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Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources

Introduction

Sturbridge boasts many natural, historic and cultural resources, and it is particularly known for its open spaces, wetlands forests, farmland, wildlife, and the iconic tourist destination Old Sturbridge Village. Residents have long valued these resources, seeing them as an integral part of the community. While Sturbridge has experienced significant land use changes over the years, the town strives to maintain its character and traditions as it manages its growth going forward. The preservation of historic places, natural resources and cultural assets is key to achieving this goal.

Natural, Historic and Cultural Resources Goals

- Provide better public access to water resources.
- Preserve water resources through stormwater management and lakefront zoning protection.
- Integrate natural, historic and archaeological resource identification, documentation, and evaluation into local planning.
- Develop and strengthen local planning and protection measures for natural and historic resources.

Natural Resources

Sturbridge is rich in natural resources. From forests to ponds and rivers, these resources add to the town's rural character, providing residents and visitors with

scenic views and recreational opportunities. They also serve many important environmental and ecological purposes such as providing habitat for wildlife.

Many of the natural features in town are water resources, such as the Quinebaug River, which runs in a southeasterly direction to Southbridge. This and other waterways are an integral part of the town's landscape and groundwater supply.

Open space, conservation land, forests and parks are other significant resources in town. Wells State Park, for example, is a 1,400-acre woodland park that is popular among hikers and campers. Adjacent to Walker Pond, the property features 60 campsites and more than 10 miles of trails.

Because natural resources are important to Sturbridge residents, the Town has worked to preserve them through bylaws and land acquisitions. For example, the Town, in partnership with the state Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, bought 826 acres of land from Old Sturbridge Village in 2006.¹ The land is used for passive recreation as it has trails, ponds and streams.² The state owns a conservation restriction on the property, which prohibits development of the land. This land acquisition and restriction has resulted in a large swath of green space in town – from Leadmine Wildlife Management Area to Wells State Park.³



Existing Conditions

The following section describes the current state of natural resources in Sturbridge. It specifically addresses geology and soils, water resources, vegetation, fisheries and wildlife, and scenic resources.



Soils, Topography and Geology⁴

This section discusses the characteristics of the soils, topography and geology in Sturbridge. It largely draws on information from past studies, including the 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan and the 2008 draft Sturbridge Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan.



1 Town of Sturbridge website, http://www.town.sturbridge.ma.us/Public_Documents/F0000F20A/preservation

2 Peggy Dumas, Community Preservation Committee.

3 Sturbridge Community Preservation Committee, http://www.town.sturbridge.ma.us/Public_Documents/F0000F20A/preservation

4 Sturbridge Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan draft, Tighe and Bond, 2008; Sturbridge 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Soil Characterization

There are six main soil types in town: Paxton-Woodbridge-Ridgebury, Brookfield-Brimfield, Canton-Montauk-Scituate, Chatfield-Hollis, Freetown-Swansea-Saco, and Merrimac-Hinckley-Windsor.

- **Paxton-Woodbridge-Ridgebury soils:** This is the predominant soil type in Sturbridge, located in the western and northeastern sections of the town. These soils consist of glacial till uplands and ridges dissected by small drainage ways, and they have a firm to very firm substratum, which restricts water movement.
- **Brookfield-Brimfield soils:** Located in the southeastern corner of town, this soil type consists of upland hills and ridges with rock exposures throughout.
- **Canton-Montauk-Scituate soils:** These soils are located in the southeast part of the town. Generally well drained, this soil type consists of soils on upland hills and rolling glacial till flats.
- **Chatfield-Hollis soils:** These soils are located west of Walker Pond and near the Charlton town line. This soil type consists of well-drained to somewhat excessively drained soils on hills and ridges.
- **Freetown-Swansea-Saco soils:** Located in the central part of town along the Quinebaug River, this soil type consists of soils on broad flats with small depressions. The soils are very poorly drained.
- **Merrimac-Hinckley-Windsor soils:** These soils are located in and around the center of town, particularly along Route 84, the Quinebaug River and Cedar Pond. This soil type is found on broad, flat plains and in rolling to steep areas, and the soils are excessively or somewhat excessively well drained.

Topography

Terrain in Sturbridge is hilly. Elevations range from a low of about 510 feet to a high of about 1,100 feet above sea level. The ridgelines generally run north to south with lower elevations in between. These lower areas include many wetlands and water bodies. Much of this topography has been influenced by the last glacial period, which was more than 12,000 years ago.

The topography, among other natural features, is considered in development plans under the Town's Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) bylaw adopted in 2009. The bylaw encourages "less sprawling and more efficient forms of development" that preserves open space and conforms to existing topography and natural features.⁵ Allowed by special permit, OSRDs must include at least 50 percent open space.



5 Sturbridge Zoning Bylaws, http://www.town.sturbridge.ma.us/Public_Documents/SturbridgeMA_PlanningDocuments/Zoning%20Bylaw%202010?FCItemID=S02B54AC5



Water Resources

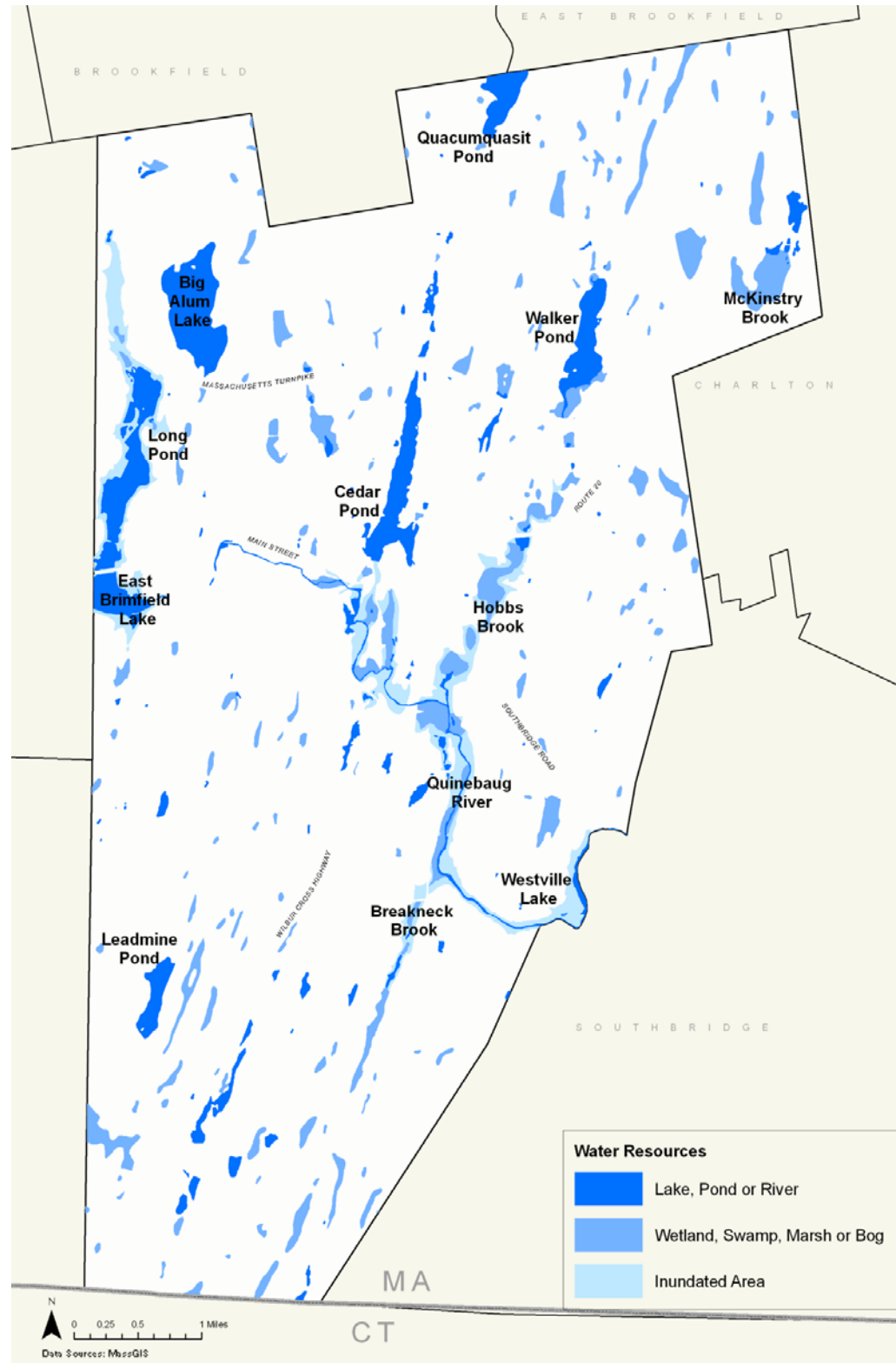
Water resources include watersheds, surface waters, wetlands, stormwater, groundwater and drinking water resources. Such resources are plentiful in the town of Sturbridge as there are many ponds, lakes and streams in addition to the Quinebaug River. The great ponds, in particular, are a valued asset in town. See Figure 5-1.

