

# HAMILTON RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

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## ESSEX COUNTY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

### MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Essex National Heritage Commission

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## **PROJECT TEAM**

### **Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation**

Jessica Rowcroft, Preservation Planner  
Division of Planning and Engineering

### **Essex National Heritage Commission**

Bill Steelman, Director of Heritage Preservation

### **Project Consultants**

Shary Page Berg  
Gretchen G. Schuler  
Virginia Adams, PAL

### **Local Project Coordinator**

Jean Nelson

### **Local Heritage Landscape Participants**

Gretel Clark  
Susanna Colloredo  
Arthur Crosbie  
John Hamilton  
Maureen Hickey  
Jean Nelson  
Susanne Richey  
Evelyn Shuman

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## INTRODUCTION

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Essex County is known for its unusually rich and varied landscapes, which are represented in each of its 34 municipalities. Heritage landscapes are places that are created by human interaction with the natural environment. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. This wealth of landscapes is central to each community's character; yet heritage landscapes are vulnerable and ever changing. For this reason it is important to take the first steps towards their preservation by identifying those landscapes that are particularly valued by the community – a favorite local farm, a distinctive neighborhood or mill village, a unique natural feature, an inland river corridor or the rocky coast. To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program (HLI) to communities in Essex County. The primary goal of the program is to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected. The focus is on landscapes that have not been identified in previous survey efforts in a given community. Another important goal of the program is to provide communities with strategies from preserving heritage landscapes.

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a Pilot Project conducted in southeast Massachusetts. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land* which has provided guidance for the program in Essex County. In short, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-ENHC consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting at which interested residents and town officials offer community input by identifying potential heritage landscapes. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, sometimes accompanied by other community members. This group visits the priority landscapes identified in the meeting and gathers information about the community. The final product is the Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; identifies the resources and documentation that provide background information; provides a short description of the priority heritage landscapes visited; discusses planning issues identified by the community; and concludes with a brief discussion of survey and planning recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix.

## HAMILTON HISTORY

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Hamilton's distinctive landscape features — its lakes, rivers, wetlands, hills and rich soils — were instrumental in shaping the history of the community from the earliest use of the area by Native Americans through the long tradition of agricultural use that continues today.

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Few confirmed Native American sites have been found in Hamilton but the Ipswich and Miles River areas are probable locales of early activity by the Pawtucket group, which was referred to locally as Agawam. Native Americans remained in the vicinity of Wigwam Hill until the mid-eighteenth century.

Hamilton, originally an outlying area of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Ipswich plantation, was settled by colonists relatively late for an Essex County community. The Bay Road was established through the area by 1641 and remains the primary organizing feature of the town's transportation system. There were scattered European settlers in the area by 1675 and a meetinghouse center was established at Cutler Road and Bay Road by 1712. Through the Federal period (1775-1830) agriculture was the primary occupation, with limited industrial activities initially clustered on the Ipswich River and later scattered throughout the area. Hamilton was not incorporated as a separate town until 1793.

Dispersed agricultural settlement, supplemented by a few mills and small shops, persisted well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. With the arrival of the Boston and Maine Railroad in 1839, commercial activities shifted to the railroad junction in South Hamilton, while civic activities remained concentrated at the meetinghouse center.

A major period of growth occurred during the Late Industrial period (1870-1915). The Methodist Camp Meeting Ground established at Asbury Grove in 1859 gained in popularity during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, bringing many summer residents to the community, as well as day-trippers arriving by train from Boston. Chebacco Lake emerged as a resort area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with hotels to accommodate seasonal visitors. The founding of the Myopia Hunt Club in 1876 and the development of many large estates contributed to Hamilton's image as a rural retreat. New residential areas and an expanded commercial district were also established in South Hamilton during this period.

There was another period of rapid growth after 1940, with the construction of Routes 95 and 128 nearby. It was characterized by suburban-scale residential development, particularly in South Hamilton and Asbury Grove. In the early 1960s when landscape architect Charles Eliot was hired to prepare the first master plan for the community, the population was about 6,140 residents. There were three distinct forms of development: large family estates and farms, a few densely settled neighborhoods of small houses on narrow streets, and recently developed subdivisions. By 2004 when the most recent master plan was completed the population had grown to 8,315. Despite a roughly 25% growth in population over the past 40 years, Hamilton is fortunate to retain a surprisingly rural character.

## **RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTATION**

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This section of the Reconnaissance Report identifies planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program.

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## **Inventory of Historic Assets**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets is a statewide list that identifies significant historic resources throughout the Commonwealth. In order to be included in the inventory, a property must be documented on an MHC inventory form, which is then entered into the MHC database. A searchable database is now available online at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us.mhc>.

According to the MHC, Hamilton's inventory documents 85 properties that date from 1640 to 1980. These are mostly residential properties located along Bay Road and other older roads in the community. This is one of the smallest inventories found among the Essex County communities. It focuses on structures built prior to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and includes few resources in South Hamilton. The estates in North Hamilton are also largely omitted from the inventory. Most of the inventory forms were completed some time ago and do not meet current standards for documentation of historic resources.

