

Local Food and Agriculture

**An Element of *Sustainable Berkshires*,
Long-Range Plan for Berkshire County**

Adopted 3.20.14



SUSTAINABLE BERKSHIRES
Community Strategies For A Sustainable Future

Sustainable Berkshires is a project of the
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission.



**Berkshire
Regional
Planning
Commission**

The work that provided the basis for this publication was supported by funding under an award with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The substance and findings of the work are dedicated to the public. The author and publisher are solely responsible for the accuracy of the statements and interpretations contained in this publication. Such interpretations do not necessarily reflect the views of the Government.



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Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation—Green Pastures Fund Grant

Town of Great Barrington/Great Barrington Agricultural Commission

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
The Local Food System.....	1
The Berkshire “Foodshed”	2
Food and Agriculture through the Sustainability Lenses	3
The Planning Process	7
Local Food and Agriculture Vision.....	11
Achieving the Vision.....	11
1. Land Access and Availability	13
Farmland and Farmers.....	13
Key Issues and Opportunities	15
Goals, Policies, and Strategies	19
2. Food System Infrastructure	21
Local Food Supply and Demand.....	21
Plant and Tree Products.....	26
Animal Products.....	31
Other Products	36
Key Issues and Opportunities	36
Goals, Policies and Strategies	38
3. Healthy Food Access	43
Food Insecurity in Berkshire County.....	43
Key Issues and Opportunities	48
Goals, Policies and Strategies	49
4. Farmer Education, Networking and Support.....	53
Municipalities and Agriculture.....	53
Key Issues and Opportunities	55
Goals, Policies and Strategies	56

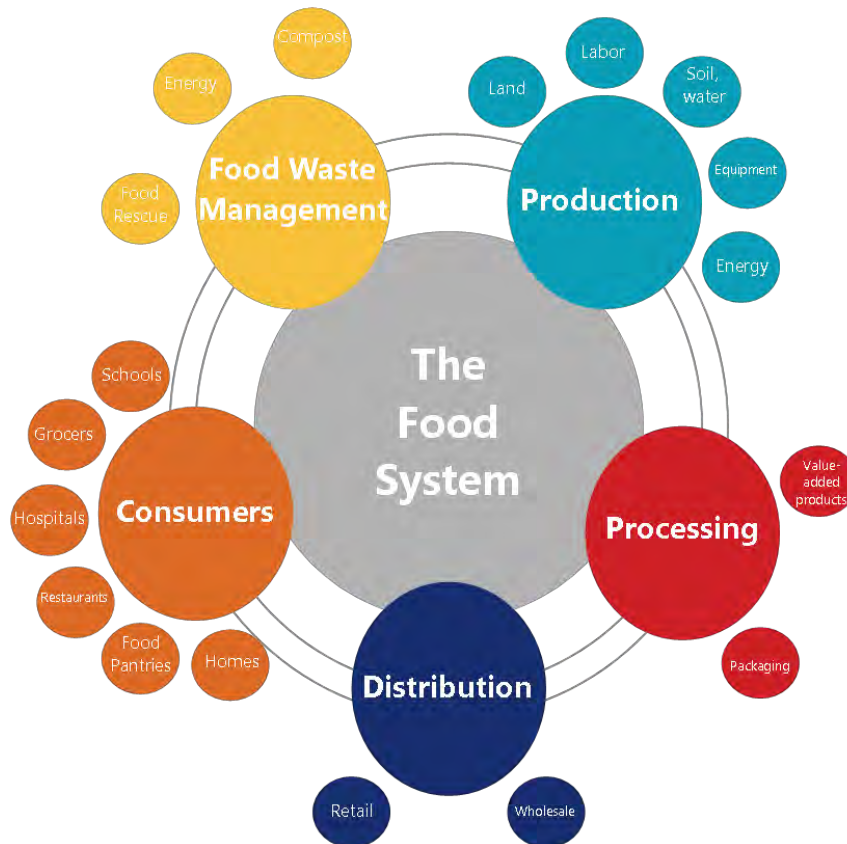
INTRODUCTION

A regional food system is a food system in which food production, processing, distribution and consumption are integrated to enhance the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of a particular place. The Berkshires have a long history of agriculture and have experienced a new influx of interest in farming as a profession and in the local food movement in general in recent years. Supporting a robust local food system has the potential to support economic development, health and wellness and retain the landscape and rural character valued by residents and visitors alike. This Element looks at existing conditions of the Berkshire region's food system, identifies challenges to the food system's sustainability and sets forth goals, policies and strategies for strengthening the regional food system into the future.

THE LOCAL FOOD SYSTEM

A food system is the path food takes from soil (farm) to soil (compost). In a local food system, all of these components are within the same area versus a commercial food system where production and processing are done elsewhere before being shipped. While some products may always need to be shipped in, for example most recognize the Midwest has a natural advantage to produce grains and certain crops require warmer climates, such as mangoes, bananas and coffee, a local food system model seeks to maximize the amount of food that is produced and consumed within the same geography.

Figure FA1: The Food System

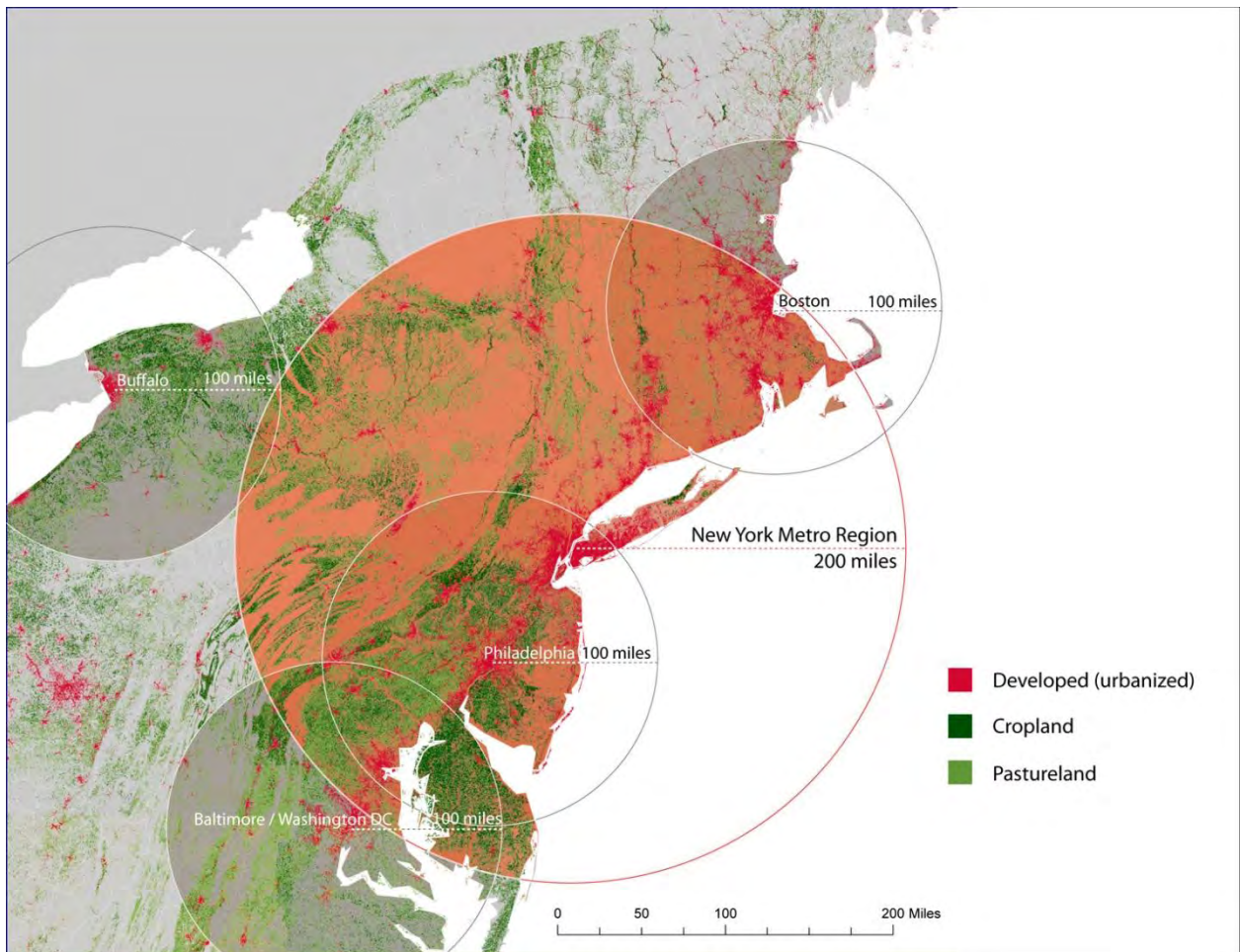


Source: Recreated by BRPC from Wholesome Wave diagram originally created January 2012

THE BERKSHIRE “FOODSHED”

Before discussing local food, one first needs to define what “local” means. There are many definitions, usually distinguished by a geographical distance. The distance required varies by the number of people to feed and the amount of agricultural land available nearby. In the rural Berkshires, agricultural lands are literally next door and there are relatively few people to feed. A study by Williams College students showed that the region has the capacity to feed itself (see callout box). There they defined the “foodshed” as the county geography. The term foodshed is a play on the watershed concept and refers to the geography from which an area could draw in enough food to sustain its population. A Keep Berkshires Farming survey of Berkshire residents tend to think of “local” as coming from no more than 50 miles away, which can capture portions of New York, Connecticut and Vermont as well as the Pioneer Valley.

Figure FA2: Foodsheds of Major Metro Areas in the Northeast



Source: Columbia University

The region, however, is also part of other areas’ foodsheds; the density and population of the New York metro area put their foodshed draw area at 200 miles, capturing all of Berkshire County.

Berkshire Foodshed Analysis: Could the region grow enough food to feed itself?

Students from the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies conducted a foodshed analysis of the Berkshires in 2010 and found that, while the region currently does not have enough land in production to support itself, it does have the additional land capacity to do so. They estimated the region to have 83,611 acres of farmland available, which could be brought into production. Different diets require different amounts of land to support them. For example, raising animals for meat requires more land for grazing plus additional land for hay and feed production whereas a relatively small plot is needed to produce a high volume of vegetables. Calculations of the amount of land per person by different diet types are shown in Table FA1, and are translated into how much of the available land would be need to be bought into cultivation in order for the region to be able to feed itself locally. According to these calculations, the region would be able to feed itself on all diet types other than the heavy meat diet.

Table FA1: Farmland Required for Different Diets

	Acres	%of Total Land in County	% of Available Potential Farmland
Total Land Area (Berkshire County)	593,093		
Total Potential Farmland Available	83,611	14%	
Vegan Diet/Soil Sustenance (4,000sq. ft/person)	11,979	2%	14%
Vegetarian Diet (.5 acre/person)	65,229	11%	78%
Light Meat Diet (.6 acre/person)	78,275	13%	93%
Heavy Meat Diet (2 acre/person)	260,916	43%	312%

Source: Foodshed analysis and its relevance to sustainability. Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems. Peters, Bills, Wilkins, and Fick. 2008; Berkshire County Foodshed Analysis, Emigh, Raduazo, Durant, Williams College CES student paper, 2010

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE THROUGH THE SUSTAINABILITY LENSES

The food and agriculture system of the Berkshire region contributes to regional identity and wellness. Farms provide habitat to support biodiversity, scenery that contributes to the tourist economy, and a tie to our region's history and sense of community. In distressed neighborhoods, a community garden or meal site can provide important linkage to health, nutrition and community support.

A robust, sustainable food system is a collaborative network integrating production, processing, distribution, consumption and waste management in such a manner to enhance the environmental, economic and social health of a community or region. In a multi-year effort, the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Glynwood, Inc. led a comprehensive evaluation and analysis of the Berkshire region food system based on Glynwood's Keep Farming methodology. Through this effort, called Keep Berkshires Farming, existing conditions, challenges and opportunities in the Berkshire food and

agriculture system were identified by teams of volunteers interacting with Berkshire food system stakeholders:

Economic Development

A vital food and agriculture system enhances regional resilience, partly through its role in the regional economy. The Berkshire food and agriculture system contributes to the regional economy in the following ways:

- **Service and Goods:** Berkshire farmers require goods and services to produce food, and this expenditure is partially spent in the Berkshires, supporting local businesses and workers. Farmers surveyed via Keep Berkshires Farming spend at least \$3,244,450 on all goods and services related to their farming operation, with only \$539,350 being spent in the Berkshire region. On the other hand, \$2,705,100 is spent outside of the region. Extrapolating, the 225 additional farms identified via Keep Berkshires Farming spend an additional \$6,886,804 on goods and services. If farmers were able to spend a greater share of this money locally, it would contribute to the regional economy by supporting local businesses and services.
- **Grow Local, Shop Local:** Most Berkshire farmers sell a majority of their product within the Berkshire region, and many sell their product through small, local businesses. Locally grown and locally purchased foods keep money in the Berkshires. Residents report spending \$290,123,600 weekly on food. With scaled up production and increased purchase of local food, a greater proportion of this figure would stay in the Berkshire region and contribute to the regional economy.
- **Tourism and Recreation:** Food tourism and Agritourism represent a growing interest in the Berkshires and beyond, and the region stands ready to benefit from this national trend through the “Taste Berkshires” initiative. The Berkshire Visitors Bureau and the Berkshire Farm and Table organization have jointly formed this initiative, which will market the restaurants, inns and specialty food stores that grow and serve locally grown food in the region to major markets such as New York City. Already, the region is home to acclaimed restaurants and specialty food stores that serve local food, contributing to the overall appeal of the region as a travel destination. Agritourism is already an opportunity that Berkshire region farms have benefited from, offering activities on their farms that go beyond food production for the recreation and enjoyment of visitors. Visitors are also attracted to the Berkshires landscape, and farmland is an important component of the region’s scenic character.
- **Education, Career Development and Job Training:** The food and agriculture system offers opportunity for education, career development and job training through existing kindergarten through high school districts, vocational/technical schools, institutions of higher education and non-profit organizations. Mt. Everett High School, for example, has an active Future Farmers of America Club for high school students, along with a culinary program for students interested in investigating or pursuing cooking or hospitality careers, while Undermountain Elementary School has a gardening club for lower and middle school students. The Railroad Street Youth Project pairs aspiring chefs with established chefs through its Culinary Arts Program. One day a week, after school, students work with award winning chefs such as Brian Alberg of the Red Lion Inn to learn skills necessary for gainful employment in area restaurants. At the end of the semester, students have the opportunity to plan and prepare a gourmet tasting menu to showcase their skills. Members of the program go onto successful careers in the culinary arts, including entry into premier culinary arts programs such as the Culinary Institute of America. Area farmers and food based businesses make a significant contribution to the local and regional economy by offering employment opportunities in the agricultural industry. In addition, some farmers in the region also offer apprenticeship style training opportunities, such as Dominic Palumbo of Moon in the Pond Farm in Sheffield.
- **A Growing Sector:** The industry sector of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting was one of six sectors to experience an increase in the number of establishments between 2011 and 2012, growing from twenty-seven (27) to thirty (30) establishments. Average monthly employment figures in this sector also experienced growth—from 175 to 183 between 2011 and 2012. Keep Berkshires

Farming is listed a priority project in the 2013 Berkshire CEDS Annual Performance Report, consistent with Goals 1 and 2 of the 2011 CEDS. Through addressing food system infrastructure challenges, Keep Berkshires Farming seeks to increase the amount of food produced and consumed in the Berkshire region. This in turn would augment capital and potentially increase the number of jobs. Currently there are barriers within the Berkshire local food and agriculture system. These include the absence of a central body or location for the aggregation and distribution of products, the absence of a nearby, accessible and commercial scale value added processing facility, and the absence of a centrally located, accessible and USDA certified meat slaughter and processing facility. These capacity deficiencies impede the viability of small-scale, commercial farming in the Berkshire region, and impede scale increases in production and sales, hence limiting overall economic potential.

- **Cross-cutting Opportunity:** Berkshire farmers want to produce more, and Berkshire residents want to buy more local food. A lack of regional processing infrastructure offers opportunity for new business development, and opportunities for the motivated entrepreneur have already been realized during the Keep Berkshires Farming planning process: a nursery owner in the central Berkshire region identified the lack of a commercial processing facility in the region, and has started a commercial kitchen with facilities and equipment available for rental by farmers and processors. Expanding production, expanding availability and expanding access could expand opportunity for Berkshire residents through greater access to the benefits of local food, including health and nutrition, especially for children. Childhood hunger, for example, can have negative consequences on childhood development and learning, which can impact educational attainment and workforce productivity.

Social Equity and Access

A vital food and agriculture system contributes to regional identity, health and wellness. Access to healthy, fresh and local foods for all residents, regardless of income or stage of life enhances regional resilience and sustainability through the following ways:

- **Food Security:** A region able to produce and distribute food to its residents is less vulnerable to outside shocks or influences manifested in the food and agriculture market, such as an increase in fuel costs resulting in an increase in food costs, or a battle of political wills resulting in dramatic cuts to federal food assistance programs.
- **Food Access:** A sustainable food system is one that provides access to healthy and fresh foods for all residents regardless of income or stage of life.
- **Nutrition and Health:** Access to healthy and fresh foods directly links to some of the public health issues facing our region, including obesity and diabetes. In terms of wellness, fresh food ripens longer and gets eaten more quickly, allowing a gain in taste and nutritional advantage. Critics of the conventional food system point to the public health impacts of large scale or industrial agriculture, which has resulted in an abundance of food options that are cheap and easy but may be short on vitamins, nutrients and healthy fiber or protein due to the amount of time they are in storage and shipping. Critics also point to the transmission of harmful diseases to consumers facilitated by some conventional, industrial agriculture practices. Some of the environmental impacts of industrial scale farming may have other public health impacts as well, such as nitrogen or phosphorous loading into public water supplies.
- **A Productive Use of Space:** Community gardens or urban agriculture offer a productive use of vacant land, and can help provide connections between residents and community organizations.
- **A Regional Support Network:** Non-profit organizations, churches, civic groups, schools, and other institutions work to enhance access to and awareness of fresh, locally grown foods, through a variety of means. These groups are challenged in terms of financial and staff capacity but meet a critical need in the region.



Agricultural land on Baldwin Hill in Egremont. This view is permanently protected via APR and exemplifies the dual value of agricultural land in the Berkshires, in both productive value and scenic value.

Minimizing Environmental Impact

A robust regional food and agriculture system minimizes regional environmental impacts through:

- **Fewer Food Miles:** Local food travels an average of 50 miles from farm to table, compared to an average of 1,500 miles for conventional foods. The local food choice impacts energy use and climate emissions through shorter distance travelled.
- **A Land Ethic and Best Management Practices:** Farms in the region use a range of practices to manage the land and produce the best possible yield for market - from conventional to bio-dynamic. Low lying river valleys tend to have prime agricultural soils but are also key riparian habitat areas. Through the state and region, there are opportunities for farmers to learn new ways to manage their land and their crops for the health of the community, environment and land.
- **Eyes on the Farm:** When asked why they choose to purchase local foods, residents frequently ranked the statement “I care about how and where my food is grown” as a very important reason. The rise of industrial agricultural production has brought with it greater unknowns about how our food is grown and what is in our food when we buy it. When we do find out how some food is grown or raised, or how some animals are brought to slaughter, we are often left looking for better choices locally. In a local food system, the relationship between farmer and consumer is immediate and helps build understanding. In our region, farmers rely heavily on the local market to sell their products. If consumers are consistently choosing the local or organic product over the conventional product, or buying from one farm over another because they want to support one set of farm practices versus another set, consumers better

understand agricultural practices and farmers may be more likely to try new methods of farming that meet consumer demand.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Keep Berkshires Farming

The Food and Agriculture planning process differs slightly from other elements of the Sustainable Berkshires plan. Regional findings and trends were collected through a volunteer-driven effort called “Keep Berkshires Farming”. Keep Berkshires Farming is a community-driven initiative aimed at supporting and strengthening local agriculture to build a strong and healthy regional food system (see callout box). This planning process engaged a diverse set of stakeholders in gathering and analyzing data to understand current supply and demand dynamics within the local food system. The data collected and analyzed informed both the regional goals and policies and local strategies to support a vibrant agricultural economy. The planning process included all thirty-two Berkshire communities working in three sub-regional groupings: South, Central and North, each which had their own perspective planning process and time table. See Keep Berkshires Farming callout box.

Food and Agriculture Subcommittee

Representatives from organizations with a focus on food businesses, farming, farm services or programs, or health were invited to participate in a short-term subcommittee to help develop the Local Food and Agriculture Element of the plan. Members were in some cases active volunteers in one of the Keep Berkshires Farming subarea working groups. The committee met once to review background information and develop and refine goals, policies and strategies, twice on goals and policies, and a fourth time to discuss implementation.

Regional Panel Series

A monthly panel series was held from January–April of 2013 to bring experts and case studies on major policy areas that had risen to the top in the planning process: slaughter, value-added processing, food hubs, and getting more local food served in schools and institutions.

Figure FA3: Flyers from Regional Panel Series



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming

Regional Food and Agriculture Meetings

Volunteers worked with Glynwood and BRPC staff to organize and host a final public meeting to unveil each local area action plan and dovetail the discussion as to which of those local priorities needed a more regional approach. This helped pull out and prioritize the actions needed within the regional plan

as opposed to the more localized action plans. Three meetings were held, one in each subregion with approximate 50-55 people attending each meeting.

Consortium

Given the duration of the planning process for Keep Berkshires Farming, the consortium received several update presentations throughout to let them know the methodology and findings. They also received the draft element for final review and comment before approving the element content and forwarding it to the Commission.

Commission

Once the Consortium had approved the plan contents, it was brought forward to the Commission for review and approval.

Keep Berkshires Farming

The Keep Berkshires Farming Process was underway for three years as teams of community volunteers from across the region worked through a grassroots-driven planning process to gather data and set strategies for supporting local agriculture. This effort was guided by the agricultural non-profit Glynwood and the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission but owes its success to the countless volunteer hours that went into the meetings, surveys, and events.

Glynwood and Keep Farming®

Glynwood is 225-acre diversified farm and education center located in Cold Spring, NY. In support of their mission to support small farms, they developed the Keep Farming® community planning process to empower communities to understand the role of farming in their local community and economy and then develop strategies to help support continued farming.

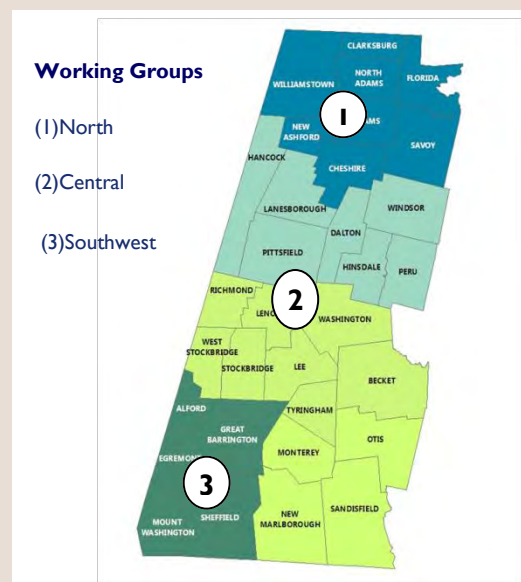
The Keep Farming® methodology differs from other planning processes in the following key ways:

- **Provides local data to the community that is not otherwise available:** The most recent Agricultural Census data is from 2007; the data collected through the Keep Farming® process is local and stays with the community.
- **Involves diverse stakeholders throughout the process, including farmers:** Stakeholders represented a wide range of interests in the regional food system, and the participation of farmers helps secure buy-in for goals, policies and action items for implementation.
- **Supports the agricultural economy by connecting producers to local markets:** Community forums and farmer dinners created networking opportunities for all members of the regional food system.
- **Communities develop their own strategies to support farms in their area by choosing tools and actions most appropriate to their situations:** This is important in terms of securing community support and buy-in for implementation, but also in terms of tailoring action plans to address specific, localized issues.
- **Community based process creates relationships and dialogue that result in implementation:** The local process with diverse stakeholders builds on community assets and networks, helping to create new relationships and strengthen existing partnerships for implementation.

From Keep Farming® to Keep Berkshires Farming

Glynwood worked with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission to modify the Keep Farming methodology from a community- to regional-scale initiative that addressed the entire food system. This meant changing the sequence of meetings, number and function of committees, and adding in new food security and health surveys and content. This flexibility allowed the Berkshires to craft an approach to best meet their needs and reflect the interests of the volunteers and community as expressed in kickoff meetings.

The county was divided into three regions (see map, right), with volunteers from each area working together through the keep farming process.



Keep Berkshires Farming Process

Volunteers from each subregion worked, with the support of Glynwood and the BRPC, through an 18-24 month process of data gathering, public meetings, farmer outreach, and strategy development.



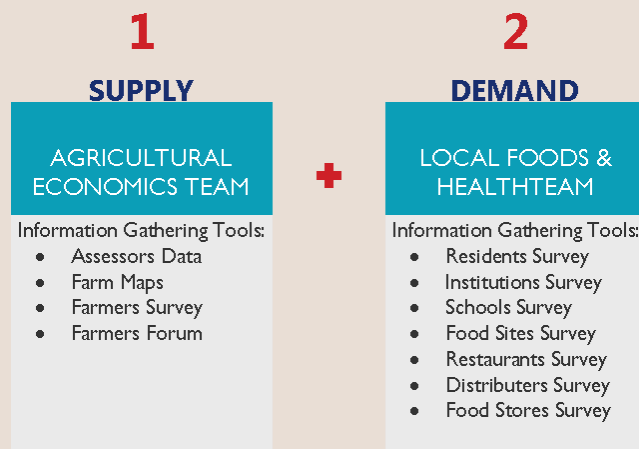
Volunteers

At the outset of the project, community conversations focused on the reasons volunteers wanted to contribute their time to the project. Some common motivations, which also help illustrate the range of people involved in the process, included:

- Old and new farmers wanting to ensure conversations on the subject represented their interests in an accurate way
- Old and new farmers who believe in their products and know some of the regulatory, market, and infrastructure challenges facing small farmers
- Desire to see local agriculture better represented in economic development discussions
- Commitment to community health and a belief in slow foods and whole foods
- Businesses that know the market potential of local food and want to see more food available
- A belief that local food is an essential component of long-term local resiliency in the context of climate change and transitioning energy landscape
- An understanding that both hunger and poor nutrition are health challenges in our communities
- A love of the rural landscape and natural environment and a desire to see farms remain a prominent feature of that landscape
- A love of all that is local in the Berkshires, including its yummy food!

Two Teams

Original data was gathered using a variety of survey, map, and interview tools in order to enhance knowledge of local food production and distribution with the aim of improving market connections. This was achieved through the hard work and dedication of community volunteers working in two teams to gather existing and original data on supply and demand dynamics within the local food system.



From Data to Policy

Each of the three subregions compiled their data and then worked as a group and with the community at the community forums to develop strategies they'd like to pursue to help strengthen farming in their area. These data and strategies are contained in the Action Plan for each subregion. From these strategies and larger regional discussions of needs and scale, the goals, policies, and strategies for this regional plan element were drawn.

LOCAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE VISION

Vision: Berkshire County has a resilient local food system that includes a full spectrum of economically viable farms offering a diverse range of products. The community supports its farmers both as neighbors and as businesses, purchasing their food for consumption at home, school, or out to eat. Successful farm businesses are part of the region's sustainable economy, keeping more money in the economy from local spending. Regional investment in value-added infrastructure has also enabled farmers to increase production and profits. Farmers continue to care for the productivity and health of the land and community by employing best practices for soil, water, habitat, and biodiversity. Eating local, healthy foods is promoted through education, networking opportunities, and economic development activities. It is also made possible for those of limited income or mobility to access more healthy food options at affordable prices to foster a hunger-free community.

ACHIEVING THE VISION

1. **Land Access and Availability:** Farming and forestry, first and foremost, requires land. Land prices in the region have skyrocketed in recent decades. This section looks at the supply of land and strategies for keeping and adding land in productive use for years to come.
2. **Food System Infrastructure:** The profitability of small farming can be greatly augmented by the ability to get products to market, particularly value-added products such as meat, cheese, and frozen or canned goods. Missing links in the business or physical infrastructure can create barriers to market. This section reviews current opportunities, barriers to market, and identifies strategies for overcoming those barriers to expand the market potential of local farms.
3. **Healthy Food Access:** Our region, despite local farms and large yards in which to garden, struggles with food insecurity. Nationally and locally the number of people struggling to put enough and healthy food on the table has increased over the past decade. This section reviews the range of programs currently working to combat hunger and improve health in the region and how we can continue to grow and support them to ensure we take good care of our neighbors now and in the future.
4. **Farmer Education and Support:** Farming is an intensive career that means 24-7 effort for all or the majority of the year. This section identifies ways the community at large as well as different organizational entities can help support farmers by bringing training closer to home, creating networking opportunities to talk shop, and other technical supports for their businesses.

1. LAND ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY

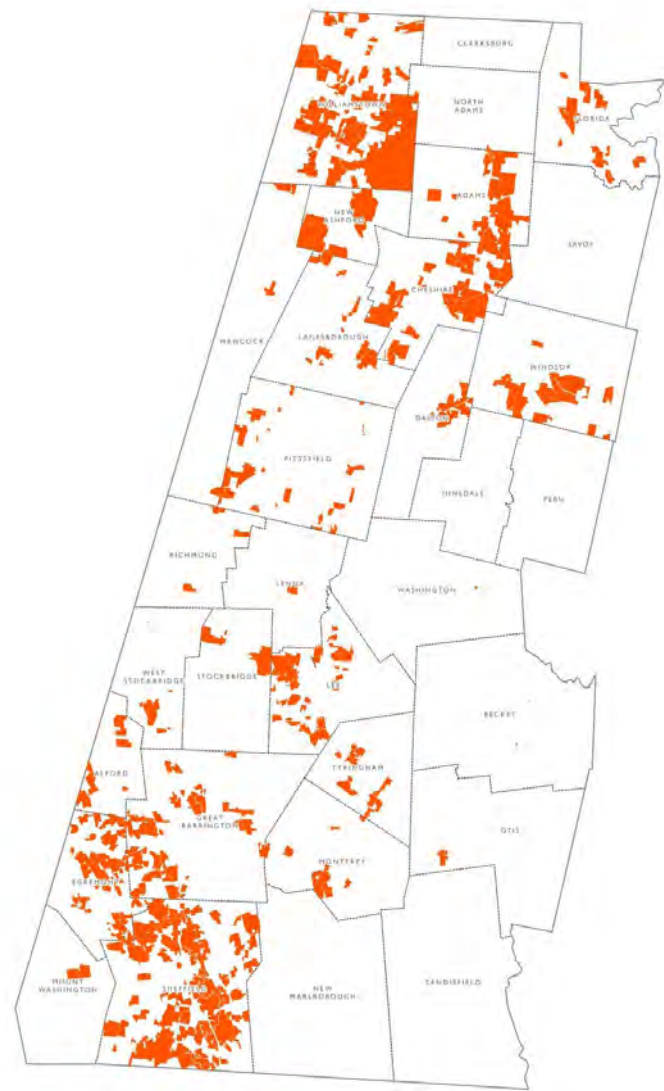
In order to have viable agriculture to support a local food system, the region needs to have farms and ensure that there are opportunities to transition farms to new ownership or start new farms over time. This section reviews the current supply and use of agricultural land and soils in the region, looks at who is currently farming, and then considers what needs to be done to ensure that the region keeps productive farmland in production into the future.

FARMLAND AND FARMERS

Land in Farms

Approximately 59,000 acres, or 9.7% of the entire county land supply, is in some kind of agricultural use. The Agricultural Census reported a 30% increase in the number of farms between 2002 and 2007. While the number of farms has grown, the size has not, with the average farm size decreasing from 191 acres in 1997 to 127 acres in 2007. Farms are generally concentrated in the lowland areas of the Hoosic and Housatonic River valleys where there are more prime and secondary agricultural soils. The two greatest concentrations of farms in the region are the northwest corner (Williamstown) and the southwest corner (Egremont-Sheffield). The most recent agricultural census (2007) reported 522 farms in Berkshire County; 106 of these farms participated in Keep Berkshires Farming by completing surveys and or attending meetings. Keep Berkshires Farming identified and mapped 331 commercial farms in the Berkshire region, a huge start in having a comprehensive farm map. Some communities had a lower participation rate than others and so fewer farms may have been identified on maps. Forestry and non-food producing agricultural operations (such as horse farms) are also likely underrepresented in the Keep Berkshires Farming maps given the food system focus and farmer participation patterns. Farm maps of each of the 32 communities in the Berkshires are contained in Appendix A.

Figure FA4: Land in Farms Mapped Through Keep Berkshires Farming



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming

Farmland Conservation

Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

The APR program through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) is a voluntary program that allows farmers to place their land under a permanent conservation easement to keep it in farming. Farmers are compensated for the foregone development rights of the property and are then eligible for special programs and assistance as APR farms. The program focuses on acquiring easements on farmland with key attributes including prime agricultural soils, which are deemed by US Geological Surveys to be the most productive for crop production. There are 12,421 acres of prime agricultural soils being farmed and only 5.7% of these are in permanent APR protection. The majority of Berkshire farming takes place on 46,578 acres of non-prime soils.

Table FA2: Agricultural Land in the Berkshire Region

	Total	Percent
Total Acres in Agriculture	58,999	
Non-Prime Soils	46,578	79%
Prime Agricultural Soils	12,421	21%
Total Acres Prime Agricultural Soils	43,813	
Currently Being Farmed	12,421	28%
Not Being Farmed	31,393	72%
Farm Acres in APR	8,137	14%
Prime Agricultural Soils in APR	2,497	6%

Source: Mass GIS, BRPC 2013

*See Appendix B for a map of prime agricultural soils and lands in APR

Chapter 61/61a

“Chapter” lands refer to forestry (Chapter 61) and farm (Chapter 61a) properties entered into the program by their owners on an annual basis by verifying they are in agricultural or forestry use in order to receive a reduced tax rate on the land. The program is designed to reduce taxes on agricultural properties to reduce their costs of operation and thereby improve profitability. However, once a property is converted into a non-agricultural use, five years of roll back taxes must be paid and land cannot be sold or taken out of agricultural use until payment is made. This program is a useful tool in keeping land operating costs low for farmers and foresters but also allow non-farming land owners to receive the reduced tax rate if they are leasing their land for agricultural purposes. Currently 42,364 acres are protected in Chapter 61/61a.

