Open Space Plan
2011
Fitzwilliam, NH

TOWN OF FITZWILLIAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE
Open Space Plan 2011

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Open Space Plan would not have been possible without the Fitzwilliam citizens who attended and contributed to the Fitzwilliam By Design forum back in 2006, attended the multitude of smaller presentations made before various town organizations since then, or completed the open space surveys. Your interest and input were integral to our efforts.

We also wish to acknowledge the professional support provided by the Monadnock Community Conservation Partnership (MCCP), and particularly the staff of the Monadnock Conservancy, including Pete Throop and Rick Brackett. Without them it's likely this project would have taken much longer.

We also appreciate the assistance of Amanda Stone from the UNH Cooperative Extension Service and Lindsey Webb from NH Fish & Game for their assistance in helping us to understand and interpret natural resources data and maps. Frank Bateman provided the cover design and cover photo for this Plan. The photo was taken from Route 12 at the bridge over Scott Brook looking northeast.

We also want to thank the NH Charitable Foundation for financial support that enabled us to utilize the expertise of the MCCP. This project was also supported by funding from the Fitzwilliam Conservation Fund and the citizens of the town who have repeatedly expressed their support for open space in Fitzwilliam. Thank you.

Members of the Open Space Committee

Dorothy Zug, Chair
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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Introduction

Open space has been directly linked to the quality of life by the residents of Fitzwilliam at a variety of forums, town meetings, and in surveys. It, therefore, becomes important for the town to undertake open space planning to define specifically the types of spaces and resources that contribute to this important community characteristic. This planning effort will then, in turn, provide guidance for the Open Space Committee, the Conservation Commission, and other town boards on how and where to focus future open space protection efforts.

Open space protection can take many forms. Traditionally, such protection has been synonymous with land conservation through purchase for town forests or parks or the establishment of conservation easements on private property (for more information on land conservation see Appendix B). While these individual actions remain important open space protection tools, more recent initiatives in many areas have taken a more holistic approach to maintaining open space.

These initiatives often provide public events, activities, and educational opportunities that focus on open space resources in a community and thus often build a more meaningful relationship between the community and its resources. These activities often take place under the guidance of an Open Space Committee, and that has been the case in Fitzwilliam over the past year and a half. Once formed, open space committees can become a significant local resource for community conservation initiatives, including aiding landowners in the identification of land management strategies and resources available for protecting open space.

This Open Space Plan is Fitzwilliam's first step in undertaking a comprehensive strategy for protecting open space in town. It explains the mechanisms by which information was collected, summarizes that

information, and makes recommendations for actions to be taken over the next few years. Focus Areas are identified to assist the Open Space Committee in directing its efforts and make the most effective use of limited resources. These areas are lands specifically identified as important to town residents, contain specific natural resources that are limited in some way, contain many resources in one location, and/or serve as important connecting corridors for recreation or wildlife. Identification of Focus Areas is not intended to exclude conservation activities in other parts of town or otherwise limit the work of the Committee.

The goals that the Open Space Committee commits itself to are outlined in the Recommendations section of the Plan. They were developed to provide the Committee with direction and to keep the Committee active in the community. Action steps are built into the goals in order to provide a framework for accomplishing the goals. Goals and action steps will evolve as the Committee refines its work and Committee membership changes. Specific strategies for protection of open space are also found in this section.

Over time, the Open Space Plan will be updated, including reviews of the focus areas and goals. As open space is protected or lost to development, shifts in the plan and the Committee's focus will occur. As the needs of the community change, so will the focus of the plan. As a general guideline, the useful life of a plan like this is approximately 5 years. If the goals and focus areas seem to be shifting drastically, it may be necessary to update the Plan before 5 years are up.

Purposes

The Open Space Plan lays out methods by which limited resources can be applied to conservation projects to protect and retain the town's rural character. The role of this document is to assist the citizens of Fitzwilliam in achieving its open space protection and conservation goals. The plan should be used as a guidance tool that focuses conservation related actions and decisions in the town.

Specifically this plan provides:

- A Summary of the Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey
- The location of special places and scenic areas/vistas identified by community members
- A set of conservation focus areas based on community and resource values
- Goals and Implementation Strategies to aid in protection of identified focus areas

This plan presents the results of efforts to identify and analyze the cultural and natural resources in Fitzwilliam as the basis for prioritizing land areas that should receive encouragement and support for conservation. The Open Space Committee seeks, through this plan and its activities, to:

- Protect the character of the town through strategically conserving lands identified as contributing to the community's rural character
- Further Fitzwilliam conservation goals by reaching out to land owners and providing incentives to encourage conservation of high priority lands
- Broaden the community base of understanding about land conservation: what it is, how it works, and why it's valuable

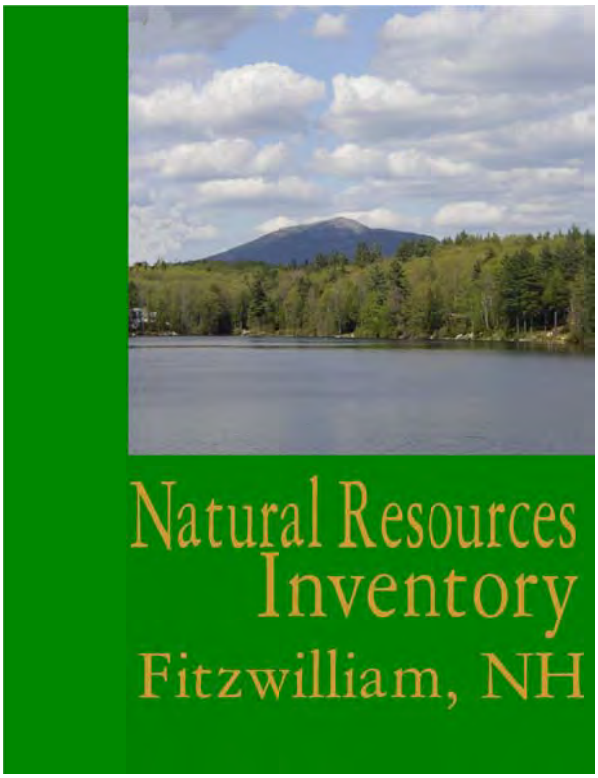
Approach and Process

Developing an Open Space Plan for Fitzwilliam was identified as a top priority at the Town Forum of 2006. This "Tomorrow by Design" event drew many residents to discuss how they would like to see the community evolve in the coming years. Soon after, a subcommittee was formed. The Natural Resources Inventory Committee consisted of some members of the Conservation Commission and several other citizens. The resulting Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) outlined the important resources within Fitzwilliam that support its character and culture. Seen as the first step in a

process for reaching the town's open space goals, the NRI presented recommendations for future work including establishment of an Open Space Committee to identify and prioritize conservation focus areas.

An Open Space Committee was formed as a subcommittee of the Conservation Commission in April of 2010, again made of members from the Conservation Commission and other citizens. The Committee secured the help of the Monadnock Community Conservation Partnership (MCCP) program to provide an organizational framework and facilitate meetings and data collection. Over the next year the Committee reviewed the NRI and other town documents. The Committee also collected input on the important resources and places identified by townspeople.

Major documents that influenced the planning process were the Fitzwilliam Master Plan, the 2009 NRI, and the results from the 2006 Town Forum. Since some of the committee members were not involved in the creation of the NRI, MCCP provided natural resources presentations to help the Committee better understand town resources and where they are located. The MCCP also provided map layers that helped identify where multiple resources occurred in the same location. Areas where four or more resources co-occurred were considered "hot spots" for conservation attention.



During the summer of 2010 the Committee and MCCP developed the Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey to gather information from town residents. The Committee attended regular meetings of the Select Board and Planning Board as well as local clubs and groups including the Laurel Lake Association, Historical Society, and Garden Club, among others. Members also hosted an information booth at town events to collect more surveys. The survey was also distributed with the November 2010 town newsletter that went out to all town residents.

Survey results were shared with the community through the March 2011 town newsletter as well as through a poster display at the 2011 Town Meeting. The poster display was then moved to the library for two months. The survey and raw data collected can be viewed in Appendix B.

In January of 2011, Amanda Stone from the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension and Lindsey Webb from NH Fish and Game presented information on the NH Wildlife Action Plan. They provided a framework for the committee to identify wildlife priority areas based on habitat maps and local knowledge. A similar process was used to identify water and soil resources in the following months.

After compiling all this information, the Committee identified "focus areas" for conservation (Appendix A). These focus areas, distributed across town, were identified as important by community members and/or exhibited the highest concentrations of natural resources. The Committee and MCCP then produced the Open Space Plan summarizing the characteristics of the focus areas and laying out goals for conserving open space in Fitzwilliam.

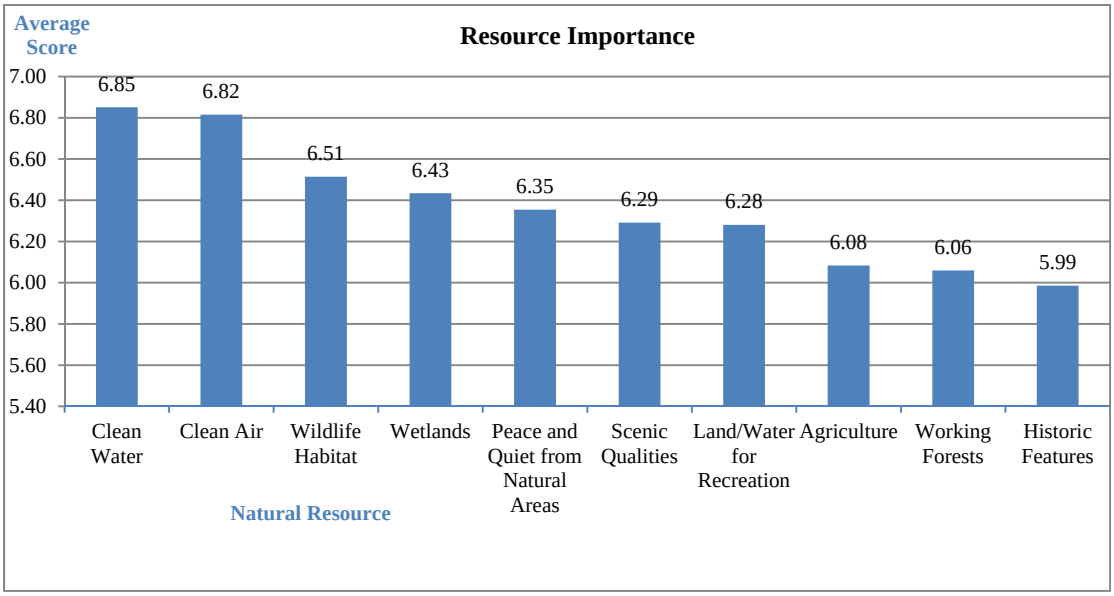
FINDINGS

Results of the Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey

A total of 212 people completed the Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey. This is almost 10% of all town residents and represents a high rate of return for surveys of this type. The survey asked participants to complete three activities. First, to rate the importance of different types of natural resources, ranging from clean air and water to historic features and scenic areas.

