

Conservation Commission Report

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 2008, the Conservation Commission focused on protecting environmentally sensitive areas of Holderness and encouraging public use of the town properties. The Holderness Park and Recreation Department scheduled winter snowshoe walks through the Pilote property on Beede Road and an open house was also held there in March. 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 them. Six citizens participated in the workshop presented by Kerry Yurewicz and Conservation Commissioner Larry Spencer in April. On June 6-7 the Squam Lakes Natural Science Center, Squam Lakes Association, Squam Lakes Conservation Society and the Holderness Conservation Commission co-hosted a 24-hr Bio-blitz in the Squam Lakes range area. The objective was to identify as many organisms in the area within the time period.

The Commission hosted a workshop with Arlene Arles, from DES, in August to explain the newly enacted Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (RSA 483B) that went into effect on July 1, 2008. More information about the act can be obtained through the Department of Environmental Services website at <http://des.nh.gov>. In September the HCC hosted a regional meeting for area conservation commissions for an opportunity to discuss issues in common, and potential solutions. Former Conservation Commissioner Reggie Pettit and Larry Spencer organized a trail work day for the Pilote property in November. A group

of students from Plymouth State University helped to construct bridges over some of the wet areas to make the trails more passable.

Conservation Commission Chair Larry Spencer continues to be a member of the Energy Committee which has gathered energy use statistics on the town buildings for the purpose of identifying possible ways of conserving energy use.

Commissioners continue to advance their own understanding of environmental matters through attendance at workshops and meetings. Larry Spencer and Anne Packard attended the annual meeting of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions and reported about the sessions they attended. The Commission also met with Chris Devine to discuss water run-off on Route 3 and with David Lorch to discuss the Town's permitting processes.

For 2009 the Conservation Commission plans to co-sponsor another vernal pool workshop in the early spring with the Squam Lakes Association. The commission also plans to initiate a project to accurately locate the Town's prime wetlands areas so the locations can be added to the Town's mapping layers. Some wetlands have already been documented, but the information cannot be used with modern computer mapping programs. The Commission plans to add to the list of vernal pools already identified in Holderness. Identification of the vernal pool locations in the town is important for the protection of many types of amphibians. If you believe you have a vernal pool on your property please contact the Commission through the town office.

The Conservation Commission has changed the day and time of the meetings to the 2nd 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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