



Milton Celebrates Casey Road Conservation Land

Applause and inspiration were the order of the day at the trailhead to Casey Road Conservation Land in Milton on an early October 2021 Saturday morning. The occasion was held to celebrate conserving this town-owned forestland. Attendees were enthusiastic in expressing their appreciation, while speakers encouraged them to support land conservation and forestry education.

The festivities began with the unveiling of a new sign to welcome visitors to the property. The handmade sign, designed and crafted by Bill and Deb McCormack, was warmly applauded and praised for its attractiveness. Neighbor Jeff LeClair commented afterwards, "I'm incredibly happy about it. It really makes you appreciate [the land] even more."

After this auspicious start, the group enjoyed refreshments and re-gathered at the trailhead. The first speaker, Cynthia Wyatt, long-time Chair of the Milton Conservation Commission (CC), was introduced by new CC Chair Virginia Long, who appreciated Wyatt for her inspiring leadership and many years of service.

Wyatt recounted the history of conserving the property, a process that took over six years to accomplish and required several favorable warrant article votes by town residents. She went on to express thanks to town Selectman Andy Rawson, to Milton Fire and Rescue and Public Works Departments, to several Board members and staff of local land trust Moose Mountains Regional Greenways (MMRG), as well as to the town Casey Road Land Protection Committee and to all the citizens of Milton for their support of the project. When Rawson spoke next, he in turn expressed gratitude to Wyatt for all she has done for the Town of Milton.

MMRG Executive Director Jill Eldredge said MMRG was honored to be asked to hold the conservation easement on the property while the Town continues to own the land. She named and thanked several local businesses who donated to the project, commenting that their support combined with that of seventy individual donors was critical to its success.

Virginia Long thanked the many volunteers who worked to clean up the land and improve the trails, including several members of the audience who raised their hands as others clapped.



MMRG Board member Peter Goodwin, who created the trail map of the property, spoke about the conservation partnership between MMRG and the Town of Milton's Conservation Commission. He also reminded the audience of the economic value of conservation for towns.

Selectman Rawson and MMRG's Jill Eldredge closed the ceremony by cutting the ribbon across the trail, after which about half the group headed out for a walk led by MMRG Board member Jon Nute. As a retired forester and having assisted with the parcel survey, Nute was well-qualified to impart much information that fascinated the participants. He described how this land and its forest have changed since the Ice Age 12,000 years ago and how today's forest cover emerged from the field clearing of 200 years ago. Nute also spoke to specific tree species and options for managing this forest.

Nute's final message was to urge participants to encourage the young children in their lives to consider a career in forestry, noting how it can be a satisfying vocation and one needed in today's world. Cynthia Wyatt had also concluded her talk with an inspirational message -- exhorting the audience to take part in grassroots advocacy and support for voluntary land conservation efforts.

The mission of the Milton Conservation Commission is to provide for the proper utilization and protection of the natural resources and watershed resources in the Town of Milton, in accordance with NH RSA 36-A. For upcoming events or other conservation news, see our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Milton-NH-Conservation-Commission-111312517719861/>. To learn more about Moose Mountains Regional greenways, visit mmrgnh.org.