

## Conservation Matters

*A monthly column focused on conservation education, as the result of collaboration among several area conservation commissions and organizations. If your town's commission or conservation organization would like to contribute articles, please contact Jessica Tabolt Halm [jess\\_tabolt@hotmail.com](mailto:jess_tabolt@hotmail.com)*

Title: Mark Your Calendar – May 3 – Your Invitation To Learn More About Land Stewardship

Submitted by: Rumney Conservation Commission

Are you reading this article while enjoying a scenic vista outside your window or thinking about your favorite outdoor place? Maybe you wish someone had saved your favorite place -- it's no longer the place you loved. If your town still has beautiful open spaces and public lands, there's probably been careful stewardship — or, a lot of luck. Stewardship means the management or care of something, particularly the kind that works. The contributions of a steward often result in the guardianship, monitoring and management of resources.

In accordance with RSA 36-A, Conservation Commissions are created to ensure the proper utilization and protection of the natural and watershed resources of a town. Primarily an advisory body, the commission works in cooperation with other town boards, such as the Planning Board and Selectmen, to ensure development has no adverse effects on our natural resources, and takes into account the character of the town. In our area, land trusts like the Pemi-Baker Land Trust can be important partners in this work. The Rumney Conservation Commission reviews site plans, dredge & fill permits, forestry operations and conducts site walks as appropriate. Since it is not a regulatory authority, education and outreach are our key tools for conservation in the area.

The Baker River and its associated wetlands, part of the Pemi-Baker Watershed, is like the circulatory system in the body. It delivers many benefits to the town affecting our quality of life such as opportunities for recreation, agriculture, and critical habitat for fish and wildlife species throughout their life cycle.

How do we maintain these values in a town? How can a landowner ensure that a town, land trust, family member or next owner continues to steward the land they love? There are a variety of methods to consider. In fact, you are invited to attend an information session **May 3, from 8:30 am to noon**, at the Russell Elementary School, co-sponsored by the Rumney Conservation Commission and the Pemi-Baker Land Trust. A variety of experts will share information and guidance for you and your family to consider. Coffee and light refreshments will be provided. Brian Hotz from the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests will discuss easements and options. Other speakers include Jasen Stock from N.H. Timberland Owners Association who will present information about landowner liability, Betty Jo Taffe who will introduce the work of the Pemi-Baker Land Trust, and Don Winsor who will talk about the easement process from a landowner's perspective.

There are many options for landowners to consider and our speakers will be able to take the mystery out of the terminology. These include land donation, remainder interest gifts with life estates, sale of land, and conservation easements. There are several types of land donation with a variety of benefits for the donor including tax benefits, and the land can be put to a variety of specified uses. There is a lot to be learned about

conservation easements too. An easement is a written promise, legal form, recorded at registry of deeds. It may be donated or sold, and can be placed on just a portion of a piece of land. It essentially dissolves development rights and does not always require that the land be accessible to the public.

We hope you will join us to learn more. Bring a friend along. Conservation and stewardship is a big job, and we all need to know more and do what we can to be good stewards of the land, providing care, monitoring and management of our special places and resources.