

Belmont Conservation Commission Annual Report 2017

It was an exciting and productive year for the Conservation Commission! The most notable accomplishment was negotiating the purchase from the Sanborn Family Trust of the 78-acre Currier-Sanborn property located on Gardners Grove Road north of NH Route 140. This property, consisting of wetlands and contributing uplands, is ranked as the highest value wildlife habitat of its kind in New Hampshire. There is approximately a half mile of unspoiled frontage along the Winnepesaukee River, a half mile on the Tioga River, 250 feet of Silver Lake frontage, and is contained in the Aquifer and Groundwater Protection District. Your Commission received a \$57,270 grant award from the New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP); a \$42,496 grant through the NH Department of Environmental Services –



Rick Ball, LCHIP Executive Director Dijit Taylor, Board President
Amanda Merrill & Denise Naiva Photo: Perry Smith

Wetlands Bureau Aquatic Resource Mitigation grant, and \$7,500 through a NH State Conservation Committee Moose Plate grant. Over \$107,000 has been raised toward the total cost of \$150,000. The \$43,000 balance will come from the Conservation Fund, which is replenished through the Land Use Change Tax as land comes out of Current Use and the unexpended balance of the yearly BCC budget. This property abuts the Tioga River Wildlife and Conservation Area, and will provide a total of approximately 300 acres of protected conservation land. Acquisition of this land will help to protect water quality, wildlife habitat and recreation for residents now, and for generations to come



Before Town Meeting, a red pine timber harvest will have been completed in the Jeff Marden Town Forest. Unfortunately, the large stand of red pine had become infected with Red Pine Scale. The scale has been creeping northerly and we have been monitoring its progress. It is not treatable. The only way to control its spread is through harvesting. Fortunately, these trees showed only early infection, and we will be able to harvest with a net financial gain to be used to establish a special forest maintenance fund. Many thanks to our Conservation Commission member, Scott Rolfe, who orchestrated the whole project.

Belmont was especially fortunate to receive a land donation in December. The donated property, with frontage on both Union Road and Ladd Hill Road, contains 28 acres. We are grateful for the donor's generosity. This property is unspoiled and will be used in its natural state for the enjoyment of the Town's residents.

Kudos to Conservation Commissioner Lynn Lowd who has been active with protecting Belmont's waterways on Lake Winnisquam. Milfoil is an increasing problem on many NH lakes. The Winnisquam Watershed Network (WWN) is a newly formed group made up of volunteers from the towns that border Lake Winnisquam. Its goal is to form a strategic approach to promote water quality, including the control of milfoil. Your Conservation Commission looks forward to this partnership to promote clear, clean waters for residents to enjoy while ensuring that native aquatic species thrive. Working with the N.H. Dept. of Environmental Services Exotic Species Program, the WWN plans



to address milfoil with a more systematic and comprehensive approach than has been used in the past.



The Village Spur Rail Trail project continues to move forward with the anticipated completion of Phase 2 in Spring 2018. The Slippery Rock Bridge was completed this year and as this report is being written the second bridge is being assembled and pushed across the Tioga River. When Phase 2 is completed the trail will run from the Belmont Mill to South Road.

The Commission hosted a Private Water Well Testing Forum presented by Mr. Paul Susca, Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at NH DES; Ms. Kathrin Lawlor, Community Engagement Coordinator with Toxic Metals Superfund Research Program; and Mr. Lucio Barinelli of NH Public Health Laboratories (NHPHL). Participants learned about potential contaminants, naturally occurring and man-made, that are observed in well water. Testing is encouraged for private well owners every 3-5 years. Residents were offered the opportunity to have the Commission subsidize testing at the NHPHL and 51 owners took advantage of it.

Commission goals for 2018 include engaging Belmont Elementary students in the planting of blueberries on the Andrew Sanborn Farm off Durrell Mountain Road, as well as sponsoring a talk on Climate Change presented by the NH Department of Environmental Services. We will continue to engage with the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions and other agencies that promote a healthy environment. Work days on the Town's conserved properties are ongoing and we encourage our residents to participate. It's fun and a bit dirty. Watch for our newsletters and announcements on the Town's website.



Joe Boles was the recipient of the *Belmont Conservation Commission Award in Memory of Jeffery A. Marden*. Joe is a Therapeutic Recreation major at UNH and plans to involve children with cognitive and physical disabilities with the outdoors to improve their quality of life. The scholarship is funded by private donations and with grants from the Sargent Fund. Those wishing to donate may do so at the Lakes Region Scholarship Fund.

Thank you for your support and please let us know what is important to you by attending our monthly meetings, the first Wednesday of each month, 6pm, at the Corner Meeting House. We have an open position for an alternate member. It's a great way to contribute to the rural nature of our community.

Thank you for your continued support!

Denise Naiva, Chairman

Paul Schmidt, Vice Chairman

Keith Bennett, Member

Ben Crawford, Member

Laurel Day, Member

Scott Rolfe, Member

Claude Patten, Jr., Ex Officio

Ken Knowlton, Alternate

Lynne Lowd, Alternate

