

# SECTION 7

## ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan incorporates the inventory of all the land-based natural, scenic, and cultural resources that are available in town (Section 4), identifies the areas that contain these resources (Section 5), and based on the community's general goals (Section 6), makes comparisons between the supply of resources and the demand (Section 7).

In subsection, *A. Summary of Natural Resource Protection Needs*, the most important environmental issues previously identified in Sections 3, 4, and 5, are highlighted. In subsection *B. Summary of Community's Needs*, the recreation and open space needs of the residents are discussed using the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Survey, feedback from Public Forums and discussion, accomplishments from the 2004 Action Plan, and specific elements of Section 3, Community Setting. In subsection *C. Management Needs*, the obstacles to the effective resolution of these needs are addressed including organizational barriers and the most significant land use conflicts concerning open space and natural resource use. Subsection *D. Environmental and Open Space Equity* addresses the issue of whether there are areas of Town which lack access to recreational resources.

### A. SUMMARY OF NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION NEEDS

Shelburne residents value their town's natural environment, clean drinking water and air, farmland, forests, diverse wildlife habitats, and long-range scenic views. This was clearly articulated in the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Survey, in which *an overwhelming majority (95%) of the survey respondents believed it is important to preserve the rural/agricultural character of our town.*

In this survey, mailed to over 860 Shelburne households, 339 responses were received (close to 1/3 of all the town's households) providing a wide range of opinions. They indicated that they appreciate all of the ways their town contains both a vibrant village downtown and a predominantly agricultural and rural landscape. However, the key lesson learned was that, while there is overwhelming citizen support for the maintenance of Shelburne's rural, small-town and agricultural character, the ideas and strategies to achieve this goal are wide ranging and disparate.

#### *Open Space/Conservation*

According to the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Survey, the issues of top importance to respondents are:

- protecting drinking water resources, well fields, aquifer recharge areas (95%)
- keeping habitats for various wildlife (94%)
- preserving scenic views (88%)

A majority of respondents, 77%, said that they would support the Town taking action to protect and conserve open space and natural resources. Strategies included:

- 65% support zoning changes for open space protection
- 63% support Town acceptance of conservation easements or conservation restrictions
- 62% support Town acceptance of donated conservation land or development rights
- 50% support Town purchase of conservation land or development rights

The Community Preservation Act, a significant potential resource of funds for the Town for land preservation, historic preservation and community housing, remains controversial. 43% would support the adoption of the Community Preservation Act, 34% would not, and 23% indicated that they needed more information to make an informed decision.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations continue to be of concern to those interested in protecting and preserving natural resources in Shelburne. However, in Shelburne as in many small communities, zoning is a hot-button issue and an anathema to some. Given that Shelburne is also under potential development pressure from wind power advocates and others, and the major scenic corridor through Town (Route 2 – Mohawk Trail) is entirely zoned ‘commercial’, these are issues which must be dealt with, and are identified in the Action Plan as priority projects. Unplanned development is a way of describing what can occur in a community that has minimal zoning, land use regulation, or protected land. With unplanned development, houses appear on building lots easiest to develop. Most residential development in this situation would likely be a combination of approval-not-required lots and traditional, “cookie-cutter” subdivisions, most likely developed in agricultural and open space areas. Unplanned development can increase the threat, over time, to farmland, large blocks of forest habitat, aquifers, and clean and plentiful drinking water by fragmentation, resource exploitation, and non-point source pollution.

Many respondents (20%) indicated that they would like more information about options for conservation and preservation, indicating a strong need to continue to educate residents about critical land and natural conservation strategies. This will be an early and ongoing priority in the Seven-Year Action Plan. Generally speaking, people need to become more aware of ways to preserve and protect natural resources, and how their actions may positively or negatively impact agricultural land, forests, wildlife areas, water quality, rivers, streams, ponds, and groundwater.

Town collaboration with the Franklin Land Trust and other organizations to produce public outreach and educational materials on topics such as land protection, estate

planning and land preservation, could help lower the resistance of individuals toward private landowner conservation initiatives.

