

# Open Space and Resource Protection



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## Introduction to the Open Space Element



Residents of Monterey view open space as one of the most precious assets to the community. The 2003 Monterey Open Space and Recreation Plan documents the town's dedication to its land by updating the 1990 version of this report. The community seized the opportunity provided by the 2002-2003 Community Preservation Initiative of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA), to collect the information presented in this plan and to conduct a community visioning session to provide a basis for the goals and recommendations considered here.

The following section is a brief overview of the town's Open Space and Recreation Plan. For further inquiry, the document can be found at Monterey Town Hall.

## SECTION 1. PLAN SUMMARY

Monterey's Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) summarizes our ecological, historical and recreational resources, identifies our conservation priorities, and includes a five-year action plan to help us reach our goals and objectives. It also acknowledges issues such as land use, finances, and demographics, which impact our community's development. To help us complete the OSRP plan, we worked with the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and UMass Extension; we also relied on Monterey's 1990 Open Space & Recreation Plan (OSRP) and recent input from community boards and individuals.

In the years since the last OSRP the most significant action has been the adoption of the Scenic Mountain By-law in May 2003. This new by-law will help reduce aesthetically and ecologically disruptive activities on ridges and steep slopes. Pressure for residential development is increasing in town, and since 1998 an average of 14 new homes have been built each year. Under current zoning, the town could ultimately have 46 new miles of road, another 2914 dwelling units and 7600 residents. If this happened, water demand would increase by about 500,000 gallons/day, and there would be an additional 3300 tons of solid waste produced each year.

As more homes are built, Monterey faces changes that will affect the look and make-up of our community:

- added stress on town services;
- loss of our middle-class population base, which cannot compete with the increased cost of housing;
- loss of the valued landscape features;
- degradation of water quality; and
- loss of wildlife habitat and impacts to biodiversity.

The intent of this document, and its inclusion in Monterey's Community Development Plan, is to provide a framework for efficient, wise and fair planning for the future of Monterey.



## SECTION 2. INTRODUCTION

### *A. Statement of Purpose*

Land is one of the most precious assets our community possesses. How we use it shapes our town's character and vitality. Monterey is fortunate because its rural character and scenic beauty—the qualities that appeal to so many of us—remain largely intact. This is due in part to conservation efforts by state environmental agencies and private non-profits, which have permanently protected nearly 40% of our town. Meanwhile revisions to Monterey's Zoning Bylaws have helped to safeguard water quality and scenic ridgelines by regulating building and development. Still, Monterey residents acknowledge the need to make our bylaws more relevant to current pressures and to reflect new information. We strongly support efforts to ensure the future of Monterey's rural identity. At present, the greatest threats we face are from (1) development that is incompatible with the town's character, and (2) outside economic pressures that could erode our control over the town's future. Without careful planning and zoning, the fabric of our community and the environment we cherish could suffer irreversible damage.

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

In 2001, using funds from Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (Executive Order 418) and The Trustees of Reservations' Highlands Initiative, the Monterey Selectboard voted to update the town's 1990 Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). The plan was completed with assistance from the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (Bryan Boeskin, Mark Maloy and Peter Falcier) and UMass Extension (Laurie Sanders, Kasey Rolih, Scott Jackson). UMass Extension worked with community members and wrote the document, while staff at the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission were responsible for updating and compiling GIS maps. The principal members of the community involved were: Michele Miller, John Sylbert, Muriel, Fred Chapman, Claudia Weldon, Storrs Olds, and Joyce Scheffey.

This Open Space and Recreation Plan is an advisory document that will help guide and inform the actions of local officials. Upon approval by the state's Division of Conservation Services, our town will be eligible to apply for state grants to help cover the costs of protecting land for conservation and recreational use. For Monterey, the reimbursement rate is 52% (up to \$250,000).

In the fall of 2002 the Selectboard sent a questionnaire to each residence, asking for input on topics ranging from affordable housing and transportation to open space and recreation. 36% (268/742) of those surveyed responded. With respect to open space and recreation, the responses re-affirmed those from the town's 1990 Open Space & Recreation plan—Monterey residents care deeply about protecting the town's rural character and its natural resources (See Appendix 1).

Three public meetings were held to discuss the OSRP (12/02, 2/03, 11/03). Fifty-seven people attended a meeting that showcased a new approach to prioritizing land for protection developed by the University of Massachusetts. Attendance at other meetings ranged from 4-23 and included the members of the Open Space Committee as well as interested town residents. UMass Extension also gave a presentation to the Monterey Preservation Land Trust in September, at which 28 people attended. In November, 23 Monterey residents attended a public meeting and

discussed, debated and amended the goals, objectives and 5-Year Action plan. In addition, since September a large, colorful poster soliciting participation in the OSRP process was posted in town (Appendix 2). In November Joyce Scheffey and Laurie Sanders wrote an article about the OSRP for the Monterey News (Appendix 3). As part of the plan's development, UMass Extension staff also interviewed staff of The Trustees of Reservations, National Park Service, Berkshire Natural Resources Council, Monterey Preservation Land Trust, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Management, Lake Buel Association and the Lake Garfield Association; their comments are also incorporated into this document.