Land Trust and Non-Profit Activity

Farmland can also be protected via community and regional land trusts, such as the Berkshire Natural Resource Council (BNRC), the Community Land Trust of South Berkshire, Williamstown Land Trust, or Sheffield Land Trust, through conservation easements or restrictions. Recent efforts of the largest land

trust in the region, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, have made significant strides in conserving agricultural land. While BNRC has expressed a desire to not have to manage physical structures on its land, partnership approaches where a community land trust holds the structures and BNRC holds the land offers much promise. The buildings and land could then be leased to a farmer on a long-term lease arrangement as one way of overcoming escalating land costs. Local land trusts also sometimes work as a bridge partner with the state to help contribute upfront costs to permanently protect land in agricultural use through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program.

Farmers

- **Age and Tenure:** The most commonly reported age group for Berkshire farmers is between 40 and 60 years old, with a median age of 58.3 years. Median age has increased since 1997, when it was 54.6 years, and 2002, when it was 56.3 years. The average number of years spent farming is fifty three years. A majority of Berkshire farms are family run, with very few identified as non-family farms. Farms have been in the family, on average, for 92.4 years. (Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys)
- **New Farmers Entering the Profession:** In the Berkshires, more women are becoming the principle operators of farms, with a 59% increase in woman-run farms between 2002 and 2007, from 81 to 129. The number of young farmers is also growing, exhibiting an increase between 2002 and 2007. This increase included farmers 25 years or younger, as well as farmers 25 to 44 years old. (Source: USDA Agriculture Census, 2007)
- **Farm Size:** The average acreage owned by farmers is 103.1 acres, while the average property farmed is 169.8 acres (including leased land). Many Berkshire farmers rely on leases or other borrowing arrangements to expand the amount of land that they farm. The majority of Berkshire farms are fairly smaller: 35% are between 10 and 49 acres in size, while 31% are between 50 and 179 acres. Only 20% of Berkshire farms are over 180 acres in size, and only 5% are 500 acres or more. (Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys)
- **Labor:** More farmers identified themselves as part-time farmers than full time, and many indicated that if they did not have some kind of off-farm income, whether a full-time or part-time position, their farm operation would not be financially self-sustaining. Many count on family members to help run the farm, and in all sub-regions, the issue of finding qualified, reliable full-time or part-time labor for the farm came up as an issue to continued sustainability of farming operations. Many farmers also noted that mere food cultivation and production is not enough, and they have taken to Agri-tourism activities to attract people to visit their farm as another source of revenue for their agricultural operation.
- **Earnings:** Between 2002 and 2007, average annual income fell by 27%, from \$54,158 to \$39,456. Although average value of farm products sold increased by 15%, average farm income fell by 30% between 1992 and 2007. This may be attributable to high production costs. For example, farmers noted fuel costs to be a challenge, with a 48% increase in fuel expenses between 2002 and 2007. (Source: USDA Agriculture Census, 2007)

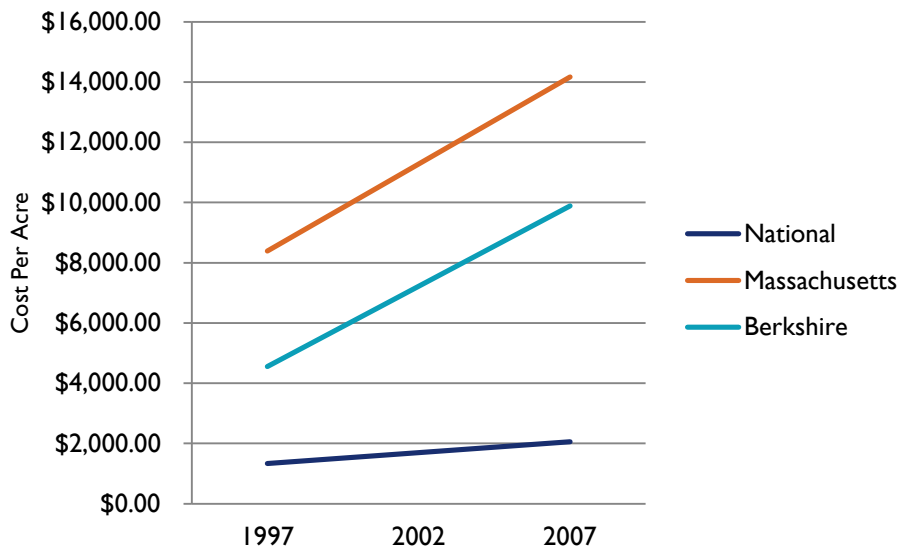
KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Land Access Hindered by Land Costs

Berkshire farmers use more land than they own, and the primary mechanism through which they access additional farmland are lease agreements. Farmers cited the availability of farm land and the cost of farm land as key challenges in continuing to make farming a successful endeavor. Nationwide, farm real estate value (the value of all land and buildings on farms) increased 10.9% between 2011 and 2012. The value of crop and pasture land increased by 14.5% and 4.5% respectively. In Berkshire County, the asset value

per acre of agricultural land, including buildings, has increased steadily since 1997. The Agricultural Census reported a 164% in cost per acre of agricultural land between 1992 and 2007.

Figure FA5: Trend in Agricultural Land Value, Including Buildings (2013 Dollars)



Source: USDA Agriculture Census

One way to get around high land purchase costs is through expanded lease arrangements. While well-established farmers, particularly multi-generational farms, have a good handle on land lease options, newcomers or less established farmers have difficulty knowing the land and owners who are willing to consider a lease arrangement. Also, there is a greater awareness of the need to make arrangements, which may have been handshake deals at one point in time, legal with associated paperwork. While there are strong, established programs like Land For Good who can help navigate the land lease matching process once two parties are at the table, there is a gap in local capacity to help make those matches and direct people to available technical assistance resources.

Most Agricultural Land Not Conserved

Less than twenty-five percent of the region's farmed acres are considered to be prime agricultural soils. An even smaller percent, 14% or 8,137 acres, in agriculture are permanently protected through an Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR). This indicates a need to protect prime soils and farmland through farmer and landowner outreach, continued promotion of sustainable practices to help enhance the health and productivity of non-prime agricultural soils, and connecting farmers to land with soils suitable for their desired use. Of the one hundred and six farmers who responded to the Keep Berkshires Farmers' Survey, only twenty-one or 19.6 percent had a farm with an APR, while forty-three, or 40% had land in Chapter 61/61A. The small number of farms participating in the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program is of note, since two sub-regions indicated farmland preservation as a top interest in terms of future farmer education opportunities, and all three regions indicated farmland availability as a top challenge or barrier to continued farming. The relatively small proportion of permanently protected farm land points to the vulnerability of the Berkshire food system: it may be

more appealing to sell land for residential or commercial development than to keep it in an agricultural use.

Most Farmers Do Not Have a Succession Plan in Place

The average age of Berkshire farmers is older, with most farmers being between forty and sixty. Succession planning for farm transfer is an important issue to ensure there is a next generation in place to keep the farm in agriculture. Planning helps to ensure that today's farms will be tomorrow's farms. Succession planning explicitly came up as an issue of interest in both the North region and the South region, with the North region farmer survey indicating 40% (17) of farmers do not have a solid succession plan for their farm, and the South region farmer survey results reporting strong interest in education/training about succession planning.

Land available for agricultural use is an important consideration in how much food can be grown in the Berkshire region. Berkshire residents want more local food, and there is enough agricultural land to support production expansion. A Williams College study in 2011 found that the Berkshire region has enough land to support food for all residents for a number of diet types, but it also found that existing supply did not meet regional demand. An analysis conducted using figures for 2012 found similar results. These updated figures highlight a notable gap between regional demand and local supply of all food categories except for dairy products. This includes a supply and demand gap for cereal and bakery products, beef products, pork products, fruits, berries and vegetables. This finding is supported by KBF resident survey findings.

Growing Number of Young Farmers

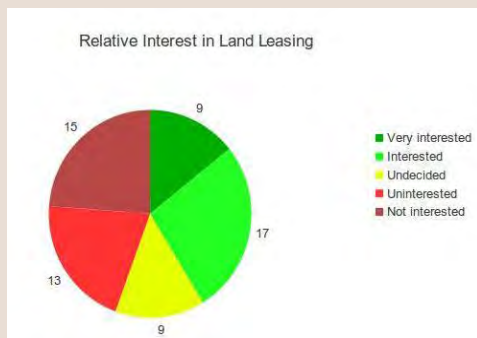
There are new, beginning farmers actively involved in Keep Berkshires Farming that have a strong presence in the local and regional food system. Based on total farmer survey responses countywide, 30% of farmers are less than 40 years old. They are a dedicated and passionate future for farming in the Berkshires. As many established farmers near retirement, there is a multi-fold opportunity for building relationships between established and new and beginning farmers. Newer farmers can benefit from the skills and expertise of older farmers with years of experience on the land, while older farmers are looking for labor for existing operations and a future for their farm when they retire. Access to affordable farmland is a barrier for newer farmers to get started and expand a farm business, so building relationships with established farmers can offer a support network and land access opportunities. Farm transfer planning is an important tool to keep farmers on the land farming.

Unleashing the Potential for Land Leasing for Farm Creation and Expansion

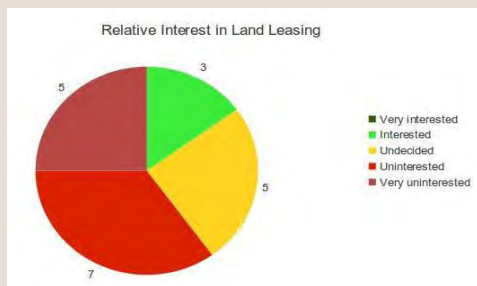
A 2013 pilot effort in the northern Berkshires explored the potential for land matching between farmers and private land owners in Williamstown and Adams. The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and American Farmland Trust worked with students at the Williams College Center of Environmental Studies to formulate a methodology to identify land with quality agricultural soils that could be brought into production through lease arrangements.

Maps of residential parcels 4.5 acres or larger with either primary or secondary soils were created and a mailing list generated. Surveys indicated strong interest from private land owners in exploring leasing their land to farmers and strong interest from farmers on starting or expanding land lease options. The full study is available at: <http://ces.williams.edu/publications/student-papers/>. See Appendix B for a map of regional agricultural lease potential.

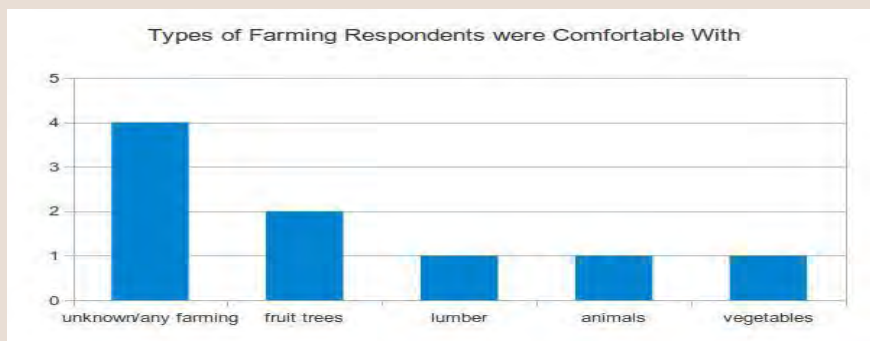
In Williamstown:



In Adams:



The types of farming landowners were comfortable with:



If these two towns are any indication, there is significant potential in the region to bring more land into production through expanded use of land lease arrangements.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

GOAL FA1: Improve access to land for current and new farmers.

Policy FA1.1: Create Berkshire Farmland Access and Transition Network.

Strategy A: Formalize Roles and Responsibilities

Land For Good is a New England based non-profit organization that connects farm seekers to farms and farmland, assists in farm transfers and helps landowners make land available for farming. The New England New England Farmland Finder is an online resource providing a way for farmers and landowners to connect. The Carrot Project helped convene a meeting of agriculture, land trust, and planning representatives to discuss needs and potential for creating an ad-hoc or formal network to comprehensively and efficiently deal with inquiries and needs for farmland access and transition specific to the Berkshires. Berkshire Grown and the Community Land Trust with many co-sponsors are hosting a symposium on April 12, 2014 to put more farmers on the land and more land into farming. All groups should continue to clarify the roles and responsibilities of this new Berkshire Farmland Access and Transition Network to achieve the stated purpose of streamlining the path for farmers and property owners to lease or sell farmland to retain and grow the amount of land in production within the county.

Strategy B: Promote Availability of Assistance

Once the network has been established and mechanisms for inquiry intake and referral have been determined, the group will need to work together to help promote the presence and function of the network. Possible target audiences include, at a minimum, current farmers, land trusts, agricultural commissions, estate planning entities, and tax preparation professionals.

Strategy C: Maintain Property Maps

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission has the capacity to select potential lease properties using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and parcel-based assessor records and USGS soils data. Maps can be generated on demand from any formal municipal board or committee, such as an agricultural commission. These maps can be used to generate mailing lists for those who wish to duplicate the work done by Williams College in Williamstown and Adams. As assessors' records are updated, maps and any associated lists can be updated.

Policy FA1.2: Work within existing systems to improve access to farmland conservation and financial supports.

Strategy A: Train Tax Preparers, Assessors' Offices, Lawyers and Accountants on Land Tax and Estate Planning

Multiple entities are potentially involved in land transactions, whether sale or estates transfer planning, or annual tax preparation. This poses both a challenge and opportunity for improving access to consistent information related to supporting farmland staying in or entering into productive use. Coordination is needed to educate the whole stream of supporting service providers involved to be aware of, and help pass on to their clients, information on farmland protection options and property owner incentives. This could both help ensure more farmers have succession plans in place

and help inform both farmers and other property owners about land lease options and tax incentive programs.

Strategy B: Increase APR Program Use, Prioritizing Outreach in Low-participation Communities

Activity in the APR program is very robust in some communities and almost nonexistent in others. Anecdotal evidence suggests this is somewhat rooted in a general distrust of government programs and a strong sense of individualism and private property right not uncommon within the farming community. However, the region should work to help ensure that those interested in options for keeping their land in farming have access to APR program information and give local examples of farms that have employed it to their benefit.

GOAL FA2: Ensure farms have succession plans in place to support keeping farms in agricultural use.

Policy FA2.1: Promote farmer participation in succession and estate planning.

Strategy A: Centralize and Promote Available Resources

A lack of succession planning is a potentially huge variable in predicting the future of farming in the region. The region should work on all fronts including trainings, business and personal property services, agricultural groups and non-profits and municipalities to help highlight this need and the options available to property owners in their area of the county. There are a number of guides available, targeted to different audiences (i.e. Land Access Project and the New England farmland finder) but they are only useful once someone knows to look for them. A single resource guide that could be widely distributed would help raise the awareness of existing resources and support the capacity of individuals and groups to communicate and work together around land access opportunities and issues.

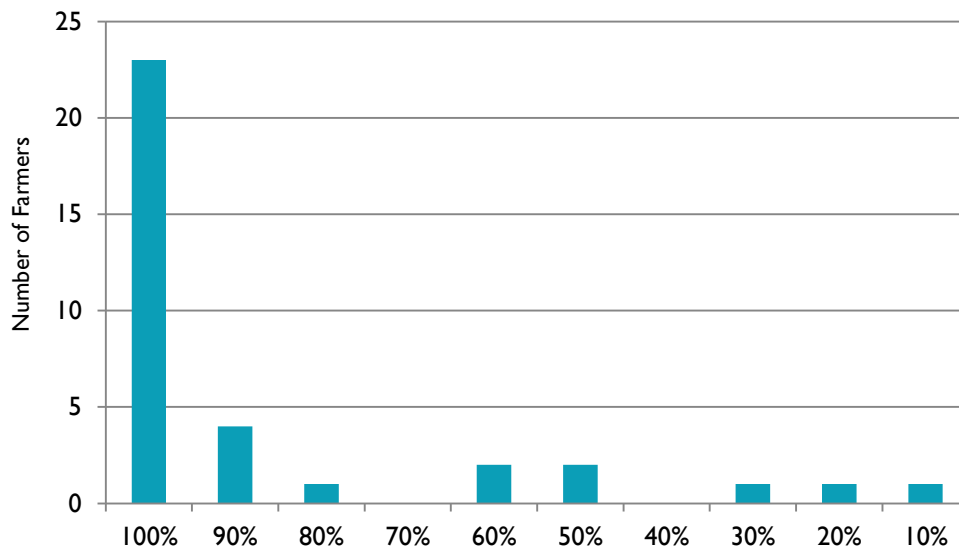
2. FOOD SYSTEM INFRASTRUCTURE

Farms in the Berkshires produce a wide range of food and fiber products and farmers report that recent shifts in consumer information and purchasing behavior in support of local food has translated into more robust farm sales. A study of local food supply and demand provides some view of the still unmet demand for local farm products - a positive indication for additional farm and farm market share growth. While the first section looked at land access, this section reviews current production, means to market, and barriers to increased production for four major commodity categories: fruits and vegetables, meat, dairy, and wood and fiber products. Goals, policies, and strategies then set forth ways to clear barriers and increase farm production and profitability.

LOCAL FOOD SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Survey data gathered in the Keep Berkshires Farming process illustrates that county farms have a highly localized market base of consumers. Most farmers sell between 80%-100% of their product within the Berkshire region.

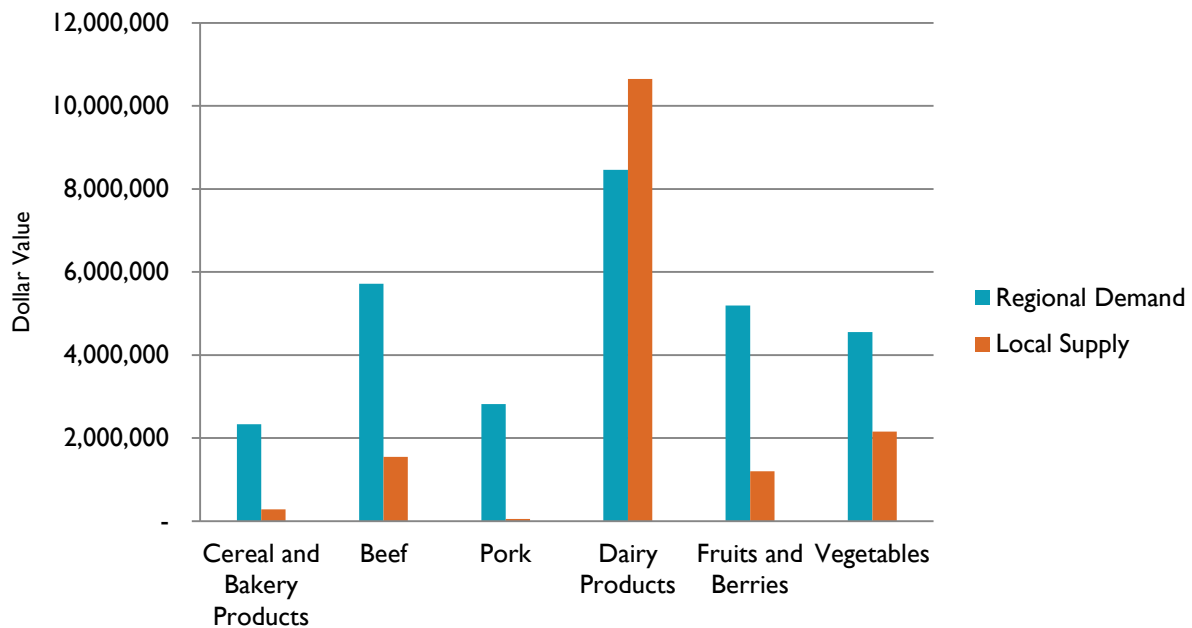
Figure FA6: Percentage of Product Sold in Berkshire Region by Number of Farmers



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Farmer Surveys

Consumer Expenditure Survey data from 2012 indicates that regional demand is greater than local supply for all major farm product categories except dairy. Resident surveys, conducted as part of the Keep Berkshires Farming process echoed this finding.

Figure FA7: Comparison of Local Supply to Demand

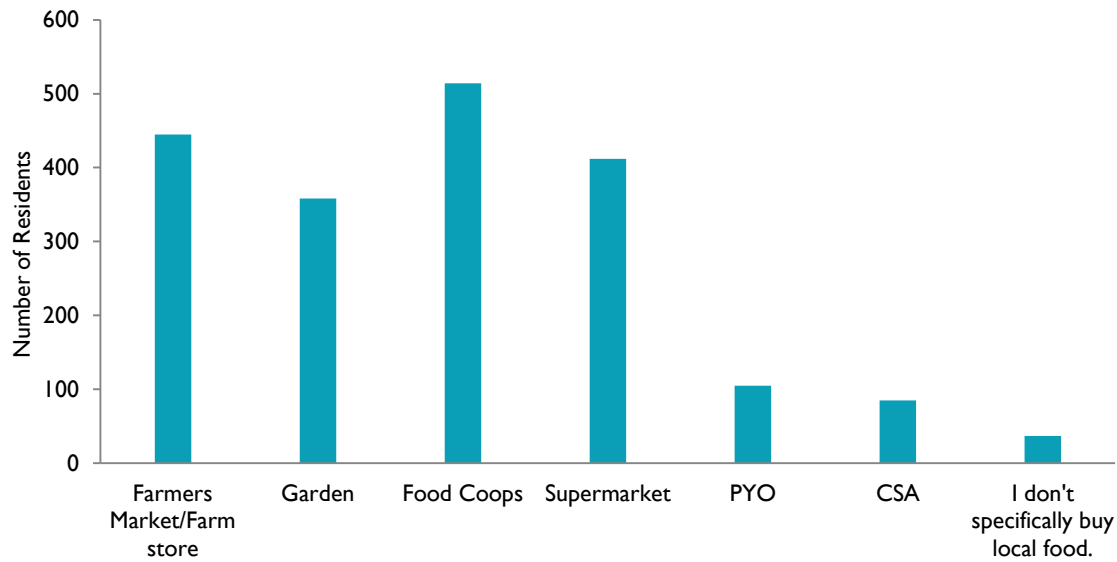


Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys

Individual/Household Consumer Demand

Six hundred and ninety four (694) residents were surveyed through the Keep Berkshires Farming effort. The resulting picture showed a strong demand for local food.

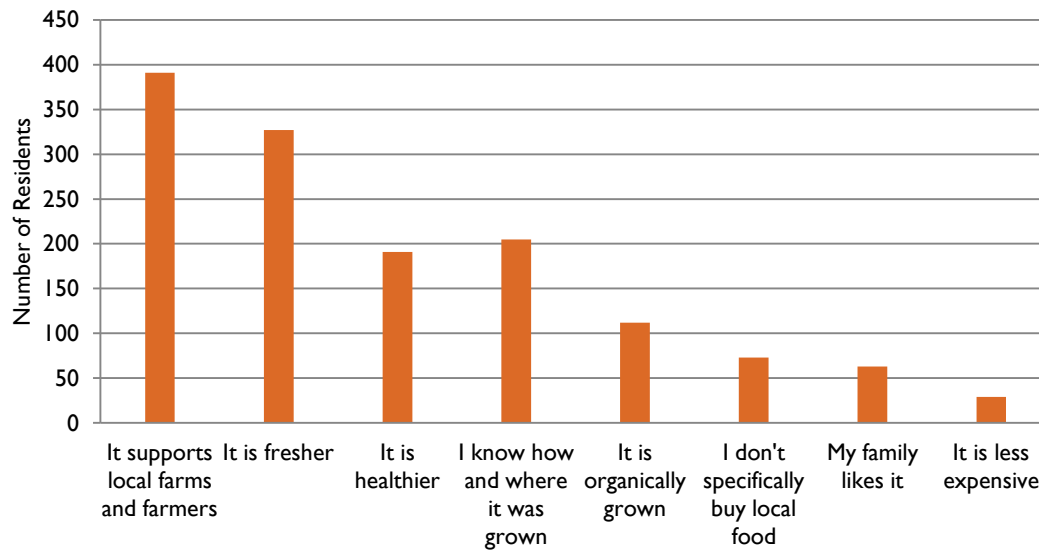
The majority of respondents indicated they purchase local food; 77% of these indicated that they would purchase more local food if they could. Residents surveyed spend an average of \$100 a week on groceries, or an estimated \$3,608,808 a year. Residents did not indicate what percentage of their grocery expenditures went toward local foods, but multiplying this figure of annual food expenditures by the total number of households in the Berkshires (55,793), there is potential for between \$14,506,180 (if 5% of groceries purchased were local) to \$217,592,700 (if 75% of groceries purchased were local) to be spent on local farm products. The number of households is a lower estimate for the county total, as it only counts primary residences rather than secondary or seasonal homes.

Figure FA8: Where Berkshire Residents Purchase or Obtain Food

Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Resident Surveys

When choosing where to shop, residents identified three top factors: convenient location, affordability, and a good selection. When asked where residents go to specifically purchase local foods, residents indicated farmers' markets and/or farm stores most often, followed by their garden or a friend's garden, food coops and then supermarkets. Very few residents indicated that they access local food through Pick Your Own (PYO) operations or through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations. Residents like to purchase local food because it supports local farms and farmers, and because local food is fresher and healthier. They like knowing how and where their food is grown. The high number of residents reporting shopping at food coops or farmers markets/farm stores could be a bias from locations where the survey in some sub-regions were given, including local coop markets or food related events.

Figure FA9: Why Berkshire Residents Purchase Local Food

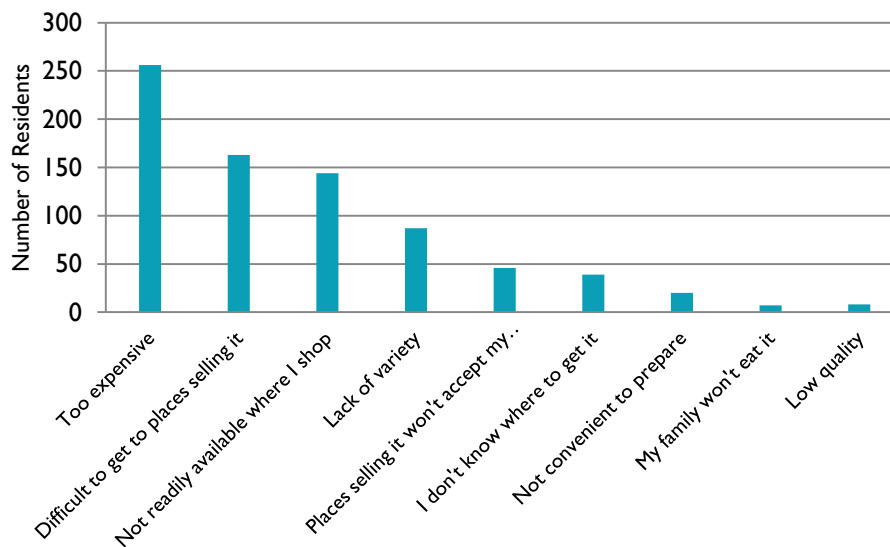


Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Resident Surveys

Expanding Local Market Share

Residents want more meat, more dairy (yogurt, cheese, milk, ice cream) and more grain products. They also want more of what is already fairly easy to get: locally grown fruits and vegetables. Most residents would purchase more local foods if able, and they identified the following barriers to buying more local food: the expense of local foods, difficulty in getting to where local food is sold, and the lack of availability where they grocery shop.

Figure FA10: Barriers to Increased Local Food Purchase by Berkshire Residents



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Resident Surveys

Commercial Consumers

Table FA3: Commercial Consumer Market Expansion Potential and Considerations

Type	Purchasing Behavior	Market Expansion Potential	Key Considerations
Institutions Twenty one (21) institutions were surveyed, including public school districts, private and public colleges, community colleges, hospitals, private health/wellness institutions, nursing homes, and private elementary and high schools.	Feed an average of 419 people or 855 meals a day, ranging from 80 meals a day to 1,500 meals a day Average food budget of \$679,167, ranging from \$10,000 to \$1,500,000. Menus contain between 0.05% and 30% local food	Seventeen of the twenty-one institutions would use more local food if possible. Institutions noted the following barriers to why they do not purchase more local food: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budgetary constraints • Seasonality • Availability • Timing/frequency of deliveries Have dedicated food service staff and steady demand pattern throughout year.	Most institutions prefer fewer distributors, have flexibility when they can receive delivery, and have one drop-off location. A food hub offering pick-up and delivery for participating growers and institutions would help address timing/frequency of deliveries, and contractual growing would help address availability concerns as well as monetary concerns.
Restaurants Sixty six (66) restaurants were surveyed ranging from small, rural roadside cafes to large hotel restaurants.	The most commonly sourced local product used in the region's restaurants is milk, followed by vegetables, baked goods, and eggs. Restaurants expressed interest in more local meat.	Price and convenience were the two most important factors Restaurants are more likely to fluctuate in demand for local food throughout the year, probably requiring more food during peak visitor months like the summer, fall and winter holidays.	Many restaurants expressed interest in food hubs and direct purchase opportunities from local farms.
Food Processors and Distributors Twenty five (25) food processors and/or food distributors were surveyed, including small, specialty dairy processors or butcher shops as well as wholesale distributors such as Ginsbergs, and larger super stores such as Wal-Mart.	Regional processors indicated that most of the product they use comes from local suppliers. Products used depend on the type of processor—dairy, meat, and vegetables or fruit were the primary products noted.	The most commonly cited challenge to using more (or any) local food were concerns over food safety and liability; volume and dependability; price; communication gap; lack of local decision-making and the regional lack of processing facilities.	Distributors and/or processors also expressed interest in contract growing, enhanced communication, a local food hub and enhanced processing facilities along with enhanced access to and use of farmer assistance programs.



PLANT AND TREE PRODUCTS

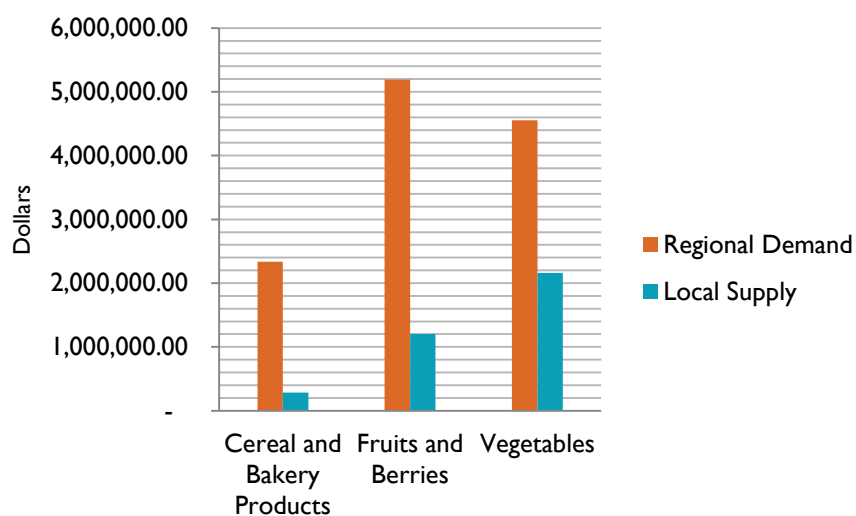
Including fruits, vegetables, maple syrup, honey, wine, cider, wood, and baked goods.

Current Production and Market Demand

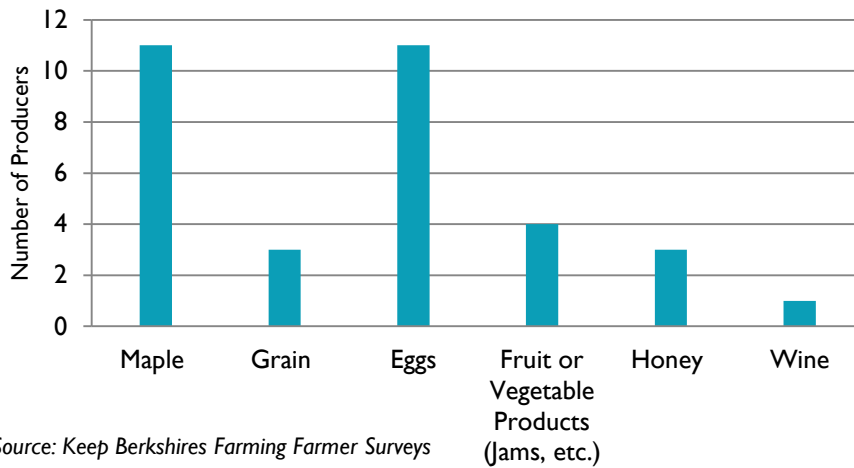
The vast majority of cropland in terms of total acreage is in cultivation for hay, corn and soy, much of which supports animal feed, grazing, and bedding. However, there are an estimated 18 farms with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operations and 6 orchards in the county.

Fruit and vegetable farmers report that they can sell what they currently grow without difficulty. Between Community Supported Agriculture shares, farmers markets, farmstands, grocers and restaurants, farmers are generally able to sell their inventory. Resident surveys show that there is significant unmet demand for more: resident demand for fresh vegetables is more than twice current supply and demand for fresh fruits and berries is roughly four times the current supply.

