So Much Ephing Land

*Considering Williams’s Resources*

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 3

Introduction

  Project Overview 4

  Notes on Narrative 5

  Property Map 7

Methodology

  Interviews 9

  Survey 16

  Evaluation Matrices 18

Individual Land Reports

  Cole Field 20

  Berlin Mountain 27

  Stone Hill 34

  Pine Cobble 40

  Mt. Hope Farm 46

  Christmas Brook-Denison Park 52

Conclusions 58

  Brochure 61

Works Cited 63
Land Acknowledgments

Our project, by nature of the assignment, is tangled in fraught questions around land management. In addressing past and future use and “ownership” over these properties, it is important to acknowledge that this land is un-ceded territory of the Mohican peoples, who are presently based in what is known as Wisconsin. We recognize that Williams College was founded upon and continues to profit from the exclusions and erasures of many Indigenous peoples, whom we did not consult directly during this project. This acknowledgment serves to recognize the work that still needs to be done to dismantle ongoing legacies of settler colonialism, of which this land acknowledgment addresses only a sliver. We invite you to meditate on and take seriously the broader meanings and implications of our project in this context.

Team Acknowledgements

First and foremost, we would like to thank Professor Henry “Hank” Art for his guidance and mentorship, without which this report would not have been possible. We would also like to thank our main clients: Provost Dukes Love, President Maud Mandel, Vice President of Finance Fred Puddester, and Associate Vice President of Finance Matt Sheehy for their assistance throughout our project. Last and perhaps most importantly, we would like to thank everyone else involved in our semester long project including those who completed our survey, our interviewees, and those who participated in previous research projects related to the lands our project is addressing.
Introduction

Project Overview

Since it was founded, Williams College has acquired an impressive amount of land. While some of these properties have been incorporated into the College’s central campus, others have not. In fact, there are a number of land parcels that are owned by the College that are neither a part of campus nor being used in any overtly meaningful way. This report will address six of these properties and will include a series of recommendations to the College administration regarding the optimal use and management of these lands moving forward. The properties in question include sections of Cole Field, Berlin Mountain, Stone Hill, Pine Cobble, Mount Hope Farm, and Denison Park and Christmas Brook.

We began this semester-long project by researching the past, current, and potential management of each property. The bulk of this research consisted of in-person interviews and email exchanges with clients and relevant stakeholders. One of the primary goals of this research was to assess alternative management options for each property. Over the course of this research process, we also assessed the priorities and values of our clients in order to determine more or less what “optimal” management of these properties would actually entail. We learned through our interviews that, when it comes to land management, the College’s top priorities are sustainability, education, and community. Expanding on these values, we created an evaluation matrix in order to quantify the relative values of each management alternative. After evaluating each of the properties in this way, we determined the optimal management option(s) for each property and compiled a series of recommendations to the College.
Notes on Narrative

We invite you to contemplate the role of narrative throughout our project. Being deliberate about the stories we wanted to tell with our research was part and parcel of both our process and takeaways during this semester-long endeavor. Our scope is large and the details often divergent. For our report to be accessible to the widest audience, we urge our readers to prioritize the following themes:

1. *Visibility and Transparency*: Because each of our land parcels comes with a unique, complex history of acquisition, ownership, and (non)use, we found that most of the College community is not well-informed about these resources. In fact, we found that most of the student, staff, and faculty bodies did not even know that the College owned these lands. Given that all land holds value and history, we find it of great importance to raise awareness for these areas so that we can hold more intentional relationships with them. Even for parcels for which we may recommend what is assumed to be a more “passive” action, one of our central ethics is that decision-makers and those implicated in College land use be knowledgeable about *why* the College holds ownership over it to begin with.

2. *Embracing Messiness*: Similarly, we found that the messiness of each of the distinct parcels was both humbling and reflective of the diversity that has swelled over the course of the College’s history. Our class conversation with Project Manager Scott Henderson and Professor of Art History E.J. Johnson was particularly formative for us, as we found that both the campus architecture and landscaping had come to document the many eras through which the College has passed. Perhaps the states of Mt. Hope Farm and Denison
Park vary drastically—our belief is that this is a virtue of the College, not a shortcoming. The people who are enrolled in and employed by the College represent a pretty wide range of backgrounds and beliefs about the world. We should honor that diversity in our planning as well.

3. **Reconsidering Resources and Power:** Lastly, and importantly, we view this project as an opportunity to confront the College’s vast land-based, social, and financial wealth and power. We recognize that Williams sits in a much larger U.S. history of Indigenous land dispossession and wealth inequality. As clients of the College’s administrators, we hold tremendous power in our recommendations; as such, we urge the College to seriously consider the possibility and consequences of relinquishing ownership of land, which could demonstrate a long-term commitment to reparative projects such as decolonization and reparations.

The Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust generously shared with our team their presentation, “5 Solutions for Land-Based Wealth Redistribution,” which has informed much of our central ethic. Tracing a history of systemic racism forced by the white-European U.S. settler nation-state, this presentation proposes the following five restorative acts: 1) land return or rematriation, 2) reparations by way of restitution, rehabilitation, compensation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition, 3) land trust by donation or bequeathment, 4) conservation/cultural respect easement, and 5) treating land based on the concept of personhood. Logistically and financially, the idea of returning land to Indigenous people

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or rendering complete control and legal ownership of land may seem unappealing to
College administrators; nonetheless, as the NEFOC Land Trust holds, land-based wealth
accumulation is inextricable from wealth inequality, structural racism, settler colonialism,
and climate change. What would it would like for Williams to even consider identifying
its role in these broader systems, and how could we set a precedent for other elite
institutions?

**Property Map**

Below is a property map (provided to us courtesy of Fred Puddester) that includes all
campus and non-campus lands owned by Williams College, which are shaded in red. The parcels
that we were assigned for this project (Cole Field and Eph’s Pond, the Berlin Mountain Ski
Area, the Stone Hill woodlot or Cluett Estate, the Pine Cobble Housing Development, various
small parcels of Mount Hope Farm, and Christmas Brook and Denison Park) are all included on
this map and indicated with arrows and labels, with the exception of the Berlin Mountain Ski
Area, which is not pictured, but is located to the southwest of campus on the border of and in
New York state, indicated by the arrow. This particular project was not concerned with the
“Main Campus” lands, the Library Shelving Facility, or Hopkins Forest. Please refer to this map
throughout the report to specify the location of the various parcels if confusion arises.
Methodology

Interviews

A major part of the research process for this project involved interviewing various members of the College and Williamstown communities to determine their opinions on the current and potential uses of the land parcels in question. These interviews were crucial to the development and refinement of our own research questions, and really helped us get a better sense of the history of the parcels, their current uses, and plans for future projects on the lands, many of which were already considerably well-developed. We would like to sincerely thank each one of our interviewees for dedicating their time and knowledge to this project, and acknowledge that the conclusions we came to would not have been possible without their input.

In each of the following sections, we will summarize the main points gathered from each interview, and reflect on how their input influenced the evolution of our vision for the project.

Dukes Love: Provost to Williams College

David “Dukes” Love serves as the Provost at Williams College, and was one of the four main clients for this project. As Provost, he makes broad financial and administrative decisions, as well as, more specifically, decisions concerning strategic planning and development around the campus. Dukes has been Provost for four years, and sees his mission as primarily one of support for the current student body. When asked about the land parcels in question, we were relatively surprised to find that he had little knowledge of their existence, particularly the Berlin Mountain Ski Area, Mount Hope parcels, and the Stone Hill woodlot. Cole Field, the Williams Inn, and the Pine Cobble development he was aware of, due to their proximity to
campus, but still didn’t know much about any past, current, or future projects going on at the sites. This was an important discovery for us, and sparked an important evolution in our research question, as we began to question how a senior financial officer at the College could be unaware of the existence of half of our parcels.

