

Section 9: FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

This *Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004* has sought to provide a broad perspective, a lucid analysis of pressing issues and valuable information. The preceding sections have focused on the array of characteristics in Town that influence open space, from population and transportation to ponds, wastewater, wildlife, Route 2, playing fields, trails, handicap accessibility, land management, protection mechanisms, and funding opportunities. *Part I* presented the Open Space Framework, highlighting key open-space resources in Concord's region, in the Town, and in its neighborhoods, and *Appendix I* focused in on key aspects of the large natural/agricultural areas and major water/wildlife corridors.

The ability to expand the Five-Year Action Plan for an additional two years provides Concord with the opportunity to expand the goals and objectives identified in 2004. Ten members of the 2004 Open Space Task Force, as well as a recreation representative and Town staff, reconvened in January 2010 to discuss what recommendations had been met, and ways to respond to current planning and environmental conditions to broaden the Action Plan goals. Each recommendation is addressed below.

A. Recommendations

The water, wildlife, recreation and open space concerns addressed, as well as opportunities for improvement, form the basis for the recommendations following. These 15 recommendations will have the broadest impact when implemented, and will benefit the entire Town. Acting expeditiously on them is a high priority in order to protect a meaningful pattern of open space for Concord's future.

The "additional action items" listed under each recommendation are narrower in scope or specific to particular locations. They are nonetheless important to the overall goal of preserving Concord's special places for generations to come.

All recommendations are addressed to the Town of Concord, as well as to the broader Concord community. Most are also addressed to one or more organizations or agencies as potential collaborators on solutions. The recommended timetable for completion, either within two years or five years, is given for each recommendation.

The following organizational acronyms are used:

BOS = Board of Selectmen
NRC = Natural Resources Comm.
PB = Planning Board
PWC = Public Works Comm.
BOA = Board of Assessors
ZBA = Zoning Board of Appeals
FINCOM = Finance Committee
TM = Town Manager
CREC = Concord Recreation Comm.
CCC = Concord Cemetery Committee

CONCORD:

CRD = Concord Recreation Department
CPSC = Concord Public School
Committee
CCRSC = Concord-Carlisle Regional
School Committee
ADAC = Americans with Disabilities Act
Coordinator
CSEC = Comprehensive Sustainable
Energy Committee
WCTF = West Concord Task Force

MassDOT = Mass. Highways
MADC = Mass. Dept. of Corrections
MADOT = Mass. Dept. of Transportation
MADCR = Mass. Dept. of Conservation
and Recreation
MANHP = Mass. Natural Heritage &
Endangered Species Program

GOVERNMENTAL:

MAPT = MassPort
USNPS = U.S. National Park Service
USF&W = U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
RSC = Wild and Scenic River
Stewardship Council

OAR = Org. for the Assabet River
MAUD = Mass Audubon Society
CNN = Conc. Neighborhood Network
CFBFRT = Concord Friends of the Bruce
Freeman Rail Trail

PRIVATE:

SVT = Sudbury Valley Trustees
TTOR = Trustees of Reservations
WWP = Walden Woods Project
CLCT = Concord Land Conservation
Trust

1. INCORPORATE THE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN IN TOWN & COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING

It is imperative that open space considerations be incorporated into the Town and regional decision-making process. The Open Space Framework introduced in Concord's *1992 Open Space Plan* provided a useful integrated framework for our land and natural resources. The Town, land trusts, citizens and many organizations have used it as a reference and at times consulted it in making decisions.

All Town boards and committees that deal with open space issues should be briefed about Open Space and Recreation Plan 2004. One member of each group should be designated to be informed about and provide advice on open space issues and opportunities. The Natural Resources Commission should sponsor an annual fall meeting of interested persons to consider open space issues and opportunities, and maintain an active dialogue on these issues.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PB, PWC, ZBA, CLCT]
[Within two years]

Additional action item:

- Evaluate the benefit of revising the Town's zoning map and land use regulations based in part on the Open Space Framework to better protect the Town's large natural and agricultural areas, plus the major water-protection and wildlife corridors.
- Develop an open space overlay on the Town's WebGIS maps for public use.
- Update the Open Space Framework to better understand regional patterns and prioritize open space protection.
- Concentrate most future growth in Town to existing small and medium-sized lot areas, as well as near the train stations and sewer infrastructure; avoid unbuilt areas, parcels adjoining major natural areas, and major water-protection and wildlife corridors.

