

Deerfield's Hidden Gem- Peg King Park and Trail



Peg King Park is known around town as a “hidden gem”. On a hot summer day, this is the place you will find reprieve; in the winter, the best snowshoeing jaunt around!

Roger King donated the land for Peg King Park. Roger and his wife Margaret were longtime, respected Deerfield residents who lived a life of service to town and country. The Kings lived in the Ridge Road farmhouse, Hillcrest Farm circa 1766, which has been in the family since Revolutionary times. Many in town have been part of the Easter Sunrise service on the picturesque hill.

When Margaret died in August 2001 at age 80, Roger spent months figuring how to best honor her. In 2002, on the first sunrise Easter Service without her, he gave tribute, “She loved this spot for the view, abundance of birds, and the sound of the brook, particularly the brook in the valley below”. On December 19, 2002, Roger King signed over an 11-½ acre parcel to the town of Deerfield in an official ceremony at Town Hall. The area was to be known as Peg King Park in memory of his parents, Howard and Mable King, and his beloved wife of 41 years. He wanted future generations to enjoy it.

The gift had to be formally accepted by the voters, so at Town Meeting March 2003, while Roger lay in the hospital, the warrant article to accept the gift came up for discussion. Selectman Joe Stone called Roger at his bedside so he could hear the unanimous vote of acceptance. Roger passed away that September at age 84.

In the deed, Roger stipulated that there would be off-road parking, pedestrian paths, a bridge over Nichols Brook to access the major portion of the land, “no mechanized equipment used for transporting people”, and finally: “It is expected that the Town of Deerfield will cooperate with groups, such as scouts and like bodies, to maintain and improve the park”.

The town and various groups have fulfilled Roger’s vision of cooperation. Selectman at the time, Fran Menard and Kate Hartnett assessed the area for potential trails. Glenn Young, overseen by Road Agent Keith Rollins, excavated the parking area. The girl scouts, earning their silver and bronze awards, completed the sign, “Peg King Park”, and the gardens next to the entrance (perennials donated by van Berkum Nursery). It is unknown who put in the original picnic table and bridge, but in 2010, when they deteriorated, Eagle Scout Moe Gerow replaced them. Moe’s work will last a while. He incorporated the whole scout troop along with their parents, using materials and anchor techniques that will withstand weather and seasonal flooding.

In fall 2012, AmeriCorps crews coordinated by welfare administrator Denise Greig, cleared and remarked the main trail. This fall, thirteen 8th grade magnet students, with teacher Ellen O'Donnell, Principal Paul Yergeau, and Conservation Committee member Kate Hartnett performed clean up of limbs and tree fall, cleared and marked a short side trail. The Deerfield Conservation Commission regularly monitors the area.

To visit:

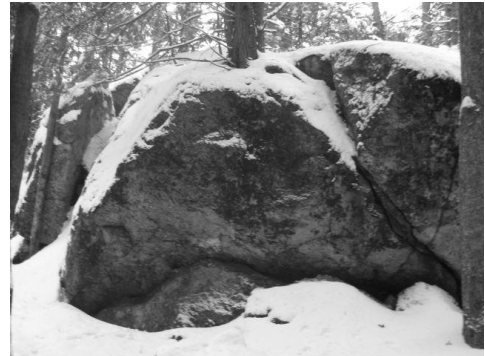
The trail is located about 250 feet up Ridge Road from the intersection with Candia Road on the right. There is ample room to park and turn about.

After entering the park, there is a short descent to the brook side picnic tables. The trails begin across the bridge. Standing on the bridge over Nichols brook and looking downstream, you will see the remains of a dam that was once part of a productive sawmill. The white markers create a



loop through pine,

hemlock and birch forest. The blue markers off to the right denote a short trail alongside a glacial erratic adorned by snow, or moss and fern, depending on the season. Meandering along the main trail, you will pass along stonewalls bordering Candia Road properties. A vernal pond resounds with awakening life in the early spring.



Relax, breathe, and take in the natural beauty around you. Before you leave, enjoy a quiet moment next to Nichols Brook under the hemlocks, and toss a thought of thanks to Roger and Peg King.

Deb Campelia
Deerfield Conservation Commission

Thanks to:

Jack Hutchinson, Bob Kilham, Jeanie Menard, Fran Menard, Lorraine Davis, Mark Young, Kate Hartnett, Lynn Hapke, Mel Graykin, Stephanie Gerow, Patti Moore, John Dubiansky, Mary County Concord Monitor 12/20/ 2002, Manchester Union Leader 12/18/2002, original Deed, Eulogy delivered by Rev. Chris Tidwell, 2003