

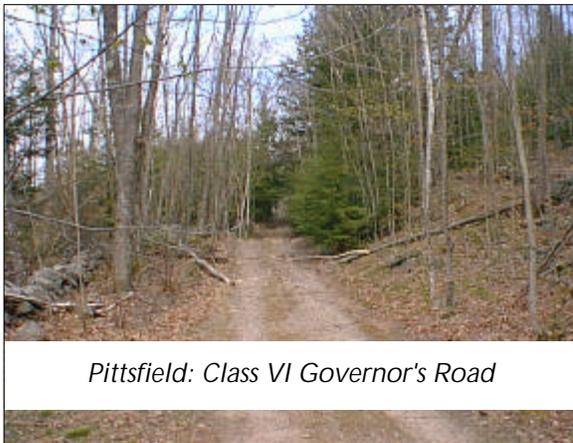
A Guide to the Development of a Municipal Open Space Trail System Plan



Bow: Trail through Nottingcook Forest



Bradford: Boardwalk at Bradford Bog



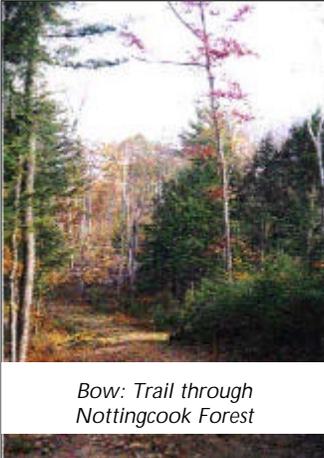
Pittsfield: Class VI Governor's Road



Pembroke: Memorial Field along the Merrimack

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OCTOBER 2001



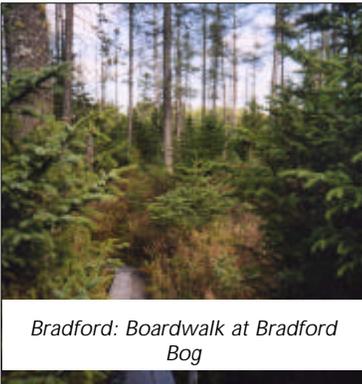
*Bow: Trail through
Nottingcook Forest*



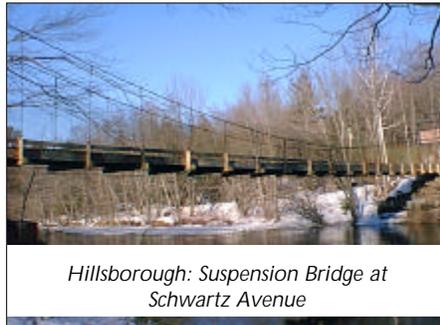
Loudon: Bumfagon Swamp



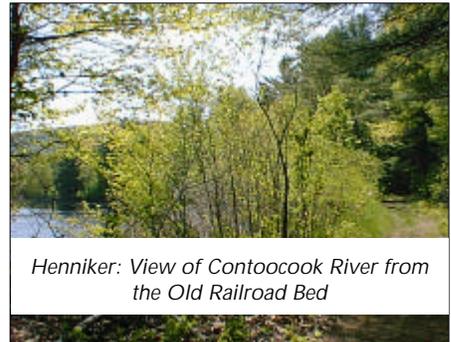
Pembroke: Memorial Field along the Merrimack



*Bradford: Boardwalk at Bradford
Bog*



*Hillsborough: Suspension Bridge at
Schwartz Avenue*



*Henniker: View of Contoocook River from
the Old Railroad Bed*



Pittsfield: Class VI Governor's Road



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This document was produced in October 2001 by the Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) through funds from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services' (NH DES) Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP). The concept and production of *The Guide to the Development of a Municipal Open Space Trail System Plan* was highly encouraged by the New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development's (NH DRED) Trails Bureau. Geographic Information System (GIS) data layers that formed the basis for many of the maps developed for Open Space Trail System Plans are available through New Hampshire Geographically Referenced Information Transfer System (GRANIT) at the University of New Hampshire. The *Guide* is intended to help municipalities within New Hampshire, which have GIS capabilities or which want to work with their respective Regional Planning Commission, to produce an Open Space Trail System Plan for their own community.

To date, CNHRPC has worked with seven towns in our Region to develop an Open Space Trail System Plan for each: Pittsfield (1999), Henniker (1999), Hillsborough (2000), Bradford (2000), Bow (2000), Pembroke (2001), and Loudon (2001). The production of this *Guide* developed out of a desire to share the process with other communities. As news of these Plans has traveled beyond our Region, it became clear that a wider audience could benefit from our methodology and experiences.

The following individuals have personally made the development of this *Guide* a reality through funding, innovation, and a strong vision for all to have access to this resource:

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THE NUTSHELL



WHAT IS AN OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN?

Beginning in 1999, the Central NH Regional Planning Commission (CNHRPC) developed a methodology that has evolved over time with each of the Open Space Trail System (OSTS) Plans we have produced. Funded through the Department of Environmental Services' (NH DES) Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP), each Plan is tailored to the needs of a particular municipality. Through the REPP in the Central NH Region, there is no cost to the municipality for the production of an OSTS Plan.

In a nutshell, an OSTS Plan is an inventory of the existing formal and/or informal trails in a town in the context of a municipality's conservation easements, public lands, privately conserved lands, and rights-of-way. The goals of the Plan are to lay the groundwork for the creation of a trail network throughout the town and to promote the conservation of lands of special significance. The Plan looks at parcel information; contains descriptions of trails, easements, and Class VI roads; and provides recommendations on how to achieve a trail network using existing conservation or public lands as a starting point. The Plan also focuses on how to protect a town's open space and create a trail system that gives residents and visitors alike the opportunity to enjoy and further appreciate the Town's open space by providing recommendations as to what actions should be taken to accomplish these goals. A Trails Steering Committee, a group representing both public and private interests within the community, formulates recommendations for the Plan.

