

CHAPTER 4: OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL RESOURCES— HAMPSHIRE COUNTY

Introduction

With its rolling hills, cascading waters, deep forests, open meadows, and abundance of open space, the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor is an extraordinary outdoor playground for residents and visitors alike. Opportunities to hike, camp, swim, boat, cross-country ski, hunt, fish, and cycle abound in the region. In the Hampshire County section of the corridor, there are nearly 30 square miles of open space available for multiple recreational opportunities, including 5,803 acres within state forests and parks, 10,669 acres within wildlife management areas, and 1,919 acres within other significant open space lands. The greatest recreational treasures in Hampshire County include the Westfield River with its federal Wild and Scenic designation, and the extensive 7,900-acre wilderness area created by the adjoining lands of the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area, the Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest, and the Hiram H. Fox Wildlife Management Area.

The Outdoor Recreational Resources chapter is an inventory of recreational resources developed through a review of Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

listings, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife's MassWildlife listings, information from the Commonwealth's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), and narratives within the Open Space and Recreation Plans of Byway towns. Resources are described here by type of facility (State Forest and Parks, and Wildlife Management Areas) and by type of activity (hiking trails, camping, swimming, boating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing, hunting and fishing, bicycling, and golfing).



The Westfield River Wildwater Races, an annual spring event for more than 55 years, attracts boating enthusiasts from across the northeast.

While the inventory in this chapter focuses on the recreational resources within the corridor, there are several nearby resources (accessible from the byway) that are so important to the region that they have been included here. Most importantly, these involve the lands

contiguous to the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area: the Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest and Indian Hollow Campground.

State Forests and Parks

The 5,803 acres of state forests and parks within the corridor are managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. State forests and parks are managed for both recreation and forestry resources. Of the six forests and parks within the Hampshire County part of the corridor, D.A.R. State Forest and C.M. Gardner State Park offer the greatest range of recreational opportunities.

Goshen

D.A.R. State Forest – 1,700 acres

Located on Route 112 just north of the Goshen town center, D.A.R. State Forest offers a popular beach for swimming on Upper Highland Lake, a shady picnic area and pavilion, and camping. The forest was established in 1929 when the Daughters of the American Revolution donated 1,020 acres to the Commonwealth. Almost 750 additional acres have been acquired since then, including the Upper and Lower Highland Lakes. The forest includes miles of mixed-use trails through northern hardwood-conifer forest. In addition, the park offers camping, boating, and snowmobiling, among other outdoor recreation activities. There is a handicapped accessible trail that runs along the forested shoreline of Upper Highland Lake, providing scenic water views. The Goshen fire tower, located within the state forest, provides spectacular views of the Connecticut River Valley.

Cummington

Bryant Mountain State Forest – 617 acres

Located just south of West Cummington, Bryant Mountain is one of the higher summits in Massachusetts at 2,080 feet, and was once home to the Berkshire Snow Basin Ski Area. DCR reports that there are no official trails at Bryant Mountain, but that the former ski trails can provide access for wildlife viewing.

Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest – 2,486 acres

Located within the Route 112 study area, but along Route 143 in Chesterfield, the Gilbert A. Bliss State Forest runs along the East Branch of the Westfield River, north of the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area. The 9-mile long East Branch Trail passes through the Forest along the river.

Worthington

Worthington State Forest – 183 acres

This state forest is located off of Route 143, within one mile of the intersection with Route 112 in Worthington town center. Within this state forest are the headwaters of Watts Stream, a tributary to Little River.

Huntington

Huntington State Forest – 732 acres

Just east of Route 112, along Huntington’s border with Montgomery, the Huntington State Forest edges Roaring Brook to the west, and provides hiking and mountain bike opportunities.

C.M. Gardner State Park – 85 acres

Located in the rolling hills along a scenic section of the Westfield River’s East Branch, C.M. Gardner State Park offers opportunities for hiking, fishing and boating. A wooded picnic area is available on the banks of the river. The land was given for a state park in memory of Charles M. Gardner of Huntington, farmer, writer and National Grange leader for 34 years. Nearby are two impressive flood control dams managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Knightville Dam and Littleville Dam each over 160 feet high. The southern area of the state park is known as “40 Gorge.”

Wildlife Management Areas

In addition to state forests and parks, the Route 112 corridor in Hampshire County also has over 10,669 acres of wildlife management areas overseen by MassWildlife. A great variety of species and wildlife can be found in the management areas along Route 112, from bogs to rivers to upland forests.

Goshen

Lily Pond Wildlife Area – 282 acres

Surrounding the 30-acre Lily Pond, which resembles a flooded bog, this management area is home to waterfowl species such as great blue heron, as well as moose, bear, otter and beaver. Hemlock and white pine make up approximately 90 percent of the tree cover in this relatively flat to gently rolling woodland. Access to this management area is from Ball Road, which can be reached from Route 112. There is no formal parking lot at this management area, though a small log landing provides parking for a few vehicles.

Cummington

Paul Cuddy Wildlife Management Area – 86 acres

Located south of Route 112 and Chesterfield State Forest, this wildlife management area provides access to the Westfield River.

Cummington Wildlife Management Area – 194 acres

This management area is located on the north side of Route 112 and north of the Chesterfield State Forest.

Powell Brook Wildlife Management Area – 224 acres

This management area is comprised of moderately steep, northeast facing slopes, forested with a mixture of northern hardwoods and softwoods. Powell Brook, a cold-water stream,

forms much of the northern boundary of the area. Access to the area is off of Powell Road, just south of the Bryant Homestead and Five Corners.

Worthington

Fox Den Wildlife Management Area - 3,770 acres

This large management area has several non-contiguous parcels within the towns of Worthington, Middlefield, and Chester. In Worthington, a large parcel borders the Middle Branch of the Westfield River, and has access from River Road in West Worthington. Northern hardwoods of American beech, maples, birches, white ash, along with scattered white pine comprise most of the forest with hemlock found along stream corridors, shaded ravines, and poor drainage areas. Several small unnamed brooks flow across the various parcels. Tuttle Brook and the Middle Branch of the Westfield River have excellent trout habitat. Deer, turkey, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, bear, bobcat, fisher and occasionally moose inhabit the area. Blackburnian warbler and yellow-rumped warbler nest in the spruces. Mourning warbler nest in early successional forests. Many species of dragonflies inhabit the clear, cold waters of the Westfield River.

