







## **Section 5 – Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest**

### **Introduction**

The following tables lay out a current inventory of all private, public, and nonprofit recreation and conservation parcels in Wakefield. They also provide information regarding location, acreage, management, use, source of funds, current condition, recreation potential, public access, zoning, and the degree of legal protection for preservation as open space for each parcel. Private as well as public lands have been identified. Map 5: Open Space shows the distribution of protected and unprotected open lands in Wakefield.

For planning purposes, it is important to be aware of the degree of protection for each parcel. Knowing the level of protection (or lack thereof) will point out how easily some properties we assume to be open space can be developed. This knowledge will help in identifying those open space and recreation areas that need additional effort for their preservation and protection. The classification of protection status used in this plan comes from a variety of sources, primarily local knowledge and the Mass GIS open space data layer. It does not reflect any additional research into deeds or restrictions and will need to be updated if new information is discovered about these parcels.

It is important to understand that regardless of the level of protection on these lands, the potential for development always exists. The higher the level of protection, though, the more challenging it is for development to occur. The inventory is divided into three overall categories:

**Highly Protected Conservation and Recreation Land:** Includes all land that is owned by the Conservation Commission, Water Department, and the Parks and Recreation Department. The conversion of these properties would invoke Article 97 of the Amendments to the State Constitution, making it difficult, but not impossible, for a municipality to sell, transfer, or use this land for other purposes. Federal involvement would be triggered on any lands purchased with federal Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF).

**Moderately Protected Open Land:** Includes all land owned by other municipal departments or commissions including school properties and lands managed by the Board of Selectmen for non-recreational purposes. While it only happens occasionally, Town Meeting can approve the sale of this type of land for private development.

In addition, this category includes private land that is taxed as forest, farm, or recreation land under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B or land on which development is restricted through a short-term

(5-30 year) conservation restriction. These tax programs are rarely used on a long-term basis and are, therefore, vulnerable to development. The owners of land classified under Chapter 61 must notify the Town if they plan to sell or convert the land to another use and the Town has 120 days to decide whether to exercise the option to purchase the land.

Unprotected Open Land: Includes all undeveloped land with significant open space or recreational values such as golf courses, cemeteries, and schools. While these properties appear to be part of the Town's open space network because of the length of time they have existed as such, these lands, in most cases, can be easily developed into office parks or housing developments. This can be especially disheartening and special efforts must be made to protect or acquire the most important of these properties.

### **When is property considered to be legally protected open space?**

Determining the actual legal level of protection for any given parcel can require some detective work. The section below is an excerpt from the "Open Space Planner's Workbook" published by the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs. This excerpt is included here to give the Town additional background on protection levels. The entire workbook can be found on-line at <http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/global/publications.htm>.

"Article 97 of the Articles of Amendment to the State Constitution, or simply "Article 97", protects certain lands acquired for natural resources purposes, meaning "conservation, development and utilization of the agricultural, mineral, forest, water, air and other natural resources". Furthermore, a 1973 opinion of the Attorney General stipulates that land acquired for these purposes cannot be converted to any other use without the following actions: 1) the local conservation commission must vote that the land is surplus to its needs, 2.) the park commission must vote the same if it is parkland in question, 3.) the matter must be taken up at Town Meeting or City Council and pass by a 2/3 vote, 4.) the town must file an Environmental Notification Form with EOE's MEPA Unit, and 5.) the matter must pass by a 2/3 vote of the Massachusetts Legislature. Finally, if the property was either acquired or developed with grant assistance from EOE's Division of Conservation Services (i.e. Self-Help, Urban Self-Help or Land and Water Conservation Fund), the converted land must be replaced with land of equal monetary value and recreational or conservation utility. While conversions do occur, the process is purposefully onerous in an attempt to protect these conservation and recreation lands in perpetuity. Lands protected by Article 97 are often owned by the municipal conservation commission, recreation commission, water department, or by a state or federal conservation agency ( i.e. state EOE agencies or the federal National Park Service). Lands purchased for general municipal purposes are not protected by Article 97. Private lands can be permanently protected lands if the deed is restricted by a Conservation Restriction, Agricultural Preservation Restriction, Historic Restriction or

Wetlands Restriction.