Second, to answer the question, "What makes the Town of Fitzwilliam such a unique place to live?" Third, to identify and rank (1=high; 5 = low) their top five favorite places in town and mark them on a map that was provided.

Ranking the importance of natural resources (part 1) proved to be a difficult task. The overwhelming response was that *all* of the resources were valuable in contributing to Fitzwilliam's unique character and quality of life. On a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being low and 7 being high, most people circled 7 for all of the resources. Resources and their average values included clean water (6.85), clean air (6.82), wildlife habitat (6.51), wetlands (6.43), peace and quiet from natural areas (6.35), scenic qualities (6.29), land and water for recreation (6.28), agriculture (6.08), working forests (6.06), and historic features (5.99).



Of 212 survey responses, 155 included written responses in part two. Many respondents cited multiple reasons for Fitzwilliam being a unique and beautiful place to live. The Committee grouped responses into four major categories including the quality of life and aesthetics of the town, cultural/built environment of the town, natural resource values of the town, and specific places in town. Factors related to the quality of life and the aesthetics of town, such as the sense of community, scenic areas, rural character and recreational opportunities were mentioned 173 times. Factors associated with the cultural/built environment in town including the historic buildings, quaint New England village, school, library, and careful development came up 117 times. Natural features such as lakes, forests,

development came up 117 times. Natural features such as lakes, forests, wildlife, and quarries were cited 84 times. Specific places in Fitzwilliam were identified 21 times and included Laurel Lake, the Pinnacle, and Rhododendron State Park, among others.

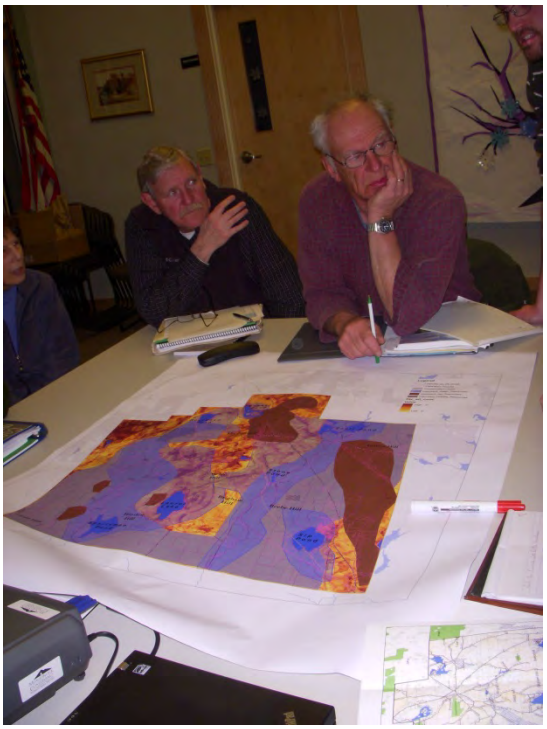
Of the 12 locations identified on the map in part 3 of the survey (Little Monadnock Mountain area, the Pinnacle area, Gap Mountain lowlands, Fullam Hill area, Brigham and Webb Hill area, Grant Hill area, Rockwood Pond watershed, Sip Pond watershed, Laurel Lake watershed, Kemp Brook, Scott and Priest brooks, and an Other category), 5 locations appeared most often. These included the Laurel Lake watershed, Little Monadnock Mountain area, the Pinnacle area, Rockwood Pond watershed, and the Gap Mountain lowlands. Of the 212 responses, 163 people selected Laurel Lake with an average score of 1.94 (a low score indicates a high ranking). Seven other places also had relatively high average scores, but were identified by fewer people. The top five places appeared to most survey respondents across town to be important to the character of Fitzwilliam. The second grouping of places seemed most important to individuals living near those areas. The survey instrument, raw data, and the summary data can be found in Appendix C.

Map Location - Based on Dot Placement Locations (1 = Highest Priority to 5 = lowest identified priority)	**#**	**AVG**
I - Laurel Lake Watershed	163	1.94
A - Little Monadnock Mountain Area	155	2.64
B - The Pinnacle Area	115	2.84
G - Rockwood Pond Watershed	99	2.71
C - Gap Mountain Lowlands	95	3.60
E - Brigham and Webb Hill Area	71	3.25
H - Sip Pond Watershed	48	3.81
J - Kemp Brook	47	3.45
D - Fullam Hill Area	40	3.48
K - Scott and Priest Brooks	46	3.83
F - Grant Hill Area	37	3.35
L - Other (Village - 7, Rail Trail - 7, Quarries - 3, West Lake Rd. - 1, Templeton Tpk - 1, Library - 1, Sportsman's Pond - 1)	30	3.63

Summary of Focus Area Development

Focus Areas are the locations in town where the Open Space Committee will direct its primary land conservation, landowner outreach, and educational activities. This does not prevent the Committee, or other town agencies, from engaging in conservation work outside of the focus areas, but it does provide some sense of priority of importance and guidance on where to focus limited time and resources. For more information regarding the important natural resources and their locations in town, consult the 2009 Natural Resources Inventory.

The development of focus areas was a complex process involving survey results, analysis of multiple natural resource maps, and conversations among MCCP staff and Committee members. The survey results served as a starting point for initial identification of several important areas of town. These areas included Laurel Lake and Rockwood Pond watersheds, Little Monadnock, the Pinnacle, and Gap Mountain Lowlands.



The entire watersheds of Rockwood Pond and Laurel Lake were considered focus areas because any activity within the watersheds can impact the quality and character of these resources. Although many areas within these watersheds are developed and not generally candidates for traditional land conservation, work with lake associations and landowners can help prevent deterioration of the resource even where opportunities for conservation easements or purchase of open space are limited.

Identification of upland focus areas started with existing conserved properties on Little Monadnock, the Pinnacle, and Gap Mountain. By buffering these conservation areas by ¼ mile the Committee was able to designate significant areas of open space and then connect them with corridors for wildlife and recreation.

While much of the existing conserved land is in the northern half of town, the Committee sought to diversify the locations of focus areas (and thus future access to open space by town residents) by using the natural resources information provided in the NH Wildlife Action Plan and other sources. The end result was a green belt of focus areas around town beginning at the Pinnacle, west to Little Monadnock, south along Grant Hill to Sportsman's Pond, then to the west side of Sip Pond, northwest along Priest Brook and Brigham Hill, and then northeast along Scott Brook and Fullam Hill to Scott Pond. From Scott Pond the focus area diverges to Gap Mountain to the north and to the large protected block of land in Rindge to the west. Maps of the focus areas can be seen in Appendix A.

Summary of Focus Areas

Laurel Lake Watershed

Laurel Lake lies in the heart of Fitzwilliam being south of the geographic center as well as the historic village and depot. The lake is Fitzwilliam's only deep (46 feet), cold water pond. It is also the town's largest water body at 180 acres. A boat launch at the southeast end of the lake provides public access, and a small town beach is located at the south end. The NH Department of Fish and Game stocks the lake with brown and rainbow trout each year. The watershed for Laurel Lake is approximately 692 acres and drains south into Sportsman's Pond and Kemp Brook.

Much of the lake shoreline is developed with particularly high density building on the eastern shore. East Lake Road and West Lake Road parallel the shoreline allowing for year round access to the lake shore. The watershed is highly subdivided near the lake with larger land parcels at the higher reaches of the watershed. Permanent land conservation is more likely in the upper reaches of the watershed while resource protection, restoration, and education efforts may be effective approaches in the developed areas.

Rockwood Pond Watershed

The Rockwood Pond watershed is located in the northwest corner of Fitzwilliam east of Little Monadnock and Rhododendron State Park. The watershed is approximately 920 acres, and the pond is 90 acres making up 10% of the watershed area. It is considered a warm water pond, with a maximum depth of 22 feet. A dam at the northern end of the pond drains into the South Branch of the Ashuelot River.

There is significantly less development around Rockwood Pond than around Laurel Lake. The development on Rockwood Pond is located to the north and east along Rockwood Pond Road and Sunset Road. The development along Rockwood Pond Road to the north is year-round housing while properties on Sunset Road are seasonal. The railroad bed also falls within the watershed running roughly north to south along the western edge of the pond.

Little Rockwood Pond is a wetland complex separated from Rockwood Pond by the railroad bed. The southern end of the Rockwood Pond

watershed is partially protected by parts of the Rhododendron State Park, Piper Hill Easement, and Schupack Easement. There is more potential for permanent land conservation in the south and east portions of the watershed. Resource protection, restoration, and education strategies may be most effective for the developed portions in the north and east, nearer to the pond.

