

The mission of the Lancaster Open Space and Recreation Committee is to advance the goals, objectives, and actions of the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan and to serve as a centralizing forum of this effort.

We had a busy year in 2011. Here is some of the work we did:

- Got our 2009-2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan finalized and approved by the State. We are now eligible for state grants.
- Our large project of the year continued to be the Thayer Field Recreation Campus Project that we started planning over a year ago. Please read more about this project, below
- The Water Resource District Task Force that was created in 2010 completed its advisory meetings in January and made a recommendation to the Planning Board in April 2011. The Task Force recommendation is to expand the Water Resource District to cover Lancaster's existing "Zone II" water supply protection areas designated by the MassDEP as well as the area of the proposed new well site on Route 110 by the Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area.
- In collaboration with the Commission on Disability, met with the State Office of Fishing and Boating Access, the State Office of Disability, and the Town Administrator to discuss site access modifications for persons with disability at the "to be constructed" Pellechia car-top boat launch on Route 70.
- Drafted "Land Protection Focus Areas" ranking matrix and GIS maps, which will be completed in early 2012. These land protection focus areas arise from the Open Space and Recreation Plan update process, which includes guidance from Mass Fish and Game;
- Drafted an advisory document for the Select Board about exercising the municipal "Right of First Refusal Process" on land proposed for Chapter tax status conversion;
- Began to process of collaborating with the Town Forest Committee to discuss working together on a Town-wide Forestry and Silviculture Plan.
- Collaborated with the Lancaster Friends of the Nashua River in forming a task force to work with town officials to open the locked gates and improve the entrance to the Nashua River Greenway Cook Conservation Area on Route 70 by "adopting" the entrance, the 2 ½ mile trail, and Greenway area as a service project. This project is in collaboration with the Conservation Commission and the Open Space and Recreation Committee.
- Continued to work with the Conservation Commission to develop land stewardship plans for town-owned conservation land. This initiative is ambitious and will take several years.

- Collaborated with The Thayer Memorial Library and the Lancaster Friends of the Nashua River in recruiting speakers for its Rosemary Davis environmental series.
- The Thayer Field Recreation Campus Project -

Planning activity surrounding the “Thayer Field Recreation Campus” project took on full focus during 2011. The established Thayer Field Task Force developed a mission statement for the 23 acre multi-generational, multi-recreation community campus project. As part of bringing this project towards PARC Grant Writing submittal for July 2012, many efforts have been tackled and accomplished, including identifying and completing ten (10) individual project plan team ideas and presentations for the Campus, Parcel Wetland Delineation in conjunction with the completion of parcel Survey and Topographical map. Completing these efforts, while working with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission, led the Task Force to a working UMASS Landscape/Architectural site development presentation which was delivered by the UMASS students December 8, 2011. The Thayer Field Task Force continued their ever-important open collaboration and outreach throughout the year with other Lancaster Town Committees and residents. This included establishing a Thayer Field Website, completing a town-wide survey and meeting to review status with respective town committees including Finance Committee, Planning Board, Conservation Committee, Recreation Committee, Board of Selectman as well as a specialized letter to all Parcel Abutters. Positive feedback has been received by all. Interest continues to be fostered in support of this intended Lancaster citizen recreation campus. For 2012 the Task Force will be focusing on establishing Non-Profit status so as to establish and commence fundraising efforts as Site Development plans are pulled together, project budgets are defined and grant writing submittal is prepared for submission.