### **How do we determine if a property is legally protected open space?**

Lands owned by municipal conservation commissions and water departments are usually protected, and lands held by EOEAs, the National Park Service and the USDA Forest Service are also protected. However, it may be necessary to do some research at the Registry of Deeds or at Town Hall to make a final determination. The deed may stipulate that the land is to be managed by the conservation commission or park commission, or that it was gifted to the town with deed restrictions or for park or conservation purposes. If the property was acquired or developed with DCS grant assistance, the grant agreement should have been recorded as an adjunct to the deed. Land acquired by the town can also be researched by looking at the Town Meeting Vote or City Council Vote authorizing the acquisition, with an eye toward the intended purpose of the acquisition or the managing municipal agency”.

Source: Open Space Planner’s Handbook, Section 5

## **Inventory**

The following table summarizes the amount of open space and recreation land managed by each type of land-owner highlighted in the inventory. Wakefield’s open space is fairly well distributed throughout the town in that there are pockets of open space within a few blocks of each neighborhood. However, the densest area of town, the western section on the border with Stoneham, has very few open space parcels relative to the number of people per square mile. In general, the areas with the fewest open space parcels are those near the center of town. Fortunately, Lake Quannapowitt’s location near the town center provides access to a spectacular resource relatively close-by. On the south end of town, bordering Melrose, and also on the eastern edge of town, bordering Saugus (but north of the Town Forest), significant open space areas are also more sparse, though the population densities in these areas are lower as well.

**Table 15: Summary of Property Totals**

<b>Summary Table: Open Space and Recreation Lands in Wakefield</b>	
<b>MANAGEMENT AGENCY</b>	<b>NUMBER OF ACRES</b>
Conservation Commission	56.66 acres
DPW – Parks and Recreation Land	147.75 acres
DPW – Water Resources	144.2 acres
State	114.2 acres
Schools	114.94 acres
Public cemetery	37.69 acres
Private lands	52.49 acres

### ***Public, Non-Profit Conservation Land***

Approximately 57 acres of land fall under the purview of the Conservation Commission. These conservation lands are highly protected as they are held in conservation restrictions. As can be seen in the table below, Reedy Meadow is the largest conservation holding and the parcel with the most significant recreation possibilities. There are opportunities for hiking and bird watching, as well as other types of recreation.

**Table 16: Conservation Commission Properties**

<b>Conservation Commission Managed Properties</b>								
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>FUNDS USED</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>REC. POTENT.</b>	<b>PUBLIC ACCESS</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>DEG. OF PROTECT.</b>
Reedy Meadow	52.6 +A over 4 parcels	Rec. trails	Gift - MA Audubon Society	Good	High	Free	I	High
Land off Forest Street	0.1	No Rec. Use	Gift - Cullen	Good	Medium	Free	SR	High
Land off Paon Blvd./Rt 128	1.21 A	No Rec. Use	Gift - Thompson	Good	Low	Free	SR	High
Land off Gumwood/Butler	2.74 A over 7 parcels	No Rec. Use	Town Meeting Transfer	Good	Medium	Free	SR	High

***Total Lands = 56.66 acres***



## Parks and Recreation Land

Approximately 148 acres of land fall under the jurisdiction of the DPW's Department of Parks and Forestry. The recreation facilities include athletic fields, playgrounds, small parks, walking areas, a beach, tennis courts, a boat launch, and a historic house. In addition, some small parcels of land serve simply as a break in the developed landscape.

**Table 17: DPW Properties**

<b>DPW Managed Parklands, Playgrounds, and Athletic Fields</b>								
LOCATION	AREA	USE	FUNDS USED	CONDITION	REC. POTENT.	PUBLIC ACCESS	ZONING	DEG. OF PROTECT
Triangle @ Prospect & Hopkins Streets	1.15 A	No Rec. Use	Town	Good	Limited	Free	SR	High
Spring St. Park	10.64 A	No Rec. Use	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Hall Park	1.28 A	Scenic Park	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Quannapowitt Lakeshore	2.98 A	Historic House, Tennis Courts	Town	Good	Good	Rental Fee	SR	Moderate
						Cts. res.		
Quannapowitt Lakeshore	1.8 A	No Rec. Use	Town	Fair	Limited	Limited	SR	High
	3.1 A							
Landrigan Field (next to High School)	3.0 A	Athletics	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
	6.57 A							
Little League Field (aka Fernald Field)	2.38 A over 3 parcels	LL Baseball	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Town Forest	45.23 A	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Lower Common	8.3 A over 3 parcels	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
Upper Common	2.6 A over 2 parcels	Rockery	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
Gertrude Spaulding Park	40,900 SF	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Spaulding St. Playground/ Park	1.39 A over 7 parcels	Playground/ Park	Private/ Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate

