

Wellfleet continues to experience the pains of growth which stretch some of the very resources which are needed to support an increased population. This is particularly true of its water supply and waste disposal. The Local Comprehensive Plan completed in 1995 discusses this in detail. That Plan is presently being updated. . Most residents depend on individual private wells for their water with groundwater the sole source of that supply. Most people also rely on individual septic systems for disposal of waste water. The sensitivity of the Cape Cod aquifer to contamination is well documented and is compounded by the increasing problem of saltwater intrusion along coastal areas. With this in mind it is critical that all resources which impact on our water resources be guarded carefully. The interconnectedness of our natural resources is only amplified over time and growing use.

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 (Appendix J contains an overview statement). As a result of this study the Local Comprehensive Plan contains a large number of specific recommendations for action. Many of these needs are echoed in this Open Space and Recreation Plan. A listing of the needs identified in both resource protection and in the community follows:

#### **A. Summary of Resource Protection Needs**

##### **1. Ground Water Protection**

- a. The future supply, quantity and quality of ground water is a major concern to the residents of Wellfleet due to the sensitivity of the aquifer and the continuing threat of increased development.
- b. Water testing in the central district and several residential areas should be continued on an ongoing basis to stay abreast of changes over time.
- c. There should be the further provision of wellfields as needed and appropriate.

##### **2. Waste Disposal**

- a. On-site septic systems are a threat to ground water quality in some areas. Special consideration needs to be given to wastewater disposal needs in the Central District, and in areas near ponds and fragile coastal areas.
- b. A plan for updating all cesspools to Title 5 should be implemented as soon as possible. Continued effort is needed to determine the feasibility of alternative means of septic disposal including the potential for sewers and increased utilization of alternative waste treatment systems such as community or cluster systems.

- c. Need to expand and refine our successful initial efforts at recycling to the extent a market is available.
- d. Eliminate roadside and beach litter and illegal dumping.

### **3. Wellfleet Harbor Protection**

- a. The shellfish industry needs to have clean water, space and facilities and these can and should be balanced with the recreational demands of seasonal traffic.

### **4. Protection of Coastal Resources**

- a. Intense residential building, including expansion of existing houses, in or adjacent to the buffer zone endangers our coastal banks, barrier beaches and the quality of water in our harbor and estuaries. We need to continue and improve cooperation and coordination between all Town agencies to ensure protection of these natural resources.
- b. Development of shorelines must provide space for salt marsh retreat in the face of sea-level rise which is expected to accelerate.
- c. Intense use of beaches seasonally must be monitored wisely.
- d. Erosion of beaches should be monitored.
- e. Tide restrictions degrade extensive marshlands in Town with severe impacts to marine animals and loss of ecological functions that are fundamental to the health of the harbor, i.e. important to both wildlife and people.

### **5. Protection of Kettle Ponds**

- a. Fresh water kettle ponds become overused in the height of the summer and this threatens their very essence.
- b. Constant monitoring, providing limited and controlled access, and toilet facilities are important

### **6. Land Conservation**

- a. Determine and establish a minimum percentage of remaining developable land that the town would like to preserve and begin to implement that goal with an emphasis on protecting natural the resources, scenery and the character of the Town.
- b. Continue cooperative open spacepreservation efforts in accordance with LCP - working with Conservation Commission, Wellfleet Conservation Trust, Open Space Committee, Cape Cod National Seashore, and others.

## **B. Summary of Community's Needs**

- 1. **Maintaining present character of town, especially in the Central District.**

The attraction of Wellfleet of year round residents as well as seasonal residents and visitors continues to be its charming and historic town center, much of which resembles a fishing village of years gone by. Equally important to that character is the large amount of open space surrounding the central village and stretching from Cape Cod Bay to the Atlantic Ocean.

## **2.      Transportation**

- a.      Ways to reduce traffic congestion. We need to better address the issue of summer traffic congestion in the central District as well as on Route 6.
- b.      Improve parking facilities in village and at beaches.

## **3.      Need to improve and expand specific recreational areas keeping in mind the environmental consequences.**

- a.      A teenage recreation center is badly needed for year round families.
- b.      Continue to maintain/improve accessibility standards (see Appendix I for ADA report)
- c.      Consider creating neighborhood recreational areas in order to improve public accessibility to recreational opportunities.

## **4.      Need to consider water supply, waste, and open space requirements when the town builds new buildings or remodels older ones (as a case in point, in 2003 a new Senior Center was completed; in 2004 a water supply system for all public buildings was installed).**

## **5.      Need for continued education to improve citizen awareness of the relationship between population growth and ground water protection, waste disposal, recreational areas, town character. and natural resources such a beaches, wetland, harbors, etc.**

## **6.      Need to ensure that Open Space and Recreation needs are addressed adequately by theCPACCommittee.**

## **C.      Management Needs, Potential Change of Use**

There are at least three needs which can be classified under the rubric of management in Wellfleet. First, it is important that the Open Space Committee and the Board of Selectmen work to counter the commonly held misconception that, because 61% of its land is in the National Seashore and that additional acreage is owned by the Audubon Society, the matter of open space has been resolved. While the facts are correct, the conclusion is erroneous.

Most of the citizens of Wellfleet spend most of their time and conduct most of their activities within the boundaries of the town and therefore the quality of life of most people is heavily influenced by the physical characteristics of the land within the town. The town proper contains the harbor and its estuaries, ponds, wetlands, scenic vistas, historic areas, woodlands and wildlife

habitats. It also contains a population with needs for both active and passive recreation facilities and a shellfish industry which forms an important economic asset, directly for those involved and indirectly for other residents and visitors.

Reconciliation of pressures for development on the one hand and the maintenance of rural characteristics on the other have been a recurring problem. While recognizing the legitimate and reasonable needs for development and the ever changing lifestyle in Wellfleet , care must be taken to keep significant options open for future generations.

Secondly, voters should also be reminded that the cost of open space is considerably less than land which has been developed, at least residentially. In other words, the costs of town services (including police, fire-ambulance, public works and education) increase more than proportionally as the town becomes further developed and there are increases in population. Thus, the tax rate goes up.