

Town of Lanesborough Open Space and Recreation Plan

Prepared by
the Lanesborough Open Space and Recreation Committee
and
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</u>	3
<u>SECTION 1 PLAN SUMMARY</u>	5
<u>SECTION 2 INTRODUCTION</u>	7
<u>A. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE</u>	7
<u>B. PLANNING PROCESS AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</u>	7
<u>SECTION 3 COMMUNITY SETTING</u>	11
<u>A. REGIONAL CONTEXT</u>	11
<u>B. HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY</u>	12
<u>C. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE / POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS</u>	13
<u>D. GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS</u>	16
<u>SECTION 4 ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS</u>	26
<u>A. GEOLOGY, SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY</u>	27
<u>B. LANDSCAPE CHARACTER</u>	30
<u>C. WATER RESOURCES</u>	30
<u>D. VEGETATION</u>	35
<u>E. FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE</u>	ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.
<u>F. SCENIC RESOURCES AND UNIQUE ENVIRONMENTS</u>	44
<u>G. ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES</u>	47
<u>SECTION 5 INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST</u>	51
<u>A. PRIVATE PARCELS</u>	51
<u>B. PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT PARCELS</u>	53
<u>SECTION 6 COMMUNITY VISION</u>	57
<u>A. DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS</u>	57
<u>B. STATEMENT OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS</u>	57
<u>SECTION 7 ANALYSIS OF NEEDS</u>	59
<u>A. SUMMARY OF RESOURCE PROTECTION NEEDS</u>	59
<u>B. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY’S NEEDS</u>	59
<u>C. MANAGEMENT NEEDS, POTENTIAL CHANGE OF USE</u>	64
<u>SECTION 8 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</u>	69
<u>SECTION 9 FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN</u>	71
<u>SECTION 10 PUBLIC COMMENTS</u>	78
<u>SECTION 11 REFERENCES</u>	79
<u>APPENDIX A: SURVEY RESULTS</u>	81

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Members of the Lanesborough Recreation Committee were the first to recognize the need for an Open Space and Recreation Plan. David Schulman, then a member of the Recreation Committee, volunteered to organize and lead a group in gathering the initial information. Much of the early drafting of the report was done by David, whose wide knowledge of Lanesborough history, geology, and folklore was a constant inspiration to other Committee members. Assisting David in this early stage were Debbie Decelles of the Recreation Committee, Gordon Zaks representing the Friends of Pontoosuc Lake, and two members of the Conservation Commission, Stacy Parsons and Jack Hickey.

As the initial drafts unfolded, Paul Boudreau and the Board of Selectmen wisely decided to take advantage of an Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant, which provided the funding to hire a consultant to help an all-volunteer Open Space and Recreation Committee. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission was hired to assist the new committee in editing and organizing the material from the original drafts, and bring the final product to completion. Additional members were added to the Open Space and Recreation Committee. These members are listed in the following section of the plan.

**Thank you to all who donated their time and effort,
without whom this plan would not have been developed!**



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SECTION 1 PLAN SUMMARY

Sustainability is of the utmost importance for a town to survive and thrive. Currently property taxes are climbing at a rate that many residents find uncomfortable. The cost of education, healthcare retirement benefits is an ever increasing burden on the town. When a new home is built in town it ultimately costs the town more in services then it contributes in terms of property taxes. Some of these problems may not be repairable on the local level, federal intervention may be required, but we, as a town can do a lot to change the course we are presently on. Planning for the future and smart growth is part of the answer.

The Open Space Plan is meant to promote Lanesborough as a sustainable community, a place to live, work and educate our young in a safe and enjoyable atmosphere. Currently the town is struggling financially and lacks a vision for the future. The open space plan will recommend priorities and directions for the town, some of which may translate to land protection strategies, including zoning changes, which will promote, protect and help our town to prosper. These changes are based on an analysis of the geology and ecology of our area and an analysis of the social needs and economic needs of our citizens, which will hopefully make them sound choices for our town.

The plan will contain recommendations for protecting the water supply, for zoning for careful land use, for wetland protection, for scenic skyline protection or a moratorium on ridgeline development, for watershed protection by-laws, for locations for future town well sites, for hazardous waste control, for the protection of rare species and habitats and historic sites, for improvement of services for the handicapped and elderly, for the creation of a special town redevelopment area that will be a colonial-style New England commercial center, for preservation of lands most deserving of protection, and for provision of accessible recreational facilities.

SECTION 2 INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of Purpose

Lanesborough's Open Space Plan was created in response to the ongoing residential and commercial development that has been occurring in town for more than thirty years. Since 1971, the town has gained more than 550 acres of development, the vast majority of which is residential development. During that same period the town lost more than 600 acres of farmland and forest. Some residents have voiced their concerns about the encroachment of development on previously green open spaces, prime agricultural lands and along old dirt roads in remote areas of town. Some fear that Lanesborough is in jeopardy of losing its rural character.

Lanesborough's drinking water supply was threatened with contamination from a petroleum leak on the Mobile gas station on Main Street. Although the petroleum never reached the drinking water supply, it was taken off-line for a time while the situation could be assessed and mitigated. The water supply continues to be susceptible to contamination from development, road maintenance activities and accidental chemical spills. The addition of the Berkshire Mall makes the Route 8 corridor attractive to further commercial development. The proliferation of signs and continued increases in traffic all serve to adversely impact the enjoyment of our environment.

Some residents are also concerned with the continued lack of resources and facilities for recreational activities. Organized sports teams vie for the few playing fields that the town has to offer, and fields are often booked back-to-back.

In recognizing the multifaceted benefits in providing open space, we hope with this publication to begin the process of developing a diverse "network" of open space facilities that will:

1. Protect groundwater supplies;
2. Support rare and natural wildlife habitats;
3. Protect unique natural and historic resources;
4. Provide a variety of very accessible recreational facilities convenient to the different geographical centers within the Town;
5. Enhance the Town's appearance through the protection of open space, creating a desirable, attractive environment for residents and businesses alike.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

In 2004 the Recreation Committee, recognizing the need for athletic fields, started looking for property suitable for recreational needs. This process led to familiarity with the Lanesborough's open space, the recognition of opportunities for responsible development and the decision to develop an Open Space and Recreation Plan for the town.

In the summer of 2004 an Open Space and Recreation Committee was formed to guide the town in the development of its first Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Committee was a joint

effort composed primarily of members from the Conservation Commission and Recreation Committee. This Committee was expanded in 2006 and became the working group that developed the final plan. The Lanesborough Select Board supported the development of the Plan, and allocated funds towards the planning effort. A preliminary survey was compiled to assess resident’s position on open space and recreational issues. In 2005, approximately 1,200 surveys were distributed to landowners through the local property tax bill mailing. Of those, 379 surveys were returned. A follow-up survey of approximately 1450 surveys were sent to all Lanesborough residents, including property owners and renters, in March 2006. Of these, 356 surveys were returned. The results of the two surveys are discussed in more detail in Section 7, Analysis of Needs, and are included in Appendix __.

Table __. Lanesborough Open Space and Recreation Committee

Committee Member	Interest/affiliation
Dave Schulman, Chairman	Camp Mohawk
Paul Boudreau, Vice-chairman	Town Administrator
Bill Girard	Tree Warden, Tree & Forest Committee
Barbara Davis-Hassan	Former member of the Mt. Greylock Scenic Byway Committee
Jack Hickey	Conservation Commission
Larry Spatz	Interested citizen
Aimee Thayer	Planning Board, Agricultural Commission
Gordon Zaks	Friends of Pontoosuc Lake

On October 18, 2006 the Open Space and Recreation Committee held a public forum, to which residents were invited to attend. The forum was advertised in the Berkshire Eagle and through flyers that were posted in several gathering areas in Lanesborough. The evening consisted of a 45-minute presentation, *Current Conditions and Future Decisions*, followed by a 1-hour interactive discussion about open space, recreation and economic development issues in Lanesborough. The presentation consisted of five main components: 1) current development trends, 2) rare and unique environments and species, 3) status of protected open space areas, 4) a summary of the public survey results, and 5) mechanisms available to protect additional open space areas. The main components of the presentation were conducted by Lauren Gaherty (Environmental Planner, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission). After the main presentation, the floor was open to discussion.

The two topics that generated the most interest were the Community Preservation Act (CPA), one of several land protection mechanisms that was summarized during the presentation, and the Cost of Community Services analysis. A summary of the main discussion points are listed below.

- Eminent domain. One resident asked if the accumulation of CPA funds would entice the town to take lands from unwilling landowners by eminent domain to protect open space areas.
- The town is aging and is becoming a retirement community. There is a need to factor that into the COCS analysis.
- One resident asked if the CPA surcharge was tax deductible.

- There is a concern that if the town continues to conserve land, there will be less land to build upon. The price of real estate has risen inordinately, and local kids will no longer be able to afford living here. The town's expenses will continue to grow, but there will be less lands on the tax roll.
- A member of the Open Space and Recreation Committee stated that the intent of the Open Space and Recreation Plan was to help town officials GUIDE development, not to stifle it.
- A resident asked if the town had a Land Trust? A member of the Committee answered that the town did not, but other towns similar in size to Lanesborough did have land trusts. The town of Lee was cited as an example.
- There is a need for a municipal sewer up from Pittsfield through the center of the town. Town Brook is the recharge area for the town's water supply and is in an area that collects runoff from all development, including Rt. 7. This supply can be easily contaminated. Can CPA funds be used to pay for a sewer extension?
- Perhaps the town should consider freezing 1-family homes and condominiums, as the COCS indicates that they do not generate enough taxes to cover the expenses they generate. Perhaps the town should encourage more commercial and industrial development.
- One resident asked how much of the existing housing stock was considered "affordable?" An exact answer was not available, but it was believed that less than 10% was affordable as defined by the state.
- The tree warden expressed an interest in joining the Open Space and Recreation Committee, and his contact information was collected. A real estate agent also indicated an interest in joining the Committee.
- One resident expressed a feeling that the COCS analysis sounded "anti-kid." Dave Schulman, Committee Chairman, explained that open space conservation was not anti-kid; rather that it was about properly planning for conservation and development so that the current generation could pass along the current rural character of the town to their children.

SECTION 3 COMMUNITY SETTING

A. Regional Context

Lanesborough is located in Berkshire County, the western-most county of Massachusetts. Rich in history and culture, Berkshire County is home to artist colonies, retirement communities, small cities, and rural towns. Lanesborough is located north of the city of Pittsfield with the Taconic Mountain Range to the west and the Hoosic Mountain Range to the east. Mt. Greylock, the highest mountain in Massachusetts and the State Reservation in which it is located lies to the northeast with one of two access roads to the summit located in Lanesborough. These mountains have historically limited development to the flat land of the valley where mill industries arose along the Hoosic River to the northeast and the Housatonic River to the south. Berkshire County is one of the most beautiful areas of Massachusetts, dotted with lush forests and climbing mountains. For reference, see the Locus Map and the Topographic Map.

To the north, Lanesborough is bordered by New Ashford, to the east are the towns of Cheshire and Dalton. The Appalachian Trail passes through both towns and the Crane paper mill which produces paper for national currency is located in Dalton. To the south is the City of Pittsfield, where the Stanley Electric Company was started which later became General Electric. The worldwide headquarters of GE Plastics is still located in Pittsfield. The south east corner of Lanesborough contains the Pittsfield State Forest and Balance Rock State Park. To the west is the rural town of Hancock, the home of Jiminy Peak Ski Area. The summit of the ski area is actually located in Lanesborough.

Lanesborough shares the 480 acres of Pontoosuc Lake with the City of Pittsfield and has received national recognition as the northernmost town of the recently designated Upper Housatonic Valley Natural Heritage Area. In fact, the waters of Lanesborough flow into two major river watersheds. The western branch of Housatonic River Watershed which flows down through Connecticut to Long Island Sound is fed by Lanesborough's Town Brook and Pontoosuc Lake. The Hudson River Watershed waters flow northerly out of Cheshire Reservoir located on the east side of Lanesborough into the Hoosic River watershed which ultimately contributes to the Hudson River. The Cheshire Reservoir provides recreation for fishing and boating, along with providing a scenic view along the Ashuwillticook rail trail which runs north from the Lanesborough Mall Road to Adams Massachusetts. This paved trail is very popular with bikers and hikers who are looking for a scenic walk in the country. These waters support boating, swimming, and fishing while offering abundant opportunities for other outdoor activities.

Lanesborough has two main highways running north and south, route 8 to the east and route 7 through the center of Lanesborough. The Mall Road connects the two routes to the Berkshire Mall. The mall is the largest shopping center in Berkshire County.

While Lanesborough has its own elementary school through sixth grade, the Town is part of the Mount Greylock Regional School District with three other northern Berkshire County Towns. The students also have a choice of vocational schools in the area.

The major employer in Berkshire County is Berkshire Health Systems while the major employer in Lanesborough is the Berkshire Mall. Other employers in the town include small businesses, restaurants, and the elementary school. The economy in the county has become largely service based catering to tourists and second home owners who come to the area for cultural entertainments and the natural beauty of the Berkshires. Most residents travel to work in Pittsfield or the surrounding towns and recreational areas by their own vehicles as the only mass transportation is the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority which services the town with stops at Berkshire Mall and the center of Town on two different routes.

B. History of the Community

Lanesborough was first settled by a group of 76 men from Framingham in 1740. These men petitioned the Great and General Court of Massachusetts for a grant of wilderness land lying upon the Osatunock (alias the Housatanuck River) north of an Indian town that is now known as Stockbridge. The petition was granted on January 8, 1741. Surveyors and chainmen in an area of six square miles laid out seventy-nine equal plots. The map was submitted to the General Court for approval and on November 19, 1742 the town became New Framingham. The French – Indian War started in 1744 and was a major impediment to continued growth. The dread of an Indian invasion was a constant concern. To encourage settlement families were offered a financial incentive to work their own land. This offer was first made in 1750 and was then increased in 1752, but it was not until 1753 that Moses Brower became the first real settler. He was awarded 8 pounds for making this step. Around the same time, Captain Samuel Martin, Nathaniel Willcocks, and a Mr. Steales also settled in. Unfortunately these men were driven out by Indians and only the Captain was to return. Six years of struggles kept things from progressing for the town. In 1759 the end of the French – Indian War made it safer for settlers and folks started working their lots. By 1760 the first school was being built. In 1761 the common lands were drawn out and offered for settlement in the Boston Gazette and Connecticut paper. This brought more residents to the town.

Originally known as New Framingham, the town of Lanesborough was officially incorporated on June 21, 1765. The town was named, by Governor Francis Bernard, after the Earl of Lanesborough, a member of the British Peerage, a member of the Lane family, with his seat in Lanesborough, Ireland. It's also possible it was named after his wife. The lineage of this family can be traced to 1350 in English history.

The natural resources of the land enabled the people and the town to prosper. Lanesborough became a literary and cultural center, and a relatively wealthy town. By 1771 three schoolhouses had been built to accommodate all of the town's children. Many residents of Lanesborough participated in the Revolutionary War.

By 1790 the population was up to 2,142. The first federal census confirmed that and listed Lanesborough as the largest town in Berkshire County. By 1800 this number dropped to 1,443 as a large portion of the town was incorporated into Cheshire.

By 1830 the town was self sufficient with many stores and taverns and thriving industries. Marble quarrying was the most important industry at that time. In 1842 over \$200,000.00 worth

of marble was shipped all over the country. Marble from Lanesborough was considered amongst the finest in the country, and was used in the Berkshire County Court House, The Berkshire Athenaeum, the State Capitol in Albany, and the Capitol Building in Washington. Several Hundred men were employed at these quarries. There were also two large brick-making factories in town which manufactured the bricks used in the Federated Church, the old Congregational Church and the Fletcher homestead, where descendants of the original family still reside.

The Briggs Iron Works brought new business to town when iron ore was discovered and iron fabrication became a bustling business. The plant was located at the site of today's Town Hall. The ore was mined in the vicinity of the present day Ore Bed Road which took its name from its original use. Slag from this plant formed a hard dark colored glass which is found all over town for it was used as road base material. In 1846 the Railroad came through Lanesborough along what is now Route 8. In 1847 the Berkshire Glass works were founded. This plant was known for making fine glass.

Farming was also a significant industry for Lanesborough beginning with the original settlers who cleared the land and managed flocks of sheep and grew grain, vegetables, maple syrup, honey and orchard crops. By the mid 1800's the town had 5 hotels, 3 tanneries, 5 shoe shops, 3 tailor shops, 5 blacksmiths, 2 cloth dressing factories, 2 wagon shops, 5 saw mills, several grist mills, a mill for spinning wheels, harness shops and many other stores.

Early in the 20th century the town began its transition to a residential community. This was partially due to the onset of the trolley line, which transported Lanesborough inhabitants to Pittsfield to work at the Woolen Mills and General Electric, which had taken over the Stanley Company. The trolley ran up Main Street, turned on Summer Street and cut across to the Rinehart farm where it then continued down Old Cheshire Road to Cheshire. By 1940 the population of the town had grown to 1,321 and continued to grow up to a total of 2,933 by 1960. The war time economy and post war boom increased the population to a level it has maintained until the present day.

Josh Billings, born Henry Wheeler Shaw, was one of Lanesborough's best-known citizens. Born at the family home on Constitution Hill, he was the son of Congressman Henry Shaw. Billings became a humorist that wrote for many publications and was a well known lecturer.

Currently, there are two sites in town on the National Historic Register: St. Luke's Church on North Main Street (Rt. 7) and the original Pettibone Homestead on Old Cheshire Road. According to the Massachusetts Historical Commission there are also 77 sites of significance in Lanesborough as listed in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information Systems (MACRIS). Most of these sites are farms and residences. There are 30 farms or residences, 6 churches and 3 schools listed from the 1800's and 12 houses and 1 church from the 1700's. Other sites listed include town buildings, a few businesses, 2 cemeteries, a landmark and some bridges.

C. Demographic Profile / Population Characteristic

Historical Population Counts

In 1791, Lanesborough had the largest population in Berkshire County (DAVE: SOURCE?). Today, within the regional context, Lanesborough is a town with a small-to-medium-sized population, ranking 11th out of the 32 municipalities in Berkshire County.

Table __. Historical Population Counts for Lanesborough

Year	Population
1850	1,929
1900	780
1950	2,069
1980	3,131 (population peak)
2000	2,990

Source: BRPC, 2004.

Table __. Historic Population Statistics

Year	Population	Historic Events
1791	2,142	Largest town in Berkshire County
1800	1,443	Lost corner of town due to Cheshire
1830	1,192	Marble quarries and brickyards begin decline
1850	1,929	Railroads completed in 1842 and Iron Works started in 1847
1860	1,308	Berkshire Glass Works started 1853
1890	1,018	Glass company closes
1910	947	Trolleys arrive
1950	2,069	Post WWII boom begins
1980	3,131	Including 825 seasonal home owners
1990	2,855	
2000	2,990	

Source: ?? DAVE – provide source

Demographics

Overall, the population of Lanesborough is aging. The number of young people 20 years old or younger decreased 6.3% between 1990 and 2000. The greatest loss in population during those ten years was young people ages 25-34, and the greatest gain in population during those years was people ages 45-54. The median age of the town has increased 13% since 1990, from 35.6 years in age to 40.2 years. This increase is rather significant in such a short time. However, this increase is comparable to the county-wide median age, which increased from 35.9 year in age to 40.5 years during the same time period.

