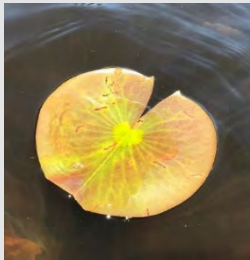


# Town of Becket Open Space and Recreation Plan

*November 2023*



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# Acknowledgements

Massa-adchu-es-et (Massachusetts) The word Massachusetts is an Algonquin word which roughly translates to “large hill place” or “at the great hill.” We begin with gratitude for nearby waters and lands. We recognize these lands and waters as important Relations with which we are all interconnected and depend on to sustain life and wellbeing. Becket residents acknowledge the sacred land where we work, live, teach, learn, and build our community. This land, home to the Pocumtuc and Mohican people who live here today as they have for 13,000 years, is the place of the Blue Hills. We also wish to be good neighbors to all Nations and peoples here in the Dawnland region, otherwise known as New England, including Abenaki, Micmac, Maliseet, Narragansett, Nipmuc, Passamaquoddy, Pawtucket, Pennacook, Penobscot, Pequot, Wampanoag, and those we have omitted either due to colonial erasure or our own ignorance. We extend our respect to citizens of these Nations who live here today and their ancestors who have lived here for over 500 generations.\*

The Town of Becket would like to thank the Becket Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee members (past and present) who donated their time and vision to the development and completion of this plan. A special Thank You! to Meredyth Babcock, who provided most of the photographs that grace this plan. And to Michael Wolski, who donated a copy of his painting “Canoe Bliss” as a raffle prize to encourage residents to participate in OSRP planning process.

The Town also wishes to thank the community members who participated in the open space and recreational survey and the public forum workshops, which provided the foundation for the recommendations of this plan.

The Town would also like to acknowledge the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, which provided technical assistance in the development of the plan. Lastly, the Town of Becket is thankful for its agreement with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Community Compact Best Practices Program, without which this plan could never have been completed.

\* Borrowed from UMASS acknowledgment <https://www.umass.edu/diversity/umass-land-acknowledgement>

# Section 1: Plan Summary

## Background

The town of Becket produced its first Open Space and Recreation Plan in 1989 with updates in 1998 and 2006. The early plans address issues of resource protection, conservation of lands and historic structures. Each update identified planning as an important piece in protecting the character of the town. The 2022 version takes that one step farther asking residents if the town should expend resources to move some of the objectives forward.

Becket residents value its rural, wild, and cultural character. They recognize the importance of incorporating climate mitigation into planning models. Becket was one of the first Towns in Berkshire County to adopt the Community Preservation Act. Funds from this have supported historic preservation, low-income housing, and land protection. The Town invoked its Right of First Refusal in the Chapter 61 state tax abatement program to conserve the land now known as the Becket Historic Quarry and Forest, a 300-acre site open for public enjoyment of history, wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation.

## Need for Open Space and Recreation in Becket

The 2022 plan incorporates residents' needs while addressing the part that comprehensive land protection can play in making a community more resilient and prosperous in a changing climate. A review of past OSRP plans and the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) and Hazard Mitigation Plans demonstrate that residents continue to prioritize goals that are unmet, a need to evaluate the success of projects already undertaken, and assess current development trends within the context of climate mitigation. This 2022 Plan provides an opportunity to do each of these tasks with the support of community members and town boards.

The MVP Plan showed the Town's interest in understanding the Town's flood plains, wetlands and ability to reconnect them to reduce the likelihood of flooding during high water events. Becket residents expressed a desire to be proactive, protecting its most valuable wildlife corridors, intact water resources, and open spaces while strengthening its access to outdoor recreation. Safeguarding Becket's rural character, numerous existing outdoor recreation opportunities, and its historic districts continue to be a priority.

Stewardship of natural spaces and rural character was identified as key factors to the success of the Town's ability to serve residents and attract visitors and second homeowners. The importance of sharing and caretaking what is already available was highlighted in our research. Identifying, through data supported research, areas that are appropriate for slow but steady

growth, without diminishing what makes Becket a unique healthy climate resilient community, are incorporated in the goals set out in this 2022 OSRP.

Becket's most notable recreational attractions are its lakes and ponds. The 2022 survey of residence, as with the 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan, identified residents' desire for recreation, including clean water for swimming, fishing, boating, and drinking. Although there are numerous lakes and ponds, and five private summer camps in town, public opportunities for local youth and seniors in all these categories could be made more accessible, climate resilient and family friendly.

The recognition, across the state, of a changing climate has increased the need for strategic planning. Directing priorities based on research so that next steps in protecting open spaces and significant environments that make our town more resilient, while increasing residence access to and knowledge of recreational offerings without diminishing the wild spaces they value.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan identifies the existence of numerous large, undivided, unprotected parcels that, if protected in perpetuity, can provide invaluable long-term wildlife habitat and corridors for movement. Maintaining wildlife habitat and corridors will be increasingly important as climate change alters the Berkshire environment.

Becket's 2022 Open Space and Recreation plan captures the history, context and character of the Town of Becket that makes it a bastion for fish & wildlife as well as a peaceful, inclusive family-friendly place to call home.

***Enjoying nature by way of Becket's lakes and ponds***





# Section 2:

## Introduction

### 2A. Statement of Purpose

The Becket community's vision for the protection of open space and accessible outdoor recreation includes protecting its treasured natural resources and parks and maintaining the scenic beauty. This Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) notes existing resources and describes key trends and issues regarding open space and outdoor recreation. It also establishes refreshed goals, objectives, and actions to achieve its vision. This document is a critical step in helping the Town to prioritize open space preservation as it advances economic development plans. Becket can use this document to guide growth in a manner consistent with open space preservation tenets while addressing the development needs of the Town and its residents.

### 2B. Planning Process and Public Participation

In January 2022, the Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee (Advisory Committee) met for the initial planning meeting with a goal of creating and submitting to the Division of Conservation Services the Town of Becket's updated OSRP.

*Table 2.1: Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee Members*

Committee Member	Interest/affiliation
Ken Smith, Chair	Becket Land Trust
Alvin Blake, Vice Chair	Becket Planning Board
Meredyth Babcock	Municipal Vulnerability Plan Committee Member
Cindy Delpapa	Community Preservation and Wild & Scenic Westfield River Committees
Karen Karlberg	Becket Resident and former member of Conservation Commission and Zoning Board of Appeals
Michael Lavery*	Becket Select Board
Larisa Shpitalnik	Community Preservation Committee
Jeff Wilkinson	Becket Zoning Board of Appeals

*\*M. Lavery served Jan. - April 2022.*

The Advisory Committee worked within the constraints of the Covid-19 Pandemic to solicit community input on this matter. To achieve this, the Advisory Committee posted meeting information and materials created during the planning process on the Town's website under its own OSRP page. Initial meetings were held via Zoom technology, but most later meetings were hybrid meetings of in-person and via Zoom. All meetings were held and publicly posted in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law. Holding meetings remotely provided enhanced opportunities for residents of all abilities to attend public meetings and events.

To solicit the public's input the following were undertaken:

- In spring 2022, a public survey was conducted to gather data about the community's opinions and vision for open space and recreation. The survey was offered via online Survey Monkey and paper copies of the survey were offered at Becket Town Hall and Becket Athenaeum. Promotion of the survey was posted on the Town's website, included as a stuffer in tax bills and posted in partnership with the Becket Athenaeum and Becket Art Center. The survey was live for two months to collect data and gathered 309 responses, of which 93% identified as a full or part time Becket resident. Within the survey 131 respondents offered their emails as a way to receive periodic updates on the project. Results of the survey are found in Appendix A.
- On April 4, 2022, in partnership with the Becket Art's Center, the Advisory Committee held a hybrid presentation at the Becket Athenaeum. This was an in-person hands-on forum, exploring the concepts of open space and recreation, and asking attendees for input. The recording of the meeting was posted on local community television. The forum was promoted via the Town's website, the Athenaeum's communications network and the *Becket Beat*, a local monthly newsletter.
- On December 5, 2022, the Advisory Committee presented the major findings of the planning process and the recommended seven-year action plan to residents and officials via an interactive public forum. This forum was held as a hybrid meeting, being a mix of in-person attendance at the Becket Town Hall and remotely via Zoom. Both in-person and zoom attendees were asked to offer input on the major findings and the draft action plan, including voting for the three most important actions that they felt the Town should prioritize for implementation. The presentation and results of the voting are found in Appendix B of this plan. The forum was promoted via the Town's public announcements email blast system, website, the OSRP website page, the *Becket Beat* newsletter, and through flyers posted in Town Hall, the Senior Center, and Becket Athenaeum. Direct invitations to attend were sent to the Becket Select Board, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and Parks and Recreation. Personal invitations to attend were also emailed directly to the 131 public survey respondents who provided their email to receive periodic project updates.
- The draft OSRP was offered for public review and comment through two separate periods: first for December 5-30, 2022 and secondly March 13-31, 2023. In both instances the availability of the plan was promoted via the Town's public announcements subscriber email blast system, the Town's Home Page News and Community Events Calendar, OSRP website page, and through flyers posted in Town Hall, the Senior Center, and Becket Athenaeum. Direct invitations to review the draft plan were sent to these key Town boards: Select Board, Parks and Recreation, Conservation Commission, Planning Board and ZBA. The public review period for the OSRP was also advertised via the *Becket Beat* community newsletter. Comments received during the public review period were incorporated into the draft plan that was submitted to the Department of Conservation Services (DCS) in April 2023.
- Updates were provided to the Planning Board throughout the planning process, meetings of which were also offered via Zoom technology. The Select Board and Conservation Commission were also updated by Advisory Committee members.

- The Becket Planning Board and Becket Select Board each discussed and formally recognized the final version of the OSRP at their respective public meetings held on November 8 and November 9, 2023. The plan has also been reviewed and recognized by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (see Appendix C for letters).

This OSRP builds on several planning initiatives and documents that have been developed by the Town of Becket. The finalized OSRP of 2006, the 2009 Jacob's Ladder Corridor Scenic Corridor Management Plan and the 2020 Becket Hazard Mitigation and Municipal Vulnerability Plans are sources of information and inspiration, as these documents involved extensive public participation processes. The OSRP also reflects the new data found within BioMap3. In addition to the information provided by the Advisory Committee, this plan reflects the existing conditions, capabilities and needs of key Town boards, as related through direct interviews with members of the Parks and Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, and Planning Board.



# Section 3:

# Community Setting

## 3A. Regional Context

Becket is a rural town located amidst the Berkshire hills of southwestern Massachusetts. At 48 square miles, it has the eleventh largest land area of all Massachusetts towns and cities. It lies approximately 19 miles southwest of Pittsfield and 39 miles northwest of Springfield. It is bordered by seven towns: Washington and Middlefield to the north, Otis to the south, Tyringham and Lee to the west, and Chester and Blandford to the east. Primary access to and from the town is via Route 20 from the east and west and via Route 8 from the north and south. Route 20 is also known as Jacob's Ladder Scenic Trail. The elementary school in North Becket is attended by students from Becket and Washington, and junior high and high school students must travel to schools in neighboring towns.

Its hilly terrain includes a portion of October Mountain State Forest, the largest contiguous state forest in Massachusetts, through which a section of the Appalachian Trail runs. The headwaters of three different watersheds also lie within Becket's borders: the Housatonic, the Farmington, and the Westfield Rivers. The northeastern border is formed by the Westfield, the only river in Berkshire County and the first river in the state, to receive National Wild and Scenic River designation.

## 3B. History of the Community

Plantation Number Four, known today as the Town of Becket, is in the northern section of what is considered the Southern Berkshires. The Town of Becket was officially established and incorporated in 1765 by deed of the Royal Court of Massachusetts in the King of England's name. The first settlers and travelers to come to Becket were greeted with a craggy mountainous landscape, the cool rush of countless streams, small quiet ponds and a forest rich soil that was not very good for cultivation of agriculture. Many settlers began by harvesting the timber and farming, but the shallow soils soon gave way, sending many farmers west.

As noted in Becket's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary publication, *Becket Massachusetts, From Colonial Township to Modern Town, 1765-2015*, Becket's development mirrored many rural New England communities. At first purely agricultural, the farms were eclipsed in the mid-1800s and later by small family-operated businesses. The arrival in North Becket of the Boston and Albany Railroad in 1841 and the improvements to east-west travel changed the dynamics of the Town. Lumber and wood products became the Town's primary exportable products, with mills and granite quarries becoming prime industries. Villages developed in close proximity to these sites, particularly North Becket Village, which hosted mills, businesses, a post office and was served by a railroad catering to freight and passengers. A flood in 1927 damaged many businesses and homes in North Becket, some of which did not survive the devastation. The end of sidetracks and

passenger service in the 1950s ended the railroad era and signaled the downturn of industry and business in the Village. By this time Becket residents were largely employed in industries and businesses outside Becket and the Town “assumed a role of rest and recreational area for summer fugitives from the cities, a role that largely continues today.”<sup>1</sup>

Jacob’s Ladder Trail (aka Rt. 20) was the major east-west traveling route through Becket, linking Southern Berkshire towns to larger cities in Hampden County. This roadway serves as both a commercial route and a tourist route, further introducing Becket to city dwellers touring around in their automobiles. It was during this period that visitors discovered the camps and cottage communities that developed along Becket’s ponds. The completion of the MassTurnpike in the late 1950s, with no exit in Becket, diverted much of the travelers away from the Trail, causing the demise of several small roadside businesses. Today Jacob’s Pillow Dance Festival and the private summer camps are the anchor enterprises in Becket, supplemented by small rural businesses scattered throughout the Town. The Becket-Washington School and the Town of Becket are other major employers.

The town has been marked by time and the land that once was harvested has returned to a prime natural state, except for the now numerous houses that have been built by those seeking solace in the woods. The town’s peaceful pride can be seen in the old stones and in the rich history of its buildings like the Mullen House. Another major attraction is the internationally renowned Jacobs Pillow Dance Festival and School. Each summer it entertains the public with the motion and rhythm of countless performers in an enchanting, forested setting.

*An important feature of the Scenic Byway’s history, the stone cairn was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. (Photo courtesy of Destination Development)*



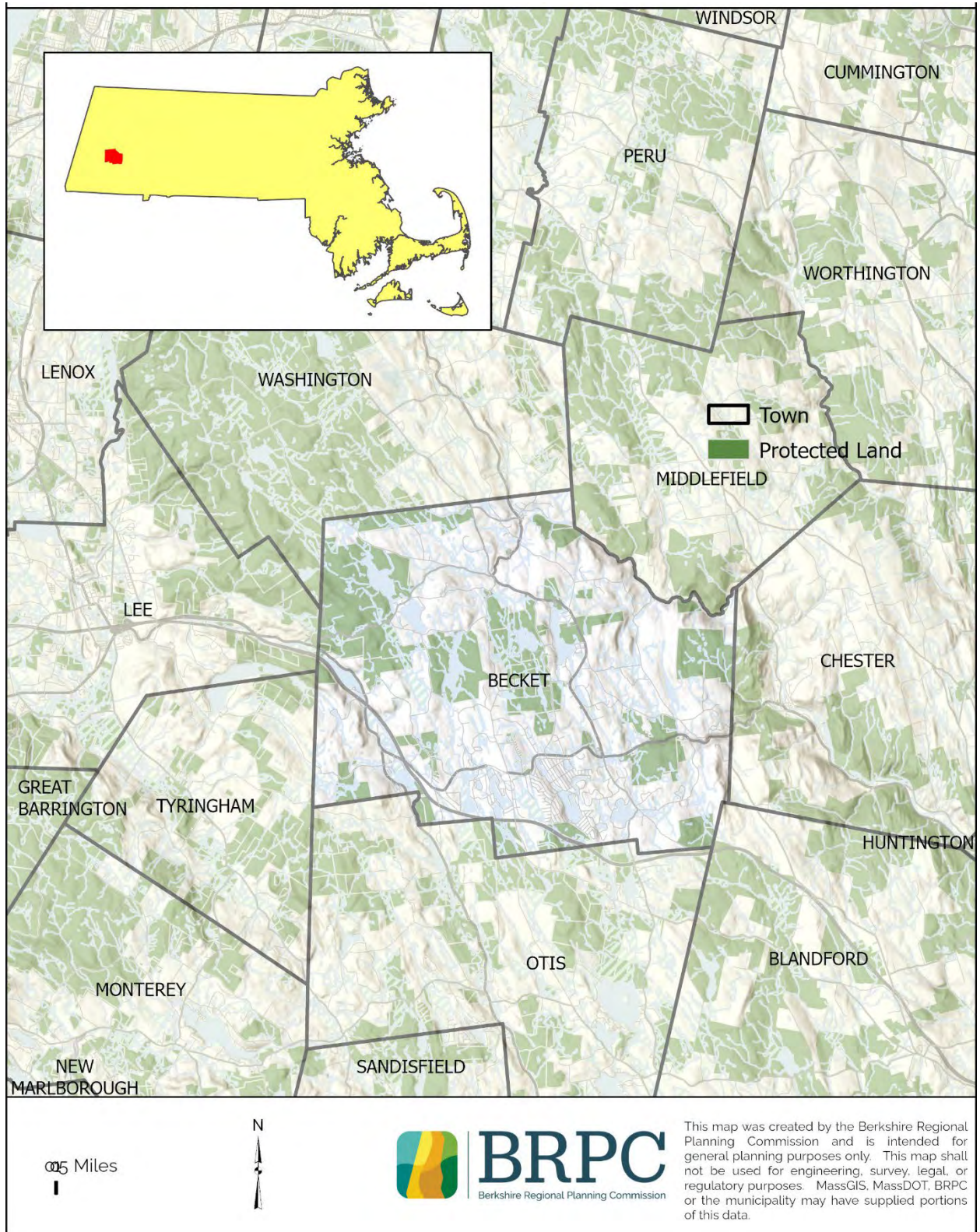
Source: BRPC 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> Becket 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee, 2015. *Becket MA, From Colonial Township to Modern Town 1765-2015*, Becket, MA.



Map 1. Regional Context



### 3C. Population Characteristics

According to the *Becket Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Report*, Becket is a town with a population of 1,859, as stated by the 2018 American Community Survey (ACS). Becket grew rapidly in the between 1960 and 2000, despite the absence of new or large employers. Since then, population growth has been much more modest, as illustrated in Table 3.1.

According to the same report, there are 1,791 housing units in Becket. An estimated 811 are year-round housing units, which is approximately 45% of the total. The ACS estimated that the average size of households are 2.3 people per household. It is estimated that 858 of the vacant housing units are estimated for use as seasonal, recreational or occasional use (48% if total).

*Table 3.1 Becket Population Trends*

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>1960</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2018</b>
Becket	770	929	1,339	1,493	1,756	1,779	1,859
Lee	5,271	6,426	6,247	5,850	5,993	5,943	5,760
Washington	290	406	587	592	544	538	543
Otis	473	820	963	1,067	1,364	1,612	1,420
Tyringham	197	234	344	365	346	327	452
Berkshire County	142,135	149,402	145,110	139,352	134,953	131,219	126,348

*Source: United States Decennial Census; 2018 American Community Survey*

Population densities across Becket vary widely, from the very densest neighborhoods in the Sherwood Forest development, constructed in very small lots in the 1960s, to the more typical scattered development along local roads. Denser development is also common along the shorelines of many of the lakes and ponds, and is also found in the historic North Becket and Center Becket areas. The Development Trends Map clearly shows where development has occurred and concentrated in Becket.

#### Age

Like much of Berkshire County, Becket faces an increasingly older population, with a median age of 47. Most year-round residents are between the ages of 20 and 65, with the largest cohort between the ages of 55-74 (36%). The percentage of children and young adults under 19 years of age continues to decline, standing at 17%. The decline in younger residents could influence school enrollment and funding, as well as future the capacity of volunteers and town employees, such as police and firefighters.

*Table 3.2: Becket's Age Breakdown 2018*

<b>Age Group Percentages</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2018</b>
Age 19 and under	26.1	18.5	16.9
Age 20 to 34	13.9	10.4	14.5
Age 35 to 54	35.4	33.4	25.5
Age 55 to 74	19.8	31.3	36.3
Age 75+	4.8	6.5	7.0

*Source: United States Decennial Census; 2018 American Community Survey.*

## Economic Status

According to Berkshire Benchmarks (based on the 2018 ACS S1901), the median household income of families in Becket increased from \$65,250 in 2010 to \$84,100 in 2018, which is higher than both Berkshire County and the Commonwealth. As noted in the Becket Hazard Mitigation Plan, Becket has a fairly high percentage of residents over age 65 (21%). Also notable is the high percentage of homeownership at 92.4%, which is significantly higher than the statewide average of 62%. Becket's unemployment is approximately 4%.

There is very little commercial development in Becket, and what businesses are located here are scattered small, family-owned enterprises, many of which have five or fewer employees. Approximately 12% of Becket workers are self-employed in not incorporated businesses. Thus, the vast majority of Becket's year-round residents commute to work in nearby towns. As can be seen in Table 3.3, a quarter of workers are in the education and health and social assistance sectors. The arts/entertainment/recreation/accommodation/food services and retail trade sectors factor for another large segment of the population. These sectors reflect the larger trend of employment in Berkshire County, moving away from manufacturing and focusing more on education, human services and the tourism trade.

*Table 3.3: Becket Resident Employment Age 16+ Years Old*

Becket Residents Employment: Top Five Industry Sectors	Percent of working population
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	25%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	16%
Retail trade	12%
Professional, scientific, and management, and admin. and waste man. services	11%
Manufacturing	10%
<b>Total working population represented</b>	<b>74%</b>

*Source: United States Decennial Census; 2018 American Community Survey.*

Becket is fortunate in that its rural landscape and abundant water supports five overnight camps and one campground. These entities provide an opportunity for hundreds of visitors and locals to enjoy, and ideally learn to become good stewards of natural resources and wild places. The camps offer much needed summer employment to young adults in the region. The seasonal influx of summer visitors supports our local businesses and introduces many to our area who later return to raise their families or spend their summers here.

## Race, Ethnicity, and Diversity

According to the US Census American Community Survey 2014-2018, Becket is predominantly white, like much of Berkshire County. Of the total population in Becket, Hispanic or Latino persons make up 5.5%, Black or African American persons make up 1.6%, and persons who identify as two or more races make up 0.7%. See Table 3.4, for a breakdown of the race and ethnicity.



*Table 3.4: Race and Ethnicity of Becket 2018*

Race and Ethnicity	Percent
White alone	91.8%
Black or African American alone	1.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone	0%
Asian alone	0%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	0%
Some other race alone	0.4%
Two or more races	0.7%
Hispanic or Latino	5.5%
Total	100% (1,859 persons)

*Source: United States Decennial Census; 2018 American Community Survey.*

## Environmental Justice and Equity

Environmental Justice (EJ) is “based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment” (Mass. Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, 2015). Conceptually, environmental justice recognizes that some of the most highly polluted and undesirable areas to live have tended to contain populations of low-income, minority, foreign-born, and non-English speaking residents. Additionally, these populations have tended to have reduced or limited access to open space. In Massachusetts, these populations have been mapped in each municipality based on Census information. Because these populations have historically been underserved in terms of open space and recreation access and opportunities, they should be a crucial factor in future decision-making regarding these issues. In Massachusetts, a neighborhood is defined as an EJ population if any of the following are true:

- the annual median household income is not more than 65% of the statewide annual median household income;
- minorities comprise 40% or more of the population;
- 25% or more of households lack English language proficiency; or
- minorities comprise 25% or more of the population and the annual median household income of the municipality in which the neighborhood is located does not exceed 150% of the statewide annual median household income.

According to 2019 American Community Survey data there are no environmental justice populations located within the Town of Becket based on the state’s criteria. As such an EJ map is not included in this plan. There are no public housing projects or developments in the Town, and therefore any residents meeting any of the EJ criteria will be scattered throughout the Town. Seniors on fixed incomes are likely the largest segment of the population being cost burdened. Efforts to reach out to these populations were conducted as part of the planning process.



### 3D. Growth and Development Patterns

#### Infrastructure

##### Transportation System

As reported in Becket's 2020 *Hazard Mitigation Plan*, transportation infrastructure includes more than 158 miles of roadways. Major roadways provide access to the surrounding communities and highway systems, offering regional transportation access and mobility.

Currently, the Town of Becket maintains about a third of existing roadways in the town (56 road miles), while MassDOT is responsible for approximately 32 miles. Many of these are the most heavily used roadways, particularly arterial roads that connect Becket with neighboring communities. The remainder of roads in the town are privately owned, including those controlled by homeowner or development associations that take responsibility for maintaining roads within their subdivisions (for example, the Sherwood Forest Road District), or they are "unimproved" roadways that access few or no homes or businesses (for example, old logging roads).

The principal routes of travel in and out of Becket are Routes 8 and 20. State Route 8 crosses Becket's boundary near West Becket, where it joins US Route 20. Routes 8 and 20 are the same road between West Becket and Bonny Rigg Corners, where Route 8 turns north and runs through Becket Center and the Village before crossing the northern town boundary and into Washington. Route 20 runs east-west through Becket, connecting it to the neighboring towns of Chester and Lee. The Massachusetts Turnpike travels 6.8 miles of highway through the southwestern corner of town, but as of yet has no exit in Becket.

Route 20 is also part of the Jacob's Ladder Trail, a state designated scenic byway extending 35 miles between the towns of Lee to the west, through Becket, ending in Russell to the east. The Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, Inc. is a non-profit organization that maintains its natural beauty and historic character. Aside from this route, the town has not designated any roads as Scenic Roads, although many would qualify.

The Byway extends through landscapes of tree-covered hills with rocky outcroppings and cascading streams, and narrow valleys with the winding Westfield River and classic village centers. The Byway includes five towns that have varying lengths of roadway within them: Lee (7 miles), Becket (10.5 miles), Chester (6.5 miles), Huntington (2.5 miles), and Russell (6.5 miles). As the Byway enters the Town of Becket, it passes by scenic Greenwater and Shaw ponds. Travelers pass through an area that is largely forested. The roadway itself offers drivers an interesting ride, as it winds its way upward through the hilly terrain of the Berkshire Hills. Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival is located just off the Byway to the north and, if not paying attention, visitors could easily pass the entrance. Continuing eastward, travelers reach The Summit, which is the Byway's highest elevation at 1,775 feet. The site is marked by a stone cairn, originally placed there for the gala inauguration of the roadway in September 1910. The cairn is all that remains of what was a very popular destination. A short distance away is Jacob's Well, an important site in the early 20th century, as cars of the day often became overheated making their way toward the Summit and needed water. There are interpretive signs at both the Summit and Jacob's Well.

There are no bus lines or mass transit available to residents of Becket, nor are there any designated bikeways. Proximity to well-maintained state highways is crucial for year-round residents, as most commute to outlying areas for employment. Residents commuting to the north travel on Route 8 or Washington Mountain Road, and those commuting east or west use Route 20. For seasonal residents, the opposite is often true, these residents value distance from the major highways of town. The Boston-Albany Railroad, the busiest freight line in Massachusetts, runs along the northern border of town, but does not stop in Becket (*Hazard Mitigation Plan 2020*). The Western Massachusetts legislative delegation has been pressing the Commonwealth to incorporate East-West passenger rail along this route to better link the region to larger metro areas east and west of the Berkshires. Inclusion of additional recreational opportunities along the railroad corridor, such as bike/pedestrian accommodations, and planning for a potential influx of new residents should be considered as part of Becket's long-term strategic planning efforts.

### **Water Supply Systems**

Residents, businesses and institutions in Becket are supplied by private groundwater sources. There are 31 public drinking water sources in the town, which serve water to members of the public. These include the elementary school, the town hall, restaurants, Jacob's Pillow, and the various camps. In addition, there are three watershed areas that have been designated by the state as Outstanding Resource Waters. The location of the public drinking water supplies and other important water sources are illustrated on the Water Resources Map.

### **Wastewater Systems**

All residences and businesses in Becket dispose of sewage on site. All these are individual systems, except for the wastewater plant that was constructed to serve the two YMCA camps, Chimney Corners and Camp Becket. While access to water supply and the ability for a site to handle septic effluent have not prevented large tracts of land from being subdivided, it has prevented many of the smaller subdivided lots from being built on. This has not always been true, because during the mid-century summer cottage building boom, wells and septic systems were installed on very small lots, and now some of these systems are failing. Local residents report that many Title 5 septic inspections have required repair or replacement.

### **Telecommunications**

Becket is served by high-speed broadband internet service, with a large percentage of enrollment. The Town hosts four cell towers located throughout the Town. The Town of Becket offers the municipal Becket Bulletin e-alert public announcement system that delivers Town announcements for those who wish to voluntarily subscribe to this service.

### **Stormwater System**

The major connector roads have stormdrain systems that handle road runoff.

## Land Use (Refer to Map 2 Current Land Use)

### Land Use

Becket's land use and development patterns are driven in part by its rugged landscape. Dominant landforms in the town are steep, bedrock mountain ridges which run northwest-southeast through town. The valleys between these ridges are dominated by rich wetland areas serving as headwaters for the many streams which flow both north and south through the valleys. This topography, coupled with a lack of major transportation sources, has been cited as barriers to widespread commercial and industrial development in the Town.

According to the MassGIS mapping system, the predominant land use in Becket is forest, which covers approximately 26,507 acres, including forested wetlands (87% of total land coverage). The second largest land uses are open water (1,191 acres and 4% of total) and open wetlands (776 acres and 3% of total). The extensive forestlands and extensive wetland resources provide the rural and unspoiled atmosphere that residents and visitors alike cherish, in addition to large tracts of land and water for wildlife habitat.

Developed land within Becket, as calculated by MassGIS, covers approximately 1,508 acres (5% of total coverage). For the purposes of this open space plan, land considered "developed" include a variety of land use categories, including residential, commercial and industrial development, as well as other categories such as right-of-way, bare land, tax exempt and developed open space, the last of which consists largely of grassed lawns and playing fields. Much of the land categorized as commercial development is found within the various camps.

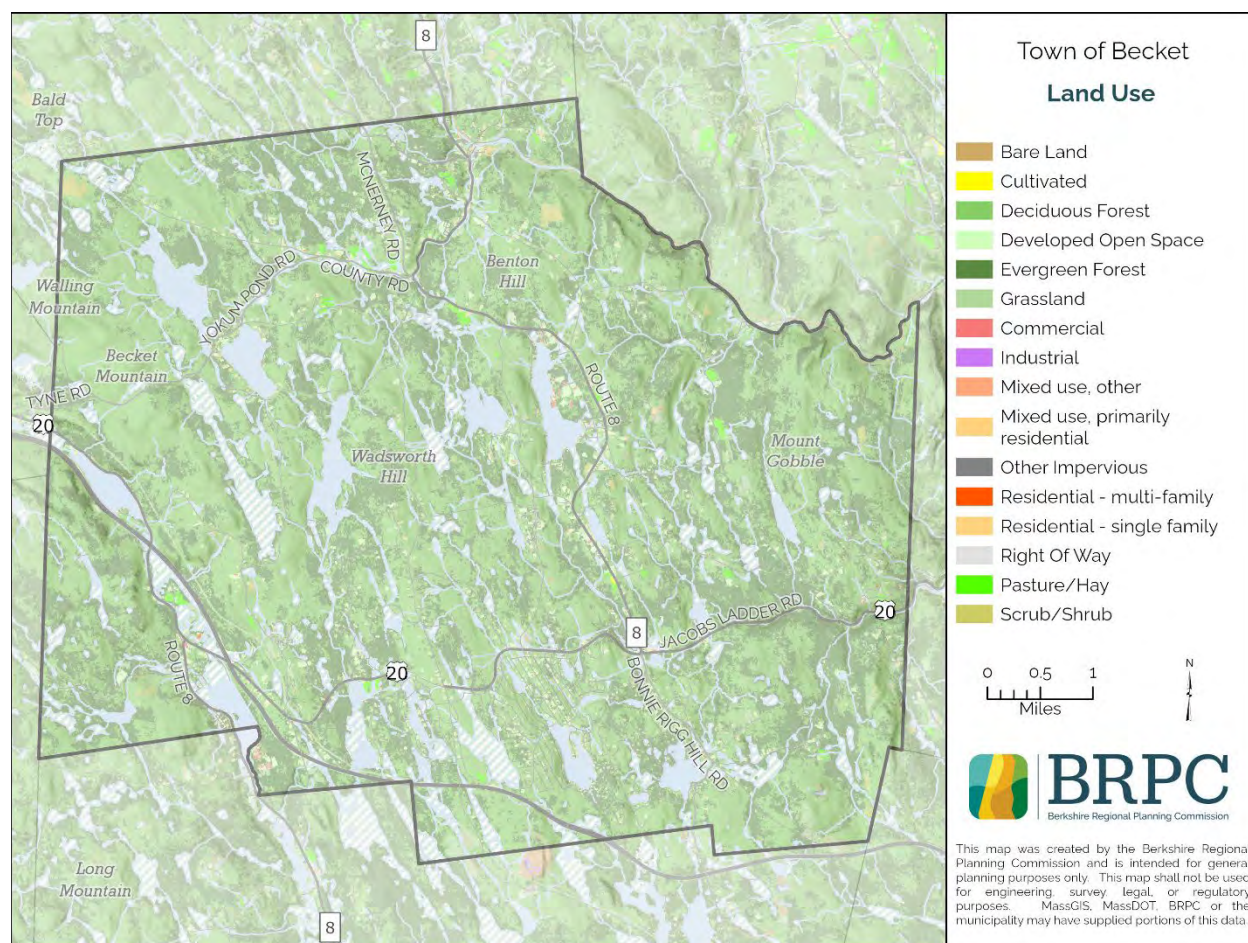
It should be noted that current GIS land use technology (2016) uses a vastly different methodology for mapping and calculating land use than the previous 1999 and 2005 technologies used in Becket's previous open space plans. The 2016 GIS technology is much more detailed than the old, attempting to clearly delineate the footprints

*Table 3.5. Land Use in Becket (MassGIS 2016)*

Land Use	Acres
Agriculture	0.91
Bare Land	85.16
Commercial	27.07
Cultivated	1.78
Deciduous Forest	14,980.59
Developed Open Space	673.22
Evergreen Forest	10,282.80
Forest	0.05
Grassland	368.79
Industrial	1.02
Mixed use, other	3.11
Mixed use, primarily residential	4.23
Open land	26.55
Palustrine Aquatic Bed	57.34
Palustrine Emergent Wetland	593.39
Palustrine Forested Wetland	1,243.52
Palustrine Scrub/Shrub Wetland	125.06
Pasture/Hay	109.61
Recreation	1.95
Residential - multi-family	10.85
Residential - single family	189.56
Right-of-way	480.53
Scrub/Shrub	103.20
Tax exempt	33.04
Unknown	1.27
Water	1,191.36
<b>Total</b>	<b>30,595.97</b>

of buildings and mapping the vegetated cover surrounding those buildings. Take for example a 1-acre residential property, which includes a house surrounded by a grassed lawn and separated from its neighbor by a row of mature maple trees. The older technology would simply have mapped the entire 1-acre site as a residential use. In contrast, the newer technology would map the footprint of the house as a building, the lawn as developed open space and the tree line as deciduous forest. This technology more accurately depicts the developed, impervious acreage of the Town and the corresponding lawn coverage. However, it also increases or skews the acreage of forest cover, because mature trees within developed areas throughout the Town center and in residential neighborhoods are being considered deciduous or evergreen forest. But clearly these clumps of trees do not constitute a forest, nor do they provide the same quantity and quality of habitat that unfragmented forests provide. This explanation of current versus previous GIS technologies has been provided to explain why land use acreage from 2016 will not provide a precise land use change analysis of what has occurred since 1999 and 2005.

*Map 2 Becket Land Use 2016*



### Development Trends (see Map 3, Development Trends)

Available town data showing the construction date of buildings within the Town of Becket allow for a picture of development trends to emerge. This data shows the last available construction date for a given building, so do not capture earlier structures that may have existed on a given parcel and been replaced. This data is based on assessor's information, current as of 2019.

The Development Trends map clearly illustrates development trends in Becket. Pre-1900 development was clustered in two major areas: North Becket Village and Becket Center, with scattered development along a few other roadways. Building development 1900-50 was mainly centered around lakeshore development along Greenwater, Shaw, Rudd and Center Ponds. Much of this development involved small summer cottages on small lots, as well as summer camps becoming established on Rudd and Center Ponds. Dense lakeside subdivision communities prevailed from 1951 to 1975 around man-made lakes, most notably the Sherwood Forest community. Subdivision development continued throughout out the later 1970s to 2001, many again focusing on private lakes communities with access to the water. The Indian Lakes community was developed around Indian Lake Reservoir in the 1980s. Newer, post 2001 development continues within these later subdivisions as well as along rural roads.

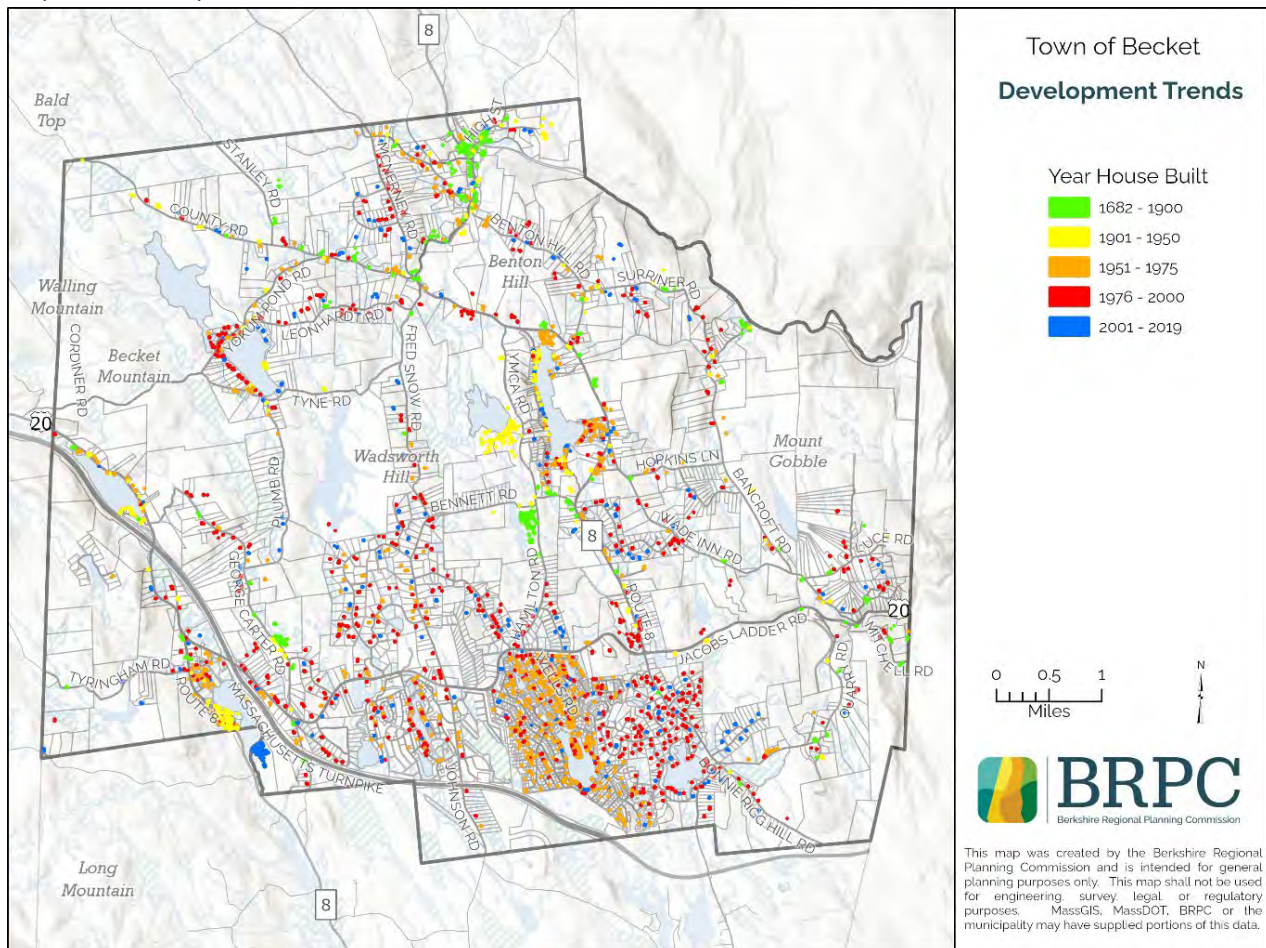


**Table 3.6: Becket Buildings**

Year Built	Number of Buildings
Pre-1900	133
1901 - 1950	186
1951 - 1975	611
1976 - 2012	799
2013 - 2019	38

Source: MassGIS Parcel Data, Assessor Data 2019.

**Map 3. Development Trends**



Becket's forestlands and numerous lakes and ponds provide the rural and unspoiled atmosphere that residents and visitors alike cherish, in addition to large tracts of land for wildlife habitat. Aside from wetlands and water bodies, residential development is the next largest land-use category. There is very little commercial development in Becket, and what businesses are located here are small, family-owned enterprises. There is very little commercial development in Becket, and what businesses are located here are scattered small, family-owned enterprises. Thus, the majority of Becket's year-round residents commute to work in nearby towns. There is very little agricultural land in Becket, as the soils, steep slope, and



shallowness to bedrock inhibit most agricultural activities. The town's limited agricultural lands consist of farm fields, livestock and wood production scattered across the town.

