

SECTION 9

TEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Ten-Year Action Plan fulfills the Open Space and Recreation Plan objectives. The objectives address open space, natural resources, recreation, and community development needs because the quantity and quality of accessible open space relates directly to the state of Heath's environment; the town's recreational opportunities; and the quality of future development in Heath.

The objectives are listed in the far left column of Table 9-1 and are followed in the same row by recommended actions in order of priority, responsible board or group, start date, and potential funding sources. By implementing the recommended actions, each objective will begin to be realized.

Implementing the Open Space and Recreation Plan will not only require the participation of the Open Space Committee, but it will also necessarily involve many other town groups, including: the Select Board, Planning Board, Highway Department, Board of Health, Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Committee, and the Historical Commission.

Many of these actions may be constrained by a lack of volunteer time, in addition to funding limitations. Where money is required, such as to permanently protect open space, it does not have to be provided by the town alone. State and federal governmental agencies, private non-profit conservation agencies, and foundations are potential sources of funding. These sources are more likely to invest in land protection projects that have a broad base of community support.

A successful Open Space and Recreation Program, under the primary stewardship of an Open Space Committee, can achieve all of the action steps listed below over time. However, it will be important to establish priorities for the first seven years. The Open Space Planning Committee has prioritized action steps by the goals and objectives listed in the previous chapter. These action steps are represented



West Branch North River (Franklin Land Trust)

graphically (where possible) on the Ten-Year Action Plan Map and are outlined in greater detail in Table 9-1. The most important objectives in order of priority are:

- Develop and promote trails around Town to increase interconnections and promote the community's natural resources and historic landscapes.
- Support the development of solar arrays and other forms of alternative energy production.
- Maintain rural character of Heath.
- Protect drinking water and the general quality of Heath's waters.
- Encourage opportunities for public social gatherings for Heath residents.

Table 9-1: Recommended Actions of the Open Space and Recreation Plan

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
GOAL 1: Protect Heath's scenic and historic rural landscape.				
Preserve cleared land, including land in pasture and cultivation, as a visible component of Heath's landscape.	Support agriculture by implementing recommendations from FRCOG 2017 Community Food Assessment, such as Hilltown Farmers Market.	Ag Commission	Ongoing	Town funds, State funds (Mass Food Trust or Ventures Program), Private funds, Volunteer time
	Maintain inventory of farms in Heath and do an analysis of which have prime farmland soils.	Ag Commission	Ongoing	Town funds, DLTA, Franklin Land Trust, State funds (MVP grants)
Protect and promote Heath's historic sites.	Explore the adoption of the Community Preservation Act in order to access state funds for historic preservation.	Select Board, Historical Commission	2025	Town funds, State funds (DLTA), Private funds, Volunteer time
Maintain rural character of Heath.	Educate landowners about available low interest loans and programs to assist with distressed housing to maintain rural character.	Franklin County Regional Housing & Redevelopment Authority, Select Board, Board of Health	2021	Town funds, State Funds, CDBG funds

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
GOAL 2: Assure that Heath's natural resources are of excellent quality and that species have high quality habitat.				
Protect drinking water and the general quality of Heath's waters.	Continue to implement Heath's Wetlands Protection Bylaws.	Conservation Commission	Ongoing	Town funds
	Continue to implement Heath's regulations for Water Supply Protection Districts.	Conservation Commission, Planning Board	Ongoing	Town funds, State funds (DWSP)
	Consider how to prevent erosion from stream banks, trails, and dirt roads and discuss with user groups possibilities for protecting sensitive areas.	Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Parks and Recreation Committee	2022	Town funds, State funds, Private funds, Volunteer time
	Investigate ways to mitigate the use of road salt in the winters.	Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works	2021	Town funds, State funds (DLTA)
	Investigate and communicate alternative septic technologies and funding sources.	Board of Health	2021	Town funds, State funds (DEP Water Resource Grants)
	Monitor and enforce herbicide use at Papoose Lake.	Conservation Commission, Board of Health	Ongoing	Town funds
Seek to protect priority habitat and corridors.	Gather data, map, and establish protected wildlife travel corridors linking core wildlife and recreation areas.	Conservation Commission	2024	Private funds, State Funds (LAND or Conservation Partnership grants)
	Work with area universities to map wetlands and vernal pools.	Conservation Commission	2024	Private funds, State funds (MVP), Volunteer time
	Adopt a long-term plan to manage town-owned conservation areas.	Conservation Commission, Select Board	2026	Town funds, State funds

