

Metrowest
Conservation Alliance

Working together to protect local land and water.

METROWEST
CONSERVATION
ALLIANCE

**ACTION PLAN
2025 - 2035**

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The Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA) Advisory Committee and MCA Coordinator, the authors of this plan, extend our appreciation to the many partners involved in the development of this plan. Relying on the contributions of our partners, the Metrowest Conservation Alliance's 2025-2035 Action Plan compiles ideas and feedback from conversations between nearly 50 partners across the region. We thank our partners for their time and expertise throughout this process.

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MCA Coordinator:

Michael Perrin, Sudbury Valley Trustees

MCA Advisory Committee:

Matthew Brown, OARS

Joan Ferguson, Concord Land Conservation Trust

Jacque Goring, Town of Stow

Laura Mattei, Sudbury Valley Trustees

Claire Rundelli, Town of Natick

Priscilla Ryder, City of Marlborough

Guidance from:

Abby Fullem, Consensus Building Institute

William Labich, RCP Network

Jon Peterson, Network for Landscape Conservation

OUR PARTNERS

The Metrowest Conservation Alliance welcomes any and all conservation, community development, or other municipal entities and/or nonprofit organizations in our partnership. The list below reflects active partners that participated in the development of the 2025-2035 Action Plan.

Acton Conservation Trust
Town of Acton Conservation Department
Town of Ashland Conservation Department
Town of Berlin Conservation Commission
Town of Billerica Conservation Department
Town of Bolton Conservation Department
Town of Boxborough Office of Land Use
Carlisle Conservation Foundation
Town of Chelmsford Conservation
Department
Town of Chelmsford Conservation
Commission
Chelmsford Land Conservation Trust
Town of Concord Natural Resources Division
Concord Land Conservation Trust
Town of Grafton Conservation Department
Town of Harvard Land Use Department
Harvard Conservation Trust
Town of Holliston Open Space Committee
Town of Hopkinton Land Use Department
Town of Hudson Planning & Community
Development Dept.
Hudson Land Trust
Town of Lincoln Conservation Department
Lincoln Land Conservation Trust
Town of Littleton Conservation Department
Littleton Conservation Trust
City of Marlborough
Mass Audubon
Metacomet Land Trust
Town of Natick Community Development
Department

Town of Northborough Planning Department
OARS
Sherborn Rural Land Foundation
Town of Shrewsbury Conservation Division
Town of Stow Conservation Department
Town of Southborough Open Space
Preservation Comm.
SuAsCo Wild and Scenic River Stewardship
Council
Town of Sudbury Conservation Office
Sudbury Valley Trustees
Town of Tewksbury Community Development
Dept.
The Trustees of Reservations
Town of Upton Land Use & Inspectional
Services
Town of Upton Conservation Commission
Town of Upton Open Space Committee
Town of Wayland Conservation Department
Town of Westborough Conservation
Department
Town of Westborough Select Board
Town of Westford Land Use Management
Department
Westford Climate Action
Town of Weston Land Use Permitting &
Preservation Dept.

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INTRODUCTION

The Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA) is a Regional Conservation Partnership encouraging and advancing collaboration between environmental leaders in the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Rivers Watersheds (“the SuAsCo”). The MCA seeks to harness the existing energy in the SuAsCo around land and water conservation and stewardship and foster relationships between conservation practitioners to create impacts beyond the local level. Partners include municipal staff, municipal committee members, staff and volunteers with land trusts, leaders of nonprofit organizations, and community members involved in environmental efforts.

The MCA 2025-2035 Action Plan (“the Plan”) was developed by the MCA Advisory Committee and MCA Coordinator with input and feedback from all partners. The Plan acts as both a strategic plan and action plan, providing a long-term vision for the MCA as well as tangible next steps to achieve success. Content for the Plan was gathered from partners over the course of various meetings, including sub-regional gatherings and focus groups reviewing versions of the document.

The Plan highlights the concerns and opportunities of utmost importance to the partners. The priority topics represent categories that repeatedly emerged during conversations with partners during information-gathering sessions. At these sessions, participants discussed their current, future, or desired conservation and stewardship projects and brainstormed how positive impacts could be shared on a regional level. Many partners demonstrated similar hopes for the use of the MCA, such as increasing efficiency and pace of projects through information sharing amongst conservation practitioners and expanding capacity for larger projects through collaboration.

