

## **Land Stewardship Coordinator**

Sara Callaghan, Land Stewardship Coordinator

This was my first year fulfilling the role as the Land Stewardship Coordinator and I enjoyed getting acquainted with the people and the conservation areas in town. The Land Stewardship Coordinator works with the Land Stewardship Subcommittee to promote ecologically sound land stewardship activities on the town-owned lands, fulfill conservation easement obligations and provide opportunities for community engagement. The contracted part-time position is funded through the General Fund with additional support for specific stewardship projects provided by the Conservation Fund, Durham Land Use Trust and Patron's Trust. Accomplishment of stewardship activities was made possible by the involvement and help from community volunteers, the Department of Public Works, the GIS administrator, Durham Parks and Recreation, Land Stewardship Subcommittee, Conservation Commission, Stewarding Our Lands Working Group and Trustees of Trust Funds. Thank you to everyone who worked with me to achieve our stewardship goals for Durham's conserved lands.

### **2023 Accomplishments:**

- Successfully coordinated volunteer workdays with local organizations and community members at the Milne Nature Sanctuary, Jackson Landing, Doe Farm, Stolworthy Wildlife Sanctuary and Longmarsh Preserve.
- Accomplished various stewardship projects across the Town's conservation lands with UNH Nature Groupie Interns at the beginning of the summer.
- Expanded and strengthened the trail steward volunteer program and prepared information, materials, and a training workshop to support the new trail volunteers.
- Updated trail maps, markers and signs at the Oyster River Forest/Spruce Bog conservation area.
- Completed the routine annual monitoring of the Town's six conservation easements and coordinated the completion of the seventh
- Effectively managed the Town's involvement in the acquisition of the Pike Conservation Property on the Lamprey River.
- Completed invasive species management with volunteers at Doe Farm, Milne Nature Sanctuary, Oyster River Forest/Spruce Hole Bog and Stolworthy Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Worked with GIS administrator to incorporate land stewardship objectives using the Town's GIS system, including completing conservation asset inventories, creating online volunteer trail steward report forms and invasive species mapping on conservation lands.

- Coordinated review and approval of proposed research projects on Town of Durham conservation areas.
- Worked with landowners and public partners on maintaining public trails that cross through privately-owned and public lands.

**2024 Goals:**

- Create and implement a plan to repair or replace deteriorating trail infrastructure at Longmarsh Preserve.
- Develop a trail sign update on the Jackson Landing Nature Trails with Durham Parks and Recreation
- Continue to coordinate the wildlife and invasive species management of the Town's conservation areas
- Work cooperatively with DPW and hired contractors to manage invasive species along the Mill Pond Dam and provide community opportunities to learn about invasive species identification and management.
- Continue to complete routine stewardship responsibilities on the Town's conservation lands.