

Summary of the Second College Grant Master Plan

Dartmouth College owns and manages 27,000 acres of woodland in the Northern Forest region of New Hampshire, near Erroll, New Hampshire and the Maine state line. This land, known as the Second College Grant or “the Grant”, was given to the College by the State of New Hampshire in 1807. The Grant is characterized by a remote wilderness aesthetic, a diversity of habitat, and pristine waters.

The Grant has long been used for timber harvesting and recreation, although recreation has expanded more recently as the Grant became more accessible. Timber harvesting has been culturally and economically important to the region for hundreds of years, and the Grant provides income for Dartmouth College. The intent is for harvesting to continue, but in balance with other management goals, such as wilderness recreation, preservation of natural places and waters, and long-term sustainability. The increasing complexity of management goals led to the development of the Master Plan for the Second College Grant, to consolidate multiple-use management policies into one document. This summary extracts the core management goals and a brief overview of policies and guidelines to meet those goals.

The Second College Grant Master Plan was written by the members of the Grant Management Committee in the fall of 2004, with help from a variety of experts and professionals familiar with the Grant. The members of the Grant Management Committee at the time of the writing of the plan were:

Ellen Arnold, College Counsel

Richard W. Birnie '66, Professor of Earth Sciences

Donald Cutter '73 former Asst. Director of Outdoor Programs

Kevin S. Evans, Director of Woodland Operations

Andy Harvard '71, Director of Outdoor Programs

Edwin Johnson '67, Emeritus Status, former Exec. Vice President for Finance & Admin.

Adam Keller, Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration

Larry Kelly, Associate Director of Real Estate

Stacy Miller LaBare '77, alumni representative

Daniel M. Nelson '75, Senior Associate Dean

Rand N. Stowell '64, alumni representative

Vision/Statement of Purpose

The Second College Grant, given to Dartmouth College by the State of New Hampshire in 1807, is and shall remain a multiple-use forested ecosystem, important to Dartmouth for educational, research, recreational, wood production and financial purposes. It shall continue as a premier destination for the Dartmouth community, and as an exemplary model of environmentally sound private land stewardship, reflective of the ecology, landscape, culture and wood-based economy of the Northern Forest.

The management of the Grant shall be multiple-use in nature and provide for a sustainable working forest, a healthy and balanced ecosystem, properly managed populations and habitat for fish and wildlife, and the coordination and integration of all user groups to the highest extent possible. Management of the Grant shall also foster and encourage the wide spectrum of intangibles sought by a diversity of users, such as solitude, challenge, remote recreational experiences, traditional and contemporary outdoor sports, and a setting conducive to education and research.

The Master Plan was prepared to provide guidance for the proper management of the Grant in the generations to come. (*Following are the management goals outlined in the Master Plan and a summary of the specific policies and guidelines in place to meet the goals*).

I. Educational Opportunities and Research

Management Goal:

To continue successful past and present educational and research activities and to encourage new educational and research activities in the Grant.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

The educational and research function of the grant will be promoted to a diverse array of audiences, both within the Dartmouth community and externally. Research projects will be analyzed for compatibility with other goals and objectives, but studies across a broad spectrum of topics are applicable and encouraged.

II. Timber Harvesting/Wood Products

Management Goals:

To protect the natural features and integrity of the Grant, including its natural communities and native species. Activities should use and build upon ecological principles and natural tendencies, rather than oppose them.

To effectively manage a working forest in order to provide forest products, maintain a healthy ecosystem, and remain a multiple-use setting for various other activities. Forest management will emphasize long-rotation, high quality, solid wood products that provide financial support to the College and student scholarships, and will contribute to the economy of the region.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

The Grant produces income through timber harvesting, which is used to defray the costs of the management of the Grant and to provide funds for Dartmouth College. Income goals are

developed year to year, in balance with sustainable resource management. Forest management approaches are developed with expert advice, and based on sound silvicultural techniques to provide for a diversity of forest types and habitat. Forest and habitat inventory procedures are in place, and will be continued to collect data to inform future management decisions. Other management considerations include soil protection, limitation or restriction of pesticide use, green certification, enhancement of wildlife habitat, cooperative agreements with conservation organizations, and compatibility with recreational and educational uses.

