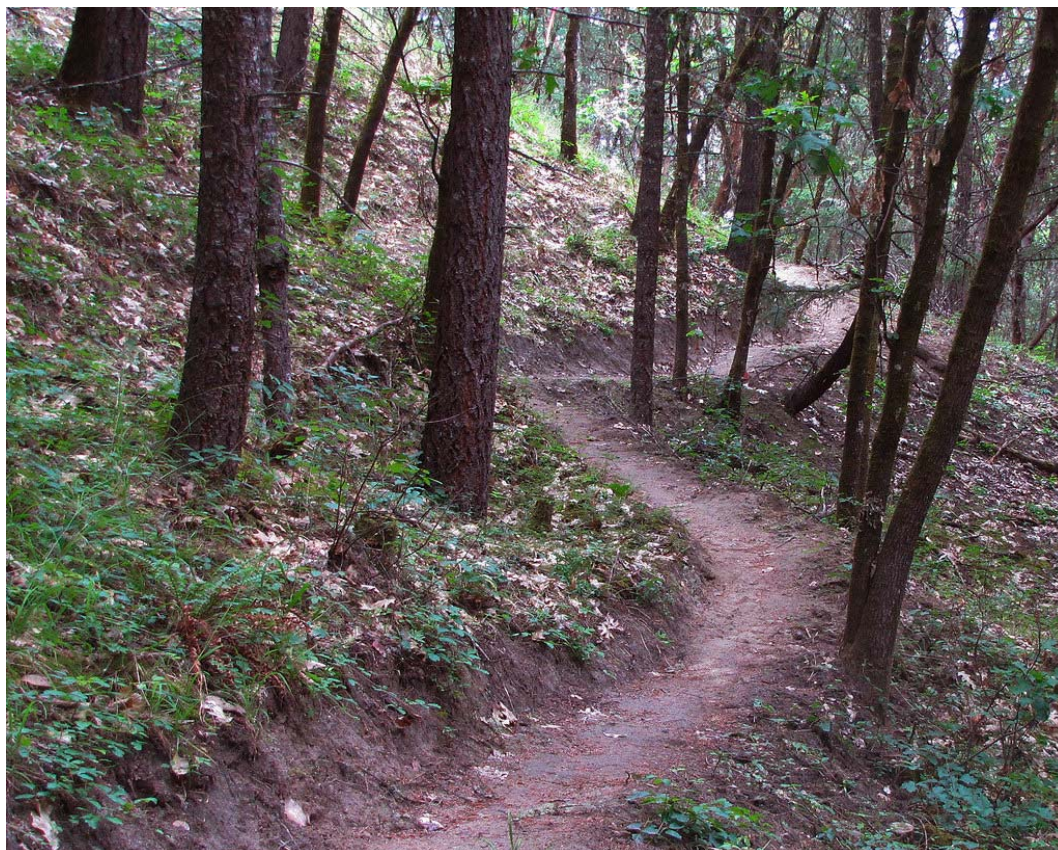


CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS REPORT 2023

includes:



- ✓ Lists of Conservation Commission Contacts in NH & VT
- ✓ Reports of Conservation Commissions 2022 Activities
- ✓ UVLT Staff Directory
- ✓ Conservation Easements – Frequently Asked Questions

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LAND TRUST

19 Buck Road, Hanover, NH 03755
603-643-6626 / www.UVLT.org

CONSERVATION COMMISSION CONTACTS - NH

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions

Barbara Richter, 54 Portsmouth St, Concord, NH 03301 / 603-224-7867 / barbara@nhacc.org

Bath

Bruce Barnum, barnumtumosa@myfairpoint.net

Canaan

Bill Chabot / bill.chabot@gmail.com

Charlestown

Richard Holmes / rlholmes46@comcast.net

Claremont

Gary Dickerman / gdman411@gmail.com

Cornish

Corey Fitch / conservationcommission@cornishnh.net

Dorchester

Sherman Hallock / shermanhallock@msn.com

Enfield

Jerold Theis / j.h.theisdvm@gmail.com

Grafton

Frank Neufell, Prescott Hill Road, Grafton, NH 03240

Grantham

David D. Wood / cadawood@comcast.net

Hanover

Vicki Smith / vicki.smith@hanovernh.org

Haverhill

Kaytee Currie-Huggard / conservation@haverhill-nh.com

Lebanon

Mark Goodwin / mark.goodwin@lebanonnh.gov

Lyme

Blake Allison / conservation@lymenh.gov

Newport

Stanley Hannum / ASK@NewportNH.net

Orange

Dorothy Heinrichs / nhdorothy@gmail.com

Orford

Edmund Cooley / conservation@orfordnh.us

Piermont

Helga Mueller / rabenest@myfairpoint.net

Plainfield

David Grobe / pcc@plainfieldnh.org

Unity

Stan Rastallis / stanrastallis@gmail.com

CONSERVATION COMMISSION CONTACTS – VT

Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions

c/o VLCT, 89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602 / 802-828-5067 / vtconservation@gmail.com

Bradford

Nancy Jones / npj.4251@gmail.com

Corinth

Glynn Pellagrino / glynnpellagrino@tops-tele.com

Hartford

Matt Osborn / mosborn@hartford-vt.org

Hartland

Rob Anderegg / ccommission@hartlandvt.org

Newbury

Michael Thomas / conservationnewbury@gmail.com

Norwich

Craig Layne / norwich.conservation.commission@gmail.com

Randolph

Brendan Barden / RCC@randolphvt.org

Royalton

Tico Wolff / rselectman@bluemoo.net

Sharon

Michael Zwickelmaier / 802-649-2940

Strafford

James Erbaugh / conservation@straftfordvt.org

Thetford

Jim McCracken / jcmcc211@gmail.com

Tunbridge

Betsy Gaiser / betsygaiser@gmail.com

Vershire

Kathy Hooke / kathy.hooke@mountainschool.org

Weathersfield

Ryan Gumbart

West Fairlee

Peggy Willey / peggywilley@mytopsmail.com

West Windsor

Ted Siegler / ted@dsmenvironmental.com

Windsor

Tom Marsh / tmarsh@windsorvt.org

Woodstock

Kristen Durocher / kristen.durocher@gmail.com

REPORT OF BRADFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

We said a fond farewell to Sandy Price this year. She served on the BCC for many years and headed up our beautification projects.

Stewardship

All Wrights MT Trails were groomed in the spring, led by Tom Gray with assistance from volunteer Hypertherm employees, including former BCC member, Riley Hudson.

Broken and faded trail marker signs were replaced by Brad Johnston, painted by Mary Ellen Gray and installed by Tom Gray.

Rick Evans led the 13th Annual Race to the Top on June 4. 22 youth finished the 1.5 mile Fun Run and 32 finishers ran the 3.5 mile Race. 9 adults finished untimed. Liam Genereaux finished the 3.5 mile in 34 minutes, 38 seconds. Colton Evans was the fastest youth in the 1.5 mile Fun Run.

Management

BCC member & county forester AJ Follensbee, with Orange County Forester David Paganelli scoped out and flagged the best option for an improved access road to the Woods Trail from the Devils Den Parking area.

AJ Follensbee applied for and received a Wetlands Permit from the State of Vermont for the above-mentioned access road.

Upper Valley Land Trust approved the revised Forest Management Plan, including improving the access road to Woods Trail to facilitate logging operations.

Upper Valley Trails Alliance staff, with nine Hypertherm employees, joined Rick Evans, Tom Gray, Jason Mosel and Tom Kidder to make significant safety improvements to the Devil's Den Trail near the entrance to the cave.

Bradford Hannaford's manager Craig St. Cyr led a team of employees in grooming trails for the Devil's Den Ultra Run in October.

40 runners competed in the 24-hour Devil's Den Ultra Run. Lee Pellerin of East Hardwick, Vermont completed 83 miles; Hannah Garty of Syracuse, NY completed 76 miles. Proceeds from this event benefit a Vermont-based Veterans Suicide Prevention program.