2. THINK REGIONALLY & WORK COLLABORATIVELY WITH TOWNS IN CONCORD'S REGION

Most major issues in Town involve one or more other towns. Eighteen neighboring towns interact with Concord, forming a town-centered region. The importance of a regional approach to open space planning has increased as communities respond to development pressures.

The Town should join with neighboring towns to request a planning grant to examine the potential benefit of integrating open-space protection efforts in Concord's region. Town leaders should be up to date on land-use changes and protection throughout the region, with appointed representatives meeting annually with those of the other towns, and reporting to the Town and residents on regional land-use changes and open-space protection issues. Neighboring towns should be familiar with and encouraged to use Concord's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

[BOS, TM, PB, NRC]
[Within two years]

Additional action items:

- Work with towns to the northwest to maintain the last vegetation corridor permitting wildlife from New Hampshire to reach Concord and surrounding towns.
- Strengthen land protection and wildlife habitat connectivity along the Sudbury River Valley through Sudbury and Wayland and the Concord River Valley through Bedford, the two places where considerable rare species habitat adjoins Concord.
- Collaborate with adjacent towns to monitor and address boundary-area issues concentrated in nine places around Concord's border.
- Encourage the state to use the three-layered region-town-neighborhood approach for its open-space planning process, so that within a few years the towns in Concord's region will be using similar data and approaches.
- Develop a regional Biodiversity Council with members from each town to coordinate and create data for use in decision-making.
- Use and encourage existing organizational frameworks to promote stronger regional open space planning and protection such as Metropolitan Area Planning Council/Minuteman Advisory Group on Interlocal Cooperation; Hanscom Area TownS; Bay Circuit Alliance; Bruce Freeman Rail Trail.

3. PROTECT CONCORD'S LARGE NATURAL AREAS

Large natural areas represent the most outstanding natural resources in Concord, providing biological diversity, interior species, large-animal habitat, flood control, clean groundwater, and diverse recreational opportunities. Large woodlands also represent the major areas of carbon storage capacity; protecting these resources can mitigate some of the effects of climate change.

High priority should be given to protecting, by conservation acquisition or restriction, the remaining core parcels needed to sustain the integrity of the Town's large natural areas. Ongoing management of these areas and uses adjacent to them should be consistent with the goals of biodiversity, wildlife movement, clean groundwater, flood control and diverse compatible recreational activities.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PB, USF&W, USNPS, MADCR, CLCT, MAUD, TTOF, WWP]
[Within five years]

Additional action items:

- Designate certain municipal land as permanent conservation land: first priority, the former landfill area in whole or in part (transferring certain public works activities to another location if possible); second priority, Willow Guzzle in whole or in part; and third priority, White Pond Reservation in whole or in part. Parcels in/near the Spencer Brook valley and in/near the Estabrook Woods remain a priority.
- Include Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) and Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) mapping in prioritization lands to be protected.
- Protect small- and medium-sized areas outside the core parcels to provide wildlife habitat and connectivity on a smaller scale, as well as localized benefits of carbon storage and green areas.
- Identify misplaced structures on edges so that more cohesive open space lands can be acquired and protected.

4. PROTECT CONCORD'S LARGE AGRICULTURAL AREAS & FARMING

Large agricultural areas in Concord provide numerous exceptional values, including fresh farm products for local and city distribution, symbols of our farming history, economic support for farm families, educational value, rural character, enhancement of game species, habitat for wildlife requiring large open areas, and recreational walking paths. It is also important ethically to protect prime food-producing areas in a world of growing hunger, and to produce food close to home, thus reducing the huge amounts of fossil fuel we use in transporting food from distant places. Farmers in a metropolitan region face issues from field drainage and markets for food products, to suburban neighbors unfamiliar with farm issues and changing regulations, programs and opportunities.

