



Green Worcester Committee

7/25/2022

TWT
MASTER

WHAT'S LEFT: An Update on Worcester's
Open Space

Worcester Conservation Commission

1 August 1987

1987 Open Space Top Ten List

Cascades Park East/ West	60.56 acres	Saved
Coal Mine Brook	71.15 acres	Partially Saved, Lost & Outstanding
Stratton Hill	126.80 acres	Lost
Nick Chase Estate	59.30 acres	Saved
Broggard Farm & Higgins Estate	319.86 acres	Partially Lost & Outstanding
Poor Farm Brook North	85.43 acres	Partially Lost & Outstanding
Parson's Estate	28.00 acres	Saved
God's Acre	17.15 acres	Saved
Broad Meadow Brook	+/- 245.05 acres	Saved
Crow Hill	42.25 acres	Saved (50 acres)

1996 Open Space Top Ten List

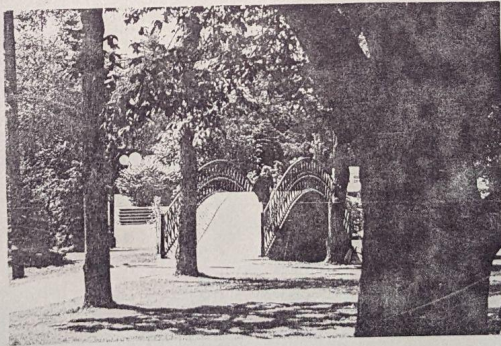
Cascades Park East	41.26 acres	Saved (30.86 acres)
Catholic Charities (Parcel K)	85.00 acres	Saved
Coes Reservoir Abutters	100.26 acres	Saved
Crow Hill	33.65 acres	Saved (50 acres)
Higgins Estate	115.17 acres	Partially Lost / Outstanding
Kettle Brook North	29.60 acres	Saved
Laurel Mountain	126.57 acres	Saved
Poor Farm Brook North	46.73 acres	Partially Lost & Outstanding
Stoddard Estate/Brooks	43.62 acres	Outstanding
Wigwam Hill & Coal Mine Brook	47.70 acres	Partially Saved , Partially Lost

1998 Open Space Top Ten List

Cascades Park East	41.26 acres	Saved (30.86 acres)
Catholic Charities (Parcel K)	85.00 acres	Saved
Crow Hill	33.65 acres	Saved (50 acres)
Higgins Estate	115.17 acres	Partially Lost / Outstanding
Kettle Brook North	29.60 acres	Saved
Laurel Mountain	126.57 acres	Saved
Logan Field Extension	31.03 acres	Partially Saved
Poor Farm Brook North	46.73 acres	Partially Lost & Outstanding
Stoddard Estate/Brooks	43.62 acres	Outstanding
Wigwam Hill and Coal Mine Brook	47.70 acres	Partially Saved , Lost & Outstanding

WORCESTER

1987 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE FIVE YEAR ACTION PLAN



Vision of Open Space

Public Users:

Hikers

Bird Watchers

Hunters

Snow Shoers

Trappers

Photographers

Campers

American Chestnut Program

Walkers

Cross Country Skiers

Backpackers

Lepidopterists

Environmental Studies

Picnickers

Geocachers

Artists... etc.

CONTEXT: Greater Worcester Land Trust

Founded:	1987		
Staff:	1.5 FTE		
Board:	12 (Twice Monthly)		
Membership:	412		
Annual Budget:	\$150,000		
Towns:	10		
Fee: 1396ac	CR: 950ac	Easement: 17ac	Pass Through: 546ac







"It is not enough to save bits and pieces of wilderness.

You can not have a healthy canoe country and ill urban centers and expect the planet to feel well.

We can preserve every last tree in the canoe country, and all the trees in all the other official wilderness areas and still be doomed if we do not check the spread of cities, the suburban sprawl that eats away daily at the wild areas that have not received lawful protection.

We must, each one of us, find those meadows and marshes, woodlots and creeks near our homes and deal with them with the same respect we reserve for renowned wilderness.

If we do not, the planet will simply cease to function."

Michael Furtman
A Season for Wilderness



Greater Worcester Land Trust

by the Numbers

- 33 Years Protecting Open Space
- 10 Municipalities
- 83 Properties
- 1,339 Acres Owned
- 950 Acres Cons. Restriction
- 10 Ponds
- 17 Acres of Easements
- 546 Acres of Transferred Lands
- Highest Elevation:
1388' Asnebumskit, Paxton
- Lowest Elevation:
358' Coal Mine Brook, Worcester
- 22 Miles of Rivers & Streams

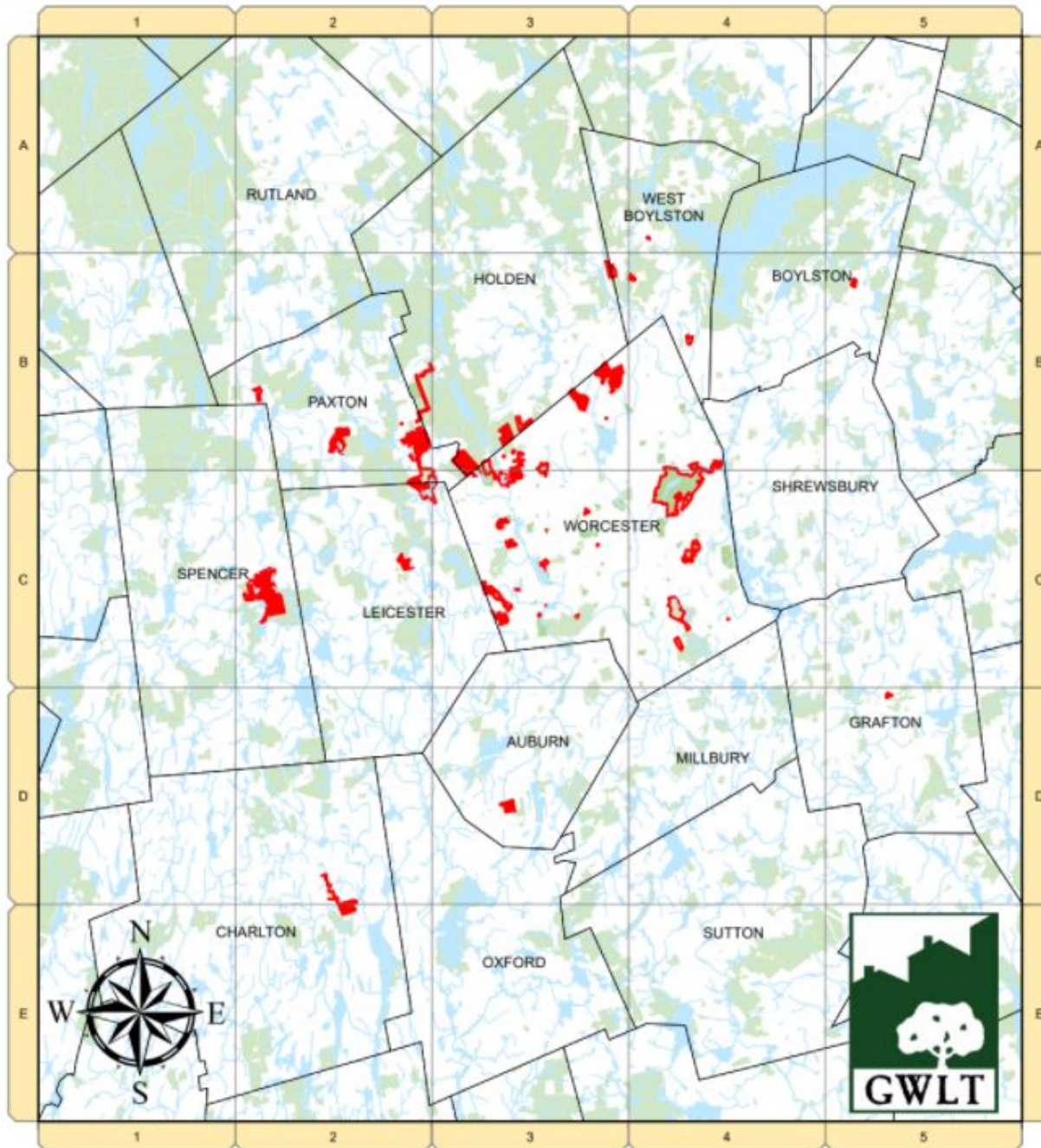
2,856

Acres Conserved Overall
creates access to open space for

293,214

people like you

GWLT.org



■ GWLT-Owned Land □ GWLT Conservation Restriction ■ Conserved Land ■ Waterways

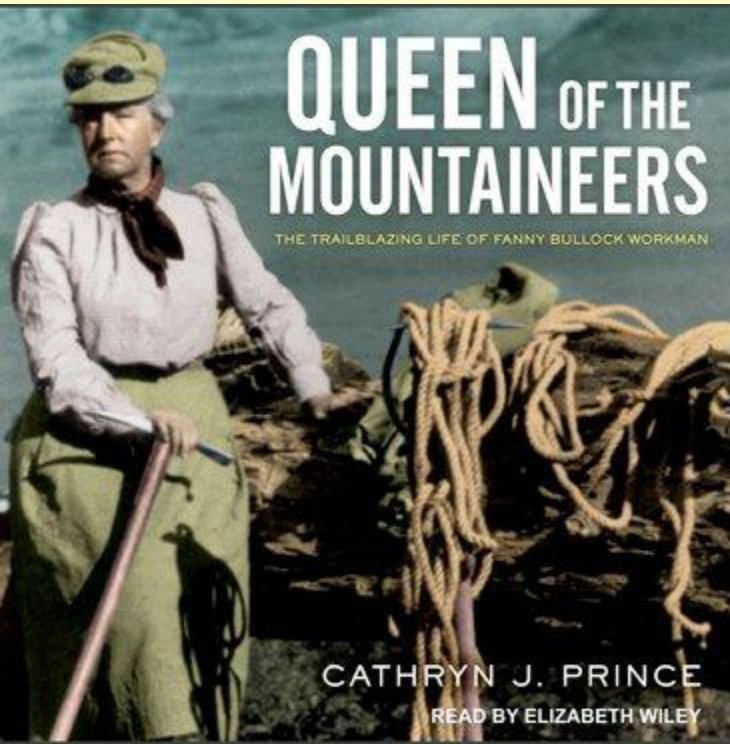
Historical Context

An early community focus on mountains, trails, and backcountry -

And how that focus was brought home from other regions to the local community through trail systems and networks

Fanny Bullock Workman

Worcester Mountaineer & Explorer



Worcester Natural History Camp 1885



Appalachian Mountain Club

Lodge



Green Mountain Club

Lodge

\$4,000 Fire Destroys Green Mountain Club

HOLDEN, Aug. 11 — A fire of undetermined origin destroyed the Green Mountain Club on Salisbury street late last night.

G 11 Aug. 56

Fire Chief Robert Johnson said the blaze did about \$4000 damage and virtually leveled the one-story wooden structure. He and a representative from the fire marshal's office will investigate the fire today, he said.

The blaze was discovered by Charles W. Robinson, 639 Salisbury St., about 11:45 p. m. He spotted the flames from his home and called the Fire Dept.

Apparatus from both the Chaffin and Holden Fire stations answered the alarm.

The fire gained headway before being discovered, Chief Johnson said, and the building was completely ablaze when firefighters arrived.

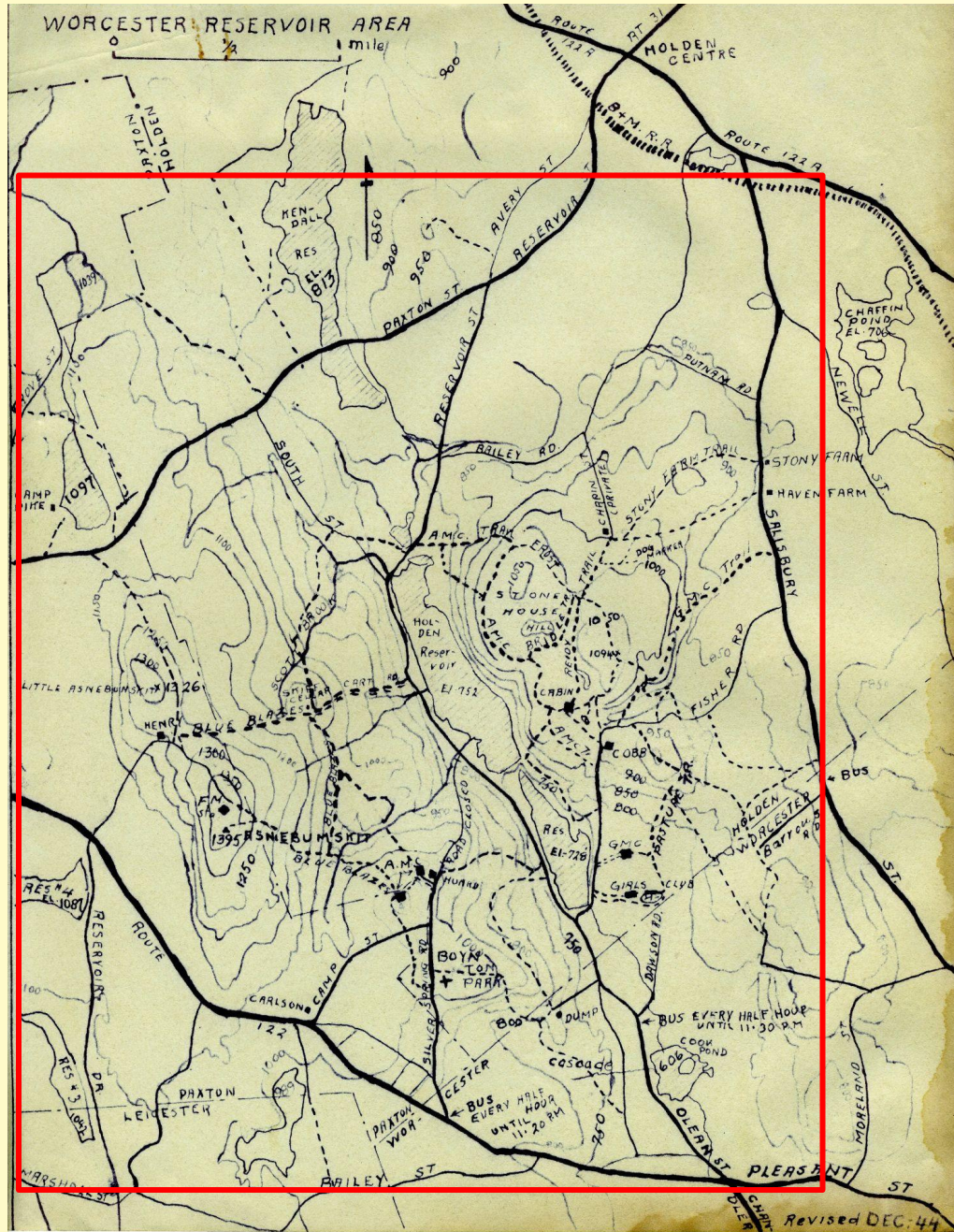
The building stood in a wooded area some distance from Salisbury street. Firefighters used the department's 1,000-gallon tank truck to contain the blaze while laying hose from the nearest hydrant, about 1,000 feet away.

The building, containing a kitchen and a large meeting room, was owned by the club. The organization is made up of about 100 outdoor enthusiasts who help maintain the Long Trail, a hikers' route through the Green Mountains from Massachusetts to the Canadian border.

Club members said there had been no meeting in the building last night.

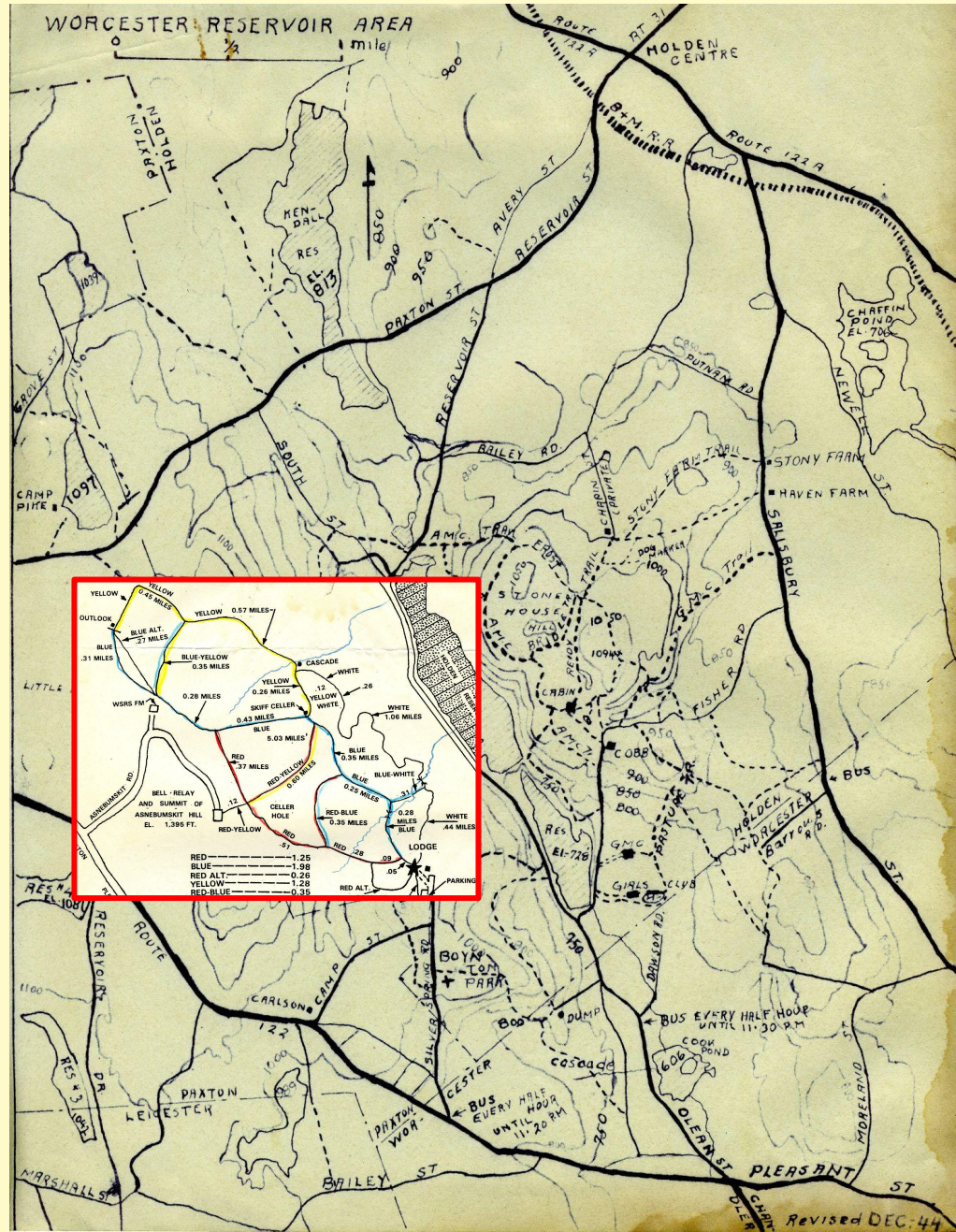
The Massive Trail Network That Was

1944



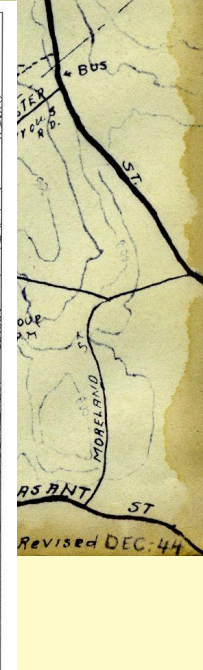
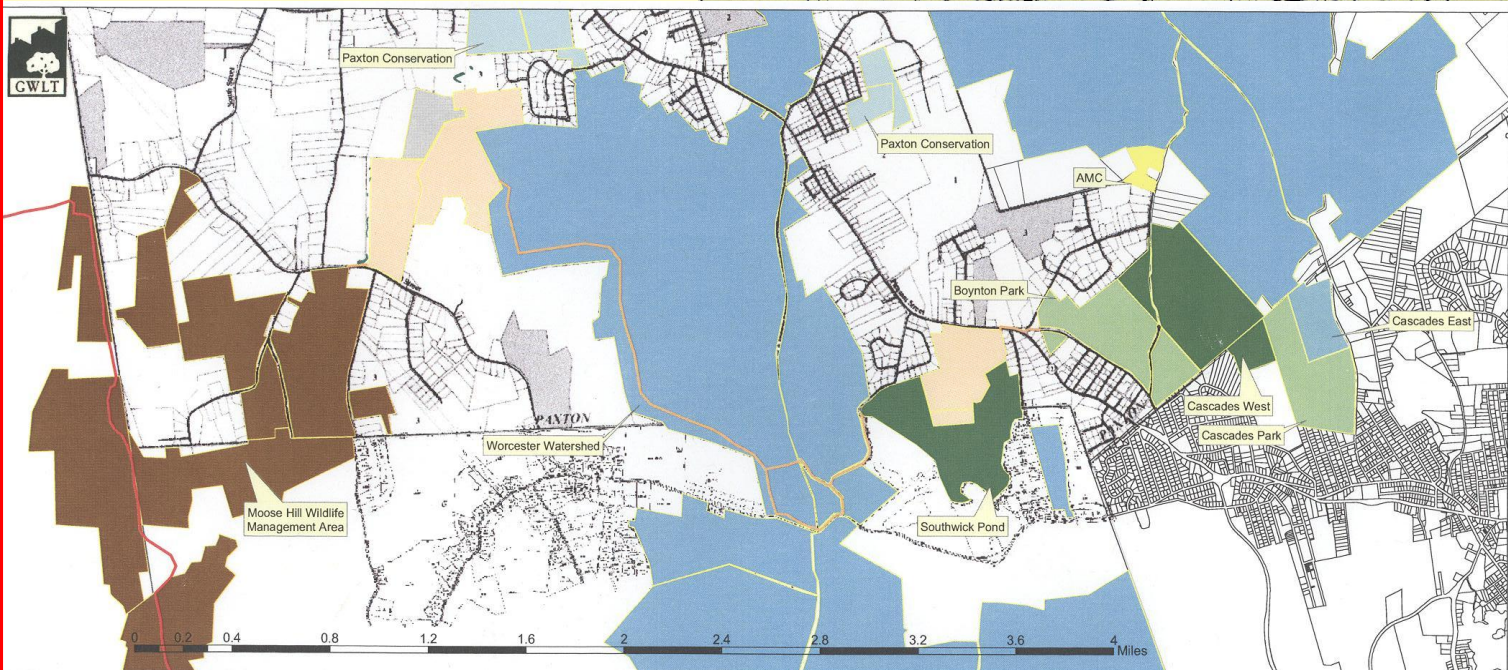
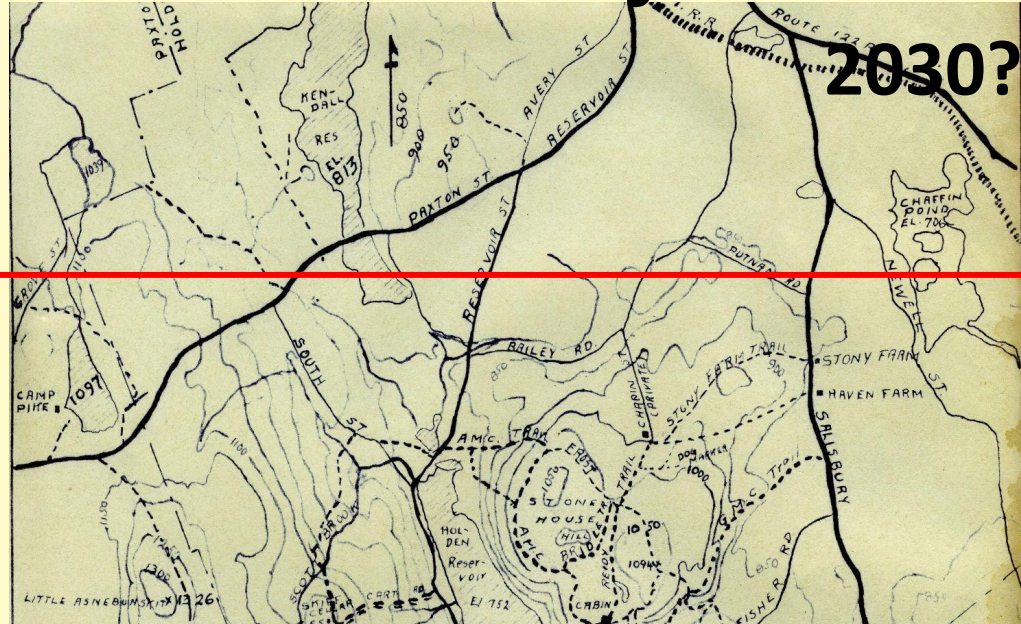
The Trail Network Reduced

1980



The Trail Network Projected

2030???



“Frontcountry”



- The “Leave No Trace” organization defines Frontcountry as “outdoor areas that are easily accessible by vehicle and mostly visited by day-users.”
- The principles of “Leave No Trace” were designed around backwoods ethics but generally apply to conservation lands in more urbanized areas.
- The idea of Frontcountry then becomes one of a classroom or learning laboratory for how one responsibly enjoys wild landscapes, which in turn, allows for those spaces to be able to survive human use.

