

# Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge

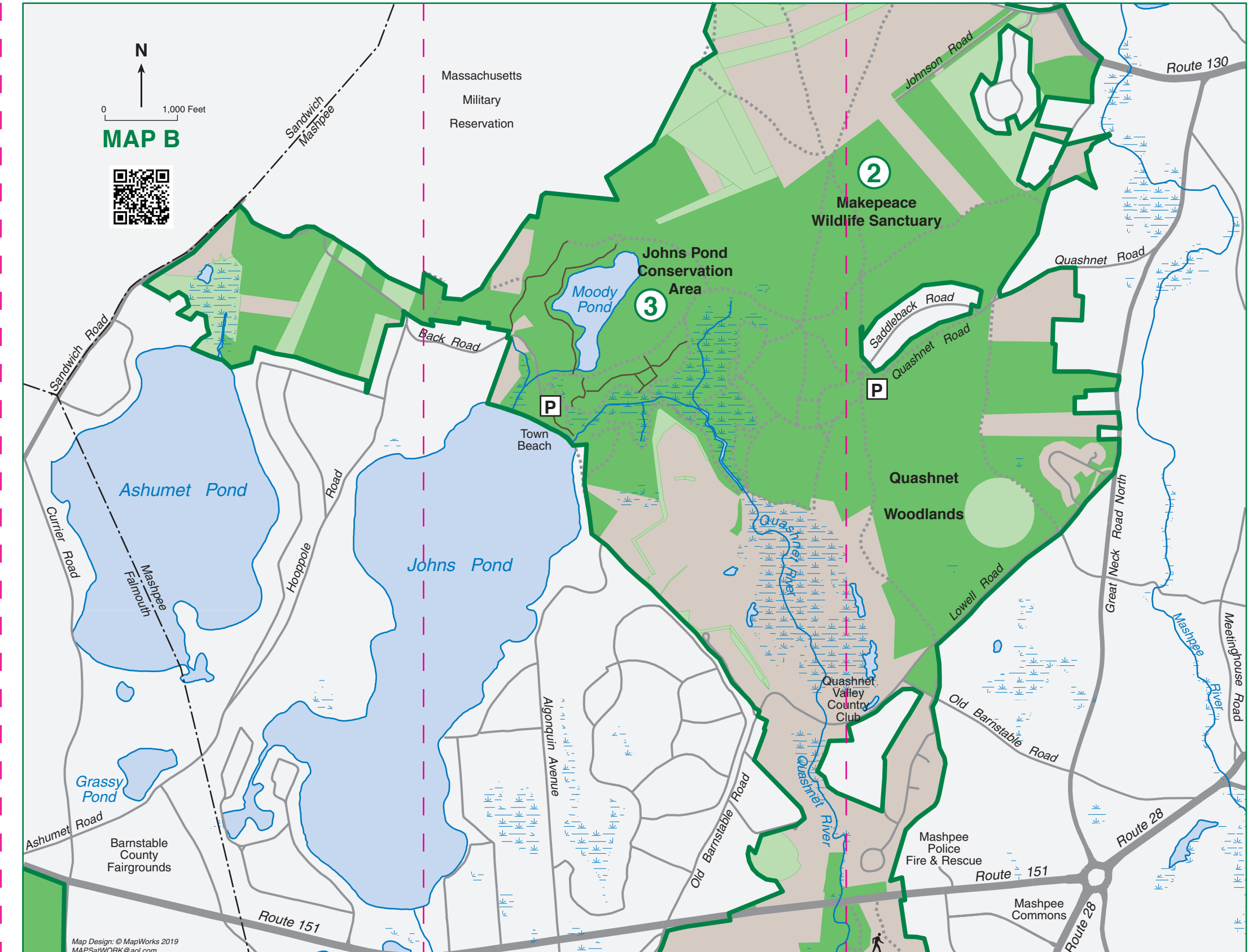
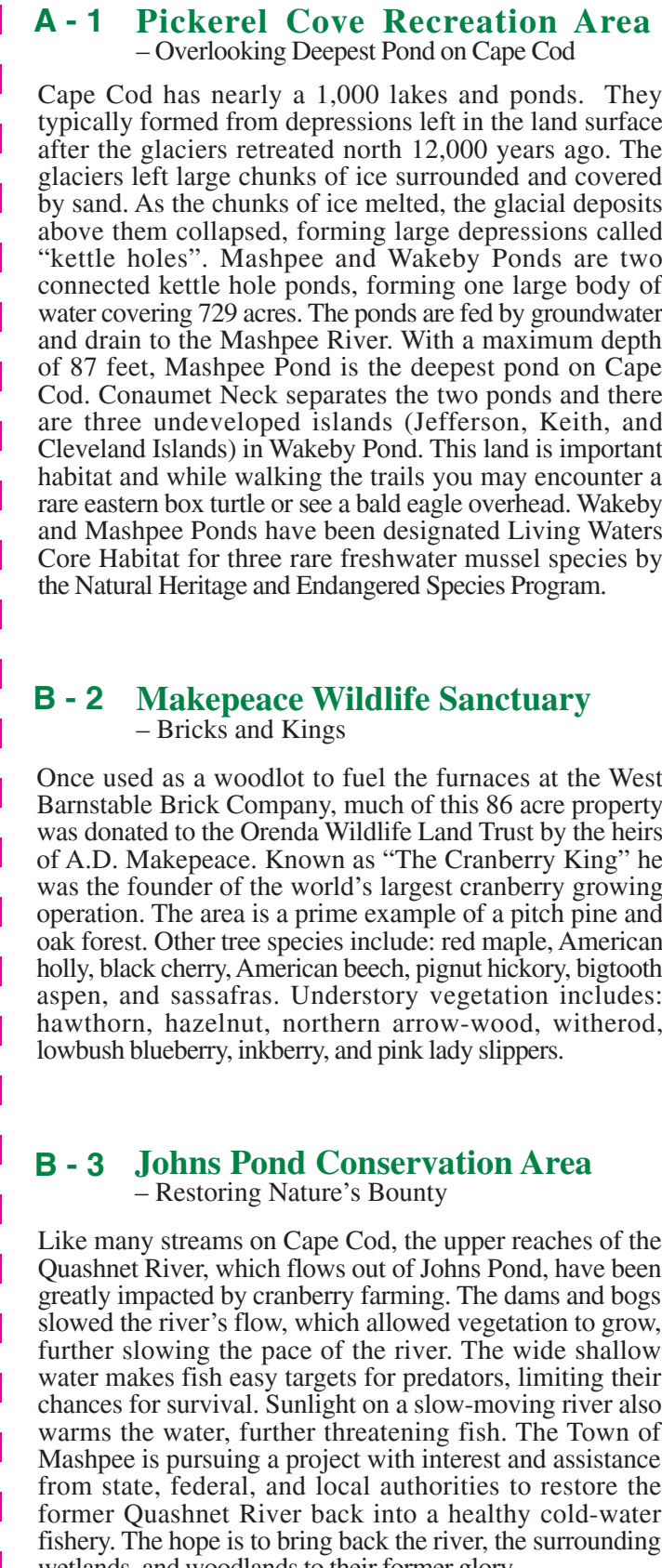
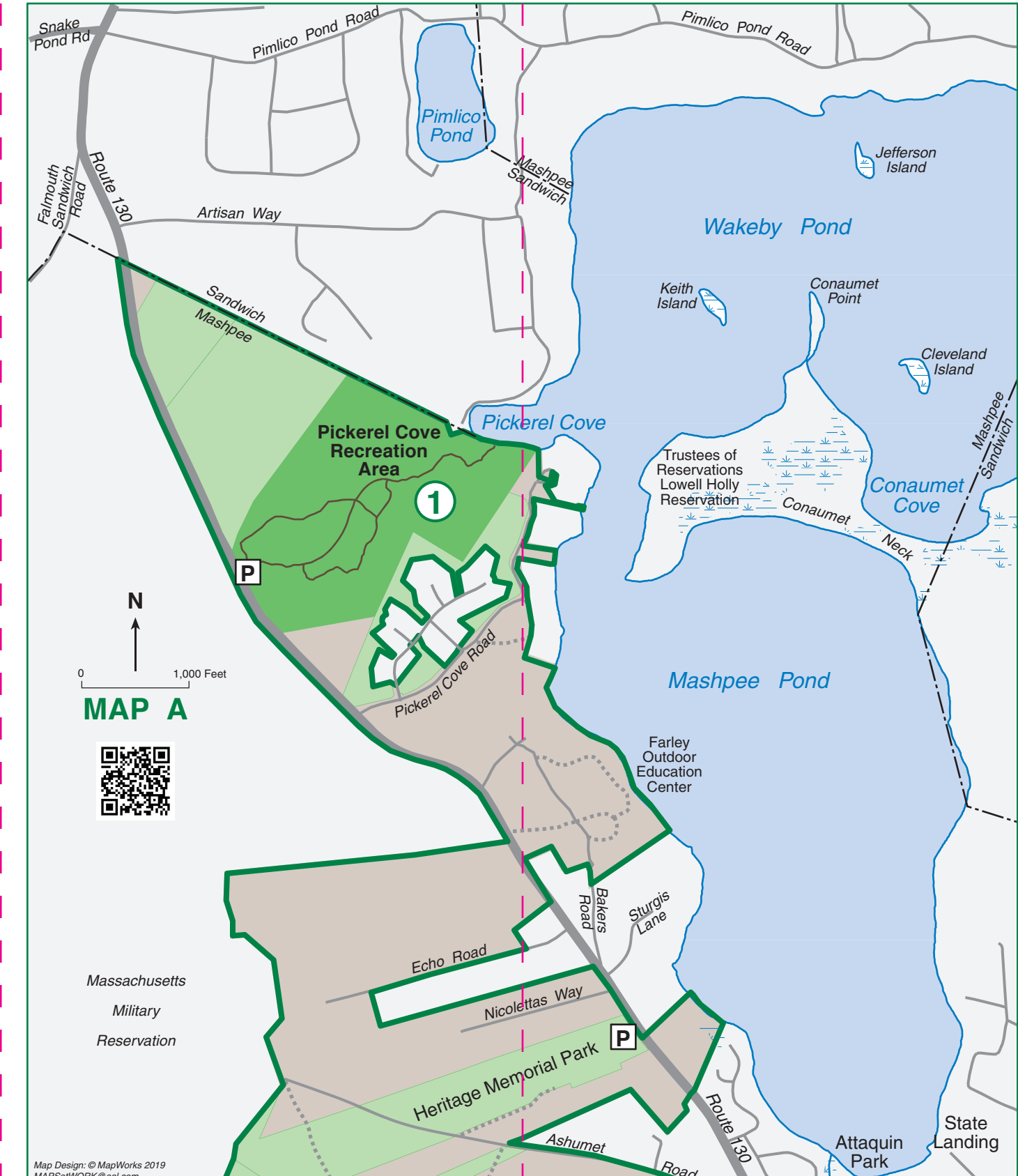
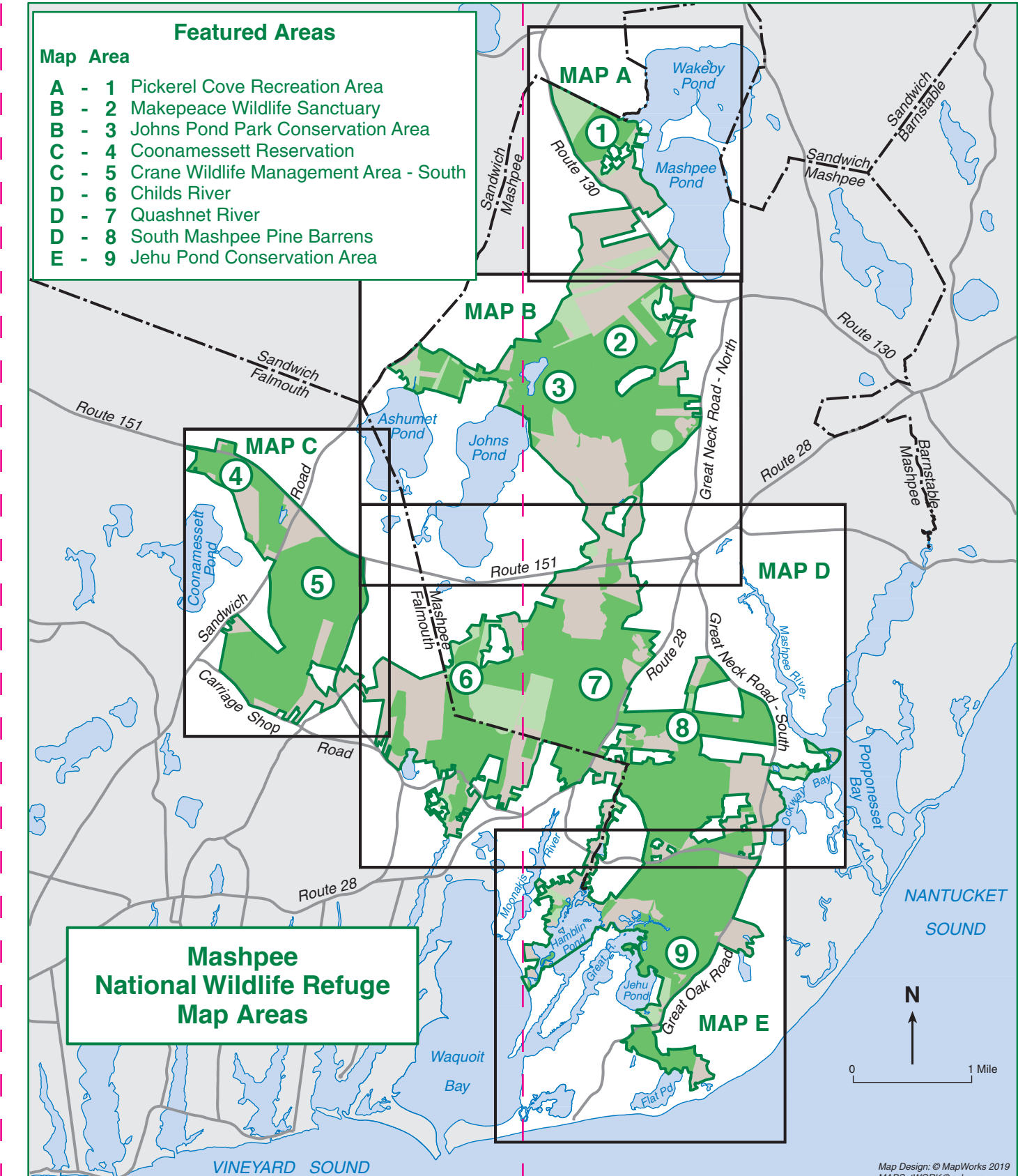
Although this National Wildlife Refuge gains its designation from the approved acquisition boundary and fee title land owned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), it exists because of partnerships. At the time the Refuge was created in 1995, nine public and private agencies joined together and agreed to place a variety of their individual properties under coordinated management. This model, the first of its kind in the nation, allows for the sharing of resources to benefit wildlife, plants, and human communities that call this area home. Since then, the Refuge has grown with the addition of new conserved lands and the partners stay true to the commitment that if we are to breathe pure air, drink clean water, and thrive in a healthy world, then we must provide for the well-being of all species. The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe remembers when the land, rivers, and bays were filled with a plenitude of life in balance with each other. As the Refuge grows and thrives, perhaps we will be on our way to returning to their ideal for future generations.

