



Open Space Plan for the Town of Aquinnah



DRAFT — June 28, 2018

2018

Aquinnah, which was incorporated as the Town of Gay Head in 1870, is located at the westernmost end of Martha's Vineyard Island and comprises approximately 3,400 acres. The predominantly residential community has 363(2014 estimate) year-round residents and is known for its Native American heritage, the Gay Head Cliffs, and its beautiful beaches. The Town changed its name to Aquinnah in 1998.

Aquinnah is essentially "an island within an island;" it is separated from Chilmark, its only neighboring town, by a boundary that runs largely through water bodies (Menemsha Bight, Basin, and Pond and Squibnocket Pond). The two Towns share a common land boundary for just 3,000 feet: 1,791 feet on Long Beach, and 1,209 feet between the ponds. This small stretch between the ponds is the location of the single road providing access from Aquinnah to all other points on Martha's Vineyard. In addition, a small triangular-shaped piece of land, approximately 8,620 square feet in size, lying on the "Chilmark side" of the Menemsha Basin Boundary is legally incorporated within the Town of Aquinnah.

Aquinnah's landscape is defined by soft rolling hills, low heathlands, magnificent ocean vistas, and the famous Gay Head Cliffs, a recognized Natural Landmark. Regionally, Aquinnah shares certain characteristics with the other towns on Martha's Vineyard: overall seclusion from the mainland, highly variable seasonal populations, lifestyles and landscapes dominated by the ocean, and unique economic constraints.

Within this greater Island context, Aquinnah retains a unique character as well. The furthest point from any of the ferries or points of entry, Aquinnah retains the most purely rural qualities to be found on Martha's Vineyard. Its 2016 population represents just over two percent (2%) of the total population of Martha's Vineyard. This small community, however, is also the most ethnically diverse on the island, as 43% of its residents are ethnic minorities. The clear majority of these are descendants of the Island's original settlers, the Wampanoags. The federal recognition in 1987 – and subsequent development – of the "Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)" is the single most significant and defining milestone in recent Aquinnah history, and figures largely in any discussion of the Town's future. Archaeological sites and Indian cemeteries are important elements in the Town's past and future.

The visual character of each of the six towns of Martha's Vineyard is distinct. On a small scale, the down-Island towns are the "cities and their suburbs", while the less populous, less commercial up-

island towns are the "countryside." The Island's geography and history created the contrasts between its more settled seaport towns and its farming communities. While open space is necessary for all six towns, it is especially important up-Island, to maintain the visual diversity of Martha's Vineyard.

Demographics and Economics

Aquinnah has the smallest population on the Island, with a 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) estimate of only 363 year-round residents, which is projected to decline to about 194 persons by 2035. It is the most racially diverse population on the Island with about 27 percent of its population identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native.

Aquinnah has the smallest population of Martha's Vineyard's six towns with an estimated population of 363 in 2014. Although small relative to the other Island towns, Aquinnah's population is estimated to be at its highest in 2014 compared with U.S. decennial census counts between 1930 and 2010. However, per UMass Donahue Institute population projections, Aquinnah's population is projected to decline 41 percent between 2014 and 2030 and further decline 10 percent to 194 people by 2035. This contrasts with the county projections that anticipate modest growth of 6 percent and 3 percent in total population respectively between 2014 and 2030 and 2030 and 2035. Aquinnah's population per the decennial census data dropped from 344 in 2000 to 311 in 2010.

Aquinnah has a growing older adult population and much fewer children than other towns on the Island. The population age sixty-five years and over is projected to grow from about only 10 percent of year-round population to over half of the population by 2035 and the population of working-age adults age twenty to sixty-four years is expected to decline from about 68 percent of the total year-round population to about 44 percent.

About 27 percent of Aquinnah's year-round households are estimated to have low/moderate income. The thresholds for low/moderate income are based on household size – in the Dukes County area, the income threshold for a two-person household to have low/moderate income, for example, would be \$52,600.

Since 1930, Aquinnah's population increased most significantly between 1970 and 1980, at a time when the county also had significant population growth when the town's population grew 86 percent and the county's population grew 46 percent. However, Aquinnah's total population growth between 1930 and

2014 was only 125 percent (from 161 to 363 people); while the county's total population increased about 240 percent (4,953 to 16,816 people).

AQUINNAH AND DUKES COUNTY POPULATION CHANGE 1930-2014 & 2030/2035 PROJECTIONS

Year	AQUINNAH		DUKES COUNTY	
	Population	% Change	Population	% Change
1930	161	--	4,953	--
1940	127	-21%	5,669	14%
1950	88	-31%	5,633	-1%
1960	103	17%	5,829	3%
1970	118	15%	6,117	5%
1980	220	86%	8,942	46%
1990	201	-9%	11,639	30%
2000	344	71%	14,987	29%
2010	311	-10%	16,460	10%
2014	363	17%	16,816	2%
2030 projected	215	-41%	17,902	6%
2035 projected	194	-10%	18,453	3%

Source: Martha's Vineyard Housing Needs Assessment 2013; 2010-2014 American Community Survey, as provided by MVC; Massachusetts Population Projections, UMass Donahue Institute, as provided by MVC. Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability

Aquinnah is expected to have a greater share of older adults in the years to come compared with the county. Between 2000 and 2014, Aquinnah's population of children age nineteen years and under declined from about 28 percent of the total population to about 22 percent of the population; the population of age twenty to sixty-four years increased slightly from 62 percent of the population to 68 percent; and the population age sixty-five and over remained about the same at 10 percent.

However, the age composition of the population by 2035 is projected to change dramatically in Aquinnah with only 6 percent under age nineteen years, 44 percent age twenty to sixty-four years; and 50 percent age sixty-five year and over - a significant increase in the population of older adults. County-wide, projections indicate that about 29 percent of the total population will be age sixty-five and over by 2035.

Age Distribution 2000-14 & 2035 Projection

Age	2000				2014				2035 projection			
	AQUINNAH		DUKES COUNTY		AQUINNAH		DUKES COUNTY		AQUINNAH		DUKES COUNTY	
	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%	Est.	%
under 19	95	28%	3,665	25%	79	22%	3,597	21%	12	6%	3,492	19%
20 to 64	214	62%	9,169	61%	248	68%	10,263	61%	85	44%	9,622	52%
65 +	35	10%	2,153	14%	36	10%	3,055	18%	97	50%	5,339	29%
Total	344	100%	14,987	100%	363	100%	16,915	100%	194	100%	18,453	100%

Median Age	37.1		40.7		39.1		45.7		---		---	
Source: US Census 2010; 2010-2014 American Community Survey; Note: ACS data based on samples and are subject to variability; Massachusetts Population Projections, UMass Donahue Institute												

A significant economic difference apparent on the Island in comparison to statewide is that there is a prevalence of self-employed workers in all Island towns. Statewide, the 2014 ACS estimates indicate that only 6 percent of all workers age sixteen years and older are self-employed, yet about 19 percent of all workers in Dukes County are self-employed and about 46 percent in Aquinnah are self-employed, which is by far the highest estimated self-employment rate of all the Island towns.

Roughly 54 percent of Aquinnah's total labor force is employed in the services sector, which includes professional, scientific, management, administrative, entertainment, food, accommodations, and other services. Similarly, about 45 percent of Dukes County labor force is employed in the services sector. About 15 percent is employed in construction in Aquinnah and about 16 percent in construction in the county. Only about 3 percent in the town and 12 percent in the county are employed in wholesale/retail trade. A significantly larger percentage of Aquinnah residents is employed in the agriculture, forestry, or fishing sector at about 13 percent than in the county at only about 2 percent. Employment in government accounted for 10 percent of the total labor force employment; this can be attributed to having two governments, the Tribe and the Town.

TABLE 4.13: EMPLOYEMENT BY INDUSTRY, 2015

Industry	AQUINNAH		DUKES COUNTY	
Total	199	100%	8,764	100%
Services	107	54%	3,950	45%
Construction	29	15%	1,408	16%
Wholesale & Retail Trade	5	3%	1,049	12%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	8		937	11%
Manufacturing	4	2%	329	4%
Government	20	10%	384	4%
Transportation, Warehousing	1	1%	211	2%
Information	0	0%	316	4%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	25	13%	180	2%
Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development. As provided by MVC				

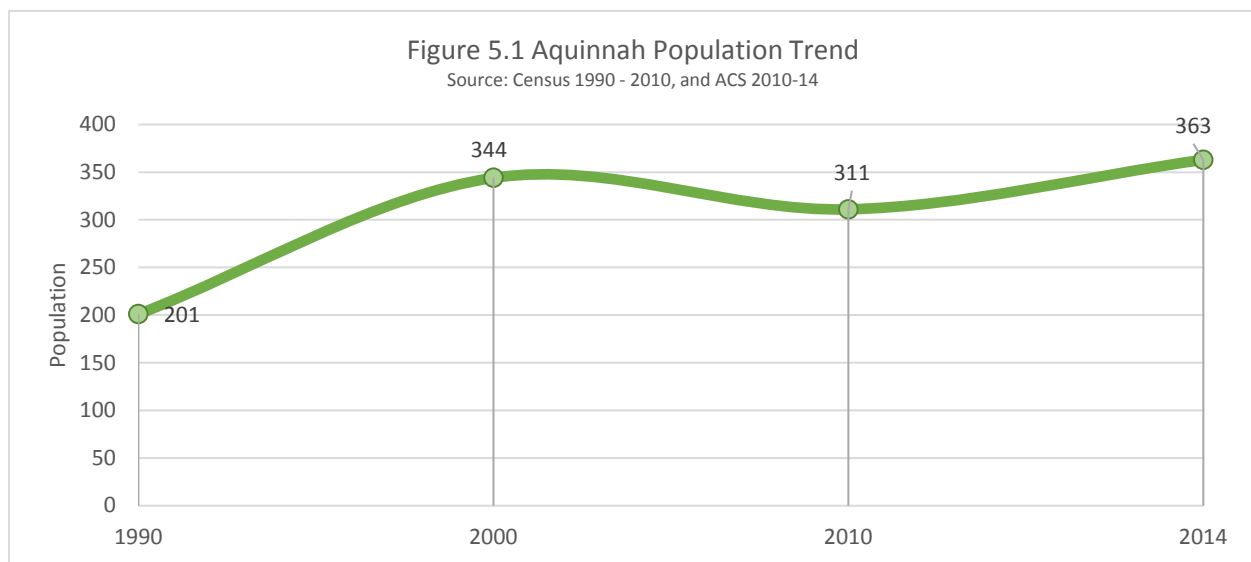
The unemployment rate in Aquinnah is lower than county wide – per the MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development 2015 figures, Aquinnah's unemployment rate was 4.8 percent and the county was 6.9 percent. However, as expected in a resort area, the average January unemployment rate is higher than the annual rate – 7.7 percent for the town and 12 percent for the county – but the town

January rate is still significantly lower than county-wide, indicating that a smaller share of Aquinnah residents is employed in industries that fluctuate with seasons (such as tourism industries).

TABLE 4.14: AVERAGE EMPLOYMENT, 2015

	AQUINNAH	DUKES COUNTY
Labor Force	207	9,328
Employed	197	8,688
Unemployed	10	640
Area Unemployment Rate	4.8%	6.9%
MA Rate	5%	5%
Average January Unemployment Rate Area	7.7%	12%
Average January Rate MA	5.8%	5.8%

Source: MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development



Zoning

Most of Aquinnah is zoned as a Rural-Residential District, which permits detached single-family dwelling on minimum two-acre lots. Other than provisions for affordable housing, there are no provisions for attached single-family, two-family, or multi-family dwellings. However, section 3.302 allows compact siting by special permit with up to twenty units on lots of 5,000 s.f. minimum adjacent to open space that, together with the house lots, would equal the two-acre minimum for each dwelling. The remainder of the town is zoned as the Marine Commercial District, which does not permit residential uses.

