

# The Duxbury Land Trust Newsletter

Volume XII No. 9

*Conserving Duxbury's Special Places*

February 2021

## **DLT Properties for Local Outdoor Recreation**

The Duxbury Land Trust was founded in 1994 to conserve a traditional swimming hole in the Ridley Brook. Since that time, DLT has conserved 493 acres of brook frontage, wildlife habitat, forested properties, agricultural fields, and areas for public recreation. Motorized or mechanized recreational vehicles are not permitted on any DLT-conserved land, other than snowmobiles on VAST trails. The complete list of conserved properties with colorphotos can be found under "projects" on the DLT website: [www.duxburylandtrust.org](http://www.duxburylandtrust.org).

### **Ridley Brook Swimming Hole**

The swimming hole is located on the Camel's Hump Road diagonally across from the bottom of Marshall Road. The 11-acre property, which is owned by the DLT, covers both sides of the brook. The property is open to the public for daytime use including: swimming, fishing, nature study, hiking, hunting, and winter sports. A VAST snowmobile trail follows the Town trail that runs through the property.



*Nature study at Ridley Brook. Image courtesy of Kelley Taft.*

### **Ridley Brook Properties**

Another DLT-owned property is located on the corner of Scrabble Hill and Camel's Hump Road. The property combines a five-acre parcel donated by Andy Clapp, a long-time Duxbury property owner with an adjacent 13 acres, purchased from the Cook family in 2011. A walking trail runs through the property. Similar to the Swimming Hole property, daytime activities such as swimming, fishing, hiking, nature study, and winter sports are encouraged.

### **Duxbury Town Forest**

In 2017, the Town of Duxbury became one of more than 100 towns that have town forests when it accepted a 169-acre property, donated by the State of Vermont, located at the top of Hart Road. Typical town forest activities are allowed, including: hiking, wildlife viewing, nature study, winter sports, and hunting. Long-range planning has been started by a town committee. The management plan will be developed based on the findings of a forest management study being conducted by the County Forester.



*Bears in the Town Forest. Image courtesy of Lois Haslam.*

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## State Farm Lot 2

In 2014, the State of Vermont donated a conservation easement on approximately 92 acres on both sides of the River Road, bordered by the Village District (Duxbury Corners) on the east and Hart Road on the west. As of 2014, it is farmed and includes the Duxbury Community Garden. The public is invited to use the land, other than that leased to the farmer, for community gardening, hiking, hunting, fishing, and winter sports.

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## American Chestnut Restoration Update from Kendra Collins

The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF) continues to work to restore the American chestnut to eastern forests. Since meeting with the Duxbury Land Trust in 2016 our mission hasn't changed, however our work has advanced.

Breeding for blight resistance has seen the biggest change since 2016. For over 35 years, our breeding focus has been to incorporate genes from blight-resistant Chinese chestnuts into a population of American chestnut trees. In 2018 we found solid evidence that many more genes than previously assumed are involved in blight resistance. We have adjusted our program to use additional data to make better breeding selections.

In American chestnut restoration, hypovirulence is a biocontrol tool that uses a blight strain infected with a virus to reduce the blight's virulence, giving infected trees a better chance at overcoming the infection. Blight cankers can be treated with hypovirulent strains of blight to manage infections. A limitation of this biocontrol method has been compatibility of virulent and hypovirulent blight strains. A Super Donor strain of hypovirulent blight, which overcomes these incompatibility issues, has been developed by collaborators at the University of Maryland and we are hopeful it will be approved for wide use.



Chestnut burs from the 2020 harvest.  
Image courtesy of Kendra Collins.

Finally, biotechnology tools have advanced in the past few years and have been used to better understand the genetic underpinnings of many aspects of our work. In 2020, our partners at SUNY's College of Environmental Science and Forestry submitted an application to the USDA to consider deregulating the transgenic Darling-58 blight-tolerant American chestnut. Hopeful for approval, TACF is preparing to assist with the diversification of this tree into a population of wild-type American chestnuts suitable for species restoration.

Restoring a tree species that ranged from Maine to Georgia and west to the Ohio River valley is an audacious goal. TACF is optimistic that future generations will enjoy forests complete with mature American chestnuts.

For more info: <https://acf.org/science-strategies/3bur/>

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## Board Member Vacancy

Help the DLT fulfill its mission by becoming a board member. Currently there is a vacancy on our nine-member board.

For more information: Alan Quackenbush, Chair, [aqbogs@myfairpoint.net](mailto:aqbogs@myfairpoint.net) or 244-7512.  
See current trustees on the About DLT page: <https://duxburylandtrust.org/about-dlt/>

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

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## NEW! Business Sponsorships

For \$50 per year sponsoring businesses will be identified on the DLT website with a link to the business website. For more information: Audrey Quackenbush, [audreyq@myfairpoint.net](mailto:audreyq@myfairpoint.net) or 244-7512. The DLT reserves the right to select appropriate businesses.