

# Draft for discussion as of 3/5/14

## 12.2 Natural Resources

**Goal 1** To preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's natural resources, including its ocean front and beaches, its rivers and estuaries, its farmlands, woodlands and open spaces, its aquifers and watersheds and its wild flora and fauna.

Objectives to address Goal One:

- 1.1 Improve protections for beaches and waterfront areas.
- 1.2 Decide upon and initiate measures for implementing nitrogen reduction to meet TMDL targets in the Westport River watershed.
- 1.3 Reduce other forms of pollution in the ponds, waterways and fish and shellfish areas.
- 1.4 Continue land and open space protection programs especially in aquifer zones and sensitive parts of the watershed.
- 1.5 Preserve critical wildlife habitat throughout the town and provide protection for endangered species.
- 1.6 Improve public understanding of actions that will help protect our natural resources.

**Goal 2** To guide and control future development in order to sustain Westport's bountiful natural resources and assure that these resources are enjoyed by future generations.

Objectives to address Goal Two:

- 2.1 Implement recently adopted bylaws designed to guide sustainable development.
- 2.2 Draft and obtain approval of additional bylaws and regulations that support sustainable development.
- 2.3 Enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and other state laws that protect the environment.
- 2.4 Devise and begin to implement a plan that addresses the many stormwater problems in the town.

### Action Plan:

**Goal 1** To preserve, protect, restore and enhance Westport's natural resources, including its ocean front and beaches, its rivers and estuaries, its farmlands, woodlands and open spaces, its aquifers and watersheds and its wild flora and fauna.

**Objective 1** Improve protections for beaches and waterfront areas

#### Action items:

- 1.1.1 Promote dune conservation and re-vegetation.
- 1.1.2 Provide signage and public education to reduce walking and playing in dunes.

**Objective 2** Decide upon and initiate measures for implementing nitrogen reduction to meet TMDL targets in the Westport River watershed.

#### Action items:

- 1.2.1. Complete 2-year data collection project on upper East Branch and analysis of findings. (SMAST and WRMC)
- 1.2.2. Use results of 1.2.1. to identify principle sources of nitrogen in East Branch.
- 1.2.3. Prepare a Nitrogen Reduction Plan (NRP) for achieving nitrogen targets in efficient and cost-effective manner.

- 1.2.4. Identify and seek sources of local and state funding for implementing the NRP on a shared, equitable basis.
- 1.2.5. Obtain local and state approval of the NRP.
- 1.2.6. Establish administrative arrangements for implementing the NRP.
- 1.2.7. Begin implementation of the NRP.
- 1.2.8. Establish systems for continuing monitoring nitrogen levels in the Westport River to assess effects of the program.

**Objective 3** Reduce other forms of pollution in the ponds, waterways and fish and shellfish areas.

**Action items:**

- 1.3.1. Continue water quality monitoring programs for various pollutants in various parts of the Westport River.
- 1.3.2. Initiate water quality monitoring in Sawdy and Devol Ponds and other water bodies as deemed important.
- 1.3.3. Identify water bodies where pollution reduction efforts are needed.
- 1.3.4. Obtain expert assistance as needed to devise plans for addressing pollution problems in polluted water bodies.
- 1.4.5. Formulate remediation plans and seek public approval and funding for implementation of plans.

**Objective 4** Continue land and open space protection programs especially in aquifer zones and sensitive parts of the watershed

**Action items**

- 1.4.1. Encourage Conservation Restrictions (CRs) and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) on private properties as appropriate.
- 1.4.2. Continue tax reduction and exemption programs for open space protection programs.
- 1.4.3. Identify lands that are in or adjacent to the aquifer zones and other sensitive areas and seek ways to give them protection.

**Objective 5** Preserve critical wildlife habitat throughout the town and provide protection for endangered species.

**Action items:**

- 1.5.1. Build partnerships with interested organizations, agents and local experts who can help with identification of areas that are critical habitat for various forms of wildlife, especially endangered and listed species.
- 1.5.2. Where programs already exist for protection of such habitat, see that they are supported and implemented.
- 1.5.3. Provide financial support for protection of breeding habitat of listed species on Town-owned property such as Town Beach.
- 1.5.4. Improve enforcement of Town by-laws designed to protect endangered wildlife species.
- 1.5.5. Evaluate the alternative ways of expanding breeding areas for endangered and listed species.

**Objective 6** Improve public understanding of actions that will help protect our natural resources.

**Action items:**

- 1.6.1. Encourage and support private organizations such as the Westport Fishermen's Association, Westport River Watershed Alliance, Westport Land Trust, Mass Audubon and Lloyd Center that provide education and information on the importance of the Town's natural resources and how to protect them.

- 1.6.2. Encourage town bodies such as the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, Water Resource Management Committee, Beach Committee and Shellfish Advisory Committee to address natural resource protection issues in their meetings and seek to educate the public as to the importance of protecting these resources.

**Goal 2** To guide and control future development in order to sustain Westport's natural resources and assure that these resources will exist to be enjoyed by future generations

**Objective 1** Implement recently adopted by-laws designed to guide sustainable development.

**Action items:**

- 2.1.1. Continue to enforce recently approved Low Impact Development and Flexible Frontage bylaws in order to minimize land clearing, protect encroachment into wetland areas and reduce stormwater impacts.
- 2.1.2. Evaluate on a yearly basis the effectiveness of the by-laws and amend as needed.

**Objective 2** Draft and obtain approval of additional bylaws and regulations that support sustainable development

**Action items:**

- 2.2.1. Encourage departments to work together to develop a standard set of regulations relating to development and stormwater design.
- 2.2.2. Improve regulations so that applicants, boards and committees have a clear understanding of expectations during the permitting process.
- 2.2.3. Update the Planning Board's Subdivision Regulations to include low impact design standards..
- 2.2.4. Prepare and seek approval of a new bylaw requiring shared denitrifying septic systems in new development projects that are within specified proximity of sensitive wetlands and waterways.
- 2.2.5. Consider the adoption of a bylaw imposing impact fees on new development projects that impact critical natural resources such as potable water supply and endangered waterways.

**Objective 3** Continue to Enforce the Wetlands Protection Act and other state laws that protect the environment

**Action items:**

- 2.3.1. Provide training and funding for Town staff, committees and boards to keep well informed of changing regulations.
- 2.3.2. Improve the Town's GIS mapping with upgraded layers showing wetland areas and other environmentally sensitive resources.

**Objective 4** Devise and begin to implement a plan that addresses the many stormwater problems in the Town

**Action items:**

- 2.4.1. Create an asset management program to identify and map the Town's stormwater system, including drainage basins, drainage structures, rim and invert elevations, pipe size and material.
- 2.4.2. Develop a maintenance plan for repair, cleaning, and replacement of drainage structures
- 2.4.3. Identify and prioritize improvements to the stormwater system.
- 2.4.4. Upgrade stormwater facilities to reduce flooding and provide additional treatment for stormwater runoff.