

Section 2

Introduction

2A. Statement of purpose

This plan is an update of the 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan prepared by the town of Stow. The plan summarizes the progress that the town has made in providing for its open space and recreation needs and sets forth goals and specific action items for the next five years. The plan is designed to provide a framework for the efforts of various town boards and committees involved in the protection of Stow's open lands and to guide municipal partnership efforts with both state and federal agencies and nonprofit organizations. It will also help guide work by the town's Community Preservation Committee and will serve as the Natural Resources and Open Space component of the town's Master Plan, currently under revision. The Open Space and Recreation Plan must be updated every five years to maintain eligibility for the Commonwealth's Selp Help Grant program. This is the fifth Open Space and Recreation plan developed by the town of Stow.

2B. Planning process and public participation

This plan has been prepared by the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee, which was appointed by the Stow Conservation Commission in 2003 specifically for the purpose of updating this plan, in conjunction with the Stow Open Space Committee. The Plan Committee consists of Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Dwight Sipler, Doug Moffett, and Bill Maxfield. They were assisted by volunteer Pam Weathers. The Open Space Committee includes Bob Wilber, Kathy Sferra, Eve Donahue, Chris Rodstrom, Vin Antill, Jean Lynch, and Bill Maxfield. Members of both committees are involved in planning and open space issues in the town of Stow. Members of the committee serve on the Stow Open Space Committee, Stow Community Preservation Committee, Stow Conservation Commission, and the Board of Directors of the Stow Conservation Trust. In addition, both Pam Weathers and Dwight Sipler have been involved in writing prior versions of the Stow Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The 1997 Open Space and Recreation Plan was used as the starting point for the plan but has been extensively revised, updated and formatted to comply with the Commonwealth's new Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. In addition, for the first time, Geographic Information System (GIS) data and maps were available to assist in updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan and allowed the committee to conduct an extensive analysis of Stow's remaining open lands at the parcel level. This information was invaluable and enabled the preparation of the high-quality maps that accompany this plan.

Concurrent with the Open Space Plan, the Master Plan of Stow is being updated. The Open Space and Recreation Plan will serve as the Natural Resources and Open Space component of the Stow's Master Plan. The town's 2003 Master Plan survey was used to provide data on residents' opinions regarding community character, development and open space. In addition, information from several planning charettes conducted jointly by the town and the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission (MAPC), including one on natural resources and open space, was incorporated into the plan as appropriate.

All of the meetings of the Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee were advertised public meetings open to interested citizens and members of other boards. In addition, copies of the draft document were circulated to all of the relevant Town boards and community groups for their comments and made available in the Stow Public Library. The specific distribution list

included the following: Town Administrator, Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Planning Board, Board of Assessors, Recreation Commission, Lake Boon Commission, Historical Commission, Finance Committee, Randall Library, Master Plan Committee, Agricultural Commission, Municipal Land Use Committee, and Community Preservation Committee.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee conducted a public forum on October 5, 2006 to present the final draft of the plan and to accept additional public comment on the plan. The forum was advertised in local papers and on the community bulletin board outside the Randall Library. Comments received at the forum were incorporated into the final plan.