

**Town of Shelburne**  
**Open Space Committee**  
**2016 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 2016 was to continue 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.

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

- Continued work on the Shelburne Trail system: upgraded the Woodland Loop Trail, installed new trail signs, brush-hogged the entire trail, and repainted blazes; performed trail maintenance on the Stone Fire Tower Trail;
- In conjunction with the Town's Tree Warden, FRCOG, and the GSFBA, envisioned and planned the development of a Village Tree Walk, with attendant map and brochure. Specific trees to be included were identified by OSC members and Tree Warden. The Town included the OSC request for FRCOG Technical Services Grant for a full Tree Survey which may lead to a "retreeing" of the Village;
- 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 for open space development, road protection, signs, and special permit applications;
- Worked on issues and programs with groups such as the Boy Scouts to raise awareness and control invasive species such as Garlic Mustard;
- Provided input to the Shelburne Community Development Strategy;
- 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.

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;
- Work with the Franklin Land Trust to develop potential trails along the riverfront on town-owned land;
- Integrate map resources into new digital mapping system in development by Assessors;
- Review culvert survey data and collaborate with Town officials on best ways to protect wildlife and ensure safety at river and stream crossings;
- Coordinate with the Mahican-Mohawk Trail ad hoc group to ensure improved access, marking, mapping, maintenance and marketing of the trail.
- 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;
- In conjunction with the Recreation Committee, continue to identify landowners willing to open their land to the public, and identify, map and blaze such trails including posting trail signs;
- 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 individuals who have contributed to the Open Space Contribution Account this year.

We were saddened by the loss of long-time member Eugene Butler who helped keep the committee grounded, and we welcomed new member Arlene Patenaude.

**At-large Members:**

Joel Dwight  
 Larry Flaccus  
 Linda Herrera  
 Arlene Patenaude  
 Jim Perry  
 David Schochet

**Board Representatives:**

Norman Beebe, Recreation Committee  
 Beth Manning, Agricultural Commission  
 Norm Davenport, Conservation Commission  
 John Wheeler, Planning Board