Hiram H. Fox Wildlife Management Area – 2,951 acres

This large management area is located in four communities: Worthington, Chesterfield, Chester, and Huntington. The area encompasses two large interconnected parcels, bisected by Route 112, of rolling hills with some steep ledges and gullies. A portion of Moss Meadow Brook and its headwaters are located in the western parcel. The Little River, which passes through the eastern parcel, is stocked with trout. Deer, grouse, raccoon, snowshoe hare, gray squirrel, turkey, bear and numerous non-game species can also be found in the management area.

Huntington

Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area – 2,430 acres

In addition to spectacular views from Route 112, this wildlife management and recreation area provides hiking, fishing, and hunting opportunities to visitors of the area. The area, owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, can be accessed from Route 112, just south of the Hiram H. Fox State Wildlife Management Area. Through a cooperative lease agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MassWildlife manages 296 acres of the area for fishing, hunting, and preservation of the grasslands within the seasonally dry bed reservoir for the East Branch of the Westfield River. The vegetation is grassy and bushy on the seasonally flooded plain. Portions of the land above the floodplain are forested in mature hardwoods and softwoods. Woodcock, grouse, cottontail rabbit, gray squirrel, raccoon, deer, moose and numerous other species inhabit the area. The river is stocked with trout, and the area is stocked with pheasant. In summertime and early autumn the open areas of the basin have spectacular blooms of wildflowers. These old fields attract many species of songbirds and butterflies. The area just below the dam has a historic house, picnic tables, fireplaces, universally accessible public restrooms, drinking water and a picnic shelter. Groups may reserve the shelter in advance for a modest fee. Each spring, water releases

from the Knightville Dam are coordinated with those from nearby Littleville Lake to provide challenging flows for the annual Westfield River Wildwater Races. Note: depending upon flood control activities, special rules and regulations of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be in effect in this area.

Huntington Wildlife Conservation Restrictions/Easements– 732 acres

MassWildlife also has three large lots in Huntington for which they have negotiated and purchased conservation restrictions, including easements for public access of these lands for non-motorized recreational enjoyment. These lots, which do not have any marked trails or designated parking areas, include the following:

The Stanton Lot (249 acres) is located along the western side of Route 112 in Huntington, just west of the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area.

The Stanton-Clapp Lot (78 acres) is a mixed forest with white pine, hemlock-hardwoods mix, and oak hardwoods mix. The white pines along the road frontage have a dense deciduous understory composed of striped maple, witch hazel, sassafras and mountain laurel. The property has 1,050 feet of frontage along the Westfield River, which is stocked with rainbow and brown trout. Access to this wildlife area is through a right-of-way over private property off Montgomery Road, near Route 112.

The Stanton-Cook & Beesaw Lots (405 acres) have several timber types, including oak/hardwoods, northern hardwoods, and hemlock/hardwoods. The understory is composed of mountain laurel, striped maple, hop hornbeam and witch hazel. Cold Brook and several small streams flow across the area to eventually join the West Branch of the Westfield River. The Chester-Blandford State Forest abuts the northwestern boundary. There is no formal parking, but there is 4,050 feet of road frontage along the south side of Route 20.

Other Significant Open Spaces

Cummington

The William Cullen Bryant Homestead– 195 acres

Maintained by the Trustees of the Reservation, the William Cullen Bryant Homestead was the boyhood home and inspiration to one of America's foremost 19th-century poets. The site, which boasts one of the last old growth forests in the region, has prompted the conservation of over 970 acres of actively managed surrounding farm and forest land. The homestead contains a visitors' center, restrooms, picnic areas, and hiking trails.

Worthington

Road's End Wildlife Sanctuary, Massachusetts Audubon Society– 157 acres

The sanctuary runs along the height of a long ridge and offers occasional views of the surrounding hills. The extensive forest attracts many woodland bird species. Bluebird and tree swallows have been seen in the meadow. You can often find beaver in the wetlands and

the pond; other resident mammals include bear, otter, and coyote. The sanctuary, which features a short loop trail, can be accessed from Route 112, just south of the intersection with Capen Road, from a dirt road running west called Corbett Road.

Huntington

Littleville Lake– 1,567 acres

Managed by the Army Corps of Engineers, Littleville Lake is located about one mile off Route 112 in Huntington and Chester. The park offers visitors opportunities to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation activities. The 280-acre lake is formed by a large dam across the Middle Branch of the Westfield River. Swimming and camping are prohibited as Littleville Lake serves as a backup water supply reservoir for the city of Springfield, Massachusetts. The undeveloped areas of Littleville Lake are managed to preserve and promote the forest and wildlife resources. The hundreds of acres of hemlock, pine and mixed hardwoods are managed by Corps personnel to provide timber and fuel wood, improve wildlife habitat and to insure water quality. Miles of roads and the Eagle Ridge Trail provide opportunities for hiking and mountain biking.

Hiking Trails

Hiking trails can be found in many of the state forests, parks, and conservation areas along the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor. Extensive trail systems can be found at D.A.R. State Forest in Goshen and along the East Branch of the Westfield River, starting at the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area in Huntington. The William Cullen Bryant Homestead, Deer Hill Reservation, and Gilbert Bliss State Forest in Cummington also have hiking trails.

Goshen

D.A.R. State Forest features 15 miles of trails. The D.A.R. has several long hiking trails, including the Long Trail, Moose Run, Darling Trail, Twining Brook Trail and Beaver Pond Loop. There are combined hiking and bridle trails, including the Black Bear Trail, Bobcat Trail, Turkey Trail, Tilton Farm Trail, Town Trail, Camp Howe Trail, Sunset Trail, Porcupine Trail and Boy Scout Trail.

Cummington

The William Cullen Bryant Homestead has 2.5 miles of hiking trails on the property, including the Rivulet Trail, which traverses the site of old growth forest and runs close to the Rivulet Brook. The area was inspiration for Bryant's famous 1824 poem, *The Rivulet*.

Arunah Hill Natural Science Center has over 60 acres of pristine natural forests, with 6 miles of marked & maintained trails. There are many more miles of unmarked and uncharted paths at the center as well.

Gilbert Bliss State Forest see description for East Branch Trail below.

Huntington

The nine-mile long **East Branch Trail** is a major scenic path that runs from the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area north through the Gilbert Bliss State Forest to the Chesterfield Gorge Reservation in Chesterfield. The trail follows the historic river road along the west side of the Westfield River, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. Along the east side of the river in this section is the **Claude M. Hill Trail**, which runs from the Knightville Dam to the Indian Hollow Campground.

C.M. Gardner State Park has several short walking trails.

Littleville Lake has 14 miles of trails on old cart roads that run on both sides of the lake, connecting with Goss Hill, Fiske, and Kinnie Brook roads. The trailhead for Eagle Ridge Trail is located at the second gate, on the way to the boat ramp.

