Winter Brought Deep Snow, Prolonged Cold

The winter of 2011 was like winters from long ago with deep snow and prolonged cold weather. With no January thaw, the snow in mid-February was 40”-50” deep, making it hard for the men and their skidders to keep up the logging operation. On the high slopes of Mt. Dustan, paint marks on the trees that are 5 feet off the ground were at or below snow level. While warm weather in the last few years has forced us to end winter’s operations early, this year we were able to harvest wood to April 1. It was a challenging, but overall very successful winter at the Grant.

Summer Work Opportunities at the Grant

The Outdoor Programs and Woodlands Offices hope to provide a Dartmouth student with the opportunity to spend this summer at the Grant. The Northern Studies Internship endowment provides annual funding for an intern to assist with multiple projects. One of this summer’s projects involves working with NH Fish and Game personnel to do radio tracking as part of the on-going fish telemetry study. A second project will develop educational information about Dydimo to help prevent this invasive algae from spreading into the Grant. In these educational efforts the intern will also take creel information to analyze fishing pressure within the Grant. Another student has received funding to help study soil carbon at the Grant. This student will be setting up experiments in different forest conditions to compare levels of carbon in the soil. We will also have a US Fish and Wildlife intern on the Grant catching and tracking woodcock. We are interested in looking at the ratio of adults to juveniles, and estimating fall mortality from hunting. All in all it will be a very busy summer.
Students enjoying activities during Winter Weekend.

Winter Weekend at the Grant a Big Success

In February the Grant was alive with sled dogs, DOC members, alumni, and other Grant faithful. A large contingent of College students made the trek to the Grant to spend the weekend skiing, snowshoeing, dog sledding and learning bush-craft skills. For many students, this was their first visit to the Grant.

Guests arrived Friday night and a variety of activities started bright and early Saturday morning. People gathered Saturday evening at the Management Center for dessert and story telling. Students were entertained by Willem Lange with stories of Ross McKenney, reportedly a highlight of the trip.

Dartmouth Partners with Trout Unlimited and NH Fish and Game to Improve Research and Recreational Activities

Significant new efforts are underway at the Grant to improve fisheries management of wild native brook trout populations and to provide students and faculty with new and exciting recreational and research opportunities.

Dartmouth has partnered with the NH Fish and Game Department; with Trout Unlimited, a national conservation organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of cold water fisheries; and with other local sportsmen’s groups including the Rangeley Region Guides Association, to launch a major new study of migration and spawning patterns of native brook trout. Areas of focus include the Swift Diamond, Dead Diamond, and Magalloway Rivers, which flow through the Grant and empty into Umbagog Lake, located in New Hampshire and Maine.

Last spring, thanks to over $8000 raised by the Sebago Chapter of Trout Unlimited, brook trout, some of which weighed up to four pounds, were implanted with radio telemetry tags in the Swift Diamond and Diamond rivers. Their movements were then tracked throughout the watershed. In some instances, individual fish have traveled more than 50 miles, leaving the Grant and crossing into the Magalloway River in Maine, then returning to the Grant, and returning to Umbagog Lake for the winter.
In addition to tracking data, over 400 DNA samples were collected and are now being analyzed by a team of Dartmouth students and faculty. One student has received grant funding from WISP, the Women in Science Program, under the supervision of Ann Kapuscinski, Dartmouth’s new Professor of Sustainability. This team will attempt to determine the extent to which brook trout in the Swift Diamond and Dead Diamond represent similar or different populations from brook trout elsewhere in the watershed. This work will help NH Fish and Game, the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, and Dartmouth make future management decisions to insure the preservation and enhancement of some of the last remaining populations of wild brook trout in the region. The students involved are interested in basing their senior honors thesis on this project.

This project is expected to continue for at least another two years. Additional tagging, tracking and sampling is planned for this spring, and additional money is being solicited to purchase 25 additional telemetry tags, each of which cost between $225 and $250. Anyone interested in obtaining information about tracking results to date, or supporting the project by contributing toward the purchase of a tag may obtain additional information by contacting the Dartmouth-Sebago TU Telemetry Project, P.O. Box 8401, Portland, Maine 04101, or by contacting Grant Management Committee member Robert Piampiano ’67 at rpiampiano@piampianolaw.com. Any tags purchased will be implanted in wild fish by trained NH Fish and Game biologists. Your name will then be assigned to that fish and you will receive periodic reports about your fish, including where it goes, what it does, and in some cases, what other creature ate it! Upon completion of the project, you will also receive a copy of the full project report.
Dartmouth and Trout Unlimited have partnered to introduce Dartmouth students to the Grant and to the sport of fly fishing, and to involve them in the Grant fish tagging study. Last spring the Sebago Chapter of Trout Unlimited hosted 10 students from Bait and Bullet for a two-day fly casting clinic at the Grant that covered everything from types of lines, leaders, rods and flies, to stream entomology and casting instruction. The clinic was a great success, with most students catching their first trout, including a beautiful four pound brook trout. All of the fish caught by the students were tagged or sampled as part of the fisheries study. The clinic will be repeated this spring during Memorial Day Weekend, May 28-29, 2011. To prepare for the trip, a fly fishing course is being offered as a class on the Hanover campus in April and May. It is being taught by Robert Oden, former Dartmouth Professor and President of Carleton College, and a member of the Grant Advisory Committee. This class can be taken to fulfill the physical education requirement.

