

## **Deerfield Conservation Commission 2018 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
- Make comments and recommendations on land use plans submitted to the Planning Board

**Work done in 2018 by DCC members and volunteers is outlined below:**

### **LAND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION**

**Marston Farm Project.** In 2016, the DCC was given the opportunity to participate in the permanent protection of 166 acres of agricultural and forest land off Nottingham Rd. The acreage is part of the historic Marston Farm which was purchased in 1765 by the Marston family and that has remained in the family for over 250 years. This multi-faceted project involved two parcels—the 128-acre Marston Pendleton Conservation Area and a contiguous 38-acre tract of previously unprotected agricultural land. The Marston Pendleton Conservation Area is one of multiple parcels forming the Great Brook Corridor and was donated to the Town by H. Gile Beye, grand-daughter of Mary Marston Pendleton. It is hoped that the Town will convey Town Forest status on the parcel at a future date making it the eighth Town Forest. The 38-acre tract is still privately owned by Ms. Beye, but a conservation easement has been placed on the property to protect it from development. The Town is an executory interest-holder in this conservation easement which has been conveyed to Bear Paw Regional Greenways. The permanent conservation of these two parcels adds to 425 acres already protected in the Great Brook Corridor. Funding for this project came from multiple sources: a Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) grant, a grant from an anonymous donor advised fund of the NH Charitable Foundation, the Deerfield Conservation Fund, and a Piscataqua Region Estuaries Program/Great Bay Resource Protection Partnership (GBRPP) transaction grant. **The DCC would like to express its gratitude on behalf of the Town to Ms. Beye and her family for their generosity and continued dedication to conservation in Deerfield.**

**Boisvert Town Forest.** The Boisvert Town Forest was created in 2014 with the passage of warrant article #11. This project was brought to a close in 2018 with the permanent protection of the property through the conveyance of a conservation easement deed to Bear Paw Regional Greenways. Four years and many hours of work have resulted in the finalization of the easement deed with an important addition to the language that incorporates standards for the planning and management of trails that are beneficial to both people and wildlife.

Completion of the conservation easements on the Boisvert Town Forest and the Marston Pendleton donated parcel brings the number of permanently protected town-owned parcels in Deerfield to ten, for a total of 996 acres:

|                                       |                    |           |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| • Arthur Chase Town Forest            | Tax Map 414 Lot 73 | 40 Acres  |
| • Boisvert Town Forest                | Tax Map 404 Lot 2  | 185 Acres |
| • Freese Town Forest                  | Tax Map 410 Lot 32 | 178 Acres |
| • Dowst-Cate Town Forest              | 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 Pendleton Conservation Area | 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  |

**Hartnett Donated Easement.** Kate Hartnett donated an easement on 24 of her 26 acres adjacent to Thurston Pond. It was her intent to start a protected wildlife corridor connecting Bear Brook State Park and undeveloped lands to the north in western Deerfield. It is the first easement in Deerfield that explicitly identifies protection of dark skies, natural quiet, and early successional habitat.

**The DCC encourages the donation of land and conservation easements** as a means of preserving Deerfield's forests and fields, its rivers and streams, and wetlands and wildlife. Over the years, with the strong support of Town residents, and the generosity of private landowners like Ms. Hartnett (see above), DCC has facilitated the acquisition of properties that enhance and support the creation of greenways and provide suitable wildlife habitat guided by the Open Space Plan of Deerfield's Master Plan and the NH Wildlife Action Plan.

**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. Open space protection focuses on properties which are rich in high quality conservation values - important soils, surface waters and wetlands, wildlife habitat, recreational trail corridors, links to existing conservation lands, and retention of Deerfield's rural character. 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. Conservation Fund monies are routinely supplemented by donations and grants, such as from the Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP).

## STEWARDSHIP

**Annual monitoring of Deerfield's Town Forests and conservation areas** ensures that they comply with the terms of their respective easements. As in previous years, DCC again responded to resident reports of wetland disturbances, safety issues, unauthorized cutting, dumping, and ATV activity on several conservation parcels.

**Wetland permit application review and input** is one of the functions that DCC performs as part of its stewardship responsibilities as they relate to Deerfield's wetlands and shorelands.

