

# Open Space

## OVERVIEW

Lincoln has established a nationally renowned model program of land stewardship. Caring for public and privately-owned land, avoiding encroachments on wetland resource areas, thoughtful landscaping and sustainable forestry, supporting local farms, and putting wildlife interests first seem to have been broadly accepted as Lincoln's way of life. These ideas, however, can easily be jeopardized by contemporary practices such as mansionization, poorly considered siting, and redevelopment of older residences or new residential construction that involves clearance of once-undisturbed areas to make way for very large homes with lawns and manicured yards. As new housing development and housing re-sales continue to bring new people into



the community, there is no guarantee that Lincoln's future population will be as committed to conservancy. Increased public awareness and a continued commitment to stewardship will be needed in order to protect the conservation values that inspired so many open space acquisitions in the past.

## Key Findings

- ❖ Today, Lincoln's open space inventory includes more than 4,000 acres of land.
- ❖ More than half of all wetlands in Lincoln – approximately 1,417 acres – are protected by deed or conservation restriction, in addition to the regulatory protections afforded by M.G.L. c.131, s. 40 and the Lincoln Wetlands Bylaw.
- ❖ Lincoln has approximately 2,900 acres of conservation land, including 2,230 acres owned by the town or a non-profit land trust, and 630 acres of privately-owned land protected by conservation restrictions or Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs).
- ❖ Approximately eighty percent of all protected open space in Lincoln is open to the public for passive recreation, such as hiking, wildlife observation, canoeing, horseback riding and similar low-impact activities.
- ❖ Local governments – including the Towns of Lincoln and Concord and the City of Cambridge – own approximately 684 acres of land with no perpetual restrictions against a change in use.

- ❖ Today, Lincoln has 574.8 acres of active farmland, including 412 acres protected in perpetuity through conservation deeds, conservation restrictions, or Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs). Overall, the farmland is fairly evenly distributed throughout the town.
- ❖ About forty-five percent of the town and two-thirds of its open space inventory are forested.
- ❖ Including the town’s churches, Lincoln has approximately 449 acres of institutional open space.
- ❖ Lincoln has approximately seventy-two miles of trails and ten miles of roadside paths. Nearly seventy percent of the trails run through protected open space owned by the town, the LLCT and other organizations, and federal and state parks.

## Key Challenges

- ❖ Lincoln’s institutional properties seem fairly secure because the organizations that own them are unlikely to close their doors, relocate, or dispose of their land. However, most have no legally binding protection against a change in use.
- ❖ Most of Lincoln’s open space trails are not accessible to people with disabilities.
- ❖ Lincoln has a land stewardship program that is considered a model. It requires staff, equipment and facilities, and effective management, and Lincoln makes a noteworthy commitment to meeting these needs. The long-term management and monitoring of conservation land will be increasingly challenging because the tasks are time-consuming and specialized. With a trend of decreased community involvement, these responsibilities may not be able to be carried out predictably by volunteers, even those as devoted and knowledgeable as Lincoln’s conservationists.
- ❖ Lincoln has had the luxury of a fairly slow rate of population growth and the presence of many long-time residents who understood, practiced, and promoted Lincoln’s conservation ethic. As new housing development and home re-sales continue to bring new people into the community, there is no guarantee that Lincoln’s future population will be as committed to conservancy even though many households are attracted to the town because of its open space.

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## EXISTING CONDITIONS & TRENDS

Lincoln residents describe their town as “an oasis compared to other areas.” They say that Lincoln’s abundant “land, trees, and open space” attest to a history of “good work and land planning,” and they cite Lincoln’s safe drinking water, trails, and rural character as critically important to their quality of life. At a public meeting for this Comprehensive Plan, residents signaled considerable support for continuing to protect land that supports conservation values, including farms, scenic vistas, the beauty of Lincoln’s roads, water resources, wildlife habitat, and unique natural features. Lincoln residents care deeply about the quality of the natural and built environment, and they have traditionally been willing to invest in land acquisitions and stewardship. As one resident said when responding to an open space survey in 2007, “Protecting conservation land is vital – and we should expend our resources there.”

In fact, Lincoln has a long tradition of public and private actions to protect open space. Owing to efforts by the Lincoln Land Conservation Trust (LLCT) and the Rural Land Foundation (RLF), Lincoln is nationally recognized as a leader in land conservation. Lincoln has acquired or otherwise protected numerous parcels of

conservation land through outright purchase, donations, and concessions resulting from development reviews and the local permitting process. In addition, the LLCT owns several properties and helps to protect privately-owned land by holding conservation restrictions. Much of the open space that exists in Lincoln today results from a culture of conservation that generations of residents have shared and passed down to newcomers. This same culture influenced private landowners to make charitable gifts of land to the town and the LLCT. It also contributed to Lincoln's decision in 2002 to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA), a local option for generating funds for open space, affordable housing and historic preservation, and some types of recreation facilities. Since then, Lincoln has used CPA funds to acquire and manage land and to replenish its Conservation Fund.

Lincoln has impressive tracts of conservation land, well-preserved agricultural landscapes, and non-profit institutions that own large amounts of open land. Organizations such as the Massachusetts Audubon Society, Walden Woods Project, the Carroll School, the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, and the Farrington Memorial have helped to keep Lincoln a place that looks much the way it did many years ago. Lincoln is remarkable for the degree to which it has absorbed growth and change with relatively little impact on its visual character. Active farming still thrives in Lincoln, and the town has lost very few acres of agricultural land in the past thirty years. Residents appreciate the chance to buy locally grown produce and eggs, and many people hope that in the future the town will have even more agricultural activity. The town has instituted a model stewardship program and made a significant commitment to ensuring its success. Leasing farmland is one of the many tools Lincoln uses to take care of its open space and promote appreciation for the town's agricultural legacy.

Lincoln still has privately-owned land that could be developed. Many of these lands are forested, used recreationally, or are in active agricultural use, while others are simply vacant land holdings that meet the current needs of private property owners. It also has public land that could be converted to other uses, including land owned by the town. As the remaining tracts of unprotected land become available for purchase, Lincoln may find it more difficult to build consensus about the best course of action for the town as a whole. While residents value the conservation ethic that has always distinguished Lincoln from other Boston-area suburbs, the town has competing needs: more types of housing, recreation and other community facilities, school building improvements, and tax revenue to pay for the services that people expect town government to provide.