Watersheds

Sturbridge is primarily located within the Quinebaug River Watershed, which is in the southern part of central Massachusetts. Covering 850 square miles, the watershed extends south into Connecticut and western Rhode Island. To the north/northwest is the Chicopee River Watershed, to the west is the Connecticut River Watershed and to the east is the French River Watershed.⁶



⁶ Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, http://www.mass.gov/Eoea/docs/eea/water/watersheds_map.pdf

Figure 5.1 Sturbridge Water Resources

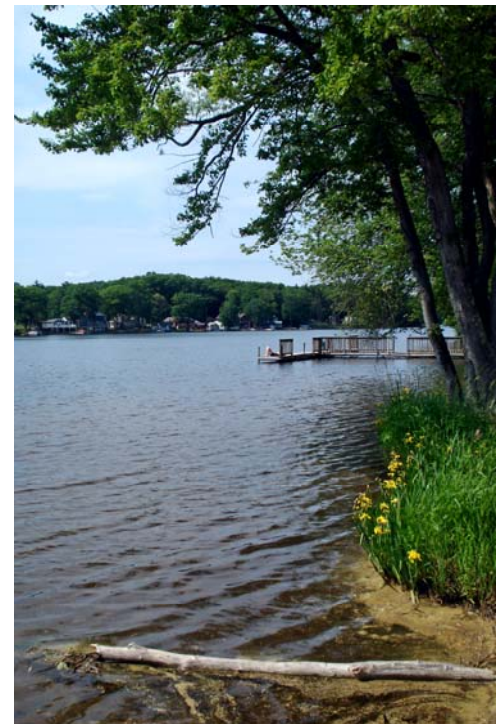
The Quinebaug River stretches about 65 miles, 19 of which are in Massachusetts.⁷ Its watershed is heavily forested and contains 54 lakes and ponds. Together with the French River Watershed and Quinebaug-Shetucket River Valley, it forms the Thames River Watershed.

Surface Waters

Rivers, streams, lakes and ponds serve many different functions in Sturbridge, including habitat for wildlife and areas for recreational activities. Residential areas are also largely centered around lakes and ponds in town.

Part of the Quinebaug River is located in Sturbridge, as was mentioned earlier. The river runs in a southeasterly direction through the central part of town. There is a six-mile canoe trail on the river, running from Holland Pond to East Brimfield Lake. Hamant Brook, a stream located on the grounds of the old Camp Robinson Crusoe property, also offers recreational opportunities as it is a popular fishing spot. There are several walkable trails on the property. Breakneck Brook is located within the Breakneck Wildlife Management Area.

There are also seven major open water bodies in town, according to the 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan. They include Cedar Lake (Pond), Walker Pond, Leadmine Pond, Big Alum Lake, East Brimfield Lake, Long Pond, Westville Lake, Breakneck Pond and Quacumquasit Lake, also known as South Pond. The following descriptions come from the Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources focus group.⁸



Cedar Lake

- **Big Alum Lake:** Covering roughly 195 acres, this is the largest lake in Sturbridge. The lake can primarily be accessed via residential routes, though there is a walking route around the lake, which is more than 3 miles long. There is also a public boat ramp at the end of Clarke Road.
- **East Brimfield Lake:** This 360 acre lake straddles Sturbridge and neighboring town Brimfield. Connecting to the lake to the north is Long Pond, which can be



⁷ Ibid, French and Quinebaug Rivers Watershed, http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eoeewaterterminal&L=4&L0=Home&L1=Air%2C+Water+%26+Climate+Change&L2=Preserving+Water+Resources&L3=Massachusetts+Watersheds&sid=Eoeea&b=terminalcontent&f=eea_water_french-quinebaug&csid=Eoeea

⁸ Natural, Cultural and Historic Resources focus group, Issues Paper draft, Sept. 4, 2010.

accessed at a fishing area off of Champeaux Road. There are two public access ways to East Brimfield Lake, both off of Route 20. Several activities are allowed in the area, including motorized boating, fishing (license required), picnicking, canoeing and hunting in forested wetland and upland areas (license required).

- **Cedar Lake:** Located in the north-central section of town, this lake is roughly 183 acres. The Town's recreational beach is located near the southwest end of the lake, and Sturbridge Host Hotel on Route 20 is on the south end. Hotel guests or restaurant patrons can access a small beach on the lake. There is also a small area on the west side of the lake that is a popular fishing site.
- **Walker Pond:** this 104 acre body of water is located in the northeast corner of town, east of Wells State Park. The park provides access to the pond with its admission fee.
- **Quacumquasit Lake:** Also known as South Pond, it is located in the northeastern section of town, near the Brookfield town line. There is a small beach at the north end, off of Lake Road. It is 218 acres in size.
- **Westville Lake:** This lake is located near the Southbridge town line. Westville Lake Recreation Area, which is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, includes picnic facilities and athletic fields. There are also hiking and biking trails and fishing spots around the lake, though swimming is not allowed.
- **Leadmine Pond:** This 53 acre lake is located at the southwestern corner of town.

The Sturbridge Recreation Department operates the Town Recreation Area at Cedar Lake, mentioned above. The Recreation Area includes tennis and basketball courts and is home to a Town-sponsored summer camp. The Sturbridge Annual Town Meeting recently voted to create the Sturbridge Lakes Advisory Committee (SLAC). This committee will be made up of two representatives from each of the five Lake Associations (Big Alum, Cedar Lake, South Pond, Walker Pond, and Leadmine Pond), one representative from Brimfield Dam, one from the Board of Selectmen, and one from the Conservation Commission. This advisory committee will be focusing on such issues as the quality of the lakes, area watershed, and lake safety.⁹



Wetlands

Wetlands occur along the streams, rivers and creeks of Sturbridge. In particular, they are located near the Quinebaug River, Hobbs Brook, McKinstry Brook, Hamant Brook and Breakneck Brook. They provide groundwater and aquifer recharge, moderate changes in water supply, prevent pollution by filtering contaminants, provide food and habitat for wildlife, provide flood storage, and add to the natural landscape.



⁹ <http://bigalum.org/environment.html>

Wetlands are protected under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (MGL c. 131 § 40), which was originally enacted into law as the Hatch Act in 1972 and amended by the 1996 Rivers Act. The law aims to protect public and private water supplies, prevent storm damage and pollution, protect wildlife habitat and fisheries, reduce the effects of potential flooding and protect groundwater supplies.¹⁰ Under the Act, work within wetland resource areas and their buffer zones cannot occur without approval from the Sturbridge Conservation Commission.

Like other Massachusetts communities, the Town of Sturbridge has adopted a local wetlands bylaw that is more stringent than the state law.¹¹ Enacted in 2002, it serves to not only protect wetlands and natural resources but also provide erosion and sedimentation control and protect water quality, rare species habitat, recreational values, and agriculture and aquatic activities.¹² Activities within 200 feet of wetlands require review and approval by the Commission so as to ensure there will be “no significant adverse impact” to the wetlands.¹³ In addition, the local bylaw creates a 25-foot “no disturb” buffer and mandates that new structures be at least 50 feet from any wetlands, though waivers can be granted.



Floodplains

Floodplains – areas adjacent to waterways that are inundated with water during times of increased flow – are also protected in Sturbridge. Specifically, within the Town’s Zoning Bylaws is a Flood Plain District, which seeks to “protect the public health, safety and general welfare, to protect human life and property from the hazards of periodic flooding, to preserve the natural flood control characteristics and the flood storage capacity of the flood plain, and to preserve and maintain the ground water table and water recharge areas within the flood plain.”¹⁴

In the Flood Plain District, structures cannot be built or substantially improved, and earth or other materials cannot be filled or dumped without a special permit granted by the Planning Board.¹⁵ Some uses such as agricultural and outdoor recreational uses are allowed in the district as long as “they are permitted in the underlying district and they do not require structures, fill, or storage of materials or equipment.”¹⁶



¹⁰ Wetlands Protections Act regulations, <http://www.mass.gov/dep/service/regulations/310cmr10a.pdf>

¹¹ According to the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions, 195 MA cities and towns have adopted non-zoning wetlands bylaws or ordinances.

¹² Town of Sturbridge website,

http://www.town.sturbridge.ma.us/Public_Documents/SturbridgeMA_ConsInfo/conservation

¹³ Ibid, http://www.town.sturbridge.ma.us/Public_Documents/SturbridgeMA_ConsInfo/Regulations/Introduction1.1

¹⁴ Sturbridge Zoning Bylaws.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

These kinds of restrictions help protect against disruptions to floodplain areas and the water-holding capacity of those areas. When such disruptions occur, flooding beyond the boundaries of floodplains can take place, which can potentially damage roads and buildings.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which owns land within the floodplain of the Quinebaug River, also provides flood control in the area. There is a dam along the Quinebaug River at Westville Lake on the town's border with Southbridge. It is part of network of six dams maintained by the Corps to "relieve the effects of flooding along the major rivers of the Thames River Basin."¹⁷



Vernal Pools

Vernal pools are seasonal depressions that typically hold water during certain times of the year, generally in the fall or winter. They are breeding grounds for a host of amphibians and invertebrate animals. As of January 2010, there were 46 certified vernal pools in Sturbridge, according to the Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP) of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (MassWildlife).¹⁸ These vernal pools are protected under several state and federal laws, including the Wetlands Protection Act and the Federal Clean Water Act. The Town's local wetlands bylaw includes a provision that creates a 200 foot buffer around certified and potential vernal pools.



Water

Groundwater

In Sturbridge, groundwater resources can be found in the areas along the Quinebaug River and Hamant Brook. Aquifer areas in the central part of town – such as those in the Quinebaug River valley – have higher yields, estimated at greater than 300 gallons per minute. Other areas have yields closer to 10 to 100 gallons per minute.

The Town adopted a Groundwater Protection District in 2002. The overlay district limits the types of uses allowed in delineated aquifers or recharge areas.¹⁹ It requires a special permit for certain activities such as those that "render impervious" more than 15 percent or 2,500 square feet of any lot, and it prohibits other uses such as landfills.²⁰



¹⁷ Westville Lake, Army Corps of Engineers website, <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/wvl/wvlfc.htm>

¹⁸ MassWildlife website, Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program, Vernal Pools, http://www.mass.gov/dfwle/dfw/nhesp/vernal_pools/vernal_pool_data.htm

¹⁹ Sturbridge Zoning Bylaws.

²⁰ Ibid.

Drinking Water Supply

As mentioned in the Public Facilities and Services chapter, the Town of Sturbridge provides public water service to most of the suburban residential, commercial and industrial zones. As of mid-2010, the system had nearly 1,700 connections, serving roughly 4,616 people.

