

**CAMPTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION (CCC)
2020 ANNUAL REPORT**

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.*

During 2020, the Commission's main focus has been on the West Branch Brook Forest Project, a land conservation effort to acquire the 145 acre Spokesfield Homestead on NH Rt 3. A public hearing was held on April 22. Four grants were applied for and a fund-raising effort was launched in May during which over 60 individuals contributed over \$26k. Professionals were hired for survey work, appraisal, legal work, grant writing assistance and environmental assessment. A property clean-up day was held to remove a dilapidated cabin and old tires. In 2021, we expect to complete due diligence tasks before grant money is delivered, close on the property, work with the Pemi Baker Land Trust to write the conservation easement language and stewardship plans for the future, and plan for public access. This town-owned property will continue to host a snowmobile trail and be accessible year round. New trails will be planned in collaboration with the White Mountain Trail Collective to allow visitors to experience the property's varied, high quality wildlife habitats.

The Commission continues to manage 2 town-owned conservation properties: Pattee Conservation Park(PCP) and Blair Woodland Natural Area(BWNA). The field at PCP was partially mowed this fall, in preparation for a Veteran's 5K road race hosted by White Mountain Karate. The Campton Garden Club continues to partner on care of the Liberty Tree. In November, the state conducted a timber harvest on the neighboring Blair State Forest, which led to more research on management of the PCP forest to optimize the health and usefulness of this small forest that abuts state land. BWNA is managed as a natural area. Trails are kept for walking and access to the Pemigewasset River. We welcome hosting local youth groups for educational forest or field tours of either property. Simply be in touch with any of our members if you're interested.

The Commission manages the town's Conservation Fund (CF). In 2020, the CCC received generous donations totaling \$26,055, as part of our land acquisition fundraising efforts. These funds were deposited and remain in the CF, which also earned \$20.84 in interest. A withdrawal for \$1020 was made to send two Campton students to the Barry Conservation Camp. After camp closure was confirmed the \$1020 was refunded and deposited back in the account. In 2020 the Commission has paid \$27,012.25 in project related expenses from the CF for survey work, appraisal, legal work, grant writing assistance and environmental assessment. Balance of the fund on 12/30/2020 was \$209,255.47.

2020 was the third year that we have sponsored two Campton residents to attend NH Fish and Game's Barry Conservation Camp in Milan, NH. We have worked closely with health teacher Katie Scambio at Campton Elementary School to select one boy and one girl to attend a week of this summer camp, based on applications and an interview process. However, due to Covid-19, the camp did not open this year. We anticipate sending these same two previously chosen students in 2021.

Continuing activities this year included managing submission of monthly "Conservation Matters" articles to The Record Enterprise. Seven other conservation/natural resource groups in the area take turns writing articles on a variety of topics. Our roadside clean-up took place twice this year, in April and November. We now pick up trash the entire length of Blair Road and 175 north of Blair Road for 1.5

miles, near the intersection with Perch Pond Road. We welcome residents' help, particularly those living along the route. We held our 7th Annual Frozen Bog Tracking Walk in January, led by Lea Stewart. About 15 participants explored the frozen solid, wind-swept bog, finding evidence of active otters! This year, we are planning virtual tracking and winter walking experiences through social media. Look for posts on our Facebook page, and feel free to share your own tracking photos there as well.

CCC members continue to stay current in conservation related topics and attended various events and webinars including the NH Assoc. of Conservation Commissions and DES Groundwater Source Protection conferences, and meetings of the Lakes Region Planning Commission and Pemi River Local Advisory Committee. Other ongoing work includes the review of wetland permit applications, outreach to landowners interested in conserving their land, or landowners wanting to harvest timber resources. We continue to follow seasonal projects on the town's largest preserved area, the Beebe River Tract, by The Conservation Fund, NH Fish and Game, Plymouth State University, and Trout Unlimited.

There were some inquiries about visible timber harvesting within the community. The Commission has asked our county forester for assistance in reaching out to landowners with timber resources to help answer questions, plan for sustainable timber harvest practices, and employ NH's recommended Best Management Practices. Contact us for these resources. Many are available on line.

The Friends of the Pemi-Livermore Falls Chapter continues to push towards the goal of revitalizing the recreational, scenic and historic Livermore Falls area. The volunteer effort is led by Plymouth Rotary. CCC members continue to regularly attend meetings with members of the Campton Historical Society, State agency representatives, and interested citizens. The West side (Campton) continues to be unsafe around the old mill, erosion from high water events make the river difficult to access, and legal parking along Rt. 3 is limited and confusing. Unfortunately, again in 2020, we did not see visible improvements that were hoped for due to staff changes in state agencies working with the group. In the second half of 2020, there was some renewed energy as a result of new staffing at the state level so 2021 could be the year when some positive changes are seen on the west side. The east side improvements made in previous years by the State of NH and the Friends group continues to be enjoyed by an increasing number of people floating the river to Plymouth, picnickers and swimmers, and fishermen. You can learn more by reading Friends of the Pemi's annual report or going to their website.

The commission now stands at 7 members, since Jim Butler joined in October. CCC meetings are open to the public and are held at the town office, generally on the first Wednesday of each month at 7PM. This year, most meetings after March were over Zoom. The topic of the April meeting each year is management of the town's two conservation lands. Public involvement is welcome. You can also access CCC-related news, information and archived articles through our website: www.camptonconservation.org, and on Facebook: <https://facebook.com/CamptonConservationCommission>.

Sincerely (serving since),

Dan Boynton(2019), Jim Butler(2020) Shannon Garnsey(2014), Jessica Halm(2005),

Jane Kellogg(1999), Dick Osborne(2017), Rebecca Steeves(2013)