

6. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Summary of Open Space and Recreation Themes in Wayland	
Assets	Liabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Town has a diverse natural landscape that includes rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, hills, and forests.• More than 2,700 acres of land in the Town are permanently protected open space.• Over 590 acres of farmland still exist in Wayland.• Wayland Center and Cochituate have attractive parks, cemeteries, and open space areas.• In recent years, the Town has successfully protected several priority open space properties.• Wayland offers a wide variety of public and private active recreation opportunities.• Water access, including the Town beach, Dudley Pond, Lake Cochituate, and Town pool, is available for all Wayland residents.• Through the Community Preservation Act, the Town will raise funds for open space protection, historic preservation, and affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several parcels identified in the Conservation Commission's Open Space and Recreation Plan as a high priority for protection are threatened by development.• On average, almost 20 acres of forest and farmland are converted each year to other uses (mostly residential).• Over the years, certain public lands, such as the "Sanctuary" in front of the Town Building, have not been maintained or used to their fullest potential.• Residents have expressed that additional recreational facilities are needed for residents of all ages.

6.1 Introduction

During the Master Plan process, Wayland residents identified open space and recreation lands as a critical aspect of the Town's landscape and a key contributor to quality of life in the Town. On a practical level, open lands help protect the Town's water supply, manage flood waters, provide wildlife habitat, and offer opportunities for various recreational activities. Open lands also help identify the Town as a semi-rural community and provide a window into Wayland's agrarian past. As vacant land continues to be developed, the remaining open lands become even more important for preserving Wayland's unique character.

The Town has a tradition of planning for open space and recreation and then successfully implementing those plans. At the time of this writing, the Conservation Commission has a draft 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan that is nearing completion. This draft Plan delineates four primary goals:

1. Preserve the semi-rural character of the Town.
2. Preserve, protect, and maintain natural areas including water bodies, wetlands, municipal water supply, wildlife habitat, farmland, etc.
3. Provide opportunities for passive and active outdoor recreation within the Town.
4. Advocate for the public benefits and values of open space to Town residents.

As noted in the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan, the success of Wayland's open space program will depend upon the willingness of voters to devote limited financial resources to open space conservation. The

Town has already adopted the CPA, which will provide a self-renewing source of funds for open space protection.

The draft Open Space and Recreation Plan also stresses the importance of the Town maintaining open communication with the owners of property identified as important to the community for open space purposes. The cooperation of landowners is essential for the successful implementation of an open space plan and for the development of recreational facilities in the Town.

The goals and recommendations of this draft plan are incorporated into this Master Plan in the Land Suitability Map, the Land Use Guide Plan, and the Master Plan recommendations. Combined, these two documents form the basis for future Town actions related to open space protection and the development of additional recreational facilities.

Land Management Activities

The Town, through the Conservation Commission, has taken an active role in managing its conservation land. Examples of past land management activities include:

