



# BioMap2

CONSERVING THE BIODIVERSITY OF  
MASSACHUSETTS IN A CHANGING WORLD

## Bolton

Produced in 2012

This report and associated map provide information about important sites for biodiversity conservation in your area.

**This information is intended for conservation planning, and is not intended for use in state regulations.**





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## Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Fish & Game, through the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program (NHESP), and The Nature Conservancy's Massachusetts Program developed *BioMap2* to protect the state's biodiversity in the context of climate change.

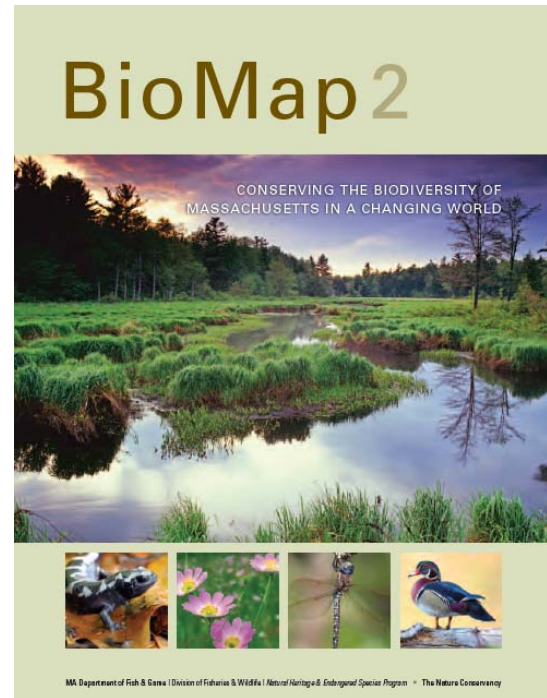
*BioMap2* combines NHESP's 30 years of rigorously documented rare species and natural community data with spatial data identifying wildlife species and habitats that were the focus of the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's 2005 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). *BioMap2* also integrates The Nature Conservancy's assessment of large, well-connected, and intact ecosystems and landscapes across the Commonwealth, incorporating concepts of ecosystem resilience to address anticipated climate change impacts.

Protection and stewardship of *BioMap2* Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape is essential to safeguard the diversity of species and their habitats, intact ecosystems, and resilient natural landscapes across Massachusetts.

## What Does Status Mean?

The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife determines a status category for each rare species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, M.G.L. c.131A, and its implementing regulations 321 CMR 10.00. Rare species are categorized as Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern according to the following:

- Endangered species are in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of their range or are in danger of extirpation from Massachusetts.



Get your copy of the *BioMap2* report! Download from [www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp) or contact Natural Heritage at 508-389-6360 or [natural.heritage@state.ma.us](mailto:natural.heritage@state.ma.us).

- Threatened species are likely to become Endangered in Massachusetts in the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of their range.
- Special Concern species have suffered a decline that could threaten the species if allowed to continue unchecked or occur in such small numbers or with such restricted distribution or specialized habitat requirements that they could easily become Threatened in Massachusetts.

In addition NHESP maintains an unofficial watch list of plants that are tracked due to potential conservation interest or concern, but are not regulated under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act or other laws or regulations. Likewise, described natural communities are not regulated by any law or regulations, but they can help to identify





ecologically important areas that are worthy of protection. The status of natural communities reflects the documented number and acreages of each community type in the state:

- Critically Imperiled communities typically have 5 or fewer documented sites or have very few remaining acres in the state.
- Imperiled communities typically have 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.
- Vulnerable communities typically have 21-100 sites or limited acreage across the state.
- Secure communities typically have over 100 sites or abundant acreage across the state; however, excellent examples are identified as Core Habitats to ensure continued protection.

In 2005 the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife completed a comprehensive State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) documenting the status of Massachusetts wildlife and providing recommendations to help guide wildlife conservation decision-making. SWAP includes all the wildlife species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), as well as more than 80 species that need conservation attention but do not meet the requirements for inclusion under MESA. The SWAP document is organized around habitat types in need of conservation within the Commonwealth. While the original BioMap focused primarily on rare species protected under MESA, *BioMap2* also addresses other Species of Conservation Concern, their habitats, and the ecosystems that support them to create a spatial representation of most of the elements of SWAP.

### ***BioMap2*: One Plan, Two Components**

*BioMap2* identifies two complementary spatial layers, Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape.

Core Habitat identifies key areas that are critical for the long-term persistence of rare species and other Species of Conservation Concern, as well as a wide diversity of natural communities and intact ecosystems across the Commonwealth. Protection of Core Habitats will contribute to the conservation of specific elements of biodiversity.

Critical Natural Landscape identifies large natural Landscape Blocks that are minimally impacted by development. If protected, these areas will provide habitat for wide-ranging native species, support intact ecological processes, maintain connectivity among habitats, and enhance ecological resilience to natural and anthropogenic disturbances in a rapidly changing world. Areas delineated as Critical Natural Landscape also include buffering upland around wetland, coastal, and aquatic Core Habitats to help ensure their long-term integrity.