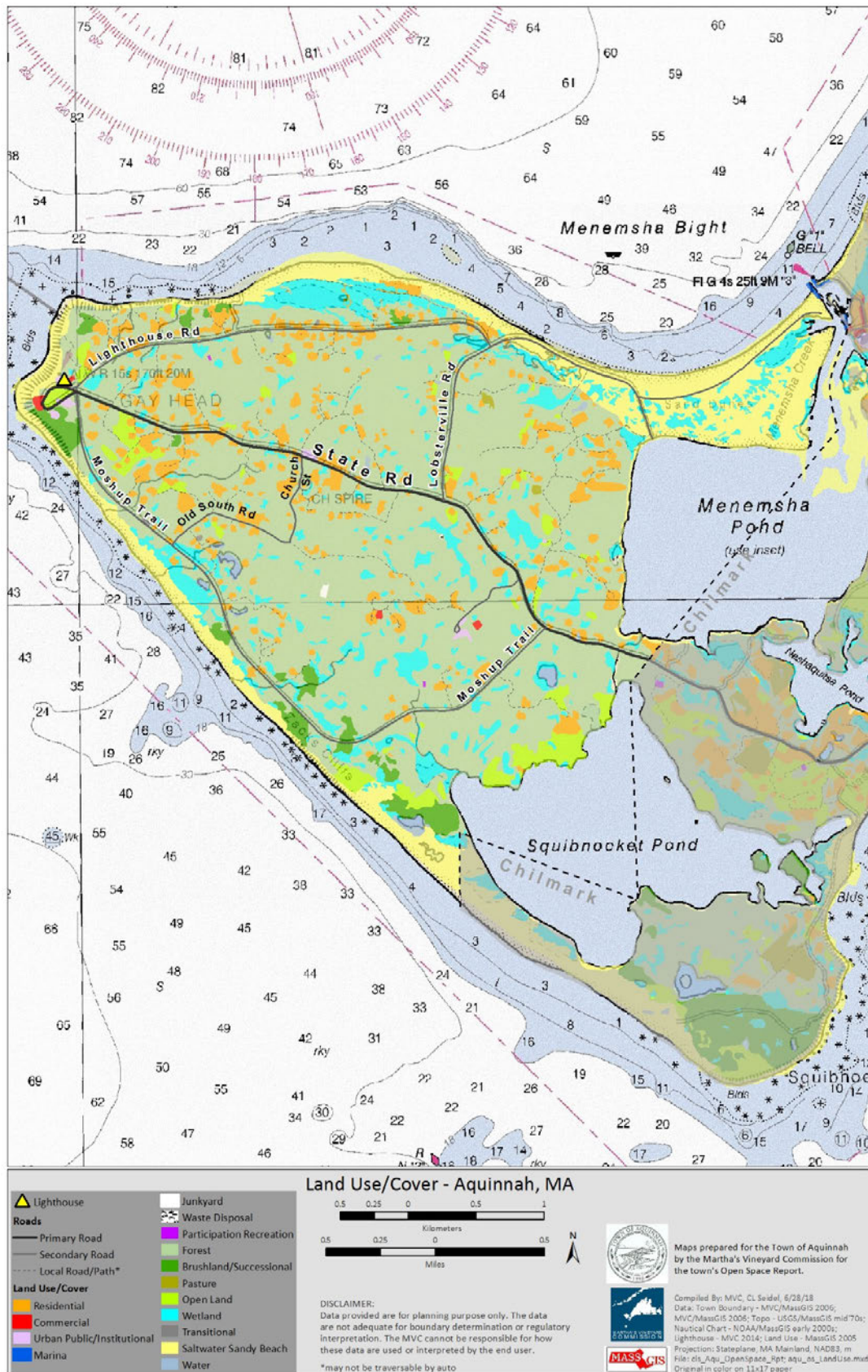
Per Section 6.9-2 of the Aquinnah Zoning Bylaw, the total number of building permits issued each year for residential construction is limited as follows:

For each of the three years commencing on the first publication of notice of the Planning Board hearing, the Building Inspector shall issue no more than six (6) permits each year for new residential construction. Two additional permits may be issued each year to the Aquinnah Resident Homesite Recipients. Except for Resident Homesite Permits any permit not issued in any year will not carry over to the next year. These permits are not transferable, in whole or in part.

In addition to the Rate of Development District of Critical Planning Concern that limits the total number of building permits issued (described above), the following overlay districts also impact residential development in Aquinnah:

- **Town of Aquinnah District of Critical Planning Concern** – this overlay district covers the whole town except for the Indian Common Lands and requires a special permit for siting of buildings, structures, and additions, etc.
- **Island Road District, Special Ways Zone, and Special Places District** – requires special permits for changes to stone walls, limits vehicular access, and limits height of structures.
- **Flood Plain Zone** – requires flood plain permits for new construction or substantial improvement to existing structures.
- **Coastal District** – does not permit construction within one hundred feet of wetlands, water bodies, beaches, dunes or the crest of bluffs over fifteen feet high; construction permitted within 200 feet with special permit.
- **Moshup Trail District of Critical Planning Concern** – limits parking areas and parking, requires a special permit for new construction to review siting, and restricts building materials.
- **Gay Head Cliff Area District of Critical Planning Concern** – requires a special permit for the siting of buildings, structures, and additions, etc.
- **The Wild and Scenic North Shore District of Critical Planning Concern** – a limited area extending one hundred feet seaward from the mean low water line that prohibits permanent structures unless municipal or commercial fishing, etc.

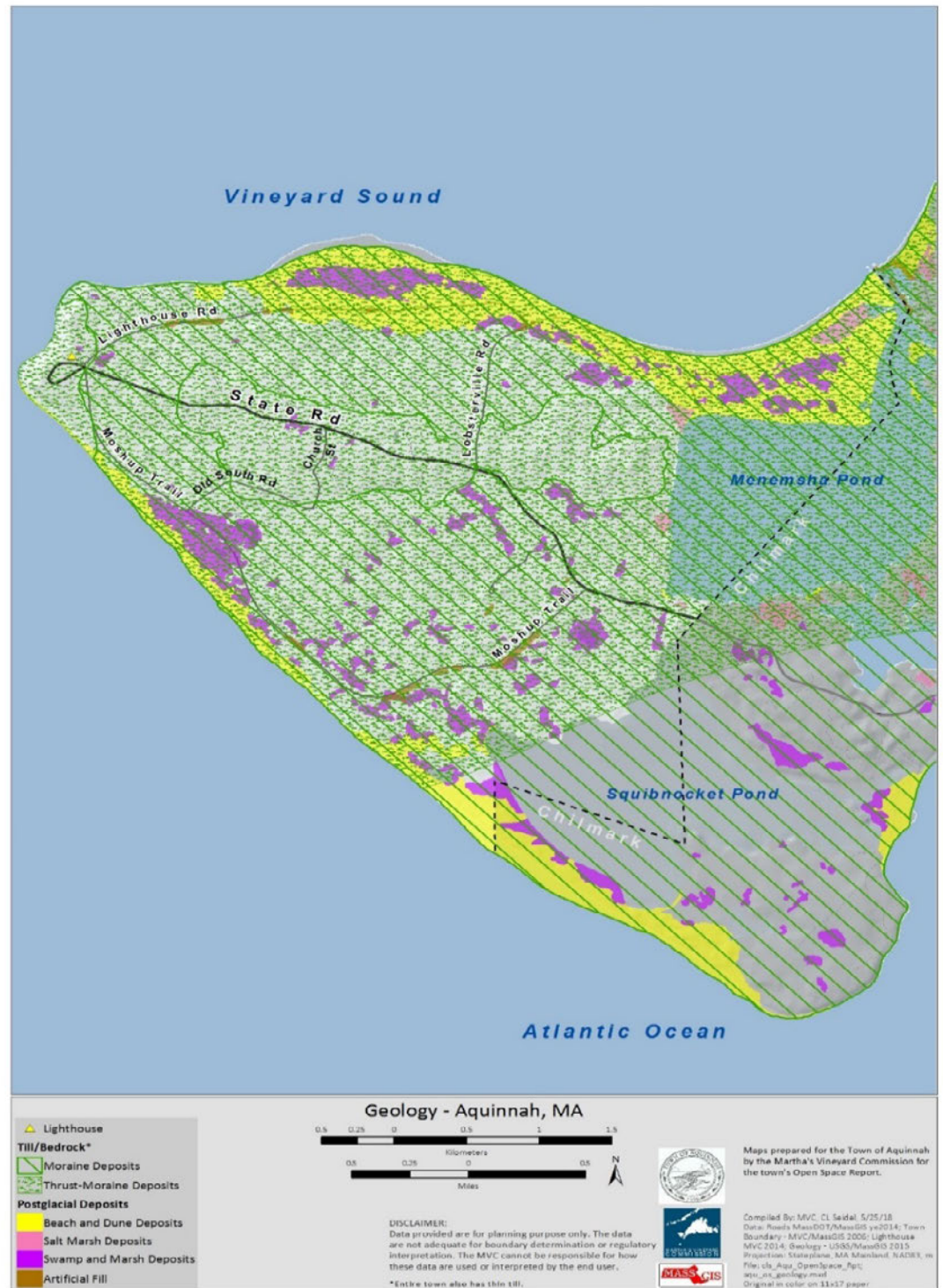




Physical Characteristics

Topography

Aquinnah's topography is characterized by hills that are neither long nor high. However, due to the lack of any tall trees, small hills, modest fields, and low cliffs appear larger than they are. The inland area of Aquinnah is marked by its rolling rises in land and a predominance of open vistas. The seaside is primarily flat with some slight rises in land and a predominance of open vistas.



Soils and Their Capacity for Use

a. Soil Development

The kinds of soils that develop in any area depend largely on the parent material and the topography. The soils in Aquinnah developed on glacial deposits that were gouged out of older coastal deposits of sands, silts, and clays north of the area (see Geology Map for deposit types). The wide diversity of materials results in a range of soil types (see Soil Map). The loams and sands may be underlain by very compact clay till or coarse sands and gravels. Each soil type affects our ability to use the soil for agriculture, sewage disposal, or road construction in a different way.

Soils develop by a complex series of chemical and physical changes caused by infiltrating rainwater, vegetation, water table level, and agricultural practices. These changes result in the formation of a sequence of horizons in which different particle sizes and chemical complexes are organized. This can be seen in the topsoil and subsoil, which are marked by distinctive colors and textures. These upper layers of the soil give clues to soil scientists as to what the deeper parent materials may be. Some soils give clues to the presence of a high water table or a hardpan. These clues are important to the Town in deciding approximate uses of the soils for roads, homesites, and agriculture.

b. Soil Distribution

Throughout the Town, the pattern of soil types is a complex one. With the presence of clay and the very hilly topography, the lowlands are typically wet. The presence of clay layers may, however, lead to springs or seeps forming wet areas, even on hill slopes. The alternating layers of clays and sands, which were gouged up, broken, folded, and smeared by the advancing glaciers, creates a variety of parent materials to develop very different present-day soils. The retreating ice released meltwaters that cut valleys and deposited eroded sands and gravels.

The soils may be broadly grouped into those developed on sand and gravel, those developed on clay or clay till, and those which developed in sands but formed a cemented “hard-pan.” These soils are distributed in a complex and seemingly random pattern throughout the Town.

c. Soil Capabilities

The soils in Aquinnah were extensively mapped in 1980. The limitations of each soil are described for use in sewage disposal, commercial sites, homesites, landfills, and others. The survey is not detailed enough for use on parcels under two acres in size. It is most appropriately used for general planning purposes.

The soils are classified and mapped based on their texture, drainage, flooding, slope, and presence of hardpan (see Soil Map). The qualities all affect the use of the soil for homesites, roads, etc. The soils map can be used to define critical areas where certain uses are not appropriate and other areas where these uses should be encouraged. The percentage of clays, silts, and sands varies with soil types and directly affects the soils suitability for sewage disposal. This is so because clay soils may not infiltrate sewage resulting in a back-up of the system. On the opposite extreme, coarse sands and gravels may accept sewage so readily that nearby shallow wells may be contaminated. In another case, the presence of a seasonal high water table may require the use of leaching trenches instead of a leaching pit.

d. Recommendations

The limitations of each soil for such uses as sewage disposal, road construction, and homesites should be used in the subdivision review process. Situations where a lot or lots are entirely severely limited for sewage disposal should be avoided. Extensive areas that are severely limited might be used as open space, or the lots may be laid out so that each lot contains a part of the limited area, as well as a part of the suitable area.

In some areas where a large portion of the area proposed for subdivision is severely limited, borings or percolation tests may be required as part of the subdivision plan. These severely limited areas might also become the target of open space purchases.

Vegetation

The vegetation of Aquinnah is mainly composed of a scrub oak and heath community. The listed categories of trees within the town are black and white oak. Oak stands of 41 to 60 feet are not uncommon, although the tree heights do vary from 1 to 20 feet near the shore to the larger trees inland. The densities of the tree stands are illustrated through several land surveys as having many areas with an 80-100% crown closure. With such a dense abundant oak forest, the growth of individual trees in woodlots could be improved considerably by thinning, pruning, and other practices. This great amount of forested land is a considerable firewood resource in the Town, which, if properly managed, could provide a substantial renewable source of energy.

Other vegetative areas in the Town consist of shrub swamps, which are primarily located near the intersection of State and Lobsterville Roads. Tidal salt marshes can be found off Menemsha Pond in the Lobsterville area. Both areas contribute greatly to the diversity and preponderance of wildlife.

