



Community Preservation Committee Littleton, Massachusetts

The CPC was established by Town Meeting in 2007. The CPC has the powers and responsibilities specified by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 44B, section 5(b), the Community Preservation Act.

Community Preservation Application for Funding

Date: 4-29-2024

Project Title: Webster Property Acquisition

Name of Applicant: TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Name of Organization: TOWN OF LITTLETON

Address: 37 SHATTUCK ST, LITTLETON MA 01460

Telephone: (918) 540-2460 Email: JDUGGAN@LITTLETON.MA.GOV

CPA Category (check all that apply): **Open Space** **Historic Preservation**
Recreation **Community Housing**

*CPA Funding Requested: \$ 760,000 Total Project Cost: \$ \$ 760,000

Please attach answers to the following questions. Include supporting materials as necessary.

- 1. Project Description:** Please give a detailed project description, including specific objectives.
- 2. Goals:** How does this project accomplish the goals of the Community Preservation Plan for Littleton? (See Guidelines for Project Submission for general criteria)
- 3. Timeline:** What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical milestones? Will this be a multi-year project?
- 4. Budget:** Please provide a full budget including the following information, as applicable.

(NOTE: CPA funds may not be used for maintenance):

- a. Total amount of the project cost, with itemization of major components.
- b. Additional funding sources. Please include those that are available, committed, or under consideration.
- c. Describe the basis for your budget and the sources of information you used.

* PURCHASE OF LAND - \$730,000

SOFT COSTS - UP + \$30,000



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5. **Support:** Have the appropriate Town Boards and Commissions expressed support and/or approved the project? What is the nature and level of community support for this project?

Submit this form and accompanying materials to:

Community Preservation Committee
c/o Town Clerk Office
Town Offices
37 Shattuck Street
P.O. Box 1305
Littleton, MA 01460
978-540-2401
townclerk@littletonma.org

Please provide one paper copy as well as an electronic (pdf) file.

Exhibit B: Community Preservation Application for Funding

Response to Questions

1. **Project Description:** The project is for purchase of parcel R09-5-0 which is 36.49 acres generally located near the corner of Bulkeley Road and Crane Road. The attached project narrative, graphics and photographs provides detailed property information.

2. **Goals:** The goal of the purchase is to provide permanent protection for the property's natural resources (including forested uplands and wetlands, a vernal pool and perennial and intermittent streams). The purchase will also protect the Native American and historical resources on the property, and will provide public walking trails in an area of Littleton that is not well served by nearby trails.

3. **Timeline:** The anticipated purchase timeline would be:
 - a. Town Meeting vote May 7, 2024
 - b. Purchase could occur after the town and the seller agree on a closing date.

4. **Budget:** The sole component of the total project cost price is the purchase price of up to \$730,000.00

5. **Support:** The Community Preservation Committee, Littleton Conservation Trust, the Littleton Select Board and Finance Committee support the purchase.

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS. The Webster property is approximately 36.49 acres. This LAND Grant application is considering the purchase of the entire property for open space and conservation purposes. Graphics and photographs are provided in Attachment 3. Figures 3-1, 2 and 3 show general site location and conditions. General site Photographs are in Fig 3-4. The property includes a mix of upland hardwoods and softwoods, forested, shrub and emergent wetlands, streams, old field and a certifiable vernal pool, all of which provide important wildlife habitat and create a gradient of habitats that can be resilient to changing temperatures, rainfall and storm events. The property is almost entirely forested (softwoods and hardwood) and is Prime Forest Land (Fig 3-5). It is currently in Chapter 61A with a Certified Forestry Management Plan in place. Much of the property also contains Prime Farmland Soils (Fig 3-6). There is about 0.4 acres of old field (where a garden used to be) providing additional habitat diversity. The property includes a large core wetland in the northern half of the property, several intermittent streams and associated vegetated wetlands as well as a perennial stream (Fig 3-7). The 100-year floodplain is associated with the core wetlands and the perennial stream and its associated wetlands (Fig 3-8). A Potential Vernal Pool was investigated in Spring 2023 and clearly supports an abundant vernal pool ecosystem. Vernal pool photographs are provided in Fig 3-9 and Certification forms are being prepared. As noted on Fig 3-10, this Webster vernal pool and associated habitat complete the connection between recognized vernal pool core habitat and the numerous vernal pools of the Boxborough Station WMA. Scattered invasive species are present throughout.

Aside from the diverse habitats, the site's location is extremely valuable (Fig 3-11). It is uniquely situated in the southern portion of Littleton which has very limited available conservation land trails. At the same time, however, it is in the middle of an unprotected area between, and with ½ mile of, major protected lands totally over 500 acres such as the Littleton Conservation Trust property, Boxborough Station Wildlife Management Area and "Daley CR" in Littleton and the Harvard Sportsmen's Club and Patch Hill Conservation Land in Boxborough, and as such would provide an important protected wildlife corridor between all these properties. The Boxborough Conservation Trust has expressed their support for this purchase. Local residents have observed, and caught on game cameras, numerous wildlife species using the area, including bobcat, deer, coyotes, fisher cat, red fox, skunk and others.

In addition to the natural features, the property is part of Littleton's early history and contains Colonial and numerous Native American features (Fig 3-12).

DEVELOPMENT THREAT. The property is considered under development threat, primarily due to its proximity to the MBTA Station and the MBTA Communities Multifamily Zoning requirements. Both independent living units and single family houses have been considered in evaluating the property, showing that there are options for developing the site. A 495/MetroWest Development Compact Plan (MDCP) map (Fig 3-13) shows the property adjacent to, but not within, a State Priority Development Area. MDCP defines Littleton as a "developing suburb" that is part of the sprawl frontier, and the subject property would help develop a critical link for Area 158-14, 158-17 and 37-12 (Locally Identified, Regionally Significant and State Designated Priority Preservation Areas). Finally, according to Mass Audubon's Losing Ground 2020, is ranked 6th for total area of newly developed land (standardized by town size), showing the amount of development pressure.

PURPOSE. The goal of the acquisition is to preserve and protect the land not only for its own value, but also due to its location between other protected lands and vernal pool core habitat. The purchase would provide Littleton, and Boxborough, residents with new recreational possibilities, inspire our Land Stewards with new connections to make and provide land owners with ideas for protecting land which they currently own and, most specifically, serve as a possible catalyst for private owners to conserve portions of their adjacent critical lands. There have been preliminary discussions with the owners of 300 Foster to allow parking and access through their property, but no agreement has been reached. The acquisition will also protect cultural resources and the Historical

WEBTSER PROPERTY ACQUISITION COMMUNITY PESERVATION FUNDING REQUEST

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- Project Narrative
- Graphics
- Photographs

Commission is committed to providing educational information on the proposed kiosk. The vernal pool, given its close proximity to the trail, will also provide an educational opportunity both for information on the kiosk as well as training for certifying vernal pools.