When asked about what he would do on the lands, Dukes responded that he would like to see any current or future projects reflect the three main missions of the College: Research, Community, and Sustainability. As we continued with the project, these broad goals framed the majority of the plans that we considered for each site.

**Matt Sheehy: Associate Vice President of Finance**

Matt Sheehy serves as the Associate VP of Finance at Williams College, and was the second of our four main clients for this project. He has worked at the College for seven years, and sees his position as being “octopus-like,” meaning he is involved in many different goals and projects at the College, and must find balance and give voice to many different financial needs across the board. Unlike Dukes Love, Sheehy was aware of the existence of all the land parcels in question, as he has been involved in paying the taxes on the ownership of each. According to Sheehy, each land parcel comes with its own caveats, potentials, and challenges, and must be considered independently. While we had briefly considered developing a broader management plan for all the land parcels at once, Sheehy’s input was useful, in that it showed us that we would need to consider each parcel on its own.

Sheehy had knowledge of several projects that had been proposed on the land in the past, including additional housing and solar installations, which have met with varying degrees of
success. His biggest goals for the College and tangentially for these lands are centered around the current body of faculty, staff, and students, and how the College’s resources can best be utilized to serve these groups. He was also interested in pursuing new, innovative ideas for the lands, disliking the mindset of having “always” done something a certain way. He also was able to provide us with specifics on the history and current uses of several land parcels.

Stephanie Boyd: member of COOL Committee, Conservation Commission (ConCom), and Williamstown Planning Board

Stephanie Boyd, who served as the Director of the Zilkha Center at Williams College in the past, is currently active in both the Williamstown and College communities, serving on the COOL Committee, Conservation Committee, and the Williamstown Planning Board. She was extremely helpful in providing specifics on the current projects planned for several of the lands, especially the potential for a solar installation on the Stone Hill woodlot, and the boardwalk planned for the area behind the new Williams Inn and Christmas Brook. As a member of the community, she was also able to provide a different perspective on the use and value of the lands: according to her, many of the lands are used (unofficially) by community members for recreational purposes, such as hiking and dog-walking. As a member of the COOL Committee and Con Com, Boyd also pushed us to question how the lands could be used to satisfy sustainability goals.

Hank Art: ENVI 302: Environmental Planning Workshop Professor

Hank Art, an emeritus professor at Williams College in the Biology and Environmental Studies departments, has worked at the College since 1970 and was our professor for this course. In our various interviews with him, we were able to gain a better idea of the actors involved in
decision-making processes for these lands, and he provided us with important connections to contact for further information. As a highly involved member of both the Town and College, his input was also essential in that he was able to speak to the needs and involvement of both communities, and as a resident for nearly fifty years, he also had an important perspective on the history of the lands and how they have been and continue to be used today.

Maud Mandel: Williams College President

Maud Mandel serves as the current President of Williams College, and was the third of our four main clients for this project. Like Dukes Love, she also was not aware of the non-campus lands until we brought them to her attention. Her missions for the College, and thus potentially for the lands in question, were mostly longer-term, and involved considerations of the strategic planning processes, sustainability, and tradeoffs. Mandel was particularly concerned with the expense of development and renovation (especially in reference to the Mount Hope lands), and pressed us to consider the value of unbuilt and undeveloped lands. This was certainly an important goal to keep in mind, especially as our project began to evolve and we began to broadly consider issues of power and accessibility as they related to land ownership. We also considered, during our interview with President Mandel, how to make these lands more visible, especially to members of the College community, for whom these lands seemed to be the most invisible.

Fred Puddester: Vice President of Finance

Fred Puddester serves as the Vice President for Finance at Williams College, and was the
fourth and final of our four main clients for this project. During this interview, we gained a much better understanding of the specific legal and financial limitations on the Pine Cobble, Stone Hill, Mount Hope, and Cole Field properties. In addition to suggesting an outdoor skating rink on the tennis courts (like he enjoyed in his small hometown when he was younger), Puddester was also able to give us more specific details on the current and future plans for several of the parcels. His priorities for the lands had to do with academics, particularly research opportunities, and sustainability goals.

**Jamie Art: General Counsel to the College**

Jamie Art currently serves as the General Counsel to Williams College, but has also worked in the Department of Real Estate and Legal Affairs, and served as a private lawyer in Williamstown for several years. He was therefore extremely helpful in providing knowledge about the legal and financial situations on each of the land parcels, particularly Pine Cobble and Cole Field. Art was also able to provide us with further contacts in the community and beyond.

**Rita Wallace: Executive Director of Design and Construction, Facilities**

Rita Wallace currently serves as the Executive Director of Design and Construction in Facilities at Williams College. She was aware of the various non-campus lands that are part of this project, as well as several past and future plans for their use. Wallace’s main concerns for any potential development have to do with expense; and like President Mandel, she also stressed the importance of unbuilt lands. Her main goals for the College and these lands include
communication, collaboration, and input from students and community, and her input in this
arena in particular helped inform our questions concerning visibility, accessibility, and power.

**Stephanie Morningstar: NEFOC Land Trust**

Stephanie Morningstar (Oneida, Turtle Clan) serves as the Co-Coordinator of the
Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust in addition to being an herbalist, scholar, student, and
Earth Worker. The NEFOC Land Trust is an alliance between Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and
Asian farmers in the Northeast region committed to land sovereignty and sacred relations to land.
Morningstar encouraged us to think about the campus’s role as a large land-owning institution
with the power to redistribute wealth and, integrally, consider building long-term, slow
relationships with regional farmers of color and the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican
Indians. Importantly, she shared with us the NEFOC Land Trust’s presentation on how to
meaningfully frame the question of land-based wealth redistribution.

**Andrew Groff: Director of Community Development for Williamstown**

Andrew Groff currently serves as the Director for Community Development for the Town
of Williamstown. His perspective was particularly useful, in that he was able to provide insight
into the needs and desires of the Town, and had extensive knowledge of several projects that are
being implemented by members of the community already. His priorities concern addressing the
relationship between the College and Williamstown communities, and pinpointed Mount Hope
as the land with the most potential out of the given parcels.
Karro Frost: Conservation Botanist at MA NHESP

Karro Frost is a conservation botanist at the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, and we were able to interview her when she visited campus to examine the hairy honeysuckle growing on the slopes of Pine Cobble. As will be discussed in more depth later, the hairy honeysuckle is an endangered species in Massachusetts, and one of the largest populations of this plant in the state exists on Pine Cobble, so any development on or around that site is limited by where it grows. As we considered the management of the Pine Cobble property, this knowledge was particularly useful, as it pointed at potential research and educational opportunities in the future, and informed our decisions about how to approach any further development at the site.

Dan Levering: Assistant Director for Custodial Services and Special Functions, Facilities

Dan Levering, the Assistant Director for Custodial Services and Special Functions in Facilities at Williams College, provided us with crucial information about the current management of the College-owned parcels at Mount Hope Farm. Several of the parcels are used for light farming, primarily haying, and one is used for facilities storage, and all of them are used by community members for recreational purposes. Levering was particularly helpful in illuminating the legal processes and limitations surrounding the Mount Hope parcels, how the parcels are currently being put to necessary use by the College, and how those uses may now have to be addressed in the wake of the death of Jim Sylvester, the previous caretaker of the property.
Survey

To broaden the scope of the people involved in our project, we decided to distribute a Google Forms survey\(^2\). Faculty, students and staff were asked to fill out various questions regarding the six parcels in question. First, they were asked to identify their affiliation with the college to determine the variety of opinions we were receiving and through what general perspective. The results represented 123 responses, with the highest response rate (75.6\%) from students, followed by staff (17\%) and faculty (6.5\%). Then, they were asked if they had any prior knowledge about any of the six parcels in which the results indicate 59.3\% of people who responded did not know about these places. We then had an open response question to ask what they would do with the land if they could have anything. Many ideas revolved around better access in terms of trails and recreation, while others acknowledged that the land was previously owned and should be donated. Other prominent ideas were renewable energy and community agriculture. Many creative responses were submitted that carefully acknowledged wants for community engagement, sustainable management and environmentally just use of the land, as well as create access to creative spaces (like art studios). Next, we asked respondents to rank some ideas we had prepared including: solar panel additions, geothermal additions, affinity housing, and selling/donating the land. Respondents were then asked what their favorite idea was and a majority of people replied recreation, community agriculture, or donating the land. Finally, people were asked if they would be personally interested in using the lands which had around 48\% saying “No,” they would not.

