

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION DECEMBER 2013

The Plainfield Conservation Commission (PCC) is an advisory commission to the Plainfield Select Board. This year the commission concentrated on organizing conservation easement deeds, inventorying Class VI roads, and continuing the education/action campaign to control invasive species.

*Understanding the Ramifications of Conservation Easement Deeds:* The PCC has worked to review and organize the conservation easement deeds on record for the conserved properties within Plainfield's boundaries. We continued a project that Ruthann Wheeler had worked on.

The importance of knowing the content of these deeds is paramount. The language in a deed records the intent of the creators of the easement to conserve the land in perpetuity as it was used at the time the land was officially conserved. The deeds record the specific intents of what can, and cannot, be done on the land to prolong the land's current use as open space, agricultural and/or forested land, and maintain its undeveloped character, its history and beauty. And, as most recently experienced, if the language allows public access: what is the extent of the access, the definition of access, the type of access, etc.?

The language in these easement documents is now easily accessible in a two-volume, tabbed and alphabetized set to be reviewed on an annual basis during the property's monitoring visit (a PCC official makes this visit and reports the current use). Sitting on a shelf in the Town Office, the volumes are there when the Town of Plainfield (who is the holder of the easement), the landowner, any other town committee, or the public has a question about the land's current use.

*Class VI Roads:* Many years ago Howard Zea took the hand-drawn map of Plainfield and noted by hand and pencil what roads are discontinued and the date of that discontinuance. He also highlighted the Class VI roads and their dates of establishment or any official change to them.

The PCC embarked on a campaign to walk *Howard's* roads and photograph pertinent elements in the road or being seen from the road. Also noted is the steepness of the road, wetness of the terrain, the current condition of the road, the beginning and ending of the road, any noteworthy historic significance, environmental value, scenic beauty, whether the road connects to other road(s), number of residences on the road, ease-of-access for emergency vehicles, etc.

All of this information is catalogued in a three-ring binder, housed at the Town Office, for anyone looking for this type of information. The description of the road is objective (i.e., factual) without editorial comment. The PCC believes this volume will provide useful information to any decision-making a town committee makes, for a potential home buyer, or for a current property owner considering a change to the road.

*House Calls:* Having found it difficult to reach all community members, the PCC will this year try a new strategy to explain and help Plainfield control the overwhelming spread of invasive species in Plainfield and the Upper Valley. We're calling this effort—House Calls.

Commissioners will visit with you, at your invitation, and share their knowledge about the identification of good and bad plants on your property. They will give you ways to encourage the good plants and control the spread of the bad plants. It's a dialog; not a lecture from the commissioner. You will ask the questions, show the place on your land where you have a concern, ask for reference material or professional help to contain the invasion, etc. Plus, we are there for you, if invited, to spread the word to your neighbors. In other words telling you something in a workshop or weed-pulling-party which you may, or may not, want to know; we will come to you (or a group of you) to help you with your specific invasive species problem(s).

So, make the call (469-3399 or [ferguson208a@tds.net](mailto:ferguson208a@tds.net)) and we'll make an appointment to help you control (you may never eradicate) the spread of invasive species—our native plants and wildlife will appreciate your efforts.

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>	01/01/13 Beg. Balance	\$18,770
	Interest earned	\$7
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12/31/13</b>	<b>\$18,777</b>
<b>Conservation Commission Fund</b>	01/01/13 Balance	<b>\$60,137</b>
	Interest earned	\$22
	Current use penalty monies in ('12)	\$8,465
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12/31/13</b>	<b>\$ 68,624</b>



Loomis Road, One of Plainfield's many class VI Highways  
Photo: Myra Ferguson