

Wetland Trail Corridor Maintenance Plan

West Newbury Open Space Committee
West Newbury Mill Pond Committee
West Newbury Riding and Driving Club

April 2018

This plan covers the activities necessary to maintain the trail corridor of existing trails in wetland areas in the town of West Newbury. It does not include

- creation of new trails
- modifications to existing trail surfaces
- installation or modification of drainage structures
- installation or modifications to stream or wet area crossings

Additionally, this plan assumes that the trail work described is to be completed by the West Newbury Open Space Committee, Mill Pond Committee and West Newbury Riding and Driving Club and/or volunteers under their supervision. These groups will not be responsible for trail work completed without their authorization. This plan also does not assume any right to perform trail maintenance on property owned by entities other than the town of West Newbury, other than as granted through existing trail easements and/or owner permission.

Before engaging in any trail maintenance, all individuals will be provided with a map of the area in which they will be working and a copy of the practices to be followed in performing the maintenance.

Wetlands Identification

Figure 1 shows properties in West Newbury that have existing trail networks. While some of these trails may cross through wetland resource and buffer zone areas, delineation to establish wetland and buffer zone areas for all these properties would be labor and cost prohibitive. Given that the activities proposed in this plan would have minimal impact on the public interests the wetland regulations are designed to protect, this plan uses digital maps to estimate the extent of wetland areas.

Maps from the Merrimac Valley Planning Commission show estimated wetland boundaries as well as existing trail systems for West Newbury. The location and extent of these wetland areas was confirmed by reviewing corresponding maps from the Ma DEP Wetlands and Wetlands Change website. This website also provides the locations of NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife. The information provided from these websites was combined to develop maps for the West Newbury properties this plan covers and are included as Appendix A to this plan. Rather than establishing a protective 100 foot buffer zone from these digitally represented lines, this plan provides best management practices that would be appropriate even in wetland areas for existing trails.

Regulatory Compliance

Although many of the trail properties have wetlands located within them, only a small percentage of existing trails cross through wetland areas. Because these trails are already being used, and the maintenance activities proposed in this plan will have a negligible impact on these wetland areas, a Request for Determination for these activities is being submitted to the Conservation Commission to comply with wetlands regulations. This filing will streamline completion of trail maintenance activities and allow committee members and volunteers to be in compliance with wetlands regulations

This plan does not apply to any work other than the routine trail corridor maintenance described in the plan. Approval for any work other than routine trail corridor maintenance as described in this plan must be sought by the individual group proposing the work under a separate filing. The following limitations to the use of this plan also apply:

1. Any trail corridor work proposed for areas shown as NHESP Estimated Habitats of Rare Wildlife on the maps will require authorization by the Conservation Commission or its Agent prior to work being completed.
2. For trail systems with pre-existing Orders of Conditions from the Conservation Commission, those conditions must be adhered to in addition to the requirements of this plan.

Clearing Frequency/Extent

Routine trail corridor maintenance is limited to trimming of vegetation, cutting of tree limbs and branches and the cutting of felled trees to maintain the required height and width of the trail corridor. The frequency and extent of clearing will be dependent on the intended use of the trail. Potential trail uses in West Newbury include the following:

- Pedestrian – including Walking, Hiking, Snowshoeing, Cross Country Skiing
- Mountain Biking
- Equestrian

In its Trails Guidelines and Best Practices Manual, updated March 2012, The Ma Department of Conservation and Recreation categorizes trails into 5 classes based on the extent of trail development and provides recommended operation and maintenance practices for these classes. This document was used to evaluate the types of trails present in West Newbury and determine the following frequency and extent of corridor maintenance for each use. For trails with multiple uses, the use with the most rigorous maintenance guidelines will be followed as set forth below:

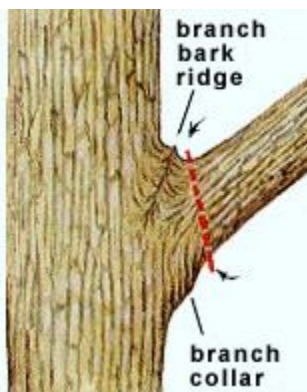
| Intended Use | Corridor Width | Corridor Height | Maintenance Frequency |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| Pedestrian | 12 – 18 inches outside tread edge | 8 feet | Every 3 to 5 years or as needed to respond to trail obstacles |
| Mountain Biking | 12 – 18 inches outside tread edge | 8 feet | Every 1 to 3 years or as needed to respond to trail obstacles |
| Equestrian | 18 – 24 inches outside tread edge | 10 ft | Every 1 to 3 years or as needed to respond to trail obstacles |

Source: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/stewardship/greenway/docs/dcrguidelines.pdf>

Clearing Practices

Trail clearing of vegetation outside the tread edge and within the trail corridor will be completed in accordance with the following practices to insure the minimum disturbance to vegetation in or near wetland areas.