The ways in which land can be protected from development can yield different benefits, both to the landowner and to the community. For example, land that is protected through the use of a conservation restriction or Agricultural Preservation Restriction can stay in private ownership. Decisions regarding property management are left in the hands of individuals, not a state or federal agency or non-profit group. Individual landowners may be more responsive to local concerns, and the land remains on the local property tax rolls. Although public access is sometimes required in conservation easements purchased by state agencies and land trusts, it is not guaranteed. Lands purchased in fee by state agencies and large land trusts are likely to provide access to the general public and sometimes offer payments in lieu of taxes.

Items in the Action Plan such as collaboration between the Town and other entities such as land trusts to provide public education on landowner conservation options, developing criteria to help prioritize land for protection, and adopting scenic viewshed and ridgeline protection will all help focus attention on natural resource protection, avoiding undesirable development.

### ***Agriculture/Forestry***

Most respondents to the survey indicated an interest in preserving the rural character of the town through agriculture and forestry. Key issues include:

- 97% feel that keeping farms economically viable is important
- 92% are concerned about the loss of agricultural lands
- 92% want to maintain working forest lands
- 91% feel keeping fields/pastures open is important to the Town
- 88% feel that the impact of invasive species on farms and open space is an important issue

When survey respondents were asked what actions they would take to support the long term stability of local agriculture and forestry,

- 98% say they would definitely attend the Shelburne Falls Farmers Market and purchase locally produced items;
- 83% say that they would ask the Agricultural Commission to assist farmers and forestry businesses in navigating the rules and restrictions for new projects;
- 78% say they would allow agriculture such as raising poultry and rabbits in the village residential area; and
- 46% say they would consider contributing to a fund to purchase agricultural land.

A pervasive issue underlying all discussions about agriculture is that of landowner rights, and strategies designed to protect and preserve agricultural and forest lands must be framed in these terms, involving the landowners affected. While much of the farmland in

Shelburne is temporarily protected through Chapter 61 enrollment, longer term strategies such as conservation easements need to be a part of ongoing discussions.

### ***Balancing Development with Conservation***

The challenge for many rural towns in the Commonwealth is to grow in population without diminishing natural resources like clean drinking water, farmland, and contiguous forests beyond the capacity of local ecosystems and economies of scale. Although exact capacity thresholds for water supplies, the regional agricultural economy and forest habitat acreage are not easy to measure, most residents would probably agree that poorly planned development can detract from their town's rural character and erode the quality of the environment over time.

Finding the right balance between development and open space is on the minds of many respondents to the 2013 Open Space and Recreation Survey. A majority of respondents (82%) feel that increasing the rate of business/commercial development is important. 57% feel that increasing the rate of residential development is important, while 43% do not. The top issues:

- 91% are concerned about developing and siting alternative energy sources such as wind, solar, etc.
- 88% feel preserving and maintaining historical buildings/spaces is a priority
- 80% would like to see the Town regulate building development on ridgelines

Many respondents supported various strategies to balance development and open space. However, once again, a significant number requested additional information about them, indicating that there is a clear need for more discussion and educational opportunities about strategies for protecting what makes Shelburne special.

- 75% feel it is important to work to preserve the Mohawk Trail through Shelburne as a scenic corridor, and limit development that breaks up scenic vistas.
- 73% would like regulations that specify the size and locations of alternative energy systems, such as solar, wind, fracking, etc.
- 72% would authorize the Planning Board to review and approve the site plans of new commercial developments.

Additional strategies rated by respondents include:

- Enact regulations that limit what can be built on hilltops and mountain ridgelines.  
*(65% agreed; 27% disagreed and 8% need more information)*
- Maintain current zoning which allows building single family homes on 2 acre lots with 250' frontage along existing roads.  
*(57% agreed; 15% disagreed and 28% need more information)*

- Make it easier for developers to protect open space in new residential and commercial developments by clustering houses/structures closer together.  
*(54% agreed; 28% disagreed and 18% need more information)*
- Amend the Zoning Bylaws to allow building on “flag lots” or to allow several lots to share one driveway to encourage the development of back lands without the need to file subdivision plans.’  
*(47% agreed; 22% disagreed and 31% need more information)*
- Keep all of Route 2 zoned “commercial” which now allows for development of a “commercial strip” corridor.  
*(38% agreed; 38% disagreed and 24% need more information)*

Of course, some types of development can be beneficial to a community, especially if it is consistent with a comprehensive town plan that balances growth with natural resource conservation. Well-planned economic development, for example, which promotes the use of renewable land-based resources like locally grown produce, dairy, meat, and forest products could help provide more jobs for residents and at the same time limit the total number of homes built in town. The 2013 Survey results agree with this finding by identifying the most significant threats to Shelburne’s sense of community and rural character as being: 1) Economic stress to the farming community, 2) Rising property taxes, and 3) Development.