\(^2\)“Williams College Land Parcels.” Survey results. December 2019. https://forms.gle/kL3BMpFfHe8LHaGm8
There are many limitations to our survey. Firstly, the percent of students, faculty, and staff that responded compared to the college whole is very small. By sending the survey out to our five group members social circles, we acknowledge there is bias in these responses and it may not represent the larger Williams College community. There is reason to believe that various response biases may have influenced the proportion of people who filled out the survey; we might even assume that the proportion of folks who knew about these lands is in reality even smaller. In all, more people, and a more random sample of people would need to respond for our data to show representative results. Although improvements to our survey strategy are necessary for data, the open-ended questions added to our brainstorming as to what and how the lands should be used. Donating the land being a popular choice led us to consider if and how donation was possible and whether it would add or diminish social welfare for the people receiving the land or the college.

**Evaluation Matrix**

While our interviews may have collected qualitative data, another metric we used to determine alternative methods for management of these lands was an evaluation matrix. The purpose of creating this matrix was to quantitatively represent options for each land parcel and rate them to determine the best route for our recommendations. Because our project addresses six land parcels, our evaluation strategy necessarily considers alternatives for each of these properties. We evaluated alternatives according to five priorities: expressed interest, sustainability, educational value, community benefit, and feasibility. Alternatives, for example: solar arrays, agriculture uses, increased recreational management, and relinquishing land were
rated on the basis of these values. We then assigned each of these elements a score of one to five depending on how well it reasonably they fulfilled the values that we prioritized. A score of one meant that the alternative did not fulfill the needs of the values stated above. A score of five meant that the choice was a perfect way to fulfill the goal. Expressed interest was influenced and determined by our survey results as well as conversations in various interviews. For example recreation on Stone Hill was ranked high because many people emphasized that they hike and walk their dogs there. Sustainability was ranked on the basis of whether the alternative would be a best practice for sustainable stewardship, trails and invasive species management were ranked high. Solar options were ranked high in sustainability because they add to renewable energy resources, yet maybe not a five because of the externalities that a solar array may create against the environment, like cutting down forests for more space. Educational value was ranked on notions that the alternative could broaden research at Williams for faculty or students. For example, Mount Hope agriculture plans could be an opportunity for agriculture theses or general research. Community benefit was based off of our interviews with community members. Listening to the ways the community already uses the lands informed many of our ratings in terms of recreation management and clarity. Lastly feasibility was ranked because many projects would be extremely expensive to implement like, renovating the dilapidated buildings on the Mount Hope Piggery parcel. Each row was summed to determine a total score for each alternative, the totals were then taken into consideration for our parcel recommendations.

In conclusion, our matrices helped us rate different alternatives and have productive conversations as to the importance of different land management strategies. We recognize that it is impossible to truly and objectively quantify a value for each alternative and that there are
inherent biases produced by our group. We chose the above method of evaluation in an attempt to compare the relative value of each alternative and, in each case, select the option that best meets our clients’ goals. Additionally, this method was useful to discuss and try to make ourselves aware of the many costs, benefits, and stakeholders in Williams College land management. Lastly, the recommendations based on the matrices are not mutually exclusive. We believe that there are multiple choices that can be carried out, for example, a plan for an art walk from the back of the new Williams Inn to the Clark Art Institute and a plan for the management of invasive species in the area.
Individual Land Reports

Cole Field
Physical Description and Site History

Cole Field and Eph’s Pond are located to the north of the Williams campus, accessible from Stetson Road, which extends from the rear of Mission Park, past Poker Flats, and eventually down the hill to Cole Field. The land included in the parcel is currently occupied primarily by athletic fields, but the parcel also includes the recreational paths that lead to the Hoosic and are frequently used by College and Town community members alike, and the two wetland areas on either side of Stetson Road. The first of these wetlands is the old hockey pond, located to the west, and the second is Eph’s Pond, located to the east, directly down the steep bank from the retirement housing community off Southworth Street. These wetland areas are overgrown and largely inaccessible, as there are no visible paths or access points from the road. Around the border of the hockey pond and other areas of Cole Field, there is a population of hairy fruited sedge, (*Carex trichocarpa*) an endangered species in Massachusetts.

Considerations

There are several important considerations to keep in mind when discussing the management and potential uses for Cole Field, which are listed below.

a. Wetland Protection Act: Eph’s Pond and the adjoining hockey pond to the west are both classified as wetlands under the *Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act*, and therefore are protected. This limits the amount of development that can be completed on this land. ³

b. Hairy-fruited sedge (*Carex trichocarpa*): as a state-listed threatened species in Massachusetts, the hairy fruited sedge has a detailed management plan that also limits the amount and type of development that can be completed on land containing the sedge.4

c. 100-Year Floodplain: Cole Field is located on the Hoosic River floodplain, which is classified by FEMA as a 100-Year Floodplain. Under FEMA, there are detailed restrictions on activities and development that can be completed in this area. Additionally, climate change is causing flooding to occur ever more frequently, meaning that what may have once been considered a 100-year floodplain may soon become a 20- or even a 5-year floodplain. This inevitably affects any decisions that may be made about the management of Cole Field, which flooded most recently in 2011.5

d. Landfill cap: Cold Field was used as a landfill in the 1970s, and although it is no longer used as such, the landfill was never capped. There is now a healthy forest growing over the landfill site, so efforts to cap the landfill have been contentious, as it is believed that it would be more damaging to destroy the forest than simply leaving the landfill uncapped. Additionally, FEMA’s restrictions concerning the 100-year floodplain would also make capping difficult.6

e. Skating pond: Eph’s Pond and the hockey pond were used in the 1930s as an outdoor skating rink and a practice site for the Williams hockey team. However, this use was...
Abandoned over the past 30 years due to overgrowth of vegetation around the ponds, and a lack of reliability concerning the thickness of the ice, which posed a danger to skaters.\textsuperscript{7}

f. Salt/sand runoff: A past ENVI 102 report, written in 2006, completed a comprehensive study of the water quality of Eph’s Pond and found it relatively good; however, it was adversely affected by runoff of salt and sand from the road during the winter. This is an important thing to consider when discussing how to keep the ecosystems of both ponds healthy for human and non-human inhabitants.\textsuperscript{8} Considerable amounts of sediments are eroding into the southeast corner of Eph’s Pond from malfunctioning storm drains.

g. Historical importance: directly to the south of Eph’s Pond is a steep embankment that some speculate was used in the 1910s for WWI training exercises. Due to this historical use, it is possible that the site is protected by a historical preservation act.\textsuperscript{9}

h. Birding: Eph’s Pond is a popular site for birding, and hosts many different species of birds throughout the year. It is currently difficult to access or view the wetlands, but birdwatchers have found they are able to observe some birds in the marshy vegetation along the border of the Pond by the road.\textsuperscript{10}

i. Hoosic River pollution: the Hoosic River is contaminated with PCBs, due to past industrial runoff from the long-closed Sprague Electric factory in North Adams that was discovered in the 1980s. Although this factory is no longer in operation, PCBs still remain in the sediment and fauna of the Hoosic River.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{7}“Williams Outing Club History.” \textit{Williams College}, \url{https://woc.williams.edu/about-woc/history/}