Most of the historical residential development in Becket is concentrated in three village centers: North Becket, Becket Center, and West Becket. Dense residential subdivisions are centered around a few of the Town's manmade lakes and ponds, notably Robin Hood Lake, Long Bow Lake, Indian Lake, Crystal Pond and Shaw Pond. Outside of these areas, development is scattered across the town, mostly consisting of single-family homes on lots greater than two acres and located along existing roadways. There is an increase among seasonal homeowners offering their properties for use as rental units through Airbnb-type systems.

Portions of Becket are owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, including state forests and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). The largest of these forests, the October Mountain State Forest, spans four adjacent towns. The Town of Becket and The Trustees of Reservations also own and manage lands open for public recreation.

Becket is fortunate in that its rural landscape and abundant water supports five overnight camps and one campground. The camps and campground own well over a thousand acres between them and maintain their lands in an undeveloped state contributing to the rural and wilderness character of the town. Camp Becket for Boys was Founded in 1903 by George Hannum on Rudd Pond, it is one of the oldest continually operational summer camps in the United States

## **Future Development**

As noted in the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan (2020), Becket has experienced slow but steady population growth, a trend that is expected to continue with generally limited patterns of future land development. The entire Town constitutes a single residential/agricultural zoning district that has a minimum lot size of two acres for single-family dwellings and three acres for two-family dwellings in order to accommodate the siting of drinking water wells and septic systems on a single parcel. More intensive residential development and other uses, including any commercial or industrial use of land, are only allowed under a special permit review process. Also, as described above, the town's steep slopes and wetlands limit developable lands to glaciated valleys, which are predominantly narrow and characterized by large bedrock outcroppings with medium-sized cobble boulders lining stream bottoms and banks.

Two previous studies on the Town's maximum build-out concluded that it is still possible for Becket to accommodate thousands more residential units, based primarily on lands available for development and the zoning controls in place at the time of the studies (1993 and 2000). No significant zoning amendments have occurred since 2000. While it is unlikely that development to this extent will occur, it is likely the town will see continue to see both permanent and second-home construction increase, as people come seeking the peace and quiet of Becket's beautiful landscape. Intense development, such as that indicated as possible in the build-out studies, would compromise the ecological integrity and diversity of this landscape.

There are a large number of undeveloped parcels within subdivisions located all across Becket. These were planned subdivisions that were never started or fully built out. Many are along the shores or provide access to small lakes and ponds. Maintaining shorelines in a natural state would help to retain water quality and wildlife habitat. These lands could be a focus of

conservation for long-term habitat continuity and climate change resilience. The boundaries of these parcels can be seen on the Development Trends Map.

The cost of land in Becket is still relatively inexpensive compared to other more tourist-oriented towns in the county, and much less than undeveloped lands in the eastern portion of the state. As such, the Town has begun to see proposals for commercial uses that seek large parcels in rural areas, such as cannabis farms, glamping facilities and solar farms.

### **Zoning (see Map 4 Zoning)**

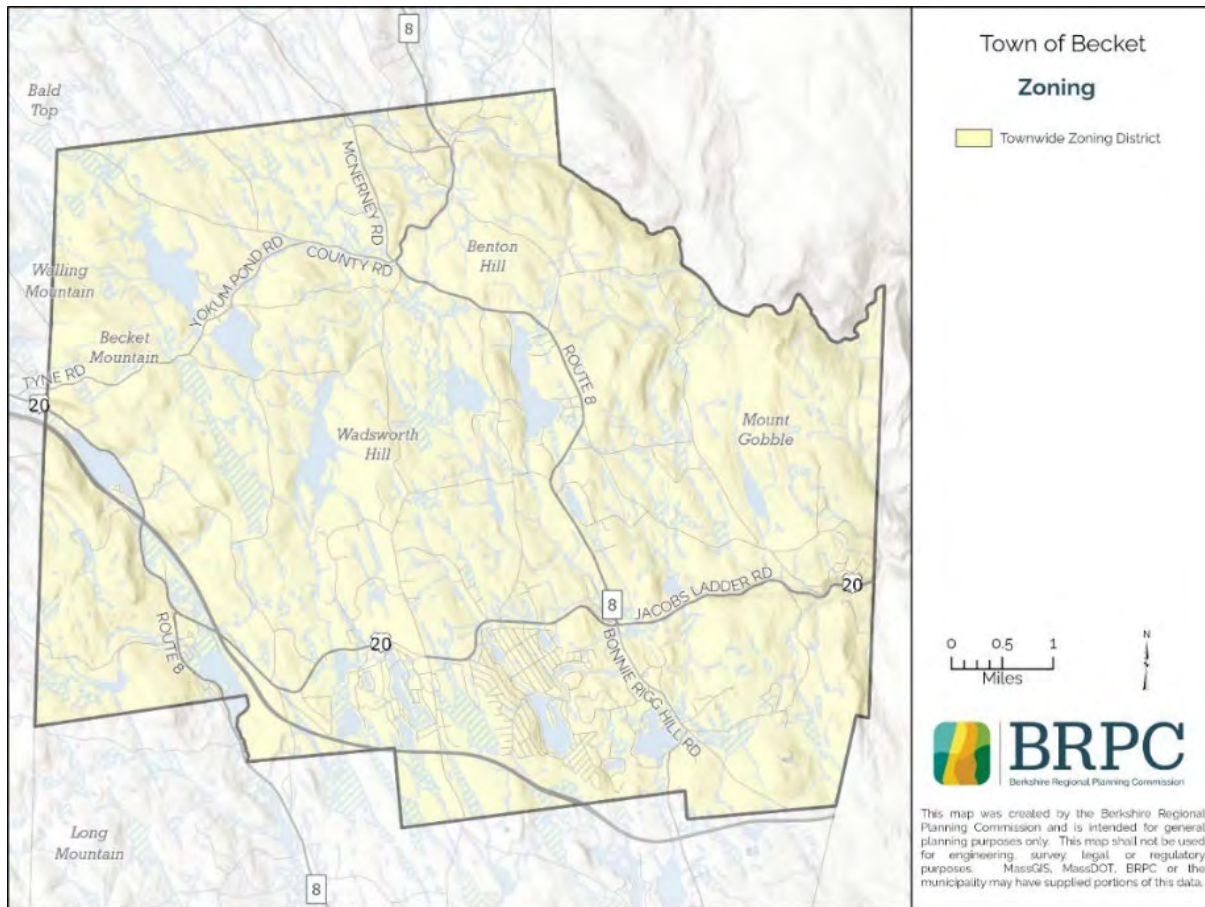
Under current zoning laws, all parcels in Becket are zoned Residential-Agricultural. Other uses are only allowed under a special permit review process. Over 2,300 lots smaller than two acres remain undeveloped, as they were subdivided prior to the adoption of Becket's first zoning by-laws. The town has specific provisions in its by-laws addressing subdivisions, non-conforming lots, lot sizes, and review of site plans. In reaction to the quarter-acre-lot developments of the 1960's, Becket adopted a two-acre minimum lot size in 1976. Older subdivisions, such as occurred in the development of Sherwood Forest, allowed development of cottages on ¼-acre lots, despite the fact that there was no public water or sewer service. Many of the lots were not developed, and the Town has made an effort to encourage homeowners of small lots to purchase neighboring undeveloped lots when possible.

Single family homes are allowed by right, but more intensive residential development, such as two- and multi-family homes require a special permit. The town has a Flexible Residential Development bylaw that allows for an increased density with a 1.5-acre minimum requirement through special permit. Any commercial or industrial use of land is only allowed through a special permit process. Becket has enacted bylaws to govern commercial solar arrays and marijuana uses. Recent commercial solar and marijuana facilities have been constructed under the Town's bylaws for these uses, and a "glamping" camping resort facility was proposed under existing bylaws. These projects have exposed limitations on the Town's ability to limit tree clearing and potential water withdrawal impacts. A commercial solar array developer cleared acres of mature forest to install its facility, as the Town's bylaw did not address tree clearing limits. A large marijuana growing facility was also permitted, felling trees to accommodate development.

Becket has adopted a Floodplain Zoning Overlay which requires any proposal for building within the Flood Hazard Areas be reviewed by the Conservation Commission and Planning Board. The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has developed an updated floodplain bylaw template that it is encouraging towns to adopt, but as of autumn 2022 the Town has not taken steps to adopt the template.

The previous OSRP recommended the drafting of several zoning or town bylaws intended to protect natural resources and maintain Becket's rural character. These recommendations included adopting wetland/shoreline bylaws and improving stormwater management and erosion control requirements. The Conservation Commission drafted a local Wetlands Bylaw, which was not supported by the Board of Selectmen and did not proceed to Town Meeting. In the mid-2000s the Town was successful in establishing a Right-to-Farm Committee and adopted a Right-to-Farm bylaw. No other attempts to protect sensitive resources or steep slopes have been made.

Map 4. Zoning Map



# Section 4:

# Environmental

# Inventory and Analysis

## 4A. Geology, Soils and Topography (Refer to Map 5 Soils and Geologic Features)

Becket is located primarily in the Berkshire Highland ecoregion of Massachusetts. This is characterized by cooler climates that support plant communities and wildlife that are more commonly found in northern New England. Northern hardwoods and, to some extent Spruce-fir forests, dominate the landscape, while lakes and ponds are abundant.

The bedrock structure of Becket was mapped in 1974 by the U.S. Geological Survey and revealed a predominance of schist and gneiss. The major formations are the Hoosic Formation (schists), Washington Gneiss, Tyringham Gneiss, Shales Brook Limestone, and some undifferentiated gneisses. The more weather-resistant rocks are found as outcrops at higher elevations. The less resistant limestone has been eroded by glaciers and weathering and is common along the stream valleys. The harder bedrock formations have been the source of past industrial operations that once mined granite for various uses.

*Quarry pit exposes bedrock extracted for industrial purposes*



The Historic Becket Quarry and Forest is a former granite quarry that is now open for public recreation, where visitors can learn the history of this industrial site and walk a now-regenerated forest landscape. Public visitation to the quarry pit and other former quarry pits in Becket are discouraged for safety reasons.

The surficial sediments in Becket consist of glacial till, stratified drift, wetland deposits, and alluvium. Till usually consists of poorly sorted sediments in which different grain sizes are mixed. Stratified drift consists of layers of silt, sand, clay and gravel. Alluvium is a mixture of sand and gravel deposited on the outwash plain of a receding glacier.

Stratified drift in Becket consists of gravel, sand, and silt deposited by streams formed from melting glacial ice. This drift was laid down in front of the glacier and underneath the glacier. In Becket, because the stratified drift is thin, ranging from 0-40 feet thick, groundwater yields from this source are moderate to poor. Becket Basin, in Becket Center, contains stratified drift at least 30 feet thick. The Basin was probably formed at the intersection of rock-shattering faults. The glacier further abraded and scoured the area creating a depression filled with gravel and sand.

Alluvium laid down by streams consists primarily of thin layers of gravel, sands, and clay or silt less than 10 feet thick and deposited since the last glacial era. Alluvium does not store water as do the sand and gravel deposits within the stratified drift, down into the subsurface. The high infiltration rate of sands and gravels places groundwater supplies at risk of contamination should subsurface oil tanks or septic systems fail.

The glacial action left behind a lot of exposed bedrock and large boulders in the streams. The bedrock places limitations on siting homes and had to be blasted along portions of Route 20 to construct the highway. The streams in Becket are dominated by large boulders and run clear creating beautiful cascades in several areas of town as well as providing excellent spawning habitat for native trout and the endangered Atlantic salmon.

It is a challenge to site septic system leach fields in much of the town due to slope, shallow depths to bedrock, to long periods of high water tables, or to excessive drainage properties. The areas of poorly drained and excessively drained soils are illustrated in the Soils Map. The agricultural suitability of almost all soils in Becket are poor due to steep slopes, high water tables, and the extremely rocky terrain.

#### *Berkshire-Marlow Association*

These extremely stony soils are characterized by steep slopes of 15-45% and as such are unsuitable for buildings or septic systems. Marlow soils were formed in glacial till derived from granite, gneiss, and schist.

#### *Lyman-Tunbridge Association*

These soils are shallow and have extremely rapid permeability, and they are often located on moderately steep slopes. Bedrock outcrops, surficial boulders and stones characterize this soil. The underlying bedrock is gneiss, schist, and granite. Lyman soils are primarily derived from glacial till and fractured mica schist. Tunbridge soils are acid glacial till derived from black mica schist.

#### *Peru-Marlow Association*

These soils cover the steep upland areas throughout town. It is a compact, stony, glacial till derived from schist and characterized by seasonally high-water tables, no more than 30 inches below the surface. Slopes range from 3-15% and on average, stones are no more than 3-20 feet apart. During the winter months a perched water table exists, but for the rest of the year the soils are moderately drained. Peru soils formed in glacial till and were derived from granite, gneiss, and schist.

#### *Pillsbury Loam*

These are level to gently sloping soils associated with glacial till uplands. Stones 5 to 20 feet apart dominate this soil type. A perched water table exists during the winter and spring months.



The seasonal high water table makes areas with these soils unsuitable for buildings, roads, or septic systems.

*Merrimac, Hinckley and Groton*

These soils are all characterized by rapid permeability making them less suitable for septic systems. The Merrimac soils are suitable for row crops, but the soils are susceptible to droughty conditions. Groton soils are primarily derived from limestone.

*Hero and Fredon*

Fredon is a very deep, mostly level, poorly drained soil associated with outwash plains and stream terraces formed by shale, slate, sandstone, limestone, gneiss, and granite. A high water table from October to June does not make this a good soil for buildings, roads, agriculture, nor septic systems. Hero soils have a high water table from November through April and are not suitable for buildings, roads, nor septic systems. Hero soils consist primarily of silt and clay deposited over sand and gravel. As with Fredon, groundwater contamination could occur if the system were not designed to avoid high groundwater.

The Soils Map illustrates large areas where the soils in Becket are excessively drained soils. Interestingly, these soils tend to exist on both steeply sloped areas (such as along the Middlefield border and Becket Mountain), and in the lower lying areas in the center of the town. Poorly drained soils are found in and around wetland and floodplain areas, with large areas of these underlying soils in scattered throughout Becket. In general, excessively drained and poorly drained soils are least desirable for development where septic systems are to be used. Excessively drained soils are not desirable for recreation areas that receive heavy use or traffic, as turf will demand more maintenance in the form of watering or irrigation to stand up to heavy use. Poorly drained soils underlying recreational areas will be flooded and retain muddy conditions for prolonged periods, limiting their use for organized sports.

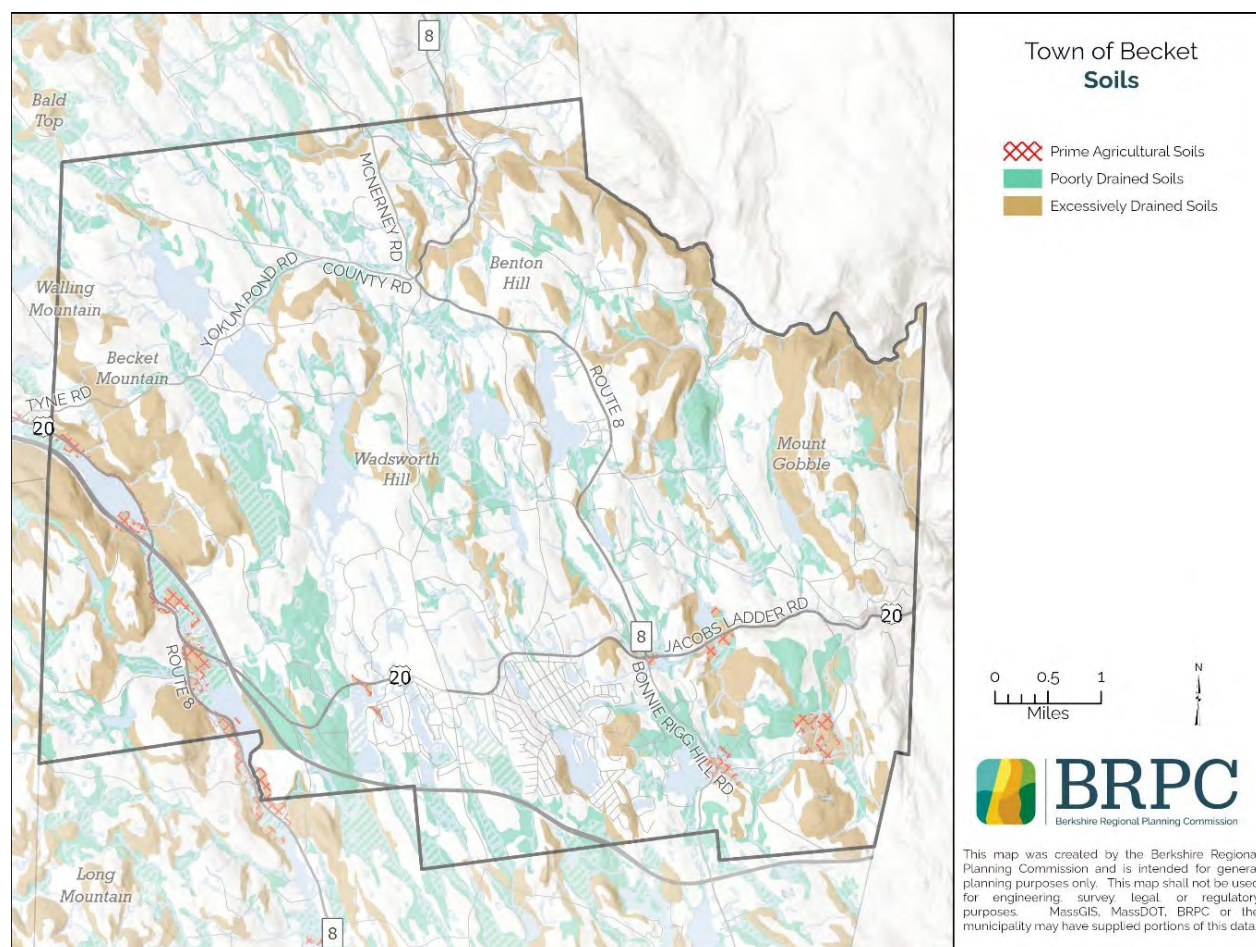
There are barely any parcels in Becket categorized as having Prime Agricultural Soils. These are soils that have been determined to have a combination of physical and chemical characteristics for economically producing sustained high yields of food, feed, forage, and crops, when managed according to acceptable farming methods. Development should be directed away from areas with these underlying soils so that agricultural production can be maintained or expanded. These soils are strictly found in the southern half of the town in very small clusters.

It should be noted that the soils map is generalized for planning purposes only. Exact soil conditions are extremely localized and can differ greatly from one building lot to the next.

Creating or expanding recreational trails on steep slopes needs to be done carefully to avoid soil erosion and down-slope sediment deposition into water resources. Clearing of tree canopy and natural ground vegetation should be limited, especially on steeply sloped areas to avoid creating hazardous conditions and habitat destruction. For example, the newly created Esau's Heel Walking Path, approved at the 2021 Annual Town Meeting and used the Community Preservation Act funding, was designed utilizing these ecological practices.



Map 5. Soils Map



#### 4B. Landscape Character (Refer to Map 2 Current Land Use)

The dominant landforms in Becket are its steep, bedrock mountain ridges which run northwest southeast through town. The valleys between these ridges are dominated by rich wetland areas serving as headwaters for the many streams which flow both north and south through the valleys.

Becket's elevations range from the 2,200-foot Walling Mountain in the October Mountain State Forest at its western border to approximately 800 feet where the West Branch of the Westfield River exits Becket at its northeast border with Middlefield and Chester. A series of northwest-southeast ridges are consistently more than 15% slope and are marked by large exposures of bedrock.

The glaciated valleys are predominantly narrow and are characterized by large bedrock outcroppings with medium-sized cobble boulders lining the stream bottoms and banks. The absence of organic soils near the streams allows them to run clear throughout the year.

Wetlands range in size from the 600-acre Tyne Swamp to ones less than 0.5 acres in size. Pre-settlement era Becket was dominated by wetlands of more than 100 acres in size. Many of these wetlands now are not visible due to impoundment of their waters for recreational and aesthetic purposes.

***Small scattered wetlands created by beavers provide wildlife habitat and water recharge***



Steep slopes and wetlands limit the developable lands to the glaciated valleys. Nevertheless, steep slopes are not currently regulated in Becket by state or local laws.

#### **4C. Water Resources (Refer to Map 6 Water Resources)**

Becket's quality of life is directly united with the quantity and quality of its water resources. The numerous ponds and streams which drain the headwaters of three different watersheds are valued sources of recreation, scenic views, and drinking water. Many of Becket's lakes and ponds are man-made impoundments, specifically to serve as anchors for development of cottages and camps. This abundance of surface water resources has attracted year-round and summer residents for over one hundred years. Because of the narrow valleys and steep gradients of the brooks, many have been impounded to allow recreational use. Swimming, boating, and fishing are popular during the summer months with ice skating and ice fishing popular during the winter months.

According to 2016 MassGIS Land Use data, open water and wetland ecosystems cover approximately 11% of Becket: four percent is covered by open waterbodies (1,191 acres), while three percent is covered by aquatic bed, emergent and shrub/scrub wetlands (776 acres) and four percent is covered in forested wetlands (1,244 acres). [Note: For all other analyses in this plan, forested wetlands are categorized as forest cover for land use calculations; however, it is important to call attention to this ecosystem in the water resource sections because of their importance to long-term biodiversity conservation.] These water resource land use figures are slightly higher than the 1999 and 2005 Land Use calculations for open water and wetlands that were used in the previous open space plans because the newer 2016 data reflects more accurate wetland resource mapping methodologies. However, it should also be noted that the figures are not all inclusive of the town's wetland resource areas. These figures do not reflect the actual on-

the-ground acreage of wetlands because they do not reflect small, yet important wetlands dispersed throughout the town in forests, backyards, and fields.

The land within Becket's boundaries includes the headwaters of three different river systems. Being at the headwaters of the watersheds gives Becket the opportunity to be in control of its water quality and floodplain areas and to serve as a source of good water quality to the subwatersheds downstream. The Housatonic River watershed drains ten percent of Becket's land toward the west. The Housatonic River is the dominant watershed in Berkshire County. The river flows in a southerly direction through the county and into Connecticut, from where it drains into Long Island Sound. The Farmington River watershed drains approximately thirty percent toward the south, while the Westfield River watershed drains about sixty percent of the land toward the north, south, and east. The Farmington and Westfield rivers are tributaries of the Connecticut River which, like the Housatonic, flows through Connecticut before discharging into Long Island Sound.

## **Watersheds and Surface Waters**

### *Housatonic River Watershed*

Greenwater Pond is an 88-acre Great Pond sandwiched between the Massachusetts Turnpike on the south shore and Route 20 on the north shore. It is, on average, 23 feet deep with the center being about 58 feet. It currently has informal access on the west end allowing trout and bass fishing, and a dam on the west end. It is the source for Greenwater Pond Brook which runs about 1/4 mile before it enters Tyringham.

A small unnamed impoundment that flows into Upper Goose Pond has a few residences on the north shore and no public access. It is the source of Higley Brook which runs into Goose Pond before entering into the town of Lee.

Within the Housatonic River Watershed, to the west of the Appalachian Trail, is the headwaters for Basin Pond in Lee, a state-designated Outstanding Resource Water. These waters are recognized for their outstanding ecological, recreational, socioeconomic and/or aesthetic values, and for which extra protections are in place. This entire area is located within the October Mountain State Forest, and is thus protected open space.

### *Farmington River Watershed*

Palmer Brook Pond is over 800 acres which is privately owned and impounded on its south shore. There is no public access to this pond.

Shaw Pond is a 100-acre Great Pond with average depths of 13-19 feet. It has public access and a boat ramp in Otis just south of the town line on Route 8. It has fish populations of bullhead trout, yellow perch, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and chain pickerel.

Ward Pond (Mystic Isle Lake) is a secluded, natural, 25-acre pond with no public access. Its average depth is 8 feet. Its outlet, Thomas Brook, feeds Mud Pond, a 50-acre quaking bog just over the town line in Otis.



Silver Shield, Robin Hood, Long Bow, Lancelot, Excalibur, and Golden Fawn Lakes are all privately owned, impounded streams and wetlands which lie within the Sherwood Forest and Sherwood Greens residential developments. The shores of these lakes are heavily developed primarily with summer cottages and second homes.

Three unnamed ponds lie in a north-south configuration on lands between Johnson Rd. and Otis State Forest near the Becket-Otis town line.

Shales Brook is the outlet for a 10- to 20-acre beaver pond in the Becket Wildlife Management Area. It flows northeast into Shaw Pond.

Palmer Brook flows from Palmer Brook Pond south until it is impounded in the Sherwood Greens development and part of a former golf course. It then flows into the impounded Mystic Isle Lake before making its way into Otis and Thomas Pond. It becomes Thomas Brook after it leaves Thomas Pond and makes a brief reentry into Becket before making a rapid descent into Hayden Pond.

Tyne Brook drains the 600-acre Tyne Swamp, crosses under Plumb Road, and then enters Palmer Brook.

The West Branch of the Farmington River forms a brief boundary between Becket and Otis before it flows into Hayden Pond in Otis. Not too long after it flows into Connecticut, a section of the river is designated a National Wild and Scenic River, the only one in the entire state of Connecticut.

#### *Westfield River Watershed*

Within the Westfield River Watershed there are three sub watersheds that support state-designated Outstanding Resource Waters. The first two are the sub watersheds that feed Horn Pond and the Austin Brook Reservoir in neighboring Blandford. The third is a small headwaters section that flows south into Otis. The Austin Brook Reservoir is owned by the town of Chester and can be considered protected open space as long as the reservoir is used by the town.

Buckley Dunton Reservoir is 195 acres. It lies mostly within the October Mountain State Forest and has public access and a boat ramp at the southern end via Yokum Pond Road. The 1989 plan suggested identifying this impounded lake as a Class A water resource, reserving it as a possible future source for public water.

Yokum Pond is a 109-acre artificial Great Pond which is managed for chain pickerel, yellow perch, smallmouth bass, and largemouth bass. It averages 7-10 feet deep and is accessible to the public via a boat launch off Leonhardt Rd. It has heavy recreational use during the summer and winter.

#### ***Kayaking on Buckley Dunton Reservoir***



Rudd Pond is an artificial, 80-acre pond owned by the Chimney Corners/YMCA camp. Access to this pond is with permission of the camp only.

Center Pond is a 125-acre artificial Great Pond averaging 8-14 feet deep. It is the most heavily used recreational pond in Becket. Camp Wahtitoh is located on its northern shore, and Camp Greylock on its eastern shore. The southern end has three beaches each over 100 feet long. The town owns a 2-acre public beach area, boat launch and parking lot at the southern end. Fishing for smallmouth and largemouth bass is common.

Crystal Pond is a 10-acre, artificial pond located across the road and to the east of the Town Hall. There is no public access to this pond.

Horn Pond is a 30-acre, natural, Great Pond located just south of Mount Gobble in northeastern Becket. Although previous reports indicated it is owned by the town of Chester for its water supply, property maps show that the entire shoreline abuts private lands.

Robin Hood Lake is the largest impounded lake at 70 acres. It is privately owned and is heavily developed with small cottages on all shores.

Several other smaller ponds lie within the Westfield River Watershed: Walker Brook Pond, Spark Brook Pond, Chimney Corners Pond (Hamilton Brook Pond), Little Robin Lake, Lancelot Lake, two unnamed ponds off Carter Rd. in North Becket, and off County Rd. in the northwestern corner of the town, and the abandoned quarry behind Bonny Rigg Hill.

Rudd Pond Brook flows north from Rudd Pond before joining Yokum Brook.

Yokum Brook makes a steep descent from its headwaters in the October Mountain Forest and follows Yokum Pond Rd. and Route 8 before it runs through North Becket village on its way to join the West Branch of the Westfield River.

Shaker Mill Brook crosses into Becket from Washington to the north and then cascades through a ravine adjacent to Brooker Hill Road before descending into North Becket village and joining the West Branch of the Westfield River. The ravine was mentioned as one of the unique resources of Massachusetts in a 1929 Natural Areas Survey by noted landscape architect Charles Eliot. The Town of Becket has been acquiring the land along the south side of the ravine in anticipation of creating a greenway along it.

Depot Brook follows the Conrail railway into North Becket village from Washington before it joins with Shaker Mill Brook and Yokum Pond Brook to form the West Branch of the Westfield River.

Center Pond Brook and Mountain Pasture Brook are two other south-flowing streams which join the West Branch of the Westfield River below North Becket village. Mountain Pasture Brook joins at the hamlet of Bancroft.

The West Branch of the Westfield River forms the primary boundary between Middlefield and Becket. This river is the longest free-flowing river in the state of Massachusetts. The Westfield River and its main tributaries in Becket have been designated as a National Wild and Scenic River.

Steep slopes on both sides of the valley have prohibited most development, making this one of the most scenic spots in the Berkshire foothills. When the water is high enough, the river becomes a challenging class IV run for many area kayakers.

Hamilton Brook flows south out of Rudd Pond and into Chimney Corners Pond in the YMCA camp before it enters Walker Brook downstream.

Walker Brook has the second largest volume of flowing water within the town after the West Branch of the Westfield. The West Branch of Walker Brook first flows south, generally paralleling Fred Snow Rd. before it empties into Robin Hood Lake. It then winds northeast to Bonny Rigg Corners where it meets the main stem and flows east along Route 20. The main branch begins just west of the Town Hall at a small pond and wetlands south of Center Pond. Brown trout and brook trout are plentiful in the main stem. The main branch is also a class IV kayaking run when the water is high enough. Much of Walker Brook follows the Jacob's Ladder Scenic Trail. Not too far over the Becket-Chester town line, Walker Brook joins the National Wild and Scenic West Branch of the Westfield River.

Spark Brook starts in Otis State Forest before it empties into Spark Brook Pond in the Indian Lakes Estates development. It then flows north through Becket State Forest before joining Walker Brook at Walker Brook Pond.

Cushman Brook drains the mountains in the southeast corner of Becket around Quarry Road and flows north before entering Walker Brook less than a mile before the Becket-Chester town line. Its waters support brown and brook trout populations.

Austin Brook's source is the water shedding from Mt. Gobble and lies entirely within lands owned by Chester and has no public access.

### **Aquifer recharge areas**

Groundwater is mostly replenished through precipitation, and to a lesser extent from inflow of adjacent groundwater and natural infiltration from streams. It is important to understand that groundwater, however, is not separate from surface water. The cracks in the bedrock allow for interchange of water resources from bedrock to surface waters. Any decline in water quality within a watershed's drainage area is a result of activities occurring within its borders. Taking steps to protect its own water supplies will also mean cleaner water for those communities downstream and protect aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.

The one medium-yield aquifer, near Greenwater Pond, is not a likely drinking water resource for most of Becket as water would have to be pumped uphill to where most of Becket's population lives. Road salting also puts this aquifer at great risk as it lies in between the Massachusetts Turnpike, the state's main east-west artery for commercial and tourist traffic, and Route 20, a major regional road.



## Outstanding Resource Waters

There are two areas within Becket that support Outstanding Resource Waters (ORW). The first is the headwaters of the Basin Pond, which is located in the neighboring town of Lee. The second ORW near Mount Gobble is watershed land for the Town of Chester drinking water supply.

## Flood Hazard Areas

In Becket there are approximately 2,600 acres of FEMA-mapped special flood hazard areas, as designated by the National Flood Insurance Program. This program delineates the 100-year flood elevations which statistically have a 1% chance of being reached in any given year. These floodplain areas cover roughly 9% of the town's total acreage. Of these floodplains, approximately 129 acres of floodplain are developed, which is 5% of the total floodplain acreage. It should be noted that the 100-year floodplain maps were created in the early 1980s, and as such may not accurately reflect boundaries that may have shifted in the past 40 years.

Floodplains are often located along the town's principal streams, including Walker Brook, Palmer Brook, Center Pond Brook, Yokum Brook, and the West Branch of the Westfield River. These areas are regulated under the Town's Floodplain Zoning Overlay, which requires any proposal for building to be reviewed by the Conservation Commission and Planning Board and meet certain floodplain development regulations. Low-lying areas adjacent to the town's many impounded ponds and wetlands are also susceptible to flooding. This includes areas around Center Pond, Rudd Pond, Ward Pond, Shaw Pond, Greenwater Pond, Yokum Pond, Horn Pond, and Buckley-Dunton Reservoir. The current impoundments were constructed for aesthetic and recreation reasons and were not meant to act as flood control structures. It has been over 50 years since a flood has reached or exceeded the 100-year flood elevation. It is not uncommon for waters to reach these levels more than once over the 100-year period.

In 2020 Becket updated its Hazard Mitigation Plan and developed a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness report, in which flood-prone problem areas were identified across the Town. Sources of flooding of roads and properties included development in floodplain and on steep slopes, failing culverts and beaver activity.

While impoundments can offer some security for flood control, no dams in Becket were constructed with flood-control in mind. Becket had a tragic experience in 1927 when an impoundment below Rudd Pond collapsed and ravaged North Becket Village, destroying homes, businesses, and killing one person. Factors which contribute to the intensity of a flood are the amount of impervious surfaces (pavement), disruption of vegetative cover, and loss of flood storage areas (natural floodplains and wetlands). Becket's remaining wetlands and unbuilt floodplains continue to provide this valuable function. Protecting the headwaters of these basins would provide an important function for Becket and all towns downstream.

## Wetlands

Wetlands in Becket vary in size from 600-acres (Tyne Swamp) to smaller than one-half acre. Their functions include filtering pollutants, storing flood waters, and providing critical habitat for diverse wildlife species and native flora. They also provide many acres of open space. The wetlands in Becket lie mainly in the northwest-southeast oriented valleys left by the scouring action of the glaciers thousands of years ago. They are the sources for the many brooks and rivers originating in Becket. Wetlands provide very valuable functions for the communities near

them, including flood water storage, pollutant filtration, beautiful open spaces, scenic views and wildlife habitat. As noted in BioMap3, many of the wetlands in the Town harbor rare plants and animals, providing habitat that may help sustain the region's biodiversity.

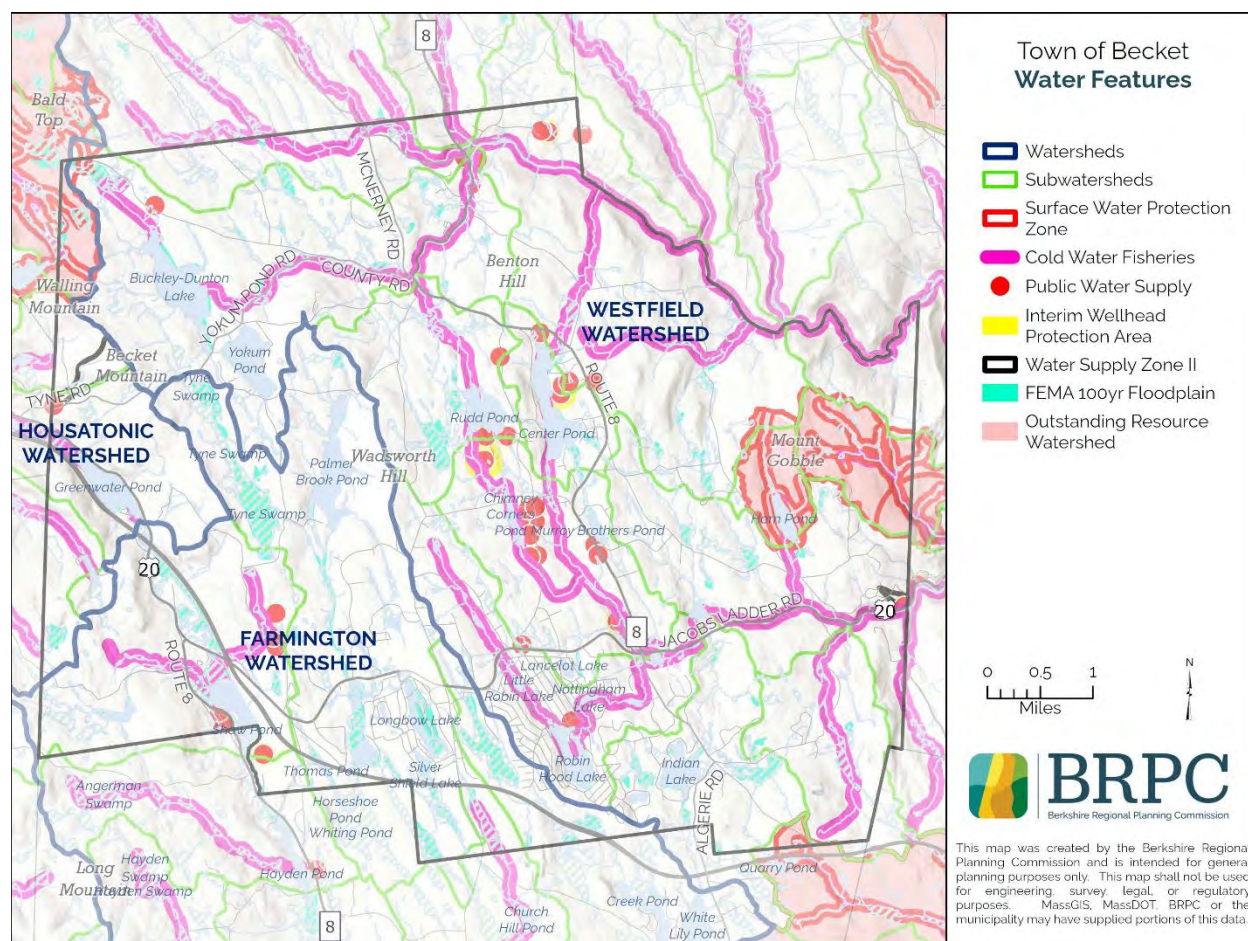
Several large wetlands have been impounded over the years in order to create recreational ponds. The most significant of these were the headwaters of Palmer Brook, Indian Lake and the several impoundments in the Sherwood Forest and Sherwood Greens developments. While these water bodies now provide valuable recreational and aesthetic qualities, the remaining wetlands continue to perform important and irreplaceable functions.

The Wetlands Protection Act, as amended by the 1996 Rivers 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 perennial rivers and streams is regulated by the Becket Conservation Commission. Becket does not have any additional regulations which affect activities near or around its wetlands.

#### *Wetlands Provide a Host of Environmental Benefits*



Map 6. Important Water Features



#### 4D. Vegetation (Refer to Map 2 Current Land Use, Map 7 Fisheries and Wildlife)

Approximately 87% of Becket's land is covered by forest. It consists primarily of an oak-maple hardwoods community, spruce-pine softwoods community, and hemlock-beech-mixed community. Hemlocks are found along steep, cool ravines. Approximately 5% of the forest land is categorized as forest wetland.

#### Agricultural Land

Agriculture lands consist of farm fields, pastures, corrals, and livestock farmyards, which are scattered across the town. Traditional open agricultural lands cover less than one percent of Becket, and there are no traditional agricultural operations of a significant size, except for the Robinson Farm, which offer beefalo and manages a wood lot. The soils, steep slope and shallowness to bedrock tend to inhibit agricultural activities on a commercial scale.



## Wetland Vegetation

According to MassGIS 2016 data, approximately 776 acres within Becket have been mapped as being open wetland ecosystems, including 57 acres of aquatic bed wetland, 594 acres of emergent vegetation wetland, and 125 acres of shrub/scrub vegetation. Additionally, there are 1,244 acres of forested wetlands. These different wetland ecosystems provide an array of diverse wetland habitats.

## Forest Land

Forests dominate the landscape of the town, providing residents with a rural atmosphere and wildlife with large tracts of land for habitat. Successional forests are dominated by colonizing species such as poplar, grey and white birch and white pine. The more mature forests are typified by sugar maple, ash, red oak, yellow birch, beech, spruce and hemlock.

According to 2016 MassGIS Land Use data, there are approximately 26,508 acres of forest within the Town, supporting diverse plant communities. Tree diversity ranges from predominately mixed northern hardwoods to fewer softwoods. Typical canopies of a northern hardwood forest include American beech, ash, birch, and sugar maple. Scattered throughout the hardwood forest are white pine. On some of the south facing slopes are red oak stands. Hemlock forest covers are found in and along deeply incised stream valleys while red spruce and black spruces make up some of the higher plateaus. No inventory has been undertaken to determine if specimen or old growth trees are present in the community though some of the steep slopes and inaccessible areas may never have been logged and could have older vegetation.

Below the main forest canopy are mountain laurels, azaleas, witch hazel and maple-leaf viburnums, along with striped maples, red elders, and witch hazel in the lower elevations. Common ground cover in the forest includes Indian cucumber roots, blueberries, wood ferns, pink lady slippers, and wild oats.

## Priority and Exemplary Plant Communities

As noted in NHESP's document *BioMap2 Conserving the Biodiversity of Massachusetts in a Changing World*, Becket (2012), the Town's undeveloped lands host a state-designated Priority Natural Community and several Exemplary Natural Communities. Exemplary Natural Communities are those plant communities that represent the best examples documented of natural plant communities. The Exemplary communities in Becket tend to be located in BioMap3 Aquatic and Wetland Cores, such as the Westfield River, the wetlands north of Shaw Pond, along Tyne Brook and its associated wetlands, and within the series of wetlands and ponds that are located along the Becket/Otis border. Two state-designated Priority Natural Communities are located in Otis,

*Northern Hardwood Forests provide habitat and rural character*



just south of the Becket/Otis border, a Level Bog and an Acidic Shrub Fen. Both of these habitats are categorized as Vulnerable plant communities, having 21-100 sites or limited acreage across Massachusetts. All these plant communities are found within BioMap3 Core Habitat.