Clearly, not all development is undesirable, nor could the town over-restrict land development, even if this was the consensus of residents and officials. However, understanding the cost/benefit ratio of conserved land vs. developed land can be a powerful argument and incentive for preservation, and more education on this is warranted.

A key issue for the Town is balancing the community’s interest in building a strong tax base and allowing for new residential, commercial and industrial expansion against open space and natural resource conservation goals. The pros and cons of ownership of conserved land by non-profit organizations is always an issue as it can remove properties from the tax rolls.

Most residents understand the need for balance and respect for the rights of property owners, including their right to develop land. Ideally, through zoning and non-zoning techniques the Town could provide incentives to developers so that all development in Town would contribute as much as possible to the residents’ shared vision for their Town. For example, cluster development incentives in the Subdivision Regulations could reduce pressure on forest and farmland.

Another way the Town could promote and preserve active farmland, help stabilize local residential property tax bills, and create jobs, is by developing a heritage-based eco-tourism sector in the town and region’s economy, which could combine residents’ interest in historic preservation, bicycle and hiking trail systems, active farmland, and home-based businesses. This could help to increase revenue from farms’ direct sales and

create local jobs. A town with a greater number of its residents working locally feels different than a bedroom community. Local workers can support stores and other services with their purchases.

One of the most important natural resource needs is for a continuing discussion on how residents want their town to develop over time, and which areas should be protected from development so that water, forests, habitat, and farmland can be conserved for the next year, and the next 100 years.

## **B. SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY'S NEEDS**

Planning for a community's open space and recreation needs must satisfy the present population's desires for new facilities, spaces, and services, and also must interpret and act on the available data to prepare for the future needs of Shelburne residents. Although the Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan will be updated in seven years, the types of actions identified in Section 9 take into account the needs of the next generation as well.

### ***Recreation***

The Shelburne Recreation Committee's primary mission is to create and oversee recreational activities for townspeople of all ages in order to promote community as well as healthy lifestyles. The committee works hard to provide seasonal events for varying age groups and interests, provide oversight of the maintenance and/or improvements to the existing town field property and town-owned common areas and future town recreational areas. The committee has organized many events over the years that draw a variety of residents. Access to facilities and programs by special needs groups, such as the elderly and the disabled, including the development of more accessible trails from the village, was expressed in the Survey and public forums.

The top recreation issues identified include:

- 82% are interested in working on how to best use the Pothole/riverfront area
- 80% want to allow more access to river resources
- 76% would like to be able to access more land for recreation
- 76% would like more information about available recreational activities
- 74% indicated the availability of organized recreational opportunities is a concern

The survey asked if there are ways to broaden the mix of recreational facilities and programs offered to residents, and the top ranked activities that respondents expressed the most interest in are:

- Additional hiking trails (70%)
- Fitness, aerobics, yoga (68%)

- Hiking from the village of Shelburne Falls (66%)
- Picnic/park areas (65%)
- Swimming area (64%)
- Nature walks, guided hikes (63%)
- Adult education classes (58%)

As the population of Shelburne continues to age, as is the trend in Town and throughout the country, there may be more pressure placed upon the Town to provide open space and recreational activities for older citizens. Any future development of land or facilities for open space and recreation should include careful consideration of access for older citizens, as well as for the handicapped. These needs should be also addressed as a matter of course under ADA requirements. However, specific programs could be specifically targeted at those citizens with special needs.

Small towns interested in increasing the amount of recreational programs available to children, adults, and seniors have four main options: funding the programs themselves, depending on volunteers, providing programs in collaboration with other towns, or a combination of the first three. Some of the recreational programs offered in town are supported via private associations. The Shelburne Recreation Committee is trying to work in collaboration with these private groups to better serve residents' recreation needs. Collaboration with neighboring towns like Buckland to pool resources for the benefit of the area has potential.