# The Refuge Ecosystem

The habitats of the Refuge support many creatures for all, or parts, of their lives. Bald eagles, bufflehead ducks, snowy egrets, blue herons, and osprey take advantage of the rich rivers, marshes, and wetlands. Many species of upland birds may be found in the pitch pine barrens, oak woodlands, coastal shrub, and field habitats. Watch for eastern bluebirds, ruffed grouse, pine warbler, prairie warbler, and many species of hawks and owls.

This land is also a refuge for mammals such as river otter, gray squirrel, flying squirrel, whitetail deer, skunk, raccoon, New England cottontail, and northern long-eared bats. Streams are home to sea-run brook trout and herring. Endangered and threatened species also reside here. There are spotted turtles, eastern box turtles, and northern diamondback terrapins, as well large numbers of rare moths, plants, and insects.

Many of the habitats of the Refuge are adapted to or dependent on fire, storms, and other periodic disturbance. The Refuge partners work together to apply various management techniques including prescribed fire, cutting, and other forms of active restoration to maintain the full suite of habitats and species found here.



- ### Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge Partners
- Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge, Inc.
  - U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
  - MA Department of Conservation & Recreation/ Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
  - MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
  - Falmouth Rod & Gun Club
  - Orenda Wildlife Land Trust
  - Town of Mashpee & Mashpee Conservation Commission
  - Town of Falmouth & Falmouth Conservation Commission
  - Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council



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### A - 1 Pickerel Cove Recreation Area

– Overlooking Deepest Pond on Cape Cod

Cape Cod has nearly a 1,000 lakes and ponds. They typically formed from depressions left in the land surface after the glaciers retreated north 12,000 years ago. The glaciers left large chunks of ice surrounded and covered by sand. As the chunks of ice melted, the glacial deposits above them collapsed, forming large depressions called “kettle holes”. Mashpee and Wakeby Ponds are two connected kettle hole ponds, forming one large body of water covering 729 acres. The ponds are fed by groundwater and drain to the Mashpee River. With a maximum depth of 87 feet, Mashpee Pond is the deepest pond on Cape Cod. Conaunet Neck separates the two ponds and there are three undeveloped islands (Jefferson, Keith, and Cleveland Islands) in Wakeby Pond. This land is important habitat and while walking the trails you may encounter a rare eastern box turtle or see a bald eagle overhead. Wakeby and Mashpee Ponds have been designated Living Waters Core Habitat for three rare freshwater mussel species by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