1. Herbaceous vegetation less than one foot in height will be left uncut to maintain vegetative cover to the soils.
2. Herbaceous vegetation higher than one foot will be cut to a height no lower than one foot and left in the corridor area.
3. Woody vegetation such as shrubs and vines will be cut at ground surface using loppers where possible, and a pruning saw where necessary. Invasive species may be cut to the ground in an area extending no more than five feet outside the trail corridor.
4. Saplings in the corridor two inches or less in diameter at ground level will be removed by cutting close to the ground surface with a pruning saw. Cuts will be flat so they do not create a safety hazard.
5. When possible, tree branches intruding into the corridor will be cut back to the tree trunk, to the outside of the bark collar as shown in the illustration at the end of this section, rather than cutting off at the corridor edge. Large branches will be undercut to avoid stripping the bark.
6. Fallen trees or limbs will be cleared by cutting out the section that intrudes into the trail corridor with a pruning saw or chain saw if necessary.
7. Woody materials removed from the corridor may be disposed of where cut as long as they do not block the trail, destroy remaining vegetation (for example, by completely blocking light to the remaining vegetation), or obstruct drainage or the flow of water within a wetland area. Any material that will destroy remaining vegetation or obstruct drainage or the flow of water within a wetland area will be disposed of at least fifty feet upland of the edge of the wetland area. Where materials are left where they are cut they will, if possible, be placed perpendicular to the trail corridor with the butt end facing away from the trail.



Branch bark collar

A proper pruning cut should almost always be taken back to just outside the branch bark collar. This is often a slightly raised ring at the base of the branch.

On the upper side of the branch is the branch bark ridge, which begins in the crotch of the two branches and runs along the main stem near parallel to the angle of the branch. A good pruning cut should run from just outside the branch bark ridge and angle down and away from the main stem, remaining outside the branch bark collar. You should not cut into the collar or ridge.

Source: <http://www.tree-care.info/advice/pruning/cut>

Access/Equipment

Trail clearing will be completed in accordance with the following practices for access and equipment.

1. Access will be by established trails and on foot. No motorized equipment will be used to access clearing areas or transport cut materials, other than to the trail head.
2. Foot traffic in the corridor areas outside the trail tread will be minimized as much as possible during trail work by working from within the trail tread where possible.
3. Manual cutting equipment will be used to the maximum extent practical. When motorized saws are necessary, fuel for these saws will be transported in DOT approved containers and stored at least 50 feet from wetland areas shown on the maps. Fueling and refueling will be completed at the fuel storage location rather than the cutting location.

Notification

Each group completing trail corridor maintenance activity under this plan will be responsible for notifying the Conservation Commission Agent before or within 24 hours following completion of the work. The notification may be via email (jsmith@westnewbury.org) or phone (978) 363-1100, ext 126.

This notification will include:

1. The group responsible for the work
2. The person supervising the work and their contact information, as well as the names of other workers.
3. The location of the trail and area where the work is to be, or has been done, and a description of that work.

Any questions about the requirements of this plan or proposed trail work may also be communicated to the Conservation Agent.

