

OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN for Lee, Massachusetts



January 2016

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

2016 OPEN SPACE & RECREATION PLAN

FOR LEE, MASSACHUSETTS

Acknowledgments

In addition to thoughtful input from members of the public, the Lee citizen Task Force put in many hours of work identifying and exploring the issues and needs of their town, and identifying ways to address these actively. The assistance of all Task Force members is deeply appreciated. Photos in the plan are courtesy of Clare Bunnie Lahey, Dennis Regan and BRPC.

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Section 1

Plan Summary

The *2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan* has been developed with the recognition that protection of open space and provision of recreational opportunities are key ingredients of the quality of life in a community. This Plan defines those elements of Lee's open space areas and



recreation programs and facilities that contribute to its quality of life, and attempts to determine whether the benefits of these are accessible to all of Lee's residents. It also examines how well Lee is doing in terms of protecting these very important features. The Seven-Year Action Plan sets a planning agenda for implementing strategies necessary to meet these goals. Some of the more important findings of this study are that:

1. Lee is changing in many ways: economically, environmentally, and socially. With the sharp decline in manufacturing, Lee has continued to court the tourist trade. While this diversifies the town's economy, the demand for second homes on large lots could threaten scenic and fragile environmental areas.
2. Lee's strong sense of community remains an important defining characteristic. Recreational opportunities and open space contribute to community interaction and quality of life.
3. The Town has an extensive inventory of protected open space including many acres under local, state and federal ownership. However, many important areas remain unprotected or in temporary protection (Chapter 61 lands). Agricultural lands in particular, so important in defining Lee's character, are in danger of being converted to non-agricultural use. Promotion and utilization of long term protective strategies such as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR) and conservation easements, combined with voluntary actions supporting locally grown agricultural products, growth management and development standards could be effective ways to retain these lands.

4. Lee is fortunate to have large tracts of land under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission. Focusing on environmental education and linking protected town lands into an open space system are ways to insure the conservation attributes of the land are met while increasing the use and enjoyment by town residents.
5. Overall, the population is aging, and there is an influx of new cultural groups. Each of these populations has unique recreation needs that must be addressed.
6. Lee is deficient in meeting many of the recreational needs of its population. Particular attention needs to be paid to the development of recreation programs for all age groups and to the maintenance of its facilities, including the provision of modern, safe equipment that is accessible to people with disabilities.
7. Lee is pursuing an active economic development and re-development program. These efforts will allow the community to remain a vital employment center over time - a very worthy comprehensive goal that is important to retaining the historical sense of community. Economic development and re-development efforts must preserve sensitive environmental resources.
8. More development will occur on marginal lands as the town gets closer to buildout. This will bring many environmentally sensitive areas into jeopardy. Much of the Lee landscape is vulnerable because of its geology, soils and topography.
9. Many opportunities to broaden existing and future resource offerings and assets will require cooperative efforts. This plan and other related efforts will be successfully implemented only to the extent that these efforts are made both within town and with external entities.

Section 2

Introduction

A. Statement of Purpose

The *2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan* reflects Lee's intent to protect, preserve, and broaden its open space and recreational pursuits. It is the intent of this Plan to build upon

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

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

B. Planning Process and Participation

Lee conducted an open space planning process in 2000. A draft plan was substantially complete in 2000 but was never formally submitted for approval. Building partially upon the 2000 planning effort, this *Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan* was developed in 2015-16 by the Lee Open Space and Recreation Task Force (Task Force), led by the Lee Youth Commission and the Conservation Commission and prepared by the Town Administrator's office. The



Berkshire Regional Planning Commission served as technical advisors to the Task Force gathering relevant data and preparing the planning documents. The Task Force was comprised of interested citizens and representatives of the Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and the Lee Land Trust, with consultation provided by the Historical Commission, Public Works Department and Recycling Committee.

The needs assessment component of the plan consisted of a review of current census data, an updated recreation and open space survey and feedback from key stakeholders and other knowledgeable citizens. The public survey, filled out by 225 residents and returned to the Task Force, provided detailed information on the open space and recreational needs of people of all ages in the community. The survey was made available to the public through paper copies and via the internet. To inform residents and increase participation, town officials announced at Annual Baby Town Meeting that the survey was available and encouraged residents fill them out and return them. The survey results and a summary report can be found in Appendix C of this plan.

The Task Force met four times during the months of May through July 2015, taking time at each meeting to discuss draft materials, provide corrections and edits, and to develop goals and actions based upon existing and new information. On July 7, 2015, the Task Force invited the public to provide input on the draft plan, and comments received were incorporated into the plan. The draft plan, including maps and results of the town-wide survey, was posted on the town's website for easy public access and review. On November 12, 2015 the Task Force met to review the plan for final edits and comments prior to being offered to the public once again for review and comments. Each meeting was publicized in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

On December 7, 2015, the Task Force hosted a public forum at Lee Town Hall to present the findings of the draft plan and to solicit input from town residents and officials. The forum was noted in local newspaper and on social media. A feature article about the forum was published on the front page of *The Berkshire Record*. The public forum was widely advertised with color flyers posted in public places such as town hall, the Lee elementary and high schools, post office, senior center and library. Flyers were also posted in retail stores and restaurants throughout the town. In an effort to reach underserved residents, flyers were also posted at the Senior Center and housing complexes under the purview of the Lee Housing Authority, which oversees senior and subsidized housing. Local stakeholder groups such as land trusts, conservation organizations, and lake associations were directly notified of the forum and invited to participate. A copy of the draft plan was posted on the town's website and a hard copy was placed at the front desk of the Lee Library.

The December 7th public forum was attended by 21 residents representing various neighborhoods and age groups. Large poster-sized maps were offered for public review, and the complete list of goals and actions were distributed as handouts. The forum began with a presentation that summarized the main findings of the plan and the results of the public survey. The presentation closed with a summary of the goals and a short background about how each goal was established. A question and answer period followed the presentation.

At the conclusion of the presentation attendees were asked to review the goals and action items and to vote for those items that were of most importance to them. The goals and actions were posted along the walls of the meeting room, and attendees were given a set of five adhesive dots to use for voting. Copies of the Action Table were distributed to attendees so that they could review the goals and actions at their seats prior to voting. Members of the Lee OSRP Task Force were available to answer questions that residents may have regarding the actions or the system of voting.

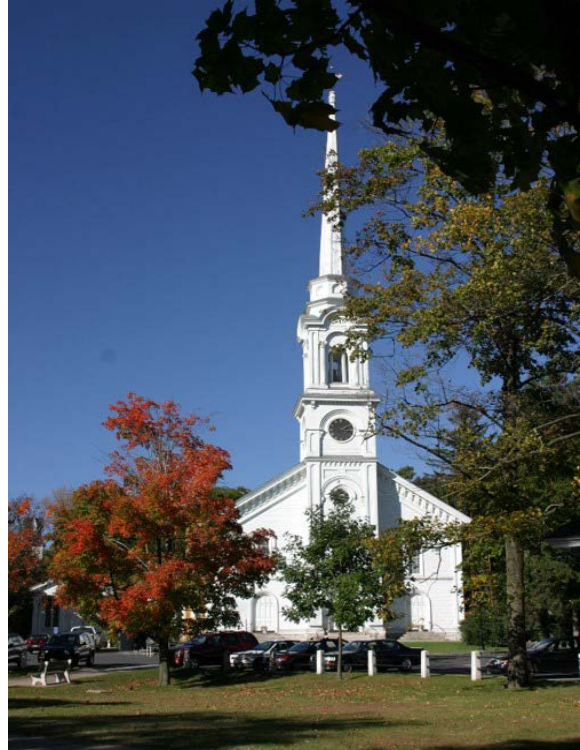
In addition to receiving input at the public forum, copies of the Action Plan were posted at the Lee Library, along with a copy of the draft plan. Seven additional residents cast votes for the five actions that they felt were of greatest importance, and these were included in the final vote tally. Materials and input from the public forum are found in Appendix C.

Section 3

Community Setting

A. Regional Context

Lee is commonly referred to as the "*Gateway to the Berkshires*". It is also the "*heart of the Berkshires*," with the geographic center of Berkshire County only one mile from the center of town. The town is nestled in the Housatonic River valley with hills to the east, south and west. These steep slopes are the largest single physical element affecting the future development of Lee. Approximately 6,500 acres (37% of the total land area) can be considered steep grade (15% or greater). Located immediately off Exit 2 of the Massachusetts Turnpike, Lee is often the first Berkshire destination of commercial travelers and tourists from the south, east, and west.



Topographically, two distinct forms of landforms cover the town of Lee. Looming up to the east is the hilly Berkshire Hills Plateau, encompassing October Mountain and shared with neighboring Becket and Washington, which is one of Lee's most scenic vistas. The mountain, with some of the highest elevations in the town, rises to nearly 2,000 feet, compared to an elevation of 900 feet in the center of town. Washington Mountain and Coddington brooks, flowing down from the mountain, are sources of water for the Town's reservoirs. Portions of nearby Lenox are also served by the water supply.

To the south lies another upland, cleaved by the picturesque Tyringham Valley. These uplands occupy a considerable area of the town and are sprinkled with mountain streams. Beartown State Forest, straddling Lee, Great Barrington, Stockbridge, Tyringham and Monterey, occupies many miles of upland and is a regional recreational site for swimming, hiking, and camping. Part of the Appalachian Trail goes through the southern and eastern portions of town connecting to Tyringham and Becket. To the north and west, the weathering of metamorphic rock has occurred to expose the rolling, limestone-underlain Housatonic Valley. The Rattlesnake Hill range to the west of separates the lowlands of Lee from the lowlands of

Stockbridge. Small hills, such as those in the Golden Hill Town Forest in the northern part of town, dot the valley.

Suitable agricultural land is most abundant in the western part of Lee. Agricultural uses have dwindled, as it has become increasingly hard for farms to remain viable. High Lawn Farm, one of the region's few remaining dairy farms and only creamery is located on a hilltop overlooking Laurel Lake and stretches westward into Stockbridge. Lee's town beach is located on Laurel Lake, which straddles the both Lee/Lenox town border. The beach is located on High Lawn Farm land and is used seasonally for recreational swimming.

The Housatonic River, flowing south and eventually west through the town, is both a natural and economic resource. Three branches of the River meet in Pittsfield to the north, then flow through Lenox before arriving in Lee and continuing south through Connecticut to Long Island Sound. Chemical pollution from industries, located in Lee and upstream from Lee, has contaminated the river making it unsuitable for swimming and prohibiting anglers from consuming their catch. Wastewater treatment instituted by local industries starting in the 1960s has abated the further deterioration of the river, which remains primarily a recreational resource for kayaking/canoeing and catch-and-release fishing today. Local and regional environmental groups, including the Lee Land Trust, the Housatonic River Initiative and the Housatonic Valley Association, have continued to work to clean up the river and plan for its increased recreational and scenic use.

Because of Lee's steep, stony slopes, floodplain along the river corridor, usable and buildable land is at a premium. This restricts the town's population, economic development and development of recreational areas. At the same time, these natural characteristics are invaluable for their intrinsic unspoiled beauty.

The town's economic base has continued to become more diversified with four of the last five paper mills closing their doors in 2008. Over the last forty-five years, commercial development has spread from the Turnpike interchange, weaving its way along Route 20, the main transportation route through town, and along Route 102. Lee has a thriving downtown retail center that serves town residents as well as the adjacent rural communities. The scenic downtown Lee Park and tall spire of the Congregational church are local landmarks that typify a historic New England village. An increased retail and hospitality presence serves to stimulate Lee's share of the County's tourism pie.

B. History of the Community

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

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

As with many communities located along river valleys in Berkshire County, much of the landscape was cleared for agriculture in the 19th century. The gently rolling hills in the central portion of the town supported crops, pasture and livestock. A few active farms continue today, most notably High Lawn Farm, which extends into neighboring Stockbridge, and the Leahey Farm at the foothills of October Mountain.

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

Since the mid-1800s, the Town has developed a long and rich heritage as a paper mill community due in large part to the Housatonic River that flows through the north side of downtown. By 1867, due to the river and the arrival of the railroad, Lee was home to twenty-five paper mills and ranked first in the country's paper making industry. The devastating flood of 1886 forced the closing of the small mills in East Lee. The surviving paper and sawmills moved to the center of town, rebuilding on the banks of the Housatonic River. This industrial

heritage illustrates why Lee was long known as a mill town. By the 1930's, the paper business in Lee began to decline as the softwood forests, sources of wood pulp, were depleted. The mills continued to be major employers until 2008, when four of the last five paper mills in the town closed, resulting in a loss of 450 local jobs.

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

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

In 1976, Lower Main Street was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The historic Main Street area, consisting of 18 buildings and an oval park, includes the Congregational Church, Lee Library, Lee Memorial Hall (Town Hall) and the Morgan House. These measures were taken not only to preserve Lee's rich architectural history but also to further prevent incompatible commercialization of the main thoroughfare through town. Individual structures such as the Lee Railroad Station and the Merrill Tavern in South Lee are also listed on the National Register.

Several private restoration projects have been conducted by building owners within the Lower Main Street area, most notably the extensive exterior repairs to the exterior and steeple of the iconic Congregational Church – remarkable for such a small congregation. The beautiful makeover of the former H.A. Johansson building into educational, office, restaurant and retail space has brightened up a large section of the street.

With the paper mills shuttered and other industries relocating overseas, Lee has started a slow transformation from a manufacturing based economy to a service based economy. Once a prominent stagecoach stop, downtown Lee has retained its historic look and now looks to revitalize downtown Lee into a vibrant social and economic center that focuses on serving residents, travelers and tourists.

C. Population Characteristics

The town's year-around population is estimated to be 5,932 residents.¹ Lee, because of its location near several Berkshire tourist attractions, such as Tanglewood, is also home to many seasonal residents who hail from New York City, Hartford, and Boston. Many of the estimated 700+ part-time residents own homes in developments surrounding area lakes or live in the newer condominium complexes. The daytime population also swells, particularly during the summer season, due to tourists visiting Lee or passing through to other destinations. According to the 2012 Regional Transportation Plan, summer traffic volumes are generally 10% higher than annual average daily traffic (AADT), and in some cases may be as much as 50% higher. For purposes of this report, the recreational needs of Lee residents are described as the primary audience for the town's parks and open space, with recognition that these areas will also be used and appreciated by visitors to the Berkshires. As tourism has increased in town since 1997, and since our forefathers, who didn't foresee tourist impacts when donating conservation lands to the Town, it is incumbent upon us, the guardians, to protect these habitats from human overuse and fragmentation.