Camping

There are a variety of camping options accessible via the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor, from public camping sites in state forest and parks to privately managed youth sleep-away camps.

Goshen

At **D.A.R. State Forest** camping is available from mid-May through mid-October in the designated campgrounds. There is one campground located near the nature center and Upper Highland Lake, offering 51 wooded campsites with showers and a private beach. Another wooded group site is located on the northern edge of the forest, by Twinning Brook Pond. **Camp Howe** is a 4-H youth camp on Aberdeen Road, adjacent to the DAR State Forest. The phone number is: (413) 268-7635. **Camp Holy Cross**, a facility of the Diocese of Springfield since 1930, is a youth summer camp that contains over 250 acres of woods and fields situated on the Upper Highland Reservoir in the D.A.R. State Forest. The phone number is: (413) 684-0125.

Cummington

Established as a homestead by Arunah Bartlett in the mid 1800s, **Arunah Hill Natural Science Center** was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1992 to create and maintain a dark sky observing site; an environmental, botanical, and wildlife preserve; a research facility for astronomy and science; and an educational facility for astronomy, science, and nature. Camping is encouraged and free at the Arunah Hill Natural Science Center. Camping facilities are in a natural and pristine state. The center requires campers to give prior notification of camping on site. **Shire Village Camp** is a youth summer sleep-away camp near Cummington town center.

Worthington

The **Berkshire Park Camping Area** is located high in the hills on 246 acres of forest land. The elevation is 1,423 feet above sea level, well above the high temperatures and humidity.

The campground is at the end of Harvey Road, one mile into the woods off Old Post Road (can be accessed from Worthington town center). This camping area offers children's activities, pool swimming, hiking/mountain bike trails, volleyball/badminton, horseshoes, adult craft lessons, playground equipment, pond fishing, an arcade and hay rides.

Huntington

Indian Hollow Campground (Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area), a large group camping site, is located at the northern end of the basin for the Knightville Dam reservoir in Chesterfield. It is owned and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is available by reservation to community groups such as churches, schools, scouts and clubs.

Swimming

Goshen

Within the **D.A.R. State Forest**, there are two beaches along the southern edges of Upper Highland Lake. One beach, located next to the camping sites, is designated only for campers, and is unguarded. The other beach is available for day-use, and is guarded in the summer months.

Huntington

In Huntington, visitors can also take a dip into pools of the cool-running East Branch of the Westfield River at the **Knightville Dam Recreation Area**, but none of these are officially sanctioned swimming spots. **C.M. Gardner State Park** has a roped off swimming area in the East Branch of the Westfield River (a narrow lake at this point) with a beach.

Boating

Along much of its stretch in Hampshire County, the Route 112 Scenic Byway follows the East Branch of the **Westfield River**, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. There are opportunities to access the East Branch of the Westfield River for canoeing and kayaking along Routes 112/9 in Cummington at many of the state highway turnout areas. This



Kayakers enjoy a quiet moment in an eddy on the East Branch of the Westfield River.

section of the river has many small riffles and rapids (Class I and II) and can only be run in times of high water.

The Westfield River Wildwater Races are held each spring (typically the third weekend in April) on the East Branch of the Westfield River in Huntington, and watched by hundreds of spectators from Route 112. There is an 8-mile novice segment run from Huntington Center to Russell on Saturday, and an expert segment of the river race, run from the Knightville Dam to Huntington Center on Sunday. Additional information is available through the Huntington Police Department. These same sections of river can be run at times of higher water or when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a scheduled water release at Knightville Dam. There are many significant rapids on the Knightville-Huntington section of the river (Class III and IV), and this segment should only be attempted by experienced whitewater boaters. Access points to the river in Huntington are at the Knightville Dam, and at the Route 112 Bridge in Huntington Center.

For flatwater boating enthusiasts, there are two boat ramps on **Upper Highland Lake** in the D.A.R. State Forest in Goshen, and one boat ramp on **Lower Highland Lake**. These lakes are small, and generally suitable for canoes, kayaks and similar small craft. At the 280-acre **Littleville Lake**, the Huntington access area provides a boat ramp and parking area. Motors, however are limited to a maximum of 10 horsepower. Canoes may be launched at the upper end of the reservoir in the Dayville area. Note that swimming and camping are prohibited at Littleville Lake because the lake serves as a backup water supply reservoir for the City of Springfield, Massachusetts. **Norwich Pond** in Huntington is described as a “jewel in the hills.” The lake is ideal for small craft, rowboats, canoes, small sailboats, and low-speed motor boats. The one public boat ramp off Pisgah Road in Huntington is the only public access to the pond.

Cross-country Skiing and Snowshoeing

There are many trails for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing in the state forests, parks, and conservation areas along the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor.

Goshen

D.A.R. State Forest features 15 miles of trails. The D.A.R. has several long trails, including the Long Trail, Moose Run, Darling Trail, Twining Brook Trail and Beaver Pond Loop. DAR grooms many of these trails and has a warming hut that rents sit skies.

Cummington

The William Cullen Bryant Homestead has 2.5 miles of trails on the property. **Arunah Hill Natural Science Center** has over 60 acres of pristine natural forests with 6 miles of marked and maintained trails. There are many more miles of unmarked and uncharted paths at the Center as well.

Huntington

The nine-mile long **East Branch** Trail is a major scenic path that runs north from the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area through the Gilbert Bliss State Forest to the Chesterfield Gorge Reservation in Chesterfield. The trail follows the Westfield River, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. **The Knightville Dam** area also offers vast opportunities for skiing and snowshoeing. The **C.M. Gardner State Park** in Huntington has several short walking trails that are suitable for snowshoeing or skiing. **Littleville Lake** has 14 miles of trails on old cart roads that run on both sides of the lake.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are permitted in all state wildlife management areas and in most state forests and parks. Hunting seasons are established by the Massachusetts Division Fisheries and Wildlife. See their website for information:

http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw_toc.htm. Note that a license from the Massachusetts Division Fisheries and Wildlife is required to fish, hunt or trap. For more information, see: http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/recreation/licensing/license_fees.htm or call (508) 792-7270.

