

## Section 9: Seven-Year Action Plan

This Seven-Year Action Plan on the following pages is intended to provide concrete steps towards implementing the goals and objectives discussed in previous sections of this Open Space and Recreation Plan. The Action Plan restates the goals and objectives followed by recommended actions, potential funding sources, the board or group responsible for implementation, and projected start dates. By implementing the recommended actions, each of the objectives will begin to be realized. The Action Plan Map at the end of this section is a graphical representation of highlights of the Action Plan.

Successful implementation will require the participation of existing town boards, committees and staff, including, but not limited to: the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Recreation Committee, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, and Agricultural Commission. Successful implementation will also require the collaboration of the town with other local and regional entities working in the town and the surrounding area such as the Connecticut River Watershed Council, Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust, Franklin Land Trust, the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Accomplishing the actions identified in this section will require time and commitment from dedicated volunteers. Forming an ongoing Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee is critical to this Plan's success. Where money is required, it may be sought from state and federal governmental agencies, private non-profit conservation agencies, foundations, and individual donations in addition to municipal funds. A broad base of community support for the Open Space and Recreation Plan should facilitate the fundraising which may be needed to implement the action items.

## Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan – Seven-Year Action Plan

GOAL/OBJECTIVES	ACTIONS	NOTES / STATUS OF ACTION ITEM IF CARRIED OVER FROM 2005	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/ GROUP	PROJECTED START DATES
<b>GOAL 1:</b> Ensure that the Town of Gill continues to protect its valued cultural, historical, scenic, archeological and natural resources (including water resources, wildlife habitat, forests and farmlands) through conservation and stewardship.					
Prioritize areas in Gill with significant cultural, historical, scenic, archeological and natural resources so that town officials and residents can act efficiently when a parcel of land containing such resources becomes available for protection.	Develop a list of criteria which, if identified on a parcel being offered as a donation or for sale in Town, would signify priority for action. If the parcel is under Chapter 61, 61A, or 61B, this could trigger the town's official consideration of its right-of-first-refusal to acquire or otherwise seek to conserve a parcel of land.	Not started.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission	2013
	Develop a protocol for how the town would consider using its right-of-first-refusal (or assigning the right to a conservation land trust or conservation agency) regarding Chapter lands that are put up for sale for development.	Not started.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and Select Board	2013
	Using the list of criteria and the GIS maps in the Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan, identify general areas of conservation interest that would be considered to be priority areas with significant cultural, historic, scenic, natural, archeological, and natural resources.	Not started.	Town, Direct Local Technical Assistance	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and Conservation Commission	2013
	Meet with local land trusts to better understand the details of holding conservation restrictions and provide training for Town boards and other interested parties.	New in 2011.	Town, Local land trusts	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Select Board, Conservation Commission, Land Trusts	2012
	Include an ongoing "what's new in land conservation in Gill" article in the Gill Newsletter.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Town Administrative Assistant	2012
	Along with prioritizing areas to protect, prioritize areas not to protect so that some development is possible. See also Goal 5.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Planning Board, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Development Committee (yet to be formed)	2013
Encourage landowners interested in protecting their land from development to work with Franklin Land Trust, Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, with state and federal conservation agencies, and with the Town of Gill.	Invite Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and Franklin Land Trust to a town forum to provide a presentation on their current activities and on the assistance they have to offer to Gill landowners.	Mount Grace and Franklin Land Trust did hold presentations in 2010. This is an ongoing education action item and should remain in the plan.	Volunteer or supported by land trusts.	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and Select Board	2011 (ongoing process)

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Use the annual Biodiversity Days as a means for building a comprehensive biological and geological inventory in selected areas of Gill using community volunteers.	Work with the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions (MACC) to coordinate annual spring walks to inventory animals, insects, fish, plants, trees and significant geological features in the Town Forest.	Action has been started.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Conservation Commission and MACC	2013
Support the training of local volunteers in vernal pool certification for students and citizens.	Encourage Northfield Mount Hermon and Gill-Montague Schools and residents to participate in an training program in vernal pool certification.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Gill-Montague School	2012
Explore revisions to Gill's zoning bylaw that would result in greater protection of valued "natural and cultural resources" and, which could also help to ensure any land development provides benefits that reflect the town's natural resource conservation goals.	Request the Franklin Regional Planning Board – or Citizen Planner Training Collaborative (CPTC) - to present a program on zoning bylaws for the conservation of "natural and cultural resources" and encourage Gill residents to attend the meeting.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	UMass Extension Citizen Planner Training Collaborative	Planning Board and Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2013
	Develop, publicize, and if received well by the residents of Gill, seek to adopt a bylaw(s) that will help to protect valued "natural and cultural resources."	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Direct Local Technical Aid through Department of Housing and Community Development	Planning Board	2014
	Revisit the benefits of conservation/cluster development and determine whether current conservation development zoning is still the best option for Gill.	New in 2011.	Direct Local Technical Aid through Department of Housing and Community Development	Planning Board	2015
Explore the potential for developing a private conservation land trust or land fund for Gill.	Invite members of a small, private land trust, such as the trust in Whately, to a meeting of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee as a first step to understanding the value and risks associated with having a local land trust.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2014
	Further explore the possibility of adopting the Community Preservation Act.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Select Board, Planning Board, Historical Commission	2014
Continue to protect river and stream banks, particularly the portions of the Connecticut River bank subject to chronic erosion.	Participate in the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Conservation Commission	2012
<b>GOAL 2: Ensure that the Town of Gill is responsive to the needs of farm and forest landowners and of other businesses producing local products in Town.</b>					
Consider ways that the town might support agricultural and forest operations as they would other	At Town Meeting, vote to set aside funding each year for agricultural and forestland conservation.	New in 2011.	None needed	Agricultural Commission and Conservation Commission	2012 and ongoing annually

