

HARTLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

All community members are invited to attend our meetings, the **second Wednesday of the month**, and participate in our many projects and activities below. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact us at:

Natalie Starr Natalie@dsmenvironmental.com 436-1156 or
Jennifer Waite, mwaite@vermontel.net.

The Commission works closely with and supports the Hartland Nature Club to educate the public about the valuable natural resources found in Hartland.

Members/Term

Crosby, Guy	4/1/2008
Greenberg, Dean	4/1/2009
McWilliams, Ken	4/1/2009
Merritt, Cordie	4/1/2009
Swanberg, Ned	4/1/2009
Starr, Natalie, <i>Co-chair</i>	4/1/2008
Van Buren, Mike	4/1/2009
Waite, Jennifer, <i>Chair</i>	4/1/2008
White, Ginny	4/1/2007

Land Conservation and Trails

What natural resources help to makes Hartland unique? The Conservation Commission has worked with the Planning Commission and conservation organizations like the Upper Valley Land Trust as well as surveyed residents at Old Home Day to try to identify and develop strategies to conserve Hartland's natural heritage. Three efforts are underway to try to ensure Hartland's natural resources have the opportunity to be a permanent, vibrant part of the community. The Commission welcomes your input:

1) Update Town Plan - The Town Plan is an important vehicle to ensure public health and environmental quality are observed during development and growth. The Natural and Historic Resource sections of the Town Plan are of particular interest to the conservation commission since they help to define what warrants protection. The Conservation Commission updated the Natural Resources Section of the Town Plan in cooperation with the Planning Commission this fall for adoption this spring.

2) Land Conservation – Conservation Trust Fund - The Commission established the Conservation Trust Fund in 1989 and it has served as an important source of matching funds for state and federal grants and stewardship support for several existing conservation projects including the Lemax, Shumway, and Jersey farms. The Conservation Trust Fund is even more important today as it enables the Commission to help landowners who want to keep their land open or in agricultural use and conservation, but are squeezed by rising land prices and taxes. Many of these lands have great community importance or notable natural resources such as active agricultural land, scenic hayfields or pastures, working forests, important wildlife habitat or travel corridors, a favorite swimming hole or trail, and even a scenic ridgeline.

There are continuous opportunities before the Town right now to be the recipient of state and federal grants to help Hartland landowners who wish to sell conservation easements on properties of community importance. However, with rising land prices, these opportunities can require a significant local match, as well the ability in some cases to cover up-front costs for the landowner of survey and appraisal. This year, the Commission seeks to build the Conservation Trust Fund to fund these important projects before it is too late.

3) Ancient Roads and Trails - There are an estimated 1,700 miles of class 4 highways and trails in Vermont, and they can be found in the more remote sections of almost every Vermont town (Hartland is no exception). With population growth and development increasing, Class 4 highways and trails become important community resources as they provide access for snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, walking, bicycling, horseback riding, fishing, and hunting. Town-controlled corridors help ensure that there will continue to be a place in the community to enjoy these activities; they may also serve as important links to more extensive trail systems that are on private lands. With the Ancient Roads Bill passed in the Vermont Legislature 2006, the Town has until July 2009 to update the Town Highway Map and identify these roads and trails. The Conservation Commission is working with the Selectboard toward this end.

