

SECTION 9

FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Five-Year Action Plan is intended to provide concrete steps towards implementing the objectives of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The Goals and Objectives are listed in Table 9-1 in the same order as they appear in Section 8 of this OSRP. The Objectives are followed in the same row by recommended action steps, the board or group responsible for implementation, and start dates. By implementing the recommended actions, each of the objectives will begin to be realized.

Successful implementation will require the participation of existing town boards, committees and staff, including: the Open Space Advisory Committee, Recreation Committee, Select Board, Planning Board, Board of Assessors, Finance Committee, and others.

Accomplishing the actions identified in this section will require time and commitment from dedicated volunteers. Where money is required, it may be sought from state and federal governmental agencies, private non-profit conservation agencies, charitable foundations, and individual donations in addition to municipal funds.

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

GOAL A: To preserve and enhance the special rural and agricultural landscape which makes the Town of Whately unique – the farms of East Whately; the ridges and forests of West Whately; the town’s scenic roadways, historic landscapes and historic buildings and sites; and the town’s village centers.				
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>A1. Appoint a standing Open Space Advisory Committee that would have the responsibility of implementing the 2006 Whately Open Space and Recreation Plan.</i>	Upon receiving state approval of this Open Space & Recreation Plan, appoint a standing Open Space Advisory Committee.	Select Board	2006	Not Applicable (N/A)
<i>A2. Prioritize areas in Whately that contain significant natural, agricultural, and cultural resources, and/or opportunities for recreation so that town officials and residents can act in a timely manner to protect these areas when parcels of land are offered for sale, offered for donation to the town, or come out of the Chapter 61 program.</i>	Develop lists of criteria for evaluating and prioritizing the natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources of a parcel of land.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Agricultural Committee, Whately Land Preservation, and Recreation Committee	2006	N/A
	Using the lists of evaluation and prioritization criteria developed above, and the GIS maps in the Whately Open Space and Recreation Plan (2006), identify	Open Space Advisory Committee, Agricultural Committee,	2006	N/A

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
	areas of conservation interest in town that would be considered to be priority areas with important natural, cultural, agricultural, and/or recreational value.	Whately Land Preservation, and Recreation Committee		
	Develop a protocol for how the town would consider using its right-of-first-refusal (or assigning the right to a conservation land trust or conservation agency) regarding Chapter lands that are put up for sale for development.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Implementation Committee, Agricultural Committee, and Select Board	2006	N/A
<i>A3. Encourage landowners interested in protecting their land from development to work with Franklin Land Trust, Whately Land Preservation, state and federal conservation agencies, and/or with the Town of Whately.</i>	Invite representatives of the Franklin Land Trust, Whately Land Preservation, non-profit conservation organizations, and state and federal conservation agencies to a town forum to provide a presentation on their current activities and on the assistance they have to offer to Whately landowners.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Agricultural Commission, and Select Board	2007	N/A

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
	Send a letter to all landowners in town with more than 10 acres of undeveloped land that publicizes the town’s goal to conserve priority natural, cultural, agricultural and recreational resources for current and future generations of residents. The letter should encourage landowners to contact town officials or Whately Land Preservation about land protection options.	Open Space Advisory Committee and Select Board	2007	Town of Whately, Franklin Land Trust, ¹
<i>A4. Be responsive to the needs of farm and forest landowners and other agricultural businesses in town. Consider ways that the town might support agricultural operations as they would other commercial or industrial businesses in town. Actively encourage agricultural protection and</i>	Invest municipal funds in support of local Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) applications. Explore ways to commit, on an annual basis, municipal funds to the town’s Agricultural Preservation Fund for this purpose.	Agricultural Commission, Finance Committee. Select Board and Open Space Advisory Committee	2006	N/A
	Consider removing excise taxes on farm animals. Consider providing additional municipal	Agricultural Commission, Select Board,	2006	N/A

