

# TOWN OF PLEASANT VALLEY OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PLAN

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MEETING

Tuesday, June 25, 2013





# PROJECT TEAM

Town of Pleasant Valley  
Open Space Committee

Sandra Larkin  
Rebecca Seaman  
Meta Plotnik

Teddi Southworth  
Ross Hartlipp  
Don Sagliano (Town Board Liaison)

AKRF, Inc. | Nina S. Peek, AICP, Senior Technical Director

Taconic  
Site Design & Landscape Architecture | Peter Karis, RLA, Principal Landscape Architect





# WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT?

- ❑ Town is a partner in the Open Space conservation process.... Town has a seat at the table.
- ❑ Gives the Town credibility when talking with prospective property owners.
- ❑ Town is in a better position to qualify for grants and other sources of conservation funding.
- ❑ Property tax benefits
- ❑ Protection of critical natural resources that keep our water clean and our air safe to breath.
- ❑ Net reduction in carbon footprint.





# COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN

- ❑ Creates an INVENTORY of the open space, natural habitat, forest, water and farmland resources in the Town
- ❑ Creates and implements a PLAN to preserve these resources
- ❑ Prioritizes PRESERVATION efforts
- ❑ Good planning results in significant ECONOMIC benefits





# WHAT DOES THE PLAN ADDRESS?

- ❑ Water
  - Creeks, Streams, Wetlands, Aquifers and other special areas
- ❑ Topography
  - Slopes
- ❑ Land Patterns
  - Agriculture, Woodlands, Development
- ❑ Soils and Geology
  - Prime, Statewide Significant, Hydric
- ❑ Ecology and Biologically Sensitive Areas
  - Significant Biodiversity Areas (SBA's)
- ❑ Existing Areas of Conservation
  - Protected lands, Conservation Easements





# HOW DO WE DEFINE OPEN SPACE?

*“Land with minimum or no development, the protection of which would conserve important natural resources, farmland, cultural resources, wildlife habitat, and recreational uses, resulting in the creation of conservation development patterns that provide fiscal and economic benefits to our community.”*

*Pleasant Valley Open Space Committee*



# HOW DO WE DEFINE FARMLAND?

*“Businesses that use land to produce a marketable product that the farmer can sell at a profit.”*

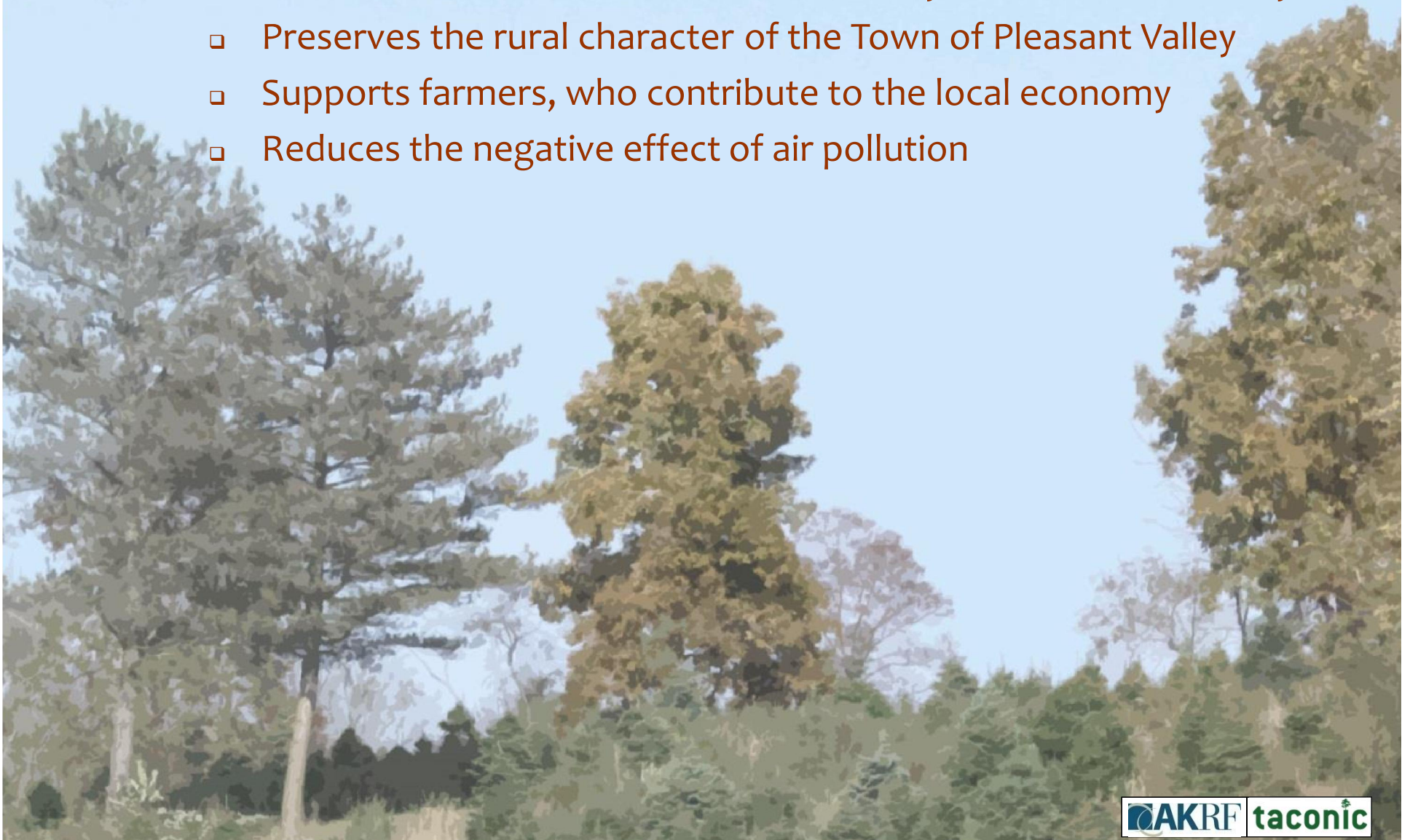
*Hudson Valley Almanac Weekly  
“The State of Farming in the Hudson Valley”*



# GENERAL BENEFITS

## OF OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION

- ❑ Maintains the natural environment, ecosystem and biodiversity
- ❑ Preserves the rural character of the Town of Pleasant Valley
- ❑ Supports farmers, who contribute to the local economy
- ❑ Reduces the negative effect of air pollution





# ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## OF OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION

- Farmland Support and Preservation
  - Supports industries that generate billions of dollars in economic activity annually
  - Industries Rely on Farms and Open Space





# ECONOMIC BENEFITS

## OF OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION

### ❑ Water Management

- Developing open space and farmland requires construction of water treatment facilities and infrastructure - which is often paid for by local property taxes

❖ **WETLANDS AND NATURAL RECHARGE** perform this function for **FREE**



# ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF OPEN SPACE AND FARMLAND PROTECTION

## □ Forest Management

- Approximately eight times more stormwater runs off from impervious surfaces, such as streets, sidewalks and roofs, than from forested land
  - ❖ For every 10% INCREASE IN FOREST COVER in a watershed, **costs of water treatment DECREASE by 20%**

*(Purdue University;  
<https://engineering.purdue.edu/SafetWater/watershed/landuse.html> )*



*“In many instances, it is less expensive for a community to maintain open space that naturally maintains water quality, reduces runoff, or controls flooding than to use tax dollars for costly engineered infrastructure projects such as water filtration plants and storm sewers.”*

*Thomas P. DiNapoli  
New York State Comptroller*



# WHAT WE HAVE HEARD....


## ON-LINE SURVEY RESULTS (JUNE 24, 2013)

- 99 Respondents
- 73 % characterize Pleasant Valley as RURAL
- 82 % cite the importance of preserving open space and farmland
- 86 % of respondents who own or operate farms do not receive any financial assistance other than a tax exemption to help them maintain their farms



# WHAT WE HAVE HEARD....

## ON-LINE SURVEY RESULTS (JUNE 24, 2013)

- 
- **Financing Open Space and Farmland Protection**
    - 53 % would support a local bond effort to finance open space protection; 24 % would not, and 23 % have no opinion)
    - 59 % would support an annual fee per household (15 % would not, and 26 % have no opinion)
      - **32 % would pay up to \$20 per household, annually**
      - **35 % would pay up to \$50 per household, annually**
      - **26 % would pay up to \$100 per household, annually**



# WHAT WE HAVE HEARD....

## STAKEHOLDER MEETING

- Provide tax incentives for farmland preservation
- Adjust the rules and benefits for agricultural exemptions
- Flexibility in regulations to accommodate agricultural uses
  - Require buffer zones between farmland and residential development
- Adopt Right to Farm laws





*“Conservation, viewed in its entirety, is the slow and laborious unfolding of a new relationship between people and land”*

Aldo Leopold





## Myths...

- The Town is going to take your land.
- That little bit is not going to help... there is nothing we can do.
- I don't get any benefit from conserving open spaces.
- Without development, my taxes will continue to increase.





