

CHAPTER 4:

OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL RESOURCES – FRANKLIN COUNTY

Introduction

The outdoor recreational resources located along the Route 112 Scenic Byway are among the region's greatest assets. A large variety of outdoor recreational activities are available nearby, including camping, hiking, mountain biking, whitewater sports, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, golfing, swimming, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. This chapter of the Corridor Management Plan inventories these facilities by type of activity, identifies findings related to the existing and potential increase in the use of recreational facilities, and recommends future actions to ensure that the recreational resources remain an asset to the region's economy and quality of life.

While the Corridor Management Plan focuses on resources within a half-mile radius of the Byway (Route 112), the recreational resources section of the report also includes attractions that are located outside of the study area boundary and within the towns along the Byway. Recreational resources that are accessible from Rte. 112 and within a short drive have been included. The resources located directly along the Byway are noted as such.

There is an outstanding system of state forests, parks and wildlife management areas near the Route 112 Scenic Byway in Franklin County. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) owns and manages three properties that are located either along the Byway or within a few minutes' drive. In addition, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) manages a wildlife area located on the Byway. Combined, these areas provide almost 4,000 acres of open space accessible to the public and hundreds of miles of multiple-use trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, and snowmobiling. Some of the state forests also have facilities for camping, swimming, and picnicking. Fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing are also enjoyed on these lands. In addition, there are a number of open space and conservation areas that are owned by towns and nonprofit conservation organizations, and are maintained for public use. Finally, there are several privately-owned areas that are made available to the public for their outdoor enjoyment.

State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas

Below is a listing of the state parks, state forests, conservation areas and wildlife management areas located either directly on the Route 112 Scenic Byway or within the towns along the Byway. DCR maintains the state forest and parks system, while the

DFW maintains the wildlife management areas. The parks, state forests, conservation areas and wildlife management areas that are located directly along the Byway are noted with a star (☆). A brief description of the facilities and a summary of the activities available at each of these sites are also included below. These descriptions are based on information from the DCR website (www.mass.gov/dcr), DCR's *Western Connecticut Valley District Draft Forest Resource Management Plan* (Draft 1.1 – January 15, 2007), and from DFW's MassWildlife website (www.mass.gov.dfwele/dfw/habitat).

Catamount State Forest, Colrain

Catamount State Forest consists of 1,125 acres located in southwestern Colrain bordering on eastern Charlemont, accessible from Four Mile Square Road. The twenty-seven-acre McLeod Pond and nearby streams are stocked with trout. The area offers trails for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding, as well as the opportunity for various winter activities such as snowmobiling. The state forest contains seventy-five acres of road and trail corridors where vegetation management is modified to meet safety and aesthetic concerns and seventy-four acres of Priority Habitat for rare plant and animal populations protected under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act. There are 184 acres located within 100 feet of a stream, wetland, lake, pond or other aquatic feature in the forest. Call 413-339-5504 for further information.

☆Catamount Wildlife Management Area, Colrain

The Catamount Wildlife Management Area consists of 256 acres available for hunting. It is located adjacent to the Catamount State Forest in two sections east and south of the state forest. Access is available from Stacy Road and Catamount Hill Road and off-street parking is provided. This is an area of very steep slopes covered with mixed hardwood forest, a few wetland areas, and plateaus. This area is **not** stocked with pheasant.

H.O. Cook State Forest, Colrain

The H.O. Cook State Forest contains 1,620 acres for hunting, fishing, hiking and horseback riding trails and winter activities including snowmobiling. It is located one-mile east of Route 8A on State Farm Road in northwestern Colrain and northeastern Heath bordering on the Vermont state line. The more than five miles of streams include native brook trout. There are 146 acres located within 100 feet of a water feature in the forest and twenty-seven acres of Priority Habitat for rare plant and animal species. The state forest also contains eighty acres of road and trail corridors. Call 413-339-5504 for further information.

Shelburne State Forest, Shelburne

The Shelburne State Forest consists of seventy-two acres located south of the High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary. It is the location of the Mount Massamett Fire Tower, which is accessible only by foot. The state forest contains seven acres of road and trail corridor and two acres of Priority Habitat for rare plants and animals. Call 413-339-5504 for more information.

Buckland State Forest, Buckland

The Buckland State Forest consists of 93 acres in southeast Buckland managed primarily as a forest resource, with few facilities for recreation. There are no roads and trails maintained in the forest and only three acres located near water features. Call 413-339-5504 for more information.

