

SECTION 5 - INVENTORY OF LANDS OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION INTEREST

Lands having conservation and recreational interest were identified utilizing a four-step process which involved the following inventory and mapping activities:

- 1.) Inventory and mapping of the following vacant and recreational lands (*see Appendix H – Open Space Inventory*):
 - Vacant parcels of 10 acres or larger;
 - Vacant parcels abutting the Connecticut River or north of Pearl Street;
 - Parcels under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B or the APR Program;
 - Vacant and recreational parcels owned by public entities (including, but not limited to, the Town of South Hadley and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts) and non-profit entities (including, but not limited, to the Kestrel Trust, Connecticut River Watershed Council, etc.);
 - Parcels owned by organizations with a recreational interest (including, but, not limited to the Gun Club, Redcliffe Canoe Club, South Hadley Swimming Club, Girl Scouts, etc.);
 - Parcels owned by special entities (such as, Mount Holyoke College, Northeast Utilities, Holyoke Gas & Electric, etc.)
- 2.) Identification as to which of the inventoried and mapped parcels from step 1 are permanently protected (*see Appendix G, Map 5 - Open Space Land and Appendix H – Part 1*)
- 3.) Application of wetland and other natural resource attributes and/or values associated with recreation potential to the inventoried properties
- 4.) Identification of those parcels mapped in step 1 which have natural resource or recreation potential significance but are not permanently protected open space (*see Appendix G, Map 5 - Open Space Land and Appendix H – Part 2*)

Lands abutting the Connecticut River or located north of Pearl Street/Amherst Road are deemed to have significant natural resource and open space value due to their relationship to the river and the range. This analysis resulted in a determination that there are approximately 2,721 acres of land which are permanently protected open space. However, nearly an equal amount, 2,773 acres of land are not permanently protected, but have been identified as having either natural resource or recreation potential (*see Appendix G, Map 5 - Open Space Land*).

5.1 AGRICULTURAL PROGRAM PARCELS

According to records of the Town Assessor's office, there are currently

- 2 parcels totaling 30 acres under Chapter 61 designation;
- 51 parcels totaling 1,057 acres under Chapter 61A;

- 4 parcels totaling 198 acres under Chapter 61B; and,
- 5 parcels totaling 245 acres under the APR program or Forest Legacy Program

Only agricultural lands having an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) placed on them are protected in perpetuity. The one APR parcel in South Hadley totals 122 acres and is currently used as an active farm. Combined, those two parcels total 147.2 acres of protected open space.

The 1,273 acres under the Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B programs afford the Town the right of first refusal. Therefore, even though these parcels are not permanently protected at present, they are a bit closer to being protected than most privately held properties.

5.2 CONSERVATION RESTRICTION PARCELS

Only a few privately-owned parcels in South Hadley have conservation restrictions imposed upon them. These restrictions are conveyance of development rights to a public agency and non-profit conservation organizations empowered to hold such restrictions. In 1994, some 58.4 acres (the Lyman property) was placed under a deeded Conservation Restriction with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/Department of Environmental Management, and two parcels, one in the Lithia Springs area with 57 acres and a second off of Woodbridge Street with 46 acres was placed in the Federal Forest Legacy Program.

To fulfill a condition of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) attached to the license for the Holyoke Dam, Northeast Utilities, Inc. (Holyoke Water Power and Holyoke Power & Electric) attempted to place a conservation restriction on approximately 100 acres abutting Bachelor Brook, Stony Brook, and the Connecticut River. The purpose of this “conservation restriction” was to protect the floodplain forest habitats. However, they conveyed this restriction to Holyoke Gas & Electric and did not follow procedures set forth by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. While the Holyoke Gas & Electric subsequently conveyed a conservation restriction on the same property to the DCR and the Town of South Hadley in 2007, the fact that the Town purchased the entire surrounding 284 acres from Northeast Utilities in 2005 and imposed a restriction on the entire 284 acres, made the issue of the conservation restriction a moot point.

As part of the approval of the Stonegate Subdivision off Alvord Street in the late 1980’s, conservation restrictions were conveyed for a number of “lots” and parcels in the subdivision. However, these restrictions were conveyed to the agency which preceded the Department of Environmental Protection. The current owner of the parcels has challenged their legality alleging they were not conveyed pursuant to Massachusetts law and procedures.

