



FOSTER



Photo Credit: Town of Foster, Trails & Walks in Rhode Island, Foster Preservation Society

Municipal Resilience Program Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings

June 2024



Town of Foster, Rhode Island

Community Resilience Building

Summary of Findings

Overview

The need for municipalities, corporations, states, and federal agencies to increase resilience to extreme weather events and a changing climate is strikingly evident amongst the communities across the state of Rhode Island. Recent events such as Tropical Storm Irene, Super Storm Sandy, severe winter storms (2013 & 2015), and even the recent severe flooding during the summer and fall of 2022 and 2023 have reinforced this urgency and compelled leading communities like the Town of Foster to proactively collaborate on planning and mitigating risks. Ultimately, this type of leadership is to be commended because it will reduce the vulnerability and reinforce the strengths of people, infrastructure, and ecosystems and serve as a model for other communities in Rhode Island, New England, and the nation.

In the spring of 2024, the Town of Foster embarked on certification within the state of Rhode Island's Municipal Resilience Program (MRP). As a prerequisite to certification, the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) provided the Town with a community-driven process to assess current hazard and climate change impacts and to surface projects, plans, and policies for improved resilience. In April 2024, Foster's Core Team helped organize their Community Resilience Building process and workshop facilitated by TNC in partnership with RIIB. The core directive of this effort was the engagement with and between community members to define strengths and vulnerabilities and the development of priority resilience and sustainability actions for the Town of Foster.

The Foster Community Resilience Building Workshop's central objectives were to:

- Define top local, natural, and climate-related hazards of concern.
- Identify existing and future strengths and vulnerabilities.
- Identify and prioritize actions for the Town.
- Identify opportunities to collaboratively advance actions to increase resilience alongside residents and organizations from across the Town and beyond.

The Town of Foster employed an “anywhere at any scale”, community-driven process called Community Resilience Building (CRB) (www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org). The CRB’s tools, reports, other relevant planning documents, and local maps were integrated into the workshop process to provide both decision-support and visualization around shared issues and existing priorities across Foster. The Foster Comprehensive Community Plan (2023) and the Draft Foster Hazard Mitigation & Floodplain Management Plan Update (2024) were particularly instructive as references. Using the CRB process, rich with information, experience, and dialogue, the participants produced the findings presented in this summary report. This includes an overview of the top hazards, current concerns and challenges, existing strengths, and proposed actions to improve Foster’s resilience to hazards and climate change today, and in the future.

The summary of findings transcribed in this report, like any that concern the evolving nature of risk assessment and associated action, is proffered for comments, corrections and updates from workshop attendees and other stakeholders alike. The leadership displayed by the Town of Foster on community resilience building will benefit from the continuous participation of all those concerned.

Summary of Findings

Top Hazards and Vulnerable Areas for the Community

Prior to the CRB Workshop, the Foster Core Team identified the top hazards for the Town. The hazards of greatest concern included hurricanes and major storms; flooding of rivers, streams, and roadways; and Nor’easters and blizzards during fall, winter, and spring months. Additional hazards highlighted by participants during the CRB Workshop included wildland fires, high wind events, and drought conditions, particularly during the late summer months. These hazards have direct and increasing impacts on the infrastructure, environment, and residents of and visitors to Foster. These effects are seen in residential homes, natural areas (wetlands, rivers, forests, preserves, parks), road infrastructure, dams, businesses, transportation systems, municipal facilities, social support services, and other critical infrastructure and community assets within Foster.

Current Concerns and Challenges Presented by Hazards

The Town of Foster has several concerns and faces multiple challenges related to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change. In recent years, Foster has experienced a series of highly disruptive and damaging weather events including severe flooding (March 2010), Tropical Storm Irene (August 2011), Superstorm Sandy (October 2012), Nor'easter Nemo (February 2013), and Blizzard Juno (January 2015), severe drought (2016), and significant blizzard (2022). Impacts from Irene and Sandy included coastal and widespread inland flooding along with tree damage and associated power outages. The winter storms Nemo and Juno dropped 2-3 feet of snow with 2-3 inches per hour of accumulation at their peak. The magnitude and intensity of these events and others across Rhode Island have increased awareness of natural hazards and climate change, while motivating communities such as Foster to proactively improve their resilience.

As is predicted with climate change, the impacts from these severe weather events have been varied and diverse. In Foster this has included riverine flooding of critical infrastructure, roads, bridges, and low-lying areas; localized flooding from stormwater runoff during intense storms and heavy precipitation events; and property damage and utility outages (lasting several days or more) from wind, snow, and ice. Longer periods of elevated heat, particularly in July and August, have raised concerns about vulnerable segments of the population, including elderly and disabled residents who are homebound, residents living in older housing stock without air conditioning, lower-income residents who may have difficulty with utility bills for temperature control in their homes, and the residents living in proximity to areas with increased potential for wildfires. The combination of these issues presents a challenge to preparedness and mitigation priorities and requires comprehensive, yet locally specific actions in Foster.

The workshop participants were generally in agreement that Foster is experiencing more intense and frequent storm events and heat waves. Additionally, there was a general concern about the increasing challenges of being prepared for the worst-case scenarios (e.g., major thunderstorms and hurricanes (Cat-3 or above)) particularly in the late summer and in the fall/winter months when more intense storms coincide with colder weather (i.e., Nor'easters, blizzards). The impact of the recent COVID-19 pandemic was raised by workshop participants as well.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges

As in any community, Foster is not uniformly vulnerable to hazards and climate change. Certain locations, assets, and populations have been and will be affected to a greater degree than others. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key areas of concern and challenges across several broad categories.

Municipal Functions, Operations, & Growth:

- Participants felt that State requirements on affordable and low to moderate income housing targets unfairly places burden on Foster due to the communities need to maintain open space and the high levels of ground-water saturating their soils. They shared concerns that development and further build out to meet those affordable housing requirements will invariably sacrifice forested lands that current filter and protect the state's drinking water supply.
- Foster also specifically reported the duty to maintain and provide high quality drinking water for approximately 60% of the state via locations within the watershed of the Scituate Reservoir. Foster is not often recognized for protecting critical drinking water resources for a large portion of the population across the state of Rhode Island. Impacts of the quality of drinking water due to development and/or water contamination from septic systems may impact the quality of drinking water for much of the state of Rhode Island.
- Difficulties in the establishment of new businesses due to state regulations that require costly above ground wastewater treatment systems on parcels with high water table. Currently, Foster is experiencing a "downward slide in development" because of the difficulty building with an increasing amount to elevate groundwater levels as well as the cost of utilities site work and building materials.
- Interest and desire to attract new businesses along US-6 but need to balance growth with minimizing impact to the adjoining forested and wetland areas ("need to find a balance"). Further difficulty due to flooding risk along this busy transportation corridor through Foster.
- Residents are both community-minded and "don't want to be told what to do", which can result in independent approaches to managing property (not necessarily in the public interest). For example, property owners will have fires on property without notifying and getting permission from the Fire Department to ensure everyone's safety.
- Limited financial support exists to cover the costs of supplies and labor associated with projects to improve the sustainability of local agricultural producers. This is also true for land trusts working to protect open space, which helps ensure high quality of drinking water for much of the state.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Limited tax base and revenue for Foster presents a challenge to advancing much needed infrastructure maintenance and upgrades.
- Despite the contributions made by Foster in maintaining high quality drinking water for the state, there has been limited support to help local homeowners deal with wastewater issues that can contaminate critical aquifers and the reservoir that feeds Providence Water. Rural communities like Foster must absorb the burden of maintaining drinking water services without support and benefits for other directly dependent issues like wastewater management. Foster residents rely on private wells and some public wells for their drinking water.
- Current agricultural community is aging and looking to retire, resulting in concerns about the potential for sale and conversion of productive farmland to development.
- Contaminated soils due to irresponsible activities in the past result in complications and expense for new development and construction. Examples include the challenges to installing traffic lights at an intersection due to the discovery of contaminated soils during inspection prior to grading of site to improve visibility.

Emergency Management & Preparedness:

- Rapidly aging population of residents that have limited mobility and are increasingly isolated during and after disasters. There are not many public transit routes in and around Foster for folks with limited mobility to rely on.
- Concerns about routine and longer-duration power outages after major storm events which can present problems for elderly and more isolated residents.
- Dispersed residential housing across large geographic areas in addition to bridges being out for several decades can result in longer wait times for emergency responders to arrive in the event of an issue.
- Weak cell service across western Rhode Island means many communities must rely on land lines, which are vulnerable to the impacts of storm damage.
- Large fuel loads (leaf litter and debris from trees) along roadways and near powerlines presents a growing amount of fuel sources for wildland fires.
- Significant and escalating concerns regarding the potential devastating impacts to the land, people, and property in Foster given the significant threat from wildland fires.
- Foster's three Volunteer Fire Companies do not have the capacity or proper equipment needed to manage large scale wildland fires in the event they occur within Town or in neighboring municipalities before getting to Foster.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Forest fires potential is increasing with the likelihood of more intense and bigger fires becoming more prevalent, particularly during periods of increasingly more intense droughts in the late summer and early fall months.
- Current restrictions on where Fire Companies can draw water for fire suppression due to lack of a public water supply or designated dry hydrant locations. Clayville is an example of a reliable pond to draw water however, there is a need for a special fire truck to pump the water from this location, which presents a further technological challenge alongside availability of water for fire suppression.
- Ongoing issues with downed trees and limbs blocking roads and the wait time required for Rhode Island Energy to remove obstacles leaves Foster's emergency responders standing idle and not able to respond to the needs of their community (including critical medical care and fire services). Example of the electric utility taking up to three days to open roadways for local emergency responders during events from 2019 through 2021.
- Currently there is no preparation or contingency plan in place to handle chemical spills, which can result due to traffic accidents along the three main transportation corridors through Foster.
- Lack of maintenance and upgrades on state highways (US-6 and RI-101) due to roadway deterioration and flooding throughout Foster has implications for emergency responders needing to take detours to respond to emergencies during normal operations and during major weather events.
- Failed drainage systems on US-6 caused flooding and forced residents to detour and use RI-101 during a six-day closure, which participants believe would not have been tolerated in a more densely populated community elsewhere in Rhode Island.

