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This 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan update is a revision of Wellfleet's earlier plan (revised 1998 and 1992). It is designed to give it meaning for today's town, and to meet the state's 2001 Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements. It recognizes that a large part (61%) of the town falls under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service and the need to protect/manage/conservate the remaining portion (39%) is increasingly important due to accelerating development pressure. The update builds on the earlier plans, incorporating goals of protecting natural resources, conserving open space and providing a varied recreation program. The plan seeks to address these goals simultaneously where possible by encouraging preservation of open space, while allowing opportunities for its enjoyment through modest improvements which provide access for passive recreation.

Public participation was a large part of the Plan's development. During the winter and spring of 2004-05, the Open Space Committee met regularly to assign tasks and review drafts periodically meeting with representatives from other groups including the Wellfleet Conservation Trust, Conservation Commission and Planning Board.. Information was collected by all members, some of whom contributed to writing sections of the Plan in their areas of expertise. The overall Plan was compiled, formatted and updated by the Open Space/Land Bank Committee and submitted to the State Division of Conservation Services for review. In a letter dated June 22, 2005, Melissa Cryan, the State's Urban Self-Help coordinator gave conditional approval of the Plan through June 2010, with several revisions. In order to accomplish these revisions in the allotted time-frame, the town hired land planning consultant Jeff Thibodeau, owner of *Helios Land Design* to assist. The 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan herein is the result of these collective efforts.

Due to the fact that this Open Space and Recreation Plan update is being completed prior to the completion of the 2005 LCP, we have used the results from the 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan as well as more recent statistics such as the 2000 U.S Census and updated statistics and other information compiled by the Cape Cod Commission, the Town of Wellfleet and others. Several surveys conducted in conjunction with the creation of the town's Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) have been incorporated into this Open Space and Recreation Plan. They were used by both projects to obtain a real sense of public opinion on the town's approach to open space and recreation, and public hearings were held throughout the planning process. The LCP, approved by the Cape Cod Commission and town officials, serves as the town's response to the Cape Cod Regional Policy Plan (1991, amended 1996) and is the central document guiding planning and growth decisions for the town. The LCP is presently in the process of being updated and will reflect the updates presented in the 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan update.

This update presents some new ideas for recreation. There is an equal emphasis on open space preservation by means other than direct acquisition, for instance, through conservation restrictions, donation, cluster zoning, undevelopment and other means in response to current economic conditions. Most importantly this update includes discussion of the new Community Preservation Act, the successor to the Land Bank.

Since the passage of the Land Bank Act in 1998 the Open Space/Land Bank Committee has worked with citizens of Wellfleet, Town Government and several public and private agencies to increase the acreage of conservation to the maximum available while doing this at the lowest cost per acre. By working within these guidelines the Town was able to secure more land for conservation at a lower cost per acre than would otherwise have been possible considering the very high cost of land in Wellfleet. Also, by working with various agencies and organizations, both public and private, the Open Space/Land Bank Committee was able to obtain land which in almost every case was contiguous with other conservation land, thereby providing larger natural corridors for wildlife as well as making more of a conservation impact. Over this six year history of the Land Bank more than 64 acres of prime upland open space has been acquired with 56% of the purchase cost being accomplished through funds provided by private and public agencies outside of the Wellfleet Land Bank. The 2005 Town meeting approved the purchase of 29.63 additional acres bringing the total acreage of land purchased through the life of the Land Bank to 93.84 acres. When these purchases are consummated, the average purchase cost to the Land Bank will be slightly in excess of \$41,000 per acre. If Self-Help applications are successful in 2006 and 2007, the final per acre cost will be reduced to \$32,000 per acre. To put this number in perspective, the average assessed value per acre of land in Wellfleet is \$393,600!

Yet in spite of increased efforts and success, conservation efforts will always struggle to keep pace with the unceasing development pressure placed on the region, which continues to lure droves of visitors each season. With every passing year, more and more of these visitors have become permanent residents, and the town's carrying capacity is being pressed to its limit. This must be taken into consideration not only with economic and business development but with the development and use of conservation and recreation resources as well. While some of the adverse impacts of increased development and more intense land use are obvious, it will probably be years before the full impact of the last 35 years of growth can be seen. Conservation and recreation planning in the 21st century will need to respond appropriately and creatively to the changing natural and cultural landscape. In addition to continued efforts to preserve the remaining open space, many towns in the region, including Wellfleet, are rewriting the rulebook for conservation by razing abandoned buildings, reclaiming and cleaning up contaminated sites and reusing the land for conservation and recreation related purposes. Recent trends toward reclaiming developed lands known as "undevelopment" and the greening of contaminated sites, known as "Brownfield redevelopment," will need to continue and be built upon.