The long-term persistence of Massachusetts biological resources requires a determined commitment to land and water conservation. Protection and stewardship of both Critical Natural Landscapes and Core Habitats are needed to realize the biodiversity conservation vision of *BioMap2*.

### Components of Core Habitat

Core Habitat identifies specific areas necessary to promote the long-term persistence of rare species, other Species of Conservation Concern, exemplary natural communities, and intact ecosystems.

### Rare Species

There are 432 native plant and animal species listed as Endangered, Threatened or Special Concern under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) based on their rarity, population trends, and threats to survival. For





Table 1. Species of Conservation Concern described in the State Wildlife Action Plan and/or included on the MESA List and for which habitat was mapped in *BioMap2*. Note that plants are not included in SWAP, and that marine species such as whales and sea turtles are not included in *BioMap2*.

Taxonomic Group	MESA-listed Species	Non-listed Species of Conservation Concern
Mammals	4	5
Birds	27	23
Reptiles	10	5
Amphibians	4	3
Fish	10	17
Invertebrates	102	9
Plants	256	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>62</b>

*BioMap2*, NHESP staff identified the highest quality habitat sites for each non-marine species based on size, condition, and landscape context.

### Other Species of Conservation Concern

In addition to species on the MESA List described previously, the State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) identifies 257 wildlife species and 22 natural habitats most in need of conservation within the Commonwealth. *BioMap2* includes species-specific habitat areas for 45 of these species and habitat for 17 additional species which was mapped with other coarse-filter and fine-filter approaches.

### Priority Natural Communities

Natural communities are assemblages of plant and animal species that share a common environment and occur together repeatedly on the landscape. *BioMap2* gives conservation

priority to natural communities with limited distribution and to the best examples of more common types.

### Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat, especially for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. *BioMap2* identifies the top 5 percent most interconnected clusters of Potential Vernal Pools in the state.

### Forest Cores

In *BioMap2*, Core Habitat includes the best examples of large, intact forests that are least impacted by roads and development, providing critical habitat for numerous woodland species. For example, the interior forest habitat defined by Forest Cores supports many bird species sensitive to the impacts of roads and development, such as the Black-throated Green Warbler, and helps maintain ecological processes found only in unfragmented forest patches.

### Wetland Cores

*BioMap2* used an assessment of Ecological Integrity to identify the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

### Aquatic Cores

To delineate integrated and functional ecosystems for fish species and other aquatic







Species of Conservation Concern, beyond the species and exemplary habitats described above, *BioMap2* identifies intact river corridors within which important physical and ecological processes of the river or stream occur.

### Components of Critical Natural Landscape

Critical Natural Landscape identifies intact landscapes in Massachusetts that are better able to support ecological processes and disturbance regimes, and a wide array of species and habitats over long time frames.

### Landscape Blocks

*BioMap2* identifies the most intact large areas of predominately natural vegetation, consisting of contiguous forests, wetlands, rivers, lakes, and ponds, as well as coastal habitats such as barrier beaches and salt marshes.

### Upland Buffers of Wetland and Aquatic Cores

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers.

### Upland Habitat to Support Coastal Adaptation

*BioMap2* identifies undeveloped lands adjacent to and up to one and a half meters above existing salt marshes as Critical Natural Landscapes with high potential to support inland migration of salt marsh and other coastal habitats over the coming century.

The conservation areas identified by *BioMap2* are based on breadth and depth of data, scientific expertise, and understanding of Massachusetts' biodiversity. The numerous sources of information and analyses used to

### Legal Protection of Biodiversity

*BioMap2* presents a powerful vision of what Massachusetts would look like with full protection of the land most important for supporting the Commonwealth's biodiversity. While *BioMap2* is a planning tool with *no regulatory function*, all state-listed species enjoy legal protection under the [Massachusetts Endangered Species Act \(M.G.L. c.131A\)](#) and its implementing regulations ([321 CMR 10.00](#)). Wetland habitat of state-listed wildlife is also protected under the [Wetlands Protection Act Regulations \(310 CMR 10.00\)](#). The *Natural Heritage Atlas* contains maps of [Priority Habitats and Estimated Habitats](#), which are used, respectively, for regulation under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and the Wetlands Protection Act. For more information on rare species regulations, and to view Priority and Estimated Habitat maps, please see the [Regulatory Review](#) page at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dfg/dfw/natural-heritage/regulatory-review/>.

***BioMap2* is a conservation planning tool that does not, in any way, supplant the Estimated and Priority Habitat Maps which have regulatory significance. Unless and until the *BioMap2* vision is fully realized, we must continue to protect our most imperiled species and their habitats.**

create Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape are complementary, and outline a comprehensive conservation vision for Massachusetts, from rare species to intact landscapes. In total, these robust analyses define a suite of priority lands and waters that, if permanently protected, will support Massachusetts' natural systems for generations to come.





## Understanding Core Habitat Summaries

Following the Town Overview, there is a descriptive summary of each Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape that occurs in your city or town. These summaries highlight some of the outstanding characteristics of each Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape, and will help you learn more about your city or town's biodiversity. You can find out more information about many of these species and natural communities by looking at specific fact sheets at [www.mass.gov/nhosp](http://www.mass.gov/nhosp).

