

Town of Shelburne
Open Space Committee
2020 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 project this year has been continued work with the Recreation Committee on the Shelburne Trail system. Committee members and volunteers worked to add to the town's trail system, clear brush, refresh blazes, remove invasive species, install trail signs, create trail maps, and maintain trails including those on private property on Mt. Massaemett, Wilcox Hollow, and the Wooded Loop Trail.

Following a feasibility study of a potential trail route connecting Deerfield Avenue to the existing Mohican-Mohawk Trail, the Town received two grants from the Mohawk Trail Woodland Partnership (MTWP) to work on defining a route for a safe and legal way for the public to access and enjoy land gifted to the Town by Lillian Davenport. Study elements covered by the grants included a geotechnical evaluation of soils stability, wetlands and invasive species delineation, and topographical and property line surveys from Deerfield Avenue to the end of the Town-owned Davenport lot, including potential easements required.

The MTWP grants as well as a grant from the Shelburne Cultural Council provided resources to design and produce trail maps and educational signs for the trails regarding forest health, forest recreation and ownership, local land history, sustainable forest management, invasive species identification and control, and the relationship of forests and climate change.

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

- Identify and advance the top priority action items in the Open Space and Recreation Plan and continue work on action plans with interested citizens and town Boards;
- Continue to assess the feasibility of an access route to the Town-owned properties along the riverfront starting at the Deerfield Avenue Parking Lot, and take next steps based on the assessment findings;
- Install 14 interpretive panels along various Shelburne trails and provide two new trail brochures;
- 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;
- Work with the schools to advance education on invasive species;
- Work with FRCOG on a regional pollinator plan;
- Advance approval of the Community Preservation Act for Shelburne; and,
- 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; Land Preservation Account: \$ 31,479; APR Local Match Account: \$ 1,250; Open Space Revolving Fund: \$ 474.

At-large Members:

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

Board Representatives:

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