Notably, the Plan does not include goals and/or objectives centered on invasive species management. Invasive species management was highlighted by many partners during the information-gathering sessions. The SuAsCo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA), the sister organization to the MCA, focuses exclusively on coordination of invasive species management. Thus, the MCA Advisory Committee decided not to include invasive species management within the Action Plan. MCA partners are encouraged to join this collaborative to further explore these topics.

The five priority topics for regional collaboration identified throughout the development of the Plan are: **Protection of Critical Landscapes, Habitat Restoration & Management, Agricultural Land Protection & Access, Climate & Ecological Resilience, and Community Development.** These priority topics are the basis for the goals and objectives within the Plan.

MCA OVERVIEW

Formed in 2011, the Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA) is a Regional Conservation Partnership advancing regional conservation and land management in the Metrowest Boston area, specifically the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Rivers Watersheds. The partnership spans across 36 communities and covers more than 375 square miles. The MCA has a naturally fluctuating average of 50 partners, which include municipal staff, conservation commissioners, open space committee members, land trust staff and/or board members, nonprofit staff and/or board members, and community members engaged in environmental efforts. Any organization, committee, individual, and other groups is welcome to join the MCA.

The MCA is guided by an Advisory Committee, a volunteer decision-making group composed of representatives from the different sectors of the partnership. The Sudbury Valley Trustees provides much-needed capacity by appointing staff as the official coordinator for the partnership.

The MCA hosts two annual gatherings and various workshops throughout the year. The annual gatherings typically include presentations from partners about regionally relevant topics as well as networking opportunities. MCA also workshops center priority concerns and/or opportunities shared among partners. Workshops inspire partners to tackle new projects, provide support and advice for partners undergoing similar projects, and empower partners to tie their efforts to those of their colleagues to expand reach and capacity on a regional level.

Various committees exist under the MCA umbrella and focus on goals within the purview of the partnership. It is the hope of the Advisory Committee that the Plan will energize the formation of new committees of conservation practitioners passionate about certain topics. The Bumblebee Project (BBP) is an exemplary committee. The BBP addresses the decline of native pollinator species through sharing information with the public about the importance of specific native plants. The BBP hosts winter sows at community-gathering spaces, summer garden tours at demonstration gardens, and various mediums of educational workshops to encourage and enable community members to assist in the conservation of at-risk pollinators.

Mission:

Members of the Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA) work collaboratively on land management (stewardship) and land protection to achieve regional conservation success. The MCA promotes sustainable forestry and agriculture, biodiversity protection, and local economies. The MCA recognizes the need to integrate people with the environment through education, extension and outreach in order to achieve our conservation goals.

The ultimate goal of the partnership is to create connections, share knowledge, and combine efforts to advance shared priority environmental topics and broaden impacts to the larger SuAsCo area. The MCA exists within a very active area for land protection and stewardship, so partners will benefit from improved coordination and communication.

MCA PARTNERSHIP FUNCTIONS

Throughout the Action Planning Process, partners expressed the need for the Plan to define the functions of the Metrowest Conservation Alliance. As a partnership with a broad scope, these functions guided the formation of actionable objectives throughout the Plan. Below lists the overarching functions of the partnership.

Function 1: Regional Capacity-Building → Support capacity-building for regional conservation by facilitating conversations, organizing committees, applying for and administering grants, and conducting outreach.

Function 2: Partner Support → Provide training opportunities and share relevant resources with SuAsCo conservation practitioners through workshops and webinars, promoting online educational resources, and sharing examples of successful projects.

Function 3: Networking → Foster community and connections among the SuAsCo land conservation community, center peer-to-peer learning, and strengthen connections with audiences beyond current MCA membership (foresters, realtors, attorneys, public health agencies, affordable housing commissions, etc).

Function 4: Tool Development → Create and publish useful tools to further regional land protection in the SuAsCo area.

Function 5: Advocacy → Share opportunities for partners to support legislation that would support conservation and land management on a regional level.

Function 6: Committee Coordination → Facilitate committee organization to work on specific goals and objectives under priority topics, and encourage the formation of new committees and recruitment of new members.

Function 7: Public Education → Educate the public about the importance of regional conservation and land management in a uniform message for SuAsCo partners.

ACTION PLAN PROCESS

ABOUT

Based on partner feedback, the Metrowest Conservation Alliance 2025-2035 Action Plan is a compilation of actions, concerns, and opportunities related to land conservation and land management in the SuAsCo watershed. The Action Plan defines the purpose of the partnership and provides goals and objectives for the priority topics, or focus areas, identified by the partnership.

