



Broadacres Is the Place for Me

BY ROBERT BOSSO, CONSERVATION ASSISTANT

What is it about old New England farms that is so appealing? Buttressed by forest or marsh, there is a sense of history and quiet dignity imbuing the jumbling field stone walls, the unkempt meadows, the ancient shade trees. Perhaps they evoke the ideal landscape, embedded deeply within the Pleistocene of our subconscious?

Regardless, they are a precious commodity, increasingly rare with the passage of time, as one-by-one they are converted to other economic purposes. If not that, then they are often left to be smothered beneath a shag of aggressive invasive plants. The end result is the same: the farm is eventually lost to living memory, its existence attested only by an archival photo, or maybe a label on an old map. Every so often, however, circumstances allow for a different outcome.

Broadacres, cont.

Once part of a larger horse farm owned by Honora Haynes, Broadacres Farm (aka Broadacre, Broad Acres, and Broad Acre; the jury is still out) is the newest addition to the Sudbury Conservation Department's portfolio of protected open spaces. The property is bordered to the west and south by the extensive wetlands of the Wake Robin parcel. Across Morse Road to the east is the remaining portion of the Broadacre purchase, which is administered by other Town departments, and where the original riding arena still stands. Here also runs the corridor where once the trains of the Lowell and Framingham Railroad Company trundled past.

Taking advantage of the open meadows and wetlands, wildlife abounds: great blue heron, deer, and dragonflies. On a sweltering summer day, you might notice a commotion emanating from a mulberry tree playing host to a raucous assortment of avian visitors. On other days, there is little to disturb the bucolic stillness.

Purchased in July of 2019, Broadacres sits close to the center of town, along Morse Road just beyond Featherland Park. In a [Town Hall Forum](#) held in November of that same year, participants expressed a desire to preserve the agricultural nature of the property, while adding walking trails. This common vision is now being translated into reality. The Conservation Department's Land Manager, Joe Miller, has been busy scouting out the terrain and mowing walking paths through the meadow grasses, which can reach chest-high in summer. With the help of volunteers, a large volume of brush has been cleared, including the ubiquitous invasive bittersweet, to reveal the pasture fences. To polish it off, he has produced a brand-new trail map to add to the existing [collection](#).

Plans for the future include the repair of the split-rail fence near the parking lot. Building on the success of the pollinator meadow at the Davis Farm Conservation Land, the Department will also introduce its own home-grown native plant seedlings in an effort to augment and diversify the existing plant population of

Broadacres. This will be the first such project since the Department's planting initiative was kicked off earlier this year.

That's all well and good, but there is something even bigger coming down the (former) track. Once the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail is officially open to the public, and after a quick pass of the brush mower, Broadacres will be subsumed into the broader network of Sudbury's open spaces. Stepping onto the Rail Trail and heading left will transport you into North Sudbury, where such attractions as the pollinator meadow at Davis Farm await, as does Frost Farm with its prominent rock outcropping and double log stringer footbridge. If instead you go right towards the center, you will immediately arrive at other Town-owned open spaces, including the Howe and Parkinson properties.

Broadacre Farm is a testament to the community's dedication to preserving and enhancing its historic and natural heritage. Clearly, many of us see something worth preserving in an old New England farm, but what exactly is that "something"? You are invited to spend time there, and maybe find your own answer.

