

Town of Shelburne
Open Space Committee
2019 Annual Report

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

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."

The major focus of work of the Committee in 2019 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.

The Committee also represented the Town on the Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership Advisory Committee and worked to finalize a plan in conjunction with FRCOG, Mass DEA and USDA Forest Service outlining strategies to advance sustainable and productive woodlands, land conservation, and economic development in the region.

The major project this year has been continued work on the Shelburne Trail system in conjunction with the Recreation Committee and the Franklin Land Trust. Committee members and volunteers worked to clear brush, refresh blazes, remove invasive species, install trail signs and maintain trails including those on private property on Mt. Masset and the Wooded Loop Trail.

FRCOG obtained a feasibility study grant with the Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation to evaluate the potential development of a Riverfront Trail connecting the Potholes to the existing Mahican-Mohawk Trail located on Franklin Land Trust property. This was supported by an allocation of Town funds, and Timber and Stone, a professional trail building firm, was hired to conduct a study of the proposed route. This study was completed in December, and laid out a foot-by-foot analysis of what would be required to build the trail. Subsequently, the Committee applied for (and received) a grant of \$20,000 from the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership to work on this important link in the Mahican-Mohawk Trail system.

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 continue the development of the trail along the riverfront and take next steps based on the assessment findings;
- 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;
- Promote the Open Space Donation Account as a means to fund open space acquisition with private dollars in the absence of town funding.

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.)

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	107.6	0.3%
TOTAL PRIVATELY OWNED OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION	5,180.1	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>	297.0	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	441.5	2.9%
TOTAL OPEN SPACE WITH SOME LEVEL OF PROTECTION	5,621.6	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 individuals who have contributed to the Open Space Donation Account this year. Account totals include: Open Space Donation Account: \$16,094.71; Land Preservation Account: \$ 31,479.65; APR Local Match Account: \$ 1250.00; Open Space Revolving Fund: \$ 442.11.

At-large Members:

Joel Dwight
Larry Flaccus
Joan Greenfield
Garth LaPointe
David Schochet
Jim Perry

Board Representatives:

Norman Beebe, Recreation Committee
Beth Manning, Agricultural Commission
Norm Davenport, Conservation Commission
Tom Johnson, Planning Board