Trails in town have been mapped, blazed and identified with signs as part of an action plan from the 2004 Plan, in which residents voiced a desire to have a network of hiking trails as long as the trails were posted with trail etiquette rules and standards, for hiking only, and if they were on publicly owned lands and on roads only. As noted above, trails continue to be of interest to residents. Trails, road right-of-way bike lanes and paths might be more easily designed in certain areas than others. Also, a series of self-guided walking trails that loop through the cultural and historic village center could be established in collaboration with the Business Association.

A system of trails will take time to develop correctly. Permanent trail systems are a long-term project dependent in large part upon the presence of leadership and the cooperation of private landowners who are willing to share their land resources for recreation.

### ***Cultural and Historic Resources***

Shelburne is blessed with an abundance of cultural and historic buildings and landscapes. Survey respondents said that it is important to preserve these resources.

- 86% want to see a capital improvements plan for maintaining historic public structures and resources, e.g., Memorial Hall, Arms Library, Cowell Gym, Bridge of Flowers, cemeteries, etc.
- 75% think we should focus retail and commercial development in the Shelburne Falls village area

- 78% feel we should provide more village parking and restroom facilities for visitors
- 69% agreed that we should focus additional efforts on promoting and serving the tourism industry.

Scores of residents commented in the narrative section of the survey on how highly they value the village and small-town feel as a quality of life attribute of living in Shelburne.

### **C. MANAGEMENT NEEDS**

Shelburne has several management needs with respect to maintaining clean drinking water, planning development, supporting the farming community, conserving the integrity of wildlife habitats in town, and enhancing recreation programming and encouraging trail development.

#### ***Master Planning and Consensus***

As is mentioned in the Plan, one the most important management need for local officials and community leaders to reach consensus on a vision for the future of land use, development, and conservation in Shelburne. In addition, because farming is integral to the scenic, rural, and cultural characteristics of Shelburne outside of Shelburne Falls, it is critical that voters and Town officials build an understanding of what farmers really need to keep their farms in business (beyond good intentions) even as development pressures rise throughout the region. A Master Plan developed in 2004 articulated a vision for the Town. It is time to revisit this document and reinvigorate a discussion of updating a plan with a specific and practical road map which can be used by Town officials to guide their policies and actions, and this is an action item in this Open Space and Recreation Plan. Action Items I-4-E and I-5-F of the Seven-Year Action Plan focus on keeping the Master Plan review and discussion in the forefront of the Town's planning process.

Consensus on zoning is also a sticking point which should be addressed. Land for commercial/industrial development, zoning of the scenic corridor along Route 2, ridgeline protection, wind power development and other zoning and subdivision regulations are other issues which could be revisited as a part of an updated Master Plan. Action items in the Seven-Year Action Plan such as Items I-4-B, C and E are several actions addressing zoning issues.

#### ***Collaboration with Adjacent Towns***

Because the main village of Shelburne Falls crosses the Deerfield River and includes part of Buckland, any planning efforts for that area should be jointly developed. There is a Business Partnership coordinated by the Greater Shelburne Falls Business Association which brings together the Select boards from both towns. The Deerfield River is a shared resource, and action items such as developing the Pothole area, improving recreational



access to the river, and building and maintaining a vital village area by nature involves both towns.

Residents of the village area in both towns receive their drinking water from the wells operated by the Shelburne Falls Fire District. These wells tap an aquifer adjacent to the North River in Colrain. Given that protecting drinking water resources, well fields, aquifer recharge areas was an important priority for 95% of survey respondents, the Town would be well served by working closely with the Town of Colrain, the Shelburne Falls Fire District and the other two water supply districts in Colrain (Griswoldville and the Colrain Fire District) to help develop strategies to protect the water supplies from contamination. Contaminants can originate from non-point source pollution generators like improper pesticide use by farmers, homeowners, utility companies, and highway departments and road salt use by local and state highway departments. None of these water districts have long-term emergency water supplies, so the loss of one well to pollution could be extremely inconvenient to residents using public water. Zoning can be designed to include overlay districts that seek to protect aquifer integrity by restricting the amounts and types of hazardous materials that can be stored, used and disposed of, and the density and types of development allowed. This level of protection cannot happen without the collaboration of town and district officials working across town lines.