## Reality...

- Taxes from agricultural/vacant land are a financial winner for the Town
  - For every \$1 the Town receives in property taxes from residential lands, it spends more in services
  - For every \$1 the Town receives in property taxes from agricultural and vacant lands, it spends less in services





## Reality... Economics

- Open space provides increased property values
  - Properties adjacent to open space and other conserved areas
  - Properties within or exposed to Scenic Areas



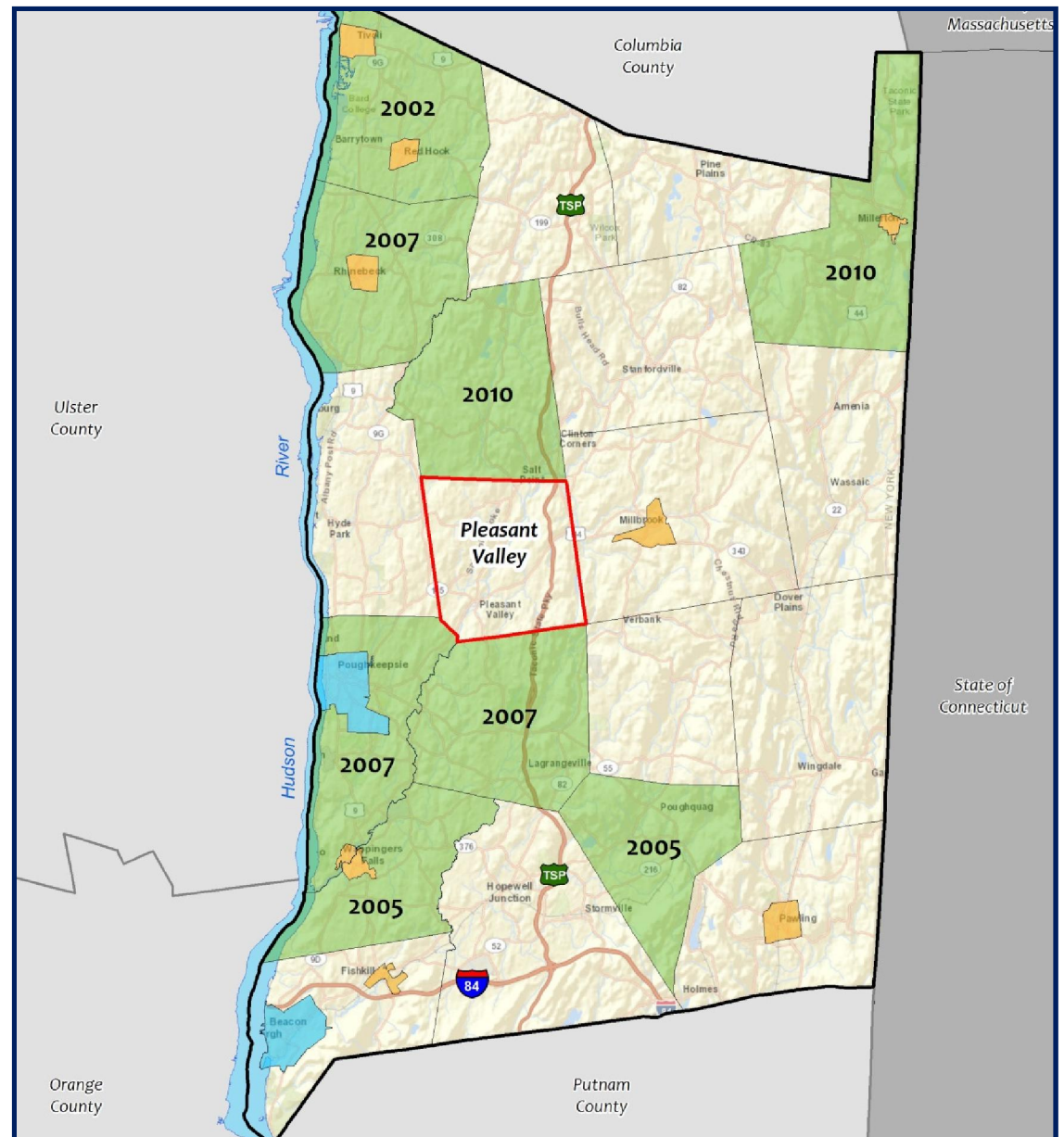


## Reality... Climate Change

- Maintaining open spaces lowers our carbon footprint
  - Average annual temperatures are rising, CO<sub>2</sub> levels are rising and water quality is degrading



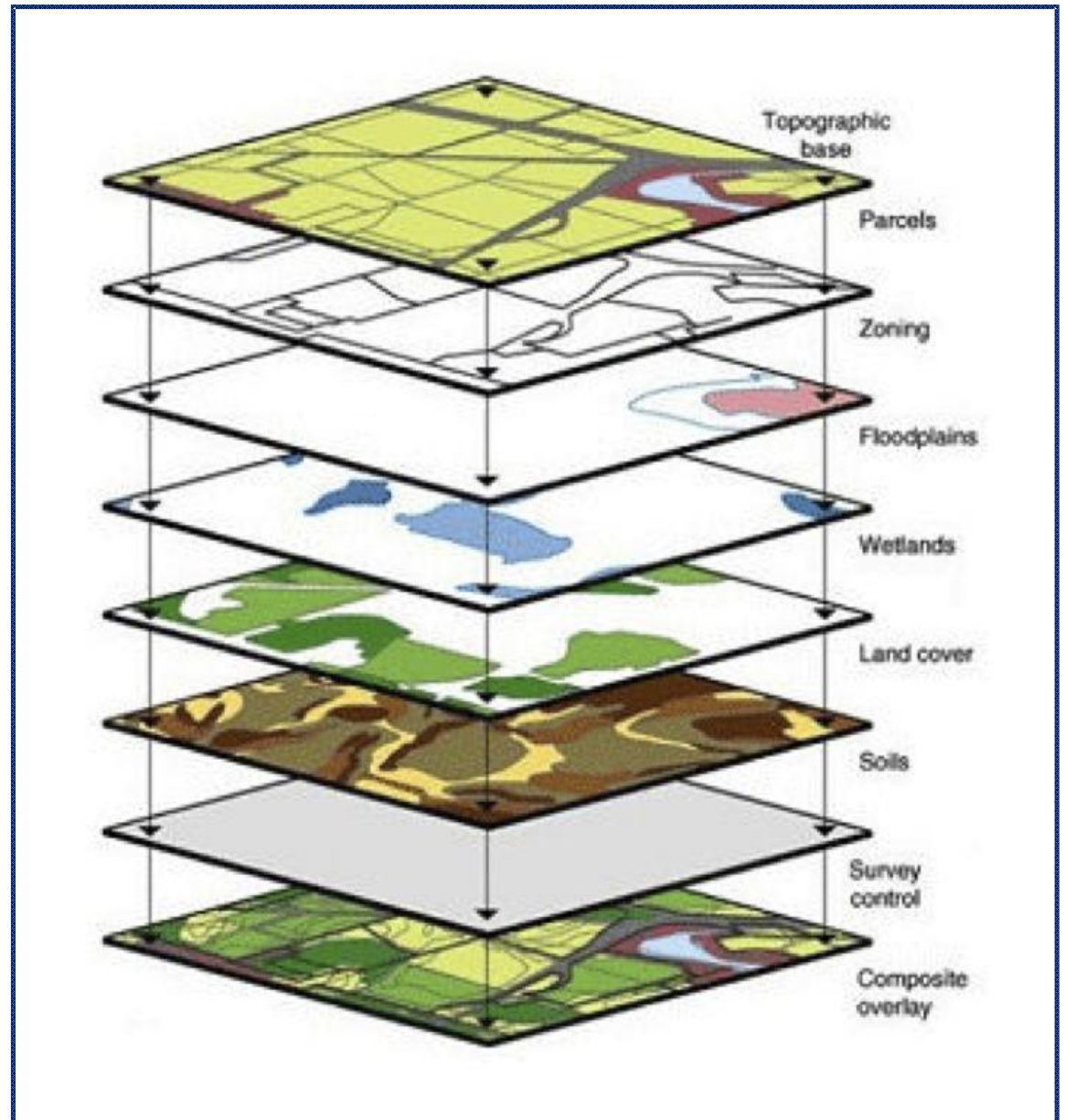
Open Space and/or Farmland Plans



## Dutchess County Towns with Open Space and/or Farmland Plans

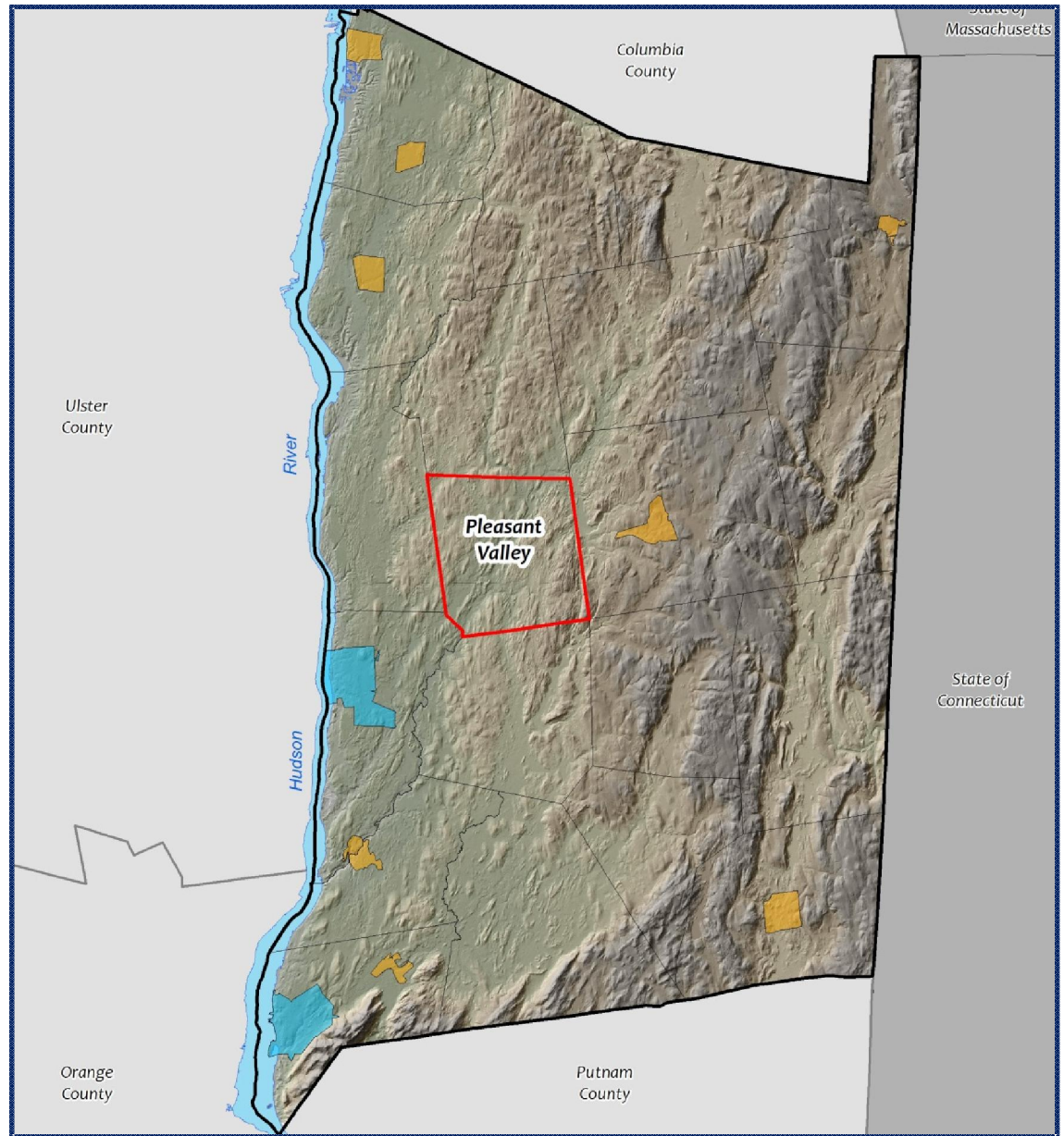


What are we looking at?