Our hope for the creation and publishing of the Plan is to encourage collaboration between MCA partners across the priority topics and key opportunities pertaining to land conservation and management in the SuAsCo area. Feedback from partners throughout the formation of the Plan highlighted that impactful collaboration can range from large-scale protection projects to informal dialog between partners. We hope this plan sparks conversations and action facilitated by the MCA and our partners through the formation of committees around objectives laid out in this plan.

PROCESS

The Action Plan's development process centered MCA partner engagement throughout. The process began at the MCA Fall Meeting in November 2024, with over 30 participants sharing their perspectives on conservation opportunities and challenges, and the role of regional collaboration in responding to them. This feedback became the backbone of the priorities and goals in the Action Plan.

In January 2025, the MCA Coordinator hosted six "Action Planning Sub-regional Gatherings" to promote deeper and more detailed conversations in specific geographies and engage more MCA partners in the Action Plan development. 45 MCA partners – including representatives from 36 different municipalities, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies listed in the Our Partners section – participated in these sub-regional gatherings. The gatherings were used to expand upon the feedback from the MCA Fall Meeting and informed the action-oriented objectives in the Action Plan.

The drafting of the Action Plan was an iterative process. After the first draft was completed by the MCA Coordinator and Advisory Committee, MCA partners were asked to review the draft and share feedback during breakout sessions at the MCA Spring Meeting in April 2025. Around 25 partners attended this meeting. The Advisory Committee integrated feedback, e.g., combining specific priority topics, into an updated second draft that was circulated via the MCA Newsletter for a final round of feedback.

The Action Plan development process was facilitated by the MCA Coordinator, MCA Advisory Committee, and the Consensus Building Institute (CBI).

STRUCTURE OF DOCUMENT

The following sections are presented in a consistent order: *Priority Topic* > *Introduction* > *Common Themes* > *Goals* > *Objectives*. Each section is defined below to support clear understanding and navigation.

'Priority Topic' are the categories of highest interest to partners. Specific goals and objectives identified during the Action Planning Process were grouped under these categories. These topics are listed in no particular order of importance.

'Introduction' offers a high-level overview of the Priority Topic, explaining its relevance to the Metrowest Conservation Alliance.

'Common Themes' summarizes recurring concerns, opportunities, and key discussion points that emerged throughout the Action Planning Process.

'Goals' define the overarching targets that the partnership aims to achieve.

'Objectives' identifies the specific action items the partnership intends to implement in order to advance the stated Goals.

ACTION PLAN OVERVIEW: *PRIORITY TOPICS & GOALS*

Protection of Critical Landscapes

- Utilize the SuAsCo Conservation Prioritization Tool
- Protect corridors for wildlife & recreation
- Protect water bodies & surrounding areas
- Manage regional grant applications

Habitat Restoration & Management

- Encourage & activate forest stewardship plans
- Coordinate regional deer management
- Promote native pollination systems
- Expand grassland habitat management

Agricultural Land Protection & Access

- Protect existing farmland
- Support new farmers by providing access to farmland
- Spread awareness of farmland protection & support options

Climate & Ecological Resilience

- Share local bylaws/ordinances advancing climate resilience
- Leverage existing local plans to create regional impacts
- Encourage & advance regional ecological resilience projects

Community Development

- Balance housing & conservation needs
- Improve land access for historically excluded groups
- Expand land use & access for indigenous communities

PRIORITY TOPICS, GOALS, & OBJECTIVES

Priority Topics:

- A. Protection of Critical Landscapes
- B. Habitat Restoration & Management
- C. Agricultural Land Protection & Access
- D. Climate & Ecological Resilience
- E. Community Development

PROTECTION OF CRITICAL LANDSCAPES

INTRODUCTION

Land Protection is an important part of building a healthy and thriving Metrowest. However, conservation projects can be complex and expensive, and often require many years of effort.

Over time, the conservation community has found great success working through partnerships to protect many special places. By bringing together individuals from various organization types (municipalities, volunteer and staffed land trusts, state agencies, etc.) who can exchange ideas and learn from one another, the Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA) creates a nexus for cooperative action. Together, our partners can make a greater impact, raise more funds, and protect more priority land.

COMMON THEMES

SuAsCo Conservation Prioritization Tool; cooperative grant applications; wildlife corridors; recreation corridors; coordinated outreach to priority landowners; utility easements; creation of maps; cooperative plans; ecosystem/natural services; Chapter 61 & Article 97 land

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

A.1: Convene partners around MCA SuAsCo Conservation Prioritization Tool to encourage cross-boundary projects.

