

In Yarmouth the Royal River's undeveloped shoreline and habitat is rapidly disappearing as our community grows. The Royal River's shoreline from East Elm street upriver to North Yarmouth still remains mostly undeveloped and naturally supports beavers, otters, deer, and a variety of bird species and distinct flora. This environment creates a surprisingly remote experience for paddling in the summer and skating, snowshoeing and skiing in the winter.

The Royal River Conservation Trust and the Town of Yarmouth are working in close partnership to raise the necessary funds to purchase 24 acres of riverfront land that is owned by Steve and Greg Dugas, Yarmouth residents. The Dugas riverfront property abuts the 22 acre Town-owned Hilda Barker Preserve and the 35 acre Town-owned Sligo Road Preserve directly across the Royal River. The connection of these preserves will create a corridor for trails and will protect one half mile of shoreline. This new Riverfront Woods Preserve creates a lush sanctuary that is also accessible from growing neighborhoods. These lands are part of a nearly 1,000 acre multi-town unfragmented habitat.

FAQ A Community Priority: According to the Town's Parks and Lands Committee, the Dugas riverfront property rates highly according to the Town's adopted open space vision, fits squarely with the Town's land acquisition priorities. The property aligns fully with the Royal River Conservation Trust's vision and goals. In the spring of 2017, both the Yarmouth Town Council and the Royal River Conservation Trust's board unanimously voted to work together to conserve the property.

FAQ Acreage, frontage, project structure:

- 24 acre Dugas riverfront: Planned town-owned, with RRCT conservation easement
- 22 acre Hilda Barker Preserve: Current town-owned, with planned RRCT conservation easement.
- 35 acre Sligo Road Preserve: Current town-owned, town dialog on trails, planned ballfields, other uses.
- 7.2 acre Dugas Open Space Lot (Subdivision). Planned town-owned.
- 700 shoreline feet river frontage (Dugas)
- One half mile shoreline river frontage (Sligo+Barker+Dugas)

FAQ: Wetlands, habitat, vernal pools: The Royal River's shoreline from East Elm street upriver to North Yarmouth still remains mostly undeveloped and naturally supports beavers, otters, deer, and a variety of bird species and distinct flora. This environment creates a surprisingly remote experience for paddling in the summer and skating, snowshoeing and skiing in the winter. The Dugas property includes a rich matrix of tributary streams, mature floodplain forests, six potential vernal pools, buffer zones for jurisdictional vernal pools on abutting properties, and beaver flowage.

FAQ Unfragmented habitat & regional habitat context: The Dugas property is part of a nearly 1000 acre multi-town unfragmented block (2015 data), one of the two largest remaining habitat areas connected to Yarmouth. The habitat is quickly eroding due to more than 23 units of residential development built, approved, or proposed-pending in recent years in Yarmouth alone, within this habitat block. The riparian habitat of this stretch of river is crucial because it connects

Casco Bay's significant habitat to some of southern Maine's most resilient riparian zones upriver, especially New Gloucester's Intervale and the cool forested stretches of the Middle Branch of the Royal River (Chandler Brook) in Pownal and Durham.

FAQ: Regionally Significant Public Access, Widely Promoted, Benefitting Maine

Businesses: The Riverfront Woods shoreline is part of one of greater Portland's most accessible fresh-water paddles, either for novice paddlers or for a twelve-mile flatwater round trip paddle. Hand-carry access ramps with parking in both Yarmouth (East Elm Street) and North Yarmouth (Route 9) allow for ample access for individuals, group trips, schools, guides, or events. On-site rental canoes (Yarmouth Community Services) increase the accessibility. LL Bean uses this stretch of river daily, for Outdoor Discovery School Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) classes, launching from East Elm Street. Due to proximity to population centers, the stretch of river is the most-viewed paddling site state-wide on MaineTrailFinder.com. This stretch of river is the premier segment of the Royal for paddlers, and promoted as part of the Royal River Water Trail. In the winter, when the ice is solid, this stretch of river is popular for skating, skiing, biking, snowmobiling, and more.

The land-based trails on the new Riverfront Woods Preserve will be accessible by public road, a short distance from Yarmouth's robust village sidewalk network, with a public parking lot and trailhead. The Dugas riverfront parcel acquisition creates the first-ever public access by land to the Barker Preserve, donated to the town with no available access in 2001.