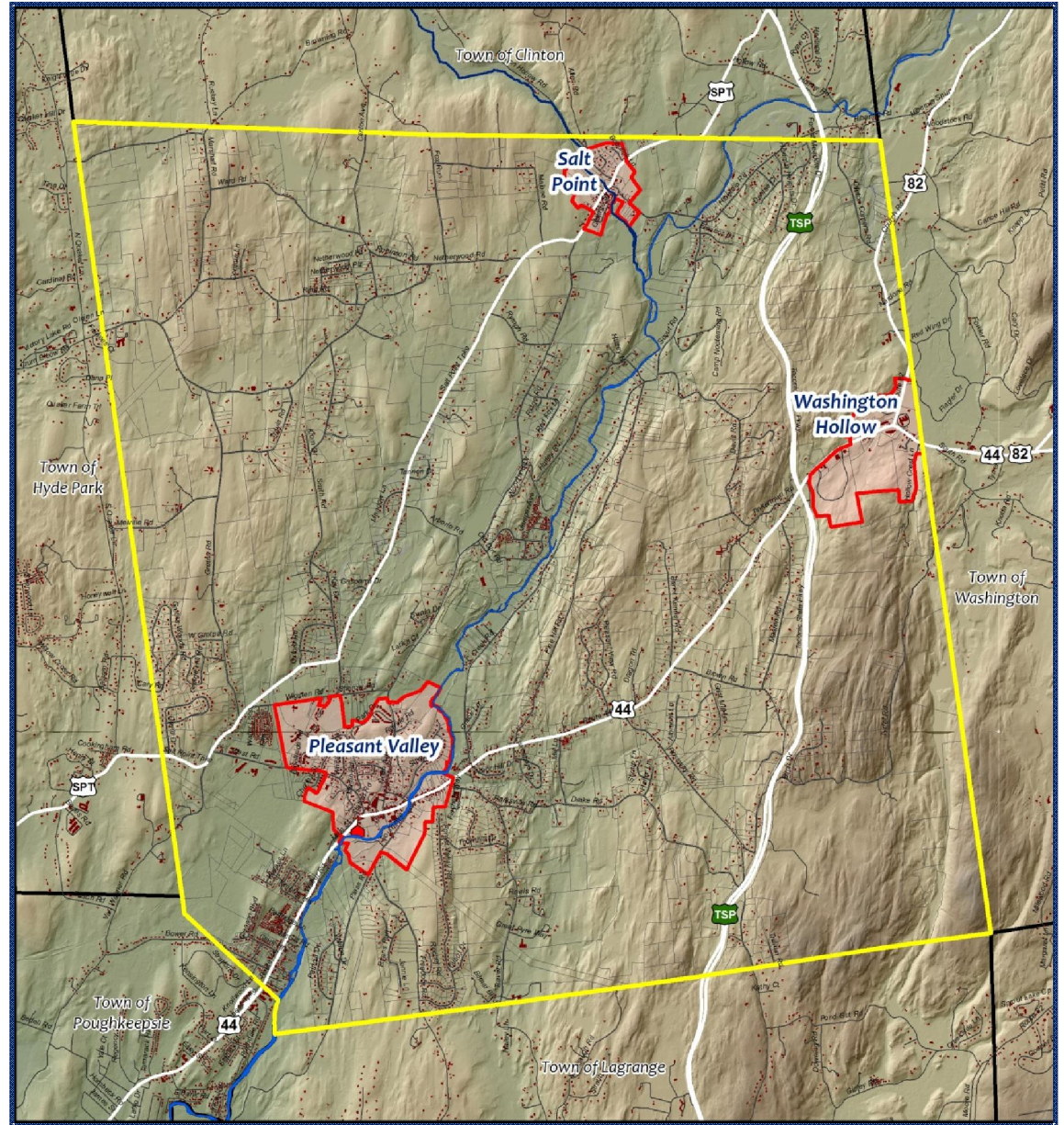
Resource Inventory





Dutchess County (Terrain)

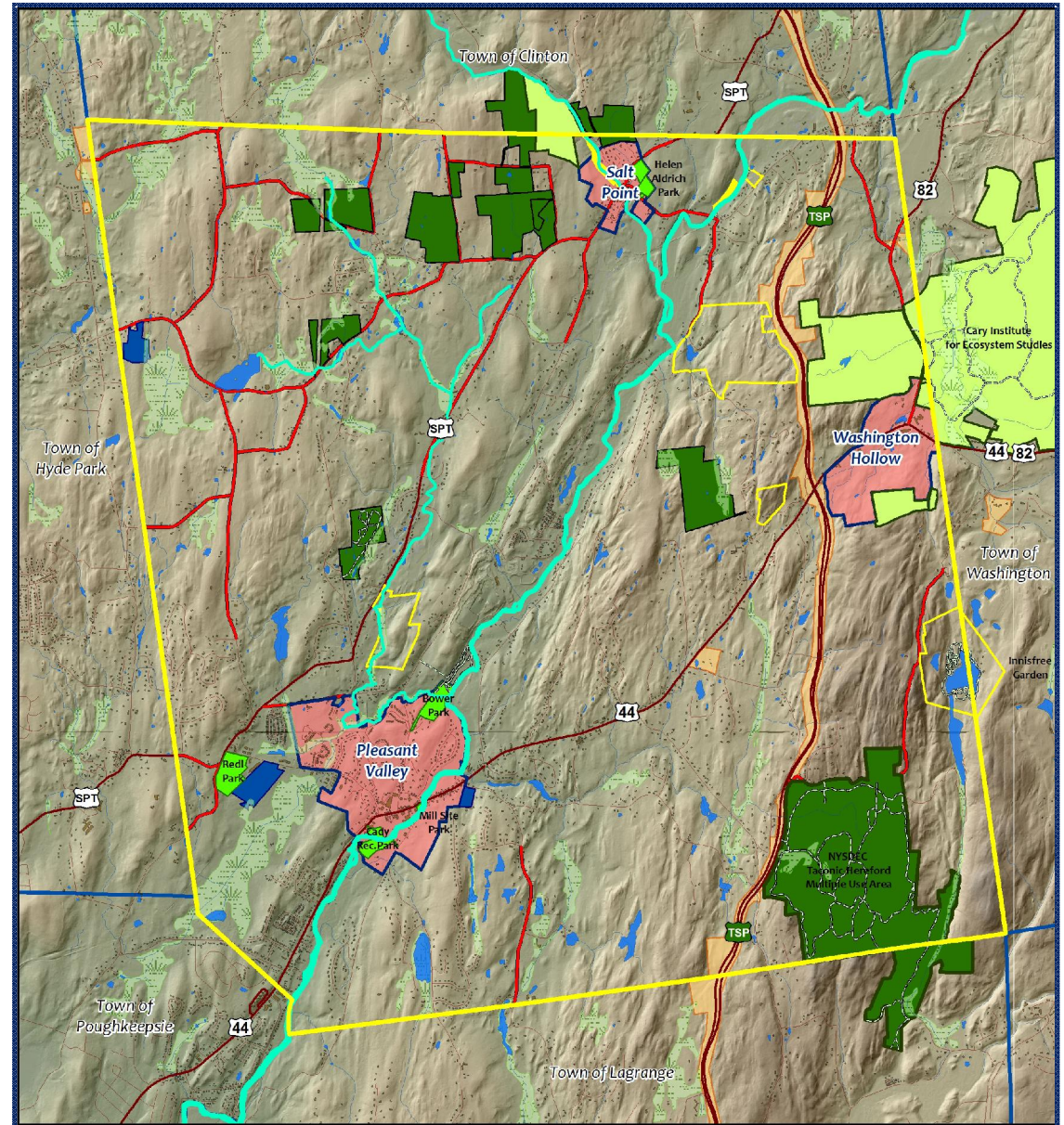




Pleasant Valley (2012)

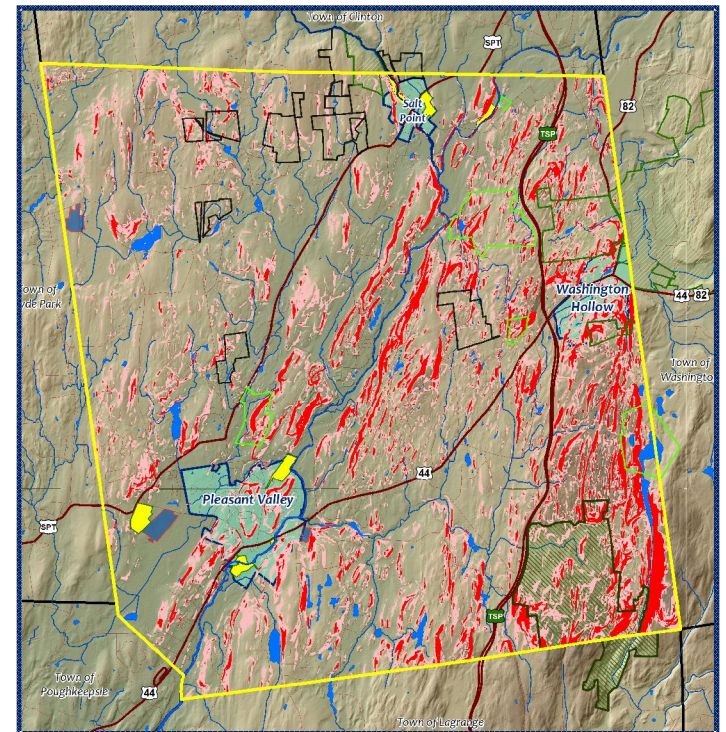
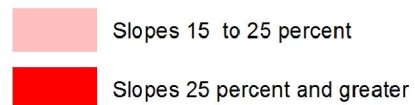
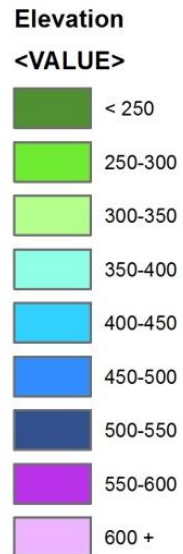
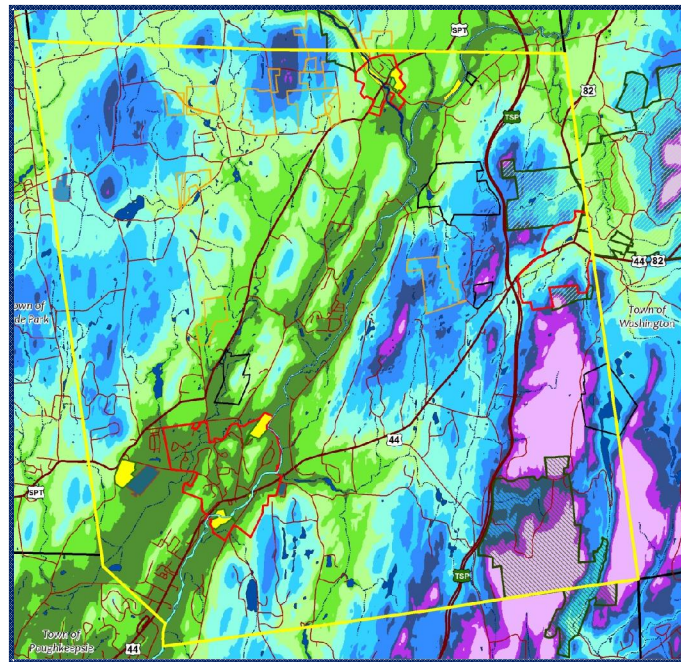


