

MOHAWK TRAIL WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP –  
IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS  
ENV 21DCS 04

Heath – Catamount  
Public Land Corridor Project  
**TOWN OF HEATH**  
MASSACHUSETTS



Submitted by the Heath Parks & Rec Committee

Town of Heath

1 East Main Street

Heath, MA 01346

Grant Project Contacts:

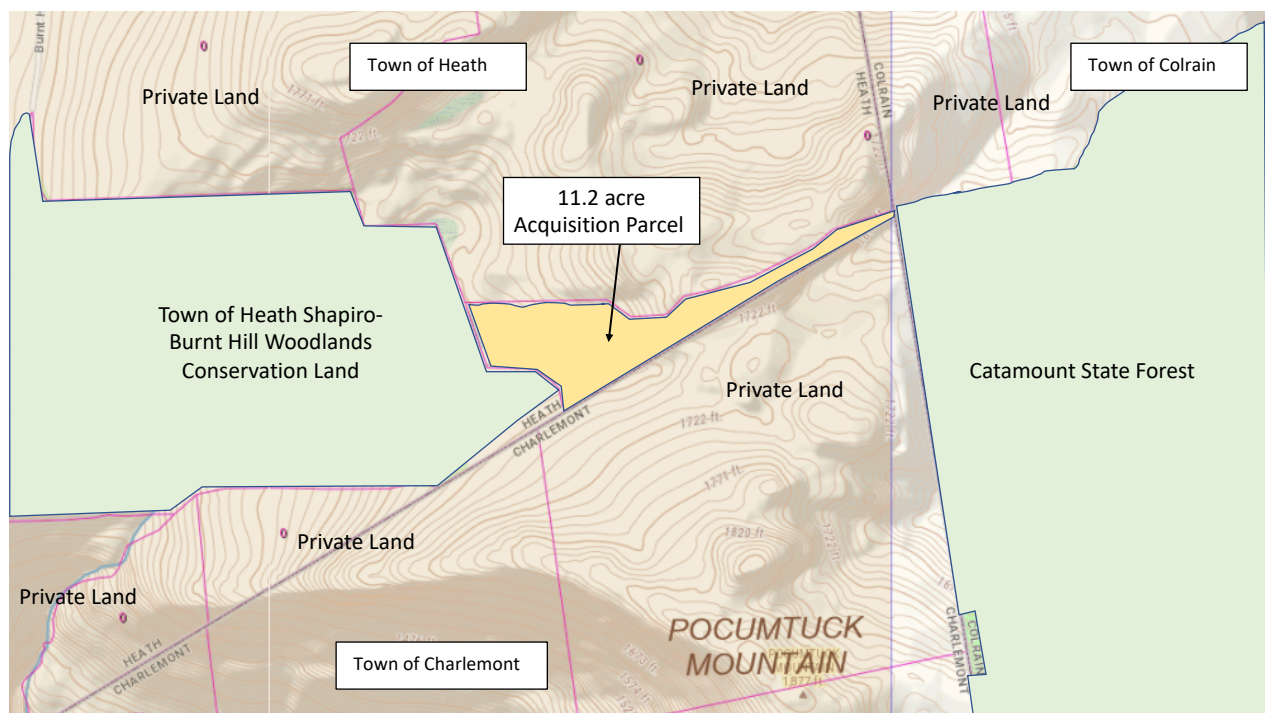
Kate Peppard, Chair, Heath Parks & Rec Committee [kbpeppard@gmail.com](mailto:kbpeppard@gmail.com)

Michael Cucchiara, Grant Lead, Heath Parks & Rec Committee [Michael.cucchiara@gmail.com](mailto:Michael.cucchiara@gmail.com)

Town Coordinator: Hilma Sumner, [Bos@townofheath.org](mailto:Bos@townofheath.org)