Roads & Road Networks, Bridges, & Dams:

- Majority of stormwater drainage systems on state highways and roads are not functioning as designed, with culvert failures and routine flooding along certain road segments.
- Aging infrastructure on US-6 - including bridges, culverts, and roadways built over 100 years ago present issues for municipalities like Foster that rely on these critical transportation corridors. However, these are not always priorities for the state Department of Transportation. The maintenance and replacement of bridges is not prioritized.
- Drainage issues, including large volumes of potentially polluted stormwater runoff from US-6 into adjoining forests and wetlands.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Concerning increase in erosion on dirt roads across Foster and in neighboring municipalities due to more intense and longer-duration precipitation events.
- Growing concerns with certain road segments and associated stormwater management infrastructure such as culverts that were designed to handle storms from decades ago (1970s) and are now ill-equipped given the increase in magnitude and duration of storms in the 2020s.
- Recognition that many privately owned dams in Foster need maintenance and upgrades. This includes the privately owned Gorham N. Farm Pond Dam (RI Dam #526) that has a non-functioning control valve to lower water levels which results in the private property owner's inability to pre-release stored water and reduce risk to the dam in advance of a major precipitation events.

Wastewater Treatment, Drinking Water Supply, & Stormwater Systems:

- All of Foster's residential homes and facilities are on drinking water wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems, which can present a challenge during periods of longer duration power outages.
- Elevated high-water table due to more annual rainfall presents growing challenges for design, engineering, installation, and maintenance of residential septic systems.
- Issues with ongoing functionality and maintenance of household septic systems given the highwater table. Non-functioning septic system can present contamination issues in and around protected well heads used to source drinking water.
- High water table presents challenges for typical stormwater management infrastructure and approaches in Foster.
- High water tables and permeable soils in many areas of Town, particularly more densely populated areas such as Clayville, where it can be challenging to keep drinking water systems safe (including wells) from contamination from saturated septic system fields.
- Residential septic system failures due to high water table with engineering challenges to upgrade systems due to physical lot size constraints.

Watersheds, Wetlands, Rivers, Open Space, Forests, & Trees:

- Ongoing concerns about dead and standing trees along roadways and proximity to buildings and structures.
- Lack of capacity and financial backing for the Foster Land Trust to take full advantage of the Natural Resources Conservation Service Agricultural Conservation Easement program and place easements on working lands.

Specific Categories of Concerns and Challenges (cont'd)

- Forest invasive pests and pathogens have growing impacts on income derived from woodlots as well as increasing the forest fire risk.
- Ongoing and increasing pressure on landowners to secure profit and sell property to developers, which will increase the number of subdivisions in Foster and reduce the amount of intact forested lands.



Credit: City-Data.com



Credit: Town of Foster



Credit: AllTrails.com

Current Strengths and Assets

Just as certain locations, facilities, and populations in Foster stand out as particularly vulnerable to the effects of hazards and climate change, other features are notable assets for Foster's resilience building. Workshop participants identified the following items as their community's key strengths and expressed interest in centering them as the core of future resilience-building actions.

- Clearly, the responsive and committed engagement exhibited by leadership, staff, and residents is a very appreciated strength within and across Foster. Ongoing collaboration between municipal staff, committee/commission volunteers, business owners, land trusts, faith-based organizations, non-government organizations, adjoining municipalities, and various state-level organizations, among others, on priorities identified herein will help advance comprehensive, cost-effective, community resilience building actions.
- Rural community with a high level of participation from residents in town government as well as community events. Over 80% of individuals involved in governmental affairs on boards and commissions in Foster are volunteers.
- Deep sense of pride amongst residents and desire to retain a small town feel for Foster.
- Majority of residents are part of long-term, multi-generational families that care about Foster and work hard to keep it a safe and friendly place to live.
- Many residents are self-sufficient, as well as mechanically inclined.
- High rates of homeownership in Foster with minimum lot size of five acres results in low density housing overall, which town residents highlighted as a benefit.
- Foster has had an influx of new residents over the last few decades and shifts in population, and the Town in large part has retained a strong sense of community and public events in Foster are usually well attended.
- Strong social fabric in Foster where residents are committed to making improvements where needed.
- Healthy, robust debates occurring in Town amongst residents that want to keep things the way they are and residents that wish to make changes who all wish that Foster remains a wonderful place to live.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Proactive Planning Department always striving to improve the livability of Foster for residents.
- Well publicized and attended Earth Day Clean-up events in Foster which helps to signal the Town's commitment to environmental issues and stewardship needs.
- High level of engagement in the current Hazard Mitigation Plan update by residents in Foster as well as appreciation amongst residents for processes like Community Resilience Building and the state's Municipal Resilience Program, which are all designed to help improve the resilience and sustainability of the community going forward.
- Foster's rural character and considerable number of small farms that produce vegetables and other produce via farmers markets is viewed as a real community strength by residents.
- Configuration and connectivity of forests in Foster with the larger forested areas of New England are critically important for wildlife migration and habitat integrity, particularly with changing climatic conditions.
- Large tracts of forested lands with high percentage of pervious surfaces that can absorb and filter rainfall and stormwater runoff very effectively.
- US-6 represents a major transportation corridor and potential focal point for commerce in Foster and brings folks from out of town in and through Foster.
- Foster's libraries provide a community hub for residents as well as hosting numerous events at the community theater and supporting a thriving arts community in Town.
- Foster Churches Association and affiliated organizations are actively engaged via a strong core group that works together to solve issues prevalent amongst their parishioners.
- Community focused and well-respected school system with long-term teachers and administrators that are from Foster.
- Strong working relationship with other neighboring communities (including municipalities in Connecticut) via mutual aid and fire response commitments between Fire Companies and Departments.
- Major east-west as well as north-south state highways increases the access and egress to and from Foster during major events. Foster is a 30-minute drive from Providence.

Current Strengths and Assets (cont'd)

- Sparsely populated with zoning dimensional regulations confirming to NFPA 1141 – Standard for Fire Protection Infrastructure for Land Development in Wildland, Rural, and Suburban Areas.
- Major east-west as well as north-south state highways increases the access and egress to and from Foster during major events. Foster is a 30-minute drive from Providence.
- Foster has three Volunteer Fire Companies strategically dispersed across the Town.
- Strong agricultural community and woodlot owners that care deeply about the land and have a desire to ensure the land is permanently protected. Residents and visitors readily seek out and purchase farm grown products from agricultural and forestry operations in Foster.
- High level of awareness amongst residents regarding the importance of maintaining protected open space to ensure resources such as clean drinking water and habitat for wildlife are preserved.
- Long track record of effective land protection and stewardship by the Foster Land Trust.
- Environmental sustainability has always been a priority given that the water resources in Foster provide safe, clean drinking water for 60% of the state of Rhode Island’s residents via Providence Water. Foster residents rely on groundwater as their drinking water source.
- Approximately 90% of residents currently have generators at their residences so power outages have less of a disastrous impact.
- Open farm and forested lands help to absorb and filter large amounts of precipitation that ultimately recharges the local water table and regional aquifer.
- Ample availability of freshwater resources across Foster.

Recommendations to Improve Resilience

A common theme among workshop participants was the need to continue community-based planning efforts focused on developing adaptive measures to reduce Foster's vulnerability to extreme weather, climate change and other common concerns raised. To that end, the workshop participants helped to identify several priority topics requiring more immediate and/or ongoing attention including:

- **Long-term vision and growth** (i.e. responsible/sustainable growth, volunteerism, conservation & recreation, economic development, funding/tax base, water quality);
- **Infrastructure improvements** (i.e. road/bridge/dams, stormwater management systems, green stormwater infrastructure, private septic systems);
- **Quality of life improvements** (i.e. parks and recreation, open space & access, sustainability, health & safety, economic prosperity, water quality, education);
- **Emergency management** (i.e. communications, outreach, education, continuation of services, evacuation, vulnerable populations, alert systems, wildfire).

In direct response, the Community Resilience Building workshop participants developed the following actions and identified, but did not rank, them as priority or as additional actions. Maps provided during the CRB Workshop gathered from the Foster Comprehensive Community Plan and the Hazard Mitigation & Floodplain Management Plan are provided in Appendix A.