A.1.1: Connect partners from abutting communities to identify high integrity, cross-boundary land protection projects.

A.1.2: Identify cross-town areas with high numbers of priority parcels for potential 'aggregation projects'.

A.1.3: Organize proactive outreach campaigns to reach private landowners, especially in aggregation areas.

A.1.4: Share information from Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition The Value of Land Conservation with the general public.

A.2: Prioritize land protection projects creating key linkages for wildlife and recreation corridors.

A.2.1: Complete a strategic conservation map identifying key projects for habitat connectivity with partners throughout the region using MassGIS data and SuAsCo Conservation Prioritization Tool.

A.2.2: Partner with Regional Planning Agencies to further their efforts to create strategic maps identifying key projects for recreation connections.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES, Cont.

A.3: Protect land around waterways and water bodies.

A.3.1: Support OARS' analysis of river and tributary corridors to identify projects to enhance riparian habitat.

A.3.2: Forge partnerships between municipalities to strengthen coordination for protection and management of water supplies, waterways, and water bodies.

A.3.3: Collaborate with partner organizations to identify and advance projects for recreation, restoration, and aquatic habitat connectivity.

A.4: Expand funding opportunities for land protection by applying for grants beyond municipal bounds.

A.4.1: Maintain a list of collaborative land protection projects within the SuAsCo that received funding through non-municipal grants to highlight alternative funding sources.

A.4.2: Apply for and manage grants for cross-town land acquisition and land management projects leveraging applicant eligibility.

HABITAT RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Habitat restoration and management projects are often completed by MCA partners. However, these efforts rarely cross municipal boundaries. Successful restoration and management requires coordinated projects across the region. Coordinated projects expand habitat availability for wildlife across the region, creates refuges for vulnerable species, and improves functionality of natural services. The MCA aims to promote these coordinated efforts.

While there are many opportunities for habitat restoration and management across the region, partners expressed interest in three main themes: forest management, grassland management, and native pollination systems. Partners were especially keen to connect with others about past successes that can be used as case studies.

COMMON THEMES

Cooperative forest management plans, public communications about forest management practices, deer management, wildlife corridors & protection of forest blocks, grassland management, grassland bird conservation, dog management, native plants, threatened pollinators, regionally-appropriate seed mixes, public education

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

B.1: Encourage partners to prepare forest management plans for healthy forest habitats.

B.1.1: Partnering with state entities and contracted foresters to share information about the elements and process of Forest Management Plans.

B.1.2: Using MassGIS data, assess protected forest habitat blocks and initiate cross-boundary Forest Management Plans.

B.1.3: Publish a list of successful forest management projects conducted by partners on the MCA Habitat Restoration & Management webpage.

B.2: Coordinate regional deer management efforts to address overbrowsing concerns.

B.2.1: Convene the Deer Management Committee biannually to discuss results of community deer management efforts and current information, including hunting studies, updated policy and regulations, and strategies for deer management.

B.2.2: Share information with partners and the general public about the impacts of the overabundant deer population.

B.2.3: Continue engaging MassWildlife biologists to inform partners on regulations, policies, best practices, and updated information.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES, Cont.

B.3: Promote the conservation of native pollination systems based on the success of the Bumblebee Project MCA Committee.

B.3.1: Continue to host public education programs (summer garden tours, winter sows, etc.) to guide community members to create pollination systems that support declining species of native pollinators, preferably with existing groups and at community gathering spaces.

B.3.2: Continue to support the establishment of gardens and meadows/habitats in all 36 communities that provide host plants, pollen, nectar to support threatened pollinator species.

B.3.3: Provide a region-wide, interactive map showing each pollination system garden and/or meadow in the SuAsCo.

B.3.4: Continue to provide a plant list to benefit threatened pollinators, guided by best practices and Dr. Gegear's research.

B.3.5: Compile a list of bylaws and ordinances requiring native plants in landscaping plans.

B.4: Promote Best Management Practices for vulnerable grassland habitats and species.

B.4.1: Facilitate conversations between partners managing grassland habitat.

B.4.2: Share information and highlight local examples of Best Management Practices on the MCA Habitat Restoration & Management webpage.

B.4.3: Complete strategic conservation map leading to outreach to landowners with known breeding populations of threatened grassland bird species.

