

## Wildlife Habitat Evaluation of the Canoe River in Norton MA

### 7. Department of Fisheries and Wildlife (Care and Control Agreement)

Several parcels along the Canoe River and Route 495 have been transferred to the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in a care and control agreement from Massachusetts Highway. This agreement was signed in 2004 and the result of over 20 years of negotiations and persistence. There is no public access to the property from roads; however, if one were to gain access to the Canoe River from a public area, one could canoe to the Fisheries and Wildlife land. The major purpose for the protection of the land is to create a five-town wildlife habitat and passive recreation corridor. This project is the Canoe River Greenbelt project. More information on this project can be found under the section on the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee. A significant amount of the work to complete the care and control agreement was done by Leonard Flynn of the Mansfield Natural Resources Trust. Mr. Flynn also is the land acquisition coordinator for the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee. The Town of Norton is eternally grateful for the dedication and persistence of Mr. Flynn. He has been a wonderful ally.



South of Route 495 the Canoe River makes a C-shaped turn. This portion of the reach includes the northernmost bridge of Route 495 to the southernmost bridge of Route 495 where it crosses Route 123. The majority of this reach is a red maple swamp with a small portion of shrub-scrub swamp at the northernmost bridge. Three Alluvial Atlantic white cedar swamps are found within this area. A natural bog can be found to the northeast of the confluence of the Canoe River with Tucker Brook. This bog is a vernal pool and habitat for spotted turtle. Harlequin darter and the Ruby meadowhawk dragonflies also find breeding habitat here. Another vernal pool is found within the Red maple swamp to the northwest of this bog. The upland

portions of the Fish and Wildlife land consist of a field, White pine forest and an isolated area encircled by the river and the Mass Highway fencing along Route 495.

This area is habitat for the river otter, muskrat, raccoon, deer, and fox. Freshwater mussel beds are common for Eastern elliptio and Eastern lampmussel. As the river meanders several areas provide shade by the overhanging branches and fallen logs. The logs also provide basking habitat for turtles. Painted turtles are common. Spotted turtles utilize vernal pools on adjacent properties. Dragonfly and damselfly exuviae were not found on any of the walls of the bridges for Rt. 495.

In 2006, Jennifer Carlino and Wheaton Fellows Shea Clark inspected the property at the access off Newcomb Street. The cultural field contains mowed grasses, Meadowsweet, Canada

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mayflower, Rushes, Meadow spittlebugs, Dragonflies, Crickets and signs of Deer. Adjacent to the field is a seepage area consisting of Red maple, Poison ivy, Virginia creeper, Elm, Swamp white oak, Atlantic white cedar, Sedges, Dewberry, Jack in the pulpit, Bedstraw, Skunk cabbage, Massachusetts fern, Cinnamon fern, Sensitive fern, Eastern starflower and Cinquefoil. A large black butterfly and moths were also observed. The Atlantic white cedar were measured at the diameter at breast height (or dbh) including the dead wood.

Two certified venal pools are located on the western side of the river.

The Care and control agreement between the Fisheries and Wildlife and the Division of Capital Asset Management protects approximately 126 acres of land under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution. Adjacent land is protected by the conservation commission and the Land Preservation Society of Norton. Approximately 60% of this reach is permanently protected.



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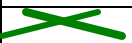



This is the parcel map was taken from the Town of Norton Assessor Maps. The parcels are outlined in black. The Canoe River is outlined in blue. Newcomb Street is shown in red. Route 495 is in black. North is at the top of the page and the scale is roughly 1"=200', but obviously reduced on this page.



