

Questions and Resources for Team Preparation 2005 Massachusetts Envirothon Current Issue

Protecting Cultural Landscapes

This year's Envirothon current issue asks you to take a new look at the landscape around you. Your team will investigate how your community's history and its relationship to natural resources are expressed in the landscape. You will develop your own critical perspective on what is important to protect in light of this heritage, and you will make a proposal for specific next steps to be taken.

You are encouraged to consider water as well as land resources as you look at the landscape. Streams and rivers, estuaries and bays, and of course the ocean, have played — and continue to play — a critical role in Massachusetts' history and development. Water is a central feature of the "land"scape.

We also encourage you to find ways to take what you learn here and contribute to existing efforts to protect cultural landscapes in your community! Your extra effort on the current issue will qualify you for the Massachusetts Envirothon Community Awards for Community Research and/or Community Service. More information is at <http://maenvirothon.org/website-html/communityawards.html>.

This document offers an outline of 1) background information & resources and 2) questions & strategies for community investigation that teams can use to prepare for their presentation. It is also on line, with live Internet links, at <http://maenvirothon.org/website-html/currentissue2005.pdf>.

The following resource people offered ideas, advice, and resources to this effort:

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1. UNDERSTANDING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

What do landscapes have to do with natural resource management?

The term "landscape" is used often in art. We don't normally associate it with science and land management. Its use suggests the importance of visual qualities that are hard to measure. We use it loosely; for example, to refer to both the view from a mountaintop and the design of a backyard garden. How can the study of landscapes relate to management?

In the latter part of the 20th century, the study of landscapes developed as the study of how people have interacted with each other, and how communities of people have used nature, as concretely expressed in their surroundings. In the introduction to his book *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (1984) John Brinckerhoff Jackson, a preeminent thinker who focused the idea of landscape in the American consciousness, defined a landscape as

. . . not a natural feature of the environment, but a *synthetic* [emphasis in the original] space, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the land functioning and evolving not according to natural laws but to serve a community . . . a place deliberately created to speed up or slow down the process of nature. (page 8)

J.B. Jackson continued:

No group sets out to create a landscape, of course. What it sets out to do is to create a community, and the landscape as its visible manifestation is simply the by-product of people working and living, sometimes coming together, sometimes staying apart, but always recognizing their interdependence. (page 12)

Envirothon teams who have investigated previous current issues know that management of our use of natural resources requires a big picture understanding of people as well as nature. The study of landscapes can provide such a framework and perspective for stewardship.

What do we mean by a "cultural landscape"?

In a sense, *every* landscape is a cultural landscape — every landscape has a story to tell about the relationship between people and nature, past and present. Thus, for many scholars (such as J.B. Jackson above) cultural landscapes are less a particular kind of landscape than they are a way of "seeing" our everyday surroundings in a new way. We can learn much about our society, our economy, and our values by paying attention to our use of the land. For more on this way of looking at cultural landscapes, visit the Institute for Cultural Landscape Studies (ICLS) at <http://www.icls.harvard.edu/sources/lang1.html> and <http://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/programs/ld/icls.html>

Appreciation for cultural values in the landscape naturally tends to focus on places that best represent those values. "Cultural landscape" has thus become a label for specific places with special value and significance. For purposes of the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory program (see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/Inventoryprog.htm>), for example, "Heritage, or cultural, landscapes is a broad term for the special places created by human interaction with the environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past." (Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (2003). *Reading the Land, Massachusetts Heritage Landscapes: A Guide to Identification and Protection*, p. 3)

The on-the-ground work of protecting and managing sites that have cultural value has given rise to

specific, formal definitions of cultural landscapes that reflect practical considerations for planning and stewardship. In its authoritative Preservation Brief 36, *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes* (<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>), the National Park Service (NPS), the agency in the United States that has taken the lead in managing cultural landscapes, defines a cultural landscape as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." The NPS divides cultural landscapes into four general types for purposes of planning and management (official definitions abbreviated here):

Historic Designed Landscape — These are landscapes consciously designed or laid out according to design principles, or in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.

Historic Vernacular Landscape — These can be a single property such as a farm or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. These are landscapes that evolved through use by the people whose activities shaped that landscape; they reflect the physical, biological, and cultural character of everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. Examples include rural villages, industrial complexes, and agricultural landscapes.

