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# A Comparison of Resource-Centric VS. People-Centric Approaches to Open Space Planning: A Case Study in Jaffrey, NH

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# A Comparison of Resource-Centric vs. People-Centric Approaches to Open Space Planning: A Case Study in Jaffrey, NH



A Masters Project Presented  
By

Mark W. Kresge

February 2011

Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning



**UMASS**  
**AMHERST**

**A COMPARISON OF RESOURCE-CENTRIC VS. PEOPLE-CENTRIC  
APPROACHES TO OPEN SPACE PLANNING:  
A CASE STUDY IN JAFFREY, NH**

A Masters Project Presented

by

MARK W. KRESGE

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
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## **ABSTRACT**

### **A COMPARISON OF RESOURCE-CENTRIC VS. PEOPLE-CENTRIC APPROACHES TO OPEN SPACE PLANNING: A CASE STUDY IN JAFFREY, NH**

**FEBRUARY 2011**

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**Directed by Professor Elisabeth Hamin**

Land preservation can be an important planning tool when used as part of a strategic and comprehensive vision. This planning process is complicated, however, by the diversity of functions and values associated with open space and the large number of potential stakeholders with an interest in the issue.

This project examined alternative ways to approach the development of an open space plan and observed the interaction between competing forces during the planning process in the small rural community of Jaffrey, NH. One of the main issues examined was whether identification of potentially valuable open space would have different results when approached from a people-centric perspective as opposed to a natural resource-centric perspective.

In this case study, it was found that resource-centric mapping tended to identify valuable lands in relatively small, discrete patches. This type of analysis resulted in a fractured view of high-value land that failed to identify the corridors that would be necessary to unite the patches into a cohesive network of linked landscapes. On the other hand, identification of valuable lands through the use of public focus sessions tended to result in broader swaths of targeted land. This resulted in a more comprehensive view of the landscape than that obtained from the strictly resource-based mapping.

With both approaches having elements to recommend them, a multi-faceted approach involving both scientific analysis and public input seems to be the optimal approach to open space mapping. This will require more expenditure of time and effort early in the planning process, but will be more comprehensive and will have political benefits at the back end when it comes to selling the plan to the public.



# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iv
ABSTRACT .....	v
CHAPTER	
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.0 OBJECTIVES .....	3
3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW .....	6
4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION – JAFFREY, NH .....	20
5.0 METHODOLOGY/PROCESS DESCRIPTION.....	30
5.1 People-Centric Data Collection.....	31
5.2 Resource-Centric Data Collection.....	35
6.0 DISCUSSION .....	40
6.1 Mapping Observations .....	40
6.2 Process Observations.....	46
7.0 CONCLUSION.....	50
8.0 REFERENCES .....	52

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A	WEBSITE PAGES/MINUTES
APPENDIX B	DRAFT OPEN SPACE PLAN
APPENDIX C	MAPS

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Although incorporation of open space into community design dates back at least as far as the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century creation of public parks and “garden city” concepts, recent decades have brought a resurgent interest in the analysis of open space as an integral part of a community plan. Land preservation can be an important planning tool when used as part of a strategic and comprehensive vision rather than as an opportunistic, reactionary approach (Daniels & Lapping, 2005; Wright & Czerniak, 2000) , and planners are increasingly tasked with formulating coherent strategies and management plans for the creation or maintenance of undeveloped open space (Hollis & Fulton, 2002). This planning process is complicated, however, by the diversity of functions and values associated with open space and the large number of potential stakeholders with an interest in the issue.

As a broad categorization, divergent approaches to open space planning can be conceptualized as utilizing either a “demand approach” or “supply approach” (Maruani & Amit-Cohen, 2007). A demand-based, or people-centric approach focuses primarily on the recreational value and ecosystem services provided by undeveloped land. This tends to be a more utilitarian approach, in which the existence of open space is justified by the value of the services it provides to

humans. On the other hand, a supply-based, or resource-centric approach is generally more oriented toward land conservation on the basis of its intrinsic natural resources, and may employ a broader conception of the ecological values provided by open space. This project will examine the interplay of these two approaches during the creation of an open space plan for the small rural community of Jaffrey, NH.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

This project is structured to answer the following question:

- Is there a material difference in the identification of lands targeted for protection when approached from a demand-based perspective as opposed to a supply-based perspective? Or is this an example of two roads leading to the same destination?

While the supply approach and demand approach embrace different sets of values, there is also a considerable amount of potential overlap in the two approaches. In many cases, the qualities of undeveloped land that make it ecologically valuable also make it an attractive area for recreational purposes. Therefore, it is conceivable that the same lands could be prioritized for protection by the two approaches, only for different reasons.

The working hypothesis for this project is that there *will* be a distinction between the lands identified as worthy of protection by people-centric approaches versus those identified by resource-centric approaches. Since not all recreational uses of open space necessarily correlate with high ecological values, it is assumed that there will be some lands identified as valuable for recreational use that would not be present in a strictly supply-based approach. Conversely, areas with high

natural resource values (i.e., extensive wetlands) are not necessarily conducive or appropriate for recreational uses. Therefore, it seems likely that there would be a divergence in the types of lands selected for protection when approached through a resource-centric analysis versus a people-centric analysis. However, if this assumption turns out to be incorrect, and there is a high degree of convergence between lands identified as valuable by the two approaches, then this would have significant ramifications on the optimal way to conduct an open space planning process, particularly in resource-constrained situations.

Generally speaking, the data required to develop a supply-based map of valuable open space resources is readily available from state and regional planning agencies, and can be analyzed relatively quickly in order to come up with a prioritized open space map for a community. In comparison, the type of robust public participation process employed in this project to generate demand-based maps tends to be more expensive in terms of time and effort expended by citizen groups or consultants working on developing the open space plan. If the end result is that an extended public participation process results in essentially the same outcome as a desk plan, then this would suggest that the process can be safely scaled down without sacrificing plan quality. By developing a plan with more emphasis on natural resource mapping and less emphasis on soliciting

public comment, the plan could be executed more expediently and inexpensively.

In the broader context of an ongoing open space protection effort within a community, there may be other pertinent reasons for a robust public participation process (such as building political support). While this project will focus primarily on the inventory aspect of identifying and mapping lands to be prioritized for protection, observations regarding the public participation process itself will also be added as appropriate.

### **3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The primary role of regulatory planning in the United States has historically been “to determine *how* land will be developed not *if* it should be.” (Wright & Czerniak, 2000, p. 419). The rise of importance of land trusts and other open space protection efforts over the last few decades suggest that the public is looking beyond regulation in search of other methods to protect key open space lands from development. Most land trust and other open space protection programs focus on voluntary and negotiated agreements or transactions as the best means of conserving land. These approaches implicitly recognize that the use of regulation to permanently conserve private property from development in the United States “is not and never will be politically or legally possible.” (Wright & Czerniak, 2000, p. 420)

Over time, open space protection efforts have become a prominent feature in American land use policy. There is little doubt that open space protection has a direct impact on both urban growth patterns and land use patterns in general (Hollis & Fulton, 2002). For planners involved in land use issues, the development of open space plans is becoming an important addition to their policy toolbox. Often, these open space plans will lay the groundwork for

potential cooperative land conservation projects involving planning agencies, landowners, land trusts, and developers.

While these types of projects can provide viable mechanisms for land protection, Hollis & Fulton observe that decentralized land protection efforts may constitute a reactionary, ad hoc response to development pressures. The protection of scattered individual parcels may not represent a significant improvement over the scattered, leapfrog type development commonly criticized as sprawl. Particularly if a key objective is to create large blocks of contiguous preserved land in order to maintain core habitats and other uses that require larger unfragmented tracts of land, then land protection should be approached within the framework of a guiding strategic vision (Daniels and Lapping 2005). Ideally, this is the type of guidance that an open space plan can help provide to a community, and the planning process itself may also help to build popular support for open space protection.

One of the factors affecting popular support for open space protection is the degree of accessibility and visibility of the lands being protected. Forested areas have been found to contribute to satisfaction with community and sense of peacefulness, but only when those forested areas are accessible, either visually or



physically. In general, support for open space protection will depend on the degree of interaction with nature, and the amount of interaction is in turn linked to knowledge of availability of natural areas and visibility of natural areas (Kaplan & Austin 2004).

Therefore, both as a matter of ecosystem functionality and in order to ensure political support, open space protection needs to be approached with the goal of creating a network of protected open space that weaves through an entire community. Depending upon the protection method employed, open space may be acquired or protected in discrete chunks, but the resulting system should encompass both linear elements and nonlinear areas to create a cohesive whole. The ultimate goal is to create interconnected open space that will eventually coalesce into a network of linked landscapes (Arendt 2004). It is important to view the overall network as a unified system composed of individual elements including linear elements like trails, as well as land trust preserves, individual properties with conservation easements, government-owned lands, land contained within open space developments/conservation subdivisions, etc.

Aside from the potential to provide a unifying framework for piecemeal protection efforts, there are also broader social reasons for governments to

become involved in planning open space protection. As economies develop, fewer people derive their employment directly from working on the land, and the value of land reflects its uses for other purposes such as residential or commercial development. Counterbalancing this trend, rising standards of living, employment, and lifestyle patterns drive the demand for more outdoor recreation – either active or passive enjoyment of natural spaces. Meeting these needs requires accommodating the desires of many different demographic groups (Maruani and Amit-Cohen 2007). In essence, a constant friction exists between the desire for development and the desire for open space conservation.

At least in the United States, the favored approach to resolving such conflicts is to defer to market forces. However, in this case a market failure is created due to the non-market nature of many benefits provided by open space and the difficulty of quantifying the value of these public goods. The speculative value of land for development is almost always higher than land used as open space, so a complete deferral to market forces results in a sub-optimal allocation of land for open space uses (Geoghegan 2002, Banzhaf 2010).

Economic valuation studies that have incorporated revealed preference studies using hedonic pricing analysis, and stated preference studies using contingent

valuation approaches in order to assign a monetary value to open space have yielded highly variable results. In general these studies indicate a positive effect on land values due to proximity to open space, but the magnitude of that effect is highly sensitive to overall context and location. Under certain conditions, proximity to open space can even have a negative effect on land values. For example, this can be observed in locations adjacent to a very busy park, or adjacent to a loud, smelly agricultural operation (McConnell & Walls, 2005).

Another context that influences perceived value of open space is the degree of development pressure in the area being studied. In areas that have come under heavy development pressure the value placed on open space may be somewhat higher, but the willingness to pay for this amenity is also influenced by average income levels in the area and other demographic factors. As a further complication, some hedonic studies suggest that the value placed on open space is contingent upon the distance from the respondent's residence. One study suggested a positive effect on value for open space that is located within sight of the respondent's house, but a negative effect for open space that is located at a further distance, but still within walking distance (Geoghegan 2002). A possible interpretation of this result is that people value open space seen from their window, but favor amenities such as restaurants or other retail/commercial

amenities available to them within walking distance more than open space.

Pursuing this observation to its logical conclusion, one would be left with an unsolvable NIMBY situation where everybody wants the nice open field in their backyard, and everybody also wants the amenities provided by commercial development, but nobody wants those amenities located in their backyard.

Since the direct calculation of average economic values assigned to open space seems to be problematic, a more interesting result that could potentially be gained from properly designed studies would be the distribution of perceived values for open space among the public (Banzhaf, 2010). This would provide some guidance for a policy-based approach to open space protection. A main priority for policy-makers is to identify the level of political support for possible ranges of open space protection efforts amongst various constituencies and coalitions.

Given that a quantitative, econometric solution to open space allocation does not appear to be forthcoming, planners are faced with the issue of how best to develop policy that adequately recognizes the various stakeholders with interests in open space.

There is no general agreement on planning criteria that might illuminate how much open space is needed, where it should be located, or how it should be used (Maruani & Amit-Cohen, 2007). To the extent that these questions can be answered, they will most likely be location-dependent and will vary from community to community.

Open space can be an important issue in many types of communities, but relations between stakeholders are probably at their most contentious in suburban fringe areas where a significant amount of open space still exists but is coming under increasing development pressure. This suburban fringe is a collision zone (Daniels 1999) with many opportunities for divergent perceptions of what landscapes should be. This can spawn local opposition groups or social movements that rally around causes including open space issues. Movement of new landowners to the suburban fringe can change the politics, values and decision-making process in rural areas. Distinctions between urban and rural are blurring, and the focal causes that people are willing to rally around are shifting as new people move to the interface areas between people and natural resources (Dwyer 2004).

The open space issues in these types of areas are also more complicated since the use of open space as working lands (primarily agriculture and forestry) is still a realistic possibility, whereas these uses are not present to any great degree in more urbanized areas. While the land use choices posed in urbanized areas may conceivably be condensed to a dichotomy of urbanization vs. recreational/ecosystem services uses, this simple duality is probably not sufficient to fully capture the important planning concerns present in a suburban fringe or rural area. In these areas, a better conceptualization might be a triangular model of working lands vs. recreational/ecosystem services vs. urbanization (Koomen, et al. 2008). Although either of these simplistic classification schemes can provide a starting point for approaching the decision-making process, the boundaries between the various concerns also tend to blur when applied to actual land use situations. Specific to agricultural uses is the concept of multifunctional agriculture, which includes encouragement of other values in addition to agricultural function, such as biodiversity, landscapes and vistas, and other contributions to socio-economic viability in rural areas (Renting, et al. 2009). More broadly, this concept of multifunctionality can also be applied to other land uses as a means of gaining popular support for land use decisions. More effective policies will target multiple aspects of open space, e.g.,

encouraging both working lands functionality and enhancement of natural resource values or recreational values.

The degree to which a community's open space plan addresses multifunctional issues may depend on the guidance provided by state or regional planning agencies. For example, in Massachusetts the typical open space plan is titled as an Open Space *and Recreation* Plan (italics added). Based on guidance contained in the Massachusetts Open Space and Recreation Planner's Workbook (2008), these plans explicitly include an emphasis on recreational activities and use a comprehensive approach to preparation of the plan including both resource inventories and public participation. In other localities where no such explicit guidance is available, planners must use their best judgment when considering the appropriate content for an open space plan.

One of the implications of emphasizing multifunctional aspects of open space is that the plan is likely to incorporate elements of both "demand-based" and "supply-based" approaches to open space planning. In this classification scheme, the demand-based approach is described as being more typical of planners and geographers, and is focused on responding to human demand for recreation, amenities and quality of life. The supply-based approach is described

as being more typical of ecologists or conservationists, and is focused on protecting existing landscapes, habitats, and natural values (Maruani and Amit-Cohen 2007). Of the two approaches, the supply-based values are probably more easily identified in objective terms. Natural features that contribute to ecological value are relatively easily mapped and described in objective, scientific terms. When dealing with demand-based features, however, socio-political issues become paramount, and both the identification and weighting of values becomes a function of exactly what population segment is being considered. Therefore, any plan that incorporates demand-based elements needs to consider the methods by which values are being defined and decisions affecting the plan results are being made. Understanding land use change and developing plans to help guide it call for an understanding of the social forces driving it (Gobster, et al. 2004).