The source of water is three active wells south of Main Street or Route 20. (See Figure X.4 in the Public Facilities and Services chapter.) These wells are located 130 to 500 feet from the east bank of the Quinebaug River.²¹ The Town is also constructing a fourth well off of Shattuck Road that is expected to come online in the spring of 2011.

Stormwater Management

Communities are required to manage stormwater runoff under federal law. This is because stormwater carries nutrients and pollutants from lawns, fields, roads, construction sites, and other sources into waterways and sewer systems. Sturbridge has taken many steps to manage and filter stormwater runoff. A Continuous Deflective Separation (CDS) unit has been installed, for example, at Mill Park to help filter stormwater that runs off the road.²²

Stormwater management planning is also incorporated into various development review processes in town. For example, the Town adopted a Stormwater Bylaw and the standards are incorporated into the Planning Board regulations. A stormwater management permit and plan are required when other permits are needed for land disturbing activities. Additionally, applicants for a special permit to develop an OSRD must include a narrative explanation as to the proposed systems for stormwater drainage and the potential onsite impacts and on abutting properties.²³ As stated in the OSRD bylaw, the Planning Board encourages developers to use “Soft Stormwater Management Techniques and other Low Impact Development techniques” that allow ground infiltration and reduce impervious surfaces.

Similarly, best practices for stormwater management – such as use of rain gardens and roof water collection – are encouraged under Site Plan Review. Stormwater Management Plans are also required for projects on Priority Development Sites, which are those designated by the Town for expedited permitting.



Vegetation and Forest Resources

Nearly 18,000 acres of land in Sturbridge – or approximately 75 percent of the total land area – is forested.²⁴ The forests are northern mixed hardwood, and they include



²¹ Tighe and Bond, 2008.

²² Town of Sturbridge website.

²³ Sturbridge Zoning Bylaws.

²⁴ 2005 Sturbridge Open Space and Recreation Plan

a variety of tree species, including red and white oak, red maple, white ash, white pine and eastern hemlock.

One of the many forested lands in Sturbridge is 266-acre Opacum Woods, a permanently protected conservation area owned by the Opacum Land Trust.²⁵ The property has ponds, swamps, vernal pools and historic sites, and it is home to a numerous plant species.

Town wide, there are two endangered plant species, according to the NHESP. Table 5.1 shows species in Sturbridge that have been designated by the state as endangered, threatened, or species of special concern.

Table 5.1 NHESP Rare Plant Species

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Most Recent Observation
Vascular Plant	<i>Adlumia fungosa</i>	Climbing Fumitory	SC	2008
Vascular Plant	<i>Asplenium montanum</i>	Mountain Spleenwort	E	1946
Vascular Plant	<i>Clematis occidentalis</i>	Purple Clematis	SC	1998
Vascular Plant	<i>Corallorhiza odontorhiza</i>	Autumn Coralroot	SC	1984
Vascular Plant	<i>Eriophorum gracile</i>	Slender Cottongrass	T	1997
Vascular Plant	<i>Liatris scariosa</i> var. <i>novae-angliae</i>	New England Blazing Star	SC	1934
Vascular Plant	<i>Lipocarpa micrantha</i>	Dwarf Bulrush	T	2007
Vascular Plant	<i>Lygodium palmatum</i>	Climbing Fern	SC	1937
Vascular Plant	<i>Platanthera flava</i> var. <i>herbiola</i>	Pale Green Orchis	T	1933
Vascular Plant	<i>Poa saltuensis</i> ssp. <i>languida</i>	Drooping Speargrass	E	2000
Vascular Plant	<i>Ranunculus pensylvanicus</i>	Bristly Buttercup	SC	2008

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

E = Endangered, T = Threatened, SC = Special Concern



Fisheries and Wildlife

The natural spaces in Sturbridge are home to many different species of wildlife. These spaces include everything from vernal pools to forests to rivers. Three waterways in town have been stocked with trout by the state this year: Big Alum Pond, Long Pond and the Quinebaug River.²⁶

Large sections of Sturbridge have been identified by the NHESP as “Core Habitat” sites, which are the most important areas in the state for maintaining and protecting biodiversity.²⁷ Delineated during two conservation projects – BioMap and Living



²⁵ Opacum Land Trust website, http://www.opacumlt.org/opacum_woods.html

²⁶ MassWildlife website, Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program, Trout-Stocked Waters http://www.mass.gov/dfwle/dfw/recreation/fishing/trout/trout_waters_cd.htm

²⁷ Ibid, Biomap and Living Waters, http://www.mass.gov/dfwle/dfw/nhesp/land_protection/twnrpts/sturbridge_core_habitats.pdf

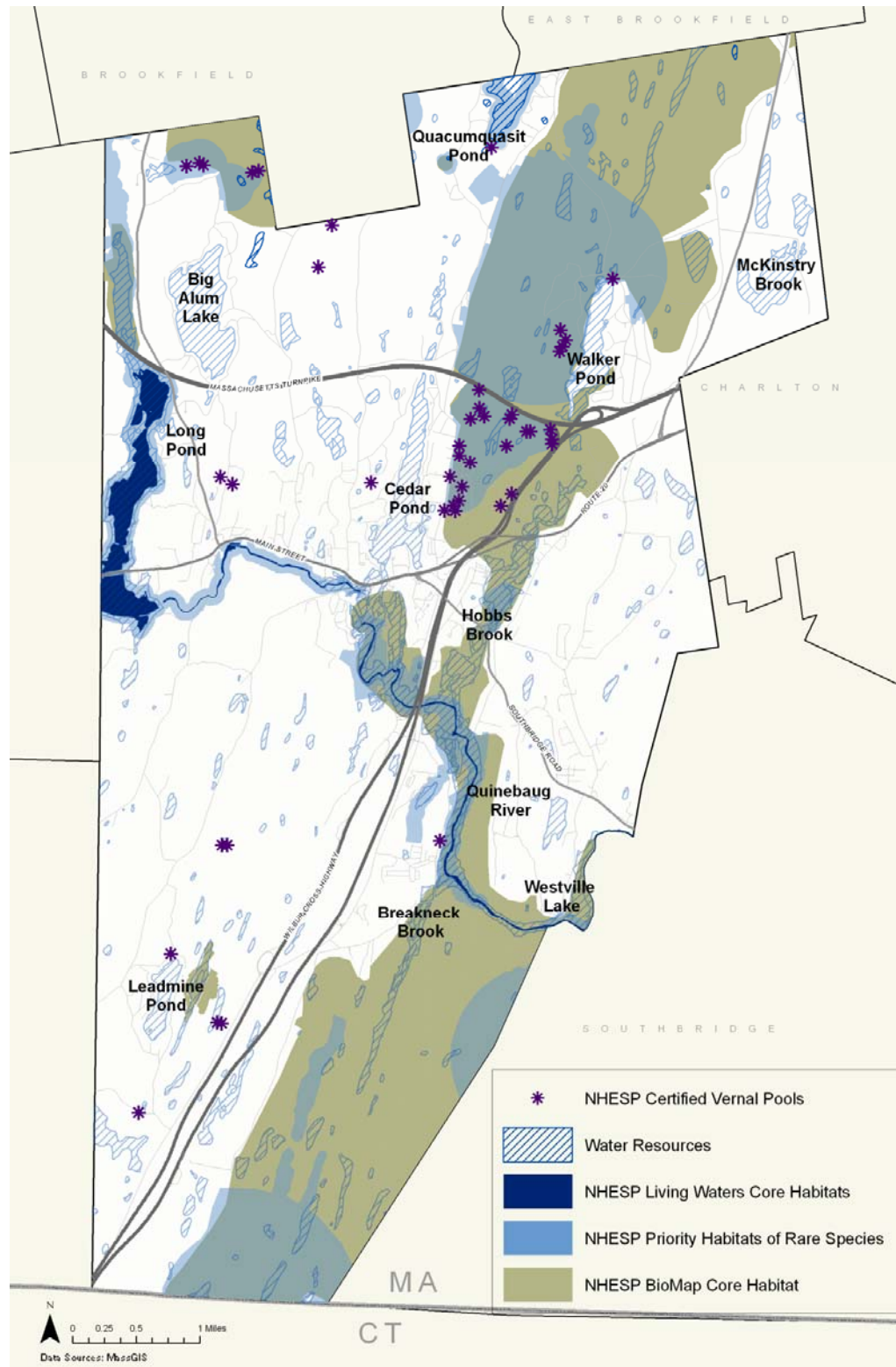
Waters – the Core Habitats for aquatic, plant and wildlife species include the southwestern corner of town and the area around Wells State Park, and the Core Habitats for freshwater biodiversity include Long Pond, East Brimfield Lake and the Quinebaug River.²⁸ These resources are shown in Figure 5-2.

MassWildlife (the NHESP) has also designated Priority Habitats for rare species throughout Massachusetts. These areas are home to state-listed rare plants and animals, and habitat alterations within the areas require review by the NHESP.²⁹ In Sturbridge, Priority Habitats are largely located along the Quinebaug River through the central part of town and in the areas around Long Pond, East Brimfield Lake and Wells State Park.



28 Ibid, An Interactive BioMap and Living Waters,
http://www.mass.gov/dfwel/dfw/nhesp/land_protection/interactive_map.htm

29 Ibid, Priority Habitats and Estimated Habitats for Rare Species,
http://www.mass.gov/dfwel/dfw/nhesp/regulatory_review/priority_habitat/priority_habitat_home.htm

Figure 5.2 Wildlife Habitats

In addition, MassWildlife has identified waters in Sturbridge – and across the state – that are known to have coldwater fisheries resources.³⁰ They include McKinstry Brook, Hamant Brook and Hatchet Brook. These waters were defined as coldwater fisheries resources if they met at least one of the following criteria: brook, brown or rainbow trout reproduction has been determined; slimy sculpin, longnose sucker, or lake chub are present; or the water is part of the Atlantic salmon restoration effort or is stocked with Atlantic salmon fry.