\textsuperscript{8}“Water Chemistry of Eph’s Pond.” May 18, 2006. \url{https://web.williams.edu/wp-etc/ces/ephs-pond-4.pdf}

\textsuperscript{9}“A Field Guide to Bluffs Forest.” \url{https://docs.google.com/document/d/1aol_npaukH48Celdm399l5bnNfbap79er1FXwpcxzQg/edit}

\textsuperscript{10}“A GUIDE TO BIRD WATCHING IN WILLIAMSTOWN MASSACHUSETTS.” \url{http://mutualism.williams.edu/Links/birdtour.htm}

\textsuperscript{11}“A snapshot of PCB levels in Hoosic River sediments, crayfish and brown trout in the tri-state area.” December 2005. \url{https://www.researchgate.net/publication/289811192_A_snapshot_of_PCB_levels_in_Hoosic_River_sediments_crayfish_and_brown_trout_in_the_tri-state_area}
Evaluation Matrix and Recommendations

Taking sections a-i into consideration, our group developed a set of evaluation matrices to determine how best to manage and use this land in the future. Our initial proposals fell broadly into five categories: (1) status quo; (2) recreation; (3) renewable energy; (4) manage endangered species; and (5) relinquish.

a. Option (1) would involve no change, and would allow the College to continue using the area for athletic purposes, and visitors to continue using its hiking and dog-walking trails around the Hoosic. Additionally, it would involve the construction of the proposed bike path, which already has extensively detailed plans and will hopefully be completed in the next few years. This option is feasible, but we believe that our plan would let the status quo continue to exist, with the addition of more uses that would add to the value of the space.

b. Option (2) would involve the introduction of additional and improved recreational uses, such as the construction and installation of a boardwalk around Eph’s Pond that would allow greater access to the pond for birding, skating, etc. This option has had a lot of expressed interest, both from interviewees (Rita Wallace in Facilities was very much in favor of the idea for a birding boardwalk) and the survey (many responses indicated that an outdoor skating pond would be desired), and is relatively feasible, as the boardwalk would not be particularly expensive, and we could receive advice from Sheep Hill on how to successfully and cheaply build it. This option also has a lot of community and educational value.
c. Option (3) was considered as a possibility by using the wetlands to produce geothermal energy. This might be difficult due to their protected status under the Massachusetts WPA. Additionally, while this option also had a lot of expressed interest, and would have value for sustainability and community, it would be very expensive, could cause ecological damage to the pond, and due to the small size might not produce as many returns as desired.

d. Option (4) would involve the further management of the hairy fruited sedge, which is already protected under the Massachusetts Rare and Endangered Species List. It is possible that the sedge population could be used as an opportunity for research, which would have both educational and community-based value. This is a relatively feasible option, and also scored high under expressed interest.

e. Option (5) would involve the relinquishment of the land. Although this option did not score particularly high, we found it important to consider the implications and results of relinquishing ownership of each of the given land parcels. Cole Field did not score high on this option because of its extensive current use by the College, its proximity to campus, and its potential for additional, future use.

After assigning ranks to the various categories, (1) status quo and (2) recreation were ranked the highest. We therefore recommend to the College and Williamstown that these options be prioritized when considering how best to manage Cole Field and Eph’s Pond.
<table>
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<th>Cole Field</th>
<th>Expressed Interest</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Educational Value</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Parcel Score</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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Table 1. Cole Field Evaluation Matrix

**Note: these options are not mutually exclusive, and a management plan for the property could include one or more of the alternative proposals.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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Berlin Mountain
Physical Description and Site History

Berlin Mountain is quite a large parcel of land owned by Williams College located approximately 10-minutes away via vehicle from the central campus. It is a highly forested, mountainous area with a number of hiking trails connecting it to surrounding properties. The property was initially purchased by the college in the early 1960s with the intention of it being a main training area for the College’s ski team and the College Ski Area. Then Williams College ski coach Ralph Townsend helped establish skiing trails on the property for multiple types of skiing. He and the college initially developed plans to install ski lifts for the central slopes and develop the area similarly to the skiing properties of Dartmouth or Middlebury, but ultimately this plan fell through. Despite the failure of this plan, use of the property continued as a handle tow was installed around 1965 so the teams could get to the top of the slope for alpine or slalom skiing. By the early 1970s, the college’s ski team stopped hosting trainings and Winter Carnival at Berlin Mountain because the trail was deemed too steep and narrow for safe usage. The handle tow was removed by about 1975, effectively ending the college sanctioned skiing on the land parcel.12

Nowadays, Berlin Mountain remains a relatively active site in terms of recreational usage. The college owned property is home to a number of recreational activities including hiking, mountain biking, and unauthorized motorized usage. Additionally, backcountry skiing replaces hiking as the main activity during the winter season.

Berlin Mountain has been the subject of land management research for a number of years in the Environmental Planning course at Williams College. These include a 2000 report on the Taconic Crest Trail which details information on current and former use of the areas as well as a

2013 report on Williamstown Open Space and Recreation Plan. More recently, a 2018 report titled *Proposal for Recreational Improvement at Berlin Mountain* was conducted for Professor Sarah Gardner’s ENVI 411 course.\(^\text{13}\) This report is extremely detailed and outlines very specific recommendations for development of the land. We will refer to this report for specificity, details, and recommendations and as such, we want to credit William Keating ‘19, Shauna Sullivan ‘19, and Andrew West ‘19. Many of their recommendations were carried out in 2019.

Considerations

The Berlin Mountain property has quite a few unique characteristics that we had to take into consideration in the development of our report.

a. Ownership: While the main section we are looking at is owned by the college, the property is surrounded by various land parcels with many distinct owners, many of which are interconnected via the hiking trails, as highlighted in the figure below.

Figure 1. This map shows the various parcels of land in the area and their respective owners. On the Massachusetts side, there are eight different landowners: the state of Massachusetts, the town of Williamstown, Williams College, Williamstown Rural Land Foundation, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council, and three individuals who own private land (Daniel Holland, Timothy and Donna Kaiser, and Jean Wimpenny). On the New York side, there are two landowners: Williams College and the State of New York.14

b. Topography of the Land: Below you will see a figure highlighting the topography of the Berlin Mountain Ski Area. It is important to consider the landscape of the area for the potential additions of new trails, campsites, solar panels, or wind turbines.

c. Access to the Power Grid: One of the main suggestions in our survey was investing in renewable energy and considering this would fit our clients’ sustainability goals, we had to consider Berlin Mountain as an option for either solar or wind power. However, in conversations with our interviewees, especially Dukes Love, we learnt a huge barrier would be tremendous costs of development and issues with accessibility to the power grid.

Consequently, any management plans regarding developing or adding new trails will require cooperation and collaboration with the segmented land owners and appropriate understanding of
the landscape. Beyond these aforementioned considerations, our project also drew from the 2018 report for economic considerations in potential development and maintenance of the land.

Evaluation Matrix and Recommendations

Using the information we gathered from our interviews, past reports, and our survey, we developed the following evaluation matrix to weigh the alternative use options for the Berlin Mountain land parcel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Berlin Mountain</th>
<th>Expressed Interest</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Educational Value</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Parcel Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renewable energy</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relinquish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The options we considered for the land were: 1. Status quo, that is maintaining the land management plan in place with current recreational uses of Berlin Mountain. 2. Developing renewable energy in the form of solar or wind power. 3. Recreation, specifically improving current recreational uses and including new forms of recreation. 4. Relinquishing ownership of the land be it through donation or sale.