-  Town Parks
-  Taconic Hereford Multiple Use Area (NYSDEC)
-  Public School
-  Other Town Owned Parcels
-  Private Recreation Facilities
-  Lands of Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies
-  Conservation Easements (DLC)
-  Scenic Roads
-  Sites with Historic Status
-  Water Body



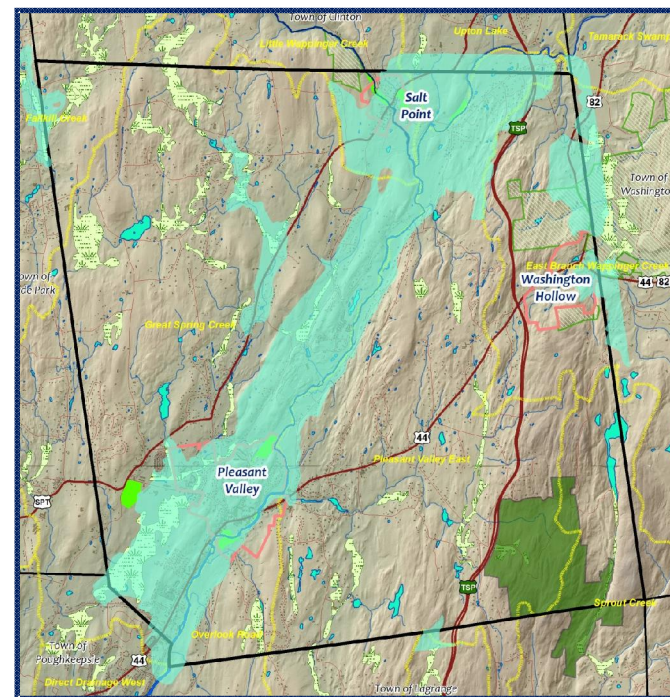
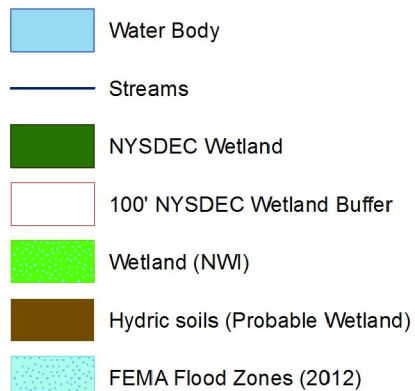
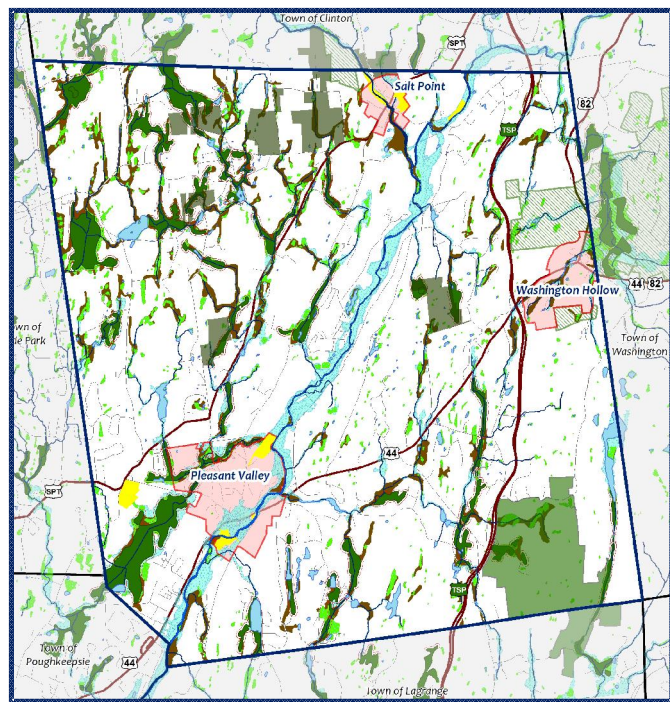
## Existing Conserved Lands





