

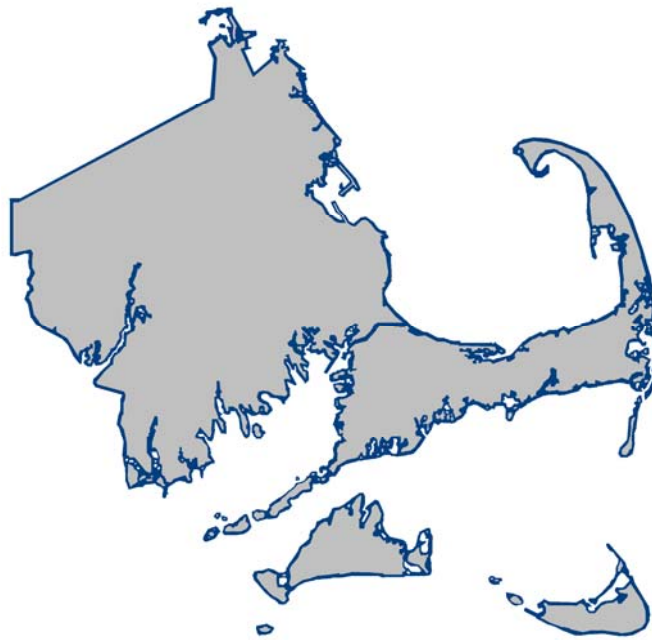
**THE PILGRIM  
RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT (RC&D) AREA  
Massachusetts**

**5-YEAR AREA PLAN**

**2008 - 2012**

**for the Pilgrim RC&D Area**

Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties



Prepared by the Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc.  
15 Cranberry Highway  
West Wareham, Massachusetts 02576

With assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**Required Clauses and Signatures**

The Pilgrim RC&D Council's program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P. L. 100-259) and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7CFR-15, Subparts A&B) which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap/disability be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial (or technical) assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.

The Pilgrim RC&D Council agrees that the signing of this document constitutes agreement to comply with federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free workplace, and responsibilities for procurement, suspension, and disbarment.

The Pilgrim RC&D Council has had this application reviewed by the state. Comments made through the state single point of contact have been considered prior to submission of the application and that all applicable procedures have been followed. An environmental impact statement will not be prepared during the development of the Area Plan, but an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be prepared concurrently with the development of each project, when applicable, in accordance with federal procedures.

William S. Napolitano 4/14/08  
Date  
William S. Napolitano, Chair  
Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc.

James R. Watson 4/14/08  
Date  
James R. Watson, Secretary  
Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc.

Christine S. Clarke 4/14/08  
Date  
Christine Clarke, State Conservationist  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Massachusetts

Curtis T. Elke 4/15/08  
Date  
REVIEWER  
Curtis Elke, Assistant State Conservationist  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Massachusetts

Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc. is an equal opportunity service provider and employer

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**The Pilgrim Resource Conservation & Development Area Council, Inc.  
Board of Directors, Officers, and Staff**

<u>Name</u>	<u>Office</u>	<u>Representing</u>
William Napolitano	President	Southeastern MA Regional Planning and Economic Development District
Richard Ward	Vice President	Plymouth County Conservation District
Jim Watson	Sec./Treas.	Old Colony Planning Commission
T.J. Hegarty		Dukes County Commissioners
Allen Reinhard		Nantucket County Commissioners
William Clark		Barnstable County Commissioners
Tim Soverino		Nantucket County Planning and Economic Development Commission
Carolyn DeMoranville		Plymouth County Commissioners
David Rose		Bristol County Conservation District
Mary McBrady		Community at Large
Barbara Hanley		Community at Large

**Staff**

Irene Winkler	Coordinator	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
Kelly Savary Powers	Secretary	USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

**Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc.**

**Serving**            5 Counties: 64 Towns, 5 Cities

<u>Bristol County</u>	<u>Plymouth County</u>	<u>Barnstable County</u>	<u>Nantucket County</u>	<u>Dukes County</u>
Acushnet	Abington	Barnstable	Nantucket	Chilmark
Berkley	Bridgewater	Bourne		Edgartown
Dartmouth	Carver	Brewster		Aquinnah
Dighton	Duxbury	Chatham		Gosnold
Easton	E. Bridgewater	Dennis		Tisbury
Fairhaven	Halifax	Eastham		Oak Bluffs
Freetown	Hanson	Falmouth		W. Tisbury
Mansfield	Hingham	Harwich		
N. Attleborough	Hull	Mashpee		
Norton	Kingston	Orleans		
Raynham	Lakeville	Provincetown		
Rehoboth	Marion	Sandwich		
Seekonk	Marshfield	Truro		
Somerset	Mattapoissett	Wellfleet		
Swansea	Middleborough	Yarmouth		
Westport	Norwell			
<b><u>Cities</u></b>	Pembroke			
Attleboro	Plymouth			
Fall River	Plympton			
New Bedford	Rochester			
Taunton	Rockland			
	Scituate			
	Wareham			
	W. Bridgewater			
	Whitman			
	<b><u>City</u></b>			
	Brockton			

**Pilgrim Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) Area Council, Inc.**  
**Five Year Strategic Plan for the RC&D Area**  
**2008 - 2012**

(Plymouth, Bristol, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties, Massachusetts)

**Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to provide long term direction (5 years) for the Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc. The Pilgrim RC&D Area Council recognizes that development must be based on sound, sustainable, long-term consideration for the Area's natural resources. Through this plan, the Pilgrim RC&D Area Program will emphasize prudent use, management, and conservation of the Area's natural resources as an integral component of economic development strategies.

