



Cattails by Cherrie Corey

Community Vision

This section highlights the broad themes that concern Concord residents. Concord residents want to preserve the Town’s unique character and meet the challenges faced on the Town’s lands into the future. Concord is engaged and acting on issues related to open space and recreation planning through the Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Natural Resources Commission, Recreation Committee, Trails Committee, Agriculture Committee, and Climate Action Network. Part of this open space and recreation planning includes implementing sustainable principles to help mitigate climate changes and ensuring food and water security.

A) Description of Process

This plan builds on Concord’s long history of planning and conservation. The process engaged citizens, town officials, and volunteers on the Open Space and Recreation Committee, assisted by a consulting team of graduate students from the Conway School. The report is an update of the *2004 Open Space and Recreation Plan*, as expanded and approved in 2010, and also draws concepts from the *2005 Comprehensive Long Range Plan: A Vision for 2020*.

inform the goals of this document.

The first community meeting was held on February 4, 2013, in the conference room of the town offices at 141 Keyes Road in Concord. Flyers, newspaper announcements, and emails were used to advertise the meeting and approximately 45 residents gave their input on priorities for open space and recreation in Concord. Roughly 40 people attended the second community meeting on March 13, 2013, and provided feedback on the preliminary recommenda

“Our open spaces are systematically being developed and are slowly disappearing. Preserving what is left is critical for the well-being of our community as well as its historic character.” – Concord Resident

The goals of the 2010 action plan provided guidance in developing the goals for this plan. Each 2010 action item was analyzed to ascertain whether it had been completed, still needs to be completed, or is no longer applicable. Community feedback from two community meetings and an online survey all helped

tions. In addition, an online survey was sent out in the Town, both in electronic and hard copy format, and 453 responses were collected and analyzed. In addition to community input, the Conway student team also sought information from experts in planning, ecology, and climate change.

B) Statement of Open Space and Recreation Goals

Many Concord residents are well-informed and proactive in their conservation efforts. They recognize the unique assets that Concord has to offer, including its recreational, ecological, and cultural resources. Concord residents expressed their concerns about development pressure, “mansionization” (tearing down existing homes and building much larger ones), loss of farmland, lack of safe bicycle routes, and lack of walkability and trail connecti-

ty. Residents also expressed a desire to protect the ecological integrity of the natural areas in their community.

From the planning process, the following four overarching goals emerged to help guide the action strategy for open space and recreation for the next seven years in Concord.

Four Overarching Goals

1. Protect water resources and biodiversity.

Residents want to protect water resources and biodiversity. Factors relevant to water resources include quality, availability/supply, and safety. Concern for biodiversity includes protecting wildlife habitat, connecting migration corridors, and managing invasive species.

2. Improve recreational access and connectivity.

Residents want schools, parks, and residential neighborhoods to be connected to natural areas through a network of improved trails and sidewalks. They are also interested in seeing the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail completed. Both goals will allow residents to engage more with the natural resources in Concord and thereby become better stewards of the land. Providing pedestrian and bike routes that connect amenities will allow for less car-dependence and help reduce the Town’s carbon footprint. Updating and distributing a town-wide trail map will ensure that all residents are aware of the trails and have the opportunity to use them.

3. Protect agricultural land, including fields, meadows, and orchards.

Residents want to protect farmland in Concord not only because of its scenic and historical importance, but also because of their desire to produce food locally.

4. Improve collaboration and management.

Many of the goals and objectives identified in the *2004 Open Space and Recreation Plan* address management and collaboration issues for the three goals listed above. Residents want town officials to collaborate with other town departments, strengthen relationships and share planning strategies with regional partners, and increase efforts to secure funding for implementation of the specific action items and other objectives outlined in this plan.