

# OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN for Lee, Massachusetts



Draft - July 14, 2015

Plan prepared by the Lee Open Space and Recreation Task Force, Lee Youth Commission, Lee Conservation Commission, and Lee Planning Board with the assistance of the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission. This Plan was developed with funding from the state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

DRAFT

# 2015 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

FOR LEE, MASSACHUSETTS

## Acknowledgments

In addition to thoughtful input from members of the public, the Lee citizen Task Force put in many hours of work identifying and exploring the issues and needs of their town, and identifying ways to address these actively. The assistance of all Task Force members is deeply appreciated.

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The staff of Town Hall and various town departments, including the Department of Public Works and the Town Administrator provided essential technical and administrative assistance.

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The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission served as the Lead Planning Consultant for the project and produced this document.

## Others Stakeholders Consulted During the Course of This Project

Conservation Commission, Lee Land Trust, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, and others, including various local citizens and experts.

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# Section 1

## Plan Summary

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The *2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan* has been developed with the recognition that protection of open space and provision of recreational opportunities are key ingredients of the quality of life in a community. This Plan defines those elements of Lee's open space areas and recreation programs and facilities that contribute to its quality of life, and attempts to determine whether the benefits of these are accessible to all of Lee's residents. It also examines how well Lee is doing in terms of protecting these very important features. The Five Year Action Plan sets a planning agenda for implementing strategies necessary to meet these goals. Some of the more important findings of this study are that:

1. Lee is changing in many ways, economically, environmentally, and socially. Lee has continued to court the tourist trade with the decline in manufacturing, which already has impacted environmental resources in the town.
2. Lee's strong sense of community remains an important defining characteristic. Recreational opportunities and open space contribute to community interaction and quality of life.
3. The Town has an extensive inventory of protected open space including many acres under local, State and Federal ownership. However, many important areas remain unprotected or in temporary protection (Chapter lands). Agricultural lands in particular, so important in defining Lee's character, are in danger of being converted to non-agricultural use. Promotion and utilization of long term protective strategies such as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program and conservation easements combined with voluntary actions supporting locally grown agricultural products and growth management and development standards could be effective ways retain these lands.
4. Lee is fortunate to have large tracts of land under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Focusing on environmental education and linking protected town lands into an open space system are ways to insure the conservation attributes of the land are met while increasing the use and enjoyment by town residents.
5. Overall, the population is aging, and there is an influx of new cultural groups. Each of these populations has unique recreation needs that must be addressed.
6. Lee is deficient in meeting many of the recreational needs of its population. Particular attention needs to be paid to the development of recreation programs for all age groups,

and to the maintenance of its facilities, including the provision of modern, safe equipment that is accessible to the handicapped population.

7. Lee is pursuing an active economic development and re-development program. These efforts will allow the community to remain a vital employment center over time - a very worthy comprehensive goal that is important to retaining the historical sense of community. Economic development and re-development efforts must preserve sensitive environmental resources.
8. More development will occur on marginal lands as the town gets closer to buildout. This will bring many environmentally sensitive areas into jeopardy. Much of the Lee landscape is vulnerable because of its geology, soils and topography.
9. Many opportunities to broaden existing and future resource offerings and assets will require cooperative efforts. This plan and other related efforts will be successfully implemented only to the extent that these efforts are made both within town and with external entities.

# Section 2

## Introduction

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### A. Statement of Purpose

The *2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan* reflects Lee's intent to protect, preserve, and broaden its open space and recreational pursuits. It is the intent of this Plan to build upon the extensive work completed previously. The purpose of this plan is to provide a rational framework for achieving a sense of balance between community needs and open space preservation over the next decade. There is a strong feeling among many residents in the community that the economic well-being of the town and its residents is important. At the same time, there is a very real concern on the part of many other residents that Lee is in danger of losing those qualities that make it special place to live and to raise a family - its quality of life. Recreation and open space opportunities are important components of Lee's quality of life and, as evidenced by the results of a recent community survey, are two of the areas in need of improvement by the town. It is important to note that protecting wildlife habitat was another high priority listed in a public opinion survey conducted in May 2015.

The town continues its adjustment to a new stage in its history as it transitions from a manufacturing economy. This change will render planning increasingly critical. The implementation of several planning initiatives has included renewed interest and work on updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

### B. Planning Process and Participation

Lee conducted an open space planning process in 2000. A draft plan was substantially complete in 2000 but was never formally submitted for approval. Building partially upon the 2000 planning effort, this Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan was developed in 2015 by the Lee Youth Commission and the Conservation Commission and prepared by the Town Administrator's office. The Committee was comprised of interested citizens and representatives of the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and the Lee Land Trust, with consultation provided by the Historical Commission.

The needs assessment component of the plan consisted of a review of current census data, an updated recreation and open space survey and feedback from key stakeholders and other knowledgeable citizens.

# Section 3

## Community Setting

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### A. Regional Context

Lee is commonly referred to as the "*Gateway to the Berkshires*". It is also the "*heart of the Berkshires*," with the geographic center of Berkshire County only one mile from the center of town. The town is nestled in the Housatonic River valley and is surrounded by the Berkshire Hills Plateau and the Taconic mountain range. These steep slopes are the largest single physical element affecting the future development of Lee. Approximately 6,500 acres (37% of the total land area) can be considered steep grade. Located immediately off Exit 2 of the Massachusetts Turnpike, Lee is often the first Berkshire destination of commercial travelers and tourists from the south, east, and west.

Topographically, two distinct forms of landforms cover the town of Lee. Looming up to the east is the hilly New England upland. October Mountain, a state forest that is also shared with Becket, is one of Lee's most scenic vistas. The Washington Mountain and Coddington Brooks, flowing down from the mountain, are sources of water for the town reservoirs, Washington Mountain Lake and Schoolhouse Lake. Portions of nearby Lenox are also served by the water supply.

To the south lies another upland, cleaved by the picturesque Tyringham Valley. These uplands occupy a considerable area of the town and are sprinkled with mountain streams. Beartown State Forest, straddling Lee, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Tyringham and Monterey, occupies many miles of upland and is a regional recreational site for swimming, hiking, and camping. Part of the Appalachian Trail goes through the south and eastern portions of town, connecting to Tyringham and Becket.

To the north and west, the weathering of metamorphic rock has occurred to expose the rolling, limestone-underlain Housatonic Valley. Upland streams flow through this valley before eventually joining the Housatonic River. Small hills, such as those in the Town Forest in the northern part of town, dot the valley. Northeast Lee is home to October Mountain, which at nearly 2,000 feet has some of the highest elevations in town, compared to an elevation of 900 feet in the center of town.

The town's economic base has continued to become more diversified with four of the last five paper mills closing their doors in 2008. Over the last forty-five years, commercial development has spread from the Turnpike interchange, weaving its way along Route 20, the main transportation route through town. Lee has a thriving downtown retail center that serves town residents as well as the adjacent rural communities. The scenic downtown Lee Park and tall spire of the Congregational church are local landmarks that typify a historic New England village. An increased retail and hospitality presence serves to stimulate Lee's share of the County's tourism pie.

Suitable agricultural land, which is limited due to the mountainous topography and soil quality, is most abundant in the western part of Lee. Agricultural uses have dwindled, as it has become increasingly hard for farms to remain viable. One of the region's few remaining dairy farms and only creamery is located on a hilltop overlooking Laurel Lake. Lee's town beach is located on Laurel Lake, which is located in both Lee and Lenox. The beach is located on private land and is used seasonally for recreational swimming.

The Housatonic River, flowing south and eventually west through the town, is both a natural and economic resource. Three branches of the River meet in Pittsfield to the north, then flow through Lenox before arriving in Lee and continuing south through Connecticut to Long Island Sound. Chemical pollution from industries, located in Lee and upstream from Lee, has contaminated the river making it unusable for swimming and usable only for catch-and-release fishing. Wastewater treatment instituted by local industries starting in the 1960s has abated the further deterioration of the river, which remains primarily a recreational resource for canoeing today.

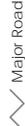
A significant portion of the town of Lee is within the 100-year floodplain. Although the northern end of the floodplain is sparsely populated with homes, the southern end contains the downtown commercial district and well-developed residential areas along Rt. 20 to the Turnpike, culminating at Route 102, which stretches from East to South Lee. These areas are occasionally flooded, the last major flood occurring in 1968 in East Lee. Several of the town parks and athletic fields are located in the floodplain, restricting their recreational use and availability.

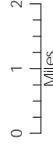
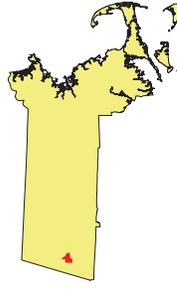
Local and regional environmental groups, including the Lee Land Trust, the Housatonic River Initiative and the Housatonic Valley Association, have continued to work to clean up the river and plan for its increased recreational and scenic use.

Due to Lee's steep, stony slopes and extensive floodplain, usable and buildable land is at a premium. This restricts the town's population, economic development and development of

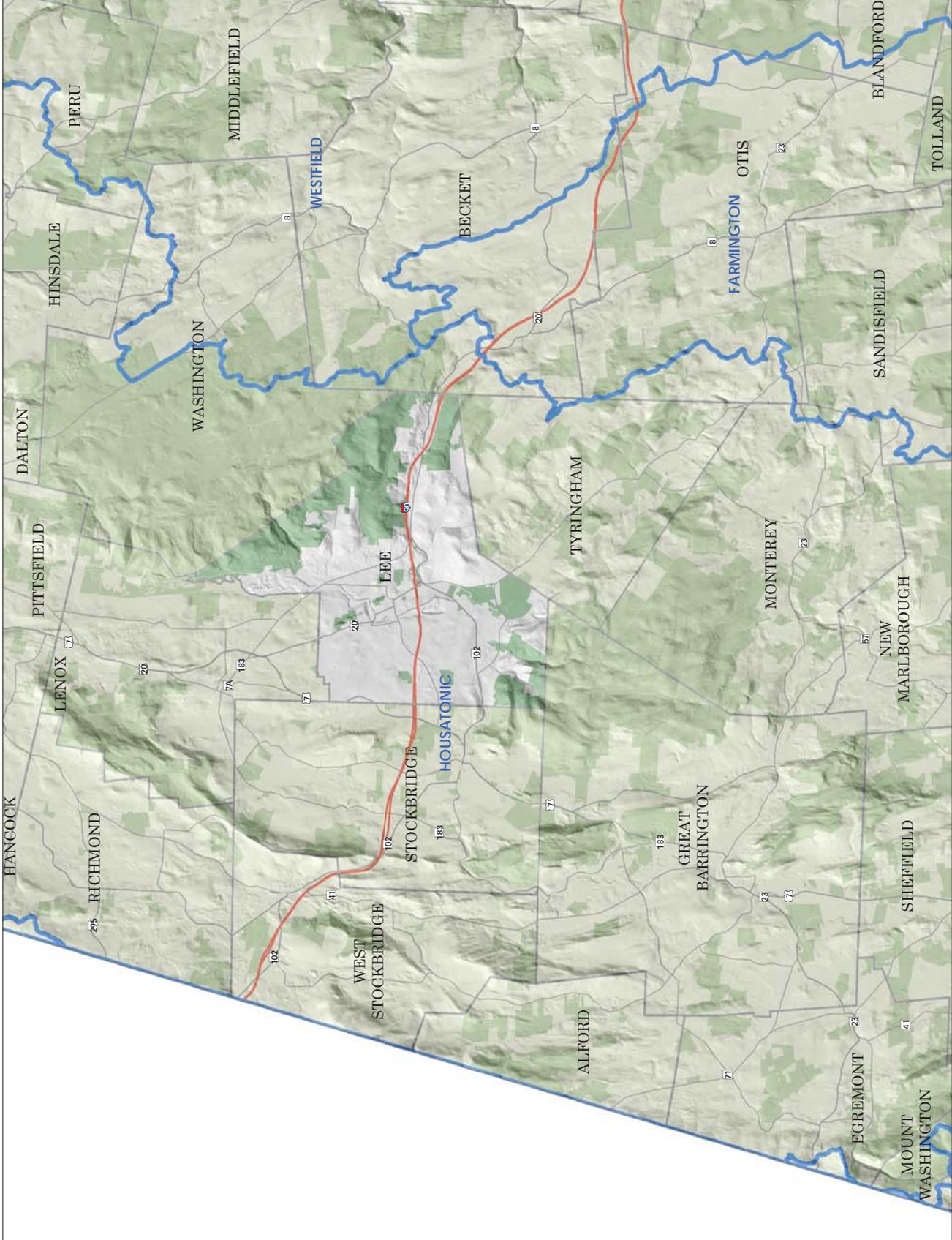
# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan

Map 1: Regional Context

-  Towns
-  Interstate
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Major Watersheds
-  Protected Land



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recreational areas. At the same time, these natural characteristics are invaluable for their intrinsic unspoiled beauty.

## B. History of the Community

Settlement of Lee began in the eighteenth century when several families from Cape Cod settled in the hills of East Lee. In 1760, an early citizen, John Winegar, built a gristmill on the banks of the Greenwater and Goose Pond brooks in East Lee establishing the first local industry. In that same year, Isaac Davis settled on Hop Brook, and Ruben Pixley, Aswell Dodge, Jonathan Foote, Richard Hauk, John Freeze, and Peter Wilcox settled nearby. The town was incorporated in 1777 and was named after a high-ranking officer in the Continental Army, General Charles Lee.

A number of Lee men served in the Revolution and, as a financial result, many became deeply involved in Shay's Rebellion against imprisonment for debt in 1786. A confrontation between Shay's supporters and General Paterson's Federal forces on Hamblins Hill resulted in a standoff. Historic Peter's Cave, located in a mountainous outcropping known as Ferncliff, is noted as the hiding place of Lee native Peter Wilcox during the rebellion.

The waterpower of the Housatonic was exploited in the early years of settlement for saw and gristmills. As with most communities in the eighteenth century, agriculture was the primary component of economic activity. It was eventually eclipsed as industrial production, primarily paper and textiles, became concentrated along the riverbanks. Samuel Church built the first paper mill in South Lee in 1806. It was the second paper mill in Berkshire County, following the Crane Mill in Dalton which was built in 1801. The River was also used for various manufacturing purposes after the War of 1812, when unmet domestic demand prompted their development. Ball and Bassett & Company wove woolen cloth; Foote & Hinman made cotton cloth; Laflin & Loomis made gunpowder. The Hurlbut family made carriages before being involved in paper-making.

At mid century, the railroad became an important spur to industrial development. At its peak in 1867, Lee was home to 25 paper mills and ranked first in country's papermaking industry. The devastating flood of 1886 forced the closing of the small mills in East Lee. The surviving paper and sawmills moved to the center of town, rebuilding on the banks of the Housatonic River. This heritage illustrates why Lee was long known as a mill town.

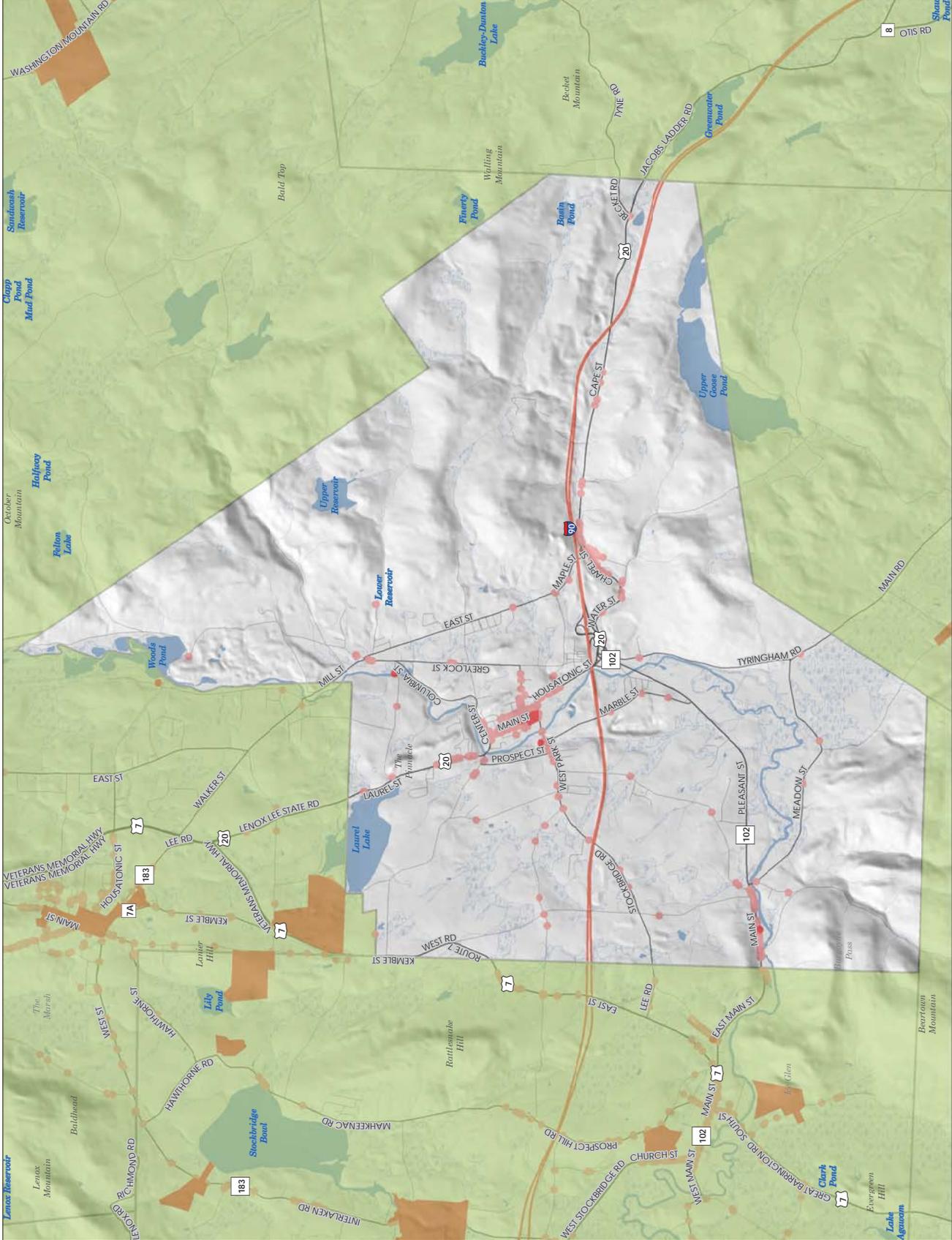
By the 1930's, the paper business in Lee began to decline as the softwood forests, sources of wood pulp, were depleted. Four paper mills owned by Schweitzer-Mauduit remain near the center of town, with Mead operating two other mills in South Lee.

# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map A: Historic Resources

- National Register Historic Places
- Historic Properties (MACRIS)
- Towns
- ↔ Interstate
- ↔ Major Road
- ↔ Minor Road
- ↔ Local Road
- ~ Stream
- ~ Wetland
- ~ Open Water



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Quarrying became an established industry in the mid-1800's and continued to produce large quantities of marble until the 1930's in Lee. Lee marble, considered by many to be the best in the country, was used in the construction of many historic monuments and buildings in several U.S. cities. Among these were St. Patrick's Cathedral and Grant's Tomb in New York City and the State House annex and Public Library in Boston. Between 1852 and 1863, Lee supplied the marble for enlarging the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. The lime industry was well established by 1885, furnishing lime for building and agriculture. By the 1930's, the Lee Lime Corp. ranked as one of the largest producers of lime in New England. The marble quarries were abandoned in the 1940's but have reopened in recent years, subject to market demand. Both lime and marble quarries are still mined today.

In 1957, a state toll road, the Massachusetts Turnpike, was built, connecting Lee to Boston in a ride of less than three hours. The location of the primary entrance/exit for Berkshire County just south of downtown Lee made it a strong factor in the life and development of town and furthered the need for the Town to protect its conservation land.

In 1976, lower Main Street was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic Main Street district, consisting of 18 buildings and an oval park, includes the Congregational church; Lee Library; Lee's town hall, Memorial Hall; and the Morgan House. The Golden Hill Bridge was recently accepted for listing and the village of South Lee was designated a National Register Historic District in 1999. These measures were taken not only to preserve Lee's rich architectural history but also to further prevent incompatible commercialization of the main thoroughfare through town.

## C. Population Characteristics

The town's year-around population is estimated to be 5,932 residents.<sup>1</sup> Lee, because of its location near several Berkshire tourist attractions, such as Tanglewood, is also home to many seasonal residents who hail from New York City, Hartford, and Boston. Many of the estimated 700+ part-time residents own homes in developments surrounding area lakes or live in the newer condominium complexes. The daytime population also swells, particularly during the summer season, due to tourists visiting Lee or passing through to other destinations. According to the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan, summer traffic volumes are generally 10% higher than annual average daily traffic (AADT), and in some cases may be as much as 50% higher. For purposes of this report, the recreational needs of Lee residents are described as the primary audience for the town's parks and open space, with recognition that these areas will also be

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<sup>1</sup> Data from the US Census American Community Survey 2009/2013 and is available at <http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml>

used and appreciated by visitors to the Berkshires. As tourism has increased in town since 1997, and since our forefathers, who didn't foresee tourist impacts when donating conservation lands to the Town, it is incumbent upon us, the guardians, to protect these habitats from human overuse and fragmentation.

Since recording 1,170 inhabitants in the first federal census of 1790, Lee grew steadily in population through the 1950s to a population of about 5,000. During the 1800s, growth can be attributed to the waves of Irish, then Italian immigrants who came to work in the mills and quarries. In the 1960s and '70s, Lee again began attracting newcomers, increasingly adding households with commuting links to Pittsfield and those drawn to the area for its natural beauty and quality of life. From 1960 to 1970, Lee's population increased by 1,255 residents or 21.9%. During the population boom of the '60s and early '70s, new shopping areas were developed adjacent to the downtown, with lower Main Street also seeing an influx of small retail and service businesses. At the same time, many of the stately homes of the industrialists in South Lee were converted to small business use, primarily country inns and antique shops, giving the village commercial district double duty as a tourist stop.

Since the mid-1970s, Lee's population has slowly declined. From 1980 to 2010, the population decreased by 4.8%, from 6,247 to 5,943 residents. Since then, the decline has continued. The racial mix of the community is rather homogeneous, with 96.6% of the population classified as white in 2014. Recent years have witnessed a small influx of Hispanic immigrants settling in the downtown neighborhood.

The population decline over the last two decades is due to a combination of factors. One reason is a declining birth rate. At the same time, improvements to health care have extended life spans, and led to changes in the age distribution of the community. In 1970, 10.3% of Lee's residents were over 65 years of age. By 2014, the elderly represented 19.4% of the population. Children under 14 comprised 14.7% of the population in 2014, with teens and adults 15-44, at 65.9%, representing the balance. With the growing aging trend expected to continue, recreational facilities will need to be designed that are more accessible to persons with disabilities.

### Historical Population

Year	Pop.	±%
1850	3,220	—
1860	4,420	37.30%
1870	3,866	-12.5%
1880	3,939	1.90%
1890	3,785	-3.9%
1900	3,596	-5.0%
1910	4,106	14.20%
1920	4,085	-0.5%
1930	4,061	-0.6%
1940	4,222	4.00%
1950	4,820	14.20%
1960	5,271	9.40%
1970	6,426	21.90%
1980	6,247	-2.8%
1990	5,849	-6.4%
2000	5,985	2.30%
2010	5,943	-0.7%

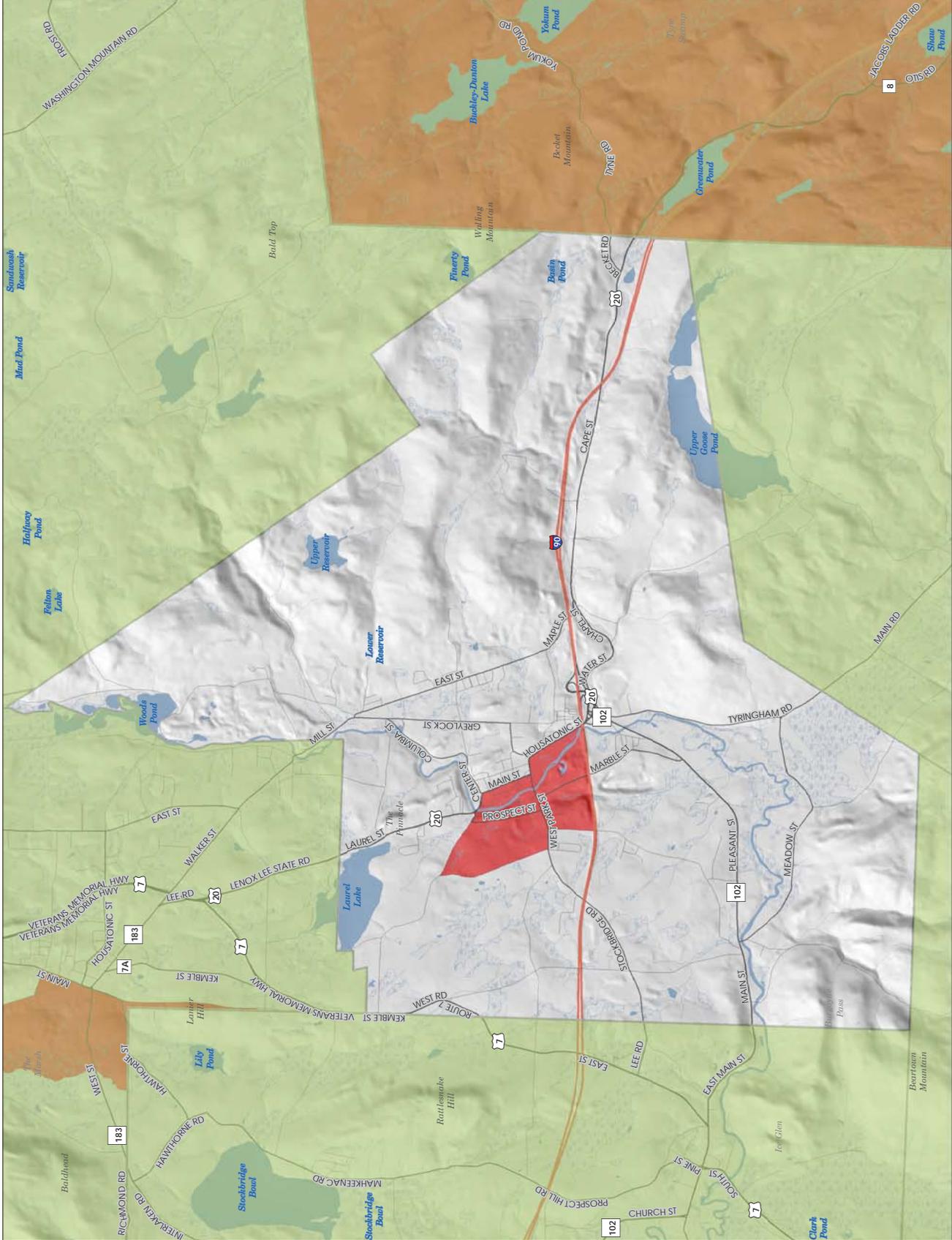
Source: United States Census records and Population Estimates Program data.

# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map 2: Environmental Justice Populations

-  Towns
-  Interstate
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Local Road
-  Stream
-  Wetland
-  Open Water
-  Environmental Justice



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Although overall population shifts have not been remarkable over the last forty years, residential development trends have changed the population density and distribution. Newer homes and condominiums were built further away from the town center or on former agricultural land on the outskirts of town.

The most notable factor in the population decline is out-migration, forced by reduced employment in Lee's largest industry, papermaking, and the demise of other high-paying manufacturing jobs in the region; and by young adults leaving for college. This economic trend has not been restricted to Lee. The manufacturing base has declined in Berkshire County, particularly over the last dozen years, while employment opportunities increased in the lower-paying service sector, particularly in health and retail. The net effect has been a declining non-residential tax base and increased dependence on residential property taxes. In Lee, this trend was partially stemmed by the addition of the Berkshire Outlet Village to the tax rolls in 1997.

Overall, the lack of economic growth over the last several decades, coupled with fewer residents employed in manufacturing, has made it difficult for taxpayers to keep up with upgrading the town's services.

Lee's economy is increasingly diverse. Since the closing of the former Clark-Aiken manufacturing plant reported in the 2000 Open Space and Recreation Plan, four of the last five paper mills in town have closed. Following the closure of the mills in 2008, the mills remain primarily vacant and significantly underused. The economic base has broadened in recent years encompassing more small businesses in both the manufacturing and service sector. Lee, like many other local communities, benefits from the tourist industry. The Outlet Village and the downtown are partly visitor destinations. Though Lee lacks major cultural attractions, its motels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and gas stations benefit from travelers visiting cultural attractions in neighboring Stockbridge and Lenox such as the Norman Rockwell Museum and Tanglewood.

Income data available from the 2014 American Community Survey show that Lee is less prosperous than many other communities in the Commonwealth, ranking 281 out of 351 municipalities in median household income. The median household income in 2013 was \$57,683, 86.3% of the state average. Although not a wealthy community, Lee has few residents on public assistance. Compared to the statewide average of 11.4%, Lee had only 9.5% of its residents with incomes below poverty level.

The resident population trends suggest little change in the number of people to be served with recreational activities, but significant variability in needs. Based on Lee's age distribution and measures of wealth, recreational activities will need to be diverse while development opportunities may be limited. Although there is currently greater demand for recreational

opportunities for children, the town will need to focus more on the increasing needs of its elderly citizens in the future.

## D. Growth and Development Patterns

Though early settlement was in East Lee, the population center for the town has been concentrated in the central village, radiating from the Lee Town Park, since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Small settlements, many with retail businesses, continued to exist in South Lee and East Lee. Neighborhoods, each with their own recreational areas and schools, were often homogenous pockets for different ethnic groups. Housing for the many industrial workers sprang up in close proximity to the paper mills and quarries. Large tracts of farmland used for livestock and silage crops insulated the town center in all directions. To the south and east, unsettled forestland predominated.

With the advent of popular usage of the automobile, residential development spread beyond the original areas. In the post-World War II era, this dispersion accelerated as large farms and large expanses of agricultural land were converted to residential and other uses, a process facilitated by the growing prominence of the automobile. Except for a handful of remaining large tracts, the large farmlands have disappeared, replaced mostly by single family homes that have altered the open spaces and scenic views. South Lee, though still maintaining separate churches and a post office, is no longer the commercial and population center it once was. The Oak & Spruce resort is also located in South Lee. A private development of second homes, Leisure Lee, was developed surrounding Goose Pond. There is a condominium development on the side of October Mountain. Though not a large presence, trailer parks occupy a small tract near the Turnpike and the Bradley Park area in northeast Lee. Public projects, built by the town and Commonwealth, provide housing for low income, elderly, and mentally disabled and physically handicapped residents.

### Patterns and Trends

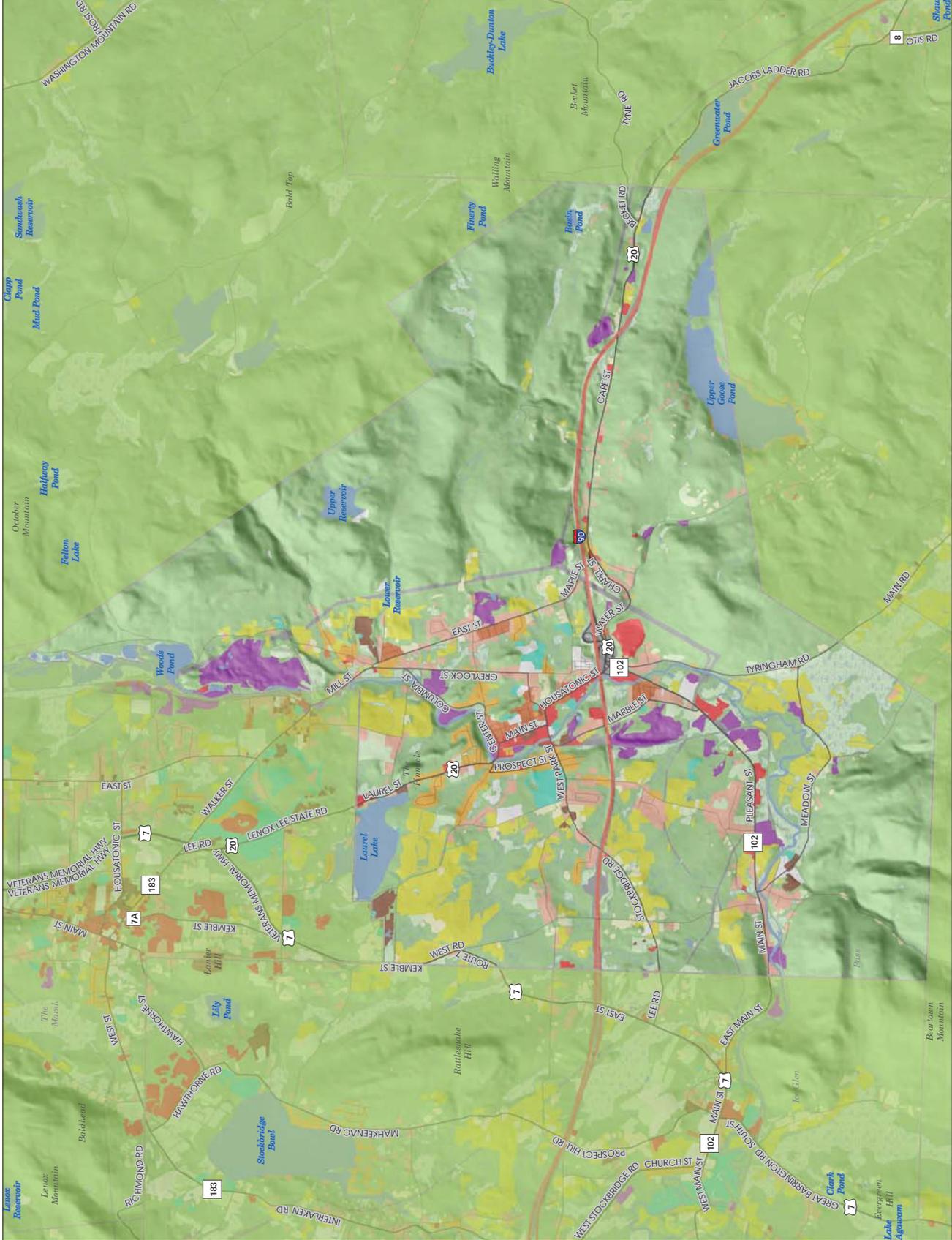
Since the 1960s, the townspeople have taken an interest in preserving a portion of the remaining unspoiled land in town for watershed and recreational use. Additional conservation land has been acquired along Laurel Lake, in the Tyringham Valley, and near South Lee. Housing development has become limited in recent years due to the current shortage of buildable land and strict enforcement of environmental regulations, although a senior assisted living project with a nursing home component has just opened and several subdivisions are planned. It should be noted that housing pressures are not entirely alleviated by the decrease in population—the number of households in Lee actually increased between 1980 and 1990, even as the overall population decreased. Luckily, forest land has been left relatively untouched because of its steep slopes and remains conserved, even though much of it is

# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map C: Current Land Use (2005)

- Forest
- Agriculture
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Multi-Family Residential
- High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Very Low Density Residential
- Recreation
- Open Land
- Urban Public/Institutional
- Utilities / Transportation
- Water
- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water



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privately held. One exception is the recent construction of the Berkshire Outlet Village retail complex on a previously forested tract overlooking the Turnpike, for which extensive slope cuts were made, and which is still not stable. An official plan regarding watchful maintenance and preservation of conservation land and future acquisition of open space still needs to be put in place.

The building of the Turnpike, and the upgrading of former country routes, such as Route 102, to 2-lane highways, spurred development away from the center of town. Businesses such as gas stations, fast food restaurants, and motels sprang up near the Turnpike entrance in the 1960s and '70s. Commercial and civic activity is concentrated along Main Street in the center of town and along Routes 20 and 102, radiating away from the Massachusetts Turnpike interchange.

The Route 102 area has been rezoned industrial and is home to several light industries. In 1987, the Windsock Industrial Park was privately developed. In 1997, the Quarry Hill Business Park was created along this route. It is intended to attract new industry to replace jobs lost in the traditional paper and machine manufacturing industries.

The impacts of the changing land use patterns on recreational use and open space are many. Specifically:

- a. The conversion of most of the remaining farmland and increased housing development have threatened the rural landscape and scenic views that have traditionally existed in all sections of town except the town center.
- b. The haphazard development of the commercial district has diminished the scenic beauty and impressions made on visitors when they entering this "gateway" town. The rural landscape and the New England character of the buildings is important to Lee, and other Berkshire communities, in maintaining the quality of life desired by their residents and in attracting tourists.
- c. Neighborhood recreational facilities are more extensive than in many surrounding communities. They provide opportunities for pedestrian usage and neighborhood interaction, although there may be some issues with ownership and maintenance. At the same time, the centrally located facilities at the schools and off Route 20, and the soccer fields on Route 102, have not been upgraded or expanded significantly.
- d. Telecommunication towers have begun to spring up along the Massachusetts Turnpike, including Lee, with the ability of towns to regulate them limited by the Federal Telecommunications Act. It is important to carefully limit and guide the siting of these facilities, particularly in order to preserve scenic resources.

## Infrastructure

### *Transportation System*

One of Lee's greatest economic assets is its location off Exit 2 of the Massachusetts Turnpike, an Interstate highway connecting Buffalo, New York and Boston. This exit is one of only two interchanges in the Berkshires. The stretch between Westfield and Lee (approximately 30 miles), is one of the longest stretch without access within metropolitan counties in the United States. Currently a large portion of the Exit 2 Turnpike traffic passes through the downtown on its way to Lee and other towns within the County. This traffic, along with what has been generated by the Berkshire Outlet Village since its opening in 1997, puts Lee's downtown streets under enormous strain, particularly in the summer. Route 20 is a major arterial which runs through Lee connecting to the neighboring towns of Lenox and Becket. Route 20 is also part of the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Trail, a state-recognized scenic byway. The Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. is a non-profit organization that works to maintain the natural beauty and historic character.

Lee's main public transportation system is the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority's local bus service connecting Lee with Pittsfield to the north and Great Barrington to the south. It runs six days a week on a regular schedule from early morning until early evening. Greyhound, and Peter Pan provide long distance service to Vermont, Connecticut and New York City, Albany and points west, Springfield, Boston, Providence and Cape Cod.

The closest airport is a municipal airport in Pittsfield, 10 miles away. Lee is within an hour and a half drive of two major airports in Albany and Hartford and a two and a half hour drive to Logan Airport in Boston and the Providence (RI) Airport. Limousine service is available to the airports in Albany, Hartford, Boston, and New York. The Council on Aging provides service to seniors and persons with disabilities.

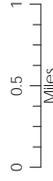
The only train service currently operating is the Housatonic freight line that runs from the north end of Lee along the Housatonic River through the center of town and then to the west. The line is utilized to transport raw materials and product for manufacturing and industry. Passenger service to New York City is available at Hudson, NY (a 1 hour drive) or Dover Plains, NY and to Boston and Chicago from Pittsfield.

There is no passenger rail station in Lee since passenger service was eliminated in 1971. However, the Housatonic Railroad Company (HRRC) has proposed re-establishing passenger rail service between Danbury, Connecticut and Pittsfield, Massachusetts on the former Berkshire Line. The HRRC proposal would once again make it possible for a passenger boarding the passenger train at Grand Central Station in New York City to reach Pittsfield by train in approximately four (4) hours and vice versa. For the HRRC proposal to become reality, a

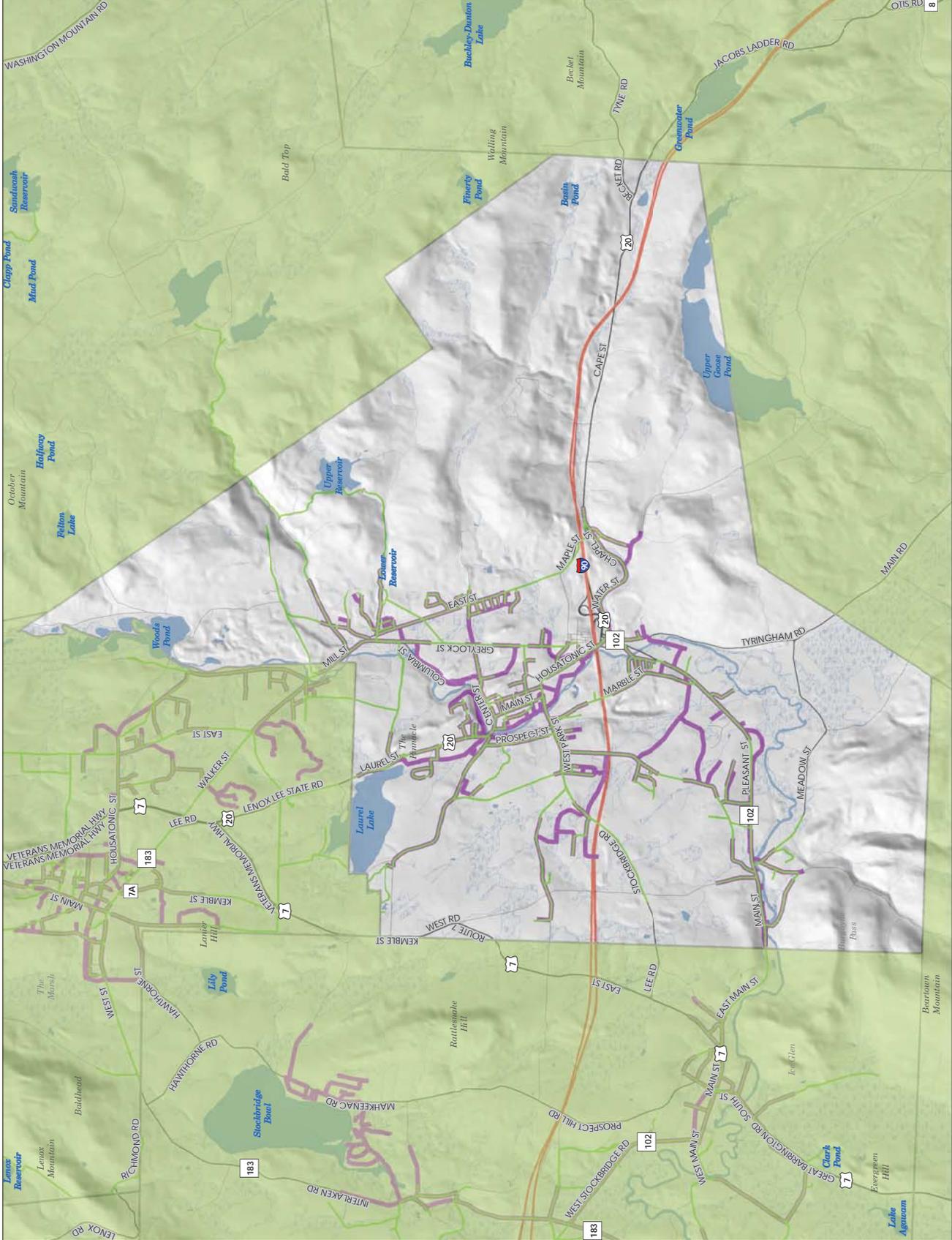
# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan

## Map D: Infrastructure

-  Water
-  Wastewater
-  Towns
-  Interstate
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Local Road
-  Stream
-  Wetland
-  Open Water



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significant capital investment in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York will need to be made to upgrade the rail infrastructure along the Berkshire Line. In 2013 BRPC partnered with HRRC to conduct a passenger rail station location and design analysis with the primary objective of identifying the most feasible and advantageous locations for passenger rail stations along the Berkshire Line. As a result of the analysis, initial passenger rail stations are recommended in the City of Pittsfield, the Town of Lee and the Town of Great Barrington. Passenger rail stations located in these locations will best serve the needs of the region and the operational needs of the proposed passenger rail service. It was recommended that a new passenger rail station be constructed in Lee on the west side of the downtown area on Railroad Street. A station in this location is expected to serve the needs of the local community, support existing commercial establishments in the downtown area, further economic development, and facilitate intra-county transportation.

### *Water Supply Systems*

Lee draws its public water supply primarily from town reservoirs located on October Mountain. The Washington Mountain Brook Watershed Project under the Small Watershed Flood Control Program consists of: 240-acre Washington Mountain Lake, which functions as a flood control and recreational watershed; 70-acre October Mountain Lake, which serves as a flood control and recreational watershed and provides part of the water supply; and 39-acre Schoolhouse Lake, which functions as a flood control and is one of the town's primary water sources. A new water filtration plant came online in September of 1998, improving the quality of drinking water and bringing the water supply into compliance with the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act.

The Town also satisfies its drinking water needs through the use of surface water. The Town has long obtained its public water supply from Leahy and Vanenetti Reservoirs. With the completion of the new water treatment facility, the town has begun to use water from the Schoolhouse Lake and October Mountain Lake Reservoirs. A large proportion of the watershed area for the reservoirs is currently protected.

### *Sewer Service and Septic*

Most of the Town of Lee is sewered, with the exception of a significant hamlet, East Lee. The present sewer system extends to the development at Foxhollow above Laurel Lake in Lenox (the facility has a private pumping station that taps into the Lee sewer system) and along the Route 102 industrial district. The construction of a new municipal wastewater treatment plant was completed in 2008. Through the construction of the new plant, average daily flow capacity increased from 1 million to 1.25 million gallons per day.

Onyx Specialty Papers Inc. on Route 102 has its own waste water treatment facilities, which are subject to State environmental quality review. Mead built a secondary treatment facility that went online January 2000, and is in the process of upgrading their original system that is projected to be back in operation by January 2001. Schweitzer-Maudit formerly operated its own wastewater treatment facilities which are no longer operational. The Schweitzer facilities were purchased by Niagara Worldwide LLC and a new permit would be required if these wastewater treatment facilities were to become operational again.

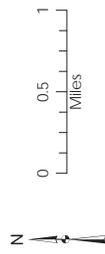
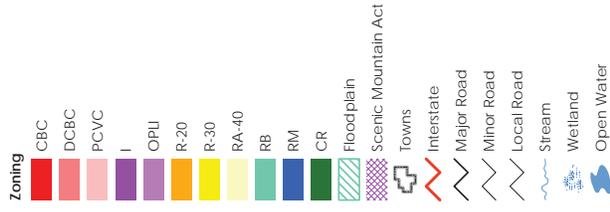
Cottage septic systems surrounding Laurel Lake contribute little bacteria to the lake but do contribute some nutrients that may be aggravating the long-standing problem with weed growth. New state regulations affecting septic systems will encourage the upgrading of existing systems and prevent contamination of water resources.

### Long Term Development Patterns

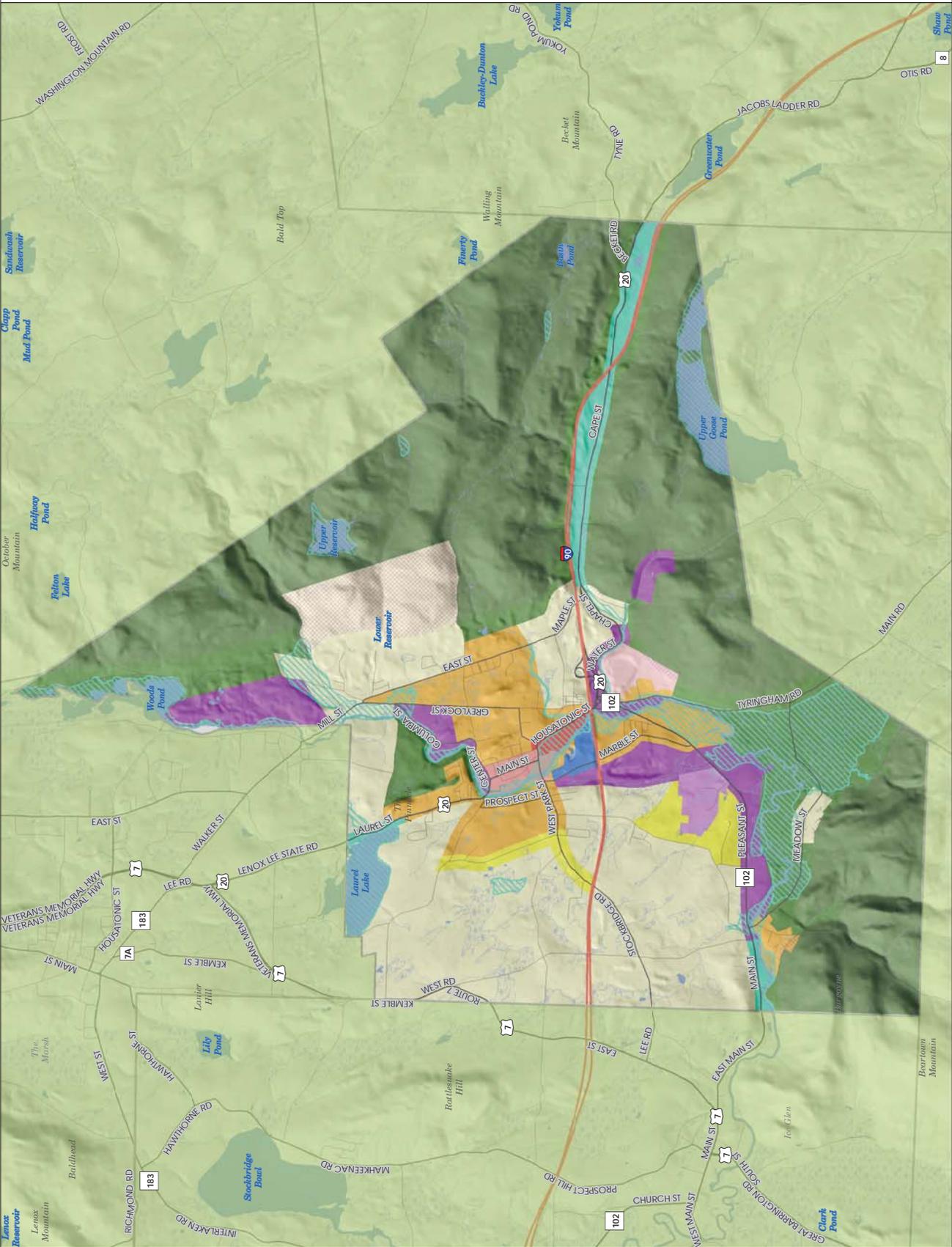
Land use in Lee is controlled through the zoning by-laws, originally adopted in 1963 and most recently amended in 1998 and through sub-division control regulations. The current zoning districts are shown on Map 3. The zoning includes an environmental review procedure in several instances where special permits are required.

