

Chapter 5: Strategic Action Plan

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Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of strategic actions necessary to achieve the open space goals of the Gardiner community. A land conservation program is the central feature of this strategy, which is backed by sufficient long-term funding sources and is balanced with smart planning for future development in the community. Undertaking the conservation program with the philosophy of partnership, balance and equity with landowners and other conservation partners is critical to its success.

A Philosophy for Land Conservation

A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Fulfilling the land conservation goals set forth in this plan can not be achieved by the town alone. It will require partnership of a monumental scale, with opportunities and roles for all. Landowners are the primary partners in conservation, and all actions undertaken through this program should be conducted with equity and consideration for their fiduciary responsibilities. Other partners in conservation include community members, business leaders, investors, land trusts and conservation organizations, and county, state and federal agencies. A partnership approach will help to leverage conservation efforts to maximize the public and private benefits of open space in the community. A more detailed summary of regional efforts and partners is provided in portions of Chapters 1 and 2.

Neighboring communities, including the Towns of New Paltz, Plattekill, Lloyd, Rochester, Wawarsing, and Shawangunk, should also be considered partners in conservation, with opportunities to share resources such as staff or consulting services, model laws and ordinances, and community outreach efforts. Continuing regular communication and cooperation with neighboring communities is important to ensure that the town's open space efforts do not stop at its borders. New York State's Quality Communities Grant Program recognizes the importance of planning across municipal borders and provides opportunities within the Intermunicipal Growth Program to address common open space and growth issues. For example, the town could partner with a neighboring community such as New Paltz, that shares common open space and fiscal resources to complete a joint trail master plan or another similar intermunicipal project. This partnership would be advantageous to both communities from both a financial and a land-use planning perspective.

IN THE SPIRIT OF LANDOWNER EQUITY

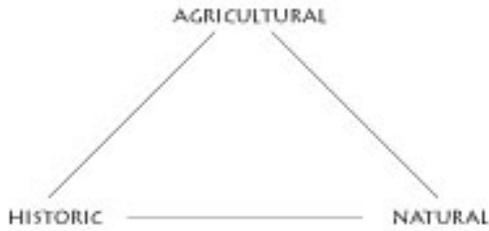
This plan is based on the notion that landowners should be recognized and respected for their important role in conservation. All conservation planning and landowner outreach should be conducted with the following basic notions as the framework for conversation decisions:

- Landowners are the primary stewards of open space lands in Gardiner
- Landowners have fiduciary responsibilities and financial needs inherent in their land holdings
- Landowners should be provided with options for conserving their lands, if they choose to do so
- Landowners should be fairly compensated for land conservation efforts

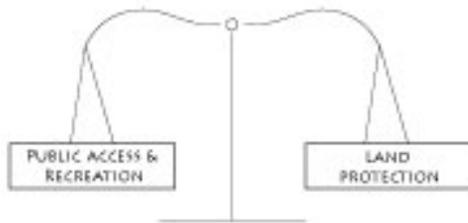
A BALANCED CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Maximizing public support for investment in conservation requires a balanced program that includes protection of agricultural, natural and historic resources. Opportunities for public enjoyment of lands through trails or public access should be considered and prioritized when they do not compromise conservation goals. Conservation efforts should also be balanced geographically throughout the town's priority conservation network and diverse resources.

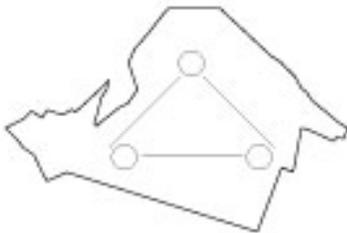
A Balance of Resource TYPE:



A Balance of Resource USE:



A Balance of Resource LOCATION:



Strategic Action Plan

Implementing Gardiner’s conservation vision is a long-term effort that requires dedication and endurance. Implementing the vision will not be achieved by proactive conservation alone. It will require diverse funding to back the conservation efforts - from town, state, federal and private sources. Importantly, it will also require continued commitment to planning efforts to ensure that future development in the town respects the conservation goals of this plan. The results of these efforts often take years, even decades, to exhibit measurable results. By following this plan, the town is taking steps towards the long-term vision, in ways that are most appropriate to Gardiner’s limited financial resources and needs.

