

Section

1

Section 1: Introduction

The Town of Sturbridge is a community with a healthy mix of housing, commercial and industrial development, and preserved open space. The Open Space Committee has been diligent in its efforts to review undeveloped parcels to determine their value, if any, for open space preservation, habitat protection, water supply protection, and recreational opportunities. As during the last plan update, the town remains aware that the many lakes and ponds within the bounds of this town provide an attractive area for seasonal use with its many cottages providing summer homes or family retreats. The lakes are a tremendous recreational asset but can provide a burden on the town in terms of making sure that these beautiful water bodies and scenic areas are protected to ensure water quality and appropriate access. Additionally, the town must consider potential future needs for open space and recreation areas that occur when these second homes gradually become converted to year round residences.



Figure 1-1: Breakneck Brook Army Corp of Engineers Land. Photo taken by Gwenth Gendreau.

The town has been very active in the implementation of the recommendations found in the 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan. This 2018 plan highlights accomplishments and identifies areas where additional work may be necessary, as well as identifying new goals for the town to pursue in the future. It also incorporates existing goals of protecting natural resources, conserving open space and providing recreational opportunities for all, regardless of ability level.

As with other plan updates, there is an emphasis on open space preservation through a variety of means such as updated zoning techniques, conservation restrictions and purchase or donations of

TOWN OF STURBRIDGE OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN - 2018

land. Further, this plan reflects the continued belief that the use of Community Preservation Funds as a means of open space acquisition is critical to accomplishing open space goals and objectives. During this past plan period the Town partnered with the Community Preservation Committee, the US Forest Service, and The Trust for Public Land to acquire the Plimpton Community Forest. Several grants including a LAND grant and other private donations helped make this acquisition become a reality.

This plan sets forth a roadmap that will help to achieve the goals of maintaining the small town character of the town, providing recreational resources for all ages and abilities, and acquiring critical open space lands that will help protect our groundwater resources, habitat areas and quality of life in the Town of Sturbridge.