

UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Trails for everyone

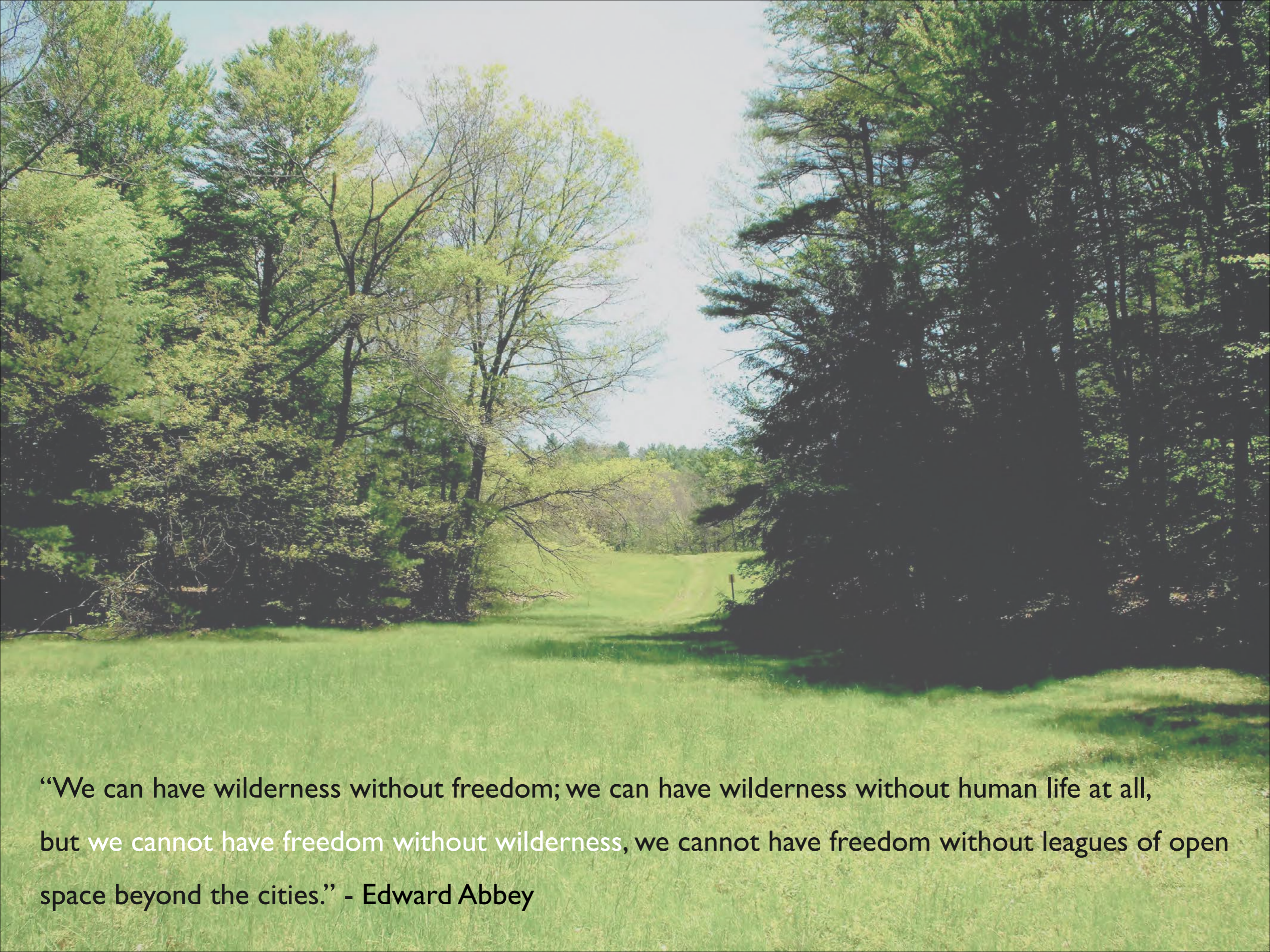
April 1, 2014

Charles (Chaz) Southard

A photograph of a wooden boardwalk path winding through a dense forest. The path is made of wooden planks and has a low wooden railing on one side. The trees are tall and thin, with a thick canopy of leaves. The lighting is soft and diffused, suggesting an overcast day or a shaded forest. The overall tone is natural and serene.