### B - 2 Makepeace Wildlife Sanctuary

– Bricks and Kings

Once used as a woodlot to fuel the furnaces at the West Barnstable Brick Company, much of this 86 acre property was donated to the Orenda Wildlife Land Trust by the heirs of A.D. Makepeace. Known as “The Cranberry King” he was the founder of the world’s largest cranberry growing operation. The area is a prime example of a pitch pine and oak forest. Other tree species include: red maple, American holly, black cherry, American beech, pignut hickory, bigtooth aspen, and sassafras. Understory vegetation includes: hawthorn, hazelnut, northern arrow-wood, witherod, lowbush blueberry, inkberry, and pink lady slippers.

### B - 3 Johns Pond Conservation Area

– Restoring Nature’s Bounty

Like many streams on Cape Cod, the upper reaches of the Quashnet River, which flows out of Johns Pond, have been greatly impacted by cranberry farming. The dams and bogs slowed the river’s flow, which allowed vegetation to grow, further slowing the pace of the river. The wide shallow water makes fish easy targets for predators, limiting their chances for survival. Sunlight on a slow-moving river also warms the water, further threatening fish. The Town of Mashpee is pursuing a project with interest and assistance from state, federal, and local authorities to restore the former Quashnet River back into a healthy cold-water fishery. The hope is to bring back the river, the surrounding wetlands, and woodlands to their former glory.

**Trail Map Legend**

- MNWR Boundary
- Protected Land - open for public access
- Town, State, Federal, or Nonprofit Land - with variable public access  
*Please follow property regulations*
- Other Land - no public access  
*Please respect private property*
- Walking Area (trails not mapped)
- Trail
- Dirt Road
- Paved Road
- Town Boundary
- Parking Area
- Open Water
- Wetland
- QR Code Provides Link to Site Video (with mobile QR reader)

- User Ethics:**
- Use designated entrances and stay on trails
  - Keep off of river banks to avoid erosion
  - Do not disturb plants or animals
  - Pick up any trash
  - Refuge lands are closed to off-road vehicles

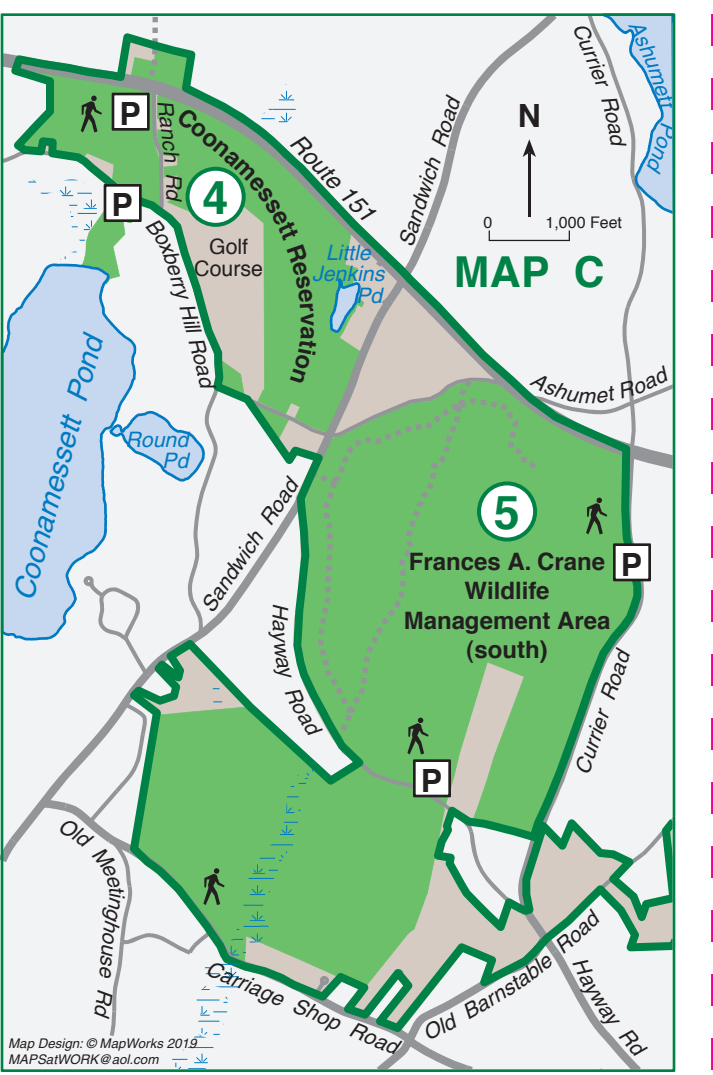
The funds for the maps, design and printing of this guide were provided by Partner contributions and Community Preservation Act Funds from the Town of Mashpee

