

**MOHAWK TRAIL WOODLANDS PARTNERSHIP –
IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS**

BID #: BD-21-1042-ENV-ENV01-60021

Heath-Catamount State Forest
Public Trails Connection & Wayfinding 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

Michael Cucchiara, Grant Lead, Heath Parks & Rec Committee Michael.cucchiara@gmail.com

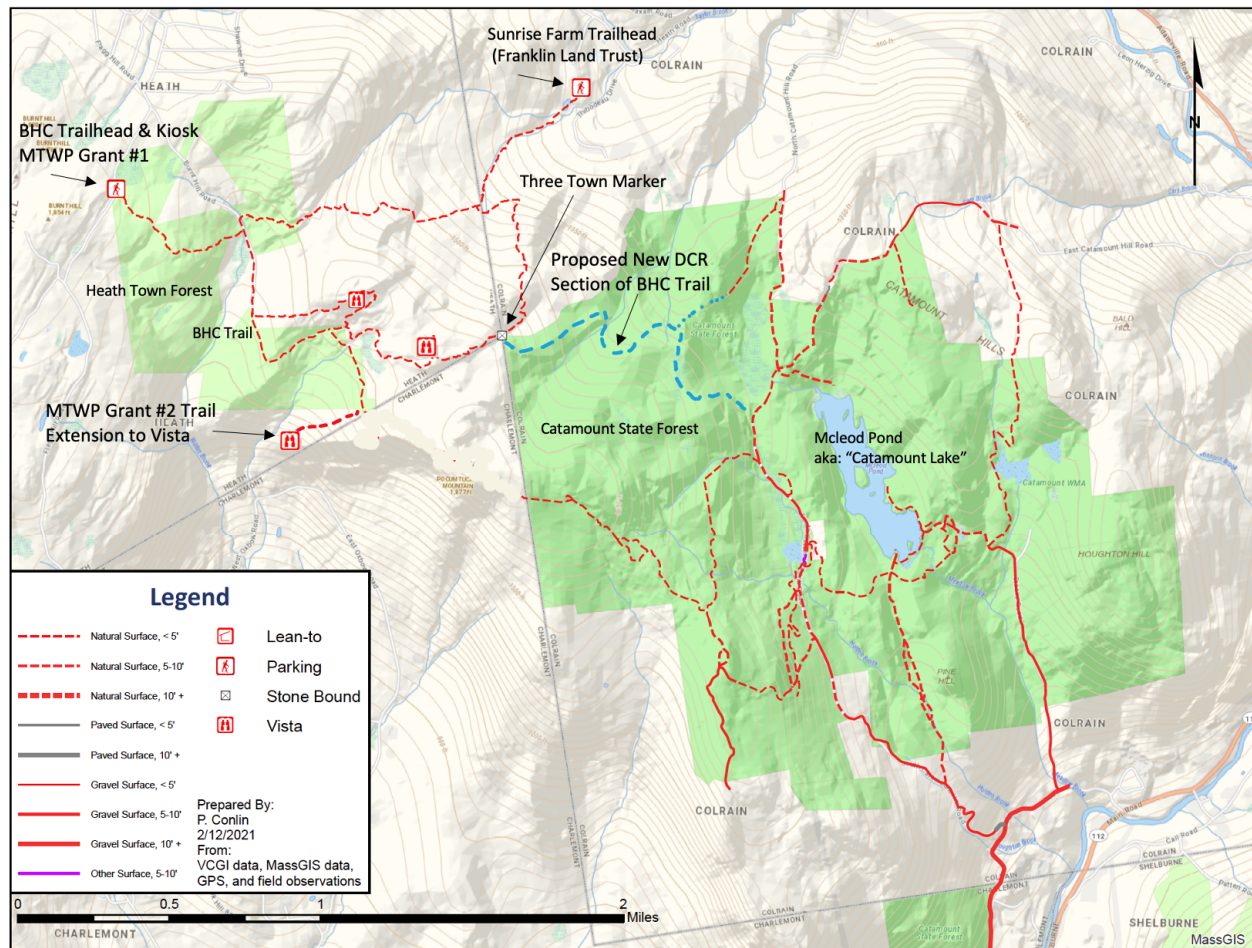
Town Coordinator: Hilma Sumner, Bos@townofheath.org

(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 has recently been completed. The BHC Trail was envisioned to provide public access on town conservation land to connect it with existing public access forest lands. In addition to BHC Trail Grant, the Town of Heath also received a grant to acquire an approximately 9-acre parcel of land contiguous to existing town conservation lands. The work related to the second Mohawk Woodlands grant is ongoing and is expected to be completed within the next 12 months.