Although planners involved in preparation of open space plans are likely to incorporate public interests into the plan in some manner, there remains a possibility of introducing bias with regard to open space issues. In some cases, there may be a divergence in the importance assigned to open space and scenic views by local residents when compared to professional planners tasked with guiding land use change. Results of a survey conducted in Sunderland, MA



suggested that scenic views and the presence of woods and open fields were more important to residents than to either planners or developers (Ryan 2006). In general, it appears that planners tend to have more confidence than the public that the benefits of development outweigh its costs. Since planners have a high degree of influence on the decisions being made on behalf of community residents, it is incumbent upon them to acknowledge the varying views of residents and involve them in the decision-making process to the extent possible (Broussard et al. 2008).

When considering public involvement, it has been observed that common legally required participation methods like meeting notices, public hearings, reviews and comment procedures don't really work very well. Typically, these mandated methods don't fully satisfy the public's wish to be heard, aren't necessarily representative, and usually don't even improve decision-making by public officials (Innes & Booher 2004).

Governance issues involving conceptions of place and territory seem to be an area where it is particularly useful to employ collaborative approaches to planning (Healey 2003). Senses of place and opinions about proper balances between people and natural resources tend to be strongly held, and each interest

group will rigorously defend its own mental picture of what the land should look like. In these situations it can be helpful to work gradual and sequential participatory experiences into the public decision-making process (Lagabriele, et al. 2010).

With the ascendancy of the information society, information becomes associated with power, and the distribution of knowledge within the community has tended to become broader. Where power and information are widely distributed across a community, collaborative, consensus-building approaches may be required to develop flexible linkages between key players with differences in knowledge and values (Innes & Booher 1999).

A key danger if one fails to adequately account for public involvement is the formation of local opposition groups. The operation of local opposition groups is an understudied area in planning, but it is increasingly common to see opposition activists relying on inducing awareness-raising emotional responses in the public, rather than presenting factual research (van Dijk & van der Wulp 2010). While conflict and confrontation is certainly nothing new in politics, the ability to fire up emotional responses across broad swaths of the public has become a much faster and more efficient process with the rise of modern

communication networks, social networking applications and the rise of the 24-hour news cycle which guarantees coverage of issues that might have previously been off the public radar screen. This politics of opposition seems to be in vogue throughout the American political system, but if adequate attention is paid to participatory methods, one can at least hope to avoid it the local municipal planning level.

One way to minimize the potential for local opposition groups is to make sure that the planning process includes an emphasis on consensus building wherever possible. In consensus building, the group collectively absorbs and evaluates information. However, in order for a consensus group to have a legitimate claim of speaking for the public interest, it must be widely representative of the viewpoints within that public (Innes 1996). Therefore, considerable thought must be given to the selection of group members in order to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are represented.

In summary, some of the main elements that have been identified in the literature as important to open space planning include items like developing a strategic vision to create networks of linked landscapes; identifying high-value areas resulting from the presence of natural resources, recreational opportunities,

or working lands; finding opportunities for multiple uses on protected lands; recognizing the differences between supply-based and demand-based approaches to open space; and encouraging public participation and consensus building during the planning process in order to satisfy competing interests and build political support. This project follows the development of an open space plan in a small New Hampshire community, and examines the ways in which some of these issues were reflected during the planning process.

#### **4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION – JAFFREY, NH<sup>1</sup>**

The community used as a study site for this project is the Town of Jaffrey, located in southwestern New Hampshire. Located at the outer edge of the suburban fringe, Jaffrey currently retains many characteristics of a rural area, but has also seen moderate residential and commercial development pressures in recent decades. Within the immediate region, the town will be well-positioned for further growth during the next economic recovery due to the presence of infrastructure such as municipal water and sewer systems not typically offered in many nearby towns. The town is taking advantage of the current lull in development pressures to consider the best means of guiding development patterns in the future.

Historically, Jaffrey has enjoyed a reputation for the beauty of its natural resources. Its most prominent physical feature is Mount Monadnock, whose 3,165' peak dominates the northwest quadrant of the town and occupies approximately 20% of the town's land area. Glaciated terrain has resulted in a large variety of rivers, ponds, hills, and valleys that contribute to the area's attractiveness for tourists. Beginning in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Jaffrey became a destination for summer visitors, and was especially well-known among writers

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<sup>1</sup> Unless noted otherwise, the data and statistics presented in this section were obtained from the Jaffrey 2007 Master Plan Update.

and artists. By the turn of the century, the town had six grand hotels and attracted summer residents from academic and professional circles throughout the New York to Boston area. Although the hotels are now gone, tourism and summer homes still form a portion of the town's economic base.

Other important historical contributors to the town's economy were agriculture and a variety of manufacturing and textile mills utilizing the water power from the Contoocook River, which flows northward through town. The town's soils are generally not conducive to large scale row crops, so agricultural operations were typically small, or oriented toward sheep and cattle grazing. Dairy farms were a prominent feature in the town until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, but none remain in town today. A few small poultry or cattle operations, some small vegetable growers, and several active haying operations can still be found in the town. Light manufacturing also still plays a part in the local economy, and the town has a larger proportion of its residents (26% of the workforce) employed in manufacturing than most other towns in the immediate area.

Jaffrey's has a population of 5,657 (U.S. Census Bureau 2009 Population Estimate). There is little racial diversity (>97% white), but a substantial range of socioeconomic diversity. The 2000 Census reported that 25% of the households

had annual incomes of less than \$25,000, 58% had annual incomes between \$25,000 and \$75,000, and 17% had incomes greater than \$75,000. Although the distinctions are blurring somewhat, these socioeconomic disparities are represented to a degree by the two geographic locales known as Jaffrey Center (perceived as summer residents, “old money”), and East Jaffrey (perceived as manufacturing base, “working” people). This bifurcation of the town into two distinct camps is often reflected in various aspects of town politics.

The town has experienced varying growth rates over the years, as shown in Table 1. Relatively slow growth was seen from 1930 to 1970, followed by much more rapid growth during the 1970s and 1980s. Since the recession years beginning in 1990, growth has remained at relatively low levels of less than 1% average annual growth. If economic recovery leads to faster growth rates in the future, however, continuing with the large-lot new housing patterns of recent decades could affect the town’s rural character.

**Table 1 – Jaffrey Decennial Population Trends 1930 - 2009**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Increase for Decade</b>	<b>Average Annual Growth Rate</b>
1930	2485	-	-
1940	2879	394	1.5%
1950	2911	32	0.1%
1960	3155	244	0.8%
1970	3353	198	0.6%
1980	4349	996	2.6%
1990	5361	1012	2.1%
2000	5476	115	0.2%
2009	5657	181	0.7%

Source: NH Office of Energy and Planning; U.S. Census Bureau

Jaffrey's population characterizes it as a small town. However, the presence of municipal water and sewer infrastructure means that the town can maintain a relatively high population density in its core area. In addition to the town-wide population statistics, the U.S. Census Bureau also tracks statistics for the Jaffrey Census Designated Place (CDP). The Jaffrey CDP encompasses a 2.5-square-mile area located around the central core of town. In the 2000 decennial Census, the population density for Jaffrey Town overall was 143 people per square mile, while the population density for Jaffrey CDP was 1,114 people per square mile. If the town adopts policies that encourage development of new housing to occur within the CDP, or at densities comparable to those found within the CDP, development pressures upon open space areas can be minimized.



In addition to development pressures created by the simple demand for new housing choices by an increasing population, Jaffrey is located in an area that also contains forces that can help to drive new housing construction as an economic development tool. This region of New Hampshire is home to a Finnish cultural community that has always emphasized the construction trades as a favored occupation. Over time this has created a business cluster of construction companies in the area as employees spin off from existing companies to create their own enterprises. As a result, employment levels and the general economic well-being of the community are closely tied to the health of the local housing construction industry. In order to maintain employment levels, there is a natural tendency for these local construction companies to continue building housing units just to stay afloat, even if the market demand is relatively weak.

Although conflicting interests are prevalent in attempts to balance economic development and healthy growth against a desire to maintain the rural character of the community, the interest in protecting open space is also one that can cut across socioeconomic classes and political constituencies. The lifelong Jaffrey resident who treasures the ability to jump on his snowmobile and careen down a snowy Class VI road may not share many values with a recent retiree who arrives in Jaffrey with their subscription to *The New Yorker* and a penchant for

bird-watching, but the love of an open field as a place to pursue their respective interests is a force that may help form coalitions among these apparently disparate stakeholders.

The residents' appreciation of the recreational opportunities and quality of life afforded by Jaffrey's natural setting and open spaces can be seen in the results of a 2005 Community Survey distributed by Southwest Region Planning Commission as a prelude to the most recent Master Plan Update. This survey had a return rate of approximately 35% of the households in Jaffrey and provides an overview of community attitudes regarding growth, community character, and local government. Figures 1, 2 and 3 below depict responses to selected questions most directly pertinent to open space issues. Taken as a whole, these responses indicate that residents rate scenic areas and open space features very highly. Whether that interest is more associated with simple visual aesthetics, with some perception of community character, or with unstructured recreational activities such as hiking, skiing, snowmobiling, etc., it is clear that the town has an interest in maintaining its undeveloped open spaces.

Figure 1 Survey results on recreational activities

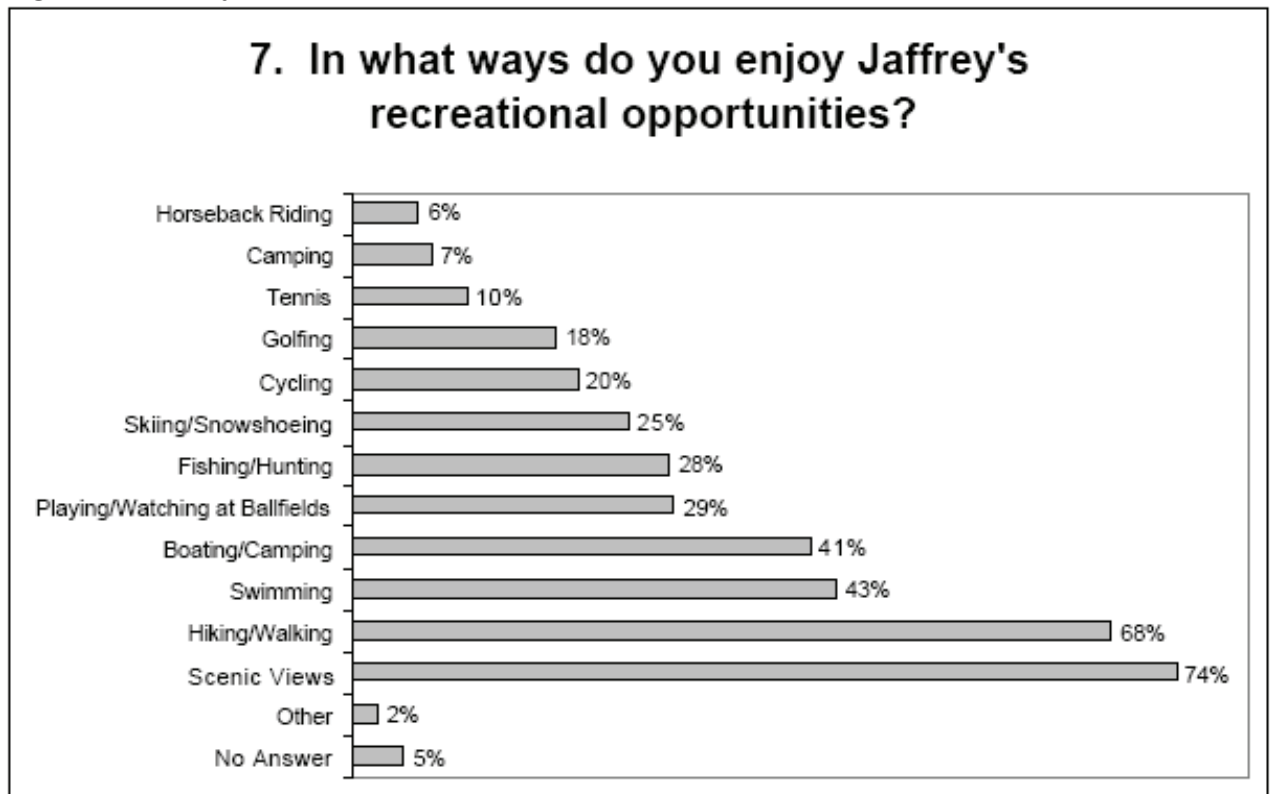
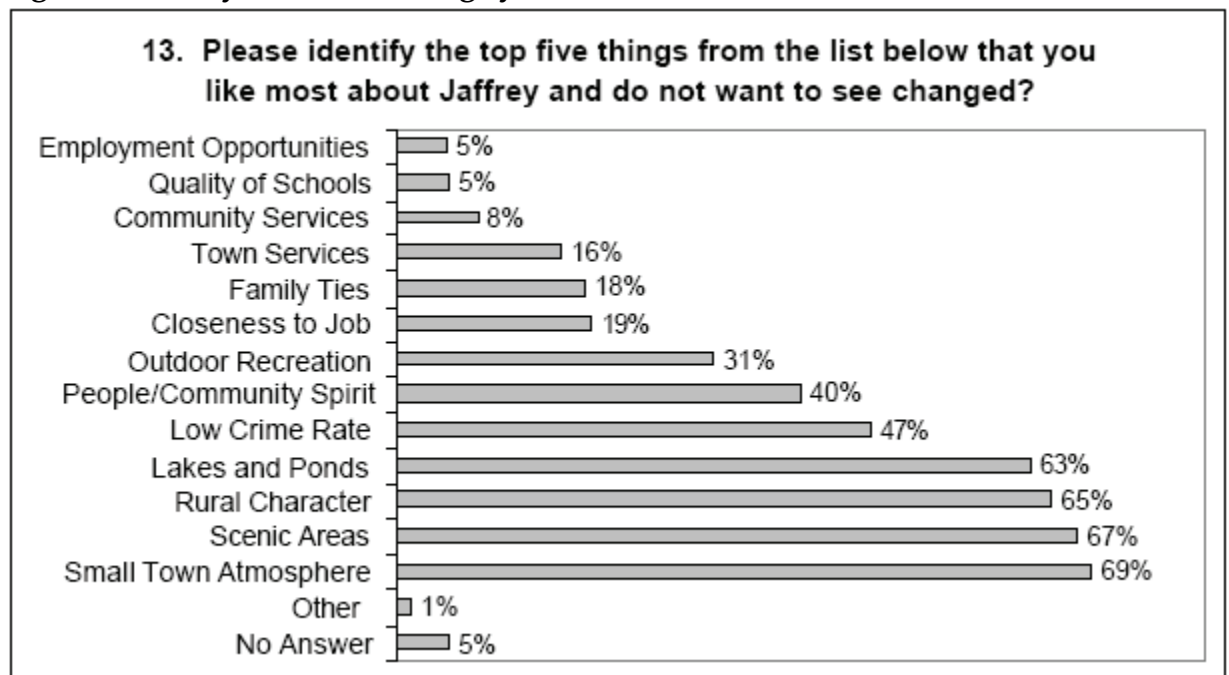
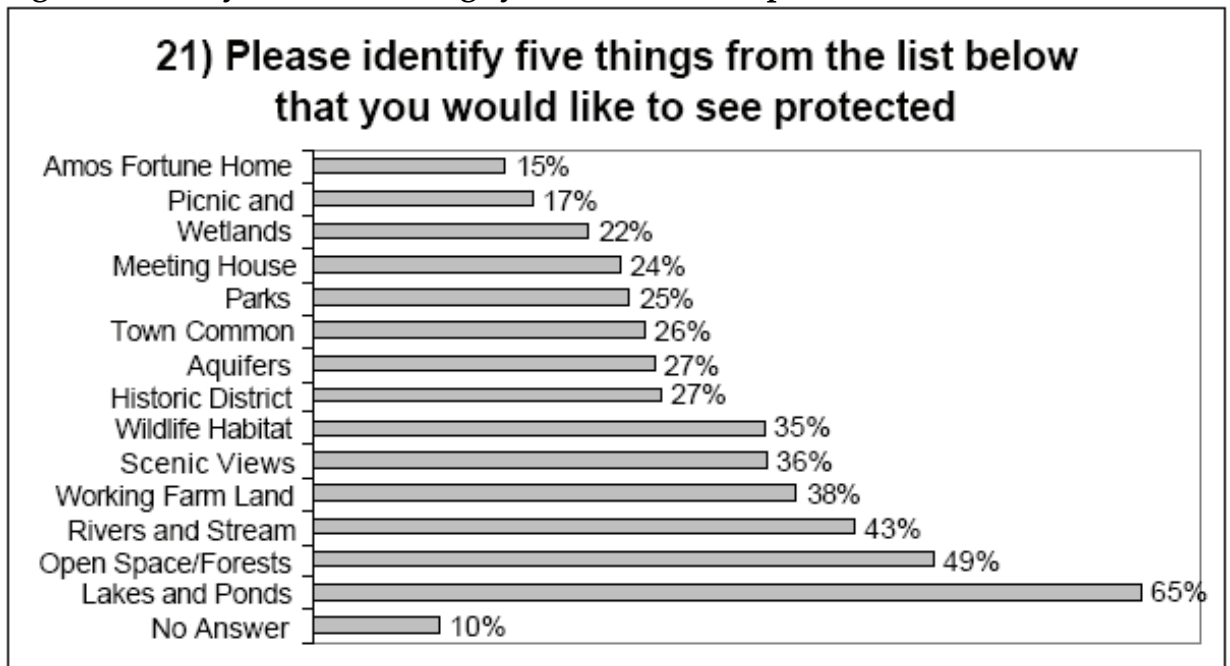


