

Over 180 years later the Canal is long closed, but the lakes remain, now ringed by hundreds of seasonal and an increasing number of year round homes and cottages. Bradley Brook has the Madison County Childrens Camp providing a week long summer program for kids to explore nature. Hatch lake has Shiloh, a Christian campground with a Chapel, small store, and access for the camper's boats. Eatonbrook is shared with Nelson and has public access for boating and fishing. Lelands Pond, near Hamilton, has public access and is well known for excellent fishing. Woodsmans Pond used to be a public water supply for Hamilton and has only 1 home. It is favored by bird watchers.



The watersheds are home to a variety of land uses, each with different impacts



Dense development poses along the lakeshore poses planning challenges



Eaton's share of Eatonbrook features 38 parcels and the Morrisville Community Club and public boat launch.

Through the hills run Eaton Brook, Bradley Brook, Electric Light Stream, Callahan Brook and other small tributaries and old Canal feeders. They run first to the Chenango River, before merging with the Susquehanna.

These lakes and streams are vital to the beauty, culture, and well being of Eaton. Over the years the shores of these lakes have become home to many people. Initially properties were basic summer cottages for fishing and swimming. Some were simply platforms for pitching a tent. Drinking water came from the lakes, wells were a rarity. Gradually, more land was occupied by seasonal cottages. Bradley Brook Reservoir and Hatch Lake alone are home to 245 residences. Typically, these lots are tiny and cause unique planning issues which continue to be exacerbated as more properties are modernized and feature motor boats, fine lawns, washers and dryers, wells, and other 'improvements'. Septic systems can be outdated or under capacity. Watershed woodland has been removed for development and agriculture is a predominant land use in the watershed. All of this challenge water quality; algae blooms are seen more readily throughout the summer and fall and invasive species of plants and animals are showing up, disrupting the long standing ecology and threatening the benefits provided by the lakes. A renewed focus on protecting these resources is required.

While the lakes are a central feature of Eaton, the rest of the rural landscape is equally important to the character of the community. The town should preserve as much open space as possible, so the rolling hills, forests, and fields, uninterrupted from development, are enjoyed in the future.

To this end, Eaton should take a broad approach to conserve their natural resources, including accounting for climate change and other environmental issues that transcend borders.

Environment Goals

1 Preserve Water Quality

- a **Develop** a Watershed Protection Plan
 - Request a presentation by Soil and Water Conservation District to cover plans already applicable to Eaton as well as available grant opportunities
- b **Draft** a job description and request County hire a part time Watershed Inspector/Environmental Manager position to actively manage lake regulations with local Town officers, develop new proposals, and respond to issues
- c **Pass** new local regulations for onsite wastewater disposal for properties near lakes and tributaries, including requiring septic system inspections and services at time of title transfer
 - Provide and host training opportunities for contractors
- d **Coordinate** efforts between lake residents, lake associations, farmers, and entities (DEC, S&W, CCE, County) to address and mitigate agricultural runoff issues
- e **Support** efforts to control and prevent invasive species across all lakes
 - Work with PRISM and DEC to establish invasive management plans
 - Support Lake Associations and work with DEC in managing public areas where DEC does not provide full support package, with a focus as needed on bathrooms and cleaning stations
- f **Update** Town permitting requirements for construction, demolition, and remodeling to require specific erosion abatement measures if property within 500 ft of lake, tributaries, or steep slopes
 - Establish responsibility for erosion abatement and clear code that follows latest DEC 'Blue Book' practices
 - Consider erosion control plan for all permits for lakeside construction
- g **Provide** water quality education resources (septic systems, invasive species, new relevant Town code, training opportunities, best practices, etc.) on Town website (townofeaton.com)
- h **Re-evaluate** winter road maintenance and explore alternatives to salt, particularly in sensitive areas
- i **Encourage** lakeshore and other property owners to plant low-impact native landscaping that enhances lake habitat , reduces erosion, and reduces need for lawn treatment
- j **Improve** communication with lake associations
 - Assist in search for grant funding to support environmental improvement activities in partnership with lake associations

Environment Goals

2 Renewable Energy

- a **Adopt** local solar regulations based on CNY Regional Planning and Development Board's example
- b **Investigate** possible collaborations with SUNY Morrisville on renewable energy projects
- c **Develop** a plan for electric vehicle charging stations

