

Dead River West Parcel

Natural Resources Inventory – (Preliminary Report, Cathy Rees – GPMCT)

With the acquisition of the Bella property GPMCT has gained the ability control the majority of the watershed draining directly into the Dead River. With careful land management, GPMCT has the ability to protect water quality suitable for the wide variety of fish, shellfish, reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals and invertebrates that depend on the river habitat. In addition to the ecological value of the habitat, the aesthetic and cultural value of the undeveloped shores of the Dead River are being conserved.

The dam at the head of the Narramissic River maintains the water of the Dead River at a higher level than it would naturally be without the dam. The result is that the terrestrial habitat meets the river abruptly with just a fringe of wetland species. A few exceptions exist where small pockets of wetland exist, often where a drainage from the property meets the river.

The two large wetlands on the parcel are both designated inland waterfowl/wading bird habitat by the Maine Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife. There are active beavers in both wetlands and they have greatly enriched the parcel's habitat diversity. Virginia rail and ring-necked ducks are both less-common waterfowl that were observed using the wetlands.

Numerous drainages cross the parcel heading toward the Dead River. Some are very intermittent and are only recognizable downslope where a channel is visible. All of the drainages provide a variety of habitat and offer botanical richness. The outlets from both of the wetlands, are more consistently flowing and support more diverse and extensive streamside habitats.

The land area of the parcel offers a great deal of botanical diversity for its size. The property is located within the white pine- mixed hardwoods forest ecosystem which is characterized by white pine and hemlock as the dominant conifers with red oak, beech, sugar maple and red maple as the most abundant deciduous species. On the Bella parcel, white ash is also common.

Forestry activities in the past have left enormous, open grown white pines and mature red oak and red maple supercanopy trees. Understory trees include hop hornbeam and blue beech in addition to the familiar striped and mountain maple. Less common shrubs and herbaceous plants are thriving in the understory along with the usual species.

The geology of the parcel is significantly different from that of the Wildlands. It is underlain by the Bucksport Formation which is made up of metamorphosed fine-grained, calcareous sedimentary rock. The result is diverse topography with less acidic soils that may explain some of the plant species richness observed on the parcel.

Invasive species include multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*) and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.). Japanese honeysuckle is more locally abundant near the Mast Hill roadside, the old quarry and the drainage from the quarry to Dead River. Multiflora rose was seen as individual plants in a couple of locations. Populations of both are manageable and should at least be prevented from forming seed thus, preventing further spread.

The varied topography, complex hydrology, calcareous bedrock and high forest structural diversity of the Bella Parcel all contribute to the exceptional conservation value of this acquisition.