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“We can have wilderness without freedom; we can have wilderness without human life at all, but we cannot have freedom without wilderness, we cannot have freedom without leagues of open space beyond the cities.” - Edward Abbey

OVERVIEW

- What is UA?
- Inclusive
- Healthy
- Sustainable



Universal Access provides freedom.

DESIGN

- Design is a goal oriented process aimed at finding a solution.
- Designers focus on creating the best experience possible for the user.
- Universal Design is an approach to a better user experience and if done properly should not even be noticed.



WHAT IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN?

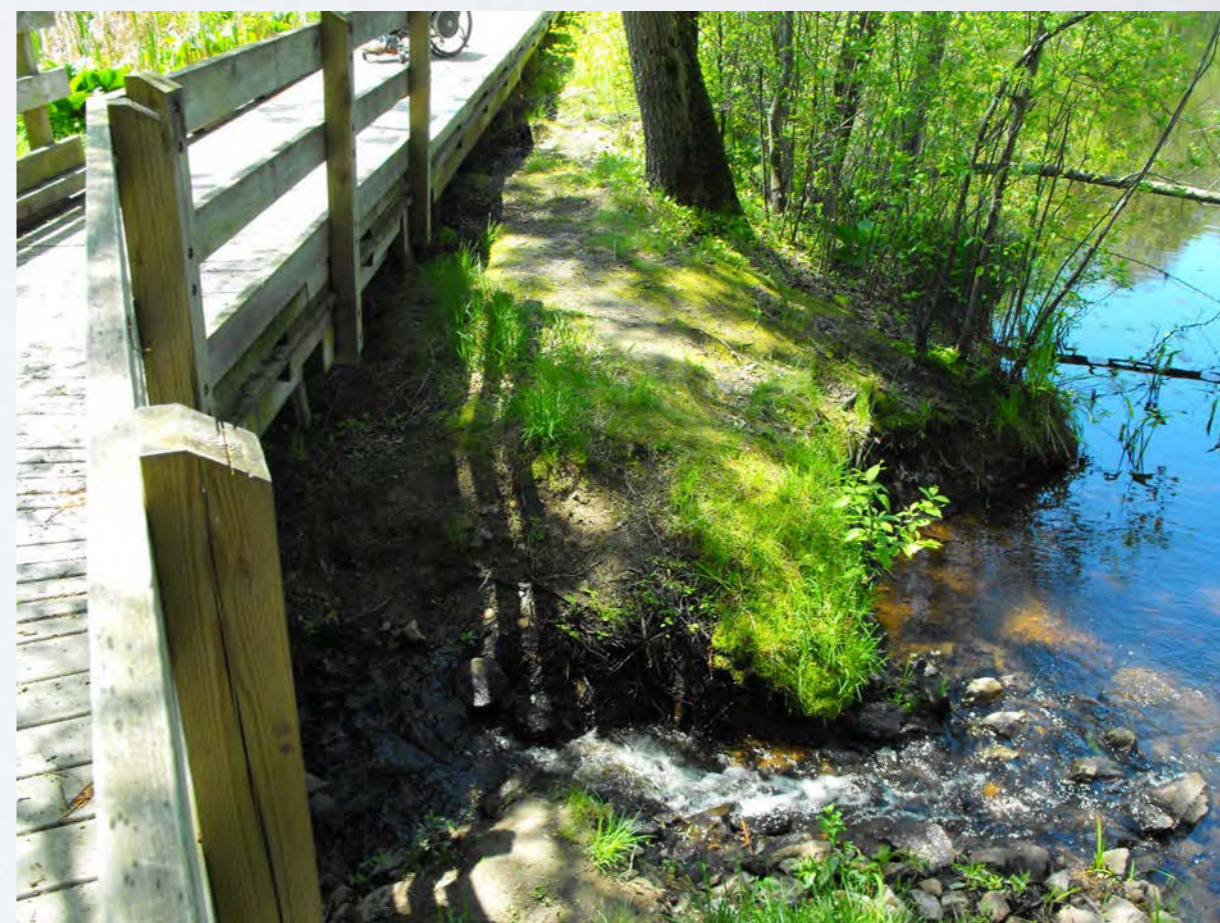
- Universally designed places, products, and programs inherently offer access, use, or participation to the greatest number of people, regardless of their level of ability.
- Barriers that exist for some people may be completely invisible, unless you know what to look for.
- Example: Curb cuts- everyone uses them from bikes, walkers, grocery carts, wheelchairs, wheeled carts and strollers. They provide access to and from the sidewalk.
- Including UA into the design of buildings and trails provides an inclusive mechanism for all people so they can share their experiences with friends and family.