☆Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) State Forest, Ashfield/Goshen

The DAR State Forest is a 1,020-acre forest that can be accessed from Route 112 in Goshen. It includes Upper Highland Lake, a picnic area, camping area, swimming area, bath houses, and a boat ramp. Summer activities include: non-motorized boating, hiking, fishing, horseback riding and mountain biking. In the winter season, the following activities are popular: ice fishing, skating, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling. There are fifteen miles of mixed-use trails winding through a northern hardwood-conifer forest. In all, there are 190 acres of road and trail corridor in the forest and 240 acres within 100 feet of a water feature. The Goshen fire tower provides spectacular views of the Connecticut River Valley and into five states. The campground offers fifty-one wooded campsites featuring modern comfort stations with showers and a private beach. Wheelchair accessible campsites and a full range of accessible activities are also available.

Other Significant Recreation Areas

Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum and Trolley Car Number 10, Shelburne Falls

The Museum, located in the old freight yard on the Buckland side of Shelburne Falls, features the last surviving trolley car from the Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway. This trolley line started in 1896 and hauled freight up and back from the rail yard in Shelburne Falls to the mills of Colrain, crossing the Deerfield River on what is now the Bridge of Flowers. It also carried mill workers, mail, farm produce, shoppers, high school children. The open cars offered a pleasant way to spend a summer evening or weekend on the way to Hillside Park. The trolley stopped operating in 1927 when the State improved the roads and trucks hauled the freight. Trolley Car Number 10 sat idle in a farmer's field for many decades and even served as a chicken coop during its retirement. It was fully restored in 1999 by the Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum and is available for rides. The trolley was built by Wason Manufacturing Co. in Springfield, Massachusetts. It was delivered to Shelburne Falls and has not left the valley since. For thirty years it served Shelburne Falls and Colrain. In 1908 the trolley company built a bridge across the Deerfield River (now the Bridge of Flowers) which allowed direct access to the railroad. The Shelburne Falls Trolley Museum also has an operating hand pump car, and a collection of railroad and trolley artifacts and pictures. The museum is at 14 Depot St. (on the Buckland side of Shelburne Falls) and operates on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, from Memorial Day through October. Hours are 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. In July and August, the museum is also open Mondays from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Call 413-625-9443 for further information or visit the website at www.sftm.org.

Glacial Potholes, Shelburne Falls

The Potholes are located off Deerfield Avenue, just below the hydroelectric dam in Shelburne Falls. The site includes over fifty ancient glacial potholes; some are as small as six inches in diameter and some are as large as thirty-nine feet across. The potholes were ground in the granite during high water of the glacial age by the whirlpool action of water and gyrating stones. This area was originally known as Salmon Falls, a favorite fishing spot of Native American Indians and early settlers. The potholes can be viewed from the end of Deerfield Ave. There is no direct access except across private property with permission from the land owner. Swimming is discouraged due to the high risk of injury. The Towns of Shelburne and Buckland are currently working on a design for an observation platform.

Bridge of Flowers, Shelburne Falls

Located between Buckland and Shelburne in downtown Shelburne Falls, this unique 400-foot former trolley bridge spans the Deerfield River connecting the two sections of downtown Shelburne Falls. Built in 1908 by the Shelburne Falls and Colrain Street Railway, it provided a physical link to the Boston & Maine and New York, New Haven & Hartford railroads at their station on the Buckland side of the Deerfield River. When the trolley stopped running in 1929 the Shelburne Falls Women's Club transformed the bridge into a "blooming profusion from spring to fall". The bridge is still tended by the Shelburne Falls Women's Club. There are over 500 varieties of plantings. It is estimated that 35,000 to 45,000 visitors came to the bridge in 2007. Each year in May the Women's Club holds a Bridge of Flowers Plant Sale on the green between Main and Water Streets. Call 413-625-9830 for more information about the sale.

High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary, Shelburne

The High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary consists of 586 acres and is owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. It includes a vast collection of flowers and plants that bloom from May through September. The ledges offer a panoramic view of the Deerfield River Valley. The High Ledges has trails that are open to the public. There is an admission fee of \$2.00 for adult non-members of the Audubon Society and \$1.00 for children and senior non-members. Admission for Audubon Society members is free. There are no public facilities.

