

CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS REPORT 2021



includes:

- ✓ Lists of Conservation Commission Contacts in NH & VT
- ✓ Reports of Conservation Commissions 2020 Activities
- ✓ UVLT Conserved Properties Map
- ✓ UVLT Staff Directory
- ✓ Conservation Easements – Frequently Asked Questions

sponsored by:



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

19 Buck Road, Hanover, NH 03755

603-643-6626 / www.UVLT.org

CONSERVATION COMMISSION CONTACTS - NH

New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions

Barbara Richter, 54 Portsmouth St, Concord, NH 03301 / 603-224-7867 / barbara@nhacc.org

Bath

Bruce Barnum, barnumtumosa@myfairpoint.net

Canaan

Bill Chabot / bill.chabot@gmail.com

Charlestown

Richard Holmes / rlholmes46@comcast.net

Claremont

Gary Dickerman / gdman141@gmail.com

Cornish

Corey Fitch / conservationcommission@cornishnh.net

Dorchester

Maria Weick / bomabesa@gmail.com

Enfield

Alan Strickland / alanstrickland@me.com

Grafton

Frank Neufell, Prescott Hill Road, Grafton, NH 03240

Grantham

Dave Wood / cadawood@comcast.net

Hanover

Vicki Smith / vicki.smith@hanovernh.org

Haverhill

Marie Bjelobrck / marie@nsmpt.com

Lebanon

Mark Goodwin / mark.goodwin@lebanonnh.gov

Lyme

Blake Allison / conservation@lymenh.gov

Newport

Stanley Hannum / ASK@NewportNH.net

Orange

Dorothy Heinrichs / nhdorothy@gmail.com

Orford

Edmund Cooley / conservation@orfordnh.us

Piermont

Helga Mueller / rabenest@myfairpoint.net

Plainfield

David Grobe / pcc@plainfieldnh.org

Unity

Stan Rastallis / stanrastallis@gmail.com

CONSERVATION COMMISSION CONTACTS – VT

Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions

c/o VLCT, 89 Main Street, Montpelier, VT 05602 / 802-828-5067 / vtconservation@gmail.com

Bradford

Nancy Jones / npj.4251@gmail.com

Corinth

Glynn Pellagrino / glynnpellagrino@tops-tele.com

Hartford

Matt Osborn / mosborn@hartford-vt.org

Hartland

Rob Anderegg / ccommission@hartlandvt.org

Newbury

Michael Thomas / conservationnewbury@gmail.com

Norwich

Craig Layne / NorwichConservationCommission@gmail.com

Randolph

Mike Van Dyke / RCC@randolphvt.org

Royalton

Brad Salzman / rselectman@bluemoo.net

Sharon

Fritz Weiss / rossvall.weiss@gmail.com

Strafford

Steve Willbanks, conservation@straffordvt.org

Thetford

Steve Lehman / slehman616@gmail.com

Tunbridge

Betsy Gaiser / betsygaiser@gmail.com

Vershire

Kathy Hooke / kathy.hooke@mountainschool.org

Weathersfield

Heather Shand / hshand@gmail.com

West Fairlee

Peggy Willey / peggywilley@mytopsmail.com

West Windsor

Ted Siegler / ted@dsmenvironmental.com

Windsor

Tom Marsh / tmarsh@windsorvt.org

Woodstock

Neil Leitner / nleitner@townofwoodstock.org

REPORT OF BRADFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

We were happy to welcome AJ Follensbee as a member of the Bradford Conservation Commission (BCC) in January. AJ is the Windsor/Orange County forester, so he brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the group. Sadly, Ed Wendell resigned from the BCC after 16 years of dedicated service. Longtime volunteer Rick Evans joined in October. **Stewardship equals fostering a love and understanding of the land by enhancing access, experience and education. This year's projects were:**

- 3 benches built by Randy Moore were installed at pause places along trails in the Wrights MT/Devil's Den Town Forest (Copeland Family [1]; Cohase Rotary Club [2]).
- 5 hiking signs were installed at strategic Town road locations to direct visitors to the Town Forest.
- Updated kiosk maps, provided by TRORC, were installed by Tom Gray at 3 trailheads.
- Through the efforts of Jared Pendak, a wayfaring sign directing visitors to the Wrights MT Trailhead has been installed by the State on Route 25.
- The Davis bench near Devil's Den was repaired by Rick Evans.
- A virtual Race to the Top of Bradford spanned the whole month of June, and 49 runners contributed \$1,050 which was donated to the Bradford Food Shelf and The Space on Main.
- The Devil's Den Ultra Run, coordinated by Jason Mosel, took place in October. Limited to 15 runners due to Covid restrictions, the race spanned 24 hours with the top contestant from Fairfax, VT logging 75 miles. Darkness, thunder, lightning and torrential rain did not dampen their spirits. Just under \$4,000 was raised for a Vermont Veteran Suicide Prevention Program and just under \$1,000 was raised for the Friends of Wrights MT Fund. Plans are underway for continuing this event in 2021.

Management:

- A selective timber harvest, scheduled by Orange County Forester David Paganelli, included removal of 109 ash trees near trails in preparation for the invasion of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB)
- Bradford Tree Warden Ben Rubinfeld and AJ Follensbee conducted a roadside ash tree inventory on 20.75 miles of Class 2 and Class 3 roads. 1,622 ash trees were identified (see map on Page 59). Dead ash trees are dangerous and more costly to remove, so it was recommended that identified ash trees be removed before they become infested. Wrights MT Road was prioritized for ash tree removal due to: proximity to known infestation; high concentration of ash; proximity to WM/DD Town Forest; significant road traffic. See the full Bradford Roadside Ash Inventory report at Bradford's website: <https://www.bradford-vt.us>.

Information & Education:

- BCC's 1st Monday Movie was held in January and February, then canceled due to COVID-19.
- BCC co-sponsored with The Space on Main a three-hour, online Jackson Wild Film Festival in October featuring 15 pre-selected films on wildlife, conservation, environmental justice and scientific research.

Beautification:

- A volunteer crew, coordinated by Jean Carlan and Sandy Price cleared invasive Japanese Knotweed from the bank near the Public Library
- The Bradford Community Garden, which is partially supported by the BCC, had a highly successful season. All 22 beds were claimed by individuals and families who planted vegetable and flower starts that were donated by organizations and individuals. Not only did the produce feed the gardeners and their families, but some of the produce was also donated to the Bradford Food Shelf.
- In a collaborative venture with VT Urban & Community Forestry and the Arbor Day Foundation, 150 trees of five different species were given to 75 Bradford households for planting at their homes.

2020 Canaan Conservation Commission Annual Report

In addition to the usual business of reviewing construction permits and site visits to approve said permits as required by NH DES, the Canaan Conservation Commission also accomplished the following in 2020:

- Sponsored the 14th annual Earth Day Roadside Cleanup. With help from Helen Skeist and the Goose Pond Crew, we succeeded in removing over 75 bags of trash, as well as a number of tires, appliances, and propane cylinders from the sides of the streets of our town.
- We continue to maintain the trail system in the Town Forest. Members re-marked the trails, cleared downed trees, and cleared brush and overgrowth in both Spring and Fall.
- Represented the town of Canaan on the Mascoma River Local Advisory Committee.
- Monitored easements on properties within Canaan, as well as surrounding communities for the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT). We also monitor the McKee parcel in Canaan for the NH Conservation Land Stewardship Program.
- Attended various meetings of MWCC, as well as other organizations.
- Provided financial support for the Connecticut River Conservancy's "Source to Sea" river cleanup. We also donated to support the UVLT.
- Volunteered over 100 hours in service to the community.

