

# **Groton Conservation Trust**

P.O. Box 395, Groton, MA 01450

December 12, 2014

**To: Organizations with Interest in Conservation and Recreation in Groton**

**Re: Proposal for an Annual Groton Conservation Forum**

Dear Colleagues,

Through the combined efforts of several organizations and individuals, Groton has enjoyed remarkable success in protecting properties for conservation and recreation. While there has been coordination and cooperation among our organizations on a project-by-project basis, we believe that more regular communication would benefit all of our efforts as well as help engage the broader community. With this in mind, the Groton Conservation Commission (GCC), the Groton Conservation Trust (GCT), and the Groton Trails Committee (GTC) propose that our organizations meet annually to share our perspectives and organize efforts around common issues and objectives.

We perceive several advantages of such regular gatherings both to our organizations and our conservation agenda in town:

- Improved communication among the organizations that have shared conservation and recreation interests in Groton;
- Coordination of activities such as targeting and supporting potential land acquisition, trail creation, etc.;
- Sharing of information on ongoing projects by our individual groups;
- Coordination on outreach to town and state government as well as the public;
- Sharing of information on common problems such as control of invasive plants and management of all-terrain vehicles;
- Presentation of our plans and concerns in order to maintain public enthusiasm and awareness for conservation activities in Groton; and
- Celebration of conservation efforts in Groton at a public forum.

We propose to be inclusive by inviting a wide variety of groups with interests in open space in Groton (see Attachment 1). We recognize that such a large forum could be unwieldy so we have proposed a relatively simple agenda that attempts to foster dialog and coordination:

1. **Opening Remarks**
2. **Brief Statement from Each Organization** Someone from each organization will have the opportunity to make a two to three minute presentation about what they are doing and about their conservation-related issues and concerns. Since presentation times will be short, and since time limits will be enforced, we would also like to offer, and encourage, each organization the opportunity to submit

written information about their organization and their activities. We will make such submitted information available online.

3. **Social Hour with Sign Up for Inter-Organization Working Groups** Three to five teams will be proposed based on feedback from the member organizations prior to the forum. Topics under consideration include: a) setting up a volunteer coordination system in town; b) approaches to managing ATVs; c) fostering, expanding, and enhancing recreational opportunities; d) control of invasive plant species; e) improving accessibility for those with disabilities; and f) providing better access for fire control. [*Please let us know how you would prioritize these topics or suggest others.*]

We will plan for the attendance of several dozen individuals. We will provide tables for posters and information on your organization. We anticipate that the forum will last between two and three hours. The GCC, the GCT, and the GTC will rotate the chair of the forum with the GCT taking the first turn.

Our first forum will be on Wednesday February 11, 2015 at 7 PM at the Groton Country Club. Light refreshments will be served.

We all feel very lucky to have access to Groton's abundance of natural resources. We are excited by our collective accomplishments to protect, enhance, and help others enjoy what our town offers. We hope that you will attend the first annual Groton Conservation Forum and join with others in making our collective efforts better. Please RSVP by emailing Susan Hughes ([susahughes@gmail.com](mailto:susahughes@gmail.com)) and Mark Gerath ([mark.gerath@gmail.com](mailto:mark.gerath@gmail.com)) by January 10, 2015. Please also direct any questions or comments as well as your working group priorities to them.

Thanks for considering joining us at Groton's first Annual Conservation Forum.

Sincerely,



John Smigelski  
Chair, Groton Conservation Commission



Daniel B. Wolfe  
President, Groton Conservation Trust



Paul G. Funch  
Chair, Groton Trails Committee



## **Attachment 1: Invited Organizations**

Groton Conservation Commission  
Groton Conservation Trust  
Groton Country Club  
Groton-Dunstable Regional School District  
Groton Greenway Committee  
Groton Lakes Association  
Groton Park Commission  
Groton Planning Board  
Groton School  
Groton Trails Committee  
Groton Turtle Association  
Groton Town Forest Committee  
Groton Water and Sewer Department  
Lawrence Academy  
Hazel Grove Association  
Massachusetts Audubon  
Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife  
Nashoba Dirt Organization  
Nashua River Watershed Association  
New England Forestry Federation  
Sargisson Beach Committee  
West Groton Water Department  
The interested public