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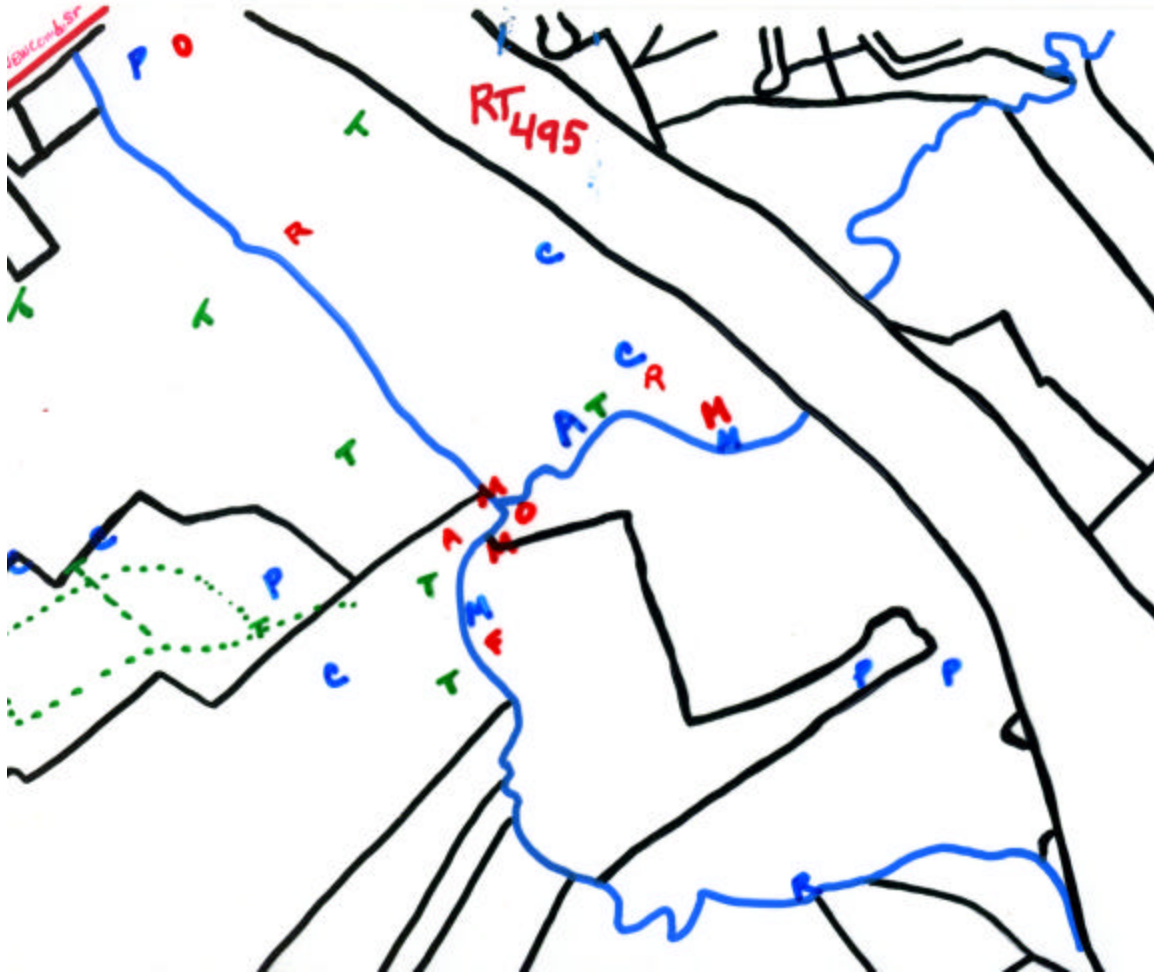
Natural Community Type			
Solid		Striped	
	Alluvial Red Maple Swamp		White Pine-Oak Forest
	Red Maple Swamp		Successional White Pine Forest
	Alluvial Atlantic White Cedar Swamp		Mixed Oak Forest
	Atlantic White Cedar Swamp		Cultural Grassland
	Shrub-Scrub Swamp		Coastal Plain Pond
	Deep Marsh		
	Shallow Emergent Marsh	Hatched	
	Open Water		Pitch Pine-Oak Forest
	Woodland Vernal Pool		

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Permanently protected land includes land owned by the Norton Conservation Commission (to the west of the tributary); Land Preservation Society of Norton (to the south of Canoe River); and land under the care and control agreement with DFW (all land between the tributary and Canoe River and Rt 495).

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Observed Wildlife		Wildlife Sign		Significant Feature	
A	Amphibian	B	Browse (deer/muskrat)	C	Certified Vernal Pool
B	Bird	D	Deer track, scat, sign	M	Mussel bed
F	Fish	M	Midden (muskrat, otter, mink)	P	Potential Vernal Pool
M	Mammal	T	Track, scat, sign (other)	R	Riffle/pool
O	Odonate			T	Turtle nest site
R	Reptile				