

Thoughts on the Natural Environment Planning

Here are a few issues that should be included. These are not comprehensive, and are more goals than strategies.

- Provide ways for quiet contemplation of the natural environment, day and night, including limits on noisy activities in some places.
- Improve access to appropriate areas (shore of ocean and ponds, trails through woods and meadows, etc.) for active recreation.
- Protect habitats, especially rare habitats for native species to thrive and maintain communities through the years.
- Keep agricultural lands used for growing food crops, expanding where appropriate to provide more food from local sources. Aquaculture and fishing in ponds and salt water should also be encouraged.
- Clean up scenic roadside views to extend vistas and mask ugly constructions visible from roads and water.
- Ensure that we have sufficient undeveloped land to protect aquifers, and that sewage systems and septic systems are designed to protect our pond water as well as the aquifer.
- All of these require substantial acreage of land dedicated for different purposes, and definitely not for additional areas of dense residential and commercial development. It strikes me that we need to say something about encouraging cluster development and infill of already densely developed town areas in order to allow necessary continued construction without ruining the natural environment's use for specialized activities such as farming, habitat protection and recreation.
- All these specific uses of the natural environment contribute to the character of the Vineyard, and we should keep in mind this aspect of developing recreational access, enhancing roadside vistas, encouraging agriculture, and protecting habitats.