Town of West Newbury

Geographical Areas

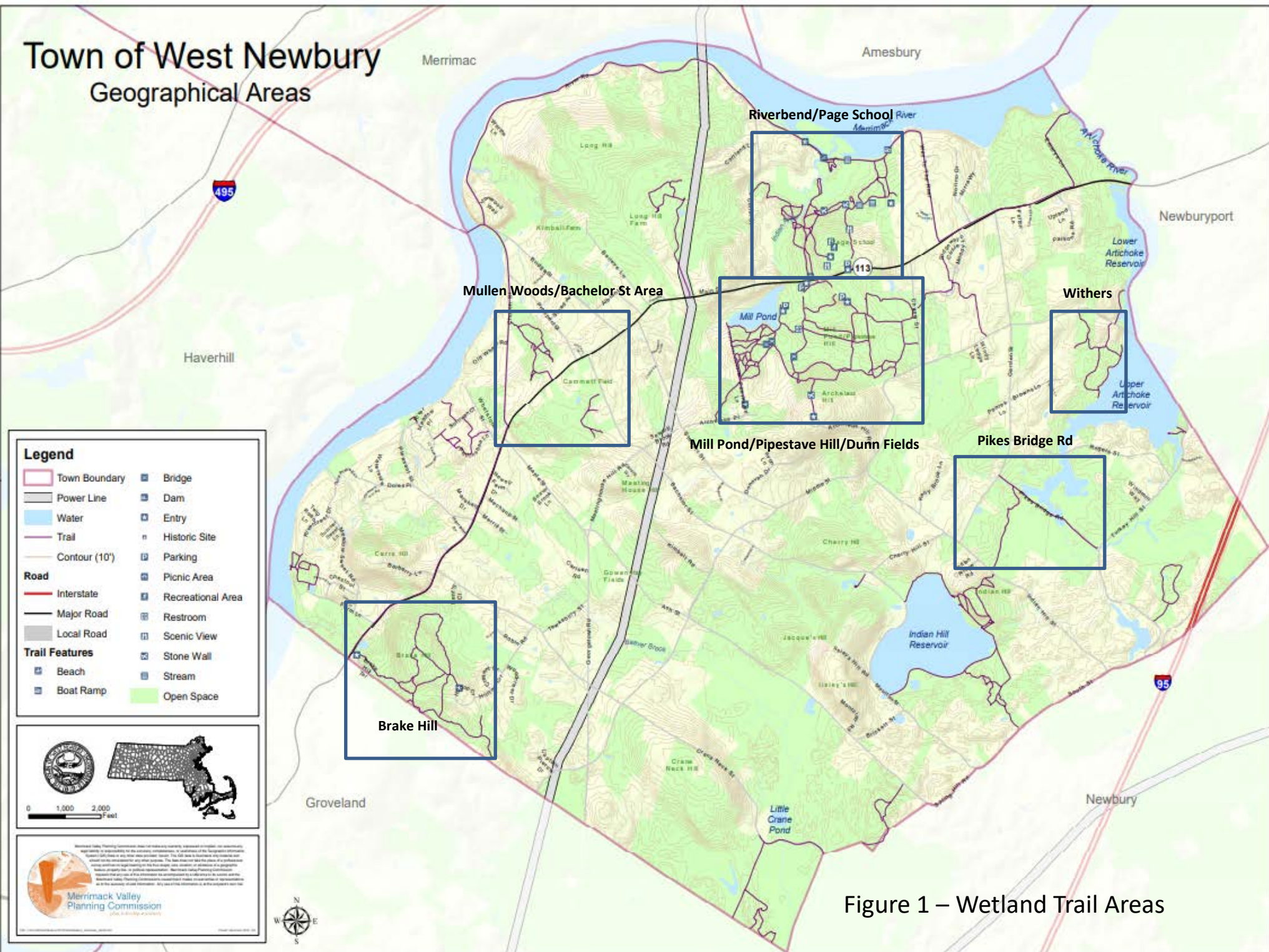


Figure 1 – Wetland Trail Areas

Appendix A

Trails/Wetlands Maps

Mill Pond, Pipestave Hill and Dunn Field Area

Riverbend and Page School

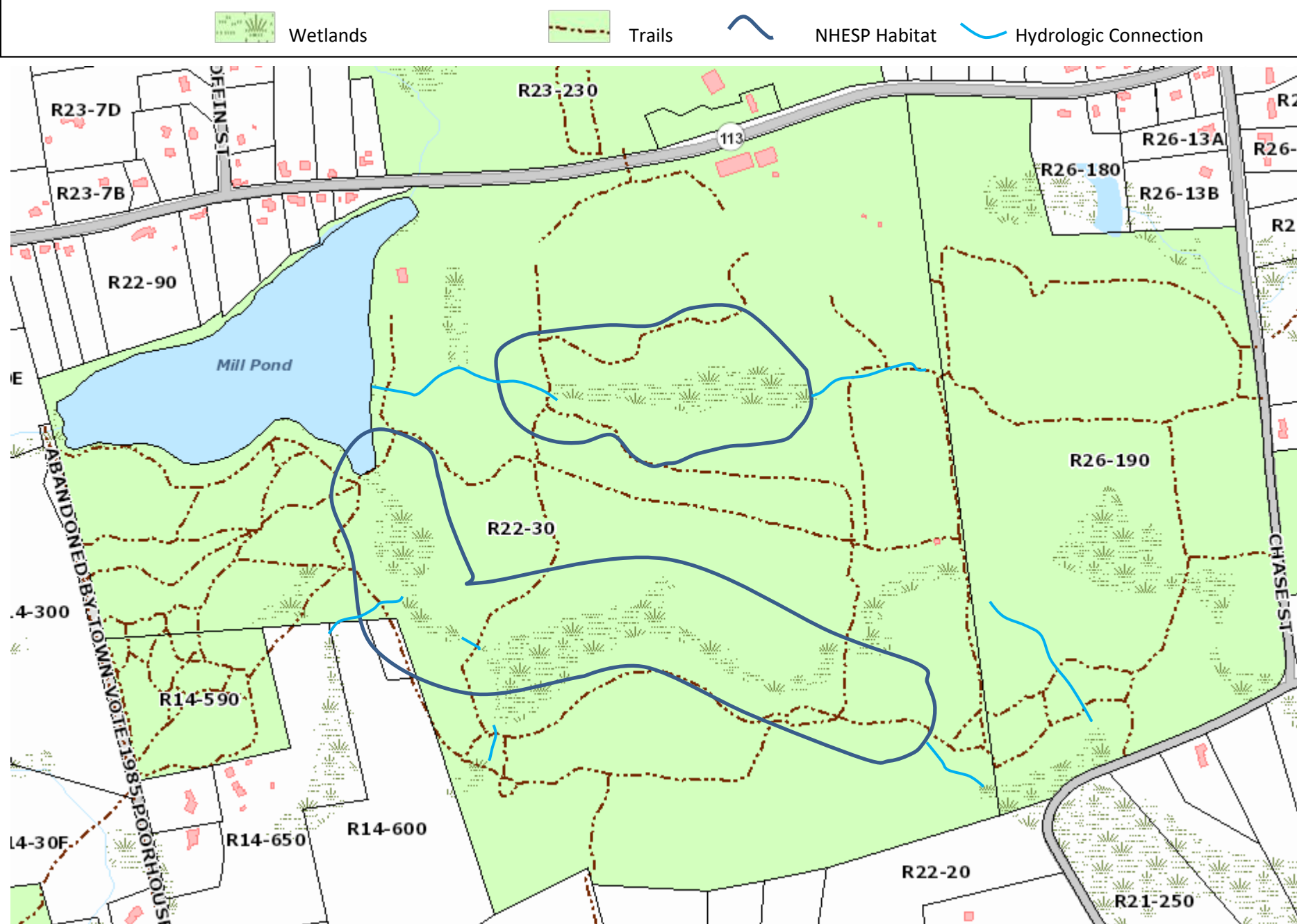
Withers Conservation Area

Pikes Bridge Rd

Brake Hill

Mullen Woods and Bachelor Street Area

Mill Pond, Pipestave Hill and Dunn Fields Area



Riverbend and Page School Area



Wetlands



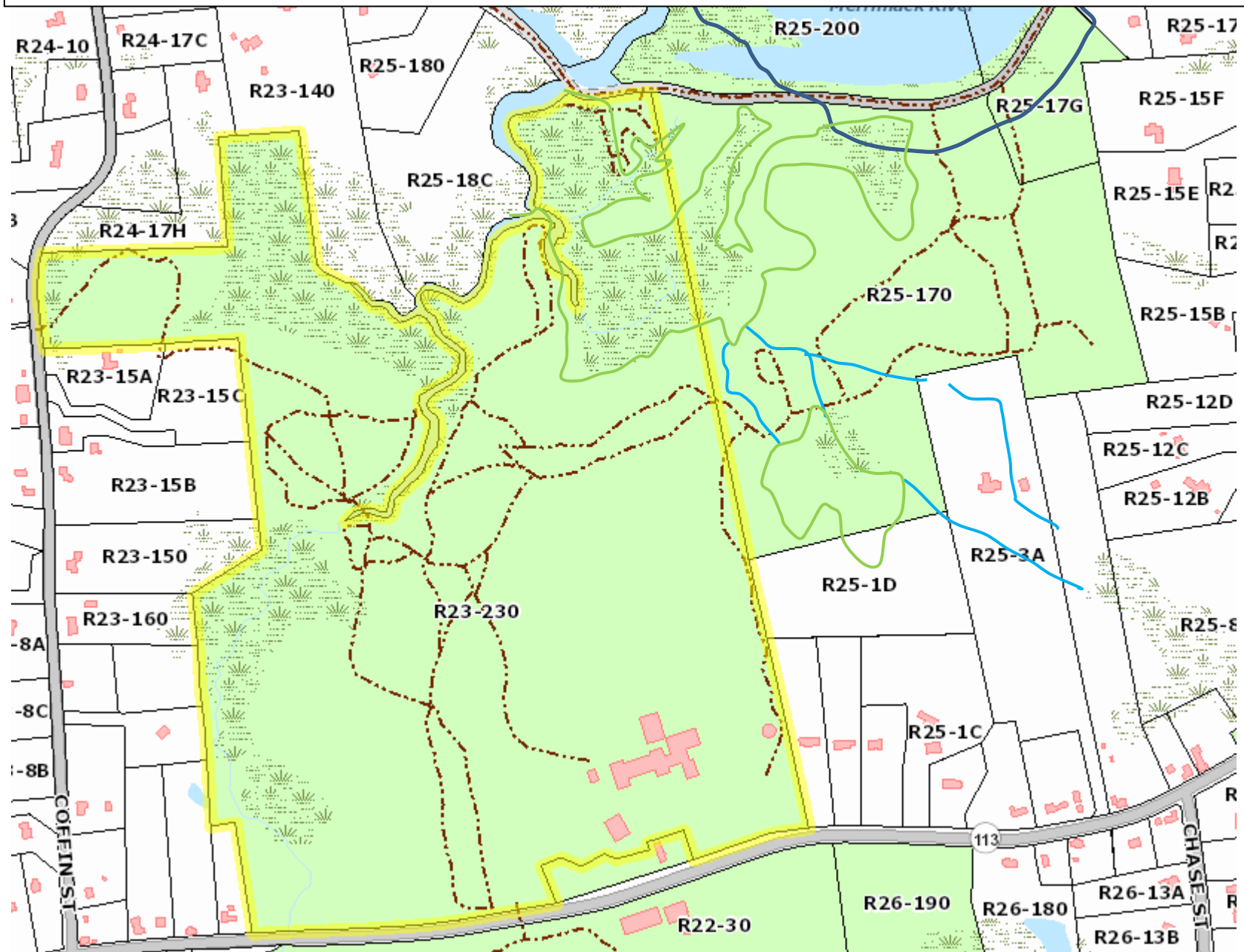