As Gardiner will likely continue to face development pressure on its aquifer resources, farmlands and other open spaces in the future, a similar long-term approach is recommended. The recommendations that follow include immediate, short-term and long-term actions that can be taken to advance the town’s conservation vision in three program areas:

- A. Create a Land Conservation Program**
- B. Develop a Comprehensive Approach to Conservation and Development**
- C. Create a Fiscally-Responsible Land Conservation Financing Strategy**

A. Create a Land Conservation Program

The land conservation program is the primary framework for implementation of conservation projects. The town would work with landowners, conservation organizations, and other partners to conserve lands within the priority conservation network (as identified in Chapter 4) through conservation easements, purchase, donation and other tools.

The land conservation program provides the tools, and administrative and structural framework, for conserving the town’s aquifers and water resources, farmlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural and cultural, and hisotrical resources. Many of the lands in Gardiner fall into several of these categories. Farmlands along Rt. 208 corridor might also be located within the an aquifer recharge area and may provide wildlife habitat. Projects that meet several categories would be highly competitive as they provide multiple public benefits.

Creating a local land conservation program will require substantial effort and resources from the town, including the creation of a Conservation Advisory Commission (CAC), local funding (to serve as a match for state, federal, and private funds), landowner outreach, and outreach to community. The local land conservation program also requires that a diverse set of tools be in place for implementing conservation. These conservation tools should be complemented with tools that help retain and grow the agriculture and agri-tourism industries.

ACTIONS

IMMEDIATE (WITHIN 1 YEAR):

- I. APPOINT A CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)** to develop and manage the land conservation program, communicate with the community and landowners, seek funding, and undertake other efforts to advance the plan. The CAC should draw upon the expertise of the existing Town Planner and Ulster County’s Planning Commission where possible, as well as assistance from existing town boards and volunteers. The CAC would serve as the main contact for land conservation efforts, organizing the town’s various boards and committees and coordinating their roles in land conservation. The role of the CAC is to accomplish all of the actions necessary to complete the land conservation program (see actions 2-6 below).

The CAC should continue to build a partnership with local land trusts, conservation organizations, local and regional leaders, Ulster County, and other conservation leaders. The CAC should help to build intermunicipal and regional partnerships where combined efforts can result in cost sharing or cumulative benefits. Partnership with land trusts and conservation organizations such as the Mohonk Preserve, Open Space Institute, and Wallkill Valley Land Trust, to meet shared goals in conservation, is highly recommended.

The role of the CAC includes the following:

1.1 Develop land conservation program guidelines which identify program goals; program partners and their roles; criteria for selecting projects; land conservation tools (acquisition, PDR); and a process for landowner outreach and transactions.

1.2 Conduct parcel evaluation and identify priorities according to the program guidelines. The priority conservation network identified in this plan (Chapter 5) and the rating criteria (Appendix C) can be used as a starting framework for the identification of parcels for the land conservation program. Often, a third party entity is commissioned to conduct the parcel evaluation in order to maintain neutrality.

1.3 Create a package of land conservation tools. PDR and acquisition of land are recommended for the package because they are proactive, long-term solutions that demonstrate that the town is committed to conservation. However, additional tools must also be developed by the town to ensure that there is a diversity of options for landowners. Tools that help to reduce the tax burden for landowners are recommended. A list of recommended tools is provided below (these are discussed further in Chapter 6).