## Additional Information

For copies of the full *BioMap2* report, the Technical Report, and an [interactive mapping tool](#), visit the [BioMap2 website](#) via the Land Protection and Planning tab at [www.mass.gov/nhosp](http://www.mass.gov/nhosp). If you have any questions about this report, or if you need help protecting land for biodiversity in your community, the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program staff looks forward to working with you.

Contact the Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program

By phone 508-389-6360  
By fax 508-389-7890  
By email [natural.heritage@state.ma.us](mailto:natural.heritage@state.ma.us)  
By Mail 100 Hartwell Street, Suite 230  
West Boylston, MA 01583

The GIS datalayers of *BioMap2* are available for download from MassGIS at [www.mass.gov/mgis](http://www.mass.gov/mgis).





## Town Overview

Bolton lies within the Southern New England Coastal Plains and Hills Ecoregion, an area comprised of plains with a few low hills. Forests are mainly central hardwoods with some transition hardwoods and some elm-ash-red maple and red and white pine. Many major rivers drain this area.



## Bolton at a Glance

- Total Area: 12,850 acres (20.1 square miles)
- Human Population in 2010: 4,897
- Open space protected in perpetuity: 2,166 acres, or 16.9% percent of total area\*
- BioMap2 Core Habitat: 2,914 acres
- BioMap2 Core Habitat Protected: 1,089 acres or 37.4%
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape: 547 acres
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape Protected: 438 acres or 80.1%.

## BioMap2 Components

### Core Habitats

- 3 Exemplary or Priority Natural Community Cores
- 2 Wetland Cores
- 2 Aquatic Cores
- 1 Vernal Pool Core
- 6 Species of Conservation Concern Cores\*\*
  - 6 birds, 2 reptiles, 4 amphibians, 5 insects, 2 plants

### Critical Natural Landscape

- 2 Wetland Core Buffers
- 1 Aquatic Core Buffer

\* Calculated using MassGIS data layer "Protected and Recreational Open Space—March, 2012".

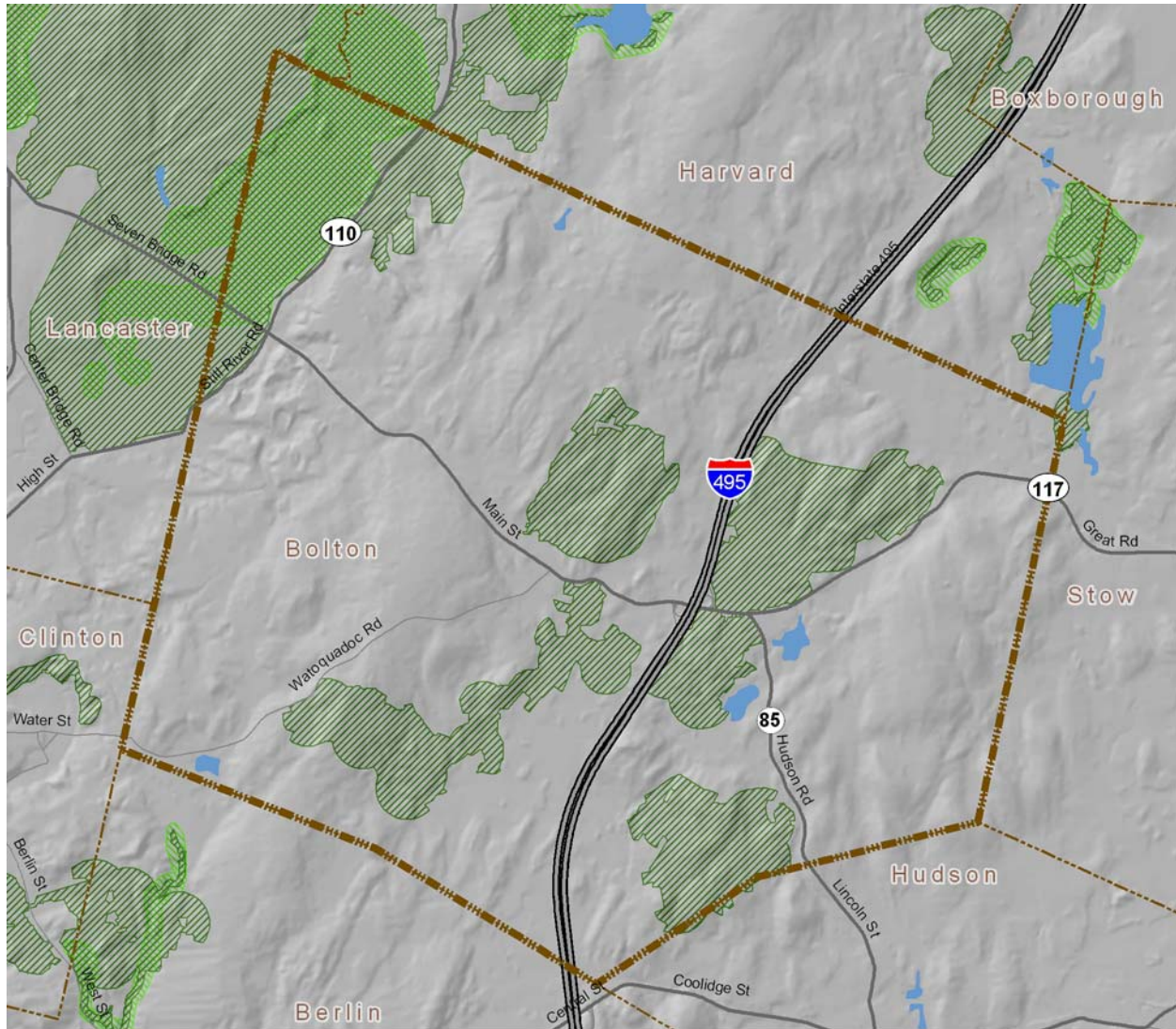
\*\* See next pages for complete list of species, natural communities and other biodiversity elements.





