

CHAPTER 9

TEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Ten-Year Action Plan provides concrete steps towards implementing the objectives of the Deerfield River Watershed Open Space and Recreation Plan.

The objectives are listed in the far left column of Table 9-1. They are followed in the same row by recommended actions, the agency or organization responsible for implementation, and start dates.

Successful implementation may require the participation of a Regional Open Space Committee (ROSC), which could be made up of at the very least, the Deerfield River Watershed Association, Franklin Land Trust, and the regional planning agencies. The ROSC could meet twice a year to oversee the facilitation of sub-regional and regional collaborations as well as provide support to communities pursuing their own action plans.

Accomplishing the actions identified in this chapter 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, foundations, and individual donations in addition to municipal funds.

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

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE
A. Oversee the implementation of the Deerfield River Watershed Open Space and Recreation Ten-Year Action Plan.	Establish a Deerfield River Watershed –Regional Open Space Committee (ROSC) that would meet Bi-Annually and act as a Liaison or as a Facilitator for Sub-Regional and Regional Collaborations.	Deerfield River Watershed Association (DRWA), Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department (FRCOG), and Franklin Land Trust (FLT)	2004
B. Protect and conserve agricultural lands.	Identify large blocks of active farmland and prime farmland soils.	FRCOG and FLT	2005
	Develop and administer a landowner survey to determine how to increase participation in the Agricultural Preservation Restrictions Program.	FLT with Town Open Space Committees (OSC) and Town Agricultural Commissions	2006
	Collaborate to raise funds for conserving the most important agricultural lands in the watershed.	Farmers, FLT, Valley Land Fund, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR), the Farm Bureau, Department of Agricultural Resources, USDA/Natural Resource Conservation Service, Franklin Conservation District, Town Agricultural Commissions	2006
REGIONAL COLLABORATION	Organize a meeting with Legislators, staff of the Office of Commonwealth Development, and representatives from the watershed towns to discuss how to develop a regional approach to the promotion of development patterns that sustain the quality of the region’s agricultural, natural, cultural, and recreational resources.	Watershed Town Open Space Committees with support from Town Select Boards, FRCOG, and FLT	2004
C. Strengthen the long-term viability of the regional agriculture and forest products industries by supporting farm and forest-based businesses and products.	Promote watershed-wide agricultural and forest-based products and make it easy for residents in and out of the region to buy locally grown and produced goods and services.	Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA), Shelburne Falls Area Business Association (SFABA), Massachusetts Woodlands Cooperative, UMass Extension, Department of Agricultural Resources Farm Viability Program, Mohawk Trail Association, and Chambers of Commerce as well as town Open Space Committees	2005

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE
	Encourage the establishment of Town Agricultural Commissions to represent farming issues in those communities that are committed to sustaining their agricultural landscapes.	Town Select Boards, Town Open Space Committees, and CISA	On-going
	Form Events Committees to plan and produce eco-and heritage-based tourism events and involve farmers in those events like a Leyden Maple Syrup Festival.	Town Select Boards, Town Open Space Committees, Town Agriculture Commissions, and Chambers of Commerce	2005
	Draft a model windmill bylaw that outlines standards for siting and regulating the use of wind turbines while providing a means for forest landowners, including farmers and towns, to generate additional revenue from undeveloped land.	Florida Planning Board and BRPC	2005
	Encourage alternative uses of under-used farm buildings.	FRCOG Regional Planning Board and Massachusetts Barn Preservation Task Force	2006
D. Identify and conserve parcels of conservation, wildlife, and recreation interest.	Provide a means for town Open Space Committees to collaborate to identify joint land protection projects to pursue together now and in the future.	DRWA and FLT	2006
	Identify and protect parcels of conservation, wildlife, and recreation interest that are most threatened by development.	Individual towns in collaboration with Deerfield River Watershed Association (DRWA), FLT, and Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)	2006
	Encourage towns to consider passing the Community Preservation Act, or top establish and contribute to their own municipal fund to help purchase and leverage land protection projects.	Town Open Space Committees, FLT, Massachusetts Audubon Society (MAS) and DRWA	2006
<i>SUB-REGIONAL COLLABORATION</i>	Hold a conference in the Berkshire Highlands of municipal, regional, and state governments, agencies, and organizations and state legislators to discuss the State's Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS) to towns containing state open space lands, the balance of state and privately owned land, and the impact of state lands and declining PILOTS on local municipal budgets.	TTOR/HCI, Town Select Boards, Finance Committees, and Boards of Assessors	2005

