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September 25, 2025

Jessica Atwood  
FRCOG  
John W. Olver Transit Center  
12 Olive Street Suite 2  
Greenfield, MA 01301

Re: Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Atwood:

Thank you for submitting the updated Action Plan for the Town of Gill's Open Space and Recreation Plan extending the goals and objectives over 10 years. I'm pleased to write that the plan has received an additional three years of approval, and the town is eligible to apply for DCS grants through April 2031. Please contact me at [melissa.cryan@mass.gov](mailto:melissa.cryan@mass.gov) if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

*Melissa Cryan*

Melissa Cryan  
Grant Programs Supervisor

## **Section 9: Ten-Year Action Plan**

This Ten-Year Action Plan on the following pages is intended to provide concrete steps towards implementing the goals and objectives discussed in previous sections of this Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Action Plan restates the goals and objectives followed by prioritized recommended actions, potential funding sources, the board or group responsible for implementation, and projected start dates. By implementing the recommended actions, each of the objectives will begin to be realized. The Action Plan Map at the end of this section is a graphical representation of highlights of the Action Plan.

Successful implementation will require the participation of existing town boards, committees and staff, including, but not limited to: the Open Space and Recreation Committee, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, and Agricultural Commission. Successful implementation will also require the collaboration of the town with other local and regional entities working in the town and the surrounding area such as the Connecticut River Watershed Council, Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust, Franklin Land Trust, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Accomplishing the actions identified in this section will require time and commitment from dedicated volunteers. Forming an ongoing Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee is critical to this Plan's success. 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. A broad base of community support for the Open Space and Recreation Plan should facilitate the fundraising which may be needed to implement the action items.



Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan – Ten-Year Action Plan

<i>GOAL/OBJECTIVES</i>	<i>ACTIONS</i>	<i>NOTES / STATUS OF ACTION ITEM IF CARRIED OVER FROM 2011</i>	<i>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</i>	<i>RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP</i>	<i>PROJECTED START DATES</i>
<b>GOAL 1:</b> Ensure that the Town of Gill continues to protect its valued cultural, historical, scenic, and archeological resources through conservation and stewardship.					
Prioritize areas in Gill with significant cultural, historical, scenic, archeological importance so that town officials and residents can act efficiently when a parcel of land containing such resources becomes available for protection.	Develop a list of criteria which, if identified on a parcel being offered as a donation or for sale in Town, would signify priority for action. If the parcel is under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B, this could trigger the town’s official consideration of its right-of-first-refusal to acquire or otherwise seek to conserve a parcel of land.	Not started.	Town, Direct Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission	2021
	Develop a protocol for how the town would consider using its right-of-first-refusal (or assigning the right to a conservation land trust or conservation agency) regarding Chapter lands that are put up for sale for development.	Not started.	Town, DLTA, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and Select Board	2022
	Using the list of criteria and the GIS maps in the Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan, identify general areas of conservation interest that would be considered to be priority areas with significant cultural, historic, scenic, natural, and archeological resources.	Not started.	Town, DLTA	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and Conservation Commission	2022
	Meet with local land trusts to better understand the details of holding conservation restrictions and provide training for Town boards and other interested parties.	Not started.	Town, Local land trusts	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Select Board, Conservation Commission, Land Trusts	2022
	Implement, publicize, and monitor the effectiveness of the Gill Historical Commission’s Archaeology Accountability Policy adopted in 2015.	New in 2020	Town, Volunteers, Massachusetts Cultural Council	Historical Commission	2021 (ongoing process)
	Include an annual “what’s new in land conservation in Gill” article in the quarterly Gill Newsletter.	Not started.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee,	2021
	Along with prioritizing areas to protect, prioritize areas not to protect so that some development is possible. See also Goal 5.	Not started.	Town, Volunteers	Planning Board, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Development Committee (yet to be formed)	2022
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.	Invite Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and Franklin Land Trust to a town forum to provide a presentation on their current activities and on the assistance they have to offer to Gill landowners.	Mount Grace and Franklin Land Trust did hold presentations in 2010. This is still an education action item and should remain in the plan.	Volunteers or supported by land trusts.	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2022

