



*TOWN OF DURHAM  
8 NEWMARKET ROAD  
DURHAM, NH 03824-2898  
Tel: 603/868-5571  
Fax: 603/868-1858  
Website: [www.ci.durham.nh.us](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us)*

## **2020 Durham Land Stewardship Highlights**

**By Ellen Snyder, Land Stewardship Coordinator**

**December 1, 2020**

**The Land Stewardship Coordinator** works in consultation and collaboration with the Durham Land Stewardship Subcommittee to coordinate land stewardship activities, responsibilities and opportunities on town-owned lands, fulfill conservation easement obligations, and provide information through property signage, town website, Friday Updates, kiosks and other forums to inform and engage the public in caring for and enjoying town lands. This is a part-time contract position funded by the General Fund. Many volunteers, conservation partners, the Conservation Commission, and town staff at Town Hall and Department of Public Works (DPW) were key to the stewardship accomplishments. Funding for the various projects was from the Conservation Commission Fund, Durham Land Use Trust, Patron's Trust (private donations), grants, and in-kind contributions.

### **Land Stewardship Subcommittee Membership 2020:**

Kenny Rotner (Chair, Town Council), Ann Welsh (Chair, At-Large), Sally Tobias (Vice-Chair, Economic Development), John Carroll (Agricultural Commission), John Nachilly (Conservation Commission), Larry Brickner-Wood (Heritage Commission), Andrea Bodo (Heritage Commission), Mike Everngam (Trustees of the Trust Fund), Gale Carey (At-Large), Vin Dell'Ova (At-Large), Rachel Gasowski (Parks & Rec Director), Todd Selig (Town Administrator), Rich Reine (DPW Director), Mike Lynch (DPW Director)

### **STEWARDSHIP OF TOWN-OWNED LANDS**

#### **Doe Farm**

- Completed a re-grading and expansion of the parking area, installed a new boundary fence, and installed new entrance signs.
- Contracted for design and printing of two new historical panels for the kiosk; information was provided by the Durham Historic Association.
- Cleared trees and invasive plants around the historic Doe foundations; created a new path that winds among the foundations.
- Coordinated invasive plant control by TurfPro.
- Supported a research project by UNH Post-Doc on the invasive Emerald Ash Borer.
- Began planning for a winter timber harvest (to remove dying red pine) in collaboration with Trustees of the Trust Fund and consulting forester Charlie Moreno.
- Conducted a reconnaissance of the trails out to Moat Island with Durham/UNH fire and safety staff.

#### **Jackson's Landing**

- Brushed out trails and re-installed set of interpretive signs.

### **Longmarsh Preserve**

- Bog bridge repairs by the Rotary Club of Durham – Great Bay.
- Trail brush out by volunteers and UNH Nature Groupie interns.
- Discussed parking options with abutters, DPW, Durham Police.
- Coordinated trail stewardship and land management with partners including the Forest Society, The Nature Conservancy, and NH Fish and Game.

### **Milne Nature Sanctuary**

- Worked with the Milne Nature Sanctuary Committee to remove remaining invasive Norway maples, pull invasive plants, plant native wildflowers and shrubs, spread wildflower seeds, install a memorial bench, and install a new entrance sign.

### **Oyster River Forest (ORF)**

- The Rockingham County Conservation District (RCCD) completed a fourth year of targeted herbicide treatment of invasive plants. Funded by a 2019 grant from the NH State Conservation Committee (“moose plate”) and the Conservation Commission Fund.
- The Land Stewardship Coordinator hand-pulled invasive wild parsnip, for the 7<sup>th</sup> year of control.
- Cleared invasive plants around trailhead and cellar hole, with help of volunteers and interns.
- For the third year, the Conservation Commission funded mowing of the trails.
- Installed a temporary bridge across a section of flooded trail.

### **Thompson Forest**

- Submitted two successful grant proposals to the US Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Wildlife Program for invasive plant control (\$4,350 and \$1,925).
- Coordinated invasive plant control by contractors (Rockingham County Conservation District and Osprey Ecological Services LLC).
- Coordinated volunteers to hand pull invasive glossy buckthorn.
- Worked with UNH Nature Groupie Interns to pull invasive plants and improve trail.
- Volunteers built two trail bridges.

### **Stevens Woods Trail Network**

- Assisted with design and layout of Oyster River bridge trail connector to Stevens Woods from Thompson Lane.
- Brushed out new trail through NH Fish and Game’s Beaudette property.
- Coordinated trail mapping with UNH and NHFG.
- Worked with NHFG, Eversource, and NH DES to design a trail bridge across LaRoche Brook on Beaudette.

### **Wagon Hill Farm**

- Completed a trails and bridges assessment to identify needed improvements.
- Worked with a Scout to complete his Eagle Scout project: upgraded a section of trail with hardpack and boardwalk and fixed two benches.
- The Rotary Club of Durham – Great Bay repaired several trail bridges.
- Provided guidance to the Living Shoreline project partnership on trail and shoreline stewardship.
- Collaborated with NH Fish and Game on habitat management on Wagon Hill Farm North 40.

