

Report of the Fremont Conservation Commission

In 2019 the Fremont Conservation Commission continued to focus on public awareness and preservation of natural resources. The Commission meets monthly and has the following responsibilities as one of the Town's Land Use Boards:

- Help manage Town land for recreation and wildlife.
- Steward and implement the Town Forest and Wildlife Management Plans.
- Provide educational programs and support trail maintenance of Town Forests in partnership with Open Space Advisory Group.
- Work strategically with landowners and conservation organizations to preserve critical properties in Town.
- Advise other Boards on matters related to the Town's natural resources.

The following are some of the highlights from 2019.

- Worked with the Southeast Land Trust (SELT) on grant applications and presented information at Fremont Public Hearings that resulted in approvals from the Town that will ultimately conserve approximately 50 acres of prime agriculture, wildlife habitat, and wetlands at the Brett property located at 240 Beede Hill Road, Parcel 05-071. The preservation of this property will add protective buffers around Brown Brook, Spruce Swamp, and preserve one of the Town's most beautiful view corridor at the top of Beede Hill.
- Attended a Regional Public Hearing in Epping on a site plan review for an asphalt plant. The Chair spoke on behalf of the Commission that collectively submitted a letter of concern given the very close proximity of the proposed project to Fremont's protected groundwater aquifer.
- Reviewed one new wetland application for Sandown bridge work and continued engagement on an existing wetland application for the widening of Shirkin Road. These applications were before the State of NH Department of Environmental Services for the protection of and impact to state-defined prime wetlands, respectively. The Commission is the primary review board for the Town of Fremont on these applications.
- Participated in the Annual Town Cookout hosted by the Library including youth engagement and a walk in the woods to see new trails in the nearby Town Forest.
- Supported Open Space members in the construction and maintenance of Town Forest trails (signage, trail maps, youth outreach). Vice Chair Bill Knee and Open Space members have made great progress on an interpretive trail coming soon to Oak Ridge Town Forest. Work on this interpretive trail project is being supported through the Aya Mahoney Conservation Fund.

The Conservation Commissions expended \$3,315 of the \$3,564 budgeted in 2019. Most of the budget was spent on clerical services including updates and transition to the Town's new website. Other larger expenditures were applied to conservation projects, public awareness and membership dues. The Commission has memberships with organizations that provide professional services (New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions) and regional

support (Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests and Lamprey River Water Association). The Commission also expended its remaining Residual Budget from 2018 for professional consulting to update the Town's Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) which is a chapter in the Town's Master Plan and has not been updated since 2008. Updates to the NRI in 2020 will include new mapping and revisiting of the Town's goals for conservation and protection of natural resources. These important and timely updates will be communicated to the Planning Board as they revisit land use planning goals for the Town of Fremont.

The Commission works with a forestry consultant to manage the Town's Forests. In 2019 we oversaw the planning and execution of a timber harvest in the town-owned Glen Oaks Conservation Area which included careful thinning to improve the long-term forest management of timber and make wildlife ecological improvements. Below is a summary of the final tally of gross stumpage in board feet (BF) and tons.

- White Pine and Hemlock sawtimber 51,040 BF
- Red and Black Oak grade logs 13,820 BF
- Hardwood pallet 13,460 BF
- Chipwood 1,775.89 tons

Your Commission members are shown below with some Open Space Committee members, at a Town Forest kiosk located at the Fremont Public Library. You can learn more about your Town Forests by visiting the Town's website and "The Fremont Town Forest" Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FremontTownForests>).



Front: Bill Knee (Commission Vice Chair), Leanne Miner (Commission Chair), Pat deBeer and Cindy Crane (Commission Members). Back: Dennis Howland (Open Space Chair), Rich Cooper (Commission Member and Open Space), Jack Karcz and Sam Harris (Open Space)

2018 Photo courtesy of Pat deBeer

We are always seeking new Commission Members that are interested in conserving the natural resources of our town. To learn more, please contact the Conservation Commission or attend one of the regular meetings on the first non-holiday Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the basement meeting room in the Fremont Town Hall. You can also direct questions to the

Land Use Office at 895 3200 x 306 or by email to landuse@fremont.nh.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Miner, Chair Fremont Conservation Commission

Report of the Open Space Advisory Group

Since its inception in 2003, the Fremont Open Space Advisory Group has worked in conjunction with the Fremont Conservation Commission, the Board of Selectmen, and the residents of Fremont to ensure that Fremont's rural past as well as Fremont's future is properly protected.

2019 was a busy year for Open Space volunteers. Besides the normal trail maintenance work and leading hikes, our major accomplishment was extending the Depot Trail. The Depot Trail, accessed from the Library, has already become one of our most popular trails. To make it even better, we moved the start of the trail a tenth of a mile closer to the Library. Watch for the new sign a short distance past the gate on the west side of the Rail Trail. We plan to continue to improve this trail making it more user friendly. Also in 2019, we laid the plans for a short, new trail in Glen Oaks which will allow us to visit an array of glacial boulders, and a scenic seasonal brook.



We led four hikes in 2019.

In February we led a group out to Camp Nasty! There isn't much left of this Fremont lore.

Thanks to Pat and Bruce and Mary for clearing the way out into the swamp!

In April, we led a group on a B52 hike. Another piece of Fremont history!



In the Fall, we previewed the new Depot Trail Extension and Oak Ridge South, and then a week later tackled Glen Oakes and did all of the original trail system.

Open Space is always looking for new members. Most of our time is spent "in the woods" doing, rather than in a meeting room talking. Come join us! Prune a branch. Move a log. Or just enjoy our woods!

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Howland, Chair
Rich Cooper
Betty Harris
Mathew Thomas

Stan Almond
Bruce deBeer
Sam Harris

Anne Beliveau
Pat deBeer
Jack Karcz

A rare picture of some of the Open Space Team NOT in the woods!



Seated L to R: Patricia deBeer, Jack Karcz, Sam Harris
Standing: Matthew Thomas, Rich Cooper, Dennis Howland, Robert Woulfe

Photos Courtesy of Dennis Howland and Mary Kaltenbach

"The continued existence of wildlife and wilderness is important to the quality of life of humans."

~ Jim Fowler