### **(1) Applicant Qualifications and Project Description:**

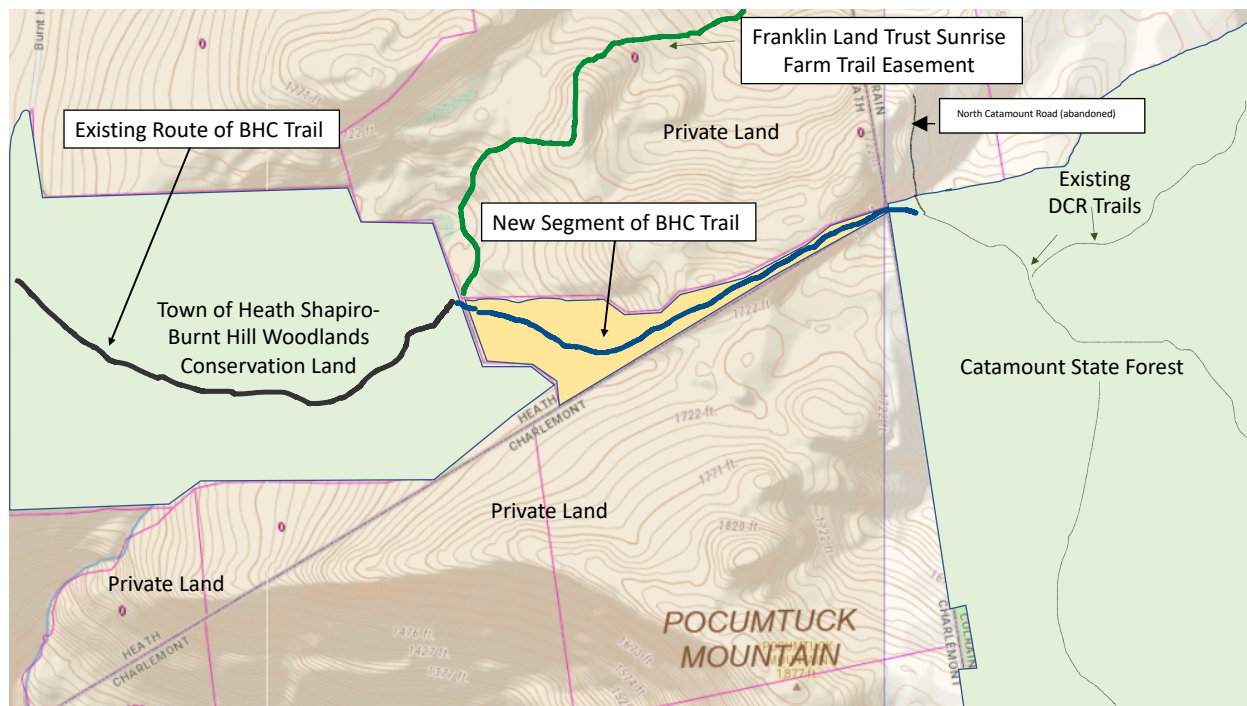
The Town of Heath has been an active member in the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership (MTWP) and is committed to furthering the goals of the Partnership. Recently the Town of Heath acting through its Parks and Recreation Committee, was awarded a grant from Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs (“EEA”) for the development of the Burnt Hill-Catamount Trail (the “BHC Trail”) Development Project which is currently underway. The BHC Trail was envisioned to provide public access on town conservation land to connect it with existing State Forest lands. While the BHC Trail project has improved access across Heath’s Conservation land, the trail still lacks direct public land access to the Catamount State Forest. The purpose of this grant application would be to solve this limitation by acquiring an 11.2-acre parcel of privately-owned land, abutting Town Conservation Land and the State Forest land (see Map 1 below). This Project to be known as the “Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project” (the “Project”), will create a direct publicly owned land bridge between the 350-acre Town-owned Shapiro-Burnt Hill Woodlands Conservation Area to the 1,338-acre Catamount State Forest. It will also result in the addition of 11.2 more acres of conservation land for the Town of Heath.



**MAP 1- ACQUISITION PARCEL AND EXISTING HEATH CONSERVATION LAND & CATAMOUNT STATE FOREST**

The Project will involve the acquisition (through a friendly sale with its current owner) by the Town of Heath of the uniquely shaped 11.2-acre parcel pictured above in Map 1. The parcel is entirely within the Town of Heath and is currently owned by a descendent of the original settler of the land in 1790. Given this unique history, current owner is eager to see the parcel preserved for public recreation access and has agreed to work with the Town on this Proposal. After acquisition the parcel would then be dedicated by the Town of Heath as new conservation land. Thereafter, the Heath Parks and Recreation Committee would use Committee members and community volunteers to clear a new hiking trail on the parcel. This

would result in the creation of a new trail segment (illustrated in Map 2 below) that would become part of the BHC Trail and provide direct public access into the Catamount State Forest and the existing network of DCR trails therein. The long-term maintenance of the newly acquired conservation land as well as the new segment of the BHC Trail will be provided by the Heath Parks and Recreation conjunction with the Town.



