

PARC, LAND & Conservation Partnership Grants Open!

Information Sessions:

LAND & PARC

Teams – May 7, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Westborough – May 8, 2026 at
11:00 am

Conservation Partnership

Teams – May 13, 2026 at 2:00 pm

Deadlines:

LAND & PARC

July 9, 2026

Conservation Partnership

July 13, 2026

MASSACHUSETTS
LAND
CONSERVATION
CONFERENCE
MARCH 13, 2026

Team up with your Municipality: DCS Open Space & Recreation Grant Programs



DCS Grant Priorities

- Open space & natural resources
- Biodiversity
- Drinking water supply protection
- Carbon sequestration and storage
- Climate resilience
- Outdoor recreational opportunities
- Environmentally vulnerable or burdened communities

Grant Program	Eligible applicants	Eligible Projects	Max award (FY26)	Reimbursement	Anticipated Posting/Deadline/Award	Grant Program Details
Conservation Partnership	Conservation non-profits	Fee or CR	\$425,000	50%	March/July/October	CR must be recorded on land purchased with grant funds.
Landscape Partnership	Conservation non-profits, municipalities, state conservation agencies	Fee, CR, APR, WPR	\$1.25M	50%	November/April/July	Meet minimum project acreage; eligible partnerships; CR recorded on land purchased by non-profit partners.
Forest Reserves	Conservation non-profits, municipalities	Fee or CR for a forest reserve.	\$425,000	50%	November/April/July	CR must be recorded on land purchased with grant funds.
Land & Water Conservation Fund	Municipalities, federally recognized tribes, state conservation agencies (DCR, DFG)	Fee for park or conservation, new park or trail development, park renovations.	\$1M	50%	October/January/April	Purchase of land requires a yellow-book appraisal (coordinated with EEA).
Local Acquisition for Natural Diversity (LAND)	Municipalities	Fee or CR.	\$425,000	52-70%	March/July/October	An approved OSRP or draft OSRP submitted to EEA by the Grant application deadline
Parkland Acquisition and Renovation for Communities (PARC)	Municipalities	Fee for parks, new park development, or park renovations.	\$425,000	52-70%	March/July/October	
Drinking Water Supply Protection	Municipalities, municipal water suppliers, water and fire districts	Fee, CR or WPR.	\$350,000	60%	December/April/July	50+% of the property must be in DEP groundwater, Interim Wellhead Protection Area or surface water zone; DEP Project Approval.
Tribal Land Acquisition	MA tribal governments or conservation non-profits working with a MA tribal government	Fee, CR, APR for tribal conservation or restoration of ancestral land.	\$500,000	100%	February/May/July	Tribal government must own fee purchased with grant. Non-tribal partners may hold the CR, or APR.

* Municipal grant applicants must:

Have a Town Meeting or City Council Vote authorizing the full project cost and property purchase.

Certify it complies with the Massachusetts General Laws, including G.L. c. 40A, § 3A, the MBTA Communities Act.

Not have unresolved protected open space conversion issues with EEA



Conservation Partnership Grant Program

Eligible projects

- Land acquisition for conservation and recreation
- Due diligence expenses for gifts
- Fee simple or CR projects are eligible

Eligible entities are 501(c)(3) non-profits with environmental, conservation, or recreation purpose

Program Information

Maximum grant
award is \$425,000

Reimbursement
rate is 50% of total
cost

Nasketucket Bay, Fairhaven
Photo by Buzzards Bay Coalition



Program Requirements

CR to municipality, state agency, or land trust

Must retain the interest in the property – applicant cannot be a pass through

Land must have public access

Conservation and recreation use only

Wheeler Holly Preserve, Barnstable
Photo by Barnstable Land Trust



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Working with Municipalities

OSRP requirement

CPA funding

Municipal votes

Conservation Restrictions

Pre-Acquisitions



Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP)

- OSRPs assist communities in assessing and planning for the future of its conservation and recreation resources
- Municipalities applying for a LAND, PARC, or LWCF Grant must have an approved OSRP (or submit a draft plan by the application deadline)
- 65% of municipalities have an eligible OSRP on record
- <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/open-space-and-recreation-plans>

