

DCC receives 2015 Regional Annual Conservation Award!

The Award: On 24 Jan 2015, Deerfield Conservation Commission (DCC) was awarded an *Annual Conservation Award* at the Bear Paw Regional Greenways Annual Meeting, attended by people from all over southeastern NH. DCC members are delighted, because this recognition highlights the significance of having permanently protected Deerfield's seven Town Forests. It also recognizes the work needed over several years to revise the language for the 2014 conservation easement deed.

Background: DCC has had the permanent protection goal for over 20 years, since the days of the original Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP), which was the precursor to the current Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). During those five years (from 1987-1992), the NH Legislature made \$50 million available for land protection projects throughout the State. Deerfield's was the most complex local project, involving seven landowners to form a corridor of linked, private, and now permanently protected properties along the *Great Brook Corridor* in northeastern Deerfield.

The Work—Rewrite, Stewardship, Forest Management Planning, Harvests: Before DCC could complete the permanent protection of the seven Town Forests in 2014, members wanted to rewrite the old conservation easement deed, because it was a 20 year old template, amended over the years many times by many people. After all those changes, DCC members found it difficult to follow. We wanted to help clarify the easement conditions for future DCC members, as well as Town officials and citizens. So now you can easily see easement purpose, property stewardship goals, use limitations, reserved rights, administrative responsibilities, and other details at the link "Deerfield Forest Easement Recorded 2014.07.01:"

http://townofdeerfieldnh.com/Pages/DeerfieldNH_BComm/Conservation/Town%20Forests%20and%20Parks/

We also clarified that property stewardship involves more than just forest management.

Charlie Moreno, the consulting forester who prepared the management plans for each Town Forest and is overseeing the timber harvests, also was present at the Annual Meeting, so DCC was able to thank him for his contribution to long term stewardship and healthy forestry. Each management plan is available to read as soon as it completed on the DCC page of the Town website. And those managed harvests are underway on the Town Forest lands over the next several years, generating revenue and improving forest quality.

DCC worked with the Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF) and Bear Paw staff as well as Town Counsel during the long and winding rewrite process. DCC understands that SPNHF will highlight the conservation easement work in its Spring 2015 edition of *Forest Notes*, their full color magazine published statewide.

DCC also is contacting other conservation organizations as well as the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions to inform them that the easement template is available for use by other Conservation Commissions.

DCC members are surprised and grateful for the recognition, since it was not the purpose of our work. Thanks to Bear Paw for their honor.