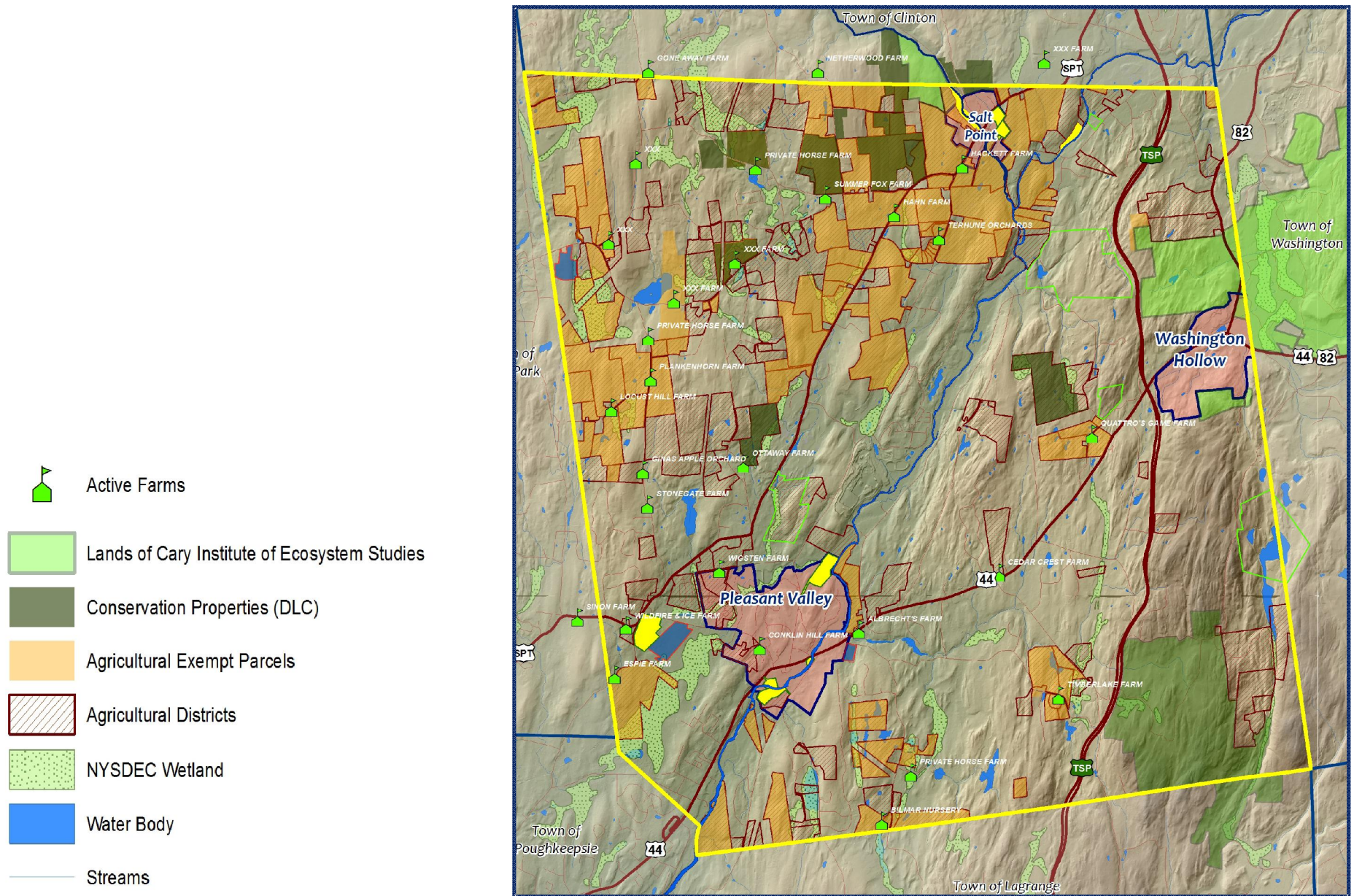
## Topography and Steep Slopes





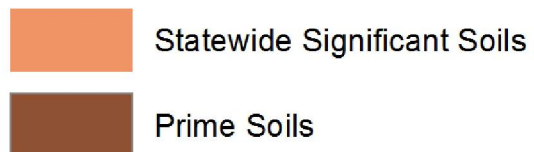
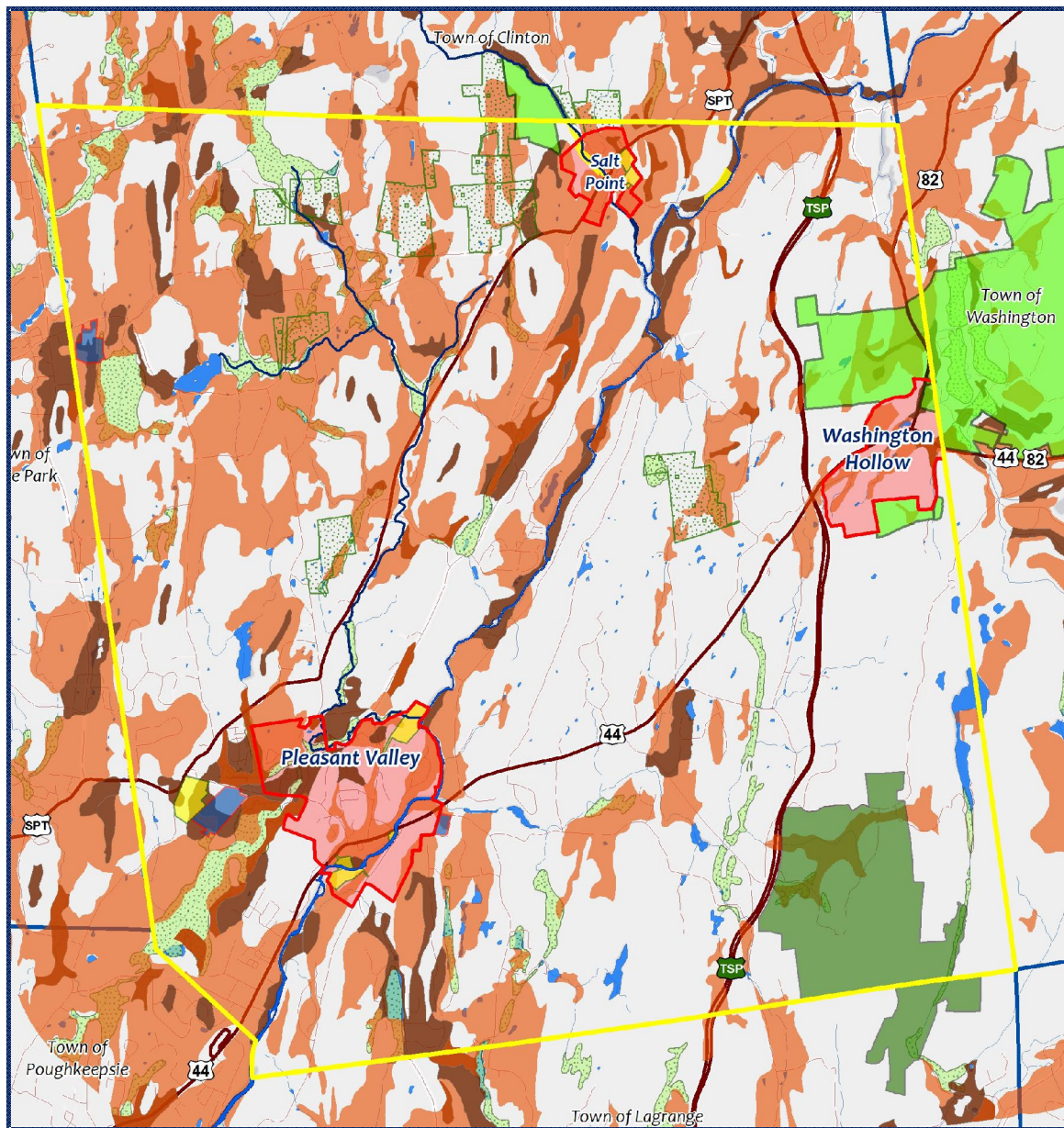
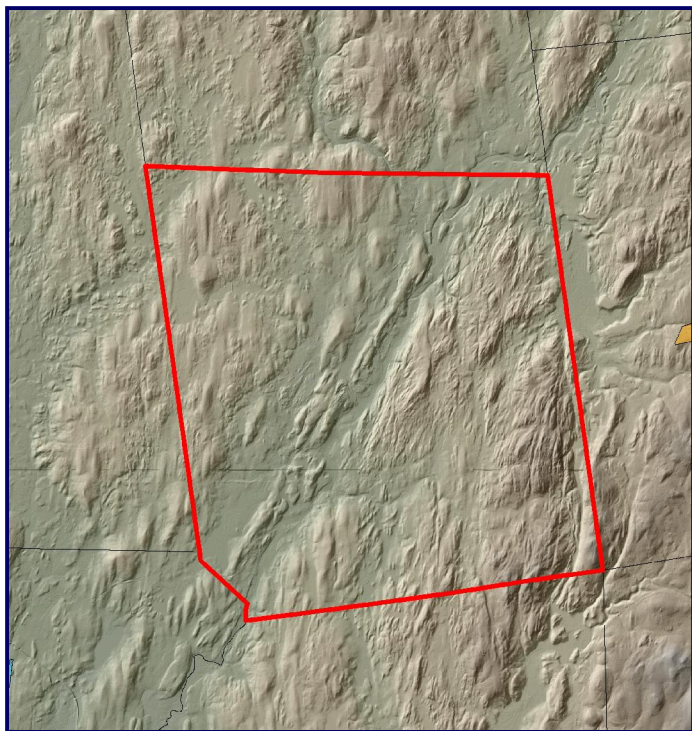
## Surface Waters and Aquifer Zones





