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To Hopedale Select Board

From BRWA

The Blackstone River Watershed Association supports the purchase of the Morneau Trust property located at 364 West Street by the Town of Hopedale. As a non-profit organization focused on the Blackstone River and its tributaries in Massachusetts, our association believes that these forests and wetlands are critical parts of the Mill River watershed. This 155-acre property can continue to provide a wide array of public benefits to the citizens of Hopedale, downstream communities, and ultimately the Narragansett Bay estuary if it is maintained as forest and wetland conservation land.

Intact forests and wetlands that are found on this property represent the best ecotypes for providing natural filtration, recharging groundwater, and maintaining stream water quality. Located along the Mill River and near the Hopedale Parklands, the value of this large tract of open space for the future of Hopedale cannot be overstated. This property represents almost 5% of the entire Town. There is currently no public road access into the property and there are no buildings or development. This is totally unique for Hopedale and represents a natural asset deserving of permanent protection.

Features of this property that are particularly noteworthy include the following:

- Aquifer recharge
- Potential future water supply wells for the Town
- Intact forest and wetland habitats
- Aquatic and riparian habitat
- Flood attenuation
- Surface water runoff protection through forest and other vegetation
- Wildlife habitat
- Possible future public recreation use

We encourage the Select Board to exercise their right of first refusal as a result of this property leaving Chapter 61 protection status and acquire this property for the benefit of both the citizens of Hopedale and the Blackstone River watershed.