Respectfully submitted by,

Bill Chabot, Chair

Canaan Conservation Commission

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Charlestown Conservation Commission meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00PM in the Community Room below the library. The public is invited to attend.

The Commission was very active this year in maintaining and promoting the towns hiking trails. The Commission is a member of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance and our trails are listed on their program entitled Upper Valley Trails Finder. By going to their website www.localmotion.org/trails/ you can find all our trails mapped out with directions on how to access, length of trails and other pertinent information along with pictures. Trail maps are also available in the Selectboard office and the library. Our thanks go out to Bill Fowle for building another kiosk which was installed behind the snowmobile club's groomer shed at the start of the Hubbard Hill State Forest trail. A bridge was constructed over the Halls Pond feeder brook which makes crossing the brook much easier and safer.

Annual projects the Commission was involved with included the semi-annual Adopt-a-Highway clean-up along Rt. 12, and the yearly monitoring of the LCIP (Land Conservation Investment Program) easements held by the state and monitored by the Commission.

The Commission also sponsors Green-up day the first Saturday in May of each year. Due to the presence of COVID 19 this year there was no formal get together for a town wide clean up but bags were made available at the town office and thanks go out to the many people who contributed to the clean up on their own time.

The Reservoir Lot timber sale, which had been ongoing for years has finally finished and three other stands that were scheduled to be worked on in 2020 were also accomplished.

The property at 1110 Acworth Road which was purchased in December of 2019 has had all buildings and trash removed. Field work is being done on a Forest Management Plan for this lot and the Sam's Hill Town Forest lot which abuts it.

Respectfully submitted

Richard Holmes

Chairman

CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT

It was a good year to enjoy the outdoors, and we are lucky to live in an area of the world with so many places to be off in the woods alone or socially distanced with friends. The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly given us all a new appreciation for our rural landscape. Needless to say, many of our regular activities and events were postponed or cancelled this year, and some were modified for health and safety reasons. Sadly we had to cancel our annual tracking workshop lead by the Roots School. We hope that this spring we may be able to offer it again.

Fortunately some things were able to proceed as planned. A group of volunteers worked in the town orchard to tend to the trees by weeding and spreading bark mulch. The trees got a light pruning by Louis Graff, and Dean Gregoropolis donated his time to mow the grass in the orchard again this year, for which we are very grateful. It wasn't a great apple year, but the trees are doing well, and we look forward to an abundance of fruit in the coming years.

Along with the town orchard, we maintain trails in three different locations in town. The Clement Loop Trail, located off Maplewood Road, and the Roaring Brook Trail, with its wonderful lookout to the White Mountains. We had a trail work day that entailed quite a bit of chain sawing and brush clearing in the F.X. Shea Town Forest, as the forest experienced substantial blowdowns this year. The F.X. Shea Town Forest was also the site for the Blake Memorial Library story walk in August. If you aren't familiar with the town forest, it is located at the end of Wilson Road off Coppermine Road. The CCC is in the process of purchasing new signs for the road so the trailhead will be easier to find.

The big focus for the Conservation Commission this year is to continue to work on education and outreach regarding the section of the town plan that addresses Act 171, which is a state statute whose goal is to identify and protect important habitat, particularly contiguous forest blocks that connect wildlife corridors between towns throughout the state. Corinth has large sections forest that serve as safe travel zones for wildlife, and in the coming years it will be important to understand how our land use patterns will affect these important aspects of our local ecology.

We are also working with the town Cemetery Commission to bring green natural burial options to people in Corinth, without having to establish a cemetery on your own land. Green burials are a great way to ecologically complete the cycle of life.

Once again, the CCC was proud to support the efforts of Green Up Day*. This year the Commission donated all the redeemable bottles collected during May 2020 to the New Hope food shelf. The CCC raises most of the money to support its projects by collecting returnable bottles at the town transfer station. The town supports our work by supporting our modest annual budget request, which is voted on at town meeting.

The Conservation Commission meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m., and all meetings are open to the public. Our meeting agenda and minutes from prior meetings can be found on the town website.

Respectfully submitted by Glynn Pellagrino

CONSERVATION COMMISSION 2020

Rickey Poor was awarded the Annual Conservation Award for playing a major role in establishing the CREA property, volunteering with the Four Winds program, and countless projects in between. Rickey has shown an exceptional commitment to protecting our natural resources and fostering education for our youth. She served as chair of the commission for a number of years and has been on more monitoring walks than any other member of the commission. Rickey received a painting of the CREA pond by Jim Schubert for her award; photos of the painting are viewable on the Town website. The Commission welcomes recommendations for the Annual Cornish Conservation Award, please feel free to reach out to any of the Commission members with your suggestions.

The Commission started the year with an internal survey and brainstorming session for larger goals and next steps for the Commission—one of which is a focus on researching an appropriate piece of land to conserve. Due to COVID-19, meetings were suspended starting in March and resumed in July with the addition of a Zoom option which allowed folks to join the meetings in a way not available previously. A virtual option will continue in 2021. Rickey Poor, Jim Barker, and Bill Gallagher assessed all the trees on scenic roads that were marked by Eversource for removal—overall, there was a sense of pride and attention to detail that Cornish gives to the scenic roads. Members helped with various maintenance projects at CREA including the Fall clean-up. Jim Barker helped to repair the bridge, and several members helped to install a beaver baffle. The Commission applied for a Grad Student Collaborative Service Initiative through Antioch to focus on Invasive Species mapping and mitigation planning for CREA. The Commission assisted the Granite State Rural Water Association and the City of Claremont on a Whitewater Watershed protection plan. Rickey was able to attend the NHACC annual conference, which was held virtually. In an effort to meet our education goals—while still dealing with the pandemic—we are working on a series of articles in ConnectCornish to highlight the Town’s natural resources.

The Monitoring Committee, chaired by Rickey Poor, completed monitoring walks on all conserved properties scheduled for monitoring this year of which the Town of Cornish is the primary easement holder. No violations of easement terms were found. The committee welcomes the landowners to join on the monitoring walks.

If you are interested in joining the Commission or want to learn more about conserving your land, feel free to reach out to the Commission for more information.
conservationcommission@cornish.net

Regular Members: Corey Fitch, Chairperson; Bill Gallagher; Cindy Heath, Treasurer; Reyer Jaarsma; Monica Matthews; Rickey Poor; Stuart Wilkie, Secretary

Alternate Members: Jim Barker; John Berry; Kimberly Patterson; Jody Schubert; Bob Taylor

Selectboard Representative: John Hammond



Conservation Commission

~ MISSION STATEMENT ~

To protect the natural resources of Enfield and preserve them for future generations.