Renewable energy (3rd) and relinquishing (4th) the land both received rather low scores in the evaluation matrix. While renewable energy did have some potential in sustainability goals and educational value, there were a couple considerations we had to make in terms of community value, expressed interest, and feasibility. Berlin Mountain is one of the more actively used parcels in terms of various forms of recreation. Developing the lands for renewable energy could potentially interfere with these uses and since we did not want to prohibit current uses of the land, it received low scores for expressed interest and community. Additionally, feasibility was a
questionable factor due to financial limitations of developing solar or wind farms and connecting the energy sources to the electricity grid. Pursuing either of these options would require tremendous amounts of resources, especially financial ones. Relinquishing, on the other hand, received low scores across the board due to the high use of the area and the many unknown factors that would come with changing ownership of the land. One major complication that we considered in feasibility is how would we find someone who actually wants to take land that seems to be rather undevelopable beyond recreation.

As illustrated in the Table 2 above, the two best scoring options were recreation (1st) and status quo (2nd), likely due to their similarities. As such, our recommendations for the Berlin Mountain property are to follow suit with the short and long-term recommendations outlined in their report, including but not limited to new trails, improving upkeep and signage of current trails, and the addition of a campsite. Some portions of their recommendations are already well under way, if not completed, such as a newly paved parking lot and a trailhead kiosk. Full recommendations and other details including economic factors can be found in the in-depth report located on the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies website.
Stone Hill: Kite Hill and Woodlot
Physical Description and Site History

The Stone Hill land parcel encompasses both what is known as Kite Hill and the neighboring woodlot to the west, both of which are situated near the Pine Cobble School and Buxton School. Although most students are familiar with the part of Stone Hill that is visible from the Clark Art Institute, fewer students and many local residents will be familiar with the grassy field that comprises Kite Hill, as well as the quiet woods that we are terming the woodlot. Local joggers, hikers, and dog-walkers have made recreational use of the trails through Stone Hill, as the area is quite secluded and vast.

Environmental journalist and Class of 1946 Environmental Fellow-in-Residence Elizabeth Kolbert said of Stone Hill’s soil composition: “Over the last 10,000 years, Stone Hill has assumed many forms: lake bottom, forests, woodlots, and farms…. Each of these identities is preserved in its soil—a history recorded in rot.”15 Near to the College-owned woodlot on Stone Hill is a similar woodlot owned by the Town of Williamstown. A 1998 Environmental Planning and Analysis Workshop student plan reported that the Conservation Commission manages the lot, which was once owned by Amos Lawrence and Theresa B. Hopkins, then passed on to a few hands before being given to the inhabitants of Williamstown. Although from the late 1960’s to the early 1970’s the town considered logging the lot, ultimately the Stone Hill Forest Management Plan deemed the forest health to be “fair” to “good,” and the lot was spared.16

Editor's Note: The College-owned woodlot parcel is located to the south of the Town and Buxton School woodlots, a was most recently logged in the mid-1970s, with the logs being dragged to the rear of the Cluett Estate building (now Pine Cobble School). Currently the Williams Outing Club maintains the Kite Hill and Hopkins-Gale trails on the property, part of the Stone Hill Trail Network. This is the parcel in need of having a management plan, be it for timber harvest, carbon offset generation, or etc.

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Considerations

Given Stone Hill’s particular history and current status, we have found the following considerations relevant to this area’s next steps, which are as follows. Regarding Kite Hill, we have considered the importance of the formerly annual Kite Day tradition\(^\text{17}\), which was commenced by H. Lee Hirsch and which lasted most prominently between 1961-1975. In 2016, Rosenberg Professor of Environmental Studies and Biology Hank Art attempted to revive the tradition, inviting Williams students to design and build their own kites and fly them on the Clark Art Institute’s meadow along with other students and community members alike. Professor Art has also admitted that it can be hard to sustain such traditions without a consistent body of people or point-person to keep them going year after year. Nonetheless, history can hold immense value in a town as small and old as Williamstown, and we would like to give weight to this particular historical tradition.

Other considerations for Kite Hill involve historical resistance to constructing a solar array at this particular site. It has been noted that in the past, local residents have expressed concern over the construction of solar panels, counter to the COOL Committee’s interest—a situation reminiscent of many NIMBY (short for “not in my backyard” in environmental justice discourse) oppositions. In a similar vein, when considering constructing renewable energy farms in the past, College administrators have ultimately decided that the financial and infrastructural costs of these projects would outweigh the long-term sustainable benefits. Specifically, as Matt Sheehy noted in our interview, constructing a solar array at the Berlin Ski Mountain proved to be logistically unfeasible because of the site’s physical distance from the electric grid.

Turning to the Stone Hill woodlot, primary concerns involve the College history of timbering. Additionally, any interests in improving trail maintenance would have to finance the costs of doing so. The 1998 student report claimed that it was unclear between spokespeople from Buxton School and Clark Art whether the public or Clark personnel was responsible for maintaining the trails. They recommended that a volunteer crew be tasked with maintaining the trails, and that a partnership with Clark Art work to produce maps to raise visibility for these trails. We have found that, since 2016 a collaboration between the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation, Williams College, Buxton School, The Town of Williamstown, and the Clark Art Institute has helped streamline the trail system, as illustrated by this on-line map: https://www.clarkart.edu/PDFs/2016/TRAILMAP.pdf.

Evaluation Matrix and Recommendations

We decided to evaluate four non-mutually exclusive possible alternative uses for Stone Hill, which can be found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stone Hill</th>
<th>Expressed Interest</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Educational Value</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Parcel Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>Renewable energy</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Relinquish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3.* Evaluation Matrix for four possible alternative uses on Stone Hill.

The suggestion that received the highest grade according to our evaluation methods was further developing recreational opportunities in the area. Specifically, this would entail improving the trails through the field and woodlot and reviving Kite Day in a more systematic fashion, with the hopes that the tradition would continue past one or two years. Our survey and
interviews both revealed that many were in favor of increasing recreational use, so this option received the highest marks for expressed interest. In the long-term, we do not imagine that these efforts will alter the land, so it also received a relatively high mark for sustainability; in fact, sustained efforts to encourage communal use of the land might actually ensure that local and College-affiliated folks will maintain the area with respect and care. We found that community value and feasibility were also relatively favorable for this land parcel, leaving only educational value with a relatively low mark. In the table below, you can see some of the incurred costs on stone hill trail updates that can be a guide for any future trail developments both at Stone Hill and other parcels we are examining.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Vendor</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Cost per</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiosks</td>
<td>Timberhomes, Vershire, VT</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$1,725</td>
<td>$3,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trailhead Mini-kiosks</td>
<td>Timberhomes, Vershire, VT</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$750</td>
<td>$2,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport of Kiosks &amp; Mini-kiosks</td>
<td>Timberhomes, Vershire, VT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead-free Trail Blaze Paint (gal)</td>
<td>Forestry Suppliers, Jackson, MS</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>$55</td>
<td>$330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement for posts (80# bag)</td>
<td>R.K. Miles, Williamstown, MA</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>$5</td>
<td>$50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poster Prints on vinyl</td>
<td>Poster Print Factory, NJ</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$45</td>
<td>$225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail signs</td>
<td>Becks, North Adams, MA</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>$19</td>
<td>$555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sign Mounting Hardware</td>
<td>R.K. Miles, Williamstown, MA</td>
<td></td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$7,500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Finances for previous Stone Hill trail system updates drawn from Berlin Mountain 2018 Report.18

The second highest option was to push for the installation of solar panels on Kite Hill, which was controversial in expressed local interest but high in sustainability in the long run. Despite controversial local opinions, we put forth that pushing the local area to commit to solar

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energy, again in the long haul, would actually be more favorable to the community, as it would drive down energy costs and decrease carbon emissions. Feasibility gained a low score because of its associated financial and infrastructural costs. At one point, we would have liked to see the College commit to local sustainability efforts by subsidizing the installation of a communal solar farm to incentivize local neighbors, but from our conversations with administrators, we do not foresee that the College will do so in the near future. Nonetheless, we believe it is important to advocate for serious consideration of this option.

