A variety of local, regional, and state-wide strategies are available to achieve conservation priorities while meeting housing needs, as described in the Wachusett Greenprint.



Photo Credit: K. Blanchflower

I. Apply Open Space Planning

Open space planning and conservation design can protect community open spaces and working lands.

Few communities have the financial ability to protect all of the land they wish to conserve, so development on these lands is inevitable.

Open Space Residential Design enables housing subdivisions to protect open spaces. This site design tool:

- **Focuses on special resources to be preserved;**
- **Identifies best locations for development; and**
- **Utilizes techniques to reduce impacts to streams and ponds.**

More information on open space planning and facilitation through by-laws can be found elsewhere on this website in *Saving Open Spaces* .



***Greenprint* Maps**

To help facilitate future development and conservation decisions, the *Greenprint* maps show:

- Existing protected lands;
- Areas that should be protected; and
- Areas suitable for housing development.

Town maps show watershed boundaries, wetlands, wildlife habitats, and partially or permanently protected areas. Click on each community below to access the Greenprint map for that community (pdf version):

Holden

Hubbardston

Leominster

Paxton

Princeton

Rutland

Sterling

West Boylston

Westminster

All maps were prepared using the Massachusetts Geographic Information System (GIS) data layers.

II. Implement Low Impact Design Techniques

The best way to meet
regional conservation priorities
is by limiting development
to those areas deemed suitable
by Greenprint maps.

Low impact design (LID) is a set of strategies that helps maintain natural systems during the development process. LID techniques may be applied to:

- residential development;

- nonresidential development, as well as
- redevelopment projects.

More information on LID and facilitation through by-laws can be found elsewhere on this website in *Low Impact Design* .

III. Increase Regional Cooperation

Greenprint meeting participants agree that Wachusett tows can work together to increase assistance with issues of mutual interest. However, several concerns were raised:

- There are too few people on existing municipal boards and committees;
- Volunteers on several boards will be unable to make additional commitments; and
- Most towns lack staff to coordinate with other towns.

Collaboration among towns is a daunting process due to limited time and personnel.



MWC staff considered these challenges and identified initial actions that will facilitate collaboration:

- **Create a "circuit rider"** who can attend help town boards get the information they need about land conservation and low impact techniques;
- **Arrange community workshops** that feature experts from state, federal and private entities

- **Help area legislators** to deliver more state and federal assistance with proven techniques that can benefit all Wachusett communities.

IV. Obtain State Assistance *2008 Energy and Environment Bond Bill*

Funds available through this bill can be applied towards land and water protection efforts, as well as affordable housing initiatives:

- More than **$366 million** is provided for land accounts, including grants **for open spaces and recreation lands**
;

- Nearly **$320 million** is provided **for water resource protection and improvement.**



Town committees can work with land trusts to contact property owners and arrange the best values for investments of state, municipal and private resources.

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act enables a local bylaw to provide funding for open space, historic preservation and affordable housing.



If adopted, the bylaw establishes a local Community Preservation Committee to recommend local CPA projects. **Community funding is obtained by a surcharge on the real estate property tax, and the state provides additional matching funds.**

Funds provided by the community and the state can by used for:

- **Purchase of open space** to protect water resources, farmlands, forests, wildlife habitats, scenic places, as well as lands for recreation uses.
- **Preservation of historic structures and landscapes** which or determined to be historically or culturally significant.

- **Creation of housing** for low and moderate income households, including senior housing.

Since 2002, more than $300 million in state matches went to local Community Preservation

Funds.

In the Wachusett region, West Boylston and Hubbardston have enacted a CPA bylaw and municipal plans for other Wachusett communities recommend its adoption.