



Janet H. Morrison

J.D. - M.S.

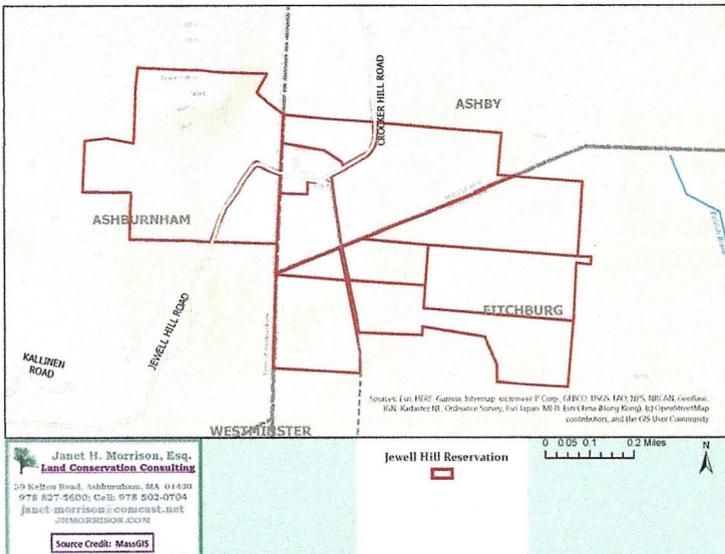
Land Conservation Consulting

Jewell Hill Conservation Project (Crocker Farm Property) Fitchburg, Ashby & Ashburnham Completed 2020

Funded by:

FY2020 LAND Grant to:
City of Fitchburg for land in Fitchburg
Town of Ashburnham for land in Ashburnham

FY2020 Drinking Water Supply Grant to:
City of Fitchburg for land in Ashby



The Conservation of Crocker Farm (now Jewell Hill Reservation) was the culmination of years long efforts to preserve this unique and beautiful agricultural property. Located in three municipalities (Fitchburg, Ashby and Ashburnham) and two counties (Worcester and Middlesex), this 296 acre property is blessed with many natural resources. Its 84 acres of agricultural fields with prime agricultural soils are complemented by wetlands and cold water streams (Falulah Brook), a mixed hardwood/conifer forest providing wildlife habitat and timber resources, and Jewell Hill (elevation 1411 ft.), which affords a view of the Boston skyline. The conservation of Crocker Farm protects public drinking water, with 68% of the property within the City of Fitchburg’s water supply watershed.

This scenic property offers many recreational opportunities, including hiking on Jewell Hill (an easy ¼ mile hike to the summit), bird-watching for bobolink in the fields, and fishing for native brook trout. The property can be accessed from Caswell Road in Fitchburg, Crocker Road in Ashburnham, and Jewell hill Road in Ashby.

The conservation of Crocker Farm was completed in 2020, with its acquisition by The Trustees of Reservations. The property is now known as Jewell Hill Reservation.



MASSACHUSETTS LAND TRUST COALITION

MassLand E-News

The Newsletter of the Massachusetts

Land Conservation Community

August 20, 2020

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Jewell Hill Farm



The Trustees has achieved permanent protection of 296 acres known as Jewell Hill Farm in the towns of Ashby, Ashburnham and the City of Fitchburg, in partnership with the Town of Ashburnham and City of Fitchburg. The farm is an important part of Fitchburg's drinking water supply and has informally been enjoyed by local residents for years. Jewell Hill's natural beauty, sweeping agricultural landscape, and existing forest trails have been well maintained by the Crocker Family for the last four generations. Now permanent protection ensures visitors may always enjoy the property's trails and the stunning views from the summit of Jewell Hill. Conservation of the property was made possible through the generosity of Gus and Alfred Crocker, the estate of Jamie Hudson, and successful efforts of the Town of Ashburnham and the City of Fitchburg to secure state grant funding from the LAND grant and Drinking Water Supply Protection programs. The property served as a dairy farm from World War II until 1987. Today, the property reflects a matrix of both upland forests and fields in hay production, including 40 acres of prime agricultural soils. The property adjoins more than 2,000 acres of protected land in the Fitchburg Watershed.

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In August, E-News highlighted the protection of Jewell Hill Farm, a 296 acre property in the towns of Ashby, Ashburnham and the City of Fitchburg, which was a collaboration among various partners. Left out was the contribution of MLTC member [Janet Morrison](#), who developed the grant funding strategy, and worked with the Town of Ashburnham and the City of Fitchburg to secure grant funding and fulfill all grant requirements. Thank you, Janet!