5.3 PRIVATE RECREATION PARCELS

Four private organizations own land used for recreational purposes primarily for use by their members.

South Hadley Swim Club. The South Hadley Swim Club owns a site of approximately 10 acres off Amherst Road. A member-owned organization run by a Board of Directors, the club's purpose is to encourage athletic exercise, namely swimming and outdoor recreational activities. On the ten acre site, the club owns and maintains several facilities consisting of a concrete swimming pool 75 feet long by 28 feet, 8 inches wide, an octagonal shaped wading pool approximately 19 feet across, a basketball court, locker rooms and a covered picnic area. Membership in the Swim Club is open to anyone. There is an initial membership fee and yearly dues. The Club facilities are open for member's use from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Redcliffe Canoe Club. The Redcliffe Canoe Club, a private club with membership fees and yearly dues, owns a 27,000 square foot parcel along Canal Street abutting the Connecticut River. This site is used for boating, swimming, fishing and has a boat launch ramp on the River.

Mount Holyoke College. Mount Holyoke College started in 1837, with a single building on a single lot on what is now called College Street, has since grown into a complex of academic buildings, residence halls, sports facilities, woodlands, a brook including three ponds and many wooded areas. The College's property is available to Mount Holyoke College students, faculty, staff, alumnae and invited guests. While the College has liquidated some of its unused parcels over the past 7 years, the College retains significant open space lands and facilities including:

- The Orchards Golf Course which was built in the early part of the 20th century by Joseph Skinner and given by him to the College. This ownership continues but the management and operation of the club has been contracted to Arnold Palmer Golf, Inc.
- The College's Athletic Fields and Track sit on land abutting Silver Street and have been made available for limited community and resident use. This open use policy may become slightly more limiting as the College undertakes a major redevelopment of the fields and track to bring them into compliance with NCAA requirements during 2007. However, the College has assured the Town that the high school's use of the facilities may be continued.
- A 7-acre parcel of land along the Connecticut River and north of Ferry Street, acquired in 2005 from Northeast Utilities, Inc. The College is attempting to obtain permits to allow development of a boathouse and dock for use by the College's student and community rowing programs.
- An 18-acre parcel on the Mount Holyoke Range which includes a cabin that is used by the students.

Western Massachusetts Girl Scout Council. The Western Massachusetts Girl Scout Council own and operate Camp Lewis Perkins, a 21.7 acre outdoor facility with frontage on Bachelor Brook and the Old Pearl City Pond lake bed. Facilities at the camp include a lodge, troop cabin, 9 small cabins, a maintenance building, two platform tents, one hard-roofed tent, latrines, flush toilets, an in-ground pool, hiking trails, a playing field, and an outdoor cooking area. During July and August, four to six sessions of week-long camp are conducted. Each session serves about 100 campers. Weekends from March through October, troop camping takes place. Troops also camp for longer periods during school vacation and occasional day events take place during winter. Site use fees are charged. The camp is available (when space permits) on an occasional basis to groups with similar missions to the Girl Scouts.

5.4 PUBLIC AND NONPROFIT PARCELS

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns 1,265 acres of land including some buildings within the Town of South Hadley. Nearly all of this land is on the Mount Holyoke Range managed as part of the Skinner State Park and Mount Holyoke Range State Park under the auspices of the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Within the Mount Holyoke Range, in South Hadley, the DCR manages approximately 1,256 acres.

Skinner State Park not only contains the Summit House, an historic hotel described in Section 3 of this report, but also provides scenic views of the Connecticut River Valley and links to the Metacomet-Monadnock hiking trail. The park is located at the far westerly end of the Mount Holyoke Range. Tourists, hikers, and cyclists come for the views from the top and the challenge of climbing to the Summit and/or traversing the ridgeline. The only vehicular access to Skinner Park is via Summit Road off of Route 47 in Hadley, Massachusetts.

Mount Holyoke Range State Park occupies the center and eastern portions of the Mount Holyoke Range in South Hadley. During the past 7 years, DCR has increased its holdings for this park including the purchase of approximately 600 acres from South Hadley Fire District #2.

