

25 Years of People, Paths, Possibilities

Adair Mulligan, Executive Director of the Hanover Conservancy

We at the Hanover Conservancy are delighted at this opportunity to celebrate one of our most important partners, the Upper Valley Trails Alliance. As an organization that creates and maintains miles of trails on our protected lands in Hanover, we are grateful to be able to call upon the Trails Alliance's deep and ready expertise.

Here are a few examples you may recognize if you hike in Hanover. At our Greensboro Ridge Natural Area, we wanted to add a new trail to create a loop with an existing one. The route had to avoid sensitive areas and be sustainable. It had to bypass vernal pools, keep feet dry, and bring the hiker past intriguing features such as a ledge's spectacular quartz vein, a stone wall, and bear-marked beech. And it had to be fun! Who you gonna call? The Trails Alliance! Their staff first helped us lay out the 3/5 mile Greensboro Highlands Trail, and then they led a group of volunteers, including from Hypertherm, to build what soon became a favorite route on the south side of town.

On Moose Mountain at the opposite end of town, the Conservancy wanted to honor the request of Doug Britton to build a trail so people could enjoy the donation of his family's land. Having discovered an active bear area on the north side of that parcel, we determined to focus the new trail on the far south end. But how could we build a trail long enough for a satisfying hike while avoiding wildlife disturbance on most of the property? Answer: call the Trails Alliance! Their staff helped us lay out the Black Bear Loop, featuring stone walls, two pretty stream crossings, and a very impressive glacial erratic. That summer, the Alliance's High School Trail Corps built the nearly mile-long path, incorporating a half-mile circle, that would soon become a magnet for hikers looking for a fun new mountain route.

The Conservancy especially appreciates the chance to engage high school students on our protected lands, knowing the healthy outdoor experience this offers and hoping it will stimulate a life-long love of hiking and natural places. We're currently working on plans to have the Trail Corps bridge sections of the Harris Trail and build a connector on our new Moose Mountain Forest property. The Alliance's High School Trail Corps has also helped us re-route unsustainable sections of the Grasse Road and Hemlock Trails at the Balch Hill Natural Area.

The list goes on. Over at the Trescott Water Supply Lands, we worked closely with the Trails Alliance as this vast area was about to be opened to the public for the first time in a half century. Together, we planned trails, maps, and messaging, and the Alliance led the drafting of a recreation management plan for these water supply lands that are so important to public health and safety.

Our partnership goes beyond trail work. We are both small nonprofits with big public footprints, and share not only compatible missions but similar organizational challenges. Over the years, it's been great to have such a fine staff of good people to call upon at the Upper Valley Trails Alliance. Congratulations and thanks for 25 years!

All the best,

Adair Mulligan