Duxbury Town Forest

In July 2017, Duxbury became one of the more than 100 Vermont towns to create a town forest. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) had contacted the Duxbury Land Trust (DLT) in 2010 about the possible sale of two parcels of state-owned land at the end of Hart Road: the so-called “Fr. Logue property” and the “hospital block” of the Camel’s Hump State Park. However, FPR later asked the Town if there was interest in accepting this land from the state to be designated as a Town Forest. At the annual Town Meeting in 2015, those present unanimously voted to accept the land for use as a Town Forest. In 2016, the Vermont Legislature passed a joint resolution to approve the transfer of the land to the town for use as a municipal forest; for forestry, conservation, and recreational uses. Finally, in 2017 FPR transferred, at no cost, 169 acres to the Town of Duxbury.

The 169-acre property combines the former Father Logue youth camp and land managed by FPR as a non-contiguous part of Camel’s Hump State Park. The parcel contains many natural features including: hemlock-northern hardwood forest, bedrock outcrops, numerous small waterfalls, headwater streams, vernal pools, wetlands, and a pond. It provides opportunities for hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, birding, and hunting.

All Town Forest photos courtesy of Kelley Taft.

Color version available at duxburylandtrust.org
A committee of townspeople has been appointed to develop a management plan for the property in accordance with the easement. Once the committee has come up with recommendations, with input from interested townspeople, an overall management plan for the property will be presented. A specific forest management plan developed by a professional forester is also required.

The donation from the state was contingent upon the DLT accepting a conservation easement on the parcel. The easement stipulates the permitted and non-permitted uses, to protect the property for forestry, conservation, and passive recreation in perpetuity. The DLT played a key role in this endeavor. Alan Quackenbush, DLT Board Chair, participated in legislative committee hearings and worked with FPR to develop the conservation easement. He also served as Duxbury’s representative in completing the land transfer.

Duxbury Land Trust Events

The DLT hosted two ecological events in 2017. They were taught by Rachel Sargent, a Duxbury naturalist who has been an educator with the Fairbanks and Montshire museums and is a freelance nature writer and illustrator (She is also our newsletter editor).

Winter Excursion - February 2017

In February, DLT members and other local residents joined Rachel Sargent to discover some ecological features of the winter landscape. Rachel helped participants, of all ages, observe bud adaptation and winter animal activity. The event was held on an area of State land along the River Road that was permanently conserved by the DLT in 2014.

Introduction to Nature Journaling - August 2017

The DLT was again fortunate to have naturalist Rachel Sargent offer a nature journaling event in August. She introduced a group of enthusiastic participants to nature journaling using tree and plant identification. The event was the first-ever to be held in Duxbury’s new Town Forest off Hart Road. Exercises included nature observation, drawing exercises, and practice journal entries.

Duxbury Land Trust Annual Meeting 2018

DLT’s 2018 annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 10, 6:30 p.m. at Crossett Brook Middle School Library. Phil Huffman, Chair of the Waitsfield Conservation Commission, will speak about the value of town forests and provide highlights of Waitsfield Scrag Forest Management Plan.

Phil is Director of Landscape Conservation and Policy for the Vermont Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. He holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Middlebury College and Master’s degrees from Yale University in both Environmental Studies and Public and Private Management.

The event is free and all are welcome.

2016/2017 Board of Trustees

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