**Table 17 Continued**

<b>DPW Managed Parklands, Playgrounds, and Athletic Fields Continued</b>								
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>FUNDS USED</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>REC. POTENT.</b>	<b>PUBLIC ACCESS</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>DEG. OF PROTECT</b>
Veteran's Field	3.15 A	Boat Ramp, Softball	Town	Good	Good	Free (Great Pond)	SR	High
Sullivan Playground Ext.	13.3 A over 3 parcels	No Rec. Use	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
Moulton Playground	5.53 A	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
Nasella Playground	4.69 A	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
J.J. Round Memorial Park/ Playground	6.52 A 9.22 A	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
Mapleway Playground	16.78A	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
Sullivan Playground	6.5 A	Rec.	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
COL Connolly Playground/ Beach	1.08 A over 3 parcels	Seasonal Beach	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate

***Total Lands = 147.75 acres***



## Water Facilities

Wakefield's DPW also manages about 144 acres of land protecting the Crystal Lake watershed and pumping stations. The protected area in Crystal Lake's watershed and the old Town wells are highly protected as they are a drinking water source, held by the Town's water department. The Town of Stoneham has protected an additional 13 acres in the Crystal Lake watershed.

**Table 18: DPW Managed Water Department Facilities**

<b>DPW Managed Water Department Facilities</b>								
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>FUNDS USED</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>REC. POTENT</b>	<b>PUBLIC ACCESS</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>DEG. OF PROTECT</b>
Old Town Wells/Pumping Station	27.74 A over 2 parcels	Closed	Town	Good	None	Limited	SR	High
Crystal Lake Watershed/ Pumping Station	42.34 A over 4 parcels	Water Source	Town	Good	Limited	Limited	SR	High
	Easement							
Crystal Lake Watershed	17.67 A over 8 parcels	Water Source	Town	Good	Limited	Limited	SR	High
Crystal Lake Watershed	17.51 A over 4 parcels	Water Source	Town	Good	Limited	Limited	SR	High
Crystal Lake Watershed (in Stoneham)	14.2 +A over 3 parcels	Water Source	Town	Good	?	?	?	?
Water Tower	.36 A	Water Source	Town	Good	None	Limited	SR	High
Linden Street Pumping Station	.38 A	Water Source	Town	?	?	?	SR	High?
Nahant Street Pit	24 A	Town Dump	Town	?	?	?		Unprotected?

**Total Lands = 144.2 acres**

### ***State and Federal Land***

The state Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns approximately 7 acres of land in Wakefield as part of the Breakheart Reservation which adjoins Saugus. The state of Massachusetts owns and manages 107 additional acres, some of which is a Regional Vocational High School which abuts Breakheart Reservation and another portion of which is used by the MA Army National Guard.

**Table 19: State Lands**

<b>Commonwealth of Massachusetts Properties</b>									
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>	<b>MGMT.</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>FUNDS USED</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>REC. POTENT.</b>	<b>PUBLIC ACCESS</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>DEG. OF PROTECT.</b>
Open space bordering Rt. 128	3.9 A	Comm of MA		State	Good	None	Limited	?	?
Camp Curtis Guild, Bay State Road	22.83 A	Comm of MA	MA Nat. Guard	State	Good	Limited	Limited	GR	Unprotected
Breakheart Reservation	27.5A over 3 parcels	DCR/ Comm of MA	Rec.	State	Good	Good	Free	SR	High
NE Metropolitan Regional Vocational School	60 A	Reg. School Dist. Com.	Gr. 9-12	State	Good	Good	Free	SR	Unprotected

***Total Lands = 114.2 acres***

***School Properties (Public and One Private)***

Wakefield's school department owns about 110 acres of land in Wakefield in the form of athletic fields and playgrounds, while an addition 5 acres is held by a private school. School property is not protected for open space or recreation purposes. The school department has discretion on how the land will be used and, as has happened in some cases in recent years, these parcels can be used for school expansions and other development. Also, as can be seen in the table below, a number of schools have been closed but the properties are still owned and managed by the school department. These properties provide an opportunity for the town to preserve the recreation facilities.