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

Historical Population

Year	Pop.	±%
1850	3,220	—
1860	4,420	37.3%
1870	3,866	-12.5%
1880	3,939	1.9%
1890	3,785	-3.9%
1900	3,596	-5.0%
1910	4,106	14.20%
1920	4,085	-0.5%
1930	4,061	-0.6%
1940	4,222	4.00%
1950	4,820	14.2%
1960	5,271	9.4%
1970	6,426	21.9%
1980	6,247	-2.8%
1990	5,849	-6.4%
2000	5,985	2.3%
2010	5,943	-0.7%

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

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

Since the mid-1970s, Lee's population has slowly declined. From 1980 to 2010, the population decreased by 4.8%, from 6,247 to 5,943 residents. Since then, the decline has continued. The racial mix of the community is rather homogeneous, with 96.6% of the population classified as white in 2014. Recent years have witnessed a small influx of Hispanic immigrants, with most settling in the downtown neighborhoods. The yearly Latino Festival, held during Founder's Day Weekend, offers these newcomers an opportunity to share their culture with their neighbors.

The population decline over the last two decades is due to a combination of factors. One reason is a declining birth rate. At the same time, improvements to health care have extended life spans, and led to changes in the age distribution of the community. In 1970, 10.3% of Lee's residents were over 65 years of age, but by 2014 the elderly represented 19.4% of the population, almost double that of 1970. Children under 14 comprised 14.7% of the population in 2014, with teens and adults 15-44, at 65.9%, representing the balance. According to the *Berkshire County Age Friendly Survey Results* report (BRPC 2015), in 2010 one in three Americans was already aged 50 or older, and by 2030, one in five will be over the age of 65. By 2030 the United States population over age 65 is expected to overtake the number of those under 18. In Berkshire County this shift already occurred in 2011, with 42% of Lee's population 50+ years of age. This appears to be a permanent change in Berkshire County, with the number of adults over 65 continuing to increase and the percentage of children continuing to decline. With the growing aging trend expected to continue, recreational facilities will need to be designed that are more accessible to seniors and persons with disabilities.

Although overall population shifts have not been remarkable over the last forty years, residential development trends have changed the population density and distribution. Traditionally high density residential development is generally concentrated in the town center, where a mix of 19th century single family homes, duplexes and multi-family residences were built to supply housing for industrial executives, mill workers and their families and where small businesses and their owners also resided.

A few high density residential subdivisions, with small homes on small lots, were built in the 1950s, such as those on East Street, and small trailer parks were built along Bradley Street and Water Street near the turnpike. Newer homes and condominiums were built further away from the town center and on former agricultural land on the outskirts of town. An increasing portion of these newer homes are owned by seasonal homeowners. More modern multi-family housing is scattered in a few areas of the town, some of which are affordable housing (Hyde Place, Brown Memorial Court, Clark Court) and some of which are more recent condominium developments (Foxhollow, October Mountain).

The most notable factor in the population decline is out-migration, forced by reduced employment in Lee's largest industry, papermaking, and the demise of other high-paying manufacturing jobs in the region; and by young adults leaving for college and not returning. This economic trend has not been restricted to Lee. The manufacturing base in Berkshire County has been declining during the past three decades, while employment opportunities increased in the lower-paying service sector, particularly in retail, hospitality and health services. The net effect has been a declining non-residential tax base and increased dependence on residential property taxes.

In Lee, this trend was partially stemmed by the addition of the Berkshire Outlet Village to the tax rolls in 1997. Retail is the largest private employment sector in the town in 2015, with the town's two largest employers, Prime Outlets and Country Curtains, employing 785 people between them. This figure is almost as high as the total number of people employed by the next six largest employers in the town.

Overall, the lack of economic growth over the last several decades, coupled with fewer residents employed in manufacturing, has made it difficult for taxpayers to keep up with upgrading the town's services. Since the closing of the former Clark-Aiken manufacturing plant reported in the 2000 *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, four of the last five paper mills in town have closed. Following the closure of the mills in 2008, the mills remain primarily vacant and significantly underused.

Since 2010, Lee's employment numbers have been stable but its economy has become increasingly diverse. The economic base has broadened in recent years encompassing the largest job increases in trade/retail and service sectors. A small increase of 29 in manufacturing jobs also occurred during this time period, but this increase does not begin to make up for the hundreds of losses that occurred when the four paper mills closed in 2008.² Lee, like many other local communities, benefits from the tourist industry. The Outlet Village and the downtown are partly visitor destinations. Though Lee lacks major cultural attractions, its motels, bed and breakfasts, restaurants, and gas stations benefit from travelers visiting cultural attractions in neighboring Stockbridge and Lenox such as the Norman Rockwell Museum and Tanglewood.

Income data available from the 2014 American Community Survey show that Lee is less prosperous than many other communities in the Commonwealth, ranking 281 out of 351 municipalities in median household income. The median household income in 2013 was

² Source: Mass. Exec. Office of Labor & Workforce Development

\$57,683, 86.3% of the state average. However, compared to the statewide average of 11.4%, Lee had only 9.5% of its residents with incomes below poverty level. Lee is a town with a strong culture of volunteerism, helping those in need with a vibrant food pantry, English as second language programs, and financial assistance for children's sports programs.

A large geographical area of the town west of the town center is considered by the Executive Office of Energy and the Environment as an Environmental Justice (EJ) area (see Map 2 in Appendix A). The area has been determined as an EJ because the median household income for 2010 for residents within this census block is less than or equal to 65.5% of the state average. As the state's average for this year was \$62,133, this means that median household income for this area was \$40,673 or less. No other populations meet the EJ criteria. The population within the EJ area is approximately 1,000 people, which is approximately 17% of the town's population.

The EJ area is bound on the east by Housatonic and Main Streets, to the south by the Massachusetts Turnpike, to the west by Spring Street and to the north by Summer Street. Residential development along the Main and Housatonic Streets is a mix of high density and multi-family housing units, while the rest of the area is predominantly a mix of medium- and low-density single family homes (refer to EJ Map 2 and Land Use Map C). The Lee Athletic Field is within the EJ area with tennis, basketball, skateboard, playground, pavilion and boat ramp. Land available to residents for outdoor recreation or quiet reflection within ½ mile of this block include the Ferncliff Property, the ElementaryMiddle and High School and adjacent Fairmount Cemetery, the River Park, the Lee Bank Athletic Fields, the Town Farm (aka Stockbridge Road Recreation Area) and St. Mary's Cemetery. The southern edge of the Golden Hill Town Forest is within ½ mile of this block, but public access on Golden Hill Road is a mile or more away. Greenock Country Club is in the midst of the EJ area, and in the winter is used by local residents for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Park benches line Main Street and the town square within walking distance of senior and subsidized housing complexes. The River Park and the proposed Lee Bikeway are within the EJ boundaries and would increase outdoor recreation for not only these residents, but also those within the densely developed neighborhoods outside of the EJ area.

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

D. Growth and Development Patterns

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

With the advent of popular usage of the automobile, residential development spread beyond the original areas. In the post-World War II era, this dispersion accelerated as large farms and large expanses of agricultural land were converted to residential and other uses. Except for a handful of remaining large tracts, the large farmlands have disappeared, replaced mostly by single family homes scattered along rural roads that have altered the open spaces and scenic views. South Lee, though still maintaining separate churches and a post office, is no longer the commercial and population center it once was.

Development over the past few decades has continued to be dispersed single family homes, but with the addition of seasonal housing. The Oak & Spruce resort is also located in South Lee. A private development of second homes, Leisure Lee, was developed surrounding Goose Pond. There is a condominium development on the side of October Mountain. Though not a large presence, mobile home parks occupy a small tract near the Turnpike and the Bradley Park area in northeast Lee. Public projects, built by the town and Commonwealth, provide housing for physically challenged residents. Senior housing is provided within the old Lee Elementary School on High Street, Hyde Place on Main St. and Brown Memorial Court on Marble Street. Clarke Court provides affordable housing for economically challenged families. In 2013 the Central block, now known as 57 Main Street, was renovated to offer affordable housing on its upper floors, maintaining the first floor as retail space.

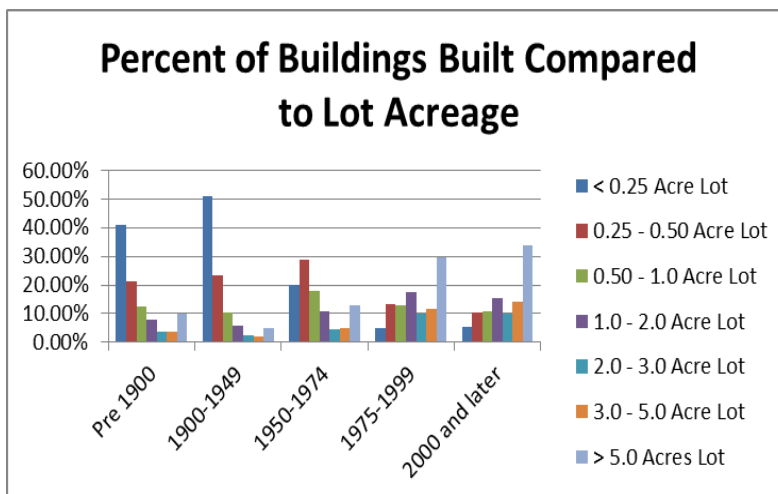
Patterns and Trends

Although a few subdivisions have been built in Lee in the past few decades, residential development continues to be primarily single family homes built along existing roads. Approval-Not-Required (or "ANR") development refers to the subdivision of single lots with frontage on a public way. Under state law, lots on a public way that meet zoning dimensional requirements for frontage may be subdivided without substantive Planning Board review.

Historically large lots, which tend to be forest or open fields, are subdivided into several lots along the roadway. ANR development fragments woodlands, wetlands and fields, and scenic vistas, and creates remnant parcels too small or too isolated to support farming or forestry activities, and degrades habitat for most wildlife species.

As noted in the Land Use Section of the *Sustainable Berkshires Plan* (2014), residential development trends have changed in recent decades, with larger homes being built on larger lots. This trend continues even as the number of people per household has decreased. Prior to 1950, most residential units in Berkshire County were built in lots less than ¼ acre. Between 1950 and 1974

most residential units were built on lots ¼ - ½ acre in size. Since 1975 this trend changed significantly with many homes built on lots greater than 5 acres. Since 2000, 33% of the residential units built in the Berkshires have been built on lots greater than 5 acres (see Table “Percent of Building Built Compared to Lot Acreage”).



As the *Sustainable Berkshires Plan* also notes, the Berkshires has seen an increase in the number of housing units being built as seasonal homes. The Berkshires has for more than 150 years been a place where visitors come to enjoy the fresh air and pastoral qualities of the region. However, the number of seasonal homes in Lee remained low, at an average of 10% of new homes built 1900-1974. However, in the years 1975-1999, the percentage of seasonal housing units in the town increased dramatically to 69% of total new home construction. Although seasonal home construction post-2000 has declined, it is still substantial at 32% of total units. Seasonal homes tend to be built on much larger parcels than non-seasonal homes. According to county-wide data, about half of year-round residential homes are built on parcels of two acres or less, while 75% of seasonal homes are built on parcels exceeding two acres. Half of the total seasonal homes built are situated on parcels exceeding 5 acres.

Continued sprawl and increased large-lot development could threaten the rural and scenic qualities that local residents value and seasonal homeowners are drawn to. Planning for continued residential growth could include identifying the town’s highest priority scenic,

natural and cultural assets and developing strategies to steer inappropriate development away from these areas.

Since the 1960s, the townspeople have taken an interest in preserving a portion of the remaining unspoiled land in town for watershed and recreational use. Additional conservation land has been acquired along Laurel Lake, in the Tyringham Valley, and near South Lee. More recently the large expanse of open lands on scenic Golden Hill were protected from development by a sale to Robert Bartini for additional grazing for his large herd of cattle. It should be noted that housing pressures are not entirely alleviated by the decrease in population—the number of housing units in Lee increased dramatically between 1975 and 1999, even as the overall population slightly decreased. Luckily, forest land has been left relatively untouched because of its steep slopes and remains conserved, even though much of it is privately held. One exception is the construction of the Berkshire Outlet Village retail complex on a previously forested tract overlooking the Turnpike, for which extensive slope cuts were made. An official plan regarding watchful maintenance and preservation of conservation land and future acquisition of open space still needs to be put in place.

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

The Route 102 area has been rezoned industrial and is home to several light industries. In 1987, the Windsock Industrial Park was privately developed. In 1997, the Quarry Hill Business Park was created along this route. It is intended to attract new industry to replace jobs lost in the traditional paper and machine manufacturing industries. Some of the industrial parks and light industries, such as Boyd Manufacturing and Country Curtains, have been located off the road with screening in an attempt to maintain the rural character of the road. Continued careful development will be needed to avoid changing the character of the roadway from a rural roadway to a commercial and industrial corridor.

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

- a. The conversion of most of the remaining farmland and increased housing development have threatened the rural landscape and scenic views that have traditionally existed in all sections of town except the town center.

- b. The haphazard development of the commercial district has diminished the scenic beauty and impressions made on visitors when they entering this "gateway" town. The rural landscape and the New England character of the buildings is important to Lee, and other Berkshire communities, in maintaining the quality of life desired by their residents and in attracting tourists.
- c. State forests and neighborhood recreational facilities are more extensive than in many surrounding communities. They provide opportunities for pedestrian usage and neighborhood interaction, although there may be some issues with ownership and maintenance. At the same time, the centrally located facilities at the schools and off Route 20, and the soccer fields on Route 102, have not been upgraded or expanded significantly.
- d. Telecommunication towers have begun to spring up along the Massachusetts Turnpike, including Lee, with the ability of towns to regulate them limited by the Federal Telecommunications Act. It is important to carefully limit and guide the siting of these facilities, particularly in order to preserve scenic resources. Section 9.7 of the zoning bylaw requires a special permit for a wireless communication facility within the town.

Transportation System

One of Lee's greatest economic assets is its location off Exit 2 of the Massachusetts Turnpike, an Interstate highway connecting Boston westward to Springfield/Hartford, Albany and Buffalo, New York. This exit is one of only two interchanges in the Berkshires. The stretch between Westfield and Lee (approximately 30 miles), is one of the longest stretches without access within metropolitan counties in the United States. Currently most of the Exit 2 Turnpike traffic passes through the downtown on its way to Lenox and other towns within the County. This traffic, along with what has been generated by the Berkshire Outlet Village since its opening in 1997, puts Lee's downtown streets under enormous strain, particularly in the summer.

Route 20 is a major arterial which runs through Lee connecting it to the neighboring towns of Lenox and Becket. Route 20 as it travels through Lee is also part of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, a state-recognized scenic byway. The Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. is a non-profit organization that works to maintain the natural beauty and historic character of the corridor.

Route 102 is Lee's other major arterial linking the town to neighboring Stockbridge to the west. Route 102 is increasingly important as a main commercial and industrial corridor, due in large part to its close proximity to the turnpike exit. The town's last remaining paper mill, Onyx

Specialty Papers (an old Mean paper property in South Lee) is located on this route, utilizing the power of the Housatonic River.

Lee's main public transportation system is the Berkshire Regional Transit Authority's local bus service connecting Lee with Pittsfield to the north and Great Barrington to the south. It runs six days a week on a regular schedule from early morning until early evening. Bus Route 2 is a north/south route that links residents to Lenox and Pittsfield via Main Street, Greylock Street and Lenox Dale, while Bus Route 21 is an east/west link along Route 102 between the Lee Outlets and Stockbridge and Great Barrington. Recreational areas located directly on a bus route include the Lee Middle/High School, River Park, Housatonic Street Athletic Field, and the Soccer Fields, while recreational areas located within a short walk of the routes (within ½ mile) include October Mountain State Forest, Woods Pond, and Ferncliff. Greyhound and Peter Pan provide long distance service to Vermont, Connecticut and New York City, and also provides service to Albany and points west, and to Springfield, Boston, Providence and Cape Cod.