- Submitted a \$24,000 grant application to the State Conservation Committee Moose Plate program for a 2021 trail/bridge improvement project (approved).

#### **OTHER TRAIL PROJECTS**

- Worked with Strafford Regional Planning Commission on the completion of a set of 8 standardized trail maps for Durham conservation lands.
- Collaborated with trailfinder.info to place Durham trails on this web-based trail site.
- Established a Volunteer Trail Stewards program.
- Flagged a new trail network for Riverwoods.

#### **INFORMATION AND OUTREACH**

- Partnered with Oyster River Cycle & Sport and Durham Parks & Rec on a Winter Trail Tromp to four Town conservation areas.
- Posted COVID-related trail guidelines at major trailheads.
- In collaboration with Durham Parks & Rec, developed a series of Scavenger Hunts that were posted to Friday Updates.
- Updated the town-wide conservation lands map.
- Updated webpages for town conservation lands.
- Contributed land stewardship highlights to weekly Friday Updates.
- Developed a variety of new signs for town conservation areas, including No ATVs and dog-walking protocols.
- Compiled information for a “No horseback riding on town conservation lands” ordinance.
- Created a Land Stewardship Notebook for the new DPW Director.
- Assisted volunteer Walter Rous with his photo and architectural drawing documentation of three historic cellar holes on town conservation land.

#### **KNOTWEED AND OTHER INVASIVE CONTROL**

- For second year, collaborated with Doug Cygan, NH Department of Agriculture, Markets, & Food Invasive Species Coordinator, to treat knotweed behind the town hall and along Mill Pond Road. Also treated other invasive plants along Mill Pond, including glossy buckthorn, multiflora rose, bittersweet, honeysuckle, Autumn olive, privet, and barberry.
- Worked with Sandy Brook Drive neighborhood to craft a knotweed control plan for their area.
- Responded to landowner inquiries related to invasive plant management.

#### **ANNUAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT MONITORING**

- Coordinated with the contractor who monitors the Capstone conservation easement, funded by the Technology Drive Fund, which is specific to this easement.
- Volunteers helped complete the monitoring of the following town-held conservation easements:
  - Fogg #1
  - Fogg #2 (Caravan/Bennett)
  - Merrick
  - Powder Major
  - Oyster River Forest (a town-owned property with NRCS and LCHIP-held easements, that requires the town to monitor)

### **MERRICK CONSERVATION EASEMENT**

- Raised more than \$2,600 in private donations to the Patron's Trust to build a 110' boardwalk at the trailhead on the Merrick property off Bagdad Road; the boardwalk was built by volunteers in October, led by Conservation Commission member John Nachilly.
- Worked with DPW, Riverwoods and NH DOT to include a trail connector to the Merrick property that will tie-in to the planned upgrade and lights at the Routes 4/108 intersection.
- Installed new trail blazes on the trail network and updated the trail map.

### **OTHER**

- The Land Stewardship Subcommittee met monthly to discuss stewardship issues, projects and priorities.
- Coordinated stewardship projects and funding with the Conservation Commission and Trustees of the Trust Funds.
- Hosted three UNH Nature Groupie interns for 2.5 weeks.

2020 Land Stewardship Expenditures and Funding Sources							
	General Fund	Conservation Fund <sup>1</sup>	Patron's Trust <sup>2</sup>	Land Use Trust <sup>3</sup>	Grants <sup>4</sup>	In-Kind Value <sup>5</sup>	Notes
<b>STAFF</b>							
Land Stewardship Coordinator	\$43,291						698 hours
<b>VOLUNTEERS</b>							
UNH Nature Groupie Interns						\$6,419	3 interns, 2.5 wks: 236 hrs X \$27.20/hr
Town Volunteers						\$6,120	225 hrs x \$27.20/hr
Doug Cygan, NH Dept of Agric, Markets, & Food							Knotweed control: town hall & Mill Pond Road
<b>CONTRACTORS</b>							
Invasive control		\$5,500			\$6,275		Doe Farm, Thompson Forest
Tree clearing		\$2,500		\$2,500			Doe Farm foundation area
Trail mowing		\$1,200					Oyster River Forest, Thompson Forest
Kiosk interpretive panels		\$900					Doe Farm
SRPC trail maps		\$2,000					8 sites
Wetlands permitting		\$880					Stevens Woods and Merrick bridges
<b>MATERIALS</b>							
Trails and bridges		\$2,500	\$2,622		\$5,000		materials
Eagle Scout projects		\$700					lumber
Workday supplies		\$500					gloves, tools
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$43,291</b>	<b>\$16,680</b>	<b>\$2,622</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$11,275</b>	<b>\$12,539</b>	
<sup>1</sup> Conservation Fund is primarily from Land Use Change Tax							
<sup>2</sup> Patron's Fund is from private donations							
<sup>3</sup> Durham Conservation Land Use Trust (funds from timber harvests) on town land)							
<sup>4</sup> Grants: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Wildlife; Eversource							
<sup>5</sup> Volunteer hours in-kind contribution value calculated by Independent Sector: <a href="https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2020/">https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2020/</a>							