

OSRP Update 10th Meeting

March 14, 2019 7:30pm

Attendance: Evan Abramson (FRCOG), Megan Rhodes (FRCOG), Gail Berrigan, Miho Connolly, Eva Gibavic

Blue = action items

Red = discussion item; needs input

Green = Administrative/minor corrections to be made

Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest

- **Committee to review draft and return comments by 3/28**
- ADA Report - **not reviewed by OSRP; report by contractor**
 - **Miho to forward copy of report to FRCOG**
 - The Town can be held liable if town-owned properties (including parking lots at trailheads) do not comply with ADA regulations (i.e. handicap van accessible signs)
 - Town/ConCom should work to meet ADA regulations
- **Committee to fill out table 5-8 & 5-9 (by 3/28)**
 - Managers: State agency (MassWildlife, DCR, UMass); Town office (ConCom or Town of Leverett)
 - Condition: For recreation
 - Access: Free, discouraged, "limited through lands in private ownership," "limited, through easements with neighboring properties"
 - Grants: i.e. any state funding. Include info about CPA funds; MassTrails grants do not apply
 - Cemeteries are not included in these tables because they do not technically enjoy any protections.

MAP: Open Space Inventory

- **Add to legend: Land owned by private land trusts with potential for protection (pale green)**
 - These properties are mostly owned by the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust (and one parcel by Mt Grace), but are not otherwise protected.
- **Eva to review map and check for errors**

Action Plan Items

- 7-year action plan; include start and target end dates.
- Goal 1: Preserve the Rural Character of Leverett
 - **Miho to ask Margie: Can Community Development Plan still be considered relevant?**
 - Preserve historic and cultural resources including historic homes - **remove 'based on rankings'; add Community Preservation Committee to Responsible Boards.**
 - **Miho to ask Planning Board: Any discussion about building cap?**
 - Probably is no longer relevant
 - **Miho to ask Zoning Board & FRCOG to check bylaws: Updates to zoning regulations?**
 - Establish and Agricultural Advisory Commission - **Assess interest of Leverett residents in local agriculture in survey?**
 - Otherwise probably not relevant to Leverett
 - **Establish restrictions on roadside shade tree removal - Keep.**
- Goal 2: Protect & Preserve Natural Resources:
 - **Reword action items listed under 2010 'Protect and Preserve Natural Resources'**
 - We don't like the idea of 'ranking' habitats, water resources-- 'explore'? 'Assess'?

- *“Evaluate existing and potential conservation parcels (e.g. Ch61) for significant characteristics and develop a prioritization system” ?*
- *“Identify Town goals for conservation areas and prioritize parcels for conservation acquisition and/or management.” ?*
- Add RGT to responsible boards
- Establish permanent protections on unprotected lands of conservation value (i.e. RGT properties, Town limited protection properties as appropriate) - RGT & ConCom
- Explore the acquisition of ‘owner unknown’ properties as conservation areas
- Evaluate current management of town lands and explore alternative management methods (including establishing ‘wildlands’, forest harvest, alternative energy farms, targeted habitat management)
 - Wildlands: Areas with limited human interference. Many sources of funding (and CRs) require public access - but we could just refrain from putting in trails, prohibit snowmobiling, etc.
 - This may be particularly applicable to landlocked parcels that are otherwise not in use and/or ‘owner unknown’
- Create a report on Leverett’s wetlands using USFWS wetland data
- Goal 3: Improve Public education related to open space
 - Trail maps, signage - *“Continue to update ...”* - RGT, ConCom (Leverett Trails Committee)
 - Install roadside signage for conservation areas and improve wayfinding at trailheads - RGT, ConCom (LTC)
 - Work with willing landowners and/or purchase properties to connect existing trails and to improve signage, parking, and access for trailheads - RGT, ConCom (LTC)
 - Establish public education information space - *remove (complete)*
 - Or, “Maintain public education informational space at Town Library”
 - Distribute informational materials for improving landowner awareness of open space needs and benefits and options of private stewardship - ConCom
 - Distribute resources about effective land stewardship, including treatment of invasives, responsible chemical use (e.g. pesticide, fertilizer), promoting native ecosystems - ConCom
 - Continue to organize trail hikes on Town and RGT trails - RGT, ConCom (LTC)
 - Friends of Leverett Pond don’t really do this
 - Continue to work with Friends of Leverett Pond to implement Nuisance Aquatic Plant Management Plan... - FLP, ConCom
 - Remove ‘handicapped accessible boardwalk’ and “trail around pond” - mentioned in later goals.
 - “Leverett Pond Committee” does not exist
 - Explore the possibility of creating a trail around Leverett Pond - FLP, ConCom, RGT (LTC) -- Keep
 - Expand trails around town to increase their interconnections - RGT, ConCom (LTC) -- Keep
 - Create Leverett Elementary School Outdoor Learning Environment that includes an ADA-accessible trail and fitness activities - Leverett Elementary School, RGT + ConCom (LTC), Council on Aging, Recreation Commission
 - Eva-- does this wording suit you?
 - Complete Leverett-Shutesbury school-to-school trail - Remove

- Install ADA-compliant trails - RGT, ConCom, Council on Aging, Recreation Commission, Friends of Leverett Pond
 - Gordon King trails may be a good candidate for a wetland boardwalk, if access can be secured.
 - Friendship trails another option if parking were available

Public Participation

- Need heavy public participation for report; another public forum is required at the end to present results.
- Create an online survey - SurveyMonkey
 - Based on Erving OSRP Survey. **Committee to submit comments/revisions to FRCOG by 3/28**
 - Distribution:
 - **Internet only? Or provide printed options?**
 - Create a QR code
 - **FRCOG to print flyer to advertise**
 - **Promote widely:** Newsletter (link/QR code); Town Meeting; public spaces (coop, library, Town Hall, elementary school...)
- What do we want to learn from the town?
 - What resources are utilized and how?
 - What resources are desired?
 - What are Leverett's special places?
 - What do Leverett residents value?
 - Development vs preservation of open space? How to?

Next Steps:

- **Miho: Ask Margie/CPC about extending FRCOG's contract to Dec 31 in order to finish administrative work/revisions from state**
- Timeline:
 - Survey to close 4/30
 - **Next (last) meeting: Thu, May 16 @ 7:30pm**
 - Public forum @ 6:00pm? before Select Board meeting on 5/28
 - *Representatives from each board must attend public forum*
 - FRCOG will present OSRP findings (~20min)
 - OSRP to be (mostly) complete by June 1
 - Town to submit OSRP to state
 - FRCOG to finish edits required by state and resubmit (~by Dec 31)

Next (last) meeting: Thu, May 16 @ 7:30pm