## Open Space Inventory

Today, Lincoln has more than 4,000 acres of *open space*: land used for conservation, the preservation of scenic resources, community character, and unique or heritage landscapes, watershed protection, and outdoor recreation.<sup>1</sup> The town's efforts to save land from development can be seen in the size and characteristics of its open space inventory, for more than eighty percent of Lincoln's open space is protected in perpetuity. Most of the parcels are protected by conservation deeds, that is, fee simple ownership by the town, with parcels designated for conservation purposes under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, or by a land trust, the National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Lincoln also has made extensive use of conservation restrictions and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR) to protect open space, mainly through its partnerships with the LLCT, which holds a majority of the conservation restrictions in town, and the RLF. The City of Cambridge also owns some protected watershed land in Lincoln, although the vast majority of Cambridge's property is not subject to use restrictions.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all open space classifications, acreage, and features reported in this chapter are based on the following sources: Town of Lincoln, *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (March 2008); Lincoln Conservation Department, FY2008GIS\_Files.mdb and FY2007GIS\_Files.mdb [CD-ROM]; Lincoln Assessor's Office, FY2008 Parcel Database; and recorded field observations by Dodson Associates and Community Opportunities Group, Inc.

Cambridge is not the only entity that owns a large amount of unprotected open space. Many of the open spaces considered intrinsic to Lincoln’s rural beauty also have no legal protection against a future change in use, even though the probability of conversion is very low. While Lincoln has done more than any community in the Commonwealth to protect and manage open space, it still has some important properties that could be developed in the future. It also hosts established facilities that control many acres of unrestricted land, notably the 661-acre HAFB and Hanscom Field compound north of Route 2A.

**PROTECTED OPEN SPACE**

**Conservation Land.** Lincoln has approximately 2,900 acres of conservation land, including 2,230 acres owned by the town or a non-profit land trust and an additional 630 acres of privately-owned land protected by conservation restrictions or APRs (Map 6.1).<sup>2</sup> The geographic distribution of conservation land varies considerably in Lincoln, with the largest parcels concentrated on the west side of town. A virtually uninterrupted conservation greenbelt extends from the Sudbury River to Route 2, west of Bedford Road and Lincoln Road, where a combination of historic estates, farms, and early public open space acquisitions help to explain the presence of several large, contiguous parcels. A large portion of the land in this area was acquired in 1969, when Lincoln purchased nearly 600 acres from five property owners for a total acquisition cost of \$1.8 million.<sup>3</sup> The major western holdings include:



- ❖ Approximately 151 acres of privately-owned conservation land with public trail easements surrounding Farrar Pond and Farrar Pond Village;
- ❖ The Mount Misery conservation area, located between South Great Road and Concord Road, including 234.1 acres of woodlands, trails, and agricultural fields;
- ❖ The former Codman estate, on the opposite side of Concord Road from the Mount Misery land and extending across the MBTA railroad tracks. This collection of fairly large parcels, owned variously by the town and the LLCT, contains a combined total of about 263 acres of conservation land. Some of the land is managed as active farmland by the Codman Community Farms, Inc.;
- ❖ The Adams Woods property, with sixty-eight acres of conservation land owned primarily by the town, accessible from Old Concord Road;
- ❖ The Baker Bridge Fields, with 103 acres of town-owned conservation land leased for agricultural use between Baker Bridge Road and Concord Road;

<sup>2</sup> Note: some of the conservation land is protected both by deed and a conservation restriction. The 630 acres of conservation-restricted land includes only parcels that are not also protected by conservation deeds.

<sup>3</sup> Jo Springer, “Historical Land Uses and Land Ownerships of Mt. Misery, Lincoln, Massachusetts” (1981), 26.

- ❖ The Pine Hill conservation area between Concord Road and Sandy Pond Road, including 108± acres of protected woodlands and scenic vistas to the west and north;
- ❖ Approximately 260± acres of forested watershed land surrounding Flint's Pond; and
- ❖ The eighty-two acre Bergen-Culver conservation area between Lincoln Road and Baker Bridge Road, abutting the Codman land to the west and the school complex on Ballfield Road to the northeast.

North of Route 2, Lincoln has two large conservation areas:

- ❖ West of Bedford Road, the town-owned Tanner's Brook (Elm Brook) conservation land includes 110± acres between Brooks Road and Sunnyside Lane; and
- ❖ East of Bedford Road, the Ricci Farm conservation land includes 182.1 acres between North Great Road (Route 2A) and Route 2.

The conservation lands located south of Route 2 and east of Bedford Road and Lincoln Road generally consist of smaller parcels and a more fragmented pattern of open space, but this section of town was already quite developed by the time Lincoln began to acquire open space in the late 1950s. Another difference is that while the town owns most of the conservation land to the west, the LLCT owns more land to the east. Noteworthy examples of the conservation land found on the east side of town include:

- ❖ Fifty-seven acres of the former Wheeler Farm, adjacent to Bedford Road and Route 2, preserved by the Rural Land Foundation's first limited development project in 1965 and owned in fee by the LLCT;
- ❖ Flint's Fields, privately-owned land protected by conservation restrictions and an APR, located on both sides of Lexington Road and partially abutting the Wheeler Farm open space;
- ❖ The Osborne conservation land, composed of 36.5 acres owned by the LLCT off Page Road;
- ❖ More than ninety acres of contiguous conservation land in the vicinity of Weston Road, Conant Road, and Silver Hill Road, including the twenty-five acre Silver Hill Bog, forty-seven acres in the Pigeon Hill conservation area, and a twenty-acre holding known as Browning's Fields;
- ❖ The 55.2-acre Beaver Pond conservation area, located about one-third of a mile west of Browning's Fields, with trail access from Tower Road through the adjacent twelve-acre Todd property;
- ❖ The Stony Brook conservation area, with slightly less than fifty acres of conservation land along the Stony Brook's southern course through Lincoln;
- ❖ The 32.2-acre Umbrello land off Tower Road in South Lincoln; and
- ❖ Sixty-nine acres of private conservation land owned by Roy S. MacDowell, off Old Sudbury Road, under a conservation restriction held by the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

**Other Protected Land.** Lincoln's inventory of protected open space includes portions of federal and state parks and a federal wildlife area:

- ❖ Approximately 333 acres of the 971-acre Minute Man National Historical Park, owned and managed by the National Park Service, located along both sides of North Great Road in North Lincoln;
- ❖ At the southwestern edge of town, a 13.8-acre segment of the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge, which encompasses more than 3,400 acres of land in seven towns, mainly in Sudbury and Wayland; and
- ❖ Ninety-five acres of the 462-acre Walden Pond State Reservation, a state park in Lincoln and Concord, managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).