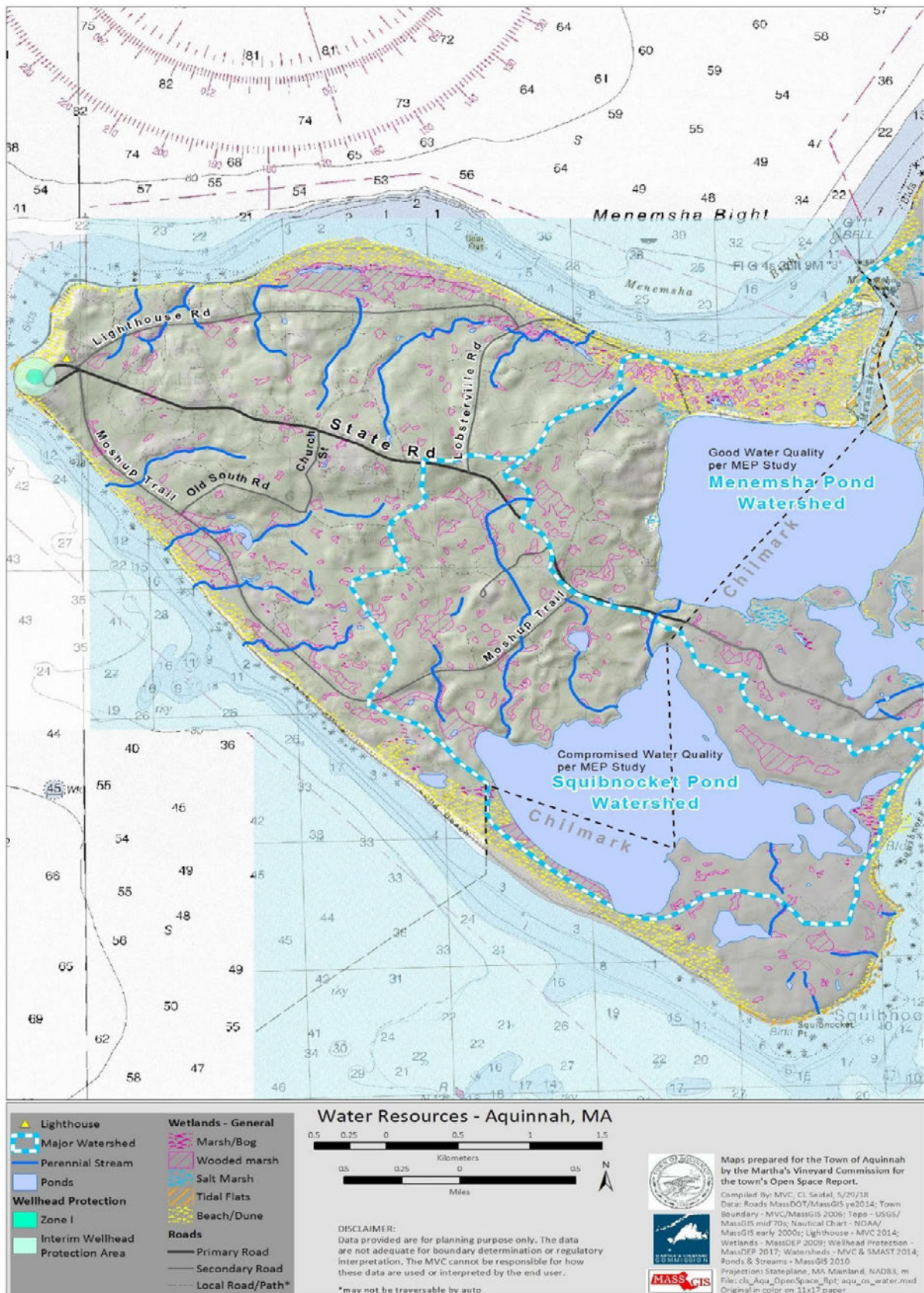
Water Resources

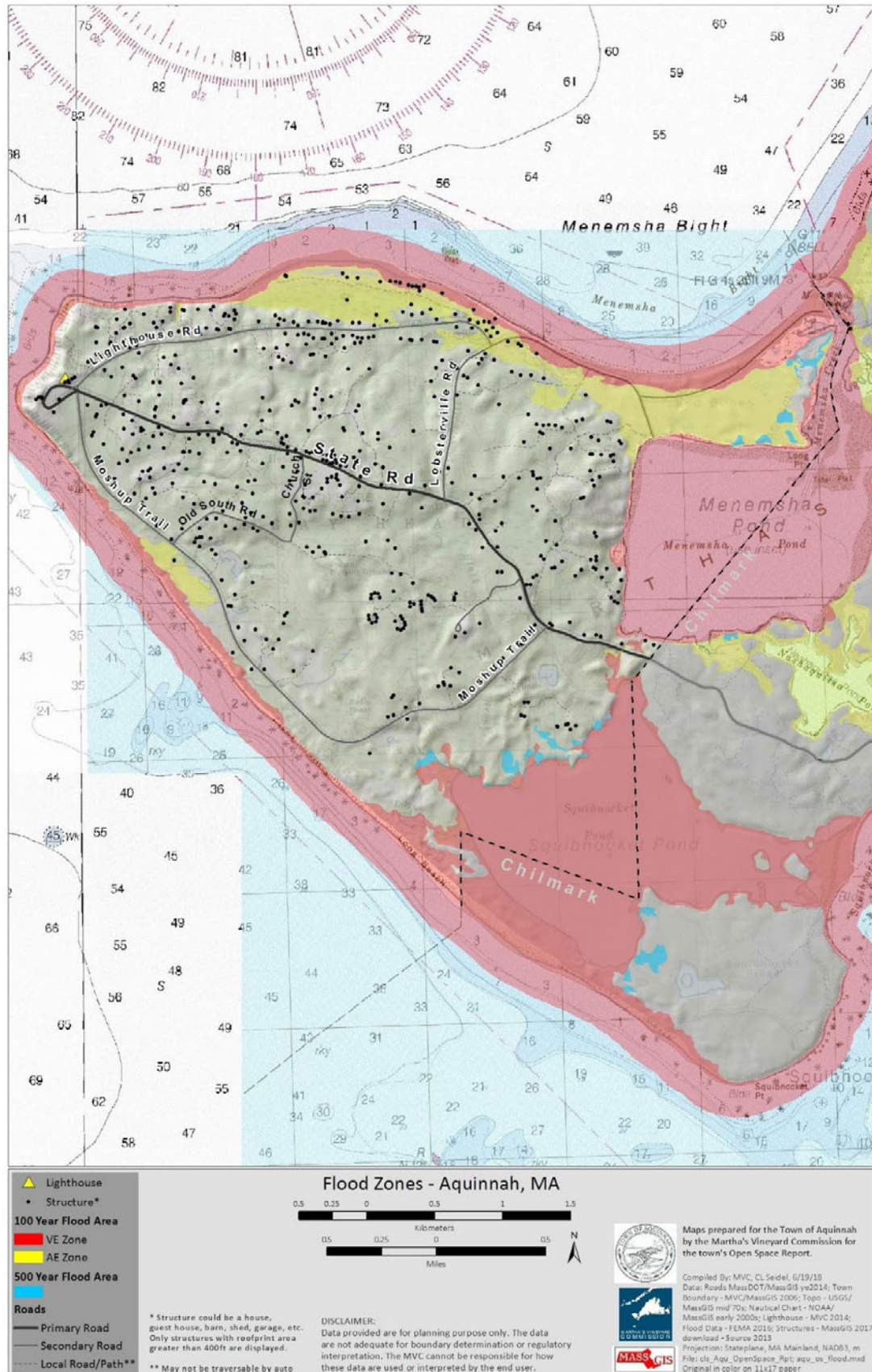
The Town of Aquinnah contains a large portion of fresh and salt water resources comprised of approximately 583 acres of surface water and 550 acres of permanent and seasonal wetland areas. The existing barrier beaches, coastal dunes, coastal beaches, and coastal banks must also be included under wetland areas under the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act (G.L. 131, s. 140), but their area is unknown. Generally, wetlands and water resources cover a large proportion of the Town's 3,500 acres and must be considered in open space planning. The breakdown of these areas is as follows:

Surface Water	
<u>Fresh</u>	<u>Acres</u>
Black Pond	5
Black Brook	N/A
Lily Pond	3
Occooch Pond	4
Squibnocket Pond	285
<u>Salt</u>	
Menemsha Pond	286
<u>Other Wetland Types</u>	
Permanent	380
Seasonal	170

One of the Town's chief resources is the tidal salt water of Menemsha Pond, which provides a supply of shellfish including clams, quahogs, scallops, eels, and blue crabs. The fresh water of Squibnocket Pond is a source of eels, white perch, and other edible fin-fish. Both areas provide a wide variety of water-related recreational activities and wildlife habitats.

Unlike most areas of the Island, Aquinnah does not have exceptionally high quality or ample quantity of groundwater. The aquifers are generally ranged from very poor to variable. In those areas where groundwater is found, there is considerable uncertainty as to the quality and quantity of the aquifer. The depth to water varies from 10 to 300 feet and the quality varies from high in dissolved minerals and fine sediment. Other areas, located along the coast, are characterized by limited amounts of fresh water and a high vulnerability to salt water intrusion.





Wildlife

Squibnocket

Squibnocket Pond and its contiguous areas constitute perhaps the greatest wildlife biome in the State of Massachusetts. It is a complete ecosystem with the best fresh water on the Island and an outlet into saltwater that has one of the few remaining Alewife runs on the Island. It includes pond, marsh, and swampy areas, beach, dune, open areas, scrub, cover, and a few groves of trees. The rocks off the shore provide a resting place for Gray seals in winter.

It provides both nesting and feeding areas for a multitude of waterfowl and has the largest number of nesting Canada Geese on the Island. These are non-migratory feral Canada Geese, as migratory Canadas do not nest on the Vineyard. Other birds nesting there include Mute Swans, Black Duck, herons, Spotted Sandpipers, and Piping Plover, to name a few. Special and unusual species include the Alder Flycatcher and Virginia Rail.

In addition to its value as a nesting area, it is a feeding area for shorebirds, herons, ducks, geese, and swans. There is tremendous variety in the habitat found there; from open areas and outgrown fields to oak woods and a few stands of planted spruce, which offer dense nesting and roosting cover. It includes the only cattail marsh of any size on the Island – the breeding ground for Alder Flycatcher and Virginia Rail. Deer, Otter, and Muskrat abound as well as fish of several varieties such as Perch and Pickerel.

Squibnocket Ridge is an important wintering area for Rough-legged Hawk, and Harlequin Ducks can be found along its shores. This is one of the few areas in Massachusetts where Harlequin Ducks can be seen with regularity.

Cranberry Lands

This is an unusual dune, beach, swamp, and wetlands area surrounded on three sides by salt water – Sounds and pond. Several small ponds in the interior provide nesting, feeding, and resting for waterfowl of all kinds. Shore-eared Owls nest and hunt there, as do some species of shorebirds (Spotted Sand piper). It is a good habitat for sparrows, herons, and snowy egrets, among many others. It is one of the few remaining areas of undisturbed gull and tern nesting, is one of the largest nesting areas in all New England for the Black Crowned Night Heron, and one of the only four breeding colonies of Snowy Egrets in New England.

There is unusual topography and habitat throughout the area. Potholes and wetlands are interspersed among sand dunes and scrub thickets, providing cover for mammals as well as birds. Bog orchids, wild

cranberries, beach plums and wild roses make both interesting floral and excellent cover and nesting habitat for herons.

It has been estimated by Massachusetts Audubon Society that there was a population of 10,000 Herring Gulls and about 1,500 Great black-backed Gulls. The latter are rapidly taking over where the Herring Gulls used to be the only nesting species.

Lobsterville Bog – Swamp

The myriad of fresh water wetlands attracts waterfowl like Teal, Widgeon, and Hooded and Common Merganser. The cranberry bogs and potholes offer protected feeding for many kinds of wildlife.

Zach’s Cliffs – “Moshup Trail Sanctuary”

The heart of the rare coastal Heathland habitat. Excellent wildlife habitat consisting of many wet, swampy areas full of potholes and cranberry bogs provide protection and habitat for waterfowl and land birds. Plenty of fresh water, overgrown fields, and scrub are suitable for game birds and small animals. Otter and Muskrat occur in the area as well as excellent habitat for hawks feeding. The endangered orchid *Arethusa bulbosa* has been found in the area.

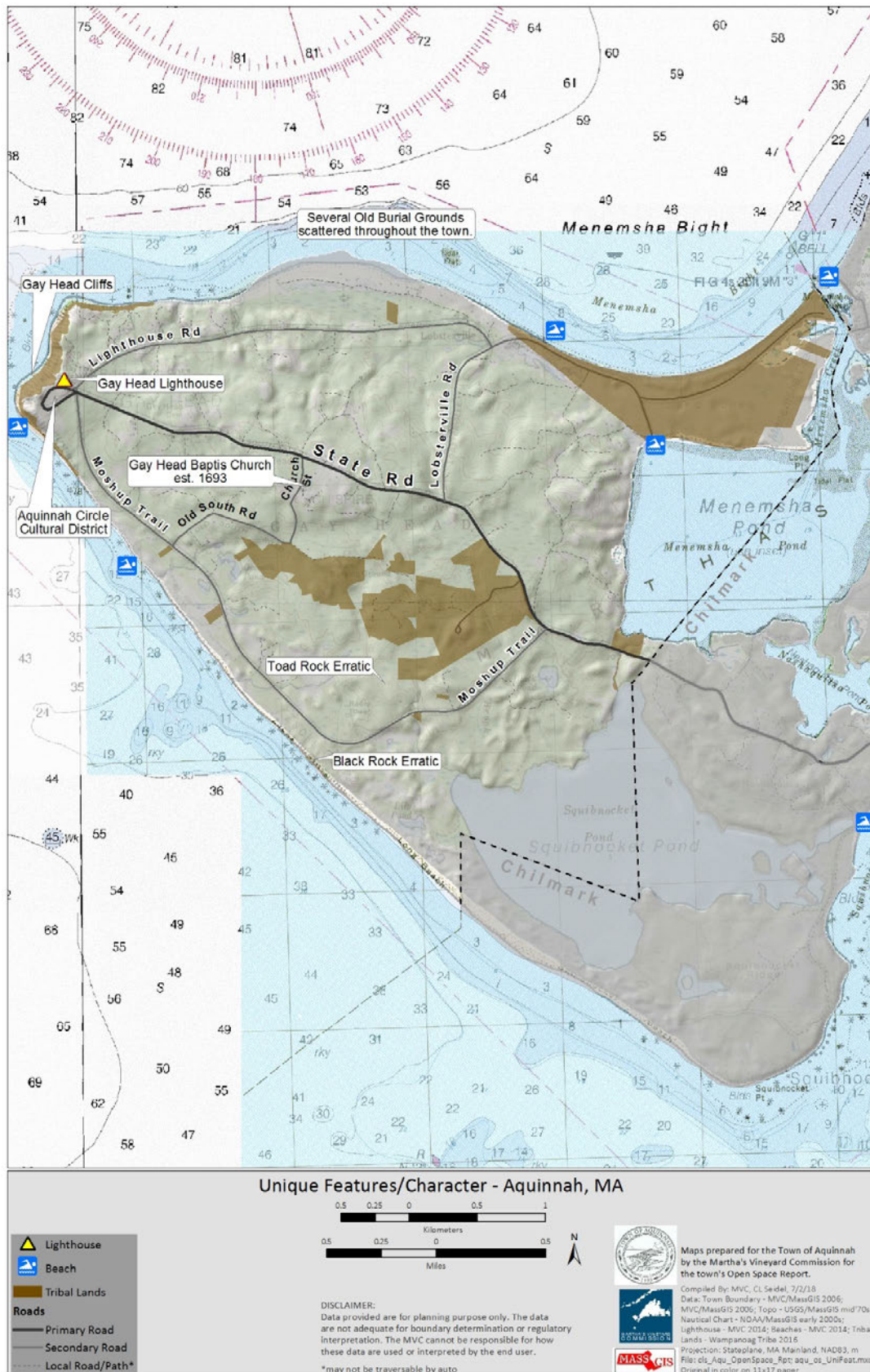
Unique Features

Aquinnah is a place of refuge for rare species. Within the Lobsterville area, there are two endangered floral species – Rock Rose (*Helianthemum demosum*) and Blue-eyed Grass (*Sisyrinchium arenicola*). Both wildflowers have been field checked by plant consultants and have been listed with the Massachusetts National Heritage. Another rare flower located in the Lobsterville area is the Horn or Sea Poppy (*Glaucium flavum*). It is quite unusual to have these three unique floral species in one area.