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commercial or industrial businesses in town.	At Town Meeting, vote to remove excise taxes on farm animals.	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A
Support the marketing of Gill farm and forest products as well as other locally produced products.	Broaden publicity for events that feature local products—such as Gill Cheese Night—to attract attendees from area towns.	Item is underway and is ongoing.	Volunteers, local farmers	Agricultural Commission	2012
	Update the Gill Farm Guide brochure annually.	Item is underway and is ongoing.	Volunteers	Agricultural Commission	2012
Explore the options for encouraging agritourism in Gill.	Consider hosting a farm tour to highlight farm products and strengthen the connection between farmers and potential and/or existing customers.	Begun and ongoing.	Volunteers, local farmers	Agricultural Commission	2013
Encourage a connection between Gill farmers and foresters and Gill's school children to foster knowledge of natural systems in children and to help satisfy any unmet recreational needs of children in an innovative manner.	Evaluate whether there is a way in which some of Gill school children's recreational needs could be met through field trips to farm or forest operations.	New in 2011.	Volunteers, MDAR	Agricultural Commission, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Gill Elementary School Staff	2013
<b>GOAL 3: Ensure that the Town of Gill maintains or improves the quality and accessibility of all its recreational facilities and programming.</b>					
Evaluate the needs of all municipal recreational facilities and properties.	Inventory and assess all existing recreational facilities, properties and programs.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee	2012
	Partner with Northfield Mount Hermon and the Gill-Montague School System to work on making their recreational facilities available to Gill residents during the week.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Northfield Mount Hermon representative, Gill-Montague School representative	2012
	Explore the feasibility of improving the Stacy's Ferry public land for use as park, picnic area and river access for kayaks and canoes, including ADA accessibility.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Select Board	2012
Explore the feasibility of developing a new recreational facility for Gill Elementary School and residents of Gill.	Apply for an MA Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program (formerly Urban Self Help Program) grant to fund the development of a new recreational facility for Gill Elementary School and for residents of Gill.	New in 2011.	MA Division of Conservation Services, School Building Assistance Program	Recreation Committee and Open Space Advisory Committee	2013
	Make more information available about current Riverside School recreation facilities and encourage more use of them.	New in 2011. Note: A committee is currently accessing public uses at the Riverside School.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Town Administrative Assistant	2012
	Assess the potential to continue to upgrade the Riverside School recreational facilities.	Some upgrades completed by volunteers. Ongoing.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee	2015









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	Support the repair and ongoing maintenance of the Gill Elementary School nature trail.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers, MA Division of Conservation Services	Recreation Committee	2015
Promote existing and future recreational facilities and services.	Submit a regular "Open Space and Recreation" column to the Gill Newsletter.	New in 2011.	Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2012
	Develop a guide to facilities, programs, and trail systems in town.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Volunteer with graphics skills	2012
	Develop a one-page, easily reproduced flyer that shows the locations of different recreational facilities in and around Gill. Mail to all residents each year as part of a regular Gill Newsletter mailing.	Not yet done. Still relevant.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Volunteers	2013
Continue to cooperate with private entities in town such as FirstLight, Gill-Montague School District, The Nature Conservancy, and Northfield Mount Hermon School that provide recreational facilities used by Gill residents.	Include FirstLight, the Gill-Montague School District, The Nature Conservancy, and Northfield Mount Hermon School as well as other entities on the mailing lists for meetings of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee and the Recreation Committee as a way of communicating the town's interest in a mutually beneficial relationship with these organizations.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee, Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2012
Support the development of multi-use and limited-use trail systems, which can be accessed from publicly owned land or private lands with permission.	Encourage the formation of a non-municipal trails committee.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Bernardston-Leyden-Gill Snowmobile Club, Volunteers	2012
	Inventory and map the existing system of largely informal trails on Town and State-owned land.	New in 2011.	MA Division of Conservation Services, Franklin Regional Council of Governments	Town Forest Committee	2013
	Use the Gill Newsletter to promote a meeting on trails and trail development. Gauge interest among landowners for the creation of new trails in town. If interest is strong, encourage a secondary meeting to establish a course of action.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Recreation Committee and Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Volunteers, Newsletter Committee	2013
Identify recreational needs of residents of all ages and develop new programs and facilities as appropriate.	Use the Gill Newsletter to report results of the OSRP survey and to request volunteers to take on activities that most interest them. If volunteer recruitment is unsuccessful, seek grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council to fund staff time and direct costs for the most desired program.	Not started. Still relevant.	Massachusetts Cultural Council	Recreation Committee and Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee, Volunteers, Newsletter Committee	2013