This property has been pursued for purchase not only because of its diverse habitat and valuable position, but also because it will help with climate change impact mitigation. The presence of the 100-year floodplain along the perennial stream and wetland core mean that the property in its natural state is beneficial for amelioration of flood hazards; it is designated by TNC Nature Based Solutions for “Conserve for Inland Flood Resilience” (Fig 3-14). Mass Audubon’s recently released “The Value of Nature” shows that forests and wetlands both capture significant amounts of carbon. The wetlands provide additional resiliency functions by storing flood waters and slowly releasing it, allowing for groundwater recharge and drought resilience. The spectrum of habitat on the site provide resiliency as climate changes. It is rated overall average for resiliency (Fig 3-15). And, of course, keeping this area from becoming developed avoids the associated impacts from increased runoff, water quality and temperature degradation and loss of forestlands. Protection of the land would further the Towns’ MVP goals, and addresses our recognized challenges and hazards including loss of trees and their cooling effect, increased erosion for intense rain events, water quality impacts from runoff and low water levels, and invasive species. Finally, according to Mass Audubon’s Losing Ground 2020, Littleton ranked 244th in the state for total area of permanently conserved land (by percent) but is ranked 6th for total area of newly developed land (standardized by town size). The proposed purchase would help further the Town’s goal to achieve a more equitable amount of protected open space that is available for passive recreation. This also advances the new Healey-Driscoll Administration’s Climate Focused Forestry Initiative.

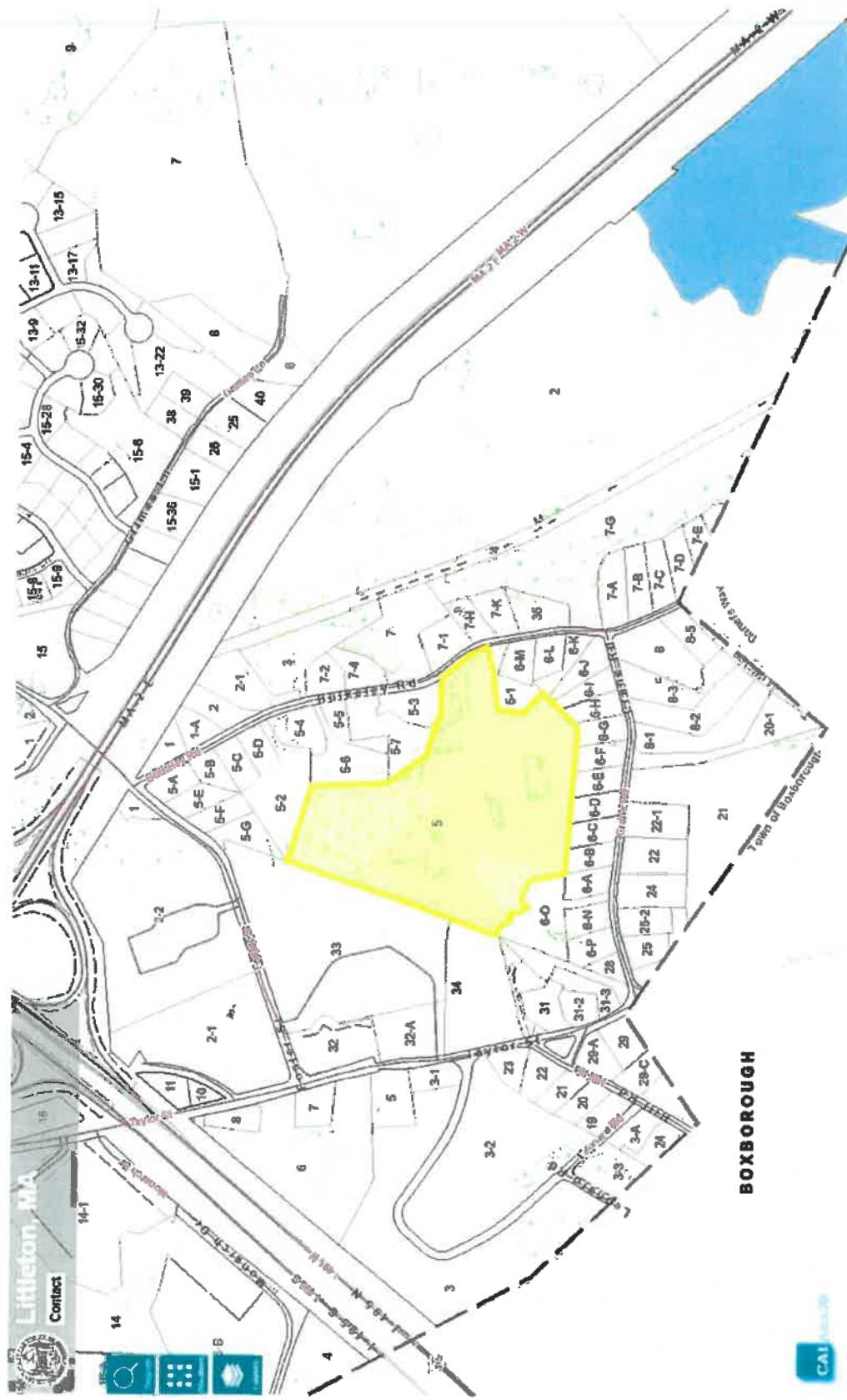
STEWARDSHIP. The Littleton Conservation Commission (LCC) works very closely with the Littleton Conservation Trust (LCT) and the Land Stewards to monitor, maintain and improve our conservation lands. Examples of our efforts over the last couple of years are included in the attachments. It is expected that this property would benefit from Stewardship activities including trail creation and maintenance, boardwalk and kiosk construction, vernal pool education, spring time amphibian crossing efforts and invasive species training and management. Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) comes with an extensive background in stewardship expertise.

CONSISTENCY. The acquisition would advance many of the Littleton OSRP goals and action plans. Section 5 of the Application Form provides additional detail. The acquisition is also consistent with the Littleton Master Plan goals, including mitigating the impact of climate change on natural resources and water supplies through establishment of open space corridors; connecting trails and open spaces; and acquiring open space. On a more regional basis, this purchase conforms to the SCORP. As indicated in the OSRP, “In many ways Littleton’s recreation needs as determined by the community closely relate to those identified in the SCORP”. Of particular note, SCORP Goal 1 is to provide access for underserved populations such as the acquisition of land and development of new open spaces in areas that lack existing or useable open spaces, such as Environmental Justice neighborhoods. Goal 2 is to increase availability of all types of trails. This project would specifically increase pedestrian trails and connections in the southern areas of Littleton which currently has very few available trails. The protected wildlife corridor would also provide easier access for wildlife viewing; Goal 3 (invest in recreation and conservation areas that are close to home) would also be met by tying together this entire quadrant of Littleton to large open space areas. Consistency with the MPDC is described above.