The area is also home to six state-listed species: dune noctuid moth, straight lined mallow moth, least tern, northern harrier, piping plover, and the northeastern beach tiger beetle.

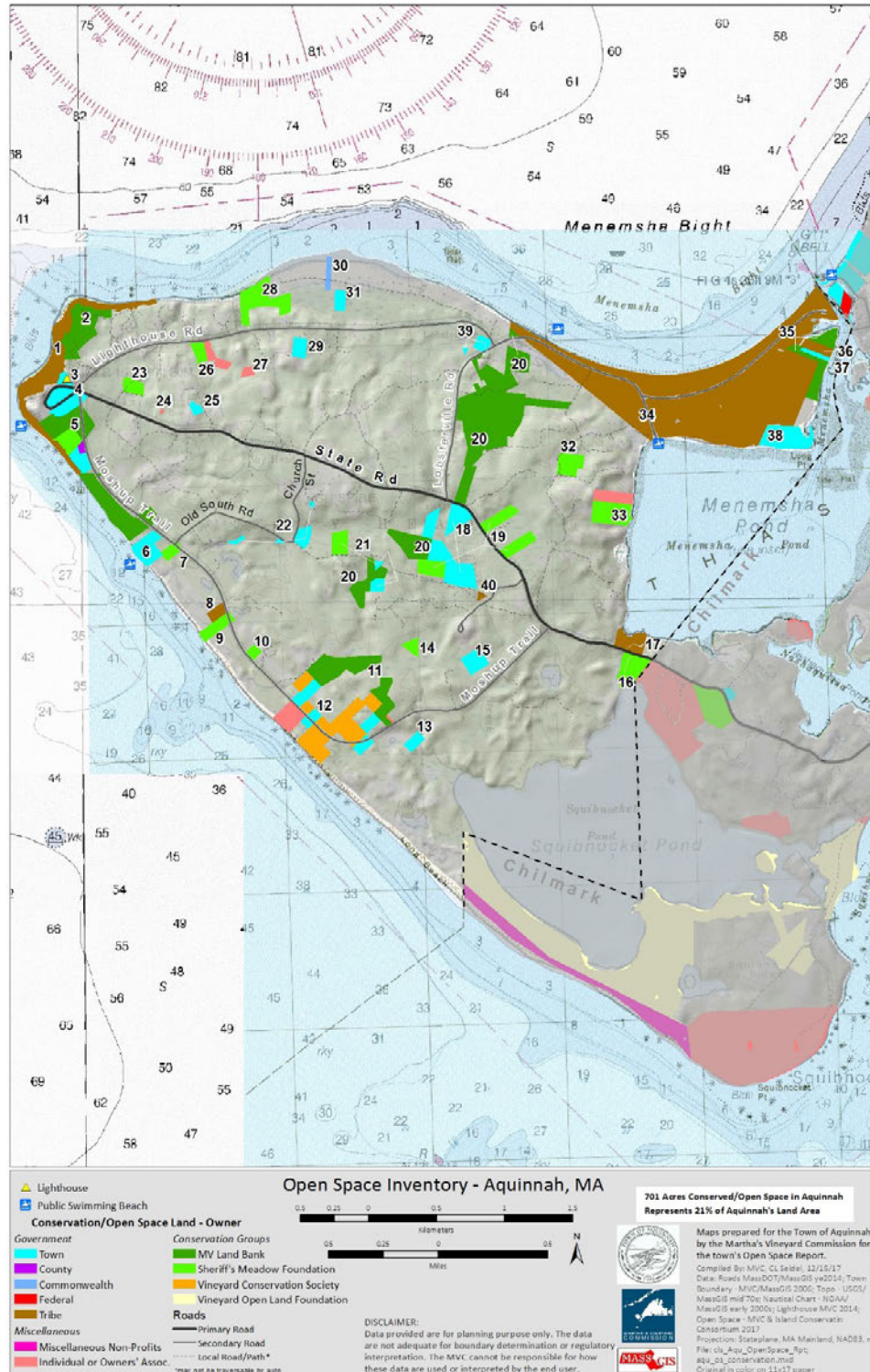
Climate

Aquinnah’s climate can be characterized as being moderate. Average winter temperatures range from approximately 30° to 35° F, while average summer temperatures range from approximately 75° to 80° F. The ocean temperatures produce a steady sea breeze that keeps the town warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Foggy weather is common during the spring and fall due to the difference in the land and water temperatures. The moderate climate of Aquinnah is favorable to vacationers who frequent this tiny resort community.



Existing Open Space Lands

The following map and table identifies the various open space resources in Aquinnah. It details the various permanently controlled open space from both local government and non-profit organizations.



Aquinnah Open Space/Conservation Land Matrix - 12/14/17

Site Number	Name	Acres	Owner(s)	Conservation Status	Physical Description	Purpose
1	Gay Head Cliffs	35.13	Wampanoag Tribe	Perpetuity	Clay cliffs	Conservation
2	Aquinnah Headlands Preserve	17.81	Martha's Vineyard Land Bank (MVLB)	Perpetuity		Conservation
3	Gay Head Lighthouse	1.75	USA & Town of Aquinnah	USA Land - perpetuity; Town Land - Limited*		Historic
4	Aquinnah Circle Area	8.87	Town of Aquinnah	Limited*		Historic & Recreation
5	Gay Head Beach & Walkway	44.12	Town of Aquinnah, Dukes County, MVLB, & Sheriff's Meadow Foundation (SMF)	Perpetuity	Beach with walking path to/from parking lot	Conservation
6	Philbin Beach	8.49	Town of Aquinnah	Some parcels in Perpetuity & one parcel	Beach	Recreation
7	SMF Nuovo	2.50	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
8	Tribe 9-184	2.66	Wampanoag Tribe	Unknown		Unknown
9	SMF Moshup Trail	5.04	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
10	SMF 12-19	1.73	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
11	Toad Rock Preserve	24.95	Martha's Vineyard Land Bank & Smith (Conservation Restriction)	Perpetuity; 1 parcel w/CR held by MVLB		Conservation
12	Moshup Trail	49.17	Town of Aquinnah, Private (w/CR held by VCS), Vineyard Conservation Society (VCS)	Perpetuity & 1 Town parcel unknown		Conservation
13	Town 12-73	2.84	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown (is vacant town land)		Unknown
14	SMF Nuovo	2.38	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
15	Town 11-22	5.76	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown		Unknown
16	SMF Squibnocket Pond	8.30	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
17	Cook Lands	6.84	Wampanoag Tribe	Limited		Conservation
18	Town 8-26 & 8-31	15.63	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown		Unknown
19	SMF Nuovo	16.36	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
20	Gay Head Moraine	103.66	Town (w/CR held by MVLB) & Martha's Vineyard Land Bank	Perpetuity		Conservation
21	Town 9-X & SMF Wisniewski	8.34	Town of Aquinnah & Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Town - unknown; SMF - perpetuity		Recreation & Conservation and Unknown
22	Town 9-X	5.43	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown		Recreation & Conservation and Unknown
23	SMF Egger	3.90	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
24	Indian Burial Ground	0.16	Gross	Limited		Other
25	Gay Head Cemetery	1.55	Town of Aquinnah	Limited*		Historic
26	SMF Lighthouse Rd	6.58	Private (2 parcels w/CR held by SMF) & SMF owns 1 parcel	Perpetuity		Conservation
27	SMF Lehman CR	1.32	Lehman w/CR held by SMF	Perpetuity		Conservation
28	SMF Leonard Preserve	15.06	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
29	Town 5-59	3.57	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown		Unknown
30	Dogfish Bar Beach Access	2.46	Department of Fish and Game	Perpetuity		Recreation & Conservation
31	Town 5-88	2.87	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown		Unknown
32	Knapp Preserve	6.78	Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
33	SMF Eastman	16.89	Eastman (w/CR held by SMF) & Sheriff's Meadow Foundation	Perpetuity		Conservation
34	Cranberry Lands	227.21	Wampanoag Tribe	Perpetuity		Conservation
35	Menemsha Neck Preserve	12.20	Martha's Vineyard Land Bank	Perpetuity		Conservation
36	Menemsha Neck	4.01	Wampanoag Tribe	Limited Protection*		Conservation
37	Town 3-5	1.73	Town of Aquinnah	Perpetuity		Conservation
38	Town 3-33	13.65	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown		Unknown
39	Town 4-X	2.88	Town of Aquinnah	Unknown		Conservation
40	Tribe 8-9	0.69	Wampanoag Tribe	Unknown		Unknown

Site Number	Name	Public Access	Infrastructure	Site Condition	Recreation
1	Gay Head Cliffs	Limited	Beach access at base of cliff; On public bus route	Eroding clay cliff	Beach walk, Ocean swim
2	Aquinnah Headlands Preserve	Full Access	Trails; On public bus route		Hiking
3	Gay Head Lighthouse	Limited	Lighthouse, walking path, overlook visitors' site; On public bus route		Lighthouse Tours
4	Aquinnah Circle Area	Full Access	Parking; On public bus route		Museum Tour
5	Gay Head Beach & Walkway	Full Access	Walking path; On public bus route		Beach walk, Ocean swim
6	Philbin Beach	Limited	none		Beach walk, Ocean swim
7	SMF Nuovo	No public access	none		none
8	Tribe 9-184	Limited	none		none
9	SMF Moshup Trail	1 parcels yes; 2 parcels no	none		none
10	SMF 12-19	Full Access	none		none
11	Toad Rock Preserve	4 parcels yes; 5 parcels no	Trails		Hiking
12	Moshup Trail	No public access	none		none
13	Town 12-73	Unknown	none		none
14	SMF Nuovo	Unknown	none		none
15	Town 11-22	Unknown	none		none
16	SMF Squibnocket Pond	Full Access	On public bus route		none
17	Cook Lands	Limited	Shellfish Hatchery; On public bus route		none
18	Town 8-26 & 8-31	Unknown	On public bus route		none
19	SMF Nuovo	Full Access	On public bus route		none
20	Gay Head Moraine	Some Full Access; Some No Access	Trails; On public bus route		Hiking
21	Town 9-X & SMF Wisniewski	two parcels full access; one parcel no access	none		none
22	Town 9-X	two parcels full access; two parcel no access	none		none
23	SMF Egger	Full Access	On public bus route		none
24	Indian Burial Ground	No public access	On public bus route		none
25	Gay Head Cemetery	Full Access	Cemetery; On public bus route		space
26	SMF Lighthouse Rd	SMF Parcel - Full Access; Other - no access	On public bus route		none
27	SMF Lehman CR	No public access	none		none
28	SMF Leonard Preserve	Full Access	On public bus route		none
29	Town 5-59	Unknown	On public bus route		none
30	Dogfish Bar Beach Access	Full Access	none		none
31	Town 5-88	Unknown	none		none
32	Knapp Preserve	Full Access	none		none
33	SMF Eastman	Private parcel - no access; SMF parcels - full access	Trails		Hiking
34	Cranberry Lands	Limited	none		none
35	Menemsha Neck Preserve	Full Access	none		none
36	Menemsha Neck	Limited	none		none
37	Town 3-5	Unknown	none		none
38	Town 3-33	Unknown	none		none
39	Town 4-X	Full Access	On public bus route		none
40	Tribe 8-9	No public access	none		none
Total Acres Conserved:					701
Percentage within Town:					21%

The Vineyard is graced with private conservation organizations, both local (Sheriff's Meadow Foundation, Vineyard Conservation Society, Vineyard Open Land Foundation) and Mainland-based (Trustees of Reservations and The Nature Conservancy). Over the decades, the vision and dedication of these organizations has resulted in the successful protection of especially choice parts of the Island.

The continued implementation of the Martha's Vineyard Land Bank Commission illustrates the breadth of this appreciation among Islander's and citizens of each town. Established by the Commonwealth in 1986, the Land Bank uses a surcharge on each transfer of real estate for the purpose of acquiring, holding and managing land and interests in land, such as (a) land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas; (b) agricultural land; (c) forest land; (d) fresh and salt water marshes and other wetlands; (e) ocean and pond frontage; beaches, dunes, and adjoining backlands, to protect their natural and scenic resources; (f) land to protect scenic vistas; (g) land for nature or wildlife preserves; (h) easements for trails and for publicly owned lands; and (i) land for passive recreational use. The Land Bank has preserved over 3,400 acres, complementing the efforts of the other conservation groups. The Land Bank is an effective tool for towns to target and realize their open space objectives.