¹ <http://www.franklinlandtrust.org/> or call 413.625.9151

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>continued use of farms to sustain agriculture as a viable component of Whately’s social and economic base.</i>	tax relief (beyond Chapter 61A) to farmers in exchange for short-term land protection agreements.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Board of Assessors		
	Encourage farmland owners to participate in the Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program.	Agricultural Commission	2006	N/A
	Review town bylaws and regulations to determine what changes or additional measures may be needed to support town agricultural operations.	Agricultural Commission, Board of Health, Planning Board.	2007	N/A
	Publish guide of town farm stands, pick-your-own and retail farm operations.	Agricultural Commission	2007	Town of Whately, Franklin Land Trust, Massachusetts Cultural Council ² , UMass Extension Service, ³

² <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/programs/lccgrants.html>

³ <http://www.umassextension.org/index.html>

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
				American Farmland Trust ⁴
<i>A5. Continue advocating for the adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Communities that adopt the CPA can impose a small property tax surcharge which sets aside funds to address local needs related to open space protection, affordable housing, and historic preservation. Local CPA funds are matched by the Commonwealth through the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund.</i>	Develop timetable for bringing the CPA to a town vote.	Implementation Committee; Open Space Advisory Committee	2007	N/A
<i>A6. Explore revisions to Whately’s zoning bylaw that would result in greater protection of valued natural, agricultural, scenic, and cultural resources and would</i>	Encourage the use of the town’s Open Space/Cluster Developments Bylaw in appropriate areas of town. Review the bylaw to ensure that there are no disincentives for	Planning Board and Open Space Advisory Committee	2006	N/A

⁴ www.farmlandinfo.org or call 1.800.370.4879

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>help to ensure any land development provides benefits that reflect the town’s natural resource conservation goals.</i>	developers to use this option. Open Space/Cluster Developments can minimize the loss of prime farmland and help to maintain open space.			
	Consider adopting a Ridge Protection Bylaw that would help to protect the slopes and ridgelines of the West Whately hills from poorly planned development.	Planning Board	2007	N/A
	Consider amending the town’s Site Plan Review regulations to include incentives to developers who adopt period architectural elements in their renovations and new construction projects. Consider creating an Agricultural Overlay District that might require site plan review, cluster development and buffers between new homes and commercial operations and existing agricultural operations within the district.	Planning Board	2008	N/A

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>A7. Support the efforts of the Whately Historical Commission to designate additional scenic roads and to establish additional historic districts in Town.</i>	Consider adopting a Scenic Roadways Bylaw to mitigate the impact of Approval-Not-Required (ANR) development.	Historical Commission and Planning Board	2007	N/A
	Continue the process of identifying significant scenic corridors or viewsheds and then develop a process for prioritizing these areas for protection. For example, parcels that provide linkages between various protected parcels around the Town might receive higher priority for protection than others.	Historical Commission, Open Space Advisory Committee	2007	N/A
<i>A8. Raise public awareness about estate planning and taxes and the property tax implications of different types of development as compared to protected open space, farmland, and forested land.</i>	Collaborate with the Franklin Land Trust, American Farmland Trust, Whately Land Preservation and other non-profit organizations to educate landowners about land protection opportunities and estate planning.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Agricultural Commission	2007	N/A
	Consider conducting a Cost of Community Services (COCS) analysis for Whately to evaluate the property tax implications of residential, commercial, and	Select Board	2007	American Farmland Trust

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
	industrial development; preserved open space; farmland; and forested land.			
	If a COCS is done, then collaborate with Whately Land Preservation and the Franklin Land Trust to convene a series of Public Forums, articles in the local newspaper, and town-wide mailings to present the results of the Cost of Community Services analysis and other relevant information about the property tax implications of various types of land uses.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Agricultural Commission, Board of Assessors, Finance Committee, Select Board	2008	American Farmland Trust, Franklin Land Trust, Town of Whately
<i>A9. Work to prevent and clean-up road-side dumping and littering.</i>	Encourage neighborhood and community-oriented volunteer groups and Girl Scout and Boy Scout groups to assist the town in the clean-up of litter along roadways. Sponsor a “Roadside Cleanup” day with a barbeque or other gathering held at the conclusion of the clean-up to	Open Space Advisory Committee, Whately Grange, Select Board, Whately Highway Department, Whately	2007	Whately Grange, Whately PTO