### UNPROTECTED OPEN SPACE

**Public Land.** Local governments – including the Towns of Lincoln and Concord and the City of Cambridge – own approximately 684 acres of land with no perpetual restrictions against a change in use (Map 6.2). Nearly all of this land is located on the east side of town. Some of the properties support a public facility, which means they have both land and buildings. Aside from the absence of preservation restrictions on the buildings, the land itself makes an important contribution to Lincoln’s identity and rural character. The most visible properties include:

- ❖ Lincoln’s municipal buildings in the town center – the Town Office Building, the Pierce House, the Lincoln Public Library, and Bemis Hall – surrounded by approximately thirty-two acres of grounds, open fields, and woods;
- ❖ The 54.4-acre Lincoln Public Schools and recreation complex on Ballfield Road;
- ❖ Twenty parcels with a combined total of 516.4 acres of land, protecting the drinking water supplies of Lincoln, Concord and Cambridge.

**Land Owned by Private Organizations.** Two non-profit organizations with a long-standing commitment to conservation and open space own unprotected land in Lincoln. Significantly, the Massachusetts Audubon Society’s headquarters and flagship sanctuary, Drumlin Farm, are largely unprotected. Of the Society’s 225.6 acres in Lincoln, one twelve-acre parcel on Old Sudbury Road is protected by a conservation restriction. The Walden Woods Project on Baker Farm Road, which includes eighteen acres in Lincoln, is largely unprotected, too, with the LLCT holding conservation restrictions on two parcels with a combined total of six acres.

**Chapter 61A-61B Land.** Many Eastern Massachusetts suburbs have very little agricultural land today because most of it has been developed. In Lincoln’s case, there is very little unprotected agricultural land because the town took steps long ago to acquire Chapter 61A land and other farm land and to promote agricultural activity. Although Lincoln has a total of 337.6 acres of land under Chapter 61A-61B agreements, only 134 acres remain unprotected. The largest include:

- ❖ 54.4 acres on Trapelo Road, owned by the DeNormandie family;
- ❖ 26.6 acres on Old Sudbury Road, owned by the MacDowells;

- ❖ 8.3 acres on Beaver Pond Road, owned by the Kumlers; and
- ❖ 8.6 acres on Old Winter Street, owned by the Levins.

## Open Space Characteristics

Lincoln's open space meets many needs: preserving the town's rural character and agricultural heritage, protecting wildlife habitat, wetlands, and water supplies, managing growth, and maintaining property values. The larger conservation areas, watershed lands, and parks clearly serve more than one purpose, as evidenced by the multiple uses that co-exist on the Mount Misery land and the Minute Man National Historical Park. This is as the authors of Lincoln's original and subsequent open space plans intended. Still, many of the town's individual parcels or tracts of open space seem to address a primary public interest, and much like Lincoln's varied pattern of conservation land, the geographic distribution of open space uses differs throughout the town. Both the amount of open space and the uses of the land contribute greatly to the natural environment and physical form of Lincoln's neighborhoods.

## AGRICULTURAL LAND

Lincoln's most important heritage landscapes are its farms. Like so many small towns in Massachusetts, Lincoln began as a farming community and gradually lost much of its agricultural land to farm abandonment, residential development, and transportation improvements. Until c. 1950, Lincoln had about 3,700 acres of land in agricultural use: dairy farms, a mink farm, orchards, fields cultivated for a variety of produce, and extensive pasture on approximately forty farms and estates. The suburbanization of Boston-area towns after 1950 accelerated the loss of farmland throughout the region, particularly in communities along and adjacent to Route 128. By 1976, the amount of agricultural land in Lincoln had declined to 638 acres.<sup>4</sup> Due to sustained efforts by the town and its non-profit partners, Lincoln has managed to preserve most of the agricultural land that still existed thirty-two years ago. Today, Lincoln has 574.8 acres of active farmland, including 412.0 acres protected in perpetuity through conservation deeds, conservation restrictions, or Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APR).<sup>5</sup> Overall, the farmland is fairly evenly distributed throughout the town.

Privately-owned non-institutional land makes up eighteen percent of Lincoln's protected farmland and more than half of the unprotected farmland. The vast majority of the protected land is owned by the town or the LLCT, much of it licensed to or used informally by local farmers and agricultural organizations. Indeed, one of the remarkable characteristics of agriculture in Lincoln is the presence of so many small farming operations on local, state, federal, and land trust property. A noteworthy agricultural preservation project is the Codman Community Farm, a working farm located on a portion of the former Codman estate. The Codman family left the land and farm buildings to the town, but Codman Community Farm, Inc. (CCF), manages the property. A private, non-profit corporation governed by a board of directors, CCF was formed specifically to ensure that the Codman's farm would remain in active agricultural use. The land is used for crop production, pasture, and community gardens, and the farm also has a variety of livestock and a farm stand.<sup>6</sup> There does not appear to be a formal lease agreement between the town and CCF.

<sup>4</sup> Town of Lincoln Conservation Department, "Agricultural Land 1900-1950," GIS Feature Class [CD-ROM], March 2008; *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008), 44.

<sup>5</sup> Conservation Department, "Agricultural Land," GIS Feature Class [CD-ROM], March 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Codman Community Farms, Inc., <http://www.codmanfarm.org/index.html>.

## ESTATES AND INSTITUTIONAL OPEN SPACE

Another type of heritage landscape of great importance to Lincoln is the family estate. These properties feature relatively large buildings (often more than one), typically separated from the road by formal grounds with generous lawns and sculpted gardens, surrounded by agricultural land and forests. Several of Lincoln's nineteenth century estates and summer homes still serve as private residences. However, Lincoln's historic appeal to well-to-do people left a Gilded Age footprint that has made the town attractive to non-profit institutions such as private schools, museums, and other charitable organizations.



The Carroll School, Pierce House, Farrington Memorial, Minuteman Career & Technical School, the Walden Woods Project, the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, and Massachusetts Audubon Society exemplify the range of educational, public, and charitable organizations currently operating in Lincoln, in many cases occupying buildings that originally served as mansions. Including the town's churches, Lincoln has approximately 449 acres of institutional open space.