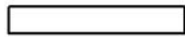




### BioMap2 Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape in Bolton



-  BioMap2 Core Habitat
-  BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape

1 Mile  




Natural Heritage  
& Endangered  
Species Program

Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife  
1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581  
phone: 508-389-6360 fax: 508-389-7890

For more information on rare species and natural communities, please see our fact sheets online at [www.mass.gov/nhesp](http://www.mass.gov/nhesp).



**Species of Conservation Concern, Priority and Exemplary Natural Communities,  
and Other Elements of Biodiversity in Bolton**

**Insects**

**Moths**

- [Twilight Moth](#), (*Lycia rachelae*), E
- [Pink Sallow Moth](#), (*Psectraglaea carnosa*), SC
- [Pine Barrens Speranza](#), (*Speranza exonerata*), SC
- [Pine Barrens Zanclognatha](#), (*Zanclognatha martha*), T

**Beetles**

- [Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle](#), (*Cicindela duodecimguttata*), SC

**Amphibians**

- [Four-toed Salamander](#), (*Hemidactylium scutatum*), Non-listed SWAP
- Northern Leopard Frog, (*Rana pipiens*), Non-listed SWAP
- [Blue-spotted Salamander](#), (*Ambystoma laterale*), SC
- [Marbled Salamander](#), (*Ambystoma opacum*), T

**Reptiles**

- Eastern Ribbon Snake, (*Thamnophis sauritus*), Non-listed SWAP
- [Blanding's Turtle](#), (*Emydoidea blandingii*), T

**Birds**

- [American Bittern](#), (*Botaurus lentiginosus*), E
- [Least Bittern](#), (*Ixobrychus exilis*), E
- [Sora](#), (*Porzana carolina*), Non-listed SWAP
- [Eastern Whip-poor-will](#), (*Caprimulgus vociferus*), SC
- [Grasshopper Sparrow](#), (*Ammodramus savannarum*), T
- [Vesper Sparrow](#), (*Pooecetes gramineus*), T

**Plants**

- [Autumn Coralroot](#), (*Corallorhiza odontorhiza*), SC
- [Cat-tail Sedge](#), (*Carex typhina*), T

**Priority Natural Communities**

- [High-terrace floodplain forest](#), S2
- [Pitch pine - scrub oak community](#), S2

**Exemplary Natural Communities**

- Low-energy riverbank

**Other BioMap2 Components**

- [Aquatic Core](#)
- [Wetland Core](#)
- [Vernal Pool Core](#)
- [Aquatic Core Buffer](#)
- [Wetland Core Buffer](#)





E = Endangered

T = Threatened

SC = Special Concern

S1 = Critically Imperiled communities, typically 5 or fewer documented sites or very few remaining acres in the state.

S2 = Imperiled communities, typically 6-20 sites or few remaining acres in the state.

S3 = Vulnerable communities, typically have 21-100 sites or limited acreage across the state.