## **Public Shade Trees**

Public shade trees are defined as trees located along the roadways within the public right of way and are regulated by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 87. This law outlines the authorities of the Town's Tree Warden, establishes procedures for cutting or removing public shade trees, and sets penalties for violations. The cutting and maintenance of trees along Town-owned roads can only occur by first holding a public hearing, or gaining approval from the Town's Select Board, or in the case of designated Scenic Roads, the Town's Planning Board. At this time there are no locally-designated scenic roads in Becket.

Trees located along state highways are the jurisdiction of MassDOT, and do not require a public hearing to be cut, unless the cutting is part of a large improvement project.

Due to the large percentage of forested land in Becket, most roadways are tree-lined and viewsheds are dominated by the forested landscape. The Town's two parks, one in North Becket Village and one adjacent to the town hall in Center Becket, have been developed and designed for recreational activities such as playgrounds and ball fields leaving minimal tree canopy and limited understory in the areas popularly used. The visitor experience could be enhanced in both parks by the planting of native shade trees, particularly if summer temperatures and the number of heat waves continue to rise in the coming decades due to climate change. Yokum Brook, which flows along North Becket Village Park, could benefit from additional tree plantings to create an adequate vegetated buffer and tree canopy shade in this vicinity. The Town's beach is a popular recreation area with has a sand beach separated from the parking area by a strip of trees providing some shade, and there is a small wetland with thin vegetation and trees serving as the southern border. Esau's Heel is the town's newest passive recreation area. Community Preservation funds were used to convert an abandoned road into a short walking trail, including a new loop. There is abundant vegetation and shade canopy at this site.

## **Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species**

The following list of rare and endangered species comes from the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), as cited on their website in April 2022, (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/list-of-endangered-threatened-and-special-concern-species>). The State Rank indicates Special Concern (SC) species are natives that have suffered a decline which could threaten the species, or have a small number, limited distribution, or specialized habitat; Threatened (T) species are likely to become endangered in the future; Endangered (E) species are in danger of extinction. To protect some rare plants and animals that reside within these areas and could fall prey to collectors, NHESP does not reveal the exact site of some individual plant and animal populations.

**Table 4.1. Rare Plants in Becket**

Taxonomic Group	Scientific name	Common Name	State Rank	Most Recent Observation
Vascular Plant	<i>Sisyrinchium mucronatum</i>	Slender Blue-eyed Grass	E	2019
Vascular Plant	<i>Arceuthobium pusillum</i>	Eastern Dwarf Mistletoe	SC	2009
Vascular Plant	<i>Moneses uniflora</i>	One-flowered Pyrola	SC	2019
Vascular Plant	<i>Lygodium palmatum</i>	Climbing Fern	SC	Historic
Vascular Plant	<i>Carex pauciflora</i>	Few-flowered Sedge	E	Historic
Vascular Plant	<i>Carex livida</i>	Livid Sedge	E	Historic

Source: NHESP, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer> April 2022 downloaded

#### 4E. Fisheries and Wildlife (Refer to Map 7 Fisheries and Wildlife)

Berkshire County is one of the most ecologically diverse and intact natural landscapes in the state, and Becket's forests and wetland resources are key components of the overall landscape. The region provides important expansive forest habitat that connects the northern forests of New England and New York northward to Canada and southward to the forests of the Appalachian Mountain chain, providing habitat, opportunities to enhance genetic diversity in species and safe passage for roaming animals like black bear, fisher and bobcat and treetop habitat for resident and migratory birds. The Nature Conservancy has recognized the importance of the Berkshire Highlands Forest that blankets the county's eastern border, which includes the Town of Becket (BRPC, 2014). Providing wildlife travel ways will be increasingly important as some animal and plant species may need to migrate northward or higher in elevation to continue to survive in a warming climate. Large blocks of habitat are particularly important for animal populations that need large territories to sustainably live, breed and disperse, such as black bears and moose. Residents all across Becket can enjoy wildlife in their backyard, along hikes in woodlands and along the Town's many wetland resources. Listing all the species found there would fill a book all its own.

Wildlife corridors between protected areas are important to the survival of threatened, rare and endangered species. The waterways, forests and vernal pools provide habitat for common and rare reptiles and amphibians, and for common and rare insects, which provide the basis of the food chain for the wildlife we enjoy. Larger wildlife species commonly seen are turkey, fox, coyote, bear, and deer. Bird species also commonly seen are a wide variety of songbirds and raptors. Small populations of moose are known to inhabit some areas of Becket, most consistently in the western portion of Becket, in Tyne Brook Swamp and southwest around Shaw and Greenwater Ponds.

Becket's lakes and ponds provide aquatic habitat needed for a variety of animal species, including beaver, mink, otter, several duck species, osprey, bald eagles, Canada goose, and various herons. Turtles, frogs and salamanders are commonly found across the Town. The lakes and ponds also provide an abundance of fish species, including many that are prized by anglers such as large and small-mouth bass, perch, pickerel and in a few select ponds trout are stocked.



## Coldwater Fisheries

Several streams in the Westfield River Watershed are considered by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (DFW) to be cold-water fisheries because of their ability to sustain reproducing wild trout populations and other species that require cool year-round temperatures. These streams are shown in pink on the Fish and Wildlife Map and the Water Resources Map.

In 2002 and 2007 the Town of Becket and resident volunteers supported the removal of the Ballou and Silk Mill Dams in North Becket. Combined, the two projects reconnected eight miles of stream for brook trout, Atlantic salmon and other native fish and aquatic species.

## Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are indispensable to biodiversity, both locally and globally. In many upland areas, where the nearest wetland or other waterbody is thousands of feet away, vernal pools are the only aquatic breeding grounds in the area. Some of the state's rarest amphibians, including the mole salamanders (Jefferson, spotted, marbled salamanders) and some species of freshwater snails and clams, are inexorably linked to the vernal pool in which they were hatched. Most live out their lives within ¼ miles of their natal pool, returning to breed. For a species with a narrow or small distribution, a specific vernal pool may be the only place in the region where the creature is found. If that pool is destroyed, that specific population of creatures could become locally extinct.

Vernal pools are most often found in the Berkshires in woodland areas, where evaporation from sunlight is limited due to the forest canopy. According to a data layer set developed by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection, there are nine certified pools and about 48 potential vernal pool sites in Becket. This data layer has been developed through a desktop analysis, so the true number of vernal pools could be much higher due to thick forest canopy and dense areas of evergreen tree cover.

*Spotted Salamander eggs in Vernal Pool*



## Rare, Threatened and Endangered Species (see Map 7 Fish and Wildlife)

Becket's large tracts of forest and its abundant water resources support several rare animal species. The areas where rare species are known to exist can be seen on the Fish and Wildlife Map. In general, these areas tend to be along streams, rivers, and wetlands. Areas of note are the stream and wetlands north of Shaw Pond, Palmer Brook, Rudd Pond Brook, Center Pond Brook, and the other major tributaries to the Westfield River. The stream and wetland complex that flow into Shaw Pond, which is situated between the Mass Turnpike and Route 20, is vulnerable to runoff pollutants generated by vehicles and road sand and salt.

According to the NHESP, there are multiple records of Wood Turtles, which require a mix of stream, wetland, and neighboring upland habitats. The Wood Turtle has been found in the area

around Palmer Brook off Plumb Road. In addition, the American Bittern is known to inhabit sites within the town. This secretive bird breeds and nests in dense marshlands, deep within the protective cover of tall sedges, reeds and shrubs. The streams and wetlands also support other water birds, including the regal Great Blue Heron. These animals need wetlands, but also some terrestrial lands for some part of their life cycles. Therefore, it is best to conserve not only the wetlands, but the surrounding area, which can provide the needed uplands, but can also act as a buffer from development and human intrusion.

In addition to large animals, Becket supports two rare fishes and is part of a contiguous forest that supports several rare insects. The Bridle Shiner is a fish of special concern in Massachusetts, because its populations have been declining or have been extirpated in much of the region. The population in Shaw Pond is one of only six known populations in the Farmington River Watershed. This fish lives in well-vegetated, quiet waters, and is an important part of the freshwater ecosystems as prey for larger fish. The Brindle Shiner is also found in Shales Brook which feeds into Shaw Pond. The Lake Chub is found in sections of the Westfield River. Like native trout, the Lake Chub requires moderate- to fast-flowing cold, clear streams with gravel and rubble substrates. Excessive sediments from roads or other development can degrade the clean gravel needed for spawning and proper egg development. Protecting habitat along the Westfield will help to ensure the excellent quality of water that supports rare fish, native trout and other aquatic wildlife.

The Core Habitat area along the Westfield River is known to support the rare Ocellated Darner dragonfly. This site is within dispersal distance of another Core Habitat for this species in neighboring Chester, which allows for movement of the darners between these two areas. While some of the habitat in these two areas are located within the October Mountain SF and Walnut Hill WMA, conserving more land within these areas, to increase the amount of contiguous forest and riverine habitats, is desirable for the long-term health of these insect populations.

The Core Habitat area in the northwest section of Becket is known to support the rare Eastern Veined White Butterfly (*Pieris oleracea*) and the Beaver Pond Clubtail dragonfly (*Gomphus borealis*). The large core habitat, which reaches beyond Becket's borders, is largely undeveloped and unfragmented northern hardwood forest, with sunny openings that provide habitat for the Eastern Veined White butterfly. The wetlands and numerous small ponds that reside in this area, north and northeast of the town, provide habitat for the dragonfly. While these two insects have not definitively been identified in Becket, the contiguous forest cover and the ponds and wetlands in this section of the town probably provide habitat and allows for dispersal of the rare insect populations known to exist in the area. Crystal Pond, located on Main Street in the vicinity of the Town Hall, supports rare species. The Early Hairstreak Butterfly has been documented in the woodlands to the northeast of the pond. The mature northern forest supports the life cycle of the butterfly, especially beech trees, where the larvae feed on developing fruits and leaves.

The State Rank indicates Special Concern (SC) species are natives that have suffered a decline which could threaten the species, or have a small number, limited distribution, or specialized habitat; Threatened (T) species are likely to become endangered in the future; Endangered (E) species are in danger of extinction. To protect some rare plants and animals that reside within these areas and could fall prey to collectors, NHESP does not reveal the exact site of some individual plant and animal populations. See Table 4.2 for a list of species of concern.

Map 7. Areas of Important Fish and Wildlife Habitats

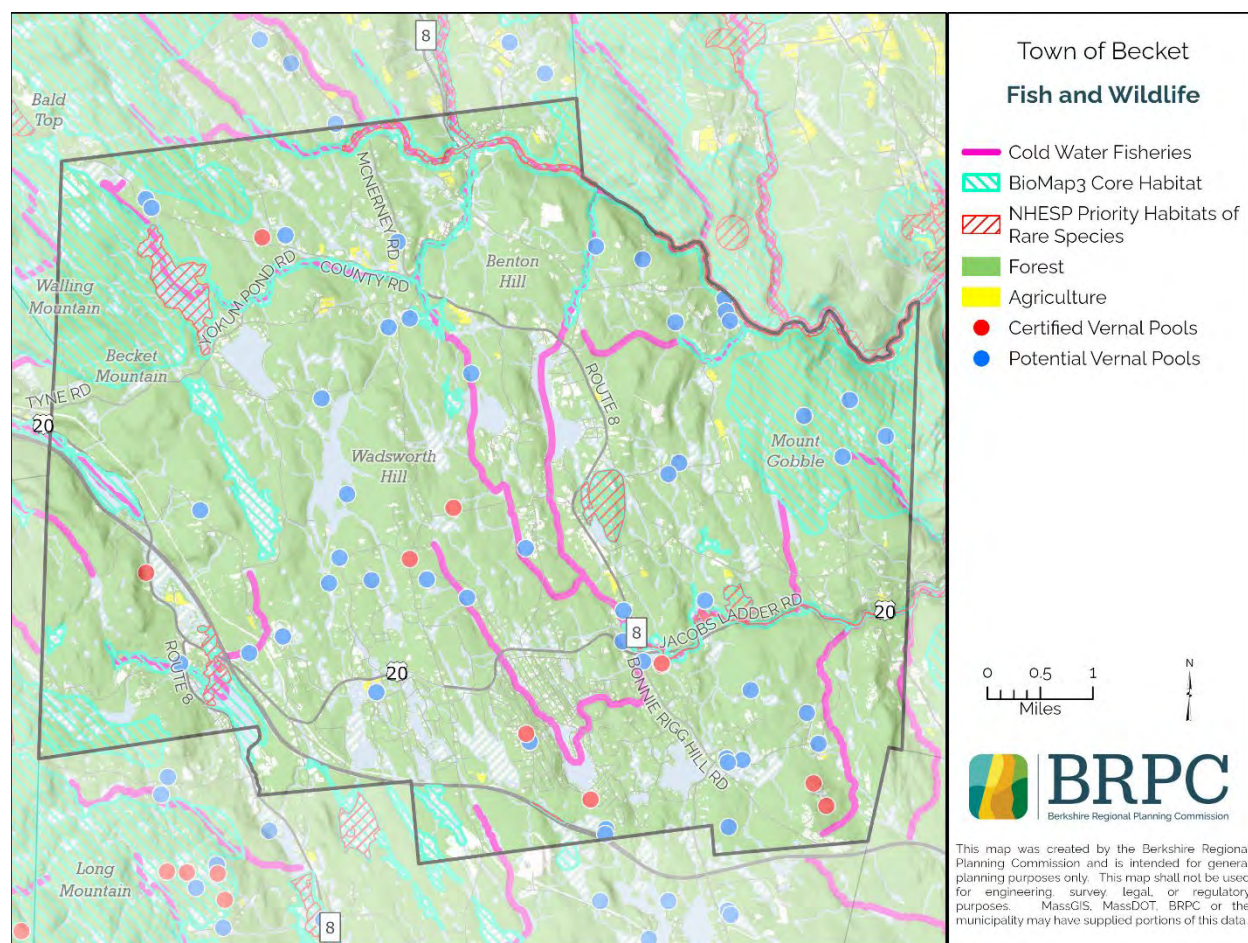


Table 4.2 Rare Animal Species in Becket

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	State Rank	Most Recent Observation
Bird	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern	E	2012
Bird	<i>Gavia immer</i>	Common Loon	SC	2015
Butterfly/Moth	<i>Erora laeta</i>	Early Hairstreak	T	2005
Dragonfly/Damselfly	<i>Boyeria grafiana</i>	Ocellated Darner	SC	2004
Dragonfly/Damselfly	<i>Somatochlora forcipate</i>	Forcipate Emerald	E	1973
Fish	<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Brindle Shiner	SC	1994
Fish	<i>Catostomus Catostomus</i>	Longnose Sucker	SC	2008
Mammal	<i>Sorex palustris</i>	Water Shrew	SC	2010
Reptile	<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>	Smooth Green Snake	Non-listed SWAP	
Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC	2006

Source: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rare-species-viewer> April 2022 downloaded



#### 4F. Scenic Resources and Unique Environments (Refer to Map 8 Unique Features)

##### Scenic Landscapes and Unique Environmental Features

###### *Westfield Wild & Scenic River*

The West Branch of the Westfield River, along with its tributaries the Shaker Mill Brook and Center Pond Brook, have been federally designated as a Wild & Scenic River. Besides the scenic, ecological and historic features within this watershed, the area is noted as one of the largest roadless areas remaining in Massachusetts. The federal designation is intended to encourage landowners, public officials and citizens to act as stewards of the river by protecting and promoting it. Conservation of the river and its aesthetic and ecological attributes are the central theme of the designation. The designation also affords the river and its tributaries some additional protections against inappropriate development and makes the river eligible for additional funding programs.

###### *Appalachian National Scenic Trail*

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT) is a passive recreation footpath that runs more than 2,000 miles between Springer Mountain in Georgia and Mount Katahdin in Maine. Approximately 90 miles of the trail travels through Massachusetts, all of it in Berkshire County. Residents and visitors can easily access the famous and historic trail at parking facilities in the area: one located on Jacob's Ladder Scenic Byway (Rt. 20) in Becket and the other on Washington Mountain Road in Washington. For thru-hikers and those hiking a section of the AT, rustic accommodations and tent platforms can be found nearby at the Upper Goose Pond cabin.

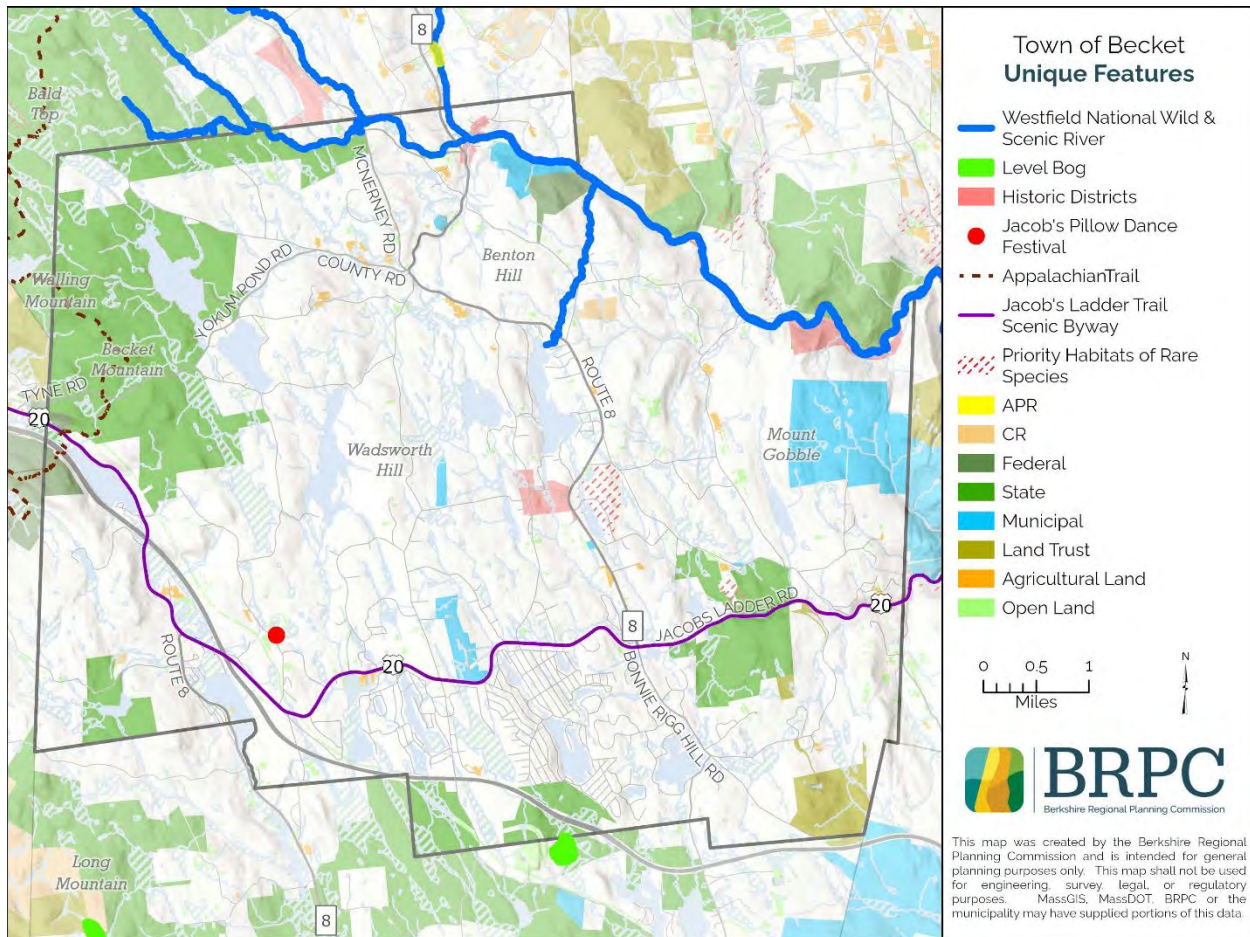
###### *Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway*

Route 20 in Becket is part of the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway, a state-recognized scenic byway that travels through five Western Massachusetts towns. 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. In 1910, the road was opened as the first highway built specifically for the revolutionary new horseless carriages. Crossing the Berkshires as it does, it was dubbed "the First of the Great Mountain Crossovers,". The Trail attracted automotive pioneers from far and wide to test themselves and their machines against the rugged terrain.

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 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.



Map 8. Unique Features of Becket



## Cultural, Archeological and Historic Areas

### National Register Historic Districts and Landmarks

There are three National Register of Historic Places Historic Districts in Becket that recognize the Town's history. The North Becket Historic District recognizes the industries and historic architecture that developed with the arrival of the Western Railroad in 1841. North Becket Village rapidly developed into the main economic and civic center. Over a twenty-year period, many of the Town's public institutions moved to the village, and a cluster of Greek Revival residences were built on the west side of Main and High Streets. Many of the village's industries and commercial buildings were wiped out by the 1927 dam failure event described earlier in this section, leaving only foundational remnants. Today, the district has around 35 historically significant buildings, including many fine examples of Greek Revival architecture. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

Located within the North Becket Historic District are several historic and cultural gems. Bidwell Park in North Becket is a one-acre parcel recognized on the State Registry as an historic site. This narrow strip of grassy land with a few shade trees, located between Yokum Brook and Main Street, and bound to the north by the West Branch of the Westfield River, and Maple Street to the south was the only piece of land remaining after the flood of 1927 and was deeded to the town to be used always to beautify the town. The Mullen House Education Center is a historic home donated to the Town by the heirs of Miss Eleanor Mullen who was a long-time teacher at the Becket Elementary School. It houses a permanent museum exhibit created by the Becket Land Trust that displays artifacts, photographs and documents relating to the history of the Historic Quarry. There is also a Becket Basket display by the Becket Historical Commission here. The Becket Arts Center (BAC), housed in Seminary Hall, is now home to a four-season space that is used for a wide variety of cultural events. BAC provides arts programming for all ages, exceptional gallery artist exhibits, performances, and talks. The Becket Athenaeum are also located in this historic district, serving as a library and community meeting space.

The Middlefield-Becket Stone Arch Railroad Bridge District extends through parts of the towns of Chester, Middlefield, and Becket, encompasses a 3.7-mile stretch of railroad right of way in which there are ten historic keystone arch bridges crossings, including nine over the west branch of the Westfield River. These granite bridge structures, completed in 1841, were the first keystone arch railroad bridges built in America. They are a product of the Western Railroad, the first railroad built over a mountain and the first built through wilderness. They are wholly dry laid without mortar or other materials and are still intact today. The Arches have served their purpose well. Some, abandoned in a line relocation in 1912, have stood unattended for over a century now. Those still in use carry trains 40 times heavier than those operated over them when first built. There is an easy 2.5-mile trail that takes visitors over the bridges. The district was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. Two Keystone Arches within the Walnut Hill WMA have been designated as National Historic Landmarks and can be accessed by the public along the Keystone Arch Bridges Trail that begins at Herbert Cross Road in Chester.

Becket Center Rural Historic District recognizes the Town's spiritual and political center of the Town from 1756 to the 1840s. Federal and Greek Revival period farmhouses and public buildings define the architectural character of the district. The Becket Center Rural Historic District was designated in 1982.

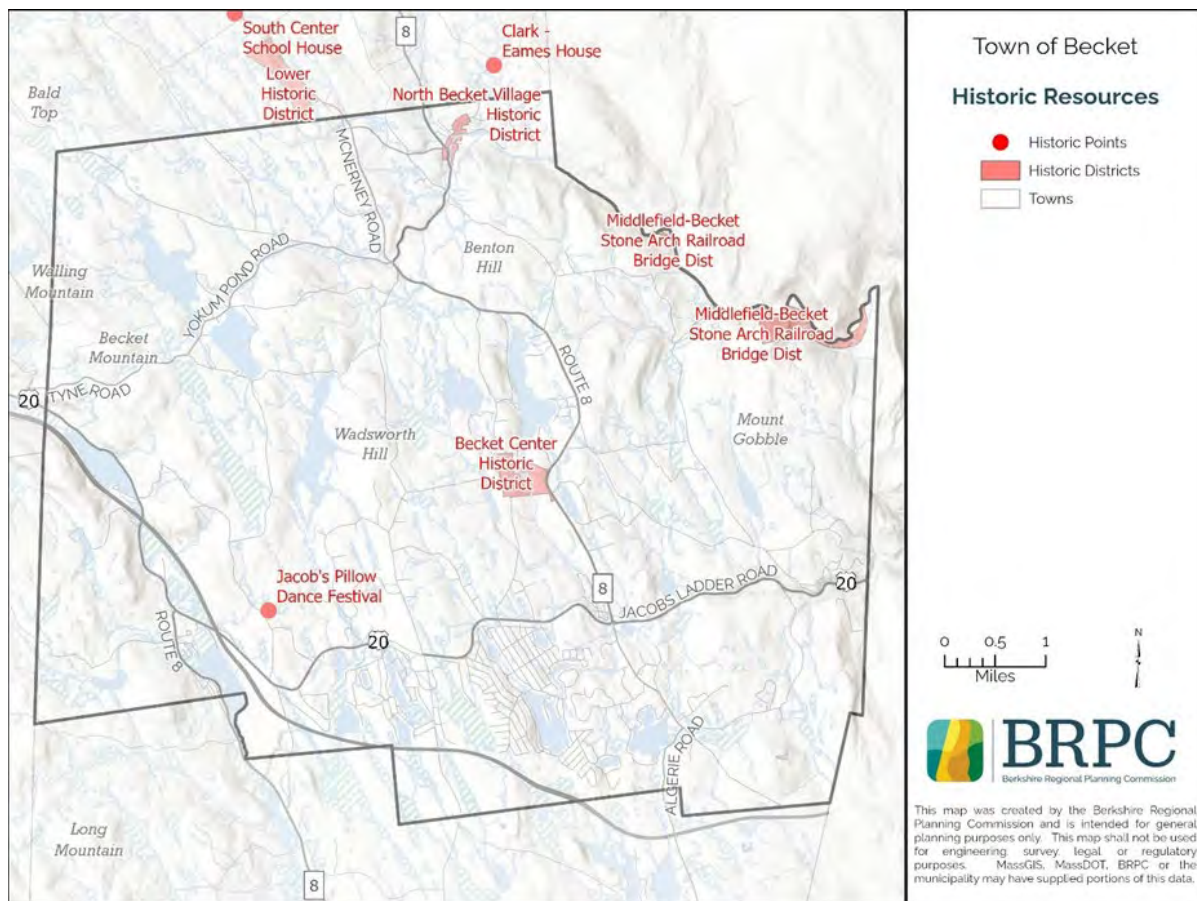
Jacob's Pillow, the home of America's first and longest-running dance festival, has been a cultural resource in Becket since 1933. In 2003, the federal government named Jacob's Pillow a National Historic Landmark for its importance in America's culture, distinguishing the Pillow as the country's first and only Landmark dance institution. The property has a historic significance beyond its dance credentials, as it served as a station on the Underground Railroad in the 1800s and is currently engaging with Native American representatives to explore the site's Indigenous background. Jacob's Pillow provides residents with world class dance performances, including many educational programs, performances, talks, and other activities that are free of charge.

#### *Becket Historic Quarry and Forest*

The Becket Historic Quarry and Forest is situated on the lands of the former Hudson-Chester Quarry, which was once one of the largest of several in the area that extracted granite and shipped it by railroad for polishing to nearby Chester Mass. and Hudson, N.Y. Gravestones and

monuments were the main products. The quarry opened in the 1850s and closed in the 1960s. In 1999 The Labrie Stone Products proposed purchasing the abandoned quarry and reopening operations there. The publicly accessible Historic Quarry and Forest is the result of an extraordinary community fund-raising campaign to save a 300-acre parcel of land from modern industrial development. It is one of the most intact historic quarry landscapes in Massachusetts, with a blacksmith shop, standing derrick, and experimental air-drill testing tunnel. The old quarry operation sits like a sunken vessel, a living museum with rusted artifacts left behind when the Hudson-Chester Granite Company suddenly folded in 1940. When it was abandoned, it was as if the men just walked away for lunch and never came back, and that's what makes it a wonderful museum. There are trucks, drills, and derricks (booms to hoist granite) throughout the site. In October of 2021, the Becket Land Trust transferred ownership and management of the Historic Quarry and Forest to The Trustees of Reservations, the oldest and largest land conservation organization in Massachusetts.

*Map 9. Historic Resources*





## 4G. Environmental Challenges

The Becket Open Space and Recreation Committee, using the guidance provided by the *Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook* (EOEEA, 2008), has identified the pressing environmental challenges that face the Town.

### Environmental Justice and Equity

As noted by the Commonwealth's Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), Environmental Justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution, and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. This means that Towns should identify and strive to address any disproportionate share of environmental burdens experienced by lower-income residents and communities of color who, at the same time, may lack environmental assets in their neighborhoods. In practice, there are basically two frameworks of environmental equity:

- Stopping the environmental "bads," such as a disproportionate burden of toxics; and
- Promoting the environmental "goods," such as assuring access to parks, green amenities, and recreational opportunities.<sup>2</sup>

Becket is a relatively large community, at 26,507 acres (41 square miles), where the protected lands that offer public access are generally located near the periphery of the Town (see the Open Space Lands of Interest Map for locations). The largest of these is October Mount State Forest, which offers year-round access to both a pond and a large network of trails, but the vast majority of residents need to access the property by driving there. Few residents have access to public lands within a mile of their homes, and most of these, such as Becket and Otis State Forests, the three Wildlife Management Areas and the Conte Wildlife Refuge have no trail systems.

Most residents of the many lake or pond neighborhoods have access to their lake/pond, with a few also offering some open space in the form of a park or open lands. The new Esau's Heel Trail has provided a walking trail to a heavily populated area of Becket, being within a mile of these densely developed neighborhoods. Residents that live in the Becket Center area or North Becket Village have access to the Town's two children's playgrounds with picnic areas.

### Landfills, Brownfields and Hazardous Waste Sites

The old Becket landfill is closed. The municipal transfer station is at the site. There are no privately-run landfills in the town.

There are no 21E Hazardous Waste sites in Becket. However, according to DEP Reportable Release Reports, 23 hazardous waste spills have occurred in the town since 1993. Most of these spills along the roadways or on private property. Roadway spills that occur adjacent to streams, ponds and wetlands have the potential to severely contaminate those resource areas. The MassPike carries a vast amount of trucks that carry potential hazardous materials, such as the spill that occurred in 2021. Of special concern are those wetland resources that support rare species, such as the Westfield River and its tributaries and Shaw Pond. Other concerns are where

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/objectives-of-environmental-justice>



contaminant spills occur in densely developed areas, such as Sherwood Forest. One leaking oil tank has the potential to contaminate the drinking water supplies for several neighboring properties. The leaking underground tank that was on the Becket General Store was finally cleaned up after waiting several years for funding for analyses and construction.

## **Erosion and Excessive Sedimentation**

Drainage channels along steeply-sloped roadways occur during severe storm events, and these severe storms seem to be increasing in number and severity in recent years.

The streambank along Yokum Brook is eroding, threatening the integrity of the war memorial monuments. The streambank should be stabilized to ensure the long-term preservation of these historic structures. Use of natural stabilization measures would be preferable.

Soils from the path and beach sand from the Becket Town Beach erode into Center Pond during severe precipitation events. These sediments tend to flow towards nearby wetlands. The Parks & Recreation Committee would like to implement practical and cost-effective measures to remedy the situation.

## **Flooding**

Flooding is a significant concern to many parts of town. In 2020 Becket updated its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP). This plan identifies various types of disasters and their impacts on the community. As with many communities in the county, one of the major environmental hazards facing Becket is flooding. There are several locations in town that have periodic flooding, usually associated with major storm events such as a tropical storm or hurricane. Primary flooding sources in Becket include these river systems in addition to many streams which flow both north and south through the many valleys of the planning area. Fortunately, Becket does not have a high number of flood-prone structures compared to other communities, though the list includes the DPW building, the Becket-Washington School, a few camps and several structures along ponds and lakes. Structures vulnerable to flooding are mostly limited to those that were built within floodplains and/or close to the town's extensive wetlands. However, these natural areas also provide the benefit of temporary storage of floodwaters, which helps to reduce water volume and velocity in rivers and streams during storms.

Floods in the Town of Becket have occurred in every season of the year. Spring floods are common and are caused by rainfall in combination with snowmelt and/or ice jams. Floods in late summer and fall are usually the result of above-normal precipitation, often associated with coastal storms moving up the Atlantic coastline, with more localized flooding caused by summer thunderstorms. Winter floods result from the occasional thaws and ice jams, particularly in years of heavy snow cover (*Hazard Mitigation Plan Update, 2020.*)

## **Forestry Issues**

Several invasive plant species threaten the natural and dynamic diversity of Becket's forests. A relatively new but devastating threat is that of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), a pest that is expected to ravage ash trees in the same manner that Dutch Elm Disease killed our stately elm trees. The EAB was first discovered in Massachusetts in Berkshire County in 2012. Since that

time it has aggressively spread to 168 additional communities in Massachusetts, including every community in Berkshire County. Infestations of the borer result in a very high mortality rate. Early stages of infestation in a tree will be seen in the canopy and upper trunk, but as the population density grows, EAB will infest the lower trunk. Tree damage and eventual mortality is caused by the larval feeding on the trees' cambium, eventually girdling and killing the tree. EAB-dying ash trees are easily identified because of the presence of D-shaped exit holes and bark that is bleached and flaking off. Weakened and dead trees will become safety hazards, especially along streets, utility lines and near structures.

***D-shaped holes from EAB***



Other invasive species that can threaten forest structure include bittersweet, which can engulf and take down a stand of trees within a few years, and the hemlock wooly adelgid, which threatens the cool-loving hemlock stands that cover steep ravines and protect coldwater streams.

## **Development Impact**

The intense development that has historically occurred around some of Becket's lakes has diminished their use for wildlife, and development continues to occur along the shorelines. Development introduces new sources of nonpoint pollution into the lakes, and watercraft has facilitated the introduction of invasive aquatic vegetation. Traditionally, home construction included the removal of trees and other shoreline vegetation, and the planting of lawns down to the water's edge. Removing pre-construction vegetation can reduce water quality and the habitat benefits that native vegetation provided.

The negative impacts of traditional development patterns should serve as a warning for future development around the Town's undeveloped lakes. The town should strive to guide development so that impacts to wildlife and water quality are minimized to the extent possible. This should include minimal clearing on new lots and a requirement to maintain shoreline vegetation. The creation of a pathway through the buffer will allow homeowners access to the water. Vista pruning of a few lower tree branches will provide a framed view of the water. The use of lawn chemical applications should be discouraged or closely monitored.

Because vernal pools are only prominently noticeable part of the year when they hold water, these vital habitats are extremely vulnerable to being destroyed by development. Much of the development in the Berkshires, including Becket, is occurring by clearing forest lands. The most effective way to protect vernal pools is to identify and certify them. The certification affords the pools and their surrounding area some protection from development. Vernal pools that are associated with Wetland Resources, such as riverfront or forested wetlands, are afforded some protection by the Mass. Wetland Protection Act. However, small, isolated pools not associated with a Wetland Resource are not protected by the Act.

Aquatic habitats and their surrounding riparian and floodplain areas are some of our most biologically productive areas, hosting a disproportionately higher number of rare species than corresponding uplands. They provide breeding habitat for reptiles and amphibians who need both

water and land to fulfill their life cycles and provide resiliency against the impacts of climate change. A large percentage of riparian habitat has already been developed over past centuries for agricultural, industrial, and residential uses. The Wetlands Protection Act provides some protection from development within 200 feet of streams and rivers, but development is not prohibited entirely from this area. Development within the floodplain is discouraged but can be allowed if compensatory flood storage is created in the vicinity.

### **Aquatic Invasive Species and Surface Water Pollution**

Becket's surface waters, its coldwater streams and many lakes and ponds provide valuable wildlife habitat and offer outdoor recreational opportunities. The lakes and ponds are a draw for homeowners and camps and important economic contributors to the Town's economy. Maintaining water quality and the integrity of the aquatic habitat are key to preserving these waters for future generations. Most of the streams that have been evaluated for specific designated uses attain their value to provide habitat for fish and other wildlife and swimming and boating contact recreation. However, some of the waters in Becket are not attaining their full potential value, as noted in the *Final Massachusetts Integrated List of Water for the Clean Water Act 2018/2020 Reporting Cycle*. For example, Palmer Brook is listed as lacking a coldwater assemblage of fisheries, Buckley Dunton Pond is listed for mercury in fish tissue, and Center Pond and Greenwater Pond are listed due to infestation of Eurasian Water Milfoil.

Aquatic invasive plant species can be found in many of Becket's lakes, ponds and wetlands. Some plants, such as Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) have colonized large areas of wetlands and lake and pond shorelines, while others, such as Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) have invaded the shallow waters of many lakes and ponds. Some of the lake associations actively manage invasive plants with herbicide applications, while others are attempting to control small infestations with hand-pulling campaigns. There is also a concern that new invasive species, such as zebra mussels, could invade Becket's waterbodies.

Recreation at many of the man-made impoundments is compromised by excessive aquatic vegetation. As a result, homeowner lake associations conduct plant management activities at many of the lakes. Herbicide applications have occurred in Sherwood Forest, Center Pond, Shaw Pond and Indian Lake. In addition, hand-pulling of invasive vegetation occurs at Center Pond (the location of the Town Beach), Greenwater Pond, Yokum Pond, and draw-downs are occurring at Greenwater and Palmer Brook Ponds. The Becket Conservation Commission, concerned that the associations are relying too heavily on herbicidal application, is now requiring that comprehensive, long-range plant control programs be developed and that they contain a variety of control methods.

Shaw Pond is a small waterbody that is suffering from increased populations of Eurasian water milfoil and Common Reed. Located on the pond are Camp Lenox, a small community of modest cottages and a public boat launch. Local homeowners would like to conduct an assessment of the pond and develop a long-term management plan to protect water quality and habitat, but residents here have a limited capacity to undertake such an endeavor.

The shorelines of many of the lakes and ponds have been densely developed, with drinking water wells and septic fields tightly concentrated in some areas. Failing septic systems can contribute to contamination of the lakes and ponds themselves, as well as neighboring wells.

The Highway Garage and Salt Shed are located next to Depot Brook, presenting the potential risk of salt intrusion and other pollutants into Depot Brook via surface runoff and/or groundwater contamination. The Town is considering relocating the highway facility to a new location.

### **Stormwater and Road Runoff**

Stormwater runoff is the greatest single source of nonpoint pollution in Massachusetts. Roads often parallel rivers, streams and brooks, and roadways are now recognized as one of the most serious sources of non-point source pollution. Roads are typically crowned to allow water to drain away quickly from the center and onto surrounding lands. If the road has a storm drain system, as many do, the water is collected and piped directly into the nearest waterway. Sand, salt, debris, and auto-derived pollutants enter the waterway untreated. If the road does not have a storm drain system, the water flows off the road and onto the surrounding land or the adjacent waterway or wetland.

As noted in the updated *Hazard Mitigation Plan* of 2020, many of the roads throughout the Town do not have adequate drainage systems to deal with heavy rains, especially the dirt roads. Many of these roads are privately maintained by the homeowner associations within subdivisions. More intense storms that deliver higher volume of precipitation in a single event are expected to put significant pressure on existing dams, culverts, and other drainage infrastructure that were designed to handle smaller storms with more consistent distribution of precipitation.

Also noted in the *Hazard Mitigation Plan*, there are several areas across Becket where natural resource protection is warranted, prioritizing streams, wetlands and floodplains. Specific stream road crossings were identified and prioritized for improvements. Regarding land use tools, the need to update zoning bylaws to minimize land disturbance, better manage stormwater runoff and protect natural resources was noted as a major need.



# Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

As noted in *America's Great Outdoors, A Promise to Future Generations*, outdoor recreation provides Americans with physical and emotional rejuvenation and promotes respect for our natural heritage. Research indicates that regular exposure to nature lowers stress, cultivates creativity, and builds self-confidence among young people. Heritage landscapes, which provide us with a sense of our cultural and agricultural past. Revenue from farms and forests supports local families, some of whom have worked the land for generations. Local farms also provide fresh produce and meat, while forests provide wood products, heating fuel and maple syrup.

Undeveloped natural lands serve many natural and social functions, including wildlife habitat and corridors, water quality protection, flood control and, with the growing impacts of climate change, carbon sequestration. Conserved undeveloped lands entice residents to enter a fresh and quiet environment and to reconnect with nature. Outdoor recreation is increasingly seen as a way to increase peoples' activity level and combat health issues such as high blood pressure, obesity and diabetes. Becket is fortunate in that many of the privately-owned lands offer outdoor experiences, including children's summer camps, a campground, a B&B with summer and winter trails, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, which offers outdoor dance performances amid a large campus with picnicking and hiking offerings.

Fortunately, the Town of Becket has a mixture of open space, resources, and recreational areas that add to the quality of life. The gorges of the river valley are complimented nicely by the hiking trails and scenic vistas over the mountain forests. These areas are under both public and private ownership, and they hold various levels of protection and various amounts of exposure to the possibility of future development, which may limit the level of public enjoyment they offer in the future. The size of the properties open to public recreation vary greatly in size, from the more than 1,500 acres of forested wildlife land within the October Mountain State Forest to the smaller Town-owned slivers along Brooker Hill Road. In general, the larger properties tend to be in areas of higher elevation and often involve steep slopes. The Appalachian Trail travels through Becket and can be accessed at several sites in Town, offering residents the opportunity to say they have walked a portion of this famous national Trail.

