



A. Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to provide direction for the use of open space and recreation land in Wellfleet. Put another way, the purpose of this plan is to provide a framework for responsibly managing presently undeveloped open space, while affording flexibility for future management changes.

Any open space plan for the Town must deal with some unusually complex and, in some ways, contradictory community characteristics and needs. Wellfleet's rather small land area contains a splendor of natural resources and natural beauty that can be easily disrupted by overuse. And yet, it is just that fragile richness which makes the place the object of intense desire for so many thousands of people. Moreover, different groups want to use the resources for different purposes; some want to make a living from activities such as development, shellfishing or tourism, others want to preserve the Town's village qualities as the setting for their year round living, while many others come here on an intermittent, seasonal basis for recreational and vacation activities that make full use of the natural environment.

Taken together, such use patterns can interfere with each other, as well as placing heavy stress on natural systems. Extensive residential development, for example, may add polluting nutrients to the harbor, which in turn, threatens both commercial and recreational shellfishing. Again, as tourism increases, the quality of life for year round residents can be substantially altered. And for second home owners, the very qualities that attracted them to Wellfleet are diminished as their numbers increase. No open space plan can possibly resolve all these problems. What it can do is indicate how the judicious use of open and generally undeveloped land can contribute to providing and preserving certain fundamental resources and values on which the future life of the Town will depend. These include the protection of:

- water supply;
- environmentally sensitive areas;
- public access to beaches, ponds and the harbor;
- important local industries such as shellfishing; as well as providing for residential housing, business, and facilities for the storage and repair of necessary equipment;
- affordable housing opportunities for those who work in the area; and,
- services for residents and visitors.

Working through the Land Bank legislation, Wellfleet has obtained 64.21 additional acres of particularly valuable land to be set aside for conservation (see Appendix E). This has occurred through the cooperation and support of both private and public agencies. The Open Space Land Bank Committee has worked with the Wellfleet Conservation Trust, The Audubon Society, The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Division of Conservation Services and the Department of Fisheries and Wildlife to maximize the tax funds available to purchase open space.

There is also a special situation in that approximately 61% of the Town is under the control of the Cape Cod National Seashore and additional acreage is owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. These extensive undeveloped lands contribute much to the environmental and aesthetic quality of the town; however, at the same time they constrain development to the remaining 39% of the town's area, where most of the people of Wellfleet spend most of their lives.

Consistently rapid development during the last several decades has resulted in the creation of an increasingly suburban landscape, increasing highway strip development, groundwater pollution, and the destruction of unique and irreplaceable resources such as shellfish beds.

In spite of this, the town has made great strides in open space acquisition during this time. Major acquisitions include the following:

- Rinzler –6-acre purchase on 1-5-05 for \$370,000 (\$61,667/acre);
- Koessel –1.56-acre purchase on 8-15-03 for \$200,000 (\$128,205/acre);
- Ziering –7.26-acres purchase on 5-15-03 for \$380,000 (\$52,342/acre);
- Chavez 1 – 6.98-acre purchase on 6-24-02 for \$600,000 (\$85,948/acre)
- Chavez 2 –0.93-acre purchase on 5-15-03 for \$125,000 (\$134,553/acre)
- Baker Estate Properties (Geiger Family) –Almost 9 acres of upland were acquired over a three-year period. This acquisition ties in with the 16 contiguous acres owned by the Wellfleet Conservation Trust and brings the total conservation holdings by the Town, Wellfleet Conservation Commission and State (Mass Wildlife) in this area to about 140 acres. The third and final phase of the acquisition was completed by June 1, 2001. The total cost of \$650,000 has been offset by \$250,000 because the Town received an Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) Self-Help grant.
- Ernst Property – The Town approved at the October 2001 Town meeting the purchase of approximately six acres of land abutting an existing conservation area off Lt. Island Rd./Compass Hill Road at Box Turtle Lane for \$562,000 to be phased over the three year period 2002 – 2004. Of this, the Land Bank provided \$305,400 with \$106,600 coming from an EOEA Self-Help grant and \$150,000 from Mass. Audubon, phased over three years. A \$94,640 EOEA additional Self Help Grant has been applied for the Phase III final purchase of the Ernst property to further reduce the use of Land Bank funds. This purchase expands the 32-acre conservation area already owned by the Wellfleet Conservation Trust and the Mass. Audubon Society.