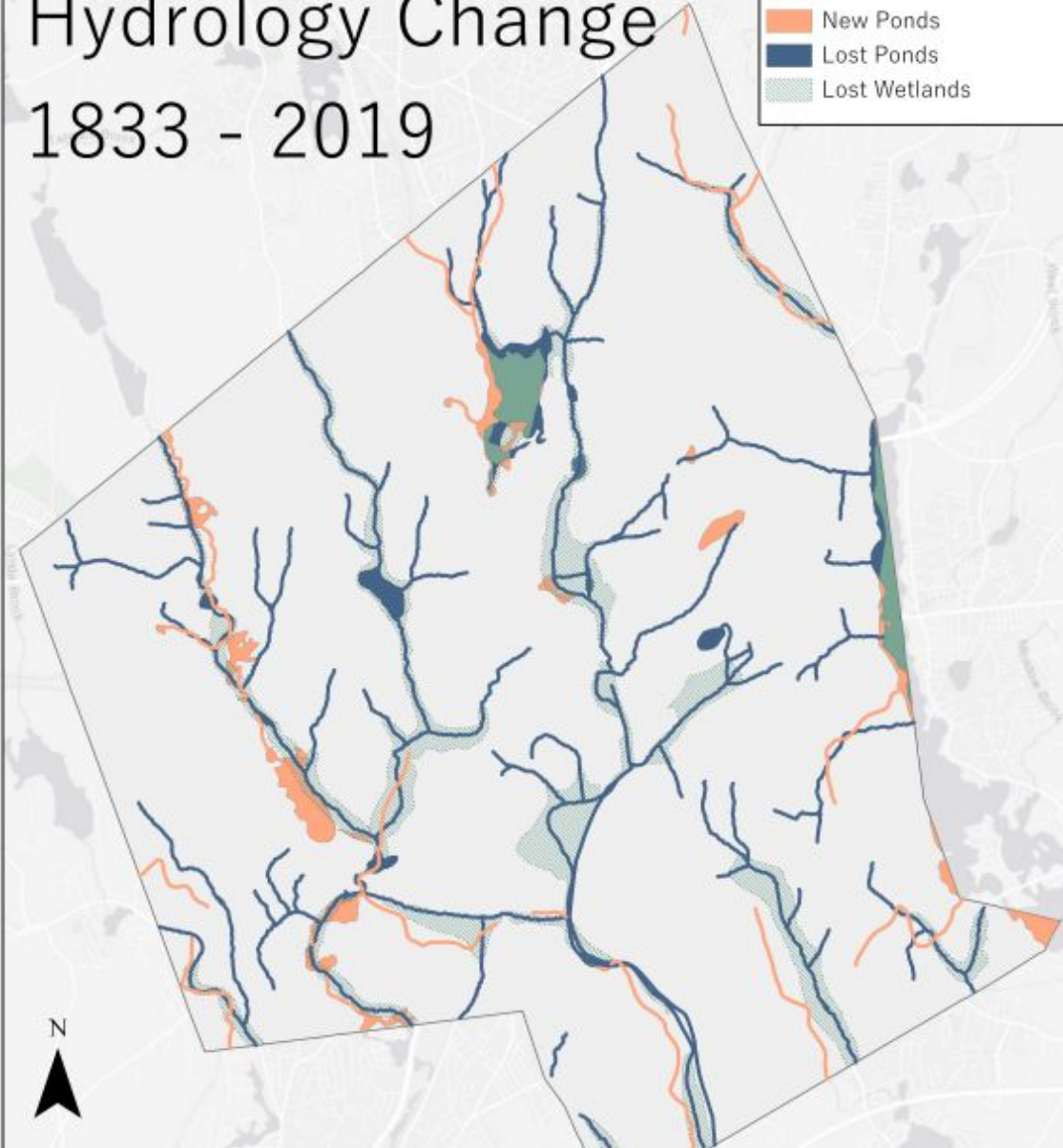
- The original creators of the first local trail network were inspired by and used the same techniques and approaches as the White Mountain National Forest, the Long Trail, and the AMC and GMC trail systems of rugged primitive footpaths with painted blazes and routed wooden signs.
- We need to go backwards and bring forward the culture of long distance trails and trail networks INTO the City, creating a “Frontcountry” learning space for urban dwellers that draws them into a lifelong experience of the forest, greenways, and trails.
- This can be where they learn about trails, navigation, outdoor access, and gateway experiences with a campfire or an overnight component.

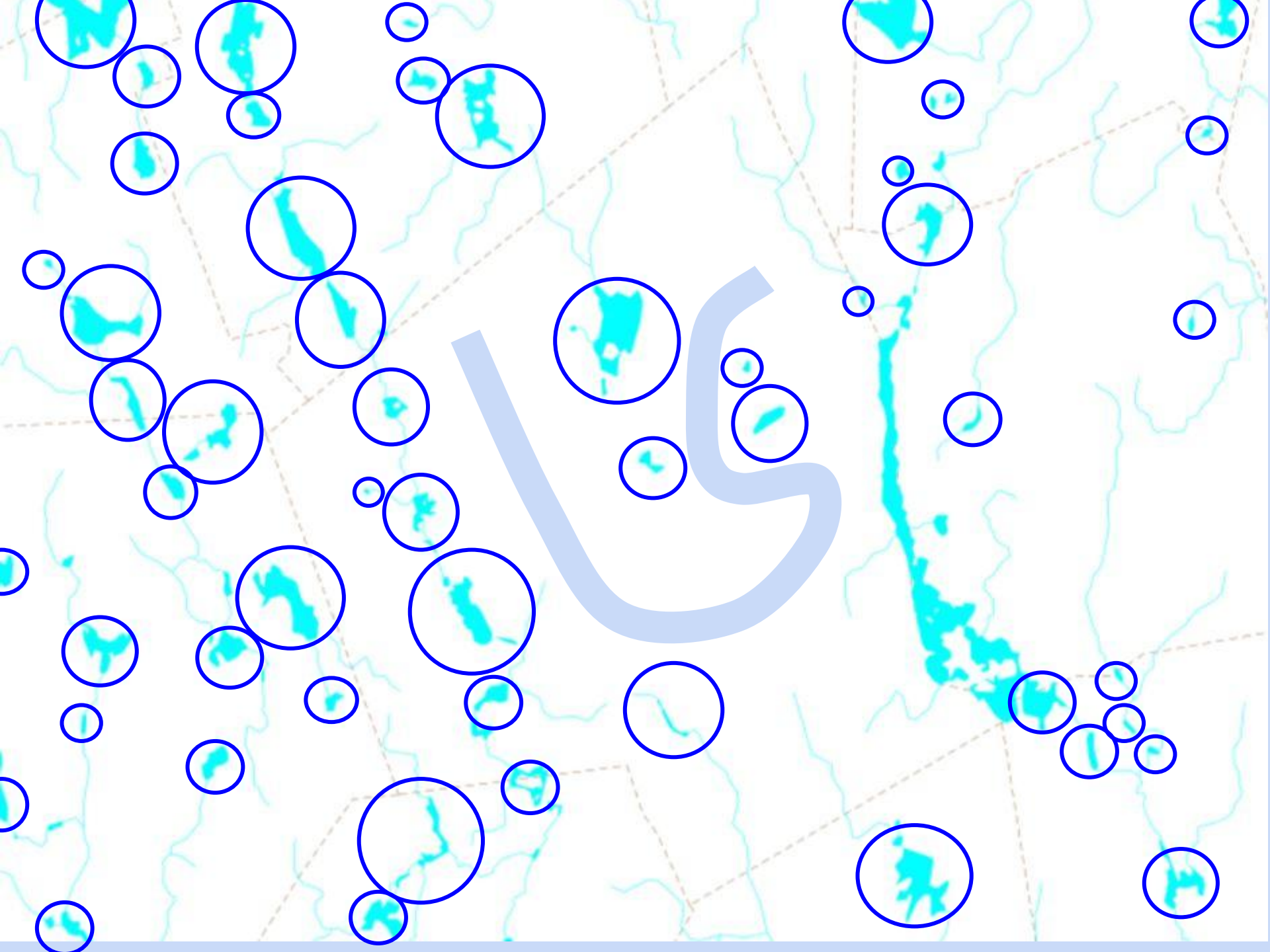
The AMC Gearshed Hosted by GWLT



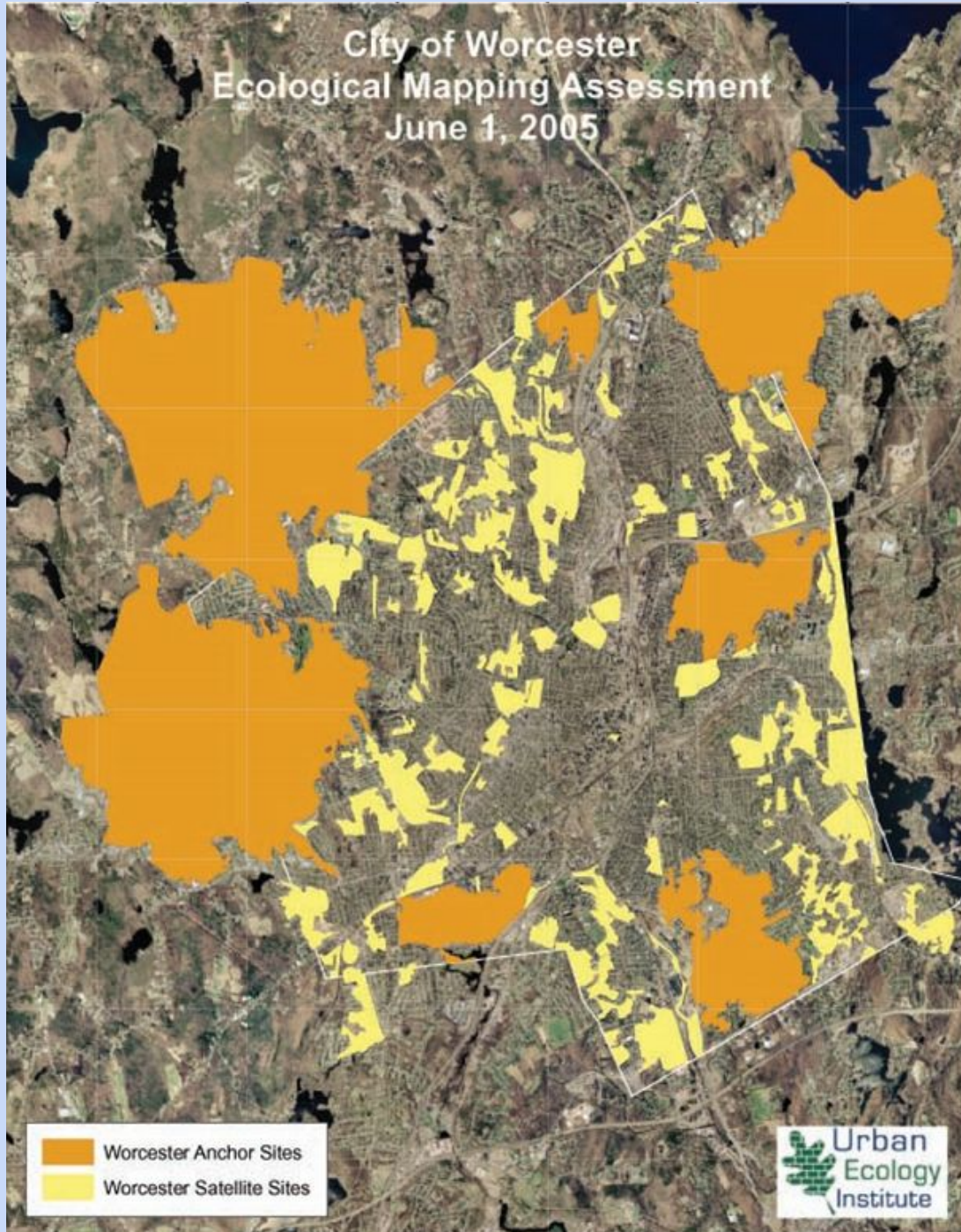
Worcester Hydrology Change 1833 - 2019

- New Rivers
- Old Waterways (including Blackstone Canal)
- Ponds Maintained
- New Ponds
- Lost Ponds
- Lost Wetlands





City of Worcester
Ecological Mapping Assessment
June 1, 2005



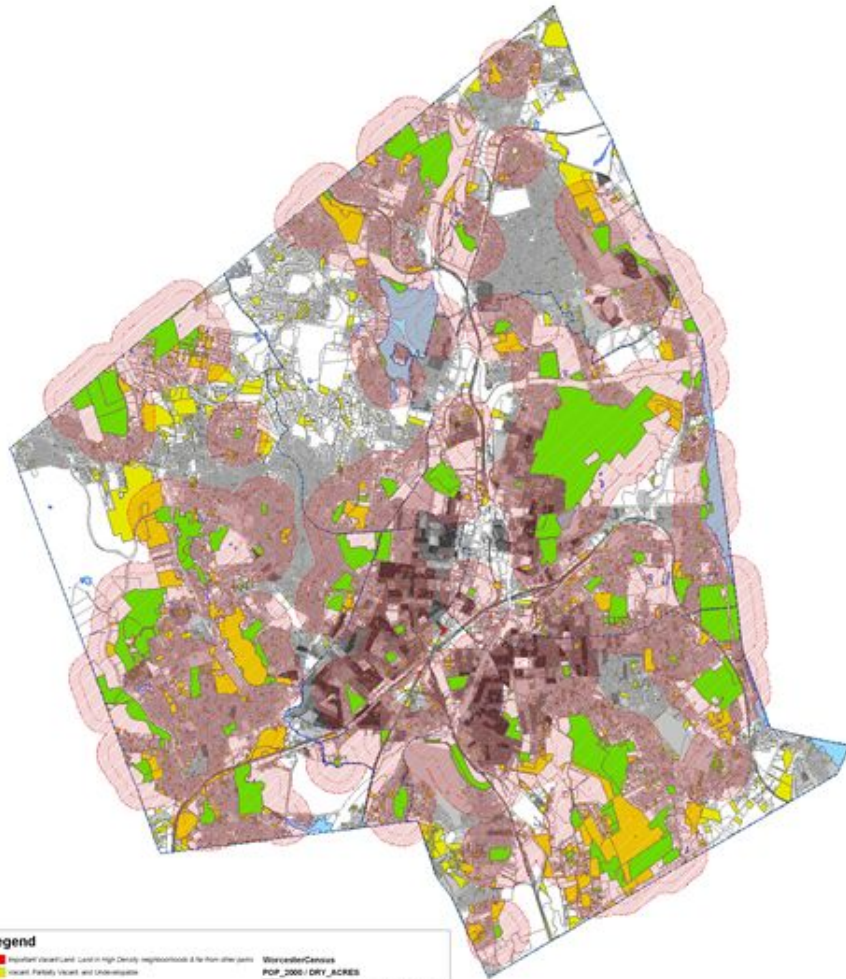
Worcester Anchor Sites
Worcester Satellite Sites



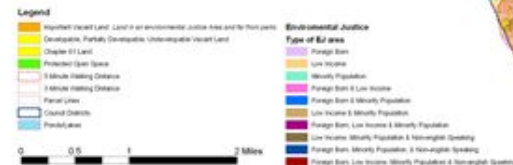
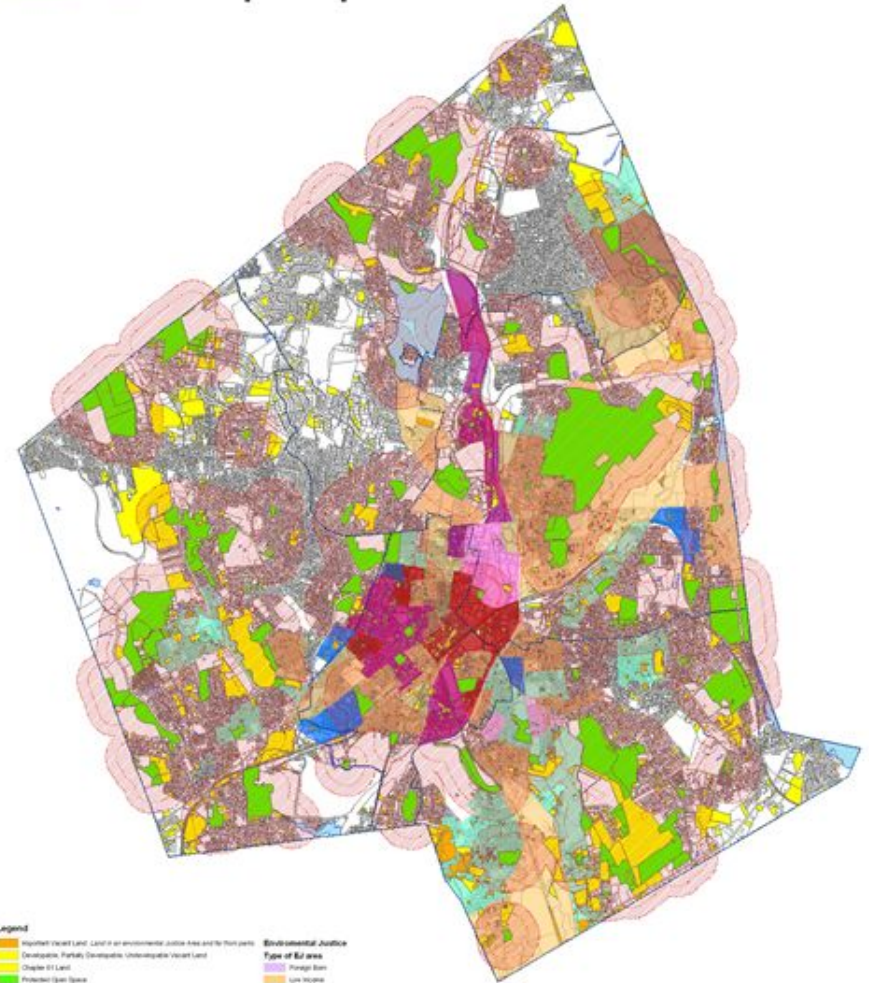
Adding in Density, Proximity, & EJ Designations



Analysis of Vacant Lots Based on Density and Proximity to Open Spaces



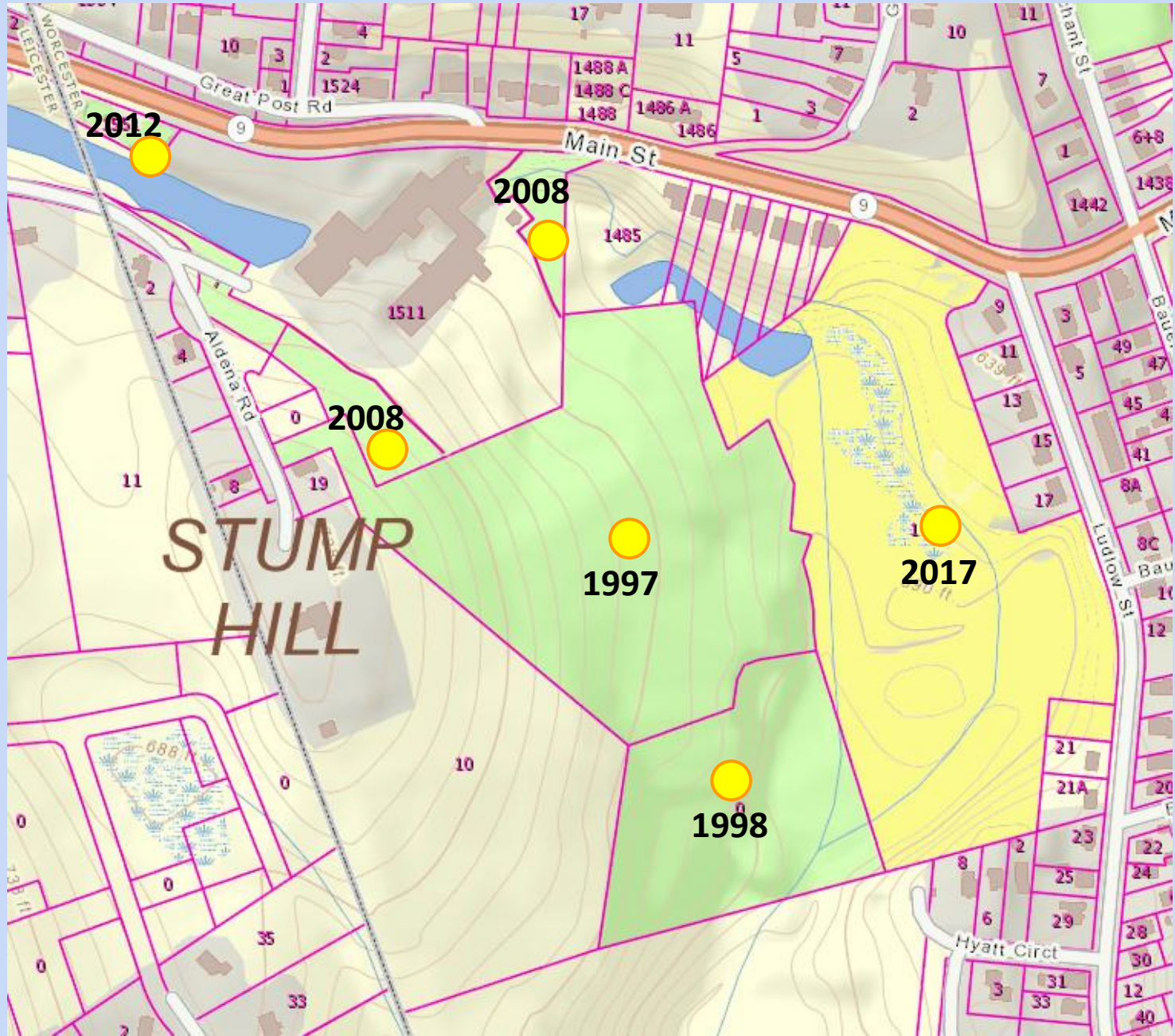
Analysis of Vacant Land Based on Environmental Justice and Proximity to Open Space



Less Orthodox Urban Connection Tools

- Utility Corridors
- “Paper” Streets
- Side-yard & Rear-yard Setbacks
- Tax Title Properties
- Regulatory Zones (Wetland Setbacks)
- Demo
- Brownfields -> Greenfields (Groundworks)
- Highway Cow Tunnel & RxR Pedestrian Underpass
- Rail to Trail Conversion
- Permitting Process

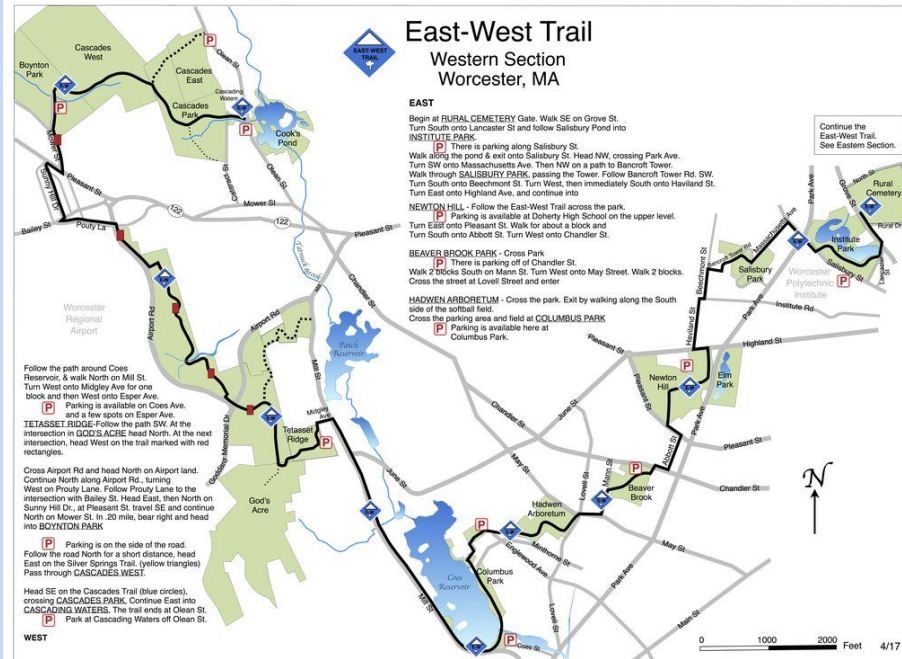
Kettle Brook North





Pleasant & Winslow Peace Park







WSU





11/15/2007









[Home](#)

[Map](#)

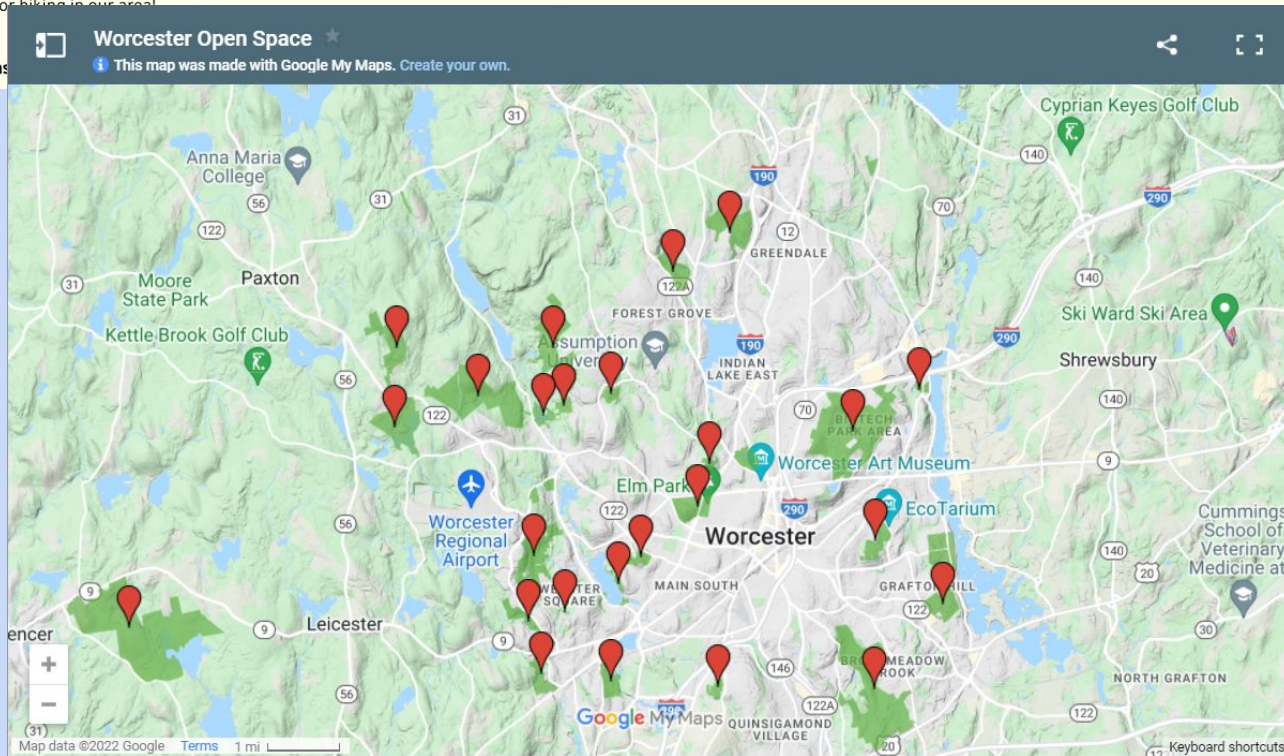
[Lands and Trails](#)

