

Report of the Fremont Conservation Commission

The Fremont Conservation Commission had an exciting year doing great things for the community and conservation in 2018 and we're even more excited about 2019. The Commission was also very active in advising local Boards on a variety of issues related to conservation, reviewing state wetland permits, and working with regional organizations to conserve land and protect natural resources. The following is a summary of the Commission's 2018 activities.

- Attended 6 Public Hearings, site visits, and meetings (with presentation) to facilitate approvals and legal execution for the Town to purchase 12 acres of land in and around the Oak Ridge Forest and Spruce Swamp (Parcel 04-018) and facilitate approvals for the gift of 4 acres land from Ellis School (Parcel 02-151-001) totaling an additional 16 acres of land conserved for endangered wildlife and natural resource preservation. The Conservation Commission will propose to add the 16 acres of land to the Town Forest.
- Reviewed 4 State of NH Department of Environmental Services wetland applications. Conservation Commission is the primary review board for the Town of Fremont on these applications.
- Participated in 13 site visits with the Zoning and/or Planning Boards where wetlands were of concern.
- Reviewed and commented on 14 Variance and comment requests brought before the Zoning and Planning Boards with a focus on wetland, forest, and habitat preservation through alternatives or application of best management construction practices.
- Continued working with the Southeast Land Trust (SELT) to execute appraisal work and grant applications for the potential conservation of approximately 80 acres of prime agriculture, wildlife habitat, and natural resource preservation.
- Participated in the Town Cookout hosted at the Library including youth engagement by creating an interactive trail that included a scavenger hunt.
- Attended 2 seminars hosted by State conservation organizations where members networked with local, state and federal conservation organizations and attended all day technical seminars to learn more ways to bring awareness and conservation practices to the community.
- Supported volunteer Open Space members in the construction and maintenance of Town Forest Trails (signage, trail maps, youth outreach, accessible infrastructure such as bridges/boardwalks). Look for the hiking signs around town!
- Worked with the Road Agent to install several way-finding signs around Town to bring awareness to our vast trail network.

The Conservation Commissions fully expended the Town approved operating budget of \$2,000, which included Town Forest trail maintenance of \$360. Additional expenditures facilitated by or approved by the Conservation in 2018 included:

- Expended \$7,500 for expansion and update to the Town Forest Management Plan to include newly acquired forest lands in the Glen Oakes Town Forest. The Conservation Commission will continue to steward healthy maintenance of Town Forests for wildlife and

timber harvest, monies from which will be used to continue maintenance and management of Town Forests.

- Expended \$7,585 including legal fees to purchase Parcel 04-018 and \$553.50 in legal fees to document the gift from the Fremont School District of parcel 02-151.001. This total land expenditure of \$8,139 was covered by the Town's Land Use Change Tax Fund.

Photo (R) at the closing for parcel 04-018 purchased from Charles & Carlene Bolduc on May 3, 2018.



L to R: Bill Knee, Carlene & Charles Bolduc, Leanne Miner, Neal Janvrin
Photo courtesy of Heidi Carlson

- Reviewed and supported approximately \$2,700 in Town Forest trail upgrades and public awareness of our Town Trail System. All upgrades and new infrastructure installed by volunteers! A small portion of the cost to support new trails and maintenance came from the Conservation Commission's Operating Budget (\$360). The remaining cost was paid from a Conservation Budget Residual account (\$1,880) and the Forest Management Plan account (\$794).

The Commission has welcomed new member Rich Cooper who also sits on the Open Space Advisory Group and is very active in maintaining our trail system.

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 Forest 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 Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at the basement meeting room in the Fremont Town Hall. For more information, visit the Town's Website or learn more by watching videos that can be found on FCTV Channel 22 or through Vimeo and the Fremont Community Television Facebook page.

Throughout the year the Commission worked with the Open Space Advisory Group to support maintenance, improvements, and plans for the Town Forest's trails. This group of volunteers has put in many 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
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. 2018 was a busy year for Open Space volunteers. Besides the normal trail maintenance work, our group was involved in numerous Town Forest activities including new trails, bridges, boardwalks, benches, trail signage and a new Kiosk at the Fremont Public Library.

There were a number of major accomplishments including two new trail segments - the Salmon Ridge Trail in Oak Ridge North and the Depot Trail in Oak Ridge South. As part of the Salmon



Ridge project, we also built a 14' bridge over a water crossing on the Beaver Trail which had become impassable. The Depot Trail allows access to Oak Ridge South from the library via the Rockingham Rail Trail. As part of the Depot Trail project, a new kiosk was built at the Library parking lot.

Bridge on the Salmon Trail. Open Space Project helps Dennis Howland, Jack Karcz, and Sam Harris enjoying the woods!
Photo courtesy of Dennis Howland

Salmon Ridge features a scenic overlook and one of our 4 new "Leopold" benches. The benches are based upon a design by Aldo Leopold, who is considered one of the founders of the

conservation movement. The benches are simplistically elegant. Besides the one on Salmon Ridge, a second is installed along the Depot Trail and is dedicated to Aja Mahoney. A third is on the Barred Owl Trail in Glen Oakes, and the fourth is at a scenic overlook on the Marsh Trail in Oak Ridge South.

We also led two hikes in 2018; a winter snow shoe hike and a fall foliage hike.

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
Jack Downing
Jack Karcz

Stan Almond
Bruce deBeer
Betty Harris
Mathew Thomas

Anne Beliveau
Pat deBeer
Sam Harris

Another Community in Action Project

Fremont's active and highly motivated Open Space and Conservation Folks unveiled another trail this year. On October 13, 2018 the first interactive trail was highlighted. The Acorn Trail hosted a scavenger hunt and hike on a grey Saturday as volunteers partnered with the Fremont Public Library and other local groups for a Town Cookout celebrating Fall and the kickoff of the Fremont Public Library's First Annual Scarecrow Contest.

Conservation and Open Space Volunteers pose here at the newly constructed Kiosk at the Fremont Public Library after their interactive trail hike and scavenger hunt.

Front: Bill Knee, Leanne Miner, Pat deBeer, Cindy Crane
Back: Dennis Howland, Rich Cooper, Jack Karcz, Sam Harris

These volunteers are behind the scenes (AKA in the woods) doing tons of trail maintenance, new trail layout, signage, and lots of other projects to make the woods and trails accessible to all!

They deserve a huge round of applause for their hard work all year round!



Enjoy the woods and take a hike!!

Photo courtesy of Pat deBeer

Community in Action information gathered by Heidi Carlson