The first Area Plan for the Pilgrim RC&D Area was written in 1975. It was used as a tool for people in southeastern Massachusetts to identify and seek solutions to their natural resource based problems. Since 1975, the Area has changed, population has increased significantly and today is nearly 1.3 million. This region continues to be the fastest growing area in the State of Massachusetts.

This document was developed by soliciting public input through a survey of sponsor organizations; environmental, agricultural and natural resource conservation organizations; boards of selectmen; city councils; town administrators; municipal planning boards, departments and staff, conservation commissions and agents, boards of health and staff; and agricultural commissions in the 5 county area served by the Pilgrim RC&D. Council members were provided guidance on the development of this plan and provided input to this plan over a nine month period. The counties served by this Area Plan include the following: Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket.

Congress passed the Food and Agricultural Act of 1962, which authorized Resource Conservation and Development areas. The purpose of the act was to expand opportunities for local units of governments, conservation districts, and individuals to improve their communities in multi-county areas. This included assistance in enhancing the economic, environmental and social well being of the RC&D Areas. Currently, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service administers the Federal RC&D Program. This document serves as an agreement between NRCS and the Pilgrim Resource Conservation and Development Council Inc.

**Pilgrim RC&D Overview**

**Vision**

Natural resource management and protection in a way that improves the economy, the environment, and the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts' communities.

**Mission**

To provide assistance to locally elected and appointed officials, civic leaders and community organizations to plan and implement projects for natural resource conservation and community development.

**Background of the Council**

The original sponsors of Pilgrim RC&D were the County Commissioners, Regional Planning Agencies and Soil Conservation Districts in southeastern Massachusetts. In 1975 they asked for help from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to improve the economy through orderly development and conservation of resources through the Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Program. After USDA approved this request in 1976, the Pilgrim Resource Conservation and Development Area was established. The Pilgrim RC&D Council was established to represent the sponsors and carry out an Area Plan of action.

Early sponsors of the Pilgrim RC&D recognized the opportunities available to not-for-profit organizations and filed for an official determination letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). In August of 1977 the Pilgrim RC&D Area Council was incorporated as a non-profit in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In October of

1978 IRS issued a letter of determination recognizing The Pilgrim Resource Conservation & Development Area Council, Inc as a 501(c) 3 organization.

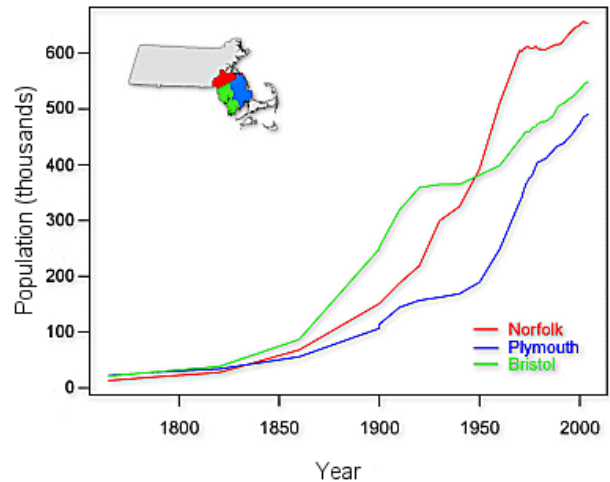
### Overview of the Area

The Pilgrim RC&D Area is located in southeastern Massachusetts and includes Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes and Nantucket Counties. The area is bordered on the east by Buzzards Bay, Cape Cod Bay, Massachusetts Bay, Nantucket Sound and the Atlantic Ocean; to the west by the state of Rhode Island and Norfolk County Massachusetts; to the north by Suffolk County Massachusetts.

With the loss of agricultural and forest lands and with increases in population, the character of the land is changing. Population has increased since the industrial revolution in southeastern Massachusetts, but it has done so much more rapidly since the 1950s.

A simple measure of how the character of the land is changing is population density, or how many people, on average, live per unit of land. Not only does the character of the land change when population density increases, it is well documented that water quality and natural ecosystems suffer greatly with increased human presence.

The average population density for Massachusetts is about 250 persons/km<sup>2</sup>. Currently, the population density of Bristol and Plymouth Counties are about 375 and 280 persons/km<sup>2</sup> respectively. Some define rural as towns with less than 100 persons/km<sup>2</sup>. If so, most of the towns of Southeastern Massachusetts that were rural are now gone. Others define urban to be towns with more than 300 persons/km<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, the number of urban areas in Southeastern Massachusetts has grown while the largest change is an increase in suburban towns (100 to 300 persons/km<sup>2</sup>). Formerly urban areas are being outpaced in terms of growth by former rural and suburban towns.



Population trends for Southeastern Massachusetts

Within the next 15 years the population is projected to grow by more than 200,000, increasing stress on our water supplies, wetlands, productive farmlands and existing agricultural businesses, open spaces, cultural and historic resources, valuable wildlife and habitat, transportation systems and more. This Area Plan has been developed to address the changes in the Area and the most pressing resource needs.

The Pilgrim RC&D Area is located in southeastern Massachusetts.

