

## OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLANS SUMMARIES Town Council 12-9-2013

Both the acquisition and management of open space properties are *Greening of Falmouth* goals. Listed below are Town owned properties and corresponding management activities.

### RIVER POINT CONSERVATION AREA

- Bridge: Staff is developing an RFP for bridge replacement. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Habitat: This property has diverse habitat and is proposed to be managed by bush hogging and/or controlled burning to sustain biodiversity.
- Invasives: Current invasive management practices have been successful and will need to be continued to prevent further invasive species damage.
- House: The house is in disrepair and should be demolished. It is an attractive nuisance and has been vandalized on occasion. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Conservation Easement: This property is not restricted by a conservation easement. A possible future mitigation deal could be a revenue source that can off set future management and acquisition costs within the overall open space program. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Education/Research: Biodiversity Research Institute is performing an ongoing bird migration study and the property is a popular school field trip site as well as the site of an archeological dig done by the State of Maine.

### SUCKFISH BROOK CONSERVATION AREA

- Forest Management: This property is proposed to be left mostly forever wild with possible light harvesting to maintain the hardwood forest at the northern portion of the property. This property will be co-managed with the Town of Westbrook. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Acquisition: There may be future acquisition opportunities to connect with Highland Lake. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Trail Building: One additional trail is planned to connect the north and south ends of the property.

### NORTH FALMOUTH COMMUNITY FOREST

- Trail Building: New trails are proposed for the 100-Acre Wood section.
- Forest Management: A forest management plan will be developed for so called 100-Acre Woods portion of the Forest. This property was heavily cut prior to the sale of the 100-Acre Woods portion, making this forest our most extensive early successional forest. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Acquisition: There may be future acquisition opportunities to ensure access & preserve a significant snowmobile trail. **[Future Council action necessary]**

### BLACKSTRAP HILL COMMUNITY FOREST

- Forest Management: There are tentative forest management plans in the Northwest corner of this property to create New England Cottontail habitat adjacent to the field. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Ordinance Enforcement: There has been long standing inappropriate ATV & dirt bike use on the property. Recent letters to property owners has resulted in less activity.
- Invasives: There are many invasive species at the northern end of the property that will be addressed within the next two years.

## HADLOCK COMMUNITY FOREST

- Forest Management: Plans are to continue implementation of the forest management plan to diversify habitat. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Acquisition: There may be future acquisition opportunities of abutting parcels as they become available.

## TOWN FOREST / COMMUNITY PARK NORTH

- Forest Management: There are forest management plans are to create early successional habitat north of Field C (access from Paddock Way) with remaining lands to remain forever wild. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Invasives: There are moderate invasive species issues on the property to be controlled as needed.

## EAST BRANCH CONSERVATION AREA

- Invasives: Continue to control invasive species to preserve rare hardwood terrace flood plain forests. To date, over 1,500 honeysuckle and buckthorns have been managed.
- Forest Management: This property is to be left forever wild.
- Trail Building: Maintain canoe trail, including launch point.

## WOODS ROAD COMMUNITY FOREST

- Forest Management: Plans include maintaining oldest portion as late successional forest (forever wild) and to harvest lightly around the margins to maintain deer wintering area as required by DEP/IF&W. **[Future Council action necessary]**
- Trail Building: This property is suitable for potential ADA accessible trail loop.

## FALMOUTH NATURE PRESERVE

(Complicated property – 3 town-owned lots and 1 FLT lot)

- Management: There are inconsistent management provisions/protections for all lots. Ultimately the entire “preserve” needs a uniform easement.
- Invasives: There are invasive species in several areas that are still manageable if addressed in a timely manner.
- Habitat: This property is heavily used, especially by dog walkers resulting in less wildlife. Much of the property is also vulnerable to sea level rise.
- Acquisition: There may be future acquisition opportunities of abutting parcels as they become available. **[Future Council action necessary]**

## SUMMARY

The properties indicated above are not intended to be parks or exclusively recreation areas. They are wild places where nature predominates; not man. They are places that can improve sustainability by protecting our air and water quality, providing homes for wildlife, sequestering carbon, protecting rare or endangered species, controlling floods and recycling nutrients.

Our goal should be to protect and promote biodiversity and healthy ecosystems that can sustain themselves while at the same time, provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.

Given the lack of natural disasters (fire, floods, extreme storms), farmland clearing, farmland abandonment, etc. and the uniformity of the plant communities found on most of our wooded parcels (similar ages, similar structures), vegetation management is a way we can create and maintain that diversity

With the implementation of these management plans, nearly half (44%) of Falmouth’s open space properties will be left forever wild, as will most of the additional 1,500 acres of conservation land in Falmouth. The remaining ±13% of open space will be managed as early successional forests.