Sidewalks radiate from the town center, linking some but not all densely developed neighborhoods to recreational lands. Outstanding sidewalk routes include Main Street to Sandy Beach on Laurel Lake and Main Street to October Mountain State Forest (via Columbia, Greylock or East streets). Outside of the town center rural arterial and minor roads generally do not have sidewalks. There are currently no designated bicycle lanes designated in the town. The Lee Bikeway Committee is working to create a bikeway/pedestrian bikeway route through Lee that will connect the town to neighboring Stockbridge and Lenox. Route 102, which has wide shoulders, will serve as the bikeway between Stockbridge and Lee, and north of this the route will be a mix of off-road and on-road to Lenox Dale.

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

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

There is no passenger rail station in Lee since passenger service was eliminated in 1971. However, the Housatonic Railroad Company (HRRC) has proposed re-establishing passenger rail

service between Danbury, Connecticut and Pittsfield, Massachusetts on the former Berkshire Line. The HRRRC proposal would once again make it possible for a passenger boarding the passenger train at Grand Central Station in New York City to reach Pittsfield by train in approximately four (4) hours and vice versa. For the HRRRC proposal to become reality, a significant capital investment in Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York will need to be made to upgrade the rail infrastructure along the Berkshire Line. In 2013 Berkshire Regional Planning Commission partnered with HRRRC to conduct a passenger rail station location and design analysis with the primary objective of identifying the most feasible and advantageous locations for passenger rail stations along the Berkshire Line. As a result of the analysis, initial passenger rail stations are recommended in the City of Pittsfield, the Town of Lee and the Town of Great Barrington. Passenger rail stations located in these locations will best serve the needs of the region and the operational needs of the proposed passenger rail service. It was recommended that a new passenger rail station be constructed in Lee on the west side of the downtown area on Railroad Street. A station in this location is expected to serve the needs of the local community, support existing commercial establishments in the downtown area, further economic development, and facilitate intra-county transportation.

Water Supply Systems

Lee draws its public water supply from town surface water reservoirs located on October Mountain. The Town obtains its public water supply primarily from the Schoolhouse and Leahey Reservoirs. A large proportion of these watershed areas are currently protected. In addition, the Vaninetti Reservoir and October Mountain Lake are available as backup water supplies if a need might arise.

Sewer Service and Septic

Most of the Town of Lee is sewerred, with the exception of a significant hamlet, East Lee, and a seasonal development, Leisure Lee. The present sewer system extends to the development at Foxhollow above Laurel Lake in Lenox (the facility has a private pumping station that taps into the Lee sewer system) and along the Route 102 industrial district (See Map D in Appendix A). The construction of a new municipal wastewater treatment plant was completed in 2008. Through the construction of the new plant, average daily flow capacity increased from 1 million to 1.25 million gallons per day, and the nutrient removal efficiency has greatly increased. The EPA has awarded the town the Wastewater Treatment Excellence award, because of the exemplary operations management of the plant.

Onyx Specialty Papers Inc. on Route 102 sends its industrial waste water to a treatment facility that is still owned and operated by Mead Corporation. Schweitzer-Maudit formerly operated its own wastewater treatment facilities, but these are no longer operational. The Schweitzer

facilities were purchased by Niagara Worldwide LLC and a new permit would be required if these wastewater treatment facilities were to become operational again.

Residential septic systems surrounding Laurel Lake contribute little bacteria to the lake but do contribute nutrients that may be aggravating the long-standing problem with weed growth. The Town of Lee extended its sewer lines along Bramble Lane in Lenox, giving all residents the option of tying into the system. To date approximately half of the homes on the lane have tied into the system.

Long Term Development Patterns

Given development trends over the past several decades and given existing zoning, it is expected that Lee will continue to see a mix of year-round and seasonal home construction, and possibly increased commercial/industrial development along Route 102. The building boom of the 1970-90s has dwindled since the recession and housing implosion that began in 2008. However, although diminished, seasonal home buying continued throughout the recession in the forms of new construction and purchase of existing houses. Home prices in Lee, as in other South County communities, continues to increase due to market demand. This demand could increase if passenger rail between NYC and Lee comes to fruition.

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

In 2008, the town established a Scenic Mountain Overlay District, enabled by the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act (MGL Ch. 131, Sec. 39A). The purpose of the law is to regulate land disturbance activities that could have a significant adverse effect on watershed resources or natural scenic qualities because of water quality pollution or destruction of vegetation. Most land disturbance activities that involve removal, filling, excavation clearing or other alteration of land located within the district, including projects requiring a special permit and single family homes, will require the filing of a Notice of Intent with the Conservation Commission. Upon review, the Commission has the authority to apply special conditions to the development to avoid or minimize natural resource degradation. Other notable changes to zoning include major modifications to sign regulations, creation of an Adaptive Reuse Overlay District (2009), regulation of adult entertainment (2006), wind energy facility bylaws (2007), and a zoning map amendment moving some areas from Industrial into RB Rural Business and RA-40 zones (2009).

As a result of environmental and other development constraints, much of the future development can be expected to occur on marginal land and will place environmentally sensitive lands in a more vulnerable position. Agricultural lands, in particular, are vulnerable to development because of easy accessibility. Unless measures are taken, dramatic alterations to the character and identity of the community could occur.

Section 4

Environmental Inventory and Analysis

A. Geology, Soils and Topography



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

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

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

Surficial geology of the town reflects both deposits of glacial origin and more recent deposits associated with the flooding of the Housatonic River and its tributaries. The upland areas are covered with a thin mantle of glacial till, a poorly-sorted mixture of silt, sand, gravel, boulders and clay deposited directly by the glacial ice as it advanced generally from the northwest to

southeast. As the glacier melted and retreated from the area about 18,000 years ago, meltwater streams deposited layers of sand and gravel. The most important materials left behind in this process in Lee were the coarse grained, ice contact stratified drift deposits that currently fill the valley of Greenwater Pond Brook and the area immediately south of Woods Pond. These deposits have a significant impact on the groundwater potential of the area.

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

B. Landscape Character

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

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

Lee's identity is also defined by the scenic beauty of its lakes, rivers and streams. The most prominent of these is the Housatonic River. The river and its tributaries are responsible for the

scenic wetlands and fertile floodplains that line its shores. These, in turn, make possible the excellent wildlife habitat that exists in this area. Laurel Lake, as one of the few water bodies in this area with publicly accessible swimming, is a resource of regional recreational significance. It also offers outstanding views. For 45 years, the Berkshires has struggled with the loss of their lakes because of premature aging, or eutrophication, and thus the onset of milfoil and other invasive, non-native aquatic plants. Laurel Lake is no exception. The Town must play a part solving the long-term problem. Solutions may include discussions with the neighboring town of Lenox about providing sewer to all lakeside cottages.

The rural character of Lee is still very apparent in the working farms that dot the landscape, particularly in the western portion of town and the entrance to the Tyringham Valley. High Lawn Farm, the town's largest and most iconic agricultural landscape, is currently under the ownership of one family group. Loss of the farm and possible future change of use would have a significant impact upon the character of the community, and is therefore a concern to the Town.

C. Water Resources

Lee is rich in water resources, including brooks, streams, ponds, vernal pools, wetlands, and aquifers (See Water Resources Map 6, Appendix A). This section focuses on waters within the Town of Lee, but it is important to keep in mind that improvements in water quality in the Housatonic River, Laurel Lake, and other brooks, streams and wetlands have impacts beyond town borders. Coordination with towns both upstream and downstream is necessary in order to clean and restore the Housatonic River and preserve its scenic and natural beauty. The town's surface water sources provide clean drinking water (primarily Schoolhouse Lake and Leahey Reservoirs), and provide scenic and recreational resources to residents and tourists.

Watersheds

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

Surface Water

Surface water resources play an extremely important role in the Town of Lee, both from the standpoint of recreational value and economic usefulness. The Housatonic River, which flows through the middle of the town, and Laurel Lake, accessible from Route 20, are the most prominent water bodies known and used by local residents. The Wetlands Protection Act, gives some protection to the wetlands and rivers of the state. The goals of the act are to preserve water quality, maintain drinking water quality and quantity, provide recharge through infiltration, retain natural flood storage, sustain fisheries, and protect wildlife habitat. To attain these goals, development within 100 feet of wetlands and 200 feet of rivers is regulated by the Lee Conservation Commission. The town does not have any additional regulations which affect activities near or around its wetlands.

The Housatonic River Watershed is the largest in Berkshire County, encompassing 320,145 acres across 26 communities. The river dominates the center of Lee, and is the final destination for most of the streams that flow through the town. Recreational use of the Housatonic River is limited by water quality problems associated with PCB contamination caused by the General Electric Company (see Environmental Challenges). The U.S. EPA has issued its Draft Modification to the Reissued RCRA Permit (Draft Permit), which will dictate how GE conducts the cleanup. The six Berkshire County Rest of River municipalities have been working together with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to understand how the cleanup will affect the communities so that they can provide informed and constructive input to the EPA during this public review period. As part of this work, Lee has submitted comments to the EPA.

The river is used for canoeing as well as other forms of scenic enjoyment. The stretch of river between the Decker Canoe Launch in Lenox and the Woods Pond launch is extremely popular for canoers/kayakers because of the meandering channel, easy paddling and the lack of dams. The Housatonic Valley Association, a watershed organization, has been successful in creating new canoe put-ins along the river in recent years, including one at the popular Lee Athletic Field. The Town of Lee is also incorporating a greater role for the riverfront in its downtown planning and implementation efforts. The river is also a favorite for local anglers, particularly Woods Pond and the Catch & Release section of river between the Rt 20 bridge and the Stockbridge town line.

Ponds and lakes are also an important element of Lee's water resource inventory. The most significant of these is Laurel Lake, which is shared with the Town of Lenox. This facility includes a town beach on the south side for Lee residents (Sandy Beach), a town beach on the north for Lenox residents, and a state-run public boat ramp along Route 20. An annual three-foot

drawdown is conducted at Laurel Lake along with selective hand-pulling of invasive aquatic plants.

Another asset is Goose Pond, a 225-acre water body split into Upper and Lower ponds, which straddles the Lee/Tyringham border. This pond is unusual in that it is a cold water lake with extremely clear water with a transparency of more than 15 feet. Lower Goose Pond can be accessed via a public boat ramp located on its southern tip from Goose Pond Road off of Route 20. While Laurel Lake is a visible easy lake to access, Goose Pond is a hidden gem. Upper Goose Pond is difficult to access with a steep rocky shoreline and no formal trails. It is managed by The Trustees of Reservation (TTOR) as a wilderness area with a ¼ mile of rocky shoreline that rises nearly 300 feet to a ridge top at 1,753 feet. The Appalachian Trail runs adjacent to the TTOR property, and the Lee Land Trust was gifted land on Route 20 that will provide easier access to the TTOR/AT properties.

Woods Pond, a dammed section of the Housatonic River, is another waterbody that provides residents with the opportunity to paddle, fish, hunt waterfowl and view wildlife. The pond is famous for large carp and for viewing herons, bald eagles and various duck species.

Aquifer Recharge Areas

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

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

Flood Hazard Areas

Flood hazards have always been a major concern of the inhabitants of the Town of Lee. As a result of its location in the Housatonic River Basin, at the base of many major mountain streams, the Town has on several occasions suffered substantial losses due to flooding. Areas in East Lee have been regularly flooded and in one instance experienced significant loss of life.

According to the *Lee Hazard Mitigation Plan* (2012) the FIRM flood hazard area maps indicates that there is a total of 1,966 acres of 100-year floodplain within the town. This amounts to 11.4% of the total town. These areas are occasionally flooded. The last major flood occurred in 1968 in East Lee. Several of the town parks and athletic fields are located in the floodplain restricting recreational use and availability.

In the northern section of town, flood hazards are minimal because the floodplain is contained within high banks where there is little or no housing. In the southern flatlands, however, the floodplain widens out as the Housatonic River enters areas of flatter topography, which unfortunately, are among the more developed sections of town. Areas particularly prone to flooding in this area include the southern end of Main Street, along Route 20 to the Mass. Turnpike, the northern part of Tyringham Road for about 2,000 feet, and a three mile stretch along Route 102, where significant residential and commercial/industrial development has already occurred. The broad floodplain area near Meadow Street is largely in agricultural use and the wetlands are a major attraction for wildlife, including many species of migratory birds. The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) has recognized the value of this resource by acquiring over 340 acres of land in this area. These acquisitions serve the dual purpose of protecting an important wildlife habitat and providing flood storage for the river basin.

Wetlands

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

According to MassGIS map data, wetlands cover 1,096 acres in Lee, which is 6% of the town's total land cover. This percentage is relatively low for a Berkshire County valley town. This

data, which includes both forested and non-forested wetland types, captures the larger wetlands and does not include the smaller wetlands that exist throughout the town near or within other land uses. Scattered wetlands are found throughout the town with the greatest concentrations in the western portion from Route 102 northward to Summer Street. Notable wetlands are found north and south of Devon Road, along and to the south of Route 102, along the Mass. Turnpike, between Greylock Street and East Street, along Washington Mountain Road, north of Woods Pond, along the railroad tracks near the Lenox town border, south of the quarry, slightly west of Finnerty Pond, and just south of Basin Pond. Most of these wetlands are in wooded areas, though some are in fields.

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

D. Vegetation

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

Forest Land

Approximately 11,626 acres (67%) of the town is forested, making it the land use that is most prevalent in the town. This figure includes both upland and wetland forests. Notable red pine stands surrounding Laurel Lake and near the lake's Rt 20 causeway area should be protected. The town's forests are an important outdoor recreational asset. Large blocks of protected forest lands are owned by the Town of Lee, DCR, DFW and BNRC. Lee forests provide wildlife habitat and trail systems that provide outdoor recreational opportunities such as hiking, hunting, mountain biking, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, motor biking and ATV riding.

In addition, 1,316 acres of forest land are enrolled in the Chapter 61 Tax Program. This state tax program offers forest property owners (for lands >10 acres) an opportunity to reduce their property tax burden in exchange for a commitment to keep their land undeveloped and to manage it for forest products. Some tax savings must be returned to the state if the land is converted to a non-forestry usage, such as residential or commercial development. When a conversion is proposed, the municipality in which the land is located is offered the first right of refusal to purchase the land to keep it in an undeveloped state. For the purpose of open space planning, lands under the Chapter 61 Tax Program are considered temporarily protected from development, because while the land is in the program it cannot be converted. However, if the landowner proposed converting the land, the municipality must exercise its right of refusal within 120 days, which often is not enough time to local governments to gather the financing to purchase the property.