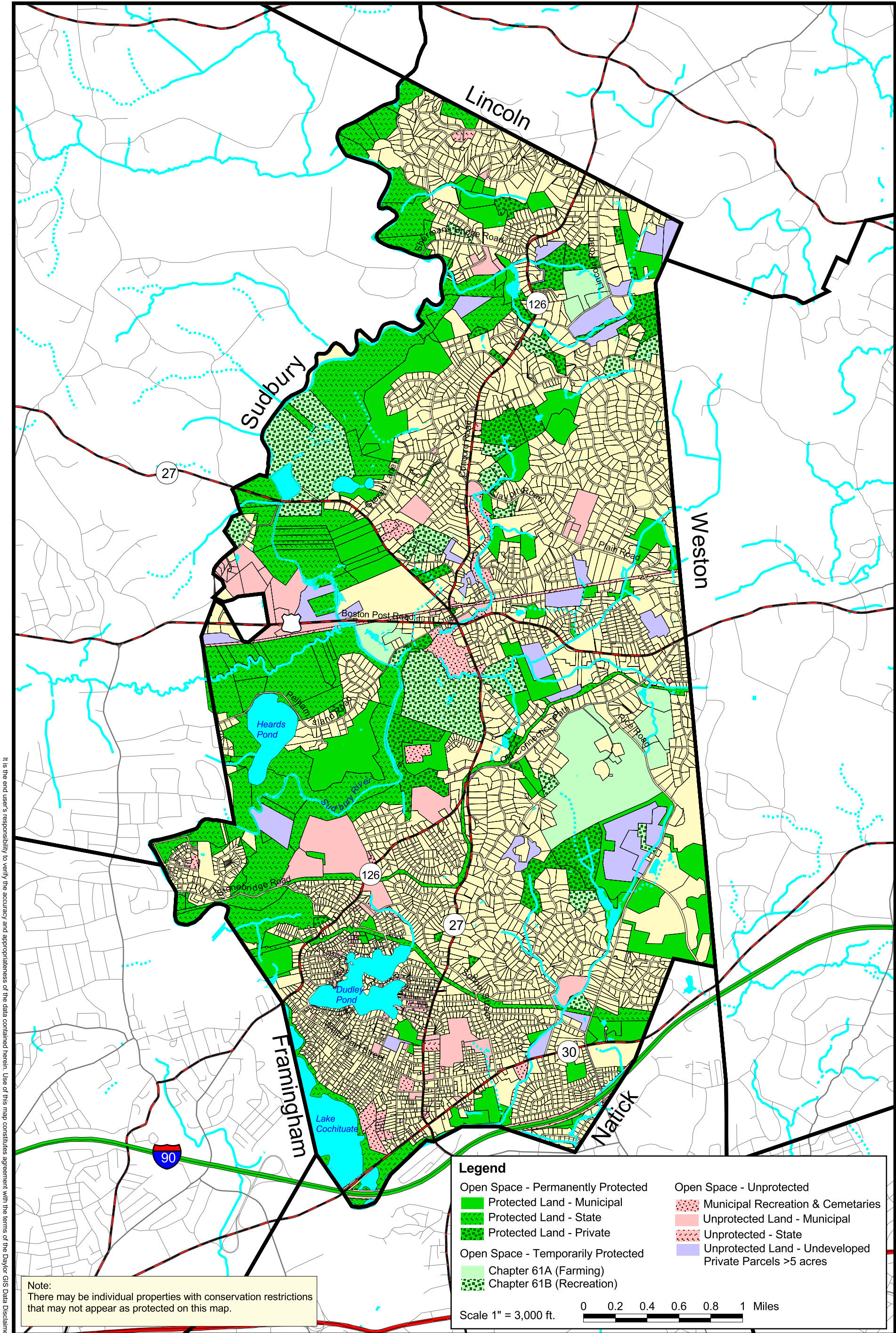
- Establishing a Land Management Working Group to make decisions and oversee operations at the Cow Common Conservation Area. In 1991 the Conservation Commission renovated the “Damon Carriage Shed”—an old shed located on the Cow Common—for use as a workshop and storage building. Programs to help field-nesting birds have also been initiated.
- Initiating efforts to create a regional trail system through the various protected lands of the Sudbury River corridor. Wayland and other communities are working with the Bay Circuit Alliance to create this trail system. A trail map for the conservation areas in Wayland has been prepared and is included in the Open Space and Recreation Plan.
- Providing educational outreach related to natural resources, including meeting with Wayland’s children in the public schools. Much of this has happened through the efforts of the Town’s Conservation Administrator who also has held a successful Wetlands Protection Act seminar for real estate agents.

6.2 Open Space Inventory

Figure 6-1 and **Table 6-1** classify the Town’s open space, recreation, and other public and private lands according to ownership and level of protection. For example, land owned by the Wayland Conservation Commission or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is generally constrained by legal restrictions that prevent its development. This is also the case with private lands that are subject to a conservation restriction. In contrast, lands owned by other Town departments or by private parties without a conservation restriction may be legally developed by the owner, or may be sold to another party who could then develop them.