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<b>GOAL 2:</b> 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.					
Build a comprehensive biological and geological inventory in selected areas of Gill using community volunteers.	Work with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) to coordinate annual spring walks to inventory animals, insects, fish, plants, trees and significant geological features in the Town Forest.	An inventory of fern species in the Town Forest was conducted in 2019-2020	Town, Volunteers, Town Forest trust fund, Massachusetts Cultural Council	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Forest Committee, Conservation Commission and MACC	2021 (ongoing process)
	Explore support for joining FRCOG's Regional Pollinator Habitat Corridor Project.	New in 2020	Town, Volunteers, Direct Local Technical Aid	Residents, Agricultural Commission, Select Board	2021
Support the training of local volunteers in vernal pool certification for students and citizens.	Encourage Northfield Mount Hermon and Gill-Montague Schools and residents to participate in a training program in vernal pool certification.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers, State funds (MVP)	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Gill-Montague School	2023
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.	Request the Franklin Regional Planning Board – or Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) - to present a program on zoning bylaws for the conservation of "natural and cultural resources" and encourage Gill residents to attend the meeting.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	UMass Extension Citizen Planner Training Collaborative	Planning Board and Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2023
	Develop, publicize, and if received well by the residents of Gill, seek to adopt bylaw changes that will help to expand protection of valued "natural and cultural resources."	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Direct Local Technical Aid through Department of Housing and Community Development	Planning Board	2024
	Revisit the benefits of conservation/cluster development and determine whether current conservation development zoning is still the best option for Gill.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Direct Local Technical Aid through Department of Housing and Community Development	Planning Board	2023
Explore the potential for developing a private conservation land trust or land fund for Gill.	Invite members of a small, private land trust, such as the trust in Whately, to a meeting of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee as a first step to understanding the value and risks associated with having a local land trust. Include members of former and merged small land trusts to understand the evolution and life cycle of such organizations.	Revised for 2020	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2023
	Further explore the possibility of adopting the Community Preservation Act.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Select Board, Planning Board, Historical Commission, Board of Assessors, Tax Collector	2022

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Continue to protect river and stream banks, particularly the portions of the Connecticut River bank subject to chronic erosion.	Participate in the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee.	Ongoing.	Town, Volunteers	Conservation Commission	Ongoing
	Take an active role in the FERC relicensing process for FirstLight's hydroelectric facilities and strongly advocate for riverbank stabilization and erosion mitigation measures to be included in the new 50-year operating licenses.	New in 2020 but ongoing since 2014.	Town, Volunteers, DLTA, FRCOG, Connecticut River Conservancy, Connecticut River Watershed Council, Landowners	Select Board, Conservation Commission, Landowners	2021
Consider ways that the town might support agricultural and forest operations as they would other commercial or industrial businesses in town.	At Town Meeting, vote to set aside funding each year for agricultural and forestland conservation.	Ongoing.	Town	Agricultural Commission, Conservation Commission, Town Administrator, Select Board, Finance Committee	2022 and ongoing annually
Support the marketing of Gill farm and forest products as well as other locally produced products.	Broaden publicity for events that feature local products to attract attendees from area towns.	Item is underway and is ongoing.	Volunteers, local farmers	Agricultural Commission	Ongoing
	Support farm-to-table relationships between Gill farms and local restaurants.	New in 2020	Volunteers, local farmers, DLTA, MDAR, school lunch programs	Agricultural Commission	2022
	Organize Gill Fall Picnic as a venue to showcase local agricultural products and foster community spirit.	Started in 2018	Volunteers, Town, State funds (Mass Food Trust or Ventures Program)	Agricultural Commission, Friends of Gill	2018 and ongoing annually
Explore the options for encouraging agritourism in Gill.	Consider hosting a farm tour to highlight farm products and strengthen the connection between farmers and potential and/or existing customers.	Begun and ongoing.	Volunteers, local farmers, State funds (Mass Food Trust or Ventures Program)	Agricultural Commission	Ongoing
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.	Evaluate whether there is a way in which some of Gill school children's recreational needs could be met through field trips to farm or forest operations.	Item is underway and is ongoing.	Volunteers, MDAR, Massachusetts Cultural Council	Agricultural Commission, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Gill Elementary School Staff	Ongoing

