

# CHAPTER 6

## GOALS

### **A. Description of Process**

The Deerfield River Watershed Open Space and Recreation Goals were developed in part through the following planning processes:

- The Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) Planning Department developed a set of goals and objectives in the fall of 2003 for review by the Deerfield River Watershed Open Space Planning Committee (OSPC). FRCOG developed the first draft by summarizing like elements of eleven municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans. The OSPC developed the final draft of the goals and objectives through discussions that took place during four public meetings over a five-month period.
- Between September 2003 and June 2004, FRCOG staff developed this Watershed Open Space and Recreation Plan under the supervision of the Deerfield River Watershed OSPC. The planning process used several methods for involving public participation:
  - FRCOG and the Deerfield River Watershed Association (DRWA) teamed up to write a letter to all municipal Select Boards requesting representation on the OSPC.
  - The OSPC held six public meetings, one land conservation working meeting, and one public forum.
  - Drafts of each section of the plan were E-mailed to approximately seventy-four people representing key town boards, state agencies non-profits, business owners and residents of diverse interests.
  - Overall, the OSPC was comprised of approximately thirty persons though a core group of fifteen persons came to most meetings. In all, the participants represented the following:
    - Leyden Open Space Planning Committee
    - Charlemont Open Space Planning Committee and Conservation Commission
    - Colrain Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee
    - Buckland Open Space Planning Committee
    - Heath Select Board and Conservation Commission
    - Shelburne Community Development Planning Committee
    - Greenfield Historical Commission
    - Greenfield Planning Department
    - Conway Community Preservation Committee

- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
  - U.S. Gen New England
  - Deerfield River Watershed Association
  - Water Resources Research Center
  - A forestry/wildlife management consultant
  - Town of Florida
  - American Whitewater
  - New England F.L.O.W.
  - Crabapple Whitewater Outfitter
  - Northeast Association of Four-Wheel Drive Clubs
  - Beef farmer
  - Sawmill owners
  - Massachusetts Audubon Society
  - Massachusetts Riverways Program
  - Connecticut River Watershed Council
  - Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game
  - Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation
  - The Trustees of Reservations, Highland Communities Initiative
  - Colrain Sno-Drifters Snowmobile Club
  - Greater Whately Snowmobile Club
  - Conway Snowmobile Club
- A Deerfield River Watershed Conference was held on April 24, 2004 where concerned citizens reviewed the Watershed Action Plans and learned how different aspects of the plans would be implemented. All public comments were recorded and considered for incorporation into the plan.

## **B. Deerfield River Watershed Open Space and Recreation Vision**

Deerfield River Watershed residents recognize that the ecological and economic vitality of the region is dependent on the ability of towns to: 1) Maximize value from natural resources including prime farm and forest land soils, drinking water, wind, and sun energy while maintaining or enhancing ecological integrity of the watershed; 2) Manage development through creative zoning and aggressive land conservation; 3) Conserve wildlife habitats; and, 4) Conserve the region's unique rural character.

The following vision statement was developed in part by summarizing the watershed goals and objectives and incorporating strategies discussed in the meetings of the OSPC.

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION IN THE DEERFIELD RIVER WATERSHED IN 2014**

In the year 2014, the residents of the Deerfield River Watershed will note the successes of the past decade to include the conservation of the region's most important natural, cultural, and recreational resources.

The Deerfield River Watershed continues to contain active farmland and farms, large blocks of forest of diverse ages and types, priority core terrestrial and aquatic habitats, high quality surface waters and sustainable supplies of clean drinking water.

Soon after the completion of municipal and watershed-wide planning in the early part of the decade, citizens of each community began to act on the belief that active farmland meant too much to the quality of their lives to be lost. Together with citizens of other towns, they took action in all forms to provide for the possibility of sustaining as many farms as possible over the coming years. Citizens and town officials, farmers and landowners, state agencies and non-profits all pursued fundraising, market development, zoning, land conservation, and all forms of education and outreach strategies to enhance the capacity of their farms to generate more profits and for the communities, to conserve a viable agricultural business community well into the future.

The most critical forest and aquatic habitats of the watershed have been protected from development while large blocks of contiguous forest have been mostly conserved through a renaissance of local, wood-based businesses, some of which are associated with existing farms.

Along with prime farmland soils, the watershed communities were also able to conserve the quality and quantity of surface and ground waters. By implementing strategies that reduced the amount of non-point source pollution, protected future drinking water supplies, regulated main stem flows, and managed the impacts of development, the quality of the water both above and below ground has been maintained, and in some cases, improved despite the fact that the number of people living in the watershed has steadily increased over time.

The most significant historical and scenic resources have been maintained in part due to the efforts of the communities' Historical Commissions in bringing to light the necessity of protecting the land use patterns of the past well into the future. Historical Commissions, land protection interests, and town planning boards explored the aspects of the watershed that stood out from surrounding regions and encouraged their residents to see them, celebrate them, and support their continuation, in part as an answer to sprawl, the dominant development pattern of the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Deerfield Watershed continues to provide residents and visitors with all kinds of recreational activities and programming only, now the resources are better managed and

coordinated. Landowners, business associations, recreation enthusiasts and town Select Boards work together to encourage the promotion of the watershed's accessible recreational assets as a means of maintaining a healthy regional tourism industry while keeping problems to a minimum. Towns have learned how to develop their own public trail networks and water and terrestrial trail user groups coordinate their use and stewardship of privately owned trails to the betterment of all.

The Deerfield River Watershed continues to be a heavily forested basin, home to a slowly growing population of people motivated to conserve what they love about their region, which is:

- Bursting with agricultural, wood-based, and renewable energy businesses;
- Teeming with heritage and recreational based eco-tourism activities that support the residential and commercial services in historical village centers;
- Anchored by traditional manufacturing;
- Surrounded by majestic long-range scenic views;
- Home to viable populations of native terrestrial and aquatic plant and animal species; and,
- Full of deep, clean, ample volumes of water above and below ground.