6.2.1 Public Lands

As overseer of the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the largest single landowner in the Town other than the Town, with more than 1,250 acres of holdings in the Sudbury River corridor. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts owns about 250 acres of land in the Town.



The Town of Wayland owns more than 1,400 acres in the Town. Approximately 765 acres are under the control of the Conservation Commission, 200 acres under the School Committee, 165 acres are under the control of Parks and Recreation Commission, and 75 acres under the control of the Water Department. The largest Town-owned conservation areas are the 135-acre Hamlen Woods Conservation Area located off of Rice Road (the Sudbury Valley Trustees own portions of this area), the 93-acre Sedge Meadow Conservation Area located off of Moore Road along the Sudbury River, and the 86-acre Heard Farm Conservation Area located off Pelham Island Road. Other large open Town-owned parcels exist, but the Town has not yet determined their future use.

Undeveloped and unprotected public land in Wayland is of great importance to the Town's future, given that more than 900 acres of land falls into this category. Some of this public land may be suitable for new Town facilities or uses, such as schools, recreational facilities, or affordable housing. On the other hand, these are among the last areas in Town that are still available to be conserved as open space or address the Town's active recreation needs. The Town's active role in the future of these lands based on a comprehensive—not piecemeal—approach is important.

Table 6-1
Town of Wayland
Protected and Unprotected Open Space

Owner/Manager	Number of Parcels	Total Acres	% of Town	% of Open Space
Permanently Protected Open Space				
Town of Wayland	88	844.4	8.3	16.6
State and Federal	129	1,509.9	14.9	29.7
Private Protected Land	42	355.4	3.5	7.0
Permanently Protected Open Space Subtotal	259	2,709.7	26.7%	53.3%
Temporarily Protected Open Space				
Chapter 61A (Agriculture) Land	12	361.4	3.6	7.1
Chapter 61B (Recreation) Land	29	467.4	4.6	9.2
Temporarily Protected Open Space Subtotal	41	828.8	8.2%	16.3%
Unprotected Open Space				
Town of Wayland Recreation Land	78	164.8	1.6	3.2
Town of Wayland – Other Lands	123	336.4	3.3	6.6
State of Massachusetts	58	424.7	4.2	8.4
Undeveloped Private Parcels At Least 5 Acres	26	345.0	3.4	6.8
Undeveloped Private Parcels Smaller Than 5 Acres	296	272.9	2.7	5.4
Unprotected Open Space Subtotal	581	1,543.8	15.2%	30.4%
Total Open Space	881	5,082.3	50.1%	100.0%

Table 6-2 lists the major publicly-owned conservation and passive recreation areas in Wayland.

