Discovery: Natural Resources

Shrewsbury Master Plan

ABOUT

Natural Resources refer to the environmental features of Shrewsbury, including its geology, waters, wildlife, and climate. These characteristics are fundamental to understanding the land use patterns of the Town.

Shrewsbury's landscape is shaped by the Shrewsbury Ridge and its hilly, upland terrain. Lake Quinsigamond divides Shrewsbury from Worcester and covers 475 acres. This deep drainage lake experiences seasonal water temperature stratification, with warmer and cooler layers in the summer that supporting a diversity of wildlife.

Shrewsbury also has various ponds, brooks, and 1,974 acres of wetlands that further support the town's ecology.[1] Recent development has reduced Shrewsbury's open spaces, yet pockets of town still reflect New England rural landscapes with woods, fields, and stone walls.

Climate change is impacting Shrewsbury's environment. Changes in precipitation and temperature make flooding, extreme heat, and winter storm events more common and less predictable. These dynamics also have secondary effects: they may adversely impact native species, reduce recreation and economic activity, and increase human-wildlife conflicts.

New environmental threats are emerging in the form of new invasive species, PFAS contamination, and other contaminants.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS SINCE THE 2016 MASTER PLAN

- ✓ Established a stormwater utility fee to provide dedicated funding for stormwater management based on the 2016 Master Plan.
- ✓ Acquired parcels around the former Grafton State Hospital adjacent to/in a Zone II aquifer recharge area to use it for agricultural preservation, open space, and recreation.
- ✓ Implemented several efforts to manage invasive species including development of a recommended planting guide and hosting regular water chestnut pulls, with a declaration that the Asian Longhorn Beetle invasive species has been eradicated from town in September 2026

DID YOU KNOW?

Shrewsbury's tree canopy accounts for **58%** of total land cover[2]

Over **200** bird species can be found in Shrewsbury's uplands and lakeside[3]

By 2030, Shrewsbury may have up to **19 days** above 90 degrees, and **38 days** by 2050.[4]

WILDLIFE IN SHREWSBURY

Have you seen these species in Shrewsbury?



Bald Eagle



North American Beaver



Northern Pike

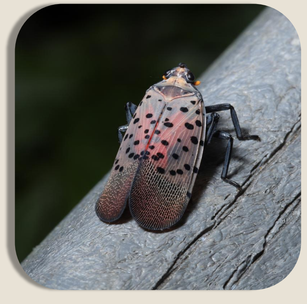


Maple Tree

Invasive Species



Water Chestnut



Spotted Lanternfly

1. MassGIS, 2026.
2. American Forests, Tree Equity Score Location Insights, 2023.
3. 2020 Town of Shrewsbury Open Space and Recreation Plan.
4. All In Shrewsbury : Municipal Climate Action and Resiliency Plan, 2026.