

APPENDIX C: ACCOMPLISHMENTS UNDER THE 2006-2010 OPEN SPACE PLAN

This appendix describes open-space related accomplishments made by the Town of Ipswich since the approval of the last open space and recreation plan in January 2006. The following list covers achievements large and small made between 2005 and 2012. A five-year plan was completed in 2006 and a two-year update was completed and approved in 2010. The Town and the Open Space Committee are proud of these accomplishments and hope to report a similar list at the conclusion of its 2013-2020 plan. The achievements are grouped by subject matter according to the 2006 goal to which they are related.

GOAL 1: PRESERVE THE HISTORIC AND SCENIC CHARACTER OF THE TOWN

- The Agriculture Commission was established in 2005 by a vote of Town Meeting, concluding the efforts of an exploratory agricultural committee.
- The report, “Analysis of Ipswich Agriculture and Agricultural Land,” also known as the Ag Study, was published in January 2010 after a year-long study completed by a consultant and funded by the Town’s Open Space, Recreation and Water Supply Protection Fund.
- The Town passed a Right to Farm bylaw in the fall of 2010.
- The Agricultural Study Implementation Committee (ASIC) was formed in 2011 to carry out the recommendations of the Ag Study. This group worked for a period of 18 months and has since reported conclusions and passed on action items to various town boards, most directly to the Agriculture Commission. Several subcommittees met with farmers on multiple occasions to discuss general agricultural issues.
- The Town amended the Great Estates Preservation Bylaw in October 2012 to encourage permanent conservation outcomes for Great Estate properties by making it possible for the property owners to preserve portions of their land without losing their eligibility to be developed as a Great Estate in the future.
- Five more scenic roads were designated at Special Town Meeting in 2009: Linebrook, (Howe Street to Leslie Road), Mile Lane, Old Right Road (Route 1 to Linebrook), Paradise Road, and Plains Road.
- The Green Space Preservation Development District passed at Special Town Meeting in 2008, a zoning bylaw that affects three large parcels (including the Paradise Road gravel quarry). The new bylaw’s intent is laid out in seven points, several of which are relevant to open space (page 98 in the October 2011 edition of the zoning bylaw).
- The Town participated in the Essex County scenic byways planning project, which resulted in the preservation of several parcels important to this goal. See full list in Goal 4.

GOAL 2: PROTECT AND ENHANCE WATER RESOURCES

- In October 2008, the Town passed the Stormwater bylaw establishing requirements and procedures to control stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution from new development, in part by prohibiting non-stormwater discharges into municipal storm drains. The bylaw has since been amended and regulations adopted.
- The first Open Space Residential Design project, Partridgeberry Place, was built in Ipswich in 2006. The project preserves 74 percent (28 acres) as open space and uses Low Impact Development (LID) to demonstrate an innovative approach to stormwater management
- In June 2008, the Town purchased the 19-acre Lynch farm on Linebrook Road for the primary purpose of drinking water supply protection for the Bull Brook Reservoir. The acquisition cost was split between the Town's Open Space Bond funds and an award from DEP's Water Supply Protection Grant Program. The acquisition also helped meet scenic land and agricultural preservation goals, and preserved an important trail link between Willowdale State Forest and the Town's Prospect Hill water supply protection lands.
- In the fall of 2011 solids handling equipment at the wastewater treatment plant was upgraded to improve sludge dewatering and overall efficiency of the plant during periods of high flow. At the same time, the plant's ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system was replaced with a new, more effective and energy efficient UV disinfection system.
- The Utilities Department has included public education about water conservation in distribution of utility bills and continues a program to sell discounted rain barrels.