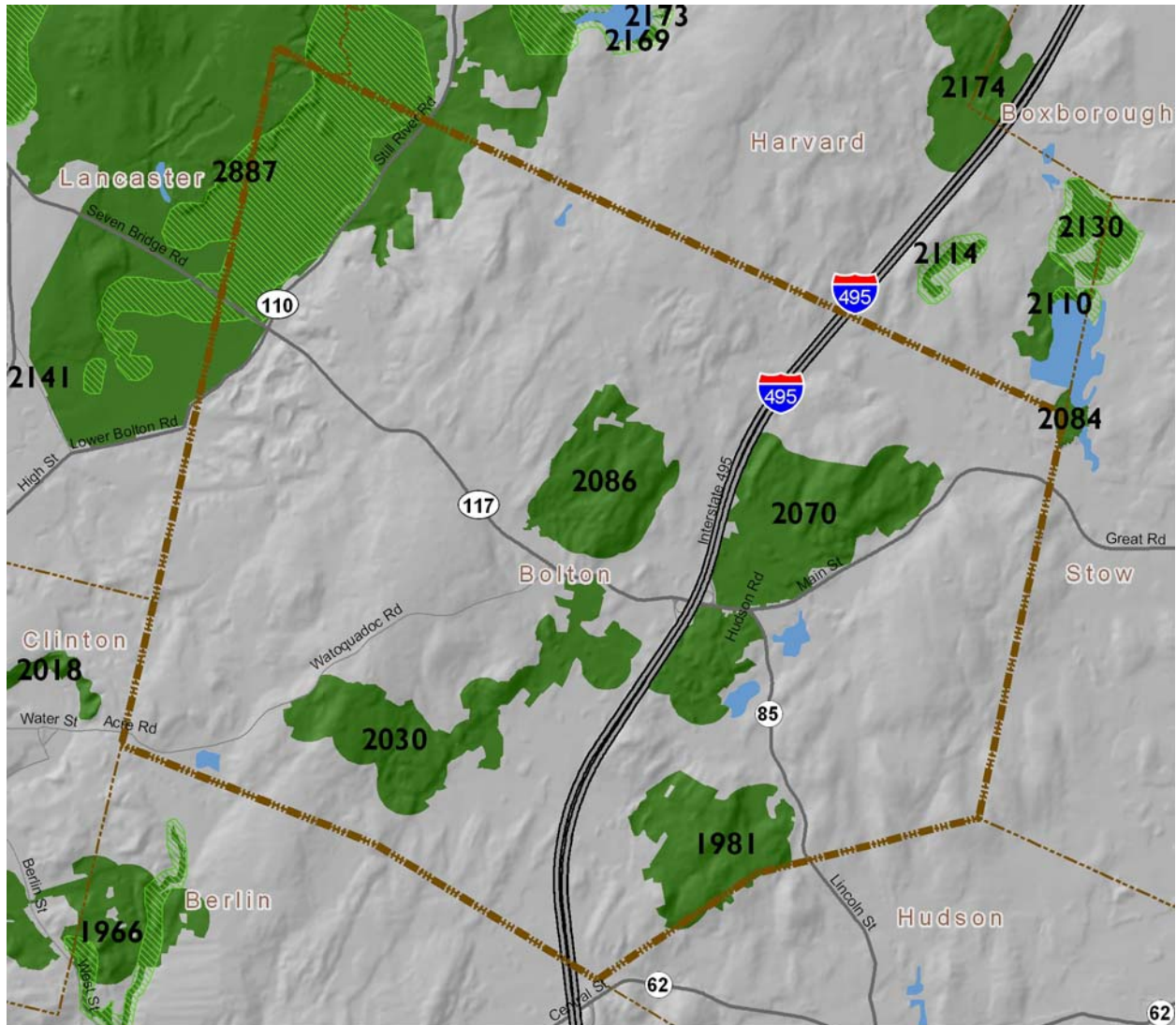




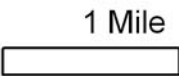


### BioMap2 Core Habitat in Bolton

Core IDs correspond with the following element lists and summaries.



- BioMap2 Core Habitat
- BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape





Elements of BioMap2 Cores

This section lists all elements of BioMap2 Cores that fall *entirely or partially* within Bolton. The elements listed here may not occur within the bounds of Bolton.

**Core 1981**

Species of Conservation Concern

Four-toed Salamander	<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Marbled Salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	T

**Core 2030**

Blue-spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	SC
Marbled Salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	T

**Core 2070**

Vernal Pool Core

Species of Conservation Concern

Autumn Coralroot	<i>Corallorhiza odontorhiza</i>	SC
Four-toed Salamander	<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Marbled Salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	T

**Core 2084**

Species of Conservation Concern

Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	T
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**Core 2086**

Species of Conservation Concern

Four-toed Salamander	<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Marbled Salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	T

**Core 2887**

Forest Core

Aquatic Core

Wetland Core

Vernal Pool Core

Priority & Exemplary Natural Communities

Acidic Graminoid Fen	S3
Alluvial Red Maple Swamp	S3
Circumneutral talus forest/woodland	S3
High-terrace floodplain forest	S2
Low-energy riverbank	S2
Pitch pine - scrub oak community	S2