Janet H. Morrison

J.D. - M.S.

Land Conservation Consulting

City of Fitchburg Drinking Water Supply Watersheds Summary of Land Conservation 2009 – 2021

The City of Fitchburg is fortunate to have an abundant and well protected drinking water supply, due to the foresight of City leaders 150 years ago, who established a reservoir system in Fitchburg. Subsequent acquisitions and reservoir construction increased the City's water supply through a gravity fed system, stretching from Fitchburg Reservoir in Ashby south through three reservoirs in Fitchburg. In addition to the Northern Watershed, a second water supply system was established with the construction of four reservoirs in Westminster, Princeton and Hubbardston, known as the Southern Watershed.

In 2009, a City fund was established for the conservation of land in the water supply watersheds, with revenues of \$477,000 from the sale of a Conservation Restriction on 1,865 acres of City-owned land in the Northern Watershed to the Mass. Department of Fish and Game (DFG). Since that time, this fund has been utilized for the conservation of land in the Northern and Southern Watersheds.

In the Northern Watershed, located in Fitchburg, Ashby and Ashburnham, 800 acres of land has been conserved to date. From 2009 – 2012, the City was a partner in the Southern Monadnock Plateau Forest Legacy Project, which used federal funds to conserve 285 acres in Fitchburg and Ashby. Most recently, two FY2020 state LAND grants were awarded to the Town of Ashburnham and the City of Fitchburg, which funded the conservation of 222 acres of land in Fitchburg and Ashburnham, formerly owned by the Crocker family and now part of Jewell Hill Reservation owned by The Trustees. A FY 2020 state Drinking Water Supply grant was used to conserve an additional 96 acres in Ashby, including the remaining part of Crocker Farm, now Jewell Hill Reservation. (See attached map.)

In the Southern Watershed, located in Hubbardston, Princeton and Westminster, 246 acres of land were conserved between 2014 and 2019, through the Quabbin Reservoir to Wachusett Mountain (Q2W) Forest Legacy Project. (See attached map.) An additional 60 acres in Hubbardston was donated to the City in 2020.

The permanent conservation of land in the City's Northern and Southern Watersheds is essential to maintain the quality and quantity of the City's drinking water. Conservation prevents residential and other development, which negatively impacts water quality and quantity, due to run-off from paved roads, roofs, driveways and lawns and the loss of water due to increased flooding. The conservation of open land in the watershed provides the best assurance that clean and abundant water flows to the City's reservoirs.

Conservation of land for water supply protection also benefits communities in the City's watersheds, by protecting wildlife habitat and preserving open space. As with the Quabbin Reservoir watershed, the conservation of water supply watersheds creates an "accidental wilderness" with many environmental benefits. The City's Northern Watershed now includes nearly 2,700 conserved acres. With its connections to other conserved land, the Northern Watershed anchors a conserved landscape of nearly 5,000 acres. In the Southern Watershed, 1,313 acres of City owned land has been augmented by 306 acres conserved since 2014. These additions have created important connections to the Wachusett Mountain State Reservation in Princeton and MA DCR Water Supply Land in Hubbardston, creating a protected landscape of more than 10,000 acres.

I have been involved in the development, management and successful completion of all the land conservation projects reviewed here, formerly representing North County Land Trust and as an independent consultant for the past four years. In all cases, the City's land conservation funds were used to leverage state and federal grant funds, private funds and landowner donations, with the result that the City has paid 10% or less of the cost of conserving land in its water supply watersheds.

Respectfully submitted,
Janet H. Morrison, Esq.