There are two endangered species in Sturbridge, according to the NHESP. One of those species, the Indiana Myotis (a mid-sized bat), is listed as “endangered” by both the State and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Table 5.2 identifies the status of rare animal species in Sturbridge.

Table 5.2 NHESP Rare Animal Species

Taxonomic Group	Scientific Name	Common Name	MESA Status	Federal Status	Most Recent Observation
Amphibian	<i>Ambystoma opacum</i>	Marbled Salamander	T		2003
Bird	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	E		1999
Butterfly/Moth	<i>Callophrys hesseli</i>	Hessel's Hairstreak	SC		1997
Fish	<i>Notropis bifrenatus</i>	Bridle Shiner	SC		1999
Mammal	<i>Myotis sodalis</i>	Indiana Myotis	E	E	1938
Mammal	<i>Sorex palustris</i>	Water Shrew	SC		1996
Mussel	<i>Alasmidonta undulata</i>	Triangle Floater	SC		2004
Mussel	<i>Strophitus undulatus</i>	Creeper	SC		2004
Reptile	<i>Glyptemys insculpta</i>	Wood Turtle	SC		2005

Source: Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program

E = Endangered, T = Threatened, SC = Special Concern



Scenic and Unique Resources

Sturbridge has a rural character and boasts many scenic resources, including roads, woodlands and water bodies. In 2005, the Town adopted a Scenic Road Bylaw that aims to “protect the scenic quality and character of certain roads within the Town of Sturbridge.”³¹ Specifically, within the public right-of-way in designated scenic roads, stone walls cannot be destroyed, trees cannot be removed, and roads cannot be repaired or reconstructed without approval of the Planning Board.



³⁰ Ibid, Coldwater Fisheries Resources, http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/fisheries/conservation/cfr/cfr_home.htm

³¹ Town of Sturbridge General Bylaws, http://www.town.sturbridge.ma.us/public_documents/SturbridgeMA_Bylaws/I022F598F.0/General%20Bylaws%20Updated%202008%20Final.pdf

In addition to roads, scenic resources in town include Wells State Park, Westville Lake Recreation Area, the Quinebaug River, Long Pond, Opacum Woods and Tantiusques. Acquired by the Trustees of the Reservation in 1962, Tantiusques is a 57-acre site that was the center of one of New England's first mining operations.³² The site, which was mined for graphite between the mid-17th century and the early 20th century, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.³³



Quinebaug River

The Town Common area in the center of town is a National Register Historic District, which was established in 1977. Extending along Main Street between Hall Road and I-84, the district includes 47 properties, including Town Hall.³⁴ As mentioned in the Public Services and Facilities chapter, Town Hall and the Center Office Building are both listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The appearance of both buildings has been improved through recent rehabilitation work.

Another major amenity is Old Sturbridge Village. The open air historic museum depicts and interprets New England village life of the early 19th century. It was established in the 1940s, and it currently covers more than 200 acres. With its historic buildings, costumed interpreters, educational programs, and collection of artifacts, it has long been a major tourist attraction in the town.



Environmental and Management Challenges

Public access to the town's natural, cultural and historic resources is limited, inconsistent or in some cases, non-existent, according to the Focus Group. Access to the lakes in Sturbridge is of particular concern as the points of access are poorly defined. This means many of the lakes and other resources cannot be fully enjoyed by residents or visitors alike. Improving access would allow more people to not only take advantage of these resources but to better appreciate, value and potentially protect them. The Town has taken steps toward this end, having recently formed the Sturbridge Lakes Advisory Committee, which seeks, in part, to improve public access to the lakes.

Development and redevelopment around the lakes is another major issue. Over the years the Town has seen an increasing number of summer lakefront cottages being converted from seasonal homes to year round residences. As a result, the Town regularly reviews applications for Special Permits and Orders of Conditions pursuant to the Wetlands Protection Act to tear down and rebuild homes near lakes, and it has been difficult to determine what constitutes an appropriate development



³² The Trustees of the Reservation, <http://www.thetrustees.org/places-to-visit/central-ma/tantiusques.html#15>

³³ Waymarking website, http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM4QMC_Tantiusques_Graphite_Mine

³⁴ Sturbridge Reconnaissance Report, <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/reconReports/sturbridge.pdf>

given the location.³⁵ Specifically, the Town wants to continue to allow people to improve their properties but seeks to ensure the lakes are protected as well. Stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces and septic system discharge can affect water quality.

According to the 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan, there have been concerns about the health of Cedar Lake given the presence of aquatic weeds and fecal coliform. The Town, however, has extended sewer lines along much of the lake's shoreline as means of preventing contaminant flow from septic systems into the lake.³⁶ The water quality of the lake is also monitored.

Historic and Archaeological Resources in the Town of Sturbridge

The Town of Sturbridge has a rich history represented in physical cultural resources, its historic and archaeological resources, which include buildings, structures, objects, burial grounds, landscapes, and archaeological sites. These historic and archaeological resources provide a valuable material record of the history of Sturbridge and significantly enhance the quality of life in the town. They enhance the scenic qualities of the landscape, establish community character and identity, and in large part define what is unique about the Town of Sturbridge. The historic properties and sites that comprise the cultural landscape in Sturbridge are both finite and non-renewable. Therefore, this section of the Master Plan presents a plan to assist in the management of Sturbridge's rich and varied historic resources.



Town Common

The following section of the Master Plan contains four separate components associated with the preservation of historic and archaeological resources in the Town of Sturbridge: (1) Identification and Evaluation of Historic and Archaeological Resources; (2) Preservation-Related Tools and Programs; (3) Historic Preservation Goals and Objectives; and (4) Recommendations. The first section provides a brief overview of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's Inventory of Historic and



Oliver Wight Tavern



³⁵ Planning Director Jean Bubon.

³⁶ 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth as well as the State and National Registers of Historic Places, and notes the properties and districts in Sturbridge that are included in both the State and National Registers. The second section describes tools and programs that could potentially be utilized by the Town for historic preservation purposes. The third section delineates more specific goals and objectives related to issues defined by the Town of Sturbridge, and the fourth section provides overall historic preservation recommendations.

Identification of Historic and Archaeological Resources

The identification and documentation of historic and archaeological resources in the Town of Sturbridge is a fundamental research and preservation planning process designed to provide basic information on the current location, appearance, and condition of historic resources throughout the community. Evaluation of their significance and resultant recognition through their listing in the State Register of Historic Places and National Register of Historic Places is an important additional step. Properties that have been documented on state inventory forms are, after acceptance by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, included in the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth (the Inventory). Properties that have been evaluated and are determined significant through an official review and approval process (local landmarks and districts, National Register-listed properties, properties with preservation restrictions) are listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Only properties that have been determined significant through a state and federal nomination and approval process are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Inventory and State and National Registers of Historic Places are described below.

As noted in more detail below in the Preservation-Related Tools and Programs section, the National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. The State Register of Historic Places was established in 1982 as a comprehensive listing of buildings, objects, structures, and sites that have received local, state or national designations in Massachusetts based on their historical or archaeological significance. The Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth includes all buildings, structures, sites, and objects that have been recorded on inventory forms in the Commonwealth, not all of which have received an official designation.



Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets (the Inventory) is a statewide list that contains information about all properties that have been documented on a MHC inventory form. In order

to be included in the Inventory, a property must be documented on one of several types of MHC inventory forms, which is then entered into the MHC database. This searchable database, known as MACRIS, is now searchable online at <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc>. The inventory forms for all of Sturbridge's documented properties (excluding archaeological sites) are available online at MACRIS in PDF version.

Documented Above-ground Properties

According to the MACRIS, Sturbridge's Inventory documents over 200 above-ground properties ranging from the turn of the 18th century to the late 20th century. The documented properties include the Sturbridge Town Common, Sturbridge Fairgrounds, Fiskdale Mills and workers' housing, and the small community of Snellville, as well as many houses, commercial buildings, and religious structures. Much of this inventory was completed between 1971 and 1974 by members of the Sturbridge Historical Commission. A list of the inventoried properties is included in the appendix to this chapter.

A reconnaissance survey of Sturbridge's heritage landscapes was undertaken in 2007 as part of a wider survey of the communities within both the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor. Although the survey did not document properties on MHC forms, a number of priority landscapes were identified. These priority landscapes are the Quinebaug River, the Barrett Farm, Fiskdale, Theme: Ponds, Sturbridge Town Common National Register District, Hobbs Property, and Old Sturbridge Village. The report is online at: <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/reconReports/sturbridge.pdf> and the map which shows their location at: http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/reconReports/sturbridge_map.pdf

The reconnaissance report actually functions more as a planning document; it contains a number of valuable and insightful recommendations which are incorporated into this master plan.

Documented Archaeological Sites

According to MHC's site file records, there are 48 documented historical archaeology sites within the town of Sturbridge. Two of the sites - the Tantiusque Lead Mine Historic Archaeology Site (STU-HA-45) and the Fording Place at Tantiusque site - are located within the Tantiusque Reservation, which is listed in the National and State Register of Historic Places. Otherwise, none of the other sites have been determined individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Site types include an historic lead mine (Tantiusque Mine STU-HA-45), a barber shop (STU-HA-40; Barber Shop), the Fording Place at Tantiusque (STU-HA-39), and the Wight Saw Mill (STU-HA-18). Because of swiftly flowing and powerful streams,

many area sites date to the industrial periods, including the Fiskdale Mill Complex (1826-1888) (STU-HA-43), the Upper Mill Dam Site (STU-HA-41), and elements associated with the Grand Trunk Railroad (STU-HA-34).