Outside of the Mount Holyoke Range, the Commonwealth owns only a few parcels which are highway related. One of these, the state highway garage sits on Route 33 at Old Lyman Road.

The State Pool site is also located on Route 33 adjacent to BATTERY Brook Park. Plans are underway to demolish the pool and redevelop the site for tennis courts.

Nonprofit Organizations. Two parcels totaling 5 acres within South Hadley are owned and managed by local land trusts:

- The Connecticut River Watershed Council parcel consists of 5.9 acres just north of Cove Island and slightly inland from the Connecticut River. This parcel is accessible by River Road and is fully contained in the 1% Flood Hazard Zone.
- The second parcel, the Kestrel Trust parcel, is located in the Mount Holyoke Range and is 4.3 acres in size.

Town of South Hadley Parcels. The Town owns a significant amount of land set aside for conservation and recreational purposes. Generally, these lands are managed by either the Conservation Commission or the Recreation Commission. It should be emphasized that municipal ownership does not convey that the land is protected from development. This section will distinguish between those lands that municipally-owned and protected from those that are not permanently protected.

- Town of South Hadley. The Town owns approximately 1,687 acres of land. For the purposes of this plan, only lands owned or reserved to be managed by the Conservation Commission or established as park lands are inventoried as protected lands. Other Town-owned lands are evaluated as unprotected lands which may have conservation or recreation interest. It should be noted that some lands are under management by the Conservation Commission by vote of a Town Meeting. However, such lands are not considered permanently protected since such a vote could be replaced by a vote to have the lands managed by another department of the Town.

Conservation Commission. Approximately 2/3's of the town-owned lands (or 1,191 acres) are owned or reserved to be managed by the Conservation Commission. These parcels are distributed throughout the community from the southeastern corner at the end of Lyman to the northern reaches of the Mount Holyoke Range. Westerly, the Commission manages several different areas which abut the Connecticut River.

Three priority goals have guided land acquisition for land acquisition:

- Mount Holyoke Range;
- Land along streams (“greenbelts”); and,
- Buffering for existing conservation areas.

Protecting land in these areas helps to preserve water quality, wildlife habitat, and the Town’s aesthetic and recreational resources. Recent acquisitions have met these objectives. Over the past 7 years, the most significant acquisition of land for conservation purposes was the 2005 purchase of the 284-acre Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Conservation Resource Area along the Connecticut River and Ferry and Hadley Streets. A \$500,000 Self-Help Grant, a \$300,000 donation from Mount Holyoke College, and assistance from the Trust for Public Lands aided this acquisition. However, during this time, the Conservation Commission has primarily acquired new land through donations. These donations have principally included the 3.4-acre LeBlanc Conservation Area on Brainard Street

and small additions to the Bagg Conservation Area and the Bynan Conservation Area.

The Conservation Commission administers at least 13 distinct Conservation Areas including:

- Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Conservation Resource Area (284 acres). Acquired in 2005 with a \$500,000 Self-Help Grant and a \$300,000 donation from Mount Holyoke College, this parcel is the largest and most biologically diverse of the properties managed by the Commission. Most of the property lies north of Ferry Street, abuts the Connecticut River and Bachelor Brook. A smaller portion of this area lies south of Ferry Street, along Stony Brook. At present, the area is largely undisturbed, but is traversed by major power line easements and a small portion is farmed by a local farmer under an agreement with the Town. Among the unique features of this property are two of the best examples in the state of small floodplain forests and numerous rare habitats as noted previously. With its access to the Connecticut River and proximity to the Mount Holyoke Range, there is interest in developing a very limited trail system which would link the central portion of the town with the Mount Holyoke Range.
- Bynan Conservation Area (142 acres). Lying in the southeast corner of town, the Bynan Conservation Area was part of an acquisition of approximately 142 acres in 1978 from the Bynan family. Of this land, purchased with the assistance of Self-Help funds, about 40 acres were reserved to accommodate expansion of the South Hadley Sanitary Landfill. The remainder were reserved for conservation and recreation purposes. Several smaller abutting parcels have recently been protected also. The area consists of pine barren type of habitat; pitch pine and oak woodlands are interspersed with wetlands and ponds that often dry up in the summer. Old wood roads wander throughout the area, facilitating hiking and cross-country skiing. One trail loop has been marked, and periodic cleanups remove trash and abandoned vehicles. Further work is needed to develop and reroute trails as the landfill expands. Access by off-road vehicles that dump trash and tear up woods and wetlands needs to be blocked more effectively. Entrances to this area are from the east end of Lyman Terrace, New Ludlow Road, and Bartlett Street. Recent discussions have arisen regarding the possible expansion of the Landfill into a small portion of this property.
- Black Stevens Conservation Area (62 acres). Perhaps the most visible and used of the conservation areas due to its proximity to South Hadley High School and location on Newton Street, the Black Stevens Conservation Area provides marked walking trails extending from Newton Street to the Plains Elementary School at the corner of Route 33 and Route 202. Situated along Newton Street, Stevens Pond is probably the most publicly identifiable