Table 6-2
Town of Wayland
Conservation and Passive Recreation Areas

Property/Manager	Total Acres	Description
Great Meadows NWR U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	1265	Mostly river areas with bordering wetlands and marshes
Cochituate State Park MA Division of Conservation and Recreation	178	Open water, swimming & picnicking
Dudley Pond Town of Wayland	88	Great Pond surround by residential development
Castle Hill Conservation Area Conservation Commission	25.4	Wood esker, pond & marsh
Cow Common Conservation Area Conservation Commission	64.3	Was village cow common from ca. 1640; now used for haying and community garden
Dudley Brook Conservation Area Conservation Commission	11.5	Brook with wet woodland swamp & short hiking trail
Hamlen Woods Conservation Area Conservation Commission	135.2	Pond, hilly terrain & Snake Brook
Heard Farm Conservation Area Conservation Commission	85.7	Former colonial farmland, now wood lands
Lower Mill Brook Conservation Area Conservation Commission	41.5	Varied terrain & contains peat deposits
Lower Snake Brook Conservation Area Conservation Commission	31.6	Varied terrain, abuts Snake Brook
Pine Brook Conservation Area Conservation Commission	37.7	Varied terrain
Pod Meadow Conservation Area Conservation Commission	32.0	Mature woodlands, marsh; abuts MWRA's Pod Meadow and Hultman Aqueduct
Sedge Meadow Conservation Area Conservation Commission	93.1	Farmland, fields, & woodland; good wildlife habitat
Timber Land Conservation Area Conservation Commission	9.2	Old fields, woodlands, & wetlands
Trout Brook Conservation Area Conservation Commission	64.7	Spectacular glacial ridges and kettleholes; forested uplands and red maple swamps
Turkey Hill Conservation Area Conservation Commission	46.2	Second highest hill in Town & scrubby woodland
Upper Mill Brook Conservation Area Conservation Commission	116.3	Varied terrain
Wayland Hills Conservation Area Conservation Commission	53.9	Upland woodlands & red maple swamp
Mill Pond Recreation Area Parks and Recreation Department	10	Site of colonial grist mill
Greenways Conservation Area Conservation Commission/Park & Recreation Department	98	Open fields, wooded trails
Loker Conservation Area Conservation Commission/Park & Recreation Department	30	Pond, field, wooded trails
Reeves Hills Conservation Area Conservation Commission	8	Pond, wooded trails
Rowan Hill Conservation Area Conservation Commission	25	Wetlands, bog, open fields

Source: Wayland's Draft 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge

Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge consists of valuable freshwater wetlands flanking 12 miles of the Concord and Sudbury Rivers. The refuge comprises land in seven Towns (Billerica, Bedford, Carlisle, Concord, Lincoln, Sudbury, and Wayland). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages Great Meadows as wildlife habitat, with a special emphasis on migratory birds. 221 bird species have been recorded in the Refuge, and both migratory and native species nest there. The diversity of plant and animal life visible from the refuge trails provides visitors with excellent opportunities for nature study.

Wildlife species common to New England are found at the Great Meadows Refuge. A few white-tailed deer live along the marsh borders and in the uplands. Muskrats, foxes, raccoons, cottontail rabbits, weasels, squirrels, and various small mammals are common, and naturalists can find excellent winter tracking. Amphibians and reptiles can be observed in the warmer months. Several species of waterfowl, including Canada geese, mallards, black ducks, wood ducks, and blue-winged teal nest here. Nesting boxes are provided for wood ducks in the Refuge's wetlands.

Cochituate State Park Management Plan (Draft)

Cochituate State Park, managed by the Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), is one of the most popular destinations in greater Boston for swimming, picnicking, field sports, boating and fishing. The portions of the State Park in Wayland are mainly used by Wayland residents, and include a beach and playground. Non-Wayland residents visit the part of the park in Natick, where additional facilities are available. The three ponds in this state park total over 600 acres in surface area and have good water quality. Up to 200,000 people visit the park each year, the vast majority of which visit the Natick side of the park. The following is a summary of the DCR's management recommendations for Cochituate State Park that are relevant to open space and recreation planning in Wayland:

- Take action in coordination with surrounding communities to maintain and enhance the water quality of Lake Cochituate.
- Continue to work with abutting residential property owners to protect the vegetated buffer while permitting reasonable access to the ponds for swimming and boating.
- Enhance environmental education programs to realize the potential for the park to be the primary outdoor education center for children coming from urban areas in eastern Massachusetts.
- Redesign the park day use facilities to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety, increase green space adjacent to the lake, and enhance recreation opportunities for the waterfront crescent.
- Work with local advocates and regional partners to enhance regional trail connections, including the Snake Brook Trail, the Cochituate Rail Trail, and the Weston Aqueduct right-of-way.
- Make appropriate upgrades and additions to the staffing plan to provide enhanced visitor services and stewardship for natural and cultural resources.
- Continue to work with the Greater Callahan Open Space and Greenway Plan working group on regional land protection initiatives to enhance the continuity of conservation lands.