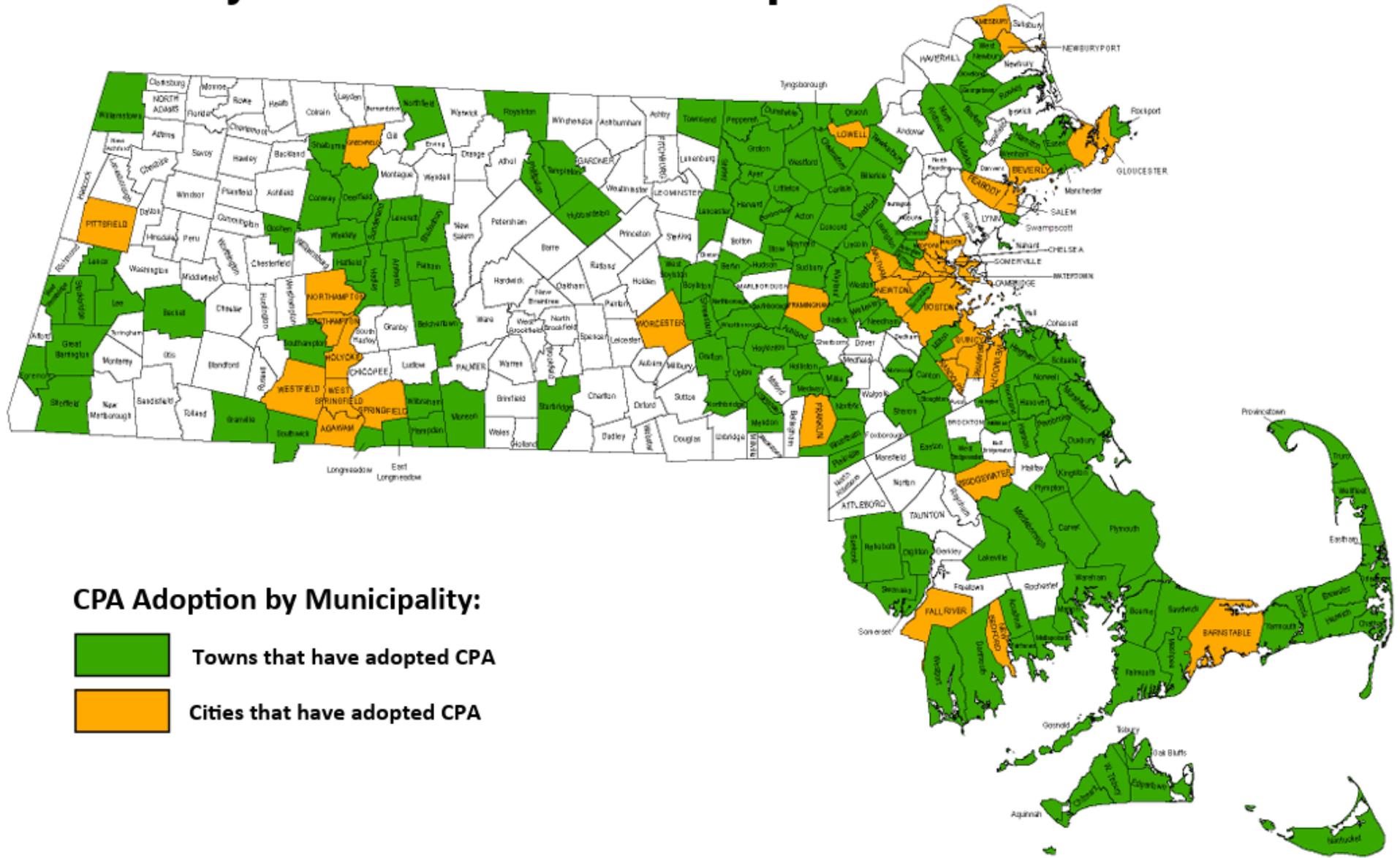


Community Preservation Act Funding

- Revenues generated from real estate transaction at the Registry of Deeds + state distribution
- Community Preservation Fund for open space protection, historic preservation, affordable housing and outdoor recreation
- Eligible as for use with state grants
- Coordinate with your community's Community Preservation Committee for project approval and authorizing votes

Community Preservation Act Adoption

May 2025



CPA Adoption by Municipality:

-  Towns that have adopted CPA
-  Cities that have adopted CPA



Conservation Restrictions

- Required of CPA funded open space and recreation acquisition projects
- Can be a mechanism by which a municipality brings grant funding to a project to be purchased by the land trust
- Required of land trust acquisitions funded with DCS grants
- Land trusts bring important expertise: identifying appraisers, survey work, BDRs etc.



