

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Conservation Committee has completed many achievements during 2006. Our committee is comprised of volunteers that are appointed by the Selectmen. According to state law, it is our responsibility to protect the natural resources of the town. New Hampshire RSA 36-A directs us to “conduct researches into our local land and water areas” and “seek to coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes”. Our membership is made up of six regular members, three alternates, and one Selectman Ex-Officio representative. We are very fortunate that our committee has a wide range of knowledge concerning wildlife, vegetation, shoreline and wetland soil issues. Their innovative ideas, positive energy and endless contributions of time have been an asset to our town in protecting our natural resources. I thank the entire committee and their families for always being there and commend their ability to think out of the box to accomplish the tasks we are presented with.

Member of the Conservation Commission were able to participate in the 2006 Law Lecture Series in October and November. This series included three lectures: 1. Off-Site Exactions and Impact Fees, 2. Ethics for Land Use Board Members, 3. Land Use Regulation. Three of our committee was able to attend the “Saving Special Places” workshop, which was held in Wolfeboro at the Kingwood Regional High School. The Conservation Committee was also able to send someone to attend The Law Lecture Series in Manchester, NH pertaining to conservation issues and Storm Water Management. Our members continue to attend informative and educational meetings, when ever possible.

The Conservation Committee has the important assignment concerning the proper utilization and protection of the natural resources and of watershed resources, including but not limited to shoreline protection, wet soil issues, site walks (when responding to citizen concerns), and endangered species protection. We continue to work with the State Wetland Bureau concerning any issues in our town as well as our input on all dredge & fill permit applications as well as Sand and Gravel Excavations as stated in RSA 155-E-3. The Scenic Roads in town also come under the charge of this Commission, as described in RSA 231:157 and RSA 231:158. The list of Scenic Roads are: Gale Village Road, Currierville Road, Maple Avenue, Goulds Hill Road, Heath Street, Bartlett Street and Thornell Road. The various boards in our town continue to keep us informed on issues and permits that come before them. We enjoy the good working relationship with all the town boards and committees.

One of our accomplishments this year has been under the direction of Conservation Chairperson, Trisha McCarthy and Alicia Raddatz Vice Chairperson. On May 5, 2006, we hosted our second identification process of Bio-Monitoring of wet soil areas on the Busch Farm. This was a huge success. The Newton Memorial School’s 5th Grade was bussed to the Busch Farm for an Educational Field Trip. We had approximately 70 students and about 30 parents who participated in this event. Our goal is to include students from Memorial School, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts in our next Bio-Monitoring Day and hope to expand this to other areas in town as part of our Storm Water Management Program. We invite participation by all, and guarantee that it will be a fabulous learning experience, (and fun for all ages). The Busch Farm is one of our largest

parcels that has over 47 acres to explore. This area is open to the public and includes off street parking. The easiest access is from Rte 108 (north of New Boston Road), on the right side by the pipe gate. We hope to be selected for a grant that will allow us to improve the parking area, repair culverts, add a walking bridge, make a second access for Emergency Equipment and add signage at the entrance and on the loop trails.

This year we were fortunate to obtain an addition to our list of protected Conservation Land. This is a large 33+ acres that sits between the Peanut Trail off Whittier Street and Old Lower Road. The Land has been named the John Marden Conservation Land. This enhances our wildlife corridor, watershed resources and open space as mentioned in our Master Plan while protecting our wildlife habitat and natural resources.

In addition to this we will be obtaining a small parcel from the Wilder's Grove Cottage Association. This is a special little piece of land within our shoreline protection area and our aquifer. This is just another way to protect our natural resources. If you know of an important piece of land that may be of interest to us, and help keep Newton greener, please contact us.

Family Fun Day at Greenie Park was another activity that was a wonderful success. The Newton Recreation Committee organized this terrific event and the Conservation Commission was the sponsor of the mountain bike race. Many of our youth participated in the race and we had prizes for all that attended including a tie for first place. It was decided that we would sponsor a similar activity at the Busch Farm in 2007.

The Conservation Commission is available to assist with any community or school event. We have created a slide show that can be used to educate our residents and our youth on Newton Conservation and Recreational Land. We invite you to use our land with your family and friends. We have town maps showing conservation land that would be great for hiking, cross-country skiing, exercising your dogs, bird watching, wildlife observation, fishing, farmers, canoeists, snowmobilers or just a simple picnic. The public is encouraged to use and enjoy this open space.

The conservation easement on Hidden Acres Farm, located on Thornell Road is being monitored according to the Bylaws of the Stewardship Committee. The landowner, Forrest Reynolds, has worked closely with the Stewardship Committee, to maintain the integrity of this historic farm and conservation easement. This easement was the conclusion of our application to the Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, (LCHIP). One of the requirements of this program was the formation of the Stewardship Committee. This committee was appointed by the Selectmen and is comprised of five members that remain on the committee with staggering terms as follows: Mary Marshall-Chairperson expires in 2009, Nancy Slombo-Vice Chair expires in 2007, Mike Seekamp-Treasurer expires in 2008, Trisha McCarthy-Secretary expires in 2009, and Pat Wonson who expires in 2010. This is a wonderful piece of Newton History that we have the ability to protect. We continue to work with the homeowner, (Mr. Reynolds) and monitor the easement and activity on it.

This committee meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month. The meetings are held in the rear of the Town Hall at 7:30pm. All meetings are open to the public, and we encourage anyone that is interested to attend. Feel free to log onto to the town web site at <http://www.newton-nh.gov> for access to minutes of our meetings.

We look forward to another prosperous year, and encourage your input.

Respectfully submitted,
Trisha McCarthy, Chairperson
Conservation Commission