Pinnacle

The Pinnacle is the second highest point in town at 1404 feet. It is also the scenic backdrop to the village. Five streams originate on the peak, ultimately flowing into two watersheds (the Miller's River to the south and the Ashuelot River to the north). The Pinnacle is also a historic and cultural resource, once containing a ski area and rope tow on its southern slope. This slope is still maintained as an open field during the summer and a sledding hill in the winter. Cross country ski trails cross the Schupack Easement just south of the Pinnacle summit. The Pinnacle is also an important area for wildlife. There are multiple large parcels that abut the Schupack Easement, including the lot that contains the summit of the hill, which have the potential for additional land conservation at the center of town and for outdoor recreation opportunities.

Little Monadnock Mountain

Little Monadnock is the highest point in Fitzwilliam at 1838 feet with excellent views of the surrounding landscape from exposed areas of bedrock. Little Monadnock itself is a particularly scenic vista for the community especially from Rockwood Pond and points south and east. Little Monadnock is part of the Rhododendron State Park and is thus protected. It is part of a 14,500 acre unfragmented block of land extending into neighboring towns of Troy and Richmond and is thus important for wildlife populations and outdoor recreation. Approximately 3,065 acres of the unfragmented block

are conserved, including the state park, Widow Gage Town Forest, Slavic Easement, and the Morgan Reserve.

Class VI roads and the Metacomet-to-Monadnock Trail cross through this block of land providing for public recreational opportunities. The Rhododendrons are distinctive in the state because of their unusual northern location and are classified by the NH Natural Heritage Bureau as an exemplary natural community with protected status in the state. Much of the area around Little Monadnock has been identified by the NH Wildlife Action Plan as a priority for wildlife habitat protection as well. All of these resources combine to make this an important area for future conservation efforts and outdoor recreational and educational opportunities.

Gap Mountain

Although the top of Gap Mountain lies in Troy, the majority of properties on the southern slope are located in Fitzwilliam. There are very few places in Fitzwilliam from which Gap Mountain cannot be seen. It is also so close to the border that many residents go there for recreation and collecting blueberries in the summer. This is another upland area that is not highly fragmented or subdivided, providing ample opportunities to increase the size of a protected block of open space for scenic, wildlife, and recreational purposes.

Western Corridor

The western corridor is a north-south connection between the habitat and recreational areas of Little Monadnock and Sportsman's Pond. The majority of this corridor follows the Grant Hill uplands which make up a 5,900 acre unfragmented block of wildlife habitat. Multiple old roads travel through this block of forested land with very few homes. Historic settlement sites, including one within the Grant State Forest, can be found along these old roads (the Whitcomb cellar hole, depicted above, is a good example). This forest is made up of

some of the largest parcels in town due to the lack of access and the difficulty of developing the land. A few land conservation projects in this area could ensure a long term wildlife and recreational corridor.

Southern Corridor

The southern corridor runs along the southern border of Fitzwilliam with Massachusetts and connects Grant Hill and the eastern, undeveloped shore of Sportsman's Pond with the western undeveloped shore of Sip Pond. The largely undeveloped shorelines of these two ponds are very large wetland complexes that are important wildlife habitat as identified by the Wildlife Action Plan as well as valuable for their plant diversity, maintenance of water quality, scenic vistas, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Connecting these two important habitats would allow for healthy wildlife populations including wide-ranging moose and bear.

Focusing some conservation efforts along this section of Fitzwilliam would also help ensure future open space and natural resources for a portion of the community which currently has little permanently protected land. Although there is development along the few roads, there are significant large parcels and stretches of undeveloped frontage that, if protected, would help retain the rural character of this area.

Eastern Corridor

The eastern corridor runs north-south along Priest Brook, Brigham Hill, Scott Brook, and Fullam Hill up to Scott Pond and Gap Mountain. This stretch is long, encompasses many different landscape and habitat types. This corridor was laid out in a way that avoids development as much as possible, but it was necessary to cross both Route 12 and Route 119. These

highways pose difficulties for the creation of corridors for both recreation and wildlife as the high speed traffic can be dangerous for both people and animals. The Committee primarily used knowledge of existing wildlife crossing areas to designate the corridor location.

The variety of habitats and natural communities makes this corridor particularly attractive as environments change from uplands, to the rail trail along Priest Brook, to the broad emergent wetlands north of Stone Pond. This corridor offers a variety of recreational opportunities, types of scenic vistas, as well as plant and wildlife diversity. Although the corridor avoids much of the development in this area, no one portion of its many habitats is wholly contained within the focus area. This means the corridor's viability depends both on permanent protection and educational efforts to promote sound land use decisions around the corridor.

Agricultural Areas

The nature of Fitzwilliam's landscape poses limits to agriculture in many places. Whether the soil is too thin, rocky, or wet, nearly 80% of the town's area is unsuitable for farming without a great deal of alteration. The places in town that do have viable agricultural soils and active farms are areas of focus for conservation. Farms provide many services for the community including serving as a local source of food, feed for animals, scenic vistas, habitat diversity for wildlife, and places for people to come together at farm stands and markets. Fitzwilliam has a few pockets of productive soils which are located in three main areas. The largest area of agricultural soils is located east of Route 12 and north of Route 119. There are also a few pockets of these soils along Fullam Hill Road starting near the state line and Route 12 all the way up to Route 119. The third area in town with productive soils is located on the eastern slopes of Grant Hill in vicinity of Holman Road and Pierce Road.

Regardless whether these places are actively farmed or forested, their value lies in the soils and the future potential for supporting the community with some basic, but very important needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Implementation Strategy

The mission of the Open Space Committee is to support the maintenance of the rural character of Fitzwilliam by identifying lands contributing to the town's quality of life and working to conserve them. The Committee seeks to develop relationships and networks among Fitzwilliam citizens and resource professionals that will serve as resources for the community and landowners in making resource sensitive land use decisions. The Committee will use this network to continue the community conversation on Fitzwilliam's rural character, how the natural and historic resources support that character, and what the community can do to protect these resources.

The Committee has developed three strategies for executing its mission. These strategies will provide guidance and direction for the Committee's work over the next five years, recognizing that specific activities will vary as opportunities arise and Committee membership changes. The overall goal is to keep the Committee focused on its mission while effectively utilizing the talents and interests of its membership and other town resources.

The first strategy is *Plan and Committee Development*. The Committee recognizes that this Open Space Plan is a "living" document and will evolve over time to reflect the desires of the people of Fitzwilliam. This initial plan, while drafted by the Committee, will be vetted by other town boards including the Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Select Board. As was the case with this first Plan, other groups and associations in Fitzwilliam will also be asked for future input as the Plan evolves. Once finalized and adopted as a public document the plan will be promoted by publicizing the plan in the town newsletter and online, making copies available and making presentations to various town groups.

As the Committee begins to identify and work on specific projects, gaps in the Plan will be come evident, and details not explicit in the Plan will need to be worked out (e.g., additional data collection; event planning). Strategic planning by the Committee should take place approximately every other year as part of a reflection on progress toward goals and maintaining focus on the mission. Identifying and completing training opportunities for new and veteran Committee members and volunteers in the areas related to the mission can build internal capacity for realizing the goals. Finally, the Committee should undertake a thorough review of the Plan in its fifth year, focusing on updating the Plan and focus areas based on successes, disappointments, and new information.

The second strategy is *Becoming Active in the Community*. In order to be most effective the Committee needs to help the Fitzwilliam community understand the purpose and goals of the Plan and what the Committee hopes to accomplish. The Committee will, therefore, seek to provide opportunities for the community members to be active on conserved lands and learn about natural and cultural resources in Fitzwilliam. These activities, partnered with educational workshops, will help foster a deeper understanding of the natural and cultural resources in Fitzwilliam. Building this understanding is an important step towards increasing the connection between people and town resources.

The Committee will continue to develop as a resource for the community. Achieving this goal will help to build trust in the Committee's activities and increase opportunities for education and outreach to town groups and private landowners interested in conserving their land or making resource sensitive land use decisions.

The third strategy is *Landowner Outreach and Support*. This approach is designed to build relationships with individual landowners by serving as a resource for information about land use protection options and best practices. The Committee recognizes that not all landowners will be able to or want to permanently protect their properties. A wide variety of agencies, publications, and resource professionals are also available to assist these landowners in making wise land use decisions consistent with the goals of this Plan.

The Committee will also serve as a resource for those land owners who seek ways to permanently protect their property by providing information about

land protection options and potential sources of financial support, should that be necessary. When the Committee is presented with a potential land conservation project in this manner they will assess the property following the *Guidelines for Assessing Conservation Lands in Fitzwilliam* and use the *Fitzwilliam Land Conservation Characteristics Worksheet* as spelled out in the 2009 Natural Resources Inventory and located in Appendix D in this document.

The Committee has developed a list of more specific activities or "implementation steps" that it can take under each strategy to achieve its goals and support its mission. The list is not exhaustive and is not intended to limit the Committee in what its members may or may not do. This list can be found in Appendix E.