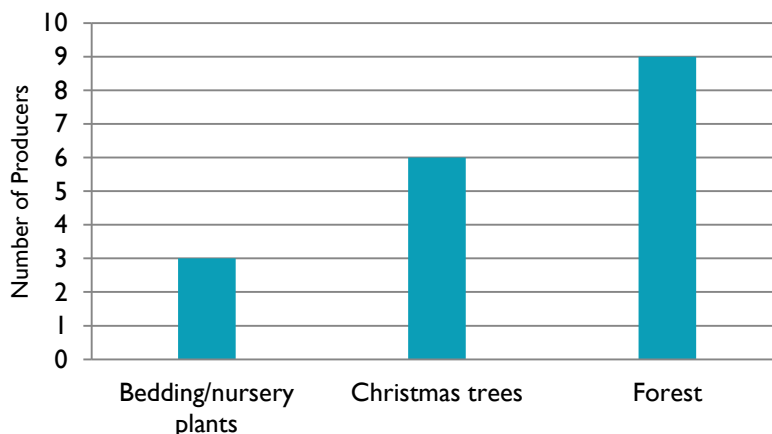
Figure FA11: Comparison of Local Supply to Demand



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys

Figure FA12: Processed Products by Number of Producers

Fruit and berry producers include the many apple orchards across the region, most of which also produce some type of value added fruit products for sale at small on-farm stores such as pies, jams and preserves, apple cider donuts, apple cider, wine and sparkling cider. Some orchards, such as Jaeschke's Orchard in Adams, have also generated some farm-to-school arrangements for direct sale of small, uncut apples to local schools.

Figure FA13: Other Wood Based Products by Number of Producers

Some farmers also profit from nursery or forestry activities. Specific challenges and opportunities related to forestry and timber activities need study and identification. Nurseries are not usually considered a wood-based product, but are included in this section.

Barriers to Increasing Market Share

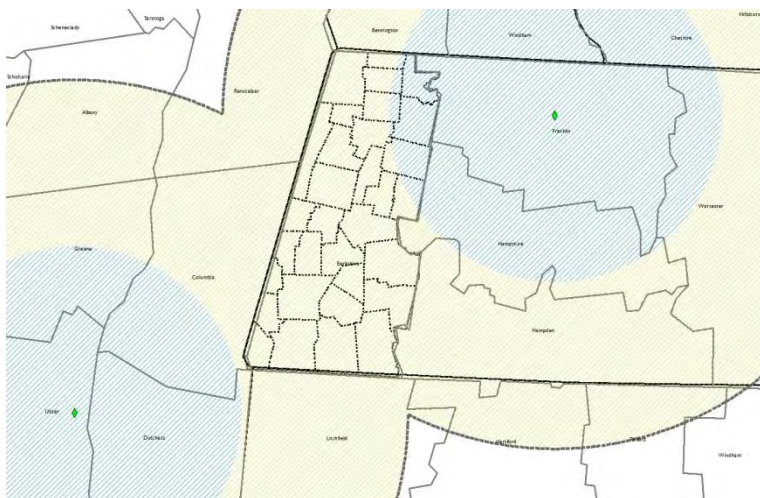
Local production could ramp up through either expanding current operations, or adding new producers to the market, but would likely require some combination of the two. For new farmers, the largest barriers can be finding and securing land to farm, as well as the up-front costs of starting a new business. For current operations, the challenge is one of thresholds. Smaller operations can operate with limited

labor and the CSA model for vegetables or Pick-Your-Own model for fruits helps keep labor costs low. Assuming farmers have access to additional land; the choice to expand requires that the potential profit outweighs the costs of expansion. Many local farmers farm by choice because it is something they love. Expansion could mean owner/operators having to do more of the business side and less of the farming, which could sway the choice in favor of remaining small. While not all farmers are interested in expanding, some are interested in moving forward but see two infrastructure gaps that, if filled, would make expansion a more viable and attractive choice. These are limited access to value-added processing capacity and the lack of a centrally located facility to facilitate the aggregation, storage, packaging, distribution, delivery and/or marketing of regionally produced food products.

Value-Added Processing Capacity

The region is currently served by two commercial (versus hobby/personal use) food processing facilities, located in Kingston, New York and Greenfield, Massachusetts. The site in Greenfield, called the Western Massachusetts Food Processing Center, is operated by the Franklin County Community Development Corporation (CDC) and links facility access with small business development and marketing supports in their function as a small business incubator and economic development agency. The facility has room for storage of produce and materials, commercial freezer space and is equipped with machinery that can be rented for flash freezing of produce, canning and producing sauces or other value-added products. The general draw area for using this facility for fresh vegetable preparation and freezing is 25 miles, which would include only a narrow edge of northern Berkshire communities. However, the catchment area for preparation of sauces is larger and draws people from southern Berkshire County (~50 miles) and as far east as the Boston Metro area. Beyond that, and without a certain scale of efficiency, profiting from value-added processing can be difficult with travel and time spent. However, the CDC is willing to work with each individual producer to adapt their services to each individual producer's needs as much as possible.

Figure FA14: Value Added Processing Capacity



Source: BRPC, 2013

The Kingston facility, Farm to Table Co-Packers offers equipments for the processing and packaging of farm products, including fresh, frozen, or pickled. They also offer equipment for baking, an incubator/test kitchen, three loading docks and 8,000 square feet of storage space for refrigerated, frozen or dry goods.

As shown in the map figure above, use of this facility would only make sense for canned or jarred sauces or similar items, but not vegetable flash freezing. The 29,000-square foot industrial kitchen in Kingston's Tech City works with farms on many levels, buying from them, sourcing from them for customers and producing for them. Fresh locally grown produce is used in many products from jars to Individually Quick Frozen (IQF), packaged for sale into many different markets throughout the region. Offering a local facility for freezing vegetables could help sales to institutions like schools and for improving local access to produce and vegetables off-season when in demand during the school year.

Clark's nursery in Lee recently opened a commercial kitchen and the Berkshire Co-op in Great Barrington is in the planning stages for creating one in their new location. These facilities will offer local options for using facilities and equipment for value-added processing that is more convenient for Berkshire farmers.

Aggregation and Distribution Service

Restaurants, institutions and farmers identified a desire for a collaborative infrastructure such as a "food hub" to provide processing, storage, marketing and distribution. While the scale and function of a "food hub" varies, the basic idea is to have a centrally located facility with a business management structure to facilitate, some combination of the following: the aggregation, storage, packaging, distribution/delivery and/or marketing of regionally produced food products. Food hubs are particularly valuable in a small-farm context like the Berkshires, where individual farms have a difficult time consistently meeting commercial-scale food demand but several farms working together could do it well. However, there needs to be a point person or management system in place to build relationships, pick up products from different farms and perform quality control, packaging and then delivery to end users.

Currently, there is no regional infrastructure to assist in the processing, storage and distribution of foods, although one business, Berkshire Organics, does partner with regional farms to operate a delivery program to individuals, along with deliveries to some local schools under their non-profit arm. The two co-op markets also will pick up food from farms, presenting potential opportunities for a pick-up/delivery system for interested institutions and restaurants that is located on or near existing delivery routes.

Farmers are often unable to focus significant effort in building and maintaining these contract relationships. By providing that function and handling the aggregation and distribution functions, food hubs create the predictable conditions needed for stable producer-to-market relationships. Some food hubs, such as the Intervale Food Hub, in Burlington, Vermont, work with farmers to set prices and thus help enhance business viability. They can also offer technical assistance and business planning—season extension, cold storage, packaging, marketing, new farm incubation, etc. A Berkshire food hub could be a centrally located facility with processing, storage and distribution infrastructure for farmers. It would facilitate the aggregation of regional food, and help to solve some of the issues cited by farmers, institutions, restaurants and meal sites/food pantries to be barriers to selling and using more local food.

		
Where are they?	Providence, RI	Burlington, VT
About	Year-round service working with 50 local farms and producers to offer consumers produce, dairy, meat, seafood and value-added products like granola.	Year-round service offering delivery to community sites and employers of locally produced fresh and processed foods. Offers an online market for ordering. Works with farmers to grow to demand and fairly price products.
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a mobile component which facilitates farm to business ordering and delivery or pick-up. • Business owners only have to deal with delivery or pick up time, and one invoice, and farmers set the prices. • Potential buyers can check prices lists on line, and also can receive e-mails with current or new listings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offers farmers a stable market, fair prices, advanced working capital through their subscription, delivery and pick-up system. • Assists farmers with things like season extension, new farm incubation, business development and other farm related research or planning efforts.
Learn more:	http://www.farmfreshri.org/	http://intervalefoodhub.com/

ANIMAL PRODUCTS

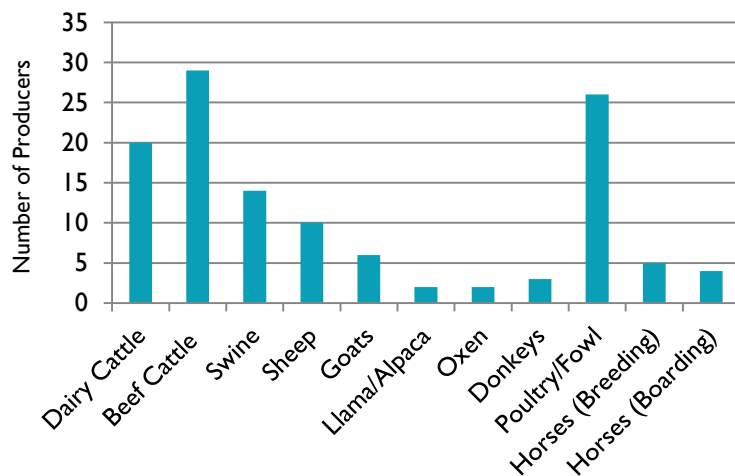


Meat

Current Production and Market Demand

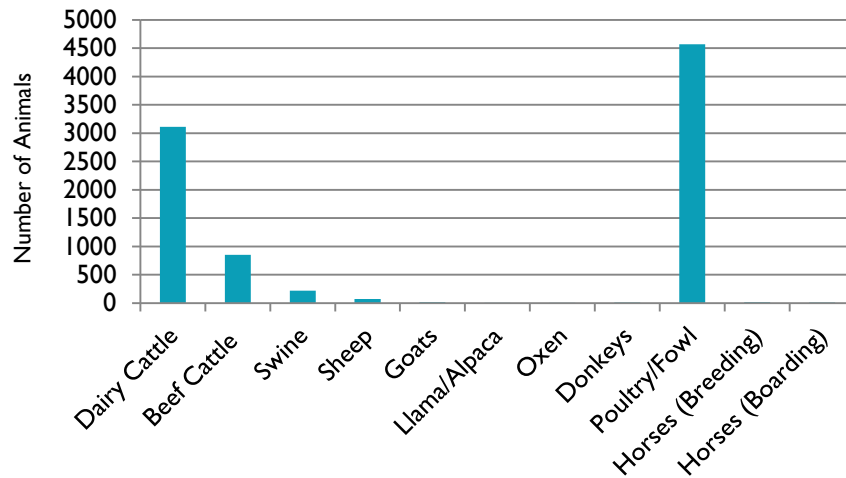
The region raises a variety of animals for meat, eggs, dairy and fiber. Beef cattle, poultry /fowl and dairy cattle are the most common in both total number of livestock and number of farms raising them according to Keep Berkshires Farming farmer surveys.

Figure FA15: Livestock by Number of Producers



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Farmer Surveys

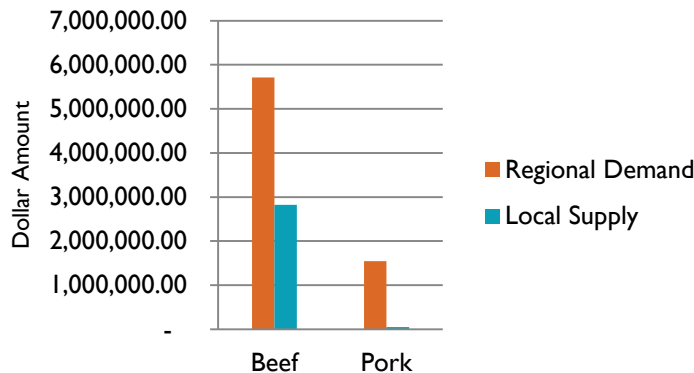
Figure FA16: Livestock by Number of Animals



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys

The most common types of livestock by producer and number of animal are identified as beef cattle, poultry/fowl and dairy cattle. Regional demand is much greater than local supply, particularly in beef and pork. This highlights the challenges present in the Berkshire food system which make it difficult to get meat to market, most notably the lack of local slaughter and processing infrastructure. While it appears that there are nearly thirty beef producers in the region, they are all fairly small scale—the farmers surveyed through Keep Berkshires Farming reported just over 500 total beef cattle. That results in an average of sixteen beef cattle per producer. It is expensive to raise beef cattle and expensive and time consuming to slaughter and process the cattle for commercial sale. Consumers in the region expressed interest in more meat, and there is growing recognition that small-scale, grass-based meat operations are better for the environment, the consumer, and the cows themselves, representing potential in the Berkshire meat sector.

Figure FA17: Comparison of Local Supply to Demand - Meat



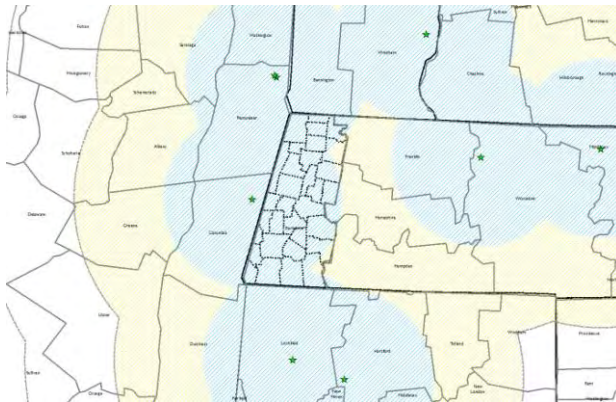
Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys

Barriers to Increasing Market Share

Commercial Sales (Beef and Pork)

Some farmers provide meat for retail sale in stores or through direct sales to restaurants in the region, Boston, and New York City. In order to get meat to market in a commercial setting, animals must be slaughtered and packaged at a USDA-certified facility. There are only two USDA certified slaughter facilities in the state, Adams Farm in Athol and Blood Farm in Groton. A fire in late 2013 significantly damaged the Groton facility, further limiting statewide slaughtering capacity. The region's proximity to three other state borders helps; local farmers use one of four facilities: Westminster Meats in Westminster, VT, Hilltown Pork in Canaan NY, Stratton's Custom Meats and Smokehouse and Eagle Bridge in Hoosic Falls, NY, and Bristol Meats in Bristol, CT. Almost all of Berkshire County is within fifty miles of at least one of these facilities, though they also serve other areas. The high volume already experienced by these facilities makes it challenging for Berkshire farmers to easily, reliably use the facility for the slaughter and processing of livestock.

Figure FA18: Slaughter Facilities



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys

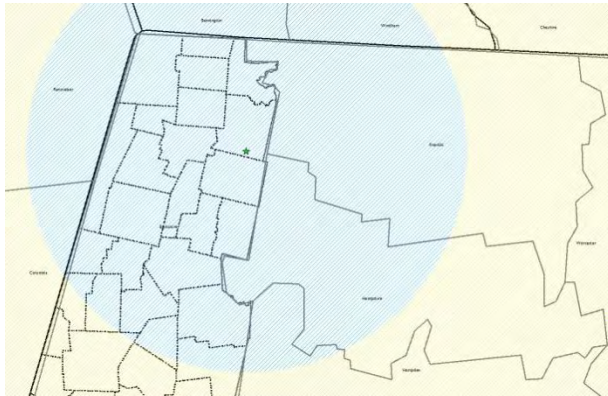
On-Farm Sales (Beef and Pork)

Because of the cost and complexity of commercial sales, many farms raise smaller herds for direct sale on their farms. The Berkshire region does have some smaller scale custom slaughter enterprises that slaughter for on-farm use under a personal use exemption.

The meat slaughtered and prepared for exclusive use by producers, household members, nonpaying guests and employees are exempt from federal licensing and

inspection. A custom exempt slaughterhouse is one not requiring continuous inspection of slaughter/processing activities since livestock is only slaughtered for exclusive use of the owner of the animal. This meat cannot be sold, and can only be consumed by the animal's owner, household members and nonpaying guests or employees. However, an animal can be sold to the end-consumer prior to butchering in what is called an "on-the-hoof" sale. The image below indicates that nearly the entire Berkshire region would be served by a custom operation in Savoy, if this operation expanded and received USDA certification.

Figure FA19: Berkshire Region Slaughter



Source: BRPC, 2013

Poultry

Poultry slaughter and processing has its own set of rules. Poultry also has a personal use exemption and a custom exempt poultry slaughterhouse would have the same limitations as other meat. There is also a producer/grower poultry processor exemption. Poultry producers raising sound and healthy poultry on their own farms can sell dressed, whole poultry to household consumers, restaurants, hotels and boarding houses. There is a numeric limit to this exemption which only covers up to 1,000 birds per year. After that point, farmers would have to seek a slaughterhouse status which becomes cost-prohibitive in terms of what the market will bear. The only way farmers can sell poultry to wholesale, retail, to restaurants and other food service institutions is if the poultry has been slaughtered and processed at a USDA inspected commercial poultry slaughterhouse. Demand for more poultry came up in resident surveys as well as at the top of the list of products restaurants seek. Farmers have expressed interest in visiting the mobile poultry unit at Glynwood to investigate the feasibility of having such a unit in the Berkshire region.

Figure FA20: Modular Poultry Unit



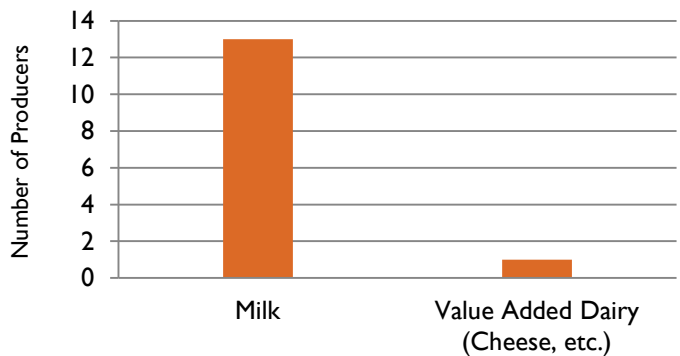
Modular poultry units offer a flexible option for USDA certified processing. They can be shared among farms, or travel between different farms. The New England Small Farm Institute in Belchertown offers a travelling Modular Poultry Processing Unit (MPPU). Farmers scaling up poultry production may find an on-farm, stationary unit a better option, but this only allows them to process their own birds. A farmer in South County built a MPPU, and was waiting for state approval to share it with other farmers as of 2012.

Dairy

Current Production and Market Demand

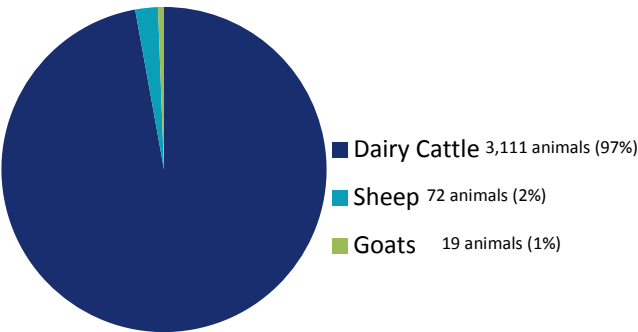
Dairy is the one food commodity where production exceeds local demand. This is in large part due to the success of High Lawn Farm in Lee which bottles its own milk and cream and does some value-added processing such as ice cream. Other than this farm business, most dairy farms in the region export their milk through dairy collaborative such as: AgriMark, which produces the Cabot brand, or Dairy-Lea, which supplies Chobani yogurt. Crescent Creamery is another dairy distributor that gets its dairy products from dairy farms in the Berkshires. These companies require contracts which, until very recently, required an “all or nothing” approach whereby if a farm had a contract they could not keep or sell some added business growth, as illustrated in the large disparity between milk producers and value-added enterprises shown in the figure below.

Figure FA21: Number of Dairy Products Producers*



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys
*While thirteen producers mentioned producing milk, twenty producers noted owning dairy cattle.

Figure FA22: Dairy Livestock



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys

Besides milk, dairy farms in the Berkshires also produce cheese, yogurt and ice cream. Smaller producers sell their milk, cheese, yogurt or ice cream at a number of outlets, including seasonal farmers’ markets, local grocery coops, farm markets, grocery stores, or directly to consumers and directly on the farm.

Figure FA23: Comparison of Local Supply and Demand, Dairy Products



Source: Keep Berkshires Farming Surveys

Fiber

A final animal-based product is fiber, with a number of small sheep and alpaca farms operating with wool as a primary product. The resulting product is typically high-end wools that can be sold in local knitting and craft shops. Currently, operations typically shear on-farm take the raw fleece to a fiber mill to be cleaned and spun into yarn or rovings.

OTHER PRODUCTS

Compost

There are three state-permitted Food Materials Processors in Berkshire County: at Meadow Farm in Lee, Agresoil Compost in Williamstown and Holiday Brook Farm in Dalton. Only one farmer in the Keep Berkshires Farming process identified compost as a product however. The dynamics behind food waste and composting are set to change radically in October 2014 when a state food waste ban goes into effect. The ban, as currently stated, would apply to any facility generating one ton of food waste or more per week. These facilities will be required to repurpose useable food, and then ship the remainder to an anaerobic digestion facility, a compost facility or an animal feed operation. All of these present possible business opportunities in the Berkshires. In generating consumer demand for compost haulers and drop sites, this could precipitate the use of composting services by other parties including smaller business that do not reach the 1 ton threshold but who might want to reduce their garbage volume and hauling costs, as well as residential users who may want to compost but don't want to manage their own compost heap.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Lack of Slaughter and Meat Processing Capacity

The county has no commercial USDA-certified facilities for the slaughter and processing of meat and poultry. The processing infrastructure within the county is limited in scale and certification and the end product cannot be sold in retail or wholesale outlets, restaurants, or institutions. Berkshire farmers must travel to commercial USDA-certified facilities in neighboring counties in New York, Connecticut,

Vermont and central Massachusetts. When mapped, the entire region falls within 25 miles of at least one of these facilities, but farmers describe lengthy waiting lists of a year or more and the cost of trips to and from these other facilities that can negate the profitability of sale. Longer distances also mean more stress on the animals. Slaughter and meat processing infrastructure has potential in the Berkshire region, and could help current farmers and farmers' interest in expanding meat production or branching into meat production be implemented, helping to expand supply and meet regional demand. Dairy farmers in the Berkshire region have long struggled financially, and many could have an additional opportunity for revenue with easier to access slaughter and processing opportunities for male calves and old dairy cattle, or to expand to grass-fed beef on their pastureland to take advantage of strong consumer demand for this product.

Berkshire Grown, NOFA-Mass, the Carrot Project, the Massachusetts Farm Bureau and other stakeholders are working to expand slaughter infrastructure and capacity in the Berkshire region, recognizing that the existing capacity is low and requires substantial travel and planning for farmers looking to profit from meat. A livestock slaughter and processing facility in the Berkshire region requires planning efforts. Cooperation and collaboration among farmers, product volume, and market volume are critical considerations, and while Keep Berkshires Farming has initialized the research component, further progress would benefit from in-depth, meat-specific research study. The physical siting of a slaughter facility also requires planning and community input, as there are certain physical and infrastructure characteristics required.

They are:

- A suitable size of the site for requisite buildings, parking lots, access roads and potential future expansion, as well as potable water for processing needs and a sewage system able to efficiently handle liquid waste and process water.
- Site should not be near areas of industry that attract vermin, such as sanitary landfills and scrap yards.
- Site should avoid areas of industry that produce odors and airborne particulate matter such as oil refineries, trash dumps, chemical plants, sewage disposal, dye works, and paper pulp mills.
- Prevailing winds should be considered—what might be blown to the facility, or where might the odors from the facility go?
- Suitable space and lay out for separation of official and non-official establishments.

Lack of Value-added Dairy Capacity

While the net regional supply of dairy exceeds demand, it should be noted that this is in the milk category versus value –added dairy and non-cow dairy products including goats' milk or cheese and ewe's cheese. Cheese was cited to be one of the favorite local products in resident surveys, with respondents indicating they wanted more cheese, yogurt, ice cream and raw milk. The barrier to meeting this demand is therefore a lack of processing capacity. If there was a commercial facility to incubate, and perhaps help train cheese makers and other value-added dairy enterprises it would enable farms and businesses to experiment with product development before investing in their own infrastructure.

Lack of Understanding of Composting Capacity and Potential

Understanding the capacity, and the ease producers of food waste have getting food waste to these facilities is an important consideration in face of the new solid waste reduction targets that the

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection plans to implement in October 2014. This new commercial/institutional food waste ban will affect any establishment generating more than one ton of organics (food waste) and compostable paper per week. While the ban will challenge the regions' existing and limited capacity, it could also provide opportunity to create new jobs, expand existing businesses, reduce waste at the source and help achieve overall Sustainable Berkshires goals. Waste reduction through expanded composting is listed as a strategy in the Housing and Neighborhoods element and could be approached in tandem with planning around the waste ban and farm business development. This new policy could also increase farm revenue, with something like a per ton tipping fee.

GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOAL FA3: Ensure agriculture and local food economic activities are prioritized within regional and local economic development strategies and investments.

Policy FA3.1: Highlight local food and agriculture as key economic sector of the region.

Strategy A: Maintain Presence of Agricultural Projects on CEDS List

Agricultural sector investments have been identified as a regional economic development priority in the county's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, a document linked to potential federal EDA funding. As this document is regularly updated, local food and agricultural advocates will need to work to ensure emerging food system projects are included in project list updates.

Strategy B: Work with Local Economic Development Entities to Promote Local Food and Farm Businesses

The Berkshire Visitors' Bureau recently received a grant to promote local agriculture in its regional tourism work, building on recent momentum in that direction from local food events and the strong buy local message and identity that Berkshire Grown has been able to cultivate and support.

Policy FA3.2: Link economic development and infrastructure investments to agriculture economy.

Strategy A: Conduct Site Assessment and Readiness for Major Food System Infrastructure Projects

Conduct a map based site assessment using a list of criteria to better ascertain the range of sites available countywide for food infrastructure sites to help inform discussions.

Strategy B: Work with Individual Communities on Site Readiness and Planning

Using the base map and list of site optimal criteria, municipalities will be able to understand what is possible in their boundaries. If municipalities would like to advance site readiness for food system projects, farm and economic development entities should support as possible the project moving forward.

Strategy C: Explore Ways to Better Link Region with Education System for Professional Training on Agriculture and Food System Skills

There are a number of training programs and class options within a 2 hour drive from the region, including vocational technology program, Berkshire Community College, SUNY Cobleskill, UMASS

Amherst school of Agriculture (incl. hospitality), and Greenfield Community College. Connecting farmers and those aspiring to other careers within the food system to these resources, and perhaps increasing the number of programs offered within the region or for working students, can help increase accessibility.

Policy FA3.3: Link farms and food businesses to small farm business supports.

Strategy A: Consolidate Farm Business Program Marketing Through Berkshire Grown and MDAR

There are a number of programs for farm businesses, yet farmers can find it difficult to find and differentiate between the different products and programs. Creating a one-stop shop by consolidating a list of all programs through Berkshire Grown and MDAR can help farmers find and use valuable resources like Common Capital, The Carrot Project, Franklin County CDC as well as MDAR's many programs and resources.

Strategy B: Hold Regular Business Trainings for Farmers

Business trainings geared for agricultural businesses are different from those that may be offered to other types of local businesses if they are to really focus in on sector needs and sector-specific financing options. Bringing regular business trainings, perhaps starting with a financing session, for farmers will help startup farms, growing farms, and farms in transition to a new or diversified product base.

Strategy C: Work with Local Banks to Diversify Financial Tools

Offer information regarding Federal Housing Administration loans to compete with the farm credit offerings and provide more options. USDA is another agency offering loans to farmers.

GOAL FA4: Facilitate more value-added products getting to market.

Policy FA4.1: Investigate and advance slaughter facility planning and development.

Strategy A: Hold a Mobile Unit Field Trip for Interested Farmers

Discussions of slaughter at panel events and farmer dinners during Keep Berkshires Farming helped grow interest in mobile slaughter units as a more flexible and small-scale alternative to a bricks and mortar facility. Glynwood, in Cold Spring, New York, has a mobile unit and welcomes groups to take an educational tour. Initial interest and sign-ups should be followed up in order to organize a field trip of interested farmers in the region.

Strategy B: Education and Outreach to Gain Farmer Support

Any expansion of local slaughter capacity will require a high level of coordination and communication between farmers. The first step is to bring people to the table to garner interest and ensure that any interested farmer has the opportunity to participate.

Strategy C: Establish a Meat Producers Association

If a group of farmers wish to explore the feasibility of local slaughter capacity, they will need to formally establish a meat producers association committed to working through details such as negotiating aggregation of supply and potential growth in supply, within local farms or expansion into other areas outside of the county to ensure a local slaughter facility would be economically viable.

Strategy D: Update and Consolidate Prior Feasibility Study Work

A number of meat processing feasibility studies have been conducted in the region. Before initiating any such study in the Berkshire region, these studies should be reviewed as a means of building on lessons learned, taking into account demand and resources from the broader region (Pioneer Valley, northern Connecticut, southern Vermont and New York), including early identification of potential roadblocks uncovered in prior efforts.

Strategy E: Collaborate to Secure Financing

If the collaborative of meat producers forms, completes the prior steps and wishes to continue moving forward, the collaborative will need to secure financing to support the various steps from assessment to feasibility to any construction. USDA Value-Added Producers grant should be considered.

Policy FA4.2: Investigate and advance value-added dairy capacity of the region.**Strategy A: Explore Small-Scale Value-Added Dairy Enterprises to Keep More Local Milk Local**

A 2003 study commissioned by Berkshire Grown as well as survey findings of the Keep Berkshires Farming effort found strong demand for value-added dairy. Given the region's still strong dairy presence but with small dairy farms under increasing strain, advancing the idea and practice of value-added dairy processing is a critically important measure to support farm viability while also meeting local food demand. While Keep Berkshires Farming survey responses did not identify interest in operating a value-added business by existing dairy farmers, this could be an opportunity for a food business entrepreneur to purchase milk from area dairies to produce a value-added product such as cheese or yogurt.

Strategy B: Assess Feasibility of Local Dairy Collaborative

Current small dairy farms in the county are struggling due to low milk prices relative to operating costs. Making non-milk truck options more viable has potential to remove the middleman, make value-added processing more viable, and enable small farms to explore bottling or other options that alone would be infeasible.

Policy FA4.3: Explore feasibility of non-food processing needs.**Strategy: Evaluate Fiber and Wood Product Potential**

Value-added products for non-food items help support local farms, who are often diversified, as well as local artisans who contribute to the culture and community of the Berkshires. A resource for support and potential collaboration around economic development for wood-based businesses is the Massachusetts Woodlands Institute, a non-profit organization with a mission to (a) maintain the environment and character of the woodlands of Massachusetts; (b) conserve and enhance forest resources; and (c) foster community economic development.

GOAL FA5: Create better linkages between farmers and markets.

Policy FA5.1: Develop a countywide food hub at an appropriate scale for the region.

Strategy A: Feasibility Study

There is seemingly strong demand for a food hub in the region, but a full feasibility study is needed to assess use, range of services, and potential locations.

Strategy B: Collaborate to Secure Site and Financing

If the feasibility study yields positive results and an entity comes forward wishing to advance the concept, partners should work to link this person with the right local actors and supports to help facilitate the development of a food hub.

Strategy C: Build a Berkshire Brand to Market Locally Grown and Produced Goods

Once a food hub has begun to gain momentum, and perhaps also as more value added products hit the market from the Berkshires, collaboratively marketing them under a brand becomes more viable, particularly in accessing external markets such as New York City.

Policy FA5.2: Continue Farm-Buyer Connections via Berkshire Grown.

Strategy A: Continue Farm-Buyer Meetings to Generate New Relationships

Berkshire Grown has held successful farmer-buyer meetings annually to help develop contracts and purchasing relationships. This is a critical function in helping to sustain and expand the number of local purchase connections to support a local food system.

Strategy B: Continue On-line Product Matching between Restaurants and Farmers

Berkshire Grown hosts an informal online product-buyer matching whereby farmers can post supply currently available and restaurants and other food buyers can post what they're looking for, which can yield matches and increase local food use in restaurants and local retail outlets and institutions. This online system should be continued, with any adjustments necessary based on use, and promoted to both producers and buyers.

3. HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS

A defining characteristic of a sustainable food system is access to local, healthy food for all residents. Access to healthy food can be limited by income, transportation, and knowledge. The following section reviews the local emergency food system, its demand and performance in recent years, and some innovative programs that have emerged across the region to help fight hunger in our communities.

FOOD INSECURITY IN BERKSHIRE COUNTY

As defined by the United State Department of Agriculture, food security means access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food **insecurity** refers to the lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods. Food insecure households are not necessarily food insecure all the time. Food insecurity may reflect a household's need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.

Feeding America is a national hunger-relief charity. A 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, Feeding America's mission is to feed America's hungry through a nationwide network of member food banks and engage the country in the fight to end hunger. Feeding America also provides an annual report describing food insecurity by county, for total population and children. It also looks at the proportion of food insecure individuals who are not eligible for federal food assistance. Their methodology uses a combination of population surveys, American Community Survey (ACS) data about median family incomes for households with children, child poverty rates, home ownership rates and race and ethnic demographics among children, and unemployment rates from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on unemployment rates.

In 2012, Feeding America research showed that almost 49 million Americans, including 15.9 million children, nationwide are food-insecure, meaning that for much of the year, they do not always know where their next meal is coming from.

The Feeding America analysis estimates 14,200 people in Berkshire County are food insecure, a food insecurity rate of 10.9%. This includes an estimated 4,350 children (under 18). Of the total population, 29% are above the SNAP threshold of 200% poverty, meaning they are not eligible for federal food assistance. In 2012, there was a total food budget shortfall of \$8,318,000. At an estimated cost per meal of \$3.34, an estimated 2,490,419 meals were missed by Berkshire County residents.

Table FA4: Berkshire County Food Insecurity

Population	130,886
Food Insecurity Rate	10.9%
Estimated Number of Food Insecure Individuals	14,200
Percent below SNAP threshold of 200% Poverty	71%
Percent above SNAP threshold of 200% poverty	29%
Child (Under 18) food insecurity rate	17.2%
Estimated Number of Food Insecure Children	4,350

Source: Feeding America, 2012

Income Barriers

Poverty is the most significant barrier to having access to enough healthy food. Individuals and families with limited or fixed incomes may have less access to a car to access healthy foods or lack financial means to purchase raw ingredients versus the affordable, processed foods easy to find at corner stores or smaller grocery stores. According to US Census 2010 results, almost 15,000 Berkshire County residents lived in poverty.

