

# I. Introduction

# Outcomes

- ☑ Gain a thorough understanding of the town's open space initiative, including its acquisition and management priorities: past, present & future.
- ☑ Approve the management plans for N. Falmouth, Blackstrap, Hadlock & Woods Road Community Forests; River Point, East Branch and Suckfish Brook Conservation Areas; and Falmouth Nature Preserve.

OR

Set in motion a process for approving the above management plans.

- Be informed about the financial dimensions of the open space initiative.



# THE GREENING OF FALMOUTH

**Falmouth Conservation Commission**  
**January 2006**



# Open Space Definition

*Any non-developed land and water areas in the community. Open space may include woodland, wetlands, riparian corridors, farmland, orchards, and fields that serve a variety of functions: wildlife habitat, buffer zones, ecological protection, agriculture, passive public recreation, and scenic enjoyment.”*



*Places where nature, not man, is the dominant player.*



# Vision

*In 2106 – and beyond – Falmouth is still a community that has significant tracts of open land, healthy & diverse plant & wildlife populations, opportunities for traditional outdoor recreation, and visible rural character. Falmouth continues to be a “quality place.”*

# History

2004

- ❖ Subcommittee of the Conservation Commission formed to develop the plan.

## Members:

- ❖ Judy Adelman, Falmouth Land Trust trustee
- ❖ David Chase, developer
- ❖ Mel Dickenson, Conservation Commission
- ❖ David Merrill, large landowner, lifelong resident
- ❖ Frank Ruch, Conservation Commission member
- ❖ Bob Shafto, Conservation Commission Chair  
[Chair]
- ❖ Faith Varney, large landowner, PACPAC chair
- ❖ Gary Fogg, consultant



# 2006

- ❖ Plan goes public, numerous feedback sessions held.



- ❖ Council adopts plan in August; creates Open Space Implementation Sub-Committee of the Conservation Commission; authorizes Ombudsman position.
- ❖ Ombudsman hired in December.



# Goals

- 1. To retain and protect Falmouth's rural character and natural resources.**





## 2. To protect large tracts of land for wildlife habitat.



Green areas indicate where large undeveloped tracts still exist.