The number of Lanesborough students attending school declined from the 1980s to the 1990s. Throughout the 1990s the number remained fairly level, fluctuating from 582 students in 1990 to

547 students in 1996. However, according to information distributed by the Mt. Greylock Regional School District, which Lanesborough is part of, regional school enrollment has declined steadily during six of the last nine years (EPR, 2006).

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education, Office of School Finance, Lanesborough's expenditures per pupil increased dramatically between 1993 and 1998. The cost per pupil in Lanesborough has increased from \$4,343 to \$7,173, an increase of 65%. This is greater than the county average of a 30% increase.

According to the 2000 Census, the number of people that describe themselves as White was 2,911, which is 97.4% of the population. Of those listing European heritage, the nationalities listed most often, in order of abundance, were Irish, Italian, English, French and Polish. Other races that approached 1% each were Asian (.8%) and African American (.7%). Approximately 237 people (8%) of population has moved to Lanesborough from outside of Berkshire County since 1995. Approximately 90% of Lanesborough residents 25 years or older have at least a high school diploma. Approximately 17% of residents have earned a bachelor's degree and 9% have earned a graduate or professional degree.

Lanesborough is an average Berkshire County community in terms of income level. According to the US Census of 2000, Lanesborough residents had a median household income of \$46,496 (in 1999 dollars), which is higher than the national median income. The percentage of households in town living below the poverty level has increased only slightly, from 3.5% in 1990 to 3.7% in 2000. This is far below the national average of 9.2%.

The majority of residents in the town live in single family homes. Of the 1,382 housing units in the town, 1,150 (83%) are single family houses. Building booms in the 20th century occurred in late 1940s, 1950s, and 1980s. The 1990s saw the least number of housing units constructed in the 20th century, with a gain of approximately 90 units. Housing affordability has remained fairly level in recent years. As in 1990, a significant number of home owners, greater than 1 in 5, pay more than 30% of their income on home rent or mortgages.

According to the Massachusetts Dept. of Employment and Training, the Town's Total Labor force as of November 2005 was 1,777. Since 1990, unemployment has generally been slightly lower than the county-wide average, with the highest annual unemployment rate of 10.4% in 1991 and the lowest unemployment rate in 2000 of 2.3%. The annual unemployment rate for 2004 was 4.1%. The greatest number of jobs provided by businesses in Lanesborough are in the retail trade. This industry sector provides 53% of the jobs offered within the town, and the preponderance of these are provided by shops in the Berkshire Mall, the town's largest single employer. Other business sectors that provide employment within the town are Accommodation and Food Services (13%) and construction (9%).

Municipal Finances

Lanesborough's municipal budget increased an average of 8.2% annually between 2000 and 2005 increasing the property tax rate substantially during this time. The reason for the increases have been twofold; a significant increase in expenditures, primarily health insurance and

education costs, and a decrease in state aid. This combination has forced the Town to rely more heavily on the local property tax to provide municipal services.

Total Town Budget FY00 and FY05 (not including state school construction reimbursement)

FY00	FY05	Difference	Percent Difference
\$4,939,774	\$6,976,091	\$2,036,317	41.2%

Increased Expenditures, 2000-2005

- Education costs increased by \$1,070,011 or 32%
 - Elementary School +\$394,216, or 21.5%
 - Vocational +\$187,969 or 21.1%
 - MGRHS +\$487,826 or 35.3%
- Health insurance benefits increased by \$384,500 or 123%
- The Town’s debt service (new school building) increased by \$314,675 or 512% (Town’s portion of debt service, not including state reimbursement)
- Berkshire County Retirement assessment increased by \$76,698 or 74%
- Total increase for just these four areas of the budget is \$1,845,884
- Total increase for all other areas of the budget is \$190,433

Decreased Revenue Sources

- State aid for education decreased by \$58,243 or -10.4%
- State aid for general government decreased by \$74,079 or -17%
- Berkshire Mall Tax Abatements – because of retail store vacancies (primarily the former Ames building), the Berkshire Mall has received annual tax abatements in recent years, which had had to be made up from the remainder of the tax base. In FY2000 the Mall contributed 23.85% of the town’s overall tax revenue. In FY 2005 this figure had shrunk to 18.6%

D. Growth and Development Patterns

Patterns and Trends

Lanesborough is approximately 30 square miles, or almost 19,000 acres in size. Today Lanesborough is a bedroom community, with many of its residents commuting to Pittsfield. It is largely forested, with patches of agricultural fields and pastures. Residential development has occurred in villages, around the lake and along major roadways. This is a different landscape from that of 150 years ago, when the town was a farming community, with a hearty industrial base that included an iron works, glass works, brickyards and quarries. Today these businesses are all gone. Since it was historically easier to travel along the lowlands and floodplains where land is relatively level, this is generally where development begins. This holds true for Lanesborough. Much of the original development took place along the Town Brook valley, which is now the Main Street / Rt. 7 corridor. Extending from that central means of travel were

large tracts of land cleared for farming which historically consisted of wheat, rye, corn, hay, apples, dairy and beef. Today farming on these same lands consists mostly hay, corn, vegetables and apples with much less dairy and hardly any beef.

Residential development today in Lanesborough is located in four population centers. The Pontoosuc Lake and Balance Rock Road section of town is the most densely populated. This neighborhood began its development during the 1920s and continued through the 1940s. By the beginning of the 1950s, most of the building lots, which are less than 1/4-acre, were occupied with seasonal cottages. The building continues today, as the seasonal cottages are being winterized and expanded to accommodate year-round residents. Most of these residences were built before the enactment of our current zoning laws and are very close together.

The Town Center is a cluster of businesses and older residences along Main Street, also known as Route 7. This area includes the school and several churches as well as many older residences. The Northern section of Lanesborough is more sparsely settled save for new subdivisions off Bailey Rd. (e.g. Victoria Lane, Greylock Estates, Lynn Court). Here there are large tracts of land, including the southern reaches of the Mt. Greylock State Reservation and large historic farms. Most of these residents are on their own well water and do not draw from the Town Water District. The Berkshire Village area, on the eastern edge of town is the location of the Berkshire Mall and several businesses located along the Cheshire Road / Rt.8 corridor. Berkshire Village consists of many older homes and has a distinct village center and sense of community

Commercial development has historically been located along the Routes 7 and 8 which are two of the major interstate routes in Berkshire County, both running North - South in their Lanesborough sections. New business ventures continue to locate along both these highways.

Property values in Lanesborough and the surrounding communities have risen dramatically, due partially to an overall increase in the real estate market and partially to an increase in the number of tourist facilities, time-share condominiums and second homes. Cultural and recreational opportunities are abundant in Berkshire County, making it a desirable place to vacation and retire for those living a few hours away in the metropolitan areas of New York City and Boston.

Land use changes have been documented in a computer format for over 30 years. Using the records held by MassGIS, the state agency that gathers and stores map data, we can track general land use changes between 1971 and 1999. As can be seen in Table __, commercial development has increased by 88 acres, which is a 101% increase, and residential development has increased by almost 490 acres, which is a 49% increase over that time. Of the commercial development, the Berkshire Mall alone is responsible for 57 of those acres and Unistress is responsible for several more acres. According to the MassGIS, there was also a substantial increase in the amount of land categorized as recreation. The increases can partially be attributed to expansions at Jiminy Peak and the addition of Brodie's cross-country skiing land and of the driving range complex on Route 7. In contrast, the two land use categories that have lost the most acreage are agricultural lands (~420 acres) and forest (~200 acres).

Since 1971, substantial residential growth has occurred on Bailey Road, Brodie Mountain Road, Silver Street, Noppet Road, Greylock Estates, Lynn Court, Victoria Lane, North Mountain Road,

and on Rt. 7 (in the form of condominiums). Commercial development has increased along Route 7, including the post office plaza, the abutting self storage facility, and a reception center for time share condominiums. Commercial development has also increased along the Route 8 corridor, including a significant expansion of the Unistress concrete plant and the continuing evolution of the Berkshire Mall.

The Land Use Map illustrates the general areas in Lanesborough where the greatest development has occurred since 1971. The land use trends that are captured in Table __ reflect trends and the changes in acreage are approximate. This data illustrates that residential and commercial development tends to replace agricultural and forest lands.

Table __. Approximate Land Use Changes 1971-99

Change in Land Use Acreage	1971	1985	1999	1971-1999 Change (acres)	1971-1999 Change (percent)
Residential	987	1,187	1,474	487	49
Agriculture	2,820	2,721	2,397	-423	-15
Forest	13,283	13,161	13,083	-200	-2
Recreation	190	216	333	142	75
Commercial	80	88	161*	81	101
Vacant	676	632	595	-81	-12
Mining / Waste Disposal	64	97	45	-19	30
Institutional	31	25	44	13	43
Wetland	306	303	301	-5	-2
Transportation	4	7	7	3	63
Industrial	22	25	24	2	7
Water	461	461	461	0	0

Source: MassGIS, BRPC, 2006.

* Berkshire Mall, approximately ~57 acres in size, was developed during this time period.

Zoning

The current zoning bylaws and map were drafted in 1965. Although some bylaw amendments have occurred, the substance of the bylaws have changed little since their inception. The most notable amendments have been the establishment of the Water Supply Protection District in the 1980s, the increase of frontage and lot sizes to more easily accommodate septic systems and wells in 1988, the addition of a retail and industrial complex section to the bylaw after the construction of the Berkshire Mall, and a Wireless Communications Facilities bylaw in the 1990s. The town of Lanesborough is divided into six primary zoning districts. The zones and their locations are illustrated on the Current Zoning Map.

The vast majority of the town is within the R-A district, which as a 2-acre minimum for single-family residential development. Multi-family dwellings of four units or less are allowed by special permit. Minimum lot sizes for single-family dwelling in the R-1 and R-3 zones are 22,500 square feet and in the R-2 zone is 10,000 square feet. One-family dwellings are allowed

by right in all four residential zones, and two-family dwellings are allowed by right in the R-2, R-3, and R-A zones.

The business district is intended primarily to concentrate light commercial activities such as retail businesses, consumer services and offices. These zones are corridor areas that line specific areas of Route 7 and Route 8, the main commercial routes in the town. This pattern of locating commercial and industrial entities on roads radiating away from the town center is consistent with zoning patterns in other communities across the region. Although locating commerce and industry on main arteries makes sense from an economic point of view, it has also facilitated strip development along both roadways. A thin business zone also lines Partridge Road, which is currently a rural and relatively undeveloped road.

The town's only industrial zone is bounded by Route 8, Swamp Road and Partridge Road. The southeastern portion of this zone is occupied by the Berkshire Mall and the Berkshire County House of Correction, but the vast majority of the zone is undeveloped. The zone is bisected by a large wetland complex, a portion of which is known to harbor rare species.

The Town of Lanesborough recently received a Smart Growth Technical Assistant Grant to stage a full review of the Zoning Bylaws to develop bylaws that are in line with current smart growth principles, while eliminating contradictions and unclear zoning. A Zoning Review Committee is being seated to work on this project and quotes are being received for legal review of the current bylaws. Areas which may be discussed are to allow more densely developed multi-use town centers and transportation points, and the possible clarification of uses in the business and industrial zones, as well as the expansions of neighborhood business zoning.

Lanesborough has adopted a Water Supply Protection district, which encompasses much of the aquifer recharge area for the municipal water supply. This zone prohibits several activities that have the potential to negatively impact the aquifer, including facilities that would involve large volumes of hazardous waste, household waste, salt products, junkyards and petroleum products. It also regulates several other land use activities involving large volumes of herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers. Unfortunately, several of the aforementioned facilities are non-conforming uses that were located within the zone when it was adopted.

In 2000, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, with funding from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, conducted a buildout analysis for Lanesborough. *The Report on Potential Buildout of Lanesborough* determined that there were approximately 5,950 acres of new potentially developable land in the town, which is approximately 1/3 the total acreage of the town. If this land were developed to the maximum allowed by zoning, it would result in over 3,700 new housing units and almost 10 million square feet of additional commercial/industrial floor space. At a maximum buildout, the population of Lanesborough would be more than 12,500 people (BRPC, 2000).

According to the buildout analysis, the largest area of land most suitable for residential development is east of Route 7 in the southern half of the town. This includes large areas of unprotected agricultural and forested land. Other large areas of potential residential development occurs in the northern and western portions of town; however, these areas are characterized by

slopes greater than 15%, which make development costly and less suitable for large scale development. The areas of potential development can be seen on the Buildout Map. The buildout report can be reviewed in its entirety in Appendix ___.

Land Use and Cost of Community Services

When discussing the conversion of a large tract of woods or farmland into housing units, there is a common misconception that the new housing development will help to reduce the local tax burden. This misconception fails to factor in the liabilities or the cost of services that will be required to meet the needs new residents.

The following discussion, of what is called the Cost of Community Services, is an objective evaluation of the perception that new houses are a net tax benefit to the community. This discussion analyzes land use comparing it to the fiscal cost of community services. In their simplest forms, forest, farms and other open lands generate less revenue than residential, commercial or industrial uses, but they also require less public infrastructure and fewer services. Residential development certainly adds to the town's tax base, but they also add municipal costs by requiring additional public services and infrastructure, such as roads, water, sewer, police, fire, and of course schools. This being the case, it becomes necessary to understand the fiscal implications of the different types of land uses and associated demand for municipal services.

This study utilizes town financial records of fiscal year 2005 to assign costs of local public services to various private uses that require them, such as residential, commercial, seasonal homes, farms and open land. Costs attributed to each type of land use are then compared to the annual tax revenues that each delivers. The result measures costs to revenues for each type of land use category.

Unplanned growth or misinformed land use policies can be costly to a community through increased traffic congestion, pollution, loss of open space, and increased demand for costly public services. Land use policies should reflect the financial relationships between such diverse land uses as residential or open land as they affect the demand for municipal services.

While local tax revenues are easily separated according to land use category, state aid and expenditures are not as easily allocated. To do so requires the following reasonable assumptions:.

1. Land uses that contribute to the year-round population contribute to the town's population-based costs; education, health, recreation.
2. State aid for education is distributed according to year-round population. Therefore, it is attributed to land uses that house year-round residents.
3. Land uses that depend on roads and involve residential, commercial or industrial activities contribute to the town's highway costs.

Once each land use category has been attributed appropriate costs and revenues a ratio giving the cost per dollar of revenue for each land use category can be developed as displayed in the following chart.

Table __. Summary Cost of Community Services for Lanesborough

Land Use	Total Revenue	Total Expenditures	Cost/Revenue Ratio *
One Family	\$4,806,687	\$6,269,949	1.30
Seasonal	609,971	226,224	0.37
Condo	86,221	191,114	2.22
Misc. Residences	36,194	34,036	0.94
Two-family	193,181	232,987	1.21
Three-family	38,505	47,135	1.22
Apartments	41,528	47,135	1.14
Land	670,895	617,298	0.92
Commercial	1,328,551	118,040	0.09
Industrial	88,706	40,767	0.46
Forest land	4,164	1,784	0.43
Agricultural land	6,259	2,676	0.43
Recreation land	12,942	446	0.03

Source: *Lanesborough Assessor's Record FY05.*

* NOTE: A ratio of 1.00 or greater indicates that town expenditures exceed tax revenues.

One concludes from the above chart that, although "open land" and recreation land do not contribute much to the tax base, they also do not contribute to the burden of town expenditures. We have to strike the right balance between development and open space in order to have sustainable town finances. In order to keep the town financially secure, we also have to try to control the types of development that occur, as not all developments contribute equally to town costs. If these trends continue the town's finance will be increasingly strained. If we can develop a plan that fosters open space retention and controls development then we can possibly alleviate to some extent these financial pressures.

Infrastructure

Transportation system

The roads in Lanesborough are in good condition and are well cared for. The basic means of transportation in and around Lanesborough is by car therefore the quality of roads are important.. Lanesborough has 2 major interstate roads. Both routes 7 and 8 run north-south as they travel through Lanesborough and are on either side of town. Route 7 runs through the center of town providing access to most of the residential areas while Rt. 8 runs through our most commercial and industrial zone and provides access to Berkshire Village. Traffic can be an issue especially during commuting times. School buses serve the Lanesborough Elementary School and the Greylock Regional High School. The Berkshire Regional Transit Authority has buses that make limited stops along Routes 7 and 8, and taxi service is available out of Pittsfield to the south.

Historical rail lines no longer exist and have been replaced by a multi-use recreational path, which goes along the Cheshire Reservoirs and Berkshire pond. Commercial air travel is accessible via a 1-2 hour drive through Albany and Bradley International Airports in Albany, New York and Hartford, Connecticut respectively. Logan Airport in Boston and the New York/New Jersey airports provide service to Lanesborough residents willing to make the 2- 4-hour commute. Pittsfield Municipal Airport, Harriman Airport in North Adams and Great Barrington Airport service local private air traffic.

In Lanesborough, there are roughly 10 miles of highway maintained by the Massachusetts Highway Department, consisting of the north-south Route 7 traveling through the center of town, and the north-south Route 8 traveling through the eastern portion of town. According to a Massachusetts Highway Department study done in 2000 over a 48 hour period, the average daily traffic count was 14,900 vehicles along Rt.7 on the Lanesborough/Pittsfield border. According to traffic counts taken by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission in 2001, the average daily traffic on Route 8 is 13,700 vehicles (BRPC, 2005). There are also 49 miles of town roads, and 2 miles of state park roads, for a total of 62 miles. The commuting patterns on Route 7 show that the majority of trips are to Pittsfield. In 1990, 917 trips were counted to Pittsfield and points south on a daily basis, 93 trips north towards Williamstown and points north along Route 7; there were also 110 trips to other locations east or west.

Traffic on Route 8 has increased and access to and from roadside properties can be difficult. The Route 8 Corridor Access Management Study, completed in 2005, recommends several actions to address the issue. The three overall recommendations include:

- Identify land parcels for acquisition to prevent future roadside developments with emphasis on the narrow strip of land between Route 8 and Ashuwillticook multi-use trail;
- Improve and consolidate existing driveways to reduce vehicular conflicts; and
- Identify high accident locations and propose countermeasures.

The first recommendation is to acquire land between the Ashuwillticook and Route 8 at the northern end of Old State Road where it intersects with Route 8. This is in Berkshire Village. The acquisition of land along the roadway could help to maintain the rural character of the roadway in this area.

Water supply systems

The Lanesborough Water District, formed in 1938, provides water to approximately 2,400 residents, which is roughly 80% of the population of the town. There are 825 services, all but 40 of which are single family residences. Single family residences pay a fixed fee per year for water. Fifteen of the businesses are high users and are metered. The remaining businesses are charged a fixed annual fee based on an Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) formula, based on the Massachusetts Title 5 water use guidelines.

The Berkshire Mall property was annexed to the District in 1988 when the mall was under construction. Initially, it was planned that the mall would be connected to the District by a water main under the mall road. However, wetlands issues delayed construction of the road beyond the

opening date of the mall, so the water main could not be installed. Pyramid Company, the owner of the mall, made arrangements with Pittsfield to supply water. Because the mall was within the District, an agreement was made whereby Pittsfield water is sold to the District, which in turn sells it to the Mall. Mall water usage is not included in the business figures discussed above.

The Miner Road well is the primary source for the District and has a capacity of 610 gallons per minute. A second well on Bridge Street is a back-up source, as it does not quite have the capacity to meet summer demand of the District. July is the peak usage month, and is 12% higher than the average month.

A petroleum leak from the Mobile gas station on Rt. 7 forced the District to put the Bridge Street well off-line for a couple of years. MBTE levels were found in test wells located between the site and our well, but never in the Bridge St well itself. However there was concern that pumping the well would draw the contamination into the well, so it was not used for some time. The reclamation work specified by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and performed with funding from Mobile corrected the problem, and the well is again approved by the DEP for use. The well is now used occasionally.