Table FA5: Berkshire County Population in Poverty

Total Population	131,221	Percent of Total Population
Total Population in Poverty	14,916	11.4%
Children in Poverty (5 and Under)	1,578	1.20%
Children in Poverty (Under 18)	2,960	2.25%
Seniors in Poverty	1,806	1.4%

Source: 2010 US Census

Income levels are important determinants to food assistance programs. Use of some of the more common food assistance programs are shown below.

Food Subsidy Programs

WIC	SNAP
The WIC Program provides supplemental foods, health care referrals and nutrition education at no cost to low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding post-partum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk.	The largest food subsidy program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, provides monthly food credits on EBT cards to income eligible households. Monthly amounts vary by household size and can be used to buy eligible items through participating vendors or retailers.
Berkshire Enrollment: 2,795 (2011)	Berkshire Enrollment: 6,321 (2011)

Sources: WIC; Berkshire Health Systems; SNAP; US Census American Community Survey 2007-2011

Free Community Meal Sites

A total of 56 food pantry or meal sites are in the region, mostly clustered in North Adams, Pittsfield and Great Barrington. All are supplied with food through the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts as well as private donations. Those surveyed report that, while they have enough resources to meet need, their food budgets are tight and they have little flexibility in what food they get, which drives what they can prepare and serve. All have seen increases in need that they are struggling to meet.

Table FA6: Food Distributed via Community Meal Sites or Meal Services

Meals on Wheels (2013)	212,173
Pounds of Food Distributed (2011)	1,161,498
Soup Kitchen, Meals Distributed (2013)	43,767
Total Meals Distributed	146,916

Source: Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

According to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, the number of total meals distributed increased by 58% between 2009 and 2011, or from 92,867 meals to 146,916. The total pounds of food distributed also increased, up 63% between 2007 and 2011. See Appendix B for a map of community meal sites.

Distance and Mobility Barriers

Distance to a grocery store is another barrier. Whether someone lacks access to a car due to financial, physical, or age reasons, it is difficult to access healthy food without one in a highly auto-dependant rural region. This includes seniors and children who cannot drive and may be unable or have difficulty preparing food on their own.

Distance

There are four USDA recognized food deserts in the Berkshire region. USDA defines a food desert as an urban neighborhood or rural community without ready access to fresh, healthy and affordable food. Food deserts are identified through two key characteristics: census tracts having a poverty rate of 20 percent or greater or a median family income at or below 80 percent of the area median income and having at least 500 people and/or at least 33% of the census tract's population living more than one mile from a super market or grocery store. The four food deserts in Berkshire County are in North Adams and Pittsfield, with one in North Adams and three in Pittsfield.

Table FA7: USDA Food Deserts and Neighborhoods Affected

Community	# USDA Food Deserts	Neighborhoods Affected
North Adams	1	State Street, South Church Street, Braytonville, West Shaft Road, Church Street, Greylock Mountain
Pittsfield	3	Newell, Coltsville, Parkside, Elm, Williams, Dalton Division, Yankee Orchards, Churchill, Hancock, Highland Avenue, Taconic, Onoto, Watson, Pontoosuc, Oak Hill, Lakeview Terrace, Elizabeth, Southwest

Source: USDA, Sustainable Berkshires

It should be noted that the food desert designation was designed with urban areas in mind and so the total population density of the census tract factors into the designation, which is also why the two cities rise to the top. There is a formula for a rural food dessert, which was looked at as part of this effort, however it is a distance-based formula (10 miles from a grocery store) which, simply using a 10-mile radius almost the entire county was covered, and certainly all populated areas. As anyone in the Berkshires knows, there is a difference between the distance “as the crow flies” and driving, particularly in rural areas. Anecdotal evidence would suggest good portions of the county’s rural areas lack easy access to a grocery store. These areas may have a general store, but typically that would have a very limited selection, especially of any fresh produce.

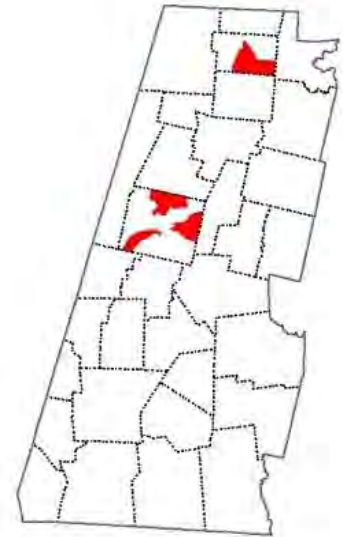


Figure FA25: Food Deserts in Berkshire County

*A 2013 opening of a Super Wal-Mart has helped resolve food access issues in North Adams.

One way to augment fresh food retail access is through farmers markets, and there are four food subsidy programs that can be accepted at farmers markets to help keep costs down:

- **WIC-FMNP:** Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides WIC participants with FMNP checks or coupons in addition to their regular WIC benefits. These checks or coupons are used to buy eligible foods from farmers at farmers' markets and/or roadside stands that have been approved by the State agency to accept FMNP coupons. The farmers or farmers' market managers then submit the redeemed FMNP checks or coupons to the bank or State agency for reimbursement.
- **WIC -F&V:** Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Fruit and Vegetable (F&V) Program
- **SNAP/EBT:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits can be used at a farmers market. The farmers market needs to apply for an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) machine to accept the SNAP benefits, which can take several months.
- **Senior FMNP:** Provides low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture (CSA) programs.

Table FA8: Farmers Markets Accepting Meal Assistance Program Vouchers

Communities by Region	Food Subsidy Programs Accepted			
	WIC - FMNP	WIC - F&V	SNAP/EBT	Senior FMNP
North County				
Williamstown				
North Adams	✓		✓	✓
Adams	✓			✓
Central County				
Lanesborough	✓			✓
Lee				
Lenox	✓			✓
Pittsfield	✓		✓	✓
South County				
Great Barrington - Fairgrounds	✓			✓
Great Barrington - CHP	✓	✓	✓	✓
Otis		✓		✓
West Stockbridge				

Source: Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, MDAR

Overcoming Mobility Barriers – Bringing Food to Vulnerable Populations

Meals on Wheels

Another challenge facing the Berkshire region in terms of food security is the growing number of senior or elderly residents. Older residents with health or limited mobility may face greater challenges in accessing fresh and healthy foods. The region has 1,806 seniors in poverty, and this figure is likely to

grow in coming years. According to Elder Services of Berkshire County, an average of 214,379 Meals on Wheels has been distributed per year (between 2008 and 2012).

Free and Reduced Lunch

Children are another population vulnerable to food insecurity, and childhood hunger can have long-term implications on individuals, families and communities. Hunger and poor nutrition can have negative consequences in the physical and educational development of a child, impacting how they perform in school, how far they go in school, and later, how they perform in the workplace. Childhood hunger or poor nutrition can lead to other health issues such as obesity or diabetes. According to the 2010 US Census, the region has 4,538 children in poverty. Schools offer free and reduced lunch programs for low-income children, and some also serve breakfast. In 2012, an estimated 4,350 Berkshire children were considered food insecure, with a child food insecurity rate of 17.2%. For some children, the free and reduced lunches (and breakfasts) may be the only balanced meal they have, and anecdotal stories from teachers and social service providers tell how children return to school on Monday having missed meals over the weekend. There were 6,788 free or reduced cost lunches served in the Berkshire region in 2012.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

An Overtaxed System Facing Rising Demand

Faith-based and civic organizations provide much support to the hungry of Berkshire County, but all report that they need more funding and volunteer capacity to help meet all need. The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts plays a large role in providing food to Berkshire meal sites and food programs.

Creative Local Programs Helping to Increase Emergency Food Resources

A number of community-based programs and initiatives have emerged to help the local emergency food system keep up with demand so that Berkshire residents don't have to go hungry:

Share the Bounty	Helping farmers + helping hungry families = the goal of Share the Bounty. Berkshire Grown conducts fundraising to support its Share the Bounty program that purchases CSA shares from farms for local food pantries and kitchens and WIC participants and also subsidizes shares for family use.
Gideon's Garden	Gideon's Garden, a program sponsored by Saint James Episcopal Church and Taft Farm in Great Barrington, is a place where young people (grade school and up) plant, tend, and harvest food for local food pantries and community meals programs.
Grow Extra (Grow a Row)	The Grow Extra initiative of Northern Berkshire Community Coalition's Mass in Motion program and Hoosac Harvest (see below) is a variation of the national Grow a Row program and works with farmers, organizations and home gardeners to grow extra vegetables in the summer and donate to food pantries.
Hoosac Harvest	This group is a highly organized volunteer group that began working to bring Berkshire Grown's Share the Bounty Program to the northern Berkshires. It has since continued to work on food and nutrition issues in the eight northern Berkshire communities. It works to raise money to subsidize the CSA share to make it a more financially viable option for a low-income household. It works directly with Square Roots farm which, once operated on leased land in Clarksburg, now has a permanent farm location in Lanesborough. Hoosac Harvest also works to conduct gleanings to increase the supply of food at community meal sites.
Co-Act Gardens	Co-Act, a community based organization, works with area churches to grow food in various community garden sites, as well as their own garden plot, harvesting from the sites and delivering produce to community meal sites. Activity currently focuses in Pittsfield and Great Barrington.
Community Garden Programs	The two cities have community garden programs. In Pittsfield, the Westside Neighborhood Initiative organizes gardens at school sites and some lots, growing produce to donate to community meal sites. In North Adams, the Growing Healthy Garden Program operates a number of gardens for use by residents and community meal sites and is working to pair the gardens with nutrition education and cooking classes.

Weekends Lack Meal Coverage

Coverage for meal sites or pantries is concentrated to weekdays, in part simply because of their church-based nature and the need for churches to focus on conducting their religious services on weekends. School-based programs for youth also have gaps on weekends, holidays and vacations, when they cannot access free or reduced lunches. Only three communities in the Berkshires have summer meal programs for youth: Pittsfield, Adams, and North Adams.

GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOAL FA6: Build a year-round local food system.

Policy FA6.1: Explore the potential for expanding local value-added processing capacity for personal and group use for use over the winter.

Strategy A: Inventory and Survey Sites with Kitchen Facilities

It would be helpful to do an assessment of facilities (Granges, churches, schools, etc.) having certified commercial kitchens and determine if there are times when they are not in use and could be rented out. Municipalities have been gradually scaling down use of older school facilities with full kitchens as the youth enrollments decline, reducing the number of schools needed. Churches have also been closing and congregations consolidating. Closed churches looking for a reuse option may want to explore how the kitchen factors in. Congregations are also struggling with high heat and building maintenance costs. Kitchen rentals could provide an alternate revenue stream to assist them.

Policy FA6.2: Support farms extending their seasons for production later into the fall and winter months.

Strategy A: Offer Year-Round Farmers Market

A repeated theme in the survey findings with residents and farmers was for year-round farmers markets. Berkshire Grown has, for several years, held very successful holiday farmers markets in November and December, but these are special events and don't cover the entire winter. In winter 2014-2015, Berkshire Grown will experiment with monthly markets over the holiday weekends in January, and February. At the same time, the Pittsfield Farmers Market is looking to extend their weekly May-October market into the winter with a monthly market November-April. Combined these will hopefully offer enough market frequency to make it viable for vegetable farmers to produce over the winter and will be a start towards building year-round market activity.

Strategy B: Continue to Link with Season Extension Trainings and Financial Assistance Programs

Some farmers, particularly in South County, have been gradually implementing greenhouse and hoop house infrastructure to support season extension. The agricultural entities active in the region can support season extension with trainings and promoting available grant and loan resources to help fund the upfront costs.

GOAL FA7: Expand access to healthy, local food in all Berkshire schools.

Policy FA7.1: Scale up farm-to-institution programs in all Berkshire schools.

Strategy A: Form a Working Group of Dining Service Managers to Meet with Massachusetts Farm to Institution on How to Best Implement the Program

At the farm-to-institution panel event, school dining service managers expressed an interest in learning more, sharing best practices and getting real-time practical strategies to employ to help implement a successful farm-to-school program. A group meeting with state Farm to Institution program staff and their peers across the county that is focused on the practical steps and details involved would help facilitate the implementation of the program locally.

Strategy B: Host a Farm to Institution Buyers and Producers Matching Event (Berkshire Grown and MA Farm to School)

Currently, Berkshire Grown hosts producer and buyers events for stores, restaurants, institutions, and farmers' market managers to help match local farm producers with markets for their product for the upcoming season. A separate event to help match major institution buyers (including schools, hospitals, and other large facilities) with farmers could be initiated. While this may not overcome the supply, aggregation, and distribution need for a hub, it could help build relationships that could facilitate new markets for local farms large enough to produce volumes needed at institutions, or offer an opportunity to aggregate with other farms as necessary.

Strategy C: Work with Superintendents, Principals, School Committees, Teachers and Dining Services to Link Food, Farms and Gardening to Curricula

Past farm to school work has illustrated that a successful program takes unified commitment from parents, teachers and staff, and administrators. It generally takes several years for students to acclimate to the new, healthier food options and short-term food waste by the kids can deflate adult support for the program, particularly with the added costs involved. However, linking food with curricula is one practice that helps to more quickly generate youth interest in the produce being served, particularly for the younger students (Kindergarten).

Policy FA7.2: Work with parents and kids to improve nutrition literacy and cooking know-how.

Strategy A: Partner with Health Care Providers and Mass-In-Motion Programs to Offer Nutrition and Cooking Classes

One barrier to healthy food access is a lack of food literacy – both in knowing a broader range of produce and then knowing how to prepare it. Cooking classes, farmers' market tours, and other nutrition programming can help introduce people to healthy food options

Strategy B: Link Local Culinary Programs to Community Service Projects for Teaching Others

Berkshire Community College and some high schools (e.g., Mt. Everett) have or could start culinary programs. Students could work directly with the community as a community service or applied learning component of these programs to help improve nutrition and cooking know-how in their communities.

Strategy C: Encourage Creation of School Gardens with Parent Involvement

School garden success is largely tied to a committed teacher, parent or group of students. This sustained commitment can be difficult to maintain over the long term. However, one avenue to help support a sustainable garden program is to go beyond gardening and make lasting links to curriculum. For example integrate food policy as an example of political process, soil and plant health as part of biology and garden settings as still life models for art classes, etc. Another example of sustaining these type programs is to make the benefits very visible both in the production of food for school cafeterias and through community events to celebrate, cook, and eat what kids have grown (models: Fertile Ground & Lanesborough Elementary School).

GOAL FA8: Expand access to locally grown foods for low- to moderate-income households.

Policy FA8.1: Maintain and expand programs that provide access to local, healthy foods for low-and fixed-income households.

Strategy A: Expand the Funding and Reach of Current Programs Like Gideon's Garden, Grow a Row, and Share the Bounty

These programs are great examples of programs working to bring fresh local produce to low-income households.

Strategy B: Offer a Fresh Food Mobile in Areas Designated as USDA Food Deserts (Pittsfield and North Adams) or Neighborhoods with High Transit Dependence

(Model – Enterprise Farm Mob Market delivers to Springfield; potential funding source: Common Capital; Western MA Food Bank may also want to be involved)

Strategy C: Work with Farmers Market Managers to Ensure All Markets Accept and Promote and That They Accept TANF, SNAP and WIC Benefits

Not all markets accept food subsidy programs. If the region is to support nutrition and food access, programs should be accepted at more, if not all markets to improve access and inclusivity at farmers markets. MDAR holds farmers market manager workshops for assistance and training in this area.

Strategy D: Promote the Use of Programs that Double TANF SNAP and WIC Credits at Farmers Markets

Wholesome Wave is an organization that doubles SNAP benefits used at farmers markets. This double buying power goes a long way to remove barriers to healthy food for low-income households. While the current program is not accepting new market partners this year, it may open it up in the future or some other group, even a local group, might organize to help provide this function. The WIC program promotes use of its benefits at local markets as well. Individual farmers markets could hold fundraisers to support double SNAP benefits.

Strategy E: Work with Neighborhood Groups to Build Robust Community Gardens in Low Income Neighborhoods and Affordable Housing Developments with Cooking Class Component

Community gardens have the potential to improve food access, foster community interactions, increase activity levels, and reduce blighted conditions from vacant parcels in urban areas. However, more often than not, past attempts at gardens have not been able to cultivate and sustain community “ownership” of the gardens where the operation and maintenance is adopted by those who use it. There have also been problems with low or inconsistent use which results in food rotting on the vine or weed growth. Some part of that link is in community building and the other piece is in food education with the thought that if people really want the produce they can grow because they know how to use it and understand its health benefits, they will engage with the gardens in a different way. Some families are generations away from culinary practices that involved fresh produce (versus canned or ready-meals). Classes, and perhaps associated community meals, can help address both challenges.

4. FARMER EDUCATION, NETWORKING AND SUPPORT

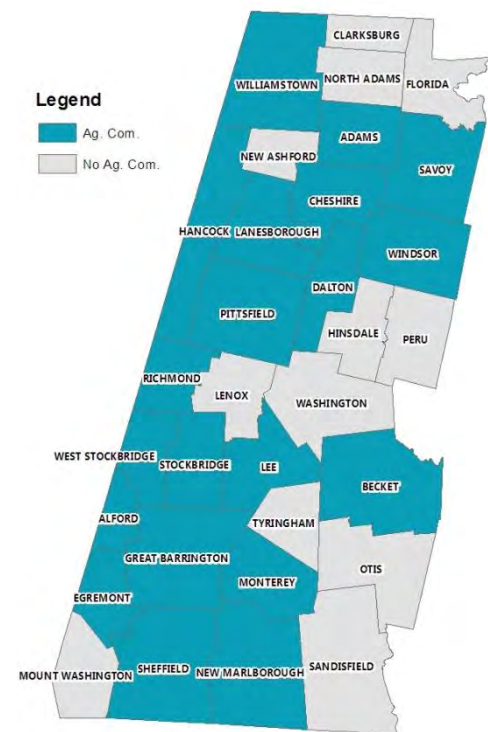
Support of local farming means supporting farmers as people and professionals through networking and training opportunities. It also means the community itself becomes more aware of farming practices and the value of local agriculture to the region. This section looks at ways municipalities can support their farmers, the host of groups working to provide technical assistance, training, and grant resources to farm businesses, and then recommends ways to augment or promote existing events and resources to support the farming community.

MUNICIPALITIES AND AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Commissions

Massachusetts communities interested in supporting agriculture have the option of starting an Agricultural Commission. These non-regulatory volunteer committees work on a range of policy and farm support activities and help represent agricultural interests and concerns within city or town government. Eighteen of the Berkshire's 32 communities have established Agricultural Commissions to date. The Massachusetts Association of Agricultural Commissions (MAAC) provides support to existing Commissions and assistance to towns interested in starting one.

Figure FA24: Municipalities with Agricultural Commissions



Right-To Farm Bylaws

Right-to-farm bylaws exist in one form or another in all 50 states. Their intent is to protect and encourage continued agriculture, promote agriculture-based economic opportunities, and protect farmlands within a town by allowing agricultural uses and related activities to function with minimal conflict with abutters and town agencies. Four communities in the Berkshires have adopted a right-to-farm bylaw: Adams, Egremont, New Marlborough, Savoy, and Sheffield. A model bylaw is available through the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

Farming Organizations Active in the Berkshire Region

Berkshire County



Berkshire Grown is perhaps the most recognizable local food and farming organization in the region. Berkshire Grown has raised the profile of local agriculture in the region through various special events, Holiday Farmers Markets, and its annual business to business directory and its guide to farms. Berkshire Grown also helps match farmers and business end-users through their networking events, supporting local food purchase and use that contributes to the bottom line of local farms.



The Berkshire Chapter of the Massachusetts Farm Bureau is the local representative of that statewide organization. In addition to lobbying for policy additions and changes at the state and federal levels to support small farms, the Farm Bureau provides farmers with access to insurance and other resources, as well as networking opportunities.

Local and Regional Land Trusts

In addition to these farm-centric organizations, there are also a number of land trusts who are invaluable partners in ensuring the sustainability and accessibility of local agricultural land over the long term. These include Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, Community Land Trust in the Southern Berkshires, and the Sheffield Land Trust.

Massachusetts and Western Mass



The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources has a number of western Massachusetts program representatives to help promote the array of MDAR programs in the state. Annually, this includes the invitation of the municipal Agricultural Commissions in western Massachusetts to a day-long retreat which includes training, capacity building, and resource sharing opportunities and a biannual marketing conference which provides networking opportunities and marketing assistance and training to farmers.



The Carrot Project is a non-profit organization working to foster a sustainable, diverse food system by supporting small and mid-sized farms and farm-related businesses through expanding accessible financing and increasing farm operations' ability to use it to build successful, ecologically and financially sustainable businesses. The Carrot Project partners with farmers, lenders, investors, donors, and farm service providers to create loan programs connected to technical assistance and strengthen the sector's knowledge base through research and information sharing.

Northeast and Beyond



Land for Good is a New England based non-profit organization working to connect farm seekers to farms and farmland, assisting in farm transfers to help keep the farm a farm for the next generation or operator, and helping landowners make land available for farming.



The Northeast Organic Farming Organization-Massachusetts works to educate farmers, landscapers and consumers on the benefits of local organic systems based on complete cycles, natural materials, and minimal waste for the health of individual beings, communities and the living planet. It holds two conferences each year offering organic workshops and trainings for farmers.



Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) conducts research into best practices and provides training to farmers to help improve farm viability and promote sustainable agriculture practices.



The New England Small Farm Institute operates throughout New England with a particular focus on young farmers. It provides new farmer training, helps match younger farmers with more experienced farm mentors, and operates the New England Land Link, an on-line site with a searchable listing of available farmland to help aspiring farmers find land.



The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service has a field office in Pittsfield, providing assistance to farmers and land owners. The office assists farmers in planning and implementing changes to their farm to further sustainability.

KEY ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Need and Desire for More Farmer Networking Opportunities

Social organizations formed around farming, such as a Grange in each community have had a diminished presence in contemporary times. Groups and organizations such as the Grange provided opportunities for farmers to get together regularly, discuss challenges and opportunities and share best practices, and build a network. Farmers involved in Keep Berkshires Farming enjoyed the farmer dinners, and the North group continues to hold their own farmer dinners. Existing organizations do offer support and social opportunities for farmers, including the Farm Bureau, Berkshire Grown and the Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA). These groups and gatherings offer more than just social opportunity; they offer opportunities for farmers to learn from experts in all aspects of the food system, as well as from each other.

Berkshire farmers identified opportunities for connecting with farmers to share skills either as a top priority or one with significant interest to continue through Keep Berkshires Farming. The following topics or issues were raised as meriting specific attention and further opportunity for training and support:

- Succession Planning
- Options for Preserving Farmland
- Grants and Technical Assistance
- Collaborative Infrastructure
- Educational Opportunities with Local Experts

Continuing to identify and plan opportunities for farmers to come together socially will help to grow the agricultural network of the Berkshires and forge new partnerships while strengthening existing relationships. Farmer dinners, farmers' markets, educational events, and community forums already happen. Farmers had other ideas, as well, including promoting community events such as an agricultural fair—like the annual fair in Adams, and like the fair once held at the Great Barrington fairgrounds. These events not only help promote regional agriculture as a part of regional identity, but also give farmers a chance to socialize and share their work with each other and the larger community.

Connecting People With Education and Training Resources

Training and support for new farmers as well as continuing education for farmers were a common theme in surveys and comments received at public meetings. However, there is no need or desire to reinvent the wheel. There are a wealth of training and conference opportunities organized through the various agricultural entities active in the state and region. The question then becomes what needs to be done to better inform people about these options. Programs such as “farm-sitting” would allow a farmer the time away to go to a longer training.

Education and training isn’t limited to the farming component of the Berkshire food system. One goal identified in all Keep Berkshire Farming action plans is the goal to promote food and agriculture awareness and education in Berkshire schools. A regional goal is to promote food and agriculture curriculum and job training in regional voc/tech schools and institutions of higher education. This would not only further awareness of local food and agriculture, but would also help meet a need identified by farmers of skilled farm labor. While some schools in the region do offer programs for students interested in an agricultural career, these options are not offered every semester. Also these programs are in voc/tech schools not located within the Berkshire region but in the Pioneer Valley, Connecticut or New York.

GOALS, POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

GOAL FA9: Work together to ensure regional goals and policy priorities are reflected in state and federal planning and legislation.

Policy FA9.1: Continue and expand existing activism networks.

Strategy A: Maintain Presence at State Ag Day

Regional farm and local food and health advocates have organized informally to promote and attend State Ag Day in Boston. This is a great networking and policy discussion opportunity and should be continued.

Strategy B: Farm Bureau Policy Advocacy

The Massachusetts Farm Bureau, including the active local chapter, is a great resource for farm networking, support, and policy advocacy. The local chapter should continue to get involved with dinner events and hosting policy discussions to support civic advocacy follow-through to support changes identified in this plan. Also the local chapter should be engaged as new topics and issues emerge that are important to the health and competitiveness of small farms in the state and national food system.

Policy FA9.2: Ensure region is well-represented in state food policy and planning.

Strategy A: Participate in State Planning Process

The state is about to begin a planning process to develop a statewide food and agriculture plan. The region should participate in this process as events are planned to help ensure the work of Keep Berkshires Farming and the resulting goals, policies, and strategies are reflected in and supported by the new state policy document. This is particularly true of any state or federal level policy changes or additions desired to support a more robust and competitive local food system.

Strategy B: Ensure Consistent County Representation on the Massachusetts Food Policy Council

The county currently has no representation on the state Food Policy Council, although there are some representatives on the advisory council. The region should work to gain and maintain representation to ensure Berkshire interests and farms are represented in larger discussions.

GOAL FA10: Municipalities that support agriculture and local food.

Policy FA10.1: Zoning and bylaw amendments to support agriculture.

Definitions of farming in local bylaws and ordinances should be broad, to encompass the diversity and continuing evolution of Agriculture. The following are examples of bylaws and ordinances that municipalities could consider to support active agriculture:

Strategy A: Right to Farm Bylaws

One of the most simple and concrete formal actions municipalities can take to support local farms is to pass a right to farm bylaw emphasizing the importance of farming to the community and affirming the rights of farmers to continue their businesses as new uses and neighbors come and go over time.

Strategy B: Allow Agricultural Processing As-of-Right in Industrial Districts

Agricultural processing can mean a higher-intensity use and not one appropriate to all areas, particularly if there is noise, lighting, or truck traffic impacts. Industrial zoned areas as well as old mill buildings, which may have a mill reuse overlay district, and an industrial past, may be suitable. Incorporating these uses as uses allowed by right in the zoning bylaws, can help streamline the permit approval processes by avoiding the more time-intensive special permit process.

Strategy C: Agricultural Preservation Overlay District

Towns/cities may want to consider adopting this zoning technique to preserve farmland in a designated area, by requiring clustering of residential properties on smaller lots.

Policy FA10.2: Support Agricultural Commissions in all communities.

Strategy A: Continue to Advance Farmer Training Through Ag Commission Workshops

MDAR supports annual meetings of Agricultural Commissions with training and networking time built into each schedule. The existence of this network sets a good footing to use these annual meetings and perhaps occasional special events to be organized during the winter to help bring more training options closer to home and build capacity of agricultural commissions to work with their elected officials and other municipal boards to support agriculture and food system business enterprises.

Strategy B: Form Agricultural Commissions in Municipalities with Active Agriculture

Not all municipalities currently have an agricultural commission. Those communities with an agricultural presence, or more urban environments where food markets, businesses, and urban farming might be more active, should consider starting a commission to represent and support local farmers, help guide food events, municipal practices and regulations. However, not all municipalities have the population or agricultural activity to support a robust commission that would not struggle with finding volunteers.

Strategy C: Educate Municipalities on the Role and Potential Activities of Agriculture Commissions

Some Agriculture Commissions struggle to gain traction in their communities. This is manifest by a lack of presence on municipal websites, mailboxes in town halls, and not being called in by other boards or committees with they are dealing with a farm related topic or issue. They typically operate without a budget and without a clear agenda of what they are to accomplish. This can lead to volunteer attrition resulting in Agricultural Commissions that don't meet and lack necessary membership. MAAC offers opportunities for networking with other active Agriculture Commissions to learn more about their accomplishments.