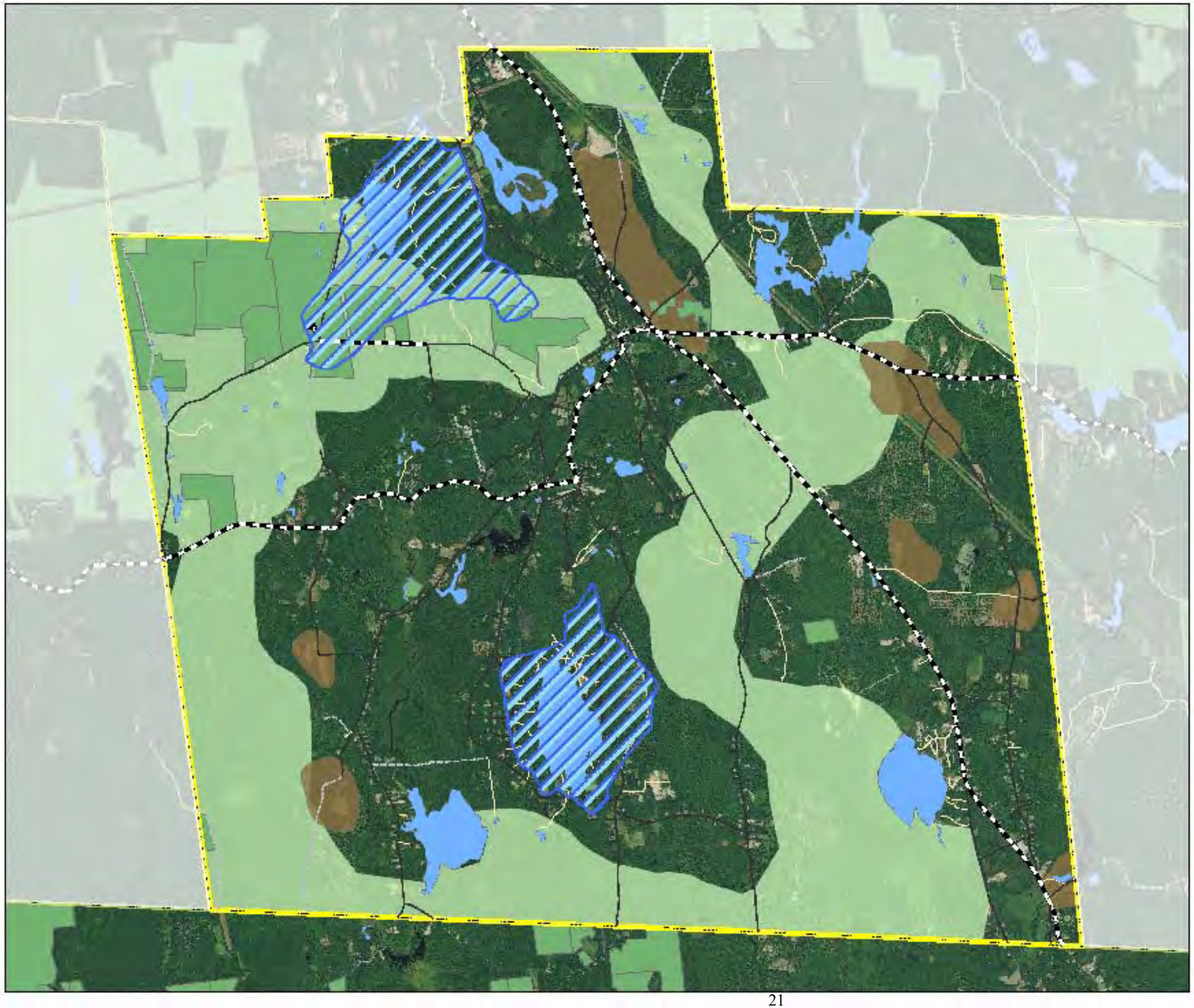
CONCLUSION

The town of Fitzwilliam has, on multiple occasions, determined that the natural and cultural resources in town contribute directly to the rural character of the community and the quality of life of its residents. This Open Space Plan was created to help the citizens of the town maintain and protect these important characteristics. Using this Plan, the Open Space Committee will work with town agencies, landowners, and natural resource professionals to conserve the open spaces we hold so dear.

In doing so, the Committee recognizes there is a balance between natural resource protection and development. By designating Focus Areas of high value to town citizens or containing important natural resources, the Committee seeks to alert Fitzwilliam citizens to priority areas of town that contribute to our sense of place and, therefore, may warrant further protection. The Committee recognizes there are multiple mechanisms for maintaining open spaces, ranging from individual landowner decisions to public purchase of property. The Committee does not prescribe particular strategies, and will continue to support town agencies, private landowners, and others in making land use decisions that will maintain and build Fitzwilliam's unique character and sense of community.

Appendix A: Fitzwilliam Focus Area Maps

1) ***Comprehensive Focus Areas Map – page 21***
2) ***Forested Focus Areas Map – page 23***
3) ***Agricultural Focus Areas Map – page 25***
4) ***Laurel Lake Watershed Map – page 27***
5) ***Rockwood Pond Watershed Map – page 29***



Fitzwilliam Open Space
Draft Focus Areas
9/20/2011

- Surface Water
- Conservation Lands
- Agricultural Focus Areas
- Focus Watersheds
- Forested Focus Areas

N

Note: This map is not regulatory in any way. It does not indicate a new zoning or overlay district. This map is only meant to guide the Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission in their efforts to protect and promote the rural character and natural resources of Fitzwilliam.

Fitzwilliam Open Space
Draft Focus Areas
9/20/2011

Conservation Lands

Forested Focus Areas

N

The lands highlighted in pale green on this map are the Forested Focus Areas. The basis for these areas were creating connections or corridors between the existing conserved lands in Fitzwilliam. The Committee then looked to connect some of the more important wildlife habitats identified in the NH Wildlife Action Plan along with the larger parcels and opportunities for recreation such as the rail trail.

Note: This map is not regulatory in any way. It does not indicate a new zoning or overlay district. This map is only meant to guide the Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission in their efforts to protect and promote the rural character and natural resources of Fitzwilliam.

Fitzwilliam Open Space
Draft Focus Areas
9/20/2011

Conservation Lands

Agricultural Focus Areas

N

The places highlighted in brown were identified as Agricultural Focus Areas due to either classified as productive agricultural soils by the NRCS county soil survey or are areas actively farmed.

Note: This map is not regulatory in any way. It does not indicate a new zoning or overlay district. This map is only meant to guide the Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission in their efforts to protect and promote the rural character and natural resources of Fitzwilliam.

Fitzwilliam Open Space
Draft Focus Areas
9/20/2011

- Focus Watersheds
- Conservation Lands
- Parcels 10 acres or less
- Parcels greater than 10 acres

N

The blue hashed area represents the shape of the Laurel Lake watershed. Beneath this are red and green parcel lines. The red parcel lines represent properties less than 10 acres while the green show properties greater than 10 acres. Green areas are more suitable for permanent conservation options whereas the red are more suitable for provideng assistance to landowners to make resource sensative decisions, especially along the shorefront.

Note: This map is not regulatory in any way. It does not indicate a new zoning or overlay district. This map is only meant to guide the Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission in their efforts to protect and promote the rural character and natural resources of Fitzwilliam.

Fitzwilliam Open Space
Draft Focus Areas
9/20/2011

- Focus Watersheds
- Conservation Lands
- Parcels 10 acres or less
- Parcels greater than 10 acres

N

The blue hashed area represents the shape of the Rockwood Pond watershed. Beneath this are red and green parcel lines. The red parcel lines represent properties less than 10 acres while the green show properties greater than 10 acres. Green areas are more suitable for permanent conservation options whereas the red are more suitable for provideng assistance to landowners to make resource sensative decisions, especially along the shorefront.

Note: This map is not regulatory in any way. It does not indicate a new zoning or overlay district. This map is only meant to guide the Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission in their efforts to protect and promote the rural character and natural resources of Fitzwilliam.

Appendix B: Understanding Land Conservation

Land Conservation is Voluntary: All land conservation is the result of a voluntary decision by a willing landowner. Whether a land conservation easement is sold or donated, the process begins with a landowner making a decision to conserve his or her land. Land conservation is not a form of government regulation.

Clear Purpose and Public Benefit: Land conservation is accomplished through a real estate transaction. Various rights and interests in a parcel of land are conveyed from one person or organization (the landowner) to another (a land trust or town), thereby extinguishing those rights expressly for the purpose of protecting identified conservation values such as:

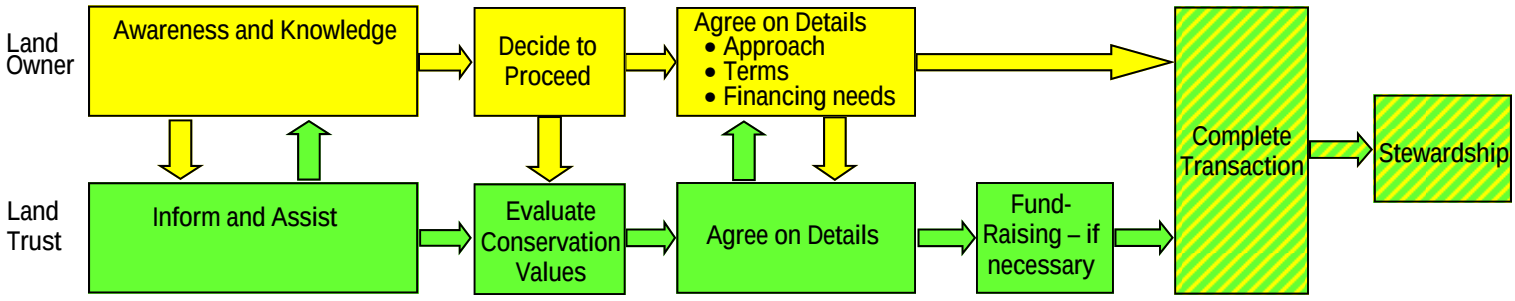
- The water quality in streams, rivers, ponds, lakes; ground water aquifers, and wetlands
- Wildlife habitats and migration corridors that contribute to the health and diversity of wildlife populations
- Scenic, cultural, or historic features that contribute to the unique character and quality of life of a town
- Lands with the potential to support productive, economically viable, and sustainable forestry and agriculture
- Lands with the potential to support non-commercial public outdoor recreation such as hiking, hunting, fishing, skiing, or snowmobiling

When land is protected by a land trust, there must be a clear, identifiable public benefit from the protection.

Transfer of Rights: One of the most common approaches for conserving land is the donation or sale of a conservation easement. A conservation easement is a legally binding agreement between a landowner and a land trust that conveys explicit rights from the landowner to the conservation organization through a legal deed, thereby extinguishing those rights in perpetuity. The landowner is able to retain certain rights (i.e. to farm, harvest timber, engage in non-commercial recreation, and to exclude or withdraw a predetermined portion of the land from the easement for future development). Rights that are transferred to the land trust and therefore extinguished include the right to sub-divide; build residential, commercial, or industrial structures; extract

minerals; and any other uses that would be detrimental to the conservation values. Negotiating the terms of a conservation easement can be flexible, provided that conservation values are identified and protected, and there is a clear public benefit of the transaction.

