

Deerfield Conservation Commission 2022 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

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.

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, Rockingham County Conservation District, the USDA Wetland Reserve Program, and others. Currently 996 acres of town-owned parcels in Deerfield 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, Dirt Bikes,
Cross country skiing	Mud Trucks and Mountain Bikes
Snowshoeing	
Wildlife observation	Fires or firewood collection
Orienteering	Horseback riding
Photography	Camping, large group games
Dog walking – leash and scoop	Target Shooting

In addition to the town-owned parcels, there are numerous privately-owned conserved parcels. 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.

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 2022 these combined funding strategies resulted in the completion of the **Adami-Cote easement on Mountain and Nottingham Roads**, adjacent to the Berglund and Menard easements, adding ~25 acres to the linkage of Bear-Brook to Pawtuckaway; the conservation of the ~20-acre **Geraldine Mathews parcel on Cole Rd.** adjacent to Lindsay-Flanders Town Forest; and the addition of the ~55-acre **Bradbury easement on Thurston Pond Rd.** that abuts the 2018, 30-acre Hartnett easement. For each of these projects the Town partnered with Bear-Paw Regional Greenways by contributing the transaction costs from the Conservation Fund. The monetary values of the development rights were donated by the landowners, a highly valued mechanism for land protection that stretches Town conservation dollars.

The DCC thanks these landowners for their generous donations!

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 reports of wetland disturbances, safety issues, unauthorized cutting, dumping, target shooting and ATV activity on conservation parcels and in wetland areas.

OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

Deerfield's preserved areas hosted projects this year supporting both purpose and pleasure. Researchers from UNH were given permission to conduct fieldwork on the Arthur Chase Town Forest to gather data on furbearer occurrences, and Peg King Park was approved as a site for *geocaching*; a *GPS-based* treasure hunt.

DCC strives to address the concerns of residents and local organizations that have come to the Commission for advice and support and continues to collaborate with neighboring towns in a mutual effort to protect common waterbodies such as Pleasant Lake, Northwood Lake, and the Lamprey River. The DCC also works closely with the Town's Boards and Commissions, especially the Planning Board and the Town Planner, and coordinates stewardship activities and Town Forest timber harvests with the Forestry Commission,

DCC cooperates with State organizations such as NH Fish & Game, the NH Department of Environmental Services, the Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP), as well as local and regional entities such as the Pleasant Lake Preservation Association, the Lamprey River Watershed Association and its Advisory Committee, the Southern NH Planning Commission, and land trusts, such as Bear-Paw Regional Greenways.

DCC members are volunteers who give freely of their time in service to the Town. Serita Frey is the Chair and Haley Andreozzi is the Financial Officer. Members include Josh Freed, Wes Golomb, Chloe Gross, and Erroll Rhodes. The DCC is grateful to ALL the many volunteers who contribute their time and talents to easement monitoring, trail maintenance, and assistance with land protection projects

DCC continues to seek new members and volunteers to share in its mission of protecting the magnificent beauty and heritage of Deerfield for future generations, and to assist with various conservation-related tasks and projects. If you are interested in preserving our town's open spaces, wetlands, and natural resources, you can contact **Serita Frey** at serita.frey@gmail.com. Please consider joining us at our meetings on the second Monday of each month at 7 pm at the George B. White, or look us up on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/DeerfieldConservationCommission/>.

Deerfield Conservation Commission
Serita Frey, Chair