- ❑ Bristol, Plymouth, Barnstable, Nantucket and Dukes Counties.
- ❑ 65 Towns and 5 cities, all with distinct and different forms of local governance
- ❑ 1,190,000 acres (1,859 square miles) (24% of state)
- ❑ 1.3 million population (year 2002) (20% of state)
- ❑ 8 River Basins (Ten Mile River, Mount Hope Bay, Narragansett Bay, Buzzards Bay, Taunton River, Cape Cod Bay, Cape Cod, Southcoastal)
- ❑ 1,000 miles of saltwater coastline
- ❑ Over 1,100 inland lakes, ponds and reservoirs
- ❑ 122,000 acres of Agricultural land (11% of Area and 23% of states)

Resources of Regional Importance:

- ❑ The area was founded by the Mayflower Pilgrims in 1620.
- ❑ Home to federally recognized Wampanoag nations
- ❑ Over half the worlds cranberry production
- ❑ Two large populated islands, accessible only by air or boat
- ❑ 300 historical sites

- ❑ Cape Cod National Sea Shore
- ❑ Recharge areas to existing and future water supplies
- ❑ Recharge area to coastal embayments
- ❑ Inland and coastal wetlands and their recharge areas
- ❑ Inland and coastal ponds
- ❑ Floodplains, beaches, banks and dunes
- ❑ Commercial and recreational shellfish and finfish habitat
- ❑ Rare plant and animal habitat
- ❑ Private open space
- ❑ Town conservation lands
- ❑ Economic, historic and cultural resources
- ❑ Historic villages
- ❑ Working waterfronts and harbor areas
- ❑ 18 State parks and forests
- ❑ Active agricultural and aquacultural areas
- ❑ Scenic landscapes

Southeastern Massachusetts is a large area in transition. It is a region of 64 towns and 5 cities that share common challenges; managing change to ensure a high quality of life, to protect a unique environment and enhance their economic future. A vision has emerged for southeastern Massachusetts through a regional "Smart Growth" effort - this vision has been established to fully meet the challenges by the year 2020.

Unmanaged growth will create problems in every community in land use, the environment, economic development and infrastructure and the delivery of local services. Ideally the citizens within the region should manage the economic and physical change through consensus and avoid irreversible problems. Equipped with good public policy, plans, regulations, technical and educational services, communities can support actions that keep southeastern Massachusetts a desirable place to live, work, and visit.

Southeastern Massachusetts retains fragile rural qualities and historic towns, cities, and cultures that are threatened by sprawl and uncontrolled development. Growth management means investment management, promoting high quality of life, efficient use of public resources and enhancing private investment opportunities while sustaining a healthy environment.

The forces of economic change and location preferences are rapidly converting vast amount of land in southeastern Massachusetts into a monotonous pattern of sprawl. Long and economic "backwater" of New England, the region has emerged as one of the strongest growth areas in the Northeast. This trend is consuming open space, erasing the historic character of communities, threatening important environmental resources, and burdening a strained infrastructure in the region that covers nearly 1.2 million acres and contains 1.3 million residents.

Southeastern Massachusetts is the state's new growth frontier. By the year 2020 there will be over 200,000 new residents in the region. Between 1960 and 1990, southeastern Massachusetts grew by more than 10,000 people per year, or a growth rate of 46 percent. This rate is triple the rate for Massachusetts as a whole. An addition of 10,000 new residents requires an additional 3,500 housing units, 28,000 extra vehicle trip days, consumes an additional 710,000 gallons of water per day and enrolls 2,157 new students per year.

Growth stresses the community fabric causing problems that are difficult to resolve. The cost of pressures and problems diminishes the overall quality of life within the region. Many communities actively seek industrial and commercial development without regard for the impact of such development on their own or neighboring towns. Agricultural land is under increasing pressure for development. Traditional town and city centers continue to decline in the face of more competitive, auto-oriented retail locations. Commuters are frustrated with long delays and local traffic fills constricted roads. The expansion of school systems, utility systems and community services stretch budgets. Communities compete for non-residential development to help build their tax base because new housing developments frequently do not pay for the increased services they require.

Growth in the region is not uniform. The population of Brockton, Fall River and New Bedford grew by only 3.6% over the last thirty years, while the balance of the region grew by more than 80%. Some cities have lost population, but must continue to maintain the infrastructure designed to support a larger population. The large urban areas remain captured in long-term economic stagnation linked to the steady decline in the manufacturing sector. These cities would welcome growth. Population and income growth in the urban communities are far behind the regional or state averages. In the urban areas the cost of managing large and underutilized infrastructure consumes scarce local resources.

The growth population is concentrated in communities that increasingly serve as commuter suburbs. Residents on the Cape find that Boston is a reasonable commute and commuters no longer consider bridges a limit to commuting. From Plymouth to Pembroke and from Mansfield to Hyannis, residential construction dominated by single family housing is underway.

Cape Cod is a finite place, with a limited capacity to sustain new growth. Respondents to the 1996 survey used to develop the Cape Cod Regional Policy plan indicated that the following factors were very important in their decision to live on Cape Cod: 60% cited the air and water quality, 55% cited proximity to the coast, 52% cited rural character, 48% cited small town life style. Respondents ranked traffic congestion, population growth, ground water pollution, pollution of coastal waters, loss of open space as the most serious problems facing the Cape over the next 5 years. Fifty four percent of the respondents to the survey indicated that over the past 25 years population growth in their town has worsened the quality of life. Under existing regulations, the build-out potential of the Cape is substantial and population growth is expected to continue. If not properly managed such growth could result in additional environmental degradation and a diminished quality of life, which in turn can undermine the economic health of the region. Another commuter hub is Hyannis, on Cape Cod, providing bus services to residents who commute to Boston daily.

Cape Cod, which relies on ground water as its sole source of drinking water is particularly vulnerable to groundwater pollution from sources like onsite sewage disposal systems, dumping and burial of toxic materials on military bases. Nonpoint pollution discharge to surface waters and wetlands from roads, lawns and agriculture pose a threat to shellfishing areas. Over the past 20 years, the residents of Cape Cod have become aware of the fragile nature and limited availability of the Cape's land and water

A sole source aquifer is the principle supply of drinking water for an area where, if contaminated, may become a significant health risk to the local residents. The large 140 sq.mi. Plymouth-Carver aquifer is the second largest aquifer in the State. It contains more than 500 billion gallons of fresh water and is easily subject to degradation because of porous soils that can allow contaminants to travel widely. The towns of Plymouth, Carver, Wareham, Bourne, Plympton, Middleborough, and Kingston all depend on the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer as their principal source of water. Recognizing the critical nature of the situation of the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer as potable supply, the Massachusetts Legislature, voted to create the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer Advisory Committee (PCAAC).