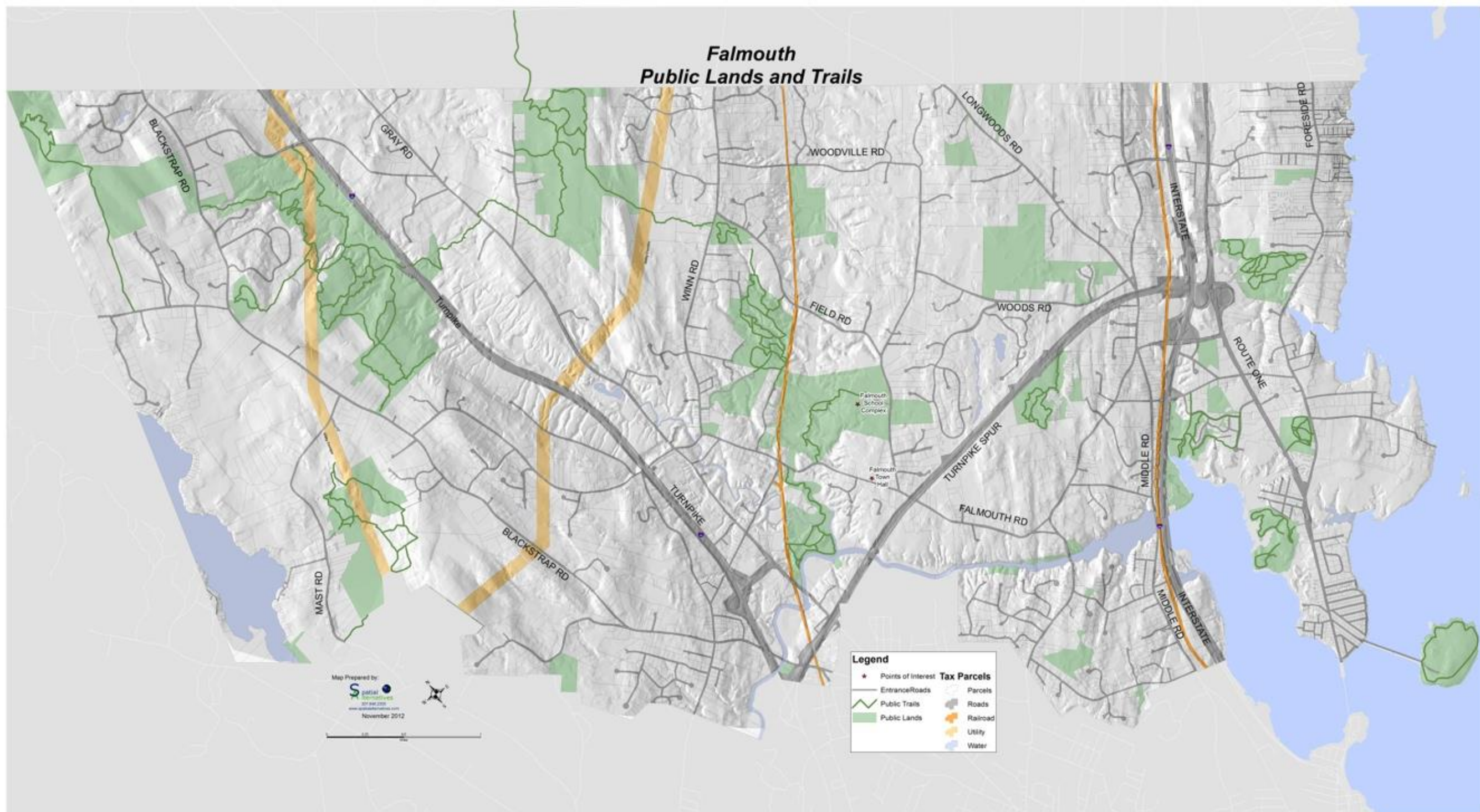


### 3. To ensure the availability of outdoor recreation.





## 4. To provide connectivity between open space areas.



## Connectivity is also envisioned in the proposed Comprehensive Plan...

*“...in keeping with the Open Space vision: extensive Town open spaces form a green network that connects many areas of the Town and surrounding communities, enabling varied types of activity – promoting a healthy environment. This network connects through paths, trails, and bike paths that give residents access to parks, fields, and places of solace and beauty.*”