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<b>GOAL 3:</b> Ensure that the Town of Gill maintains or improves the quality and accessibility of all its recreational facilities and programming.					
Evaluate the needs of all municipal recreational facilities and properties.	Inventory and assess all existing recreational facilities, properties and programs and implement transition plan recommendations.	ADA assessment conducted in 2018	Town, Volunteers, Community Compact Commission, State funds (MOD)	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Administrator	2018 and ongoing
	Partner with Northfield Mount Hermon and the Gill-Montague School System to work on making their recreational facilities available to Gill residents during the week.	Not yet started.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Northfield Mount Hermon representative, Gill-Montague School representative	2023
	Explore the feasibility of improving the Stacy's Ferry public land for use as park, picnic area and river access for kayaks and canoes, including ADA accessibility.	Not yet started.	Town, Volunteers, State funds (PARC or DCR grants), FirstLight	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Select Board, Conservation Commission	2021
	Support re-establishment of a Recreation Committee	New in 2020.	Town, Volunteers, Recreation Committee Revolving Fund	Select Board, Finance Committee, Town Administrator	2021 or as residents step forward to volunteer
Explore the feasibility of developing a new recreational facility for Gill Elementary School and residents of Gill.	Apply for an MA Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program grant to fund the development of a new recreational facility for Gill Elementary School and for residents of Gill.	Not yet started. Still relevant.	MA Division of Conservation Services, Town, Gill Elementary PTO, Community Donations	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Gill Elementary PTO, Select Board, School Committee	2023
	Monitor conditions, maintain, and upgrade Riverside School recreation facilities and encourage more use of them.	Revised in 2020.	Town, Volunteers, Four Winds School, State funds (PARC)	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Administrator	2021 (ongoing process)
	Support the repair and ongoing maintenance of the Gill Elementary School nature trail.	Parent volunteers began the work in 2017.	Town, Volunteers, MA Division of Conservation Services (PARC)	Gill Elementary parent volunteers, Conservation Commission	2017 (ongoing process)

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Promote existing and future recreational facilities and services.	Submit a regular “Open Space and Recreation” column to the Gill Newsletter.	Several articles about the Town Forest have appeared since 2015.	Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Forest Committee	Ongoing.
	Develop a guide to facilities, programs, and trail systems in town.	Town Forest trail map and brochure published in 2018.	Town, Volunteers, Town Forest trust fund, State funds (DCR Stewardship grant)	Recreation Committee, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Forest Committee, Volunteer with graphics skills	Ongoing.
	Develop a one-page, easily reproduced flyer that shows the locations of different recreational facilities in and around Gill. Mail to all residents each year as part of a regular Gill Newsletter mailing.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers, DLTA, Public Health grants	Recreation Committee, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Volunteers	2023
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.	Include FirstLight, the Gill-Montague School District, The Nature Conservancy, and Northfield Mount Hermon School as well as other entities on the mailing lists for meetings of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and the Recreation Committee as a way of communicating the town’s interest in a mutually beneficial relationship with these organizations.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2022
	Request FirstLight to host an annual outdoor education program at one of its Gill properties.	New in 2020.	FirstLight	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, FirstLight	2022
Support the development of multi-use and limited-use trail systems, which can be accessed from publicly owned land or private lands with permission.	Encourage the formation of a non-municipal trails committee.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers, DCR funding for trail access over private lands (MassTrails)	Volunteers	2022
	Inventory and map the existing system of largely informal trails on Town and State-owned land.	Town Forest trail map published in 2018	State funds (MassTrails), DLTA	Town Forest Committee, Trails Committee	2023
	Use the Gill Newsletter to promote a meeting on trails and trail development. Gauge interest among landowners for allowing public access and the creation of new trails in town. If interest is strong, encourage a secondary meeting to establish a course of action.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers, DCR funding for trail access over private lands (MassTrails)	Recreation Committee and Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Volunteers	2022