Working with the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), PCAAC will develop the Plymouth-Carver Aquifer Action Plan. Committee meetings will focus on the following topics:

- Negotiation strategies with local developers and other users of water resources for effective management and conservation.
- Education regarding legislative and administrative policies on water permitting, use, and mitigation at the state, regional, and local level.
- Strategies and regulatory parameters for water resource protection for state and local governance, including but not limited to the reuse of effluent, stormwater management, resource protection model by-laws, and multiple community strategies in use elsewhere.
- Dewatering and the impacts of earth removal activities on groundwater levels.
- Relationship of private water supplies on existing and future potential water supplies (i.e. impact of private community supplies; impact of irrigation projects).

Adequate water supply and good water quality are problems throughout the region. Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket's drinking water sources are also underlying sole source aquifers. Some communities are disadvantaged because their water needs for commercial and residential development do not meet their supply. There are no regional strategies to ensure clean and sufficient water for all communities in southeastern Massachusetts. Cape Cod has long been concerned about the limits on its water supply, a resource that is considered scarce today.

Land use patterns are changing. Land is being consumed to serve a mobile culture. Land in southeastern Massachusetts is being consumed at a rate two and one-half times the rate of regional population growth. Between 1951 and 1985, one-third of the agricultural land and open land was converted to urbanized land uses. Agricultural and open land declined from over 200,000 to 110,000 acres today. In the same time urbanizing land use more than doubled. By the year 2020, without change in current development patterns, the percentage of land in southeastern Massachusetts that is developed is liable to increase an additional 20%.

There are approximately 123,000 acres dedicated to agricultural production on 1650 farms in the Area. There are 14,000 acres of harvested cranberry bogs in the region. Of the approximately 1,000 cranberry growers in North America, 400 are in Massachusetts. About 70 percent of these growers are small family farms with less than 20 acres of bog. Cranberry growers own and control approximately 48,000 acres of upland and wetland support lands, outside of cranberry production acreage.

On average, every planted acre of cranberries is supported by three to four acres of surrounding wetlands and uplands. These supporting wetlands and uplands provide open space, wildlife habitat and groundwater recharge in an area otherwise stressed from urbanization.

The region supports a diversity of agricultural businesses including greenhouse and nursery, fruits, vegetables, livestock, poultry, milk and other crops.

Within the last 10 years the region has experienced a resurgence in people interested in agriculture and local agriculture. There is growing awareness of the benefits of purchasing local products, for the economy, the environment, health and energy savings. The Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, Inc. (SEMAP) was organized to support the business, marketing and technical needs of farm businesses in the region. Agricultural Commission (AgComs) have been organizing in municipalities throughout the region to raise the visibility and provide a voice for agriculture. Five years ago there were 6 AgComs in the area today there are 110 and the numbers continue to grow.

There is a significant and growing demand by consumers for locally grown and processed foods. Energy conservation, food safety, supporting local growers and agricultural businesses, and environmental protection are all drivers for this movement. Pilgrim RC&D has played a significant role in establishing service infrastructure to support buy local efforts and agricultural business to business initiatives in the region. The Council will continue to support the movement and efforts of growers associations, agricultural commissions, the Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, MA Department of Agricultural Resources and the United States Department of Agriculture in efforts that support and promote growth of local agriculture and buy local efforts.

Energy conservation has grown significantly in importance within the past 10 years. Businesses, governments, citizens, and agriculture are all researching and implementing ways to reduce fuel consumption, develop alternative energy sources, and reduce their carbon footprint. Municipalities are organizing Energy committees that are addressing the need for public education, technical assistance, and financial assistance for creating incentives for reducing energy consumption. The state and federal government and the private sector are offering educational, technical and financial incentive programs for citizens and businesses to conserve energy and develop alternative fuel sources. This trend will grow and strengthen within the timeframe of this plan.

Income is unevenly distributed throughout the Area. While the residents of a few suburban communities have extremely high average incomes, most towns and cities rank near the bottom in average income for the state and have many residents whose skills are poorly matched to growing economic sectors with higher paying jobs.

## **NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Needs and opportunities were identified in strategic plans developed by counties and growth management plans developed by regional planning agencies. They were also identified and scored through a questionnaire provided to municipal leadership; town administrators; planning boards and staff; conservation commission boards and staff; boards of health; agricultural commissions; agricultural, environmental and community development organizations throughout the Area.

The Council reviewed and considered all of this data for the creation of this plan during Fiscal Year 2007. Given the five plan time-frame and the resources available, this plan addresses those needs and opportunities that clearly meet our vision and mission and that are either not being addressed by other organizations or not being addressed adequately. Therefore, not all needs and opportunities are addressed in this plan.

## **AGRICULTURE**

### **Land Conservation & Management**

#### **Needs and Opportunities:**

1. *Agricultural sustainability, retain existing farmers and develop future farmers*
2. *Working farmland protection*
3. *Meat slaughtering and processing facilities(USDA-inspected)*
4. *Increased participation in USDA and state programs for resource conservation technical and financial assistance*
5. *Greater application of agricultural soil and water conservation practices*
6. *Grassland management, conservation and improved forage production*
7. *Aquaculture sustainability*
8. *Improved wildlife management planning and plan implementation*

#### **GOAL A:**

To increase awareness, through education, of farmers and communities of the consequences of farmland protection programs and planning and zoning tools.