## **State and National Registers of Historic Places**

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. All National Register properties are also listed in the State Register. Hamilton has one National Register district: the Hamilton Historic District (1973, 26 properties), which runs along Bay Road. There are also four houses listed in the First Period Buildings of Eastern Massachusetts thematic nomination, all of which are also individually listed in the National Register. There are no preservation restrictions in Hamilton.

## **Local Historic District**

Local historic districts, which are administered at the municipal level, are special places within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by a local historic district commission. Hamilton has one local historic district, the Hamilton Historic District (1973, 26 resources). It has the same boundaries as the National Register district of the same name. Properties within local historic districts are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

## **Planning Documents**

Hamilton completed its Master Plan in 2004, initiated by the Planning Board and prepared with input from the Citizens Action Planning Committee. It is intended as a blueprint to guide future land use and protect the town's finite land and natural resources. A major purpose of the plan was to engage citizen participation in identifying key priorities and evaluating options for workable recommendations that have broad-based support. Many of the issues identified during the master planning process also relate to heritage landscapes and many of the recommendations contained in the Master Plan support preservation of

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historic landscapes. Hamilton's most recent Open Space and Recreation Plan expired in 2002. However, the Master Plan addresses many issues related to open space and recreation.

### **Planning Bylaws and Other Tools**

Hamilton has already implemented several important land use planning tools, notably site plan review, cluster zoning and overlay zoning. It also has a scenic roads bylaw. The following are designated scenic roads: Asbury Street, Bridge Street, Chebacco Road, Cutler Road, Gardner Street, Goodhue Street, Highland Street, Miles River Road, Moulton Street, Sagamore Street, Walnut Road and Winthrop Street.

### **PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES**

Hamilton's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by eight residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on October 21, 2004. During the meeting residents compiled a lengthy list of the town's heritage landscapes, which appears in the Appendix. Once the comprehensive list was created, attendees were asked to articulate the value of each landscape and to identify issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members selected a group of priority heritage landscapes to be visited by the consulting team during the fieldwork. Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued, contributes to community character and is not permanently protected or preserved.

The following text describes the priority landscapes that were the focus of the reconnaissance work in Hamilton. In most instances intensive survey work will be needed to fully document the physical characteristics and the historical development of the landscape. These heritage landscapes, which are listed alphabetically, represent a range of scales and land use types.

#### **Chebacco Lake**

Chebacco Lake, located on the Hamilton/Essex border, was used for commercial ice harvesting during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After the railroad was extended east to Essex in 1872, the lake became a resort area with hotels built around the perimeter. The area later evolved into a cottage community consisting of compact seasonal houses built on small lots. The 209-acre lake (a state-designated great pond) has a maximum depth of 22 feet, but the many of the coves around the perimeter are shallow, with aquatic vegetation evident around the entire lake. There is extensive recreational boating and some fishing. Residents expressed particular concern about poor water quality, resulting in part from increased development along the shoreline and inadequate waste disposal systems. Such concerns are not unusual around lakes in developed areas served by subsurface wastewater disposal systems.

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## **Equestrian Trails**

One of the most distinctive features of Hamilton is the role that equestrian activities play in the community, due in large measure to the presence of the Myopia Hunt Club and the Essex County Trails Association. There is an extensive network of trails that extends over both private and public land. Some trails are permanently protected but many are not. As large land holdings are sold and developed, trails that have been available for public access on an informal basis may no longer welcome equestrians and other trail users. Hamilton's active equestrian community, working with other organizations and the town, hopes to formalize access arrangements, and to work with owners to assure that trails are maintained and that any use conflicts are resolved.

## **Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary**

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is located off Essex Street on the top of Brown's Hill, the highest point in Hamilton. It is the site of the former Mandell estate and was previously a Catholic high school, owned by the Carmelite Order. The seminary purchased the property in 1970. There are remnants of the estate landscape, with scenic drive, sweeping lawns, ornamental plantings, mature specimen trees and dramatic regional views. Some of the former estate buildings remain and additional buildings have been added since the 1960s to support the various activities of the seminary. There is also a town-owned underground concrete reservoir on top of the hill and panoramic views over the Miles River Valley that are highly valued by community residents.



## **Ipswich River**

The Ipswich River has its headwaters in Wilmington and meanders through several cities and towns before running along the Hamilton/Ipswich border. It is most visible in Hamilton at the crossing with Winthrop Street in the northwest part of town, site of Manning Mills (Willowdale Mills) and Highland Street in the north central part of town. A stone triple-arched bridge carries Highland Street over the river at the site of the Norwood Mills, another area identified by

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Hamilton residents as a heritage landscape. The Ipswich River and its ponds, lakes and streams are important to regional ecology, and also a major economic resource as the Ipswich River system supplies water to 330,000 people and thousands of businesses in 14 communities. Yet the river is recognized as one of the most threatened in the nation. Pollution has caused closures of wells, shellfish beds and beaches; fish runs are blocked by dams; and the river is often pumped dry to meet water demand. The Ipswich River Watershed Association is working with state agencies, communities and other organizations to restore the river to health.