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<b>GOAL 4: Ensure that the Town of Gill residents and Town officials successfully work together and with others to guide the conservation of open space and recreation resources.</b>					
Form a permanent Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.	Request the Select Board approve a warrant article for Town Meeting vote that asks to establish a standing Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.	Not started. Still relevant.	Volunteers	Select Board	2012
	Monitor the implementation of the 2011 Gill Open Space and Recreation Plan.	New in 2011.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2012 (ongoing)
	Revise and update any sections of the OSRP throughout the seven-year period in preparation for the next OSRP.	New in 2011.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2012
Conduct public outreach regarding the activities of the Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.	Create an online presence for Open Space and Recreation activities in Gill via a webpage or Facebook.	New in 2011.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2013
Explore opportunities to partner with local, regional, and statewide land conservation organizations and agencies to better leverage limited town dollars and volunteer hours towards the conservation of priority resource areas.	Meet annually with conservation organizations such as Mount Grace Conservation Land Trust, Franklin Land Trust and other entities to discuss any potential conservation projects.	Not begun. Still relevant.	Volunteers	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2012
	Send a town representative to attend quarterly meetings of the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership to engage land conservation agencies and organizations and other town open space committees in efforts that focus on Gill priorities as well as on broader landscape-scale conservation.	Not begun. Still relevant.	North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership	Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee	2014
<b>GOAL 5: Identify ways to balance open space and recreation resources preservation in Gill with commercial and industrial development to ensure an adequate tax base to support the Town.</b>					
Provide support and planning to individuals wishing to start new commercial or industrial businesses.	Establish a study committee to promote new commercial and industrial development in Town. Learn about and publicize availability of assistance for individuals wishing to state new businesses in Town.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Planning Board, Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2012-13
	Conduct outreach to regional organizations, such as the Franklin County Community Development Corporation and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, to research existing business development and entrepreneurial resources	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Planning Board, Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2012-13
	Based upon results of research, create a public outreach and education webpage and/or a brochure that identifies resources to individuals wishing to start a new business in Town.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2013-14
	Encourage home-based businesses in order to expand the number of commercial businesses without developing new parcels of land.	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2013-14
Identify suitable areas to pursue additional commercial or industrial	Revisit the 2004 Gill Community Development Plan as a starting point to identify areas in Gill suitable for commercial or industrial	New in 2011.	Town, Volunteers	Planning Board, Development Study	2013

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businesses in Town.	development.			Committee (yet to be formed)	
	Conduct periodic reviews of the zoning bylaws to determine if they continue to accommodate economic development efforts.	New in 2011.	Town	Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals	2012 (ongoing)
Evaluate the revenues produced by each type of land use in Town.	Consider conducting a cost of community services study - potentially through American Farmland Trust - to determine the fiscal contributions of residential, commercial, industrial, and farm and open land in the town.	New in 2011	American Farmland Trust	Planning Board, Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2013
Determine what types of businesses, products and services are supported in town.	Conduct a survey to evaluate the types of businesses, products and services are supported in Town.	New in 2011	Town, Volunteers	Development Study Committee (yet to be formed)	2012-13