The following are the main publicly owned open spaces in Aquinnah:

- Lobsterville Beach – 18 acres (two linear miles) of beachfront owned by the Town and open to the public.
- West Basin Town Landings – Moorings for about two dozen boats with direct access to Menemsha Pond and its prime shellfish beds. A smaller access point is available at the end of Lobsterville Road.
- Philbin Beach – A six-acre south shore beach.
- Aquinnah Library Playground.
- Aquinnah Recreation Area – A small recreation site with one basketball court behind the fire station. The basketball facility was recently improved.
- The Martha's Vineyard Land Bank – This public land trust holds four properties in Aquinnah:
 - 1) Aquinnah Headlands Preserve (50.8 acres),
 - 2) Gay Head Moraine (103.2 acres),
 - 3) Toad Rock Preserve (14.6 acres),
 - 4) Menemsha Rock Preserve (12.8 acres),
- Sheriff's Meadow Foundation – This private conservation organization owns almost 88 acres in Aquinnah:
 - Leonard Estate, Lighthouse Road (13.3 acres),
 - Eastman property open to the public, Menemsha Pond (7.2 acres),
 - Various other smaller and unconnected parcels.
- Vineyard Conservation Society – This non-profit conservation organization has conserved 354

acres in Aquinnah, including the Moshup Trail Sanctuary:

- VCS Fee Ownership Total: 55.87 acres
- VCS Conservation Restrictions: 10.17 acres
- Tribal Lands – The following are held by the Town as common lands and deeded to the Wampanoag Tribe as open space and conservation lands (excludes 190 acres of Tribal land used for community development):
 - Cranberry Lands, Menemsha Neck (228 acres),
 - Clay Cliffs (32.8 acres),
 - Herring Creek, between Squibnocket and Menemsha Ponds.
- Aquinnah Lighthouse, United States of America – (1.1 acre)
- Aquinnah former Town Landfill – (4 acres)
- Other permanently protected Sanctuary lands were transferred to the Town as part of the EOEEA

The following are the main privately held properties:

- Agricultural Lands – two parcels totaling 12 acres under Chapter 61 protection in Aquinnah.
- Kennedy Estate – approximately 300 acres, the largest singly owned piece of land in Aquinnah other than Wampanoag Tribal lands; it is completely private but its location and quality make it geographically and ecologically an important open space resource to the town.

The Aquinnah Circle Cultural District is also a key feature in the Town. The designation by the Massachusetts Cultural Council was the result of a unique collaboration between the Town, Tribe, and several partner organizations. The MCC started the Massachusetts Cultural District Initiative in 2010, to stimulate new arts and cultural activity in towns as well as attract creative business to the district areas. A Cultural District is a specific area in a town that has a concentration of cultural facilities, activities and assets.

The ACCD is home to the Gay Head Cliffs Lookout, Gay Head Light, Aquinnah Cultural Center, numerous Wampanoag tribal member-owned restaurants & retail shops featuring local arts & cuisine, beautiful parks for picnicking, and hiking trails to explore and access the nearby Moshup Beach. The Town and Tribe will use the Aquinnah Circle's new designation to provide cultural and economic benefit while keeping its natural beauty and integrity intact.

Agricultural Land

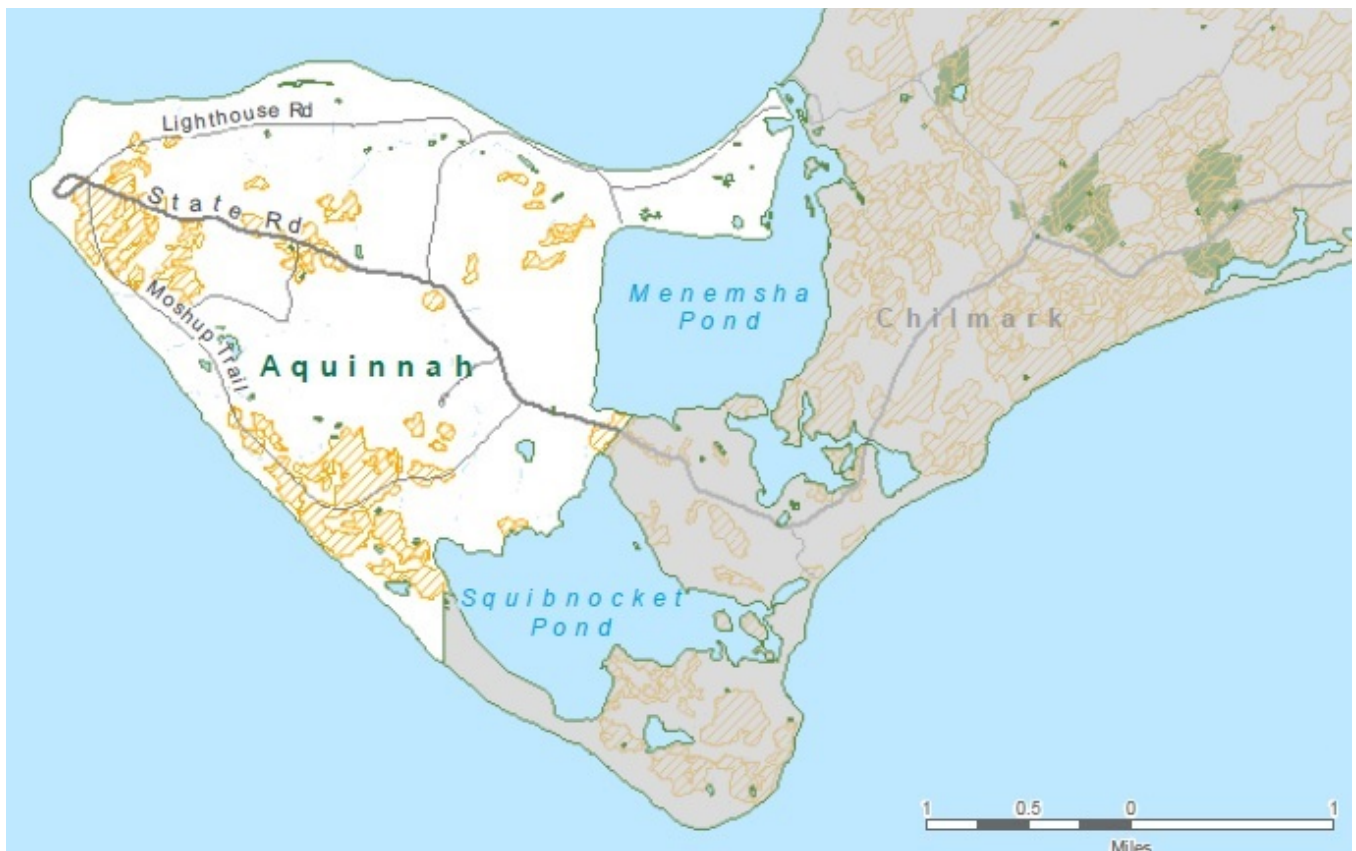
Although representing just a fraction of the land from previous generations, many areas of the Vineyard are still strongly associated with farming. Farming represents scenic, economic, and cultural sensibilities. The selection of these criteria reflects the desire to preserve the remaining working farms and to provide for the possibility from prime agricultural land to be returned to farming.



Natural Resources Conservation Service/MassGIS 2003
and West Tisbury Steering Committee

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Agricultural Land in Aquinnah		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Working	20	0
Prime Agricultural	6	395

Source: Farms - MassGIS (1999 ground cover) and MVC 2004



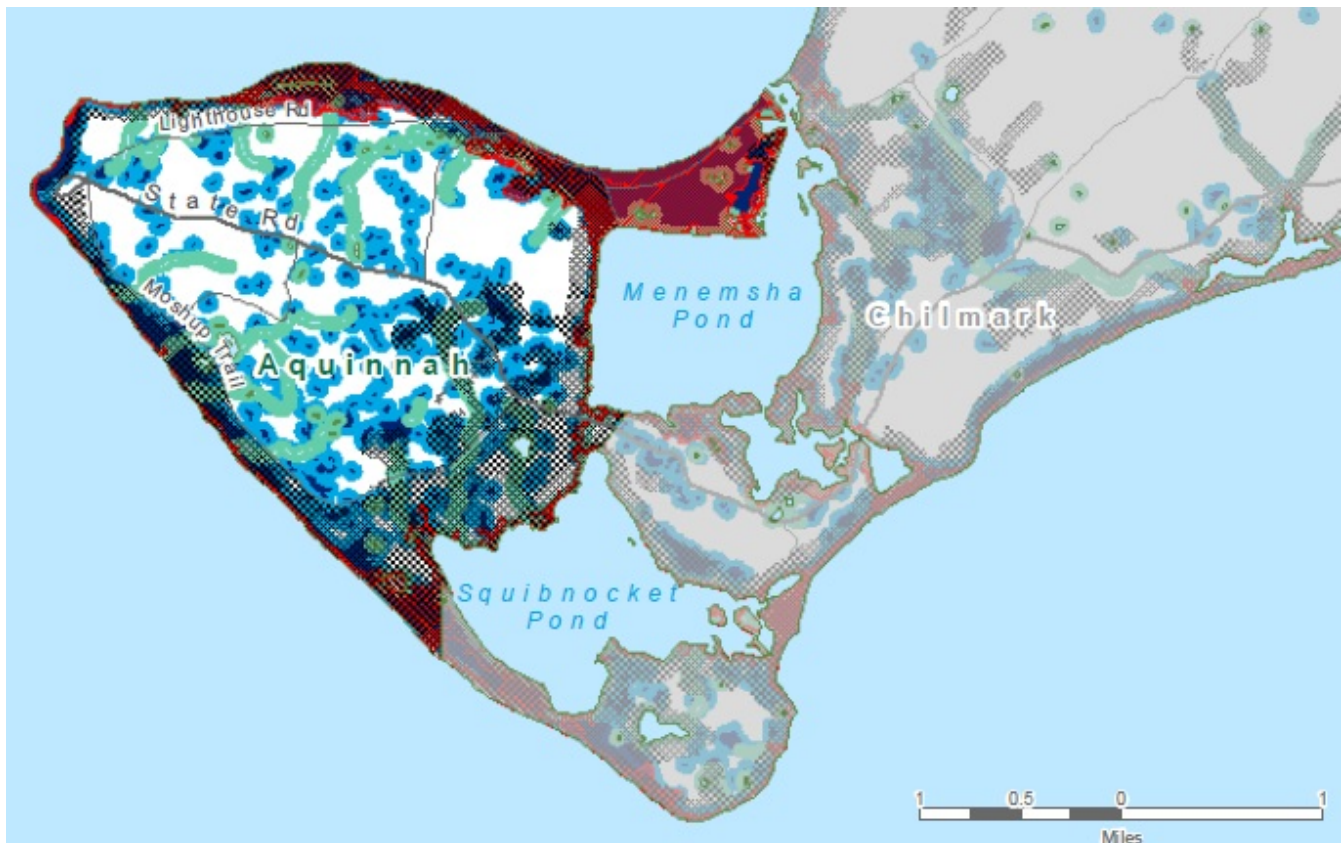
Water Resources - Coastal and Surface Water

The presence of the ocean, ponds or streams makes land more desirable for preservation as open space, both from ecological (water quality, habitat) and cultural (scenic, recreational) perspectives. Wetlands may not be built on, but they and the adjacent areas also offer resources of interest for preservation of open space and natural resources. Similar considerations apply to ponds and streams and their adjacent areas. The Coastal District of Critical Planning Concern identifies the natural areas along the sea's edge, great ponds and their tributaries. Higher weighting was given to the criteria that were most restrictive to development.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Coastal and Surface Water Resources		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Wetlands	20	751
Within 200' of wetlands	6	3,134
Flood Hazard Area	10	558
Coastal DCPC	8	1,225
Surface water	20	636
Within 200' of surface water	6	905



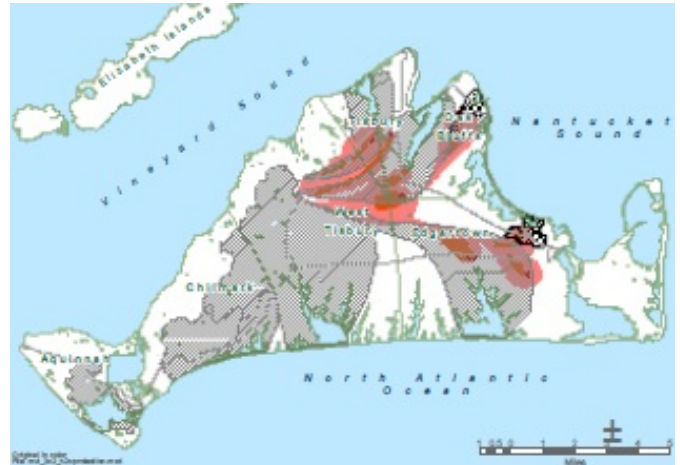
Source: DEP/MassGIS 2003; FEMA/MassGIS 1997;
MAPC 2000; MassGIS 2003