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE
<i>SUB-REGIONAL COLLABORATION</i>	Collaborate to conserve a shared 10,000-acre contiguous block of forest.	Charlemont, Heath & Colrain Open Space Committees (OSC) with support from Town Select Boards, DCR, and FLT	2005
<i>SUB-REGIONAL COLLABORATION</i>	Collaborate to conserve forests within shared BioMap Core Habitat areas using a multitude of strategies from forest management promotion to the use of conservation restrictions. Identify open spaces that provide wildlife habitat including the Core Habitat and Living Waters habitats, determine their level of threat from development, and encourage landowners to protect the land or to manage the land for the species.	Monroe and Rowe Planning Boards Florida, Savoy, Rowe and Charlemont OSCs Hawley, Ashfield, Buckland OSCs Colrain and Charlemont OSCs Shelburne and Conway OSCs Ashfield and Conway OSCs Deerfield and Conway OSCs Deerfield and Greenfield OSCs Heath and Colrain OSCs Leyden and Colrain OSCs	2006
E. Promote the enhancement, or creation, of fish and wildlife corridors.	Work with Riverways and UMass Extension to assess river continuity within the watershed and to identify treatments for reducing the impacts posed by existing highway and culvert infrastructure.	DRWA in collaboration with the Riverways Program and UMass Extension	2005
	Coordinate among town Open Space Committees a program that could train volunteers how to measure and qualify wildlife movement as a means of informing land conservation planning focused on landscape-scale wildlife movement.	DRWA and Town Open Space Committees and UMass Extension Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation (NREC) Program	2006
	Work to design and conserve greenways and “blueways” (river corridors) within towns and for the region.	Town Open Space Committees (OSC) and the Regional Open Space Committee (ROSC)	2006
	Encourage sub-regional meetings of landowners to discuss wildlife corridors, maintaining open fields, forestry, etc.	OSCs, HCI, UMass Extension	2007
<i>SUB-REGIONAL COLLABORATION</i>	Collaborate to develop the Green River Greenway for both habitat protection and a recreational trail.	Greenfield, Leyden, and Colrain with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Fish and Game (DFG), FLT, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the National Park Service (NPS)	2005

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F. Coordinate with state, regional, and local entities to maximize protection of joint open space resources.	Identify land preservation organizations and agencies and their activities, funding, and land ownership characteristics. Check in with the group working on the Draft National Forest Model.	ROSC, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (BRPC) and FRCOG	2004
	Identify the most important unprotected open space parcels adjacent to protected lands.	FLT, TTOR, BRPC and FRCOG and Town Open Space Committees	2005
	Partner with FLT and seek funding from federal, state, and private sources to protect remaining farm and forestland in the watershed as the opportunities arise.	ROSC, DRWA, FLT, and the Deerfield Basin Team	2006
G. Promote a land protection education program for landowners to include estate planning, land protection options, and presentations by regional land trusts.	Identify the agencies and organizations that already offer these services and coordinate their efforts annually so that landowners within each sub-region of the watershed can access land conservation planning information together with others of the same geographic area.	ROSC and DRWA in collaboration with the Open Space Committees within each town	2004
	Educate landowners and voters about the APR Program, Conservation Restrictions, the Chapter 61 programs, inter-generational farm transfer, values of protected land, and estate planning in general by providing handouts for new residents.	Town Open Space Committees with the assistance of UMass Extension, FLT, DRWA, USDA/Natural Resource Conservation Service, Franklin Conservation District, and the New England Forestry Foundation	2006
H. Maintain and improve the quality of surface water and groundwater.	Use the upcoming Non-point Source Pollution (NPSP) Assessment as well as the recently completed Franklin County Regional Water Supply Study to identify areas where there are existing or potential impacts on surface and ground water quality and quantity from industrial, municipal, agricultural, large water withdrawals, recreation uses and domestic refuse dumping. Utilize the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Deerfield Water Quality Assessment Report and their upcoming watershed surface water quality action plans as resources.	The Deerfield Basin Team, DEP, and DRWA in conjunction with collaborators involved with the NPSP Assessment	2005-2007

