

Vermont Land Use Planning Implementation Manual Topic Paper Information and Resources

18. Open Space and Resource Protection Programs (6 pages)

Nonregulatory tools for protecting natural and cultural resources including conservation commissions, open space planning and land acquisition programs.

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Examples:

- *Shelburne Open Space Plan* - <http://www.shelburnevt.org/>
- *Natural Heritage Element Inventory and Assessment for Waitsfield and Fayston, Vermont* - <http://www.waitsfieldvt.us/docs/index.cfm>
- West Fairlee Conservation Commission website - http://westfairleevt.com/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={4E1DD934-9735-45D2-B1AA-DE9F9A524846}
- Middlesex Conservation Fund Guidance Document - http://www.middlesex-vt.org/html/conservation_program.html
- Development Constraints Analysis for a number of towns. *Development Constraints Analysis* page from Land Use and Transportation Connections -- Experiences from Northwest Vermont webpage -- <http://www.transportation-landuse.org/pages/tools/constraints.htm>

Resources:

- Agency of Natural Resources – <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/>
- Agency of Agriculture - <http://www.vermontagriculture.com/>
- Vermont Division for Historic Preservation – www.historicvermont.org
- Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, conservation programs - <http://www.vhcb.org/conservation.html>
- Urban and Community Forestry Program - http://www.vtfpr.org/urban/for_urbcomm.cfm
- Vermont Land Trust - <http://www.vlt.org>
- Northern Forest Alliance - www.northernforestalliance.org
- *Conserving Vermont's Natural Heritage: A Guide to Community-Based Planning for the Conservation of Vermont's Fish, Wildlife, and Biological Diversity* (The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife) - http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/library.cfm?libbase=Reports_and_Documents
- *Web Guide to Technical Assistance Programs in Vermont*, Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife's directory of all the organizations in Vermont that provide some type of natural resource-related assistance to towns and private landowners - <http://www.vtfishandwildlife.com/vtfwl/index.cfm>
- *Visual Resources* page from Land Use and Transportation Connections -- Experiences from Northwest Vermont webpage - <http://www.transportation-landuse.org/pages/tools/visual.htm>
- *Hypothetical Example of Computing a LESA Score* (see below)

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HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE OF COMPUTING A LESA SCORE			
Factor Name	Factor Rating (0-100)	Factor Weight (Total = 1.00)	Weighted Factor Rating (Factor Rating X Factor Weight)
LAND EVALUATION (LE)			
Land capability classification	68	0.30	20.4
Soil productivity	62	0.20	12.4
LE subtotal		0.50	32.8
SITE ASSESSMENT (SA)			
SA-1 Agricultural Use			
Acreage of farm	100	0.15	15.0
Farm investment	80	0.05	4.0
Surrounding uses	60	0.10	6.0
SA-1 subtotal		0.30	25.0
SA-2 Development Pressure			
Protection by plan or zoning	90	0.06	5.4
Distance to sewer	70	0.05	3.5
SA-2 subtotal		0.11	8.9
SA-3 Other Factors			
Scenic quality	50	0.09	4.5
SA-3 subtotal		0.09	4.5
TOTAL LESA SCORE			71.2
<p>In this simple example, a LESA score could range from 0 to 100. The higher the score, the more important the site for agricultural uses. Thresholds can be set to group sites by scores into two or more classes—based on their agricultural importance—to help make land use decisions.</p> <p>The LESA framework is flexible. Factors can be added and factor ratings and weightings adjusted to tailor the assessment to a particular location or for use in achieving a particular objective.</p> <p><i>Source: Pease, J.R., and R.E. Coughlin. 1996. Land Evaluation and Site Assessment: A Guidebook for Rating Agricultural Lands, Second Edition. Soil and Water Conservation Society: Ankeny, Iowa.</i></p>			