

CAMPTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION: ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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 has grown to 6 commissioners with the appointment in April of Tammy Wooster, who has a background in wildlife management and works as a technician at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest in Woodstock. After over 12 years, Jane Kellogg has stepped down as chair of the commission; Jess Halm and Melissa Greenawalt-Yelle have taken her place as co-chairs. Those interested in becoming involved with the commission should contact a commissioner or the Select Board, or attend a meeting. Our meetings are held at the town office on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm (November through April), or at 7:30pm (May through October).

The 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 2008, the fund gained \$23,197.96 in deposits and \$5,144.26 interest. Expenditures totaling \$196,911.04 were made from this fund for the purchase of 11.2 acres of land located on the corner of Blair Road and Route 175 (described below). The total balance of the Fund at the end of the year stands at \$63,322.96.

The Commission's greatest effort this year resulted in the purchase of the approximately 11-acre Pattee Property. In September, over 40 Campton residents attended a public hearing regarding the project and were overwhelmingly in favor of the CCC's intent to purchase 10.7 acres of land. Due to a competing offer, the CCC decided to purchase the .5 acre parcel containing the late Ed Pattee's house, in order to conserve the property. The intent is to resell the house, upon voter approval at this year's Town Meeting, with the proceeds reimbursing the Conservation Fund. The land purchase protects grassland habitat and provides access to the Blair State Forest. The State has indicated willingness to collaborate with the CCC to establish and maintain recreational trails in the Forest. Our April 2009 meeting will focus on land management concerns and input by community members concerning CCC-managed properties.

Blair Woodland Natural Area (BWNA), acquired in 2002, is located on Route 3, south of the intersection with Blair Road. Comments in the visitor's log book indicate that this "pocket park" continues to pleasantly surprise visitors with its network of walking trails along the Pemigewasset River. This spring, the CCC installed new trail signs with the help of several volunteers, including George Wright, Reed Harrigan, Ian Halm, Eric Wooster, and Ron Reynolds. Leah Gray, the former owner of the Blair Woodland property, generously donated funds to purchase materials for the signs. The trails are open year-round; however, winter use of the parking lot is problematic because of its upward slope towards Route 3 and poor visibility from snow banks. Therefore, winter parking is available around the corner at the Country Cow Restaurant or the Blair Covered Bridge. In an effort to increase awareness of BWNA, copies of the trail guide were sent to local B&Bs, along with a letter highlighting the property's appeal.

The CCC collaborated with many community groups this year, including the consideration of dredging Campton Pond, an effort led by Todd Baldwin and Steve Hackett. At this point, this is on hold due to conflicts with the current Forest Service Management Plan. After a vernal pool workshop at the Squam Lakes Science Center, community volunteer Peggy

Martin worked with Commissioners to document vernal pools in town. The CCC also hosted a training session led by Jason Aube, NHDES Outreach Specialist, concerning the updated Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act (CSPA), attended by conservation commissioners and local officials from surrounding towns. In September, Michelle Therrien, a GIS Specialist from the Town of Meredith, spoke to Campton's Planning Board and Conservation Commission on how Campton's GIS database, created in 2005, can best be used as a planning tool. Additionally, we have begun to work with Campton Village Precinct commissioners to establish a groundwater protection plan and ordinance for the town. We have also continued working with the Campton Historical Society, the Pemigewasset River Local Advisory Committee, The North Country Council, and Rumney Ecological Systems (Quincy Bog) acting as a local land trust.

The commission reviewed wetland and alteration of terrain applications. We also investigated an illegal river crossing and have been in touch with State officials as well as the landowner in order to try to correct the problem. 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.

In February, the CCC created and distributed an informational brochure, which is available at the Town Office or on the CCC website. In December, Campton Current Use landowners of 50 acres or more received a letter from the CCC detailing current tax incentives for conservation easement donations. 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.

The CCC encourages residents to use our lending resource library, which is now accessibly-located at the Campton Public Library. The CCC works hard to keep info on our website (<http://www.camptonnh.org/conservation.htm>) current and useful. You can also find our minutes from our regular business meetings there, to learn about what we are up to all year long!

Sincerely;

Jessica Halm, Melissa Greenawalt-Yelle, Co-Chairs

Jules Doner, Lisa Doner, Jane Kellogg, and Tammy Wooster