feature of this area. This property was acquired in three sections: smaller tracts in 1963 and 1966, and then in 1981, a 47-acre parcel from the Stevens Paper Mill, all with financial assistance from the state Self-Help Program. Newton Smith Brook flows through a wooded ravine into the pond. The forested site includes oaks, maples, paper birch and hemlocks, with wildflowers such as pink lady's slippers in the spring. Great horned owls have been seen here. Classes from both schools use this area for nature study. Currently trails are kept open primarily by use, with occasional maintenance by volunteers and the high school cross country track team. The Conservation Commission has sought funding for assessment of the causes and potential solutions for rapid filling of the pond with sediment, and then implementation of the recommended measures of restoration of the pond.

- Titus Pond Conservation Area (3.8 acres). Consisting of 3.8 acres of pond and its feeder stream and associated wetlands, this site is located on Newton Street between Queen Circle and Camden Street. The pond had been used for fishing by local children for years, but is plagued by eutrophication and an unsightly growth of duckweed on the surface in the summer.
- Warner Conservation Area (9 acres). Accessible from Mosier Street, this area has a path which leads into a wooded honeysuckle grove on a hill, and then down to a wet meadow and stream crossed by a boardwalk to an open hayfield. These nine acres were acquired from the Warner family in two portions, in 1983 and 1987, with assistance from the Self-Help funds. The area is named after Edwin Warner, former South Hadley Tree Warden. Yearly mowing is necessary to keep the hayfield on this parcel open. Development of the Mountainbrook subdivision is underway along the southern edge of the area. This development may increase use of the area and potentially poses some hazards of uncontrolled access.
- Hawkins Conservation Area (3 acres). The Hawkins Conservation Area is a wooded wetland bisected by a stream at the corner of Silver Street and Chapel Hill Drive. It was sold to the Conservation Commission in 1977 for a small sum, to be used as a bird sanctuary in memory of Professor Everett D. Hawkins of Mount Holyoke College.
- Bagg-Pierce Wildlife Sanctuary (32 acres). Lying along the Connecticut River, this area was begun in 1997 with the donation of 30 acres by Malcolm Bagg to honor his wife and mother-in-law. Five additional acres have been added to this sanctuary with a recent purchase funded by the Valley Land Fund. This site is partly in the 100-year floodplain. Several trails and an old woods road traverse the site providing access for wildlife viewing and enjoyment.