**Woodlands News**

Despite the deep snow we were able to harvest 5000 cords of wood this winter on Mt. Dustan and along Alder Brook and the Winter Road. We completed aspen regeneration cuts along Alder Brook and the Winter Road to provide more ruffed grouse habitat, and worked to encourage growth of species for moose to brown in the Upper Alder Brook valley.

Summer harvesting will occur in the 4-Mile Brook area, and will use single tree selection, group selection and small patch clear-cuts. In this area we are supporting habitats for pine martin, deer, moose as well as the riparian habitat along the east branch of the 4-Mile Brook and swamp.

Road projects for the summer include culvert maintenance, road grading, and ditch work on 4-Mile Brook Road, Southside Road and the Johnson Brook spur road. Roadside clearing will also be done on the Loomis Road above Stoddard cabin, and the Dead Diamond Road from the gauge pool to the Dike Site Road.

Bridge work for 2011 will include new decking for the Washburn Brook bridge, and new tread plank for Gate Camp Bridge. We will also finish the Alder Brook Bridge, and start a new bridge project on the Southside Road where there is an existing hanging culvert. These culverts do not allow for fish passage.
An exciting project for us is the construction of a new Town Office/Research Cabin which we hope to complete this summer. The cabin will be built by students and will be located in the woods closer to the airfield.

Wildlife work will include spring woodcock and grouse surveys, fish tagging, telemetry work on woodcock, and our 12th annual fish weekend. We will continue to clear 10-12 acres of wildlife habitat in the fall and will prune and fertilize apple trees this spring. We hope the summer weather cooperates for all these projects.

**Dedication of new Alder Brook Bridge**

In 2008 the College received a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant to help with wildlife habitat improvement work on the Grant. This included funds for mowing and the removal of hanging culverts to help fish passage up-stream. Two sites were identified as impeding fish passage: one on the Southside Road and the other on the Alder Brook Road.

Bridge work on Alder Brook began in the summer of 2009 and was completed in the fall of 2010. The bridge was successfully used for this year’s winter operation.

The Grant Management Committee is pleased to name this bridge in honor of Dick Plummer, a long-time advocate for and lover of the Grant, who passed away last year. A small dedication ceremony will be held with Dick’s friends and family at this summer’s joint meeting of the Grant Management and Advisory Committees.

**Thanks to Members of the Grant Management Committee**

Member of the Grant Management Committee meet quarterly to provide advice on the Grant’s land management practices, to recommend policy concerning the variety of uses and activities at the Grant, and to set goals and objectives consistent with the Master Plan and Forest Management Plan. We are grateful to the work of the following committee members:

- Athena Aicher ‘11, Student representative
- Matt Ayres, Faculty representative, Biology
- Joe Bachman, ’91, T’03, Alumni representative
- Lisa Celone, Campus Planning & Facilities (chair)
- Kevin Evans, Woodlands Office
- Larry Kelly, Real Estate Office (retired)
- Harry Kinne, Dean of the College Office
- F. Jon Kull ‘88, Faculty representative, Chemistry
- Dan Nelson ‘75, Outdoor Programs Office
- Robert Piampiano ‘67, Alumni representative
- Chris Rhoades ‘13, Student representative
- Chuck Wooster ‘89, Alumni representative

We are grateful, too, to members of the Grant Advisory Committee who meet annually at the Grant.
Contribute to The Cook Family Second College Grant Wildlife Habitat Fund

The Wildlife Habitat Enhancement Project was established in the early 1990’s in response to the College’s vision and commitment to biodiversity and sustainability. After initial years of habitat inventory and establishment of population monitoring systems, the work continues with implementation of habitat manipulation strategies and ongoing collection and use of population and habitat data.

In 2008 Russ Cook ‘53, T ‘57, along with family members Melissa ‘82 and Gordon ‘87, established the Cook Family Wildlife Habitat Endowment to specifically support the College’s work in this area. Funded projects include habitat management for deer, moose, marten, grouse, woodcock, songbirds, and native trout.

While the Grant’s operating budget supports recreation and timber management, this fund provides important enhancement for continued research. It has enabled us to manage the property in a more holistic manner, where creation and maintenance of wildlife habitat has become a fully integrated component in planned management strategies. Cook states “I support the Grant not only because I’ve been a frequent visitor and user of the land, but because I’ve witnessed the positive changes and increased support by the State and the College of this treasured property.”

Managers of the Grant appreciate the increased capacity for excellent land management that this fund allows. Please contact Lisa Celone at Lisa.C.Celone@dartmouth.edu to donate to the Cook Family Wildlife Habitat Endowment Fund.

Dartmouth’s Second College Grant is more than the College’s wild northern campus; it embodies the belief that through reasoned forest management, the land can provide financial support to students and a model of reasonable land management for others in the north woods.

Throughout the year several College faculty and students use the quiet forest classroom, research continues on behavior of animals and plant populations, and visitors and hunters alike enjoy this special place.

While it takes many, many hours of thoughtful planning and effort to manage the Second College Grant with this balanced perspective, we hope that all who experience the Grant agree on one thing: it’s worth it!