



36 Foxbrook Road
East Hartland, CT 06027
860.653.3916

February 21, 2007

Granby Land Trust
C/O Rick Orluk
106 Higley Rd.
Granby, Ct. 06035

Dear Land Trust members,

Every artist has a time in their career when they can create a masterwork, every musician a magnum opus, every poet an epic work to stir the reader's soul. An arborist's life is a little different. We can't take any credit for the trees we care for, just for the way we care for them. The sense of artistic accomplishment, however, is surely similar when a tree of the caliber of the Dewey Oak is entrusted to one's care. It gives me great pleasure to donate my time to care for this truly awesome specimen and I want to thank the Land Trust and it's many generous members for the opportunity.

Arborworks would like to gratefully acknowledge the help of our great friends from Arbor Services of Washington Depot and the thoroughly professional crew and equipment that came out to help work on the old oak on a spectacular February day. Steve Banffy is an ISA certified arborist from Kent, and Jesse Van Wy is an arborist in training from New Preston. Bill and Joslynn Pollack have run Arbor Services like a well oiled machine for over twenty years and we appreciate their generous contribution of man and machine. It's been our pleasure to have collaborated with them on special projects for over twenty years.

Considering the size and evidently great age of the tree, it is in relatively good health. It has suffered in the last few years from a combination of stresses that, if left unchecked, could eventually strain the plant beyond it's ability to rebound. I don't see cause for alarm at this time. Consider the age old aphorism from England concerning White oak: 200 years growing, 200 years living, 200 years dying. In continued ideal conditions, the Dewey oak may well be merely middle aged. What follows is a laundry list of things done and yet to do to prolong the tree's life.

Anthrachnose of the leaves was treated in 2006 with successive fungicide applications. Proper sanitation included raking the leaves and disposing of them away from the root system, as the causal agent of anthrachnose can be reintroduced by proximity and wildlife. Fungicide applications are advisable for the coming growing season, as fungicides are preventive, not curative.

The tree's root system received a carefully calibrated application of low nitrogen fertilizer

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in late summer Of '06, along with a product called Bio-Pak which contains organic humectants and live mycorrhizal fungi that help affix nitrogen to the root nodules. I don't recommend fertilizing again for at least two years, possibly more. Care must be taken not to upset the tree's natural state. Over-stimulation of a mature plant can be extremely stressful in the long run.

Drought is always of great concern and should be mitigated whenever necessary by liberally watering by hand. If a high volume tank is employed, it is essential that no herbicides have EVER been used in it, as they are persistent and WILL harm the tree. A good soaking every few days during periods of drought will help the plant fend off other stresses.

The entire crown has been cleaned as of today of large, obvious deadwood down to a diameter of approximately 1/2 inch. No live limbs have been removed. Two of the dead limbs were approximately 10" in diameter. It is my opinion that a light hand is best when caring for an old tree or any other old living thing for that matter. The tree didn't need people heavily pruning it for a couple of centuries to attain it's current size and it doesn't need "thinning" now.

Two new support cables have been installed. One reinforces an existing cable in the leader arching over Day Street, the other helps support the largest leader growing to the North. Both cables use EHS cable of 5/16 diameter with a tensile strength of 11,200 pounds. The cable end terminations are of my own design, are ANSI compliant and have proven stronger than the cable itself in certified break tests. They are state of the art, allowing for a smaller diameter hole for installation. This disrupts less cambium, promoting faster over-growth of the wound site. More info can be found at ENDZ.BIZ. The cables are designed to be as unobtrusive as possible.

The police department has passed along concerns voiced by some truck drivers that the limb over Day Street is getting lower. The cables prevent that from happening, but technically speaking, the limb is getting lower due to the process of forming annual rings. The rate of growth is very slow, probably on the order of 1/8" to 1/4" per year. Pruning off a limb of this size would be detrimental to the tree. It would remove a substantial portion of the crown that would surely negatively affect the root system which would subsequently negatively affect more of the crown. In addition, removing the limb over the road would create a large wound site on the main stem, creating an ideal entry point for decay fungi that would certainly weaken the tree structurally. I recommend a discussion begin to consider relocating the road a few feet to the west in order to maintain the minimum clearance for passing trucks.

Parked cars along the road on the root mass has successfully been addressed by the placement of boulders along the shoulder. Kudos to the town crew for their artistic placement. A parking area well away from the root zone would be an ideal solution for the tree's many admirers who may not realize that they may be parking on some roots when they pull their cars off the road to take in the tree's splendor.

The
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Road salt should not be used for a few hundred feet in either direction, as even the salt spray mist off tires could be harmful to the roots and buds, even in winter.

The area around the base would benefit from once or twice annual mowing, preferably by hand with a weed wacker. Cultivated grasses such as fescue should not be encouraged in the root zone, as it competes rather successfully for water and water borne nutrients. The coarse hay grass present is preferable.

That about covers it for now. I will continue to monitor the tree as I have and make recommendations as necessary in the future. Thanks again for the opportunity to give a little something back to the community in such an enjoyable and rewarding way. As many of you already know, I grew up just down the street from this tree and so have a special place in my heart for it.

Sincerely,



R. Brian Watkins
Ct. arborist license 62380