As a result of environmental and other development constraints, much of the future development can be expected to occur on marginal land, and will place environmentally sensitive lands in a more vulnerable position. Agricultural lands, in particular, are in great jeopardy of being lost to development. Unless measures are taken, dramatic alterations to the character and identity of the community could occur. Development and Land Use issues are considered in greater detail in the Master Plan.

# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map 3: Zoning



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# Section 4

## Environmental Inventory and Analysis

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### A. Geology, Soils and Topography

Topographically, two distinct types of landforms cover the Town of Lee. Looming to the east is the hilly New England upland, while to the north and west the land opens out onto the rolling Housatonic Valley. To the south lies another upland, pierced by the picturesque Tyringham Valley. The uplands occupy a considerable area of the town and are dissected by mountain streams including Coddington Brook, Beartown Brook, and Greenwater Pond Brook.

Steep slopes are the largest single physical element affecting the future development of the community. Approximately 6,500 acres, 37% of the total area of 17,350 acres, can be considered steep slopes and not coincidentally, by their nature protect the scenic vistas which townspeople treasure. The largest area is to the east where the mountainsides of the New England upland have been deeply cut by mountain streams.

The bedrock geology of the town is characterized by the soft, carbonate rock formation which underlies the more developed, western portion of the community, and more resistant gneissic rocks which dominate in the upland areas. The pattern of limestone deposits and location of more resistant rocks has had a significant impact on the development of this community. The floor of the Housatonic Valley is underlain by Stockbridge Limestone of Ordovician Age. The lower dolomitic part of the formation was mined for its marble for building purposes and the upper calcitic part is used for commercial fertilizers. The New England Upland to the east and south is primarily made up of Micaceous Quartzite, Becket Granite Gneiss, and Hinsdale Gneiss, while the less resistant rocks that remain on the valley floor and as part of the Taconic Range to the west are Berkshire Schist and Amphibole Schist.

Surficial geology of the town reflects both deposits of glacial origin and more recent deposits associated with the flooding of the Housatonic River and its tributaries. The upland areas are covered with a thin mantle of glacial till, a poorly-sorted mixture of silt, sand, gravel, boulders and clay, deposited directly by the glacial ice as it advanced generally from the northwest to southeast. As the glacier melted and retreated from the area about 18,000 years ago, meltwater streams deposited layers of sand and gravel. The most important materials left behind in this process in Lee were the coarse grained, ice contact stratified drift deposits that currently fill the valley of Greenwater Pond Brook and the area immediately south of Woods Pond. These deposits have a significant impact on the groundwater potential of the area.

# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map 4: Soils and Geologic Features Map

-  Prime Agricultural Soils
-  Excessively Drained Soils
-  Poorly Drained Soils
-  Towns
-  Interstate
-  Major Road
-  Minor Road
-  Local Road
-  Stream
-  Wetland
-  Open Water



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Soil characteristics also differ dramatically between the more developed portion of town and the uplands to the east. The upland area is severely sloped and dominated by extremely stony, acidic soils with shallow depth to bedrock. Sandy, gravelly soils on terraces characterize the area south of Woods Pond and east along the Mass. Turnpike and Greenwater Pond Brook, while rich alluvial soils cover much of the floodplain of the Housatonic River. Poorly drained mineral and organic soils are also found in wetlands and low areas that border the Housatonic River and its tributaries, including along Meadow Street. In the western third of the town are mixed, scattered areas of stony, limestone soils, poorly drained mineral and organic soils and stony acid soils with hardpans. This area contains the majority of well-drained soils, of which a significant portion is considered prime agricultural land. These soils are shown on Map 4.

## B. Landscape Character

The character of the Lee landscape is defined by a unique blend of natural and social features such as vibrant town center which underwent a significant revitalization in 1997. Downtown Lee, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is an intact, cohesive grouping of buildings that typifies the architecture of a late nineteenth century mill town.

Natural features also play an important role in defining Lee's identity. The steep mountainous, wooded terrain to the east and south (October Mountain and Beartown Mountain) is a constant reminder of Lee's location in the Berkshires. The steep slopes represent both a major constraint to future development and a prime source of current and future recreational enjoyment for Massachusetts residents (October Mountain and Beartown State Forests and the Appalachian Trail). Although much of this area is currently protected, there are still parcels that could be developed. The types of problems encountered in the 1980s during the construction of Leisure Lee, a large second home development in the more hilly southeastern portion of town, including erosion and difficulty obtaining percolation, are concerns that the town carries with it as it enters a stage when nearly all new development will be on marginal lots.

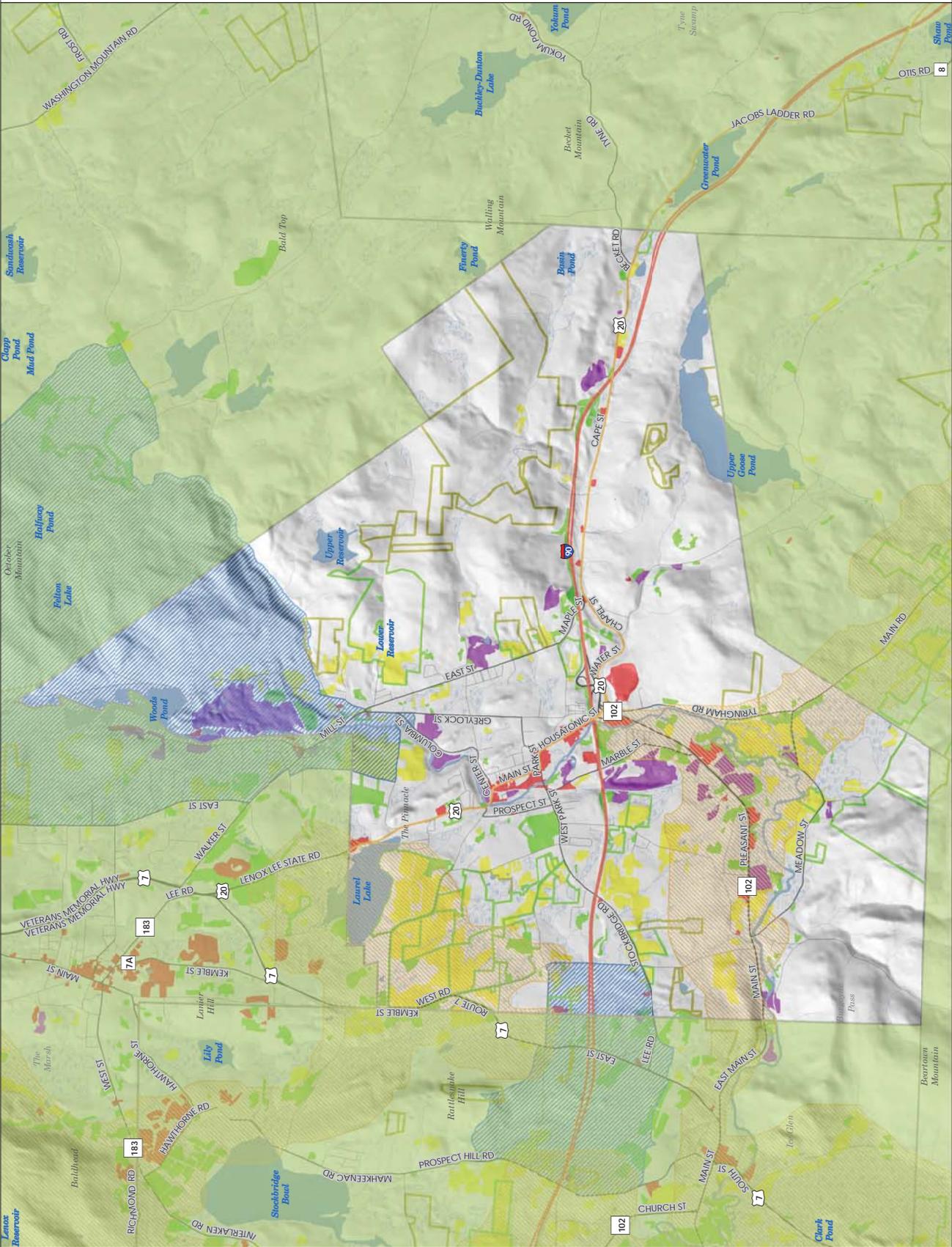
Lee's identity is also defined by the scenic beauty of its lakes, rivers and streams. The most prominent of these is the Housatonic River. The river and its tributaries are responsible for the scenic wetlands and fertile floodplains that line its shores. These, in turn, make possible the excellent wildlife habitat that exists in this area. Laurel Lake, as one of the few water bodies in this area with publicly accessible swimming, is a resource of regional recreational significance. It also offers outstanding views. For 45 years, the Berkshires has struggled with the loss of their lakes due to premature aging, or eutrophication, and thus the onset of milfoil and other nuisance weeds. Laurel Lake is no exception. The Town must play a part solving the long-term problem. Solutions may include discussions with the neighboring town of Lenox about sewerage the lakeside cottages on their side of the lake.

# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map 5: Unique Features Map

- Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Chapter 61
- Chapter 61A
- DCR Scenic Landscapes
- Open Land
- Agricultural Land
- Commercial Land
- Industrial Land
- Jacobs Ladder Trail Scenic Byway
- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water



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The rural character of Lee is still very apparent in the working farms that dot the landscape, particularly in the western portion of town and the entrance to the Tyringham Valley. Agricultural land uses dominate in the northwestern section of the community. These include a 750+ acre segment of a much larger farm that is currently under the ownership of one family. Due to the size and location of this parcel, its future use will have a significant impact upon the character of the community, and is therefore of obvious concern to the Town.

## C. Water Resources

Lee is rich in water resources, including brooks, streams, ponds, vernal pools, wetlands, and aquifers (*See the Water Resources Map*). This section focuses on waters within the Town of Lee, but it is important to keep in mind that improvements in water quality in the Housatonic River, Laurel Lake, and other brooks, streams and wetlands have impacts beyond town borders. Coordination with towns both upstream and downstream is necessary in order to clean and restore the Housatonic River and preserve its scenic and natural beauty. Our surface water sources provide clean drinking water (primarily Schoolhouse Lake and Leahey Reservoir), and provide scenic and recreational resources to residents and tourists.

### Watersheds

Lee lies within the Housatonic River Basin, which drains the entire town through a complex system of tributary streams, brooks and small rivulets too numerous to mention. The Housatonic River enters the Town of Lee from Lenox at Woods Pond, in the northern portion of town, and flows in a south-southwesterly direction, through the town center, before exiting the Town's western border into the Town of Stockbridge. Along the way it is joined directly by several major tributaries including Washington Mountain Brook, Coddington Brook, Goose Pond Brook and Hop Brook. Other streams that indirectly feed into the Housatonic River are Greenwater Pond Brook, Basin Pond Brook, Mad River, Willow Brook and Commons Brook.

### Surface Water

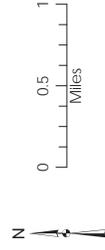
Surface water resources play an extremely important role in the Town of Lee, both from the standpoint of recreational value and economic usefulness.

Recreational use of the Housatonic River is limited by water quality problems associated with PCB contamination caused by the General Electric Company (see Environmental Challenges). The U.S. EPA has issued its Draft Modification to the Reissued RCRA Permit (Draft Permit), which will dictate how GE conducts the cleanup. The six Berkshire County Rest of River municipalities have been working together with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to understand how the cleanup will affect the communities so that they can provide informed and

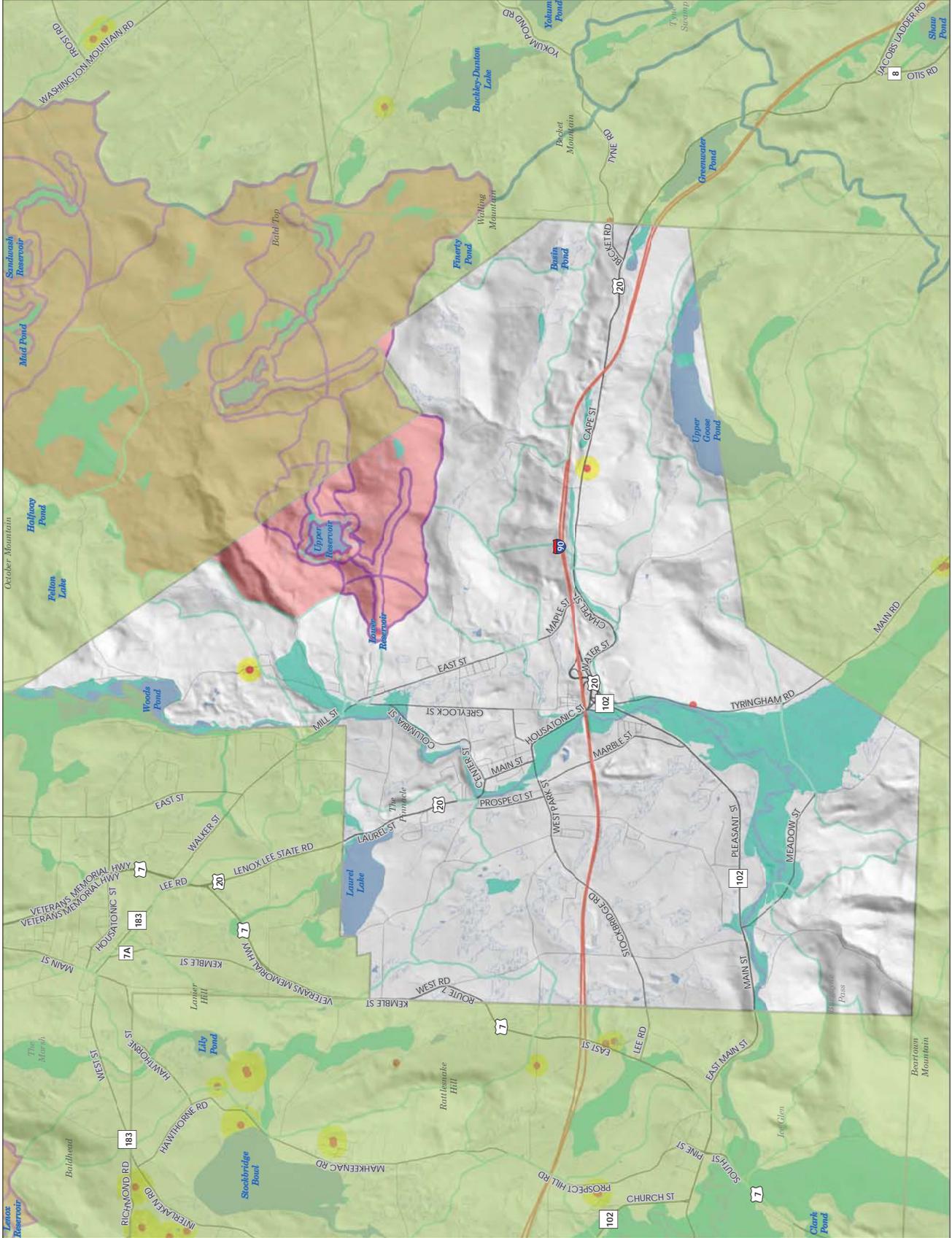
# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan

## Map 6: Water Resources

- PWS
- Interim Wellhead Protection Area
- Surface Water Protection Zone
- Outstanding Resource Waters
- FEMA 100yr Floodplain
- Watersheds
- Subwatersheds
- Towns
- ↘ Interstate
- ↘ Major Road
- ↘ Minor Road
- ↘ Local Road
- ~ Stream
- ~ Wetland
- ~ Open Water



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constructive input to the EPA during this public review period. As part of this work, Lee has submitted comments to the EPA.

The river is used for canoeing (see Appendix) as well as other forms of scenic enjoyment; and Lee and adjoining communities are also working to develop a greenway along the river. The Town of Lee is also incorporating a greater role for the riverfront in its downtown planning and implementation efforts.

Ponds and lakes are also an important element of Lee's water resource inventory. The most significant of these is Laurel Lake, which is shared with the Town of Lenox. This facility includes a town beach (Sandy Beach) and a state-run boat ramp along Route 20. An annual 3ft drawdown is conducted at Laurel Lake along with selective handpulling. Limited water-based recreation also exists at Goose Pond, but public accessibility to this resource is extremely limited, despite the pond's status as a Great Pond.

### Aquifer Recharge Area

The Town of Lee relies almost entirely on surface water supplies as a source of public water. The reservoirs and the new water treatment plant have improved the quality of water and doubled the quantity of water available to the town. Although the Town does not currently rely heavily on ground water as a source of drinking water, hydro-geological explorations have been performed in the town to identify potential subsurface supplies. In fact, a study recently indicated that development of available groundwater supplies remains a possibility for the future.

There are two major aquifers in the town of Lee: the Woods Pond Aquifer and the Greenwater Pond Brook Aquifer. Although each of these aquifers is capable of producing significant quantities of water, each also suffer from water quality problems. The Woods Pond Aquifer currently yields in excess of two million gallons per day to four wells operated by a local industry used exclusively in industrial processing. The Greenwater Pond Brook Aquifer, though not currently being used as a public water supply, does serve a number of private users who have drilled wells in the deposits along Route 20. Test wells drilled in the Greenwater Pond Brook aquifer have projected an estimated capacity of up to one million gallons per day, although sodium levels are high due to the proximity of the Mass. Turnpike. No effort has been made to protect the recharge areas of either aquifer.

### Flood Hazard Areas

Flood hazards have always been a major concern of the inhabitants of the Town of Lee. As a result of its location in the Housatonic River Basin, at the base of many major mountain

streams, the Town has on several occasions suffered substantial losses due to flooding. Areas in East Lee have been regularly flooded and in one instance experienced significant loss of life.

A significant portion of the town of Lee is situated in the 100-year floodplain. In the northern section of town, flood hazards are minimal because the floodplain is contained within high banks where there is little or no housing. In the southern flatlands, however, the floodplain widens out as the Housatonic River enters areas of flatter topography, which unfortunately, are among the more developed sections of town. Areas particularly prone to flooding in this area include the southern end of Main Street, along Route 20 to the Mass. Turnpike, the northern part of Tyringham Road for about 2,000 feet, and a three mile stretch along Route 102, where significant residential and commercial/industrial development has already occurred. The broad floodplain area near Meadow Street is largely in agricultural use and the wetlands are a major attraction for wildlife, including many species of migratory birds. The State Fisheries and Wildlife Division has recognized the value of this resource by acquiring over 300 acres of land in this area. These acquisitions serve the dual purpose of protecting an important wildlife habitat and providing flood storage for the river basin.

## Wetlands

Wetlands in their natural state are often considered undesirable, and are in fact, unsuitable for many types of development. In the past, wetlands were commonly altered by draining or filling and then used for many of human activities. This practice is now recognized as damaging to the environment and can occur in Lee only at the discretion of the Conservation Commission. In the last several decades, the variety of wetland values has been formerly recognized by the Wetlands Protection Act. Some of the values include: wildlife, outdoor recreation, purification of aquifer recharge areas, flood control (stabilization of runoff), reduction and prevention of erosion, and scenic qualities.

The Town of Lee performed an extensive inventory of its wetland resources in 1974 as part of a study entitled Housatonic River Flood Plain and the Inland Wetlands in the Town of Lee, Massachusetts. This study was based on aerial photography and botanical classifications in the field. In 1975, the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, used the same techniques to produce wetland maps for towns across Massachusetts.

Scattered wetlands are found north and south of Devon Road, along and to the south of Route 102, along the Mass. Turnpike, between Greylock Street and East Street, along Washington Mountain Road, north of Woods Pond, along the railroad tracks near the Lenox town border, south of the quarry, slightly west of Finnerty Pond, and just south of Basin Pond. Most of these wetlands are in wooded areas, though some are in fields.

The most extensive area of wetlands in town is the flat floodplain north and south of Meadow Street. Much of this land is still being farmed. As has been pointed out, a concerted effort has been made by the State Fisheries and Wildlife to protect this important wetland.

## D. Vegetation

The Town of Lee is extremely fortunate in having a large percentage of its land mass covered by some form of vegetation, much of it protected through either public ownership or state law. Included are a wide variety of vegetational associations. Fields and croplands are found in the northwestern part of town, and extend the length of the Housatonic River from Woods Pond to South Lee, along a narrow strip of the Massachusetts Turnpike, and into the broad flat lands of the Hop Brook area. Hemlock-northern hardwoods are found in the mountainous southwestern section of town, in much of the eastern highlands, and small scattered areas in the western end of town. White and red pine softwood forest is found in a broad north-south band on the eastern side of town in the uppermost elevations. Flood plains, swamps and marshes are found in scattered pockets in the western part of town and a large area is found in the Hop Brook region.

### Forest Land

To be completed...

### Agricultural Land

To be completed...

### Rare Species

Lee is also home to a number of rare plant species, some of which are threatened by the lack of a formal protective strategy. According to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program, there are currently four unprotected areas in the town which may or may not encompass rare species sites, but whose habitat and natural community types are considered unusual and of excellent quality.

#### *Town of Lee List of Rare Plant Species*

Vascular Plant	<i>Carex tetanica</i>	Fen Sedge	SC	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Conioselinum chinense</i>	Hemlock Parsley	SC	1982
Vascular Plant	<i>Eleocharis intermedia</i>	Intermediate Spike-sedge	T	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Equisetum scirpoides</i>	Dwarf Scouring-rush	SC	1915
Vascular Plant	<i>Eragrostis frankii</i>	Frank's Lovegrass	SC	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Galium labradoricum</i>	Labrador Bedstraw	T	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>	Andrews' Bottle Gentian	E	2012
Vascular Plant	<i>Lonicera hirsuta</i>	Hairy Honeysuckle	E	2008

## Town of Lee List of Rare Plant Species

Vascular Plant	<i>Platanthera flava var.</i>	Pale Green Orchis	T	2013
Vascular Plant	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Bur Oak	SC	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Sisyrinchium mucronatum</i>	Slender Blue-eyed Grass	E	1912
Vascular Plant	<i>Acer nigrum</i>	Black Maple	-WL	2008
				(delisted)
Vascular Plant	<i>Carex retrorsa</i>	Retrorsed Sedge	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Caulophyllum giganteum</i>	Giant Blue Cohosh	-WL	2000
Vascular Plant	<i>Equisetum variegatum var. variegatum</i>	Variiegated Horsetail	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	Common Sneezeweed	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Heteranthera dubia</i>	Grassleaf Mud-plantain	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Juncus nodosus</i>	Knotted Rush	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Pellaea atropurpurea</i>	Purple-stem Cliffbrake	-WL	1980s
Vascular Plant	<i>Populus balsamifera ssp. balsamifera</i>	Balsam Poplar	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Ribes americanum</i>	Wild Black Currant	-WL	2002
Vascular Plant	<i>Salix candida</i>	Hoary Willow	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Salix pedicellaris</i>	Bog Willow	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Salix serissima</i>	Autumn Willow	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Scirpus pendulus</i>	Pendulous Bulrush	-WL	1999
				(delisted)
Vascular Plant	<i>Sparganium fluctuans</i>	Floating Bur-reed	-WL	ND

SC = Special Concern T= Threatened E= Endangered WL= Watch List

## Unique Natural Resources

There are nine Natural Heritage Natural Community Priority areas in Lee, with many shared between the neighboring communities of Lenox, Washington, Stockbridge, Great Barrington and Tyringham. The Lake area is degraded, with large populations of invasive non-native species and damage from flooding, but the core of the calcareous seepage fen remains and could be recovered with management of the non-native species. On Laurel Lake itself, a calcareous ledge supports uncommon species. Hop Brook and its mouth on the Housatonic River support rare species and mud flat riverside marsh communities. Several years ago, there was a calcareous sloping fen and rare species in an adjacent wet meadow. Nevertheless, the area was slated for development.

