

Report of the Conservation Commission

Members of the Fremont Conservation Commission were busy throughout the year working on local conservation projects, acting to advise local Boards on matters of conservation, and working with regional, state and national organizations to promote and protect the natural resources of our community. The Commission's efforts toward fulfilling its mission throughout the year are summarized below.

Throughout the year the Conservation Commission has been acting in an advisory capacity for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment on matters related to wetland habitat protection, water quality protection and aquifer protection. Acting in concert with the State's Wetland Bureau and the Planning Board, wetland violations and conservation easement violations are being mitigated on property adjacent to Brown Brook. The Commission has reviewed site plans and made recommendations to minimize the impact several developments will have on water quality and wetland habitat in Town. The Commission has actively promoted *Best Management Practices* within the Town for the benefit of all its residents.

The Commission discussed several House Bills put forth by the State House of Representatives and their ramifications. The progress of HB 1515, HB 1549, HB 1545, and HB 1586 were monitored by the Commission throughout the year as they involved changes to laws affecting the mission of Conservation Commissions throughout the State.

Working with the Rockingham Planning Commission, the Conservation Commission was informed early in the year that two Brownfield Projects (contaminated land sites) in Town have been worked on. Extensive monitoring and clean up have occurred at Rowe's Gas Station and L&P Auto. These sites were contaminating groundwater and surface water.

The Conservation Commission is pleased to report that its efforts have resulted in the acquisition of an additional 76 acres for its Town Forests. In an ongoing effort to protect the natural beauty of the wetland complex known as Spruce Swamp and the water quality of the aquifer underneath it, the Commission acting with the Forest Society and the Smith brothers (former property owners) successfully conserved additional land adjacent to the wetland. Toward this end, the Commission applied for and was awarded \$84,000 in grant money to assist in acquisition of the land. The property is located just north of and adjacent to our Glen Oakes Town Forest expanding low-impact, recreational opportunities for our residents.

The Commission sponsored and/or promoted several activities for our residents throughout the year. In February, the Open Space Advisory and Conservation Commission hosted a Snowshoe Hike through the Glenn Oakes Town Forest. To celebrate Earth Day in April, the Commission held a public viewing of "Green Fire", a documentary commemorating the land ethic introduced to this nation by Aldo Leopold. In the fall, the Rockingham County Woodland Owner's Association and Commission hosted a walk lead by Forester, Charlie Moreno through the Oak Ridge Town Forest to view past forestry practices and discuss forest management practices.

The Open Space Advisory and Conservation Commission manned a booth at the *Fremont Fall Festival* to promote public awareness and use of our Town Forests and land conservation. Finally, the Commission and Forest Society jointly sponsored a dedication ceremony commemorating the conservation of the Smith Property followed by a Fall Foliage Hike of the newly acquired forestland.

Through the efforts of the Open Space Advisory with support from the Conservation Commission, a trail system was established in the northern portion of the Oak Ridge Town Forest. The trail system has short loops and a longer loop over rolling glacial terrain providing a fun walk in the woods.

On December 5th, the Rockingham County Woodland Owner's Association presented the Conservation Commission with the John Hoar Award. The Award was given in recognition of the Commission's efforts to implement and continue good forestry practices and work for the improvement of forestry and conservation in general. The Commission is continuing this work by pursuing a conservation easement with the Forest Society for the Oak Ridge Town Forest.

If protecting and conserving the Town's natural resources interest you, please consider getting involved. Both the Conservation Commission and Open Space Advisory have openings and we welcome your input.

Sincerely,

Bill Knee, Chairman
Fremont Conservation Commission



Thanks to the efforts of some Open Space Volunteers, the Oak Ridge Town Forest North Parking Lot on Tavern Road has a new sign!

L to R: Volunteers Sam Harris, Jack Karcz,
and Jack Downing

Photos Courtesy of Dennis Howland

Report of the Open Space Advisory

Since its inception in 2003, the Fremont Open Space Advisory 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.

In 2012, the emphasis continued to focus on maintaining, enhancing and promoting the open space in Fremont. These activities built upon the work done in previous years by many resident volunteers.

- Feb 11th snow shoe hike was once again snowless. Attendees did get to visit the "Island" and got a sneak peak at the Smith Property.
- Minor trail work included re-routing two short sections of trails in Oak Ridge, and repainting the blazes on the Homestead Trail in Glen Oakes. A new Oak Ridge Town Forest Sign was installed at the Oak Ridge North Parking Lot, and a mailbox for trail maps installed at the Glen Oakes kiosk. A special thanks goes out to the Open Space trail crew which includes Jack Downing, Sam Harris, and Jack Karcz, and additional thanks to Gene Cordes for help with the spring clean-up of debris in Oak Ridge.
- Members of the Open Space Advisory participated in the Fremont Festival in September, working with the Conservation Commission to promote Fremont's open spaces.
- With the acquisition of the Smith property, our fall foliage hike served double duty as a dedication hike as well. Forester Mike Speltz and FCC Chair Bill Knee provided much insight about the forest in "Smith" and Glen Oakes.

The Fremont Open Space Advisory will continue to study new opportunities to further protect special areas in Fremont. We plan on offering additional activities and encourage residents to take advantage of the wonderful open spaces that belong to all of the residents of Fremont. Dont forget to check us out on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/FremontTownForests

Respectfully submitted,

Dennis Howland
Chair



Smith
Dedication
Hike

13 October
2012