

Report of the  
Open Space Action Committee  
2013

Purpose of Open Space Action Committee

The Rochester Open Space Action Committee (OSAC) was appointed by the Board of Selectmen in April of 2010 to implement the approved Rochester Open Space & Recreation Plan. The goals identified in the Open Space Plan seek to protect the quality of life in Rochester by continuing stewardship of surface and ground water, maintaining large tracts of privately owned open space, preserving farm and forest views and ensuring wildlife habitat. Equally important are the goals of providing outdoor recreational opportunities to Rochester's more than 5,000 residents.

2013 Open Space Action Committee Accomplishments:

- Collaborated with the Rochester Land Trust, Inc. and Rochester Conservation Commission in the design and printing of Explore Rochester - Rochester's first ever trail guide of 13 select permanently protected properties. The trail guide contains trail maps, descriptions, photographs and points of interest along the trails of thirteen properties throughout Rochester. The 52 page color guide includes information on many miles of public trails in Rochester that provide great opportunities for walking, hiking, birding, fishing, cross country skiing, and horseback riding. Hard copies of the Explore Rochester trail guide are available free of charge, by request, at the Rochester Town Hall Annex, 37 Marion Road, Rochester, MA 02270. A digital version of the guide is available at [www.townofrochestermass.com](http://www.townofrochestermass.com).

The following Open Space Plan objectives (in bold) were accomplished:

***Proactively encourage water conservation and protection through education and regulation.***

Mattapoissett River Water Supply Educational Brochure

The Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee (MRVWSPAC) created a new logo and brochure to educate the public about the Mattapoissett River Valley aquifer and the committee's work in managing water resources for our future.

***Restore herring populations in the Mattapoissett and Sippican Rivers***

Herring Ladder Replacement Project at Hathaway Pond Dam

Private property owner Mr. Douglas Beaton, in collaboration with Alewives Anonymous, Inc., funded the installation of an aluminum Alaskan Steeppass ladder at Hathaway Pond Dam to improve fishway passage in the Sippican River.

***Increase the total number of acres of permanently protected farmland and forestland in Rochester***

Farmland Protection Project on Dexter Mill Brook

The Town of Rochester applied for and received a \$20,000 grant from the Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program to hire an engineering consultant to conduct a land survey and prepare compiled plans necessary to divide and permanently protect the 47.81-acre McCarty property off New Bedford Road in Rochester. The property supports two agricultural fields totaling 11.6-acres, two ponds, an intermittent stream, bordering vegetated wetland, flood plain, and over 700 linear feet of frontage on Dexter Mill Brook.

***Maintain and improve recreational facilities in Rochester***

Rochester Memorial School Playground

The Rochester Memorial School Playground Committee completed the construction of a new playground and soccer field at RMS, and was chosen by the Wareham Lowes as the Lowes Heroes Project for 2013.

Doggett's Brook Recreational Area

The Rochester Land Trust, Town of Rochester Conservation Commission and The Wildlands Trust collaborated to clear and improve storm damage to the existing loop trail on the Town and Wildlands Trust properties. A kiosk has been installed and work has begun on boundary fencing and trail markers.

Leonard's Pond Canoe Cartop Boat Access

Thanks to the work of the Rochester Highway Department, a canoe/cartop boat access and parking area were constructed at the 4.1-acre town owned property off Mary's Pond Road.

***Promote farming and forestry in Rochester***

Forest Management at Town Forest and Old Colony Vocational Technical High School

The Rochester Conservation Commission worked in collaboration with Old Colony in hiring forester Phil Benjamin to prepare forest stewardship plans for the 17.62-acre Town Forest and 20+ acres of forest surrounding Old Colony. A public informational workshop entitled "Walk & Talk with Foresters Phil Benjamin and Tom Farrell" was held on November 16, 2013.

Respectfully submitted,

Laurene Gerrior, Chairperson

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