D.A.R. State Forest in Goshen offers excellent fishing opportunities on both Upper and Lower Highland Lakes. During the winter months ice fishing is popular. The **Westfield River** is one of the best trout rivers in the state. It offers plenty of native brown and rainbow trout, and MassWildlife stocks the river with trout and salmon fry early every spring. Running from the town of Savoy, the river is accessible along Route 9/112 in Cummington at many highway turn-out locations. As it runs southeasterly to Chesterfield and into the Trustees of Reservations' Chesterfield Gorge and Gilbert Bliss State Forest, the river has many other excellent spots, some of which must be earned with some bushwhacking. Wading spots are easy to find, as are the clearings where you can find enough room for fly casting. The deep pools in the lower river hold fish throughout the season. The upper Westfield River is also one of the few successful spawning areas in the state for Atlantic salmon and is also home to other migratory fish.

In Worthington, **Berkshire Park Camping Area** offers pond fishing opportunities. **C. M. Gardner State Park** in Huntington is located along a scenic section of the East Branch of the Westfield River. This state park offers opportunities for fishing along this section of the River. In Huntington, **Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area** offers fishing and hunting opportunities. The river is stocked with trout in the spring and the surrounding hills, which provide prime upland game habitat, are stocked with pheasants in the fall. **Littleville Lake** is a favorite year-round spot for fishermen. Trout, bass, yellow perch and smelt are major species found in the lake. Hunting and fishing are permitted in accordance with posted restrictions and Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife laws. **Norwich Pond** is well stocked with trout each spring. Anglers also use this 122-acre natural great pond in winter months to catch occasional large bass or leftover trout. Fishing tapers off in

summer months, however, when conflict with other uses is high. Norwich Pond is located on Pisgah Road off of Route 66, and there is a public access site for the pond up the road about 1.5 miles on the left.

Bicycling

In the Pioneer Valley region, there is a wealth of lightly-traveled and scenic roads outside the urban areas of the Valley as a resource for bicycle transportation and tourism. The greatest concentration of such routes is in the Hilltowns. Route 112 is considered to be one of the best cycling roads due to its well paved conditions, light traffic, and breath-taking scenery. It is identified on the Pioneer Valley Bicycling Map as a main bicycling route in the Hilltowns, though there is no more detailed published source of information about cycling in the Route 112 region.

Route 112 Scenic Byway advisory committee members in Hampshire County have noted that for good on-road cycling, it is important to promote the installation of two-foot shoulders along the roadway wherever possible. The wider four-foot shoulders tend to collect more debris, creating hazardous obstacles for cyclists. Regular street-sweeping of shoulders would be an important improvement. Installation of rumble strips should also be avoided wherever possible as they present a certain hazard to cyclists.

There are also some good off-road bicycling opportunities at the state parks and forests and at wildlife management areas along Route 112. **D.A.R. State Forest** in Goshen features a New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) trail up the steep hill to the fire tower at the forest's high point. In Huntington, an old logging road, now called the **East Branch Trail**, extends 9 miles, from the **the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area** to the Chesterfield Gorge Reservation in Chesterfield. The trail follows the Westfield River, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. **Hiram H. Fox Wildlife Management Area** also offers opportunities for people of varying skill levels.

Golfing

Worthington

The **Worthington Golf Club** was founded in 1904. It is an 88 acre, nine-hole course located 1,700 feet above sea level. The 5,700 yard design offers a challenge to anyone and superb views of the surrounding hills. The golf season begins during mid April and ends on October 31st. The club also features a comfortable restaurant and lounge with full bar and menu and great views of the golf course and surrounding hills.

Off-road Vehicles

Off-road vehicles (ORVs) are allowed in a limited number of the state forests and parks in western Massachusetts, none of which are located in the Byway corridor study area. Members of the Hampshire County Route 112 Advisory Committee have noted that all terrain vehicle (ATV) use has been a particular problem throughout the region, with the erosion and destruction of trails. The Western Massachusetts ATV Association could be an important partner in helping to address these issues.

Snowmobiling

The Massachusetts Snowmobile Corridor Trail Map 2006, available from the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, shows where snowmobile corridors and some secondary trails are located in the Byway study area. More detailed information and maps of local trails are available from local snowmobile organizations in the towns along the Byway. Snowmobiles are allowed in the Route 112 Scenic Byway corridor on designated trails in the **Catamount, DAR, and the H.O. Cook State Forests**. It should be noted that the snowmobile trails in the region are seasonal snowmobile trails. Trails on private property are often governed by written agreements with the property owner, stipulating maintenance responsibilities in return for access. For the most part, neither the public nor the private trails serve as off-road vehicle (ORV) trails in warmer weather.

More information on local snowmobile trails and conditions can be obtained from the following organizations:

Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts
P.O. Box 386
Conway, MA 01341
413-369-8092
www.sledmass.com

Hilltown Snowmobile Club, Ashfield
Maintains and grooms trails in Ashfield, Plainfield, and Holly
Contact: Mike Dufresne (413) 628-9964

Goshen Highlanders Snowmobile Club, Goshen
Maintains and grooms trails in Goshen
Contact: www.goshenhighlanders.com
Jerry Bird (413) 268-8363
Bill and Deb Turner (413) 268-3145

Worthington Snowmobile Club
Maintains and grooms trails in Worthington
Contact: Bob Gilbert (413) 238-5878

Universal Access (Handicapped Accessibility to Recreational Areas)

Handicapped accessibility to recreational areas is a priority for each of the Hampshire County towns along the byway. All make mention of this in their needs assessment and/or goals of their Open Space and Recreation Plans. For the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, DCR's Universal Access Program is dedicated to providing outdoor recreation opportunities in state parks for visitors of all abilities. Accessibility to the state parks and forests is achieved through site improvements, specialized adaptive recreation equipment, and accessible recreation programs. DCR Park Interpreters include visitors with disabilities in nature walks and interpretive programs scheduled seasonally around the state. Assistive listening equipment is available upon request at many parks. Recorded brochures, walks, and tours are also available at some parks. For further information, to request information in alternative formats, or to request American Sign Language interpretation for any DCR program, please contact the Universal Access Program office at P.O. Box 484, Amherst, MA 01004. Or call 413-545-5353 voice; 413-577-2200 TTY.

Universal access has been made available to beaches, swimming, fishing, boating, camping, hiking, picnicking and vistas throughout the Commonwealth. In the Route 112 Scenic Byway region, the **DAR State Forest** provides universal access to many recreational activities. This facility provides accessible beaches, boating (flatwater kayaking), camping, fishing, picnicking, rest rooms and hiking trails. The state forest features an accessible one-half mile stabilized stone dust trail that travels through the woods alongside Upper Highland Lake. The trail includes benches, a fishing pier, and lakeside views. During the winter months, DCR operates a warming hut that rents sit skies.

