

Section 6: Community Vision

Description of Process

The Town of Gill's open space and recreation goal statement was developed through the following planning process:

- In 2017, the Select Board approved an Open Space and Recreation Committee to update the 2011 Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Committee held eight public meetings and a public forum.
- The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee developed an Open Space and Recreation Survey in early 2020. The survey was advertised via the Town newsletter. The survey was also made available online through SurveyMonkey and a link to the survey was posted on the homepage of the Town of Gill's website. Paper copies of the survey were available at the Town Hall, the Slate Library, and at polling locations during the March 2020 Presidential Primary Election.
- Results of the survey – along with the draft goals and objectives – were presented at the public forum, held on December 21, 2020.
- The results of the survey and input from the Forum – as well as analysis of existing conditions and the Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest were used as the basis for the development of the final goals statement as well as the final goals and objectives.
- The Open Space and Recreation Plan Committee developed draft sections of Gill's Open Space and Recreation Plan with input from members of the community. The Committee was comprised of the Town Administrator, Town Clerk, representatives of the Conservation Commission, Energy Commission, Cemetery Commission, and residents.

See the Appendix for meeting sign in sheets, agendas and a copy of the survey and its detailed results.

Vision Statement of Open Space and Recreational Goals

General Open Space and Recreational Goals

People live in Gill in part because they like its rural, small town character. According to the 2020 Open Space and Recreation Survey, respondents highly value the open fields and working farms, forests and trails, and rivers and streams. Many respondents of the survey (over 40%) said that they would be willing to donate money or pay higher taxes for the town to protect additional land.

Residents who responded to the Open Space and Recreation Survey and participated in the process of developing this Open Space and Recreation Plan confirmed that the vision from the 2011 OSRP still remains a valid future for Gill's natural, recreational and agricultural resources and its economic vitality.

Vision Statement

In a vision of its future, the Town of Gill will preserve its valued agricultural landscapes and working farms and forests and support sustainable economic development that protects the Town's natural, historic, and cultural resources, strengthens the tax base, and provides goods, services, and jobs for its residents. The Town will support a proactive planning process that encourages land uses to sustain the health of its waters, forests, wildlife and working farms and forests, preserves historic resources and that identifies areas appropriate for carefully planned commercial and industrial development. The Town will also identify ways in which working farms, forests, and waterways could contribute to the Town's economic development by potentially supporting agritourism and ecotourism.

The Town will strive to provide more information to residents on options to protect open spaces to assist landowners and developers in designing projects that sustain and enhance the community's shared assets and character. The Town will also strive to enhance the recreational experiences of its school children – and of all citizens – by supporting improved recreational opportunities and/or facilities. This Open Space and Recreation Plan is a vital component of a proactive, sustainable land planning and development process that will strive to effectively and equitably manage growth and development in Gill while preserving natural resources and wildlife habitat, historic features, scenic roads and vistas, and recreational opportunities for current and future residents of the town.

Goals

From this Vision Statement, several broad goals emerge. They include:

- Protecting Gill's natural, recreational and agricultural resources;
- Responding to the needs of farmers and foresters;
- Maintaining or improving recreational programs and facilities, particularly programming for youth;
- Collaborating with other entities to protect Gill's open space and recreational resources; and
- Supporting economic development.