The involvement of the Emergency Management Coordinator to examine the risks of the flood plain areas is another component. For example, a potential threat to the water supply is the annual accumulation of water-borne debris (wood, etc.) in the Deerfield River under the Bridge of Flowers. The aqueduct that carries the drinking water through the village is located on the Bridge of Flowers. The battering and stress that the structure endures each year from the accumulated debris is a concern because there is generally no money to pay for prompt removal of the debris. In the summer of 2010, a crack was discovered on the bridge, further threatening this valuable resource. Given the popularity of the Bridge of Flowers with tourists and residents alike, the Shelburne should follow up on the action item to work with Buckland and the Water District to pursue the necessary funding to access and repair the Bridge.

Another cross-town-border issue is the preservation of large blocks of forest which serve as wildlife corridors and fly-ways for migrating birds. To protect large blocks of forest from fragmentation might require both land protection efforts and strategies similar to those that would support agriculture, with a regional approach. Action Items I-1-B and C which call for inventories of forest tracts and discussion of a National Forest Designation will help address this issue. Land protection work begins with providing landowners (residents and non-residents) with information about the benefits and risks of enrolling in the Chapter 61 programs, in protecting their land with conservation restrictions, and with estate planning in general. Several Action Items in Goal I focus on increased communications with landowners about options and strategies for protecting land. Collaboration of the Open Space Committee with those adjacent towns would provide a platform for working on a regional basis. Such coordination could be facilitated by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments working with Land Trusts and Commonwealth officials.

### ***Agricultural Focus***

Farmland is a treasured resource of Shelburne, and we are stewards of that land, preserving it for generations to come, just as our ancestors preserved it to hand on to us. Although farmland is at risk throughout New England, as markets and other forces often work against small family farms, there are a multitude of strategies available to a town committed to preserving its local and regional agricultural industry. Local volunteer leadership must continue to work with regional land conservation and farm promotion efforts. However, to be truly effective, Shelburne needs to ensure that its policies are friendly to farm and forest-based businesses. In addition, farmers need to be consulted in advance if the Town is considering the development of strategies or zoning which might affect their bottom line.

An Agricultural Commission was established as one of the action items in the 2004 Plan. Over the past few years, it has struggled to make an impact as many farmers have not been able to commit the time and energy to its success. It has recently been revitalized, and has played a key role in developing this Open Space and Recreation Plan with doable action items which will advance their agenda. The Town should explore ways to provide support to the members of the Agricultural Commission so that they can continue to be actively engaged in the implementation of the Seven-Year Action Plan.

As part of the development of this Plan, the Agriculture Commission and Open Space Committee have collaborated on developing a new map (see Map xx) with an inventory of all active farms in Town (almost 40 identified), and this will help reinforce the strong role agriculture plays in the ethos of the Town.

### ***A Focus on Natural Resource Protection***

While updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan, one of the critical issues identified for Shelburne was the lack of a central resource with accountability for natural resource protection and advocacy in the Town government. In larger, urban towns, one would most likely find a Conservation Department, Planning Department, Recreation Department or other staffed function with resources to monitor, map, manage, and enforce policy and regulations regarding natural resources in a municipality. Such staffed departments have the personnel, knowledge and resources to work with state and federal officials to understand critical issues and fund and implement solutions. However, in a small town like Shelburne, such resources do not exist, and the Town depends on volunteers with limited time and knowledge to do what they can. The Conservation Commission is consumed with statutory review of wetland issues, and the Open Space Committee, with no statutory authority or budget, can not address these concerns on its own. This issue, common in all the small towns in Western Massachusetts, sets the stage for greater regional collaboration by organizations such as the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Resources and others to provide funding, technical assistance and coordination to better manage natural resources. Action Item II-2-K of the Seven-Year Action Plan calls for greater collaboration in

Shelburne to coordinate natural resources planning and protection within the scope of the Open Space Committee, but legislative action on a state-wide level should be considered.

### ***Recreation***

The Recreation Committee has made a remarkable impact on quality of life in town, utilizing limited resources to maximum effect. Respondents to the survey expressed interest in broadening the mix of recreational facilities and programs offered to residents. In particular, there is interest in expanding recreational opportunities and accessibility for Shelburne residents of all age groups, and action items to address this objective are outlined in Goal III of the Seven-Year Action Plan. Once again, there may be opportunities for collaboration with adjacent towns to accomplish objectives with resources available.

