

Town of Shelburne
Open Space Committee
2014 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee highly values the efforts of our many citizens who continue to support the goals of protecting and preserving open space in the Town of Shelburne.

The major focus of work of the Committee in 2014 was to complete the update of the Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan to qualify the Town for grant programs. The purpose of this plan is to serve as a guide for the identification, prioritization and protection of Shelburne's natural, cultural, scenic and historic resources, and to identify future open space and recreation needs of the residents of Shelburne. Using a technical assistance grant from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Committee took the following steps:

- Hosted a town-wide forum to identify key priorities;
- Mailed and posted on-line a survey that drew responses from over 350 townspeople;
- Analyzed detailed survey responses in conjunction with town Boards and Committees;
- Held multiple meetings to provide town residents and businesses an opportunity for additional review and comment;
- Posted all 10 sections of the Draft Plan on the Town Website for public review; and,
- Made copies of the Draft Plan, along with all maps, available for public review in the Town libraries and Town Hall.

After review and discussion, all ideas, comments, and corrections received throughout the planning process were incorporated in the final version of the 2014 Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). This has now been approved by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Resources.

With an extensive action plan developed collaboratively with input and buy-in of many town Boards and Commissions, the OSRP represents consensus building on the most important natural, agricultural, and recreational resource needs in town and on the best solutions for addressing them. The Open Space Committee has begun work on several action items in collaboration with other town Boards and Committees.

In addition, throughout the year, the Committee continued to advocate for open space in Shelburne, and worked to carry out the directives of the Town and initiatives identified in the first Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan approved by the Town. Activities included:

- Provided input to the Shelburne Community Development Strategy;
- Continued work on the Shelburne Trail system; posted additional signage and tree species information on the Wooded Loop Trail in conjunction with a Boy Scout Eagle candidate; distributed copies of trail map;
- Advised the Planning Board and ZBA regarding open space issues;
- Worked on issues and programs with groups such as the Boy Scouts to raise awareness and control invasive species such as Garlic Mustard;
- Continued to update the collection of over 30 maps relating to various town attributes and open space to facilitate town officials and citizen access to the information and tools (maps are available for study on a rack in the Memorial Hall meeting room and on the Town Website);
- Served on the Mohawk Trail Regional Woodlands Partnership Board seeking strategies to better utilize woodlands in conjunction with Mass DCR and USDA Forest Service;
- Served as a clearinghouse for landowners by distributing information and e-publications from a variety of land conservation organizations.

The Committee reviewed priorities for the coming year, and has the following goals:

- Present the updated 2014 Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan to the Town;

- Work with the Select Board, Conservation Commission and the Franklin Land Trust to promote potential large-scale land preservation projects utilizing the Landscape Partnership program;
- Utilize a small grant from the Mt Grace Land Trust to educate landowners about conservation and preservation options;
- Identify and advance the top priority goals in the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan and begin work on action plans with interested citizens and town Boards;
- Continue to develop and sponsor educational forums on topics such as conservation programs, land transfer, control of invasive species, and other topics of interest to landowners;
- Continue to identify landowners willing to open their land to the public, and identify, map and blaze such trails including posting signs at trail heads delineating trail names;
- Meet with and share information with the Open Space Committees of neighboring towns and work with the Agricultural Commission to advance and promote farming in Shelburne and the region;
- Promote the Open Space Donation Account as a means to fund open space acquisition with private dollars in the absence of town funding.

Open space is defined as, "land that is undeveloped, generally without paved roads or permanent structures, which includes, but is not be limited to, land to protect existing and future well fields, aquifers and recharge areas, watershed land, agricultural land, grasslands, fields, forest land, fresh water marshes and other wetlands, river, stream, lake and pond frontage, lands to protect scenic vistas, land for wildlife or nature preserve and land for active or passive recreational use such as the use of land for community gardens, trails, and noncommercial youth and adult sports, and the use of land as a park, playground or athletic field."

Through the efforts of many citizens using techniques such as conservation restrictions, Agricultural Preservation Restrictions and tax incentives (such as Chapter 61), residents of Shelburne have identified over 5,550 acres of agricultural land, woodlands and open space in the Town with some level of protection from development. (37.1% of the Town's land area – see following table for details.)

PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE	Acres	% Of Total Land Area in Shelburne
Farmland		
<i>Protected by Agricultural Preservation Restriction</i>	1,360.2	9.1%
<i>Temporarily Protected Farmland under Ch. 61A*</i>	1,964.8	13.1%
Forestland		
<i>Protected by Conservation Restriction</i>	429.0	2.9%
<i>Owned by a Conservation Organization</i>	647.2	4.3%
<i>Temporarily Protected Forestland</i>		
Chapter 61*	671.3	4.5%
Chapter 61B*	<u>42.6</u>	0.3%
TOTAL PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION	5,115.1	34.2%
PUBLICLY OWNED OPEN SPACE	Acres	% Of Total Land Area in Shelburne
Forestland		
<i>Protected by State Conservation Agencies</i>		
Department of Conservation and Recreation – Division of State Parks and Recreation	74.7	0.5%
<i>Land Owned by Shelburne Falls Fire District</i>	<u>297.0</u>	2.0%

Other Lands		
<i>Cemeteries</i>	37.0	0.2%
<i>Land with Limited Protection Owned by Town of Shelburne</i>	32.8	0.2%
TOTAL PUBLICLY OWNED OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION	366.8	2.4%
TOTAL OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION	5,556.6	37.1%

Source: FRCOG using Town of Shelburne Assessor's Records, 2012; and MassGIS Open Space data, 2012

It is the privilege of the Open Space Committee to work with landowners as stewards of open space, and we are grateful for the support of many townspeople committed to preserving open space, agriculture and the rural character of the Town, and to the many individuals who have contributed to the Open Space Contribution Account this year, which now totals almost \$17,100.

At-large Members:

Cynthia Boettner
Eugene Butler
Joel Dwight
Larry Flaccus
Linda Herrera
Rita Jaros
David Schochet
Josiah Simpson

Board Representatives:

Norman Beebe, Recreation Committee
Thomas Miner, Conservation Commission
Beth Manning, Agricultural Commission
John Wheeler, Planning Board