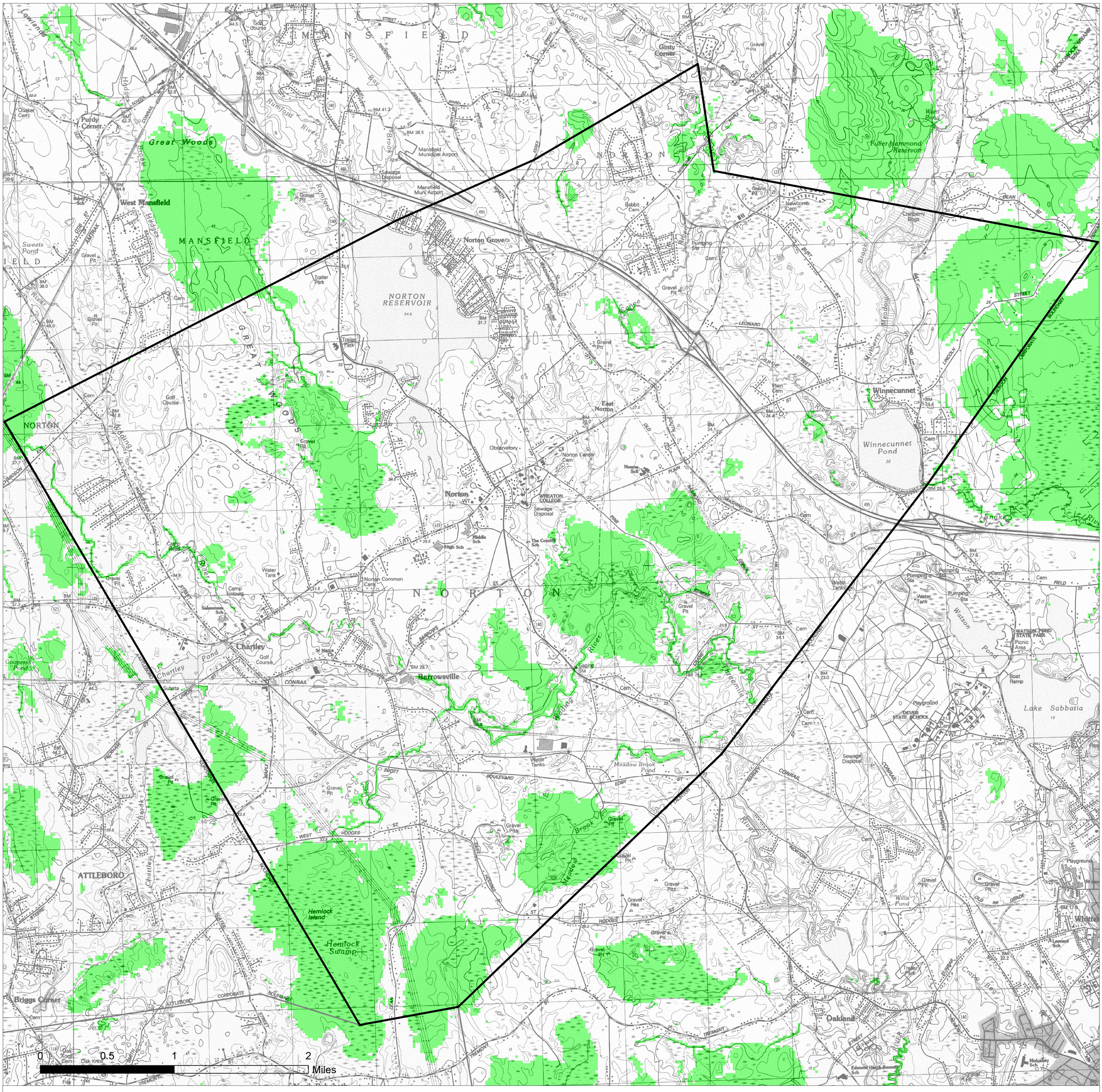
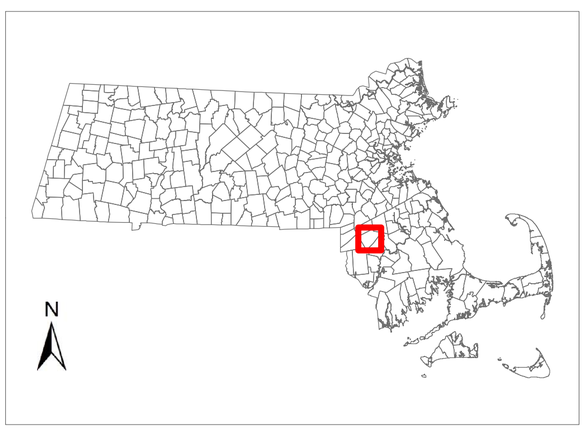
Habitat of Potential Regional or Statewide Importance
Town of NORTON, MA



Habitat of Potential Regional or Statewide Importance

Updated January 9, 2024



MassDEP's Massachusetts Wildlife Habitat Protection Guidance for Inland Wetlands (June 2006) adopted a new approach for assessing wildlife habitat impacts associated with work in wetlands. This approach utilizes maps developed at the University of Massachusetts Amherst using the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS). The maps depict Habitat of Potential Regional or Statewide Importance that may trigger more intensive review under the MA Wetlands Protection Act. For more information on how to assess wildlife habitat impacts, see Section III of the Guidance document: https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-wildlife-habitat-protection-guidance-for-inland-wetlands/download.

CAPS is an approach to prioritizing land for conservation/protection based on the assessment of ecological integrity for various ecological communities (e.g. forested wetland, shrub swamp, headwater stream) within an area. The CAPS model assesses ecological integrity of the Massachusetts landscape as influenced by environmental stressor metrics (e.g. pollution, fragmentation). It relies on data that are broadly available across Massachusetts. Ecological features which are not consistently surveyed or uniformly available, such as certified vernal pools, rare species habitat, and contamination sites are not included in the CAPS analysis. When available, this more specific ecological information may be used in conjunction with the CAPS outputs to better understand particular sites in Massachusetts and support informed conservation decision-making. For more information on the statewide maps produced by the CAPS model, see: http://www.umasscaps.org.

These maps were prepared by the University of Massachusetts Amherst, with funding from the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.

UMass Amherst

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