The forests, lakes and ponds provide the setting for outdoor recreation year-round. Aside from the many summer activities offered within the public and non-profit lands, hunting/trapping, ice fishing, snowshoeing and x-country skiing trails entice people to enjoy winter activities. The Massachusetts Snowmobile Association's Route 95 snowmobile trail winds its way through October Mountain State Forest and follows through the southwest corner of Becket.

This section contains an inventory of undeveloped lands of interest that provide environmental benefits to both wildlife and Becket residents. Listed in this section are important parcels with a description of their ownership and management, the level of accessibility to the public, and the level of protection from development they hold. The lands with the highest level of protection are those owned and managed by the federal and state governments and those on which conservation deed restrictions have been placed. Other large tracts of undeveloped land with a good deal of protection are the municipal lands such as the drinking water supply lands owned by the Town of Chester. The Town of Becket owns several open space parcels with varying degrees of protection

Approximately 5,764 acres of land within Becket are permanently protected open space, which is 19% of the Town's total acreage, leaving the vast majority of land in town unprotected. The bulk of these protected lands (4,237 acres) are state-owned and include the October Mountain State Forest (SF), Becket SF, Otis SF, and Becket and Walnut Hill Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). The National Park Service owns 215 acres of land, 90 of which is located along the Appalachian Trail and 125 acres of which are in the northeast section of Town. In addition, the Trustees of Reservations owns 284 acres (the Becket Historic Quarry and Forest), the Becket Land Trust owns 32 acres and the Town of Chester owns 683 acres of watershed protection land.

There are differing levels of protection that are involved in open space and recreation lands. Most federal and state lands maintained for conservation and recreation can be regarded as permanently protected lands. Most conservation lands owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, and to remove protection status of these lands for development would require an act of the state legislature. Although such a scenario could occur, the action would undoubtedly be contentious.

Other lands that can be considered permanently protected are private lands upon which a conservation restriction (CR) or easement has been placed. The CR is a legal agreement between a landowner and another entity in which the owner agrees to restrict the use of the land. Activities such as farming, forest or wildlife management, recreation and other land uses that the property owner wishes to pursue continue to be allowed. The landowner continues to own the property, but if the land is sold, the new owner must comply with the provisions of the CR, which has been placed on the deed and is transferred. CRs are typically held by governmental agencies, land trusts, environmental organizations and municipalities (Conservation Commissions often hold CRs). A total of 53 acres of private land is permanently protected through CRs.

The Town of Becket owns a total of 260 acres of undeveloped land that in various sites across the town. Of these, 100 acres are within the former proposed Jacob's Well subdivision, which the Town has taken for lapse of taxes. None of the lands owned by the Town of Becket are believed to be protected by conservation deed restrictions and so could be vulnerable to change. Although it is unlikely that Becket 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.

*Table 5.1. Summary of Open Space Lands with Some Level of Protection (Refer to Map 10: Inventory of Land of Conservation and Recreation Interest)*

Ownership	Size in Acres	Level of Protection
Federal	215	High
State (DCR, DFW)	4,237	High
Private Lands with Conservation Restrictions	53	High
Town of Becket	260	Medium & Low
Other municipal lands (Town of Chester Watershed)	683	High
Land Trusts (Becket Land Trust, The Trustees of Reservations)	316	High
Chapter 61, 61A, 61B	3,006	Low
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>8,770</b>	

Source: MassGIS, MassGIS Online Assessor Data FY2020

## 5A. Private Parcels

### Private Deed Restricted Conservation Lands

There are a few properties where private landowners have placed conservation deed restrictions on their land. Conservation restrictions reduce the tax burden on the property and may also provide funding to the landowner if another entity agrees to hold the restriction on the land. These are shown on the Open Space Land of Interest Map in yellow.

*Table 5.2. Deed Restricted Conservation Land*

Site Name	Ownership	Acres	Public Access?	CR/APR
Benton Hill Road CR	Corcoran	44	No	CR
Shaw Pond CR	Shaw Pond Club	3	No	CR
Shales Brook WCE	Soules	6	Yes	CR
<b>Total Acres</b>		<b>53</b>		

Source: BRPC Open Space Data, Town Assessors Data 2020

### Chapter 61 Tax Program Lands

There are 29 property owners in Becket that have placed all or a portion of their lands into one of the Chapter 61 Tax Abatement Programs. The total acreage of land enrolled in the Chapter 61 tax programs is 3,006 acres. Canterbury Farm, enrolled in Chapter 61, is a B&B that offers hiking and cross-country ski trails, and allows the public on the site for a fee. It is unknown if public access is allowed by other landowners.

Chapter 61 is a tax abatement program that offers a 95% tax savings to forest landowners. The intent of the program is to protect and enhance the state's timber-producing capacity. To qualify for Chapter 61, landowners must have a minimum of 10 acres that are suitable for timber production. Like Chapter 61, Chapter 61A is a voluntary enrollment program for preferential tax assessment based on current agricultural use of the land. Chapter 61A requires a 5-acre minimum

of agricultural land which must produce a minimum number of agricultural products. Chapter 61B is a recreational land classification program designed to encourage the preservation of open space and promote recreational uses. To qualify for Chapter 61B the landowner's property must consist of at least 5 acres that are suitable for recreational purposes. The program offers a 75% tax savings.

The Chapter 61 tax programs are of interest to municipalities for two main reasons. First, lands that are managed for forest, agricultural or recreational uses remain open and scenic, helping communities maintain their historically rural roots. Second, if a property that is enrolled in any of the Chapter 61 programs is placed on the real estate market for a change of use, the Town has a 120-day right of first refusal to purchase the property at fair market value. For example, if a farm purchased for the development of a subdivision or a commercial use, which is different from its current agricultural use, then the Town has the right to purchase that property before anyone else. This gives the community some control over the destiny of its rural character. If the Town does not acquire the land and it does change use, the tax savings that had accumulated during the land's enrollment in the Chapter 61 program must be paid back in full prior to the land use taking place.

The Town of Becket has successfully utilized the Chapter 61 program to save a largely-forested property, an abandoned former granite quarry located in the southeast corner of the Town. In 1999 a stone processing company proposed purchasing the site to establish a new granite grinding operation. In 2000 the Town of Becket invoked its Right of First Refusal and assigned its rights to the Becket Land Trust. In a flurry of activity, the Land Trust was able to raise the purchase price for the land and it became the Historic Becket Quarry and Forest, a publicly-accessible outdoor recreation site. The site today is owned by The Trustees of Reservations, a larger land trust.

As can be seen on the Open Space Lands of Interest map, many of the Chapter lands are located adjacent to existing permanently protected state or land trust properties. Communicating and creating partnerships with these landowners could lead to conservation easements, which would create long-term linkages between conserved lands for future protection of habitat, biodiversity and potential recreational opportunities.

*Table 5.3. Chapter 61, 61A, 61B Properties*

SITE ADDRESS	OWNER	Acres	Level of Protection	Public Access?
0 FRED SNOW ROAD (CANTERBURY FARM)	BACON	175	Low	Y, for fee
0 BENTON HILL ROAD	BALDUCCI	33	Low	Unknown
0 LOOSE TOOTH ROAD	BECKET HILLS LAKES LLC	509	Low	Unknown
0 SURRINER ROAD	CASCIO	116	Low	Unknown
0 COUNTY ROAD	CLAPPER	49	Low	Unknown
0 BONNY RIGG HILL ROAD	DEFOREST	158	Low	Unknown
0 JACOBS LADDER ROAD	DENHAM	54	Low	Unknown
0 BANCROFT ROAD	DOWLING	381	Low	Unknown
0 BANCROFT ROAD	ELLSWORTH	74	Low	Unknown
0 JACOBS LADDER ROAD	FLETCHER	10	Low	Unknown

0 ANDREWS ROAD	FORTUNE	10	Low	Unknown
0 RAILROAD TRACKS	HIGGINSON	141	Low	Unknown
0 TYRINGHAM ROAD	HUNT	153	Low	Unknown
0 VARIOUS	INDIAN LAKE ASSOCIATION	28	Low	Y
0 HOPKINS LANE	JOHANSEN	27	Low	Unknown
0 QUARRY ROAD	LAPORTE	42	Low	Unknown
0 QUARRY ROAD	METCALF	90	Low	Unknown
0 BEECH TREE LANE	MILLER	11	Low	Unknown
0 OTIS ROAD	MORRIS	107	Low	Unknown
0 ALGERIE ROAD	ONE HOPE FUND LLC	79	Low	Unknown
0 QUARRY ROAD	TERRENCE & MARIANNA	136	Low	Unknown
0 PARSONS WAY	PARSONS WAY ASSOCIATION	25	Low	Unknown
0 WADE INN ROAD	RAYMER	6	Low	Unknown
0 FRED SNOW ROAD	ROBBINS	15	Low	Unknown
0 BANCROFT ROAD	SEASHORE	46	Low	Unknown
0 HIGH STREET	SPENCER	19	Low	Unknown
0 MITCHELL ROAD	TOOMEY	299	Low	Unknown
0 SURRINER ROAD	WILL	102	Low	Unknown
0 JOHNSON ROAD	WILLIAMS STONE CO INC	111	Low	N
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,006</b>		

Source: MassGIS Town Assessors Data 2020.

### Privately Owned Recreational Areas Without Protections

Most of the undeveloped land in Becket is privately owned. Some of these lands are owned by businesses or organizations, such as the summer camps, while others are owned by private individuals. The Town hosts several large properties that offer outdoor recreation in the form of childrens' camps and a family campground, although all of these landowners charge a fee for use of the site. These lands are used only seasonally but provide a mix of open land, forest cover and aquatic habitats for wildlife year-round. The largest camp complex is the YMCA Camp Becket / Chimney Corners camping facilities, which are located on several parcels over an extensive 1,240 acres of land in the center of Becket. Rudd Pond, Rudd Pond Brook and Hamilton Brook all support rare species, and the camp owns much of the watershed lands that feed these waterways. Other camping sites that have large land holdings are Camp Watitoh, Camp Greylock, Camp Lenox and Bonny Rigg Camping Club. Berkshire Fishing Club is a private club that owns 860 acres in and around Palmer Brook Pond. The club offers fishing and canoeing on the pond and hiking on its four miles of trails is available. The club recently closed and the future of the land is uncertain, as it is listed for sale on the real estate market. There are no conservation protections on any of these properties, and they are not enrolled in any of the Chapter 61 tax abatement programs. Canterbury Farm, which is enrolled in Chapter 61 and is adjacent to the YMCA camps, offers summer hiking and winter snowshoeing/cross-country skiing.

Residents highlighted a few private undeveloped parcels across Becket that were of interest to them, including large parcels along Yokum Pond, Palmer Brook Pond and the unnamed pond north of Shales Brook WMA. The Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy now own the former Kushi Institute property, in the northeast corner of Becket. The Marian Fathers have a history of conservation and land stewardship at their property in Stockbridge.



Others noted that a property in North Becket Village, just beyond the school, is up for sale. Attendees suggested that the Town consider acquiring the property which is close to the school and park.

**Table 5.4. Privately-Owned Unprotected Recreational Areas**

Address	Owner	Acres	Public Access?	Level of Protection
Plumb Road	Berkshire Fishing Club	860	N	None
Main Street	Bonny Rigg Camping Club	69	Y, for fee	None
Bennett Road	Camp Becket / Camp Chimney Corners	1,240	Y, for fee	None
Main Street	Camp Greylock	264	Y, for fee	None
Beaver Brook Road	Camp Lenox	134	Y, for fee	None
Main Street	Camp Watitoh	116	Y, for fee	None
Fred Snow Road	Canterbury Farm	175	Y, for fee	Low (Ch.61)
		220	Y, fee for some events	None
George Carter Road	Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival			
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,077</b>		

Source: MassGIS, Town Assessors Data 2020.

## 5B. Public and Non-Profit Parcels

A significant portion of Becket is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and includes state forests and Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). The National Parks Service owns parcels along the National Scenic Appalachian Trail (AT). Together these state- and federally-owned lands total 5,141 acres, or 17% of Becket's total land area. The largest of these forests, the October Mountain Forest, spans four adjacent communities and is the largest area under single ownership in the Town of Becket. The Town of Becket oversees 260 acres of land open for public use and the Town of Chester also owns a large tract of land that is the watershed for their municipal drinking water supply. Land trusts offer 316 acres for public recreation. In addition to these lands, there are five ponds to which the public has access: Greenwater, Shaw, Center, and Yokum Ponds, and Buckley-Dunton Reservoir.

### State and Federal Lands

Government-owned lands conserve more than 5,000 acres of land in Becket, all of which are open for public use. Becket State Forest is located in the heart of Town. October Mountain State Forest is the largest state forest in Massachusetts, spreading across portions of five towns. There is an extensive road and trail system throughout the property. The 16,500 acres offers a variety of outdoor experiences, including camping (in neighboring Lee), hiking, boating, snowmobiling and one of very few state parks that allow ATVs. A portion of this state forest is located in the northwestern corner of Becket, including the Buckley Dunton Reservoir and a portion of the AT. A major snowmobile trail system extends from here southward through West Becket into Otis. Trails and gravel roads within this state forest is being considered as part of a regional Highlands Footpath system that will connect Becket with the neighboring Towns of Lee and Chester/Middlefield.

Other state lands that extend beyond Becket borders and offer larger expanses of protected lands are the Farmington River and Walnut Hill WMAs and Otis State Forest. Although not located in Becket, The Nature Conservancy's Coles Brook Preserve is located just over the town border in Middlefield. The property hosts a network of unmaintained dirt roads for walking, hiking, snowshoeing. The preserve is one of a patchwork of conserved properties along the Becket/Middlefield border.

There is a short trail developed within the Walnut Hill WMA that provides access to the Keystone Arches, a set of historic stone bridges constructed in the mid-1800s to serve the Boston-Albany railroad system. The other state lands in Becket do not have established trails or other facilities. The general policy of the Department of Fish & Game is to protect and preserve natural habitat areas without creating new roads or trails through its properties. As such, their lands are best enjoyed by those who prefer a wilderness experience. Those who prefer walking or hiking on trail systems tend not to utilize these lands.

The federal government owns land along the AT corridor and a parcel in the northeast corner of Becket. This second parcel is the Conte Wildlife refuge, located adjacent to a large Town-owned parcel.

*Table 5.6. State- and Federally-owned Lands in Becket (all open for public us)*

Site Name	Ownership	Acres in Becket	Recreation
October Mtn. State Forest	Dept. of Conservation & Recreation (DCR)	2,820	Camping, hiking, boating, fishing, snowshoeing/x-country skiing, fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, ATV use
Becket State Forest	DCR	689	Hunting, fishing, no trail system
Otis State Forest	DCR	210	Hunting, fishing, no trail system
Farmington River WMA	Dept. of Fish & Game	206	Hunting, fishing, no trail system
Walnut Hill WMA	Dept. of Fish & Game	76	Hunting, fishing, short Trail at Keystone Arches
Shales Brook WMA	Dept. of Fish & Game	236	Hunting, fishing, no trail system
Conte Wildlife Refuge	United States of America	125	Hunting, no trail system
Appalachian Trail (AT) Corridor	National Parks Service	90	Hiking, snowshoeing
<b>Total Acres</b>		<b>4,452</b>	

*Source: BRPC Open Space Data, Town Assessor's Data 2020*

## Municipal Lands

In general, most water supply protection and municipal conservation and recreational lands are protected under Massachusetts Article 97 if they were acquired with conservation and/or recreation in mind. Article 97 expressly states that Massachusetts citizens have a Right to a Clean Environment. This authorizes local and the state governments to utilize their traditional Police Powers (public health, safety, welfare and morals) to protect and promote the environment in general. Article 97 requires a two-thirds roll call vote of each house of the state legislature in order to dispose of or change the use of certain local, county or state lands taken or acquired for natural resources purposes, which is broadly defined.

The Town of Becket owns several open space / recreation properties in North Becket, though it is believed that none of these parcels were acquired for conservation. The North Becket Village Park hosts outdoor exercise equipment, a walking track, benches and a walking track. Ballou Park is a small grassed area with a bench for sitting, separated from North Becket Village Park by the Yokum Brook. The Becket Washington Elementary School, located across from the park, hosts a playground and tennis and pickleball courts. Together these adjacent properties offer a public gathering place for residents to enjoy outdoor recreation in a variety of ways. The North Becket Village properties are also in very close proximity to the Becket Arts Center, Becket Athenaeum and a Memorial Park honoring veterans, creating a local, family-friendly destination.

The Town owns and maintains a public beach on Center Pond, which in the summer has a lifeguard. According to responses given during the public open space survey, it appears that the Town Beach may well be the most visited of the Town's park properties. Residents must pay a very low-cost fee for using the beach and parking area. The beach is small but accommodates the residents who use it, partly because many residents have lake access from their own lakeshore properties or have lake access through their private property associations. The beach hosts a dock which swimmers and anglers use, and the Town tries to maintain a packed gravel path to connect the handicap parking area to the dock. Adjacent to the beach is a public boat launch, which was installed by the state's Office of Fishing and Boat Access.

The Town also owns the Becket Center Park, located next to the Town Hall. This park offers playing fields with night lights, a playground, benches and a roofed picnic area. The athletic fields are not often used, as there are not enough children in each age group in Becket to create teams; instead, local children often join athletic teams in Dalton.

There are four cemeteries, which offer quiet solitude and a glimpse into the history of the Town.

The Town has taken possession of all the parcels involved with the Jacob's Well Lane properties, a failed subdivision of almost 100

*Becket Center Park Playground*



Source: BRPC 2022.

acres in size. The Esau's Heel Trail, which largely follows the roughly laid-out subdivision road, was formally opened after a public ceremony was held on June 18, 2022. The site hosts a trailhead and easy loop trail.

While the Town-owned open space lands listed in Table 5.7 are currently considered somewhat protected from development, none have formal deed restrictions prohibiting their sale or their development. Therefore, these lands cannot formally be considered as permanently protected open space. However, if these lands were to be considered for sale or a change of use it would require a vote of Town Meeting, and Becket residents have traditionally favored preservation of lands that provide historic, natural or recreational value. As such, the Town considers the majority of lands listed in Table 5.7 as having a Limited level of protection. The exceptions are the elementary school and the cemeteries. While the Becket Washington School is currently thriving, the future student population could conceivably fall below a level that is economically sustainable. Several rural schools in Berkshire County have been converted to other beneficial uses, most often into senior and/or affordable housing, a community center or to meet other municipal needs. Therefore, the school is being considered as having a Low level of protection. Town-owned cemeteries are valued historic resources to the Town, and although they have no formal protection, it is very unlikely that residents at Becket Town Meeting would approve the removal of graves for development. Therefore, these lands are considered as having a High level of protection.

The entire area of Becket consists of one planning zone, Residential-Agricultural. As stated in the Town's zoning bylaws, "the whole area of the Town shall constitute a single zoning district with uniform regulations for each class or kind of structure or use permitted, except as otherwise permitted herein."



*Table 5.7. Town of Becket Municipal Conservation & Recreation Land*

Site Name	Acres	Ownership	Management	Condition	Current Uses	Rec. Potential	Public Access	Level of Permanent Protection	Grants Used for Outdoor Conservation or Recreation
Becket Arts Center	.33	Town of Becket	Board of Trustees	Good	Art, Education, outdoor events	None	Y	Limited	None
Becket Washington School grounds	3	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Good but tennis needs resurfacing	Tennis, pickleball, playground	None	Y	Low	None
North Becket Village Park	1.9	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Good	Pavilion, walking track, outdoor fitness equip., picnicking	Bridge over brook would expand use	Y	Limited	Community Preservation Act (CPA)
Town Beach	2.8	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Fair, erosion due to slope; parking limited	Swimming, fishing, boat launch, picnicking, yr-round porta potty	None	Y	Limited	None
Bidwell Park (N. Becket)	7.5	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Good	Brookside green space; fishing	None	Y	Limited	Fed. DOT Scenic Byways
Ballou Park	.71	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Poor, collapsing support wall	War Memorial & Ceremonies	None	Y	Limited	None
North Becket Fire Station Pavilion	3.2	Town of Becket	Volunteer Firemen's Assoc.	Good	Outdoor gathering place, basketball	None	Y	Limited	None
Colonial Parade Ground	1.9	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Good	Memorial	None	Y	Limited	None
Becket Center Town Park and Pavilion	6.94	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Good	Athletic fields & bleachers, lights, playground, pavilion w picnic tables	Walking track	Y	Limited	CPA

N Becket Landlocked Parcel (next to Conte Fed. Land)	110	Town of Becket	Town of Becket	Undeveloped & lacking road access	Hunting, wilderness hiking	Trail system if get road access	Y	Limited	None
Becket Center Cemetery	4.9	Town of Becket	Cemetery Com- missioners	Fair	Quiet solitude, history	None	Y	High	None
West Becket Cemetery	.63	Town of Becket	Cem. Comm.	Fair	Quiet solitude, history	None	Y	High	None
North Becket Cemetery	10	Town of Becket	Cem. Comm.	Fair	Quiet solitude, history	None	Y	High	None
Yokum Burial Ground	< .5	Town of Becket	Privately maintained	Fair	Quiet solitude, history	None	Y	High	None
Old Town Pound	< .5	Town of Becket	Parks and Rec. Committee	Good	History	None	Y	Limited	None
Mullen House Ed. Center	.24	Town of Becket	Board of Directors	Good	Educational activities, history	None	Y	Limited	None
Ravine & Waterfall	3.71	Town of Becket	Parks & Rec. Committee	Undeveloped steep slopes	Wilderness hiking	None	Y	Limited	None
High Street Bridge Area	.66	Town of Becket	Town of Becket	Undeveloped	Small greenspace	None	Y	Limited	None
Silk Mill Dam Site	.94	Town of Becket	Town of Becket	Undeveloped	Fishing, small greenspace	None	Y	Limited	None
Jacob's Well Lane / Esau's Heel Trail	99.6	Town of Becket	Town of Becket	Fair, wetlands present	Walking, hiking	Accessible trail, possible site of new highway garage & police sta.	Y	Limited	CPA
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>260</b>								

Note: Many of the parks (\*) have level grassed areas that can also provide outdoor exercise and meditative recreation such as yoga and/or Tai Chi

## Land Trusts

The Becket Land Trust is a local non-profit that has played a key role in conserving more than 300 acres of land in Becket. The Land Trust took ownership of approximately 300 acres of land in the southeast corner of the Town in 2000. This includes 284 acres in Becket and 15 adjacent acres in Otis. The largely-forested site, a former abandoned granite quarry, was proposed to be sold for a new granite extraction and processing facility. The Land Trust stepped in and served as the Town's Right-of-First-Refusal designee while also raising the funds to purchase the property. The Historic Quarry and Forest site includes a trail system with a self-guided tour of the site. In 2021, the site was transferred to The Trustees of Reservations, a larger land trust organization that maintains more than 120 publicly-accessible sites across Massachusetts.

The Becket Land Trust still owns 32 acres of land for public use through ownership of their Pink Quarry, located adjacent to Becket State Forest, and another conservation area located on Route 20.

*Table 5.8. Land Trust Lands*

Site Name	Ownership	Acres in Becket	Public Access?	Level of Protection
Becket Historic Quarry and Forest	The Trustees of Reservations	284	Y	High
Conservation Area	Becket Land Trust	22	Y	High
Pink Quarry	Becket Land Trust	10	Y	High
<b>Total Acres</b>		<b>316</b>		

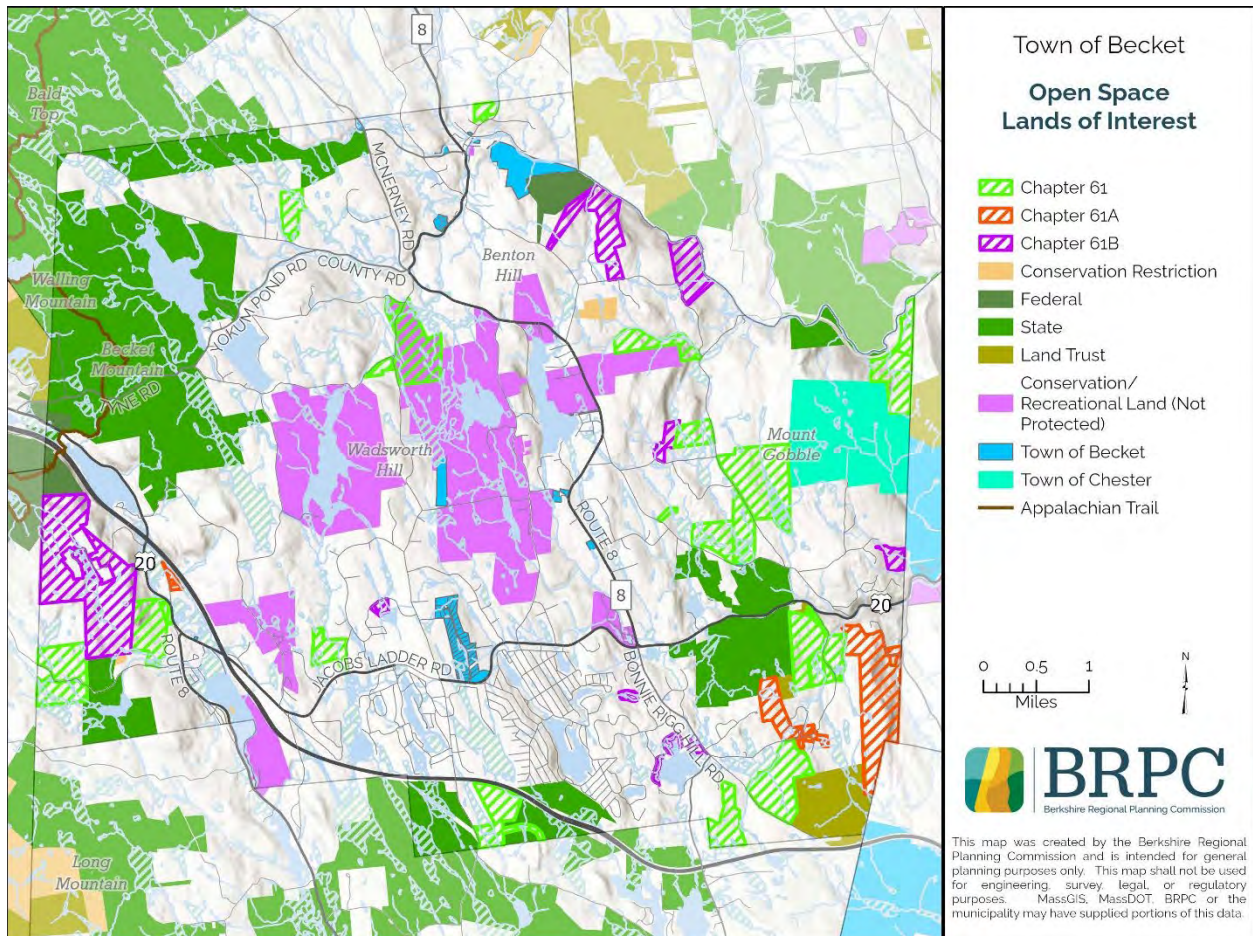
## Historic and Cultural Properties and Resources

As noted in Section 4 of this Plan, Becket is endowed with several areas of historic and cultural importance. The Becket Arts Center, Mullen House Educational Center and Becket Athenaeum are all located in North Becket Village Historic District. Two of the Stone Arches can be accessed through the Walnut Hill WMA, and Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival sits on 220 acres, the main campus of which is open to the public for outdoor performances, educational programs, picnicking and hiking on designated trails. The sites are summarized in Table 5.9 below.

*Table 5.9. Historic Resources Summary Table*

Name	Location	Historic Designation
North Becket Village Historic District	North Becket	National Register Historic District (NRHD)
Middlefield-Becket Stone Arch Railroad Bridge District	Becket-Middlefield border	NRHD, National Historic Landmark (2 Keystone Arches only)
Becket Center Historic District	Becket Center	NRHD
Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival	Carter Road	NRHD, National Historic Landmark

Map 10. Open Space Lands of Particular Interest





# Section 6:

# Community Vision

## 6A. Description of Process

In the spring of 2022, the Becket Open Space and Recreation Committee was formed to steer the efforts to develop the Town's third Open Space and Recreation Plan. In developing goals and actions for this OSRP, the Becket Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee revisited the 2006 OSRP, as well as considering recommendations that emerged from the 2020 Hazard Mitigation and Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plans. The Committee, armed with mapping and natural resources data collected by the BRPC, and with information derived from the public survey, the public outreach program and the public forums, subsequently formed the updated Goals and Actions found in this plan.

## 6B. Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Through a series of public outreach efforts and conversations with Town officials and citizens, a shared vision of preserving a rural Becket began to emerge. Residents and Town officials have clearly stated in the public survey and at the public forums that Becket's rural character is one of its greatest strengths and worth protecting for future generations. They appreciate the low-key, free spirit of country living. The Town's natural resources complement the availability of the Berkshires' cultural resources, from Jacob's Pillow being located right here in Becket to the availability of the dense cluster of cultural venues and events within a 30- or 40-minute drive.

During the planning process it became clear that there were areas within Becket where conservation efforts should be focused to create conservation corridors for natural resources biodiversity and wildlife connections and movement. These corridors may be needed as sensitive plant and wildlife species may need to migrate to adapt to a shifting climate and environment. The areas of conservation focus are noted on the Action Map in teal blue oblongs and circles. Also on the map are focus areas for Town Beach and trail enhancements and improved public access.

Because the vast majority of Becket's land is privately owned, it is important to enlist and educate private citizens in land and natural resource conservation efforts. Many residents have stated through the public survey and during public forums that they would like to learn more about the world around them and what part they can play in preserving Becket's natural communities. Many property owners state that they are interested in learning how to become better stewards of their lands. It is important that these landowners are given the tools to succeed. Partnering with environmental conservation organizations and state agencies will be key in providing these educational tools.

Although residents are surrounded by nature, properties formally open for public recreation are somewhat limited and many are not well known. Residents have voiced their desire to learn more about and visit the recreational opportunities in and around Becket, specifically asking for maps of public trail systems and trailhead parking. New outdoor recreational facilities must be designed for long-term sustainability and protection of natural resources. Publicizing Becket's public outdoor spaces, including newly developed and updated sites, can help to facilitate residents' use of these properties.

Considering public input provided through the public survey and the April 2022 public forum, the Advisory Committee developed three main goals for the protection of natural resources and enhancement of recreational opportunities. The Actions that have been developed during the planning process have been categorized under three overarching Goals:

1. Protect the Town's natural resources with climate change impacts in mind.
2. Partner for resource protection and conservation.
3. Support the development of sustainable recreation while respecting natural resources.



***Maintaining the natural beauty of Becket for future generations is the highest priority.***

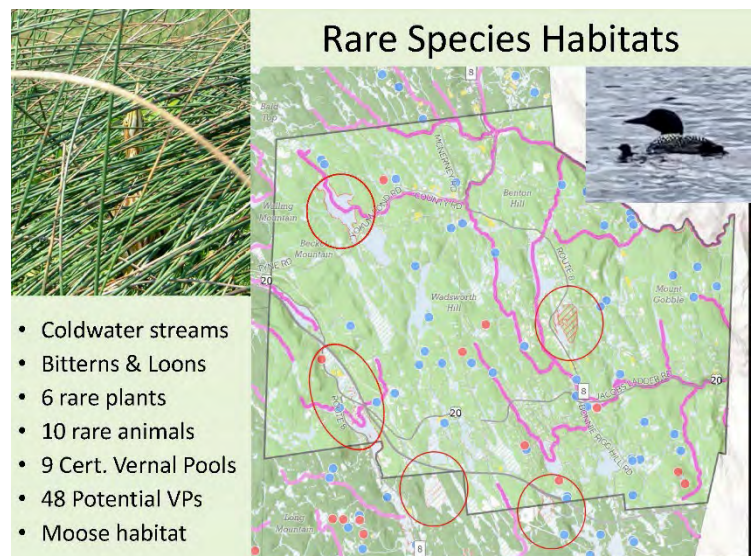
# Section 7: Analysis of Needs

## 7A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs

As noted in *An Assessment of the Forest Resources of Massachusetts* (2010), the forests of the Berkshire Highlands region, in which Becket is located, are among the highest priority areas in the state for hosting intact forest blocks and providing timber products. The forests here “provide the full suite of ecosystem services. The top watersheds are comprised of forestland that provides basic supporting ecosystem services such as protection of water quality, prevention of soil erosion, protection of biodiversity and wildlife habitat, while also providing wood for local markets. This forestland also provides opportunities for recreational, spiritual, and aesthetic experiences, a forest environment in which people of all ages can connect with nature and the outdoors.”<sup>3</sup>

The Town’s forest cover, mixed with the rugged terrain, provides residents with a feeling that they are living in a rural and wild place. It is a main reason why they live or vacation here. Forests also provide habitat for wildlife, including rare species that reside in or travel through the area. These forests may also be harboring rare species that have never been documented or have not been documented for decades. However, most of the land in Becket is privately owned, including large camp properties, and very little is permanently protected open space, particularly in the Town’s interior.

### Summary of Species of Concern and their locations within Becket



Given the Town’s limited resources, it may be most productive to partner with state agencies and focus protection measures in areas where rare species are known to exist or where they can reasonably be expected to exist. The Town should actively work with the DCR, DFW and conservation organizations to expand conservation land around their existing properties. Tyne Swamp, adjacent to October Mountain State Forest land, is mapped in the most recent version of BioMap3 as Core Habitat and these and other wetlands in the eastern portion of Becket are known to harbor moose.

<sup>3</sup> de la Cretaz, et al, 2010.

Conserving additional land along the corridors of the Westfield Wild & Scenic River and its tributaries should be prioritized as these streams are coldwater fisheries and also noted as BioMap3 Core Habitat areas. In this watershed there are potential opportunities to expand protected lands in a few specific areas. There is an opportunity to expand on the small amount of Town-owned conserved land along the Shaker Mill Brook. The stream flows through a rugged ravine and the land has an intact forest and riparian corridor. A private landowner is willing to offer acreage for permanent conservation and has already removed the one dwelling on the property. Ideally the donation would be made to a conservation organization, possibly partnering with the Town. Pursuing conservation of a larger undeveloped parcel to the north of this site would expand the protection for this stream corridor up to the boundary of October Mountain State Forest.

The Marian Missionaries of Divine Mercy now own the former Kushi Institute property, which involves over 100 acres within close vicinity to a scattering of conserved lands owned by the Town, Commonwealth and U.S. Government. Other nearby lands are enrolled in Chapter 61B. The Marian Fathers have a history of land stewardship in Stockbridge, where they have placed a Conservation Easement on a large portion of their land to protect Kamposa Bog, a rare calcareous fen.

The Town should also focus water quality and habitat protection efforts on the wetland areas associated with Shaw Pond, most especially the wetlands north of the pond, and with Greenwater Pond. These wetlands are known to support an endangered bird that is shy and sensitive and should be protected from human intrusion. These waters are also listed as Core Habitat in the recent BioMap3 data. The Commonwealth and federal government own lands in close proximity to these waterbodies. In addition, the Town and the lake associations should continue to work with MassHighway to limit the impacts of road salt, which can impair the pond's ability to sustain aquatic life and contaminate drinking water wells.

The Town should encourage developers to minimize intrusions into forest lands and to limit the amount of clearing that occurs for roads, buildings, and driveways. Low Impact Development techniques, which seek to maintain existing topography and vegetation, should be promoted for all development and possibly be required for larger developments requiring special permits. Amending zoning bylaws can be undertaken to achieve these goals. Reducing openings in the forest may also aid in limiting the introduction or spread of some invasive species. Adopting the Berkshire Scenic Mountain Act will provide the Town with a land use tool to guide development along the ridgelines and slopes of Becket's higher elevations. At least 10 towns in Berkshire County have adopted this Act, including the nearby towns of Dalton, Lenox, Lee, Stockbridge, Lenox and Monterey.

Although Becket is endowed with a high number of ponds and lakes, many of the shorelines of these waterbodies are already surrounded by residential development, which fragments important wildlife habitat. There is known rare species habitat along the waterways and wetlands associated with Rudd Pond. The town should work with the YMCA Camp and other landowners within this corridor to create a protective undeveloped buffer around these water resources to provide suitable habitat for the rare animal species that inhabit this area. Crystal Pond has been identified as hosting rare and endangered species, and a corridor between Center Pond and Crystal Pond, which crosses Route 8, results in high mortality of wildlife.



Intensive residential development around the lakes, ponds and streams can degrade water quality, remove valuable wildlife habitat, diminish recreational and property values, and threaten the rural character of the town. Historic development patterns allowed development that is too dense and too close to the shoreline, threatening public health and the environment. The Town should investigate measures to protect its waterbodies through regulation and landowner education.

Many of the ponds and lakes are managed by homeowner lake associations. These associations often own and manage the road systems, dams and common lands within the subdivision. They also oversee lake management programs, such as control of aquatic invasive plant species whose populations can become excessive enough to hinder recreation and threaten water quality. Chemical treatment programs have been conducted on several of the waterbodies. Most of these lake associations are run by volunteers who can become overwhelmed with the complexity and cost of lake management activities. In recent months some of the lake associations have begun the process of banding together to create an association that would serve as an umbrella group, where lake managers can share information on a variety of topics, including lake management. The Becket Conservation Commission would like to support and participate in this group to promote sustainable, long-term lake management programs for each of these water resources.

The few ponds and lakes whose shorelines remain largely undeveloped should be prioritized for future conservation efforts. Palmer Brook Pond and the unnamed pond north of the Shales Brook WMA have shorelines that have not been developed, and Rudd, Center and Yokum Ponds still have large expanses of undeveloped shoreline. These shorelines provide the aquatic/terrestrial habitat necessary for many species to fulfill their life and breeding cycles. The lands surrounding the unnamed pond north of Shales Brook WMA serve as critical habitat linkages between protected state lands that allow safe wildlife movement and migration, including a known moose population. Much of the lands in this corridor are currently enrolled in the Chapter 61s tax abatement programs, and if these lands were to be proposed for development, the Town would have a Right of First Refusal to purchase the land. Becket residents have already shown their willingness to protect lands from inappropriate land uses and could once again partner with local land conservation organizations, to protect this corridor for future wildlife and recreational values.

There is also an opportunity to pursue permanent conservation lands in the southeastern portion of the Town that would expand the acreage of conserved lands in the vicinity of the Historic Forest and Quarry. The landowner has indicated a willingness to sell the land to a conservation organization for permanent protection. The lands are currently enrolled in the state's Chapter 61s tax program.

Although previous attempts to develop a local wetland bylaw to protect shoreline habitat failed, the Town should reconsider potential land use tools to protect wetlands, river corridors and upland habitats. Efforts could focus on protecting a few key undeveloped waterbodies. Establishing a Lake Protection Overlay District that involves only a few of the most vulnerable waterbodies could be considered, with the focus on protecting habitat and water quality by minimizing land clearing and impervious surfaces and maintaining shoreline vegetation.

It is expected that the majority of the land in Becket will remain in private ownership in the near future. If the forests and wetland resources are to be protected for future generations, it

is key that owners understand how to become good stewards of these precious resources. The overwhelming majority of residents who responded to the public survey have indicated an interest in learning more about ways to manage and conserve their lands. Almost 90% of survey respondents who responded to a question about chemical applications to their lawns and gardens would consider reducing the use of them. Almost 79% who answered a question about land management stated a willingness to learn how to manage it for wildlife. Eighty percent who answered a question about conserving their land stated a willingness to learn more about saving it for future generations. Interestingly, far fewer respondents stated a willingness to sell land or accept a conservation easement on their land, although there were a fair number who answered that they were not sure, indicating a need to provide more information on the subject. Seventy-four percent who answered a question about wetland resource protection stated a willingness to attend an informational session to learn more about bylaws. The full responses are found in Table 7.1.

