

## **SECTION 2 – INTRODUCTION**

### **A. Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is to provide an organizational model and rational framework with which residents and town officials may make sound decisions about the future of open space in Foxborough. Open space is defined by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 61B (Recreational and Open Land Statue) as “Land retained in substantially a natural, wild or open condition, or in a landscaped condition, in such a manner as to allow to a significant extent the preservation of wildlife and other natural resources.”

This Open Space and Recreation Plan is intended to focus past expressions of support for open space acquisition by assessing demographic trends, evaluating environmental conditions, inventorying existing open space and recreation resources, identifying opportunities to expand and enhance open space and recreation resources, and affirming open space and recreation goals and objectives. It culminates with an updated seven-year action plan of recommendations.

It should be noted that the Open Space and Recreation Plan is a dynamic working document. Conditions change both locally and regionally, and new information constantly becomes available. The Plan should be reviewed periodically and adjusted as needed. The next OSRP update should be conducted in 2018.

### **B. Planning Process and Public Participation**

Foxborough’s residents always have had a strong conservation ethic, preparing its first “Inventory of Areas with Natural Resources Development Potentials” by the Natural Resources Technical Team of Norfolk County and the Foxborough Town Advisory Group in July 1967.

Foxborough’s original OSRP (“Open Space Study”), prepared in 1976, was revised in 1988 (“Open Space Plan”). Efforts to revise the 1988 plan were unsuccessful and it expired in 1993. Although several attempts to update the plan were made in 1994 and again in 2002, there simply was not enough time or funding for this monumental task. In June 2003, a subcommittee was created to research how the town could afford to purchase and/or protect an environmentally significant property that was for sale. The subcommittee became frustrated to learn that without a current Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Town would not qualify for State Self-Help funds, which would be critical to purchasing the property. In a revived effort to prepare the OSRP, in January 2004, the Conservation Commission and Recreation Department worked cooperatively to distribute an open space survey to residents; 100 surveys were returned.

On February 11, 2009, the Conservation Commission held a kickoff meeting to involve residents in the OSRP’s strategic planning process. The Commission then circulated a second open space survey, modeled after the State OSRP Workbook’s example, which also was posted on the Town’s website. Results from both the 2004 and 2009 surveys indicated that preservation of open space was the top priority of Foxborough residents (see Appendix B for 2009 survey results).

In early 2010, Foxborough’s part time Conservation Manager procured a grant from the Taunton River Watershed Alliance and in late 2010 also received the assistance of a Wildlands Trust intern to assist her in preparing the Plan. Information about the OSRP was posted on the Commission’s website and emails inviting input and requesting attendance at meetings and public forums were sent to interested residents. Individuals with specialized expertise were enlisted and an Open Space and Recreation Planning Committee (“OSRP Committee”), who met on a regular basis, was created.

In October 2010, portions of the draft OSRP were distributed to the OSRP Committee, the Town’s department managers and several interested residents, requesting comments (which were later incorporated into the Plan). In early 2011, the Conservation Manager gave a brief OSRP presentation to the Board of Selectmen during one of their televised public meetings.

A second draft of the OSRP was distributed to the OSRP Committee, Town boards and committees and other interested parties in May 2011. It also was displayed prominently at the public library, the Town Clerk’s office, the Conservation Commission’s office and on the Commission’s website for four weeks to solicit public comment. The final draft of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, incorporating the public’s comments, was sent to Melissa Cryan of the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services in June 2011.

Throughout the planning process, the OSRP Committee and the Conservation Manager included Foxborough's residents, elected officials, appointed boards and commissions, and town staff in the development of the OSRP.

Special thanks are given to key members of both the Conservation Commission and Recreation Department for their consistent and cooperative efforts in preparing the Plan, to the Wildlands Trust for providing an intern, and to the OSRP Committee, Town boards and committees, concerned citizens and the Taunton River Watershed Alliance for their contributions to the 2011–2018 OSRP.

Please see the Preface for a complete list of the many contributors who made this Plan possible.



*A beautiful woodland scene in early spring*