Figure 2 Survey results on things you like most



**Figure 3 Survey results on things you would like to protect**



These same concerns regarding retaining open space and maintaining Jaffrey's existing rural character crop up repeatedly in the 2007 Master Plan. The 2007 Master Plan addressed natural and scenic resources prominently in the Vision Statement and Implementation sections, as well as in the individual chapters on Economic Development, Historic and Cultural Resources, Land Use, Natural Resources, Recreational Resources, and Regional Context. The following quoted excerpts are selected from the Vision Statement and Implementation sections of the Master Plan:

"The people of Jaffrey have indicated that they want to see Jaffrey remain a small town, with a friendly atmosphere. We envision a Jaffrey that combines controlled growth and development with strong land preservation and environmental protection." (p. iv)

“Preservation of open space, forests and fields, and wildlife habitats, all of which are integral to our rural character, is of crucial importance. Mount Monadnock, and our ponds, lake, wetland areas, and scenic vistas are trusts to be passed unspoiled to future generations.” (p. iv)

“Jaffrey will encourage the wise use of land and preservation of open space, such as is provided by its present Open Space Development Plan. Jaffrey will focus on concentrating high density housing development or mixed uses in or adjacent to the Town’s hub where town water and sewer are presently available.” (p. iv)

“Develop a plan for open space and agriculture designed to protect Jaffrey’s natural resources, open spaces, and rural character.” (p. viii)

In recognition of these interests and in response to a proposal from the Conservation Commission, the Jaffrey Select Board initiated the process of creating an open space plan in 2009 by appointing an ad hoc committee to examine open space issues and make recommendations to the Select Board. This ad hoc committee was chaired by the author of this paper; the information gathered and observations made during committee meetings form the basis for the project.

In this position as committee chairman, I essentially had a triple role as an agenda-setter, an active participant and an observer. From a pure research standpoint, this complicates the interpretation of any observations made during the process. Since previous open-space related studies in Jaffrey had largely

been approached from a resource-centric perspective, within the context of this project, I clearly had a vested interest in ensuring that a people-centric perspective was represented during the committee process. Despite this bias in my structuring of the issues considered by the committee, however, ultimately the process results were dictated by the committee members themselves. While my personal interests had a definite influence upon the form of the committee process, the values voiced by the citizen participants and the conclusions drawn by the committee members can be ascribed solely to their own interests and experiences, and were not influenced by my motivations as a researcher.

## **5.0 METHODOLOGY/PROCESS DESCRIPTION**

A major objective of this project was to examine the differences and similarities in the lands identified as valuable open space from a people-centric perspective in comparison to those identified from a resource-centric perspective. In order to examine this issue, I utilized the forum of a newly established ad hoc Open Space Committee in Jaffrey. The initial group convened by the Select Board in January 2010 as an ad hoc Open Space Committee was comprised of two members from the Planning Board, including myself, and two members from the Conservation Commission.

The initial mandate from the Select Board was to examine governmental involvement in open space issues in Jaffrey, and provide a recommendation on whether the Town should have a permanent Open Space Committee to deal with these issues. During the ad hoc committee's initial meeting, I made the suggestion that additional public input would be useful in developing a meaningful recommendation. Given the diversity of different stakeholders in town with an interest in open space issues, the committee concurred that a robust public participation process was necessary in order to fully explore the perceived values of open space in Jaffrey. In the context of this project, the new opinions and information collected by the ad hoc Open Space Committee during

public meetings represents the people-centric aspect of open space interests in town.

### 5.1 People-centric Data Collection

The ad hoc committee held a series of public sessions during the Spring of 2010, with each session focusing on one particular aspect of open space. Each public meeting was properly noticed and publicized in the local newspaper and on the town website, but our primary intent was not to assemble a high turnout and wide cross-section of town residents at each meeting. Rather, our goal was to assemble the most knowledgeable and passionate advocates for each narrowly defined interest in a focus session where they could provide input to the committee for evaluation, analysis and synthesis at a later date. In keeping with this goal, we issued personal invitations for each meeting to specific individuals known to have high levels of knowledge and involvement in activities related to the topic for the meeting. The concerns, issues and expertise offered by the attendees helped to define the areas and concerns most important for their particular activity or interest. As a shorthand term, these meetings have been referred to here as “focus sessions”. These meetings did not, nor were they intended to, fit the description of a “focus group” in the classical research sense that they would include a structured process to collect and interpret data



(Larson, et al. 2004). Rather, they can be thought of more as free-wheeling discussions with “partisan groups”, or “special interest groups” that provide the narrowly focused viewpoint of a particular population subset.

Seven of these focus sessions were held from March through May 2010, covering the following topics:

- Snowmobiling
- Working Lands - agriculture, forestry, maple sugaring, etc.
- Hunting
- Ecosystem Services - aquifer protection, wetland functions, wildlife habitat, stormwater control, etc.
- Town character – artistic values, historic preservation, photography, scenic vistas, etc.
- Trail Use - hiking, biking, birding, skiing, snowshoeing, ATV riding, dog walking, horse riding, etc.
- Water Access - fishing, boating, swimming, etc.

Throughout the public participation phase, documentation of the project in the form of meeting agendas, minutes, and resource information was posted to the town website so as to provide a project repository and allow additional participation from interested parties unable or unwilling to attend the meetings.

A compilation of the web pages for the website dedicated to this open space

planning effort and copies of the minutes documenting each public meeting are presented in Appendix A.

Specific issues discussed with each group included the following topics:

- What are the land values most important to your group?
- What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?
- Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?
- Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?
- Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?
- Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?
- What is the general sense of future participation in your activity?  
Expanding? Contracting?

In addition, wherever appropriate, participants of each focus session provided input on a paper base map of the town, sketching out the areas of the most interest to them. Depending on the topic, mapping was not always feasible, but for those topics where mapping was beneficial, maps were prepared showing areas that were either used currently by the interest group or that would be desirable for future expansion of their uses.

At the conclusion of these focus sessions, the committee moved into an evaluation phase where it attempted to find common themes among the groups and synthesize the various inputs into a cohesive overall open space strategy. I recommended to the Select Board that the committee size be increased in order to accommodate more viewpoints from the community during the analysis of the information collected. The Select Board concurred, and expanded the committee size from its initial size of four members to a total of ten members. In addition to continued representation from the Conservation Commission and Planning Board, additional members were added to provide viewpoints from groups such as large landowners, people actively working the land, builders and developers, and realtors. The resulting draft Open Space Plan and recommendations submitted to the Town were the products of the efforts of this expanded 10-member committee. The Draft Open Space Plan submitted to the Town is attached in Appendix B.

## 5.2 Resource-Centric Data Collection

The resource-centric approach to identifying and prioritizing open space is represented in this project by the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) mapping completed for the Town of Jaffrey in 2009. The NRI report (Kane & Ingraham,

2009) used available databases and GIS mapping to identify areas with high values of wildlife habitat, water resources, soils and scenic resources. These individual values were consolidated into a co-occurrence model that summarizes the composite ecological value for all land in the town. This data-reduction technique combines all of the mapped resources into a single model, with higher values assigned to areas where there is significant coincidence of natural resources. Thirty mapped resources were included in the model (see Table 2: Co-occurrence Model Factors).

**Table 2. Co-occurrence Model Factors**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Resource</b>
<i>Scenic</i>	Scenic viewpoints (buffered)
	Scenic Analysis - 1 point
	Scenic Analysis - 2-3 points
	Scenic Analysis - 4-11 points
<i>Soils</i>	Important forest soils - Class IA
	Important forest soils - Class IB
	Important forest soils - Class IC
	Prime farmland soils
	Farmland soils of statewide importance
<i>Water</i>	High-yield Aquifers
	Flood Insurance Rate Zones (100-year floodplains)
	Wetlands and 100' Buffers
	Potentially Favorable Gravel Well Areas
	Public Water Supplies (buffered on Sanitary Radii)
	Wellhead Protection Areas
<i>Wildlife</i>	Riparian zones (300' buffer)
	Unfragmented Lands 100 - 500 acres
	Unfragmented Lands 500 - 1,000 acres
	Unfragmented Lands 1,000 - 2,500 acres
	Unfragmented Lands 2,500 - 5,000 acres
	Unfragmented Lands 5,000 - 10,000 acres
	WAP Matrix Forest: Appalachian oak / pine
	WAP Floodplain forests
	WAP Grasslands
	WAP Matrix Forest: Hemlock / hardwood / pine
	WAP Marshes
	WAP Matrix Forest: Northern hardwood / conifer
	WAP Peatlands
	WAP Ridge / talus
	WAP Matrix Forest: High and low elevation spruce / fir

Note: WAP is the Wildlife Action Plan by NH Fish & Game Dept. 2006

Lands that scored in the top 5% for composite ecological value in the co-occurrence model described above were depicted on a Conservation Focus Areas map in the NRI report. This resource-centric map is the basis for comparison with lands identified for protection by the people-centric approach, and a re-sized and re-formatted map based on Kane & Ingraham's work is presented in the 2009 NRI Conservation Focus Areas map in Appendix C. This re-formatted map, as well as the final versions of the various people-centric maps, were completed subsequent to the conclusion of the ad hoc committee's discussions and writing of the Draft Open Space Plan.

For the purposes of this project, the means of comparison between the people-centric composite open space map and the resource-centric co-occurrence map will be visual inspection and qualitative observation. Although quantitative differences could be calculated between the areas portrayed on one map versus the other, a comparison of this nature is unlikely to be instructive for at least two reasons. First, comparisons of line, shape and area may fail to adequately consider qualitative differences between the entities being compared (Frawg & Monstre 1970), which can be significant when considering the inherently subjective elements in many open space issues. Second, even if a strictly quantitative interpretation were to be considered applicable, it would not

represent a comparison between directly comparable entities due to some of the arbitrary decisions that went into the creation of these maps.

On the resource-centric map, the original identification of areas with high natural resource values is a fairly objective process based on available databases typically resulting from aerial photo interpretation. However, the overall accuracy of that mapping effort is contingent upon the smallest mapping unit used in the original analysis and interpretation. More significantly, the cutoff point of using only the top 5% of co-occurrence scores to define the Conservation Focus Areas is an arbitrary selection that could have a dramatic effect upon the comparison. If one were to select, say, the top 10% of co-occurrence scores instead, this could significantly increase the calculated acreage within those focus areas.

On the people-centric maps, the definition of priority areas is more arbitrary and subjective from the start. These areas were mapped freehand during focus sessions based on imprecise sketching of areas of interest. In addition, many of the demand-based areas involve linear elements like trails. Depending on the assumed width of the easement or buffer zone associated with the trail, the resulting acreage could differ substantially.

Despite these difficulties in measuring differences between the two scenarios, it is still quite possible to draw conclusions based on a more holistic interpretation of their similarities and differences.



## **6.0 DISCUSSION**

Over the course of this project, the work has unfolded in two distinct phases.

The first phase involved five months of organizational planning and collection of public input in focus sessions, and the second phase consisted of an additional three months of committee discussions that attempted to distill and analyze this input in order to create a plan for dealing with open space issues. The lessons to be learned from these activities fell into two general categories – observations pertaining to data and information, and observations pertaining to process. The information-oriented conclusions tend to be more associated with the first phase of work, while the process-oriented conclusions are derived more from the second phase of work.

### **6.1 Mapping Observations**

Maps generated during the focus sessions are presented in Appendix C. These demand-based maps were created for the five topics of snowmobiling, working lands, hunting, ecosystem services, and trail users. Although the ecosystem services topic would appear to overlap with the supply-based NRI analyses of wildlife habitat and wetlands, it is still considered people-centric in the context of this project. Since it is derived from the residents' on-the-ground experience of these areas and represents their immediate perception and enjoyment of these

high-value areas rather than a static picture derived from remote sensing technologies, it satisfies the criterion of being based on human demand. The results of the remaining two focus sessions were not conducive to graphical representation due to the diffuse nature of the interests represented.

In addition to the individual interest group maps created during the focus sessions, a composite map representing a compilation of all the individual interest groups was also prepared. This composite map does not perform any scoring or weighting to emphasize areas that may appear on multiple interest group maps, it simply merges the individual layers together to form a single representation of people-centric open space priority areas. This map is presented in the Composite Focus Sessions Map – Jaffrey NH in Appendix C.

One of the concerns voiced during ad hoc committee discussions of the maps is that by creating a composite map in this manner, the end result may simply be a map that highlights the entire town as being valuable to someone. Naturally, such a map would not be particularly useful in helping to prioritize the areas of most interest. While this outcome was not actually the case in this particular instance, it is probably a valid concern. Theoretically, if every single possible interest were to be considered, including every individual landowner, then the

entire undeveloped area of the town could conceivably be flagged as valuable open space. Therefore, when considering people-centric mapping projects, one should be aware of the possible need for introducing some kind of weighting or co-occurrence analysis similar to that described for the resource-centric mapping in this project.

