

## **REPORT OF THE PLAINFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION DECEMBER 2012**

**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.

The PCC has been involved in the discussions and field walks with the State of New Hampshire and their future logging of the Annie Duncan Forest.

**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; monitor Class VI road protection issues and measures.

Monitoring reports have been sent to the Office of Energy and Planning for Morgan Hill, Benson Town Forest and Mud Pond. The report for the Walker Farm is partially completed at this time.

Currently the commission is researching and considering the mechanism to change a Class VI Road to a Class A Trail. The public can still access a Class A Trail on foot. However, if the public wishes to use a vehicle on the trail, he/she must have written permission from the landowner. The change this type of road's status must be voted at the Annual Town Meeting.

In addition, the PCC will discuss and plan to add the monitoring of the Shulman property (see below) to the list of lands stewarded by the Town of Plainfield.

**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; maintain the Conservation Commission's website; maintaining and expanding partnerships with neighboring Conservation Commissions; organizing/sponsoring environmental education opportunities.

**FORESTRY WORKSHOP** It was a picture-perfect day in June 2012 when several Plainfield residents joined some members of the PCC to walk the Loomis Road property (development rights owned by the Nature Conservancy) to learn the landowner's role in the proper harvesting of a forest. The workshop illustrated the steps to ensure a successful timber harvest which can provide income, improve wildlife habitat, and result in trails,

better access, views, and a healthy and vigorous forest for the future. We appreciate the Saturday morning Karen Bennett (NH Cooperative Extension) and Erhardt Frost (Forester) gave us sharing their many years of experience with timber sales, loggers and registered foresters.

**GREEN-UP WEEK** The 2012 Annual Green-Up Week (April of each year), advertised at District and Town Meetings, was again successful as various residents volunteered to pick up discarded items along our town's roads. Your time and effort are much appreciated!

**WEBSITE** 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. The website is still "under construction" with the assistance of Mike Sutherland and former PCC member, Judy Hallam. Take a look at the site on [www.plainfieldnh.org](http://www.plainfieldnh.org)

**P**rojects consist 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.

**KOEHLER TRAILHEAD** In early December, the PCC and the Plainfield Highway Department worked together to install a kiosk at the Koehler Trailhead on Sanborn Road. The trails that leave this trailhead can take you many places—one of which is the shortest walk to French's Ledges. The various trails accessed from the parking area connect to Columbus Jordan Road on Colby Hill where George Koehler, long-time Plainfield resident, used to enjoy walking to the Spencer and/or Farnum Lots.



**SHULMANS' LAND GIFT** The family of Renee Shulman (Ladieu Road) gifted 19 acres to the Town of Plainfield. The land is south of the intersection of Ladieu and Porter Roads. The Shulman family gave this land to the community to enjoy its recreational, aesthetic, wildlife-habitat and water-quality value. An added value is the potential of this site's connection to town-owned Farnum Lot and its connectivity to the existing community trail network at the Plainfield Elementary School. It's a beautiful site and ready for your enjoyment.

**HANCHETTS BROOK FOREST** The Upper Valley Land Trust was successful obtaining a grant through the NH Aquatic Resource Mitigation (ARM) Fund for the conservation of the Hanchetts Brook Forest in Plainfield, NH.

Some of the benefits of conserving the Hanchetts Brook Forest include:

- The protection of 101 acres of upland forest adjacent to Hanchetts Brook;
- The protection of 1750 feet of frontage on Hanchetts Brook, which frontage is among the Highest Ranked Habitat in the Biological Region by Ecological Condition illustrated in New Hampshire’s Wildlife Action Plan (WAP);
- Protection of rare plant communities and some rare insects;
- Adding more conserved land in proximity to already-conserved lands within the Town of Plainfield;

**MAPPING PROJECT** The PCC now subscribes to an inexpensive service offered through the State. This service stores our archived mapping data contained in our Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) and analyzes it upon request. We have avoided 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 decision-making commissions, committees and boards is working on at the time.

Respectfully Submitted,

Myra Ferguson, Chair  
 Conservation Commission  
[pcc@plainfieldnh.org](mailto:pcc@plainfieldnh.org)

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION FUNDS YEAR END BALANCES**

<b>Forestry Maintenance Fund</b>	01/01/12 Beg. Balance	\$18,749
	Interest earned	\$21
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12/31/12</b>	<b>\$18,770</b>
<b>Conservation Commission Fund</b>	<b>01/01/11 Beg. Bal.</b>	<b>\$52,494</b>
	Interest earned	\$61
	Current use penalty monies in ('10/'11)	\$7,582
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12/31/12</b>	<b>\$ 60,137</b>