No OSTS Plan is complete without a map series that graphically depicts the main elements of the Plan. The CNHRPC uses a Geographic Information System (GIS) to produce the maps for the Plan. Select trails are located through the use of Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment, pcARC/INFO software edits the data layers and ArcView software lays out the design of the maps. The following is a list of the set of maps that accompanies our OSTS Plans:

BASE MAP (MAP 1): depicts the names and classifications of all of the roads in the Town along with its streams, ponds, wetlands, and the political boundaries;

TOPOGRAPHIC MAP (MAP 2): depicts the USGS 20' contour lines on top of the BASE MAP;

UNFRAGMENTED LANDS MAP (MAP 3): depicts the areas that are not fragmented with Class I, II, or V roadways using a 500' buffer around these roadways;

PUBLIC LANDS, EASEMENTS, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY MAP (MAP 4): depicts Town-owned land, other public lands such as State and Federal properties, conservation lands or easements, Class VI roads, powerline corridors, and railroad corridors;

EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM MAP (MAP 5): depicts where the official and unofficial trails are located within Town; GPS technology may be employed to record the actual location of some of the trails; and

PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM MAP (MAP 6): depicts the culmination of the research and recommendations of the Plan, including existing and proposed trails, trail linkages, and existing and proposed conservation and public lands.

The Plan also provides information on how to get started creating the trails and open space network. An OSTS Plan can complement your community's Master Plan because it could be designed in conjunction with the findings and goals of your Master Plan. Some of the Central NH Region's Planning Boards have adopted their OSTS Plan as an element of their Master Plan. Often, the OSTS Plan provides specific recommended changes to the Site Plan Review Regulations or Subdivision Regulations.

WHY PRODUCE AN OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN?

While working with communities on their Master Plans, the CNHRPC noticed that many people constantly referred to the natural and aesthetic beauty of their particular community and the Central New Hampshire Region. With the current realization that what they have is precious and is being encroached upon by unavoidable change, attitudes have begun to shift. People are thinking now more about current use, permanently preserving important lands in their Town from future development, and the passive recreational use of these lands to bring them back to the natural character they so deeply desire. Alternative means of transportation, such as a bicycle path as an option to reduce vehicle trips, are being explored and examined more than ever before.

- 1) It takes conservation and recreation planning to a new level
- 2) It encourages traditionally opposing groups to work together
- 3) It challenges the ability to think on a regional basis instead of just on a municipal basis
- 4) It is a fun project for all ages that can create tangible results and foster community spirit

After consulting with the CNHRPC's 20 municipalities, the Commission produced a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for the Region with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NH DOT), which was then incorporated into the State's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan did not address an increased municipal desire to connect to the natural amenities afforded to our communities, and it was realized that an important piece of the open space and recreational puzzle was missing from the equation. The Trails Bureau of the NH Department of Resources and Economic Development (NH DRED) was approached with the broad idea of a municipal Open Space Trail System (OSTS) Plan and they supported the concept. On a large scale, most organized trails in New Hampshire typically consist of snowmobile clubs, and so NH DRED was pleased to learn that passive three-season use of existing, expanded, and proposed new trails may become a reality through the OSTs Plan process. With these Plans, the Trails Bureau felt that local trails could be both recreational and economic assets and would have positive effects on communities, particularly if the municipalities chose to publicize their trails and create linkages to neighboring systems.

By the summer of 2001, CNHRPC staff had worked closely with seven communities to complete municipal Open Space Trail System Plans. Plans for Pittsfield and Henniker were produced in 1999, for Hillsborough, Bradford, and Bow in 2000, and for Pembroke and Loudon in 2001. The methodology shared in this *Guide* developed over the course of producing the Plans to meet the specific needs of each particular community. The Trails Steering Committees for the Plans have been generally comprised of volunteers, municipal staff members, students, private landowners, and various Board and Commission members.

From a regional standpoint, as Plans have been completed, locations where trails crossed over into neighboring communities have been identified. This has led to cooperative endeavors among communities. For example, three contiguous towns, Bradford, Henniker, and Hillsborough, enrolled in our program through the Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP) over a two-year period. The Bradford and Hillsborough Conservation Commissions held joint meetings and brainstormed over vacant lands that concerned both towns and collaborated to create a proposed trail system.

Many towns have conservation lands which abut potential or conservation lands on the other side of the town line, and are communicating on how to best preserve and utilize the areas. Other communities have successfully approached landowners for conservation easements in areas identified in the OSTs Plan as having significant open space value. As the recommendations in each Plan are implemented, many more opportunities will arise for both municipal and regional teamwork.

Independent trail activities have also occurred in the Central NH Region. Concord and Deering created detailed trail guides and brochures to help visitors and residents enjoy the assets and recreational opportunities of their respective towns. In Concord and Loudon, cooperation has ensued between the Conservation Commissions and private landowners to connect a Concord trail to the Loudon side of Oak Hill. Creating an OSTs Plan provides an additional tool for similar projects.

Not only does the OSTs Plan include an inventory of preserved and public lands, it also records lands abutting Class VI roads, snowmobile trails on private land, railroad corridors and utility easements. This facilitates the potential creation of new trails as well as paints a picture of the potential resources a town has available to create an open space and trails network. Inevitably, when initially approaching the Conservation Commissions about the virtues of creating an OSTs Plan and throughout the entire process itself, three prominent issues take forefront of discussion. Landowners and municipalities are concerned about:

- liability issues
- lack of privacy (too many people using the trail/land)
- misuse of property open for public use (vandalism or uses not permitted by landowner)

The OSTs Plan process has been designed to address these valid concerns. Methods described include public notice posting of and invitation to our meetings, referencing and interpreting the relevant state statutes which protect private landowners from liability, inventorying only basic property information (map & lot number, acreage, current use, etc) readily available to the public, and listing the use of the property (if any). In one of the towns the CNHRPC inventoried, landowners who had a conservation easement on their land came to one of our meetings and asked us to remove all references to their parcel and to leave it off the maps. Truly these are sensitive and noteworthy issues and Steering Committees needs to accommodate such requests and be cognizant of potential areas of landowner concerns.

By sharing the Plan development process with others, the CNHRPC would like to invite municipalities in the State of New Hampshire to consider their natural assets and use and preserve them appropriately by developing a similar Plan to our Open Space Trail System Plans. We highly encourage you to involve your local Regional Planning Commission for mapping assistance if your municipality does not have access to ArcView, GPS equipment, or the most recent digital mapping data layers.

THE PROCESS OVERVIEW

Your Open Space Trail System Plan's direction needs to be determined by input from the residents of your community. These interested parties will form the Trails Steering Committee that provides recommendations for the Plan. Your municipality's Conservation Commission is a good place to begin in forming the Trails Steering Committee, since they are already familiar with the Town and the conservation properties within the Town. An Open Space Trail System Plan embodies goals of preserving open space and expanding recreational possibilities, which the Conservation Commission is already working towards.

