

Town of Shelburne
Open Space Committee
2022 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee continues to value the efforts of our many citizens who support the goals of encouraging recreational access and 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."

This year the Committee began work on updating the 2013 Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), working with Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) using Commonwealth of Massachusetts, District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funding. A Plan update is required by the Commonwealth every seven years. A comprehensive survey of recreation and open space options was developed and shared with Shelburne residents, businesses and landowners on-line and in hard copy to identify their priorities. Next steps in the process of updating the OSRP will be to review and tabulate survey results and hold a public meeting to present and share the results of the survey to elicit discussion on further action items to include in the updated plan.

Another major project this year has been continued work with the Recreation Committee on the Shelburne Trail system. Committee members and volunteers worked to clear brush and fallen trees, refresh blazes, remove invasive species, and maintain trails on Massaemett Mountain, Wilcox Hollow, Franklin Land Trust Conservation Area, and the Wooded Loop. The Open Space Committee partnered with the Arms Library and the Deerfield River Watershed Association to host four guided interpretive hikes within Shelburne attended by more than 30 citizens.

- July - Mohican-Mohawk Trail
- August - Shelburne Fire Tower Trail
- September - Mass Audubon High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary
- October - Wooded Loop Trails

The Committee continued to work on developing a route for a safe and legal way for the public to access and enjoy land gifted to the Town by Lillian Davenport on the riverfront.

The Committee represented the Town on the Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts Board to work on 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:

- Complete the update of the Shelburne Open Space and Recreation Plan;
- Identify and advance the top priority action items in the OSRP and continue work on action plans with interested citizens and town boards;
- Continue to assess the feasibility of access to the (former) Lillian Davenport property along the riverfront and take next steps to acquire easements over private property;
- 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;
- Advance implementation of the Community Preservation Act; and,
- Promote the Open Space Donation Account as a means to fund open space acquisition with private dollars.

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.)

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: \$ 33,979;
- APR Local Match Account: \$ 1,250;
- Open Space Revolving Fund: \$ 130.

At-large Members:

Joel Dwight
Larry Flaccus
Garth LaPointe
Jim Perry
David Schochet
Peggy Warwick
Laurie Wheeler

Board Representatives:

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