

# High Meadows Management Plan



**Town of Falmouth  
December 2013**

## I. Summary

The 15-acre High Meadows property, created by a sub-division development in 1996, is a classic “measle” conservation property. There is no ready public access to the property and no real way to actively manage it with the cooperation of abutting landowners. It is best left alone to serve as a scenic buffer between the Gray Road and Bowdoin Drive. Perhaps as the area gets built out in time it could become a “pocket park.”

## II. Description

The 15-acre High Meadows property was acquired by the town as conservation set aside land when the Bowdoin Drive subdivision was created in 1996. The property fronts the Gray Road on the west; private land to the north, east and south; Eastern Avenue and Bowdoin Drive at the northeast corner; and a short stretch of the West Branch of the Piscataquis River to the south. However, given the extensive wetlands on the property, there is no easy public access to it, by foot or vehicle. The property boundaries are not marked.

Vegetation of the property consists primarily of open fields and early successional forest growth (apple, alder, red maple, red oak), and a small stream that runs the length of the property from north to south. Although small, it does have some wildlife habitat value. Left alone, the property will grow into mature forest.

There appears to be some encroachment by a homeowner on the southwest corner of the lot (yard waste dumping, mowing and a new fence that encloses town property), and some mowing of the meadow by a Bowdoin Drive homeowner. A survey would probably be necessary to firmly establish the property line in the area of the fence. Some evidence that the neighbors walk the property is evident, although there are no established trails.

## III. Conservation Values

Given its small size and lack of good public access, this is a classic “measle” open space property of little ecological or recreational value. Its primary value is serving as a scenic buffer between the Gray Road and Bowdoin Drive. It also provides some water quality protection to the West Branch. It might serve as a “pocket park” at some future date with the area becomes completely built out.

## IV. Property Restrictions

The terms of the Bowdoin Drive development agreement preclude any further building on the property, nor can it be sub-divided. Public access is allowed.

## V. Management Goals

Without ready access to the property, there is little to be done regarding its management unless one or more abutters was willing to provide access to mow the fields or a trailhead to create a public accessible trails on the property. The most immediate management task would be to mark the boundaries of the property to help curb future encroachment. Otherwise, the property should be left forever wild. A second task would be to resolve the encroachment problem in the southeast corner.

Trees should be left to grow up and provide a visual buffer between Route 100 and the houses on Bowdoin Drive.

A next step would be to meet with homeowners in the Bowdoin Drive subdivision to get their input into what they would like to see done with the property. An initial contact person has been identified and that process has been set in motion.

#### VI. Future Opportunities / Plans

There is undeveloped land to the south that may be obtainable, but doing so would not provide access, thus there is no real reason to acquire it. High Meadows is a meadow now and will likely be a meadow forever.

#### VII. Budget

Boundary signs valued at  $\pm \$30$  are already on hand. A survey would cost  $\pm \$1,200$ .



River boundary



Early successional growth



Abutter encroachment



Field, Bowdoin Dr. Houses