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	Educate the public, farmers, municipalities and industry on Best Management Practices for protecting surface and ground water quality.	Town Agricultural Commissions, Connecticut River Watershed Council (CRWC), CISA, Deerfield Basin Team, DRWA, FRCOG, BRPC, Town Boards of Health, Planning Boards, Boards of Appeal, and Conservation Commissions	2008
	Promote the use of protective buffer zones to conserve water supplies and surface waters where possible.	Town Boards of Health, Conservation Commissions, and Water Supply Superintendents	2008
	Facilitate annual joint meetings with neighboring towns' Conservation Commissions and Boards of Health to maintain a cooperative approach to water resource protection and to discuss the potential for collaboration on water quality monitoring and on other NPS pollution needs.	Deerfield Basin Team and DRWA	2008
<i>SUB-REGIONAL COLLABORATION</i>	Work together to monitor the water quality of the Glen Brook Sub-watershed, an Outstanding Resource Water, to protect current and potential future water supplies.	Town of Greenfield Water Department and the Town of Leyden Conservation Commission	2005
<i>SUB-REGIONAL COLLABORATION</i>	Seek grant funding to pay for more detailed hydrologic studies to inform land planning, land protection, water quality monitoring, and zoning strategies to conserve groundwater quality.	FRCOG, Charlemont, Colrain, and Shelburne Town Boards of Health and Community Water Supply Superintendents, and the State Geologist	2005
I. Promote the Massachusetts Chapter 61, 61A, and 61 B Programs to local landowners to help keep undeveloped lands in active farming, forestry, and recreational uses.	Promote broader participation in the Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B programs.	University of Massachusetts Extension Service and TTOR /HCI	2006
	Develop and publicize a tracking procedure or protocol that would enable towns to be able to process conversions of Chapter 61, 61A, and 61B parcels to uses that trigger the granting of right-of-first-refusal to the town.	FLT, DCR, DAR, and the Town of Leyden OSC	2006
J. Identify and seek to protect unique natural and cultural areas including outcrops, waterfalls, vernal pools, and archaeological sites, etc.	Encourage nature groups/ hunting clubs/ forestry, wildlife biologists, and natural resource professionals to participate in educational activities to help people understand wildlife and their habitat needs and behaviors and the value of land conservation and cultural and historic preservation.	Massachusetts Audubon Society (MAS), DRWA, TTOR, Town Historical Commissions, and Red Gate Farm	2005

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	START DATE
K. Encourage land use and development patterns that manage growth and preserve scenic, rural character, open space, and water resources, and agricultural and forested lands.	Explore alternative zoning regulations to conserve natural, agricultural, and scenic values.	Town Planning Boards, FRCOG and BRPC	2005
	Adopt/Improve/Simplify approval process for Conservation Subdivision Designs.	Town Planning Boards, FRCOG and BRPC	2006
	Protect through use of scenic easements, the scenic resources of road corridors like the Mohawk Trail and Rte. 112/Clesson Brook Valley.	Town Planning Boards and Historical Commissions, FLT, FRCOG and BRPC	2007
L. Focus new development in the most appropriate areas.	Develop a model bylaw adaptable by towns that would grant incentives to developers willing to revitalize old buildings rather than develop open space.	FRCOG, BRPC, in conjunction with town Historical Commissions.	2009
M. Protect historic landscapes and the scenic character of the watershed (including long-range scenic views).	Investigate various ways of protecting rural historical landscapes and scenic values e.g. revising and updating the 1992 Franklin County Rural Historic Landscape Preservation Plan.	Historical Commissions, Planning Boards and Urban Forestry Committees	On-going
N. Encourage discussions amongst town officials and residents on the costs of services associated with commercial, recreational, industrial, and residential development, and farm and forestland.	Complete a Cost of Community Services (COCS) study and/or initiate an All-Board Meeting to discuss costs in services of different land uses.	FRCOG Regional Planning Board, HCI, UMass Extension, and American Farmland Trust	2006
O. Create opportunities to develop a greater sense of community by sustaining existing levels of programming offered by libraries and through other methods.	Use local libraries as a hub for communication and information sharing and dispersal. Team-up with local libraries to provide cultural, natural history, and land conservation talks and programs.	Town OSCs, DRWA, Libraries	2005
P. Promote, protect, and enhance the recreation value of the Deerfield River and its main tributaries for flat and white water activities, fishing, swimming, tubing, and other related activities.	Identify existing and potential public river access and distinguish their intended uses including access points on Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) lands.	DRWA, DCR, US Gen-New England	2005

