

SECTION 8: GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1: Protect present and future water resources

Objective 1A: Adopt a Lake/Pond Overlay District in order to protect the town's surface water resources from the negative impacts of dense residential development.

In 1995, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission prepared a growth management report for the town entitled Holland: Land, Water, People, In Concert. One of the report's main recommendations was for the Town of Holland to adopt a water protection overlay district in order to protect the town's surface waters, especially the waters of Hamilton Reservoir. The 2004 Holland Open Space and Recreation Plan supports the adoption of a Lake/Pond Overlay District for several reasons:

Continued Degradation of Water Quality at Hamilton Reservoir

A number of conditions have resulted in the continuing degradation of water quality at Hamilton Reservoir, the town's most valuable surface water resource. New waterfront development continues to place increasing stress on the reservoir's ecosystem. The last remaining large parcel of land adjacent to the reservoir is scheduled for development. With no large parcels of open space land left to act as a natural buffer, the reservoir ecosystem receives a high percentage of storm water run-off that has not been conditioned by ecological processes, such as filtration and bio-remediation by open space land.

Much of the dense residential development surrounding the reservoir is located on steep slopes and on soils that are subject to moderate to severe erosion. Dirt roads and driveways serve a significant number of these residences. During periods of heavy rain, storm run-off carries soil from these unimproved roads into the reservoir leading to sedimentation. Due to its relatively shallow depth, the reservoir is especially vulnerable to the negative effects of sedimentation.

Pollution from residential sources also poses a serious threat to water quality at Hamilton Reservoir. Inadequate or faulty septic systems can release effluent into the reservoir's waters. In addition to posing a threat to human health, the effluent often contains phosphates. In order to adapt to the increased levels of phosphates, the reservoir ecosystem compensates by increasing plant growth and this can lead to rampant weed expansion throughout the reservoir.

Fiscal Considerations

Establishing a Lake/Pond Overlay District is one of the most cost effective methods for preventing the further degradation of water quality in Hamilton Reservoir and other water bodies such as Lake Siog. Alternative solutions, such as a municipal sewer system and a treatment plant or periodic dredging operations, are costly and Holland does not currently possess the municipal

funds to implement such measures. An overlay district would begin to address the major environmental issues relating to the degradation of water quality in the town's surface waters without requiring a major financial investment.

Effectiveness

If administered properly and consistently, the regulations for the overlay district would assist in reducing the threats to the water quality created by dense residential development along pond and lake shorelines. Because the bylaw's regulations would be legally enforceable, conformance to the regulations by the public would likely be high. The bylaw could be a powerful growth management tool for the Town of Holland to begin addressing the serious threats to its valuable surface water resources.

The key to the adoption of a Lake/Pond Overlay District is an informed citizenry that recognizes that the benefits of an overlay district outweigh the additional restrictions imposed on lakefront properties and certain uses adjacent to water bodies. This plan recommends the implementation of an education campaign to inform the citizens of Holland of the major benefits of adopting an overlay district for ponds and lakes. In order to implement the campaign and increase its effectiveness, this plan strongly recommends that the town develop a partnership with the Hamilton Reservoir Association.

The education campaign could emphasize the central role that Hamilton Reservoir plays in the community, particularly its economic role. Residents should be made aware that postponing action on protecting the reservoir could result in greater financial consequences and greater restrictions in the future. The need for strong support from community members is essential since adopting a Lake/Pond Overlay District will ultimately require a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting. The text of the Lake/Pond Overlay District proposed by PVPC in the report Holland: Land, Water, People, In Concert is included in the Appendix.

Objective 1B: Adopt a Seasonal Conversion Bylaw

In addition to adopting a Lake/Pond Overlay District, this plan recommends the adoption of a Seasonal Conservation Bylaw. The conversion of seasonal homes to year-round homes puts additional stresses on lake and pond ecosystems, particularly if septic systems are inadequate to accommodate a year-round residence. A Seasonal Conversion Bylaw requires that specific standards be met before a seasonal home is converted to a year-round residence. The text of the Seasonal Conversion Bylaw proposed by PVPC in the report Holland: Land, Water, People, In Concert is included in the Appendix.

