

Dunstable Rural Land Trust

D.R.L.T. News

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Dunstable Civic Trust Formed

By David Tully

Recognizing the past and anticipating the future, the Dunstable Rural Land Trust formed the Dunstable Civic Trust on January 3, 2002.

Recognizing the Past:

The past is what was responsible for the present good fortunes of the Town of Dunstable. In 1974, several Dunstable citizens banded together to form the Dunstable Civic Associates. This group of interested citizens recognized that the Town's land needed to be protected from exploitation and unplanned growth, and to protect its natural resources; its aquifers, its open space and habitat.

This loosely held legal entity and closely-knit group of individuals decided to purchase what was at the time the only operational gravel pit in Dunstable and set in motion a plan to preserve and protect some of the Town's open space.

To pay for this undertaking, the group borrowed the funds to purchase the property. With the property now owned and a substantial mortgage in place, how would the mortgage be paid? The Associates decided to sell gravel from a ten-acre parcel along the Nashua, New Hampshire border, with the provision that none of the gravel be transported through Dunstable. The sale of gravel provided much of the required cash to meet the monthly obligation, the balance was paid by the members of the Dunstable Civic Associates, at the rate of \$20.00 per month per member. This continued until 1986 when the mortgage was paid off.

Many of the members of the Dunstable Civic Associates are now members of the Dunstable Rural Land Trust. (DRLT).

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Winterfest Cancelled

Unfortunately, Winterfest 2002 was cancelled due to unseasonably warm temperatures.



The lack of snow and unsafe ice conditions on the pond made many of us disappointed that the event had to be cancelled.

There was too much mud to have sleigh rides! We'll try again next year and make sure to invite Old' Man Winter!

DRLT Calendar

Just over \$3,000 was raised by the sale of the Dunstable Calendar this year! Many, many thanks to Robin & Jeff Pallis for producing the calendar. Special thanks to those who helped with sales – Convenient Mann, The Library, Dunstable General Store, Dani Carville, Pat Emery, Roberta McGovern, Carol Marceley, Stephanie DeBay, The Conservation Commission and the DRLT Directors.

New website Launched

Many thanks to Bob Petersen for his efforts involved in designing and launching the Land Trust website. Log-on and visit us!

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Recognizing that the group owned this 175-acre parcel with no outstanding debts, presented an opportunity for the members to make a difference and preserve this valuable acreage for current and future generations. A conservation easement was granted to the Town of Dunstable to forever protect the property from unwanted development. The property itself was contributed to a newly formed organization; the Dunstable Rural Land Trust, a not-for-profit organization.

During the period from 1987 until 2001; the Dunstable Rural Land Trust acquired either by purchase or by gift another 325 acres. The Trust now owns approximately 500 acres of land in Dunstable. The two major parcels being: Fletcher/Main Street/Nashua, New Hampshire border of approximately 300 acres, and a second major parcel consisting of about 85-90 acres at the Nashua, New Hampshire line adjoining Salmon Brook and the railroad tracks.

The efforts and sacrifices of the members of the Dunstable Civic Associates created a foundation upon which land and its natural resources and beauty could be protected and enjoyed by future generations; thus the recognition of the past.

Anticipating the Future

Over the past several years, the prices of real estate in Dunstable have escalated to a level not even thought about when the Dunstable Civic Associates was formed or even in the last five years. How can the efforts of the Dunstable Civic Associates members be preserved from the inevitable pressures to sell the property?

Not all of the land held by the DRLT is currently protected from the development; steps must be taken to protect these properties and the resources that the residents of Dunstable have become so accustomed to walk and enjoy. Each parcel owned by the DRLT will be analyzed to determine whether or not permanent easements on the property would be beneficial in the long term to the DRLT and to the Town of Dunstable.

The Dunstable Rural Land Trust (DRLT), on January 3, 2002 was instrumental in the formation of the Dunstable Civic Trust; a not-for-profit organization to hold easements

and provide a source of protection of the Dunstable Rural Land Trust and any other property. The Dunstable Civic Trust is comprised of five trustees, two designated by the Dunstable Rural Land Trust and three other public members.