## Agricultural Lands

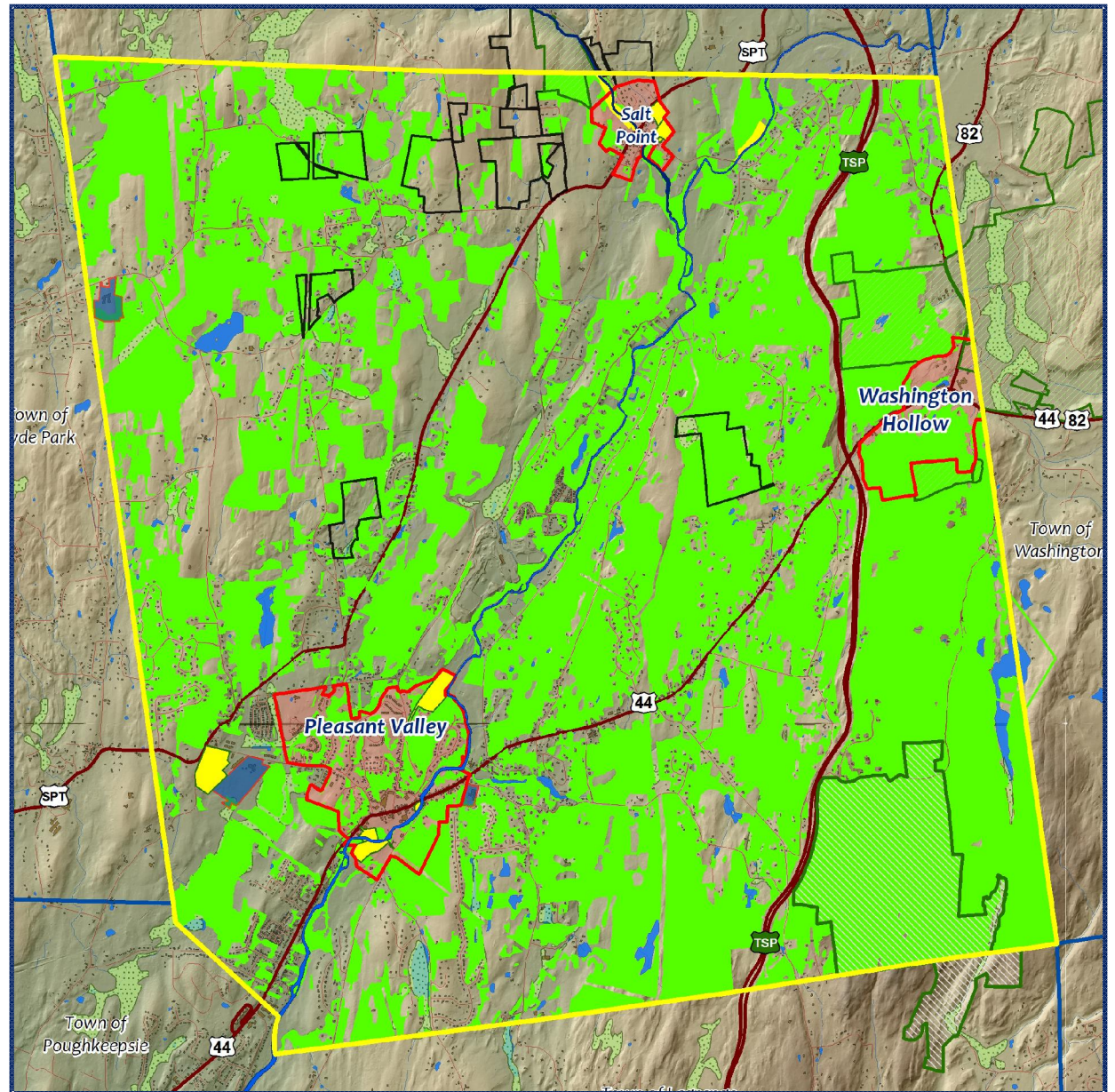




## Soils

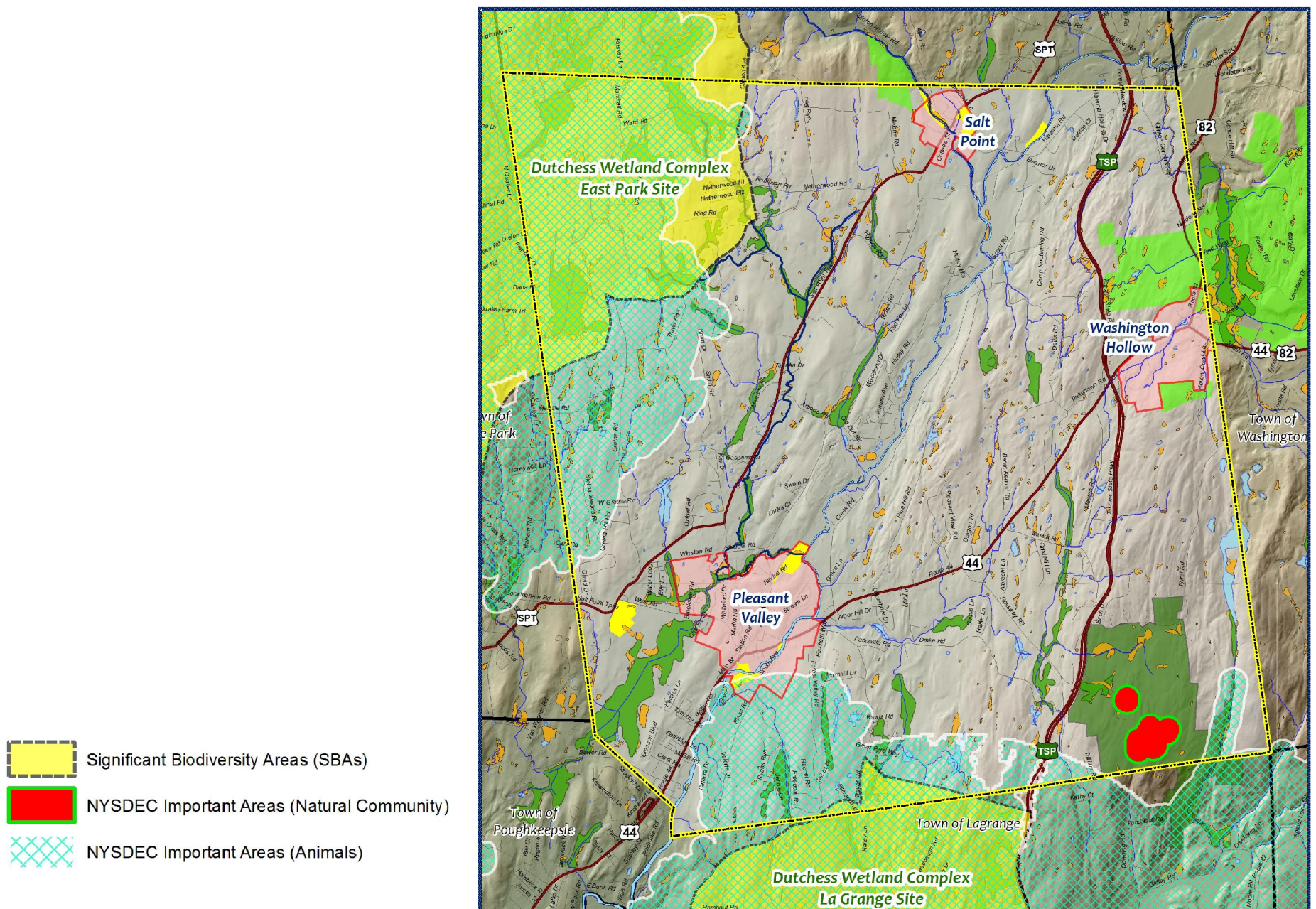


-  Taconic Hereford Multiple Use Area (NYSDEC)
-  Private Recreation Facilities
-  Lands of Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies
-  Conservation Properties (DLC)
-  Forest