### **Masconomet's Grave**

Masconomet (also known as Masconomo) sachem of the Agawam Tribe, was an important Native American leader during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He met with John Winthrop, son of the first governor of Massachusetts, and later signed a treaty granting much of the Agawam land to the English in exchange for protection from their enemies. By the time Masconomet died in 1658, most of his tribe had been wiped out by war and disease. He was buried on Sagamore Hill in the northeast corner of Hamilton. The gravesite is approached by a narrow paved road from the west, which also leads to the adjacent U.S. Air Force Solar Observatory. The gravesite, which lies south of the road and is maintained by the town, is a small clearing in the woods that includes several circa 1910 monuments and remnants of ornamental plantings. It also remains an important ethnographic site, with strong evidence of recent Native American use such as animal skulls and dreamcatchers. Except for the Air Force facility, most of the area around the gravesite remains wooded. A major concern of local residents was that future development of the surrounding hillside would adversely impact the setting of the grave.

### **Meadowbrook Farm**

Meadowbrook Farm, located at the corner of Essex Street and Chebacco Road in the eastern part of Hamilton, is one of the most active remaining farms in Hamilton, with a popular farmstand. In addition to its agricultural use, the farm is prominently located within the community and is considered a particularly scenic area. The property also connects to the Chebacco Woods trails which are now owned by the town. Residents would like to see continued agricultural use of this land and were concerned that it might be vulnerable to other uses as there are no permanent protections in place.

### **Miles River**

The Miles River, which flows through Wenham, Hamilton and Ipswich, is part of the Ipswich Bay watershed. The narrow river meanders from south to north through the east central portion of town and flows into the Ipswich River in Ipswich. It has been an important center of farming activity and community life since Colonial times, with some of the town's richest soils along its banks. The river is now valued for its scenic and wildlife value. Flow along some parts of the river has been disturbed by construction of beaver dams. Primary concerns

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expressed for the health of the river were development along its banks and potential for increased pollution.

### **Myopia Schooling Fields**

The Myopia Schooling Fields are part of the Myopia Hunt Club, located on the west side of Bay Road opposite the Hunt Club and next to Patton Park. They are used primarily for schooling horses, but occasionally for show events. The schooling fields are visually important to the community because of their prominent location along Bay Road. They are perceived as protected open space but are actually under no form of protection.

### **Norwood Mills**

The Norwood Mill complex is located at the intersection of the Ipswich River and Highland Street. One of the most distinctive features is the sturdy triple-arched stone bridge that carries Highland Street over the river. On the south bank, east of the bridge is a single wood frame late 19<sup>th</sup> century mill building resting on its stone block foundation. Remnants of a dam are in the river adjacent to the mill building. The mill building is not currently being used and is in poor condition.

### **Yellow House Field**

This property on Bridge Street is close to the former home of the U.S. Equestrian Team. It is now privately owned and operating as a horse farm. It is valued as a scenic resource and as an important connector in the equestrian trail network. It is not permanently protected and is perceived as vulnerable to development.

## **PLANNING**

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### **Preservation Strategies**

Hamilton residents place high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its village and civic center, its hills and rivers, the extensive farm fields, a strong tradition of equestrian use and the many scenic rural roads. Hamilton's natural resources and landscape features played a critical role in the settlement and historical development of the community. Hamilton is also fortunate to have a large and diverse collection of historic resources. The town has already taken steps to preserve its most significant buildings and natural areas. It is now looking beyond these resources to the fields, trails, rural roads, neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most Essex County towns, Hamilton is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten both land-based uses and natural resources. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

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## **Planning Issues**

In addition to the priority landscapes listed in the previous section, residents identified general issues related to heritage landscapes and community character. Most of these critical planning issues relate directly to the priority landscapes. The planning issues discussed below are arranged in alphabetical order. Community members also expressed interest in learning about preservation tools and strategies that have been effective in other Massachusetts communities and in identifying sources for preservation funding.

### ***Agriculture***

Hamilton is fortunate to have an ongoing tradition of agriculture that preserves open fields, provides food and is a link with past land use in the community. It also has extensive open space where the agrarian character of the community is preserved. Hamilton encourages farming and equestrian activity for economic, fiscal and quality of life reasons. Preserving the remaining active farms, both for their agricultural use and for their scenic value and importance as watershed lands, wetlands and open space is an important community priority. The recently completed town Master Plan identifies policies that support continued agricultural use.

### ***Estates***

Hamilton has an outstanding collection of estates that were developed primarily as gentleman's farms during the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. These include the Bradley Palmer, Pingree, Appleton, Totten, Moseley, Winthrop and Patton properties. Many are in highly visible locations and are important to the character of the community and the region. Some, such as Appleton Farms and Appleton Grass Rides, are already permanently protected. Others remain in private ownership. In most cases these properties are not well documented, which is an important goal of this Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. Community members expressed strong concerns about development pressures and were interested in exploring options that would preserve important visual features of former estates but allow for more flexible uses.