Public shade trees as defined by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 87 are those located within the public right of way. Trees within the right of way are protected from being removed without a public review process that involves the town's tree warden. Unauthorized removal of such trees are punishable by fines or other penalties. There is a remarkable elm tree located on Stockbridge Road that is thought by some local residents to be one of the largest elms in the county, possibly second or third in size after the state's Champion Elm in Lanesborough. This elm, in the vicinity of 203 Stockbridge Road, is likely in the town's right-of-way. A blight-resistant elm was planted at Sandy Beach in 2010 has prospered for five years.

Agricultural Land

According to MassGIS land use data, 1,240 acres of land in Lee are in crop or pastureland use, or are kept open field, for a total of 10% of the total land cover in the town. Although High Lawn Farm is the most visible agricultural site in the town, several other properties support agricultural uses, including the Leahey Dairy Farm sited below October Mountain. Local agriculture not only provides the community with a local source of produce, meat and other foods, but often provides scenic landscapes and wildlife habitat. Lee farms provide a pastoral foreground that contrasts with a forested hillside background.

Only two of the town's farms, the Courser Brook Farm and LaFattoria, are permanently protected by an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR), totaling 237 acres between the two farms. Approximately 1,815 acres agricultural lands are enlisted in the Chapter 61A Tax Program, with four privately owned farms that are 100 acres or more in size. Some of the land under the Ch. 61A program is currently forested, wetlands or open land, but are associated with working farms. This explains why there is more acreage enlisted under Chapter 61A than there is total pasture and crop land calculated by MassGIS (see land use map Map C and

Inventory Map 7 in Appendix A). The Chapter 61A program, like the Chapter 61 Forestry Program, is a temporary program. If the land changes use, the owner must pay back the taxes saved under the program and offer the Town of Lee the right of first refusal.

High Lawn Farm, located in the northwestern portion of the town, is the largest, comprising of 1,500 acres between Lee and Stockbridge (755 acres of this are in Lee.) Some portion of High Lawn land is forested, but much of the land is in active agricultural production. The land has been farmed since the mid-1800's, but the farm began in 1887 when W.D. Sloane purchased the first 180 acres. A summer villa and several iconic farm buildings were erected in the early decades of the 20th century, and throughout the 1920s - 1970s descendants of the Sloane family purchased additional land and created a large modern dairy farm, establishing a Jersey cow herd whose lineage is internationally recognized. By the mid-1930s the farm had 25 families working and residing on the farm. The recognizable yellow buildings scattered across the farm are some of the residential housing offered on the farm. Master Breeder awards from the American Jersey Cattle Association were awarded to Colonel Wilde in 1960 and to Mrs. Wilde in 1977, making them the first couple to ever receive the award in separate years. The property fell into disrepair in the 1980-1990's but is experiencing a renaissance with the restoration and reuse of the original farm buildings, erection of new barns with modern milking equipment, and extensive fencing of its acreage and replacement of aging trees. The owners' goal is to return it to a model farm of the 19th century, removing architecturally irrelevant out-buildings and reducing the use of motorized vehicles on the property. High Lawn Farm recently purchased adjacent lands in Stockbridge along Bean Hill Road. Today the farm is one of the largest and last-remaining in-tact family farms in Massachusetts.

Rare Species

Lee is home to a number of rare plant species, some of which are threatened by the lack of a formal protective strategy. According to the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Program, there are currently 26 plant species of concern that are found within in the town, many of which found in wetlands or moist soils, making the protection of wetlands even more important. Although common, spring beauty flowers are found in forests in the town, harboring the arrival of spring.

Town of Lee List of Rare Plant Species

Taxonomy	Scientific Name	Common name	Status	Last documented sighting
Vascular Plant	<i>Carex tetanica</i>	Fen Sedge	SC	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Conioselinum chinense</i>	Hemlock Parsley	SC	1982
Vascular Plant	<i>Eleocharis intermedia</i>	Intermediate Spike	T	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Equisetum scirpoides</i>	Dwarf Scouring-rush	SC	1915
Vascular Plant	<i>Eragrostis frankii</i>	Frank's Lovegrass	SC	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Galium labradoricum</i>	Labrador Bedstraw	T	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>	Andrews' Bottle	E	2012
Vascular Plant	<i>Lonicera hirsuta</i>	Hairy Honeysuckle	E	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Platanthera flava</i> var.	Pale Green Orchis	T	2013
Vascular Plant	<i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	Bur Oak	SC	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Sisyrinchium mucronatum</i>	Slender Blue-eyed	E	1912
Vascular Plant	<i>Acer nigrum</i>	Black Maple	-WL (delisted)	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Carex retrorsa</i>	Retorse Sedge	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Caulophyllum thalictroides</i>	Giant Blue Cohosh	-WL	2000
Vascular Plant	<i>Equisetum variegatum</i> var. <i>variegatum</i>	Variegated Horsetail	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Helenium autumnale</i>	Common	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Heteranthera dubia</i>	Grassleaf	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Juncus nodosus</i>	Knotted Rush	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Pellaea atropurpurea</i>	Purple-stem	-WL	1980s
Vascular Plant	<i>Populus balsamifera</i> ssp. <i>balsamifera</i>	Balsam Poplar	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Ribes americanum</i>	Wild Black Currant	-WL	2002
Vascular Plant	<i>Salix candida</i>	Hoary Willow	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Salix pedicellaris</i>	Bog Willow	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Salix serissima</i>	Autumn Willow	-WL	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Scirpus pendulus</i>	Pendulous Bulrush	-WL (delisted)	1999
Vascular Plant	<i>Spartanum fluctuans</i>	Floating Bur-reed	-WL	ND

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

Source: Frost, Karro, 2015. NHESP letter to Town of Lee dated June 16, 2015.

Unique Natural Resources

The Town of Lee has several areas that contain unique or uncommon natural resources or that provide outstanding scenic qualities. In 1981 the Commonwealth of Massachusetts conducted a statewide survey of the state to identify large landscapes of superior scenic qualities (See Map 5, Unique Features in Appendix A). Two areas in Lee were noted in this survey: 1) High

Lawn Farm along Summer Street, Route 7 and extending into Lenox and Stockbridge, and 2) the scenic vistas that can be seen along Route 102 and Tyringham Road, extending into Stockbridge and Tyringham. Although commercial development along the Route 102 corridor has diminished the scenic qualities of some sections of this road, the long-range views of Beartown Mountain remain striking. Lee is partly located in an ecological area known as the Western New England Marble Valley. It is this calcareous bedrock that has made the town's marble and limestone industries so successful. Since rock formations including calcium-based marble are geologically different from the rest of the state, the chemistry of the water and soil of the area are also distinct. Vegetation growing on these soils is distinct, with many species that occur only in calcium-rich areas. Some of these species are under state protection because they are so uncommon in the state. The wetland vegetation in particular is different from most of the rest of New England, with an abundance of species that are specialized to calcium enriched, but otherwise nutrient poor, waters. Lee has several occurrences of calcareous fens, a riverside marsh and calcareous ledge in priority habitats.

A portion of the 1,350 acre Kampoosa Bog Drainage Basin ACEC is located in the town of Lee (225 acres) with the majority of the drainage basin located in Stockbridge (1,125 acres). The Kampoosa drainage basin is part of the larger Housatonic River watershed. The heart of the ACEC is Kampoosa Bog and its associated surface waters, wetlands, groundwater and rare species habitat. Scientifically, Kampoosa is not a bog, but a fen, contained in a small basin (the Kampoosa drainage basin), with an inflow of calcareous cold groundwater. Scientists refer to Kampoosa Bog technically as a Lake Basin Graminoid (grass-like) Calcareous Fen. Due to the critical ecological importance of surface and ground water to the fen and the high concentration of rare species found there, the boundary of the ACEC is designed to approximate the sub-drainage basin of Kampoosa Bog.

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

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

A second ACEC, the Upper Housatonic River ACEC, is in the northern portion of the Town. This ACEC, designated in 2009, encompasses a total of 12,280 acres, extending across portions of Pittsfield, Washington, Lenox and Lee. The boundaries generally follow a 13-mile corridor of the Housatonic River and its supporting watersheds, from southern Pittsfield to the northern portion of Lee. This section of the river includes a complex ecosystem, hosting the river, adjacent wetlands and floodplain forests, several coldwater fisheries, rare species habitat and steep forested slopes of October Mountain State Forest. As noted on the ACEC website, the regionally significant biodiversity and wildlife habitat in the designated area is indicated by the exceptional number of rare species (32), Certified and Potential Vernal Pools (46), and the combined total of 11,405 acres or 93% of the area delineated as viable habitat by the DFW's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP). Of this total, 7,869 acres (64%) of the ACEC is designated as BioMap Core Habitat and Supporting Natural Landscapes, 3,536 acres (29%) as Living Waters Core Habitat and Critical Supporting Watershed. Regulated areas of rare species Priority Habitats and Estimated Habitats total 3,130 acres or 25% of the ACEC, with the majority of these acres included in the BioMap and Living Waters areas. Approximately 1,614 of the ACEC is in Lee, extending from the state forest east of the Woods Pond and backwater areas of the river southward to the cove pond area in the vicinity of Columbia and Greylock Streets, and includes the Coddington and Washington Mountain Brook watersheds. The ACEC locations are found on Map 5, Unique Features Map in Appendix A.

As noted by NHESP, several Priority Natural Plant Communities occur in Lee, most of which are associated with the outstanding riverine and wetland resources. These communities have been ranked to reflect each one's rarity and level of threat. The table "Town of Lee List of Priority Natural Communities," below, lists these unusual resources, with their designation of rarity, and the locations of these communities are shown on Map F: Vegetation and Fisheries & Wildlife. Many are shared between the neighboring communities of Lenox, Washington, Stockbridge, Great Barrington and Tyringham. According to the *BioMap2, Conserving the Biodiversity of Massachusetts in a Changing World for Lee* (2012), the town hosts five unusual natural plant communities within the nine areas, all of which are listed as Imperiled Communities (S2), with only 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.

<i>Town of Lee List of Priority Natural Communities</i>			
Type	Ecological Community	Comments	Status
Other Ecological	Certified Vernal Pools	13 pools	
Natural Community	Major-river Floodplain Forest		S2
Natural Community	Wet Meadow		S4
Natural Community	Black ash-Red maple-Tamarack Calcareous Seepage Swamp		S2
Natural Community	Small-river Floodplain Forest		S2
Natural Community	Hickory-Hop hornbeam Forest/Woodland		S2
Natural Community	Shrub Swamp		S5
Natural Community	Calcareous Sloping Fen		S2
Natural Community	Deep Emergent Marsh		S4
Natural Community	Freshwater Mud Flat		S4
<i>S2= Imperiled communities, typically 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state</i> <i>S4= Apparently secure in Massachusetts.</i> <i>S5= Demonstrably secure in Massachusetts</i>			

Source: Frost, Karro, 2015. NHESP letter to Town of Lee dated June 16, 2015.

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

Regional and Statewide Vegetation Mapping Projects

BioMap2

The Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game, through the NHESP and The Nature Conservancy's Massachusetts Program developed *BioMap2* to protect the state's biodiversity in the context of climate change.

BioMap2 combines NHESP's thirty years of rigorously documented rare species and natural community data with spatial data identifying wildlife species and habitats that were the focus of the DFW 2005 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP).

BioMap2 also integrates the Nature Conservancy's assessment of large, well-connected, and intact ecosystems and landscapes across the Commonwealth, incorporating concepts of ecosystem resilience to address anticipated climate change impacts. In addition, NHESP created a second *BioMap2* series for all communities located within the Housatonic River Watershed in 2011, which provides guidance on where to focus habitat protection efforts.

Protection and stewardship of *BioMap2* Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape is essential to safeguard the diversity of species and their habitats, intact ecosystems, and resilient natural landscapes across Massachusetts. According to the *BioMap2* Town Report, Lee lies on the border of the Berkshire Highlands/Southern Green Mountains, the Lower Berkshire Hills, and the Western New England Marble Valleys/Berkshire Valley/Housatonic and Hoosic Valley Ecoregions. The Berkshire Highlands Ecoregion is an area drained by the Deerfield, upper Westfield, Hoosic, and Housatonic Rivers. Lakes and ponds are relatively abundant. This ecoregion has deep soils that support northern hardwoods and spruce-fir forests. The Lower Berkshire Hills Ecoregion is similar to the Berkshire Highlands Ecoregion, with its common northern hardwoods, but lacks spruce-fir and harbors transition hardwoods. Lakes and ponds are relatively abundant. The Western New England Marble Valleys Ecoregion is an area drained by the Hoosic and Housatonic Rivers. This ecoregion harbors farms, evergreen forests, transition and northern hardwood forests, and calcareous fens. The limestone-rich bedrock in the area creates alkaline lakes and streams.

Lee at a Glance

BioMap2 Core Habitat: 5,253 acres

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

BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape: 7,075 acres

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

BioMap2 Components

Core Habitat

Exemplary or Priority Natural Community Cores

3 Forest Cores

5 Wetland Cores

9 Aquatic Cores

9 Species of Conservation Concern Cores**

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

Critical Natural Landscape

2 Landscape Blocks

5 Wetland Core Buffers

7 Aquatic Core Buffers

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

E. Fisheries and Wildlife

Inventory

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

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

Fishing opportunities are also abundant in Lee's lakes and ponds and in the numerous streams that feed the Housatonic River. The fish species include rainbow, brown and brook trout, creek chub, banded killifish, blacknose and longnose dace, yellow and brown bullheads, and slimy sculpin. They also include smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, rock bass, bluegill, chain pickerel, northern pike, emerald shiner, yellow and white perch, carp and white and longnose suckers. The DFW annually stocks trout in Beartown Brook, Hop Brook, Greenwater Brook, Washington Mountain Brook, Laurel Lake, and Goose Pond. When available, brood stock Atlantic salmon are stocked in Laurel Lake and Goose Pond. There is a popular Catch & Release area on the Housatonic between the Rt 20 bridge and the Stockbridge town line. Because of PCB contamination it is not possible to eat any fish taken from the Housatonic River.

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

Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat, especially for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. 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. 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. The most effective way to protect vernal pools is to study and certify them.

There are currently 13 certified vernal pools and another identified 28 potential vernal pools. Lee is noted by NHESP as having a few clusters of certified and potential vernal pools in the same general area. These clusters are particularly valuable habitat for the species that rely solely on vernal pools to breed, as a nearby pool can provide alternate habitat should one pool dry up or is otherwise diminished for use. Vernal pool clusters are found most predominantly in the southwest portion of the town (See Map F in Appendix A).

Rare Species

Lee hosts 21 animal species of concern, including 11 vertebrates and 10 invertebrates. Like the plant species of concern, the majority of animal species require water or wetland habitats for all cycles of life or for breeding. The two endangered species are the American Bittern, which requires open marsh habitat dominated by tall emergent vegetation, and the Boreal Marstonia snail, which requires cold lake waters.

