

## **Report of the Conservation Commission**

The Fremont Conservation Commission had another busy year advising local Boards on a variety of issues related to conservation, doing site visits, and working with Regional and State organizations on local conservation projects. The following is a summary of the Commission's 2017 activities.

Throughout the year, the Commission has advised the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment on matters related to wetland habitat protection, water quality protection, and aquifer protection. Three projects of particular note this year were: (1) The review and approval of a request for an expedited DES Wetland Application for Parcel 01-012 for a driveway to go through a wetland area to access a proposed cell tower; (2) The review of a Variance request and approval of an expedited DES Wetland Application on Scribner Road (Parcel 02-014.002) to build a garage 57.24 feet from a wetland; (3) the review of a Special Exception request on Thunder Road (Parcel 02-001.016) to fill 962 square feet of a wetland to construct a 20 foot wide driveway. The Conservation Commission reviewed requests with focus on conserving critical wetland habitat and natural resources and considered alternatives proposed by applicants to minimize potential for wetland impacts.

Special thanks to Commissioner Pat deBeer for publishing the data for Glen Oakes Town Forest onto trailfinder.info. An interactive map, the location of the trailhead, and a description of each trail is now available for the public's convenience on the website. Additionally, there is also a brief history of the property, contact information for any questions, and some photos to help guide the way through the trails. To find this webpage, simply visit trailfinder.info, click the "find trails" tab on the top of the page, and select "Rockingham County" and "Fremont" on the left-hand side of the page. This year, Ms. deBeer also assisted UNH Cooperative Extension's Fred Borman in an effort to update the Conservation Land data layer for NH GRANIT. She has helped Piscataqua Region Estuaries (PREP) with a similar update.

The Conservation Commission has undergone several changes this year. We've said good bye and hello to some great volunteers. Ms. deBeer finished her term as a Commissioner in March 2017, however, she continued to work with the Open Space Advisory Group throughout 2017 and we recently welcomed her back in December 2017 to backfill a recently vacated seat that is critical to maintaining an active Commission quorum. The Conservation Commission is appreciative of her continued efforts.

Special thanks also to Leo Danjou for his volunteer work on the Commission and very notably his commitment to filming public events including an Open Space hike on the Cooperage Trail. We wish Leo luck and thank him for his time and efforts to the Commission.

In April of 2017, the Commission welcomed Cindy Crane as a new member!

Bill Knee stepped down from Chair and became the Vice Chair of the Commission. I am grateful that Bill remains on the Commission so we can continue to learn from his long-term experience,

knowledge, sincere passion for the environment. Thank you Bill! With Bill's transition, I began my term as Chair in April. We continue to seek volunteers that are interested in conserving the natural resources of our Town to join the Conservation Commission or just get involved and show your support.

What does a Conservation Commissioner do?

- Help manage Town land for recreation and wildlife
- Steward and implement the Town Forest and Wildlife Management Plans
- Provide educational programs and hikes in your Town Forests in partnership with Open Space
- Work to establish conservation easements on properties in Town
- Advise other boards on matters related to the Town's natural resources

To learn more about protecting Fremont's natural resources, please contact the Conservation Commission or attend one of the regular meetings on the first non-holiday Monday of the month at 7:00 pm in the basement meeting room at the Town Hall. For more information, visit the Town's Website or learn more by watching rebroadcasts of our meetings that can be found on Cable Channel 22 or the Fremont Community Television Facebook and Vimeo pages.

Throughout the year, the Commission has worked with the Open Space Advisory Group to help them maintain, improve, and plan for the Town Forest's trails. This group of volunteers has given many man-hours working in the forest and their efforts are much appreciated. You can learn more about your Town Forests by visiting "The Fremont Town Forest" Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/FremontTownForests>). The site contains lots of current information, maps, pictures and video content. Don't forget to "Like" it!

Respectfully submitted,

Leanne Miner  
Chair

## **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. 2017 was a busy year for Open Space volunteers. Besides the normal trail maintenance work, our group was involved in numerous Town Forest activities from new trails to our fall hiking series.



The major accomplishment in 2017 was the completion of the new BARRED OWL trail in Glen Oakes. This included final clearing and the addition of blue metal blazes. This 1.1 mile footpath winds

itself along the northern perimeter of the town forest and is our most challenging trail in Glen Oakes. A loop from the parking lot is about 2.5 miles long. Signs can be found at both ends of the trail. We still anticipate a connection between the Barred Owl Trail and the South East Land Trust (SELT) trail system which abuts Glen Oakes. This would allow us to reach the B52 crash site from the Glen Oakes Parking lot.

We led three hikes in the Fall of 2017. This included a visit to the "gentlemen's" farm of Jack Downing, long time Open Space member. We also trekked through Oak Ridge North and Glen Oakes.

The Open Space Group has also instituted a Free Guide Service Program. This is designed to reach people who are looking to visit our town forests, but could benefit from customizing the "where" and the "when." This is an excellent way for you "newbies" to get out and enjoy our Town Forests!



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  
Sam Harris  
Betty Harris

Rich Cooper  
Jack Karcz

Jack Downing  
Matthew Thomas

Photos courtesy of Dennis Howland