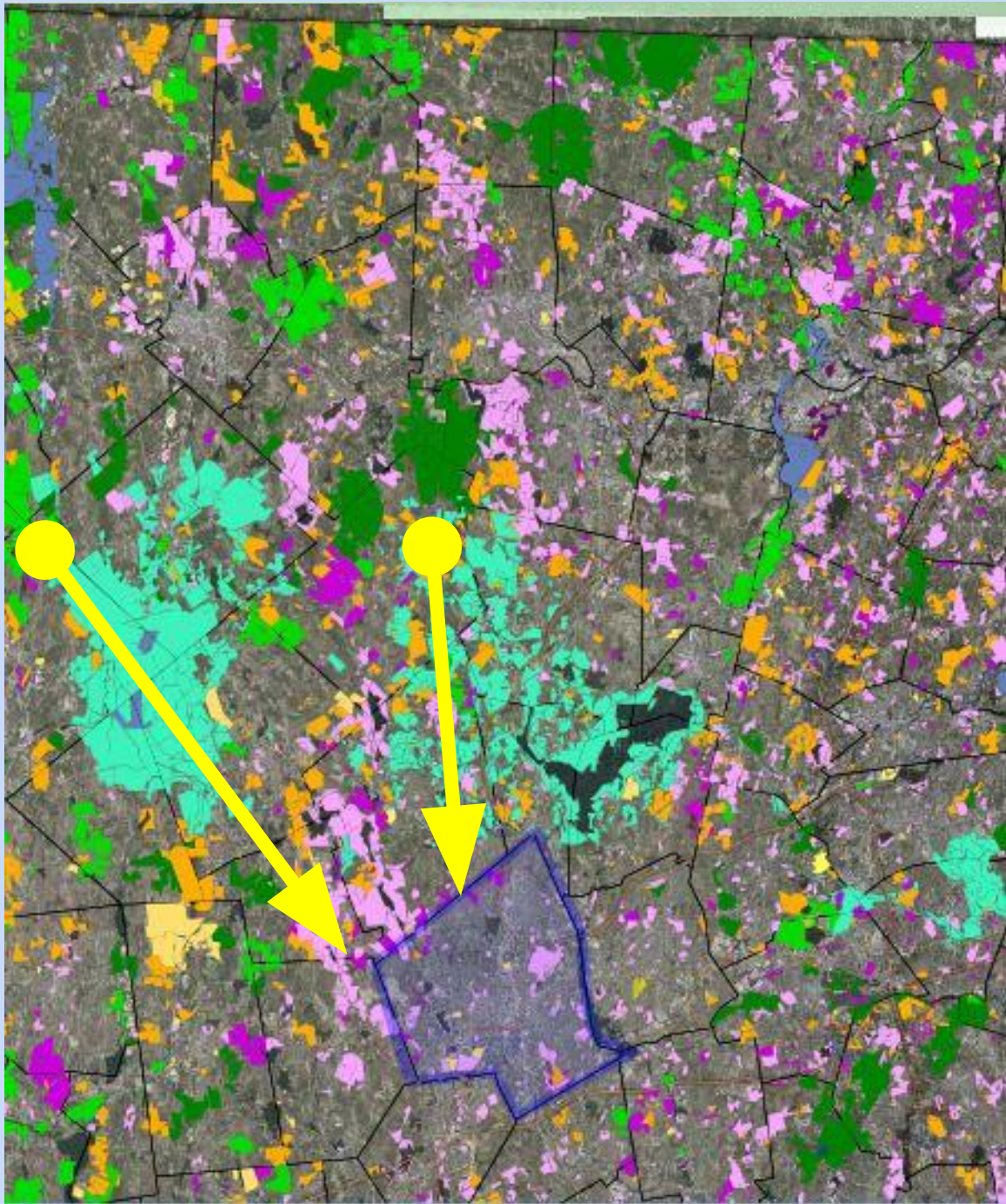
[More Info](#)

[January 2018 Hiking Guide](#) (.pdf courtesy of Jacqueline Lynn) [download](#)

This will be the ULTIMATE guide to hiking in and around Worcester, particularly featuring the lands of the Greater Worcester Land Trust! You will surely be surprised at the number and variety of opportunities for hiking in our area!

Looking for reas





Partnerships Are King

4 municipalities,

4 land Trusts, and

2 private groups

Working over **3** decades

To Build the “Four-Town Greenway”

an **965** acre beltway,

for public access through hiking,

as well as forestry,

as well as a traditional N.E. family farm,

as well as wildlife habitat,

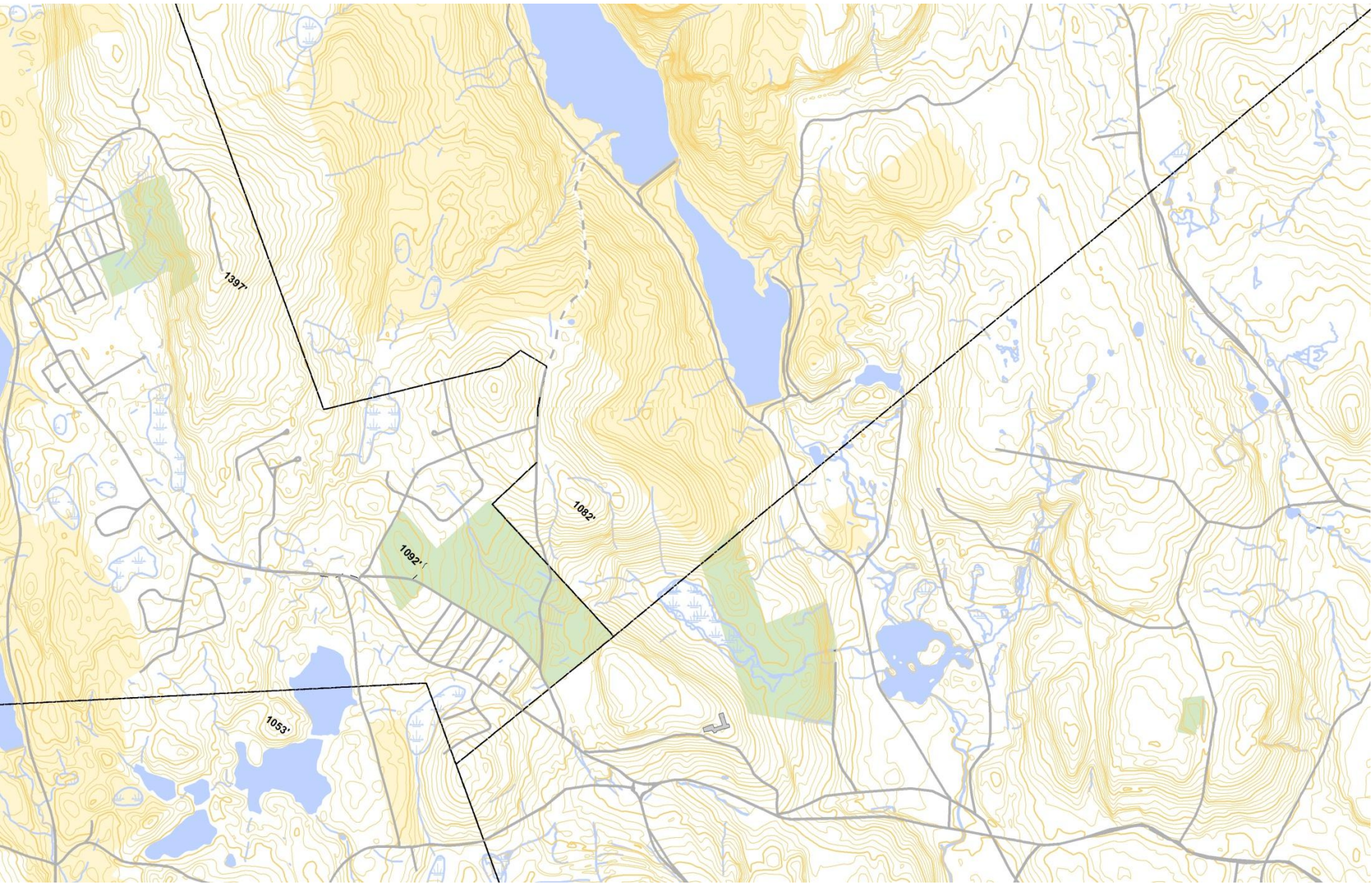
as well as hunting and trapping,

as well as a back-country campsite.

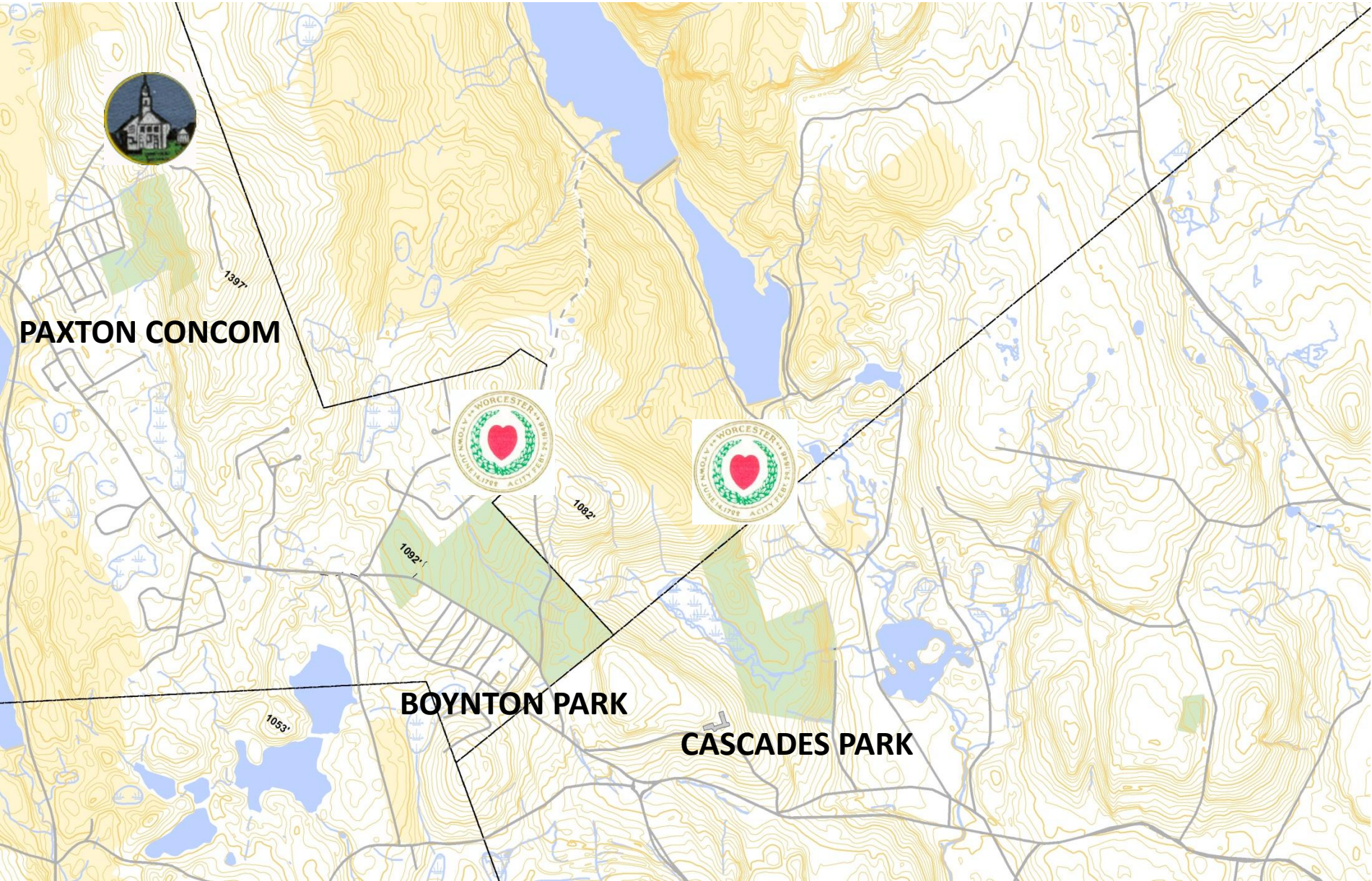
And the Project isn't over YET!