Covid-19 virus dramatically altered the Commission's function and activities this past year. The monthly Conservation meetings were suspended from March through July. During that period, applications for permits were forward directly to NHDES. The Conservation Committee's annual hike during Old Home Days was cancelled. The Commission began Zoom videoconference meetings in August. A major focus was updating the Natural Resource Inventory that was initiated in 2005. Natural Resources include, but are not limited to the following: **Wildlife, Wildlife Corridors and Habitat, Water Quality, Wetlands, Bogs, Rivers, Streams, Vernal Pools, Escarpments, Views, Historic Trails, and unique geological features such as Waterfalls and sensitive Ecological Areas containing rare plants, or flowers.**

Respectfully submitted,



Alan Strickland, Chair

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Hartford Conservation Commission (HCC) was established in 1990 to inventory natural resources, maintain and preserve natural areas, protect valuable wildlife habitat, monitor scenic areas and watershed areas, educate and increase awareness of conservation, and encourage recreation consistent with the preservation of the natural beauty of Hartford. The HCC manages the 423-acre Hartford Town Forest (HTF), the 21-acre Maanawaka Conservation Area in Wilder and the 6.5-acre



David Chang Conservation Area in Quechee. We hope you get out and enjoy these wonderful parcels and treat them with respect. Please contact us if you see maintenance or abuse issues so we can organize restoration or clean-up.

Members of the HCC include Tom Kahl (chair), Dana Hazen (vice-chair) Jon Bouton, Angela Emerson, Mary Hutchins, Katie Mann, Lee Michaelides and Selectboard Liaison Emma Behrens.

Projects in the Hartford Town Forest (HTF) and Trails

- Continued work updating the HTF Recreation Management Plan.
- Continued to re-paint boundary markings in the HTF.
- Continued work on developing an integrated HTF Plan that includes all of the plans and inventories of the HTF.
- Worked with County Forester A.J. Follensbee to update of the 2011 HTF Forest Resource Management Plan including preliminary plans to conduct a timber harvest in the winter of 2022.
- Periodic trail maintenance including installation and replacement of trail signs, trail markers/blazes, removing trees fallen across trails, and clearing/mowing brush. The HCC would also like to thank local volunteers, primarily local mountain bikers and snowmobilers, who perform trail maintenance.
- Due to Covid-19, trails work days were changed to an on-line registration to maintain HTF trails. A dozen people/ groups worked on over 20 trails.
- Worked with the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center to offer Level 1 chainsaw training in the HTF.
- Developed a trails agreement with a property owner adjacent to the HTF that allows a short segment of a trail to pass onto private property.
- Worked with representatives of the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps who spent two weeks in the HTF doing trail relocation and restoration work. This work was collaboratively planned with mountain bike enthusiasts.
- Performed trail maintenance in the Maanawaka Conservation Area.

Outreach and Education

- Led a February 16th snowshoe outing/educational walk in the HTF.
- Had an information booth for the February 29th Town Meeting.
- May 5th informational presentation of the draft HTF Forest Resource Management Plan to the Selectboard.
- Mailed letters informing all property owners adjacent to the HTF and Reservoir Road of the Forest Management Plan update and future public outreach meeting.
- Held a July 15th public outreach virtual meeting to explain and solicit public input on the draft Forest Resource Management Plan. This meeting was recorded and posted on the HCC website along with the draft Plan and a public comment form.
- November 2nd presentation of the HTF Forest Resource Management Plan to the Selectboard that was approved.
- Began work to establish an annual HCC stewardship award.
- Began work investigating alternative methods of stream restoration.
- Investigated developing more detailed information on Town wetlands.
- Provided information about grassland birds on the HCC website.
- E-mailed the draft revised HTF Recreation Management Plan and public outreach notice to interested residents.
- Held a virtual public outreach meeting on the draft updated HTF Recreational Management Plan on October 21st. This meeting was recorded and posted on the HCC website with the draft plan and a public comment form.

Other Ongoing Projects within the HCC

- Sponsored the May 30th Green-Up Day activities that involved 205 volunteers and collected 3.48 tons of waste. Due to Covid-19, registration was done remotely.
- Working with landowners interested in conserving their land including sending outreach letters to owners of ten parcels evaluated to have higher significance. Held on-site discussions and site visits with three property owners.
- With a grant from the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions, conducted invasive plant treatment in the David Chang Conservation Area.
- Organized natural resource information and developed criteria for town-wide natural resource review.

Participation with Town and Regional Groups

- Ottauquechee River and White River water quality sampling.
- Met with the White River Natural Resource Conservation District staff to hear about their work and programs.
- Working on various projects with other town boards including the Tree Board and Resilient Hartford.

The HCC meets on the first Monday of the month at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcome to attend. If you have any questions about the Conservation Commission, please contact Town Planner Matt Osborn (295-3075) or mosborn@hartford-vt.org

Hartland Conservation Commission 2020

The Hartland Conservation Commission (HCC) works to protect and preserve Hartland's natural and cultural resources. Our efforts are focused in three areas: Public and Protected Lands and Watersheds, Education and Outreach, and Public Policy, as described below.

The Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) at 7 pm in Damon Hall, or virtually during the pandemic. We invite anyone who is interested to attend.

Public and Protected Lands and Watersheds

- Petitioned the State to reclassify Eshqua Bog as a Class 1 wetland to enhance its protected status.
- Continued water testing along Lull's Brook and the Connecticut River at seven sites. Notified residents via the list serve when *E. coli* levels exceeded the State-determined safe level of contamination. Continuously monitored the temperature in Lull's Brook.
- Contributed \$1,750 from the Conservation Trust Fund toward land conservation projects.
- Participated in the Connecticut River Source-to-Sea clean-up in September with a clean-up at Sumner's Falls. Removed over 130 pounds of trash.
- Accompanied representatives from the Native Plant Trust on a search for rare and endangered plants at Sumner's Falls.

Education and Outreach

- Presented the annual Hartland Conservation Award at Town Meeting to Cordie Merritt for her work on the Commission and with other conservation organizations.
- Posted seven notes to the list serve to increase awareness about emerald ash borer (EAB).
- Co-sponsored Green-Up Day. Ninety-eight volunteers picked up 500 pounds of trash.

Public Policy

- Continued inventorying ash trees along roads in Hartland to understand the potential impact of EAB. In collaboration with Two Rivers Ottauquechee Regional Commission (TRORC), developed a mapping tool for displaying ash density along Hartland's roads.
- Inventoried ash trees in Hartland's cemeteries and forwarded that information to the Cemetery Commission.
- Placed and monitored traps for the EAB at four sites along the CT River. No EAB were detected.
- Contributed to Hartland's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) to ensure that the ash trees killed by EAB are recognized as a future hazard.



Guy Crosby inspects a trap for EAB.

We wish to thank Knox Johnson and Cordie Merritt, two long-standing members of the Commission, who stepped down this year. Their many contributions have been greatly appreciated. In their stead, we welcome David Sleeper and Sarah Wood.

Commission members (term ending): Chair Rob Anderegg (2022), Chris Collier (2022), Guy Crosby (2023), John Dumas (2024), Dean Greenberg (2024), David Sleeper (2024), Sarah Wood (2022), Tina Barney (2023), and Jennifer Waite (2023).

