

Town of Shelburne
Open Space Committee
2011 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.

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."

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 Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan approved by the Town. Activities included:

- Provided input to the Shelburne Community Development Strategy;
- Advised Planning Board and ZBA regarding open space issues relating to Mt. Massemet Wind Farm proposal;
- Worked on issues and programs to control invasive species such as Garlic Mustard;
- Partnered with the Highland Communities Initiative to host a public informational forum in Shelburne on Family Issues/Estate Planning;
- Completed a project to gather, preserve, laminate and display 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 on a rack in the Town Office and on the Town Website;
- 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:

- 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;
- Using a grant from the Highland Communities Initiative, install resource shelves in the Arms Library and the Shelburne Center Library with information on land conservation and preservation, and develop a series of informational packages for landowners on topics about conservation and land management strategies;
- Using a grant from FRCOG, resurvey townspeople and update the Open Space and Recreation Plan for the Town;
- 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 preserved over 8,100 acres of agricultural land, woodlands and open space in the Town with some level of protection from development. (55% of the Town's land area.) Approximately 1500 of these acres are permanently protected, and the remaining 6,500 acres are in Chapter 61, 61A or 61B tax classification. Almost 1000 acres are in the pipeline for permanent conservation restrictions or other land preservation tactics. Landowners who have participated in the Farm Viability Program also have covenants with the Commonwealth covering several hundred additional acres.

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 totals over \$ 13,000.

At-large Members:

Cynthia Boettner
Eugene Butler
Paul Cohen
Russell Davenport
Joel Dwight
Larry Flaccus
Linda Herrera
Rita Jaros
Daniel Lieberman
David Schochet
Josiah Simpson

Board Representatives:

Norman Beebe, Recreation Committee
Norm Davenport, Conservation Commission
John Herron, Agricultural Commission
Douglas Finn, Planning Board