Since the last iteration of this Plan in 1995, the town has continued its aggressive land acquisition strategy. Since the inception of the Land Bank, the town has purchased 57 parcels totaling 64.21 acres for an approximate total of \$ 2, 155,800 (approx. \$33,574/acre)¹. A

¹ See Appendix E for complete list of parcels.

complete listing of all existing conservation and recreation lands in Wellfleet is included in Appendix E, *Wellfleet Tax Exempt Land*, and further described in Section 5.

Private land purchases have also helped protect undeveloped lands. Since its founding in 1984, the Wellfleet Conservation Trust has preserved approximately 81 parcels totaling 268 acres² throughout the town, protecting river corridors and wetlands and filling in gaps in the town's green belt.

These collective conservation efforts have been buoyed over the last decade by such legislative tools as the Cape Cod Land Bank, mentioned above, the Cape Cod Commission Act and most recently the Community Preservation Act (CPA). 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.

A recent publication produced by The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts Inc., entitled *Take Back the Cape – Discovering Opportunities for Undevelopment*, defines undevelopment as "the removal of existing manmade structures and influence upon the land followed by site restoration to a more natural state".³

In 1998 the Town completed a successful undevelopment project at the town-owned Geiger property in which an existing cottage was removed. Such creative approaches to land protection will enable conservation and recreation resources to keep pace with the increased demands and impacts of development while simultaneously improving the quality of life.

² The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc. 2005 figures, Appendix F. These figures are higher than those provide by the Town listed in Appendix E because the town's records do not yet reflect recent additions..

³ The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts, Inc., *Take Back the Cape – Discovering Opportunities for Undevelopment*, Sunderland Printing, Hyannis, MA., 2001.

B. Planning Process and Public Participation

In 2004, the town's Conservation and Recreation Departments began to address the need for a revised Open Space and Recreation Plan that would reflect the town's evolving land use identity and enable the town to be eligible to receive Self Help funds from the State.

As with the 1998 Plan, most of the information needed existed and could be used as a basis for the update. Foremost among these resources was the town's 1998 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the town's 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP), and extant maps produced for each and also for other local and regional projects relevant to the town's planning initiatives. Using these resources as a springboard, work on the new Plan was begun.

To facilitate the process, an ad hoc Wellfleet Open Space and Recreation Plan Workgroup was formed. During the winter and spring of 2004-05, the group 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. Open Hearings were held by the Open Space Committee on January 5, 2005 and January 12, 2005 to discuss the draft 2005 Open Space Plan Update. A similar meeting with the Planning Board. 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 the stipulation that "no final grant payments will be made until the plan is completed". In order to complete the Plan to the state's satisfaction, eight revisions were suggested, with deadline of August 1, 2005 in order to be eligible to collect Self-Help funds that had already been awarded to the town amounting to several hundred thousand dollars.

In order to accomplish these revisions in the allotted time-frame, the town hired Jeff Thibodeau, owner of *Helios Land Design*, a land planning consulting firm in Orleans, Massachusetts to assist. The 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan herein is the result of these collective efforts.

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs' *Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements* and the *Open Space Planner's Workbook - Companion to the 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan Requirements*, were used as guides for preparing the Plan. Wellfleet's 1998 Open Space and Recreation Plan and 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) provided much of the information contained in this plan and are consistent with it. Whenever possible and prudent, existing documents and records were incorporated directly into the revised Plan.

Incorporation of the Local Comprehensive Plan

In April 1995, Wellfleet completed its Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP). This was an extensive study undertaken to develop policies and actions to guide the development of the Town. This resulted in a document (370 pages) which defined goals and policies for the Town, and also

detailed an implementation program with specific actions to be accomplished in order to achieve these goals⁴. The 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan is currently being updated and will reference the findings and recommendations of this 2005 Open Space and Recreation Plan in relevant Sections. The updated LCP is scheduled for completion in spring of 2006, though an extension may be required.

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. The listing of goals, and the definition of an implementation program as presented in the 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan, represents much hard work on the part of the Town. The document was voted on (and accepted) at Town Meeting, and has been approved by the Cape Cod Commission. LCP goals which are pertinent to issues of open space and recreation in Wellfleet have influence the development of this Open Space and Recreation Plan and the two documents are consistent with each other and with the Cape Cod Commission's Regional Policy Plan.