**C - 4 Coonamessett Reservation**  
– A Cape Cod Inn

The 212 acre Coonamessett Reservation has a rich history. Eighty years ago, when Hatchville was an important dairy center, the land was part of The Coonamessett Ranch Corporation owned by the Crane family of Woods Hole. The family leased the property to Edna Harris in 1930, and under her direction the Coonamessett Inn grew in fame and prosperity. The inn was demolished in 1987. A small parking lot on Ranch Road provides access to the former polo field, as well as to trails on the other side of Ranch Road leading to Little Jenkins Pond. This area protects the Coonamessett and Crooked Pond town well sites and provides a critical link between the two sections of the State's Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area. It contains a variety of plant and wildlife habitats and guarantees public access to a beach on Coonamessett Pond, the largest pond in Falmouth. The polo field is a remnant of the now rare sandplain grasslands, one of the Cape's distinguishing critical habitats for endangered species. A new project to expand the native grasslands and create more pollinator meadows on the Reservation was initiated in 2017 by several Mashpee Wildlife Refuge partners. This will enhance the habitat for endangered and rare wildlife species of birds and provide a rich diversity of native Cape Cod plants important for pollinators such as native bees, hummingbirds, and migrating monarch butterflies.

**C - 5 Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area - South**  
– A Landscape of History

Open habitats such as grasslands, shrublands, and young forest are an important part of the New England landscape. Fires set by Native Americans, wildfires, and later colonial agricultural practices, created extensive open habitats. As Massachusetts agricultural lands were abandoned from the 1850's into the early 1900's, and as the use of fuelwood gave way to fossil fuels, fallow fields, and abandoned woodlots became very productive wildlife habitat for species such as American woodcock, whip-poor-will, prairie warbler, eastern towhee, field sparrow, and New England cottontail. Eventually, abandoned fields and woodlots succeeded to closed-canopy forest and wildlife species dependent on open habitats declined dramatically. The 150+ acres of contiguous sandplain grassland occurring at Frances A. Crane Wildlife Management Area is one of the best remnants of this habitat in Massachusetts. Prescriptions for expanding the grasslands include tree removal, mowing, grading, fire, herbicide treatment, and native warm season grass seeding. Collectively, these actions will provide habitat for both state-listed species and traditional game species such as American woodcock, ruffed grouse, and cottontail rabbits.



