

# **Conserving Pine Park for the Future**

## **The Trustees of The Pine Park Association**

### **An Incomparable Resource for the Community**

Pine Park is a 100-acre preserve created in 1905 and approved as a NH charitable trust in 1906. Located within easy walking distance of downtown Hanover and Dartmouth College, the park is owned by The Pine Park Association, a volunteer-run 501(c) 3 organization, and managed in partnership with Dartmouth College and the Town of Hanover. It is the oldest park and trail system in Hanover, one of the oldest protected areas in New Hampshire, and the most heavily used recreational area in the community. In addition to walking, hiking, snowshoeing, and skiing, the park serves as a training site for college and local high school cross-country, track and ski teams.

Visitors enjoy a variety of trails and vistas, including 3,500 feet of undeveloped Connecticut River shoreline, the scenic Girl Brook Ravine, a wooded ridge, and several patches of old-growth forest. Not surprisingly, graduating seniors from Dartmouth consistently rank it as one of their favorite places, and local churches have used it as a gathering place for reflection.

### **Why Pine Park Needs Help Now**

The Pine Park Association trustees seek major investment in Pine Park of roughly \$300,000 to cover the ambitious projects for which we have commitments over the next three years and an additional \$200,000 for stewardship of the park through 2029. Our goals are to make the aging forest more resilient and more supportive of wildlife and to enhance public access to its varied trails and natural beauty.

Two unrelated events—a major dieback of trees in 2019 and the closure of the adjacent Dartmouth Golf Course in 2020—dramatically illustrated the need for a new vision for the park and prompted the Association to launch an ambitious effort to secure the park's future.

The closure of the Dartmouth golf course offers a unique opportunity to reimagine a major section of the park as we reclaim the roughly 8.5 acres of open field that had been part of the course for more than 100 years. The park's founders had once imagined a landscape of flowering trees and inviting places to sit and admire the lovely views. We are returning to that early vision, but also making it more accessible for visitors who lack the mobility or fitness to navigate the steep trails leading to the wooded heart of the park.

Trees stressed from insects and disease pose safety hazards along the trails. When they fall into Girl Brook, they accelerate erosion from heavy runoff in the brook's watershed, resulting in washouts and trail closures.

Invasive plants march steadily into the park along its edges with the former golf course and are starting to penetrate recently logged areas. Our forest management plan, completed in 2021, gives top priority to control of invasives as a precondition for restoration efforts.

Immediate solutions and long-term management strategies are both necessary and have become more urgent under the pressures of climate change.

## The Plan

Given the park's size, heavy use, and complex ecology, a significant infusion of funds is essential to ensure the future health of what some call Hanover's "Central Park." After two years of careful deliberation, we have identified projects that address immediate issues requiring capital investment, while also providing for the park's long-term needs. All the experts we have consulted tell us to expect climate change to present further challenges for the stewardship of this treasure and the plan takes these challenges into consideration.

### Phase I - 2022

Activity	Estimated Cost
<b>Forest restoration</b> - begin replanting logged areas with climate resilient native trees, remove hazard trees, install protection for saplings and new trees from browsing deer, rough in connector trails to river and glades, identify areas for improved habitat for birds and pollinators	\$15,000
<b>Trail repair</b> - remove immediate hazard trees along trails, repair washouts and eroded areas along Girl Brook, remove brush and slash along former Cathedral Trail, kiosks and signage	\$35,000
<b>Invasive plant control</b> - buckthorn, honeysuckle and burning bush on border with golf course	\$18,000
<b>Entrance and Information Kiosk on Rope Ferry Road</b> - the closure of the Hanover Country Club has created the opportunity for a proper entrance and signage welcoming visitors to the park. Budget includes the design and construction of a stone wall flanking the trail entrance; kiosk with sign, map and seating; landscape design and initial plantings.	\$50,000
<b>Accessible Trail</b> - to ensure that Pine Park is welcoming and accessible for all, plans include an ADA-compliant trail (up to 2,100 feet depending on budget) that begins at the Rope Ferry Road entrance. The trail will have an even surface for easier walking and unrestricted movement of devices like wheelchairs and strollers. Budget includes site preparation, trail design and installation, and seating.	\$170,000
<b>Total Phase I Estimated Cost</b>	\$288,000

### Phase II - 2023

Activity	Estimated Cost
<b>Continued Forest Restoration</b> - continued planting and protection of saplings, complete connector trails, install log benches and view sites, planting for wildlife habitat	\$5,000

<b>Continued Trail Repair</b> - continued removal of hazard trees, erosion repair and brush removal	\$7,500
<b>Continued Invasive Species Control</b> – repeat on areas treated in 2022	\$12,000
<b>Continued Planting</b> - to finish the new Rope Ferry Road entrance with native trees and shrubs and begin planting edges that transition between the woods and the open grasslands	\$7,500
<b>Total Phase II Estimated Cost</b>	\$32,000

### Phase III - 2024 through 2028

Pine Park is a dynamic environment subject to the vicissitudes of heavy rains, insect damage, and ongoing impacts from invasive plants and trees. To maintain a high level of stewardship, the park requires additional resources to deal with future contingencies. We expect that the park's needs will vary by year, but that \$35,000 per year from 2024 through 2029 will help us in applying for grants so that we can sustain the health of the forest, act proactively to protect the trails, and expand efforts to naturalize the former golf course lands.

**Total Phase III Estimate Cost**                      \$175,000

### Partners

Dartmouth College and the Town of Hanover have been generous with funding and expertise. The Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service have provided grants for initial work. Technical support from Jim Kennedy, the Hanover Conservancy, and the Upper Valley Trails Alliance has also proved invaluable.

### About The Pine Park Association

Founded in 1906, The Pine Park Association (“PPA”) is one of the oldest non-profit organizations in New Hampshire. The organization is managed by an independent 14-member board of trustees drawn from the community, which includes representatives from the Town of Hanover and Dartmouth College. PPA's mailing address is Box 416, Hanover, NH 03755.

The Pine Park Association (EIN: 02-6010422) is a registered New Hampshire charitable organization (Registration # 15465) and is an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, qualified to receive tax deductible transfers or gifts. Donations in the form of marketable securities are welcome and may be transferred into a special account maintained with Ledyard Financial Advisors, 2 Maple Street, Hanover, NH 03755. Further information may be obtained from the Association website at [pinepark.org](http://pinepark.org) or from PPA's Treasurer, Bruce Atwood, at [bta@attewode.com](mailto:bta@attewode.com).

PPA has no paid staff and does not employ consultants in connection with its fund-raising, so 100% of gifts go to projects and operations of the organization. Further information on PPA's finances is contained in its 990-EZ return filed with the IRS.