

Princeton Open Space and Recreation Planning

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Introduction

Plan Development Process

Resident Survey

Workshops and Hearings

A Few Lessons Learned



Princeton Open Space and Recreation Plan

Introduction

Princeton is a small town, population 3,500

Mount Wachusett, Wachusett Meadow Wildlife Sanctuary, Leominster State Forest

Open Space Committee is made up of five volunteers, annual budget \$500

Parks and Recreation Comm is in disarray

Previous Focus has been on Trails and Hiking

Our 2020 update of the OSRP is in-process



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Plan Development Process

- Sections 2-5 were updated only by members of the committee and reviewed via eMail
 - Section 2: Introduction,
 - Section 3: Community Setting
 - Section 4: Environmental Inventory and Analysis
 - Section 5: Inventory of Lands of Conservation and Recreation Interest
- Process for determination of Community Needs is in process
 - Survey of residents
 - “Town Buzz”
 - Workshops with various town leaders
 - Public hearing
- Goals and Plan will flow from Needs – March-to-April process

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Survey of Residents

- 7 Question Survey, largely plagiarized
- 40% response rate, thanks to Select Board help. 582 surveys Returned
- Recognition that there is a good deal of bias in the returns
- Questions Asked
 - Demographics: Family type, Length of residence
 - General Conservation Goals
 - Usage of Recreation Areas
 - Participation in Activity types
 - Interest in Programming
 - Comments

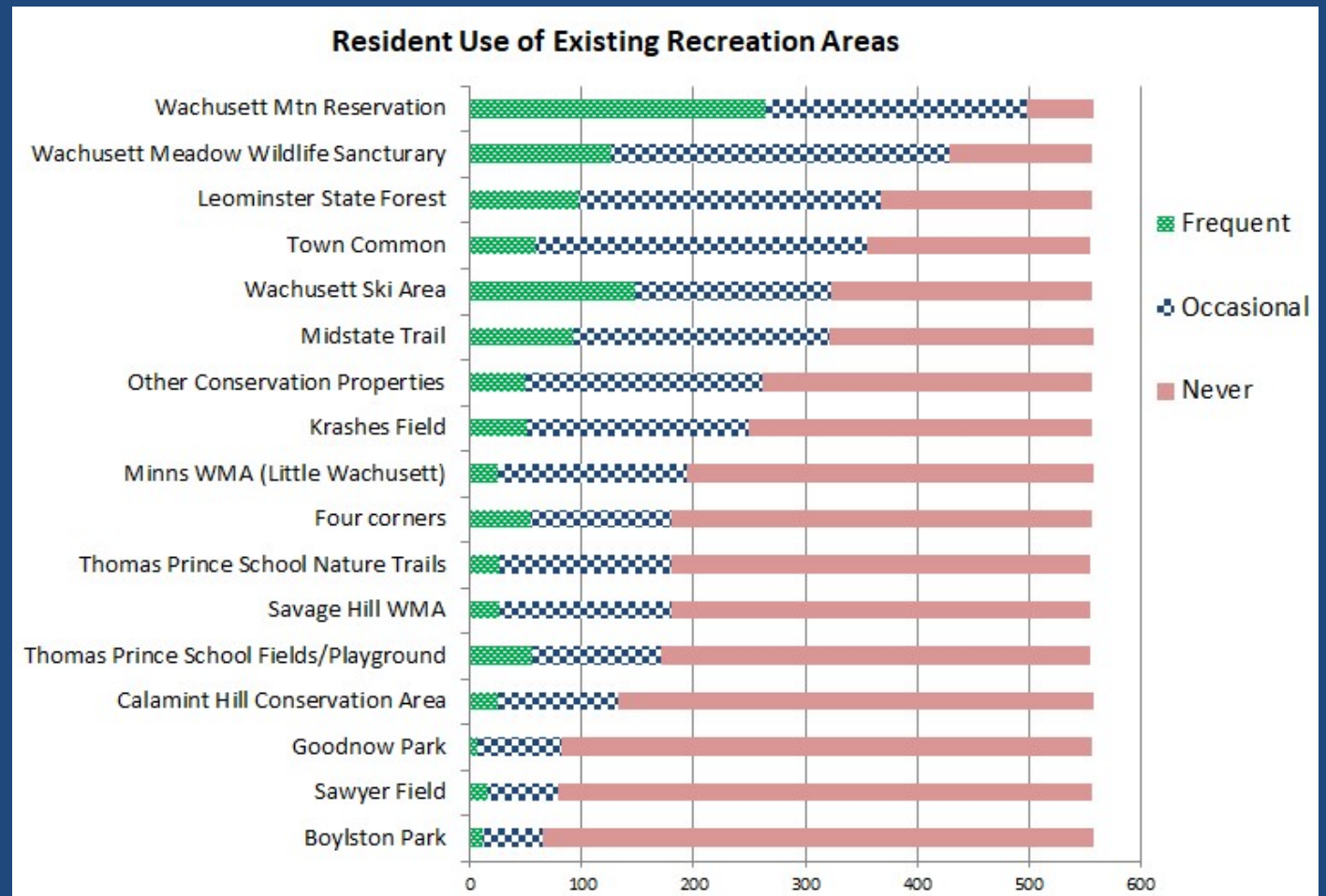
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Usage of Recreation Areas