- **Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) Program:** PDR would be used by the town to purchase the development rights of property from willing landowners. PDR can be applied to agricultural properties as well as lands with scenic, natural, or other open space values. The town or a partner land trust would hold the easement.
- **Term Conservation Easement Program:** A term conservation easement provides tax abatement for a specific time period or “term” in exchange for protection of the agricultural, open space, or historical values of land or buildings. This tool could provide tax relief to

landowners or may provide a point of entry for landowners that might not be ready to commit to a permanent conservation easement.

- **Conservation Asset Management Planning:** Comprehensive Asset Management Planning would provide assistance to landowners in the comprehensive planning of their land assets, offering competitive solutions to a full build-out.
- **Open Space Incentive Zoning:** Incentive zoning allows a landowner or developer to work with a municipality to obtain specific incentives in exchange for providing desired community amenities such as open space conservation. Incentive zoning could be developed through a Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) process.
- **Land Acquisition:** In some cases, the town may desire to purchase conservation lands in fee. This would be most relevant for parklands or public access areas.

1.4 Conduct landowner outreach. Conduct ongoing outreach to town landowners to gauge interest in conservation, as well as their individual needs. Maintain an open dialogue with the town's major landowners, ensuring that they are kept abreast of the town's plans for land conservation and financing. Continue to discuss the types of tools they need to conserve their land, should they desire to do so. The recommended agricultural committee could assist with outreach to agricultural landowners.

1.5 Publicize and provide information to landowners on existing tools, programs, and tax benefits available for conservation, including state and federal tax incentives for conservation easements, and state property tax reductions through agricultural assessment and sustainable forestry (480A). For this effort, the town could partner with regional land trusts and other communities working on open space conservation to develop a useful brochure or guide for landowners.

1.6 Advance program publicity. Conduct ongoing outreach to the community on the benefits and opportunities of conservation. Involve the community in all future aspects of conservation planning. Ensure that the community's conservation goals developed through this plan are evaluated and considered when implementing conservation projects. Keep the community informed of conservation actions and achievements.

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN 3 YEARS):

2. COMPLETE PILOT PROJECTS. A few successful pilot projects can help to garner larger support for land conservation efforts and can also help to quickly protect vulnerable areas of town. The town's bond funds may be a local source for some of these projects, matched with federal and state grant programs and assistance from land trusts and other partners. Some planning projects may also be funded through grants and other funding

sources. Prioritize projects that are both cost-effective and provide substantial public benefits.

Recommended pilot project categories include the following:

- **Farmland protection/aquifer protection:** Conserve a priority farm with a willing landowner (many of the town's farms are also within aquifer recharge areas).

Potential grant funding source:

New York State, Department of Agriculture and Markets, Farmland Protection Implementation Projects (last grant round in June 2006); USDA Farmland Ranchland Protection Program (also possibly Open Space Institute)

- **Water resource/habitat protection:** Conserve a significant parcel of cliff and talus lands (and buffer); create a nature preserve at the Plattekill Gorge; conserve a significant portion of the Wallkill or Shawangunk River Greenbelt; conserve significant acreage of the Shawangunk Grasslands as a wildlife connection to the National Wildlife Refuge.

Potential grant funding source:

State Environmental Protection Fund or Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund- acquisition of parklands and open space

- **Community trail connections:** Develop a concept plan for the hamlet greenway (as discussed in Chapter 4).

Potential grant funding source:

New York State Quality Communities Grant Program – Intermunicipal Growth Program or Community Open Space Program (last application deadline was November 2006) or NYSDOT/federal transportation enhancement program (SAFETEALU)

LONG-TERM (WITHIN 5+ YEARS):

- 3. EVALUATE THE LAND CONSERVATION PROGRAM** to ensure that the primary goals are being met. Augment the program as necessary.

B. Develop a Comprehensive Approach to Conservation and Development

This plan has been focused on identifying and prioritizing the town's major open space resources and identifying solutions for conservation of these resources. However, conservation of open space is only truly effective if it is balanced with appropriate development patterns.