Land Conservation

The 20th annual Buck-A-Pie Week at Colatina Exit raised \$646 for the Bradford Conservation Fund.

Information and Education

2022 Annual Appeal focused on educational aspects in the Town Forest.

Ryan Rebozo led a vernal pool hike in April to the highly productive vernal pool at the intersection of Wrights MT Trail and Ernie's Trail.

The Friends of Wrights MT Scholarship was increased to \$1,000, but no graduating Bradford senior applied for the scholarship.

A two-sided interpretive sign about forest birds was designed by Nancy Jones and Ryan Rebozo and developed by graphic designer Matthew Denton. It was installed by Tom Gray and Steve Clark. One side of the sign illustrates winter migratory destinations of our birds and the other side illustrates nesting sites of our forest birds. QR codes on the sign are linked to Cornell's Ornithology website of birdcalls for each illustrated species.

BCC's 1st Monday Movie has returned to Colatina Exit featuring environmental films.

Conservation and Beautification Projects

At the recommendation of Jared Pendak, who also serves on Bradford Parks & Recreation Commission, we purchased perennials and planted a pollinator garden at Elizabeth's Park. Daniel Labate assisted with plant selection and volunteered with planting.

Nancy Jones, Chair

See photos on pages 62 and 102

DEVIL'S DEN TRAIL ENHANCEMENT



POLLINATOR GARDEN AT ELIZABETH'S PARK



~ NOTES ~

BRADFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION'S DEVIL'S DEN ULTRA RUN OCTOBER 2022 WITH 40 RUNNERS COMPETED



Conservation Commission

In addition to the usual business of reviewing construction permits and site visits to approve said permits as required by NH DES, the Canaan Conservation Commission also accomplished the following in 2022:

- Sponsored the 16th annual Earth Day Roadside Cleanup. With help from Helen Skeist and the Goose Pond Crew, we succeeded in removing over 80 bags of trash, as well as a number of tires and other large items from the streets of our town.
- We continue to maintain the trail system in the Town Forest. Members re-marked the trails, cleared downed trees, and cleared brush and overgrowth in both Spring and Fall.
- Sent a number of mailings to properties that we determined may be of conservation interest. Have started a dialog with several owners as a result.
- Met with the Enfield Conservation Commission in hopes of working together on future conservation projects.
- Provided financial support for the Connecticut River Conservancy's "Source to Sea" river cleanup. We also donated to support the UVLT and other local charities.
- Volunteered over 85 hours in service to the community.

**Respectfully submitted by,
Bill Chabot, Chair
Canaan Conservation Commission**

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Charlestown Conservation Commission meets on the third Monday of the month at 7:00 PM in the Community Room. The public is invited to attend.

Once again, this year the Commission was very active in maintaining the town's hiking trail network. In addition to regular trail maintenance the upper bridge on the Nature Trail was rebuilt with help from volunteers and a donation of lumber from Blanc and Bailey.

Thanks go to John Lambert for making and putting up new signage on all the town trails and for the donation of two benches that have been placed on the Reservoir and Crown Point Trails in honor of his late wife Janice who was instrumental in getting the trail system in Charlestown laid out and started. In memoriam, we would like to thank Donnie Highter for his many years of mowing the Great Meadow Trail.

Work is ongoing on a trails map revision and the addition of the Crown Point Trail and the trails system at Up on The Hill property in North Charlestown that is owned by Upper Valley Land Trust.

The Commission's application for cost share funding for access road improvement and forest improvement practices on the Sam's Hill Town Forest from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was not funded in this yearly cycle due to many applications and little money. Our application has been rolled into the 2023 year's applications and we are optimistic for progress in 2023.

Annual projects this year included a semi-annual adopt-a-highway clean-up of Rt 12 from the Walpole town line to Bowen Crossing Road in South Charlestown and sponsoring the town wide Green Up day the first Saturday in May. This Fall the annual monitoring of Land and Community Investment Program (LCIP) of properties was accomplished and remarking of the boundaries will be ongoing in the Spring.

Alternate member positions are open on the Commission. So, if you have an interest in Conservation please attend a meeting and get involved.

Respectfully submitted

Richard Holmes
Chairman

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Conservation Commission had an active year in 2022. We welcomed two new members, Katharine Lea and Travis Gendron. And, thanks to a number of grants, we saw the completion of three great projects around town. First, an anonymous grant funded a new parking area at the FX Shea Town Forest, located at the end of Wilson Road. Ricker Excavation completed the new parking lot last spring. This gravel lot is large enough to accommodate a school bus, which will allow future educational opportunities for our local school children and alleviate the parking limitations on Wilson Road. Many thanks to the town highway crew, who trucked gravel to the site, and to Jon Spanier, who found the funding opportunity.

Secondly, a matching grant-funded project supported the planting of three oak trees at the new fire station in East Corinth. This grant from the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation came thanks to the work of Ginny Barlow, who initiated the project and oversaw the planting and watering of the new trees. Our appreciation also goes to members of the Tri-Village Volunteer Fire Department, who helped water the trees, and to Bob Sandberg, whose compost enriches their soil. In yet another addition to Corinth's public spaces, the Garden Society's volunteers planted two willow trees, laid ground fabric, and mulched and planted wildflowers on the berm along the front of the transfer station. This project was overseen by Barbara Soros and Liz Davis, with excavation work by Dean Gregoropoulos and compost donated by the Limlaw family. This was all in addition to an area that had already been planted previously with two swamp oaks courtesy of a previous grant secured by Ginny Barlow from the Vermont Caring for Canopies program. These new efforts will not only add beauty to the area, but ease the maintenance burden. We look forward to the spring colors come Green Up Day in May.

If you hike on the Clement Loop Trail off the Maplewood Road (one of three trails managed by the Conservation Commission) you probably know that Dartmouth College, who owns the land and generously allows public access to it, has been conducting research and logging in conjunction with the University of Vermont and other entities on that parcel of land. The trail is currently being reconstructed to accommodate their research and is open for walking, but caution and care are advised so as not to disturb any of the research projects that are going on.

Lastly, the CCC continues to work on our educational goal to bring awareness to Corinth's crucial role as a major connecting area of intact priority forest blocks and wildlife connectivity corridors. These important undeveloped areas of town are part of a primary north south habitat for all of our wildlife, including moose, bear, deer, and bobcats, as well as many small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. It is our goal to help the community to understand and protect these areas as our town grows and changes in the future. We thank all the volunteers and members of the public who support us with their time and their deposit bottle returns, and we look forward to continuing to work on your behalf to conserve Corinth's rural character.

Respectfully submitted,

Glynn Pellagrino, chair
Corinth Conservation Commission

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

2022

This year, the Commission focused on updating the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) for publication in 2023. With the help of the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission, our work groups will continue the research and editing process into 2023.

In addition to the NRI efforts, public education and land conservation in Cornish remained a high priority.

The Education Subcommittee was busy with its “Wild About Cornish” event series which included: exploring vernal pools, a bird walk, and a wildlife and ecology exploration on the CT River. We partnered with guides from the UNH Extension, the Connecticut River Conservancy, the Pennacook-Abenaki People, as well as other local experts. Through our own Conservation Notes program, we continued to publish articles in Connect Cornish about local natural resources.

Wally and Jerri Cole generously donated a conservation easement on 203 acres of their property at the end of Paget Road. This easement extends forest protection around the Yatsevitch Forest creating one interconnected block—now totaling 2,172 acres—of conserved habitats essential to the diversity of large-scale ecological systems. Local fundraising efforts and a contribution from Cornish’s Conservation Fund covered the project costs related to creating the donated conservation easement.

In the spring, Commission Vice-Chairperson Jody Schubert was selected to attend the 4-day NH Coverts Project, sponsored by the UNH Cooperative Extension, to learn about promoting wildlife conservation and forest stewardship. Many other members attended additional educational opportunities via webinars and conferences, including participation in the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions Annual Conference.