In order to compare the results of the two approaches to defining high-value open space, the Composite Focus Maps With NRI Overlay – Jaffrey NH map in Appendix C shows the conservation focus areas defined in the Natural Resource Inventory report as an overlay on top of the people-centric areas defined during focus sessions. The immediate observation is that the supply-based conservation focus areas are considerably smaller than the demand-based areas, however for the reasons discussed earlier, this is not a particularly illuminating observation. Of considerably more interest is the difference in patterns seen in the results from the two approaches.

The resource-centric approach presents a static picture containing rather small and discrete pockets of high-value resources. Using the terminology of the patch-corridor-matrix model for conceptualizing landscapes, this supply-based approach tends to identify patches. Aside from riparian zones that would

possess an intrinsic high habitat value of their own, this approach does not really identify corridors to connect the patches. Pursuing an open space protection strategy based on these areas would result in a series of disconnected protected properties that do not necessarily coalesce into a functional ecosystem over a broader scale. In addition, the multitude of small patches identified by this method makes it difficult to bring a specific focus or sense of prioritization to the process of open space protection. Interpreted literally, the even distribution of small high-value patches across the entire town means that when considered at any area scale larger than that represented by individual small patches, no one area is more valuable than another or more deserving of protection. In essence, this particular resource-centric mapping project does not provide much useful guidance for developing a proactive approach to open space planning even on a town-wide scale, much less at a regional scale.

The people-centric approach on the other hand, tends to present a more dynamic view of the landscape, with high-value areas often defined based on movement. Since many of the activities and interests included in this demand-based approach are associated with human movement in the form of trails, or animal movement in the contexts of hunting, birdwatching, etc., identification of corridors can be considered to be an inherent part of this approach. In

combination with the identification of patches or larger high-value areas, this provides a more comprehensive view of the landscape to be protected. With regard to the original question of whether or not examining open space through the lens of human demand would simply be redundant to a resource-centric study, it does appear that the people-centric approach assigns value to open space in patterns that differ materially from those seen in a supply-based inventory.

Ultimately, it seems that strictly limiting the identification of high-value lands to one method or the other would probably be detrimental to the overall quality of the open space planning effort. If one accepts the premise that the goal of open space planning is to protect contiguous areas of unfragmented land and networks of linked landscapes, then the issue of corridors must be addressed.

This can be treated as a separate task if starting from a supply-based inventory of high-value patches, but it is already present as an organic and integral part of the process when starting from a demand-based inventory. Still, it would be shortsighted to completely discount the value of supply-based scientific studies.

Some of the advantages of this approach include the transparency of identification based on defined physical parameters, and the ability to identify potential high-value areas that might have been overlooked by local residents.

All in all, the best approach to preparing an inventory of high-value open space is likely to incorporate elements of both approaches.

## 6.2 Process Observations

The second phase of this project assembled a committee of ten members to evaluate the information and maps generated during the earlier public focus sessions. By affiliation, inclination, occupation, or circumstance, a partial list of the ten members' identifying characteristics included:

- Planning Board
- Conservation Commission
- Farmer
- Forester
- Developer/Builder
- Small business owners
- Realtor
- Jaffrey native
- Jaffrey newcomer
- Large landowners
- Small landowners
- Politically liberal
- Politically conservative
- Tree huggers
- Tree cutters
- Employed
- Retired

Naturally, since these were actual people and not characters provided by Central Casting, it would be difficult to categorically define any one individual by the polar opposites listed above. More commonly, people simply trend toward one side or the other of these poles along a spectrum. I intentionally nominated the six new members for the expanded committee with the express purpose of

representing the diversity of interests in town, and the nominations were vetted by the Select Board with regard to that goal.

Given the amount of committee diversity, it was an open question at the start of the process whether decisions and recommendations by consensus would be a realistic goal. Through the course of meetings and discussions, however, we discovered that differences of opinion were frequently matters of degree rather than fundamental disagreements on substance. By agreeing to participate on the committee, all members had demonstrated some degree of love for the land, or at least a keen regard for the value of land and an interest in how it is used. Ultimately, this shared bond of respect for the land proved to be useful for seeking out areas of consensus.

One of the early demonstrations of the power of open discussion arose during the focus session on snowmobiles. At that point, the original ad hoc committee was largely composed of members who tended to tread more softly on the earth, and were somewhat horrified by the prospect of snowmobiles whizzing by. During the discussions, however, the input provided by focus session participants made it clear that the local snowmobile club members were actively involved in stewardship of the land. Their organization was careful to gain



landowner permission for trail use, conducted active trail maintenance activities that benefited other winter trail users in addition to snowmobiles, received matching funds for trail maintenance from the state based on their documentation of these multiple uses, and were actively involved in the repair of erosion damage caused by less benign uses such as ATV traffic during the summer. This new level of familiarity with the activities and values of other land users caused a change of opinion for several committee members, and sparked new lines of discussion about forming alliances between different types of trail users to better leverage available resources.

In addition to the information flows from focus session participants to committee members, the later intra-committee discussions provided another forum for exchange of ideas. None of the committee members approached the process locked into a hardened ideological position, but certainly there were divergences of viewpoint and natural proclivities. Some of the more conservative members were originally disinclined to think that adoption of a proactive stance by government with regard to open space protection was necessarily a good idea. As discussions progressed, however, and the advantages and disadvantages of government involvement were fleshed out more thoroughly, a consensus developed for some kind of a limited governmental role.

While the final recommendations had to be tuned somewhat carefully in order to thread the needle of consensus, the fact that this group of ten citizens was able to generate a substantive report complete with policy recommendations completely by consensus was a significant achievement. Particularly in this context where an ad hoc committee was asked to provide guidance to the town for future approaches to open space, the fact that there were no dissenting opinions and no need for a minority report amplifies the significance of the recommendations that were presented. While a group of ten people cannot represent all possible viewpoints in town, most major wings of opinion were represented and in the end, none could claim to have been marginalized by being on the losing side of a simple majority vote. Recommendations that have been generated by unanimous agreement help to increase the perceived validity of the process. Ultimately the value of this advisory panel will depend on how well the committee's consensus-building experience translates into attitudes in the general voting populace. As a first step, though, it appears that it will provide a solid base for developing the broader political coalitions needed to implement an open space protection plan.

## **7.0 CONCLUSION**

This project examined alternative ways to approach the development of an open space plan and observed the interaction between competing forces during the planning process. One of the main issues examined was whether identification of potentially valuable open space would have different results when approached from a people-centric perspective as opposed to a natural resource-centric perspective. If there were little difference between the results produced by the two methods, then there would be little point in collecting public input since it is generally much quicker and easier to evaluate natural resources information that is readily available in databases and GIS layers distributed by State agencies.

In this case study, it was found that the resource-centric, supply-based use of co-occurrence analysis tended to identify valuable lands in relatively small, discrete patches. This type of analysis resulted in a fractured view of high-value land that failed to identify the corridors that would be necessary to unite the patches into a cohesive network of linked landscapes. On the other hand, the people-centric, demand-based identification of valuable lands through the use of public focus sessions tended to result in broader swaths of targeted land. Since many of the people-based interests revolved around the movement of either humans or

animals, identification of corridors supporting those movements was an integral part of the process. This resulted in a more comprehensive view of the landscape than that obtained from the strictly supply-based co-occurrence analysis.

While both approaches have elements to recommend them, it seems unlikely that a strictly supply-based, resource-centric approach to open space planning will result in optimal results. Relying on supply-based analysis for the initial open space inventory requires that significant additional judgment calls be made by the entity conducting the open space planning in order to create a comprehensive plan with linked, contiguous areas of open space. Incorporating public input into the process, however, will provide many of those linkages right from the start. This has the dual benefit of making the plan preparation step easier, and also increases the public acceptance of the process. A multi-faceted approach involving both scientific analysis and public input will require more expenditure of time and effort early in the planning process, but will have benefits at the back end when it comes to selling the plan to the public. Since implementation of an open space plan ultimately hinges on political support, incorporating public input into the formation of the plan is likely to be a wise investment and result in a better plan overall.

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## APPENDIX A

### WEBSITE PAGES/MINUTES



## Ad hoc Open Space Committee

This committee was tasked with evaluating governmental forms for dealing with open space issues in Jaffrey, and preparing the town's first Open Space Plan. This was a two-phase project. The first phase was an information gathering process in which we solicited input from specific interest groups (e.g., skiers, birders, hunters, snowmobilers, working lands people, conservation advocates, etc.). These stakeholders and interest groups were invited to visit the committee to discuss their values, interests and hopes for open space in Jaffrey. The second phase was distilling this input into a coherent plan that clearly identified priorities and strategies that can help to guide the Town's land use policies going forward.

The first public participation phase of this process was completed during Spring 2010. The second phase, which included an expanded committee size and discussions leading to the formulation of a Draft Open Space Plan occurred during Summer 2010.



► **Draft Open Space Plan & Maps  
October 2010**

[OSC Home](#)[Meetings](#)[Members](#)[Mission Statement](#)[Nature For People](#)[Public Involvement](#)[2009 NRI](#)[Example OS Plans](#)[2010 Draft OS Plan](#)[Poke the OSC](#)

## Mission Statement

### Committee Mission Statement

- To collect public input upon the places and aspects of land use that contribute to Jaffrey's quality of life.
- To evaluate possible land use policy choices that would ensure that our existing quality of life remains available to future generations.
- To identify the ecosystem services provided by open space in Jaffrey and evaluate policy choices that would maintain these utility values.

### Committee Charge from Select Board

The Jaffrey ad hoc Open Space Committee is a volunteer citizen committee advisory to the Select Board and charged to:

A) Evaluate the proper role, composition and/or need for a permanent Open Space Committee;

B) Prepare an Open Space Plan for the Town of Jaffrey that clearly identifies the priorities and strategies that could guide the Town and a permanent Open Space Committee going forward;

Upon completion of these first two tasks, the ad hoc committee will be dissolved and the Select Board will take its findings under advisement.

OSC Home

Meetings

Members

Mission Statement

Nature For People

Public Involvement

2009 NRI

Example OS Plans

2010 Draft OS Plan

Poke the OSC

## Nature for People

Excerpt from Letter from the President, [Nature Conservancy](#), Summer 2010 issue

It might be said that the Nature Conservancy was born of the impulse to protect nature by setting it apart from people. We can appreciate why such sentiment arose in 1950s America, when suburbs were gobbling up forests, and meadows were giving way to highway interchanges for a newly mobile society. "Buy it up, fence it off" became the unspoken motto for a nascent land conservation movement.

While those pioneering land saves were indeed heroic, we may have inadvertently done ourselves a disservice by reinforcing a false dichotomy: people *or* nature. When people see themselves as separate from nature, it's easy for conservation to be perceived as a luxury we can't afford during economic hard times - and as just another special interest the rest of the time.

As the scope and scale of the Nature Conservancy's work has expanded over the last half-century, however, a stronger appreciation of people's relationship *with* nature has taken hold. There is a growing recognition that our species' sustenance, livelihoods, economies and well-being are absolutely dependent on an intact and healthy natural world. A singular focus on securing biodiversity has evolved into a broader vision of conservation that ensures vibrant natural *and* human communities.

Conserving nature is often seen as a selfless act, but I would argue that the time has come to insert a bit more self-interest into our mission. We will continue to value the pristine and find joy and inspiration in nature's beauty, but conservation will command greater commitment and support only by continuing to refocus our plans and actions on the well-being of people.

-Mark R. Tercek  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
The Nature Conservancy

*"Conserving nature is often seen as a selfless act, but I would argue that the time has come to insert a bit more self-interest into our mission."*

[OSC Home](#)[Meetings](#)[Members](#)[Mission Statement](#)[Nature For People](#)[Public Involvement](#)[2009 NRI](#)[Example OS Plans](#)[2010 Draft OS Plan](#)[Poke the OSC](#)

## Public Involvement

During the information gathering phase of the open space plan development process, the committee solicited input from stakeholders and interest groups whose activities typically involve use of undeveloped lands.

The following list of interest groups were represented in the focus group sessions:

Snowmobiling	March 3
Working Lands - agriculture, forestry, maple sugaring, etc.	March 17
Hunting	March 31
Ecosystem Services - aquifer protection, wetland functions, wildlife habitat, stormwater control, etc.	April 7
Misc. Rural Characters - artists, historic preservationists, photographers, scenic vista proponents, etc.	April 21
Trail Users - hikers, bikers, birders, skiers, snowshoeing, ATVs, dog walkers, equestrians, etc.	May 5
Water Access - fishing, boating, swimming, etc.	May 19



[OSC Home](#)[Meetings](#)[Members](#)[Mission Statement](#)[Nature For People](#)[Public Involvement](#)[2009 NRI](#)[Example OS Plans](#)[2010 Draft OS Plan](#)[Poke the OSC](#)

## 2009 Natural Resource Inventory

### Background and Justification

The Jaffrey Conservation Commission, in its role as advocate for natural resources on behalf of the Town, recognized the need for current natural resource data for the entire town displayed at a scale sufficient for meaningful interpretation for conservation planning. Cognizant of the technical advances in both digital spatial data and the mapping software applications to utilize it, the Town applied for a grant through the N.H. Moose Plate Fund for the production of a series of new maps to display the extent and location of its critical resources. Funding was approved, and in 2008 the Town secured the services of Kane & Ingraham, Conservation Consultants to produce the map series, along with a summary report that would together constitute a new Natural Resource Inventory of the town, which the present report comprises.

### The Natural Resource Inventory

In the past two decades, Natural Resource Inventory has become a critical tool for the collection, synthesis, display and interpretation of data relating to natural resources of an area, be it at the property scale, town scale, regional scale or larger. Essentially a compilation of resource information tied to location, it can take many forms, depending on the needs of the sponsor. By displaying the known resources of an area on a variety of maps, the various component resources that exist at a location can be comprehended at once, and decisions the impact resource use are better informed.

#### NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

TOWN OF JAFFREY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

#### SUMMARY REPORT



PRODUCED IN COOPERATION WITH THE JAFFREY CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
CHRISTOPHER KANE & PETER INGRAHAM, 2009

Kane & Ingraham  
Conservation Consultants  
6 Concord Street • Concord, NH 03301 • 603-466-7512 • www.ki-consultants.com



**NRI Summary Report (1.8 MB)**

### Full-Size Maps:

- ▶ **Base Map (7.8 MB)**
- ▶ **Wildlife and Ecology (2.2 MB)**
- ▶ **Unfragmented Lands (1.5 MB)**
- ▶ **Water Resources (1.6 MB)**
- ▶ **Soil Types (1.9 MB)**
- ▶ **Scenic Areas (1.4 MB)**
- ▶ **Co-Occurrence Map (9.2 MB)**
- ▶ **Tax Parcels and Zoning (0.6 MB)**
- ▶ **Conservation Focus Areas (2 MB)**

## 2010 Draft Open Space Plan

### Background and Justification

Some of the defining characteristics of Jaffrey have always been the beauty of its landscape, the richness of its natural resources, and the abundant recreational opportunities. The wise use of land and preservation of open space is encouraged in many sections of Jaffrey's Master Plan, and conservation of natural resources is a recurring theme throughout the Master Plan. The purpose of this draft Open Space Plan is to illuminate possible approaches to preserving and enhancing these desirable attributes as the town continues to grow.