High priority should be given to the protection of the remaining core parcels needed to sustain the integrity of the large agricultural areas. Farmers should be supported on issues such as drainage, worker housing, product outlets and ecologically and economically sustainable farming methods. An agricultural committee should be established to provide information for farm programs, regulations, best practices and issues.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PB, BOA, USNPS, TTOR, MADC, CLCT]
[Within five years]

Additional action items:

- Protect small- and medium-sized agricultural fields lying outside the Open Space Framework when their agricultural value, neighborhood importance and/or contributions to the Town's rural character justify such action (e.g., Scimone Farm, Marshall Farm, etc.). Farmers need such outlying fields to improve their economic viability, and townspeople benefit from the existence of such lands in numerous ways.
- Support farmers in their effort to pass a Right-to-Farm bylaw, community-supported agriculture initiatives, and other efforts to protect Concord's agricultural heritage
- Encourage the protection of tractor pull-offs in strategic locations to mitigate the unintended consequences of traffic congestion.

5. PROTECT MAJOR WILDLIFE- & WATER-PROTECTION CORRIDORS

Historically, open space across the Town was connected, permitting the movement of wildlife and people on foot. Development in recent decades now threatens to coalesce, leaving the land fragmented in separate pieces. Corridors, as wide strips of natural vegetation forming a town-wide network, connect large natural areas and large agricultural areas, and facilitate the movement of wildlife, walkers, and in some cases clean flowing water. Wildlife corridors for mid-size and large animals are most effective when they lack significant gaps or narrows but have a relatively continuous high shrub layer. Water-protection corridors provide a wide array of benefits, including shade and fallen logs for fish habitat, reduced chemical runoff, erosion and sedimentation control, enhanced water quality, and wildlife movement.

High priority should be given to the protection, by conservation acquisition or restriction, of land in the key corridors linking large natural and agricultural areas. Landowners should manage the corridors to enhance wildlife movement, clean water and fish populations. Where possible, a route for walkers should be encouraged.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PB, USF&WS, USNPS, RSC, CLCT, OAR, SVT, TTOR]
[Within five years]

Additional action item:

- Work with MassDOT to install and monitor wildlife underpasses under Route 2 for enhanced connectivity opportunities.

- Retain and manage vegetation along streams to maintain cooler temperatures in streams, provide fallen logs for fish habitat, and cover for wildlife.

6. STRENGTHEN NEIGHBORHOODS IN TOWN

Town funds, which fluctuate over time, are never adequate to address all open-space issues across the Town. Neighborhoods with a sense of community can provide care and stewardship for local open spaces, and identify opportunities for and achieve protection of additional local land, bringing people together and connecting them to the land. Open spaces and walkable roads in the center of neighborhoods, which encourage walking or cycling instead of driving, tend to enhance a sense of community.

Neighborhoods should be encouraged and supported in local land stewardship and in efforts to create common protected land conveniently accessible by walking and bicycling.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PB, CLCT, PWC, CNN]
[Within two years]

Additional action items:

- Make the roads of Concord once again pleasant and safe for walking, bicycling, school children and the elderly in part through the incorporation of traffic calming measures, which will also provide benefits to water and wildlife, and help reduce our carbon footprint.
- Concentrate future growth and development in existing areas of Town with high- to medium-density building lots; avoid development adjoining large natural areas.
- Focus potential growth and enhance walking and bicycling in areas served by infrastructure within approximately one-half mile of train stations, thus reducing traffic impacts on natural resources.
- Protect clusters of special sites and individual sites identified as high priority and presently inadequately protected.
- Provide neighborhood-oriented opportunities for recreation and gardening by creating informal playing fields, expanding community garden locations, maintaining and improving existing playgrounds, etc.
- Form Master Planning Task Forces for Thoreau Depot and Concord Center in similar fashion to WCTF.