GATHER AN INTERESTED GROUP OF PEOPLE

Included on the enclosed CD is a sample publicity notice that can be used to post in prominent places in your community and to send to your local newspaper for publication. It is important that you try to reach as many people as possible in the beginning stages of the project.

Other local officials or staff from the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen, Historic District Commission, and Recreation Department can provide helpful insight into the creation of the Open Space Trail System Plan. Involvement of private landowners, area snowmobile clubs, biking and equestrian clubs, local residents of all ages, outdoor enthusiasts, and Boy and Girl Scouts is important, because many may have an active interest in promoting an Open Space Trail System Plan and could provide invaluable assistance in the planning and implementation phases. Invite citizens who may be in opposition of the development of a Plan to address their concerns in the beginning of the process. The more interests that are represented by the Steering Committee, the more diverse and creative the group will be, and the variety of available resources and contacts will be greater.

At your initial meetings, be prepared to answer tough questions about landowner liability, misuse of private property open for public use, and privacy and vandalism. There are many answers to these questions, which include:

- ⇒ protective State laws
- ⇒ local law enforcement
- ⇒ close communication with landowners
- ⇒ posting of property for specific uses
- ⇒ local commitment for maintaining trails and reporting problems.

More tips on how to address these important issues are located on the CD in the model OSTs Plan under the Implementation Chapter.

PRODUCE A PLAN FOR YOUR COMMUNITY - THE OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN!

The first step to any Plan is to identify the existing conditions of the study area. By documenting a detailed listing of parcel information as well as a description of the property or right-of-way, it becomes easier to determine what the next steps will be for enhancements, landowner agreements, or determination of appropriate trail usage. Many properties have characteristics that are better suited for certain types of trails usage; for example, trails along a riverbank or waterbody are generally not suited for motorized or bicycle use, nor are trails on land that are susceptible to erosion. Also, landowners who have given permission for one type of use, such as winter snowmobiling, may not be willing to allow summer hikers to cross their land. It is imperative to stress most of the land that is inventoried is privately owned; therefore it needs to be respected as such even if it is listed in the Plan. Guidelines for data collection, presentation, and implementation tools are included on the model Open Space Trail System Plan on the CD at the back of this *Guide*.

You should seek landowner permission before placing an existing private trail, including a snowmobile trail, in the Plan or on the maps. Make sure the Steering Committee explicitly states what uses are permitted on each of these private trails (for a snowmobile trail, permission has typically been granted for winter use only).

1. Inventory Conservation and Public Lands

This component of the OSTs Plan is dedicated to the inventorying of the conservation land easements, municipal-, state-, and federally- owned conservation lands, land owned by land trusts, and other public lands owned by these government entities. Begin by identifying each of the permanently conserved lands in the community and other publicly-owned lands by tax map and lot number and producing a detailed description of these lands. Residents familiar with these properties should be asked to prepare a description of the property, including location and topography, and the locations of wetlands, water bodies or other features contained in these lands. In this section, it is important to include parcel information relevant to an Open Space Trail System Plan, such as acreage and the name of the agency or organization that owns or manages the property, and currently allowed public uses. This information will be contained in the body of the Plan for later analysis by the Trails Steering Committee for possible incorporation into the proposed open space trail system network. Map the locations of the parcels which were inventoried.

2. Inventory Existing Trails, Rights-of-Way, Class VI Roads, and Utility Corridors

This component of the Open Space Trail System Plan is dedicated to the inventorying of the land owned by private and public service companies, parcels abutting Class VI roadways, railroad rights-of-way, and parcels accommodating utility easements. Produce a detailed listing of the information about each right-of-way or trail, describing location, topography, wetlands, water bodies, or other features located along each right-of-way, trail, or road. Include parcel information relevant to an OSTs Plan, such as acreage, current use status, whether there is a building on the parcel, and management or ownership, and public uses where appropriate. Again, this information is needed in order to analyze the suitability of the trail or right-of-way for incorporation into the proposed open space trail system network.

For some of the existing trails, it is possible to record the actual location of certain trails by using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. This is most appropriate for trails located on public lands or private lands if permission has been granted by the landowner. When this information has been gathered, map the locations of trails, rights-of-way, Class VI roads, and utility corridors.

3. Prepare Recommendations: Propose Where to Link Trails, Create New Trails & Identify Land to Protect from Future Development through Conservation

When information on existing trails, conservation and public lands, and rights-of-way have been gathered and are presented all together on maps, it is possible for the Trails Steering Committee to determine likely users of the trails and choose locations where trail connections would be most advantageous. It is important that the Committee focus on areas to protect from future development that reflect findings of your local Master Plan to aid in its adoption by the Planning Board. Map these future potential trails and areas to protect from development based upon a complete Plan inventory analysis.

When preparing the Plan for distribution, include appendices with the map series, sample landowner agreements, sample conservation easement deeds, trail checklists, volunteer liability forms, statutes, and sample warrant articles in order to facilitate the municipality's implementation of the recommendations ascribed in the OSTs Plan. Suggested appendices are included with the model Plan on the enclosed CD, but feel free to tailor them to your own needs.

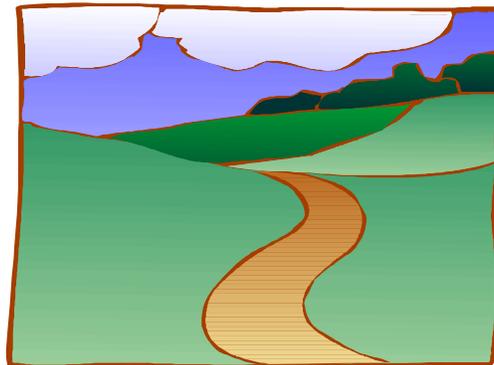
4. Implement the Recommendations of the Plan: The Hard and Rewarding Part!