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
Educate residents about their role in enhancing the resiliency of the landscape.	Provide landowners with information about invasive species and ways to mitigate them.	Conservation Commission, Board of Health	2021	State funds, Towns funds (MVP), Volunteer time
	Educate owners about grants available for creation of forest plans under Ch. 61.	Conservation Commission	2021	State funds (DCR Forest Stewardship Planning Grant)
	Educate farm owners about the use of fertilizers near stream corridors.	Conservation Commission	2022	Town funds, State funds, UMass Cooperative Extension
Support the development of solar arrays and other forms of alternative energy production.	Encourage the installation of solar energy collectors for residential, commercial, and municipal sites.	Select Board, Planning Board	2021	Town funds, State funds (Green Communities) Volunteer time
GOAL 3: Enable Heath residents to maintain strong connections with each other and the Town.				
Develop and promote trails around Town to increase interconnections and promote the community's natural resources and historic landscapes.	Continue to explore possibility of creating a trail system and amenities on the Shapiro Lands, including signage and parking.	Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation Committee	2021	Town funds, Private funds, State funds (Land and Water Cons. Funds), Volunteer time
	Make resources available to landowners about the benefits and options of private stewardship of land (ex. information about landowner liability for trail usage, tax options, etc.).	Conservation Commission, Parks & Recreation Committee,	2022	Town funds, Private funds, Volunteer time,

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE BOARD/GROUP	START DATE	POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES
	Map existing trails in town.	Parks & Recreation Committee	2024	Town funds, State funds (MassTrails), Volunteer time
Encourage opportunities for public social gatherings for Heath residents.	Create themed hikes throughout the year on trails in town.	Parks & Recreation Committee, Council on Aging	2022	Town funds, Private funds, Volunteer time
	Investigate possibilities for an outdoor swimming area, either in town or in neighboring communities.	Parks & Recreation Committee	2020	Town funds, Volunteer time
	Maintain and improve Heath Community Park and basketball court.	Parks & Recreation Committee	Ongoing	Town funds, State funds (PARC)
	Maintain Elementary School Playground and fields for community events and programming.	Parks & Recreation Committee	Ongoing	Town funds, State funds (PARC)
	Continue to encourage various sport races as an annual event.	Parks & Recreation Committee	Ongoing	Town funds, Private funds, Volunteer time
	Plan more seasonal town-wide events.	All committees and boards	Ongoing	Town funds, State funds (Mass Cultural Council), Volunteer time
Improve access to open space for all residents.	Implement findings from ADA Evaluation in appendix to ensure that recreational and open space facilities are accessible to all.	Conservation Commission, Parks and Recreation Committee, Select Board	2026	Town funds, State funds (MOD – ADA)

**Continue to implement Heath's regulations
for Water Supply Protection Districts**

**Continue to implement Heath's
Wetlands Protection Bylaws**

**Maintain inventory of
farms in Heath and do
an analysis of which have
prime farmland soils.**

**Create themed hikes
throughout the year on
trails through town.**

**Encourage the installation
of solar energy collectors
for residential, commercial
and municipal sites.**

**Monitor and enforce herbicide
use at Papoose Lake**

**Maintain and improve
Heath Community Park
and basketball court.**

**Continue to explore the
possibility of creating a
trail system and amenities
on the Shapiro Lands,
including signage and
parking.**

**Adopt a long-term plan to
manage town-owned
conservation areas.**

- Permanently Protected Open Space
- Building Footprint
- Public Water Supply
- Public Water Supply Protection Area
- Road
- River, Stream
- Water Body
- Wetland



Note: The Heath OSRP contains many action items. Many of them apply to policies or locations that are Town-wide. The action items depicted on this map are associated with specific locations. Please see Section 9 of the OSRP for the complete Ten-Year Action Plan.

Town of Heath Open Space & Recreation Plan 2020

Action Plan

January 2020

0 0.5 1 Miles

Sources: Map produced by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department. GIS data includes MassDOT, MassGIS and FRCD. Open Space data provided by the Town of Heath. Display boundaries are approximate and are intended for planning purposes only. Use is for local use only.



**Franklin Regional
Council of Governments**