Mansfield began the development of its next Master Plan with an October 2019 community meeting. From that meeting, a vision statement for 2030 and 6 major goals were proposed, including “Accessible, connected and well-publicized green spaces.”

The Plan elaborates, “In 2030, Mansfield’s open spaces are celebrated and used by residents of all ages and abilities. Residents easily access them using walkable connections and multiple transportation modes. Mansfield’s existing open spaces, natural habitats, and conservation areas are adequately preserved and maintained. The Town actively seeks to expand its open space network as opportunities arise to preserve natural habitat, protect watersheds, and link resource areas.”

To accomplish this, the Master Plan outlines several actions including collaboration among the conservation and recreation commissions as well as the NRT and other organizations that touch on the open spaces in Mansfield. One proposal is to develop an “Emerald Necklace” that connects all of the open space assets in the downtown areas that are currently under development.

Key to success is not only continuing to acquire contiguous land to further develop and diversify open space options, but also to manage these public and private properties. To do this, the Master Plan seeks development of a budget to maintain trails and signage including funding dedicated services from the Department of Public Works for trail maintenance.

In all of these activities the NRT plays an active role, whether it be its continued work in land acquisition and stewardship, its collaboration with the Conservation Commission and the DPW, or the guidance regarding the continued development of the trail system. When the Master Plan is adopted in Spring 2020, the NRT will feature prominently as an active player in the preservation and continued growth of vital open spaces in the Town of Mansfield.

—Submitted by Sharon Friedman, NRT Board Member and Master Plan Committee Member.
The following projects were undertaken last year:

**Plymouth Street:**
Last summer we were fortunate to have Ciaran Connolly of Troop 51 choose our Plymouth Street property as the site of his Eagle Scout project. He and his fellow scouts constructed and installed 3 benches along the trail. They also built a long footbridge to facilitate access to the trail and modified an existing bridge. We very much appreciate the Scouts efforts. Another small footbridge was constructed by the NRT. The trail is now accessible in all but the wettest conditions.

Blow downs continued to plague the property. John Southard was instrumental in keeping the trails clear. We also hired an arborist to remove the most dangerous trees. Fallen trees continue to be a problem and we will address them as they occur.

**Dorothy York:**
Neighbors have alerted us to issues regarding youths lightning campfires on the property. We are undertaking the following steps to combat this issue:
- More signage prohibiting fire on the property
- Placing a removable barrier to prevent off street parking (lots of car traffic has damaged the small field just inside the property)
- Signage indicating closure of property at night, and alerting police to the situation.

**Great Woods:**
Troop 17 preformed trail maintenance on the White trail. They completed about half the trail.

**Marie Strese:**
Trees were removed from the blue trail by John Southard and myself. Much more remains to be done to restore the trails. We hope to complete the project in the near future.

**Corporal Hardy:**
Michelle White organized the annual spring clean up as usual. Thanks to all the volunteers who made the day a success!

**WWII Memorial Trail:**
The NRT partnered with Keep Mansfield Beautiful in refurbishing the information kiosks at either end of the trail. Lou Andrews designed and helped install the new signage. We also painted the kiosks.

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**Acquisitions Update – Tod Snyder, Acquisitions Director**

In 2019, the NRT did not acquire any new properties. However, there are several potential donations in the works which could add 60+ acres to our holdings if they come to fruition. Acquisition of these properties would mean that the NRT would have successfully conserved over 500 acres for open space in Mansfield. Most of the land the NRT acquires is through generous donations from private individuals. We are always interested in potential new land donations; such a donation would also result in a tax deduction for the donor.
Trail Work

NRT has a long history of supporting NRT and town conservation areas. We were was active again this year supervising Scout projects, refurbishing kiosks, and replacing boardwalks. The NRT also worked closely with the town’s Open Space and Recreation Committee to identify trails needing maintenance.

Scout Troop 17 helped clear the Great Woods White Trail. Stewardship Director Colin Cauldwell supervised.

The NRT partnered with Keep Mansfield Beautiful to refurbish the WWII Veterans’ Memorial Trail kiosks by painting them as well as adding maps and other information.

Troop 51’s Ciarán Connolly’s Eagle Scout Project built a boardwalk and three benches along the Plymouth Street Conservation Area under the supervision of Stewardship Director Colin Cauldwell.

Mansfield Conservation History

Four generations mark Great Woods Trails - 2001

(l-r) Ryan Morley, Evan McIntyre, Ciarán Connolly, and Liam Lyle, Colin Cauldwell.