Lastly, we would also like to remark that relinquishing this land parcel received the lowest grade in this matrix, primarily due to low expressed interest from College administrators and local governing bodies, the little perceived educational value of this action, and the low logistical feasibility of surrendering not only access but legal ownership to a regional land trust or other stakeholder.
Pine Cobble Housing Development Forested Lands
Physical Description and Site History

The portion of Pine Cobble owned by the College consists of both developed and undeveloped, forested areas. Our assignment was to address only the forested portion of the property. Nonetheless, we chose to consider the context and questions offered by the entire property in the early stages of our project, as we found them relevant to the broader scope of our assignment.

The developed portion consists of a neighborhood of homes, developed by the College in the 1980s. Since construction, these lots have been available for faculty to purchase, occupy during their tenure at Williams, and sell back to the College when appropriate for a guaranteed fair market value. This system has proven costly to the College for several reasons. Pine Cobble is an extremely steep property, making it practically and financially demanding to maintain. Although residents pay taxes to the town of Williamstown, the College incurs the high costs of maintaining the area, namely Pine Cobble Road. Not only does the college offer to sell the homes at the lowest price afforded by the housing market and typically sell them back at a significantly higher value, many of the homes are quite luxurious and were expensive to construct in the first place (Jamie Art). Given these high costs, coupled with the fact that eleven of these lots are currently unoccupied and on the market, it is worth asking whether this property (unbuilt-upon areas) could be put to better use.

Behind these housing lots is a large area of undeveloped, forested land. Like the housing lots, this land is very steep. It is intercrossed by a small trail system, enjoyed recreationally by locals (Stephanie Boyd). One of the defining features of this property is its plant life. Pine Cobble is home to the largest population of hairy honeysuckle (*Lonicera hirsuta*) in the state of Massachusetts.
While hairy honeysuckle does not have federal endangered status, it is listed E (for endangered) under Massachusetts state law. Since 2010, the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) has worked on this property to promote the hairy honeysuckle growing there.

Considerations

Our project considers Pine Cobble from an ecological, topographic, and financial perspective. As previously stated, this property is home to the largest population of hairy honeysuckle in Massachusetts, an endangered species under state law. Despite NHESP’s efforts, this population of hairy honeysuckle has decreased by about half since 2010. According to Karro Frost (a conservation biologist who works with NHESP and has been involved with the Pine Cobble hairy honeysuckle population for many years), there is a significant risk of losing the species altogether. The Pine Cobble hairy honeysuckle population should be a priority consideration for this property. Optimal management of this property moving forward will require the College to continue to account for this feature.

We also found it relevant to take into account the topographic and financial aspects of Pine Cobble. Namely, the property is extremely steep. This means that additional development on this property would be extremely difficult from a practical as well as financial perspective. Despite this, in the case that we made the unlikely decision to recommend the development of additional housing lots on Pine Cobble Road, it was important for us to consider the Williamstown zoning bylaws, specifically building codes. (2) As far as costs to the college are concerns, Pine Cobble—especially the developed portion—offers a very poor return on investment. However, Pine Cobble is managed moving forward, the significant costs already
incurred by the College in order to maintain this property should be taken into account and made a priority consideration.

**Evaluation Matrix and Recommendations**

Based on our interviews and survey, we determined the five most promising options for managing Pine Cobble moving forward. These were (1) to allow the property to continue being managed as it is currently (status quo), (2) to collaborate with NHESP to optimally manage the property’s hairy honeysuckle population, (3) to revert the property to town ownership, promoting current recreational use of the property, and (5) to relinquish the property to a meaningful stakeholder.

There are currently rough plans in place in order to better preserve the Pine Cobble hairy honeysuckle population. With additional support from the college, the feasibility and educational, environmental, and community benefits of this option would likely be significant. According to Fred Puddester, the College’s Vice President for Finance and Administration and Treasurer, the town has little interest in acquiring Pine Cobble due to the logistical and financial challenges of managing the property. Our survey displayed significant interest in allowing the property to be used recreationally. Given that Pine Cobble is already enjoyed recreationally by many community members, this would be a relatively easy change that would probably yield many additional benefits. We have received very little feedback regarding the possibility of relinquishing the property, however the environmental and community benefits of this option could be significant. Based on these considerations, we rated these five management options according to our evaluation matrix (See Table 1). According to this evaluation, managing the
property to preserve hairy honeysuckle and making improvements to facilitate greater
recreational use of the property proved to be the most promising management options. Since
these options are not mutually exclusive, we chose to recommend both to the College.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pine Cobble</th>
<th>Expressed Interest</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Educational Value</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Parcel Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage Endangered Species</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revert to town ownership</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>18</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relinquish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 5.* This table shows the ratings we assigned to each management alternative according to how well we expected them fulfil the following priorities: expressed interest, sustainability, educational value, community, and feasibility. According to this evaluation matrix, recreation and endangered species management are the highest-scoring options.

Our primary recommendation for this property is to collaborate with NHESP in order to optimally manage the hairy honeysuckle populating currently inhabiting the area. According to Frost, the plant would benefit from periodic cutting and burning to open up the canopy, followed by periods of no disturbance. In addition to the obvious ecological benefits of protecting this population, this collaborative effort would offer valuable research opportunities to Williams College students and staff interested in rare and endangered species. On behalf of NHESP, Frost expressed considerable interest in partnering with the College on such research projects. There is also an opportunity for students to assist NHESP with annual monitoring of Harry Honeysuckle and other endangered species in the area in order to determine the effects of management. Lastly, Pine Cobble homeowners who live in proximity to hairy honeysuckle should be educated about
what the plants look like, instructed to avoid dumping leaves or other yard waste in inappropriate areas, and encouraged to allow the plants to grow on their property rather than pulling them out like weeds. It is our hope that the College will accept these recommendations in order to preserve the Pine Cobble hairy honeysuckle population and create valuable research opportunities for students and faculty.

In addition to collaborating with NHESP, we recommend that the College take action to improve the existing recreational opportunities offered by Pine Cobble. The property is currently used recreationally by locals, mostly for hiking. We recommend a plan to facilitate this by expanding the existing trail network, improving trail quality, and creating greater accessibility via parking options and clear signage.
Mount Hope Farm
Physical Description and Site History

Our group was assigned three separate and scattered lands that are a part of Mount Hope Farm. These lands were the Piggery off Green River Road, a hayfield on Potter Road, and the Million Dollar Cow Barn on the Green River. The piggery is a thin and oddly shaped pasture with two dilapidated shacks surrounded by forested land. Our visit there suggested that is it regularly maintained as a pasture as the sheds remain unused. It is a place where walking would be easy and flat. The hayfield off Potter Road is a regularly hayed area in which the hay is used for broader purposes in the farm as a whole.

Lastly the Cow Barn has a large, architecturally beautiful barn that is currently used as storage for facilities. The barn has a road leading up to the entrance and is more accessible by car. All three of these parcels are plowed by the College. Williams also pays for the general maintenance of all three parcels while not reaping benefits that it could. Therefore, our suggestions mainly refer to Mount Hope Farm as a place that needs better and more transparent accessibility.

The history of Mount Hope Farm is quite complex. It was originally owned by Parmelee Prentice and Alta Rockefeller Prentice, daughter of John D. Rockefeller19. Their 72-room summer home, Elm Tree House, was completed in 192920. The Prentice’s had farming with goals of improving crops and livestock products through genetics21. In 1955, after Parmalee Prentice’s death, the 1400 acre property was bequeathed Lenox Hill Hospital of New York City (Figure 3 red map)22. The Elm Tree House, and Mount Hope property were purchased from Lenox Hill Hospital by Williams College in 1963 for $325,00023.