The Process for Donating or Selling a Conservation Easement



Stewardship: When a land trust accepts a conservation easement, it takes on the legal responsibility to steward and enforce all terms of the easement in perpetuity. The land trust must monitor the property annually to ensure that the identified conservation values are not compromised or diminished by human activity, as established under the terms of the easement.

Permanence and Flexibility: The landowner still owns the land and can sell it, lease it, mortgage it, or otherwise transfer it to anyone at any time, although the land will continue to be subject to the conservation easement. This is why the land trust takes such care during the planning of a conservation easement to ensure that all future uses desired by the landowner are accommodated in the design of the easement. For example, if a landowner anticipates giving a portion of their land to their children to build a house in the future, then the land needed to accommodate the future house can be excluded from the easement. If the landowner decides to donate the land or an easement to a qualified land trust or to a town, the value of the donation - as determined by a qualified appraiser - may be deductible for income tax purposes.

Role of the Community: Many towns do hold conservation easements or purchase lands for conservation uses. However, many towns do not have the resources to adequately manage lands that they own or monitor and enforce easements they hold. Lands purchased by the town are taken off the tax roll, and unless also protected by a conservation easement, a future town vote could reverse the town's initial conservation intentions. Landowners who conserve their land with an easement continue to pay property taxes at the same rate as

lands enrolled in the state's Current Use Program.

Since towns benefit from protection of conservation values, it can be in a town's interest to support conservation efforts. The most effective roles that a town can play to encourage land conservation are to:

- Develop an Open Space Conservation Plan that:
  - Identifies what community members value about the town
  - Considers the natural and cultural resources that contribute to quality of life
  - Identifies focus areas to guide conservation efforts.
- Foster community awareness about the benefits of conservation to the community and to the landowner
- Help educate landowners about the values of their land and about possible conservation options
- Provide financial incentives (funding to help cover transaction costs) to make land conservation affordable to all landowners regardless of means

The conservation planning process begins with talking about and developing a consensus about how the town's landscape contributes to the town's character, desirability, and overall quality of life. When town residents understand what characteristics contribute most to quality of life in their town and where the landscape supports the best examples of these characteristics, they are in a position to make the best management and land use decisions for themselves and the future of the town. Fitzwilliam's conservation planning effort has begun this process.

Appendix C: Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey

1) ***Blank Survey – page 37***
2) ***Summary of Data Collected –raw data available online – page 39***
3) ***Comments Collected – page 40***

Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey

Thank you for participating in the Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey. *Please return the completed form to the library, town hall, or mail it to the Fitzwilliam Open Space Committee at P.O. Box 725 Fitzwilliam, NH 03447*

Part 1: Resource value importance rating and ranking

On the right you will find a list a cultural and natural resources. Please rate each resource listed (cultural and natural) based on ***how important the resource is in contributing to Fitzwilliam's unique character and quality of life****. Circle a number from 1 to 7, with 7 being very important and 1 being not important.*

How Important are These Resources to You?	*Importance Rating - Circle One*						
	Low						***High***
•Clean Air ……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Clean Water for humans and wildlife …….	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Wildlife Habitat (forest and field, large unfragmented blocks)	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Wetlands (flood prevention, wildlife habitat, recharge)…..	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Land/water for Recreation (hiking, hunting, fishing, etc.)….	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Peace and Quiet from natural areas……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Agriculture (character, local products, economics)……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Working forests (forest health, local products, economics) ..	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Scenic qualities associated with natural lands……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Historic features (buildings, cellar holes, stone walls, quarries)...	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*

Part 2: ***Please answer the following question:***

a. *What makes the Town of Fitzwilliam such a unique place to live?*_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 3: *Mapping Special Places*

- *Identify places on the map to the right that should be considered as a priority for Land Conservation.*
  - *Write the numbers 1-5 on the line next to places that you feel are important enough to be considered as a priority for land conservation.*
  - *Write a "1" next to the place you think should be the most important priority, "2" for the second most important place, and so on.*
  - *In the space below the name of each place you selected, write a brief description of what you think makes that place important or special. (scenic, wildlife, recreation, etc.)*
  - *If you need more copies of this survey for other family members, they can be obtained from the Land Use office at the town hall.*

____ (A) **Little Monadnock Mountain Area**

____ (B) **The Pinnacle Area**

____ (C) **Gap Mountain Lowlands**

____ (D) **Fullam Hill Area**

____ (E) **Brigham and Webb Hill Area**

____ (F) **Grant Hill Area**

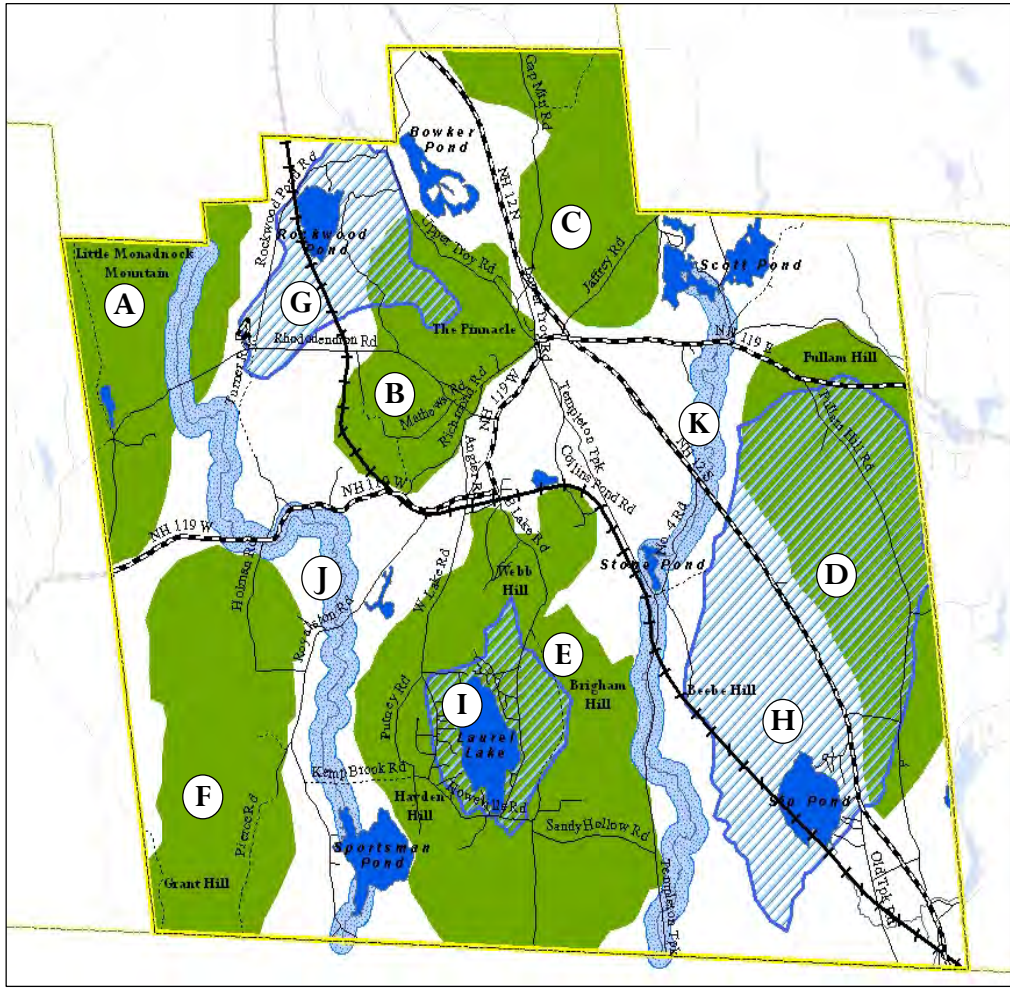
____ (G) **Rockwood Pond Watershed**

____ (H) **Sip Pond Watershed**

____ (I) **Laurel Lake Watershed**

____ (J) **Kemp Brook**

____ (K) **Scott and Priest Brooks**



____ **Other (Village, Rail Trail, Quarries, etc):**_____

If you would like more information about this project, please provide your name and contact information.

*Name:*_____*Email:*_____

Fitzwilliam Conservation Survey Results

Map Location - Based on Dot Placement Locations (1 = Highest Priority to 5 = lowest identified priority)	**Sum**	**Average**	**Median**	**Count**
A - Little Monadnock Mountain Area	409	2.64	3	155
B - The Pinnacle Area	327	2.84	3	115
C - Gap Mountain Lowlands	342	3.60	4	95
D - Fullam Hill Area	139	3.48	4	40
E - Brigham and Webb Hill Area	231	3.25	3	71
F - Grant Hill Area	124	3.35	4	37
G - Rockwood Pond Watershed	268	2.71	3	99
H - Sip Pond Watershed	183	3.81	4	48
I - Laurel Lake Watershed	316	1.94	1	163
J - Kemp Brook	162	3.45	4	47
K - Scott and Priest Brooks	176	3.83	4	46
L - Other (Village - 9, Rail Trail - 9, Quarries - 4, West Lake Rd. - 1, Templeton Tpk - 2, Library - 1, Sportsman's Pond - 2, Bowker Pond - 1)	109	3.63	4	30
Other 2 (in case someone identified two "others")				

Resource Importance - Based on a rating of 1 through 7 (1=Low, 7=High importance to Town Character)	**Sum**	**Average**	**Median**	**Mode**
Clean Air	1404	6.82	7	7
Clean Water	1425	6.85	7	7
Wildlife Habitat	1342	6.51	7	7
Wetlands	1319	6.43	7	7
Land/Water for Recreation	1275	6.28	7	7
Peace and Quiet from Natural Areas	1309	6.35	7	7
Agriculture	1235	6.08	7	7
Working Forests	1230	6.06	7	7
Scenic Qualities	1296	6.29	7	7
Historic Features	1245	5.99	7	7

Community's Comments
Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey
Summer and Fall 2010

These comments from Fitzwilliam residents were in response to the question under Part 2 of the Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey: "What Makes the Town of Fitzwilliam such a unique place to live?"

1. Being part of the Monadnock region/history.
2. All of the above. We really enjoy living here! (referencing Part 1 resources)
3. The proximity to hiking trails.
4. peaceful, scenic, sense of community
5. Rural Character – quintessential new England town center, historic, recreational trails, and bodies of water, civic pride
6. Unspoiled character of Center – historic, Great library (could be open Fridays though!), Lake – Laurel!!! Tennis courts and basketball court, summer music on common, proximity to hiking trails – Gap Monadnock, pinnacle, Back roads- some still not paved, The Inn, Summer events on Common – range of types (craft and used items, antiques, garden, and book fair)
7. Small town, quiet, unhurried, pretty.
8. Its historic nature associated with the natural beauty of its resources.
9. Rural, natural character.
10. The ability to enjoy the peace and quiet of nature – the ability to see the night sky without light pollution. The sense of cooperation and caring of the people in the community.
11. Laurel Lake is beautiful and clean. The rural character is wonderful but I'm happy to see businesses (Birds and Things, antiques, etc) and restaurants in Town.
12. Thank you.
13. Peaceful and relaxing atmosphere.
14. Old time charm.
15. Environment, Scenic, Friendly People. Eco-friendly.
16. The laurel lake area is not over-developed. It has not been made into a "tourist trap" but yet quality of water is very important.
17. Peaceful, tranquil, quiet.
18. Lake, Peace, Quiet.

19. Fitzwilliam and Laurel Lake (Where we spend summers) is part of my DNA. The scale and naturalness of its landscape, its preservation of the Town center and surrounding area, the architectural harmony and friendliness of the community are unique. When I come to Fitzwilliam I look forward to greeting the families. Timelessness and character of its environment.
20. We live here most of the summer. We have a little place in "Whites Grove." There is no finer, cleaner, crisp lake than our beloved Laurel Lake.
21. Rail Trail needs to be paved. Open Spaces for recreational uses.
22. Rural Character, small town atmosphere, friendliness, needs more technology available throughout town, needs more industry to broaden the tax base.
23. Untouched by large retail structures.
24. Need broadband in all areas. Safe and Secure.
25. Small town charm, quaint, beautiful Laurel Lake, close proximity to Mt. Monadnock.
26. Small town, historic, beautiful bodies of water, especially Laurel Lake.
27. Rural character – small town friendliness – however we do need to expand high speed internet to the lake area – we pay the highest takes and have the least amount of services.
28. Peace and quiet – nature.
29. Its unique and rural setting, to change anything or add businesses would spoil our beautiful setting.
30. The quiet, peaceful, woodsy and quaint town. Like the old fashion style of the town. Hopefully it will stay as peaceful.
31. Its History (very important to keep up and support the Blake house), the preservation of dirt roads/woods roads, and others to use for walks/hikes in all seasons, the minimization of changes which disturb nature/living "things."
32. Abundance of unique historical architecture, beautiful area, open to public access.
33. Beautiful area – caring community – not too far from Boston.
34. Very relaxed, friendly, lots of water and wildlife.
35. History, Nature, ski mobile and hiking trails. I am new to the area.
36. Rockwood Pond is a magical place with quiet solitude with enough darkness to see the Milky Way.
37. Quiet, low traffic, Friendly town government.
38. Quiet, beauty, bodies of water, (unpolluted), outdoor recreation (year round).
39. Town Common, Library, pinnacle, ponds, quarries, rail trail.

40. Natural beauty – water, mountains, forests.
41. Community – close knit, active neighbors, ability to participate in your surroundings.
42. I love the peace and quiet, the small town character and charm, and the beautiful scenery. I love the hiking trails, the lake to canoe/kayak on. The list is almost endless.
43. Conservation
44. Historic Common, Swimming, Walking (rails, little Monadnock, Rhododendron State Park).
45. No large housing developments.
46. Peaceful, friendly, quaint.
47. Love the small village feel.
48. Downtown, common, no stop lights, or commercialism.
49. Less people, more nature.
50. Small size, history, nature, recreation, family.
51. Beautiful library offering so much. Green-spaces and lakes and ponds. Quarries, rail trail needs to be paved.
52. The high priority of the town places on preserving the historic character of the town and an awareness of the importance of preserving open space for the future (necessary to give greater emphasis to attracting business to the town).
53. Involvement of the citizens in the civic issues.
54. Slow pace, natural beauty.
55. Night Sky and stone walls.
56. it's a town with character. I like the small town feel and that it's not overbuilt.
57. The quality of life created by Town/Lake et al make Fitzwilliam "the" place for me, certainly for rest and vacation. This is my 75th year here!
58. Open spaces for skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, biking. Historical buildings; the Inn lately. [Its like asking] which of my children do I love best? Put most priority on ones that are most threatened.
59. Historical character, fields, community, beautiful trees, water (ponds, lakes).
60. The People!
61. Space, clean air, quiet, lakes and ponds, good people.
62. It's a great "country" town.
63. It is country while having necessary things. Very quaint.
64. The natural environment and proximity to hiking trails.
65. The recreation.

66. It is so simple and quiet; we have the "New Englandness," also have the clock tower.
67. An abundance of the resources listed above. (referencing Part 1)
68. The rural atmosphere.
69. It used to have many great qualities – Inn was a gathering place, needs more family friendly qualities so people will move here and buy all the big houses that are for sale! Farmers market needs to return. The library is great.
70. The historical village and Laurel Lake.
71. Charm and beauty.
72. Small town quality, historic value, preservation of resources, unique and special people – Priority number one: clean our earth – then look for recreational value.
73. Its small, rural quality, friendliness of the community.
74. Grew up here, now I'm raising my children – Love the library!
75. The small town historical aspects of life.
76. All of the above, and the great people. All the Rail trails.
77. Open Space, good neighbors, careful development of land, good planning.
78. 40 years of enjoyment.
79. Both the natural and historic aspects of the town lend it a unique feel.
80. I like that it is in the "country" but close to Keene and Rindge. This way I can enjoy the wildlife, recreation and woods, but still close to shopping.
81. There are a lot of outdoor activities to do.
82. Beautiful, historic, with accessible wilderness.
83. The great quality of life and the people that live here to make it such a great community.
84. Low traffic, rails (unpaved) trails, swimming, outdoors, nature.
85. It is gorgeous!
86. No developments, no noisy areas, appreciation of stone walls and colonial homes, scenic roads.
87. Quiet, most people mind their own business.
88. We think it is the mix of open lands (fields), forests, water, and the aesthetics and community feel of the Common area. This small rural town, with its New England feel and atmosphere, is balanced by its accessibility to business and cultural centers like Boston, Central Mass, Keene etc. Over development of the land with large housing projects, malls, big box stores, etc, will destroy the balance.
89. Forests, Lakes and Ponds, minimal development.
90. The Fitzwilliam Library.
91. The people, quiet, the lakes, no crime.

92. Natural beauty, historical preservation of town and environment, open, unsubdivided spaces, hiking areas and rail trail, back roads, where you can "go back in time."
93. Clean, quiet Laurel Lake.
94. The people.
95. The woodlands and peace and quiet.
96. The people.
97. The scenic beauty, the sense of community, the mountain!
98. It's Beautiful!
99. Sense of Community, natural/recreational resources, blend of "transplants" and people who have lived here since childhood is nice!
100. We still have wild spots visible, even from the road.
101. Definitely the small town sense of community, the town common is not only pretty, but a great place for local gatherings and visiting with neighbors during events. Trails, history, library, Inn, our school, historical uniqueness.
102. Quaint character – lakes and ponds – big town with small town feel – historical buildings – clean lake – wooded areas between buildings – Library – Blake House – town common.
103. The rural aspect has always been a special trait of Fitzwilliam. Habitat for wildlife and scenic vistas are also important.
104. Its historic and rural character and great people.
105. Fitzwilliam is heaven to me; biggest part of my life has been spent here.
106. Community events and small school.
107. The People.
108. It's a quiet, safe place to like where I don't have to worry as much when my kids go outside to play.
109. It's my hometown. I love it here.
110. So far I've noticed the playground at Emerson is so outdated. The number of stray cats where we live and the fire station horn going off at odd times.
111. Nature and Discoveries each day. Love the step back in time. No huge developments.
112. Caring community, nice balance of wild and cultivated resources.
113. Historic features and scenic qualities.
114. The backwoods places that are still undeveloped. Fitzy's approach to growth so far has been healthy – therefore the rural quality is somewhat intact. We need to help large landowners maintain their property rather than sell for development. Thanks for the time and effort you are giving for this project. Land between Putney Rd. and Royalston Rd. and also Grant Hill are wonderful wilderness areas that need protecting.

115. Quaint, history, natural beauty, but… lack of options/opportunities regarding internet/cell service. This does not have to interrupt natural resources but can invite business, at home work, and quality of life. Fitzwilliam does not promote or accentuate its offerings. I don't know many of these areas but I do see options for promoting them as tourism sites and to preserve character. Laurel Lake is not well kept – large motor boats, no facilities at public beach – people using wooded areas for toilets and dumping. The quarries are full of garbage!!
116. Combination of historic features, clean water, scenic qualities and peace and quiet surrounding houses and industry. Access to east, west, north, and south via good quality roads.
117. Natural Beauty, Town center, close to Keene, which has movies, college, restaurants, shops.
118. Rural character in proximity to Boston.
119. It's a historic and peaceful way of life. The community spirit of taking care of each other plus contact and caring about how the past affects all of us.
120. The air, the water, the wildlife, etc. etc. Cannot imagine a better place to live.
121. In addition to asking what places should be conserved, the Town needs to address the question of "where should the next 500 houses to be built go?" I've come to believe that smart growth policies are the best route to achieve conservation goals.
122. That we have not sold out to commercial interests. We have a beautiful community and must preserve it.
123. Walking trails, common, town services, Rhododendron State Park, Laurel Lake.
124. The People, historic features, land and water recreation.
125. Not much – poor police, etc.
126. Its historic heritage, its open spaces, its old New England character and its ex-ex-suburban environment (to call it rural is a stretch).
127. Have always loved living in a small town – where you can still raise your own food in gardens as well as raising animals (chickens, goats, pigs, etc…) on your own land.
128. Quiet, rural town with historic common – however the town is dying – we need to encourage business via commercial development areas to attract people which will help support the antique dealer, the inn and eachother!
129. New Hampshire is the last stop where our history is even attempted to be preserved.
130. Quiet, Scenic, Historic features, People, Laurel Lake.

131. Its rural character and forestry.
132. My husband was born in the old farmhouse, raised his family and died here. As an amputee he loved to ride his electric scooter all over town to see the wildlife i.e. eagles, other birds, deer, etc and the waterways, especially Laurel Lake where he had memories of harvesting ice blocks for the meat on the farm (when he was a kid) lugging water from the lake when wells went dry (for the farm animals) fishing in the lake and brooks, hunting. Camping as an assistant scout master, picnicking in Sandy Hollow, blueberry picking, etc.
133. The people and the pride we all take in our town.
134. Low key lifestyle of the community
135. Rural NH charm and the way it fits into its surroundings.
136. It's history, the natural beauty of the lakes and forests.
137. The people, the history, lake, museum, town hall, all kept as when it was built.
138. The long history and unique New England character of mixed use.
139. Our forests, rural character, historic buildings, and colonial character and history.
140. It's people – beauty, wildlife, and quiet.
141. It has a lot of woods and nature as well as a nice residential area.
142. The woods, rivers and the rolling hills. Rail Trails and Quarries.
143. The Forests, water sources for canoes, kayaks and fish and birds.
144. Combination of natural resources and historical features and heritage. Rail trails and quarries.
145. Plenty of natural resources and history. Rural living. Small N.E. town feel.
146. I believe people should be able to manage their own land. I would like to see more cluster developments so we can have more neighborhoods.
147. The people. The preservation of a lot of natural resources.
148. Quiet, kind people, beautiful town.
149. The peacefulness.
150. People.
151. Connections to the past, quiet rural character.
152. Its beauty and cleanliness and lands that are not built up i.e. conservancy and wetland and not trying to take natural resources that will spoil the land, environment and downgrade homes.
153. The People.
154. Mix of agriculture, open lands.
155. Has my name!

Appendix D: Guidelines for Assessing Conservation Lands in Fitzwilliam

Guidelines for Assessing Conservation Lands in Fitzwilliam

Purpose and Introduction

The maintenance of open space, preservation of rural character and protection of the diversity of natural resources in the town of Fitzwilliam require that we identify characteristics of the landscape that we believe to be important. The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide a list of such characteristics and outline how town officials and residents can begin to compile information and make use of it in identifying locales that have important conservation attributes. This information can then be used by town officials and agencies to set priorities for land protection in town, document areas that may be sensitive to disturbance, and provide a basis for land use regulation that will facilitate wise use while protecting important town features.

These Guidelines rely on two important sources of information: 1) published and unpublished information sources, and 2) field survey work. Both are important in assessing the overall conservation value (not to be confused with the monetary value or price of a piece of property) of a locale or parcel of property.

Potential sources of information include:

- Topographical, Geological, Soil, Vegetation and Other Maps
- Aerial Photos
- Historical Documents
- Fish & Wildlife Records From Local, State and Federal Agencies
- Surveys and Records from Non-Profit Conservation Groups (e.g., Nature Conservancy)
- Natural Resources Inventories
- Personal Knowledge of Town Residents

Conservation Characteristics and A Conservation Index

The attached table provides a list of conservation attributes that town residents and the Conservation Commission have identified as important features of Fitzwilliam. The table is intended to provide a consistent list of land characteristics that will enable comparisons to be made among different areas or properties in the town.

The list also includes characteristics that may detract from the conservation value of a property (e.g., toxic contamination).

The Conservation Characteristics table also assigns values to each characteristic. These values are also based on the relative importance of each characteristic (higher value = more important) as determined by town residents, the Natural Resources Inventory Committee, and the Conservation Commission. By identifying which characteristics are present on a property and totaling these values it is possible to calculate a Conservation Index that can be used to give an over-all indication of important conservation characteristics. A high index value would be 22 and above; moderate index 11 – 21, and low index 10 or less.

The Conservation Characteristics table also provides a list of features that can be combined with other information (e.g., from maps) to write a summary description of the property. Such a summary should accompany any report from a field survey (see following guidelines).

Guidelines for Field Surveys

Field surveys can be conducted by individuals from a variety of backgrounds, regardless of expertise or prior experience. The goal is not to obtain expert data about a site but to begin a process of recording information that can be useful in determining the conservation characteristics that are present. In combination with information from other sources (e.g., maps), we can begin to better document the important natural features of Fitzwilliam. The steps in the field review process are listed below.

1) Obtain a map of the property that identifies property boundaries.
2) At least two people should visit the property, with the owner's permission, and complete the Conservation Characteristics worksheet, assigning points to the characteristics that are present.
3) As much of the property as possible should be visited. If all of the parcel is not covered, this should be noted on the comment sheet.
4) Notes should be kept about any characteristics and assignment of points that observers do not understand or are uncertain about.
5) Once the field visit is completed, total the points, and fill out the Comments sheet.

FITZWILLIAM LAND CONSERVATION CHARACTERISTICS

Worksheet

CRITERIA			POINTS	
Section	**I.**	**Parcels with a Relationship to Conserved Land or Have Conservation Values**		
	A.	Land that abuts or provides linkages to existing conservation areas	**6**	
	B.	Land threatened by a change in use that will undermine identified conservation values	**3**	
	C.	Parcel has a clear potential to stimulate future contiguous land protection projects	**3**	
	D.	Parcel is part of an unfragmented land area	**3**	
		Section I Total Points		
Section	**II**	**Wildlife and Special Natural Areas**		
	A.	Large tracts of undeveloped habitat and corridors important for wildlife, often south-facing high slopes	**3**	
	B.	Land containing ecologically significant or rare natural communities or species	**6**	
	C.	Lands which increase the diversity and viability of wildlife populations, including fields and/or riparian areas	**3**	
		Section II Total Points		
Section	**III**	**Clean Water**		
	A.	Land overlying aquifers and aquifer recharge areas	**5**	
	B.	Frontage on named streams, lakes, and ponds, often important wildlife corridors	**6**	
	C.	Wetlands, flood plains, vernal pools, small streams, and small ponds	**3**	
		Section III Total Points		
Section	**IV**	**Recreation, Scenery, Cultural and Historic Resources**		
	A.	Land that offers opportunities for low impact outdoor recreation by the public	**3**	
	B.	Parcels that preserve the town's cultural or historic heritage, such as granite quarries	**3**	
	C.	Parcel is an important focal point for community and/or educational activity	**6**	
	D.	Parcel features exceptional scenic outlook	**3**	
	E.	Parcel itself is a scenic view	**4**	
		Section IV Total Points		
Section	**V**	**Forestry and Agriculture**		
	A.	Tracts of woodland with sufficient size, appropriate soils, and other attributes that support responsible forest management, including the production of forest products	**3**	
	B.	Farmlands, open fields, or early successional habitats with prime soil and other attributes that support viable agriculture	**5**	
		Section V Total Points		
Section	**VI**	**Parcel Size**		
	A.	Property is 10 to less than 20 acres	**3**	
	B.	Property is 20 to less than 35 acres	**4**	
	C.	Property is 35 to less than 50 acres	**5**	
	D.	Property is more than 50 acres	**6**	
		Section VI Total Points		
Section	**VII**	**Possible Unwanted Features**		
	A.	Hazardous materials	**-15**	
	B.	Buildings or manmade structures that detract from conservation value	**-6**	
	C.	Problematic lot configuration	**-2**	
	D.	Problematic surrounding land use, incompatible with conservation value such as junkyard	**-6**	
	E.	Parcel would cause excessive maintenance or management expense	**-5**	
	F.	Existing easements detract from conservation value	**-5**	
	G.	Invasive or non native plant species present	**-5**	
		Section VII Total Points		
		Total Points		

Comments, Summary, Signatures

Map and lot number:_____ Date of Field Survey:_____

Location in relation to nearby roads:

How the site came to be selected for observation:

Prominent conservation characteristics:

Distinctive species and unusual features:

Conservation features that need further investigation:

Summarize the site's conservation characteristics:

Names (print) _____ _____ _____

Signatures _____ _____ _____

Appendix E: Open Space Committee Goals and Implementation Strategies

1) ***Plan Development – page 56***
2) ***Community Engagement – page 57***
3) ***Landowner Outreach – page 58***
4) ***Rural Character and Resource Protection – page 59***

Goals	Objectives	Implementation Steps
1) Plan Development		
	0 - 6 Month Objectives	
	Produce a draft plan	Work with MC to draft a plan
	Finalize the plan	Work with MC, Selectboard, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and Public
	Build Plan Approval	Promote plan and have open discussions with Selectmen and public
	Adopt as a Guiding Public Document	Discuss with Planning Board
		Hold Public Hearings
	7 Month - 1st Year Objective	
	Promote the plan	Newsletter Presence
		Exhibit at the Library and at Town events
		Advertize at hikes and community engagement efforts
	2nd Year - 4th Year Objectives	
	Plan Timeline and Dates for Events	Public hikes, neighborhood gatherings, exhibits and speakers
	Continue with publicity	Newsletter, buttons, Fitzwilliam mascot
	Gather Feedback	Request feedback from other boards and commissions, landowners, and community
	Train Committee Members	Attend workshops to improve the capacity of committee and gain ideas/insight
	5th Year Objective	
	Update Plan	Refine Priority Areas
		New Survey or other form of Public Involvement
		Set new goals for the upcoming 5 years
		Adopt as Official Town Document