Objective 1C: Permanently protect lands adjacent to Hamilton Reservoir

Since the waterfront property surrounding Hamilton Reservoir has been almost completely developed, land in the general vicinity of the reservoir is likely to become increasingly attractive

to developers. The town should strive to permanently protect as much open space land in the general area of Hamilton Reservoir as possible in order to reduce environmental stresses on the reservoir ecosystem.. Although preserving land in the general area of the reservoir is not as effective as preserving land along the reservoir's shoreline, these land purchases can assist in protecting water quality at the reservoir.

The town possesses numerous small lots in the Hamilton Reservoir area. These lots were essentially abandoned by their previous owners because the lots were "un-buildable". In order to secure permanent protection status for these small lots, the town should place these lots under the jurisdiction of the Conservation Commission.

Objective 1D: Enter into a partnership with the Town of Brimfield to protect the aquifer recharge area that supplies water to the medium flow aquifer located in the northern section of town.

This important underground aquifer is located on the borders of Holland and Brimfield. The section of the aquifer in Holland is located under layers of gneiss and schist. Due to the impermeability of this type of geologic feature, it is unlikely that development directly over the aquifer will pose a threat to its water supply. However, most of the recharge area for this aquifer is located in the Town of Brimfield. Protecting the aquifer requires protecting the aquifer recharge area that supplies it. The town should enter into a partnership with Brimfield in order to permanently protect the land above the aquifer recharge area.

Goal 2: Provide recreational opportunities for residents

Objective 2A: Establish a committee to pursue the acquisition of additional public playing fields for the town.

In 1995, Reflections of the Future: The Holland Master Planning Study recommended the acquisition of new playing fields for Holland as a major recreational priority. The need for additional playing fields is also stated in the 2002 Annual Report of the Holland Recreation Committee (Annual 2002 p, 40). The rise in the popularity of team sports, particularly soccer, has increased the need for additional playing fields in Holland.

Objective 2B: Establish a committee to map the numerous trails and bike routes in the northern section of town and develop a trail network that connects the Town Center and the Lake Siog (Holland Pond) area.

A trail and bike network that connects the Town Center and Lake Siog area would be a valuable addition to the town's recreational assets. The trail network would expand the town's recreational offerings for residents and would reinforce Holland's image as a destination for recreational opportunities. The ultimate goal of this project would be to secure permanent

protection for the trail network through land acquisitions or conservation restrictions. Fortunately, a significant amount of land in the Lake Siog area is already under governmental management. This project could be started as part of the Master Planning Process that is scheduled for Fall 2004.

Goal 3: Provide wildlife habitat

Objective 3A: Secure permanent protection for open space lands that connect existing habitats and therefore create a wildlife corridor in the western section of town

The Town of Holland is dominated by forestlands and therefore possesses large tracts of contiguous wildlife habitat. Enhancing the effectiveness of these habitat areas for the preservation of wildlife involves securing permanent protection status for these lands and creating a wildlife corridor by linking these lands together. Wildlife corridors are especially effective for protecting migrating wildlife and wildlife that require a wide feeding area. The western section of Holland is well suited for a wildlife corridor since it already possesses substantial permanently protected wildlife habitat and a limited number of roadways. In order to create a wildlife corridor in this area, the town should identify undeveloped parcels of land that can act as links and then secure permanent protection status for these parcels. The ultimate goal would be to create a corridor that extends up to the northern border of town and connects to Brimfield State Forest. The Norcross Wildlife Foundation and the Opacum Land Trust are two conservation organizations that are actively seeking to protect wildlife habitat and open space lands in the region. In order to increase their effectiveness in acquiring permanent protection for land parcels, the town should coordinate their efforts with these two organizations.

