

Land Stewardship Annual Report, 2024

The Land Stewardship Subcommittee was established in 2010 to help guide and coordinate the stewardship of the town's conservation areas, parks and other lands. It is made up of representatives from the Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, Heritage Commission, Parks and Recreation, Trustees of the Trust Fund, Town Council and at large town residents, as well as non-voting members, including the Town Administrator, the DPW Director, Stewardship Coordinator and Recreation Director.

This past year, in our role to help and oversee the management of town properties we:

- Oversaw the work of the Land Stewardship Coordinator, who among other thing managed a number of volunteer work days to control invasives and maintain town trails
- Printed and distributed a concise two-page summary of the town's conservation areas and parks. The summary is available online on the town's website, under *Conservation Lands and Parks*.
- Approved a lichen survey involving site work at Longmarsh by Jeremy Howland.
- Approved the contract for a boundary survey of Jackson's Landing by Stales and Stones Land Surveying, LLC.
- Approved a trail accessibility study of several Durham properties by Enoch Glidden
- Reviewed the proposed budget for Land Stewardship in 2025
- Added alternate positions to the committee to decrease the number of meetings cancelled due to lack of a quorum.

The major capital focus this year has been the repair of several bridges in the Longmarsh Preserve. There were four wooden bridges that needed repair, as well as a stone ford that was partly under water. Two of the wooden bridges, the long bog bridges that parallel beaver dams, need to be re-designed. Because the design will likely be costly, and the bridges were dangerous in their existing state, the committee decided to replace the damaged boards once more, with volunteers, which will give us several years to plan and finance the new design.

The two smaller bridges, on the yellow trail, were repaired by volunteers. We decided to leave the stone ford, (which connects the Longmarsh Preserve Trail to the Sweet Trail) as is, and instead reroute the trail to cross the water further up the stream. The town has signed a contract to have this done by Martin Forestry Consulting.

Members: Ann Welsh, Chair; Marty Gorham, at large, Gale Carey, at large; John Carroll, Agricultural Commission; John Nachilly, Conservation Commission; Caroline Singer, Heritage Commission/Historic District Commission; Myrta Janosz, Recreation Committee; Darrell Ford, Town Council; Ted Howard, Trustees of the Trust Fund; Neil Slepian, alternate; Sara Callahan, alternate