

Report of the Conservation Commission and Open Space Advisory Group

Report of the Fremont Conservation Commission

In 2020 the Fremont Conservation Commission continued 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 in your Town Forest in partnership with Open Space Advisory Group.
- Work strategically with landowners and conservation organizations to preserve critical properties in Town.
- Provide technical review and comment on state wetland permit applications on behalf of the Town.
- Advise other Boards on matters related to the Town's natural resources.

The following are some of the highlights from 2020:

- Worked with the Southeast Land Trust (SELT) on securing grant approvals and obtaining Town approvals to facilitate final purchase of an agricultural easement at the Brett property located at 240 Beede Hill, Map 5 Lot 71. The preservation of this agricultural property will add protective buffers around the Bond Brook/Spruce Swamp and preserve one of the Town's most beautiful view corridors at the top of Beede Hill.
- Negotiated an agreement with a landowner to conserve 10 acres of land abutting the Oak Ridge South Town Forest including high-value water resources and wildlife habitat (Map 4, Lot 17).
- Completed a long overdue update to the Town's Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) mapping last updated in 2008. The Commission also completed a very informative and detailed draft of the NRI text document that will be available in 2021. The NRI is a significant chapter in the Town's Master Plan and includes updated goals for conservation and protection of natural resources. These important and timely updates will be used by the Planning Board as they revisit land use planning goals for the Town of Fremont. The Commission thanks Ms. deBeer and Mr. Knee for their significant contributions.
- Reviewed and commented on a New Hampshire Dredge and Fill application for Applicant Galloway Trucking on Shirkin Road. This application included a proposal to protect State-designated prime wetlands. The Commission is the primary review board for the Town of Fremont on these applications.
- Reviewed and commented on land use applications before the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment with the potential to impact wetlands, wetland buffers, and other natural resources.

- Continued preparations for forest management in the Oak Ridge North area including meetings and planning with forestry and wetland consultants.
- Supported Open Space members in the construction and maintenance of Town Forest trails (signage, trail maps, youth outreach).

The Conservation Commissions expended approximately \$5,465 of the \$6,665 budgeted in 2020. Most of the budget was spent on clerical services and the updated Natural Resources Mapping and document. The remaining budget of \$1,200 has been deposited into a budget residual fund and is earmarked for use in updating maps and plans for evaluating land conservation with a focus on agricultural land use.



View of Brett property where land is now conserved by an agricultural easement. Photo inset of Nick and Nancy Brett, Property Owners, on their antique tractor. Photos courtesy of Duane Hyde, Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire

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, visit the Town's website, or attend one of the regular meetings on the first Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the basement meeting room in the Fremont Town Hall. You can also watch us on FCTV or Vimeo. Learn more about your Town Forests by visiting our great kiosks or "The Fremont Town Forest" Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/FremontTownForests>).

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 our rural past as well as our future is properly protected.

In spite of COVID, 2020 was a busy year for Open Space volunteers.

Besides the normal trail maintenance work, we made improvements to a number of trails in our town forests. This was due in part to the increased use of the trail system and by a more diverse user group.

The Depot Trail, accessed from the Library, has become one of our most popular trails. To make it even better, we extended the boardwalk, added ramps to each end, and took out numerous roots and stumps.



In Glen Oaks, we added a short loop trail off of the North side of Forest Loop to two large, glacial erratics; ROCKY and BULLWINKLE.



In Oak Ridge North, we added a new bridge to the Beaver Trail, which included a horse and rider bypass. Also, on the Beaver Trail, we added ramps to each end of the old bridge.

For safety reasons, we did not lead any hikes this year. We focused on encouraging everyone to "get out there." We will resume this once it is safe to do so.

The Open Space Group 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
Jack Karcz

Stan Almond
Bruce deBeer
Sam Harris

Anne Beliveau
Pat deBeer
Mary Kaltenbach