Goal 4: Preserve the town's rural character, natural areas, scenic views, and historic sites

Objective 4A: Implement design recommendations for the Town Center presented in The 1995 Holland Master Planning Study

The Town Center/Public Facilities section of Reflections of the Future: The Holland Master Planning Study provides recommendations and a model for the future development of the Town Center. These recommendations provide a useful framework for developing the Town Center while continuing to protect critical historical and natural resources located in the area.

Objective 4B: Map the location and historic sites in the original Town Center area and gather personal histories from senior members of the community

The timeframe for collecting personal accounts relating to Holland's past history and development is closing, as senior members of the community grow older. An effort to collect this historical information before it is lost forever should be undertaken by the town. The project could be undertaken as a class project or independent study by youth in the community. A Holland Historical Committee could provide guidance and expertise to the researchers.

Objective 4C: Form a committee to study the possibility of adopting a Historic Overlay District for the Town Center

Holland has a dense cluster of historic buildings and sites located in and around its Town Center. The town should consider creating an historic overlay zoning district to provide a higher level of protection for these valuable historic assets. The goal of an historic overlay district is not necessarily to prevent development adjacent to historic structures, but to regulate this development to ensure that it does not detract from nearby historic structures and sites.

SECTION 9: FIVE-YEAR ACTION PLAN

1. Protect present and future water resources – Actions:

(2004–2005)

Conduct an education campaign focusing on the benefits of adopting a Lake/Pond Overlay District and Seasonal Conversion bylaw for the town.

Who: Open Space and Recreation Committee, Hamilton Reservoir Association, Conservation Commission.

(2005-2006)

Develop a Lake/Pond Overlay District and Seasonal Conversion bylaw designed to protect surface water resources. The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) can provide guidance in the development of the regulations contained in the bylaw.

Who: Open Space and Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board

(2006–2008)

Present a Lake/Pond Overlay District and Seasonal Conversion bylaw to Town Meeting for a vote by residents.

Who: Board of Selectmen, Planning Board

(2004-2008)

Identify and track parcels of open space land adjacent to Hamilton Reservoir for possible acquisition by the town. Begin transferring small lots owned by the town in the area of Hamilton Reservoir to the Conservation Commission in order to secure permanent protection for these lands.

Who: Open Space and Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen

(2004–2008)

Approach the Town of Brimfield concerning the establishment of a partnership to protect the aquifer recharge area that supplies water to the medium flow aquifer located in the northern section of town.

Who: Open Space and Recreation Committee

2. Provide recreational opportunities for residents – Actions:

(2004-2008)

Establish a committee to pursue the acquisition of additional public playing fields for the town.

Who: Recreation Committee, Park Commission

(2004-2006)

Establish a committee to map the numerous trails and bike routes in the northern section of town and develop a trail network that connects the Town Center and the Lake Siog (Holland Pond) area.

Who: Open Space and Recreation Committee, Recreation Committee, Park Commission

3. Provide wildlife habitat – Actions:

(2004-2005)

Identify open space lands that would serve to connect existing habitat and therefore create a wildlife corridor in the western section of the town.

Who: Open Space and Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission

(2005-2008)

Secure permanent protection for open space lands that connect existing habitats and therefore create a wildlife corridor in the western section of town.

Who: Open Space and Recreation Committee, Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen

4. Preserve the town’s rural character, natural areas, scenic views, and historic sites – Actions:

(2004-2008)

Ensure that town officials and committees refer to the design recommendations for the Town Center presented in the 1995 Holland Master Planning Study when planning renovations or construction in the center of town.

Who: Board of Selectmen

(2004-2006)

Map the location and historic sites in the original Town Center area and gather personal histories from senior members of the community.

Who: Holland Historical Committee (ad hoc committee)

(2004-2006)

Form a committee to study the possibility of adopting a Historic Overlay District for the Town Center. Committee would present their findings to the Select Board.

Who: Holland Historical Committee (ad hoc committee)

SECTION 10: PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public Comments on the 2004 Holland Open Space and Recreation Plan are located in the archived copy of the plan at Holland Town Hall.

SECTION 11: REFERENCES

References for the 2004 Holland Open Space and Recreation Plan are included in the Appendix.