



2006 Annual Report

Bear-Paw Regional Greenways is growing – more this year, it seems, than ever before. Early in 2006 we received a generous bequest from former member Dan Morris' estate. This encouraged us to take the leap and increase executive director Dan Kern to full time. The result was greater coordination and more efficient operation of our organization. Consequently, we are busier than ever. Because Dan was full time, he had time to apply for grants and work on projects, which resulted in offsetting most of the increase in salary expenses. Therefore we used less than 1/10 of the bequest, leaving the rest available for other important uses.

Of course, our primary mission is to protect our natural resources. To this end, we completed projects that conserved more than 219 acres in the Bear-Paw region. We are actively working on 22 more projects, some of which we expect to complete in 2007 and in 2008.

In order to progress toward our mission, we need to reach out to residents of the member towns. We do this in a variety of ways including publishing *The Bear-Paw Print* and *Tracking Bear-Paw*, expanding membership appeals, submitting articles to the local media, providing representation at member town activities and hosting our own events. One of our goals is to host or co-host at least one event in each member town every year. We try to have an event every month, and we vary our offerings to appeal to many interests.

We started the year with our annual meeting. Iain MacLeod was our featured speaker. He talked about raptors in the Bear-Paw region. In the afternoon we led a walk in the Mulligan Forest, a 2036 acre project, which we are helping the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests to protect.

We offered 6 other walks during the year; the Strafford Town Forest on Parker Mt., a spring bird migration walk in Raymond, a tour of the rerouted Suncook River with Eric Orff, a hawk watch on Blue Job Mt., a tour of newly purchased Candia conservation land, and a tour of a project encompassing the headwaters of the Lamprey River. In addition, we hosted a Biothon, which yielded observation of almost 300 species on 2 protected properties. We also gave 2 conservation workshops, one in Northwood and one in Strafford. We also hosted a Roundtable, which focused on the regional conservation plan we are developing.



We also reached out to new members, inviting them to a board meeting and property tour of a project in progress. And, we hosted 2 music events. In March it was "Out of the Woods" with Becky Rule, who made a very humorous debut as an auctioneer, poet Neil English and folk/bluegrass band Cordwood. In October it was "Down from the Hill #6," which has become an annual favorite.

Thanks to Dan's efforts, we were approved for \$221,850 in federal, state and private grant funding. Working jointly with member towns, Dan led a number of successful grant application efforts. These included a NH LCHIP grant for \$100,000 for a conservation project in Deerfield, which will protect a major part of the headlands of the Lamprey River. Also included is an \$87,500 federal farmland protection grant to help conserve historic Deerfield farmland containing prime agricultural soils. In addition, we were granted funds for other land protection projects and various efforts including our regional conservation plan, purchase of GPS equipment and training for GIS, a supplement for Dan's salary, updating our web site, our NROC involvement in Strafford and a regional landowner outreach.

The executive director, volunteer board and committee members of Bear-Paw spend many hours every month involved with the basic functioning of the organization. We are in the process of reviewing and updating our strategic plan, and reviewing and adopting the Land Trust Alliance Standards and Practices. We are developing a volunteer outreach, for which we welcome anyone with a little extra time to help with some of the necessary tasks of running Bear-Paw.

Somehow, the busier we are, the busier we tend to get. In addition to our usual yearly events, in 2007 we will be adding a turtle walk, a financial planning workshop and a return to the Suncook River to check on the evolution of its new route.

We thank all our members for their continued support. We are growing fast and could not continue to address the demands for our work without you.