Larry Duval and Jim Fitch received the Annual Conservation Award for their continued efforts in managing and monitoring the wetlands in town with a particular focus on the CREA property. Their hard work enhances access to these trails and fields for greater enjoyment by our community.

We honored two long-time members who retired from the Commission: Jim Barker and Bill Gallagher. The book *The Zero Waste Solution*, by Dr. Paul Connett, was donated to the George H. Stowell Free Library in Bill’s honor and a children’s book *We Are Water Protectors*, by Carole Lindstrom, was donated to

the Cornish Elementary School Library in Jim's honor. The Commission partnered with the Sustainable Lifestyle group to host a public reception for the book dedications, and Dr. Paul Connett gave a brief talk on his work and his book.

The Commission's Land Monitoring subcommittee completed monitoring walks on all seven conserved properties of which the Town of Cornish is the primary easement holder. No violations of easement terms were found. We also worked with NH's Conservation Land Stewardship Program to help monitor four properties in Town which were acquired through the Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP). We encourage the landowners to join the monitoring walks.

The Commission purchased volunteer program books for the Cornish volunteers of Four Winds Nature Institute, an outdoor education program held through the Cornish Elementary School. Two Commission members were also school volunteers in the program.

We were pleased to welcome a new member this year, Glenn Griffin. And we also thank Monica Matthews, who needed to step down this year, for her service.

If you want to learn about conserving your land, feel free to reach out to the Commission, conservationcommission@cornishnh.net.

Corey Fitch, Chair

2022 Membership

Corey Fitch, Chair
Jody Schubert, Vice-Chair
Linda Leone, Secretary
Cindy Heath, Treasurer
Glenn Griffin

Reyer Jaarsma
Monica Matthews
Herrika (Rickey) Poor, Alternate
Bob Taylor
John Hammond, Select Board Rep.

Conservation Commission

~ MISSION STATEMENT ~

To protect the natural resources of Enfield and preserve them for future generations.

Using habitat maps prepared by New Hampshire Fish and Game, the Conservation Commission Identified 110 properties in Enfield that contained the highest ranked habitat for wildlife in New Hampshire and sent to those property owners a listing of the map # and block of those parcels. In the mailing we also noted the value of the habitat for recreation. That information has also been submitted to the Master Planning Task Force as our contribution to the Master Plan document, which is still in preparation. We have continued to make available remaining copies of the 2021 Natural Resources Inventory.

The Conservation Commission completed preparation of 3 Warrant Articles, to be placed on the warrant at the Town Meetings in March 2023. We are holding an informational public meeting at the Shaker Museum on February 16, 2023 from 7:00-9:00 PM at which time members of the CC will explain the value of these articles with regard to protecting the natural resources of Enfield.

We have also recruited a 5th member of the seven we are authorized to have. His name is Mr. Doug Smith, a longtime resident of Enfield whose knowledge of the community will be of great value to the CC. Residents of Enfield are encouraged to volunteer by submitting an application (<https://www.enfield.nh.us/town-manager/pages/forms-documents>) to Alisa Bonnette at the Town Hall (abonnette@enfield.nh.us) and attending a meeting of the CC. We meet the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Dept. of Public Works on Lockhaven Road.

Respectfully submitted,

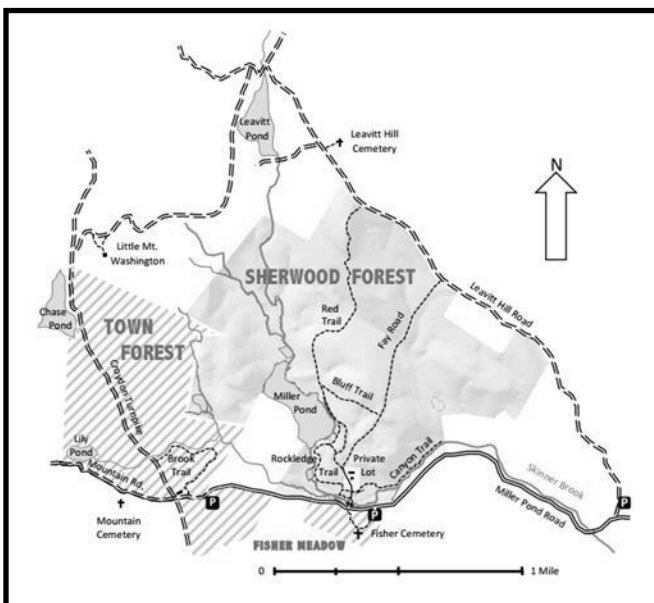
A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. H. Theis".

DR. Jerold Theis
Chairman

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT

The Grantham Conservation Commission (GCC) is charged with encouraging the public and governing bodies to advance “the proper utilization and protection of the natural resources” of Grantham. It serves as an advisory board to the Grantham Selectmen, and as such its recommendations usually need to be ratified by the Selectmen before they become actionable.

As discussed in previous reports, the emerald ash borer, an invasive insect, was first found in Grantham in 2019. As the larvae mature, they create tunnels under the bark of mature ash cutting off the flow of nutrients between the roots and crown, thus killing the tree. It is anticipated that dead ash will begin to appear in Grantham this summer and that essentially all the mature ash in Grantham will die within the decade. If an individual tree does not yet appear heavily infected, it may still be preserved by having it injected with insecticide by a qualified applicator. While the removal of healthy ash is not encouraged, those that are not being treated and will pose a risk once dead should be removed before they die.



Last winter the GCC initiated the long-delayed logging operation in the Town Forest and a selective logging on the Fisher/Smith Lot. The goal, as outlined in the 2017 Forest Management Plan, is to improve the wildlife habitat and timber stocking on both properties. The forests in the northwestern portion of Grantham are uniform in age minimizing their value to wildlife and have been degraded by ice storms and insects. A full explanation of the planned harvest and its goals recorded in Oct, 2021 is available on the GCC web site. Of particular note, the clear cuts in the Town Forest are intended to create large patches of early successional forest. Dode Gladders, the Sullivan County forester, has pointed out that the absence of early successional forest in our area has contributed to the more than 80% reduction in the population of 38 species of birds in the last 50 years. Additionally, the logging brought in more than enough money to pay for the necessary road revisions and installation of new parking and opened some lovely views from the Croydon Turnpike. It also led to the discovery by Dode Gladders of a striped maple (*Acer pennsylvanicum*), which is the largest in Sullivan County. It now registers in the NH Big

Tree Program. Although the residual slash from the operation obstructed the Brook Trail this summer, that trail has now been reopened and the blazing refreshed by the GCC with the help of community volunteers, Dave Beckley, Mike Cronin, Renee Gustafson and Craig McArt.



The GCC is continuing to work to increase the access and enjoyment of the Sawyer Brook Headwaters and the recently acquired 5.6-acre property adjacent to Dunbar Hill Road. Welcome signs acknowledging contributors have been installed, efforts were made to minimize erosion at the beaver pond overlook, a new connector trail has been opened thanks again to the help of volunteers Bruce and Jane Altobelli and Mike Cronin, and plans have been initiated to build a parking pull-off for four cars at the Dunbar Hill Road access.

The selective logging in the Fisher lot removed many of the ash trees while they still had commercial value and created several logging roads into the forest. Additionally, repairs have been made to the Fisher cemetery, fencing installed around the old well, and many of the white pine and birch that were competing with the apples and chestnuts have been removed from the orchard.

Other routine activities of the Commission this year included the review of applications for tree removal along the shores of Grantham's ponds, and the land stewardship monitoring of the Fisher and Sherwood Forest lots.

If you are interested in volunteering for Commission projects, please contact David Wood, Commission Chair, at 603-865-7473. The commission wants to make a special acknowledgement of the contributions made by Craig McArt, who recently resigned from the commission. His artistry in sign making and his devotion to trail construction and maintenance have benefited us all. The current members are: Susan Buchanan, Richard Hocker, Richard Kaszeta, Dennis Ryan, and David Wood together with the alternate members: John Eylander, Marty Gearhart, Christine Henderson, and Jack van Hoff.



