

IX. Seven-Year Action Plan

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More than any other Open Space Plan prepared by the Town of Rochester, the 2008 plan involved a significant amount of public outreach on topics of concern. The following goals and objectives were prepared as a result of a public participation process that included a survey, public meetings, and community planning events. By encouraging residents of Rochester to participate in this process, the Open Space and Recreation Committee has formed a set of Goals that have been essentially written by the residents of Rochester.

Goal 1: Protect surface and ground water quality and quantity and natural resources in the Mattapoissett River and Sippican River watersheds.

Objective 1: Increase the total acres of permanently protected land in the Mattapoissett River Valley and Sippican River watersheds. The Zone II recharge area is the highest priority for land acquisition.

Action 1a: Pursue available funding sources for the acquisition of critical lands along the Mattapoissett River. (Self Help Program, Aquifer Land Acquisition Program, Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee)
(*Conservation Commission, Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee*)
2010 -2017

Action 1b: Acquire critical lands in the Mattapoissett River and Sippican River recharge areas when released from Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B for water supply protection. (*Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee*)
2010 - 2017

Objective 2: Proactively encourage water conservation and protection through education and regulation.

Action 2a: Develop and implement a water use reduction outreach campaign.
(*Conservation Commission, Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee*)
2010

Action 2b: Develop and implement a simple school curriculum for science teachers to explain how water reduction and aquifer protection can protect the environment. (Open Space Action Committee, Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee, Buzzards Bay Action Committee)
2011

Action 2c: Encourage the communities of Mattapoissett, Marion, and Fairhaven to join Rochester in a water use reduction outreach campaign.
(*Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee*)
2011

Action 2d: Investigate limiting the use of lawn chemicals in medium and high yield aquifer protection areas of the Mattapoissett and Sippican Rivers.
(*Conservation Commission, Planning Board*)
2012

Action 2e: Create a Water Protection By-Law in the Planning Board Regulations.
(*Planning Board*)
2012

Objective 3: Reduce stormwater discharges degrading Mattapoissett River and Sippican River water quality.

Action 3a: Educate townspeople about impacts from stormwater runoff from excessive pavement and lawns. Encourage natural plantings in place of lawns, as well as the use of organic fertilizers.

(Open Space Action Committee, Conservation Commission)
2013

Action 3b: Continue to develop and improve the Groundwater Protection District By-Law in the Planning Board regulations.
(Planning Board)
2012

Objective 4: Restore herring populations in the Mattapoisett and Sippican Rivers.

Action 4a: Maintain fish ladders and keep river free of obstructions.
(Herring Inspector, Alewives Anonymous)
2010 - 2017

Action 4b: Investigate removal of compromised dams and impoundments as a means to restore river function and improve fish passage.
(Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission)
2010 - 2017

Objective 5: Evaluate the condition of Rochester's ponds and streams and identify conditions that need improvement.

Action 5a: Investigate adoption of the Mattapoisett River and Sippican River under the "Save a Stream" program.
(Open Space Action Committee, Conservation Commission)
2013

Action 5b: Review existing water quality data and sampling locations and make recommendations for improvement.
(Conservation Commission, Board of Health, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay)
2010

Objective 6: Protect Mattapoisett River and its wetland habitat from running dry in summer months.

Action 6a: Encourage DEP to develop a water budget for the Mattapoisett River to establish safe withdrawal targets. Seek funding to complete a detailed hydrologic study of the watershed and river flow with respect to municipal wells, private wells, and agricultural and industrial use. (Conservation Commission, Mattapoisett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee)
2011

Objective 7: Support and strengthen the Mattapoisett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee (MRVWSPAC) and Mattapoisett River Valley Water District Commission (MRVWDC).

Action 7a: Continue to provide at least one Town staff member as a representative to both boards that will report back to the Board of Selectmen and appropriate planning departments.
(Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Highway Surveyor)
2010 - 2017

Goal 2: *Preserve Farmland and forestland that are the basis of Rochester's character. Almost everything that people identify as desirable about the Town is a result of its history and working landscape.*

Objective 1: Increase the total number of acres of permanently protected farmland and forestland in Rochester

Action 1a: Work to educate landowners of critical farmland and forestland about the benefits of Conservation Restrictions and the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program (APR).
(Open Space Action Committee, Conservation Commission)
2010 - 2017

- Action 1b: Acquire more Conservation Restrictions and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions.
(Board of Selectmen, Open Space Action Committee, Conservation Commission)
2010 - 2017
- Action 1c: Adopt “Transfer of Development Rights” Bylaw that allows for permanently protecting farmland in exchange for denser development at an alternate location.
(Planning Board)
2012
- Action 1d: Work with legislators to modify MA General Law Ch 61, 61A, and Ch. 61B so that lots are not split off before being offered to the town. Seek legislation that will make preservation as attractive as development.
(Board of Assessors)
2011
- Action 1e: Work with legislators to modify MA Assessment Law to take into account the public benefit of clean air, clean water and fertile soil provided by open space when assessing highest and best use.
(Board of Assessors)
2011
- Action 1f: Encourage the Planning Board to continue to adopt By-laws that preserve Open Space, such as greenbelts in new subdivisions that connect with open space in adjacent land; no build zones on new lots contiguous with open space on adjacent land, working toward trail connections and habitat integrity.
(Planning Board)
2010 - 2017

Action 1g: Create or identify an entity that will match farmland in need of cultivation with people who want to farm.
(Board of Selectmen, Open Space Action Committee)
2013

Objective 2: Promote farming and forestry in Rochester.