## Woodlands

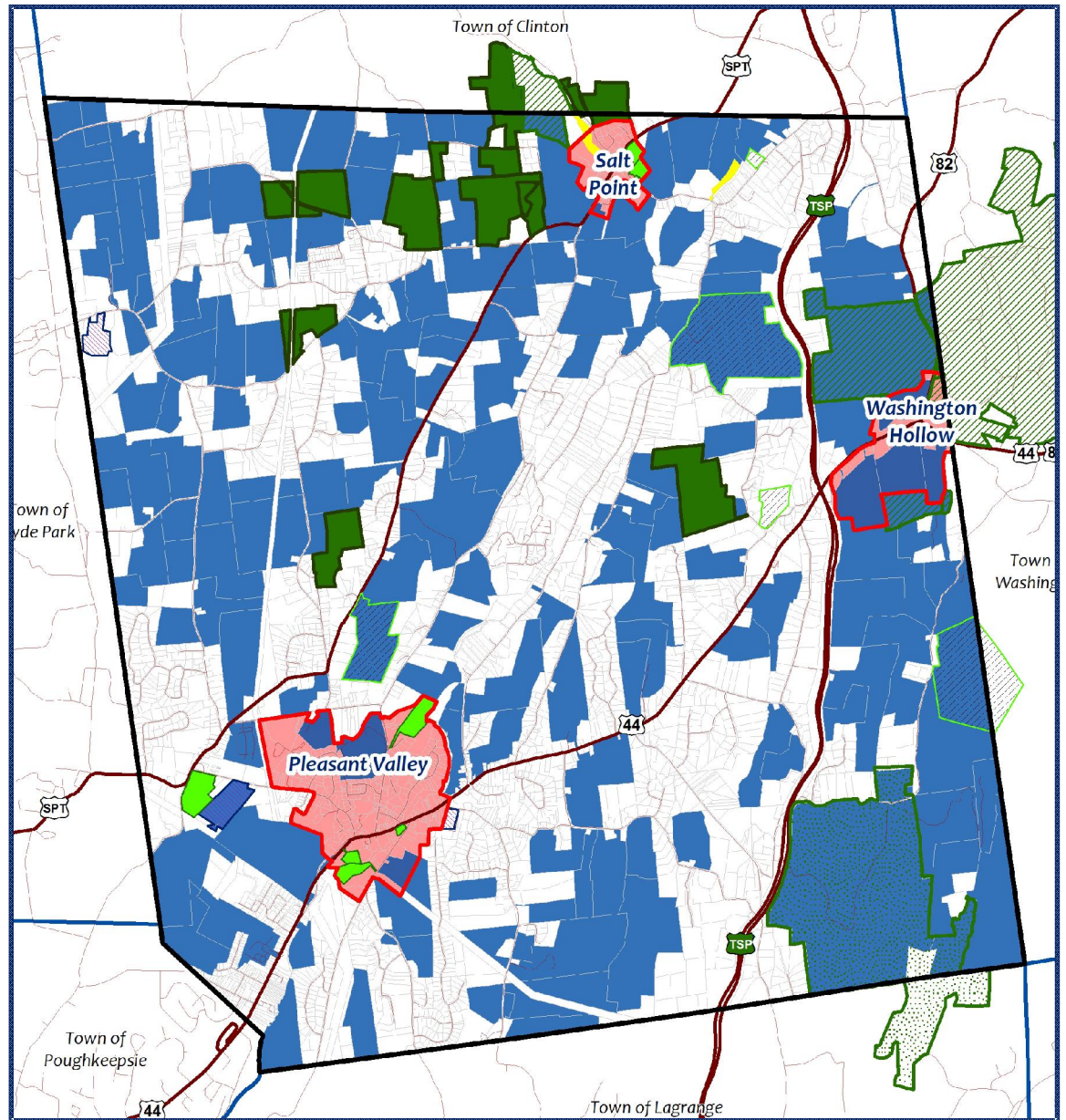




Significant Ecosystems Map




 Parcels 50 Acres and Larger

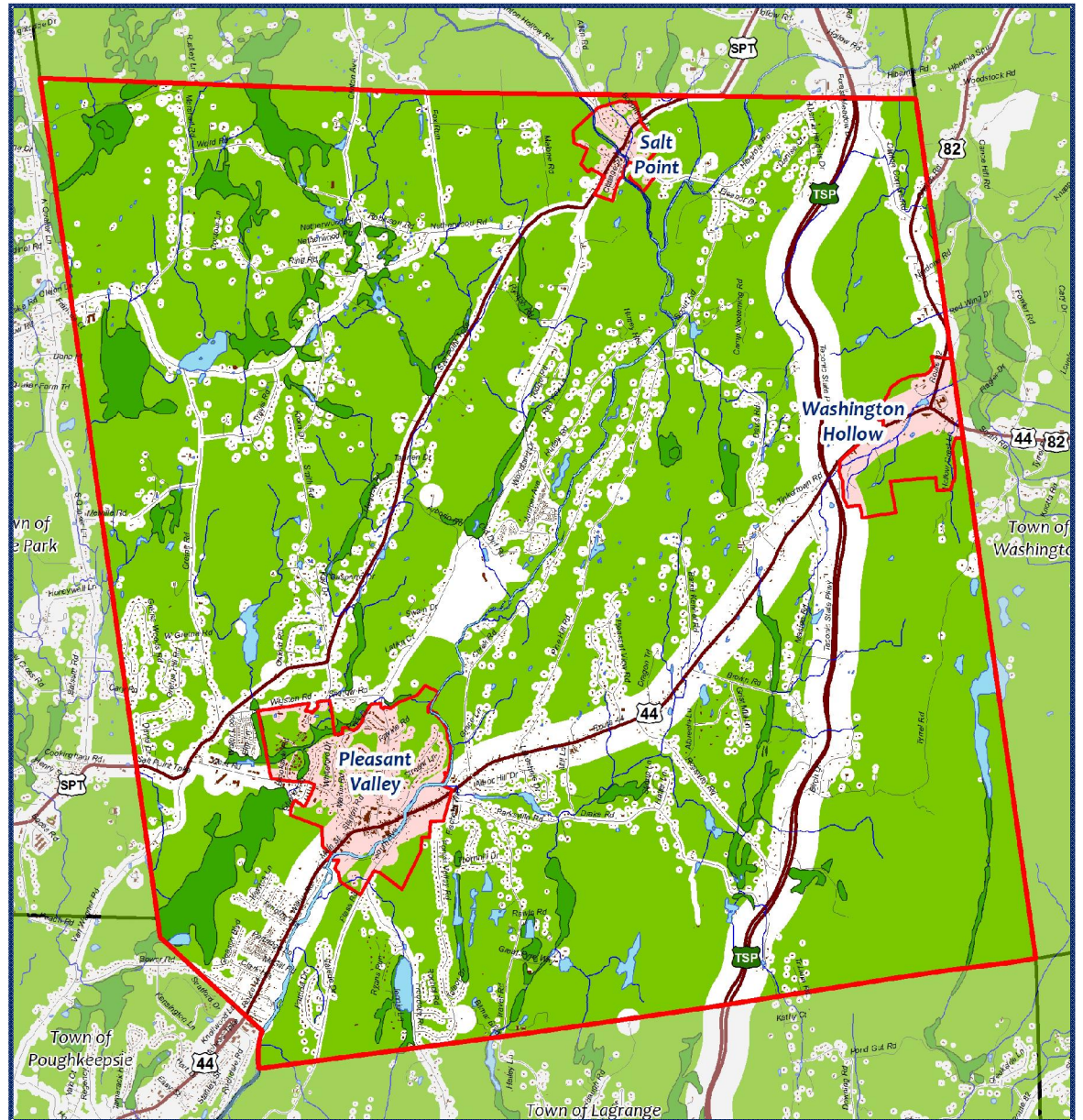


## Parcel Size Distribution



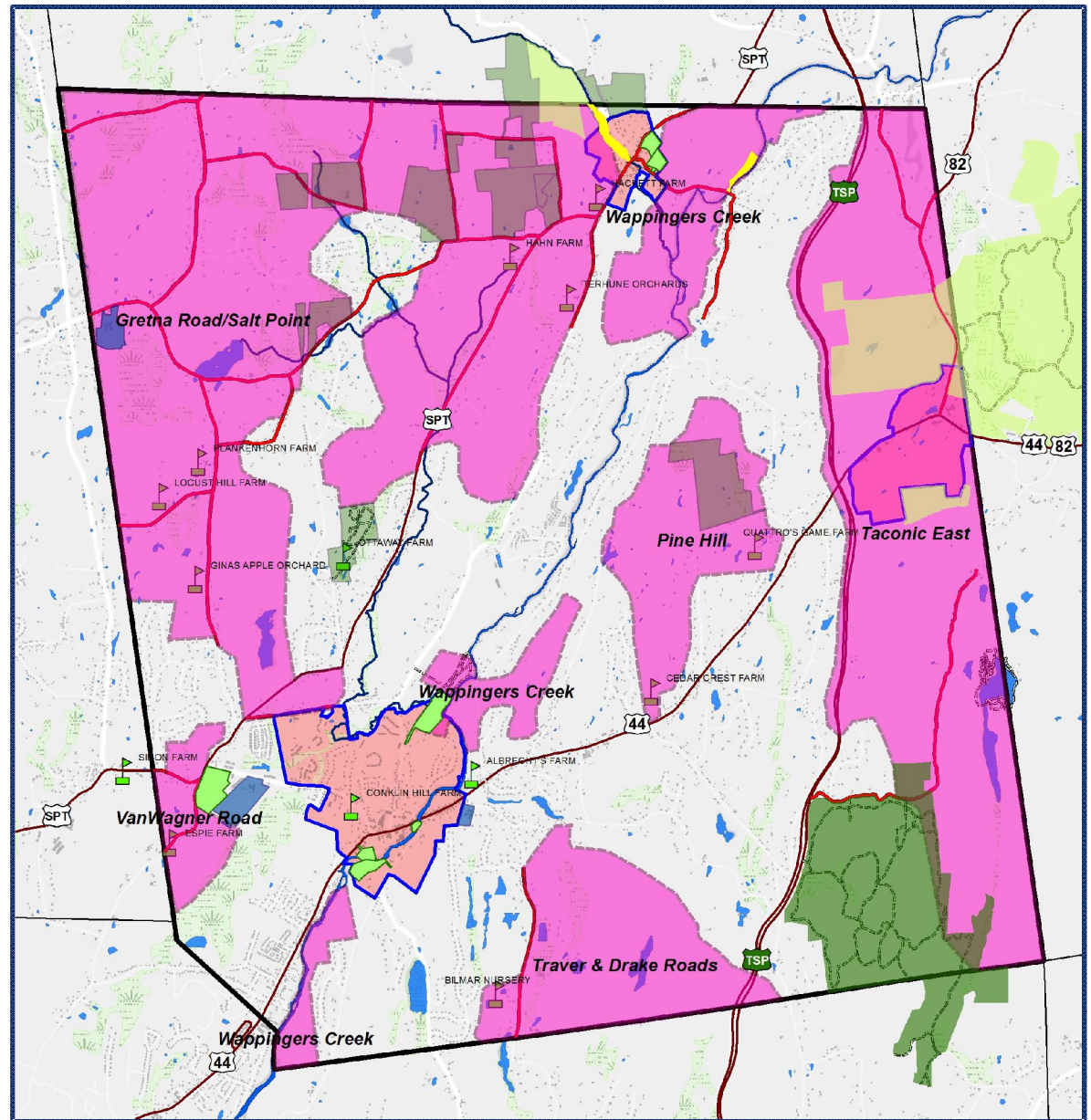
 Contiguous Lands (Habitat)

## Contiguous Lands



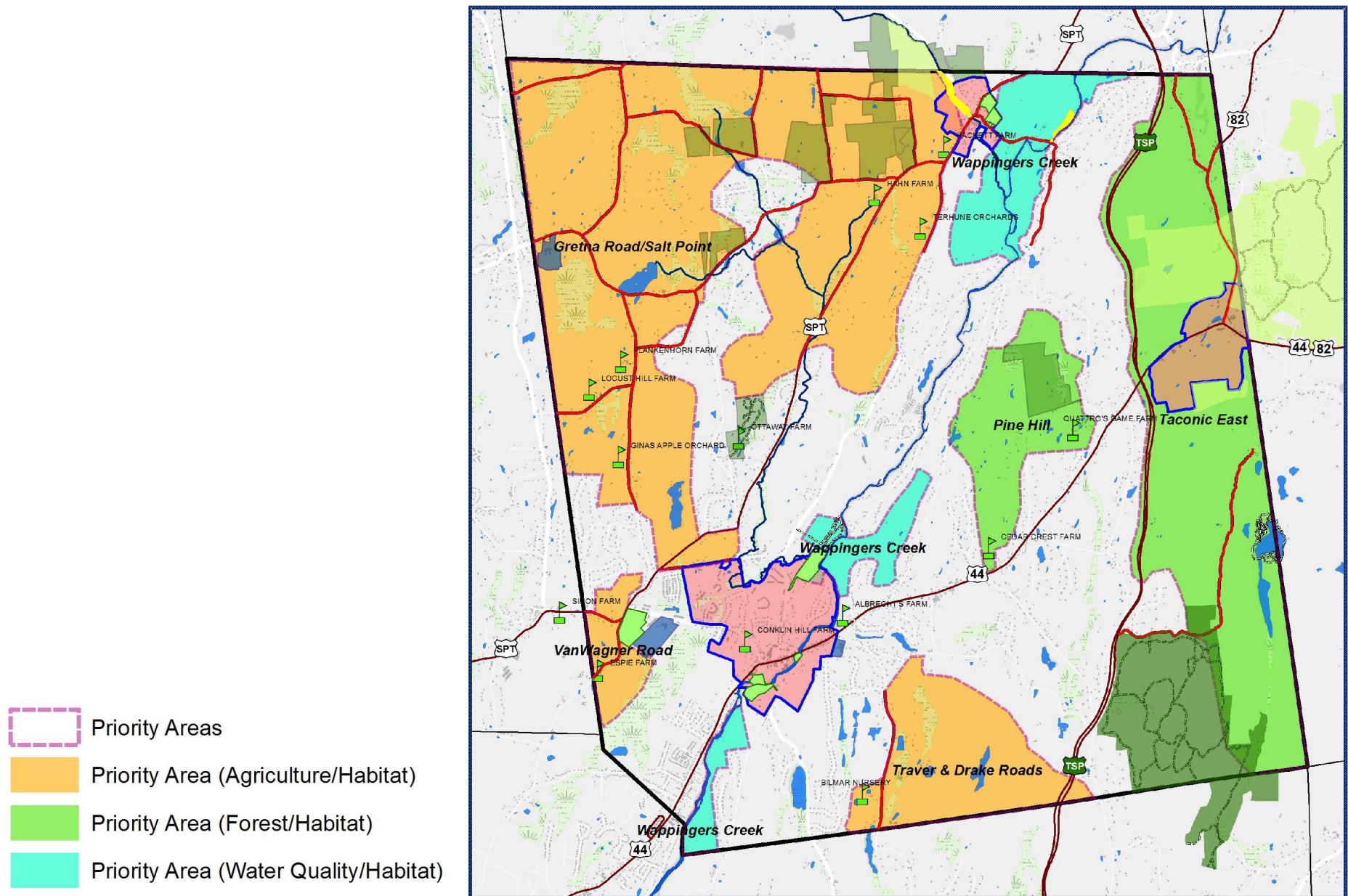


 Priority Areas



Possible Conservation Priority Areas Map





Possible Conservation Priority Areas Map (By Benefit)



# WHAT WILL THE PLAN INCLUDE?

## Policy Recommendations

- MAPPING AND TOWN CODE/ZONING
  - Critical Environmental Areas and Pursue Designation
  - Prepare a Scenic Viewshed Map and Scenic Viewshed Regulations
  - Adopt Right to Farm Laws