Priority Actions

Capital Projects

- Create an instructional video for residents and elected representatives regarding the impact of natural disasters and the actions needs to improve resilience in Foster and other rural communities in Rhode Island. Video should highlight local impacts created by issues such as failed drainage systems along state highways, dead-end roads, forest fire, and highwater tables and septic systems, among others.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Ensure opportunity for proactive forest management focused on clearing fuel loads from roadways & powerlines to help reduce the impacts of wildland fire on critical transportation corridors and power transmission. This may need to be coordinated with the electric utility.
- Seek to encourage the responsible utility (Rhode Island Energy) to proactively trim trees and limbs away from powerlines to help reduce exposure of Foster's residents to power outages.
- Conduct a town-wide review and prioritization of municipal stormwater management infrastructure systems. Secure funding to advance several projects to remedy issues at the highest priority coupled with data collection to help demonstrate effectiveness of improved stormwater management to residents.
- Look to secure funding for roadway improvements and replacement of bridges. Areas to prioritize include segments of Johnson Road, Anthony Road, and Hemlock Road near the Scituate town boundary.

Plans/Preparedness/Studies/Outreach

- Prepare a town-wide plan for landowners that will help to reduce the start and spread of wildfire in Foster. Look to state programs such as Fire Wise to better assess the vulnerabilities of wildfire on land, people, and property in Foster.
- Work to further ensure the small-scale farms in Town are utilizing conservation practices that help to reduce the impacts of operations on localized water quality and other natural resources.
- Set up educational outreach opportunities for decision makers in Foster that highlight that more development can be detrimental to both protecting natural resources and reducing the impacts of climate change on residents.

Priority Actions (cont'd)

- Conduct a town-wide mapping exercise of all failing culverts, as well as location of washouts.
- Look to incorporate proactive flood mitigation measures into Foster's existing road and bridge improvement plan managed by the Department of Public Works.
- Proactively improve powerline mitigation and grid resilience via better tree maintenance and management in hopes of reducing the frequency and extent of power outages across Foster.
- Develop and operationalize a communications plan to increase the awareness amongst residents of the vulnerabilities in Foster due to natural disasters and climate change ("what's at stake") in hopes of building support for actions developed herein as well as in other core planning documents such as the Foster Hazard Mitigation & Floodplain Management Plan and Comprehensive Plan.
- Explore the potential for securing grants, in addition to existing loans, to assist homeowners with upgrades private septic systems across the entire community of Foster.
- Explore how Foster and the Providence Water Supply Board could mutually benefit by taking actions to ensure greater resilience of the Scituate Reservoir.

Additional Actions

Capacity Building

- Examine Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings from neighboring municipalities to find areas of common interest, shared value, and capacity availability to begin creating regional partnerships and networks to collaboratively tackle issues.
- Secure and allocate additional funding to assist Department of Public Works with proactive removal of dead and standing trees and limbs along roadways in Foster.
- Seek out and secure resource, staff, and equipment directly or through mutual aid agreement with adjoining municipalities, private sector, and/or state agencies to help improve readiness for the reality of a major wildland fire.
- Secure funding to conduct a watershed monitoring program to get a better handle on water quality and runoff issues at bigger scales across Foster.
- Explore the possibilities for advancing a community-based composting program in Foster to reduce food waste and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Work to attract more volunteers to contribute their time and expertise to opportunities to serve in local government.
- Help strengthen Foster's voice in the state legislature by arming the two state representatives with a deeper understanding of the challenges of the community (presented herein) they represent in hopes of increasing awareness and funding to advance necessary actions to improve resilience and sustainability across rural communities in Rhode Island. Produce and develop a more specific action plan to the two state representatives who can use the material as their legislative playbook throughout the legislative session each year.

Capital Projects

- Seek out approaches to reduce the flooding impacts to the Swamp Meadow Covered Bridge.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Complete the Anthony Road bridge repairs to open up access to an egress option for emergency and ambulance services.
- Encourage responsible entities to better maintain the 60 miles of fire lanes around the Scituate Reservoir to ensure access for fire suppression of smaller wildland fires before they escalate into major fires.
- Look to better maintain, clean out, upgrade, and/or retrofit culverts on dirt roads in Foster to help minimize costly road washouts and flooding on neighboring lands.

Plans/Preparedness/Studies/Outreach

- Complete the update of the Foster Hazard Mitigation & Floodplain Management Plan and ensure that appropriate actions in the Community Resilience Building Summary of Findings are considered and included in the update.
- Assess and prioritize the removal of dead and standing trees and limbs along roadways in Foster to help ensure risk to motorists and powerlines are minimized, as well as reducing the financial risk to the municipality associated with diminished safety to residents.
- Conduct extensive assessment and cleanout debris and soil from all culverts and other clogged stormwater water drainage infrastructure across Foster to ensure existing systems are not impaired given the increased intensity and duration of precipitation events.
- For annual certification of “Forest Farm Open Space” parcels, ensure fire mitigation measures and actions are built into all forest management plans prior to approval.
- Work with State to reduce the amount of roadside trash along major roads and highways in Foster.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Identify dams in need of maintenance and improvements and work with owners to conduct the necessary engineering and repairs. Complete Emergency Management Plans for all high/significant hazard dams in Foster and on file with the state's Department of Environmental Management.
- Work with state level legislators to relax the affordable housing requirements for municipalities in western Rhode Island (including Foster) in favor of maintaining critical forested lands to help ensure a long-term, safe drinking water supply for residents across the State.
- Continue to advocate for legislation that would help incentivize responsible growth and provide supportive services for rural communities in the state of Rhode Island.
- Identify appropriate forest fire awareness materials and share at all public meeting and events in hopes of further educating residents on actions that can be taken to reduce impacts to residents and their properties in Foster.
- Explore the possibility of allowing Rhode Island Energy the ability to trim trees more than the current 8 feet from powerlines. Other states provide utilities the latitude of removing trees and limbs up to 30 feet from powerlines. Increasing the allowable distance to 15 feet would greatly reduce the potential impact of trees and limbs on powerlines during storm events.
- Look to adopt roadside forest management practices that reduce impacts to transportation and powerlines including the plants of shrub and tree species that don't grow more than 15 feet and require less maintenance over time (refer to UConn Extension roadside demonstration sites in Connecticut for examples).
- Encourage landowners engaged in farming or forest management to adopt best management practices in accordance with town zoning and regulations.
- Work with local farms to increase the number of outlets for residents and visitors to purchase locally grown produce and products.

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Continue the work of the Planning Board to adopt zoning ordinances that would allow for roadside stores up to a certain size for local farms to sell their produce and products.
- Work to ensure the state Department of Transportation prioritizes and upgrades stormwater drainage systems including culverts along all segments of US-6 and RI-101 through Foster.
- Continue to advance discussions between Fire Companies in Coventry and Foster on pre-identifying and designating collective water sources (dry hydrants) for fire suppression use across the two communities.
- Review egress and access issues on the few dead-end roads in Foster and work to reduce the potential for downed trees during storms to present obstacles to providing medical and emergency services to isolated residents along these road segments.
- Advocate for greater awareness and compensation by the state for the ecosystem services provided by the municipality such as clean drinking water, clean air, and the historical significance of Foster.
- Look to ensure that Foster benefits from the solar energy being installed in Rhode Island by entering a purchase power agreement, as well as the installation of fiber optic cable along the RI-101 corridor. Currently, those products and potential services pass directly through Foster.
- Add more comprehensive cell coverage service to existing towers that do not have prohibitive restrictions. This would help to reduce the dependence of land phone lines.
- Conduct outreach and education to private landowners regarding the risks of unregulated fires on private property and the potential risks to the greater community in Foster (i.e., for example, risk of burning during windy weather).

Additional Actions (cont'd)

- Revisit planning and viability of designated route identified for evacuation of residents during major disasters including RI-102 and RI-40 amongst other state highways.
- Look to assist private property owners responsible for maintaining ponds used to draw water for fire suppression by Foster's Fire Companies. Explore potential to secure grants to assist these private landowners with funding to maintain ponds and associated dams if present. This should include help with the removal of debris such as fallen trees and limbs that clogs critical water sources.
- Secure and install fire danger warning signage that can warn of changing conditions at campgrounds and community spaces as well as along major roadways to enhance visibility of the issue and risk.
- Integrate the fire danger warning signage with more prominent signage demarcating designated evacuation routes across Foster.