LOCAL WOOD. LCC generally sources their lumber for kiosks and signs from Littleton Lumber who in turn get their pressure treated lumber from Northeast Treaters located in Belchertown. This project is expected to need an entrance sign, kiosk and 2-3 boardwalks/stream crossing.



FIGURE 3-1 WEBSTER USGS



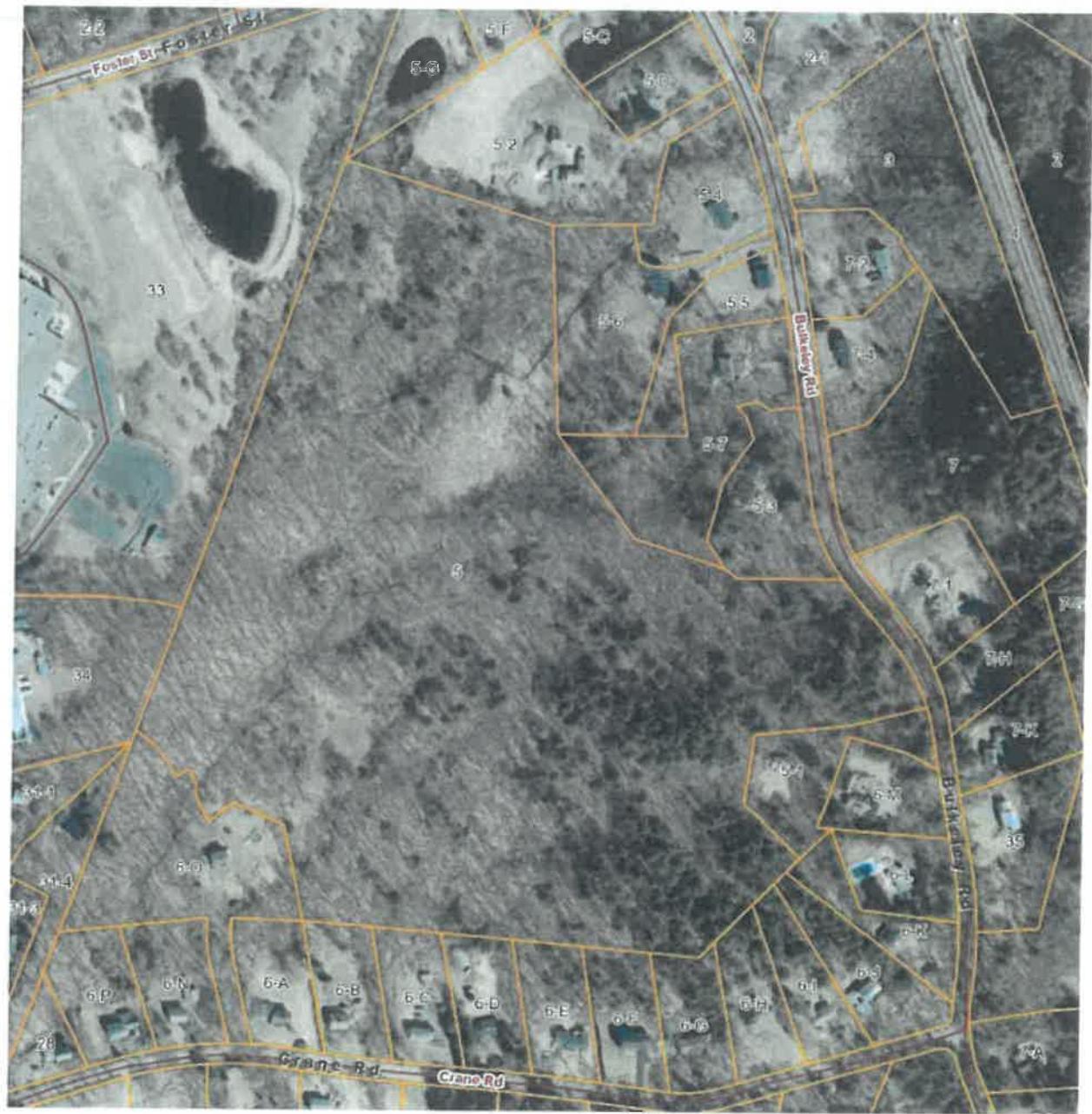


FIGURE 3-3 2021 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

Attachment 3-4 PHOTOGRAPHS

Webster Land Acquisition, Littleton

Photo 1. Old field (former garden)