Skinner Brook as seen from the Brook Trail in the Grantham Town Forest. Photo by David Wood.



Grantham/Croydon ridge from the beaver dam in Sawyer Brook Headwaters. Photo by David Wood.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) was established in 1990 to inventory natural resources, maintain and preserve natural areas, protect valuable wildlife habitat, monitor scenic areas and watershed areas, educate and increase awareness of conservation, and encourage recreation consistent with the preservation of the natural beauty of Hartford.

The HCC manages the 423-acre Hartford Town Forest (HTF), the 21-acre Maanawaka Conservation Area in Wilder and the 6.5-acre David Chang Conservation Area in Quechee. We hope you get out and enjoy these wonderful parcels and treat them with respect. Please contact us if you see maintenance or abuse issues so we can organize restoration or clean-up.

Members of the HCC include Tom Kahl (chair), Katie Mann (vice-chair), Jon Bouton, Angela Emerson, Mary Hutchins, Ted Levin, Lee Michaelides and Selectboard Liaison Mary Erdei.

Activities from 7/1/21 to 6/30/22 include:

Projects in the Hartford Town Forest (HTF) and Trails

- Continued work creating an Integrated Town Forest Management Plan that encompasses the several different management plans and inventories.
- Worked with County Forester A.J. Follensbee to plan and explain a timber harvest in the winter of 2023 including numerous social media postings and several public meetings and site visits to the HTF.
- Installed wayfinding signs to help residents and visitors find the HTF.
- Periodic trail maintenance including installation and replacement of trail signs, trail markers/blazes, removing trees fallen across trails, and clearing/mowing brush. The HCC would also like to thank local volunteers, primarily local mountain bikers and snowmobilers, who perform regular trail maintenance.
- In partnership with the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association, conducted a trail workday that attracted 30 volunteers to work on several trail sections that needed attention including construction of a bridge, bypass trail, and treadway improvements.
- Held an on-line registration to maintain HTF and Hurricane Forest Wildlife Refuge trails.
- Signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Upper Valley Mountain Bike Association regarding mutual communication and support activities.
- Performed trail maintenance in the Maanawaka Conservation Area.
- Worked with the Hartford Area Career & Technology Center Natural Resource Class on student chain saw training and in collaboration with the County Forester on wood lot improvements in the HTF.

Outreach and Education

- Assisted the Quechee Library in implementing a summer story walk and nature scavenger hunt in the HTF.
- Partnered with the Hartford Salamander Team to host a Vernal Pool walk in the HTF.
- Held a winter ecology walk in the HTF.
- Partnered with an ornithologist on a birding walk in the HTF.

Other Ongoing Projects within the HCC

- Sponsored the May 7th Green-Up Day activities that included 456 volunteers and collected 3.24 tons of waste.
- Working with landowners interested in conserving their land.
- Conducted invasive plant treatment in the David Chang Conservation Area.
- Installed a nest box for American Kestrels.

Participation with Town and Regional Groups

- Working on various projects with other town boards including the Climate Action Steering Team, Tree Board and Resilient Hartford.
- Working with the Hartford Salamander Team on a public education series.
- Received an Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions grant to assist the Hartford Salamander Team and North Branch Nature Center in the Amphibian Road Crossing community science monitoring project.
- Working with the Climate Action Steering Team on implementation of the Hartford Climate Action Plan.
- Partnered with the White River Partnership and the Connecticut River Watershed Council to participate in the September 11th Source to the Sea river clean-up.

The HCC normally meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Hartford Town Hall. The public is welcome to attend. Meetings also are accessible remotely. If you have any questions about the Conservation Commission, please contact Town Planner Matt Osborn (295-3075) or mosborn@hartford-vt.org

HARTLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION 2022

The Hartland Conservation Commission (HCC) works to protect and preserve Hartland's natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the community. Our efforts are focused in three areas: Public and Protected Lands and Watersheds, Education and Outreach, and Public Policy, as described below.

The Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at 7 pm. We invite anyone who is interested to attend.

Public and Protected Lands and Watersheds

- Began implementing the management plan for the Sumner Falls Recreation Area. Hired Gary Trachier to map significant features of the property.
- Received two grants to provide signage at Cady Brook Trail and at Sumner Falls.
- Received a large grant to build an ADA-accessible trail down to the outdoor classrooms on the 17-Acre Wood.
- Continued water testing along Lull's Brook and the Connecticut River at seven sites, including a new site on Weed Brook. Notified residents via the listserv when *E. coli* levels exceeded the State-determined safe level of contamination.
- Participated in the Connecticut River Source-to-Sea clean-up in September with a clean-up at Sumner's Falls. Sixteen volunteers removed over 250 pounds of trash.
- Began to work on a management plan for the Jenne Town Forest.



Volunteers clean up Sumner Falls

Education and Outreach

- Co-sponsored Green-Up Day. One hundred fifty volunteers covered all the targeted roads in town.
- Co-sponsored presentations on the History of the North Hartland Dam, Birding by Ear, and the History of Sumner Falls. Participated in a Bioblitz around the library.
- Coordinated efforts to assist migrating amphibians on Big Night. Over a dozen volunteers worked at several road crossing "hot spots".
- Maintained the Conservation Commission Facebook page as a vehicle for public outreach and education.
- Staffed a booth at Old Home days with information on various conservation projects that we are currently working on.

Public Policy

- Drafted Town policies on Class 4 roads and Legal trails and forwarded them to the Selectboard for approval.

John Dumas stepped down after several years on the Commission. We are grateful for his unselfish service. We welcome Robyn Mosher, who joined the Commission in September.

Commission members (term ending): Chair Rob Anderegg (2026), Scribe/Clerk Tina Barney (2023), Treasurer Chris Collier (2026), Guy Crosby (2023), Dean Greenberg (2024), Robyn Mosher (2024), David Sleeper (2024), Jennifer Waite (2023), and Sarah Wood (2026).



Conservation Commission's Activities During 2022

Meetings

- Meetings of the Conservation Commission are held on the third Tuesday of every month at 6:00 PM at the J.R. Morrill Building, 2nd floor, Conference Room and on Zoom.

Education and Outreach

- The Conservation Commission assisted the Newbury, VT Conservation Commission in launching kayakers and canoers on the Connecticut River during the Paddle the Border, a free bi-annual event. The Haverhill Conservation Commission also volunteered with the Haverhill Recreation Department and the Hope in Haverhill mission to revitalize Railroad Park in Woodsville.

The Commission's Plans in 2023

The Commission plans to:

- Offer more education and outreach to the community.
- Increase our budget to cover costs for future educational events and advertising.
- Keep our membership current with the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions.

The Conservation Commission has four members and would like to fill more seats. Send letters of interest to conservation@haverhill-NH.com

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Katelyn Currie-Huggard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Katelyn Currie-Huggard, Chair

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

2022 was a typically busy year for the Conservation Commission.

Trails and Land Management

This year's major project was the replacement of two decrepit footbridges on the Beaver Pond Trail in the Lyme Town Forest. The work was done by the Upper Valley Trails Alliance's High School Trails Corps, with generous financial support from the Lyme Foundation and matching dollars from the Conservation Fund.

Elsewhere, the Lyme Biodiversity Working Group (LBWG) continued its ongoing program of Japanese knotweed eradication in the Big Rock Preserve. The project uses systematic, repetitive cutting management, rather than herbicide application. Now four years old, the LBWG's program has realized significant progress in controlling and eradicating the knotweed. Funding for the program was provided by a generous grant from the Lyme Foundation and matching money from the Conservation Fund. The program is capably managed by Commission member Meg Sheehan and Lyme resident Rob Wipfler.