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	Establish a public access trail along the Fall River from the Town Forest (Gill/Bernardston town line) to the confluence of the Fall and Connecticut Rivers in Factory Hollow.	New in 2020.	Town, Volunteers, MA Division of Conservation Services (MassTrails)	Recreation Committee and Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Forest Committee, Volunteers	2022
	Investigate with FirstLight the possibility of creating a public access park on land between Riverview Drive and the Connecticut River, similar to the walking path and picnic area on the Montague side.	New in 2020.	FirstLight	Select Board, Conservation Commission, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Volunteers	2021
Identify recreational needs of residents of all ages and develop new programs and facilities as appropriate.	Use the Gill Newsletter to report results of the OSRP survey and to request volunteers to take on activities that most interest them. If volunteer recruitment is unsuccessful, seek grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to fund staff time and direct costs for the most desired program.	Not started. Still relevant.	Massachusetts Cultural Council	Recreation Committee and Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Volunteers,	2021
<b>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.</b>					
Form a permanent Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.	Use the Gill Newsletter to explore if there are volunteers interested in serving on an Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.	New in 2020	Town, Volunteers	Select Board, Town Administrator	2021
	Request the Select Board approve a warrant article for Town Meeting vote that asks to establish a standing Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.	Not started. Still relevant.	Volunteers	Select Board	2022
	Monitor the implementation of the 2020 Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan.	Not begun. Still relevant.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2021 (ongoing)
	Revise and update any sections of the OSRP throughout the ten-year period in preparation for the next OSRP.	Not begun. Still relevant.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2021 (ongoing)
	Encourage existing committees to periodically review their Action Plan responsibilities.	New in 2020.	Volunteers	Town Committees	2021 (ongoing)
Conduct public outreach regarding the activities of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.	Create an online presence for Open Space and Recreation activities in Gill via the Town website or Facebook.	Not begun. Still relevant.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Administrator	2022
Explore opportunities to partner with local, regional, and statewide land conservation organizations and agencies to better leverage limited	Meet annually with conservation organizations such as Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust, Franklin Land Trust and other entities to discuss any potential conservation projects.	Not begun. Still relevant.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2022

<i><b>GOAL/OBJECTIVES</b></i>	<i><b>ACTIONS</b></i>	<i><b>NOTES / STATUS OF ACTION ITEM IF CARRIED OVER FROM 2011</b></i>	<i><b>POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES</b></i>	<i><b>RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP</b></i>	<i><b>PROJECTED START DATES</b></i>
town dollars and volunteer hours towards the conservation of priority resource areas.	Send a town representative to attend quarterly meetings of the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership to engage land conservation agencies and organizations and other town open space committees in efforts that focus on Gill priorities as well as on broader landscape-scale conservation.	Not begun. Still relevant.	North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2022
<b>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.</b>					
Provide support and planning to individuals wishing to start new commercial or industrial businesses.	Establish a study committee to promote new commercial and industrial development in Town. Learn about and publicize availability of assistance for individuals wishing to start new businesses in Town.	Not yet started. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Planning Board, Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2023
	Conduct outreach to regional organizations, such as the Franklin County Community Development Corporation, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce, and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, to research existing business development and entrepreneurial resources	Not yet started. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Planning Board, Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2023
	Based upon results of research, create a public outreach and education webpage and/or a brochure that identifies resources to individuals wishing to start a new business in Town.	Not yet started. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers, DLTA funds	Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2024
	Encourage home-based businesses in order to expand the number of commercial businesses without developing new parcels of land.	Not yet started. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2023
Identify suitable areas to pursue additional commercial or industrial businesses in Town.	Revisit and update the 2004 Gill Community Development Plan as a starting point to identify areas in Gill suitable for commercial or industrial development.	Not yet started. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers, DLTA funds	Planning Board, Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2024
	Conduct periodic reviews of the zoning bylaws to determine if they continue to accommodate economic development efforts.	Not yet started. Still relevant.	Town	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals	2022 (ongoing)
Determine what types of businesses, products and services are supported in town.	Conduct a survey to evaluate the types of businesses, products and services that are supported in Town.	Not yet started. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2023

Work with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) to coordinate annual spring walks to inventory animals, insects, fish, plants, trees and significant geological features in the Town Forest.

Take an active role in the FERC relicensing process for FirstLight's hydroelectric facilities and strongly advocate for riverbank stabilization and erosion mitigation measures to be included in the new 50-year operating licenses.

Partner with Northfield Mount Hermon and the Gill-Montague School System to work on making their recreational facilities available to Gill residents during the week.

Apply for an MA Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program grant to fund the development of a new recreational facility for Gill Elementary School and for residents of Gill.