#### **Objective 1:**

2008 – 2009: Gather data on farmland acres in Area, farmland permanently protected, not permanently protected, land at risk of loss to other uses, land under farmland protection programs i.e., APR, FRPP, land trust conservation restrictions, MDAR Farm Viability covenants, etc. by end of 2009.

#### **Strategies:**

Years 2008 – 2010: Data Collection, Research, Synthesis and Documentation

Collect GIS mapping and data for farmland in area; acres, land use, ownership, protected or not – what programs. Document.

#### **Objective 2:**

2008 and 2009: Research Farmland Protection programs, services and techniques.

Determine:

- What programs and services are effective (benefit farmer, farmland and community for short and long terms)
- What programs and services works are not effective (benefit farmer, farmland and community for short and long terms) what are farmer apprehensions what concerns are real and substantiated, which are not.
- What is Community perspective. “What are benefits to farmer, business, community, public, consumer...”
- What are concerns of farmers, program and service participants, program and service staff, community leaders and staff (BOS, AgComs, town planning departments etc.)
- What are viable programs, services, planning and zoning tools and techniques for short and long term

#### **Strategies:**

Individually and then collectively, conduct interviews with farmers and farmland protection specialists from American Farmland Trust (AFT), Farm Bureau, MA Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) –Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program, MDAR Farm Viability; SEMAP Farms Forever, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Farm and Ranchland Protection Program,, land trusts, town planners to discuss strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities to strengthen programs. Understand farmer’s interests, apprehensions, benefits and “losses” when participating in programs – look at short and long term economic benefits to farmer, and community.

Answer the Questions:

Is what has been done in terms of farmland protection programs working

to benefit the farmer, the community and agriculture in short and long term?  
What is working and why?  
What is not working and why not?

2010: Document results of data and research. Determine if apprehension of some programs and services is real and substantiated or not.

**Objective 3:**

Educate farmers and community leaders on tools available for farmland retention and their short and long term consequences.

**Strategies:**

Years 2011 – 2012: Plan and implement 2 educational forums for farmers and community re: effective (benefit farmer community, and tax payers economically, environmentally, socially) farmland programs and methods, how to participate, testimonies and case studies etc.

Educational forums will be recorded and available to public throughout the Area.

2009 – 2012: Assist AFT on farmland protection methods by distributing AFT's Municipal Guide on Farmland Protection tools and techniques. Providing one educational workshops per year on Guide. (Through AgCom Gatherings)

Promote SEMAP Farms Forever Program on RC&D Website and AgCom Website and at educational forums

**GOAL B.**

Promote agricultural viability and retention by providing a voice and visibility for agriculture at the local level through establishment of town Agricultural Commissions.

**Objective 1:**

Provide organizational assistance that results in the establishment of 20 new town agricultural commissions by 2012.

**Strategies:**

2008: Work with the Martha's Vineyard Commission (county-wide AgCom-7 towns), Acushnet, Wareham and Fairhaven to provide assistance in creating an agricultural commission. Plan town-wide agricultural commission informational meetings, assist steering committees with drafting town meeting warrant articles, prepare steering committees for town Meeting.

2009: Work with Swansea, Seekonk, Freetown and Berkley to provide assistance in creating an agricultural commission. Plan town-wide agricultural commission informational meetings, assist steering committees with drafting town meeting warrant articles, prepare steering committees for town Meeting.

2010: Work with Plymouth, Halifax, Dighton to provide assistance in creating an agricultural commission. Plan town-wide agricultural commission informational meetings, assist steering committees with drafting town meeting warrant articles, prepare steering committees for town Meeting.

2011: Work with 3 towns on the Cape to provide assistance in creating an agricultural commission. Plan town-wide agricultural commission informational meetings, assist steering committees with drafting town meeting warrant articles, prepare steering committees for town Meeting.

**Objective 2:**

Provide support to all existing agricultural commissions by providing assistance with planning and implementing educational forums on topics that range from developing goals to conflict resolution, to new markets etc. Work in partnership with AgComs, MDAR, AFT, MA Office of Dispute Resolution (MODR), SEMAP, Ag in the Classroom, land trusts, Farm Bureau etc. Provide one-on-one technical assistance to AgComs upon requests.

2008 – 2012: Provide support to existing Agricultural Commissions by facilitating meetings that result in establishment of goals and the development of individual AgCom Work Plans, maintain the agricultural commission website [www.massagcom.org](http://www.massagcom.org), provide planning assistance for regional and statewide AgCom gatherings, provide grant writing services that fund town agricultural inventories and mapping projects, support farmers markets, and organizational support for the potential establishment of a statewide AgCom support organization.

2008 – 2009: Continue implementation of MDAR and MA Society for Promoting Agriculture (MSPA) grants to populate and manage Statewide AgCom website.

**Objective 3:**

Research the need for a statewide organization to support municipal agricultural commissions.

**Strategies**

2008: Write AgMarketing grant proposal for funding a statewide agricultural commission meeting at which discussion of a statewide support organization will take place.

2009: If proposal is funded, provide organizational assistance needed to prepare for statewide meeting. Survey AgComs on what they want and need from meeting, what they expect as a result of attending the meeting. Implement meeting in 2009. Include the opportunity for AgCom members to discuss the merits of having a statewide support organization for AgComs

2009 – 2012: Should AgComs want a statewide support organization, Pilgrim RC&D will provide technical assistance support to AgCom members who will spearhead the effort.

**Objective 4:**

2008 and 2009: Plan a statewide Agricultural Commission Educational Forum. Work in partnership with MDAR, AgComs AFT and others to provide a program that meets the needs of the AgComs and provides the opportunity to discuss the merits of a statewide Agricultural Commission support organization, and if positive begin discussion on how to organize.

**Objective 5:**

2009 – 2012: Provide technical assistance to plan and create this organization. (If majority of AgComs favor the establishment of a statewide AgCom support organization).