7. MANAGE WATER-RELATED ISSUES TO PROTECT THE TOWN'S GROUNDWATER & SURFACE WATER

With an increased commitment to water conservation, the Town should be able to maintain its valuable surface and groundwater drinking supplies. However, development, stormwater flows, road salt, chemical pollutants and sedimentation threaten water quality and aquatic ecosystems. More than 2000

houses have septic systems, many of which are old or substandard, leaching nitrogen, phosphorus and organic matter that may be polluting water. The considerable hard surface in parts of Concord causes large rapid stormwater flows often containing roadsalt and sand, which should be balanced between safety (e.g., for pedestrians and traffic) and environmental dimensions (e.g., degrading streams and polluting wells). Continued acquisition of open space near Town wells is a wise investment. This is particularly important as the effects of climate change are better understood. Floodplain and wetland protection will be even more critical to assure areas of natural storage for floodwaters are protected.

Conservation of water and the elimination or replacement of septic systems that do not meet current standards should be accelerated, as especially effective ways for residents to protect the Town's groundwater and surface-water systems. For the same reason, the Town should continue to reduce sand and salt applications to roads, increase the use of permeable rather than impermeable surfaces, and, where possible, divert stormwater flows into vegetated swales, etc. Near Town wells, these solutions should be implemented at the highest practical level and combined with continued land acquisition.

[BOS, TM, PB, PWC, NRC]
[Within five years]

Additional action items:

- Implement the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan in order to protect the quality of groundwater and surface waters in Town.
- Break up or disconnect hard surfaces so that wherever possible stormwater is dispersed into vegetated swales, surface depressions, and certain natural areas.
- Reduce groundwater infiltration into wastewater sewer pipes to maintain and improve efficiency of the sewage treatment facility.
- Monitor the small sewage treatment facilities of the Massachusetts Correctional Institution and Middlesex School to minimize pollution in the Assabet River and Spencer Brook.
- Have the Town manage and maintain any new neighborhood (package) wastewater treatment facilities to provide long-term quality control.
- Systematically study the Town's ponds and surrounding lands, beginning with Warner's Pond, to identify threats to existing conditions and actions to be taken to improve those conditions.
- Assess potential impacts of climate change on flooding and the need to accommodate larger volumes of floodwater expected to result from the effects of climate change.

8. PROTECT AND MONITOR CONCORD'S STREAMS, RIVERS, PONDS, & WETLANDS

Many of the Town's natural areas and open spaces are vitally linked by water resources, which are affected by groundwater supply. Wetlands are the key buffers. They help protect clean groundwater, as well as the fish and aquatic ecosystems in ponds, streams and rivers, against the impacts of development and other surrounding land uses. Wetlands also buffer flood impacts, recycle nutrients and chemicals, and preserve biodiversity. In the face of continuing damage and threats to wetlands and the water resources they protect, a Town wetland-protection by-law is needed to guard against changes in the state's wetland protection. While some water quality data exist for the Assabet River, Walden Pond and a few other places, the scarcity of comprehensive data is surprising given the abundance of ponds, streams and rivers in Concord, and since such information is extremely valuable for planning.

The Town should adopt its own wetland-protection by-law with criteria and procedures, including increased minimum setbacks that provide effective protection of Concord's wetland resources. Comprehensive water-quality sampling programs that build on existing programs should be developed throughout the Town, and should be implemented for Concord's ponds, streams and rivers to evaluate the presence of, and establish a baseline for, pollutants that degrade the Town's aquatic ecosystems.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PB, PWC, USFW, USNPS, RSC, CLCT, OAR, SVT]
[Within two years]

Additional action items:

- Complete state certification for the Town's vernal pools under the Wetland Protection Act, and enhance protection of those certified.
- Consider land protection approaches for protecting the shoreline of ponds, especially where protection can enhance water quality and neighborhood outdoor recreation.
- Develop a stream/river group or surface-water group in Town to help strengthen stewardship of these fragile important open-space resources.
- Evaluate and identify or initiate solutions for recreational access to the river near Keyes Rd., and the adequacy of the canoe, boat and fisherman access point by the Lowell Rd. bridge.
- Map and record areas in Town under jurisdiction of the State Wetlands Act and Rivers Protection Act, including certified vernal pools and setbacks from wetlands and perennially running streams, and ensure strict compliance with them.
- Evaluate fish movement and its potential in Nashoba Brook between Nagog Pond and Warner's Pond by considering a fish ladder

