



Dudley Conservation Land Trust

Working for over 25 years to preserve and promote the rural, natural and scenic character of the Town of Dudley and surrounding communities for current and future generations.



DCLT – Five Year Strategic Plan January 2017

I. Land Acquisition

Core Statement

The DCLT recognizes that the conservation of land is essential to maintaining the rural and scenic character of Dudley and surrounding communities. Presently, 20% of the town of Dudley is protected open space, 20% is developed, and 60% in unprotected open space. The DCLT’s goal for the future is that conservation lands keep pace with the development of the town. In regards to specific parcels that should be protected, the DCLT’s priority will be the acquisition of lands adjacent to its existing conservation holdings, with a focus on creating expansion of our East and West green corridors. This will allow for ease of stewardship and will create larger blocks of conservation land that will benefit people, plants and wildlife. The DCLT will also consider the acquisition of lands outside of its core holdings provided the land in question has significant conservation value (as determined by the DCLT’s criteria and guidelines regarding conservation value of each property).¹

Specific Action Plans

Through targeted outreach to land holders abutting existing DCLT properties, DCLT can expand its reach. DCLT may also track newspaper notices and/or attend Board of Selectmen, conservation commission, and planning board meetings to identify further opportunities for targeted land conservation in Dudley and surrounding communities.

Existing Parcel	Contacting Landowners
Tufts Branch	Dudley Sportsmen’s club about sale of their land
	Yacuzzi family
	Antos Family
Slater Woods	Town of Dudley about transferring abutting land
	Other abutting landowners, including Lee Forest Nominee Trust, Kunkel, Sue Forest Trust, and Elmas Realty Trust
Wieloch Woods	Town of Dudley about transferring abutting land and foreclosure
Keith Land	Town of Dudley about transferring abutting land
BioMap2 critical parcels not abutting existing parcels	Zajac Family (Quinebaug rail trail)
	Mannion Family

¹ Available online at <http://dudleyclt.org/forms/landacquisitionguidelines.pdf>

II. Stewardship

Core Statement

After land acquisition, the stewardship of the DCLT lands is the most important task of the DCLT. The proper stewarding of lands results in properties that are safe to use, visually attractive and maintain the diversity of habitats for wildlife. There will be a special focus in maintaining (and even increasing) declining habitats such as meadows and early successional forests that require the periodic intervention by humans such as through a forest management plan.

Specific Action Plans

Short Term	Mid Term	Long Term/Ongoing
Create a five-year stewardship plan for each land holding	Conduct outreach and engagement with the community and schools to create “stewardship days” (high school students required to volunteer)	Ensure each conservation land holding has assigned steward
Reach out to local forester to help create forest stewardship plans	Work with community, schools, and stewards to identify and verify vernal pools on land	Ensure stewards implement plan, as described below

Stewardship plans shall be created and submitted to the BoD annually by July 1 and reviewed and approved by November 1. Each plan shall address how to meet the following goals, with the exception of parcels without public access, which only need to complete 1 and 2:

- 1) Boundary lines are monitored (at least on annual basis) for possible encroachment by abutters and contact BoD as necessary
- 2) Invasive species are kept to minimum to preserve native habitat
- 3) Trailhead entrances are well maintained and attractive for visitors
- 4) Trails are free of overhanging branches
- 5) Foot bridges are installed/maintained over wetland areas as appropriate
- 6) Historic value of parcels such as rock walls or cart paths are identified and preserved

III. Education and Outreach

Core Statement

DCLT encourages sustainable development that occurs with consideration and protection of critical natural resource areas and maintains Dudley’s rural community character. Whenever possible, the DCLT should be a resource for both its members and the community and work to educate and inform them about the value of conserving land for future generations. DCLT should provide a way for people to get together and have fun while supporting our conservation goals to build goodwill and familiarity with the trust. In the past, this has included our Annual Plant Sale, lectures at the Black Tavern,

stewardship projects, and nature hikes. Additionally, DCLT should serve as an authority on land protection for the community and offer advice and information on topics relevant to Dudley and the surrounding communities, such as on solar siting.

Specific Action Plans

Education

- Host at least one lecture annually on topics related to our natural resources and the importance of conservation
- Promote the mission of the DCLT to the public through seminars e.g. “Techniques on Conserving Land” that includes information on the organization and how citizens might support it
- Offer annual scholarship awarded to high school student in the Dudley Charlton Regional School District.
- Distribute newsletter as a forum to talk about the value of land conservation
- Publish periodic articles in the Webster Times that address conservation issues

Outreach

- Create a booklet that reviews each sanctuary, provides maps and other useful information to enhance the visitor experience, and includes membership information and benefits with periodic updates
- Create and distribute written materials which promote DCLT sanctuaries and donation options
- Enhance youth engagement
 - Offer to sponsor field trips at one of our sanctuaries
 - Invite local students to attend a general board meeting and events
- Offer at least three programs annually, such as:
 - Walks at our own sanctuaries or natural places outside of Dudley
 - Lectures on conservation and environmental issues at the Black Tavern
 - Offer a stargazing/astronomy program
 - Organizing and information on topics of local interest that affect local conservation, such as siting of large, ground-mounted solar arrays
- Identify and highlight the historic value of DCLT lands
- Partner with other local organizations where practicable to offer educational opportunities which promote conservation topics of interest to the local community, such as:
 - Mass Audubon
 - The Last Green Valley
 - Other land trusts
 - Land For Good
 - Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

IV. Finances

Core Statement

A strong financial footing is critical for the DCLT to meet its goals of acquiring new conservation lands, stewarding existing lands, covering its administrative expenses, and supporting its education & community outreach efforts. Historically, the DCLT has supported its operations from a combination of membership fees, donations, fundraising events, bank financing, and grant writing. For the future, the DCLT believes the organization needs to substantially build its cash and investment reserves in order to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming years.

Specific Action Plans

- Launch a Capital Campaign to finance an endowment fund with the goal of \$350,000 raised within the next 5 years. Once the \$350,000 is raised, the DCLT will be permitted to spend up to 5% of the amount annually to support its goals
- Establish plan for ongoing funding acquisition. The goal of this effort will be to bolster cash reserves to support land acquisition and maintenance efforts. For each acre acquired, the endowment fund goal will be \$1,000. Strategies to support this effort include but are not limited to:
 - Conduct at least one major Fundraising event each year, such as the Annual Plant sale
 - Use current revenues sources to bolster cash reserves in operating account from its present \$25,000 range to \$50,000. This will provide enough liquidity to cover 10 years of basic expenses and gives us the flexibility to undertake a venture that could not be met via writing a grant. It can also be used as match funding to increase eligibility for larger grant opportunities
 - Launch a planned giving effort, including information and outreach around annuities, charitable trusts, and estate planning
 - Increase funds from membership, including offering and marketing sustaining membership
 - Research and enhance revenue potential from employer matching funds and Amazon Smile