**MAP 2- NEW SEGMENT OF BHC TRAIL WITH CONNECTION TO CATAMOUNT STATE FOREST**

As illustrated in the Map above, the Project will facilitate the extension of the existing BHC trail from its current terminus at the property line of the Shapiro Conservation Land where it intersects with the Franklin Land Trust's Sunrise Farm Trail Easement (the Sunrise trail exists on private property and does not directly link up with DCR trails in the Catamount State Forest).

The Project is located on the eastern border of Heath, western border of Colrain, and northeastern border of Charlemont, an area comprising one of the largest stands of uninterrupted forest in Franklin County and perhaps the State. This Project will create new public land corridor ensuring recreational access across the Burnt Hill-Catamount Trail in perpetuity, greatly improving public access to this large forest resource. Once completed the BHC Trail combined with existing DCR Trails in the Catamount State Forest, will provide approximately 6.5 miles of hiking trails across thickly forested public lands uninterrupted by roadways or structures. The Heath-Catamount State Forest Public Land Corridor Project will provide the lynchpin to ensure recreational access for the public in perpetuity and thereby furthering the goals of the Mohawk Woodlands Partnership.

## **(2) Project Task List and Implementation Timeline:**

The Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project will be completed in two phases during 2020-2021, with both stages being completed by the July 31, 2021. The first phase of the project will involve the acquisition of the 11.2-acre parcel from its current owner. Given that the acquisition of land and its subsequent dedication as conservation land requires Town Meeting approval, the Parks and Recreation has moved to include this proposal on the Annual Town Meeting warrant. Given the Covid-19 crisis, Heath's Annual Town Meeting has been rescheduled several times already and is likely to take place either in late July 2020 or September 2020. Despite these scheduling challenges, the proposal has been warmly received in town and Parks and Recreation does not anticipate any obstacles to approval at Town Meeting. The Parks and Recreation Committee has been working diligently with the current owner to facilitate a smooth transfer of ownership within the timeline required under this Grant Application. The Town of Heath will retain Special Town Counsel (included in the grant budget below) to facilitate the sale of the land to the Town and its subsequent dedication as Conservation Land. It is anticipated that the conveyance to the Town should be completed by October 2020, depending upon the timing of the rescheduled Annual Town Meeting.

The Second Phase of the project will begin after acquisition of the parcel has been completed. Beginning in late fall of 2020 and continuing into spring of 2021, the Heath Parks and Recreation Committee will begin work on extending the BHC trail. Utilizing volunteer labor, Parks and Recreation Committee will over the course of several socially distant "Trail Day Work Bees," will build out the new segment of the BHC trail. This trail work will include the installation of water bars, trail signage, a trail map and markers and will be completed well in advance of July 31, 2021. No building permits or conservation commission approvals are anticipated in either Phase I or Phase II of this Project.

### **Key Project Implementation Milestones:**

- Phase I – Land Acquisition Enter into Letter of Intent (precursor to Purchase and Sale Agreement) with Current Landowner July/August 2020
- Approval of Town Meeting for Acquisition & Dedication of Conservation Land Late July/September 2020
- Execute Purchase and Sale Agreement September 2020
- Conveyance of Land and Recording of Deed/Title, Recording of Conservation Restriction October 2020
- Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 – Phase II- BHC Trail Extension Project "Trail Day Work Bees"
- Completion of Phase I and Phase II – July 2021

**(3) Project Budget:**

It is anticipated that the total costs for Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project will be \$19,450.00. The Project will be funded entirely by the Mohawk Woodlands Implementation Grant on a reimbursement basis in accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement.

Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project Budget			
Phase One - Land Acquisition			
1	Land Acquisition 11.2 acre parcel (Sales Price)		\$ 15,000.00
2	Conveyance Legal Fees		\$ 1,500.00
3	Title & Recording Fees		\$ 500.00
		Total Phase One Cost	\$ 17,000.00
Phase Two - BHC Trail Construction			
1	Pressure Treated Lumber Water Bars & Culvert		\$ 1,150.00
2	Trail Signage and Trail Markers		\$ 850.00
3	Trail Map and 4x4 Post		\$ 450.00
		Total Phase Two Cost	\$ 2,450.00
		TOTAL PROJECT COSTS	\$ 19,450.00

## Appendix A

### Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant Application Form

**Fiscal Year 2021**

*Please do not reformat this form – use the fillable pdf form*

*Please print double-sided*

*Please fasten application package with a binder clip, no three-ring or plastic binders!*

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1. **Municipality or Municipalities:** Town of Heath

2. **Project Name:** Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project

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3. **Contact**

**Person:** Kate Peppard, Chair Parks and Recreation Committee

Michael Cucchiara, Grant Lead, Parks and Rec.

**Address:** Sawyer Hall, 8 East Main Street, Heath, MA

01346  
**Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

781-690-1567  
**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

michael.cucchiara@gmail.com  
**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please note: the contact person is the official representative for this project, usually not the chief municipal officer.**

4. **Briefly describe the project and tasks planned to complete the project on TWO or less attached pages.** Use the Evaluation Criteria as an outline for the description to ensure the maximum score possible for your project. Also explain how the site will be maintained (if appropriate for the project type) or next steps the municipality plans to take once this grant is

completed based on the completed project. (how will the project help further projects that meet the MTWP goals).

#### **5. Proposed Funding:**

The MTWP Implementation Grant Program is a **reimbursement** program. Grant recipients are reimbursed after invoices have been paid by the municipality. **The total project cost must be raised or appropriated by the municipality shortly after project approval if it has not already been appropriated.** Costs incurred prior to grant approval and contract execution are ineligible. Municipal account labor, volunteer hours, and donations are also ineligible for reimbursement.

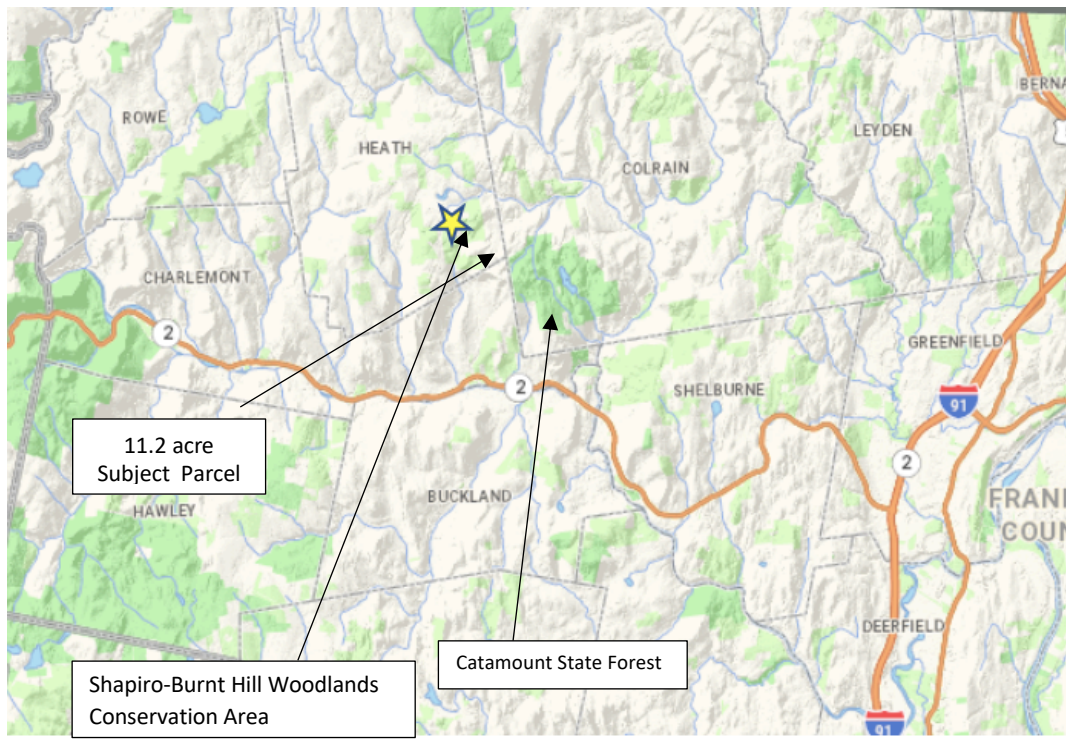
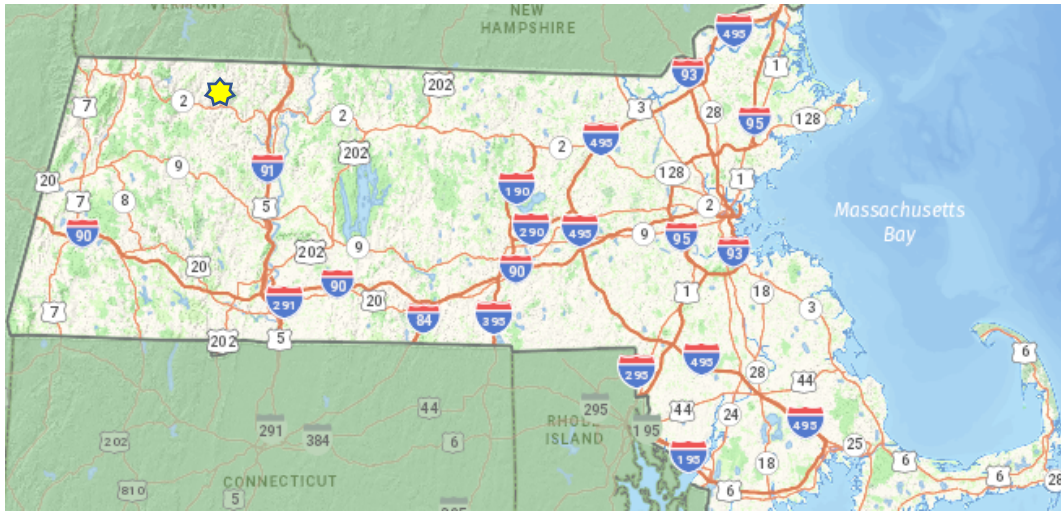
#### **Attach a one page description of the proposed project budget including:**