Historic Site — These are landscapes significant for their association with a historic event, activity, or person. Examples include battlefields and president's house properties.

Ethnographic Landscape — These landscapes contain a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence and ceremonial grounds are often components. Examples include contemporary settlements, religious sacred sites, and massive geological structures.

For another in-depth look at these definitions and some examples, and also teaching resources, see the web site for the Cultural Landscape Foundation at <http://www.tclf.org/>.

What should be protected?

The impulse to identify and protect special landscapes has grown out of our awareness of the importance of landscapes to our understanding of ourselves. But the definition of "special" can vary across time, in different places and for different cultures:

A landscape valued by one group may be simply invisible, or even offensive, to another. Next to an official historic district may be a neighborhood that is not eligible for any special treatment but has deep meaning and associations for the people who live there. Mobile homes may be critical to a farm economy, though they jar the sensibilities of visitors expecting to see only white clapboard houses and wooded hillsides from a "scenic overlook" in a state forest. . . . Even when landscape preservation standards are broadened to include a wide range of landscape types, strict preservation is not always an appropriate stance. Designers and communities may also choose to transform existing landscapes or create new ones. Managing cultural landscapes thus involves planning for positive change as well as preventing negative change.
(<http://www.icls.harvard.edu/language/whatare.html>)

In recognition of this reality, the Massachusetts' Heritage Landscape Inventory Program advises that

broad public involvement, and integration into larger community planning efforts, is key to a successful landscape protection effort:

The establishment of an effective Heritage Landscape Committee . . . and the ultimate success of the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program in your community will be related to the involvement of a broad representation of the community. The program is a local initiative; therefore, be sure to welcome anyone who wants to participate. . . . The Committee should include representation from the full range of groups concerned with land use issues in order to offer a comprehensive view of heritage landscapes. . . . a balanced and broad-based Committee is an important ingredient for the success of the program. The Committee may include representatives (staff and members) of municipal boards, commissions and committees, as well as delegates of local organizations such as historical societies, trusts, and neighborhood groups. Local residents knowledgeable about local history and ecology, or local professional in a related field, should be identified. (*Reading the Land*, pages 22-23)

While preserving cultural heritage is the most often cited reason for cultural landscape protection, there are other values as well, for the land and for the community:

Beyond simply the safeguarding of historic places and scenic vistas, the protection of heritage landscapes supports sustainable land use, the conservation of biological diversity, and the preservation of community character. . . . Planning decisions that are informed about and respectful of heritage landscapes and the community's priorities benefit the present residents and future generations with an enhanced sense of place and an improved quality of life. (*Reading the Land*, p. 41)

Protection for agriculture, increased tourism and outdoor recreation, and higher real estate values are byproducts of safeguarding cultural landscapes that can strengthen the economy, as well.

Young people — including Envirothon teams — may be resources for their towns in the identification of priorities for protection. Although it is difficult to generalize, your personal experiences growing up, as well as your Envirothon investigations this year, may enable you to offer a valuable multi-cultural and future-oriented perspective on the significance of cultural landscapes to your communities. Some of the suggestions beginning on page 10 under the heading "Discover Your Sense of Place" will help you to try out new ways of seeing your community. These activities are highly recommended! Your experience of this year's current issue, your understanding of your community, and any community service projects you undertake, will be much richer if you don't jump immediately to a focus on the most obvious "special" landscapes that have already been identified.

2. PROTECTING CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

What are the threats to cultural landscapes?

Cultural landscapes in Massachusetts are threatened by:

Natural forces. In addition to weathering and decay of built structures, the ecological community on the landscape can suffer from invasive species and soil erosion. Even the natural process of vegetation growth and succession — for example, forest reclaiming an old field — can be considered a threat if the open field is an important element of the landscape.

Economic influences. Land use is subject to economic forces — neglect and disuse in depressed economic times, and development in boom times. Protection of the landscape is rarely the most

profitable use of the land, so development — from new residential or commercial construction, to new utilities such as telecommunications towers, dams on streams and rivers, even wind generators on the horizon — is a frequent landscape threat.

Human action. Overuse can result from both too much attention (loving it to death) and too little care. Too many visitors, or particularly heavy use, can affect the natural community on the site, accelerating such threats as soil erosion. Heavy traffic on scenic roads can mar the country experience. Ironically, well-meaning attempts to provide access to sites, such as widening roads and creating parking, can also be threats.