Open space conservation is just one of many elements that fit together to create a quality community, one that people want to live in. Housing affordability, land-use patterns, traffic patterns, fiscal affordability (i.e. taxes), schools, parks, trails, and other services all effect people's decisions to live and work in a Gardiner. An ideal next step of this plan would be to understand the appropriate balance of these (and many other) elements that contribute to livability in Gardiner, making sure that the conservation plan will help to achieve the community's desired balance.

Future development in the town should support the goals of this open space plan. Development patterns should take into account the open space resources of the town, both those which have been specifically identified as priority areas and corridors, as well as the finer-scaled resources that are important at the site level. This will involve communication between the open space committee, the planning board, environmental conservation commission, town board, and zoning board as well as communication with adjoining communities and regional initiatives.

Of particular concern is the future build-out of the town under the existing zoning and land-use regulations, which will likely not support the open space goals of this plan. In addition to creating patterns that will fragment open space areas, wildlife corridors, and farmlands, the build-out would also likely lead to significant impacts of the town's aquifer recharge areas. The town has already made significant changes to the ridge zoning district to ensure that development within this area takes into account the natural capacity of the ridge resoures. The majority of the remaining portion of the town is within an agricultural-residential (AR) zoning district, which is currently being reviewed and revised to ensure compatibility with the goals of the town's comprehensive plan.

Some specific recommendations for balancing the land use patterns and other infrastructure and fiscal elements of the community with the goals of the open space plan are provided below.

ACTIONS

IMMEDIATE (WITHIN 1 YEAR):

- 1. DEVELOP A PROCESS MODEL FOR INCORPORATING THIS PLAN'S DATA AND MAPS IN REVIEW OF DEVELOPMENT PLANS.** There are many resources in this plan that can be used by the Planning Board and ECC to help assist in the review of development proposals. The plan includes resource maps, conservation planning areas, and a priority conservation network. These data and maps should all be consulted for guidance in the review of future development proposals. It is recommended that the planning board, ECC and future CAC receive training in how to use this information, and work together to develop a process for coordinating their efforts. Plan information (and help with its translation) should be available to landowners and developers in town so that they understand the town's goals for resource protection before beginning to develop a project. Training in the use of existing conservation tools, such as the recreational river designation of the Shawangunk Kill, should also be incorporated into this process model.
- 2. CREATE A GARDINER AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE** to help facilitate communication between the town and the agricultural community. The committee could help to ensure that initiatives in the town are responsive to the needs of the agricultural community. The committee could assist in developing appropriate land

conservation tools and business development and marketing options for the agricultural community and assist with agricultural landowner outreach. It is recommended that the committee collaborate with the Ulster County Farm Bureau and other communities in the Wallkill Valley to create a regional approach to this effort, like that of the Rondout Valley Growers Association on the other side of the ridge.

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN 3 YEARS):

- 3. AUDIT THE TOWN'S LAND USE REGULATIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL COMPATIBILITY.** The agricultural committee, in partnership with town boards, should review the town's existing zoning, subdivision, and land use regulations for potential alterations that will help to support the continuation of agriculture and protect farmlands. This includes support of creative agricultural business development and investment in rural infrastructure necessary to support business efforts such as local farmers' markets, pick-your-own operations, farm tours, and the like. It may also include review and revision of allowed and permitted uses within the agricultural zoning district to ensure that landowners have the opportunity to diversify and make the best use of their property.

Protecting Gardiner's Water Resources

The protection of Gardiner's water resources is critical to both existing and future residents. Protection of water resources includes efforts to safeguard both water quality and quantity of Gardiner's ground waters (aquifers) and surface waters (rivers, streams, wetlands, lakes, etc.). Water quality can be threatened by a number of activities, including development, construction (for example, runoff from grading and clearing), and agricultural practices (for example, the use of pesticides).

Protecting water resources effectively requires a combination of proactive planning and zoning initiatives and local tools, covering all scales of water resource management, from the watershed to the site.

