

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Open Space and Recreation Committee came into being with the approval at the 2008 Town Meeting to fulfill the mission *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.*

The Committee completed the 2009-2016 Open Space and Recreation Plan and it was formally accepted and approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs in May 2010. Not taking anything for granted, members of the Open Space and Recreation Committee partnered with other town committees, boards, non-profit groups (such as the Lancaster Land Trust and the Lancaster Friends of the Nashua River) to make progress with the ambitious 7-year action plan.

The Thayer Field Campus Committee, now a separate town committee, arose from our Open Space and Recreation Plan update process and has gained significant recognition and traction supporting a recreation campus in the Town Center.

The Lancaster Trail & Bike Way Coalition was initiated in 2013 with the aim to unify and connect Lancaster's trails both locally and regionally. The Open Space and Recreation Committee appointed two of its members to this coalition (see separate LTBC annual report).

The Open Space and Recreation Committee participated on an exploration team to determine the feasibility of adopting the Community Preservation Act for Town Meeting vote in the future.

The Open Space and Recreation Committee continued to advocate and advise on parcels of interest for land protection, building off of GIS mapping that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission completed in 2012.

The Open Space & Recreation Committee is moving forward with the implementation of the Open Space & Recreation Plan. As part of this implementation, the OSRC would like to involve the many stakeholders that are beneficiaries of the plan, including:

- Planning Board
- Conservation Commission
- Board of Selectmen
- Town Forest Committee
- Trail & Bike Way Coalition
- Land Trust
- Friends of the Nashua River/Cook CA
- Commission on Disability
- DPW
- Agricultural Commission
- Recreation Committee
- Thayer Field Campus Committee

The OSRC will re-affirm the goals of the OSRP, and plan the implementation in order to meet these goals, as follows:

- Water supply protection
- Agricultural land protection
- Forest land protection
- Recreational resource development
- Pedestrian connection development
- Overall land conservation and protection
- Land acquisition

The OSRC Chair, Cara Sanford, stepped down from the Open Space and Recreation Committee in September 2013, having served since 2008. The Committee would like to convey our utmost gratitude to Cara for her Herculean efforts to organize the OSRC and bring forward a stellar OSRP, as well as all the other projects she has sparked, like the Thayer Field Recreation Campus Task Force (and the resultant PARC grant application), the Water Resource Task Force, Friends of the Cook, Friends of the Nashua, the resurgence of the Farmers Market, and the Trail & Bike Way Coalition. If it were not for her efforts, the Town of Lancaster would not have nearly as much open space, farm land, forest land, water resource protection, or recreational opportunities. Above it all, she has single-handedly created an environment whereby more cross-communication is happening than ever before between Town boards and between the boards and the citizens of Lancaster.

Thank you, Cara. We will sincerely miss your enthusiasm, guidance and leadership.