Credit: RedFin



Credit: Wikipedia



Credit: FireNews.org

CRB Workshop Participants: Department/Organization

Town of Foster – Office of the Town Council Members & President
Town of Foster – Police Department
Town of Foster – Fire Department
Town of Foster – Planning Department
Town of Foster – Zoning Board
Town of Foster – Planning Board
Town of Foster – Conservation Commission
Foster & Glocester Regional School District
Providence Water
Northern Rhode Island Conservation District
Natural Resources Conservation Services – Providence County District

Foster Core Project Team

Grant McGregor – Town Planner – Town of Foster

Online CRB Workshop Facilitation Team

Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank – Anthony Hebert (MRP Co-Lead)

State of Rhode Island (DEM) - Kim Koriath (MRP Co-Lead)

The Nature Conservancy - Adam Whelchel, Ph.D. (Lead Facilitator)

The Nature Conservancy – Sue AnderBois (Small Group Facilitator)

The Nature Conservancy - Kai Lo Muscio (MRP Coordinator/Small Group Facilitator)

The Nature Conservancy – Tim Mooney (Small Group Facilitator/Scribe)

The Nature Conservancy – Angela Tuoni (Scribe)

State of Rhode Island (DEM) – Rachel Holbert (Scribe)

Recommended Citation

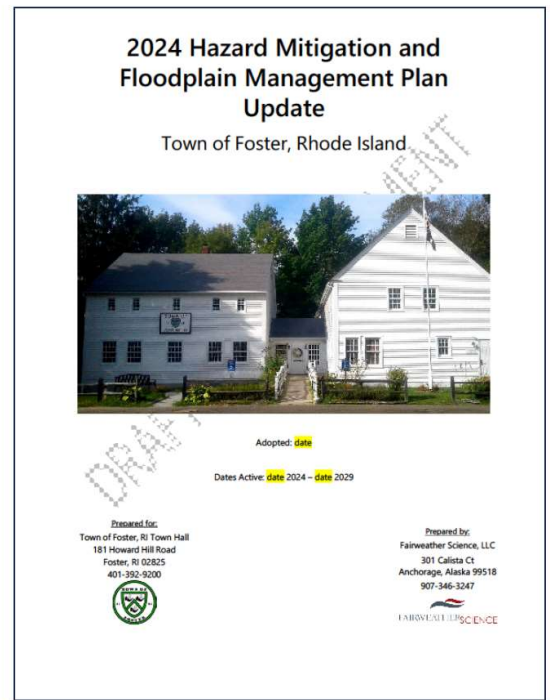
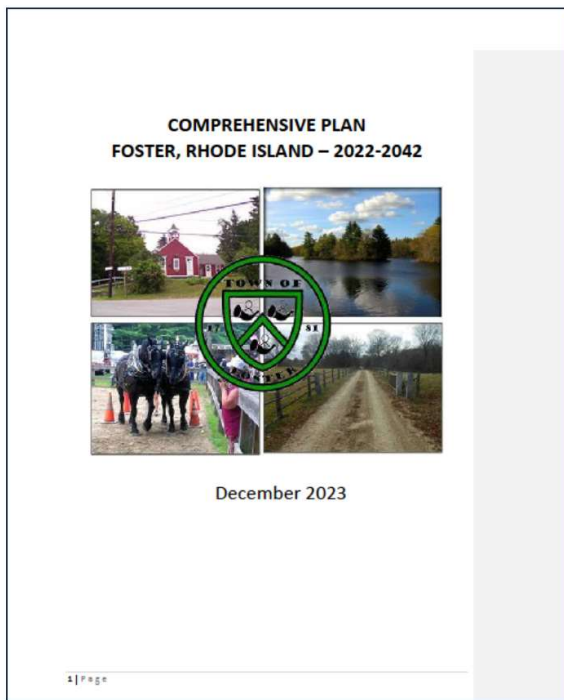
Town of Foster Online Community Resilience Building Workshop - Summary of Findings Report. (2024). State of Rhode Island’s Municipal Resilience Program. The Nature Conservancy and Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. Foster, Rhode Island.

Acknowledgements

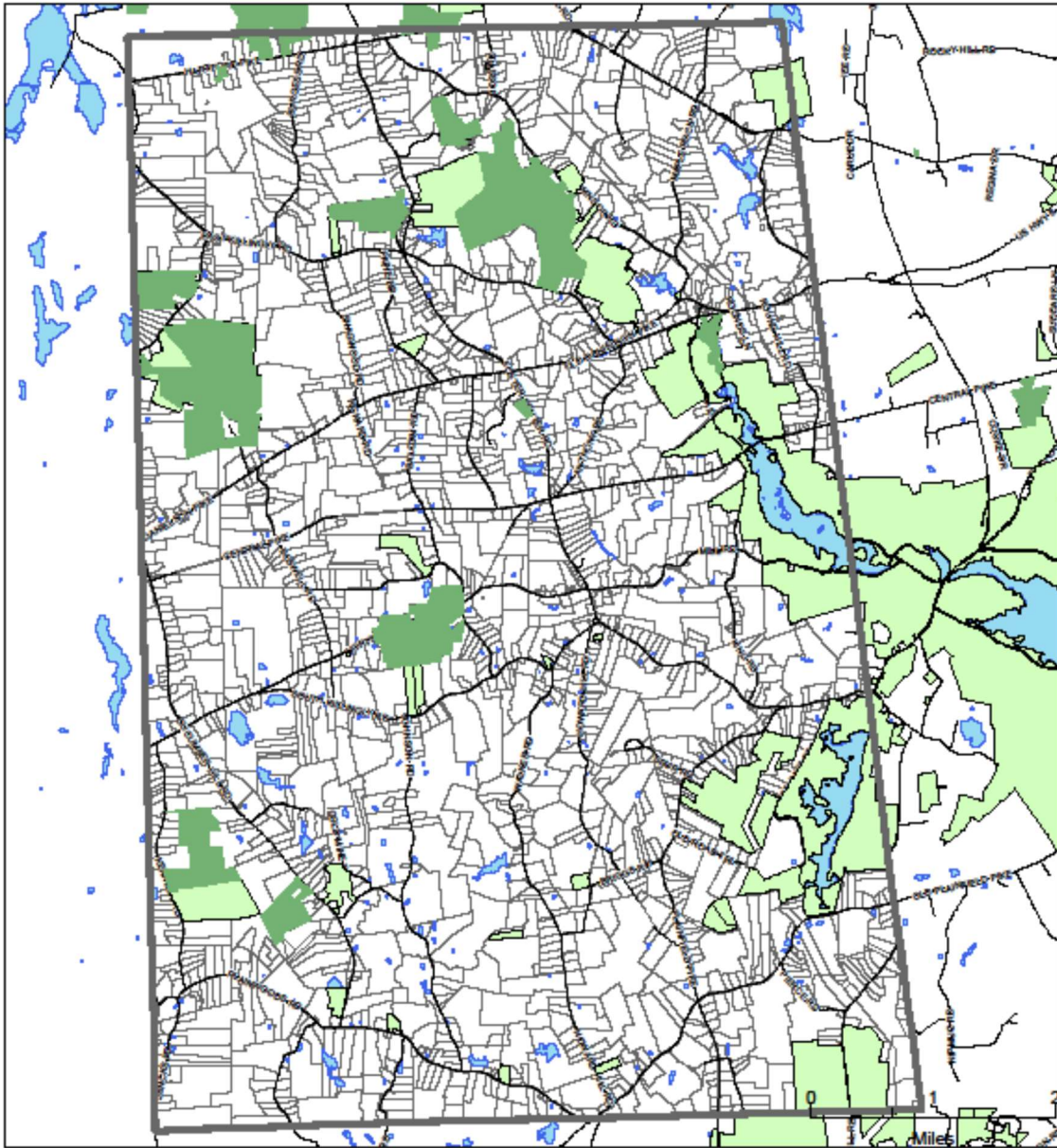
Special thanks to the Town leadership, staff, and community members for their willingness to embrace the process in hopes of a more resilient future for Foster. This online Community Resilience Building Workshop was made possible in large part through the dedicated contribution of the facilitation team members who skillfully conducted the Foster Community Resilience Building workshop in close partnership with the Town’s Core Project Team.

Appendix A






Town of Foster Map Resource Packet* Used During Workshop



***Gathered from Foster’s Comprehensive Community Plan (2023) and Draft Hazard Mitigation and Floodplain Management Plan (2024)**