- Edward Trompke Conservation Area (10.1 acres). Half of this area was acquired from the South Hadley Conservation Society. The remaining 5.26 acres was donated in 1998 by Alice Trompke to honor her late husband. It is characterized by floodplain forest which run along Stony Brook. This area adjoins a similar conservation area in Granby (also donated by Mr. Trompke). Trails were proposed in the South Hadley portion to connect to an existing trail in the Granby conservation area; however, neighbors objected and the proposal was set aside.
- Connecticut River Conservation Land (31 acres). The Commission also oversees 31 wooded acres along the Connecticut River, which includes a narrow strip between Upper River Road and Lower River Road, and land which abuts the municipal golf course parcel. The section between Upper and Lower River Road is bisected by a graded gravel road, with a high, steep bank dominated by hemlocks along the river, and a wetland on the other side. The Town has improved the road just enough to allow access of emergency vehicles if local residents are trapped by flooding of Lower River Road. Access to the river from this land is made impossible by the height and steepness of the bank. The Commission hopes to see development of walking trails that begin on the River Road parcel and continue on the Municipal Golf Course land.
- Mount Holyoke Range – Western Part. Conservation lands now include a number of undeveloped wooded parcels on the Holyoke Range and a number of smaller parcels along streams. On the western section of the Holyoke Range in South Hadley, the Town now protects 148 acres of conservation land, including the eight (8) parcels transferred from the Conservation Society. Several parcels totaling 111 acres along Dry Brook abut Skinner State Park. Other scattered parcels add to the mosaic of protected land west of Lithia Springs Reservoir.
- Mount Holyoke Range – Eastern Part. On the eastern part of the Holyoke Range, between the Notch and Lithia Springs Reservoir, about 200 acres are now under the management of the Conservation Commission. These parcels include a 20-acre Conservation Society parcel, a 59-acre parcel given to the Town in 1972 by Elvina Ball Stewart, the Bourbonais Parcel, and several parcels recently found to belong to the Town and now protected as conservation land. A number of the steeper parcels in this area harbor rare plants on the south-facing rocky slopes. Rare reptiles and amphibians have also been found here, and on nearby private parcels. Additional land protection is still needed on the Mount Holyoke Range, if habitat for these rare species is to be preserved.

Recreation Commission and Golf Commission. Approximately 19% of the town-owned lands (or 306 acres) are reserved for more active recreational activities under the auspices of the Recreation Commission or Golf

Commission. These parcels are more concentrated than the Conservation Commission land. Generally, the parcels are located in the southern half of the town. South Hadley has a variety of playgrounds and athletic and recreation facilities:

- Beachgrounds Park. Located in the South Hadley Falls area, this park is the central focus of many community and neighborhood activities and includes three (3) baseball/softball fields, one of which is lighted. The same fields are used for soccer and practice football in the fall. Facilities include: One (1) basketball court and individual playground equipment.

A wading pool was closed and removed in 2006 ago due to maintenance and demand issues. However, plans are underway to develop a “spray park” to replace the wading pool. Efforts to obtain donations for development of the “spray park” have been quite successful, although the total amount of funds needed have not been raised. Development of the “spray park” is envisioned as one key element of a total redevelopment of the Beachgrounds Park which has reached a high level of functional obsolescence due to its age and changes in recreational interests and needs.

The Playground Committee noted in 1998 that Beachgrounds Park is in need of new playground equipment some of which has been in place for over forty years. Though nine years old, this analysis still holds true today. Further, the report also suggested that the park should be redesigned to more fully and safely allow for the variety of activities it offers which includes baseball, softball, basketball, football, and soccer. Installation of the “spray park” will further the need for this park redesign.

- Buttery Brook Park. This facility is located on Route 33 just north of Chicopee, near several areas of active residential and commercial development. Adjoining the site is the state swimming pool facility which has been closed and is slated for demolition. Facilities include: Two (2) basketball courts, one (1) playground lot, individual playground equipment, picnic area, and skate park.

Buttery Brook Park has long been the community’s focus as the Town’s recreation centerpiece. To that end, the Selectboard established a Revitalization Committee to review the site and recommend how to better utilize the property. This committee evolved into a volunteer organization which has developed plans for revitalization of the park and carried out different recreational programs at the park. A skate park opened during the summer of 1999 through the efforts of various volunteers. Current plans call for redevelopment of the adjoining swimming pool site for tennis courts. Relocating of playground equipment within the park is a possibility along with a redesign of the entrance to the park.

Potential acquisition of private property that abuts the park would help provide an athletic field to the site. To this end, the condo association which owns the land at Shadowbrook Estates has indicated they may be willing to donate some abutting land for expansion of Buttery Brook Park. The Town lacks sufficient areas to play soccer, lacrosse, baseball, and softball and this property would be an ideal choice to develop for athletic purposes.