FAQ Future management of the preserve and the conservation easement: The preserve will be owned and managed by the Town of Yarmouth. The Town Council and the town's Parks & Lands Committee, and their publicly drafted and publicly adopted management plans and policies and ordinances, will govern important future decisions. Our campaign will resist donor conditions or strings attached, although some funding sources like the Land for Maine's Future program require funder agreements such as "no development." The Conservation Easement to be held by the Royal River Conservation Trust will also guarantee "no development," the easement's terms will be drafted publicly with solid input from town committees and others. CMP has rights to manage the powerline corridor, but not to expand beyond 100' and 38KV. The Town will work with CMP on sensitive management.

FAQ Land management costs: Land management costs (eg, long-term trail management) will be provided by the Town of Yarmouth, supported by \$20,000 in our campaign budget. Some ancillary land management costs may be provided by the developer of the adjacent property, as required by the Planning Board (Access road construction, parking lot construction), but only if the development proceeds independent of the conservation acquisition.

FAQ Bridge across the river, and rail-with-trail: While proposals for a bridge or rail-with-trail may not happen in our lifetimes, and may not cross the Dugas riverfront parcel, this acquisition and its deeds-terms will not prohibit these proposals or future connecting trails, and will set the stage for future community visions.

FAQ Subdivision project is fully independent of new Preserve acquisition.

- Riverboat LLC (Dugas family members) today own both the riverfront lot (planned new addition to the Barker preserve) and also the East Elm Meadow lot (planned new subdivision.)
- Legally, all documents emphasize that the two projects (preserve expansion, and subdivision) are separate independent transactions. The preserve's option will be executed -- with access and parking rights -- even if the subdivision does not proceed. The subdivision can proceed even if the preserve acquisition fails.
- Dugas family members plan a \$135,000 donation toward the preserve expansion acquisition, while also separately meeting all Planning Board requirements for subdivision open space. The planned donation is a "discount sale," offering the land for \$135,000 less than the arm's-length independent appraised value.
- The subdivision concept plan proposes to provide public trail access from the subdivision (public street, public parking lot, and open space lot with public trails) to the Barker Preserve, whether or not the Dugas riverfront lot is acquired. Similarly (fail-safe), the new preserve would create access and parking rights for the public to get to the Barker Preserve, whether or not the subdivision advances.

FAQ Hunting and trapping: Hunting and trapping will be restricted by local ordinances. Local ordinances today limit firearms town-wide to shotguns and .22s for night-hunting raccoons. LMF funding (if received) allows hunting and trapping regulation by local ordinance. The adjacent Barker parcel has a deed restriction prohibiting hunting. Development of nearby and adjacent lots will make this neighborhood tighter, from a hunting perspective.

FAQ Railroad crossing: A new trail will cross the railroad line; the railroad line is owned by Maine DOT. There is an existing farm crossing. We are already working with MaineDOT to convert the existing farm crossing instead to a trail crossing.

FAQ CMP easement: The small powerline that crosses the Dugas riverfront. CMP holds an easement, which is limited by deed to 100 feet width, and limited to a 38KV line. The Town of Yarmouth's Parks & Lands Committee will work closely with CMP to maintain the powerline in partnership with maintenance goals of the new Preserve.

FAQ Historical and Cultural Context

- **JACOB R. PRATT HOMESTEAD FARM:** The Pratt family owned land in the North Road and Ledge Road area since before 1805. The family had been residents of Yarmouth (and the previous North Yarmouth) since at least the early 1770s when the first Pratt births were recorded. By 1871 there were at least 4 Pratt family farms on North Road, all near the junction with East Elm Street. In 1848 David Pratt and Jacob Pratt owned the now-Dugas parcel and sold a corridor to the railroad to allow railroad construction. The Dugas riverfront parcel was part of homestead farm of Jacob R. Pratt until 1895, then Eugene Pratt until 1927. Eugene Pratt owned the parcel in 1924 when a cattle underpass with "1924" carved in the keystone was built under the railroad.