Though many of the survey results, environmental characteristics and issues facing the town remain consistent with the last Plan, there are several notable demographic trends. Population data indicates that middle aged and retired people are the most numerous and fastest growing age groups in Wellfleet and that in the coming decades, open space and recreation planning will need to provide ample passive recreational opportunities that will serve this largest segment of the population well into retirement age. Wellfleet reached an estimated 2,841 residents in 2003, up 92, or 3.2 percent, from the U.S.Census count of 2,749 in 2000. This amounts to an approximate yearly average population growth of 1 percent since 2000. Though this is still much lower than in the past, its percent rate of population increase exceeds both the region and the state during the same period. From 2002 to 2003, Wellfleet increased its population by only 26 people, ranking 185th in the state but had a relatively high population growth rate, ranking at 116th, with a 0.9

percent population increase. This was slightly higher than the Capewide average of 0.7% and significantly higher than the statewide average of 0.2% during the same time period. In short, population gains have been steady for decades until 1990, when a notably sharp decline occurred and has continued to the present day, maintaining a growth rate of approximately 1% per year.

U.S. Census 2000 found the Northeast had the highest median age in the nation at 36.8 years. Since 1990, the Cape's median age increased 5.1 years, from 39.5 to 44.6 in 2000. According to the 2000 census, Wellfleet ranked 13th in the state with a median age of 47.0 years. By comparison, the statewide median age increased from 33.6 in 1990 to 36.5 in 2000.

Wellfleet's annual unemployment rate has been consistently higher than the state's. However, the year 2004 showed a slight decrease in Wellfleet's unemployment rate from 6.5 percent in 2003 to 6.0 percent (Mass DET) which has continued into 2005 with the most recent unemployment rate at 4.3% (DET May 2005 figures). The economy continues to improve overall, which bodes well for the near future.

Both employment and wages have increased slightly each year since 2001. Industries with the highest wages are consistently in the following sectors:

- Professional and Technical Services
- Real Estate and Rentals and Leasing
- Finance and Insurance
- Health Care and social assistance

Wages in Construction and Arts, Entertainment and Recreation were also notably and consistently high, possibly owing to the relatively large number of professional artists, musicians and actors in town. Though not providing the highest wages, the largest employment sector is accommodation and food services followed by retail trade, owing to the town's large number of bed and breakfasts, restaurants and retail shops, all of which cater to tourists, primarily during the summer months. These figures illustrate the town's thriving and diverse economy employing both professional and blue collar workers and its dependence on tourism.

The total value of the shellfishing industry to Wellfleet is over \$2.75 million annually. Fifty-five percent of this crop comes from the "wild" fishery, while 45% comes from the practice of aquaculture. The "wild" fishery consists of harvesting the bivalves generally where they have grown, without any intervention except the dumping of an occasional load of cultch. This fishery is closely managed by the Shellfish Constable with a view towards limiting the harvest to the extent that the resource remain self renewable. This is done by setting quantity limits, area limits, and seasonal closures.

While much of Wellfleet uses private wells for their water there is a public water supply system. The original wells located on Town property off Grist Mill Road have a permitted capacity of 20,000 GPD and are designed to serve approximately 50 residential connections to lots potentially subject to contamination from the old land fill and septage pit. In 2004, the town has

also added a third well, significantly increasing the available GPD and increasing the total connections to 57.

Although groundwater quantity in Wellfleet is presently ample for domestic, small-volume wells, municipal withdrawal could lower water levels and cause ecological damage to surface waters such as kettle ponds and vernal pools. This can occur where wells are located too closely to surface waters or rates of withdrawal are too high. Extensive pumping for human use can dramatically alter the levels of ponds and other wetlands to their detriment and, if located near the seashore, can cause salt water intrusion as well. Several private wells exceeded the target sodium threshold level of 20 mg/L over a decade ago. Now in 2005 and a projected water use increase of over 1,000% by buildout, it is extremely important to identify and develop water supply sources that will accommodate this expectedly high demand while protecting against salt water intrusion and other contaminant sources

The biggest, persistent problems are environmental and public health issues related to wastewater disposal and drinking water quality. Because of its relatively low population density and political climate, sewers have not yet been installed. Wellfleet continues to rely solely on on-site septic systems. Though most of the town's soils are highly permeable, there are still failed systems due to overloading, particularly during the summer. Although many lots are currently using alternative wastewater treatment systems, pollution in the most densely developed portions of Wellfleet is a pressing issue which will only be alleviated through serious planning measures which reduce pollution sources, improve waste treatment systems, provide public sewerage, and/or provide a municipal water supply. Until these things happen, Wellfleet's drinking water quality in the central district is extremely tenuous.