Of course the greatest threat to cultural landscapes is a community's lack of awareness and concern, which allows these threats to take their toll.

How can landscapes be protected?

The process of protecting cultural landscapes consists roughly of three phases: identification, evaluation, and protection. While these phases have significant overlap and there is no one definitive all-inclusive checklist, elements of the process have been described in detail in a variety of places. The summary of the process below is drawn from the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Program's guide to identification and protection *Reading the Land* and from the National Park Service Preservation Brief 36 *Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment, and Management of Historic Landscapes* (<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>).

1. Identification

The main feature of the identification phase is the inventory. Inventories can include a variety of efforts, from community-wide general "windshield surveys" to listings of plant species on a particular site, and from visits to the local historical commission, the local planning board, and the local history room of the library to determine the current status of preservation-oriented by-laws and ordinances.

In *Reading the Land*, The Heritage Landscape Inventory Program recommends a two part inventory (pages 24-30). The reconnaissance survey is a broad-brush overview of the natural and historic features of the town. The first step is to draw on members of the community to brainstorm an inclusive list of landscapes, based on a clear set of criteria. The reconnaissance also includes preliminary visits by the committee to the sites, including photography and first contact with the owners. The second part of the survey is the intensive survey, a carefully planned collection of detailed descriptive and historical information about a limited number of sites that appear to rank highest according to the set criteria. The intensive survey includes extensive field work and research in the library and town hall. Data is recorded on Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory forms. Descriptive information includes boundaries, overall context and character, unifying features, arrangement of features, natural and vegetative features, and buildings and structures.

2. Evaluation

Evaluation is the crucial part of the process where the results of survey activities are used to define approaches and priorities for protection. Evaluation actually begins at the very beginning of the identification phase, with decisions about criteria for judging the significance of landscapes.

The evaluation process addresses both the integrity and significance of the landscape. Questions about

integrity include: Does the landscape retain elements of the historic setting? To what degree do original and historic materials remain on the site? Does the landscape convey a feeling of its historical past? Questions about significance include: Is the landscape associated with events that have made a significant contribution to broad patterns of our history? Does the landscape embody distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction? Does the landscape represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction? Does the landscape possess high scenic value? Does the landscape generate a strong positive reaction from the community for reasons of the heart?

The National Register of Historic Places, part of the National Park Service, is the official list of U.S. historic and archaeological resources deemed worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. (see <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/about.htm>)

The National Register offers clearly defined criteria (see <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/listing.htm>) for listing that make the task of evaluation easier, whether or not the goal is to be included in the Register. The Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Program also recommends that communities consider landscapes that have deep importance for the community but may not meet the National Register's standards.

3. Protection

Planning. The protection phase is characterized by thorough planning for both the short and long term. The Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Program emphasizes that public participation in planning is essential. The key steps suggested for heritage landscape protection at the local level are: educating the community's citizens, building community support, and then development of the plans themselves. Planning can be quite extensive: the National Park Service recommends that products of this phase should include a treatment plan, an interpretive guide, a maintenance guide, and a plan for maintenance record-keeping. The inventory process described by the NPS in *Protecting Cultural Landscapes* (<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>) results in the development of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) whose goal of the CLR is to provide managers with the information they need to make good decisions. Development of the CLR involves extensive research into the history, significance, and treatment of the resource, including evaluation of the integrity of the landscape.

Treatment. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (on page 8 of *Protecting Cultural Landscapes* at <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>) include four primary treatments, or kinds of work carried out to achieve a historic preservation goal. The primary focus is on the built environment (official definitions abbreviated here):

Preservation applies measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction.

Rehabilitation makes possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical or cultural values.

Restoration is defined as accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

Reconstruction involves depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and

detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Treatments for biotic systems represented in historic landscapes are not as well delineated. However, some detail — including guidance for specimen plant management, vegetation systems management, pest management, and endangered species — is provided as part of NPS publication 28 Cultural Resources Management Guideline (pages 11-12 at http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/nps28/28chap7.htm). DCR's Urban Forestry web site (<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/urban/>) is a good Massachusetts resource for these issues. Urban and community foresters must frequently take cultural and historical values into consideration. Eric Seaborn, Massachusetts' Urban Forestry Coordinator (617/626-1468 or eric.seaborn@state.ma.us) welcomes calls from Envirothon teams interested in these topics.

