

The Duxbury Land Trust Newsletter

Volume XIII No. 11

Conserving Duxbury's Special Places

January 2020

The DLT Helps Amphibians Cross the River Road

North Branch Nature Center's Amphibian Road Crossing (ARC) program is a citizen science project with two aims: get amphibians safely across Vermont roads during the critical spring migration and collect data. Every spring during a very brief period – usually the first wet nights after the ice breaks and temperatures rise above 40F – frogs and salamanders move from wherever they overwintered to vernal pools and wetlands where they will mate and lay eggs. If they are unlucky, they will need to cross a road during this migration, risking death by squashing.



Illustration of Vermont amphibians crossing a road. Courtesy of Rachel Sargent Mirus.

The Duxbury River Road has two ARC sites: one where the road runs between two wetlands and one before the turn-off for the dam's canoe portage. Last Spring the DLT teamed up with NBNC's volunteer contact and organized some amphibian rescuing. The DLT held a Saturday information session and when the weather lined up for the migration, teams of volunteers were ready.

The DLT submitted data to NBNC for the Duxbury sites. At the wetland site alone we saved 204 salamanders and frogs on the night of April 19: 60 Spotted Salamanders, 106 Wood Frogs, 27 Spring Peepers, 10 Green Frogs, and one Eastern Newt. We're looking forward to contributing to the ARC program again this spring! If you're interested in volunteering to rescue salamanders, keep an eye out for DLT event announcements in 2020.

Interested in hearing more about the ARC program? Read a full length article here: <https://rachelscybercabinet.works/index.php/blog/40-salamanders-and-citizen-sci>.

Green Up Day 2019 Partnership

DLT has been coordinating Duxbury's Green Up Day since 1997. The decision to revive the event, which had been discontinued for several years, was inspired by the desire to show our commitment in serving the town in addition to our primary mission of land conservation. Green Up appeared to be the perfect vehicle to expand our involvement and to demonstrate the grass roots, down-to-earth nature of our group. We have recruited many volunteers who have collected tons of trash over the years and improved the look of Duxbury's roadsides in the process.



This year's event was enhanced with the participation of the Duxbury Historical Society (<https://duxburyvt.com/>). Society members, under the guidance of Mary Ethel, Don, and Kelly Welch, spent most of the day greeting volunteers; offering delicious home baked goods to get volunteers energized for their work; and expressing appreciation for their efforts. It was a wonderful collaboration of two Duxbury-based, volunteer organizations working to sustain the best of Duxbury for future generations: it's natural beauty and historic resources.



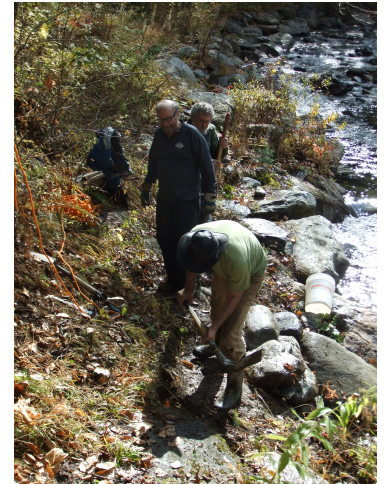
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The Duxbury Land Trust
P.O. Box 56
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Duxbury Land Trust 25th Anniversary Service Project

The Duxbury Land Trust (DLT) observed a milestone on October 18, 2019. Twenty-five years after establishing a land trust in Duxbury, the non-profit has now conserved nearly 500 acres. In keeping with the grass-roots spirit of the founding members, the current board decided to celebrate with a service day working on two projects. The first task entailed improving access on the DLT trail at the corner of Scrabble Hill and Camel's Hump Road; the second involved removing two dilapidated bridges on the Town Forest. Board members accomplished these efforts along with the enthusiasm and ingenuity of two energetic and determined non-board volunteers: Henry Amistadi and Joe Bledsoe Mirus.

Starting with an 11-acre project to conserve a beloved swimming hole, the Trust has conserved agricultural and forest lands; wildlife habitat; riparian corridors; recreation land; and open space, mostly through holding donated conservation easements. The most recent project was accepting a conservation easement on the 169-acre Duxbury Town Forest in 2017.

Removing bridges in the Town Forest. Photos courtesy of Audrey Quackenbush



Improving access to the DLT trail.

An Update on Emerald Ash Borer in Duxbury

It's shiny! It's cute! It's... the Emerald Ash Borer. Despite their innocuous appearance, the Emerald Ash Borer (affectionately known as EAB) is not a beetle we want taking up residence in Duxbury's forests. If you see signs of EAB, the Vermont Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation wants to know about it.

EAB is originally from east Asia and was first confirmed in Vermont in 2018. While EAB coexists with Asian ash trees, it decimates our North American species: 99.7% of EAB infested American ash will die from the infestation after just one to four years from the initial signs of beetle activity.

The larvae feed beneath the bark of the tree, carving S-shaped tracks and leaving distinctive 1/8-inch D-shaped holes when they bore out as adults after one to two years. Infested ash trees will show bark splitting, woodpecker flecking, dead top branches, and leafy offshoots from the lower trunk, in addition to the S-tracks and D-holes made by the beetles.

Duxbury falls in an EAB High Risk Area: within five to ten miles of a confirmed infestation. EAB has been found in Starksboro, Buels Gore, Montpelier, Berlin, Middlesex, and Worcester. But there's good news for Duxbury! First, 2019 surveys of suspiciously symptomatic ash trees in these towns did not turn up new infested areas. Second, tap tree surveys – where ash trees are stressed to create conditions that attract EAB – in Little River State Park, CC Putnam State Park Trailhead in Waterbury, and Camel's Hump State Park in Starksboro did not turn up EAB signs.

The Vermont Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation is monitoring and managing for EAB. For more information, or if you think you've found signs of EAB, check out vtinvasives.org/land/emerald-ash-borer-vermont or email Jon Cherico, Protection Forester, at Jonathan.Cherico@vermont.gov.

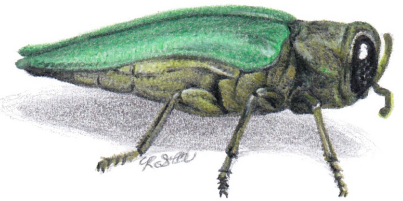


Illustration of the Emerald Ash Borer.

Courtesy of Rachel Sargent Mirus.

Please help us conserve Duxbury's special places by becoming a member

Membership levels: Individual - \$15, Family - \$30, Supporting - \$30, Contributing - \$50. Sustaining - \$100 Mail your tax-deductible donation to: Duxbury Land Trust, PO Box 56, Waterbury, VT 05676

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