Margaret Danehy was awarded a $1,000 scholarship from the NRT.

The Leonard F. Flynn Environmental scholarship for 2019 was awarded to Mansfield High School senior Margaret Danehy, who plans to pursue a degree in environmental engineering at the University of New Hampshire. In her senior year, Maggie became especially interested in marine biology. She learned of the harmful impact climate change has on coral reefs, and she became interested in projects that create artificial reefs to preserve aquatic habitat.

In her senior year, Maggie was a student in Advanced Placement Biology. Aside from academics, Maggie showed her commitment to the environment through a variety of activities. She created and posted flyers in school and around town to increase awareness of problems climate change causes on coastal communities. She started a petition asking Dunkin Donuts to end the use of Styrofoam cups because of their harm to the environment.

The NRT Leonard Flynn Environmental Scholarship is a $1,000.00 scholarship awarded by the Natural Resources Trust of Mansfield to a Mansfield student who has demonstrated a commitment to the environment. Do you know of worthy students? Let them know! Applications are being accepted for the 2020 scholarship. Go to NRTMA.org for an application.

The scholarship is named for Lenny Flynn who was a lifelong conservationist and a founding member and past president of the NRT of Mansfield. Under his leadership, the NRT, working with the Mansfield Conservation Commission and other agencies, acquired over 800 acres of land for permanent passive recreation in Mansfield. He lived in Mansfield for 48 years before passing away in 2015 at the age of 81.

Pictured: NRT Scholarship Committee member and director Deborah Snyder with recipient Maggie Danehy.
NRT Annual Meeting

NRT bylaws require an annual meeting in the month of April. The annual meeting is necessary for a quorum of members to vote on 2020 officers, the budget, and any articles. In past years, we've also enjoyed an annual speaker and socializing over refreshments.

In light of the public health concerns regarding COVID-19, NRT regrets that NRT will not hold an in-person meeting. Instead, the items requiring votes will be emailed to members in April.

“This Old Town” books still available

This collection of Harry Chase’s articles, mostly from The Mansfield News from 1967-2016, includes stories from Mansfield’s earliest settlement and history, its people and how they lived, its geography, and natural features, and Harry’s own memories of growing up in “This Old Town.” There is much to enjoy in reading Harry Chase’s stories.

Information on how to order is on our website www.nrtma.org.

Events—by Sally Fehervari, Outreach Director

Family Fun Night on July 9th was a great opportunity to introduce Mansfield and area residents to our trails and also sell our books. We still hear the same question, “There are trails in Mansfield?”

Lucas won the “Name the Critter” contest. With Sally Fehervari.

Fall Festival, on Oct.5th, had Lou Andrews selling books and giving away trail maps on the steps of the Mansfield Historical Society. Later that month, on the 23rd, NRT participated in the first ever “Welcome to Mansfield 101”, and it was a huge success. This event, sponsored by the library, allowed Mansfield newcomers to sign up for a library card, take a tour, say hello to members of the Select Board and the Town Manager, and meet representatives from town departments and community. There were many organizations there, and it was a fun time to introduce new residents to the NRT.

Thanks to all the NRT members who helped to make these events a success!

NRT President Lou Andrews (left) presents an award to Jerry Huiskamp for his 6 years of Service as vice president of the NRT.

NRT President Lou Andrews awarded the “Golden Puttin’ up sign post” award to Stewardship Director Colin Cauldwell for his work installing signs and boardwalks.

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As we complete our 49th year, the NRT is as strong as ever. Our focus has shifted from acquisitions to awareness and stewardship of our properties. To this effort, Diane Simms is coordinating trail walks, with Colin Cauldwell and Sally Fehervari assisting. We still, however, are working on acquiring two large parcels. We hope to close on one before July 1st.

The Conservation Commission is sponsoring an article to transfer control of several town-owned properties to the Commission. Please go to town meeting and support the article.

A special thanks to Diane for taking over this newsletter, along with our website and Facebook page.

Give some thoughts on how we should celebrate our 50th year in 2021.

Lou

The NRT welcomes new members!

Your membership is important to help us maintain our quest to protect Mansfield’s natural resources.

Individual or Family Membership is $35.00 per year. Other membership levels are available. See our website for details.

Mail your dues to:
NRT of Mansfield
255 Fruit Street
Mansfield, MA 02048

or pay online with PayPal from our website: www.nrtma.org.

The NRT is a 501(C)(3) Corporation. Your dues and donations may be tax-deductible.

Thank you for your support.