In order to develop recommendations on possible approaches to open space protection, the Jaffrey Select Board appointed four volunteers to form an ad hoc Open Space Committee (OSC) in early 2010, and then expanded the committee size to a total of ten members in June 2010. The original ad hoc committee conducted focus sessions with seven distinct interest groups of Jaffrey citizens, and the expanded committee evaluated the input collected in the context of preparing a draft Open Space Plan. This draft plan builds upon data collected in previous reports such as the 2009 Natural Resource Inventory, and offers recommendations on steps to be taken in order to implement a more proactive approach to open space protection in Jaffrey.

Draft Open Space Plan  
Jaffrey, NH



Prepared by:

Ad Hoc Open Space Committee

Tom Doane  
Caryn Garrison  
Michael George  
Bill Graft  
Charlie Kitch

Mark Kowale  
Cush Moore  
Lee Sawyer  
Carl Thompson  
Carol Thompson

October 2010



**Draft Open Space Plan (1.4 MB)**

### 11 x 17 Maps:

- ▶ **Protected Open Space Map**
- ▶ **Hunting Focus Session Map**
- ▶ **Ecosystem Service Focus Session Map**
- ▶ **Snowmobiling Focus Session Map**
- ▶ **Working Lands Focus Session Map**
- ▶ **Trail Users Focus Session Map**
- ▶ **Composite Focus Session Map with NRI Conservation Focus Areas Overlay**

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 17, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Garretson, Doane

**Absent:**

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and presented a status update on the memo that was sent to the Select Board. This memo suggested a modification to the committee's charge to include preparation of an initial Open Space Plan for Jaffrey, in addition to its discussions regarding the proper role and potential composition of a permanent Open Space Committee. Positive feedback was received from Don MacIsaac on this idea, input from other Select Board members still pending.

Member Doane suggested that further clarification of definition of "open space" was needed in order to firm up the mission statement for the committee. Discussion ensued on whether or not there was a minimum parcel size to qualify as open space. Conclusion was that value of a particular parcel is not necessarily related to size, and that even small parcels might qualify as open space, depending upon circumstances. Question was raised on whether athletic and other organized recreation facilities should be included. Conclusion was that these facilities should be identified in the initial inventory of permanently protected conservation land and parcels under current use, but that management or expansion of these facilities was not an appropriate focus for the committee's discussions since this is already handled in town government by the Recreation Dept.

Ideas floated for the committee's mission statement included 1) identifying the components that make up the quality of life/rural character in Jaffrey and formulating strategies to ensure that these qualities and recreational opportunities remain available to future generations, and 2) identifying ecosystem services provided by open space such as aquifer protection/water resources, wildlife habitat, stormwater control, wetland functions, etc. and incorporating the protection of these utility values into any plan. These preliminary ideas are to be refined and discussed further at next meeting.

The committee discussed the types of interest groups that should be invited to share their interests during the information gathering phase of the committee's work. Each interest group will form the focus for one committee meeting, with the intent of collecting information on the types or locations of land important to that group, and how the group's interests might be incorporated into a plan.

Tentative focus groups and meeting dates:

- |  |          |
|--|----------|
| • Snowmobiles  | March 3  |
| • Working lands – agriculture, forestry, sugaring                | March 17 |
| • Hunting  | March 31 |
| • Resource conservation – water, habitat, wetland, etc.          | April 7  |
| • Misc. rural characters – artists, photographers, scenic vistas | April 21 |
| • Trail users – walkers, bikers, birders, hikers, skiers         | May 5    |
| • Water access – fishing, water sports, swimmers                 | May 19   |

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**February 17, 2010**

The need for standardizing and organizing information collected from each group was discussed. A checklist of questions for each group was developed including the following items:

1. What are the land values most important to your group?
2. What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?
3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?
4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?
5. Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?
6. Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?
7. What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?

Next meeting will be on March 3.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee



**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 3, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Garretson, Doane

**Absent:**

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Minutes from the Feb. 17 meeting were approved without changes.

Names of potential contacts for working lands focus group were discussed and responsibilities assigned for contacts/invitations prior to the March 17 meeting.

Discussions on the beta website pages, comments were solicited from committee members. No substantive changes suggested, so Chairman Kresge will create links on the Town website and bring the site live. Additional content can be added as we go along, and meeting agendas and minutes will be posted on the site.

Discussion topics/questions for each focus group that were formulated during the last meeting were reviewed. Procedures for focus groups were discussed, with emphasis on the notion that these are information gathering sessions, looking for group's input rather than driving a discussion from the committee's perspective. We should try not to get into extended conversations on possible prioritizing or tradeoffs, keep the focus on obtaining as much as info as possible about the group's needs and values.

**SNOWMOBILING FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.**

Four members of the Monadnock Sno-Moles attended the meeting. Chairman Kresge provided a brief introduction on the objectives for the committee and described the process being used for the focus group sessions. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to conversation regarding the Sno-Moles' activities and general issues and concerns for snowmobilers in the area. Specific discussion items are summarized below.

**Focus Group Discussion Topics:**

*1. What are the land values most important to your group?*

Access is number one issue – both at local level and a more regional level. Ideally, would like to have access to trail corridors that extend long distances (30-40 miles) for day-long rides. Jaffrey not currently a destination area for riders due to lack of extended corridors, but if corridors could be developed, would be a significant boon to local businesses.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 3, 2010**

*2. What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?*

Grant funding is available for maintenance on rail trail and any other trails on the Sno-Moles club trail map. Grants issued by the State must be matched by club funds or in-kind resources such as labor, materials and equipment time. Sno-Moles rebuilt the rail trail Contoocook Lake bridge south of Red Dam last summer.

The club solicits permission from landowners for use of trails. When landowners sign a State-issued permission with the club for the free use of their land, the NH DRED Bureau of Trails provides them with a free liability insurance policy for any liability incurred during trail use. Agreement can be for a fixed term or indefinite term, but in any case can be terminated upon 30 days written notice.

*3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?*

Access to private lands is threatened when other users such as Jeeps and 4-wheeler ATVs rip up the trails or are disrespectful of landowners' wishes. Club tries to post signs restricting usage and monitor usage, with limited success.

Creating trails and access into undeveloped areas is a double-edged sword. It makes for enjoyable riding, but there's really no way to police usage – once access is established, it invites all sorts of usage.

*4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?*

Rail bed, trails across private lands on southern side of town, Class VI roads, wood-pole power lines. As a future goal, would like to build bridges and clear the rail bed on the northern side of town to link up with Peterborough rail trail. Funding might be available for a good-looking bridge to continue the rail bed crossing at the swampy area below W. W. Cross across from Ridgecrest. Would like to create a loop from the rail bed back toward the east to link up with Swamp Rd in Sharon or Annett Forest trails.

*5. Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?*

Snowmobile use is generally compatible with equestrian use, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking. Club receives donations from non-snowmobile users to support their beneficial trail maintenance activities.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 3, 2010**

When the State reviews grant applications, it considers the club's grooming logs that document the other trail users that are encountered during grooming activities.

Grooming equipment could potentially also be available to the Town for winter emergency situations – access to backcountry locations, rescues, evacuations, etc.

*6. Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?*

Jeeps and 4-wheelers ripping up the trails and Class VI roads. Reckless users may only be a minority of the drivers, but create a lot of damage, erosion and ill will with landowners.

*7. What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?*

Club membership is generally over 1,000 users, but fluctuates year to year. Was down to 600 users four years ago, but has rebounded. Still significant usage by younger people, so can expect to continue into the future. Club is interested in encouraging more participation by younger members – “They need to participate in all of this, or it's going to be gone. We don't want to see it go away.”

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Next meeting will be on March 17.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 17, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Garretson, Doane

**Absent:**

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Minutes from the March 3 meeting were approved without changes. Future draft minutes will be posted on the committee website and can be amended as necessary.

Names of potential contacts for hunting focus group were discussed and Chairman Kresge offered to contact Bruce Pelletier and other members of the hunting community prior to the March 17 meeting.

Diffuse interests in the remaining groups looking at natural resources, conservation, rural character, etc. will be harder to define, and will probably require more concerted effort by committee in order to encourage attendees. Members Graf and Garretson suggested contacting some of the pond associations in town due to their interest in preventing invasive species, wetland protection, etc.

Current status of conservation easements at Grey Goose Farm was discussed, Member Graf confirmed that easements had been executed on both lots, one 31-acre lot has been sold, uncertain on status of other 25-acre lot.

**WORKING LANDS FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.**

Citizens involved with agricultural, livestock and forestry activities attended the meeting. Chairman Kresge provided a brief introduction on the objectives for the committee and described the process being used for the focus group sessions. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to conversation regarding the state of agriculture and forestry in Jaffrey and general issues and concerns for people working the land. Specific discussion items are summarized below.

**Focus Group Discussion Topics:**

*1. What are the land values most important to your group?*

One important characteristic for this group is that land is viewed in terms of function. This can be either naturally occurring processes or human-based processes, but the value is seen as being derived from these functions (as opposed to just intrinsic or aesthetic values).

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 17, 2010**

Emphasis on stewardship of the land, sustainable crops (agricultural or forest).

*2. What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?*

In general, there aren't a lot of prime agricultural soils in Jaffrey, and many of those that do exist have already been built on.

*3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?*

One of the main challenges for agriculture is more related to taxation policy rather than land use policy, per se. Erecting agricultural structures such as greenhouses or barns requires taking land out of current use and reclassifies it as residential, which creates a financial burden on farmers. It was noted that Vermont's regulatory/policy climate is typically much more farm-friendly than in New Hampshire. Suggestion was made that it would be helpful to petition Board of Selectmen to establish a special agricultural zone in which land would be taxed at a lower rate.

Productive land should be used for growing food, not for residential development –

“You go to Europe and think you're going to build a house in a field, and you'll go to the gallows. There, you put the houses up in the rocks and the trees where they belong. This country hasn't got there yet.”

Support was voiced for notion of more concentrated residential densities in town center, rather than large lot zoning that consumes otherwise productive land.

*4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?*

Several fields at end of Great Road were noted for haying activity. Desirable soil types and exposures for agriculture depend upon the crop being raised. Advances in agricultural practices and shifts in economy were noted which make profitable operations in this area more likely to be small boutique operations, possibly greenhouse-based, niche marketing, not necessarily dependent upon large tracts of land. Access to a water source is important, also exposure to drive-by traffic for a farm-stand type operation.

*5. Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?*

Not all working land is necessarily worked by the landowner. Land may be rented out (in cash or in kind) to other operations such as sheep grazing, maple sugaring, haying, etc.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 17, 2010**

Although this isn't a primary livelihood for the landowner, it provides other benefits and active land maintenance/stewardship for the landowner that would like to keep the land open but doesn't plan to work it himself. Active working of the land tends to preserve viewsheds and character of the land that would otherwise be lost to overgrowth.

Forested lands can also host things like equestrian riding trails, and more generally contribute to attractiveness of the area as a destination recreational/tourism area.

*6. Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?*

Observation was made that 100 acres of farmland will make the town a lot more money than 100 acres of houses, due to cost of providing services to residential properties.

Careless use of skidders for logging operations can cause major rutting and erosion problems, if not done properly and at the right time of year.

*7. What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?*

The economic returns on haying and wide-scale agriculture in Jaffrey are marginal due to the generally poor soils. It's unlikely that a young person starting a family would choose haying as an occupation, so not an expanding use in town. For those that choose it as a way of life, however, can be rewarding.

“If I'm working on top of a hill on a nice sunny day, I enjoy it better than any day you ever took off from work. If I'm up there and it's going to rain in 5 minutes, I'm having a miserable day. It's a way of life, and I'm not asking anybody to treat me special, but don't do away with what makes this part of the country unique.”

Potential for smaller scale boutique operations, however, may provide opportunities for a continuing role of agriculture in town. In general, it's important to retain both the knowledge and the available land for producing local food supplies in order to adapt to potential future shifts in world-wide food production patterns.

Economic returns for woodlot management are slim – there probably isn't anyone in town that makes a living from cutting wood off their land. Generally the bare land has a higher economic value than the wood growing on it. Timber sales usually just one piece of the puzzle for landowners trying to maintain their land in undeveloped state.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 17, 2010**

Possible expansion of biomass forestry products for pellets or other feedstock for heating/electrical generation.

In addition to the specific interests of working lands, there was also general discussion on the desirability of establishing corridors for movement of wildlife and people between unfragmented areas of undeveloped land. Fitting the town's strategy into a more regional system of interconnected greenways and corridors could be an important consideration for the development of the open space plan. Overall, it's important to develop a shared vision for the town that people can buy into – why is open space important, how does it affect the town's sense of its own character, how does it affect attractiveness of the town as a tourist destination.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. Next meeting will be on March 31.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 31, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Doane

**Absent:** Garretson

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Names of potential contacts for upcoming natural resources focus group were discussed. After consideration of the interests of pond associations, it was agreed that they were a better fit for the water sports/activities focus group rather than the natural resources group. Diffuse interests in the remaining groups looking at natural resources, conservation, rural character, etc. will be harder to define, and will probably require more concerted effort by committee in order to encourage attendees.

The Monadnock Conservancy Conservation Leadership Training program in Keene was discussed. Member Graf indicated that he had the training materials from last year's session, and could share them with the committee.

The committee reviewed some of the discussion items from last meeting, noting in particular the issues of having to remove land from Current Use in order to build agricultural structures, encouragement of cooperative uses where lands are shared/rented by landowners for various activities, and the importance of corridors to provide linkages between protected lands.

**HUNTING FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.**

Citizens involved with hunting activities attended the meeting. Chairman Kresge provided a brief introduction on the objectives for the committee and described the process being used for the focus group sessions. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to conversation regarding the natural resource values important for hunting in Jaffrey and general issues and concerns for hunters. Specific discussion items are summarized below.

**Focus Group Discussion Topics:**

*1. What are the land values most important to your group?*

Larger contiguous areas of forested land. Hardwood forests, especially oaks – acorns provide a food source for game.



**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 31, 2010**

“Hunters are the real conservationists, that’s what we’re all about. I never got my money’s worth out of a hunting license, that’s not why you do it. I go out there for the experience of being out in the woods. You just go out there and you’re a part of Nature ... and get to watch bobcats running around after squirrels.”

*2. What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?*

Primary hunting activities in Jaffrey are deer and wild turkey, with smaller amounts of upland game and waterfowl. Several large landowners in town are supportive of hunting, including Sawyer’s fields, which are stocked with pheasants by the state.

Access to the land is one of the primary issues. Partially this is physical access – a place to park when heading into the woods, not having to cross house lots in order to get to back woodlots – but also is an issue of landowner support, not posting their land against hunting. Maintaining access to the land often comes down to an issue of respect – although not required, it’s nice to ask permission of landowner, treat the land properly, be courteous.

*3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?*

Availability of land for hunting has decreased over the years due to a combination of people posting their land, and new construction. Shooting is not allowed within 300 ft. of a structure or a road, so new construction limits the area available for hunting.

Upland game has decreased over the years, probably due to a combination of loss of habitat, increasing coyote population, and competition for resources from increasing wild turkey population.

*4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?*

Mt. Monadnock area is open for hunting as long as you’re not shooting near any trails. Several parcels off Great Road. Basically any sizable parcel of undeveloped land.

*5. Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?*

Most farmers are supportive of hunting on their land, as long as hunters are considerate, don’t leave trash etc.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**March 31, 2010**

Observation was made that since hunting is a relatively short season (~ 6 weeks), it doesn't necessarily overlap with other competing uses such as snowmobiling, skiing, etc. Also, hikers usually stick to trails while hunters are going further into the woods, so not necessarily a conflict. Also depends upon type of hunting, due to limited range, bowhunters aren't really a threat to other users of the land.

