



Open Space

1. BACKGROUND: The following provides a brief overview of data and trends related to public open space and conservation areas in Town that provide valuable opportunities to connect with our natural environment. Links to websites and programs for more in-depth information are embedded throughout the text.

Data/Trends:

- In addition to 963 acres of Wellhead protection lands, the Town has over 2,300 acres of Conservation and Recreation land, including the beaches. The municipal golf courses add another 600 acres of open space. These lands total approximately 25% of the Town.
- In addition to tidal rivers and saltwater ponds, Yarmouth has 400 acres of fresh water ponds scattered throughout the Town with 8 of the 29 ponds being publicly owned Great Ponds of 10 acres or larger.
- Yarmouth has approximately 290 acres of freshwater wetlands, 324 acres of cranberry bogs, 1,115 acres of saltwater wetlands and 1,500 acres of upland forests, much of it protected in our conservation areas and wellhead protection lands.
- The Town has many conservation areas with [Walking Trails](#) including Callery-Darling, Bud Carter, Dennis Pond, Horse Pond, Meadowbrook, Sandy Pond and Raymond J. Syrjala Conservation Areas.
- The 11 [Salt Water Beaches](#) include Smugglers, Parker's River, South Middle, Sea View, and Seagull Beach along Nantucket Sound; Englewood, Colonial Acres and Bayview Beach on Lewis Bay; Wilbur Park and Windmill Beach along the Bass River; and Bass Hole/Gray's Beach along Crab Creek on the north side of Town. The 4 [Fresh Water Beaches](#) are at Flax Pond, Long Pond, Sandy Pond and Dennis Pond.
- [Parks and Playgrounds](#) have been incorporated at Flax Pond, Long Pond, Sandy Pond, Parkers River Beach, Peter Homer Park, Wilbur Park, Packet Landing and Bass Hole, which also includes the Bass Hole Boardwalk.

Studies and Reports: More detailed information on open space can be found on the Town Website or through this [Link](#).

- [Open Space & Recreation Plan](#) provides information on our open space and recreation areas water resources.

2. EXISTING PROGRAMS/PROJECTS/INITIATIVES: Yarmouth has many existing programs related to open space and conservation.

- The Open Space Committee is charged with reviewing open space options and purchases that may be beneficial to the Town and providing recommendations.
- The Community Preservation Act (CPA) can provide grant funding for open space and recreation projects and has been instrumental in funding important projects throughout Town. Some larger Recreation projects include many improvements to the Flax Pond Recreation Area, Packet Landing Pavilion, design funds for Phase 3 of the Cape Cod Rail Trail, and rehabilitation of the Yarmouth Sailing Center Building. Larger open space preservation projects include the Parker River Tidal Restoration Project (currently under construction), and land purchases at 275 Route 28 to remove the former Yankee Village motel and create an enlarged park with water views,



and preservation of approximately 6 acres off Starbuck Lane for conservation, open space and passive recreation purposes.

- A multi-property Invasive Species Management program continues to treat and remove invasive vegetation to improve scenic vistas and wildlife habitat. Current work has targeted Mill Creek and Chase Brook Parks, Alms House Road, Meadowbrook Boardwalk, Bass Hole Beach and Taylor Bray Farm.
- Yarmouth regularly hosts an AmeriCorps Cape Cod service member who have completed many projects such as conducting a detailed survey of the conservation trails and creating updated trail maps, and preparation of a variety of educational and outreach materials.
- Developed in 2008, the Town's Prescribed Burn Plan focuses on wild fire prevention and control, and land management on 35 acres of Town land through controlled fire/mechanical land management practices.

3. WHAT'S IN THE WORKS:

- 275 Route 28 (Yankee Village Motel) was purchased by the Town in 2019 after the buildings on the site were demolished. Work is ongoing on the development plans for the waterfront site which will include low maintenance vegetation, walking paths and wildflowers and will connect the two adjacent parks, Mill Creek Park and Chase Brook Park. Although originally fully funded through CPA Funds, the Town received a \$400,000 Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) grant for the project to offset the project costs.
- The Town is investigating the purchase of 10 vacant lots along Higgins Crowell Road, some of which are located within 1,000 feet of our drinking water wells. This purchase would preserve these parcels for wellhead protection and conservation. Due diligence is currently being conducted and a variety of funding sources are being considered.
- The Board of Selectmen appointed the Land Disposition Committee to review and provide recommendations on disposition of parcels of underutilized Town owned land to generate additional tax revenue while alleviating the Town of long term maintenance costs. Town Staff is working on a town owned land inventory to identify potential parcels.
- **Riverwalk Park:** The Drive-In Site Utilization Committee (DISUC) worked for years to identify uses for the vacant 22 acre former drive-in site at 669 Route 28 before settling on the creation of a Riverwalk Park along the Parkers River, with walking trails, a looped Boardwalk along the marsh and outdoor event space. This project is in development and will create a high quality recreation and open space destination that highlights our unique connection to the water.
- Evaluate expansion of the Prescribed Burn Plan to additional large tracks of land near developed properties that may benefit from wild fire fuel hazard reduction, and ecological management.

4. THINGS TO THINK ABOUT: Now that you have had an opportunity to learn a little bit about Open Space in Yarmouth, bring your thoughts and ideas to the Workshop or include them in your Survey responses. Some things to think about include:

- What strengths do we have regarding our Open Space?
- What challenges do you see related to Open Space?
- What opportunities could we tap into to address these challenges?
- Is the Town spending its time and resources on the right projects or initiatives?
- If not, where should we be spending our time and resources?
- How does Open Space impact your vision for Yarmouth's future?
- Should the Town acquire more Open Space, or do we have enough?
- What type of parcels/locations would be beneficial to purchase for open space/conservation?
- How should we fund maintenance of our conservation areas?