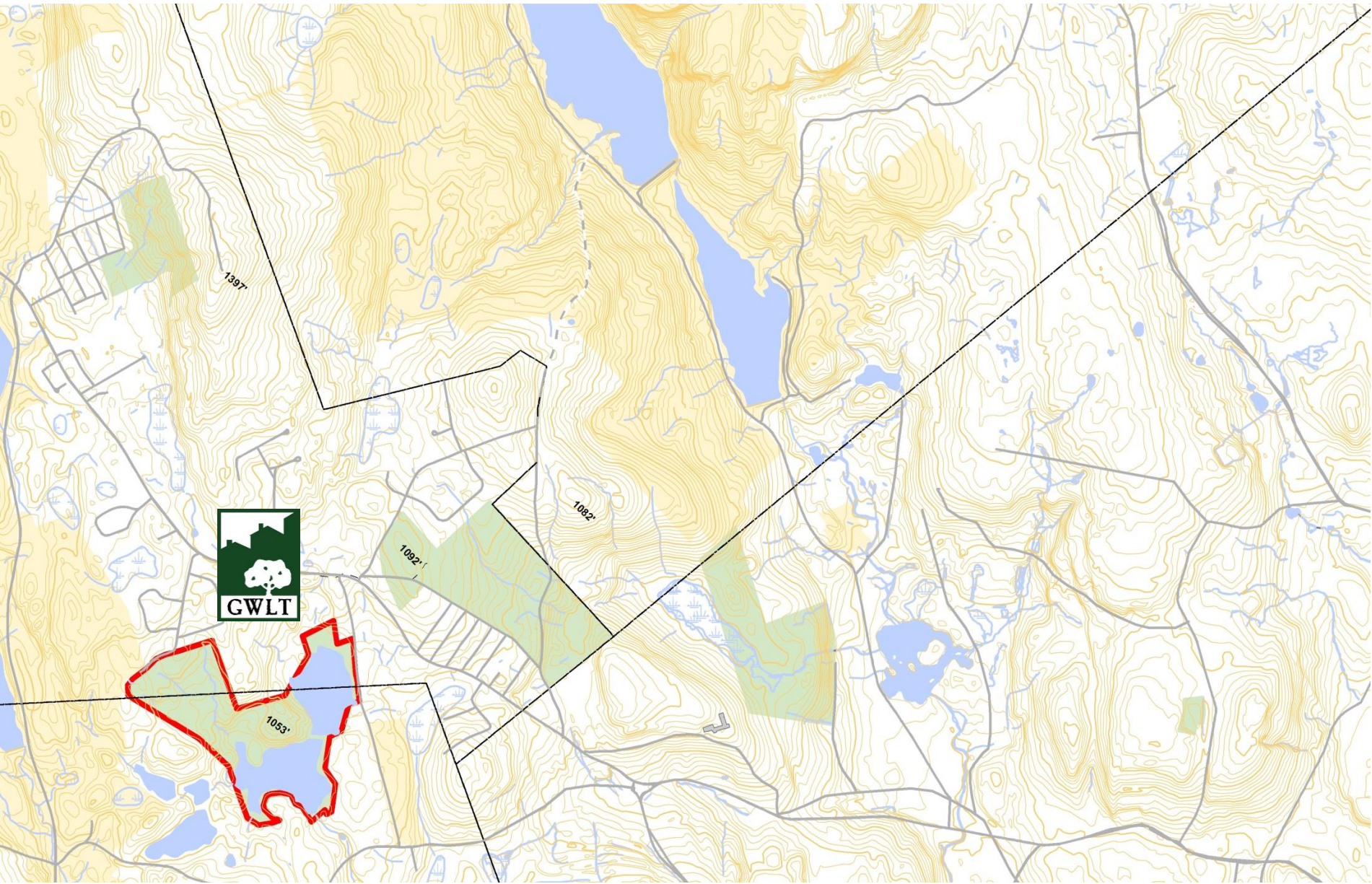
1989



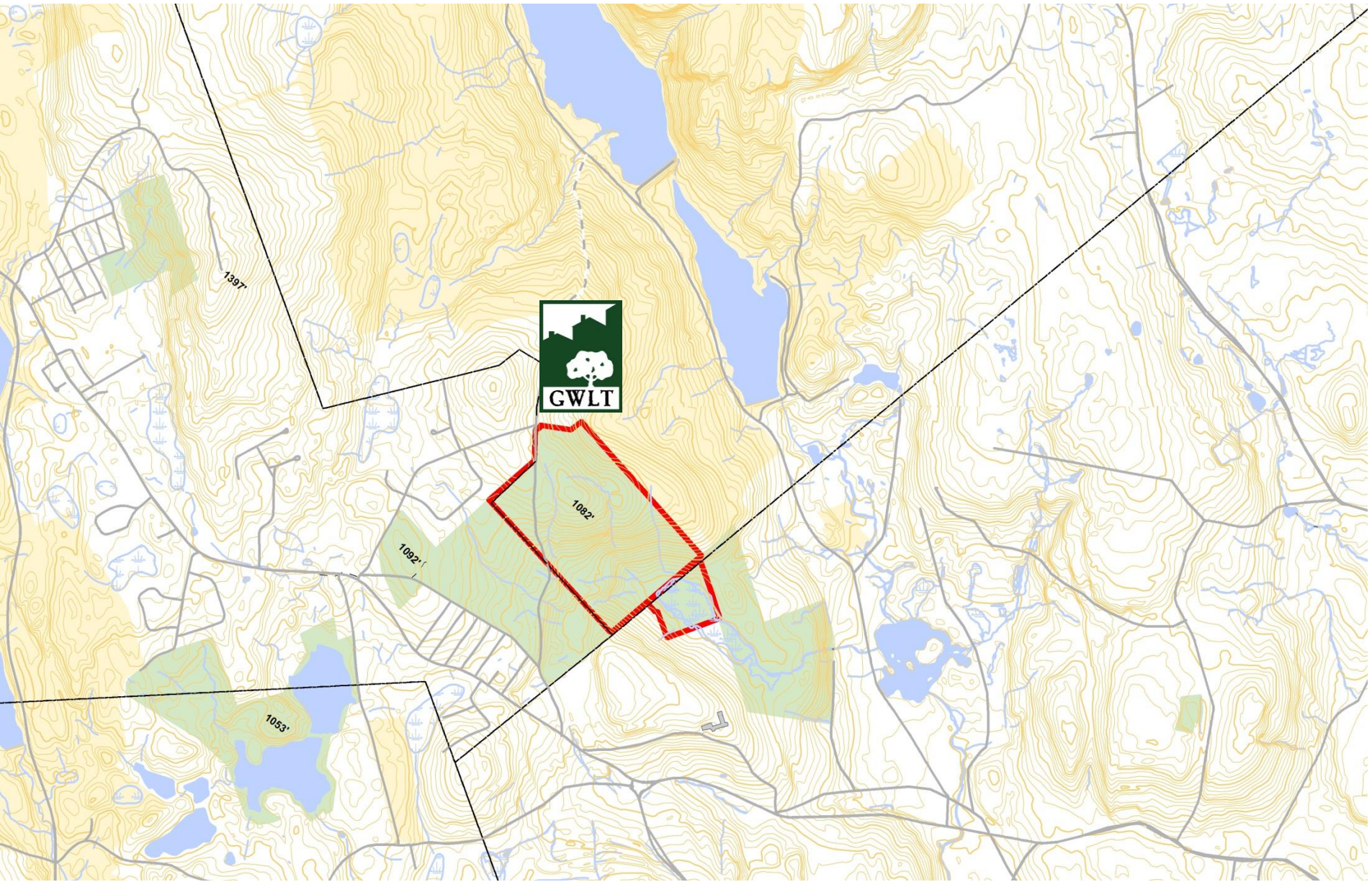
1989



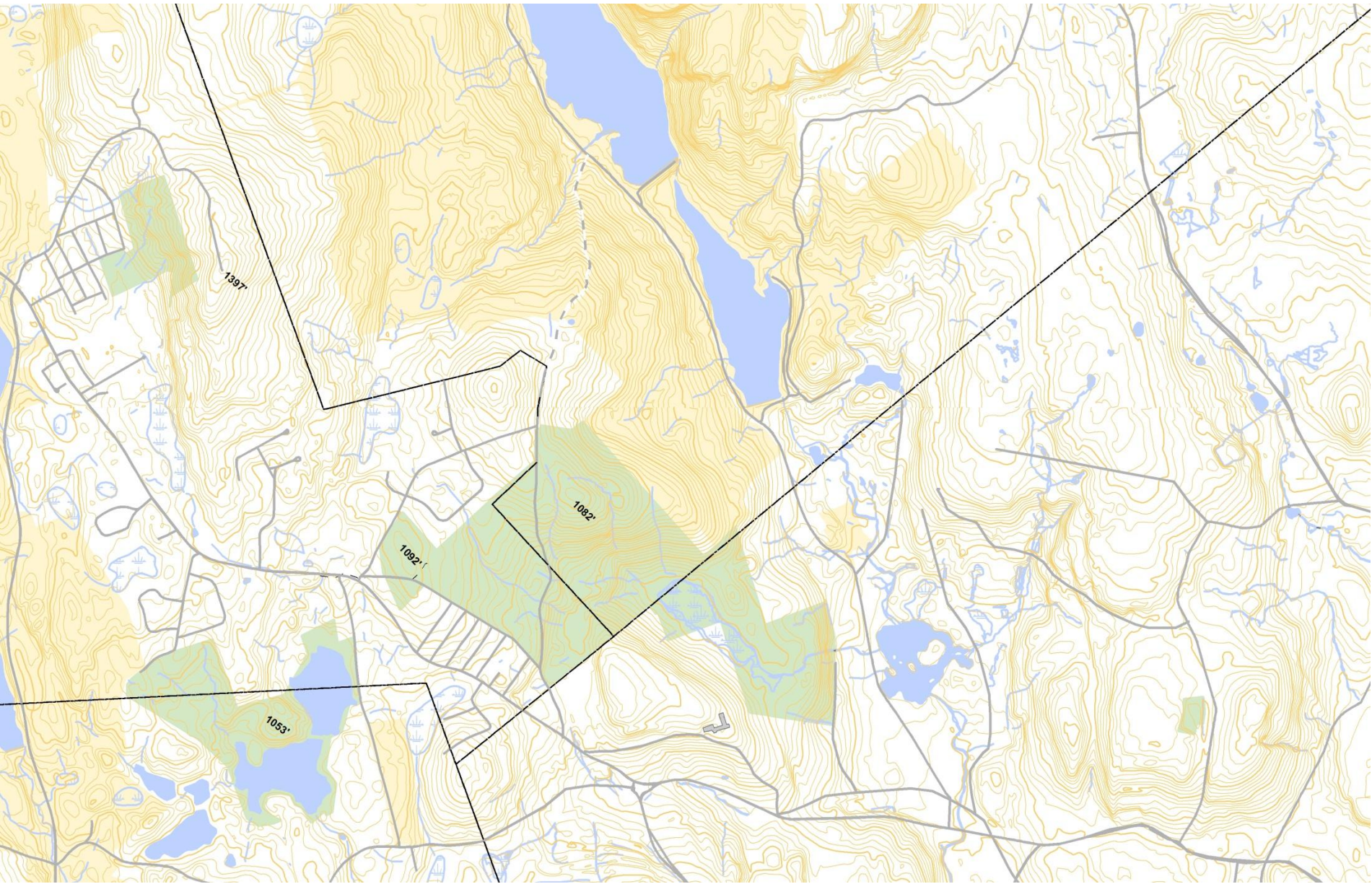
1990



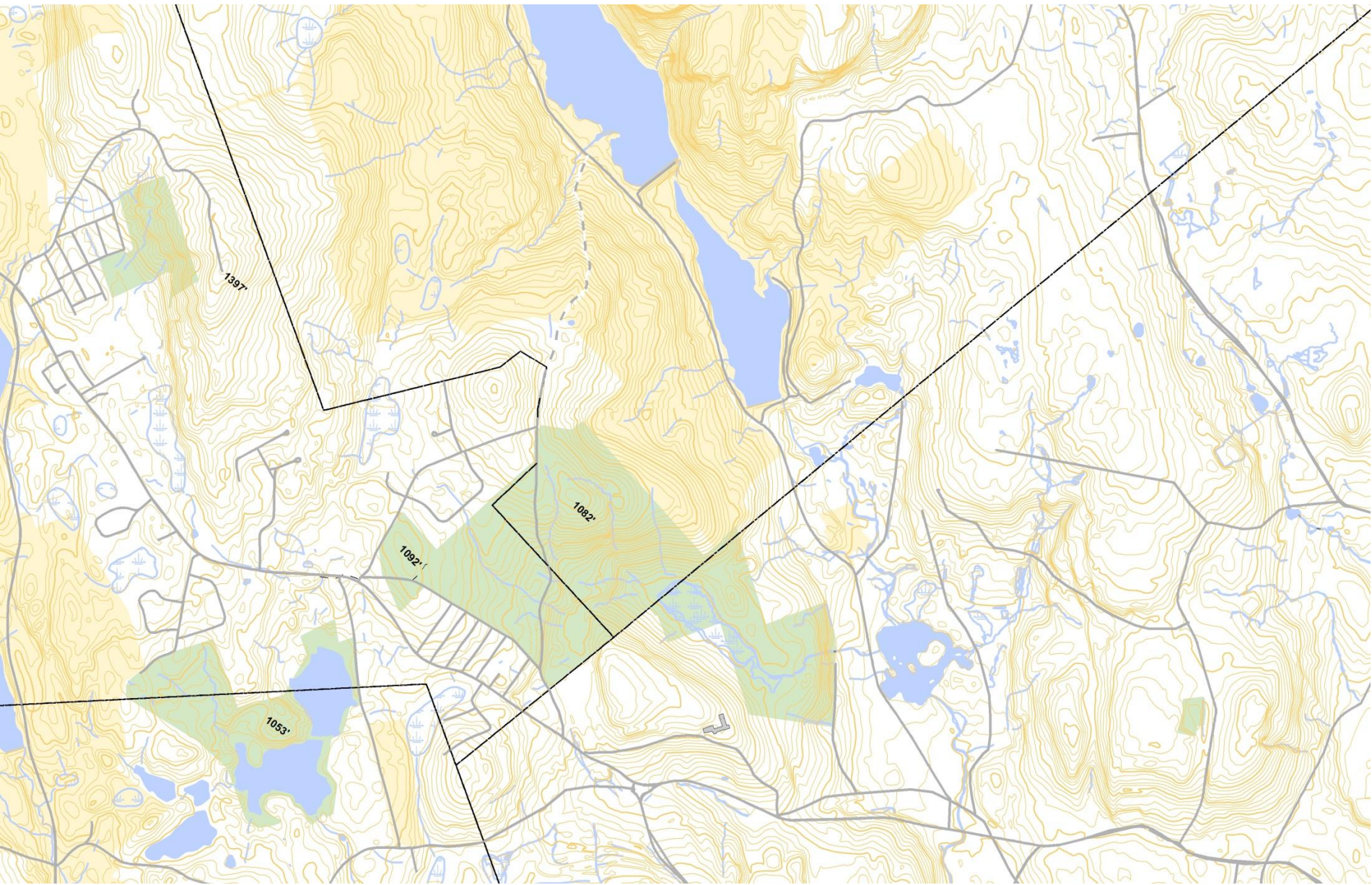
1991



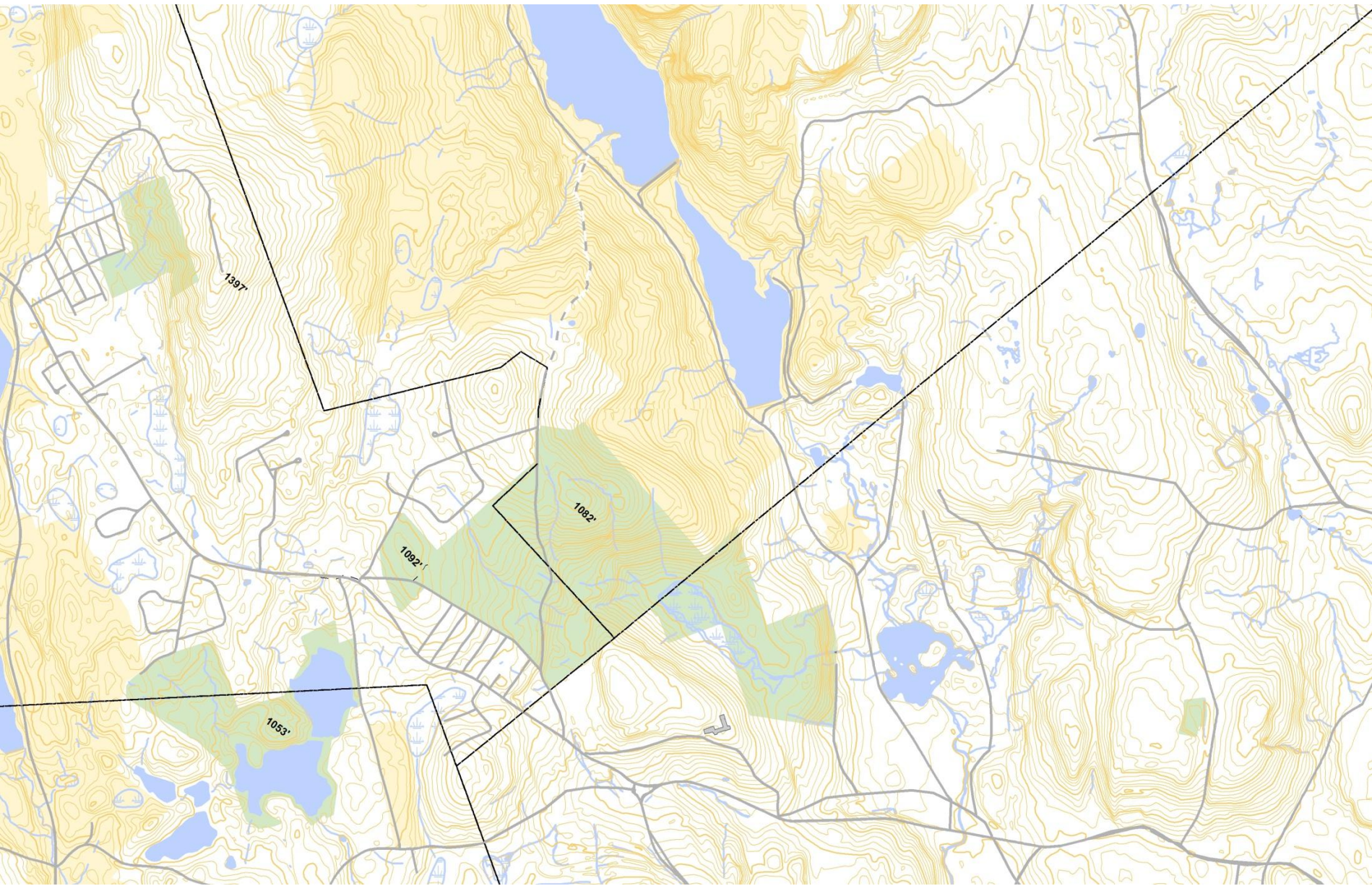
1992...



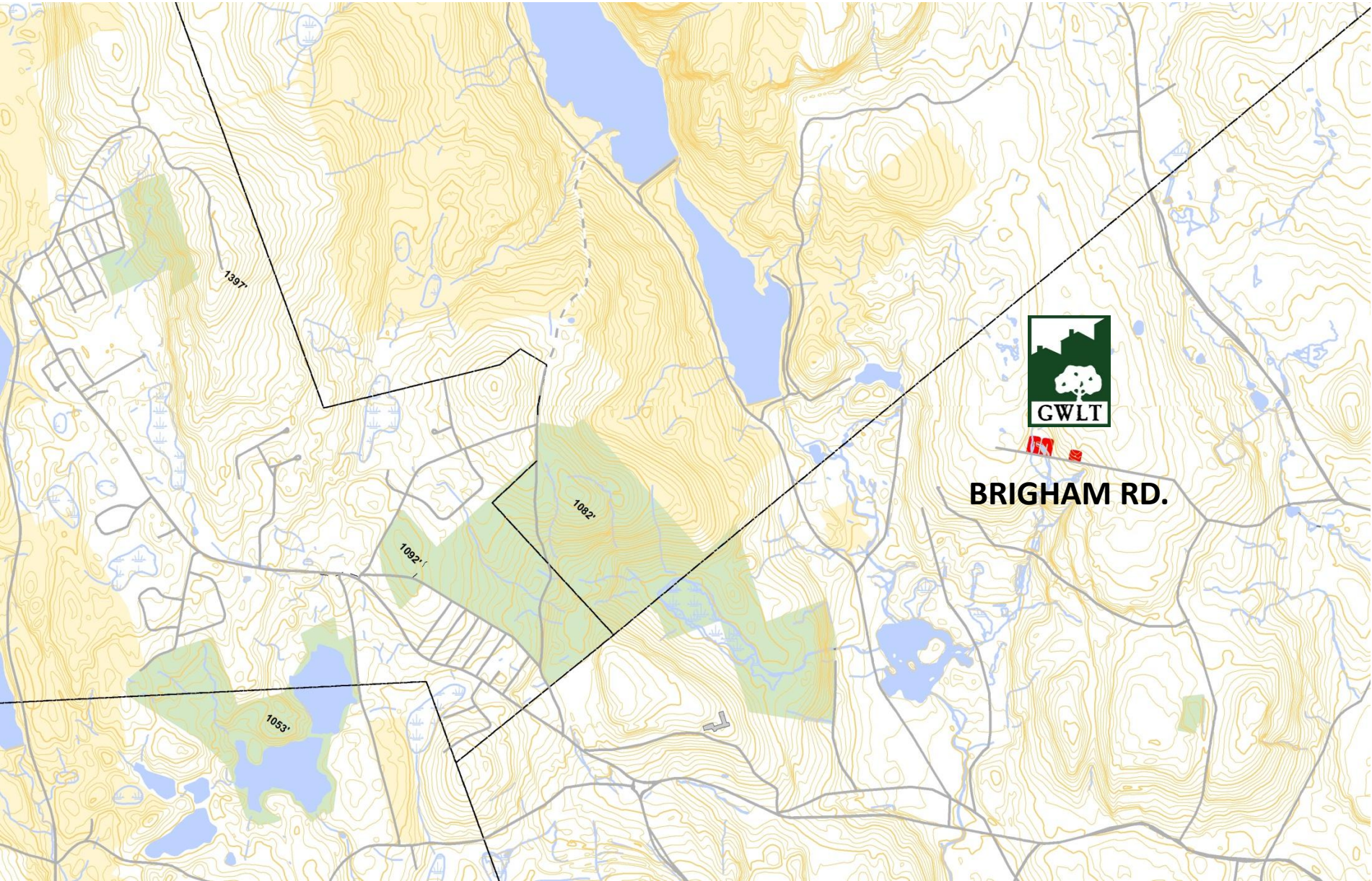
1993...



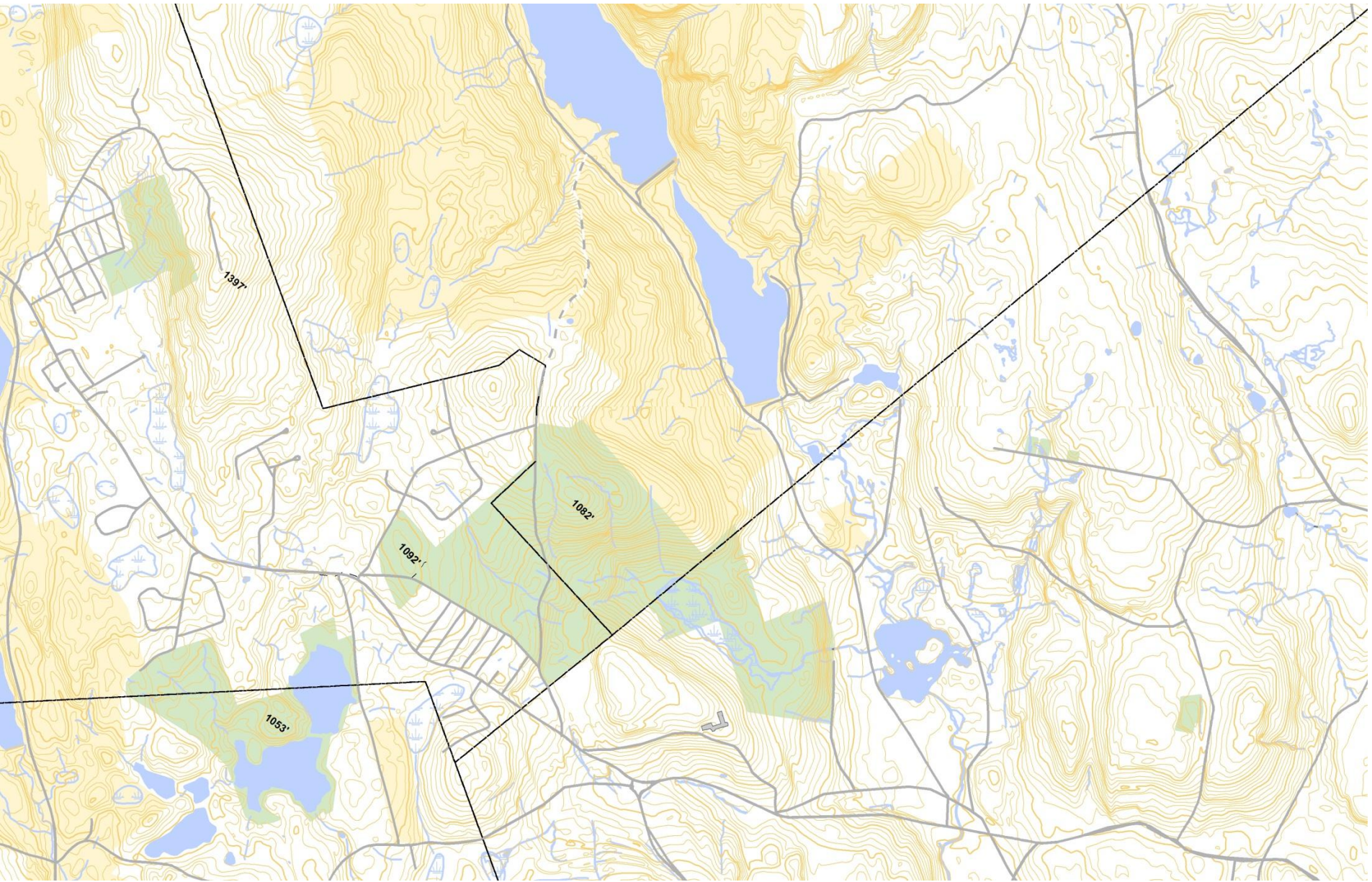
1994...



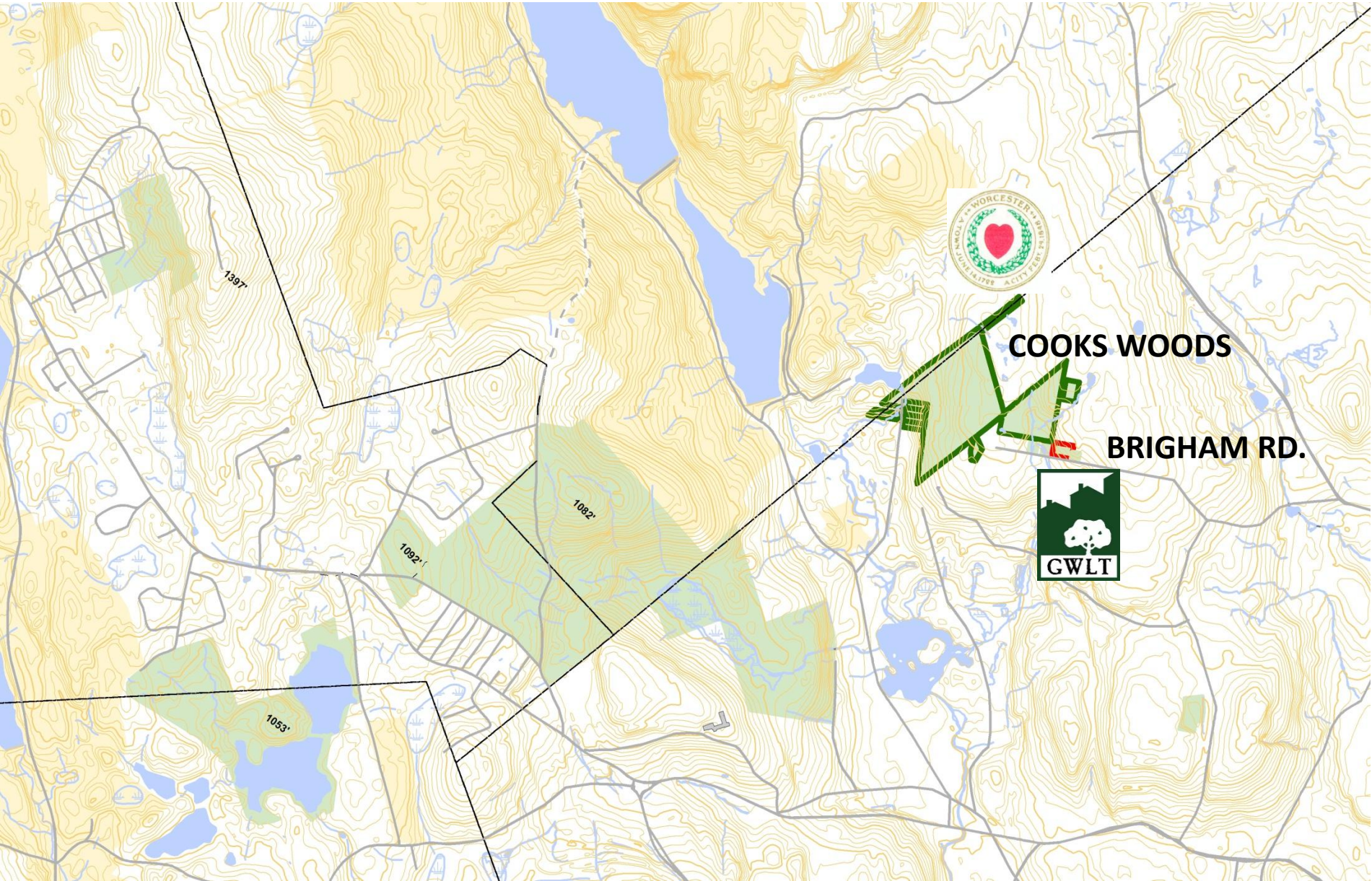
1995



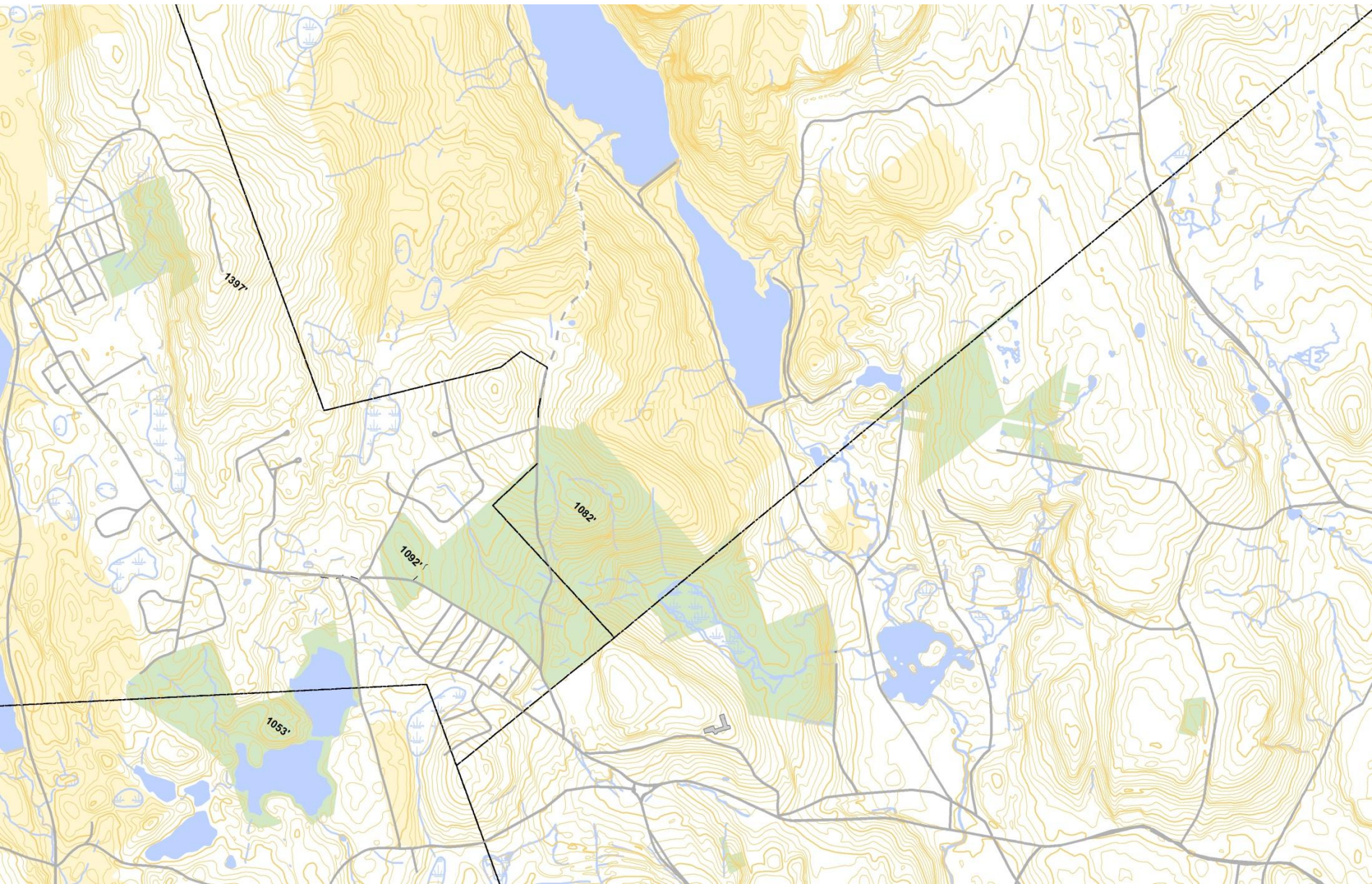
1996...