This format will provide the Dunstable Rural Land Trust and the Dunstable Civic Trust with the ability to monitor and control compliance with the provisions of any easement granted on properties held.

Information concerning the Dunstable Civic Trust is on file with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Office of the Attorney General (Division of Public Charities), the Middlesex North Registry of Deeds and the Town Clerk's Office in Dunstable.

Dunstable Civic Trust: Joseph P. Maguire, Jr., William B. Moeller, Robert Ricardelli, David E. Tully and David H. Webber.

Garden Tour a Success!

A beautiful day coupled with beautiful gardens made for a very well attended and successful Garden Tour in Dunstable last May. \$2,010 was raised!



Many thanks to Nancy & Bill Ahern, David Hardman and Patty & Alan Starbird for hosting and presenting their wonderful gardens!

DRLT News is produced for its members by the **Dunstable Rural Land Trust**, 401 Hollis St., Dunstable, MA 01827. Written by Elaine Basbanes and Judy Larter. Edited & Produced by Grace Jeanes.

DRLT Board of Directors

Robert Kennedy, Allen Chaney, Frank Cover, Peter Georges, Judy Larter, Elaine Basbanes, Reid Pepin, George Tully and David Webber.

Please find the annual renewal form on page 5.

Calendar of Events

Mark these upcoming events on your calendar!

Biodiversity Days

Join others around the state to discover and record what plants and animals live in your community. Tentative dates are May 31, June 1, 2, 3. Now in its third year, learn more about this EOEA program on their web page www.state.ma.us/envir/biodiversity.htm, or by contacting Cindy Cormier (cynthia.cormier@state.ma.us) or 626-1116). *Sponsored by the Adopt-A-Stream Program, through the Dept. Fisheries, Wildlife & Environmental Law Enforcement.*

Monday Morning Walks

Beginning April 29 thru May 20th 9-11 a.m.

Each week we'll explore a different DRLT or Town of Dunstable Conservation Area. There will be opportunities to walk a pre-existing trail or to blaze a new one. We'll leave town hall promptly at 9a.m.



Last spring several of our members participated in cleanups and trail clearing during our Monday morning walks. They marked and cut a trail from Unkety Bridge thru Craven Conservation Land. We are grateful to Coral Webber, Robyn Pallis, Mary Gaurino, Berit Pepin, Judy Larter, & Elaine Basbanes for their help. Thanks to them!

The Robin is the One
That interrupt the Morn
With hurried-few-express Reports
When March is scarcely on-

The Robin is the One
That overflow the Noon
With her cherubic quantity-
An April but begun-

The Robin is the One
That speechless from her Nest
Submit that Home-and Certainty
And Sanctity, are best

--Emily Dickinson, c. 1864

What Happened to the Fish in Ponds Winter 2001? Fishkill at Upper Pond on DRLT Wildlife Preserve

Pond Fish Kills Blamed on Otter, Oxygen Lack

UNH Cooperative Extension Aquaculture Specialist J-J Newman has been receiving reports of winter fish kills in small ponds across New Hampshire. Otters are one probable cause, she says. "No one believes that an otter can clean out a whole pond in short order, but in the winter, they really do.



In the summer otters move from pond to pond, eating a few fish at a time. In the winter, however, they will stay at a pond until all the fish are gone, before moving on to the next."

Winterkill is the other common reason ponds lose their fish. Newman explains, "that fish die when oxygen in the water under the ice runs out. "Large fish die first then smaller fish, then other small living things. Partial winterkill situations are a common reason ponds end up with no large fish, just a lot of little horned pout."

"We had ice for a really long time this year and we had thick snow cover almost the entire time, both of which contribute a lot to the incidence of winterkill", says Newman. She notes that while dead fish floating on the water surface are one sign of winterkill, fish dying of oxygen starvation more typically sink to the pond bottom to decompose invisibly.