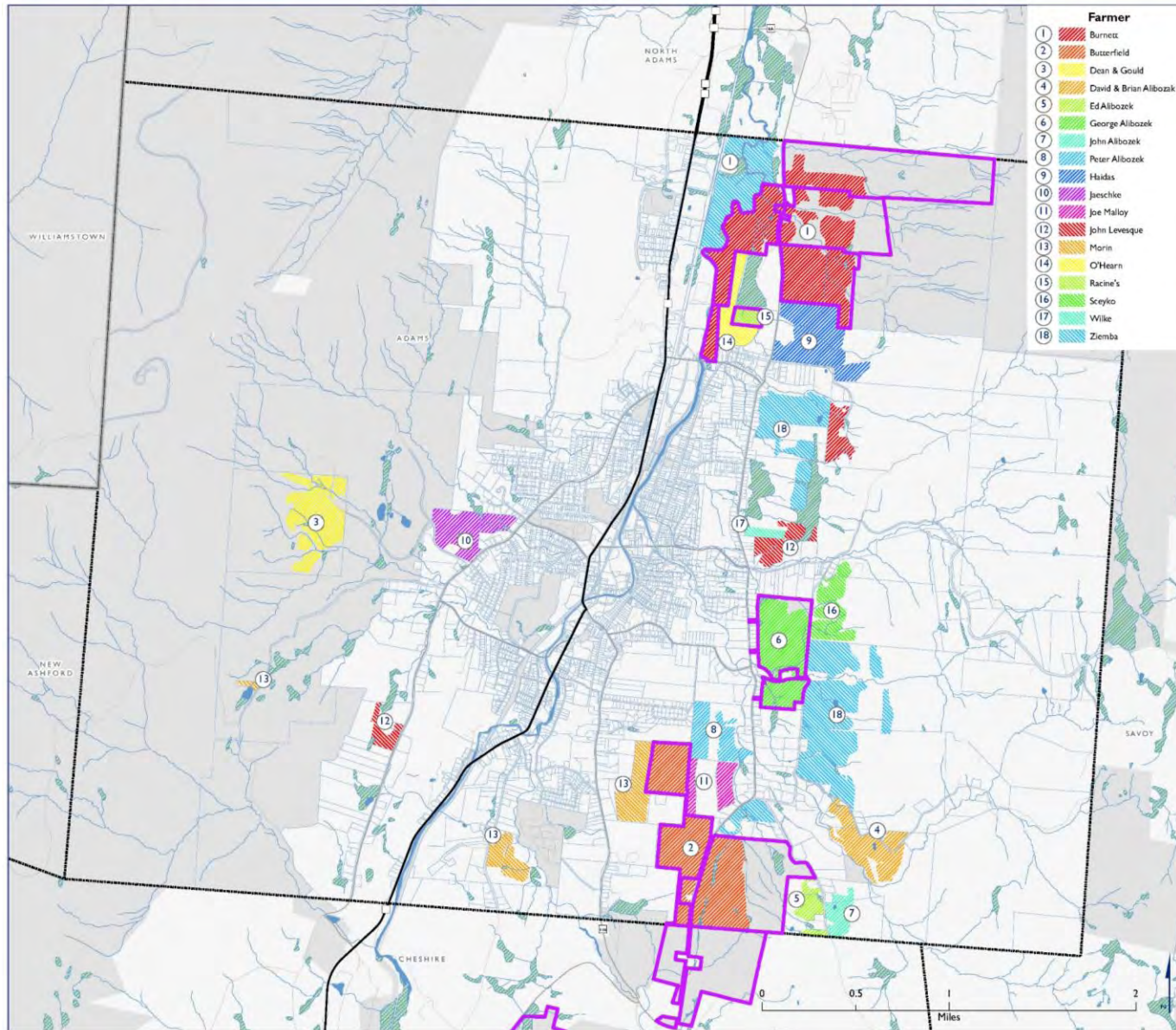
Appendices

Local Food and Agriculture Element

- A:** Community Farm Maps
- B:** Farm — Food Resource Maps

FARMS

ADAMS



Keep Berkshires Farming

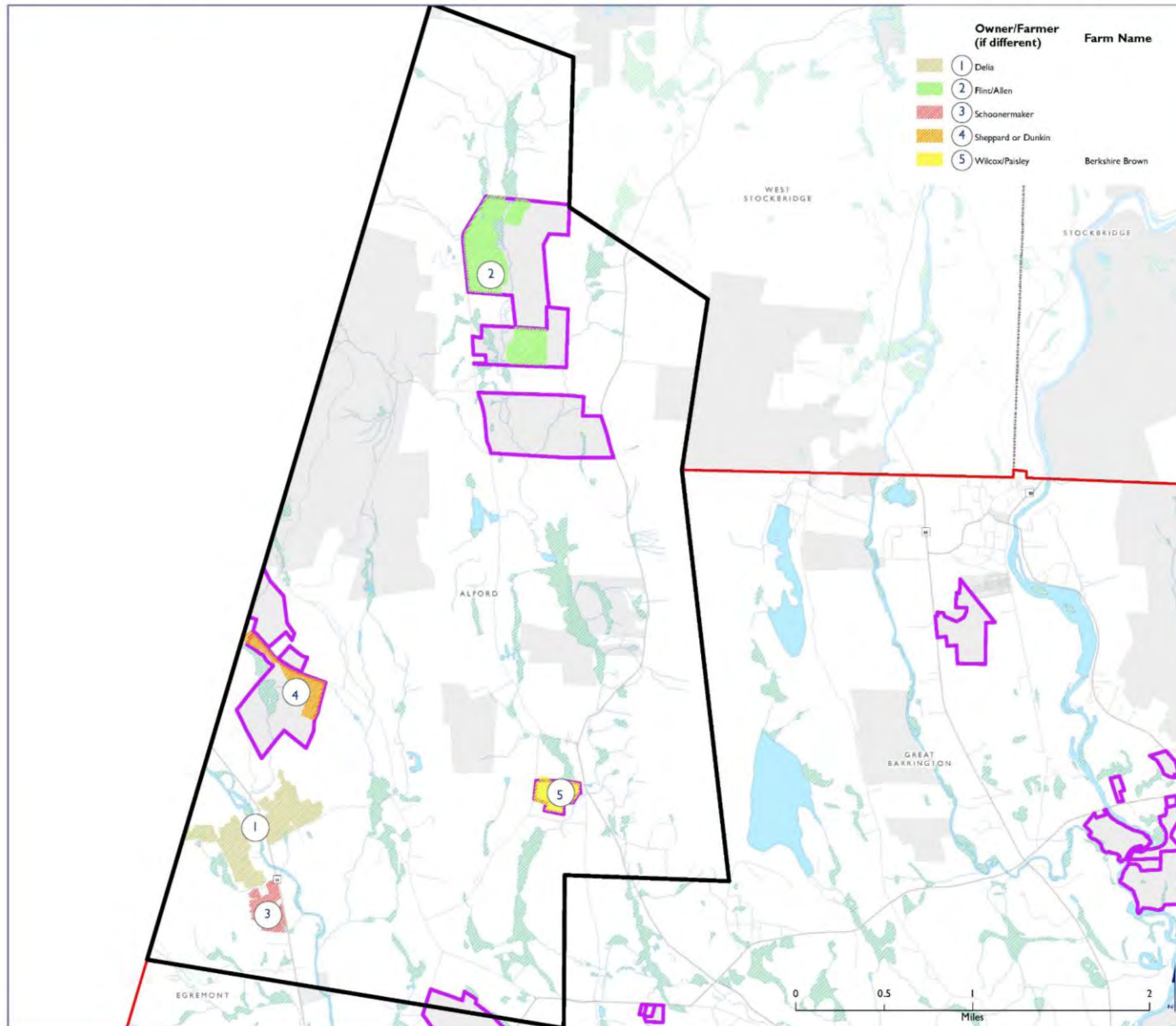


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FARMS

ALFORD

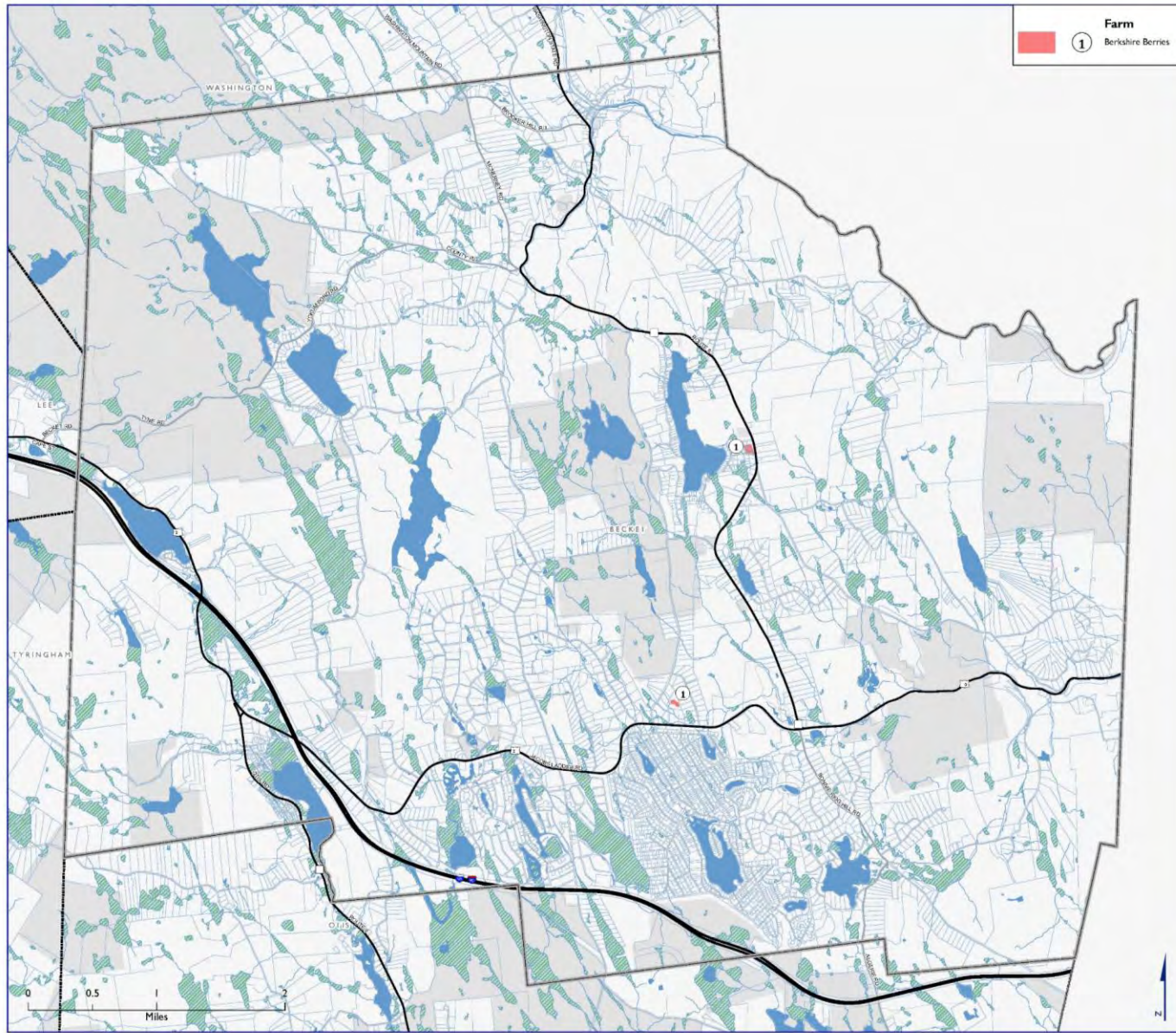


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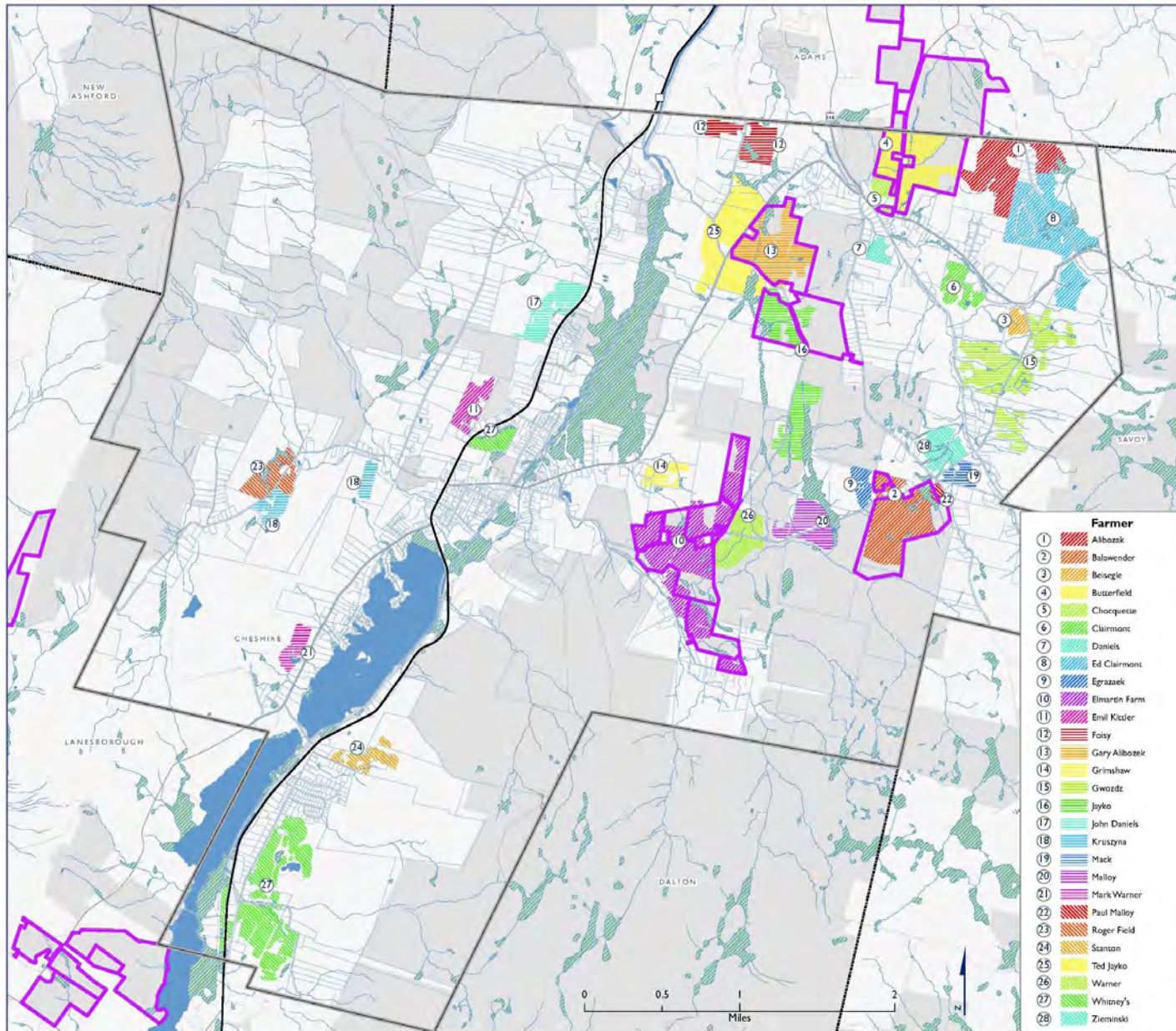


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CHESHIRE



Keep Berkshires Farming



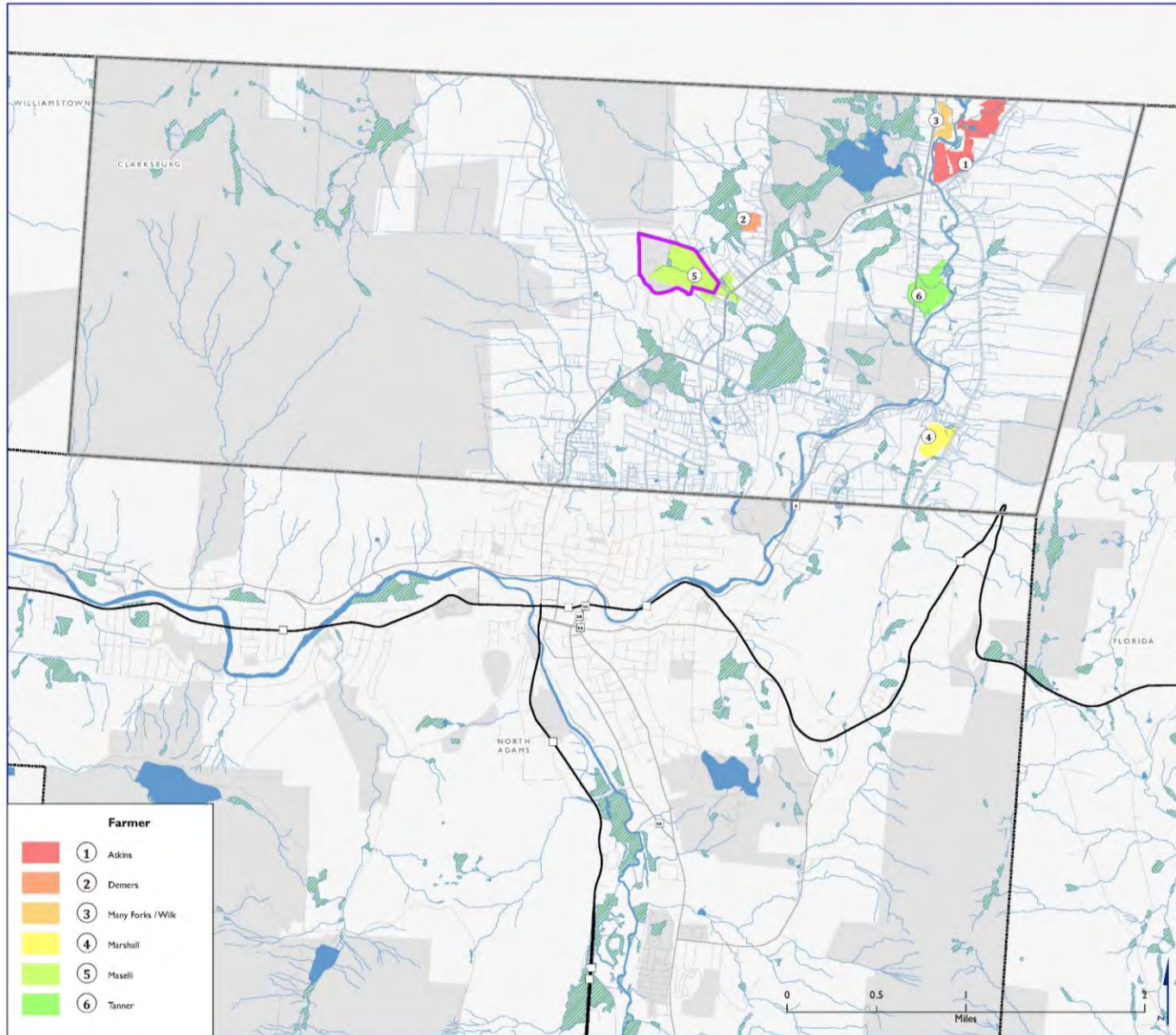
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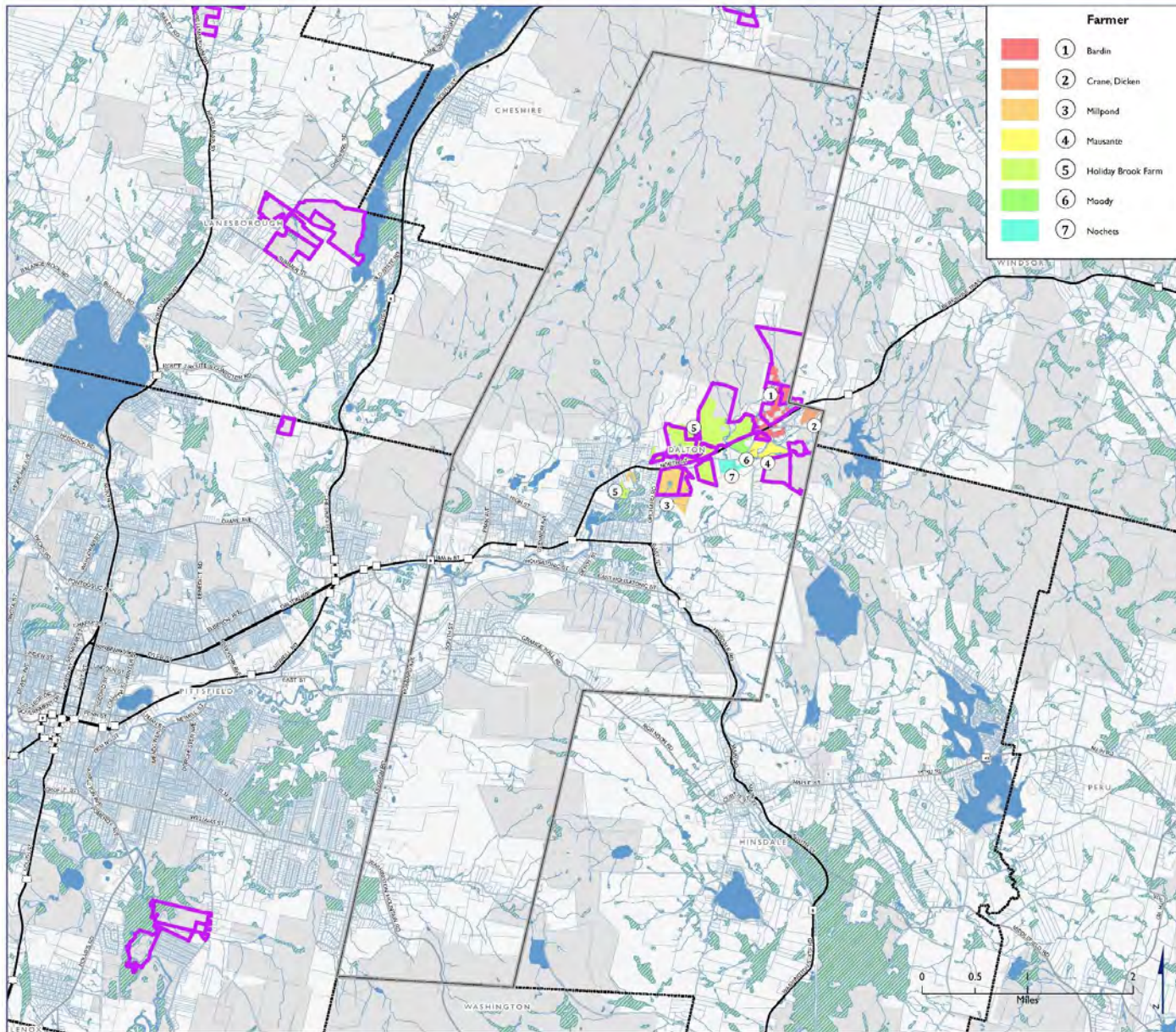
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FARMS

DALTON

Local Food and Agriculture Element



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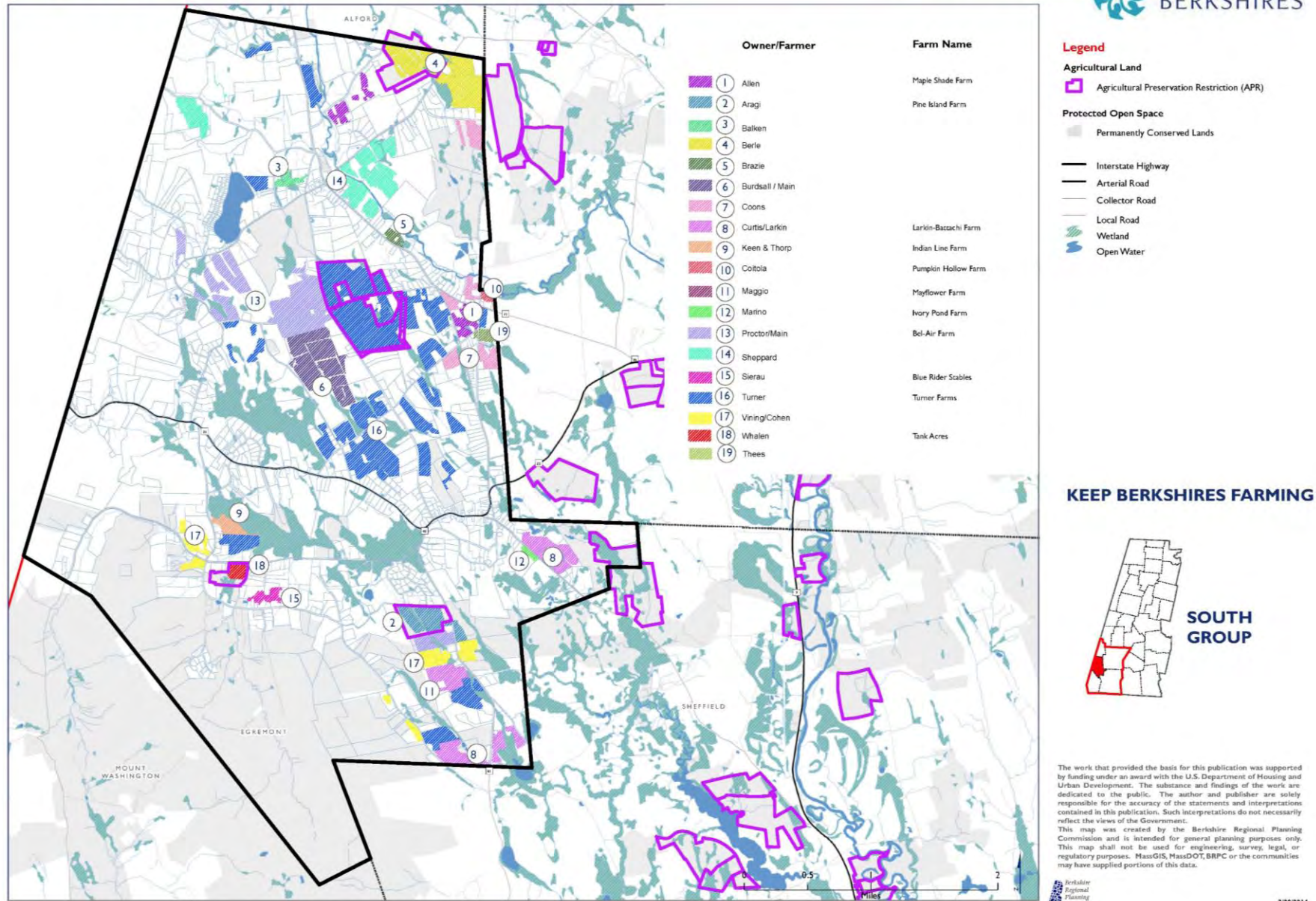


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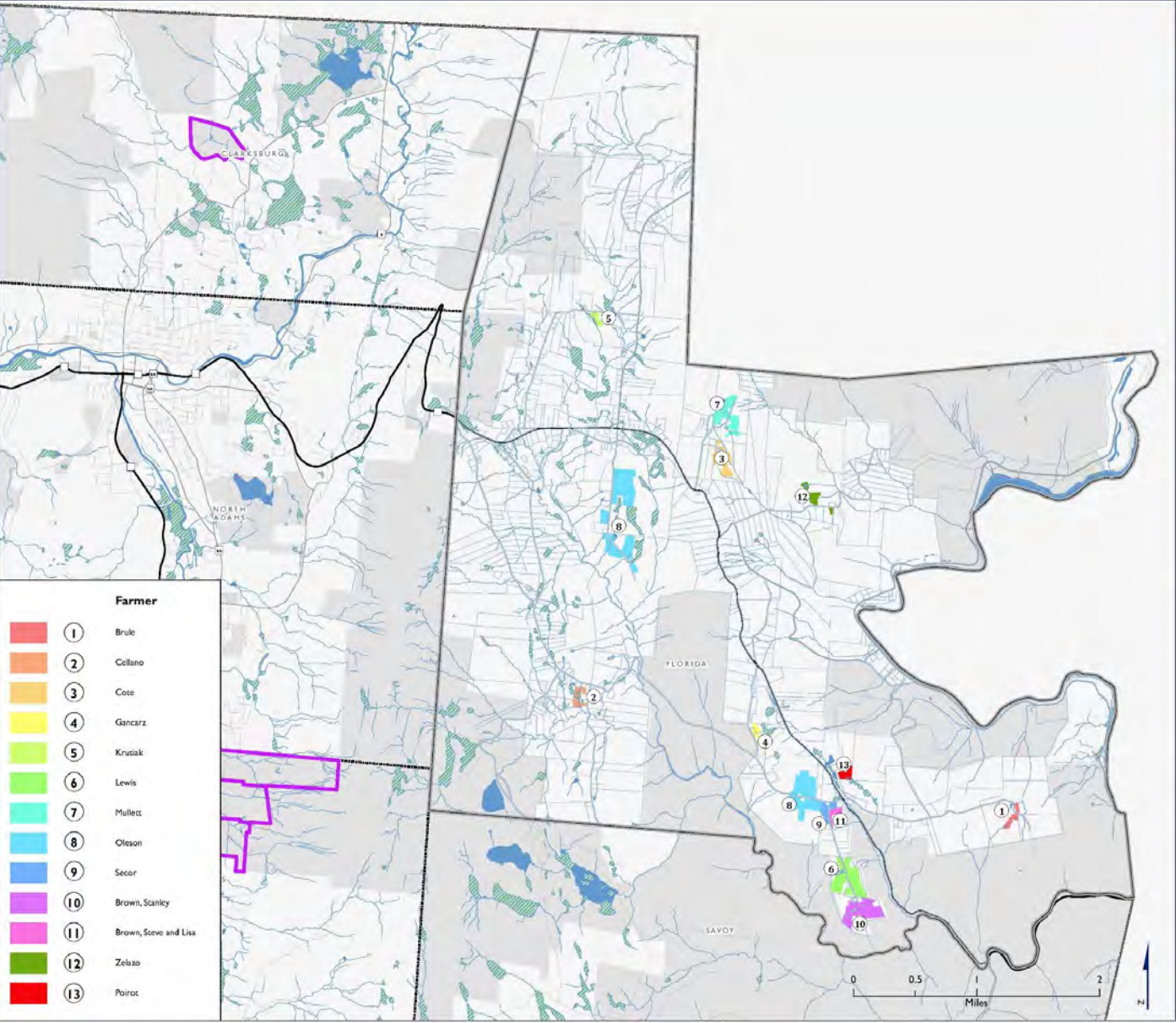
Berkshire Regional Planning Commission

3/20/2014



FARMS

FLORIDA



- Legend**
- Agricultural Land
 - Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
 - Protected Open Space
 - Permanently Conserved Lands
 - Interstate Highway
 - Arterial Road
 - Collector Road
 - Local Road
 - Wetland
 - Open Water

Keep Berkshires Farming

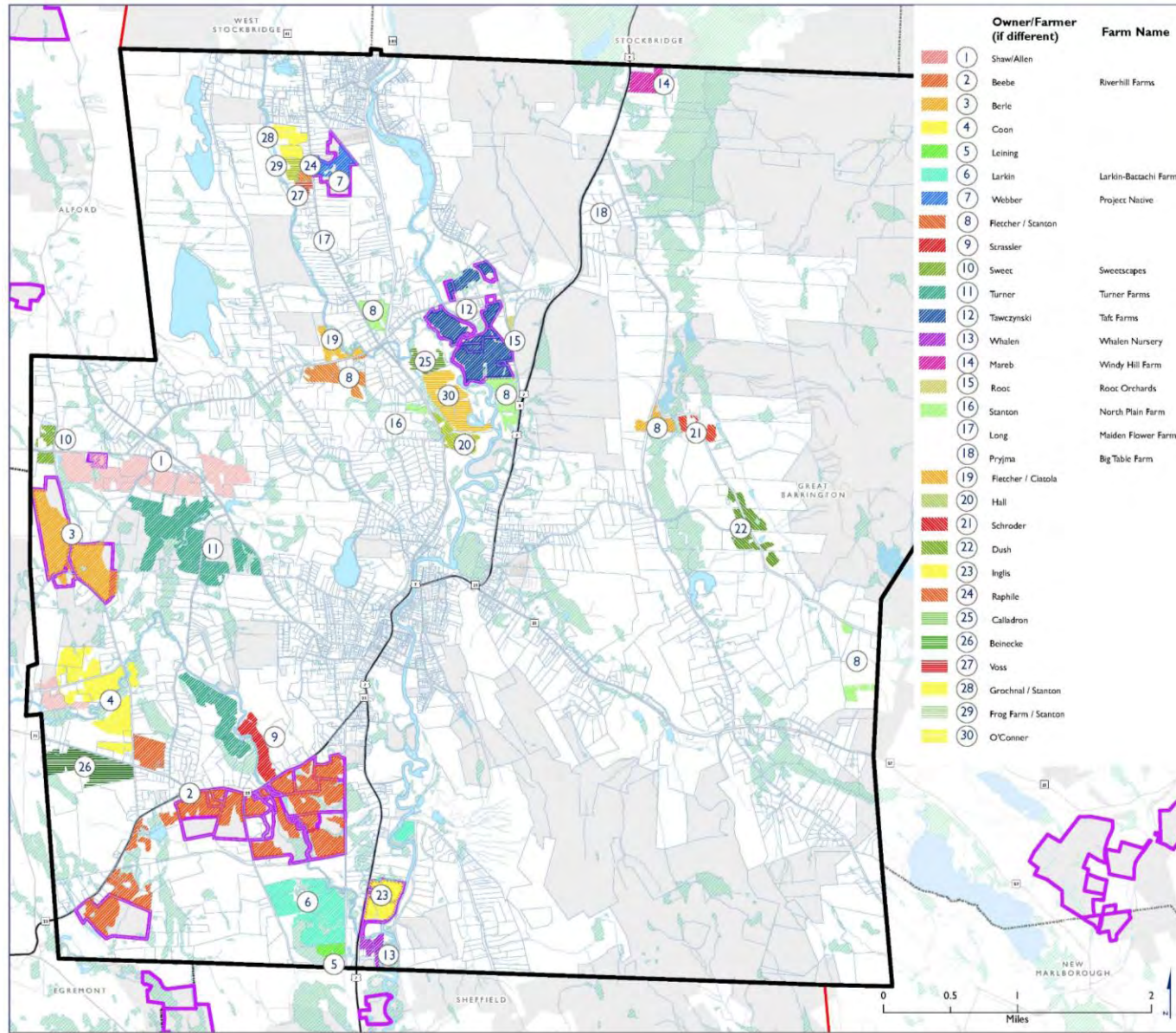


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KEEP BERKSHIRES FARMING



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FARMS

HANCOCK

Local Food and Agriculture Element



Legend

Agricultural Land

- Agricultural or Forestry Exemption Parcels (Chapter 61/61a)
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

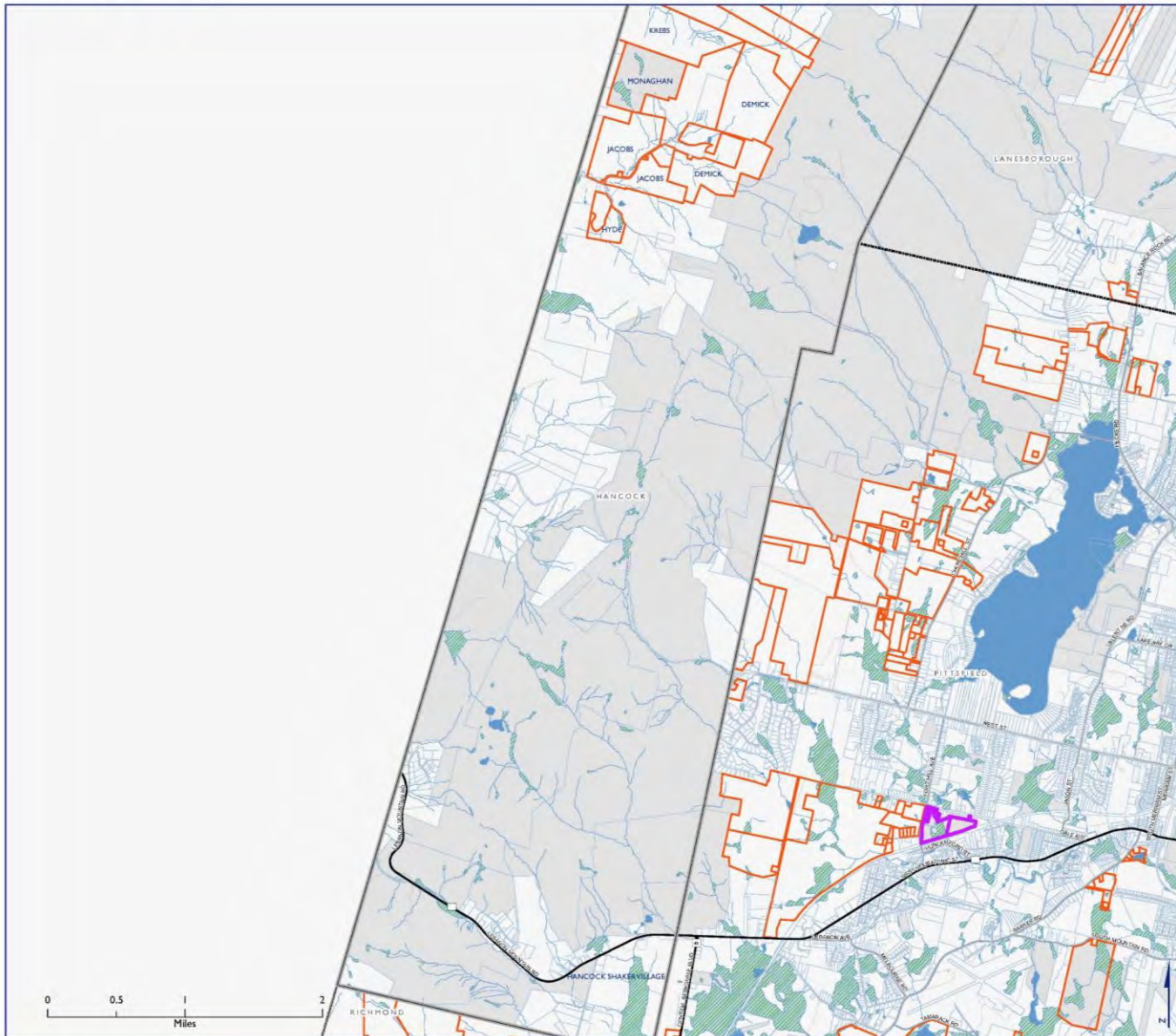
Protected Open Space

- Protected Open Space

- Interstate Highway
- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Wetland
- Open Water