*Table 7.1 Survey Responses to the Question: "What would you consider doing individually to conserve open space and outdoor recreation in Becket?"*

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Contribute to acquire/protect a specific piece of land	53.57% 150	18.57% 52	27.86% 78
Partner with a land conservation organization to improve open space and recreation	67.48% 193	14.34% 41	18.18% 52
Pay a little more in taxes dedicated to open space and recreation	58.08% 169	21.31% 62	20.62% 60
Attend an informational session to learn about protective bylaws for lakes, streams and wetlands	74.48% 216	11.38% 33	14.14% 41
Increase protective buffers where my land borders a water resource	55.63% 158	11.62% 33	32.75% 93
Attend an informational session about the tax benefits of protecting undeveloped land	62.98% 182	17.99% 52	19.03% 55
Reduce the use of chemical applications on my lawns and gardens	89.97% 260	5.19% 15	4.84% 14
Sell or donate a deeded conservation restriction to permanently protect my land from future development	24.47% 69	30.85% 87	44.68% 126
Sell land to the town or land trust	20.57% 58	39.72% 112	39.72% 112
Learn how to manage my land for wildlife	78.75% 226	9.76% 28	11.50% 33
Learn how to conserve my land for future generations	80.07% 229	11.19% 32	8.74% 25

The Town is fortunate in that there are already conservation organizations within Becket that already practice land stewardship and can offer support for outreach programs. The DCR Forestry programs offer educational materials, presentations and technical support to landowners who would like to manage their forests as working landscapes, conservation and wildlife habitats. Financial incentives are also available to these landowners. Berkshire Regional Planning Commission offers outreach programs about water quality protection, including presentations targeted to shoreline residents and lake associations. The Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory

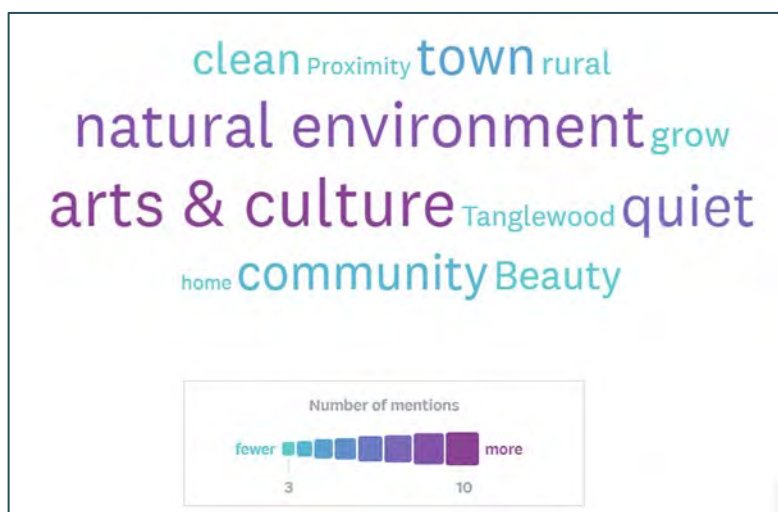
Committee is a great resource that offers environmental education opportunities for all ages and provides community grants to advance Wild & Scenic conservation and stewardship priorities. Several land trusts offer educational materials about the various tools to help landowners investigate opportunities to conserve their land, including those with financial benefits. Because 40% of survey respondents describe themselves as part-time residents, holding outreach during the summer months would be most advantageous. The establishment of the *Becket Beat*, the community's new newsletter, provides a new venue to discuss conservation issues and advertise educational opportunities.

## 7B. Summary of Community's Needs

In Spring of 2022, the Becket Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee conducted an Open Space and Recreation Survey as part of the process of updating its Open Space and Recreation plan (The survey results can be found in Appendix A). The electronic survey solicited input via the Town's official website and the Becket Athenaeum's website, and hard copies were placed in Town Hall. The survey garnered 310 responses.

Question 2 of the survey asked residents to rank the most important reasons why they live in Becket. Of the choices given, the top three reasons ranked as being of greatest importance were Rural Character, Natural Resources, and Quality of Life and Community. When given the chance to expand on their answer, open-ended responses indicate that residents value the Town's rural environment but also the region's cultural opportunities (Fig. 7.1). Very few ranked growing up or having family here as being most important.

*Fig. 7.1 Survey Question 2 Word Cloud Represents Open-Ended Responses to why residents choose to live in Becket*



When asked in the survey to rank the importance of various types of open space, respondents' top three choices were Scenic vistas/rural character, Forests, and Rivers/streams/their corridors. Agricultural lands received the least amount of high-ranking votes, probably due to the small amount of land that is in agricultural use in Becket.

*Fig. 7.2. Results of Survey Question 6: What outdoor activities do you and your family most enjoy in Becket?*

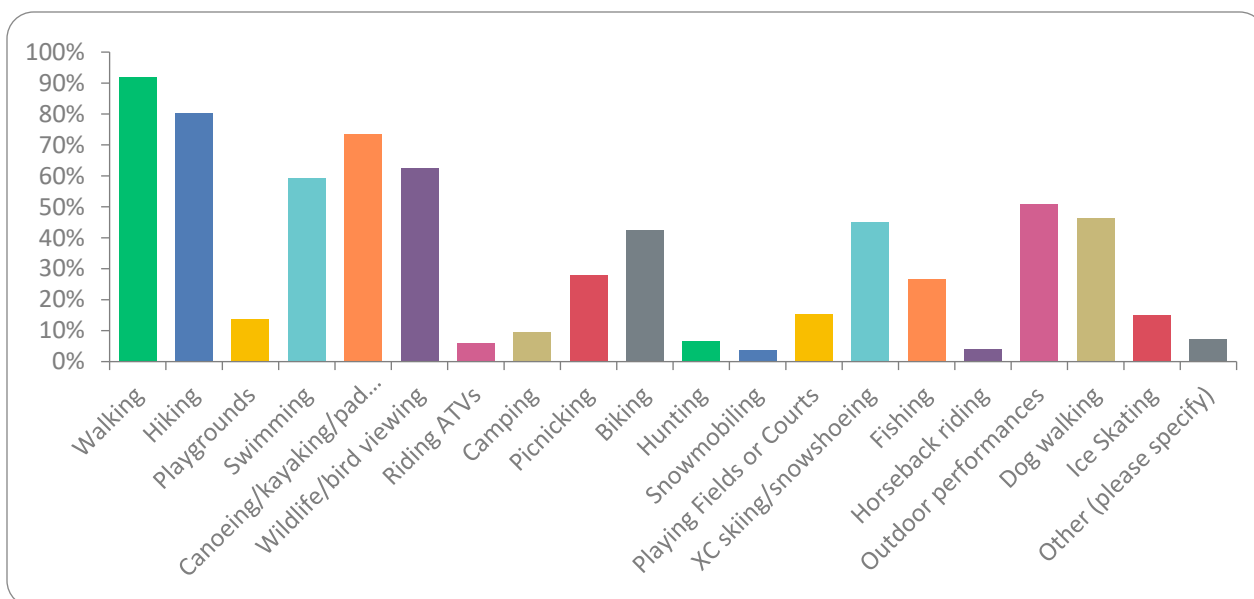


Fig. 7.2 shows what activities the residents of Becket most enjoy doing. The top five are walking, hiking, swimming, canoeing/kayaking and wildlife/bird viewing. The most visited (13+ times a year) locations for recreation activities were publicly-owned Buckley Dunton Reservoir, October Mountain State Forest, Becket State Forest and the Appalachian Trail (AT). These locations make sense as they are where residents would engage in the activities listed in the top five.

Three questions within the public survey asked residents to identify the federal/state-owned, Town-owned and privately-owned outdoor recreation lands in Becket that they visit. asking them to estimate how often they visited each of them. The federal/state-own properties identified as being most popular, where respondents visited them at least once per year, were October Mountain State Forest and the AT. Buckley-Dunton Lake and October Mountain State Forest were the sites that respondents visited Frequently (13+ times per year). A significant number of respondents stated that they did not know where the three WMA's or Becket Sate Forest were located. Of Town-owned properties, the Town Beach was by far the most visited by respondents. A significant number of respondents stated that they did not know where Esau's Heel Trail was located (131 respondents; 44% of total responses). This response is not unusual, as the trail was only opened to the public in June 2022.

**Becket ponds are important habitat areas that also provide recreational value**



Residents were then asked what prevented them from utilizing the public and private recreation lands that were just listed in the previous three questions. Residents responded with open-ended answers. Of the 229 responses to this question, the answer given most often as a barrier was that they were unaware of where the sites were located (31% of total). Many of these people stated that they were fairly new to Becket, indicating a new set of residents and/or seasonal residents who were transitioning to full-time residency. The other barrier preventing respondents from visiting Becket's sites was a limited or lack of time to do so. This lack of free time to recreate outdoors has a situation that has been echoed across the Commonwealth, as noted in the Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).<sup>4</sup> According to the SCORP, both adults and teens prefer to recreate nearby, indicating a need to have outdoor facilities distributed across Becket to increase participation from within the various neighborhoods of the Town.

Through the public survey and public forums residents expressed their needs and desires for additional opportunities to experience outdoor recreation in Becket. The public survey asked residents what additional recreation opportunities were needed in Becket and for what age groups. As can be seen in Fig. 7.2, the three activities cited as needing more opportunity were walking, hiking and biking – the very same activities that respondents said they already do in Becket. This indicates that respondents want expanded opportunities in these areas, understandable given the limited number of trail systems found within Becket. The need to expand the trails system was echoed again in the December 2022 public forum. At present the only public trail systems are found in October State Forest, The Arches, Becket Historic Quarry and Forest, and the Town's new Esau's Heel Trail. There are no trails in Becket State Forest, limiting recreational use of this large, state-owned property. Because limited or lack of free time to recreate outdoors is a barrier, it will be important to ensure that all residents know where the nearest trail system, beach or boat launch is located so that they can take advantage of these when it fits into their schedule. While there is mountain biking offered in October Mountain SF, there are no on-road bike lanes or rail trails in Becket that could encourage increased bicycling in Town. Like other rural communities in Berkshire County, many Becket residents would like to see an off-road bike/walking trail in town or nearby, and this was noted as a need across age groups. According to the SCORP, this desire is also echoed across the Commonwealth.

Swimming and tennis/pickleball courts also received a high number of votes for facilities that are needed. As expressed by the public in the survey and during public presentations, the needs for youth were playgrounds, playing fields and organized sports/activities. The needs for teens was not specifically asked in the survey, but the survey results could be inferred to identify playing fields and organized sports for this age group, with swimming and biking also needed. The need for additional things for teens to do was only mentioned once, as part of an open-ended response to survey Question 15.

The greatest needs for adults were biking, tennis/pickleball and hiking. The greatest needs for seniors and less-abled persons were more facilities for walking, hiking and swimming, with a few respondents requesting exercise classes for seniors. As seniors are the largest segment of the population, and are expected to increase into the future, it is important to understand their current and future needs. The creation of the new walking track in North Becket Park and the relatively easy terrain of Esau's Heel Trail, with the possibility of improving it for better

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<sup>4</sup> MA Exec. Office of Energy and Environment, 2017.



accessibility, can help to meet this need. Advertising these walking options to the senior population may increase their use. Of the 50 open-ended responses given to this Question, 11 respondents stated that Becket already offered enough opportunities (22% of open-ended responses). Several references were made to improve the surface of the tennis courts, which was already in the planning stage when the survey was issued. and to expand the number of pickleball courts, while a few stated a need for biking and a dog park. The full results of the survey are found in Appendix A.

*Table 7.2. Survey Question 11: If you think Becket needs more recreation opportunities for these groups, please let us know.*

	YOUTH	ADULTS	LESS-ABLED PERSONS	SENIORS	TOTAL
Walking	14.29% 24	26.19% 44	20.83% 35	38.69% 65	168
Hiking	12.26% 19	41.29% 64	17.42% 27	29.03% 45	155
Biking	25.00% 37	49.32% 73	6.76% 10	18.92% 28	148
Swimming	29.51% 36	32.79% 40	13.11% 16	24.59% 30	122
Playground	76.14% 67	4.55% 4	13.64% 12	5.68% 5	88
Boating	7.92% 8	59.41% 60	16.83% 17	15.84% 16	101
Organized Sports or Activities	46.23% 49	27.36% 29	9.43% 10	16.98% 18	106
Fishing	22.22% 20	35.56% 32	18.89% 17	23.33% 21	90
Tennis/Pickle ball Courts	11.02% 14	55.91% 71	4.72% 6	28.35% 36	127
Playing Fields	73.86% 65	10.23% 9	9.09% 8	6.82% 6	88

## 7C. Management Needs, Potential Change of Use

The Becket Conservation Commission is a seven-member board whose jurisdiction is to enforce the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act (WPA). The Commission is aided in its work by a part-time Conservation Agent who provides technical and administrative support during the review and permitting of projects within wetland resource areas. The Agent's hours are limited to approximately 20 hours per week, which restricts his work largely to tasks related to permitting of the WPA. However, the Commission's long-term goal is to expand its capacity beyond the WPA and to serve as a conduit for dissemination of information regarding water quality and aquatic habitat protection. It would like to partner with lake associations and conservation organizations to help property owners become environmental stewards of their land and possibly work within the

school system to teach students and their parents about the natural resources that Becket has to offer. Because the Commission is a volunteer board, it would be ideal to have a shared, full-time Conservation Agent who could help the Commission achieve this long-term vision. As of autumn 2022, several of Becket's lake associations have begun to create a town-wide lake association, an umbrella group, where individual lake associations can come together to identify common issues and share information with each other. The Conservation Commission, with support from a shared full-time Agent, could become an active member of such a group.

In general, the all-volunteer Becket Parks & Recreation Committee is responsible for maintenance and facility improvements at the Town's parks. The Committee works with the Town Administrator and Highway Department regarding the maintenance of and improvements to park and recreation facilities. They also rely heavily on volunteers to conduct beautification projects such as plantings and weeding, installing & removing docks, painting where needed and a host of other activities to maintain the facilities, equipment and appearance of the parks system.

The Committee also facilitates recreational and social activities, which includes a children's summer day camp and providing lifeguards at the Town Beach. Summer camp typically enrolls 15-28 children from Becket and Washington and offers crafts, swimming, sports and reading. The camp is free to residents and utilizes the Becket Center Park, North Becket Village Park and the Town Beach. Both the Becket Arts Center and the Athenaeum offer educational components to the program. The Committee also provides year-round health programs, such as yoga at the Town Hall. The Committee does not oversee youth athletic sports leagues, as there is not enough children and teens to populate sports teams, and as a result Becket youth join regional teams that encompass Becket and its neighboring rural towns. The Town does offer athletic fields that are used when teams are created by volunteers.

The Parks & Recreation Committee is fortunate in that Becket residents support the maintenance of its parks and the recreation activities that are offered through an annual budget item. The Committee also utilizes funding from the Community Preservation Act to help defray the cost of larger improvement projects, such as those done in North Becket Village Park, the Town Beach and Becket Center Park. For example, a new pavilion and benches and a resurfaced walking trail in the North Becket Village Park were recently done with Town funding. However, there are some projects that should be undertaken that are too costly and/or expensive to fund in a typical manner, and therefore may need the support of grant funding.

1. Erosion at the Town Beach is a constant concern due to the slope of the landscape. Beach sand tends to wash into the lake during severe rainstorm events, and some of this sand is migrating into the wetland next to the beach. Also, the pathway that leads from the parking lot to the dock can also wash out during these events, making it difficult for those with mobility issues to get from the handicap parking to the dock. The Town has not been able to identify cost-effective and practical solutions to these issues.

2. Mecum Way is a Town-owned road that provides access to the Town Beach and the public boat launch. However, outside of this right-of-way there seems to be some uncertainty as to property boundaries around the parking lot and the beach. Delineating property lines, ownership and acquiring some additional acreage by the Town may need to be pursued to ensure long-term access and parking to the beach and boat launch. Town ownership may be a necessity if Becket wishes to apply for public grant funds to conduct the work for these improvements.

3. The Town has taken 100 acres of undeveloped land on Jacob's Ladder Trail, which now hosts Esau's Heel Trail. The trail generally follows the subdivision road that was laid through the middle of the subdivision and was formally opened with a public celebration on June 18, 2022. Community Preservation Act funding was used to develop the loop, which is two miles in length. The beginning of the trail is along fairly level ground and could possibly host an all-accessible trail, although no work has been done to verify if the terrain is within ADA compliance. The trail requires additional design work to reconnect the segmented wetlands and restore a more natural flow pattern. The location of this site is advantageous in that it is located in an area where no hiking trails already exist and is in close proximity to densely populated subdivisions. If the Town would like to improve the trail system and/or create an accessible portion of it with state funding, it will need to place a conservation deed restriction on the parcels that would host the trails. It should be noted that this site has also been considered as possibly hosting a new highway garage and/or public safety facility. The Town should conduct an evaluation to determine the feasibility of hosting a new facility while also providing long-term wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation. The property could be developed to host a new Town building and trailhead parking while the rest could be conserved. Moving the highway garage and salt shed to this location could reduce the risk of salt intrusion into Depot Brook.

4. Parking is needed in the area of the North Becket Village Park and the elementary school. The park has been improved and the new pavilion has been erected, providing additional incentives to host public gatherings at the park.

Apart from the needs identified for Town parks, there were other issues that were raised as part of this OSRP update.

1. At the Annual Town Meeting in May 2013, Town Meeting voted by 2/3 vote to approve the transfer of 110 acres of Town-owned land to the U.S. Fisheries & Wildlife Service. The land would be used by the federal government for wildlife habitat and passive recreation. The parcel is land-locked and adjacent to an existing federally-owned parcel of 125 acres, called the Conte Reserve. The federal land does have access on a public way. However, this transfer was never completed.

2. During this OSRP update it was discovered that there were some landowners in Becket who were interested in conserving their land, either by selling it to the Town or transferring it to a non-profit conservation organization. These include lands in the Shaker Mill Brook watershed and along the Becket/Chester border. Both of these areas consist of unique habitats and/or unfragmented forest lands, the conservation of which can provide long-term benefits to biodiversity. Conserving these lands may also present an opportunity for outdoor recreation. Both of these objectives provide benefits to the residents of Becket.

3. The Town should consider amending its bylaws to better protect the natural resources and rural character that are valued by its residents. During the public survey, a substantial number of respondents indicated that they would support the Town adopting bylaws that require minimal land disturbance in new development (see Q. 4 of the survey). Likewise, a significant number of respondents indicated that they would attend an informational session about protective bylaws for lakes, streams and wetlands (Q. 5 of the survey).

Potential bylaw amendments to consider might be these:

- Updating the Floodplain Overlay District zoning bylaw. The Town should consider referring to the new template that has been created by the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency.
- Revisiting the option of adopting a town Wetlands Bylaw. This bylaw could expand the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission if this was a desired goal. An effort to adopt such a bylaw approximately 10-12 years ago was unsuccessful, being deemed too aggressive and limiting private property rights. The Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissioners offers sample bylaws that have been successful in other towns and vetted by legal counsel. The Association may also be able to provide advice on how to inform landowners and succeed at Town Meeting.
- Drafting a bylaw to reduce land disturbance and forest fragmentation during new construction or building rehabilitation projects. The bylaw should be science-based and promote Low Impact Development concepts. Protection of steep slopes should also be considered as should mechanisms to limit exterior lighting to protect rural character and wildlife.
- If a wetland bylaw would not be successful, this bylaw could include special provisions to reduce vegetation removal around wetland resources, focusing on stream, lake and pond shorelines. Components for best practices regarding invasive species management and methods to prevent their introduction could be included.

4. There has been a regional effort to develop a long-distance walking route that would link the hill towns that are located along the Jacob's Trail and Route 112 Scenic Byways. In Becket, this path travels through North Becket, traveling westward to Lee primarily through October Mountain State Forest and traveling eastward to Middlefield/Chester via local roads and new trail easements. This effort, named the Highlands Footpath, would utilize to the greatest degree possible the public lands and trail networks already existing in the region. As envisioned, the footpath would be designed to serve three primary user groups:

- Local community members who are interested in exploring their "back yard," expanding on the options and opportunities for an evening stroll or day-long hike.
- Day hikers who wish to coordinate day-long linear or loop hikes.
- Avid hikers who seek a wilderness experience with the comforts of small-town New England life at the end of each day. The footpath supports the possibility of travel from town to town that combines daytime experiences of remote wilderness areas with a good evening meal and stay in a local bed and breakfast.

\$50,000 from the state bond bill was released to redesign a trail over Gobble Mountain as part of a connection between Becket and Chester. Continuing the long and exciting development of an east-west footpath trail system will complement the existing north-south AT.

5. During the public survey and public forums it became evident that many residents of Becket were unaware of the outdoor recreation opportunities in and near Becket. For example, many residents seem unaware of the new walking track that has been constructed at North Becket Village Park and the pickleball courts that already exist at the North Becket Village tennis courts.

Hiking trail systems can be found outside October Mountain State Forest, including the Keystone Arches, Esau's Heel Trail and in Coles Brook Preserve in Middlefield, although these seem not to be well known. The Town could consider developing a guide to the Town's outdoor recreation options, highlighting the new Esau's Heel Trail.

6. The public survey indicated that residents were interested in better understanding the natural resources in Becket and learning ways in which they can help protect these resources. Many indicated an interest in learning how they could conserve their land for future generations. The Town could work with regional conservation organizations, DCR Forestry Program staff and land trusts to facilitate a series of events to serve these interested citizens. Financial incentives and technical assistance for landowners can be offered through programs offered by federal, state and private entities, the latter of which can include the Family Forest Carbon Program (a partnership between The Nature Conservancy and The American Forest Foundation). The popularity of zoom and other online technology offers the opportunity to conduct hybrid events and reach a host of people who may not be able to attend in person.

7. The survey also indicated that residents were interested in better understanding how to manage their lands for wildlife, including a strong willingness to reduce the use of chemicals on their lawns (see Q. 5 of the survey). The Town and lake associations should take advantage of this willingness and offer practical ways to protect habitat and control invasive species as part of the series discussed above regarding land conservation. The environmental impacts of salt use on private lands and roads could also be included in this series.

8. As discussed in Section 5 of this plan and seen in the Open Space Lands of Interest map, there are large blocks of land enrolled in the Chapter 61's tax programs that abut existing protected open space lands. The Town should establish a process to swiftly and efficiently exercise its Right of First Refusal so that key lands could be conserved if they were placed on the market for development. The Town already has a history of exercising this right, but that event was a unique circumstance where the Town was faced with a possibly intrusive land use. Being able to replicate or improve on the previous process will be important to act successfully in the future.

9. As also discussed in Section 5, there are large expanses of land that are owned and managed as private camps. The footprint and operations of many of the camps utilize only a small portion of their holdings, leaving much of their land in a natural state that benefits wildlife and facilitates carbon storage. As can be seen in other communities in the Berkshires, these camps can be sold for development that may not align with Becket's rural character. Maintaining close communications with camp owners is key to being able to act when these properties are being considered for sale.



# Section 8: Goals and Actions

The final goals and actions that are presented in this plan reflect the needs outlined in Section 7 of this plan. Actions have also been informed and revised through the planning process through input that Becket residents provided in the public survey, who personally provided input through their attendance at the two public forums, and through public comments received during the public review process. The draft actions that received the most votes at the December 2022 public forum are noted in Figure 8.1. with an asterisk and italic font. These top vote-getters indicated that attendees of the forum support updating the Town's Master Plan, developing protective zoning bylaw amendments and expanding the awareness and locations of existing recreational opportunities in and around Becket.

A major action item calls for updating Becket's Master Plan, which has not been undertaken for decades. It is through a comprehensive master planning process that many of the items listed here can be analyzed holistically, particularly zoning and town bylaw reviews and floodplain analysis and mapping. It is hoped that the Town is able to begin this important planning process expeditiously.

One major step that has occurred since 2006 is the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA) community. This allowed Becket to create a local Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. The current rate is 1.5%.

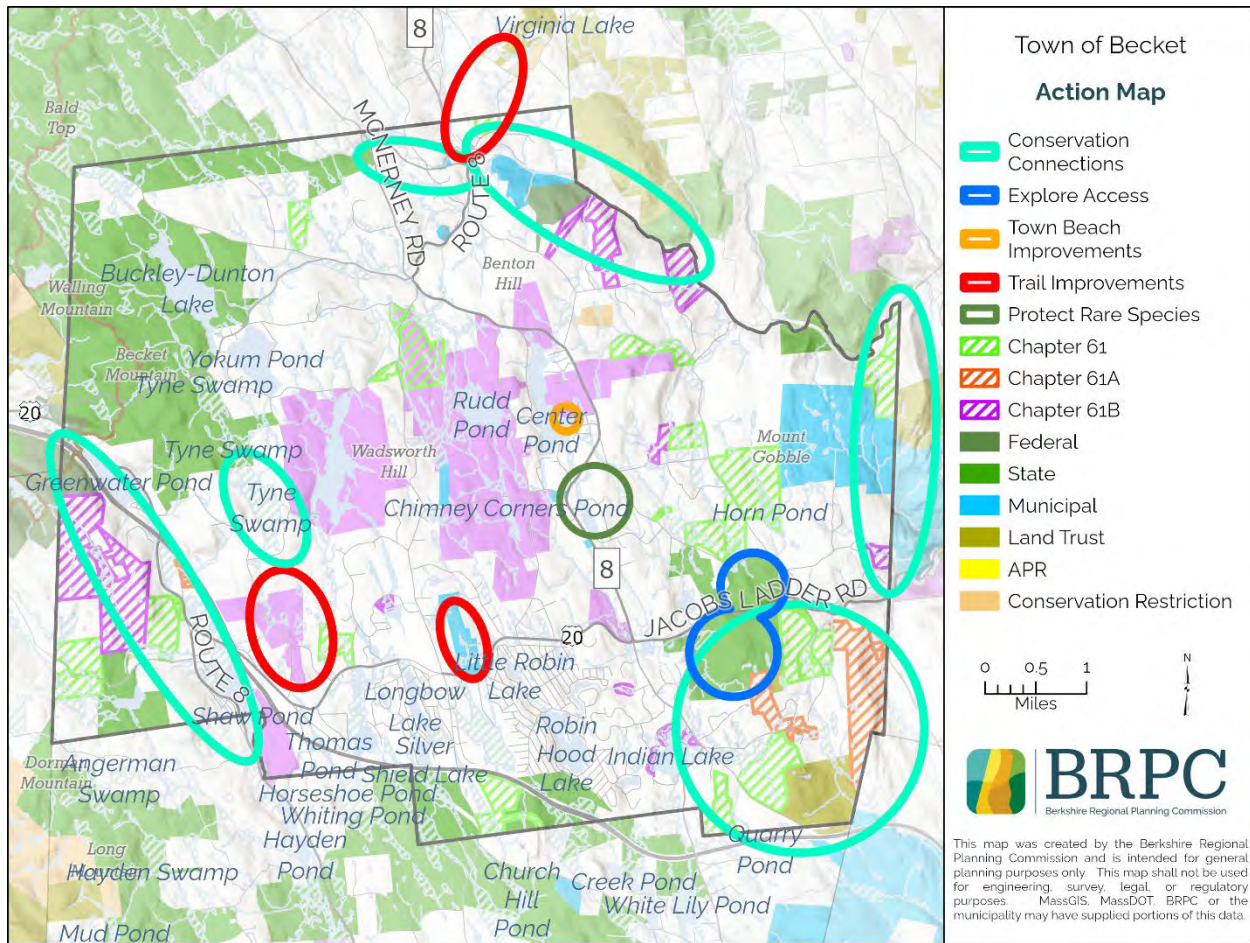
*Table 8.1. Goals and Actions*

<b>Goal 1: Protect Becket's natural resources with climate change impacts in mind.</b>
<b>Actions</b>
<i>*Update the Becket Master Plan to reflect this Plan's findings, those of previous Town planning efforts and the latest version of BioMap3.</i>
Update the Town's floodplain overlay district zoning bylaw; Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency has templates to use.
Map priority floodplain areas to reflect climate change impacts; use modeling to reduce impacts of flood events to properties and the environment; include North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative data for identifying high priority crossings.
<p><i>*Investigate bylaw amendments that increase protection of the environment; possible amendments might include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Minimizing land disturbance in new development, including the use of Low Impact Development techniques to manage erosion, runoff and steep slopes.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Wetlands protections - Mass. Assoc. of Conservation Commissioners is a good bylaw resource.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Limiting chemical applications in sensitive habitats.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Dark skies protection, with guidance from International Dark Skies Assoc.</i></li> </ul>
Establish policies and procedures to evaluate conservation and/or hazard mitigation value of tax title parcels before the Town resells the land.
Support a shared full-time Conservation Commission Agent to allow that staffer time to support local conservation and environmental efforts, including environmental educational programs.
Investigate the option of increasing the CPA surcharge for conservation of land and/or enhancement of recreational uses.
<b>Goal 2: Partner for resource protection and conservation.</b>
<b>Actions</b>
Maintain a list of Chapter 61s properties and develop a process so the Town is prepared to effectively handle future sales.
<p>Support a conservation focus on the areas of Becket shown on the Action Map to maintain ecological connections for wildlife; this includes but is not limited to these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Finalize the transfer of Town-owned land to the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, as authorized by Town Meeting.</li> <li>▪ Support the permanent conservation of land along the Shaker Mill Brook, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.</li> <li>▪ <i>* Support the conservation of land along the Westfield River and its tributaries identified as a significant wildlife habitat and corridor.</i></li> <li>▪ Support the conservation of additional lands in the area of Becket Historic Forest, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.</li> </ul>
Ensure all town permitting authorities are aware of locations of rare species habitats; refer to the latest BioMap3 and other information provided by Mass. Fisheries and Wildlife.
Support the creation of an emerging lakes/ponds umbrella lakes and ponds association group to facilitate sharing of information between lake managers for long-term resource protection.

Assess water quality, invasive species and lake management efforts in Becket's lakes and ponds; pursue resource protection and management recommendations.
<b>Goal 3: Support the development of sustainable recreation while respecting natural resources.</b>
<b>Actions</b>
Support Jacob's Pillows efforts to maintain and restore the existing wetlands trail; encourage sustainable design and education about this sensitive habitat; support potential future trail expansions.
Support the ongoing Highlands Footpath initiative to create a long-distance trail system that would link Becket through Middlefield/Chester to Goshen.
<i>* Determine which Jacob's Well / Esau's Heel Trail parcels are best suited for permanent conservation and which others may be suited for other town uses; consider creating all-persons access where possible; investigate expanding the Town's holdings to create a larger contiguous parcel.</i>
<i>* Encourage and help landowners become stewards of their land, lakeshores, streams and other sensitive habitats; options might include a series of informational sessions that include topics such as:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>Develop a "Better Your Buffer" program for protection and/or restoration of shoreline and wetlands.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Creating and maintaining wildlife habitat, including forest management and pollinator-friendly habitats.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Conservation tools, such as estate planning, donation options, deed restrictions, Chapter 61s programs.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>Chemical application laws and best practices.</i></li> </ul>
Explore and assess the need for alternative access and parking at North Becket Village Park.
Conduct work at Town Beach to secure long-term public use of the site, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clarify the boundaries and possibly acquire land to secure long-term parking.</li> <li>▪ Mitigate erosion to protect the environment and provide better access.</li> </ul>
<i>* Determine best ways to expand the awareness and locations of outdoor recreational opportunities in and around Becket, including directions to parking and trailheads; materials may be paper- and/or web-based.</i>
Advocate for bike racks at key public spaces; advocate for bike/ped accommodations along a future east-west passenger rail corridor.

*\*The top vote-getters at the December 2022 public forum are indicated by an asterisk and italics.*

Map 11. Action Map



# Section 9: Seven Year Action Plan

This Seven-Year Action Plan below established goals with associated objectives and actions with help from community input and integrated with other community planning efforts and their associated public processes. Continued Town commitment and citizen support are essential to accomplish these goals. Many of the listed actions reflect priorities and recommendations that have been in development for many years, and some will undoubtedly continue beyond seven years. The Town's ability to implement any of the given objectives is also dependent on the current budget and available funding for a given year.

The table that follows lists responsible parties that could take the lead in implementing the Actions and potential resources that may provide funding and/or other support, such as in-kind funds or administrative or technical support. It should be noted that the list of potential grant sources is a starting point and not an all-inclusive list, and as such should only be considered as a basis upon which to investigate possible funding and other support for implementation. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs is an agency with a robust set of programs that should particularly be investigated for its full set of grant and loan programs.

*Table 9.1. Seven-year Action Table*

Goal 1: Protect Becket's natural resources with climate change impacts in mind.			
Actions	Responsible Parties	Priority / Schedule (Years 2023-30)	Potential Resources
Update the Becket Master Plan to reflect this Plan's findings, those of previous Town planning efforts and the latest version of BioMap3.	Planning Board (PB), Selectboard (SB), MVP Committee (MVP Comm)	H / 2023-26	MA District Local Techn. Assistance Program (DLTA), MA Muni. Vuln. Preparedness Action Grant (MVP), Berk. Regional Planning Commission (BRPC)
Update the Town's floodplain overlay district zoning bylaw to reflect other planning efforts; MA Emergency Management Agency has template.	PB, Conservation Commission (CC)	H / 2024	FEMA Planning Grant, MVP



Actions	Responsible Parties	Priority / Schedule (Years 2023-30)	Potential Resources
Map priority floodplain areas and impoundments to reflect climate change impacts; use modeling to reduce impacts of flood events to properties and the environment.	MVP Comm	H / 2023-26	MVP
Investigate bylaw amendments that increase protection of the environment; possible amendments might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimizing land disturbance in new development, including the use of Low Impact Development techniques to manage erosion, runoff and steep slopes.</li> <li>Wetlands/shoreline protections - Mass. Assoc. of Conservation Commissioners (MACC) is a good bylaw resource.</li> <li>Limiting chemical applications in sensitive habitats.</li> <li>Dark skies protection, with guidance from International Dark Skies Assoc.</li> </ul>	PB, CC, local interested volunteers	H / 2024-28	MACC, MVP, DLTA, BRPC
Establish policies and procedures to evaluate conservation and/or hazard mitigation value of tax title parcels before the Town resells the land.	SB, CC, Becket Land Trust (BLT), Town Administrator (TA)	H / 2023	DLTA, MVP
Support a shared full-time Conservation Commission Agent to allow that staffer time to support local conservation and environmental efforts, including environmental education programs.	SB, CC	M / Ongoing	Town
Investigate the option of increasing the CPA surcharge for conservation of land and/or enhancement of recreational uses.	SB, Community Preservation Committee (CPC)	M / 2026	Town
<b>Goal 2: Partner for resource protection and conservation.</b>			
Actions	Responsible Parties	Priority / Schedule (Years 2023-30)	Potential Resources
Maintain a list of Chapter 61s properties and develop a process so the Town is prepared to effectively handle future sales.	SB, Assessor, TA	M / 2026	Town, DLTA

Actions	Responsible Parties	Priority / Schedule (Years 2023-30)	Potential Resources
<p>Support a conservation focus on the areas of Becket shown on the Action Map to maintain ecological connections for wildlife; this includes but is not limited to these areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Move forward with the transfer of Town-owned land to the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, as authorized by Town Meeting.</li> <li>Support the permanent conservation of land along the Shaker Mill Brook, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.</li> <li>Support the conservation of land along the Westfield River and its tributaries identified as a significant wildlife habitat and corridor.</li> <li>Support the conservation of additional lands in the area of Becket Historic Forest, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.</li> </ul>	SB, Parks & Recreation Committee (P&R), BLT, Westfield Wild & Scenic Advisory Committee (Westfield W&S), The Trustees of Reservation (TTOR), US Dept. of Interior, TA	H / Ongoing	Town, Community Preservation Act funds (CPA), Landscape Partnership Grant Program (LandPartnership), MA Land & Water Conservation Fund (MA L&W), MassAudubon, US Dept. of Interior (Conte Wildlife Refuge)
Ensure all town permitting authorities are aware of locations of rare species habitats; refer to the latest BioMap3 and other information provided by MA Fisheries and Wildlife.	PB, CC, BLT	H / 2023	Town, Westfield W&S
Support the creation of an emerging lakes/ponds umbrella association group to facilitate sharing of information between lake managers for long-term resource protection.	CC, SB, landowner associations, camps	M / Ongoing	Town, landowner assoc.
Assess water quality, invasive species and lake management efforts in Becket's lakes and ponds; pursue resource protection and management recommendations.	CC, landowner assoc., DCR Lakes & Ponds Program, Bd Health	M / Ongoing	MA 604b Assessment Grant
<b>Goal 3: Support the development of sustainable recreation while respecting natural resources.</b>			
Support Jacob's Pillows efforts to restore & maintain the existing wetlands trail; potential future trail expansion; encourage sustainable design and education about this sensitive habitat.	Jacob's Pillow	M / 2024-2025	Private funds, CPA, MA Trails Grant (MA Trails)
Support the ongoing Highlands Footpath initiative to create a long-distance trail system that would link Becket through Middlefield/Chester to Goshen.	Highlands Footpath Committee	M / 2026	MA L&W, MA Trails

Actions	Responsible Parties	Priority / Schedule (Years 2023-30)	Potential Resources
Determine which Jacob's Well / Esau's Heel Trail parcels are best suited for permanent conservation and which others may be suited for other town uses; consider creating all-persons access where possible; investigate expanding the Town's holdings to create a larger contiguous parcel.	SB, P&R	H / 2023	CPA, LandPartnership, MA L&W, MA Trails
<p>Encourage and help landowners become stewards of their land, lakeshores, streams and other sensitive habitats; options might include a series of informational sessions that include topics such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a "Better Your Buffer" program for protection and/or restoration of shoreline and wetlands.</li> <li>Creating and maintaining wildlife habitat, including forest management and pollinator-friendly habitats.</li> <li>Conservation tools, such as estate planning, donation options, deed restrictions, Chapter 61s programs.</li> <li>Chemical application laws and best practices.</li> </ul>	BLT, MA Dept. Cons. & Recreation (DCR), Westfield W&S	M / 2024-26	MVP, DCR Forestry staff, Forest Stewardship Program, MA Woodlands Institute, explore private environmental education grants, Greenagers, Berk. Natural Resources Council, Housatonic Valley Assoc., Berk. Environmental Action Team
Explore and assess the need for alternative access and parking at North Becket Village Park.	P&R	L / 2023	Town, CPA
<p>Conduct work at Town Beach to secure long-term public use of the site, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarify the boundaries and possibly acquire land to secure long-term parking.</li> <li>Mitigate erosion to protect the environment and provide better access.</li> </ul>	SB, P&R	H / 2023	Town, CPA
Determine best ways to expand the awareness and locations of outdoor recreational opportunities in and around Becket, including directions to parking and trailheads; materials may be paper-and/or web-based.	P&R, Volunteers	M / 2023-24	Becket Cultural Council
Advocate for bike racks at key public spaces; advocate for bike/ped accommodations along a future east-west passenger rail corridor.	Bike volunteers, P&R	L / 2023-24 and ongoing	Town, MassBike, Berk. Bike Path Council, BRPC

# Section 10:

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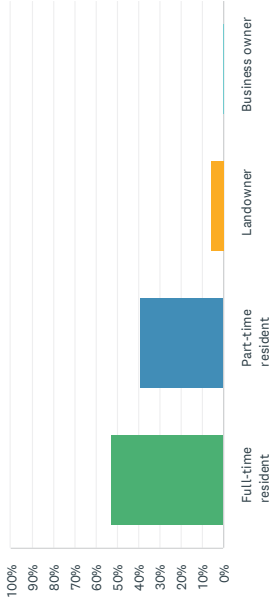
# Appendices



## Appendix A Survey Results

Q1 Pick one of the following that best describes your household:

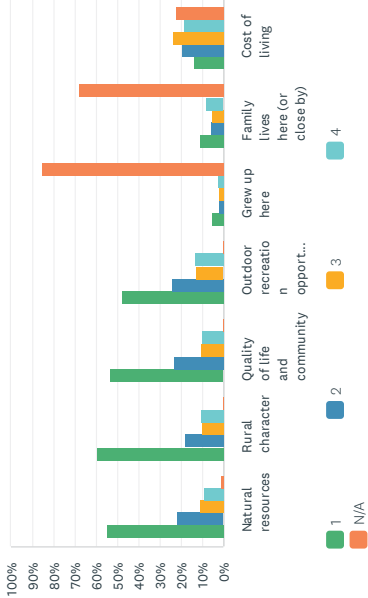
Answered: 309 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Full-time resident	165
Part-time resident	122
Landowner	20
Business owner	2
TOTAL	309

Q2 What are the most important reasons you or your family moved to or lives in Becket? Please rank 1-4 (1 being the most important)

Answered: 305 Skipped: 5



	1	2	3	4	N/A	TOTAL
Natural resources	162	64	34	28	4	292
Rural character	175	54	30	32	1	292
Quality of life and community	155	69	32	31	2	289
Outdoor recreation opportunities	138	70	37	39	2	286
Grew up here	14	7	6	8	210	245
Family lives here (or close by)	28	15	14	21	169	247
Cost of living	35	49	59	47	56	246

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Near cultural venues.	5/26/2022 6:30 PM
2	Husband has home here	5/23/2022 8:59 PM
3	Proximity to cultural activities.	5/16/2022 3:39 PM
4	Natural Environment	5/16/2022 2:40 PM
5	Tanglewood	5/16/2022 12:48 PM
6	Rural area	5/9/2022 8:52 PM

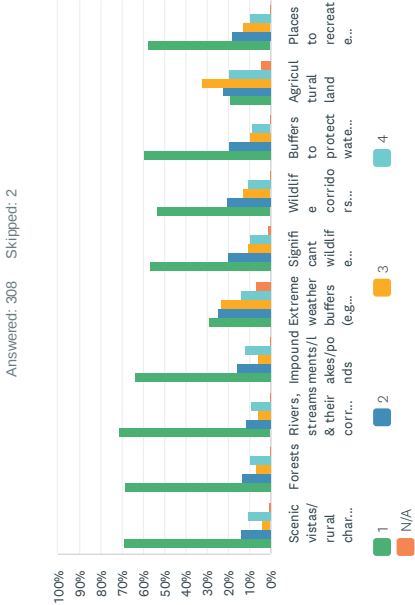
Becket OSRP Survey

7	The quiet and tranquility of the woods.	5/8/2022 3:13 PM
8	Good schools safe environment	5/8/2022 11:58 AM
9	My parents were one of the first residents in BW starting in early 1980's and a step sister who once owned a house there.	5/8/2022 10:32 AM
10	Ability to have space to grow food	5/8/2022 10:31 AM
11	Affinity for greylock and Watishon where we grew up as campers	5/7/2022 11:56 AM
12	Home has been in my family since the 40s, and my father and grandfather are buried here.	5/6/2022 6:02 PM
13	Did you only want for choices ranked or all ranked individually? Not clear...	5/4/2022 10:52 AM
14	The quiet rural and non commercial nature of Becket	4/30/2022 9:46 PM
15	Quiet community and forest environment	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
16	proximity to cultural places	4/30/2022 3:19 PM
17	Beauty	4/30/2022 8:26 AM
18	Love and hope for no future large industries will be in this beautiful town	4/29/2022 7:44 AM
19	cultural offerings:natural beauty, peace and quiet, wildlife	4/28/2022 9:17 PM
20	Private quiet community. Natural forested environment.	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
21	Tranquility and peaceful environment	4/27/2022 7:51 PM
22	solitude, quiet, cohabitating with nature	4/27/2022 6:47 PM
23	beautiful uncrowded and clean lakes	4/27/2022 6:07 PM
24	Proximity to my job	4/27/2022 4:41 PM
25	1 affordable second home in central Berkshires	4/27/2022 9:01 AM
26	Grew up in surrounding towns not Becket	4/27/2022 7:19 AM
27	bedroom community, quiet, wonderful town history.	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
28	quiet, low key	4/26/2022 11:10 AM
29	Lake frontage and cultural attractions	4/25/2022 8:34 PM
30	Proximity to Tanglewood and other arts organizations	4/25/2022 5:37 PM
31	Low taxes	4/24/2022 3:46 PM
32	Cultural & community events avbl	4/21/2022 8:54 PM
33	location	4/20/2022 10:47 AM
34	clean water, fresh air	4/19/2022 3:20 PM
35	1 - My work is here	4/14/2022 6:16 PM
36	No reason - just chance.	4/14/2022 5:25 PM
37	mix of rural character and culture 4	4/14/2022 5:18 PM
38	Water, water, water	4/7/2022 9:55 PM
39	Our children and grandchildren went to camp in becket. We wanted to be near the cultural attractions of the Berkshires.	4/7/2022 4:33 PM
40	Town beach	4/7/2022 3:57 PM
41	Has been a destination for recreation since 1971	4/5/2022 8:59 AM
42	Cultural events & opportunities	4/4/2022 7:53 PM
43	Beauty of Western Massachusetts plus cultural attractions	4/4/2022 7:41 PM

Becket OSRP Survey

44	performing arts	4/4/2022 7:36 PM
45	Family history of 150 years connected to the Quarry on Quarry road	4/4/2022 7:31 PM
46	nice balance of nature and culture	4/4/2022 7:28 PM
47	ttttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
48	the rivers	4/3/2022 9:11 PM
49	Dark skies!! Astronomy	4/3/2022 8:08 PM
50	Cultural activities	4/3/2022 7:01 PM
51	proximity to cultural activities	4/3/2022 5:31 PM
52	As a second home owner for 18 years and now full time for a year, I love this town for not having industrial business in my back yard.	4/3/2022 5:05 PM
53	Proximity to arts (e.g. Jacobs Pillow, Tanglewood, MassMOCA, etc.)	4/3/2022 4:58 PM
54	Rest & relaxation	4/3/2022 10:53 AM
55	Proximity to cultural resources	4/3/2022 5:46 AM
56	To be far away from city influence and its pollution/garbage everywhere.	4/2/2022 6:23 PM
57	The clean air, open space & way of life.	4/2/2022 1:21 PM
58	Arts and culture	4/2/2022 10:59 AM
59	Lack of commercialism to spoil our main "industry" - the 2nd home market	4/2/2022 10:27 AM
60	Open space, non industrial and no commercial operations	4/1/2022 10:25 PM

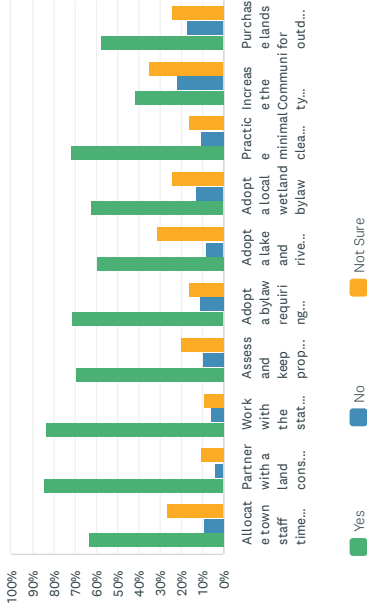
Q3 How important are each of these types of open space to you and your family? Please rank 1-4 (1 being the most important)



2	Purity of water. Both aquifers and lakes and ponds	5/16/2022 2:10 PM
3	Protection of all wildlife	5/6/2022 11:58 AM
4	This is an odd suite of features to ask about. what value are you asking about for importance?	5/4/2022 10:52 AM
5	Ability to preserve the environment and protect wildlife	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
6	Walking trails in undisturbed hills and forest amongst natures wildlife.	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
7	All of the above!!	4/27/2022 7:25 PM
8	trails throughout the community are so important to me	4/27/2022 6:07 PM
9	Protect Becket from intrusion of outside interest/businesses	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
10	invasive species cprtol	4/26/2022 11:10 AM
11	Rural but close to job in Pittsfield	4/24/2022 3:46 PM
12	scenic vista/character to me includes forests, lakes, recreate and wildlife corridors so it is all inclusive 1-4	4/14/2022 5:18 PM
13	Hiking trails	4/7/2022 3:57 PM
14	dark skies, quiet, though both of those are sadly going away	4/4/2022 7:28 PM
15	ttttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
16	really all of the above. Hard to distinguish from each other -- they all go together	4/3/2022 8:03 AM
17	Carbon Sequestration ability of the environment	4/2/2022 6:23 PM
18	We would really enjoy a place to go play tennis and a dog park	4/2/2022 1:22 PM
19	Historic Quarry	4/1/2022 10:25 PM

Q4 What should the town of Becket do to conserve open space areas and outdoor recreation?