20 https://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/tales-of-mount-hope,475553
21 https://www.berkshireeagle.com/stories/tales-of-mount-hope,475553
Figure 3 Historical Map of Mount Hope Farm showing Williams College purchased land in red

Uses for the property ranged from a farm, observatory and discussions progressed about it being the place for a women’s college, graduate school, or arts institute. The College historically made the purchase in hopes to strengthen education and benefit the town. Since then the College sold the property to August Mansker, who defaulted on his mortgage. Later the Purple Mountain Partners purchased the land and gave the parcels now owned by Williams, including the Elm Tree House, back to The College.

Due to the nature of the current ownership, Williams pays a lot for the maintenance of Mt. Hope Farm roads, the Elm Tree House, and the parcels they own, while there are people affiliated with the college that do not know of its existence.

Considerations

Considerations for Mount Hope Farm management came from financial, ecological, and agricultural perspectives. From a financial point of view, renovations are wanted by many people we interviewed. The problem with historical renovations specifically, is that the buildings are quite old and not up to any safe building codes. Therefore, the cost of implementing renovations would be too high for the college without alternative usage as a pressing need. The Cow Barn is used for facilities storage and there is a need for that use, our interviews with employees of facilities uncovered the fact that there is no where else for storing all of the large items like refrigerators. A similar situation exists for the Piggery buildings, they are in rough shape; therefore the financial inputs would be much greater than even rebuilding new sheds if there became a demand. The Piggery and hayfield are currently being maintained as farmland paid for by the college.

Evaluation Matrix and Recommendations

From our evaluation matrix six possible plans for Mt. Hope Farm were devised: (1) status quo, (2) agriculture, (3) renewable energy, (4) recreation, (5) historical renovations, and (6)
relinquish. Currently the Mount Hope properties: the Piggery, the Potter Road hayfield, and the Cow Barn are being used as storage and for hay farming. Status quo is feasible, yet the land can be better used to satisfy the missions of The College in terms of education, sustainability, and accessibility to the community. Agriculture in some ways is status quo because there is agriculture already occurring. Here, however, agriculture could be expanded as a community garden or be used as a college research focused farm. There was high interest expressed in the survey for agriculture that involved students and the community as a way to share enjoyment. Thesis projects in the Environmental Studies Program could be a future possibility if students knew they could access the area. Renewable energy in terms of solar panels is not very feasible in this area due to the small sizes and lack of access to the national grid. Recreation had expressed interest and maintenance of trails would not be as costly and could provide accessibility to students and the community to use these areas. Walking here is calming, yet the majority of Mount Hope Farm is private property therefore signage would be necessary to keep visitors from imposing. Historical renovations of the dilapidated buildings at the Piggery and the Cow Barn had interest but at this time would be very costly. The cow barn is used for storage and could be used for student, faculty, and community events if it were a useable space. Lastly, relinquishing the land has no expressed interest but is an important consideration with changes in Mount Hope Farm management and the colleges future uses for the land. Relinquishing these lands to the Purple Mountain Partners should be considered as Williams College pays for maintenance but does not gain very much from these lands at this time. Future use could prove
benefits for the College owning the land. Even if there are no specific plans for the future, there should be a management plan that exists and contacts so when questions arise, there are clear answers. This would be useful if someone for example wanted to do a research project and needed information and clearances for their wanted uses. Overall, after assigning ranks to the matrix in each category, recreation and agriculture our most feasible recommendations. We do believe that transparency of the knowledge of these lands needs to be the highest priority in terms of Mount Hope Farm. Lastly, if relinquishing the land as a donation is a consideration in the future, we ask that the administration take into account environmental justice in that costs of maintaining and owning Mount Hope Farm may burden more than help a future land owner. Historically the purposes of owning the acreage was to benefit education and community. It is our hope that this may continue to be part of the Mount Hope Farm plans in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mt. Hope</th>
<th>Expressed Interest</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Educational Value</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Parcel Score</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical renovations</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relinquish</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6. Evaluation matrix for Mount Hope that weighs Status Quo, Agriculture, Renewable Energy, Historical Renovations, and Relinquish on a one to five scale.
Christmas Brook-Denison Park
Physical Description and Site History

The Christmas Brook-Denison Park land parcel is one of the college’s oldest pieces of lands and is located behind the new Williams Inn. Denison Park is a 16-acre area surrounding Christmas Brook and includes a section of land classified as a woody swamp as per the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection.\(^{26}\) The area is heavily wooded and parts of the parcel are or have been overgrown with invasive plant species including shrubs and trees.

Christmas Brook was purchased by the college in the early 1850s as part of a larger land purchase encompassing a huge portion of the college’s land south and east of Spring Street including what we now know as Weston Field, Towne Field House, and many other well-known parts of campus. At some point in time between the late 1800s and the mid-1900s, this parcel of land was incorporated into the campus community as a larger park where Christmas Lake was located on the north side of Latham Street.

This site was home to an ice skating pond in the winter and was a wildly popular campus location.\(^{27}\) However, it slowly lost its attraction as the land became neglected and less used. Once Before the construction of the Steam Plant in the 1920s and indoor ice rink in the 1960s, Christmas Lake had been emptied and the brook put in a pipe, leaving only the section south of Latham Street and the new Williams inn above ground. This is what now is known as Christmas Brook.\(^{28}\) Over time, the Christmas Brook area has become a forgotten part of Williams and was fittingly hidden behind the overgrown invasive plants. While Denison Park sees some usage in terms of the Williamstown community walking their dogs and other forms of recreation, it remains a virtually inaccessible yet beautiful part of Williamstown.

\(^{26}\)“DEP"Wetlands"(1:12,000)"Change.""Office"of"Geographic"Information"(MassGIS)."Massachusetts"Department"of"Environmental"Protection"Wetlands"Conservancy"Program,"2005.
Considerations

There are a couple of legal and technical considerations for this land parcel.

a. Wetland Protections Act: Any recommendations or land management plans must be aware of and in compliance with the Wetland Protections Act given the woody swamp classification of Christmas Brook. This can and will affect how sections of the parcel can be developed and altered.

b. Invasive and Endangered Species: Any plan should incorporate the careful continued management of both invasive exotic species as well as any rare and endangered species located within Christmas Brook-Denison Park.

c. Accessibility: Given the distance and overgrown nature of this property, accessibility was a large consideration in our project. In our conversations with clients and interviewees, Christmas Brook-Denison Park was central to connecting students and community members with The Clark Art Institute.

Evaluation Matrix and Recommendations

We decided to evaluate four possible alternative uses for Christmas Brook-Denison Park which can be found in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Christmas Brook-Denison Park</th>
<th>Expressed Interest</th>
<th>Sustainability</th>
<th>Educational Value</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Feasibility</th>
<th>Parcel Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Status quo</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage Invasive Species</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relinquish</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7. The evaluation matrix weighs the following four options: 1. Status Quo - Leave the park and wooded swamp area as is with existing management plans. 2. Recreation - Further improving existing recreational uses. 3. Managing Invasive Species along with rare and endangered species. 4. Relinquishing the land via donation or sale.

Recreation and management of invasive species as well as rare and endangered species topped our alternative options. The main use of this land has historically been recreational activities so it fittingly scored high in terms of interest, community, and value. Improving trail access and publicity should be a top priority. While management of the plant species had not been effectively done for long periods of time, there did not seem to be much of a downside to this option. Instead, continuing to manage the vast overgrowth could improve accessibility, value, and sustainability as we could reintroduce native species to the area. Lastly, maintaining the status quo was not too far behind.