After the Plan is finished, the implementation phase begins. Your community's Conservation Commission should take the lead on the following:

- Forming a permanent Trails Committee to oversee the implementation of the recommendations.
- Adoption of the Open Space Trail System Plan by the Planning Board as a subsection of the municipal Master Plan.
- Potential municipal designation of select trails as official (enforceable) Class A & B trails. Each trail designated as such becomes a legally enforceable route by the local law enforcement if posted properly; if stated restrictions are violated, legal recourse is possible. Also, such trails can be publicized as being sponsored by the community, and maps and brochures can be created and published illustrating these trails.
- After determining the owners of land that would be suitable for potential trails or for conservation easements, the owners should be approached in order to get permission for using the land for recreational trails. It is important the landowners be contacted by representatives of the Conservation Commission or Trails Committee who will be able to answer their questions and help them feel comfortable with the issues that may arise.
- Pursuing grants, volunteer labor, local donations, and technical expertise for expansion and maintenance of the open space trail system network.
- Maintaining and constructing trails, as needed - the Trails Committee can rally volunteer trail managers to help.



THE CREATION OF AN OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN



MEETINGS AND TASKS TO CREATE AN OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN

There are a number of simple steps involved with the process of creating such a plan that quickly turn into mountains of follow-up, research, mapping, and re-evaluation! However, do not be dismayed because the end product will be a valuable document that can form the basis for community action on the recommendations detailed in the Plan. In addition, the OSTS Plan could be adopted by the Planning Board as a subsection of the local Master Plan.

This chapter will give you an overview of these broad steps and then fully explain, in conjunction with the documents on the accompanying CD, what to try to accomplish at each meeting. A sample project schedule is included which indicates what should be done between meetings. Note that an extensive amount of work is involved in between meetings and do not get discouraged if you find you need more meetings or time than originally anticipated! You generally want to allow six months to complete the Plan. We encourage you to refer to the CD at the back of this *Guide* that holds a model Open Space Trail System Plan in Word97 which can serve as your model.

The Trails Steering Committee should meet approximately four times to provide review and comment on maps and draft Plans, and to share ideas on how you would like to see your community shape its open space and recreational trail opportunities. Between the meetings, members of the Committee can be asked to assist in writing some descriptions of Class VI roads, trails, and easements.

On the following page is a schedule the CNHRPC developed to plan out the timeframe and tasks of the project. A little extra time to prepare for Meeting 2 or 3 may be required for data collection, major map revisions, and to GPS trails. If you are not working directly with a Regional Planning Commission to help produce your Plan, you may need to revise the task list in order to get these items accomplished:

	Planning Commission Tasks	Trails Steering Committee Tasks
Prepare for Meeting 1 (Month 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare Agenda - Prepare Maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base Map Review (including Class VI Roads) Identification of Existing Trails (add Topo) Identification of Public Lands, Easements, Powerline Corridors, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coordinate a meeting of interested persons
MEETING 1 (by Middle of Month 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss project - Present maps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and correct maps - Q & A about project
Prepare for Meeting 2 (Month 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GPS select trails - Produce corrected Maps - Begin parcel data collection - Produce draft Plan #1 - Prepare agenda 	Within 1 week after Meeting 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return corrected maps to CNHRPC
MEETING 2 (by Middle of Month 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present corrected maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Base Map Topographic Map (new) Public Lands, Easements, & ROW Map Existing Trail System Map - Present draft Plan #1 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and correct maps - Discuss draft Plan #1
Prepare for Meeting 3 (Month 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GPS select trails - Produce draft Existing & Proposed Maps - Continue parcel data collection - Produce draft Plan #2 - Prepare agenda 	Within 2 weeks after Meeting 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return corrected maps to CNHRPC - Submit comments on draft Plan #1 - Submit written descriptions of select lots
MEETING 3 (by Middle of Month 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present new maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unfragmented Lands Map Existing Trail System Map (revise as needed) Proposed Open Space Trail System Map - Present draft Plan #2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Review and correct maps - Review draft Plan #2 - Identify parcels for future linkages - Hold discussions about Recommendations
Prepare for Meeting 4 (Month 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GPS select trails - Final parcel data collection - Produce final draft maps - Prepare Agenda 	Within 2 weeks after Meeting 3: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit comments on draft Plan #2 - Submit written descriptions of select lots
MEETING 4 (by Middle of Month 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present final draft maps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Trail System Map Proposed Open Space Trail System Map - Present final draft Plan #3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold discussions about Recommendations - Hold discussions about Implementation - Final review and correction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing Trail System Map Proposed OSTs Map Draft Plan #3
FINALIZE THE PLAN (Month 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce final Plan and maps - Provide color Plans to Steering Committee - Provide an original of Plan for Town copying - Provide a set of display-sized maps 	Within 2 weeks after Meeting 4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit any final corrections
IMPLEMENT THE PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide support and information as requested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Initiate Recommendations in Plan - Adopt as an element of the Master Plan

WHAT IS ACCOMPLISHED AT EACH MEETING

The accompanying CD contains meeting agendas for five separate meetings. Included with the agendas are notes as to what should be done and discussed during each agenda item. You may find that you need more meetings to produce the Plan, as we did in several communities. In this case, the tasks just get spread out a little bit more but the process should remain the same. Try to have draft Plans available to people in advance of the meetings. Feel free to exchange activities at each meeting to suit your community's needs - the end product should still yield the same Open Space Trail System Plan.

It is important that leadership is established by a "Chair" or "facilitator" to take the lead on the project. This person should be present at and chair all meetings, make sure the public is informed of the activities, direct the efforts and follow-up with tasks, and feel comfortable delegating assignments to volunteers.

The initial meeting, the **Open Space Trail System Plan Orientation Meeting**, stirs up interest, answers questions, and builds a Trails Steering Committee. This meeting should familiarize interested people with the idea of an Open Space Trail System Plan and outline the process to create one. Partnerships are created (a Memorandum of Understanding is included on the CD if you need to partner with an outside organization for services) and an understanding of the project is gained.

Meeting 1 is the first official meeting of the Trails Steering Committee. During this meeting, those present should already be familiar with the concept of the OSTs Plan, and the details of how to create the final Plan should be discussed. Hand out the project schedule as well as the "Steps to Creating a Municipal Trails System" flyer which is included on the CD. A group breakout session will identify Class VI Roads, existing trails, and public lands and rights-of-way on the draft BASE, the PUBLIC LANDS, EASEMENTS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY and EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM GIS maps. At the end of the meeting, you can set the dates for the next three meetings and discuss the assignments for the second meeting. If needed, people can take home the maps to make further corrections. All assignments should be returned to the designated "assignment collector" within one week. You may also want to have a separate "map correction collector," who serves as your local mapping guru for the duration of the project.