Fish can die of winterkill even during short, less intense winters, Newman says, "Shallow ponds are more susceptible. The state Fish and Game Department recommends a minimum of eight-foot depth for New Hampshire ponds.

"Ponds with a lot of vegetation are very susceptible, to winter fish-kill, since the vegetation dies in the winter and

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decomposes under the ice”, Newman says. “The bacteria responsible for the decomposition use a lot of oxygen. To reduce vegetative growth, owners need to be aware of where plant nutrients are entering their ponds.

Excess nutrients “come from a wide variety of organic and inorganic sources”, says Newman. “The most obvious are lawn and garden fertilizers you may have applied anywhere in the area that might be washed down into the pond. It’s amazing how far the fertilizer can travel.



“Other sources of nutrients include manure—do you have any livestock, or Canada geese near the pond? Are you sure that your septic system isn’t leaking? --decomposing leaves, grass or other vegetation; other organic fertilizers—do you feed your fish? --and phosphorous soaps—what do you use to wash your car and where does the soap go? “Nutrients also may be flowing into your pond from upstream materials your neighbors may be adding to the water”, says Newman.

Newman notes the groundwater contains no oxygen when it leaves the ground, so even a constant inflow from a spring will not help prevent winterkill.

Visit this website to learn more about stocking or restocking your pond with fish: <http://ceinfo.unh.edu/Water/Documents/StokFish.pdf>

Courtesy of Peg Boyles, UNH Cooperative Education for the Weekly Market Bulletin

Family Photo Day



Thank you Carol Marcey!

Special thanks to CM Photo for a most generous donation of 10% of profits from *Family Photo Day* held on the Dunstable Town Common. Carol is a professional photographer who lives in Dunstable and is a DRLT member! She also provided many photos for the 2002 DRLT Calendar.



Snapshot of Dunstable

Mr. Roger Montbleau of *Lowell Automatic Transmission*, in Lowell, provided the DRLT with 26 “single use” disposable cameras. These cameras were given to town residents at the Library to capture scenes of Dunstable that they felt typified the natural beauty of the Town.

The photographs will be used for the annual calendar, web site and other publications and archives.

Local Medicinal Plants & the American Indians

Skunk Cabbage

American Indians used the root for cramps, convulsions, whooping coughs, toothaches; root poultices for wounds, underarm deodorant; leaf poultices to reduce swelling, ate dried root to stop epileptic seizures. Subsequently used by physicians as antispasmodic for epilepsy, spasmodic coughs, asthma; externally in lotion for itching, rheumatism; diuretic; emetic in large doses. **Warning:** Eating leaves causes burning, inflammation. Roots considered toxic.

Jack-in-the Pulpit

American Indians used the dried, aged root for colds and dry coughs, and to build blood. Externally, the root was poulticed for rheumatism, scrofulous sores, boils, abscesses, and ringworm. Dried root tea traditionally considered expectorant, diaphoretic, and purgative. Historically used for asthma, bronchitis, colds, cough, laryngitis, and headaches. Externally for rheumatism, boils, and swelling from snakebites. **Warning:** Intensely irritating. Calcium oxalate crystals found in whole fresh herb.

Adapted from the *Peterson Field Guides, Eastern/Central Medicinal Plants*, Steven Foster/James A. Duke.

2002 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____

- Annual Family Membership \$25
 I would like to make an additional contribution of \$_____ towards future land purchases.

Remember, you will not save the Dunstable woods and wetlands, broad vistas and country roads for your children and grandchildren by doing NOTHING. Instead, please join us and apply for membership today.

Annual Meeting

Wednesday, April 24, 2002
Nashua Country Club
25 Fairway Street Nashua, NH

6 p.m. Cocktails
7 p.m. Dinner
8 p.m. Business Meeting

Dinner Reservations (Please write number in box):

\$_____ enclosed for _____ dinners at \$25 each.

- Prime Rib of Beef
 Baked Stuffed Shrimp

Please return your reservation not later than April 19 to:

George Tully, DRLT
401 Hollis Street
Dunstable, MA 01827

Thank You

DRLT 2000 Membership