85% of people use Mt. Wachusett, 70% use Wachusett Meadow

Surprisingly high use of Midstate Trail, Princeton Land Trust Properties, and other town and DCR parks

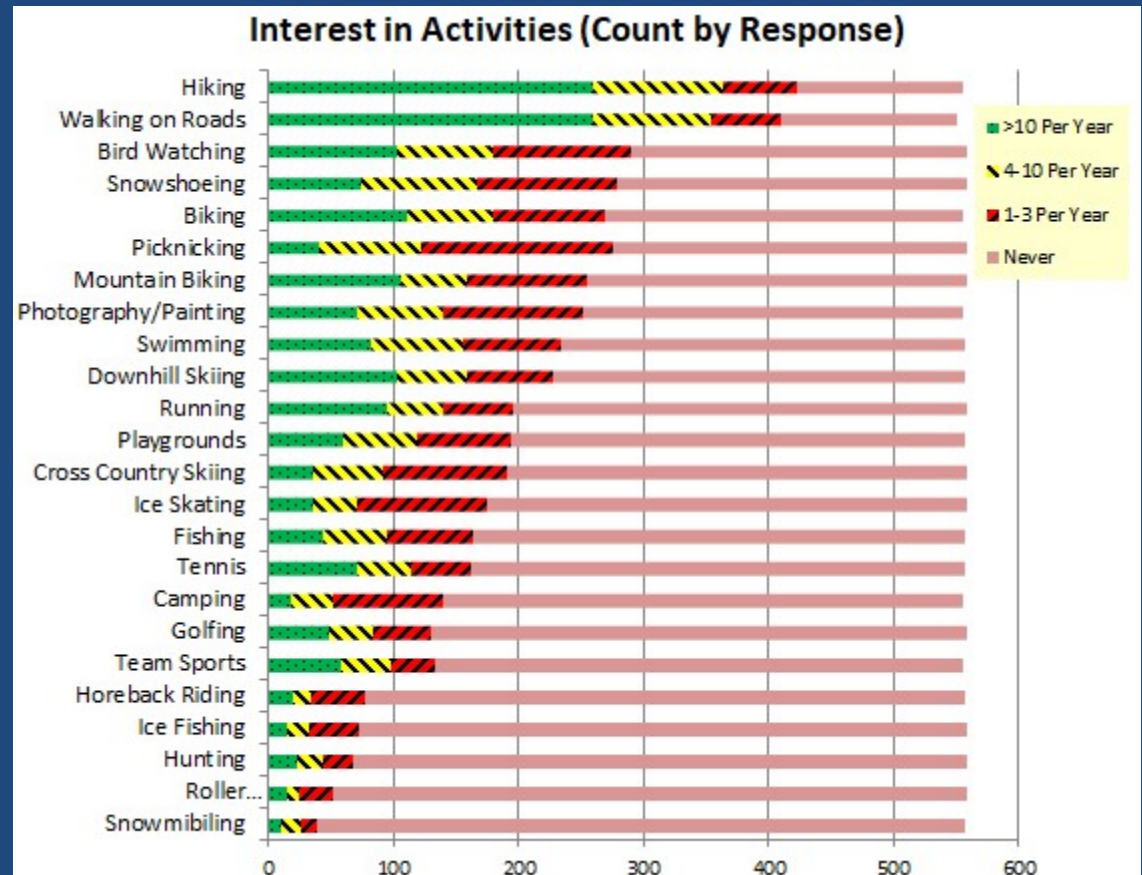
Several areas that people do not know about



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Activities of Residents

- Hiking, Walking, Biking, Birdwatching, Snowshoeing, are most popular
- Differences by age group
- Picnicking and Playgrounds higher than expected
- Effort spent on trails (hiking and biking) has a huge payback
 - 80% of Princeton Residents claim to be hikers, road walkers, bikers, bird watchers