## 5. To actively manage open space to benefit all citizens of Falmouth.



Education



Invasive  
Plants



Water Quality



Wildlife



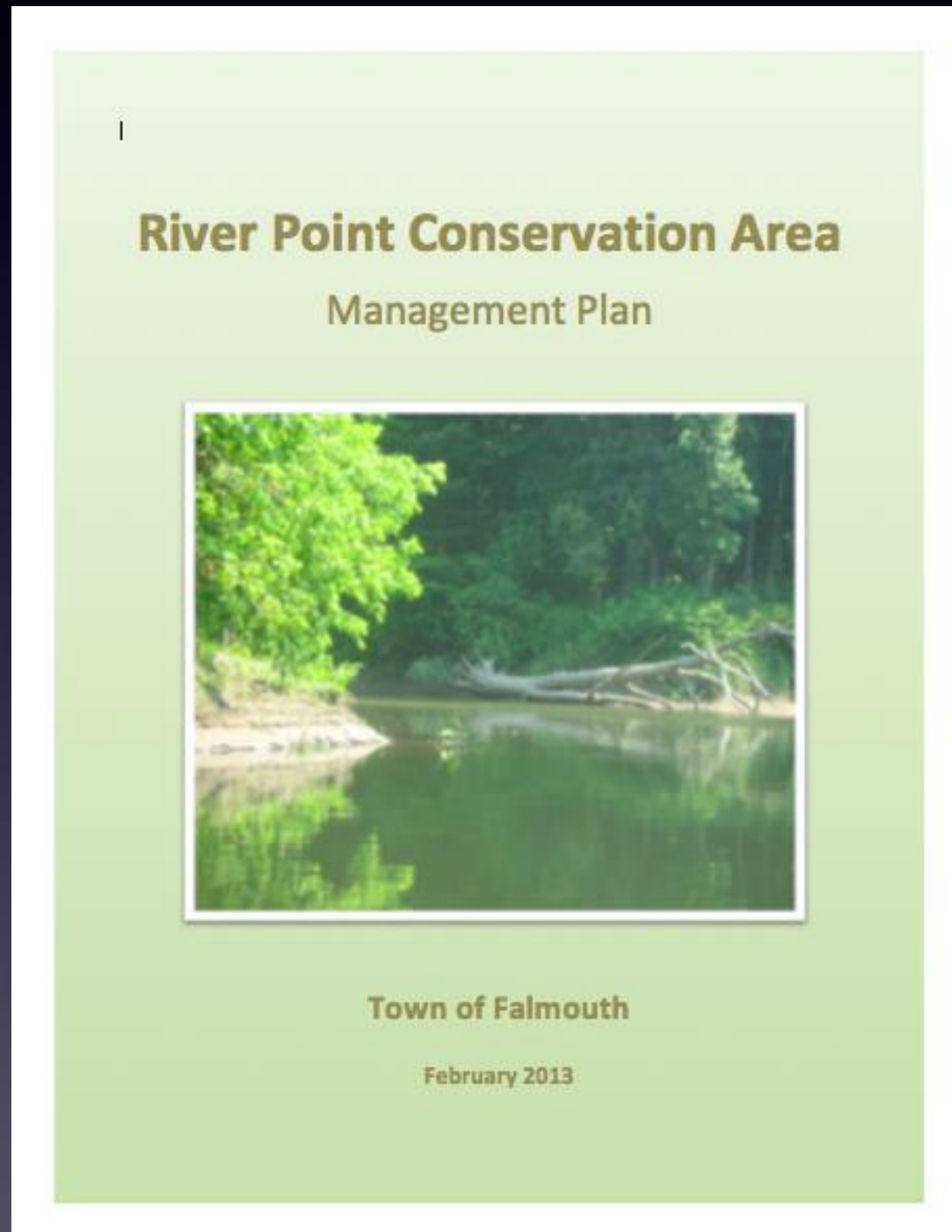
Trails



Wood Products



# Management plans exist for all major town open space properties.

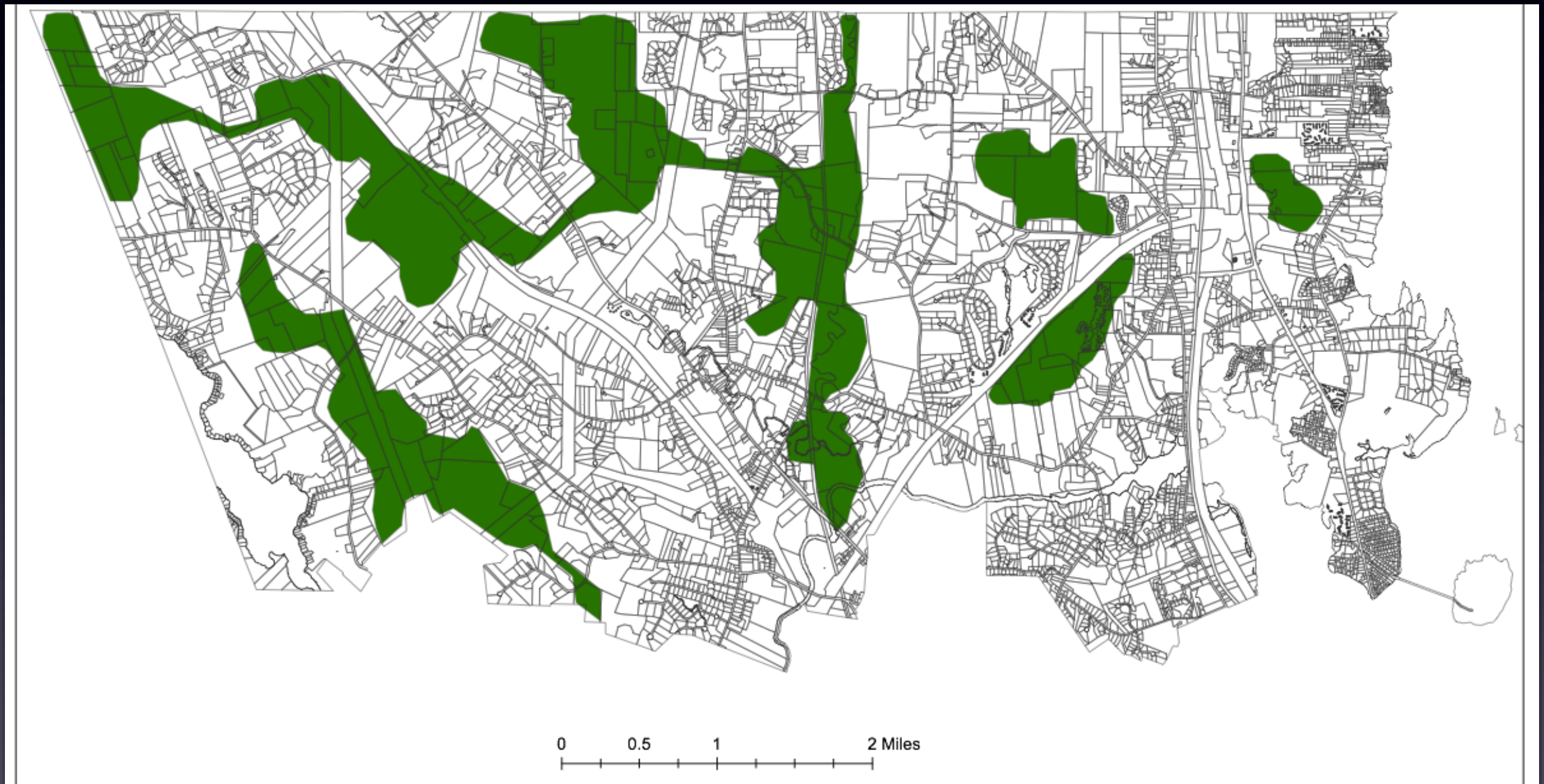


These plans, developed by the Ombudsman, informed by natural resource specialists, and approved by LMAC, drive the management work being done on these properties.



# Priorities

- ❖ *Large contiguous areas of 250 acres or more.*





❖ *“Jewel” properties that preserve rural character.*





## **Draft Comp Plan Policy Recommendations**

- ☒ Retain & protect our rural character & natural resources, and ensure the availability of outdoor recreation by preserving large tracts of undeveloped land that provide wildlife connectivity.
- ☒ Preserve natural open space & allow for passive recreation uses.
- ☒ Actively acquire additional open space, to focus primarily on land that provides connectivity to the large parcels, less on acquisition of more large contiguous tracts.
- ☒ Promote public awareness of existing open space properties and recreational opportunities.
- ☒ Ensure healthy, well managed Town-owned forests.

# Assumptions

- ❖ Open space should be thought of as part of the infrastructure of our community, like parks, public safety, schools, roads, utilities, etc.
- ❖ While we welcome donations, we don't expect landowners to donate or subsidize our acquisitions. Properties should be purchased from willing sellers at appraised value.
- ❖ Open space properties must provide benefits to the community.



# II. Structure

**Intent:** Build a system for acquiring and maintaining our open space properties that outlives the people currently involved in that work.

*There is nothing more difficult to plan, more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to manage than a new system.*