Using fire to re-set the landscape

**D - 6 Childs River**  
– I fished here

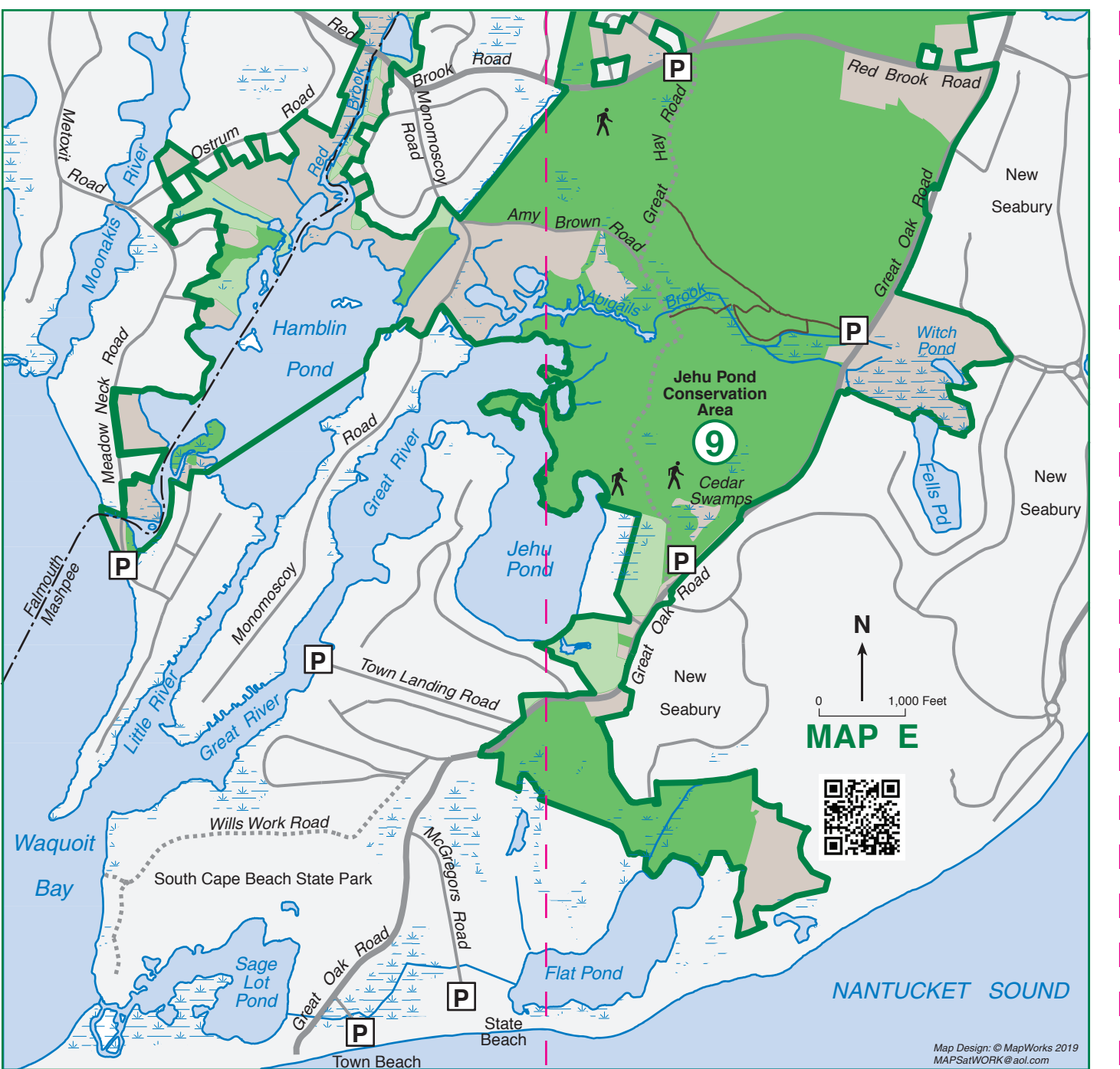
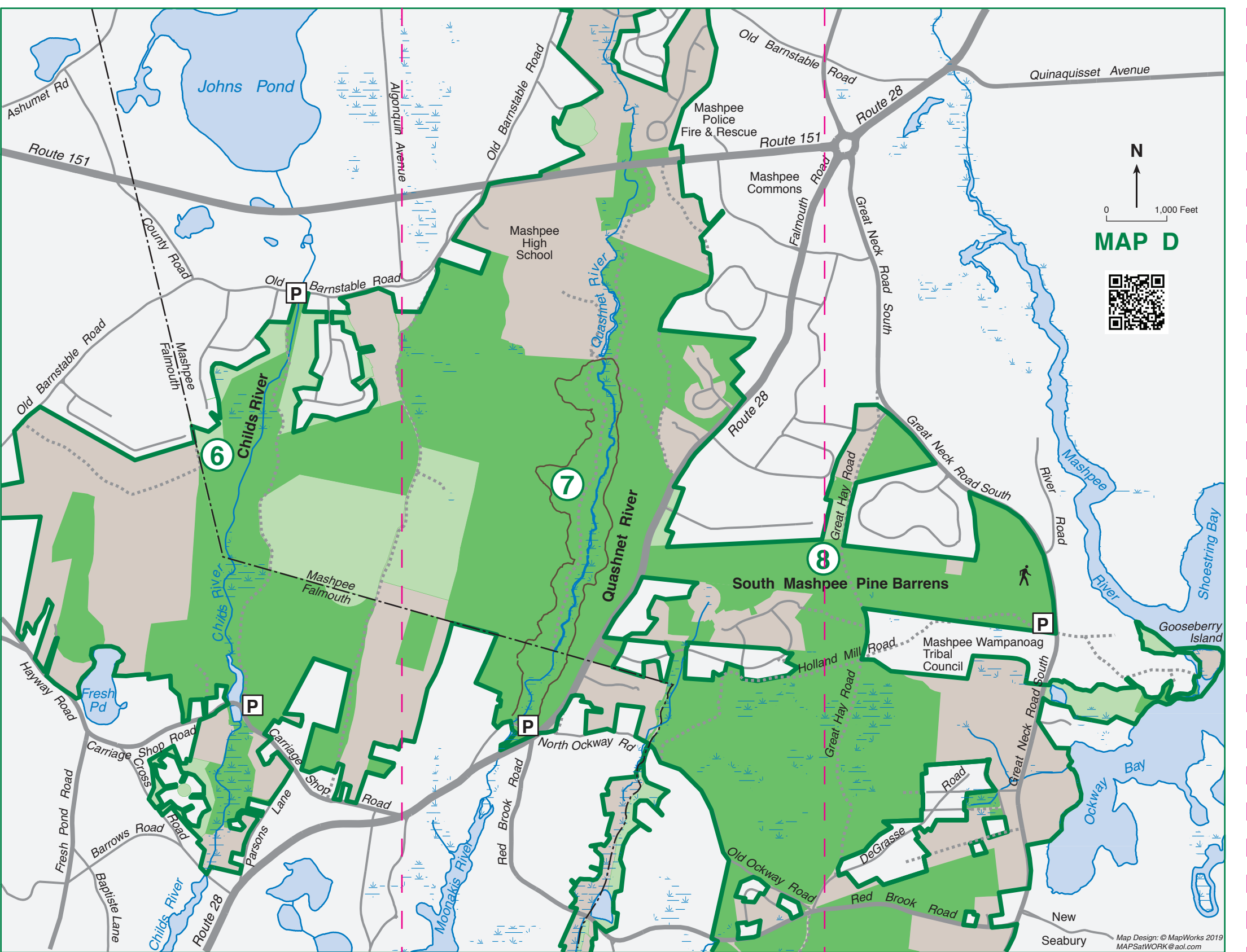
Before the 1900's the Childs River was known as a world class sea-run brook trout river. It was sought out by many dignitaries such as President Grover Cleveland, Daniel Webster, and actor Joe Jefferson. By the 1950's, the brook trout had disappeared, due to dams and cranberry farming. By 2008, stream monitoring showed that the lower portions of the river had recovered enough to begin restoring the trout. The Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife moved trout from the Quashnet River into the Childs. The fish survived and have since become a small self-sustaining population. The upper portions of the river are still impaired by remnant cranberry bogs and dams, and cannot support brook trout. The Falmouth Rod and Gun Club and partners have begun a long restoration process of the upper Childs that will benefit brook trout and many other species.