**Table 20: School Properties and Recreation**

<b>School Properties and Recreation</b>									
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>	<b>MGMT.</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>FUNDS USED</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>REC. POTENT</b>	<b>PUBLIC ACCESS</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>DEG. OF PROTECT</b>
West Ward School	.82 A	School Dept.	Historic Property	Town	Poor	Limited	Free	SR	Moderate
Walton School	2.46 A	School Dept.	Gr. 1-4	Town	Good	Fair	Free	SR	High
Doyle School	7.77 A	School Dept.	Closed	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Dolbeare School	7.87 A	School Dept.	Gr. 1-4	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Greenwood School	4.54 A over 3 parcels	School Dept.	Gr. 1-4	Town	Fair	Fair	Free	SR	Moderate
Yeuell School	7.29 +A	School Dept.	Closed	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate
Montrose School and Playground (Handicap Acc.)	3.85 A over 2 parcels	School Dept.	Closed; Temporarily occupied by police department	Town	Fair	Fair	Free	SR	Moderate
Woodville School (includes Blatz Field)	3.11 A over 2 parcels	School Dept.	Alt. School	Town	Poor	Poor	Free	SR	Moderate
Wakefield Memorial High School (includes Walsh Field)	45.26 A over 4 parcels	School Dept.	Gr. 9-12	Town	Good	Good	Free	SR	Moderate

**Table 20 Continued**

<b>School Properties and Recreation Continued</b>									
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>	<b>MGMT.</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>FUNDS USED</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>REC. POTENT</b>	<b>PUBLIC ACCESS</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>DEG. OF PROTECT</b>
Hurd School	1.02 A	School Dept.	Being rented as a school facility but not part of public school system	Town	Poor	Poor	Free	SR	Moderate
Franklin School	3.25 A	School Dept.	Closed	Town	Poor	Poor	Free	GR	Moderate
Galvin Middle School (includes Walton Field)	15.16 A	School Dept.	Gr. 5-6	Town	Good	Fair	Free	SR	High
Mill River Floodplain	5.6A	School Dept.	?	Town	?	?	?	?	Unprotected
Our Lady of Nazareth Academy (PRIVATE)	5.34A	Mary Elizabeth Kelly, Principal	Gr. 9-12 (girls)	Private	Good	Good	Private	SR	Unprotected

***Total Lands =114.94 acres***



### ***Privately-Owned Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest***

There are 7.49 acres of land held privately that are currently used for recreation purposes but which are not protected from future pressures to use these properties for other purposes should these lands change ownership.

**Table 21: Private Recreational Lands**

<b>Private Recreational Lands</b>									
LOCATION	AREA	MGMT.	USE	FUNDS USED	CONDITION	REC. POTENT	PUBLIC ACCESS	ZONING	DEG. OF PROTECT
Y.M.C.A.	.31 A	YMCA	Rec.	Private	Good	Medium	Fee	GR	Unprotected
Quannapowitt Yacht Club	.31 A over 2 parcels	Yacht Club	Rec.	Private	Good	Good	Fee	SR	Unprotected
Sheraton Colonial Hotel and Golf Club	6.9 A over 2 parcels	Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide	Lodging/ Rec	Private	Good	Good	Reservation	LB	Unprotected

***Total lands = 7.49 acres***

### ***Private Recreational Lands - Chapter 61/61A/61B***

There are 17.48 acres of private forest land under the private recreation Chapter 61B provision. There are no lands enrolled in Chapter 61 or 61A. Refer to Section 10: Implementation for more detail on these programs.

**Table 22: Chapter 61 Land**

<b>Chapter 61B Recreation Land</b>									
LOCATION	AREA	MGMT.	USE	FUNDS USED	CONDITION	REC. POTENT	PUBLIC ACCESS	ZONING	DEG. OF PROTECT
Bear Hill Golf Club	8.79 A	Bear Hill Assoc.	Rec.	Private	Good	High	Fee	SR	Unprotected
Land off Forest Road	4.45 A	Dr. J. Breslin	No Rec. Use	Private	Good	Medium	Un-official	SR	Moderate
	4.24 A	19 Belmont Rd							

***Total Lands = 17.48 acres***

## Cemeteries

Approximately 66 acres of open land in Wakefield is currently used for cemeteries. The majority do not present any potential for recreation use, though they are useful for open space and walking areas.