Riverside seep		S2
Small-river floodplain forest		S2
Species of Conservation Concern		
Cat-tail Sedge	<i>Carex typhina</i>	T
Climbing Fern	<i>Lygodium palmatum</i>	SC
Houghton's Flatsedge	<i>Cyperus houghtonii</i>	E
Low Bindweed	<i>Calystegia spithamea</i>	E
New England Blazing Star	<i>Liatris scariosa var. novae-angliae</i>	SC
Ovate Spike-sedge	<i>Eleocharis ovata</i>	E
Philadelphia Panic-grass	<i>Panicum philadelphicum ssp. philadelphicum</i>	SC
Small Bur-reed	<i>Sparganium natans</i>	E
Wild Senna	<i>Senna hebecarpa</i>	E
Brook Floater (Swollen Wedgemussel)	<i>Alasmidonta varicosa</i>	E
Creeper	<i>Strophitus undulatus</i>	SC
Triangle Floater	<i>Alasmidonta undulata</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Intricate Fairy Shrimp	<i>Eubbranchipus intricatus</i>	SC
Pine Barrens Speranza	<i>Speranza exonerata</i>	SC
Pine Barrens Zanclognatha	<i>Zanclognatha martha</i>	T
Pink Sallow	<i>Psectraglaea carnososa</i>	SC
Twilight Moth	<i>Lycia rachelae</i>	E
Twelve-spotted Tiger Beetle	<i>Cicindela duodecimguttata</i>	SC
New England Bluet	<i>Enallagma laterale</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Arrow Clubtail	<i>Stylurus spiniceps</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Brook Snaketail	<i>Ophiogomphus aspersus</i>	SC
Kennedy's Emerald	<i>Somatochlora kennedyi</i>	E
Spatterdock Darner	<i>Rhionaeschna mutata</i>	SC
Spine-crowned Clubtail	<i>Gomphus abbreviatus</i>	SC
Umber Shadowdragon	<i>Neurocordulia obsoleta</i>	SC
Zebra Clubtail	<i>Stylurus scudderi</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Blue-spotted Salamander	<i>Ambystoma laterale</i>	SC
Four-toed Salamander	<i>Hemidactylium scutatum</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Marbled Salamander	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	T
Northern Leopard Frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Spring Salamander	<i>Gyrinophilus porphyriticus</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Blanding's Turtle	<i>Emydoidea blandingii</i>	T
Eastern Hognose Snake	<i>Heterodon platirhinos</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Eastern Ribbon Snake	<i>Thamnophis sauritus</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Northern Black Racer	<i>Coluber constrictor</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Smooth Green Snake	<i>Opheodrys vernalis</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Spotted Turtle	<i>Clemmys guttata</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Wood Turtle	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	SC
Bridle Shiner	<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	SC
American Bittern	<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	E
Eastern Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus vociferus</i>	SC







Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	T
Least Bittern	<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	E
Sora	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	Non-listed SWAP
Upland Sandpiper	<i>Bartramia longicauda</i>	E
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Pooecetes gramineus</i>	T
Water Shrew	<i>Sorex palustris</i>	SC





## Core Habitat Summaries

### **Core 1981**

A 376-acre Core Habitat featuring Species of Conservation Concern.

Four-toed Salamanders live in forested habitats surrounding swamps, bogs, marshes, vernal pools, and other fish-free waters that are used as breeding sites. Most breeding sites in MA are characterized by pit-and-mound topography with significant sphagnum-moss cover. Eggs are typically laid in mounds or patches of sphagnum moss that overhang water. Upon hatching, the larvae wriggle through the moss and drop into the water, where they will develop for several weeks prior to metamorphosis.

Adult and juvenile Marbled Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late summer or early fall to breed in dried portions of vernal pools, swamps, marshes, and other predominantly fish-free wetlands. Eggs are deposited under logs, leaf-litter, or grass tussocks and hatch after being inundated by fall rains. Larvae metamorphose during late spring, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

### **Core 2030**

A 554-acre Core Habitat featuring Species of Conservation Concern.

Adult and juvenile Blue-spotted Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late winter or early spring to breed in vernal pools and fish-free areas of swamps, marshes, or similar wetlands. Larvae metamorphose in late summer or early fall, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

Adult and juvenile Marbled Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late summer or early fall to breed in dried portions of vernal pools, swamps, marshes, and other predominantly fish-free wetlands. Eggs are deposited under logs, leaf-litter, or grass tussocks and hatch after being inundated by fall rains. Larvae metamorphose during late spring, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

### **Core 2070**

A 729-acre Core Habitat featuring Vernal Pool Core and Species of Conservation Concern.

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat, especially for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. *BioMap2* identifies the top 5 percent most interconnected clusters of Potential Vernal Pools in the state.

Autumn Coralroot, a member of the Orchid family, is a brown-purple saprophyte, obtaining its nourishment from dead organic matter in the soil rather than from photosynthesis. It grows in either light soil or rich humus in open deciduous or mixed forests.

Four-toed Salamanders live in forested habitats surrounding swamps, bogs, marshes, vernal pools, and other fish-free waters that are used as breeding sites. Most breeding sites in MA are characterized by pit-





and-mound topography with significant sphagnum-moss cover. Eggs are typically laid in mounds or patches of sphagnum moss that overhang water. Upon hatching, the larvae wriggle through the moss and drop into the water, where they will develop for several weeks prior to metamorphosis.

Adult and juvenile Marbled Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late summer or early fall to breed in dried portions of vernal pools, swamps, marshes, and other predominantly fish-free wetlands. Eggs are deposited under logs, leaf-litter, or grass tussocks and hatch after being inundated by fall rains. Larvae metamorphose during late spring, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

#### **Core 2084**

A 31-acre Core Habitat featuring a Species of Conservation Concern.

Grasshopper Sparrows nest in dry grasslands. Natural situations include sandplain grasslands, but they have adapted well to anthropogenic habitats such as airports and landfills. They are very sensitive to changes in plant composition and respond well to the effects of fire management.

#### **Core 2086**

A 371-acre Core Habitat featuring Species of Conservation Concern.