**GOAL C.**

Support the establishment of a USDA-Inspected meat slaughter and processing facility that will serve southeastern Massachusetts meat producers.

**Objective 1:**

Continue providing coordination and technical assistance to the SEMass Meat Producers Group.

Support strengthening the meat slaughtering and processing infrastructure in SEMass. Encourage the development of USDA inspected slaughter and processing facilities. These facilities support existing producers and encourage new production and processing that offers a diversity of marketing opportunities to the producer.

**Strategies:**

2008: Support the efforts of SJH Consulting for their Federal State Marketing Improvement Program (FSMIP) Proposal to study supply and demand for local meats and the barriers faced by producers to supply and meet demand and barriers faced by processors and distributors to address supply and demand issues.

Educate producers, funders, legislators of need for meat processing infrastructure (use results of surveys and SJH research)

2008 – 2012: Provide organizational assistance to group by planning a minimum of one annual meeting on or around January of each year.

Continue expansion of meat producers email list. Encourage communication among group members through use of list.

**GOAL D.**

Provide Technical Assistance and educational assistance to farmers and communities for the conservation and wise use and management of soil and land resources.

**Objective 1:**

Complete ERT Studies that address impacts of land use change, open space protection, proposals that affects farmland/agriculture.

**Strategies:**

2008: Complete Fee schedule for Environmental Review Team (ERT) Study services.

2008 – 2009: Market the availability of ERT services to municipalities in Area. ERT brochures will be developed and provided to all municipalities in Area.

2009 – 2012: A maximum of 2 ERT studies will be conducted/year.

2008 – 2012: Provide information about ERTs on RC&D and AgCom website

**Objective 2:**

Increase participation in federal, state and regional technical and financial assistance programs that address conservation and wise use of agricultural resources by promoting their availability.

**Strategies:**

2008 – 2012: Post EQIP, WHIP, WRP, programs etc., on AgCom and RC&D Websites, as well as state programs such as MA AEEP, Farm Viability etc.

Participate in 2 Educational forums per year sponsored by AgComs and Conservation Districts.

Encourage state and federal NRCS, FSA, MDAR, etc., participation at AgCom gatherings for the purpose of educating farmers about program assistance.

## **DEVELOPING LANDS**

### **Land Conservation & Management**

#### **Needs and Opportunities**

1. *Sustainable development-sustainable land use planning and zoning*
2. *Development proposal evaluations for impact on surrounding land uses, water resources, land resources etc.*

#### **GOAL A.**

Provide technical assistance to communities for the conservation, wise use and management of soil, land, wildlife and natural resources.

#### **Objective 1:**

Complete Environmental Review Team (ERT) Studies that address:

1. Impacts of land use change on natural resources and the community,
2. Natural resource assessments and provide management recommendations for wildlife, recreation, open space, and forest management etc.,
3. Natural resource assessments and provide management recommendations for open space and land acquisition,
4. Development proposals for their affect on drainage and stormwater management, soil erosion and sedimentation, water quality etc.

#### **Strategies:**

2008: Complete Fee schedule for Environmental Review Team (ERT) Study services.

2008 – 2009: Market the availability of ERT services to municipalities in Area. ERT brochures will be developed and provided to all municipalities in Area.

2009 – 2012: A maximum of 2 ERT studies will be conducted/year.

2008 – 2012: Provide information about ERTs on RC&D and AgCom website.

## **FORESTLANDS**

### **Land Conservation & Management**

#### **Needs and Opportunities**

1. *Wildfire Protection*

2. *Forest management for timber production and utilization; forestlands conservation and protection*

#### **GOAL A.**

Wildfire Protection Plans are developed for large tracts of land located in the Area that are at high risk for wildfire on the urban fringe.

##### **Objective 1:**

Track and follow up on 2008 DHS, Assistance to Firefighters grant proposal for Fire Protection and Fire Safety:

Plans to be developed for communities, foundations, large tracts of privately owned or state owned on forestlands at high risk for wildfire on the urban fringe.

##### **Objective 2:**

2008: (If funded) ID Major parcels of forestlands/open space that are municipally, state, and privately owned that may be considered high wildfire risk on the urban fringe. Determine ownership. Map and document.

##### **Strategies: (2009)**

Gather town pre-disaster plans and evaluate for wildfire risk.

ID and document parcels that are high wildfire risk

##### **Objective 3:**

2009: (If funded) In partnership with Cape Cod Cooperative Extension Implement Fire Prevention and Safety proposal if grant is awarded.

##### **Strategies: (2009)**

Develop solicitation package that will be sent to all municipalities, fire departments, state agencies and private land owners that own major parcels of forestlands/open space.

In partnership with Cape Cod Cooperative Extension review competitive proposals, select and notify proposals that will receive a Wildfire Mitigation Plan and onsite demonstrations of Wildfire prevention best management practices.

Coordinate completion and delivery of plans through use of forester/wildfire consultant by the end of FY 2009.  
(plans contain risk/hazard assessments, and proposed BMPs for risk reduction)

Develop community education and outreach plan and develop educational brochures to facilitate communications between private land owners, fire departments and community for understanding of risk and hazards of wildfire and prevention and mitigation practices.

Develop political support for wildfire mitigation and prevention planning and IMPLEMENTATION of planned practices.

2010: Develop plan for gaining Political support for funding implementation of wildfire mitigation and prevention practices.

2012: Secure implementation \$ for wildfire/urban fringe hazard reduction.

#### **Goal B.**

Support increased technical assistance to be provided to private forest owners through the State Forest Stewardship Program.

##### **Objective 1:**

Secure services of the Forest Stewardship Coordinator to service private forestland owners in southeastern Massachusetts.