The source of all local funding including donations and municipal funds and other funding sources.

**If any permits are required, the permit or application for the permit must be submitted. Should the project be selected for funding, the permit will be required as part of the final contract.**



## **Appendix B: Project Locus Map**





## **Appendix C: Heath Select Board Letter of Support**

June 18, 2020

Robert O'Connor,  
Director, Lands and Forests  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

**RE: Grant Application Proposal for the Mohawk Trails Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grant  
– Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project**

Dear Mr. O'Connor

On behalf of the Select Board for the Town of Heath, I am writing to express to you our enthusiastic support for the Mohawk Trails Woodlands Partnership Grant Application submitted by the Heath Parks and Recreation Committee on behalf of the Town of Heath.

The Select Board of the Town of Heath fully supports the submission of the Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project Proposal undertaken on behalf of the Town acting by and through its Heath Parks and Recreation Committee. On behalf of the Town, we would also like to express our gratitude for the BHC Trail Development Grant awarded by EEA in the Spring of this year. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the BHC project remains very much underway as evidenced by the recent construction of a trailhead parking area.

Just as the BHC Project was designed to improve the public access to town conservation lands, this project will greatly augment those efforts by expanding the Town's supply of conservation land. Improving the public access and trail creation, especially connecting Town lands with the Catamount State Forest trails will be a dynamic improvement of regional recreational opportunities on our publicly owned forested lands. The Grant will enable the Town of Heath to expand economic development opportunities through the creation of new tourist infrastructure featuring the natural resources of our Town.

The Town of Heath is ready, willing, and able to provide the resources necessary to ensure the timely implementation of the project activities involved in the Heath-Catamount Public Land Corridor Project Proposal. Understanding the reimbursement-based nature of the Grant, the Town of Heath is prepared to provide the interim financial support to facilitate the acquisition of the subject land and take all necessary steps to ensure that the Project is delivered by July 31, 2021.

In closing, on behalf of the Town of Heath, I would like to thank you for your kind consideration of our Town's proposal and look forward to inviting you the ribbon cutting for the latest extension of the Burnt Hill- Catamount Trail in Summer of 2021!

Kindest regards,

Town of Heath Select Board