Town of Lee List of Animal Species of Concern				
Taxonomy	Scientific Name	Common name	Status	Last documented sighting
Amphibian	<i>Ambystoma jeffersonianum</i>	Jefferson Salamander	SC	2013
Amphibian	<i>Gyrinophilus porphyriticus</i>	Spring Salamander	MESA Delisted	2001
Beetle	<i>Cicindela duodecimguttata</i>	Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	SC	2013
Bird	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern	E	2009
Bird	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Northern Harrier	T	1999
Bird	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Common Moorhen	SC	1999
Bird	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common Loon	SC	2013
Bird	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	T	2014
Butterfly/ Moth	<i>Euphyes dion</i>	Dion Skipper	T	2009
Butterfly/ Moth	<i>Papaipema sp. 2 nr. pterisii</i>	Ostrich Fern Borer Moth	SC	2009
Butterfly/ Moth	<i>Pieris oleracea</i>	Mustard White	T	2009

Town of Lee List of Animal Species of Concern				
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Enallagma carunculatum</i>	Tule Bluet	SC	1976
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Neurocordulia yamaskanensis</i>	Stygian Shadowdragon	SC	2008
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Stylurus scudderi</i>	Zebra Clubtail	MESA Delisted	2008
Dragonfly/ Damselfly	<i>Stylurus spiniceps</i>	Arrow Clubtail	MESA Delisted	2008
Fish	<i>Catostomus catostomus</i>	Longnose Sucker	SC	2010
Fish	<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Bridle Shiner	SC	2010
Mussel	<i>Alasmidonta undulata</i>	Triangle Floater	Non-listed SWAP Species	2009
Mussel	<i>Strophitus undulatus</i>	Creeper	SC	2008
Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	1999
Snail	<i>Marstonia lustrica</i>	Boreal Marstonia	E	2012

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

Source: Frost, Karro, 2015. NHESP letter to Town of Lee dated June 16, 2015.

F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments

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

Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway

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

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

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

Hop Brook Wildlife Management Area & Beartown Mountain State Forest

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

Golden Hill, Town Forest, the Pinnacle and the Golden Hill Bridge

This area extends from the edge of a meadowland south of Golden Hill Road and through a microclimate of hemlock, mixed forests, brooks, and glacial outcroppings of granitic gneiss until reaching Route 20. Herein rises the Pinnacle, whose eastern vista embraces the former Shaylor Farm on Golden Hill and the dramatic expanse of October Mountain (the largest state forest in Massachusetts). Its southern and western views encompass Monument Mountain in Great Barrington, High Lawn Farm and its landmark tower, and Laurel Lake with its glimpse of "the Mount," the former estate of American writer Edith Wharton. Boundary stones in this area marked with the initials "G.W." recall that this land was a hunting preserve of the George Westinghouse estate. Included in the Golden Hill area near Bradley Street was Tuttle Bridge, a lenticular truss bridge constructed in 1885. This historic bridge has been dismantled and is now stored on the UMass campus in Amherst.

Village of East Lee

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

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

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

Glassworks Grant Area: Longcope Park and Devon Road

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

Housatonic River north to Woods Pond

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

Laurel Lake/High Lawn Farm Scenic Area

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

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

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

Ferncliff Knoll and Peter's Cave in Lee Proper

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

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

G. Environmental Challenges

Hazardous Waste

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

According to the EPA's cleanup proposal, there are three segments ("Reaches") of Rest of River in Lee where cleanup will occur, including river sections and backwaters upstream of Woods Pond (Reach 5C), Woods Pond itself (Reach 6), and the dam impoundments behind the Columbia, Eagle, and Willow mills (Reach 7).

- In Reach 5C: contaminated sediment removal and capping in the river and select floodplain areas.
- In Reach 6: contaminated sediment removal and placement of a cap, with the design generally providing a minimum water depth of six feet in the pond with shallower water

depths in the nearshore areas. Sediment removal to create Wood Pond of at least 6 feet in depth in most of pond.

- In Reach 7 impoundments: contaminated sediment removal of PCBs > 1 ppm and cap; where dam is proposed for removal, sediment removal to 1 ppm in coordination w/ removal activity. An additional option, in lieu of capping, would allow GE to excavate the sediment in each impoundment to meet an average of 1 mg/kg PCBs throughout.
- No cleanup of the flowing portion of the river between impoundments in Reach 7 is proposed.

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

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

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

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

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

Brownfield Sites

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

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

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

Core Elements of Brownfields Area-Wide Planning include:

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

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

The anticipated outcomes from this project will enable the town to:

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

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

The Town has worked with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to utilize the Berkshire Brownfields Program to undertake assessment activities and remediation through Berkshire Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund. The Town has also sought community-wide assessment funds directly through EPA to assess sites within Town focusing on the mills within the Brownfields Area-wide Planning Project. The Town has not conducted a comprehensive inventory of brownfields sites. However, since the definition of brownfields is not exclusive to sites with known contamination but rather includes sites that may have the presence or potential of contamination it is understood that any gas station, auto shop, dry cleaner, industrial site, etc. may be considered brownfields.

Landfills

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

The Town of Lee has actively spent several years pursuing the installation of a photovoltaic solar array on its closed municipal landfill off Woodland Road. The effort suffered a setback when the chosen developer went out of business in February of 2014, two months after it signed a contract to install, operate and maintain a solar facility. A subsequent effort to attract another solar developer was unsuccessful. Although the landfill is located adjacent to an Eversource substation and was permitted for reuse by the MA DEP, the cost to interconnect the system to Eversource's grid made the project uneconomical because of the size of the landfill and the limited amount of electricity that could be generated.

Schweitzer-Mauduit's closed Willow Hill landfill is much larger and has the potential to produce enough electricity to offset the cost of interconnection. The site extends into Lenox, and each community's land use permitting board has approved the solar project. Both towns have signed agreements with the developer, which will reduce the towns' electricity costs. If the project continues on schedule, it will be operational by the end of 2016.

Erosion

Because of Lee's steep topography in some portions of town, the potential for soil erosion is always present. Serious erosion problems were experienced in the construction of October Mountain Village at the base of October Mountain; so the Town is more vigilant and strictly enforces erosion control measures before, during and after construction. The Town accepted the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act in 2001, approved a map of the regulated areas in 2006 and formally filed the regulations in the Registry of Deeds in 2008. The regulations create uniform procedures regulating removal, filling, clearing of vegetation or other alteration of land within mountain regions designated by the town which are likely to have a significant adverse effect on watershed resources or natural scenic qualities.

The logging of stands of timber located on steep slopes can present erosion problems. Wise logging practices must be observed along streams and on steeply sloped watershed areas. The Massachusetts Forest Cutting Practices Act (MGL Ch. 132) requires that logging be conducted

using best management practices to protect natural and wetland resources. Commercial timber harvests can only be conducted under the conditions of a site-specific forest cutting plan, which is overseen by Department of Conservation and Recreation Service Foresters. The Conservation Commission also monitors these operations and has been successful in cleaning up several minor violations.

Chronic Flooding

The history of flooding from streams in Lee indicates that flooding can occur during any season of the year. Floods occur as a result of spring rains combined with snowmelt, rain over frozen grounds, and heavy rains associated with hurricanes in late summer and fall. Land disturbance, removal of natural vegetation and construction of impervious surface areas (e.g. buildings, parking lots, roads) exacerbates surface runoff volumes during precipitation events.

There have been a number of floods in Lee during this century. Many of East Lee's light industry was washed out in a series of floods, the most devastating taking place in 1886. The four worst floods on the Housatonic River since 1914 were recorded on January 1, 1949; September 22, 1938; March 19, 1936; and November 5, 1927.

The Town's zoning bylaw and map establish a floodplain overlay district adjacent to the Housatonic River. In that district, special permits are required for any new buildings, and the overall effect is to prohibit or severely limit construction that would increase flood levels.

In 2009 the Lee town officials worked with the BRPC to update the town's *Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan*. At this time there were several areas listed as chronically flooding during springmelt or severe precipitation events. Many sites flood because of undersized drainage infrastructure. A site of particular environmental concern is the area on Meadow Street where a junkyard property routinely floods, increasing the risk that chemicals from the stored machinery and vehicles could contamination surface and/or groundwater. Another concern is the flooding that occurs on the town's wastewater treatment plant. Recurring flood problem areas are shown in Map G in Appendix A.

Sedimentation

The potential for sedimentation problems exists where erodible soils are found on steep slopes in areas that are adjacent to water bodies. One example of the type of environmental damage that can occur in this situation occurred when a detention basin dam burst at October Mountain Village, causing significant quantities of sediment to be washed into the Coddington Brook and the "Cove Area." Although such events have been relatively rare in Lee, future

development in marginal areas will increase their likelihood if formal erosion and sedimentation control measures are not put in place.

New Development

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

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

Ground and Surface Water Pollution

Woods Pond Aquifer

A local industry is currently drawing in excess of 2 million gallons of water per day from the aquifer. Traces of PCB's were reported (Mass. DEQE, 1975) in water quality samples taken from the aquifer, suggesting that contamination may have seeped into the recharge area through induced infiltration from Woods Pond and the Housatonic River. This information led to a decision by the DEQE to discourage development of a public drinking water supply at the Woods Pond location despite significant quantities of groundwater. However, according to recent information from the Tri-Town Health Department, this aquifer is not contaminated.

Greenwater Pond Brook Aquifer

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

Septic Systems

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

Lake Eutrophication

Eutrophication is a problem that is common to both Laurel Lake and Goose Pond, and in both cases the accelerated growth of invasive non-native aquatic plants, especially Eurasian Watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), is a result. In both instances, elevated levels of phosphorous and shoreline sedimentation may be a factor in excessive plant growth. Goose Pond residents formed a lake district to deal with this and other water-related problems. Laurel Lake residents also formed a lake association. Several species of invasive aquatic plants such as milfoil and water chestnut are also found in Woods Pond.

Impaired Waterbodies

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

The MA DEP is responsible for identifying those waters that are impaired and developing a plan to bring them back into compliance with the Massachusetts Surface Water Quality Standards. The Integrated List of Waters identifies rivers, lakes, and coastal waters and the reasons for their impairment. The following river segments and waterbodies are listed as impaired in the Final Massachusetts Year 2012 Integrated List of Waters.

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

- Non-Native Aquatic Plants; Housatonic River from the confluence of Southwest Branch Housatonic River and West Branch in Pittsfield to outlet of Woods Pond in Lee impairments continued:
- Fecal Coliform;
- PCB in Fish Tissue; and
- Polychlorinated biphenyls

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

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

Laurel Lake in both Lee and Lenox is impaired by:

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

Invasive Species

Invasive aquatic plant growth impedes the recreational use of Laurel Lake, Goose Pond and Woods Pond. The aquatic plant Eurasian Water Milfoil is the plant of most concern in all these waterbodies, but water chestnut, Phragmites and purple loosestrife are also present. These plants disrupt and displace the natural plant diversities that would naturally occur in these waterbodies, diminishing the long-term survival of natural plant and wildlife populations within these areas.

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

The removal of contaminated pond sediments during the Rest of River cleanup offers the opportunity to remove the vast infestation of invasive species in the pond and upstream of it, with the added opportunity of replanting these areas with native plants. To achieve any measure of success, a long-term maintenance plan will be required to monitor these areas and quickly take action to remove new invasive plant infestations. The removal and control of invasive plants is an important yet understated benefit of the Rest of River cleanup plan for this reach of the watershed.

A three-foot annual drawdown of Laurel Lake and some hand-pulling is conducted in an effort to control excessive aquatic plant growth, primarily that of Eurasian Water Milfoil. The Goose Pond Maintenance District conducts an annual drawdown and hand-pulling efforts on Goose Pond, and periodically applies herbicides to control primarily Eurasian Water Milfoil growth. Future herbicide applications are planned to control both milfoil and Phragmites. The District and state biologists are monitoring the pond for zebra mussels and, to date, none have been found. Zebra mussels (*Dreissena polymorpha*) were discovered in Laurel Lake in July of 2009 and confirmed by the DCR Lakes and Ponds Program. DCR biologists found adults and veligers in Laurel Lake and adults in Laurel Brook. The discovery of zebra mussels in Laurel Lake prompted a series of actions by state agencies that are summarized in the Massachusetts Interim Zebra Mussel Action Plan (DCR and DFG 2009). The Interim Zebra Mussel Action Plan also provides an overview of zebra mussel species taxonomy, ecology, origin and distribution.

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

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

The DCR has installed a monitoring station and boat wash facility at the Laurel Lake public boat ramp on Rt. 20. In an effort to contain the spread of zebra mussels from the lake, monitors assigned to the boat ramp educate boat owners, check boats for signs of contamination and require boat washing.

Environmental Equity Issues

Public open space and recreational areas are found throughout the town, often extending into nearby communities (Refer to Map 7). Some neighborhoods are in close proximity to large expansive tracts of state forest lands, wildlife management areas and land trust properties, while other neighborhoods are in closer proximity to town parks or smaller forest areas. In general, those residents who live in the eastern and southern portion of the town have outstanding access to nature-related activities such as hiking, biking, hunting and wildlife viewing through state and land trust lands. However, they may have to travel for more than a mile or two to visit managed parks or athletic fields. Conversely, residents in the central or northern portion of the town are in closer proximity to town parks, athletic fields and smaller forest areas, such as Ferncliff, the Golden Hill Town Forest and the Town Farm (aka Stockbridge Road Recreation Area). The Environmental Justice area of Lee is centrally located and, depending on where inside this area a resident lives, he/she likely has a park, athletic field or small forested area within $\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of his/her home.

Maintenance of Outdoor Facilities

Maintaining public outdoor recreational facilities such as trail systems, playgrounds or parking areas is a challenge for all property owners, whether they be state, municipal or nonprofit entities. Trail systems and parking areas, particularly those located in steep terrain, can be damaged or eroded by overuse or wet weather conditions, and playground equipment can become damaged by age, weather or vandalism. Even small weather events such as a wind storm can litter a trail system with branches and render them unpassable. Litter is a constant issue in state- and town-owned parks. Although some groups have a good network of volunteers, it is difficult to maintain consistent, quality conditions. The recently established Lee Recycling Committee may be a good partner in maintaining the appearance of town parks, manning cleanup days and helping to recycle some of the waste removed, such as plastic drink bottles.

The Lee Conservation Commission does not have the resources to enhance the recreational potential of the lands that they oversee. Local residents have offered to aid the town, such as at Longcope Park, where the family that donated the land may try to install a bridge for better accessibility. An abutter to Ferncliff tried to garner support from her neighbors to clean up the area, but was unsuccessful because of residents' concerns that improving the area would attract more misuse. Lee Land Trust is an example of a small organization where a small membership struggles to maintain their organization and the lands that they protect.

Section 5

Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

A. Description of Protected and Unprotected Parcels

Lee's vast forests, wetlands, fields and meadows, in combination with extensive holdings of publicly owned land (See Map 7 in Appendix A and the Inventory on the following pages), comprise protected and unprotected assets. Residents of Lee, and the many tourists who visit the "Gateway to the Berkshires" year-round, already benefit from the extensive opportunities for passive and active recreation that exist in the state parks, wildlife protection Areas, town conservation lands, and private recreational facilities.