Meeting 2 is an interactive work session. You should have the first draft of the Plan available and be prepared to go over the beginning chapters thoroughly: the Introduction, the Inventory of Public Lands, Easements, and Rights-of-Way and the Inventory of Existing Trails Chapters. Ask for corrections, suggestions, and volunteers to fill in the blanks and write descriptions of each of the inventoried elements. Present revised drafts of the BASE MAP, TOPOGRAPHIC MAP (new), the PUBLIC LANDS, EASEMENTS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY MAP and the EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM MAP and ask the Trails Steering Committee for corrections. Ask for volunteers to gather parcel information for the appropriate sections of the OSTs Plan (map/lot number, acreage, current use, etc). Assignments should be handed in within two weeks.

Meeting 3 is the most important because the Trails Steering Committee will begin to formulate recommendations and propose trail linkages and open space protection areas based on the data that have been collected up to this point. This meeting should begin with a quick review of each Inventory Chapter in the new draft of the Plan and the six maps of the Plan. In addition, the Open Space and Recreation Chapter should be discussed and volunteers should be solicited to collect the data and to write sections on important resources in your community. Two of these maps will be new to the group: the UNFRAGMENTED LANDS MAP, and the PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM MAP. Fill in any missing descriptions throughout the Plan, and identify additional trail locations on the revised EXISTING TRAILS MAP. Review the Proposed Open Space Trail System Chapter and the draft PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM MAP and determine the recommendations for each “opportunity” within your Town. Identify the proposed trail linkages and areas to consider for future protection on the map. Assignments should be handed in to the assignment collector within two weeks.

At **Meeting 4**, present the final draft of the Plan and maps, and discuss all chapters requiring information, focusing on the recommendations in the Proposed Open Space Trail System Chapter. During this discussion, ask for any additional corrections or changes that need to be made before the Plan and its six maps are finalized. You should also discuss the next step of the Plan, implementation, which will occur after the final Plan is produced. This important but often neglected step could help prevent your Open Space Trail System Plan from sitting on a shelf and collecting dust. Make arrangements for printing and distributing the Plan to Trails Steering Committee members by a certain date, and have extra copies for other interested parties and municipal Boards/Commissions. Final corrections should be handed in within two weeks.

Getting people excited about implementation, such as setting a first meeting to discuss the newly published Plan, is a sure way to get the word out about this important new recreational and open space tool.

WHAT TO DO BETWEEN MEETINGS

While holding meetings is very important for coordinating efforts and divvying up assignments, what happens in between meetings will determine the success of your Plan. Using the OSTS Plan methodology, a great deal of data collection needs to be undertaken for each of the parcels that abuts a Class VI road; contains a powerline, railroad, or utility easement; permits certain trail or recreational uses; has a conservation easement on it or is preserved in some manner; or is a publicly owned land.

As a place to start, a printout of the model OSTS Plan included on the CD should be helpful to have on hand to guide your research and understanding of the methodology of the Plan. Next, copies of your municipality's tax assessor's index, alphabetized both by last name and by map number, are essential to obtain. A digital database which you can use in Excel or in another spreadsheet program is ideal because it saves paper and time. One or two people are needed to do this extensive inventory work; they can work on separate sections of the Plan at one time. Having a hard copy of the current set of tax maps is important because they often show where the powerline rights-of-way fall and sometimes indicate which parcels have easements on them or are in current use.

You should try to have a trained GIS person to provide assistance to your Steering Committee. Access to the software program ArcView and GRANIT (Geographically Referenced Analysis Information and Transfer System) data layers will be essential in order to properly produce and graphically depict the Plan. Throughout the course of the project timeline, updates to existing GIS data layers will need to be created and presented for display. In addition, if you want to accurately locate trails you have identified on the ground, most of the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) and the NH Office of State Planning own a high-resolution GPS unit that may be available for training sessions and use by local municipalities. Several offices of the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension also have GPS units which may be available for use. Although GIS is not absolutely required for the production of your Plan, it is very highly recommended.

An important note about Regional Planning Commission (RPC) assistance:

All RPCs in New Hampshire have access to GIS technology, although fees for their services will vary as will their ability to fit in your request for assistance, within your project timeframe, into their own work programs. Please consult with your RPC prior to undertaking the OSTS Plan project if you want to use their GIS or organizational capabilities.

Descriptions of individual properties, such as conservation easements, can add substance to the OSTs Plan. Class VI roads, which can offer a tremendous opportunity for both recreation and for open space, should be described by the residents who know them best. Throughout the model OSTs Plan on the CD, you will notice ample opportunities to describe the locations you inventory. This information will come in handy when developing and implementing your recommendations. These descriptions should be delegated by the facilitator or Chair of the Trails Steering Committee at the meetings in order to spread out the workload. Just as importantly, as in the mapping process, one person should be the “collector” of assignments who is responsible for entering them into the current draft. Site walks to key locations are especially fun, and bring along a digital camera! Choose a strategic photo to place on the cover of your Plan.

You should always obtain permission of the landowner before placing their private trails in your Plan or walk on their land to GPS these trails. In particular, winter-use snowmobile trails are tricky to GPS because typically only winter-use of the trails has been granted; although some landowners are enthusiastic to open their trails in warmer months, some may permit winter-use only. Most often, winter-use trails are snowmobile trails being maintained and groomed by area snowmobile clubs which have obtained landowner permission to use and maintain these trails for snowmobile use only. It is wise to work with your local snowmobile club to get a feel for how the landowners will react to having their property listed and generally mapped for the Plan. If there are any concerns at all, it is a good practice to defer to the wishes of the landowner in any situation that may arise. More landowner sensitivity issues are discussed in the Model OSTs Plan.

The existing trails or right-of-way opportunities and the proposed trails and areas to preserve as identified in the Plan should also be reflected on the maps for easy reference using a simple key system. CNHRPC used circled numbers to represent existing components of a trail system and squared letters to represent proposed components of an open space trail system:



These keys were placed in their respective locations in both the Plan and on the maps. See **Pembroke's Map 6** at the back of this *Guide* for an example.

All this being said, the data layers (and then the map series) will be critical for interpretation of descriptions and possibilities for new trails, trail linkages, and areas to preserve from future development. Examinations of the maps will provide new insight into what assets your town has to work with and what challenges may lie ahead.