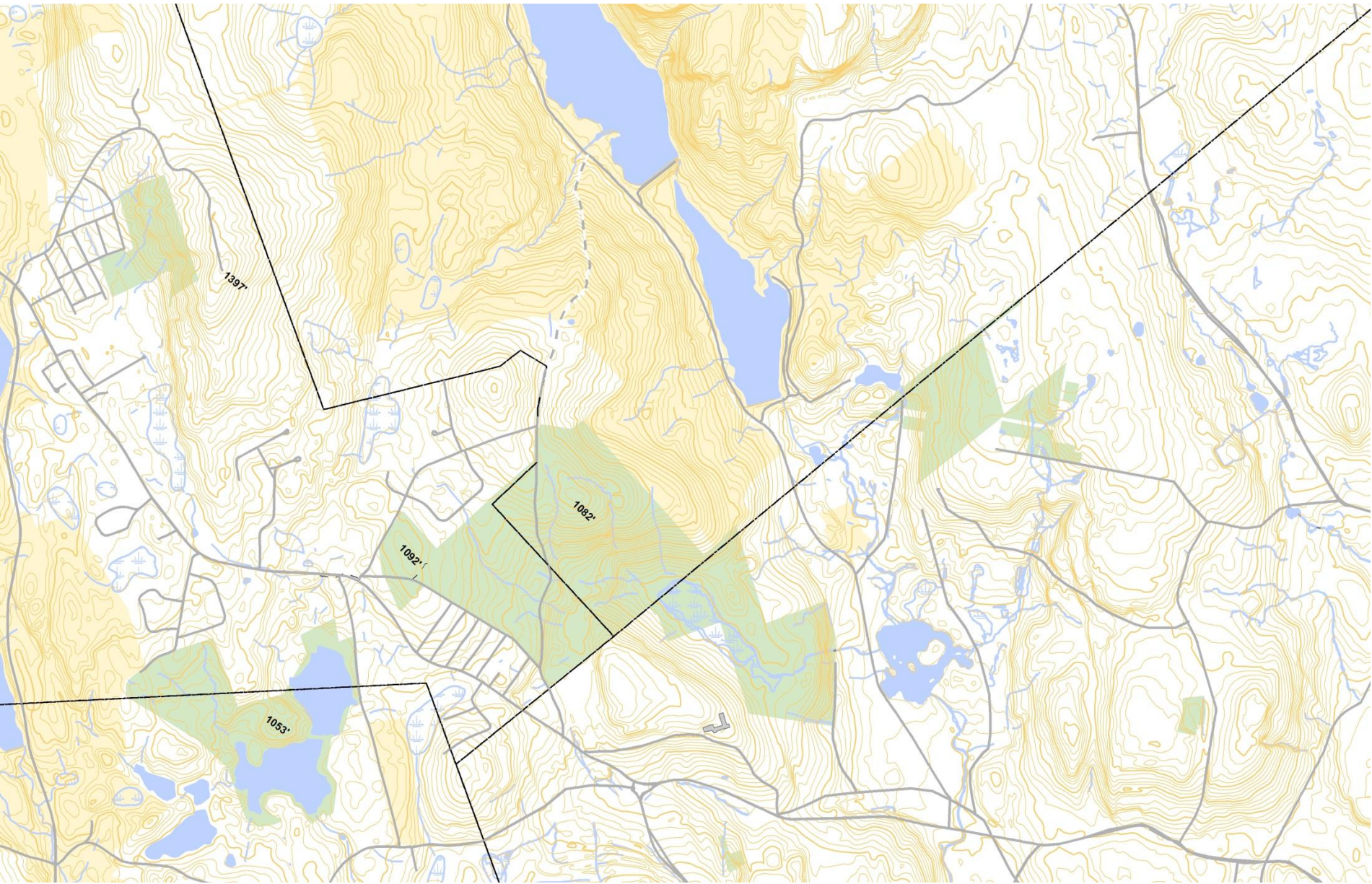
1997



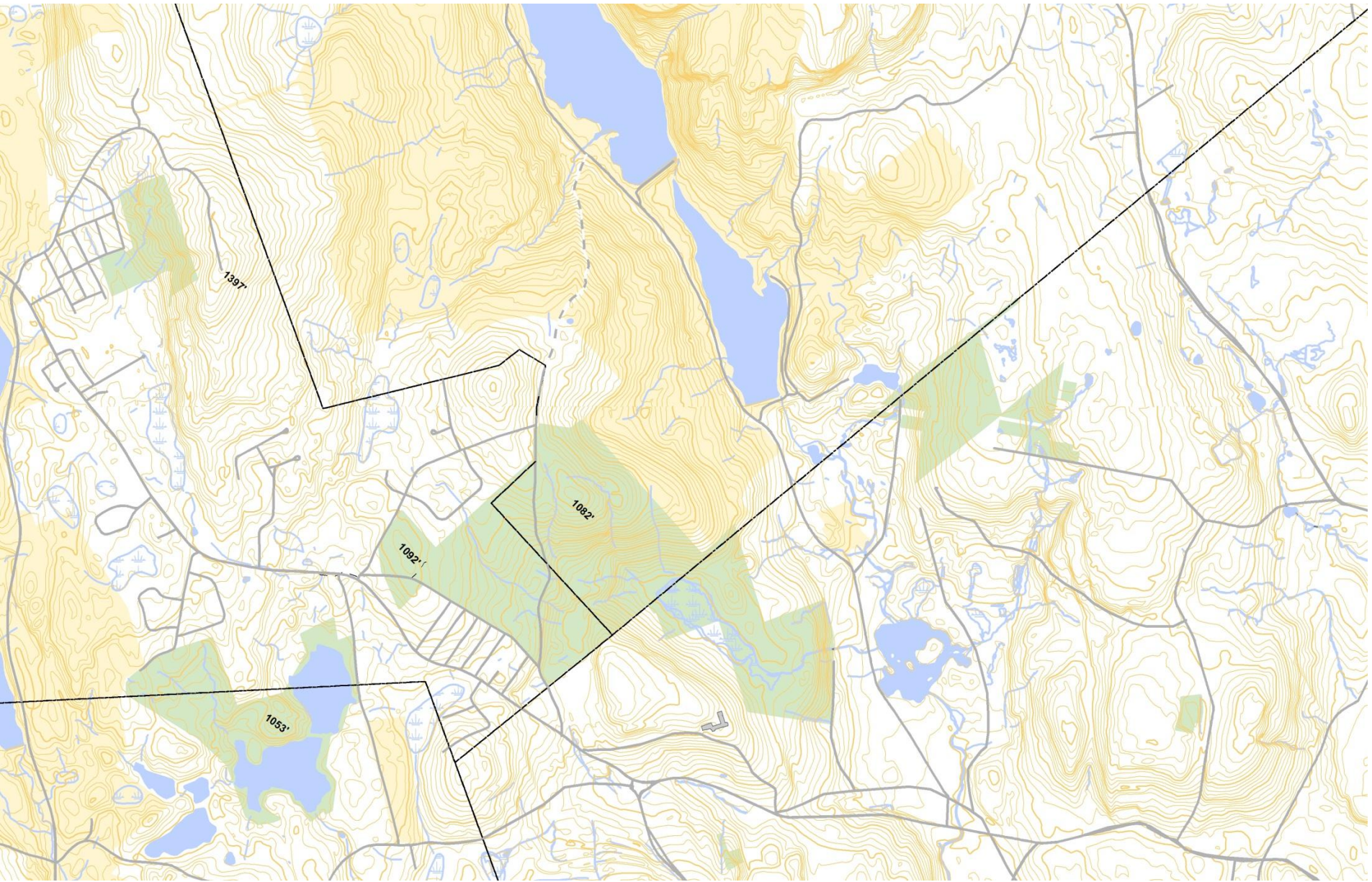
1998...



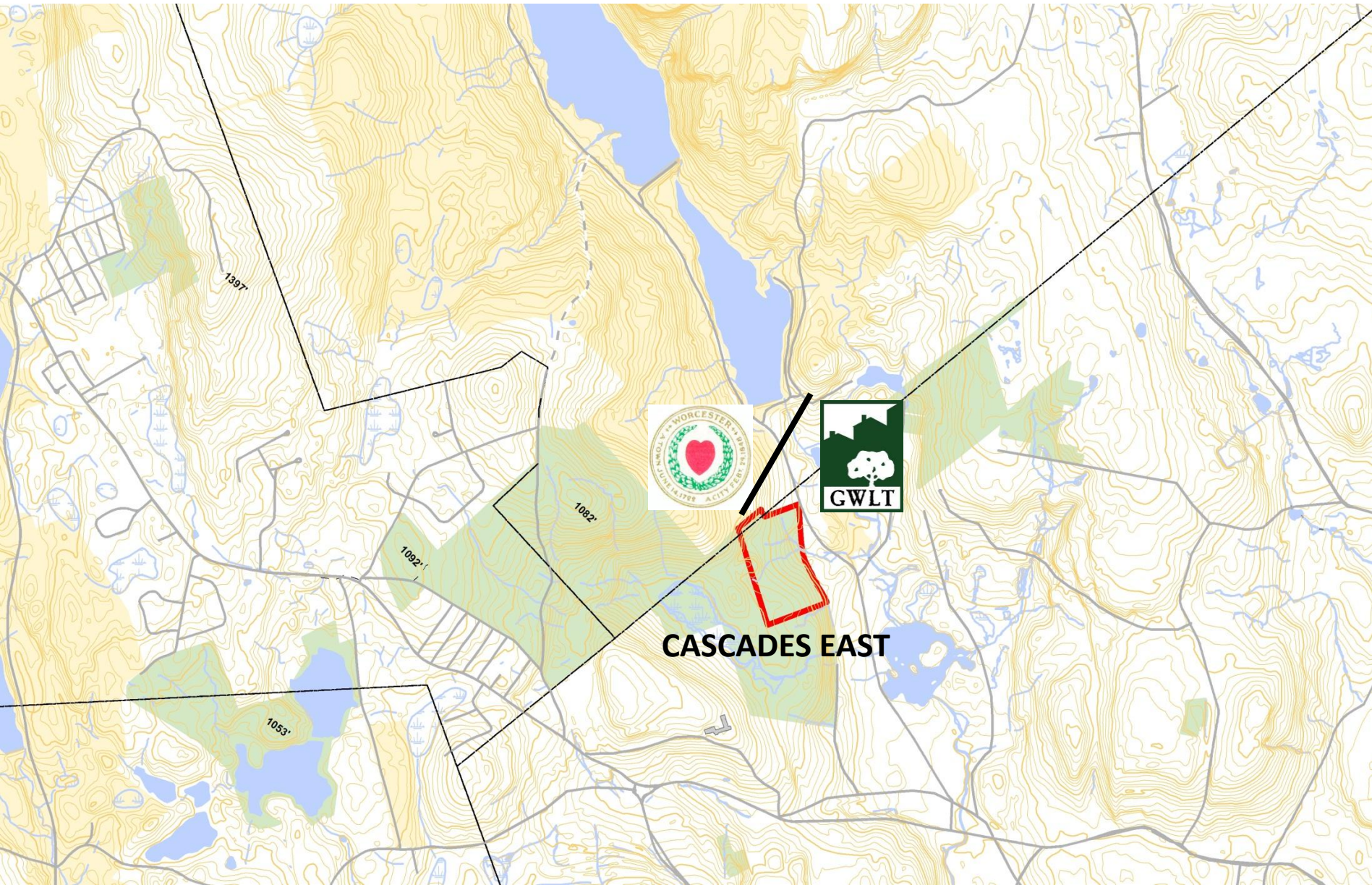
1999...



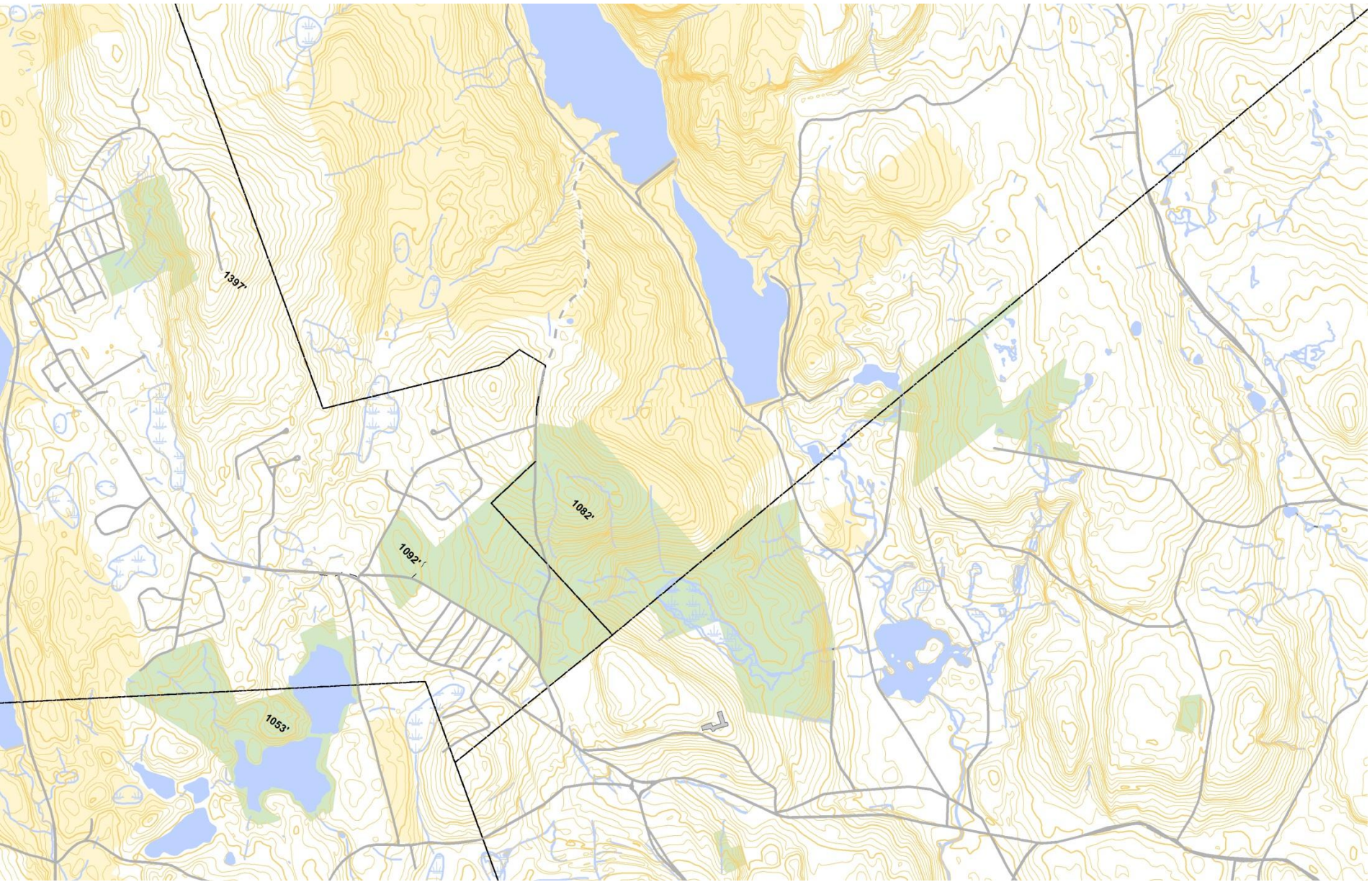
2000...



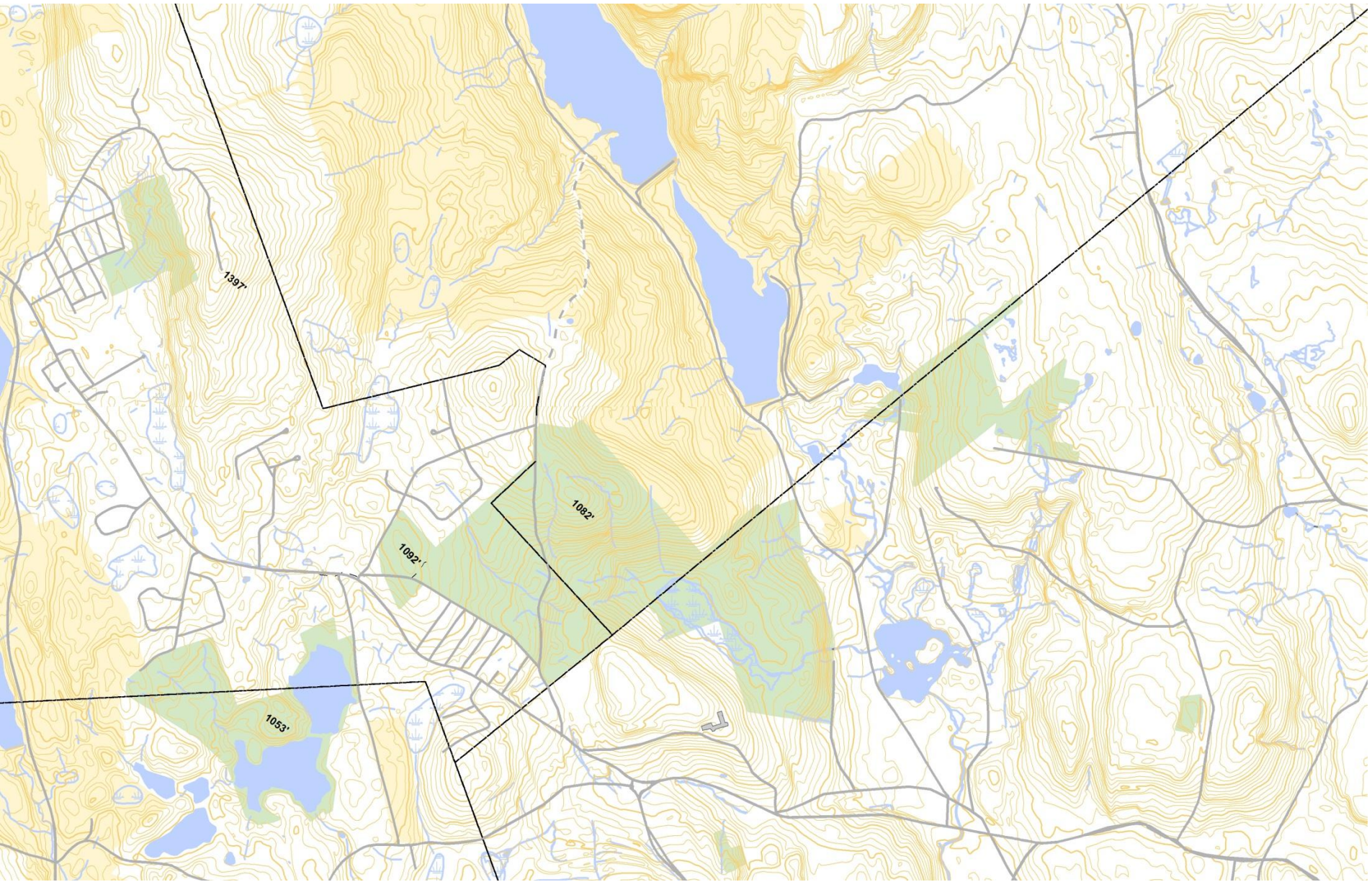
2001



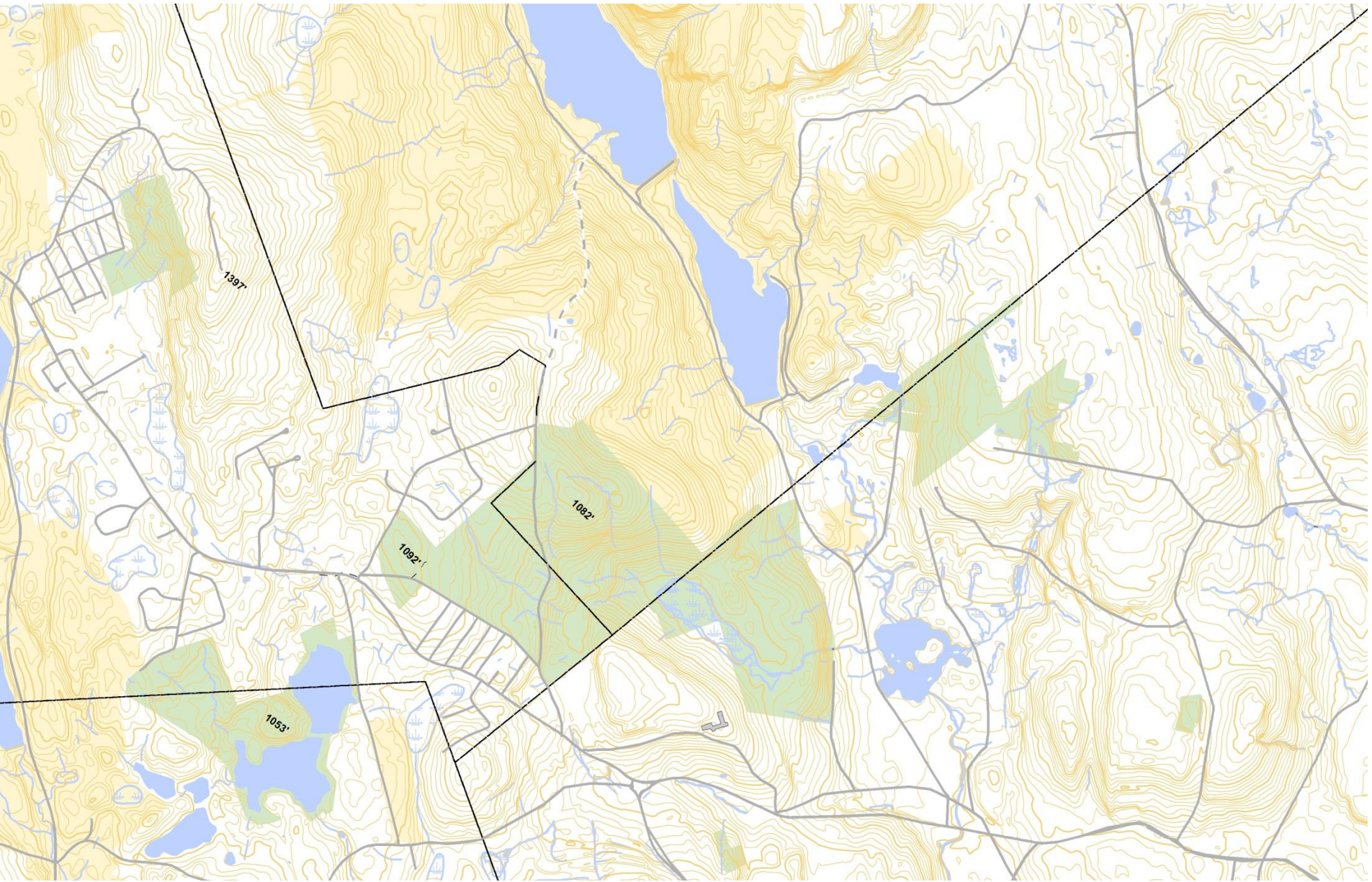
2002...



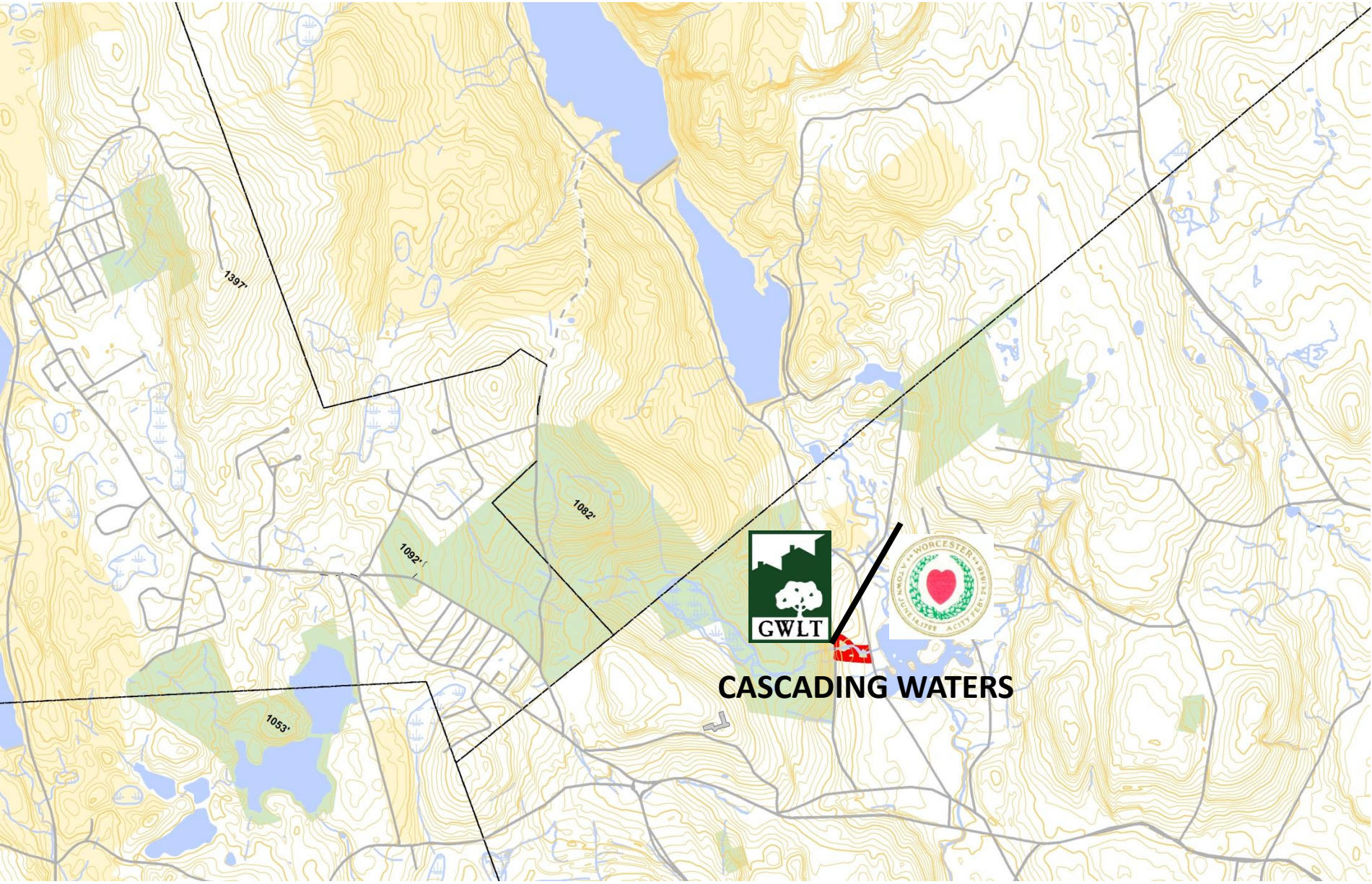
2003...



2004...