At the watershed level, management of resources often requires intermunicipal cooperation and planning, such as the efforts of the Wallkill River Task Force. This task force is a group of citizens, agency officials and professionals who are working cooperatively to address issues of water quality and quantity along the Wallkill River in Ulster and Orange Counties. The Wallkill River Watershed Management Plan, currently being drafted by the Ulster and Orange County Soils and Water Conservation Districts, in partnership with the Wallkill River Task Force, will provide recommendations on local actions to protect water resources. Gardiner is almost entirely within the Wallkill River watershed.

At the town level, it is important to coordinate conservation and planning efforts in the town to protect water resources for both quantity and quality. A balanced approach to water resource protection includes directing development in areas that are most appropriate, and focusing conservation on waterways, wetlands and critical recharge areas.

Water resources can also be protected through zoning tools (such as overlay zones to protect aquifer recharge areas, riparian buffer zones, or enhanced setbacks to protect water resources) as well as planning tools and design guidelines or standards to reduce siting and construction impacts of new development (such as impervious surfaces and runoff).

4. **STRENGTHEN PROTECTION OF WATER RESOURCES IN THE TOWN'S ZONING REGULATIONS AND PLANNING TOOLS.** The town's zoning regulations can include protective buffers and setbacks for the town's, rivers, streams and riparian areas, as well as for wetlands. Generalized recommendations for buffer widths have been discussed throughout this plan and can be consulted as a starting point. However, a more thorough evaluation of appropriate buffer widths for local needs and conditions should be conducted based on biological research and analysis with resource and habitat specialists.
5. **PLAN FOR THE GATEWAYS TO THE GUNKS.** The Trapps Gateway and the future gateway to the Awosting Reserve (Minnewaska State Park) both offer opportunities to attract tourists traveling through Gardiner on their way to the Gunks. Both physical and promotional planning of these gateways should be conducted to capture tourists and inform them of Gardiner's resources for exploration. A planning process could be implemented by the town with a planning charrette followed by a simple set of actions for enhancing the gateways and making connections between the ridge and other areas of the town.
6. **CREATE GUIDELINES FOR CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT.** Using the Conservation Planning Areas identified in Chapter 3, design guidelines can be created to help guide development in these areas in a way that protects the resource values. These guidelines can be used in conservation projects as well as in development projects. For example, with the creation of a new town park or open space area, these guidelines can help inform the use and management program for the lands, thus helping to guide the conservation project. The guidelines can also be used by landowners, developers, and the planning board in the design and review of development.
7. **DEVELOP HABITAT ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES.** The habitat mapping that has been conducted for the town is an informative tool that can be used both at the town-wide scale (this has already been done with the development of the priority conservation areas), and at the site scale. Habitat assessment guidelines are used by developers and planning boards to help thoroughly assess the potential habitat impacts of a project. They provide a clear and consistent process that is established early in project development, and eliminate the need for late-process changes and revisions. The Town of Milan in Dutchess County has adopted habitat assessment guidelines that could serve as model for Gardiner. Habitat assessment guidelines could become part of a larger package of design guidelines or standards (see above recommendation) that can be used to help guide future development.

LONG-TERM (WITHIN 5+ YEARS):

8. **CREATE A MASTER PLAN FOR TRAILS, GREENWAYS, ACCESS AREAS AND PARKS.** The focus of this plan has been to inventory and prioritize open space resources for conservation. Through this process, several potential trail and recreation opportunities have emerged. A future planning process to evolve these opportunities could be conducted with the community. Concepts identified in this plan include:

- A **hamlet greenway and trail**, linking together the four major hamlets on Route 44/55 with open space resources such as the rail-trail, the Shawangunk Kill, the Wall Kill River, Majestic Park, Tuthilltown Gristmill, Hedden's Lake, and Trapps Gateway.
- A **water trail** or (blueway trail) consisting of a series of access points located along the Shawangunk Kill and Wallkill (this project would benefit from a regional approach, extending along the Wallkill through adjacent communities).
- A **greenway system** along the Wallkill River that includes parklands and trail access, as well as protection of natural resources.
- A **Plattekill Preserve nature area**, with limited nature trails and access, which could possibly become a joint project with the Town of New Paltz.