New to the Commission's land management agenda was the implementation of a Eurasian Milfoil control program. The effort employs a hand pulling strategy modeled on one successfully used at Mascoma Lake. The goal is to move away from the current control program that is based on annual herbicide treatments. Commission Vice Chair Sue MacKenzie is the project coordinator. The staffing is all volunteer.



Outreach and Education

Thanks to considerable logistical support from *CommunityCare of Lyme*, the always popular "Green up Day" took place in early May with almost 80 individuals participating.

More information about the Commission, its properties and activities can be found at:

<http://www.lymenh.gov/conservation-commission>

(New Whipple Brook Footbridge)

Conservation Commission

www.newburyconservation.org

Visit Us on Facebook

MISSION STATEMENT: To increase public awareness of natural resources in Newbury through educational campaigns and gathering resource data in order to provide residents with the information they need to make informed decisions.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED We need new members. Our to-do-list is long, and we need your help. NCC wants to add to our **volunteer list**. If you would like to help out with events, trail work, fund-raising projects, and tree planting, **let us know!** If you are looking for projects for your church group, 4-H, Boys & Girl Scouts, service group, or school related community service, NCC can help you with ideas that will benefit both your group and our community.

This year's meeting were not as regular as we would have like. Our small membership limited the time we have to spend on new projects. NCC followed our goals set out in the 2022 town report. NCC Monthly meeting are at 7p.m. 2nd Tuesday of the month. At Baldwin Library in Wells River. We are working to improve our Zoom Access [Volunteer Opportunity help me with Zoom meetings]. All Newbury residents are invited to attend, share, and learn.

NCC Sponsored and Supported Events for 2023

- Birding With Bill on the Wells River Nature Trail Mid May date to be set 23rd Year
- Paddle the Border Spring May 21 Fall October 1st 20th Year.
- Trails Day Workday on the Wells River Nature Trails June 3rd 26th Year
- So Long Summer Hello Fall Wells River Village Festival September 2nd 12th Year
- Fall Foliage Bicycle Ride on the Cross Vermont Trail September 30th 26th Year

NCC GOALS FOR 2023

- NCC will continue our public outreach and find new ways to host educational workshops to increase our involvement with the residence of Newbury in local conservation efforts.
- NCC will continue working on a Natural Resources Inventory for the Town of Newbury. This would include, understanding the value and relationship between continuous forest habitat, open land, wetlands [including ponds river/streams] and developing a town policy that balances conservation, public recreation and educational opportunity.
- NCC will continue to work with other committees in Newbury. The Planning Board. Tucker Mt. Town Forest Management Committee, the Recreation Committee.
- NCC will continue to improve our website and Facebook presence to promote events, share pictures, stories and adventures in Newbury remotely. [Volunteer Opportunity here].
- NCC will continue to work with Upper Valley Trails Alliance to improving and promote the trails in Newbury. Working on establishing safe bicycling routes along select roads in Newbury.
- NCC will continue to work with the Cross Vermont Trail Association www.crossvermont.org to improve the trail and bringing CVT into Wells River Village.

Our website: www.newburyconservation.org.

Find us on Facebook under Newbury Conservation Commission
Contact Michael Thomas 802-757-3960 or mikethom1@charter.net
Submitted by: Carol Stoll, Cal Lynes, Michael Thomas

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission endeavors to inventory, monitor, and conserve the natural heritage assets in Town. These assets include wildlife, wetlands, waterways, natural plant communities, intact forest ecosystems, and scenic resources. We share our findings and projects with fellow citizens, Town commissions, and governing bodies. For the benefit of Town residents, we:

- Supported environmental education at the elementary school
- Hosted a vernal pools presentation and field outing by Kevin Tolan, Vermont Center for Ecostudies
- Worked on riparian plantings along Blood Brook
- Coordinated a "No Mow May" campaign
- Hosted an educational woods-walk at the Woody Adams Conservation Forest conducted by Tii McLane, Certified Forester
- Published seasonal articles in the *Norwich Times*: "Milt Frye Nature Area Vernal Pool", "Grassland Birds", "Too Many Deer", and "How Deer and Coyotes Survive Winter"
- Presented Post Office displays about "Bears", "No Mow May", "June Norwich Conservation Commission Projects" and "Overabundance of Deer"
- Added a vernal pool and pool-side plantings at the Nature Area to facilitate biodiversity, improve pollinator habitat, and support new field learning activities for students
- Installed kestrel nest box in the Nature Area meadow
- Removed invasive plants and planted native ones around the Nature Area meadow and secured a Norwich Women's Club grant to continue planting in the Nature Area
- Managed Phragmites patches invading important wetland areas
- Worked to the benefit of the trail system in town
- Hosted a white-tailed deer presentation by Nick Fortin, Vermont Fish and Wildlife, Deer Project Leader.

<https://norwichconservation.org/>
NorwichConservationCommission@gmail.com

ORFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

2022 Annual Report

The Orford Conservation Commission (OCC) strives to actively initiate participation in conservation-related projects around Orford. Our objectives remain to promote, launch, and continue dedicated stewardship of the many remarkable natural resources in Orford.

The projects undertaken by the OCC in 2022 included:

- Mountain View Farm Conservation Area: The OCC cosponsored and promoted a stargazing party at this beautiful and protected land in Quinttown.
- Orford Conservation Land: Richmond Property: Continued maintenance of the trail to the Connecticut River from Rt. 10 and monitored tree plantings at riparian buffer. Piermont Heights: Monitoring and reporting to Forest Society (NH).
- Easement Reviews: Conducted annual reviews of conserved land in Orford.
- Conservation Easements: Worked on conservation easement projects with the Upper Valley Land Trust (UFLT).
- Jacobs Brook flooding/erosion mitigation and restoration of aquatic life: Continue to monitor this site after extensive flood mitigation work completed. Continued repairs to regrading and plantings.
- Orfordville Road Bog: The OCC paid for a design by Horizons Engineers for a culvert with integrated spillway. The reconstruction, when done, will maintain water height to support aquatic life and prevent road erosion. The permit from NH DES is in hand (as of 2020) and is valid for 5 years.
- Japanese Knotweed Control: Colonies were managed along Tillotson Falls Road. Roadside mowing was coordinated with these efforts. Thanks to the Orford Highway Department for their assistance in knotweed control. Continued work is tentatively planned for 2023.
- Other activities: Reviewed wetland permit applications; reviewed NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) letters to landowners regarding wetlands violations or failing septic systems; and reviewed possible sites for Connecticut River Conservancy cleanup efforts. Planned invasive plant species identification and containment project for 2023.
- Water Testing: Water testing conducted June through September at ten sites along Jacobs Brook, at Indian Pond beach/boat launch, and the Baker Ponds. Expanded testing schedule will continue for 2023. New water testers have been trained.
- Pollinators: Plan training for and demonstrations of plantings for pollinators in 2023.

Commissioners and Alternates:

Edmond Cooley (Chair), conservation@orfordnh.us, John Miller (Vice-Chair), Harry Pease, Craig Putnam, and Carl Schmidt; Alternates: Emily Bryant (Asst. Secretary), and Fran Plaisted (Secretary).



TOWN OF PIERMONT

Conservation Commission

Phone: (603) 272-9181

Fax: (603) 272-9182

E-mail: info@townofpiermontnh.org

Conservation Commission 2022 Annual Report

Monthly meetings of the Commission are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Old Church Building. Members of the Commission at year-end were Helga Mueller, Chairman; Ernie Hartley, Eric Underhill, Mal Kircher, Karen Brown, Frank Rodimon and Rachel Brown.

As of December 1, 2022, the Conservation Fund contains \$8,959.25. Contributing to this fund are 10% of revenues from current use changes and 10% from logging on town-owned land. Monies from the Conservation Fund can only be spent for the protection of natural resources. It requires the approval of voters at Town Meeting to use monies from the Fund for the acquisition of or interest in property.

The Expendable Trust Fund for the Underhill Canoe Campsite and the Sarah Moore Canoe Access contains \$4,114. The Expendable Trust Fund for the maintenance of the Piermont Town Forest and Trails contains \$2,334.