CENTRAL GROUP

Keep Berkshires Farming

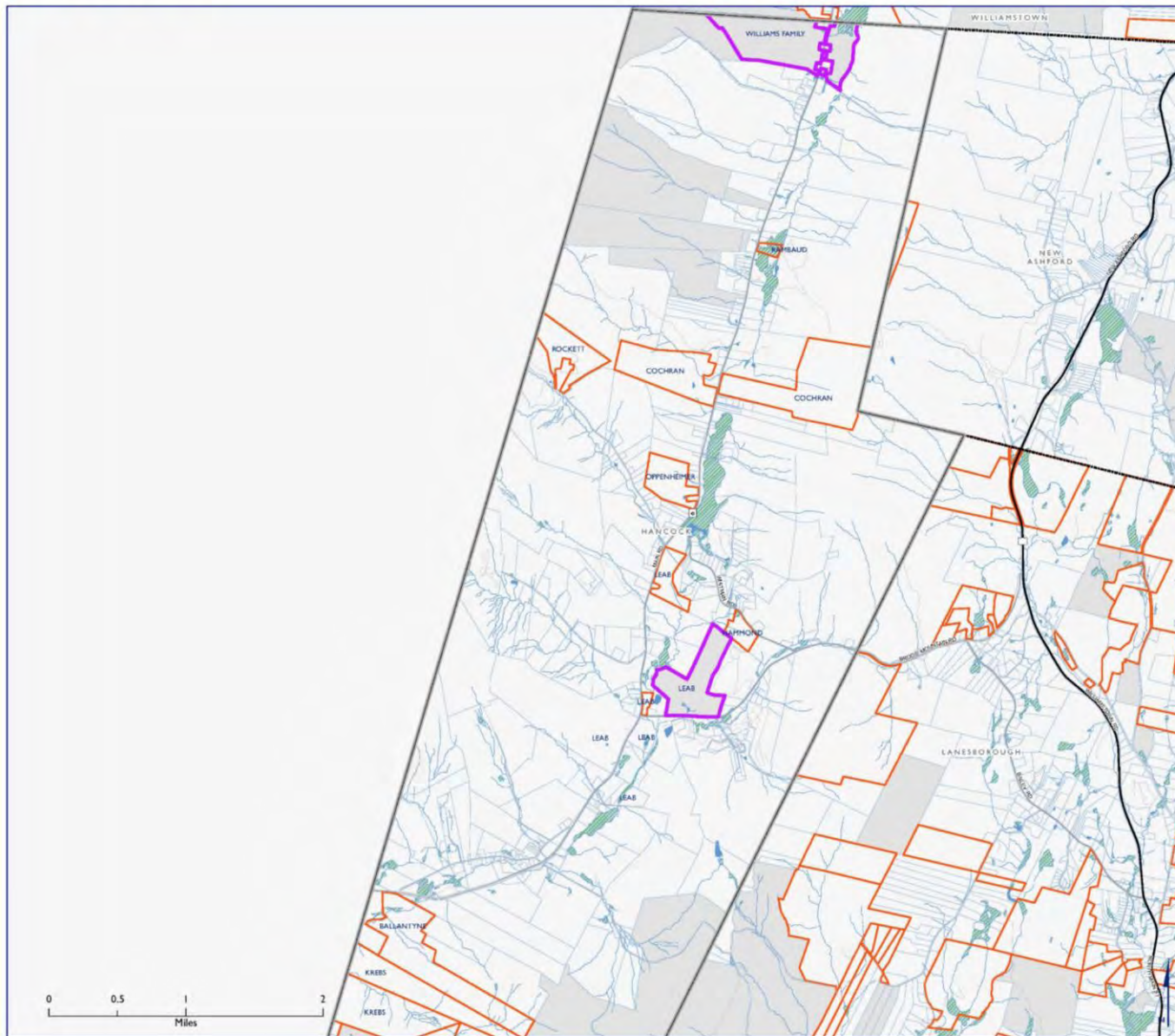


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Berkshire
Regional
Planning
Commission

3/28/2014



Legend

Agricultural Land

- Agricultural or Forestry Exemption Parcels (Chapter 61/61a)
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

Protected Open Space

- Protected Open Space

- Interstate Highway
- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Wetland
- Open Water

**CENTRAL
GROUP**

Keep Berkshires Farming



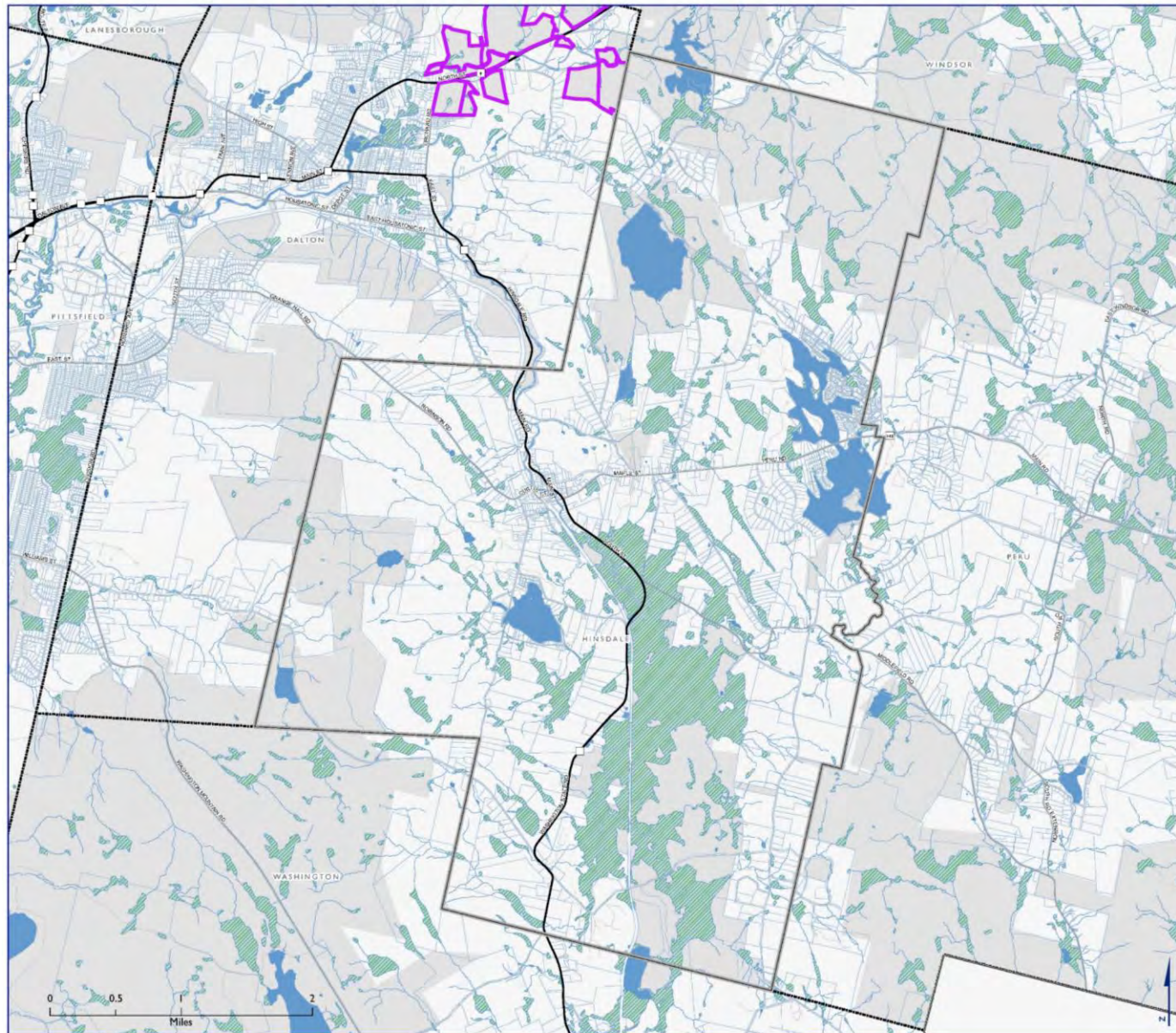
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FARMS

HINSDALE

Local Food and Agriculture Element



Legend

Agricultural Land

- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

Protected Open Space

- Permanently Conserved Lands

Interstate Highway

Arterial Road

Collector Road

Local Road

Wetland

Open Water

CENTRAL GROUP

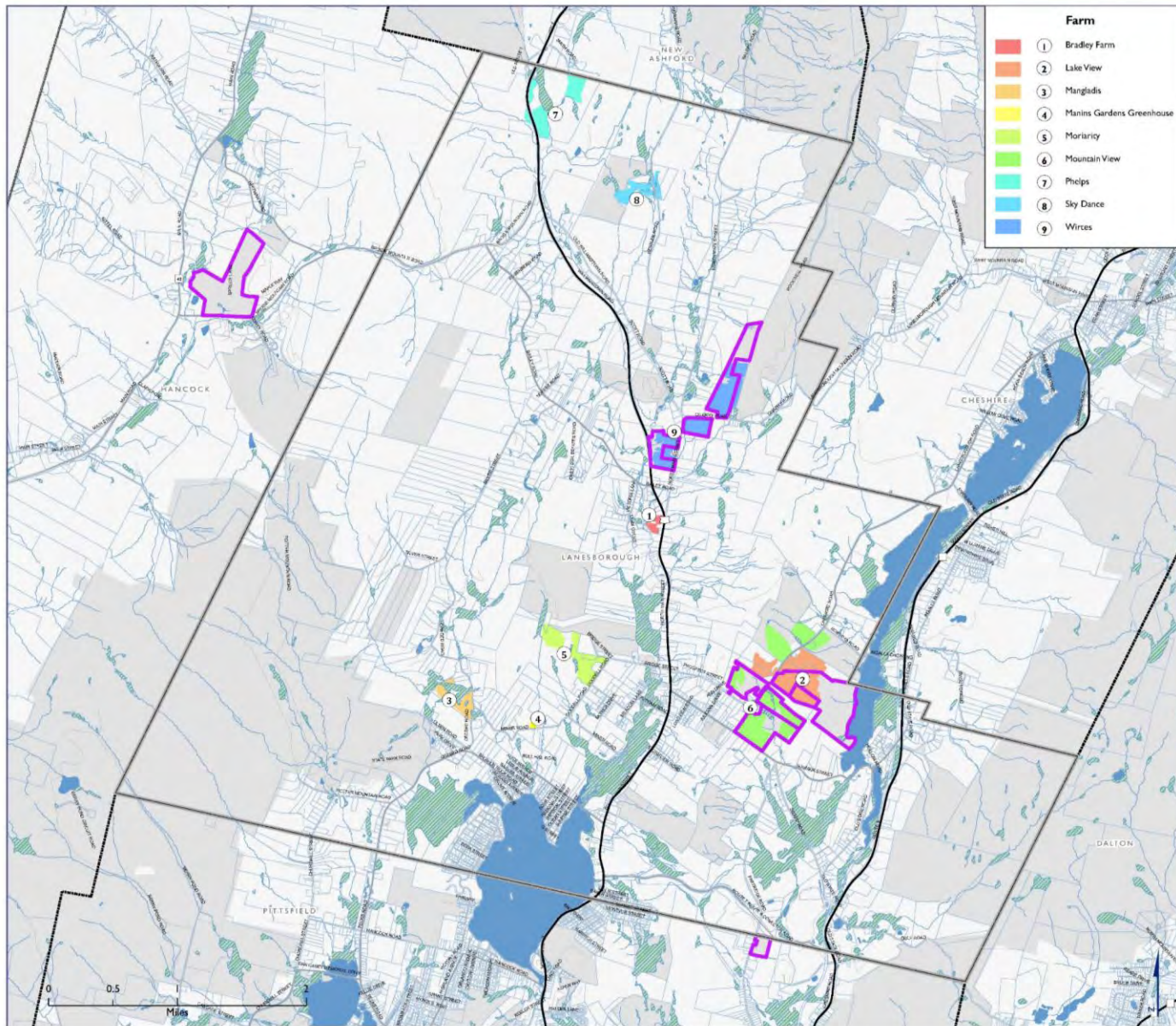
Keep Berkshires Farming



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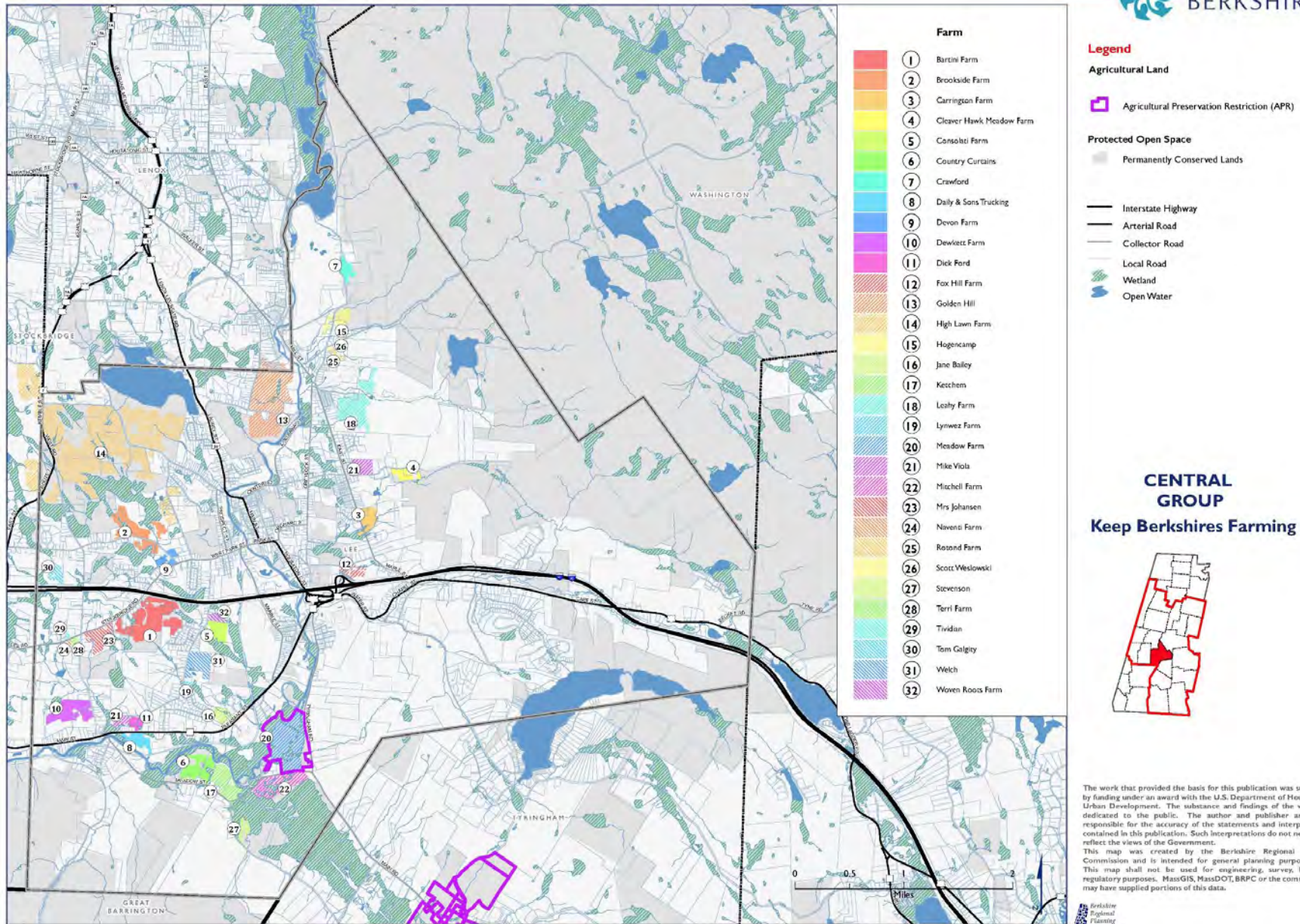


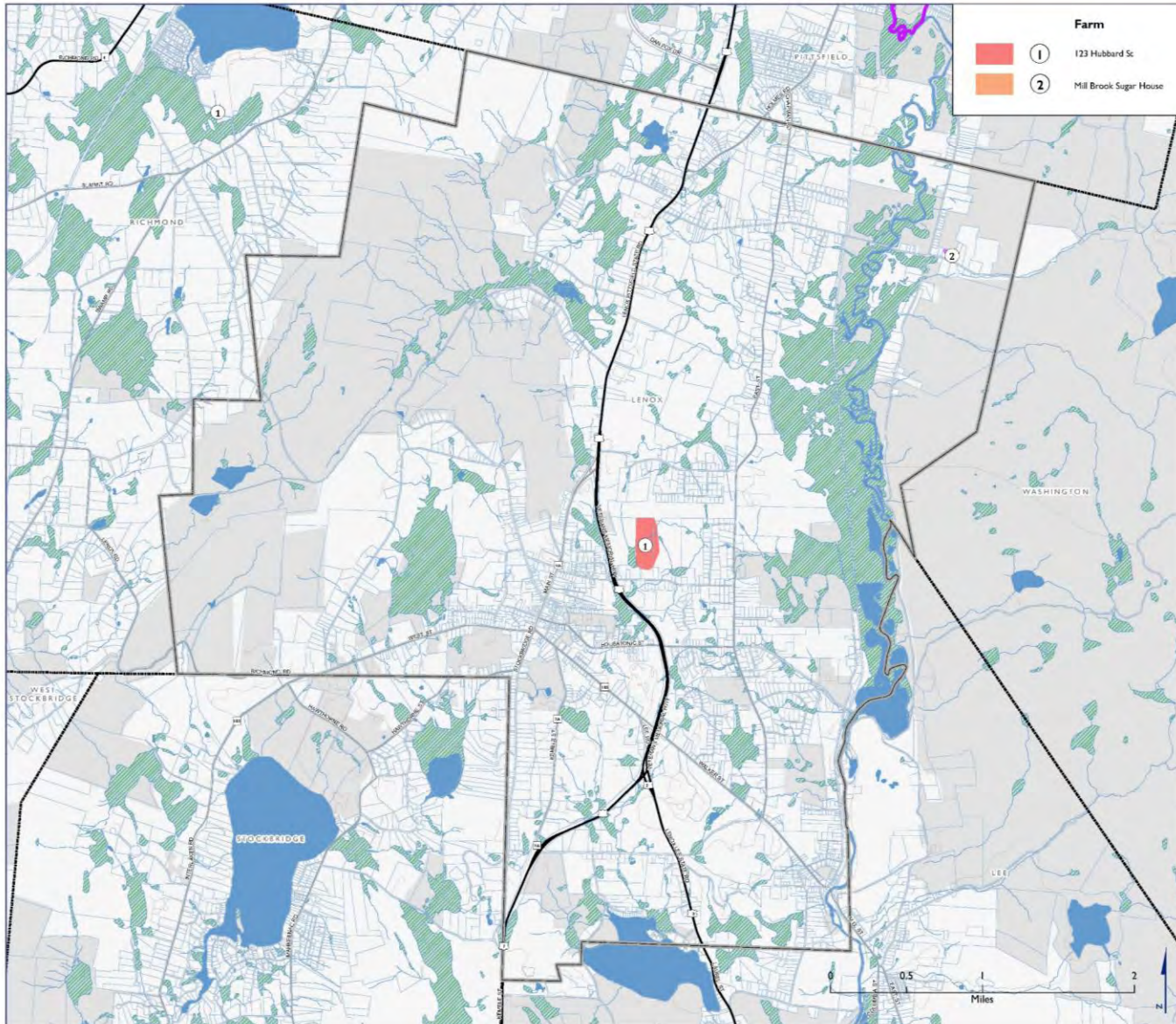
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Keep Berkshires Farming



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FARMS



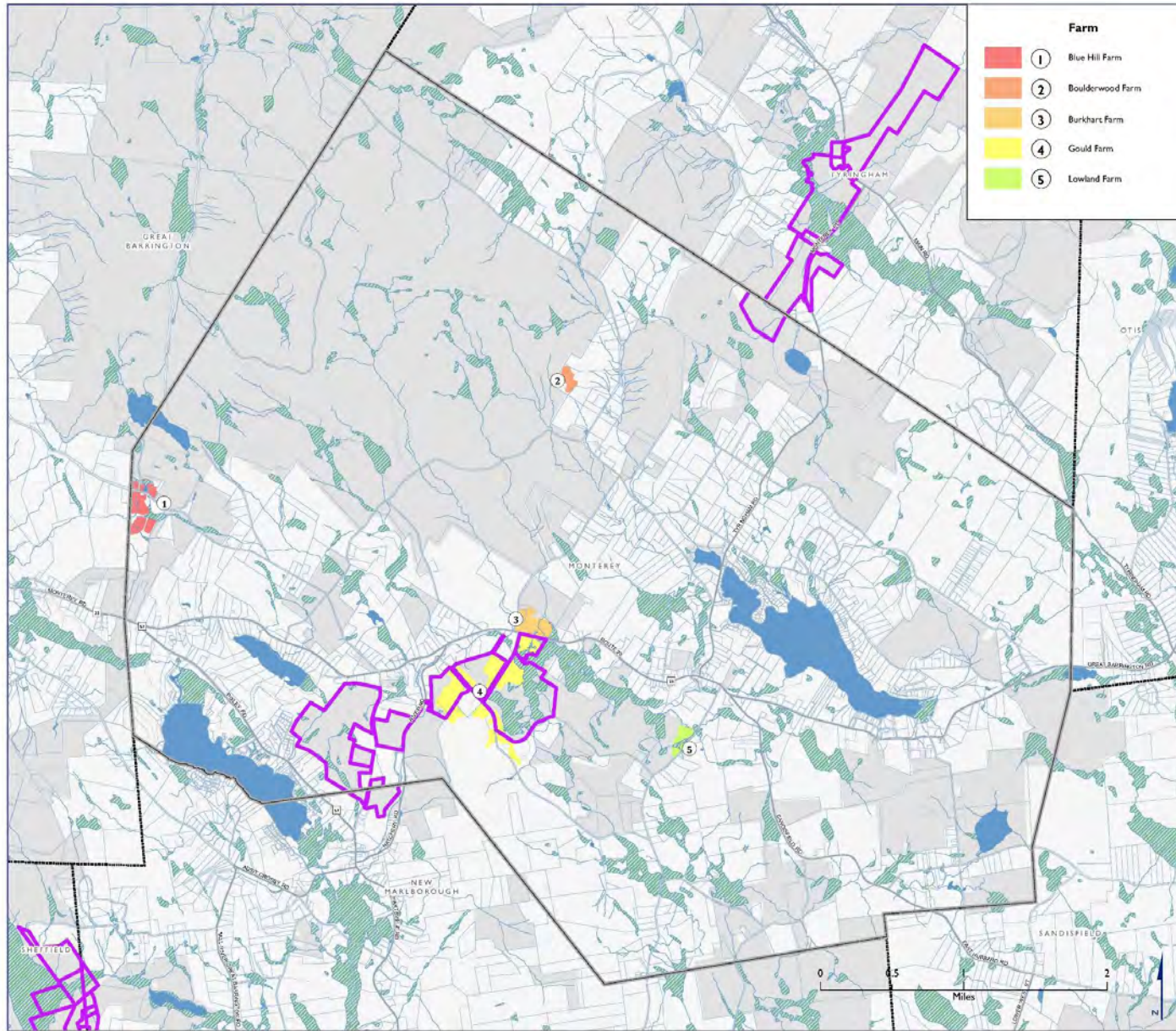


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FARMS

MONTEREY



- Farm**
- ① Blue Hill Farm
 - ② Boulderwood Farm
 - ③ Burkhardt Farm
 - ④ Gould Farm
 - ⑤ Lowland Farm
- Legend**
- Agricultural Land**
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Protected Open Space**
- Permanently Conserved Lands
- Interstate Highway
- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Wetland
- Open Water

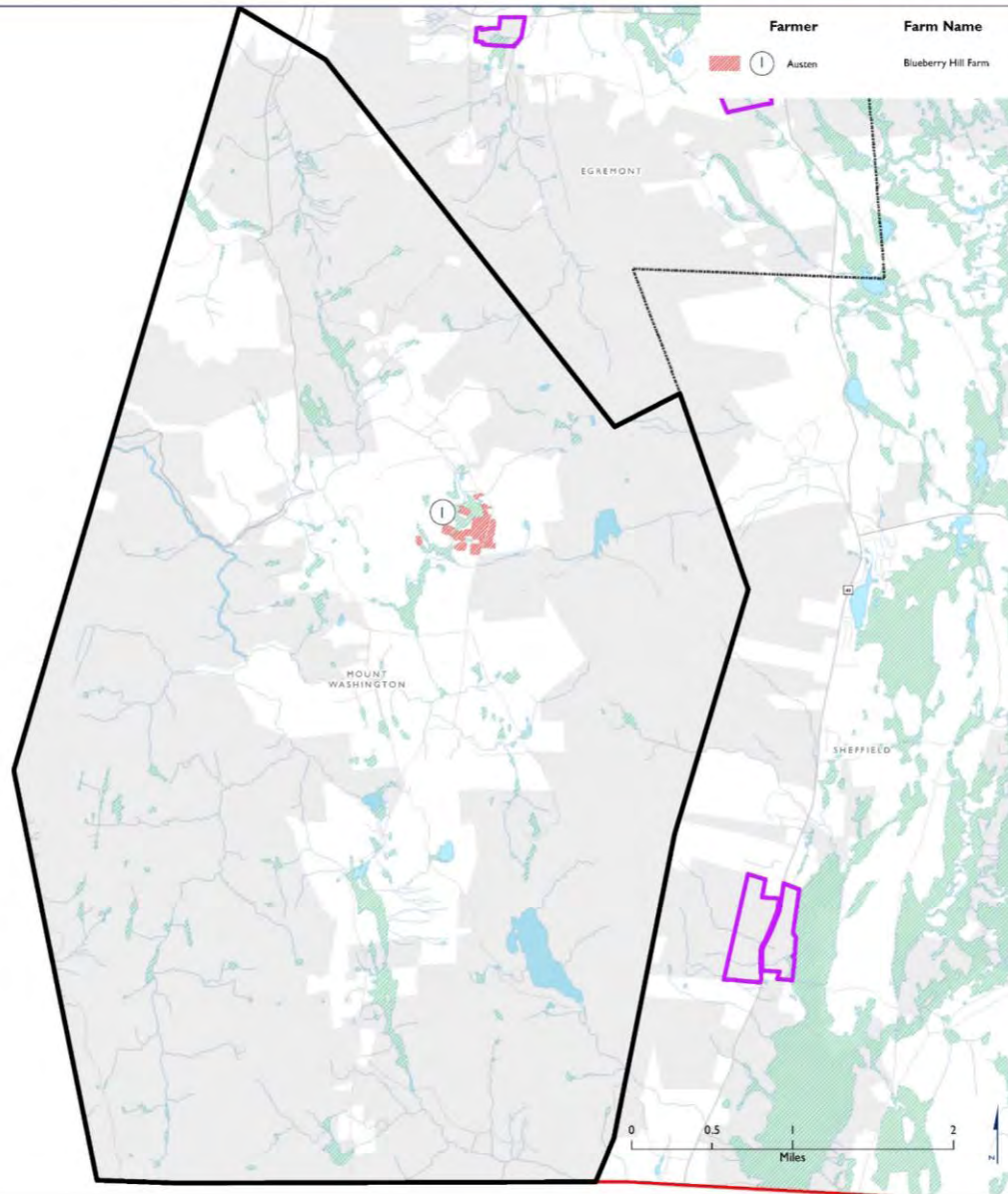
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Berkshire
Regional
Planning
Commission

3/20/2014



- Legend**
- Agricultural Land**
 - Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
 - Protected Open Space**
 - Permanently Conserved Lands
 - Roads**
 - Interstate Highway
 - Arterial Road
 - Collector Road
 - Local Road
 - Wetland**
 - Open Water**

KEEP BERKSHIRES FARMING

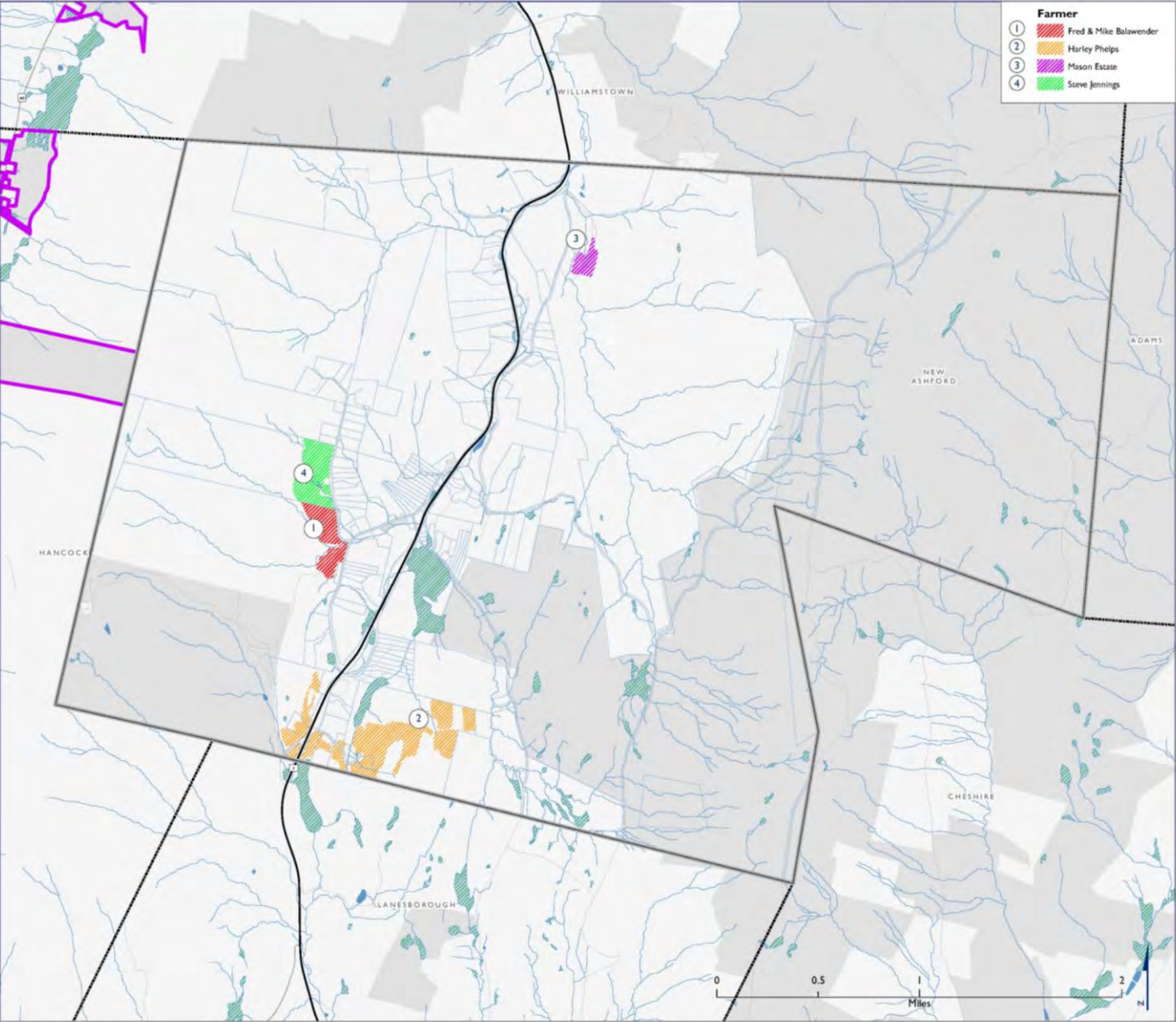


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FARMS

NEW ASHFORD



- Legend**
- Agricultural Land**
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Protected Open Space**
- Permanently Conserved Lands
- Interstate Highway
— Arterial Road
— Collector Road
— Local Road
- Wetland
Open Water

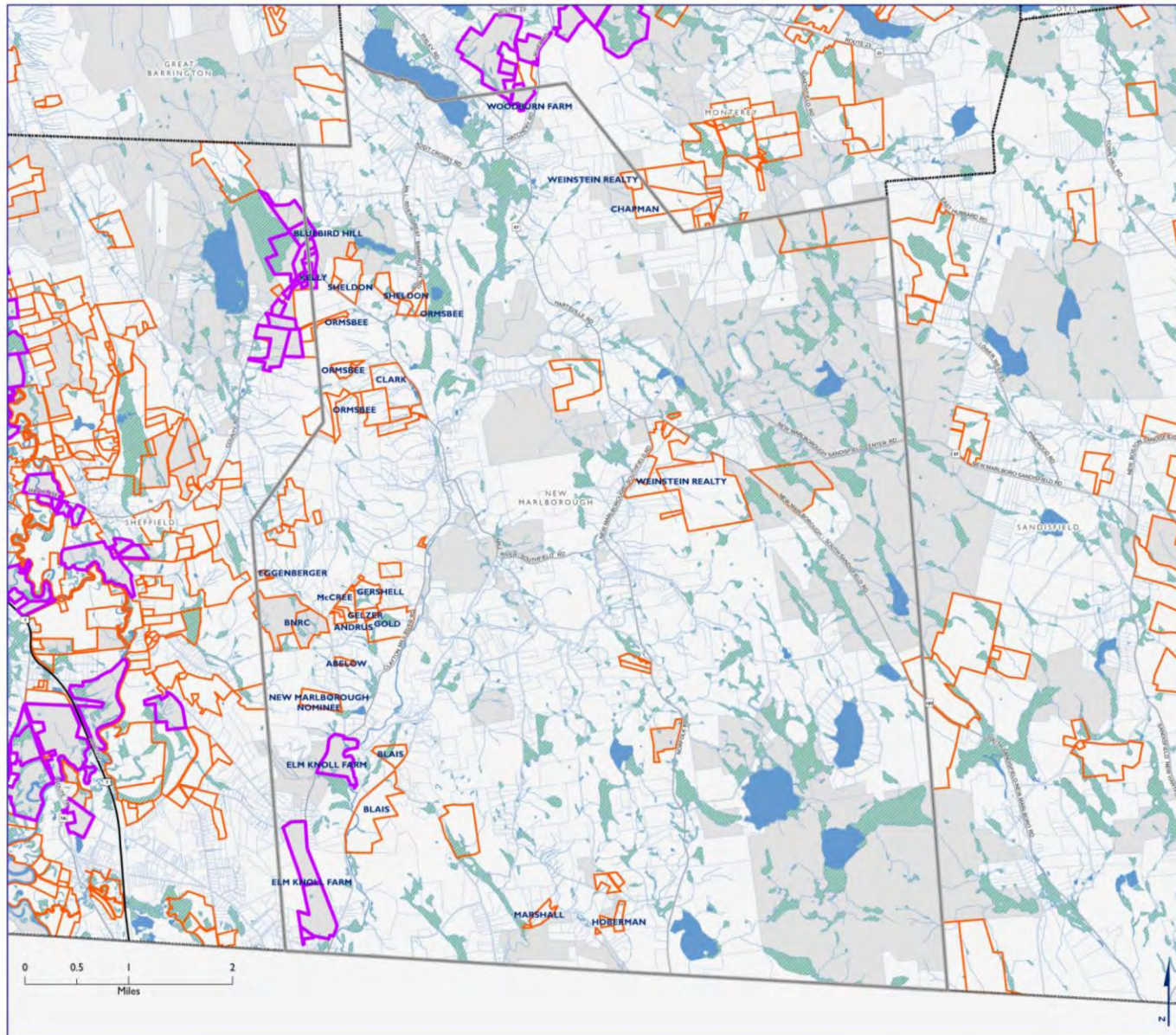
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3/20/2014