GOAL 3: PROTECT AND MANAGE OTHER CRITICAL NATURAL RESOURCES

- In January 2007, the town acquired 85.5 acres of undeveloped land on Great Neck from the Proprietors of Great Neck, Inc. Now known as the Great Neck Conservation Area, the acquisition's primary purpose is to protect sensitive coastal wetlands and wildlife habitat critical to migratory birds. The Great Neck Conservation Area is divided into eight parcels, the centerpiece of which is the 67.5-acre Core Parcel beginning at the fork of North Ridge and Little Neck Roads. Trail access to the parcel was being explored as of 2013. The Clark Pond overlook, the first access point, was completed in the fall of 2011. (See Goal 5.)
- The Ipswich Mills Dam, was the subject of preliminary dam removal studies during 2011 and 2012.
- In 2007 the Conservation Commission conducted a hydrological survey of lower Miles River from Myopia Hunt Club to its confluence with the Ipswich River. Impeded flows resulting from man-made obstructions (aging culverts and bridges), beaver activity and heavy vegetation have created persistent high water conditions along sections of the Miles River. Ipswich is part of the Miles River Collaborative, an effort by conservation volunteers and officials from Beverly, Hamilton, and Wenham to remedy the problems. Improvements to some culverts in Hamilton have been made. As of 2012 the collaborative was inactive. The Conservation

Commission has required installation of flood control measures along Saltonstall Brook in the vicinity of Powder House Village, and several flow control devices have been installed to address beaver-caused backwater problems.

GOAL 4: PRESERVE SIGNIFICANT LAND FOR OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

In addition to the parcels listed as protected in **GOALS 2** and **3** above, the following actions were taken.

- The Town worked with the Trust for Public Land to negotiate a 247-acre conservation project on one of the highest priority properties for land protection in Ipswich. The Maplecroft Farm, located on and visible from Essex Road, one of the Town’s scenic gateways, was protected through a combination of conservation restrictions and an agricultural protection restriction, in partnership with DCR, DAR, and the Essex County Greenbelt Association. The property also has a trail easement for public access held by the Essex County Trails Association. The Town contributed \$2.07 million from the Open Space Bond to the \$5.1 million project, which closed in May 2010.
- In 2011 the Town expanded the Open Space Bond by approving an additional \$5 million authorization for the purpose of open space acquisitions and for costs related to development of properties for recreational uses.
- In December 2006, the town purchased the Shady Creek Conservation Area, 44 acres of forested uplands and wetlands, including a half mile of frontage along the lower Ipswich River. Providing critical habitat to a variety of wildlife species, the property includes several vernal pools that sustain amphibians unable to breed in any other type of wetlands. Trailhead access to the Shady Creek Conservation Area is located at the end of Colonial Drive.
- In 2012 the Town was granted a conservation restriction on 26.6 acres belonging to Eugene Pelletier, Jr., off Pineswamp Road for the purpose of water supply and wildlife habitat protection. The Town has plans for developing a trail easement across the property connecting trails on the town-owned Turkey Hill Conservation Area to land owned by the Hamilton-Wenham Open Lands Trust which loops back to Pineswamp Road. There was no cost to the Open Space Bond for this acquisition.
- The Athletic Fields Study Committee (AFSC) formed in 2004 issued reports in 2007 and 2010 on its findings related to identifying the need for additional athletic fields in town. The committee advised that the Town should add between eight and ten full-size, multipurpose fields to alleviate an existing shortage causing scheduling conflicts and field overuse. The committee has put a premium on adding fields located on town-owned land to avoid the uncertainties that come with leasing from private landowners. To that purpose, the AFSC and Open Space Committee have investigated several private parcels for acquisition, although no purchases were completed by year end 2012. As of 2012, the AFSC considered converting the high school stadium field to artificial turf among its options. The committee continues to meet every other month.

- Several Stewardship plans were developed, including those for the following conservation areas: Linebrook Woods (October 2006), Great Neck (June 2007), Shady Creek (June 2007), and Turkey Hill (November 2011). The Great Neck and Shady Creek plans were not yet formally approved by the Board of Selectmen as of year end 2012. Such stewardship plans inventory plant and animal life on the properties, assess the overall health of the natural environment, prescribe active and/or passive management activities, and detail public access amenities, rules and prohibitions.
- The Town’s GIS Steering Committee worked with a consultant in 2012 and 2013 to update all local critical map data (roads, parcels, open space, buildings, etc.), and consequently improve the maps that are available to the public. Part of this effort includes an on-line mapping program, which is located on the Town’s website.
- The Lynch triangle parcel, an inholding (private land within the boundaries of public lands) in Willowdale State Forest, was acquired by DCR in 2007 to protect habitat and trails.
- The open space bond administrator routinely seeks partnerships for funding purposes with state and federal agencies, and organizations such as the Essex County Greenbelt Association.
- On average, for every open space bond dollar spent by the town, a dollar of external funding was raised via individual donations, from project partners and/or from outside grants to project partners.

