13 May 2010

OS Dogtown Draft - NM

The 'heartland' of the Cape Ann peninsula north and east of the Annisquam River encompasses more than 3000 acres of raw land. Dirt roads and walking trails crisscross a landscape of woodland with granite outcrops, boulders and overgrown swamps. Deer, fox, coyote, fisher cat, otter, beaver and other small mammals thrive there and on the margins, as well as numerous amphibian species and a panoply of shrubs and wildflowers including several rare orchids.

This is Dogtown, - three 'circles' of contiguous undeveloped terrain[1], encompassing water protection areas, ancient woodlots, defunct quarry industry lands and, especially, the historic Commons Settlement area which "has already been determined eligible for listing in the National Register…as a rare surviving site of a Colonial village with a high level of integrity." Unlike much of the open space in West Gloucester, Dogtown is notorious for its history, both real and imagined, and its reputation as a dangerous place to walk alone.

Our first task is to define the bounds of these three areas and the overlapping values that they provide the community as Open Space.

- The core area is the Commons Settlement, known for the historic cellar holes along the cart roads, Granny Day Swamp and the boulders inscribed by out-of-work masons during the Depression. This section has the highest potential as a tourist attraction.
- Named glacial erratics, Peter's Pulpit and Whale's Jaw, are features in the woodlots to the north of the commons. Abundant wildlife, a boardwalk across part of Briar Swamp, and numerous vernal ponds provide opportunities for nature study.
- The third area is described by the defunct quarry industry lands where woods have grown up around the pits. Since the pumps ceased operating in the 1930s, the Quarries and motions have filled with water creating lovely landscapes and vistas.

Access and management remain the two issues of greatest concern, but there is continuing development pressure as well, particularly in the quarries section. Of the multiple entrances to the area, only a few have parking, and most of these are in Rockport. Gloucester has only a small unpaved lot with space for ten cars at the top of Gee Avenue on the west side of Goose Cove reservoir and a pull-out place 100 meters or so before the gate on Dogtown Road with parking for 6-8 vehicles

Two man-made impoundments - Babson Reservoir and Goose Cove Reservoir - provide most of the summer drinking water supply for Gloucester; the Babson watershed is 882 acres, plus 113 A. recharge, including about 80 acres in Rockport (owned by Gloucester) protecting the headwaters of Alewife Brook. The watershed overlay for Goose Cove Reservoir is smaller (263 acres of primary and 167 acres of secondary recharge area), reaching up to the Commons Settlement on the other side.

The Cape Ann Sportsman's Club owns 40 acres, posted Private/No Trespassing, off Dogtown Road with a main entrance from Cherry Street. They stock fish in Strangeman's Pond and release game birds in hunting season. Archery and gun ranges can be disturbing to both neighbors and visitors.

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[1] Fully described in a report prepared for the Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative of the Mass Historical Commission recorded by Shary Page Berg & Gretchen G. Schuler

Babson & Goose Cove Reservoirs and the Commons Settlement

none				Babson Reservoir watershed
296/1	100.0 ac.	incl. treatment plant	R-30	Babson Reservoir
107A/	19.4 ac.	51 Cherry Street	R-10	Cape Ann Sportsman's Club
295/3	10.1 ac.	Dogtown Road	R-10	Cape Ann Sportsman's Club
310/10	266.4 ac.	to wood lots	R-20	Goose Cove Reservoir
294/1	20.0 ac.	Adam's Pines	R-RB	Goose Cove
295/4	10.0 ac.	R Dogtown Rd.	R-30	Conservation
295/5	18.56 ac.	Dogtown Rd.	R-10	Self help #4
295/1	4.7 ac.	so. side DT Rd.	EB	Gronblat's Pit/conservation
294/4	11.0 ac.	so. side DT Rd	R-80	Self help #4
294/3	15.5 ac.	Dogtown Rd.	R-80	Self help #5
294/2	5.0 ac	adjacent GC watershed	R-80	Self help #5
295/2	12.1 ac.	Dogtown Road	R-10	Self help #4
311/1	17.9 ac.	Dogtown Road	R-80	Self help #5
311/2	34.20 ac.	Dogtown Road	R-80	Self help #5 / conservation

The city also owns most of the woodlots, but there are a few private or orphan parcels south (and east) of the Norton Memorial Forest.