Reists

Municipal Votes & Authorization

- A town meeting or city council vote is required to authorize any municipal to purchase land
- All grants require municipal authorization to acquire the property, expend funds, and accept the grant award
- Municipal votes can be critical
- Submitting a grant requires municipal authorization



Pre-Acquisitions

The pre-purchase of fee land by a Land Trust partner to facilitate a municipalities acquisition.

Chapter 61 lands – 120 days to act or assign rights.

Land Trust may purchase on behalf of municipality, with documented intention to sell land to municipality when votes, funding secured.

See grant bid for details.



LAND Grant Program

- Maximum grant = \$425,000
- 52-70% reimbursement rate
- Municipality's purchase of land or CR for natural resource protection & passive outdoor recreation

LAND Grant Program Requirements

Applicant must have an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan

Must have votes to authorize conservation or agricultural commission to apply, hold land, and secure project cost

Public access must be provided for passive recreational use

Land is permanently protected under Article 97

CPA is an eligible source of funding. If CPA is used the CPA required CR will need to be recorded prior to grant reimbursement.



DWSP Grant

- Maximum award = \$350,000
- 60% reimbursement rate
- Purchase of land or CR for drinking water supply protection, conservation and recreation

DWSP Grant Program Requirements

Property must be located in a Drinking Water Supply Protection zone, or an area designated for anticipated future water supply use

DEP public hearing and approval required (award indicates preliminary approval)

Vote by Board of Water Commissioners (or Board of Selectmen authorized as such) to authorize purchase for water quality protection, and to secure project cost

Public access for site appropriate passive recreation where acceptable

CPA is an eligible source of funding. If CPA is used the CPA required CR will need to be recorded prior to grant reimbursement.

PARC Grant Program

Eligible projects

- Purchase parkland
- Develop new public outdoor recreation facilities
- Renovate existing municipal public parks



Nonotuck Park Pool, Easthampton, Photo by Daily Hampshire Gazette

PARC Grant Program Requirements

Applicant must have an approved Open Space and Recreation Plan

Any city regardless of size or town with a population of 35,000 or more is eligible for maximum grant award amount

Towns smaller than 35,000 may apply under the "small town," "regional," or "statewide" category

Must have an authorized park/recreation commission and conservation commission

Land must be dedicated to public park purposes and under custody of Park or Recreation Commission or Park Department



Gray's Beach, Kingston, Photo by Susan Woodworth

PARC Grant Program Information

- Public should participate in project selection and design
- State assistance ranges from 52 to 70% of total project cost
- Project must have municipal vote that authorizes application, raises/borrows/appropriates *total* project cost (not just local share), and dedicates land to recreation purposes
- Maximum grant award is \$425,000



Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant Program

- National Park Service funding that is administered by DCS for Massachusetts
- Funds recreation, conservation, and trail projects

Grant Program Requirements

- Reimbursement rate is up to 50%
- Maximum grant award \$1 million, minimum \$50,000
- Projects must also be approved by the NPS



Greater
Worcester
Land Trust

PROGRAM	#Projects
Drinking Water Supply Protection	1
Landscape Partnership Grant	1
Conservation Land Tax Credit (CLTC)	2
PARC	3
Community Preservation Act	3
LWCF	4
LAND	9
Conservation Partnership Grant	19