Hiking/walking trails continue to be of high interest. To develop trails on publicly-owned lands Shelburne officials might begin by organizing a well-represented trails committee. The purpose of the committee would be to develop a coordinated plan for trail and bicycle path development, maintenance, and promotion in town. The plan could be a long-term action-based plan, which would require the collaboration of willing private landowners, and would focus on the trails they support the most.

### ***Reinvigorating Town Government***

One of the challenges of small-town government is complying with complex regulations and policies overlaid by the Commonwealth and designed for large towns with full-time planning and recreation departments. Shelburne relies almost totally on volunteers to staff its committees and boards and run its conservation and recreation programs. This is a major burden on those who do volunteer, and it has become increasingly difficult to recruit new volunteers to carry on the cause of open space and natural resource protection and recreational programming.

### ***Finances***

As always, much of the effort to preserve open space and natural resources requires financial resources and comes down to money - - purchase of conservation easements, removal of property from tax rolls, maintenance of open space no longer farmed, etc. require dollars which cannot be squeezed out of taxpayers. Action Items in Goal I, Section 5 of the Seven-Year Action Plan address funding options.

As previously mentioned, there is a strong case to be made for understanding the cost/benefit ratio of conserved land vs. developed land. An action item focuses on making this powerful argument as an incentive for preservation, and more education on this is warranted.

The Recreation Committee will explore the Cora Smith Fund, a trust fund established for use by the Buckland-Shelburne Community Center to see if this might be an option for funding recreational activities.

Since the Open Space Committee has no budget supported by tax dollars, one of the action items implemented by the Open Space Committee was to establish a new fund to receive donations for land preservation. The Open Space Donation Account has drawn a number of private donations over the last few years, and further promotion of this means of raising funds is a planned action in the work plan. The Open Space Committee has also created a revolving fund to capture receipts from sales of hiking maps, to provide small resources for reprinting of the hiking guides. Other action items call for annual advocacy for banking Agricultural Protection funds from tax dollars for potential farm preservation projects.

Unfortunately, The Community Preservation Act, a significant potential resource of funds for the Town for land preservation, historic preservation and community housing, remains controversial. While 43% would support the adoption of the Community Preservation Act, 34% would not, and 23% indicated that they needed more information to make an informed decision. Action Item I-5-2 in the Seven-Year Action Plan calls for more education and discussion about this important potential resource for funding.

One key objective of the Seven-Year Action Plan (Goal I, section 5) is to develop sources of revenue to fund conservation and natural resource protection. This is something that Shelburne cannot do alone – it requires the collaboration and support of regional, state and federal government - - Shelburne and area legislators working in partnership toward a common goal.

#### **D. Environmental and Open Space Equity**

Open Space Equity means taking a look at conservation and recreation needs in Town and determining if there are areas of Town that seem to be lacking resources or access. Are open space and recreation opportunities available to all residents of Shelburne on a relatively equal basis?

Traditional measures of park and open space equity assess whether environmental justice populations in urban areas have the same access to open space and recreation resources as others in their community. Measuring park and open space equity is difficult in small, rural towns. In the case of Shelburne, no environmental justice populations are identified. These populations, as defined by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, are made up of “high minority, non-English speaking and low-income neighborhoods”.

In Shelburne, the town’s established recreation areas are located primarily in and near the village center in Shelburne Falls. In a rural community, residents are used to having to travel to a variety of destinations, whether it be for shopping, entertainment or recreation. There are several small neighborhoods in town such as Shelburne Center, but none is big enough to warrant its own recreational facilities like a basketball court or ball fields.

The Recreation Committee is working on issues of access to its facilities, including access to facilities and programs by special needs groups, such as the elderly and the disabled, and will be addressing the high interest in expanding facilities for additional hiking trails from the village, picnic/park areas, and swimming areas as well as activities such as nature walks, guided hikes, and adult education classes. Action Items to address these issues are outlined in Goal III.

Natural open space and recreation areas are widely distributed throughout town, given the rural and relatively undeveloped landscape of Shelburne. Residents may hike, hunt, snowmobile, fish and ride horseback with the permission of private landowners in many areas of town. However, while the Town has much open space, it is in private ownership, and access to that property in many cases is limited, such as access to the Machian-Mohawk Trail along the Deerfield River. A concerted effort to work with private landowners to increase availability of land for passive recreation, and funding from Commonwealth and private sources to purchase recreation easements, will increase open space equity in Shelburne.