9. ASSESS THE IMPACTS OF A TOWN-WIDE BUILD OUT (GEIS). This plan has identified priority conservation areas. A future purchase of development rights program combined with zoning revisions, open space development, and other conservation tools, can help put some of the conservation network in place. However, the conservation patterns are intricately linked with the town's future development patterns, and should be considered wholly in this context.

A Generic Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) process should be conducted to assess the opportunities, needs, and impacts of accommodating the town build-out. This process would identify future land-use development and conservation scenarios, such as:

- Build-out of the town with little to no large-scale open space conservation (only site-specific conservation of development sites)
- Conservation of priority areas with continuation of existing settlement patterns (full conservation with no change in development patterns)
- Conservation of priority areas balanced with concentrated development in existing hamlets and hamlet extension areas (full conservation and clustered residential areas)
- Other hybrids of above (varying levels of commercial and residential development)

For each scenario, the benefits and impacts on topics such as rural character, traffic, water resources, central water and sewer service options, imperiled species and habitats, housing affordability, historic resources, agricultural resources, and fiscal resources would be evaluated.

This process could help to create tools necessary to accommodate the desired alternative (for example TDR or incentive zoning) and it can also help to set up mitigation costs that can be applied towards future conservation projects. This process can also pay for itself, as the costs of the GEIS can be folded in to future mitigation fees. Several communities in New York are using the tools developed through such a process to obtain funds for land conservation through the private (development) sector.

The analysis of the fiscal costs and benefits is also an important component of this process. The costs of conservation to the town (costs of purchase, acquisition, conservation easements, parkland development and maintenance, etc.) should be factored into this analysis, as well as the costs of development (roads, water, sewer, school, and other services). Achieving the right balance for the community might, for example, involve increasing the tax base by adding an appropriate amount of commercial development within the growth areas. The GEIS would help to explore all of the costs and benefits on a much

deeper level to guide future decisions and also to provide a realistic fiscal framework for conservation actions.

C. Create a Fiscally-Responsible Conservation Financing Strategy

Understanding and preparing for the needs of the town's land conservation program is perhaps the most important component of this plan. Assessing the cost of conservation of the town's priority network will help to identify the level of investment that is needed to proceed with land conservation goals at a reasonable pace. Most likely, the land conservation program will require multiple funding sources, including public financing through a capital reserve fund and/or general obligation bonding (as was recently approved by voters) and private financing through a real estate transfer tax and/or development mitigation fees. It is recommended that all of these approaches be explored and furthered in concert with the town's fiscal capacity.

IMMEDIATE (WITHIN 1 YEAR):

- 1. CREATE A CONSERVATION FINANCE COMMITTEE AS A SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE CAC.** The role of the conservation finance committee would be to identify a diverse set of funding mechanisms for open space conservation; evaluate their benefits and fiscal impacts; and ultimately make recommendations to the town board for advancement.
- 2. CREATE A DATABASE OF EXISTING GRANTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES** and help the CAC seek matching funds for projects as they become available.
- 3. DEVELOP A WORKING LIST OF ADDITIONAL FINANCING OPTIONS FOR OPEN SPACE** and begin to explore the costs and benefits of each type of source.

Recommended financing sources for further exploration by the committee:

- **Real estate transfer fee:** An emerging and promising opportunity for local open space financing is currently being considered by state legislature called the "Community Preservation Act." This legislation would allow local governments (upon voter approval) to impose up to a 2% fee on real estate transactions to fund agricultural and open space conservation, recreational opportunities, and other important environmental benefits. This option is interesting to local governments because it is a way to generate open space funds without charging the taxpayer. First-time homebuyers and purchases below the median home value in the county would be exempt from the tax. This strategy has been successfully implemented by five towns in the Peconic Bay, on the eastern side of Long Island, in the early 1990s, with a 2% real estate transfer fee. More recently, voters in the Town of Warwick supported a $\frac{3}{4}$ % transfer fee for the purpose of land conservation in this November (2006) election.
- **Development mitigation costs:** Mitigation costs can be developed through a comprehensive GEIS process under a town-wide build-out. This process would help

to identify impacts of the full build-out of the town and create measures to mitigate such impacts. Several communities are using the tools developed through such a process to obtain funds for land conservation through the private (development) sector.