Protection tools. An array of protection tools are available at the federal, state, and local levels, and in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Each landscape protection issue is in some way unique, so the appropriate solution will also be a unique application of one or more of these tools.

Acquisition — This is the most permanent way to protect a landscape. However, it is often expensive and public ownership can be complicated to arrange. Public-private partnerships between governments and conservation organizations and land trusts are often important.

Legal restrictions — These are the second most binding way to protect a landscape, involving a restriction on the use of the property that is given by the owner (usually for a tax advantage) and recorded on the deed. Examples include listing on the State Register of Historic Places and Agriculture Preservation Restrictions.

Preservation through zoning, bylaws, and ordinances — A variety of creative legal mechanisms for protection are available to towns. Many need to be passed by two thirds votes of the town meeting or other local legislative body. Examples include scenic vista protection bylaws, village center zoning, scenic road bylaws, and local historic districts. A publication from the Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*, is available on the Mass EOEAs' Community Preservation website at <http://compres.env.state.ma.us/content/ptpo.asp>

Consideration as part of comprehensive planning processes — By itself, including cultural landscapes in comprehensive planning does not afford protection. However, it ensures that concerns about cultural landscapes will be integrated into considerations of open space, community preservation, and master planning that communities must undertake.

Application for technical assistance and funding — A variety of state programs offer help to municipalities and nonprofit organizations seeking to protect specific types of cultural landscape resources. For example, DCR's Historic Cemeteries Preservation Initiative has created a manual, *Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries*.

3. RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

The two key state agencies involved in the identification, evaluation, and protection of cultural landscapes are the **Department of Conservation and Recreation** (<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/>, in particular see the Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative at <http://www.mass.gov/dem/programs/histland/histland.htm>)

and the **Massachusetts Historical Commission** (<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcidx.htm>).

See especially DCR's *Historic Landscape Bibliography*, with links to a variety of print and web publications: <http://www.mass.gov/dem/programs/histland/bibliography.doc>

Early in 2005, DCR will begin publication of *Terra Firma*, a new series of **technical bulletins on landscape preservation**. The first bulletin is expected to be available in January and will provide an overview of issues and resources for identifying, protecting, and planning for landscape preservation. For information on publication, contact Joanna Doherty, Preservation Planner, at joanna.doherty@state.ma.us or 617/626-1390.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' **Community Preservation Initiative** is another helpful resource of state government — The CPI web page is a treasure trove of relevant information, including planning documents, maps, and helpful links, town by town and statewide (<http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/>)

The Trustees of Reservations is the premier private nonprofit Massachusetts land conservation organization. The organization seeks "To preserve, for public use and enjoyment, properties of exceptional scenic, historic, and ecological value in Massachusetts." (see <http://www.thetrustees.org/>)

The **Canon Envirothon** has included a lengthy list of relevant websites as part of its preparation for the 2005 Current Issue. Go to <http://www.envirothon.org/competition/Canon2005/index.htm> and click on "2005 Envirothon Topic" for the document with live Internet links.

Local government and nongovernmental organizations. Cultural landscape protection can fall under the purview of a variety of local boards and commissions, including the Conservation Commission, Planning Board (or Planning Department), Open Space Planning Committee, and Community Preservation Committee. In particular, Envirothon teams are advised to contact:

Town Historical Commissions — As an official part of municipal government, these commissions have responsibility for the preservation, protection, and development of the historical or archeological assets of their city or town. The commissions engage in a variety of activities including research, preparing books, maps, charts, plans, recommendations for designation as historical or archaeological landmarks.

Local Historical Societies — These nongovernmental organizations of citizens interested in their town or region's past can be a great source for interviews, local color, and well-informed opinions on historical significance and cultural value. They are not directly linked with government protection efforts. However, they often work in tandem with historical commissions, and their archival and collections resources provide valuable materials for anyone researching local historic landscapes. Research materials are likely to include maps, town records, old photos, family papers and artifacts as well as local history publications and newspapers.