Piermont Town Forest and Trails

The site on Bedford Road is managed and maintained by the Commission. The site's four color-coded trails are enjoyed by Piermont residents for hiking, snowshoeing, horseback riding and nature-watching. The Commission's plan to erect a gazebo at the site was accomplished. It will be established in its permanent position in the Spring.

Canoe Camp Sites

Both the Underhill Canoe Campsite and the Sarah Moore Canoe Access are maintained by the Commission and are enjoyed by many canoeists. Please note that the Underhill site can only be accessed by the Connecticut River.

Water Quality Monitoring

Since 2003, the Commission together with members of the Lake Tarleton and Armington Associations have monitored the water quality of lakes Tarleton, Armington and Katherine in June, July and August. The Town of Piermont also supports the Lake Host Program at both lakes.

Most of the concentration of the Commission has been to maintain the various properties including the clean-up of trails and sites; land leases and their management; selective tree cutting on wood lots; soil erosion on brooks and river properties and wetland protection. One of the new projects we plan to work on in 2023 is a new trail from downtown Piermont to Lake Tarleton as well as other trails connecting to existing trails. But to implement this and other plans we need more members, young or old, who are committed to our conservation needs and endeavors.

The Commission is available to assist property owners with any concerns on violations, wetland applications or any other conservation concerns.

Helga Mueller

Piermont Conservation Commission

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT

The mission of the Conservation Commission is to assist the community of Royalton to assess, protect, and enhance its natural resources. Additionally, we may inventory and advise on town lands in which the public has an interest, including land with historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural, or archaeological value. The Conservation Commission collaborates with a variety of municipal entities and other organizations, including the Planning Commission, the Select Board, the White River Partnership, Vermont Law School, the Windsor County Forester, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and neighboring towns' Conservation Commissions. We are also a member of the Association for Vermont Conservation Commissions.

A central concern of the Royalton Conservation Commission over the past several years has been to advise on the management of town-owned tracts of land. These include the Crawford Forest (behind the Town Offices), the Sarnoff Forest (north side of Rt 107), and the White River access sites. As part of the ongoing forest management plan for the Crawford Forest, the Conservation Commission engaged Redstart Forestry to conduct invasive plant control in the area of the parcel that was logged in 2021. This treatment was organized in consultation with the Windsor County Forester and is standard practice in order to maintain the ecological health of the forest's regrowth following major disturbance associated with timber harvesting. The Crawford Forest was also the focus of a volunteer trail workday this past fall, during which one short trail loop was improved, and plans for a larger loop and several vistas or picnic areas were also set in motion.

The Royalton Conservation Fund, which was established by the town in 2021 to facilitate the pursuit of long-term conservations projects, ended Fiscal Year '22 with a balance of \$13,459.23, having received \$6,759.67 in income: \$3,000 from the solar land lease on the Gilman property, \$2,759.67 in proceeds from the timber harvest, and a \$1,000 donation. At the time of writing, this balance has risen to \$15, 513, bolstered in large part by a generous donation of disbursal funds from the Alliance for Vermont Communities, with earmarks for the construction of a kiosk that shows hiking trails and river access points in town, and for conservation-related education.

Members:

Tico Wolff (chair)

Brad Salzmänn (treasurer)

Diana Wood (clerk)

David Barker

John Dettwiler

Bushrod Powers

Sharon Conservation Commission

Thanks to Mike Zwikelmaier for leading us through a productive year. We proudly built a kiosk in Downer Forest in honor of John Sears. Greg Elder crafted the sign which reads John Sears Memorial Trails. Approximately 80 people attended a dedication in Downer Forest for the kiosk and the excellent bench Ria Blass crafted at John's Lookout. A neighborhood group headed by Jill Wilcox and Joyce Dion organized the event, which was held on a beautiful day in October. Thanks to Sam for coordinating the kiosk construction, to Mike for obtaining all the materials, and to Tim Morton and Brian Renfro of the Vermont Department of Forest Parks and Recreation for their continued guidance and support.

Thanks to Dick Ruben for managing Green Up Day in Sharon and for all his efforts as a liaison with the Ashley Forest project.

Special thanks go to the Alliance for Vermont Communities which donated \$2000.00 to the town's conservation reserve fund.

Sam Brakeley is leading the creation of a new x-country ski trail in the annex portion of Downer Forest that traverses a beautiful ridge with lovely views of Gile Mountain. As of this writing, there have been two work days, and about half of the trail has been cleared. Stay tuned for more chances to volunteer! Remember that our meetings happen on the 2nd Monday of the month at the town offices at 6:30 pm.

Sharon Conservation Commission

Sam Brakeley, Scott Chesnut, Dan Deneen, Dick Ruben, Mike Zwikelmaier

Green Up Day Report

The 2022 May Green Up Day (GUD) turned out to be a pleasant day to walk the roads and a nice day to help folks with unloading their roadside trash. With help from 7 at the Town Garage (Thanks to the help from Frank and the road crew for making the Garage space available), we made short work of helping the 30 or so people who contributed 1200# of roadside trash, 3.4 tons of scrap metal and 2/3 ton of tires to the cause. We again netted enough from scrap metal and tire disposal fees to more than break even financially so the Town again benefitted both financially and aesthetically from the effort.

Looking forward to 2023, we on the Conservation Commission look forward to more volunteers and more input from the Town, including students, to police and beautify our space.

Yes, it's no fun picking up other people's garbage, but, the rewards of clean roadsides, and the opportunity to dispose of old tires and metal scrap for the benefit of all makes it worth the while. As Charlie Nardozzi on NPR says, "See you in the (OUR) garden spot".

- Dick Ruben, Green Up Coordinator

THETFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION



The Thetford Conservation Commission stewards town properties, creates opportunities for residents to learn about and celebrate our town's landscapes, and collaborates with other organizations doing conservation work.

Highlights from 2022 include:

- Hosted a five-part workshop series about native gardening, culminating in the planting of a community pollinator garden on the town green. Donated a collection of books about pollinators and native gardening to the Peabody Library.
- Continued restoration of the Taylor Floodplain Preserve through invasives treatment and native tree planting. This project aims to reduce erosion from flooding and enhance the habitat for birds and other wildlife. Funding for this project was made possible by the town of Thetford, a Watershed Grant from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, and the White River Natural Resources Conservation District.
- More than 150 residents, covering an estimated 70 miles of roadside, participated in Green Up Day and helped remove 1.4 tons of trash from the roadside. Thanks to Wells River Savings Bank, Susanne Simon, and Chief Scruggs for helping provide safety vests for the volunteers working along the roads.
- Collaborated with the Thetford Trails Team to share the results of their natural resources study of the Union Village Dam/Thetford Hill trail network with the public, and invite public participation in envisioning the long-term sustainable management of the network.
- Co-hosted a "Winter Wander" on Lake Fairlee with the West Fairlee Conservation Commission to learn about winter animal tracking.

In 2023, the Conservation Commission is looking forward to beginning invasives treatment on the final section of the Taylor Floodplain Preserve, updating the Town Lands Management Plan for the four town-owned forest parcels, and commissioning phase two of the Natural Resources Inventory with a focus on forest blocks and wildlife road crossings. Keep an eye out for opportunities to visit the town properties with us and learn more about this work!



Photos: The "Winter Wander" on Lake Fairlee; Native gardening workshop at the town green; mapping the community pollinator garden.

Tunbridge Conservation Commission

The Tunbridge Conservation Commission was established in 2017. Our mission by state statute is to advise the town and public on natural resource topics and issues, and coordinate activities that promote natural resource education and stewardship. The duties of the Commission encompass the study and inventory of the natural resources of Tunbridge including: surface and groundwaters, soils, unique or fragile biological sites, scenic and recreational resources, plant and animal life (especially rare and endangered species), and prime agricultural and forest land. Commission duties also include informal counsel to the Planning Commission and Selectboard as well as the development of educational activities for the public to further the understanding and preservation of local resources and conservation needs. The Commission meets on the first Thursday of the month at 6:00 at the library. All meetings are open to the public.