Recreational Linkages Assessment

In the Route 112 Byway region, the networks of trails and the masses of protected open space, the length of the Westfield River's east and middle branches provide a way of thinking about how recreational experiences might be organized and linked. The Route 112 Scenic Byway's intersections with the historic Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway (Route 2) and its associated region to the north and the Jacob's Ladder Trail Scenic Byway (Route 20) and its associated region to the south only enrich these possibilities.

The brief assessment that follows describes ongoing efforts to create recreational linkages and describes ideas and opportunities for future efforts.

Trails and Open Space Connections

Trails and open space connections is a large category here that encompasses trails for many recreational activities, including hiking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. The discussion below also includes cycling, on Route 112 itself and off road.

Ongoing efforts

- The **East Branch Trail** is a major scenic path that runs from the basin of the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area in Huntington north through the 2,486-acre Gilbert Bliss State Forest and on to TTOR's Chesterfield Gorge Reservation in Chesterfield. This nine-mile trail follows the historic river road along the west side of the Westfield River's East Branch, a designated National Wild and Scenic River. (Along the east side of the river in this section is the Claude M. Hill Trail, which runs from the Knightville Dam picnic area to the Indian Hollow Campground). The Westfield River Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee, a partnership of local towns, land trusts, government agencies, and TTOR, established the trail and is working to extend the trail southward to Huntington center, and northward to Windsor and Savoy.
- Through Commonwealth Connections, Massachusetts Division of Conservation and Recreation's Greenways program and the Highlands Communities Initiative are working to support local trails groups in Williamsburg, Goshen, Ashfield, and the Westfield Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee to develop connections of trails in the Westfield River watershed, including a potential greenway stretching from Conway State Forest to DAR to the Westfield River.
- Two trail networks from Conway to Goshen and into Ashfield, and from Ashfield into Hawley are in progress thanks to the successful work of the Ashfield Trails Committee. Through informal trail agreements with private landowners, the committee has been able to connect the open space of Chapel Brook in Ashfield (173 acres owned by The Trustees of the Reservations (TTOR)), to the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) State Forest in Goshen (1,700 acres managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)). They are working now to extend the trail from Chapel Brook eastward to the Conway State Forest in Conway, and from DAR State Forest northward to Ashfield

Town Center. The trails committee has also connected the open space of Ashfield's public elementary school, Sanderson Academy, with Bear Swamp (285 acres owned by TTOR), and are working to extend this trail northward to Hawley State Forest (7,882 acres managed by DCR). The Goshen Open Space Committee and the Williamsburg Woodland Trails group are beginning work to link the **Tilton Farm Town Trail's south loop** in Goshen to trails in the Town of Williamsburg. These groups are working to devise a route that will possibly traverse a discontinued logging road and forest land on East Street to Old Goshen Road and then to the Breckenridge Sanctuary and Bradley Sanctuary Trails, located off the Old Goshen Road and to the Briar Hill Conservation Area just over the Goshen town line in Williamsburg.

- DAR State Forest in Goshen provides universal access to many recreational activities. This facility has accessible beaches, boating (flatwater kayaking), camping, fishing, picnicking, rest rooms and hiking trails. The state forest features an accessible one-half mile stabilized stone dust trail that travels through the woods alongside Upper Highland Lake. The trail includes benches, a fishing pier, and lakeside views. During the winter months, DCR operates a warming hut that rents sit skies.
- Snowmobilers have been very active in trail development and maintenance throughout the Route 112 region. There are three established clubs, all of which are members of the larger Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts: Hilltown Snowmobile Club, which maintains and grooms trails in Ashfield, Plainfield, and Hawley; Goshen Highlanders Snowmobile Club, which maintains trails in Goshen; and the Worthington Snowmobile Club which maintains 23 miles of trails in Worthington. The clubs have main corridor trails that link to all of the towns in the region and beyond. According to Bob Gilbert of the Worthington Snowmobile Club, it is possible with adequate snow cover to ride west to Mt. Greylock and even north all the way to Canada. The current major issues for the clubs are: the loss of good will from land owners and destruction of trails due to all-terrain vehicles; and loss of trails due to transfers of land ownership to new owners who do not want to allow snowmobiles on their properties. Trails maintained by the clubs are open to multiple uses, particularly cross-country skiers and horseback riders.
- For area cyclists, the Route 112 region has been a favorite destination. Don Podolski of New Horizons Sports in Westfield makes use of Route 112 and associated back roads for some of his organized group rides. He says Route 112 is appealing to cyclists because of low traffic counts and its beautiful scenery; it is also a good north-south route. He notes, however, that because all of Route 112 involves serious elevation gains, it is only suitable for cyclists who are in good to very good physical condition. One of his most popular organized rides includes the Great River Ride (170k), which essentially covers terrain across the three branches of the Westfield River, with segments of the ride passing along Route 112. This ride occurs annually on Columbus Day weekend and draws some 350 riders from throughout the northeast. *Bicycling Magazine* has billed the Great River Ride as one of the top 10 century rides in the nation. According to avid cyclist and Huntington resident Steve

Hamlin, there are areas of Route 112 where it is possible to put together rides of 10-20 miles that are within the abilities of a fairly serious casual rider. Examples include: Route 112 from Cummington to Goshen, and some of the surrounding roads, Route 112 from Route 2 south through Buckland and north through Colrain, and even Route 112 from Huntington to South Worthington. Hamlin notes that for someone who is not afraid of some hills, the Route 112 corridor provides access to some of the best roads for cycling in New England. Traffic is light, the roads are generally in good condition, the scenery is beautiful, and the people are friendly.

- For mountain biking there are extensive trail networks including old roads and trails located in Catamount State Forest in Colrain, DAR State Forest in Goshen, Kenneth Dubuque Memorial State Forest in Hawley, Hiram Fox Wildlife Management Area, Knightville Dam Recreation Area, and in and around the Town of Huntington, including Huntington State Forest, Littleville Lake, and the old trolley line south of Route 20. Formal single-track trails have been made by groups including New England Mountain Biking Association in Catamount and DAR state forests, and informal single-track trails may be found in Kenneth Dubuque and Huntington state forests. Other public access lands and discontinued roads provide more informal trails.
- There are several horseback riding clubs in the Route 112 region, including the Hampshire County Riding Club on Ball Road in Goshen, and several 4-H riding clubs. These clubs, as well as riding clubs outside of the region, hold events where they make use of existing public trails in the region's state forests. Hawley State Forest is an especially popular destination. RJ Sadowski of Peace Haven Farm in Plainfield is beginning to develop a program that would promote the region as a destination for horse riding. He is inventorying Bed and Breakfast establishments and trail systems to define multi-day tours that might be done on horseback, perhaps with some wrangler support for watering, and safe bedding of the horses.
- Through the efforts of Pleun Bouricious, the Town of Plainfield and its historical society are developing an interpretive trails program called the "Hidden Walls, Hidden Mills" project. Funded by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project will map old dams, walls, cellar holes, mill sites etc. and link with data in the historical society about the people who built those farms and mills and lived on the land in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- The Worthington Historical Society has been discussing erecting a sign on its property that would list some highlights of local history, and directions to significant sites, including Global Positioning System (GPS) locations. Cheshire and Northampton, Massachusetts, provide good examples of this kind of signage.