### ***Neighborhoods and Villages***

Preserving neighborhood character was a major theme expressed at the heritage landscape meeting. Hamilton's historic village center and the South Hamilton neighborhood are rich in historic resources and essential to community vitality. Specific concerns expressed were that village areas are losing their distinctive character, and that the modest housing patterns that were a result of the railroad and mills at South Hamilton are threatened by development pressures.

### ***Scenic Roads***

Hamilton's rural roads were mentioned as scenic and historic assets that contribute much to the character of the community. Bay Road (Route 1A) has been the primary north-south road through the community since Colonial times.

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It carries a heavy traffic load, which is sometimes a burden to the community. Highland Street, which carries far less traffic, is the major north-south route through the western part of the community. Hamilton also values its more rural roads, such as Winthrop Street and Cutler Road, and has struggled to preserve their scenic character. Issues pertaining to scenic roads are two-fold. There is the road corridor itself, as well as the views of adjacent fields and open spaces, which are so prevalent in Hamilton.

Roads which are designated as scenic roads under the Scenic Roads Act, M.G.L. Ch. 40, Sec. 15C are Asbury, Bridge, Gardner, Goodhue, Highland, Moulton, Sagamore and Winthrop Streets; and Chebacco, Cutler, Miles River and Walnut Roads.

## **PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS**

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Preservation planning is a three-step process: identification, evaluation and protection. Four useful documents to consult before beginning to implement preservation strategies are the Massachusetts Historical Commission's *Survey Manual* and *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*; the Department of Conservation and Recreation's *Reading the Land*; and the Essex National Heritage Commission's *Essex National Heritage Area Plan*. Each publication provides necessary information for the identification, evaluation and protection of the rich cultural heritage of Massachusetts communities. The recommendations that follow are in two parts. General recommendations are listed first, followed by more specific recommendations.

### **General Recommendations**

Recommendations that apply to a broad range of resources are discussed below. The general recommendations are listed in the order in which they are most logically addressed when applying the three-step preservation planning process as described above. Thus the goal will be to (1) identify, (2) evaluate (3) protect.

#### ***Inventory of Heritage Landscapes and Other Historic Assets***

The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and the historical development of the resource. Hamilton's historic resource inventory was done some time ago and many of the forms do not meet current preservation standards. The comprehensive approach that links buildings and landscapes — the heritage landscape inventory methodology — may help to shed light on the overall landscape. Thus, using the MHC survey methodology, record more of Hamilton's heritage landscapes beginning with the priority landscapes in this report:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented beginning with the priority heritage landscapes.

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- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened areas.
  - Make sure to document secondary features on residential properties, such as outbuildings, garages and stone walls.
  - Update and complete new documentation for farms and neighborhoods using the heritage landscape approach.

### ***National Register Program***

As additional survey work is completed, evaluate properties for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

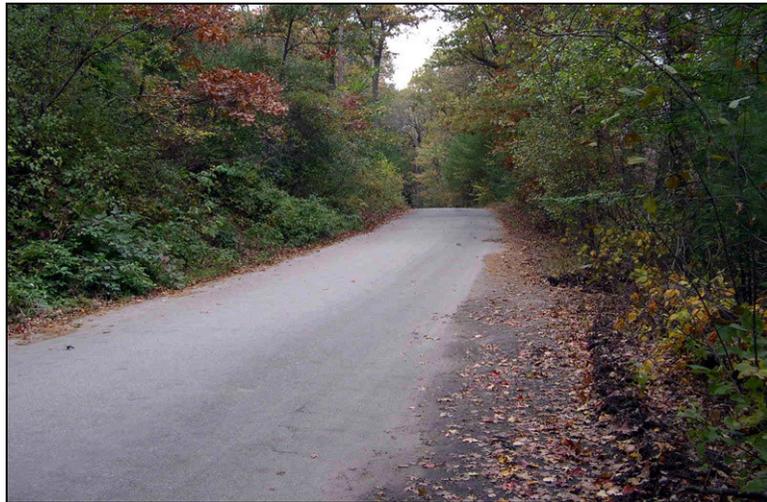
- Develop a National Register listing plan taking into consideration a property's significance, integrity and vulnerability. Priority landscapes and properties that are in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.
- Consider district National Register nominations for some of the estates, for Asbury Grove and for portions of South Hamilton.

### ***Neighborhood Character***

Nearly all preservation strategies address neighborhood character in some manner. As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. Three preservation tools that are particularly applicable to Hamilton's historic neighborhoods are demolition delay, local historic district designation (M.G.L. Chapter 40C) and neighborhood conservation district designation. A demolition delay bylaw provides a time period in which the city can consider alternatives to demolition. Both types of districts recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. Each type of district is a local initiative, adopted by a 2/3 vote of the Town Meeting, and administered by a district commission, appointed by the Selectmen. As the town knows from experience in its local historic district, the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources is local historic district designation, while neighborhood conservation districts are less restrictive but still embrace neighborhood character.

- Pass demolition delay bylaw with a six-month or one year delay and publicize all demolition requests to reinforce the value of local historic resources.
- Review documentation, boundaries and administrative procedures for current local historic district. Update as necessary after survey. Develop and publish design review guidelines for the district.