Four-toed Salamanders live in forested habitats surrounding swamps, bogs, marshes, vernal pools, and other fish-free waters that are used as breeding sites. Most breeding sites in MA are characterized by pit-and-mound topography with significant sphagnum-moss cover. Eggs are typically laid in mounds or patches of sphagnum moss that overhang water. Upon hatching, the larvae wriggle through the moss and drop into the water, where they will develop for several weeks prior to metamorphosis.

Adult and juvenile Marbled Salamanders inhabit upland forests during most of the year, where they reside in small-mammal burrows and other subsurface retreats. Adults migrate during late summer or early fall to breed in dried portions of vernal pools, swamps, marshes, and other predominantly fish-free wetlands. Eggs are deposited under logs, leaf-litter, or grass tussocks and hatch after being inundated by fall rains. Larvae metamorphose during late spring, whereupon they disperse into upland forest.

#### **Core 2887**

A 50,549-acre Core Habitat featuring Forest Core, Wetland Core, Aquatic Core, Vernal Pool Core, Priority Natural Communities, and Species of Conservation Concern.

The Nashua River and three of its tributaries in Massachusetts, the Nissitissit River, the Squannacook River, and Unkety Brook, are the watery framework for a complex landscape that supports an exceptionally high number of rare and uncommon species. Forty-one such turtles, dragonflies, freshwater mussels, salamanders, plants and other species inhabit these rivers, brooks, and vernal pools. Good populations of the globally rare Brook Floater mussel inhabit the Nissitissit River, while the equally rare Ringed Boghaunter dragonfly can be found in four boggy sites across this large Core Habitat. The wide-ranging and regionally rare Blanding's Turtle inhabits almost all of this Core; these turtles use many parts of this landscape throughout their decades-long lives, from feeding and over-wintering in deep





vernal pools and buttonbush swamps to nesting in open, sunny, well-drained fields and abandoned gravel pits.

Acidic Graminoid Fens are sedge- and sphagnum-dominated acidic peatlands that experience some groundwater and/or surface water flow but no calcareous seepage. Standing water is often present throughout much of the growing season. This is a good example of a variant of Acidic Graminoid Fen dominated by Water Willow. It has good structural characteristics and no exotic invasive species.

Alluvial Red Maple Swamps are a type of red maple swamp that occurs in low areas along rivers and streams. Regular flooding enriches the soil with nutrients, resulting in an unusual set of associated trees and plants. This example of Alluvial Red Maple Swamp is of excellent quality and is associated with several small oxbow ponds.

Circumneutral Talus Forest communities develop on boulder strewn slopes below slightly acidic cliffs or rock outcrops. There is often a gradient of vegetation density as the slope changes, with more trees on the lower slope. This example of Circumneutral Talus Forest, though small, is in very good condition. It has excellent diversity and no exotic invasive species, but has only a small buffer to development.

High-Terrace Floodplain Forests are deciduous hardwood forests that occur along riverbanks, above the zone of annual flooding. Although they do not flood annually, they flood often enough for the soil to be moderately enriched. This Core has two examples of High-Terrace Floodplain Forest which are moderate sized, but fairly disturbed with exotic invasive species present.

Low-Energy Riverbanks are open herbaceous communities occurring on sandy or silty mineral soils of river and streambanks that do not experience severe flooding or ice scour. This example of Low-Energy Riverbank is in good condition, with few exotics, and is part of a larger complex of riverine and wetland ecosystems.

Pitch Pine/Scrub Oak Communities are globally rare, fire-dependent, shrub-dominated communities, with scattered trees and occasional openings. They provide habitat for many rare species, and develop on dry, poor, usually sandy, soils. This example of Pitch pine-Scrub Oak community is in good condition, with intact natural processes like fire, and good species and habitat diversity.

Riverside Seeps are a mixed herbaceous community that occurs at the base of steep riverbanks where groundwater seeps out of the bottom of the upland slope. This enrichment leads to high species diversity. This example of Riverside Seep is relatively undisturbed and of high quality, and consists of several Black Ash-dominated seepy areas occurring along a slope above floodplain forest.

Small-River Floodplain Forests are silver maple/green ash forests occurring on alluvial soils of small rivers and streams. They occur on small tributaries of the Connecticut and Nashua Rivers and along some small rivers of eastern Massachusetts. This small example of Small-River Floodplain Forest is in good condition.

Forest Cores are the best examples of large, intact forests that are least impacted by roads and development. Forest Cores support many bird species sensitive to the impacts of roads and development and help maintain ecological processes found only in unfragmented forest patches.

Wetlands Cores are the least disturbed wetlands in the state within undeveloped landscapes—those with intact buffers and little fragmentation or other stressors associated with development. These wetlands are





most likely to support critical wetland functions (i.e., natural hydrologic conditions, diverse plant and animal habitats, etc.) and are most likely to maintain these functions into the future.

Aquatic Cores are intact river corridors within which important physical and ecological processes of the river or stream occur. They delineate integrated and functional ecosystems for fish species and other aquatic Species of Conservation Concern.

Vernal pools are small, seasonal wetlands that provide important wildlife habitat, especially for amphibians and invertebrate animals that use them to breed. *BioMap2* identifies the top 5 percent most interconnected clusters of Potential Vernal Pools in the state.