**Table 23: Cemeteries**

<b>Cemeteries</b>									
<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>AREA</b>	<b>MGMT.</b>	<b>USE</b>	<b>FUNDS USED</b>	<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>REC. POTENT</b>	<b>PUBLIC ACCESS</b>	<b>ZONING</b>	<b>DEG. OF PROTECT</b>
Old Cemetery (public)	3.85 A	DPW	Cemetery	Town	Good	Medium	Free	SR	High
		Hist. Comm. oversight	Floral Walkway						
Forest Glade Cemetery (public)	33.8A over 5 parcels	DPW	Cemetery	Town	Good	None	Free	SR	High
Lakeside Cemetery (private)	22.6A over 4 parcels	Lakeside Cemetery Corp.	Cemetery	Private	Good	None	Fee	SR	High
Jewish Cemeteries (3) - private	.43 A	Tem. Adath Israel	Cemetery	Private	Good	None	Fee	SR	Unprotected
	3.51 A	Lynn Hebrew							
	1.49 A	Ben. Soc							
	.46 A over 2 parcels	Tem. Emman.							

**Total Lands = 66.21 acres**

## Parcels of Conservation and Recreation Interest

**Table 24: Parcels of Conservation and Recreation Interest**

<i>Parcels of Conservation Interest from Gertrude Spaulding's 1995 "Wish List"</i>	
<b>Parcel Name/Location</b>	<b>Comments on Parcel</b>
#3 - Lakeside Office Park/Motel – North Ave.	connect to Town-owned pathway; complete pathway around Lake Quannapowitt
#4 - Spaulding St – Jackson Residential	connect to Town-owned pathway; complete pathway around Lake Quannapowitt
#5 - Quannapowitt Yacht Club – Linda Rd	connect to Town-owned pathway; complete pathway around Lake Quannapowitt
#6 - Scott Ln and Water St	part of Mill River watershed; potential riparian buffer
#7 - Foster Lane/Paon Blvd	part of Mill River watershed
#8 - New Salem St	part of Mill River watershed
#9 - Salem/Walton St	Saugus River watershed
#10 - Montrose Ave – power lines	land under power lines; was a bike path in the 1970s
#11 - Montrose Ave – power lines	land under power lines; was a bike path in the 1970s
#12 - Audubon Road – power lines – 4 separate parcels	land under power lines; was a bike path in the 1970s
#13 - Salem/New Salem Streets	may have already been developed
#14 - Parker Road/Rte. 128 – 5 separate parcels	fill in land not owned by town - all wet; part of Lake Quannapowitt watershed
#16 - Chapter 61B land – Forest Str/Forest Rd	attaches to a bigger upland area; possibly attached area may be given to the town; wet
#20 - Bathol St/Washington – 2 separate parcels	flood-prone area
#21 - Linden Street	adjacent to town-owned pumping station
#22 - Forest Street	highest point in Wakefield - ledge
#24 - Oak St/Melrose Ave	connection to Town Forest
#25 - Montclare Ave	connection to Town Forest
#27 - Lowell St/Penfield Circle/RR	property owner petitioned to buy a piece of property
#29 - Salem St/Walton Rd	wet area
<i>Suggestions on Lands of Conservation Priority from forum May 4, 2004</i>	
<b>Parcel Name/Location</b>	<b>Comments on Parcel</b>
"Linear Park" - acquire right of way from RR	
Path through Lakeside Cemetery	
St. Florence Church	

## **Access for the Disabled**

The Wakefield Town Planner worked in consultation with James Caffrey, the Chair of the Commission on Disabilities, and Roger Maloney, the Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, to develop a Section 504 Self-Evaluation Survey in August 2000. The inventory included site visits to all of the DPW-managed park and recreation facilities in order to examine them for handicap accessibility. A comprehensive Accessibility Survey was developed as an addendum to the Open Space Plan of 2000 and can be viewed in Appendix II of this plan. The sites surveyed were:

Moulton Playground  
Mapleway Playground  
J.J. Round Park  
Sullivan Park  
Nasella Field  
Fernald Field  
Walsh Park  
Blatz Field  
Landrigan Field  
Hall Park  
Veteran's Field  
Spaulding Playground  
Col. Connolly Beach

In addition, the newly-acquired Gertrude Spaulding Park was surveyed in June of 2004.

Many upgrades to improve accessibility have been accomplished since the 2000 survey. The steps that have been taken are outlined in Appendix II.