Trails



NHESP Habitat



Hydrologic Connection



Withers Conservation Area



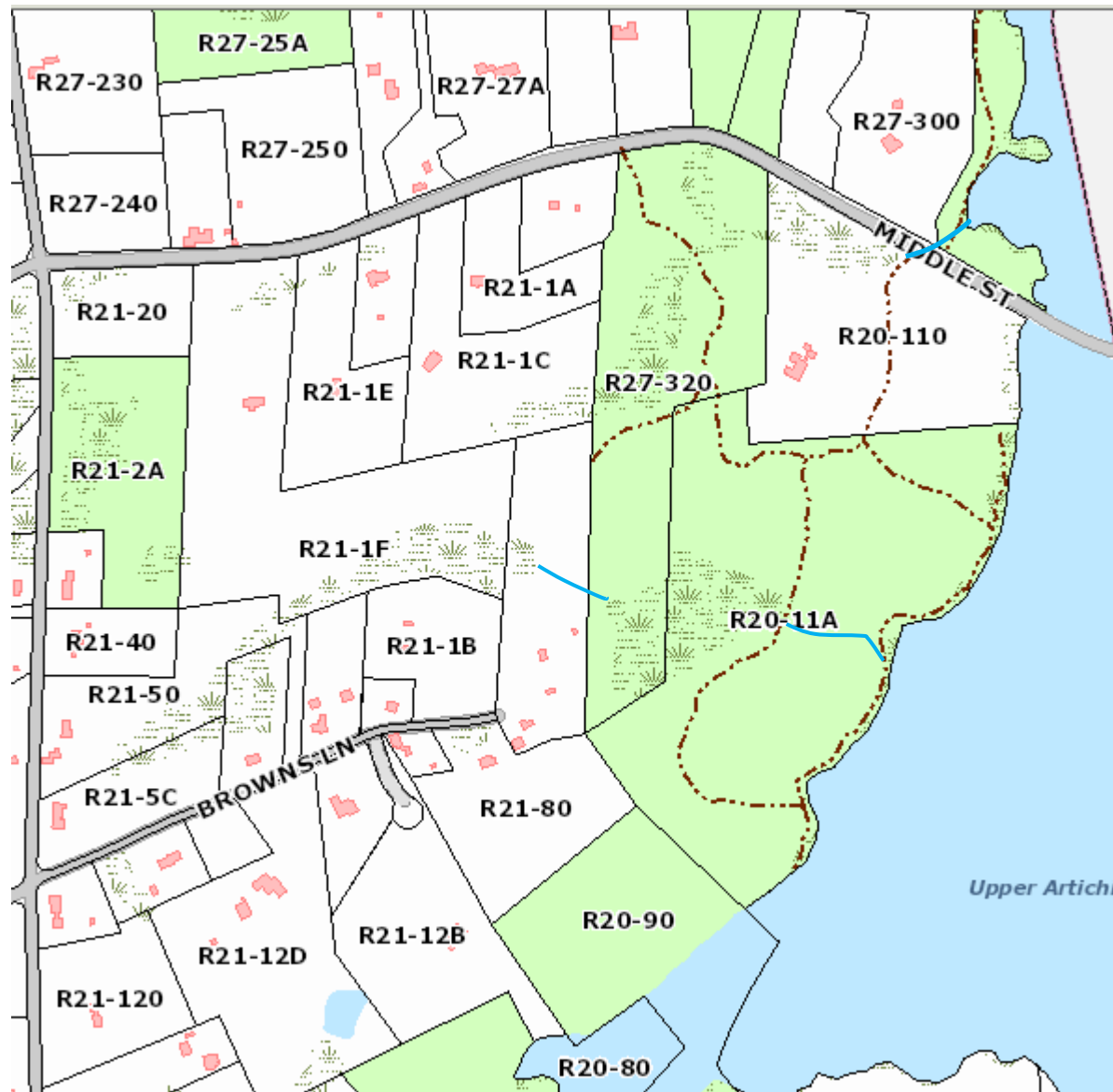
Wetlands



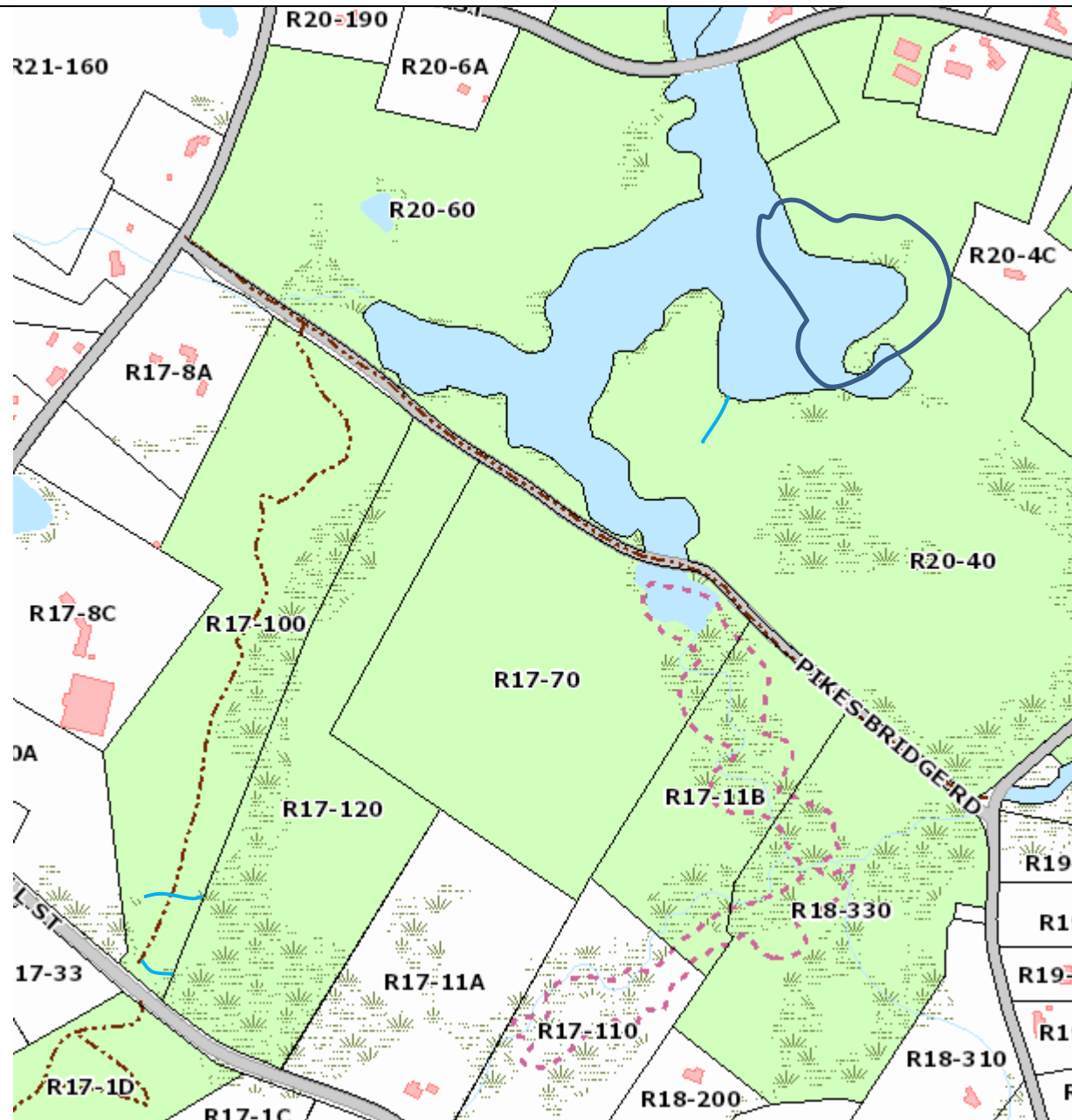
Trails



Hydrologic Connection



Wetland Trail Corridor Maintenance Plan - Appendix A: Trails/Wetlands Maps



Brake Hill



Wetlands



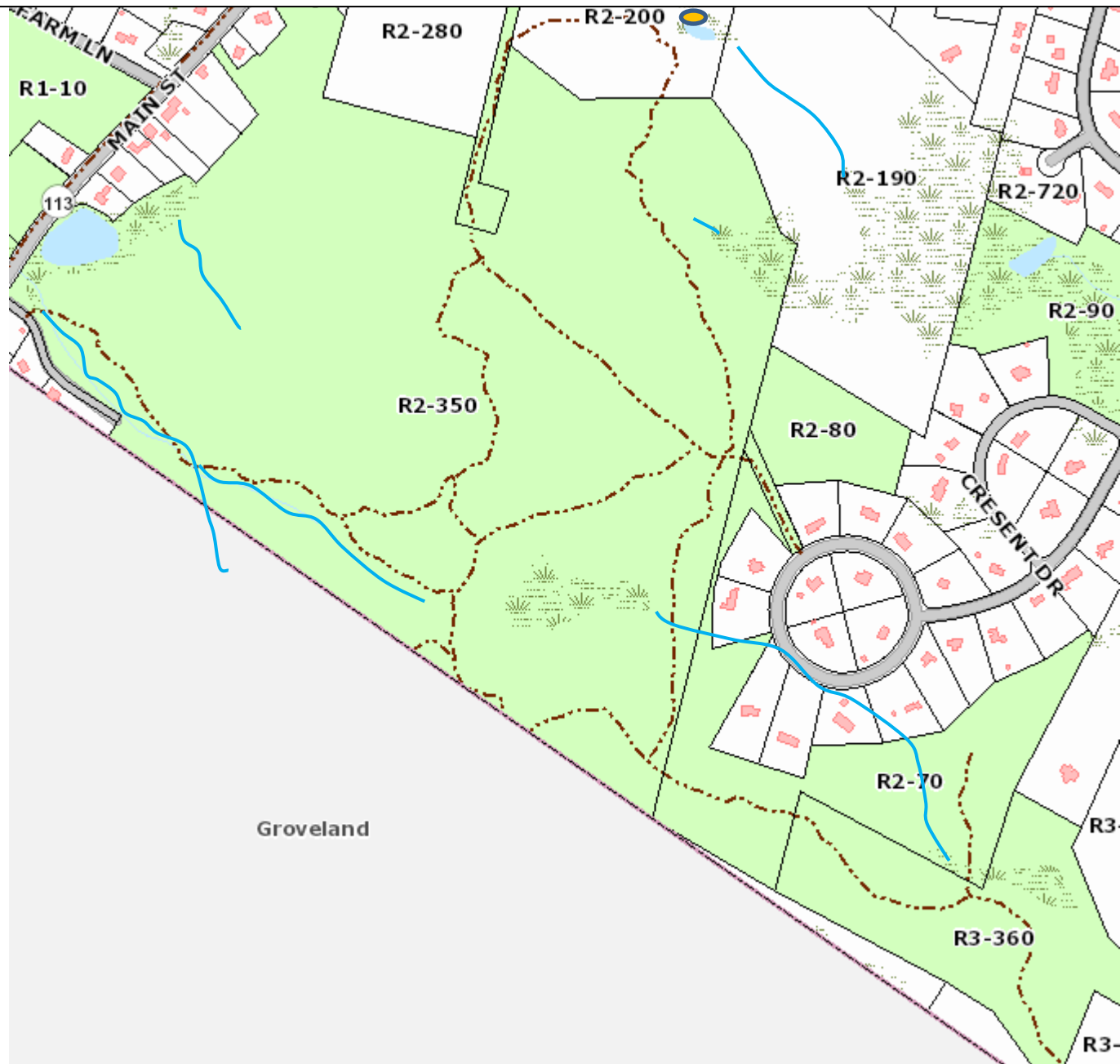
Trails



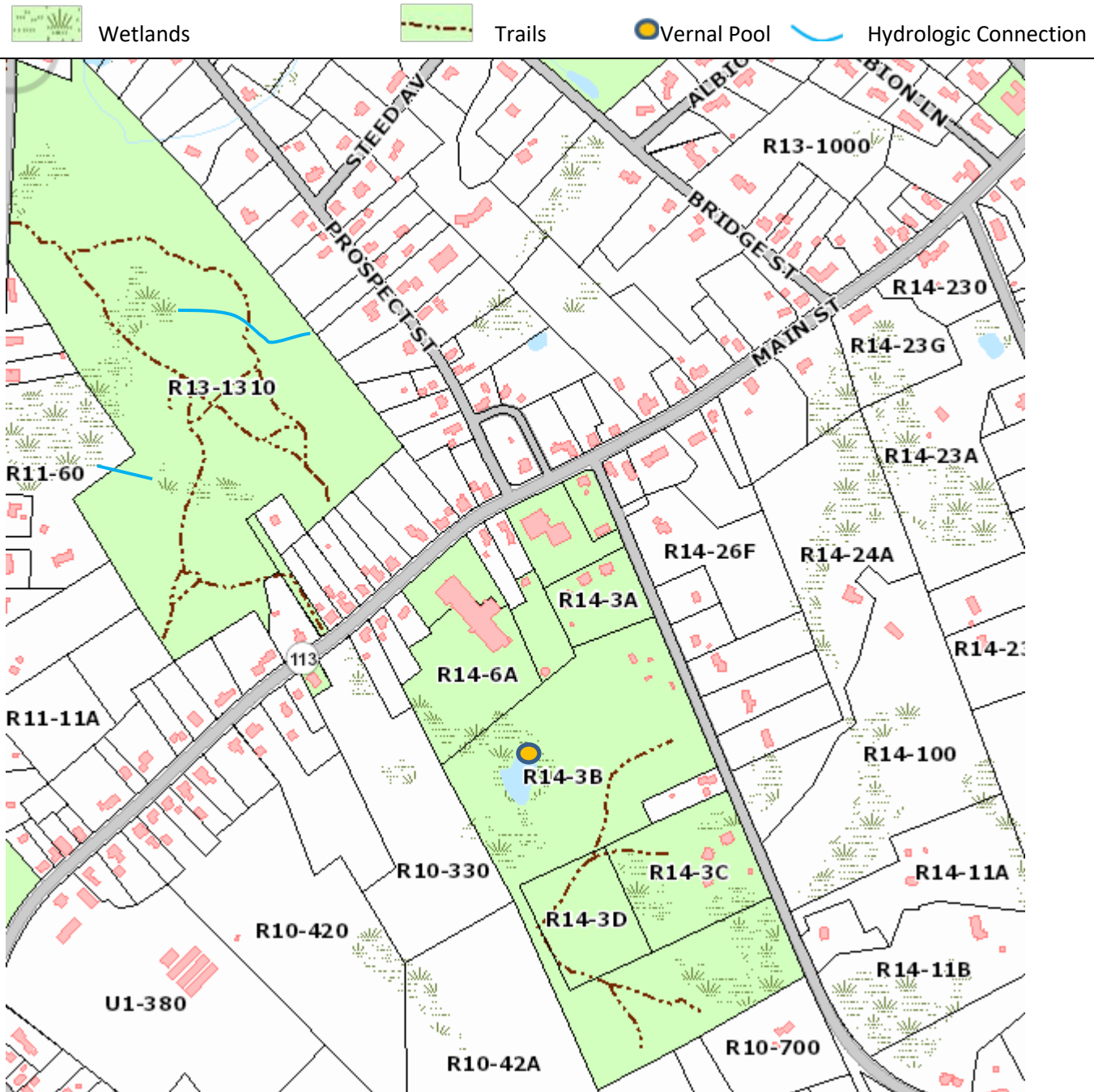
Vernal Pool



Hydrologic Connection



Mullen Woods and Bachelor Street Area





