

## *Cooperative management with Woodlands and N.H. Fish and Game*

*By Will Staats, Region 1 Wildlife Biologist, New Hampshire Fish and Game*

Beginning in the mid 1950's Dartmouth College has worked in cooperation with New Hampshire Fish and Game to protect the rich abundance of wildlife and tier habitat found on the Second College Grant. In 1994 the College signed an agreement with the Department to implement a Forest/Wildlife Management Plan. Objectives of this plan include managing the forest for a greater diversity of tree size classes to ensure a broad array of habitat types across the landscape. Objectives in the plan call for up to five percent of the Grant's forest to be in younger age classes and up to two percent of the landscape to remain as permanent wildlife openings.

The goals of this plan are achieved through both commercial timber harvest and non commercial work. Working in concert with the Regional Wildlife Biologist the college Woodlands Manager plans timber harvests that will not only achieve timber management goals but also will enhance wildlife habitat. Timber harvests planned carefully across the landscape can provide an array of tree species and size class diversity. Patch cuts and small clear cuts, for example, serve to regenerate tree species including aspen and paper birch.

These species represent an early successional forest community that is important for a large number of wildlife species. The dense new growth of young trees provides superior cover and food for wildlife including ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, bobcat, Canada lynx and moose.

To complement commercial timber harvests we also utilize what are considered non commercial methods to enhance and encourage specific types of wildlife habitat. One technique involves the use of a tree clearing machine called a brontosaurus. The brontosaurus cutting head consists of a drum studded with cutting teeth mounted on an excavator or a shear. These tracked machines are capable of traveling over wet ground and are able to extend the brontosaurus head out on the end of a large boom to reach trees and brush.



*Patch clearcuts showing 3 age classes: Mature age class in foreground, 15 year-old regeneration (cut 1996) in center, and new 2012 clearcut (about 3 acres).*



*Brontosaurus mowing vegetation*

## **2nd Newsletter**

*This is our 2nd edition of News from the Grant. If you know of others who'd like to receive a copy, please send contact information to: Lisa.celone@dartmouth.edu*

## **What to expect at the Grant.**

- ◆ December: Plowing starts, animals start to hibernate, foxes pair up.
- ◆ January: Antlers start to drop, listen for mating sounds of Great Horned Owl.
- ◆ February: Great Horned owl start to incubate eggs, Coyotes are breeding, bear cubs are born.
- ◆ March: Snowshoe Hare will start to breed, Antler growth on Moose Start, Fisher start to breed.

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## ***2012 Winter Weekend at Grant scheduled for February 25 & 26:***

The Outdoor Programs Office has scheduled this year's Winter Weekend Celebration at the Second College Grant for the last weekend in February. Activities this year will include dogsledding, snowshoeing, ski touring, and woodland exploration. Beyond general fun in the snow, last year's highlights included multiple wildlife sightings and great storytelling around the evening fire. Students, staff and faculty, alumni and friends are all welcome to attend. For more information Contact Julie Bell at the OPO: 603-646-2834.

## ***Fish and Wildlife Subcommittee Restructured***

Several new alumnae have joined volunteer efforts at the Grant to support management programs in the areas of fisheries and wildlife habitat. The restructured committee will now meet at least 4 times a year in order to advise the management committee and land managers at the Grant on pertinent management issues.

Already the enlarged committee has been busy with fish studies in the watershed under the coordination of N.H. Fish and Game Department and the Dartmouth Woodlands staff. Numerous new volunteers participated in ongoing summer research on fish populations and fishing impacts at the Grant. Since then the committee has focused on formulating guide lines for hunting and fishing at the Grant, tackling some other wildlife related policies, and considering future projects to support the Woodlands office in their management of the Grant resources. The newly found Lynx population in Northern New Hampshire gives Grant managers new opportunities to manage for Lynx habitat. This winter staff will perform track transects in the Grant to see if any Lynx are present on the Grant.

