

Hartland Conservation Commission 2005



Barred Owls like Hartland's mature forests and wooded swamp areas, but more often you'll see them hunting over fields. They're probably the most vocal of all owls, especially in February and March with their distinctive "Who cooks for you?" call.

This year was another busy year for the Conservation Commission!

Land Conservation

This year we developed a partnership with the Upper Valley Land Trust, and will be helping them to raise the local match for an important land conservation project in 2006. We also began work on a Land Conservation Strategy that will provide us with a better "tool box" we can offer to property owners in town who are interested in conserving their land, as well as help in fundraising for specific projects. An information board about land conservation options was displayed at Town Meeting, the Library and the School.

Lull's Brook Water Quality Testing and Mapping

This was a major effort of the Commission this year. We worked with several wonderful teachers at the Elementary School for the 5th – 8th grades (and many generous volunteers!) to create a series of classroom and field trip experiences for the kids all along Lull's Brook, from its headwaters down in the village. We sponsored two water quality trainings for teachers and volunteers through the UVM Watershed Alliance and VINS, and we also began our own E.coli testing program at 4 sites in Three Corners and Four Corners. E. coli is a type of bacteria used as an indicator of water pollution from human or animal waste. The purpose of this is to establish some baseline information on the health of the Brook; so far our samplings show that the levels of E. coli in the Brook are largely within the State standard. We will continue this spring and fall sampling.

Class 4 Roads and Trails

We began work with the West Windsor Conservation Commission on looking at larger connections of our area trails, and ways conservation commissions can help to keep these great trails area available for everyone to use in the future.

The Boy Scouts did an excellent job on Green-Up Day clearing brush and trees and improving drainage on the Cady Brook Trail.



Invasive Plant Control

The Commission co-sponsored an invasives control work day with the Hartland Nature Club, focusing again on the areas around Travis's Trail behind the Library and the Rec Center; we also repeatedly cut down the small knotweed stand there throughout the growing season. We helped the Nature Conservancy on one of their invasives work days at the Hartland Rivershore property (north of Simon Pearce and Harpoon), this time yanking out Garlic Mustard.

Natural Resources Maps

This long-term project came to fruition this year, and we displayed the maps at Old Home Day. The maps are very helpful tools that highlight important natural resources as deer yards, rare species habitat, conserved lands, and more!

And...

- helped out at spring Green-Up Day and sponsored a Fall Green-Up Day;
- had field trips to Summers Falls and Esqhua Bog;
- worked with the Town on the sidewalk proposal;
- kept in touch with the Planning Commission and the Selectboard on such issues as proposed ordinances, Dharma Center, and road grading and roadside tree preservation;
- participated in the Gathering of the Upper Valley Conservation Commissions and the Association of VT Conservation Commissions annual meeting;
- worked with the School and the Town on ideas for the 17-acre town parcel adjoining the school property.

Up next for 2006:

Land conservation fundraising with Upper Valley Land Trust, creating a Land Conservation and Class 4 Roads and Trails Strategy, drafting the update of the Natural Resources Section of the

Town Plan with the Planning Commission, Lull's Brook Water Quality work, and our continuing efforts with Green-Up days, invasive plant control, field trips and education events.

The Hartland Conservation Trust Fund

There can be a lot of up-front costs for landowners who are working towards permanently protecting their land – survey, appraisal, etc. And later on in the process, often a local match to a larger grant is either required or encouraged – the Conservation Trust Fund can help. The Fund was established in 1989 to support “planning and preservation of the Town’s natural and cultural resources for the continuing benefit of the townspeople.” We work with the Upper Valley Land Trust, the Vermont Land Trust, and the Nature Conservancy to respond to requests from landowners about conserving their property – so remember CTF as a local resource for *your* project.

Conservation Commission Members

Guy Crosby, Deb Jones (Treasurer), Tom Ramsey, Natalie Starr (Co-Chair), Ned Swanberg, Jennifer Waite (Chair), Ginny White, and friend of the Commission Heather Morse. Many thanks to outgoing member Brett Simmons for his contributions!