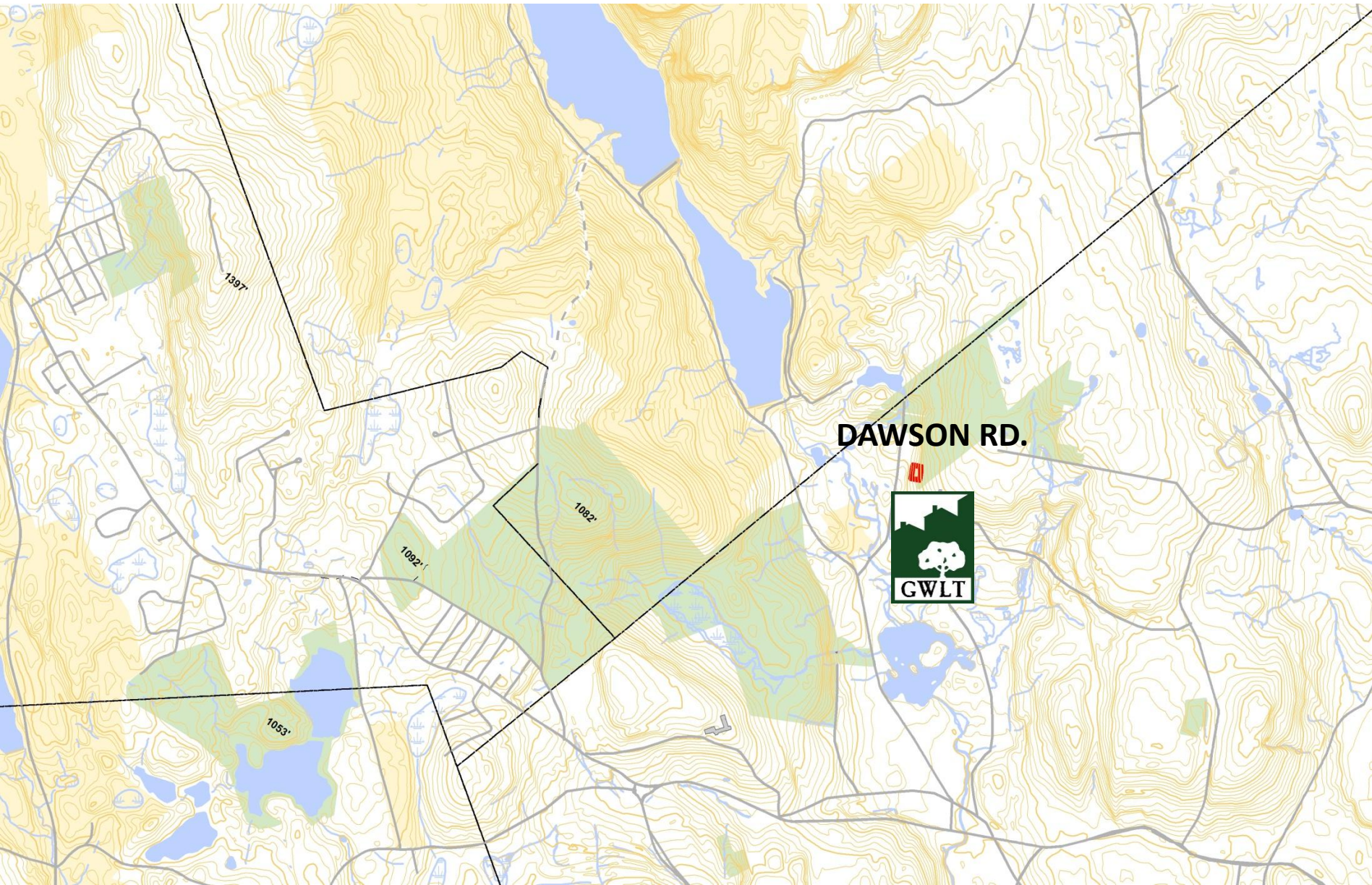


2005

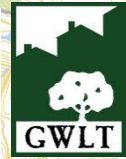
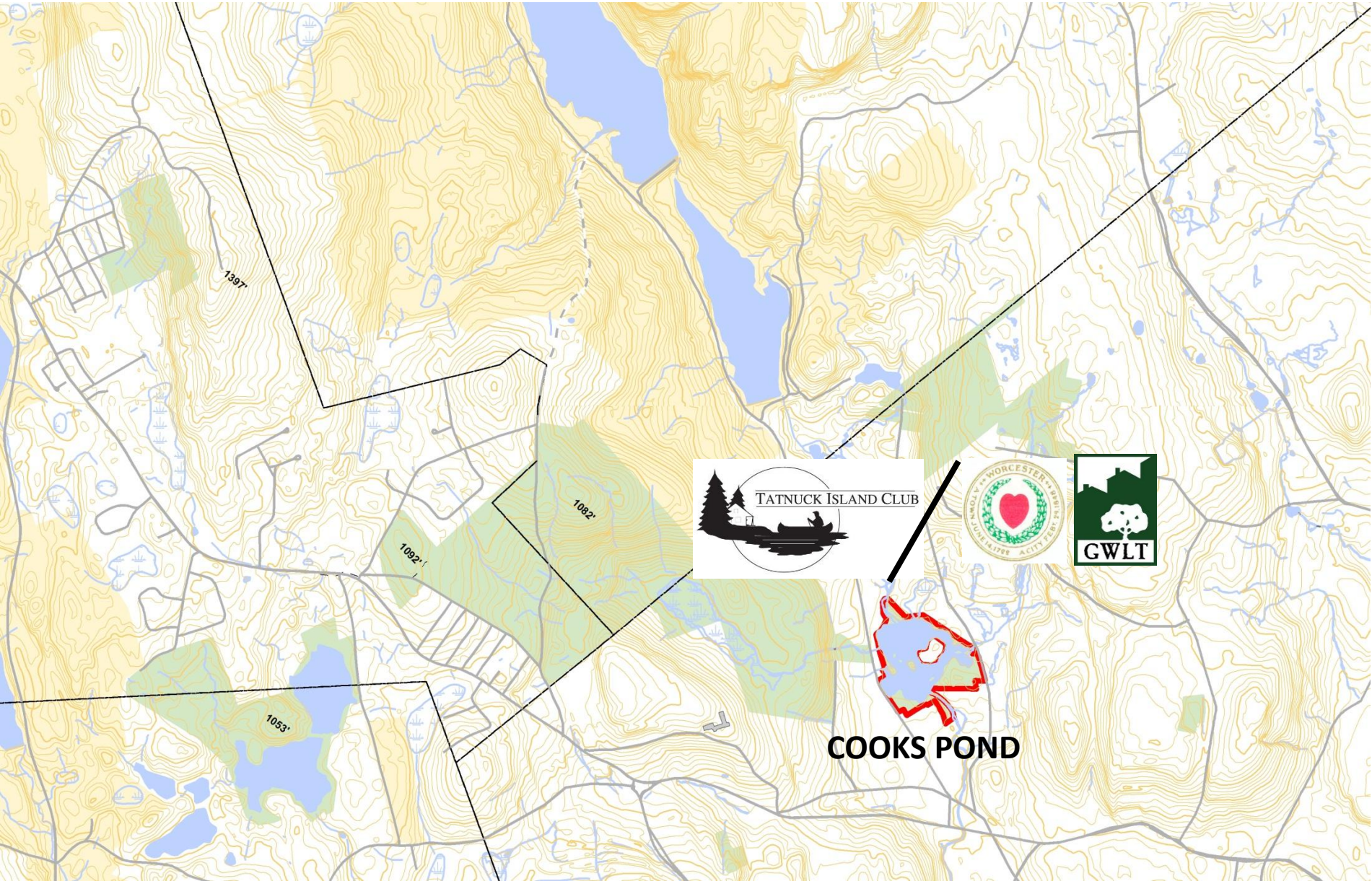


CASCADING WATERS

2006

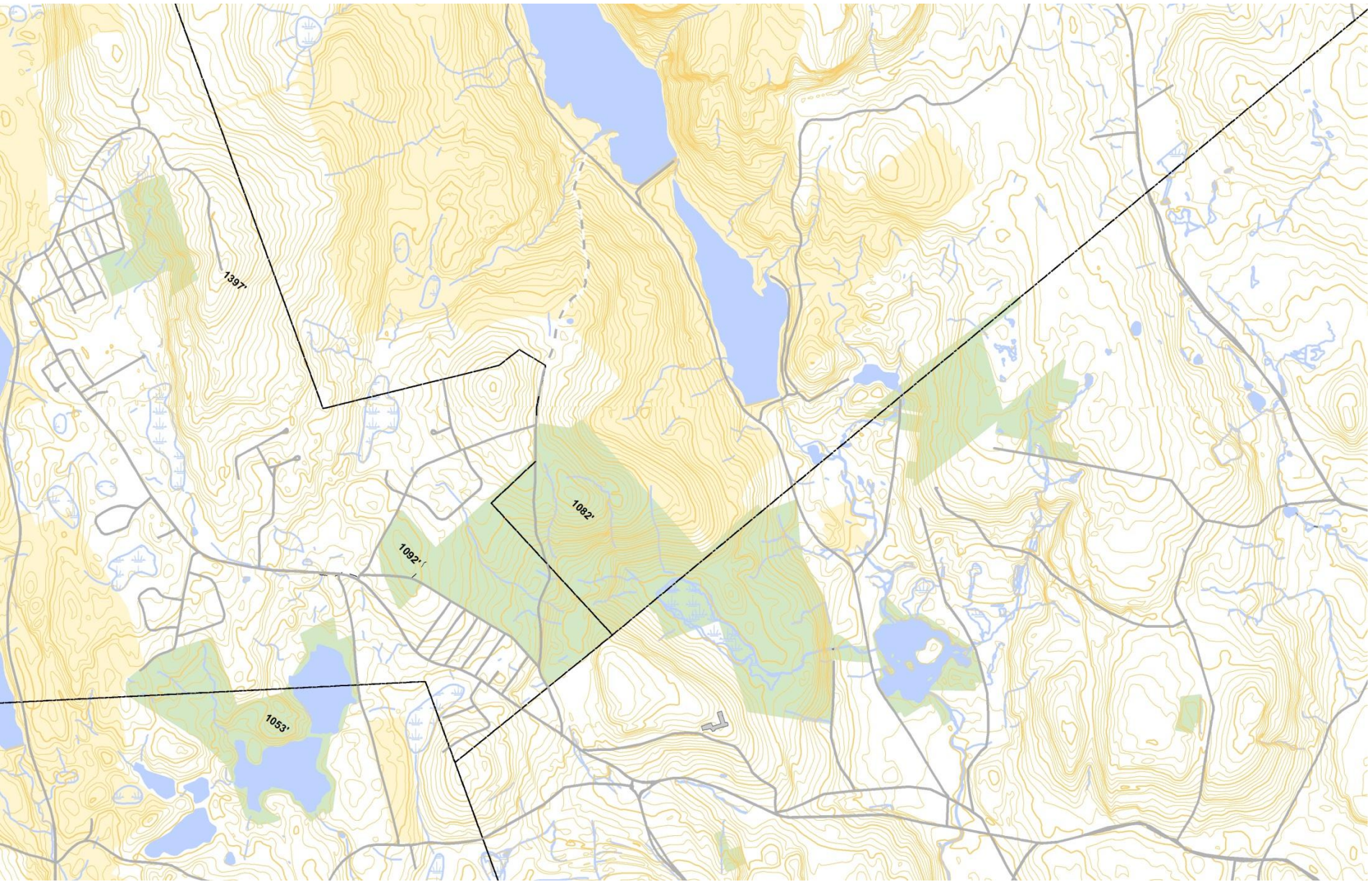


2007

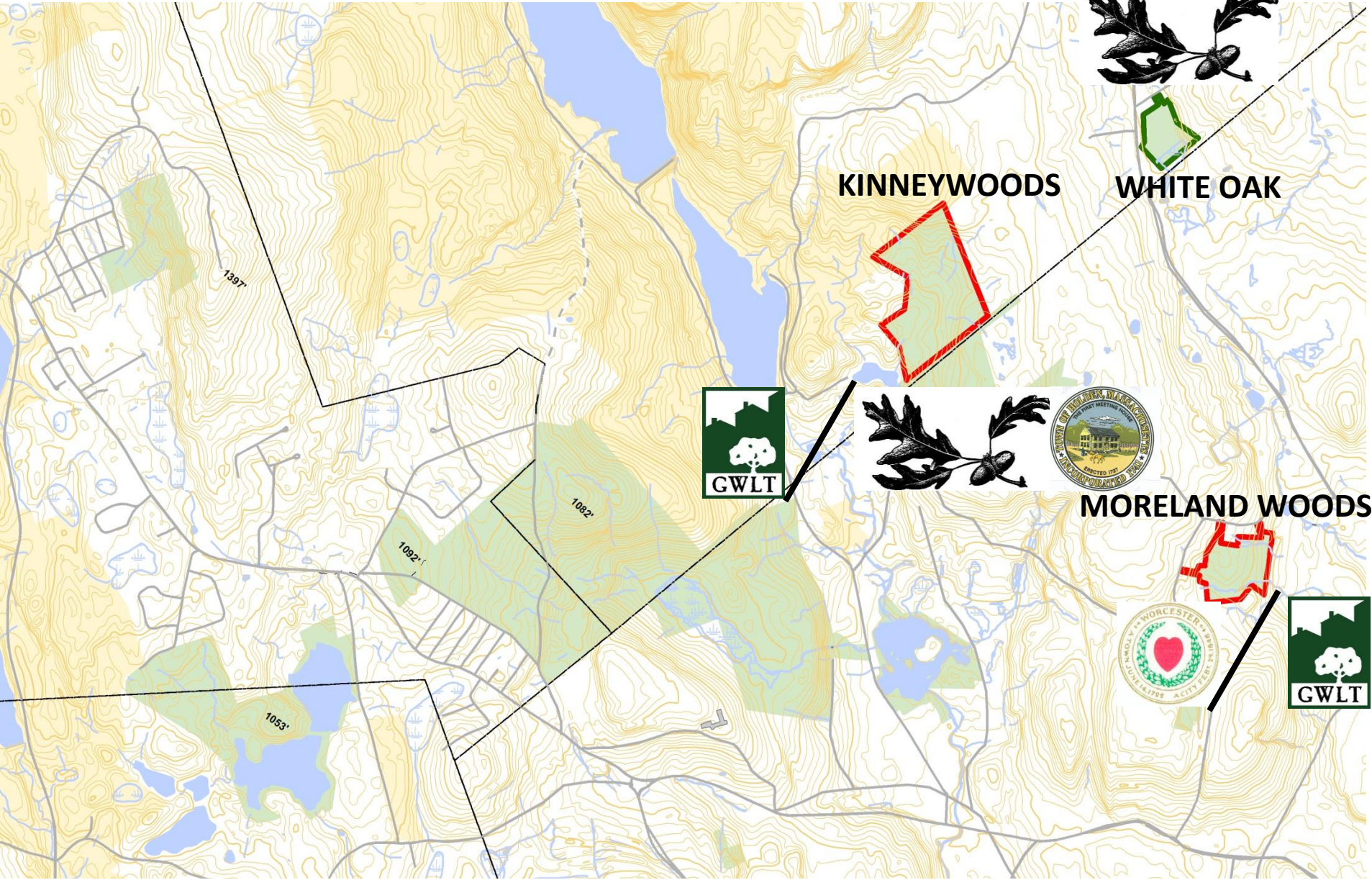


COOKS POND

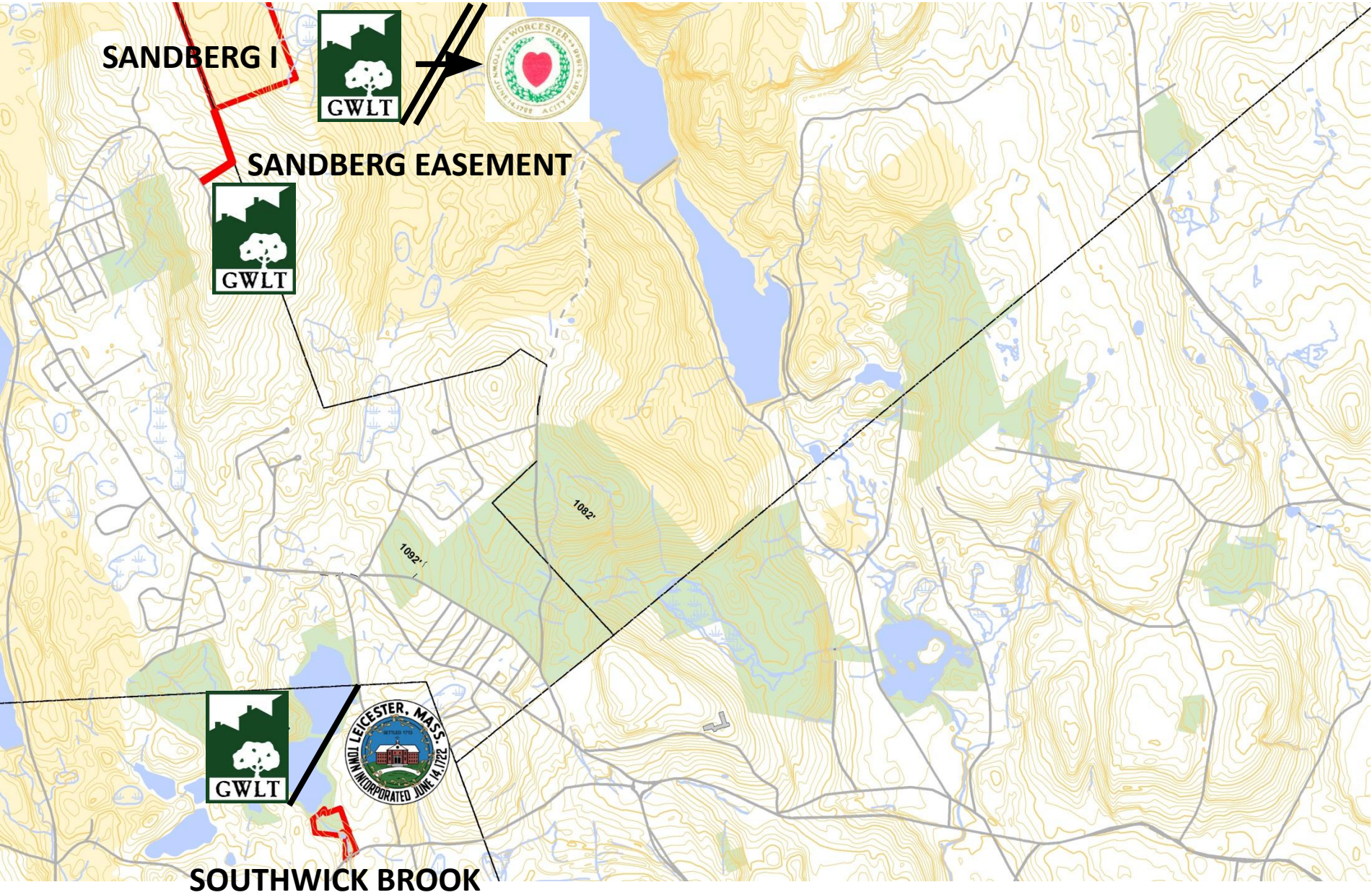
2008...