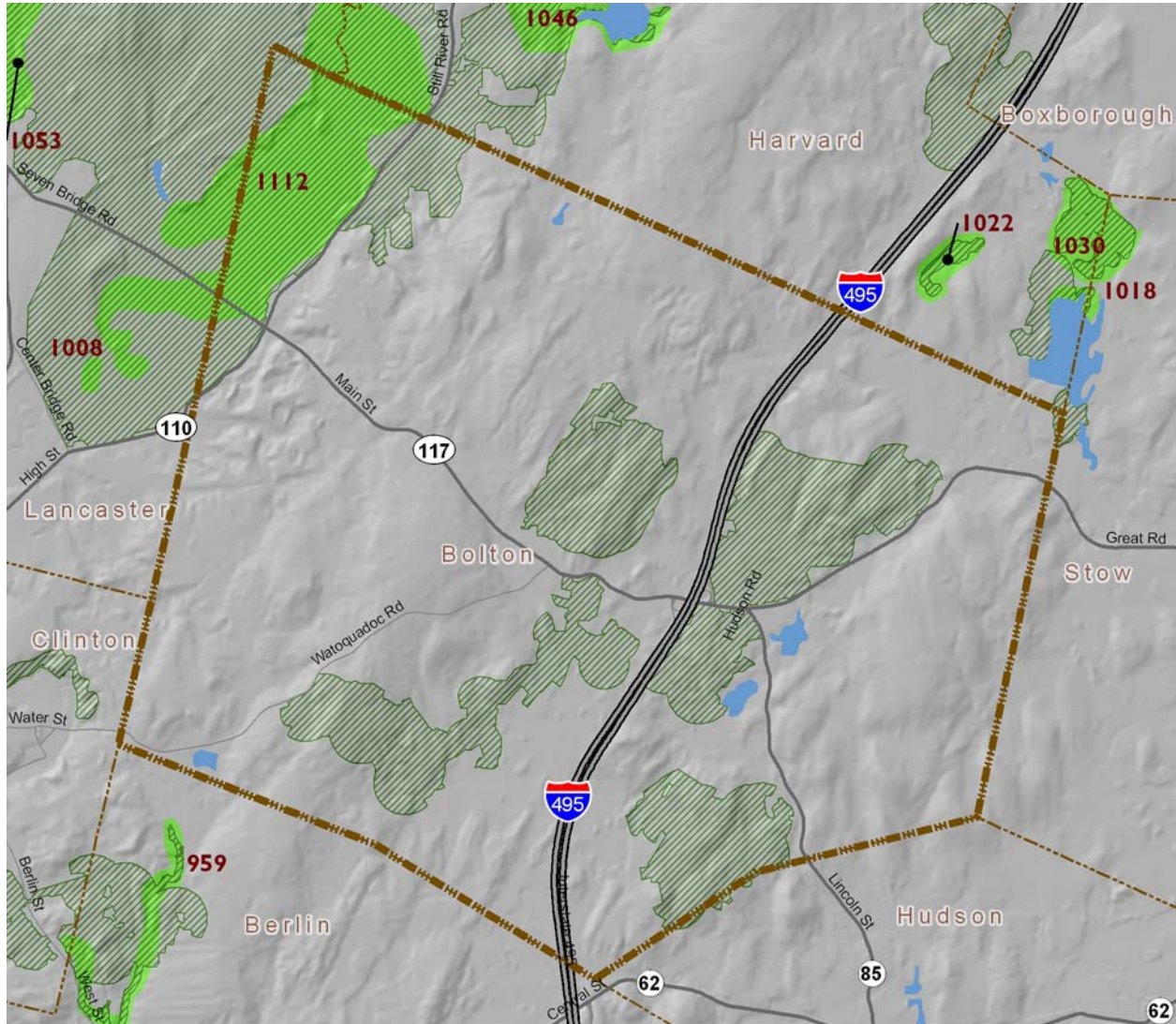






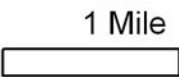


### BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape in Bolton

Critical Natural Landscape IDs correspond with the following element lists and summaries.



-  BioMap2 Core Habitat
-  BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscape







### Elements of BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscapes

This section lists all elements of BioMap2 Critical Natural Landscapes that fall *entirely or partially* within Bolton. The elements listed here may not occur within the bounds of Bolton.

#### **CNL 1112**

Aquatic Core Buffer

Wetland Core Buffer





### Critical Natural Landscape Summaries

#### **CNL 1112**

A 2,357-acre Critical Natural Landscape featuring Aquatic Core Buffer and Wetland Core Buffer.

A variety of analyses were used to identify protective upland buffers around wetlands and rivers. One, the variable width buffers methodology, included the most intact areas around each wetland and river, by extending deeper into surrounding unfragmented habitats than into developed areas adjacent to each wetland. Other upland buffers were identified through the rare species habitat analysis. In this way, the conservation of wetland buffers will support the habitats and functionality of each wetland, and also include adjacent uplands that are important for many species that move between habitat types.



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## Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Fund

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