RECOMMENDED MAPPING FOR YOUR PLAN

The map series that accompanies your Plan should consist of a BASE MAP, a TOPOGRAPHIC MAP, an UNFRAGMENTED LANDS MAP, a PUBLIC LANDS, EASEMENTS, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY MAP, an EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM MAP, and a PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM MAP. An example of the last map of this series, Map 6, is located in the back of this *Guide*. We used the town of Pembroke's PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM MAP to represent what your map could look like. The most important map in the series, it shows all features that were inventoried and depicts all proposals.

Map 1, the BASE MAP, should illustrate the rivers, streams, wetlands and water bodies of your community; the road names, their classifications, and locations; and the political boundaries of the municipality. This map provides a basic overview of your town or city. These base layers are illustrated on each map in the series.

Map 2, the TOPOGRAPHIC MAP, adds the United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic contour lines, which can be very useful when considering locations of future trails.

Map 3, the UNFRAGMENTED LANDS MAP, depicts the areas of your community that are not fragmented with Class I, II, or V roadways. This is an important feature to show because it might identify areas to protect during the recommendation stage of the Plan. Unfragmented lands provide wildlife habitat that is undisturbed by development, so wildlife can move about freely without being endangered by traffic and heavy development. Because of the nature of Class VI roads, they do not fragment the land as much as the other classes of roads as they are not as heavily used.

Map 4, the PUBLIC LANDS, EASEMENTS, AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY MAP, shows the locations of town-, state-, and federally owned lands, utility corridors, railroad rights-of-way, and land protected by conservation easements. This map also highlights Class VI roads, designated scenic roads, and discontinued or abandoned roads. This map can help the Trails Steering Committee visualize potential areas where open space protection and/or trails could be possible and beneficial by showing the location of such elements in relation to the land available for public use.

Map 5, the EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM MAP, shows the location of existing trails within the Town, including trails on public property, snowmobile trails, and trails on private property (subject to landowner permission to include in Plan). For this map, a Global Positioning System (GPS) technology may be employed to record the actual location of some of the trails. This map also shows locations of powerline corridors, Class VI roads, railroad corridors, and the like, all of which can potentially be incorporated into the Plan as trail linkages.

This small symbol was placed next to a trail's description in the Plan to indicate when the trail was located with GPS equipment. 

Map 6, the PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM MAP, is the product of all of the research and recommendations that went into the Plan. This map shows the roadways, existing trails, rights-of-way, easements, topography, hydrography, and public lands, along with the proposed open space protection areas and trail linkages that the Trails Steering Committee recommends. Note that all of the existing and proposed trails and the areas to protect from future development are marked with a circled number  or squared letter  which corresponds to the appropriate sections of the OSTs Plan.

A set of color 11"x17" maps should be incorporated into the back of each Plan you produce. In addition, you may want to produce a 24"x36" display set for planning purposes as you work toward accomplishing your recommendations.

YOUR NOTES HERE:



IMPLEMENTATION OF YOUR OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM PLAN



FOLLOW THROUGH WITH YOUR PLAN

After the inventorying and recommendation phases of your Open Space Trail System Plan, what follows is perhaps the most difficult and time-consuming aspect of any plan or study - implementation. All of the good ideas and worthy efforts that went into producing the Plan will be put to the test when attempting to get the public to agree with and assist with what the plan is recommending.

The ideas presented in the Plan may be even more challenging to implement due to its reliance on the cooperation of private landowners. Each identified trail will generally abut numerous properties; when considering the proposed open space trail system as a whole, the prospect of obtaining permission from all landowners can be daunting. The key to remember is that all good things take time to build; creating a trail system or preserving open space will require patience and perseverance. Finding funding is always challenging for land acquisitions and easements. The model OSTS Plan lists many different ways of funding projects in its Implementation Measures Chapter. The Sources of Technical Assistance on the following pages can help point you in the right direction.

Give your implementation a helping hand by scheduling an implementation meeting at the last Trails Steering Committee meeting. Be sure to have bound copies of the final Plan ready to distribute at any implementation meeting you hold. Invite municipal Board or Commission members to attend and provide feedback.

Many different factors and techniques have to be considered when building an open space trail system. The Plan will contain practical suggestions for implementing the recommendations; also, sensitive issues such as landowner liability and trails management should be discussed in order to provide a balanced view of the Open Space Trail System Plan. Appendices accompanying the model Plan offer sample forms and agreements as well as the specific citations from the NH Revised Statutes Annotated (RSAs). In addition, Resource References are listed to help with the implementation of the Plan and to provide further guidance along the way. You may want to tailor the Appendices to fit your community's needs.

CREATE A TRAILS COMMITTEE

A Trails Committee can be established at any time under the umbrella of a municipal body, such as the Conservation Commission. Although it will have no official power, it will have the approval of and be able to make recommendations to the Conservation Commission as its subcommittee. By forming a separate Trails Committee, the specific mission of creating and maintaining a trail system can be accomplished without overwhelming the Conservation Commission's limited time. If you choose, the Committee can be an official committee of the Town through a vote at Town Meeting. In either case, the Trails Committee should decide where to develop trails and what uses of each trail are most appropriate.

Members of the Conservation Commission can be on the Trails Committee, and invite private landowners, other municipal board members, special interest groups (equestrian, snowmobile, mountain biking), local public volunteer organizations (Scouts, Rotary, Lions), schoolteachers, and representatives of businesses to help round out the Trails Committee. The more interests that are represented on the Committee, the more diverse and creative the group will be, and the variety of available resources and contacts will be greater. The Trails Committee will also have the responsibility to rally volunteer trail managers to maintain trails, establish signage, and report problems.

The Committee should meet on a regular basis to coordinate trail happenings. In order to raise public awareness of the existing open space trail system and opportunities, the Trails Committee can also produce a brochure or small guidebook of the trails with descriptions to be distributed to interested parties, hold trail maintenance events, host tours along trails, or sponsor trails naming contests.

The formation of a permanent Trails Committee will be the catalyst for making great projects happen with your new Plan! Contact your local Regional Planning Commission for potential funding sources for projects identified in the Open Space Trail System Plan.

The model OSTS Plan gives the Trails Committee advice on how to follow through with the recommendations of the Plan. It also talks more about landowner concerns, trail maintenance, open space management, and regulatory measures.