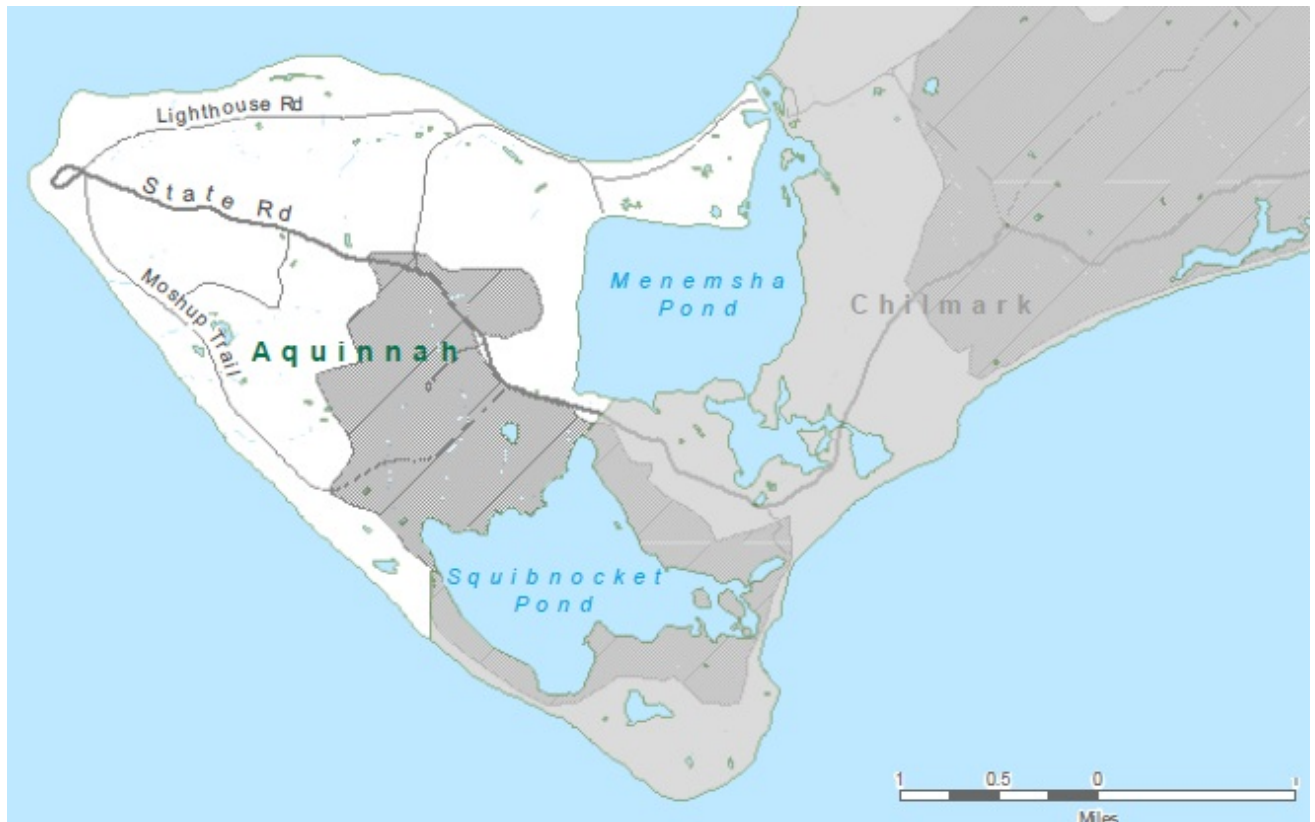
Water Resources - Areas of Protection

Development places stress on groundwater resources and, ideally, would be located outside of areas highly sensitive to groundwater contamination. Preserving lands within the areas of protection of public wells - Zone I, operational zone of influence, and Zone II - protects the public health, as well as public investment in infrastructure. The operational zones of influence were determined by the MVC as areas more likely to infiltrate to groundwater than the rest of Zone II. The vitality of the Island's great ponds also affects human health, but also involves habitat, cultural, scenic and recreational values. Identified are the pond watershed that are already at or beyond nitrogen limits, or are projected to reach those limits.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability Groundwater Resource Protection		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
 Public well – Zone	20	0
 Public well – operational zone of influence	6	0
 Public well – Zone II	4	0
 Pond watershed at or beyond nitrogen limit	6	811
 Pond watershed projected to reach nitrogen limit	4	0



Source: DEP/MassGIS 2003; MVC 2003

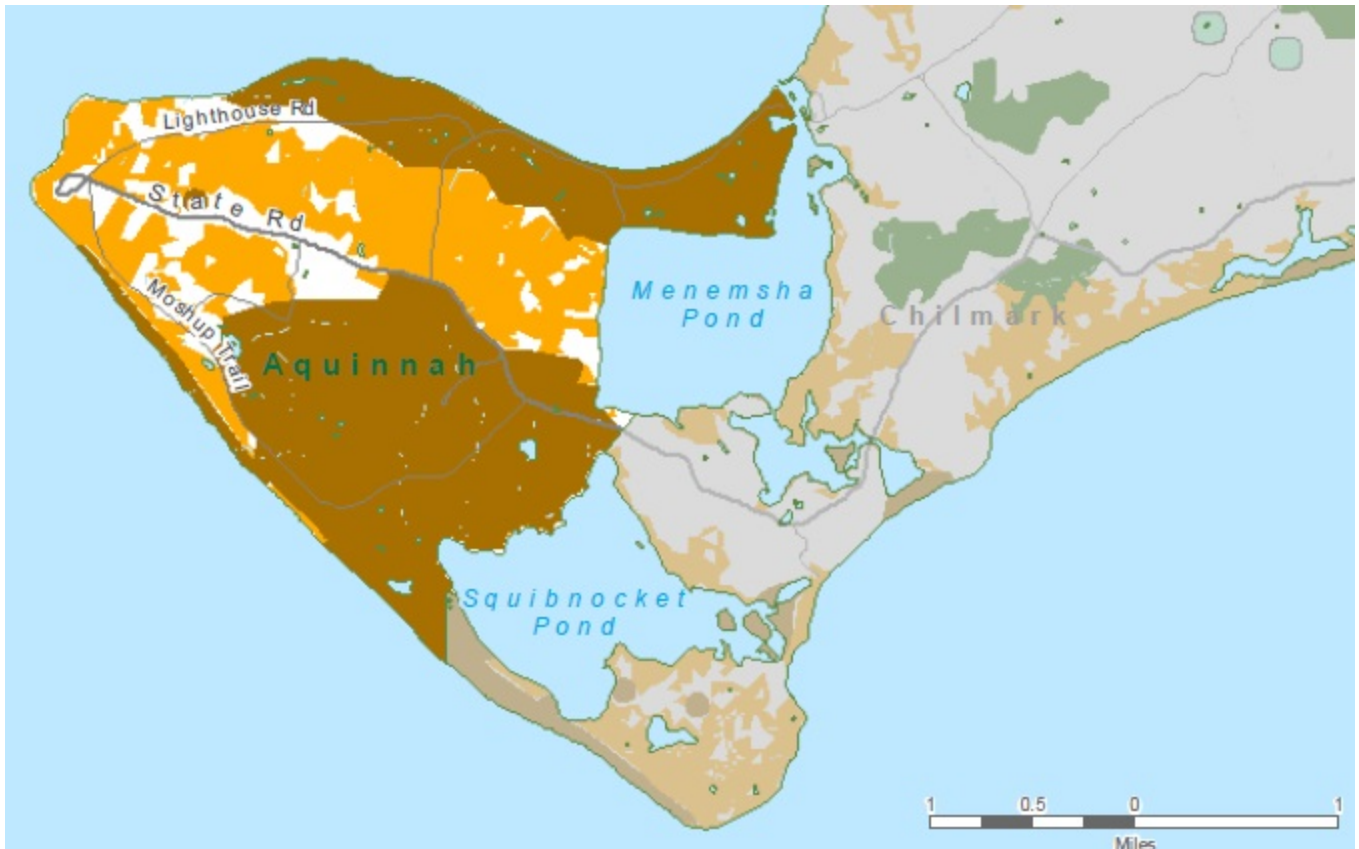


Habitat and Woodlands

Martha's Vineyard is the site of some globally important habitats, such as the distinctive sandplains. This is evident from the extent of significant "core" and supporting habitat. In addition, large unfragmented woodlands not already included in the habitat criteria are identified because they may still be potentially important open spaces from a scenic or recreational standpoint. Core and Supporting Habitat are areas identified by the Commonwealth that provide habitat for several species that are Endangered, Threatened, or are of Special Concern, including the Harrier Hawk and various types of moths.

Criteria for Open Space Suitability		
Habitat and Woodlands in Aquinnah		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Core Habitat	10	1,958
Supporting Habitat	6	1,031
Additional Unfragmented Woodland (50+ acres)	8	0
Additional Unfragmented Woodland (10-50 acres)	4	0

Sources: Habitat - Natural Heritage/MassGIS 2002
Woodland - MacConnell 1999 ground cover



Scenic/Cultural

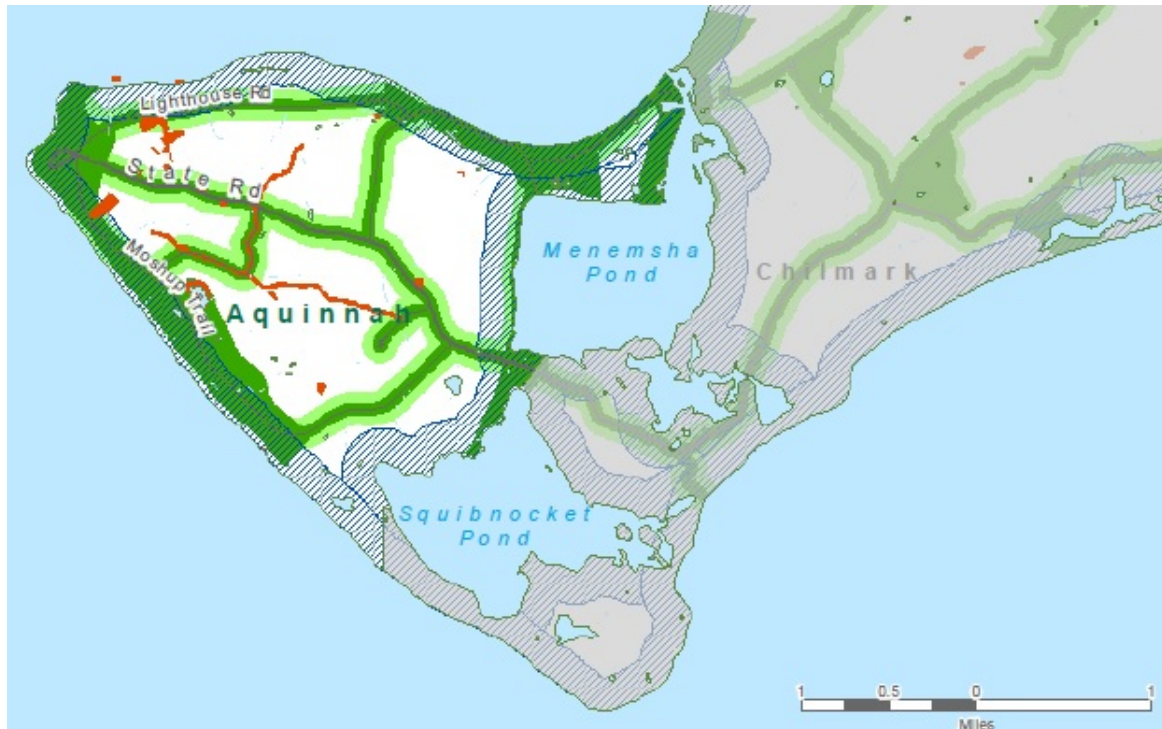
The character of the Island is derived by how it looks from public spaces, including major roads and the water. A preliminary identification of views from the main Island roads includes:

- Wooded areas within 200' from roads as well as adjacent fields and ponds;
- Larger vistas from public overlooks and particularly scenic roads and,
- The axis of view corridors at the ends of certain roads.

A secondary buffer area, generally an additional 300' from roads, was also identified as was the coastal viewshed made up of land within 1,000' from the coast and other navigable waters. Also included are cultural landscapes that Towns have previously designated as Special Places. This analysis will likely be subject to future refinement by the Towns and the MVC. Another issue facing the Town is the preservation of viewsheds due to vegetation growth, especially from trees that are not regularly maintained.


Criteria for Open Space Suitability Scenic/Cultural in Aquinnah		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
Primary Vista/Viewshed	20	1,098
Secondary Vista/Viewshed	4	585
Cultural Landscape	20	88
1000' from Coast/Great Pond	6	1,287

Sources: Viewsheds- MVC/Steering Committees 2004
Cultural Landscapes - Town DCPCs/MVC 2004



Recreation and Access

In addition to their indispensable role of buffering the Island (and Great Ponds) from the sea, beaches are, understandably, the most used recreational spaces on the Vineyard. Public access to beaches varies greatly among towns but is generally less available to the public Up-Island (where there are also fewer people). Other existing recreational areas, such as golf courses and ball fields should be mapped in the future. Mapping the bike paths and walking trails would help identify gaps in the town and Island-wide network of trails and paths.

