

# Northfield Open Space Committee

## 2011 Annual Report

During 2011 the Open Space Committee (OSC) met nine times. The major objective during the year was to make progress on revising the Northfield Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP), approved by the town in November 2005; the OSRP is scheduled to expire in November 2012.

The original 2005 OSRP development was funded by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG). For this 2012 revision there are no FRCOG funds, nor town of Northfield funds, for this purpose, so the OSC members are doing all the work of the revision.

A major requirement of the OSRP revision, as mandated by state regulation, is a new town-wide survey. The OSC revised/updated the 2004 survey and mailed it to 1366 Northfield households in early September; the survey was also available on SurveyMonkey. A 41-page document detailing the results of the survey is available on the OSC website; also on the website is a 7-page summary of the results.

A public information forum will provide additional community input in early 2012. The OSC will use the survey and public forum results to revise the goals, objectives, and action items of the OSRP. Another public session is planned for later in the year to review the complete proposed OSRP revision.

During 2011 the OSC also:

- participated in discussions involving rerouting of a bike trail in West Northfield,
- participated in discussions involving the Mill brook property,
- discussed with the Energy Committee the proposed Green Community solar overlay district,
- met with John Lepore of the PVRS Resilient Land Management Plan project,
- co-sponsored with the Northfield Trails Association a series of Sunday hikes in Northfield,
- put on hold the Riverbank Trails project due to abutter resistance.

The OSC continues its strong working relationships with the Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership. During 2011 the OSC worked closely with these organizations to arrange community meetings regarding the “Four Rivers” Forest legacy application.

The OSRP specifies a number of ongoing responsibilities, including:

- Citizen Stewardship: The Citizen Stewardship Award, an annual award initiated in 2007, was awarded for the fifth time in 2011. The awardees this year are William and Christine Copeland for donating a “forever wild” conservation restriction (CR) on 185 acres.
- Open Space Conservation: The OSC continues to track and promote various opportunities to conserve open space in Northfield. The primary conservation achievement this year was the 185-acre forever-wild CR noted above, which the Copelands have named Masson Ridge.
- 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](http://www.northfield.ma.us). The OSC has representatives on three other Northfield committees: Agricultural Commission, Community Preservation Committee, 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