Cascades Glen	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Asnebumskit - Briarcliff	Conservation Tax Credit	GWLT	White Oak Land Conservation Trust	
Difley Family Forest	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	Town of Paxton	
Moreland Woods (Orrison)	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Blueberry Hill	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	Town of Holden	
Blueberry Hill	Community Preservation Act	Town of West Boylston	GWLT	
Donker Farm North	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Asnebumskit Ridge	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Donker Farm	LAND	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Cook's Brook	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Fowler Brook - South Fork	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Sibley Farm	Landscape Partnership Grant	GWLT	Town of Spencer	MassAudubon
Tetasset Ridge	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Southwick Pond Brook	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	Town of Leicester	
KinneyWoods	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	Town of Holden	White Oak Land Conservation Society
Cascading Waters	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester	
Parson's Cider Mill	LWCF	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Cascades East	Self Help Grant (LAND)	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Broad Meadow Brook Savannah	Self Help Grant (LAND)	City of Worcester	GWLT	MassAudubon
Broad Meadow Brook Savannah	LWCF	City of Worcester	GWLT	MassAudubon
Coes Reservoir Park	Urban Self Help Grant (PARC)	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Pleasant & Winslow Park	PARC	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Cook's Pond	Conservation Partnership Grant	Cooks Pond Island Club	GWLT	City of Worcester
Ball Property	Self Help Grant (LAND)	City of Worcester	GWLT	MassAudubon
Moreland Woods	LAND	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Crow Hill Savannah	LAND	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Malden Brook	Conservation Partnership Grant	Town of West Boylston	GWLT	
Malden Brook	Community Preservation Act	Town of West Boylston	GWLT	
Green Hill Park – Trinity Woods	Conservation Partnership Grant	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Muir Meadow	Drinking Water Supply Protection G	City of Worcester	GWLT	Town of Paxton
Crow Hill North	LAND	City of Worcester	GWLT	
Ecotarium West	Conservation Partnership Grant	Ecotarium	GWLT	City of Worcester
Holbrook Forest	LWCF	Town of Holden	GWLT	White Oak Land Conservation Society
Sewall Pond	PARC	Town of Boylston		

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For questions on LAND, Drinking Water Supply Protection, and Landscape Partnership Grant Programs

Melissa Cryan (857) 274-7173

melissa.cryan@mass.gov

For questions on PARC and Land & Water Conservation Fund Grant Programs, as well as Open Space and Recreation Plans

Darya Mattes (617) 721-4864

darya.mattes@mass.gov

For questions on Conservation Partnership, Tribal Land Acquisition, and Conservation Assistance Grant Programs

