

5 INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

According to the MassGIS Open Space datalayer, and information provided by the Hadley Conservation Commission and Assessor, Hadley has approximately 5,490 acres of land, with some degree of protection from development. Roughly half of this land (2,695 acres) is permanently protected under Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR). the next largest category of land owner is state and federal conservation entities and non-profit land trusts with 1,858 acres.

This chapter provides an inventory of land in Hadley important for its current and future open space and/or recreational use. Private and publicly owned sites are included. Use of private land is not guaranteed unless there is consent of the property owner in the short term, and a deed restriction for the long term. Protected open space provides aesthetic amenities, maintains the town's rural character, and assists in protecting the town's natural resources, including clean air and water, the Mount Holyoke Range, and productive agricultural soils. Adoption of the Community Preservation Act has provided the town with greater ability to protect open space and develop recreational programs.

Protected lands are public or semi-public parcels which are permanently protected for conservation purposes, or private lands that have been permanently protected with a Conservation Restriction (CR) or Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR). This chapter also includes parcels with limited or partial protection. For the purposes of this plan, partial protection is attributed to a parcel of open space if the deed has some level of protective language. Limited protection is attributed to a parcel if the deed does not have protective language, but the parcel is owned by a conservation entity such as a land trust or a state or federal agency responsible for natural resource protection.

A. Private Parcels

The majority of Hadley's open space is farmland, and the greatest amount of its protected open space is land that has been placed under APR (2,695 acres) with the assistance of the Department of Agricultural Resources (MADAR). MADAR's program for the purchase of development rights from farmland is especially important to Hadley due to the significant development pressure, and large portion of the community involved in active agricultural operations. Hadley was one of the first in the Commonwealth to use the APR program, and has received special recognition for the number of years it has been in the program and amount of farmland saved. A complete list of APR properties is provided in the Appendices.

The Kestrel Trust is a non-profit land trust assisting in the negotiation of APR agreements, and sometimes buying critical parcels in Hadley. The American Farmland Trust has also assisted the town in acquiring APRs. These organizations work closely with the Hadley Conservation Commission, sharing important expertise.

The majority of active farmland (5,800 acres) is enrolled in Chapter 61A, an important tax relief program incentive for farmland. Just under half of those Chapter 61A acres (46%) are permanently protected by APRs. Since the town has the right of first refusal on land withdrawn from Chapter 61A, it is important to track those parcels not permanently protected, and to

develop collaborative partnerships for protecting these lands if first right of refusal opportunities arise.

In addition to parcels enrolled in 61A, another 130 acres is enrolled in Chapter 61, and 128 acres enrolled in Chapter 61B. Chapter 61 is a tax relief program for working woodlands, and Chapter 61B for passive or active recreation. As with Chapter 61A, the Town has first right of refusal if land is withdrawn from either tax program before its term of enrollment. The Town can assign its right of refusal to another qualified conservation partner. As with farmland that is not permanently protected, it is important to monitor working woodlands and recreation areas for opportunities to secure permanent protection as they become available.

There are also 347 acres private land protected through Conservation Restrictions (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Private Conservation Restrictions

Map/Parcel	Name	Location	Year	Book/Page	Acres
4A/34	Kosier CR	Middle Street	2002	6615/156 & PB 193/104	12
6B/76	Aggasiz / Kestral CR	Mt. Warner	1986	2740/15 & PB 138/84, 85	159.29
11A/19	Zaskey CR	Mt. Warner Road	2012	10953/15	69.63
11C-1	Thayer (Elder) CR	Mt. Warner	2006	8645/146 & 7709/138	97.78
11C-2	Thayer (Elder) CR	Mt. Warner	2006	8645/146 & 7709/138	
12A/10	Lake Warner/ Kestral CR	Stockbridge Road	2008	9546/115	5.7

B. Public and Nonprofit Parcels

The Mount Holyoke Range and the Mt Warner area are both significant forested areas and foci for preservation efforts. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has acquired a great deal of land, especially on the Range and along sections of the Connecticut River shoreline. The Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game owns 94 acres on Mt Warner as the Lake Warner Wildlife Management Area.

In the Hockanum section of town the DCR and Conservation Commission have identified land adjacent to the Connecticut River as important for protection. This land has multiple resource values: productive farmland, wetlands, river frontage and a sandy beach that could be developed into a modest park. In addition, its proximity to the Skinner State Park makes this area a target for protection through direct acquisition, the use of conservation restrictions or the use of APRs. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has protected 160 acres in Hadley as part of the Connecticut River Greenway.

The Fort River watershed area and the Great Meadow are two areas that have garnered significant attention in recent years. The Fort River Initiative is a group of local interests that want to protect both the farming interests in the Fort River area, and the important wildlife habitats. The Great Meadow consists of the original farming plots of the first settlement of Hadley, and is an important historic area not currently protected from encroaching development.

Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is also in Hadley. The Conte Refuge was established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conserve the abundance and diversity of native plants and animals and their habitats in the 7.2 million acre Connecticut River watershed in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.

Appendix B includes an inventory of the approximately 592 acres of open space and recreation land owned by the Town of Hadley. Of this, 400 acres is managed by the Water Department for water supply protection.

Table 5.2 State, Federal, and Non-Profit Owned Conservation Areas

Map/Parcel	Name	Location	Year	Book/Page	Protection Status*	Acres
8/9A	Mount Holyoke Range/DCR	85 Chmura Road	2014	11605/347	Partial	44.49
9/22D	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road	2012	10878/0240	Limited	32.07
9/31	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road				1.8
9/34	Conte Refuge/USFW	South Maple Street	2005	8487/0135	Partial	10.2
9/36	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road	2006	9413/0206	Limited	24.0
9/37	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road	2008	9413/0206	Limited	41.0
9/38	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road	2013	11368/029	Limited	12.0
9/39	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road	2009	9967/0277	Partial	66.52
9/40	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road	2010	10392/0238	Limited	24.4
9/51-1	Conte Refuge/USFW	Moody Bridge Road	2005	8487/0135	Partial	12.5
10A-3A	Conte Refuge/USFW	Mill Valley Road	2011	10525/85	Limited	19.32
10A-2A	Conte Refuge/USFW	Mill Valley Road				8.6
12A/15	Lake Warner WMA	Mt Warner	1993	4385/233	Limited	94.8
11C/3A	Valley Land Fund	North Maple Street	1994	4462/241	Limited	19.57
6A-19	Kestrel Trust	Mt Warner				13.4
6A-16	Kestrel Trust	River Drive				35.0
12A-10	Kestrel Trust	Stockbridge Street/ Lake Warner				5.7
10B-4	Comm. of Massachusetts	Norwottuck Rail Trail				40.0
3-3, 3A, 4, 6, 7, 13, 14,	Comm. of Massachusetts	CT River Greenway				159.91

14A, 12, 8, 15, 16, 30, 34; 2-30; 5G-8; 6B-3; 11C-22, 23						
2-32; 8-13, 20C, 47A; 2-8, 45A; 3- 41A, 43, 50, 54, 34A, 71, 76, 77; 7A-2	Comm. of Massachusetts	Mount Holyoke Range/ Skinner State Park				1131.78
12B-26, 28, 31, 27	Comm. of Massachusetts	Rte 116 / Mill River				60.7

**Partial = Deed has some protective language; Limited = Deed does not have protected language but owner is a conservation entity; CA = Conservation Area; WMA = Wildlife Management Area*