Action 2a: Keep farmers on farmland by matching available farmland with people interested in farming (i.e. Chapter 61 A properties).
(Open Space Action Committee)
2013

Action 2b: Encourage townspeople to buy local products.
(Open Space Action Committee)
2010 - 2017

Action 2c: Encourage appointment of an active Agricultural Commission.
(Open Space Action Committee)
2010

Action 2d: Encourage adoption of a Right-to-Farm Bylaw.
(Open Space Action Committee)
2011

Action 2e: Work to develop curriculum that educates both children and adults about agriculture and Rochester's farming heritage.
(Open Space Action Committee, School Committee)
2012

Action 2f: Involve science teachers at the Memorial School in teaching appreciation for agriculture. Develop an "Agriculture in the Classroom" program.

*(School Committee, Agricultural
Commission)
2012*

Action 2g: Facilitate the formation of an organized local forestry interest group of owners, foresters, loggers, mill owners and lumber yards to promote a sustainable yield and a stable market for local forestry products. *(Agricultural Commission, Open Space Action Committee)*
2012

Objective 3: Develop a public policy of welcoming landowner discussion about preserving working landscapes, open space, water quality protection and seeking alternatives to house lots for owners who want to sell their land.

Action 3a. Institute a public policy of inviting landowner discussion about preserving working landscapes, open space, water quality protection and seeking alternatives to house lots for owners who want to sell their land.
(Open Space Action Committee, Rochester Town Meeting)
2013

Goal 3: Provide Rochester residents with recreational opportunities in both well-maintained facilities and natural areas in their hometown.

Objective 1. Encourage the use of existing protected properties and recreational facilities in Rochester.

Action 1a: Produce a brochure listing accessible town -owned land and recreational facilities with simple verbal descriptions.
*(Open Space Action Committee,
Conservation Commission)*
2010

Objective 2: Maintain and improve recreational facilities in Rochester.

Action 2a: Obtain funding to build and maintain a Mary's Pond resident's beach facility.
(Park Commission, Town Meeting)
2017

Action 2b Improve handicapped access to the Dexter Lane Recreational Area and Raynor Gifford Memorial Park.
(Park Commission)
2011

Action 2c: Improve the Dexter Lane Recreational Area to include a playground, pavilion, basketball court, tennis court, and additional ball fields.
(Park Commission)
2010 – 2015

Action 2d: Improve ball fields and playgrounds at the Memorial School.
(School Committee)
2011

Action 2e: Develop and maintain walking trails, bridle paths and bike paths on public land where they are suitable.
(Conservation Commission, Open Space Action Committee, Local Interest Groups)
2010 – 2017

Action 2f: Acquire additional public access points on Snipatuit Pond as it becomes available.
(Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission)
2010 - 2017

Action 2g: Establish funds and a procedure to administer them for maintaining town recreational facilities.
(Park Commission, Town Meeting, Finance Committee)
2012

Goal 4: Direct growth to appropriate areas without damaging Rochester's critical natural, cultural and scenic resources.

Objective 1: Implement the Goals of the 2010 Open Space & Recreation Plan.

Action 1a: Appoint a standing Open Space Action Committee to implement the goals of the 2008 Open Space & Recreation Plan.
(Board of Selectmen)
2010

Action 1b: Provide copies of the Open Space Plan and the public policy to all Departments and Boards.
(Open Space Action Committee)
2010

Objective 2: Require important decisions to be consistent with the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Action 2a: Encourage the Board of Selectmen to solicit recommendations from the Open Space Action Committee on any land related decisions.
(Board of Selectmen, Open Space Action Committee)
2010 -2017

Objective 3: Encourage preservation of natural areas through zoning regulations.

Action 3a: Develop a comprehensive Land-use plan for the Town of Rochester based on existing physical characteristics (i.e. topography, soils, water supply, wetlands, etc.)
(Planning Board, Conservation Commission)
2011

- Action 3b: Encourage the Planning Board to develop a Tradable Development Rights (TDR) By-Law to save the illusion of “country” on the roads we use daily. TDR’s provide a legally binding way for a landowner to sell development rights that a buyer can use somewhere else in Town.
(Planning Board)
2011
- Action 3c: Encourage the Planning Board to sponsor an “Open Space Residential Development” by-law to provide a place for TDR’s to transfer into and to provide an alternative to the Flexible Development option in preserving farming acreage and Open Space.
(Planning Board)
2011
- Action 3d: Encourage the Planning Board to continue to adopt by-laws that preserve Open Space, such as greenbelts in new subdivisions that connect with open space on adjacent land; consider no-build zones on new lots contiguous with open space on adjacent land, working toward trail connections.
(Planning Board)
2010 - 2017
- Action 3e: Conduct a seminar for engineering firms doing work in town and present Rochester’s guidelines for maintaining rural character.
(Open space Action Committee)
2012
- Action 3f: Conduct informative presentations to Town Meeting concerning bylaws.
(Planning Board)
2010 – 2017

Action 3g: Educate about wise land use and resource protection at every opportunity through newsletters, press releases, and open meetings.
(All town boards and officials)
2010 - 2017