AGRICULTURAL LAND PROTECTION & ACCESS

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural lands continue to be a cornerstone of communities across Metrowest, but these lands are vulnerable to increasing development pressures. Not only do farms add to the rural character of the area, but they provide fresh and healthy foods to nearby residents. The protection of farmland and availability of local food is more important than ever, which is why the Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA) believes in enhancing and supporting our local farms.

Conserving farmland can be a complex process that must be tailored to the farmer's vision and business structure. Common protection strategies include Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs) and Farm-friendly Conservation Restrictions (CRs), as well as farm succession planning. Access to farmland for new farmers is another challenge in the area, due to the high price of land and lack of high-quality soils.

Many MCA partners protect farms and/or provide access to viable farmland at conserved areas. The wide variety of experiences within the MCA allows members to come together to find appropriate solutions to conserve important agricultural lands and support our remaining agricultural businesses.

COMMON THEMES

Mechanisms for protecting farms, farmland succession planning, funding for purchase/protection of agricultural land, farmer access to land, farm-friendly CRs

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

C.1: Increase the rate of farmland permanently protected in the SuAsCo.

C.1.1: Communicate findings from the SuAsCo Conservation Prioritization Tool to identify priority farmland protection projects.

C.1.2: Conduct strategic outreach to farmers with farmland protection organizations such as Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) and the American Farmland Trust (AFT).

C.2: Support new farmers requiring access to agricultural land.

C.2.1: Coordinate with New Entry to connect new farmers with land and the conservation community.

C.2.2: Facilitate peer-learning workshops highlighting successful efforts connecting farmers to conservation land.

C.2.3: Share resources that facilitate allowing farmers to access protected land on the MCA Agricultural Land Protection & Access webpage (ex. Farm lease agreements).

GOALS & OBJECTIVES, Cont.

C.3: Educate partners on farmland protection options.

C.3.1: Host workshops highlighting relevant topics (farmland succession planning, farmland protection tools, etc.) with farmland-specific partners such as AFT and MDAR.

C.3.2: Provide materials and resources for partners to further educate farmers about options and opportunities to help maintain their farms and plan for succession.

C.3.3: Share current information with partners about state and federal grant programs supporting farmland conservation.

CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

INTRODUCTION

The Metrowest Conservation Alliance (MCA) believes that adaptation and resilience to climate change must be addressed. By working together, MCA partners can create a more resilient region, leveraging shared knowledge and resources to tackle climate change impacts more effectively. Because aspects of climate resilience fall into a number of the topics identified in this plan, the goals and objectives identified under this priority topic are primarily focused on planning and permitting opportunities for increasing climate resilience.

During the Action Planning Process, partners expressed interest in sharing examples of strong climate-focused bylaws and ordinances and bolstering existing municipal plans such as Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Plans. Partner sharing about bylaws and ordinances could lead to the adoption of similar efforts on a regional level. These include wetland bylaws, tree removal bylaws, and others. Also, analyzing existing plans and identifying overlapping objectives can spark regional projects. Plans of note include Hazard Mitigation Plans, Community Resilience Plans, Net Zero Plans, Municipal Vulnerability Plans, and Open Space and Recreation Plans.

One of the central climate concerns for partners is how to address impacts of climate change, such as ‘heat island effect.’ Collaborative action on this issue could include increasing tree canopy coverage, implementing cool roofing policies, and designing more green infrastructure. It is important to highlight the co-benefits of these types of projects and their benefits for overall ecological resilience in communities.

COMMON THEMES

Regenerative sustainability, ordinances & bylaws, flood mitigation and storage, carbon sequestration, MVP Plans, stormwater management, tree canopy, extreme heat

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

D.1: Highlight existing ordinances and bylaws in SuAsCo towns advancing climate resiliency in coordination with Regional Planning Agencies and the Massachusetts Conservation Professionals (MSMCP).

D.1.1: Promote the MAPC Climate Resilient Land Use Strategies resource and compile a list of exemplary bylaws and ordinances in the SuAsCo that address climate change concerns, including Wetlands and Stormwater Bylaws, and post on the MCA Climate & Ecological Resilience webpage.

D.1.2: Collaborate with MSMCP to share climate bylaw resources with our partners.

D.1.3: Support communities in adopting local bylaws and ordinances that support protections for healthy canopy, improvements to soil health, and ecological restoration.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES, Cont.

D.2: Leverage existing climate-related plans and resources to inspire regional projects and expand regional impacts of local climate projects.

D.2.1: Promote strong climate-focused goals and actions to be replicated in relevant plan development and/or updates to expand available funding sources for implementation.

