

**From:**  
**Sent:** 10/13/2006  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** Berkshire Regional Planning Commission/BCAP

To whom it may concern:

The census data attributed to the Town of Otis belie the current reality. This town of just over 1,600 year-round residents is undergoing enormous development pressure. While well over 200 lots have created through subdivision in the past two years, and another 50 to 75 are pending, that represents only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. Owners of waterfront properties, the majority of whom are out-of-town residents, are enlarging/rebuilding the properties at a pace never before experienced in this town.

With eight state-classified "Great Ponds" within our borders -- including Otis Reservoir, the largest fresh-water recreational body of water in the state -- as well as the Farmington River and its tributaries, this is producing extraordinary pressures on the natural resources within our borders.

But we still are a town of 1,600+ largely working-class residents, and with a budget and staff that reflects that status. We have no paid planning staff, a very part-time zoning enforcement officer, and no paid professional staff [with the exception of a part-time secretary who takes minutes and assists with paperwork] to assist our all-volunteer Conservation Commission.

The Berkshire Conservation Agent Program has provided us with an invaluable resource in dealing with sensitive environmental issues -- as well as the increasing complexities of the Wetlands Protection Act's regulations and requirements -- that we could never otherwise afford. In addition to helping us protect our natural resources, the agent program has helped educate our commissioners and -- extremely important, but difficult to measure quantitatively -- has helped us send a message throughout this community that, despite our all-volunteer status, the Conservation Commission is well informed and able to work with property owners and developers to ensure that their plans are carried out in a manner that complies with regulations and protects the environment.

We, therefore, strongly encourage your support of this important program.

Gail Palmer,

Otis Conservation Commission