9. MONITOR WILDLIFE & BIODIVERSITY, AND PROTECT KEY HABITATS

Although Concord is a relatively species-rich town, no systematic mechanism exists to keep track of and protect its key species. To aid the Town in decision-making and encourage land stewardship by residents, valuable information on state-listed rare species, much-appreciated wildlife and plant species, and pest and invasive species in Town would be extremely useful.

A wildlife and biodiversity committee should be established to accumulate, make available, and highlight information on key species and their distribution in Town and its region. Collaboration with neighboring towns to maintain viable natural connections for wildlife movement across the region should be encouraged. Habitats of state-listed rare species in Town should be actively protected.

[BOS, TM, NRC, USNPS, USF&W, MANHP, CLCT]

[Within two years]

Additional action items:

- Form a vibrant linkage of public agencies and private organizations in at least Westford, Carlisle, Concord, and Sudbury to plan strategically and take actions for protection of regional biodiversity and wildlife movement.
- Protect Concord's exceptionally high density of rare species.
- Protect the exceptionally valuable large unfragmented natural areas of Concord, which support many interior species.
- When possible, create areas for individual species with established protection measures.
- Support and encourage participation in annual events that celebrate wildlife diversity such as "Big Night," Biodiversity Days and the Christmas Bird Count.

10. REDUCE THE MAJOR IMPACTS OF ROUTE 2

The four-lane highway, Route 2, slices the community into two parts, blocks wildlife movement, recreational walking routes, and walking for residential and shopping (and hospital-access) purposes. The highway is a source of roadsalt accumulating in the slow-moving groundwater and a major source of noise in Town. The noise degrades nearby habitat for sensitive bird species and probably other wildlife.

A sequence of carefully designed and located structures that restore frequent crossings by key wildlife, in addition to safe attractive crossings for walkers and bicyclers, should be incorporated in Route 2 planning and construction at the earliest opportunity. Solutions to reduce the propagation of road salt and traffic noise (consistent with wildlife crossing, safety and aesthetics) should be identified and incorporated in planning and construction of the highway.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PWC, PB, MADOT, WWP]

[Within five years]

Additional action items:

- Reestablish freer wildlife movement between the two halves of Town by adding several wildlife underpasses and one wildlife overpass.
- Reduce traffic noise and its impact on nearby wildlife habitat by using raised soil berms with woody vegetation plus soil banks along a somewhat depressed highway.
- Reduce roadsalt application levels to reduce effects on groundwater and aquatic ecosystems.
- Lengthen bridges somewhat to facilitate wildlife movement and floodwater flow on floodplains and to reduce constricted-water-flow effects on river conditions.
- Add overpasses for walkers to reconnect the split halves of Town for shoppers, hospital-area access, and diverse recreational users.

11. MEET INTENSIVE-USE RECREATIONAL NEEDS CONSISTENT WITH CONCORD'S OPEN SPACE FRAMEWORK

Concord contains a rich array of field-based and other recreational resources. However, based on a statewide survey, plus local growth in the youth population and demands for organized sports and other activities, key gaps in our resources are evident. Most noticeable is the inadequate number of regulation-size soccer/lacrosse fields, and, secondarily, baseball fields. Demands for an indoor swimming facility, a skate park, and perhaps two ball fields are in the process of being met. Equally important are small informal playing fields for children in their own neighborhood, which offer recreational opportunities in addition to organized sports programs. Such neighborhood spaces not only help take pressure off the major field facilities but also serve as effective meeting places for residents. Studies prepared for the Concord Recreation Commission in 2003 and Walden Woods Project in 2002 contain specific analyses of recreation field needs and potential locations.