Clashes of interests are often more due to philosophical differences, rather than physical conflicts.

*6. Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?*

Housing development.

*7. What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?*

Strong sales of hunting licenses, overall participation staying more or less steady. Active state programs to encourage hunting among young people.

In addition to above items, there was a discussion on whether or not putting land into tax-favored Current Use status imposes a moral obligation to leave the land open to public use. Suggestion was made that it should be a quid pro quo – if you're asking the rest of the town to shoulder a heavier tax burden in order to leave your land in Current Use, then there should be a public benefit, and access should be granted for hiking, hunting, etc.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m. Next meeting will be on April 7.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 7, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Doane

**Absent:** Garretson

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

The committee reviewed some of the discussion items from last meeting on hunting, noting in particular the issues of maintaining access to land parcels, and the notion of avoiding conflicts by staggering land uses over different seasons during the year.

**NATURAL RESOURCES FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.**

Citizens interested in natural resource conservation and other open space related issues attended the meeting. Chairman Kresge provided a brief introduction on the objectives for the committee, described the process being used for the focus group sessions, and briefly summarized the results of the 2009 Natural Resource Inventory. This study collected and presented much of the information pertinent for natural resource conservation issues, however further input is being solicited in the focus group format in order to take advantage of the more detailed knowledge of local residents. In addition, it was hoped that if any important land values were missed in the NRI, input from this group could be used to fill the holes. The remainder of the meeting was devoted to conversation regarding the natural resource values important in Jaffrey.

One aspect of natural resources that was discussed revolved around the protection of surface water quality, especially given Jaffrey's position at the headwaters for several major watersheds. Surface water in most of the town flows into the Merrimack River basin northward via the Contoocook River. Water in the western portion of town flows into the Connecticut River basin. Our position at the headwaters means that any water quality degradation will affect downstream users, and not much flow is available for dilution.

Discussion of wetland area between Mt. Road and Great Road, "Priest Swamp" area – this area had been considered for designation as "prime wetland" at one time, but designation was never completed. This area is largely red spruce & alder, has high wildlife habitat values. Some of the land is already protected in this area.

Discussion of how you can quantify the ecosystem services provided by undeveloped land. Some functions such as water supply protection and stormwater absorption can be quantified to a degree, but others such as wildlife habitat do not lend themselves to direct valuation.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 7, 2010**

Ultimately, has to be some kind of canvassing of public opinion as to what is “valuable” to them, and this may or may not be related to economic valuations.

“What is the cost of something when it’s gone? Now we have it, but with the tyranny of small decisions, twenty years from now it’s gone. That’s a cost, but it’s really hard to quantify.”

Discussion of whether the Master Plan process from 2006-2007 captured some of these values. The survey distributed as part the process found that maintaining “rural character” was important to most respondents. Difficult to define rural character, and it was also pointed out that although the survey response rate was “good” (30%), a majority opinion in the survey still amounts to a “majority of the minority” considering the total population of the town.

“The problem is there’s a lot of people that don’t see that there’s anything wrong and aren’t unhappy with anything, so they don’t take the time to turn out to vote locally or nationally. And that’s unfortunate, so that leaves it up to the elected officials to try to watch out for them as best as they can and make sure that the average person’s interests are being represented.”

One interest group that needs to be considered are the landowners, particularly large landowners. Landowners are a primary stakeholder in this whole process. Use of the land for hunting and other purposes can have a negative impact on landowners in the form of trash left behind, lack of respect.

Concern was voiced that if property ownership rights are changed by ordinance or regulation (as opposed to voluntarily or by purchase), then that’s a taking. Question was raised whether Jaffrey really needs more protected land than the 23.6% that is currently protected.

Current laws regarding ATV use have a default position that even if land is not specifically posted, ATVs are not permitted. ATVs are also not permitted on Class VI roads unless town officials have authorized that use of the roads. Of course, enforcement is a challenge.

There are different levels of current use. An additional 20% reduction in valuation is available if you make the land available for recreational use, in which case all uses such as hunting are permitted. If you don’t take the 20% recreational reduction, you can still post land in current use against hunting or other uses.

Discussion of whether the intended purpose of this open space planning process is to create some sort of ordinance or regulatory document. Response from the committee that this is not part of our charge – the open space plan will be a guidance document intended to identify possible priorities for the town, but not to implement these in any kind of regulatory structure. Concern was voiced that the process would “somehow have some influence on

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 7, 2010**

some land use policy or ordinance. I'm a little concerned that it's going in that direction ... the landowners are the biggest stakeholders and should have the biggest amount of rights."

Discussion of the value of Class VI roads – "town should always keep them, don't discontinue them, because 50 years from now they may be the avenue for people to hike and walk on. They're public ways now and they should stay public ways." Could the open space plan help instill some awareness of these issues, and encourage a sense of social responsibility by users for not abusing the roads in order to keep them in semi-passable condition? By law, town does not maintain Class VI roads, but under certain circumstances can expend some money to maintain them to the point of being usable as emergency lanes.

Discussion of the value of unfragmented lands – should degree of fragmentation be one of the criteria the town looks at if trying to decide how to allocate funds (grants, etc.) available for land preservation? Yes, that could be one criteria, but not the only one. Discussion of relative merits of land purchases versus conservation easements. Observation that with an easement, the land stays on the tax rolls. Observation that landowners' willingness to put lands into conservation will sometimes depend on their stage of life – some are ready, some aren't.

Question whether one role of the open space planning process should be public education. Agreement that this could be an important function provided by a permanent open space committee.

Discussion of the importance of providing corridors and linkages to provide cover for wildlife moving between undeveloped areas. Suggestion that this is an important priority – increasing awareness, trying to provide some kind of coordination to ensure that patterns of development occur so that linkages remain between areas, and that some kind of regional approach also looks at linking undeveloped areas across the multi-town areas.

Following up on the observations that most people tend not to participate in the governance process,

"When I was young and having children and working, I didn't have time to think too much about this. And now that I'm older, and I have time to think about it, I don't want it to be too late for that next generation of people. It's just a pattern – people don't come to the meetings because they don't have time and they're not focusing on it. But then when they get to be old enough to really enjoy it, they say, gee we need to take care of this."

Question raised of whether the future growth rate of Jaffrey is going to be fast enough to create major problems with resource consumption. Observation made that there were only two Jaffrey natives in the room, so clearly there has been population inflow over the years. It depends on what time scale you look at. Although growth has stopped the for last couple years due to the economy, the longer term trend is for continued growth.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY  
Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
April 7, 2010**

Support voiced for the notion of concentrating population within the town core area that is served by water and sewer, thus easing development pressures on the outlying areas.

Description of an ongoing study by Fish and Game that is collaring bobcats to track their movements. So far, 12 bobcats have been collared in this general area. Results aren't available yet, but should be instructive with regard to wildlife corridors. Cats have been collared in the vicinity of Thorndike Pond and north side of Mt. Monadnock. One of the more important corridors is probably between Mt. Monadnock and Gap Mt.

Discussion of distribution of current protected lands in Jaffrey. Although a significant percentage of land is permanently protected, most of that land is concentrated around Mt. Monadnock. There may be a need to protect resources in other parts of the town and pursue additional protection strategies of easements or acquisitions. "It's the quality, not the quantity".

Reiteration of the importance of education, installing awareness in people about the value of natural resources, fostering a cooperative community spirit. Positive feedback can be helpful, complimenting people that do an exceptional job with land stewardship. Encouraging the expectation of land preservation as a community ethic or social norm can help establish a climate supportive of conservation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m. Next meeting will be on April 21.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 21, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Members Graf, Doane, Garretson

**Absent:**

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. Minutes from the April 7 meeting were approved without changes.

Appropriate committee size and names of potential contacts for an expanded committee to develop the open space plan and recommendations to Select Board were discussed. Possible group size of 9-10 people was suggested. Goal is to have draft plan completed at end of summer.

**AESTHETICS, RURAL CHARACTER FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.**

Attendees included artist, historical preservation advocate, landowners. Discussion of examples from other communities around the country where the original character of the town has been lost to urbanization, natural beauty of the land diminished.

**Focus Group Discussion Topics:**

*1. What are the land values most important to your group?*

“My interest is not so much in the natural environment, but in the visual and historical environment. For me, the acre of land in Centennial Park (at Main St. and Bryant Road) is more valuable than 200 acres out behind the mountain that nobody can see. ... More people drive cars than walk around in the woods any more. If you want to retain ‘rural character’, one acre as seen through the windshield of the car is more important than many acres that you never see. ... If you see something 100 times passing by in the car, that’s more important than seeing something one time hiking through the woods.”

“You don’t want to see a double-wide trailer in front an important view, I want to see something attractive.”

“Preserving views are really important to the appeal of a town. My home town was the most beautiful place in the world, but has been absolutely ruined by not taking into account the special places. They built houses there and they have their views, but since it’s not open to the public it’s not nice for the overall town appeal.”

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 21, 2010**

“Jaffrey has this unique look, and that’s what the curb appeal is. It makes it a beautiful place where people are proud to live.”

“So much of it is perspective. If you live in a house, you might have a much better view of the mountain if you cut the roadside trees, but a lot of the other residents on the road don’t want the trees cut because they think it adds to the rural character.”

*2. What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?*

Possibly retain or create pullovers for access to roadside vistas.

Talking to Historic District Commission might be useful to get their perspective on issues around town, even though their direct jurisdiction is only Jaffrey Center. HDC created a comprehensive inventory of all agricultural properties and structure in town, which is available at the library. An HDC member might be a good representative for any future permanent open space committee.

One of the functions of an open space committee could be education, informing landowners of options available for dealing with their land, or informing developers of innovative approaches to site development.

*3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?*

From the standpoint of viewshed and aesthetics, development of many housing units, particularly if executed without design creativity, at Sawyer’s Farm or Grandview would be unfortunate. “That’s not to say that those couldn’t be developed in a creative way that would retain those visual qualities.”

Difficult to figure out finances for protecting land – even if landowner has inclination to preserve land, they still have to figure out how to pay taxes.

“The reality is that they may not have the money – the money may have been played out through the generations. A lot of people have grown up with the notion that owning land is a good investment, and at some point in time, due to the needs of the family or individuals, they may want to change use and develop it. ... Unless you own it, then you shouldn’t have much to say about it.”

*4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?*



**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 21, 2010**

Mountain views from Sawyer Farm, Jaffrey Center, Charlie Royce's field, Steve Meyers',  
Gilson Rd.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**April 21, 2010**

*5. Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?*

Preserving views is not necessarily incompatible with housing development – just requires good site planning and recognition of views as an important parameter.

There needs to be a balance between economic development/business interests and preservation. Economic development director should be involved in this process as well.

*6. Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?*

Indiscriminate development.

*7. What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?*

You've got to make people aware of the value, the overall vision for the town.

There was some discussion of the possible uses of view easements in protecting vistas. The committee was cautioned that this can require detailed language and negotiations, and that it may not be as easy as one might think.

Also some extended discussion of the relative merits of current use tax structures. It was suggested that unless the land is actually being "used" (i.e., agriculture, forestry), then it's just a tax shelter that negatively impacts the overall tax base for the town. This point was extended with the observation that removing land from tax rolls for open space purposes also has negative implications for the tax base.

Discussion of differences between European approaches to aesthetics and site planning and U.S. approaches. Proper attention to site design and sight lines can result in attractive communities.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m. Next meeting will be on May 5.

Submitted:

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 5, 2010**

**Present:** Chairman Kresge, Member Garretson

**Absent:** Members Doane, Graf

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

Appropriate committee size and names of potential contacts for an expanded committee to develop the open space plan and recommendations to Select Board were discussed.

**TRAIL USERS FOCUS GROUP 7:30 p.m.**

Attendees included citizens with a variety of interests ranging from specific foot traffic uses to more generalized conservation interests.

**Focus Group Discussion Topics:**

*1. What are the land values most important to your group?*

Connectivity between areas of interest is an important feature – being able to traverse the land in a pleasant setting.

Open space corridors, based on natural resource inventory, make lots of sense.

“One of the things that is often neglected is open fields. Making sure that there are meadows, along with forests and trails is a good thing.”

*2. What is the current availability/adequacy of resources for your activity?*

“Open space is one the things that this area offers, that other areas in this part of the country don’t always offer. We would really be missing out if we didn’t preserve that. It’s just a huge draw for the town. People from other areas that have lost their open space come here to use it.”

*3. Are there any particular areas of vulnerability for resources required for your activity?*

Question was raised of where the funds would come from for implementing any policy recommendations. Annual appropriations and grants are two most common sources, but committee hasn’t explored that in detail.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 5, 2010**

Question was raised whether committee would be looking at access issues in terms of having parking available to be able to get to the areas of interest. Particularly in winter, roadside parking is not always a good option. Provision of parking would also increase the utility of the Cheshire Pond Conservation Area.

Major erosion problems on Class VI roads where trucks pass through when ground is soft. Red Gate Rd., Woodbury Hill Rd.

*4. Where are the lands in Jaffrey most suitable for your activity?*

Question was raised about coordination with surrounding towns for protection strategies. Valuable natural resource areas are not necessarily constrained by municipal boundaries.

Word of mouth is important to let people know of areas like CPCA and Childrens Woods.

Extension of rail trail northward out of town would be good idea, although challenging due to missing bridges and lack of definition of the corridor in places.

“What I think is really nice is seeing people out walking around and out on the rail trail because it’s very easy walking. I’m interested in a democratic approach where everybody can enjoy the trail and you can potentially push a wheel chair. Particularly when the days are short in the winter, it would be nice to have more opportunities for places to go and not have to dodge the cars.”

The school district land on Carter Hill at the town line was suggested as a good opportunity to extend the available trails accessible from the rail trail. It’s a very pretty area that would be readily accessible to a lot of people.

Area out by Woodbury Hill Rd., Fiske Rd. looping back through Thorndike Pond Rd. Sanders Rd. area.

*5. Does your activity lend itself to a multiple use scenario?*

It was felt that the interests of trail users are not antithetical to those of working lands, hunters, etc., that really there is a good fit between most of these uses. Activities such as hunting and snowmobiling do not typically hurt the conservation value of a piece of land.

Possibility of multi-use trail corridors with parallel trails - separation of the motorized sports from foot traffic.

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**May 5, 2010**

6. *Are there other uses that are incompatible with your activity?*

ATV and other four-wheeler use was generally observed to be detrimental to all other uses due to erosion concerns, disruption of wildlife photography opportunities, impacts to habitat, etc.

7. *What is the general sense of future participation in your activity? Expanding? Contracting?*

It's really difficult to get people involved, both politically and physically getting out to enjoy the land. "Most of the people I talk to in town say 'oh we can see the mountain from here, that's all we need'. I still hike the mountain a lot of the time all by myself."

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 p.m. Next meeting will be on May 19.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**June 24, 2010**

**Present:** Kresge, Doane, Thompson, Koch, George, Garretson, Graf  
**Absent:** Moore, Sawyer, Therriault

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

This was the first meeting of the expanded ad hoc open space committee (from 4 members to 10 members). New committee members were oriented to the overall process and purpose of the ad hoc committee.

