

# THE SIGNIFICANT ROADSIDE TREES OF EGREMONT

**Project Intent.** To conduct an inventory of the significant roadside trees of the Town of Egremont, in order to focus preservation efforts on the Town's current and future heritage trees.

**Background.** The rural Town of Egremont in the Berkshires has large tracts of open space, many of them providing panoramic views of scenic landscapes. Bordering some of the open spaces are large and old roadside trees. In Egremont's Master Plan (March 2003), one of the top five Immediate Action Strategies is to "create an inventory of historic landmark trees and develop an ongoing tree protection and maintenance program."



A millennium tree planting program in 2000 by the Egremont Land Trust spurred community interest in protecting Egremont's heritage trees. This was followed by a successful grant application written by the Land Trust for the Town under the Urban Forest Planning and Education Program, a joint effort of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management (D.E.M.) and the USDA Forest Service. This resulted in the formation of a Tree Committee to oversee work under the grant. The grant enabled the Town to solicit bids to perform an inventory of large significant trees, and the South Hadley consulting firm Trees New England was hired to perform the inventory and prepare a management plan based upon the results.

## **Summary of Inventory Recommendations.**

- ✓ **Plant new trees on a regular basis, and diversify the species distribution.**
- ✓ **Perform routine pruning maintenance.**
- ✓ **Manage risk by creating schedules for hazard pruning and removal.**
- ✓ **Continue the Tree Committee, in order to follow through with the recommendations.**
- ✓ **Develop a town tree ordinance.** A tree ordinance establishes Town policies and procedures and provides a basis for enforcement. A few sample clauses might include: require street tree planting with any new development; require tree replacement when non-hazardous trees are removed; and specify a tree-for-tree or inch-for-inch replacement. In some cases, money instead of trees may be reimbursed to the Tree Committee or Town, to be dedicated for future tree planting. A tree ordinance forms a strong basis for an effective tree program and is strongly recommended.
- ✓ **Educate the citizenry about the existence and importance of the Massachusetts tree laws,** specifically *Chapter 87.Shade Trees*. Massachusetts is fortunate to have a strong basis in law for protecting street trees. Chapter 87 defines street trees and powers of tree wardens, and details the regulations regarding cutting, removal, and damages. The Massachusetts Tree Wardens' and Foresters' Association Handbook (8<sup>th</sup> edition 2003) includes the statutory sections from all the Massachusetts General Laws that are relevant to public shade trees.