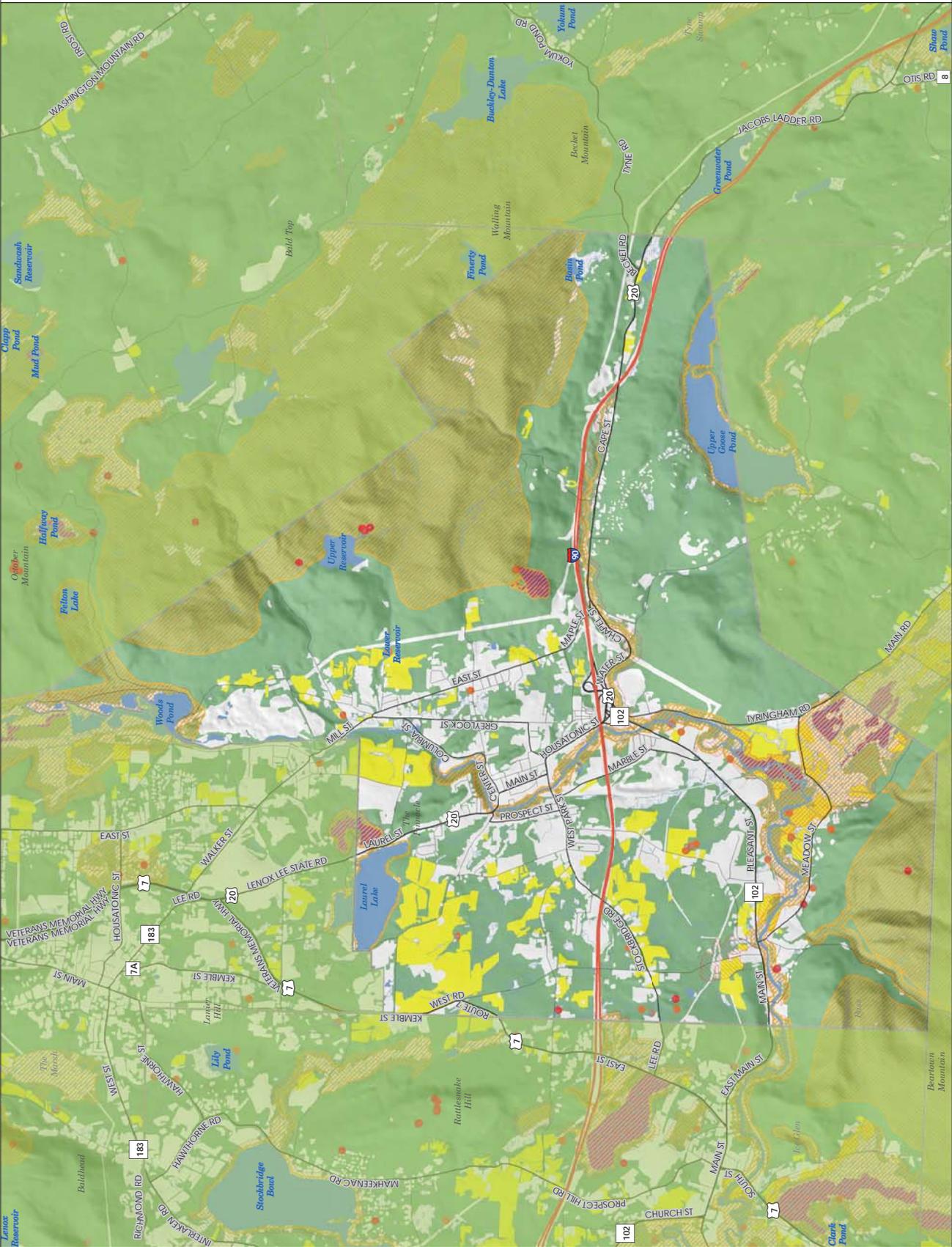
A portion of the 1,350 acre Kamposoa Bog Drainage Basin ACEC is located in the town of Lee (225 acres) with the majority of the drainage basin located in Stockbridge (1,125 acres). The Kamposoa drainage basin is part of the larger Housatonic River watershed. The heart of the ACEC is Kamposoa Bog and its associated surface waters, wetlands, groundwater and rare species habitat. Scientifically, Kamposoa is not a bog, but a fen, contained in a small basin (the Kamposoa drainage basin), with an inflow of calcareous cold groundwater. Scientists refer to

# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map F: Vegetation and Fisheries and Wildlife

- Certified Vernal Pool
- Potential Vernal Pool
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species
- BioMap2 Core Habitat
- Natural Communities
- Agriculture
- Forest
- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water



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Kampoosa Bog technically as a Lake Basin Graminoid (grass-like) Calcareous Fen. Due to the critical ecological importance of surface and ground water to the fen and the high concentration of rare species found there, the boundary of the ACEC is designed to approximate the sub-drainage basin of Kampoosa Bog.

The Kampoosa Bog ACEC contains one of the Commonwealth's most significant rare species habitats. The fen and adjacent areas within the ACEC provide habitat for at least 19 state-listed rare species, within a relatively small area of 1,350 acres. According to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, Kampoosa Bog supports not only a very high number of state-listed rare species, but provides habitat for several rare species that are found at very few other sites in Massachusetts. According to the Natural Heritage Program, "preserving the integrity of this calcareous fen is critical to maintaining one of the premier rare species sites in Massachusetts." The Nature Conservancy has given Kampoosa a global ranking in terms of its significance, meaning it is imperiled throughout its range due to rarity or highly vulnerable to extinction due to biological factors, and requires "the highest priority for protection."

Highly significant archaeological resources are also located within the ACEC, determined by the Massachusetts Historical Commission as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Following ACEC designation, the Kampoosa Stewardship Committee was formed by a variety of local, regional and state private and public agencies and organizations, as well as interested citizens, to preserve and restore the resources of the ACEC by fostering community stewardship.

### *Town of Lee List of Natural Communities*

Other Ecological	Certified Vernal Pools	13 pools	
Natural Community	Major-river Floodplain Forest		S2
Natural Community	Wet Meadow		S4
Natural Community	Black ash-Red maple-Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp		S2
Natural Community	Small-river Floodplain Forest		S2
Natural Community	Hickory-Hop hornbeam Forest/Woodland		S2
Natural Community	Shrub Swamp		S5
Natural Community	Calcareous Sloping Fen		S2
Natural Community	Deep Emergent Marsh	Exemplary Natural Community	S4
Natural Community	Freshwater Mud Flat		S4

S2= Imperiled communities, typically 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state

S4= Apparently secure in Massachusetts.

S5= Demonstrably secure in Massachusetts

Lee is partly located in an ecological area known as the Western New England Marble Valley. Since rock formations including calcium-based marble are geologically different from the rest of the state, the chemistry of the water and soil of the area are also distinct. Vegetation growing on these soils is distinct, with many species that occur only in calcium-rich areas. Some of these species are under state protection because they are so uncommon in the state. The wetland vegetation in particular is different from most of the rest of New England, with an abundance of species that are specialized to calcium enriched, but otherwise nutrient poor, waters. Lee has several occurrences of calcareous fens, a riverside marsh and calcareous ledge in priority habitats. This area, popularly known as “The Rocks” is currently for sale and efforts by the Town to secure the historically important spot should be made.

Management and monitoring of conservation lands become important as acquisition and protection are accomplished. Water quality and quantity are ongoing issues for wetlands. All wetlands particularly need to maintain their natural water regime, including normal fluctuations and connections with uplands and other wetlands. Another aspect of managing conservation lands that is important in many areas is controlling invasive non-native species that alter the habitat and occupy space that native species would otherwise use. Bush honeysuckle is a particular problem on several of the priority areas in Lee, with Japanese buckwheat, purple loosestrife, and giant reed grass also colonizing large areas of many wetland communities.

## Regional and Statewide Vegetation Mapping Projects

### *BioMap2*

The Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game, through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife’s Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), and The Nature Conservancy’s Massachusetts Program developed *BioMap2* to protect the state’s biodiversity in the context of climate change.

*BioMap2* combines NHESP’s thirty years of rigorously documented rare species and natural community data with spatial data identifying wildlife species and habitats that were the focus of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife 2005 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). *BioMap2* also integrates the Nature Conservancy’s assessment of large, well-connected, and intact ecosystems and landscapes across the Commonwealth, incorporating concepts of ecosystem resilience to address anticipated climate change impacts.

Protection and stewardship of *BioMap2* Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape is essential to safeguard the diversity of species and their habitats, intact ecosystems, and resilient natural landscapes across Massachusetts.

According to the BioMap2 Town Report, Lee lies on the border of the Berkshire Highlands/Southern Green Mountains, the Lower Berkshire Hills, and the Western New England Marble Valleys/Berkshire Valley/Housatonic and Hoosic Valley Ecoregions. The Berkshire Highlands Ecoregion is an area drained by the Deerfield, upper Westfield, Hoosic, and Housatonic Rivers. Lakes and ponds are relatively abundant. This ecoregion has deep soils that support northern hardwoods and spruce-fir forests. The Lower Berkshire Hills Ecoregion is similar to the Berkshire Highlands Ecoregion, with its common northern hardwoods, but lacks spruce-fir and harbors transition hardwoods. Lakes and ponds are relatively abundant. The Western New England Marble Valleys Ecoregion is an area drained by the Hoosic and Housatonic Rivers. This ecoregion harbors farms, evergreen forests, transition and northern hardwood forests, and calcareous fens. The limestone-rich bedrock in the area creates alkaline lakes and streams.

### *Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS)*

The Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) is an ecosystem-based (coarse-filter) approach for assessing the ecological integrity of lands and waters and subsequently identifying and prioritizing land for habitat and biodiversity conservation. Ecological integrity is defined as the ability of an area to support biodiversity and the ecosystem processes necessary to sustain biodiversity over the long term. CAPS is a computer software program and an approach to prioritizing land for conservation based on the assessment of ecological integrity for various ecological communities (e.g., forest, shrub swamp, headwater stream) within an area.

CAPS combines principles of landscape ecology and conservation biology with the capacity of modern computers to compile spatial data and characterize landscape patterns. This process results in a final Index of Ecological Integrity (IEI) for each point in the landscape based on models constructed separately for each ecological community.

## Lee at a Glance

*BioMap2 Core Habitat: 5,253 acres*

*BioMap2 Core Habitat Protected: 3,316 acres or 63.1%*

*BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape: 7,075 acres*

*BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape Protected: 4,075 acres or 57.6%*

### BioMap2 Components

*Core Habitat*

*6 Exemplary or Priority Natural Community Cores*

*3 Forest Cores*

*5 Wetland Cores*

*9 Aquatic Cores*

*9 Species of Conservation Concern Cores\*\**

*1 mammal, 3 birds, 1 reptile, 2 amphibians, 2 fishes, 6 insects, 2 mussels, 1 snail, 10 plants*

### Critical Natural Landscape

*2 Landscape Blocks*

*5 Wetland Core Buffers*

*7 Aquatic Core Buffers*

*\*\* See BioMap2 Town Report Appendix X for complete list of*

## E. Fisheries and Wildlife

### Inventory

The Town of Lee provides a diversity of wildlife habitat in its vast forests, its wetlands, and in the open lands (meadows and pastures) that cover the landscape. Particularly good wildlife habitat are located in the 16,000 acre October Mountain State Forest, the 10,000 acre Beartown Mountain State Forest, Woods Pond, and the two hundred acre Hop Brook Wildlife Management Area, recently acquired by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife.

In the numerous ponds, lakes, streams, and wetlands of Lee many species of waterfowl flourish. The Housatonic River, in particular, provides an important corridor for migratory birds. Some that are known to nest in the County are the Canada Goose, mallard, the black and wood ducks, hooded merganser, pied-billed grebe, blue winged teal, common gallinule, Virginia rail, sora rail, American bittern, and the great blue, green and black-crowned night herons. Large tracts of wetlands owned and operated by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife as wildlife management areas in the Woods Pond and Meadow Street areas provide particularly good opportunities for wetland wildlife.

Fishing opportunities are also abundant in Lee's lakes and ponds and in the numerous streams that feed the Housatonic River. The fish species include rainbow, brown and brook trout, creek chub, banded killifish, blacknose and longnose dace, yellow and brown bullheads, and slimy sculpin. They also include smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, rock bass, bluegill, chain pickerel, northern pike, emerald shiner, yellow and white perch, carp and white and longnose suckers. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife annually stocks trout in Beartown Brook, Hop Brook, Greenwater Brook, Washington Mountain Brook, Laurel Lake, and Goose Pond. When available, brood stock Atlantic salmon are stocked in Laurel Lake and Goose Pond. Due to possible PCB contamination it is not possible to eat any fish taken from the Housatonic River.

Large tracts of woodland, particularly in the October Mountain and Beartown State Forests provide excellent habitat for many species of game animals. There are both mature forests and new growth forests in the area. It is common to see beaver, muskrats, otter, bobcat, fisher, coyote, porcupine and snowshoe hare. Large numbers of white-tailed deer, wild turkeys, black bears, ruffed grouse, pheasants, rabbits and gray squirrels are hunted and harvested annually in Lee. The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife and a local sportsmen's club annually stock hundreds of ring-necked pheasants in the area.

## Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat, especially for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. BioMap2 identifies the top 5 percent most interconnected clusters of Potential Vernal Pools in the state.

## Corridors for Wildlife Migration

### Rare Species

#### *Town of Lee List of Rare Species*

Amphibian	<i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>	Jefferson Salamander	SC	2013
Amphibian	<i>Gyrinophilus porphyriticus</i>	Spring Salamander	MESA Delisted	2001
Beetle	<i>Cicindela duodecimguttata</i>	Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	SC	2013
Bird	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern	E	2009
Bird	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern Harrier	T	1999
Bird	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common Moorhen	SC	1999
Bird	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common Loon	SC	2013
Bird	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	T	2014
Butterfly/ Moth	<i>Euphyes dion</i>	Dion Skipper	T	2009
Butterfly/ Moth	<i>Papaipema</i> sp. 2 nr. <i>pterisii</i>	Ostrich Fern Borer Moth	SC	2009
Butterfly/ Moth	<i>Pieris oleracea</i>	Mustard White	T	2009
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Enallagma carunculatum</i>	Tule Bluet	SC	1976
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Neurocordulia yamaskanensis</i>	Stygian Shadowdragon	SC	2008
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Stylurus scudderii</i>	Zebra Clubtail	MESA Delisted	2008
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Stylurus spiniceps</i>	Arrow Clubtail	MESA Delisted	2008
Fish	<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>	Longnose Sucker	SC	2010
Fish	<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Bridle Shiner	SC	2010
Mussel	<i>Alasmidonta undulata</i>	Triangle Floater	Non-listed SWAP Species	2009
Mussel	<i>Strophitus undulatus</i>	Creeper	SC	2008
Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	1999
Snail	<i>Marstonia lustrica</i>	Boreal Marstonia	E	2012

SC=Special Concern T=Threatened E=Endangered MESA= Massachusetts Endangered Species Act

## F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

Lee's character is defined by a series of scenic landscapes, cultural and historic areas, unusual geologic features and unique ecosystems, one of which has been recognized for its statewide significance as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). These features are shown on Map 5.

### Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway

Jacob's Ladder Trail (Route 20) is a state-designated scenic byway, extending the 35 miles between the towns of Lee to the West, through Becket, and ending in Russell to the east. Historically, it was a major trading route from the Connecticut to the Hudson Rivers. It was also used during the revolutionary war as a main supply route for troops from Boston to Fort Ticonderoga in New York.

The five towns located along the byway have retained much of their small, rural atmosphere, including scenic fields and mountains, and historic structures. Like the intent of the Wild & Scenic River program, the National Scenic Byway program recognizes the unique resources along the byway corridor and strives to protect these resources through local stewardship efforts.

During the scenic assessment that was conducted as part of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan, four section of the byway were noted as being of High or Excellent scenic quality. The one segment that was noted as being of excellent scenic quality is that in the vicinity of Jacob's Pillow. This segment of the road rises from marshes on the western end to the coniferous forests of the eastern end. Having the world-famous dance festival within this segment brings in a cultural aspect to this road segment. The other three segments, traveling from west to east, include the Becket-Greenwater Pond, West Becket, and Palmer Brook segments. The old golf course and the historic farm buildings along the Palmer Brook segment was noted as important scenic features.

### Hop Brook Wildlife Management Area (#1) & Beartown Mountain State Forest (#2)

This tract takes its name from the profusion of hop vines which once grew throughout all of South Lee and the Hop Brook Valley. Interestingly, the area belonged to Great Barrington from 1761 until 1777, when Lee was incorporated. Hop Brook Valley, the lowest point in Lee, is the site of Hop Brook and the Housatonic River. The unique wildlife populations of these two riverways, together with the sharp elevation change from Fernside (Beartown Mountain) into the lowlands, provide unparalleled biodiversity.

### Golden Hill (#3), Town Forest (#4), the Pinnacle (#5) and the Golden Hill Bridge (#6)

This area extends from the edge of a meadowland south of Golden Hill Road and through a microclimate of hemlock, mixed forests, brooks, and glacial outcroppings of granitic gneiss until reaching Route 20. Herein rises the Pinnacle, whose eastern vista embraces the former Shaylor farm on Golden Hill and the dramatic expanse of October Mountain (the largest state forest in Massachusetts). Its southern and western views encompass Monument Mountain in Great

Barrington, Highlawn Farm and its landmark tower, and Laurel Lake with its glimpse of “the Mount,” the former estate of American writer Edith Wharton. Boundary stones in this area marked with the initials "G.W." recall that this land was a hunting preserve of the George Westinghouse estate. Included in the Golden Hill area near Bradley Street is Tuttle Bridge, a lenticular truss bridge constructed in 1885, and now listed on the National Historic Register.

### Village of East Lee

Lee's original settled area, this village encompasses an abandoned settlement called Dodgetown (#7). Here in the 1750's lived the town's first inhabitants on a piece of land located on what is now Landers Road and Chestnut Street. East Lee is also the site of many of Lee's original industries, including Monument Mill (still standing) on Forest Street.

Lower and Upper Goose Pond (#8) southeast of the village, together over two miles long, are partially managed by the U.S. Dept. of the Interior. Upper Goose Pond is accessible by boat or on foot only, although it is a scant two miles from Route 20 in East Lee. The Appalachian Trail crosses Route 20, and winds through to the Upper Pond in this area, not far from the Lee border.

Bisecting this old village is the track grade of the Berkshire Street Railway's extension to Huntington, the ill-fated Huckleberry Line. Built at a cost of \$3 million dollars, the line ceased to exist in 1927 when the rails were lifted and the site deserted.

### Glassworks Grant Area: Longcope Park (#9) and Devon Road (#10)

In the southwest part of town lies the ancient Glassworks Grant, which dates back to 1754. This includes Longcope Park, a town-owned tract of splendid coniferous trees and sparkling rivulets, and many scenic views east and south from Stockbridge Road. The Glassworks Grant, consisting of 1564 acres, was established to encourage the making of potash for use in the glassmaking industry of eastern Massachusetts, including the famous Sandwich Glass of Cape Cod. Northwest from Stockbridge Road runs Devon Road, a scenic location and also part of the grant.

### Housatonic River north to Woods Pond (#11)

One of the original impoundments of the Housatonic River for local industrial use created an extension of a river oxbow into the ecological resource called Woods Pond. Today the pond is protected as a wildlife management area by the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. This unique ecological community, located at the foot of October Mountain, is home to one of the widest populations of wildlife in central or southern Berkshire County. It is widely used today for fishing, hunting, canoeing, hiking and other off-road activities.

## Laurel Lake/High Lawn Farm Scenic Area (#12 & 13)

Laurel Lake, dividing Lenox and Northwest Lee, creates a habitat containing century old white pines and hemlocks, and a naturally sandy cove called Sandy Beach, site of the most beautiful sunsets in the town of Lee. The south side of the lake is owned by High Lawn Farm (#13), one of the oldest dairy farms in the Northeast. It is one of the largest pieces of private land in Massachusetts, and its Teutonic farm tower and architecture render it incomparable. Especially spectacular is the vista east from Summer Street in Lee, over Laurel Lake to October Mountain.

Sandy Beach is used annually by the town with permission from High Lawn Farm's owners, and is a favorite recreation area for local residents. It is unique for its view across the lake to an open meadow called Edith Wharton Park. This rolling expanse of field and deciduous trees is jointly owned and managed by the towns of Lenox and Lee.

This lake region figures in the cultural past of Lee and Lenox. Noted celebrities who spent considerable time at the lake include inventor George Westinghouse, actress Fanny Kemble and author Edith Wharton.

## Ferncliff Knoll (#14) and Peter's Cave in Lee Proper

Within the urban limits of Lee lies Ferncliff, geologically known as a drumlin and one of a local series that formed glacially and include the aforementioned Pinnacle. Like the Pinnacle, Ferncliff consists of climax forests, sheer cliffs and glacial erratics.

On its south side, as a point of historical interest, lies Peter's Cave where insurrectionist Peter Wilcox hid during Shay's Rebellion in 1787. Due to the settling of boulders, the cave's interior is now largely considered impassable. Wilcox's cabin is now the site of the Lee Library. Ferncliff's most distinctive vista is to the south from historic Union Rock, a mound of feldspar located behind the Central School. From there may be seen Lee's unique town spires, the most significant feature of the Lee Downtown Historic District, set against the backdrop of Beartown Mountain.

## G. Environmental Challenges

### Hazardous Waste

The Housatonic River is contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) released over several decades from the General Electric Company (GE) facility in Pittsfield. The presence of PCBs within the entire length of the river within Lee restricts full public use of this natural resource. GE has entered into a Consent Decree with the US EPA to conduct cleanup activities within the river stretching from Pittsfield downstream through Great Barrington. Cleanup has been conducted on the first 1.5 miles of the river, and proposals are now being considered for the "Rest of River," including several areas within the town of Lee.

According to the EPA's cleanup proposal, there are three segments ("Reaches") of Rest of River in Lee where cleanup will occur, including river sections and backwaters upstream of Woods Pond (Reach 5C), Woods Pond itself (Reach 6), and the dam impoundments behind the Columbia, Eagle, Willow mills (Reach ).

- In Reach 5C: contaminated sediment removal and capping in the river and select floodplain areas.
- In Reach 6: contaminated sediment removal and placement of a cap, with the design generally providing a minimum water depth of six feet in the pond with shallower water depths in the nearshore areas. Sediment removal to create Wood Pond of at least 6 feet in depth in most of pond.
- In Reach 7 impoundment: contaminated sediment removal of PCBs > 1 ppm and cap; where dam is proposed for removal, sediment removal to 1 ppm in coordination w/ removal activity. An additional option, in lieu of capping, would allow GE to excavate the sediment in each impoundment to meet an average of 1 mg/kg PCBs throughout.
- No cleanup of the flowing portion of the river between impoundments in Reach 7 is proposed. See ortho map.

PCBs have also more recently been discovered in cove/ponds adjacent to the river along Columbia Street. The Town of Lee has requested that the EPA include these areas into its cleanup plan.

The EPA, with the support of the Commonwealth, has proposed dredging Woods Pond and upstream backwaters in the first few years of a 15-year cleanup timeline. If necessary, further dredging may be conducted after all upstream cleanup activities have been completed. Cleanup activities will require the clearing of land for the creation of access roads for heavy equipment, staging areas and other construction-related activities. These activities may present the opportunity to plan for and repurpose some of these roads and sites for public recreational access, including improved river access, multi-use paths or hiking trails.

Two sites in the town of Lee have been identified by GE as potential permanent disposal sites for PCB-contaminated sediments that will be dredged from the Housatonic Rest of River during cleanup activities. The sites identified are Lane Construction Corporation sand & gravel and a site on Forest Street. The Town has stated unequivocally to GE, the EPA and the DEP that it will not accept the landfilling of PCB sediments within town borders. This stance is supported by the other five Rest of River communities. See attached letter for this and other PCB-related issues.

The Rest of River Communities (Sheffield, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Lee, Lenox and Pittsfield) submitted a joint letter responding to the EPA's cleanup plan which stated that they all adamantly oppose a local landfill for contaminated materials, and that GE should remain legally responsible for the contamination in perpetuity, that the municipalities should be

provided full opportunity to review and provide input on site specific clean-up plans as they are developed, that GE should be responsible to deal with the impacts of its pollution on all third parties (property owners, businesses, and the municipalities), and that all hazardous waste disposal facilities, including temporary storage areas, haul roads, dewatering facilities, and loading facilities should be subject to the Massachusetts Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Act.

GE also filed a very lengthy response to EPA's proposed cleanup plan. In their response, GE states that it believes it has the right to develop a hazardous waste landfill in the region, leave most of the contamination in place, not be responsible for future problems with the remaining contamination, and not be subject to any local or state laws or regulations. In GE's opinion, issues which third parties may encounter due to the remaining contamination can be handled between the third parties and GE.

## Brownfield Sites

Brownfields are defined by the EPA as "real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant." Determining whether sites are contaminated by a hazardous substance or other pollutant, cleaning up sites that are found to be contaminated and reinvesting in these properties protects the environment, reduces blight, and takes development pressures off greenspaces and working lands.

The Town of Lee secured a Brownfields Cleanup Grant from the EPA in 2012 to cleanup a town owned, former residential property contaminated by petroleum substances. Through the grant, the structure at 25 School Street was demolished after properly disposing of asbestos laden materials. Confirmatory sampling has revealed that there are no contaminants remaining on the site above state thresholds. A *Permanent Solution with No Conditions Statement* was submitted to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in accordance with the Massachusetts Contingency Plan in April 30, 2015. As of the writing of this report the site remains under the ownership of the Town and is able to be sold and/or redeveloped.

In 2013, the Town was awarded a Brownfields Area-wide Planning Grant by the EPA. The purpose of the grant is to develop a plan for the four former paper mills (Eagle, Greylock, Columbia, and Niagara) in a 700 acre area just north of the downtown.

Core Elements of Brownfields Area-Wide Planning include:

- Collecting information and identifying community priorities related to brownfields cleanup and near- and long-term revitalization;

- Evaluating existing environmental conditions, local market potential, and needed infrastructure improvements;
- Developing strategies for brownfields site cleanup and reuse; and
- Identifying resources or leveraging opportunities to help implement the plans, including specific strategies for public and private sector investments and improvements necessary to help with cleanup and area revitalization.

The Brownfields Area-Wide Planning Program is designed to help communities confront local environmental and public health challenges related to brownfields, and benefit underserved or economically disadvantaged communities. Area-wide planning for brownfields encourages community-based involvement in site assessment, cleanup and reuse planning, as well as overall neighborhood revitalization. Through the brownfields area-wide planning approach, the Town and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission are working with residents and other stakeholders to develop reuse plans for the four mills which are considered to be “catalyst” brownfield sites.

The anticipated outcomes from this project will enable us to:

- research strategies for appropriately reusing brownfields, which will help lead to eventual assessment, cleanup and improvement of public health;
- connect assessment, cleanup, and decisions for subsequent reuse of these brownfields to their neighborhood and town-wide contexts;
- increase capacity of residents and stakeholders from the BF AWP Project Area to participate in, take ownership of, and benefit from brownfields revitalization in their community; and
- further the network of local, regional, state, and/or federal partnerships that will help facilitate environmentally sustainable and equitable brownfields cleanup and redevelopment.

The plan is currently in the process of being drafted. Through this process, the partners are working to emphasize the importance of redeveloping these formerly industrial sites in favor of undeveloped sites. In addition, open space and recreation components are planned to be incorporated into the plan with recommendations for a riverwalk or multi-use trail connecting the sites to one another and to the downtown. In addition, recommendations are expected to include incorporated canoe launches within the sites and maintaining green spaces within the sites themselves to enhance the quality of life for those living and/or working in the area.

The Town has worked with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to utilize the Berkshire Brownfields Program, to undertake assessment activities and remediation through the brownfields cleanup revolving loan fund (Berkshire Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund). The Town has also sought community-wide assessment funds directly through EPA to assess sites within Town focusing on the mills within the Brownfields Area-wide Planning Project. The Town

has not conducted a comprehensive inventory of brownfields sites. However, since the definition of brownfields is not exclusive to sites with known contamination but rather includes sites that may have the presence or potential of contamination it is understood that any gas station, auto shop, dry cleaner, industrial site, etc. may be considered brownfields.

### Landfills (to be updated)

The Town of Lee operated a sanitary landfill at a site off Woodland Road for more than thirty-five years, until its closure in 1991. As was often the case, the landfill was sited in a sand and gravel deposit. The facility has been capped and currently poses no major environmental hazard. As part of the State's closure procedure, the Town was required to perform a Comprehensive Site Assessment, which included the installation of ground water monitoring wells. Although no existing ground water contamination problems were identified, the town is required to continue monitoring ground water quality.

### Erosion

Due to Lee's steep topography, the potential for soil erosion is always present, particularly now that the best land has been developed, and much of the land that is available for development is marginal at best. Steep slope is prime factor in erosion. Areas with slopes greater than 15% or those designated as highly erodible, on Map 4, have serious erosion problems. Since serious erosion problems experienced in the construction of October Mountain Village, the Town strictly enforces erosion control measures before, during and after construction. The Town accepted the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act in 2001, approved a map of the regulated areas in 2006 and formally filed the regulations in the Registry of Deeds in 2008. The regulations create uniform procedures regulating removal, filling, clearing of vegetation or other alteration of land within mountain regions designated by the town which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on watershed resources or natural scenic qualities.

The logging of stands of timber located on steep slopes presents other problems. Wise logging practices must be observed in the watershed areas through Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management. The Conservation Commission also monitors these operations and has been successful in cleaning up several minor violations.

### Chronic Flooding (to be updated/verified)

The history of flooding from streams in Lee indicates that flooding can occur during any season of the year. Floods occur as a result of spring rains combined with snowmelt, rain over frozen grounds, and heavy rains associated with hurricanes in late summer and fall.

There have been a number of floods in Lee during this century. The four worst floods on the Housatonic River since 1914 were recorded on January 1, 1949; September 22, 1938; March 19,

1936; and November 5, 1927. Flood damage in Lee's subwatershed has been estimated to average \$94,000 per year. The major damage is along the Housatonic River from Goose Pond Brook upstream to Forest Street. Damage from a 100-year flood has been estimated at \$1,560,000. This estimate places Lee third in Berkshire County in terms of flood damage potential behind Pittsfield and Williamstown. During previous floods, damage has been reported in East Lee near Goose Pond Brook, in South Lee near Fairview Street, and along Meadow Street near Hop Brook.

## Sedimentation

The potential for sedimentation problems exists where erodible soils are found on steep slopes in areas that are adjacent to water bodies. One example of the type of environmental damage that can occur in this situation occurred when a detention basin dam burst at October Mountain Village, causing significant quantities of sediment to be washed into the Coddington Brook and the "Cove Area." Although such events have been relatively rare in Lee, future development in marginal areas will increase their likelihood if formal erosion and sedimentation control measures are not put in place.

## New Development

Over the next decade, most new development that takes place in Lee will have an impact on recreation and open space because much of the land currently available for development has some form of development constraint. As land development begins to occur in more marginal areas, the zoning and land use controls and growth management techniques will increase in importance.

The map of unique features clearly indicates that many of the features that are so important to Lee's identity today will be subject to increasing development pressure over the next decade. The rural character of Lee, as defined by its working farms and meadows, is endangered. The town's scenic roads, and the views that were identified by various town residents as most scenic, often include agricultural or open land.

## Ground and Surface Water Pollution

### Woods Pond Aquifer

A local industry is currently drawing in excess of 2 million gallons per day from the aquifer. Traces of PCB's were reported (Mass. DEQE, 1975) in water quality samples taken from the Woods Pond Aquifer, suggesting that contamination may have seeped into the recharge area through induced infiltration from Woods Pond and the Housatonic River. This information led to a decision by the DEQE to discourage development of a public drinking water supply at the

Woods Pond location despite significant quantities of groundwater. However, according to recent information from the Tri-Town Health Department, this aquifer is not contaminated.

### Greenwater Pond Brook Aquifer

Due to its location adjacent to the Massachusetts Turnpike where large quantities of road salt are used in the winter, the Greenwater Pond Brook Aquifer has very high sodium levels in the winter months. Consideration needs to be given to the implementation of measures to lower salt use in specific portions of the recharge area, particularly since there are several private households that draw their drinking water supply from the aquifer.

### Septic Systems

Over 85% of Lee's households are on public sewer. Where septic systems do exist they are well maintained, due to aggressive enforcement of Title 5 by the Tri-Town Health Department. The few contamination problems that do exist are due to system overloads that occur as seasonal lakeside cottages are converted to year-round use and involve the seasonal high water table.

### Lake Eutrophication

Eutrophication is a problem that is common to both Laurel Lake and Goose Pond, and in both cases Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) is the culprit. In both instances, elevated levels of phosphorous may be a factor in excessive plant growth. Goose Pond residents formed a lake district to deal with this and other water-related problems. Laurel Lake residents also formed a lake association.

### Impaired Waterbodies

The health and quality of our surface waters is generally good, but these resources are highly vulnerable to “nonpoint” pollution. This type of pollution occurs as rain and snowmelt that flow into our lakes and streams carry diffuse amounts of pollutants. Oil, gasoline, salts and chemicals wash off of roadways and parking lots. Fertilizers, pesticides, and soil run off from improperly managed construction sites, crop lands, and forests. These pollutants alter the water chemistry, depth, and temperature, stressing native plants and animals and making it possible for invasive species to thrive. Over time, fishing becomes more difficult as weeds take over. As sediments fill the water body, flooding can occur and boating and swimming may no longer be possible. Best practices, such as low impact development, aimed at minimizing impervious surfaces and guarding against runoff, should be adopted in Lee’s subdivision and zoning regulations.

The MA DEP is responsible for identifying those waters that are impaired and developing a plan to bring them back into compliance with the Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards. The Integrated List of Waters list of impaired waters identifies rivers, lakes, and coastal waters

and the reasons for impairment. The following river segments and waterbodies are listed as impaired in the Final Massachusetts Year 2012 Integrated List of Waters.

The Housatonic River from the confluence of Southwest Branch Housatonic River and West Branch Housatonic River in Pittsfield to outlet of Woods Pond in Lee is impaired by:

- Non-Native Aquatic Plants; continued...

Housatonic River from the confluence of Southwest Branch Housatonic River and West Branch in Pittsfield to outlet of Woods Pond in Lee impairments continued:

- Fecal Coliform;
- PCB in Fish Tissue; and
- Polychlorinated biphenyls

The Housatonic River from the outlet of Woods Pond in Lee to the Risingdale Impoundment dam in Great Barrington is impaired by:

- Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorph*);
- Excess Algal Growth PCB in Fish Tissue Phosphorus (Total); and
- Polychlorinated biphenyls;

Laurel Lake in both Lee and Lenox is impaired by:

- Eurasian Water Milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*);
- Non-Native Aquatic Plants;
- Zebra mussel (*Dreissena polymorph*);
- Dissolved oxygen; and
- Total Phosphorus

## Invasive Species

The layers of sediment and the resulting shallow, warm water of Woods Pond and the backwaters upstream of it provides the perfect growth medium for non-native invasive aquatic plant species, including Eurasian Water Milfoil and water chestnut. Wetlands and uplands adjacent to the pond and river harbor vast acreage where of purple loosestrife, Phragmites and other non-native species dominate. These plants disrupt and displace the natural plant diversities that would naturally occur in the river and pond, diminishing the long-term survival of natural plant and wildlife populations within these areas. Also, because the pond and the Housatonic River upstream of it are a very popular paddling route, the chance that fragments and seeds can be transported from this area to other aquatic recreational areas is high.

The removal of contaminated pond sediments during the Rest of River cleanup offers the opportunity to remove the vast infestation of invasive species in the pond and upstream of it, with the added opportunity of replanting these areas with native plants. To achieve any

measure of success, a long-term maintenance plan will be required to monitor these areas and quickly take action to remove new invasive plant infestations. The removal and control of invasive plants is an important yet understated benefit of the Rest of River cleanup plan for this reach of the watershed.

Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) were discovered in Laurel Lake in July of 2009 and confirmed by the DCR Lakes and Ponds Program. DCR biologists found adults and veligers in Laurel Lake and adults in Laurel Brook. The discovery of zebra mussels in Laurel Lake prompted a series of actions by state agencies that are summarized in the Massachusetts Interim Zebra Mussel Action Plan (DCR and DFG 2009). The Interim Zebra Mussel Action Plan also provides an overview of zebra mussel species taxonomy, ecology, origin and distribution.

In Massachusetts, only the Hoosic and Housatonic River watersheds were characterized as highly susceptible to zebra mussel invasion (Smith 1993). In November 2009, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (EEA) convened the Zebra Mussel Task Force (ZMTF) to make recommendations to the Secretary of EEA on an updated action plan to address the presence of zebra mussels (ZMs) in water bodies of the Commonwealth. Key recommendations of the ZMTF include:

- Steps to enhance education and outreach including comprehensive signage, installation of educational kiosks, and outreach through vessel registrations, licenses and permits.
- Mandatory vessel decontamination procedures and self-certification that an acceptable procedure has been followed for all vessels that have been in infected waters.
- Enhanced enforcement measures including a hierarchy of penalties for offenses including fines and other civil and criminal enforcement options.
- Improvements in self-certification and boat ramp monitoring programs.
- Revised management actions for Laurel Lake, Laurel Brook and the Housatonic River including enhanced boat ramp monitor coverage of 40 hours per week at the Laurel Lake state ramp, additional signage, and providing a site nearby for decontaminating vessels. Identified organization resources and collaboration opportunities
- Identified legislative and regulatory changes to support the Recommendations.
- Identified future actions to study and address to reduce the introduction and spread of ZMs and other aquatic invasive species in Massachusetts water bodies.

## Environmental Equity Issues

To be completed...

# Section 5

## Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

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### A. Description of Protected and Unprotected Parcels

Lee's vast forests, wetlands, fields and meadows, in combination with extensive holdings of publicly owned land (see Map 7 and Inventory on the following pages), comprise protected and unprotected assets. Residents of Lee, and the many tourists who visit the "Gateway to the Berkshires" year-round, already benefit from the extensive opportunities for passive and active recreation that exist in the State Parks, Wildlife Protection Areas, Town Conservation lands, and private recreational facilities.

#### State Parklands

Over 2,047 acres of state land in South Lee and East Lee are permanently protected, as part of the October Mountain and Beartown State Forests. These properties offer a variety of recreational activities including hunting, camping, fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing (see Appendix). Some of these facilities are handicapped accessible. Areas owned by the State Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for wildlife habitat and flood protection, comprising about 383 acres at the George L. Darey Housatonic Valley and Hop Brook Wildlife Management areas in the eastern and southern areas of town, are permanently protected. The U.S. Department of the Interior also has 247 acres of land in Lee under permanent protection as part of the Appalachian Trail corridor. There is another 134.8 acres owned by the state, but is not part of any of the above land, but is wedged between the AT, the Pike, and Goose Pond and is called the Sernaker Property. There is also .4 acres owned by the state for the Laurel Lake Boat Ramp.

The town is fortunate to have easy access to October Mountain State Forest. As the largest state forest in Massachusetts (16,100 acres), it offers residents an opportunity to enjoy several miles of trails through a large expanse of forest land. Taking together the state forest, combined with adjacent conservation lands owned by Berkshire Natural Resources Council and the watershed lands of the City of Pittsfield and the Town of Lee, this land mass is the largest contiguous area of conserved land in the state outside of the Quabbin Reservoir.

The state forest is popular with local residents for hiking, hunting, mountain biking, boating, snowmobiling and camping. As one of only a few state lands that allows off-highway vehicles

(OHVs), residents can enjoy this activity without having to trailer their vehicles very far. The DCR is currently in the process of developing a resource management plan for October Mountain and has begun to host public stakeholder meetings. As part of this process, a few Lee residents attended a public input session held on March 4, 2015. They, like others at the session, requested as their highest priority that DCR fix Schermerhorn Road for easier vehicular access into the state forest. Other recommendations included creating more loop trails, improving signage and maintaining snowmobile access. Lee residents can also easily access Beartown State Forest. At 12,000 acres it is one of the largest state properties in the Commonwealth. Outdoor activities are similar to October Mountain, including OHV use trails.

### Town Conservation Lands

Town owned lands under some form of permanent protection include properties under the jurisdiction of the Lee Conservation Commission and Town watershed lands. Lands to be maintained for conservation and passive recreation under Conservation Commission control include Dunn Park, Longcope Park, Ferncliff Reservation, Foote Pond Park, Edith Wharton Park, Town Forest, and Abbey Court Park. These parcels, totaling 196.2 acres, are all classified as permanently protected. Numerous opportunities for nature studies, bird watching and snow shoeing also exist in parcels controlled by the Lee Conservation Commission. Hiking, camping (by permission only) and hunting (other than firearms) are allowed. Commercial activity and motorized vehicles are prohibited. The primary goal should be to police and protect the existing trails from overuse and fragmentation of habitat. New trail development should be determined on a case by case basis always mindful of our first charge, to protect conservation lands.

The Town also owns over 587 acres of watershed land in the eastern portion of town. This land was acquired to protect the town's drinking water supply. There are plans to purchase the few remaining unprotected parcels in the watershed this summer. Recreation is not permitted on the watershed lands.

### Other Town-Owned Land

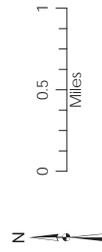
Town owned lands not subject to permanent protection include pocket neighborhood parks, and areas for active recreation. Approximately 280 acres falls into this category, more than half of which is the Stockbridge Road property that was acquired for a proposed municipal golf course. None of this property is permanently protected. Most is handicapped accessible.

A Riverfront Park was created in the downtown Lee area utilizing a grant from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD).

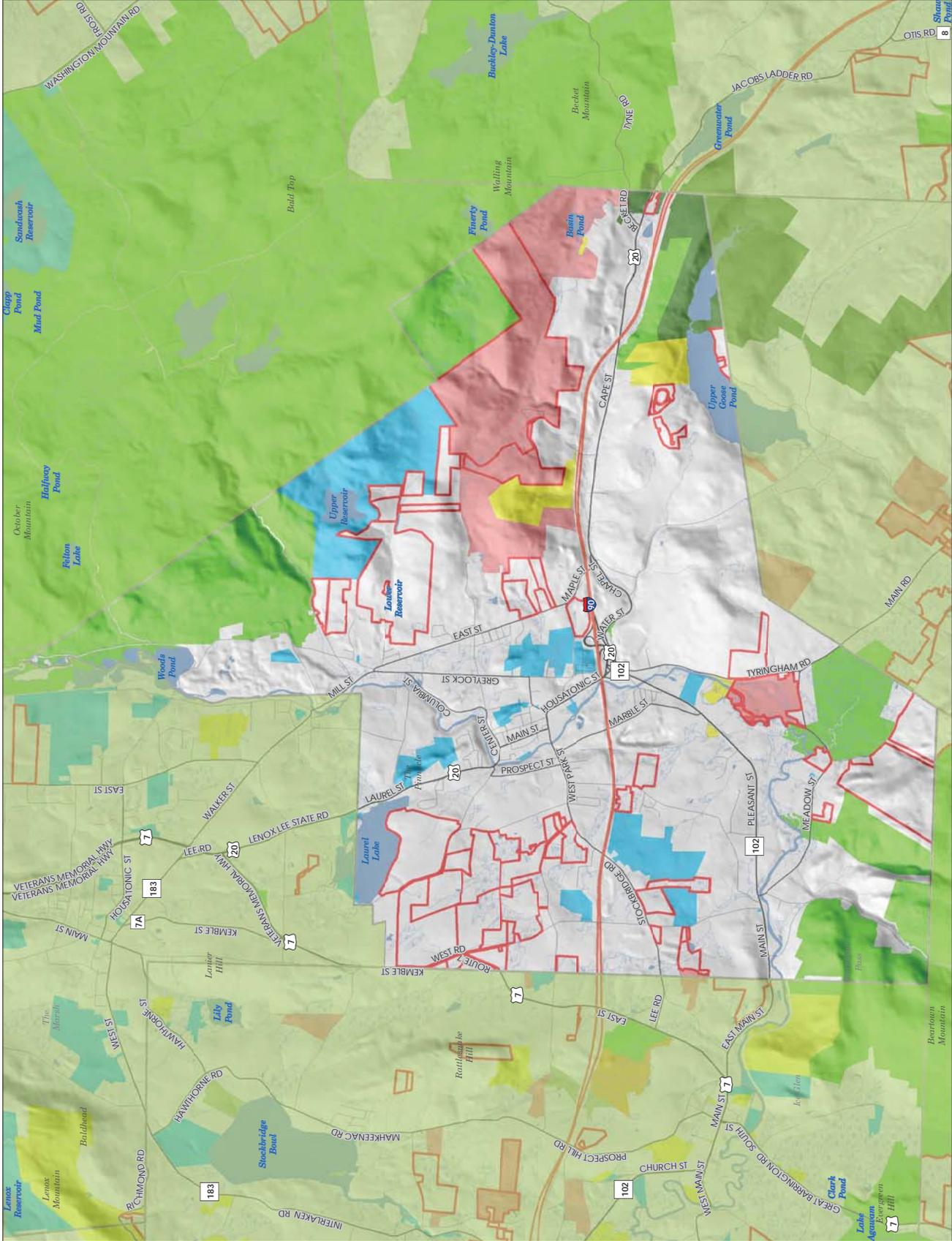
# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan

## Map 7: Inventory of Land of Conservation and Recreation Interest

- Federal
- State
- Municipality
- Conservation Organization
- Land Trust
- Non-Profit
- Private
- Chapter 61, 61A, 61B
- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water



This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or other purposes. The BERPC or the municipality may have supplied portions of this data.



## Lands Under Massachusetts Gen. Laws Ch. 61, 61A, and 61B

Current available data indicate over 3,966.4 acres of land are currently classified as "chapter lands," signifying that they are taxed under one of three use categories affording the property temporary protection. These are Chapter 61 (forestry): 1,316 acres, Chapter 61A (agriculture): 2,650.4 acres, and Chapter 61B (recreation): 0 acres. Public access to these properties requires property owner permission.

## Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program

The agricultural preservation restriction program makes it economically feasible for a property to remain permanently in agriculture when the State purchases the development rights. The Town of Lee currently has only one farm that is participating in this program, totaling 120 acres.

## Protected Non-Profit Land and Conservation Restrictions

Current available data indicate over 1,763.1 acres of land are protected lands are owned outright by non-profits or held in conservation restriction. The three non-profit landowners include the Lee Land Trust (86.9 acres), the Trustees of Reservation (Goose Pond Reservation – 107.7 acres), and Berkshire Natural Resources Council (159.5 acres). An additional 1,409 acres are in private ownership with conservation restrictions held by Berkshire Natural Resources Council.

## Privately Owned Recreation and Open Space

The final category of recreation and open space involves land that is in recreational use but is privately owned. These properties, totaling 438 acres, include the Oak and Spruce Resort (366 acres), the Greenock Country Club (61 acres) and several smaller parcels. Some of the recreational activities offered are golf, indoor swimming, tennis and indoor games. In all cases, access is by fee only.

