9. SEVEN-YEAR ACTION PLAN

The Royalston Open Space & Recreation Committee is proud of its success in fulfilling much of the action plan put forth in the Town's first five-year plan, issued in 2004. Specifically, the committee and other town entities completed the following actions:

- Created a permanent Open Space & Recreation Committee
- Established criteria for evaluating open space acquisitions
- Prioritized desirable parcels for watershed protection, habitat and trail networks, and other uses; set up a database of desired land parcels and who owns them
- Prepared educational materials regarding open space and natural resources in Town
- Conducted public outreach and education programs informing residents of the Town's desire to acquire and protect specific open space parcels
- Worked with the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Partnership to inventory and assess properties of historical and cultural interest and document their unique features and significance
- Developed a website[22] that provides information about the working of the Open Space & Recreation Committee and a link to the North Quabbin Woods website, with extensive information for residents and visitors about outdoor opportunities
- Via the town newsletter and the local newspaper, disseminated information about committee projects and open space issues
- Conducted a new public opinion survey and reviewed and updated the Open Space & Recreation Plan
- Spearheaded the successful campaign to adopt the Community Preservation Act.

As the Town moves forward with the new seven-year plan, it should continue to focus on the substantive issues of open space and recreation preservation, acquisition, enhancement, management, and maintenance. Three areas in particular are essential for any future progress towards meeting the goals of this Plan:

- Continuing to nurture "buy-in" from Town staff, boards and residents that open space is a central and lasting priority for the Town, while acknowledging that there are competing needs.
- Continuing to explore sources of funding and other support for open space and recreation activities and programs. The Town of Royalston is a small rural community with few municipal resources to achieve the goals of this Plan. Financial resources may be found in the Community Preservation Fund and in federal, state, and private grants. Such initiatives as local sponsorship, donated community labor, or park "adoption" could provide additional support.
- Build capacity in the Town of Royalston by engaging a greater proportion of town residents in Open Space and Recreation planning

[22] http://www.royalston-ma.gov/OSRC/indexopen.htm

In the following seven-year action plan for 2010-2016, the column marked “Priority” gives an indication of the weight given to this item in obtaining the overall goals and objectives of this plan (outlined in **§8**). Priority can be understood to relate to both the “level of importance” of items and the necessary sequencing of them (i.e., without completing the first priority items, it may be difficult to proceed to the latter ones). In the tables, 1=highest/first priority, 4 = lowest/last priority. Locations of key action plan items are highlighted on **Map 15**. Details of the target area where we will work to obtain trail easements for the Mattabesset-Metacomet-Monadnock / New England National Scenic Trail are shown on **Map 16**.

Year 1 (2010)

Action	Priority	Completion Deadline	Lead Agency*	Comments**
Establish a working relationship with the Community Preservation Committee	1	2010	OSRC	*Three members of the OSRC are already members of the Royalston CPC*
Follow up on town acquisition of U-parcels (parcels of unknown ownership identified in 2005)	1	2012	OSRC & BOS	
Begin research into old roads in town, in order to identify which are still public ways, which are abandoned, and which are discontinued	1	2015	OSRC & PB	
Conduct research into grant opportunities, particularly regarding creation and maintenance of trails and creation of a riverside part in South Royalston	1	ongoing	OSRC	
Continue to disseminate information in a variety of media to nurture knowledge of and support for open spaces	1	ongoing	OSRC	
Continue to maintain website	1	ongoing	OSRC	
Continue to monitor any changes in Chapter 61 status of land parcels in town	1	ongoing	OSRC & BOS	
Work in partnership with Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust and state and federal conservation agencies to protect open space in Royalston, particularly those parcels identified as priorities	1	ongoing	OSRC	*Also an HLI priority*
Work in partnership with National Scenic Trails Committee to prioritize actions for Metacomet-Monadnock National Scenic Trail section in Royalston	1	ongoing	OSRC & CPC	*National Scenic Trails Committee is new as of Oct. 2009*
Engage in the zoning review process and work with other town boards to gain acceptance of amendments	2	ongoing	PB, BOS, OSRC, CC	
Continue to maintain and manage existing facilities	3	ongoing	BOS	

*BOS: Board of Selectmen; CC: Conservation Commission; CPC: Community Preservation Committee; DPW: Department of Public Works; OSRC: Open Space & Recreation Committee; PB: Planning Board
**Some of these indicate overlap with recommendations and priorities of the Heritage Landscape Inventory (HLI).