SOURCES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Help may be just a phone call away! Do not hesitate to call upon someone who might be able to assist you over any hurdles you encounter as you produce your own Plan or as you begin to implement your Plan. Listed here are the nine Regional Planning Commissions in New Hampshire, the NH Department of Environmental Services, the NH Division of Resources and Economic Development, NH GRANIT, and the NH Office of State Planning. Please be aware that these different resources may require fees for assistance and their timeframe to assist may differ from yours, depending upon the level of help requested. For original guidance and information on producing a municipal Open Space Trail System Plan, please contact the Central NH Regional Planning Commission.

Central New Hampshire Regional Planning Commission

28 Commercial Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 226-6020
(603) 226-6023 (fax)
www.cnhrpc.org

NH Department of Environmental Services

6 Hazen Drive
Concord, NH 03305
(603) 271-3503
www.des.state.nh.us

NH Division of Resources and Economic Development

Trails Bureau
PO Box 1856
172 Pembroke Road
Concord, NH 03302
(603) 271-3254
www.nhparks.state.nh.us/trbureau.html

NH Office of State Planning

2 1/2 Beacon Street
Concord, NH 03301
(603) 271-2155
www.webster.state.nh.us/osp

NH GRANIT

Complex Systems Research Center
Morse Hall
Durham, NH 03824
(603) 862-1792
www.granit.sr.unh.edu

North Country Council, Inc.

107 Glessner Road
Bethlehem, NH 03574
(603) 444-6303
(603) 444-7588 (fax)
www.nccouncil.org

Lakes Region Planning Commission

103 Main Street, Suite #3
Meredith, NH 03253
(603) 279-8171
(603) 279-0200 (fax)
www.lakesrpc.org

Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission

77 Bank Street
Lebanon, NH 03766-1704
(603) 448-1680
(603) 448-0170 (fax)
www.uvlsrc.org

Southwest Region Planning Commission

20 Central Square, 2nd Floor
Keene, NH 03431
(603) 357-0557
(603) 357-7440 (fax)
www.swrpc.org

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission

438 Dubuque Street
Manchester, NH 03102
(603) 669-4664
(603) 669-4350 (fax)
www.snhpc.org

Nashua Regional Planning Commission

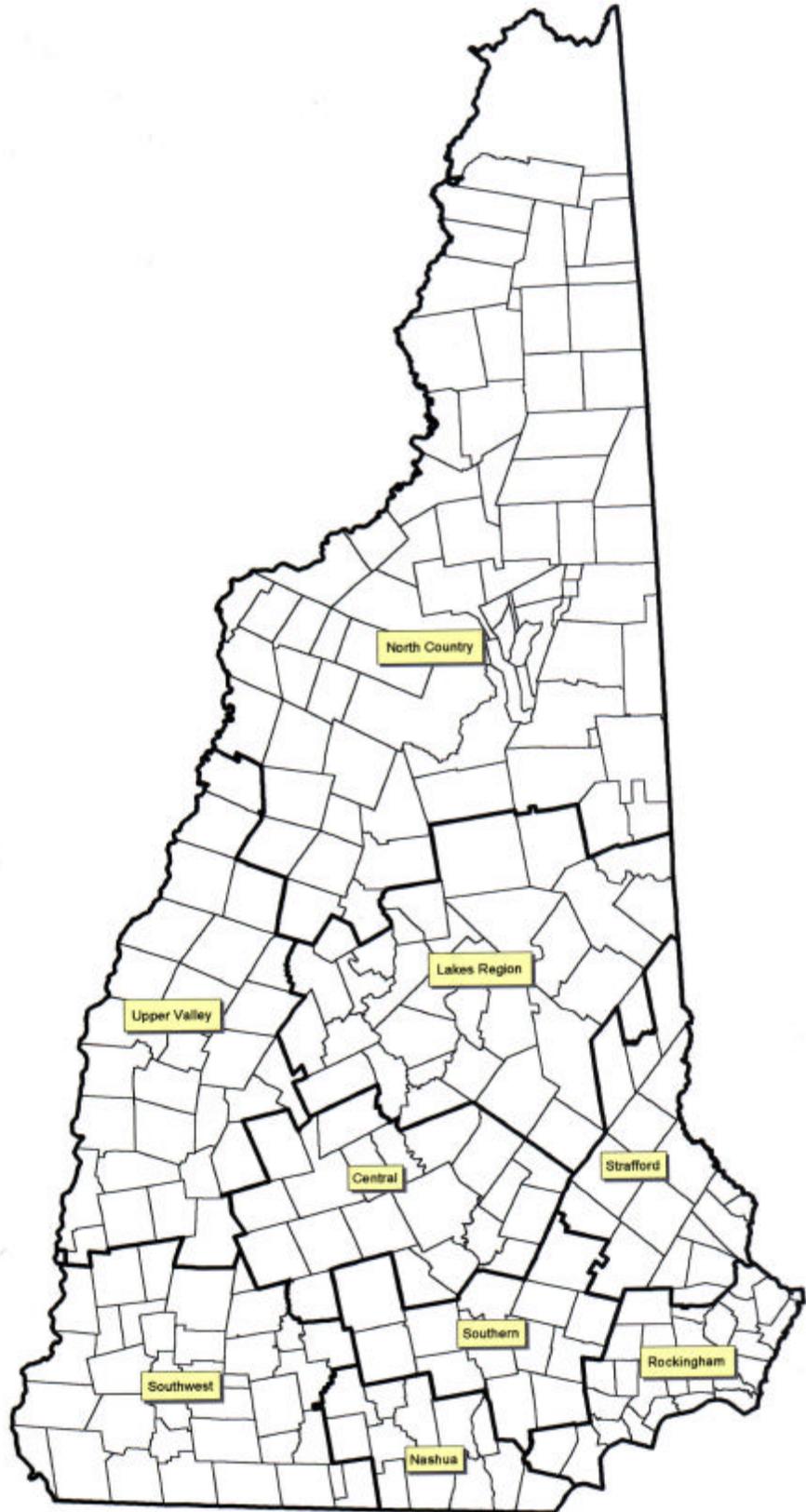
115 Main Street
PO Box 847
Nashua, NH 03061
(603) 883-0366
www.nashuarpc.org