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Q. Promote and provide access to existing and new recreational trail networks on public and private lands in the watershed (e.g. walking, hiking, bicycle, snowmobile, canoe, raft, and kayak trails, paths, lanes, and water trails for hunting, hiking, fishing, snowmobiling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, swimming, bird watching, Off-Highway Vehicles, bicycling, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, rafting, etc.).	Hold a regional conference to focus on discussions of recreational trail use issues (e.g. ATV use on sensitive areas) in Western Massachusetts and on the short and long-term solutions.	New England Association of Four –Wheel Drive Clubs, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Cows Lumber, Snowmobile Clubs, Town Conservation Commissions, Recreation Commissions, and OSCs, Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), New England Mountain Bike Association, and other trail clubs	2005
	Identify existing discontinued town and county roads and other roads that might be targeted by towns for action.	Town Planning Boards	On-going as needed
	Identify handicapped accessible facilities and ensure that some access is provided within each community.	Town OSCs	2005
	Identify sources of funding to purchase rights of way.	ROSC and recreation groups	2006
	Develop a Welcome/Education program for new property owners that would encourage the retention of public access while allowing for the effective communication of landowner preferences.	ROSC, Town OSCs and recreation groups	2006
	Expand the Mohawk-Mahican Trail into Deerfield to connect to the Pocumtuck Ridge Trail.	Deerfield Land Trust, Deerfield Planning Board, and DRWA	2006
	Utilize the AMC’s new Deerfield River Watershed Map as a guide and develop a set of Watershed, “by land and by water” trail maps, signs, and kiosks throughout the watershed.	DRWA, DCR, Snowmobile Clubs, AMC and town OSCs, NE FLOW	2006
REGIONAL COLLABORATION	Investigate the feasibility of a watershed boundary ridge trail that could be extended up into Vermont that would also link village areas to parks, facilities, state forests, wildlife management areas, and town conservation areas.	DRWA, DCR, Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), Town trail clubs and Town OSCs	2005
R. Develop access to information concerning the locations of designated recreational resources within the watershed.	Develop an on-line database for training resources, trail use, and, etiquette.	AMC, DRWA, Off-Highway Club, and UMass Extension	2006

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S. Provide recreational safety information throughout the watershed for land and water-based activities.	Incorporate safety into river events and hold demonstrations and provide training programs.	DRWA and the Deerfield River Basin Team	On-going
T. Resolve recreation-based land use conflicts in the watershed in a manner that improves the quality of the resources while strengthening the capacity of stakeholders to be able to promote sustainable practices among their constituencies.	Sponsor and facilitate an event to bring all recreational users together to promote communication and to share mutual needs and concerns.	DRWA and the Deerfield River Basin Team in conjunction with the recreational trail user groups.	2005
	Host seasonal hikes, trail workdays, and other community activities on public lands. Use these events as a means of familiarizing residents with trails, meeting landowners whose property trails may cross, and learn proper trail etiquette and maintenance techniques.	DRWA and the Deerfield River Basin Team in conjunction with the recreational trail user groups.	On-going
	Bring programs to the region, such as Tread Lightly, to promote a safety and trail use message.	DRWA and the Deerfield River Basin Team in conjunction with the recreational trail user groups.	2006
	Form a sub-regional volunteer trail stewardship group to conduct maintenance/clean-ups on multi-use recreational trails and parking areas.	DRWA and the recreational trail user groups.	2007

Source: Deerfield River Watershed Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee Members and a Summary of Municipal Open Space and Recreation Plans for the towns of Deerfield, Conway, Heath, Greenfield, Charlemont, Colrain, Leyden, Buckland, Shelburne, Savoy, Florida; 2004

