

CONSERVATION COMMISSION DECEMBER 2015

The Plainfield Conservation Commission (PCC) is an advisory commission to the Plainfield Select Board. This year the commission collaborated with other community agencies, e.g., the Meriden Bird Club (MBC) and the Plainfield Town Garage Study Group (PTGSG). The majority of our work took place in the field rather than the meeting room: re-marking the boundaries of the Spencer Lot, inventorying Class VI roads and continuing the education/action campaign to control invasive species in our fields and forests.

Collaboration with Town Committees and Clubs: Sharing the expertise Plainfield has within its various voluntary committees and clubs yields efficient use of the expertise in each group and the satisfaction of sharing knowledge to complete our sometimes overlapping goals and projects.

The Selectboard requested that a study group convene to guide their decision to guarantee the sustainability of the Town Garage both environmentally and operationally. The PCC contributed two commissioners to this study group. The PCC is primarily concerned with the protection of the Penniman Wetland which is adjacent to the current Town Garage at the intersection of Penniman and Stage Roads. Representatives from the PCC, Energy Committee, Planning Board, and Zoning Board started meeting last summer and continues to formulate various recommendations (using research and cost-benefit analysis). There are two basic questions to answer: 1) to choose another site in town for the garage, 2) or keep the garage on the current site and renovate, re-contour the site, or rebuild the building(s) and re-contour the site. The purpose of this work is for the Town Garage, to meet all local, state and federal requirements for effective operation and the protection of the Penniman Wetland.

The MBC is examining the sustainability of the historic and valuable bird sanctuary they own on Main Street in Meriden. The PCC was invited to partner with the newly formed Sanctuary Stewardship Committee of the MBC to implement and design and conduct an annual survey of the migratory and year-round resident birds that use the 32-acre site. In addition, a new bird checklist was developed to educate the human visitors about the sanctuary's unique and fascinating feathered inhabitants. In the near future, people visiting the sanctuary will have a list of birds to look for on the trails through the forest and field, and the MBC members doing the annual survey will have a structured and reliable survey of birds inhabiting the sanctuary during every May and June. In this way, the MBC can determine if the sanctuary can retain the bird populations with a healthy environment of good food, clean water and shelter from predators.

Kimball Union Academy invited our opinion on the plans they developed to re-vegetate the wetland that runs from Chellis Pond down to Main Street by the hardball field. Among other things, we learned that their name for that wetland is *Frog Hollow*.

This collaboration with other community groups has been a welcomed activity for us. It was nice to be asked for our opinion, we were happy to spend the time, and it's nice to know that there are so many attuned to our community's environmental sustainability. There is a definite value learning from each other.

Class VI Roads: Yes, we're still working on this project. It's not something that can be done overnight. The three-ring binder of reports is growing more complete as time passes and more reports are completed. We have so many roads available to us to walk or ride on. Each one has its own personality and adventures to share with us. We anticipate it

will be a good resource when questions surface about the sustainability of these wonderful and recreational roads.

House Calls: We have had success with this way of getting the word out about the wildlife that lives on our personal properties. We really want you to know that the animals, birds and trees/shrubs work together to keep each other alive and healthy. We humans can keep this cyclical, give-take relationship alive by controlling the spread of invasive species.

To help you, the commissioners from the PCC will visit with you, at your invitation, and share their knowledge about the identification of good and not-so-good plants on your property. They will give you ways to encourage the good plants and control the spread of the invasive 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, learn about sources 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.

We have found that telling you something in a workshop or participating in a weed-pulling-party is not as effective as coming to your property to help you with your specific invasive species problem(s).

So, make the call (469-3399 or ferguson20897@gmail.com) 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.

Spencer Lot: We, intrepid commissioners, went to the Spencer Lot off of Class VI Road Columbus Jordan Road to find and mark the boundaries of this rectangular lot. This lot is a wonderful resource for hunting and recreation. There are no trails within its boundaries (except for an educational trail that has not been maintained since its creation in the late 1980s). The commission is determining how to increase the enjoyment of this hard-to-access resource between Columbus Jordan and Farnum Roads.

Monitoring of Conserved Properties: We have another year of 100% reporting to the state's Conservation Land Stewardship Program (LCIP) properties—Mud Pond on Porter Road, Walker Farm #1 and #2 on Sanborn Road, Morgan Hill on True Road, and the Benson Town Forest off High Street and Cram Hill Road.

Respectfully Submitted, *Myra Ferguson*, Chair
pcc@plainfieldnh.org

CONSERVATION COMMISSION FUNDS YEAR END BALANCES

Forestry Maintenance Fund	01/01/15 Beg. Balance	\$18,781
	Interest earned	\$15
Balance	12/31/15	\$18,796
Conservation Commission Fund	01/01/15	\$64,342
	Current Use Penalty Income/Interest earned	\$9,673
Balance	12/31/15	\$ 74,015