WHO USES UA TRAILS?

- Daily Walkers
- Families
- Anyone w/o hiking boots
- Dogs
- Elderly
- People w/ injuries from ACL to illnesses like Heart Disease
- Mobility Impaired



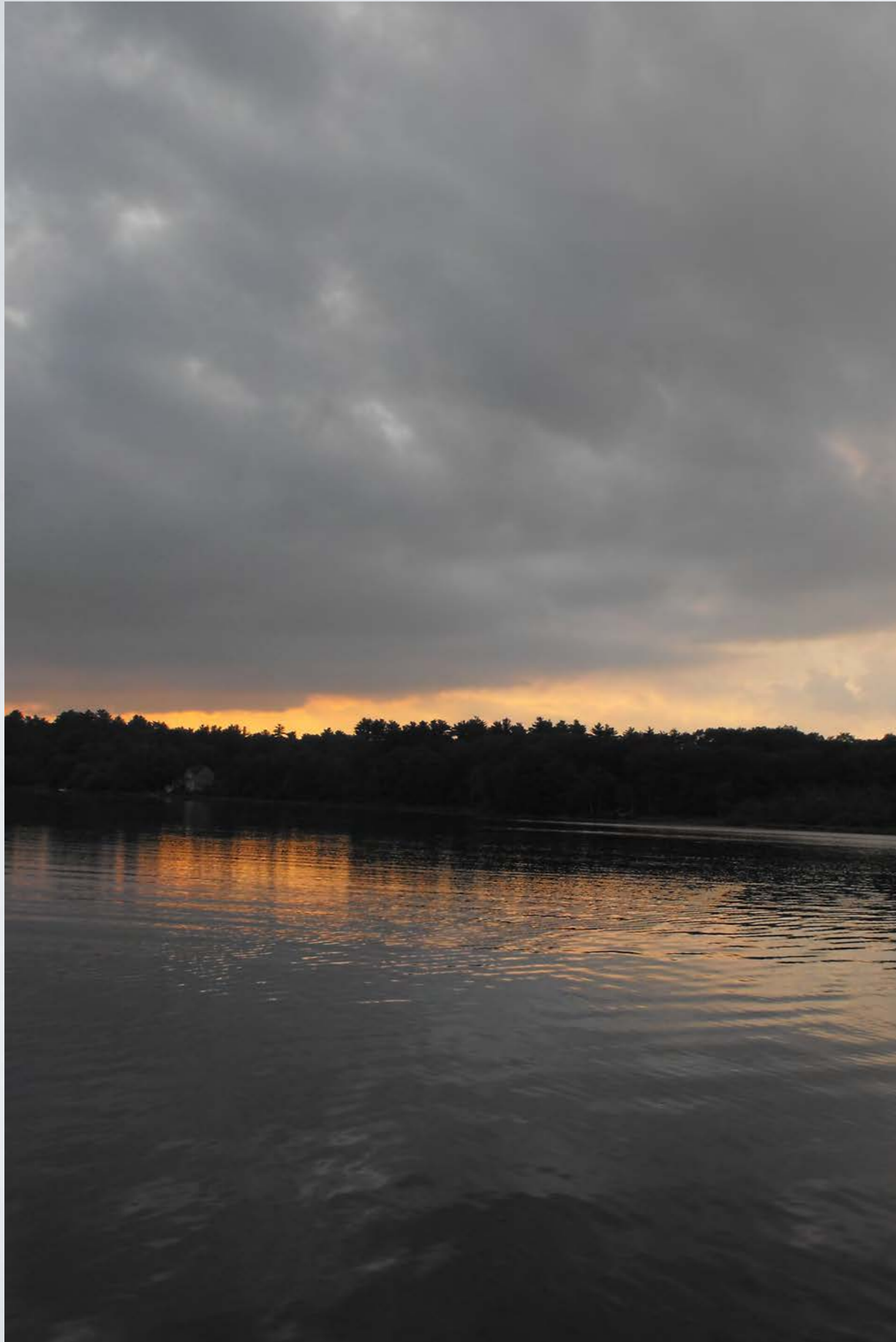




CONSULTING

- Serves as a consulting advisor to the Statewide Project Manager, ADA Task Force, and other staff as appropriate, including field superintendents.
- Helps to develop policies, guidelines or practices relating to universal access (this may involve researching, drafting or reviewing documents, and helping to pilot or evaluate practices).
- Conducts site visits with staff to assess universal access potential so as to deepen staff awareness of how our properties may be experienced by visitors with mobility disabilities and to identify ways to make our properties more welcoming. This includes evaluating signage, property entrances and kiosks to provide perspective.
- Prepares written follow-up reports on site visits, with recommendations on issues and potential actions. Often these reports include photographs that illustrate his experience on the property, adding to their value as learning tools for staff.
- Helps review planned field projects to make properties more universally accessible.
- Works with staff to identify and evaluate trails, pathways, carriage roads, fire roads and farm roads to make them more universally accessible.
- Provides feedback about The Trustees' website and other communication vehicles.
- Helps to identify useful web information for staff involved with universal access issues.
- Represents The Trustees informally to other organizations to help broaden our network and share information.