Year 2 (2011)

Action	Priority	Completion Deadline	Lead Agency	Comments
Improve basketball courts at Town Hall and Whitney Hall	1	2012	OSRC & CPC	
Explore options for a Town swimming area	1	2012	OSRC	*Options include Tully Lake, Doane's Falls, and the Millers River; requires cooperation with owners*
Work with landowners whose land includes portions of the Metacomet-Monadnock National Scenic Trail to ensure trail access	1	2016	OSRC & CPC	
Continue to monitor any changes in Chapter 61 status of land parcels in town	1	ongoing	OSRC & BOS	
Explore the feasibility of creating trails to link the Town Common to Jacob's Hill Reservation and the associated ledges	2	2013	OSRC with TTOR	*HLI recommendation*
Complete inventory of town's stone walls and explore the possibility of enacting a bylaw to protect internal stone walls	2	2016 and ongoing*	OSRC & PB	*Roadside walls already are protected*
Organize field trips to the town's public lands	2	ongoing	OSRC	*Coordinate with Royalston Cultural Council and Athol Bird and Nature Club*
Continue to explore access to the Millers River in South Royalston, with the goal of creating a riverside park, improving the appearance of the discontinued bridge, linking trails to the state's Wildlife Management Area, and possibly creating a swimming area	2	ongoing	OSRC	*Coordinate with South Royalston Improvement Corporation*
Continue to maintain and manage existing facilities	3	ongoing	BOS	

*Royalston resident Larry Siegel is working on an inventory and map of all stone walls in town. The OSRC will work with him to convert it to digital form

Year 3 (2012)

Action	Priority	Completion Deadline	Lead Agency	Comments
Create a map of public lands and trails in Royalston	1	2015	OSRC	
Work with MassWildilife to prepare a plan for enhancing access to the river and celebrating its natural and cultural history	1	2016	OSRC	*HLI recommendation*
Work with landowners whose land includes portions of the Metacomet-Monadnock National Scenic Trail to ensure trail access	1	2016	OSRC & CPC	
Continue to monitor any changes in Chapter 61 status of land parcels in town	1	ongoing	OSRC & BOS	
In accordance with the 2003 ADA study, make recreation areas, facilities and programs more accessible to the public	1	ongoing	DPW/ADA Coordinator	*Requires new funds. Benefit concert (coordinate with Royalston Cultural Council?)*
Organize children's activities on public lands	2	ongoing	OSRC	
Continue to maintain and manage existing facilities	3	ongoing	BOS	
Periodically assess and evaluate recreational needs and resources	3	ongoing	OSRC	

Year 4 (2013)

Action	Priority	Completion Deadline	Lead Agency	Comments
Develop easements with landowners whose land includes portions of the Metacomet-Monadnock National Scenic Trail to ensure trail access	1	2016	OSRC & CPC	
Continue to monitor any changes in Chapter 61 status of land parcels in town	1	ongoing	OSRC & BOS	
Continue to maintain and manage existing facilities	1	ongoing	BOS/OSRC	
Periodically assess and evaluate recreational needs and resources	1	ongoing	OSRC	

Year 5 (2014)