There are 18 prehistoric archaeological sites documented in the town of Sturbridge. Site types include lithic flake find spots (19-WR-756, Mt. Dan Road Native American Findspot), rockshelters (19-WR-688; the Forest Lane Rock Shelter), and an abrading stone indicative of woodworking (19-WR-337 Westville Dam). None of these sites contains extensive archaeological information and none is listed in the National or State Registers of Historic Places.

Please note that no information concerning archaeological resources, especially their locations, can be disclosed in documents prepared for public review in order to protect the sites from possible looting or vandalism. For additional information regarding archaeological resources in the Town of Sturbridge, please contact the State Archaeologist at the MHC.

To date, there have been 8 professional archaeological surveys conducted in the Town of Sturbridge. These include reconnaissance surveys of the Westville Dam (Ritchie and Lance 1988), an intensive archaeological survey along Main Street (Holmes et al. 1993), a reconnaissance survey of the East Brimfield Dam and Reservoir (Ritchie and Lance 1988), an historic properties management plan of East Brimfield Lake (Atwood 1998, 2000), an intensive survey of the Massachusetts Country Club (Milne & Ritchie 2000) and a combined reconnaissance and intensive survey at Big Alum Pond (Binzen and Wendt 2003). This research identified both historical period and ancient Native American sites, but none that met eligibility criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as individual sites. That said, these surveys have been limited to specific project impacts, by and large, and it is possible that additional, unreported sites exist. Sensitive areas for prehistoric (ancient Native American) site include relatively level, elevated land forms within close proximity to potable water, on well-drained sandy soils, or adjacent to specific resources, such as knappable stone, or clay that can be formed into pottery. EuroAmerican sites are probably along Contact Period trails, at fording places in rivers in streams, near well-travelled highways, and where primary trails or highways intersect.

Although access to Old Sturbridge Village records and information about archaeological investigations are not currently accessible, Ed Hood at Old Sturbridge Village has considerable knowledge about Sturbridge archaeological sites that are not on file at the MHC.



State and National Registers of Historic Places

The Town of Sturbridge has a single historic district and two individual properties listed in the State and National Register of Historic Places. The Sturbridge Common Historic District, which includes 47 buildings, was listed in 1977. The Sturbridge Center School at 301 Main Street is a contributing resource in this district; the building is protected by a Preservation Restriction, which was placed on the building in 1999. Buildings which are protected by Preservation Restrictions are automatically included within the State Register of Historic Places. The two individually listed properties are the Oliver Wight House on Main Street (listed in 1982) and the Tantiusque Reservation Site near Leadmine Road (listed in 1983).

The Sturbridge Historical Commission has compiled a very preliminary list of pre-1850 structures, but further work needs to be done to determine the historical or architectural significance of these and potentially other buildings.



Old Sturbridge Village

Old Sturbridge Village (OSV), in part because of its name and location, is sometimes perceived to be a museum of Sturbridge's history. Rather, it is a living museum whose purpose is "to provide modern Americans with a deepened understanding of their own times through a personal encounter with New England's past.

The museum is a nonprofit educational institution. Its collections, exhibits, and programs present the story of everyday life in a small New England town during the years 1790 to 1840".³⁷ The Articles of Organization filed for the Quinebaug Village Corporation, as it was known at the time, states that it was created to establish "a model village that depicts specimens and reproductions of the New England architecture and antiquities, the arts, crafts, trades, and callings commonly practi[c]ed in and about New England villages prior to the expansion of the industrial expansion.....".³⁸ OSV was originally founded "for the educational benefit of the public"³⁹. It changed its name to Old Sturbridge Village in November 1950.

This is an important distinction, because OSV does not purport to be a resource for local Sturbridge history. At the same time, it represents a great opportunity to bolster the Town's efforts to identify, study, inventory, and potentially display historic and archeological artifacts from the Town's history. The Town should seek to develop a more direct working relationship with OSV to determine how it can leverage this opportunity to enhance an understanding of the Town's heritage.



³⁷ <http://www.osv.org/museum/index.html>

³⁸ July 15, 1938 Quinebaug Village Corporation Articles of Organization

³⁹ Ibid.

Preservation-related Tools and Programs

Sturbridge already has important planning tools in place to document current conditions within the town, identify issues of concern to town residents, and to develop strategies for action. In an appendix to this section, a variety of planning tools and programs (both voluntary and regulatory) are identified that are available for preservation planning purposes in the Town of Sturbridge.

Cultural Resources

Sturbridge is home to a host of cultural resources, including groups, events and traditions. These resources help shape the community's sense of place and draw tourists to the area. This section, which is based on the work of the Natural, Cultural and Historic Focus Group, outlines the many cultural resources available in Sturbridge.

- **Stageloft Repertory Theater:** This theater, which has been in Sturbridge since 1994, provides live adult and youth productions throughout the year.⁴⁰ Theater workshops for youth are also held in the summer.
- **Hayloft Dancers:** This square dance club has been dancing in the area since 1960.⁴¹ The club hosts a variety of events, including square dance lessons and special dances at Hayloft Barn in Sturbridge.
- **Mass Motion Dance:** This dance company has offered dance training in Sturbridge since 1983.⁴² Classes include ballet, jazz, tap, hip hop and Irish Step.
- **Joshua Hyde Library:** The public library provides a variety of programs for adults and children, including book discussions and presentations.
- **Concerts on the Common:** The Sturbridge Recreation Department holds a series of concerts on the Sturbridge Town Common during the summer. Performances have ranged from country music bands to a Beatles tribute band.
- **Sturbridge Harvest Festival:** This annual festival is held in October on the Common and at the Publick House. It features a pumpkin decorating contest, mini-train rides, children's games and a marketplace with vendors and artists.⁴³
- **Feast and Fire:** This annual event occurs during the Fourth of July weekend and includes a parade, picnic buffet, entertainment and a bonfire.



40 Stageloft Repertory Theater, www.stageloft.com/

41 Hayloft Steppers Square Dance Club, <http://www.hayloftsteppers.org/>

42 Mass Motion Dance, <http://www.massmotiondance.com/>

43 Publick House, http://www.publickhouse.com/harvest_festival.htm

- **Sturbridge Lions All American River Race:** This annual canoe race takes place in April. It is a timed race that covers more than six miles between Turners Field and Westville Lake.⁴⁴

Many of the programs listed above are supported by small grants from the Sturbridge Cultural Council. The 7-member local Cultural Council aims to “foster the support of programs in the arts, humanities and interpretive sciences.”⁴⁵ It reviews and approves grant applications on a calendar year basis, with FY2010 grants helping fund school music programs, theater productions, storytelling programs and an “eco-art” project, among other programs.⁴⁶

Recommendations



Recommendations for Natural Resources

- Continue to develop, maintain and improve public access to water resources, open space and trails. The Sturbridge Lakes Advisory Committee should continue to look for ways to improve public access to the lakes in particular. Strengthening the Town’s partnerships with lake associations and improving collaboration among the groups should be a priority.
- Consider adopting a Low Impact Development (LID) bylaw to minimize post-development stormwater runoff and further protect the town’s water resources and surface and groundwater drinking supplies. Ideally, such a bylaw should apply town-wide, but it could be targeted specifically to areas that are especially sensitive from an environmental perspective. Review the design, construction, and maintenance of stormwater “best management practices” both by the Town and private developers to ensure that the Town is taking advantage of the most recent and effective approaches to LID.
- Continue monitoring the water quality of the lakes to determine which, if any, are in need of cleanup or protection.
- Consider enacting a lakes overlay district for the areas surrounding all of the lakes in town or only those of specific concern. The overlay district would help protect water quality, maintain natural beauty and minimize negative impacts of new development or redevelopment projects around the lakes. It could control building heights, densities, setbacks, stormwater management, and grade changes, among other issues.



44 <http://www.angelfire.com/ma3/sturbridgelions/events.html>

45 Sturbridge Cultural Council, http://www.town.sturbridge.ma.us/Public_Documents/SturbridgeMA_BoardCmt/cultural

46 Massachusetts Cultural Council, http://www.mass-culture.org/lcc_detail_overview.asp?coun_enum=273

- In conjunction with efforts to provide greater public access to the Quinebaug River, ensure that any new access points protect river water quality and shoreline vegetation.
- Using this Plan and the soon to be updated Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Conservation Commission should lead an effort to identify critical resource areas encompassing streams, ponds, vernal pools, floodplain, wildlife habitat, wetlands and other water bodies for conservation and preservation. This information could be used to guide future land use decision-making and potential regulations.
- Along with the continued development of walking trails through recently acquired open spaces, evaluate opportunities and locations that could be used to facilitate wildlife crossings and connect habitat areas within the town.
- Seek funding through NHESP, DFW, and other partners to fully evaluate and document the wildlife habitat values and natural communities in Sturbridge.
- In the course of updating the zoning bylaw, ensure that any revisions consider and incorporate appropriate best practices for such environmental protections as stream buffers or shoreline setbacks.



Recommendations for Historic, Archaeological, and Cultural Resources

- The Historical Commission should continue its work to inventory the built environment, identify properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and pursue such listings.
- Consider the preparation of a community-wide archaeological inventory which would identify areas of archaeological sensitivity that would aid in future planning and development efforts.
- Educate residents of the importance of maintaining the historic character of Sturbridge and its importance to their economic, aesthetic, and cultural investment in their community.
- Initiate and support local by-laws that will encourage preservation of historic assets.
- Study and consider possibility of an Architectural Preservation District (APD) by-law, which would provide binding and non-binding review of exterior changes to buildings within designated APD districts.
- Continue developing more in-depth regional partnerships and programs with organizations with similar preservation and educational goals, including OSV; The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV), the non-profit organizations which oversees the Quinebaug-Shetucket Rivers National Heritage Corridor and the nearby

Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor; and the Trust for Public Land.