## B. Lands with Permanent Protection State Property

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Manager</i>	<i>Acreeage</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Access</i>	<i>Level of Protection</i>	<i>Comments</i>
October Mountain State Park	DCR	780.6	Recreation/ Conservation	Camping, hiking, biking, hunting, XC skiing, snowmobiling	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	398.0	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	71.6	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	36.4	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR/RA-40
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	32.7	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	25.8	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	16.2	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	9.6	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	6.1	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
October Mtn. State Park	DCR	1.4	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Laurel Lake Boat Ramp	DCR	0.4	Recreation	Boating, fishing	Y	Permanent	RB
Beartown State Forest	DCR	357.5	Recreation/ Conservation	Camping, hiking, biking, XC skiing, horseback riding, swimming, boating	Y	Permanent	CR
Beartown State Forest	DCR	130.0	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Beartown State Forest	DCR	69.6	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Beartown State Forest	DCR	42.6	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Beartown State Forest	DCR	35.9	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Beartown State Forest	DCR	18.0	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Beartown State Forest	DCR	15.1	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Housatonic Valley WMA	DFG	16.8	Conservation	Wildlife habitat, canoeing	Y	Permanent	CR
Housatonic Valley WMA	DFG	16.3	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Housatonic Valley WMA	DFG	10.2	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR

*Site Name      Manager Acreage Use      Activities      Public Access      Level of Protection      Comments Zoning*

Hop Brook WMA	DFG	137.7	Conservation	Fishing	Y	Permanent	CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	89.4	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	56.6	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	28.2	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	19.5	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	9.1	See above	See above	Y	Permanent	CR
Sernaker Property	DCR	134.8	Conservation/ Recreation		Y	Permanent	CR/RB

**Federal Property**

*Site Name      Manager      Acreage Use      Public Access      Level of Protection      Comment Zoning*

Appalachian Trail Corridor	National Park Service	191.5	Recreation	Y	Permanent	CR
Appalachian Trail Corridor	National Park Service	28.6	Recreation	Y	Permanent	CR
Appalachian Trail Corridor	National Park Service	18.2	Recreation	Y	Permanent	CR
Appalachian Trail Corridor	National Park Service	5.3	Recreation	Y	Permanent	RB
Appalachian Trail Corridor	National Park Service	3.5	Recreation	Y	Permanent	CR

## Protected Non-Profit Land

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Acreeage Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Access</i>	<i>Level of Protection</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	130.4	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / hiking	Y	Permanent CR
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	19.3	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / CR	Y	Permanent R-20/CR
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	5.5	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent I
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	3.0	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	0.6	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	0.3	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	0.2	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR
Berkshire Co. Land Trust	Berkshire Natural Resources Council	Non-Profit	0.2	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR
Goose Pond Reservation	The Trustees of Reservation	Non-Profit	107.7	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR
	Lee Land Trust	Non-Profit	41.7	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR
	Lee Land Trust	Non-Profit	32.1	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent RB
	Lee Land Trust	Non-Profit	13.1	Conservation	Wildlife habitat / Conservation	Y	Permanent CR

Protected Land- Agricultural Preservation Restriction

*Site Name*    *Owner*    *Status*    *Acreage Use*    *Public Level of Access Protection*    *Comments Zoning*

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Acreage Use</i>	<i>Public Level of Access Protection</i>	<i>Comments Zoning</i>
Courser Brook Farm	Donald Kelley	Private	119.9	Agriculture    N    Permanent	APR    CR/R-20

Protected Land- Conservation Restriction

*Site Name*    *Owner*    *Status*    *Acreage Use*    *Public Level of Access Protection*    *Comments Zoning*

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Acreage Use</i>	<i>Public Level of Access Protection</i>	<i>Comments Zoning</i>
Yale Hill Road CR	Sarah Befley	Private	7.3	Conservation    N	BNRC Owns CR    RA-40
	American Chestnut Nominee Trust	Private	294.3	Conservation	BNRC Owns CR    CR

	American Chestnut Nominee Trust	Private	245.4	Conservation	P    BNRC Owns CR    CR
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	HW Davis	Private	758.7	Conservation	P    BNRC Owns CR    CR
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	HW Davis	Private	0.4	Conservation	P    BNRC Owns CR    CR
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	HW Davis	Private	102.9	Conservation	P    BNRC Owns CR    CR
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# C. Land with Various Levels of Protection

## Town of Lee

*Site Name*   *Manager*   *Acreeage Use*   *Activities*   *Public Level of Access*   *Level of Protection*   *Funding*   *Zoning*   *Comments*

Reservoir Land	Water Department	587.4	Water protection	None	N	Permanent	Town funds	CR/RA-40	
Edith Wharton Park	Conservation Commission	Lee: 3.1 Lenox: 12	Conservation	Fishing, wildlife habitat	Y	Permanent	Funds from BNRC	RA-40	Managed/owned jointly with Lenox
Bradley St. Playground	Town of Lee	0.9	Recreation	Playground, basketball courts	Y	Limited		RA-40	
Golden Hill/Town Forest- The	Conservation Commission	69.5	Conservation/Recreation	Hiking, picknicking	Y	Permanent		R-20/CR	
Abbey Court Park	Conservation/Commission/ DPW	6.2	Recreation/Conservation	Baseball, neighborhood activities and conservation land	Y	Permanent	Self-Help Grant	RA-40	
Fernclyff Reservation	Conservation Commission	18.3	Conservation/Recreation	Wildlife habitat/hiking/2 ballfields @ west end	Y	Permanent		R-20	Peter's Cave
Footte Pond Park	Conservation Commission	20.9	Conservation	Wildlife habitat, hiking, skating	Y	Permanent	Donated in 1975 as part of a subdivision transaction	R-20	
Maple St. Property	DPW	38.3	Recreation	Baseball, XC skiing, hiking	Y	Limited	Town funds	RA-40	
Dunn Park	Conservation Commission	32.6	Conservation	Wildlife habitat	Y	Permanent	Gift	RA-40	

*Site Name    Manager    Acreage Use    Activities    Public Level of Access    Funding    Zoning    Comments*

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Manager</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Level of Access</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Zoning</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Athletic Field	DPW	4.5	Recreation	2 tennis courts, 1 baseball field	Y	Limited	CBC	
East Lee Park	DPW	1.6	Recreation	Baseball field, playground	Y	Permanent	RA-40	Purchased from State
Longscope Park	Conservation Commission	45.6	Conservation	Wildlife habitat, trails	Y	Permanent	RA-40	Gift
South Lee Playground	DPW	.4	Recreation	Playground/ basketball, War Memorial	Y	Permanent	RB	
River Park	DPW	2.1	Recreation/ Conservation	Walking, picnicking	Y	Permanent	DCBC	New park under construction. Provides links to the River
Town Farm	Select Board	168.5	Recreation		Y	None	RA-40	Town funds
Town Soccer Fields	DPW	21.3	Recreation	Soccer fields	Y	None	T-20	
Lee High School	School Department	34.9	Recreation	1 football, 1 practice football, 2 soccer, cross country, baseball, lacrosse, sledding, softball, basketball court, tennis courts	Y	Limited	R-20	
Fairmont Cemetery	DPW	26.2	Historical	Walking	Y	Permanent	RA-40	

*Site Name    Manager    Acreage Use    Activities    Public Level of Access    Funding    Zoning    Comments*

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Manager</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Level of Access</i>	<i>Funding</i>	<i>Zoning</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Lee Central School	School Department		Recreation	Playground	Y	Town funds	R-20	
Clark Court	DPW	10	Recreation		Y	None		Site of recreation center
LYA building	LYA	.5	Recreation	Basketball, indoor activities	Y	None		
Lenox Town Beach	Town of Lenox	1.2	Recreation	Swimming	Y		RA-40 / RB	

## D. Lands with Temporary Protection Chapter 61 Lands - Forestry

*Site Name    Owner    Status    Acreage    Public Level of Access Protection    Map & Lot #    Zoning*

Beer	Cy & Ronni Beer	Private	20.2	N	Temporary	27-41	CR
Benjamin	Mark and Sciacca Benjamin	Private	30.9	N	Temporary	12-196	RA-40 / R-30
Bruce	David & Donna	Private	56.1	N	Temporary	31-1111-6	CR
Carrington	Marion Carrington	Private	43.2	N	Temporary	14-25	CR
Dooley	Joanne & Michael Dooley	Private	57.7	N	Temporary	19-44, 19-44A	CR/R-20/R-40
Felt	Irving Felt	Private	25.5	N	Temporary	23-25	RA-40
Garrity	Steven Garrity	Private	79.4	N	Temporary	9-3, 9-4, 9-6, 9-8	CR
Hogencamp	Robert, Brian & Brenda	Private	72.2	N	Temporary	4-41, 4-44	RA_40
Horace Davis	Horace W Davis Realty Trust	Private	861.5	N	Temporary	21-39B, 21-1111-8	CR
Iselin	David R Iselin Trustee	Private	28.3	N	Temporary	23-29C, 23-29D, 23-29E	RA-40
Misrok	Lawrence & Ruth Misrok	Private	18.8	N	Temporary	27-126	CR
Smith	Henry Smith	Private	22.2	N	Temporary	33-1111-19, 33-	CR

# Chapter 61 A- Agriculture

## Site Name    Owner    Status    Acreage    Public Access    Level of Protection    Map & Lot #    Condition Zoning

Bartini J	John & Nanette Bartini	Private	8.7	N	Temporary	28-21	RB
Bartini R	Robert Bartini	Private	14.7	N	Temporary	24-2	RA-40
Brittain	Christopher Brittain	Private	30.8	N	Temporary	24-13	RA-40
Brookside	Brookside Family Realty	Private	46.3	N	Temporary	18-1	RA-40
Carrington	David Carrington	Private	35.7	N	Temporary	13-184	CR/R-20
Field	Alice Field	Private	30.5	N	Temporary	19-49	RA-40
Ford	Meredith Ford	Private	256.2	N	Temporary	35-15, 35-17A	CR/RA-40
Fraser D	Dorothy Fraser	Private	43.6	N	Temporary	18-4B, 8-7	RA-40/R-30
Fraser J	John Fraser	Private	14.4	N	Temporary	18-8	RA-40
Highlawn Farm	Highlawn Realty	Private	754.6	N	Temporary	6-1, 6-5, 11-1, 11-2, 11-3, 11-5, 11-6, 11-7, 11-8, 11-9, 1-14, 12-202	RA-40/R-30
Holmes	Mildred Holmes	Private	16.2	N	Temporary	17-41	RA_40
Johansen	Mary Johansen	Private	30.5	N	Temporary	23-24A	RA-40
Leahey	Lehey Dairy	Private	305.5	N	Temporary	8-43	RA-40/CR
Shafiroff	Braxton Shafiroff	Private	8.7	N	Temporary	35-11B	CR
Stevenson	Stevenson Family Nominee	Private	928	N	Temporary	36-4B	CR
Terry	Ronald & Carol Terry	Private	6.1	N	Temporary	23-21	RA-40
Touponce	Thomas Touponce	Private	119.9	N	Temporary	31-1111-2	CR/R-20

## E. Unprotected Private Lands Important to the Town

*Site Name*   *Owner*   *Status*   *Acreage Use*   *Activities*   *Public Access*   *Level of Protection*   *Zoning Comments*

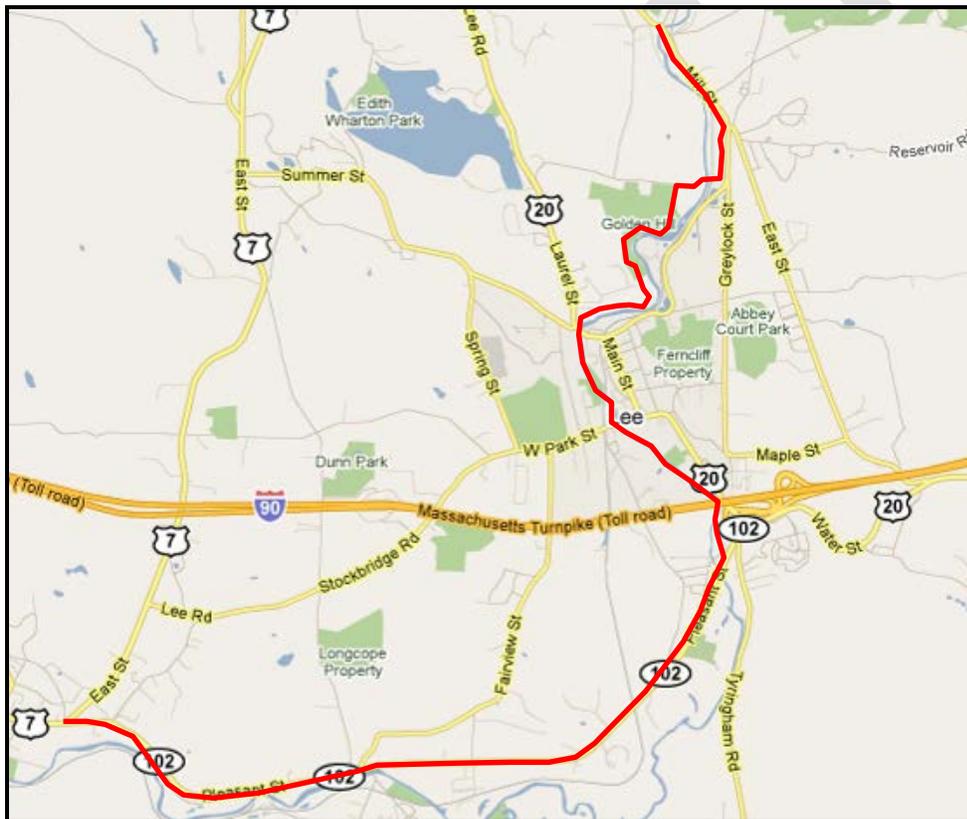
<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Acreage Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Access</i>	<i>Level of Protection</i>	<i>Zoning Comments</i>
Oak 'N Spruce	Oak 'N Spruce	Private	366.0	Recreation	Trails, XC skiing	Y, fee	None CR
St. Mary's School	St. Mary's Church	Non-profit	1.5	Recreation		Y	None R-20/R-30
Greenock Country Club	Greenock Country Club	Private	61.0	Recreation	Golf, XC skiing	Y, fee	None R-20/R-30
Little League Field	Lee Bank	Private	4.0	Recreation	Ballfield, playground	Y	None DCBC
Marble St. Playground	Lee Lime Corp.	Private	2.5	Recreation	Playground, basketball, playground	Y	None I
Sandy Beach	Wilde Estate	Private	2.33	Recreation	Beach, picnic area	Y	None RA-40
Park Square	First Congregational	Non-profit	1	Recreation/ Gathering	Walking, spot for congregation	Y	None DCBC

Town and volunteers maintain

## F. Inventory of Recreational Opportunities

### Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

The Lee Bike Committee, with technical assistance from Foresight Land Services, identified a preferred bicycle/pedestrian path through the town. The bike/ped path consists of on-road bicycle lanes along Pleasant Street (Route 102) between the Stockbridge town line and the Big Y supermarket, which becomes an off-road path from the Big Y northward to Golden Hill Road, and once again becomes an on-road route to Lenox Dale. The total length of this route is approximately 6.7 miles.



It is envisioned that the off-road section will travel parallel to Housatonic River, hopefully offering additional public access to the river itself. This corresponds with a desire for a river greenway that the Lee Conservation Commission and Lee Land Trust have advocated for to link the downtown center to the river towns parks located along its corridor. Funding has been secured for engineering services to design the section of path from the Big Y northward to Lee Bank on West Park Street. The design of this section, being termed Phase I, is being conducted during 2015-16. Once design is complete, additional funds will be available to the town for construction of this section.

In addition to Phase I, the Lee Bike Committee is also moving forward with Phase II, which is finalizing the route from West Park Street to Lenox Dale. The current Phase II route crosses West Park Street and continues along the river through the downtown, crossing Route 20, and run cross-country along the west/north side of the river behind the Eagle Mill to Golden Hill. Here it will become an on-road route again and run from Golden Hill Road to Bradley Street to Mill Street and end at the Lenox Dale town line. While this is the current recommended route, the Committee will continue to investigate new options to refine the most feasible pathway. Once the route is finalized the town will need to pursue funding for design and construction of this section of the trail.

### Existing Recreational Opportunities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>K - 8</i>	<i>8 - 12</i>	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Disabled</i>
Swimming	X	X	X	X	X
Tennis	X	X	X	X	X
Basketball	X	X	X		
Baseball	X	X			
Softball (team)	X	X	X		
Soccer	X	X	X		
Lacrosse	X	X			
Football	X	X			
Playgrounds	X				
Bicycling	X	X	X	X	
Shooting Sports	X	X	X	X	X
Golf	X	X	X	X	
Girl Scouts	X	X			X
Boy Scouts	X	X			X
Skiing	X	X	X	X	X
Snowshoeing	X	X	X	X	
Ice Skating	X	X	X		
Snowmobile Riding	X	X	X	X	X
Fishing/Ice Fishing	X	X	X	X	X
Hunting		X	X	X	X
Canoeing/Kayaking	X	X	X	X	
Camping	X	X	X	X	X
Walking/Running	X	X	X	X	
Hiking	X	X	X	X	
Indoor Fitness			X		
Gardening	X	X	X	X	X

## Summary of Passive Recreation Opportunities

Residents of and visitors to Lee already benefit from the extensive opportunities for passive recreation that exist in the State Parks and reserves and town conservation lands. These include hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, and cross country skiing in the October Mountain and Beartown State Forests. The federally owned Appalachian Trail also crosses through Lee and can be accessed on Route 20. Numerous opportunities for nature studies, bird watching, hiking and snow shoeing also exist in parcels controlled by the Lee Conservation Commission, including Dunn Park, Longcope Park, Ferncliff Reservation and the Town Forest.

## G. Inventory of Recreational Areas

<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Existing Use</i>
Golden Hill Forest	Golden Hill	Passive recreation (P.R.)
Lee Public Schools	Multiple locations	Football, Soccer, Tennis, Baseball, Basketball, Playground, Lacrosse and Sliding
Longcope Park	Church St.	P.R.
Dunn Park	West Road	P.R.
Ferncliff Reservation	off Dublin Hill, Cliffwood, Robert & Orchard St.	P.R., Ballfield
State Park Lands	Woodland Road	P.R.
Burt Property	Stockbridge Road	P.R.
Maple St. Property	Maple St.	P.R., Ballfield
Hartwood Road Playground	Hartwood Road	P.R., Playground, Ballfield
Bradley St. Playground	Bradley St.	Playground
Athletic Field	Housatonic St.	Playground, Tennis courts
South Lee Playground	Church St.	Playground
East Lee Playground	Chapel St.	Playground, Ballfield
Pleasure Park	Pleasant St.	P.R., Soccer/Ballfield
Laurel Lake Property (Joint with Lenox)	Laurel Lake Road	P.R.
River Park	Downtown by River	P.R., Gazebo
Marble St. Playground (Private Property)	Marble St.	Playground, Ballfield
Little League Field (Private Property)	Lee Bank	Ballfield

# Section 6

## Community Vision

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### A. Description of Process

The community goals were derived from several meetings, a public opinion survey and from previously prepared comprehensive planning documents.

### B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The 'vision' statement for the Open Space and Recreation Plan is stated below.

Lee residents' vision for the future is that the community should work together to:

*Carefully guide and manage change to ensure Lee preserves its present combination of outstanding natural assets, traditional New England atmosphere, and small town community spirit that makes it a special place. Residents, leaders and organizations should continue to promote social diversity and economic prosperity while protecting and preserving important historic, cultural, and environmental features. The community must also take any steps necessary to continue to provide high quality services, facilities and opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of present and future residents.*

Goals are:

- *Protect water resources and preserve riparian habitat*
- *Protect mountain ridges and steep slopes*
- *Preserve farmlands and pastures and encourage growth in agriculture*
- *Promote passive outdoor recreation*
- *Provide active outdoor recreation opportunities and areas*
- *Promote cooperative use of resources and encourage participation*
- *Promote and protect the historic characteristics of the town*
- *Maintain the visual character and attractiveness of developed areas, particularly in gateway areas of high visibility*
- *Continue to provide high quality public educational and town services and facilities*
- *Encourage walking, bicycling & transit as transportation options*
- *Promote retention of scenic and community qualities related to road corridors*
- *Promote land use that meets social and economic needs while maintaining or improving the quality of the environment*
- *Preserve Conservation Lands*

# Section 7

## Analysis of Needs

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The analysis of needs is based upon the results of a community survey which was distributed to all households in the Town of Lee and the planning process described in Section II. An important part of this process was a review of the draft 2000 Recreation and Open Space Plan to evaluate how well the town has performed in meeting the goals and objectives stated in that draft plan. During the planning process, the issue of whether those needs that remain unaddressed are still valid was considered in light of changing demographics, development trends and newly defined community preferences.

### A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Within the past decade the Town has experienced little new development and is not faced with the increasing development pressure felt when the resource protection needs were identified in the 1989 Recreation and Open Space Plan. In contrast to development pressure, four of the last five paper mills in town ceased operation in 2008. The Town recognizes that the redevelopment of these previously developed sites is a critical component in striking the appropriate balance between both conservation and an aggressive effort to promote economic development. The need and rationale for such a balance is best summarized in the mission statement for the Town's Economic Development Plan and Strategy (1995) which concludes that *"A vital economic base will maintain and increase our quality of life by respecting and contributing to our social and physical setting."*

The Comprehensive Downtown Strategy (CDS) developed by the Lee Community Development Corporation (Lee CDC) encourages the cleanup and redevelopment of blighted and contaminated properties in the downtown area to allow for neighborhood appropriate re-development. As described previously, as former industrial sites each of the mills can be considered a brownfield site. Currently, the presence of brownfields, vacant mills and blighted property detract from the community character of the downtown area and creates a sense of disinvestment, disregard and neglect that discourages investment in the community.

Redevelopment of existing developed lands is preferential to development of marginal lands which would place increasing pressure on the environmentally sensitive areas of Lee, as well as those features that contribute to the character and identity of the Town. While the same development pressures of the 1980s are not a reality today, it is no less important to preserve the agricultural and rural character of the community, the integrity of the hilltops and hillsides,

the quality of drinking water and the water relied on for recreation, the continued availability of diverse habitat for wildlife, the continued viability of special environments, including those that support rare and endangered species of plants, and the cultural diversity of the community.

Lee's forests, wetlands, fields and meadows, in combination with extensive holdings of publicly owned land, offer a rare opportunity to develop a network of greenbelts, conservancy areas, nature preserves, and sites for a variety of active and passive recreational purposes. Development of an open space system, that does not threaten the integrity and viability of conservation lands, would also provide a formal mechanism for the management and protection of rare and endangered resources that are scattered throughout the community.

## Water Resources

The protection of water resources ranked as a high resource protection need in the recent community survey. These include the protection of the town's drinking water supply as well as its lakes, rivers, streams, and other wetlands.

More than 90% of the community is currently on the public water supply system. One hundred percent (100%) of the Leahey and Schoolhouse Reservoirs watersheds are protected from development through ownership by the water supplier or as state owned park land. Seventy six percent (76%) of the Vaninetti Reservoir watershed, which is utilized as a back-up supply, is owned by the Lee Water Department with the remainder of the watershed privately held forest.

Ground water is not a major source of drinking water for the town, however, there are two major aquifers with a total potential of yield of over 3 million gallons per day which could play a role in the long term future of either the town or the region.

Although the Town has adequate drinking water supply to support the needs of the existing community and future redevelopment, the Town's infrastructure is inadequate. In particular is the provision of adequate fire flow water pressure. The existing infrastructure is inadequate to provide the fire flow water pressure required by many redevelopment projects. For example, the existing available fire flows at the Eagle Mill are approximately 2,700 gpm and fire flows drop to 1,000 gpm at the southern end of Main Street. In assessing the Eagle Mill redevelopment options, the anticipated fire flows needed for the proposed project is 4,500 gpm. The construction of replacement water lines comprising 11,400 linear feet of new water main running from the town's water treatment facility to the southern end of Main Street could provide fire flows to the Eagle Mill in excess of 4,500 and further improve fire flows within Main Street to 3,500 gpm. These improvements would also benefit the Columbia and Greylock mills fostering private investment in the area while at the same time increasing fire safety generally in the downtown and surrounding area. In addition, the Water Main improvements would also

serve an area of the downtown center that encompasses very attractive redevelopment opportunities which the town has previously identified (West Side Development Area).

The Conservation Commission takes a very active role in protecting town wetlands, monitoring all types of projects, from the creation of small ponds to building in vicinity of the wetlands. As more development occurs in marginal areas, there is higher probability that it may encroach upon wetlands and wet soils. Wetlands serve a variety of purposes that are important to the community. From an economic standpoint, they provide flood storage and in periods of high water, they may determine whether or not residents will experience serious economic losses due to flooding. This is particularly critical along the Housatonic River where there is a history of severe floods causing significant damage.

Wetlands also provide habitat for a diversity of wildlife, and portions of the Housatonic River floodplain located in the Hop Brook area have been identified as important corridors for migratory birds. Wetlands also contribute to the scenic quality of the community.

The town is fortunate that the State Division of Fisheries and Wildlife has recognized the value of Lee's wetland areas, and has made a major investment in the acquisition of wetlands in the Hop Brook and Woods Pond areas. There are other sites, however, which are endangered and in need of protection. Also listed by the Housatonic River Restoration Plan as an important resource to be saved is Basin Pond - the only bog-type wetland in Lee.

### Rest of River

Recently, the EPA commissioned the *Cleanup of the Housatonic "Rest of River" Socioeconomic Impact Study* (June 2012). This work indicates that over the span of several years, while river PCB cleanup activities and construction are taking place, the six impacted municipalities, including Lee, stand to lose more than \$350 million in economic losses due to reduced real estate tax and tourism revenues, and damages to municipal infrastructure systems.

Two sites in the town of Lee have been identified by GE as potential permanent disposal sites for PCB-contaminated sediments that will be dredged from the Housatonic Rest of River during cleanup activities. The sites identified are Lane Construction Corporation sand & gravel and a site on Forest Street. The Town has stated unequivocally to GE, the EPA and the DEP that it will not accept the landfilling of PCB sediments within town borders.

According to the *Cleanup of the Housatonic "Rest of River" Socioeconomic Impact Study* residential properties near a future PCB landfill could decline in value by 3.5 percent, and that commercial, industrial and agricultural properties could decline by 1.75 percent. Although the PCB landfills would not be "hazardous waste landfills" according to EPA's regulatory definition, the hazardous waste price effect is appropriate to use given likely public attitudes toward these

disposal facilities. The distance from the potential landfill locations over which this effect would apply is assumed to be 3 miles, which is the mean distance at which an effect was detected in the studies analyzed by EPA.

The Rest of River Communities (Sheffield, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Lee, Lenox and Pittsfield) submitted a joint letter responding to the EPA's cleanup plan which stated that they all adamantly oppose a local landfill for contaminated materials, and that GE should remain legally responsible for the contamination in perpetuity, that the municipalities should be provided full opportunity to review and provide input on site specific clean-up plans as they are developed, that GE should be responsible to deal with the impacts of its pollution on all third parties (property owners, businesses, and the municipalities), and that all hazardous waste disposal facilities, including temporary storage areas, haul roads, dewatering facilities, and loading facilities should be subject to the Massachusetts Hazardous Waste Facility Siting Act.

### Steep Slopes

Steep slopes are the largest single physical element affecting the future development of the community. With over 37% of town's land mass situated on slopes over 15% in grade, and much of the future new development likely to occur in more marginal areas, soil erosion and sedimentation looms as a very real potential problem. This is all the more likely if one considers the percentage of soils that are classified as "highly erodible" by the Natural Resources Conservation Services.

In response to the need for the protection of steep slopes and scenic views, the Town accepted the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act in 2001. A map of the regulated areas was approved in 2006 and the regulations were formally filed in the Registry of Deeds in 2008. The regulations create uniform procedures regulating removal, filling, clearing of vegetation or other alteration of land within mountain regions designated by the town which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on watershed resources or natural scenic qualities. Adverse effects include the pollution or diminution of ground or surface water supply, erosion, flooding, substantial changes in topographic features, and substantial destruction of vegetation. The regulations define three regions and two zones, which regulate activities based both elevation and percent slope.

### Wildlife and Vegetation

The Town of Lee is fortunate in having ample wildlife habitat at two of the State's largest State Forests: October Mountain and Beartown Mountain. These, in combination with the Hop Brook wildlife management area, provide habitat for a diversity of woodland and wetland wildlife. If there is any real threat, it is to the smaller animals that live along the habitat "edges" between small woods, fields, along the brooks and Housatonic River in the more developed western portion of town. Such areas will become even more fragmented as development continues.