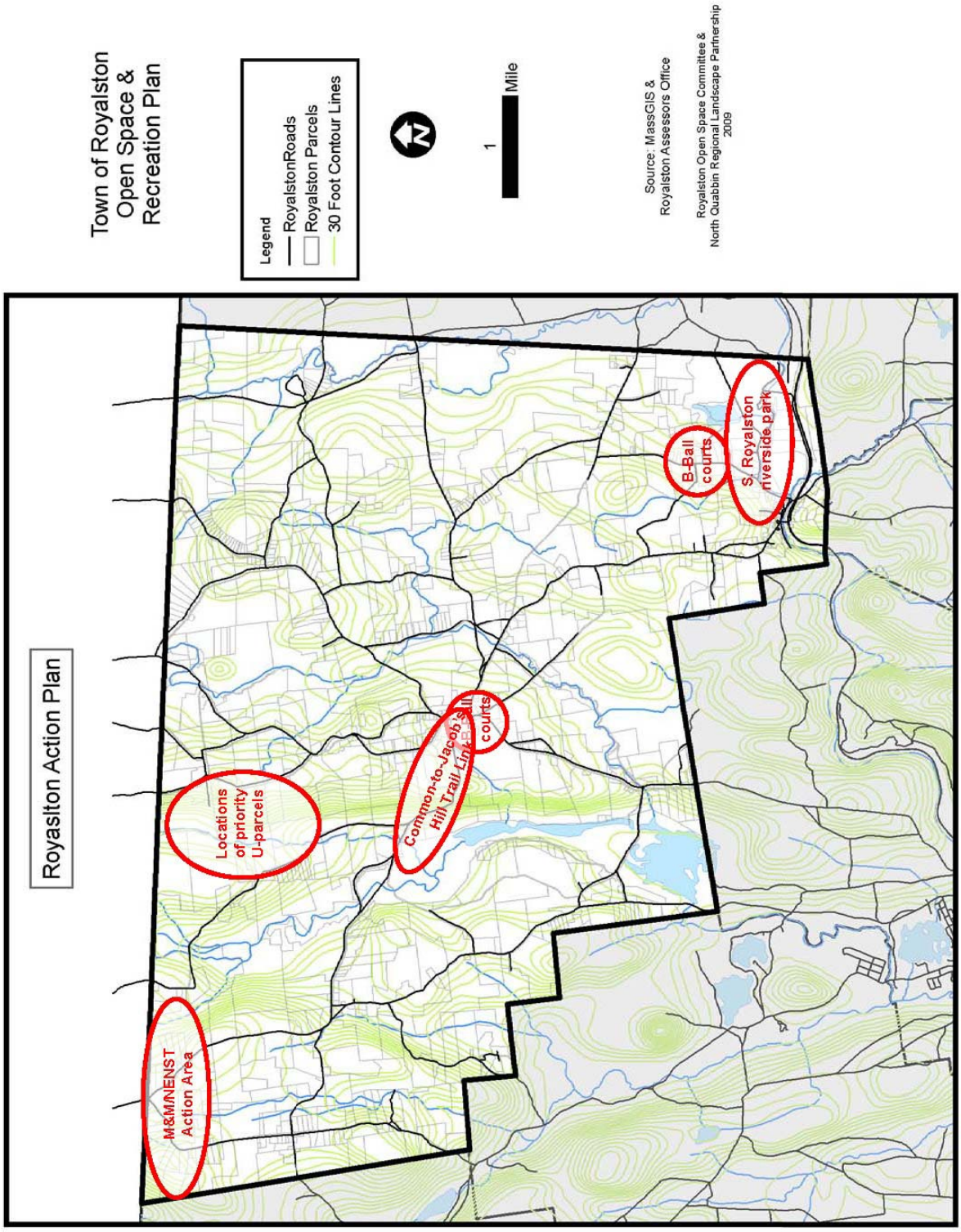
Action	Priority	Completion Deadline	Lead Agency	Comments
Continue to secure easements with landowners whose land includes portions of the Metacomet-Monadnock National Scenic Trail to ensure trail access	1	2016	OSRC & CPC	
Continue to monitor any changes in Chapter 61 status of land parcels in town	1	ongoing	OSRC & BOS	
Continue to maintain and manage existing facilities	1	ongoing	BOS/OSRC	
Periodically assess and evaluate recreational needs and resources	1	ongoing	OSRC	

Year 6 (2015)