Photo 2. Typical hardwood forest



Photo 3. Typical softwood forest



Photo 4. Typical trail through forest



Photo 5. Small intermittent stream with step stone crossing



Photo 6. Intermittent stream and wetland trail crossing



Photo 7. Perennial stream

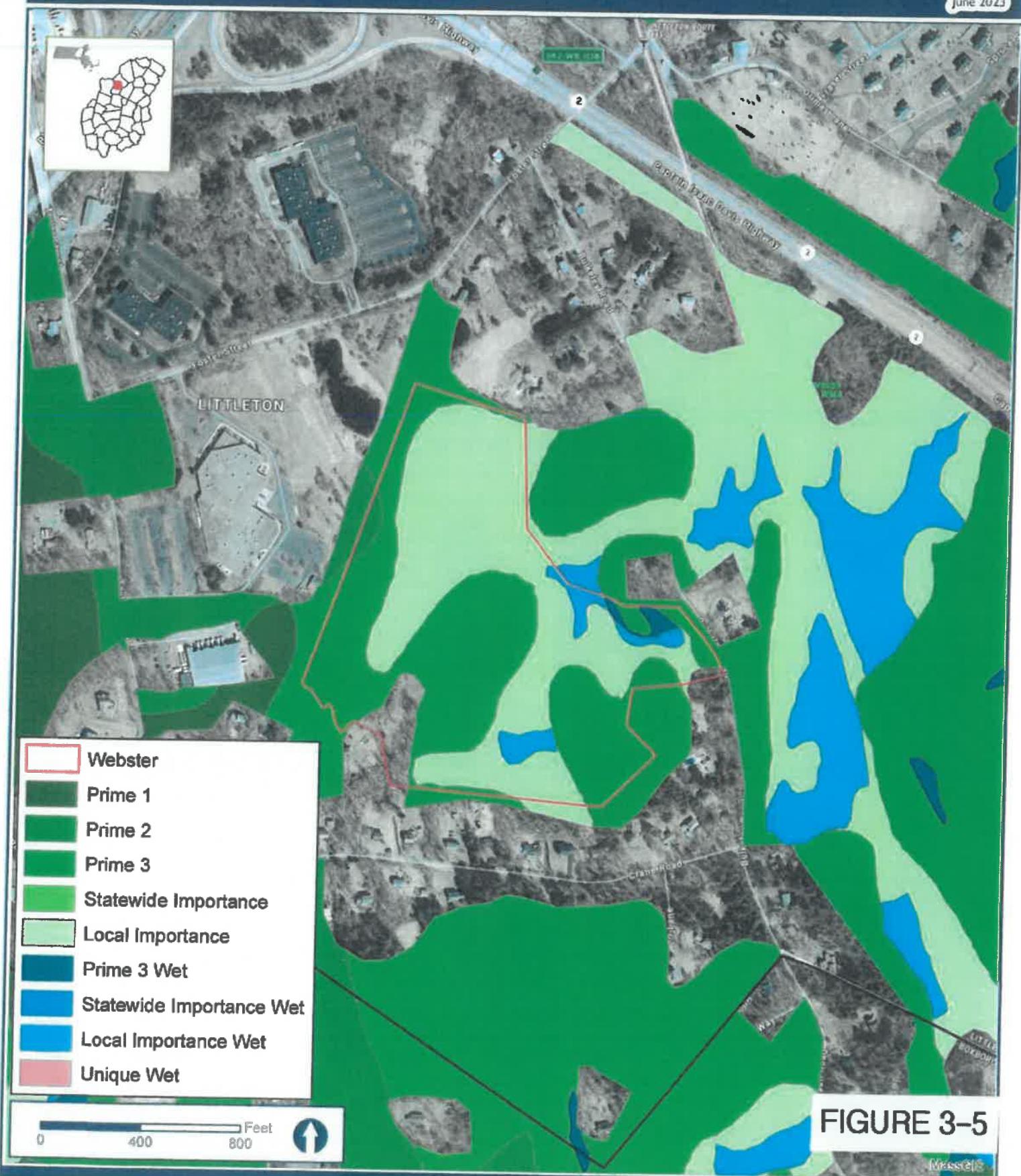


Photo 8. Perennial stream

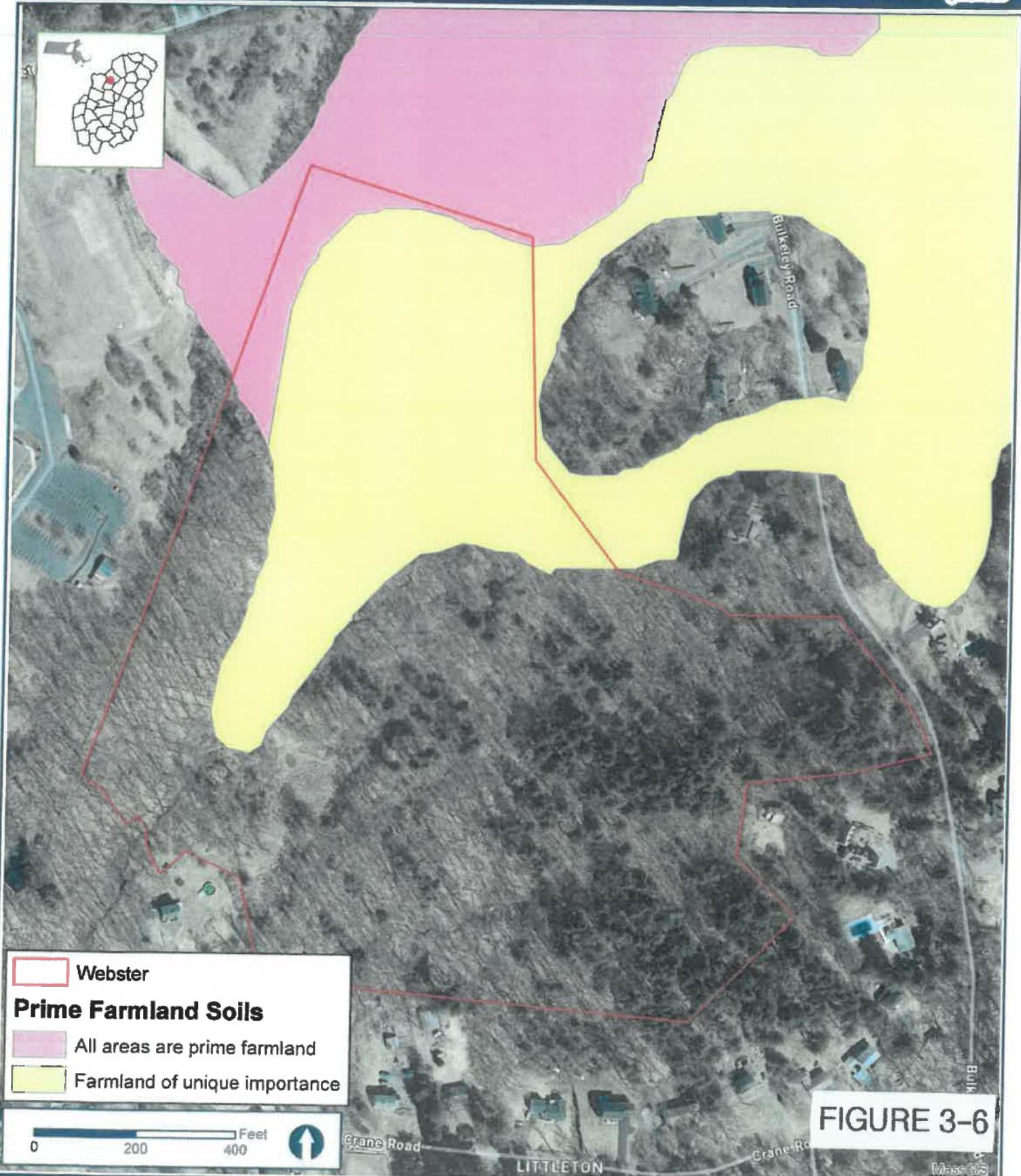


Photo 9. Drone photo of emergent marsh; three deer were observed walking through

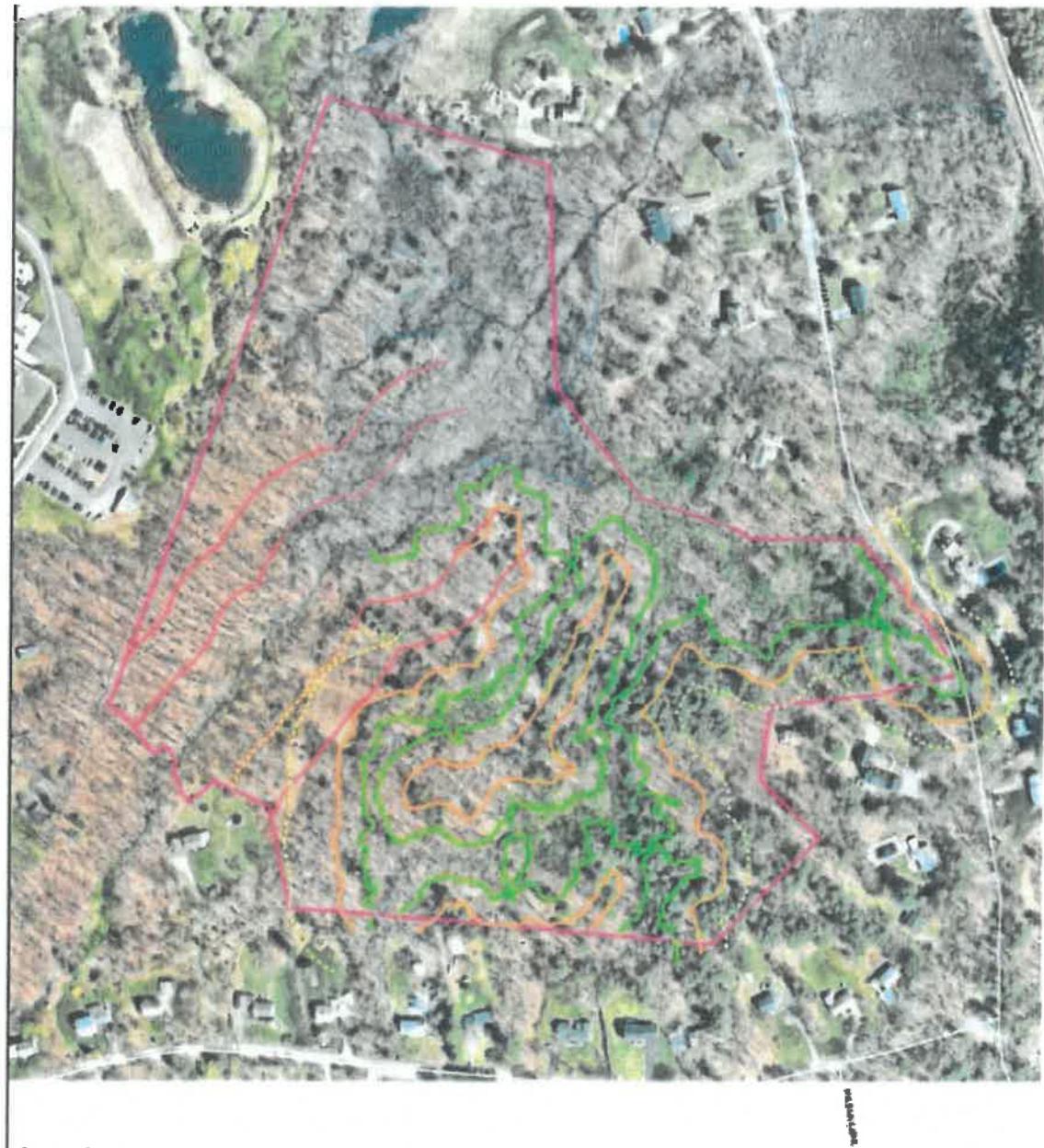




Map produced by Sudbury Valley Trustees. Data provided by Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. This map should be used for reference only. Boundary lines are approximate. Sudbury Valley Trustees - 18 Wolbach Road - Sudbury, MA 01776 - 978-443-5588 - web@svtweb.org - www.svtweb.org



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Legend

Wetland_Lines	Bamboo Wetlands
100 ft Buffer	Freshwater
50 ft Buffer	Salinity Tolerant
25 ft Buffer	Shallow
Riverbank	Deep
Site	Shrub
Marsh/Bog	Marsh/Bog
Wadsec marsh	Wadsec marsh
Open Water	Open Water

000

000 ft
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0 100 200 300 400 500 600 700 800 900 1000