*--Niccolo Machiavelli*



Town Council

Town  
Manager

Land  
Management  
& Acquisition  
Committee

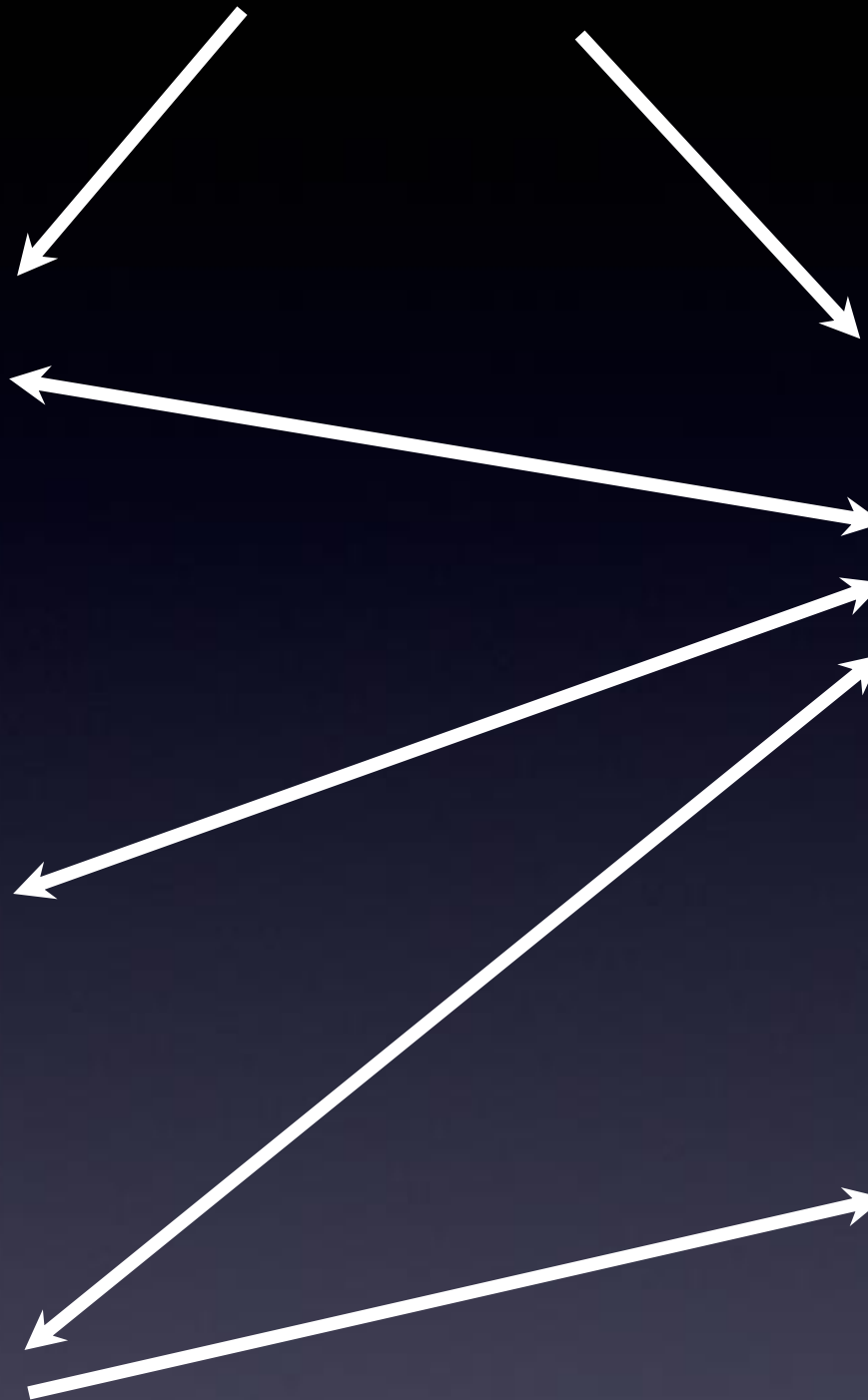
Parks &  
Community  
Programs  
Director

Falmouth  
Conservation  
Corps

Ombudsman

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## **2006 - Open Space Implementation Subcommittee**

Conservation Commission chair, developer, Land Trust, large landowner, Realtor, Conservation Corps member, citizens, Ombudsman. Disbanded June 2013

## **2009 - Land Management Team created**

Town manager, Land Trust, Parks & Public Works Dir., Comm. Programs Dir., Open Space Implementation Subcommittee Chair, FTAC member, Ombudsman. Disbanded July 2013

## **2013 - Land Management & Acquisition Committee created**

Town manager, Land Trust, Parks & Comm. Programs Dir., Conservation Corps, citizens, Ombudsman.



