Skowhegan

**Critical Natural Resources** (Goal F)

**Overview and Summary:** (In Plan not here)

**Policies:**

• Conserve critical natural resources in the community.

• Coordinate with neighboring towns and private, regional, and state conservation agencies

and land trusts to protect shared critical natural resources.

• Utilize existing development regulations to continue to protect critical natural resources.

**Strategies:**

1.Continue to update the Shoreland Zoning Ordinance as conditions warrant.

2. (*High Priority)* Develop an Open Space Plan. Designate critical natural resource areas as

priority areas in development of the plan. Priority areas will include:

a. Essential Wildlife Habitat (bald eagle nest site)

b. Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Habitat

c. Rare or Exemplary Plants and Natural Communities

d. Rare or Exemplary Natural Community Locations

The open space plan will identify whether these areas should be a) designated to further

study, b) protected by ordinance or regulation, or c) priority for acquisition of title or

development rights, based on their relative importance.

The open space plan will also serve to identify and suggest protective measures for areas

of essential farmland (strategy 9-2) and outdoor recreation (strategy 6-8).

3. Identify critical natural resources and amend ordinances appropriately to protect those

resources, including but not limited to, modification of the proposed site design,

construction timing, or extent of excavation. The regulatory process will incorporate

maps and information provided by the Maine Beginning with Habitat program.

4. Continue to utilize resource protection practices and standards for construction and

maintenance of public roads and properties within the Public Works Department (PWD).

The PWD shall continue following DOT’s Best Management Practices for Erosion

Control and shall require all its employees to attend Maine Local Roads Center training on

erosion and sedimentation control.

5. Participate in ongoing interlocal planning/protection of Lake George and the Kennebec

River.

6. Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical natural resources such as through

purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.

7. Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical natural areas

about applicable local, state or federal regulations.

**Implementation**

1. **The Conservation Commission is charged with preparation of an open space plan for**

**presentation at the 2012 Town meeting. The open space plan will include a scenic view inventory and assessment, a priority list of high value natural areas, high value agricultural areas, and potential recreation sites, and strategies to pursue public/private partnerships to protect these areas such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers. Areas identified in the open space plan will be integrated into the land use plan’s rural areas wherever feasible.**

1. **The Planning Board will consult with the Conservation Commission in proposing**

**amendments to Site Review (2012) and Subdivision Ordinances (2011) to further protect natural resource areas. The following standards are recommended and will be discussed:**

* + **require applicants to solicit written review comments from the Skowhegan Conservation Commission, Maine Department Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW) and Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) when any portion of a proposed development is within 500 feet of Essential Habitat Areas identified on Beginning with Habitat map.**
	+ **require applicants to adopt appropriate measures based on review comments to protect identified critical natural resources including but not limited to changes to proposed site design, construction timing and/or extent of excavation.**
	+ **require that any proposed subdivision within 500 feet of any Essential Habitat Area must be an open space subdivision with conserved land to include land contiguous to the identified habitat and left essentially undisturbed.**
	+ **require IFW written review comments when a portion of a proposed subdivision is within Canaan Bog or other deer wintering area as indicated on a State Beginning with Habitat map and require an open space subdivision if [50] percent or more of a conventional subdivision would encompass such a habitat area.**
1. The Skowhegan highway department will continue to utilize best management practices for erosion control and will ensure that employees engaged in road maintenance work attend appropriate Maine Local Roads Center training. The highway department will also instigate practices to ensure that culvert replacement and other road maintenance activities do not alter or impede wildlife movements.
2. **The Conservation Commission will coordinate an information and education campaign for residents as well as owners of property in or near critical natural resource areas. The commission will obtain informational literature, distribute it, hold public information sessions, participate in regional planning and conservation efforts, and pursue other activities as identified throughout the planning period.**