

BOSCAWEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Annual Report • 2004

The Commission (BCC) enjoyed welcoming Boscawen residents and visitors to Town Forest Day in October 2004. The Commission guided visitors through the Boscawen Town Forest Interpretive Nature Trail. New features included an interpretive kiosk at the former Weir Farm with pictures depicting the farm, buildings, and the Weir family. In May, Merrimack Valley High School students worked at the Town Forest this spring as part of their community service day. Students and teachers cleaned the trailhead area, brushed trails, and performed other maintenance. The Commission greatly appreciates their work and dedication. Thanks are also extended to Colby Lumber for donating lumber for replacement interpretive trail stop posts.

The newest activity in the multi-use Town Forest is geocaching. Geocaching is an increasingly popular activity where individuals pack a small box with trinkets and messages and hide it in an area. The "cacher" records the location of the box using Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates and records the location and shares it with other geocachers who attempt to locate the "treasure."

All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) operated in the Town Forest continue to be a management challenge for the Commission. Motorized wheeled vehicles are not allowed in the Forest. Hiking, cycling, snowmobiling, bird watching, and hunting and trapping consistent with state law are allowed. The Commission is working with the Boscawen Police Department and the NH Fish and Game Department to enforce the ATV ban. Please respect this restriction so that the Commission can continue to manage the Town Forest with minimal cost to all of us.

Plans for 2005 include considering a timber harvest and wildlife management prescriptive cut in the Town Forest in collaboration with the BTF forester and the NH Fish and Game Department. The BCC will also investigate expansion of the trails in the Forest. Full moon cross-country ski and snowshoe nights are slated this year for January 28 and February 25 (dependent on snow conditions). Please watch the *Boscawen Newsvine* for further information.

Members of your Commission participated in the Zoning Ordinance Revision Committee (ZORC). The ZORC has been working for approximately a year and a half revising Boscawen's zoning ordinance so that it is consistent with the new Master Plan and better prepares the town for the challenges and benefits of growth.

The Commission reviewed and commented on numerous permits and performed a variety of proposals and responded to requests for inspections including applications for sand and gravel pit operations, wetlands dredging and filling, alteration of terrain, illegal dumping, land clearing, and numerous commercial and residential applications and proposals.

This year, the BCC worked with the University of NH Cooperative Extension to draft and submit a grant application to the US Department of Agriculture Natural Resource Conservation Commission Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program. The grant, rated highest in the state, will support the purchase of a conservation easement on part of the riverfront lands managed by the Highway View Farm. After a public hearing in the summer, the BCC voted to encumber \$160,000 of the Conservation Fund for a period of six months. The Commission continues to monitor private lands with conservation easements purchased by the State of New Hampshire through the [former] Land Conservation Investment Program known as LCIP. Steve Walker from the NH Office of Energy and Planning attended a BCC meeting and provided information on the easement monitoring resources that the agency offers.

With a continuing commitment to education and outreach, the Commission supported the NH Fish and Game Department's moose education project. When completed, the traveling

display will re-create a mortal struggle between two Bull Moose. Plans for 2005 include soliciting a Boscawen student for a conservation camp scholarship. Candidates will be asked to submit an essay on why they want to participate in the weeklong camp. The successful candidate will be asked to present a summary of his or her experiences and acquired knowledge and skills at a BCC meeting. Past conservation camp scholarship winners included a young man who volunteered for several years and initiated projects with the Commission. The BCC is piloting a college scholarship program. The small scholarship will be open to Boscawen residents who are pursuing a career in natural resource conservation. Further information on both scholarships will be published in the "Conservation Corner" in the *Boscawen Newsvine*.

Each month a different member of the BCC writes an article featuring different activities of the Commission and other natural resource issues for the "Conservation Corner" column in the *Boscawen Newsvine*.

The BCC elected the following slate of officers: Michele L. Tremblay, Chair; Ray Powelson, Vice-chair; Mark Ciarametaro, Secretary; and Michael Jette, Treasurer. Laura Lane will provide administrative services under contract to the Commission. Regular and alternate membership on the Commission is open to all town residents. Associate membership is open to anyone who does not wish to commit to full membership on the BCC but wants a more formalized affiliation. Associate members and other individuals are welcome to attend meetings and serve on sub-committees. The chair extends her sincerest gratitude to the Commissioners who provide the energy, ideas, and leadership for its work.

The Boscawen Conservation Commission meets in the Town Office Complex on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. The meetings are open to the public and all are welcome to attend. Volunteers are always invited to help with trail work, serve on sub-committees, and participate in other conservation activities. As always, the Commission thanks the citizens of Boscawen for their support of conservation. Your ideas and feedback are welcomed and encouraged. For further information on the Commission or to provide your feedback, please call Michele Tremblay, Chair at 796.2615 or email the Commission at boscawencc@tds.net.

Respectfully submitted

Michele L. Tremblay
Chair