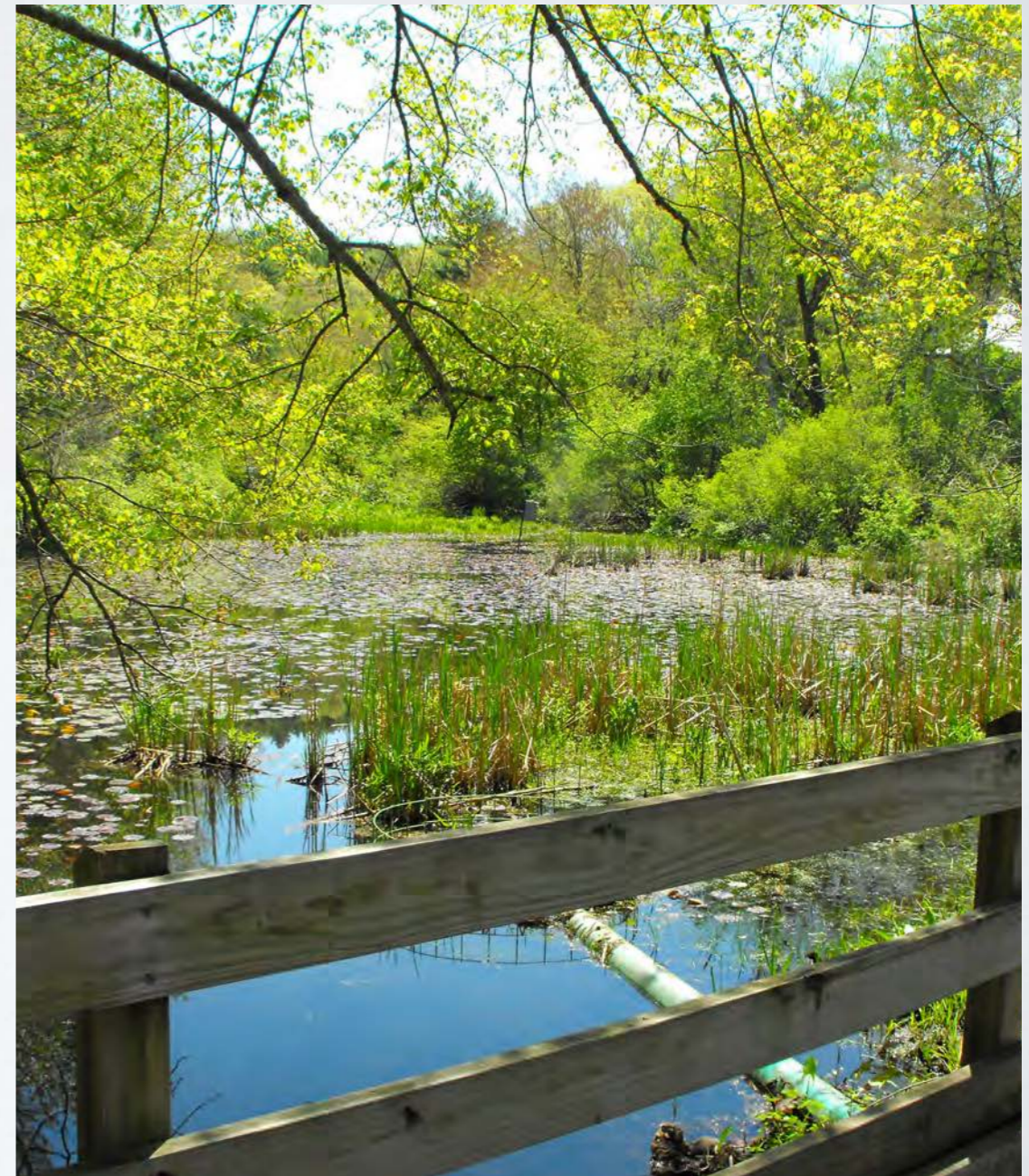




ACCESS & HEALTH

Restorative Effects of Nature

- Nature provides a doorway to healing through evolutionary and psychological principles.
- Promotes sustainable practices and aspects of health psychology.
- Studies indicate that a relationship to the earth, foster sustainable practices (recycling, food consumption, human – animal relationships).
- Stronger relationships to nature positively influences our relationships with others.







- Nature reduces stress.
- We view ourselves in a broader perspective.
- Research shows that we enter different state of consciousness. This is liberation
- Clinical neurology has identified directed attention as being in the prefrontal cortex. 99% of our day we are in this state and this can lead to states and stress and tension.
- Practicing psychologists find that entering the natural world leads to greater awareness, emotional responsiveness and the ability to heal and engage with others.
- Stepping outside provides a multi-sensory space where one is free in comparison to a static office.

SUSTAINABLE

- Sustainability has many facets, including environmental, social and economic sustainability.
- Sustainable trails minimize trail impacts on the surrounding environment.
- Trail users of all abilities benefit from and contribute to the social sustainability of the trail.
- A broader spectrum of trail users builds more public support for the trail.
- Sustainable trail design ensures a high probability of compliance with the proposed recreation trail accessibility guidelines.
- Sustainable trails are also better from an economic perspective because of the decreased costs for maintenance and environmental protection.

AmericanTrails.com



GOAL: KEEP USERS ON THE TRAIL

- In New England, many of our woodland trails follow old routes from farm and timber operations.
- The trails were not designed for long-term recreational use. This often results in trails that require high levels of maintenance and do not fully protect environmental and cultural resources.
- Sadly, they fail to provide the most positive user experiences.
- Users who leave the trail tread, they widen it, create braided trails, and create social trails. environmental damage and raise maintenance costs.
- Users leave the trail when it becomes eroded or wet, or when the trail does not meet their needs or expectations.







Informational sign with text and a logo.

Dog Walkers

Informational sign with text.