LYME CONSERVATION COMMISSION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Like other Lyme committees and commissions, the Conservation Commission found itself in 2020 trying to navigate the uncharted waters of conducting the people's business and maintaining the Town's recreational properties during the time of the Covid19 pandemic. Beginning April 2020, the Commission no longer was able to conduct face-to face meetings. In May, it began meeting remotely via UberConference call. In December it switched to the Zoom format in December. Despite limitations imposed by Covid-19 related mandates, the Commission was able to realize some significant achievements.

Trails and Land Management

The 2020 summer season saw the completion of two major trail projects. The first was the building of two structures that enabled the dry crossing of two perpetually wet areas on trails in the Town Forest. The second was the construction of a new trailhead at the Big Rock Preserve's Route 10 entrance. The work was done by the Upper Valley Trails Alliance's High School Trails Corps, with financial support from the Lyme Foundation and the Conservation Fund.

Also, in 2020, the Commission-sponsored, Lyme Biodiversity Working Group (LBWG) continued its program of Japanese knotweed eradication in the Big Rock Preserve. The project uses systematic, repetitive cutting management, rather than herbicide application. Due to strictures imposed by Covid-19, the participation of volunteers was not possible. To compensate for the labor shortfall, LBWG retained three interns. Funding for the program was provided by a generous grant from the Lyme Foundation and matching funds from the Conservation Fund. The program was managed by Commission member Meg Sheehan and Lyme resident Rob Wipfler,

Outreach and Education

Most programs were cancelled, but thanks to considerable support from *CommunityCares of Lyme*, the always popular "Green up Day" took place in early May with almost 90 individuals and family members participating.

Commission 2020 Membership

Blake Allison (Chair and Secretary *pro tem*). Other voting members were Tom Colgan, Meg Sheehan and Matt Stevens. Alternates included Rebecca Hanissian, Russell Hirschler, David Lysy and James Munroe. Ben Kilham served as the Select Board's representative.

More information about the Commission, its properties and activities can be found at:

<http://www.lymenh.gov/conservation-commission>

NEWBURY CONSERVATION COMMISSION (NCC)

www.newburyconservation.org

Visit Us on Facebook

MISSION STATEMENT: To increase public awareness of natural resources in Newbury through educational campaigns and gathering resource data in order to provide residents with the information they need to make informed decisions.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED We need new members. Our to-do-list is long and we need your help. NCC wants to add to our **volunteer list**. If you would like to help out with events, trail work, fund-raising projects, and tree planting, **let us know!** If you are looking for projects for your church group, 4-H, Boys & Girl Scouts, service group, or school related community service, NCC can help you with ideas that will benefit both your group and our community.

NCC. We are working on having our meetings on Zoom the second Tuesday of the month. All Newbury residents are invited to attend, share, and learn.

REPORT FOR 2020

NCC was like everyone thrown off by the Covid Pandemic. Our meeting were not as regular as we would have like. We followed our goals set out in the 2019 town report with COVID adjustments still held our 23rd Trails Day Work Day on the Wells River Conservation Trails. 17th Fall Paddle the Border and 23rd Fall Foliage Bicycle Ride on the Cross Vermont Trail. We worked to maintain and improving our trails throughout the summer. We researched Emerald Ash Bore, and other invasive and there spread in Vermont. Working with the Cross Vermont Trail Association www.crossvermont.org and the state of Vermont the trail in Wells River was improved and fixed a major wash out.

NCC GOALS FOR 2021

Many of our goals can be worked on during the Pandemic. Doing research, organizing programs, and outreach to improve our web-site so we can keep Newbury residence informed.

1. NCC will continue our public outreach and find new ways to host educational workshops to increase our involvement with the residence of Newbury in local conservation efforts.
2. NCC will continue working on a Natural Resources Inventory for the Town of Newbury. This would includes, understanding the value and relationship between Continuous forest habitat, open land, wetlands [including ponds river/streams] and developing a town policy that balances conservation, public recreation and educational opportunity.
3. NCC will continue to work with other committees in Newbury. The Planning Board. Tucker Mt. Town Forest Management Committee, the Recreation Committee.
4. NCC will continue to improving our web-site and Facebook presence to promote events, share pictures, stories and adventures in Newbury remotely.
5. NCC will continue to work with Upper Valley Trails Alliance to improving and promote the trails in Newbury. Working on establishing safe bicycling routes along select roads in Newbury.

NCC's success in 2021 depends on volunteers joining in. Please consider becoming a member or signing up to volunteer.

Our website: www.newburyconservation.org.

Find us on Facebook under Newbury Conservation Commission
Contact Michael Thomas 802-757-3960 or mikethom1@charter.net

Submitted by: Carol Stoll, Cal Lynes, Michael Thomas

Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission endeavors to inventory, monitor, and conserve the natural heritage assets in Town. These assets include wildlife, wetlands, waterways, natural plant communities, intact forest ecosystems, and scenic resources. We share our findings and projects with fellow citizens, Town commissions, and governing bodies. For the benefit of Town residents, we:

- Supported environmental education and outdoor classrooms at the elementary school.
- Published articles in the Norwich Times about forest connectivity, forest conservation, and water use.
- Maintained Post Office Displays about conservation projects and local natural history.
- Removed invasive plants and planted native ones around the meadow in the Village Nature Area.
- Managed Phragmites patches incurring into new wetland areas.
- Assisted the Vermont Land Trust in conserving 100+ acres of forest and meadow near Norford Lake.
- Worked with the Upper Valley Land Trust to conserve 290 acres on the Gile Ridgeline.

NorwichConservationCommission@gmail.com

ORFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

2020 Annual Report

The Orford Conservation Commission (OCC) continues to work actively on a variety of conservation-related projects throughout Orford. Our objectives remain to promote and continue dedicated stewardship of the many remarkable natural resources in Orford.

The projects undertaken by the OCC in 2020 included:

- Mountain View Farm Conservation Area: The OCC cosponsored and endorsed activities including stargazing, moonlight snowshoeing, and historic barn restoration work at this unique and protected land in Quinttown.
- Orford Conservation Land: Continued maintenance of hiking trail to the Connecticut River from Rt. 10 and monitored tree plantings at riparian buffer.
- Easement Reviews: Conducted annual reviews of conserved land in Orford.
- Conservation Easements: Worked on conservation easement projects, including Brackett Brook Farm in East Orford, among others, with the Upper Valley Land Trust (UVLT).
- Jacobs Brook flooding/erosion mitigation and restoration of aquatic life: Worked with NH DES, NH DOT, Ron Rhodes with the Connecticut River Conservancy, and wetlands engineer Jim Kennedy to repair work along NH Route 25A in Orfordville. Work including assessing the riparian bench, placing rock, and planting trees and willow stakes, was undertaken.
- Orfordville Road Bog: The OCC paid for a design by Horizons Engineers for a culvert with integrated spillway. The reconstruction, when done, will maintain water height to support aquatic life and prevent road erosion. The permit from NH DES is in hand and is valid for 5 years.
- Japanese Knotweed Control: Additional colonies were managed along 25A. Roadside mowing was coordinated with these efforts. Continued work is planned for 2021.
- Other activities: Presented a conservation slide show at Town Meeting; reviewed wetland permit applications; reviewed NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) letters to landowners regarding wetlands violations or failing septic systems; and reviewed possible sites for Connecticut River Conservancy cleanup efforts. Planned invasive plant species identification and containment project for 2020. Worked with NH DES and Selectboard on Orfordville Road bog culvert and spillway project.
- Water Testing: Water testing conducted May through September at ten sites along Jacobs Brook at Indian Pond beach/boat launch, and the Baker Ponds. Testing sites were added, and more frequent testing will continue for 2021. New water testers have been trained.