Groundwater studies conducted over several years have led to the conclusion that a well in a deep underground aquifer north of Bull Hill Rd may be the best option for an additional water source. It is a deep well, residing 450 feet below ground in limestone. Yields so far have been promising, although not conclusive. This source is less susceptible to potential contamination from hazardous material spills on nearby Route 7, and therefore is a desirable backup to the two existing wells. Further development work of a well on this site is a high priority item for the District.

A Study of the District's supply, storage, and distribution systems was completed by the engineering firm Tighe & Bond in 1999. The study concluded that major upgrades were needed. Grant loan funding was obtained to complete the high priority needs of the distribution system and this work was completed in 2003.. Two major needs remain:

1. New Well. An alternate water source is needed because if the Miner Rd. well were to become unusable the Bridge St. well does not have the capacity to serve the needs of the District.
2. Increased Storage capacity. An additional 1,000,000 gallons storage capacity was recommended, to bring the total to 1,300,000 gallons.

Wastewater systems

Most of Lanesborough's residents rely on private septic systems to dispose of their wastewater. There are limited areas near Pontoosuc Lake that are tied into the City of Pittsfield's sewer system. In 1975, a 15" main was installed along Route 7 from the town line north to the current intersection with the Berkshire Mall Rd. This line services the homes and businesses along Route 7 and the residences on Baker and Irwin streets. In 1981 a privately funded 4" forced main line extension was installed to service the 30 units at Pontoosuc Condominiums. As of 1990, 1027 residences were served by individual septic systems, while 86 homes were served by sewer. Of

the 106 businesses existing in 1990, 98 were served by on-site systems and 8 were served by sewer.

In 2002 the Town applied for and received a Community Development Block Grant from the state to tie the No-Namie Trailer Park at the corner of Route 7 and Bull Hill Rd. into the sewer system. The trailer park at the time was under a Board of Health order to remedy compliance issues under the Title V state sanitary code. Another 4" forced main line was eventually installed to service just the trailer park.

More recently there have been privately funded sewer extensions along Narragansett Avenue on the west side of Pontoosuc Lake that are also tied into the Pittsfield system. Due to the small size of many of the lots in this area and the expense of installing a new septic system, in many cases it has become more beneficial to install sewer lines. This trend may continue, though public funding will be necessary to fully service this area with sewers.

The Town is currently in negotiations with the City of Pittsfield to increase the cap on the amount of wastewater flow from Lanesborough to the City's sewer system. The Town will also be conducting a Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan that will provide guidance for future sewer expansion and make the Town eligible for state low interest loans for sewer construction. The Town's immediate priorities are to sewer the area around Pontoosuc Lake and allow for the Berkshire Mall to tie into the City's system. Berkshire mall currently has an on-site wastewater treatment plant that is nearing the end of its lifespan and connecting to the Pittsfield sewer system may be an option to an upgrade of the plant.

Recreational Facilities

Lanesborough residents are fortunate in that they have ample opportunities to enjoy the natural world within the town. Swimming, boating and fishing are available at Pontoosuc Lake and to some degree at Cheshire Reservoir. Hiking and wildlife viewing are available at all the public lands and on many private lands scattered across town, although long connecting routes between public lands are lacking. Hunting is allowed on all the state lands and on some private lands. The Ashuwillticook Rail Trail is accessible to people of all ages and abilities. ATV's are allowed in Pittsfield State Forest, and ATVs and snowmobiles are allowed in Pittsfield State Forest and Mt. Greylock State Reservation.

The opportunities for team sports are more limited. The town has three sites that offer athletic fields (Bridge Street, Narragansett Avenue and the Elementary School), but these are limited in their capacity to fulfill the needs of the existing programs. The main three programs overseen by the Lanesborough Recreation Committee are baseball, football and soccer. The baseball program currently involves 150 children playing at different levels, the football program has 85 children playing at on three teams, and the soccer program has 140 children in it. The number of fields to accommodate the various uses and teams is inadequate. In addition, the sizes of two of the fields are adequate only for the smaller children to play on; they are not large enough even to accommodate official Little League tournaments. Fortunately, the owner of the Sunset Drive-in has offered a portion of that land to the town to construct athletic fields there. It is the intent of the Recreation Committee to develop playing fields, rehabilitate the old concession stand, and

construct a pavilion at the site. A walking track and hiking trails are also being considered if space allows.

Lanesborough residents are also fortunate in that the town has recently authorized the purchase of a 20-acre parcel in the downtown area for the development of a senior/community center. Although it is not known at this time how the property will be developed, it is envisioned that the property will support a community gathering place and possibly house some municipal services.

Telecommunications and Energy

Cable television service in Lanesborough is provided by Charter Communications although not all areas of town receive service. In the more remote areas, reception is via satellite dishes, antennae reception or none at all. The same situation exists with broadband internet service, which is available through Verizon. Many homes still have dial up service or none at all.

Lanesborough has two wireless communication towers within its boundaries and has been approached for a third. Some ridgelines in town have suitable wind speeds to accommodate wind turbines. It is expected that Jiminy Peak will install a 1.5 MW wind turbine in 2007-08.

There are three major east-west high tension electrical lines running across Lanesborough which are informally used by hikers and off-road vehicles as recreational pathways. The access and liability issues of using these manmade pathways have not been addressed. Generally, the power company owning the lines has easements over privately owned land.

SECTION 4 ENVIRONMENTAL INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of an Environmental Analysis is to determine scientifically how best to use the land. By obtaining as much information as possible and categorizing it we can begin to understand how the land works and how it might best be used. To do this we must understand the interaction of the town's geology, hydrology, soils, and weather patterns, and how they affect the vegetation and wildlife that are found here. Once we understand the natural landscape, we can begin to understand how our land use patterns impacts it, and begin to identify ways to minimize those impacts.

For example, one of the town's main concerns is maintaining its drinking water supply. Inappropriate development can negatively impact the water quality of our streams and lakes. Wetlands are recognized for their ability to filter and attenuate pollution in the waters that flow through them. There is a large wetland complex that surrounds Town Brook, which is the town's drinking water supply. It is therefore prudent to identify ways to protect these wetlands from inappropriate development so that they might protect the water quality of Lanesborough's water supply.

Sustainable development patterns are those that strive to allow development to occur, but minimizes impacts to our natural world. Sustainable development is growth that the town can afford and maintain. Sustainable development includes provisions for work, housing and goods for the current population as well as future generations. This would insure the vitality of the community and hopefully provide an economical and financial climate conducive for managed growth. The completion of each section of this plan provides valuable information and begins to allude to the opportunities and constraints of the land regarding land use development. By analyzing the information included in this plan we can begin to prioritize the areas within Lanesborough that are best suited for protection and which might be the most conducive to development.

Lanesborough is located in the western most portion of the state of Massachusetts, in the center of Berkshire County. New Ashford and Cheshire border Lanesborough to the north, Dalton borders the town to the east Pittsfield borders the town to the south and Hancock borders the town to the west. The town is comprised of gentle mountains along the eastern and western borders, and a stream valley that features Town Brook (refer to the Locus Map and the Topographic Map).

Basically three physiographic regions run through Lanesborough. The first is the glaciated limestone and slate belt that comprises the Taconic Mountain along the western portion of the town. The second is the limestone valley that makes up the lowlands and extends southward. The third is the rugged schists and gneisses that make up the footfills of the Mt. Greylock ridgeline, including Saddleback Mountain and Savage and Farnham's Hills.

The topography of Lanesborough is a result of the geologic erosional activities of the Hoosic and Housatonic river systems and their ancient ancestors. These rivers, along with the glacial action

of the Pleistocene 10,000 – 11,000 years ago, eroded and shaped the soft limestones that underlie the valleys. The metamorphic rock that comprises the Taconic Hills to the west and the rock that underlies the Mount Greylock range are more resistant to erosion. The town's highest peaks of Jiminy Peak (elevation 2,382'), Widow White Peak (?') and Potter Mountain (2,434') in the western portion of the town are recognizable examples of those metamorphic rocks. These mountains form the scenic hills that are visible to the west of Main Street (Route 7). Hoosic

The central part of the town is part of the Housatonic River valley that begins largely in Lanesborough and extends southward through Connecticut and drains into Long Island Sound. Springs on Brodie Mountain in the north of town form the headwaters of Town Brook, which feed into Pontoosuc Lake, which is the southern portion of town. The lake discharges water into what becomes the main stem of the Housatonic River as it flows through Pittsfield. The mountains that run along the eastern border shared with Cheshire are part of the Mt. Greylock mountain complex, with Savage Hill (1,844') being the southern tip of the complex. The eastern-most portion of the town is the headwaters of the Hoosic River, which flows northwestern through Vermont and into New York State, where it joins the Hudson River on its southerly flow into the Atlantic Ocean. The source of the Hoosic River is the springs and small brooks in the eastern part of town that includes Muddy Brook. Cheshire Reservoir was created when the brook was dammed by Arnold Print Works in approximately 1854.

The eastern portion of Lanesborough is located on the Berkshire Plateau. This deeply dissected plateau covers almost all of the eastern part of the County, extending from Vermont to Connecticut. The northern part of the plateau ranges in elevation from 1,700-2,200 feet above sea level while the southern part of the plateau ranges in elevation from 1,400-1,800 feet above sea level. The western portion of the town is in the Taconic Mountain range, with elevations ranging from 1,800-2,500 and up to 3,491.

The climate of Lanesborough is characterized by cold winters and moderately warm summers with hot spells. The precipitation is usually adequate year round. The total annual precipitation is around 43 inches, 55% of which generally falls between April and September. On the average, 2 out of 10 years there is less than 20 inches of precipitation. A heavy amount of rainfall for our area is 4 inches in one day. The average seasonal snow fall is about 71 inches, with the depth on the ground at any time typically being less than 33 inches.

A. *Geology, Soils and Topography*

Geology

Geology is the structural part of our world. It is upon these geologic formations that our environment is shaped. The harder rock formations tend to make up the higher elevations while softer rock like limestone tend to be found in lower elevations. These formations are the bedrock material from which are soils are formed as a result of weathering over time.

Along the western border of Lanesborough are the Taconic Mountains. This mountain range is comprised mostly of schistose and phyllitic formations which have been highly metamorphosed.

The bedrock under these mountains is the oldest in Lanesborough. The mountains were once rough and jagged, and it is estimated that they mountains once stood 20,000 feet high, but millions of years of weathering has reduced them to a more gently rolling form at heights that are generally 2,000-3,000 feet high. Savage Hill and the Mt. Greylock complex that run along the Lanesborough-Cheshire border are made up of the same type of rock formations.

The central area of town, which is part of the larger valley extending through the county, is primarily underlain by Limestone and Dolomite. This type of rock was created as sediment and organic materials such as seashells settle to the bottom of a body of water. Over time these sediments solidify and the calcium from seashells and skeletal remains cement or bond the particles together. Due to their calcareous nature, these materials are softer than the bedrock that underlies the Taconic Mountains and the eastern hills of the town, and therefore are prone to more rapid erosion. The limestone is often quarried for various uses. In Lanesborough the old limestone factory and quarry on the eastern border of town, near Cheshire is a good example of a historic limestone quarry. Specialty Minerals in Adams and Lee Lime in Lee are good examples of working quarries.

The hills that lie in the southeastern area of town are the northern foothills of the Berkshire Highlands Range. These areas are mostly ancient Schists and Gneisses. These are geological strata that have been highly metamorphosed.

Soils

The topography and soils that we see today is the result of the major uplifting of the ancient Appalachian Mountains (including the Taconic Mountains to our west), of glacial actions occurring during the last ice age, of content weathering, and of the erosion caused by the Housatonic and Hoosic river systems. Only the restrictive slopes and thin soils found on the hillsides contained the farming practices that were so prevalent in prior centuries. These steep slopes still have constraints for development due to the potential for soil erosion, the lack of suitable soils for septic design and the potential lack of well water yields. The soils of Lanesborough can be placed in five general associations, and are displayed on the General Soils Map.

The first soil association is the Taconic-Macomber-Lanesboro association. These soils are predominantly on moderate to steep slopes, such as those along the Taconic Mountains in the western part of town. They are loamy soils formed in glacial till derived from phyllite, slate and shale. The main limitations to development on these soils are the slope on which they are found, the stoniness of the surface, and the shallowness to bedrock. The Taconic-Macomber-Lanesborough association of soils cover approximately 37% of town.

The second association is the Amenia-Pittsfield-Farmington soils. These are loamy soils formed in glacial till derived from limestone, and are predominantly found in the south-central portion of Lanesborough. This area is the central part of town and roughly follows the Rt. 7 corridor. These soils have few limitations for development, except when they are located on slopes, where

erosion is a hazard. The Amenia-Pittsfield-Farmington soils cover approximately 23.5% of the town.

The third association is the Tunbridge-Lyman-Peru soil association. These are loamy soils formed in glacial till derived from schist, gneiss and granite, such as is found on the lower slopes of Mount Greylock, and on Pratt Hill and Savage Hill. This soil association is also found east of Cheshire Road. Like the soils of the Taconic Mountains, the limitations to development on these soils involve slope, stoniness and shallowness to bedrock. This type covers approximately 22% of the towns lands.

The fourth association is the Copake-Hero-Hoosic soils. These are loamy soils formed in glacial outwash on outwash plains and terraces. These soils are found in several areas of Lanesborough, with the largest areas located in the lower reaches of the Yokun Brook watershed, along Balance Rock Road, and along the upper reaches of the Cheshire Reservoir watershed, along Cheshire Road. It is within these soils that the medium- and high-yield aquifers of the town are located (refer to the Water Resources Map for locations of the aquifers). There are few limitations to development in these soils, as they tend to be on relatively gentle terrain and drain well. This soil type covers approximately 12% of the area in Lanesborough.

The fifth soils association is the Limerick-Saco-Winooski, which contains poorly drained loamy soils formed in alluvial deposits and floodplains. These soils are found in low-lying areas and often support wetland plant communities. These soils are found along Town Brook, and at the confluence area of Yukon Brook and Pontoosuc Lake and Pettibone Brook and Cheshire Reservoir. Limitations to development in these soils are poor drainage and wetland protection regulations. These soils cover less than 1.5% of Lanesborough.

Soil type, consistency and depth to bedrock can vary greatly within soils associations from one region of town to the next, and can even vary greatly within areas of the same soils association. This variation, along with slope, can greatly affect a site's suitability for a particular land use, such as agriculture or development. In an attempt to determine future development suitability as it relates to topography and soils, we have created a map that overlays important soil characteristics and slope (see the Unique Soils & Slope Map). The map shows poorly drained (~8% of the town) and excessively drained soils (~47% of town), which can present a challenge to developments relying on septic systems. The map also shows areas with slope greater than 25% , upon which the potential for erosion and water quality impairment down gradient can present challenges to development. When combining soil and slope attributes, we can see that the areas most suitable for development are the areas of gentle terrain in the valley areas that lie along the main roadway corridors of Main Street (Route 7) and Cheshire Road (Route 8). Fortunately, much of the development that has historically occurred has been in these areas. Unfortunately, these areas also provide the town with scenic and cultural landscapes, often with farm fields and rural development set in the foreground and mountains set as the background.

The map also shows prime agricultural soils which, some would argue, should be protected for current and future agricultural use. As can be seen when comparing prime agricultural soil locations against the General Soils map, the prime agricultural soils tend to be of the Amenia-Pittsfield-Farmington and Copake-Hero-Hoosic soils, and cover approximately 7% of the town.

Of these acres, approximately 17% were in agricultural use in 1999, 12 % were under residential development, and 57% were forested. The most notable area where prime agricultural soils have been lost to development have been along the western shore of Pontoosuc Lake.

B. Landscape Character

Lanesborough is a town of hills and valleys. The central north-south corridor of the town is comprised of the Town Brook valley. The riparian area along the brook is characterized by a wetland shrub community and its associated open meadows. Town Brook flows southward into Pontoosuc Lake, which then flow into the Housatonic River. The gentle grade of this valley and the low-growing vegetation provides a rural and scenic corridor along the Main Street corridor. Mountains frame the valley to the west and east, providing a dramatic backdrop to the rural township and low-lying openness of the valley. The town's other main waterbody, Cheshire Reservoir is nestled in the hills that line the eastern border of the town. Here the headwaters of the Hoosic River are formed, from where they will flow northward prior to joining the Hudson River in neighboring New York state.

C. Water Resources

Water is one of the most important natural resources to any community. Surface waters provide the town with recreational opportunities and provides a variety of wildlife habitats. Groundwater is the source of drinking water for the majority of residents in the town. It is therefore important to protect both surface and groundwater supplies.

In February 2003 Guertin Elkerton and Associates, Inc. prepared a Storm Water Management Phase II Assessment for the town of Lanesborough. This was done in order to comply with the US EPA NPDES Storm Water Phase II Final Rule. The report identifies tasks and initiatives to be undertaken in order to achieve full compliance. In 1999 the US Environmental Protection Agency published the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Final Rule as applies to storm water discharges from small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System operators (MS4s). Since Massachusetts is one of seven “ primacy “ states (a state where the EPA is the primary regulatory authority for the implementation of NPDES rules) immediate compliance is necessary. Towns like Lanesborough are required to create storm water management programs designed to reduce discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable, protect water quality, and comply with the applicable water quality provisions of the Clean Waters Act.

To comply, towns are required to implement six minimum control measures.

1. Public education and outreach – educate the public to the problems of non-point source pollutants as the single most important element in reducing pollutant loads to local bodies of water.
2. Public participation and involvement – for broader public support, shorter implementation schedules, broader base of expertise and economic benefits and conduit to support other programs.
3. Illicit discharge detection and elimination – sanitary wastewater, effluent from septic, car wash wastewater, improper oil disposal, radiator flushing, laundry wastewater, spills from roadway accidents, auto and household toxics contribute high levels of pollutants to

bodies of water such as: heavy metals, toxics, oils, grease, solvents, viruses, bacteria and nutrients. This in turn threatens wildlife, vegetation and human health.

4. Construction site runoff control – Construction site runoff contains 10 to 20 times more sediment than an agricultural site and 1,000-2,000 times greater than forests. A few days of construction is like decades of intensive farming. This sediment contains other pollutants as well.
5. Post-construction runoff control – Pre construction planning for storm water and project review during construction are the best ways to control post construction runoff. The property owner is legally responsible for off site runoff.
6. Pollution prevention/ good housekeeping – inspect and maintain facilities, implement controls, proper waste disposal, and assess impacts of new projects.

By implementing a proper stormwater management plan this should help preserve the quality of our drinking water and our surface waters. This is a vital part of the community's infrastructure in order to assure and maintain the quality of life which we now enjoy.

Watersheds

The Town of Lanesborough is approximately 29.6 square miles and is situated at the headwaters of the two major watersheds of Berkshire County. The vast majority of the town, 21.6 square miles (73%) lies within the Housatonic River watershed. Town Brook and Secum Brook are major tributaries of Pontoosuc Lake, which is itself the headwaters of the Main Branch Housatonic River.

The remaining portions of the town lie within the greater Hudson River watershed. The subwatersheds that eventually feed into the Hudson River are the Hoosic River and the Kinderhook. Muddy Brook and Berkshire Pond form the headwaters of the Hoosic River, which is one of the few New England rivers that flows northward. Waters from these waterways flow into Cheshire Reservoir and continue northwesterly, through Vermont, before joining the Hudson River in neighboring New York State. A small portion of the Taconic Mountains, the area surrounding the Jiminy Peak ski resort, drains into the Kinderhook, which flows westward into New York state where it flows into the Hudson River.

