

TOWN OF BROOKLINE

STRATEGIC LAND ACQUISITION PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

05 October 2011



*Brookline
Conservation
Commission*

Background

The *Brookline Conservation Commission (BCC)* has been participating in the Regional Environmental Planning Process (REPP) since June 1998. The purpose of the program is to inventory the natural and cultural resources in our community in order to provide the state a comprehensive list of conservation priorities. Priority resources identified by the *BCC* include:

Undeveloped land surrounding Lake Potanipo.

Protect watershed (North Stream and Scabbard Mill Brook) and highly productive aquifer (1 of 3 in Brookline), maintain u vista, preserve Ice House history.

The Stonehouse, the Cemetery in the Woods, and surrounding undeveloped lands.

Unique landmarks of geologic/historical importance; create connection with Beaver Brook; protect watershed for 2 of 3 highly productive aquifers

Hobart-Fessenden Woods

To expand and enhance the open space on the eastern side of route 130 known as Hobart-Fessenden Woods. Currently there are approximately 310 acres of open land that makes up this area.

Whitcomb-Bross Forest Area

To expand and enhance the open space on the western side of town along the Mason town line and the Ben Farnsworth-Dupaw Gould area. Currently there are approximately 294 acres of open land that makes up this area.

Palmer Bartell -Hutchinson Hill Area

This forest is comprised of a large tract of land north of North Mason road and west of route 13. There are many wetlands and aquifer recharge areas that contribute to Potanipo Pond and the Nashua River Watershed. We continue to target pieces of property that will protect this aquifer and recreation area. Currently there are approximately 425 acres of open space land that makes up this area

Melendy Morrill Area

This forest is comprised of a large tract of land east of Melendy Pond and bordering Hollis. This is largely forested land protecting the back side of Melendy pond and connecting to large tracts of Hollis open space. We continue to target pieces of property that will protect this aquifer and recreation area. Currently there are approximately 472 acres of open space land that makes up this area

Criteria Used to Prioritize

The *BCC* used the following criteria to identify our priority resources:

- Sensitive and/or unique resource/habitat that is currently unprotected.
- Resource is threatened (within 1-5 years).
- Consistent with Master Plan goals.
- Provides educational/recreational opportunities.
- Serves as greenway/corridor that connects to existing conservation land.

REPP - Phase I

The first phase of the REPP was completed in November 1998. The Phase I data was submitted to the newly formed *Land and Community Heritage Commission (LCHC)*. The *LCHC* was established under **Senate Bill 493** “to determine the feasibility of a new public-private partnership to conserve New Hampshire’s priority natural, historical and cultural resources.”

In January 1999, the *LCHC* recommended that the State create such a partnership and establish annual funding for the program. The *LCHC* also recommended that communities embark on a second phase of the REPP to refine the data assembled in Phase I; identify the HIGHEST priority resource in each community and gather a comprehensive set of data on that resource.

Status

The *BCC* has strived to reach a goal of protecting at least 25% of the total land mass in town as open space forest and watershed. Based on that goal we will need to protect approximately 3000 acres of land. By the end of 2010 we had protected over 1800 acres of land and natural resources.

Strategic Land Acquisition

Our current strategy focuses on filling in “puzzle pieces” that abut or create continuity with the large tracts of property currently owned. Some of these are smaller tracts that open connectivity with larger pieces of land, and others are larger pieces that enhance current open spaces and forested land.

Options for Brookline Landowners

Environmentally concerned landowners of Brookline have many options for preserving their land or prohibiting development on their land. Many of these options result in federal tax deductions or local property tax abatement. Options include:

- Land donations to the *BCC* or land trust.
- “Bargain sale” (*i.e.* sell land below fair market value).
- Conservation easements.
- Remainder interests.
- Charitable trusts and bequests.
- Restrictive covenants in deeds to the land.

About The BCC

The *Brookline Conservation Commission* is a board of Brookline residents consisting of up to seven full members and any number of alternates. Residents who are interested in land acquisition policy or other conservation issues/projects are encouraged to become part of the *BCC*.

Acquisitions by the BCC (Gifts and Purchases) through 2010:

E-9-23, H-126-1, K-69
H-101, H-127, C-13
B-27, D-21, D-22
B-4, B-68, B-12
B-75, B-74, C-30
B-98, B-22, B-25
H-68, C-45, B-95
C-26, C-48, J-51
K-102, D-4, F-109
B-73, C-25, C-49
J-30-2-5, B-14, H-67
H-144, H-145, H-149
F-110, F-63, F-158
F-107, B-34, B-35
F-111, G-28

These acquisitions total nearly 1000 acres of new open space land.

In addition to these acquisitions, the *BCC* was instrumental in securing numerous conservation easements during the 1980s.