

Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust names New Bedford's Nicholas Wildman as new leader

The Board of Directors of the Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust (DNRT) today announced the appointment of Nicholas Wildman as Executive Director, effective July 18. Wildman, a New Bedford resident, has more than 15 years of leadership and project management experience at the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), a unit of the Commonwealth's Department of Fish and Game. Wildman will succeed Dexter Mead who is retiring from the position after 18 years.

"Nick Wildman opens a new chapter in the 50-year story of DNRT's effort to preserve and protect Dartmouth's natural resources forever" said DNRT Board President Andrew Mellgard. "He brings a passionate commitment to DNRT's mission and the important connection between land and people. He and his wife have raised their children hiking the trails of Destruction Brook Woods and the Ridge Hill Reserve, and he regularly runs our trails."

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Dartmouth Natural Resources Trust photo.

As the leader of DER's Dam Removal Practice Area, Wildman has been the lead on two dozen dam removal projects across the state, working with landowners, farmers, local governments, conservation groups and other state agencies to achieve a vision for restoring rivers, streams and wetlands. As a project manager he has coordinated aquatic habitat restoration projects of statewide and regional importance in partnership with federal, state and local organizations. Wildman also represented DER on the Narragansett Bay Estuary Project's

Steering Committee from 2014 to 2021, including three years as Vice-Chair.

“His work in planning complex projects and building and nurturing diverse partnerships will serve DNRT well,” Mellgard added.

“DNRT is a big part of why Dartmouth is such an amazing place to live, farm and appreciate the natural surroundings that make this such a special part of the South Coast,” Wildman said. “I share DNRT’s passion for Dartmouth’s natural treasures and am honored to be joining a dedicated and accomplished team.”

Mead, who announced his retirement in April, plans to work closely with Wildman, the Board and staff through August 26 to ensure a smooth transition. Under Mead’s leadership, DNRT has protected more than 1,500 acres of land and added more than 16 miles of hiking trails, while more than doubling the organization’s membership. He led the effort to build a new headquarters at Helfand Farm in 2016.

“Dexter’s leadership of DNRT and his collaboration with our local environmental partners and the Town of Dartmouth have been key to land protection, habitat preservation, outdoor recreational opportunities, and respect for our shared landscape,” Mellgard said.

Wildman has a graduate degree in Environmental Management from Duke University and an undergraduate degree from the University of Maine at Machias. He is a Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner. He and his wife and two children live in New Bedford.