

CAMPTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2007

The commission's mission statement (adopted in 2001): *The Campton Conservation Commission (CCC) believes the community is sustained by its natural landscapes, clean water, forest and agricultural products, and varied habitats for plants and animals. The CCC sees its mission as working to preserve, protect, and properly utilize these resources for current and future residents of the town.*

The commission remains at 5 commissioners. Jim Blake, who had served for several years, left the commission when he moved from town. His common sense approach was very much appreciated by the commission. Lisa Doner began attending meetings and joined the commission mid-year. She is presently a research assistant professor at the Center for the Environment at PSU and adds a lot of knowledge of the natural world to the commission. She has already proven to be invaluable in using her research and writing skills on various projects. Those interested in consideration for appointment should contact a commission member, the Selectmen or attend a meeting. The CCC has room for 7 commissioners and welcomes public involvement. The commission meets at the town office at 7:30 PM, the second Wednesday of each month.

The Campton Conservation Fund is a trust held by the town for the purpose of conservation projects or acquisitions. When Land Use Change Tax monies are collected, 50% of the tax is deposited into the fund. In 2007, the fund grew by \$ 65,935 deposits and \$ 8,135 interest. The power of the fund comes as important lands benefiting the community are permanently protected through purchases or conservation easements. Property owners interested in considering conservation of their property can contact the commission for support, advice or for referrals to other conservation professionals to guide families with estate planning. This year, expenditures totaling \$1,144 were made from this fund for professional consulting fees while working to protect lands over the town's important aquifer (more about this project below) for a total balance at the end of the year of \$ 231,892.

Blair Woodland Natural Area, acquired and protected through actions of the CC in 2002, had many visitors this year, as evidenced by many comments in the kiosk visitors' notebook. This shows entries by appreciative local residents making frequent tours of the site as well as non-local visitors to the area. The kiosk received a plexiglass covering to protect displayed materials. Commissioners Melissa Greenawalt-Yelle and Jessica Halm offered nature walks in various seasons and 16 PSU students were brought as part of an environmental class studying water quality with commissioner Lisa Doner. Also, Melissa Greenawalt-Yelle conducted nature walks in conjunction with the Campton Historical Society's open house at Blair Chapel. The trails are open year round, however winter use of the parking lot is problematic because of its upward slope towards Rt. 3 and poor visibility from show banks. Because of this, winter parking is available around the corner at the Country Cow Restaurant or the Blair Covered Bridge. New trail signs will be installed in spring 2008, through a generous donation of materials by Leah Gray.

This year the CCC's biggest focus was a land conservation effort to protect 17 acres over Campton's valuable aquifer. The Campton Village Precinct (CVP) and CCC established a collaborative relationship, shared expenses to engage a conservation

consultant, and applied for LCHIP grant funding in an attempt to purchase a conservation easement. The conservation effort itself was unsuccessful, but the process was beneficial on many levels. The Commission gained greater knowledge of our area's aquifer and its importance to the majority of residents in town (including the school), established a good working relationship with the CVP, and learned much about grant application processes. These gains will benefit new conservation efforts in future years.

Commissioners continued outreach and collaboration with other groups in the community including the Planning Board, the Campton Historical Society, the Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee, The North Country Council, Conservation Commissions and protection groups from other towns, and Rumney Ecological Systems (Quincy Bog) acting as a local land trust. Commissioners attended workshops and seminars on various topics. CCC outreach efforts this year included GIS maps and conservation displays at town meeting, collaborative efforts with university students working on summer projects at Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest, formulation of a list of conservation resources and the bulletin boards at the Town Office.

The commission reviewed Wetland and Forestry applications, making advisory comments to the state bureaus and occasionally making assessments after site visits. Residents are reminded that a permit is needed when planning work such as driveways or logging operations over or near wetlands or surface waters. NHDES applications for wetland permits can be obtained from the Town Clerk's office. Changes to the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA) will begin in April, 08. Since Campton's rivers are now included in these measures, we anticipate that the CCC will work with the community to help increase understanding of and compliance with the new regulations. The CCC views the changes to the CSPA as a positive action that helps preserve quality of the drinking water supply for Campton residents, helps reduce risk of annual flooding, and preserves the local riparian and lake environments for wildlife as well as human visitors.

The CCC encourages local efforts in the community for increasing sustainability and protection of our valuable local resources. These actions benefit the local area as well as global efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Campton is fortunate in having large tracts of land which, in their undeveloped state, contribute to overall protection of air and water quality and are important lands for recreation, timber and wildlife habitat. Along our town boundaries, conservation efforts have begun to preserve similar tracts of forested lands. Within Campton, a group that includes local landowners, the Squam Lakes Conservation Society, The Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Lands, are acting together on adjoining land conservation projects. This effort could eventually result in Campton owning and managing its own town forest.

Sincerely;

Jane Kellogg, Melissa Greenawalt-Yelle, Co-Chair
Jules Doner, Lisa Doner, Jessica Halm