# III. Current Status

# Falmouth Open Space Land

[as of 1 Oct 14]

Town of Falmouth Conservation Land			
	Size (Acres)		
Type	Permanently Protected	Not Protected	Total
Town Owned Conservation Land	0.0	1,420.6	1,420.6
Town Held Conservation Easements (not including FLT properties)	170.4	0.0	170.4
Falmouth Land Trust Owned Land	609.6	0.0	609.6
Falmouth Land Trust Conservation Easements (less town owned properties)	349.6	0.0	349.6
Privately held subdivision conservation land (deed restricted)	229.3	0.0	229.3
State owned land	0.0	38.9	38.9
Other Conservation land	59.4	0.0	59.4
Total =	1,418.29	1,459.5	2,877.7
% of Total Town Land Area =	7.6%	7.8%	15.5%

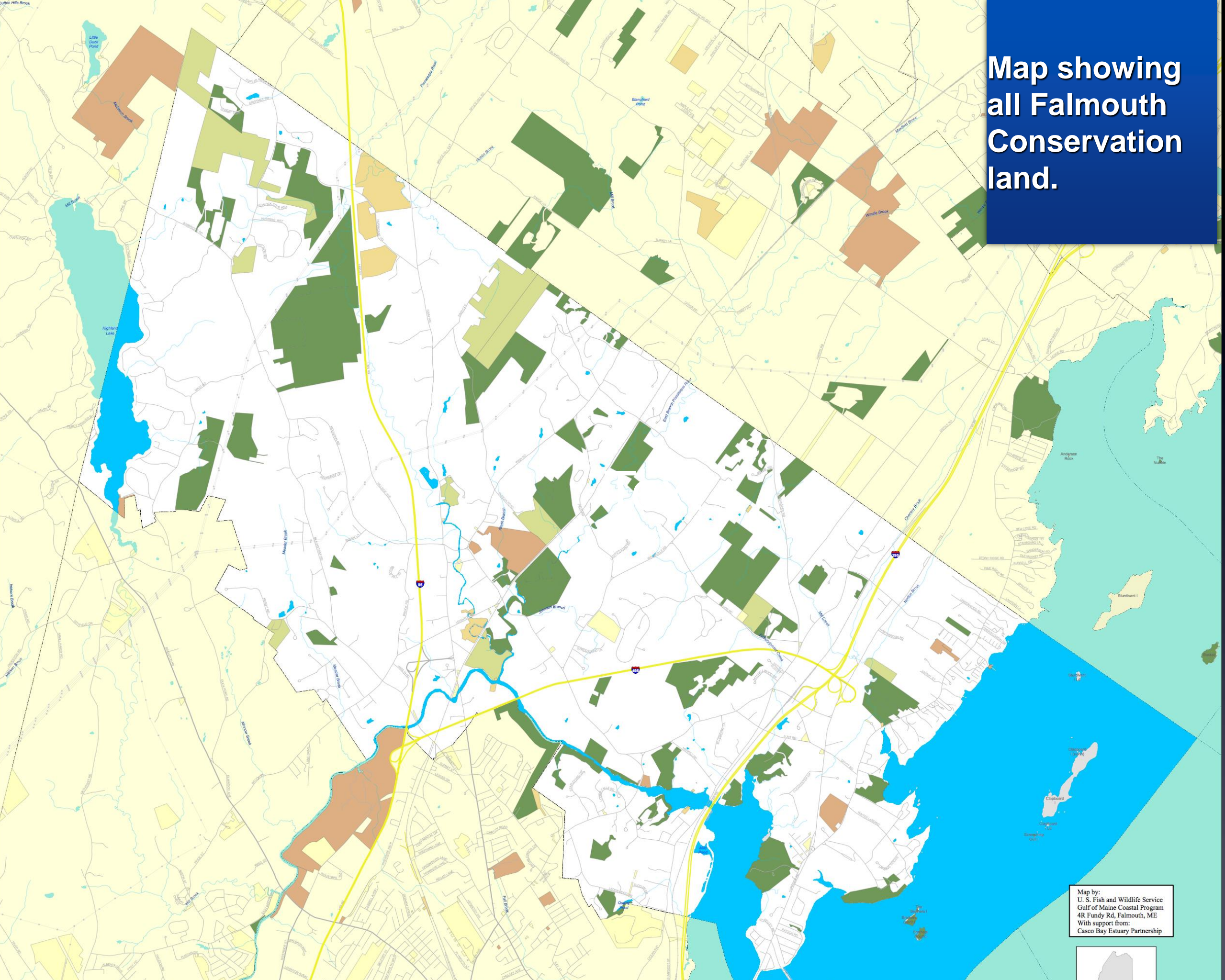


# Town Open Space Acquisition History

Era	Acreage Acquired
Pre 1990	490
1990-2000	335
2001-2005	74
>2006	522



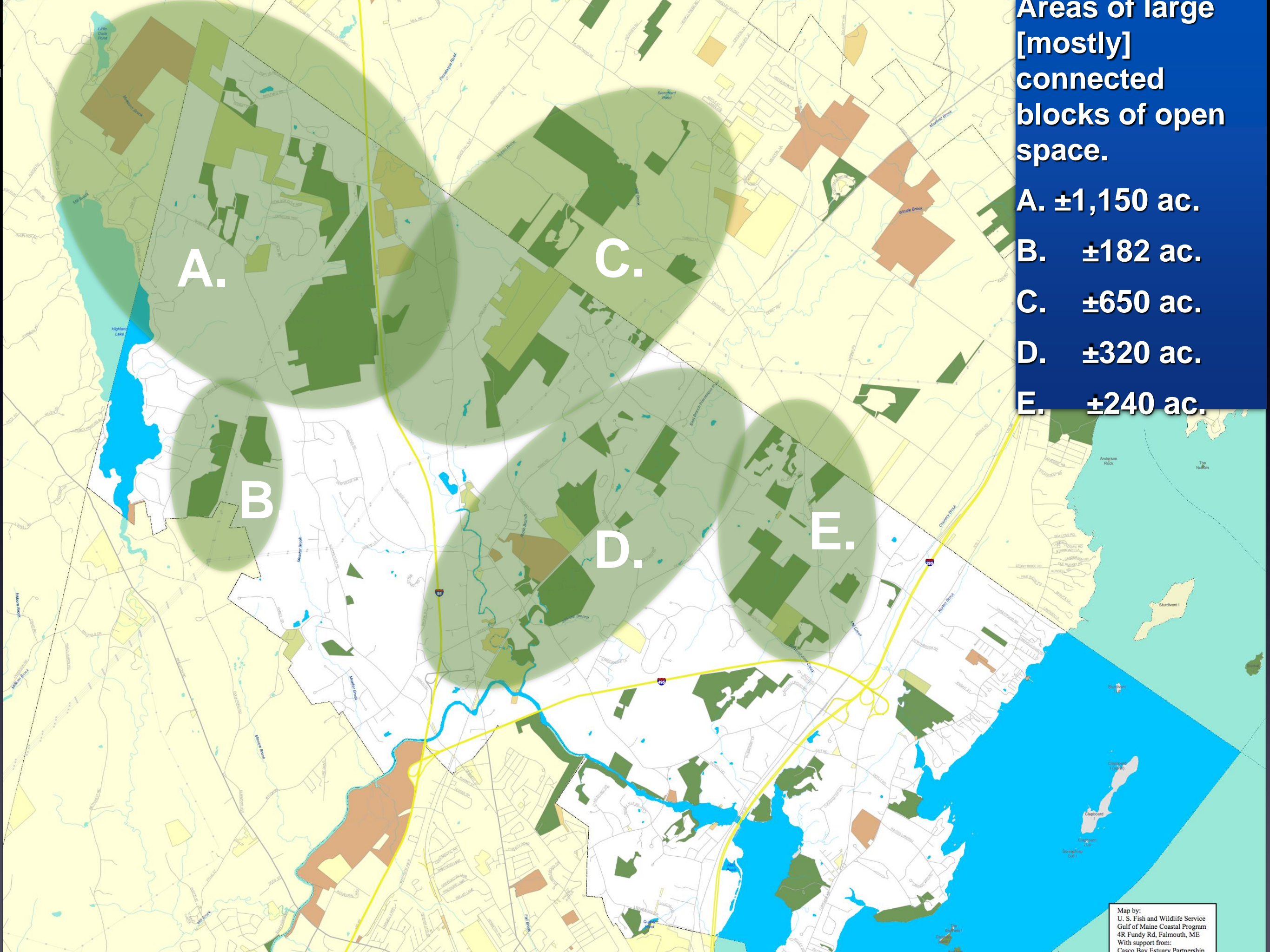
# Map showing all Falmouth Conservation land.



