

REPORT OF THE BOSCAWEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Annual Report • 2008

Land conservation continues to be a concern to the citizens of our Town. The Commission has been responding to requests for information from landowners who wish to sell or place in conservation easement their forest and farm lands. The Commission is working with land conservation organizations including The Trust for Public Land and the Five Rivers Conservation Trust to explore option with these interested landowners.

Your Conservation Commission began speaking with its agricultural landowners and businesses about forming an Agricultural Commission. There is new legislation that enables municipalities to form Agricultural Commissions to provide a voice for agriculture. These Commissions can be a tremendous resource to not only their peers but also to municipal boards. For instance, an Agricultural Commission can provide expert advice of land use ordinances that are friendly toward farming and forestry. The Conservation Commission is convening a forum for owners of working lands so that they can explore this exciting opportunity. If the interest is strong, an article would be placed on the March 2009 warrant to establish an Agricultural Commission in Boscawen.

The Commission is nearing completion of the conservation easement for the Town Forest. Our citizens voted at Town Meeting several years ago to place this easement on the Town Forest. The Commission explored many options and is working with the NH Fish and Game Department. This is another example of the partnership that started when the Town signed a cooperative management agreement with the Department. This agreement provides for cohesive management of the Town Forest and the Department's adjacent Hirst Wildlife Management Area. The management and easement services are being provided at no-charge by the Department to the Town of Boscawen. The Department's Hirst Chris Kane, a naturalist from Concord, provided a guided tour of the plants and fungus in the Town Forest that are common to our region. Chris pointed out rare and edible mushrooms and plants as well as those that are poisonous. The Commission scheduled its Full Moon Cross-country Ski/Snowshoe/Hike nights in January and February. The Merrimack Valley High School students worked with faculty to maintain trails and the kiosk area. The Commission hopes that you will visit your Town Forest and enjoy its many natural and historical features. Be sure to sign the guest book/trail register in the mailbox at near the parking area. Your Commissioners read this register and consider all of your observations and suggestion in its management activities.

A dedicated team from the Commission including Bill Caswell, Mark Ciarametaro, Michael Jette, Kathy Smith, and Michele Tremblay worked to design and create an informational kiosk that was erected at the newly completed new car top launch at the Jamie Welch Park. The kiosk, provided by the Commission, provides pre-historical and historical summaries about the Merrimack River along with information about the Best Management Practices (BMP) installed at the launch to reduce erosion. The BMP project was funded, in part, by a Watershed Assistance Program Grant from the NH Department of Environmental Services through the US Environmental Protection Agency's Section 319 Program. The Commission provided leadership and grantwriting assistance on the funding proposal. An official dedication ceremony will be scheduled for the spring of 2009.

The Commission continues its annual monitoring of the Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP) easements on the Cummings (formerly Sahlin) and Jones (formerly Emery) properties. These model landowners provide the many benefits of open space on their lands, including wildlife habitat, lowest possible community services, timber and agricultural production, hiking, hunting, and the

beauty of the working landscapes of open fields and forests that preserve rural character and make Boscawen the best town in which to live.

The Commission reviewed and commented on numerous permits and 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, intents to cut and excavate materials, reports of wood and timber cut or materials excavated, and numerous commercial and residential applications and proposals. The Commission reviewed and commented on several large development proposals. A representative of the Commission participated on the selection team for a contractor to remove the bridge over the Merrimack on Depot Street.

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; Kathy Smith, Vice-chair and Treasurer; and Mark Ciarametaro, Secretary. Alice Kraft continues to provide note taking services under contract to the Commission. Thank you to former Commissioners Michael Jette and Bill Caswell. Both Mike and Bill have moved away and can no longer serve. The Commission misses their consistent participation and thanks them for their many years of service. The Commission also extends its gratitude to Chris Lawrie who has volunteered with the Commission and has worked in the Town Forest.

The Commission's website includes wonderful images from throughout Boscawen, a directory from which to download trail maps and other reference documents, an events calendar, forms to submit wildlife sightings and other information, and links to other conservation resources. The Commission hopes that you will find this website helpful and visit it often to provide your wildlife sightings and suggestions for resources.

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 dedicated 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, email the Commission at boscawencc@tds.net, or visit boscawencc.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Michele L. Tremblay
Chair