

SECTION 9

SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Seven-Year Action Plan fulfills the Open Space and Recreation Plan objectives. The objectives address both open space and recreation goals because the quantity and quality of accessible open space relates directly to the availability of recreational opportunities in Wendell. For example, nearly 60 percent of the Open Space and Recreation survey respondents use Wendell State Forest at least monthly, while the two most popular forms of recreational activity are walking and hiking, which can be facilitated by a network of connected open space.

The goals and objectives are listed in the first two columns of Table 9-1 in the same order as they appear in Section 8 and are followed in the subsequent columns by recommended actions, responsible board or group, start date, and potential funding sources. By implementing the recommended actions, each objective will begin to be realized. Successful implementation will require the participation of existing town boards, committees and staff, including but not limited to the Selectboard, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Council on Aging, Board of Assessors and others.

Most of these recommended actions may be constrained by a lack of volunteer time, rather than funding. Where money is required, such as to permanently protect open space, it does not have to be provided by the Town alone. State and federal governmental agencies, private non-profit conservation agencies, and foundations are potential sources of funding. In addition, these sources are more likely to invest in land protection projects that have a broad base of community support.

The Wendell Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee prioritized the 55 action steps finding twelve that were felt to be most important. These priority action steps are listed below in no particular order and represented in the Action Plan Map at the end of this section. (Information in parentheses after each priority action item identifies the corresponding number of the item on Table 9-1.)

The Priority Action Steps are:

- Identify focus or priority areas and clarify the criteria for protection priorities. (Action Item A1b)
- Identify parcels that are of special conservation interest and prioritize parcels using their location relative to focus areas, value, acreage, and threat of development to compare between projects. (Action Item A2b)

- Work with local land trusts to identify potential conservation buyers. (Action Item A2c)
- Identify funding sources for land protection. (Action Item A1a)
- Apply for State Historical Preservation funding. (Action Item A9a)
- Negotiate access with abutters to the Phelps Forest Conservation Area for forestry purposes, clarify the status of abutting properties to the west, and then complete a stewardship plan with a forester. (Action Item A5c)
- Provide ongoing maintenance for trails in the Fiske Pond Conservation Area (including periodic mowing, removal of trees and brush above dam, and maintenance of beaver deceiver) and continue improvements to trails and bridges over wet areas. (Action Item A5a)
- Formalize public access to the Millers River for recreational purposes. (Action Items B3d and A4c)
- Sponsor educational events and materials for residents concerning the management of invasive pests and diseases impacting vegetation, including food crops and trees. (Action Item A6d)
- Post signage on all roads leading into town informing citizens as well as prospective buyers of property in Wendell that the town of Wendell is a "Right-to-Farm" community. (Action Item A10a)
- Create a committee and/or hire a consultant to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the needs of the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Open Space Committee, ZBA, Tree Warden, Cemetery Commission, Historical Commission, Energy Committee, Agricultural Commission, Community Garden, and evaluate the need for additional funds and/or administrative assistance for these departments. (Action Item A11a)
- Construct sidewalk and bike path to the north and south of the Commons in center of Town. (Action Item A5h)
- Develop a comprehensive plan to update the playground in the Town Center for improved safety and aesthetics. (Action Item B2c)

Table 9-1: Recommended Action Steps to Implement the Wendell Open Space and Recreation Plan

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
A. Ensure that the Town of Wendell retains its rural character and sense of community and maintains or improves the quality of its air and water, and the diversity and integrity of native fauna and flora through the conservation of locally important natural, open space, and cultural resources.					
	A1. Prioritize land protection projects that conserve forestland, drinking water, streams and ponds, open fields, scenic views, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and farmland.	a. Identify funding sources for land protection.	Open Space Committee	2011-2017	Volunteer time; local land trusts
		b. Identify focus or priority areas and clarify the criteria for protection priorities.	Open Space Committee; Agricultural Commission; Conservation Commission	2011-2017	Volunteer time
		c. Refine the mapping of priority of areas and identify gaps in these areas at the parcel level.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission; NQRLP	2011	Volunteer time; NQRLP
	A2. Take advantage of the Town’s right-of-first refusal with Chapter 61 parcels or assign this right to a third party.	a. Explore ways to increase the amount of money in the land acquisition fund.	Selectboard; Open Space Committee; Town Meeting	2011-2017	Volunteer time
		b. Identify parcels that are of special conservation interest and prioritize parcels using their location relative to focus areas,	Open Space Committee; Board of Assessors;	2012	Volunteer time