Surface water

Lanesborough is endowed with several streams. Town Brook is the most central and important stream in Lanesborough. It, along with the aquifer flowing beneath it, are the source of the town's public water supply. This stream begins on Brodie Mountain and flows southward through the town center, discharging into Pontoosuc Lake. Other streams that drain the Taconic Hills to the west are Hollow and Secum brooks, which also drain into the lake. Secum Brook is considered a cold water fishery by the Mass. Department of Fish and Game. These streams are known to support fish species that require cold, relatively unpolluted waters, and where surveys have indicated that they support report sustainable, reproducing populations of brook or brown trout, or long nose suckers or slimy sculpin (Madden, 2004). In addition to its sustainable population of trout, Town Brook is stocked with trout by Fish and Game.

Muddy Brook and Pettibone Brook flow into Cheshire Reservoir from the hills of the southeast corner of town. These hills separate the Housatonic River watershed from the Hoosic River watershed.

The town is fortunate in that two of the county's largest water bodies lie partially within its borders, Pontoosuc Lake and Cheshire Reservoir. Pontoosuc Lake is one of the region's most heavily used recreational lakes. Fishing, boating, waterskiing, swimming, snowmobiling and cross-country skiing are all popular uses of the lake. The lake is approximately 480 acres in size and is categorized as a class B water body. Designated uses for this category include wildlife and aquatic life habitat, primary and secondary recreation, agricultural use, compatible industrial use, and public water supply. The lake is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and current uses are habitat and recreation. Swimming and the main boat access area for the lake are located at Pontoosuc Park, which is located at the southern end of the lake in neighboring Pittsfield. Lanesborough has a small boat launch located at the end of Ocean Street, and a public beach for residents located at the end of Sunrise Street.

Approximately 90% of Pontoosuc Lake's 13,607-acre watershed is in Lanesborough. A variety of land uses are found within the watershed. Forested land covers the greatest area in the Pontoosuc Lake watershed, comprising 66% of the total, and is followed by cropland (11%). Residential development makes up the largest amount of developed land within the Pontoosuc Lake watershed at 7% of the total land area. All remaining land uses are individually less than 5% of the total. The majority of the development within the watershed has occurred around the shoreline of the lake, limiting forested and open land to the rest of the watershed. Residential properties cover the vast majority of this shoreline area. Major tributaries to the lake include Town Brook and Secum Brook.

According to a recent lake management plan, Pontoosuc Lake is generally healthy and well within the state's water quality standards for safe swimming, but it has water quality issues that require monitoring. Overall the majority of pollutants were found to be entering the lake from developed land uses in the watershed, and through stormwater inputs. Most of the development in the watershed is located within ¼ mile of the lake shores (Friends of Pontoosuc Lake/Watershed Corp, 2004).

While the greatest volume of pollutant inputs to Pontoosuc Lake come from the tributaries, the highest concentration of inputs come from stormwater outfalls during rain events and snowmelt. A report conducted by ENSR identified animal waste as the greatest source of E.Coli found in stormdrain outlets (ENSR, 2000). This indicates that stormwater treatment and management in the small geographic area of developed neighborhoods around the lake may result in reductions of pollutants. Measurements of total suspended solids and turbidity reveal few specific problems for the lake. However, it was noted in the Post-Implementation Study that sediments and particulate matter are being drawn into the lake during drawdown. Drawdown, therefore, may be pulling additional phosphorus-laden sediment into the lake (Friends of Pontoosuc Lake/Watershed Corp, 2004).

The Pontoosuc Lake Management Plan was developed to comprehensively address the management responsibilities of local stakeholders, including the Town of Lanesborough, the

City of Pittsfield, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the Friends of Pontoosuc Lake/Watershed Corporation. This serves as a roadmap for each organization with management responsibility to identify what they are responsible for and how their work should be coordinated with the others. Recommendations to protect the ecosystem health and recreational use of the lake include the control of nuisance aquatic plants and algae, to promote the management of lake resources based on sound scientific principles, methods to control nutrient enrichment, improve fisheries habitat, and improve the coordination between recreational users. The Friends of Pontoosuc are currently working on a watershed management plan that is expected to be published in 2007. This plan will address nonpoint source pollution issues in the upper reaches of the watershed.

The Cheshire Reservoir, also known as Hoosic Lake, also offers recreational opportunities. The reservoir system is made up of four interconnected waterbodies, Berkshire Pond (approximately 22 acres), the South Basin (approx. 67 acres), the Middle Basin (approx. 132 acres) and the North Basin (218 acres). All of Berkshire Pond and portions of the South and Middle basins are located within Lanesborough, while the entire North Basin is located in neighboring Cheshire.

Water levels throughout the basins are shallow, allowing light to penetrate to the bottom and facilitating aquatic plant growth. Fishing, boating, swimming and snowmobiling are popular uses of the lake. The lake is categorized as a class B water body, and is designated for uses which include wildlife and aquatic life habitat, primary and secondary recreation. The lake is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and current uses are habitat and recreation. The main boat access area is located at the northern end of the North Basin, off the Cheshire/Lanesborough Road (Rt. 8). Canoe/kayak launches are located at the causeways Off of Ingalls Crossing and Nobody's Road.

Like Pontoosuc Lake, Cheshire Reservoir is a man-made waterbody created by a dam at the outlet in Cheshire. The lake had been privately owned until 2000, when it was acquired by the state of Massachusetts. The lake is now maintained by the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation. Waterfront development in Lanesborough is located along the South and Middle Basins, off of Summer Street and ___ Street. In addition, Camp Mohawk is located on the western shore of the Middle Basin.

The North Basin, the largest and best known of the basins, is also the most heavily developed basin, with over 100 lakefront residences along its shores. The health of the Cheshire Reservoir basins have been a concern for many years. Invasive aquatic plants, such as Eurasian milfoil and curly pondweed have degraded water quality and limited recreational use of them. Lake management activities, such as weed control, are largely conducted by the Hoosac Lake Recreation/Preservation District, an association of landowners living along the shoreline of the North Basin.

The upper basins flow northerly into the Lower Basin. The water quality and ecological health of these basins has never been comprehensively studied. The upper basins are known to harbor invasive aquatic plants and may thus be a source of re-infestation to the Lower Basin.

Aquifer recharge and Floodplain Areas

Groundwater is generally withdrawn from bedrock sources or from gravelly soils. Water collects in cracks, fractures, faults and fissures in rock formations. The bedrock underlying the Taconic Mountains vary greatly in density and porosity, and water yields in this area of town vary greatly. The gneisses and schists of the eastern uplands are crystalline rocks, which have low levels of porosity, resulting in generally poor water yield. Both of these areas tend to also have poorly-percolating soils, making it difficult to locate septic systems.

The limestones and dolomites that underlie the central and southern portions of town are relatively soft and soluble, allowing water to percolate through and form channels. Soils found above this bedrock is unconsolidated material created by the flow and ebb of glaciers across the landscape. When the glacial sheets would surge forward they would scarify the land. When glacial sheets retreated they would leave these deposits in various layered formations. The material would vary from coarse gravels to fine silts. The coarser the material the greater the porosity, allowing the soil to hold large amounts of water.

There are three main areas in Lanesborough in which medium- or high-yield aquifers are located. The first medium-yield aquifer lies below the lower reaches of Secum Brook and a large wetland area that drains into Pontoosuc Lake. The Secum Brook aquifer's drainage basin, which is six square miles, contains at least five tributary streams. The aquifer is covered primarily with forests and it has very few private homes, but some farming continues in the flatter and lower reaches. According to an aquifer study conducted by Ward Motts in 1986, the aquifer has a ground water outflow of 6.97 million gallons per day (mgd). The Secum aquifer is unsuitable for drinking water supplies, as the old Lanesborough landfill and an old General Electric Company landfill are located within the recharge area.

A high-yield aquifer is that which underlies Town Brook. This aquifer is the most important aquifer to the town as it is the source of Lanesborough's municipal drinking water supply. The Town Brook aquifer is located in the center of Lanesborough west of Route 7 and flows into the northern end of Pontoosuc Lake. The drainage area is less than half of the Secum Brook aquifer and has ground water outflow of 1.2 mgd. This is the only aquifer suitable for development for the municipal water system in an area north of Bull Hill Road. This water supply is recharged by a combination of the groundwater flowing from the surrounding hills and surface water flowing into Town Brook. Like the other aquifers, a wetland overlies much of the area. Because the water supply is supplied by both groundwater and surface waters, it is vulnerable to contamination from a variety of sources.

A high-yield aquifer underlies the area around Muddy Brook. This area known as the Cheshire aquifer is approximately 230 acres in size. This aquifer is utilized to supply water to more than 50 families in Berkshire Village.

The Cheshire aquifer does not hold promise for further ground-water exploration either in bedrock or stratified drift. Drilling in bedrock carbonates should not be done in the vicinity of Berkshire Cooperative Spring because of the negative effects of lowering the potentiometric surface from pumping and causing the inflow of poor quality water into the carbonate rock.

Drilling in the carbonate anywhere in the Cheshire Aquifer should be accompanied by a long-term pumping test and careful monitoring to insure protection of the spring's water supply. A test well at Camp Mohawk only yielded 25 gpm. and any yield less than 50 gpm. in a 2 ½ inch well is considered unsatisfactory for a municipal water supply. Once again, a large wetland area overlies much of the aquifer.

The recharge area for underground aquifers can extend well beyond the boundaries of the aquifers themselves. The suspected recharge areas for Town Brook and Secum Brook, as mapped by MacFadyen & Ruth in 1972, extend far beyond the streams themselves, encompassing the lower elevations that surround Constitution Hill and The Noppet.

There is relatively little floodplain area in Lanesborough. The area of the town which is in the 100-year floodplain is approximately 1,265 acres, comprising of less than 7% of the total acreage in the town. Currently, less than 8% of that floodplain area has been developed. Of the developed acreage, much of that is located along the shores of Pontoosuc Lake or is located in close proximity to Town Brook as it flows parallel to North Main Street. The floodplain areas are shown on the Water Resources Map __. The town has a floodplain bylaw.

Wetlands

Lanesborough contains a relatively low percentage of wetland area. According to MassGIS land use data, less than 2% of the total acreage in town is inventoried as wetlands. It should be noted however, that this data source is very limited, in that it recognizes only large, easily identified wetland areas that are noted on topographical maps developed in the late 1980s and to some extent aerial photography. Smaller wetlands and/or forested wetlands may be unaccounted for. For example, wetland soils cover 5-8% of the town, indicating an accountability gap.

The large wetland complex along Town Brook is arguably the most important wetland area to some Lanesborough residents, as this is the source of the municipal drinking water. Another important wetland important to ecological biodiversity is that which is dissected by Swamp Road. The plant community, a Black Ash/Red Maple/Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp, is a rare community found only in a few sites in the region. Other large wetland areas are associated with Secum Brook, at its discharge into Pontoosuc Lake and along Muddy Brook. Numerous other wetland areas exist throughout the town, but they are of a smaller scale.

D. Vegetation

Development has the potential to significantly fragment wildlife habitat. The loss of habitat and the fragmentation of large tracts of undeveloped land threatens the biodiversity of the region's plant and animal communities. Biodiversity refers to the richness or diversity of native species, their habitats and natural communities -- plant and animal assemblages -- in a particular area (Barbour, et al, 1998). It is the natural biological complexity of an ecosystem that sustains plants and animals through thousands of years of evolution.

Although Berkshire County has experienced a substantial increase in residential development, the region is still relatively rural. Western Massachusetts supports sustainable populations of

large animals, such as moose, deer and bear, while also supporting a number of small, less conspicuous animals such as rare butterflies, fish, salamanders and turtles. For some animals, it is the last place in the state where their habitat is still intact. Lanesborough is blessed in that it still has large tracts of undeveloped forests, fields and wetlands, and the town is host to several unique natural communities that support unusual and rare species.

The Berkshire and Taconic hills, along with the Housatonic and Hoosic River valleys that lie within them, support an unusually high number of rare plant and animal species. The region is a focus for conservation and protection of biodiversity. To be effective, conservation planning for biological diversity must provide the necessary habitats for both rare and common species to protect the full suite of our native” landscape.

The state of Massachusetts is divided into several ecoregions, which are landscape units within which are similar environmental conditions. Geology, hydrology, soil type, and climate determine the distribution of plant communities and animal populations. The ecoregions of Massachusetts vary widely, from the dry, sandy conditions of Cape Cod, to the marble bedrock valleys of the Housatonic River, to the rare high elevation forests and swamps of the Mt. Greylock range. There are three general ecosystems in Lanesborough: the Taconic Mountains along the western portion of town, the Marble Valley of the Housatonic River in the central portion of town, and the Berkshire Highlands along the southeastern portion of town. Within each ecoregion, there are plant communities that help to define smaller ecosystems, which support unique assemblages of plants and animals. Some animals live their entire lives within one or two specific ecosystems, while others move from one ecosystem to another to take advantage of the terrain and plants found within each system.

The Taconic Mountain ecosystem includes the mountains that frame the western portion of town, including Brodie, Potter and Honwee mountain. The ecosystems are characterized by rich mesic forests and fast flowing mountain streams. The ecoregion also includes Mt. Greylock, the highest peak in the state.

The Marble Valleys of the Housatonic and Hoosic rivers are the only region in the state that support large areas of alkaline, high-pH waters. The calcium derived from the marble and limestone bedrock buffer the waters from becoming acidic, thus allowing specialized plant communities to thrive here. This extremely diverse ecoregion hosts flora and fauna often found nowhere else in the state. The Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) considers the calcium-rich wetlands as “hot spots” for rare species. Of the three ecosystems, the marble valleys support 539 known rare species, the highest number of any ecosystem in Western Massachusetts.

The Berkshire Highlands ecoregion includes the southernmost extent of Vermont’s Green Mountains. The higher elevations and corresponding cooler climate support vegetative patterns more typical of northern New England, with stands of Spruce-fir interspaced throughout the dominant northern hardwood forests.

Unique Natural Resources

To help communities conserve important habitat areas within these ecoregions, the NHESP has developed two complimentary planning projects, BioMap and the Living Waters. The goal of these projects is:

To promote strategic land protection by producing a map showing areas that, if protected, would provide suitable habitat over the long term for the maximum number of Massachusetts' terrestrial and wetland plant and animal species and natural communities (Div. Fish. & Wildlife, 2001).

Both BioMap and Living Waters delineate Core Habitats that identify the most critical sites for biodiversity conservation across the state. Each community was presented with a guide identifying Core Habitat areas and describing the rare ecosystems and rare species that exist within those areas. Core Habitat areas identified are based on documented observations of rare species, natural communities, and exemplary habitats needed to preserve biodiversity in the region. The guide in full is included in its entirety in Appendix ___.

The most important Core Habitat in Lanesborough in terms of biodiversity protection are the lands that form a contiguous and unbroken forest that begins on Savage Hill and Pratt Hill, and continue northward along the Mt. Greylock mountain complex. The slopes and summits of the Mt. Greylock complex contain some of the rarest montane communities in Mass. According to *Most Excellent Majesty*, a book written by local naturalist Lauren Stevens, 40 rare species are found in the Mt. Greylock Reservation, 5 which are not found anywhere else in Massachusetts.

The large wetland complex that spans to the east of Swamp Road is exemplary of a Black Ash/Red Maple/Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp. This is an unusual wetland, where calcium-rich groundwater seeps up and maintains the wetness of the area, benefiting rare calcium-loving plants found only in certain sites in Western Mass. In addition, the wetland complex hosts extremely rare plants. This wetland is very rare for Massachusetts, and is thought to occur in less than 20 sites across the state. The NHESP considers this type of wetland vulnerable to extirpation in the state because of its rarity and the limited number of acres that remain intact.

Another important community is the Rich, Mesic Forest located in the southeastern portion of the town, extending into neighboring Dalton. This type of forest, a variant within the typical hardwood forests of the region, are dominated by Sugar maple, with a diverse herbaceous layer and many spring ephemerals (plants appearing only in spring), in a moist, nutrient-rich environment. Other areas where rare plants have been documented are on Brodie Mountain Road and on the Donnybrook property along Route 7, where the Kelly family is developing a 18-hole golf course.

In addition to these important Core Habitat areas, there are several Priority Habitat and Wetland Habitat sites in Lanesborough. Whereas Core Habitat is noted as areas which support rare and unique plant and animal communities, Priority and Wetland Habitats are those areas which are known to support individual plants and/or animals, and on which development is regulated by law under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and Wetland Protection Act. Development in these areas must, to the extent possible, avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts to

the rare species known to exist there. These sites are shown on the Plant and Wildlife Habitat Map.

One individual plant should be highlighted. The Town of Lanesborough is the proud home of the Champion Elm Tree of the State of Massachusetts. This majestic tree is thought to be more than 150 years old. It graces lower Summer Street, just east of busy Route 7. It is a massive tree, its trunk is more than five feet wide, and it stands over 115 feet tall with a canopy over 105 feet in diameter. Initially Elm Watch provided inoculations against Dutch-Elm disease. Presently the Town of Lanesborough Tree and Forest Committee presently works to maintain its health by providing necessary pruning and continuing inoculations. The “Champ” is one of the last remaining Elm trees of outstanding size.

General Plant Inventory

In rural areas like Berkshire County, the surrounding vegetation frames the landscape in which we live. Plants regulate ecological functions and improve the environment in which we live. Plants absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen, they filter and cool our air, and they protect water quality by tempering floodwaters and attenuating nutrients and other pollutants traveling in stormwater runoff. Plants provide stabilization, structure, nutrients, and organic matter to the soil. Plant provide cover and food for the wildlife, and provide visual stimulation and diversity in the landscape around us.

Plant communities are an assemblage of species that exist within a certain area. These communities are found in recurring patterns that can be classified and described by their dominant physical and biological features, such as Red maple swamps or Spruce-fir forests. Lanesborough is lucky in that it hosts several types of plant communities, ranging from the wetlands in the low-lying areas, to open fields and forests. In the natural world, the main factors in establishing plant communities are climate and soil conditions. Temperature, precipitation, humidity, sunlight, and wind determine plant adaptability and hardiness. The availability of water, nutrients and light is also essential.

Approximately 69% of Lanesborough town is forested. In general, most of these forests are relatively young, probably in the general age of being 40-150 years old. Forests that were logged to create farmland, timber and charcoal have been allowed to grow back. The forests that have regenerated are typical northern hardwood forests, largely the birch-beech-maple forest type. Other trees that abundant in the region include ash, white pine, hemlock and spruce.

According to new data developed by the Harvard Forest of Harvard University, there is an indication that some areas of the town were forested during the 1830's, which is a time in the region's history when much of the land was cleared for agriculture. Many of these areas are forested today. Since agriculture generally began its decline during the latter half of the 19th century, it is possible that forests areas documented as existing in 1830 and today have been forested somewhat continually between these years. The intent of this mapping project is to identify forested areas that may have been continuously forested since 1830.

