

Section 8: Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives were formulated from the results of the 2020 Gill Open Space and Recreation Planning Survey and were reviewed and modified through the public meetings of the Gill Open Space and Recreation Committee. Review of the 2011 Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan, the 2004 Gill Community Development Plan, the as well as public input and comment were also considered in the formulation of the goals and objectives.



Improvements to the Gill Elementary School nature trail are included in Goal 3.

To help achieve this Open Space and Recreation Plan's goals and objectives, a Seven-Year Action Plan is included in Section 9. The Action Plan includes responsible parties and potential funding sources as well as projected start dates. Establishing an ongoing Open Space and Recreation Committee is critical to a successful implementation of the Action Plan.

Goals and Objectives

GOAL 1:

Ensure that the Town of Gill continues to protect its valued cultural, historical, scenic, and archeological resources through conservation and stewardship.

Objectives Related to Goal 1:

- Prioritize areas in Gill with significant cultural, historical, scenic, archeological resources so that town officials and residents can act efficiently when a parcel of land containing such resources becomes available for protection.
- Encourage landowners interested in protecting their land from development to work with Franklin Land Trust, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, with state and federal conservation agencies, and with the Town of Gill.

GOAL 2: Ensure that the Town of Gill continues to protect its valued natural resources (including water resources, wildlife habitat, forests and farmlands), while responding to the needs of farm and forest landowners and of other businesses producing local products in Town.

Objectives Related to Goal 2:

- Build a comprehensive biological and geological inventory in selected areas of Gill using community volunteers.
- Support the training of local volunteers in vernal pool certification for students and citizens.
- Explore revisions and updates to Gill’s “Conservation Development” zoning bylaw that would result in greater protection of valued “natural and cultural resources” and, which could also help to ensure any land development provides benefits that reflect the town’s natural resource conservation goals.
- Explore the potential for developing a private conservation land trust or land fund for Gill.
- Continue to protect river and stream banks, particularly the portions of the Connecticut River bank subject to chronic erosion.
- Consider ways that the town might support agricultural and forest operations as they would other commercial or industrial businesses in town.
- Support the marketing of Gill farm and forest products as well as other locally produced products.
- Explore the options for encouraging agritourism in Gill.
- Encourage a connection between Gill farmers and foresters and Gill's school children to foster knowledge of natural systems in children and to help satisfy any unmet recreational needs of children in an innovative manner.

GOAL 3: Ensure that the Town of Gill maintains or improves the quality and accessibility of all its recreational facilities and programming.

Objectives Related to Goal 3:

- Evaluate the needs of all municipal recreational facilities and properties.
- Explore the feasibility of developing a new recreational facility for Gill Elementary School and residents of Gill.
- Promote existing and future recreational facilities and services.
- Continue to cooperate with private entities in town such as FirstLight, Gill-Montague School District, The Nature Conservancy, and Northfield Mount Hermon School that provide recreational facilities used by Gill residents.
- Support the development of multi-use and limited-use trail systems, which can be accessed from publicly owned land or private lands with permission.
- Identify recreational needs of residents of all ages and develop new programs and facilities as appropriate.

GOAL 4: Ensure that the Town of Gill residents and Town officials successfully work together and with others to guide the conservation of open space and recreation resources.

Objectives Related to Goal 4:

- Form a permanent Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.
- Conduct public outreach regarding the activities of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.
- Explore opportunities to partner with local, regional, and statewide land conservation organizations and agencies to better leverage limited town dollars and volunteer hours towards the conservation of priority resource areas.

GOAL 5: Identify ways to balance open space and recreation resources preservation in Gill with commercial and industrial development to ensure an adequate tax base to support the Town.

Objectives Related to Goal 5:

- Provide support and planning to individuals wishing to start new commercial or industrial businesses.
- Identify suitable areas to pursue additional commercial or industrial businesses in town.
- Determine what types of businesses, products and services are supported in town.