2022 Highlights

- Welcomed four new members to the commission.
- Continued vernal pool inventory and monitoring of identified pools.
- Maintained membership in the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions and attended the annual AVCC conference.
- Hosted a Woodlands for Wildlife walk with a local landowner, COVERTS, and Orange County Forester.
- Led a wildflower walk with a local landowner.
- Developed a strategic plan with consultation from the Agency of Natural Resources.
- Raised over \$1200 with the Bluebird House Fundraiser.
- Hosted Green-up Day partnering with the Recreation Committee for Green-up Day events.
- Collaborated with the Town Forest Committee and Tunbridge Trails Committee to sponsor Town Forest Event series.
- Researched ATV impact on natural resources and provided a position statement to our selectboard.
- Participated in native plant/riparian restoration work with the White River Land Collaborative on Belknap Brook.
- Worked with the White River Partnership and 14 volunteers on clean up and waste tire removal from the lower First Branch.
- Hosted the Four Town Conservation Commission meeting sponsored by the Agency of Natural Resources. (Tunbridge, Sharon, Royalton, Strafford)
- Participated in the Randolph area Christmas Bird Count.

Future Events

- The “Winter Evening” talk series at the library
- Green Up day
- Walks/talks summer series
- First Branch monitoring and clean-up

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Gaiser, Michael Sacca, Cheryl McCarty,
Eliza Minnucci, Scott Beavers, Evan Reiss,
Maureen McCullough, and Jory Innes

WEST FAIRLEE CONSERVATION COMMISSION ACTIVITIES- 2022



Winter Wander on Lake Fairlee organized by Conservation Commission

The West Fairlee Conservation Commission has had a busy year, much of it out-of-doors or on Zoom. This year, concern for local water quality has led CC members to focus on education about our watershed, wetlands, and Lake Fairlee.

We hosted a fun and well-attended **‘Winter Wander’** on Lake Fairlee. Folks of all ages spent a snowy Saturday wandering the lengthy edges of Treasure Island - on and off ice. We learned about winter habits of lake-edge wildlife, loons, resident beavers, and properties of snow with Scott Ellis of Thetford Academy’s Outdoor Program, and Doug Tifft of Lake Fairlee Exploratory Committee.

A CC member is part of a wide team of local and State folks on the **Lake Fairlee Association (LFA) Water Quality Action Committee** exploring Lake Fairlee water quality issues, and how best to protect and improve its poor water quality score. We were also invited to join with Lake Fairlee Exploratory Committee, LFA, Town of Thetford, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and State folks to consider and advise on locating possible education trails on Treasure Island. Ultimately, a study will be done to determine wildlife and environmental needs before proceeding. Lake Fairlee draws thousands of people to our area in summer, and widely serves the local economy year-round.

We were part of a 3-town team that helped to write and distribute a very user-friendly colorful **Lake Watershed Guide** of best practices for landowners living within the Lake Fairlee watershed of almost 13,000 acres. Sponsored by the LFA, Thetford and West Fairlee Conservation Commissions, these were hand-delivered to all homes in the watershed. We can all do our part to protect wells and water quality for wildlife, wetland, and stream health, which eventually protects our Lake’s health too.

The WFCC hosted a fun and informal **“Paddle to the 3 Corners”** of Lake Fairlee suggested by Jim Hughes. West Fairlee, Thetford and Fairlee folks started wherever they liked and paddled to the geolocated conversion of our 3 Town lines. We took pictures, enjoyed the late afternoon skies and water, and returned for a sumptuous pot-luck picnic on the shore.

We continue to host, sponsor, and encourage other educational events in **Brushwood Community Forest (BCF)**. We are seeing much use of our **trail system**. In Brushwood North, we are beginning serious work to creating trails for the future. It takes time to coordinate with local, State and Federal partners, grantors and volunteers; and to site the trail in the best way for the environment. There is growing awareness that we need to understand **animal migration (travel) corridors**, and to keep them open and adequate for larger mammals as well as birds, that require isolation and larger territory to thrive. Our trail siting and designs must balance protecting these corridors with getting walkers and other recreationists out in nature and experiencing the beauty of Brushwood!

Other highlights included:

* Tom, Gabi and our youngest WFCC member Tomas Masterson, of Coyote Hill Bike Camp, hosted a guided **Mountain Bike Outing** in Brushwood North in October that drew over 20 enthusiastic cyclists. “We chatted about proposed trails. Everybody enjoyed and recognized the trails from Brushwood Rd in Bradford, leading into Brushwood North as new territory for them.”

* **“Words in the Woods” poetry hike** led by WFCC members Alyssa Godesky and Ann Stephens was much enjoyed on a sunny autumn morning in Brushwood.

* A wonderful **Morning Bird Walk** on the north shore of Lake Fairlee at Doug and Bonnie Tifft’s, with Susan Tiholiz as our birding leader.

* We continue to monitor Brushwood for **invasive plant communities** (bittersweet, buckthorn and more); removing them when located.

* Russell Barnes of Lyme, and County Forester Dave Paganelli presented on **Timber Stand Improvement (TSI)** in Brushwood South. Russell’s unique skill, innovative tools and entertaining approach to TSI, and Dave’s broad forestry experience rounded out the morning. A great group of folks attended from here and around the State.

Keeping pollinator insect (and bird) health in mind, we co-sponsored a Winter -through -Autumn **Native Pollinator Garden Series** with Thetford CC, eventually planting at the Thetford Center Community Gardens. Alicia Houk of the Thetford CC led this excellent project which was very hands on: mulching with paper; planting and starting native seeds at the Thetford Center Community Garden; and plenty for folks to take home to try on their own.

Looking forward to more progress and adventure in the year ahead! Watch for a Snow Fun day in February, Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Fest March 19th, and Green Up Day May 6th. Join us!

WEST WINDSOR CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The West Windsor Conservation Commission normally meets on the first Monday of the Month at 7pm. All residents and visitors are welcome to attend. Agendas are posted in advance of each meeting on the Town Web Site.

The Conservation Commission is tasked with managing the Town Forest Conservation Easement, and also worked in 2022 on:

- Joint meetings with the Planning Commission concerning potential changes to Flood Plain/Flood Hazard Zoning

- Shade Tree management options

- Completion of relocation of significant segments of the Bicentennial Trail to alleviate erosion issues and to tie in with the Ascutney Outdoors Trail

- Supervision of Trail Easements held by the Town outside of the Town Forest, together with potential new trail easements

- Monitoring and potential management of invasive species

Ted Siegler, Chair

WOODSTOCK CONSERVATION COMMISSION 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

The Woodstock Conservation Commission (WCC) is comprised of local conservation volunteers who work to study and protect natural resources. Most efforts involve protecting wetlands and preserving open spaces. The WCC works with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) to provide local comments on wetland and other land disturbance permits.

The Commission holds regularly scheduled meetings Every 4th Tuesday at 4:00 PM at the Town Office Building starting Jan 17, 2023. The public is encouraged to attend.

Meeting minutes, agendas, and announcements are posted on the Town's website: <https://www.woodstocknh.org/conservation-commission>

PERMITS, MITIGATION AND REPAIR PROJECTS

The WCC has received notifications from NHDES regarding Permit Applications and Wetlands Mitigation. They have also received notices of various federal and state highway repair projects. The WCC reviewed the permits and notices and had no comments to the State.

BARRY 4-H CONSERVATION CAMPS

This year, the WCC interviewed 14 students and selected two Lin-Wood Middle School students to receive \$600 scholarships to attend a week of educational learning activities at the Barry Conservation Camp, located in Berlin, New Hampshire. There were 14 students that applied; the WCC conducted interviews at the school. We extend our thanks to Ms. Rebecca Steeves, 7th & 8th grade Science Teacher at the Lin-Wood Public School, for her assistance with this project.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

The WCC manages conservation land easements granted to the Town. To retain these easements, the Town and the WCC must meet any restrictions listed in the property deeds.