Areas that have been forested almost continuously since 1830 can be considered Primary Forest, which is an older and more complex forest ecosystem than the birch-beech-maple that often succeeds newly abandoned farmland. Primary Forest is not Old Growth, but does occur on untilled soil. Although some areas might have been woodlots that were cut repeatedly and even used for pasture, the sites retain greater native biodiversity, including types of wildflowers, than adjoining areas that were tilled. It is not known if the 1830 forest areas in Lanesborough are Primary Forest, but the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) recommends that such a possibility be researched in order to determine the ecological value of these areas. As noted on the Plant and Wildlife Map, the areas in town where currently forested areas have been documented as being forested in 1830 include the northern slopes of Potter Mountain, Honwee Mountain, and areas around the gravel pit on Old Ore Bed Road. Other areas of potentially continuous forest areas are Savage Hill, an area along Kessler Road and along the southern extent of the Mt. Greylock mountain complex. The NHESP notes that large undeveloped areas suspected of being Primary Forest, such as the areas to the north of Pittsfield State Forest and to the south of Mt. Greylock State Reservation, would be good targets for acquisition or other conservation protection to protect the biodiversity that may exist in these forests due to the limited scope of disturbance that occurred in these areas.

The largest High Elevation Spruce-fir forest in the state occurs on Mt. Greylock and to some extent along the ridgelines that make up this mountainous complex. Although this forest does not extend south to Platt or Farnham's hills, the undeveloped forest of these lower elevations provide a buffer around the rarer high-elevation forest communities near Mt. Greylock. Another important forest area is that along Potter Mountain. These forests protect cold, high-gradient brooks that provide significant habitat for salamanders, and migrating and breeding birds.

In addition to forested plant communities, Lanesborough hosts large open fields. Some of these fields continue to be used for crops or hay production, while others are used primarily for pasturing livestock. These agricultural fields support a variety of grasses and wildflowers, some of which are rare.

The Lanesborough Tree & Forest Committee conducts several activities throughout the year to educate residents and school children about the importance of trees in the landscape. They also work with the Tree Warden to maintain the health of the trees on municipal lands. Since its inception in 2003, the committee has received several grants, planted several young public trees and held a number of workshops on the proper maintenance of trees. The committee has provided funds to maintain the Champion Elm and has recently embarked upon new efforts to promote heritage trees in the town. In 2005 the Committee collaborated with the Berkshire Natural Resources Council and the Historical Commission to procure a historic marker for the site of the Constitution Oak.

The Tree & Forest Committee hopes to establish a tree-holding nursery on the Lanesborough Fire & Water District's land. This nursery will eventually provide replacement trees for town use and be a source of trees for an Adopt-a-Tree program. Grant funds are currently being sought to support this effort. Other future projects of the Committee include the adoption of a Town Tree Bylaw, a Treescaping program, and pursuit of a line-item for the annual town budget.

Rare, threatened and endangered plant species

The wetlands on the western side of Swamp Road are known to harbor two rare plants. These wetlands are hydrologically connected to the wetlands on the eastern side of the road, which supports the Black-Ash-Red-Maple Tamarack wetland community. In addition, the Kelly property on the west side of Route 7 is known to harbor a rare plant community.

The complete list of rare plant species that are known to have historically existed in Lanesborough is found in Table __. The NHESP lists rare species by the category, and the definitions for each category is as follows: "Endangered" (E) species are native species which are in danger of extinction throughout all or part of their range, or which are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts, as documented by biological research and inventory. "Threatened" (T) species are native species which are likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future, or which are declining or rare as determined by biological research and inventory. "Special concern" (SC) species are native species which have been documented by biological research or inventory to have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked, or which occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become threatened within Massachusetts. None of the rare plants are federally listed as endangered. These definitions related to both rare plants and animals.

Table __. List of Rare and Endangered Plant Species.

Scientific Name	Common Name	State Rank	Most Recent Observation
<i>Amelanchier bartramiana</i>	Bartram's Shadbush	T	1988
<i>Asplenium ruta-muraria</i>	Wall-rue Spleenwort	T	1997
<i>Carex hitchcockiana</i>	Hitchcock's Sedge	SC	1987
<i>Carex schweinitzii</i>	Schweinitz's Sedge	E	1995
<i>Carex tetanica</i>	Fen Sedge	SC	1988
<i>Clematis occidentalis</i>	Purple Clematis	SC	1997
<i>Eleocharis intermedia</i>	Intermediate Spike-sedge	T	1986
<i>Equisetum scirpoides</i>	Dwarf Scouring-rush	SC	1991
<i>Myriophyllum verticillatum</i>	Comb Water-milfoil	E	2002
<i>Ophioglossum pusillum</i>	Adder's-tongue Fern	T	1984
<i>Panicum philadelphicum</i> ssp. <i>gattingeri</i>	Gattinger's Panic-grass	SC	1915
<i>Platanthera dilatata</i>	Leafy White Orchis	T	1907
<i>Potamogeton strictifolius</i>	Straight-leaved Pondweed	E	2002
<i>Ranunculus pensylvanicus</i>	Bristly Buttercup	T	1916
<i>Rosa acicularis</i>	Northern Prickly Rose	E	2004
<i>Sagittaria cuneata</i>	Wapato	T	1991
<i>Sanicula odorata</i>	Long-styled Sanicle	T	1990
<i>Symphotrichum prenanthoides</i>	Crooked-stem Aster	T	2004

Waldsteinia fragarioides	Barren Strawberry	SC	1988
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Source: <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhesp/townl.htm#Lanesborough>.

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

General Inventory

Due to the variety of plant communities, Lanesborough is blessed with a vast array of wildlife. Animals that prefer forested areas, such as grey fox, fishers, porcupines and pileated woodpeckers are once again living in the region. Animals that take advantage of both forest and field, the ecosystem considered “edge habitat,” such as black bear, white-tailed deer and turkey, are flourishing. Birds, such as bluebirds, cardinals, Canada geese and vultures are expanding their range northward and have become more abundant. Bald eagles and ospreys have been at Pontoosuc Lake.

Fishing opportunities in Lanesborough are plentiful. During the last thorough survey of the lake, conducted in 1978, the Mass. Department of Fish & Game found 14 fish species present: yellow perch, white perch, largemouth bass, golden shiner, bluegill, white sucker, pumpkinseed, rock bass, black crappie, rainbow trout, chain pickerel, yellow bullhead, common shiner and brown trout. The trout are the result of annual spring stockings. A 2000 water quality study also stated that brook and rainbow trout can also be found the lake. Fish & Game has been regularly stocking the lake with tiger muskellunge (muskies) since 1980. These fish are stocked at 3-12" and require up to 5 years to attain the 28" minimum legal length. Northern pike are also present, and the natural reproduction of pike has been confirmed. While there is interest in the trout and the heavily fished largemouth bass population, the lake’s biggest claim to fame is its ability to consistently produce large tiger muskies.

Cheshire Reservoir is also a popular fishing lake. Like Pontoosuc Lake, the last thorough survey was conducted in 1978, at time nine species were recorded: largemouth bass, yellow perch, pumpkinseed, bluegill, rock bass, black crappie, brown bullhead, white sucker and golden shiner. Chain pickerel and northern pike are also known to be present. The reservoir has a reputation for its abundance of largemouth bass and yellow perch, and for producing large northern pike. According to a July 5, 2006 article in the North Adams Transcript, local fishermen have expressed a concern about the decline of the fish population in the reservoir. Although the decline has not be studied in any detail, the fishermen are concerned that regular herbicide treatment are the cause of the decline.

In addition to the lakes, trout and bass are found in local streams. The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game stock Town Brook with trout in the spring.

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are ephemeral wetlands which fill annually from snowmelt, rain and the rising groundwaters of spring and early summer. Most years the pools completely dry out by mid-to-late summer (Kenny & Burne, 2000). The wet-dry cycle prohibits fish from becoming

established, but it can support an array of small creatures with a seasonal home. Many woodland amphibians and reptiles need both aquatic and terrestrial habitats to complete their lifestyles, and numerous species have evolved life cycles that exploit the temporary nature of this wetland without the predation of fish. For instance, many frogs and salamanders are hatched and live the first weeks of their lives in water. They then move onto land, migrating up to ¼ mile away from the pool, to spend most of their lives in the forest, living in the dampness of the forest floor, under logs and leaf litter (Feder, 2006). They return to the same pool in which they were born to breed and lay their eggs, starting a new generation of forest-dwelling amphibians. In many upland areas, where the nearest wetland or other waterbody is thousands of feet away, vernal pools are the only aquatic breeding grounds in the area. Some of the state's rarest amphibians are completely dependent upon vernal pools for their breeding grounds, including the mole salamanders (Jefferson, spotted, marbled salamanders) and some species of freshwater snails, clams and other invertebrates.

Vernal pools are indispensable to biodiversity, both locally and globally. For a species with a narrow or small distribution, a specific vernal pool may be the only place in the region or on earth that the creature is found. If that pool is destroyed, that specific population of creatures could become locally extinct. Examples exist in the scientific literature of a species identified from one vernal pool, but not found again after the destruction of that pool (Kenney & Burnes, 2000). Because many of the region's rarest amphibians rely completely on vernal pools, it is important to identify vernal pools and prioritize those known to support rare species for protection.

Vernal pools are most often found in the Berkshire Region in woodland areas, where evaporation from sunlight is limited due to the forest canopy. There are two certified vernal pools in Lanesborough, both of them located within The Bolders park. These pools are protected from development. However, there are 57 sites in the town that have been identified as possible vernal pools. As can be seen on the map, the vast majority of these potential vernal pools are located on private property. Efforts to determine if they are vernal pools and if they support rare species should be undertaken, and protection measured for the land surrounding those that are determined to be vernal pools should be investigated. The potential vernal pools are displayed on the Plant and Wildlife Habitat Map.

Wildlife Corridors

In particular, the large undeveloped area of land in the southeastern section of Lanesborough, bordering northeastern Pittsfield and western Dalton, supports the rare Eastern Veined White Butterfly. This unfragmented block of forest, with sunny openings from downed trees, is less than 10 km from known Core Habitats in Windsor and Pittsfield. The forest here is probably a migrating corridor that allows dispersal of young butterflies between these two habitats. Dispersal of young is critical to maintaining a healthy gene pool within the various populations of butterflies, and is therefore critical to the long-term survival of the species in this region. The land in this area is largely unprotected (see the Protected Open Space Map).

Rare, threatened and endangered species

There are several rare animals that have been known to exist in Lanesborough. Many of these animals have not been sighted in several decades. The most recent sighting of a rare animal is the Bridle Shiner, which is located in the headwaters of the Hoosic River Watershed.

The southern tip of the Mt. Greylock range is an extension of an area that support dozens of rare plant populations, as well as habitat for rare butterflies and damselflies, and two very rare songbirds. It is in the lower elevations of the Mt. Greylock range, that Blackpoll and Mourning Warblers are known to breed, one of the few sites within the state. The cold mountain streams support one of the most important areas for the rare Spring Salamanders. This Core Habitat contains forested habitat around the entrance to an important bat hibernaculum (underground overwintering site). Although the habitat of the Mt. Greylock State Reservation is protected from development, the large contiguous areas surrounding the reservation remains unprotected.

Another Core Habitat area is located along the Potter Mountain range, southward into Pittsfield State Forest. This habitat area is characterized by cold, high-gradient streams and springs, which again may support important areas for the Spring Salamander. Lower elevations support Jefferson Salamanders, another amphibian of special state-wide concern. Although not located within Lanesborough, the larger Core Habitat, which runs southwesterly into Pittsfield and Hancock, is known to host an important bat hibernaculum, which is an underground overwintering area. To ensure the survival of the bats in this region, it is therefore important to protect habitat needed by this population.

Another Core Habitat area is located in the southeastern corner of Lanesborough, off Gulf Road. Rare amphibians are found in the mountain streams. The unfragmented forest block that extends from Lanesborough to Dalton and into Cheshire support the rare Eastern Veined White butterfly.

Cheshire Reservoir and the streams that flow into it support a range of rare species, some of which require quiet, heavily vegetated water, and others that require cool, fast flowing waters. Cheshire Reservoir and Berkshire Pond support the Bridle Shiner a rare fish, as well as four rare or uncommon rare aquatic plant species.

The complete list of rare animals known to have historically existed in Lanesborough is found in Table __. An explanation of the State Endangered Rank can be found in the Rare and Endangered Plan Species section of this plan.

Table __. List of Rare and Endangered Animal Species

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	State Rank	Most Recent Observation
Bird	<i>Ammodramus henslowii</i>	Henslow's Sparrow	E	1930
Bird	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>	Sedge Wren	E	1948
Bird	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common Moorhen	SC	1967
Bird	<i>Podilymbus</i>	Pied-billed	E	1946

	podiceps	Grebe		
Bird	Rallus elegans	King Rail	T	1949
Fish	Notropis bifrenatus	Bridle Shiner	SC	1980

Source: <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/nhosp/townl.htm#Lanesborough>.

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

From almost anywhere in Lanesborough you have a view of the hills. Both the main routes through the town, Main Street (Rt. 7) and Cheshire Road (Rt. 8) provide scenic vistas. Mt. Greylock can be seen from several roadways vantage points. Although the scenic resources, such as the lakes and mountain, are well known, the town has lesser-known assets, such as the hidden but numerous caves, waterfalls, and streams and woodlands..

Scenic landscapes

Lanesborough has many areas of aesthetic appeal. Ask most residents what appeals to them about Lanesborough's landscape and you will get similar answers: the hills, the lakes, the pastures and the countryside in general. From almost anywhere in Lanesborough you have a view of the hills. In fact, it is a challenge not to have a hill in the backdrop of any view.

Pontoosuc Lake is probably the most widely acknowledged scenic resource in our town. Driving north from Pittsfield along Route 7 it is the first thing you notice; it is the town's southern gateway. On clear days, Mount Greylock can be seen in the far background. Mount Greylock can also be seen from vantage points on Partridge Road and the Mall Road.

It should be noted also that Lanesborough is the southern gateway to the Mount Greylock Scenic Byway. This is one of five scenic byways that traverse Western Massachusetts. As noted in the *Mount Greylock Scenic Byway Corridor Management Plan*, the panoramic views from the Visitor Center are some of the most picturesque along the byway. The views of expansive rolling open fields give way to views of Pontoosuc and Onota lakes nestled among the hills miles to the south and west. The site offers some of the most incredible sunsets along the Scenic Byway, looking down at the lakes below, set among the twinkling lights of Pittsfield. The views may be enjoyed from the grounds of the Visitor Center in agreeable weather or enjoyed from within the comfort of the center in inclement weather. The plan notes that the pastoral scenery provided by the farms that surround the byway's gateway is an outstanding asset and, unfortunately, vulnerable to residential development. There are interpretive guides at the Center to help you identify the various features that you are viewing, such as the lakes and mountains. The Visitor's Center is reached by traveling on North Main Street, which passes through the Wirtes horse farm and the Garrety cow farm. These farms offer splendid scenery of rural New England farm life, complete with rolling fields, stone walls, old barns and livestock.

The Visitor Center is located on what was once part of the Bradley Farm, one of the early farms of Lanesborough. Interpretive trails, adjacent to the visitor's center parking lot, offer a historical commentary of Bradley Farm. Our farmlands and historic buildings remind us of our rural past.

Their place in the landscape is a big part of the *genus loci* or sense of place that impresses upon residents and tourists. The *Massachusetts Wildlife Viewing Guide*, written by William J. Davis, indicates that the Greylock Reservation is an excellent site for viewing many types of wildlife and unique vegetation. Seeing a fox or deer in an open field, or an eagle or osprey at the top of a tree is always a sight to behold.

Perhaps the most impressive trail in Lanesborough, due to its ease of accessibility and flat terrain, is the Ashuwilliticook Rail Trail. The ten foot wide smooth asphalt path is an old rail corridor that dates to 1845. The Rail Trail runs through the Eastern portion of town starting at the Berkshire Mall's southern most entrance on Route 8. The trail runs parallel to Berkshire Pond and the Hoosac lakes in Lanesborough revealing some of the most beautiful scenery in Berkshire County. The Cheshire Reservoir and associated wetlands are the beautiful foreground offering spectacular vegetation and wildlife while the mountains are the backdrops offering an incredible view.

Other scenic attributes, which are less obvious, are the streams, the waterfalls, and caves, which offer historic relevance, and unique environments. The Berkshire Hills Book, an American Guide Series, points to the hills, the caves, Disappearing Brook and Balance Rock as being places to visit. Berkshire County Landmarks, by Donald Spencer Smith recognizes Coon Cave, Constitution Cave, Baker's Cave, Secum Brook, Daniels and Churchill brooks, Hollow Brook, Wizard's Glen, the Berkshire Spring, as places of interest. It lists the best scenic resources as Old Cheshire Road, Rockwell Road and the views across Berkshire Pond and Cheshire Reservoir. The Mall Road and Partridge Road offer views of Mt. Greylock to the north. There are several small falls in town but Pettibone Fall is probably the most spectacular.

Another important scenic attribute are the historic buildings in town. They offer us a glimpse of our past and provide an architectural flair to the surrounding scenery and are an integral part of the town's landscape. Similarly so do the town's many cemeteries. They also add flavor and history as well as a sense of place.

Residents have indicated, through two town-wide surveys, that they choose to live in Lanesborough because of its natural beauty and the wide open spaces of its landscape. The North Main Street corridor provides a scenic backdrop that is cherished by residents and tourists alike. Rolling farm fields bisected by fast flowing streams provide an open and spacious foreground, while forested hillsides provide a dramatic backdrop. This area has also been identified as a Distinctive Scenic Feature, the highest of the three scenic grades used by state landscape planners in the *Massachusetts Landscape Inventory, A Survey of the Commonwealth's Scenic Areas, 1982*. The Inventory notes that the "vistas are impressive and the mountain scenery is the most picturesque in the Commonwealth" (see the Unique Features Map).

The pastures, the rolling meadows and the foothills are highly regarded as scenic attributes. This may be one of the scenic resources, which is most clearly disappearing. A most recent example is the loss of the farmland on Bailey Road, which will now become many new homes. In order to appreciate these views you need to go no farther than Summer Street. Go to the corner of Old Cheshire Rd and look out over the Strawberry fields or drive down a little farther and look across Windy Hill Farm. Another scenic vista is off Rockwell Rd. These fields are beautiful and

provide necessary habitat and diversity to our ecosystem, and yet these are the lands that are most in jeopardy of being developed and lost for good.

Cultural, archeological and historic areas

There are two sites in Lanesborough that are on the National Register of Historic Places. The first is the St. Luke's Episcopal Church on Main Street, and the second is the Pettibone Farm on Cheshire Road, which is now the site of Camp Mohawk. These properties are shown on the Unique Features Map. **WE NEED A PARAGRAPH OR 2 ABOUT THESE PLACES – THE 2 NATIONAL HISTORIC REGISTER PLACES** There are several other historic buildings and properties, but none of these have any historic designations placed upon them.

Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area

Lanesborough is at the northern reaches of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. According to the new website for a heritage area, it encompasses 29 communities in the hilly terrain of western Massachusetts and northwestern Connecticut, the upper Housatonic Valley is considered by many to be the quintessence of a civilized, independent, and thoughtful retreat. Writers, artists, industrialists and vacationers have visited the region for over 150 years, making it one of the country's leading cultural resorts.

A national heritage area has a distinctive history and geography, nationally important resources, and a story of broad interest to tell. There are 23 designated heritage areas across the country. Though the National Park Service provides technical expertise, the work and success of national heritage areas lies squarely with the citizens of the area.

The National Park Service has conducted a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area. During the development of the study, four major heritage themes emerged:

1. Cultural retreat. the area has a long-standing literary tradition, which in turn attracted America's wealthy industrialists, out of which developed an engrained cultural atmosphere. World renowned music and theater festivals reside among the rich pastoral setting.
2. Shaping a scenic landscape: majestic estates, working farm fields and forested hillsides provide a scenic landscape that marks the region.
3. Cradle of Industry: the iron industry and papermaking, two of America's foremost industries, were located in the area. Also developed here were advances in the use and manufacturing of electrical equipment.
4. Development of Democracy: the area is the home of several important events associated with the American and Civil War efforts for freedom.