CORE ELEMENTS OF A SUSTAINABLE TRAIL

- Designing and developing sustainable trails is the key to a successful trail system.
- The core elements of a sustainable trail are that it:
 - **Protects the environment**
 - **Meets user needs and expectations**
 - **Requires little maintenance**



UA IS A PROACTIVE SOLUTION

- Sustainable trails and trail systems must meet different users' needs and expectations.
- If they do not, users may abandon the trails and / or create their own, less sustainable trails.
- Ultimately, a sustainable trail design will most often be a trail that connects desired control points by roughly contouring along the sides of slopes.



DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- A UA trail will lead users to desired destinations such as water features, historic sites, vistas, interesting landforms and user facilities; while avoiding wet areas, steep slopes, critical habitats, and other culturally or environmentally sensitive areas.
- Design trails to avoid runoff.
- Erosion is the number one problem for sustainable trails. It damages trails, is expensive to repair and diminishes the user experiences.
- In New England, water is the primary erosive force. Trails that collect water or channel water will be both environmentally and economically unsustainable.

WHERE TO BEGIN

- What are the places that are available?
- How do we keep existing spaces, redesign and make them both sustainable and user-friendly?
- Keep it simple (old fire roads, gardens, bike paths).
- Bradley Palmer is an exemplary site.



TRUSTEES' SHOWCASE

- Three project phases – 1.25 new UA trail that Doyle Community Park.
- 75% funded through grants.
- Project goals: demonstrating community support, integrating schools and educating individuals and organizations, the value of corporate partnership with stewardship goals.
- Volunteer Days included Boys and Girls Club, trail stewards, and many other committee members from surrounding towns and cities
- Achieving a broader vision of connecting people to the land
- Bringing awareness and celebrating success. The Trustees' expected completion of the UA Trail this spring. That is just one measure of our success for this project as a whole.
- The project's long-term success will be determined by our ability to (1) bring awareness and promote the unique opportunities this new trail system offers our visitors and (2) find creative outlets, such as events, day use activities, and others that help us achieve our overarching goals of increased visitor traffic over time.

DOYLE COMMUNITY TRAIL



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)



(E)

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- (A) Base grade preparation
 - (B) Completed trail segment
 - (C) Install of finish material
 - (D) 24' bridge over retention basin weir (located adjacent to trailhead/visitor parking lot)
 - (E) Viewing platform overlooking pond on estate grounds

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Design & Develop trails.
- Engage local community and businesses.
- Collaborate to secure grants.
- Create a website for Massachusetts-based UA trails.
- Questions, comments & thoughts?

CONNECT

Healthy Heart Trails connect families and individuals to the great outdoors and promote a healthy lifestyle through active recreation.

Trails are the heart of our parks. DCR invites everyone to make them the heart of healthy living.

COMMIT

Find a trail near you and commit to a regular exercise routine. Each trail is identified by a green heart symbol.



A Healthy Heart Trail is an easy to moderate walk approximately 1.5 miles long that is free, fun and fitness friendly.

CHECK IT OUT

See the map inside this brochure and discover more than 70 Healthy Heart Trails throughout Massachusetts. Review the trail information, including length in miles, degree of difficulty and trail starting point. Download the tracking chart at www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/hht/ to calculate your progress. Join the list serve to receive Healthy Heart Trail updates and tips.

COME ON!

Set a goal

Whether you are walking for stress relief, physical health or just to be outside, it all adds up to improving the quality of your life.

Make a plan

Select a Healthy Heart Trail nearby and schedule a "regular" time to walk.

Wear proper clothing and sturdy footwear

Wear walking/hiking shoes. Dress in layers, and don't forget to use sunscreen, sunglasses and a hat.

Drink water and bring a snack

Drink before, during and after your walk. Remember to bring a healthy snack such as a Cascadian Farm Granola Bar or Lärabar.

Be safe

Walking with a friend is fun and motivating.

Track your success

Use a pedometer to measure your progress.

Celebrate your accomplishment!

Plan a reward for yourself when you reach a certain goal.