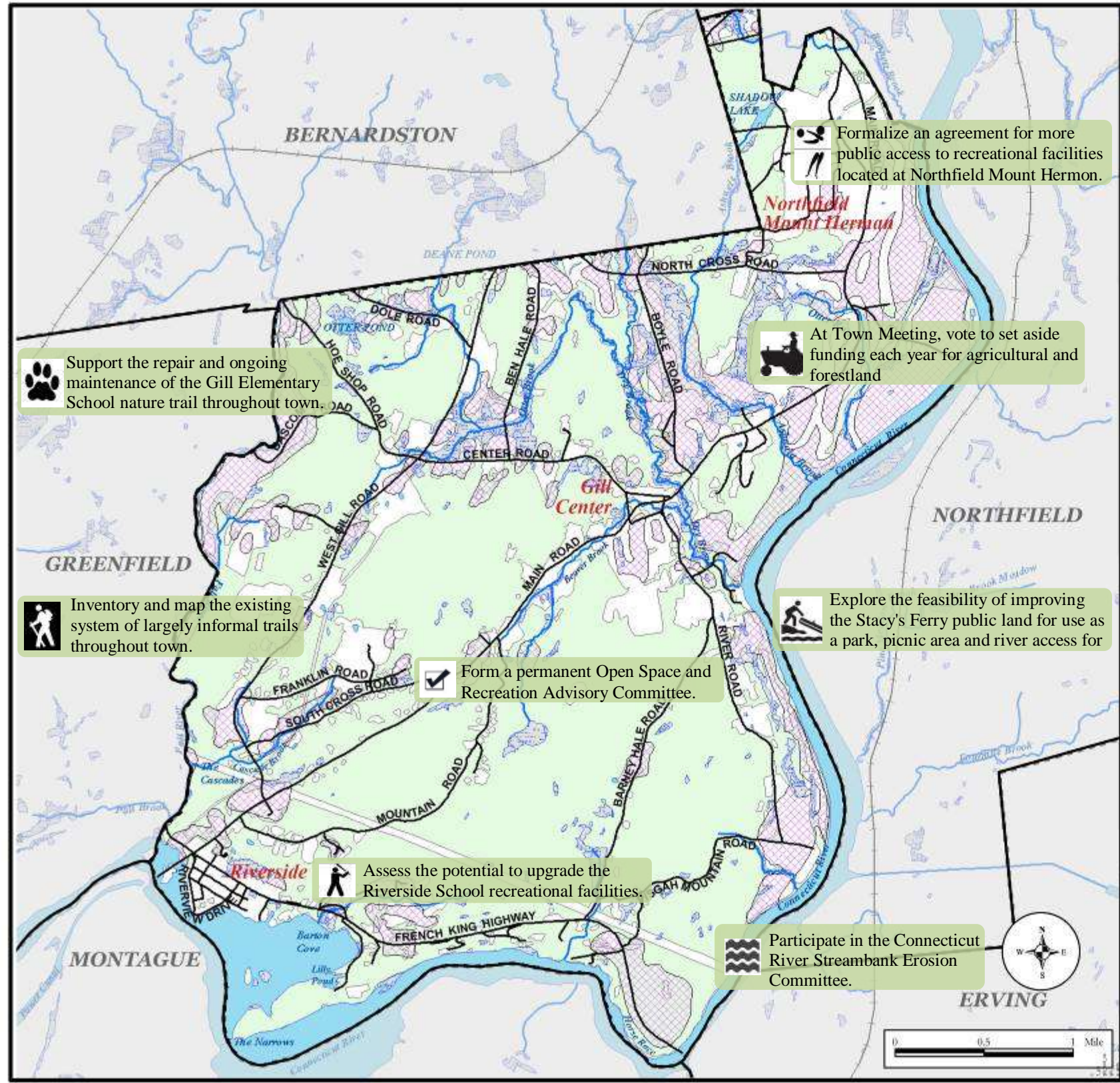
# Seven-Year Action Plan Highlights


## Town of Gill 2011 Open Space and Recreation Plan


-  Town Line
-  Rail Lines
-  Roads
-  Streams and Rivers
-  Water body
-  Wetland
-  Slope > 25%
-  Prime Farmland Soil


Goals, objectives and action items in the Seven-Year Action Plan include – among others – resource and land protection, recreational facilities upgrades, economic development, and river preservation and access, highlighted in this map.


Successful implementation of the Plan will require the participation of existing town boards, committees and staff as well as dedicated citizen volunteers.





 Support the repair and ongoing maintenance of the Gill Elementary School nature trail throughout town.


 Formalize an agreement for more public access to recreational facilities located at Northfield Mount Hermon.


 At Town Meeting, vote to set aside funding each year for agricultural and forestland

 Inventory and map the existing system of largely informal trails throughout town.

 Explore the feasibility of improving the Stacy's Ferry public land for use as a park, picnic area and river access for

 Form a permanent Open Space and Recreation Advisory Committee.

 Assess the potential to upgrade the Riverside School recreational facilities.

 Participate in the Connecticut River Streambank Erosion Committee.



Sources: Map produced by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department. GIS data sources include MassDOT, MassGIS and FRGOG. Depicted boundaries are approximate and are intended for planning purposes only, not to be used for survey.

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