**D - 7 Quashnet River Corridor**  
– A Story of Success

The Quashnet River flows south from Johns Pond through abandoned cranberry bogs and past the Quashnet Valley Country Club (Map B). It continues south, passing through Atlantic white cedar swamps and pitch pine and oak woodlands. The lower portion of the river has been restored by hard working volunteers led by the Cape Cod Chapter of Trout Unlimited. South of the town line it becomes the Moonakis River, most of which is a tidal estuary flowing into Waquoit Bay. The flow of clear, cool water supports a variety of fish species, especially trout, river herring (blueback and alewives), and American eels. As the largest supplier of fresh water to Waquoit Bay, the Quashnet River is a vital link in an ecosystem which encompasses fisheries, recreational lands, beaches, and the bay itself.

**D - 8 South Mashpee Pine Barrens**  
– Shaped by Fire

The European settlers found extensive areas of open pitch pine forest and heathlands throughout the Northeast. These "barrens" were maintained through burning by the native people. They are dominated by pitch pine and associated with scrub oak, tree oaks, grasses, forbs, and fire dependent low shrubs such as lowbush blueberries and huckleberries. Suppression of wildfires has allowed forest vegetation to take over these once open habitats. The pine barrens ecotypes are now rare and imperiled globally. Many groups including the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Town of Mashpee, and several land trusts are working together to restore neglected pine barrens on Cape Cod. New England cottontails, Northern long-eared bats, eastern box turtles, hog-nosed snakes, pine barrens buckmoth, whip-poor-wills, and other rare animals and plants can thrive in this restored, fire-dependent, ecosystem.



**E - 9 Jehu Pond Conservation Area**  
– A Corridor for Hay and Wildlife

In colonial times, the Great Hay Road was a cartway used to transport salt hay from the southern marshes to mid Cape farms and beyond. The Jehu Pond Conservation Area consists of lands owned by the USFWS, the Town of Mashpee, and the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation. It serves as an important corridor for many wildlife species and contains excellent examples of Cape Cod habitat types. In this relatively small area you can experience a walk from the dry oak forest to cool moss-filled cedar swamps, and past the always changing tidal estuary to the fire-dependent pitch pine forest. Jehu Pond itself is a sub-embayment of the Waquoit Bay estuary and the land adjacent to it is home to white-tailed deer, turkey, osprey, coyotes, eastern box turtles, New England cottontail, northern long-eared bats, and other wildlife.

**Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge**



Southern Areas Northern Areas

Provided by The Friends of Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge

