

Northfield Open Space Committee

2011 Annual Report

The Northfield Town Forest saw lots of action in 2012, with members of the Open Space Committee (OSC) participating in most, such as: a bio-blitz in the spring, construction of a kiosk (at the parking lot at the top of Gulf Road) in the fall, and planning for a new pedestrian trail loop. These activities were organized mainly by Mike Barry of the Conservation Commission and Willa Caughey, an Ameri-corp associate at Mount Grace. A number of additional Town Forest activities are planned for 2013.

The major OSC objective during the year was to complete the revision of the Northfield Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP). Without FRCOG or town funding for this revision, the OSC members did all the work, with help on mapping from Andrea Buglione, an Americorp associate with the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership. The OSC also worked with the Recreation Commission on the recreation part of the draft OSRP. The 2012 draft revision was completed and sent to the Department of Conservation Services office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for official review.

As part of the work on the OSRP revision, the OSC held a town-wide public forum February 15, 2012 which was well attended. The forum yielded useful data which augmented the results of the 2011 town-wide *Survey on Open Space and Recreation*. Results of the survey and forum are available on the OSC page on the town website. Two highlights of this revised OSRP, based on the survey and forum results, are investigations toward establishing a Northfield Community Park and increased documentation and marking of trails. The OSC web page links to meeting minutes, the Open Space and Recreation Plan, maps and other materials that may be of interest.

During 2012 the OSC also:

- Asked the Selectboard to advocate for the conservation of the Mill brook property owned by the NMH school,
- At the Selectboard's request, coordinated two "town right-of-first-refusal" purchases of Agricultural Preservation restriction (APR) properties,
- Worked with John Lepore on the PVRs Resilient Land Management Plan project,
- Co-sponsored the Northfield Trails Association series of Sunday hikes in Northfield,
- Monitored the relicensing process for the Northfield Mountain pumped storage facility.

The OSRP specifies a number of ongoing responsibilities, including:

- Citizen Stewardship: 2012 is the sixth year for the Citizen Stewardship Award; the 2012 awardee is Robert Pasteris for his work with the town on obtaining *Green Community* status for Northfield.
- Open Space Conservation: The OSC continues to track and promote various opportunities to conserve open space in Northfield. In this connection the OSC continues its strong working relationships with the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership.
- Stream Monitoring: The OSC continues to partner with a local non-profit group, Greater Northfield Watershed Association (GNWA), on issues of mutual interests.
- Trail Work: The OSC continues to partner with the Northfield Trails Association on issues of trail maintenance, signage, documentation, etc.

The full OSRP, OSC membership, meeting times, and meeting minutes, as well as other documents, are on the OSC page of the town's website, www.northfield.ma.us. The OSC has representatives on five other Northfield committees: Agricultural Commission, Community Preservation Committee, Conservation Commission, Historical Commission, and the Planning Board.

Respectfully submitted by members of the Open Space Committee:

Michael Barry, Joanne McGee, Susan Ross, Kate Rossiter, Jennifer Tufts, Jerrold *Wagener*