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- Use survey data to determine whether other historic neighborhoods would be appropriate to preserve through creation of additional historic districts, such as South Hamilton.
  - Alternatively, pass a neighborhood conservation district (NCD) bylaw. Neighborhood conservation districts are special areas that are preserved by regulating scale, massing and materials of additions and new construction. Such districts may be the most appropriate way to preserve the land use pattern of an area where there are changes in materials but the overall size, scale and orientation of structures within the heritage landscape are retained.



### *Scenic Roads*

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Hamilton residents and visitors alike. Yet roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. The Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) only addresses removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads — the stone walls, views across open fields or to the ocean — is not within the public right-of-way. This is an important distinction and requires more than one approach. Also, numbered routes cannot be designed as scenic roads under M.G.L. Chapter 40 Sec. 15C; thus other approaches are necessary.

- Review list of designated scenic roads. Identify other roads in the community that should be considered as potential scenic roads. Develop a list of possible additions with descriptions and photo documentation. Use this as the basis for designation of additional scenic roads, particularly those in rural/agricultural areas.
- Amend Scenic Roads Bylaw to include design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls. Add

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other design criteria such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Coordinate procedures between Department of Public Works and Planning Board.

- Establish an overlay to reinforce preservation of important views by establishing a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopting flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws could be written to apply to the numbered routes also, which are not protected under the Scenic Roads Bylaw.
- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstruction, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the town may have to accept responsibility for some costs to implement certain standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by Mass Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads, for example requiring a public hearing if any additional pavement is to be added to a town road during reconstruction or repair. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted through a bylaw. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths and posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

### *Funding of Preservation Projects*

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. In recent years, the ENHC has maintained a small grants program for Essex County communities. In addition, both the MHC and the DCR have had funding programs to assist communities in preservation related issues including:

- Survey and Planning Grants administered by the MHC support survey, National Register and preservation planning work.
- The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) administered by the MHC funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- The Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLPGP) administered by DCR funds planning, rehabilitation, education and stewardship projects focused on historic landscapes, including cemeteries.

Funding for these programs varies from year to year. When planning Hamilton's heritage landscape inventory program, contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding is available.

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Communities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects; however Hamilton would first have to adopt the Act. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth are worthy of consideration. The CPA (MGL Chapter 44B) establishes a mechanism by which municipalities can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Funds are collected through a .5% to 3% surcharge on each annual real estate tax bill. The Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA.

Adoption of the Community Preservation Act, by a majority vote on a ballot question, fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists and affordable housing advocates. At least 10% of the funds must be used to preserve historic resources. At least 10% must be used to protect open space. And at least 10% must be used to advance affordable housing. The remaining 70% must be used for one of these three uses as well as recreational needs and can be distributed in varying proportions depending upon the projects that the city believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Information about the CPA can be found at [www.communitypreservation.org](http://www.communitypreservation.org).

Towns like Hamilton, which have a local historic district bylaw, may apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) status which is granted by the National Park Service through the MHC. After a community completes an application and is accepted as a CLG, it files a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings and decisions. In return the town is eligible for federal funding that is distributed by the MHC. The matching funds are competitive; however the MHC must pass along a proportion of its federally allocated annual funding to CLGs through its Survey and Planning Grant program.

### **Specific Recommendations**

#### ***Asbury Grove Camp Meeting Ground***

This is a historically significant area that also offers important low cost housing within the community. Its non-conforming zoning represents both a challenge and an opportunity. The need for improved sewage disposal was a key issue identified in the town's Master Plan.

- Document historic resources on MHC inventory form, establish NR district if determined eligible.
- Implement zoning recommendations contained in 2004 Master Plan.

#### ***South Hamilton***

General recommendations for neighborhood character are applicable for South Hamilton. This strategy would be strengthened by the publication of design review guidelines that address commercial and residential properties. Some of

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the most pressing concerns are traffic and parking. Additional recommendations are as follows:

- Document historic resources and list in NR where appropriate.
- Establish local historic district or neighborhood conservation district depending on findings of documentation. See Neighborhood Character recommendation under General Recommendations.
- Implement zoning recommendations contained in Master Plan.
- Develop a village overlay zoning district that addresses density through dimensional regulations, which enhance the existing village plan in Hamilton's downtown.
- Study traffic and parking and search for traffic mitigation strategies such as one-way streets and patterned road surface to slow traffic. Search for parcels of land to be used for parking that are or may be screened from view.

## **CONCLUSION**

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The Hamilton Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Hamilton and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. However, it is only the first step in the planning process. Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms. The documentation in turn can be used to build consensus and gather public support for their preservation. Implementation of recommendations will require a concerted effort of and partnerships with municipal boards and agencies, local non-profits, and state agencies and commissions.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to the municipal land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Hamilton in preserving important features of the community's character. The tasks that are recommended will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Hamilton's Historical Commission, Planning Board and Conservation Commission. It also is advisable to present this information to the Board of Selectmen, applicants to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on behalf of the town. Finally, distribution of the report to conservation organizations, neighborhood associations and other preservation minded groups will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Hamilton's heritage landscapes.

**APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY**

This list was prepared as a summary of the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Hamilton on October 21 and follow-up fieldwork on the same day. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified in the HLI meeting.** The chart has two columns, the name and location of the resource are in the first, notes about the resource are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| CR = Conservation Restriction             | NR = National Register              |
| ECGA = Essex County Greenbelt Association | PR = Preservation Restriction       |
| LHD = Local Historic District             | * = Priority Landscape              |
| NHL = National Historic Landmark          | TTOR = The Trustees of Reservations |

<b>Agriculture</b>	
<i><b>Appleton Farms and Grassrides</b></i> Bay Road and Highland St.	Farm along both Bay Road and Highland Street with stunning regional views of open fields, stone walls and mature trees. Property includes approximately 360 acres in Hamilton with additional acres in Ipswich, where house and barns are located. Owned by TTOR, which had conducted a detailed inventory of historic resources. Permanently preserved.
<i><b>Devon Glen Farm</b></i> Bay Road	Part of a larger historic farm preserve that also includes Cilly's Hill, Bradford Preserve and Harvard Woods. Farm is now in private hands with CR's and semi-protected condition. Land was historically owned by Winthrop and Bradford families, now owned by John Donovan. Adjacent to Myopia Schooling Field. Not permanently protected.
<i><b>Green Meadows</b></i> Asbury Street	General Patton's Farm. Partially protected. Important for trail access.
<i><b>Meadowbrook Farm</b></i> * 247 Essex Street	In active agricultural use, which includes farmstand. Property connects to Chebacco Woods trails which are now owned by the town. Visually important, not protected.
<i><b>Moseley Paddock</b></i> Bay Road	Visually important fields along east side of Bay Road with split rail fence and stone walls. Scenic long distance views. Donkey and horse are always out together. Also important link in trail system. Privately owned, not protected.
<i><b>Winthrop Property</b></i> Highland Street	Fields and woods along Highland Street, some in Ipswich. Winthrop family owns 700 acres, important agricultural land. Also site of Groton House Farm. Conservation discussions underway.
<b>Burial Grounds and Cemeteries</b>	
<i><b>Hamilton Cemetery</b></i> Bay Road	In relatively good condition.
<i><b>Masconomet's Grave</b></i> * Sagamore Hill	Located on top of Sagamore Hill. Circa 1910 granite monument commemorates Masconomet. Area is also an ethnographic site with evidence of frequent use by Native Americans. Grave site is maintained by town. Air Force facility is adjacent to it. Surrounding area is owned by Donovan properties. Hillside remains largely wooded with trails and commanding views but is not permanently protected.

