

Deerfield Conservation Commission
2017 Annual Report
50 YEARS AND COUNTING!

In 2017 DCC completed its 50th year of service to the Deerfield Community!

As documented in its first report to the Town, on March 14th 1967 Deerfield ***“joined more than 60 other New Hampshire communities when voters in the 1967 Town Meeting approved a conservation commission”***. To mark the 50th anniversary, on March 14th, 2017, Deerfield Conservation Commission (DCC) members and many long-time friends of the Commission shared memories and refreshments in celebration. DCC’s first members, Frank Perrotta, Philip H. Oxnam, R. Bruce Elliot and Robert A. Stevens would be proud of their legacy as DCC continues the work its predecessors began on that auspicious day.

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 land as conservation areas or town forests, and then manage those areas. 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, educate the public about renewable energy
- 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 sand and gravel excavation and restoration plans to the Planning Board.

Primary work by DCC members and volunteers in 2017 is outlined below:

LAND CONSERVATION AND PROTECTION

A survey of the 178 acre, town-owned and managed Edythe H. Boisvert Town Forest was completed in 2017. Town Forest status and authorization to convey a conservation easement was granted by vote of the Town on March 14, 2014. Upon completion of the easement, the parcel will become Deerfield’s 9th permanently protected property, in addition to the following six town forests and two conservation areas:

• Freese Town Forest	Tax Map 410 Lot 32	178 Acres
• Arthur Chase Town Forest	Tax Map 414 Lot 73	40 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
• 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

The DCC has considered various types of recreational uses of these lands. Many are acceptable because they have very little impact on conservation values. Some are not acceptable because of the significant impact they do have on soils, wildlife habitat, and/or water quality.

The following are two lists of recreational activities, permitted and not permitted. They apply to all Deerfield conservation lands and Town Forests.

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

Funding for conservation projects comes from a mix of sources including donations, grants, and the Conservation Fund which is currently supplemented by 50% of the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT). LUCT collections deposited in 2017 provided \$44,315, making it possible for DCC to continue its mission of working strategically to protect Deerfield’s rural character. DCC is grateful for the Town’s continued support for conservation. Grants and other sources of funding, such as through New Hampshire’s *Land & Community Heritage Investment Program* (LCHIP), are routinely sought to supplement conservation funds used for acquiring and protecting these parcels.

DCC encourages the donation of land and conservation easements as a means of preserving Deerfield’s forests and fields, its rivers and streams, and its wetlands and wildlife. Over the years, with the support of the residents of the Town and through the generosity of private landowners, DCC has facilitated the acquisition of properties that enhance the creation of greenways and provide suitable wildlife habitat; all in keeping with the Open Space Plan of Deerfield’s Master Plan, and the NH Wildlife Action Plan.

STEWARDSHIP

Annual monitoring of all of Deerfield’s Town Forests and conservation areas ensures that they are in compliance 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 a number of conservation parcels.

Members and volunteers re-marked trails on the Dowst-Cate Town Forest, and long-time volunteer Frank Mitchell worked with folks from Liberty Mutual, who contributed their time to paint all existing blazes and put up medallions at regular intervals throughout the Freese Town Forest.

In addition to the Freese boundary work, Al Jaeger and Will Frey were able to GPS and re-locate markers in sections of the Great Brook Corridor. Considered Deerfield’s gem, the Great Brook Corridor was one of the most ambitious local projects funded through New Hampshire’s 1987 *Land Conservation Investment Program* (LCIP) and currently links nearly 700 acres of contiguous lands of seven owners. Trails through the corridor can be accessed from Harvey or Coffeetown Roads.

DCC is grateful to its members, volunteers and partners for the many hours donated in accomplishing these numerous annual tasks, ensuring 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.

DCC continues to partner with the Forestry Commission and a professional forester to develop forestry management plans for the Town Forests. Forestry activities are undertaken based on the recommendations outlined in their respective plans. Completed management plans for six of the nine Town Forests and conservation areas can be found on the DCC web page of the Town website.

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:

Northern Pass Transmission (NPT) Wetland Application Review: This year, DCC independently reviewed and provided input on the project's wetland and shoreland permit applications for subsequent approval by the *NH Department of Environmental Services* (DES). During that process, DCC members met with *Eversource* representatives to assess potential impacts of the project to Deerfield's wetlands. The Conservation Commission, through its member representative, continues to make significant contributions as it actively participates with the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board in the Town's *Motion to Intervene*, which allows Deerfield to join with other towns in the *Site Evaluation Committee* approval process for the NPT project. Participation empowers the Town to provide local input and to attempt to protect Deerfield's environmental interests during the NH Site Evaluation Committee (NH SEC) review process.

TRAILS COMMITTEE

DCC's 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. The *Trails Committee* contact is Ben Miner ben.minerd@gmail.com. Trail inventory and maps can be found at: http://townofdeerfieldnh.com/Pages/DeerfieldNH_BComm/Conservation/Trail%20Maps

PARTNERSHIPS AND OUTREACH

DCC welcomed an opportunity to partner with Deerfield Community School (DCS). A grant from the *New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions* (NHACC) was the catalyst for an ongoing collaborative project between Ellen O'Donnell's 7th and 8th grade students and DCC members.

DCC participated in updates to the NH Town & Community Forest Survey as well as the NH GRANIT update. NH GRANIT is New Hampshire's statewide GIS clearinghouse.

Through collaboration with the Deerfield Planning Board, NH Hampshire Fish & Game and the developer of the Brown's Mill subdivision off Mt. Delight Rd, member Kate Hartnett was instrumental in the design of a unique, 29-acre, open space conservation easement area. A former gravel pit is being reclaimed to provide wildlife habitat for turtles, birds, insects, and other species valued in the NH Wildlife Action Plan. The parcel is very near NH Fish & Game's Corey Wildlife Management Area.

DCC strives to address the concerns of residents and organizations that have come to the Commission for advice and support, and routinely reviews activities affecting *Shoreland Protection* and *Regulated Wetlands*. 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

DCC MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

Although 2017 saw changes in its membership rolls (the loss of Deb Campelia to the Peace Corps and Jim Deely to competing Town obligations), the torch has been passed. Haley Andreozzi and Ben Minerd have fully embraced their respective appointments, becoming active participants in the work of the Commission.

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. Member Kate Hartnett is DCC's Northern Pass representative and Wes Golomb liaisons with the *Lamprey River Watershed Association*. Haley Andreozzi and Ben Minerd are members, who along with volunteers Frank Mitchell, Al Jaeger and Alan Perkins, contribute their time for easement monitoring, trail maintenance, and research, and to assist with land protection projects. Kelly Roberts was the architect of and continues to be the creative force behind the Conservation Commission webpage at townofdeerfieldnh.com. Judy Marshall is the DCC clerk, providing organizational research and support to the Commission. 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 of Deerfield Citizens. If you are interested in preserving your town's open spaces, wetlands, and natural resources, please contact **Serita Frey** at serita.frey@gmail.com or join us at our meetings.

Deerfield Conservation Commission
Serita Frey, Chair