The following sections lists the various land parcels in the town that are undeveloped and describes whether or not those lands are available for the public to use. In general, those lands that are permanently protected for conservation and/or recreation are the most valuable to the public over the long term, as they will not be threatened with development and will remain open for future generations. For the purposes of this plan, federal and state lands are being considered permanently protected, as they are currently being maintained for conservation and/or recreational purposes. Most conservation lands owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are protected under Article 97, an amendment to the state constitution, and to remove protection status of these lands for development would require a 2/3 vote within the state legislature. Although such a scenario could occur, the action would undoubtedly be contentious and likely garner a public uproar. Other lands considered permanently protected are those owned by local land trusts, as these were purchased with a conservation intent, and lands that are prohibited from development due to placement of a deeded restriction, including conservation and agricultural restrictions.

The protection status of municipally-owned lands varies widely depending upon the circumstances under which the land was acquired. If the lands were acquired and accepted by town meeting vote that the lands are for conservation purposes, then it would take a special



act of town meeting and the state legislature to take the land out of conservation use. Lee's watershed lands surrounding the drinking water reservoirs are within this category. However, if the reservoirs were to be withdrawn as drinking water supplies for some reason, this protection status could be removed. In fact, some of these waterbodies may be attractive sites for shoreline development. Other municipally-owned conservation and recreation lands typically include parks, playing fields, playgrounds and school properties. These kinds of lands are not typically deed restricted and thus could be vulnerable to change. Although it is unlikely that Lee would sell public open space lands for development, there could arise a situation in which the public benefits of the land transfer would outweigh the cost of losing open land.

State and Federal Parklands

Over 2,047 acres of state land in South Lee and East Lee are permanently protected as part of the October Mountain and Beartown State Forests. These properties offer a variety of recreational activities including hunting, camping, fishing, snowmobiling, and cross-country skiing (See Appendix A). Some of these facilities are handicapped accessible. Areas owned by the DFW for wildlife habitat and flood protection, comprising about 383 acres at the George L. Darey Housatonic Valley and Hop Brook Wildlife Management areas in the eastern and southern areas of town, are permanently protected. The U.S. Department of the Interior also has 247 acres of land in Lee under permanent protection as part of the Appalachian Trail corridor. There is another 134.8 acres owned by the state, but is not part of any of the above land, but is wedged between the AT, the Pike, and Goose Pond and is called the Sernaker Property. There is also .4 acres owned by the state for the Laurel Lake Boat Ramp. State-owned properties are shown in green in Map 7 in Appendix A.

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

The state forest is popular with local residents for hiking, hunting, mountain biking, boating, snowmobiling and camping. As one of only a few state lands that allows off-highway vehicles (OHVs), residents can enjoy this activity without having to trailer their vehicles very far. The DCR is currently in the process of developing a resource management plan for October Mountain and has begun to host public stakeholder meetings. As part of this process, a few Lee residents attended a public input session held on March 4, 2015. They, like others at the session, requested as their highest priority that DCR fix Schermerhorn Road for easier vehicular

access into the state forest. Other recommendations included creating more loop trails, improving signage and maintaining snowmobile access. Lee residents can also easily access Beartown State Forest. At 12,000 acres it is one of the largest state properties in the Commonwealth. Outdoor activities are similar to October Mountain, including OHV use trails.

The National Park Service owns 247 acres on five parcels of land along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail corridor as it travels through the eastern portion of the town. The AT is a renowned historic long-trail reaching almost 2,200 miles between Georgia and Maine.

Town Conservation Lands

Town-owned lands under some form of permanent protection include properties under the jurisdiction of the Lee Conservation Commission and Town watershed lands. Lands to be maintained for conservation and passive recreation under Conservation Commission control include Dunn Park, Longcope Park, Ferncliff Reservation, Foote Pond Park, Edith Wharton Park, Golden Hill Town Forest, and Abbey Court Park. These parcels, totaling 196.2 acres, are all classified as permanently protected. In general the properties overseen by the Conservation Commission are forested sites with unimproved trails systems for hiking with limited parking and no facilities or picnic areas. Steep slopes are found on most sites rendering them inaccessible for physically disabled people. Hiking, wilderness camping (by permission only) and hunting (other than firearms) are allowed. Commercial activity and motorized vehicles are prohibited. In addition, the Town owns 120 acres of the Stockbridge Road Recreation Area (aka Town Farm), which was originally acquired for a proposed municipal golf course. The primary goal should be to police and protect the existing trails from overuse and fragmentation of habitat on all Town conservation lands. New trail development should be determined on a case by case basis always mindful of the mission to protect conservation lands.

The Town also owns over 587 acres of watershed land in the eastern portion of town. This land was acquired to protect the town's drinking water supply. Recreation is not permitted on the watershed lands.

Other Town-Owned Land

Town owned lands not subject to permanent protection include pocket neighborhood parks, school grounds and playing fields, and areas for active recreation. Approximately 298 acres falls into this category, 48 acres of which is a portion of the Stockbridge Road Recreation Area (aka Town Farm). In addition there is the 7-acre Riverfront Park was created in the downtown Lee area utilizing a grant from the State Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Most are handicapped accessible.

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

Current available data indicate over 3,131 acres of land are currently classified as "chapter lands," signifying that they are taxed under one of three use categories affording the property temporary protection. These are Chapter 61 (forestry) 1,316 acres, Chapter 61A (agriculture) 1,815 acres, and Chapter 61B (recreation) 0 acres. Public access to these properties requires property owner permission. These parcels are shown outlines in red on Map 7 in Appendix A.

Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) Program

The agricultural preservation restriction program makes it economically feasible for a property to remain permanently in agriculture when the State purchases the development rights. The Town of Lee currently has only two farms: Courser Brook Farm on Tyringham Road and the Bartini/LaFattoria LLC on Golden Hill Road (former mill property), that are participating in this program, totaling 237 acres. These areas are shown in pink on Map 7.

Protected Non-Profit Land and Conservation Restrictions

Current available data indicate over 1,793 acres of land are protected lands, which are owned outright by non-profits or held in conservation restriction by them. The three non-profit landowners include the Lee Land Trust (Barlow Property 87 acres, Williams property 30 acres), the Trustees of Reservation (Goose Pond Reservation 108 acres), and Berkshire Natural Resources Council (several sites = 961+ acres). Land-trust-owned lands are shown in yellow on Map 7. An additional 953 acres are in private ownership with conservation restrictions held by Berkshire Natural Resources Council (shown in pink on Map 7). A notable 207-acre conservation restriction, negotiated by Lee Land Trust and BNRC, is held on land owned by Silverleaf Resorts at the Oak N' Spruce Resorts property.

Privately Owned Recreation and Open Space

The final category of recreation and open space involves land that is in some type of recreational use but is privately owned and unprotected from development. Notable properties include the Oak and Spruce Resort, which offers year-round trails and indoor swimming and other recreational amenities, and the Greenock Country Club (61 acres) that offers golf to the public. In these cases, access is by fee only. Smaller private parcels open to the public free of charge include St. Mary's School grounds, Lee Bank Little League Field, Marble Street Playground, Sandy Beach and Lee Congregational Town Park.

B. Lands with Permanent Protection

State Property

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

Site Name	Manager	Acreage	Use	Activities	Public Access	Level of Protection	Comments	Zoning
Beartown State Forest	DCR	15.1	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Darey Housatonic Valley WMA	DFG	16.8	Conservation/ Recreation/Wildlife habitat	Canoeing, hiking, hunting, fishing	Y	Permanent		CR
Darey Housatonic Valley	DFG	16.3	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Darey Housatonic Valley	DFG	10.2	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	137.7	Conservation/ Recreation/Wildlife Habitat	Fishing, hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	89.4	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	56.6	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	28.2	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	19.5	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Hop Brook WMA	DFG	9.1	See above	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Sernaker Property	DCR	134.8	Conservation/ Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR/RB

Federal Property

Site Name	Manager	Acreage	Use	Activities	Public Access	Level of Protection	Comments	Zoning
Appalachian Trail	National Park	191.5	Recreation	Hiking	Y	Permanent		CR
Appalachian Trail	National Park	28.6	Recreation	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Appalachian Trail	National Park	18.2	Recreation	See above	Y	Permanent		CR
Appalachian Trail	National Park	5.3	Recreation	See above	Y	Permanent		RB
Appalachian Trail	National Park	3.5	Recreation	See above	Y	Permanent		CR

Protected Non-Profit Land

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Access</i>	<i>Level of Protection</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Zoning</i>
Basin Pond	Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC)	Non-Profit	294.3	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR
Basin Pond	BNRC	Non-Profit	3.0	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR
Chestnut Street Preserve	BNRC	Non-Profit	245.4	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR
Chestnut St Preserve	BNRC)	Non-Profit	130.4	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR
Polatnik & Goodman	BNRC	Non-Profit	19.3	Conservation /Recreation /Fishing	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		R-20/CR
Polatnik	BNRC	Non-Profit	5.5	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		I
	BNRC	Non-Profit	3.0	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR
Goose Pond Reservation	The Trustees of Reservation	Non-Profit	107.7	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking, hunting	Y	Permanent		CR
Blanche Barlow Acres	Lee Land Trust	Non-Profit	41.7	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking	Y	Permanent		CR
Blanche Barlow Acres	Lee Land Trust	Non-Profit	32.1	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking	Y	Permanent		RB
Blanche Barlow Acres	Lee Land Trust	Non-Profit	13.1	Conservation /Recreation	Hiking	Y	Permanent		CR
Williams Property	Lee Land Trust	Non-Profit	30.0	Conservation /Recreation	Not Available	Y	Permanent		RA-40

Protected Land- Agricultural Preservation Restriction

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Access</i>	<i>Level of Protection</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Zoning</i>
Courser Brook Farm	Thomas Touponce	Private	119.9	Agriculture	Agriculture	N	Permanent	DAR APR	CR/R-20
La Fattoria Farm	La Fattoria LLC	Private	82.8	Agriculture	Agriculture	N	Permanent	DAR APR	RA 40
La Fattoria Farm	La Fattoria LLC	Private	34.0	Agriculture	Agriculture	N	Permanent	DAR APR	RA 40

Protected Land- Conservation Restriction

<i>Site Name</i>	<i>Owner</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Use</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Public Access</i>	<i>Level of Protection</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Zoning</i>
Yale Hill Road CR	Sarah Begley	Private	7.3	Conservation	Private	N	Permanent	BNRC Owns CR	RA-40
Zeif	Zeif	Private	8.1	Conservation	Unknown	Unknown	Permanent	BNRC owns CR	CR
Davis CR	HW Davis	Private	607.6	Conservation	Private	N	Permanent	BNRC Owns CR	CR
Davis CR	HW Davis	Private	0.4	Conservation	Private	N	Permanent	BNRC Owns CR	CR
Davis CR	HW Davis	Private	102.9	Conservation	Private	N	Permanent	BNRC Owns CR	CR
Culleton CR	BNRC	Private	29.5	Conservation	Private	N	Permanent		Flood-plain
Silverleaf	BNRC	Non-Profit	204.7	Conservation/ Recreation	Unknown	N	Permanent		CR

C. Land with Various Levels of Protection

Town of Lee

Site Name & (Parcel #)	Manager	Acreage	Use, Activities	Public Access	Level of Protection	Funding	Zoning	Condition and Recreation Potential
Reservoir Land 5-1, 5-4, 5-6, 9-1, 9-10, 10-1, 10-2	Water Department	587.4 (7 parcels)	None- drinking water protection	N	Permanent	Town funds	CR/RA-40	Excellent - Drinking water supply protection – no public access
Edith Wharton Park 6-4	Conservation Commission	Lee: 3.1 Lenox: 12.0	Hiking, fishing	Y	Permanent	Funds from BNRC	RA-40	Not developed - Possible future recreation area
Bradley St. Playground 8-23	Town of Lee	0.9	Playground, basketball courts	Y	Limited		RA-40	Fair -- ADA parking and other improvements needed
Golden Hill/ Town Forest- The Pinnacle 7-49	Conservation Commission	69.5	Hiking, picnicking	Y	Permanent		R-20/CR	Fair -- Existing rustic trail system. May need future trail improvements.
Maple St. Property 19A-86	DPW	38.3	Baseball, XC skiing, hiking	Y	Limited	Town funds	RA-40	Good -- ADA parking and other improvements needed
Maple Street 19-39	Conservation Commission/ DPW	6.2	Baseball, neighborhood activities and conservation land	Y	Permanent	Self-Help Grant	RA-40	Good – Already fully developed, but ADA parking and other improvements needed

Site Name & (Parcel #)	Manager	Acreage	Use, Activities	Public Access	Level of Protection	Funding	Zoning	Condition and Recreation Potential
Ferncliff Reservation 12A-247, 13-174, 19A-10, 19A-11	Conservation Commission	18.3	Wildlife habitat/hiking/ 2 ballfields @ west end	Y	Permanent		R-20	Fair -- Existing rustic trails, possible future easier hiking trail
River Park 18a-48	DPW	.5	Sitting, gazebo	Y	Limited	Town funds	PCVC	Excellent – Existing site developed, but possible bike path/river walk on adjacent town lots
Dunn Park 17-42A	Conservation Commission	32.6	Walking	Y	Permanent	Gift	RA-40	Undeveloped – Wet conditions and other constraints limit expanded use
Athletic Field 19A-115	DPW	.5	Walking, playing field, tennis	Y	Limited		CBC	Excellent -- ADA parking and other improvements needed
Athletic Field 19-1	DPW	4.0	2 tennis courts, 1 baseball field	Y	Limited		CBC	Excellent -- ADA parking and other improvements needed
East Lee Park 20-33	DPW	1.6	Baseball field, playground	Y	Permanent	Purchased from State	RA-40	Fair – High potential for adding & upgrading; ADA parking and other improvements needed
Longcope Park 23-31	Conservation Commission	45.6	Hiking	Y	Permanent	Gift	RA-40	Fair - Existing rustic hiking trails

Site Name & (Parcel #)	Manager	Acreage	Use, Activities	Public Access	Level of Protection	Funding	Zoning	Condition and Recreation Potential
South Lee Playground 29-39	DPW	.4	Playground/ basketball, War Memorial	Y	Permanent		RB	Excellent – High potential for adding & upgrading ADA parking and other improvements needed
Town Farm (Stockbridge Rd Rec. Area) 24-1	Select Board	48.3	Open Land	Y	None	Town funds	RA-40	Undeveloped – High potential for future recreation use
Town Farm (Stockbridge Rd Rec. Area) 24-31b	Select Board	120.3	Open Land	Y	Permanent	Town funds	RA-40	Undeveloped – High potential for future recreation use
Town Soccer Fields 25-101	DPW	21.3	Soccer fields	Y	None		T-20	Good – Fully developed; ADA parking and other improvements needed
Lee Elem & High School 19A-73	School Department	34.9	1 football, 1 practice football, 2 soccer, cross country, baseball, lacrosse, sledding, softball, basketball court, tennis courts	Y	Limited		R-20	Good – Fully developed; ADA parking and other improvements needed. Land constraints.
Abbey Court 13-154	School Department	20.9	See above	Y	Limited	Town funds	R-20	Fair – Fully developed; ADA parking and other improvements needed
Fairmount Cemetery 19-47	DPW	26.2	Walking	Y	Permanent		RA-40	Excellent -- Paved driveway for walking. No potential for expanded recreation

