



BELMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

WORKING TO CONSERVE YOUR NATURAL RESOURCES

WHO, WHAT, HOW?

Who Are Your Conservation Commissioners?



Ken Knowlton, Chair (2008)
Denise Naiva, Vice Chair (2007)
Brian Watterson, Select Board Rep.(2007)
Ward Peterson (2007)
Nancy Wederski (2009)
Mark Lewandoski (2008)
Ginger Wells-Kay (2009)

Magnus McLetchie -Alternate (2007)
Scott Rolfe -Alternate (2009)
Vacant -Alternate (2008)

Land Use Staff:
Rick Ball, Land Use Tech 267-8300 x 25
Candace Daigle, Planner 267-8300 x13

What Is A Conservation Commission?

The Belmont Conservation Commission works hard to protect and conserve your natural resources. We would like Belmont citizens to better understand what we do and to support us in our work. To this end, we will be sending out a newsletter from time to time.

The BCC was established by Belmont voters in 1967 for “the proper utilization and protection of natural resources and for the protection of watershed resources of the Town. Natural resources include the air, land, surface and ground waters, fish, wildlife, plants, wetlands, soils, minerals, and scenic quality.” Conservation Commissions are advisory bodies only and have no legal or regulatory authority. The State of New Hampshire passed RSA 36A in 1963, allowing towns to create Conservation Commissions.

The BCC advises the Selectmen, Planning Board and other local boards on conservation matters. We can

receive and manage gifts of money and property in the name of the town and can acquire and manage open spaces within the town, all subject to the approval of the Board of Selectmen.

Managing natural resources on town-owned conservation areas such as the Town Forest is a large part of the Commission’s charge. Creating and keeping a current Natural Resources Inventory of Belmont is another ongoing task of the BCC.

Your Belmont Conservation Commission acts as liaison to other organizations and works on inter-community and regional conservation and preservation efforts like the Tri-City Aquifer Project and the Belknap Mountains Project. Any questions or comments, speak with any of us or Rick Ball at the Land Use Office.

How Can You Get Involved?

Come to our meetings, which are held at 7:00PM on the first Wednesday of the month in the Corner Meeting House near the Belmont Police Station. We need input from interested citizens. Also, we currently have an opening for one Alternate Commissioner. There is work to be done in attending other educational and public meetings regarding conservation issues and reporting

back; clearing and maintaining trails on town conservation land; identifying plants and animals and keeping records to add to Belmont’s Natural Resources Inventory; raising money for the BCC scholarship fund; and more. If you are interested in supporting the care and conservation of our natural resources, please contact Rick Ball, Land Use Office at 267-8300 x19.

Your Conservation Land In Belmont

Currently, Belmont is very fortunate to have 2 parcels of land set aside for public use. Our 65 acre Town Forest is bordered by the Tioga River and includes a pond, beaver dam, marsh, a magnificent stand of red pines, and miles of trails. It is open to foot traffic, mountain biking, cross country skiing and other non-motorized use. The Forest can be entered from 3 entrances on Wildlife Boulevard. Orange gates were installed last month and parking places are being created for more convenient access.

Through the work of the Conservation Commission and the Land Use Office, Belmont recently acquired a second large property on Depot Street (Rte 140 near the Tilton line) that is now in conservation. It will soon be available for your use. We are currently working on flagging the boundaries of the property, creating a parking area, and devising a management plan that will

include recreation use. This beautiful piece of land includes wetlands, meadow, forest, and river. It is habitat for many NH animals including moose, deer, and wild turkey.

Conservation land is paid for in part by Belmont's land use change tax. The Town of Belmont voted to give the Conservation Commission 100% of the taxes collected when land goes out of current use and is put into house lots or commercial development. This money is used for the acquisition of conservation land only. Please plan to visit and enjoy these beautiful public lands right in your community (driving fewer miles to enjoy nature saves fuel too!).

Aquifer Protection and Water Issues News

The Tri-Town Aquifer Project culminated in a Best Management Practices Guidebook published in draft form in August; it will soon be available to homeowners, developers, and businesses. Members of the Tri-town Water Resources Committee and the Lakes Region Planning Commission worked for nearly 2 years to complete this guidebook; funding was provided by the NH Department of Environmental Services. Rick Ball, Land Use Technician, and Candace Daigle, Town Planner, were our representatives. The project's goal is to provide the towns of Belmont, Northfield, and Tilton with a detailed guidebook of best management practices to protect the stratified drift aquifer that provides our drinking water.