The 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan was developed under the guidance of the Local Planning Committee (LPC). The LPC was established by the Board of Selectmen in 1992 and consists of representatives of seven Town Boards concerned with growth management, development and environmental protection: the Planning Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, the Open Space/Land Bank Committee, the Conservation Commission, the Natural Resources Advisory Board, the Board of Health and the Housing Authority. In addition, the LPC has one at-large member. The 2005 LCP update is being conducted by a similar committee. Draft chapter of the Plan will be distributed to various boards for comment and specific meetings will be arranged as needed to solicit input.

The 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan was developed with extensive outreach to the residents of Wellfleet and the 2005 update is using a similar outreach strategy. All meetings of the Local Planning Committee are public, with appropriate notice given. Information on the progress of the planning process is disseminated through the media and through brochures. In addition to these ongoing efforts, a number of special efforts are being made to garner public opinion, through a town-wide survey and public workshops.

Public Opinion Survey

For the current update, a random sample of residents and non-residents is being conducted with a distribution of approximately 1,500. This survey is included as Appendix D, *2005 Town Planning Survey*. Results are scheduled to be unveiled during at a public meeting scheduled for July 30, 2005. Since the results are not currently available, for the purposes of this Open Space and Recreation Plan update, results of the 1995 LCP survey are being used.

In the 1995 LCP, a comprehensive survey was distributed to all year-round residents of the Town (about 2,100 households) and a sample of 400 nonresident taxpayers (i.e., seasonal residents and

⁴ See "Setting A Course For Our Future" - The 1995 Local Comprehensive Plan, Wellfleet, Massachusetts, April, 1995

other nonresident property owners). Responses were received from 535 of these 2,500 households, representing an overall response rate of about 21 percent. The response rate from non-residents was somewhat higher than that from residents. Appendix B, *1995 LCP Opinion Survey*, contains the questions and Appendix C, *Results of the 1995 LCP Opinion Survey*, a, abbreviated summary table of the results. Following are brief descriptions of some of the more important results relevant to open space and recreation planning:

1995 LCP Survey Results Relevant to Open Space and Recreation Planning

Business

- **Develop more waterfront commercial uses at the marina (1995 Town of Wellfleet LCP Opinion Survey Results, p.7)**

Overall, there is some support for commercial growth at the marina: 47 percent of respondents support this, and 41 percent oppose it. However, this question elicited a clear difference of opinion among the various groups of respondents: while year-round residents support the establishment of waterfront commercial uses (50% in favor, 38% opposed) and seasonal residents are split on the issue (44%–42%), non-residents tend to oppose such development by a 53% to 32% majority.

Those in the 31–50 age group support additional waterfront commercial uses by a margin of almost two to one (58%–30%). Younger respondents present the strongest opposition (50% opposed, 38% in favor).

- **Establish a small marine research and education center at Wellfleet Harbor (Ibid.)**

This question elicited strong support for establishing a research and education center that would provide jobs and economic growth while building on the town's image as a traditional maritime community: 76 percent of respondents support this concept and only 12 percent oppose it. Support is generally strong among year-round residents (77%), seasonal residents (78%) and non-residents (69%). Similarly, support is strong among respondents of all ages, ranging from 66 percent of those over 70 years old to 84 percent of the 31–50 age group.

- **Implement a comprehensive harbor management plan to promote effective harbor development and allocate resources equitably among diverse interests (Ibid., p.9)**

This statement also elicited strong support from all groups: 76 percent expressed support, including 77 percent of year-round residents, 78 percent of seasonal residents, and 69 percent of non-residents. Among the various age groups, support ran from 69 percent of those over 70, to 83 percent of those in the 31–50 group. Appendix J, *Draft 2005 Harbor Management Plan – Overview Statement*, provides more detail regarding this ongoing project.