Site Name & (Parcel #)	Manager	Acreage	Use, Activities	Public Access	Level of Protection	Funding	Zoning	Condition and Recreation Potential
Meadow St Cemetery 35-6		1.2	Walking	Y	Permanent		RA-40	Fair – Used for walking. No potential for expanded recreation
Lenox Town Beach 7-8	Town of Lenox	1.2	Swimming	Y	Unknown	RA-40	RA-40 / RB	Good – Fully developed

D. Lands with Temporary Protection

Chapter 61 Lands - Forestry

Site Name	Owner	Status	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection	Map & Lot #	Zoning
Beer	Cy & Ronni Beer	Private	20.2	N	Temporary	27-41	CR
Benjamin	Mark and Sciacca Benjamin	Private	30.9	N	Temporary	12-196	RA-40 / R-30
Bruce	David & Donna Bruce	Private	56.1	N	Temporary	31-1111-6	CR
Carrington	Marion Carrington	Private	43.2	N	Temporary	14-25	CR
Dooley	Joanne & Michael Dooley	Private	57.7	N	Temporary	19-44, 19-44A	CR/R-20/R-40
Feit	Irving Felt	Private	25.5	N	Temporary	23-25	RA-40
Garrity	Steven Garrity	Private	79.4	N	Temporary	9-3, 9-4, 9-6, 9-8	CR
Hogencamp	Robert, Brian & Brenda Hogencamp	Private	72.2	N	Temporary	4-41, 4-44	RA_40
Horace Davis	Horace W Davis Realty Trust	Private	861.5	N	Temporary	21-39B, 21-1111-8	CR
Iselin	David R Iselin Trustee	Private	28.3	N	Temporary	23-29C, 23-29D, 23-29E	RA-40
Misrok	Lawrence & Ruth Misrok	Private	18.8	N	Temporary	27-126	CR
Smith	Henry Smith	Private	22.2	N	Temporary	33-1111-19, 33-1111-26	CR

Chapter 61 A- Agriculture

Site Name	Owner	Status	Acreage	Public Access	Level of Protection	Map & Lot #	Zoning
Bartini J	John & Nanette Bartini	Private	8.7	N	Temporary	28-21	RB
Bartini R	Robert Bartini	Private	14.7	N	Temporary	24-2	RA-40
Brittain	Christopher Brittain	Private	30.8	N	Temporary	24-13	RA-40
Brookside	Brookside Family Realty	Private	46.3	N	Temporary	18-1	RA-40
Carrington	David Carrington	Private	35.7	N	Temporary	13-184	CR/R-20
Field	Alice Field	Private	30.5	N	Temporary	19-49	RA-40
Ford	Meredith Ford	Private	256.2	N	Temporary	35-15, 35-17A	CR/RA-40
Fraser D	Dorothy Fraser	Private	43.6	N	Temporary	18-4B, 8-7	RA-40/ R-
Fraser J	John Fraser	Private	14.4	N	Temporary	18-8	RA-40
High Lawn Farm	High Lawn Realty	Private	754.6	N	Temporary	6-1, 6-5, 11-1, 11-2, 11-3, 11-5, 11-6, 11-7, 11-8, 11-9, 1-14, 12-202	RA-40/R-30
Holmes	Mildred Holmes	Private	16.2	N	Temporary	17-41	RA_40
Johansen	Mary Johansen	Private	30.5	N	Temporary	23-24A	RA-40
Leahey	Leahey Dairy	Private	305.5	N	Temporary	8-43	RA-40/CR
Shafiroff	Braxton Shafiroff	Private	8.7	N	Temporary	35-11B	CR
Stevenson	Stevenson Family	Private	92.8	N	Temporary	36-4B	CR
Terry	Ronald & Carol Terry	Private	6.1	N	Temporary	23-21	RA-40
Touponce	Thomas Touponce	Private	119.9	N	Temporary	31-1111-2	CR/R-20

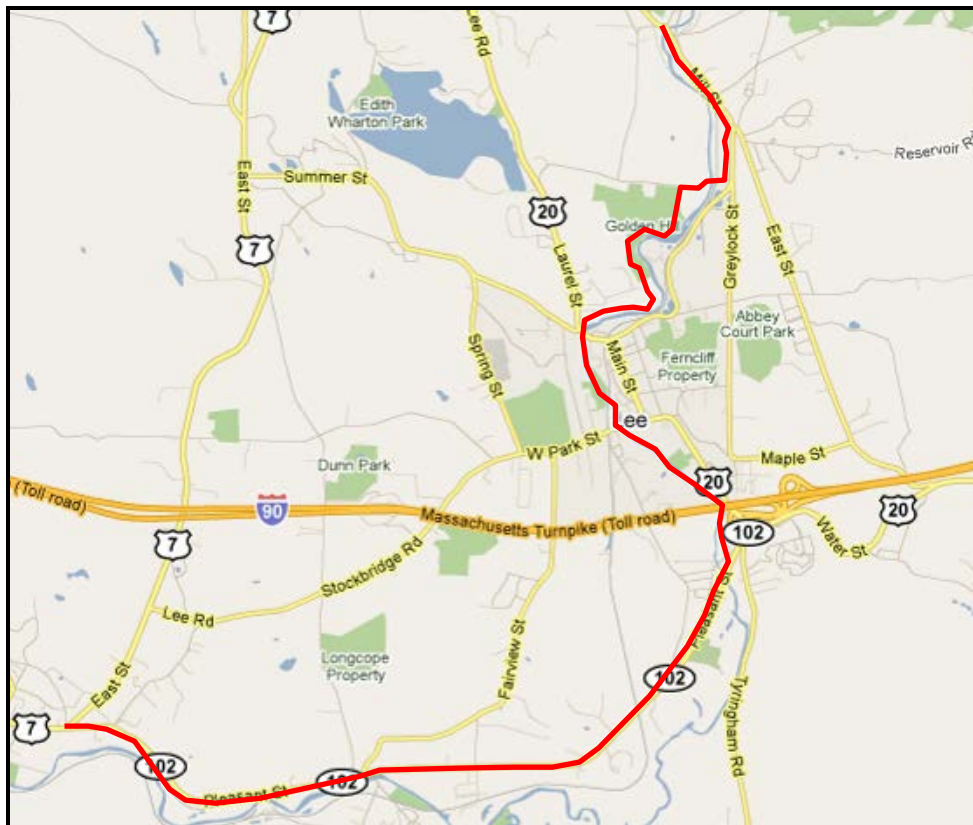
E. Unprotected Private Lands Important to the Town

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

F. Inventory of Recreational Opportunities

Bicycle/Pedestrian Path

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



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

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

Summary of Passive Recreation Opportunities

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

<i>Existing Recreational Opportunities</i>					
<i>Activity</i>	<i>K - 8</i>	<i>8 - 12</i>	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Disabled</i>
Swimming	X	X	X	X	X
Tennis	X	X	X	X	X
Basketball	X	X	X		
Baseball	X	X			
Softball (team)	X	X	X		
Soccer	X	X	X		
Lacrosse	X	X			
Football	X	X			
Playgrounds	X				
Bicycling	X	X	X	X	
Shooting Sports	X	X	X	X	X
Golf	X	X	X	X	
Girl Scouts	X	X			X
Boy Scouts	X	X			X
Skiing	X	X	X	X	X
Snowshoeing	X	X	X	X	
Ice Skating	X	X	X		
Snowmobile Riding	X	X	X	X	X

<i>Existing Recreational Opportunities</i>					
<i>Activity</i>	<i>K - 8</i>	<i>8 - 12</i>	<i>Adult</i>	<i>Senior</i>	<i>Disabled</i>
Fishing/Ice Fishing	X	X	X	X	X
Hunting		X	X	X	X
Canoeing/Kayaking	X	X	X	X	
Camping	X	X	X	X	X
Walking/Running	X	X	X	X	
Hiking	X	X	X	X	
Indoor Fitness			X		
Gardening	X	X	X	X	X

G. Inventory of Public Recreational Areas

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

Section 6

Community Vision

A. Description of Process

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



B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

The 'vision' statement for the Open Space and Recreation Plan is stated below. Lee residents' vision for the future is that the community should work together to:

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

Goals are:

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

Section 7

Analysis of Needs

The analysis of needs is based upon the results of a community survey which was distributed to all households in the Town of Lee and the planning process described in Section II. An important part of this process was a review of the draft 2000 *Lee Open Space and Recreation Plan* to evaluate how well the town has



performed in meeting the goals and objectives stated in that draft plan. During the planning process, the issue of whether those needs that remain unaddressed are still valid was considered in light of changing demographics, development trends and newly defined community preferences.

A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

Within the past decade the Town has experienced little new development and is not faced with the increasing development pressure felt when the resource protection needs were identified in the 1989 Recreation and Open Space Plan. The recession that began in 2007-08 and continues in 2015 is to some extent responsible for this. In contrast to development pressure, four of the last five paper mills in town ceased operation in 2008. The Town recognizes that the redevelopment of these previously developed sites is a critical component in striking the appropriate balance between both conservation and an aggressive effort to promote economic development. The need and rationale for such a balance is best summarized in the mission statement for the Town's Economic Development Plan and Strategy (1995) which concludes that *"A vital economic base will maintain and increase our quality of life by respecting and contributing to our social and physical setting."*

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

Redevelopment of existing developed lands is preferential to development of marginal lands which would place increasing pressure on the environmentally sensitive areas of Lee, as well as those features that contribute to the character and identity of the Town. While the same development pressures of the 1980s are not a reality today, it is no less important to preserve the agricultural and rural character of the community, the integrity of the hilltops and hillsides, the quality of drinking water and the water relied on for recreation, the continued availability of diverse habitat for wildlife, the continued viability of special environments, including those that support rare and endangered species of plants, and the cultural diversity of the community.

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

Water Resources

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

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

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

Although the Town has adequate drinking water supply to support the needs of the existing community and future redevelopment, the Town's infrastructure is inadequate. In particular is the provision of adequate fire flow water pressure. The existing infrastructure is inadequate to provide the fire flow water pressure required by many redevelopment projects. For example, the existing available fire flows at the Eagle Mill are approximately 2,700 gal. per minute (gpm) and fire flows drop to 1,000 gpm at the southern end of Main Street. In assessing the Eagle

Mill redevelopment options, the anticipated fire flows needed for the proposed project is 4,500 gpm. The construction of replacement water lines comprising 11,400 linear feet of new water main running from the town's water treatment facility to the southern end of Main Street could provide fire flows to the Eagle Mill in excess of 4,500 and further improve fire flows within Main Street to 3,500 gpm. These improvements would also benefit the Columbia and Greylock mills fostering private investment in the area while at the same time increasing fire safety generally in the downtown and surrounding area. In addition, the water main improvements would also serve an area of the downtown center that encompasses very attractive redevelopment opportunities which the town has previously identified (West Side Development Area).

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

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

The Town is fortunate that the DFW has recognized the value of Lee's wetland areas and has made a major investment in the acquisition of wetlands in the Hop Brook and Woods Pond areas. There are other sites, however, which are endangered and in need of protection.

Rest of River

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

Two sites in the town of Lee have been identified by GE as potential permanent disposal sites for PCB-contaminated sediments that will be dredged from the Housatonic Rest of River during cleanup activities. The sites identified are Lane Construction Corporation Sand & Gravel and a

site on Forest Street. The Town has stated unequivocally to GE, the EPA and the DEP that it will not accept the landfilling of PCB sediments within town borders.

According to the *Cleanup of the Housatonic "Rest of River" Socioeconomic Impact Study* residential properties near a future PCB landfill could decline in value by 3.5 percent, and that commercial, industrial and agricultural properties could decline by 1.75 percent. Although the PCB landfills would not be "hazardous waste landfills" according to EPA's regulatory definition, the hazardous waste price effect is appropriate to use given likely public attitudes toward these disposal facilities. The distance from the potential landfill locations over which this effect would apply is assumed to be 3 miles, which is the mean distance at which an effect was detected in the studies analyzed by EPA.

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

Steep Slopes

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

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

Wildlife and Vegetation

The Town of Lee is fortunate in having ample wildlife habitat at two of the state's largest state forests: October Mountain and Beartown Mountain. These, in combination with the Hop Brook Wildlife Management Area, provide habitat for a diversity of woodland and wetland wildlife. If there is any real threat, it is to the smaller animals that live along the habitat "edges" between small woods, fields, along the brooks and Housatonic River in the more developed western portion of town. Such areas will become even more fragmented as development continues. Particular attention also needs to be paid to those environments that support rare or endangered species of plants or animals. Monitoring conservation land and removing non-native species before they become a problem and impact native species is strongly recommended.

NHESP has identified Priority Conservation Areas that are locally and regionally important to long-term biodiversity. These areas are shown on maps on pages 8-9 of the *Lee BioMap2 Guiding Land Conservation for Biodiversity in Massachusetts* report (2011).

Farmland

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

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

High Lawn Farm encompasses approximately 1,500 acres, approximately 750 acres of which are in Lee, with the remainder in Stockbridge. Because of its location along their borders, the towns of Stockbridge and Lenox can also be considered stakeholders in this farm. The loss of this farm in particular, but of agricultural landscapes in general, would have a profound impact upon the character and identity of the Lee.

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

B. Summary of Community Needs

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

The 2015 Open Space and Recreation Plan Survey, a 16-question instrument (a copy of which is included in the appendix) was widely distributed in town and the school system. Two hundred twenty five (225) copies of the questionnaire were returned. Sixty-four percent (64%) of the survey respondents felt that recreational needs were not being met for residents across the board, with particular emphasis on the children and young adults. However, a significant number of respondents (44%) indicated that more opportunities were also needed for adults.

Respondents to the survey indicated strong support for additional walking paths, bike paths, hiking / walking trails, swimming areas or access, playgrounds and walking loops along public roadways. Ninety percent or greater of the Lee survey respondents indicated they would support recreational improvements to these areas. This reflects their activities of choice, which are walking, hiking and swimming. It also reflects the demographics of the town, which has a relatively high percentage of older adults. This is consistent with the survey results provided by residents and recreational land managers from across the state during the development of the draft *Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)* of 2012. During the public participation process for this plan, residents who attended the local public SCORP meeting in Pittsfield on November 16, 2011, restated their desire for improving and expanding trails in the region.

Laurel Lake and Sandy Beach were indicated as being highly used with over 60% of the respondents indicating they use either resource greater than 6 times per year, with a quarter of the respondents using either area more than 16 times per year. However, continued public access to Sandy Beach is not guaranteed. The beach itself is privately owned by High Lawn Farm, but the owners have allowed the town to use the beach for its residents for 85 years. The Town is hopeful that this very generous seasonal donation of private land for use as a beach continues, but there is no guarantee. Additionally, the access road to the beach is privately owned. Originally the property of the paper mills, in 2008 the road was purchased by Laurel Lake Power and then subdivided with Tom and Katie Scheurer, who have continued to

allow residents to use their road to access Sandy Beach. While the Town is hopeful that this generous contribution will continue, it too is not guaranteed. The Town should investigate alternatives to secure a permanent publicly accessible beach for future generations.

