

## REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Town Forest Ordinance was adopted on 3/22/07. It is comprised of the Glen Oakes and Oak Ridge Conservation areas at this time. Signage summarizing proper usage of the Town Forest were purchased and installed at entry points into both Conservation Areas.

Signs & trail markers for the Marsh Trail and Ridge Trail in the Oak Ridge Conservation Area were purchased and installed the fall of 2007. The two loop trails begin about 100 feet beyond a small parking area created at the site of the landing area generated during the last timber harvest on the side of Meetinghouse Road. This completes the Oak Ridge Loop Trail project funded by a grant from the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) with sweat equity provided by the Fremont Boy Scouts & other citizen Volunteers.

An Owl walk led by Terry Bronson, a NH Audubon member and resident of Fremont, was held on 12/7/07 in the Glen Oakes area, with 30 people in attendance. Although there were no responses to his owl calls that evening it was very informative and we received positive feedback on the event. We hope to do it again and the Commission is looking for other events to have on the property.

The Forest & Wildlife Management plan for the Glen Oakes property had a delayed start in 2007 and is now projected to be complete by August 2008.

The Commission worked with Theresa Walker from the Rockingham Planning Commission (RPC) to amend and update the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) text for that section of the Master Plan. This effort was funded through a grant obtained through the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition (NROC). In the summer of 2007 the Commission decided to have 6 of the existing NRI maps updated by RPC for inclusion in the NRI by the fall of 2007. The NRI section of the Master Plan will now be presented to the Planning Board in February 2008.

The Commission worked with Mark West to complete the Prime Wetland Study for Fremont, approximately 45% of which was funded by a grant from the N. H. Estuaries Program. In the Study Mr. West evaluated 55 wetlands ranging in size from 3 to 277 acres all of which met the minimum qualification for Prime Wetland Designation. Based on field assessments of each of the wetlands values & functions a scoring system was developed.



Mr. West recommended, and the Commission concurred, that 26 wetlands, the smallest of which is 11 acres in size, representing the highest functioning wetlands be designated as Prime Wetlands. The information was presented at a public hearing held on 11/28/07 and a Warrant Article was prepared for the voters to decide in March of 2008 whether these 26 wetlands should join Spruce Swamp as Prime Wetlands.

Commission member Tina Sturdivant and our Exeter River Local Advisory Committee (ERLAC) representative, coordinated activities in conjunction with ERLAC including:

- Conducting a very successful Vernal Pool workshop on May 5<sup>th</sup> at the Cordes/Brooks property on Beede Hill Road, with 60 people in attendance.
- Purchasing River Signs through the Exeter River Advisory Committee (ERLAC) that were installed at road crossings of the Exeter River by the fall of 2007 with the help of the Fremont Highway Department.

Based recommendations from the Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission member Janice O'Brien with assistance from The Society for the Protection of NH Forests (SPNHF) has discussed possible preservation options with some landowners that are potential candidates for the placement of conservation easements on their properties.



In addition, the Commission discharged its responsibilities to monitor compliance with environmental laws, participated in site walk inspections, reviewed, deliberated and commented on various projects to the Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Board.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Fremont Conservation Commission

John (Jack) Karcz, Chairman  
Bill Knee, Member  
Janice O'Brien, Member  
Tina Sturdivant, Member  
Patricia deBeer, Alternate

*"To me a lush carpet of pine needles or spongy grass is more welcome than the most luxurious Persian rug."*

*~ Helen Keller*

Photos Courtesy of Bob & Janice O'Brien