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
		value, acreage, and threat of development to compare between projects.	Conservation Commission		
		c. Work with local land trusts to identify potential conservation buyers.	Open Space Committee	2011-2017	Volunteer time; local land trusts
	A3. Coordinate with regional and state land protection entities, in and around Wendell, to ensure the continued conservation of important natural and open space resources and to promote and participate in landowner outreach programs.	a. Have the Open Space Committee appoint a liaison to the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP).	Open Space Committee	2011	Volunteer time; NQLRP
		b. Attend Western Mass. Land Trust Meetings and the Annual Land Trust Conference.	Open Space Committee	2011-2017	Volunteer time
		c. Ensure the training of OSC members in conservation alternatives.	Open Space Committee	2011-2017 (as needed)	Volunteer time; local land trusts
	A4. Coordinate and promote donations of land and conservation restrictions and facilitate local investment of land protection funding by private land trusts and state agencies.	a. Develop a procedure for determining, on a case by case basis, whether Wendell should own permanently protected open space in fee, accept a conservation restriction, or encourage ownership by others.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission	2013	Volunteer time

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
		b. Continue to support the ownership and management of properties of conservation interest by the Conservation Commission to better guarantee their protection.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission	2011-2017	Volunteer time
		c. Develop plan for Town-owned properties bordering the Millers River. (See B3d)	Selectboard; Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission; Historical Commission; Board of Health	2012-2013	Brownfields Grant
		d. With the input of all municipal boards, determine probable future uses of all lands acquired by the Town and any Town-owned lands that have not yet been designated as conservation land or auctioned off.	Selectboard; Open Space Committee; Agricultural Commission; Conservation Commission; Board of Assessors; Planning Board	2014	Volunteer time
	A5. Provide stewardship for Town-owned lands.	a. Provide ongoing maintenance for trails in the Fiske Pond Conservation Area (including periodic mowing, removal of trees and brush above dam, and maintenance of beaver deceiver) and continue improvements to trails and bridges over wet areas.	Fiske Pond Advisory Committee; Conservation Commission	2011-2017	Conservation Commission budget; Town Meeting appropriation; DCR grants

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
		b. Clarify issues concerning the western boundary of the Montague Road Forest and continue thinning trees as per stewardship plan.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission	2011	Open Space or Conservation Commission budget; Grants for Forestry; Town Meeting appropriation
		c. Negotiate access with abutters to the Phelps Forest Conservation Area for forestry purposes, clarify the status of abutting properties to the west, and then complete a stewardship plan with a forester.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission	2012	Volunteer time; Conservation Commission or Open Space budget; Grants for Forestry; Town Meeting appropriation
		d. Attain a permit to cut an access trail to the Conservation Area north of Farley Road on DCR land along western edge of this property and then construct the trail.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission	2013	DCR Recreational Trails grant; Volunteer time
		e. Continue to attempt to negotiate access with abutters to the Conservation Area south of Farley Road and, if successful, complete a stewardship plan with a forester.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission	2014	Volunteer time; Conservation Commission or Open Space budget; Grants for Forestry
		f. Provide more maintenance for trees on public lands not under the direction of Conservation Commission (especially those located on the Commons, in the cemetery, and near the playground). Increase the budget for the tree warden	Tree Warden	2011-2017	Volunteer time; Tree Warden budget; Town Meeting appropriation