Answered: 308 Skipped: 2



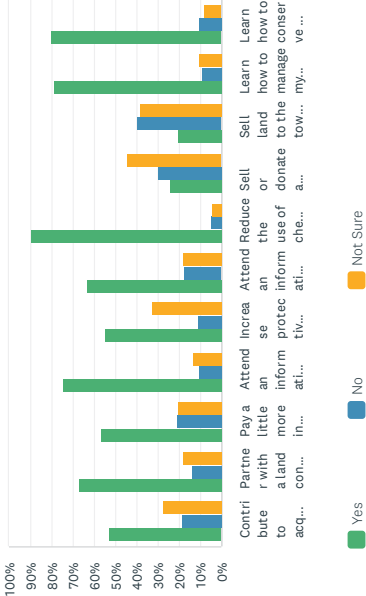
2	Protect what we have before it is too late and regulate development.	5/26/2022 6:30 PM
3	Appreciate Esau's Heel	5/23/2022 8:59 PM
4	Ban gasoliner-powered motorboats from ponds.	5/16/2022 3:39 PM
5	Town of Becket should work with neighboring towns to do above.	5/8/2022 10:32 AM
6	I am not sure non payment of taxes Q above. People might contribute work instead for the county	5/8/2022 10:31 AM
7	The town should protect the community, the peaceful way of life, and solitude that we all cherish in Becket. Becket does not need greedy land and business developers to disrupt, destroy, and pollute the environment as well as displace the wildlife of birds and land animals.	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
8	We pay a lot of state taxes which should be allocated for this not only a local issue.	4/30/2022 11:01 AM
9	adopt vehicular and construction noise limits with enforcement; PADOPT RULES PROHIBITING THE USE OF MOTOR BOATS AND "PERSONAL WATER CRAFT" ON OUR LAKES!!!!	4/28/2022 9:17 PM
10	Town Planning Board should protect the interest of the community ensuring the integrity if the environment and the character of the community. This is the main reason why Becket is unique and exemplifies the spirit represented by Henry David Thoreau in his writings "Walden Pond".	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
11	Mitigate incoming industries that would be detrimental to the preservation of wild spaces and the tranquility they provide.	4/27/2022 6:47 PM
12	Plant native trees that will thrive in a warming climate	4/27/2022 9:33 AM
13	consider protective easements as used successfully in Boulder, CO and elsewhere	4/27/2022 9:01 AM
14	Sounds like you'd like "Big Brother" to take over it! Just abide by existing zoning and bylaws and stop changing for special interest groups that see Becket only as a fast buck to be made. They don't care about Becket, they don't care about the residents.	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
15	no mosquito spraying.	4/26/2022 11:10 AM
16	Encourage rural development	4/24/2022 3:46 PM
17	Work with State to improve access to state owned lands used as open space	4/11/2022 12:28 PM
18	Partner with Berkshire Natural Resources Council	4/9/2022 10:32 AM
19	Create a commercially zoned area away from current neighborhoods	4/8/2022 4:16 PM
20	purchase lands for flora and fauna	4/8/2022 6:23 PM
21	great list. agree with all of the above	4/5/2022 8:59 AM
22	Protect existing historic resources from negative impacts of commercial and industrial projects entering the town	4/4/2022 7:59 PM
23	1) I'd add: identifying parcels that are important from an environmental perspective (vernal pools, native plants, adjacent to other open space) to get private landowners to protect or donate to a land trust. 2) I'd be in favor of purchasing land for outdoor recreation if that excluded hunting and ORV's	4/4/2022 7:28 PM
24	ttttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
25	There are already laws pertaining to the "no" areas above.	4/3/2022 12:48 PM
26	Many of these steps need to be coordinated w/ each other, so hard assess them in isolation in the way this question requires	4/3/2022 8:03 AM
27	Make ATV's illegal on any and all town or private subdivision roads. Enact and ENFORCE, (or give citizens ability to enforce), anti littering laws so people stop treating all of Becket as their personal garbage dump.	4/2/2022 6:23 PM
28	We pay enough in taxes here without town septic/water	4/2/2022 10:27 AM

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	make more trails	6/21/2022 12:12 PM



Q5 What would you consider doing individually to conserve open space and outdoor recreation in Becket?

Answered: 307 Skipped: 3

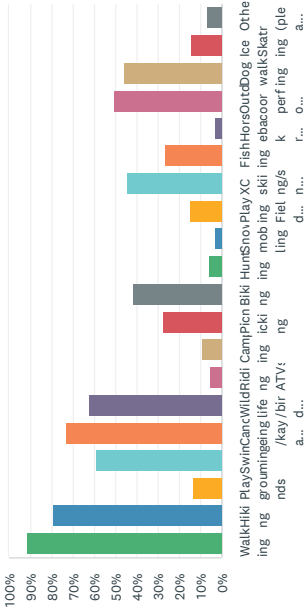


	YES	NO	NOT SURE	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Contribute to acquire/protect a specific piece of land	53.29% 154	18.69% 54	28.03% 81	289	1.75
Partner with a land conservation organization to improve open space and recreation	67.35% 198	14.29% 42	18.37% 54	294	1.51
Pay a little more in taxes dedicated to open space and recreation	57.33% 172	21.67% 65	21.00% 63	300	1.64
Attend an informational session to learn about protective bylaws for lakes, streams and wetlands	75.25% 225	11.04% 33	13.71% 41	299	1.38
Increase protective buffers where my land borders a water resource	55.33% 161	11.68% 34	32.99% 96	291	1.78
Attend an informational session about the tax benefits of protecting undeveloped land	63.64% 189	17.85% 53	18.52% 55	297	1.55
Reduce the use of chemical applications on my lawns and gardens	90.24% 268	5.05% 15	4.71% 14	297	1.14
Sell or donate a deeded conservation restriction to permanently protect my land from future development	24.48% 71	30.69% 89	44.83% 130	290	2.20
Sell land to the town or land trust	21.03% 61	40.00% 116	38.97% 113	290	2.18
Learn how to manage my land for wildlife	79.25% 233	9.52% 28	11.22% 33	294	1.32
Learn how to conserve my land for future generations	80.55% 236	10.92% 32	8.53% 25	293	1.28

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Husband's property, not my decision	5/23/2022 8:59 PM
2	We already do most of the protective measures on our land, and do what we can to protect our land and the wildlife on it	5/21/2022 11:35 AM
3	We already keep our property chemical/pesticide free and preserve areas with nests and flowers for bees.	5/17/2022 7:08 PM
4	Already have a 61b	5/6/2022 1:47 PM
5	Paying more in taxes is not the issue. Dedicating new space for open recreation needs to include conversations with the residents of our town.	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
6	We are careful to maintain waterfront buffers and regulations, but many neighbors do not and there is wide perception that there is no penalty for ignoring those rules that exist.	4/28/2022 9:17 PM
7	Conservation and protection of the precious old forest land in Becket should be paramount. Development of new commercial properties should only be considered along Main Street, Route 8 and Route 20.	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
8	Participate in a tree-planting crew and an invasive plant removal crew	4/27/2022 9:33 AM
9	reduce lawn area, plant for pollinators, volunteer to pull invasive plants	4/26/2022 11:10 AM
10	would support extra taxes for open space but not for recreation	4/20/2022 10:47 AM
11	Noise control on the Mass Pike. Electric quarry trucks. Cleaner boating practices.	4/14/2022 5:25 PM
12	A lot of those items don't apply to our property.	4/4/2022 7:53 PM
13	ttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
14	Becket already has a substantial amount of OPEN SPACE and we do not need to necessarily obtain more. Plenty of trails for walking and hiking and swimming already exist here.	4/3/2022 12:48 PM
15	we have a very small lot (.4 acre) so some of these actions do not seem possible or relevant	4/3/2022 8:03 AM
16	My yard/lawn is already chemical free. Ban the use of carcinogenics such as "Roundup" and others.	4/2/2022 6:23 PM

Q6 What outdoor recreation activities do you and your family most enjoy in Becket?

Answered: 307 Skipped: 3



Becket OSRP Survey

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Walking	91.86%
Hiking	80.13%
Playgrounds	13.68%
Swimming	59.28%
Canoeing/kayaking/paddling	73.62%
Wildlife/bird viewing	62.54%
Riding ATVs	5.86%
Camping	9.45%
Picnicking	28.01%
Biking	42.35%
Hunting	6.51%
Snowmobiling	3.58%
Playing Fields or Courts	15.31%
XC skiing/snowshoeing	44.95%
Fishing	26.71%
Horseback riding	3.91%
Outdoor performances	50.81%
Dog walking	46.25%
Ice Skating	14.98%
Other (please specify)	7.17%
Total Respondents: 307	

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Plant identification	5/26/2022 6:30 PM
2	botany, astronomy	5/17/2022 9:28 PM
3	running	5/16/2022 3:39 PM
4	Tennis	5/10/2022 7:00 AM
5	Walking tracks	5/9/2022 8:52 PM
6	Space stargazing/privacy	5/8/2022 11:58 AM
7	We'd love to bike hike walk if it were safer. Rt 8 is dangerous.	5/8/2022 10:31 AM
8	Walking our dog on a country road without vehicles zipping by	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
9	Enjoying the safety and QUIET beauty of nature and wildlife in my community.	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
10	Running path	4/27/2022 11:35 PM
11	gardening,	4/27/2022 6:47 PM
12	Gardening	4/27/2022 9:33 AM

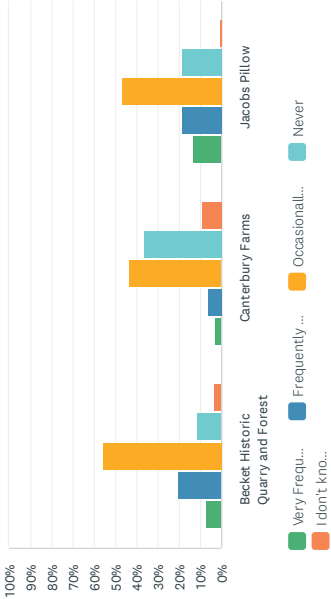
Becket OSRP Survey

13	Exploring the rich history of Becket, Keystone Arches, the Quarry until recently (over controlled), the haunts I explored as a kid growing up in Becket.	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
14	astronomy-star gazing	4/26/2022 11:10 AM
15	Boating	4/19/2022 5:44 PM
16	plant identification	4/19/2022 3:20 PM
17	Peacefully enjoying the scenery and nature	4/11/2022 12:28 PM
18	Visiting historical sites	4/4/2022 7:53 PM
19	tttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
20	plant id/botany	4/3/2022 9:11 PM
21	Astronomy!	4/3/2022 8:08 PM
22	We would really love to see access to a tennis court and a dog park	4/2/2022 1:22 PM



Q9 How often do you visit the privately owned locations below? Please mark each location with ONE of the following:

Answered: 307 Skipped: 3



	VERY FREQUENTLY (13+ TIMES/YEAR)	FREQUENTLY (6-12 TIMES/YEAR)	OCCASIONALLY (1-5 TIMES/YEAR)	NEVER	I DON'T KNOW WHERE THIS IS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Becket Historic Quarry and Forest	7.54% 23	20.33% 62	56.39% 172	11.80% 36	3.98% 12	305	2.84
Canterbury Fams	2.99% 9	6.64% 20	43.85% 132	36.88% 111	9.63% 29	301	3.44
Jacobs Pillow	13.44% 41	19.02% 58	47.21% 144	19.02% 58	1.31% 4	305	2.76

Q10 What prevents you from utilizing the sites listed in questions 7-9? Please name the site and be specific about why you don't visit.

Answered: 229 Skipped: 81

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	I visit most of them frequently.	6/21/2022 12:12 PM
2	lack of extra time	6/21/2022 12:05 PM
3	not prevented from any of the sites	6/21/2022 11:49 AM
4	Most of them I don't know where they are. I do not have small children to utilize playgrounds.	6/21/2022 11:42 AM
5	I moved to becket october 2021 and I don't know yet where the town beach is.	6/21/2022 11:38 AM
6	I didn't know it was open to the public Canterbury Fams	5/31/2022 1:05 PM
7	I'm unfamiliar with the sites but will be looking it up now and doing a little research	5/30/2022 11:59 AM
8	just because of habit.... don't venture beyond what's already great. thank you for making us aware....	5/30/2022 9:12 AM
9	Canterbury Farn. Have my own trails.	5/26/2022 6:30 PM
10	I'm not interested in Jacob's Pillow. I can't make any use of Canterbury Fams.	5/24/2022 5:26 AM
11	I don't have young kids, don't play tennis, I JUST learned about Esaws Heel and its not really on my trajectory.	5/23/2022 9:25 PM
12	No playgrounds = no children I have lived here 3 years and visit many of the hiking trails on All Trails on a very regular basis	5/23/2022 8:59 PM
13	We don't have children or grandchildren (yet) or don't know where some of the places are.	5/22/2022 4:28 PM
14	Any site I don't visit is due to having woodland around our property and the many projects and tasks involved in stewarding our land. Also age is a factor	5/21/2022 11:35 AM
15	Either we don't know about it, where it is, or enjoy that activity.	5/19/2022 6:19 PM
16	ignorance and bad knees	5/18/2022 11:22 AM
17	I prefer wild areas for hiking and dog walking	5/18/2022 8:23 AM
18	Don't know them or too far from home	5/17/2022 10:39 PM
19	October Mtn trails are all open to ATVs and snowmobiles making it unpleasant and noisy to recreate there. the noise scares away birds. The wildlife areas are sort of small, cant do a really long walk.	5/17/2022 9:28 PM
20	I don't know where they are or if they are accessible for disabled persons.	5/17/2022 7:08 PM
21	Not enough time.	5/16/2022 6:53 PM
22	Spend most leisure time at home	5/16/2022 6:41 PM
23	Either I don't know where they are, or there are opportunities closer to our house that offer more or less the same types of recreation	5/16/2022 6:14 PM
24	I want to visit all the sites I've listed as never having visited.	5/16/2022 3:39 PM
25	I don't utilize the playgrounds much unless my grandchildren are visiting. I don't play tennis.	5/16/2022 2:40 PM
26	Mostly just haven't had time yet or didn't know about specific sites. There are so many beautiful places to visit.	5/16/2022 2:24 PM
27	Am on a lake and thus tend to stay there during the war seasons	5/16/2022 2:10 PM



Becket OSRP Survey

28	All Becket Town Parks: Dog restrictions in place for permitted usage. I play in a frisbee league with my dogs, and that requires the dogs to be off leash for a period of about 5 minutes per individual dog. The town will not issue a permit for events with off leash dogs historically. So I don't visit the parks.	5/16/2022 1:41 PM
29	Other activities take up our time	5/16/2022 12:48 PM
30	Nothing	5/16/2022 12:21 PM
31	Either (I)don't where they are, new trail (Esau's-Havent been yet) or don't have a need (i.e. playground.) I also didn't know about the tennis courts!	5/16/2022 12:05 PM
32	For Number 7, I'm not sure how to access the sites I don't visit. For Esau's Heel, I would like to visit, just haven't done so yet. For North Becket Park, the location doesn't look as good as other options. For School Tennis Courts, I don't play tennis and didn't know they were open to the public. For Canterbury Farms, I think there are equally good or better options that don't require a fee.	5/13/2022 1:42 PM
33	Nothing. Not familiar with sites I have not visited	5/13/2022 11:44 AM
34	We often do our outdoor activities in neighboring towns	5/12/2022 2:01 PM
35	Don't know where some are, not interested in others.	5/12/2022 12:16 PM
36	In general, I don't need to leave my home to have beautiful resources.	5/11/2022 4:25 PM
37	Time and the fact that where I live (in Becket) provides ample walking trails, etc. at my doorstep.	5/10/2022 11:42 AM
38	Not interested	5/10/2022 11:41 AM
39	Canterbury Farm: I don't cross country ski. I would visit if I did.	5/10/2022 7:18 AM
40	Part time resident and find walking in some areas challenging.	5/10/2022 7:00 AM
41	All sites cost money do I go to free sites I know about.	5/9/2022 8:52 PM
42	limited time available to me	5/9/2022 3:45 PM
43	Lack of information about opportunities available there.	5/9/2022 2:18 PM
44	have access to a private pond Not enough time in becket. Have used trails in other towns- like to diversify my choices	5/8/2022 8:09 PM
45	Not that familiar with them.	5/8/2022 6:16 PM
46	Time. Not a year round resident and enjoy spending time in our home.	5/8/2022 6:15 PM
47	We try to visit as much of the local areas when we have time.	5/8/2022 5:43 PM
48	We have just acquired land. We are building. We do not live in Becket at this time. Excited to visit all the places mentioned.	5/8/2022 3:13 PM
49	Children and grandchildren grown. I hike and walk where i feel safe doing it alone.	5/8/2022 10:35 AM
50	I'm not living there; have not built a house on my lot yet. So have not visited these sites a certain number of times a year. However, I have visited some of these in past years. You should add Tanglewood to the list, which I've visited most of all the sites listed.	5/8/2022 10:32 AM
51	Would visit town beach (center pond), courts in becket estates and Buckley dunton more but weather and bugs are rough. Really enjoyed Dream Aeay Lodge as a becket destination.	5/8/2022 10:31 AM
52	Unsure	5/8/2022 10:27 AM
53	Not dog friendly	5/8/2022 9:59 AM
54	I thought Canterbury was private.	5/8/2022 9:56 AM
55	Becket historic Quarry and Forrest. Esau's Heel Trail-don't know where they are.	5/8/2022 9:52 AM
56	I don't know where they are	5/8/2022 9:42 AM
57	New to the area.	5/8/2022 9:28 AM

Becket OSRP Survey

58	We don't know where many of these sites are located.	5/8/2022 9:16 AM
59	not familiar with them. perhaps a brochure describing some of these interesting places would be useful, unless, the idea is not to encourage too many visitors. Also, we are only there part time and don't have time to explore more.	5/7/2022 1:10 PM
60	We enjoy also going to other sites outside of Becket. We want to visit the school tennis courts, but have not made the time.	5/6/2022 5:46 PM
61	Don't know any info on some of them and what's available.	5/6/2022 1:47 PM
62	Not familiar with some sites.	5/5/2022 11:44 AM
63	Really don't know about them and where they are	5/3/2022 9:09 PM
64	Jacobs Pillow and Canterbury Farms are a little expensive for me.	5/2/2022 2:51 PM
65	Ignorance as to where they are.	5/1/2022 7:37 PM
66	We have other outdoor options and interests ... and limited time.	5/1/2022 1:50 PM
67	Lack of time	5/1/2022 11:41 AM
68	I am disabled and a senior citizen. Also, I am a land owner.	5/1/2022 11:09 AM
69	I have a lot of property so I don't usually go other places to hike	5/1/2022 8:09 AM
70	Quarry has undesirable people there's Canterbury farm I don't cross country ski	4/30/2022 9:46 PM
71	I enjoy staying local in the Becket area. There are many other activities. and trails, not mentioned.	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
72	Because we are in Becket only during the summer months (June through September at most)	4/30/2022 3:19 PM
73	Limited time to go everywhere every year -- not lack of interest.	4/30/2022 3:08 PM
74	personal choice	4/30/2022 2:11 PM
75	Of no interest at this time	4/30/2022 12:09 PM
76	Either didnt know about them or just not interested to.	4/30/2022 11:01 AM
77	These places do not have family oriented activities or walking/cycling trails suitable for people of all age groups. The town needs places that are more like the Ashuwillitcook Rail Trail, perhaps using a public lake perimeter for scenic easy walking and biking trails. Something to attract families to come to Becket for day trips. Aside from being a wilderness, Becket has to have some reason for outsiders to visit.	4/30/2022 10:52 AM
78	Not aware of Esaus Trail. do not have young children for playground visit, don't play tennis.	4/30/2022 10:01 AM
79	Not aware of what's there and why it's attractive	4/30/2022 9:28 AM
80	I like/ know the places I already go to	4/30/2022 8:26 AM
81	Town hall playground- we don't have young children School tennis courts- we don't play tennis	4/30/2022 7:09 AM
82	I don't know about trails in these locations.	4/29/2022 6:42 PM
83	Nothing specific	4/29/2022 5:39 PM
84	Need more information. A brochure or listing on Becket website would be helpful.	4/29/2022 3:57 PM
85	New to town. Learning my way around.	4/29/2022 12:34 PM
86	Havent had the time	4/29/2022 7:44 AM
87	Working on house and time constraints	4/29/2022 6:55 AM
88	They are not numbered. Can't tell you.	4/28/2022 7:21 PM
89	Lack of awareness	4/28/2022 6:37 PM
90	Becket Town Beach - I prefer the quiet of Buckley-Dunton School Tennis Courts - I don't play tennis Town Hall Playground - no kids	4/28/2022 6:23 PM

Becket OSRP Survey

91	Would love to see pickle ball courts. We live on Rte 20 find it easier to head toward Lee, Lenox and GB. I've really never heard of many of these places.	4/28/2022 5:31 PM
92	We live on waterfront property on Center Pond. We mostly stay home and look at the beautiful view.	4/28/2022 2:19 PM
93	I would like to visit these sites more often as my leisure time permits. Some of these sites are new to me. I will surely make them a destination this coming season.	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
94	Spend time doing other things.	4/28/2022 6:04 AM
95	I don't know where this is	4/27/2022 11:35 PM
96	Don't know where these are located	4/27/2022 10:37 PM
97	Don't know where located ; weather conditions; overcrowded during tourist season	4/27/2022 7:51 PM
98	Still getting to know the area.	4/27/2022 7:25 PM
99	Mobility restrictions on trails. Town beaches and private venues can be crowded. We used to, but no longer play tennis.	4/27/2022 6:47 PM
100	My kids are grown so I don't go to parks much at all anymore and I live on center pond so I generally get my water activities there.	4/27/2022 6:10 PM
101	just not on my radar screen	4/27/2022 6:07 PM
102	I don't know where they are.	4/27/2022 5:42 PM
103	I didn't even know there was a Becket State Forest.	4/27/2022 4:41 PM
104	Not sure where they are located: WSA, Esequ, WMA, Becket State Forest Quarry: Far end of town to far to visit, parking, safety	4/27/2022 4:29 PM
105	I don't know where some of these locations are.	4/27/2022 1:15 PM
106	We don't have young children. We're not familiar with some of these parks/forests.	4/27/2022 9:33 AM
107	lack of interest and limited time as a part-time resident	4/27/2022 9:01 AM
108	Typically visit many different areas mostly out of town	4/27/2022 7:19 AM
109	NOT INTERESTED	4/26/2022 8:47 PM
110	I haven't moved to Becket yet. I plan on enjoying all these amenities, when I moved to beautiful and peaceful Becket.	4/26/2022 7:06 PM
111	Physical problems which have now been addressed.	4/26/2022 4:38 PM
112	Quarry, not anymore. too many rules, vandalism, why pay for parking when there are so many other trails (Keystone, being one) nearby that are free to use, enjoy, and also have GREAT history. Too old for playground, no tennis partner, beach boring. October Mountain is great fun, full of old roads, cellar holes, cemetery, wildlife, isolated beach and picnic area, etc. Don't go where all the tourists seem to gather, such as Canterbury and Jacobs, that's not why I'm in Becket summers.	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
113	I'm disabled.	4/26/2022 3:20 PM
114	Partly a lack of knowledge on my part - not knowing where some of these places are/what you can do there. Part of it is more specific to our family's particular interest (we don't hike/bike/kayak at present)	4/26/2022 3:12 PM
115	I live on a lake so I don't need to visit the Becket beach	4/26/2022 2:42 PM
116	Have access to Sherwood forest beaches, so don't drive to the town beach; no kids so don't use the playground	4/26/2022 1:53 PM
117	Either don't know of them or don't have the time.	4/26/2022 11:12 AM
118	walking on the roads can be challenging when cars speed	4/26/2022 11:10 AM
119	We are just moving to Becket and have not had a chance to explore everything yet.	4/26/2022 9:28 AM

Becket OSRP Survey

120	Have never heard of many of these sites and don't know where they are.	4/25/2022 8:34 PM
121	I have no use for those areas.	4/25/2022 7:44 PM
122	We just purchased our land in January 2022 so we have not been able to visit all the local sites yet. We intend to do so in the future, especially once we have built our home.	4/25/2022 6:42 PM
123	Just not high priority	4/25/2022 5:37 PM
124	not of interest	4/25/2022 4:34 PM
125	new to the area and just getting to know the area.	4/25/2022 3:09 PM
126	We are planning to be year-round residents but are not here yet. We look forward to utilizing Becket's sites much more frequently in the future.	4/25/2022 2:19 PM
127	No specific reason, just haven't visited those places.	4/25/2022 1:13 PM
128	I would love to see these Blighted homes in the Sherwood Forest be taken down bad for the quality of life and home values. I'm sure you would have plenty of volunteers to help .	4/25/2022 9:35 AM
129	Not interested	4/24/2022 3:46 PM
130	LACK OF FREE TIME	4/24/2022 1:29 PM
131	There are several I've not yet discovered. I tend to stick with areas I know.	4/24/2022 11:48 AM
132	I own 60 acres of land in Becket. I can enjoy nature without getting into my car.	4/23/2022 4:51 PM
133	Lack of knowledge and assets	4/23/2022 1:41 PM
134	I rarely go to BEcket Quarry since I live so near October Mt state forest	4/23/2022 10:22 AM
135	There aren't any barriers - I've just never visited.	4/22/2022 5:02 PM
136	Do not play tennis or have children. New residents, haven't had time yet to visit Canterbury Farms and several WMAs.	4/22/2022 4:31 PM
137	Na	4/20/2022 6:21 PM
138	Distance, age, cost-	4/20/2022 4:46 PM
139	We tried to visit the quarry, but we couldn't get anywhere near it. Come to find out, it was overcrowded with non-residents, which is great too, but priority should definitely be given to Becket residents.	4/20/2022 9:13 AM
140	No time	4/20/2022 8:30 AM
141	lack of time, other activities keep us busy	4/20/2022 7:38 AM
142	Most I don't know about!	4/20/2022 5:20 AM
143	of no interest to me	4/19/2022 5:44 PM
144	We don't know where most of them are.	4/19/2022 5:08 PM
145	Not interested in parks and playgrounds	4/19/2022 4:43 PM
146	time	4/19/2022 4:38 PM
147	No comment at present time.	4/19/2022 4:21 PM
148	I am handicapped with severe arthritis. Accessibility is difficult issue at some locations	4/19/2022 3:43 PM
149	Not familiar with location. But we should be. We have lived here for 6 years.	4/19/2022 3:36 PM
150	I don't play Tennis so I would not go to the school tennis courts, even if I knew where they were. Once I look up Walnut Hill and Buckley pond I probably will go and check them out	4/19/2022 3:36 PM
151	not interested in visiting the sites	4/19/2022 3:20 PM
152	I have never heard of Esau's Heel trail.	4/15/2022 9:22 AM
153	I don't know where they are.	4/15/2022 8:53 AM

Becket OSRP Survey

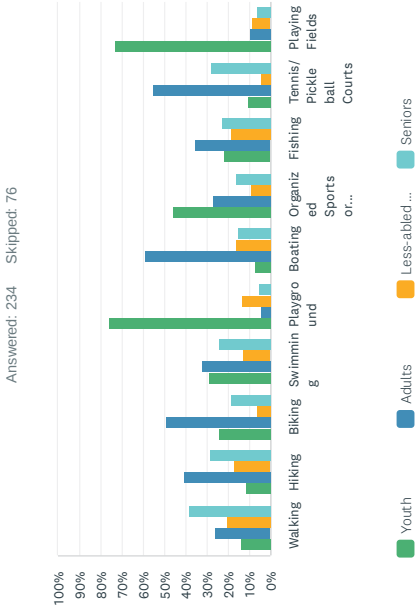
154	Not interested	4/15/2022 8:48 AM
155	Cost. Jacob's Pillow too expensive. I miss the free outdoor inside/out performances. Love Esau's Heel trail. Already been there a bunch.	4/14/2022 6:20 PM
156	I don't have much time for recreational activities	4/14/2022 6:16 PM
157	Never heard of them	4/14/2022 5:25 PM
158	My area is so rural that I can just go out of the house and walk or bike miles on wood/dirt road or accessible trails, see animals, no people, great forest. Kayak 3x a week at Buckley. Tennis in Lee. Hike twice a week out of the house. Don't need great variation.	4/14/2022 5:18 PM
159	don't know enough about them	4/14/2022 4:48 PM
160	Most often don't even know where they are located	4/12/2022 12:41 PM
161	Knowledge about them and/or existing trails to explore	4/11/2022 12:28 PM
162	Either I don't know where it is or we ( eg Canterbury Farms) don't cross country ski and know of free places to snowshoe	4/9/2022 10:32 AM
163	Either I do not know where it is or there are like facilities closer.	4/8/2022 4:16 PM
164	Becket State Forest: don't think there are any trails there, not aware of any recreational activities Becket wildlife management area, Farmington River WMA, Walnut Hill WMA, ...not sure what they offer in terms of trails, lakes, rivers, etc plus don't know where they are. Otis State Forest: didn't know it existed Esau's Heel Trail: wasn't aware it was open now School Tennis Courts: wasn't aware that they were open to the public Canterbury Farms: keep meaning to go for x-country skiing and ice skating but haven't gotten there yet	4/7/2022 8:39 PM
165	I would like to walk in my neighborhood (Crystal pond) but the roads are too hilly and not in good condition. A nice, flat walking trail somewhere in becket would be lovely.	4/7/2022 4:33 PM
166	Time!	4/7/2022 3:53 PM
167	no interest	4/6/2022 6:23 PM
168	Time, getting people to join me, sometimes a difficulty with walking due to arthritis, not sure they allow dogs and simply not knowing about them or where they are.	4/5/2022 5:15 PM
169	Catebury farms- unaware of it	4/5/2022 10:38 AM
170	I am an almost daily bicyclist and my wife and I do daily walks with our dog. While this gets us out to most of the places with some regularity we are creatures of habit and tend to visit the same places.	4/5/2022 8:59 AM
171	I'm new here, still exploring.	4/5/2022 8:20 AM
172	I really don't know much about them and haven't heard about many of them.	4/4/2022 8:37 PM
173	Jacob's Pillow: indoor events are expensive. Free wkend performances are wonderful! October Mt Snowshoeing: ice and unmaintained trails making XCO skiing very difficult. Hiking/Snowshoeing: NO local regular group so hesitate to go in alone. Tennis Court near Athenum: no way to reserve time for playing; no way to initiate contact w/ other like-minded tennis players Road Biking: no local group to sign up with. Swimming at Center Pond: life guard his should be extended to 6 or 7pm daily.	4/4/2022 7:59 PM
174	We don't know where some of them are.	4/4/2022 7:53 PM
175	Unsure of where these locations are	4/4/2022 7:45 PM
176	Jacob's Pillow - no interest	4/4/2022 7:42 PM
177	Mainly, it's because we don't know where it is such as the beach. Also, we have wonderful resources within walking distance and we take advantage of them.	4/4/2022 7:41 PM
178	Esau Heel Trail- Don't know where it is Becket State Forest- on my list but easier for me to walk elsewhere Otis State Forest- once I exhaust Becket resources, I may give it a go Farmington River- once I exhaust Becket resources, I may give it a go	4/4/2022 7:39 PM
179	I do not play tennis nor do I have young children to take to a playground. I hike/walk on my	4/4/2022 7:38 PM

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180	own property or friends' properties so my dog can be off leash.	4/4/2022 7:32 PM
181	I don't do a lot of outdoor activities at these spots because of my age and being able to navigate these areas. I mainly enjoy the peace and tranquility of living in this beautiful area.	4/4/2022 7:31 PM
182	Family no longer lives in town, but we still own the land (72+ acres) on Quarry Road. We love to go there several times a year and enjoy the outdoors. We don't usually visit these sites because there hasn't been a desire to see them.	4/4/2022 7:31 PM
183	Tend to visit areas that are close to home, and being unfamiliar with Otis, Esau's Heel Trail, and WMA spaces.	4/4/2022 7:28 PM
184	I live near Buckley Dunton so don't get to the quarry too often, though I love it. I go to Canterbury Farm as much as I can, though that depends on snow. But it probably averages about 5 times/winter. So more snow would make me go more often! And since the Pillow is only open in the summer, I can't get there more than 4-5 times/year. But all are a big part of my love of Becket.	4/4/2022 10:16 AM
185	Have recently moved here and then was treated for cancer over the winter and spring	4/4/2022 5:25 PM
186	ttttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
187	We don't have kids or grandkids, and our community has its own beaches	4/4/2022 1:20 PM
188	Frequency of time in Becket	4/4/2022 10:36 AM
189	Have only been here for 3 years so between Covid and working haven't explored everything yet.	4/4/2022 10:25 AM
190	lack of interest	4/4/2022 10:16 AM
191	most I had no idea even existed.	4/4/2022 9:21 AM
192	Do g other activities.	4/3/2022 11:14 PM
193	I don't play tennis I have no children	4/3/2022 11:02 PM
194	Time	4/3/2022 10:50 PM
195	No time	4/3/2022 10:14 PM
196	did not list Westfield River and Becket Gorge	4/3/2022 9:11 PM
197	Have other areas that fulfill my needs	4/3/2022 8:08 PM
198	Tennis courts — We don't play tennis.	4/3/2022 7:01 PM
199	I don't know about some of them!	4/3/2022 5:46 PM
200	Haven't had the opportunity yet	4/3/2022 5:05 PM
201	Many of the sites are unfamiliar to us.	4/3/2022 4:58 PM
202	The playground older children of adult age my development has their own tennis courts	4/3/2022 3:42 PM
203	I live in the middle of twenty acres and so enjoy the outdoors every day. Am chairman of Becket Parks and Rec committee and so oversee some of these spaces regularly. Am on Becket Land Trust board and so have been involved in it's work. Grew up here and know that although Becket is more developed than 50 years ago other than the "Forest" which came about before Becket had developed by-laws the other developments are using the land carefully. I also wrote the first OP Plan.	4/3/2022 12:48 PM
204	My home is on wetlands, it is all here, no need to go elsewhere often.	4/3/2022 10:53 AM
205	Available free time	4/3/2022 9:48 AM
206	Town playground- don't have kids	4/3/2022 9:10 AM
207	I don't play tennis, we have a beach very close to our house, so no need to use town beach	4/3/2022 8:03 AM
208	Becket state forest - no parking Don't know where walnut hill is.	4/3/2022 7:50 AM
209	Not there often enough	4/3/2022 7:14 AM

209	Not knowing about a lot of them	4/3/2022 6:31 AM
210	I don't know about some of them. Others, like North Becket Park and the town beach, I don't need because we live by a lake in Sherwood Forest.	4/3/2022 5:46 AM
211	not enough hours in the day	4/2/2022 11:42 PM
212	Lack of time.	4/2/2022 10:48 PM
213	I cannot do what it is I like to do there. Jacobs Pillow, parks, playground, tennis courts.	4/2/2022 6:23 PM
214	Not interested	4/2/2022 5:42 PM
215	Just not enough time to utilize them. After retirement, we would utilize them more.	4/2/2022 4:51 PM
216	Time	4/2/2022 3:27 PM
217	Just have not been there yet.	4/2/2022 2:58 PM
218	I don't know where they are.	4/2/2022 1:22 PM
219	We have enjoyed the ones we visit & further investigation is not necessary.	4/2/2022 1:21 PM
220	Not enough time!	4/2/2022 11:49 AM
221	Age	4/2/2022 11:27 AM
222	Not interested	4/2/2022 10:59 AM
223	I work full time - cannot fit everything into my busy schedule	4/2/2022 10:27 AM
224	Canterbury Farms: We cross-country ski on our own property.	4/2/2022 10:21 AM
225	Canterbury Farms: Have trails in my community.	4/2/2022 10:00 AM
226	I just moved to Becket 2 years ago, but plan on utilizing the sites listed	4/1/2022 10:25 PM
227	Having other activities	4/1/2022 9:38 PM
228	Nothing	4/1/2022 6:15 PM
229	Esau Heel - was not aware this trail was municipal owned and open to public. North Becket Park - don't know location. Becket State Forest - no public trails, entrance / parking area? Ohis State Forest - no public trails, entrance / parking area? Becket WMA - no public trails, entrance / parking area? Farnington WMA - no public trails, entrance / parking area? Walnut Hill WMA- no public trails, entrance / parking area? Becket Quarry - expensive parking fees	3/31/2022 3:13 PM

Q11 If you think Becket needs more recreation opportunities for these groups, please let us know. Choose one per category.