### Members of the Fisheries and Wildlife Subcommittee

- *Robert Piampiano*
- *Larry Kelly*
- *Kevin Evans*
- *John (Jack) Boger*
- *James Quadrino*
- *Russell Cook*
- *Robert Oden*
- *Glenn Booma*



Technical Support is provided to the committee by the Woodlands Office, Office of Outdoor Programs and New Hampshire Fish and Game Department.

## ***HUNTING WEEKEND BRINGS STUDENTS AND ALUMNI TOGETHER***

In an effort to foster student-alumni contact and appreciation for the Grant, the Grant Management Committee, in co-operation with the Bait and Bullet section of the Dartmouth Outing Club, sponsored a hunting weekend at the Second College Grant November 11-13, 2011.

Led by Bait and Bullet officers Jack Borger and James Quadrino of the Class of 2013, thirteen students, including several freshmen from the Class of '15 and several first-time hunters, were paired with hunting partners from a group of alumni and College staff led by Glenn Booma '95, Robert Piampiano '67 and others including Dr. Bryant Barnard '58 and his two sons Scott and Tim, and Mark Lancaster from the Dartmouth Security Office.

After a brief review of hunter-safety practices, students headed off into the woods with their alumni/staff partners early Saturday morning for a day of roaming the hills and ridges of the Grant in search of deer or birds.



This provided a great opportunity for the alumni/staff participants to introduce the Grant to these students, and to give them the benefit of their years of hunting experience at the Grant. One student, Loren Paley '15, who hails from Colorado, is an experienced bow hunter, and chose to hunt with her bow. Although no deer were taken, two students found a large set of moose antlers in the woods and proudly brought them back to camp.

An added feature was provided by Chris Polashenski '07, who is trapping beaver in the Grant this year, and took several students out with him while he set his traps. By Sunday morning, one beaver had been trapped successfully.

On late Saturday afternoon, after a long day of hunting, Dr. Barnard and his sons hosted a get-together at Sam's Cabin where the day's adventures were re-told, and where many tales about the lore of the Grant were shared around the warmth of the wood stove. We were fortunate to have Jack Noon '68, who has authored several books about the Grant, speak about the Grant's history and some of its personalities, including former gatekeeper Nelson Ham, and Sam Brungot, after whom Sam's Cabin and Sam's Lookout are named. Additional guests included Put Blodgett '53, and Eric Sailer '60. The Pete Blodgett cabin at Hellgate is named after Put's uncle, and Eric led students in designing and building Peaks Cabin in 1959 and Merrill Brook Cabin in 1960-61. Their stories of adventures at the Grant added to the students' knowledge of Grant history and lore, to a wonderful evening, and to a memorable weekend for students and alumni alike. Another weekend next year is already being planned.

Any alumni who hunt and would like to participate are asked to contact Robert Piampiano '67 at [rpiampiano@piampianolaw.com](mailto:rpiampiano@piampianolaw.com).





## Cooperative Management (continued from page 1)



*Mowed landing area providing open habitat*

periodically by the brontosaurus or tractor driven brush hog. In the heavily forested Grant these openings of grass and shrubs provide a unique habitat for a select suite of wildlife species.

Management of wildlife habitat in the Grant is a dynamic process that will continue to evolve; a continuous forest inventory provides us with an ongoing picture of the forest stands, their species composition and size classes across this landscape. We will continue to rely on the timber management program to be the leading influence on forest stand succession. This will be coupled with non commercial work to fine tune targeted habitats. Continued long term monitoring of forest stands and wildlife through a variety of indices will help us better measure the success of our efforts in the future and ensure the rich wildlife heritage of the Second College Grant.

The brontosaurus has proven to be particularly effective at treating speckled alder, a shrub species that provides critical feeding, nesting and protective cover for the American woodcock. As this shrub species ages the larger diameter stems begin to grow horizontally along the ground losing their ability to provide effective cover for woodcock and other wildlife. This relatively short lived shrub species is stimulated by periodically cutting to promote new and vigorous growth.

