

## **Holderness Conservation Commission**

It is the mission of the Holderness Conservation Commission to care for the conservation properties owned by the Town of Holderness, to be strong advocates for good conservation practices in the Town, to protect the Town's wetlands from being degraded, to be the local agent for wetland permits and other matters controlled by the NH Department of Environmental Services (NH-DES) and to educate the residents of the town and region about suitable conservation practices.

Members of the Conservation Commission monitor all Town properties and easements on a regular basis, particularly those properties and easements purchased with state funds from LCIP (Land Conservation Investment Program) or the more recent LCHIP (Land Conservation and Heritage Investment Program). Those duties involve monitoring one easement, the Crawford easement, and two properties, the Pilote Forest (105 acres) and the Pemi Riverside Park (5 acres). The Conservation Commission also monitors the Town Forest (25 acres), the Chabot Easement and the Swainey Brook Easement. In addition, the Conservation Commission reviews all Intents to Cut filed with the Town to determine if the cut areas are near wetlands.

During 2007, the Conservation Commission was active in working to protect environmentally sensitive areas of Holderness. The Conservation Commission met with a representative from the NH-DES Wetlands Bureau for an update of NH-DES's policies with respect to wetlands. In cooperation with the Squam Lakes Association and the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center the Conservation Commission hosted a vernal pool workshop to educate the public on the ecological importance of vernal pools and how to identify vernal pools. Twelve citizens participated in the workshop presented by Kerry Yurewicz and Conservation Commissioner Larry Spencer. Another activity included trail access on the Pilote property. Former Conservation Commissioner Reggie Pettit, Anne Packard and Jennifer Preiss of the US Forest Service walked the trail on the Pilote property and identified areas of the trail with poor drainage that will need work to make the trail passable, especially when conditions are wet. This work should be done in the fall when the conditions are the driest. The Conservation Commission will be seeking volunteer help from the community to do this trail improvement.

As part of the outreach initiative, the Conservation Commission met with Wendy Werner, Recreation Director, to discuss use of the trails in the town properties by the recreation department for snowshoe treks during the winter and other activities in the future. The Conservation Commission also met with the new Health and Compliance officer to discuss the wetlands inventory and how to make the location of the town wetlands more easily available to the public.

At the last Town Meeting the warrant article on global climate change was passed. As part of that article the Town was to establish an Energy Committee.

Conservation Commission Chair Larry Spencer is a member of the Energy Committee. The Energy Committee has met and has begun to formulate its duties. At this point the Energy Committee is examining energy use within the Town government and is gathering energy use statistics.

Anne Packard represented the Conservation Commission in the development of the steep slopes ordinances that will be voted on at the upcoming Town Meeting.

Commissioners continue to work on their own understanding of environmental matters through attendance at workshops and meetings. Shelagh Connelly, returning to the Conservation Commission as an alternate, attended the Annual Meeting of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions and reported to the Commission about the sessions she attended.

For 2008 the Conservation Commission plans to co-sponsor another vernal pool workshop in the early spring, with the Squam Lakes Association. In addition, the Conservation Commission is co-sponsoring a workshop in early April with the Squam Lakes Association on the new rules associated with the Shoreland Protection Program which go into effect on April 1, 2008. On June 6-7 the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Squam Lakes Association, Squam Lakes Conservation Society and the Holderness Conservation Commission will co-host a 24-hr Bioblitz in the Squam Lakes range area. The objective is to identify as many organisms in the area within the time period.

The Conservation Commission has changed the day and time of the meetings to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 4:00 pm at the Town Hall year round. Special meetings and field inspections are sometimes held in between regular meetings. If you have an interest in the work of the Conservation Commission or would like to become a member of the Conservation Commission, please contact the Town Administrator at the Town Office. All proceedings of the Commission are open to the public and we welcome all comments and any offers of assistance. The Commission maintains a website at: <http://www.holdernessconservationcommission.org>

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