MAP 5

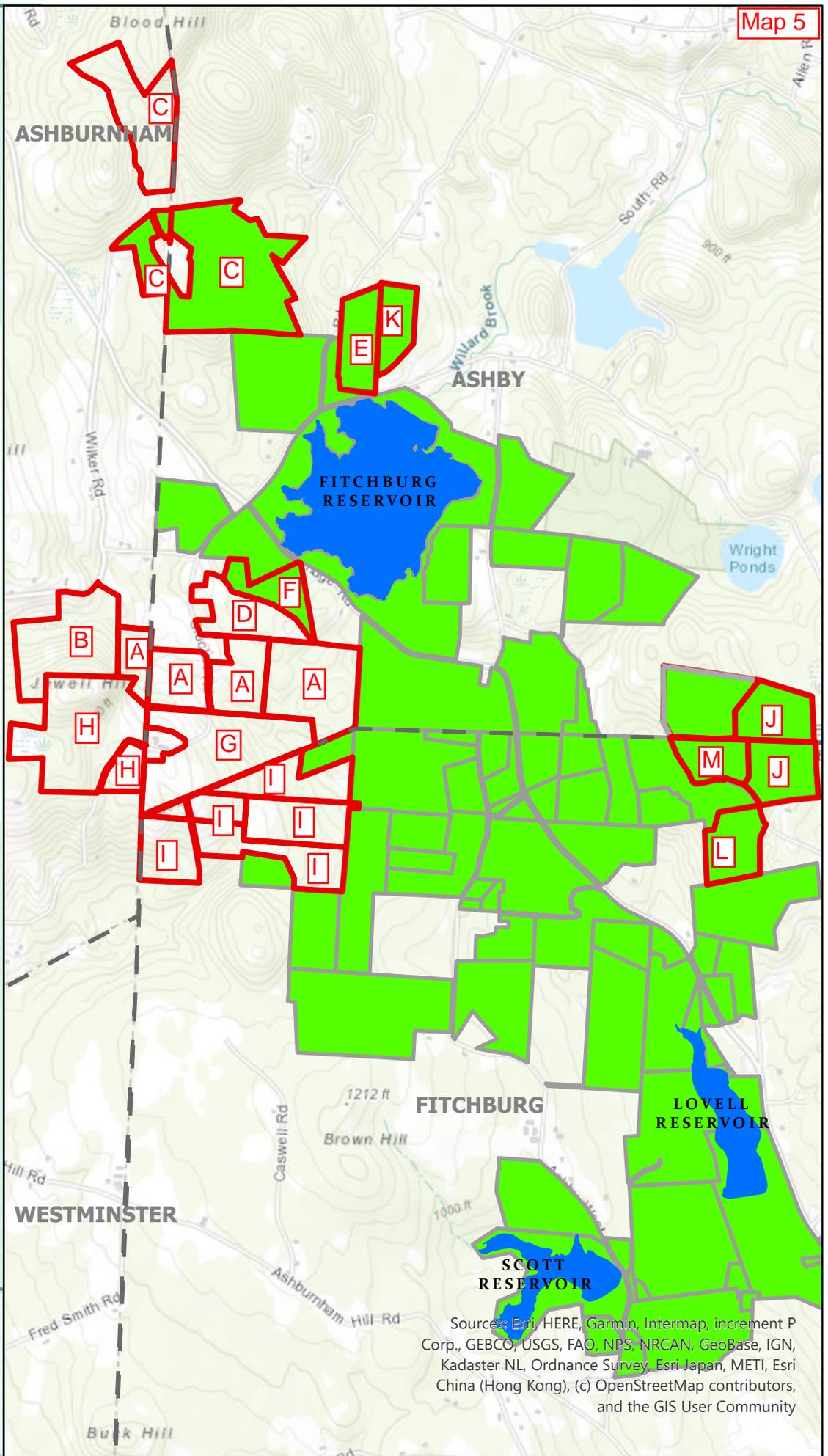
FITCHBURG'S NORTHERN WATERSHED

Protecting Fitchburg's Drinking Water

FITCHBURG WATERSHED LAND

-  CITY-OWNED
-  CONSERVATION RESTRICTIONS 2009 - 2020
-  CITY-OWNED CONSERVED 2009 - 2020

TOTAL CONSERVED 800 ACRES



0 0.25 0.5 Miles

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Source Credit: MassGIS

Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

FITCHBURG SOUTHERN WATERSHED

Quabbin Reservoir to Wachusett Mountain Forest Legacy Project (Q2W)

PROPERTIES CONSERVED

- FEE SALE
- CONSERVATION RESTRICTION

OPENSOURCE: LANDS

- MUNICIPAL
- DCR-STATE PARKS & RECREATION
- LAND TRUST
- DCR-WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION
- PRIVATE

