



TOWN OF CANTON

OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN

I. Goals and Objectives

The Open Space Management Plan is intended to guide the management and use of Town of Canton open space lands for conservation and recreational purposes.

Open space is defined as an area of land or water that either remains in its natural state or is used for agriculture, or is free from intensive development for residential, commercial, industrial or institutional use and is intended to remain in its undeveloped condition. Lands addressed by this document are either owned in fee by the Town of Canton, or the use of which is restricted through a conservation easement held by the Town.

Goal: To preserve, protect and manage Town open space properties. Objectives include:

- Preserve and protect Canton's water supply, wildlife habitat, scenic views, scenic roads, aesthetic values, and historic sites;
- Encourage retention of Canton's agricultural lands and/ or practices;
- Maintain Canton's rural town character;
- Protect and enhance Canton's natural environment;
- Preserve the purity of the community's natural resources and promote biodiversity;
- Develop management plans for specific Town open space properties.

Goal: To provide access to and/ or linkage among open space and recreational sites. Objectives include:

1. Identify, develop, and promote public access points for use of open space;
2. Protect migratory paths for wildlife;
3. Seek to protect connecting open spaces that link existing open space and/or recreational parcels.

Goal: To enable use of Town open space for passive recreation. Objectives include:

- Increase town use and awareness of open space areas for passive recreation;
- Mark and maintain existing trails and easements, and create new trails where and as necessary;
- Diversify recreational opportunities available to residents;
- Provide opportunities for passive recreational activities that require trails or paths;
- Coordinate financial and volunteer resources with the four objectives above.

II. Stewardship of Open Space Properties

In conformance with the Goals and Objectives of the Town of Canton’s open space land protection program, the town’s protected open spaces must serve a multitude of purposes. Properties will be maintained and managed consistent with the identified goals of this plan, subject to fiscal and other considerations. Management of properties will include periodic monitoring in order to identify maintenance needs, safety, and other concerns. The town may modify and/or amend the management plans from time to time. In all cases, state statutes, town ordinances, easement language, or deed restrictions that place protections and restrictions upon any individual property shall apply.

A. Management of Open Space Lands

1. Land Management Advisory Committee

The Canton Conservation Commission shall serve as the Land Management Advisory Committee, and will write and review proposed management projects and plans, provide support for management, and generally review the condition and direction of land management for Town open space properties. The Board of Selectmen is responsible for adoption of management plans for individual open space properties.

2. Notification to Abutters

Abutting property owners shall be notified in advance of any Conservation Commission or Board of Selectmen consideration of new, proposed, or modified open space management plans.

B. Maintenance and Stewardship of Open Space Lands

1. Physical Improvements

Physical improvements or maintenance of the properties are to be conducted when necessary to promote the goals of the management plan. Development of structures or paved surfaces is to be minimized.

2. Trails and Crossings

In general, trail development for passive recreational use is encouraged on Town open space properties. Stream and wetland crossings will be monitored and trail improvements will be provided as necessary. In all cases safety, erosion control, and sensitivity of the land will control the creation and closing of trails.

3. Boundary Markers

Town of Canton “Conservation Area” markers will be employed at reasonably placed intervals along property lines that abut private lands (25-50’ intervals are standard).

4. Natural Area Designation

Some properties may be designated to be left in their natural state without physical changes, routine maintenance, or possibly public access.

5. Fencing

In general, use of fencing on open space lands is discouraged. Under certain conditions, fences may be required as specified in a property’s site specific management plan.

6. Forest Management

Forest Management activities shall only be conducted in accordance with CGS Section 23-65f through 23-65q, by a forest practitioner certified by the State of Connecticut. In general, the Town of Canton will avoid clear-cutting or extensive selective cutting of forests, except as needed for public safety, planned recreational needs, or for specific wildlife management plans.

III. Uses of Properties

Passive recreational use of Town open space by the public is encouraged where environmentally and socially appropriate. Activities on these properties should be accompanied by improved public access and awareness. Where lands are environmentally sensitive or human use may be detrimental, public use should be discouraged and restricted.

