

## 2005 TOWN FOREST REPORT

This year forest management activities have been focused on trail maintenance and monitoring of effects on the land and trails from weather and visitors. The management committee met officially at town meeting, on April 15th, for trash pick up the following Saturday, and on October 23. We were hoping to draw community members on the last date for a hike and talk on geology by Dartmouth faculty member Richard Bernie, but due to grim weather attendance was limited to the committee members. At least 1 committee member has attended the so far inconclusive meetings with CVPS on power line right-of-way management.

The town forest continues to be popular with hunters, especially deer, and use by local mountain bikers has increased. Trails appear to be holding up well .

The committee would like to encourage visits by hikers and nature viewers - there are maps posted on all the trails a short distance in from their starting points, and there is a container of paper maps at the posted map on the trail from Tandy Brook Rd. In addition maps are available at the town office.

Again this year there was some damage done by motor vehicles (full sized 4 wheel drives, ATV's and dirt bikes) during "illegal" entry in mud season and by dirt bikes using the non motorized trails.

Currently the foremost concern for the management committee is figuring out how to control erosion on the loop road. Some sort of water bar construction is necessary. The biggest obstacles to this are cost and the need for access with heavy machinery. The 2006 budget primarily reflects the projected cost of this work, which if done would be funded by donations of labor and equipment time, and using material from on site.

From time to time there is interest in scout or other youth or community projects; the current To Do list follows. If interested in working on any of these items contact any of the committee members.

### To Do List:

1. construct water bars on the loop road (see above)
2. clear the lookout(s) and if possible burn the brush to revitalize existing blueberry patches
3. build bridge on the red trail over seasonal stream (drop hemlocks on site for stringers)
4. inventory the flora and fauna of the town forest, ideally with photographs.

5. make and install signs - directional signs for the trails, no motor vehicle signs where needed, possibly more detailed signs at the forest entrances explaining the "rules" same as on the back of the trail maps.
6. archeology study - find and map the foundations, stone walls, etc., find the privy and trash pits and excavate, research the history of residence and land use, etc.,
7. create an interactive guide to the town forest for school age kids.
8. release and prune apple trees (second go-round)
- 9- near the lookout or other location - build a free standing lean- to with three wind resistant walls , a wood floor, water tight roof and an approved fire pit .
10. design and at least begin a way to quantify and then monitor the growth of buckthorn, and other invasive plants.

For more information or to share thoughts about the town forest contact any committee member:

Ginny Prince, chair  
Andrew Elmore  
Jim Fitch  
Bill Gallagher