Along with the water supply and waste disposal come the very important consideration of protection of Wellfleet Harbor for the benefit of commercial fishing, shellfishing as well as recreational boating and fishing. The town, through its Natural Resources Advisory Board, is writing a Harbor Management Plan that addresses all aspects of the Harbor. The Draft Plan is complete and posted on the town's website. Many of these needs are echoed in this Open Space and Recreation Plan.

One of the town's larger recreational areas is the privately owned Chequesset Yacht and Country Club, which covers approximately 108 acres, with a nine hole golf course, small sailing basin, 5 tennis courts, boat house and club house. It is the only Chapter 61B property in Wellfleet and should be maintained as a public resource in perpetuity even if it does not always remain a privately owned golf course.

As of 2005 various agencies and organization are working on the Herring River restoration Project. One step was taken in the process when the Annual Town Meeting in April 2005 voted to acquire approximately 25 acres of the Chequesset Yacht and Country Club. This land will be allowed to revert to its natural state and therefore will not be adversely affected by the proposed opening of the Herring River dike. In taking this step the town showed its interest in having the Herring River Restoration Project go forward and simultaneously beginning to place permanent protection on parts of the Club. Continued efforts are necessary to ensure perpetual protection of the entire acreage through the use of fee purchase, conservation restriction or other means.

The Town of Wellfleet is rapidly approaching buildout, and demand for the few remaining buildable parcels in town is high. The Town's Open Space/Land Bank Committee has compiled a list of vacant land in town and has prioritized these parcels for protection. This list includes all vacant lots of significant size; many smaller open lots within subdivisions will not be included. Most of the highest priority parcels are abutting existing conservation areas and are listed in the Plan. As presently constituted, this list contains 524 vacant acres which could be protected for conservation/recreation. The Wellfleet Conservation Trust (WCT) also has a list of high priority parcels. It is recommended that these groups compile these to create a *Master Priority Parcel Acquisition List* and work cooperatively, as they have in the past, to protect the parcels listed

In its first 20 years, WCT has protected 96 parcels of land totaling approximately 268 acres (The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts Inc.). Wellfleet Conservation Trust properties are located to a large extent near the Wellfleet Harbor, where protection of the land helps to protect its water quality. Some of this land is contiguous with other protected open space such as at Indian Neck where the WCT and Commonwealth of Massachusetts jointly protect over 100

According to The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, there are 10 properties totaling 24.6 acres under conservation restrictions in Wellfleet. Conservation restrictions are the easiest and most reliable means of ensuring the perpetual protection of land. The town should continue to work in conjunction with land trusts (i.e. the Wellfleet Conservation Trust, The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. etc.) to acquire conservation restrictions on all unprotected municipal lands even if they are currently designated as conservation and recreation land and on any privately owned land that exhibits conservation values including wetland resource areas.

According to Town of Wellfleet fiscal year 2004 figures there are approximately 96 acres owned and managed by the Town of Wellfleet Recreation Commission and a total of 22 parcels totaling 13.49 acres under the care, custody and control the Town of Wellfleet Conservation Commission, plus another 56.02 acres bought with Land Bank revenues and managed by the Conservation Commission. All of these are detailed in the Plan.

The Open Space/Land Bank Committee (now the Open Space Committee since July 1, 2005) has done an admirable job of governing land acquisition in the Town of Wellfleet for the last five years. Current and near future land acquisition funding will come largely through Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds, which will be managed by a CPA Committee (Committee appointments underway). CPA funds can be used to address three core community concerns:

- Acquisition and preservation of open space
- Creation and support of affordable housing
- Acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes

A minimum of 10 percent of the annual revenues of the fund must be used for each of the three core community concerns. The remaining 70 percent can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses, or for land for recreational use.

The new CPA Committee will have the responsibility of identifying, prioritizing and pursuing

land acquisition opportunities for the purposes of open space and recreation, historic preservation and affordable housing. Because these three interests may sometimes compete with each other, it is imperative that each group has a representative or liaison to the CPA Committee that will represent these interests. Some of the tasks this Committee should consider include development of the proposed master *Priority Parcel Acquisition List* and protection of the private parcels listed. It should also prioritize all town owned parcels for their conservation and recreation value, regardless of category, and pursue their permanent protection through the establishment of conservation restrictions. Finally, it should establish a strategy for the ongoing management of these properties to ensure healthy ecosystem functioning, sanitation and public safety

Of the 44,600 total acres in the Cape Cod National Seashore about 8,000 are in the Town of Wellfleet. Several major visitor areas are within the town. These are:

- Great Island is connected by land to the mainland. The Great Island Walking Trail goes to the end of Great Beach Hill, site of the former 18th century Human Society Hut for shipwrecked seamen.
- Atlantic White Cedar Swamp is located next to the Marconi Historical Site and consists of a 1.2 mile nature trail.
- Marconi Beach area - bathhouse, lifeguard and handicapped scenic overlook
- Marconi Historical Site - Site of the sending of the first transoceanic radio message from the United States
- Atwood-Higgins House - on Bound Brook Island

According to Town of Wellfleet fiscal year 2004 figures contained there is approximately 838 acres owned and managed by the Massachusetts Audubon Society at the Wellfleet Bay Wildlife Sanctuary. This land comprises a broad expanse of salt marsh, pine woods, brooks, and ponds including five miles of trails, a children's day camp, educational workshops and classes as well as lectures - all dealing with aspects of nature, conservation and wildlife.

