

# Collaborations Beyond the Classroom: Partnerships between ALPINE and RCPs

Session 2E – Amphitheater  
2017 RCP Network Gathering

**Speakers:** Bob Heiser, J.T. Horn, Marianne Jorgensen, Adair Mulligan, Philip Nyhus, Sarah Wells, Jim Wooster

**Moderator:** James Levitt

## Opening

- New England houses great potential for the contributions of academics to land conservation
  - High density of higher education institutions
  - Also oldest institutions
- Presentation will be broken down from perspectives of students, staff, faculty, administration, alumni, and community members

## Overview of ALPINE – Marianne Jorgensen

- ALPINE began out of W&W vision with the idea of creating a network of academics to pull in constituents for land conservation
- Began with 20 individuals in NE
- Different audiences at different colleges, important to engage each in individual ways
- Last meeting moved into formulating task forces – student; faculty & staff; alumni/admin; RCPs
- Website as an eventual place for resources and tools to use
- Deliverables of task forces (this year):
  - Students: ALPINE summer institute; online land cons. internship job board; work with student organizations
    - 2017 ALPINE Summer Institute – 2 weekends, internship
  - Faculty and staff: sharing of materials; highlighting on website; forums
  - Alum/admin: case studies; green rankings of schools
  - RCP: identify colleges involved; forums

## Sarah Wells, MASS Lift program and Mt. Grace Land Trust

- AmeriCorps
  - Statewide program to increase the pace of conservation in Massachusetts
  - Recruitment on college campuses
  - RCPs can host AmeriCorps members and TerraCorps is in development
- Formal internships
  - Stewardship internships and social media internships at Mt. Grace Land Trust
  - New England graduate students - service learning program orchestrated by TerraCorps members

### **Philip Nyhus, Colby College professor**

- Gateways to access institutions to access these long-term faculty
- Target: Operationalize ways in which faculty can be partners with land conservation organizations
- Examples –
  - Faculty research (applied and foundational)
  - Collaboration of faculty and partners from long-term relationships (Belgrade region partnership at Colby; research collaborations with Maine Lakes Resource Center MLRC)
  - Faculty mobilizing institutions to acquire land and incentivize resources
  - Opportunities to host and facilitate meetings like RCP and ALPINE (students as catalysts for large landscape conservation)
- Current student work:
  - Economic impact assessment of area around Appalachian Trail
  - Studies of Kennebec as a large landscape area

### **Bob Heiser, Vermont Land Trust and Bread Loaf Conservation Project**

- Long history of parcel with Middlebury College
  - Cultural, ecological, and recreational importance
  - Middlebury College sold some of the land during the Great Depression due to the significant financial requirements
  - Emerging from the “Great Recession” there was a need to convince funders that the college asset was threatened
- Middlebury created Bread Loaf Conservation Project
- Process:
  - Rapid ecological assessments
  - Identification of all conservation values
  - Brainstorming with staff, board, and partners
  - Vermont Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy partnership
- Importance of Middlebury Administration
- Project outcomes:
  - Conservation of 2,100 acres
  - Donation of conservation easement to Vermont Land trust by Middlebury College
  - Preservation fund is created by Moore Charitable Trust Contribution
  - Middlebury matches from endowment
- Keys to success:
  - Existing and new relationships – perspective from educational community
  - Early collaboration
  - Existing information about land from faculty and students
  - Commitment
- Could this be used as a potential model?
- Supporters that have attachment to an institution can participate; endowment/management of land and conservation go hand in hand

### **Adair Mulligan, Hanover Conservancy**

- About the conservancy:
  - Private, non-profit membership organization
  - Independent of the town of Hanover
- Projects in which conservancy and college collaborated/co-funded:
  - Mink Brook Nature Preserve
  - Hudson Farm
- Involvement with Dartmouth College:
  - Student research on lands
  - Staff on campus – campus planners, real estate office,
  - Administration – access for public to water supply lands (owned 50/50 by town and college)

### **Jim Wooster, Dartmouth alum**

- Many colleges are large landowners and alumni can serve as a bridge between conservation organizations and colleges
- Land trusts can contact college alum as an entrypoint to the larger institution

### **J.T. Horn, Trust for Public Land**

- Intersection of town/college relationships with conservation of farm property
- Property owned by Dartmouth College and treated as a financial asset of the institution, not a part of the campus
  - Therefore, if the college wanted/needed to sell the property, it would need to be disposed of at fair market value – duty of college as part of endowment
- Emphasis on community relations – Dartmouth wanted fair market value and to sell, but were not willing to sacrifice public perception - needed to look good selling
- Wrote letter from municipality to federal government asking them to acquire more land in Hanover
- Letter was leveraged to say protecting property not to benefit college, or Appalachian Trail, but for federal government to invest in municipal objective

### **Closing Advice**

- Advice when working with a college/educational institution: think like businessperson with regards to money and community relations (how appearances will work out) and make the two work together
- Advice to RCP: get alumni involved (i.e. on board of land trust)
- Advice for faculty and RCP relationships: To overcome disconnect between faculty and staff and RCPs rely on face to face conversation or phone calls to get paid interns and research students
- Advice to RCPs to acquire interns: don't always think locally when considering institutions and consider different points of contact (i.e. career services office)