The WCC received a notification from town residents regarding the unauthorized development of the Merriam Woods Conservation Easement. This development was done without the permission or knowledge of the town or the WCC. Climbing organizations and individuals had installed permanent climbing equipment including anchors, bolts, and signs on the town-owned conservation property. They used public websites to solicit funds, distribute maps and information on over 150 climbing routes, and encouraged the development of Merriam Woods as a major climbing destination. These actions resulted in a marked increase of the use of the property by climbers, prompting concerns regarding litter, parking issues, and altering trails.

The deed for Merriam Woods does allow for recreational use of the land but prohibits the installation of permanent structures of any kind. The WCC, through the Town Select Board, sent letters to the Rumney Climbing Association (RCA), the climbing website Mountainproject.com, and other individuals in the climbing community, notifying them that they were in violation of the Use Limitations in the Warranty Deed of the property. In the letters, the town requested that all climbing equipment and signs be removed from the property and website information be adjusted to reflect the ownership of the property and restrictions.

Public meetings were held by the WCC with members of the town, the climbing community, and the RCA. The illegal signs were removed by climbers and the website was modified asking climbers to refrain from climbing in the area until the Town had worked through the citizens' concerns.

Several individual climbers volunteered their time for a day of clean up, removing all equipment except for fixed anchors, bolts, and tie offs. At the 2023 Woodstock Town Meeting the WCC has asked for input from the community on the removal of this equipment and the future of climbing at Merriam Woods.

The WCC has a goal to begin drafting a Management Plan for Merriam Woods and other Town-owned conservation lands by the 2023 Town Meeting. Once drafted, the Management Plans will be available for public review and comment.

Respectively Submitted,

Woodstock Conservation Commission

Kristen Durocher, Chairperson

Jim Chesebrough, Secretary

COMMISSION MEMBERS WANTED

The WCC is seeking individuals to fill a vacant seat on the Commission.

Interested people should contact

Kristen Durocher, Chair kristen.durocher@gmail.com,

Jim Chesebrough jchesebrough@keene.edu, Secretary,

or the Town Office at (603) 745-8752.



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

STAFF DIRECTORY

PHONE: 603.643.6626

FAX: 603.643.6636

www.UVLT.org

Jason Berard
Vice President, Stewardship
Ext. 104
Jason.Berard@uvlt.org

Cassie Bernyk
Land Steward / Volunteer Coordinator
Ext. 109
Cassie.Bernyk@uvlt.org

Andy Boyce
Conservation Mapping & Field Specialist
Ext. 111
Andy.Boyce@uvlt.org

Lorie Hood
Office Manager
Ext. 101
Lorie.Hood@uvlt.org

Susannah Howard
Conservation Project Manager
Ext. 114
Susannah.Howard@uvlt.org

Bill Little
Vice President, Operations
Ext. 105
Bill.Little@uvlt.org

Jeanie McIntyre
President
Ext. 106
Jeanie.McIntyre@uvlt.org

Peg Merrens
Vice President, Conservation
Ext. 112
Peg.Merrens@uvlt.org

Craig Privett
Conservation Project Manager
Ext. 108
Craig.Privett@uvlt.org

Micah Tilles
Land Steward
Ext. 122
Micah.Tilles@uvlt.org

Cheryl Twerdowsky
Bookkeeper
Ext. 102
Cheryl.Twerdowsky@uvlt.org

Sayer Wickham
Land Steward
Ext. 110
Sayer.Wickham@uvlt.org



Conservation Easements

Frequently Asked Questions

The Upper Valley Land Trust permanently protects specific parcels of land using voluntary, legally binding agreements known as conservation easements. A conservation easement is a deed that specifies the types and locations of activities permitted on a particular parcel of land. A conservation easement "runs with the land" so all future owners of the parcel are bound to the terms of the conservation easement.

UVLT works directly with landowners to draft restrictions appropriate to the unique characteristics of each property and the landowner's goals. For instance, a landowner may choose to conserve some, but not all, of their land; or a landowner may wish to specify timber or habitat management standards to continue their investment in good stewardship.

Land subject to a conservation easement remains in private ownership and can be sold, given, or inherited at any time. A conservation easement assures landowners that the natural resource values of their land will be protected forever, no matter who the future owners are.

Conservation easements are usually donated to UVLT, and easement donors may realize income tax, estate tax, and gift tax benefits. When funds are available, UVLT may purchase conservation easements. This is sometimes called "selling development rights."

Who Can Grant an Easement?

Any owner of property with conservation values may grant a conservation easement if UVLT accepts. If the property belongs to more than one person, all owners must consent. If

the property is mortgaged, the owner must obtain an agreement from the lender to partially subordinate its interest so that the easement cannot be extinguished in the event of foreclosure.

How Restrictive is a Conservation Easement?

Each conservation easement is designed to limit or prohibit development and other activities in order to protect the significant natural values of that particular property.

Agricultural and forestry activities are usually permitted and encouraged on conserved lands, and structures such as culverts, bridges, barns, sheds, fences, and dams necessary for farming and forestry are allowed. Habitat management and improvement, such as creating ponds and wetlands or establishing plant species to benefit wildlife, is also usually permitted.

Depending on the characteristics of the property and the landowner's wishes, future residential or commercial construction may be prohibited entirely — or limited to a site where it will have the least impact on the natural values of the property. Additional restrictions usually include prohibition of mining, excavation, advertising billboards, and dumps.

How Much Land Must Be Included in a Conservation Easement?

The appropriate amount of acreage depends on the purposes of the easement and the natural values of the land, the landowner's objectives, and UVLT land protection goals and priorities. The restrictions must convey meaningful conservation benefits consistent

with UVLT's mission as a charitable organization.

How are Conservation Easements Enforced?

When UVLT accepts a conservation easement, it takes on a duty of stewardship — the right and responsibility to defend the terms of the easement against any future violation. UVLT representatives visit conserved properties periodically to verify compliance, using written records and photographs to document the condition of the property.

Does a Conservation Easement Require Public Access to the Property?

A conservation easement does not allow access to the public unless the landowner specifically provides for it in the document. Public access is more often granted when the property has a history of public use and is perceived to be a recreational resource. Some landowners provide public access rights to a limited area, such as hiking along a defined corridor. Landowners may limit access to specific purposes (education or hunting, for instance) or permit only certain types of activities such as hiking or skiing. Vermont and New Hampshire state laws protect landowners who offer public access from liability.

Conservation easements do permit regular access by UVLT for the purpose of monitoring the use and activities on the property to ensure that the terms and conditions of the conservation easement are upheld.

Are There Financial Incentives to Donating a Conservation Easement?

Income Taxes: The donation of a conservation easement constitutes a charitable gift which may be deductible for federal income tax purposes if the property meets conservation standards established by the federal government. The value of the gift, determined by an appraisal, is equal to the difference between the fair market value of the property before and after the easement is donated.

Estate Taxes: A conservation easement can be a useful estate planning tool, enabling heirs to keep land they would otherwise have to sell. State and federal inheritance taxes on real estate are often so high that the heirs are forced to sell some or all of the land just to pay the taxes. Because an easement reduces the value of the property, the inheritance taxes are also reduced.

Gift Taxes: When a landowner gives land to a family member, the gift is subject to gift taxes if its value exceeds the maximum tax-free amount. Lowering the value of the land through a conservation easement may allow the landowner to give more land free of tax, or may help reduce the amount of tax owed.

Property Taxes: Most property subject to a conservation easement is eligible for preferential tax treatment under current use taxation. Landowners whose property is already enrolled in a current use program will generally not see a further reduction in their property taxes.



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19 BUCK ROAD, HANOVER, NH 03755
603-643-6626
www.UVLT.org