310/2	7.10 ac.	Common Road	R-80	includes Peter's Pulpit
310/3	0.5 ac.	junction of DT & Com Rd	R-80	Lurvey Tax Title
310/4	4.30 ac.	east of GC watershed	R-80	Watershed MUN/VAC
310/5	5.60 ac.	east of GC on Common Rd	R-80	Watershed MUN/VAC
310/6	6.41 ac.	Common Road	R-80	Watershed MUN/CONS
310/9	7.15 ac.	Common Road	R-80	Watershed MUN/CONS
310/7	8.90 ac.	Common Road	R-80	Watershed MUN/CONS
310/8	10.0 ac.	Common Road	R-80	Watershed MUN/VAC
309/17	9.4 ac.	Common Rd.	R-80	MUN/VAC
309/16	9.6 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
309/15	9.7 ac	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Self help #4 MUN/VAC
309/14	9.8 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
309/12	3.3 ac.	R. Dennison St	R-80	Murray in **Tax Title**
309/13	6.2	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Self help #4

309/10	16.7 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Self help #4
309/11	10.4 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Self-help #4 MUN/VAC
309/ 9	13.6 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
309/ 8	2.3 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Hodgkins in **Tax Title**
309/20	11.0 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
309/7	14.0 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Self help #4
309/5	7.1 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
309/1	3.9 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
309/3	0.9ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Essex County Greenbelt
309/4	2.2 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Kerr, Thos.
309/2	4.4 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	Kerr, Margaret in **Tax Title**
325/5	1.8 ac.	R. Revere St.	R-80	Gilpatrick, Jesse et al.
325/6	5.3 ac.	R. Revere St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
308/9	1.7 ac.	R. Revere St.	R-80	Kerr, Thos
308/10	1.8 ac.	R. Revere St.	R-80	Parks, J & R
309/9	13.6 ac.	R. Dennison St.	R-80	MUN/VAC
325/6	5.3 ac.	R. Revere St.	R-80	MUN VAC
325/4	2.1 ac.	R. Revere	R-80	MUN/VAC
325/3	4.8 ac.	Glos/Rkpt line	R-80	MUN VAC
308/2	6.0 ac.	R. Revere	R-40	MUN VAC
308/8	6.4 ac.	R. Revere	R-40	MUN CONS
308/7	6.4 ac	R. Revere	R-40	MUN VAC
308/6	14.2 ac.	R. Revere	R-40	MUN CONS
308/5	16.9 ac.	R. Revere	R-40	MUN CONS
325/2	5.1 ac.	R. Revere	R-40	MUN VAC
325/1	5.8 ac.	R. Revere	R-40	Essex County Greenbelt

There are several privately owned parcels of significant ecological and historic value on the west flank of the woodlots. The area was agricultural and pasture land in the 18th century and, although some stone quarrying activity is still visible, forest has overcome field and stone walls alike. Two properties (115/19 and 115/39) have subdivided of 2-3 lots for single family houses and a third (125/88) has subdivision potential.

Private land trusts, Essex County Greenbelt Association and New England Forestry Foundation, protect two other important parts of the mosaic, (115/51), and the Norton Memorial Forest (125/52

& 308/3). Both of these organizations are committed to maintaining their land for passive recreation (i.e. trails) and the preservation of the woodlands and wetlands in their natural state. NEFF, however, does expect to harvest trees on a sustainable basis.

123/31	14.0	89 Dennison Street	R-3	Cutler /ch 61 single fam
115/51	22.56 ac.	99 Dennison Street	R-80	Carter Reservation/**ECGA**
115/39	31.78 ac.	125 Dennison Street	R-80	Marsden
115/79	25.54 ac.	122 Dennison Street	R-20	Cunningham
308/13	134.58 ac	64 Revere Street	R-30	**New England Forestry F.**
125/88	12.7	83 Revere Street	R-40	Ritchie
125/52	5.6	90 Revere Street	R-40	**New England Forestry F.**

North of the tree farm, several large privately owned parcels and Quarry Street interrupt the trail system on the west, and the only potential major access point with parking from the coast road is through the Plum Cove Recreation area (155/18), adjacent to the ball field on Washington Street. Klondike Quarry is spring fed and part of the municipal water supply system. The perimeter of its relatively small watershed are fenced to deter swimming and vandalism.

