



## **Belknap Range Conservation Coalition**

**2018 Annual Report (October  
2017 to October 2018)**

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; 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 monthly at the Gilman Museum in Alton. The monthly 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. At the annual meeting in October 2018, the current officers, Chairperson-Russ Wilder, Vice-Chairperson-Bruce Jacobs, Secretary-Lisa Morin and Treasurer-Nanci Mitchell, were reappointed.

On April 22nd – Earth Day - BRCC members along with volunteers from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), helped to clean up the trails on Mount Major. An information table was set up to inform hikers of conservation organizations' work to conserve and steward land in the Belknaps. These organizations included member organizations of BRCC - SPNHF; Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT); Belknap County Sportsmen's Association; Belknap Range Trail Tenders (BRATTS); and the New England Forestry Foundation (NEFF).

On August 25th, BRCC, along with LRCT, conducted a 5-mile hike on Piper and Belknap Mountains. Russ Wilder, BRCC Chairperson and LRCT Trustee, lead 13 participants on this moderate/strenuous hike and shared his knowledge of the historic and natural heritage of this area. We were joined by BRCC member Matt Tarr, PhD, Associate Extension Professor-Wildlife Specialist UNH Cooperative Extension Service. Matt helped us understand the ecology of the forest types we were hiking through and identified plants along the way.

Other activities/items of interest include:

- Don Hughes continued as Webmaster to maintain the website ([belknaprang.org](http://belknaprang.org)) and has been doing a great job.
- Assisted with Stewardship issues and working with the BRATTS who have volunteered time to work on trail rebuilding and maintenance.

- Supported the Forest Society at the Annual Earth Day event in April and assisted with the Society's Mount Major Outdoor Classroom (MMOC) for elementary and middle school students.



Russ Wilder Photo

*Fourth Graders and Chaperones from Little Harbor Middle School, Portsmouth, enjoy lunch on the top of Mount Major as part of SPNHF's Mount Major Outdoor Classroom on October 5, 2018*

BRCC continues to monitor management activities on the newly acquired parcels and we continue to pursue additional conservation possibilities in the Belknap Range. Columbus Day weekend was again extremely busy this year. Mount Major continues to be one of the most hiked mountains in New Hampshire. BRCC, in conjunction with the Forest Society and LRCT, is helping to implement a management plan that will improve the outdoor experience on the acquired parcels and to address impacts to the trail system that has seen so much heavy use over all these years.

For more information on the BRCC, please contact the Belknap 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