

## **REPORT OF THE PLAINFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION DECEMBER 2011**

**A**dvocacy for the Plainfield Conservation Commission (PCC) consists of permitting, preventing, and/or addressing wetland issues; monitoring intent-to-cut notices; commenting on issues before other municipal boards; and making available best-management practices for the Plainfield Highway Department.

There are future plans to work with the Highway Department regarding the proximity of the Town Garage to the Penniman wetlands. At this time, the plans have not been formally discussed nor formulated.

There were a few land-use violations within the town where the PCC was asked to ameliorate. Fortunately most of the involved landowners responded and made satisfactory reparations. The cooperation and patience of all parties to the events are much appreciated.

**S**tewardship consists of watching over various lands that the town owns and the agencies that monitor (i.e., once-a-year, on-site inspection of said land) them; keeping the Select Board apprised of various bridge/trail easements; monitor and send reports to NH Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) regarding the four Land Conservation Investment Program (LCIP) properties; monitoring Class VI road protection issues and measures.

**M**onitoring reports have been sent to the Office of Energy and Planning for Morgan Hill and Mud Pond. The reports for Benson Town Forest and the Walker Farm are partially completed at this time.

This year there is discussion about gating or barring Class VI roads. At issue is the landowner's right to protect the investment made to a Class VI road and the public right to freely access that road.

**O**peration consists of maintaining a Plan-of-Work document; monitoring the annual budget; submitting yearly dues to the NH Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) and recording/filing of easement monitoring reports.

Attendance at the annual NHACC meeting is always an opportunity to make/maintain a network with other Conservation Commissioners in NH towns. The Upper Valley Land Trust sponsors an annual meeting of Upper Valley Conservation Commissioners in the Upper Valley—closer to home. All of our commissioners try to attend one or both of the enlightening meetings.

**O**utreach consists of identifying and awarding the annual Plainfield Conservation Award; organizing the Green-Up Week activities; maintaining the Conservation Commission's website; maintaining and expanding partnerships with neighboring Conservation Commissions; organizing/sponsoring environmental education opportunities

This year's Green-Up Day was successful for various residents who picked up discarded items along our town's roads. When the snow melts, there are any number of items left behind with the warmer temperatures. In concert with this springtime cleanup, the Conservation Commission organized a clean-up along River Road opposite the Plainfield Wildflower Preserve. It was a beautiful spring morning with many community volunteers, including a boy scout troop and some town youths fulfilling community service endeavors. The Plainfield Highway Department provided a dump truck and the MacNamara family brought a tractor to load the truck easily. After the clean-up, we went on a guided wildflower walk to see (with binoculars because the embankment is too steep and fragile to climb for a closer look) the small and delicate spring ephemerals (i.e., bloom for a short period of time).

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The PCC's yearly plan is to have some type of educational event for each season. The coming spring will have another clean-up day and the site has yet to be chosen. This summer, there will be a forest management/timber-sale workshop on June 9, 2012. The workshop will teach the steps to ensure a successful timber harvest. Proper forest harvesting can provide income, improve wildlife habitat, and result in trails, better access, views, and a healthy and vigorous forest for the future.

The PCC website's purpose is to provide easy access to information about hiking trail access, invasive plant control, regulations and permitting, conservation easement value and process, etc. Take a look at the site on [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org)

**P**rojects consists of testing water quality at various local sources; maintaining and using the data contained in our Natural Resource Inventory (NRI); refreshing boundary markers on town-owned property; and planning for land conservation.

A long-time Plainfield resident, George Koehler, passed away recently. Several of his friends have donated monies to the PCC to name a walking trail in George's memory. On Sanborn Road, a project is in-the-works for a trailhead parking area (with kiosk) created with these monies. When the excavation is done, it's a nice walk up to French's Ledges and then on to Columbus Jordan Road. At the terminus of the trail there will be a sign designating this walk as the George Koehler Trail. Find some time to enjoy the walk as George did. See if you can walk as many times as he did.

Another project is to help the Jordan family conserve their Wond-R-View Farm and their forested parcel on Tallow Hill. Since 1850 this land has been in the Jordan family—first owned and farmed by William Riley Jordan. The views to and from the property are representative of the beauty of a traditional hill farm in Plainfield and other parts of the Upper Valley. The Jordan family wants to conserve this property because of its history, beauty, natural resources, wildlife habitat, value as farm and forest land, etc.

Discussion of the Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) revealed a wealth of information already archived but no efficient way to use the information for decision-making. After much discussion and exploration, the PCC decided to subscribe to a service offered through the state. There is a reasonable annual fee for this service which stores our data and analyzes it upon request. Therefore, we avoid the cost of purchasing/subscribing software and training to use the software. The service, for the annual fee, provides

experts trained to use the software to create maps, reports and advice for any project Plainfield's various commissions, committee and boards is working on at the time.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Myra Ferguson*, Chair  
Conservation Commission  
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**Conservation Commission sponsored River Road land clean up**

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION FUNDS YEAR END BALANCES**

<b>Forestry Maintenance Fund</b>	01/01/11	Beg. Balance	\$18,736
Interest earned		\$13	
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12/31/11</b>		<b>\$18,749</b>