III. Recreation

Management Goal:

To provide recreational opportunities through effective management of the Grant's natural resources and infrastructure network.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

Forest management is balanced with compatible recreational needs at current and future levels. The cabins, trails, lands, and waters of the Grant serve students, alumni, and College employees throughout the year, and many recreational activities are also available to other individuals and groups. Recreational uses and facilities (cabins, trails) should be safe and well-maintained, while also preserving the remote wilderness experience of the Grant. Hunting and fishing are allowed, in compliance with State and Federal law, and within guidelines determined by the College. Some voluntary limits (such as a 2 fish/day limit, catch and release preferred) are also requested of users. In general, motorized recreational vehicles are prohibited, except as a mode of transportation to and from cabins or to conduct management activities. All seasonal pedestrian activities are encouraged, and mountain biking is allowed. Tent or vehicle camping is prohibited. All users are encouraged to determine the specific rules and guidelines for their activity of choice by contacting the Outdoor Programs Office at Dartmouth College.

IV. Infrastructure

Management Goal:

To build and maintain an infrastructure of roads, bridges, trails, cabins, and gates with consideration given to overall environmental impact, safety, forest harvesting and protection, and annual maintenance requirements and capabilities.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

Roads and bridges are built and maintained for the dual purpose of extraction of wood products and recreational use. Roads are designed to have the minimum impact on the landscape (soil, water, habitat) while allowing adequate access for these uses. Construction of new roads is weighed against other management objectives and maintenance of the remote character of the Grant. In the winter, plowing is conducted to facilitate forest management only, and not for recreation or convenience. Many roads are gated to control vehicular access and access points, and motorized recreational vehicles are allowed only as primary transportation to and from cabins. The maximum speed limit is 25 mph.

Boundary lines are maintained on a seven to ten-year basis, in partnership with abutters where feasible.

V. Fish and Wildlife

Management Goal:

To have a comprehensive fish and wildlife management program that addresses the issues of habitat needs, health of populations, effective hunting and fishing programs, and provides opportunities for wildlife viewing, educational programs, and research.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

Wildlife and fish management are integrated into many of the multiple-use management policies on the Grant, with the goal of fostering a healthy forest ecosystem that supports a diverse array of species and habitat. Special consideration is paid to rare or unusual habitat, including the native brook trout fishery. Wildlife experts are consulted regarding management decisions, and partnerships with an array of organizations are in place to foster wildlife management. Long term monitoring is conducted for a variety of species, as well as a sample plot system. The introduction of exotic species or reintroduction of native species is prohibited in the Grant. Safe and ethical fishing and hunting activities are allowed (see recreation section), and wildlife viewing is encouraged.

VI. Water Resources

Management Goal:

To maintain the quality of water resources in the Grant for habitat and recreational activities.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

Management guidelines, including road construction and timber removal, comply with a variety of best management practices to protect streams, rivers, ponds, riparian zones, and wetlands. These methods include buffers, installation and removal of temporary bridges and culverts, vegetating slopes, and other measures to minimize impact.

VII. Cultural Resources, Sites of Special Natural Significance, and Points of Interest

Management Goal:

To protect and effectively manage the cultural/historic resources, sites of special natural significance and points of interest.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

The following cultural and historic features will receive special recognition and protection:

- Hell Gate Field - Logging Camp and Pete Blodgett Cabin
- Hell Gate Gorge Dam
- Upper College Farm - Merrill Brook area
- Lower College Farm - near airfield
- Dam at Diamond Gorge
- Hand on the Rock
- Sam's Lookout
- Bateau and dam on Fourmile Brook
- Miller-Quinn Memorial Airfield