A number of small informal playing fields convenient by foot or bicycle for children and neighbors, plus a small number of regulation playing fields, should be created in locations where they do not lead to significant impacts on Concord's most important conservation areas.

[BOS, TM, PB, CREC, CRD, PWC, NRC, CNN]
[Within five years]

Additional action items:

- Complete the planned indoor swimming facility for Concord and Carlisle residents.
- Complete the two anticipated new playing fields near Bedford St.

12. SOLIDIFY THE LOCAL/REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK FOR TRANSPORTATION & NATURE-BASED RECREATION

Trails enable residents and visitors of all ages to visit Concord's open spaces and, through regional trails, those of surrounding towns. They provide opportunities for nature education, quiet reflection, and minimal-impact enjoyment of flora, fauna, and beautiful vistas. They also serve as transportation links between neighborhoods, commercial areas, historic sites, rail depots, playgrounds, and athletic fields. Trails provide opportunities for recreation and exercise (hiking, jogging, cross-country skiing, bicycling, and horseback riding) that refresh and strengthen body and spirit. The knowledge and appreciation citizens gain on trails are civic attributes vital to conservation and preservation. A strong community trail network will obviate the need for people to drive elsewhere to engage with nature.

Priority trails to establish or complete are the: Assabet-Nashoba Trail (West Concord), Landfill-Brister's Hill trails (Route 2 area), Thoreau-Emerson Trail (Concord Center via Mill Brook to Town Forest), Heywood Meadow to North Bridge Trail (through Concord Center and Old Calf Pasture), Old Mill Crossing (linking the visitor center and Monument Square), and second half of the Trail of the Colonial Militia. In addition, establishing the Concord section of the regional Bruce Freeman Rail Trail will provide convenient walking and bicycling for transportation and recreation, serve residents in the southern half of Concord, and provide access to the countryside of neighboring towns.

Six additional local walking trails should be developed in Town. A trails committee should be formed to evaluate and make recommendations on diverse trail patterns, issues, and policies. Planning should proceed for providing access for residents to walk or bicycle north/south across the Town and to neighboring towns and countryside in Concord's region.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PWC, USNPS, CLCT, CFBFRT]
[Within five years]

Additional action items:

- Study and plan for safe convenient bicycling routes in Town, for both transportation and recreation.
- Secure existing informally used trails when opportunities rise, such as the planning of a subdivision or sale of a property.
- Reroute the regional Bay Circuit Trail at several places in Town, and better link it with other trails, to enhance hiker's safety and woodland experience.
- Research and collect, and use the best available information on trail layout and design, and trail construction methods and materials, not only for trail user experience but also to protect key natural resources.

13. PROVIDE HANDICAP ACCESS TO OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

All of Concord's residents and visitors, whatever their abilities or disabilities, have the moral and legal right to participate in and enjoy to the

greatest extent possible the Town's public resources. The Town should provide to persons with mobility impairments or other disabilities considerably greater access to its trails, open spaces and intensive-use recreational resources. Priority trails for accessibility by wheelchair users are the Assabet-Nashoba Trail (West Concord area), Town Forest Trail (parking lot to Fairyland Pond), Punkatasset Trail (Monument St. to brook entering Hutchins Pond), Landfill-Brister's Hill trails (Route 2 area), Old Mill Crossing (connecting visitor center and Monument Square), and Hillside Ave. in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery.

Six existing or planned trails should be made at least seasonally accessible to wheelchair users. Also a few special trails should be designated as "Assessed" (i.e., trails offering a more rugged experience for handicapped users), and one or two trails should be made universally accessible to accommodate individuals with disabilities other than mobility impairments

[BOS, TM, PWC, CCC, USNPS, USF&WS, CLCT, ADAC, CRD, CPSC, CCRSC]

[Within two years]

Additional action item:

- Monitor existing purportedly wheelchair-accessible trails and dependably maintain their accessibility.
- Three playing fields (Ripley, South Meadow and Concord-Carlisle High School), tennis courts at Ripley and the High School, and a basketball court at Ripley should be inventoried for handicap accessibility and transition plans developed as appropriate.
- Go beyond legal requirements to be even more welcoming to people with a range of disabilities, such as in designating handicap parking spaces on all sides of Emerson Field, vigorously enforcing handicap parking laws, selecting specially designed new playground equipment and considering the creation of "special" youth teams especially for children with disabilities to occasionally play a non-league game with a league team.
- Provide a wheelchair accessible path at Rideout Playground connecting parking areas on Conant Street with the parking area off Laws Brook Road and connecting to the play area and ballfields.
- Construct an assessed trail at the Town Forest, including Handicapped accessible parking spaces at Tuttle Lane and an accessible path to the Brister's Hill Interpretive Site.

14. MANAGE ALL LAND IN TOWN CONSISTENT WITH THE OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES

Town conservation lands are of major importance, and together with federal, state, municipal, non-profit, and individually owned lands, form the open-space pattern of Concord. Yet these agencies and organizations have different primary land management goals. Also, individual landowners use a range of approaches in managing their property, many of which contribute to degrading

Concord's water bodies, wildlife, and other natural resources. Government agencies and non-profit organizations often have ready access to research studies and land management techniques that would be useful information for all involved in managing pieces, small to large, of Concord's land. Management of Town conservation land by its Division of Natural Resources requires strong permanent funding and other-resource support, equivalent on a per-acre basis to that used locally by non-profit and government agencies, in order to maintain the quality of this land and ensure that it is available for appropriate use by Town residents and others.

The Town should invest in the management of its open-space resources by dedicating sufficient conservation-land-management funds for personnel and other needs in the annual operating budget. The Town and other interested organizations should maintain and publicize a list of diverse land management techniques and encourage their use by all landowners, which will cumulatively contribute to achievement of Concord's major open-space and stewardship objectives.

[BOS, TM, NRC, PWC, CLCT, USF&WS, USNPS]
[Within two years]

Additional action items:

- Encourage the major open-space landowners in Town to establish a common vision and trajectory that facilitates accomplishment of the Town's open space objectives. Increase educational outreach and spread culture of resource conservation sustainability and climate change mitigation.
- Consider developing a park for exclusive use by dogs?

15. SECURE FUNDING & PARTNER WITH OTHER ENTITIES FOR OPEN-SPACE LAND PROTECTION

Section 5 and Appendix I of this report pinpoint high priority areas remaining for conservation protection to complete the Town's Open Space Framework. Protection of other desirable land and water resources also remains to be accomplished in Concord when adequate funds or other means are available. Finding funding for open space protection is essential, a basic role expected of most governments. Being ready to take advantage of new state or federal programs related to open space is important, as are Town initiatives. Partnering with government agencies, non-profit organizations and individuals remains a route to success. Finally, if growth occurs in Town, channeling it to areas of low environmental impact is an especially effective way to help achieve Concord's open space objectives.

The Town should continue its participation in the Community Preservation Act as a funding source for conservation acquisitions, and should continue to partner with land trusts, government entities, and individuals to make full use of available government funds and programs, as well as laws and regulations, to acquire and/or protect important land parcels.

[BOS, TM, PB, FINCOM, ZBA, NRC, USNPS, MADCR,
ANHP, CLCT, MAUD, OAR, SVT, TTOR, WWP]
[Within five years]

Additional action items:

- Consider zoning change requests early in a proposed development process in order to permanently protect more land associated with denser development.
- Establish a system for effectively monitoring properties with conservation restrictions (CRs) for compliance and continued fulfillment of conservation open-space objectives and work with landowners to explore whether they would be willing to tighten their older restrictions to more closely match the terms, conditions and duration of recent restrictions.
- Consider the use of CR's to protect appropriate lands for conservation, including land being cleaned of hazardous waste contamination.
- Expediently consider a land swap with the State to acquire Town open-space land, or use existing municipal land, along the Route 2 and 2A corridor, so that the landfill area can become part of the Walden Pond State Reservation.