**DCC is grateful to its members, volunteers and partners** for the many hours donated to ensure that Deerfield remains a faithful steward of its ecologically valuable lands.

**Visitors are encouraged to freely roam Deerfield's conservation areas** but are reminded that only non-motorized access is allowed on Deerfield Town Forests and other conservation lands, and to leave "nothing but footprints" behind.

**The DCC Trails Committee** invites those wishing to connect with Deerfield's natural resources to check out its *Facebook* page to see what's going on with over 300 fellow trail enthusiasts. Volunteers are always welcomed to assist with trail maintenance and marking. Trail inventory and maps can be found at:

[http://townofdeerfieldnh.com/Pages/DeerfieldNH\\_BComm/Conservation/Trail%20Maps](http://townofdeerfieldnh.com/Pages/DeerfieldNH_BComm/Conservation/Trail%20Maps)

### **Permitted (and not permitted) uses on all Deerfield Town Forests and conservation lands**

| Permitted *                   | Not Permitted                 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Walking                       | Snowmobiling                  |
| Hiking                        | ATV Use                       |
| Cross country skiing          | Dirt biking                   |
| Snowshoeing                   | Mud trucking                  |
| Wildlife observation          | Mountain biking               |
| Orienteering                  | Firewood collection           |
| Trail running                 | Camping                       |
| Dog walking – leash and scoop | Fires                         |
| Photography                   | Large group competitive games |

\* Hunting and free rock climbing are permitted in certain of these lands and forests.

\* Please respect – Carry in; Carry out

**Note:** Alcohol is not permitted in our Town Forests and conservation areas

## PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

**DCC strives to address the concerns of residents and organizations** that have come to the Commission for advice and support. In addition, the DCC continues to partner with neighboring towns in their mutual efforts to protect common waterbodies such as Pleasant Lake, Northwood Lake, and the Lamprey River. Entities with which the DCC routinely partners are:

- Board of Selectmen – On easements and other DCC initiatives
- Forestry Commission – Coordinating stewardship activities and town forest timber harvests
- Planning Board and Town Planner
- Pleasant Lake Preservation Association
- Bear-Paw Regional Greenways
- Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP)
- Lamprey River Watershed Association
- Lamprey River Advisory Committee
- Southern NH Planning Commission

## RECOGNITION

Kate Hartnett resigned from the Conservation Commission in November 2018 after moving to the North Country. Ms. Hartnett served on the Conservation Commission for 31 years! In recognition of her outstanding work on land protection, Ms. Hartnett was awarded the 2018 Southern NH Planning Commission's (SNHPC) Closson Award for excellence in community and regional planning. Ms. Hartnett was the first woman recipient of this award. **The DCC recognizes and applauds Ms. Hartnett for her many years of service to the Town of Deerfield and beyond.**

## DCC MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

**DCC members are volunteers who give freely of their time in service to the Town.** Serita Frey is the Chair and Erick Berglund is the Financial Officer. Members in 2018 included Haley Andrezzi, Wes Golomb, Kate Hartnett, and Ben Miner. Ms. Hartnett and Mr. Miner resigned from the Conservation Commission at the end of the year and new member Brian Adams joined. Volunteers Frank Mitchell, Al Jaeger, Will Frey and Alan Perkins contribute their time to easement monitoring, trail maintenance, and research, and to assist with land protection projects. Judy Marshall is the DCC clerk, providing organizational research and support to the Commission. The DCC is grateful to **ALL** the many volunteers who have given freely of their time in the name of conservation.

**The DCC meets on the second Monday of each month at 7 pm** and interested citizens are always welcome to attend the meetings. Volunteers are also sought to assist with various conservation-related tasks and projects.

**DCC continues to seek volunteers** to share in its mission of protecting the magnificent beauty and heritage of Deerfield for future generations. If you are interested in preserving our town's open spaces, wetlands, and natural resources, please contact **Serita Frey** at [serita.frey@gmail.com](mailto:serita.frey@gmail.com) or join us at our meetings.

*Deerfield Conservation Commission  
Serita Frey, Chair*