Map by:  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Gulf of Maine Coastal Program  
4R Fundy Rd, Falmouth, ME  
With support from:  
Casco Bay Estuary Partnership







A.

C.

B

D.

E.

Areas of large  
[mostly]  
connected  
blocks of open  
space.

A. ±1,150 ac.

B. ±182 ac.

C. ±650 ac.

D. ±320 ac.

E. ±240 ac.

# IV. Finances



# 2007 Referendum Question

## Question 1

Shall the Order entitled “Order Appropriating \$5,000,000, Including Proceeds of the Issuance of up to \$2,000,000 in General Obligation Bonds, for the Preservation of Open Space, Including Undeveloped Land, Farmland, Orchards, Hayfields, Woodlands, and Wetlands, to serve a variety of functions such as Wildlife Habitat, Riparian Corridors, Buffer Zones, Ecological Protections, Agriculture, Woodlot Management and Harvesting, Passive Recreation, Trails, and Scenic Enjoyment, through Real Estate Acquisition by the Town and by Selected Non-Profit Organizations” be adopted?

<b>Yes:</b>	1,884	69%
<b>No:</b>	830	31%

**Council authorized, but not required to spend up to \$5 million for open space acquisition.**

# Land Acquisition Costs & Funding Sources

Acquisitions since 2008	±\$3,000,000
Founding Source	1/3 Town 1/3 Grant 1/3 School sale



## **In-kind Donations (Value of Land & Easements)**

Value of Donated Property	397,000
Bargain Sale Value	465,808
<b>In-Kind Total =</b>	<b>\$862,808</b>

## **Management Income**

Grants & Donations	\$156,600
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# Management Costs

35% of Ombudsman time: \$19,250

Routine maintenance  
(trail upgrades, signage, tools, FCC  
support, etc.) \$5,000

New trail building, incl.  
trailhead improvements: Highly variable; contingent on new  
acquisitions; usually grant funded.

Long-term replacement costs:

Wood structures (bridges, kiosks), 20 yrs:	\$10,000 - \$500/yr
Metal structures (bridges, walkways), 50 yrs:	\$25,000 - \$500/yr
Kiosk maps, blazes, etc., 10 yrs:	\$2,000 - \$200/yr

Management income (forestry?): \$5-10,000/yr?



## Current Management Costs

	Current	Recommended
Ombudsman time:	\$19,250	\$22,000
Maintenance, upgrades:	\$5,000	\$10,000
Reserve fund:	\$0	\$1,200
[Forestry Income]:	\$0	[\$10,000]
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total:	\$24,250	\$23,200

# Projected FY15 Maintenance Costs

40% of Ombudsman time:	\$22,000
Routine maintenance, upgrades:	\$10,000
Long-term maintenance reserve fund:	<u>\$1,200</u>
	\$33,200

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**Question:** Dedicate some or all of management revenue to the maintenance account?



# Opportunity Cost

Tree Growth value of all 1,421 acres of town-owned open space = \$710,500

FY14 Property taxes on that value = \$10,221

# What Value Does Our Open Space Initiative Add to our Community?

Various studies have shown that open space:

- ✓ Has positive benefits on both the mental and physical health of residents.
- ✓ Enhances property values.
- ✓ Makes a community a more desirable place to live and work.
- ✓ Saves a community money by avoiding infrastructure costs in non-growth areas.
- ✓ Provides a wide variety of ecological benefits: cleaner water & air, flood control, carbon sequestration, more wildlife, etc.

An Internet search for “value of open space” will turn up many studies documenting these points.