Maps. Maps are an essential tool for landscape documentation and planning. The following resources are recommended:

Historical maps — In addition to your local historical society, the Library of Congress has an amazing collection of maps and "bird's eye views" of Massachusetts landscapes online at the American Memory website, <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/>

Orthophotos — These maps created from black & white (and some color) aerial photographs of Massachusetts communities are another amazing resource, available at

<http://www.mass.gov/mgis/comboq.htm>

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data — Staff from the Trustees of Reservations digitized a map of "scenic landscapes" from the 1981 DEM Landscape Inventory Project report. MassGIS has made this datalayer available for downloading at <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/scen-inv.htm>

Questions & Strategies for Community Investigation

for the 2005 Mass Envirothon Current Issue

Protecting Cultural Landscapes

1. Plan Your Work Using a Calendar

Most successful Envirothon teams get started early and pace themselves in their preparations for Current Issue presentations. Particular things to remember: outdoor explorations are easier in warmer weather and longer daylight, and arranging visits and interviews can take time. Here are some calendar suggestions:

Fall	Explore your community and your own ideas with "Sense of Place" and landscape reading activities Begin a reconnaissance survey Make preliminary contacts with resource people
Winter	Interview resource people Pursue library, historical society, and web resources Investigate current landscape protection efforts Develop preliminary recommendations, pursue these with intensive research Make plans to complete checklist of Community Research Award requirements Plan service projects
Spring	Prepare your presentation When final information on the question arrives in March, make an outline of your presentation and any information you need to fill in gaps Prepare maps/visuals Practice your presentation as a dress rehearsal 3-4 times - enough so you can be relaxed and conversational with the judges

Begin service projects and assemble Community Service Award materials

2. Discover Your "Sense of Place"

Your experience of this year's current issue will be much richer if you take the time at the beginning to develop your own sense of place.

- a. John Sinton, educator and environmental historian, writes that he has found that
Among the most lasting memories we have is of the place in which we grew up, the sounds and smells, the alternate paths to and from school and around the neighborhood, the secret hiding places. . . . In 30 years of teaching, my students have written their most compelling essays in response to the assignment: 'Describe the Place in which you grew up between the ages of 8 & 12.'
(John Sinton,"A Discussion of Roots and Rootlessness". Paper presented at the 2004 Conference on Emerging Issues in Water Resources in the Northeast, UMass Amherst, October 2004)
Sinton speculates that the onset of adolescence leads young people away from connection to the homeplace and the beginnings of rootlessness.

What are YOUR memories of the place(s) you lived at ages 8 - 12? Do you find yourself losing that connection?

Your place belongs to both old and young — you have inherited landscapes from older people, and in 20 years, you'll be passing them on to your children. Ask elders in town what it was like when they were growing up, whether they have any old photos, what were the important places to them. Are the important places the same? Compare and contrast.

- b. National Geographic on-line has activities related to "How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions" that can help get you started. At <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/06/g912/tghometown.html> you will find suggestions for a lesson that asks students to create a "teen-friendly" web site for their town or to redesign their town's Web site so that it is more interesting to teenagers, based on the things they determine are important to teenagers in their town.

- c. The Orton Family Foundation (<http://www.ortontest.com/programs/>) offers several resources to promote community involvement and youth leadership in planning issues. Most relevant for cultural landscapes are their ideas for community mapping and community video. While you will need to order the print materials, just a visit to the web site can give you a shot of ideas and energy for ways you can explore your community. For example, why not create a video that portrays, through pictures and interviews, a variety of perspectives on your community's cultural landscapes?

- d. Vital Communities, an organization based in White River Junction, Vermont, teaches the development of "quests" — community treasure hunts — as one way ". . . to engage citizens in community life and to foster the long-term balance of cultural, economic, environmental and social well-being in our region." (see <http://www.vitalcommunities.org/ValleyQuest/ValleyQuest.htm>). Quests are "exciting adventures that gently share and teach the natural and cultural history of the region" using hand-drawn maps and riddle-like clues to lead participants to special places in the community and its environment. The book *Questing: A Guide to Creating Community Treasure Hunts* by Delia Clark and Steven Glazer (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2004) includes detailed suggestions for researching and creating these adventures.

e. Walden Pond in Concord is one of many Massachusetts' landscapes steeped in cultural meaning. Henry David Thoreau's writings capture the essence of place and nature and culture in the landscape. The Thoreau Institute every year sponsors a teacher institute "Approaching Walden" in which teachers create units for introducing Thoreau's life and work. Two activities are particularly recommended. See <http://www.walden.org/Education/AW/Alum/> and click on 1998 to find:

Kathy Wilson, Lowell High School, *Design A Walk*
Susie Carlisle, Souhegan High School, *The Nature Seminar*

f. A variety of "sense of place" activities can be found in your own on line search. Use them to see familiar places in new ways. Some helpful questions they will use to get you started:

Take a walk with your friends, each making a list of things that you see that are "beautiful" and "ugly". At the end, compare your lists. What do you learn?

