

## Open Space Committee 2021 Annual Report

The Open Space Committee's mandate is to acquire, manage, and care for the town's protected conservation areas. We completed another busy year with notable achievements and continue to see increased traffic from residents and regional visitors to the Mt. Jefferson and Malone Conservation areas to enjoy nature and recreation on our miles of trails. Travelers on New Templeton Road and hikers to Dottie's Rock were once again delighted to see the 'mystery Christmas Tree,' courtesy of our resident forest elf. And our committee is now at full strength as we welcomed new members Dave Marsh and Tim Hawley.

### Activities

Committee members sponsored trail walks at the 250-acre Fieldstone Farm property on Lombard Road in the spring to help with the effort to conserve this beautiful property. Working closely with the East Quabbin Land Trust and the Division of Conservation and Recreation, we raised residents' awareness of its major regional ecological and recreational importance resulting in Hubbardston's residents support for the use of Community Preservation Act funds to secure its protection. Moving forward, forest and habitat management plans will be created to guide development of the area, opening it up to additional recreational opportunities, including trails.

The Baystate Trail Riders and Cross State Trail equestrian organizations once again graced Mt. Jefferson and Malone Road Conservation Area trails with their annual trail rides. These two organizations have been especially supportive of improvements to these trails in the past and, again this year, provided the money for materials to repair the seriously deteriorated and unsafe Canesto Brook bridge and Canesto Trail culvert. These trail rides also contributed to local businesses who supplied catering and overnight camping for the participants.

### Administration

Thanks to committee member Mark Kresge's application, we were fortunate to be awarded a Massachusetts Trail Grant to improve the Mt. Jefferson and Malone Road Conservation areas by creating new, more informative trailhead kiosks and trail signage. This work will begin in the late Spring of 2022.

Our experienced forestry members Tim Hawley and Mark Kresge created updated maps to more accurately identify Hubbardston's open and conserved land that will support future planning and committee activity. Their work was also appreciated by the Planning Board as it will be included in the creation of the Hubbardston Master Plan.

### Maintenance

One of the primary functions of the committee is management of the town's conservation areas and open spaces. In addition to our repair of the Canesto Brook bridge and Canesto Trail culvert, members worked to clear blowdowns and encroaching brush on trails, eradicating invasive growth at Malone Conservation area, and additional clearing of the Dottie's Rock overlook vista.

Thanks goes to local Boy Scouts Logan Day and Hunter Young who assisted us in this work to fulfill their community service requirements for achieving Life rank. These maintenance days were also supported by other members of their troop, their families, and the Young sisters – Destiny, Jasmine, and Summer.

We look forward to seeing you all hiking our woods and fields, cross-country skiing on the groomed trails at Malone, riding your bikes and horses, and enjoying picnics at the Mt. Jefferson trailhead; and we welcome you to attend our monthly meeting to provide your input on improving our valuable recreation resources.

### The Hubbardston Open Space Committee

Bob Hatch, Chair  
Stephanie Frend  
Mark Kresge

Todd Livdahl  
Susan Worth  
Rick Jones

Dave Marsh  
Tim Hawley