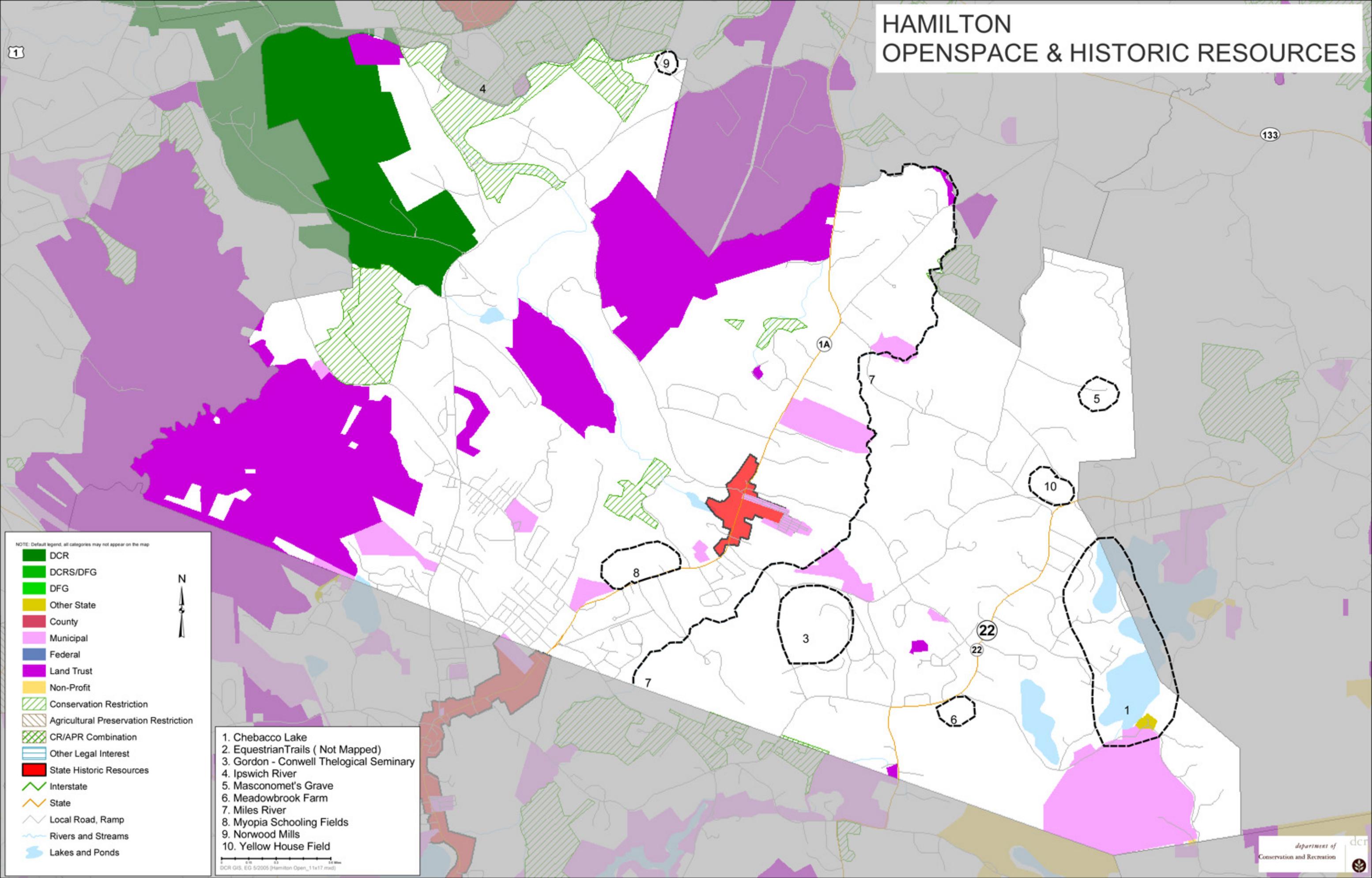
<i><b>Sarah Younger Gravesite &amp; Stone</b></i> Off Bay Road (west)	Located near the railroad tracks on private land, with access off of Bay Road.. Sarah Younger (1783-1855) fed workers building the railroad. She died of smallpox.
<b>Civic/Commercial</b>	
<i><b>Town Center</b></i> Bay Road	Commercial area is located in South Hamilton and is distinct from civic center of Hamilton which is further north. Specific businesses were mentioned as being particularly important as community gathering places.
<i><b>Town Hall/ Historic District</b></i> Bay Road	LHD, NR District. Civic center of town is located along Bay Road north of the commercial center. Valued for its historical associations, scenic qualities and importance as a community center. Historic district is fragile and will be heavily impacted by any changes.
<b>Industrial</b>	
<i><b>Abandoned Mill</b></i> Manning Mill Winthrop Street	Now owned by Essex Country Greenbelt Association. The mill was founded by Thomas Manning, and was located in the Willowdale area of Hamilton (formerly Willowdale Road in the mid-1800's through early 1900s.) Only the foundation exists today. The site is adjacent to Bradley Palmer State Park.
<i><b>Hamilton Landfill</b></i> Chebacco Road	Site of now-closed dump and Hamilton-Wenham Rod and Gun Club.
<i><b>Ice House Sites</b></i> Chebacco Road	Located around Beck Pond and Chebacco Lake.
<i><b>Manning Mills</b></i> Malden Street	
<i><b>Norwood Mills</b></i> * Highland Street (& Mill St. in Ipswich)	Threatened mill complex on Hamilton/Ipswich border. History dates back to 1600s. Privately owned. Near bridge over Ipswich River. Area includes mill building (former grist mill, sawmill and cider mill) and adjacent bridge over Ipswich River. There used to be a dam and additional mill buildings in Ipswich. Not actively used today. Building is in poor condition.
<b>Institutional</b>	
<i><b>Asbury Grove Camp Meeting Ground</b></i> Asbury Street	83-acre historic Methodist Camp Meeting Ground affiliated with the Methodist Church. Needs communal wastewater treatment plant to help preserve the unique character of century old encampment and bible center? Approximately 60 cottages have been converted to year-round residences, and the remaining 93 cottages are summer only. Other structures such as a chapel, dormitories, and library serve the Asbury Grove community.
<i><b>Gordon- Conwell Theological Seminary</b></i> * 130 Essex Street	127-acre parcel currently in institutional use as non-denomination seminary. Former Mandell estate house remains. Many buildings of various types from various periods, landscaped grounds, scenic drive. Located on Brown's Hill, the highest point in Hamilton with great regional views from the top and large underground concrete reservoir.