MASSWILDLIFE

**DIVISION OF
FISHERIES & WILDLIFE**

1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581

p: (508) 389-6300 | f: (508) 389-7890

MASS.GOV/MASSWILDLIFE

July 13, 2018

West Newbury Board of Selectmen
381 Main St.
West Newbury MA 01985

RE: Project Location: Town of West Newbury
Project Description: Trail Maintenance
NHESP Tracking No.: 09-26385

RECEIVED
NOV 06 2018
TOWN MANAGER
TOWN OF WEST NEWBURY

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for submitting the "WETLAND TRAIL CORRIDOR MAINTENANCE PLAN" (dated April 2018) and supporting documentation to the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program of the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (the "Division") for review pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA) (MGL c.131A) and its implementing regulations (321 CMR 10.00).

The Division hereby approves the submitted management plan.

Therefore, the proposed activities are **exempt from MESA review** pursuant to 321 CMR 10.14 which states: "[t]he following Projects and Activities shall be exempt from the requirements of 321 CMR 10.18 through 10.23..."

(15) The active management of State-listed Species habitat, including but not limited to mowing, cutting, burning, or pruning of vegetation, or removing exotic or invasive species, for the purpose of maintaining or enhancing the habitat for the benefit of rare species, provided that the management is carried out in accordance with a habitat management plan approved in writing by the Division"

Any changes to the proposed project or any additional work beyond that provided may require a filing with the Division pursuant to the MESA regulations. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Melany Cheeseman, Endangered Species Review Assistant, at (508) 389-6357.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. French, Ph.D.
Assistant Director

cc: Wendy Reed

MASSWILDLIFE