Site Map
Survey March 2010

Page 1

FIGURE 3-7 PRELIMINARY WETLAND AND BUFFER ZONES

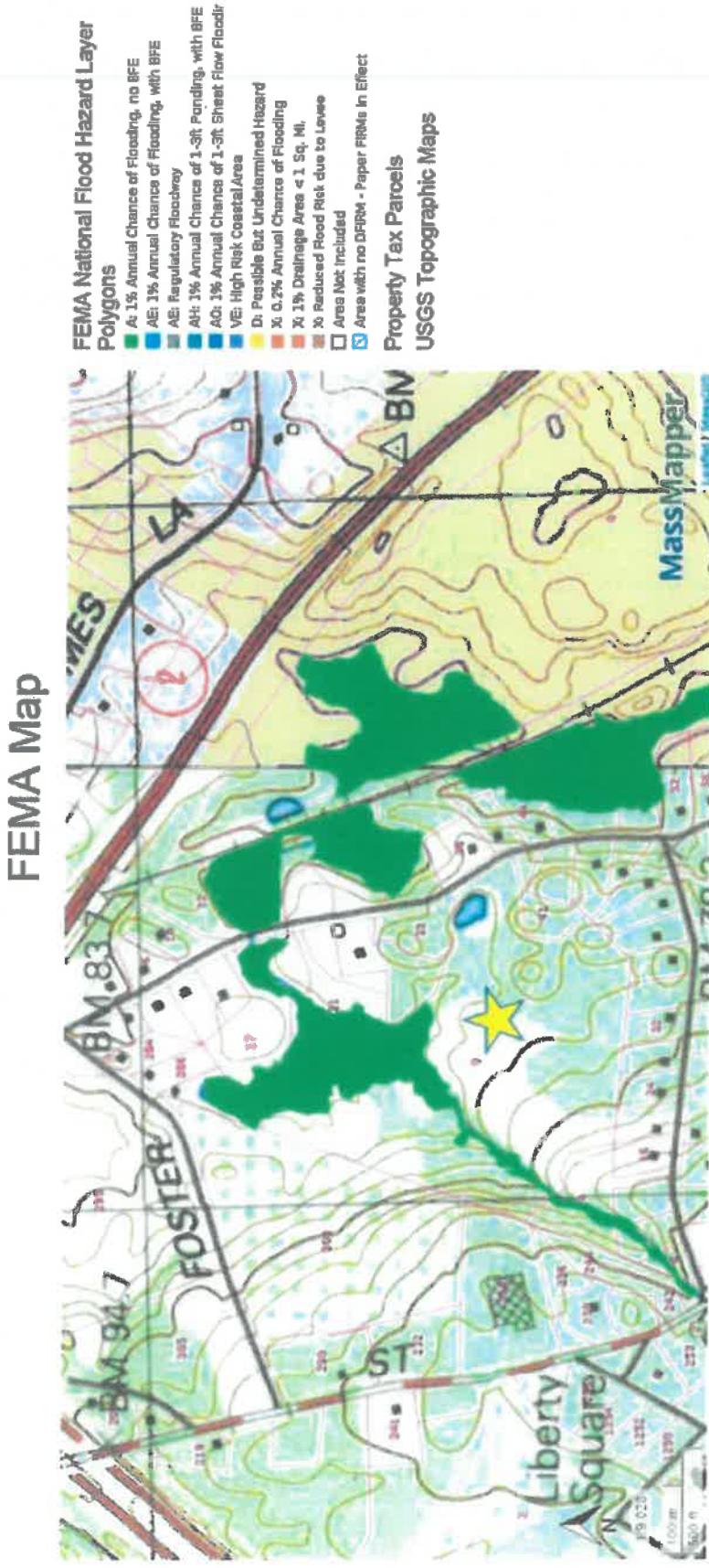


Figure 3-8 100-Year Floodplain

FIGURE 3-9 VERNAL POOL DOCUMENTATION INFORMATION



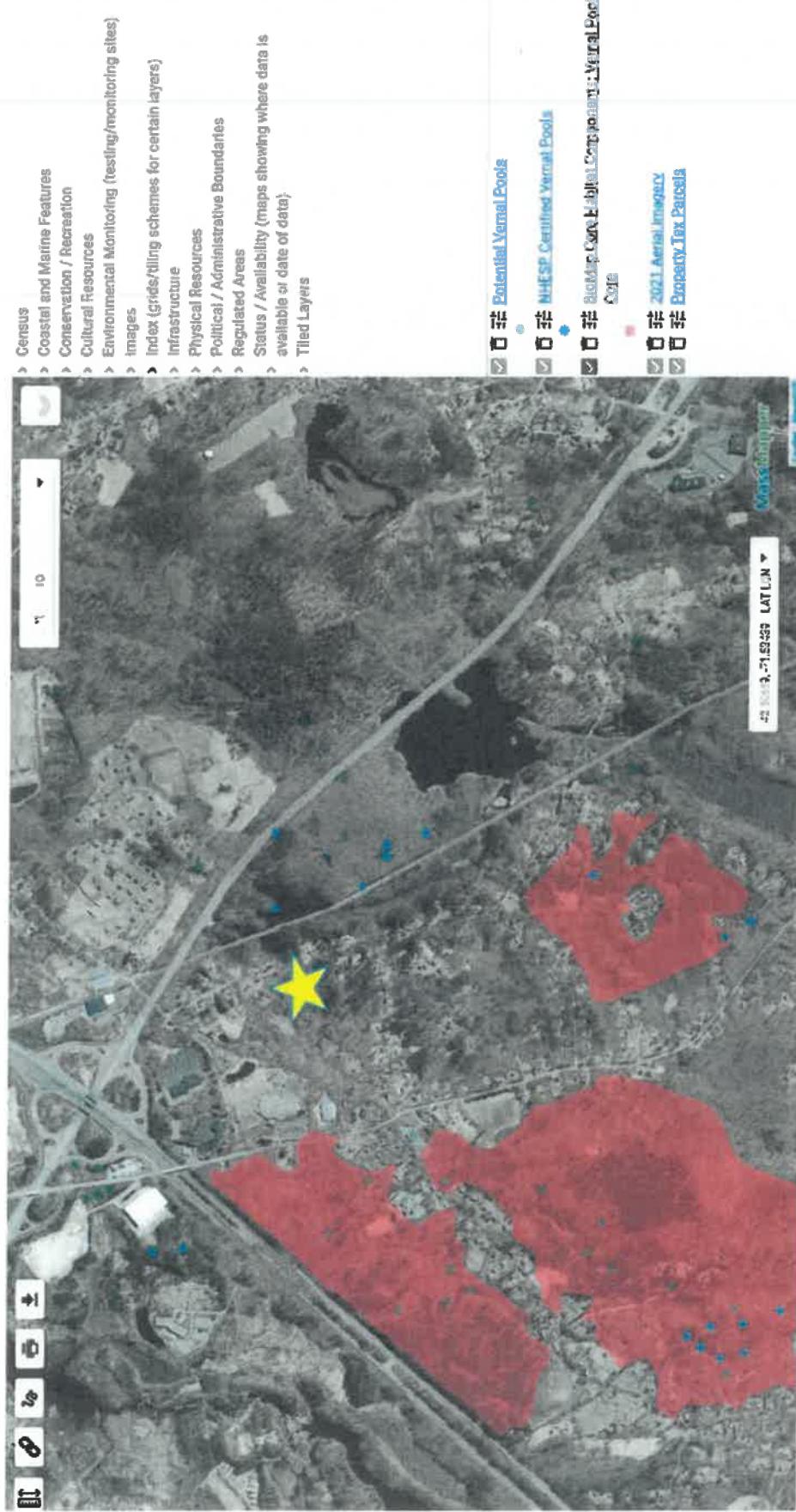
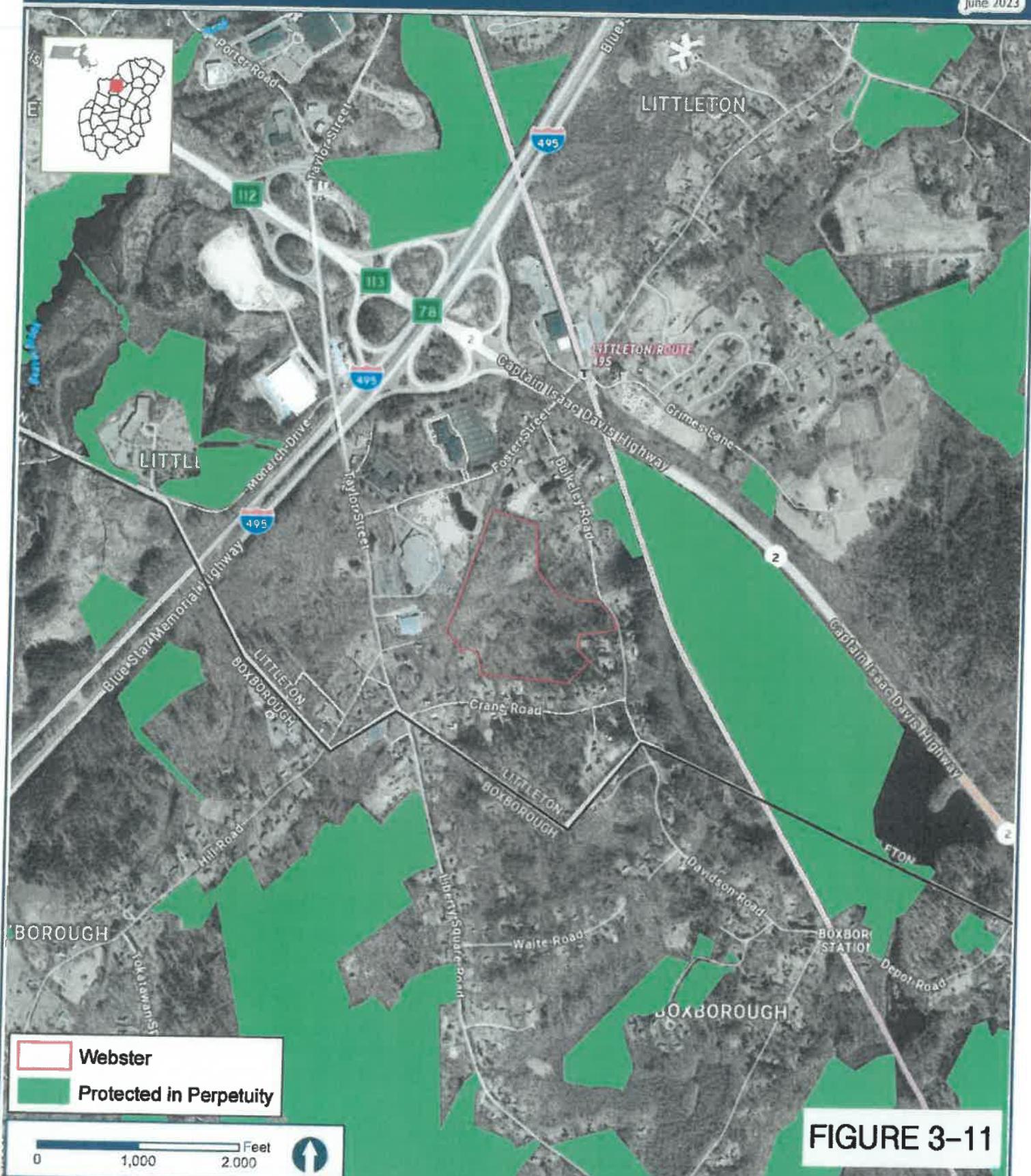