- High School. Located adjoining the South Hadley High School, this complex of facilities are primarily used for school-related activities during the school year. Facilities include: One (1) lighted multi-purpose field (football, soccer, lacrosse), two (2) baseball fields, one (1) softball field and one (1) running track which is or marginal use. The athletic fields were upgraded and slightly reconfigured as part of the building renovation project completed in 2001.
- Michael E. Smith Middle School. Located along the north side of Mosier Street, this facility is also located in proximity to substantial residential developments and the Mosier Elementary School. Facilities include: Three (3) multi-purpose fields (soccer, lacrosse). A soccer/lacrosse field was developed as part of the building renovation project in 2001.
- Plains Elementary School. Facilities include: One (1) baseball/softball field which is also utilized for mini soccer fields in the fall. Three (3) separate playground areas.
- Center School site (Hampshire Christian Academy). Facilities include: One (1) baseball/ softball field which is also utilized for soccer in the fall.
- Woodlawn School site (Council on Aging). Facilities include: One (1) basketball court, one large playground area installed in 1998; one (1) baseball/softball field which is also used for soccer in the fall.

As a result of this analysis at the Woodlawn School site where the Council on Aging is located, a new playground and equipment was installed through the efforts of the Playground Committee. The Committee examined all the playgrounds in Town, documented their findings and designated the Woodlawn site to fill a void where playground equipment has been removed. Buttery Brook and Beachgrounds Park have been identified by the Committee to upgrade the existing playground facilities.

- Mosier School. Two (2) basketball courts, one (1) playground area, two baseball/softball fields which are also used for soccer in the fall.
- Town Farm. Located along Route 47 (Hadley Street) and abutting the Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Resource Conservation Area, this land was considered for many years as a possible site for a new school. However, in

2003, recognizing the Town's growth pattern and more immediate and long-term needs for outdoor recreation fields, the Town worked with the Marine Corps to have a portion of this site transformed into several athletic fields. A portion of the site is more appropriately reserved for natural resource conservation. Consideration should be given to exploring the possibility of adding a portion of the Town Farm to the Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Resource Conservation Area.

- Ledges Golf Course. With the assistance of a \$500,000 Urban Self-Help Grant, in 1998, the Town acquired a 244 - acre tract west of Alvord Street and adjoining Lower River Road in 1998. Acquisition of this land was for the purpose of developing a multi-purpose recreation area, primarily through development as an 18-hole golf course. In 1999-2000, the Town developed the golf course including a temporary clubhouse. Subsequently, the Town developed a driving range along the Alvord Street frontage. This acquisition has preserved this parcel for passive recreation including the enjoyment of views of the Mount Tom Range and the wildlife and foliage which characterize the area. Without this acquisition, this tract would likely be developed into large-lot subdivisions as is the case with the land to the south of the property.

Fire District #2. Fire District #2 is a separate public entity which provides fire protection and water service to the northern half of the town. At one time, the district utilized the Lithia Springs Reservoir as a primary water supply. Consequently, to protect that water supply, the district owned over 600 acres of land in the Mount Holyoke Range. With the district's conversion to wells as the source of their water supply, they discontinued use of the reservoir. Subsequently, in 2004, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) acquired most of this land from the district. However, Fire District #2 continues to own 84 acres of largely undeveloped land in South Hadley:

- Mount Holyoke Range. The district owns three parcels totaling 65 acres which lie north of Pearl Street or Amherst Road. None of these parcels are used for either district operations nor retained to protect the water supply. Therefore, these parcels should be considered surplus. Discussions have been held regarding the possible sell of the land.
- Dry Brook Hill. The district owns 19 acres on Dry Brook Hill as part of the water supply system. The district's current wells are located on a portion of the property.

Fire District #1. Fire District #1 is a separate public entity which provides fire protection and water service to the southern half of the town. At one time, the district utilized the Leaping Well Reservoir as a primary water supply. Consequently, to protect that water supply, the district owned land abutting the reservoir. With the district's conversion to Quabbin Reservoir as the source of their water supply, they discontinued

use of the reservoir. However, the district has continued to own 45 acres of land in the immediate vicinity of the reservoir. A portion of this land is used for the District's garage and Water Department offices. However, most of the land is vacant. Over the past year, the district has contemplated selling a portion of the property to a private developer with access off Bartlett Road.

