



FACT SHEET 3.1

MAPPING YOUR HOBBY FARM

As you plan or make improvements to your Hobby Farm, you will want to develop a rough map or sketch showing existing site characteristics.

Your goal is to develop a good working description of your farm site, noting all of the features that will help you meet your farming goals, while managing your hobby farm to avoid, minimize, or address stormwater impacts.

A working base map of your existing site is a good way to document these features. It will help you navigate through any applicable local and/or state regulations or restrictions that may apply to your site due to the location of water resources or other features. Finally, it will serve as a template for planning your hobby farm and be critical should an emergency arise. Use Checklist 3A to develop your base map.



WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD YOU SHOW ON YOUR MAP?

The map of your property (also referred to as an “existing conditions site plan”) should show the following features:

PRIMARY FEATURES	DESCRIPTION	WHERE TO OBTAIN
SITE BOUNDARIES	Depending on the area of your property dedicated to your hobby farm, this might consist of your entire property, or just the portion of the property where your farming activities will be located.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Assessor’s Office Deed description Lot survey OLIVER* database
ROADS AND DRIVEWAYS	Roads in front of and nearby your property, including the name of the roads, and driveways on your property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Maps/Earth Local Assessor’s Office OLIVER* database
BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES	Location and outline of buildings and structures on your property, along with general description (e.g. house, horse barn, livestock pen).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Maps/Earth Local Assessor’s Office Lot survey OLIVER* database
SURFACE WATER RESOURCES, BUFFERS AND SETBACKS	Locations of wetlands, streams, rivers, lakes, ponds, and coastal resources on or near your property. Note that some water resources have legally defined “Buffer Zones” where proposed activities are subject to review by the local Conservation Commission. Others may have setbacks regulated under the Watershed Protection Act by the Department of Conservation and Recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Google Maps/Earth OLIVER* database Local Conservation Commission Watershed Protection Act Map: www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/water-res-protection/watershed-mgmt/the-watershed-protection-act.html

NATURAL VEGETATED AREAS	One of the practices used to help minimize stormwater is the use of a vegetated buffer between your farming activity and a water resource. If your property has existing wooded areas or areas with native grasses and shrubs, you should show them on your map – especially where they border an existing stream, wetland, or other water resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Maps/Earth • OLIVER* database
GROUNDWATER RESOURCES	Some pollutants such as nitrates from fertilizer are not easily filtered and can easily reach groundwater sources if allowed to infiltrate through soils. Public groundwater drinking water sources have a delineated “Zone II” protection area, which may have certain restriction. These should be mapped.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Google Maps/Earth • OLIVER* database • Local Conservation Commission
SLOPES	The slopes on your hobby farm play an important role in the management of erosion and stormwater. Knowing where these slopes are and where they lead to should be noted on your map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit
SOILS	Locate any unique features associated with your site soil conditions such as areas with rock outcrops and areas that are too soft to drive your mower or tractor across.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit

* OLIVER is an interactive online data viewer for Massachusetts that can help identify various features on and around your hobby farm.

Depending on the size and activities of your hobby farm, supplemental information may be required, including:

SECONDARY FEATURES	DESCRIPTION	WHERE TO OBTAIN
WILDLIFE HABITAT	Identify locations mapped by the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game under the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) to locate on your map.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Conservation Commission • Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game • NHESP Habitat Maps: www.mass.gov/service-details/regulatory-maps-priority-estimated-habitats
EXISTING DRAINAGE FEATURES AND PATTERNS	<p>To plan your hobby farm for stormwater management, you will need to understand how runoff finds its way across your property. Add the following features to your map:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roof drains and where they discharge (e.g., to ground surface, dry well, storage barrel, garden area) • Swales or shallow ditches that convey stormwater from one location to another • Culvert crossings beneath driveways, roads and trails • General flow patterns across the site (e.g., high ground to low ground) • On-site low areas where stormwater soaks into the ground • Storm drains and/or catch basins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most features can be observed on-site – it may be helpful to observe flow patterns when it rains

<p>SERVICE UTILITIES</p>	<p>There are a variety of utility services that could be located within your property. If the services are located underground and you know where they are, plot them on your map. If you know you have a particular service, but do not know its location, note this on your plan. Include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private water supply well(s) • Service lines for public water and sewer if available • Septic systems and connections to house • Gas service pipelines • Above-ground electrical, telephone, and cable lines, including pole locations; or underground electrical, telephone, and cable lines • Easements - your property could have easements to allow another party access for any number of reasons (e.g., if a utility runs through your property, an easement may exist to allow the utility company access for repairs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board of Health (private wells and septic) • Municipal water and sewer department (public water and sewer) • Gas company (gas service pipelines) • Electric company (underground electrical) • Deed (description of any easements on property)
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CONDUCT A “PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES” TOUR OF YOUR SITE

Once you have completed a draft of your working map, take a tour of your site with map in hand, and look for features that have problems to be addressed or that might have features you want to take advantage of.

The following is a partial list of features to consider:

Potential problems

- Areas on your site showing evidence of erosion, look especially for areas where gullies are present or appear to be forming
- Areas that appear to be deposits of sediment left by past runoff events
- Areas with exposed soils that are not going to be used for crops or groundcover
- Farming activities located in close proximity to surface waters or wetlands
- Areas where animals have destroyed the groundcover by overgrazing or trampling
- Banks of streams, ponds, or other water resources that have been damaged by past grazing, construction activities, vehicle traffic, or foot traffic
- Areas damaged by use of all-terrain vehicles, mountain bikes, or other vehicles
- Existing springs or low wet areas, not otherwise shown as water resources on plan



Potential opportunities

- Existing trees, wind breaks, wooded stands, and other vegetation that might be preserved to enhance your landscape, serve as a buffer, or serve as a friendly fence between you and your neighbors
- Existing views you want to keep to enhance your property
- Existing connections to public trails that you might want to preserve so that you can use them as part of your hobby farm activities (for example, if you keep horses to ride for pleasure)
- Existing orchards, berry patches, individual fruit bearing trees, or other plantings that you might want to maintain as part of your farming operation