Types of access and use of properties vary by property. The town seeks to match the goals and objectives listed in Section I with individual property management plans..

A. Conditions of Use for All of Canton’s Open Space Properties

- All town open space lands shall be carry in/carry out. No person shall drop, throw, or place any litter, garbage, or other refuse on town open space lands. Trash receptacles shall not be provided.

- No person shall injure, deface, destroy, remove or carry off any sign, structure, facility, trash receptacle, or other property or equipment under the care and control of the Town of Canton;
- Parades, games, fairs, carnivals, festivals, bazaars, art shows or solicitations for raising or collecting funds shall not be allowed unless authorized by prior written approval of the Town of Canton;
- Organized events or groups of 30 or more people require a written approval from the Town of Canton;
- Any commercial activity, including display of goods for sale, is not allowed without written approval from the Town of Canton;
- Posters, leaflets, placards or advertisements shall not be distributed or affixed to any land without written approval from the Town of Canton;
- Parking is permitted in designated parking areas only.
- Residents and guests are required to have pets on leashes at all times while on town property. Pets may be removed from their leashes when specifically utilized as part of the farming and agricultural activities allowed by the specific terms and conditions of the acquisition, and only while in performance of their duties.
- Properties not open to the general public can be accessed for specific uses, for valid educational purposes with prior written permission of the Town of Canton.

B. Permitted Activities

In general, public access is encouraged on the Town of Canton's open space properties. Types of access vary by property. In all cases, state statute or town ordinances that place protections and restrictions upon public property are applicable. Permitted activities are:

- Walking and hiking.
- Bird watching and nature appreciation;
- Canoeing and kayaking;
- Cross country skiing and snowshoeing;
- Dog walking (leashed only);
- Environmental education and nature study;
- Horseback riding (where specifically authorized);
- Bicycling on trails (where specifically authorized);
- Fishing (where specifically authorized, and in accordance with State of Connecticut fisheries regulations);

C. Prohibited Activities

- Carrying and/or use of alcoholic beverages;

- Littering or disposing of household garbage, trash, or other materials;
- Swimming or diving (SCUBA) in any water body on Town of Canton open space lands
- Motorized boating;
- Fouling of any well, brook, stream, or any body of water;
- Disposal of animal carcasses;
- Conduct and activities unreasonably disruptive such as drunkenness, breach of the peace, and disorderly conduct offensive to the general public;
- Use of open fires, grills or fuel stoves, except by written prior approval of the Town of Canton;
- All motorized recreational vehicles such as mini-bikes, mopeds, snowmobiles, and ATVs, except for vehicles used for maintenance and public safety and emergency;
- Use of bicycles off-trails except where noted;
- The possession or discharge any firearm, air rifle, bow and arrow, handgun, fireworks, paintball gun, or explosives;
- Digging, disturbing, cutting or removing vegetation, except by written approval from the Town of Canton;
- Disposal of sand, gravel, fill, brush, and other household or commercial materials or refuse without the permission of the Town of Canton;
- Harvesting or collection of animals and plants except for scientific or educational purposes, and with prior written approval by the Town of Canton;
- Hunting and trapping;

IV. Enforcement, Emergencies, and Communication

A. Enforcement of Open Space Management Plans

The Board of Selectmen or its designee will enforce the rules and regulations as necessary to preserve the town's open space lands for their intended uses, including such fines and restrictions as may be permitted by law.

B. Emergency Response

The Town's Fire, Police, and EMT personnel are responsible for emergency procedures to be in place for response to emergencies at town open space lands. Motorized vehicles are allowed on the open space lands for public safety emergencies without prior written permission of the Town of Canton.

C. Communication

Comments, suggestions, requests for permission, and all other communication with regard to this Plan should be directed to the Canton Land Use Office.

Town of Canton Town Hall
4 Market Street
Collinsville, Connecticut 06019
Tel: (860) 693-7892

VI. Town Open Space Properties

For a full inventory of open space, please refer to Canton's Natural Resources Inventory. Open Space Management Plans are available for the Cannon Property and the Carpenter Property.