As tourist destinations, the Mount Greylock Scenic Byway and the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area designations provide Lanesborough with new opportunities to promote the town as a scenic and historic place. Both designations allow the town to take advantage of

federal grant programs that would fund natural, scenic and historic preservation, and tourism development. In addition, events such as the Heritage Walks that are sponsored by a combination of local funds and National Park Services funds, promote and educate people about the unique characteristics of the region. Several Heritage Walks were conducted in the region in October 2006.

G. Environmental Challenges

All communities are faced with environmental challenges. The act of development, clearing the land of natural vegetation, the disposal of waste, and the use of land inevitably lead to environmental challenges. Whether the issue is protecting wetlands or cleaning up toxic spills these challenges are constant and real.

Hazardous waste sites

Lanesborough hosts one federally-listed hazardous waste site: the F.T. Rose Disposal Pit Superfund Site on Balance Rock Road. This site was used by General Electric of Pittsfield as a disposal pit for waste oils and solvents for years, possibly starting in the 1950s. The disposal site was a trench into which hazardous waste was dumped. PCBs and VOCs are the principal contaminants of concern. In 1988 GE entered into a consent decree with the US EPA to cleanup the site, including excavating surface soils down to the water table. Restrictions have been placed at the site to prevent groundwater useage and future excavation into the saturated soil zones. Contamination continues to exist on the site and monitoring of groundwater continues to be required. Because contaminants continue to reside in the groundwater, potential movement of contamination beyond the site is a continuing concern

Landfills

Lanesborough landfill – capped – monitored

Three auto junk yards in the town. Unknown impacts from spilled petrochemicals, solvents and other vehicle-related chemicals.

Stormwater Runoff

Stormwater runoff. Town tackling problems around Pontoosuc Lake. Concerns about the quality of stormwater being discharged from the Unistress property into Muddy Pond.

Ground and surface water pollution (point and nonpoint)

The Friends of Pontoosuc Lake/Watershed Corporation facilitated an Advisory Group in 2002 to formulate an understanding of the breadth of problems and concerns experienced by lake users and explore alternative feasible management approaches to address identified problems and

concerns. There are multiple lake management concerns for Pontoosuc Lake. These concerns have been prioritized by the Advisory Group and include nuisance aquatic plant and algae control, coordination of management responsibilities, nutrient control, education and outreach, water quality improvement, fisheries, recreational use, and coordination of independent initiatives.

As discussed in the *Pontoosuc Lake Management Plan*, most water quality problem in the lake can be attributed to dense development within the watershed and subsequent increases in sediment, bacterial and nutrient loading through an extensive stormwater drainage system. Thirty-five stormdrain and catch basins have been identified that discharge untreated stormwater and road run off directly into the lake. The stormwater infrastructure within the greater watershed is not currently mapped, but it also discharges untreated stormwater into the tributaries feeding the lake.

A diversity of game fish in Pontoosuc Lake is desirable. Three species of trout as well as the tiger muskies do not appear to maintain reproducing populations. Sportfishermans' associations have in the past, requested that a portion of the lake's aquatic weeds are not harvested during the June harvest to accommodate the fry of reproducing fish populations, especially largemouth bass. Many lake management techniques aimed toward addressing aquatic plants can have negative impacts of fisheries. The Advisory Group determined that drawdown and mechanical harvesting should be conducted in such a way to limit the negative impacts on fisheries at Pontoosuc Lake. There is anecdotal evidence that fish may be lost through the outlet pipe at the dam. The lack of a fish screen at the gatehouse penstock may allow for the stocked fish to pass out of the lake and downstream into the Housatonic River.

The municipal well at Miner Road is the primary public drinking water source in the town. The Bridge Street well is occasionally used, but it does not have the capacity to supply the needs of the District. Although the town enacted a protective overlay district over the recharge area for Town Brook, there are several existing land uses within the district that are potential contamination sources. Route 7 is the major north-south artery in Berkshire County, and it is a major commercial route. Tanks containing petroleum and other toxic chemicals regularly travel the road.

Densely developed neighborhoods around Pontoosuc Lake are served by individual septic systems. Although studies of the lake do not indicate that septic systems are degrading water quality, the high number of systems and their dense concentration on small lots does represent a potential source of pollution. The current sewer line that extends northward from Pittsfield, served by the Pittsfield Wastewater Treatment facility, ends at Bull Hill Road (see the Infrastructure Map).

Invasive Plants

The health of aquatic, wetland and terrestrial plant communities across the region are threatened by the spread of invasive, exotic plants. Pontoosuc Lake, Berkshire Pond and Cheshire Reservoir are all impacted by invasive plants. Invasive, exotic plants often grow profusely and densely, crowding out the native plants that feed wildlife and provide cover for young fish.

Aquatic invasive plant growth is aided when the nutrient phosphorus is present in levels greater than would naturally be occurring.

Invasive plants are described by the Massachusetts Invasive Plants Advisory group as “non-native species that have spread into native or minimally managed plant systems in Massachusetts. These plants cause economic or environmental harm by developing self-sustaining populations and becoming dominant and/or disruptive to those systems.” Lanesborough has burgeoning populations of several of the plants classified as invasive. These plants are inhibiting the growth and regeneration of native hardwood forests, invading the ecosystem of the Pontoosuc watershed and inhibiting the diversity of early successional woodlands. This contributes to the limitation of the economic potential of the affected areas as recreational, scenic and timber producing lands as well as adversely impacting the native ecology.

The densely developed north shore of Pontoosuc Lake in Lanesborough was cited as a major contributor of nutrients to the lake, facilitating the growth of invasive plants within the lake. Phosphorus, the nutrient of main concern, typically enters a waterbody through surface runoff (adhered to sediment) or in a soluble form when leached from fertilizers. To mitigate the input of phosphorus from this area, the Town of Lanesborough, with the support of grant funds from the Mass. Department of Environmental Protection and the EPA, installed stormwater management structures to capture sediment from roads and eroding banks. The phosphorus adhered to the sediment is trapped within the structures, thus decreasing the amount of phosphorus entering the lake from this neighborhood.

There are four species of aquatic plants that have infested Pontoosuc Lake. The species that is most widespread is Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), which in many areas grows to the surface of the water and impedes boats and personal watercraft, and threatens the safety of swimmers. Curly-leaved Pondweed (*Potamogeton crispus*) and European Naiad (*Najas minor*) are also well distributed and dominant in areas of the lake. A pioneer infestation of water chestnut (*Trapa natans*) has recently been detected in the Pontoosuc Lake watershed.



Hand-pulling water chestnut on Pontoosuc Lake.

In 2004 hand pulling removed 250 gallons of Water Chestnuts from the Town Brook inlet area. Another infestation was discovered in the Secum Brook inlet above the Narragansett Avenue causeway, and approximately 400 gallons of weeds were removed. Volunteer hand-pulling efforts are being expanded by the Friends of Pontoosuc Lake.

Source: Friends of Pontoosuc, 2004.

Invasive plant populations are also problematic in terrestrial ecosystems and can be found almost everywhere in Lanesborough. One landowner, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC), was able to remove invasive plants with funding from the MassWildlife Landowner Incentive Program. BNRC owns and maintains the Fletcher Farm on Cheshire Road. Its location between open farmland and thousands of acres of publicly and privately held conservation land including the Chalet WMA, Mt. Greylock State Reservation and Holiday Farm make it important for a diverse array of wildlife. Several of the steeper fields and former orchards had become overwhelmed by invasive species such as thornapple and Japanese barberry. The invasives have been removed and preliminary results are encouraging.

A comprehensive list of invasive plants has been compiled by for the town of Lanesborough. Although not unusual, the list is extensive. It can be found in Appendix ___.

Loss of Undeveloped Land

Although Lanesborough was once predominantly agricultural, it has lost most of its working farms. Lanesborough lost its last wholly contained dairy farm of 125 acres to development in 2005 for \$1.6 million. A largely forested property of 200 acres was sold for \$800,000 in 2006 and subsequently divided into 10 building lots, and a parcel of 1,600 forested acres on Brodie Mountain Road sharing land with Hancock was also recently sold.

It is increasingly difficult for a farm operation to stay in business. Several of the remaining farmers in Lanesborough find that they have few options to continue the farm into the future. Some farmers do not have family that is willing to carry on the operation. As the value of land continues to rise, outside farmers, such as younger and beginning farmers, cannot afford to purchase working farmlands. As a result, farmers reluctantly sell their land for development when they are ready to retire.

Fortunately, a few farms continue to operate in the town. A moderately sized sheep and lamb farm, two small beef operations, two maple syrup producers, several landscape and nursery retailers, an orchard, a strawberry farm, hayfields, privately owned forest stands, farm stands and a regional farmer's market continue to operate in Lanesborough. In addition, a family-run dairy farm remains operating using land in Lanesborough and New Ashford. Local businesses that support the farming community include an equine supply store, a grain business and the town's general store. The Berkshire Mall has recently become the host of the local farmer's market.

SECTION 5 INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

Lanesborough's vast forests, wetlands, fields and meadows, in combination with extensive holdings of publicly owned land comprise protected and unprotected assets. Residents of Lanesborough, and the many tourists who visit the Town year-round, already benefit from the extensive opportunities for passive and active recreation that exist in the State Parks, Wildlife Protection Areas, and private recreational facilities.

A. *Private Parcels of Conservation or Recreational Interest*

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 Lanesborough currently has only three farms participating in this program, totaling 386 acres.

Table __. Agricultural Preservation Restrictions

Site Name / Owner	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection
WIRTES FARM / Robert Wirtes	112.0	N	Permanent
PETRICCA FARM / Robert Petricca	147.8	N	Permanent
COLLINS FARM / Michael Weslowski	126.7	N	Permanent
TOTAL	386.5		

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

Assessor's records indicate 761 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): 761 acres, Chapter 61A (agriculture): 707 acres, and Chapter 61B (recreation): 479 acres. Public access to these properties requires property owner permission.

Table __. Chapter 61, Forestry

Owner	Acreage	Public Access	Level Of Protection
GREYLOCK ESTATES HOMEOWNERS NOM. TRUST	56.25	N	Limited
SKYLINE COUNTRY CLUB INC.	105.86	Y	Limited
PHYLLIS L. TUCKER	598.67	N	Limited
TOTAL	760.78		

Table __. Chapter 61 A- Agriculture

Owner	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection
FARNUMS GOODLIFE CORP	52	N	Limited
CHARLES GARRITY	50	N	Limited
SUSAN & WILLIAM KOZIARA	35.21	N	Limited
HARLEY & ELIZABETH PHELPS	370.85	N	Limited
FRANCES & LAURIE ANN SMITH	14.93	N	Limited
ALEXANDER N DRESCHER REVOCABLE TRUST	10.4	N	Limited
MICHAEL & PEGGY WESLOWSKI	83	N	Limited
ROBERT J. WIRTES	91	N	Limited
TOTAL	707.39		

Table __. Chapter 61 B Lands – Recreation

Owner	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection	Activities
THADDEUS BANNISH	12.7	N	Limited	
CRANE & CO	88.32	Y	Limited	Hiking, wildlife
HAZEL HOLMAN	219.86	N	Limited	
DOUGLAS & MARY MELLE	11.70	N	Limited	
PITTSFIELD SPORTSMAN'S CLUB	115.1	N	Limited	Shooting Sports
ALLEN & ELEANOR YOST	31	N	Limited	
TOTAL	478.68			

Significant Open Space and Recreation Areas

The final category of recreation and open space involves land that is in recreational use but is privately owned. These properties include, among others, the Skyline Country Club (187 acres), Baker Farm Golf (55 acres), Jiminy Peak Ski Area (168 acres), Pittsfield Sportsman's Club (435 acres) and Camp Mohawk (101 acres).

Table __. Privately-owned Significant Open Space & Recreational Properties

Site Name	Owner	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection	Activities
Skyline Country Club	Skyline Country Club	187.8	Y	Limited	Golf
Baker Farm	Baker Farm Assoc.	55.82	Y	None	Mini-golf, driving range
Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort	Jiminy Peak Inc.	168.74	Y	None	Downhill Skiing
Pittsfield Sportsman's Club	Pittsfield Sportsman's	435.5	Y	None	Rifle range, hunting

	Club, Inc.				
Camp Mohawk	Ralph Schulman	101.65	N	Limited	Various water and land based recreational activities
Old US Gypsum Property	Farnums-Goodlife Corporation	424.15	N	None	N/A
Phelps Farm	Harley Phelps	424.85	N	None	Agriculture
Brookside Farm	V. Garrity	108.98	N	None	Agriculture
Garrity Farm	Charles E. Garrity	158	N	None	Agriculture
Constitution Hill Farm	P Moriarity	193.42	N	None	Agriculture
TOTAL		2258.91			

B. Public and Nonprofit Parcels

State-owned Lands

Over 3,300 acres of state land in Lanesborough are permanently protected. The Department of Conservation owns the Mt. Greylock Reservation and Pittsfield State Forest. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife own the Chalet Wildlife Management Area (WMA) comprising about 800 acres in the Gulf Road / Rte 8 section of town. Other smaller WMAs exist in the Scott Rd./Kessler Rd. area. These properties offer a variety of recreational activities including hiking, biking, hunting, camping, fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing. All-terrain vehicles are allowed in Pittsfield State Forest, one of the few state lands that allow these vehicles.

Table --. State-owned Land

Site Name	Manager	Acres	Public Access	Level Of Protection	Activities
BALANCE ROCK STATE PARK	DCR	1,600.0	Y	Permanent	Hiking, biking, XC skiing, snowmobiling
PITTSFIELD STATE FOREST	DCR	454.13	Y	Permanent	Camping, hiking, biking, hunting, XC-skiing, snowmobiling
MT. GREYLOCK RESERVATION	DCR	388.0	Y	Permanent	Camping, hiking, biking, hunting, XC skiing, snowmobiling
CHALET WMA	DFWLE	800.39	Y	Permanent	Hiking, biking, XC-skiing, hunting
ASHUIWILLTICOOK RAILTRAIL	DCR	16.6	Y	Permanent	Walking, biking, rollerblading
SCOTT ROAD	DCR	20.0	Y	Permanent	Wildlife habitat

KESSLER ROAD	DFWLE	88.63	Y	Permanent	Wildlife habitat
TOTAL		3367.75			

Municipal / Public Land

The Town of Lanesborough owns very little conservation land. Only one parcel, the old Zucker property off of Route 7, is permanently protected with a conservation restriction through the Berkshire County Land Trust. Town owned lands not subject to permanent protection include pocket neighborhood parks, and areas for active recreation including the playgrounds at the Lanesborough Elementary School. The Town also owns about 160 acres where the old landfill and gravel pit are located off of Old Orebed Road. None of this property is permanently protected.

Table __. Municipal Land

Site Name	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection	Activities
TOWN HALL/MARK BELANGER PARK	2.9	Y	Limited	Ballfield, basketball, playground
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	13.1	Y	Limited	Ballfields, basketball playgrounds
WAMPATUCK PARK	1.1	Y	Limited	Basketball, playgrounds
TOWN BEACH	.12	Y	Limited	Swimming
OLD REGISTRY	1.0	Y	Limited	
BERKSHIRE SPRING	.60	Y	Limited	Public water supply
LANDFILL/GRAVEL PIT	163	Y	Limited	
CENTER CEMETARY	1.9	Y	Limited	
MOUNTAIN VIEW CEMETERY	5.91	Y	Limited	
TALCOTT CEMETERY	.93	Y	Limited	
PETTIBONE CEMETERY	.39	Y	Limited	
OLD POTTER MTN RD	47	Y	Limited	Outdoor enjoyment
LANESBOROUGH WATER DISTRICT LAND (owned by LVFWD)	51.48	N	Limited	Watershed Protection
TOTAL	289.43			

Other Protected Lands

The Berkshire Natural Resources Council, a local private-nonprofit conservation organization, owns over 600 acres in Lanesborough in three areas, the Fletcher Farm on Old Cheshire Rd., Constitution Hill off Bridge St. and an isolated parcel off Silver St. The Lanesborough Village Fire & Water District also owns over 50 acres in several parcels of land for water supply protection. Crane & Co owns about 88 acres in town that has a permanent conservation restriction through the Massachusetts Dept of Fisheries and Wildlife. This is only a small portion of total protected land owned by Crane; most of their property lies in Dalton.

Table __. Other Protected Land

Site Name / Owner	Acres	Public Access	Level Of Protection	Activities	Use
SILVER ST. / Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC)	179	N	Permanent	Wildlife habitat	Conservation
NESBIT PROPERTY / BNRC	29.65	Y	Permanent	Wildlife habitat	Conservation
FLETCHER FARM / BNRC	180.86	N	Permanent	Agricultural	Conservation
CONSTITUTION HILL / BNRC	251	Y	Permanent	Wildlife habitat, hiking X Country Skiing	Conservation
LANESBOROUGH WATER DISTRICT	51.48	N	Permanent	Water Supply Protection	Water Supply
THE BOULDERS / Crane & Co.	88.32	Y	Permanent	Hiking, biking, X Country Skiing	Conservation / Recreation
ZUCKER PROPERTY	28.6	Y	Permanent	Hiking	Conservation
TOTAL	808.91				

E. Inventory of Public Recreational Opportunities

The following table illustrates the various public recreational opportunities available in Lanesborough. The competitive sports are organized either through the schools or the Lanesborough Recreation Committee. All other activities are available on public lands or, in the case of golf, on privately operated courses.

Table __. Summary of Recreational Opportunities in Lanesborough

	<u>K-8</u>	<u>8-12</u>	<u>Adult</u>	<u>SR.</u>
Basketball	x	x		
Baseball	x	x		
Softball	x	x		
Soccer	x	x		
Football	x	x		
Shooting Sports	x	x	x	x
Bicycling	x	x	x	x
Golf	x	x	x	x

Section 5 Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

Girl Scouts	x	x		
Boy Scouts	x	x		
XC - Skiing	x	x	x	x
Ice Skating	x	x	x	x
Fishing	x	x	x	x
Hunting	x	x	x	x
Camping	x	x	x	x
Hiking	x	x	x	x
Swimming	x	x	x	x
Rollerblading	x	x	x	x
Snowmobiling	x	x	x	x
Jogging	x	x	x	x

DRAFT

SECTION 6 COMMUNITY GOALS

A. Description of Process

As stated in Section 2 of this plan, the Lanesborough Open Space and Recreation Committee was first formed in 2004. This committee was expanded and revitalized in 2006 when the town received a grant from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs to aid in the development of the town's first Open Space and Recreation Plan. This grant enabled the town to hire the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to help them gather natural resource and land use data, create a series of maps and guide the Committee in its quest to develop plan. The Open Space and Recreation Committee actively solicited resident input through two town-wide surveys and two public forums. Goals and possible actions emerged as Committee members reviewed and analyzed the technical data, and as they considered the needs of residents expressed through the surveys and forums.

B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The purpose of this plan is to assess the value of the current open space and recreation areas located within the Town of Lanesborough, identify areas most valued for their natural, scenic and cultural characteristics, and protect those areas where, if lost, would detrimentally affect the quality of life for town residents. Undeveloped land provides recreation, aesthetic enjoyment and vital ecological needs. The overall goal for drafted by the Open Space and Recreation Committee during the development of this plan is as stated:

Lanesborough is a sustainable community, in which growth is both economically viable and environmentally sound.

Out of this overall goal emerged five objectives, which are listed below. Actions to achieve the goal and objectives are listed in Section 9 of this plan.