**Rockingham Planning
Commission**

156 Water Street
Exeter, NH 03833
(603) 778-0885
(603) 778-9183 (fax)
www.rpc-nh.org

**Strafford Regional
Planning Commission**

2 Ridge Street, Suite 4
Dover, NH 03820
(603) 742-2523
(603) 742-7986 (fax)
www.strafford.org

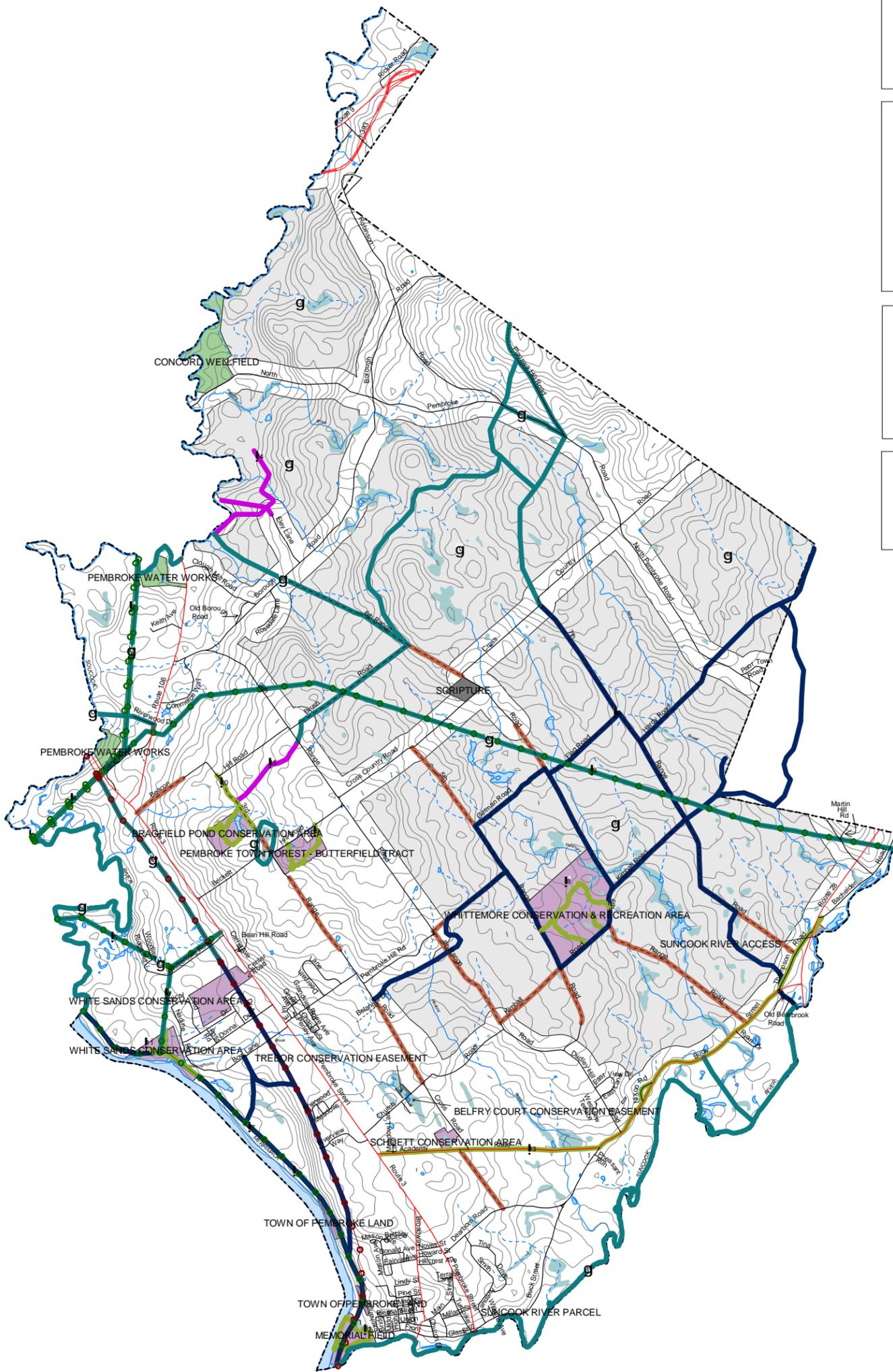


PROPOSED OPEN SPACE TRAIL SYSTEM MAP (MAP 6) FOR THE TOWN OF PEMBROKE



Town of Pembroke

Proposed Open Space Trail System Map



Base Legend

- Class I & II Secondary State Highways
- Class V Town Maintained Roads
- Class VI Town Unmaintained Roads
- Other Roads (Private, etc)
- Political Boundary
- USGS Contours, 20'
- Rivers and Streams
- Intermittent Streams
- Water Bodies
- Wetlands

Existing Trails or Rights-of-Way

- Class VI Unmaintained Road
- Abandoned or Discontinued Road
- Trail on Public Land
- Private Trail on Private Land
- Snowmobile Trail
- Public Service of NH Powerline Corridor
- Gas Line

Protected or Publicly Owned Lands

- Conservation Easement
- State-Owned Land
- Town-Owned Land
- Private Land Providing a Public Service

Proposed Open Space Trail System

- Proposed Trail Linkage
- Proposed Open Space Protection

Scale 1" = 4000' (1:48000)



This map was produced by the
 Central New Hampshire
 Regional Planning Commission
 28 Commercial Street
 Concord, NH 03301
 phone (603) 226-6020
 web www.cnrpc.org

for the Town of Pembroke through the Year-Four Regional Environmental Planning Program (REPP) funded by the NH Department of Environmental Services.

Data Sources for the Pembroke Open Space Trail System Plan Map Series:
 Town of Pembroke Tax Maps; National Wetlands Inventory 1990;
 USGS quadrangles through NH GRANIT (1:24000);
 Society for the Protection of NH Forests (1:24000);
 CNHRPC; and the Pembroke Trails Steering Committee.
 Corrections of existing layers by the Town of Pembroke
 and CNHRPC.

July 2001

Map 6

DISCLAIMER:
 This map is meant to portray those trails and rights-of-way which are generally thought of within the Town of Pembroke as being currently used as recreational trails, with the exception of the Powerline Corridor. This map should not be used to assume landowner permission has been granted for public use of any or all of the trails or rights-of-way which fall on private land. This map should be used in conjunction with the accompanying Open Space Trail System Plan, 2001. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the Town of Pembroke at 485-4747 or to the CNHRPC at 226-6020.