A proposed outline for an Open Space Plan was presented for discussion. If approved, this outline would guide the discussions at upcoming meetings of the committee. One area of discussion was the definition of open space. This issue had been a topic of conversation for the smaller ad hoc committee earlier in the process, but was repeated here with the expanded committee. It was agreed that valuable open space was not necessarily limited to only large tracts of land, and that it should include working lands, land with recreational opportunities, land with high natural resource values, scenic vistas, and areas of historical or cultural significance.

The committee considered whether or not the OSP should include some broad identification of priority areas for open space protection in Jaffrey. Members felt that it was definitely not a role of this committee to identify specific parcels that merited protection, but that a more broad-based approach that identified sectors of town as being priority areas could be useful.

There was preliminary discussion on some of the values of open space to Jaffrey. These values would form the basis for developing criteria to help prioritize and evaluate specific open space protection opportunities.

Committee members felt that the 5:00 p.m. meeting start time was too early, and suggested a 6:00 pm start time for future meetings.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. Next meeting will be on July 7 at 6:00 p.m..

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge

**TOWN OF JAFFREY  
Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
July 7, 2010**

**Present:** Kresge, Moore, Sawyer, Doane, Thompson, Koch, Therriault, George, Garretson

**Absent:** Graf

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Draft language prepared for the opening sections of the Open Space Plan based on the previous meeting's discussions was reviewed. Suggestion was made to clarify and expand upon the evolution of the ad hoc committee – initially a small group for the focus group discussions, then expanded to its current size for preparation of the OSP. Suggestion was also made to have a more explicit reference to the state Wildlife Action Plan, and include a map in an Appendix. In discussions of definition of open space, it was pointed out that “undeveloped land” is not an adequate description since we intend to include working lands such as farms.

Possible evaluation criteria were discussed for evaluating and ranking open space opportunities. Criteria were organized by four categories – natural resources, recreation, economic impacts, and public support/influence upon community character. Observations were made that many of the criteria being discussed spanned across multiple categories, so it may not be useful to organize them in that manner. Possible ranking/scoring methodologies were discussed, but the committee felt that this might be premature. The list of criteria was found to be useful, but application of criteria to specific projects could be left to a future committee/board reviewing site-specific opportunities.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m. Next meeting will be on July 21.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 21, 2010**

**Present:** Kresge, Moore, Graf, Sawyer, Doane, Thompson, Koch

**Absent:** Garretson, Therriault, George

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

A compilation of the evaluation criteria generated at the previous meeting was distributed for review. The criteria were not categorized as they had been during the discussion phase, but simply presented in a master list. The criteria were not specifically arranged in order of importance, but since some issues were raised repeatedly in various contexts during the previous discussions, the committee agreed that these issues should appear toward the top of the list. The top 5 issues were listed as providing corridors/linkage between areas of high natural resource or recreational value, encouraging productive working lands, preserving scenic vistas, protecting water resources, and encouraging publicly accessible trails.

The committee reviewed maps generated during the focus group public input sessions conducted in Spring 2010. After discussing how those maps could best be interpreted and used, the committee felt that it would be useful to prepare transparencies indicating the areas of interest for each interest group, which could be used as overlays. Rather than attempting to synthesize this information into defined priority areas at this point, the committee felt that the best course of action was to simply provide the overlays as a tool for use by future committees/review boards when evaluating site-specific open space opportunities.

The committee considered the issue of what the best governmental form would be to evaluate open space issues/opportunities in the future. The general options considered were to either charge an existing town committee (Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Select Board) with this responsibility, or to form a new standing Open Space Committee to deal exclusively with these issues. A list of pros and cons for the prospect of forming a new Open Space Committee was prepared. A number of advantages and disadvantages for this approach were identified. After consideration, the committee voted 7-0 in favor of recommending to the Select Board that a permanent Open Space Committee be formed. Absent committee members will also be polled for their opinion on this issue.



**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**July 21, 2010**

A list of roles and responsibilities for a permanent Open Space Committee was prepared. Items included:

- Identifying grant possibilities.
- Providing research-based education on open space issues to community.
- Ongoing meetings with citizen groups and updating open space maps.
- Feedback to other Town boards on applications or potential policies, as requested.
- Recommendations to Select Board on use of the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund.
- Establishing liaisons with similar committees in adjoining towns/region.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m. Next meeting will be on August 18.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 18, 2010**

**Present:** Kresge, Moore, Graf, Sawyer, Doane, Thompson, Koch, Garretson, Therriault

**Absent:** George

**WORKING SESSION**

Chairman Kresge called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed, including potential roles for a committee dealing with open space issues, and the discussion on whether these roles could be best served by a dedicated OSC or by an existing town board/commission. Members Garretson and Therriault, who were absent from the last meeting, expressed support for the notion of a dedicated OSC, but thought it was odd that the list of pros and cons had equal numbers on each side, given that the committee was unanimously in favor of a dedicated committee. Member Graf pointed out that the overall assessment of the committee was that the items on the pro side of the ledger had more weight or importance, despite the equal number, thus tilting the decision in the direction of a dedicated OSC. Chairman Kresge read a letter from Michael George also expressing support for a dedicated OSC. Final polled vote of committee members was 10-0 in favor of forming a dedicated Open Space Committee to deal with open space issues.

The committee discussed the potential roles for an OSC identified in the last meeting. Emphasis was placed on the advisory and educational resource role of the OSC – the agricultural Cooperative Extension Service was identified as a good model for providing these kinds of services. It was noted that advising landowners on tools and techniques for keeping land open in an economically viable manner would be a valuable service. Also, identifying uses of land that benefit many different users will lead to more support for open space protection.

The appropriate size for an OSC was discussed. A 7-member committee was considered to be large enough to represent different viewpoints, but not so large that it would be difficult to find enough willing members. Committee members should include representatives from land use interest groups (such as those represented in the focus group sessions this spring), other town boards/departments such as Planning Board, ConCom or others, and interested citizens in general. No more than one representative from any single town board should serve on the OSC, in order to maintain diversity of viewpoints and reduce impact on volunteer schedules.

Potential tools available for open space protection were discussed including:

**TOWN OF JAFFREY**  
**Jaffrey, New Hampshire**

**Ad hoc Open Space Committee**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**August 18, 2010**

- Current use
- Discretionary easements
- Trail easements
- View easements
- OSDP density bonus
- Tax incentives
- Brownfield redevelopment
- Overall town support of agriculture, water resource protection

The ad hoc committee will have a final meeting in September to review language for the ad hoc committee report/open space plan. The final report will be presented to the ConCom and Planning Board for comments, and to the Select Board in October.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m. Next meeting will be on Monday, September 20 at 6 pm.

Submitted:

Mark W. Kresge  
Chairman, Ad hoc Open Space Committee

## APPENDIX B

### DRAFT OPEN SPACE PLAN

# **Draft Open Space Plan Jaffrey, NH**



**Prepared by:**

## **Ad Hoc Open Space Committee**

Tom Doane  
Carolyn Garretson  
Michael George  
Bill Graf  
Charlie Koch

Mark Kresge  
Cush Moore  
Lee Sawyer  
Gail Therriault  
Carol Thompson

**October 2010**

## **Executive Summary**

Some of the defining characteristics of Jaffrey have always been the beauty of its landscape, the richness of its natural resources, and the abundant recreational opportunities. The wise use of land and preservation of open space is encouraged in many sections of Jaffrey's Master Plan, and conservation of natural resources is a recurring theme throughout the Master Plan. The purpose of this draft Open Space Plan is to illuminate possible approaches to preserving and enhancing these desirable attributes as the town continues to grow.

In order to develop recommendations on possible approaches to open space protection, the Jaffrey Select Board appointed four volunteers to form an ad hoc Open Space Committee (OSC) in early 2010, and then expanded the committee size to a total of ten members in June 2010. The original ad hoc committee conducted focus sessions with seven distinct interest groups of Jaffrey citizens, and the expanded committee evaluated the input collected in the context of preparing a draft Open Space Plan. This draft plan builds upon data collected in previous reports such as the 2009 Natural Resource Inventory, and offers recommendations on steps to be taken in order to implement a more proactive approach to open space protection in Jaffrey.

Based on the public input it received, the committee identified a set of criteria that express the values placed on open space by the citizens of Jaffrey. These criteria, along with maps prepared to depict the areas of town considered valuable by each of the interest groups, provide the building blocks for finalizing an Open Space Plan for Jaffrey. Potential tools and techniques for implementing the goals of open space protection are also identified in this draft plan.

The ad hoc Open Space Committee has identified a number of benefits for the town in the protection of open space and has suggested that it is fitting and appropriate for Town government to encourage conservation and protection of certain lands as a matter of public policy. The role of Town government in this area can include activities such as educating landowners about the topic, networking among landowners and land trusts, identifying lands that have particularly high natural resource, recreational, or working land values, and acquiring or assisting in transactions involving land or conservation easements.

In order to implement these goals, the ad hoc committee recommends the creation of a 7-member permanent Open Space Committee (OSC) that will report directly to the Select Board. Members of the OSC should encompass a broad representation of the various interests in Jaffrey. The OSC should be tasked with finalizing the Jaffrey Open Space Plan, providing recommendations to the Select Board on expenditures from the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund, interacting with other Town boards and committees on open space issues, and providing outreach and educational resources pertinent to open space issues for Jaffrey citizens. The draft plan concludes with a set of action items that will lead toward the achievement of these goals.

## 1.0 Introduction

Some of the defining characteristics of Jaffrey have always been the beauty of its landscape, the richness of its natural resources, and the abundant recreational opportunities. These qualities are prized by the town's residents and also serve as an important attraction for bringing visitors to the town. The purpose of this draft Open Space Plan is to illuminate possible approaches to preserving and enhancing these desirable attributes as the town continues to grow.

This Plan supports and elaborates upon some of the primary objectives and strategies voiced in Jaffrey's 2007 Master Plan Update. Wise use of land and preservation of open space is encouraged in many sections of the Master Plan, and conservation of natural resources is a recurring theme throughout the Master Plan. Perhaps the most succinct expression of these goals is found in this opening passage from the Plan's Vision Statement:

*The people of Jaffrey have indicated that they want to see Jaffrey remain a small town, with a friendly atmosphere. We envision a Jaffrey that combines controlled growth and development with strong land preservation and environmental protection.*

*Preservation of open space, forests and fields, and wildlife habitats, all of which are integral to our rural character, is of crucial importance. Mount Monadnock, and our ponds, lake, wetland areas, and scenic vistas are trusts to be passed unspoiled to future generations.*

In order to provide a more concrete basis for realizing this vision, the Jaffrey Select Board appointed volunteers to form an ad hoc Open Space Committee (OSC) in early 2010. The OSC initiated a series of public participation meetings to solicit input from town residents regarding the town's open space areas. Following this initial information gathering phase, the committee was expanded to a larger group in order to evaluate the input.

Although not all members of the expanded committee had attended the earlier focus sessions, all members were able to review the maps and meeting minutes generated during that process. The committee's evaluation of this input, along with its analysis of other supporting documentation describing the town's natural resources has led to the preparation of this draft Open Space Plan. Specific elements included as components of this draft plan include:

- Evaluation criteria for considering the preservation of open space and recreational opportunities.
- Strategies for maintaining healthy and functional open space networks as the town continues to grow.
- Descriptions of resources and techniques for implementing land protection strategies.

- Recommendations on the lead agency that should be responsible for open space issues within town government.

## **2.0 Definition of Open Space**

In order to provide an underpinning for the Plan, one of the OSC's first tasks was to settle on a working definition for "open space". A town's open space can serve a variety of different interests, and the way in which open space is defined helps to provide a focus for the issues addressed in the Open Space Plan.

Open space, as envisioned in this plan, can include forests, farmland, fields, shore lands, waterbodies, and wetlands. Open space can also encompass scenic vistas, town forests, historic sites, and recreational trails. It often has important natural, historic, ecological, cultural or recreational resources. With the exception of agricultural and forestry uses, open space has generally not undergone development.

Open space can be either public or private parcels of land, and size is not necessarily considered to be a limiting characteristic. Land designated as open space may be maintained in its natural state to protect specific environmental features or it may be used for agricultural, forestry, or outdoor recreational purposes. Some lands deemed environmentally sensitive or that have endangered species may or may not be conducive to certain recreational uses. It was also agreed that for the purposes of this Plan, open space would not include commercial or municipal organized recreational facilities such as ball fields and playgrounds. While these types of facilities provide clear benefits to the town, they are already a clearly defined responsibility of the town's Recreation Department, and do not require the guidance or prioritization criteria offered in this Plan.

## **3.0 Process and Approach to Plan Development**

The initial group convened as an ad hoc Open Space Committee was comprised of two members from the Planning Board and two members from the Conservation Commission. This group was tasked by the Select Board to provide a recommendation regarding the proper role, composition and/or need for a permanent Open Space Committee in Jaffrey. After its initial meeting, the ad hoc committee concluded that this issue would be best explored by conducting a process that would culminate in the production of an Open Space Plan for Jaffrey. At the conclusion of this process, it was felt that the committee would have a much clearer understanding of the types of issues that would be faced by a permanent Open Space Committee and how this function could be best addressed in town government. With the assent of the Select Board, preparation of an Open Space Plan was added to the ad hoc committee's scope.

Given the diversity of different stakeholders in town with an interest in open space issues, the committee felt that a robust public participation process was necessary in order to fully explore the perceived values of open space in Jaffrey. A series of public sessions were held during the Spring of 2010, with each session focusing on one



particular aspect of open space. Each public meeting was properly noticed and publicized in the local newspaper and on the town website, but the primary intent was not to assemble a high turnout and wide cross-section of town residents at each meeting. Rather, the goal was to assemble the most knowledgeable and passionate advocates for each narrowly defined interest in a focus session where they could provide input to the committee for evaluation, analysis and synthesis at a later date. In keeping with this goal, personal invitations were issued for each meeting to specific individuals known to have high levels of knowledge and involvement in activities related to the topic for the meeting.

Seven of these focus sessions were held during the course of the Spring, covering the following topics:

- Snowmobiling
- Working Lands - agriculture, forestry, maple sugaring, etc.
- Hunting
- Ecosystem Services - aquifer protection, wetland functions, wildlife habitat, stormwater control, etc.
- Town character - artists, historic preservationists, photographers, scenic vista proponents, etc.
- Trail Users - hikers, bikers, birders, skiers, snowshoeing, ATVs, dog walkers, equestrians, etc.
- Water Access - fishing, boating, swimming, etc.

At the conclusion of these focus sessions, the committee moved into an evaluation phase where it attempted to find common themes among the groups and synthesize the disparate inputs into a cohesive overall open space strategy. In order to conduct this analysis, the committee size was expanded from its initial size of four members to a total of ten members. In addition to the continued representation from the Conservation Commission and Planning Board, additional members were added to provide viewpoints from groups such as large landowners, people actively working the land, builders and developers, and realtors. The resulting draft Open Space Plan and recommendations are products of the efforts of this expanded 10-member committee.

## **4.0 Background Information**

Protection of open space and natural resources has been a recurring theme in a number of reports, plans and other efforts conducted in Jaffrey over the years. The preparation of this Open Space Plan builds on this previous work and represents the next logical step toward planning for the protection of the town's vital resources and interest.

