

REPORT OF THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The most important message the Conservation Commission has for the residents of Plainfield is that we are here to assist you in any construction project involving wetlands. We can assess your project and suggest alternatives to help you avoid the need for permits or guide you through the application process. The vast majority of projects are permitted provided the landowner is willing to take basic precautions to protect wetland functions and water quality. It is much simpler to obtain a permit prior to construction, and some are approved ten days after notifying the state's permitting department. "After the fact" permit applications are more involved and scrutinized more closely by that department. Running further afoul of our state laws - we unfortunately have had instances of this - can have harsh consequences but is entirely avoidable.

The Conservation Commission worked on two land conservation projects in 2009. We considered using the Conservation Fund to help the Upper Valley Land Trust accomplish a preliminary task to obtain a conservation easement on a substantial piece of high-quality farmland. Although this early step in the process was supported at a public hearing, the project would not be rushed and remains in the planning stages. Later in the year, we considered assisting the Land Trust to obtain a conservation easement on a large piece of working agricultural and forest land with important wildlife habitat value. The Plainfield Cider Orchard project was supported at a public hearing and by the Conservation Commission. The people of Plainfield, through an expenditure from the Conservation Fund supplemented by private donations, will use \$73,000 to leverage an additional minimum of \$168,000 of state funding and landowner contribution to conserve this property.

We provided input to the Selectmen supporting development of trailhead parking on Route 12-A for Home Hill Trail. This important trail, open for foot traffic and horseback riding, connects Route 12-A with Freeman Road and provides access to the hilltop common area owned by the Home Hill Landowners Association. Public access rights for the trail and common land were offered during the process of subdivision approvals. We have also commissioned an update of the town's trail map, which should be available in the spring of 2010.

Since its acquisition, Victor Hewes Memorial Park had been managed by the Conservation Commission. New commissioners invariably wondered why management of this property, acquired through a funding program limiting the use to recreation, was a function of the Conservation Commission instead of the Recreation Commission. This year the administrative budget for operating Victor Hewes Memorial Park was transferred to the Recreation Commission at Town Meeting. The Conservation Commission maintains an interest in proper stewardship of this property, as we do with all town-owned property. Late in the year the Selectmen consulted us for historical background and recommendations regarding the unruly stream that crosses under Stage Road and sometime spills over onto the neighboring property.

Although two members of the Conservation Commission moved on in 2009, we gained three and our membership has never been stronger. Alternate Judy Hallam became a

regular member with the resignation of Eric Brann. Joe Della Badia was appointed as an alternate and became a regular member with the resignation of Gordon “Peanut” Wilder. We welcomed year-end appointments of Shawn Lundrigan and Myra Ferguson as alternate members.

Information on the Conservation Commission’s day-to-day activities not highlighted here can be found in our meeting minutes posted on the town website www.plainfieldnh.org. We have begun to upgrade our page with the goal of making it an interesting, informative source of practical conservation information.

Respectfully Submitted,

David Grobe, Chairman
 Conservation Commission
pcc@plainfieldnh.org

CONSERVATION COMMISSION FUNDS YEAR END BALANCES

		Income	Expenses	
Forestry Maintenance Fund	01/01/09			\$18,635
Interest		\$62		
Balance	12/31/09			\$18,697
		Income	Expenses	
Conservation Commission Fund	01/01/09			\$113,212
Current use penalty revenues		\$15,790		
Hewes Field Parking Lot			\$3,000	
Interest Earned		\$394		
Balance	12/31/09			\$126,396