Particular attention also needs to be paid to those environments that support rare or endangered species of plants or animals. Monitoring conservation land, and removing non-native species before they become a problem and impact native species, is strongly recommended.

## Farmland

The Lee Farmers Market is among 13 weekly farmers markets held between early May and mid-November in the Berkshires. The Town of Lee finds that farming is an essential and valued activity, which provides fresh food, clean air, economic diversity, local employment, and open spaces to all the citizens of Lee. For these reasons, the Town adopted a Right to Farm Bylaw in 2008. The bylaw is intended to encourage the pursuit of agriculture, promote agricultural-based economic and employment opportunities and protect farmland within the Town of Lee. The purpose of the bylaw is to allow agricultural uses and related activities to function in harmony with the community, town agencies and others.

Working farms and agricultural landscapes contribute significantly to the character and identity of Lee. It is no coincidence that Lee's scenic roads frequently wind through agricultural landscapes or provide panoramic vistas that are largely dominated by farms, meadows or other types of abandoned farmland. This relationship is nowhere more apparent than at High Lawn Farm, a gem that dominates the landscape of the northwestern portion of town.

High Lawn Farm encompasses approximately 1,300 acres, approximately 750 acres of which are in Lee, the remainder in Stockbridge. Due to its location along its border, Lenox can also be considered a stakeholder in this farm. The loss of this farm in particular, but of agricultural landscapes in general, would have a profound impact upon the character and identity of the Lee.

In order to preserve working farms, the issue of economic viability must be addressed. The future of working farms should be addressed in a collaborative manner with landowners and representatives of local and state preservation organizations, economic organizations, and representatives of the town.

## B. Summary of Community Needs

The analysis of community needs revealed that there are deficiencies in the range of available recreation programs and facilities in the Town of Lee. This conclusion was evidenced in the responses to the recreation and open space survey which was conducted in May / June 2015.

The 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan and survey, a 16 question instrument (a copy of which is included in the appendix) was widely distributed in town and the school system. Two

hundred twenty five 225 copies of the questionnaire were returned. Sixty four (64%) of the survey respondents felt that recreational needs were not being met for residents across the board, with particular emphasis on the children and young adults. However, a significant number of respondents (44%) indicated that more opportunities were also needed for adults.

Respondents to the survey indicated strong support for additional walking paths, bike paths, hiking / walking trails, swimming areas or access, playgrounds and walking loops along public roadways. Ninety percent or greater of the survey respondents indicated they would support recreational improvements to these areas.

Laurel Lake and Sandy Beach were indicated as being high used with over 60% of the respondents indicating they use either resource greater than 6 times per year, with a quarter of the respondents using either area more than 16 times per year. However, Sandy beach is privately owned and used by the Town under an arrangement with the owners of High Lawn Farm. The farm's heirs have made it known that they will continue, indefinitely, their very generous seasonal donation of their private land for use as a beach. It might be prudent to secure some type of seasonal permanent access. Lenox Beach (at Laurel Lake) extends into Lee. Currently this beach is available for use by residents of Lenox. In past the Towns have shared their facilities when special cases have arisen. Continued cooperation in this regard should be fostered and formalized with the Town of Lenox.

Another priority area identified in the 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan was for children's play areas and town playgrounds, the Lee Athletic Field and playing courts, many of which have been allowed to deteriorate to the point where they are unsafe to use. These are also often inaccessible to the disabled. A program to upgrade these areas is needed and has been begun by the Lee Youth Commission.

A third priority identified in the 2015 survey was the need for an Indoor Recreation Center or Community Center. Such a facility would be multiple use and serve diverse segments of the community. This is a long standing item that the town has identified in previous surveys and planning efforts going back almost 30 years. Lee's current fiscal situation indicates it might be very difficult to have this be funded substantially by town funds.

A desire for developing and maintaining hiking trails, improving access, and providing open space linkages between the various town, state and other protected properties was supported by the results of the survey. Included in this is a need to integrate the Housatonic River into the Open Space network, through a greenway. Riverfront Park and the downtown section of the River must be considered prime elements of a broader open space system that will link the downtown with other areas of town, and ultimately with the regional open space/recreation network. A natural greenway could be utilized by bicyclists, hikers, canoeists, and for nature

activities. Federal and transportation funds are currently being used for the design of a Walkway/Bikeway along or in relatively close proximity to the Housatonic River.

Fifty percent of the survey respondents indicated they would support the adoption of the Community Preservation Act. Another 24% indicated they are unsure of their support for the CPA. This seems to indicate an educational effort about the CPA may result in its adoption.

Nearly ninety five (95%) percent of the survey respondents indicated it was at least somewhat important to preserve open space for recreation, to preserve ponds, rivers and streams, to preserve waterfront areas with public access, preserve wildlife habitat, and preserve woodlands. This shows that Lee residents strike a balance between conservation and recreation. There appears to be an increased opportunity for appropriate use of the town's conservation lands for passive recreation. This could be pursued by: 1) cooperative initiatives that allow non-detrimental beneficial enjoyment of the natural areas such as the River; 2) efforts to better publicize what is available, and to emphasize their value through environmental education and other programs both in the schools and elsewhere.

### C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

In 2012, the Board of Selectmen recognized the need to address organizational deficiencies in the delivery of recreational services when it re-invigorated the Lee Use Commission. The Lee Youth Commission has been re-established to advocate for groups providing recreational programming, designed or established, for the youth of Lee. In addition, the Lee Youth Commission may identify additional needs and make appropriate recommendations for future activities.

The town of Lee has a strong tradition of volunteerism. The recently constructed Pavilion at the Lee Athletic Field, which was entirely constructed by volunteer labor exemplifies that spirit. Previously, the 6 tennis courts in town were refurbished predominantly by private contributions (estimated value \$86,000.) Additionally, the recently conducted Open Space and Recreation Plan Public Opinion survey indicated there is strong interest by respondents to help with a clean-up of litter or trash, participate in a work party or help with maintenance. Efforts to coordinate volunteerism, which typically require a minimum investment, may yield significant results.

With the closure of the mills, Lee's economy is undergoing a major transformation. This transformation has put an enormous strain on the town's finances. As Lee aims to provide high quality services to its residents, it will need to increasingly pursue regional coordination and cooperation to provide services, including recreational services. Efforts at the regional delivery of services should be pursued.

The PCB clean-up of the Housatonic River offers a tremendous opportunity to recapture the river as a recreational resource. Furthermore, the clean-up of the Housatonic River could help stimulate the re-development of unused or under-utilized properties. Lee should actively pursue its interests in conjunction with the adjacent affected towns to insure Lee's interests are met with the clean-up of the Housatonic River.

DRAFT

# Section 8

## Goals and Objectives

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Note: Objectives are bulleted

### A. Open Space

#### Goal #1 - To Protect the Quality and Quantity of Water-related Resources and Protect the Health and Safety of the Citizens of Lee and Downstream Communities against Flood Inundation

- identify and prevent identifiable sources of water pollution, particularly in relation to lakes, ponds, and streams;
- protect areas of significance to the water resources of Lee, such as:
  - a. lakes and ponds with their water supply, recreational, and aesthetic benefits;
  - b. wetlands, vitally important as groundwater and wildlife habitats and resources for flooding, storm damage and pollution prevention through working with the building inspector and other town boards;
  - c. rivers, brooks and streams, integral factors in watershed drainage through enforcement of the Rivers Protection Act;
  - d. recharge areas, necessary to maintaining ground water levels and quality in potential water supply aquifers;
    - discourage runoff from new development in order to reduce contamination and peak flow rates and to encourage groundwater recharge;
    - fully support the Lee DPW in protecting watershed acreage around the reservoirs; and
    - preserve significant flood plain and wetland areas in Lee which are important for flood protection.

#### Goal #2 - To Improve the Environmental Quality of the Town through Proper Land Resource Considerations & Management

- protect, through regulatory means such as the Scenic Mountain Act, erosion-sensitive areas, hilltops and scenic ridgetops from development impacts;
- support and preserve a variety of open spaces in neighborhoods throughout the town;
- maintain riparian habitat through well-planned acquisition and management and to encourage owners of forest land to develop forest management plans;

- maintain existing wildlife habitats by careful management of developable land and by keeping certain "wilderness" areas, with protected, well-linked corridors between these areas;
- encourage and emphasize the importance of agriculture in Lee, and encourage existing farms to remain as agricultural land;
- plan and act cooperatively with other entities to promote conservation interests consistent with overall community needs.

#### Goal #3 - To Promote & Protect the Historical & Cultural Characteristics of the Town

- promote and protect the historic characteristics of the town;
- maintain the visual character and attractiveness of developed areas, particularly in gateway areas of high visibility;
- support the efforts of the Lee Historic Commission to preserve historic buildings and districts;
- discourage unsuitable development on and around historic sites;
- support awareness, particularly amongst young residents, of the town's cultural resources and diversity.

#### Goal #4 - To Promote and Maintain a High Level of Public & Private Participation in Conservation Awareness and Enjoyment

- support the Lee Land Trust in its endeavors;
- promote nature studies and an understanding/appreciation of open space;
- promote a sensitive balance between the needs of nature and humans;
- support local, regional and state conservation initiatives.

## B. Recreation

#### Goal #5 - To Provide and Maintain a Variety of Passive Recreational Opportunities in Town Parks and Properties

- increase public awareness of town parks and properties;
- upgrade access to Parks;
- provide picnic areas and hiking trails at parks where feasible;
- maintain park areas and trails;
- provide inter-connectivity through greenways linking recreational areas;
- educate the public on environmental issues related to Lee parks and public lands.

#### Goal #6 - To Provide and Maintain a Variety of Active Recreational Activities

- maintain and promote presently existing recreation lands and activities in Lee;
- encourage appropriate recreation on town-owned conservation lands where feasible;
- broaden programs for teen-agers;

- broaden handicapped access to recreational/conservation areas as much as possible;
- seek permanent protection of privately-owned recreational facilities used by Lee residents to ensure their future availability

Goal #7 - To provide excellent, safe & secure, outdoor playgrounds and recreational facilities for Lee residents

- study existing playgrounds for demographic needs, safety, etc. and make recommendations;
- upgrade playground safety;
- protect and maintain the quality and availability of:
  - Tennis Courts
  - Basketball Courts
  - Volleyball Court
  - Pavilion
  - Skateboard Park
  - Ice skating in winter
  - Baseball Fields/Soccer Fields
  - Jogging path/biking trail
  - Hiking / walking paths
  - Playgrounds

Goal #8 - To provide excellent indoor recreational facilities that are easily accessible

- provide a facility(s) that will house desirable multi-uses (such as a community center and recreational facility) in accessible location(s) (such as the downtown area);

Goal #9 - To provide a well-planned, structured, centralized program for both active and passive recreation

- increase available information covering all recreation parks, lands, facilities and activities in Lee;
- continue to consider and plan for future recreational needs;
- officially designate the Lee Youth Commission to coordinate the activities of volunteer organizations such as the Lee Youth Association, church groups, etc.;
- support the Lee Youth Association, Lee Sandy Beach Committee, Lee Community Tennis Association and other volunteer recreational groups to meet their expanding needs;
- plan and act cooperatively with other entities to promote recreation interests consistent with overall community needs.

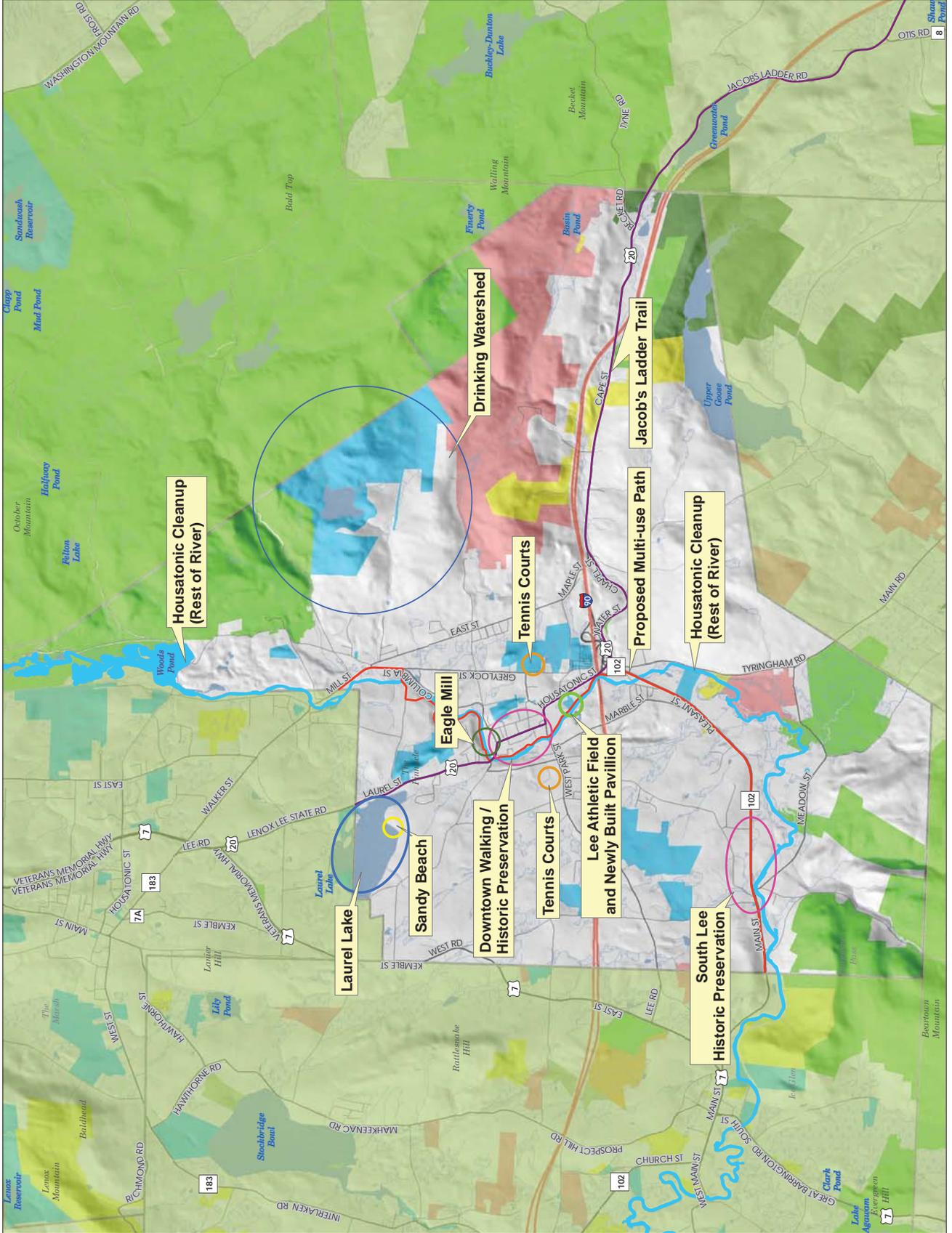
# Town of Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan Map 8. Action Plan Map

- Federal
- State
- Municipality
- Conservation Organization
- Land Trust
- Non-Profit
- Private
- Towns
- Interstate
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Local Road
- Stream
- Wetland
- Open Water



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**Berkshire  
Regional  
Planning  
Commission**



# Section 9

## Five-Year Action Plan

This Action Plan will require a commitment of additional town staff resources to accomplish all the actions listed. This commitment is mentioned within the Action Plan.

The short list of organization actions directly below transcend individual goals.

### *Suggested Actions*

### *Suggested Leadership*

### *Year Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Continue to incorporate public desires and wants into planning efforts in town	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	On-going	Other town boards and officials
Meet with representatives of key surrounding towns to discuss subregional planning issues and sharing services	Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Administrator	On-going	Surrounding towns, including Lenox and Stockbridge; Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Seek external funding for community-supported projects and improvements. Identify and actively apply/lobby for state or federal grants.	Town Administrator	On-going	Selectmen, Executive Off. of Energy & Env. Affairs, Dept of Housing & Community Dev., Dept. of Cons. & Rec., Dept of Env. Prot. and other state and federal agencies

Goal #1 - To Protect the Quality and Quantity of Water-related Resources in the Town and Promote the Health and Safety of the Citizens of Lee and Downstream Communities Against Flood Inundation.

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*

*Year Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

<p>Conservation Commission will continue to work with the Department of Environmental Protection to protect the wetlands in the Town of Lee</p>	<p>On going</p>	<p>Conservation Commission, Western Mass Circuit Rider for the Dept. of Env. Prot.</p>	<p>Dept of Env. Prot.</p>
<p>Ensure protection of water supply areas through means such as those identified in the Watershed Management Plan, regulation, acquisition</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Conservation Commission</p>	<p>Dept. of Public Works, Dept. of Env. Prot.</p>
<p>Cooperatively work on improving water quality at Laurel Lake and Goose Pond</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Conservation Commission, Lake Associations</p>	<p>Conservation Commissions in Lee and Tyringham</p>
<p>Ensure protection of flood areas through regulation, acquisition</p>	<p>On-going</p>	<p>Conservation Commission</p>	<p>Mass. Emer. Management Agency, Dept. of Cons. &amp; Rec., Fed. Emer. Management Agency</p>

Goal #2 - To Improve the Environmental Quality of the Town through Proper Land Resource Considerations & Management.

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*

*Year Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Investigate planning tools and environmental protection regulatory methods and tailor them to address Lee's needs	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Perform site evaluations, and work jointly with other public and private entities and property owners on an on-going basis	Conservation Commission	On-going	Planning Board
Continue to support and participate in regional initiatives and organizations such as Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic River Restoration, Tri-Town Health	All Boards	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic River Restoration, Tri-Town Health
Continue to participate in the Rest of River effort related to the clean-up of PCB contamination of the Housatonic River	Selectmen, Town Administrator	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, surrounding towns
Encourage/support efforts to concentrate development around the center and existing settled areas and through redevelopment/reuse of existing land and buildings	Planning Board, Town Administrator	On-going	Selectmen, Zoning Board
Work to ensure that farms in Lee remain intact, viable resources for future generations to enjoy. Consider voluntary preservation, economic programs, tax use reduction programs, such as Chapter 61 A and regulatory solutions.	Town Administrator	On-going	APR program, Lee Land Trust, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Assessors, working with property owners, the towns of Lenox and Stockbridge, and other organizations
Survey Lee Residents to determine if they would offer a parcel of land for agricultural use	Lee Land Trust	2015 – 2020	Berkshire Natural Resource Council
Obtain grant funds to work with residents to transform land into agricultural use	Lee Land Trust	2015 – 2020	

Goal #2 - To Improve the Environmental Quality of the Town through Proper Land Resource Considerations & Management continued...

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*

*Year Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Form OS/R Plan Update Committee, hold public meetings, and update OS/R Plan as needed	2020	Town Administrator, Lee Land Trust
Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Lee Youth Commission, Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee		

Goal #3 - To Promote & Protect the Historical & Cultural Characteristics of the Town.

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*

*Year Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Oversee the preservation of designated historic buildings and the Downtown and South Lee districts, and ensure development in or near historic sites is appropriate	On-going	Massachusetts Historical Commission, property owners
Consider and prepare additional historic designations where feasible and prudent	On-going	Property owners
Investigate, plan and implement the restoration of buildings and park sites in downtown area	On-going	Massachusetts Historical Commission
Preserve and encourage local enjoyment of scenic roads by reviewing scenic roads designations periodically, revising them as needed and developing linkages to other growth management strategies	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
		Jacob's Ladder Trail Advisory Committee, Department of Public Works

Goal #4 - To Promote and Maintain a High Level of Public & Private Participation in Conservation Awareness and Enjoyment

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*      *Year*      *Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Promote Open Space and Recreation Plan and get town groups to agree to participate in implementation	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Lee Youth Commission, Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works	On-going	Lee Land Trust
Expand awareness and support of conservation properties, and potential means of protecting and preserving additional lands such as easements, deed restrictions, acquisition, or Chapter programs	Lee Land Trust; Conservation Commission	2015 - 2017	Berkshire Natural Resource Council
Obtain grant funds to enhance and repair trails, remove fallen trees in key locations, survey or identify boundaries on certain lands in order to determine appropriate used such as hiking trails	Lee Land Trust; Conservation Commission	On-going	Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works
Formulate plan for education on environmental issues. Components of this program could include such items as work within the school system and community utilizing volunteers. This program should contain information about the risks and potential hazards related to non-point source pollution, forestry practices, etc. and focus not only on avoiding development impacts but on the most common and everyday activities of residents.	Conservation Commission, Lee School District, Lee Land Trust	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Dept. of Environmental Protection
Fund and implement plan for environmental education	Conservation Commission, Lee School District	2017-2020	Housatonic Valley Association, Boy Scouts, Lee High School, Lee Middle and High School Science Dep.

Goal #5 - To Provide and Maintain a Variety of Passive Recreational Opportunities in Town Parks and Properties.

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*      *Year*      *Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Provide a staffed passive recreational program that utilizes the efforts of volunteers and sensitively protects conservation lands and wildlife habitat	Conservation Commission	On-going	Boy Scouts, Kiwanis
Work towards improving accessibility to recreational resource areas	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission		

*5A. Parks*

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*      *Year*      *Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Recruit private group to share some responsibility for the town parks and trails	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission	2015	Boy Scouts, Kiwanis
Provide picnic area and trail access at town parks where feasible	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission - if land under their control	2017	Dept. of Public Works
Investigate and follow-up possibilities to own or long term lease existing private recreational facilities	Town Administrator	On-going	Lee Youth Commission

## 5B. Trails

### Suggested Actions

### Suggested Leadership

### Year

### Other Resources, Funding, Participants

Suggested Actions	Suggested Leadership	Year	Other Resources, Funding, Participants
Create/approve preliminary plan to interconnect recreational areas through greenways and trail networks	Lee Youth Commission, other Boards, Conservation Commission	2016	Other Boards, Housatonic River groups, property owners
Work to establish new bike paths that connect Lee with Stockbridge and Lenox, especially in conjunction with the clean-up of the Housatonic River and re-development of the mills	Lee Bike Committee, Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works		MassDOT, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Work with MassDOT to create bike lanes on Route 102 between Big Y and the Stockbridge Town line	Lee Bike Committee, Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works	2016	MassDOT, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Complete design and construction of a bike/pedestrian path between Big Y and Lee Bank at West Park St.	Town Administrator, Lee Bike Committee, Conservation Commission	2017	MassDOT, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Finalize a bike/pedestrian route to connect path between Lee Bank and Lenox Dale	Town Administrator, Lee Bike Committee, Conservation Commission	2018 2020	MassDOT, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Plan additional phases/means of interconnecting recreational areas	Lee Youth Commission, other Boards	2020	Property owners
Work to establish additional canoe access points	Housatonic Valley Association	2016	

Goal #6 - To Provide and Maintain a Variety of Active Recreational Activities.

*Suggested Actions*      *Suggested Leadership*      *Year*      *Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Secure continued access to private lands used for public recreation through voluntary donations, easements or acquisition	Lee Youth Commission	On-going	Town, Lee Youth Association, Conservation Commission, Goose Pond Association, Lee Sandy Beach, Goose Pond Association, other groups
Provide a suitably staffed active recreational program that leverages the efforts of volunteers. Evaluate and restructure programs as necessary.	Lee Youth Association	On-going	Lee Youth Commission

Broaden and support programs for teenagers	Lee Youth Association, Lee Library	On-going	Lee Youth Commission, Lee Community Tennis Assoc., Southern Berkshire System of Health
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Goal #7 - To provide excellent, safe & secure, outdoor playgrounds and recreational facilities for Lee residents.

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*      *Year*      *Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Have volunteer groups/organizations take responsibility for maintenance of playgrounds	Lee Youth Commission	2015	DPW
Upgrade playground equipment in all playgrounds in town	Lee Youth Commission	2015-2020	DPW
Upgrade playground equipment at the Lee Athletic Field	Lee Youth Commission	2015-2016	DPW
Investigate options (conduct feasibility analysis) for expanding outdoor recreational fields/facilities starting with the Town's Stockbridge Road Recreation Area	Lee Youth Commission	2017	Lee School District, DPW, Consultant(s)
Develop a plan for recreation use of the Stockbridge Road Recreation Area	Town Administrator	2020	DPW, other Boards, Lee School District
Maintain existing recreational facilities:	Lee Youth Commission	Ongoing	Lee Youth Association, Lee Community Tennis Association, Other recreation groups
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tennis Courts</li> <li>• Basketball Court</li> <li>• Volleyball Courts</li> <li>• Pavilion</li> <li>• Skateboard Park</li> <li>• (Ice skating in winter)</li> <li>• Baseball Field/Soccer Field</li> <li>• Playground</li> </ul>			

**Goal #8 - To provide excellent indoor recreational facilities that are easily accessible**

***Suggested Actions***

***Suggested Leadership***      ***Year***      ***Other Resources, Funding, Participants***

Cooperatively investigate options for expanding/building indoor recreational facilities to include: Community Center building for: Lee Youth Association, Day care center, after school activities, teen and adult functions, Elderly programs and possibly more	Lee Youth Commission, 2015-2020 Town Administrator	Lee School District, Consultant(s), Lee Youth Association, Lee Community Tennis Association
Select preferred options for indoor recreational facilities	Lee Youth Commission 2015-2020	DPW, other Boards, private property owners
Plan, hold public hearings/meetings and secure funding commitments for expanded indoor recreational facilities	Lee Youth Commission 2015-2020	Select Board, general public, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, State Grants
Begin phase I of implementing expanded indoor facilities	Lee Youth Commission, 2018 Lee Youth Association	Independent Contractors

Goal #9 - To provide a well-planned, structured, centralized administrative program for both active and passive recreation.