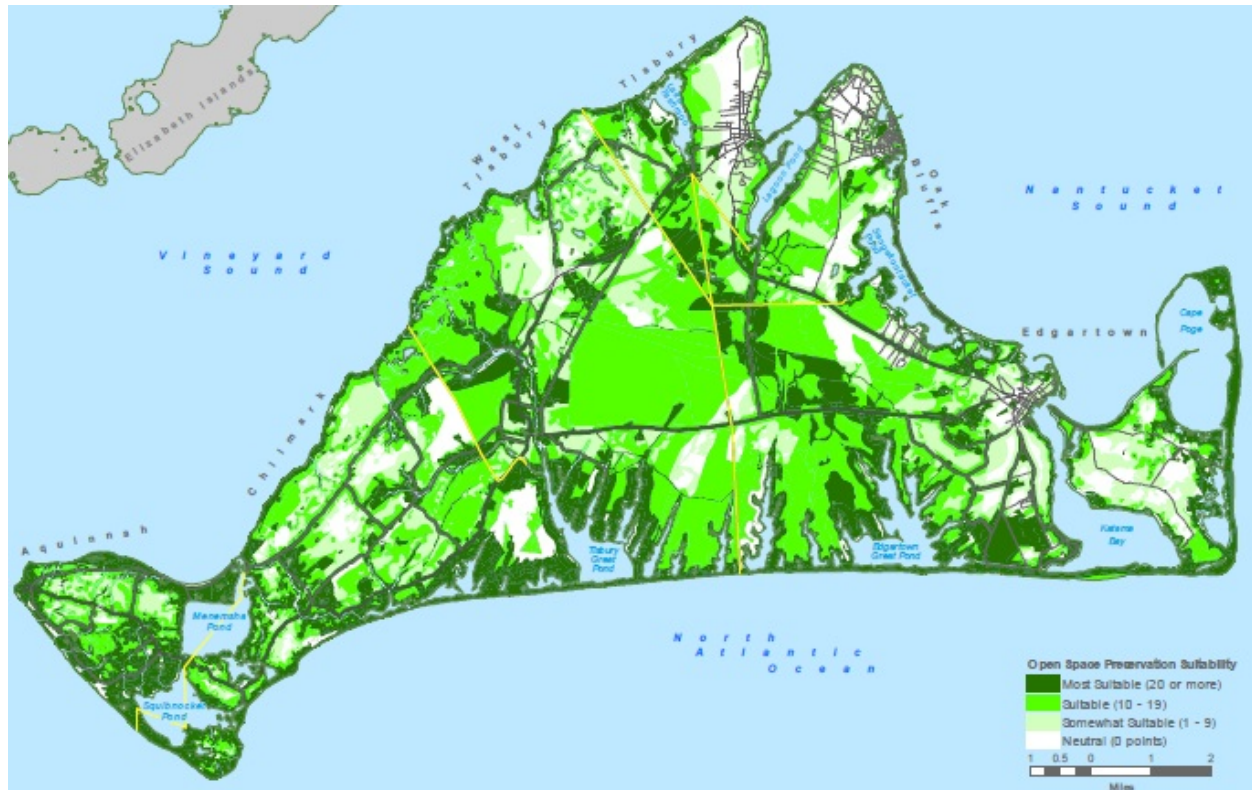
Criteria for Open Space Suitability Recreation and Access in Aquinnah		
Criterion	Points	Area (acres)
 Beach	20	107

Source: MacConnell 1999 ground cover



Open Space and Natural Resources Suitability Map

The map below shows the overall suitability of land for preservation of open space and natural resources based on a combination of the criteria described in this section. Land across the Island was divided into four categories based on the total ‘points’ accumulated from all the mapped features. The higher intensity of color or shading reflects a higher degree of suitability, according to the criteria measured and the weighting of values.



On Martha's Vineyard as a whole, the map indicates that lands close to the ocean are particularly important to preserve as open space. In general, there is a narrow beach or bluff that serves as storm damage prevention for the interior wetlands and built areas, but also as recreation, scenic vistas, and in some cases, habitat. Serving a variety of functions, these areas tend to score highly when points are summed. On the map below, these areas tend to appear as colored the darkest green, the equivalent of a high score. These shore areas form a relatively narrow fringe, extensive in total area only because they surround the entire Island. The scenic vistas afforded by the rural roads constitute another narrowly focused resource, extensive in total area only because of the extensive length of this grid network. Working farms and prime agricultural soils constitute very little of the total area of the Island. Much more extensive in area are the habitat and water

resource areas. Core habitat, primarily in the form of the globally rare sandplain grassland, covers much of the total area of the Island. The watersheds of the great ponds cover large land areas. Many of the great ponds are at or near their nitrogen loading limits, and lands within those watersheds are targeted for open space protection. Zones of contribution for public water supplies cover large areas of lands in the down-Island towns and in West Tisbury, although that town does not pump for its own municipal service.

Within Aquinnah, the lands that emerge as having the highest suitability for open space preservation appear as thin ribbons of beach; for scenic values, recreation and flood protection; and as thin ribbons of road, for the scenic vistas afforded by those rural ways. One larger area is the watershed of Squibnocket Pond, a restricted waterway with limited flushing. There is no public water supply for Aquinnah, and therefore no accommodation for zones of influence.

Open Space and Natural Resource Protection Suitability

	Martha's Vineyard (% of Island)	Aquinnah (% of Town)
Most Suitable	23,722 acres (40.4%)	2,359 acres (67.4%)
Suitable	20,267 acres (34.5%)	732 acres (20.9%)
Somewhat Suitable	9,500 acres (16.2%)	302 acres (8.7%)
Neutral	5,205 acres (8.9%)	102 acres (2.9%)

It bears repeating that in Aquinnah, as on all of Martha's Vineyard, virtually all land has some degree of suitability for open space preservation - whether for environmental, health, economic or cultural reasons. Due to the scarcity and extraordinary cost of land on the Vineyard, the decision to preserve a piece of land will likely be based far more on opportunity than on suitability; in other words, if a parcel of land becomes available, it might well be worth preserving as open space, even if it has not rated highly in this suitability analysis.

Public Participation

The Town conducted several public meetings on Open Space. The initial meetings were organizational to determine how a plan might be compiled and completed. It was determined that a survey would be useful to determine resident opinions on open space issues.

In June 2018, the Town produced a survey of residents regarding Town Open Space and Recreational Facilities. 65 persons responded, for a response rate over 10% of the Town's permanent population. If only the permanent residents are counted, the survey still exceeded 5% of the total population. Results and commentary are discussed below.

1. Survey respondents were mostly of working age. 66% of the respondents were between the ages of 25 and 64. 33% were 65 and over. There was only 1 respondent under 25.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
12 or younger	0.00%	0
13 to 18	0.00%	0
19 to 25	1.54%	1
26 to 39	10.77%	7
40 to 54	24.62%	16
55 to 65	29.23%	19
66 to 80	33.85%	22
over 80	0.00%	0
TOTAL		65

2. Over half (55%) of the respondents were female.
3. Half of the responses were year-round residents of Aquinnah. Over 66% of the respondents were year-round residents of Martha's Vineyard.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Year-round Aquinnah resident	50.77%	33
Seasonal Aquinnah resident	24.62%	16
Year-round Island resident	13.85%	9
Seasonal Island visitor or resident	10.77%	7
TOTAL		65

4. 2/3 of the respondents have children or grandchildren who use parks.

5. Respondents were asked how important it was to preserve open space, specifically about five types of categories. Respondents found it was important or very important to save each. The categories were:

Walking trails, Places of historic or cultural value, Farms and farmland, Open space that meets water and conservation needs, Scenic views, Active recreational sites, and Water access.

	VERY IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	OF NO IMPORTANCE	TOTAL RESPONDENTS
Walking trails	87.30% 55	9.52% 6	3.17% 2	63
Places of historical and and cultural value	81.54% 53	18.46% 12	0.00% 0	65
Fields and farmland	67.74% 42	32.26% 20	1.61% 1	62
Open space that meets water and conservation needs	71.88% 46	23.44% 15	4.69% 3	64
Scenic views	79.69% 51	18.75% 12	1.56% 1	64
Active recreational sites	64.06% 41	31.25% 20	4.69% 3	64
Access to water for swimming; for fishing/shellfishing; for boating; for sunbathing	89.23% 58	7.69% 5	3.08% 2	65

6. Respondents were asked how often that they used facilities. Two facilities were rated as never or rarely being used. Over 80% stated that they rarely or never used the Town center playground and basketball court. Over 80% also rarely or never used the North Bluff Trail. Conversely, respondents indicated that they used the Aquinnah Circle often (90% used it monthly or more). The West Basin also gathered responses indicating it is also used extensively.

	DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	RARELY	NEVER	TOTAL
Cliffs overlook area	10.94% 7	46.88% 30	29.69% 19	12.50% 8	0.00% 0	64
Town center playground and basketball court	0.00% 0	10.77% 7	9.23% 6	41.54% 27	38.46% 25	65
Aquinnah Circle	18.46% 12	47.69% 31	24.62% 16	6.15% 4	3.08% 2	65
Lighthouse Park	6.25% 4	18.75% 12	39.06% 25	32.81% 21	3.13% 2	64
Gay Head Moraine Trail	4.84% 3	27.42% 17	30.65% 19	24.19% 15	12.90% 8	62
North Bluffs Trail	0.00% 0	13.11% 8	31.15% 19	32.79% 20	22.95% 14	61
Toad Rock Trail	7.94% 5	20.63% 13	25.40% 16	31.75% 20	14.29% 9	63
West Basin	23.08% 15	36.92% 24	20.00% 13	20.00% 13	0.00% 0	65
Aquinnah Cultural Center	1.54% 1	12.31% 8	26.15% 17	41.54% 27	18.46% 12	65
Moshup Beach Trail	0.00% 0	25.00% 6	45.83% 11	25.00% 6	4.17% 1	24

7. Among beach areas used by residents each year, Lobsterville Beach scored highest. Lobsterville beach is used by residents often (50% at least once monthly). Philbin Beach also scored highly.

	DAILY	WEEKLY	MONTHLY	ANNUALLY	NEVER	TOTAL
Philbin Beach	21.88% 14	28.13% 18	10.94% 7	25.00% 16	14.06% 9	64
Herring Creek	3.17% 2	25.40% 16	17.46% 11	33.33% 21	20.63% 13	63
Red Beach	17.19% 11	32.81% 21	10.94% 7	23.44% 15	15.63% 10	64
Lobsterville Beach	20.00% 13	41.54% 27	10.77% 7	23.08% 15	4.62% 3	65
Moshup Beach (Land Bank)	0.00% 0	21.74% 5	30.43% 7	39.13% 9	8.70% 2	23

8. Residents are generally satisfied, but not very satisfied, with Town recreational facilities; however residents are not satisfied with recreation opportunities for young adults and seniors.

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	NOT SATISFIED	TOTAL
The overall cleanliness of Town parks and recreational facilities	27.69% 18	55.38% 36	16.92% 11	65
Parking access at Town parks and recreational facilities	26.56% 17	43.75% 28	29.69% 19	64
Play areas for small children to play in Town	9.52% 6	38.10% 24	52.38% 33	63
Recreation facilities for Young Adults	9.68% 6	25.81% 16	64.52% 40	62
Recreation facilities for Seniors	10.94% 7	31.25% 20	57.81% 37	64
Mooring facilities for Boaters	16.67% 10	56.67% 34	26.67% 16	60

9. Residents felt that increased awareness, improved accessibility, safer bicycle and increased accessibility would results in increased use of Town facilities.

	INCREASE YOUR USE	NO DIFFERENCE	TOTAL
Improved dockage for boaters	29.69% 19	70.31% 45	64
Increased awareness of resources	69.23% 45	30.77% 20	65
Improved accessibility at facilities	58.46% 38	41.54% 27	65
Safer bicycle connections	57.81% 37	42.19% 27	64
Transit Bus Access	43.55% 27	56.45% 35	62
Improved vehicular access and parking	56.92% 37	43.08% 28	65

10. Respondents were asked to rate the top five recreation resources needed. Bike trails was the top selection as 59.38% of the respondents indicated their support for more bike trails. Other highly rated facilities included children's play areas, interconnected walking trails and hiking trails. Respondents were not interested in active recreational facilities and indicated their indifference to improvement of these facilities. Improvements to volleyball courts, softball fields, soccer fields and baseball fields scored the lowest among resources needed.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Basketball courts	28.13%	18
Baseball fields	14.06%	9
Bike trails	59.38%	38
Children's play areas	56.25%	36
Family picnic areas	39.06%	25
Fitness trails	20.31%	13
Hiking trails	42.19%	27
Interconnected walking trails	53.13%	34
Local neighborhood parks	21.88%	14
Swimming beach	39.06%	25
Small boat access	28.13%	18
Small boat/dinghy storage	20.31%	13
Soccer fields	9.38%	6
Softball fields	10.94%	7
Tennis courts	21.88%	14
Volleyball courts	6.25%	4
Total Respondents: 64		

11. Respondents were asked to rate their Top 3 improvement scenarios to enhance passive recreation opportunities in the Town. Events at the circle was the dominant choice as more than 75% indicated their support for improvement in this area. When combined with support for additional seating areas in the Circle, residents value this location. Respondent also recognized that the Tribe and town need to work together to preserve and utilize open space. Finally, respondents also desired additional Community events such as annual picnic, summer camp, boating and swimming programs.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bathroom access in the Circle	37.50%	24
Seating areas in the Circle	42.19%	27
Bathroom access on the beaches	23.44%	15
Seating areas on the beaches	4.69%	3
Shade/rain shelters	32.81%	21
Directions/informational signs/kiosks	23.44%	15
More picnic facilities	12.50%	8
Improved ADA access	12.50%	8
Working relationship with the Tribe and Natural Resources Department	46.88%	30
Events at the Circle	50.00%	32
Community events: such as an annual picnic, summer camp, boating and swimming programs, social events and/or trail walks	45.31%	29
Total Respondents: 64		

12. Respondents desired focus on the improvement of existing properties and capital improvement planning to enhance the towns ability to maintain and steward open space

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Capital improvement planning	49.21%	31
Prepare an inventory, and develop plans for individual parks	41.27%	26
Focus on existing properties, rather than adding additional lands and facilities	61.90%	39
Volunteer opportunities	26.98%	17
Total Respondents: 63		

13. Finally, residents Support the continued use of CPA to improve open space and recreation facilities.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Participate in open space, parks, and recreation planning	50.00%	29
Volunteer to work on a specific project at one of the Town parks	43.10%	25
Volunteer to participate in a park clean-up day	46.55%	27
Support the continued use of Community Preservation Funds for improvements	60.34%	35
Total Respondents: 58		

The following comments were also received:

