

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION

New Hampshire RSA 36-A directs the Conservation Commission to "conduct research into our local land and water areas and seek to coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes." According to state law, it is our responsibility to protect the natural resources of the town. The proper utilization and protection of our watershed & natural resources, including but not limited to shoreline protection, wet soil issues, and endangered species protection are just some of the tasks that the Conservation Commission deals with. We continue to work with the State Wetland Bureau concerning various issues in our town and also give our input on all Dredge & Fill permit applications.

On April 1, 2008 some new rules effect for Shoreland Protection. Any activities, construction, excavation and filling, within the protected Shoreland and the 50' waterfront buffer, will be strictly enforced. Within this 50' waterfront buffer there is restricted vegetation removal & pesticides and herbicides are prohibited. If you notice anything that may concern you, please call the Conservation Commission. 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 and how to keep our ground water healthy. It's the little things like washing your car, or fertilizing your lawn or even throwing a cigarette butt on the ground that can affect our water supply. Our water is our most important natural resource and it will take all of us to keep it healthy.

This committee meets on the first and third Thursdays of each month, except June, July & August when we meet once a month or as needed. 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. Our membership is made up of six regular members, three alternates, and one Selectmen Ex-Officio representative. The members of this committee are, Chairperson Peter Mears, Vice Chairperson Nancy Slombo, Pat Wonson, Sandy Estabrook, Alicia Raddatz, Sheila Bergeron, Tim Brennan, Kim Vallient, Secretary Kim Lowther, and Selectmen Trisha McCarthy. The members are recommended by the conservation members and then are appointed by the selectmen.

The Conservation Commission participated in the annual Family Fun Day at Greenie Park that was under the direction of the Newton Recreation Committee. This was, once again a tremendous success. During this event the Conservation Commission sponsored the relay races, hula-hoop and over the pole throws. Over 50 children participated, and prizes were given to all that attended. The Conservation Commission set up a separate table and had a slide show presentation with information on Newton's Conservation Land, Storm Water Management. Included in the presentation were photos of animals found in the Town of Newton like the beautiful Great Blue Heron on the Pinkerton Conservation Land, the Great Horned Owls on the Stronach Conservation Land at the end of Bartlett Street, the Blanding's Turtle at Country Pond, the family of beavers on Wallace Street and the group of Wild Turkeys that enjoy the Old Lower Road trail off Highland.



We are very fortunate that our committee has a wide range of knowledge concerning wildlife, vegetation, shoreline and wetland soil issues. Their new ideas, positive energy and continuous contributions of time have been an asset to our town in protecting our natural resources. The residents are lucky to have such a dedicated committee. Often times they have been presented with issues that require careful and immediate attention, and I commend their ability to think out of the box to accomplish the tasks they are presented with. The Conservation Commission is kept abreast of changes in the law by utilizing the tools from the Local Government Center and the Annual Convention. The bill that Governor Lynch signed in 2007 called the Housing and Conservation Planning Program (HCPP) is a program that the Conservation Commission hopes to work on along with the Newton Planning Board. This program will provide potential grants that address local housing and conservation needs, as well another way to preserve historic resources in our community.

Our Master Plan states that we will continue to look for parcels that will increase our wildlife corridor, watershed resources and open space. As development continues in town, we hope to continue to receive donations of land designated for conservation from residents and in some cases purchase land. Residents may be able to get a tax benefit from selling us a parcel of land at a bargain sale price while at the same time assisting in protecting our wildlife habitat and natural resources. A conservation easement is another way to protect our natural resources and open space. The Conservation Commission welcomes residents to attend meetings to discuss the options available as well as potential for a tax benefit.

Thanks to the hard work of our commission and co-operation with residents we now have some beautiful parcels of land for you to enjoy. Here are just a few: The Busch Farm is one of our largest parcels that has over 48 acres to explore. This property has received some improvements this year including a large area for parking. This parcel of land is great for horses, cross country skiing, having a picnic, bird watching, or bringing your dogs for a walk. "The Pinkerton Conservation Land" named after Jim Pinkerton is located behind Jim's old farmhouse on Whittier Street. This is a 10+ acre track of land that sits between the Peanut Trail off Whittier Street and Old Lower Road. This parcel connects to the Marden Conservation Parcel of 33+ acres that we received from Nancy Marden. In addition to the Pinkerton Parcel, we have obtained a smaller 6+ acre parcel called the "Wilder's Grove Conservation Land". This is a small but very important parcel within our shoreline protection area and aquifer. Don't forget the 22 acres of Conservation land on Hadley Road and the Stronach Conservation Land at the end of Bartlett Street. We now have three contiguous parcels: Hidden Acres Conservation Easement leads into the Guscora Conservation Land off Thornell Road that now connects to a parcel that the conservation commission (along with the help of Mary Marshall) acquired this year from Jim Foy. This parcel will protect the wildlife habitat and we are very excited about this newest addition.

This year the Conservation Commission worked closely with the Transfer Station for the town's first Amnesty Weekend. This was a great success. We were able to turn in tires that had been thrown into the conservation protected lands. It was an extraordinary accomplishment in reducing the mosquito breeding grounds that are often found in old tires. We encourage you to participate in this event in the future and help our efforts to enhance our conservation lands and prevent further infection or death from mosquito born viruses.

The Scenic Roads in town also come under the charge of this Commission, as described in RSA 231:157 and RSA 231:158. The Scenic Roads are: Gale Village Road, Currierville Road, Maple Avenue, Goulds Hill Road, Heath Street, Bartlett Street, Town Hall Road and Thornell Road. We work very closely with the Road Agent and his crew regarding these roads.

Lastly, an important issue for the commission for 2009 is to establish a Town Wide Water District. This will be very important to our town in protecting our water resources. This is not an effort to have our own municipal water, but instead designed to prevent Franchise Water Companies from coming into our town, tapping into our aquifer and taking and/or selling our water. With this in place the town would be notified of an intent by a water company and be able to deal with it as the community dictates.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Peter Mears, Chairperson  
Conservation Commission