The purpose of this grant application would be augment and continue the work begun under the previous two grants. Taken together all three grants will result in facilitating new public recreational access to public and privately-owned forest lands in the Town of Heath as well as regionally. In addition to providing the financial resources necessary to create new trail infrastructure, this grant would enable the Heath Parks and Recreation Commission to work with the Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) to establish an official trail connection from the Catamount State Forest to the Burnt Hill Catamount Trail. Connecting the Burnt Hill Catamount Trail to the existing trail network in the Catamount State Forest will create an integrated regional recreational trail network. This new trail connection will stitch together a patchwork of public access recreational trails into a coordinated trail system which could eventually enable hiker access from existing trails such as the Mass Audubon High Ledges Trail network and the Mahican-Mohawk Trail (“M&M”) in Shelburne. The new interconnected trail system could be expanded within the Town of Heath and neighboring Rowe to create a long-distance trail system across the highlands that ultimately could eventually connect with the Mohawk State Forest in Charlemont. This new long-distance trail could theoretically pick up where the M&M Trail leaves off in the Mohawk State Forest and connect it to existing sections in Shelburne and Deerfield, thereby creating a true through trail across the Mohawk Trail Woodlands region.

Estimated Route of Proposed New Trail Connection to BHC Trail



Proposed New Trail Section Highlighted in Blue Dash Line Above

(2) Project Task List and Implementation Timeline:

The Heath Parks & Recreation Commission will reach out to our colleagues at DCR to discuss establishing a trail connection beginning at the Three Town Marker on the BHC Trail into Catamount State Forest eventually terminating on existing trails near the McLeod Pond as known as Catamount Lake to locals. Members of the Heath Parks & Recreation Commission in conjunction with a professional forester and representatives of DCR, will work toward identifying a new route for the BHC trail into the Catamounts. In addition, Heath Parks & Recreation will work with DCR to assist in creating new wayfinding trail signage as well as trailhead kiosks and trail maps which will provide reference point materials for visitors to Catamount State Forest trail and adjoining trail systems. These improvements will facilitate visitor access to the BHC Trail and Catamount trail systems which suffer from insufficient markings as well as degraded trail conditions within the State Forest.

Key Project Implementation Milestones:

- Phase I – Summer 2021- Members of Heath Parks & Recreation Commission and its Forestry Consultant connect with DCR representatives to map out possible new trail access into Catamount State Forest with an eye toward limiting impacts on State Forest lands; Activities will include acquiring of materials for Phase II and Phase III
- Phase II – Fall 2021 - Volunteers from Heath Parks and Rec along with its Forestry Consultant work to clear sections of new trail along DCR-approved routes. Trail work will include construction of small bridges for stream crossings and wet areas;
- Phase III – Winter/Spring 2022 – Installation of wayfinding trail signage and associated trail infrastructure;

(3) Project Budget:

It is anticipated that the total costs for Heath-Catamount State Forest Public Trails Connection & Wayfinding Project will be \$20,000.00. 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.

Public Trails Connection & Wayfinding Project Budget		
1	Forestry Consultant & Trail Clearing	\$ 7,000.00
2	Trail Signage	\$ 2,000.00
3	Trailhead Kiosk (2)	\$ 2,500.00
4	Trial Infrastructure - Bridges	\$ 1,900.00
5	Aluminum Mounted Trail Map	\$ 2,000.00
6	Trail Sign Posts PT 4x4 (15)	\$ 450.00
7	Picnic Tables & Benches	\$ 3,150.00
8	Project Contingency	\$ 1,000.00
	Total Project Budget	\$ 20,000.00

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!

