



## Belknap Range Conservation Coalition

### 2020 Annual Report (October 2019 to October 2020)

The Belknap Range Conservation Coalition (BRCC) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the conservation of open space, responsible stewardship, and low impact public enjoyment of scenic, natural, recreational and historical resources of the Belknap Mountain Range. Participating members include individuals/conservation commission members from the project area towns of Alton, Belmont, Gilford and Gilmanton as well as dedicated individuals who share an avid interest in the many resources that the Belknap Range provides. Conservation organizations with participating members include: UNH Cooperative Extension; Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF); Lakes Region Conservation Trust; Belknap County Sportsmen's Association; Belknap Range Trail Tenders (BRATTS); Gilmanton Land Trust; New England Forestry Foundation and the Belknap County Conservation District. The town of Barnstead has also supported the BRCC with a membership.

Along with working to protect the largely unfragmented natural landscape that makes up the Belknap Mountain Range, the BRCC also educates the public about the significance of the resources of the Belknap Mountain Range; develops, promotes, and implements methods and strategies for ensuring the long-term protection and responsible stewardship of these resources; and promotes opportunities for low impact public enjoyment and recreation. The BRCC strives to facilitate cooperation and communication among conservation organizations, municipalities, other governmental entities and area landowners, and helps coalition members secure funding, technical assistance and other resources for carrying out programs in support of this mission.

During the year, the Directors met quarterly at the Gilman Museum in Alton and during the COVID 19 Pandemic via Zoom conference. The meetings offer important opportunities for members to share information about parcels within the focus area. At these meetings we focused on sharing information on parcels of land that may be available for conservation in the Belknaps. We are monitoring several such parcels and are supporting contacts with landowners who might be willing to participate in a land conservation project. During 2020, one land project was active – the 65-acre Weeks project in Gilford. The project was completed on October 31, 2020. At the annual meeting on October 15, 2020, the current officers, Chairperson-Russ Wilder, Bruce Jacobs, Vice Chairperson, Secretary-Lisa Morin and Treasurer-Nanci Mitchell, were reappointed.



*Weeks Property on the west side of Gunstock in Gilford*

Due to the COVID 19 Pandemic, all in-person events were cancelled this year. BRCC Chairman supported trail work by the Forest Society on the main trail at Mount Major by providing lodging for contractor personnel working on controlling erosion near the parking lot. Hiker use of trails in the Belknaps was particularly heavy this year and most likely will require increased maintenance in 2021.

Other activities/items of interest include:

- Russ Wilder maintained the BRCC website
- BRCC assisted with stewardship issues including maintenance of signage at the end of Jesus Valley Road. As of the end of 2020, the landowner at the end of Jesus Valley Road closed trail access due to heavy usage and trespassers on her family compound.
- SPNHF's Mount Major Outdoor Classroom (MMOC) for elementary and middle school students was not held this year.

BRCC continues to monitor management activities on acquired parcels and we continue to pursue additional conservation possibilities in the Belnap Range. BRCC, in conjunction with the Forest Society and LRCT, is helping to implement a management plan that will improve the outdoor experience and to address impacts to the trail system.

For more information on the BRCC, please visit our website at [www.belknaprang.org](http://www.belknaprang.org) or contact the Belnap Range Conservation Coalition at PO Box 151, Gilmanton IW, NH 03837 or email us at [info@belknaprang.org](mailto:info@belknaprang.org).

Respectfully submitted,



Russell J. Wilder, Chair