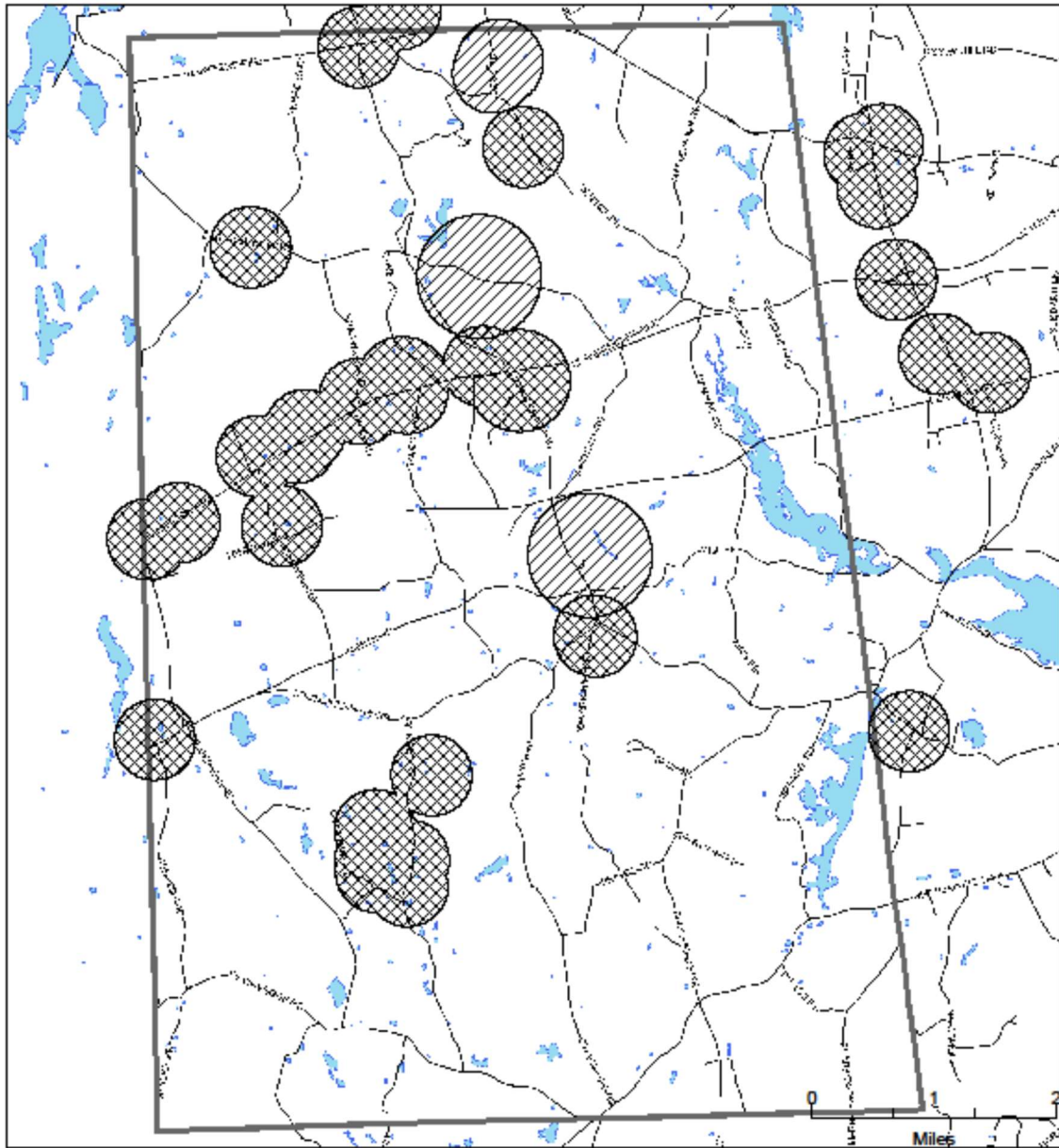


Conservation Areas

-  Foster Town Boundary
-  State Conservation
-  Local Conservation
-  Roads
-  Lakes & Ponds

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currency of this map.



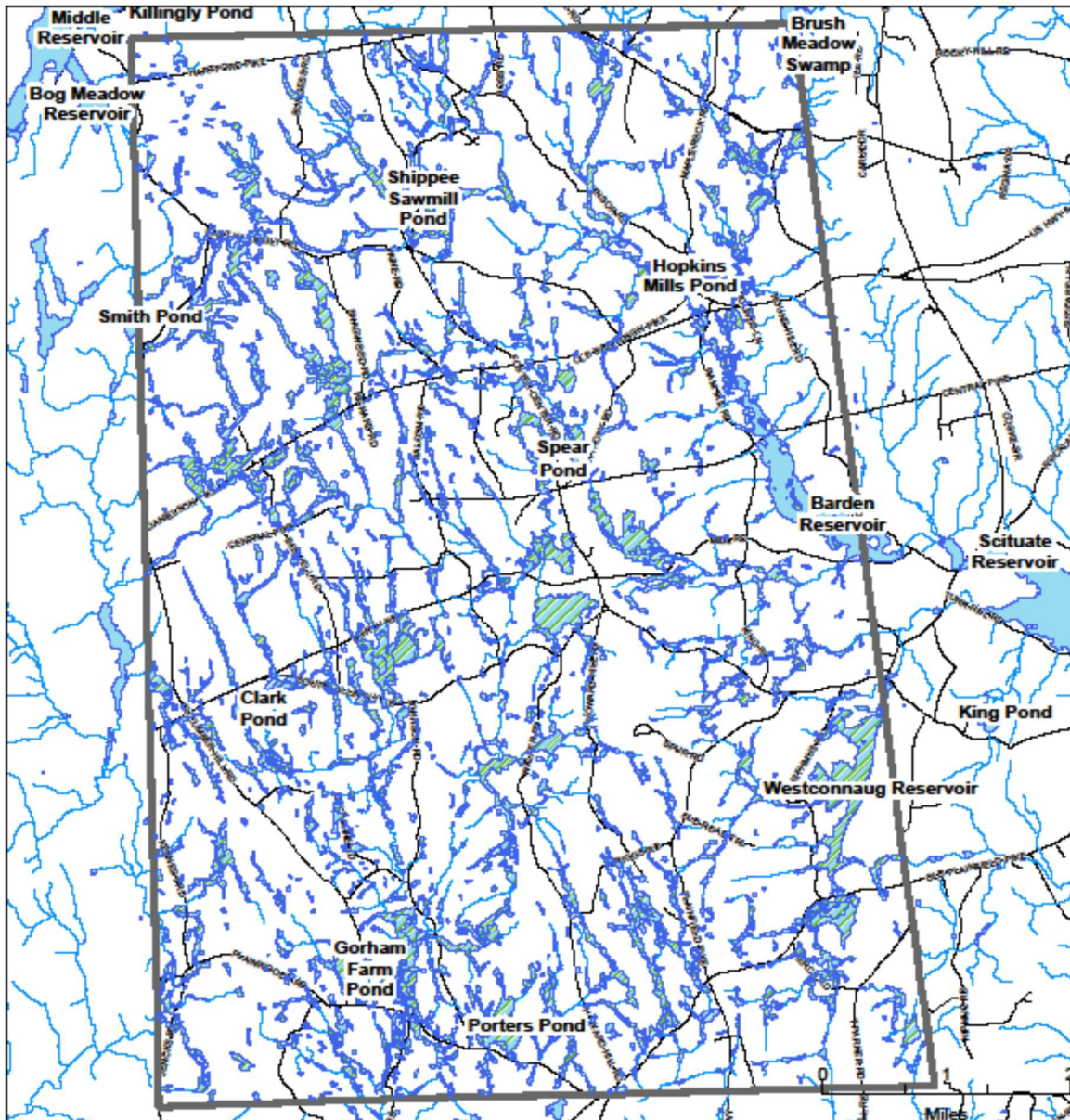


Aquifers and Wellheads





-  Non-community Wellhead Protection Areas
-  Community Wellhead Protection Areas
-  Groundwater Recharge Areas (none)
-  Sole Source Aquifers (none)
-  Groundwater Reservoirs (none)
-  Foster Town Boundary
-  Roads
-  Lakes & Ponds

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currency of this map.