- **Encourage expansion of traditional marine industries, e.g., shellfishing, as an integral part of the town's economy (Ibid.p.9)**

This statement received the strongest support of all the business development questions: 81 percent of respondents indicated support and only 11 percent were opposed. Support is strongest among year-round residents of the town (83%–12%), but 78 percent of seasonal residents and 72 percent of non-residents also support expansion of shellfishing and other marine industries. While all age groups support this strategy by wide margins, there is a clear variation of support along age lines. The strongest support is among the youngest respondents (92% of those aged 19–30); support decreases somewhat in the next older groups (86% and 83% of those aged 31–50 and 51–70, respectively); and the lowest level of support is from the oldest respondents (73% of those over 70 years old).

Traffic and Parking

- **Offer free or low-cost shuttle service between remote parking lots, (e.g., the marina or IGA site) and the town center and ocean beaches. (Ibid., p.16)**

More than two-thirds of the respondents favor providing a shuttle service between remote parking lots, the town center and ocean beaches (69 percent in favor, 18 percent opposed). The strongest support is from year-round residents (72%–17%), and the lowest level of support is from non-residents (50%–31%). Unlike the previous two questions, the support for a shuttle service appears to decrease with increasing age. The 18–30 age group supports the idea by a margin of more than four to one (75%–17%), while the oldest age group favors the shuttle service by 64% to 17%. This decrease in support, however, is not accompanied by a rise in the proportion of each group that is opposed to the concept; rather, the numbers in the “unsure or no opinion” category increase from below 10 percent for the younger two groups to almost 20 percent for the oldest group.

The Environment

The questionnaire included four questions about respondents attitude toward environmental protection strategies. Strong support was expressed for all four statements. Of all groups of questions in the survey, this section generated the strongest positive response: 316 respondents (59 percent of the total) expressed support for all four policies, and only 17 respondents opposed all four statements. Although all groups of respondents strongly support strategies to protect Wellfleet's natural resources, the greatest proportional support comes from non-residents and seasonal residents. No clear trends based on age of respondents were evident from the data.

- **Enact more stringent regulations to protect wetlands, floodplains, freshwater resources, beaches, woodlands, etc. (Ibid., p.23)**

A wide majority of Wellfleet residents and property owners support the enactment of stronger regulations to protect the town's natural resources: this question elicited support

from 71 percent of the respondents, including 76 percent of seasonal residents, 72 percent of non-residents, and 70 percent of year-round residents. Only 21 percent of respondents indicated opposition. In terms of age, the strongest support is from those aged 18 to 30 (83%–9%) and over 70 (75%–22%).

- **Protect scenic views (Ibid., p.23)**

An even greater majority of respondents supported this statement: 87 percent are in favor, and only 7 percent were opposed. Again, support is strongest among seasonal residents (90%) and non-residents (89%), but 86 percent of year-round residents support protection of scenic views. Respondents in the 18-to-30 year-old age group support view protection by 78 percent in favor to 9 percent opposed; and between 86 percent and 88 percent of respondents in all other age groups are in favor, with fewer than 8 percent in each group opposed.

- **Preserve pond water quality through use limitations (Ibid., p.24)**

Wellfleet residents and property owners support limitations on use to preserve pond water quality by a margin of eight to one (82%–10%). The level of support is highest among seasonal residents (89%–2%) and non-residents (97%–3%). All age groups are strongly in support of use limitations to preserve water quality, with the strongest support coming from those 51 to 70 years old (83%–10%) and over 70 years old (87%–55%).

- **Protect groundwater quality through limitations on residential density (Ibid., p.24)**

There is strong support for residential density limitations to protect groundwater quality: 81 percent of respondents indicated support, while 12 percent were opposed. As in response to the other questions regarding the environment, seasonal residents and non-residents tended to support such regulations more strongly than year-round residents: the proportions in support and opposed were 78%–15% for year-round residents, 92%–4% for seasonal residents, and 93%–7% for non-residents. Respondents over the age of 70 appear to favor use limitations most strongly (89%–8%), followed by those between 18 and 30 years old (83%–9%).

- **Respondents favor regionalization of water supply facilities and services by a three-to-one margin (60%–20%). (Ibid., p.29)**

Support among year-round residents exceeds a margin of two to one (58%–23%), and seasonal residents favor regionalization by more than ten to one (74%–7%). All age groups expressed support by at least three-to-one margins, except that support from those over 70 was somewhat lower (55%–21%).

