statewide figure of 28.4%.

#### Disability Status:

- While the percent of the population in this region with a disability reflects statewide figures, the percent of the disabled age 21 to 64 employed in Berkshire County — at 56.4% — is notably less than the 60% employed statewide.

#### Nativity and Language Ability:

- The foreign born population of the Berkshires remains a small portion (3.7%) of total population. Since 1990 few foreign born newcomers have arrived — only 1,646 people or 1.2% immigrating to the Berkshires, compared to the state with 312,288 (4.9%).
- Among the population 5 years and over, 6.4% (8,196) identified themselves as speaking a language other than English at home, compared to the state at 18.7%. About 2,296 people indicated that they spoke English less than "very well."



##### SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

#### Employment Status:

- Census 2000 counted the population of Berkshire County age 16 years and over at 108,466, with 63.4% in the labor force and 36.6% (39,660) not in the labor force, slightly higher than Massachusetts (33.8%).
- Parents of children under 6 years of age in the Berkshires have a greater degree of participation in the labor force than is typical statewide, with all parents in the family in the labor force in this region at 67.9% compared to 60.7% statewide.
- From 1990 to 2000 the size of the labor force in the Berkshires dropped 1,157 or 1.6%, while the overall Massachusetts labor force added 55,616 workers — a 1.7% increase.

- Labor force participation among females 16 and over was on the rise in this region in the 1990's, moving up from 54.7% in 1990 to 58.3% in 2000, while remaining steady at about 60% in both 1990 and 2000 statewide.

#### Occupation:

- Management, professional, and related occupations accounted for 35.1% (22,893), and sales and office occupations another 25% (16,331) of the employed civilian population 16 years and over. Service occupations employed the third highest number of the total employed civilian work force, 12,232 or 18.7% .

#### Industry:

- In the Berkshires more people (18,094 or 27.7%) were employed in educational, health and social services than other industries — a higher percentage than the state at 23.7%.
- Manufacturing and Retail Trade, employing 12.9% and 12.8% respectively (about 8,400 people each), followed as the 2nd and 3rd highest employment industries.
- The Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services industry (a newly defined sector) employed 6,558 (10.1%) in the so-called “cultural tourism” and recreation industries in the region.

#### Income in 1999:

- Median household income in the Berkshires rose from \$30,470 in 1989 to \$39,047 in 1999, a 28.1% increase but the smallest numerical gain and the lowest median among counties in the state.
- About half (49.6%) of Berkshire households had income between \$25,000 to \$75,000, compared to 45% of the households in the state.
- A far greater percent of Berkshire households (31.7%) were in the lowest income ranges (below \$25,000) than the state (24.6%). In the Berkshires about 19% of households had income above \$75,000 compared to over 30% statewide.
- Median family income in the Berkshires at \$50,162 was only 80% of the state median of \$61,664.

#### Poverty Status:

- The percent of all families below the poverty level in Berkshire County (6.5%) was similar to families in general in Massachusetts. But the presence of children in the family (11.6%), and especially children under 5 years of age (18.1%), signaled greater percentages of Berkshire families in poverty.
- Families headed by females with children under 5 years old in the Berkshires (55.9%) experienced a far greater degree of poverty than statewide (45.4%).

#### SELECTED HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

- Since the 1990 census 3,919 housing units (6%) were added in the Berkshires, compared to 8.3% in the state.
- Berkshire housing is defined by the predominance of single unit, detached structures (62.3%) and 2 unit or duplex housing (12.4%) at a higher rate than the state with more multi unit housing among its total units.
- The median value of owner-occupied units in the Berkshires in 1999 was \$116,800; statewide that median was \$185,700.
- Almost 70% of owner-occupied units in the Berkshires were valued (by their owners) as under \$150,000; in contrast, only 33% were valued at less than \$150,000 statewide.
- Median gross rent was \$499 in 1999 in the Berkshires, about 73% of the Massachusetts median rental rate of \$684.
- According to Census 2000 data a slightly lower percent (20.3%) of Berkshire owners were paying over 30% of household income in monthly housing costs than Massachusetts owners (22.6%).
- About 36% of renters both in the Berkshires and across the state were paying above 30% of household income in gross rental costs. □

United States  
Census  
2000



...providing you with data important  
to you and your community

#### Source: U.S. Census Bureau:

Census 1990 Tables 1-4: Selected Social, Labor Force and Commuting, Income and Poverty, and Housing Characteristics;  
Census 2000 DP Tables 2-4: Selected Social, Economic, and Housing Characteristics;

Prepared by Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, an Affiliate of the MA State Data Center (MISER at UMASS)