1. **Municipality or Municipalities:** _____

2. **Project Name:**

3. **Contact**

Person: _____

Address: _____

Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

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**

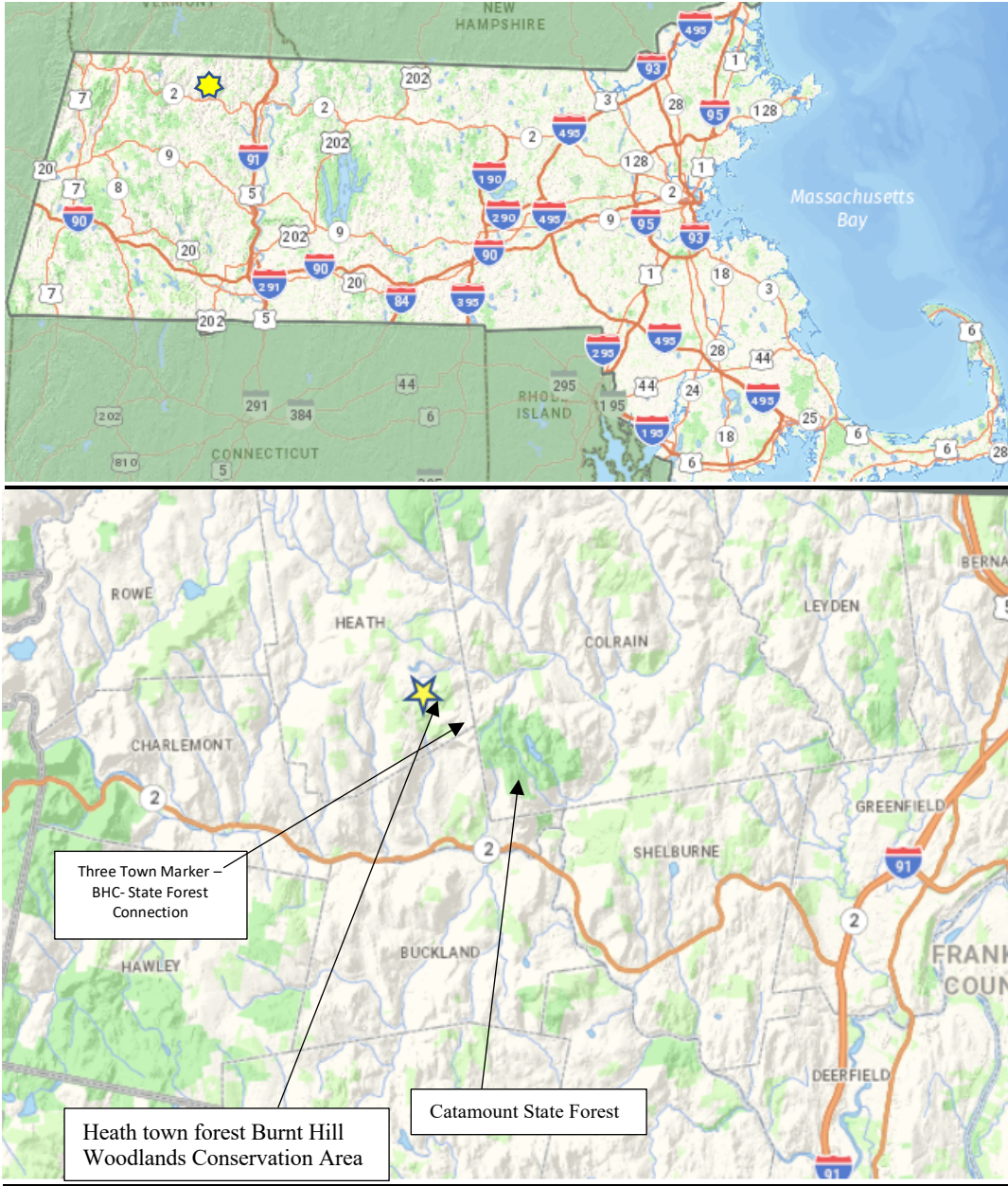
be raised or appropriated by the municipality shortly after project approval if it has not already been appropriated. Costs incurred prior to grant approval and contract execution are ineligible. Municipal account labor, volunteer hours, and donations are also ineligible for reimbursement.

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

May 18, 2021

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 State Forest Public Trails Connection & Wayfinding 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 State Forest Public Trails Connection & Wayfinding 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 two previous Mohawk Trails Woodlands Partnership Implementation Grants awarded by EEA. Despite the challenges of COVID-19, the first grant has been completed as evidenced by the new BHC trailhead kiosk and signage. The work associated with the second grant remains very much underway and is expected to be completed by the Fall of 2021.

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 public access and wayfinding to our region's recreational assets. 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 State Forest Public Trails Connection & Wayfinding Project. 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, 2022.

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 thank you again for all your support!

Kindest regards,

Town of Heath Select Board