##### **Strategies (2009)**

Contact stewardship coordinator and program administrator to seek out and request direct services to be provided to southeastern Massachusetts forest owners and managers.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Agricultural Development**

#### **Needs and Opportunities**

1. *Connecting consumers with locally grown products*
2. *Physical Infrastructure development to support ag production*
3. *Encouraging value added processing (agproducts)*
4. *AgCom organization*
5. *AgCom support*
6. *Agricultural education*
7. *Availability of USDA-inspected processing facilities (meat and poultry)*
8. *Technical assistance and educational agricultural production*
9. *Food security promotion*
10. *Economic impact of colony collapse*
11. *Farm business planning training*
12. *Organic food production and development*

#### **GOAL A.**

The public is educated about the value of buying and producing local food and purchase local products regularly.

##### **Objective 1:**

Promote the services available to the public through SEMAP

##### **Strategies:**

2008-2012: Publicize the SEMAP website through the Pilgrim website, Pilgrim newsletters, Pilgrim Annual Reports, at farmers markets and public meetings.

#### **GOAL B.**

Farmers are informed about SEMAP and participate in the SEMAP Council and in SEMAP Programs and Services.

##### **Objective 1:**

Advocate farmer participation in SEMAP Council, programs and services including but not limited to Buy Fresh Buy Local Campaign, B2B Network and Farms Forever Program.

##### **Strategies:**

2008-2012 Advocate that farmers participate in SEMAP Council programs and services through presentations to Agricultural Commissions, postings on the Agricultural Commission Website and requesting SEMAP participation at RC&D sponsored meetings.

#### **GOAL C.**

Existing, new and potential farmers possess necessary business skills.

##### **Objective 1:**

Provide business planning educational opportunities to farmers throughout the Area on an annual basis.

##### **Strategies:**

2008: Partner with MDAR and SEMAP to offer the NxLevel Agricultural Business Planning Course to a minimum of 13 farm businesses.

2009: Partner with MDAR and SEMAP to offer the Explorer Course to a minimum of 12 individuals interested in starting a farm businesses.

2010: Partner with MDAR and SEMAP to offer the NxLevel Agricultural Business Planning Course to a minimum of 13 farm businesses.

2011: Partner with MDAR and SEMAP to offer the Explorer Course to a minimum of 12 individuals interested in starting a farm businesses.

2012: Partner with MDAR and SEMAP to offer the NxLevel Agricultural Business Planning Course to a minimum of 13 farm businesses.

**GOAL D:**

Promote adequate infrastructure to serve existing agricultural businesses and new entry farming businesses.

**Objective 1:**

Continue to support the efforts of the Dartmouth Grange Shared Use Community Kitchen Committee to secure additional kitchen equipment and supplies that will result in increasing client use of kitchen for value added product development.

**Strategies:**

2008 – 2012: Provide technical assistant to the kitchen manager in grant proposal reviews, development of strategies for continued funding and referrals to potential funders.

2009: Plan and implement value-added workshops in partnership with Cape Cod Cooperative Extension.

**Objective 2:** Follow Land Conservation and Management GOAL C, Objective 1 and Strategies

2008 – 2012: Continue work with Southeastern MA Meat Producers group to evaluate demand for local meet, supply challenges, infrastructure needs for slaughter and processing (custom and USDA-inspected facilities).

**GOAL E:**

Agriculture is visible and has a voice through municipal agricultural commissions in half the towns (35) in the Area.

**Objective 1:** Follow Objectives and Strategies for AGRICULTURE, Land Conservation & Management, GOAL B, Objectives 1-4 and all strategies.

## **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

### **Community Development**

#### **Needs and Opportunities**

1. *Historic preservation*
2. *Environmental education*
3. *Public health concerns re: mosquitoes (EEE, West Nile) protection and control*
4. *Recreational facilities development*
5. *Tourism promotion*

#### **GOAL A.**

Promote public awareness on how the public can protect themselves from diseases caused by mosquitoes; EEE and West Nile Virus; and Deer ticks Lyme disease, and other tick borne diseases.

##### **Objective 1:**

Educate the public about how to protect themselves from becoming infected by either EEE, West Nile Virus, and Lyme disease.

##### **Strategies:**

2009: Organize an educational workshop that addresses public health concerns and prevention methods (including how to manage the mosquito population) related to mosquitoes (EEE and West Nile virus) and deer ticks (Lyme disease) invite public throughout SEMass. Workshop will be recorded. Partner with state and local departments of public health, mosquito control departments in the region and Cape Cod Cooperative Extension.

2010: Develop a media campaign to distribute information about EEE, West Nile, mosquito protection etc.

2011 – 2012: Implement media campaign in each southeastern Massachusetts community.

#### **GOAL B.**

Provide assistance to communities with historic preservation assessments and recommendations for management.

##### **Objective 1:**

Council will provide technical assistance with historic/cultural resources review after a request from a municipality has been reviewed and approved by the Council.

##### **Strategy:**

Historic preservation and cultural resource management will be assessed within the context of an Environmental Review Team study, upon request of municipality and approval of Council. (Maximum of 2-3 ERTs per year)

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION**

### **RENEWABLE ENERGY PROMOTION**

#### **Needs and Opportunities**

1. *Green development; green building, energy smart communities*
2. *Energy conservation and use of renewables (commercial, residential)*
3. *Energy conservation and use of renewables (agriculture)*

#### **GOAL A.**

Support the establishment of “Green” or “Energy Conservation” Committees in half the towns (35) in the Area and promote throughout the RC&D Area.

#### **Objective 1:**

Develop a municipal Energy Committee Promotion Program designed after the Pilgrim RC&D Agricultural Commission promotion and support program.

#### **Strategies:**

2008: Contact towns in southeastern Massachusetts that have Energy Committees.