The double dot or Tarr trail, which crosses the border with Rockport near the Briar Swamp Dam, continues north by Whale's jaw and along the Stony Brook watershed in Rockport to the old RR bed at the top of Woodbury Street in Lanesville. A grid of cart paths from the tree farm extends east and north through the 19th century Quarries land, but the official Dogtown Common Trail Guide does not extend above the tree farm.

157/50	23.0 ac.	42 Quarry Street	R-40	Klondike Reservoir w/ pump station
157/57	12.12 ac.	57 Quarry Street	R-40	Barry/Brook Single family
308/4	22.09 ac.	85 Quarry Street	R-40	Barzaghi Single family
157/68	3.34 ac.	81 Quarry Street	R-40	Taylor Unbuilt
157/60	2.21 ac.	75 Quarry Street	R-40	Casale Single family
157/65	1.01 ac.	61 Quarry Street	R-40	Hart Single family
163/1	29.0 ac.	93 Quarry Street	R-80	Natti Single family 61A
157/52	56.2 ac.	20 Colburn Street	R-80	61B + CR Vacant land
157/15	24.03 ac.	16 No. Kilby Street	R-80	O'Gorman Multiple bldgs.
155/17	3.9 ac.	979 R Washington St.	R-80	Korkatti Vacant land
155/18	7.4 ac.	1004 RWashington St.	R-80	City owned vacant land
155/8	48.2 ac.	1007 Washington St.	R-80	City owned Pl Cove Recreation Area
155/2	11.63 ac.	67 R High Street	R-80	ECGA Community Gdns/Young Far

163/1	29.0 ac.	93 Quarry Street	R-80	Erik Natti single family. Chap 61
163/2	3.0 ac.	102 Quarry Street	R-80	Erik Natti vacant land
163/3	11.08 ac.	107 High Street	R-80	Susannah Natti
163/4	17.10 ac.	105 High Street	R-80	Susannah Natti
265A/59	20.0 ac.	Stony Brook	R-20	Quinn (Worcester) vacant land
163/15	10.1 ac.	R High Street	R-20	Mann/Steele vacant land
164/49	20.24 ac.	111 High Street	R-80	French vacant land
164/55	9.15 ac.	111 R High Street	R-RB	ECGA
164/30	14.3 ac.	99 High Street	R-80	Millar Single family
164/52	3.83 ac	340 High Street	R-80	Craaybeck Single family
164/16	4.30 ac.	334 High Street	R-80	Essex County Greenbelt
164/22	9.7 ac	110 High Street	R-80	Brock, Lake George Two family
164/15	2.5 ac.	330 High Street	R-80	MacDowell Single family
164/12	3.71 ac.	328 High Street	R-80	O'Neil Single family
164/9	4.0 ac.	7 R Barker Avenue	R-80	Pistenmaa Vacant lot
164/4	2.57 ac.	2 Barker Avenue	R-80	Toneatti Single family
164/5	3.02 ac.	16 Barker Avenue	R-80	Snell Single family
164/6	3.79 ac.	18 Barker Avenue	R-80	Toneatti Single family
164/7	2.78 ac.	22 Barker Avenue	R-80	Pintenmaa Vacant lot
162/11	18.4 ac.	49 Leverett Street	R-80	Gibran, Vacant but on the market
162/12	2.63 ac.	44 Leverett	R-80	Rekelhoff Single family
162/17	3.01 ac.	3 Leverett Lane	R-80	Sampson Single family
162/28	15.1 ac.	10 Leverett Street	R-80	Manship Trust
162/29	3.3 ac.	15 Bianchini	R-80	Bianchini Vacant
162/31	3.15 ac.	10 Bianchini Street	R-80	Bianchini Single family

A committee was formed to look after and manage Dogtown at the time of the self-help purchases, and a program for the management plan was produced by a Steering Committee. The cornerstone objectives of this 1985 management plan are:

- Preservation of the natural and cultural features which make Dogtown such an unusual and attractive area;
- Protection of reservoirs and watersheds; and
- Maintenance of the area as a safe, clean, quiet place for traditional forms of passive recreation, eg. walking, skiing, berrying, picknicking, hunting, nature study, and relaxation.
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- Dogtown should not be manicured or made into a park, and man-made structures should be kept to a minimum.

No city resources have been allocated to policing and stewardship and those functions have only been informally served by volunteers with limited success. The objectives have been overwhelmed by nature and abuses by motorized vehicles and drinking parties. Many residents, however, care passionately about their local wilderness and wish to preserve it.