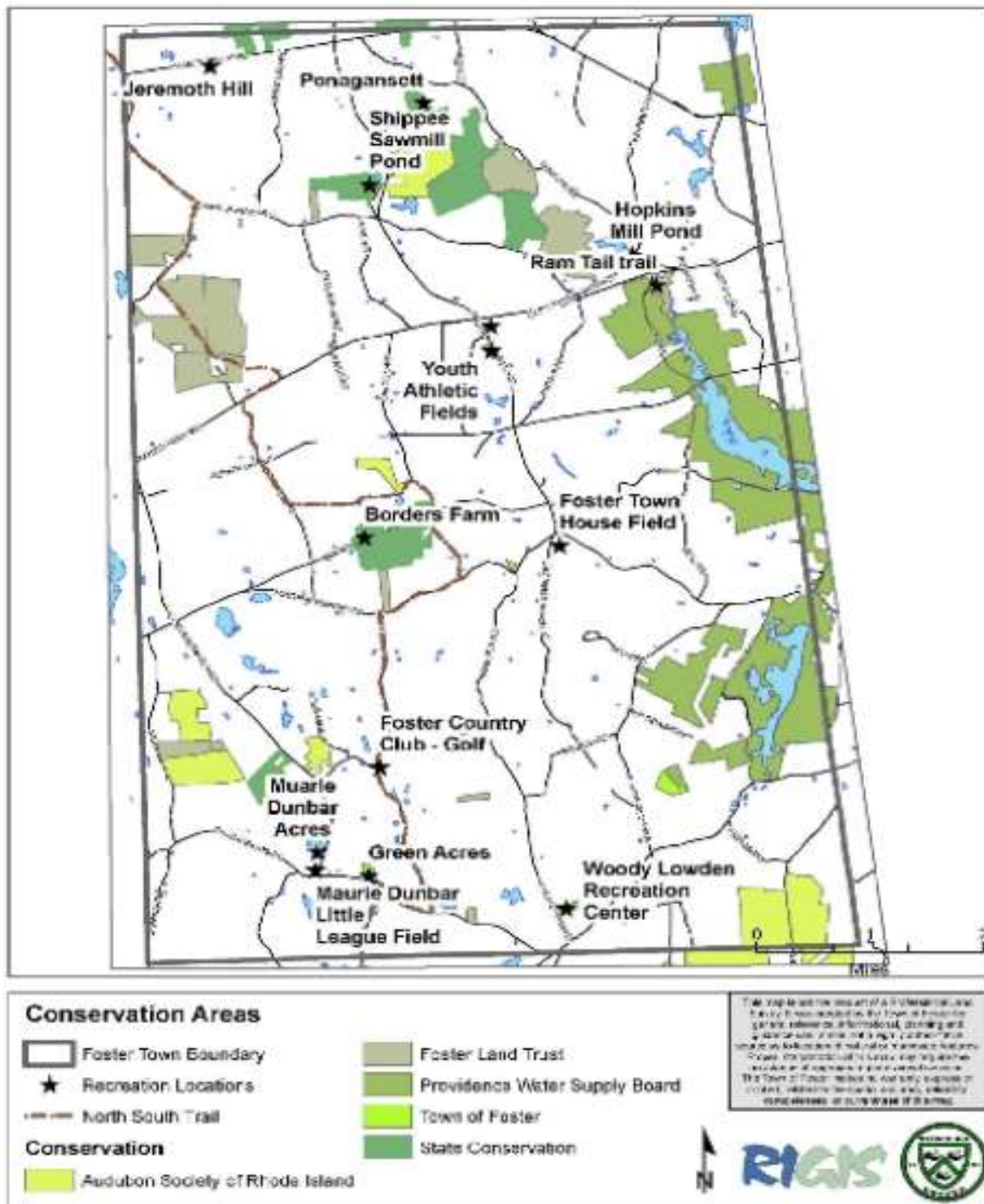


Natural Resources

-  Wetlands
-  Foster Town Boundary
-  Lakes & Ponds
-  Streams & Rivers
-  Roads

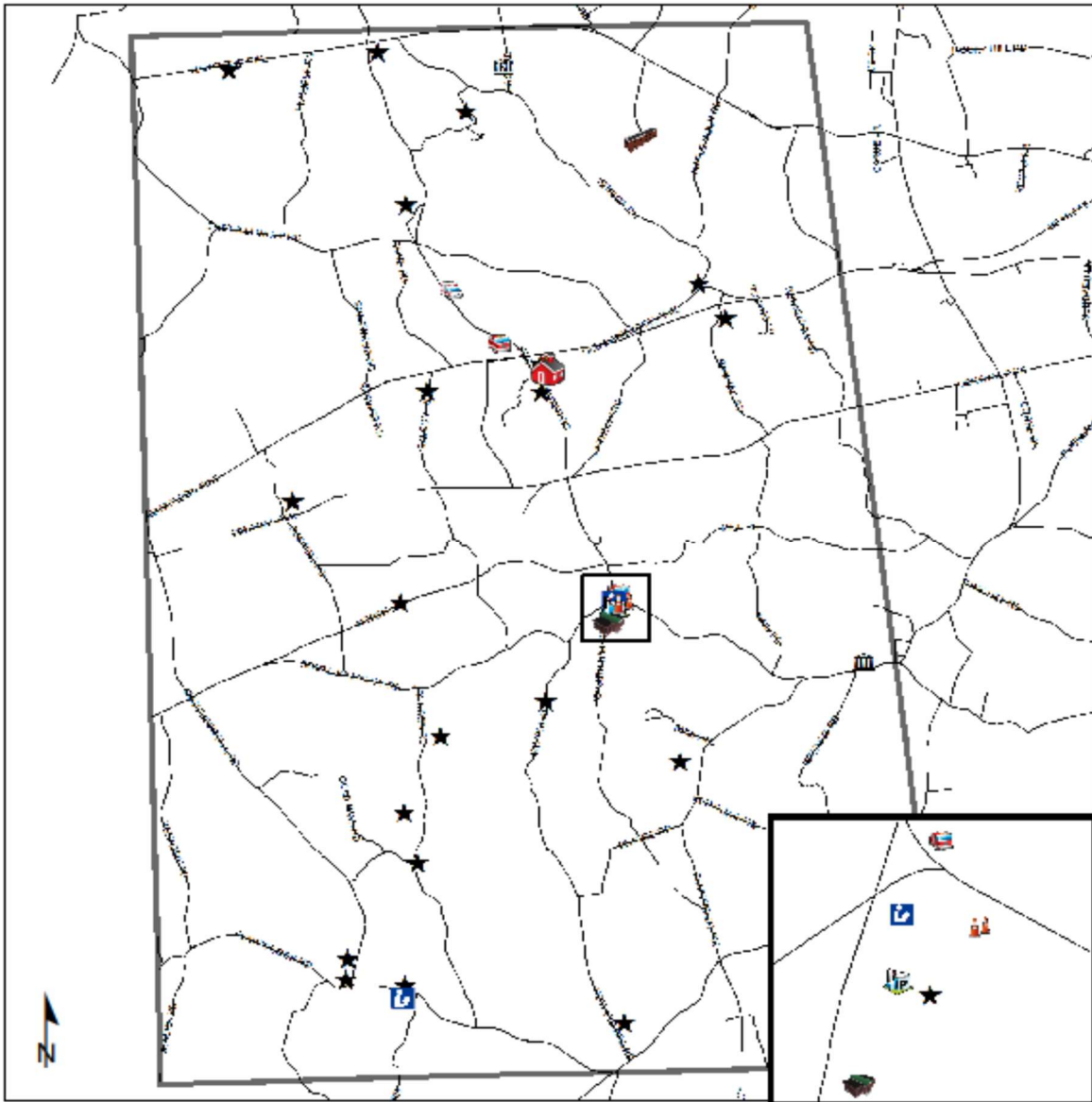
This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currency of this map.





Source: 2022 Town of Foster Comprehensive Plan

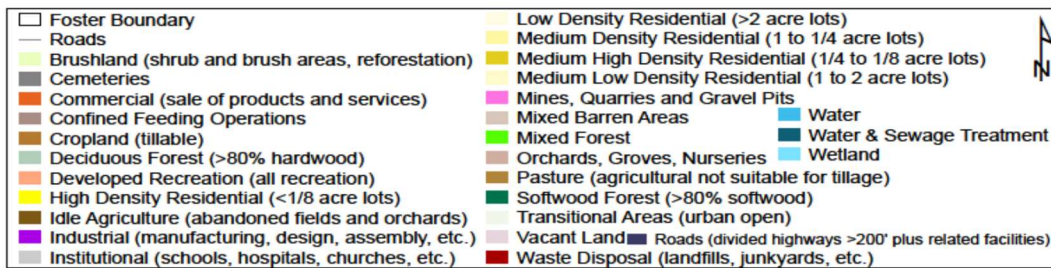
Figure 3-39 Conservation Areas in Foster