Ideas, opportunities for future efforts

- Village centers in the British countryside are connected to one another through a network of trails that are used by locals and tourists alike. The value of these trails is significant in terms of not only drawing dollars into the villages and creating associated businesses and jobs, but in underscoring the importance of the region’s rural and scenic qualities. The Route 112 region has equally beautiful landscapes and cultural treasures and could draw some lessons from this model of the British Countryside to develop a viable network of trails that connects the region’s major trails to nearby village centers. Such a system of trails could be a tremendous local resource, connecting the populations of village centers to enjoyment of the wider landscape. Not only would this expand the options for local residents in their evening or weekend walks, but it could encourage walking journeys through the region from one bed and breakfast establishment to another.
- Many town (and possibly county) roads throughout the region are not maintained and very rarely used by automobiles. Currently these roads are used by snowmobilers, horseback riders, cross-country skiers and other outdoor enthusiasts. To expand recreational infrastructure for trails in the region, an inventory of road status may be useful. Especially where old roads have been abandoned and unused for ordinary travel, it may be worth considering a change in road category so that public right of passage is maintained, but towns no longer have maintenance and liability responsibilities. Such categories include unmaintained road (M.G.L., Chapter 82, Section 32A), and statutory private way (M.G.L., Chapter 82, Section 21). It may also be worth exploring: the category of forest or woods road (M.G.L., Chapter 48, Section 16), a “...permanently maintained road, the primary use of which is access to forest lands for the purpose of forest management or presuppression and suppression of forest fires.” It has also been suggested that state legislation could be promoted to establish a new category of road—recreational road—that would build on recreational infrastructure throughout the region and state. At a community development strategy meeting held by the Hilltown Community Development Corporation in Chesterfield, a group of local residents expressed concern about not paving local dirt roads, exploring scenic status for town rural roads, cataloging road discontinuation and promoting trail development. One of the things discussed was the importance of distinguishing between road abandonment and roads that have been discontinued for maintenance. The group talked about the latter staying in town ownership for possible conversion to trails, while the former becoming property of abutters without right-of-way.
- Other existing infrastructure that could potentially advance recreational linkages includes the AT&T Fiber Optic Corridor. This corridor extends from east to west through Chesterfield into Worthington to its terminus thought to be at the microwave tower in Peru. Some initial research is required to understand the status of the corridor and the owner’s willingness to work with communities to establish a trail.
- Coordinate agencies and organizations in the region that are managing recreational areas and access points to address recreational concerns and issues and to develop consistent

public messages on rules and regulations, proper etiquette, respect for historic features, such as stone walls, and such concepts as “carry in/carry out” or “leave no trace behind.” Consistent public messages should lead to a decrease in depreciative visitor behaviors, particularly littering and irresponsible and destructive ATV use. This should, in turn, lead to better public support of future recreation and conservation efforts. (This idea is reiterated below in the section on River Access Locations.)

- Work with bicycle shops, including Don Podolski of New Horizons Sports in Westfield, to publish itineraries for bicycle rides of varying lengths and abilities, including multi-day rides that include Route 112 and the other byways of the region. Also include itineraries for mountain bike rides that make use of the great dirt roads and public trails in the region. These itineraries can include inns and campgrounds along or near the corridor. (Note that there are no inns along the corridor in Goshen and Huntington.¹ Also, there are only three public campgrounds along the corridor in Hampshire County.)
- Enhance infrastructure for cyclists by advocating for bicycle friendly, but low-impact practices in maintaining and re-designing the roadway, specifically: consistent pavement on shoulders (no crushed stone or rumble strips) that allows for safe cycling without destroying the scenic qualities of the road and regular street sweeping of shoulders.
- Attract a recreational outfitter to key Byway location that might combine bicycle sales and rentals with sale and rental of skis, canoes and kayaks, and camping equipment.
- Help promote the work of local enterprises to define and develop multi-day tours that might be done on horseback.
- The hills of the Route 112 region are rich with history. Old cellar holes, cemeteries, and other artifacts of former human settlement are scattered throughout the hillsides. Highlighting these features and relating their associated stories along the length of a trail system would enrich the experience of hiking or walking in the region’s woodlands. It would also serve to underscore the importance of their preservation. Collecting oral histories from town elders about the artifacts found in the woodlands would be a first step in this process. This could include mapping, such as the work in Plainfield, and the addition of interpretive signs, such as those recently installed at key historical sites in Northampton.
- Work with Massachusetts DCR and Outdoor Access to plan and develop more handicapped accessible trails and other recreational facilities in the region. Such accessibility is a priority for each of the Hampshire County towns along the byway. All make mention of this in their needs assessment and/or goals of their Open Space and Recreation Plans.

¹ Though there are no inns or bed and breakfasts in Huntington, there are two bed and breakfasts in nearby Russell/Blandford, and one in Chester/Blandford. There are also two nearby public campgrounds, one in Chester and one in Westhampton.

- Encourage families to explore the open space resources of the Route 112 region through region-wide treasure hunts, be they traditional letterboxing or more high-tech geocaching. Letterboxing, which dates to 1850s England, entails hiding small weatherproof boxes that contain a logbook and rubber stamp, and distributing clues to finding the box. A letterboxer will follow the clues, find the box, imprint the letterbox's stamp on their personal logbook, and then imprint their personal stamp in the letterbox's logbook as proof of having found the box. Geocaching is similar to letterboxing, but participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) to hide and seek containers called "geocaches" or "caches." A typical cache is a small weatherproof container containing a logbook and "treasure" usually toys or trinkets of little value.

