

8. NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

In addition to the open space Natural Resources described in **Chapter 6**, Bolton has unique historic and water resources that should be protected for future generations. These resources help retain the small-town character of Bolton and ensure the integrity of the town's water quality and private wells.

Since Bolton's residents rely on private wells for their water supply, it behooves the Town to continue the protection of all wetlands, streams and watershed areas. Many small ponds and streams are already located within conservation land, which helps ensure that watersheds are protected. Residents are fortunate to be able to enjoy some of these untouched places, such as the Nashua and Still Rivers, and Welch Pond.

Bolton evolved as a linear town along the Post Road, now Rte. 117. Historically, the Town Common was located between the Town Hall and the First Parish of Bolton. Bolton's town center is located along Main Street (Rte. 117), roughly between Harvard Road and I-495. The Post Road was a major stagecoach and mail route before the burgeoning rail industry of the 19th century. A number of inns, cottage industries, and civic buildings were erected in this district, including the first meetinghouse, schoolhouse, and Baptist meetinghouse.

In 1998, a Preservation Plan for the Town of Bolton was commissioned by the Historical Commission to help guide the protection of historic resources in town, and to increase public awareness of the importance of these resources. The Preservation Plan is available at http://www.townofbolton.com/Pages/BoltonMA_HistComm/plan. Documents on Bolton History, the Historic District Map and an Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey are also available on the Town of Bolton website. Historical and architectural surveys of every historical resource in Bolton (houses, cemeteries, mill remains, etc.) are available at the Town Hall and will soon be online.

8.1 Create Local Historic Districts



The MPC recommends that a Local Historic District be created in the Town Center area. According to the 1998 Preservation Plan, over two-thirds of the 30 original buildings located in the district in 1831 are still standing and subsequent structures are well integrated with the neighborhood fabric. The area is already designated as a National Register Historic District, but this provides very little protection from demolition of structures. Bolton has enacted a Demolition Delay bylaw (see Town of Bolton Bylaws, sect. 1.17) that requires a six-month review for historical and architectural significance by the Historical Commission before a demolition permit can be issued. A Local Historic District would emphasize the importance of Bolton's historic buildings by deterring demolition after the six-month review, and providing design reviews for new construction or alterations to existing structures within the District.

After the Town gains experience with the first Local Historic District, consider establishing LHDs at the locations listed in the Preservation Plan for the Town of Bolton, beginning with The Pan and East Bolton, both east of I-495, along Route 117. Finally, the MPC recommends that the Historical Commission continue to evaluate other areas and buildings of interest for creation of additional Local Historic Districts.

Responsible Entity- The Historical Commission and Board of Selectmen

8.2 Nominate Structures to State and National Historic Register

The town should nominate structures, areas and landscapes for inclusion on the National and State Historic Register. The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the Nation, the State, or the community
- Consideration in the planning for Federal or federally assisted projects
- Eligibility for Federal and State tax benefits
- Qualification for Federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available

Inclusion on the State and National Historic Register does not interfere with the private property rights of the structure. The property may be altered or even destroyed if the property owner so chooses. However, there are certain benefits for listing a property: Any government funded project that may affect the historic property requires that Federal agencies allow the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation an opportunity to comment. This protects the property from harmful road projects, or other such projects that could negatively affect the property. Further, owners of properties listed in the National Register may be eligible for a 20% investment tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of income-producing certified historic structures such as commercial, industrial, or rental residential buildings. This credit can be combined with a straight-line depreciation period of 27.5 years for residential property and 31.5 years for nonresidential property for the depreciable basis of the rehabilitated building reduced by the amount of the tax credit claimed. Federal tax deductions are also available for charitable

contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures.

Responsible Entity- The Historical Commission

8.3 Protect a Future Water Source Site at Bolton Flats

Private wells currently serve Bolton's drinking water needs, and may for generations to come. However, it would be prudent to secure a future Town well site in the event that continued development of the town cause private wells to become unworkable in the future. The Bolton Open Space Plan has identified an excellent possible water source abutting Bolton Flats which taps into its vast underground aquifer. The MPC endorses the protection of this potential site and encourages the Town to fund a study of the town's water resources, and current and future water consumption, to further this effort.

Responsible Entity – The Board of Health, Planning Board, and the Conservation Commission should work with the Board of Selectmen to review the site selection and leverage the funding to secure it.

8.4 Maintain Bolton's Scenic Roads

Most roads in Bolton, with the exception of the main highways, routes 117, 85 and 110, are designated as Scenic Roads. This designation provides some protection for the views that make Bolton unique, including the historic stone walls, stone bridges, dams, and shade trees. The existing scenic roads by-law should continue to be enforced, but further progress can be made in protecting these resources by including their maintenance. The Bolton Conservation Commission addresses maintenance of scenic roads in their 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan. To help maintain Bolton's scenic roads, the Selectmen are piloting a shade tree program with the objective of replacing aging trees. Trees that must be removed due to disease or other distress will be replaced with new salt tolerant varieties.

Responsible Entity –Historical Commission, Planning Board, Public Works Department and Tree Warden.



Carol Singing at the Historical Society barn