The Conservation Commission said goodbye to commissioners Diane Gildersleeve and Jeff MacQueen. Thank you for your years of service to the Commission!

Commissioners and Alternates:

Edmond Cooley (Chair), conservation@orfordnh.us, John Miller (Vice-Chair), Tom Bubolz, Harry Pease, Craig Putnam, and Carl Schmidt; Alternates: Emily Bryant (Asst. Secretary), Carl Cassel, and Fran Plaisted (Secretary).

CULTURE & HERITAGE

PARADISE PARK COMMISSION

The Paradise Park Commission continued its usual work of maintaining and repairing trails and benches and birdhouses during this time period. We saw increased use of the park as the pandemic kept people closer to home. It is clear our community treasures the natural resources in the park.

We have worked closely with the Town and with other agencies as we have tried to better understand the resources of the park and to prepare for the future.

Country Foresters AJ Follansbee and Hannah Dallas met with the Paradise Park Commission in July 2019 to assist us in updating the Park Management Plan. During our walkthrough of the forest, they emphasized the changing forest composition, the maturing and replacement of pine stands, tree diseases, and the impacts of climate change. Then Covid-19 soon put their work on a temporary hiatus.

The Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission has continued their assistance to the Town of Windsor in addressing major soil erosion issues in the park. Thanks to a grant (Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Ecosystem Restoration Program), bids were put out for design work to lessen the storm water impacts coming through County Roads culverts. Six firms submitted proposals in the spring of 2020, Fitzgerald Environmental Association was awarded the project, and they have begun work.

Commission member Jim Bennett accompanied Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation botanists Charlie Hohn and Tina Heath while they conducted a wetlands survey of the park. VT DEC is conducting a series of wetland bio-assessments throughout the state, using a qualitative and quantitative methodology called "Vermont Rapid Assessment Method." Observations included a walk-through of the wetland area, soil sampling, detailed sampling of flora within two 10x10 meter plots and quick assessment sampling of other associated wetland flora. VT DEC uses this data for databasing and does not provide final reports. The wetlands were assessed to be moderately disturbed by human activity with two primary threats identified as: 1.) A drying trend in the northern part of the McClain lot caused by alluvial deposition from Hubbard Brook flooding events and 2.) The incursion of invasive plants in all areas, primarily Purple Loosestrife and Common Reed. The visit helped the PPC classify the different wetland zones within the park, and we will continue to monitor the overall health of the wetland area.

We have also begun detailed studies of Lake Runnemedede to assess the overall health of the lake. The Paradise Park Committee conducts periodic water testing for the VT DEC Lay Monitoring Program (LMP) (which was largely suspended this summer due to COVID-19 restrictions), as well as monitoring for cyanobacteria and invasive species. Overall trends from the LMP data show a steady increase of nutrients since testing began during the 1980's. Since the lake is primarily spring-fed, we conducted phosphorus testing this spring in five separate locations to try to isolate potential man-made sources of run-off into the lake. This testing was not only inconclusive, but showed phosphorus levels 50 percent lower than historic spring phosphorus levels conducted periodically by VT DEC. This was almost certainly caused by the warm winter of 2019-20 in which the northwest corner of the lake did not properly freeze over. Freeze-over typically reduces light levels in northern lakes and ponds causing a mass die-off of plant life. When plants die off, their nutrients return to the water column, but that die-off was probably incomplete this year.

During the spring of 2020, several park users reported unusual phenomena in and around the northwest corner of the lake, including early blooms of filamentous green algae, a small fish kill, possible chemical pollution and the disturbance of water lily beds. Vermont DEC and Fish and Wildlife officials determined these events were naturally occurring phenomena: The fish kill was caused by a natural bacterial infection affecting only the bluegill probably spread by close contact during the spawning season, the "oil slick" was determined to be natural hydrocarbon formations from the wetland during decomposition, the water lily disturbance was a result of browsing by herbivores and the early algae bloom was unusual, but subsequent water testing did not show any sign of increased nutrients in the water. We believe that all these events were related to the lack of total freeze-over of the lake.

CONSERVATION COMMISSION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Monthly meetings of the Commission are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m. at the Old Church Building. Members of the Commission at year-end were: Helga Mueller, chairman; Ernie Hartley, Eric Underhill, Frank Rodimon, Karen Brown, Mal Kircher, and Rachael Brown.

As of December 31, 2020 the Conservation Fund contains \$5,272.32. Contributing to this fund are 10% of revenues from current use changes and 10% from logging on town-owned land. No income was received in 2020. Monies from the Conservation Fund can only be spent for the protection of natural resources. It requires the approval of voters at Town Meeting to use monies from the Fund for the acquisition of or interest in property.

The Expandable Trust Fund for the maintenance of the Underhill Canoe Campsite and the Sarah Moore Canoe Access contains \$4,110, 88

The Expandable Trust Fund for the Maintenance of the Piermont Town Forest and Trails on Bedford Road contains \$2332.59. The starting balance of this Fund at the beginning of 2020 had been \$3557.19. The Commission spent \$1, 225 erecting a “Piermont Town Forest and Trails” sign on Bedford Road as well as installing new identifying markers on trees along the Tree-ID Trail.

Land Leases

With the permission of the Selectboard, Piermont Conservation Commission has taken over the management of the three land leases in the Town. The leases include the Sarah Moore Lot, the School Lot and the Bedford Trails Agricultural property. This allows the Conservation Commission to have a better knowledge of the use of these properties.

We have implemented, along with the leases, a yearly land use report to be reported to the Commission by the lessees. The report will contain the type of use, the use of fertilizer, the use of any herbicide as well as crop rotation and soil testing.

Having these results will allow the Conservation Commission to establish a baseline for each piece of property. We look forward to working with the lessees.

Update on Erosion at the River Road Cemetery and Sarah Moore Lot

Several remedial actions have been taken; however, the Town may have to make some changes in the design of the road in the future.

Piermont Town Forest and Trails

The site on Bedford Road, now identified by a beautiful wooden sign, designed and erected by Fred Shipman, is managed and maintained by the Commission for recreational and educational purposes. The site's four color-coded trails are enjoyed by Piermont residents for hiking, snowshoeing, horseback riding and nature-watching.

Canoe Campsites

Both the Underhill Canoe Campsite and the Sarah Moore Canoe Access are managed and maintained by the Commission and are enjoyed by many canoeists.

Pollinator Garden Project

For the past two summers bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinators have enjoyed lots of insecticide-free sustenance from the Bee Balm, Liatris, Echinacea, Coreopsis and Phlox plants, and other plants provided by the Commission.

Water Quality Monitoring

Since 2003, a member of the Commission together with members of the Lake Tarleton and Lake Armington Associations have monitored the water quality of lakes Tarleton, Armington and Katherine in June, July and August. Since monitoring started, the water quality of the three lakes has been excellent and stable, with minor spikes in e-coli in some years at the State Park Beach

Lake Host Program

This was the 17th year that members of the Lake Tarleton and Armington Associations participated in the N.H. Lakes Association "Lake Host Program" to protect the lakes from milfoil and other invasive species at both public launches from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The Town of Piermont contributes \$300 each year to this program.