How we live and work on the aquifer is of utmost importance in keeping our drinking water clean and abundant. The total land area of the three towns is 46,550 acres; approx. 24% of this acreage is located on the aquifer. "Land use activities which take place in this direct recharge area have the potential to directly impact ground water quality and quantity," they write. Topics include cold climate considerations, conservation design, erosion and sediment control, septic systems, storage tanks, and other issues related to water on your home or business property.

- **Pick up a copy of the guidebook at the Belmont Town Hall, read and follow the best management practices, then pass the information on to your neighbors and local businesses.**

Recycling News

The Board of Selectmen recently announced that drop-off recycling is now available to Town of Belmont residents. Drop-off containers will be stationed at Bestway Disposal's Belmont site, open to the public on Wednesday evenings from 5-7 pm and Saturday mornings from 8 - 12noon. Take Rt.140 towards Tilton; just after the Coke Bottling Plant sign, turn left onto Industrial Dr. and look for the signs.

The following items will be accepted: co-mingled cans, bottles, jars, tin cans, plastic bottles and jugs; paper products; and anything that tears. The recycling center

will also accept metal drop-off with no charge for washers, dryers, stoves, or other metal objects without freon. There will be a \$20.00 charge for refrigerators, air conditioners, humidifiers or any other item with freon; and a \$5.00 charge for 20 lb. propane tanks.

The Town looks forward to working with Bestway in offering this service to residents. Your cooperation in following the signs and the rules of the facility is greatly appreciated. If we recycle, we make an impact on the enormous waste stream we create each and every day.