2009



2010



SANDBERG I



SANDBERG EASEMENT

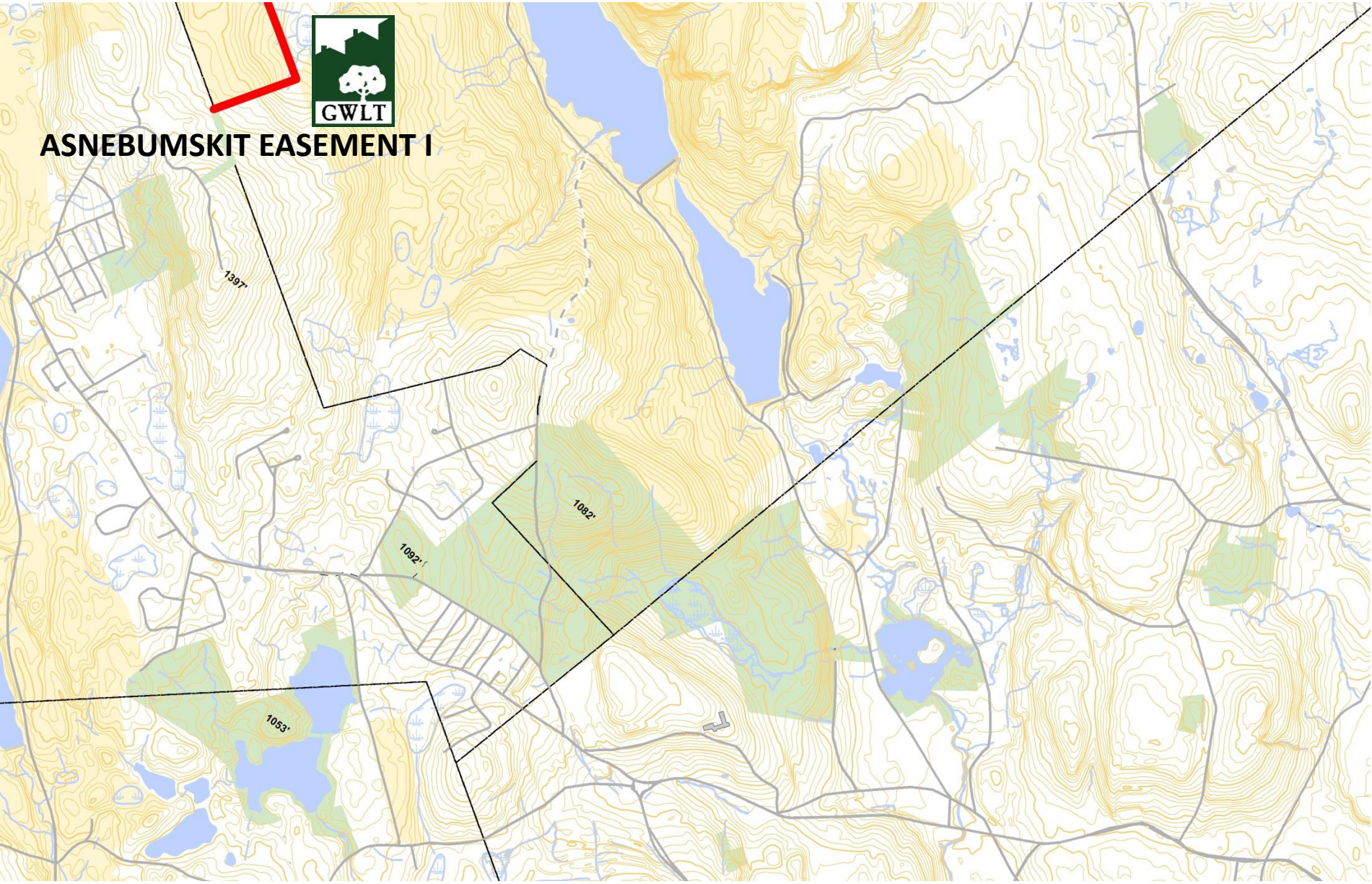


SOUTHWICK BROOK

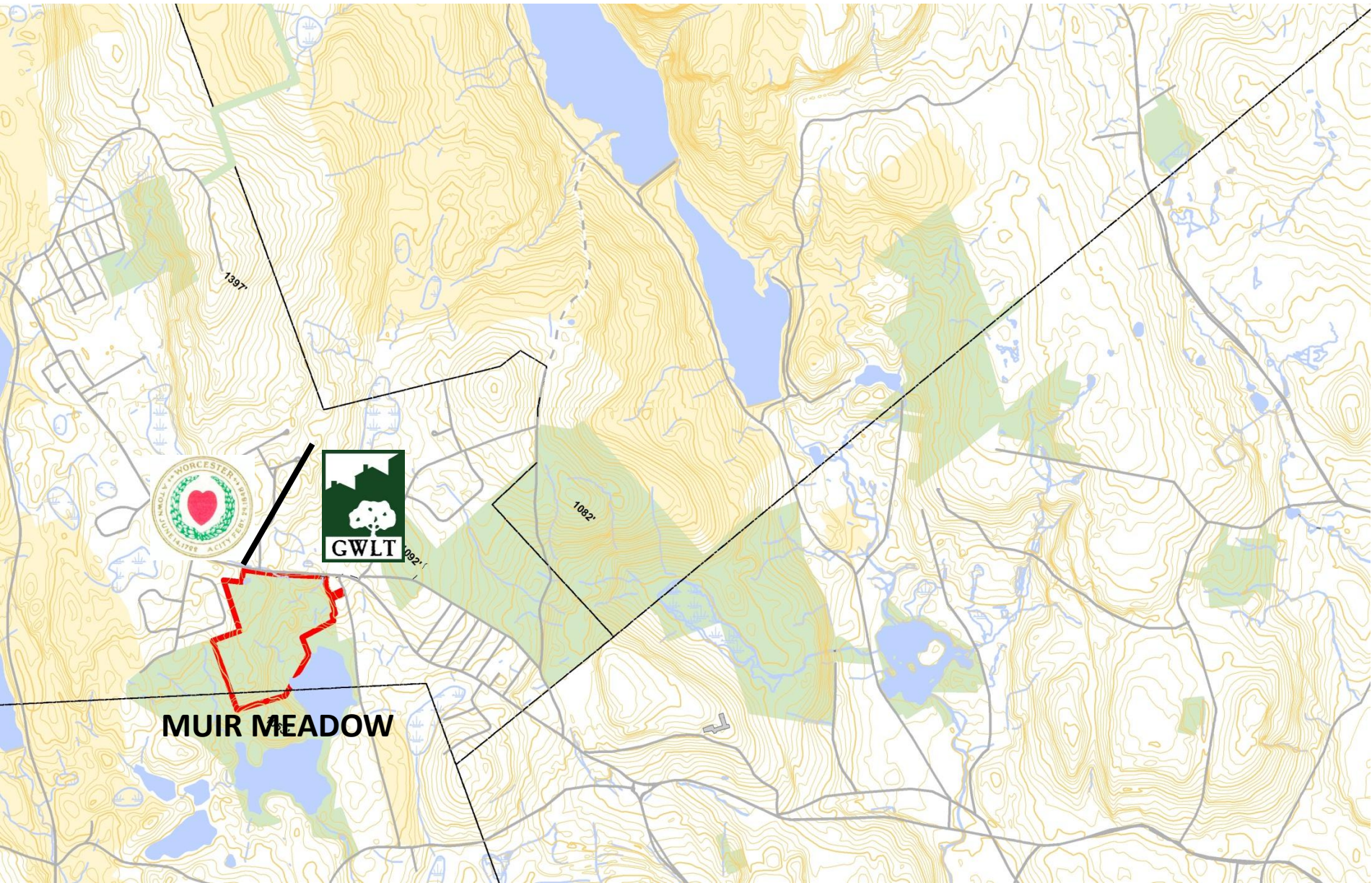
2011



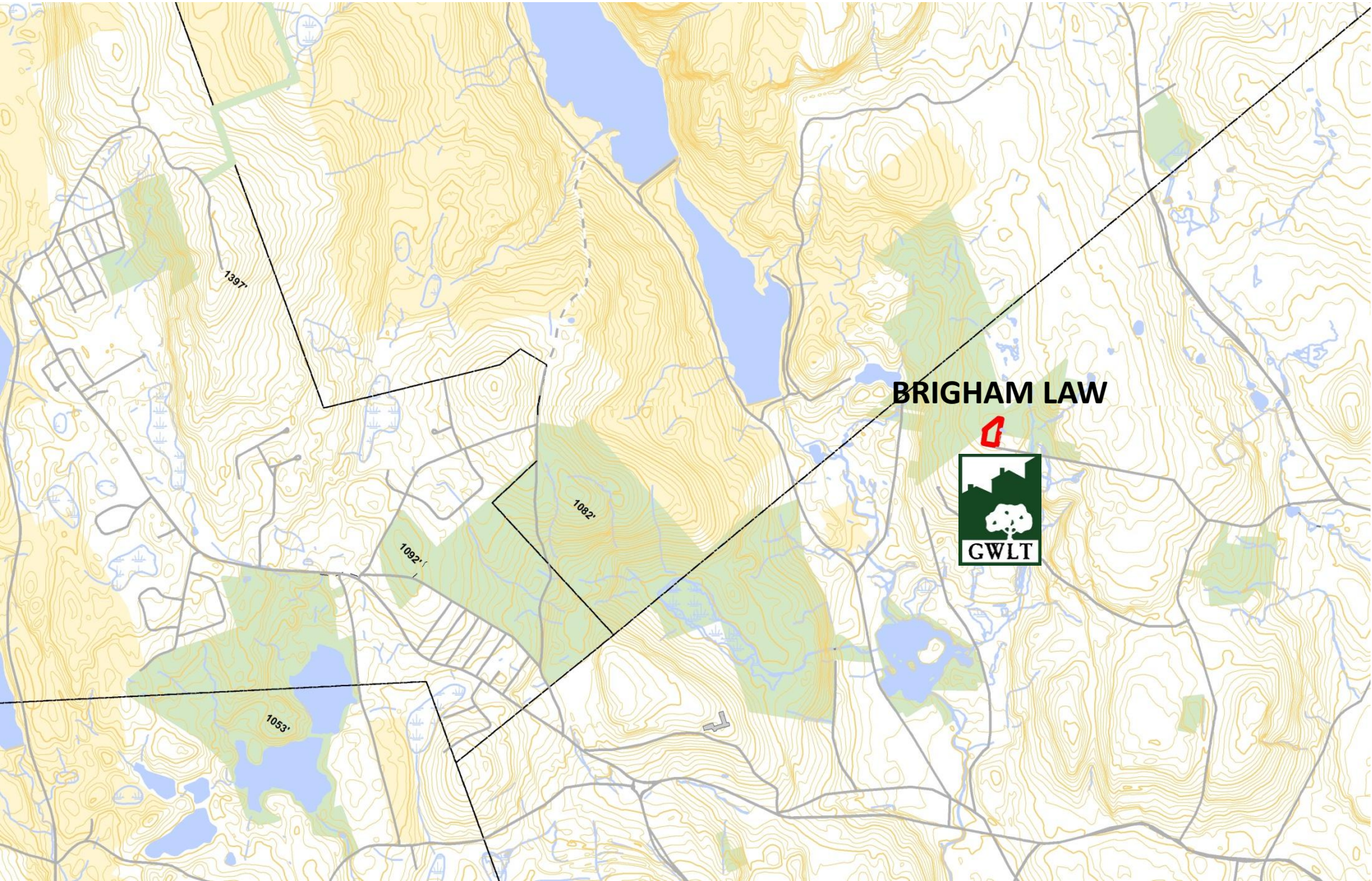
ASNEBUMSKIT EASEMENT I



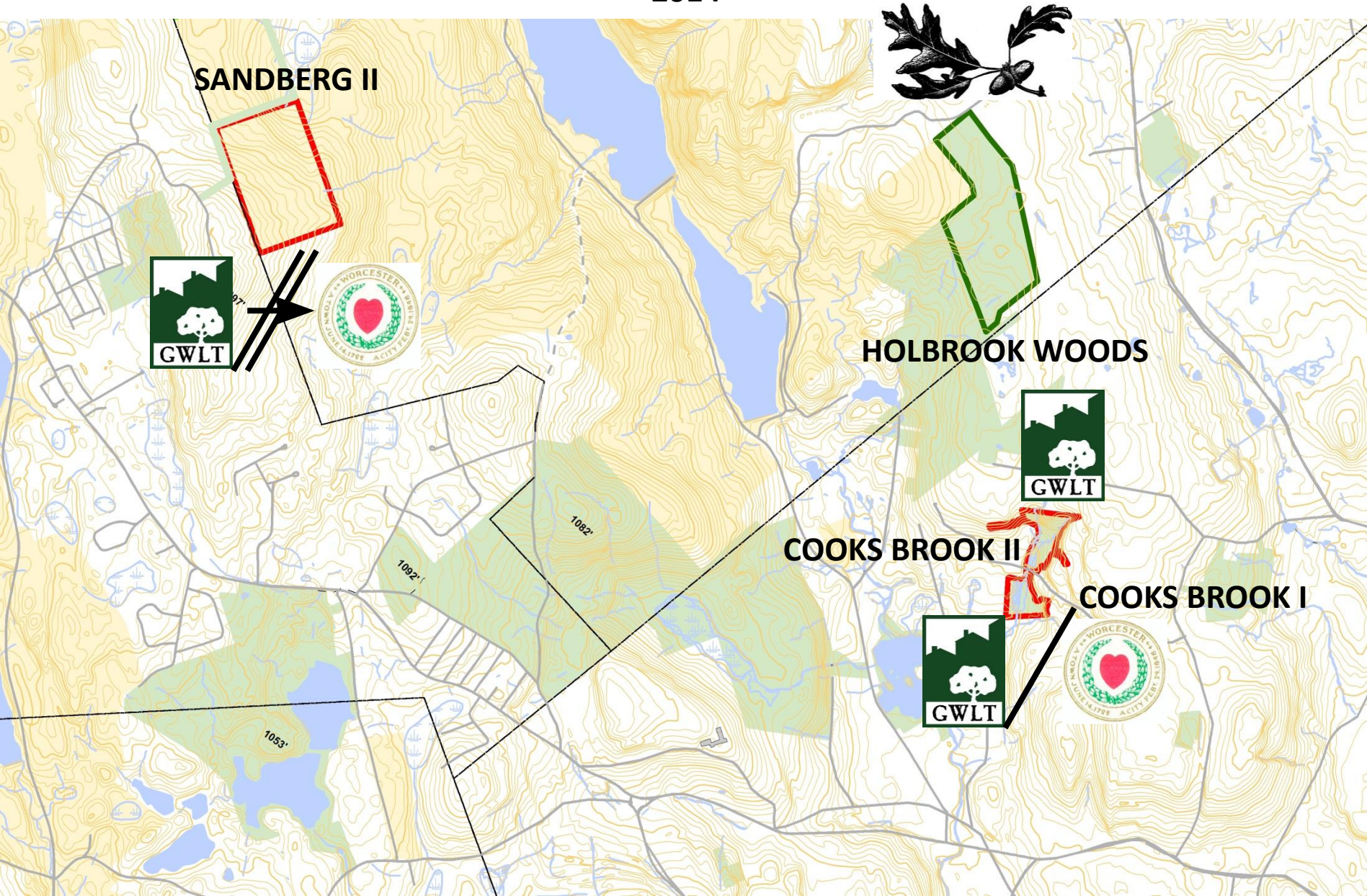
2012



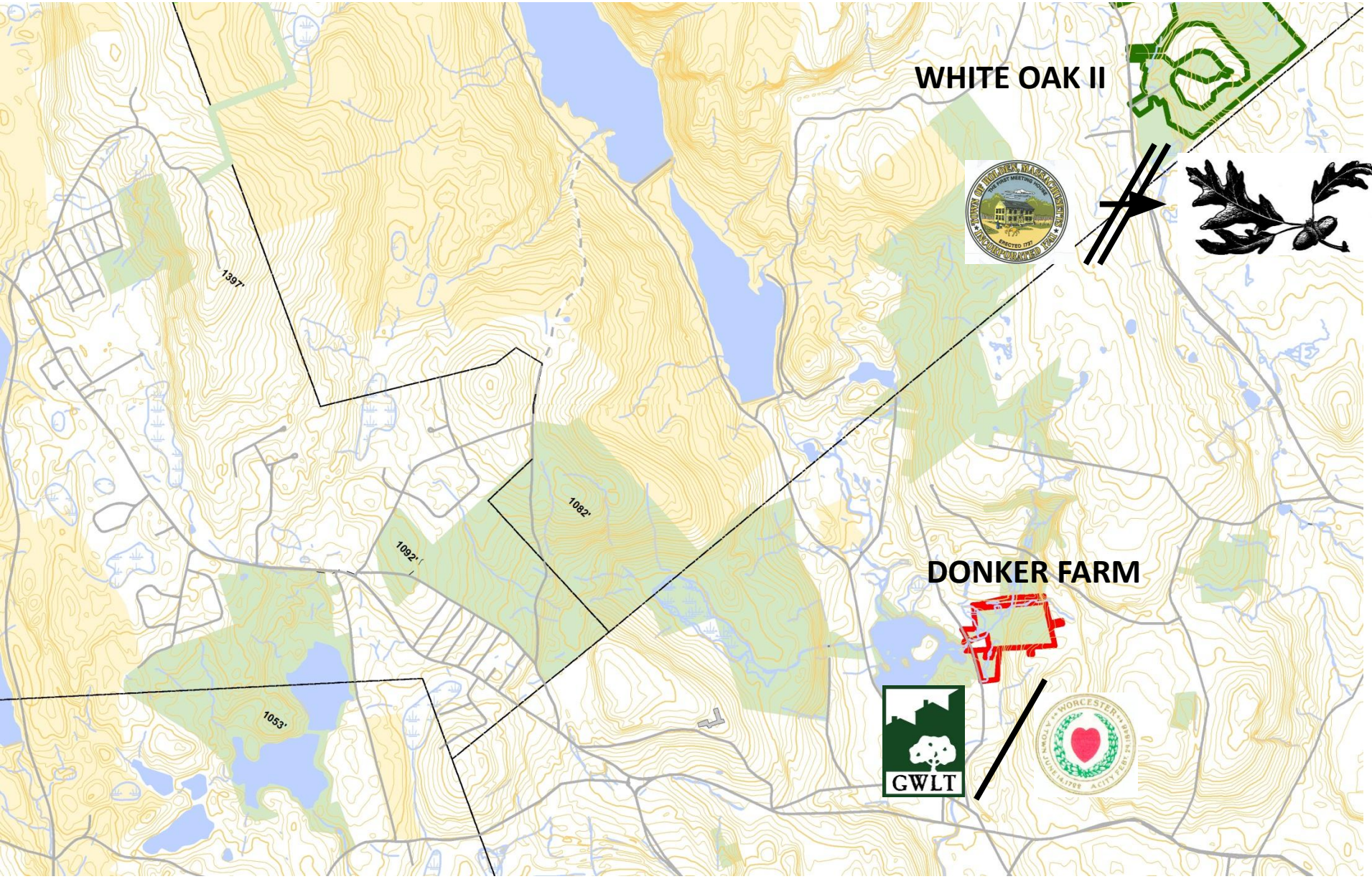
2013



2014



2015



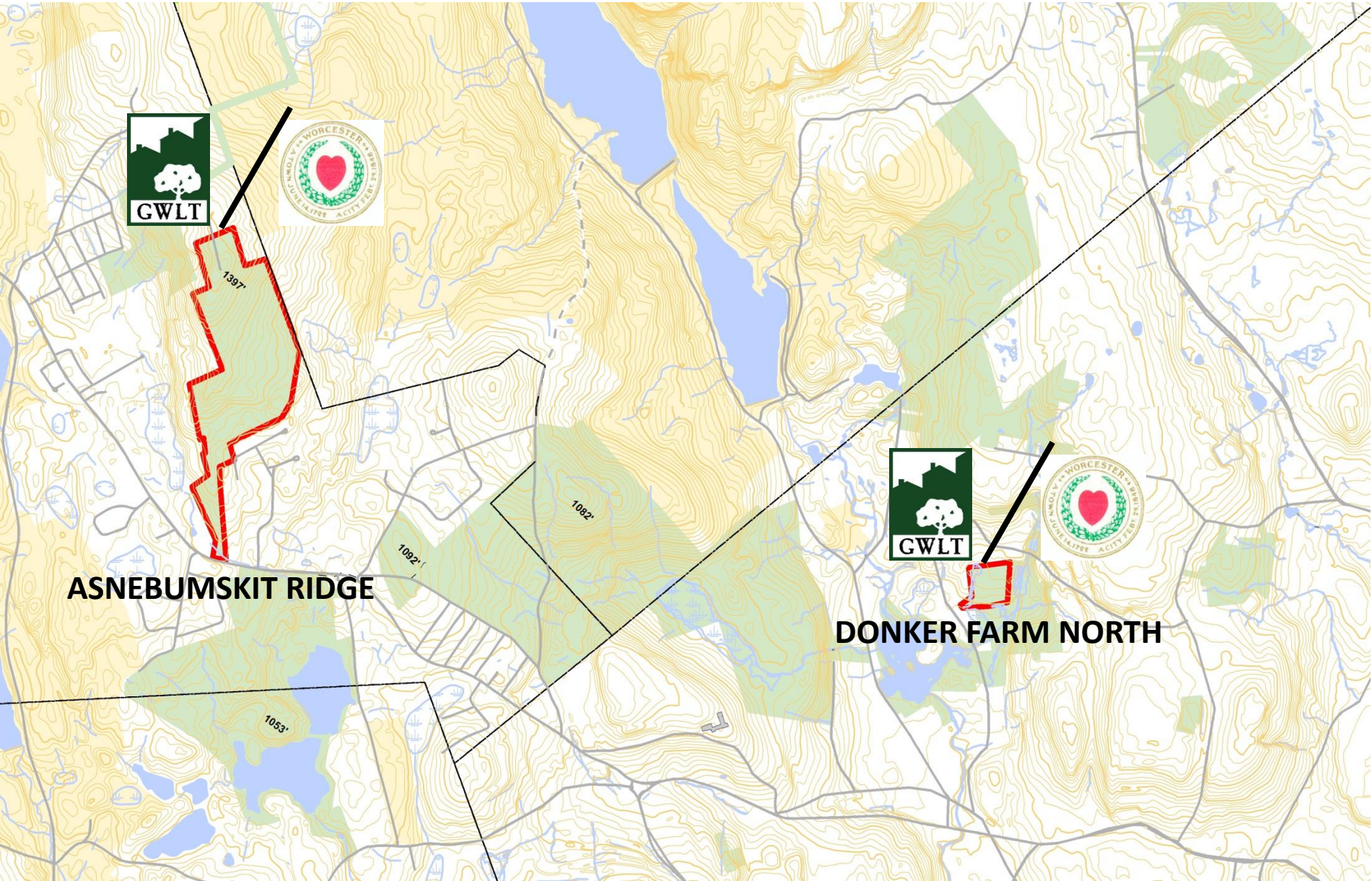
WHITE OAK II



DONKER FARM



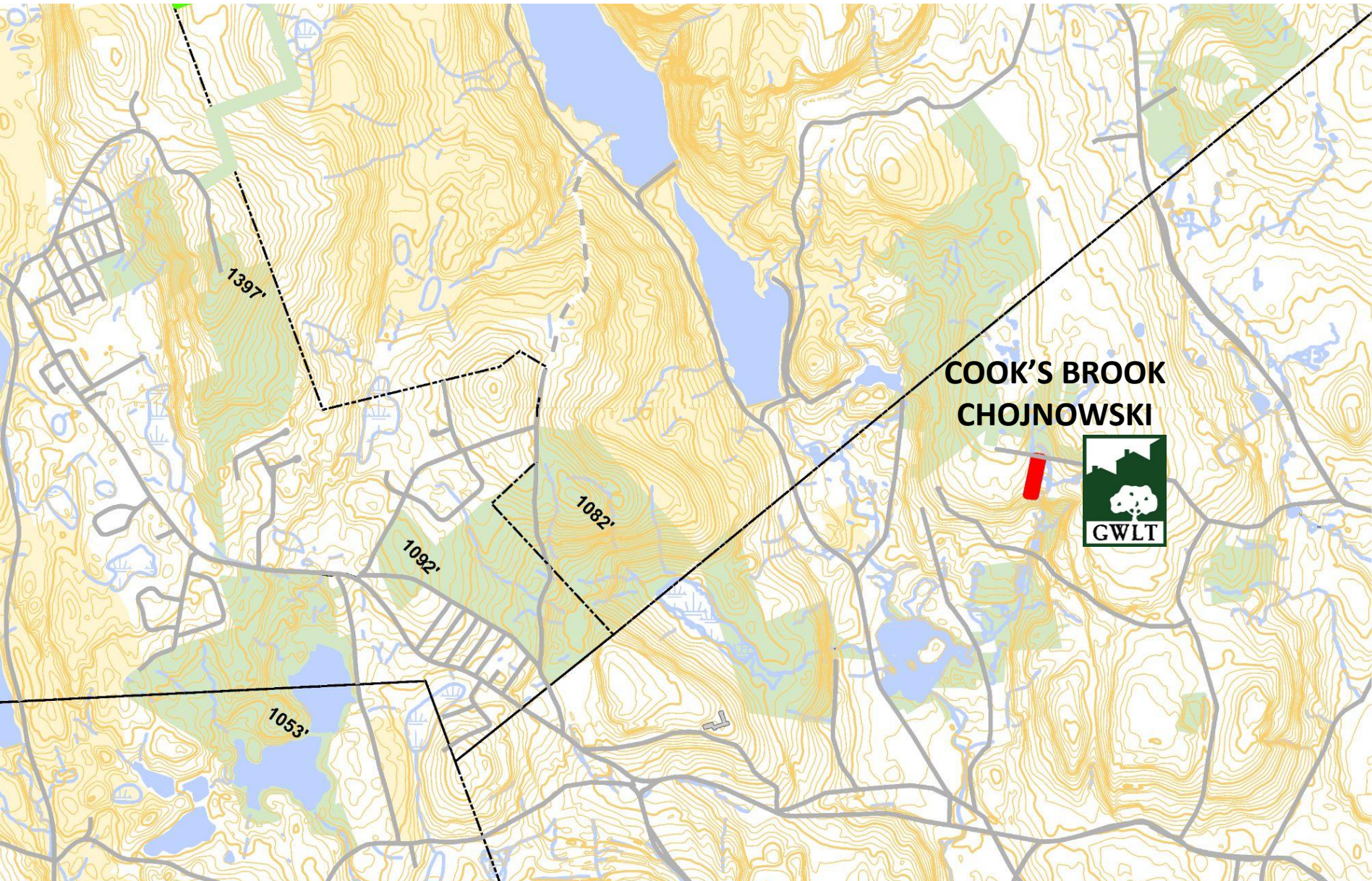
2016



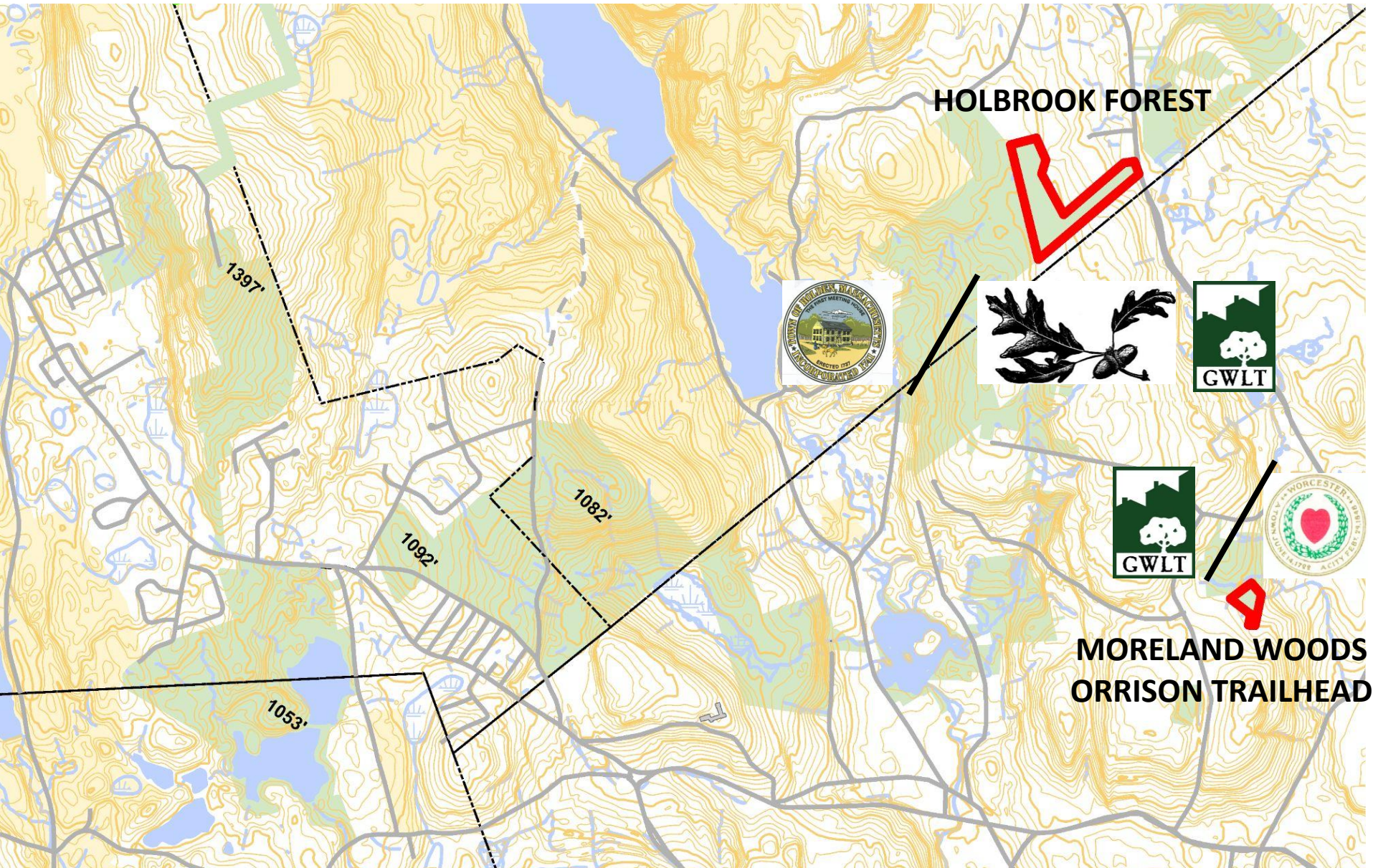
ASNEBUMSKIT RIDGE

DONKER FARM NORTH

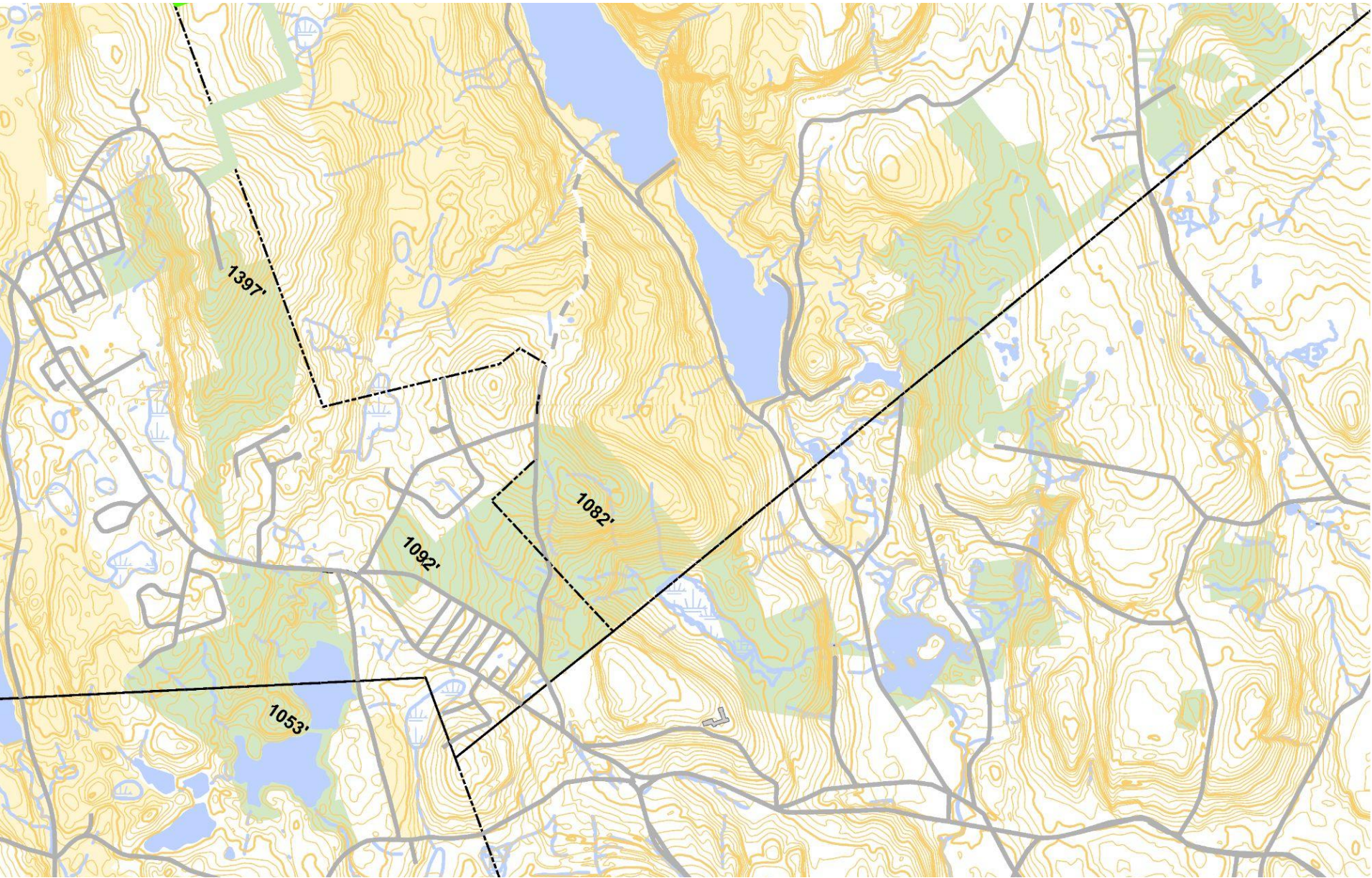
2017



2018



2019...