Lincoln's institutional properties seem fairly secure because the organizations that own them are unlikely to close their doors, relocate, or dispose of their land. However, most have no legally enforceable protection against a change in use. The Massachusetts Audubon Society's headquarters, the Carroll School, and the Walden Woods Project, all housed within former estates on substantially unprotected landscapes, have institutional interests and significant capital investments that will most likely keep them in Lincoln. Still, town officials have raised concerns about the fate of other institutional properties, notably the 71.4-acre Farrington Memorial south of Route 2. In 2005, Lincoln examined the development potential of six key properties deemed to be "at risk" of a change in use. Three of the at-risk properties were institutional uses, including the Farrington Memorial.<sup>7</sup>

## OPEN FIELDS

Lincoln has a wonderful collection of open landscapes mainly because of its agricultural history and the prevalence of family estates. In addition to active agricultural land, there is a noteworthy inventory of upland grasslands that contribute to Lincoln's scenic beauty and often function as habitat for common and rare species. The 4.1-acre Smith-Andover field in Lincoln Center, protected in perpetuity, is a fine example of managed grasslands. The extensive grasslands at Hanscom Field are typical of the ground cover found within and adjacent to airport runways and taxiways, and alongside major highways. The land within Lincoln serves as habitat for a variety of common and uncommon species, including two birds classified as threatened or endangered in Massachusetts. Although the land is not protected open space, Massport, which owns the airport, has been implementing a grassland management plan since 2004. As part of that effort, the agency has provided more grassland habitat on Virginia Road.<sup>8</sup> These are vitally important open spaces, both for resident wildlife and the visual relief they offer from the airport's hardscape.

<sup>7</sup> Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc., and Community Opportunities Group, Inc., *At-Risk Properties Analysis* (2005).

<sup>8</sup> Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), *L.G. Hanscom Field Grasslands Management Program* (January 2004), reprinted in *Draft 2005 L. G. Hanscom Field Environmental Status and Planning Report*, EOE No. 5484/8696 (November 2006), Appendix F; Open Space and Recreation Plan (2008), 29.

Lincoln has worked very hard to preserve agricultural lands and the way of life they represent. While Lincoln is not the only Massachusetts town that leases conservation fields to farmers, the Conservation Commission has been unusually attentive to possible conflicts between agriculture and wildlife. Local policies dating to the late 1990s and the conditions many farmers must meet today exemplify Lincoln's consciousness of the ways in which land use can support or frustrate the interconnectedness of natural and man-made systems. Delayed cutting of fields, Integrated Pest Management, and vegetated buffers to shield wetlands from erosion and to preserve habitat diversity have been standard requirements in Lincoln for many years. As a rule, the town gives primacy to protecting endangered or threatened wildlife and does not allow farming on public land when doing so would jeopardize critical habitat.<sup>9</sup>



## FORESTS

The sheer number of open fields and the enduring presence of working landscapes make Lincoln memorable to many people, but the town would not be what it is without its forests. About forty-five percent of the town and two-thirds of the open space inventory are forested, so the woods play an important part in shaping Lincoln's identity.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the town, a medley of fields, stone walls, and woodlands defines the view from the road and makes Lincoln a visually interesting community. Much of the open space west of Bedford Road and Lincoln Road, generally within the watersheds of Flint's Pond and the Sudbury River, is forest-covered land. There is considerable forest cover in North Lincoln between Route 2 and Hanscom Air Force Base (HAFB) as well. It not only helps to protect drinking water supplies, but also provides critical wildlife habitat for a wide range of mammals, birds, rodents, amphibians, and insects. The forests provide passive recreation opportunities, too, for many of the town's extensive conservation trails cross through wooded tracts of land.

Wetlands. Lincoln's conservation land plays a crucial role in protecting wetland resources and the wildlife that depends on them. Many of the LLCT's conservation parcels on the east side of town coincide with a chain of wooded swamps and shrub swamps in a glacial valley that runs generally from north to south. To the west, the Mount Misery land contains a beautiful display of bordering vegetated wetlands along the Beaver Dam Brook while shallow marshes cover portions of the Baker Bridge Fields. The marshes and shrub swamps along the western edge of town provide some of Lincoln's most attractive views. Over half of the wetlands in Lincoln are protected by deed or conservation restriction in addition to the regulatory protections afforded by M.G.L. c.131, s. 40 and Lincoln's Wetlands Bylaw. A black gum swamp, rare in Massachusetts, is a protected resource area within the Minute Man National Historic Park.

<sup>9</sup> Lincoln Conservation Commission, "Good Conservation Practices for Leased Fields" [Electronic Version], November 1997.

<sup>10</sup> University of Massachusetts Amherst, Resource Mapping Project, "Land Use," MassGIS, and *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008), 20.

## Open Space and Neighborhood Design

Lincoln has considerable experience with protecting open space as part of the approval process for housing developments. In some cases, land has been protected in order to comply with zoning regulations that require a set-aside of open space. One example, Farrar Pond Village, is located in Lincoln's only Open Space-Residential Development (R-3) District. For qualifying sites, the R-3 District offers a modest density bonus in exchange for preserving seventy percent of a site as protected open space. The Farrar Village Conservation Trust owns the conservation land surrounding the townhouses while the Farrar Pond Conservation Trust owns the land along the edge of the pond and provides public access easements to the water.<sup>11</sup> Farrar Pond Village illustrates many of the benefits of cluster development because it capitalizes on density, compact design, and sensitive site planning to preserve a large amount of land. It relies upon rural design principles to accommodate suburban density.



A second example, Battle Road Farm, required the town to consider a number of public interests with an emphasis on the creation of affordable housing. During the 1980s, Lincoln acquired a forty-seven acre tract of land between Hanscom Drive, Old Bedford Road, and Virginia Road in North Lincoln, opposite Hanscom Field. A portion of the land was rezoned to allow the construction of a large office building known as Lincoln North. Town Meeting agreed to place the rest of the site – roughly thirty acres – in a different planned development district that provides for a much higher density of housing than Lincoln has authorized in other locations. The economic rationale for the higher density was affordable housing. Battle Road Farm is an award-winning development and an intriguing plan because even though it has a relatively small amount of open space, the building styles, placements, and orientation approximate a village development pattern organized around common land. These design choices give the site an open feel that masks Battle Road Farm's average density of five units per acre. Slightly more than five acres of the site were placed under a permanent conservation restriction.<sup>12</sup>