Mahican Mohawk Trail, Deerfield to North Adams

The Mahican Mohawk Trail follows the historic corridor along the Deerfield and Hoosic Rivers. Envisioned as a 100-mile trail from the Connecticut to the Hudson River, it is currently a multi-modal trail of about 25 miles on roads, trails, former railways, and waterways in Massachusetts. There is a beautiful 1.75-mile section along the Deerfield River in the Route 112 Byway Corridor that begins on the Mohawk Trail (Route 2) near the Shelburne State Police Barracks and offers wonderful scenic views. Due to landowner issues, passage for one-half mile east of this point on the trail is closed. The trail may be accessed from Bardwell Ferry east and west and from Conway Station in Conway across the South River on a spectacular bridge. From Shelburne Falls west, the

trail continues as a water trail on the Deerfield River from Charlemont to Buckland, then proceeds on land through the Mohawk Trail State Forest (along an original stretch of Native American trail on Todd Mountain), and ultimately ends up at the Museum of Contemporary Art (Mass MOCA) in North Adams.

☆ Buckland Recreation Area, Buckland

The Buckland Recreation Area consists of twenty-one acres off Route 112 approximately one half mile south of the Mohawk Regional School.

Available activities include basketball, softball, cross-country skiing, fishing, pool swimming, picnicking and nature observing. Season or day passes are available. Call 413-625-6330 for more information.



Chadwick Memorial Field (Veteran's Field), Buckland

The Chadwick Memorial Field has a lighted field for baseball and lighted courts for horseshoes. It is the site of leagues and tournaments in both sports from spring until fall. The field is located off Bridge Street.

Bear Swamp Reservation, Ashfield

Owned by the Trustees of Reservations, the Bear Swamp Reservation is an easy hiking area with trails around a small pond. A nice rock ledge overlooks the pond and there is a peat bog walk. The reservation is located in northwest Ashfield with an entrance on Hawley Road, west of Route 112.

Belding Park, Ashfield

The park is located on Main St. (Route 116), just east of the intersection with Route 112, and has a public boat launch on Ashfield Lake and picnic facilities.

Hiking Trails

As noted in the preceding sections of this chapter, there are hundreds of miles of hiking trails located within the State forests, parks, conservation areas and wildlife management areas that are near the Route 112 Scenic Byway. In addition, there are private trails that may be available to the public. The Ashfield Trails Committee is currently developing a network of trails that directly link with the Byway Corridor in that town and is creating a map that will be useful to both tourists and residents. A trail has been completed from the Trustees of Reservations Bear Swamp Reservation to Sanderson Academy.

Camping

Some state forest facilities have overnight accommodations, toilet facilities and showers; however, the schedules and availability varies from park to park. Some of the facilities are only available in the warmer weather. The inexpensive accommodations and facilities provided at state park campsites and cabins are popular with various groups, and are often sold-out on weekends. The policies for renting camping sites without advance reservations vary. Reservations are strongly encouraged, and are booked through Reserve America by calling 1-877-I-CAMP-MA or 1-877-422-6762 or visiting their website at www.ReserveAmerica.com. Reservations may be made as early as six months prior to the date of arrival or as late as two days before arrival. Camping is allowed in the Route 112 Scenic Byway region at the DAR State Forest.

- Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) State Forest, Ashfield/Goshen
A 1,020-acre forest that can be accessed from Route 112 in Goshen. The campground offers fifty-one wooded campsites featuring modern comfort stations with showers and a private beach. Wheelchair accessible campsites are also available. (See also page 3 above for a more complete description of the facilities at this state forest and contact information.)

Whitewater Rafting, Canoeing, Kayaking

In addition to the boat access sites in the State Forests and Parks system at the Catamount State Forest in Colrain and the DAR State Forest in Ashfield, there are other public boat access sites along the Byway or within a few minutes' drive. These include a boat ramp at Belding Park on Ashfield Lake and put-ins along the Deerfield River. Listed in this report and shown on the accompanying Recreational Resources Map are public access sites maintained by state or local authorities.

As detailed above, there are several locations along the Deerfield River in Franklin County with access to the river for canoes and kayaks. Many of the access points and improvements that are planned were negotiated as a part of the FERC re-licensing agreement with the utility companies that operate the dams along the river.