www.mass.gov/grant-programs-offered-by-the-division-of-conservation-services

CONTEXT

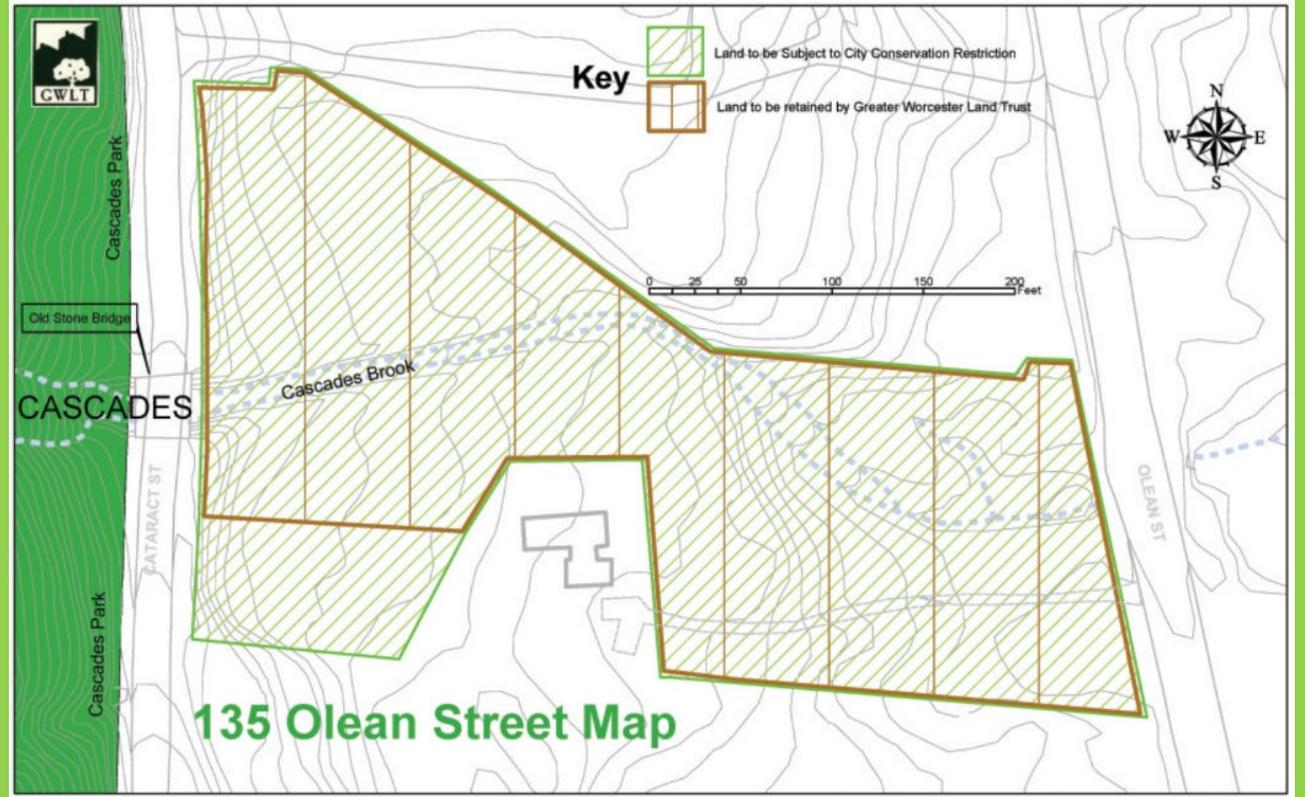
Greater Worcester Land Trust

Founded:	1987		
Staff:	2.5 FTE		
Board:	10 (Twice Monthly)		
Membership:	478		
Total Area Conserved:	3141.55 acres		
Towns:	10		
Fee: 1458ac	CR: 1095ac	Easement: 14ac	Pass Through: 571ac

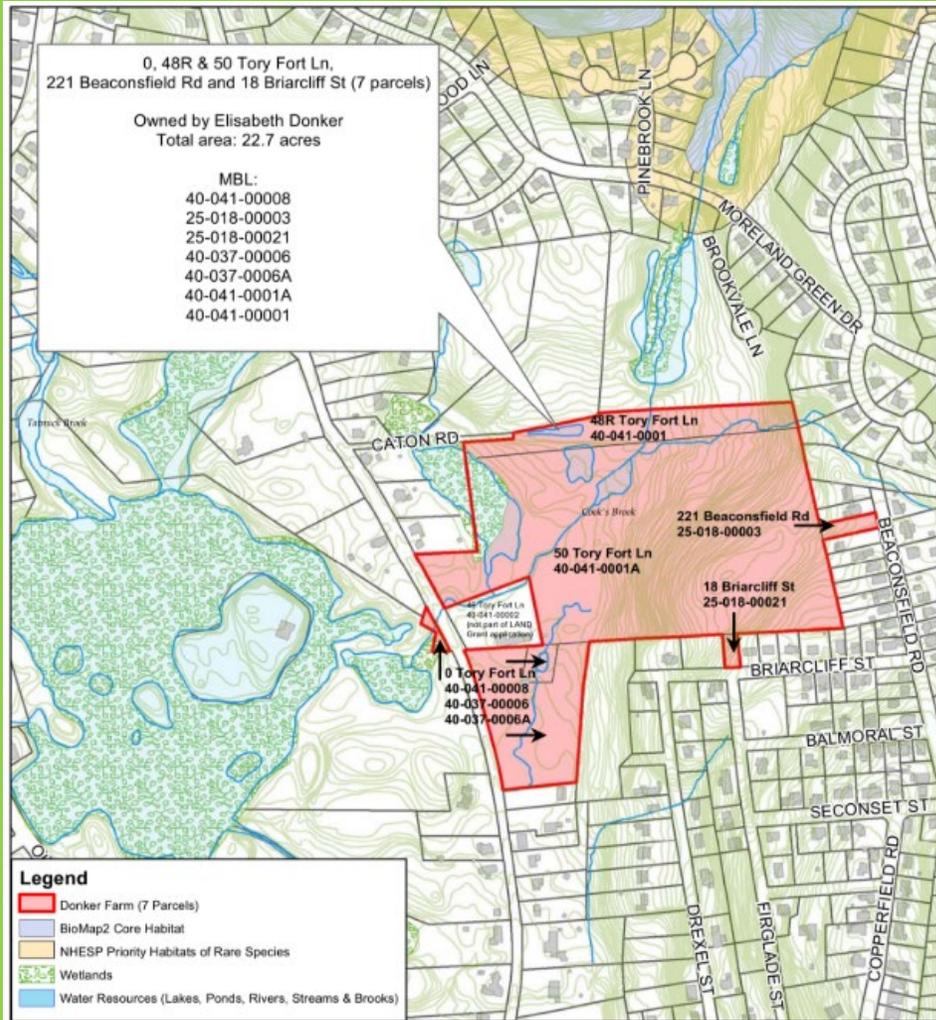




Project	Grant	Fee	CR
Cascading Waters	Conservation Partnership Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester
\$325,000	\$25,000	\$200,000	\$100,000