Recreation and the Arts

- **Expand recreational facilities for young people**

There is very strong support, particularly among year-round residents, for expansion of

recreational facilities for young people: this idea is favored by 79 percent of all respondents and 81 percent of year-round residents, and opposed by only 11 percent. Non-residents expressed a similar level of support, while seasonal residents were somewhat less likely to favor expanded recreational facilities (68% in favor, 15% opposed). All age groups strongly favor expanded recreational opportunities for the young. The strongest support is from those between the ages of 18 and 30 (83%–8%), and the lowest level of support is among those over 70 years old (72%–14%).

- **Expand recreational facilities for adults**

Although support is not as strong as for facilities for young people, there is moderate support for recreational facilities designed to serve adults: 65 percent of respondents favor expansion of such facilities, while 16 percent oppose it. As in the previous question, support is strongest among year-round residents (68%–14%) and weakest among seasonal residents (51%–28%). As with the previous question, support for expanded recreational facilities appears to decline somewhat with increasing age of respondents: among the youngest group of respondents the support ratio is 71%–8%, while margin for the oldest group is 56%–17%.

- **Extend the proposed Boston-Provincetown bike trail from the present South Wellfleet General Store terminus to Truro**

There is strong support across the board for extending the Boston-Provincetown bike trail through Wellfleet to the Truro town line: 82 percent of respondents favor taking this action, and only 9 percent oppose it. Extension of the regional bike trail is supported by more than 80 percent of year-round residents, seasonal residents and non-residents, and by more than 80 percent of those in all age groups except the 18–30 group, where the ratio of support to opposition is 62%–12%.

- **Develop a town community center**

There is moderate support for developing a town community center, with 56 percent in favor and 20 percent opposed. About the same percentages of year-round residents, seasonal residents and non-residents support this idea, but non-residents are more likely to be unsure about it (38%) and less likely to oppose it (7%).

- **Strengthen the town's role as an arts center encompassing galleries, music, theatre, etc.**

Support for strengthening the town's role as an arts center is fairly strong, particularly among seasonal residents and non-residents. Overall, 70 percent of the respondents favor this strategy and 17 percent oppose it. Support is strongest among seasonal residents (83%–10%), and non-residents (79%–14%), while year-round residents are less likely to be in favor (67% in support, 19% opposed).

- **Provide a town bandstand for seasonal concerts, celebration, etc.**

Residents and taxpayers support the provision of a town bandstand by a margin of three-to-one (62%–20%), with somewhat stronger support from non-resident respondents (71%–7%).

Public Workshops

For the 1995 LCP, three public workshops were held. The first, held in the Wellfleet Public Library on May 25, 1993, served as the public “kickoff” of the planning process. This workshop was designed to elicit general ideas from Wellfleet’s residents about the Town’s economy and natural environment, and to identify aspects of Wellfleet that residents like and other features that they would like to change. The second public workshop, August 10, 1993, was scheduled so as to provide a forum for the Town’s seasonal residents as well as year-round residents. As the flyer used to advertise the workshop stated:

“We recognize that the Wellfleet community extends beyond those who live in the Town year-round. This special place is important to those who live and work here for only a few months each year, and to others who may only visit for a few days or weeks at a time. Many of these people have demonstrated their love for the Town, returning again and again to enjoy its small-town feeling its vital arts community, and the recreational opportunities available on the Outer Cape. Many also represent the future of Wellfleet, just as many of our current residents were once “only” summer visitors.”

The third public workshop, held on November 9, 1993, focused on coastal and inland natural resources, including water quality issues that had been addressed in the August 10 workshop. Participants were organized into subgroups to discuss particular aspects of the Town’s natural resources. Participants were asked to discuss issues of natural resources quality, protection and enhancement using several prepared questions to frame the discussion. At the conclusion of the meeting the discussions were summarized and all participants had an opportunity to comment on the issues and recommendations for policies and actions identified by small groups.

In addition, the Plan incorporates and synthesizes several separate planning efforts that had taken place over the prior few years, including:

- The 1988 nomination of Wellfleet Harbor as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern, prepared by the Wellfleet Conservation Trust;
- The 1998 *Open Space and Recreation Plan Update*, prepared by the Open Space Committee under the sponsorship of the Conservation Commission;
- The *Harbor Management Plan*, prepared by the Natural Resources Advisory Board, scheduled for revision (see Appendix J, *Draft 2005 Harbor Management Plan – Overview Statement*).