



## Bar Harbor Conservation Commission Open Space Plan

*“The Town of Bar Harbor is pleased and excited to have the new open space plan. It will be used to guide planning by the Town Council, Planning Board, Marine Resources Committee, Harbor Committee, and the Parks and Recreation Committee. Local non-profit organizations have been partners in the plan’s development, and they intend to use it to help them set their conservation priorities. In addition, the plan contains many stories about Bar Harbor’s open spaces, and I think that townspeople will find it readable, informative and even entertaining.”*

Angela Chamberlain, Code Enforcement Officer & Interim Town Planner (2014)



### **PARTNERS**

Friends of Acadia, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, Maine Farmland Trust, Acadia National Park, and the College of the Atlantic

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** (completed June 2014)

An Open Space Plan which addresses recreational lands (including water access sites), cultural and historic sites, scenic resources, working/agricultural lands, natural areas/wildlife habitat, and lands vital to the protection of water resources was developed for the Town of Bar Harbor. We assessed the status of these lands, identified unmet needs and suggested strategies to meet those needs.

### **APPROACH**

An all-volunteer Conservation Commission was formed to create the open space plan, and financial support from the Town allowed us to engage a consultant’s help completing the plan. Local non-profits were invited to partner with us. We defined open space for our purposes, made an inventory of Bar Harbor’s existing open spaces, determined what was missing, came up with strategies to fill the gaps and obtained public input.

## COASTAL COMMUNITY GRANTS: Open Space Planning

### RESULTS

Existing open spaces were mapped using GIS. Based on the location of special open space features, we determined high-priority areas for additional open space. We identified 5 types of open spaces: recreational, cultural/scenic, natural habitats, water resources, and working lands. We identified protection strategies for the priority sites and received positive feedback on the completed open space plan from citizens.

### NEXT STEPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

A final presentation of the plan will be made and televised at a Town Council meeting. A press release will be prepared on the plan's completion and its online and print availability. We will publicly acknowledge and write thank you notes to all partners and begin work to implement the plan.

### NEEDS

There is an ongoing need to incorporate further public input into our open space planning and to create a timeline for implementation.

### LESSONS LEARNED

Town financial support of the process was vital. We gained an appreciation for the importance of partnering with diverse groups and learned more about both our Town and its resources as well as what is important to Bar Harbor's citizens.

### APPLICABILITY FOR OTHER MUNICIPALITIES

Our challenges and approach are applicable for other towns of many sizes.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

One focal area of our planning was maintaining water access and working waterfronts. This is important to Bar Harbor citizens and likely to many other coastal towns. Though we did not specifically address sea level rise, coastal open spaces and habitats will be affected by these changes and any planning assistance provided to towns would be helpful. Additionally, much of our public input focused on the effects of activities in uplands on coastal areas, such as non-point source pollution. Examining the impacts of these activities on coastal habitats is important.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The plan is available for download at:  
<http://www.barharbormaine.gov/229/Conservation-Commission>

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2.17.17.

### CONTACT

Jesse Wheeler, Vice Chair, Bar Harbor Conservation Commission, 207-288-8739  
Jill Weber, Past Chairman Bar Harbor Conservation Commission served as PM for this project

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