#### **SECTION 4. *H. Environmental Challenges***

At present, Monterey fortunately does not have any known hazardous waste sites, brownfield locations, significant erosion problems, chronic flooding or sedimentation issues. We do, however, face unprecedented growth. Since 1998 alone, 70 new homes have been built. The areas around Lake Garfield and Stevens Pond have been noticeably affected by clearing and construction. Most recently Mount Hunger Road and Beartown Mountain Road have come under development pressure. In the face of unprecedented growth the ongoing environmental challenge in Monterey is the protection of water resources and preservation of important open space. These challenges require direct action and tough decisions including:

- Protecting the town's rural character by precluding changes that would damage scenic roads, views, sensitive resource areas (cultural, natural, agricultural or recreational), water quality through creative zoning overlays and land protection;
- Protecting and enhancing the water quality of Lake Garfield and Lake Buel;
- Protecting water quality by addressing septic system failures, educating land owners about vegetative buffers, underground storage tanks;
- Monitoring the quality of the leachate below the town's former landfill to ensure that the quality of the Konkapot is not compromised;
- Managing invasive species that can impair recreational opportunities (swimming and boating) and natural systems
- Improving recreational resources (trails, bike paths)
- Creating incentives for agriculture
- Identifying and protecting cultural/historical resources

#### **SECTION 7: *B. Management Needs***

Like all towns, Monterey's management needs are multiple and varied.

##### *Recreation:*

- Maintain recreation-related buildings, ballfields, Bidwell Park, trails and the town beach.
- Enhance recreational opportunities for residents and visitors through the creation of new trails (pedestrian & bicycling).
- Improving accessibility to town-owned areas for all (ADA requirements).

##### *Historic*

- Maintain town-owned historic resources (cemeteries, buildings).

- Ensure un-protected historic features are not inadvertently destroyed.
- Develop a plan of action for the historic Edith Wilson house and property.

*Water Quality*

- Water quality issues have been a priority for years in Monterey. Future educational efforts are outlined in our goals and objectives section to help reduce non-point source pollution. To be effective, the town will work with riparian land owners, the Lake Garfield Association, Lake Buel Association and the Conservation Commission.

*Agricultural*

- Provide incentives for farmers to remain in farming and keep farm fields open. At the town level, we can do this through education and where possible, local tax incentives.

*Ecological*

- Update & revision of local by-laws to help ensure the maintenance of the town's ecologically important areas.
- Maintain the integrity of natural areas by controlling the spread of invasive non-native species.
- Conduct biological investigations by qualified biologists to help further refine our town's conservation priorities. Certify vernal pools.

**SECTION 8: GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

At a public meeting on November 17, 2003 23 participants endorsed the following goal and objectives for our community:

<p><b>Goal:</b> To preserve and protect the natural resources, rural character and historic assets of our community, while enhancing opportunities for diversity in housing, employment and recreation.</p>	<p><b>Objectives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Preserve a variety of open space in Town including open fields and wooded areas, held both publicly and privately.</li> <li>2) Protect all water resources: lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands and sub-surface storage areas from alteration and pollution.</li> <li>3) Preserve familiar vistas, roadsides, dirt roads, gateway areas and historic sites.</li> <li>4) Encourage agricultural enterprises.</li> <li>5) Develop and maintain opportunities for active and passive recreation and appreciation of nature and the environment for all.</li> </ol>
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## SECTION 9: 5-YEAR ACTION PLAN

