

**Town of Shelburne**  
**Open Space Committee**  
**2015 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 2015 was to begin work on executing the updated Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan. This plan, approved by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation Resources, serves as a guide for the identification, prioritization and protection of Shelburne's natural, cultural, scenic and historic resources, and identifies future open space and recreation needs of the residents of Shelburne. With an extensive action plan developed collaboratively with input from town residents 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:

- Copied and highlighted relevant sections and action items and reviewed these with each responsible board/committee/commission;
- Posted all 10 sections of the Plan on the Town Website for public review; and,
- Made copies of the Plan, along with all maps, available for public review in the Town libraries and Town Hall.

In addition, throughout the year, the Committee continued to advocate for open space in Shelburne. Activities included:

- Provided input to the Shelburne Community Development Strategy;
- Continued work on the Shelburne Trail system; distributed copies of trail map;
- Worked with Eagle Scout candidate Josh Taylor to post additional signage and tree species information on the Wooded Loop Trail;
- Collaborated with the Select Board and Pipeline Committee to keep focus on the potential environmental impacts such a project would have on the Town;
- Collaborated with the Planning Board and ZBA regarding open space issues on proposed Zoning Bylaw amendments and special permit applications;
- Worked with the Select Board, Conservation Commission and the Franklin Land Trust to promote a potential large-scale land preservation project utilizing the Landscape Partnership program;
- Utilized a small grant from the Mt Grace Land Trust to educate landowners about conservation and preservation options; developed a spreadsheet of contact information for those interested in communication about these 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 to finalize a plan in conjunction with Mass DEA and USDA Forest Service outlining strategies to advance sustainable and productive woodlands in the region;
- 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:

- Identify and advance the top priority action items in the updated Open Space and Recreation Plan and continue 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 5,600 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.)

<b>PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% Of Total Land Area in Shelburne</b>
<b>Farmland</b>		
<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%
<b>Forestland</b>		
<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*	107.6	0.3%
<b>TOTAL PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION</b>	<b>5,180.1</b>	<b>34.2%</b>
<b>PUBLICLY OWNED OPEN SPACE</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>% Of Total Land Area in Shelburne</b>
<b>Forestland</b>		
<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>	297.0	2.0%
<b>Other Lands</b>		
<i>Cemeteries</i>	37.0	0.2%
<i>Land with Limited Protection Owned by Town of Shelburne</i>	32.8	0.2%
<b>TOTAL PUBLICLY OWNED OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION</b>	<b>441.5</b>	<b>2.4%</b>
<b>TOTAL OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION</b>	<b>5,621.6</b>	<b>37.1%</b>

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 stands at \$ 18,094.

At-large Members:

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

Board Representatives:

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