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
	celebrate success and community spirit.	Elementary School PTO, Recreation Committee		

Goal B: To protect and, where necessary, enhance the quality of Whately’s natural resources including: groundwater and surface water quality and quantity; wildlife habitat; wetlands; and contiguous blocks of forested land.				
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>B1. Focus conservation efforts on areas that abut protected lands to create larger areas of contiguous farm and forested land.</i>	Collaborate with neighboring towns, local and regional non-profit groups, and other entities involved in resource protection to identify and protect parcels that provide linkages to regional or shared resources (e.g., contiguous forestland and farmland, aquifers, and watersheds).	Open Space Advisory Committee	2006	N/A
	Encourage the purchase of conservation restrictions by interested agencies and land trusts	Open Space Advisory Committee,	2006	N/A

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
	for properties abutting the Connecticut and Mill Rivers.	Conservation Commission		
<i>B2. Support ongoing efforts to protect the quality of the drinking water supplied by the Whately Water Department, the Whately Water District and individual private wells.</i>	Support the work of the Whately Aquifer Protection Committee and collaborate with the Whately Water Department and Whately Water District to implement the recommendations of the Whately Wellhead Protection Plan.	Whately Water Department and Water District, Aquifer Protection Committee, Open Space Advisory Committee	2006	N/A
<i>B3. Protect the quality and quantity of the groundwater and surface waters in Whately.</i>	Encourage the use of agricultural Best Management Practices, such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM), and lawn care practices that reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers.	Agricultural Commission, Conservation Commission	2007	N/A
	Obtain copies of the permits for the two water supply reservoirs to see if there are requirements for maintaining flows in West Brook and Roaring Brook. The state Water Resources Commission is currently in the process of setting streamflow standards and useful information may come from this	Whately Water Department, Select Board, Conservation Commission	2006	N/A

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
	work ⁵ . The Town should initiate and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the state Department of Environmental Protection, which issues permits for drinking water supplies ⁶ , the City of Northampton, and the Town of Deerfield to ensure that Whately's concerns about adequate streamflow are considered during permitting and operation of the water supply reservoirs.			
	Evaluate the effectiveness of the current floodplain bylaw.	Planning Board	2008	N/A
<i>B4. Build a comprehensive biological inventory in Whately using community volunteers. Consider how to improve upon existing information provided by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage Endangered</i>	Work with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) to coordinate annual spring walks to inventory animals, insects, fish, plants, and trees.	Conservation Commission, Open Space Advisory Committee and MACC	2006	N/A

⁵ www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/default.htm See Streamflow Standards and Stress Redesignation power point presentation.

www.mass.gov/envir/mwrc/ppt/streamflow_standards_stress_redesignation.ppt

⁶ www.mass.gov/dep/water/approvals/wmgforms.htm

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>Species Program's BioMap and Living Waters map showing core habitat areas and supporting natural landscapes.</i>				
<i>B5. Support the training of local volunteers in vernal pool certification.</i>	Encourage Town residents to participate in an annual training program in vernal pool certification.	Conservation Commission, Open Space Advisory Committee	2006	N/A
<i>B6. Support the efforts of the Whately Conservation Commission to protect the wetland resources in town.</i>	Consider adopting a local wetlands bylaw to better protect against pollution to streams, wetlands, and other water bodies.	Conservation Commission	2006	N/A
	Seek funding to continue the investigation of the impact of road salting practices on the Great Swamp.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission	2008	Contact graduate programs at local colleges or universities.