GOAL 5: ENHANCE RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES APPROPRIATE AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AGE GROUPS

- In the fall of 2011, the town completed construction of a wildlife viewing platform on Clark Pond and access was opened to the public in January 2012. The platform was built by volunteers under the direction of the Cemetery & Parks Department. This platform is accessible by wheelchairs, with a seating and large viewing platform to accommodate wheelchairs and others with physical limitations.
- In the fall of 2012, the Open Space Stewardship Coordinator and the town’s Americorps Stewardship Volunteer worked with the Essex County Trail Association and a team of volunteers to complete improvements to a multi-use trail in the town’s water supply protection lands within the Dow Brook conservation area. The trail was relocated away from sensitive wetlands and a boardwalk was built with funding granted from outdoor sporting goods retailer REI. About 170 feet of trail and boardwalk is accessible to people in wheelchairs.



Figure 1 Clark Pond viewing platform

- In 2010, a private source provided funds to update the park design and equipment at Pavilion Beach park. The surface was upgraded to meet accessibility standards, accessible pathways from the road to the equipment were installed, and accessible equipment was added. This provided needed improvements to this area, and the second park in Ipswich with fully accessible play areas.
- The town added athletic fields and made improvements to existing playing fields and playgrounds at the following locations:
 - Second multipurpose field built at Mile Lane Fields in 2007.
 - Third 60-foot baseball diamond built at Green Street Fields in 2007.
 - Rebuilt 90-foot baseball diamond at Bialek Park in 2010.
 - Replaced equipment and rehabilitated Bialek Park playground in 2009.
- In 2010 the town signed a three-and-a-half year lease for use of two soccer fields on the Raymond Fields at Maplecroft Farm.
- In the spring of 2006 the Riverwalk bridge over the Ipswich River opened to the public connecting South Main Street with Union Street and Riverwalk park amenities in and around EBSCO.

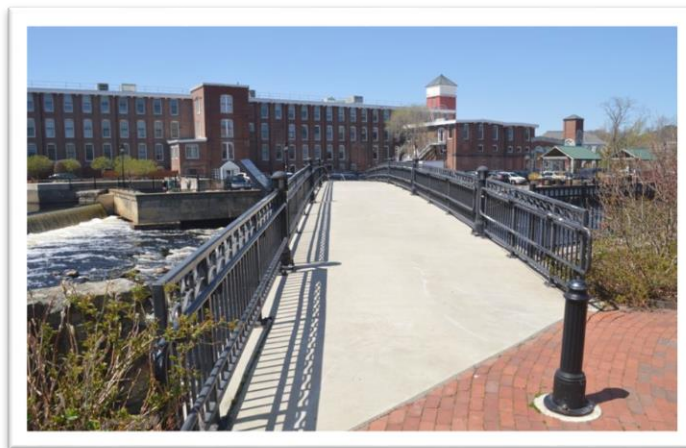


Figure 2 Riverwalk bridge connects South Main and Union Streets by EBSCO

- In 2012, the town worked to develop new public waterfront access to the Ipswich River at 149 County Road by means of a road and trail easement across private property. The access road, scheduled to be built in 2013, runs across land being developed as an assisted living facility to a dock located on property owned by the Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA), providing for enhanced passive recreational opportunities, including pedestrian and equestrian use of the trail and non-motorized boating access to the river.
- In 2012 and 2013, the town completed Massachusetts Department of Transportation-funded roadway and sidewalk improvements on Town Hill around North Main Street, the Ipswich Public Library, the United Methodist Church and First Church.
- In 2009 the town's Bay Circuit Trail Committee produced revised maps of Ipswich's sections of the Bay Circuit Trail.