FIGURE 3-10 BIOMAP VERNAL POOL CORE



Observed features include **stonewalls**, **stone-lined spring**, **stone mounds/cairns**, **stacked stones**, **upright stone slabs**, **split stones**



FIGURE 3-12 HISTORICAL AND CEREMONIAL STONE LANDSCAPE FEATURES

(Report, Mapping and Photos by Mary Gage, James Gage, Dan Boudillion and Kevin Gallant, 2013)

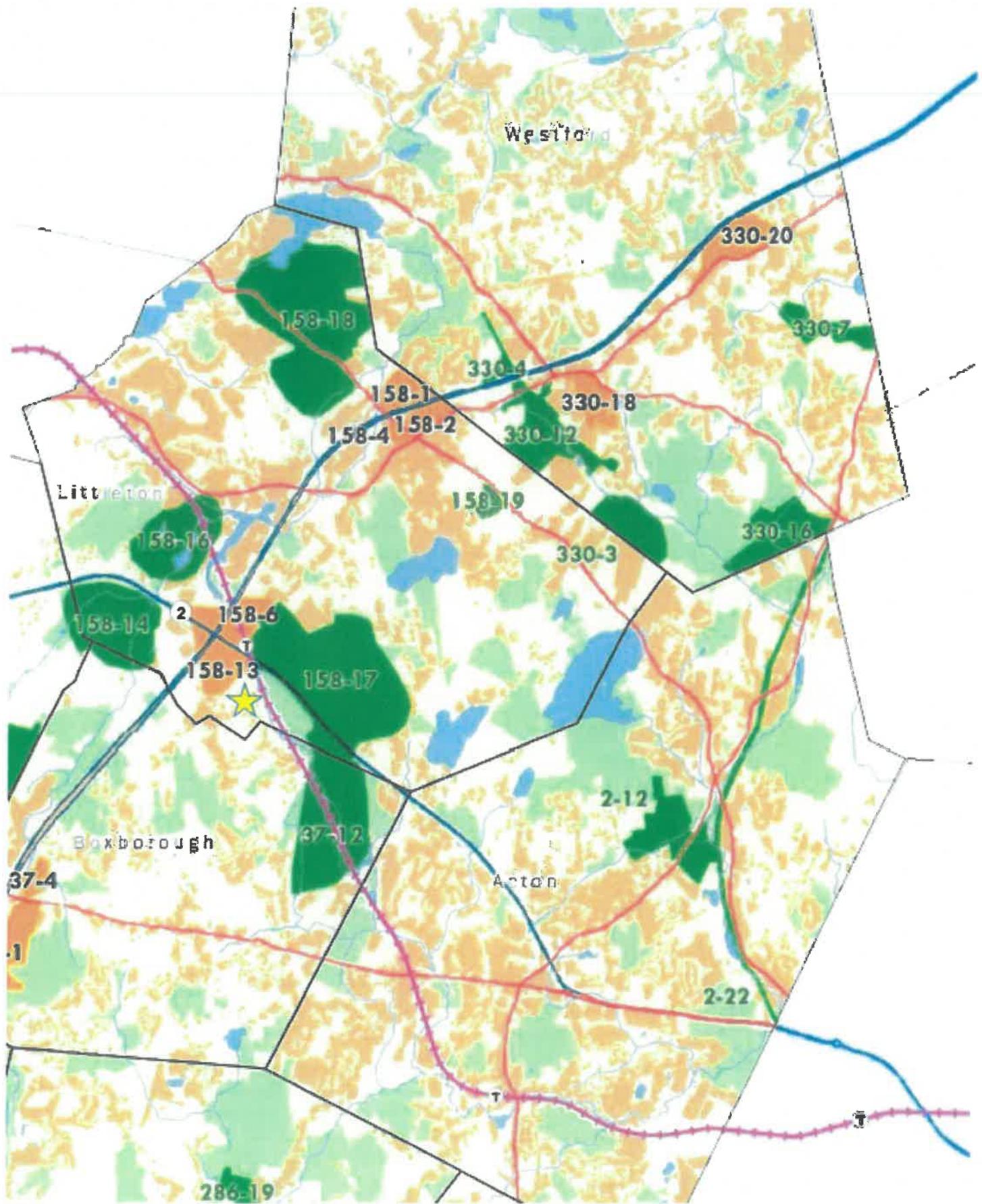
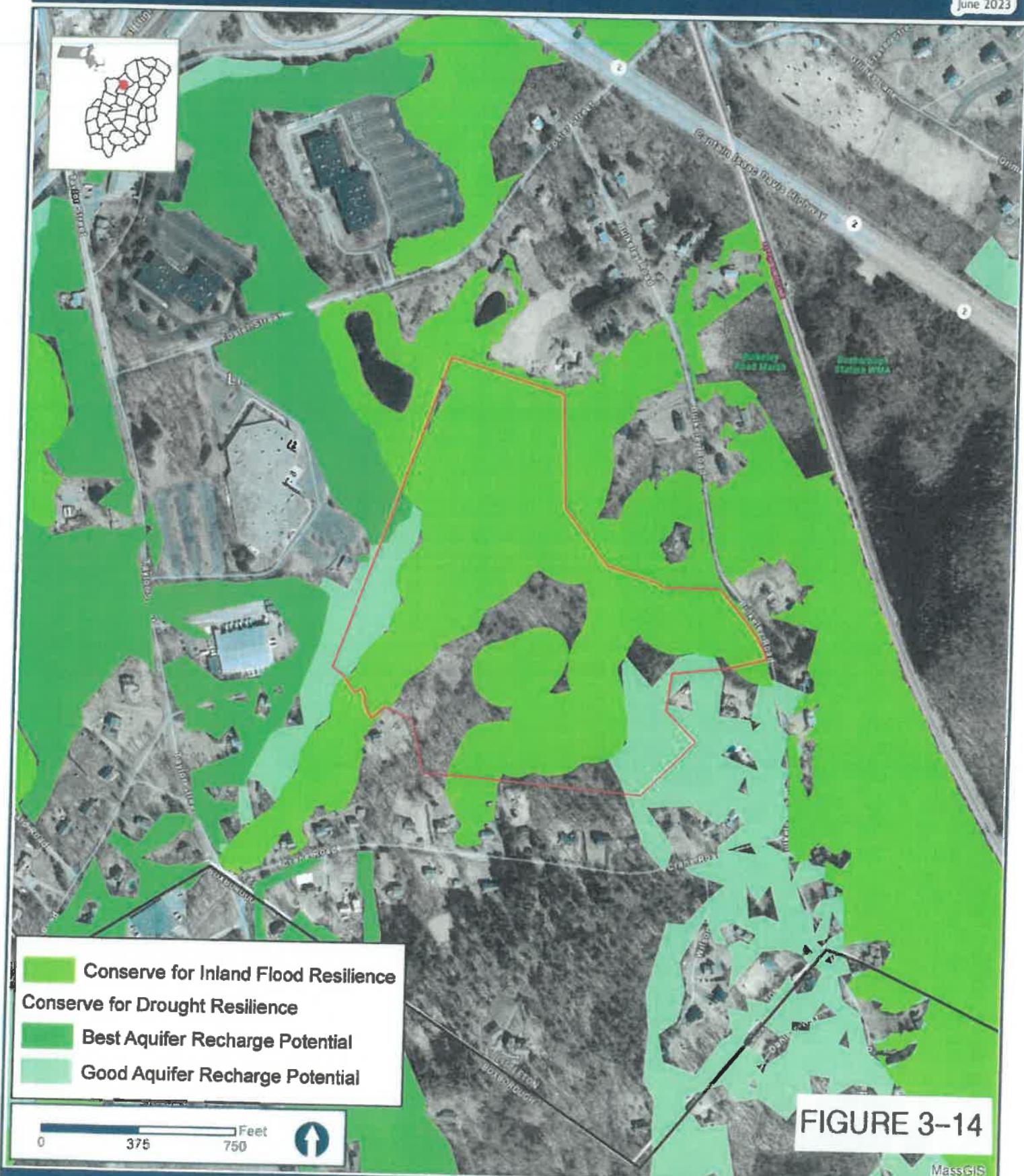