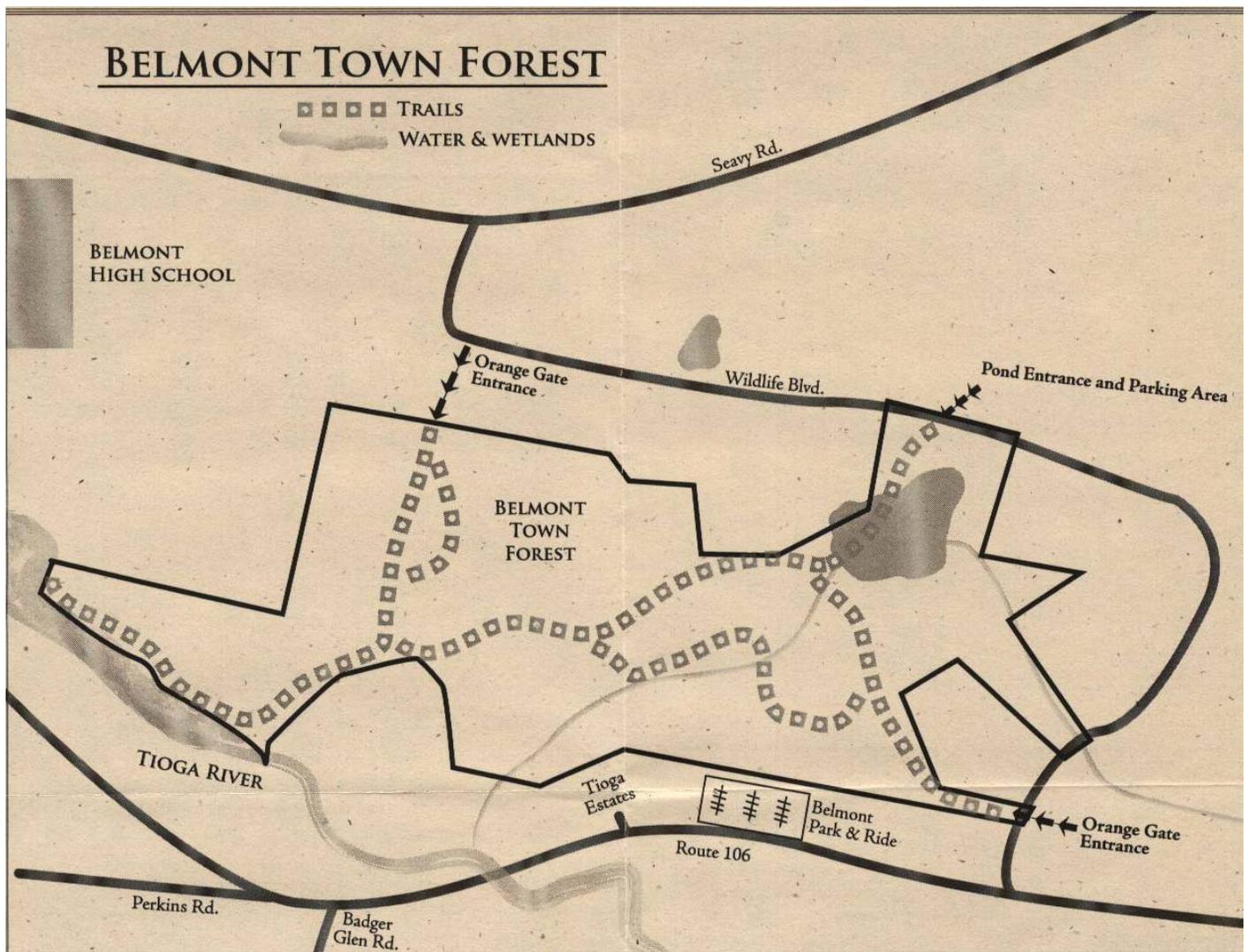
Belmont Town Forest

This summer, Conservation Commission members and 2 Belmont father and son teams had a productive day clearing trails, collecting trash, and noting plant and animal life. We evaluated the beaver pond and made plans to ensure a relatively stable pond level to help prevent overflow and erosion. We also noted deep ruts created by motorized vehicles in boggy areas by the pond and wetlands. This leads to impassable trails.

The Town Forest Stewardship Plan was developed by the Commission and approved in October 2006. Permitted uses include hiking, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, biking(non-motorized), boats, canoes, and kayaks (non-motorized and to be removed at the end of each day), snowmobiles on designated trails, fishing and bow hunting in accordance with NH law, trail work and

timber management approved by the Conservation Commission. Non-permitted activities include dumping, alcoholic beverages, damage or removal of any part of the Forest, overnight camping, fires, trapping, firearms except bows, motorized vehicles and boats, and overnight parking. To read the entire stewardship plan, including history, maps, goals, and inventory, please go to the town website, click on "Data Center", then click on "Application Forms, Ordinances & Regulations", scroll down to Town Forest and click on "Stewardship Plan".

Please use the forest and keep it as it is for all to enjoy, including the Belmont Town Forest flora and fauna that are its year-round residents. It's your Forest, too!



Clean Air and Belmont Park and Ride

“According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), driving a car is the single most polluting thing that most of us do . . . Auto emissions also contribute to the environmental problems of acid rain and global warming.”
– National Safety Council

The Belmont Park and Ride opened in 2005 to promote ride-sharing as an alternative way for commuters to travel. Conveniently located on Rt 106 near the Rt 140 intersection, it has 42 well-lit parking spaces. Ridesharing

reduces travel costs, traffic congestion and environmental impacts.

Currently, about 15-18 vehicles use the facility daily. We would like to see that number doubled and urge you to use Belmont Park and Ride to save gas money, wear and tear on your car, and damage to the environment. Go to <http://www.nh.gov/dot/nhrideshare/> to arrange your ride. We are fortunate to have a safe and convenient place to leave our vehicles while sharing rides. Let's use it.

Belmont Conservation Commission Scholarship

In 2005, the BCC created a scholarship fund to help support the education of a Belmont High School senior or graduate enrolled in a degree program in the broad areas of conservation and the environment. Monies are raised through contributions; the scholarship is administered through the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation.

Our 2005 recipient was Matt Pickowitz, now a sophomore studying Conservation Law at Unity College in Maine. Our 2006 recipient is Leonard Smock-Randall, a senior at UNH studying Environmental Conservation.

Leonard writes that he “truly believes that sustainable management of our property and the earth's natural resources must start now if we hope to secure a future that meets our current standard of living . . . I currently work as a Soil Conservation Aide with NRCS and have been working there now for over 2 years. I hope that after graduation I will step into a position as a soil

conservationist or general ecologist in NH or New England . . . We need to bring agriculture closer to home without compromising our own natural ecosystems . . . I believe that community education and outreach are two important tools that will be the basis for sustainable management in the future.. . . the small actions of many individuals in our society will allow us to continue living comfortably while maintaining the many resources that support us.” His writings illustrate his dedication to the conservation ethic in both word and deed.

We offer a scholarship in the amount of \$500.00 each year to worthy Belmont students like Matt and Leonard. To support this scholarship fund, please send a check to the Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation, PO Box 7312, Gilford, NH 03247. Write “Belmont Conservation Commission Scholarship” on the memo line. Thank you!

Natural Resources Inventory



Black Bear

The Belmont Natural Resources Inventory will be completed in early Spring 2007. This is an important tool that uses maps and digital photographs to identify and document wildlife and wildlife habitat, plant communities, vernal pools, wetlands, rock outcroppings, soils, and unique co-occurrence of natural resources. The NRI is used in planning for development and in preserving areas designated of high importance in conserving natural resources, including wildlife habitat.