2008 – 2009: Document why the Energy Committees were organized, how they were organized, membership #s and qualifications, and their current and planned activities.

2009: Create outreach materials, brochures etc., distribute to all towns in area via mail. Plan and conduct one workshop for towns wishing to create an Energy Committee.

2010 – 2012: Provide assistance to towns wishing to organize an Energy Committee, promote Committee activities and by 2012: 35 Energy Conservation Committees will exist in municipalities throughout the RC&D Area.

2009-2012 Work with energy related groups and businesses like Sustainable South Shore, Cape Cod Cooperative Extension and others.

## **WATER CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT**

### **Needs and Opportunities**

1. Groundwater quality protection and improvement - includes aquifer
2. Stormwater management, LID retention and recharge, urban, suburban and rural
3. Nonpoint source pollution control
4. Increased land user and public info & educ. programs about USDA and BMPs for water quality on aglands
5. Surface water quality protection and improvement (wetlands, streams, lakes, rivers, ponds)
6. Wetlands protection
7. Watershed planning
8. Water conservation; surface and groundwater
9. Riparian corridor protection and management
10. Adequate water supply for rural fire protection

Goals, objectives and strategies associated with Land Conservation, Land Management and Community Development support the Water Conservation and Management Element.

No additional goals, objectives and strategies will be developed for this Element.

### Examples:

- Wildfire protection efforts have a beneficial effect on water quality and water management.
- Farmland protection efforts have a beneficial effect on water quality and water management.
- Environmental review team studies often have management recommendations on how to improve water management (ag and urban) and/or how to enhance water quality or prevent water quality degradation.

### **Current and Potential Partnerships with USDA and Others**

Strong partnerships are necessary to implement objectives and strategies in this plan. The Pilgrim RC&D Council has strong relationships with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development (RD), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), and Farm Service Agency (FSA) and with state and regional organizations like the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), Massachusetts Farm Bureau Federation, the Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP), regional planning agencies and county conservation districts, county and university extension, and municipal agricultural commissions. Input and involvement by these partner organizations will be critical to addressing the continued needs of agricultural, natural resources and the communities.

Addressing the objectives and strategies related to energy and health will require maintaining relationships with regional planning agencies, developing relationships with the State Department of Public Health, county mosquito control boards and staff, municipal boards of health and other health related organizations focused on preventing the spread of EEE, West Nile and Lyme disease.

Stronger partnership will be developed with the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation Forestry Division, municipal fire departments, land trusts, and municipal conservation commissions as strategies for wildfire prevention are implemented.

### **Linkages to the NRCS Strategic Plan**

The Area Plan will address the following NRCS Overarching Strategies:

**Cooperative Conservation**, as nearly all RC&D successful outcomes are achieved through partnerships.

**Market-based Approach**, as RC&D facilitates growth of market-based opportunities that encourage the private sector to invest in conservation on private lands.

The Area Plan will address the following Venture goals:

**An Adequate Energy Supply** through Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy development and **Working Farmlands** and connected landscapes

As the Council implements this Area Plan the NRCS Foundation Goals will be addressed:

**High Quality Productive Soils** (soil quality)

**Clean and Abundant Water** (water quality and water management) and

**Healthy Plant and Animal Communities** (grassland and forest ecosystems, fish and wildlife habitat and wetlands)

**Required Clauses and Signatures**

The Pilgrim RC&D Council's program will be conducted in compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions as contained in Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987 (P. L. 100-259) and other nondiscrimination statutes; namely, Section 504, of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and in accordance with regulations of the Secretary of Agriculture (7CFR-15, Subparts A&B) which provide that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, religion, marital status, or handicap/disability be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial (or technical) assistance from the Department of Agriculture or any agency thereof.

The Pilgrim RC&D Council agrees that the signing of this document constitutes agreement to comply with federal laws concerning restrictions on lobbying, a drug-free workplace, and responsibilities for procurement, suspension, and disbarment.

The Pilgrim RC&D Council has had this application reviewed by the state. Comments made through the state single point of contact have been considered prior to submission of the application and that all applicable procedures have been followed. An environmental impact statement will not be prepared during the development of the Area Plan, but an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement will be prepared concurrently with the development of each project, when applicable, in accordance with federal procedures.

William S. Napolitano 4/14/08  
William S. Napolitano, Chair Date  
Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc.

James R. Watson 4/14/08  
James R. Watson, Secretary Date  
Pilgrim RC&D Area Council, Inc.

Christine S. Clarke 4/14/08  
Christine Clarke, State Conservationist Date  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Massachusetts

Curtis T. Elke 4/15/08  
REVIEWER Date  
Curtis Elke, Assistant State Conservationist  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, Massachusetts

## Appendix

### A. Documentation of Public Participation

Area Plan survey was developed following 3 meetings with Council input and editing.

The survey was posted on the Pilgrim RC&D Website for 6 months.

Three mailings of surveys were completed over a 6 month period. Follow up phone calls were made to prompt completion of the survey. Surveys went to 64 town and 5 city:

Administrators

Health Boards and Agents

Conservation Commissions and Agents

Planning Boards and Agents

They were also provided to MA Department of Agricultural Resources, Southeastern Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership, 15 town Agricultural Commissions, Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association, 5 Conservation Districts, 5 Regional Planning Agencies, local land trusts and natural resource conservation and agricultural organizations.

The survey is attached.

All responses were recorded, collated, scored and prioritized by score. The Pilgrim RC&D Council reviewed the results over a 6 month period. The Council synthesized the information at each monthly meeting starting in October of 2007 and ending in February of 2008. The Council paid particular attention to those needs that no other organization was addressing adequately. The Council completed their final review of the Area Plan at the March 2008 meeting.