6.2.2 Private Open Space

Private entities own a significant amount of Wayland's open space. Of the protected private open space, the Sudbury Valley Trustees own and manage approximately 345 acres in Wayland, while the Nature Conservancy owns approximately 6 acres of land off Pelham Island Road.

About 830 acres of private land is being actively used for agricultural and horticultural purposes or is managed to provide specific recreational opportunities.¹ Land in active and passive use is eligible for a reduced tax rate under Chapters 61, 61A and 61B of the Massachusetts General Laws, which are designations for land that is used for forestry, agriculture, conservation or recreation, respectively.

M.G.L. Chapter 61 is designed to keep forested land under productive forest management. Owners with more than 10 acres of forest are eligible for enrollment. They must submit a DCR-approved forest management plan and a management certificate to the Town assessor before a new tax classification can begin. The assessed value of land classified under Chapter 61 is reduced by 95%. Chapter 61 classifications run for ten-year periods. Currently no land in Wayland is enrolled in the Chapter 61 program.

M.G.L. Chapter 61A is most commonly applied to agricultural or horticultural land but can be used for the forested portions of a farm, provided a forest management plan is approved by DCR. To qualify for Chapter 61A, a farm owner must have five or more contiguous acres being used for agricultural or horticultural purposes. Property under Chapter 61A is assessed at rates that vary for different agricultural uses. Generally, classification will result in an 80% reduction in assessed value. Wayland currently has 361.4 acres of land classified under Chapter 61A.

M.G.L. Chapter 61B is similar to 61A, but applies to lands designated for recreational use and containing at least five contiguous acres. The land must be retained in a natural state to preserve wildlife and natural resources, must be devoted primarily to recreational use, and must provide a public benefit. Recreational uses may include golf, hiking, camping, nature study, shooting/target practice, hunting, and skiing. The assessed valuation of Chapter 61B land is reduced by approximately 75%. Wayland has 29 parcels of land (467.4 acres) in the Chapter 61B program.

If Chapter land is placed on the market, the Town has the "right of first refusal" for purchase of the land within 120 days of notification by the property owners of the pending sale. This right may also be assigned to a non-profit conservation organization such as a land trust. Towns often have trouble taking advantage of the right of first refusal because of the rapid timeframe within which the Town must find the money and approve the purchase. With the adoption of the CPA, however, the Town will have at least some funds that it may use to purchase Chapter lands or options to purchase. Still, a Town Meeting vote is required to authorize land acquisitions including the use of CPA funds for purchase.

6.3 Provisions for Open Space Protection

Local and state environmental regulations offer some protection for Wayland's 1,470 acres of wetlands and 2,300 acres of floodplains. Limited restrictions also apply to areas with rare species habitat, high groundwater, and other environmental constraints. However, environmental regulations do not provide complete protection

¹ Source: Wayland Assessor's database.

for environmentally sensitive areas since environmental laws are subject to change and may be circumvented in certain circumstances.

Wayland has successfully used a number of special zoning overlay districts to allow developers to build houses on smaller lots than would ordinarily be allowed in exchange for setting aside a portion of the development site as protected open space. The Paine Estate off of Cochituate Road is one example of this technique. Through a partnership between the Town and the Sudbury Valley Trustees, the large majority of this site (about 140 acres) was set aside for open space, recreation, and future municipal use, while a 26-acre portion of the site was developed with 17 single family houses, 24 senior independent living units, and 76 assisted living units.

6.4 Active Recreation Inventory

Active recreation includes those sports and activities that require the construction of specific recreation facilities such as soccer, baseball, basketball, tennis, hockey, and swimming (in a pool). Passive recreation encompasses those activities that can be done in a natural setting with little or no facility development. These activities include hiking, biking, boating, swimming (in a lake or pond), and bird watching. Active recreational facilities are summarized in **Section 7.4**.