Objective	Implementation:	Boards/Agencies Involved	Year
1. Establish Open Space Committee	a) Oversee & monitor implementation of the Open Space & Recreation Plan	Selectboard	2004
2. Protect all water resources: lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands and aquifers from alteration and pollution.	a) Work with Lake Garfield Association and Lake Buel District to actively educate lake-dwellers and other landowners about fertilizers, fuels, pesticides, vegetative buffers, low flush toilets, septic system monitoring/upgrading.	Open Space Committee Conservation Commission Board of Health	2004
	b) Work with Highway Dept for use of Best Management Practices to reduce NPS pollution by sand, salt, fuel and gravel, mitigate existing problems, and minimize salt use.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	2004
	c) Maintain rigorous standards for perc tests (1" in 30 minutes)	Board of Health	2004
	d) Ensure adequate erosion controls are in place during construction and forestry operations until the ground is stabilized	District Foresters, Conservation Commission	2004
	e) Manage aquatic invasive species	DPW, lake & streamside residents, lake associations	Annual
3. Preserve significant open space in Town including open fields and wooded areas, held both publicly and privately.	a) Identify high value areas using biomap and biodiversity models, historic, agriculture and recreation features and levels of development risk using assessor's maps and protected land data	Open Space Committee, Planning Board, Parks Commission, Conservation Commission	2004
	b) Evaluate and prioritize areas for action, and acquire/conservate key parcels to safeguard wildlife corridors, fields and meadows; prevent forest fragmentation and protect lands of significance within Monterey and along its borders	Open Space Committee, Planning Board, Parks Commission, Conservation Commission, DCR (formerly DEM), neighboring towns, and local non-profit conservation organizations	2004
	c) Designate stumpage fees for maintenance of town-owned open space	Selectboard, Conservation Commission	2004
	d) Amend subdivision control law to	Planning Board	2004

	require "linkage", or the setting aside of open space as a condition of approval. Consider tax implications and the use of cluster zoning.		
	e) Study Community Preservation Act	Selectboard, Conservation Commission	2005
	f) Update Zoning By-laws to reflect biodiversity values. For divisions of land not requiring approval, work w/ developer for best possible outcome based on biomap and biodiversity criteria.	Planning Board	2006
	g) Study logging by-laws	Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Selectboard	2007
	h) Survey and certify vernal pools	ConCom, Residents, BCC, Simon's Rock students	2004, Annual
	i) Educate landowners about conservation options and inform all stakeholders to guide impact of buildout. Host workshops with TTOR for landowners. Distribute summary sheet of conservation issues pertinent to Monterey to landowners, real estate agents, etc. Have Highlands Community Booklet available at Town Hall and Library and for distribution.	Conservation Commission, Selectboard	2004, Annual
	i) Identify, map and control invasive plant species that may threaten the integrity of sensitive natural areas	Conservation Commission, local conservation organizations, BCC & Simon's Rock students	2005, Annual
4. Preserve familiar vistas, roads, gateway areas and historic sites.	a) Have highway department apply Best Management Practices for road maintenance	Highway Department, Selectboard	2004
	b) Have highway department and tree warden cut and trim trees using Best Management Practices/arboricultural techniques	Tree Warden, Highway	2004
	c) Research a lighting bylaw	Planning Board	2004
	d) Study a subdivision control law to help maintain rural criteria: ie. native plantings, screening??? driveway permits	Planning Board	2005
	e) Consider scenic roads legislation MGL 40 ch. 15, scenic road overlay district & investigate the Scenic By-Way program to access federal and state grants to acquire	Selectboard, Planning Board	2006



	scenic easements and limit incompatible development activities		
	f) Inventory historical assets and develop programs that encourage appreciation/preservation of Monterey history	Historical Commission, Town Clerk	2006
5. Encourage agricultural enterprises/landscapes.	a) Permit B&B/agri-tourism	Selectboard, BRPC, Schools	2005
	b) Allow worker housing on working farms	Selectboard, BRPC, Schools	2004
	c) Publicize the farm viability program	Selectboard	2005
	d) Eliminate tax on farm animals	Selectboard	2005
	e) Promote agricultural careers and apprenticeship opportunities through schools and town events	Selectboard	2005
	f) Identify all the farms in town where farmers could rent land	Assessors	2005
	g) Preserve agricultural land	Selectboard, State and Private agencies	As opportunity permits
6. Develop and maintain opportunities for active and passive recreation and appreciation of nature and the environment.	a) Plan for use of town-owned land:McLaughlin/Wilson Property, community center/farming/facilities. Fox Hill Property:Walking trail/some parking/croquet etc.	Park commission, Historical Commission, Conservation Commission, McLaughlin/Wilson Committee, Town Clerk	2007
	b) Walking Trails from Bidwell Park/Konkapot Greenway; Brewer Pond Trail and Picnic Area; from Lake Garfield Beach to town center	Park commission, Historical Commission, Conservation Commission	2008
	c) Investigate beach @ Lake Buel and public/fishing access for Lake Garfield	Park commission, Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee	2007
	d) Annual event by Cultural Council	Local Cultural Council	Annual