There is a boat ramp in East Charlemont just up-stream of the #4 station dam. This ramp is located on Route 2 next to the Park & Ride lot. The trip downstream to this ramp from the Shunpike boat ramp on Route 2 is about eight miles and takes about two hours to paddle. The water is mostly class I with some class II. The section below the #4 station dam only runs in high water and is a class II plus section of river. The International Scale of River Difficulty is a standardized scale of I to VI used to rate the safety of a stretch of river or a single rapid. The grade reflects the technical difficulty, skill level required and danger associated with the section of river. A class I section of river will have long sections of flat, slow moving water, with minor ripples or waves and a course that is easily navigable. A class II section may have sections of straightforward rapids,

some small waves, weirs, small drops or ledges and eddies, but allowing a clear route through all features. A plus or minus indicates if the section is in the higher or lower end of the difficulty level of that class.

The next dam is #3 station which is in the center of Shelburne Falls also known as the "Potholes". Most people do not paddle this one-mile section below the dam because of the difficult access and because the next dam at Gardner Falls is not that far away. Some people put-in at Wilcox Hollow and paddle down to the #2 dam, but there is a portage there that requires ropes to go around the Gardner Falls Dam. Wilcox Hollow is a fishing and river access point located in Shelburne near the Gardner Falls Dam. This area is owned and maintained by TransCanada Hydro. There is a parking area at this site just off of Route 2 and TransCanada Hydro has been completing improvements to prevent bank erosion and provide handicapped accessible access to the river.

Below Gardner Falls Dam is #2 station dam. Most people put-in at Bardswell's Ferry Bridge which is three miles below the power house. You can get to Bardswell Ferry Road off of Shelburne Center Road. The trip can end four miles downstream at Stillwater Bridge or Cheapside Bridge in the Greenfield/Deerfield area. It takes two hours after the release to have the water fill in this section of river.

There are several established and licensed outdoor recreation retailers along the Mohawk Trail/Route 2 (which intersects with Route 112) that provide water safety instructions and rent watercraft such as canoes, kayaks and rafts. The businesses that rent watercraft to the public are required by the state to provide instructions on the proper and safe use of the equipment. Water level information for this section can be obtained on the Deerfield River information phone 888-356-3663. Guided whitewater trips and instruction on the Deerfield River are available from:

- Crabapple Whitewater, Charlemont
(413) 625-2288
Offers five river trips in Western Massachusetts that range from easy to advanced. They offer both rafting and kayaking.
- Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont
1-800-532-7483
Offers whitewater rafting, canoe and kayak instruction, rock-climbing and sea kayak trips.

Cross-Country Skiing and Snowshoeing

As noted earlier in this chapter, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing are allowed in many of the recreational and conservation areas. These activities are an excellent way to experience the beauty of the Route 112 Scenic Byway region during the winter months. The trails within the state parks, conservation areas, and wildlife management areas provide facilities for those who have equipment and are not seeking groomed trails. Snowmobile trails are often used by cross-country skiers and snowshoers who prefer

groomed trails. However, caution should be exercised to avoid trespassing on private land, as many snowmobile trails on private lands are governed by written agreements that pertain only to snowmobile use. Cross country skiing and snowshoeing are often allowed in recreation areas owned by towns and nonprofit conservation land trusts. Among the local recreation areas where cross-country skiing is allowed are the Buckland Recreation Area and the DAR State Forest.

Downhill Skiing

The only operating downhill skiing area in the region is the Berkshire East Ski Area, located near the Mohawk Trail:

- Berkshire East Ski Area, Charlemont
66 South River Road
Charlemont, MA 01339
(413) 339-6617

Golfing

There are a number of golf facilities located on or close to the Route 112 Scenic Byway. These facilities vary in size and type of course. Below is a list of the facilities and a brief description of each.

- Ashfield Community Golf Club
Norton Hill Road
413-628-4413
Nine-hole course.
- Edge Hill Golf Course
Mark Graves
298 Barnes Rd.
Ashfield, MA 01330
413-625-6018
www.edgehillgolfcourse.com
Public, 9 holes (being expanded to 18 holes in 2009). Accessories and lessons available.

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting is permitted in all of the Massachusetts state forest areas and wildlife management areas along the Byway in accordance with the state's regulations and permitting requirements. There are twelve different hunting seasons. Detailed information regarding these individual seasons and licensing is available from the

MassWildlife District Office in Pittsfield at 413-447-9789 or online at www.state.ma.us/dfwele/.