### **4.1 Previous Plans and Studies**

In addition to the public involvement process described previously, three previous plans and studies provided some of the data and maps that provided a foundation for the development of this Plan. The following excerpted highlights provide a brief summary of the pertinent documents:

#### **Jaffrey Cost of Community Services Study (2005)**

A Cost of Community Services (COCS) study was completed for the Town of Jaffrey, NH in 2005 to better understand the relationship between revenues and costs associated with the various land use types in town. This information was intended to be used as part of decision-making by town boards and departments as they addressed the ramifications of growth. The Cost of Community Services Study (COCS) methodology was developed by the American Farmland Trust in the 1980's. The object of such a study is to collect actual data on how much tax revenues are paid by a municipality according to land uses. Innovative Natural Resource Solutions LLC completed such a study for Jaffrey in 2004. The study breaks land use down into three categories:

- Residential – all single and multi-family residences and apartment buildings, including farmhouses, residences attached to other kinds of business, and rental units;
- Commercial & Industrial – all privately owned buildings and land associated with business purposes, the manufacture of goods or the provision (with the exception of agriculture and forest industries which are considered part of Open Space land uses), and utility-owned property;
- Open Space – all privately owned land that is devoted to agriculture, forestry or open space, as well as wetlands, are considered open space. Open space is defined as land enrolled in or clearly eligible for enrollment in New Hampshire's current use program.

The results of the study show that, in Jaffrey, using data from 2004, for every \$1.00 in revenue collected by the Town for the particular land use:

\$1.15 was spent in services to residential properties

\$0.49 was spent in services to commercial/industrial properties

\$0.68 was spent in services to open space lands.

Results will vary by community, but according to this study specific to Jaffrey, residential properties required more net tax expenditures than open space lands. This is a rather broad conclusion that does not make distinctions between particular areas where residential development might be located in town, however it does point toward the notion that residential development is not necessarily a net financial benefit to the town.

### **Jaffrey Master Plan (2007 Update)**

The 2007 update to the Master Plan addressed natural and scenic resources prominently in the Vision Statement and Implementation sections, as well as in the individual chapters on Economic Development, Historic and Cultural Resources, Land Use, Natural Resources, Recreational Resources, and Regional Context . The following quoted excerpts are selected from the Vision Statement and Implementation sections of the Master Plan:

*“The people of Jaffrey have indicated that they want to see Jaffrey remain a small town, with a friendly atmosphere. We envision a Jaffrey that combines controlled growth and development with strong land preservation and environmental protection.”*

*“Preservation of open space, forests and fields, and wildlife habitats, all of which are integral to our rural character, is of crucial importance. Mount Monadnock, and our ponds, lake, wetland areas, and scenic vistas are trusts to be passed unspoiled to future generations.”*

*“Jaffrey will encourage the wise use of land and preservation of open space, such as is provided by its present Open Space Development Plan. Jaffrey will focus on concentrating high density housing development or mixed uses in or adjacent to the Town’s hub where town water and sewer are presently available.”*

*“Develop a plan for open space and agriculture designed to protect Jaffrey’s natural resources, open spaces, and rural character.”*

### **Jaffrey Natural Resources Inventory (2009)**

This study aimed to categorize, catalogue, and map the rich natural resources of Jaffrey, NH as a basis for natural resource management and conservation planning. The study was commissioned in 2008 by the Jaffrey Conservation Commission and was written by Kane & Ingraham of Concord, NH. The summary report is accompanied by nine large format maps which illustrate the various resources.

Natural resources were divided into the following four categories:

- Wildlife Habitat
- Water Resources
- Soils
- Scenic Resources

In addition to these distinct resource areas, a co-occurrence analysis was also performed to facilitate conservation planning. A co-occurrence analysis incorporates all of the resources mapped as part of this study in a single model, thus simplifying the process of selecting potential conservation priorities. Numerous areas had high scores in the model and were deemed to deserve further consideration or study as potential conservation priorities.

The top five, in no particular order, were:

- Meade Brook Wetlands
- Monadnock massif
- Gap Mountain unfragmented area
- Jaffrey downtown from Contoocook Lake to Cheshire Pond and to the Mountain Brook Reservoir
- Mountain Brook Swamp unfragmented area

## 4.2 Inventory of Currently Protected Land

Based on review of the 2009 Natural Resources Inventory, GRANIT GIS files, and Jaffrey Assessor's records, a summary of the land currently protected as open space in Jaffrey is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1 Protected Land in Jaffrey as of August 2010**

<b>Property Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Protection Entity</b>	<b>Ac. in Jaffrey</b>
Ames Forest	FO	The Monadnock Conservancy	60
Andrews (A) / Russell	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	118
Andrews (B) / Russell	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	51
Andrews (C) / Fairbanks	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	11
Andrews (D) / Fairbanks	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	2
Annett State Forest	FO	NH Dept. of Resources & Economic Dev.	2
Blaine Forest	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	167
Bradley-Draper Memorial Forest	FO	New England Forestry Foundation	113
Cheshire Pond Conservation Area	FO	Town of Jaffrey	66
Childrens Woods + Carey Park	FO	Town of Jaffrey	125
Dr. Mills Land	FO	Jaffrey Village Improvement Society	13
Gap Mountain Reservation	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	294
Gay State Forest	FO	NH Dept. of Resources & Economic Dev.	116

Goundry	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	8
Gray Goose Farm	CE	Town of Jaffrey	58
Haven State Forest	FO	NH Dept. of Resources & Economic Dev.	93
Jaffrey - Monadnock Lot	FO	Town of Jaffrey	253
Jaffrey Town Forest	FO	Town of Jaffrey	162
Jaffrey Contoocook Wellfield	FO	Town of Jaffrey	23
Jaffrey Squantum Wellfield	FO	Town of Jaffrey	13
Jaffrey Turnpike Wellfield	FO	Town of Jaffrey	12
Jewell Forest	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	17
Kaiser CE	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	42
Lacy Rd. Lot Town Forest	FO	Town of Jaffrey	11
Lowe	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	4
Meade Brook	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	205
Monadnock Memorial Forest	FO	New England Forestry Foundation	72
Monadnock Reservation	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	2,342
Monadnock State Park	FO	NH Dept. of Resources & Economic Dev.	1,022
Morgan Forest	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	52
Morgan Forest II	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	106
Mountain Brook Reservoir	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	77
Perkins Pond Lots	FO	Town of Troy	2
Perry Forest II	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	29
Pierce	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	51
Querfurth & McCaqq	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	177
Richardson	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	62
Rowlands	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	6
Snelling/Miller	DR	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	13
Stonewall Farm / Stanley Brook	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	3
Stonewall Farm II	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	161.5
Stonewall Farm III	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	215
Strong, R.	CE	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	14
Thorndike Pond Beach	FO	Town of Jaffrey	9
Troy Mills Wetland	FO	Society for the Protection of NH Forests	3
Troy Water Works Land	FO	Town of Troy	163
White Easement	CE	The Monadnock Conservancy	74
Whittemore Island Preserve	FO	The Nature Conservancy	6
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,699</b>

Sources: GRANIT Conservation Land Data 2009, Complex Systems, University of New Hampshire, Durham NH; Jaffrey Assessor records.

Type Codes: CE = Conservation Easement  
FO = Fee Ownership  
DR = Fee Deed with Conservation Restrictions

## 5.0 Open Space Evaluation Criteria

Based on opinions voiced during the focus sessions and additional discussions, the committee compiled a list of potential qualities exhibited by open space that provide value to the Town of Jaffrey. These reflect a diverse set of interests including natural resource protection, recreational uses and economic returns from working lands.

In particular, an evaluation of specific criteria will be useful when considering potential investments in the protection of open space. The following criteria would be considered desirable characteristics for any potential open space protection project. While not every opportunity will provide all of these benefits, opportunities could be ranked and prioritized according to how many of these benefits are associated with a particular project.

- Provides local or regional linkage and corridors between protected lands and other areas with high natural resource and/or recreational value
- Encourages or maintains managed use of productive lands, such as forestry and agriculture
- Creates or preserves scenic vistas
- Protects water quality of surface or groundwater resources
- Creates or protects existing and potential trails
- Maintains high quality wildlife habitat
- Provides good alignment or connections with other community planning efforts such as economic development, municipal facilities, etc.
- Benefits a significant portion of population or has broad political support
- Maintains or increases tourism potential
- Preserves cultural or historic interests
- Is consistent with values expressed in Jaffrey Master Plan
- Has a favorable cost/benefit ratio when considering direct out-of-pocket costs, impacts to tax base, direct and indirect economic benefits.
- Provides public access to recreational resources
- Preserves rural character or existing ways of life
- Provides shoreline protection or public access to water bodies
- Encourages wood energy production and maintains carbon sink potential of forested land
- Maintains opportunities for diffuse recreational activities such as hunting, bird watching, etc.
- Is suitable for multiple uses and multi-season uses

## **6.0 Focus Session Maps**

Based on input during the focus sessions, a series of maps were prepared to depict the areas of town that are either currently used by particular interest groups, or that would be desirable areas for expansion of their use. These maps have been plotted on clear acetate overlays for ease of use in identifying priority areas where many different uses or interests converge. These maps, as well as a re-formatted Conservation Focus Areas map developed as part of the 2009 Natural Resource Inventory, are attached as Appendix A.

## **7.0 Open Space Protection Tools**

As a broad characterization, the three ways in which land may remain as open space rather than being developed for residential or commercial/industrial use are 1) regulation, 2) land conservation transactions, and 3) as working lands that are sustainable and economically viable.

For the most part, governmental regulations affecting land uses are consolidated under the authority of the Planning Board, and the topic of regulation is not addressed directly in this Open Space Plan. As a general observation, however, the Town has indicated its interest in open space issues within the language of the current Master Plan, and open space issues should certainly inform the Planning Board's approach to land use planning. The Planning Board may want to consider formally adopting the final version of this Open Space Plan as a chapter of the Town of Jaffrey Master Plan.

Land conservation transactions can take the form of either fee simple outright land purchases, or less-than-fee simple transactions such as easements. An outright purchase by the town is the most straightforward and protective type of transaction, but is also the most costly both in terms of initial acquisition costs and as ongoing costs in the form of foregone tax revenue and direct costs for land stewardship. Considering the economic challenges faced by town government, it is not anticipated that direct purchases would constitute the cornerstone of an open space protection strategy in Jaffrey.

Property ownership is often described as a bundle of rights, and the less-than-fee simple approaches to open space protection typically extinguish, transfer, or in some way limit a subset of those rights. The landowner retains ownership of their property, but either voluntarily, or in return for compensation, gives up certain rights such as the right to develop. Depending upon the resource being targeted for protection, these types of easements can be a very cost-effective tool.

Finally, the economic viability of open space uses such as agriculture or forestry will have a direct bearing on whether those lands remain as open space. Town government

can play a direct role in this area through its exercise of taxation policy, discretionary easements, tax incentives, and general land use planning policies that either encourage or discourage compact development patterns. The town can also play an indirect role in terms of providing educational resources, outreach to landowners and researching ways to improve the economic viability of working lands.



## 8.0 Recommendations

After reviewing the information gleaned from focus group sessions and previous reports, the committee identified many ways in which the Town of Jaffrey benefits from its open space lands. Accordingly, the committee has concluded that it is in the town's interest to take active steps to encourage and protect its open space. Specific roles that have been identified for town government in promoting open space include:

- Prospecting for grant opportunities
- Research-based public education regarding the value of open space
- Public education regarding open space protection techniques
- Maintaining current maps
- Meeting with public to stay current with changing priorities or uses of land
- Prioritizing expenditures from ear-marked land acquisition/conservation funds
- Liaison with other towns on regional open space corridor issues
- Liaison with local land trust organizations to stay current with conservation easement activity

In considering the best way to fill these roles, the committee posed the following question in its deliberations and developed a list of pros and cons:

**Question:** Would these roles be served more effectively by a dedicated Open Space Committee (OSC) rather than one of the existing Town bodies dealing with these issues (Conservation Commission, Planning Board, or Select Board)?

Pros	Cons
Could provide broader representation of various town interests if structured properly. Might be viewed politically as more balanced approach than either ConCom or PB.	Dilution of pool of volunteer resources available for all town government needs
Advocacy and education are key – OSC would have more time available for this role	Increased town bureaucracy
Provides a local, Jaffrey-centric perspective on open space issues	Possibly redundant with functions provided by other private or regional land trusts and other entities
Focuses more narrowly on open space issues, not saddled with other regulatory duties	Limited authority – no regulatory powers, staffing resources or real teeth beyond an advisory role

Although there were valid arguments both for and against having a dedicated OSC, the committee concluded unanimously that, on balance, the benefits of having a dedicated committee to address open space issues outweighed the potential drawbacks.

As a complement to the general roles described above, the committee also recommends that a permanent OSC provide recommendations to the Select Board on expenditures from Jaffrey's Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund and recommendations for warrant articles, bond articles, or other means of funding this reserve.

In order for it to be effective in these various roles, the committee considers it imperative that a permanent OSC be a diverse group representing a variety of interests in town. We recommend a 7-member committee as being large enough to represent different viewpoints, but not so large that it would be difficult to find enough willing members. Committee members should be appointed by the Select Board, and should include representatives from land use interest groups (such as those represented in the focus sessions this spring), other town boards/departments such as the Planning Board, ConCom or others, and interested citizens in general. No more than one representative from any single town board should serve on the OSC, in order to maintain diversity of viewpoints and reduce impact on volunteer schedules.

## 9.0 Conclusion and Action Items

This draft Plan provides the framework for a final Open Space Plan that will set forth criteria, goals, and recommendations for open space issues in Jaffrey. Many of the informational resources presented here including collection of public input, development of criteria for evaluation of open space opportunities, and preparation of interest group maps will constitute the building blocks for a final plan. The ultimate purpose of the Open Space Plan is to provide a more concrete approach toward implementing the general goals expressed in the 2007 Master Plan Update pertaining to wise use of land and preservation of open space. It should be the responsibility of a permanent Open Space Committee to finalize the Open Space Plan, encourage its adoption by the Planning Board as a chapter of the Master Plan, ensure that it is understood by all municipal officials, and keep it regularly updated.

In the course of its deliberations, the ad hoc Open Space Committee has identified a number of benefits for the town in the protection of open space and has suggested that it is fitting and appropriate for Town government to encourage conservation and protection of certain lands as a matter of public policy. The role of Town government in this area can include activities such as educating landowners about the topic, networking among landowners and land trusts, identifying lands that have particularly high natural resource, recreational, or working land values, and acquiring or assisting in transactions involving land or conservation easements.

Action items that are recommended in order to move forward with a proactive approach to open space protection in Jaffrey include the following:

### Within 6 months:

1. Appoint seven members to a permanent Open Space Committee that will report directly to the Select Board.
2. Finalize the Open Space Plan, including the adoption of a system for prioritizing potential open space opportunities.
3. Establish a meeting schedule for the group, and publicize the Open Space Plan to the general public, landowners, and interest groups.
4. Meet with other Town Boards to review the Open Space Plan and actions.

### Annually:

1. Consider what actions might be needed at Town Meeting to implement the Open Space Plan. This could include identifying means for funding the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund.
2. Hold a landowner education workshop on conservation options.
3. Report to the Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Select Board to review progress toward implementation

## APPENDIX C

### MAPS