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
		and/or relevant departments to ensure this can be done and explore options for getting assistance from residents with appropriate expertise.			
		g. Provide for clean-up of land acquired by Town from tax takings.	Selectboard	2011-2017 (as needed)	Town meeting appropriation; Selectboard budget
		h. Construct sidewalk and bike path to the north and south of the Commons in center of Town.	Selectboard; Highway Department	2015	Volunteer time; Town Meeting appropriation; Community Development Block Grants; other state funds
		i. Clean up road sides and public areas and continue and expand all-town clean up.	Ad Hoc Volunteer Committee	2011-2017	Volunteer time; WRATS budget
		j. Expand Permaculture Garden at Community Garden.	Community Garden	2011-2017	Volunteer time
	A6. Collaborate with the library, schools, Council on Aging, and other local and regional groups to foster environmental sustainability by facilitating ecologically based recreation programs and hands on stewardship projects.	a. Sponsor field trips and workshops on issues related to open space.	Open Space Committee; Library Trustees; Council on Aging; Agricultural Commission	2011-2017	Volunteer time; Cultural Council

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
		b. Provide educational workshops, films and speaker nights to help educate residents who strive to be locally, economically, and agriculturally sustainable.	Open Space Committee; Agricultural Commission; Energy Committee; Library Trustees; Cultural Council	2011-2017	Volunteer time; Cultural Council
		c. Sponsor educational events and material for residents and the Highway Department regarding the management of invasive plant species.	Open Space Committee; Highway Department; Conservation Commission; Food Production and Gardening Coordinator	2011-2017 (as needed)	Volunteer time
		d. Sponsor educational events and materials for residents concerning the management of invasive pests and diseases impacting vegetation, including food crops and trees.	Open Space Committee; Agricultural Commission; Tree Warden; Conservation Commission	2011-2017 (as needed)	Volunteer time; MDAR grants
		e. Sponsor stewardship projects on town lands.	Open Space Committee; Fiske Pond Advisory Committee; Community Garden	2011-2017	Con Com or Open Space Budgets; DCR Trail Grants; Volunteer time

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
	A7. Participate with the Millers River Watershed Council in its water quality monitoring program for the rivers, brooks, streams, lakes, and ponds in Wendell.	a. Form an Ad hoc Water Quality Monitoring Committee.	Selectboard; Open Space Committee; Conservation Committee	2011	Volunteer time
		b. Participate in local efforts to train volunteers in vernal pool identification and certification.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Committee	2012	Volunteer time
		c. Collect existing water quality data and prioritize sites for future monitoring.	Ad hoc Water Quality Monitoring Committee	2013	Volunteer time; DEP 604b grants; DRWA volunteer monitors; Riverways Program stream teams; CT River Watershed Council; EPA equipment loans
	A8. Encourage broad public participation in local planning to ensure that appropriate land use and growth management tools and strategies are identified.	a. These tools and strategies may include Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulation revisions and other tools (such as the Conservation Development Bylaw) to protect open space and natural resources, and to maintain Wendell's small town character.	Open Space Committee; Planning Board; Selectboard	2011	Volunteer time
	A9. Promote and help protect historically significant properties and landscapes within Town.	a. Apply for State Historical Preservation funding.	Historical Commission	2012	MHC Preservation Projects Fund

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		b. Promote stewardship of historical sites, structures, and landscapes through quarterly field trips and tours.	Historical Commission; Recreation Committee	2011-2017	MHC Survey and Planning Grants
		c. Evaluate the benefits of adopting a local Scenic Roads Bylaw and adopt if deemed beneficial.	Planning Board; Town Meeting	2013-2014	Volunteer time
		d. Improve stewardship of gravestones in Town Cemeteries including education regarding gravestone preservation techniques available through Association for Gravestone Studies in Greenfield.	Cemetery Commission; Historical Commission		Volunteer time; Town meeting appropriation; Cemetery Commission, Historical Commission, or Open Space budgets
	A10. Encourage sustainable local cottage industries and farm and forest-based economic activities.	a. Post signage on all roads leading into town informing citizens as well as prospective buyers of property in Wendell that the town of Wendell is a "Right-to-Farm" community.	Agricultural Commission; Selectboard; Highway Department	2011	Agricultural Commission budget; Volunteer time; MDAR grants
		b. Publish an agricultural resource brochure.	Agricultural Commission	2012	Volunteer time; Agricultural Commission budget; Town Meeting appropriation
	A11. Ensure adequate support for Town departments that regulate, protect, monitor, and maintain Wendell's open space.	a. Create a committee and/or hire a consultant to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the needs of the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Open Space Committee, ZBA,	Selectboard	2011	Volunteer time; Town Meeting appropriation