SURFACE WATER PROTECTION AREAS

- ZONE A
- ZONE C SUB-WATERSHEDS

PROPERTY ACRES

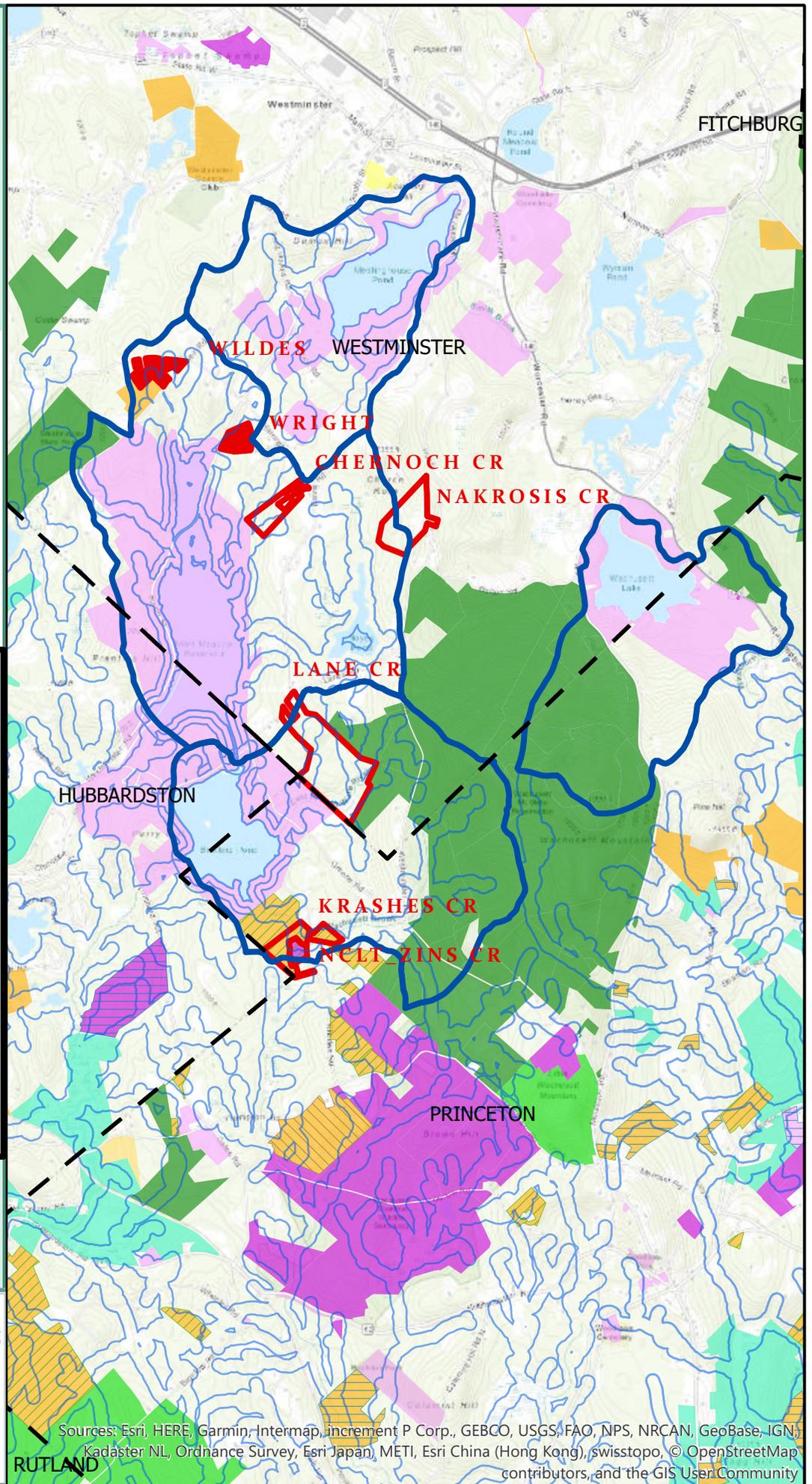
WILDES	15.4
WRIGHT	13.4
CHERNOCH CR	20
NAKROSIS CR	46.9
LANE CR	109
KRASHES CR	34.2
NCLT_ZINS CR	7.4
TOTAL	246.3



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Source Credit: MassGIS



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Gardner and Winchendon Landscape Connection Project
Phases I, II, III Completed
2015 - 2020
Janet Morrison, Esq., Land Conservation Consulting
Project Manager