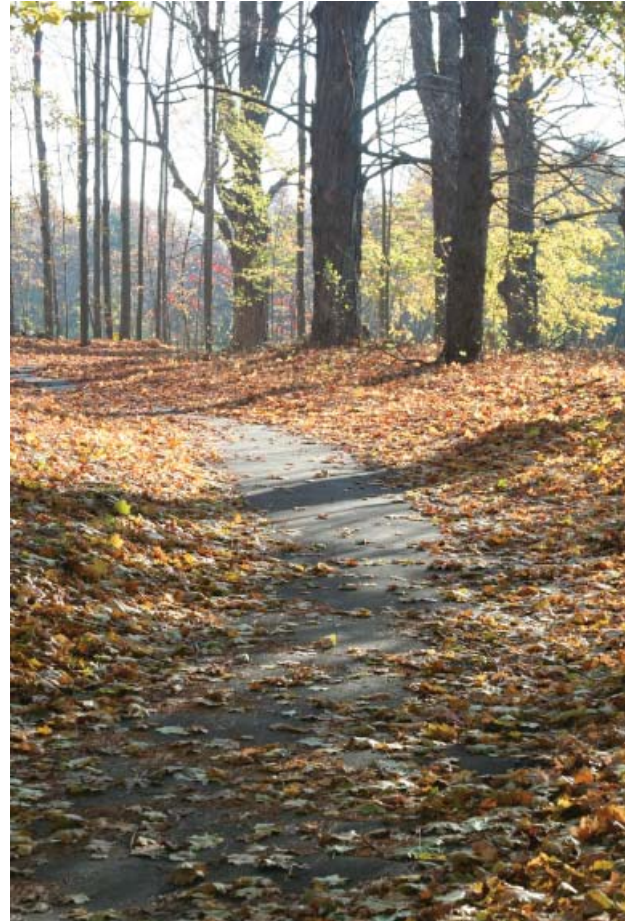
Not all of Lincoln's development-sponsored open space has involved density trade-offs. Another example of open space by design can be seen in the RLF's Wheeler Farm development. By applying the principles of limited development, the RLF created just enough large single-family house lots to pay for the land acquisition cost and transferred all of the remaining land – 56.6 acres – to the LLCT. Lincoln also has approved many cluster developments under its R-1 zoning regulations, which do not offer any density incentives but require less open space than the standard that Farrar Pond Village was required to meet.

<sup>11</sup> Lincoln Conservation Commission, *Open Space Plan* (1977), 18.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Battle Road Farm: Lincoln, Massachusetts," *Affordable Housing Design Advisor*, <http://www.designadvisor.org/gallery/battle.html>; Keen Development Corporation, "Battle Road Farm," and Lincoln Conservation Department, "CL\_All Conservation Land," GIS Feature Class, March 2008.

## Passive Recreation

Approximately eighty percent of all protected open space in Lincoln is open to the public for *passive recreation*, e.g., hiking, wildlife observation, canoeing, and similar low-impact activities.<sup>13</sup> Lincoln also has a riding ring at the Browning's Fields on Weston Road. The ring is used by a local equestrian club that provides riding lessons and training on the proper care of horses, and sponsors an annual horse show.<sup>14</sup> However, one of the most impressive features of Lincoln's open space is the renowned network of trails and roadside paths that traverse the town (Map 6.3). According to the most recent *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008), Lincoln has about seventy-two miles of trails and ten miles of roadside paths. Nearly seventy percent of the trails run through protected open space owned by the town, the LLCT and other organizations, and the federal and state parks. About twenty-four miles of hiking trails cross private land, most secured by trail easements.<sup>15</sup> Lincoln encourages residents to use the trails by sponsoring walking tours guided by the Conservation Department. Due to the presence of such a well-planned system, it is possible to walk the entire west side of town and nearly all of Lincoln on off-road trails. Bicycling is also permitted on some of the conservation trails. However, most of the open space trails are not accessible to people with disabilities. This challenge exists in all communities, and Lincoln is no exception.



The roadside paths that run alongside most of Lincoln's major roads are less intrusive than conventional sidewalks due to the town's careful approach to managing roadside vegetation. Nearly all of the roadside paths permit walking, bicycling, and horseback riding. The roadside paths connect with conservation trails in numerous locations. It is clear that Lincoln residents appreciate and use the roadside path network. An opinion survey conducted by the Open Space Plan Committee in January 2007 shows that more respondents cited a need for additional roadside paths and maintenance of existing paths than any other type of outdoor recreation facility. Moreover, of the six types of facilities that earned high need ratings in the survey, roadside paths commanded the highest overall priority ranking.<sup>16</sup> Residents value this resource so much that say they will invest in maintaining and expanding the roadside paths network, not only for its recreational appeal but also its contribution to the character of Lincoln's roads.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 10, Community Services and Facilities, for information about Lincoln's active recreation facilities.

<sup>14</sup> Town of Lincoln, *2007 Town Report*, Report of the Lincoln Conservation Commission, 119.

<sup>15</sup> *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008), 34, 40; Lincoln Conservation Department, "Trails," GIS Feature Class, March 2008.

<sup>16</sup> *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008), 85.

<sup>17</sup> Lincoln Comprehensive Long-Range Plan Committee, "June 19, 2007 Group Exercise Notes," and "Open Space Notes: February 9, 2008," on file in Lincoln Planning Department.

## Open Space Planning, Acquisition, and Stewardship

Lincoln is well-known for its achievements in open space protection and stewardship. Over the past decade, the Lincoln Conservation Commission and LLCT have instituted a land stewardship program that is proving quite effective. Today, Lincoln has baseline documentation on all conservation land owned or controlled by the town or the LLCT. All of the deeds and conservation restrictions have been located, reviewed, verified, scanned, and catalogued; the lands have been mapped and photographed, and their natural resource characteristics have been inventoried. The Conservation Department and LLCT monitor all of the conservation properties at least once a year, using the baseline documentation as a guide.

The Conservation Department includes the seven-member Conservation Commission and four professional staff whose responsibilities range from administration and enforcement of wetlands protection laws to conservation planning, public education, and land management, monitoring and assessment. The full-time land manager and part-time ranger work almost exclusively in the field. Their duties include land maintenance, trail clearing and blazing, public education, and enforcing rules and regulations for use of Lincoln's conservation land. Many outside of Lincoln would be surprised to hear that the Conservation Commission has a staff of four. Some towns have difficulty funding the services of a part-time conservation agent, and in Massachusetts there are towns as small as Lincoln that provide no professional support to their conservation commissions. However, Lincoln has understood for many years that acquiring open space is not the end point in land conservation; rather, it marks the beginning of a public commitment to care for an irreplaceable asset. By any standard, Lincoln's stewardship program is powerful testimony to the value that townspeople place on environmental quality and resource protection.