- Create opportunities to work with OSV and these other organizations to co-sponsor cultural events, walking tours, and share resources to enhance understanding of the Town's history.
- Continue the preservation and improved access to important Town documents by seeking additional CPA funds and other likely funding sources.
- Continue to support the Town's implementation of the CPA for historical preservation.
- Consider modifying the demolition delay bylaw to include buildings more than 50 years of age and to extend the delay period to one year.
- Use arts to create a local identity for residents, capitalize on tourist attractions to make the Town a destination for annual cultural events (music festivals, art shows, poetry contests, open artisan studio events, etc).

Appendix

Preservation-related Tools and Programs

Many programs exist at the local, state, and federal levels that are available to assist in the preservation of Sturbridge's important historic resources. Three broad categories of preservation-related programs are described in this section including Local Planning / Protection of cultural resources; Federal and State Regulatory review, and Financial Programs and Incentives.

Local Planning / Protection

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the nation's official list of significant historic properties. Properties listed in the NRHP include sites, buildings, structures, districts, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Contrary to popular perception, listing in the NRHP does not limit a property owner's right to alter, manage, or sell the property when using private funds. Instead, the designation acts as a key to access preservation programs and incentives at the federal, state and local level.

Some of the key benefits to NRHP listing include eligibility for federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, access to income tax deductions for the donation of historic preservation restrictions, and matching grant funds for preservation related projects. NRHP listing also requires consideration in federal, state, and some local planning projects.

NRHP properties must be at least fifty years old (unless they demonstrate exceptional significance) and must possess physical integrity by retaining enough of its original materials to exhibit its historic appearance during the time period of its historic significance. The NRHP recognizes properties associated with famous figures and events, but also acknowledges places that are associated with the history of important themes and trends in American history and pre-history. NRHP listing is

accomplished through a nomination process initiated by an individual, or a private or public entity. Property owners may object to the listing through a certified letter to the Sturbridge Historical Commission. If 51% of the property owners within a district object to the listing through the certified letter objection process, the district will not be officially listed in the National Register. The number of properties owned by a single owner is immaterial; each property owner has one “vote”. The nomination addresses the significance and integrity of the resource through a thorough report documenting its appearance and history. The report is reviewed by the MHC staff, the Massachusetts Historical Commission’s state review board, and the National Park Service before final designation.

Demolition Delay Bylaw

The objective of a demolition delay bylaw, which has been instituted in many Massachusetts communities, is to encourage owners of historic buildings to seek and consider alternatives to demolition and encourage preservation or relocation of significant buildings. Communities vary on the age and type of properties to be included in their Demolition Delay Bylaws, but communities typically require buildings that are at least 50 years old, and determined to exhibit architectural or historical significance to be reviewed before demolition is allowed. The Town adopted a Demolition Delay Bylaw in 2008, which is focused on buildings over 100 years old which meet one of more of several significance criteria and those listed in the State and National Register of Historic Places. Buildings found to be preferably preserved by the Sturbridge Historical Commission are subject to a six-month demolition delay period.

Local Historic Districts

Local Historic Districts (LHD) can protect the appearance of historic properties and encourage new construction to be designed to complement the historic setting. The designation of a LHD imposes a review and approval process by a commission of appointed members for proposed exterior changes to properties. The primary strength of a LHD is that it can be tailored to specific community needs while providing greater protection for local resources. Design guidelines are developed to address the significant defining characteristics of a particular area. Designation as a LHD is one of the most effective ways to protect the historic character of buildings, streetscapes, neighborhoods, and special landmarks from inappropriate alterations, new construction, and demolition. In addition to protecting historic resources, locally designated districts across the country consistently produce stable property values, increase commercial activity, and attract tourism dollars.

Scenic Road Bylaw

Similar to Local Historic Districts, Sturbridge’s Scenic Road Bylaw has the ability to protect the appearance of historic properties through the local review of repair, maintenance, reconstruction, or paving projects conducted to designated scenic

roads. The Scenic Road Bylaw involves planning board review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way.

Certified Local Government Program

The federal Certified Local Government (CLG) program is designed to help recognize communities that value historic preservation as a community asset. The program is administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission and establishes a set of basic requirements for local historic preservation programs, including the operation of a preservation commission or board and the maintenance of a survey of historic resources. In return, CLG status gives participating cities and towns exclusive access to at least 10% of Massachusetts' annual Historic Preservation Fund.

The funds are awarded to CLGs through a competitive survey and planning grant program on a percentage matching fund basis and can be used for preservation plans, comprehensive surveys, and National Register nominations. In addition to grant funds, the Massachusetts Historical Commission offers technical assistance to participating municipalities.

Community Preservation Act

The Community Preservation Act (CPA) is a program instituted in 143 communities across Massachusetts since its inception in 2001. Used for projects that help develop or acquire open space, increase the number of affordable housing units, and support historic preservation efforts, the CPA is funded through a property tax surcharge of no more than 3%. If adopted, 10% of the funds must go toward open space, 10% toward affordable housing, and 10% toward historic preservation. The remaining 70% can be divided as the city or town determines among these three categories. The CPA ensures that funds will always be available for preservation activities. Sturbridge adopted the CPA in 2001.

Properties receiving CPA funding for historic preservation projects must be listed in or eligible for the State Register of Historic Places, or deemed historic by the local historical commission. Funded projects can be owned publicly, privately, or by a non-profit organization, as long as they provide a significant public benefit.

Funds can be used for a variety of project types. The Town has already used CPA funds for a significant effort in digitizing town meeting records from 1738 through 1945, which are accessible to the public at the Joshua Hyde Public Library's collection.

The CPA has also provided funding for historic property signage. Signage now marks the boundaries of the Sturbridge Common Historic District Main and Haynes Streets, while informational markers have been erected at the Common, the Center School/Old Burying Ground, the North Cemetery, and the Snellville School which is

the current Senior Center. CPA funds were also used to repair some tombstones in the Old Burying Ground and North Cemeteries.

Preservation Restrictions

A preservation restriction is a legal contract by which the property owner agrees the property will not be changed in a way that would compromise its historic and architectural integrity. The Sturbridge Center School at 301 Main Street is the only property in Sturbridge which is protected by a preservation restriction. Any proposed changes to the property are reviewed by the organization to which the preservation restriction is donated or sold. The preservation restriction runs in perpetuity with the land and is binding on both the owner who grants it as well as on all subsequent owners. A preservation restriction allows the owner of a historic property to retain title and use of a property and, at the same time, ensure its long-term preservation. The owner retains the major interest in the property and can sell or will it to whomever he or she wishes.

Preservation restrictions are specifically tailored to the individual building and the elements being sought to be preserved. Some agreements only protect a building's façade, while some include stipulations to protect elements of the interior, significant architectural details, or significant landscapes. The terms of the agreement are negotiated between the qualified organization and the property owner. The owner of the property subject to a preservation restriction must secure approval before undertaking significant changes to the property, such as altering the building's historic elements or constructing an addition. The owner also agrees to repair and maintain the property to an agreed-upon level of maintenance.

Significant federal income tax benefits can result from the donation of a preservation restriction. If the property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the value of the development restrictions imposed by the preservation restriction is normally considered a charitable donation. Often a preservation restriction-holding organization will require a fee or endowment to provide adequate resources to monitor the preservation restriction in the future. According to Massachusetts General Law Chapter 184, Section 31-33, all historic preservation restrictions must be reviewed and approved by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. If the preservation restriction-holding organization is a private non-profit, the preservation restriction must also be reviewed and approved by the local municipality.

Agricultural Preservation Restrictions

Similar to Preservation Restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR) are a specific type of conservation restriction designed to help farmers realize equity without being forced to sell their land for development purposes. The equity is often reinvested back into the protected farm by way of the purchase of more land, equipment, or buildings, and through the retirement of farm debt. Overall, the program is designed to protect productive agricultural lands by establishing

permanent deed restrictions that would protect them from any use that might diminish the area's agricultural potential.

Architectural Preservation/Neighborhood Conservation Districts

An Architectural Preservation District is a district in which only additions, major alterations, demolition, and new construction are reviewed and require approval before work can progress. Generally, the districts, which are also known as neighborhood conservation districts, have both binding and non-binding regulatory review for exterior changes only.

Regulatory – Federal and State

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA), was originally enacted to address the widespread loss of historic properties during federally-sponsored urban renewal initiatives and highway construction projects during the 1960s. The law requires that any project that receives federal funds or is required to obtain permits or licenses from a federal agency is required to be reviewed for its effects on historic properties. Section 106 review is required for properties that are both listed or *determined eligible* for the National Register. This determination is part of the review process if the property has not been previously assessed for its eligibility.

Typical examples of federal undertakings that do and can take place in the Town of Sturbridge are the requirements of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) permits for development projects and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) supported road improvement projects. If a property is determined eligible for the National Register or is already listed in the National Register, then the impact of the proposed project on the resource must be determined by the federal agency or its assignee and concurred upon by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. If the project is determined to have an adverse effect on the resource, the federal agency must consult with the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) in order to determine mitigation options.

M.G.L. Chapter 254

Chapter 254 of the Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L., Chapter 9, Sec. 26-27C, as amended by Chapter 254 of the Acts of 1988), like Section 106 at the federal level, requires that any undertaking involving state involvement (funds, permits, approvals, or licenses) be reviewed to determine whether the proposed project will have an adverse effect on a property listed in the State Register of Historic Places. If it is determined that the project will have an adverse effect on a listed property, the state agency and/or the project proponent must consult with MHC to determine

mitigation measures. Unlike Section 106, which considers NRHP listed and properties that have been determined eligible, Chapter 254 only considers properties or districts listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Chapter 254 could be relevant in the Town of Sturbridge if any area or individual property is listed in the State Register of Historic Places (this designation is automatic if the area were listed in the NRHP) and any state funds, permits, approvals, or licenses are used for projects such as road improvement, community development or residential and/or commercial development.

Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) is a comprehensive review process that requires state agencies to account for the potential environmental impacts of projects involving state licenses, permits or financial support. This public process requires a thorough study of potential environmental impacts and the development of feasible mitigation options designed to avoid or minimize those impacts. Historic resources, both above and below ground, are included in the list of environmental factors that must be considered in the MEPA process.

If the project has a connection to state funds permits, or licenses, certain thresholds must be met in order to initiate MEPA review. For historic resources, the threshold is met if the project involves the demolition of any part of a structure listed in the State Register of Historic Places, or (as of 1998) the property is listed in the *Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth*. A detailed project information statement, known as an Environmental Notification Form, must then be prepared to assess the impact of the project on the resource.

Financial Programs and Incentives

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit

The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit program encourages preservation of historic structures by allowing favorable tax treatments for rehabilitation through a 20% tax credit for the rehabilitation of an income-producing NRHP-listed building. Since 1976, this investment incentive has proven to be one of the nation's most successful and cost-effective community development programs.

In order to be eligible for the credit, a building must be listed in the NRHP either individually or as a contributing structure in an historic district, or within a certified local historic district. The proposed project must also be a substantial rehabilitation costing more than \$5,000 or the adjusted basis of the property, whichever is greater. The building must be rehabilitated in a manner that meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and is reviewed through a series of applications by the State Historic Preservation Office (MHC) and the National Park Service.

For the purposes of the tax credits, income-producing buildings include commercial, agricultural, retail, and rental properties, but do not include owner-occupied residences or most condominiums.

Federal tax credits have helped encourage economic development in areas similar to Sturbridge Common's Historic District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In addition to the historic rehabilitation tax credits, a 10% Federal tax credit is also available to non-historic structures (buildings not listed in the NRHP) built before 1936. The requirements for the type of rehabilitation for these properties are not as stringent as those mandated for the historic tax credit.

Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit

The Massachusetts Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit allows up to 20% of the cost of the qualified rehabilitation of an income-producing historic structure to be credited on state income taxes. Many owners / developers use the state credit in conjunction with the federal tax credit to reach up to a return of 40% of approved costs in tax credits. Unlike the Federal incentive, the Massachusetts Historic Tax Credit program has an allocation cap of \$50 million per year, and credits are awarded via a competitive process. General requirements for eligibility to gain the credits are the same as for the Federal historic tax credits.

Survey and Planning Grants and Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)

The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) and Survey and Planning Grants, administered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission, provide 50% reimbursable matching grants for preservation of properties, landscapes, and sites listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Grants can be used for feasibility studies, design assistance and plans, acquisition and construction activities including stabilization, protection, rehabilitation and restoration. Non-profit organizations and governmental agencies can apply for the grants, which typically range from \$5,000 to \$30,000 for pre-development projects, and \$7,500 to \$100,000 for development or acquisitions. Acceptance of the grant requires that the recipients place and abide by a preservation restriction on the property that will protect its significant features in perpetuity. The Massachusetts Historical Commission should be approached regarding funding status for these programs.

Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLGP)

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) sponsors the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program, which documents and analyzes unprotected historic landscapes throughout the state. Properties must be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, with preference given to properties associated with friends' groups or citizen advisory councils. The Program supports inventory and planning projects, construction projects, preservation maintenance projects, and public education and stewardship activities. The Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program provided matching grants in the past to municipalities for

preservation of public parklands, although the grants program is currently not funded. A study was conducted by DCR of the town's heritage landscapes in 2007 as part of a larger study of many of the communities within both the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor

Sturbridge is within the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, composed of 35 towns in both Massachusetts and Connecticut. This national designation recognizes the significant natural and historic characteristics of the area and provides technical and financial support for initiatives to further economic and conservation efforts. The Corridor is managed by a non-profit, private organization which provides some funding for projects within the heritage area. Sturbridge's Trails Committee was a recipient of a grant in 2010 to help create a new trail segment of the Trolley Line Trail. Grants for historic preservation activities are certainly a possibility as well.

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

MACRIS

MACRIS Search Results

Search Town(s): Sturbridge; Resource Type(s): Area, Building, Burial Ground, Object, Structure;
Criteria:

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year
STU.A	Sturbridge Common Historic District		Sturbridge	
STU.B	Sturbridge Fair Grounds Area		Sturbridge	
STU.C	Snellville		Sturbridge	
STU.D	Old Sturbridge Village		Sturbridge	
STU.E	Fiskdale		Sturbridge	
STU.F	Fiske Hill		Sturbridge	
STU.G	Bob's Trailer Park		Sturbridge	
STU.909	Tantiusques Reservation Site		Sturbridge	
STU.113	Snellville District #2 Schoolhouse	Arnold Rd	Sturbridge	1874
STU.147	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Bates Ct	Sturbridge	1873
STU.148	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Bates Ct	Sturbridge	1873
STU.85	Sturbridge Coach Motor Lodge	Cedar St	Sturbridge	1972
STU.86		Cedar St	Sturbridge	1884
STU.87	Sturbridge Veterinary Hospital	Cedar St	Sturbridge	1966
STU.88	Shumway, Livingston House	Cedar St	Sturbridge	1840
STU.12		Chamberlain St	Sturbridge	1800
STU.13		Chamberlain St	Sturbridge	1800
STU.14	Corey - Merrick Block	Chamberlain St	Sturbridge	1800
STU.15	Franklin, Benjamin House	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1790
STU.16	Ladd, George S. House	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1800
STU.17	Drew, Clarence House	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1929
STU.18	Warner, Roswell House	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1810
STU.20	Pelton, L. House	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1835
STU.21		Charlton St	Sturbridge	1820
STU.22	Plimpton, Arthur House	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1935
STU.23		Charlton St	Sturbridge	1830
STU.24	Gifford, H. F. House	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1790
STU.46	Fuller, C. Cordwainer Shop	Charlton St	Sturbridge	1840
STU.25	Bachelor, James House	1 Charlton St	Sturbridge	1836
STU.166	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Church St	Sturbridge	1873
STU.167	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Church St	Sturbridge	1873
STU.168	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Church St	Sturbridge	1873
STU.173	Saint Anne Roman Catholic Church and Shrine	Church St	Sturbridge	1883
STU.174	Saint Anne's Roman Catholic Church Rectory	Church St	Sturbridge	1887
STU.175	Saint Patrick's Roman Catholic Church	Church St	Sturbridge	1883
STU.904	Saint Anne's Roman Catholic Shrine Pavilion	Church St	Sturbridge	

Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System

MACRIS

MACRIS Search Results

Search Town(s): Sturbridge; Resource Type(s): Area, Building, Burial Ground, Object, Structure;
Criteria:

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year
STU.905	Saint Anne's Roman Catholic Outdoor Shrine	Church St	Sturbridge	
STU.49	Fiske, Dea. Henry II House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1815
STU.50	Shephard, Philemon House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1846
STU.52	Fiske, Henry House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1850
STU.53	Fiske, David House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1786
STU.54	Fiske, Daniel III House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1832
STU.55	Fiske, Daniel II House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1811
STU.56	Fiske, Levins House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1820
STU.57	Fiske, Capt. Simeon - Marsh, Simeon F. House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1800
STU.58	Cutting, Ebenezer House	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1812
STU.902	Fiske Hill Well	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1731
STU.903	Fiske Hill District #9 Schoolhouse Memorial	Fiske Hill Rd	Sturbridge	1949
STU.48	Hobbs, Samuel House	Hall Rd	Sturbridge	1780
STU.41	Haynes House	Haynes St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.42	Dunton, Dea. Zenas House	Haynes St	Sturbridge	1780
STU.169	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Hillside St	Sturbridge	1873
STU.170	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Hillside St	Sturbridge	1873
STU.171	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Hillside St	Sturbridge	1873
STU.172	Fiskdale Mills Foreman's House	Hillside St	Sturbridge	1873
STU.132	Webster - Ward House	Hinman St	Sturbridge	1812
STU.133	Bates, Arthur L. House	Hinman St	Sturbridge	1885
STU.1	Sturbridge Candy and Gift Shoppe	Main St	Sturbridge	1955
STU.2	U. S. Post Office - Sturbridge Main Branch	Main St	Sturbridge	1959
STU.3	Wight, Oliver B. House	Main St	Sturbridge	1835
STU.4	Sturbridge Town Hall	Main St	Sturbridge	1838
STU.10	Federated Church of Sturbridge and Fiskdale	Main St	Sturbridge	1922
STU.11	Hyde, Joshua Public Library	Main St	Sturbridge	1896
STU.26	Coburn, John House	Main St	Sturbridge	1790
STU.28	Gerold House	Main St	Sturbridge	1820
STU.29	Davis, Dea. George House	Main St	Sturbridge	1814
STU.30	Corey, Dr. Jacob Jr. House	Main St	Sturbridge	1775
STU.31	East Schoolhouse	Main St	Sturbridge	1822
STU.32		Main St	Sturbridge	1825
STU.33	Wheelock and Corey Country Store	Main St	Sturbridge	1790
STU.34		Main St	Sturbridge	1918
STU.35		Main St	Sturbridge	1918
STU.36	Babbit, Erasmus Inn	Main St	Sturbridge	1772