5.5 OTHER SIGNIFICANT PRIVATE PARCELS

Within South Hadley, there are also a number of privately-owned parcels which have the potential for providing usable open space. Approximately 37 such parcels totaling over 700 acres lie within the Ultimate Acquisition Boundary outlined by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) (now, Department of Conservation and Recreation – DCR) and could provide access to and views of the Mount Holyoke Range. Other significant parcels abut the Connecticut River and could provide access to the river and/or a potential trail leading to the Mount Holyoke Range.

5.6 UTILITY COMPANY PARCELS

Historically, Northeast Utilities/Holyoke Power and Electric Company/Holyoke Water Power Company has been a major owner of utility lands in South Hadley. However, they sold a considerable portion of their land holdings in 2003 to the Holyoke Gas & Electric Department (HG&E) as part of the transaction whereby they sold the Holyoke dam to HG&E. Another significant transaction occurred in 2005 when Northeast Utilities/Holyoke Power and Electric Company/Holyoke Water Power Company sold the 284 acres abutting Ferry Street and Hadley Street to the Town of South Hadley for the Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Resource Conservation Area. Therefore, HG&E and Northeast Utilities/Holyoke Power and Electric Company/Holyoke Water Power Company continue to own some significant parcels of land in South Hadley, albeit substantially less than the amount previously owned by Northeast Utilities/Holyoke Power and Electric Company/Holyoke Water Power Company.

Northeast Utilities/Holyoke Power and Electric Company/Holyoke Water Power Company. Despite selling over 300 acres during the past 5 years, Northeast Utilities (or its subsidiaries) still retain ownership of approximately 67 acres in some potentially beneficial locations in South Hadley:

- Alvord Street/Lamb Street corridor. Thirteen parcels totaling 58 acres and additional acreage in easements form a right-of-way for high tension wires paralleling portions of Alvord Street and Lamb Street from the South Hadley/Chicopee line northward to a point north of the mouth of Bachelor Brook at the Connecticut River. This corridor is long and narrow in shape and would provide an opportunity for a public access corridor linking several publicly-owned parcels including the Bachelor Brook/Stony Brook Resources Conservation Area. At present, these parcels are informally used for recreation trails and provide linkages from the surrounding neighborhoods to Bachelor

Brook and Brunelle's Marina. Map 8 shows the geographic relationship between protected lands in Town and these parcels presently owned by Holyoke Water Power Company. With only minor interruption, connecting the Northeast Utilities/Holyoke Power and Electric Company/Holyoke Water Power Company land with the other public and protected private lands could provide the potential for public access running continuously from South Hadley Falls to the top of the Mount Holyoke Range.