The LLCT and RLF play instrumental roles in conservation land planning and management, but their roles are not the same. For example, the LLCT owns a considerable amount of conservation land and holds conservation restrictions on many parcels of open space. It also partners with the Conservation Commission for acquisition planning, stewardship, and conservation advocacy programs. The LLCT also relies heavily on volunteers and has an unusually strong track record in building public support for open space. The RLF is a different type of organization, both in structure and mission. It often participates in conservation projects by functioning as a developer and a land disposition agent, transferring land to be preserved to the LLCT or the town and recovering its investment through lot sales. Unlike the LLCT, the RLF does not hold large tracts of conservation land. One of its most sophisticated and interesting land disposition projects resulted not only in a large amount of protected open space (a portion of the Codman estate, now owned by the town), but also Lincoln's first moderate-income housing development, Lincoln Woods, and the South Lincoln Mall commercial center. By establishing local conservation and development capacity, Lincoln has assembled far more effective tools than zoning to control the fate of significant properties.

Lincoln has other town committees and non-profit organizations that contribute to its conservation objectives as well. In 2002, Lincoln adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), a state law that allows participating cities and towns to impose a surcharge on property tax bills, receive matching funds from the state, and invest the combined local and state revenue in open space, historic preservation, and affordable housing, and in some cases recreation facilities. Acting on recommendations from the Community Preservation Committee (CPC), Town Meeting has committed approximately twenty-five percent of Lincoln's CPA revenue to conservation purposes, including land acquisitions, open space planning, and maintaining the town's Conservation Fund.<sup>18</sup> In addition, the Board of Selectmen recently appointed Lincoln's first Agricultural Commission to encourage

<sup>18</sup> 2007 Annual Town Report, 83; Motions, 2008 Annual Town Meeting Warrant, 5-6.

farming and promote farm-friendly policies. Non-profit organizations such as the renowned Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Walden Woods Project, and the Food Project also share Lincoln's conservation ethic.

## Regional Trends

A striking fact about Lincoln's region is that most of the town's immediate neighbors do not have an open space and recreation plan.<sup>19</sup> Until recently, Lincoln also operated without a current plan, but Lincoln never stopped attending to its open space needs. The town continued to acquire land and more importantly, to take care of the land it already owned. While the number of towns focusing on stewardship has increased in the past decade, it is significant that Lincoln's first open space plan, written more than thirty years ago, recognized the management obligations and challenges that come with public land ownership.<sup>20</sup>

Lincoln has an undeniable impact on other communities in the Boston metropolitan area. Its conservation land and parks draw visitors from the region, and residents have traditionally supported the idea that Lincoln's open space should contribute to meeting regional needs. These needs are periodically documented in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which the state is required to prepare in order to remain eligible for grants from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund. Like its predecessors, the most recent SCORP, *Massachusetts Outdoors 2006*, evaluates statewide and regional needs for outdoor recreation facilities and predicts future demand. Major issues in the SCORP that relate to Lincoln include resource protection, stewardship, education and information, partnerships, access, maintenance, innovative tools for land protection, and the protection and development of trails. The state's findings have to be considered in the context of the region as a whole, but some of the findings may be useful to Lincoln's own long-term open space and recreation planning.

The SCORP divides Massachusetts into seven regional recreation planning areas. Lincoln falls within the Northeastern Region, which includes most of Middlesex County and Essex County. The Northeast Region ranks second statewide for total population, fifth for total acres of open space and second for total number of parcels held as open space. According to the SCORP and the most recent edition of the Commonwealth's open space inventory, Lincoln, Concord, Bedford, and Carlisle have significant municipal and non-profit open space holdings.<sup>21</sup> For the Northeast Region overall, open space used for conservation and passive recreation purposes exceeds that of other regions. Recreation activities equally popular in the Northeast Region and the state as a whole include swimming, walking, sightseeing, hiking, and fishing, but activities notably more popular in the region include baseball, sunbathing, horseback riding, off-road vehicle driving, snowmobiling, boating (motorized), surfing, soccer, tot lots, and hockey (pond). Lincoln provides for some of these pursuits.

The Northeast Region's less popular activities include road biking, cross-country skiing, and running. However, cross-country skiing at the Mount Misery conservation land and biking appear to be quite popular. The authors of the SCORP also found that return trips to agricultural areas, trails and greenways, and wildlife conservation areas in the Northeast Region were lower than the statewide average, yet these kinds of resources are particularly strong in Lincoln. The SCORP reports a high level of satisfaction with the region's wildlife conservation areas and agricultural resources, and some dissatisfaction with the lack of bikeways. As for activity needs, the region's residents place the highest priority on road biking, playground activity, swimming, walking, golfing,

<sup>19</sup> Division of Conservation Services, "Open Space and Recreation Plan Status," 3 July 2008, <http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/openspace/default.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> Lincoln Conservation Commission, *Open Space Plan* (1997), 51-53.

<sup>21</sup> MassGIS, "Protected and Recreational Open Space," July 2008, <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/osp.htm>.

and basketball, and moderate priority on tennis, fishing, and mountain biking. These activities point to needs for more playgrounds, neighborhood parks, and golf courses, and better access to agricultural lands, lakes and ponds, rivers and streams, and coastal beaches.<sup>22</sup> In some cases, these needs correlate with needs identified in a survey that Lincoln conducted for its new *Open Space and Recreation Plan*.<sup>23</sup>

Just as visitors from the region use Lincoln's open space for passive recreation opportunities, local residents use facilities in other towns. This is aided by connections between Lincoln's trail systems and trails in neighboring towns. Lincoln residents often use conservation lands and canoe landings in Concord, Sudbury, and Wayland and conservation lands in Weston. Residents of both towns use Cat Rock and Ogilvie Town Forest, located on the Lincoln/Weston border. Many Lincoln residents enjoy the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in Sudbury and Concord as well as the Minute Man National Historical Park, which is crossed by several of Lincoln's trails that connect to Walden Pond State Reservation and The Battle Road path. Lincoln wants to make more connections between its trails and open spaces and those of neighboring communities, yet coordination for open space and trails planning between adjacent towns is fairly limited and not systematic.

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## NEEDS, ISSUES & CHALLENGES

### Stewardship of Conservation Land

Lincoln has established a model land stewardship program. It requires staff, equipment and facilities, and effective enforcement, and Lincoln makes a noteworthy commitment to meeting these needs. The long-term care, maintenance, and monitoring of conservation land are challenging because the tasks are time-consuming and specialized. These responsibilities cannot be carried out predictably by volunteers, even those as devoted and knowledgeable as Lincoln's conservationists. The town's willingness to fund a professionally staffed stewardship program increases the likelihood that Lincoln will be able to protect the conservation values that inspired so many open space acquisitions in the past.