- Perley Churchill Bridge
- The old sawmill
- USGS Water Gauge Station
- Wentworth Location Cemetery (just off the Grant)
- Management Center
- Sam's Cabin
- The Dike Site

Interpretive materials may incorporate information about any of the above sites, as well as the log driving history of the area or other historic elements. There are also special natural areas, where disturbance is minimized, including some where no timber harvesting or limited timber harvesting is conducted. These include the following, and new ones may be added at the discretion of the Grant Management Committee and/or Advisory Committee:

- John Sloan Dickey Natural Area - 350 acre site where timber harvesting is limited
- Forks of the Diamond Natural Area (within the Dickey Natural Area)- 35 acres surrounding the confluence of Dead and Swift Diamond Rivers where harvesting is not allowed
- Hell Gate Pond Natural Area - 985 acre site where timber harvesting is limited
- Hell Gate Gorge (within Hell Gate Pond Natural Area) - no harvesting allowed
- Halfmoon Mountain Natural Area - 557 acre site where timber harvesting is limited
- Diamond Peaks Natural Area - 885 acre site where timber harvesting is limited
- Various sites designated by the New Hampshire Heritage Inventory (locations kept confidential to protect rare, threatened and endangered species) - no harvesting allowed

In addition to cultural/historic sites and significant natural areas, visitors to the Grant can enjoy these special natural features and points of interest, which are included on recreational maps and programs:

- Monahan's Bathtub, on the Dead Diamond Road
- Diamond Gorge Lookout, on the Dead Diamond Road
- Hell Gate Gorge, on the Dead Diamond Road
- Slewgundy, on Dead Diamond Road
- Sid Haywood Ledge and Half Mile Falls on Dead Diamond Road
- Ellingwood Falls on Swift Diamond Road
- Halfmoon Beach on Dead Diamond Road
- Blueberry Management Area on Swift Diamond Road
- Osprey nest area
- Brungot's Lookout
- Diamond Four-corners
- Finnsen's Cliff and Diamond Peaks
- Sam's Lookout, on the Swift Diamond Road

VIII. Administrative Issues

Management Goal:

To provide effective administration of the Grant, so that it remains a good example of private land stewardship, a premier destination for the Dartmouth community, and a natural resource protected for future generations.

To encourage responsible use by and cooperation between user groups in order to protect the Grant's resources for the future, and to provide for a positive experience for as many users as possible (also partially covered in recreation section).

To involve concerned and interested members of the Dartmouth community in the management process through the Second College Grant Advisory Committee and the Grant Management Committee.

Summary of Policy and Guidelines:

Administrative tasks are divided between the Woodlands Office (within the College's Finance and Administration Office) and the Outdoor Programs Office (OPO; Dean of the College's Division), with a high degree of cooperative activity. In general, land and forest management activity is the responsibility of the Woodlands Office, while Outdoor Programs administers cabins and recreational/educational activities, including the trail system. The Grant Management Committee provides advice to the Director of Woodlands Operations (Woodlands Office) and the Finance and Administration Office, and represents the interests of faculty, students, alumni/ae, Outdoor Programs, College Counsel, and the College's Real Estate Office. Financial administration of the Grant is ultimately the responsibility of the Finance and Administration Office. Daily operational financial administration is handled by the Woodlands Office and OPO.

Employees contracted by either the Woodlands Office or OPO must adhere to all policies outlined in the Master Plan, and contract work will be monitored by the responsible College office.

A variety of measures to protect lands around the Grant are to be evaluated for efficacy, to further protect the habitat and waters within the Grant. Protection of the Dead Diamond watershed is a priority. If a working forest conservation easement would protect lands adjacent to the Grant, it should be considered as long as it is compatible with other management goals for the Grant.

An emergency preparedness plan is in effect on the Grant as of summer 2004. Natural hazards and disasters are to be controlled to the extent possible. Potential emergencies include medical, fire, disease/pestilence, and flooding; measures are in place to prevent and/or mitigate these and other emergencies.