Goal 1: Protect water resources.

Goal 2: Protect rare and natural wildlife habitats.

Goal 3: Expand recreational facilities.

Goal 4: Preserve the town's historic character.

Goal 5: Create a desirable, attractive environment for residents and businesses alike.

SECTION 7 ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

A. *Summary of Resource Protection Needs*

Protecting the water quality of Pontoosuc Lake and Cheshire Reservoir are major priorities to the Town of Lanesborough, not only for recreational use, but to provide wildlife habitat. The town has shown a strong commitment to water quality through the stormwater management improvements conducted at Pontoosuc Lake. These improvements focused on controlling and treating runoff from densely developed neighborhoods on the north cove of the lake. The town should continue to search for measures that will further improve the situation in this area.

Some residents believe that there are resident bald eagles in Lanesborough. If so, this would be one of only a few known sites in Western Massachusetts. Local environmental advocates should partner with wildlife experts from Mass. Fish & Wildlife, Mass. Audubon to determine if bald eagles are taking up residence in the town. A local birdwatching group, such as the Hoffman Bird Club, could be enlisted to help in this determination. If bald eagles are living and possibly breeding in the region, efforts to protect their habitat should be pursued.

There are several areas in Lanesborough that harbor rare plant communities or rare species, and conservation efforts should focus on protecting these areas from intrusion. The wetland complex on Swamp Road is an exemplary plant community that should be prioritized for protection. This will include protections measures within the watershed contributing flow to the wetlands. The majority of land not protected from development, so town permitting authorities will need to be vigilant in protecting land use and stormwater runoff impacts within the watershed. The rare plant community on the Kelly property would be another conservation focus area.

Lanesborough is fortunate in that it has several parcels of land that have been permanently protected from development, but these parcels are scattered across the landscape. The largest protected areas are the Pittsfield State Forest in the southwest corner of the town, the Chalet WMA in the southeast corner, and the Mt. Greylock State Reservation in the northeast corner. Efforts should be made to create wildlife corridors that connect these protected wildlife areas to allow animals to move from one area to another. Potential areas for conservation corridors can be seen on the Action Map. The bonus of creating natural corridors is that they can also function as recreational corridors for people, creating long-distance wilderness travel areas for those who enjoy spending several hours or days experiencing nature.

B. *Summary of Community's Needs*

As discussed earlier, the Open Space and Recreation Committee distributed two surveys throughout this planning process. Results of the first survey indicated that Lanesborough residents enjoy outdoor activities and value the rural character of the town. Almost 90% of the survey respondents indicated that they enjoy non-motorized activities, including walking, hiking, cross-country skiing and/or mountain biking. More than half the respondents stated that they enjoyed fishing or hunting.

Regarding the need for more playing fields, the majority of respondents did not feel that additional fields were warranted. Overall, the average score indicating a need for additional playing fields was 107, while the average score indicating there was no need for additional fields was 168. However, it should be noted that many of these questions were left blank; the average score for blank answers was 96, only slightly lower than the average affirmative score.

When asked to indicate their top five recreation choices, respondent choices were varied. Of the 17 recreational choices provided, none received higher than a 12% rating. The highest scoring choices were hiking trails and biking trails, each receiving 12% of the votes. The next recreational choices that were popular were one big park and a recreation center, each receiving 9% of the votes, and picnic areas and a senior center, each receiving 8% of the votes.

Regarding residential development, 168 respondents would like to see less development, while 113 respondents would like to see more development. Regarding commercial/industrial development, 166 respondents would like to see less development, while 116 would like to see more development.

Between 2004-2005 the Open Space and Recreation Committee collected data and met sporadically. However, due to the busy schedules of the members, the development of the Open Space and Recreation Plan faltered. In 2006, the Town of Lanesborough, in cooperation with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC), received a Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant from the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. This grant allowed the Open Space and Recreation Committee to hire the BRPC as a consultant to aid in the development of the plan. The Committee was expanded to include a broader representation of town interests, including representatives from the Lanesborough Planning Board, the Town Administrator's office, the Council on Aging, the Friends of Pontoosuc, and additional interested citizens.

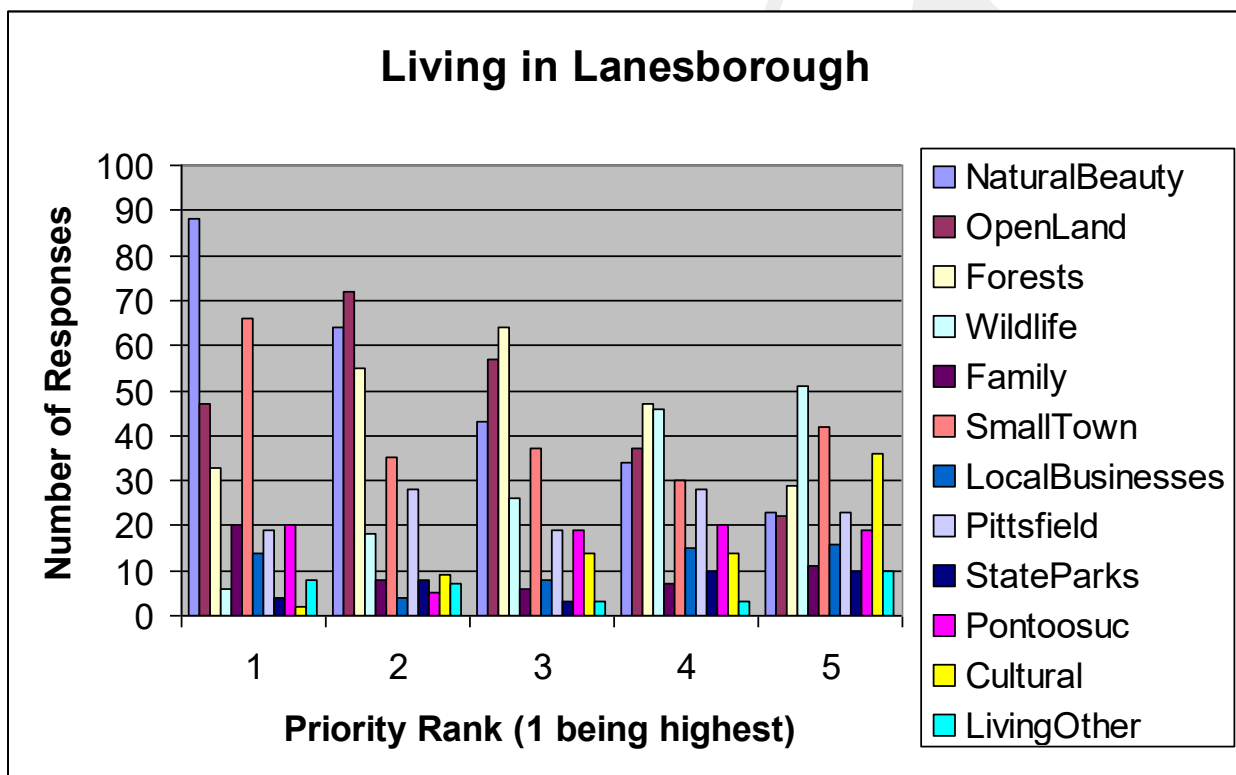
As a result of the Smart Growth grant and the newly expanded Open Space and Recreation Committee, work on the plan began in earnest. In March 2006, the Committee distributed a follow-up survey, the intent of which was to augment the information gathered in the first survey. The intent of the second survey was to understand residents' needs and desires in more detail, asking them to prioritize the improvements that they thought were needed for Lanesborough. In addition, the survey gathered demographic information about the households responding to the survey, so that needs arising from certain age groups or neighborhoods could be identified. Finally, it was designed to gauge residents' knowledge of conservation tools and the level to which they might commit to protecting open space in the town.

The approximately 1,450 surveys were sent to all Lanesborough residents, including property owners and renters. A total of 356 surveys were returned. The survey asked residents to rank the top five characteristics of Lanesborough that they enjoyed the most, with the #1 being the highest rank. The category that residents ranked overall as the characteristic they enjoyed most about the town was "Natural Beauty of the Landscape." This category received the greatest cumulative number of votes (a total of 252), as well as the most #1 votes (88). Other categories that received high cumulative scores were "Open Land and Views", which received 235 votes and "Forests and Mountains," which received 228 votes. When looking strictly that those

categories that received a high number of #1 votes, “Small Town Atmosphere (66 #1 votes)” and “Open Land and Views,” (47 #1 votes) also rated high. See Table __ below for a summary.

JACK HICKEY FEELS THAT THE FOLLOWING TABLES ARE TOO BUSY. HE SUGGESTS THAT THEY BE LIMITED TO THE TOP 3 VOTE-GETTERS. I AGREE THAT THEY ARE BUSY, BUT I ALSO FEEL THAT THE TABLES SHOULD INCLUDE ALL THE DATA PROVIDED IN THE SURVEY. WE ASKED RESIDENTS TO RATE THE TOP 5 CATEGORIES IN ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS. THE OS&R COMMITTEE SHOULD DECIDE THE FORMAT.

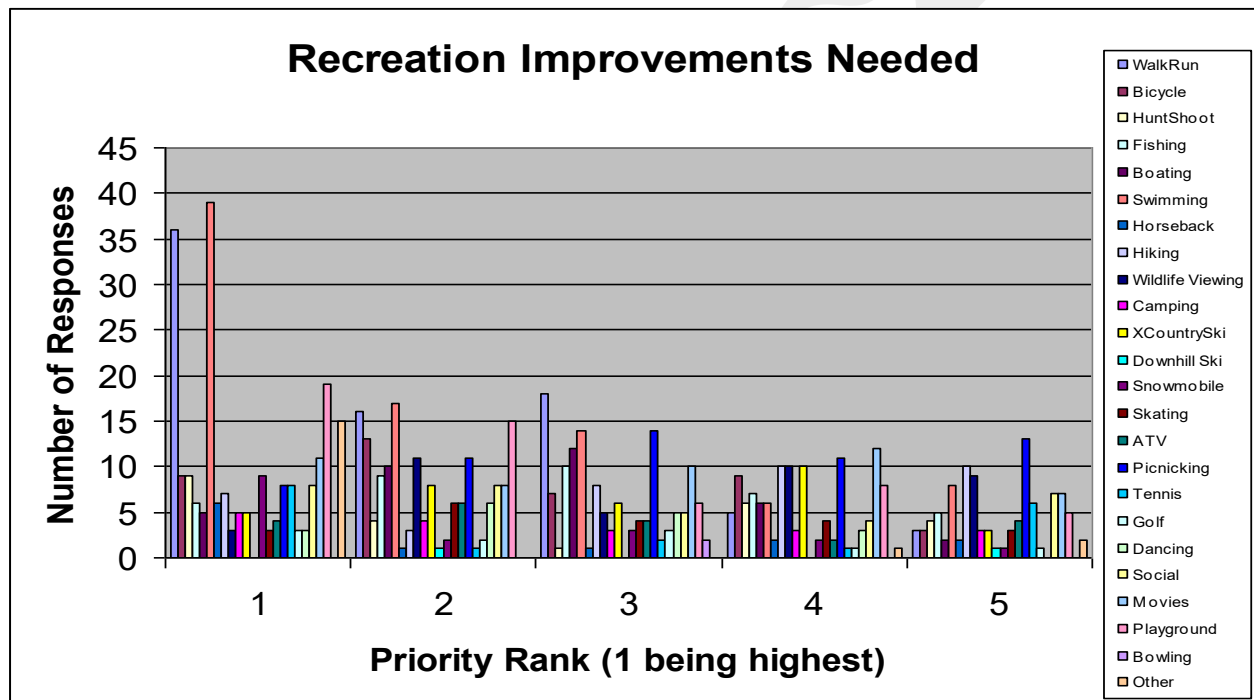
Table __. Question: What characteristics about Lanesborough do you enjoy the most? List top 5 characteristics.



Similar to the results of the first survey, the most widespread recreational activity that Lanesborough residents participate in is walking and/or running (81% of respondents). Other activities that were cited often were bicycling (54%), movies/concert/plays (51%), wildlife viewing (48%) and hiking (45%). Also in the second survey respondents were asked specifically to choose the top five recreational activities that needed improvement in the town. Surprisingly, swimming was rated at the recreational activity that was cited as needing the most improvement. Swimming received the greatest number of cumulative votes (84), and it was rated as the #1 activity need improvement, with 39 votes. Walking/running was the second-most needed recreational improvement, with a cumulative vote of 78 and a #1 priority vote of 36. These findings are fairly consistent with the participation rates cited for the Berkshires in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) of 2000. Playgrounds were the third recreational activity that was cited as needing improvement. See Table __ for the full results.

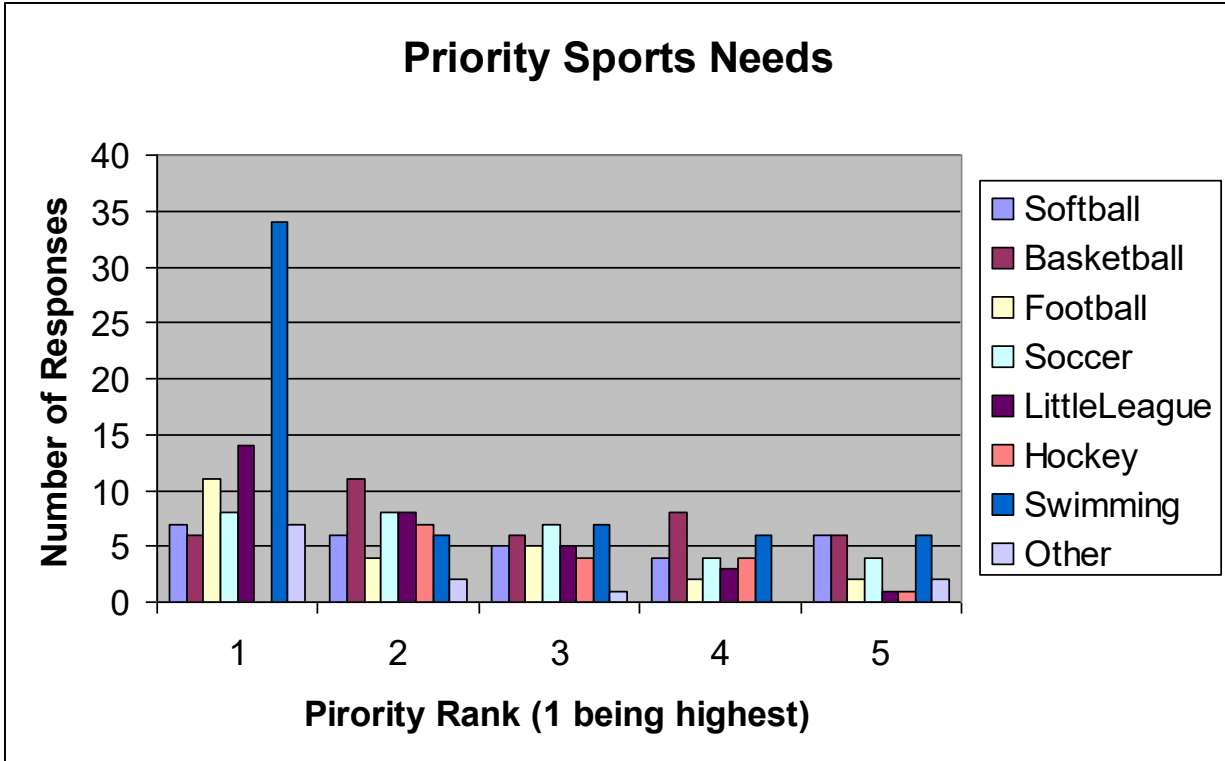
Lanesborough is fortunate in that new sidewalks are being constructed as part of the reconstruction of Route 7 (Main Street). A sidewalk will be extended from the Town Hall southward to the Pittsfield city line. The sidewalk will run along the east side of the street from the Town Hall to Putnam Rd. At that point it will switch to the west side of the street to the Post Office plaza. Then the sidewalk will cross to the east side of the street all the way to the Pittsfield City line. This will connect with the side walk along Pontoosuc Lake. This is a welcome step towards creating a more vibrant town center and providing safe pedestrian access to the lake and points south.

Table __. Question: Please indicate if you think facility improvements are needed in Lanesborough. List top 5 improvements.



Residents were asked again in the second survey if they felt that the town needed to improve facilities and/or fields for team sports. Echoing the first survey, response was low to these questions. Only 13% of respondents answered this section of the survey. Of those, the sport that perceived as needing the greatest improvement was swimming, which had a cumulative number of 59 votes, and 34 #1 votes. This is consistent with the SCORP findings for the Berkshires. The results of the survey contrast the stated needs by the Lanesborough Recreation Committee, which runs several team sports programs. According to the Recreation Committee, the existing playing fields are inadequate, both in number and in their dimensions (refer to Section 3, Infrastructure). Fortunately, the town has recently accepted a donation of on the old drive-in site for the purpose of creating athletic fields. The town will be searching for grant funds to support the design and construction of the field complex.

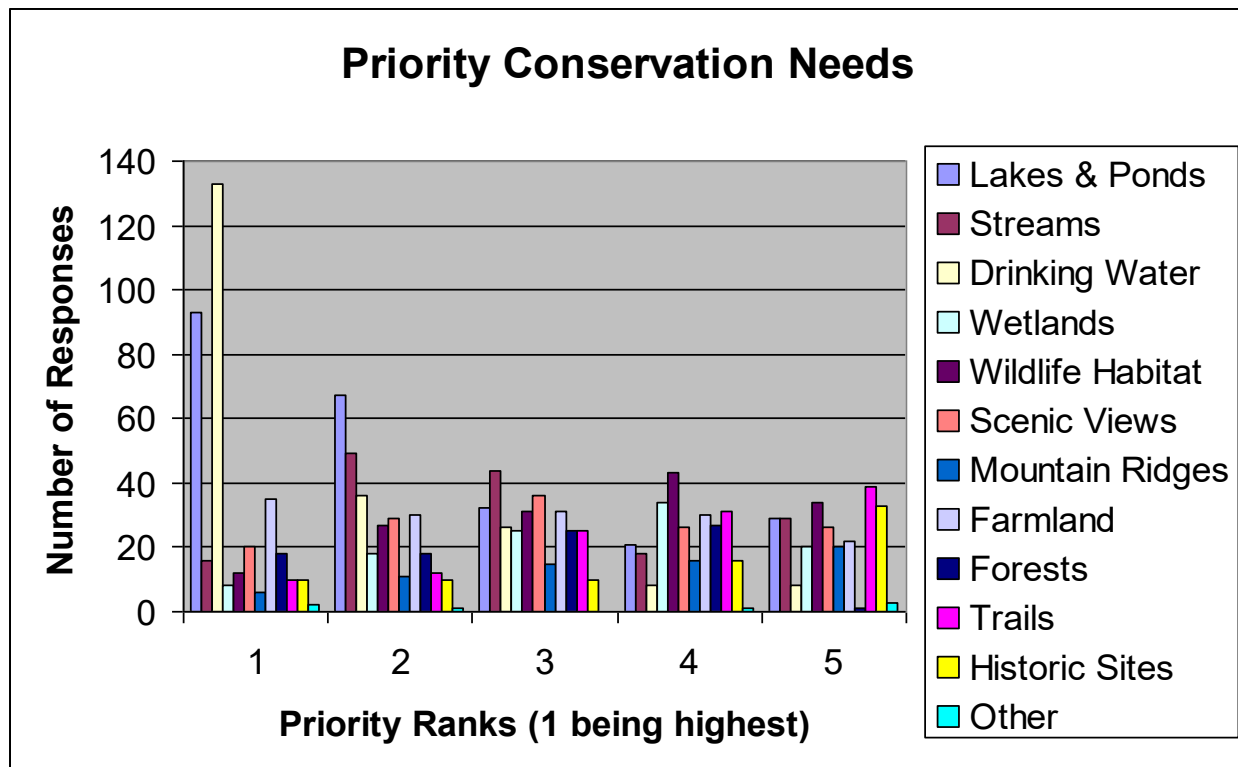
Table __. Question: Please indicate if you think facility improvements are needed in Lanesborough [for team sports]. List top 5 improvements.