FIGURE 3-13 STATE PRIORITY DEVELOPMENT and PRESERVATION AREAS



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TNC Site Resilience - Resilience

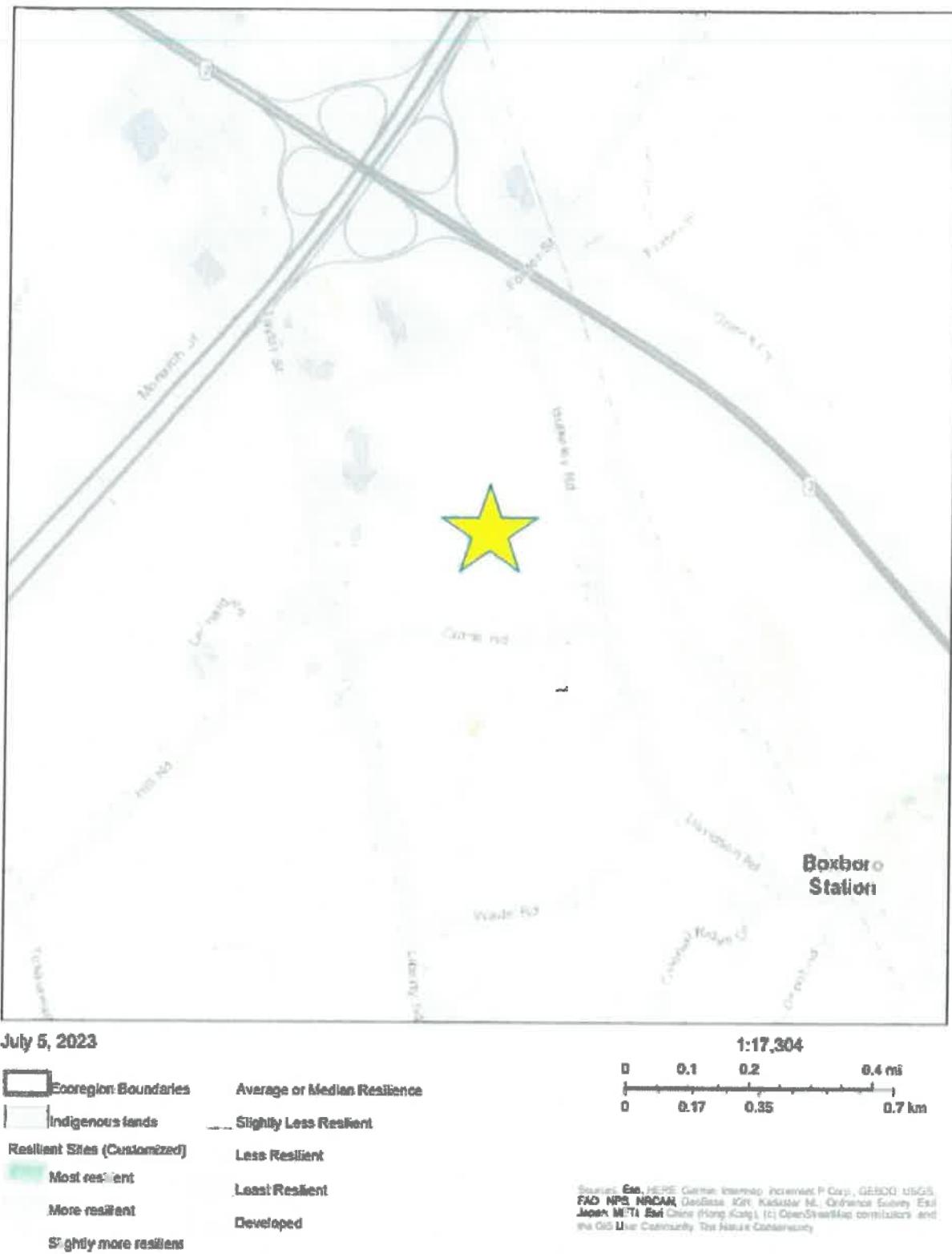


FIGURE 3-15 SITE RESILIENCE