3 Climate Change

- a **Develop** a Climate Action and Adaptation and Greenhouse Gas Inventory as supplementary segments to the Comprehensive Plan
- b **Join** and engage in local, regional, and global climate change targets and actions
- c **Locate** assistance to inventory, monitor, repair, and upgrade water-management features such as dams and culverts
- d **Reevaluate** local emergency plans for relevance in light of new weather patterns and anticipated impact on infrastructure
- e **Continue** to make changes to energy usage to enable the town to become a Climate Smart Community, presenting the opportunity to receive grants for energy saving programs

Agriculture

Vision: Agriculture is a prominent and respected aspect of Eaton's history, culture, and economy. Agriculture is the primary land use in Eaton

Agriculture is a major part of every facet of life in the Town of Eaton. Agriculture is the largest land use, with almost half the total acreage within the Town. Agricultural land is less infrastructure-intensive and thus returns a high proportion of tax revenue. The agrarian landscape and open space provided by agriculture also enhances the quality of life for Eaton residents.

Agriculture remains a crucial economic sector; despite fewer Eaton residents earning their living in agriculture and farms bringing money into the local economy. But agriculture is also part of Eaton's identity: it is part of the history of the town, the rolling fields dotted by barns are enjoyed by residents and visitors alike. Agriculture permeates through all life in Eaton, and that is reflected throughout this plan.

SUNY Morrisville has been an agricultural education institution for over 100 years and can be a valuable resource in helping to maintain agriculture in Eaton. Cornell Cooperative Extension also provides county-wide services from its office located on Eaton Street. Also located in Eaton are the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and the USDA Farm Service Agency.

Currently, agriculture remains a large economic sector in Eaton. The majority of our commercial operations are dairy farms. Today, most dairy farms are experiencing stress due a variety of issues including an oversupply of milk. In addition, many of our farmers are older and considering retirement. With this in mind, some of our farms may go out of business and farmland use could change in a number of ways. Solutions could include recruiting younger farmers, pursuing different crops, and intensive farming practices such as those practiced in the Netherlands.

Most problems with agriculture exist outside of local control but Eaton can still foster a supportive climate and take action that will improve farm viability. The County's forth coming Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan will offer further insight, but there are ample resources available for local towns seeking to protect farmland and improve farm viability.

A key aspect of this is maintaining a certain concentration of farms. Farmers like to farm where other farmers farm, and support businesses that farms depend on themselves require enough nearby farms to procure their services.

To that end it is crucial to ensure that farms continue to operate in Eaton, including having access to affordable farmland.

Legend

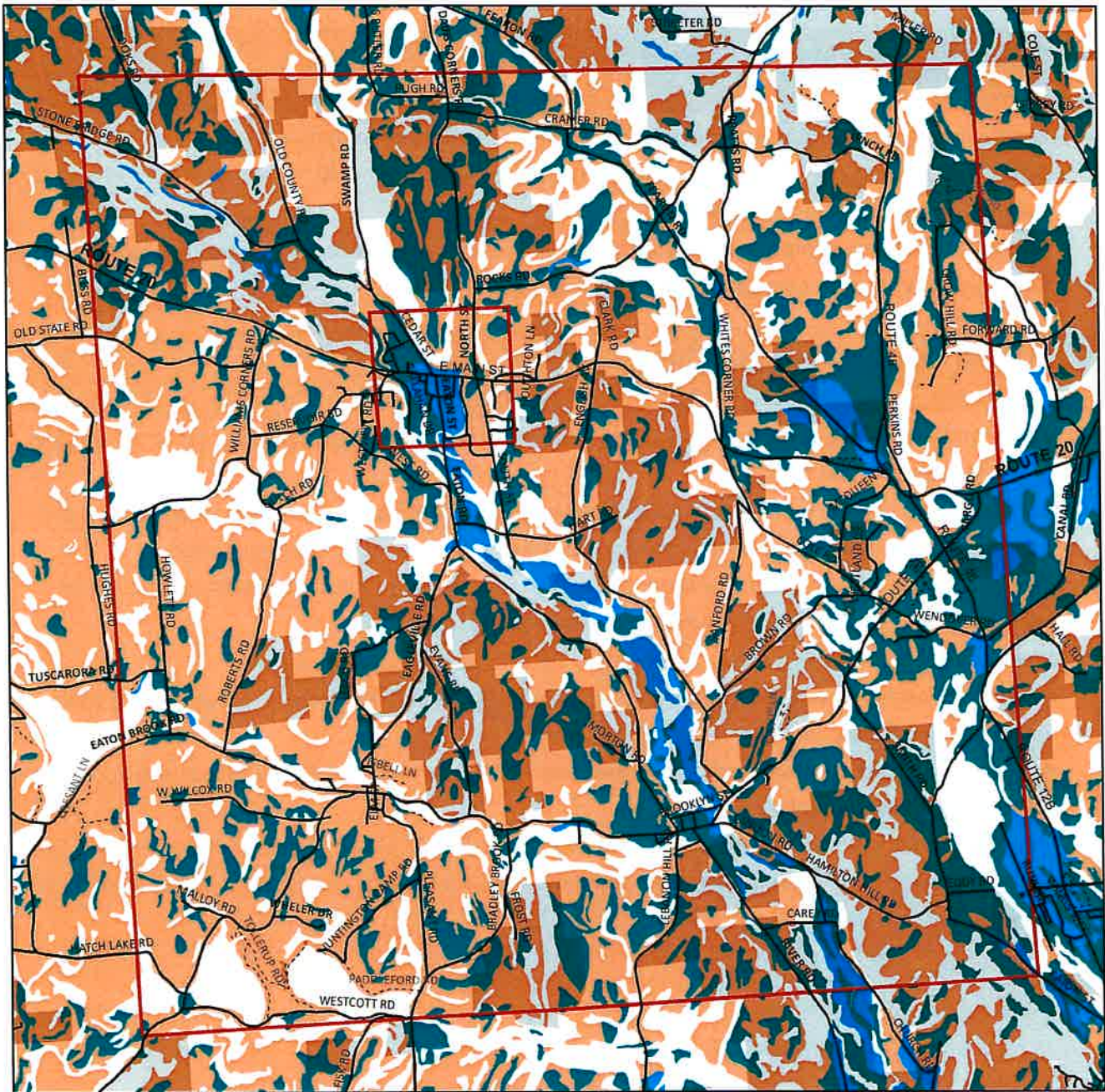
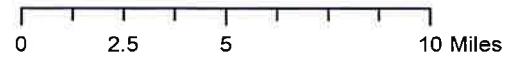
Ag Districts