Legend

Agricultural Land

- Agricultural or Forestry Exemption Parcels (Chapter 61/61a)
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

Protected Open Space

- Permanent Protection

- Interstate Highway
- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Wetland
- Open Water

**CENTRAL
GROUP**

Keep Berkshires Farming

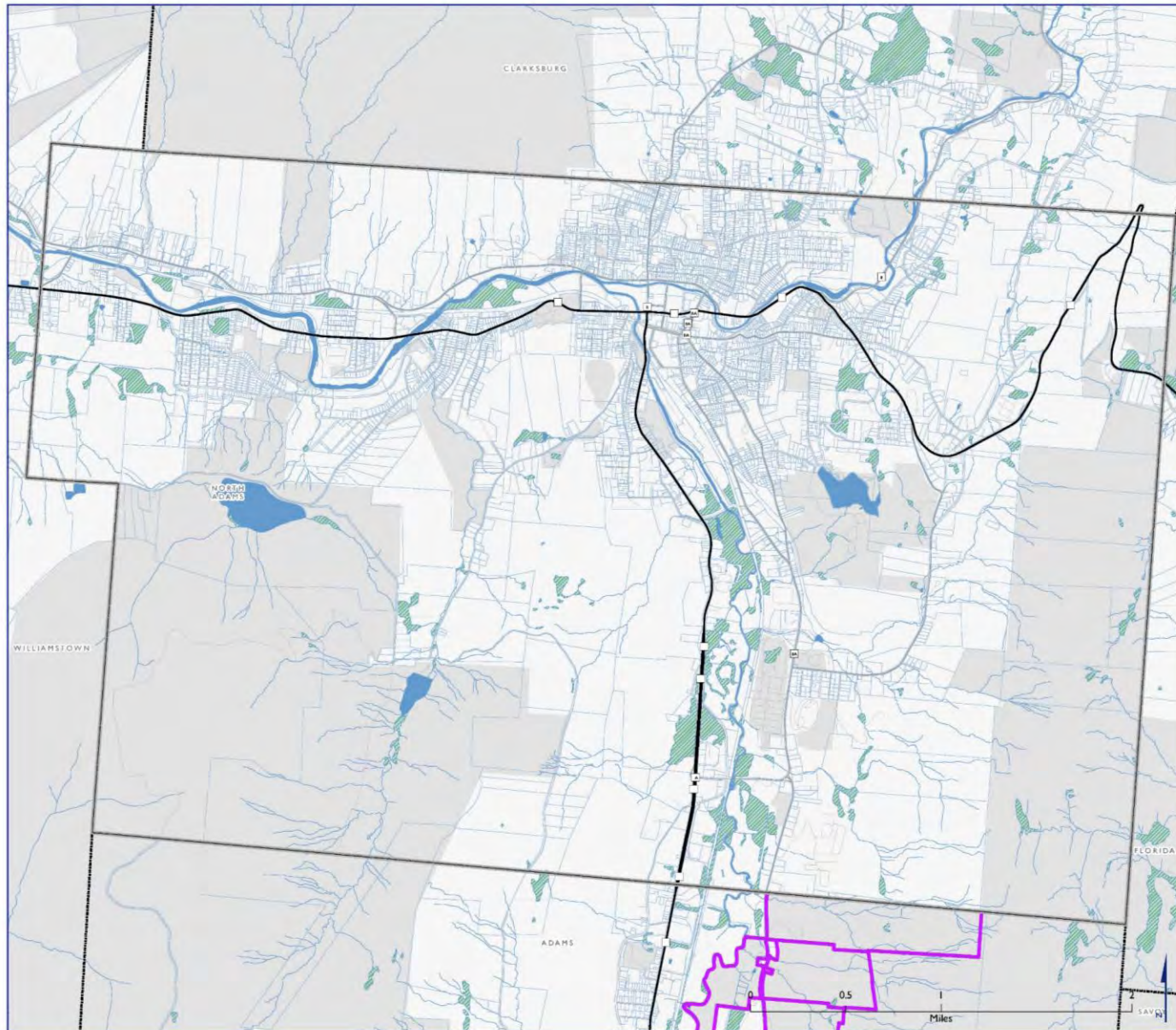


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FARMS

NORTH ADAMS



Legend

Agricultural Land

- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

Protected Open Space

- Permanently Conserved Lands

- Interstate Highway

- Arterial Road

- Collector Road

- Local Road

- Wetland

- Open Water

Keep Berkshires Farming

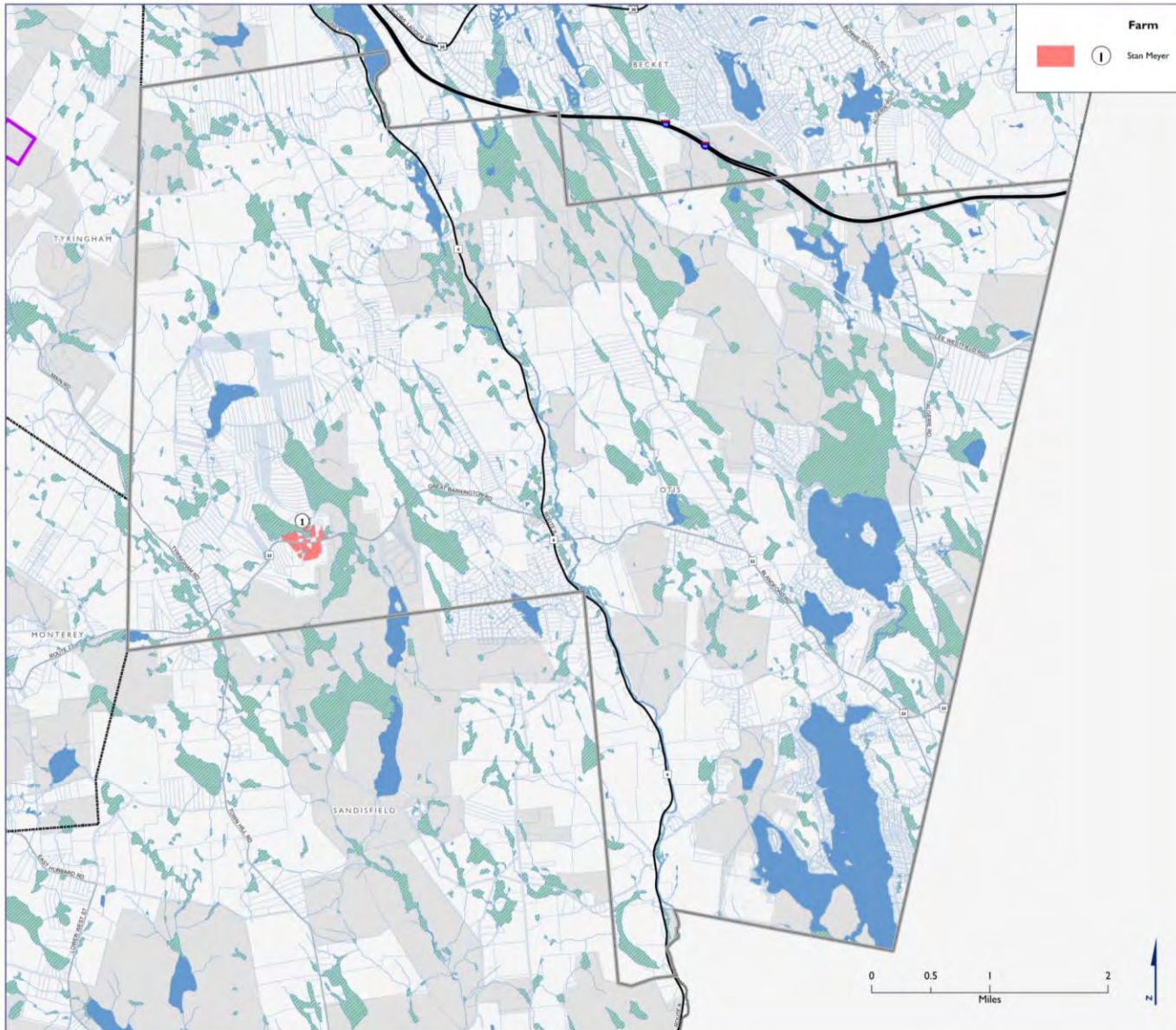


**NORTH
GROUP**

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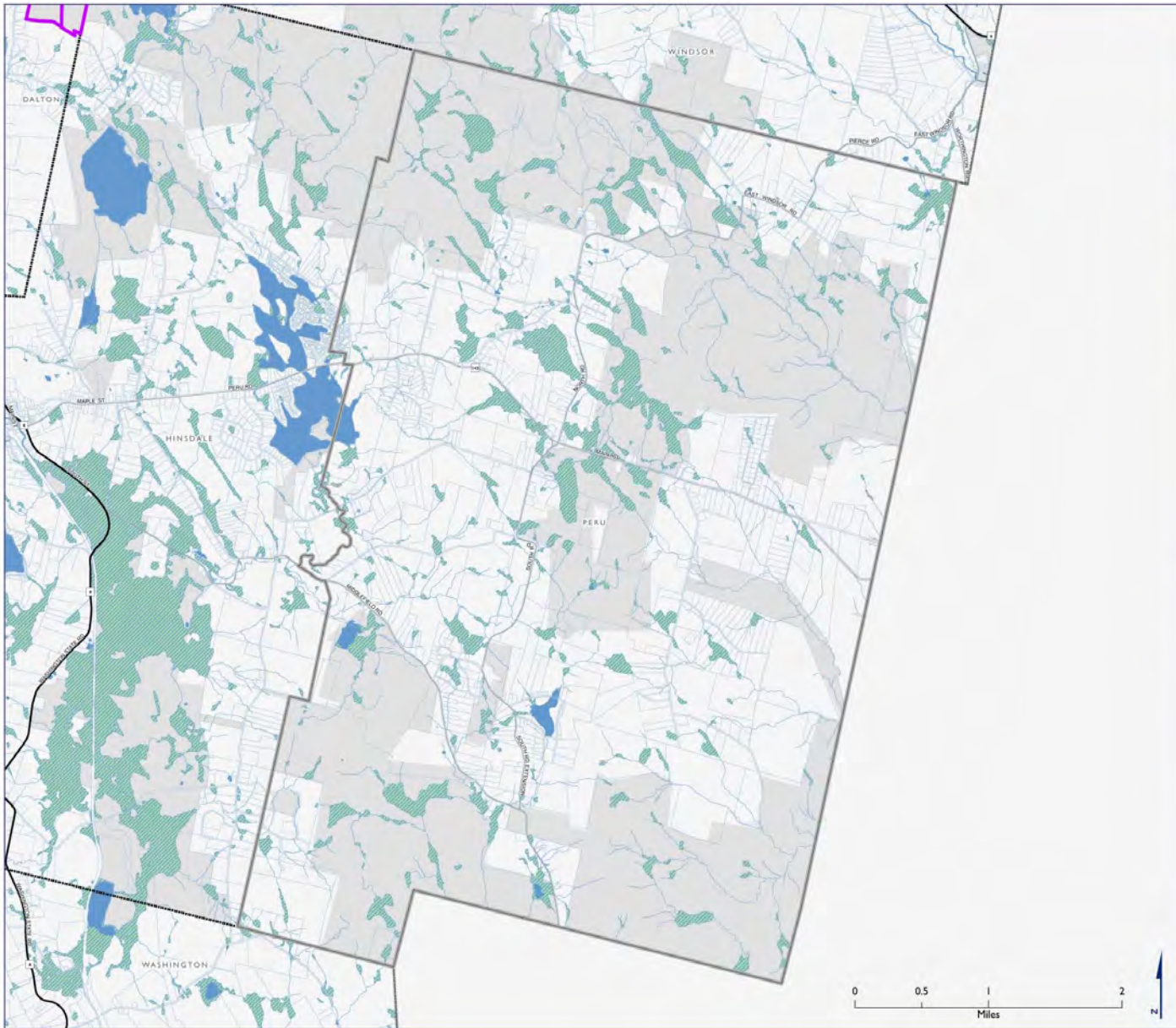
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FARMS



Legend

Agricultural Land


-  Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)


Protected Open Space


-  Federal


-  Interstate Highway

-  Arterial Road

-  Collector Road

-  Local Road

-  Wetland

-  Open Water

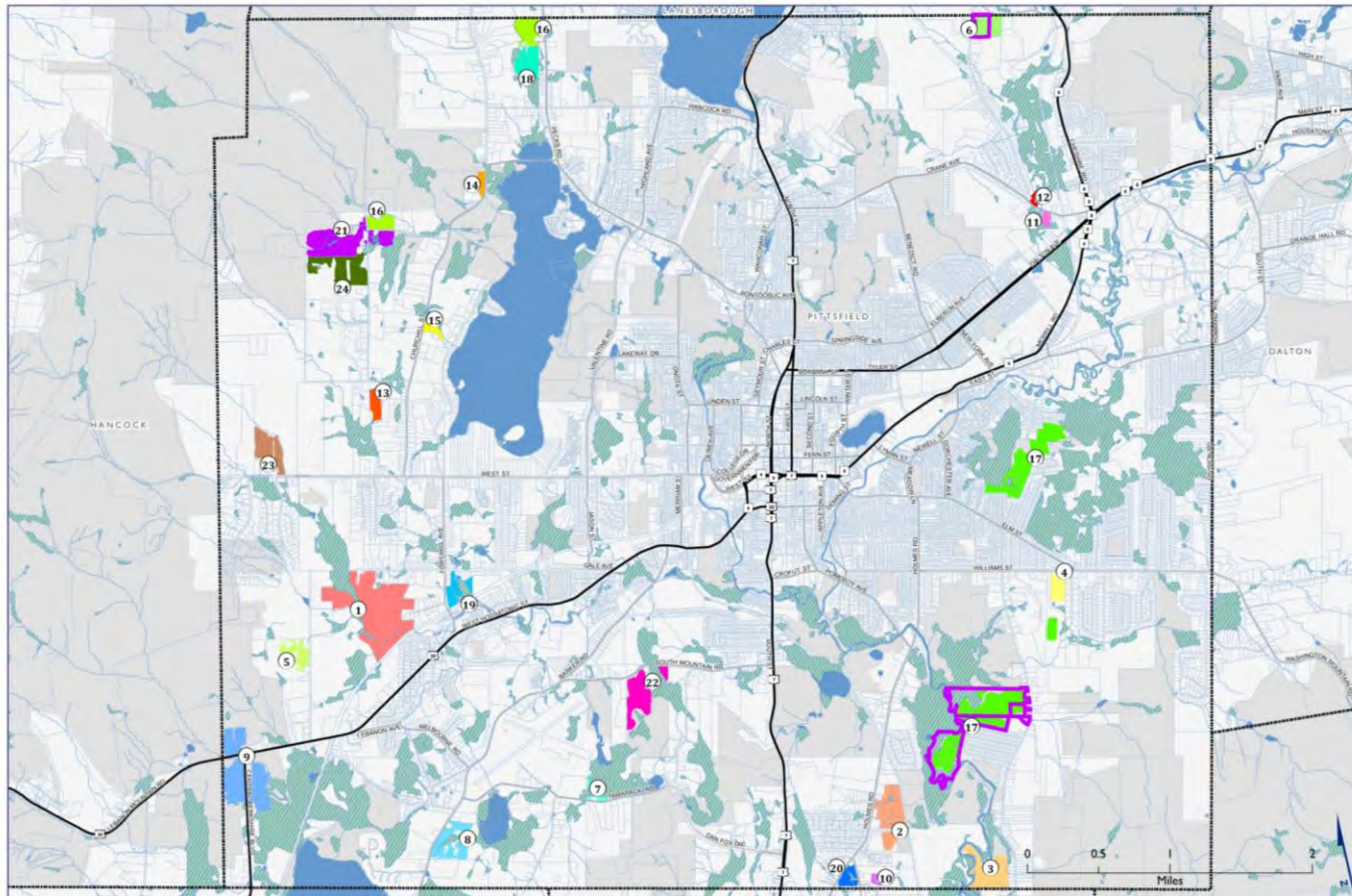
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- Legend**
- Agricultural Land**
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Protected Open Space**
- Permanently Conserved Lands
- Interstate Highway
- Arterial Road
- Collector Road
- Local Road
- Wetland
- Open Water

**CENTRAL
GROUP**
Keep Berkshires Farming



Farmer

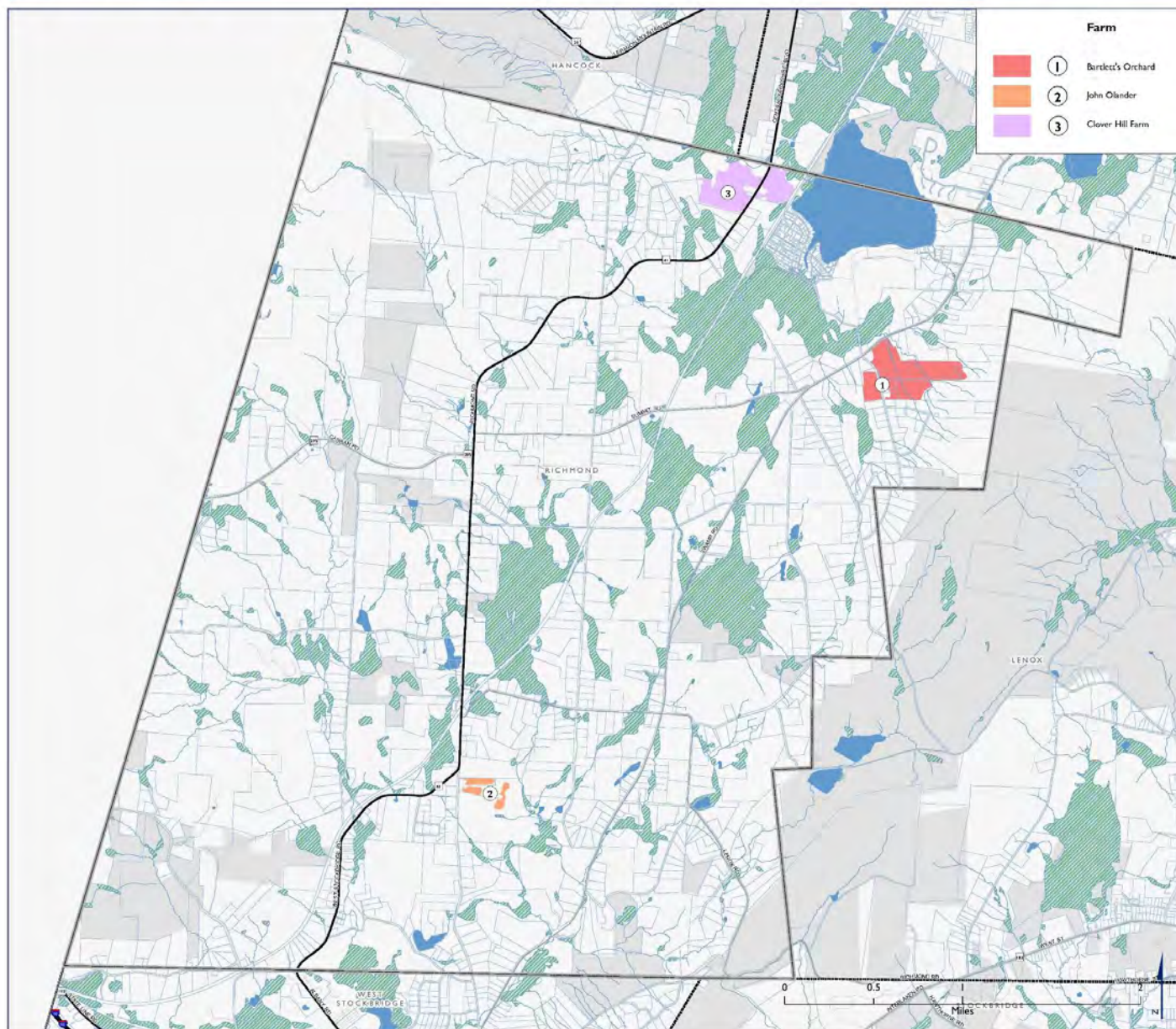
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| 2 Brielman, Chris | 11 Jaesheke | 19 Qunto, Anthony |
| 3 Butler, Leona | 12 Jodi's | 20 Rennie, Phil |
| 4 Changler, Brattle Farm | 13 Kirchner, Ned | 21 Scace, Ann |
| 5 Dallmyer, Mark | 14 Laden, Michael | 22 Wathorbo, Edward |
| 6 Delignor | 15 Lowan, Robert | 23 West, Steve & Tim |
| 7 Flynn, Nancy | 16 Mangiardi, Billy | 24 Zahn, Ester |
| 8 Haley, Dave | 17 Noble, George | |
| 9 Hancock Shaker Village | | |

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FARMS

RICHMOND



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Keep Berkshires Farming

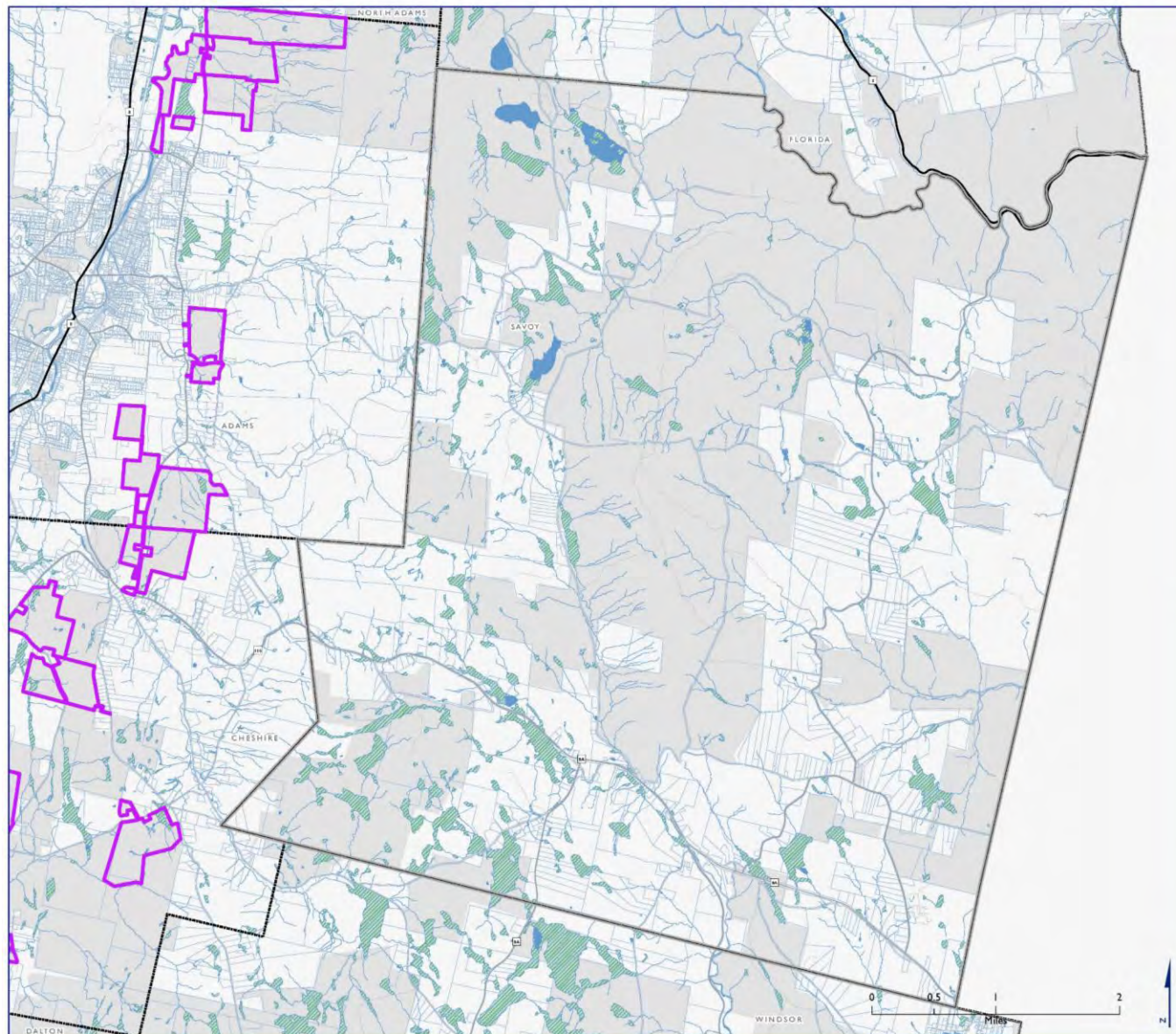


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3/28/2014



Legend

Agricultural Land

- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)

Protected Open Space

- Permanently Conserved Lands

- Interstate Highway

- Arterial Road

- Collector Road

- Local Road

- Wetland

- Open Water

Keep Berkshires Farming

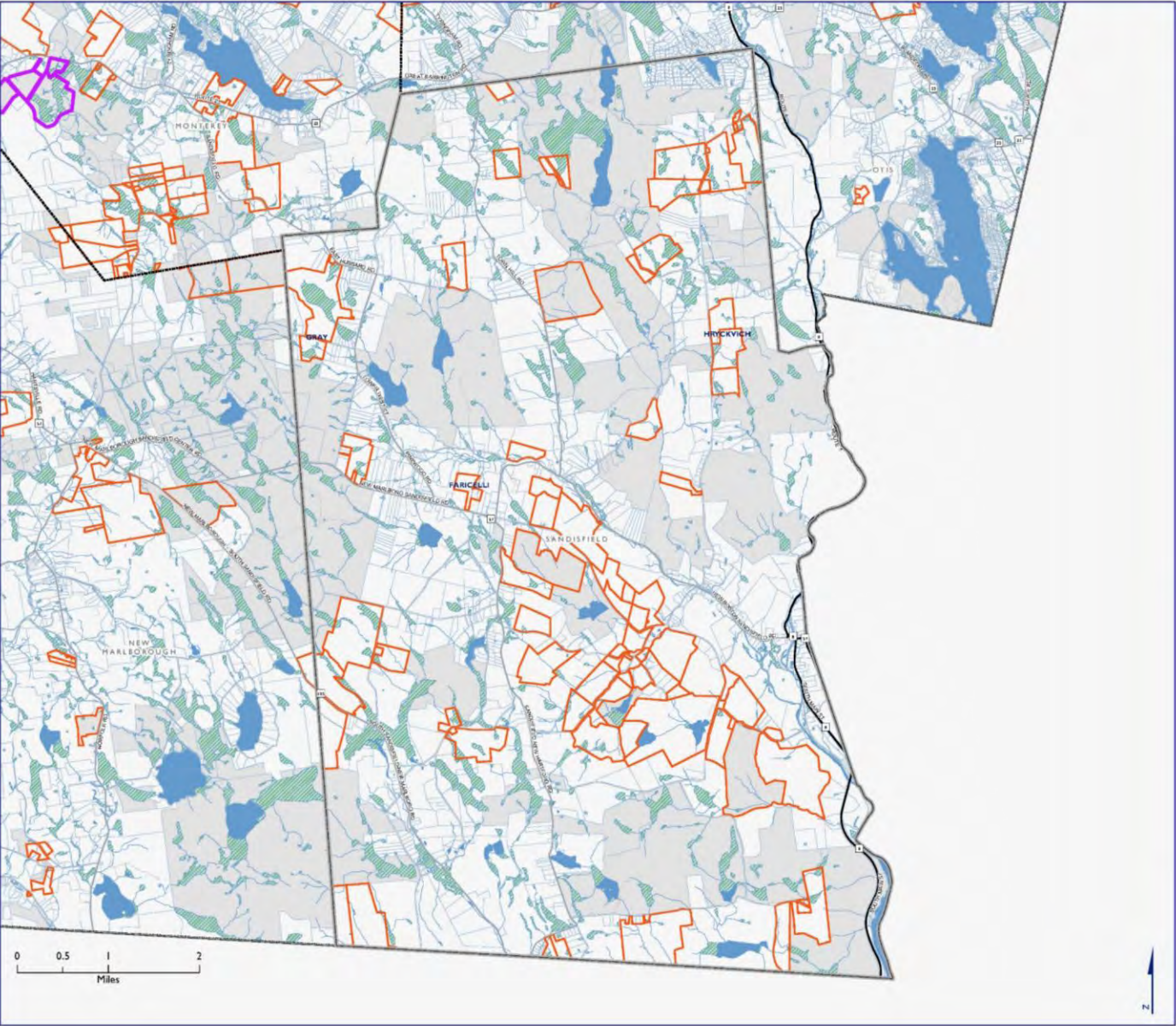


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FARMS

SANDISFIELD



- Legend**
- Agricultural Land**
- Agricultural or Forestry Exemption Parcels (Chapter 61/61a)
 - Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Protected Open Space**
- Permanent Protection
- Interstate Highway**
- Arterial Road**
- Collector Road**
- Local Road**
- Wetland**
- Open Water**

CENTRAL GROUP

Keep Berkshires Farming

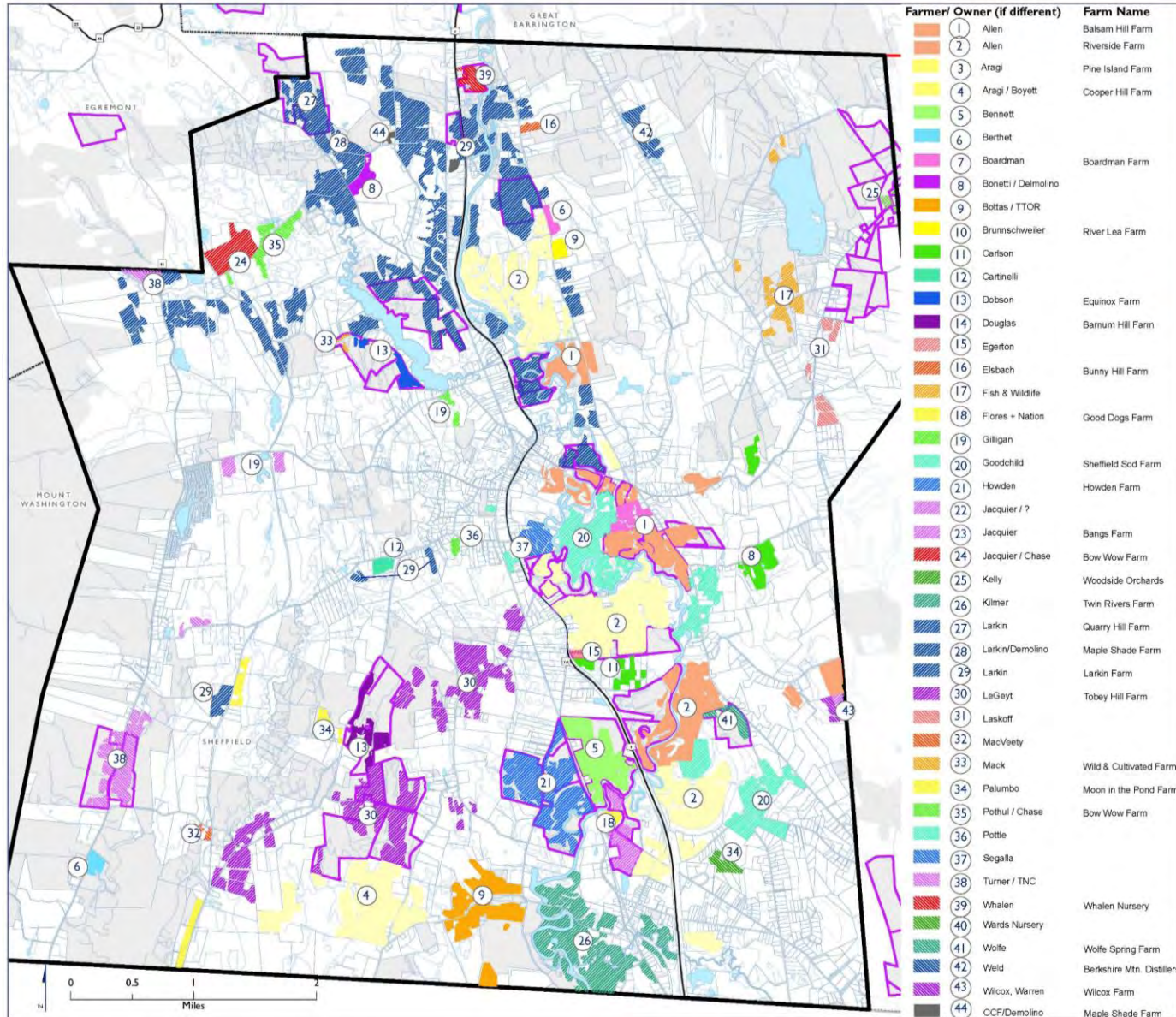


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KEEP BERKSHIRES FARMING



**SOUTH
GROUP**

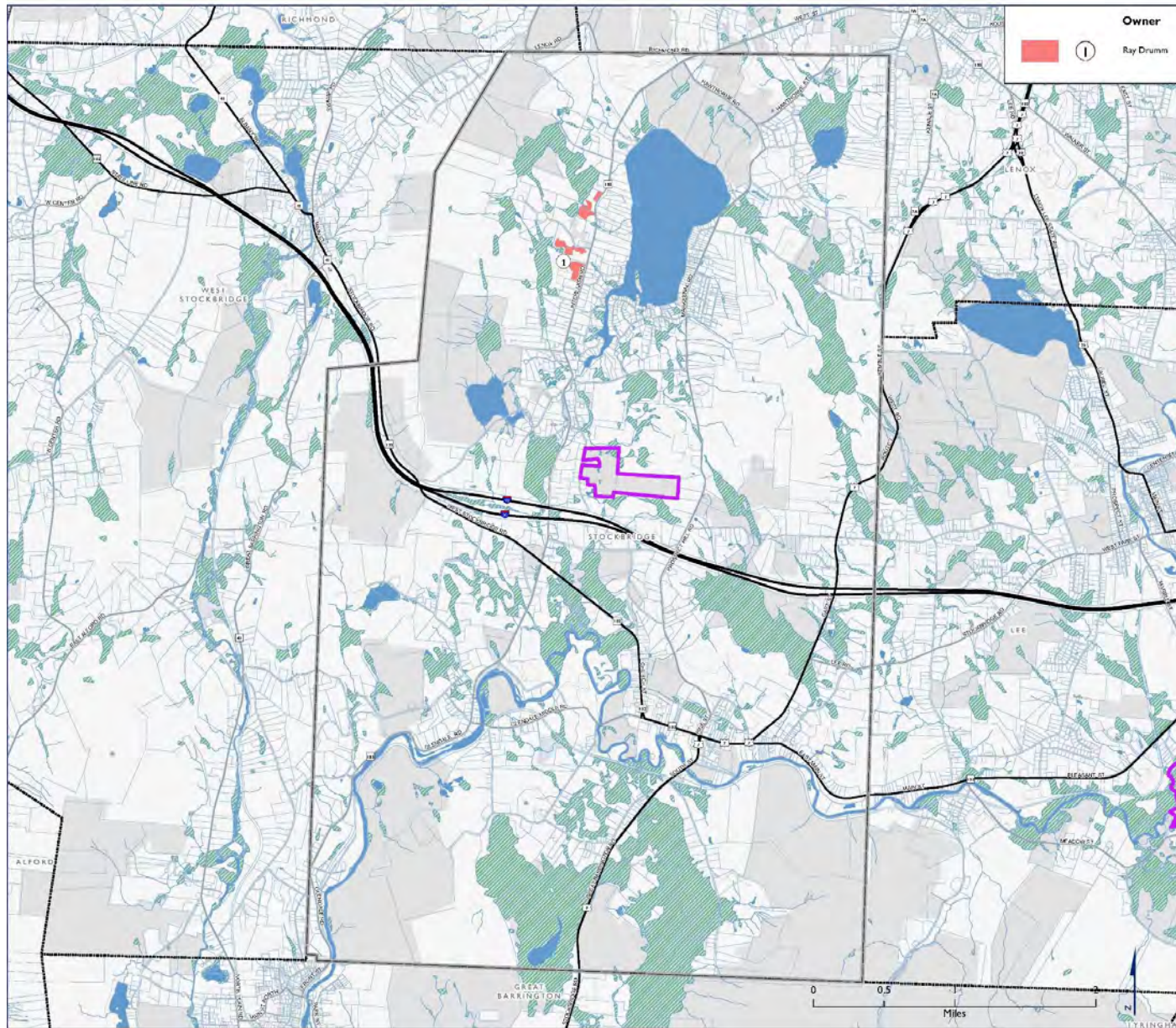
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FARMS