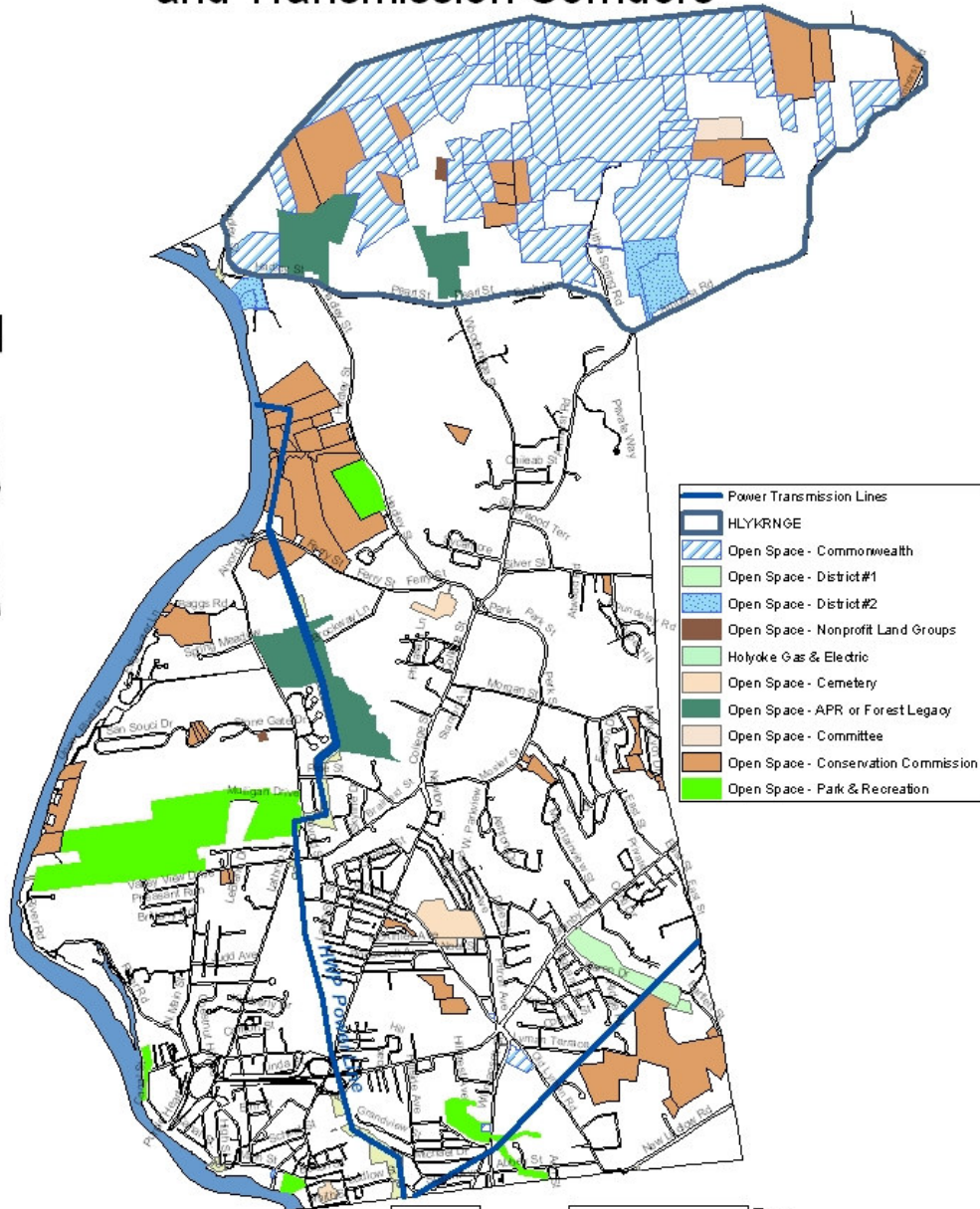
Holyoke Gas & Electric (HG&E). Holyoke Gas & Electric (HG&E) now owns some small, but relatively significant land parcels in South Hadley, predominately in the area of South Hadley Falls.

- Holyoke Dam and riverfront parcel. HG&E now owns the Holyoke Dam and a 15-acre parcel which contains the Texon Building, and buildings accessory to the dam, and undeveloped land along the Connecticut River adjoining the Route 116 bridge and Main Street. As part of the License for the Holyoke Dam, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is requiring Holyoke Gas & Electric to construct a Riverside Park which will have passive recreation (fishing, picnic areas, and viewing areas) in a portion of this parcel. As a condition of permitting alteration of the Texon Building to install a modification of the dam, HG&E will also be renovating the gatehouse area into a park. The entire reach of the canal area is listed on the National Register and this entire area falls under the Historic Preservation Act.

The HG&E also owns a related parcel north of the dam abutting the Connecticut River along Canal Street. This parcel is not proposed for any development, but is maintained as open space.

- Cove Island. HG&E also owns the 51.4-acre peninsula known as Cove Island (acquired from Northeast Utilities). A Conservation Restriction has been developed for a large portion of this area which is not currently developed. The HG&E will be applying this CR to the property in the near future. The remaining portion of Cove Island is developed with dwellings which began as "seasonal" homes. The occupants lease their area from HG&E under very limiting conditions. Under the Comprehensive Recreation and Land Management Plan required by FERC, the long-term expectation is that all of Cove Island will become a natural area as the "seasonal" homes are eventually phased out.
- Bicentennial Canal Park. HG&E also owns the Bicentennial Canal Park located off Canal Street. This park is leased to the Town which maintains nature trails, footpaths, picnic areas/park areas, and associated other uses.

MAP 8 Permanently Protected Open Space and Transmission Corridors



0 2,500 5,000 10,000 Feet

Source: South Hadley Planning Board, 2007