<b><i>Myopia Hunt Club</i></b> 435 Bay Road	Private membership institution founded in 1876 offering golf, tennis and equestrian activities including polo. Now located on former Gibney Farm. Also includes Schooling Fields located across the street. 414-acres of historic open space needing further protection. Property forms a substantial part of the town's commercial tax base.
<b><i>Pingree School</i></b> Highland Street	Former Pingree estate. Unprotected. Now a co-ed private school for day students in grades 9-12.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
<b><i>Historic Boundary Markers</i></b>	There are five towns bordering Hamilton. A total of 136 boundary markers along the perimeter of Hamilton identify the town lines.
<b>Natural</b>	
<b><i>Chebacco Lake</i></b> *	209-acre designated Great Pond. Has public boat ramp and is important for recreational purposes. Surrounded by homes. Historically used for ice, was also a late 19 <sup>th</sup> century resort area.
<b><i>Ipswich River</i></b> *	Very endangered regional river. Strong local support group for river conservation. Ipswich also identified this as a threatened heritage landscape.
<b><i>Miles River</i></b> *	Considered a "local river" by Hamilton residents. Important bridge. Valued for its wildlife. Some conservation land has been permanently protected. Was center of Colonial life along Bay Road.
<b><i>Pleasant Pond</i></b>	Formerly Idlewood Lake. Dance halls, boat rentals and other recreational activities on both Hamilton and Wenham sides of lake. Primarily in Wenham.
<b><i>Round Beck &amp; Gravelley Ponds</i></b> Chebacco Road	Part of Manchester watershed land, but located in Hamilton.
<b>Open Space</b>	
<b><i>Bradford Preserve</i></b> Bay Road	Important open space. Not permanently protected.
<b><i>Cutler Park</i></b> Bay Road	Small park of less than an acre, located diagonally across from Town Hall.
<b><i>Equestrian Trails</i></b> * <b><i>“Discover Hamilton Trails</i></b>	Unique to Hamilton. Trail network like this not found anywhere else. Priority is maintaining interconnected network. Now that land is so valuable, it is being subdivided and sold. New owners may oppose trail use which has existed informally for years. Essex County Trail Association involved with trail maintenance and preservation.
<b><i>Harvard Woods</i></b> Cutler Road	65 acres of important forest land linked to Pingree Preserve and Appleton Grass Rides by the Discover Hamilton Trail, an extension of the Bay Circuit. Heavily used. Distinctive gate.

<b><i>Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary</i></b>	Extensive wetland and corridor along the Ipswich River. Partly in Topsfield.
<b><i>Myopia Schooling Fields *</i></b> Bay Road	Large open space in the center of Hamilton adjacent to Patton Park across from Myopia Hunt Club used for informal training of horses, and for passive recreation. Visually prominent location along Route 1A. Not permanently protected.
<b><i>Patton Park</i></b> Bay Road	Public park adjacent to Schooling Fields.
<b><i>Yellow House Field *</i></b> Bridge Street	Large open field used for sports and horse events, connecting to a network of horse, hiking and ski trails. Close to the former home of USET. Now privately owned and operating as a horse farm. Key issue is preserving horse trail, an important connector.
<b>Residential / Property</b>	
<b><i>Bradley Palmer Estate</i></b> Asbury Street	Early 20 <sup>th</sup> century estate, now Bradley Palmer State Park. 550 acres in Hamilton includes mansion and outbuildings, Lamson house, also ornamental grounds and extensive trail system that is used for equestrian events and passive recreation. Partly in Topsfield.
<b><i>First Period Houses</i></b>	17 <sup>th</sup> and 18 <sup>th</sup> century houses. Various locations such as 76 and 180 Bridge St. and 918 and 1028 Bay Rd.
<b><i>Hubbard House</i></b> Bridge Street	Overlooks Miles River. and n Miles RiverOne of the oldest homes in Hamilton. First period home dating back to mid-1600's.
<b><i>Sears Property</i></b> Gardner Street	Important views of Sears property from Route 1A and Moulton St., view from Moulton Bridge over pond and fields to Miles River. Used for hunting, partially protected.
<b>Transportation</b>	
<b><i>Bay Road</i></b>	Route 1A, some sections scenic with stone walls along roadside. Views of adjacent farms also regionally important.
<b><i>Bridge Street</i></b>	Scenic road with views of large barns, open hours pastures, and hay fields.
<b><i>Cutler Road</i></b>	Designated scenic road. Cutler Road is an unpaved scenic road valued by the community. Strong historical associations, intact dry laid and piled stone walls and large trees along the dirt road, flanked by Appleton Grass Rides and Appleton Farm on one side, Harvard Forest and Collarbone Field on the other. Cutler Road leads to Nancy's Corner where Nancy Astor used to meet the foxhunt. Used to be known as Old Farms Road.
<b><i>Highland Street</i></b>	Stands out among scenic roads. Fairly well protected. Fields along it are scenic. Leased lands used for growing pumpkins, squash. Split rail fences. Winthrops own land here.
<b><i>Rail Line</i></b>	Eastern branch to Essex is an abandoned rail line, owned by Teneco. Entrance is on Walnut Road, opposite the Hamilton Shopping Center. There are issues of encroachment.
<b><i>Winthrop Street</i></b>	Important unpaved scenic road. Many people in town like it that way. Also important for trail access.



# HAMILTON OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES



NOTE: Default legend, all categories may not appear on the map

- DCR
- DCRS/DFG
- DFG
- Other State
- County
- Municipal
- Federal
- Land Trust
- Non-Profit
- Conservation Restriction
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- CR/APR Combination
- Other Legal Interest
- State Historic Resources
- Interstate
- State
- Local Road, Ramp
- Rivers and Streams
- Lakes and Ponds



1. Chebacco Lake
2. Equestrian Trails ( Not Mapped)
3. Gordon - Conwell Theological Seminary
4. Ipswich River
5. Masconomet's Grave
6. Meadowbrook Farm
7. Miles River
8. Myopia Schooling Fields
9. Norwood Mills
10. Yellow House Field

DCR GIS, EG 5/2005 (Hamilton Open\_11x17.mxd)