- **Open space incentive zoning:** Incentive zoning allows a landowner or developer to work with a municipality to obtain specific incentives in exchange for providing desired community amenities such as open space conservation. Incentives may include modifications to density, allowed uses, setbacks, or other zoning controls. The landowner or developer may provide, in exchange, dedicated open space, trail access, park land or potentially cash (in lieu of land) to contribute to a PDR program.
- **Recreation/special fees:** The town already collects a recreation fee (“fees in lieu of parkland”) of \$1,200/lot for subdivisions of 3 or more lots. This fee could be evaluated to confirm adequacy toward meeting the recreational needs of the town as it grows.

SHORT-TERM (WITHIN 3 YEARS):

- 4. CONDUCT LOCAL FUND-RAISING EVENTS IN THE TOWN.** Fund-raising events can help to supplement the conservation program funds. They also help to raise awareness and build community support for conservation.
- 5. CONDUCT FISCAL ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF CONSERVATION AND THE MOST APPROPRIATE MIX OF LONG-TERM FINANCING SOURCES FOR THE CONSERVATION PROGRAM.**

Through a separate process, the CAC will identify a set of priority parcels for the town’s land conservation program. Once this is complete, the costs of conservation (costs of purchase, acquisition, conservation easements, parkland development and maintenance, and the like) of this set of parcels should be evaluated and appropriate financing mechanisms to meet the program’s needs should be established.

LONG-TERM (WITHIN 5+ YEARS):

- 6. EVALUATE THE FUNDING PROGRAM** and augment as necessary to ensure that it continue to meet the needs of the community.

Table 5: Summary Chart: Recommended Actions

| Land Conservation Program | | |
|---|-----|---|
| Immediate | 1 | Conservation Advisory Committee |
| | 1.1 | Land Conservation Program Guidelines |
| | 1.2 | Parcel Evaluation |
| | 1.3 | Land Conservation Tool Package |
| | 1.4 | Landowner Outreach |
| | 1.5 | Program Publicity |
| Short-Term | 2 | Pilot Projects |
| Long-term | 3 | Land Conservation Program Assessment |
| Comprehensive Approach to Conservation and Development | | |
| Immediate | 1 | Process Model for Development Review |
| | 2 | Agricultural Committee |
| Short-term | 3 | Agricultural Audit of Land Use Regulations |
| | 4 | Strengthen Water Resource Protection |
| | 5 | Gateway to Gunks Plan |
| | 6 | Conservation and Development Guidelines |
| | 7 | Habitat Assessment Guidelines |
| Long-term | 8 | Trails Master Plan |
| | 9 | Build Out/GEIS |
| Land Conservation Financing Strategy | | |
| Immediate | 1 | Financing Committee |
| | 2 | Database of Existing Grants and Funding Sources |
| | 3 | Financing Options |
| Short-term | 4 | Funding Strategy: Identify Appropriate Mix |
| | 5 | Conduct Fund-Raising Events |
| Long-term | 6 | Financing Program Assessment |

Conclusion

This chapter has provided recommendations for achieving the town's open space conservation priorities. It calls for a comprehensive approach that includes conservation of the town's priority conservation areas balanced with land-use and settlement patterns that support the town's open space resources. It calls for new committees to help guide conservation planning and financing, coordinate conservation and planning efforts, and give voice to the agricultural community. While a long-term approach is recommended for ultimate success, there are many actions the town can take in the short-term to help advance the conservation vision.