

Appendix G:

Existing Major Protected Conservation Areas in the Towns in the Stewardship Plan



Nashua River and greenway corridor. Photo: Cindy Knox Photography.

River Segment	Protected Area	Acreage	Features
Nashua Mainstem in MA	Bolton Flats WMA	~1,335	"...extends along the Nashua River in Harvard, Lancaster, and Bolton. The river here is slow and meandering, with adjacent High-Terrace Floodplain Forest and Low-Energy Riverbank. The combination of a slow river, floodplain forest, and dry sand makes for excellent turtle habitat. In fact, 3 state-listed rare turtle species Blanding's Turtles, Wood Turtles, and Spotted Turtles have all been documented from this stretch of river."
	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge	~1,667	"...particular value in carrying out the national migratory bird management program...." along nearly 8 miles of the Nashua River, the Refuge's interspersed wetland, forested upland and old field habitats is ideally suited for this purpose. There are a number of non-contiguous sections in Shirley, Ayer, Harvard and Lancaster on both sides of the river, some of which was acquired as part of the decommissioning of portions of Fort Devens. Rare species. Hunting and the fact that the Refuge has different rules (no dogs, etc...)

River Segment	Protected Area	Acreage	Features
	Portion of Mulpus Brook WMA	124-acres portion of 517-acre total	Mulpus Brook is an important coldwater tributary to the Nashua. However, note that the majority of Mulpus Brook WMA is outside the ¼ mile corridor of the Nashua River.
	J. Harry Rich State Forest	~679	“...along the Nashua River is wooded with broad level trails for easy walking. It offers excellent views of the river and surrounding area as it winds along the banks” through a portion of which linear Nashua River Rail Trail passes. One of the few state-owned tree farms in the nation and one of the first such in MA....and described as “...the most intensively managed forest acreage in New England”. www.nashuariverwatershed.org/recreation/hiking-walking.html
	Groton Town Forest	~513	“...provides protection for the watershed, educational activities, recreation, and wildlife habitat...created by vote of the Town Meeting in 1922, was among the first dozen such town forests in the Commonwealth”. As part of the Surrenden Farm protection effort, the town of Groton granted the MA Dept of Fish and Game a Conservation Restriction on the Groton Town Forest, thereby opening it up to hunting and permanently protecting it as open space.
	Sabine Woods and Groton Place (abutting properties)	~146 and ~54, respectively	“...owned and managed by the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF), is a former estate featuring open fields and river vistas, broad trail.... with ~1,800 feet of frontage on the east side of the Nashua River...proclaimed "Wild Life Sanctuary for The Benefit and Pleasure of the People of Groton".
	Ayer Game Farm & MA DFW NE Headquarters	~116 91 + 15.7	Previously used to raise pheasants for stocking, this property is now used as offices for the DFW Office of Fishing & Boating Access. This property directly abuts the Groton Town Forest and Surrenden Farm. Another section abuts the DFW Northeast District Headquarters.
	Surrenden Farm/ General Field	~325	Sitting prominently in a 1,500-acre block of contiguous protected open space, 360-acre Surrenden Farm was Groton's highest conservation priority until it was purchased by the town and several conservation organizations in 2006. With ¾ mile of Nashua River frontage, forest and scenic rolling hayfields, Surrenden Farm had been one of the largest remaining unprotected landscapes in town. The General Field is 143 acres of agricultural land that has survived since early colonial times. DFW has a CR on 10 acres of Groton Water Dept. land and a Conservation Restriction on 159 acres on Surrenden Farm West.
	Unkety Brook WMA	Portion = 185 acres of a total of 527 acres	In Dunstable and Pepperell, a 185-acre portion of the Unkety Brook WMA is located along the eastern bank Nashua River. These parcels lie between the river and DCR's rail trail, providing important wildlife habitat south of the confluence of Unkety Brook with the Nashua.

River Segment	Protected Area	Acreage	Features
Nissitissit in MA	Nissitissit River WMA	~447 acres total 22 parcels acquired from 1974 to 2017	Very popular for catch and release, hunting, bird watching, and hiking on abandoned rail bed which runs along the river. The section of the river from the NH border to the Prescott bridge in Pepperell is one of only 9 designated catch and release areas in the state. In addition, in this section anglers must use a conventional fly rod and fly line. The former Turner dam was removed in 2015, benefitting fish passage and restoring coldwater habitat.
Nissitissit in NH		~309 acres total (with ~ 171 acres in Brookline and ~138 acres in Hollis)	The Brookline parcels are held by the Town of Brookline Conservation Commission, Beaver Brook Association and the Nissitissit River Land Trust. The Hollis parcels are held by Beaver Brook Association and the Nissitissit River Land Trust. These holdings are nearly contiguous along the entire river.
Squannacook in MA	Squannacook River WMA, WCR and WCE	~1,934 comprised of 1,641 in fee, 49 parcels from 1965 to 2017	This non-contiguous WMA extends from Shirley through Groton and Townsend to Ashby, consisting of almost 50 different fee-owned parcels. The Squannacook WCR is a 68-acre donated restriction on development of the South Fitchburg Hunting and Fishing Club that does not allow public access. The Squannacook WCE consists of 4 Conservation-Restricted parcels totaling 299 acres, which are open to the public, 2 in Shirley at the confluence with the Nashua and 2 in Townsend, 1 of which is located in the headwaters. (2,008 total)
	Townsend State Forest	~3,082	Non-contiguous parcels owned by the MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation. Portions are located across the river from and adjacent to portions of the Squannacook River WMA, while other large blocks extend away from the river to the NH border and include many small tributaries to the river and hiking trails.
	Willard Brook State Forest	~2,930	Willard Brook State Forest established through state purchases in the 1930's sits on 2,930 acres in Ashby and Townsend, MA. Visitors can enjoy developed recreational features at Damon Pond, Trap Brook Falls, and the adjacent 1,000+ acre Pearl Hill State Park and campground managed by MA Department of Conservation and Recreation.
	Bertozzi Conservation Area	~56 (42 acres in Groton and 14 acres are across the river in Shirley)	Municipal land adjacent to state Squannacook River WMA; popular swimming hole.