What are some favorite spots in your community?

Do you ever choose specific routes of travel, even if they are not the fastest way, because you like the feel of a certain road or the sights along the way?

Are there places that you enjoy through more than one sense (for example, what places are enhanced by their sounds? their smells?)

What places do you take visitors to, so that they get a chance to experience them?

What places speak to you of the past? the present? possible futures? What places give you a sense of community? lack of community? What places are important to your identity and heritage? your community's identity and heritage? Are they the same? How are they different?

What are the significant natural features of your community? What are the significant cultural features? Are there landscapes in your community that could be on both lists?

What places are important to preserve? What places would you change if you could? Would others in your community make a different list?

3. Read Your Community's Landscape

How has your community's relationship to the land changed over time? What specific places tell that story? We are brought up to see our communities primarily as a collections of buildings — the land is an afterthought. Try to retrain your minds to think of your town in terms of its natural resources first. Think particularly about features that at some time have been *useful*; for example, good agricultural land, waterpower, transportation routes, accessible woodland, natural meadow, special resources such as quarryable stone, local fish availability, and peat, iron ore, or cranberry bogs.

The ability to decipher something about the history of a place just by looking at it is a skill that requires much knowledge and experience. A visit to the local historical society and the library for historic maps and other background information such as local and county histories will help enrich this experience for you. A librarian who can help you find interesting documents, or someone who can accompany you to the field and help you "see" the natural and historical evidence and the answers to questions like these in the landscape, are invaluable resources. Other resources to introduce you to historical landscapes of

Massachusetts:

- Old Sturbridge Village (<http://www.osv.org/>). Click "tour the village" under "general information"
- Harvard Forest's dioramas (<http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/museum/dioramas.html>) depict the clearing of forests, development of farms, and re-growth of forests)
- *Reading the Forested Landscape: A Natural History of New England* by Tom Wessels (Woodstock, Vermont: The Countryman Press, 1997)
- *Reflections in Bulloughs Pond: Economy and Ecosystem in New England* by Diana Muir (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 2000)

Questions relating to reading the landscape:

How have people made their living directly from the land? What evidence can you find in the historical record? in the land itself? Common examples of evidence include stone walls, cellar holes, barbed wire, many-stemmed trees.

How have people benefitted from natural resources from the land? Can you find evidence of exploitation/conservation/preservation?

Where did development occur, and when? How have water, forest, wildlife, and soil resources changed?

In what ways are the natural elements of the landscape still important economically?

At <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/06/g912/cultural.html> you will find suggestions for a project to develop appreciation for how cultural change has caused people's perceptions of places and regions to change, using a focus on the immediate community.

4. Develop an inventory of landscape resources that define your community's character.

At this point in your investigation, you are getting into territory where your community may already be engaged, and the DCR publication *Reading the Land* will be helpful.

However, we encourage you to do your own preliminary brainstorming and informal "**reconnaissance survey**" (described in *Reading the Land*, pages 24-25) before you connect with an existing community inventory effort. Consider the following categories:

Waterways:	Stream and river corridors, lakes and ponds, mill ponds, canals (also bridges, dams, mills)
Open Space:	Town commons, forested lands (including urban forests), municipal parks, agricultural lands (including community gardens), estates and formal gardens, cemeteries and burial grounds, also individual trees (consider the heritage associated with American elms, American chestnuts, tree-lined streets, or champion trees in your community - see, for example, http://www.americanforests.org/resources/bigtrees/)
Structures & Objects:	Canals, bridges, stone walls, memorials, markers, gazebos, fountains
Buildings:	Houses, barns, churches, schools, libraries, town halls, factories, mills, shops
Downtowns:	Commons, village centers, formal town centers, streetscapes, central business districts
Roadways:	Country roads, recreational paths, designed roadways, railroads, and

