

“We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.”

Native American Proverb



THE ACORN - A guide to **Smithfield Plantation**

Established – 1987 and preserved by town ordinance – 1989

Philosophy:

To create at Smithfield Plantation a place which enhances the opportunities for nature exploration, and education.

The Acorn is dedicated to Donald Dunn and Betty-Jo Wade because without them there never would have been a Smithfield Plantation!

History:

Smithfield Plantation was officially designated as a “special town resource” on April 1, 1989, but the unique value of this land has been recognized by far-sighted citizens since the 1970’s. Then Litchfield residents saw no need to set aside town forests since much of the town was still open space. However, by 1986 that concept had changed with an influx of development.

Smithfield’s 100+ acres were nearly sold until a Litchfield science teacher and a Litchfield school volunteer took a National Science foundation/Maine Audubon Society class promoting “More hands On Science in Our Schools”. Their efforts resulted in the “wild and crazy idea” of turning town forest into a nature/conservation center dedicated to advancing a hands-on science curriculum.

In 1987, with the help of local citizens, the Town Forest Committee, the Litchfield School Board, and the selectmen the idea was born. An ordinance in the spring of 1989 created a board of trustees and an official mandate for education, forest management, and conservation.

At first the Betit/Strout Trail, a loop trail, was used as an educational tool by local schools. Smithfield Plantation’s many attractions included: Mark’s Meadow, the natural amphitheater, the vernal pool, and a wide variety of flora and fauna.

In 2001 with the help of a grant and the Conservation Corps, a new walking trail was created. In 2008 a loop trail to the vernal pool was added as a conservation commission project. Smithfield Trustees also applied for and received a “Safari in a Box” from the Safari Club which is available for educational use.

In 2008 a forest management plan with tree inventory was completed by Two Trees Forestry. The Board of Trustees applied for and received a Project Canopy grant to assist with the cost

Activities:

Many local groups and organizations, such as the 4-H Clubs, Senior Citizens, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Eagles Scouts have used and improved the area, with various approved projects. Smithfield Plantation has thus become a favorite walking area of many local citizens and is used by the local schools in a variety of ways including workshops and annual Forestry Day, Vernal Pool Day, and Maine History Day.

**Take nothing but pictures;
Leave nothing but
footprints!**

Trustees:

Diane Clay

David Larrabee

Terry Tracy

Carol Smith

Elton Wade



**To contact the Smithfield Plantation Trustees – Litchfield Town Office
207-268-4721 www.litchfieldmaine.org**