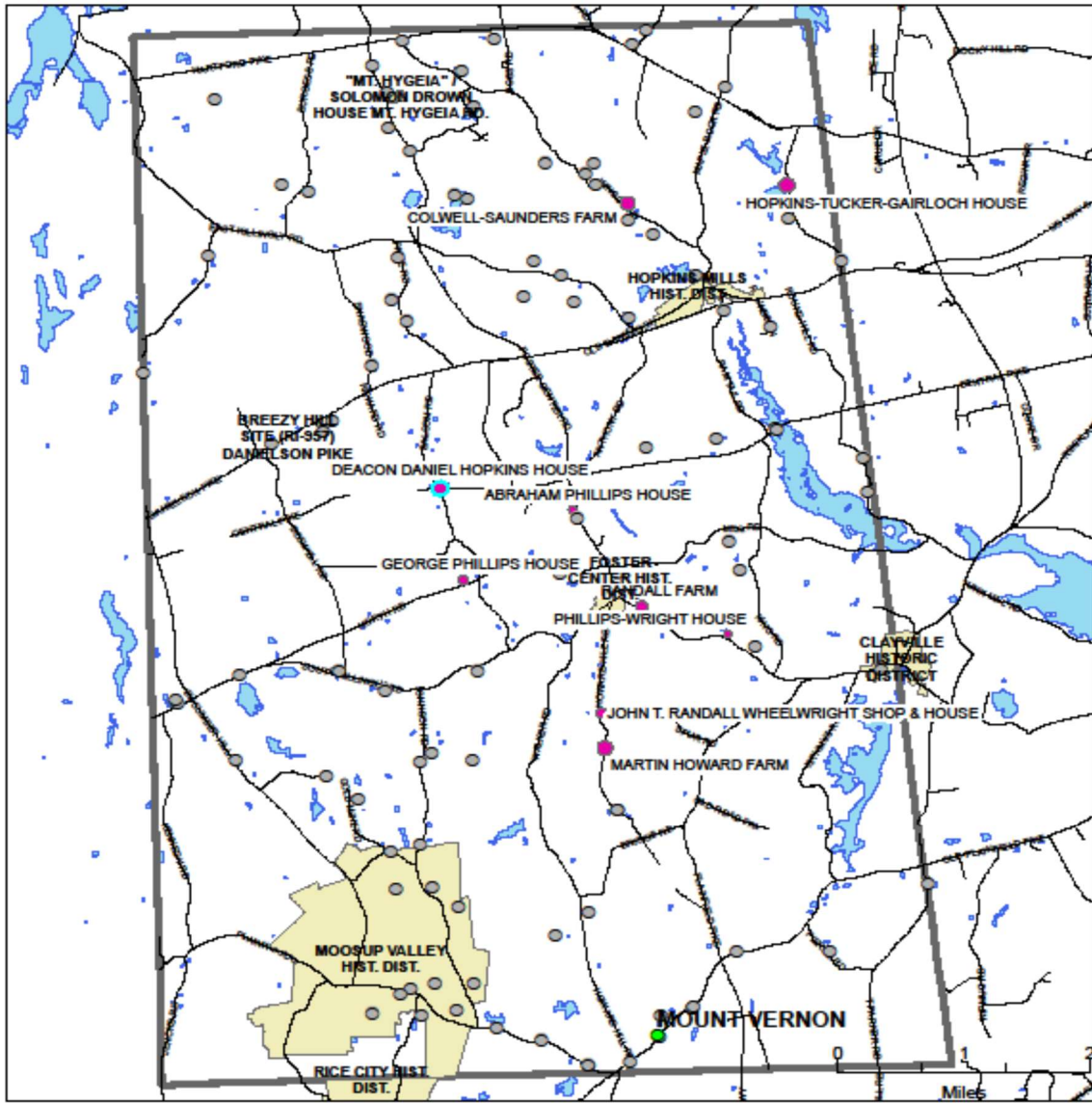


Community Facilities Map

Nike Site	Ambulance Company	Middle School	Town Hall
Fire Department	DPW	Police Station	Recreation Locations
	Library	State Facility	

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a highly authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, as expressed or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or correctness of this map.



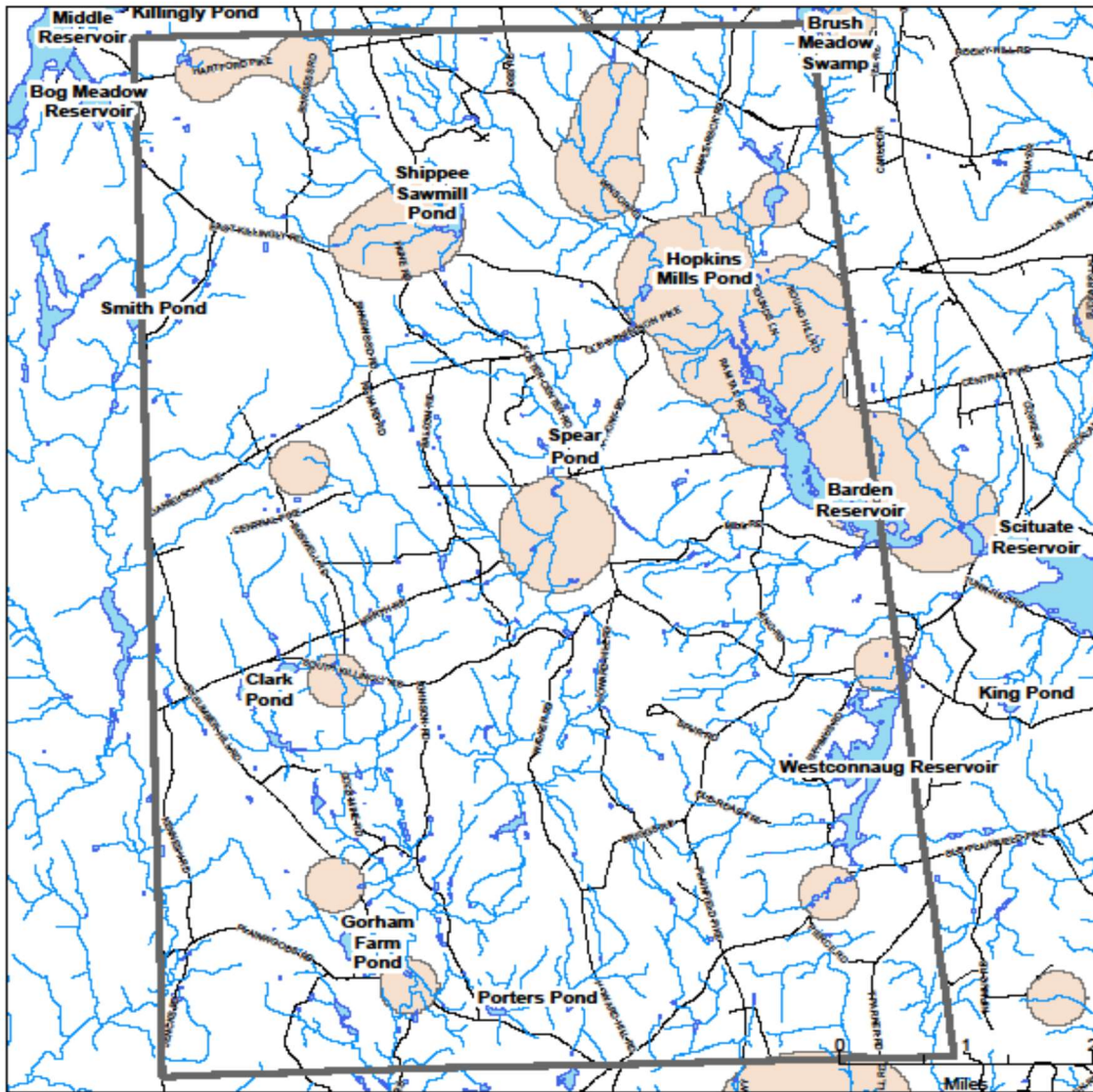


Historic Resources Map



- Historic Sites
- Historic Cemeteries
- Historic Site Candidates
- Roads
- Historic Districts
- Foster Town Boundary
- Lakes & Ponds

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currency of this map.



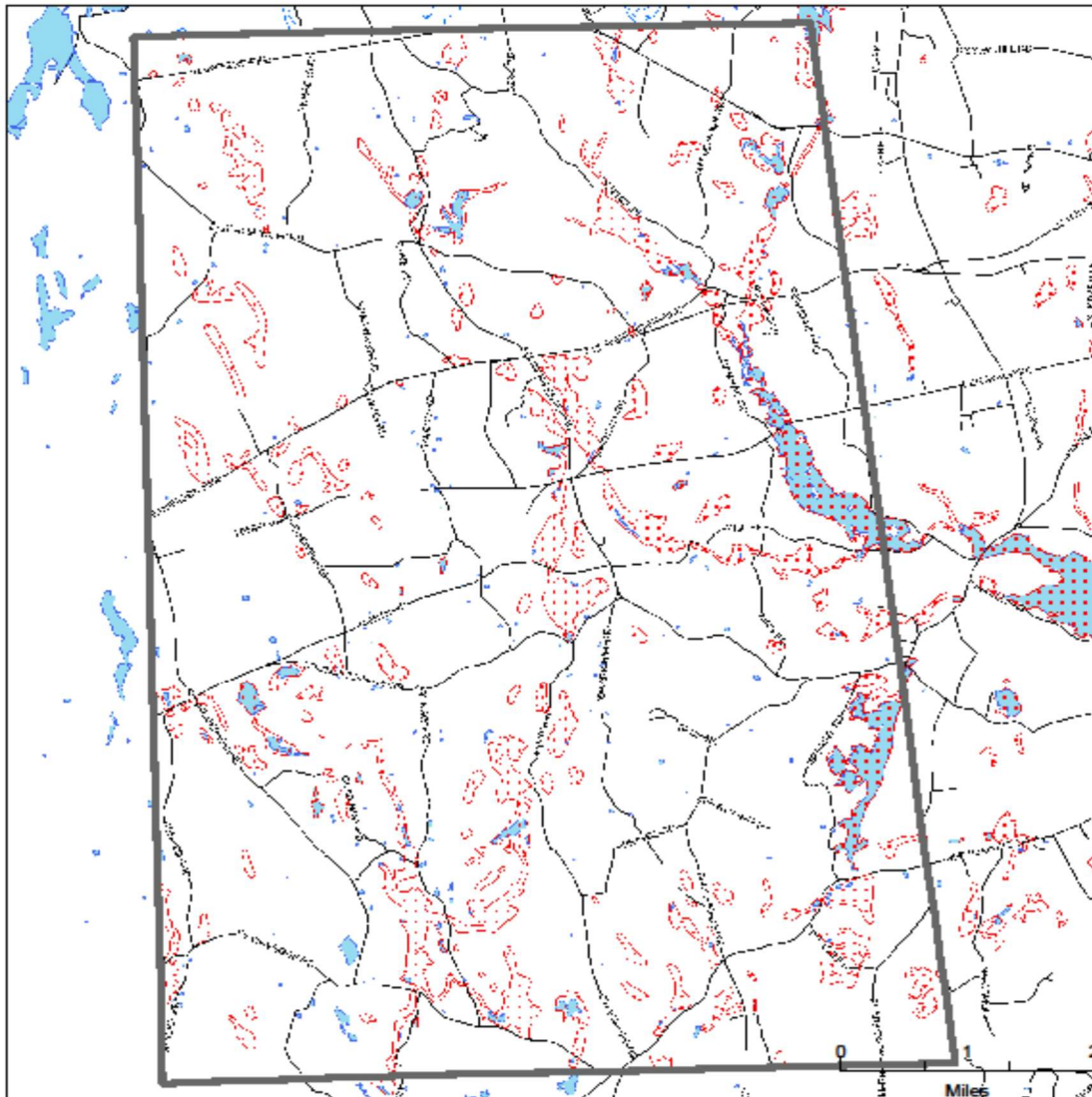


Natural Resources




-  Foster Town Boundary
-  Lakes & Ponds
-  Streams & Rivers
-  Natural Heritage
-  Roads

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currency of this map.