Archaeological Sites: rights of way
 Historic, prehistoric, traditional cultural places

5. Investigate Current Cultural Landscape Protection Efforts in Your Community

a. Contact your local library and/or historical society. What (or who) is your best source of local land use history? What resource people, maps, and other historical resources are available? Are there any current private or public efforts to protect significant cultural places?

b. Contact your local historical commission. What places are already recognized for their cultural and/or natural value? Are these places formally defined? In what ways are they already protected? Has there been an effort to document existing historical resources? Are any properties on the National Register of Historic Places? Are there any Historic Districts? (You can check the National Register on line at <http://nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/districts.html>).

c. Contact your town planning board. Does your community have a master plan for development? What does the build-out map look like? Does it recognize cultural landscape resources? the ones you identified? The EOEA Community Preservation web site's town-by-town information may be helpful (http://commpres.env.state.ma.us/community/cmtly_list.asp)

d. Contact your conservation commission and/or open space committee. What are the significant natural areas, including wetlands, streams and rivers? Are there significant agricultural lands? Are open spaces you identified threatened by development (Do these correspond to areas your team identified as significant)? Are there any current private or public efforts to protect significant natural places?

6. Outline Your Recommendations for Next Steps.

What specific element(s) of your community's cultural landscape need protection? What specific steps do you recommend? At this point, depending on your team interests and where your community is in the process, there are several directions you might pursue, based on the process outlined by the Massachusetts Historic Landscapes Inventory. You might:

- a. Complete a **more thorough reconnaissance survey** of your community, including creating a priority list of cultural landscape resources and your preliminary assessment of their significance, or
- b. Undertake an **intensive survey** of at least one landscape resource in your town, including your assessment of its significance, and your preliminary ideas for treatment, or
- c. Develop **your own research direction** and recommendations based on the unique situation you find in your community.

In any case, include your plan for ensuring adequate public involvement and education, and your estimate of the environmental and economic costs and benefits of your recommendation.

THE CURRENT ISSUE QUESTION for 2005, which will be sent to you in March 2005, will ask you to present these recommendations.

HOW WILL THE ENVIROTHON CURRENT ISSUE BE JUDGED?

Competitive Scoring

The Current Issue represents 100 points, or one quarter of your team's total Envirothon score.

As in past years, teams will have 15 minutes to present their recommendations to a panel of judges on the day of the Envirothon. This will be followed by a 10 minute period for formal questions from the panel. Judging criteria will include:

- Evidence of exploration of the idea of cultural landscapes.
- Evidence of first hand community investigation, including both field exploration and contacts
and interviews with people concerned with cultural landscapes.
- Evidence of discriminating research of library, media, and web sources.
- Persuasiveness of your case that you have chosen a focus for research and recommendations that will be helpful to where your community is in the process of identifying, evaluating, and protecting cultural landscape resources.
- Quality of proposal for the next step your community should take, including concrete next steps.
- Quality of presentation including organization, speaking skills, teamwork, effective use of
maps and other visual aids, time management, and response to questions.
- Overall quality, including evidence of curiosity, critical thinking, effort, depth, honesty, and

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A copy of the scoring sheet to be used by the judges will be mailed to participating teams at least four weeks before the Envirothon.

MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON COMMUNITY AWARDS

The Mass Envirothon's Community Awards celebrate the initiative, creativity, perseverance, dedication, teamwork, and community values of our Envirothon teams. The Community Research Award recognizes teams who have done thorough and wide ranging research in preparation for their Current Issue presentation at the Envirothon. The Community Service Award further recognizes teams who take this new knowledge and apply it in service to their communities.

Both awards are noncompetitive, and are completely separate from the competitive scoring described

above. Teams, their advisors, and school principals certify that the team has met the requirements. On the day of the Envirothon, teams receiving the award will meet with Envirothon reviewers, display their work informally for other teams, and be recognized in the awards program.

Teams who prepare diligently for the Current Issue portion of the Envirothon competition are likely to find that their work fulfills the requirements for the Community Research Award. To qualify for the Community Service Award, your team must take what you have learned through your research and apply it in service to your community this year. Projects do not have to be completed by the day of the Envirothon. Specifics for the awards are available at <http://maenvirothon.org/website-html/communityawards.html>.