- TURNER FAMILY OWNERSHIP (Dugas riverfront parcel): 1948 (Max and Ruth) to 2016 (Anne and Warren). (Book 1873, p 313)
- HILDA BARKER PRESERVE: Hilda Barker donated this parcel to the town in 2001. Her son Jim was one of the founders of the Friends of the Royal River (now Royal River Conservation Trust), founded in 1992. He was once the chairman of the Yarmouth Conservation Commission. The Barker family acquired the land from Helen Greenlaw in 1957, the same years as the Pole Yard fire (below).
- RIVERBOAT: The Dugas family's use of Riverboat, LLC, comes from a grandfather's family business Riverboat Electric.
- STEAMBOAT HOYT: Linc Merrill of the North Yarmouth Historical Society writes that Yarmouth businessmen Charles Russell and A. O. Sands built a small steamboat 35' long that could carry about 30 passengers, perhaps call the Hoyt, which in the early 1890s navigated this section of the Royal River between Yarmouth's East Elm Street and the Wescustogo House resort and springs in North Yarmouth.
- POLEYARD FIRE: A fire in 1957 originating at the CMP Pole Yard on the western bank of the Royal River burned some of the forest on the Barker parcel, according to Yarmouth's Open Space Guide. It may have also affected the forest on the Dugas parcel. The CMP powerline easement across the Dugas parcel was granted in 1956.
- SAINT LAWRENCE & ATLANTIC (GRAND TRUNK) RAILROAD. The railroad was proposed and built beginning in the 1844, and began operating in 1853. The Pratt's sold rights to cross the now-Dugas parcel in 1848. The railroad was the vision of John Alfred Poor of Portland and Andover, Maine, brother of the founder of Standard & Poor's. Grand Trunk's president Charles Melville Hays died on the Titanic in 1912. The former headquarters of Grand Trunk, in Portland's Old Port, is now a flagship office building of Gorham Savings Bank. The railroad line between Portland and Auburn (though Yarmouth) was acquired by the State of Maine around 2000. Freight service to the last customer (B&M Baked Beans) was discontinued in 2015. The line has been recently studied as a possible route for passenger rail or commuter light rail service to Lewiston-Auburn, or Montreal.
- WABANAKI NAMES: One Wabanaki name for the river Pumgustuck means "falls river." The Wabanaki name "Wescustogo" includes the tidal section of the river, meaning "muddy."
- IMPOUNDMENT & DAMS: The first dam and mill was built at East Elm Street's "Fourth Falls" in 1759 to power an iron refinery. The dam's impoundment reaches the Riverfront Woods Preserve, and continues upriver beyond Route 9 in North Yarmouth.

CASE STATEMENT:

Getting it right (neighborhood): During the campaign, we will strengthen the neighborhood and the community by creating long-term support of the new preserve and getting the neighborhood and the larger community fully invested in this new community asset. We plan to help this growing neighborhood embrace change, and embrace this new preserve as a some they have invested in, and will continue to invest in.

Getting it right (stewardship and habitat): During the campaign, we will lay the groundwork for exemplary stewardship of the preserve, inviting and recording neighborhood and community input, and ecological information, and engaging decision-makers during project development phases. The RRCT conservation easement will be supported with financial reserves from the campaign. Budgets and schedules and advocacy for municipal stewardship (trails, more) will be integrated with acquisition plans and budgets.

Getting it right (Community cohesion, conservation momentum): With unanimous spring 2017 votes of the Yarmouth Council on this acquisition, and with an exceptional landowner donation kicking off our private campaign, we will continue to set the stage for community cohesion and momentum toward strategic conservation of priority habitat and open spaces in Yarmouth.

We will also create momentum and partnerships upriver in North Yarmouth and beyond protecting multi-town habitat corridors along the Royal River Water Trail. (Royal River Habitat Trail).

A strong private campaign for necessary funds will create momentum and models for future projects, and project stewardship. We will set the stage for future public and private investments on conservation, and the care of conserved properties.

CASE STATEMENT FINE PRINT:

- RRCT will receive private charitable donations, accounting for all donations and bringing funds to the closing to acquire new municipal land. Some donors may choose a direct donation to the town. RRCT and the town will work hand-in-hand to administer governmental funds. Transparency and accountability and teamwork is our mutual commitment.
- The town plans to grant to RRCT a Conservation Easement atop both the Barker parcel and the Dugas parcel, at closing. RRCT's board-designated long-term stewardship costs for conservation easement administration are included in the campaign budget. (Note: RRCT's board, per protocol, has not yet voted on this easement budget.)
- RRCT is continuously raising funds for its revolving RRCT Land Acquisition Reserve Fund (LARF), using this project as one illustration, and will bring new funds to this project from that fund from some donors/foundations who don't have a Yarmouth-specific focus.

- RRCT and the Town will seek funding from highly competitive and recently unpredictable state and federal conservation programs, while simultaneously raising private funds. We may raise more funds than our project budget as a result of aiming high on state and federal funds. If we exceed our initial revenue budget:
 - i. RRCT will create and maintain a Yarmouth sub-account in RRCT's Land Acquisition Reserve Fund, to support additional phases or stages of the project.
 - ii. We will track carefully funding sources or donors who require that their funds go specifically to the Dugas parcel, or who request any other specific conditions of donation or award.
 - iii. We will transparently share progress reports between project partners. We will adjust and track budgets including estimates of absorbed (off-budget) municipal expenses such as land management.

- If for unforeseen reasons the project fails, RRCT and the Town will reach out to all donors offering to return unspent funds, or to invite re-direction of the donations.