Goal C: To maintain and improve the quality and accessibility of Whately’s recreational facilities and programming, especially those that connect people with the town’s diverse natural environments and landscapes. Encourage the development of new facilities and programming where feasible.				
OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>C1. Identify the best prospects for future roadside biking, walking and jogging paths in town and work to develop those facilities. Avoid the creation of conflicting policies that result in the potential unauthorized or unwanted use of private lands.</i>	Convene a Trails working group to collaborate with residents and other interested groups.	Open Space Advisory Committee, Recreation Committee	2007	N/A
	Facilitate the establishment, maintenance, and mapping of trail systems and access points.	Trails Working Group	2007	N/A
	Convene a Public Forum with stakeholders (landowners, residents, ATV riders, ATV clubs, snowmobile clubs, Northampton DPW, the State’s Environmental Police, and the Whately Police Department to discuss the problem and brainstorm solutions.	Trails Working Group, Open Space Advisory Committee, Recreation Committee	2008	N/A
<i>C2. Collaborate to prioritize and secure funding for retrofits to existing recreational facilities in town to provide access to the disabled community.</i>	Convene an Accessibility Working Group to collaborate with stakeholders	Open Space Committee, Recreation Committee, Select Board	2008	N/A

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>C3. Identify potential recreational access point(s) for the Connecticut River.</i>	Evaluate the potential for an access point to the Connecticut River via Herlihy Park. Ensure that when built, access point can be used by the disabled community.	Recreation Committee, Open Space Advisory Committee, Accessibility Working Group, state Public Access Board	2007	Public Access Board, ⁷ Self-Help Grant Program ⁸
<i>C4. Collaborate with other entities that provide recreational facilities used by local residents. These include Massachusetts Audubon, private sporting clubs, private landowners, the Department of Fish and Game, Franklin Land Trust, the Department of Conservation and Recreation, and other interested stakeholders. Good communication will help to ensure that these</i>	Invite representatives of each stakeholder group to attend a special meeting of the Open Space Advisory Committee to discuss issues and needs related to the use of these facilities. Include stakeholders on Open Space Advisory Committee mailing lists/email lists.	Open Space Advisory Committee	2007	N/A

⁷ <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/pab/>

⁸ <http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/urban/default.htm>

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>properties are managed in a way that suits the needs of all parties involved.</i>				
<i>C5. Promote existing and future recreational facilities and services by developing a guide to facilities, programs, and trail systems in town.</i>	Develop a one-page, easily reproduced flyer that shows the locations of different recreational facilities in and around Whately. Mail to all residents each year as part of a regular Open Space & Recreation Newsletter mailing.	Recreation Committee and Open Space Advisory Committee	2007	Franklin Land Trust, Massachusetts Cultural Council
<i>C6. Re-evaluate recreational needs of residents of all ages and develop new programs and facilities as appropriate.</i>	Develop a brief questionnaire to ask residents about the adequacy of current recreational facilities and recreational programs in Whately.	Recreation Committee and Open Space Advisory Committee	2009	N/A
	Use the Whately cable station and local newspapers to both report results of the survey and to request volunteers to take on activities that most interest them. If volunteer recruitment is unsuccessful, seek grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to fund staff time and direct costs for the most desired program.	Recreation Committee and Open Space Advisory Committee	Ongoing	Massachusetts Cultural Council

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OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE	POSSIBLE FUNDING SOURCES
<i>C7. Explore opportunities for partnering with the open space committees of surrounding towns on land conservation projects that protect landscape-scale resources like contiguous forests, aquifers, core habitat areas, and trail systems.</i>	Invite Open Space Committee representatives from surrounding towns to a quarterly meeting to discuss open space and recreation projects.	Open Space Advisory Committee	2006	N/A
<i>C8. Provide residents with information on the recreational resources in town and offer opportunities for stewardship of these resources.</i>	Produce articles for viewing on the local cable channel and local newspapers that highlight recreational resources in town, the most important issues or problems experienced by users at each site, and what the public can do to contribute to the solutions.	Open Space Advisory Committee	Ongoing	N/A