As such, our recommendations incorporate all three of these uses as they are not mutually exclusive. According to Professor Hank Art, there is currently a management plan for invasive shrubs in Christmas Brook that is progress. However, there is no current plan for the management of invasive exotic trees. Therefore, we turned to previous environmental planning reports conducted on this land parcel. A 2010 report titled “A Trail Plan for Downtown Williamstown’s Christmas Brook” was completed by a group of students for ENVI 411. In this report, they outline specific details on all of the common invasive and native species found in the area and make recommendations on which plants should be increased, removed, or maintained as is. The chart below offers a brief overview of their plan but we recommend reading their report in full.
Table 8. A brief but accurate overview of recommendations for managing the vegetation of Christmas Brook drawn from the 2010 Report previously mentioned.²⁹

Rather than recreate all of their report’s recommendations, we suggest following their proposals on managing the vegetation of Christmas Brook including both shrubs and trees as well as utilizing the already existing management plan for invasive shrubs that Professor Art informed us of. For full details, the report can be accessed online at the Williams College Center for Environmental Studies website.

As for recreation and status quo, our recommendation incorporates a combination of the two. We discovered through our interviews that there are ongoing plans in motion to develop a path between the new Williams Inn and The Clark, effectively connecting all of these properties with the larger campus community. We completely support this idea and want to make sure that the public is aware of these plans and can access the lands when they are complete. Detailed notes including maps, project overview and narrative, information on Wetland Protection Act compliance, and the notice of intent were made available to us by Andrew Groff and can be accessed via the Williamstown Town Hall. Furthermore, we encourage these trail plans along with the existing trails of Denison Park to add signage on local histories and plants so as to offer educational value and preservation of rare and endangered local species. We believe that the addition of a trail connecting the Inn with the Clark Art Institute through Christmas Brook-Denison Park, along with managing the property’s vegetation and the inclusion of educational signage, will be best for accessibility, sustainability, and community and educational value.
Conclusion

This project has undergone much in the way of change and evolution from the time we were first provided with the original descriptor and research questions. Originally, our group felt rather overwhelmed by the number and size of land parcels that we had been given to investigate, and soon found that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to attempt to develop explicitly detailed management plans for every one of the six groups of land parcels. Fortunately, through our interview and research processes, we were able to discover many projects already underway on several of the land parcels in question, as detailed above. For those parcels that did not have explicit project plans already, we brainstormed possibilities, using knowledge gained from our interviews, the campus-wide survey, and research completed both online and in the College archives, to determine what would be feasible and what would best satisfy the needs and the wants of the Williams communities. Ultimately, as can be seen in this report, making suggestions for the management of the parcels we were assigned did constitute a significant portion of our research and our project goals. However, we wanted to do something more.

That “something more” was guided primarily by the question that had arisen in our very first interview, which was conducted on October 1st with the Williams College Provost, Dukes Love. We were surprised to find that Love did not have much, if any, knowledge concerning the land parcels we had been assigned. Additionally, using the portion of students and faculty that completed our survey as an estimate, we discovered that more than half of the campus is unaware of these various non-campus lands -- and it should be mentioned that we, too, before beginning this project, had never heard of, let alone visited, the majority of these lands. This to us seemed significant, and remarkable. How was it that a group of upper-classmen
in an upper-level Environmental Studies class, 59.3% of the campus body, the Provost of the 
College, and even the President herself were largely unaware that these lands existed?

That was the question that stuck most in our heads throughout the semester, and ultimately, it became the question that most guided our vision for this project, as we discussed how to address the issues of visibility, accessibility, transparency, and power that surrounded the lands and Williams College’s ownership of them. Why was it that these lands felt largely invisible to a large portion of the campus? Who is able to access these lands, and how does that accessibility relate to power and privilege and knowledge? Whose voices are heard, and whose are not, in discussions surrounding these lands? How could we give voice to those who remain unheard? What was our role, our responsibility, and our positionality as a group in these discussions? How could we, as a group, participate in improving the issues of visibility and accessibility to these lands, and open them to a wider range of people? How could these lands be used to satisfy needs and desires within and even (and especially) beyond our community? How is the ownership and the use of these lands influenced by issues of power? What is the history of these lands, and what histories and narratives do those lands preserve? Who benefits from these lands now, and who could benefit from them in the future?

Later in the project, we received a particularly interesting question from one of our main clients, in response to this litany of questions we had begun to ask ourselves: essentially, was this even a problem that really needed a solution? In other words, did we necessarily have to “do” anything with these lands? This client pressed us to consider the inherent value in leaving these lands undeveloped, open, “as is,” and to some extent we agreed, believing that there is value in retaining unbuilt environments in the community -- especially given the large amount of “built”
environment that already exists at the College, and how much that environment has been expanding in recent years. However, we still believe that our questions are ones that need a solution -- or at the very least, a conversation. Because, after all, “doing nothing” in this case is not really doing nothing, and leaving these lands unbuilt still involves making a decision and taking action, even if that action can semantically be considered “inaction.” It also must be considered that Williams College, as an institution, has a significant amount of power, money, and privilege that allows it to own and operate these lands, and to leave them “as is” if it chooses to do so. As we attempt to improve knowledge of and accessibility to these lands with this project, we press the College to consider who owned the land before them, who it is serving now, and how it could be used by them or others to serve a better and wider range of communities.

Going forward, we want this project most of all to have a life beyond us, and with our final product we hope to invite many future generations of College and community members to join in the conversation and discuss how best to use these lands. This final product, which will be included below, is a brochure that includes pictures and descriptors of each of the properties we were assigned, as well as directions to those properties and suggested recreational uses. We hope to distribute this brochure as well as others like it in the mailboxes of incoming first-years, to give students a better sense of the land-based opportunities accessible to them from their very first days on campus. We hope that with this project and report, we can improve the visibility of and access to these lands, and in doing so, open the conversations surrounding them to a wide range of voices, both now and in the future.
The Brochure

NARRATIVE

Considering the extensive, complicated histories behind each of our many land parcels, as well as the detailed student- and community-crafted plans that have preceded our project, we decided to focus on the larger narratives that we want to communicate. First, we hope to increase the visibility and transparency of these lands so that members of our community can be more intentional in our relationships to the land. Second, we want to embrace the messiness of this process, which we found to be reflective of and authentic to the disparate communities that make up the whole of Williams’s campus. Finally, our project aims to set a precedent for pushing our partners at the College to consider the stakes of relinquishing the institution’s historic, immense resources— in this case, land.

WILLIAMS COLLEGE LANDS
An ENVI 302 Final Project
Fall 2019

Enjoy this beautiful place that we are privileged to access knowing that it is unceded territory of the Mohican people. We acknowledge that future work is necessary to dismantle legacies of settler colonialism.

PROJECT BY:

Williams-owned, off campus land parcels are currently hidden treasures. Our goal is to decrease knowledge gaps about these parcels so that they can be used sustainably for research and communal enjoyment.
### PLACES TO VISIT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Address(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STONE HILL WOODLOT</strong></td>
<td>An area perfect for walking, and kite day. Stone Hill meets with a variety of trails</td>
<td>0 Clout Dr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COLE FIELD</strong></td>
<td>Catch Eghs on the soccer fields, or walk to the Hoosic River to enjoy the Purple Valley</td>
<td>85 Stetson Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DENNISON PARK</strong></td>
<td>Behind the new Williams Inn a walkway will lead you to The Clark Art Institute through a quiet woods.</td>
<td>90 Denison Park Dr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BERLIN MOUNTAIN</strong></td>
<td>An old downhill ski mountain perfect for hiking and camping</td>
<td>0 Berlin Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOUNT HOPE</strong></td>
<td>The Cow Barn, Piggery, and Hayfield are beautiful places to walk and enjoy pastures around in Williamsburg</td>
<td>1478 Green River Rd, 0 Green River Rd and 0 Potter Rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PINE COBBLE</strong></td>
<td>A housing development that leads to trails as well as Mary Honeysuckle a rare and endangered species</td>
<td>0 Pine Cobbles Road</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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