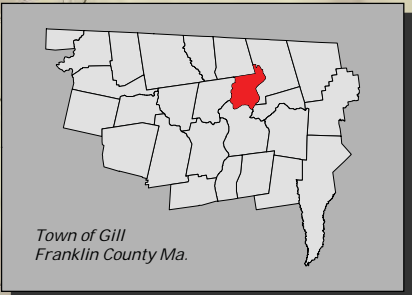
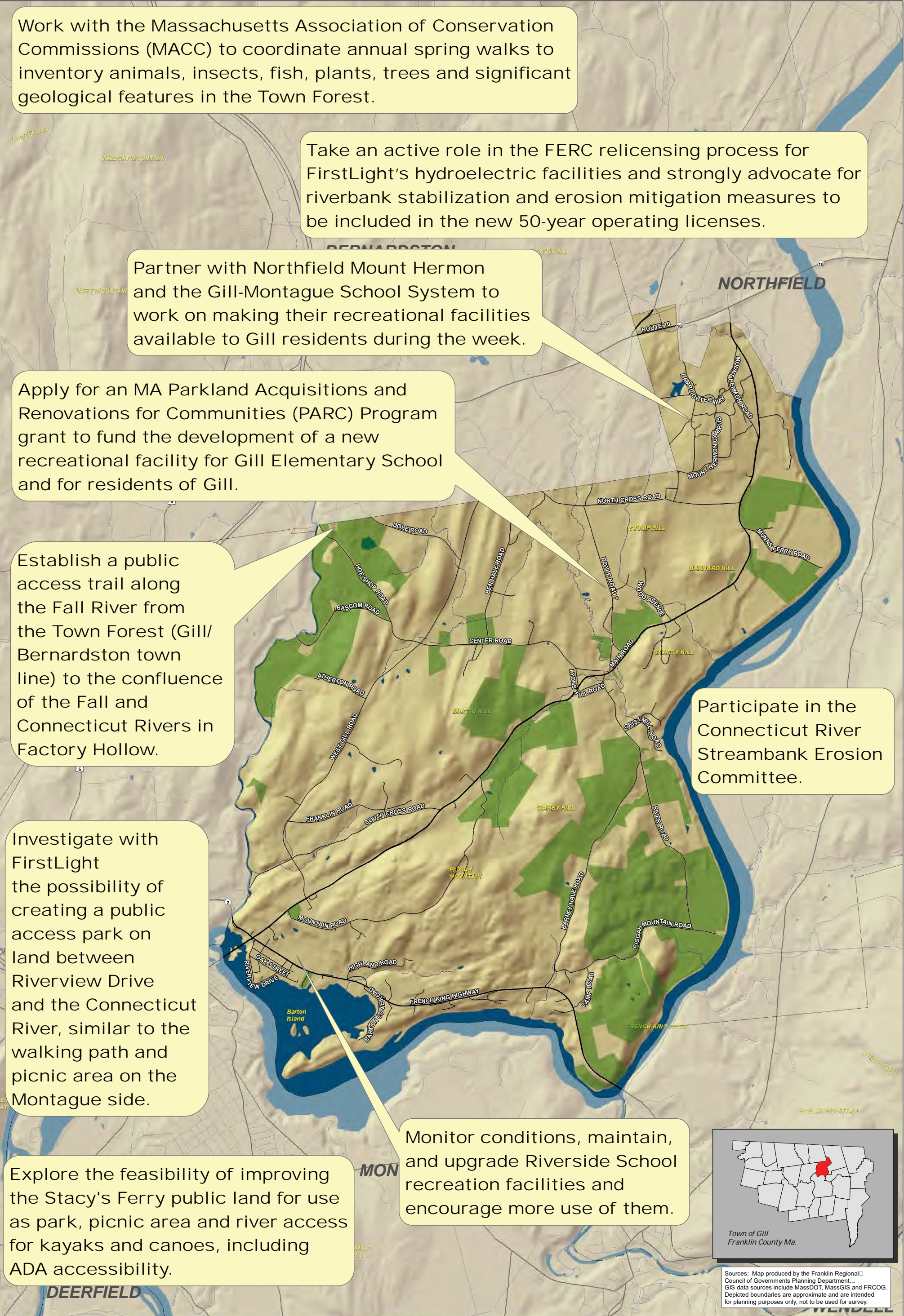
Establish a public access trail along the Fall River from the Town Forest (Gill/ Bernardston town line) to the confluence of the Fall and Connecticut Rivers in Factory Hollow.

Investigate with FirstLight the possibility of creating a public access park on land between Riverview Drive and the Connecticut River, similar to the walking path and picnic area on the Montague side.

Explore the feasibility of improving the Stacy's Ferry public land for use as park, picnic area and river access for kayaks and canoes, including ADA accessibility.

Monitor conditions, maintain, and upgrade Riverside School recreation facilities and encourage more use of them.

Participate in the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee.



Sources: Map produced by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department. GIS data sources include MassDOT, MassGIS and FRCOG. Depicted boundaries are approximate and are intended for planning purposes only, not to be used for survey.

# Town of Gill Open Space & Recreation Plan 2020

## Action Plan

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Oct. 11, 2018



Permanently  
Protected



Franklin Regional  
Council of Governments