2020



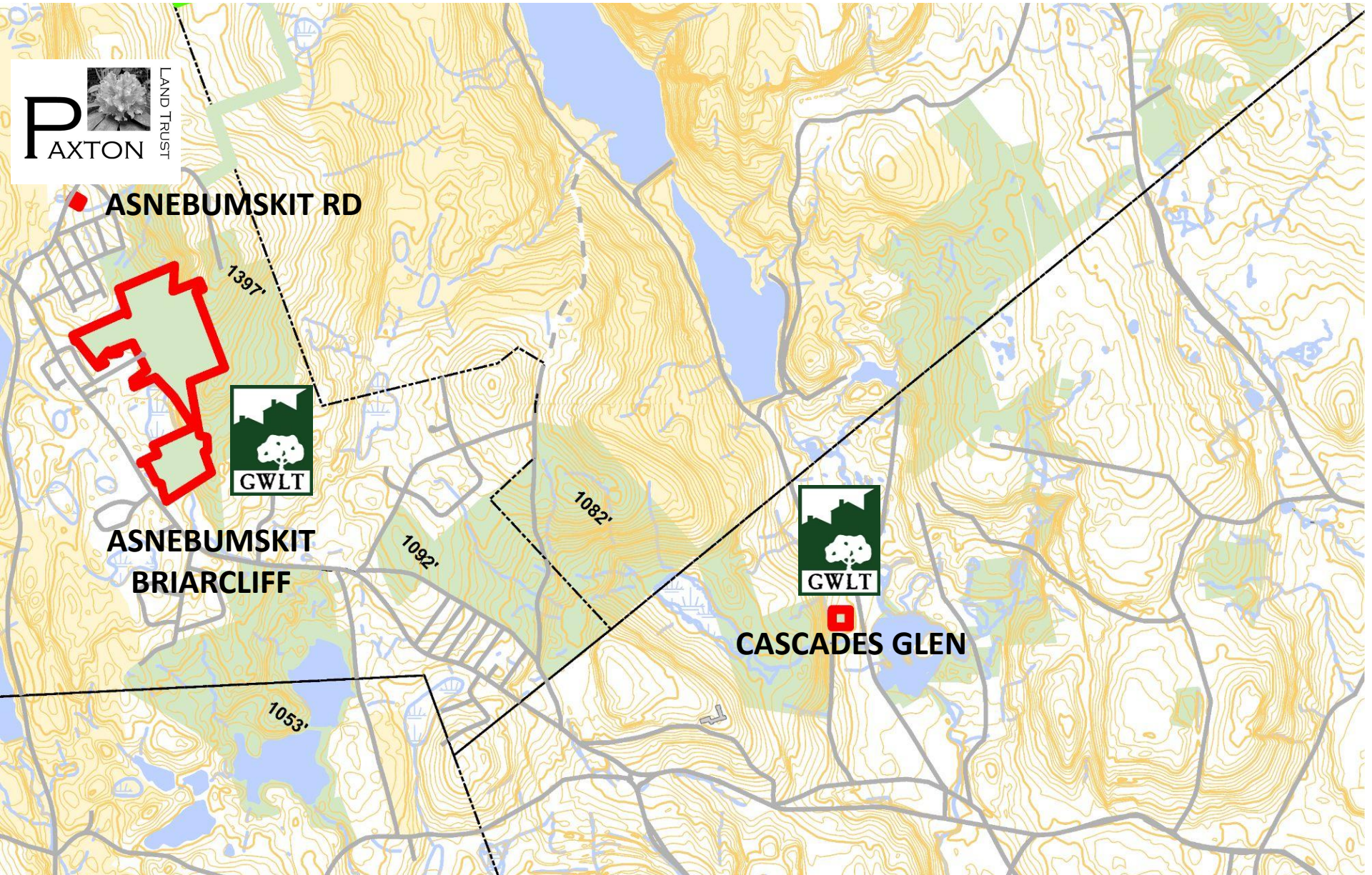
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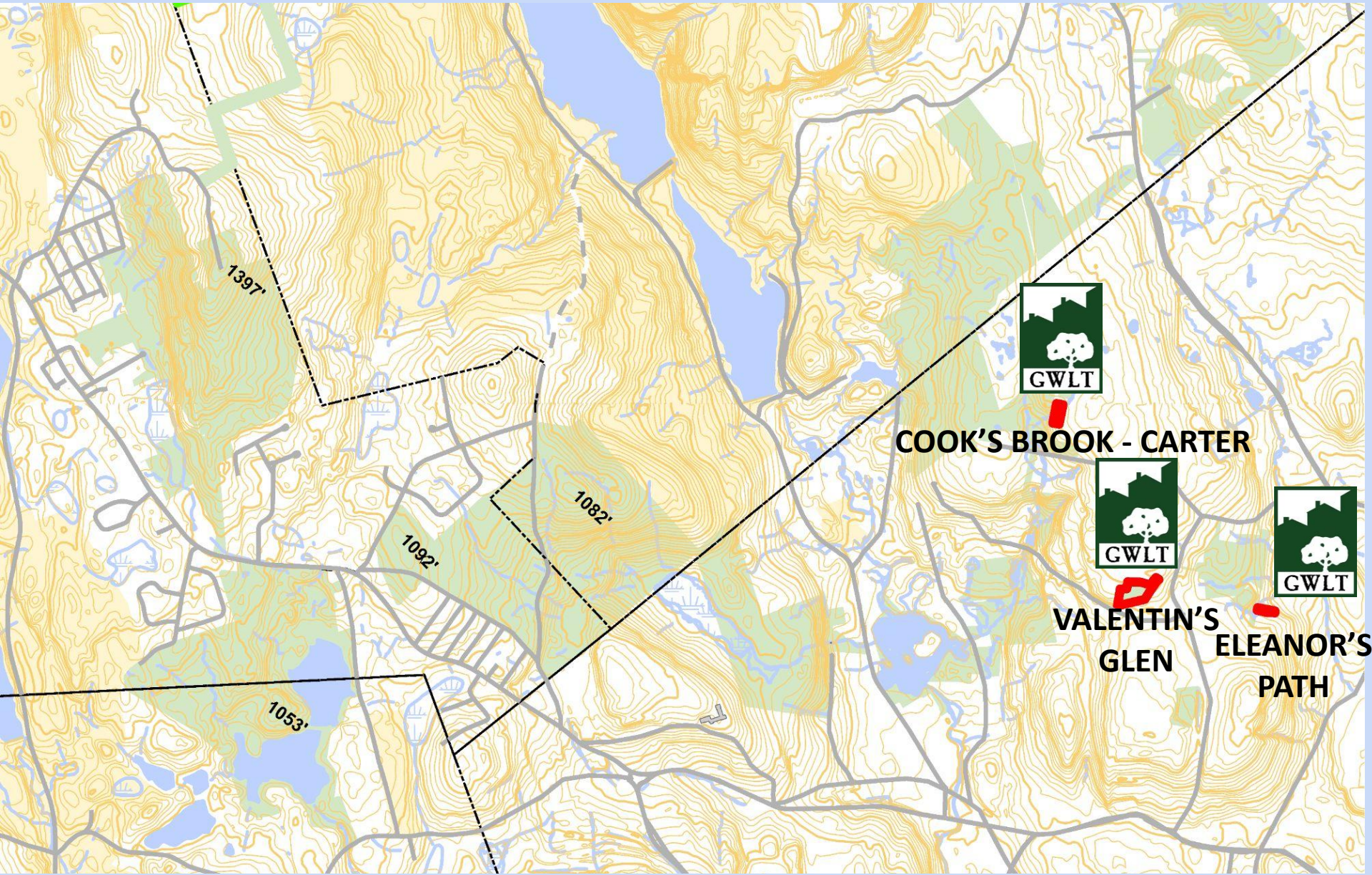
ASNEBUMSKIT
BRIARCLIFF



CASCADES GLEN



2021



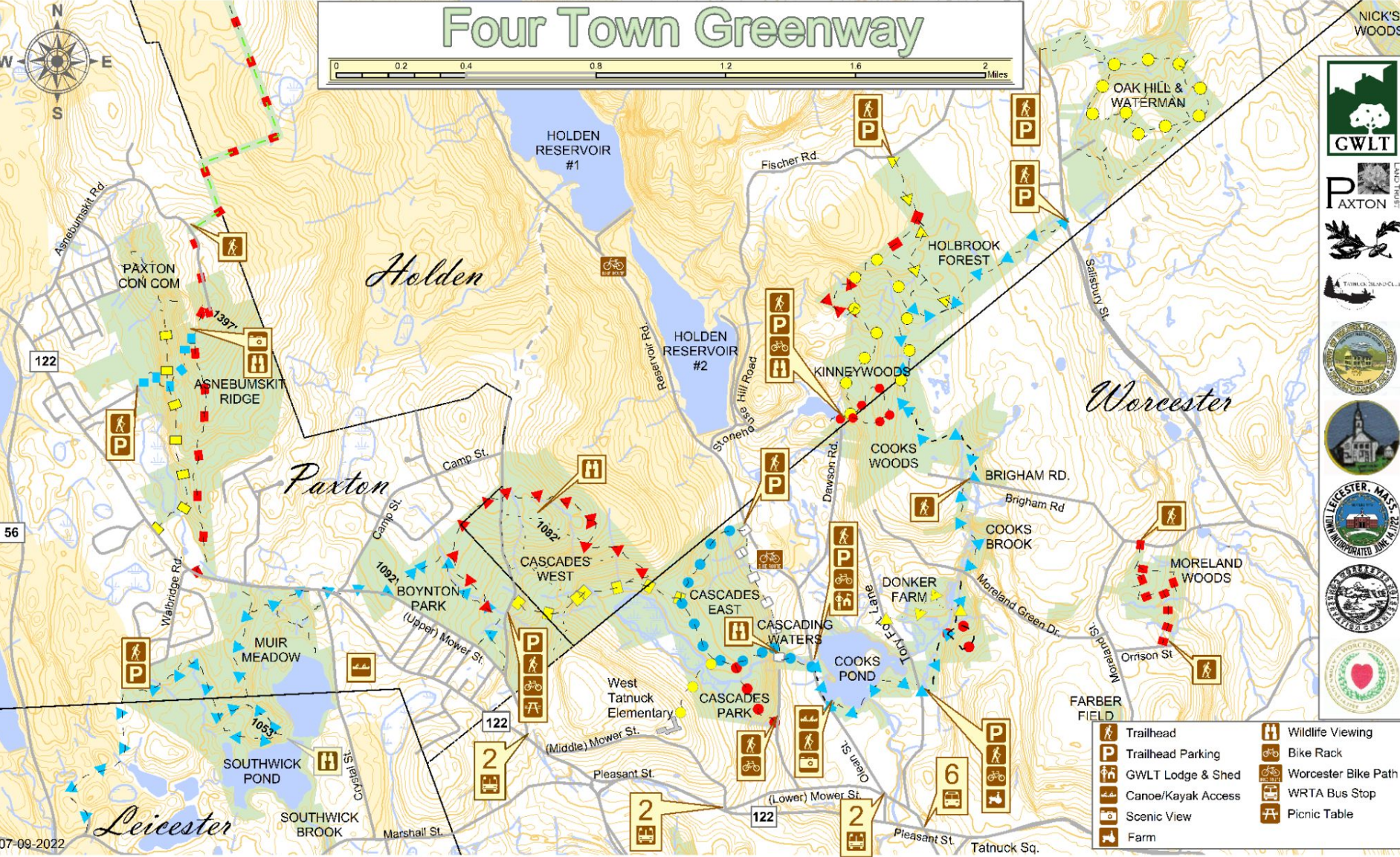
COOK'S BROOK - CARTER

**VALENTIN'S
GLEN**

**ELEANOR'S
PATH**

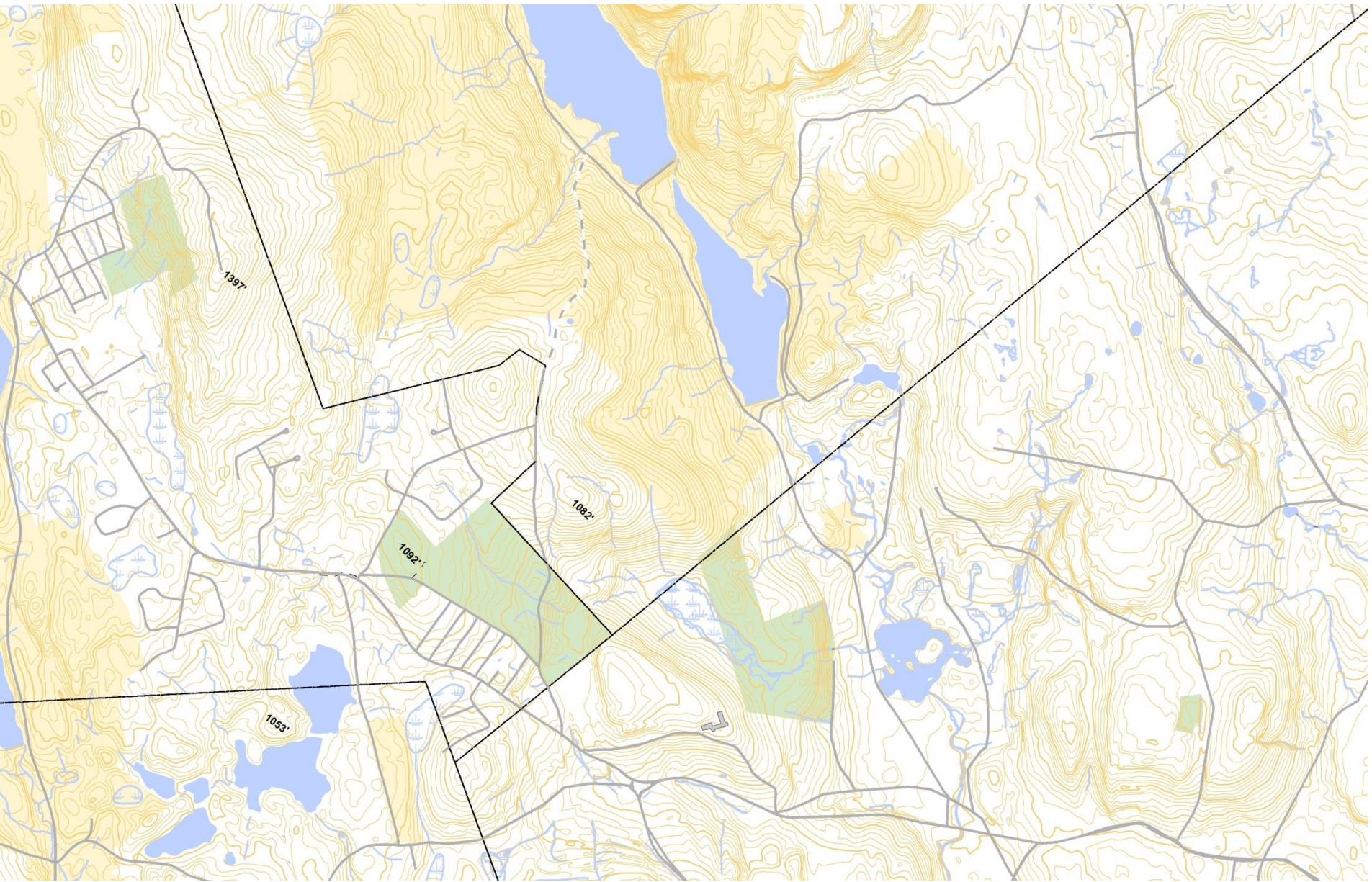


Four Town Greenway

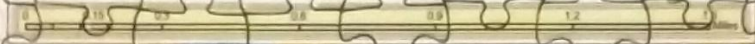
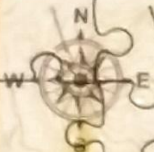


- Trailhead
- Trailhead Parking
- GWLT Lodge & Shed
- Canoe/Kayak Access
- Scenic View
- Farm
- Wildlife Viewing
- Bike Rack
- Worcester Bike Path
- WRTA Bus Stop
- Picnic Table

1989



Four Town Greenway



- Trailhead
- Trailhead Parking
- GWLT Lodge & Shed
- Canoe/Kayak Access
- Scenic View
- Farm
- Wildlife Viewing
- Bike Rack
- Worcester Bike Path
- WRTA Bus Stop
- Picnic Table

So.... Where Next?

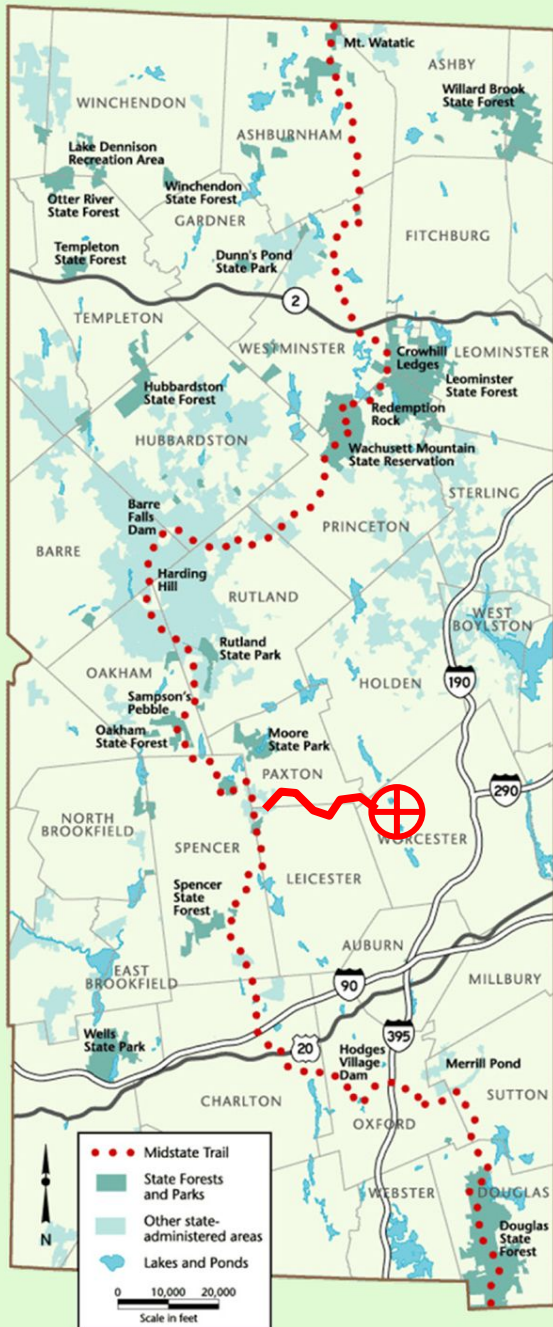
The Massachusetts MidState Trail

Inter-State Hiking Trail

92 miles

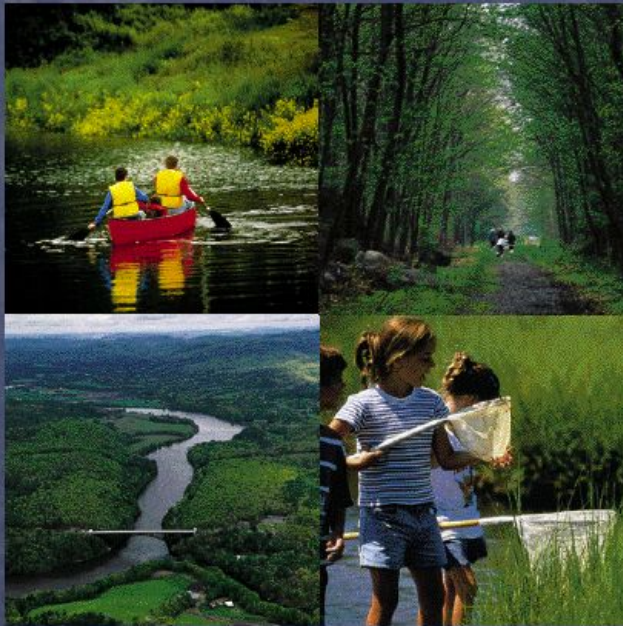
From RI North - South Trail to Narragansett Bay
To NH Wapack Trail to Mt. Wapack

A Project of the Worcester Chapter of the Appalachian
Mountain Club



COMMONWEALTH CONNECTIONS

A greenway vision for Massachusetts



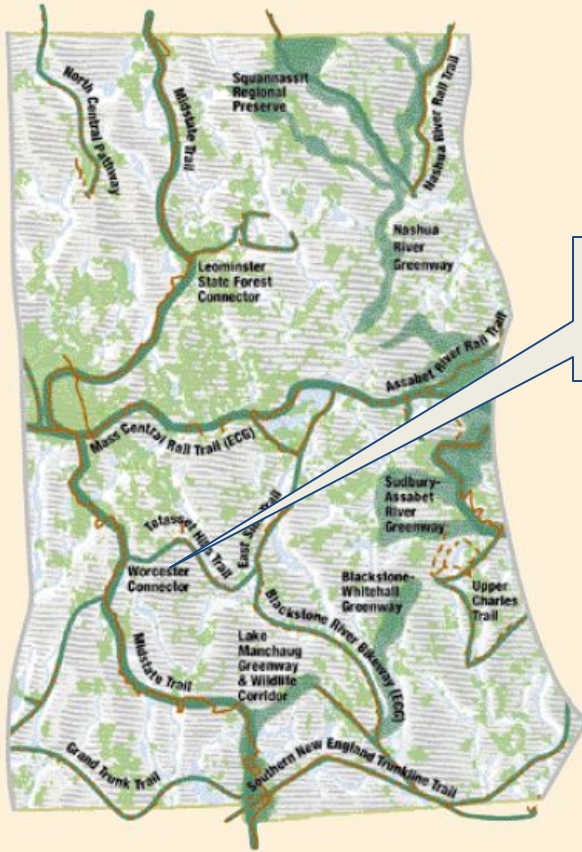
Department of Environmental Management

3 Strategically link important natural and human communities.

Greenways serve to connect people and places. They connect natural areas to each other and to the places people live. By “assembling” greenway corridors that follow linear natural features and incorporate unique ecological and historic resources, we can at once protect these special places and weave them into a unified greenway system. Together, these networks have far greater ecological value than the individual resource areas, and are often more interesting and accessible for public recreation. These connections, in turn, can help build a larger greenway constituency committed to the protection and stewardship of our natural and cultural resources.

- Develop a competitive grant program to support regional initiatives that connect population centers to the Massachusetts greenway and trail network.

Central Massachusetts



Worcester Connector



View of the Blackstone River from Lookout Rock. In this region, increasing development pressures are threatening critical resource areas. (John Pikusinski)

From the summit of Mt. Watatic to the floodplain of the Blackstone River, this diverse region encompasses rich agricultural lands, an abundance of rivers, ponds and man-made waterways, historic villages and the urban centers of Worcester, Leominster and Gardner. Amidst a patchwork of publicly held lands, unique natural features such as Wachusett Mountain, Wallum Lake and the Blackstone and Nashua rivers help to define the character of the region. Equally important is the region's heritage as a major industrial center.

“Advocates have called for protection and development of existing trails as “spines” of a region-wide trail network and for making these trails more accessible by linking them with population centers.”

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Worcester Trails — Blazing urban trails

In Worcester, a number of paths and walkways lead to historic sites, scenic views and a rich variety of park



View of Worcester skyline from the East Side Trail. (Colin M.J. Nonsck)

lands, including Elm Park the nation's oldest public park. While these urban gems are a source of pride for the city, many are viewed as neighborhood rather than regional resources.

The Regional Environmental Council

(REC), in partnership with the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Greater Worcester Land Trust, private landowners, educational institutions and volunteers, hopes to change this perception.

Starting with existing paths that feature one or more of the city's parks, the REC is mapping and blazing paths and greenways with a consistent symbol to visually connect each to the next. The East Side Trail, a 3.5 mile section of this proposed network, leads hikers past Bell Pond, a unique glacial feature, through blueberry thickets, an oak savanna, open fields, and past the shores of Lake Quinsigamond. The trail also connects places of historical significance, including the remnants of an abandoned coal mine shaft where 19th century entrepreneurs once attempted to launch a local coal producing industry.

Worcester Trails supporters hope to expand the system of trail blazes to city streets and sidewalks throughout the city and beyond.

CITY OF WORCESTER
MASSACHUSETTS
WORCESTER DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS & PARKS



OPEN SPACE &
RECREATION PLAN
UPDATE 2021



Weston & Sampson

GOAL 7: IMPROVE OPEN SPACE SYSTEM CONNECTIVITY

There is a strong desire to achieve a higher level of connectivity between assets within the City's park and open space network in order to enhance public recreation opportunities and benefit. Residents have a vision of being able to traverse long distances through open space properties and along travel ways that have park-like characteristics.

Objective 7d | Trail System Upgrades

Explore trails connectivity within and between open space assets.

Objective 7e | Land Purchases

Explore purchasing or acquiring the rights to lands with the express goal of improving and expanding connectivity between open space assets.

Work with the Greater Worcester Land Trust, as their representatives continue to have a keen sense for ways to expand the City's inventory of protected sites that provide environmental benefit and opportunities for connectivity (the linking of disparate park and open space properties).

GWLT and Mass Audubon, in partnership with the City, are committed to seeking opportunities to preserve unprotected open space assets and enhance the existing ones through new contiguous acquisitions in order to provide expanded opportunity for public use and enjoyment, wildlife habitat protection, and watershed protection. In many cases, these lands merge into other City-owned lands (that are under the ownership of various departments including Conservation Commission and Department of Public Works & Parks) to create impressive strings of connected public open space.



Connection Focus Area