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Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year
STU.37	Chamberlain, A. B. Grain and Feed Barn	Main St	Sturbridge	1920
STU.38	Griswold - Chamberlain, Clifford House	Main St	Sturbridge	1820
STU.40	Plimpton, Dea. Daniel Store - Corner House	Main St	Sturbridge	1800
STU.43	Haynes Carriage and Paint Shop	Main St	Sturbridge	1835
STU.44	Haynes Blacksmith and Harness Repair Shop	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.45	West Schoolhouse	Main St	Sturbridge	1822
STU.64	Howard, Dr. A. House	Main St	Sturbridge	1825
STU.66	Cranston Blacksmith Shop	Main St	Sturbridge	1906
STU.67	Stone, Maude House	Main St	Sturbridge	1825
STU.68	Hebard, John Double House	Main St	Sturbridge	1910
STU.71	Haynes, Conrad House	Main St	Sturbridge	1940
STU.72	Main Street Trolley Substation	Main St	Sturbridge	1906
STU.73	Mobil Gas Station	Main St	Sturbridge	1971
STU.74	Wight, Oliver House	Main St	Sturbridge	1789
STU.75	Village Victualler	Main St	Sturbridge	
STU.76	Sturbridge Visitor Information Center	Main St	Sturbridge	1965
STU.77	South Worcester Agricultural Society Hall	Main St	Sturbridge	1868
STU.78	Yankee Spirits	Main St	Sturbridge	1960
STU.79	Sturbridge Pumping Station	Main St	Sturbridge	1971
STU.80		Main St	Sturbridge	1865
STU.81		Main St	Sturbridge	1955
STU.82	Tatman, Charles House	Main St	Sturbridge	1941
STU.83		Main St	Sturbridge	1961
STU.84		Main St	Sturbridge	1896
STU.89	Wight, Alpheus House	Main St	Sturbridge	1787
STU.90	Wight Mills Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.91	Wight House	Main St	Sturbridge	1830
STU.92	Wight, W. Store	Main St	Sturbridge	1853
STU.93	Sturbridge Yankee Workshop	Main St	Sturbridge	
STU.102	Sturbridge Trading Post	Main St	Sturbridge	1957
STU.103	Mandeville Restaurant	Main St	Sturbridge	1945
STU.104	Cheese House, The	Main St	Sturbridge	1971
STU.105	Snell Double House	Main St	Sturbridge	1857
STU.106	Shumway, Livingston House	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.107	Snell Manufacturing Company Double Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.108	Snell Manufacturing Company Double Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.109		Main St	Sturbridge	1936

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MACRIS Search Results

Search Town(s): Sturbridge; Resource Type(s): Area, Building, Burial Ground, Object, Structure;
Criteria:

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year
STU.110	Phillips, Marvin House	Main St	Sturbridge	1895
STU.111	Wight, Frank House	Main St	Sturbridge	1865
STU.112	Gray, Floyd House	Main St	Sturbridge	1949
STU.114	Snell, Lucius House	Main St	Sturbridge	1865
STU.115	Hooker, Marvin House	Main St	Sturbridge	1860
STU.116	Village Farms Roadstand	Main St	Sturbridge	1955
STU.117	Snell Manufacturing Company	Main St	Sturbridge	1912
STU.118	Snell Manufacturing Company Business Office	Main St	Sturbridge	1912
STU.119	Snell Manufacturing Company Auger Shop	Main St	Sturbridge	1855
STU.120	Wight Mills Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1830
STU.121	Wight Mills Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1830
STU.122	Wight, Alpheus Barn	Main St	Sturbridge	1787
STU.123	Wight, Alpheus Vinegar House	Main St	Sturbridge	1862
STU.124	Richards, George House	Main St	Sturbridge	1892
STU.125	Guaranty Bank and Trust Company	Main St	Sturbridge	1958
STU.126	Horn of Plenty Gift Shop	Main St	Sturbridge	1957
STU.127	Lincoln, Gov. Levi House	Main St	Sturbridge	1836
STU.128		Main St	Sturbridge	1790
STU.129	Sturbridge Auto Museum	Main St	Sturbridge	1960
STU.130	Bates, Emory L. House	Main St	Sturbridge	1865
STU.131	Adams, Fred House	Main St	Sturbridge	1840
STU.134	Parker's Garage	Main St	Sturbridge	1930
STU.135	Webber, N. House	Main St	Sturbridge	1840
STU.136	Charles, T. House	Main St	Sturbridge	1840
STU.137	Fiskdale Baptist Church Vestry	Main St	Sturbridge	1849
STU.138	Taylor, A. P. House	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.139	Fiskdale Mills Agent's House - Drake, Simeon House	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.140	Fiske, Josiah House	Main St	Sturbridge	1845
STU.141	Quinebaug Manufacturing Company Hotel and Store	Main St	Sturbridge	1826
STU.142	Mallahy Building	Main St	Sturbridge	1860
STU.143	Maloney, Timothy Double House	Main St	Sturbridge	1885
STU.144	Chauvin, John Day House	Main St	Sturbridge	1875
STU.145	Kirby Drug Store	Main St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.146	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.149	U. S. Post Office - Fiskdale Branch	Main St	Sturbridge	1969
STU.150	Sturbridge Pharmacy	Main St	Sturbridge	1967
STU.151	Otis Block	Main St	Sturbridge	1874

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MACRIS Search Results

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Criteria:

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year
STU.152	Fiskdale Mills Fire House	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.153	Fiskdale Mills Double Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.154	Fiskdale Mills Double Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.155	Fiskdale Mills Double Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1875
STU.156	Fiskdale Mills Foreman's House	Main St	Sturbridge	1875
STU.157	Fiskdale Mills Foreman's House	Main St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.158	Quinebaug Manufacturing Company Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1830
STU.159	Cartier - Gleason Double House	Main St	Sturbridge	1865
STU.160	Veterans of Foreign Wars - V. F. W. Building	Main St	Sturbridge	1900
STU.161	Sturbridge Fire Station	Main St	Sturbridge	1922
STU.162	Allen, Jacob House	Main St	Sturbridge	1790
STU.176	Heritage Store	Main St	Sturbridge	1965
STU.177	1738 Apartment House	Main St	Sturbridge	1973
STU.178		Main St	Sturbridge	1820
STU.179		Main St	Sturbridge	1835
STU.180	Sturbridge Christian Advent Church	Main St	Sturbridge	1895
STU.181	Bacon - Monroe House	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.182	Bacon - Monroe Barn	Main St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.183		Main St	Sturbridge	1823
STU.184	Lombard, David House	Main St	Sturbridge	1835
STU.185	Upham, Horace House and Bakery	Main St	Sturbridge	1860
STU.186		Main St	Sturbridge	1932
STU.187	Brimfield Congregational Church Conference Hall	Main St	Sturbridge	1820
STU.188		Main St	Sturbridge	1920
STU.189	Fiskdale Mills Double Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1835
STU.190	Fiskdale Mills Worker Housing	Main St	Sturbridge	1826
STU.191	Fiske House	Main St	Sturbridge	1830
STU.192		Main St	Sturbridge	1830
STU.193	Fiskdale Mills - Lower Mill	Main St	Sturbridge	1829
STU.194	Fiskdale Mills - Upper Mills	Main St	Sturbridge	1869
STU.801	Old Sturbridge Burial Ground	Main St	Sturbridge	1750
STU.906	Massachusetts Electric Company Substation	Main St	Sturbridge	1955
STU.907	Fiskdale Ball Field	Main St	Sturbridge	1935
STU.910	Sturbridge Soldiers Monument	Main St	Sturbridge	1871
STU.47	Sturbridge Professional Center	258 Main St	Sturbridge	1970
STU.39	Sturbridge Center School	301 Main St	Sturbridge	1855
STU.27	Hyde, Benjamin D. House	313 Main St	Sturbridge	1833

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Criteria:

Inv. No.	Property Name	Street	Town	Year
STU.5	Purdey, J. E. House	Maple St	Sturbridge	1840
STU.6	Wells, B. House	Maple St	Sturbridge	1835
STU.7	Wight, D. P. House	Maple St	Sturbridge	1868
STU.8	Federated Church of Sturbridge - Fiskdale Parsonag	Maple St	Sturbridge	1869
STU.800	North Cemetery	Maple St	Sturbridge	1790
STU.59	Smith, John House	McGilpin Rd	Sturbridge	1820
STU.60	Robbins, Ezekiel House	McGilpin Rd	Sturbridge	1826
STU.61	Fiske, Nathan House	McGilpin Rd	Sturbridge	1802
STU.51		McGregory Rd	Sturbridge	1755
STU.9	Chase House	Morse St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.65	Harrington, C. C. House	New Boston Rd	Sturbridge	1870
STU.901	Vermont Bridge - Taft Bridge	Quinebaug River	Sturbridge	1874
STU.900	Sturbridge Fairgrounds	Rt 20	Sturbridge	1868
STU.908	Route 20 Bridge over Cedar Pond Outlet	Rt 20	Sturbridge	1956
STU.163	Leodore, Julian Mobile Home	School St	Sturbridge	
STU.164		School St	Sturbridge	
STU.165	Fiskdale Schoolhouse	School St	Sturbridge	1896
STU.94	Snell Manufacturing Company Worker Housing	Snell St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.95	Wight, William House	Snell St	Sturbridge	1850
STU.96	Snell Manufacturing Company Double Worker Housing	Snell St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.97	Snell Manufacturing Company Worker Housing	Snell St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.98	Snell Manufacturing Company Double Worker Housing	Snell St	Sturbridge	1870
STU.99	Snell Manufacturing Company Worker Housing	Sykes Rd	Sturbridge	1850
STU.100	Snell Manufacturing Company Worker Housing	Sykes Rd	Sturbridge	1850
STU.101	Snell Manufacturing Company Double Worker Housing	Sykes Rd	Sturbridge	1850
STU.19	Childs, Isaac Jr. House	Taft St	Sturbridge	1792
STU.69	Massachusetts Department of Public Works	West Main St	Sturbridge	1955
STU.70	New England Telephone Company Building	West Main St	Sturbridge	1950
STU.62	Potter, D. K. House	Whittemore Rd	Sturbridge	1830
STU.63	Rice - Simpson Barn	Whittemore Rd	Sturbridge	1792

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