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		Tree Warden, Cemetery Commission, Historical Commission, Energy Committee, Agricultural Commission, Community Garden, and evaluate the need for additional funds and/or administrative assistance for these departments.			
		b. Consider the potential benefits of creating a position for a shared administrative assistant for these departments vs. increasing funds to individual departments.	Selectboard; Ad Hoc Committee	2011	Volunteer time; Town Meeting appropriation
		c. If the need for an administrative assistant is determined, create a job description, fund the position, and hire someone for this position.	Selectboard; Ad Hoc Committee	2012	Volunteer time; Town Meeting appropriation
B. Ensure that the Town of Wendell improves the quality, quantity, and accessibility of its recreational resources for current and future generations.					
	B1. Identify and facilitate the acquisition of additional lands for active recreational activities and sports fields, as the need arises.	a. Conduct a parcel level analysis of all undeveloped land in Wendell that may satisfy short and long term recreational land needs.	Selectboard; Recreation Committee; Open Space Committee; Board of Assessors	2013-2017	Volunteer time

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
	B2. Determine the specific recreational programming and facility needs of Wendell residents of all ages and abilities.	a. Conduct a survey to find out the kinds of recreational facilities and programs people want.	Recreation Committee	2012	Volunteer time
		b. Talk with school officials, parents, and Senior Center members to find out what types of recreational programs or facilities are needed.	Recreation Committee; School Committee; Council on Aging	2012	Volunteer time
		c. Develop a comprehensive plan to update the playground in the Town Center for improved safety and aesthetics.	Selectboard; Library Trustees; Ad Hoc Playground Committee	2011-2012	Volunteer time; DCS PARC Grant; private donations; fundraising events
	B3. Develop and publicize recreational programming for residents of all ages and abilities.	a. Develop and promote recreational programming for residents of all ages based on survey results.	Recreation Committee	2011-2017	Volunteer time
		b. Provide the Recreation Committee with a modest annual budget to facilitate the provision and promotion of recreational programming for all ages and abilities.	Recreation Committee; Selectboard; Town Meeting	2011-2017	Town meeting appropriation; Private donations; business sponsors; Cultural Council
		c. Develop an ongoing program of ecological based recreational opportunities for Wendell residents such as biodiversity days and wildlife monitoring.	Open Space Committee	2011-2017	Open Space Committee budget; Private donations; business sponsors; Cultural Council

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD or GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
		d. Formalize public access to the Millers River for recreational purposes. (SeeA4c)	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee; Conservation Commission; Selectboard	2013	Volunteer time; DCR Recreational Trails grant; DFG Office of Fishing and Boating Access funds
		e. Develop a plan for formalizing access along discontinued roads and well-used paths.	Open Space Committee; Selectboard	2014	Volunteer time
	B4. Support and identify funding for the continued development of community arts festivals and events.	a. Develop and implement a year-round schedule of events, including Earth Day, Old Home Day, Holiday Fair, etc.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee; Agricultural Commission; Ad hoc Old Home Day and Holiday Fair Committees; Cultural Council	2011-2017	Volunteer time; Cultural Council; private donations; fundraising events
	B5. Identify appropriate areas to expand multi-use (walking, hiking, bicycling, cross country skiing) trail systems within Town as well as connections to trails beyond the Town's borders.	a. Create a trail map of existing trails in Wendell, in addition to the Fiske Pond Conservation Area Map. Determine which types of uses occur on each trail.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2015	Volunteer time; Conservation Commission or Open Space Committee budget
		b. Support the creation of opportunities for bicycling in Wendell both on and off the roads.	Open Space Committee; Recreation Committee	2106	Volunteer time; DCR Recreational Trails grant

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		c. Create a volunteer network of trail stewards to lay out, cut, and maintain trails periodically.	Fiske Pond Advisory Committee; Open Space Committee	2011-2017	Volunteer time
	B6. Catalogue existing recreational uses on current town-owned conservation lands and lands with priority for protection.	a. Review results of the 2008 Open Space Survey and augment with additional surveys as needed to determine existing recreational uses.	Open Space Committee; Conservation Commission; Recreation Committee	2011	Volunteer time