Phase I of this project was completed in June 2017, with funding from the Mass. Landscape Partnership Program and the Mass. Department of Fish and Game. In Phase I, six properties in Gardner and Winchendon were conserved, totaling 590 acres of wetlands, uplands and a significant portion of Bailey Brook, shown as Tracts #1, #3, #4, #5, #6 and #15 on the map below. Protection of Bailey Brook, a pristine cold-water stream, is the principal goal of this project. As its name implies, the project connects 590 acres of newly protected land to conserved land to the north and south. The northern connection is 625 acres of conserved land around 19th Hill in Winchendon; the southern connection is made through the 224-acre Alisaukas property in Gardner which adjoins more than 1,750 acres of protected land in the City of Gardner. In addition to the Mass. Department of Fish and Game, project partners included the City of Gardner, the Town of Winchendon and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust.

Phase II of this project was completed in June 2018, with the conservation of the 115-acres Omealia property in Gardner, to the south of the Alisuaskas Conservation Area, and shown as Tracts #2, #2X and Park on the map below. The Omealia property was conserved in two parts, comprised of an open space parcel of 84.2 acres and a 30.9 acres parcel to be used as a park. Phase II was funded by three grant programs and the Mass. Conservation Land Tax Credit (CLTC) Program. Conservation of the open space was funded by the Mass. LAND Grant Program, the federal North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) Small Grants Program and a landowner donation under the CLTC Program. Conservation of the park land was funded by the Mass. PARC Grant Program. Additional PARC Grant funds were awarded to enable the City to conserve a 6.25 acres parcel south of and adjacent to the park land, increasing the size of the park to over 37 acres. Phase II is also known as the *Bailey Brook Park and Conservation Area Project* and it is part of the *NAWCA Gardner and Winchendon Wetlands Protection Project*.

Phase III of the project was funded by the same NAWCA grant used in Phase II, which funded the conservation of an additional 101 acres of land in Gardner, shown as Tracts #7X, #7Y and #11 on the map below. Phase III is part of the *Gardner and Winchendon Wetlands Protection Project*. In this Phase, land owned by the Gardner Fish and Gun Club has been conserved by the City's purchase of a .5 acre parcel on the north side of Clark Street, adjacent to the Bailey Brook Conservation Area (Tract #7Y), and a Conservation Restriction on the Bailey Brook riverfront and associated wetlands, on land south side of Clark Street (Tract #7X). In addition, the Gardner Conservation Commission will permanently conserve 80 acres of land in the City's water supply watershed, known as the Cowee Property (Tract #11). Phase III was completed in June 2020.

Phase IV would continue land conservation in the Bailey Brook corridor, south to its confluence with the Otter River on the City's border with Templeton. With the conservation of the Alisuaskas and Omealia properties and the protection of the Bailey Brook corridor on Gardner Fish and Gun Club land in Phases I, II and III, Phase IV would complete the protection of Bailey Brook in the City of Gardner and complete the *Bailey Brook Greenway*.

Land Conservation Consultant, Janet Morrison has led and managed each phase of the project. To fund the project, she has written seven successful grant applications, including four state grants, a federal NAWCA grant and two private foundation grants.

This land is our land

City protects Bailey Brook, wildlife habitat

Andrew Mansfield
Reporter

GARDNER The city recently finalized its purchase of over 220 acres of conservation land along the Gardner-Winchendon border, following a yearlong process.

The Conservation Commission and Conservation Agent Jeffrey Legros recommended purchasing the property last year, citing its biological habitat, the presence of Bailey Brook, as well as the recreational opportunities the land provides.

Conservation Commission member David Orwig also commented on the value for the city to possess the land. "The acquisition of the Alisaukas property is very exciting for Gardner residents. This conservation property protects a variety of habitat types, including open-land (formerly agriculture) habitat, as well as vernal pools, riparian or streamside habitat and a variety of woodland types," he said.

The state grant given to the city last year was awarded by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. It provided about \$340,000 in funding for the purchase of the former Alisaukas property, which is part of a larger state-funded conservation effort known as the ***Gardner and Winchendon Landscape Connection Project.***

Ashburnham-based land conservation consultant **Janet Morrison** has worked in a leadership role on writing the applications and coordinating the project. In addition to the state funding, (Morrison) stated that private grant funds were used as well. She listed the city of Gardner, the town of Winchendon, the state Department of Fish and Game, and Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust as project partners.



[+ click to enlarge](#)

Bailey Brook wetlands



[+ click to enlarge](#)

The southeast interior of the property