In other business

The Commission is available to assist property owners with any questions on violations, wetlands applications or any conservation concerns.

Helga Mueller
Piermont Conservation Commission

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

2020 saw relatively little activity from the conservation commission with no in person meetings due to the pandemic. We are encouraging the town to use Beaver Deceivers whenever possible to control the buildup of water near our roads due to the ever industrious beavers. Beaver dams provide flood and erosion control on our waterways by slowing the flows of our increasingly severe flood events such as the Christmas rain/melt of this past year. Beaver ponds also provide critical habitat for plants and animals - wetlands like these are the most productive of the natural resources in our town. We continue to provide information and support to individual landowners as questions about land use arise. The fund balances are healthy, which could mean that we need to seek out projects that protect our natural resources. Input on possible projects from folks in town would be appreciated.

Forest Maintenance Fund

January 01, 2020	\$19,844.19
2020 Interest	<u>\$124.38</u>
December 31, 2020	\$19,968.57

Conservation Fund

January 01, 2020	\$96,905.08
2020 Interest	<u>607.38</u>
December 31 st , 2020	\$97,512.46

Current use penalties due to CC from 2019	\$1,695
Current use penalties due to CC from 2020	\$13,350

Respectfully submitted,

Bill Knight

pcc@plainfieldnh.org

2020 RANDOLPH CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT

The Commission concentrated on four priorities from our strategic plan during 2020 which included:

- Outreach and educational programs for the general public.
- Coordination with other entities with similar priorities.
- Trail work and development in town forests.
- Development of an interpretive trail.

We were able to offer two educational programs this year. Just prior to the COVID shutdown, Dan “Rudi” Ruddell of the White River Partnership did a presentation about the watershed area and opportunities for recreation. In May, Naturalist Jim Graves did a Zoom presentation, “Building a Better Backyard for Birds and Bugs”. Approximately 20 people joined in!

Gathering data for better decision-making regarding the town forests and how they are used was a top priority. A survey on Front Porch Forum elicited approximately 70 responses and the placement of a sign-in box at Ellis Lot brought in many responses about what activities users were pursuing and suggestions for improvement. This data will help to inform the ongoing updates to the management plans for the properties.

RCC continued working closely with RASTA on trail development, signage, and improved access. Informational kiosks were put up at Ellis and Sayward, and a parking lot improvement was done at Sayward. Additionally, there has been helpful communication between RCC and the Randolph Recreation Committee regarding usage and other logistical matters. A kestrel nesting box was installed at Ellis by Brian Lowe and young kestrels were fledged! RCC also decided that, given the increased usage of the Ellis Lot, that it would be best for safety purposes to put up No Hunting signs at the property. When the property was deeded to the town, it was stipulated that hunting not be allowed there.

A key priority that RCC is working on for 2021 is to put up signs directing visitors to the town forests from Route 12 at Tatro Hill Road for Sayward and from RT 66 to Ellis as data showed that many local people are unaware of where the forests are and we are seeing an increase of out-of-town visitors for mountain biking.

Mike Van Dyke, Chair



Artist, Susannah Gravel

Royalton Conservation Commission 2020

The purposes of the Conservation Commission are to assist the community of Royalton to assess, protect, and enhance its natural resources. Additionally, we may inventory and advise on town lands in which the public has an interest, including land with historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural, or archaeological value.

The Conservation Commission collaborates with a variety of municipal entities and other organizations, including the Planning Commission, the Select Board, the White River Partnership, Vermont Law School, the Windsor County Forester, Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and neighboring towns' Conservation Commissions. We are also a member of the Association for Vermont Conservation Commissions.

A primary concern of the Royalton Conservation Commission over the past several years has been to advise on the management of town-owned tracts of land. These include the Crawford parcel (behind the Town Offices), the Sarnoff parcel (north side of Rt 107), and the White River access sites. A forest management plan was completed for the Sarnoff parcel in 2018, and trail work is ongoing at this location. A forest management plan was also completed in 2019 for the Crawford parcel. A first phase of timber harvesting on this property has been approved and is scheduled for the winter of 2021-22. This work will pave the way for improved forest health, as well as the development of a more extensive trail system, vistas, and picnic areas for public use. The underlying vision here is to manage our town forests with both ecological sustainability and community benefit in mind. The Crawford parcel is a particularly appealing project in this regard, given that it is easily walkable from schools and businesses in South Royalton village.

The Conservation Commission is also preparing advice for managing the arrival of the Emerald Ash Borer in Royalton, as infestation gets ever closer. This will involve a preliminary inventory of ash trees along public roads and an estimate of the expected damage. Based on our recommendations, the Town would then be in a position to take progressive action in preparation for what promises to be an inevitable ecological change with a heavy financial burden.

Conservation Fund Ballot Question

We are asking voters at this year's town meeting to approve the establishment of a Conservation Fund – an account that can be used to manage money raised for specific conservation projects. To be clear, the establishment of this fund carries no financial obligation on the part of the town. It is expected that fund-raising may be derived from grants, donations, bequests, or approved timber sales from town forests (as is scheduled for the coming year), apart from any appropriations requested from the town. Importantly, this fund will enable us to generate and manage money that may be dedicated to specific conservation projects in both the short- and long-term. This is currently neither possible nor practical with the Conservation Commission's modest annual operating budget.

Any Royalton resident or land-owner who is interested in participating in conservation or has any questions about our activities is encouraged to contact the Town Offices or attend any of our posted meetings. Meetings are routinely scheduled for 6:30pm on the 3rd Monday of each month, and they are open to the public.

Members: Tico Wolff (Chair), Brad Salzmann (Treasurer), David Barker (Clerk), Bushrod Powers, Mike Bald, John Dettwiler, Judy Shaaf

STRAFFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION

This was a year unlike any other for the Strafford Conservation Commission (SCC). Despite the shadow of Covid-19 over the year, we saw a considerable expansion of our trail network and a surge in the use and activity on those trails. While it was otherwise a quiet year with fewer meetings and fewer guests, there was as much or more to report.

As you will note in Mike Hebb's Trail Report, we have added to the Strafford Trail System the Whiterock Trail into Tunbridge, an additional segment in the Cobb Town Forest trail system near the Vershire town-line and the Richardson Trail, which starts near the border with Thetford. Our thanks to the indefatigable Mike Hebb and his small army of trail-maintenance volunteers for their efforts.

In addition, another trail network is gradually being extended along Strafford's southwesterly border with Sharon on lands conserved by the Upper Valley Land Trust and the Vermont Land Trust. These include the Manning and Robinson properties and the proposed Ashley Community Forest, all with trail easements to ensure that these trails will be available into perpetuity.

Four members of the SCC have been involved with the efforts to create the Ashley Community Forest (ACF) through the donation by the Alliance of Vermont Communities of 106.7 acres to Strafford and 149.7 acres to Sharon: David Paganelli, J.T. Horn, Micki Colbeck and Steve Willbanks. The SCC has reviewed the Land Use Chapter of the Town Plan and concluded that the ACF project adheres closely to the recommendations and goals of the Town Plan in regards especially to recreation, forestry, open-space preservation and wildlife protection and the SCC will write a letter to the Selectboard in support of the ACF project.