The public education components of stewardship will become even more important in the future. Lincoln has had the luxury of a fairly slow rate of population growth and the presence of many long-time residents who understood, practiced, and promoted Lincoln's conservation ethic. As new housing development and housing re-sales continue to bring new people to town, there is no guarantee that Lincoln's future population will be as committed to conservancy even though many households are attracted to the town because of its open space. Caring for public and privately-owned land, avoiding encroachments on wetland resource areas, thoughtful landscaping and sustainable forestry, supporting local farms, and putting wildlife interests first seem to have been broadly accepted as Lincoln's way of life. These ideas can be jeopardized by contemporary practices such as mansionization or redeveloping older residences to the point of clearing once-undisturbed areas on existing lots in order to accommodate very large homes and manicured yards. Intensive commercial development also tends to place significant demands on natural landscapes and can reduce the quality and quantity of water resources. Further, when private land under conservation restrictions changes hands, new owners often do not realize their legal obligations. In short, Lincoln will most likely find that it needs to devote more effort to public education than in the past. Even without much new growth, Lincoln will not be immune to the effects of new interests and different values that come with a change in the make-up of a community's population.

<sup>22</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, *Massachusetts Outdoors 2006*, 78-85 passim.

<sup>23</sup> *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008), 82-83.

## Importance of Small Open Space Parcels

Although Lincoln still has a few substantial parcels of unprotected open space, the combined efforts of the town, the RLF, and the LLCT have helped to secure and protect most of the largest land holdings. Lincoln's tradition of acquiring conservation land, taking care to identify and map priority open space, and working with land owners may increase the town's ability to respond if the remaining large parcels are threatened by unwanted development. In addition, Lincoln has some land use mechanisms in the Zoning Bylaw to work with developers in the event that neither the town nor the LLCT can obtain site control over desirable open space.

While the size of a potential acquisition affects its value as conservation land, the importance of small open space parcels to the character and quality of life in established neighborhoods should not be overlooked. Despite Lincoln's low-density development pattern, it is a maturely developed suburb with some neighborhoods that have little protected open space. It also has some historic family estates, residential properties with surplus land, and institutional uses that contribute an open feel to the neighborhoods around them. As smaller, sometimes isolated pockets of land become available for development, it will be important to consider neighborhood-level needs for open space and recreation areas even when the parcels have little ecological significance. At the same time, Lincoln may find it increasingly difficult to separate neighborhood needs for open space from the routine opposition of abutters to new development.

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## Effective Use of Zoning

Lincoln's zoning provides ways to protect open space as part of the land development process. For example, the town has a voluntary cluster development option for tracts with at least 160,000 sq. ft. of land in the R-1 District, Open Space Residential Development (OSRD) by special permit in the R-3 District, a Planned Community Development (PCD) in the R-4 District, and open space requirements in some of the North Lincoln Planned Development Districts. Each of these regulatory tools has some mechanism for setting aside and preserving open space while accommodating residential uses. The open space must be conveyed to the town, a non-profit land trust, or a homeowners association.

The open space regulations in Lincoln's Zoning Bylaw tend to mirror the evolution of open space zoning in the United States since the mid-1960s. They were clearly intended to meet diverse needs and in some cases, unique site conditions. Setting aside thirty-five percent of a four-acre site as open space suggests different expectations and involves different land development techniques than setting aside seventy percent of a twenty-five acre site as open space in exchange for a density bonus. The former is a reservation of open space by design, that is, a tool for flexible site planning that includes open space; the latter is an incentive for developers to save a large amount of land. These techniques as well as the use of overlay districts have served the town's needs very well to date. Because the existing cluster/OSRD development provisions were added to Lincoln's Zoning Bylaw incrementally, Lincoln might consider clarifying the use terms in a more consistent way.

## Conservation, Passive Recreation, and Active Recreation Needs

Lincoln has an outstanding conservation record, but it does not seem to address the wide variety of recreation interests identified by its own population with the same vigor. People appreciate having access to open space and passive recreation in Lincoln, yet they have no choice but to travel to other towns to use facilities such as indoor swimming pools and health clubs. Residents seem to want more local active recreation options, notably a recreation center, a fitness center, an indoor pool and a skating rink, but it is not clear how a small town like Lincoln would finance these facilities – not only the capital cost of construction, but also ordinary operating costs. It is difficult to tell whether expanding Lincoln’s active recreation facilities falls into the category of a “want” or a “need,” for even though residents say they want more recreation choices, they rate conservation land and stewardship as higher priorities.<sup>24</sup>

In all towns, an assessment of open space and recreation needs depends in part on the particular group of residents who happen to respond to a survey or attend a public forum. However, some ideas appear as recurring themes in Lincoln regardless of the number of participants or their mode of participation, and a preference for conservation ranks at the top. Still, at a meeting to consider goals for this comprehensive plan, some residents urged the town to “remember active recreation,” to consider the possibility of converting some existing conservation land to recreation fields, and provide a recreation center for children and the community as a whole.<sup>25</sup> These are important needs, and they may be particularly important to young families and residents of Lincoln regardless of age. An inter-local agreement with Concord – as Lincoln has done to provide Board of Health inspection services for many years – or with another nearby community may be the most realistic near-term way to address resident demand for active recreation facilities.

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## GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### Goal OS-1. Preserve, protect and expand conservation, agricultural, and recreational lands.

- OS-1.1. Continue efforts to protect existing conservation land and open space from development.
- OS-1.2. Evaluate the effectiveness of Lincoln’s existing bylaws, regulations, and policies to protect open space, and strengthen them as appropriate.
- OS-1.3. Protect lands of conservation and recreation interest, such as private farms, Chapter 61 lands, view corridors, buffers and scenic vistas, outstanding natural features, and fields appropriate for recreational use.
- OS-1.4. Provide incentives to farmers on private property to place conservation or agricultural preservation restrictions on non-protected agricultural land.
- OS-1.5. Maintain open communication among conservation organizations and continue to explore funding, land acquisition, or limited development opportunities.
- OS-1.6. Partner with adjacent towns, the state, and regional non-profit organizations to promote mutual conservation and recreation interests.

<sup>24</sup> *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008), 86-87. See also, Lincoln Comprehensive Long-Range Plan Committee, “June 19, 2007 Group Exercise Notes,” on file in the Lincoln Planning Department.

<sup>25</sup> Lincoln Comprehensive Long-Range Committee, “Open Space Notes: February 9, 2008,” on file in the Lincoln Planning Department.