Lenox Beach (at Laurel Lake) extends into Lee. Currently this beach is available for use only by residents of Lenox. In the past the towns have shared their facilities when special cases have arisen, and continued cooperation in this regard should be fostered and formalized with the Town of Lenox to secure public swimming for Lee residents.

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

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

A desire for developing and maintaining hiking trails, improving access, and providing open space linkages between the various town, state and other protected properties was supported by the results of the survey. Included in this is a need to integrate the Housatonic River into the open space network, through a greenway. Riverfront Park and the downtown section of the river must be considered prime elements of a broader open space system that will link the downtown with other areas of town and ultimately with the regional open space/recreation network. A natural greenway could be utilized by bicyclists, hikers, canoeists, and for nature activities. Federal and transportation funds are currently being used for the design of a Walkway/Bikeway along or in relatively close proximity to the Housatonic River.

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) allows communities to collect funding for conservation, outdoor recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing. Community preservation monies are raised locally through the imposition of a surcharge of not more than 3% of the tax levy against real property. The CPA must be accepted at town meeting and through public referendum. To date, 160 municipalities in Massachusetts have adopted CPA. Fifty percent of the survey respondents indicated they would support the adoption of the CPA. Another 24% indicated they are unsure of their support for the CPA. This seems to indicate an educational effort about the CPA may result in its adoption.

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

C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

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

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

The ADA evaluation of the town's recreational spaces, conducted as part of this open space and recreation plan, alerted the town that almost all town parks and playing fields need parking and other improvements to increase the universal accessibility of the sites. However, town resources to correct deficiencies are limited. Catherine Carchedi of AdLib Inc., the county's accessibility and independent living advocate, suggested tackling the improvements on a small but constant basis. Making sure a handicap portable toilet is ordered for each park site that receives them is an immediate step that can easily be done. Regarding improvements, she suggested focusing first on the parks that serve the greatest number of disabled residents. Parking and pathways should be prioritized to allow disabled persons and seniors to access the

parks, and additional improvements such as handicap picnic tables and playground equipment can be addressed after these higher priorities.

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

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

Section 8

Goals and Objectives

Note: Objectives are bulleted

A. Open Space

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

B. Recreation

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

- increase public awareness of town parks and properties;
- upgrade access to Parks;
- provide picnic areas and hiking trails at parks where feasible;
- maintain park areas and trails;
- provide inter-connectivity through greenways linking recreational areas;
- educate the public on environmental issues related to Lee parks and public lands;
- support the development of a multi-use bike/walking path through the town;
- work with the Town of Lenox to investigate opportunities for new recreational amenities such as bike/walking paths and boat launches along the Housatonic River as part of PCB cleanup efforts.

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

- maintain and promote presently existing recreation lands and activities in Lee;
- encourage appropriate recreation on town-owned conservation lands where feasible;
- broaden programs for teenagers;
- broaden handicapped access to recreational/conservation areas as much as possible;
- seek permanent protection of privately-owned recreational facilities used by Lee residents to ensure their future availability

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 9

Seven-Year Action Plan

This Action Plan will require a commitment of additional town staff resources to accomplish all the actions listed. This commitment is mentioned within the Action Plan. In determining priorities for action, the Task Force took into consideration the findings documented in the plan, the findings of the ADA report, and the responses of town residents as expressed through the town-side survey and the comments received during the public outreach process. In general, High Priority Actions were those that deserved immediate attention and focus, Moderate Priority Actions were those that should be conducted in an on-going basis, and Low Priority Actions were those that, due to complexity and/or long timelines, would not likely be accomplished during the seven-year life of this plan. The short list of organization actions directly below transcend individual goals.



<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Continue to incorporate public desires and wants into planning efforts in town	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Lee Youth Commission	Other town boards and officials
Meet with representatives of key surrounding towns to discuss subregional planning issues and sharing services	Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Town Administrator, Lee Youth Commission	Surrounding towns, including Lenox and, Stockbridge; Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Seek external funding for community-supported projects and improvements. Identify and actively apply/lobby for state or federal grants.	Town Administrator	Selectmen, Exec. Off. of Energy & Env. Affairs, Dept of Housing & Community Dev., Dept. of Cons. & Rec., Dept of Env. Prot., Dept. of Transp. and other state and federal agencies
Annually reconvene the Lee OSRP Task Force to document implementation of the status of the 7-Year Action Plan, record successes and challenges and revise strategies where necessary.	Lee OSRP Task Force	Town Administrator, Select Bd., Conservation Comm., Lee Youth Comm., Planning Bd., DPW, Lee Land Trust, Lee Recycling Com

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

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

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Investigate planning tools and environmental protection regulatory methods and tailor them to address Lee's needs	L	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

Perform site evaluations, and work jointly with other public and private entities and property owners on an on-going basis	M	Conservation Commission	On-going	Planning Board
Continue to support and participate in regional initiatives and organizations such as Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic River Restoration, Tri-Town Health, Berkshire Bike Path Council	M	All Boards	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, the Housatonic Valley Association, Housatonic River Restoration, Tri-Town Health, BBPC
Continue to participate in the Rest of River efforts related to the clean-up of PCB contamination of the Housatonic River	H	Selectmen, Town Administrator	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, surrounding towns
Encourage/support efforts to concentrate development around the center and existing settled areas and through redevelopment/reuse of existing land and buildings	M	Planning Board, Town Administrator	On-going	Selectmen, Zoning Board
Work to ensure that farms in Lee remain intact, viable resources for future generations to enjoy. Consider voluntary preservation, economic programs, tax use reduction programs, such as Chapter 61 A and regulatory solutions.	H	Town Administrator	On-going	APR program, Lee Land Trust, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Board of Assessors, working with property owners, the towns of Lenox and Stockbridge, and other organizations, Lee Agricultural Commission
Survey Lee residents to determine if they would offer a parcel of land for agricultural use	M	Lee Land Trust	2016 – 2023	Berkshire Natural Resource Council
Obtain grant funds to work with residents to transform land into agricultural use	M	Lee Land Trust	2016 – 2022	BRNC, U.S. Nat. Resources Conservation Service

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Oversee the preservation of designated historic buildings and the Downtown and South Lee districts, and ensure careful development in or near historic sites as appropriate	M	Lee Historical Commission	On-going	Massachusetts Historical Commission, property owners
Consider and prepare addition historic designations where feasible and prudent	M	Lee Historical Commission	On-going	Property owners
Investigate, plan and implement the restoration of buildings and park sites in downtown area	H	Other Boards, Lee Historical Commission	On-going	Massachusetts Historical Commission
Preserve and encourage local enjoyment of JLT Scenic Byway	M	Planning Board, Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc., Department of Public Works	On-going	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Promote the <i>Open Space and Recreation Plan</i> and get town groups to agree to participate in implementation	M	Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Lee Youth Commission, Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works	On-going	Lee Land Trust
Expand awareness and support of conservation properties, and potential means of protecting and preserving additional lands such as easements, deed restrictions, acquisition, or Chapter programs	M	Lee Land Trust; Conservation Commission	2016 - 2017	Lee Agricultural Comm, Berkshire Natural Resource Council

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Obtain grant funds to enhance and repair trails, remove fallen trees in key locations, survey or identify boundaries on certain lands in order to determine appropriate used such as hiking trails	H	Lee Land Trust; Conservation Commission	On-going	Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works
Create a plan for education on environmental issues. This could include such items as work within the school system and community utilizing volunteers. It could contain information about the risks and potential hazards related to non-point source pollution, forestry practices, focusing not only on development impacts but on the common and everyday activities of residents.	M	Conservation Commission, Lee School District, Lee Land Trust	On-going	Housatonic Valley Assoc., Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Dept. of Environmental Protection
Fund and implement plan for environmental education, including respect and stewardship for natural spaces. This could include establishing outdoor ethics such as carry in/carry out and home habits such as recycling.	M	Conservation Commission, Lee School District	2017-2022	Housatonic Valley Assoc., Boy Scouts, Lee High School, Lee Middle and High School Science Dept.

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Provide a staffed passive recreational program that utilizes the efforts of volunteers and protects conservation lands and wildlife habitat	L	Conservation Commission	On-going	Boy Scouts, Kiwanis
Work towards improving accessibility to recreational resource areas	H	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission	2016-2022	

5A. Parks

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Recruit private groups and volunteers to share some responsibility for the town parks and trails	H	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission	2016-17	Boy Scouts, Kiwanis
Provide picnic area and trail access at town parks where feasible	M	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission - if land under their control	2017	Dept. of Public Works
Investigate and follow-up possibilities to own or long term lease existing private recreational facilities public access is not guaranteed	L	Town Administrator	On-going	Lee Youth Commission
Work to obtain permanent public access to Sandy Beach; seek funding if needed	H	Town Administrator, Sandy Beach Committee, Lee Youth Commission	2015 and on- going	Town of Lee, private landowner, PARC or other grant funds

5B. Trails

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Create/approve preliminary plan to interconnect recreational areas through greenways and trail networks	M	Lee Youth Commission, other Boards, Conservation Commission	2016-22	Other Boards, Housatonic River groups, property owners

Work to establish new bike paths that connect Lee with Stockbridge and Lenox, especially in conjunction with the clean-up of the Housatonic River and re-development of the mills. Focus on finalizing a bike/pedestrian route to connect path between Lee Bank and Lenox Dale; pursue funding for design and construction of bike/ped path from West Park Street northward	H	Lee Bikeway Committee, Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works, Lee Youth Commission		MassDOT, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Work with MassDOT to create bike lanes on Route 102 between Big Y and the Stockbridge Town line	H	Lee Bikeway Committee, Town Administrator, Dept. of Public Works, Lee Youth Commission	2016	MassDOT, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Complete design and construction of a bike/pedestrian path between Big Y and Lee Bank at West Park St.	H	Town Administrator, Lee Bike Committee Conservation Commission, Lee Youth Commission	2017	MassDOT, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
Plan additional phases/means of interconnecting recreational areas	L	Lee Youth Commission, other Boards	2020	Property owners
Work to establish additional canoe access points	M	Housatonic Valley Association, Lee Youth Commission	2016-22	

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Secure continued access to private lands used for public recreation through voluntary donations, easements or acquisition. Outdoor recreation ethics, such as respect for private	M	Lee Youth Commission	On-going	Town, Lee Youth Association, Conservation Commission, Goose Pond Maintenance District, Lee Sandy Beach, Silverleaf Resorts, Lee

land, speaking in low tones, and carry in/carry out should be stressed to foster good relationships with landowners.				Bank, Greenock Gold Club, Lee Lime, St. Mary's School, Congregational Church,
Provide a suitably staffed active recreational program that leverages the efforts of volunteers. Evaluate and restructure programs as necessary.	L	Lee Youth Association	On-going	Lee Youth Commission
Broaden and support programs for teenagers	M	Lee Youth Association, Lee Library	On going	Lee Youth Commission, Lee Community Tennis Assoc., Southern Berkshire System of Health

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Have volunteer groups/organizations take responsibility for maintenance of playgrounds; work with the Recycling Committee to provide ways to minimize trash and increase recycling	H	Lee Youth Commission; Lee Recycling Committee	2016	DPW
Upgrade playground equipment in all playgrounds in town, starting with the Lee Athletic Field	H	Lee Youth Commission	2016-2020	DPW
Maintain existing recreational facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tennis Courts • Basketball Court • Volleyball Courts • Pavilion • Skateboard Park • Ice skating in winter • Baseball Field/Soccer Field • Playground • Swimming 	H	Lee Youth Commission	On-going	Lee Youth Association, Lee Community Tennis Association, Other recreation groups

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Investigate options (conduct feasibility analysis) for expanding outdoor recreational fields/facilities, starting with the Town's Stockbridge Road Recreation Area	H	Lee Youth Commission	2017	Lee School District, DPW, Consultant(s)

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Cooperatively investigate options for expanding/building indoor recreational facilities to include: Community Center building for: Lee Youth Association, Day care center, after school activities, teen and adult functions, elderly programs and possibly more	H	Lee Youth Commission, Town Administrator	2016-2022	Lee School District, Consultant(s), Lee Youth Association, Lee Community Tennis Association
Select preferred options for indoor recreational facilities	M	Lee Youth Commission	2016-2022	DPW, other Boards, private property owners
Plan, hold public hearings/meetings and secure funding commitments for expanded indoor recreational facilities	M	Lee Youth Commission	2016-2022	Select Board, general public, Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation, State Grants
Begin phase I of implementing expanded indoor facilities	L	Lee Youth Commission, Lee Youth Association	2018-22	Independent Contractors

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

<i>Suggested Actions</i>	<i>Priority for Action</i>	<i>Suggested Leadership</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Other Resources, Funding, Participants</i>
Encourage town organizations to participate in implementation of the Open Space and Recreation Plan	M	Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, Lee Youth Commission	On-going	Lee Youth Association
Develop and distribute brochures describing all town parks and properties open to recreational activities in Lee both active and passive, as well as activities; stress carry in/carry out policies and options for recycling.	M	Lee Youth Commission	On-going	Chamber of Commerce, Conservation Commission
Formulate plan for education on environmental issues related to recreational lands	M	Conservation Commission	On-going	Lee School District
Formulate Plan for Media information (possibly phone/voicemail system or Internet Web services, or other means) describing all recreational activities based on the Recreation Information.	M	Lee Youth Commission	On-going	Town Administrator, Lee School District, Lee Chamber of Commerce
Implement plan for on-going environmental education related to recreational lands and media information describing all recreational activities for all ages	M	Lee Youth Commission, Conservation Commission	On-going	Lee School District, Lee Youth Association, Other Boards
Form an Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, hold public meetings, and update <i>Open Space and Recreation Plan</i> as necessary	M	Conservation Commission, Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee	On-going	

Section 10

Public Comments

Copies of the draft *Open Space and Recreation Plan* were posted on the Town of Lee's website and at the Lee Library. During the

development of the plan, the Open Space and Recreation Task Force received comments from the Lee Planning Board, Lee Conservation Commission, Lee Youth Commission, Sandy Beach Committee and Lee Recycling Committee. The Task Force also received comments from members of the Lee Land Trust, the Housatonic Valley Association and several individual residents. These comments were incorporated into the final draft plan that was offered for public review in December 2015.

The public provided direct feedback to the Task Force at the public forum, via email and by leaving hand-written comments at the Lee Library. Listed in Appendix C are the number of votes that each action received by the voting public. Provided on the proceeding pages are letters from the Lee Select Board, Lee Planning Board, Lee Conservation Commission, Lee Youth Commission and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.



Section 11

References

Berkshire (County) Regional Planning Commission, Housatonic Valley Association. *A Canoeing Guide for the Housatonic River in Berkshire County* Third Edition.

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Appendix A:

Maps

(please note that there is no Map B or Map E created for this plan)

Appendix B:

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program Materials

Appendix C:

Public Participation Materials

Appendix D:

Materials regarding the Americans With Disabilities Act