Fishing is a year-round recreational activity in Massachusetts. In addition, to increase the possibility of catching trout, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife stocks several waterways in the region. The following is a list of stocked waterways in the Route 112 Byway Corridor:

- Colrain: McLeod Pond and North River (West Branch)
- Shelburne: Deerfield River and Dragon Brook
- Buckland: Clesson Brook (Upper Branch), Deerfield River, and Cooley Brook
- Ashfield: Ashfield Lake

Farms and Farm Products

The historic agricultural landscapes located along Route 112 are some of the most important features within the Scenic Byway Corridor Study Area. Many of these continue to be working farms that sell fresh produce and other farm products, offer opportunities to pick your own fruits and vegetables, or provide other agricultural-related recreational activities. A sample of these farms is described below and in



the Outdoor Recreational Resources Chapter of this report. More information may also be available from local sources, such as the “Ashfield Farms” brochure that was produced by the Ashfield Agricultural Commission, or the Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA) website at www.buylocalfood.com. CISA’s mission is to link farmers and communities to strengthen agriculture and enhance the economy, rural character, environmental quality, and social well-being of western Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) website has additional information including lists of Agri-Tourism Farms, Bed and Breakfast Farms, and Farmers Markets (all organized by county), and Pick-Your-Own Farms (organized by product). The website can be found at www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown.

- Pine Hill Orchards, Colrain
248 Greenfield Rd.
Colrain, MA 01340
413-624-3325
Country store, bakery and snack bar; local beer and wine; local fruits and vegetables in season. Pick your own apple weekends in season.

- Shelburne Falls Farmers Market
Baptist Corner Lot, 53 Main St. (corner of Water and Main Streets, at Trinity Church)
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
Seasonal farmers market open from the end of May to early October on Fridays from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Features produce from twelve local farms.
- Johnson Hill Farm, Buckland
51 Hog Hollow Rd.
Shelburne Falls, MA 01370
413-625-6439
- ☆ Atherton Farm, Buckland
47 Ashfield Rd.
413-625-2659
Seasonal farm stand. Raises and sells vegetable and flower plants, garden produce, hay and eggs. Also sells local honey, maple syrup and jams and jellies. Christmas wreaths made to order in November and December.
- Red Gate Farm Education Center, Buckland
4 Norman Rd.
413-625-9503
www.redgatefarm.org
Non-profit educational farm serving the local community. Programs include school field trips, timber framing workshops, home school programs, summer camp, etc.
- Clark Brothers Orchards, Ashfield
580 Apple Valley Rd.
413-625-2492
www.AppleValleyApples.com
Apples, peaches, pears and plums available from September through March every day except Saturday.
- Cozie Nook Homestead and Florist, Ashfield
112 Stroheker Rd.
413-628-3254
Custom sawing, grass-fed lamb, handmade wreaths, and florals available Monday through Saturday year round.
- Cranston's Tree Farm, Ashfield
372 Baptist Corner Rd.
413-628-0090
www.cranstonschristmastreefarm.com

Christmas trees and wreaths available in November and December and maple syrup and hay available year round.

- Elmer's Store, Ashfield
396 Main St
Ashfield, MA 01330
413-628-4003
www.elmersstore.com
Natural foods grocery featuring local fresh produce including eggs, maple products, and honey. The restaurant serves breakfast 7 days a week from 7:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m., and dinner on Thursday and Friday beginning at 5:00 p.m. The store also features an art gallery. Store hours are: Monday through Wednesday, 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Thursday, 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
- Paddy Flat Farm, Ashfield
314 Norton Hill Rd.
413-628-3974
All natural vegetables, winter squash, peaches and plums.
- Scott Orchards, Ashfield
853 Conway St. (Rt. 116) South Ashfield (about 2 miles from Rt. 112)
413-628-3327
Apples, cider, peaches, plums, pears, winter squash, pumpkins, potatoes, maple syrup and honey. Open August through May, closed Tuesday.
- Sidehill Farm, Ashfield
137 Beldingville Rd.
413- 625-0011
www.sidehillfarm.net
Yogurt and raw milk from grass-fed cows; grass-fed veal; heirloom and greenhouse tomatoes; open seasonally.
- South Face Farm, Ashfield
755 Watson-Spruce Corner Rd., 3 miles off Rt. 112
413-628-3268
www.southfacefarm.com
Maple syrup products year round; seasonal restaurant March and early April weekends.
- Steady Lane Farm, Ashfield
144 Steady Lane
413-628-4689

www.steadylanefarm.com

Grass fed beef and hay.

