

## REPORT OF THE BOSCAWEN CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Annual Report • 2010

Your Boscawen Conservation Commission (BCC) was happy to assist with and support the successful creation of the Boscawen Agricultural Commission (BAC) at Town Meeting in March. Since then, the BCC has worked with the new BAC in cooperation with the Boscawen Public Library and with funding from the New Hampshire Humanities Council to conduct a series of talks on the history of working lands and how they have shaped the landscape. We look forward to long and fruitful collaboration on conservation and working lands policy and initiatives.

Representatives from the Oxbow Initiative presented information on the successful land conservation effort across the river in Canterbury on land formerly designated as an ash-trash landfill for the Concord Regional Solid Waste/Resources Recovery Cooperative. The landfill would have been sited on a high bluff, distinctly visible from Mount Kearsarge, and surrounded on three sides by the Merrimack River. The Commission hosted a presentation by Friends of Northern Rail Trail. The organization has converted miles of trail from Lebanon to Franklin and is now looking to complete the remaining sections in Franklin and Boscawen to the Concord line. Conservation Commission members are now active in this effort.

Ron Klemarczyk, FORECO, who serves as the contracted forester for the Boscawen Town Forest, provided a great walking and talking program for this year's annual Town Forest Day. Ron worked with the Commission on a timber harvest and salvage operation of trees damaged or downed by a windstorm, and marked boundaries for the Ellsworth Lot portion of the Town Forest. Ron provided fascinating insights on the why he recommended the activities that can be easily transferred to private landowners' own management choices. Ron peppered his forest management talk with interesting observations ranging from how trees are deformed from ice storm and other damage to why you might see unusually large oak leaves on the forest floor. The newly designed and constructed Weir Farm Interpretative kiosk was unveiled and dedicated during Town Forest Day. Many thanks to faithful and wonderful volunteer Chris Lawrie for constructing the beautiful kiosk stand in his workshop. It is built to last and will be enjoyed by visitors for years to come. Elaine Grant from New Hampshire Public Radio was on hand that day and included the walk in an on-air story that week.

The BCC continued to conduct its Full Moon Nights as a way to learn to love the cold nights of the winter and get to know the Boscawen Town Forest. Participants hiked, skied, or snowshoed their way through the Town Forest with the bright moonlight reflected by ice and snow.

The Merrimack Valley High School students and the Merrimack County Adult Diversion participants worked with faculty to maintain trails and the kiosk area as well as ongoing hand-to-hand combat with the invasive Asian Bittersweet that has spread aggressively in many areas of the Town Forest including the Weir Farm section. 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 the parking area. Your Commissioners read this register and consider all of your observations and suggestions in the Commission's management and planning.

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 family landowners are a model of responsible management and stewardship. Their properties 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 BCC continues to participate in the Land Use Boards Integration Team (also known as "LUBIT") that was formed to coordinate better the activities of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Adjustment, Conservation Commission, and Agricultural Commission so that they may better serve our town and applicants. The BCC hosts and maintains a listserv to facilitate announcements for meetings and to provide a way to distribute draft documents for review at public meetings. The Commission also maintains a general audience listserv for those who wish to hear about or share working lands information. You may subscribe to this listserv by sending an email to [AgComm-join@BoscawenCC.org](mailto:AgComm-join@BoscawenCC.org).

Commission members were out and about in 2010. They participated in the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions Annual Meeting and Conference, the Northeast Organic Farming Association Conference, the NH Department of Transportation public meeting on the proposed rotary, and the Boscawen/Canterbury bridge removal effort.

Despite the less than favorable economic conditions, the Commission reviewed and commented on several applications this year including those for a car dealership, Chandler Street housing development, and an apartment conversion. The Commission also responded to several calls from residents concerned about unpermitted wetlands operations on King and High Streets, soapy discharge into the Contoocook River, and brick dumping and other fill in the Contoocook River. The Commission provided review and comment on the proposed Accessory Dwelling Unit town ordinance. The Commission continues to monitor intents to cut and intents to excavate along with the corresponding reports of the timber cut and resources extracted.

The BCC elected the following slate of officers Michele L. Tremblay, Chair; Kathy Smith, Vice-chair and Treasurer; and Mark Ciarametaro, Secretary. Thanks to the officers and commissioners and alternates including Lisa Bissonnette, Jim Colby, Norm LaPierre, and David Mudge. The Commission extends its gratitude to Chris Lawrie who continues his generous volunteer service to the Commission and our Town. This year, Chris worked with Commissioners on trail and other management activities in the Town Forest. The Commission thanks Christie Coll, who has provided meeting record keeping services. Although Christie is a contractor, her services are larger than the very small fee that she is paid. Her services are essential to maximize the wholly volunteer efforts of the Commission.

The Commission's website includes color 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. The Commission revised its five-year plan, the Activity and Events Matrix that is now available on the website.

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*.

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 this important service to the Town.

The Boscawen Conservation Commission meets in the Town Office Complex on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM (except for November and December when it is the third Thursday). The meetings are open to the public and all are welcome—and encouraged—to attend. If wish to request an agenda item, please notify [commission@BoscawenCC.org](mailto:commission@BoscawenCC.org) at least two weeks in advance of the meeting with your name, subject, and desired time to address the issue.

There is one regular Commissioner vacancy—now is a great time to be active in your Town's conservation future. Please call or email if you are interested in serving your town, learning more about conservation, and having a great time with other great volunteers. 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 [commission@boscawencc.org](mailto:commission@boscawencc.org), or visit [www.BoscawenCC.org](http://www.BoscawenCC.org).

Respectfully submitted,

Michele L. Tremblay  
Chair