6	Much needed improvements to the cliff shop area including cleaning and ridding area of poison ivy. Brush cutting to enhance views of the sound. Improved seating areas for comfort and convenience of visitors and local residents. Covered areas for inclement weather. Ensuring that shops are open and operating to contribute to the vitality of the purpose. (When shops are closed visitors stop coming)
7	New restrooms are desperately needed
8	i'm not really sure what question 12 was looking for. thanks for taking time to get input on this survey.
9	Shade for the shop patrons on the circle
10	I appreciate Aquinnah!
11	This survey illustrates how little you understand about our town.
12	Resident category-- island home owner coming in throughout the year more than seasonal but not official resident
13	You did not include the West Basin Beach in your list of beaches, nor did you mention the Gay Head Moraine in your list of "walks." It might have been helpful to describe the location of the various walks that were mentioned - they don't match the description of walks in "Walking Trails of Martha's Vineyard," so I wasn't sure which ones they were.
14	I am very much against any development of the circle that would bring concerts with loud amplified music.
15	Zoning should be more business friendly to allow a small convenience store/farmers market
16	Aquinnah' natural beauty should be maintained/ enhanced
17	I think the town needs a modest facility for lodging of guests and tourists. The town needs to develop cultural programming that will bring tourists to town. ie. yoga retreats on the beach infused with Native American spirituality, Hiking trails with Native American guides and storytellers, children's programming (weekly summer camps) that will introduce tourists to the Native American culture, history and language
18	I believe expanded dockage at West Basin would be beneficial to Aquinnah residents
19	Thanks

#	RESPONSES
1	Yes, I am extremely disappointed in the fact that the town offers NOTHING for children- in the summer as well as year-round. There are no classes, no events, no facilities, nothing. The town hall should be open as a play-space for children to have classes/homework clubs/or just a hang out place. The basketball courts are a mess. The town of Edgartown just sent out a flyer with all of their parks and rec opportunities for the summer. They have swim lessons, basketball clinics, tennis lessons, etc. They also have a REC CENTER. Aquinnah kids should NOT have to ride a bus for an hour to get to the boys and girls club...especially in the winter when they can't even get home because the VTA doesn't run. Investing resources to help children survive and develop to their full potential is, first and foremost, a moral imperative. But investing in children is also important on practical grounds. It yields positive benefits to economies and societies. Since the foundation of an individual's health and well-being is laid in early childhood, the most opportune time to break the cycle of poverty, or prevent it from beginning, is during that time. Investments in children are increasingly seen as one of best and most valuable long-term investments we can make. You could have volunteers hold classes in painting, weaving, sports, reading, writing, etc. It is a shame that this has gone on so long.
2	Promoting Rare species surveys conducted with volunteers & con com - emphasize wild nature- passive recreation- community efforts to assess invasive species- dogfish bar barrier beach wetland area in oxcart rd could be reduced by members of rd association & other volunteers- Tribe does this w planting along lobsterville. WQ & shellfish education they pamphlets and low key signs. More engagement with community to promotes land conservation. We rarely talk about this at ATM.
3	I would give first priority to improvement of the Circle.
4	Aquinnah has made great steps with land conservation, but still more to do with our historic, recreational and cultural resources. Enhancing Aquinnah Circle and Aquinnah's Town Hall campus would focus these efforts on our two main gathering places. To make these efforts in partnership with the Tribe whenever possible will generate the most significant results, as well as to strengthen our resolve, our community bonds, and our unique history and trajectory.
5	I work at the parking lots in the summer -- do not have a "vested interest" in the parks & recreation aspect particularly. But, I do love Aquinnah & consider it a special place and a special resource. There is a lack of connection between "no dogs at Philbin" and the fact that people still sneak them on. People in AQ do not really take to "rules". However, you did not mention dogs in the survey and LOTS of people like to bring their dog with them on all recreational activities. Also, people totally disregard the "no climbing on the dunes" policy -- which I thought was just common courtesy in this day & age. It is primarily YEAR-ROUNDERS who climb & slide on the dunes. :(A major Active recreational activity is surfing -- you didn't mention that either. I believe there are people who would like to access the shore for that purpose. There is some "tension" between the desire to raise funds via the parking lot and even some of the questions in this survey. The idea of expanding public use at the circle means that people will need to park. A thorough discussion of the fee structure and the ebb & flow of the season might be useful. Also, the fact that it is HARD to find (good, honest) people to work -- that will continue to be a concern in years to come. So, be careful about expanding services . . . which I am going to suggest in my next paragraph anyway! I would like to see a jitney service developed for the summer -- perhaps utilizing just a couple of electric golf carts or something. It could be used to transport people & beach gear from the parking lot to the Moshup Beach entrance -- which is a longer walk than you might think. It might also be useful to develop a pick-up route for those going to Philbin -- perhaps cut down on the # of cars who park. How much to charge for this would need consideration -- as well as finding people to drive. Finally -- as already mentioned, the restrooms need to be blown up and built new. Get a waiver so low-flow toilets aren't installed -- each toilet requires a minimum of 3 flushes at the moment. I believe this is top on the priority list. The location is tricky -- keep it where the current building is or have two buildings? One set near the shops, another near the beach. I don't know, but this issue should not be allowed to go unaddressed for another year . . . I hope you dont regret asking if there was anything else I wanted to add . . .

Following the completion of the survey, a public meeting was held on June 13, 2018 to discuss the results and determine a vision moving forward. The attendees discussed the survey results and identified several additional priorities, including:

1. Increased walking trails
2. Improving under-utilized resources
 - a. Kettle Pond
 - b. Ramp at Red Beach
 - c. Herring Creek facility
3. Improved ADA Accessibility

On July 2, 2018, the Aquinnah Board of Selectmen accepted the Draft Plan after some discussion, and voted to forward such to the State for certification review (letter included).

5 year Goals and Objectives

The following represents the communities 5 year plan. The plan is addressed in several goals and the implementing policies.

Goal 1. Walking Trails – The Town and other entities seek to provide additional walking and other trails. Focus will be on the connection between other trails and large areas of land. Attention will be paid to develop existing trails for bicycle access.

- Plan and develop a cross town coast to coast pedestrian trail. Other trails may connect to this primary route.

Goal 2. The Circle is an important feature to both the Town and Tribe and should be focused on and enhanced.

Objectives

- The Town shall seek to improve the overlook, shop and circle features to include bathrooms and to improve the accessibility for disabled visitors and residents.
- There should be enhanced connection to the Circle from paths and trails.

Goal 3. Support active recreational pursuits for Aquinnah residents.

Objectives:

- Locate and work to purchase additional land for active recreation in the Town. Existing playground and active recreational facilities should be improved. Elderly and young adults are not utilizing such facilities because they are in disrepair and have not been upgraded.

- Increase accessibility and make sites more compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Utilize ramps and other mechanisms to provide beach access.

Goal 4. Provide adequate land permanently dedicated for conservation, recreation & educational use for present and future residents and visitors of Aquinnah. Identify and protect rare wildlife habitats.

Objectives:

- Promote permanent conservation restrictions, easements or gifts of important ecological resources within the town.
- Review the building permit allocation system, and determine its effectiveness.
- Where necessary, purchase open space with town appropriations or other funds.

Goal 5. Protect the abundant & pristine ponds, stream, fresh and salt marshes, bogs & other wetlands and water resources within the town that sustain the shellfish industry, provide wildlife habitat and a base for the recreational tourist industry in the town.

Objectives:

- Work closely with the Tribe, island non-profit groups & private landowners to achieve maximum protection of key wetland resource areas and habitats through acquisition and appropriate regulations.
- Provide vigorous enforcement of the Wetland Protection Act (Ch. 131:40) & the Coastal Wetland Restriction Act (Ch. 130:105) and the local wetlands bylaw.
- Work with various public and private parties to decrease the levels of nitrogen reaching Aquinnah estuaries.

Goal 6: Protect the magnificent vistas and extraordinary ecological diversity of the Moshup Trail area.

Objective:

- Town Boards will work cooperatively among themselves and with Tribal Council, Island non-profit conservation groups, State agencies, Martha's Vineyard Land Bank, and the Martha's Vineyard Commission to assure maximum protection of this vital economic, recreational and ecological resource.
- The Town shall develop a cooperative public private program to preserve viewshed by regularly maintaining/pruning back vegetation that blocks views.

Goal 7: Balance the use of land especially suited for agriculture and forestry with the objectives of protecting groundwater and scenic values.

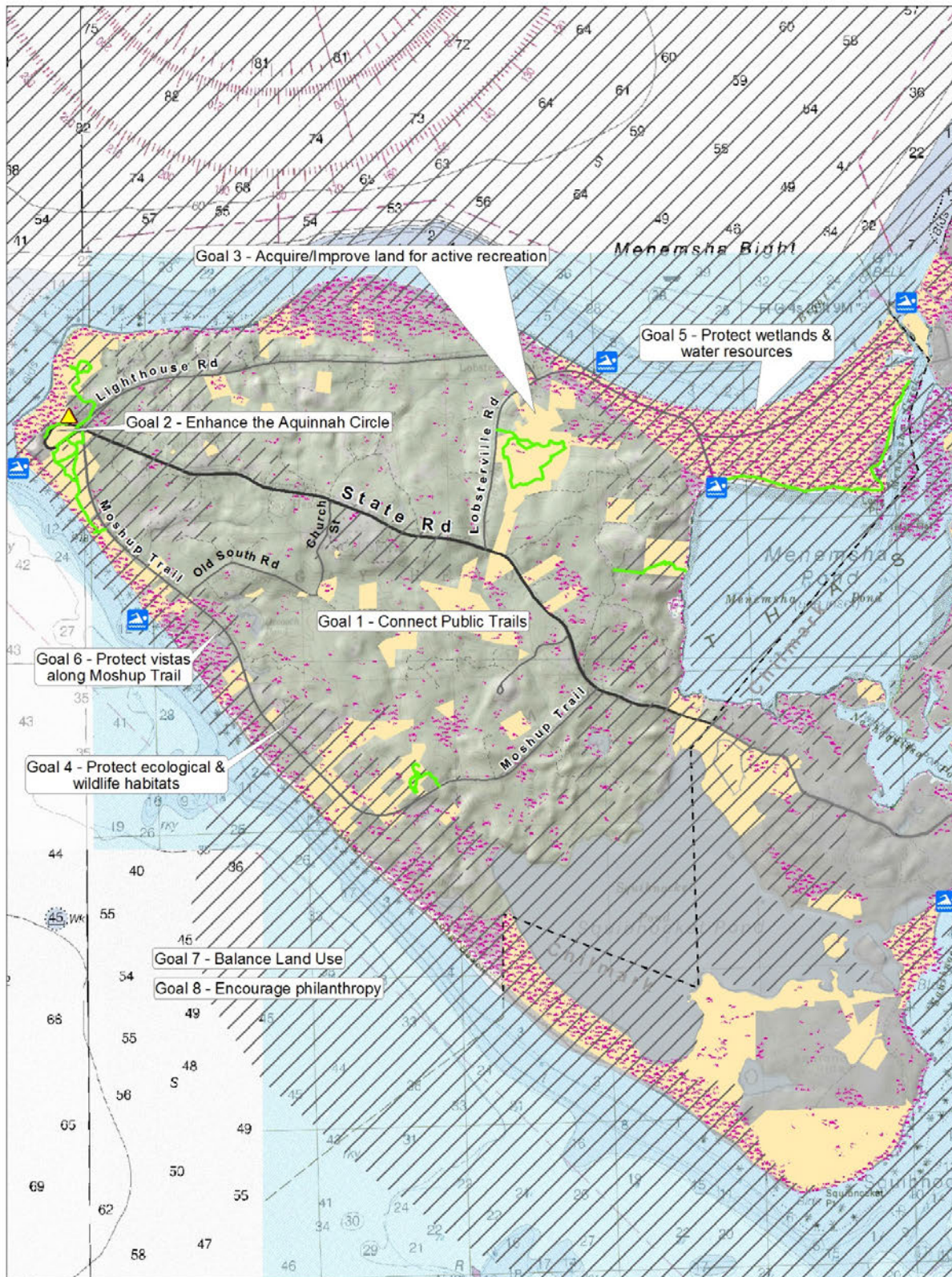
Objectives:

- Identify appropriate land for agriculture in consideration of the objective of protecting groundwater quality. Where appropriate, promote the use of incentives such as Chapter 61A tax abatement.
- Promote selective cutting for woodland management.

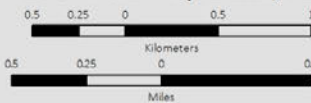
Goal 8: Encourage landowners and visitors to assist Town in its preservation efforts through CPA funding and philanthropy.

Objective:

- Establish a mechanism whereby monetary donations can be collected for the express purpose of land purchase similar to the establishment of the Permanent Endowment of the Martha's Vineyard fund.
- Continue to focus on CPA funding for active and passive recreation uses



Action Plan - Aquinnah, MA



- Lighthouse
- Beach
- NHESP Priority Habitats of Rare Species
- Wetlands
- Conservation Land

DISCLAIMER:
Data provided are for planning purpose only. The data are not adequate for boundary determination or regulatory interpretation. The MVC cannot be responsible for how these data are used or interpreted by the end user.



Maps prepared for the Town of Aquinnah by the Martha's Vineyard Commission for the town's Open Space Report.

Compiled By: MVC, CL Seidel, 7/6/18
Data: Town Boundary - MVC/MassGIS 2005;
MVC/MassGIS 2005; Topo - USGS/MassGIS mid 70s;
Nautical Chart - NOAA/MassGIS early 2000s;
Lighthouse - MVC 2014; Beaches - MVC 2014;
Habitat - NHESP 2017; Wetlands - MassDEP 2009;
Conserved Land - MVC & MV
Island Conservation Partnership - 2018
Projection: Stateplane, MA Mainland, NAD83, m
File: c:\s_aqu_OpenSpace_Rpt; aqu_os_Actions.mxd
Original in color on 11x17 paper

