

Deerfield Conservation Commission 2021 Annual Report

The Deerfield Conservation Commission is a volunteer, seven-member commission, appointed for three-year terms by the Board of Selectmen. State Law RSA 36-A calls for the establishment of conservation commissions for the “*proper utilization and protection of natural resources and the protection of watershed resources.*” The commission may also, with approval by the Select Board, acquire and manage land as conservation areas or town forests. In a nutshell, conservation commissions:

- Research and document the town’s natural resources
- Develop long-term plans and strategies for the protection of important places
- Work to permanently protect the most ecologically valuable lands
- Provide educational programs and hikes
- Work with the Forestry Commission to manage town lands for timber production, recreation and wildlife
- Advise other boards on the importance of the town’s natural resources
- Provide comment on wetland permits to the NH Department of Environmental Services
- Comment and make recommendations on land use plans submitted to the Planning Board

LAND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION

Conservation land in Deerfield includes both privately-owned and Town-owned land protected by conservation easements granted to qualified land trusts such as the Society for the Protection of NH Forests, Bear-Paw Regional Greenways, the Southeast Land Trust of NH, Rockingham County Conservation District, the USDA Wetland Reserve Program, and others.

The DCC encourages both the donation of land and of conservation easements as a means of preserving Deerfield’s forests and fields, its rivers and streams, wetlands and wildlife. Over the years, with the strong support of Town residents, and the generosity of private landowners, DCC has facilitated the acquisition of properties that enhance and support the Town’s conservation goals.

Guided by criteria contained in the Deerfield Open Space Plan (DOSP) of Deerfield’s Master Plan, and the NH Wildlife Action Plan, open space protection focuses on properties that are rich in high quality conservation values including a parcel’s location within Deerfield’s green infrastructure, the existence of important soils, its proximity and contribution to the protection of wetlands, streams, surface waters, lakes and wildlife habitats (including wildlife corridors) and its role in connecting large, unfragmented ecologically sensitive areas.

In addition to numerous privately-owned conserved parcels, there are currently 996 acres of town-owned parcels in Deerfield that are permanently protected by conservation easements.

▪ Arthur Chase Town Forest	Tax Map 414 Lot 73	40 Acres
▪ Edythe H. Boisvert Town Forest	Tax Map 404 Lot 2	185 Acres
▪ Freese Town Forest	Tax Map 410 Lot 32	178 Acres
▪ Dowst-Cate Town Forest & Park	Tax Map 416 Lot 16	100 Acres
▪ Hart Town Forest	Tax Map 403 Lot 2	71 Acres
▪ Lindsay-Flanders Conservation Area	Tax Map 415 Lot 30	58 Acres
▪ Marston Family Town Forest	Tax Map 409 Lot 54	128 Acres
▪ McNeil Conservation Area	Tax Map 406 Lot 12	63 Acres
▪ Weiss Town Forest	Tax Map 416 Lot 18	93 Acres
▪ Wells Town Forest	Tax Map 411 Lot 39	80 Acres

Visitors are encouraged to freely roam Deerfield’s conservation areas but are reminded that only non-motorized access is allowed. Carry in – Carry out. Below are permitted and not-permitted activities.

<u>Permitted Uses</u>	<u>Not Permitted Uses</u>
<u>Non-motorized activities, including:</u>	<u>Motorized vehicle use, including:</u>
Walking, hiking, trail running	ATV's, Snowmobiles,
Cross country skiing	Dirt Bikes, Mud Trucks and
Snowshoeing	Mountain Bikes
Wildlife observation	Fires or firewood collection
Orienteering	Horseback riding
Photography	Camping, large group games
Dog walking – leash and scoop	Target Shooting

Funding for conservation projects comes from a mix of sources including donations, grants, and the Conservation Fund. The Conservation Fund is a major funding tool of the Conservation Commission for carrying out its mission to protect Deerfield open space. The Conservation Fund is supported by Land Use Change Tax (LUCT) revenues which are paid to the Town by landowners when properties are removed from current use status. Per the Town vote on March 14, 2006, 50% of the LUCT revenues are transferred to the Conservation Fund.

In 2021 these combined funding strategies resulted in the passage of a warrant article to convey an easement on 128 acres within the Great Brook Corridor donated to the Town by Gile Beye in 2018, and the parcel's designation as a Town Forest under RSA 31:111. The article's passage also paved the way for a \$50,000 reimbursement to the Town from LCHIP.

STEWARDSHIP

Annual monitoring of Deerfield's Town Forests and conservation areas ensures that they comply with the terms of their respective easements. The Conservation Commission also responds to resident reports of wetland disturbances, safety issues, unauthorized cutting, dumping, and ATV activity on conservation parcels and in wetland areas.

In 2021 placement of game cameras, and posting of signs restricting motorized vehicle activity, target shooting and other unauthorized activities on the Lindsay-Flanders Conservation Area has seen positive results.

OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

DCC strives to address the concerns of residents and organizations that have come to the Commission for advice and support. As was the case with other boards and commissions this past year, DCC members met, along with members of the public, through ZOOM technology which it hopes may open the door to opportunities for increased public access going forward. Wishing to expand its public outreach, DCC established its own Facebook Page in March and welcomes new followers at <https://www.facebook.com/DeerfieldConservationCommission/>.

The DCC also continues to partner with the Town's Boards and Commissions and with local and State organizations such as NH Fish & Game, the NH Department of Environmental Services, the Pleasant Lake Preservation Association, the Lamprey River Watershed Association and its Advisory Committee, the Southern NH Planning Commission, and Bear-Paw Regional Greenways.

This year, in addition to long-time members **Serita Frey, Wes Golomb, Haley Andreozzi and Brian Adams**, DCC welcomed new members **Josh Freed, Chloe Gross and Erroll Rhodes**, and alternate member **Jo Anne Bradbury** to its roster. The commission will now be operating with a full seven-members and an alternate. Sadly, **DCC bid farewell to member Erick Berglund**, thanking him for his considerable contributions to the Town as a member for over 20 years. Erick can and should be proud of the significant contributions he has made to *...provide for the protection and appreciation of the magnificent beauty and heritage of Deerfield.*

The DCC meets on the second Monday of each month at 7 pm at the George B. White building and interested citizens are always welcome to attend the meetings.

Deerfield Conservation Commission
Serita Frey, Chair