In the Grant old fields and other designated permanent openings have been treated periodically



*Eight day old Woodcock chick*

## ***Woodlands News***

Summer 2011 was filled with management projects and a little wild weather. Summer harvesting occurred in the 4-Mile Brook area. Silviculture was focused on diversifying age classes and regeneration, so we used single tree selection, group selection and small patch clearcuts to remove the timber. In this area we are supporting habitats for pine martin, deer, and moose as well as the riparian habitat along the east branch of the 4 Mile Brook and swamp.

Road projects for the summer were typical for maintaining our infrastructure and included culvert maintenance, road grading, and ditch work. 4-Mile Brook road, Southside road and Johnson Brook spur road were the areas of focus. Additionally we did roadside clearing work on the Dead Diamond road from gauge pool to Dike Site road. In construction, we built a road extension to the spur road on Mt Dustan with a length of about 0.75 of a mile.

Bridge work for 2011 included new decking for Washburn Brook bridge, and new tread plank for the Gate Camp Bridge. Survey work was completed on a new bridge project on the Southside road where there is an existing hanging culvert which does not allow for fish passage. A full inspection of the Ellingwood Falls Bridge was also completed and plans are underway to replace the existing abutments in the next few years.

## *Woodlands News (cont'd)*

Construction of a new Town Office cabin was started this summer by a group of Dartmouth students; construction should be completed by May 2012. Like its predecessor, this cabin will be managed by the Woodlands Office and not be available for recreational use. Rather, it will be used to support our research and educational goals, various programs, and administrative needs. Use of this cabin should alleviate rental pressure on other OPO cabins which will no longer be taken out of use for these needs.

The new Town Office cabin was started in July, construction should be completed by May 2012.

Wildlife work this summer included fish tagging in the early summer on both the Swift and Dead Diamond Rivers. The annual fish weekend was held in August where 20 volunteers spent the weekend inventorying the populations of brook trout in the watershed. This was the 10th year of this important population work. Habitat vegetation mowing, using the “Bronto”, was completed in the upper 4-mile Brook watershed and the Hell Gate area. This allows us to maintain a diversity of age and size classes of alder and poplar which provide important habitat for a variety of bird species.



## *Dedication of new Alder Brook Bridge*

In July the new bridge across Alder Brook was dedicated to the late Richard “Dick” Plummer ‘54. A trip to the bridge and a short ceremony was held by family and friends of Dick. Guests spoke of Dick’s love of the Grant and his commitment to the north country. Gordy Dewitt shared stories of trips that he had made to the Grant with Dick. Bill Hoshstin talked of Dick’s commitment to the cabins and his ability to teach people about the Grant.

New Hampshire Fish and Game Fisheries Biologist, Dianne Timmons explained the importance of the bridge to fish habitat throughout the Grant property. She described the College’s commitment to the wildlife resource is demonstrated by allowing unrestricted travel by fish up and down all waterways and keeping the brooks and rivers of the College Grant free from sedimentation.

Bruce Plummer finished the gathering with some stories of his father. A small reception for those who came to the dedication was then held at the Management Center.

*Top picture: Gordon Dewitt*

*Bottom picture: The Plummer Family*





## *Contributing to wildlife work at the Grant*

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 earlier articles you have read about an enlarged committee overseeing this work, and the many projects taken on by staff, state agencies, and Dartmouth volunteers which foster research and enhance management for wildlife habitat. Much of this work is funded outside of normal college budgets, and the Russell Cook Wildlife Habitat Fund is instrumental in support of these efforts. Grant Managers appreciate the increased capacity for excellent land management that this Fund allows. Please contact Lisa Celone at [Lisa.Celone@dartmouth.edu](mailto:Lisa.Celone@dartmouth.edu) if you would like to support this work by donating to the Cook Family Fund. Thank you.



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 courses frequently 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 would agree on one thing, it's worth it

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We are on the Web!

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