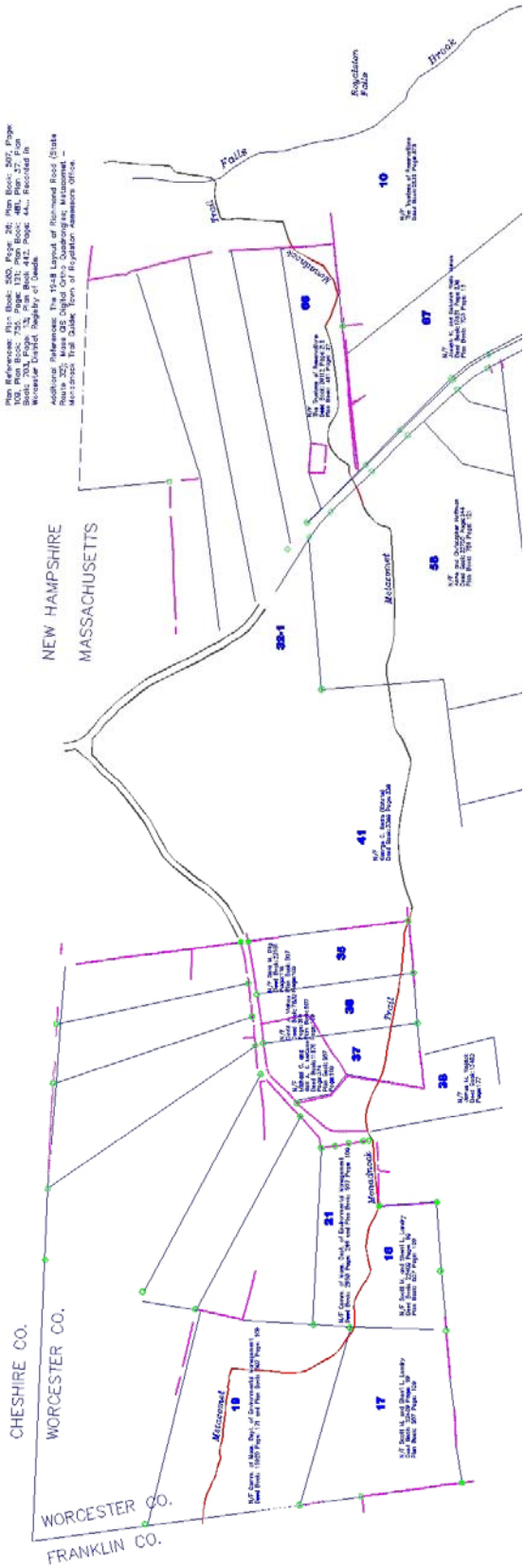
Action	Priority	Completion Deadline	Lead Agency	Comments
Finalize easements with landowners whose land includes portions of the Metacomet-Monadnock National Scenic Trail to ensure trail access	1	2016	OSRC & CPC	
Continue to monitor any changes in Chapter 61 status of land parcels in town	1	ongoing	OSRC & BOS	
Continue to maintain and manage existing facilities	1	ongoing	BOS/OSRC	
Periodically assess and evaluate recreational needs and resources	1	ongoing	OSRC	

Year 7 (2016)

Action	Priority	Completion Deadline	Lead Agency	Comments
Continue to monitor any changes in Chapter 61 status of land parcels in town	1	ongoing	OSRC & BOS	
Continue to maintain and manage existing facilities	1	ongoing	BOS/OSRC	
Periodically assess and evaluate recreational needs and resources	1	ongoing	OSRC	
Start the process for reviewing and updating the Open Space & Recreation Plan for when it expires	1	ongoing	OSRC	



Map 15 – Action Plan map. See Map 16 for additional detail on the Metacomet-Monadnock New England National Scenic Trail action area, and see Appendix F for additional detail on the U-parcels.



Map 16 – Detail of the northwest corner of Royalston crossed by the Mattabessett-Metacomet-Monadnock Trail / New England National Scenic Trail. Orange lines indicate well-surveyed portions of the trail with known access, and grey lines indicate poorly-surveyed portions with unknown access. It is a high priority of this plan to clearly survey and identify the entire portion of the trail in Royalston and to ensure trail easements across its entire length in Royalston