The *goals* included in this 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan are the long-range aspirations of the Town of Wellfleet for the protection of natural resources and the provision of recreational opportunities for its citizens and visitors. The *objectives* are conceptual steps to be undertaken to achieve these goals. Specific, tangible *actions* to implement the objectives are found in Section 9.

The goals and objectives listed below were developed by the Open Space Committee and/or borrowed from the Town's Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP). They respond directly to the public opinion survey and workshops conducted during preparation of this Plan and the 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan, supplemented by the results of other planning efforts. The goals and objectives listed are intended to be consistent with the LCP, the Cape Cod Commission Regional Policy Plan and the 2000 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

GOAL 1: Acquire, retain, preserve and protect a maximum of open space for the community and its natural and wildlife habitats. Balance the above with the practical needs of the town such as, but not limited to: recreation, affordable housing, future water needs.

OBJECTIVE 1: Enhance existing protected open space (Open Space Committee in cooperation with WCT, Massachusetts Audubon, etc.)

OBJECTIVE 2: Continue developing criteria for future land acquisition
(See Appendix G)

OBJECTIVE 3: Consider formulating changes to a bylaw or subdivision regulation requiring a minimum open space set aside percentage in new developments

OBJECTIVE 4: Actively Pursue and Work on Individual Land Acquisition Projects

OBJECTIVE 5: Continue education of population regarding the relationship between excessive growth and ground water quality, waste disposal, harbor health, natural resources, and town character

OBJECTIVE 6: Work to preserve the rural, historic, and scenic character of the town

OBJECTIVE 7: Continue policy to acquire and keep for open space tax title lands except where such community priorities such as affordable housing or municipal services may arise and listen to any comments from these boards and committees

OBJECTIVE 8: Establish procedures for approval and assessment of conservation restrictions

OBJECTIVE 9: Facilitate and/or encourage private investment to facilitate the efforts of private land conservation groups such as Mass Audubon, WCT.

GOAL 2: Protect Wellfleet Harbor and Estuary

OBJECTIVE 1: A better Management Plan needs to be developed. Shellfish industry needs to have clean water space and facilities and these needs to be balanced with the recreational demands of seasonal traffic.

OBJECTIVE 2: Continue efforts to restore Herring River and other tide-restricted estuaries and wetlands

<u>GOAL 3:</u>	Protect the town's present and future water supply.
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OBJECTIVE 1: Continue to identify and protect present and future well field areas through zoning, land management strategies/plans or acquisition

<u>GOAL 4:</u>	Improve waste disposal systems
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OBJECTIVE 1: On site septic systems are a threat to ground water in some areas. Special consideration needs to be given to the Central District and areas in close proximity to ponds and coastal areas.

OBJECTIVE 2: Eliminate roadside and beach litter and illegal dumping

<u>GOAL 5:</u>	Protect ponds, rivers, and streams
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OBJECTIVE 1: Strengthen protective regulations in A.C.E.C.

<u>GOAL 6:</u>	Protect beach areas
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OBJECTIVE 1: Explore opportunities to minimize development of new residences or expansion of existing ones in or adjacent to buffer zones to avoid endangering our coastal banks and barrier beaches

<u>GOAL 7:</u>	Coordinate recreation needs with open space priorities to benefit each
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OBJECTIVE 1: Develop and improve recreational areas and facilities

<u>GOAL 8:</u>	Accomplish the goals and objectives above expeditiously and at minimum expense. This will involve determination of the most effective organizational and administrative arrangements for their achievement, importantly including the cooperation and coordination among town boards, commissions, committees and executive agencies
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OBJECTIVE 1: Coordinate cooperative meetings among various groups involved in Wellfleet's land use planning including new CPA Committee to establish needs and assign tasks

The future of Wellfleet's natural and cultural landscape, now more than ever before, is dependent on a collaborative and timely effort to define, plan, and then implement our collective vision for the future. The achievement of each of the goals and objectives contained in this Plan is possible within the next five years provide consistent and concerted effort is expended by each of the parties charged with their implementation and adequate funding is provided. By doing so together we can protect and continue to create anew Wellfleet's natural and cultural environment, which continues to enchant us with its richness, mystery and beauty.