River Access Locations

A nationally designated Wild and Scenic River, the Westfield River provides some of the finest trout fishing and whitewater canoeing and kayaking in New England. The Westfield River's East Branch runs along much of the length of the Route 112 Byway corridor in Hampshire County. There are opportunities to access the East Branch of the River for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing along Routes 112 and 9 in Cummington at many of the state highway turnout areas, and within the Route 112 corridor as it stretches south to Huntington. The Middle Branch runs from north to south just outside of the Byway corridor to the west in Cummington and Worthington. It comes into the corridor and joins the East Branch just below the Littleville Lake Dam, which is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Boating on the Westfield River's East and West branches is best done during periods of high water, typically March and April after significant rainfall and when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has releases below the Knightville and Littleville dams. For important details about boating on the Westfield River, see the most recent editions of the Appalachian Mountain Club's publications: *AMC River Guide: Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island* and *Classic Northeast Whitewater Guide*. Following is a table of existing access points and boatable segments along the Middle and East Branches of the Westfield River.

Table 4-1: Access to the Westfield River (East and Middle Branches)

Middle Branch
Access to the middle branch for fishing and boating can be found along East River Road in Dayville and along River Road in Worthington, near the intersection with Route 143. Boaters will need to travel some 3 miles down River Road, which parallels the Middle Branch, to have sufficient water. From here it is a Class II to III 6-mile paddle to North Chester, according to the <i>AMC River Guide</i>
Littleville Lake Dam, Huntington, impounds the Middle Branch to form a 275-acre lake that is accessible for boating. There is parking at Littleville Lake and Dayville.
The base of the Littleville Dam provides access to 1 mile of Class III rapids that are dependent on releases from the dam by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
East Branch
Windsor State Forest along River Road there are several informal roadside turnoffs. <i>AMC's River Guide</i> indicates that there is a good 9-mile paddle that begins in this area with a take out at the third bridge on Route 9 (old iron bridge). This Class II run is navigable in March.
Several rest areas along Route 9 in Cummington.
Cummington old iron bridge on Route 9 provides access to the river. <i>AMC's River Guide</i> describes a Class II and III paddle that is navigable in March and April with a put in at the bridge and take out 7.5 miles downstream just before the Route 143 bridge. This journey passes through the Pork Barrel Wilderness, a remote and beautifully wild valley (qualities that also make it nearly inaccessible for rescue).
Chesterfield Bend beach is accessed by a dirt road located off of Ireland Street, 100 yards upstream of the turnoff for the Chesterfield Gorge.
The Trustees of the Reservations property at the Chesterfield Gorge provides access all along the East Branch going south through Gilbert Bliss State Forest down to the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area. Note that the old road along the river is gated after approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile so that access beyond this point is gained on foot. The Chesterfield Gorge, a box canyon located between spectacular sheer granite cliffs, is a Class IV and V run during times of high water. <i>AMC's River Guide</i> describes an 11-mile Class II and III paddle from below the gorge that is navigable in March and April. Take out is before the Knightville Dam.
Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area provide access above the dam to the East Branch north all the way up to the Chesterfield Gorge. Note that the old road along the river is gated after approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile so that access beyond this point is gained on foot. Below the dam, there is a picnic area that provides access to the river. The river is navigable in this section in spring after rainfalls or when there are releases from the dam by the Army Corps. of Engineers. This segment of the river is home to the Westfield River Wildwater Races, which occur in late April. <i>AMC's River Guide</i> describes a Class III paddle that begins below the dam, passes by C.M. Gardner State Park, and ends after 5 miles with a take out at the picnic area along Route 20 in Huntington.
C.M. Gardner State Park, Huntington
MassHighway Yard near green bridge in Huntington
Route 20 across from the Huntington Health Center. Parking at this location is limited to one hour.

There are also access points to tributaries to the Westfield River. One of these is the Little River, where access can be found across Route 112 from South Worthington

Ongoing efforts

- The **Pork Barrel Wilderness** is one of the most scenic stretches of the East Branch with deep pools and rocky runs that lead into a long gorge. It is one of the longest roadless stretches of wilderness river in Southern New England. This 7.2 mile stretch is purportedly named for a large glacial pothole that has since filled. The area is located in Chesterfield and is owned largely by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. This stretch of river is also popular for fishing, though parking and access is limited.
- The **Chesterfield Gorge** is a natural river gorge in West Chesterfield owned by the Trustees of the Reservations. The gorge is surrounded by sheer granite cliffs and topped with hemlock and beech forest. This 9.2-mile stretch of river that passes through the gorge to the Knightville Dam can be run by expert paddlers under certain water levels. There is catch and release fishing all along this stretch of river, from the Chesterfield Gorge to the Knightville Dam Wildlife Management and Recreation Area.
- The celebrated **Westfield River Wildwater Races** occur in late April with scheduled releases from the Knightville Dam and Littleville Lake Dam. These races feature an 8-mile novice segment that is run from Huntington Center to Russell on Saturday, and an expert segment, run from the Knightville Dam to Russell on Sunday. These same sections of river can be run at times of higher water or when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has other scheduled releases. There are many significant rapids on the Knightville-Huntington section of the river (Class III and IV), and this segment should only be attempted by experienced whitewater boaters. Access points to the East Branch in Huntington are at the Knightville Dam picnic area, the MassHighway yard off the green bridge, and at the Route 20 rest area in Huntington.
- The Huntington Conservation Commission owns a small parcel on **Mill Street**. They determined last year this location was not suitable for public boat access, however, it does provide fishing access. The proposal to create access at this location raised neighbors' concerns about "undesirables" hanging out at this location and leaving trash behind.

Ideas, opportunities for future efforts

- Identify all official and unofficial boating and fishing access points along the corridor and make recommendations for additional access points. Access points should include limited parking, if possible, to allow people to park a car upstream and another downstream, and boat from one car to the other.
- Work with the Army Corps of Engineers, New England FLOW, and American Whitewater to explore the possibility of additional recreational releases from the Knightville and Littleville Lake Dams.
- Enhance infrastructure for boaters by attracting an outfitter to a key Byway location. Also, explore the value of a shuttle service to help boaters get to and from put in and take out locations.

- Develop, publish, and distribute a self-guided tour to the region’s waterfalls, including: Windsor Jambs, the Chesterfield Gorge, Rocky Brook Waterfall, Glendale Falls, and Sanderson Brook Falls.
- Work with the Appalachian Mountain Club to develop a boating guide to the Westfield River. This could emulate the format of the *Deerfield River Map and Guide* developed by AMC and other project partners in 2007.
- Coordinate agencies and organizations in the region that are managing recreation areas and access points to address recreational concerns and issues and to develop consistent public messages on rules and regulations, proper etiquette, respect for historic features, such as stone walls, and such concepts as “carry in/carry out” or “leave no trace behind.” Consistent public messages should lead to a decrease in depreciative visitor behaviors, particularly littering and irresponsible and destructive ATV use. This should, in turn, lead to better public support of future recreation and conservation efforts. (This idea is also mentioned in above section on Trails and Open Space Connections.)