	YOUTH	ADULTS	LESS-ABLED PERSONS	SENIORS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Walking	14.29% 24	26.19% 44	20.83% 35	38.69% 65	168	0.00
Hiking	12.26% 19	41.29% 64	17.42% 27	29.03% 45	155	0.00
Biking	25.00% 37	49.32% 73	6.76% 10	18.92% 28	148	0.00
Swimming	29.51% 36	32.79% 40	13.11% 16	24.59% 30	122	0.00
Playground	76.14% 67	4.55% 4	13.64% 12	5.66% 5	88	0.00
Boating	7.92% 8	59.41% 60	16.83% 17	15.84% 16	101	0.00
Organized Sports or Activities	46.23% 49	27.36% 29	9.43% 10	16.96% 18	106	0.00
Fishing	22.22% 20	35.56% 32	18.89% 17	23.33% 21	90	0.00
Tennis/Pickleball Courts	11.02% 14	55.91% 71	4.72% 6	28.35% 36	127	0.00
Playing Fields	73.86% 65	10.23% 9	9.09% 8	6.82% 6	88	0.00

#	OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Extra large town swimming pool.	5/24/2022 5:26 AM

Becket OSRP Survey

2	It would be nice to have the tennis court resurfaced, and perhaps a second court for pickleball	5/16/2022 6:14 PM
3	Ok as is	5/8/2022 3:13 PM
4	Not familiar with all these facilities to comment if more are needed.	5/8/2022 10:32 AM
5	No choices.	5/6/2022 5:46 PM
6	archery and pistol range for Becket residents.	5/5/2022 11:44 AM
7	There are plenty of developed recreation spots in the area already, I do not see the need to create anymore at this point. Finding a way to provide local sports options for youth should be a priority, utilize the ball fields.	5/4/2022 10:52 AM
8	Classes like yoga or zumba	5/3/2022 3:09 PM
9	Becket does not need more recreation opportunities. It offers plenty already. The town should consider building on what it has, such as teh art center and Athenaeum. Concerts, lectures and art classes need more support.	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
10	more information on hiking spots	4/30/2022 3:19 PM
11	Becket is great for adults, but leaves so much to be desired for all of the other categories listed above. People from other parts of the Bekshires say that Becket is nothing more than woods.	4/30/2022 10:52 AM
12	Hunting areas	4/30/2022 7:09 AM
13	none	4/29/2022 5:39 PM
14	Not sure	4/29/2022 12:34 PM
15	If we make these things accessible to less abled people, it's more likely they will be accessible to ALL	4/28/2022 6:23 PM
16	Pickle ball would be fun.	4/28/2022 2:19 PM
17	The question is to limiting to one group and the proper answer is all groups should have these recreational opportunities.	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
18	Running	4/27/2022 11:35 PM
19	pickle would be nice	4/27/2022 6:07 PM
20	There exist plenty to do in Becket, don't feel Becket has to add more. If people need to be entertained beyond what Becket has already, then they need to go elsewhere. Becket residents have made an investment in an area they want to live for a reason, they enjoy the quiet small town way of life. Don't allow Becket to become just another tourist trap. If it isnt broke, don't try and fix it.	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
21	Dont know	4/25/2022 5:37 PM
22	indoor exercise classes for seniors.yoga.strength.balance	4/24/2022 12:21 PM
23	Exercise classes for seniors; ie Strength, balance, zumba, yoga	4/23/2022 5:27 PM
24	a permanent pickle ball court!	4/23/2022 10:22 AM
25	I don't see a need to increase any of the above	4/19/2022 5:44 PM
26	I think there are plenty of each for all people.	4/19/2022 3:36 PM
27	this question doesnt make a lot of sense to me.	4/18/2022 3:12 PM
28	Sidewalk, bike lane	4/14/2022 6:20 PM
29	It's all about right as it is. Biking is impossible because of bad roads and drivers. Fixing roads only makes drivers faster.	4/14/2022 5:25 PM
30	I'm satisfied now	4/14/2022 5:18 PM
31	Town pool	4/9/2022 10:32 AM
32	Bike trail would be wonderful	4/7/2022 9:55 PM

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Becket OSRP Survey

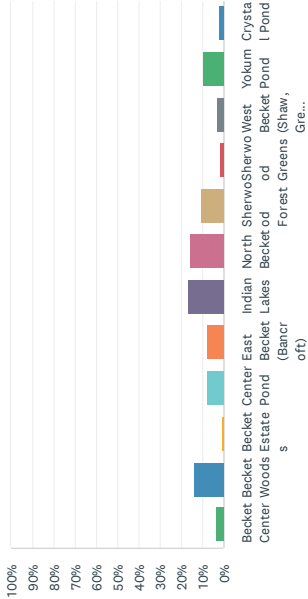
33	This was tough to fill in. Consideration of youth, seniors and less abled must be taken into consideration with each category.	4/15/2022 8:59 AM
34	Choosing only one per activity doesn't make sense. Why wouldn't these apply to everyone? We'd love to see pickleball courts.	4/14/2022 7:53 PM
35	ttttt	4/14/2022 4:09 PM
36	A dog park, please	4/14/2022 1:20 PM
37	how about a dog park	4/14/2022 10:16 AM
38	Biking is also needed for Adults. Bike trails along CSX & Rd's	4/13/2022 9:27 PM
39	Dog park	4/13/2022 8:09 PM
40	dog park	4/13/2022 5:31 PM
41	Bike paths would be great!	4/13/2022 4:58 PM
42	All of these already exist here.	4/13/2022 12:48 PM
43	ATV Trail Riding	4/13/2022 10:53 AM
44	I don't really know. My friends tell me that tennis courts are not in good condition. There seem to be ample walking hiking biking swimming opportunities.	4/13/2022 8:03 AM
45	The current tennis courts are almost unusable.	4/13/2022 5:46 AM
46	inter-connective bike trail	4/12/2022 6:23 PM
47	Ok with current opportunities	4/12/2022 3:27 PM
48	Tennis court and group soccer	4/12/2022 1:22 PM
49	Becket needs a nice park for any age group where one can walk, sit, relax, preferably a place with a pond that will attract ducks, swans, and geese... something like Stanley Park in Westfield.	4/12/2022 11:49 AM
50	We have enough venues!	4/12/2022 10:27 AM
51		4/12/2022 9:53 AM

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Q12 Please select one neighborhood in Becket that you consider to be part of.

Answered: 277 Skipped: 33



ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES
Becket Center		4.33%
Becket Woods		14.08%
Becket Estates		1.08%
Center Pond		8.66%
East Becket (Bancroft)		8.66%
Indian Lakes		17.33%
North Becket		16.25%
Sherwood Forest		10.83%
Sherwood Greens		2.17%
West Becket (Shaw, Greenwater)		3.61%
Yokum Pond		10.11%
Crystal Pond		2.89%
TOTAL		277

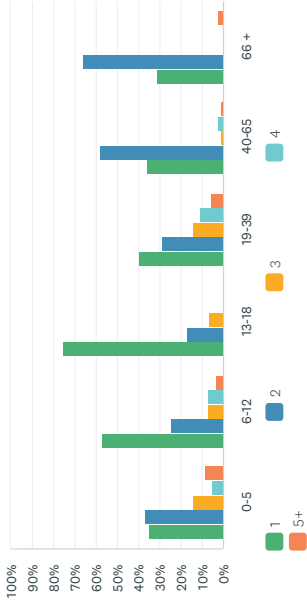
#	OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD (PLEASE SPECIFY)	DATE
1	Not sure - on Main St. across from Levernoch Plumbing.	6/21/2022 11:38 AM
2	Not sure Waide Inn Rd really fits any.	5/26/2022 6:30 PM
3	Near Sherwood forest not in	5/23/2022 8:59 PM
4	Fred Snow Rd	5/16/2022 2:24 PM

5	Fred Snow	5/16/2022 12:21 PM
6	Not	5/9/2022 10:31 AM
7	Surrier & Mt. Pasture Roads.	5/5/2022 11:44 AM
8	Waide inn rd	5/1/2022 8:09 AM
9	County rd and Yokum pond	4/30/2022 9:46 PM
10	County Road Buckley Dunton	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
11	County Road	4/28/2022 6:23 PM
12	Center Lake Estates	4/28/2022 2:19 PM
13	Buckley Dutton , October Mountain	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
14	Bonny rigg	4/27/2022 11:35 PM
15	Entrance to October mtn state forest	4/27/2022 10:37 PM
16	Crystal Pond; Buckley Dunton	4/27/2022 7:51 PM
17	County Road	4/27/2022 7:25 PM
18	County Road	4/27/2022 6:47 PM
19	George Carter Rd area not far from Jacob's Pillow	4/26/2022 4:38 PM
20	We are just moving to Becket and are hoping to make community connections.	4/26/2022 9:28 AM
21	Chester/Becket line	4/25/2022 4:34 PM
22	And West Becket	4/24/2022 3:46 PM
23	Bancroft	4/22/2022 4:31 PM
24	Werden Road	4/21/2022 8:54 PM
25	Leonhardt Rd.	4/20/2022 4:46 PM
26	I don't know	4/19/2022 5:08 PM
27	County Road - I know we are in North Becket	4/19/2022 4:38 PM
28	Becket Woods	4/19/2022 4:10 PM
29	Skyline Ridge. adjacent to Indian Lakes	4/19/2022 3:43 PM
30	Jacobs Ladder Road	4/19/2022 3:36 PM
31	Soney Brook	4/19/2022 3:27 PM
32	jacobs pillow area	4/14/2022 5:18 PM
33	George Carter Road	4/14/2022 4:48 PM
34	Shaw Pond/Mt Grove	4/11/2022 12:28 PM
35	Crystal pond	4/7/2022 3:57 PM
36	County Road/October Mountain Forest	4/5/2022 8:59 AM
37	Werden Road in West Becket near the Pillow.	4/4/2022 7:36 PM
38	October Mountain (near Yokum Pond).	4/4/2022 7:32 PM
39	tttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
40	Yokum pond area but not on the pond.	4/3/2022 7:50 AM
41	It is not particularly safe walking or riding bikes here . Blitten once, chased three times.	4/2/2022 6:23 PM
42	Becket Quarry	4/2/2022 10:21 AM

43	Skyline Ridge/Valley View	4/2/2022 9:53 AM
44	Skyline Ridge and Quarry	4/1/2022 10:25 PM

Q13 How many people and what ages are represented in your household.

Answered: 308 Skipped: 2



	1	2	3	4	5+	TOTAL
0-5	20	21	8	3	5	57
6-12	16	7	2	2	1	28
13-18	22	5	2	0	0	29
19-39	36	26	13	10	5	90
40-65	65	104	2	5	2	178
66 +	53	111	0	0	4	168

Q14 What would make it easier for you and your family to recreate outdoors in Becket?

Answered: 206 Skipped: 104

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Ban ATVs and trucks on October Mt. trails- winter and summer.	6/21/2022 12:12 PM
2	childcare options, classes for children on the outdoors	6/21/2022 12:05 PM
3	ban ATVs on residential streets they are out of control	6/21/2022 11:54 AM
4	A pamphlet or area on Becket website with maps and details of the parks and trails in town.	6/21/2022 11:38 AM
5	More public access areas to water	5/30/2022 11:59 AM
6	time! (and general information like this)	5/30/2022 9:12 AM
7	Shuttle service. Better boat launch (kayak) at Yokum Pond.	5/26/2022 6:30 PM
8	A town swimming pool	5/24/2022 5:26 AM
9	a trust fund so we didn't have to work	5/23/2022 9:25 PM
10	Fewer insects lol	5/23/2022 8:59 PM
11	Nothing special	5/23/2022 4:42 PM
12	Can't think of anything.	5/22/2022 4:28 PM
13	bike paths and lanes	5/18/2022 11:22 AM
14	land conservation; no more large developments (i.e. glamping)	5/18/2022 8:23 AM
15	Biking trails	5/17/2022 10:39 PM
16	larger town owned or nonprofit owned land where ATVs and snowmobiles do not destroy the experience	5/17/2022 9:28 PM
17	A brochure of the recreational areas listed in this questionnaire, \$5 or under beach permit tag instead of sticker as some of us walk to the lake, create a roped second swim area for adults at lake to avoid accidents with 2nd homeowners speed boats, our country store re-opened would be great for everyone.	5/17/2022 7:08 PM
18	Good weather!	5/16/2022 6:14 PM
19	Better maintenance of the road going into October mountain	5/16/2022 4:19 PM
20	Improve the tennis court. More hiking trails. And a general store -- for a cold (or hot) drink after biking or hiking -- would be nice.	5/16/2022 3:39 PM
21	Parking and signage by trail heads. Upkeep of roads ie BucklyvDunton .	5/16/2022 2:40 PM
22	If there were less ticks!	5/16/2022 2:24 PM
23	No glamping	5/16/2022 2:10 PM
24	Not much. More programs for the less able persons would help my mom recreate more.	5/16/2022 1:41 PM
25	It is already easy	5/16/2022 12:21 PM
26	Better roads?	5/16/2022 12:06 PM
27	1)Free parking for Becket residents at the Becket Quarry 2) Paved bike trail 3) Kayaking/paddling opportunities that don't involve owning/portage. (Maybe sponsored/subsidized days at town beach or Buckley Dunton with low fee rentals/lessons and/or free rides?)	5/16/2022 12:05 PM

28	Monthly info mailed 30 days ahead. Ex mail in May for June activities.	5/16/2022 11:39 AM
29	Bike lane or sidewalk on Main St. Lower fees @ quarry More mountain bike trails	5/13/2022 8:37 PM
30	I think it's already really easy to recreate outdoors in Becket.	5/13/2022 1:42 PM
31	A boat launch	5/11/2022 4:25 PM
32	Good signage.	5/10/2022 11:42 AM
33	lower speed limits on certain roads near my home	5/10/2022 7:18 AM
34	Not much.	5/10/2022 7:00 AM
35	No fees and knowledge of where areas are	5/9/2022 8:52 PM
36	clean up Becket woods pond. better road maintenance during snow and mud in Becket woods	5/9/2022 3:45 PM
37	Perhaps a bit more hiking trails, cross-country skiing trails and boating opportunities.	5/9/2022 6:16 PM
38	More and easy Parking at WMA, parking at State Forest and parking at town forests	5/9/2022 5:16 PM
39	Happy as is	5/9/2022 3:13 PM
40	The weather	5/9/2022 11:58 AM
41	More walking spaces that are clear of items to stumble over but still take one thru beautiful spaces	5/9/2022 10:35 AM
42	Onus is on us, to be there and have the time. (Becket can't help with that : )	5/9/2022 10:32 AM
43	No motor boats on Buckley Dunton, no chemical weed management, safe places to enter water.	5/9/2022 10:31 AM
44	Don't know	5/9/2022 10:27 AM
45	More dog friendly options	5/9/2022 9:59 AM
46	More signage to locations	5/9/2022 9:52 AM
47	Perhaps a horse riding facility	5/9/2022 9:42 AM
48	More information about what opportunities exist to recreate outdoors. It would be great if you had a way to communicate directly with us--I'd share my email address, for example, for this purpose.	5/9/2022 9:16 AM
49	more information and descriptions	5/7/2022 1:10 PM
50	Nothing.	5/6/2022 5:46 PM
51	Handicap accessible	5/6/2022 1:47 PM
52	I already enjoy Becket outdoor resources.	5/5/2022 11:44 AM
53	It is already easy	5/4/2022 10:52 AM
54	More walking trails	5/2/2022 2:51 PM
55	Improve the roads and provide information about all the locations	5/1/2022 7:37 PM
56	Better understanding of walking and hiking options in the town.	5/1/2022 1:50 PM
57	More walking trails and paved sidewalks near town center	5/1/2022 11:41 AM
58	No comment	5/1/2022 11:09 AM
59	A map like the trustees map that shows all resources available	5/1/2022 8:09 AM
60	I like it just the way it is.	4/30/2022 9:46 PM
61	The town offers enough recreation with trails and activities. Preserve the peaceful surroundings, and respect nature for future generations.	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
62	More written information; but make sure you inform us that the information is available.	4/30/2022 3:19 PM

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63	It is sometimes difficult to feel safe walking and/or bicycling on rural roads with no shoulders. We don't really have problems or concerns about taking advantage of hiking trails, swimming lakes, etc. We know the area and are able to enjoy it.	4/30/2022 3:08 PM
64	Conservation Commission allowing reasonable disturbance to increase drainage, slope stabilization and non-disruptive recreation.	4/30/2022 2:11 PM
65	Better parking spaces at trailheads	4/30/2022 12:09 PM
66	Easier access to some of the publicly owned but undeveloped land. Paved parking lots, better signs, and easier public access to lakes and waterways would be a good start. Perhaps a park with paved, lit, easy walking paths would be nice. Public venues for live bands during the warmer months. After that, begin clearing back some of the forest, not all of it, but enough to open up some scenery. Most of the roads are too closed in in Becket. Finally, start cultivating reasons for businesses to start setting up in some sort of downtown, perhaps North Becket is a good place to start. Perhaps this might involve some sort of tax break, or development subsidy. Don't be so scared of creating a nearby exit off of the Mass Pike-- it would be good for the economy around here.	4/30/2022 10:52 AM
67	More knowledge of locations. Easier parking at existing locations.	4/30/2022 10:01 AM
68	More information about what is available. And better developed trails	4/30/2022 9:28 AM
69	Less trash/ litter	4/30/2022 8:26 AM
70	Easier access to recreational areas	4/30/2022 7:09 AM
71	information about trails	4/29/2022 6:42 PM
72	Nothing	4/29/2022 5:39 PM
73	More knowledge of what is available.	4/29/2022 3:57 PM
74	Good weather	4/29/2022 12:34 PM
75	love the way it is now	4/29/2022 7:44 AM
76	Easier assess	4/29/2022 6:55 AM
77	[Bette] maps of trails that are suitable for less-abled adults; I wish the town could again make all of Tyne Road safe for walking by repairing the huge issues in the road.	4/28/2022 9:17 PM
78	Restricting offroad vehicles from paved roads. Arrest people using their fire arms illegally. There is one on County Road that regularly fires weapons while intoxicated within 250 feet of neighboring residence and less than 75 feet from the road.	4/28/2022 7:21 PM
79	More info about recreation opportunities	4/28/2022 6:37 PM
80	Less emphasis on motorized vehicles including boats & ATVs. More accommodations for cyclists which would include bike lanes, bike paths, sharrows, signage etc More accommodations for pedestrians on roads.	4/28/2022 6:23 PM
81	Close to Rte 20	4/28/2022 5:31 PM
82	We would bring our dog to a dog park. A designated, level bike trail for safe for seniors.	4/28/2022 2:19 PM
83	No comment	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
84	Cannot think of anything.	4/28/2022 6:04 AM
85	Safe walking and running path	4/27/2022 11:35 PM
86	Less mess left in forest when they remove trees. It is such a mess after they go. Chip the debris!!	4/27/2022 10:37 PM
87	Safer And Less Crowded Roads	4/27/2022 7:51 PM
88	Better access to Yokum Pond	4/27/2022 7:25 PM
89	Not sure, there are a lot of options already.	4/27/2022 6:10 PM
90	it's all there for us	4/27/2022 6:07 PM

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91	An easy updated list of public and private beaches in Becket would be wonderful	4/27/2022 5:42 PM
92	More information about places to hike	4/27/2022 4:41 PM
93	Bike paths to recreational areas. Recreation department working with vendors offering instruction and participation in activities such as: Tennis instruction/clinics, Skiing and hiking guided tours, swim instruction, orienteering, first aid	4/27/2022 4:29 PM
94	I already do this.	4/27/2022 1:15 PM
95	Wider shoulders on roads to allow for better road biking	4/27/2022 9:33 AM
96	TEND NOT TO RECREATE IN TOWN- GO ELSEWHERE. LIKE THE TOWN AS IT IS	4/26/2022 8:47 PM
97	I actually love my property which is a certified habitat by National Wildlife Federation. But weather has not been good the last few years and we hide out because of Covid	4/26/2022 4:38 PM
98	Good weather.	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
99	Small atv rentals	4/26/2022 3:20 PM
100	It might be helpful to know more details about what exactly there is for residents to make use of in one place - is there a website or brochure that lists everything that is available?	4/26/2022 3:12 PM
101	Not to charge Becket residents for using outdoor activities, such as the quarry	4/26/2022 2:42 PM
102	Perhaps better communication about the recreation options? I didn't know about some of the places mentioned in the survey, or what they offer. Maybe I just needed to go looking for the info.	4/26/2022 1:53 PM
103	more trails	4/26/2022 11:12 AM
104	A central location to find group activities and what locations. Event dates and times.	4/26/2022 9:28 AM
105	We recreate fire. Thanks.	4/25/2022 7:44 PM
106	A better website for parks and recreation.	4/25/2022 6:42 PM
107	We are OK as is, and would like to preserve current status	4/25/2022 5:37 PM
108	perfect as it is	4/25/2022 4:34 PM
109	more info on town resources	4/25/2022 3:09 PM
110	I don't think it's difficult, so I don't believe it needs to be made easier.	4/25/2022 1:13 PM
111	Remove the Blighted homes .	4/25/2022 9:35 AM
112	Youth sports	4/24/2022 3:46 PM
113	Better awareness of options. Maps.	4/24/2022 11:48 AM
114	Currently participate in out door activities daily>	4/23/2022 5:27 PM
115	Nothing.	4/23/2022 4:51 PM
116	a pickle ball court!!	4/23/2022 10:22 AM
117	Playgrounds for smaller kids. Both playgrounds have equipment designed for older children. More area to ride bikes with small kids. Also an easy walking path area would be helpful for small legs.	4/22/2022 5:02 PM
118	Public restrooms at trailheads	4/22/2022 4:31 PM
119	Hikes & playgrounds	4/21/2022 8:54 PM
120	Na	4/20/2022 6:21 PM
121	We do just fine thanks.	4/20/2022 4:46 PM
122	Have plenty of recreational opportunities already in Becket and the surrounding areas	4/20/2022 10:47 AM
123	We are pretty able to do so.	4/20/2022 9:13 AM
124	Not sure, plenty to do	4/20/2022 5:20 AM

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## Becket OSRP Survey

125	Question makes no sense	4/19/2022 5:44 PM
126	Organized sports for youth	4/19/2022 5:08 PM
127	Can't think of anything	4/19/2022 4:43 PM
128	Nothing. The only thing that is an issue is if there were more traffic	4/19/2022 4:38 PM
129	Nothing needed at this time.	4/19/2022 4:21 PM
130	Accessibility. Safety, especially for seniors or single women.	4/19/2022 3:43 PM
131	Nothing	4/19/2022 3:36 PM
132	more local trail	4/19/2022 3:36 PM
133	a rail trail if possible	4/18/2022 3:12 PM
134	Better understanding re: what's available. That said, perhaps we should be doing more research on our end(i.e. go to Becket website, etc.)	4/15/2022 9:43 AM
135	More public-owned areas for hiking.	4/15/2022 9:22 AM
136	On town web site, map and directions to outdoor locations	4/15/2022 8:53 AM
137	Interest	4/15/2022 8:48 AM
138	Printed and online directory of opportunities Transportation Sidewalks, bike lane/signs Social gathering for recreation	4/14/2022 6:20 PM
139	Safer places to walk & established picnic grounds	4/14/2022 5:25 PM
140	we're satisfied	4/14/2022 5:18 PM
141	easy access to walking trails - pickle ball & tennis courts HOW ABOUT A NIBE HOLE GOLF COURSE	4/12/2022 12:41 PM
142	Becket sponsored and coordinated outdoor activities	4/11/2022 12:28 PM
143	Bike trail and hiking/walking nature paths in Becket - we currently go to Lenox (the closest hiking) and Westfield (the farthest biking)	4/9/2022 10:32 AM
144	Walking paths or designated walking/biking lanes on Bonny Rigg Hill Road and Algerie Road. Heavy commercial truck traffic along those pad in a neighborhood with 120+ houses.	4/8/2022 4:16 PM
145	in-State fees for part time residents at State Parks.	4/7/2022 9:55 PM
146	Bike trail	4/7/2022 8:39 PM
147	Flat paved walking and bike trails.	4/7/2022 4:33 PM
148	No nothing new	4/7/2022 3:57 PM
149	nothing	4/6/2022 6:23 PM
150	Parking is one thought, handheld maps, rules & regulations	4/5/2022 5:15 PM
151	1) Promote bicycle awareness and accommodations for cyclists on Rte 8/20 and McNeamy and Washington Mountain Roads. 2) Continue to value Open Spaces. 3) Linking of trails. 4) Protect our valued water resources. 5) Promote outdoor group activities. 6) Provide educational resources to all ages about our natural environment and our unique responsibility in towns like Becket to preserve our natural spaces.	4/5/2022 8:59 AM
152	List and map of things to do. Also a biking path	4/4/2022 9:37 PM
153	Way to meet up w/ others. Internet sign-up? Posted signup sheets at the Athenaeum/ BAC? Guided hikes etc. At your own risk (of course).	4/4/2022 7:59 PM
154	We need to think about it.	4/4/2022 7:53 PM
155	Publication of maps	4/4/2022 7:45 PM
156	A dog park would be wonderful.	4/4/2022 7:41 PM

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## Becket OSRP Survey

157	We are doing okay, but hope overdevelopment or the wrong type of development my decrease the opportunities we already have.	4/4/2022 7:39 PM
158	I am very happy in Becket. As I said previously I have access to private properties for hiking and I also hike on the AT etc.	4/4/2022 7:38 PM
159	more hiking trails	4/4/2022 7:36 PM
160	I actually recreate where I reside - I have a large area and it's perfect for me.	4/4/2022 7:32 PM
161	Access to a map of what's offered around town and parking nearby	4/4/2022 7:31 PM
162	Recommendations, and Guides sent around	4/4/2022 7:31 PM
163	This wouldn't make it easier, but it would make it more enjoyable: 1) less chemicals in the lakes 2) less litter everywhere 3) less ticks!! (though I know there is nothing to be done about that short of chemicals, which I would not support)	4/4/2022 7:28 PM
164	more parking at sites	4/4/2022 7:23 PM
165	Have better knowledge of available options, locations, descriptions, etc.	4/4/2022 7:08 PM
166	ttttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
167	A safe dog park or dog run	4/4/2022 1:20 PM
168	n/a	4/4/2022 10:36 AM
169	Bike/walking path	4/4/2022 10:25 AM
170	More time in the day. We don't get out to Becket as often as we would like.	4/4/2022 9:21 AM
171	Not sure	4/3/2022 11:02 PM
172	Less trucks	4/3/2022 10:50 PM
173	Playground for kids, Swimming pool, bird watching	4/3/2022 10:14 PM
174	Less traffic on Bonny Rigg Hill Road	4/3/2022 10:10 PM
175	Not as many ATVs in October mountain Stat forest	4/3/2022 9:27 PM
176	easier access	4/3/2022 9:23 PM
177	cant think of anything	4/3/2022 9:11 PM
178	Outdoor town events, childrens programming, dark sky bylaw	4/3/2022 8:08 PM
179	dog park	4/3/2022 5:31 PM
180	Love how it is now	4/3/2022 5:05 PM
181	Bike paths	4/3/2022 4:58 PM
182	Have the select board in the planning board do the due diligence first Before doing any kind of voting and listen to all that love Becket again you fail miserably	4/3/2022 3:42 PM
183	Nicer Weather	4/3/2022 10:53 AM
184	Pickle ball courts	4/3/2022 9:48 AM
185	Parking and maps showing where to go	4/3/2022 8:10 AM
186	We have ample opportunities for outdoor recreation. My main concern is preserving and enhancing those opportunities for the future and their resilience in the face of climate change and other threats	4/3/2022 8:03 AM
187	Better road maintenance. In winter and mud season many roads are Difficult to drive or walk on. Think some roads with many full time residents need to paved.	4/3/2022 7:50 AM
188	More town activities	4/3/2022 7:14 AM
189	An online town brochure listing all the sites mentioned, with info and address, and hours available. Online as well.	4/3/2022 6:31 AM

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190	Better tennis courts. An ice rink. More hiking paths within the town and adjacent to Sherwood Forest.	4/3/2022 5:46 AM
191	fewer cars/more signage for cars to drive slower on country roads - safer for runners, bikers and walkers	4/2/2022 11:42 PM
192	Better information on the available recreation sites.	4/2/2022 10:48 PM
193	Enforcement of dog leash laws.	4/2/2022 6:23 PM
194	More tennis and pickle ball courts	4/2/2022 5:42 PM
195	Nothing	4/2/2022 3:27 PM
196	Open more boat ramps at Otis reservoir	4/2/2022 2:58 PM
197	Better hiking trails in good shape.	4/2/2022 1:21 PM
198	Communication... maybe a website detailing these places	4/2/2022 10:59 AM
199	Information and advance monthly notice of activities	4/2/2022 10:40 AM
200	No more disruption for commercial enterprises - we are rural! That is why most people invested in 2nd homes in Becket. Their homes generate more than enough in taxes and provide obs for many contractors.	4/2/2022 10:27 AM
201	continued maintenance and appreciation of The Becket Historic Quarry	4/2/2022 10:21 AM
202	Decent Pickle Ball Courts so we dont have to drive to Lenox	4/2/2022 10:00 AM
203	More parking at the beach.	4/2/2022 9:53 AM
204	Having more information, maps, advertisements.	4/1/2022 9:38 PM
205	More information in print and on town website. Community events	4/1/2022 6:15 PM
206	Public Trails in State Forests and WMAs	3/31/2022 3:13 PM

## Q15 Is there anything else you feel the survey missed or other input you would like to provide about open space and outdoor recreation needs and priorities?

Answered: 165 Skipped: 145

#	RESPONSES	DATE
1	Open spaces should not be developed.	6/21/2022 12:12 PM
2	How will/do Becket residents learn about results and info from a survey like this one?	5/30/2022 9:12 AM
3	Need to organize invasive removal from public property and roadsides.	5/26/2022 6:30 PM
4	No	5/24/2022 5:26 AM
5	it'd be fun to have a running club	5/23/2022 9:25 PM
6	My husband suggested dirt bike trails. Personally not interested	5/23/2022 8:59 PM
7	No	5/23/2022 4:42 PM
8	No. Thank you for doing this survey!	5/22/2022 4:28 PM
9	Winter outdoor youth activities. Sledding, ice skating	5/17/2022 10:39 PM
10	it is not all about recreation- it is about protecting land in an intact state	5/17/2022 9:28 PM
11	Better asphalt at becket park to shoot hoops?	5/17/2022 7:08 PM
12	No. Thank you for the opportunity to weigh in	5/16/2022 6:14 PM
13	We Becket does not need a glamping location at the end of country road. If it is wanted by the town, there must be a better location to put it, not on a country road that will ruin the neighborhood.	5/16/2022 4:19 PM
14	Think it is crucial we limit the destruction of our old forests and trees. By laws to protect forests and animal habitats.	5/16/2022 2:40 PM
15	Hiking maps on town website.	5/16/2022 2:24 PM
16	Destruction of natural forest at proposed glamping site.	5/16/2022 2:10 PM
17	This survey should have a dedicated domain or link in the signs around town, like the broadband survey did two years ago. It took me digging in the towns website to find this.	5/16/2022 1:41 PM
18	It would be good to have a compilation of all areas open to public	5/16/2022 12:21 PM
19	Allow businesses to exist	5/16/2022 12:06 PM
20	1)Education for residents about wildlife (i.e. not to be scared of animals etc ) and peaceful coexistence. 2) Protecting open space (and all denizens) from harmful pesticide/herbicide use	5/16/2022 12:05 PM
21	Need much better zoning for pot farms which will ruin everything we have.	5/16/2022 11:39 AM
22	The opposition to the "glamping" project is unnecessary. Use the tax revenue from it to fund everything else listed in this survey. "Glamping" is a much better option than something like an RV park going into that space.	5/13/2022 8:37 PM
23	No	5/13/2022 1:42 PM
24	No	5/11/2022 4:25 PM
25	Nope!	5/10/2022 7:18 AM
26	No	5/10/2022 7:00 AM

Becket OSRP Survey

27	I'd like a walking trail for seniors or a track near my home.	5/9/2022 8:52 PM
28	no	5/9/2022 3:45 PM
29	I don't think so.	5/8/2022 6:16 PM
30	No much easy access (parking) to the forests in becket	5/8/2022 5:16 PM
31	Thank you did a fine job with the survey. Thank you .	5/8/2022 3:13 PM
32	More funding for the summer town camp more for the teens to do	5/8/2022 11:58 AM
33	We love becket and would really enjoy having a map of all the outdoor spaces available to explore	5/8/2022 10:35 AM
34	No, nothing can think of.	5/8/2022 10:32 AM
35	Don't allow trucks on RT 8. — make safe for walking and biking to Lee	5/8/2022 10:31 AM
36	Protection of natural resources and native species.	5/8/2022 10:27 AM
37	no	5/8/2022 9:52 AM
38	No.	5/8/2022 9:16 AM
39	No.	5/8/2022 5:46 PM
40	Archery and pistol range for Becket residents.	5/8/2022 11:44 AM
41	Do not mix up the open space and recreation plan with attempts to add wetlands bylaws, water protection zones, or other regulatory items.	5/4/2022 10:52 AM
42	I am concerned about development around the ponds and notice there is less habitat for geese at the edge of the ponds and I would restrict the amount of private beaches as they affect the pH of the water and with other factors, contribute to the growth of weeds. In short, I would like to protect the habitat of animals over the use of the ponds for humans	5/9/2022 9:23 AM
43	I love the new Esau Heel Trail.	5/9/2022 2:51 PM
44	Don't approve a 100 tent/cabin glamping site on County rd.	5/1/2022 7:37 PM
45	No	5/1/2022 1:50 PM
46	No	5/1/2022 11:41 AM
47	No	5/1/2022 11:09 AM
48	Nape	5/1/2022 8:09 AM
49	Pls don't overly commercialize our town	4/30/2022 9:46 PM
50	Stop the HTR development from destroying the Drearaway and the surrounding land. Glamping attracts a wanderlust crowd that cares little about the environment. Anyone looking for a hot tub should go to a Marriott, not Becket. Camping is sacred and connects people with the environment. Glamping attracts trash, FOMO crowds, and excessive use of alcoholic beverages and drugs. It does not appeal to an environmentally appreciative crowd of participants. It's quick, immersive, and dispensible. Think wise, Becket, don't give away the beauty and serenity to greedy landowners.	4/30/2022 7:23 PM
51	Our primary wish is that Becket will remain as undeveloped as it is. No major developments.	4/30/2022 3:19 PM
52	N/A	4/30/2022 2:11 PM
53	Need more cultural activities like art shows, art studios and more choices to eat out.	4/30/2022 11:01 AM
54	The town can use outdoor recreation as a means of attracting outsiders to Becket so that businesses in town can more easily flourish. The local economy and outdoor recreation should be very linked. Start leveraging Becket's outdoor resources in a way that will make the town thrive.	4/30/2022 10:52 AM
55	It is critically important that when new mid to large size development is proposed that it is addressed with all seriousness with regard to the environmental impact. Right now it seems that the only viewpoint is tax revenue for the town. Politics and priorities need to shift.	4/30/2022 10:01 AM

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56	Noisy truck traffic that disturbs the tranquility of wild spaces.	4/30/2022 9:05 AM
57	The proposed "glamping" project on County Road will adversely affect the quiet rural character of Becket and cause irreparable harm to wildlife in October Mountain.	4/30/2022 8:29 AM
58	Protection of the wilderness from people who wish to hurt it and/or disrespect it	4/30/2022 8:26 AM
59	No	4/29/2022 5:39 PM
60	Good survey.	4/29/2022 3:57 PM
61	No	4/29/2022 12:34 PM
62	No large recreation areas or industries with in a half mile or more near communities or homes	4/29/2022 7:44 AM
63	Perhaps a community bus to neighboring towns	4/29/2022 6:55 AM
64	Stronger oversight of illegal construction and earthmoving abutting protected waterways.	4/28/2022 7:21 PM
65	Life long learning programs	4/28/2022 6:37 PM
66	I think it's important to have a "town center" and it's not clear now in Becket where that is. I think making the area around The Becket Arts Center, The Athenaeum, and the old Becket General Store a center or a small district.	4/28/2022 6:23 PM
67	Rehabilitate and enhance what already exist first. The town does not need to build more but needs to protect the precious environment and quiet local neighborhoods that all residents enjoy and cherish. Once the town goes in the direction of suburban style living, all else is history. The charm and character that Becket is known for will be lost forever to history. Preservation and conservation of the environment is most important to pass onto future generations to enjoy. We are just temporary stewards of our environment. We do not need to build more, we need to protect more of what we are blessed with.	4/28/2022 10:10 AM
68	No, thank you.	4/28/2022 6:04 AM
69	Its a good survey	4/27/2022 11:35 PM
70	We don't need a big campsite full of tourists here making it less rural and more city. Ruining our lakes and forest and increasing crime	4/27/2022 10:37 PM
71	The pristine beauty of many scenic places and the tranquil and safe use of these areas free from excess trafficking without crowded roadways and places are very important to the character of Becket that must be preserved for the general welfare of our Becket Community	4/27/2022 7:51 PM
72	"Glamping" in a cabin with a/c, linen service and no campfires or cooking isn't camping and doesn't belong in Becket.	4/27/2022 7:25 PM
73	While we support outdoor recreation, we do feel that activities such as snowmobiling or rec vehicles are not in keeping with serious preservation of wild spaces. Neither is allowing huge corporations to build disruptive facilities and introduce large numbers of people to small, quiet neighborhoods.	4/27/2022 6:47 PM
74	the proposed Dream Away glamping proposal would greatly and adversely impact outdoor activities in Becket by adding almost 400 people to the usage of our natural resources and would be detrimental to all of the positive responses about Becket outdoor recreation made above	4/27/2022 6:07 PM
75	No thank you.	4/27/2022 5:42 PM
76	With increased public usage of land, comes trash. We need a system for the trash to be collected and removed. I have personally been picking up the trash on Mecum Rd, leading to the town beach (usually empty alcohol cans and bottles), and I'm concerned about the impact that trash is already having on the Esau's Heel trail.	4/27/2022 4:41 PM
77	I think transportation to these sites might be the problem. The town should provide free activities, but also transportation.	4/27/2022 4:29 PM
78	No	4/27/2022 1:15 PM
79	An emphasis on restoration of native species in the forests and other public land	4/27/2022 9:33 AM
80	I like Becket having open space for residents but not necessarily being open or publicized to	4/27/2022 7:19 AM

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	those outside of Becket. Like keeping the volume of those using space to a minimum	
81	PROTECT THE RIVERS AND STREAMS FROM POLLUTION	4/26/2022 8:47 PM
82	Please, keep Becket quiet, peaceful, beautiful and free from high taxes and excessive administration intrusion in private property. Thank you!	4/26/2022 7:06 PM
83	No	4/26/2022 4:38 PM
84	I don't want to sound negative, but Becket doesn't need to provide what can be found naturally. Build it and they will come should not be goal. Maintain what you have, perhaps a few updates to existing facilities/parks/playgrounds adds interest, but don't go overboard. Education for landowners to conserve and protect is a great idea, but what is the point if the Town is considering all sorts of commercial ventures that disrupt the quiet lifestyle most seek in a purchase of a Becket property. I find it amusing this survey seems to think residents and landowners need education and help to preserve and protect, when actually it may be the Town of Becket officials that needs to step up the game, listen to residents, and protect the town from outside interest, especially "Big Brother".	4/26/2022 4:23 PM
85	Don't let OSRP come before letting new businesses start in Becket. We have enough space for both. The town would be able to have a wider tax base. Hopefully lowering my taxes.	4/26/2022 3:20 PM
86	I do think revisiting what role town bylaws can play in helping to preserve open space is an important step in codifying community values and guarding against overdevelopment (or at least having some guardrails in place to reference when development opportunities arise)	4/26/2022 3:12 PM
87	I am opposed to the marijuana facility across from the quarry & also the glamping project at dream away lodge	4/26/2022 2:42 PM
88	Just wanted to say thank you for doing this! I just liked the Esau trail for the first time this weekend and it was lovely!	4/26/2022 1:53 PM
89	no	4/26/2022 11:12 AM
90	invasive plant control	4/26/2022 11:10 AM
91	all good	4/25/2022 7:44 PM
92	no	4/25/2022 4:34 PM
93	No ,	4/25/2022 9:35 AM
94	Invest in youth sports, allow rural development, outdoor dining and entertainment, town festivals, trick or treat areas	4/24/2022 3:46 PM
95	We need a DOG PARK!!	4/24/2022 11:48 AM
96	no	4/23/2022 10:22 AM
97	No	4/22/2022 5:02 PM
98	Do away with bylaws that grandfather	4/20/2022 6:21 PM
99	did not list Westfield River - often walk along the old RR path- this is a great resource. The Becket Gorge too	4/20/2022 10:47 AM
100	No	4/20/2022 9:13 AM
101	no	4/19/2022 5:44 PM
102	No	4/19/2022 5:08 PM
103	Nope	4/19/2022 4:43 PM
104	I know open space does not provide revenue, but it is the heart of the town	4/19/2022 4:38 PM
105	Need to monitor outdoor areas more.	4/19/2022 4:21 PM
106	It might be helpful to publicize what qualifies a property to be a suitable land donation. A 20 acre undeveloped lot seems obvious.....what about a 2 acre lot with a house built on it?	4/19/2022 3:43 PM
107	No	4/19/2022 3:36 PM