## DISCUSSION

Lincoln's impressive open space inventory and the roadside paths and trails convey a long-standing commitment to preservation, stewardship, and recreation. Few Massachusetts communities can claim the success that Lincoln has had in protecting open space, and it is difficult to think of any town that has done as much to make its land open and usable to local and regional residents. The most important step Lincoln can take to address this Comprehensive Plan's open space goals and recommendations is to implement the new *Open Space and Recreation Plan* and prepare timely updates of the plan in the future.

Most of Lincoln's conservation land was protected through outright purchase or donation. This will probably remain the preferred technique to protect high priority parcels in the future. However, Lincoln also has established some zoning regulations to encourage or require reservations of open space in new developments. As part of a comprehensive review of the existing Zoning Bylaw, Lincoln could consider updating its regulations and providing for additional ways to preserve open space. Potentially useful mechanisms may include cluster development by right, subject to site plan review, and additional zoning tools such as transfer of development rights (TDR) and backlot development. Some communities in Massachusetts have adopted special regulations to protect vistas, unique natural features, and corridors, too, usually by establishing overlay districts with incentives to locate development away from critical resource areas.<sup>26</sup>

Farming remains an important component of Lincoln's culture, rural character, and economy. Continuing to encourage owners of private agricultural land to place conservation restrictions or APRs on their property will help Lincoln maintain its impressive tradition of agriculture. CPA funds could be used to purchase restrictions or to acquire the land in fee under a leaseback agreement with the farmer. In addition, the newly formed Agricultural Commission will need to receive adequate support to carry out its responsibilities.

Communication and cooperation between the town, adjacent communities, and non-profit conservation organizations is critical to protect open space resources of regional significance. This will require continued collaboration with the LLCT and RLF to protect the town's remaining priority open spaces, and enhanced communications with non-local conservation groups in order to facilitate joint action. Toward these ends, Lincoln could host annual forums, monthly discussion groups, and other systematic ways to promote mutual conservation and recreation interests.

### **Goal OS-2. Promote active stewardship of existing agriculture and conservation land.**

- OS-2.1. Maintain the Conservation Commission's Property Baseline Inventory and Monitoring Program.
- OS-2.2. Encourage best land management practices, such as farming or recreation field maintenance practices compatible with natural resources, ecologically sound woodlot management, and scientifically sound management of existing open farm ponds.
- OS-2.3. Support long-term land stewardship with local resources, grants, stewardship fees, and other funding sources.
- OS-2.4. Establish and enforce policies for addressing violations of conservation restrictions and regulations governing the use of conservation land.

<sup>26</sup> These ideas are discussed in more depth in Chapter 2, Land Use, and Chapter 5, The Built Environment.

## DISCUSSION

These recommendations need to be implemented by carrying out the actions identified in Lincoln's *Open Space and Recreation Plan* (2008). The town's exceptional baseline inventory and monitoring program requires continued financial support both from the town and the LLCT. Enhancing Lincoln's existing staff and volunteer capacity through college and university partnerships should be considered. Though large non-profit charitable organizations sometimes make grants available for inventory and stewardship programs, usually they favor awarding seed grants to establish new programs over grants to extend or enhance existing ones. Lincoln's most likely source of continued funding for its stewardship programs will remain its own taxpayers. In addition, the town should consider establishing stewardship fees and a special revenue fund for stewardship revenues, although the existing Conservation Fund may be appropriate for this purpose as well. The fees could be as simple as a "flat fee" for each conservation restriction or a fee structure based on an analysis of the town's cost to monitor and manage its land. Some of the large non-profit conservation organizations charge stewardship fees that represent a percentage of the market value of the land. For cities and towns, fees need to bear some rational relationship to the actual cost of a service.

Lincoln has taken countless steps to protect open space and care for its conservation land, but the town's population is changing and not all residents will be equally informed about the place of conservation and stewardship in Lincoln's community culture. Public education tools that reach people in a wide variety of locations and settings could help to increase local knowledge of the town's conservation agenda and how individuals can be part of it. The Conservation Department makes good use of the town's website, but the website needs some redesign to make it more user-friendly. Conservation displays at the library, the entrance to town hall, the Mall at Lincoln Station, and school buildings also could be considered, and displays with photographs of residents working on trails projects or participating in farm tours would communicate the message that people can make a difference. Similarly, residents who already use environmentally protective landscaping practices on their own property may be willing to allow their yards to be photographed for a display board.

Land stewardship requires a consistent commitment to environmental awareness and oversight. New regulations and policies that promote ecologically responsible land management practices, including farming, landscape maintenance, and woodlot management may need to be considered. Furthermore, continued monitoring of existing conservation lands and lands with conservation restrictions will be critical to ensure that public use or encroachments by abutters do not harm natural resources. The town will continue to need adequate capacity to enforce conservation restrictions and the rules and regulations for use of conservation land.

### **Goal OS-3. Maximize recreational opportunities on recreation and conservation land.**

- OS-3.1. Provide for multiple uses of recreation and conservation land, and multiple recreation uses of conservation trails.
- OS-3.2. Maintain and evaluate opportunities to expand the roadside path and trail network.
- OS-3.3. Maintain current recreation facilities and provide new facilities to meet evolving community needs.

## DISCUSSION

Lincoln's renowned roadside paths and conservation trails are a model for other towns. Maintaining existing trails and constructing new ones require volunteers and staff, but Lincoln is a small town and it does not have unlimited resources. Moreover, some of Lincoln's trails cross privately owned land, and not all of the trails are

protected by conservation restrictions or easements. A trails master plan helps to focus on priorities, and one should be developed collaboratively with adjacent towns, other government agencies, and non-profits.

Lincoln's commitment to open space sometimes makes it difficult for the town to meet other community interests, notably active recreation, or land and facilities designed for intensive recreation uses. The town has unmet needs for playing fields, both additional fields and maintenance of existing fields. Some residents say that Lincoln's conservation program has been so successful that it is hard to find unrestricted land suitable for active recreation, and they think more should be done to make public land available for purposes in addition to conservation. Further, Lincoln's interest in promoting mixed-use development around Lincoln Station means that eventually, the town will need to look at other possibilities for land currently occupied by the DPW garage on Lewis Street. This is an example of an area that would be suitable for multiple uses, including recreation fields, more than for conservation land. A working group with representatives of the Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Housing Commission, Recreation Committee, and town staff should participate in a joint land and facilities needs analysis and land suitability study. This involves reviewing town parcels that are not protected by a conservation restriction and all unprotected privately owned parcels, and making suitability determinations for buildings and facilities identified in the needs analysis.