Natural Resources

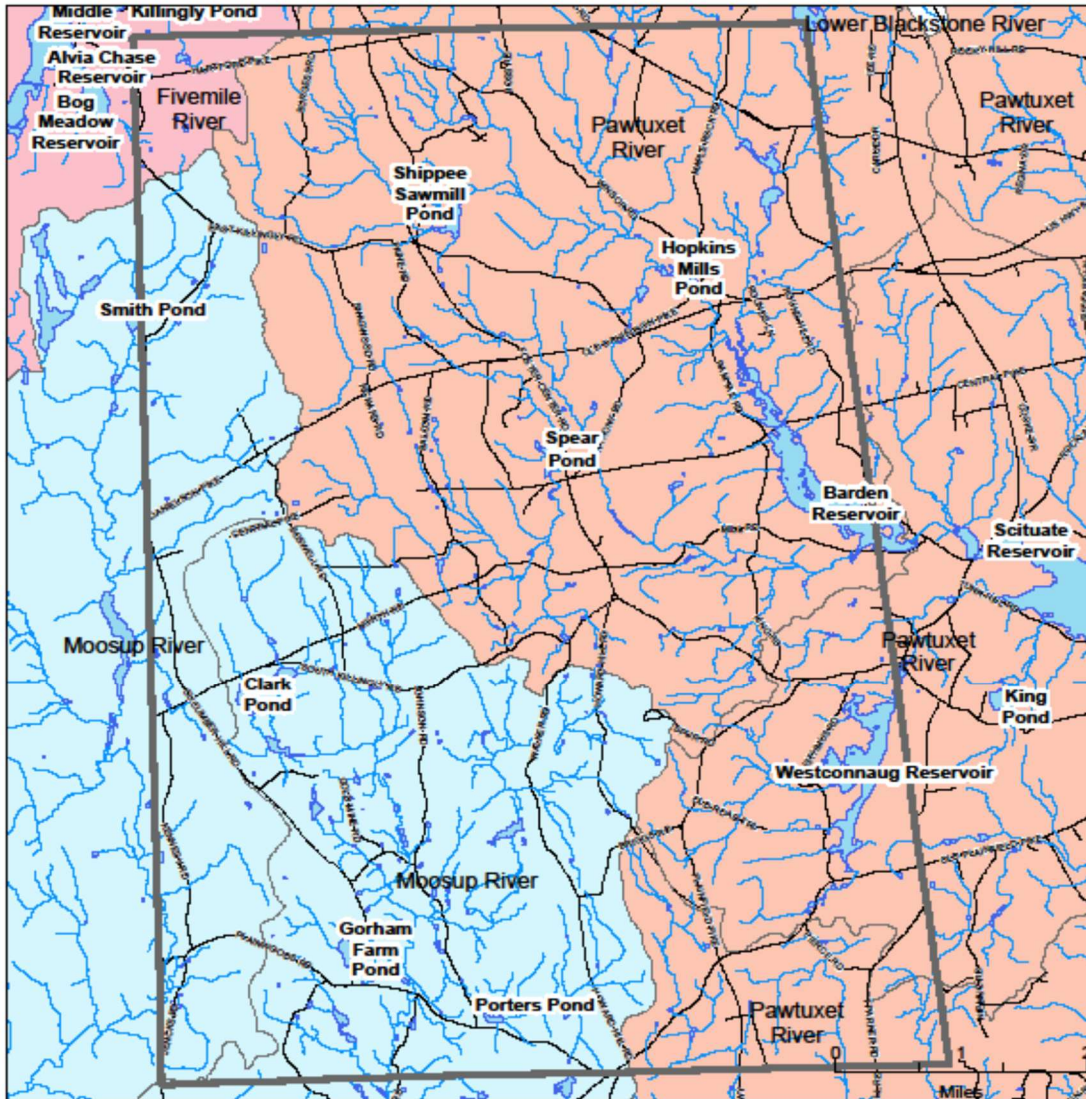
-  Foster Town Boundary
-  Lakes & Ponds
-  Roads

Floodplains

-  1-Percent Annual Chance Flood
-  0.2-Percent Annual Chance Flood

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currency of this map.



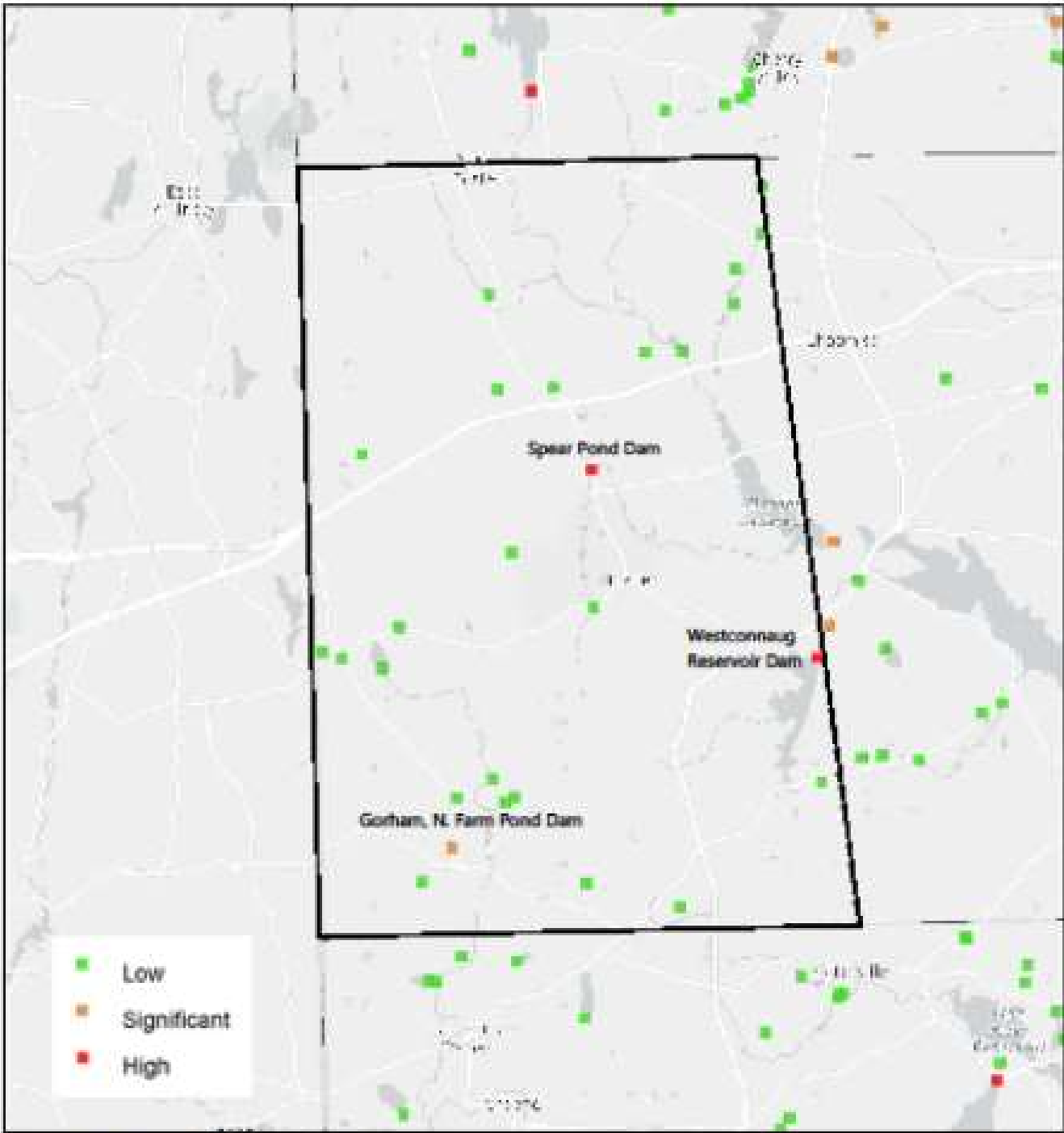


Natural Resources

- Foster Town Boundary
- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams & Rivers
- Roads
- Fivemile River
- Moosup River
- Pawtuxet River

This map is not the product of a Professional Land Survey. It was created by the Town of Foster for general reference, informational, planning and guidance use, and is not a legally authoritative source as to location of natural or manmade features. Proper interpretation of this map may require the assistance of appropriate professional services. The Town of Foster makes no warranty, express or implied, related to the spatial accuracy, reliability, completeness, or currentness of this map.





Source: RIDEM- Dam Safety (ArcGIS Online)

Figure 3-36 Location of Dams In and Surrounding Foster



Figure 1-4 Bridges in Foster

PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



www.CommunityResilienceBuilding.org