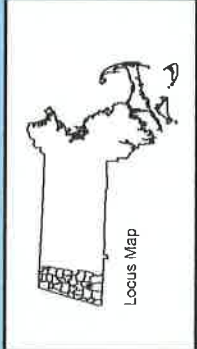
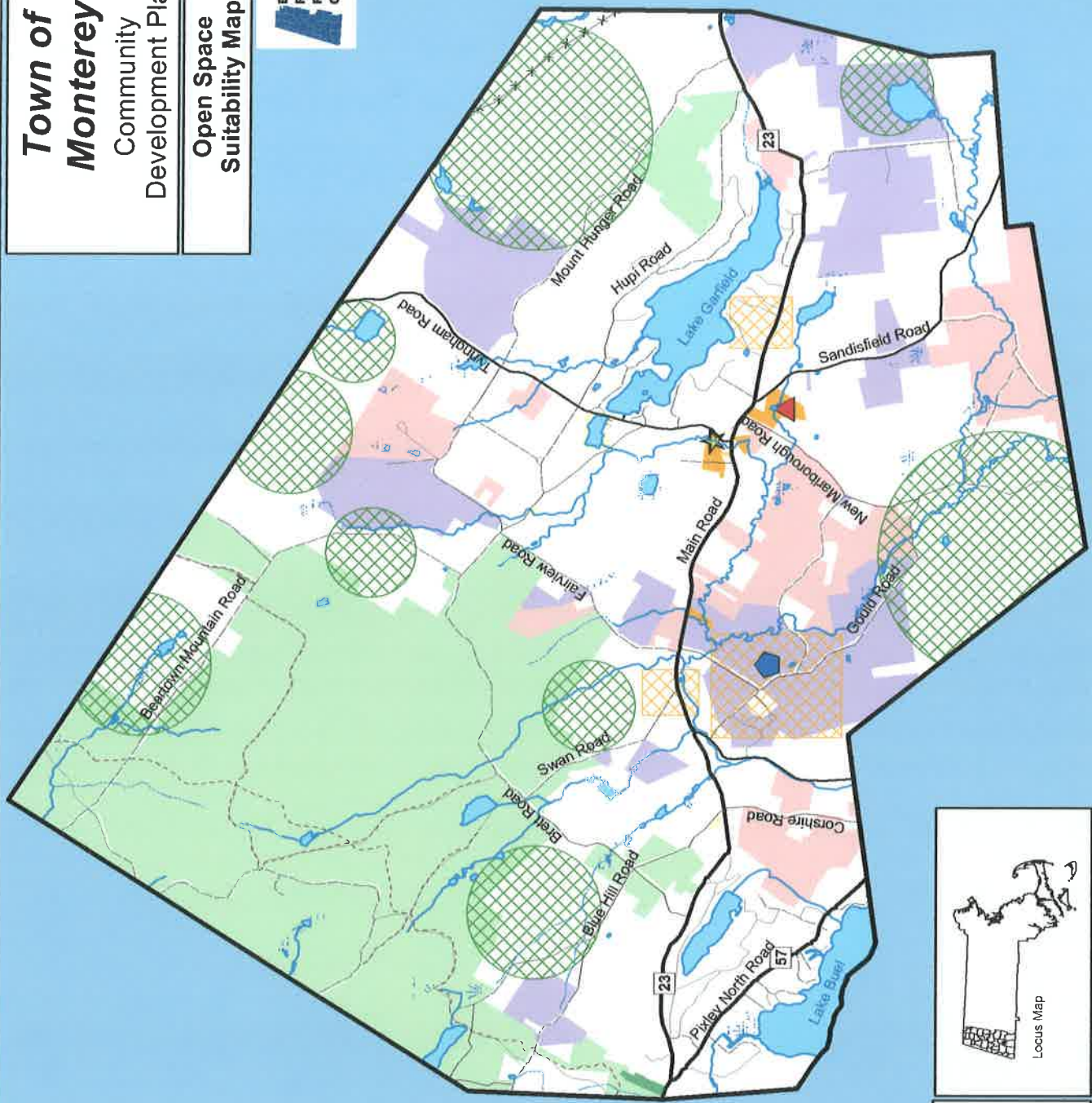
# Town of Monterey

Community Development Plan

## Open Space Suitability Map



	Area of high agricultural significance
	Area of high ecological significance
	Historic Site
	Water Resource Area
	Proposed trailhead
<b>Open Space Status</b>	
	Federal
	State
	Municipal - Protected
	Municipal - Limited
	Municipal - Unprotected
	Non-Profit
	Private



December 30, 2003  
 /cdp/projects/openspace\_suitability.mxd

Scale: 0, 500, 1,000 Meters  
 Massachusetts State Plane Meters  
 North American Datum 1983

This map was created by the Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and is intended for general planning purposes only. This map shall not be used for engineering, survey, legal, or regulatory purposes. MassGIS, BRPC, or the Town provided all of the data layers used to create this map. This project was funded through a grant from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development, and the Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation and Construction.