- In 2011 the Stewardship Coordinator worked with an Eagle Scout and his local scout troop building a one mile loop trail around the perimeter of the Turkey Hill Conservation Area.
- In 2006 the Bay Circuit Trail Committee and Open Space Program coordinated with an Eagle Scout and his local scout troop and volunteers building a trail and three wetland bridge crossings linking the trails on Town watershed lands with Willowdale State Park.

GOAL 6: ENHANCE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS TO TEACH OPEN SPACE VALUES

- The Conservation Commission Educational Program was started in 2011 and produced three videos and a speaker series. The program featured videos and lectures covering a variety of conservation and wildlife topics for the purpose of educating the public on the area’s natural resources and their value as assets to the environmental health and economic well-being of the town and region.
- The Open Space Stewardship Coordinator has worked with schools at the elementary and secondary levels promoting open space education on a number of Town conservation properties including: service projects with high school students trail building at Shady Creek Conservation Area in 2008; planting native species at Great Neck Conservation Area Clark Pond overlook in 2009 and Strawberry Hill in 2011; developing educational environmental signage with elementary students for Dow Brook Conservation Area vernal pools and uplands in 2009; and a property naming contest for Shady Creek Conservation Area in 2007.
- The Open Space Program has sponsored public education environmental programs at the following Town properties covering the following topics; Strawberry Hill and Nichols Field-migratory shore birds and meadow birds; Linebrook Woods Conservation Area- woodland birds; Turkey Hill Conservation Area- upland tree identification.

GOAL 7: PROMOTE A COOPERATIVE AND REGIONAL APPROACH TO OPEN SPACE AND RESOURCE PROTECTION

- During 2011, the Town of Ipswich initiated and fostered establishment of the Great Marsh ACEC Assembly, a collaboration of the five municipalities whose territories include portions of the Great Marsh Area of Critical Environmental Concern (GM ACEC) –Essex, Ipswich, Gloucester, Newbury, and Rowley—to address current and future management of that resource area. The GM ACEC Assembly’s work was funded by a \$15,600 Mass Bays Program Planning Grant secured by the town planning director in 2010. The Assembly was to develop a cooperative resource management strategy (CRMS) for assisting municipalities to effectively address short- and long-term objectives, issues and concerns for and about the Great Marsh ACEC. The Town of Ipswich Planning Department and Conservation Commission spearheaded the Assembly effort in the spring of 2011, inviting the participation of key municipal officials and volunteers in the five Great Marsh ACEC communities, as well as representatives of local conservation and environmental groups. The town contracted with consultants Horsley Witten Group, Inc. to facilitate the discussion process, provide technical

support, and write interim and final reports over a four month period from late summer through fall 2011. Efforts of the group were summarized in the December 2011 report titled “Managing the Great Marsh ACEC - Next Steps? Options for Developing a Resource Management Plan”. The work of the Assembly continued in 2012 through its Steering Committee, with a goal of additional funding in 2013.

- The town maintains ongoing relations with the Essex County Community Foundation, Eight Towns and the Great Marsh (formerly Eight Towns and the Bay), Ipswich River Watershed Association, Essex County Greenbelt Association, The Trustees of Reservations, and Parker River Clean Water Association. The Open Space Committee is also affiliated with the Essex County Open Space Network, sponsored by the Massachusetts Audubon Society.
- The following documents have been posted on the town website: zoning bylaw, Community Development Plan, Green Ring Report, Town Character Statement, open space guidelines, and open space bond program information.
- The Open Space Program has collaborated with Mass Audubon each spring since 2009 coordinating volunteer outings to Town conservation properties conducting Pepperweed pulls in an effort to support Mass Audubon’s attempts at controlling the threat of Pepperweed plant invasion of the Great Marsh.
- In conjunction with MassLIFT Americorp (Massachusetts Land Initiative for Tomorrow – a collaborative effort of regional conservation organizations seeking to increase the pace of land and watershed protection across Massachusetts), the Open Space Program together with Essex County Greenbelt Association shared a Land Steward member for the 2012 program year to assist the respective programs’ conservation land stewardship responsibilities and initiatives.



Figure 3 Dorothy Kerpen Monnelly