*Suggested Actions*

*Suggested Leadership*      *Year*      *Other Resources, Funding, Participants*

Encourage town organizations to participate in implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan	Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Lee Youth Commission	On going	Lee Youth Association
Develop and distribute brochures describing all town parks and properties open to recreational activities in Lee both active and passive, as well as activities	Lee Youth Commission	On going	Chamber of Commerce, Conservation Commission
Formulate plan for education on environmental issues related to recreational lands	Conservation Commission	On going	Lee School District
Formulate Plan for Telecom Media information (possibly phone/voicemail system or Internet Web services, or other means) describing all recreational activities based on the Recreation Information. Develop computer literacy outreach for all ages.	Lee Youth Commission	On going	Town Administrator
Implement plan for on-going environmental education related to recreational lands and telecom media information describing all recreational activities for all ages	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission	On going	Lee School District, Lee Youth Association, Other Boards
Form Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, hold public meetings, and update Open Space and Recreation Plan	Conservation Commission, Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee	On going	

# Section 10

## Public Comments

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To be completed...

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# Section 11

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# Appendices

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## Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan: Survey Results

The Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) intends to create a broad outline for the future of recreational public spaces and natural areas in the town of Lee. The plan must consider both the economic and structural needs of the community as well as the desire for safe, open, and desirable public spaces and the maintenance of natural resources. In order to continue with the plan in a rational and democratic manner, a survey on open spaces and recreational activity was made available to the residents of Lee in order to gauge their concerns and preferences. This report represents the results of that survey.

Sixteen questions were asked in the survey. The question results provide information that ranges from basic demographic identifiers (age, status of residency) to favorite recreational activity (hiking, cycling). Two hundred twenty five (225) respondents answered some or all of the questions in the survey: questions could be skipped or left unanswered. The questions, as they were stated in the original survey, as well as the accompanied results of each question are presented here. The hope of this survey is to provide an accurate reflection of the desires and areas of concern about open and public space in the town of Lee to be incorporated into the development of the Action Plan. The survey was available from May 15<sup>th</sup> to June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.

### 1. Do you feel there is a need to preserve open space in the Town of Lee?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	97.3%	214
No	2.7%	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>220</b>

The overwhelming majority of respondents (97.3%) felt there is a need to help preserve open space in Lee.

### 2. How important is it for Lee to preserve open space of the following types? (Please answer all.)

Answer Options	Most important	Somewhat important	Neither important or unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Not important at all	Total
Open space for recreation	76.13% 169	19.37% 43	2.70% 6	0.45% 1	1.35% 3	222
Ponds, rivers, and streams	73.42% 163	23.42% 52	2.25% 5	0.90% 2	0.00% 0	222
Waterfront areas with public access	69.82% 155	24.32% 54	4.05% 9	0.90% 2	0.90% 2	222

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Most important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Neither important or unimportant</b>	<b>Somewhat unimportant</b>	<b>Not important at all</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Wildlife habitat</b>	69.51% 155	25.11% 56	4.48% 10	0.90% 2	0.00% 0	223
<b>Woodlands</b>	58.82% 130	35.29% 78	4.07% 9	0.90% 2	0.90% 2	221
<b>Agriculture and Farms</b>	57.21% 127	31.53% 70	8.11% 18	2.25% 5	0.90% 2	222
<b>Historic sites or buildings</b>	52.91% 118	39.46% 88	5.38% 12	1.35% 3	0.90% 2	223
<b>Wetlands</b>	52.04% 115	32.13% 71	12.22% 27	2.26% 5	1.36% 3	221
<b>Scenic views</b>	49.78% 111	37.22% 83	9.87% 22	1.79% 4	1.35% 3	223
<b>Open space for conservation</b>	49.09% 108	38.18% 84	10.91% 24	0.91% 2	0.91% 2	220

The most important types of open space for the respondents were Open Space for Recreation (76.13%), areas associated with waterways (Waterfront Areas: 69.82%, Ponds, Rivers, and Streams: 73.42%), and Wildlife Habitats (69.51%). For all categories, the majority of respondents felt the particular type of open space to be of at least somewhat important to preserve.

### 3. What land conservation tools should the Town of Lee use to preserve open space? (Check all that apply.)

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>Reduce taxes in exchange for conservation of private land</b>	63.13% 137
<b>Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) - an APR is a deed restriction whereby a farm land owner restricts their land from non-farm development either by receipt of a payment or donation</b>	63.59% 138
<b>Land purchase</b>	43.78% 95
<b>Conservation restrictions - a Conservation restriction is a deed restriction whereby a land owner restricts their land from future development either by receipt of a payment or donation</b>	72.81% 158
<b>Total Respondents: 217</b>	

This question presented respondents with several strategies that could be used in Lee to help preserve open space. The most favored option was a strategy of Conservation Restrictions with

72.81% of respondents approving its use. The least favored option was direct Land Purchases with only 43.78% of respondents approving of the strategy.

#### 4. To support the preservation of open space in Lee, would you do the following?

	Yes	No	Unsure	Total
<b>Help with cleanup of litter or trash</b>	86.67%	5.71%	7.62%	
	182	12	16	210
<b>Participate in a work party</b>	78.05%	9.27%	12.68%	
	160	19	26	205
<b>Help with maintenance</b>	67.82%	18.32%	13.86%	
	137	37	28	202
<b>Conserve your land in exchange for reduced taxes</b>	64.50%	21.00%	14.50%	
	129	42	29	200
<b>Support the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) by the town - the CPA is an additional tax of between 1 - 3% on property tax bills whereby the funds raised must be used for Open Space, Outdoor Recreation, Affordable Housing or Historic Preservation</b>	50.48%	25.96%	23.56%	
	105	54	49	208
<b>Sell some land to the town at fair market value</b>	41.71%	33.67%	24.62%	
	83	67	49	199
<b>Lead activities</b>	41.21%	31.66%	27.14%	
	82	63	54	199
<b>Donate equipment or materials</b>	41.21%	34.67%	24.12%	
	82	69	48	199
<b>Sell or donate a conservation restriction to protect your land from future development</b>	40.30%	35.32%	24.38%	
	81	71	49	201
<b>Teach a class</b>	38.42%	36.45%	25.12%	
	78	74	51	203
<b>Rewrite your deed to limit future development of your land</b>	37.50%	38.00%	24.50%	
	75	76	49	200
<b>Donate money to buy land</b>	34.65%	35.64%	29.70%	
	70	72	60	202
<b>Donate land through a bequest in your will</b>	25.13%	48.24%	26.63%	
	50	96	53	199
<b>Donate some land to the town or a land trust</b>	19.80%	48.51%	31.68%	
	40	98	64	202
<b>Sell land to the town at a "bargain price" (less than fair market value)</b>	17.86%	51.53%	30.61%	
	35	101	60	196

When asked specifically what the respondents would do in order to help preserve open spaces, the respondents' answers have a few specific trends. Most respondents identified that they would be most willing to provide volunteer services to open spaces (Help with Cleanup of Litter: 86.67%, Participate in a Work Party: 78.05%, Help with Maintenance: 67.82%). In terms of issues of property, respondents favored tax based policies with Conserve Your Land in Exchange

for Reduced Tax favored by 64.5% and Support the Adoption of the CPA favored by 50.48% of the respondents. For the most part, respondents stated they would most likely not support open spaces through direct Donations of Land (19.8%) or Donation of Money to Buy Land (34.65%).

**5. What is the single biggest threat to open space in Lee? (List only one.)**

<b>Response Categories</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
<b>Development Pressures</b>	70.95%	105
a) <b>Residential Development/2<sup>nd</sup> Homeowners</b>	a) 15.54%	a) 23
b) <b>Commercial Development</b>	b) 12.16%	b) 18
<b>Improper Maintenance</b>	6.76%	10
<b>Environment/Pollution</b>	4.73%	7
<b>Money/Sale of Land</b>	4.73%	7
<b>Unsure/Don't Know/None</b>	4.73%	7
<b>Other</b>	4.05%	6
<b>Lack of Citizen Interest</b>	3.38%	5
<b>Political Issues</b>	2.70%	4
<b>Improper Zoning</b>	1.35%	2
	<b>Total</b>	148

The overwhelming majority of respondents identified Development Pressures as the biggest threat to open space (70.95% of respondents). Some responses identified specific types of development as the leading threat. Around 15.54% of all respondents specifically identified Residential/2<sup>nd</sup> home Construction Development as the main threat, while 12.16% of respondents identified Commercial Development as the main threat.

**6. What is your favorite open space in Lee? (List only one.)**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
<b>Sandy Beach</b>	17.65%	30
<b>Laurel Lake</b>	11.18%	19
<b>The Athletic Field</b>	8.82%	15
<b>Highlawn Farm</b>	8.24%	14
<b>October Mountain</b>	8.24%	14
<b>Golden Hill</b>	7.06%	12
<b>Town Common</b>	2.94%	5
<b>Goose Pond</b>	2.35%	4
<b>Pinnacle</b>	2.35%	4
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	2.35%	4
<b>Bear Town State Forest</b>	1.76%	3

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
<b>Ferncliff</b>	1.76%	3
<b>Meadow Street</b>	1.76%	3
<b>By the Ball Parks</b>	1.18%	2
<b>Longcope Park</b>	1.18%	2
<b>Stockbridge Road</b>	1.18%	2
<b>Near the High School</b>	1.18%	2
<b>Other</b>	13.53%	23
<b>Unsure/Don't Know</b>	5.88%	10
		170
<b><i>Total</i></b>		

The reported list of favorite open spaces in Lee was extremely varied. The most reported locations were Sandy Beach, Laurel Lake, and the Athletic Field.

**7. What are the top five (5) recreation activities you enjoy doing in Lee? (Check a maximum of 5 boxes.)**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
<b>Other</b>		11
<b>Walking</b>	64.0%	130
<b>Hiking</b>	50.2%	102
<b>Swimming</b>	36.0%	73
<b>Canoeing / Kayaking</b>	32.0%	65
<b>Gardening</b>	31.0%	63
<b>Swings / Slides / Playgrounds</b>	26.1%	53
<b>Bicycling</b>	25.6%	52
<b>Fishing</b>	23.6%	48
<b>Tennis</b>	22.7%	46
<b>Running</b>	17.7%	36
<b>Golf</b>	15.3%	31
<b>Basketball</b>	14.3%	29
<b>Baseball</b>	13.3%	27
<b>Snowshoeing</b>	12.3%	25
<b>Soccer</b>	12.3%	25
<b>Lacrosse</b>	12.3%	25
<b>Boating</b>	11.3%	23
<b>Indoor recreation / Fitness activities</b>	11.3%	23
<b>Football</b>	9.4%	19
<b>Ice Fishing</b>	7.9%	16
<b>Hunting</b>	7.9%	16
<b>Bird watching</b>	7.4%	15
<b>Cross-Country Skiing</b>	5.4%	11

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
<b>Dance / Yoga</b>	4.4%	9
<b>Snowmobile Riding</b>	3.4%	7
<b>Skate Boarding</b>	3.4%	7
<b>Ice Skating</b>	3.0%	6
<b>Horseback Riding</b>	1.0%	2
	<b>Total</b>	203

This question allowed for multiple selections of activities that participants liked to engage in. The most widely reported activities were Walking (64%) and Hiking (50.2%).

**8. Of the top five recreational activities you listed in the previous question, which is your single most favorite activity?**

Answer Categories	% of Respondents	# of Respondents
<b>Walking/Running</b>	20.77%	38
<b>Hiking</b>	12.57%	23
<b>Boating/Kayaking</b>	9.29%	17
<b>Swimming</b>	8.74%	15
<b>Fishing</b>	7.10%	13
<b>Golfing</b>	6.01%	11
<b>Basketball</b>	4.37%	8
<b>Playground/Children</b>	4.37%	8
<b>Cycling</b>	3.28%	6
<b>Lacrosse</b>	3.28%	6
<b>Gardening</b>	2.73%	5
<b>Soccer</b>	2.73%	5
<b>Baseball</b>	2.19%	4
<b>Football</b>	1.09%	2
<b>Hunting</b>	1.09%	2
<b>Motorsports</b>	1.09%	2
<b>Bird watching</b>	0.55%	1
<b>Dance</b>	0.55%	1
<b>Skateboarding</b>	0.55%	1
	<b>Total</b>	183

When asked to identify their single favorite recreational activity out of the 5 they selected in question 7, the responses generally reflect similar results to question 7. The most favored activity was Walking/Running (20.77%). Hiking and assorted water activities (Boating, Swimming, and Fishing) were also among the most widely identified activities.

**9. How often do you or your family members use the following recreation areas in Lee per year? (Please answer all items.)**

	<b>Very Frequently (16+ times)</b>	<b>Frequently (11-15 times)</b>	<b>Occasionally (6-10 times)</b>	<b>Sometimes (1-5 times)</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Haven't heard of it</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Tennis courts</b>	15.90% 31	9.74% 19	14.36% 28	23.59% 46	34.36% 67	2.05% 4	195
<b>Laurel Lake</b>	27.14% 54	19.60% 39	21.61% 43	26.13% 52	5.53% 11	0.00% 0	199
<b>Golf Course</b>	12.11% 23	7.37% 14	11.58% 22	25.79% 49	41.58% 79	1.58% 3	190
<b>Sandy Beach</b>	26.15% 51	18.46% 36	16.92% 33	27.69% 54	10.26% 20	0.51% 1	195
<b>Lee Athletic Field</b>	24.74% 48	14.43% 28	19.07% 37	22.16% 43	19.07% 37	0.52% 1	194
<b>Neighborhood playgrounds</b>	20.00% 38	14.21% 27	23.68% 45	20.53% 39	21.05% 40	0.53% 1	190
<b>Playing fields (for example, baseball, soccer, lacrosse, softball, football, etc.)</b>	45.36% 88	11.86% 23	10.31% 20	12.89% 25	19.07% 37	0.52% 1	194
<b>Playing courts (for example, basketball, etc.)</b>	28.72% 54	10.64% 20	15.96% 30	19.15% 36	24.47% 46	1.06% 2	188

The most widely and frequently used recreational space for the respondents was the Playing Fields (45.36% of respondents reported using the spaces “Very Frequently” =16+ times per year). The least widely and frequently used spaces were the Golf Course (41.58% reported never using the space) and the Tennis Courts (34.36% reported never using the space).

**10. How would you rate the following recreation areas in Lee? (Please answer all items.)**

	<b>Great recreation area</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>	<b>I have never used this area for recreation</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Tennis courts</b>	48.21% 94	20.51% 40	31.28% 61	195
<b>Laurel Lake</b>	66.33% 132	30.65% 61	3.02% 6	199
	51.10%	4.40%	44.51%	

	<b>Great recreation area</b>	<b>Needs improvement</b>	<b>I have never used this area for recreation</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Golf Course</b>	93	8	81	182
	66.33%	26.53%	7.14%	
<b>Sandy Beach</b>	130	52	14	196
	17.71%	69.27%	13.02%	
<b>Lee Athletic Field</b>	34	133	25	192
	11.68%	72.08%	16.24%	
<b>Neighborhood playgrounds</b>	23	142	32	197
<b>Playing fields (for example - baseball, soccer, lacrosse, softball, football, etc.)</b>	61	95	36	192
	31.77%	49.48%	18.75%	
<b>Playing courts (for example - basketball, etc.)</b>	41	93	52	186
	22.04%	50.00%	27.96%	

Laurel Lake stands out among the responses as an area widely used and graded as a great recreation area (66.33% stated that the Lake was a “Great Recreation Area” and only 3.02% had never used the Lake before). The Golf Course and Tennis Courts both stand out as spaces where the people who use the areas grade them as Great Recreation Areas (Golf: 51.1%, Tennis: 48.41%) but a large percentage of respondents (44.51%, 31.28% respectively) have never used either. Lee Athletic Field, the Neighborhood Playgrounds, and the Playing Courts were all options that were identified as spaces that “Needs Improvement” by a majority of respondents.

**11. Do you think there are adequate recreation opportunities for all ages and abilities in Lee? (Check all that apply.)**

<b>Answer Choices</b>	<b>Responses</b>
<b>Yes – recreation opportunities are adequate for all ages and abilities</b>	20.62%
	40
<b>No – need more opportunities for children and younger residents</b>	64.43%
	125
<b>No – need more opportunities for adults</b>	44.33%
	86
<b>No – need more opportunities for older adults and people with disabilities</b>	28.87%
	56
<b>Total</b>	194

A majority of respondents (64.43%) felt that there are not adequate recreational opportunities for children and younger residents. Although not a majority, a significant percentage of respondents (44.33%) felt that there is not enough opportunities for adults.

**12. If you answered no to Question 11, what specific additional recreational opportunities would you like to add in Lee?**

<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>% of Respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
<b>Indoor Rec Center</b>	23.08%	30
<b>Biking/Hiking Trails</b>	20.77%	27
<b>Update Playgrounds</b>	18.46%	24
<b>Field Complex</b>	17.69%	23
<b>Youth Engagement</b>	15.38%	20
<b>Adult Activities</b>	8.46%	11
<b>Swimming Pool</b>	4.62%	6
<b>Update/Up-keep</b>	4.62%	6
<b>Disabilities Accommodation</b>	4.26%	6
<b>Basketball Courts</b>	3.85%	5
<b>Increased Access/Use</b>	3.85%	5
<b>Running Track</b>	3.08%	4
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	3.08%	4
<b>Community Gardens</b>	2.31%	3
<b>Yoga</b>	2.31%	3
<b>Other</b>	2.31%	3
<b>Dog Park</b>	1.54%	2
<b>Ice Rink</b>	1.54%	2
<b>Non-Sport Activities</b>	1.54%	2
<b>Picnic Areas</b>	1.54%	2
<b>None</b>	1.54%	2
<b>Bathrooms</b>	0.77%	1
<b>Boat Facilities</b>	0.77%	1
<b>Consolidate Park Control</b>	0.77%	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>

When asked about what specific improvements they would like to see, respondents answered with a variety of suggestions. The most common desire was to build an Indoor Recreation Center or Community Center (23.08% of respondents). A variety of specific concerns supported the construction of a Recreation Center, including desires to expand use of basketball courts during the winter, establish a place for youth to feel safe and engaged, as well open a year round indoor swimming pool. The next most common desire was to expand and update trails that could be used for a variety of uses (Hiking/Biking/Walking: 20.77%). Updating Playgrounds, refurbishing and expanding the Field Complex, as well as Youth Engagement were also widely reported concerns.

**13. Please indicate your level of support for the following recreation improvements in Lee.  
(Please answer all items.)**

	<b>Highly Support</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Neither support nor oppose</b>	<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Strongly Oppose</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Walking paths</b>	60.30% 120	36.68% 73	3.02% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	199
<b>Bike paths</b>	59.90% 118	30.46% 60	8.12% 16	1.52% 3	0.00% 0	197
<b>Hiking / walking trails</b>	57.71% 116	36.32% 73	5.97% 12	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	201
<b>Swimming area / Access</b>	57.07% 113	34.34% 68	8.08% 16	0.51% 1	0.00% 0	198
<b>Playgrounds</b>	56.70% 110	34.54% 67	8.76% 17	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	194
<b>Walking loops (along public roadways)</b>	53.77% 107	39.20% 78	5.53% 11	1.01% 2	0.50% 1	199
<b>Public park</b>	51.04% 98	36.98% 71	11.46% 22	0.52% 1	0.00% 0	192
<b>Kayak/canoe/boat launch</b>	48.98% 96	39.80% 78	10.20% 20	1.02% 2	0.00% 0	196
<b>Sport playing fields (baseball, football, etc.)</b>	47.64% 91	36.13% 69	15.71% 30	0.52% 1	0.00% 0	191
<b>Sport playing courts (tennis, basketball, etc.)</b>	47.47% 94	36.36% 72	15.66% 31	0.51% 1	0.00% 0	198
<b>Bike lanes (along public roadways)</b>	41.92% 83	32.32% 64	16.16% 32	7.58% 15	2.02% 4	198
<b>Open space access areas (parking lots &amp; trailheads)</b>	41.33% 81	40.31% 79	17.86% 35	0.00% 0	0.51% 1	196
<b>Ice skating</b>	40.10% 77	39.06% 75	19.27% 37	1.56% 3	0.00% 0	192
<b>Picnic area</b>	39.38% 76	41.45% 80	18.65% 36	0.52% 1	0.00% 0	193
<b>Indoor recreation (fitness, weight lifting, yoga etc.)</b>	38.66% 75	35.57% 69	25.26% 49	0.52% 1	0.00% 0	194
<b>Camping area</b>	34.21% 65	33.16% 63	27.89% 53	4.21% 8	0.53% 1	190
<b>Snowmobile trails</b>	16.39% 30	24.04% 44	41.53% 76	14.75% 27	3.28% 6	183

Once again, many respondents were in favor of expansion of Walking Loops (53.77% Highly Support), Paths (60.3%), Hiking Paths (57.71%), and Bike Paths (59.9%). Swimming Area/ Access and Playground improvements were also highly supported improvements.

**14. What type of recreation ACTIVITY or IMPROVEMENTS would you like to see more of in Lee? (List as many as you like.)**

	<b>% of Respondents</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
<b>Biking/Walking Trails</b>	39.06%	50
<b>Playgrounds</b>	18.75%	24
<b>Indoor Rec Center</b>	16.41%	21
<b>Athletic Field Complex</b>	8.59%	11
<b>Other</b>	7.03%	9
<b>Basketball Courts</b>	6.25%	8
<b>Tennis Courts</b>	6.25%	8
<b>Ice Rink</b>	5.47%	7
<b>Swimming Pool</b>	5.47%	7
<b>Youth Activities</b>	5.47%	7
<b>Up-keep/Cleanliness</b>	4.69%	6
<b>Boat Facilities</b>	3.91%	5
<b>Family Activities</b>	3.91%	5
<b>Update/Improve Parks</b>	3.91%	5
<b>Increase Access/Use</b>	3.13%	4
<b>None</b>	3.13%	4
<b>Adult Activities</b>	2.34%	3
<b>Soccer Fields</b>	2.34%	3
<b>Yoga</b>	1.56%	2
<b>Community Gardens</b>	1.56%	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>128</b>

Again, the respondents identified their desire to see more Biking/Walking Trails in Lee. Playground Improvements as well as an Indoor Recreation Center were also identified as favored improvements.

**15. Are you a year-round resident, seasonal resident, or second homeowner in Lee?**

<b>Answer Choices –</b>	<b>Responses –</b>
<b>Year-round resident</b>	91.09% 184
<b>Seasonal resident</b>	3.96% 8
<b>Second homeowner</b>	4.95% 10
<b>Total</b>	<b>202</b>

**16. Please indicate the number of household members in the following age brackets (including yourself) that your answers represent:**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Under 5 years</b>	73.33%	26.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
	22	8	0	0	0	0	30
<b>5 - 17</b>	48.82%	35.43%	14.96%	0.79%	0.00%	0.00%	
	62	45	19	1	0	0	127
<b>18-24</b>	55.32%	40.43%	2.13%	2.13%	0.00%	0.00%	
	26	19	1	1	0	0	47
<b>25-34</b>	54.84%	41.94%	3.23%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
	17	13	1	0	0	0	31
<b>35-44</b>	47.14%	51.43%	1.43%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
	33	36	1	0	0	0	70
<b>45-54</b>	46.75%	51.95%	1.30%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
	36	40	1	0	0	0	77
<b>55-64</b>	60.98%	39.02%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
	25	16	0	0	0	0	41
<b>65-74</b>	53.33%	46.67%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
	16	14	0	0	0	0	30
<b>75-84</b>	63.16%	36.84%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	
	12	7	0	0	0	0	19
<b>85 or older</b>	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1
	1	0	0	0	0	0	

**Conclusion:**

The results of the survey provide invaluable information on how to proceed with the future plans for open space and recreation in Lee. In order to preserve and create open and public spaces that the citizens of Lee care about and enjoy, the preferred use of public space as well as their preferred strategies to preserve public space must be incorporated. This survey aid this aspect of the plan.

Several prevailing topics have arisen from the results of the survey. Respondents felt that recreational and open space should be preserved in Lee. Respondents felt that these spaces provide places for recreation and enjoyment as well as preserve wildlife. The most common activities are hiking, walking, cycling, and running and there are strong desires to expand and enhance trails. Respondents also wish to protect waterways and water based activities, whether it is boating, kayaking, or swimming. The most highly valued and utilized open spaces by the respondents in Lee were Laurel Lake and Sandy Beach.

The biggest threat to protected open spaces identified by the respondents was pressure from development. These pressures varied from commercial to residential and 2<sup>nd</sup> home construction. In order to preserve open spaces, respondents identified that they are more willing to donate time and energy to maintain cleanliness and safety of parks and trails. The respondents favored tax based policies to expand and protect open recreational and wildlife spaces.