2) Community Engagement		
	0-6 Month Objective	
	Ease public fears about the plan	Create Fact Sheet about what the Plan is and is not
		Write Article in Newsletter explaining the Plan
		Encourage Public Involvement at Committee meetings and Welcome new Members
	7 Month - 1st Year Objectives	
	Organize and Sponsor Public Events	Hold a Hike on Conservation Land in Fitzwilliam
		Sponsor a speaker to discuss conservation or natural resources
		Involve the school and Children with events (questing, hiking, photo diary, essays, etc.)
		Host a Panel of Conservation Landowners in Town to discuss their experiences
	Develop a Contact List	Gather Contact Information from attendees of Events
	Develop a Social Media	Create avenue for public to stay informed and interact (Facebook, twitter, blog, mailbox)
	2nd Year - 4th Year Objective	
	Organize and Sponsor Monthly Events	Hold Hikes or other Outdoor Events in each Calendar year
		Host Speakers in each Calendar year
		Plan other Events to Remain Relavent and Engaging
		Ask the Community what Interests they have

	5th Year Objective	
	Assess Community Engagement	What Successes Were Experienced? Failures?
		What New Ideas do Committee Members Have?
		What Would the Community Like to See or Learn about?
		Who has been reached? Who has not been reached?

3) Landowner Outreach		
	0 - 6 Month Objective	
	Inform Landowners about the Plan	Send Letter to all Landowners informing them about the Open Space Committee and Plan
	7 Month - 1 Year Objectives	
	Develop Outreach Strategy	How will the Open Space Committee Serve all Landowners
		How will the Open Space Committee Contact Landowners in Focus Areas
	Contact Focus Area Landowners	Inform the Landowners in the Focus Areas what the Focus Areas mean for Them
	2nd Year - 4th Year Objectives	
	Gather or Create Outreach Materials	Research what other Open Space Committees have produced/done
		Create a packet that can be reproduced and given to interested landowners
	Hold Events Tailored to Landowners	Neighborhood or Focus Area gatherings to build Understanding and Interest
		Provide Information and Professional Contacts to Interested Landowners
	5th Year Objective	
	Assess Landowner Outreach	What Successes Were Experienced? Failures?
		What New Ideas do Committee Members Have?
		What Would Landowners Like to See or Learn about?
		Who has been reached? Who has not been reached?

4) Rural Character and Resource Protection		
	0 - 6 Month Objective	
	Build Relationships	Develop Relationships with Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and Cons Com
		Build Relationships with Community Groups
		Build Relationships with the Schools and Youth
		Build Relationships with Professional Contacts and other Open Space Committees
	7 Month - 1 Year Objectives	
	Continue to Build Relationships	As mentioned above
	Maintain Open Lines of Communication	With Select Board, Conservation Commission, Landowners, and Public
	Build Resource Education into Events	Work with Committee Members organizing events to incorporate protection messaging
	2nd Year - 4th Year Objectives	
	Continue prior Objectives	As mentioned above
	Help Landowners Conserve Land	Provide basic land conservation option information to interested landowners
		Provide contact information for Porfessional Contacts to interested Landowners
		Gather public and financial support for conservation projects
	Help Town Boards	Help Select Board with Land protection/acquisition projects

	Help Conservation Commission with projects
	Help Planning board with Master Planning and protecting Rural Character
	Help build public support for conservation funding
	Help raise funds through private fundraising and grantwriting
Celebrate all Success with Public	Hold events on newly protected properties or newly created trails
	Hold Neighborhood events to celebrate conservation success to build interest/support
5th Year Objectives	
Assess Resource Protection	What Successes Were Experienced? Failures?
	What New Ideas do Committee Members Have?
	What Would Community Like to See or Learn about?
	What Resources have been covered/protected? What Resources have not?
	What Focus Areas Have experienced Activity?

Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey

Thank you for participating in the Fitzwilliam Open Space Land Survey. *Please return the completed form to the library, town hall, or mail it to the Fitzwilliam Open Space Committee at P.O. Box 725 Fitzwilliam, NH 03447*

Part 1: Resource value importance rating and ranking

On the right you will find a list a cultural and natural resources. Please rate each resource listed (cultural and natural) based on ***how important the resource is in contributing to Fitzwilliam's unique character and quality of life****. Circle a number from 1 to 7, with 7 being very important and 1 being not important.*

How Important are These Resources to You?	*Importance Rating - Circle One*						
	Low						***High***
•Clean Air ……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Clean Water for humans and wildlife …….	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Wildlife Habitat (forest and field, large unfragmented blocks)	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Wetlands (flood prevention, wildlife habitat, recharge)…..	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Land/water for Recreation (hiking, hunting, fishing, etc.)….	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Peace and Quiet from natural areas……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Agriculture (character, local products, economics)……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Working forests (forest health, local products, economics) ..	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Scenic qualities associated with natural lands……	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*
•Historic features (buildings, cellar holes, stone walls, quarries)...	*1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	*6*	*7*

Part 2: ***Please answer the following question:***

a. *What makes the Town of Fitzwilliam such a unique place to live?*_____

_____

_____

_____

Part 3: *Mapping Special Places*

- *Identify places on the map to the right that should be considered as a priority for Land Conservation.*
  - *Write the numbers 1-5 on the line next to places that you feel are important enough to be considered as a priority for land conservation.*
  - *Write a "1" next to the place you think should be the most important priority, "2" for the second most important place, and so on.*
  - *In the space below the name of each place you selected, write a brief description of what you think makes that place important or special. (scenic, wildlife, recreation, etc.)*
  - *If you need more copies of this survey for other family members, they can be obtained from the Land Use office at the town hall.*

____ (A) **Little Monadnock Mountain Area**

____ (B) **The Pinnacle Area**

____ (C) **Gap Mountain Lowlands**

____ (D) **Fullam Hill Area**

____ (E) **Brigham and Webb Hill Area**

____ (F) **Grant Hill Area**

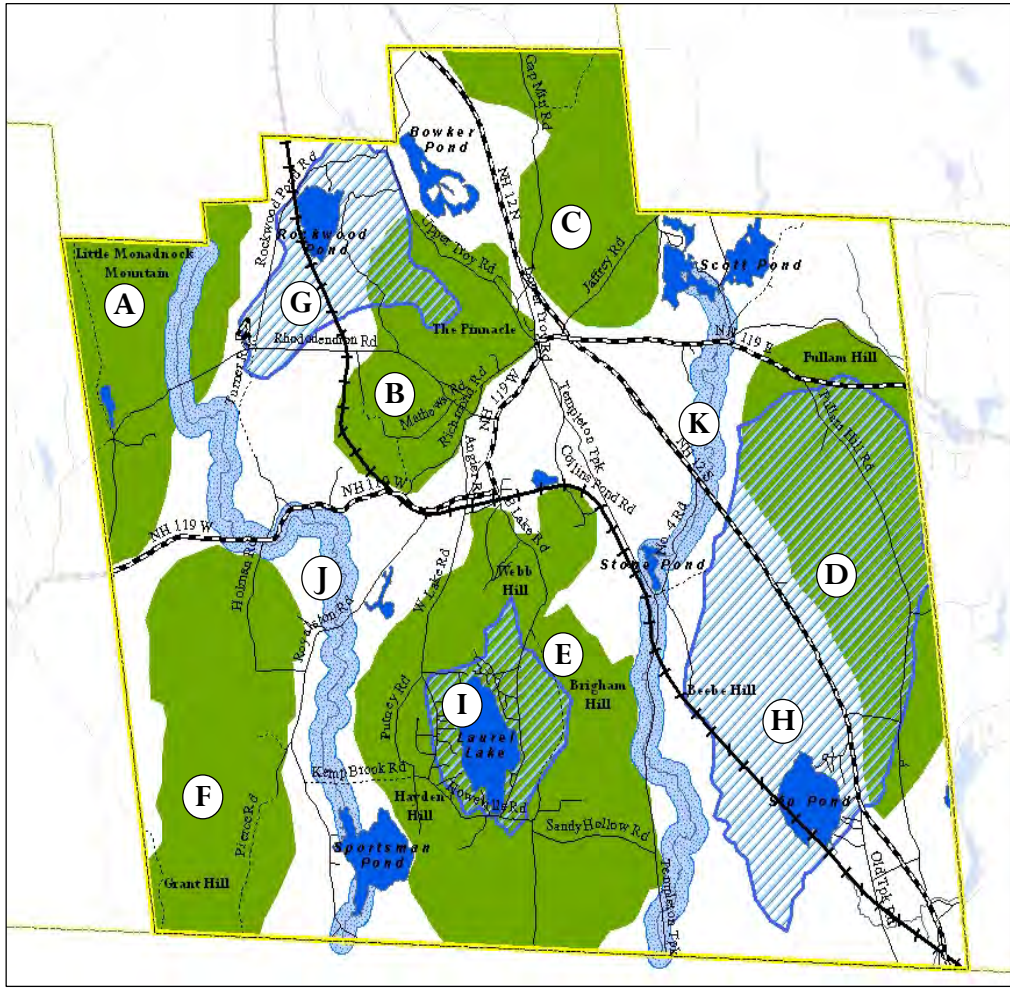
____ (G) **Rockwood Pond Watershed**

____ (H) **Sip Pond Watershed**

____ (I) **Laurel Lake Watershed**

____ (J) **Kemp Brook**

____ (K) **Scott and Priest Brooks**



____ **Other (Village, Rail Trail, Quarries, etc):**_____

If you would like more information about this project, please provide your name and contact information.

*Name:*_____*Email:*_____