Ag District Parcel

Soil Classification

- 1
- 2
- 3

Soils and Ag Districts



Agriculture Goals

1 Embrace Agriculture and Farmland Protection

- a **Take** the action recommended for local municipalities in the County Ag and Farmland Protection Plan
- b **Support** and participate in other county wide and inter-municipal efforts to support agriculture
- c **Inventory** current Town farms to understand and benchmark agriculture in the community

2 Strengthen Agriculture's Role

- a **Emphasis** agriculture opportunities when pursuing economic development
- b **Explore** outdoor space for a weekly farmers market or other means for direct local market access such as Farm to Institution Programs
- c **Pursue** infrastructure improvements such as broadband that allow farms to employ new technology
- d **Continue** to work with college on agricultural agenda

3 Support Resource Protection

- a **Enact** land use aimed at protecting farmland and ensuring that farmers have access to affordable, productive agricultural resources
- b **Support** farms and partnership efforts aiming to reduce nutrient runoff to local water bodies and private wells to reduce burden on farms and negative public perceptions of agriculture
- c **Seek** out resources and provide assistance when applicable in adaptation of best practices and equipment that conserves environmental and agricultural resources
- d **Inventory** farms in Eaton; contact farmers and determine plans for the future
- e **Determine** necessary requirements for a Farmland Protection Grant from NYS, begin work towards a local Farmland Protection Plan
- f **Apply** for a Farmland Implementation Grant from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets after completing Farmland Protection Plan.
- e **Investigate** opportunities to cooperate with Morrisville State College and Cornell Cooperative Extension on applying for a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers Grant if such a program is included in the new Farm Bill

Conclusion

The goals outlined in the plan and the actions proposed to address them are broad and ambitious. As mentioned earlier, accomplishing these goals will take partnerships, commitment, and a huge effort from different members of leadership and the broader community. Many of these goals also require some degree of investment by the Town.

Regular assessment of progress towards the outlined goals is an excellent method to ensuring the plan remains a part of decision making in addition to simply being a guiding force on what projects to pursue. The Town Board has committed to regularly addressing these goals and annually assessing progress.

It is important to remember that while some of the recommended actions are relatively simple changes and decisions, communities do not often change quickly and impacts should be understood on a longer timescale. For instance, the poor land use in the Town that led to suburban development will take a large effort to reverse, and that effort may not see significant impacts for a decade or more. That said, some major global trends, such as climate change, could result in rapid changes for Eaton (perhaps, for instance, people relocating from coastal areas), and in that sense this document also serves to prepare the Town for sudden changes in case they do occur. Likewise, because of this unpredictability, any plan is a work in progress that will require updating in the future. Reflection of how situations in the Town have changed, and the role these goals have played or could still play, should be part of any regular assessment.



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