Becket OSRP Survey

108	Tennis courts and community ice skating option	4/16/2022 2:11 PM
109	Thorough survey, thanks for your efforts!	4/15/2022 9:43 AM
110	No	4/15/2022 8:48 AM
111	Reduce car dependence Subsidize electric bikes Electric bike share Regional bike infrastructure	4/14/2022 6:20 PM
112	Feels like information about the town and possibilities would be useful.	4/14/2022 5:25 PM
113	Just that preservation would be preferable to more development. Adding amenities raises taxes and brings more people in and in itself changes the complexion of the area. The area has multiple offerings as far as we are concerned.	4/14/2022 5:18 PM
114	make them more well known and accessible. How about a new general store and gas pumps	4/12/2022 12:41 PM
115	Plan for dilapidated abandoned properties. Specifically, look at a use for these properties and use CPA funds to acquire, rehabilitate and sell or use to create open space if desirable. Then an increase to the CPA could be justified.	4/11/2022 12:28 PM
116	No more pot farms	4/9/2022 10:32 AM
117	Concerned that no commercially zoned areas in Becket leaving it up to the planning board to grant exemptions. Recent example is approval for 30,000 sq ft cannabis growing facility opposite the Becket Quarry.	4/8/2022 4:16 PM
118	Nothing we can think of at this time	4/7/2022 9:55 PM
119	No	4/7/2022 4:33 PM
120	stopped using October Mtn much because of snowmobiles and ATVs making it hard to hike, snow shoe, bird watch	4/6/2022 6:23 PM
121	Being raised in NYC I'm a bit lost in how this process works. Is there a list of all available lands (for whatever reason they are available) within Becket? Then what are the next steps in determining what that land could provide or be used for? Who or what groups then get involved next? Is there a step by step process written out? Is there a survey group that goes out to look at the land and a topographical study made of it? At the meeting the River Walk in GB was mentioned - I walked that whole walk every day with my dogs and I always had questions as to how they had made the decisions they did along the walk re: stairs, other people's properties, deserted property, care of the river frontage etc etc. It was great at the presentation to see maps, power points and hear people talk but I got a little lost because I have no background in the subject - not even enough to ask a proper question. Thanks for allowing me to answer this survey.	4/5/2022 5:15 PM
122	My first response is one of relief and gratitude that we are not alone in our tremendous appreciation for the incredible natural resources in Becket. Informational and educational gatherings, like the April 4th presentation at the Becket Athenium, are essential. More of this! And combine them with hikes or stargazing or kayaking or a tracking or a tree identification seminar for even more fun! Does the town currently have a charter or manifesto of some kind outlining the shared values of its citizens with regards the environment and the protection/preservation of natural open spaces? That the event of April 4th was co-hosted with the Arts Center is important. The synthesis of the arts with the natural world is a deeply human response to the environment and provides outlets of expression that spur creative actions. The long Berkshire tradition of Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow and the myriad of venues for the arts in this region are a resource which can be used to heighten awareness, appreciation and collective responsibility to our open spaces.	4/5/2022 8:59 AM
123	If no one spends time here, there will be fewer people who care about Becket. Why are there so few public-facing businesses? No bank, gas station, general store, diner, etc. Surely helping locals keep from driving out of town and making visitors comfortable has an impact on how people feel about open space and outdoor recreation needs and priorities.	4/5/2022 8:20 AM
124	Would love sports leagues.	4/4/2022 9:37 PM
125	Be alert to Town Boards/Selectboard/committee decisions official decisions which have potential impact on recreation resources in the z town AND publicize them along w/OSRP committee opinion. Suggestion: publicize via the new, soon to be implemented, volunteer created and operated Becket-Washington newsletter - the "Becket Beat".	4/4/2022 7:59 PM

Becket OSRP Survey

126	We'd like to see more trails (including a bike trail), a dog park, and pickleball courts. Can some of the old, stone dams (that aren't supporting existing ponds and lakes that are being used for recreation) be removed to provide for easier fish movement?	4/4/2022 7:53 PM
127	Given the stress the planet is under with climate change, top priority for me is not to do more harm to Becket's most valuable asset, it's natural habitat. Restrict habitat destruction at all cost.	4/4/2022 7:45 PM
128	No, you've got it covered. Thank you.	4/4/2022 7:41 PM
129	As more people move to and build in Becket I see a lot of deforestation happening as people clear large lots for driveways and large homes. This a major concern for me and I'd like to see more regulation.	4/4/2022 7:38 PM
130	No.	4/4/2022 7:32 PM
131	This was a good survey, it got me thinking about some things I hadn't thought about. I wonder if some nature walks and talks for all ages would help people respect and protect nature more, eg., vernal pools, native plants, trees of Becket, natural history, bird identification, animal tracking, foraging, etc. Maybe some guided night hikes and kayaking or canoeing trips in the state forests or Quarry to see/hear owls and bats. And maybe some organized litter cleanups.	4/4/2022 7:28 PM
132	tttt	4/4/2022 4:09 PM
133	We are still new here, but since we have never seen the ballpark next to town hall being used for ball games, consider converting that to a dog park?	4/4/2022 1:20 PM
134	no	4/4/2022 10:36 AM
135	Passing a Clearing and Grading law(I we don't already have one) to prevent speculative clearing by developers and individual land owners.	4/4/2022 10:25 AM
136	there were no questions specifically asking about a dog park, which I think is desired by many pet owners.	4/4/2022 10:16 AM
137	Nothing	4/3/2022 11:02 PM
138	No industrial farms	4/3/2022 10:50 PM
139	no	4/3/2022 10:14 PM
140	Just because people want it does not make it good for Becket.	4/3/2022 9:27 PM
141	There is a disconnect in town with priorities in land conservation and valuing open spaces vs development priorities.	4/3/2022 8:08 PM
142	Na	4/3/2022 5:05 PM
143	We love living in Becket and feel fortunate to be part of the town community.	4/3/2022 4:58 PM
144	All committees and boards should always higher outside experts consultants and background checks to anybody is involved in changing the fabric of Becket For it's hard to go back in time after things are lost	4/3/2022 3:42 PM
145	Limit Driving for everyday goods by providing a desired area for businesses, restaurants & fun activity for people to gather.	4/3/2022 10:53 AM
146	No	4/3/2022 9:48 AM
147	I would love to see more inclusive arts and culture. Support for small businesses: Live music and camping	4/3/2022 8:10 AM
148	no	4/3/2022 8:03 AM
149	We need to protect and preserve the open spaces through changes in our by laws. Taking land ( October mountain) by Dreamaway and turning it into a space for glamping seems extreme misuse of that area that is really a part of October Mountain.	4/3/2022 7:50 AM
150	No	4/3/2022 7:14 AM
151	People should be allowed to camp in a tent on their own land.	4/3/2022 6:31 AM

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Becket OSRP Survey

152	thank you for your efforts to protect and maintain Becket's main asset - it's natural beauty and rural character	4/2/2022 11:42 PM
153	In Sherwood Forest, many dogs are not leashed or penned in and will go after you while walking or biking. Calls to police do not get returned. ATV's speed down our roads like the Indy 500. Calls to police go unanswered. I know ATVs are not allowed as I have read the DCR info on them.	4/2/2022 6:23 PM
154	No commercial developments in our town No marijuana growers	4/2/2022 5:42 PM
155	No	4/2/2022 3:27 PM
156	Create better access to our lakes and reservoirs	4/2/2022 2:58 PM
157	N/a	4/2/2022 1:22 PM
158	Space set aside for agricultural means should not be used for pot growing fields or close to homes!!	4/2/2022 1:21 PM
159	I think it would be a mistake, and totally out of the town's character, to have a have a commercial marijuana plant right across the street from the Becket Quarry!	4/2/2022 11:49 AM
160	Survey of locating commercial cannabis operations in open space and residential neighborhoods	4/2/2022 10:40 AM
161	Pretty comprehensive survey. Becket is fine without more encroachments by urban businesses!	4/2/2022 10:27 AM
162	All in the Town of Becket and its representative Boards acknowledge and value all of the areas of natural and historic significance.	4/2/2022 10:21 AM
163	Keep Becket clean and green without the pollution of marijuana	4/1/2022 10:25 PM
164	Keep Becket safe, stop industrial farming.	4/1/2022 9:38 PM
165	Who is accountable for plan and reports on progress. How does this plan intersect with the town MVP and master plans	4/1/2022 6:15 PM

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Appendix B  
Additional Public Participation Events



Right: Town Website where the Becket Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee meetings were posted, along with other Town board meetings. The meetings and public forums were announced in the Calendar as well as the News pages. All meetings were open to the public and held in compliance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

**Becket MASSACHUSETTS**

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Becket OPRC Survey Data  
Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan - for Public Review March 13 through 31, 2023  
Final Presentation - April 4, 2022  
Public Forum Presentation - Dec. 5, 2022

**TRANSFER STATION open Thursday instead of Tuesday this week. Due to the impending storm, the Transfer Station will be closed... Read more »**

Home » Boards & Committees

## Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee

In 1989 the Town of Becket produced its first Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) with updates in 1998 and in 2006. The plans address issues of resource protection, conservation of lands and historic structures and future open space and recreational opportunities. The community identified open space planning as important to the protecting the character of the town.

The Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan is posted here for public review March 13-31, 2023. We invite you to review the plan and send your thoughts and comments to us. If your time is limited, we encourage you to focus your attention to Sections 7-9 of the draft plan. These sections describe the major findings and recommendations that emerged from the planning process. Paper copies of the draft plan will also be placed at Town Hall and the Becket Athenaeum for review March 17-31. Please send your comments to the Town's consultants, Lauren Gaherty at [lauren@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:lauren@berkshireplanning.org)

This draft plan identifies existing resources and describes key trends and issues regarding open space, conservation and outdoor recreation. Becket can use this document to guide growth in a manner consistent with open space preservation tenets while addressing the necessity of future development.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee will be disbanded when the Plan has been completed and approved.

**News**

Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan is available for Public Review March 13 through 31, 2023.  
Household Hazardous Waste Collection - Sat., May 20th, 9am till 1pm, Lee. Registration required  
Nomination Papers Now Available  
Next week, the Becket Town Hall Yoga class has switched to Monday, February 13th (9am till 10am). Wednesday (Feb. 15th) Yoga class is canceled.  
Community Health Programs offers Flu and Vaccination Clinics at Becket Town Hall 10am till Noon on Mondays, March 27th and April 24th

**Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee Calendar**

March						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

All upcoming events

**Town of Becket MASSACHUSETTS**

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Calendars | News | Useful Links

### Town Meetings Calendar

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

### Community Events

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

### Upcoming Meetings

Sherwood Greens Road District Meeting  
February 4, 2023 - 9:00am

Zoning Board of Appeals Meeting  
February 7, 2023 - 6:00pm to 7:00pm

Board of Health Meeting  
February 8, 2023 - 4:00pm

Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee Meeting  
February 8, 2023 - 5:00pm

All Town Meetings

### Upcoming Events

Chair Yoga Class - Washington Town Hall (free)  
February 6, 2023 - 11:00am

Yoga for Seniors (Instructor: Rima Sala) - Washington Town Hall (Free - No Charge)  
February 7, 2023 - 9:00am

Yoga at the Town Hall  
February 8, 2023 - 9:00am

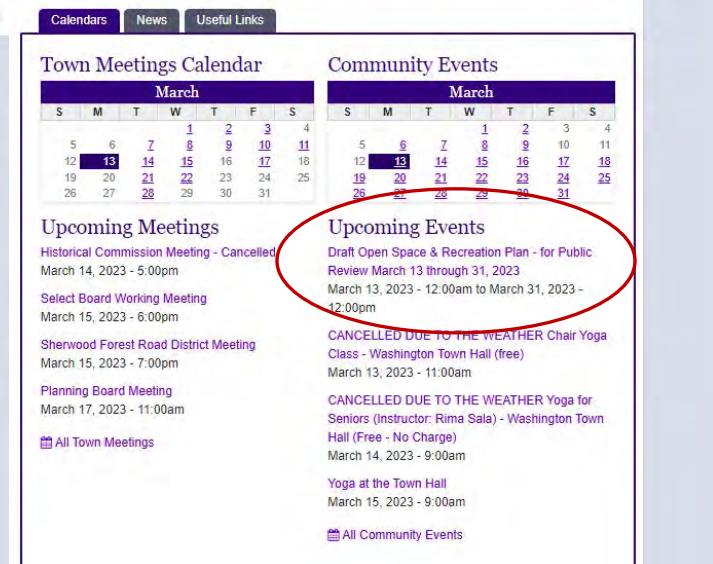
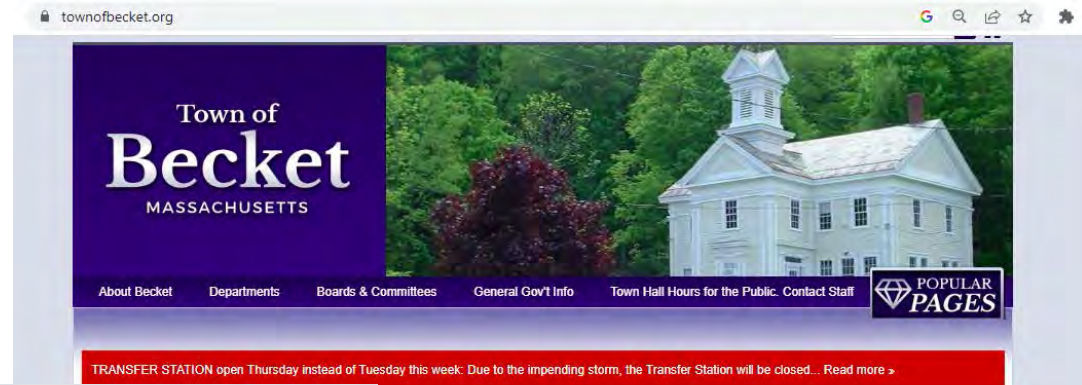
Short Term Rental Excise Tax Forum/Discussion - Becket Town Hall  
February 11, 2023 - 2:00pm to 3:30pm

All Community Events

Left: The OSRP Advisory Committee had its own committee webpage, where it posted updates and materials throughout the planning process.



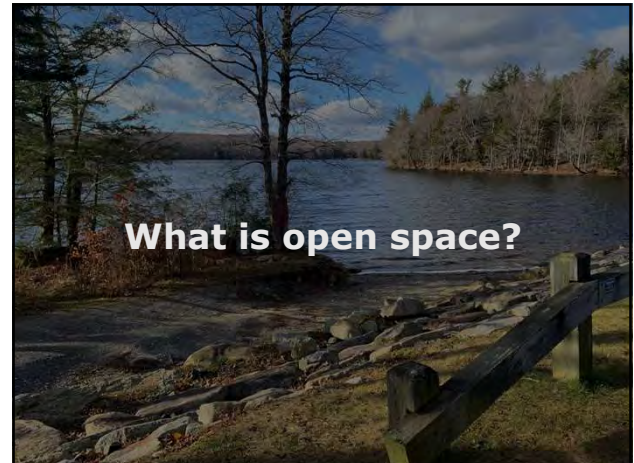
Right and below: The first and second public postings of the plan for public review were promoted under Community Events and News sections of the Home Page, with active links to the draft plan. The draft's availability was also promoted through the Town's public announcement email blast system. Additionally paper copies of the draft plan were placed for review at the Becket Town Hall and Becket Athenaeum.





## Current Conditions & Future Decisions

*Presented by the Becket Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee  
April 4, 2022*



## Welcome



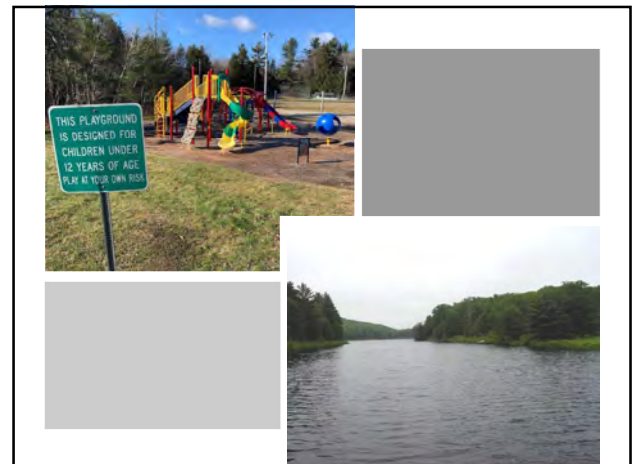
**Our purpose:** Update the 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan to create a blueprint to balance future development & conservation



**Bonus:** The plan will increase Becket's eligibility for state grants



**Tonight:** The purpose for tonight's meeting is to learn about what you think Becket should look like in 20 years



## What's Next?

If you haven't already, add your email address to the sign in sheet to stay updated!



What do you want Becket to be like in 20 years?



Suggestions to meet the open space and recreational needs that you indicated.



What conservation / preservation looks like to YOU!







## Deed Restrictions

- A legally binding restriction on the use, activity, and/or limitation of property rights, recorded at the registry of deeds.
- Property ownership is retained.
- EX) Agricultural Preservation Restriction
- EX) Conservation Restriction
- EX) Forest Legacy

## Existing Goals



Water quality is of a dependable high quality for drinking, swimming and fishing.



Becket's rural landscape consists of forests and farms amidst ponds, streams and mountains.



Becket's recreational opportunities to serve all ages, abilities and interests of residents.

Purpose	Program	Eligibility	Tax Assessment
Timber production	Chapter 61	Min. 10 acres	5% fair market value
Agriculture	Chapter 61A	Min. 5 acres, min. annual gross sales \$500	"Agricultural" assessment, commercial rate
Recreation	Chapter 61B	Min 5 acres	Min. 25% fair market value, commercial rate

### Chapter 61 Tax Program

- Tax abatement program to ease burden of owning large open tracts of land
- Allows the town 120-day *Right of First Refusal*

## We Want to Hear from You:

[surveymonkey.com/r/becket2022](https://surveymonkey.com/r/becket2022)

What do you want Becket to be like in 20 years?

Suggestions to meet the open space and recreational needs that you indicated?

What conservation / preservation options might work best for Becket?

## Community Preservation Act (CPA)

- Surcharge on tax bill (not on property value)
- Currently at 1.5%
- Three focus areas
  - Open space and recreation
  - Historic buildings and landscapes
  - Affordable housing
- Minimum of 10% of annual revenues - dedicated to each focus area
- Remaining 70% allocated as Town sees fit

Contact the Open Space & Recreation Advisory Committee

Meredyth Babcock

Mike Lavery

Al Blake

Larisa Shpitalnik

Cindy Delpapa

Ken Smith

## Current Conditions & Future Decisions



*Becket Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee  
12-5-22*

## Welcome

- Open Space & Recreation Plan:
  - Document existing conditions.
  - A blueprint to balance conservation and future development.
  - Maintain a vision of a rural Becket for future generations.
- Bonus: The plan will increase Becket's eligibility for some state grants



## Tonight's Agenda

1. The Planning Process – Major Findings
2. Next Steps
3. Interactive Feedback – Give us your Thoughts



## What is open space?



Becket Open  
Space &  
Recreation  
Advisory  
Committee

Al Blake

Ken  
Smith

Cindy  
Delpapa

Meredyth  
Babcock\*

Karen  
Karlberg

Jeff  
Wilkinson

Larisa  
Shpitalnik

*\*Thank you Meredyth for the great photos!*





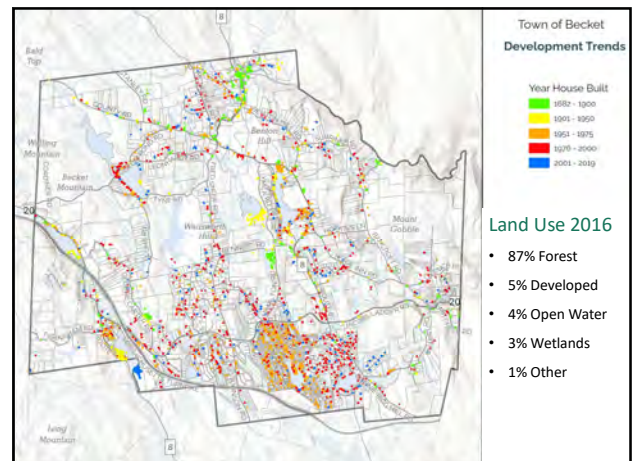


## Vast intact connections

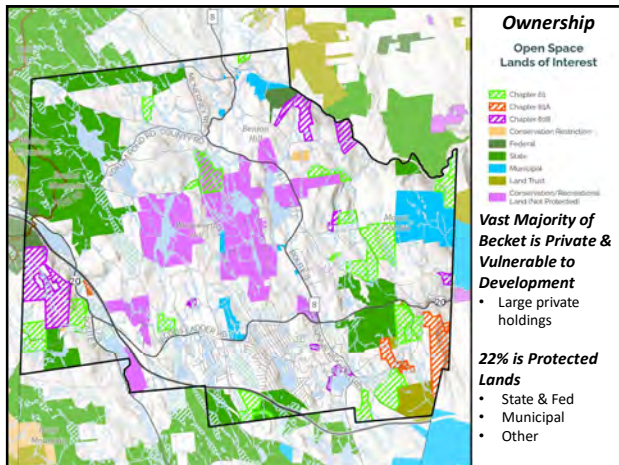


## Becket's Recreational Opportunities

- Many public lakes & ponds
- State-owned lands
- Appalachian Trail
- Becket Historic Quarry and Forest
- Town beach, playing fields, playgrounds, tennis/pickleball
- Winter sports



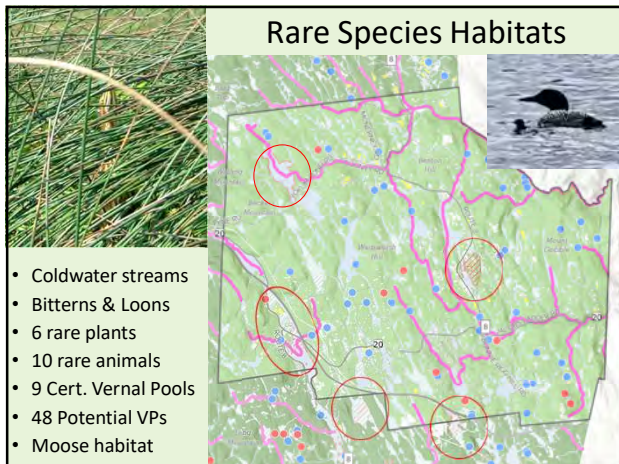




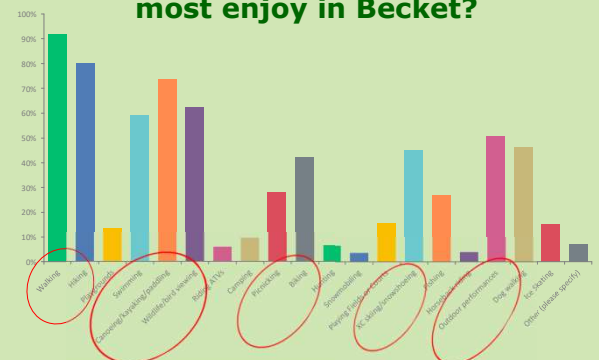
## Public Survey: 310 Responses

Most important reason why they live in Becket.

1. Rural character
2. Natural Res.
3. Quality of Life
4. Outdoor Rec. Opps.



## What outdoor recreation activities do you and your family most enjoy in Becket?

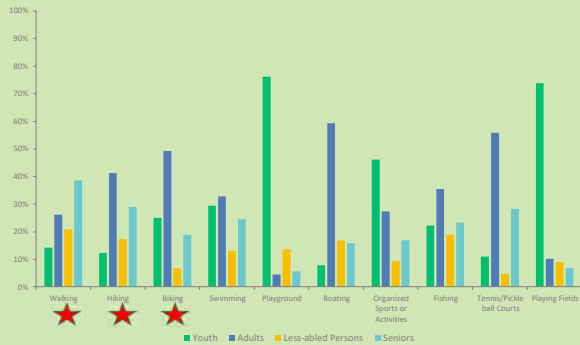


## Vulnerable Habitats: Vernal Pools



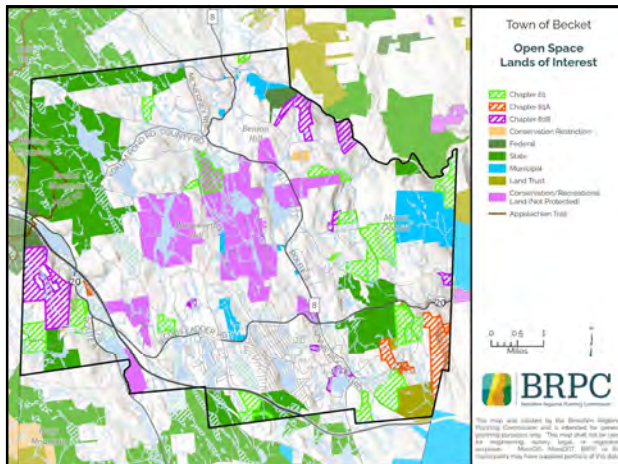
## What does Becket need more of?

Walking, hiking, biking highest total number of needs



## What should the Town do to conserve open space areas and outdoor recreation?

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Allocate town staff time for open space and recreation priorities	63.75% 195	9.31% 27	26.90% 78
Partner with a land conservation organization to conserve land permanently	84.87% 258	4.28% 13	10.86% 33
Work with the state to protect/acquire land	84.44% 255	6.29% 19	9.27% 28
Assess and keep properties taken for nonpayment of taxes that are rich in natural resources or offer more outdoor recreation	69.84% 212	9.84% 30	20.33% 62
Adopt a bylaw requiring minimal land disturbance in new development	71.81% 214	16.41% 50	16.79% 50
Adopt a lake and river protection Overlay District	60.20% 180	8.36% 25	31.44% 94
Adopt a local vested bylaw	62.46% 183	12.97% 38	24.57% 72
Practice minimal clearing on new lots or revegetate existing lots	72.09% 217	9.86% 30	16.94% 51
Increase the Community Preservation Act surcharge from 1.5% to 2%	42.23% 125	22.30% 66	35.47% 105
Purchase lands for outdoor recreation	57.91% 172	17.17% 51	24.92% 74

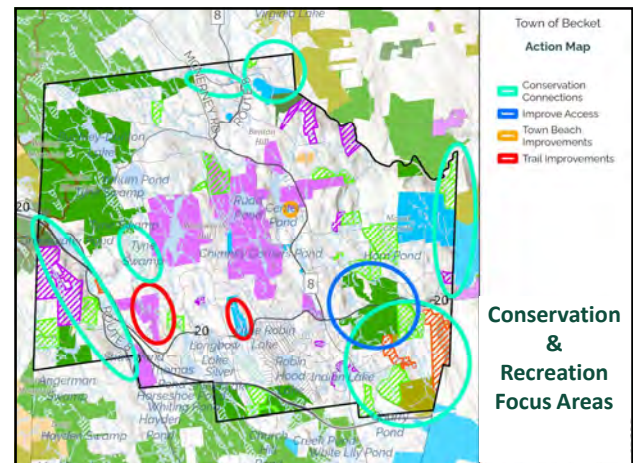


## What would you do individually for conservation/recreation?

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Contribute to acquire/protect a specific piece of land	53.29% 154	18.69% 54	28.02% 83
Partner with a land conservation organization to improve open space and recreation	67.35% 199	14.29% 42	18.37% 54
Pay a little more in taxes dedicated to open space and recreation	57.36% 172	21.67% 65	21.00% 63
Attend an informational session to learn about protective bylaws for lakes, streams and wetlands	75.25% 225	11.04% 33	13.71% 41
Increase protective buffers where my land borders a water resource	55.93% 161	11.69% 34	32.59% 96
Attend an informational session about the tax benefits of protecting undeveloped land	63.64% 192	17.85% 53	18.52% 55
Reduce the use of chemical applications on my lawns and gardens	80.24% 249	9.05% 27	4.71% 14
Sell or donate a deeded conservation restriction to permanently protect my land from future development	24.49% 71	30.69% 89	44.83% 130
Sell land to the town or land trust	21.03% 62	40.00% 116	38.97% 113
Learn how to manage my land for wildlife	79.25% 233	9.52% 28	11.22% 33
Learn how to conserve my land for future generations	80.55% 236	10.82% 32	8.53% 25

## Qs: Barriers; what would make it easier to recreate in Becket?

- >200 open-ended responses to each question
- Barriers: lack of time, lack of knowledge of public lands.
- More information and/or map on where places are with parking and trailheads.
- Safer biking and walking on roads.
- Better access to walking & hiking trails.
- Pickleball and dog park often mentioned.





## Land Conservation Tools



- Conservation Deed Restrictions
- Land Donations / Life Estates
- Chapter 61s Program
  - 61 – Forests
  - 61A – Agriculture
  - 61B – Recreation
- Community Preservation Act

## Support the development of sustainable recreation while respecting natural resources

- Support Jacob's Pillows efforts to maintain and restore the existing wetlands trail.
- Support the ongoing Highlands Footpath initiative to create a long-distance trail.
- Determine which Jacob's Well / Esau's Heel Trail parcels are best suited for conservation and which others may be suited for other town uses; consider creating all-persons access.
- Encourage and help landowners become stewards of their land, lakeshores, streams and other sensitive habitats; options might include topics such as:
  - Develop a Better Your Buffer program for protection and/or restoration of shoreline and wetlands
  - Creating and maintaining wildlife habitat, including forest management and pollinator-friendly habitats
  - Conservation tools, such as estate planning, donation options, deed restrictions, Ch. 61
  - Chemical application laws and best practices
- Explore and assess the need for alternative access and parking at North Becket Village Park
- Determine best ways to expand the awareness and locations of outdoor recreational opportunities in and around Becket, including directions to parking and trailheads; paper/web-based.
- Advocate for bike racks at key public spaces.
- Support landowners with maintenance and upgrades of existing recreational facilities that serve the public.

## Protect the town's natural resources with climate change impacts in mind

- Update the Becket Master Plan to reflect this Plan's findings.
- Update the Town's floodplain overlay district zoning bylaw.
- Map priority Floodplain areas to reflect climate change impacts.
- Investigate bylaw amendments that increase protection of the environment; possible amendments might include:
  - Minimizing land disturbance in new development, including steps to manage erosion, runoff and steep slopes.
  - Better Wetlands protections.
  - Limiting chemical applications in sensitive habitats.
- Establish policies and procedures to evaluate conservation and/or hazard mitigation value of tax titles of parcels before the Town resells the land.
- Support a shared full-time Conservation Commission Agent.
- Conduct work at Town Beach to secure long-term public use of the site.

## Next Steps

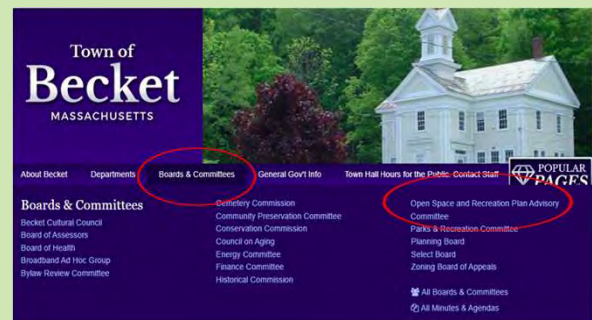


- Draft Plan offered for public review and comment through Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>
- Send comments to Lauren Gaherty at [lauren@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:lauren@berkshireplanning.org)
- Revisions made to draft plan-Committee & Town
- Revised Draft Plan sent to Mass. Div. of Conservation Services for approval
- Town becomes eligible for wider array of grants upon approval

## Partner for resource protection and conservation

- Maintain a list of Chapter 61s properties so the Town is prepared to handle future sales.
- Support a conservation focus on the areas of Becket shown on the Action Map's; this includes finalizing the transfer of Town-owned land to the U.S. Dept. of the Interior.
- Support the permanent conservation of land along the Shaker Mill Brook, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.
- Support the conservation of land along the Westfield River and its tributaries.
- Support the conservation of additional lands in the area of Becket Historic Forest, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.
- Ensure all town permitting authorities are aware of locations of rare species habitats.
- Investigate the option of increasing the CPA surcharge for conservation of land and/or enhancement of recreational uses.

<https://www.townofbecket.org>



**Thank you for attending!**

### **Now It's Your Turn**



- Join us at the maps
- Provide ideas on post-it notes and Zoom poll
- Send ideas and comments to Lauren Gaherty at:

**[lauren@berkshireplanning.org](mailto:lauren@berkshireplanning.org)**

December 5, 2022 – Public Forum Attendees Vote for Top Priority Actions

Goal 1: Protect the town's natural resources with climate change impacts in mind.		Votes
Actions		
Update the Becket Master Plan to reflect this Plan's findings.		5
Update the Town's floodplain overlay district zoning bylaw; Mass. Emergency Management Agency has template to use.		2
Map priority floodplain areas to reflect climate change impacts; use modeling to reduce impacts of flood events to properties and the environment.		1
Investigate bylaw amendments that increase protection of the environment; possible amendments might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minimizing land disturbance in new development, including the use of Low Impact Development techniques to manage erosion, runoff and steep slopes</li> <li>Wetlands protections - Mass. Assoc. of Conservation Commissioners is a good bylaw resource</li> <li>Limiting chemical applications in sensitive habitats</li> </ul>		6
Establish policies and procedures to evaluate conservation and/or hazard mitigation value of tax titles of parcels before the Town resells the land.		2
Support a shared full-time Conservation Commission Agent.		3
Goal 2: Partner for resource protection and conservation.		Votes
Actions		
Maintain a list of Chapter 61s properties and develop a process so the Town is prepared to effectively handle future sales.		
Support a conservation focus on the areas of Becket shown on the Action Map's to maintain ecological connections for wildlife; this includes finalizing the transfer of Town-owned land to the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, as authorized by Town Meeting.		1
Support the permanent conservation of land along the Shaker Mill Brook, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.		3
Support the conservation of land along the Westfield River and its tributaries identified as a significant wildlife habitat and corridor.		4
Support the conservation of additional lands in the area of Becket Historic Forest, working with willing landowners to make conservation connections.		2
Ensure all town permitting authorities are aware of locations of rare species habitats; refer to the latest BioMap2 and other information provided by Mass. Fisheries and Wildlife.		3
Support the creation of a Becket Lakes Association Group and its capacity to protect and manage natural resources		2
Investigate the option of increasing the CPA surcharge for conservation of land and/or enhancement of recreational uses.		2

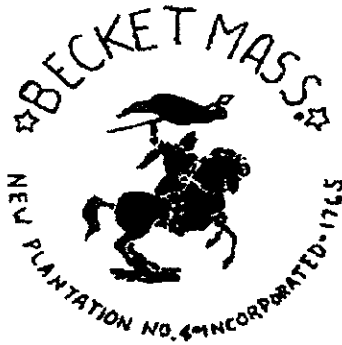


<b>Goal 3: Support the development of sustainable recreation while respecting natural resources.</b>	<b>Votes</b>
<b>Actions</b>	
Support Jacob's Pillows efforts to maintain and restore the existing wetlands trail; encourage sustainable design and educate use about this sensitive habitat.	2
Support the ongoing Highlands Footpath initiative to create a long-distance trail system that would link Becket through Middlefield/Chester to Goshen.	2
Determine which Jacob's Well / Esau's Heel Trail parcels are best suited for conservation and which others may be suited for other town uses; consider creating all-persons access where possible.	4
Encourage and help landowners become stewards of their land, lakeshores, streams and other sensitive habitats; options might include a series of informational sessions that include topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a Better Your Buffer program for protection and/or restoration of shoreline and wetlands</li> <li>Creating and maintaining wildlife habitat, including forest management and pollinator-friendly habitats</li> <li>Conservation tools, such as estate planning, donation options, deed restrictions, Chapter 61</li> <li>Chemical application laws and best practices</li> </ul>	4
Explore and assess the need for alternative access and parking at North Becket Village Park.	1
Conduct work at Town Beach to secure long-term public use of the site; clarify the boundaries and possibly acquire land to secure long-term parking; mitigate erosion to protect the environment and provide better access.	1
Determine best ways to expand the awareness and locations of outdoor recreational opportunities in and around Becket, including directions to parking and trailheads; materials may be paper- and/or web-based.	5
Advocate for bike racks at key public spaces.	
Support landowners with maintenance and upgrades of existing recreational facilities that serve the public.	1
<b>Additional Public Comments Forum Attendees:</b>	<b>Votes</b>
<i>Improve access to existing public trails and explore new connections between them - state, land trust, town lands; improve parking; 2nd homeowners/lake associations may be a good resource for trail work and other conservation/recreation needs.</i>	2
<i>Create lakeside accessible trail in Becket.</i>	
<i>Town partners with Canterbury Farm to establish a resident reduced and/or seasons pass fee structure.</i>	
<i>MassBike has funds in new Mass Infrastructure Bill for on-road walking/biking - work with BRPC to consider options for Becket; maybe consider creating routes on low-traffic dirt roads with a map.</i>	

<i>Logging proposed for 450 acres in October Mt State Forest - stay involved.</i>	
<i>Invasive species are present in many of the lakes/ponds, with milfoil the main problem; no one has real sense of the impacts across Becket and which are being treated; compile base inventory and assess them for invasive plants and zebra mussels; ensure boat inspections are done at each lake/pond.</i>	
<i>Support Jacob's Pillow in rehabilitating and possibly expanding trail system to be integrated with new theater.</i>	
<i>Evaluate possible connection/extension of Esau's Heel Trail northward.</i>	

## Appendix C

### Local and Regional Review



**TOWN OF BECKET  
SELECT BOARD**

**557 Main Street, Becket, MA 01223-3252  
TOWN HALL – (413) 623-8934 Ext. 10  
FAX – (413) 623-6036**

November 9, 2023

Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee  
Town Hall  
557 Main Street  
Becket, MA 01223

Dear Becket Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee:

The Becket Select Board commends the work that your Committee has done to update the Town's 2006 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). We appreciate the time and effort that all members of the Committee have dedicated to this plan. It provides Town boards, committees and volunteers with a series of actions that should be taken to protect Becket's rural character and enhance recreational opportunities to enjoy the natural environment.

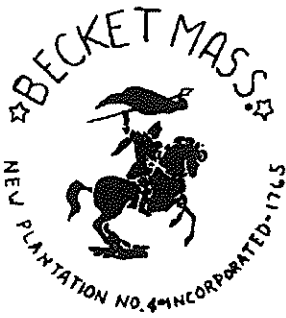
At today's meeting (November 9, 2023), the Becket Select Board voted to endorse the Draft Open Space and Recreation Plan (revised September 2023).

Thank you again for all your hard work. We look forward to supporting future endeavors towards implementation of the Becket OSRP.

Sincerely,

SELECT BOARD

William H. Elovirta, *Chairperson*



**Town of Becket  
Planning Board  
557 Main Street  
Becket, Massachusetts 01223  
(413) 623-8934 ext. 120 fax (413) 623-6036  
[planning@townofbecket.org](mailto:planning@townofbecket.org)**

November 8, 2023

Dear Open Space and Recreation Plan Advisory Committee,

The Becket Planning Board would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you on completing the Draft Becket OpenSpace and Recreation Plan (OSRP). This plan highlights the importance of protecting undeveloped landscapes to maintain the rural character and natural environment that supports our thriving community. The OSRP lays out a blueprint to improve access to the many recreational assets that we already have and to consider ways to conserve our natural resources for future generations.

We appreciate the opportunities you offered to this Board to provide input as it was being drafted and during the public review process. Thank you all for your hard work on this project.

Sincerely,

Becket Planning Board  
Robert Ronzio, Chair  
Alvin Blake, Vice Chair, Clerk Pro Tem  
Ann Krawet, Clerk  
Howard Lerner, Associate  
Gale LaBelle, Alternate





August 21, 2023

Melissa Cryan, Grant Programs Supervisor  
Division of Conservation Services  
100 Cambridge Street, 9th Floor, Boston, MA 02114

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) has reviewed the Draft *Town of Becket Open Space and Recreation Plan* (OSRP). There are several aspects of the plan that are consistent with the *Sustainable Plan for the Berkshires*, the region-wide plan for Berkshire County.

- The OSRP identifies priority conservation areas that would expand or provide linkages with existing protected open space areas in the region. Protecting large contiguous areas are key to maintaining wildlife habitat and corridors for species migrations, all the more important as the impacts of climate change continue to evolve.
- The OSRP highlights the need to engage and educate private landowners about land stewardship. During the outreach program, many property owners indicated a willingness to learn more about how they could manage their lands for wildlife or meet other conservation goals.
- The OSRP identifies the need to increase the Town's recreational opportunities open to residents with mobility limitations. Becket has an aging population and it will be important to be able to offer outdoor recreational facilities that seniors can access.
- The OSRP utilizes updated natural resource data from the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, including BioMap3.
- The OSRP notes the interest in updating the Town's Master Plan. Such a plan can bring together comprehensive strategies for protecting the Town's rural character while allowing careful development for the benefit of current and future generations.

The BRPC commends the Town of Becket for its planning efforts and encourages the Town to continue to pursue opportunities to protect the region's natural resources, expand outdoor recreational opportunities and sustain a high quality of life.

Sincerely,

Melissa J. Provencher  
Environmental & Energy Program Manager