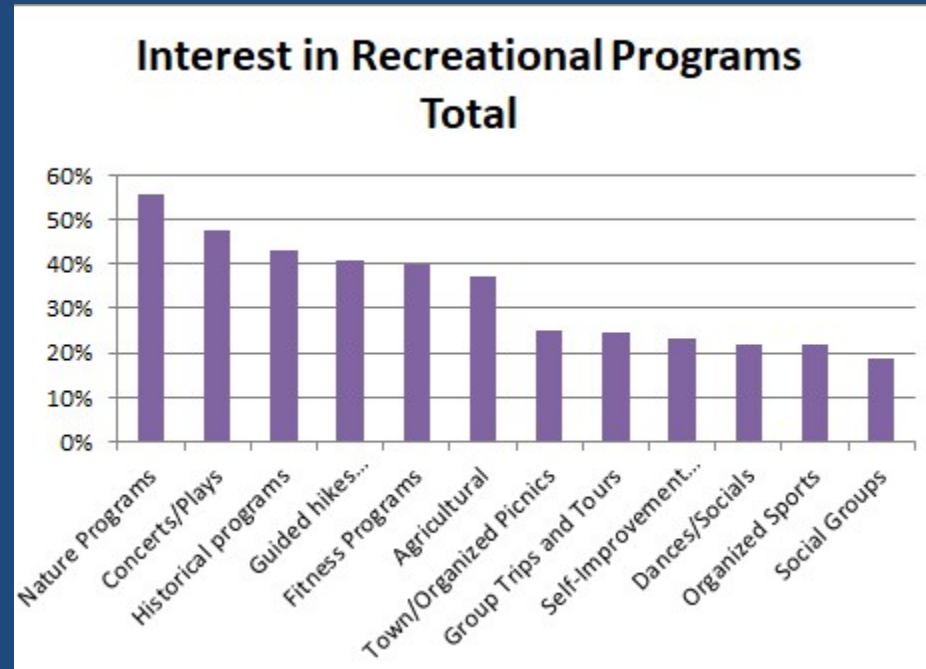


Analysis differed for Seniors, Families with kids, families with no kids

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Interest in Recreational Programs

- Strong interest in most of the activities listed
- Again, several of these are low-cost to provide
- Does not correlate to huge crowds at events offered for these activities!



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Comments

- “Preserve more” or “Maintain” open space – 48
 - No additional Open Space preservation - 5
- Expand, document, mark, interconnect and maintain trails - 34
- Safer Roads for Biking and Walking - 22
- Improve Rec Programs and Team Sports for kids in Princeton – 16
 - For adults - 4
- Improve Sawyer Field - 14
- Improve awareness of trails and parks/resources – 13
- Improve and reconfigure Krashes Field – 12
- Reduce or control cost of open space – 8
- Biking or Walking Track – 6
- More flowers, beautification – 6
- Add Dog Park – 4
- Cleanup program for town roads/parks – 3

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Town Buzz, Workshops, Public Hearings

- Town Buzz is a daytime activity set up by a select board members to highlight various town departments or town-wide issues
 - February 20 Open Space Committee was given a slot
 - Brief Presentation of OSC purpose, OSRP, Survey Results, and Initial Goals
 - 18 participants and lots of good comments
- Workshops
 - 24 leaders of various committees invited to attend a 90 minute workshop with same general structure as Town Buzz
 - Each person personally invited and committed to attendance
 - Each person asked for input to 'town needs'
 - Excellent Participation
- Public Hearing
 - To be determined

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Workshops Invitees

Person or Group	Group
Anna Wilkins	North Country Land Trust
Sherry Patch	Town Administrator
Deb Cary	OSC and MA Audubon
Walter Gowey	Ag Council
Rick Bullock	Historic Society
Aimee Kindorf	Council on Aging
Marie Auger	Planner
Clair Degutis	MA Audubon Volunteers
Corey Burnham Howard	EAC
Chris Craigue	Nimrod
Kari Sledzik	Parks and Rec
Terry Bass	Boy Scouts
Kelton Burbank	Parks and Rec and OSC
Cary LeBlanc	OSC
Lisa Drexhage	Historic Society
Erin Bonifacio	PTA

Person or Group	Group
Rachel Catlow	ConComm
Christian Henderson	Trail Sterwards and PLT
Ed Sweeney	Trail Stewards
Phil Obrien	Trail Stewards
John McCullough	Trail Stewards
Jaye Fitzgerald	NORCO
Bill Whiting	NORCO
Sarah Griffin	Girl Scouts
Rick Gardner	OSC, PLT, Trails
Karen Rossow	OSC
Phil Grensawicz	Parks and Rec
Select Board	Select Board
Tom Sullivan,	PLT
Brian Keevan	PLT and ConComm

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Development of Needs and Goals

- Will be done based on all of the feedback, by the OSC committee

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Lessons Learned

- OSRP process varies a lot by town
- Princeton could not afford an outside consultant and therefore we are doing it on our own
- Involving the Select Board worked out well for us
- Examples from other towns have been invaluable!!
 - Process for discerning needs
 - Survey question
 - Format and organization of goals