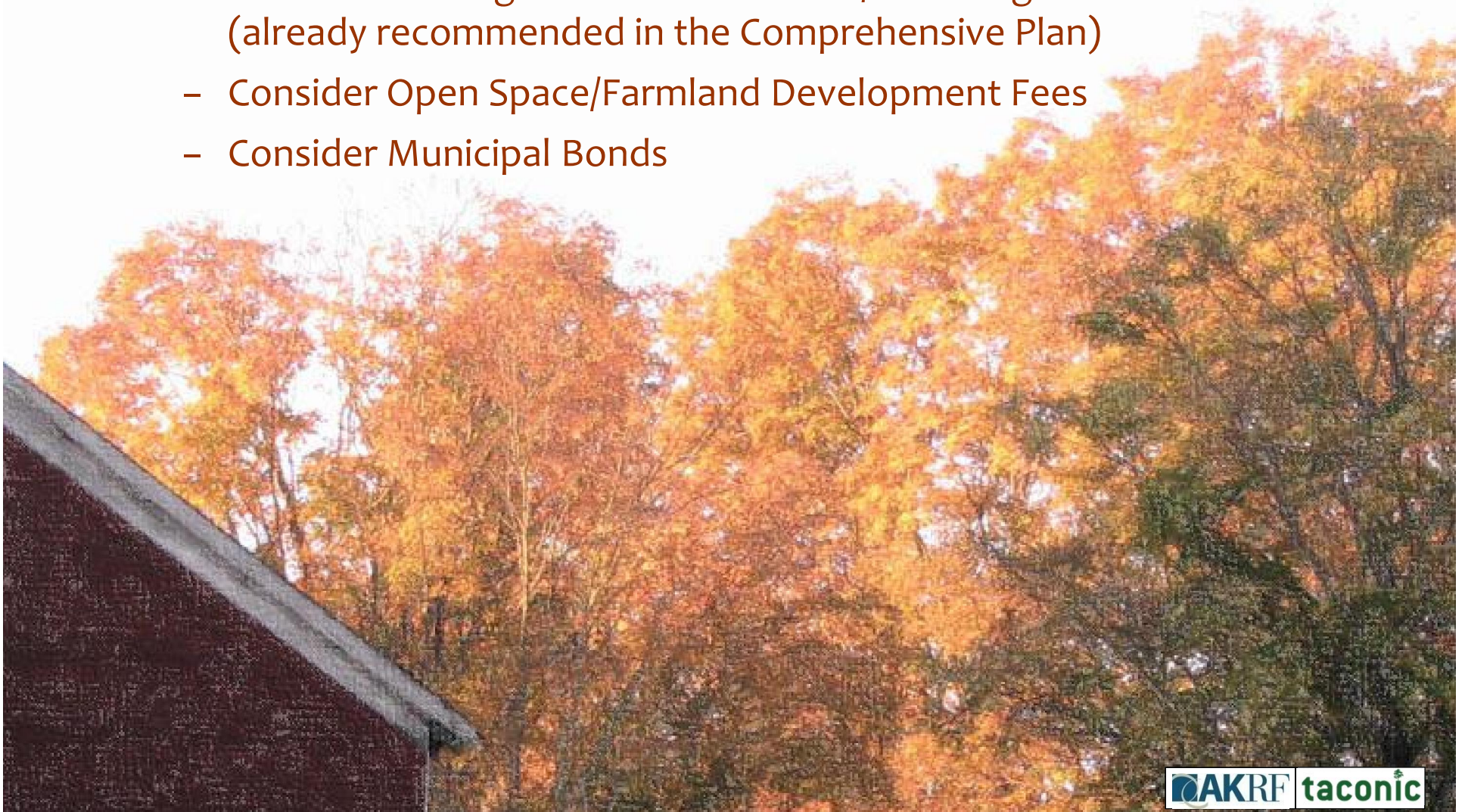




# WHAT WILL THE PLAN INCLUDE?

## Policy Recommendations

- CONSERVATION FINANCE
  - Create a Funding Mechanism for PDR/TDR Programs (already recommended in the Comprehensive Plan)
  - Consider Open Space/Farmland Development Fees
  - Consider Municipal Bonds

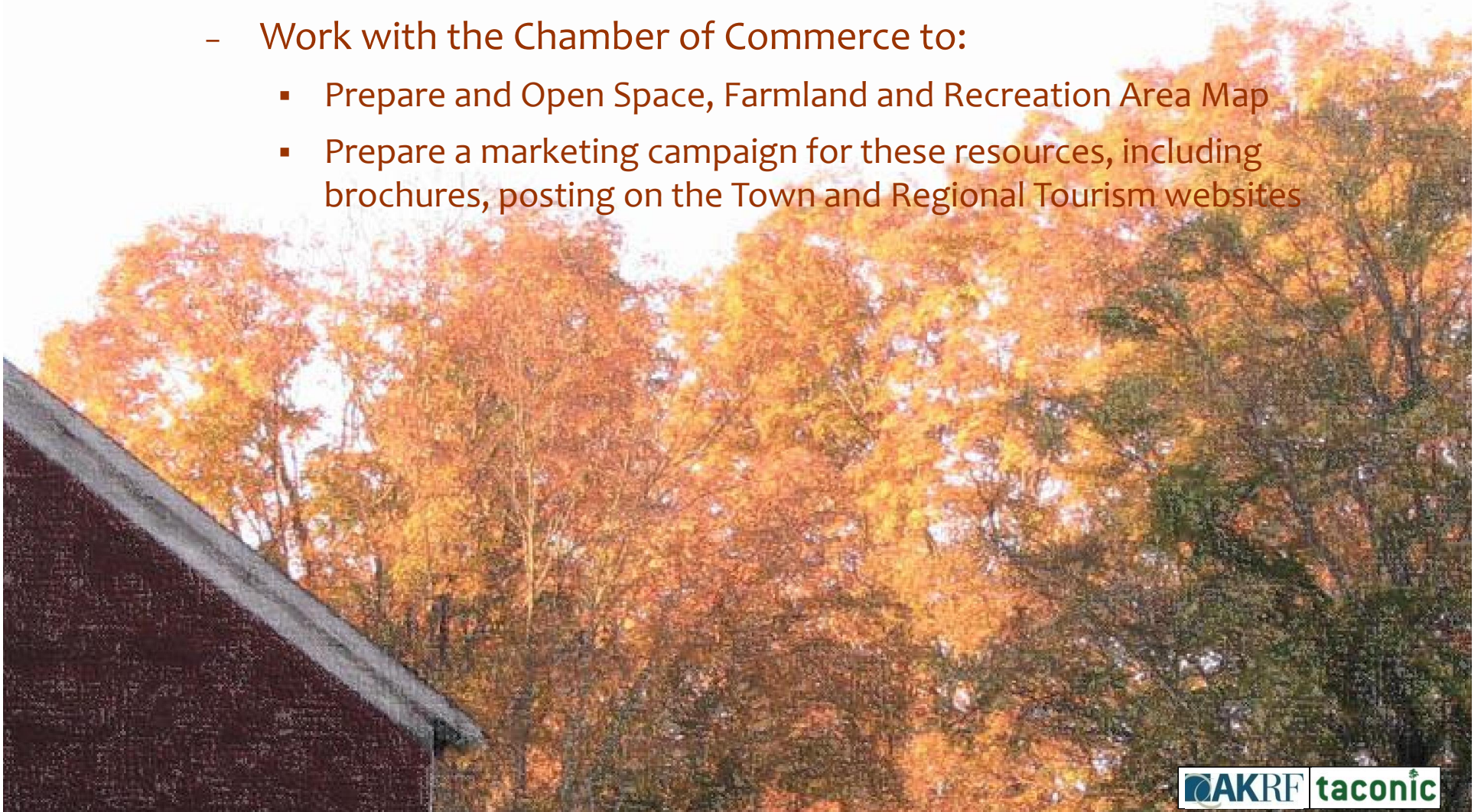




# WHAT WILL THE PLAN INCLUDE?

## Policy Recommendations

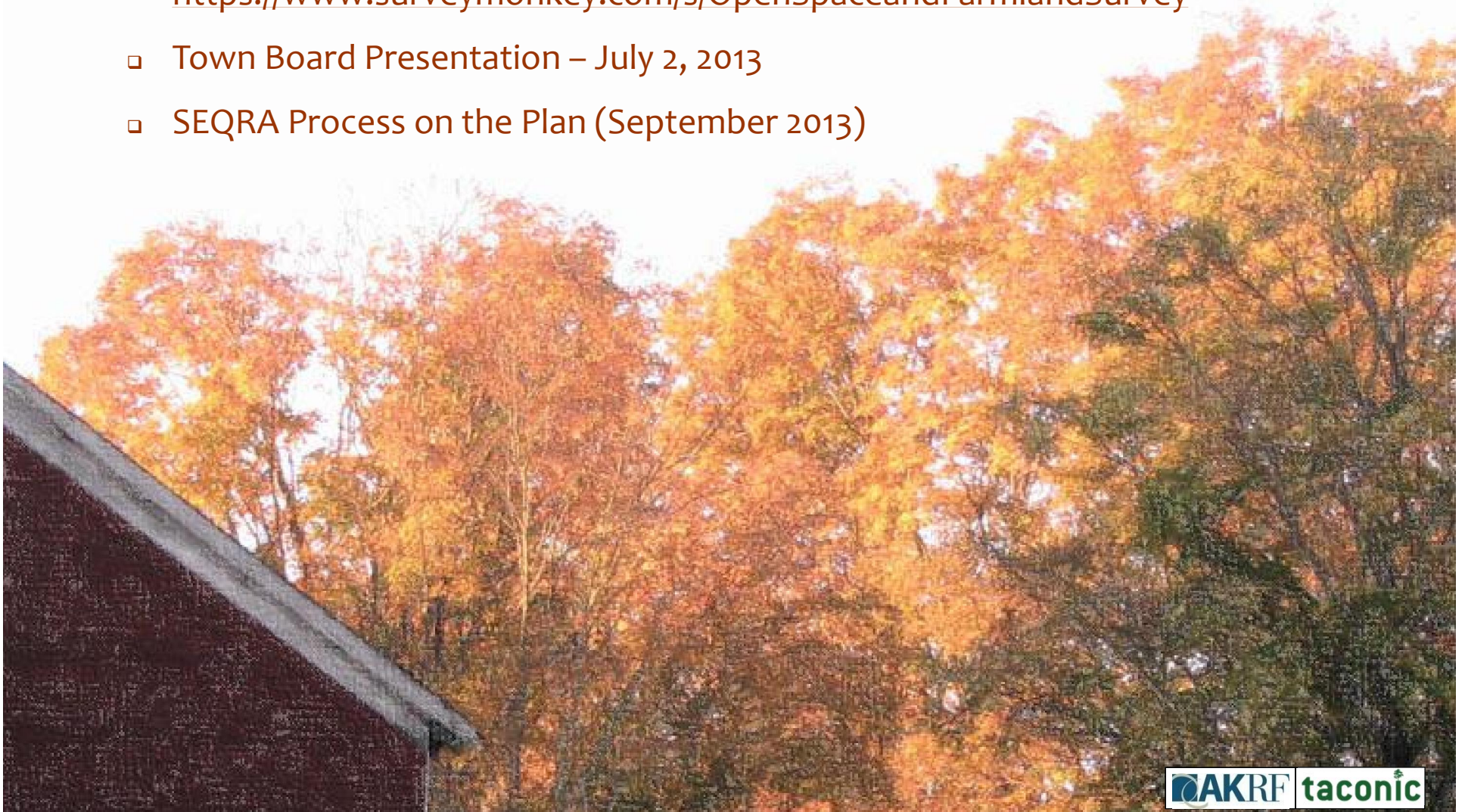
- ❑ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING
  - Develop and Promote Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
  - Work with the Chamber of Commerce to:
    - Prepare and Open Space, Farmland and Recreation Area Map
    - Prepare a marketing campaign for these resources, including brochures, posting on the Town and Regional Tourism websites





# HOW CAN YOU PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INPUT?

- ❑ On-line survey  
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OpenSpaceandFarmlandSurvey>
- ❑ Town Board Presentation – July 2, 2013
- ❑ SEQRA Process on the Plan (September 2013)





# COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