There has also been progress on the Emerald Ash-Borer front. The Town of Strafford set aside \$5,000 in the Highway Budget and has started the removal of an estimated 1,200 ash trees of significant size within the Town's rights-of-way, based on a survey by Tree Warden Bob Wilson and Carol Wilson. Orange County Forester David Paganelli has also been advising the Selectboard on this project. There are at least a dozen known infestations now in Vermont.

Please visit the Conservation Commission & Natural Resources pages of the town website: Straffordvt.org. Town Clerk Lisa Bragg and SCC members Mike Hebb and Mickie Colbeck have spent many hours developing these webpages for your pleasure. They are literally crammed with maps, photos and information.

The SCC meets the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7 p.m., in the Morrill Education Center or by Zoom. Members of the public are always welcome. The SCC has nine appointed members: Micki Colbeck, Steve Faccio, J.T. Horn, David Paganelli, Kate Root, Chuck Sherman, Will Cooney and Steve Willbanks.

Respectfully submitted,
Stephen Willbanks, Chair

THETFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION



The Thetford Conservation Commission manages town properties, plans with town committees and state agencies for future conservation, and hosts educational and service events. We're grateful for the enthusiastic participation by many town residents at those events, and we welcome your continued support!

Like so many others, our activities in 2020 were severely curtailed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The annual nature film festival, bird walk, speaker series and other popular activities will resume in 2021 (we hope!). We were, however, able to coordinate the Town's collection of trash and invasive garlic mustard on Green Up Day. More than 90 residents participated in the effort.

In addition, follow-up treatment of invasive plants continued at Hughes forest, as part of the forest restoration following timber harvesting several years ago. Work also began on restoring the floodplain habitat at the Taylor Floodplain Preserve. Restoration will greatly improve the habitat for critical resident wildlife and migratory birds. The Commission is pursuing additional funds to continue this work in 2021.

Though we were disappointed to cancel most of our normal activities, this pales in comparison to the sudden passing of Bob Pulaski, who served the Commission for more than three decades. Bob was most recently our Treasurer, but among his many contributions over the years was his critical role in the creation of the Zebedee Wetland Preserve, which is enjoyed by all of us, particularly by school groups. We all miss Bob's modesty, good judgment, humor, and dedication to the Commission and the Town that he loved.

The Commission is at work on a memorial bench for Bob at Zebedee, using donations from community members. Any remaining funds will be added to the Conservation Trust Fund toward future land acquisition for conservation. It is not too late to donate; simply send a check payable to the Thetford Conservation Trust Fund in care of Tracy Borst at the Town Hall.



Respectfully submitted,

Steve Lehman, Chair

WEATHERSFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION 2020 ANNUAL REPORT

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conservation Commission was able to continue its work and meet monthly during this fiscal year. The Commission serves as an advisory body in town while also organizing community outreach and education about natural resources, serving as a liaison between various organizations, and spearheading relevant projects as needed. Continued areas of focus for the Commission during this year have been on:

- Emerald Ash Borer education for both the public and town officials
- Town Forest use planning, with a current focus on trails
- Pre-pandemic community hikes and talks
- Testing and reporting on E. coli levels of the North Branch stream

New projects have included a town waterways naming project (in collaboration with the Historical Society) and the naming of a landmark on a Mt. Ascutney trail. This is in honor of Harry Temple, a long-time Weathersfield resident and Commission member.

The Commission meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm at the Center Meetinghouse most of the year. During the winter months meetings generally occur at the Weathersfield Proctor Library in Ascutney. These meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend. Please contact us regarding concerns about wildlife, non-native species, and other natural resources questions. Meeting agendas and notes are published on the Town website.

Note: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meetings have been held online when required. Online meeting access is posted in the monthly agendas on the Town website.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Shand, Chair

WEST WINDSOR CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The West Windsor Conservation Commission normally meets on the first Monday of the Month at 7pm. All residents and visitors are welcome to attend. Agendas are posted in advance of each meeting on the Town Web Site.

The Conservation Commission is tasked with managing the Town Forest Easement, and also worked in 2020 on:

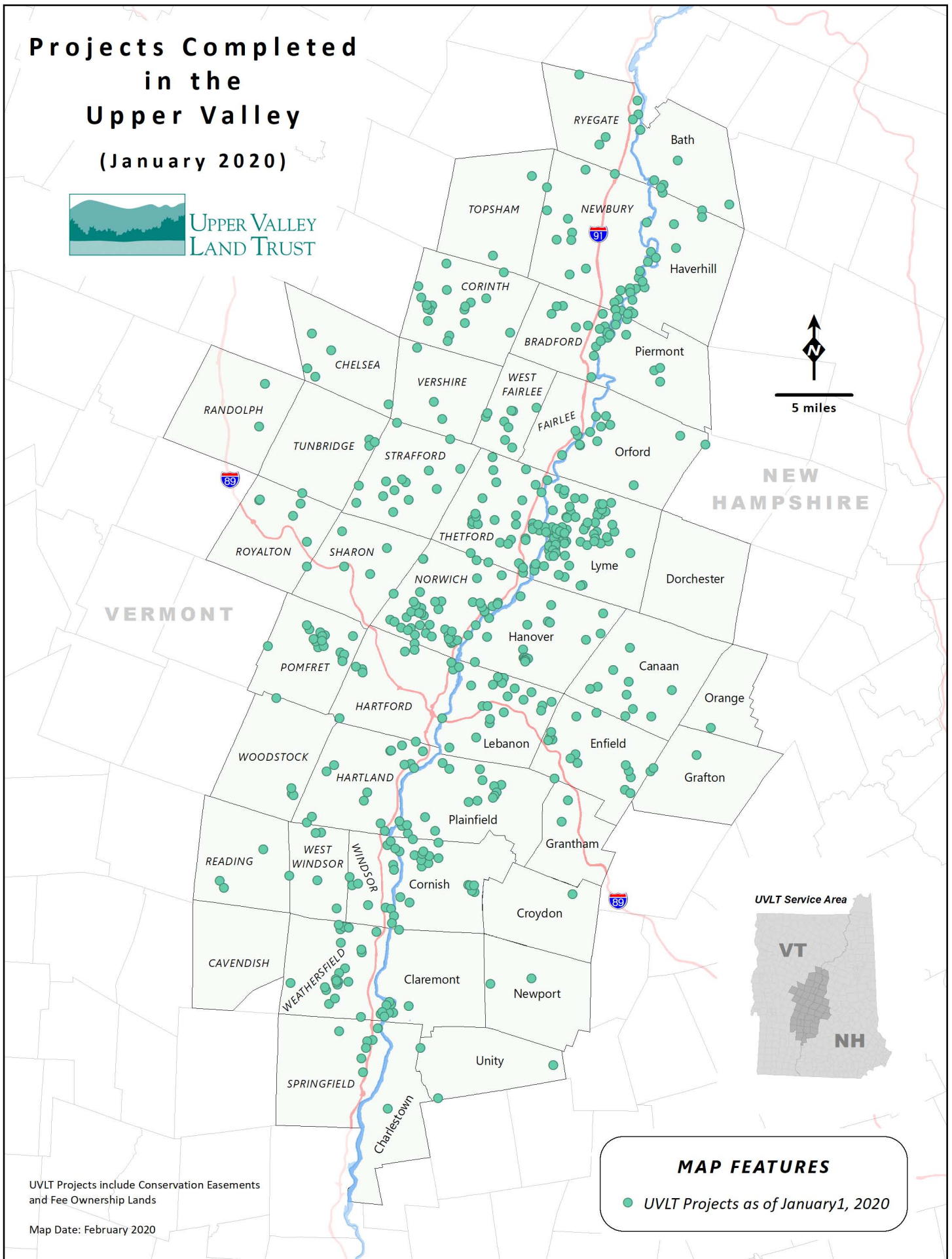
- Efforts to move the Town from Flood Plain Zoning to River Corridor Zoning;
- Sampling of the Mill Brook watershed for pollutants of concern;
- Relocation of significant segments of the Bicentennial Trail to alleviate erosion issues
- Supervision of Trail Easements held by the Town outside of the Town Forest
- Erosion control on Queen Victoria Road