CASCADING WATERS - 2005



Project	Grant	Fee	CR
Donker Farm	LAND Grant	GWLT	City of Worcester
\$628,000	\$400,000	\$114,000	\$114,000



DONKER FARM - 2015

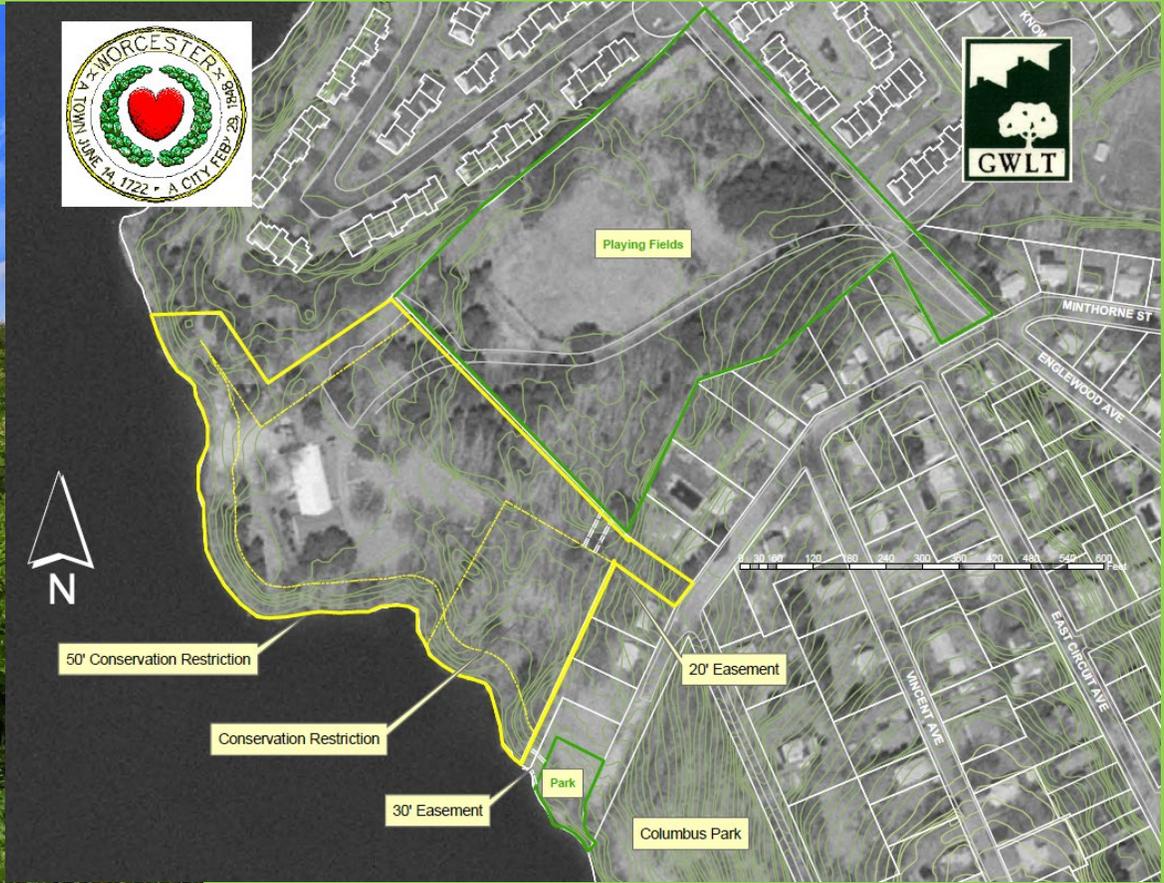


Project	Grant	Fee	CR	CR
Spring Ledge Farm	LWCF Grant	Town of Holden	City of Worcester	GWLT
\$1,280,000	\$640,000	\$100,000	\$270,000	\$270,000



SPRING LEDGE FARM - 2024

Project	Grant	Fee + CR		CR + CR	** SIDE **
Coes Reservoir	PARC Grant	\$ City of Worcester	Driveway City of Worcester	GWLT	GWLT
\$1,070,000	\$400,000	\$425,000	\$150,000	\$145,000	\$131,000



COES RESERVOIR - 2004



QUESTIONS?