Survey respondents indicated that the recreational needs of specific groups were not being met. Most specifically, respondents indicated that the recreational needs of teenagers was not being met. Of the 221 responses regarding teenagers, 164 (74%) felt that teenagers’ recreational needs were not met. Comments relating to this question often cited that teenagers had no place to congregate, meet and conduct activities in a safe and chaperoned/monitored environment. The mall was often cited as local teenagers’ gathering place, and this place was not seen as the desirable place for such activities. Many respondents requested a community center to meet the needs of the teenagers. In addition to teenagers, 65% felt that recreational opportunities are not adequate for the disabled (89 out of 136 responses).

Next, the survey asked residents to rank conservation needs for Lanesborough. The category that received the most overall votes was “Lakes and Pond,” with a cumulative number of 242 votes, and 93 #1 votes. However, the category that received the most #1 votes, at 133, was “Drinking Water.” There are two categories, “Scenic Views” and “Farmland,” that received respectable scores, with relatively high numbers of votes being cast across the 1 through 5 ranking system. This mirrors the results of a previous question, where residents ranked the natural beauty and openness of Lanesborough as high priorities.

Table, __. Question: Rank the top five areas in which you think Lanesborough should make efforts to protect or preserve.



Finally, to determine residents’ knowledge of open space protection strategies, the survey asked residents to indicate which strategies or tools they were aware of. As can be seen in Table __, the vast majority of respondents are unaware or unfamiliar with typical conservation strategies available to the local landowners and/or the Town of Lanesborough. This table indicates a great need for outreach and education.

Table __. Question: Are you aware of any of the following programs or options to protect agriculture, forestry, recreation or scenic areas?

Program or option	Yes	No
Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program	76	194
Mass. General Laws Chapter 61 (forest tax classification)	54	207
Mass. General Laws Chapter 61A (agricultural tax classification)	61	203
Mass. General Laws Chapter 61B (recreation tax classification)	34	218
Conservation Deed Restriction	53	207
Local Land Trust	60	202
Berkshire Scenic Mountains Act	37	216
Community Preservation Act	24	219

DISCUSS THE NEEDS FOR DISABLED RESIDENTS HERE. CONDUCT A SURVEY TO SEE IF TOWN PARKS ARE ADA ACCESSIBLE & DISCUSS FINDINGS HERE.

C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

Drinking Water Protection

The Town Brook watershed is the recharge area for the two municipal drinking water wells. The aquifer is susceptible to contamination from an accidental hazardous materials spill along Route 7, or from spills occurring on properties within the recharge area. The petroleum leak from the Mobile gas station is a sample of what can occur to threaten the drinking water supply. The town has adopted a Water Supply Protection district that restricts the types of land use activities that can occur within the recharge area. However, hazardous material storage and handling activities that predated the bylaw still occur within the district, and commercial traffic along Route 7 continues to increase. Therefore, it would be prudent for the Fire & Water District and the town, partnering with MassHighway and the Berkshire Haz Mat Team, to develop a hazardous spill and response plan. Training exercises to test the effectiveness of the plan should be conducted as a follow-up to the plan. The training could be conducted as a regional response exercise and could possibly be supported by grant funds from the Western Region Homeland Security Council. It would also be prudent to continue to explore the development of a deep set well in the Bull Hill Road area, as this well would be less susceptible to contamination from Route 7.

Stormwater Management

Continue to implement Stormwater Management Plan. **INSERT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM STORMWATER PLAN HERE**

Land Use

The scenic qualities of the Main Street / Route 7 corridor are being challenged by commercial sprawl. This trend occurs while at the same time storefronts sit empty in the town center. At the present time the town center is comprised of four zones, leading to confusion and inconsistent development.

Existing zoning bylaws facilitate and actually encourage development in this manner, whereas in-filling would be more appropriate. The town center currently has vacant areas where there are non-conforming lots which could be efficiently utilized in the presence of more contemporary zoning. This has led to empty storefronts and underutilized space in an active part of town. Another example of current zoning conflicts in the town center is the presence of business zoning on the west side of Main Street, which is primarily in the flood plain, whereas the eastern side of Main Street is zoned for neighborhood business not allowing for retail establishments.

The current zoning bylaws and map were drafted in 1965. Redevelopment of the town center is constrained by outdated and unrealistic lot sizing and areas are now deserted due to their non-conforming status. Although some bylaw amendments have occurred, most notably the Water Supply Protection District in the 1980s and a Wireless Communications Facilities bylaw in the 1990s, the substance of the bylaws have changed little since 1965. A new Smart Growth Technical Assistance Grant will allow the town to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing zoning bylaws and map, and to identify inconsistencies, discrepancies, deficiencies, and non-conformity with Mass. General Laws and current land use decisions. A land use attorney will recommend changes that will clearly identify what the deficiency or needed improvement is,

explain the nature of the deficiency, and explain how the recommendation addresses the issue.

At this time the Planning Board expects to rezone the town center so that it creates a uniform development strategy, encouraging redevelopment of existing structures to for Mixed Use, and allowing flexible infilling of vacant lots. The amendments also expect to include an improved Site Plan Review and Approval process.

Many residents of Lanesborough, through the public participation process conducted as part of this plan, have recently expressed concern that inappropriate development on hillsides and ridgelines could detract from the scenic and rural character of the town. The Planning Board and Conservation Commission should partner to investigate upland protection options, including an Upland Protection Area or the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act.

Amending bylaws and regulations are often difficult challenges in small communities like Lanesborough, where protection of private property rights runs strong. Public outreach is essential to successful passing of new bylaws and regulations, so the town should take every opportunity to engage local residents, business leaders and town officials throughout the development of these amendments.

Invasive Plant Control

The existence of invasive plant species in Lanesborough has been cited as a concern. The town should consider holding an invasive plant species awareness workshop. The workshop should target property owners whose land supports known invasive species populations, as well as local nurseries and landscaping businesses. Attendees should be educated about invasive plant populations and how they alter and damage the ecology of the Berkshires. They should also be provided with information on how to remove invasive plants on their land and a list of native plants that can serve as attractive alternatives to replace the invasives that are removed. The new invasive plant species regulations, including the banning of several popular ornamental plants such as Norway maples and Winged Euonymus, should be discussed at the workshops. Partners in the workshop could include the Lanesborough Tree & Forest Committee, the Mass. Department of Agriculture and the Berkshire Botanical Garden. Because invasive plants are an environmental problem within the region, perhaps a series of invasive plant awareness workshops held throughout the county.

Historic Preservation

The historic properties within Lanesborough add a certain charm and décor to the town. These assets, which are privately owned, are scattered across the town and are largely unappreciated. Unfortunately, the Lanesborough Historical Commission is inactive and there is no other group that focuses on historic preservation or promotion. Like rare wildlife species, once these assets are gone, they are gone forever. Town officials should make every effort to revitalize the Historical Commission, the members of which can serve as stewards of the town's historic past and provide aid to owners wishing to preserve their property. A town-wide survey of historic properties should be completed.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) provides technical assistance to local Historical Commissions. MHC offers the "On the Road" program, where MHC's Director of Local Government Programs visits communities, at their request, to discuss local historic preservation issues and offer ways to resolve problems. Once the Historical Commission is reactivated, it should consider developing protective bylaws and regulations, such as a demolition delay bylaw, that would provide the town with the tools to protect the remaining significant historic properties from inappropriate development or demolition. The Commission should also approach owners of significant historic properties about the possibility of placing Preservation Restrictions upon their structures. If a willing partner is found who can pay the owners to place the restriction on the structures, it may help them fund necessary restoration efforts.

Grant programs offered by MHC and the Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit should be promoted. Under the tax program, a certified rehabilitation project on an income-producing property is eligible to receive up to 20% of the cost of certified rehabilitation expenditures in state tax credits. There is an annual cap, so there are selection criteria that ensure the funds are distributed to the projects that provide the most public benefit. The MHC certifies the projects and allocates available credits.

SECTION 8 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives listed herein emerged during the development of the Lanesborough Open Space and Recreation Plan. These goals and objectives emerged from the collection and analysis of data, from the results of the public surveys and forums, and after carefully considering the possible actions that could address outstanding challenges and issues.

Overall goal:

Lanesborough is a sustainable community, in which growth is both economically viable and environmentally sound.

Five objectives emerged from the drafting of the major open space and recreation goal. The actions to accomplish these objectives and, hence, the goal, can be found in Section 9, the Five-year Action Plan. Although the completion of all the actions is an unrealistic expectation, each one should be considered and, where chances for success are reasonable, attempted during the coming five years.

Objective 1: Protect water resources

Objective 2: Protect rare and natural wildlife habitats.

Objective 3: Expand recreational facilities

Objective 4: Preserve the town's historic character

Objective 5: Create a desirable, attractive environment for residents and businesses alike.

SECTION 9 FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN

Overall goal: Promote a sustainable Community which is both economically viable and environmentally sound.

Goal 1: Protect water resources

Objective	Action	Timing	Responsible Parties
Protect Town Brook and the town's municipal drinking water supply	Increase municipal water storage capacity	2008-09	Fire & Water District
	Develop an alternate water supply source which has the capacity to serve the District needs and is less susceptible to contamination than the existing wells. The Bull Hill site is the most promising option.	Ongoing	Fire & Water District
	Develop a response and spill control plan for the Rt 7 corridor; follow this up by conducting training exercises	2007-09	Fire & Water District, Lanes. Emergency Management Director, Lanes. DPW, MassHighway, Berk. Haz Mat Team
Protect groundwater	Develop a flyer to remind residents to pump out septic systems; mail this flyer in tax bill	2007	Bd Health, Tax Collector
Involve residents in environmental protection	Educate landowners on how their activities affect surface and groundwater quality and quantity	2007-08	Bd Health, Cons Com, Friends of Pontoosuc Lake
	Educate waterfront property owners about the importance of maintaining shoreline vegetation along lakes and streams	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, Cons. Com
	Continue to bring Housatonic Valley Assoc (HVA) into the school system for environmental education	2007-09	Friends of Pontoosuc, HVA, Lanesborough Elem. School
	Increase number of household hazardous material collection	2007-10	Town Admin, North Berk. Solid Waste District

Section 9 Five Year Action Plan

	days		
	Encourage waterfront property owners to maintain vegetation along the shoreline	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, Cons Com
Protect Pontoosuc Lake	Consider extending the sewer to the Pontoosuc Lake neighborhoods	2008	Sewer Commission, Friends of Pontoosuc
	Continue to identify and control stormwater discharges into the lake	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, DPW, Select Bd
	Monitor and control aquatic invasive species	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, Lanes. & Pittsfield Cons Coms
	Work with MassHighway to reduce road runoff into the lake from Rt 7	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, DPW, MassHighway
	Investigate the possibility of establishing a low-salt area on Rt 7 along Town Brook	2007-09	Fire & Water District, MassHighway
	Support projects that reduce and control pollution in the lake's watershed	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, Select Bd, Cons Com, Town Admin
Protect Cheshire Reservoir	Partner with the Town of Cheshire and the DCR to control invasive aquatic plants	Ongoing	Lanes. & Cheshire Select Bd, Cheshire Lake Conservation/Preservation District
	Prepare a Diagnostic & Feasibility Study for the reservoir's 2 upper ponds	2007-08	Select Bd, Cons Com, Cheshire Lake Conservation/Preservation District
Continue to control stormwater runoff	Continue to implement and update the Lanesborough Stormwater Management Plan, including an Illicit Discharge & Detection Elimination Study	2008-09	Select Bd, Town Admin, DPW
	Support HVA's and Friends of Pontoosuc educational programs, including stormdrain stenciling	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, HVA, Cons Com
	Upgrade the Sediment and Erosion Control bylaw	2008	Planning Bd
	Develop a Construction Erosion Control bylaw	2008	Planning Bd

Goal 2: Protect rare and natural wildlife habitats.

Objective	Action	Timing	Responsible Parties
Protect rare species and exemplary plant Communities	Protect the wetland complex in Swamp Road / Partridge Road area by ensuring that development in the area does not negatively impact water quality or flow to the wetland	Ongoing	Cons Com, Plan Bd
	Determine the presence of resident bald eagles and secure their habitat	Ongoing	Cons Com, Mass. Audubon, Hoffman Bird Club
	Work with the property owners to maintain the health of the Champion Elm	Ongoing	Tree & Forest Committee (Tree & For Com)
	Work with Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and landowners to expand the boundaries of the Mt. Greylock State Reservation and Pittsfield State forest	Ongoing	Select Bd, DCR
	Pursue land conservation efforts surrounding The Boulders for rare species protection	Ongoing	Select Bd, Crane & Co., Berk. Natural Resources Council
Reduce and control invasive plant populations to preserve biodiversity and resilience of the town's natural assets.	Conduct workshops to educate landowners, nurseries and landscaping businesses about invasive plants	2007-09	Cons Com, Tree & For Com, Mass. Dept. of Ag
	Continue to support aquatic invasives control projects in the Pontoosuc Lake and Cheshire Reservoir watersheds	Ongoing	Friends of Pontoosuc, Cons Com, Select Bd, DCR
Protect vernal pools	Enroll volunteers to identify and certify vernal pools in town	2008-10	Cons Com, Mass. Audubon

Goal 3: Expand recreational facilities

Objective	Action	Timing	Responsible Parties
Pursue the construction of a Senior/Community Center	Establish a Senior/Community Center Study Group (Center Study Grp) to steer development of the center	Immediately	Select Bd, Recreation Committee (Rec Com), Council on Aging

Section 9 Five Year Action Plan

	Hold public forums to determine the needs and desires of residents	2007	Select Bd, Center Study Grp, School Committee
	Pursue funding for the planning and construction of the Community Center	2008-10	Select Bd, Center Study Grp
Expand swimming opportunities	Create a town park or beach on Pontoosuc Lake	2007-10	Select Bd, Rec Com, Friends of Pontoosuc
	Consider including a swimming facility at a future Community center	2008-10	Rec Com, Council on Aging
Expand walking/hiking/biking opportunities	Create a trail linking Pittsfield State Forest, the landfill and Constitution Hill	2008+	Rec Com
	Work with the Town of Dalton to pursue a link between the Boulders and the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail	2008-10	Rec Com, Dalton Open Space & Recreation Committee, Berk. Bike Path Council
	Pursue bike/pedestrian trail linking central Lanesborough to the Ashuwillticook, including the construction of a bike lane on the Mall Road when it is redone	2009+	Rec Com, Select Bd, DPW, MassHighway, Berk. Mall
	Continue to construct new or improved sidewalks during road improvement projects	Ongoing	Select Bd, DPW, MassHighway
Transform the former drive-in property into a public recreational area	Determine property suitability and limitations for playing fields and possible walking track and pavilion	2007	Rec Com, Council on Aging
	Pursue funding and solicit volunteer efforts to construct the fields, track and pavilion	2007-09	Rec Com, Select Bd
	Create network of trails if possible	2010	Rec Com
	Work with MassHighway to construct a sidewalk to the new site to the downtown area	Ongoing	Select Bd, DPW, MassHighway

Goal 4: Preserve the town’s historic character

Objective	Action	Timing	Responsible Parties
Protect historic buildings	Invite Mass. Historical Commission (MHC) to conduct an “On the Road” visit to Lanesborough	2007	Historical Commission (Hist Com), MHC
	Revisit and update the inventory of historic properties in the town	2008-09	Hist Com
	Identify the most significant historic properties and pursue National Historic Register designations	2009-10	Hist Com
	Work with owners of historic buildings to investigate possibility of placing a Preservation Restriction on their buildings	2010	Hist Com
Remind residents that historic preservation is important to the character of Lanesborough	Create a Sense of Place by highlighting unusual or beloved historic properties in local publications	2009	Hist Com
	Create a Sense of Place by emphasizing local history in the school curriculum	Ongoing	Hist Com, Lanes. Elementary School
	Educate owners of historic properties about the tax incentives and grant programs available to them for maintaining the historic character of their properties	2008-09	Hist Com, MHC, Town Admin
Promote Lanesborough’s inclusion in the Upper Housatonic River National Heritage Area	Partner with neighboring towns and organizations to conduct Heritage Walks that highlight the town’s heritage	Ongoing	Hist Com, Cons Com, HVA
	Distribute publications about the area and its designation	2009	Hist Com
	Pursue funding to conduct projects consistent with the goals of the Heritage Area Plan	Ongoing	Town Admin

Goal 5: Create a desirable, attractive environment for residents and businesses alike.

Objective	Action	Timing	Responsible Parties
Encourage responsible development patterns	Develop bylaws that encourage business development in the town center, including redefining industrial/Commercial zones, encouraging in-fill	2007-10	Planning Bd, Zoning Bylaw Study Group
	Investigate upland protection bylaws, including upland zoning or Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act	2008-09	Planning Bd, Cons Com
	Update existing bylaws & subdivision regs. to encourage developers to set aside portions of their land for open space purposes	2007-09	Planning Bd
	Investigate development of a Best Development Practices Guidebook for developers, perhaps using the Town of Franklin's as a model	2007	Planning Bd, Cons Com, Select Bd, Town Admin
	Investigate local scenic road bylaw	2008	Planning Bd, Tree & For Com
	Plant shade trees along new sidewalks and bike lanes	Ongoing	Tree & For Com
Promote land conservation	Conduct landowner workshops that educate them about the tax incentive programs available to them	2008	Agricultural Commission (Ag Com), Berk. Natural Resources Council
	Establish a land trust	2009-10	Select Bd, Cons Com
Establish a funding source for future conservation and/or recreation projects	Consider adopting the Community Preservation Act	2008	Select Bd, Rec Com, Cons Com, Hist Com, Town Admin
	Actively pursue grant funds where available	Ongoing	Town Admin, various town boards
Promote and support local agricultural operations	Develop a bylaw that allows the establishment of a farmer's market	2007	Ag Com, Planning Bd
	Support Berkshire Grown in its efforts to advertise and market Lanesborough and other regional farm products	Ongoing	Ag Com
	Promote the available land conservation options, including partnerships, to existing farmers and	Ongoing	Ag Com

	incoming new farmers		
Promote the importance of trees in the landscape	Develop a community tree-management program to create a healthy canopy over the town's roadways	2007	Tree & For Com, DPW, Cons Com
	Educate landowners about the proper care of their trees through flyers and workshops	Ongoing	Tree & For Com, local garden clubs
	Create a tree nursery	2008	Tree & For Com, Fire & Water District
	Create an arboretum at the school	2007-08	Tree & For Com, School Com
	Develop a Town Tree Bylaw	2008	Tree & For Com, Plan Bd

SECTION 10 PUBLIC COMMENTS

This section begins with the survey and its results. We got many written public comments of all types in response to the survey. These responses are all included. The survey was specifically designed to solicit as large a response as possible. We would like to take the time at this point to thank all of the residents that responded to the survey. Your answers were invaluable to our study and we could not have done it without you. The conclusions of this study are very much based on your responses as well as other social factors and environmental factors.

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APPENDICES

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