Findings and Recommendations

Findings	Recommendations
<p>There are several large disconnected tracts of recreation and wildlife lands.</p>	<p>Establish greenways strategy to connect large tracts of land for enhanced recreation opportunities and wildlife habitat. The network of trails could be extended to connect the region's major trails to nearby village centers. As in the British model, village centers in the countryside could be connected to one another through a network of trails that are used by locals and tourists alike.</p> <p>Research the status of the AT&T Fiber Optic Corridor, which extends east to west through Chesterfield into Worthington to its terminus (thought to be at the microwave tower in Peru), to determine whether this existing infrastructure could potentially advance recreational linkages. Research the owner's willingness to work with communities to establish a trail.</p>
<p>The Westfield River is among the greatest recreational treasures, but access is limited.</p>	<p>Identify official and unofficial boating and fishing access points along the corridor and make recommendations to Public Access Board at Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game for additional access points. Access points should include parking, if possible, to allow people to park a car upstream and another downstream, and boat from one car to the other. Members of the Route 112 Byway Advisory Committee for Hampshire County have noted that preserving the sense of a wilderness experience, requires more access points, but with fewer parking spaces at each of these points.</p>
<p>The East Branch Trail, which connects 9 miles of floodplain, woodlands, and riverbank from the Knightville Dam to the Chesterfield Gorge is an outstanding resource. It is intended as the first leg in a loop trail that will connect the Westfield basin.</p>	<p>Promote the work of the Westfield Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee and other partner groups to advance and develop an extended East Branch Trail southward to Huntington center and northward to Windsor and Savoy.</p>

Findings	Recommendations
Knightville Dam Wildlife Management Area holds tremendous potential for increased recreation	Work with MassWildlife and U.S. Army Corp of Engineers to improve trail systems in the reservoir basin, and to evaluate potential for summer dam releases for recreational boating.
There are many old roads and even several old hiking or snowmobile trails associated with Route 112 that are no longer in use.	Conduct survey and explore status and use of old roads and trails in the region to determine if there may be an opportunity to expand recreational infrastructure for trails. Work with The Trustees of the Reservations, regional planning agencies, and local town boards.
Hiking access and trails on state lands needs improvement.	Seek funds to build new trails in previously inaccessible but scenic state lands. As mentioned above, members of the Route 112 Byway Advisory Committee for Hampshire County have noted that preserving the sense of a wilderness experience, requires more access points, but with fewer parking spaces at each of these points.
Limited handicapped accessibility to recreation areas.	Increase recreation opportunities for all by working with Massachusetts DCR and Outdoor Access to plan and develop more handicapped accessible trails and other recreational facilities in the region. Such accessibility is a priority for each of the Hampshire County towns along the Byway. All make mention of this in their needs assessment and/or goals of their Open Space and Recreation Plans.
Cummington and Worthington in particular are lacking in amenities and trails for recreational activities.	Work with The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR) to explore feasibility of establishing turnouts and trails on lands where they have conservation restriction easements. At Upland Meadow Farm, TTOR has a 90-acre conservation easement, which encompasses Roaring Brook. TTOR also has conservation easements that extend all the way from Route 9 through to Worthington Center.

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Safety and infrastructure for cyclists should be improved</p>	<p>Enhance infrastructure for cyclists by advocating for bicycle friendly, but low-impact practices in maintaining and re-designing the roadway, specifically: consistent pavement on shoulders (no crushed stone or rumble strips) that allows for safe cycling without destroying the scenic qualities of the road and regular street sweeping of shoulders.</p>
<p>Published information about on and off-road cycling in the region is lacking</p>	<p>Publish itineraries for bicycle rides of varying lengths and abilities, including multi-day rides that include Route 112 and the other byways of the region. Include itineraries for mountain bike rides that make use of the dirt roads and public trails in the region.</p>
<p>Access for boating and fishing in the region is limited</p>	<p>Identify official and unofficial boating and fishing access points along the corridor and make recommendations to Public Access Board at Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game for additional access points. Access points should include parking, if possible, to allow people to park a car upstream and another downstream, and boat from one car to the other. Lily Pond in Goshen is one site that has already been identified.</p> <p>Work with the Appalachian Mountain Club and Westfield River Canoe Club to develop a boating guide to the Westfield River, emulating the format of the Deerfield River Map and Guide developed in 2007 by AMC.</p> <p>Exploring the possibility of regular recreational releases from the Knightville and Littleville Lake dams, determining first what ecological implications might be.</p>

Findings	Recommendations
ATV use, and trash and debris are perennial problems at many of the recreation areas.	Identify and coordinate agencies and organizations in the region that are managing recreational areas and access points to develop consistent public messages (on rules and regulations, proper etiquette, ATV behavior, respect for historic features, such as stone walls, and such concepts as “carry in/carry out” or “leave no trace behind”). To address ATV issues, also work with the Western Massachusetts ATV Association. These issues ought to be a consideration in the establishment of any new recreation areas as well.
There is a lack of resources, support and infrastructure for outdoor enthusiasts.	Encourage the establishment of outdoor recreation related businesses (bike shops, boating, camping supplies); also encourage current businesses to promote public restrooms as way to get clientele into their shops.
The Pork Barrel area is one of the largest tracts of wilderness in the region.	Work to protect the Pork Barrel area, discouraging further development of trails into the area.
Public lands in the Route 112 region are rich with history. Old cellar holes, cemeteries, and other artifacts of former human settlement are scattered throughout the hillsides.	Highlight these features and relate their associated stories along the length of a trail system to enrich the experience of hiking or walking in the region’s woodlands. It would also serve to underscore the importance of their preservation. Collecting oral histories from town elders about the artifacts found in the woodlands would be a first step in this process. This could include mapping, such as the work in Plainfield, and the addition of interpretive signs, such as those recently installed at key historical sites in Northampton.
Opportunities for winter recreation could be expanded. Turnouts at key recreation resources, most notably Knightville Dam Recreation Area, and Gardner State Park, are not plowed in winter. Access to the Berkshire Snow Basin in Cummington is also limited.	Work with MassHighway and others to promote plowing of turnouts for winter recreational access. Work with the state to formalize access to the Berkshire Snow Basin.

Findings	Recommendations
<p>Though used frequently for fishing and ice skating, Worthington’s town park is too small to serve the needs of the community. Its parking is lacking, equipment is in poor repair, and it is located too close to Route 112.</p>	<p>Work to establish a larger, more accessible town park in Worthington. Possible funding sources might include Highlands Community Initiative for design, and Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services self-help for acquisition and construction.</p>