Respectfully Submitted
Ted Siegler, Chair

Projects Completed in the Upper Valley (January 2020)



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

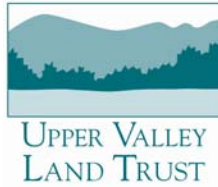


UVLT Projects include Conservation Easements
and Fee Ownership Lands

Map Date: February 2020

MAP FEATURES

● UVLT Projects as of January 1, 2020



Conservation Easements

Frequently Asked Questions

The Upper Valley Land Trust permanently protects specific parcels of land using voluntary, legally binding agreements known as conservation easements. A conservation easement is a deed that specifies the types and locations of activities permitted on a particular parcel of land. A conservation easement "runs with the land" so all future owners of the parcel are bound to the terms of the conservation easement.

UVLT works directly with landowners to draft restrictions appropriate to the unique characteristics of each property and the landowner's goals. For instance, a landowner may choose to conserve some, but not all, of their land; or a landowner may wish to specify timber or habitat management standards to continue their investment in good stewardship.

Land subject to a conservation easement remains in private ownership and can be sold, given, or inherited at any time. A conservation easement assures landowners that the natural resource values of their land will be protected forever, no matter who the future owners are.

Conservation easements are usually donated to UVLT, and easement donors may realize income tax, estate tax, and gift tax benefits. When funds are available, UVLT may purchase conservation easements. This is sometimes called "selling development rights."

Who Can Grant an Easement?

Any owner of property with conservation values may grant a conservation easement if UVLT accepts. If the property belongs to more than one person, all owners must consent. If

the property is mortgaged, the owner must obtain an agreement from the lender to partially subordinate its interest so that the easement cannot be extinguished in the event of foreclosure.

How Restrictive is a Conservation Easement?

Each conservation easement is designed to limit or prohibit development and other activities in order to protect the significant natural values of that particular property.

Agricultural and forestry activities are usually permitted and encouraged on conserved lands, and structures such as culverts, bridges, barns, sheds, fences, and dams necessary for farming and forestry are allowed. Habitat management and improvement, such as creating ponds and wetlands or establishing plant species to benefit wildlife, is also usually permitted.

Depending on the characteristics of the property and the landowner's wishes, future residential or commercial construction may be prohibited entirely – or limited to a site where it will have the least impact on the natural values of the property. Additional restrictions usually include prohibition of mining, excavation, advertising billboards, and dumps.

How Much Land Must Be Included in a Conservation Easement?

The appropriate amount of acreage depends on the purposes of the easement and the natural values of the land, the landowner's objectives, and UVLT land protection goals and priorities. The restrictions must convey meaningful conservation benefits consistent

with UVLT's mission as a charitable organization.

How are Conservation Easements Enforced?

When UVLT accepts a conservation easement, it takes on a duty of stewardship – the right and responsibility to defend the terms of the easement against any future violation. UVLT representatives visit conserved properties periodically to verify compliance, using written records and photographs to document the condition of the property.

Does a Conservation Easement Require Public Access to the Property?

A conservation easement does not allow access to the public unless the landowner specifically provides for it in the document. Public access is more often granted when the property has a history of public use and is perceived to be a recreational resource. Some landowners provide public access rights to a limited area, such as hiking along a defined corridor. Landowners may limit access to specific purposes (education or hunting, for instance) or permit only certain types of activities such as hiking or skiing. Vermont and New Hampshire state laws protect landowners who offer public access from liability.

Conservation easements do permit regular access by UVLT for the purpose of monitoring the use and activities on the property to ensure that the terms and conditions of the conservation easement are upheld.

Are There Financial Incentives to Donating a Conservation Easement?

Income Taxes: The donation of a conservation easement constitutes a charitable gift which may be deductible for federal income tax purposes if the property meets conservation standards established by the federal government. The value of the gift, determined by an appraisal, is equal to the difference between the fair market value of the property before and after the easement is donated.

Estate Taxes: A conservation easement can be a useful estate planning tool, enabling heirs to keep land they would otherwise have to sell. State and federal inheritance taxes on real estate are often so high that the heirs are forced to sell some or all of the land just to pay the taxes. Because an easement reduces the value of the property, the inheritance taxes are also reduced.

Gift Taxes: When a landowner gives land to a family member, the gift is subject to gift taxes if its value exceeds the maximum tax-free amount. Lowering the value of the land through a conservation easement may allow the landowner to give more land free of tax, or may help reduce the amount of tax owed.

Property Taxes: Most property subject to a conservation easement is eligible for preferential tax treatment under current use taxation. Landowners whose property is already enrolled in a current use program will generally not see a further reduction in their property taxes.



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

19 BUCK ROAD, HANOVER, NH 03755
603-643-6626
www.UVLT.org



UPPER VALLEY
LAND TRUST

STAFF DIRECTORY

PHONE: 603.643.6626

FAX: 603.643.6636

www.UVLT.org

Jason Berard
Stewardship Director
Ext. 104
Jason.Berard@uvlt.org

Andy Boyce
Conservation Mapping & Field Specialist
Ext. 111
Andy.Boyce@uvlt.org

Megan Chapman
Conservation Project Manager
Ext. 114
Megan.Chapman@uvlt.org

Katelyn Currie-Huggard
Land Steward
Ext. 110
Katelyn.Currie-Huggard@uvlt.org

Lorie Hood
Office Manager
Ext. 101
Lorie.Hood@uvlt.org

Robin Kilfeather-Mackey
Vice President, Operations
Ext. 105
Robin.Kilfeather-Mackey@uvlt.org

Alison Marchione
Programs Director
Ext. 109
Alison.Marchione@uvlt.org

Jeanie McIntyre
President
Ext. 106
Jeanie.McIntyre@uvlt.org

Peg Merrens
Vice President, Conservation
Ext. 112
Peg.Merrens@uvlt.org

Craig Privett
Conservation Project Assistant
Ext. 108
Craig.Privett@uvlt.org

Micah Tilles
Land Steward
Ext. 122
Micah.Tilles@uvlt.org