STOCKBRIDGE

Local Food and Agriculture Element



CENTRAL GROUP

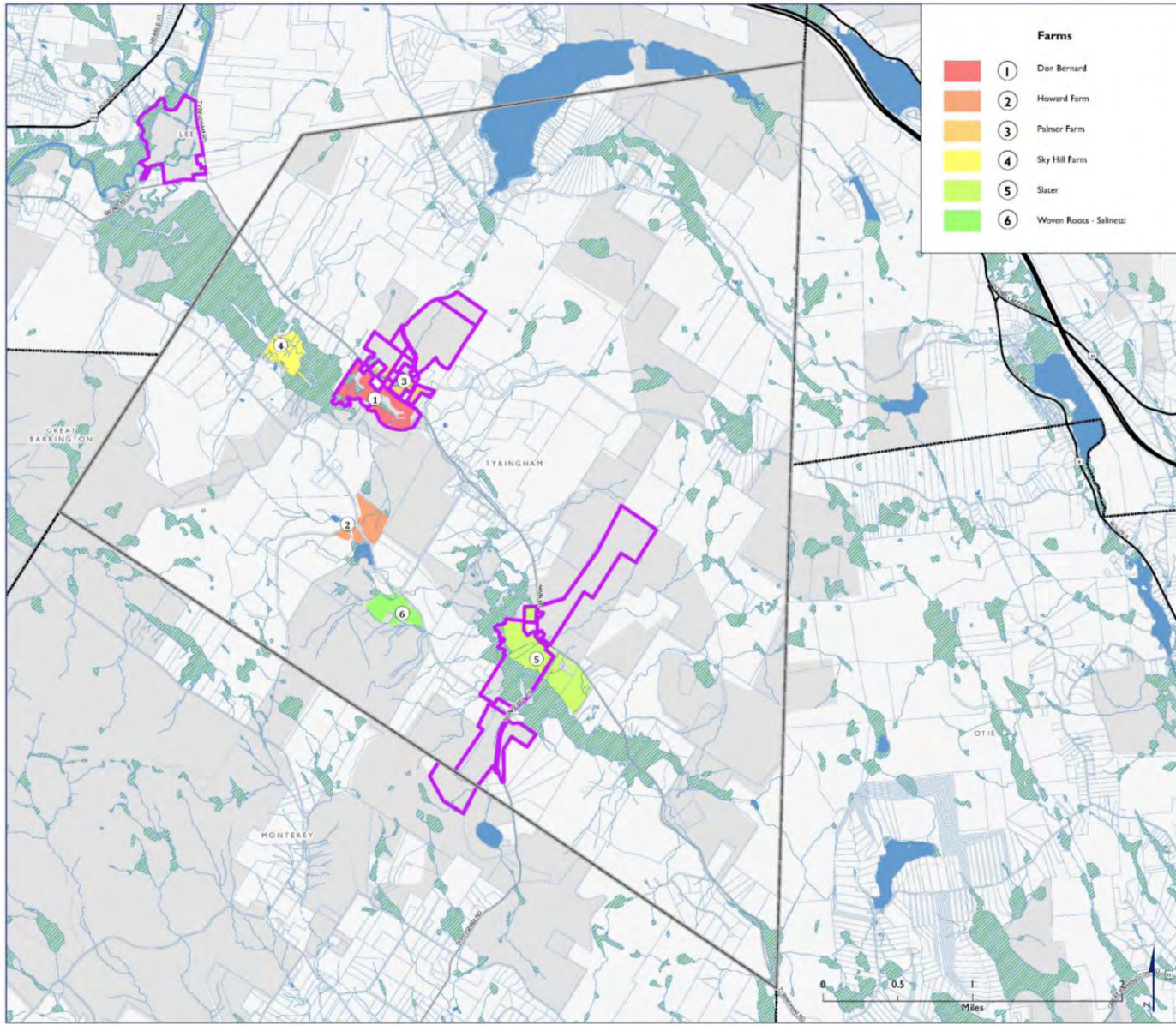
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Berkshire
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3/20/2014



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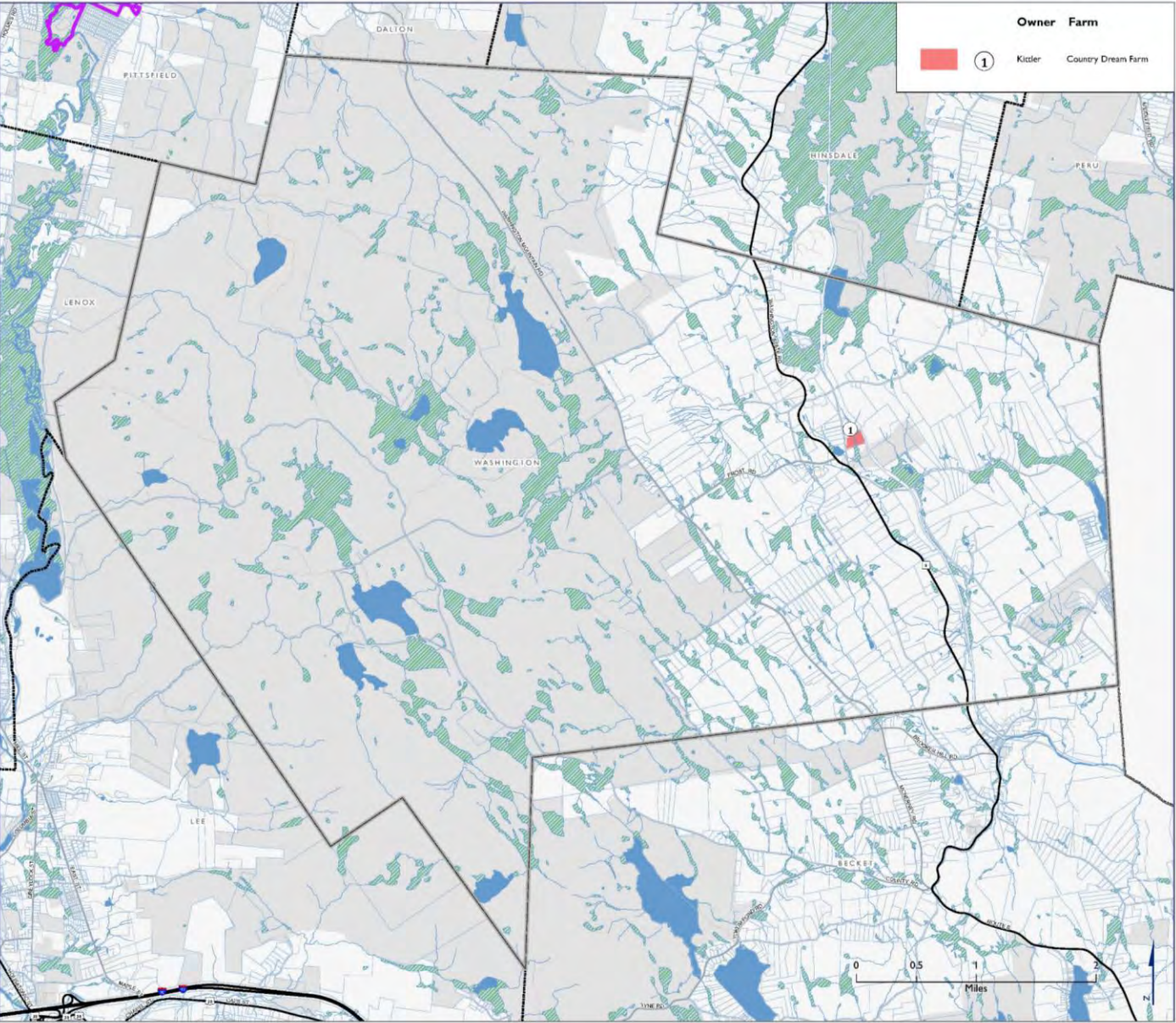


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FARMS

WASHINGTON



- Legend**
- Agricultural Land**
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Protected Open Space**
- Permanently Conserved Lands
- Interstate Highway**
- Arterial Road**
- Collector Road**
- Local Road**
- Wetland**
- Open Water**

CENTRAL GROUP

Keep Berkshires Farming

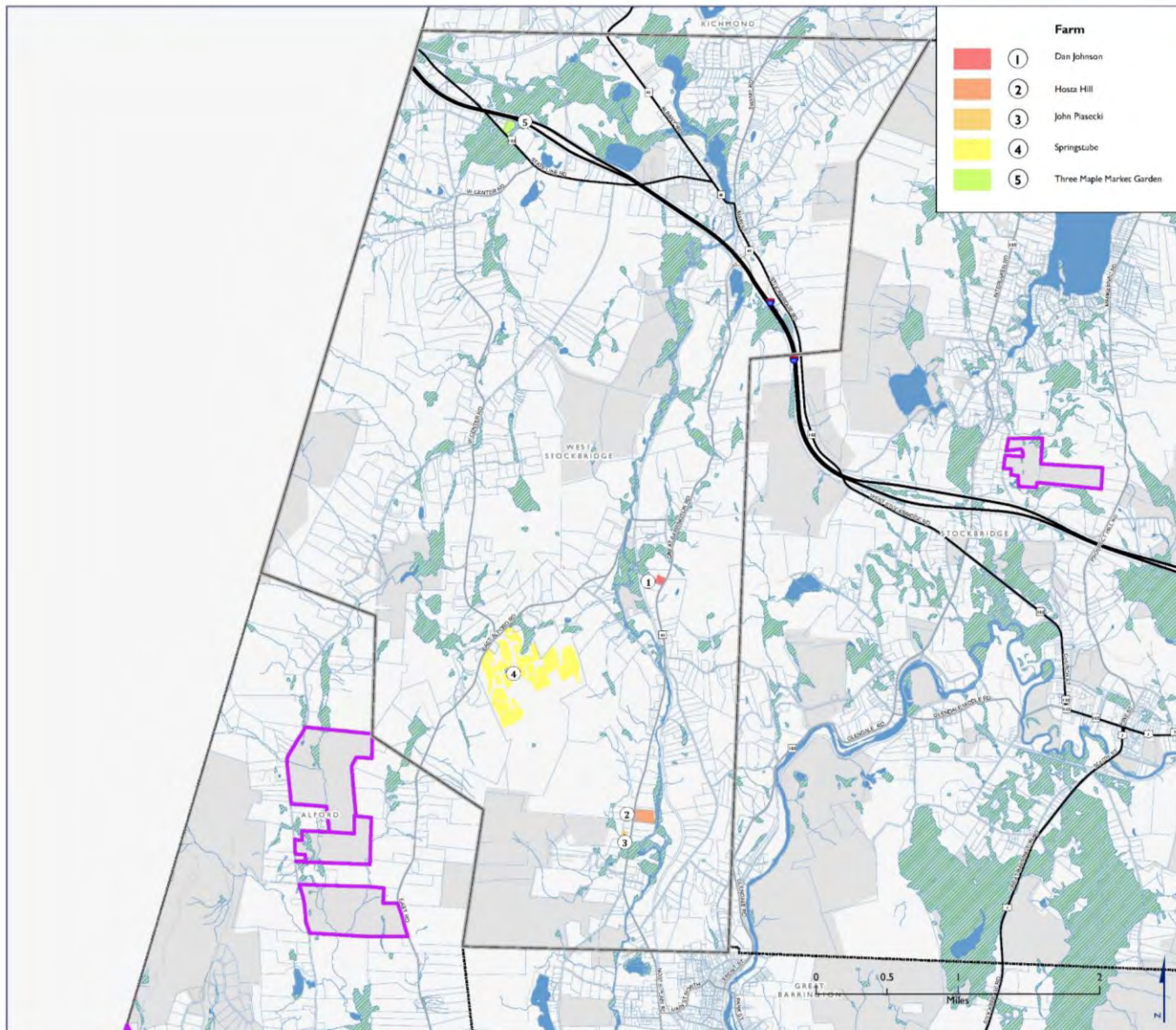


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3/20/2014



- Legend**
- Agricultural Land**
- Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR)
- Protected Open Space**
- Permanently Conserved Lands
- Interstate Highway**
- Arterial Road**
- Collector Road**
- Local Road**
- Wetland**
- Open Water**

**CENTRAL
GROUP**
Keep Berkshires Farming

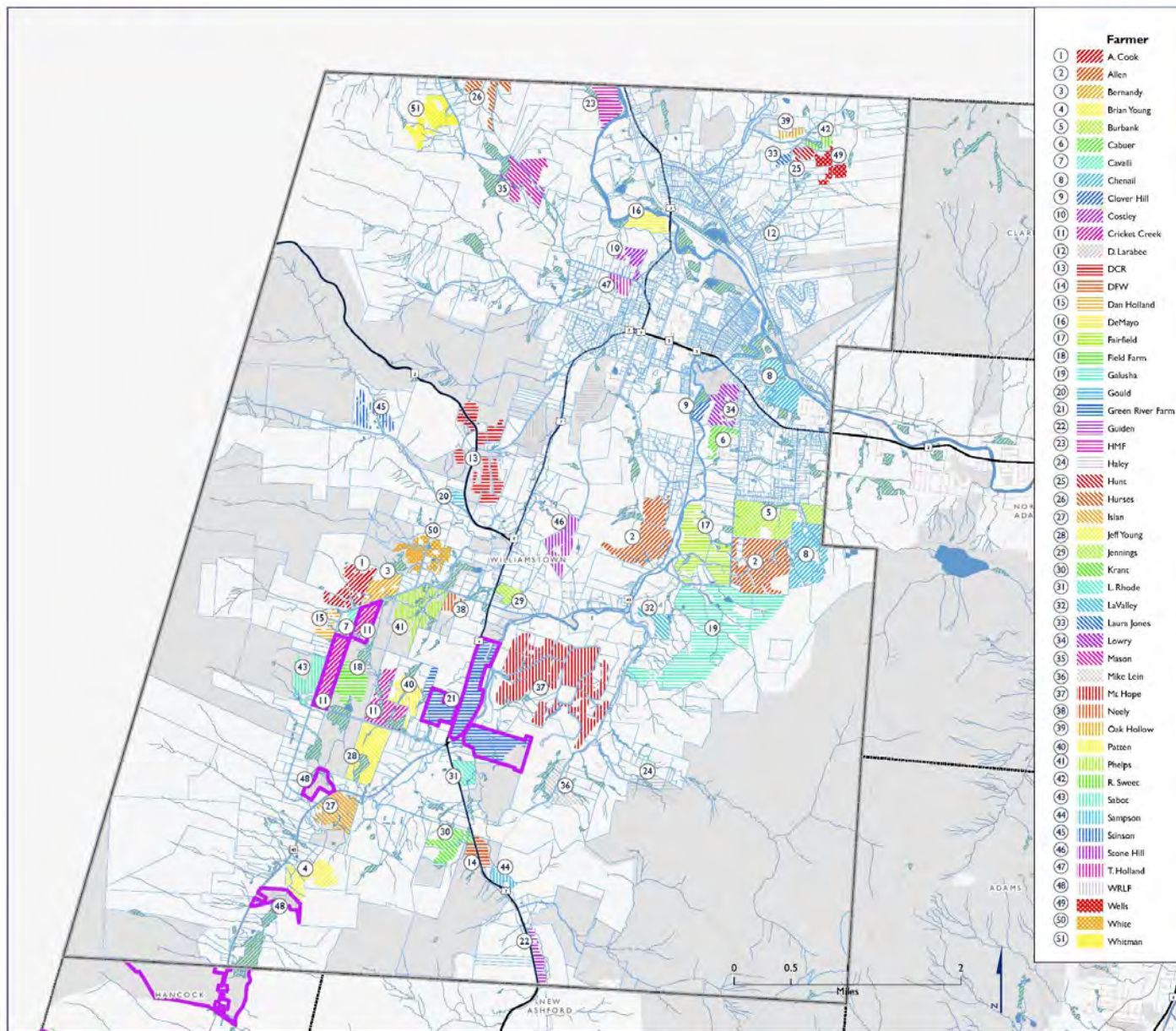


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FARMS

WILLIAMSTOWN



Keep Berkshires Farming



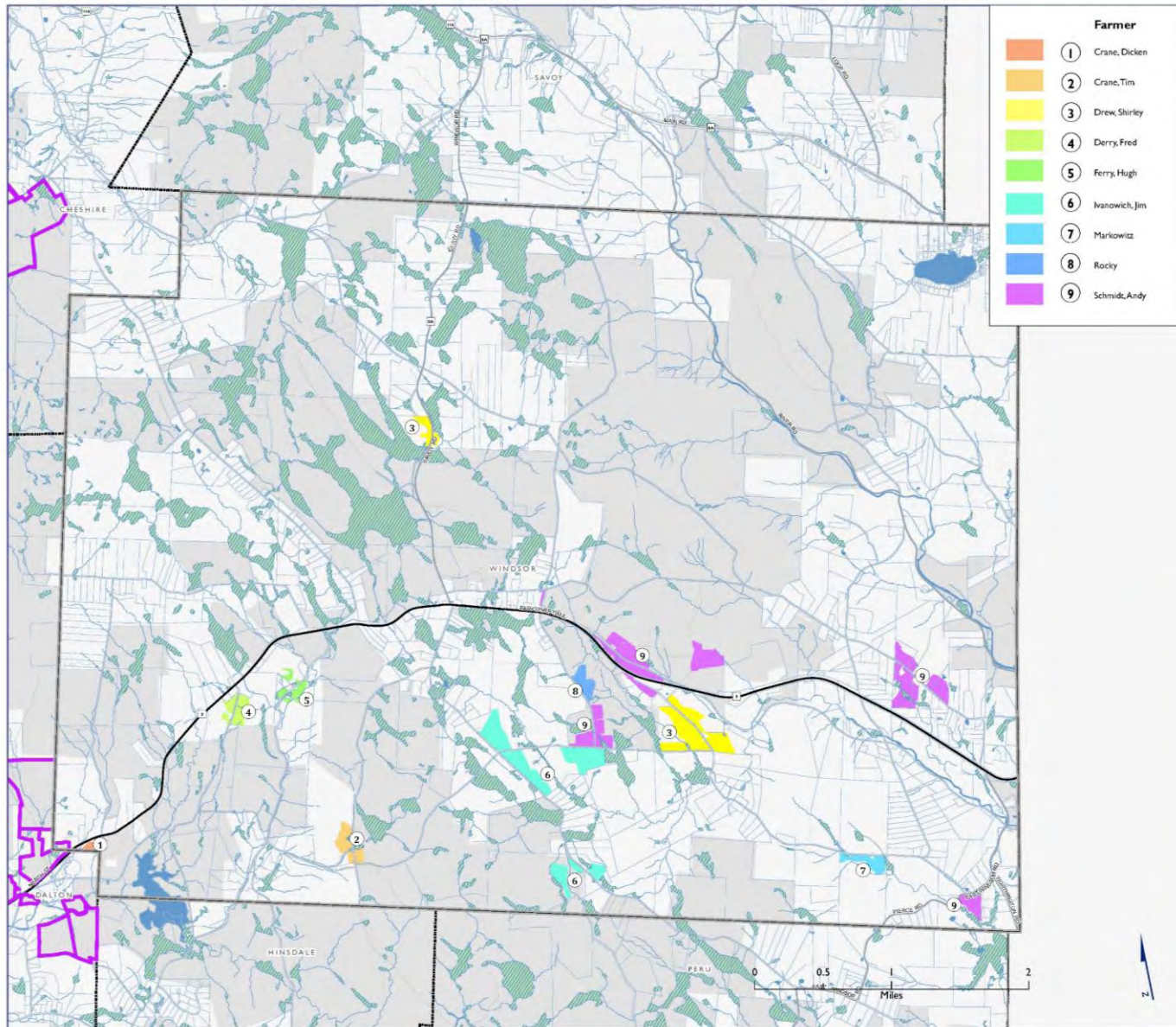
NORTH GROUP

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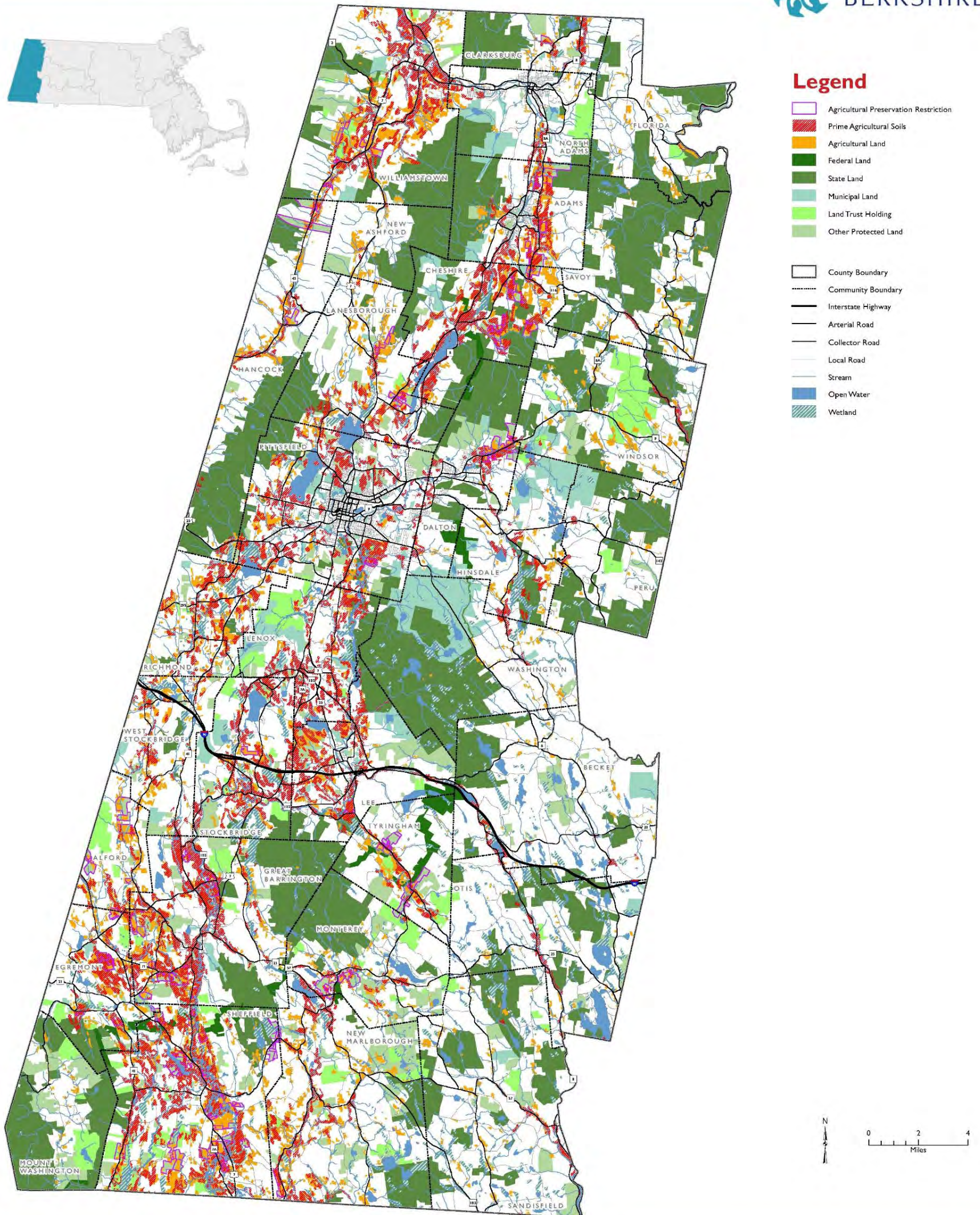
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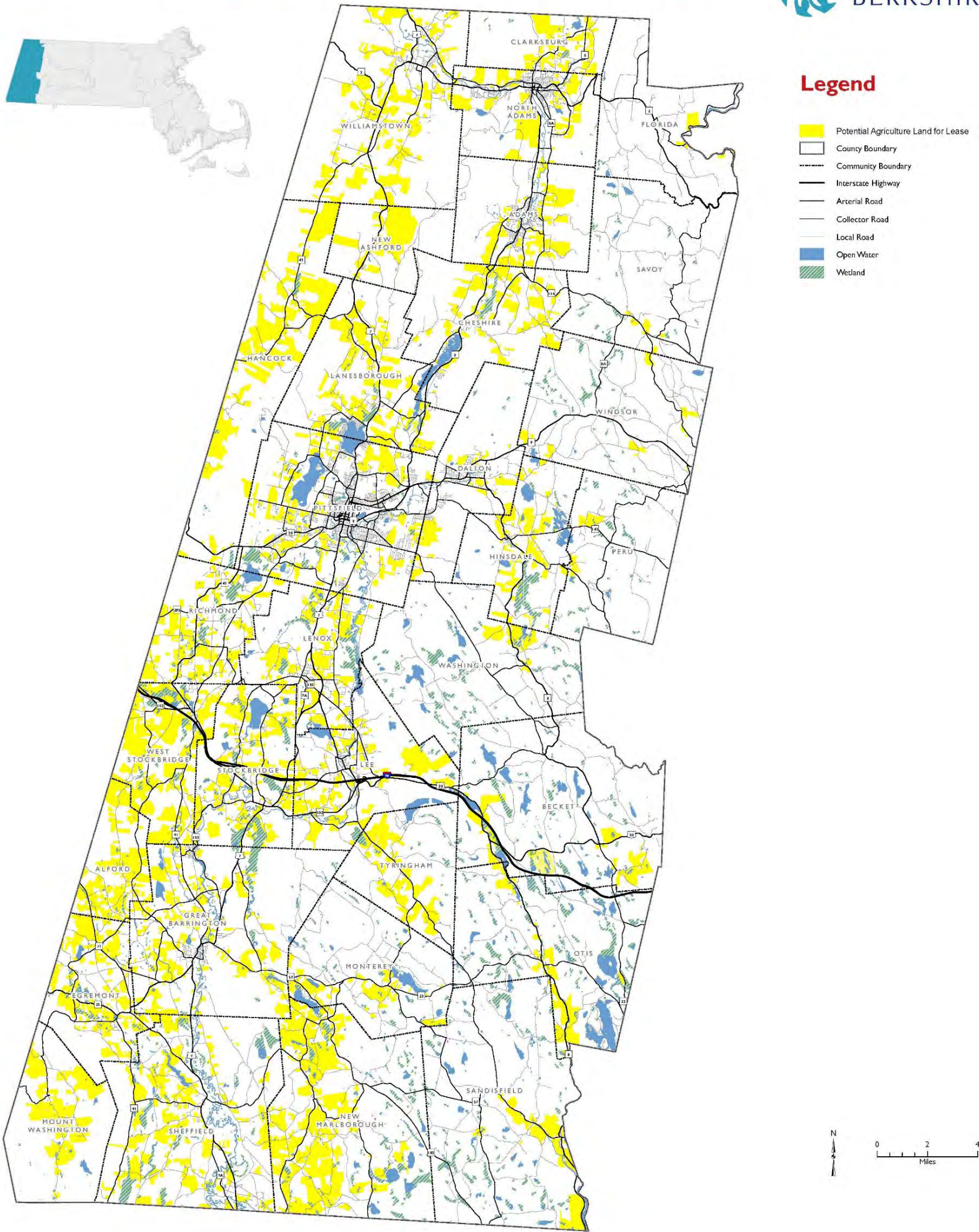
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AGRICULTURE



6/29/2011

AGRICULTURE LEASE POTENTIAL



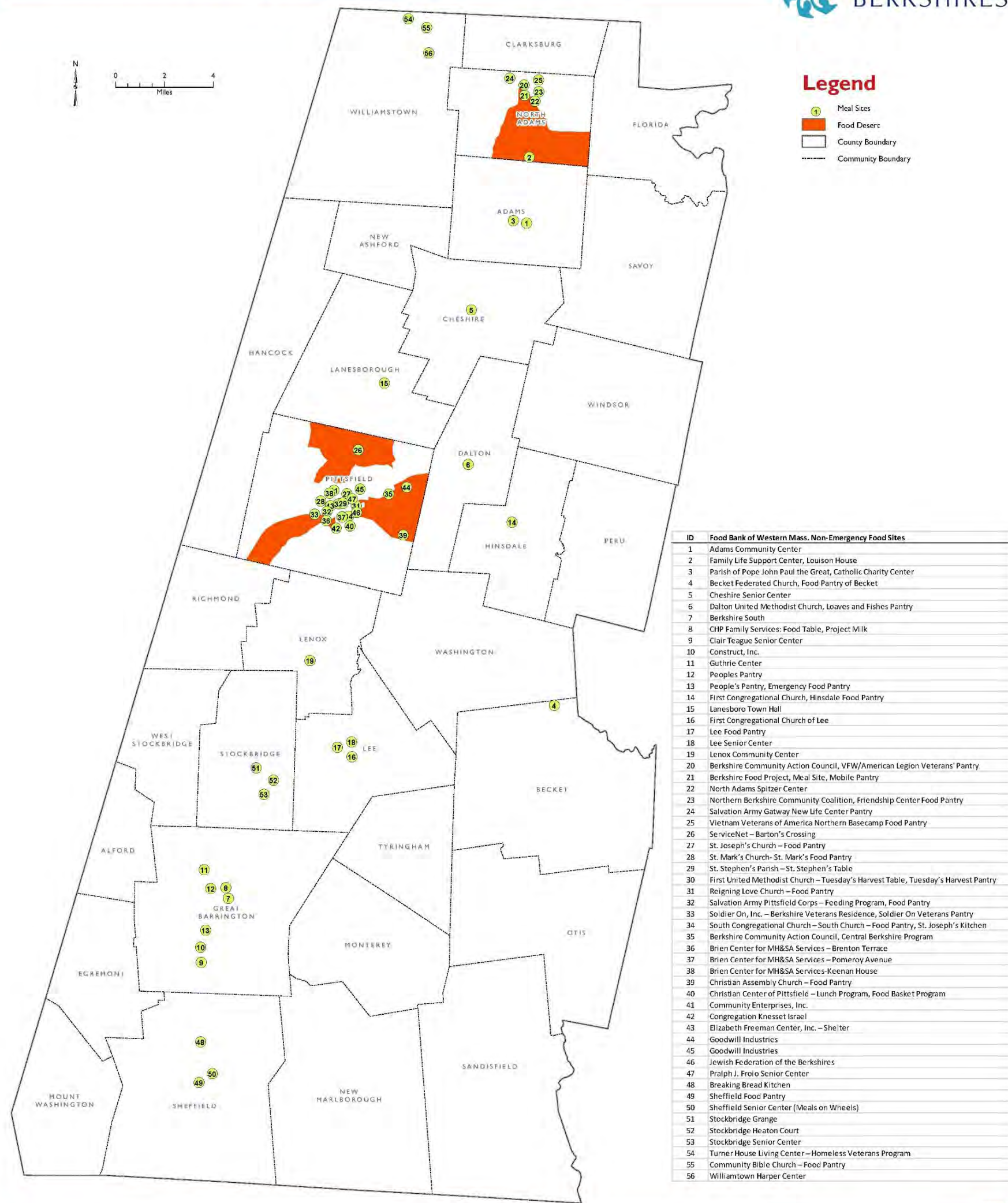
4/10/2014



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COMMUNITY MEAL SITES



3/20/2014