Pippissewa



Osprey Nest

UNH Senior Project students worked on adding to our NRI knowledge base in 2004 and 2005. This year the NRI is being completed by John Severance and Elise Lawson of Watershed to Wildlife, Inc., a natural resources consulting group from Bethlehem, NH. They have completed the fieldwork and are now working on the compilation of data. A sneak preview of results includes the sighting of a pair of bears, an active osprey nest, and some plant life of interest including bottle gentian, pippissewa, and false foxglove. The Natural Resources Inventory will be made available to Belmont residents and will be incorporated into the Town Master Plan.

Conservation and Global Warming



We hear much about global warming these days. Greenhouse gases, primarily in the form of CO₂, are apparently raising the temperature of our planet and bringing along some unhealthy, unpleasant changes. Instead of feeling help

less and hopeless, there are many things we can do to reduce carbon emissions. Even if you do not ascribe to the concept of global warming, these changes are good for your budget and for the conservation and preservation of our precious and dwindling natural resources. With the population growing, we all need to conserve.

10 Things You Can Do To Conserve Natural Resources & Reduce Carbon Emissions

- 1. Reduce, reuse, recycle** Compost, go to your recycling center, buy less, buy used. Bring your recyclables to the Belmont recycling area at the Bestway site on Industrial Dr., off Rt 140 near the Cocoa Cola Plant, Weds., 5-7PM & Sats., 8-12PM. "Use it up, wear it out, or do without." Our old Yankee philosophy can be dusted off and reused today, too!
- 2. Turn off appliances, turn off lights, and shut down computers** when not in use to save electricity and decrease carbon emissions.
- 3. Decrease heating and air conditioning.** Insulate your home well. Have an energy audit, provided free by your utility company. Wash your clothes in warm or cold water only. Turn the thermostat setting just 2 degrees lower in winter and higher in summer and save about 2,000 pounds of carbon dioxide (from National Wildlife Federation)
- 4. Conserve water** by planting dry-loving plants and trees; decrease lawn size by adding more trees and native plants; tolerate a less than perfectly watered lawn. Fix dripping spigots immediately. Turn off water while shaving and brushing your teeth; take 3 minute showers.
- 5. Buy energy-efficient products** Purchase household appliances that are labeled with the EPA's ENERGY

Save as a Reminder ☞-----

"A true conservationist is a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers but borrowed from his children."
– John James Audubon

The Belmont Conservation Commission is grateful to the New England Grassroots Environment Fund for a grant that partially funded this newsletter. The purpose of the NEGEF is *to increase engagement and participation in grassroots environmental initiatives and to build and connect healthy, sustainable communities in New England.*

STAR as they meet strict energy efficiency guidelines. Buy a hybrid car or one that has good gas mileage. Compact florescent light bulbs (CFLs) provide natural-looking light while using much less energy than standard light bulbs - and they last longer, too.

- 6. Paper or plastic?** Bring your own cloth bags when buying groceries or reuse paper and plastic. You can reduce landfill waste and save valuable natural resources this way.
- 7. Plant trees.** They reduce the carbon in the air, increase breathable oxygen, cool down air temperatures, and act as windbreaks.
- 8. Buy locally grown produce** A food mile is how far food travels from the farmer who produces it to the consumer who eats it. The more miles, the more fuel used. Also, food from far away is less fresh and it is harder to watch for production and safety problems. Support our small family farms and farmers' markets. Ask your grocery store to stock local food stuffs.
- 9. Drive Less.** Less driving means fewer emissions. Besides saving gas, walking and biking are great forms of exercise. Carpool to work or school and use Belmont Park and Ride which is part of NH RideShare system, the NHDOT free computerized ride matching service: <http://www.nh.gov/dot/nhrideshow/> When you do drive, make sure your car is running in top shape. Keeping your tires properly inflated can improve gas mileage by more than 3 percent. Every gallon of gas you save helps your budget and keeps CO₂ out of the atmosphere.
- 10. Change just one (or more!) light bulb(s)** Replace regular light bulbs with compact florescent light (CFL) bulbs. Replacing just one 60-watt incandescent light bulb with a CFL will save you \$30 over the life of the bulb. CFLs also last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs, use two-thirds less energy, and give off 70 percent less heat. According to one study, if every American family replaced one regular light bulb with a CFL, it would eliminate 90 billion pounds of greenhouse gases, the same as taking 7.5 million cars off the road. (from National Wildlife Federation)