D.2.2: Support and facilitate regional meetings to identify and collaborate on shared goals at a regional level (flood mitigation, water quality, etc.).

D.2.3: Collaborate with Regional Planning Agencies and state-wide organizations to collect data on the results of climate projects, such as culvert repairs, tree planting, etc.

D.3: Improve ecological resilience through the implementation of regional programs to address climate challenges.

D.3.1: Leverage findings from existing urban heat island studies to develop targeted regional actions that mitigate adverse effects.

D.3.2: Use the MCA SuAsCo Conservation Prioritization Tool to prioritize critically important lands for preservation to preserve and maintain natural services (flood control, carbon sequestration, cooling etc).

D.3.3: Partner with communities on regional grant projects on the education of project stakeholders and the general public on the role ecological resilience plays in overall climate resilience.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Metrowest Conservation Alliance appreciates the importance of integrating community with conservation work. Thoughtful consideration for community within conservation projects can lead to balanced land use, healthier residents, and improved access for groups historically excluded from conservation and recreation.

While there are many possible avenues to merge community development and conservation, partners expressed interest in discussing integrating housing and conservation projects and advancing land access for historically excluded groups, such as Indigenous communities, residents with mobility impairments, and people of color. These conversations can help shape more inclusive and equitable conservation strategies that reflect the needs of all community members.

By prioritizing community conservation efforts, MCA and its partners can foster more sustainable and socially just outcomes across the region.

COMMON THEMES

Affordable housing, environmental justice, trail accessibility, indigenous communities, diversifying partner representation, low-impact development

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

E.1: Improve communication with local and regional housing entities to balance housing needs and land conservation.

E.1.1: Compile examples, plans, and testimonies from projects combining conservation and housing to be added to the MCA Community Development webpage.

E.1.2: Connect housing authorities to conservation practitioners through networking sessions.

E.1.3: Provide a workshop to share tools used to plan housing and land conservation projects.

E.2: Expand access and accessibility for historically excluded groups in the SuAsCo.

E.2.1: Partner with groups specializing on accessibility within the recreation space to host workshops highlighting accessible outdoor programs.

E.2.2: Add information for each community to existing databases of accessible trails, such as the Birdability map.

E.2.3: Promote and support projects addressing language barriers in natural areas by creating one multi-language trail map for each community.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES, Cont.

E.3: Expand access and land use opportunities for indigenous communities.

E.3.1: Provide learning opportunities for partners to understand the history and current statuses of indigenous communities in the region.

E.3.2: Facilitate conversations between partners and indigenous communities to understand regional land use needs and opportunities for the communities.

E.3.3: Collaborate with indigenous partners and/or organizations to host workshops about land access pathways for indigenous communities (ex. Cultural Respect Easements, important legislation).

E.3.4: Coordinate with communities to implement indigenous land stewardship knowledge in culturally significant landscapes in partnership with indigenous communities.

GLOSSARY

- **Regional Conservation Partnership ('RCP'):** an informal network of stakeholders, typically conservation entities, banding together to accomplish land protection and land management projects across geographic and organizational bounds.
- **Conservation Restriction ('CR'):** a voluntary, permanent legal agreement entered into by a landowner and a qualified conservation organization (ex. land trust) or a government entity (ex. conservation commission, state agency) which restricts certain uses of specified land. These agreements are called Conservation Easements in different states.
- **Aggregation project:** project combining multiple properties/parcels to expand the purposes (habitat connectivity, recreation, flood storage, etc.) for conserving the land.
- **Best Management Practices ('BMPs'):** recommended techniques to maintain land (forests, fields, farms, etc.) to benefit identified stakeholders, such as wildlife or economic interests.
- **Riparian habitat:** area of land between a waterbody and uplands that is influenced by the presence of water.
- **Pollination system:** the interactions between plants and the insects, and other animals, that pollinate them.
- **SuAsCo:** the shorthand term for the area containing the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers watersheds.
- **Critical lands:** important lands to meet specific goals for land protection and/or management.
- **Agricultural land access:** providing entry and/or use of agricultural land for those not holding the land.
- **Resilience:** the capacity to withstand or to recover quickly from difficulties.
- **SuAsCo Conservation Prioritization Tool:** a tool developed by the MCA and Sudbury Valley Trustees to identify important parcels within the SuAsCo based on different criteria, such as habitat for biodiversity and farmland.

Metrowest Conservation Alliance

Working together to protect local land and water.

Thank you to our partners for their continued support. We hope you will join our efforts as a partnership to progress the goals identified in the plan.