



Dudley Conservation Land Trust Newsletter Winter 2025

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President's Message

Here we are in 2025. Hard to believe, isn't it? It doesn't seem that long ago, we were celebrating the year 2000, and the dawn of the new Millennium. Now 25 years have already passed in this century. So, what does this have to do with DCLT? To me, it shows how fast time passes by, and how we need to seize opportunities now that will benefit our community for the future.

For that reason, I'm truly excited about the possibilities open to us for 2025!

First, we're in talks with three landowners regarding the conservation of 100 acres of land in Dudley and Oxford. The good news is one family is already on board to conserve their 21 acres, and the other families remain very interested in conserving their lands. I intend to share more definitive news with all of you in the coming months regarding this very important initiative.

Second, we are actively preparing stewardship plans for each of our sanctuaries, so they can be best managed for the future. As anyone knows who has enjoyed the DCLT sanctuaries, they are all different and special in their own unique way. As we undertake this process, we're realizing that some of our properties need a bit more active management to fully reach their potential. Stay tuned as projects are carefully undertaken to control invasive species, improve trails, open up views, and to manage parts of our lands for the benefit of wildlife.

Third, we are excited about opportunities to work with other organizations such as the Dudley Grange and Mass Audubon for the benefit of our community. It's bit of a work in process, but I foresee collaborations in such areas as historic preservation and public events regarding nature and farming.

So, here's to a joyous and successful 2025! Let's have fun this year as we all do our part to make our Community a better place.

Sincerely

Keith Kirkland

Two Great Apps for Nature Enthusiasts:

"Merlin" identifies birds by their songs. Turn on the app and it "listens" to nearby birds, identifying them as it hears them.

"Picture This" identifies plants. Just turn on the app and it brings up your camera. Take a picture and it identifies the plant.

Upcoming Events:

**Hiking Club,
Sat. April 5th, 9 AM
Central Mass Rail Trail
Meet at trail head**

Take Rt 290 to Rt 190n
Take Rt 190n to exit 9 Rt 140s
Follow Rt 140s about a mile
Take a right onto Thomas St
The parking lot and trailhead is about 300' on the right. Everyone welcome.

**Children's Program
"Animals In Spring"
Sat. April 26, 2025
10:00 - 11:00
at the Grange**

Spring is a time of change! Some animals are emerging from hibernation while some have been active all winter. Others might be singing, or even look like they are dancing, to show off. Learn up close and personal about animals in the spring here in New England, and beyond, and learn more about their wild relatives.

(Live animal or live animal hybrid with some cold blooded special guests). Free and open to all.



On a cold December morning, board members Keith Kirkland, Dave Harrigan, Paul Wieloch and Mark Smith spent five hours finding and marking the boundaries of the newly acquired LaVallee land at Peter Pond. Photo left shows Paul Wieloch and me marking an existing stake.

Right photo shows Dave Harrigan checking new GPS software at the union of Dudley, Charlton and Oxford on a property which DCLT is working to acquire. Modern software programs including "Regrid" and "onX Hunt" have proven quite useful in locating boundaries and monumentation.

DCLT Receives \$20,000 Grant from Greater Worcester Community Foundation

Congratulations to board member, Heather Radcliffe, who wrote a convincing grant proposal and secured \$20,000 for DCLT to "build capacity." The grant will assist DCLT in updating and improving our social media presence and engagement with the community. The grant focuses on public awareness and public engagement and will provide training to board members, volunteers and partners in website and social media management. It is hoped that the grant will help grow membership and recruit leadership in an effort to ensure sustainability and healthy succession.

DCLT's Morse Land, submitted by George Martin

The DCLT Morse Land was our first acquisition back in 2005, and it's now been 20 years.

It is located between Route 197 (Tufts Hill) and Knollwood Road, behind the Dudley District Court. However, it is not easily accessible. The only way to enter it is to park on Tuft's Hill and cross the road and that is not easy for anyone to do.

It borders the lower end of Woodmere Road, that used to extend to Tuft's Hill.

The land has an abundance of trees, birds and native flora, mostly ferns. At one time, it must have been part of a working farm, as there is a stone marker saying Elm Farm.

The Morse Land is part of a much larger piece of land that is still in its natural state. All of this land has been in its undeveloped for as long as the road has been paved.

It is one of the first things that people notice about Dudley, the beautiful long hill with trees on both sides.



Above: Plaque on Morse Land

Below: Winter Hike at Wyndham Land Trust





Hiking Club visited the Leadmine Trails in Sturbridge in October



Boy Scout Matthew Edminston and his father, Dan logged three productive hours on Tufts Branch Valley Wildlife Sanctuary mowing the meadow and clearing brush. We are grateful for their help and wish Matthew well with his scouting endeavors.



This year our annual meeting included hors d'oeuvres and chamber music to help celebrate the year's many significant accomplishments. Top photo shows Kirsten Hadden, oboe and Mark Smith providing music. Bottom photo shows Liza Moran presenting some of the main points of the strategic plan.



Longtime member Roseann Cushing submitted this picture of a Bard owl from TBVWS this fall.



View from the knoll at Tufts Branch Valley Wildlife Sanctuary looking east toward Dudley Hill during the November super-moon

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