- Stone Meadow Gardens, Ashfield
241 Dyer Rd.
413-628-3959
www.stonemeadowgardens.com
Field-grown daylilies.
- Ashfield Farmer's Market, Ashfield
Main Street (Route 116 approx. one mile from Rt. 112) on Town Common.
Seasonal farmer's market open Saturday mornings from Memorial Day weekend to Columbus Day weekend. Agricultural products produced by local farms - vegetables, eggs, beef, fruit, baked goods, flowers and other plants.

Bicycling

Bicycling on Roads

The Route 112 Scenic Byway Corridor and the surrounding area has been identified by the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (MassBike) as providing some of the best on-road cycling in the world because of the interesting topography, paved roads in good condition, and a sparse population generating low traffic volumes. Experienced riders accustomed to navigating steep slopes and narrow shoulders would like to see the entire length of Route 112 designated as a bikeway. However, much of the Byway is narrow and winding with narrow shoulders, posing potential dangers to less experienced or young bicycle riders. In the more developed areas of the Byway, bicycling for recreation or as an alternate mode of transportation is appropriate. Such bicycle use is discussed in more detail in the Transportation Section of this Corridor Management Plan.



Several popular informal routes for road touring intersect the Scenic Byway and provide opportunities to explore the region by bicycle. Because of the topography of the region, these routes include many hills that could be challenging for the inexperienced rider (see the Recreational Resources Map at the end of this section). These routes include:

- A loop off of Route 112 in Colrain heading west on Thompson Road along Spur Brook to Wilson Hill Road and south on Clark Road to Adamsville Road, meeting back up with Route 112 in Griswoldville.

- A longer loop off of Adamsville Road, west on Maxam Road to Heath Road to Taylor Brook Road, then south on Avery Brook Road to the Mohawk Trail (Route 2) and back to Route 112 in Buckland.
- A short loop off of Route 112 in Colrain south of Griswoldville following Call Road south of the North River back to Route 112 just across the Shelburne line. A spur off of this route takes Frankton Road in Shelburne southeast to Patten Road to the access trail to the High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary to enjoy the spectacular view.
- A route from Shelburne Falls south on Conway/Shelburne Falls Road to Wilder Hill Road in Conway and into Ashfield following southwest on Baptist Corner Road to Ashfield Center and then on to Route 112 either on Main Road south of Ashfield Lake or on Buckland Road north of the lake.
- A short loop in Buckland Center following the historic Upper Street which runs just northwest of Route 112 and connects with it at both ends.
- A longer loop following Charlemont Road off of Upper Street to Avery Road south on Shepard Road to Clesson Brook Road, continuing south to Route 112 in the Buckland Four Corners area.
- A short loop in northern Ashfield following Apple Valley Road northwest off of Route 112 to Hawley Road southeast through the Bear Swamp Reservation and back to Route 112 at the northern intersection with Route 116.
- A longer loop can be followed by taking Hawley Road (in the above described route) west to Old Stage Road south, crossing Watson/Bug Hill Road and continuing south on Watson-Spruce Corner Road past the South Face Farm Sugarhouse and then traveling east on Spruce Corner Road/Route 116 back in an easterly direction to Route 112 at the Sanderson Academy.

Off-road Bicycling

Mountain biking is permitted on many of the roads and trails within Catamount State Forest in Colrain and efforts are ongoing to establish a network of biking trails in the DAR State Forest. The rugged terrain of the state parks and forests offers challenging mountain bicycling routes that require from moderate to very experienced skill and conditioning levels. At this time, there are no established bicycle trails or off-road bicycle paths with gentler terrain for the novice or family recreational bicyclist within the Route 112 Scenic Byway Study Area.

Providing safe and efficient bicycle facilities that serve as both a viable mode of transportation and a recreational facility is a priority to regional transportation planning activities. The FRCOG has been working to implement a regional bikeway system, which includes both shared roadway and bicycle path facilities. This bikeway system is called the Franklin County Bikeway and at this time only includes routes as far west as Greenfield. As the phases of the project that have been in the planning stages move into construction during the next few years, the FRCOG will be exploring further expansion

of the regional bicycle facilities. Future expansion plans will examine possible off-road connections within the Byway Study Area.

Swimming

There are several locations within the Route 112 Byway region that provide public swimming opportunities. These are listed below. In addition, there are a number of private swimming holes where people swim at their own risk.

- Buckland Recreation Area, Buckland
Route 112
413-625-6330
Pool swimming. The public can purchase day passes for \$5 during the week and \$8 on the weekend.
- Ashfield Lakehouse, Ashfield
141 Buckland Rd.
413-628-0518
Private beach on Ashfield Lake open to the public at no cost.
- DAR State Forest, Ashfield/Goshen
413-268-7098
Freshwater swimming.

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.

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 Scenic 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. There are several locations along Route 112 where snowmobile trails cross the road or where riders typically pull off the trail to gas up. These crossings may or may not be well marked to warn motorists. Both drivers and riders should exercise caution and busy crossings should be adequately marked for safety.

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
- Colrain Snow-Drifters
P.O. Box 78
Colrain, MA 01340
413-624-0110
- Buckland Riders Snowmobile Club
P. O. Box 176-6F
Buckland, MA 01338
413-625-0261
www.bucklandriders.com
- Hilltown Snowmobile Club
P.O. Box 556
Ashfield, MA 01330
413-337-5389

Universal Access (Handicapped Accessibility To Recreational Areas)

DCR's Universal Access Program is dedicated to providing outdoor recreation opportunities in Massachusetts 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.

Findings

- Information on the many outdoor recreational opportunities available on and near the Route 112 Scenic Byway is not available in one comprehensive resource. Information on individual recreational assets is scattered among the many state and local organizations that manage them. Little information is available on potential linkages with other intersecting Scenic Byways and recreational resources (such as the Mahican Mohawk Trail).
- State parks and forests are already experiencing a lack of sufficient funding for adequate staffing and maintenance. An increase in tourism could further exacerbate these problems.
- Some public recreational areas along the Byway suffer from the improper disposal of trash and public drinking.
- Some recreational boaters gain access to the Deerfield River from private property rather than at publicly owned put-in sites.
- Existing canoe/kayak put-in and takeout areas along the Deerfield River can become congested during peak use times.
- State camping areas are often filled to capacity on weekends during the summer. There are also lag times, like off-season or mid-week, when the parks are lightly used.
- Local lodging is often filled to capacity with no available alternatives on the weekends during the height of the season.
- The only existing off-road bicycling trails, located in the state forest and park system, are in rugged terrain and beyond the capacity of many less experienced bicyclists and families.

- Some sections of the Byway are a safety hazard to road biking, pedestrians, and horseback riders. Some sections are rough and breaking up from lack of maintenance.
- Off-road vehicles (ORVs) are sometimes being used in the state forests and parks on trails and roads that are not designated for such use.
- Commonly used crossings for farm machinery and recreational users, such as snowmobilers and horseback riders, are not always adequately marked to warn motorists to be careful.

Recommendations

- Participate in Western Mass Scenic Byway website to highlight important recreational and cultural resources and tourism support services (e.g. lodging and restaurants) within the study area, provide potential connections to other scenic byways, and link to other websites with more comprehensive information about attractions in the region.
- Incorporate suggestions on ways to minimize visitor impacts to the environment in educational materials and tourist brochures and make clear where activities are allowed and where they are not.
- Promote multi-day tourist packages highlighting outdoor recreational activities.
- Promote alternatives to State forest camping areas that are often full, such as local Bed & Breakfasts and motels. Promote visits that would take place during the week and/or at non-peak times of the year.
- Explore the possibility of developing a map and guide to bicycle, pedestrian, and horseback riding trails off the road.
- Develop additional unobtrusive canoe/kayak put-in and take-out areas along the Deerfield River to alleviate seasonal congestion and additional signage to direct tourists to these sites, in order to discourage the use of areas that are located on private property.
- Investigate the opportunity to establish Scenic Byway informational kiosks to direct tourists to recreational opportunities.
- Evaluate the option of maintaining or improving the road shoulders for use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and horseback riders ,where appropriate, or explore off road options.
- Support increased funding for staffing at State forests and parks and maintenance of the facilities, as well as for the promotion and further development of significant recreational resources (such as the Mahican Mohawk Trail).

- Commonly used crossings for farm machinery and recreational users, such as snowmobilers and horseback riders, should be adequately marked to warn motorists to be careful.