

HARTLAND CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Lull Brook Farm Conserved

The Commission was pleased to provide \$6,000 in Conservation Trust Fund monies to the Upper Valley Land Trust, in support of Gayle Davis' generous conservation easement donation on her beautiful 203-acre Lull Brook Farm! We are also actively working with UVLT on several other potential land conservation projects.

Water Quality Sampling

This is our eighth year of conducting spring and fall water quality sampling along Hartland's waterways. Currently, we test five sites for *E. coli* and Phosphorus: two sites are at swimming holes along Lull's Brook, two are farther upstream, and the final site is at Sumner's Falls Town Park. The majority of our results this year were within recommended levels, except for the Spring *E. coli* samples at Martinsville Covered Bridge and at Sumner's Falls, which exceeded the state standards for swimming and other recreation. This year we also purchased and installed a water temperature recorder in an effort to assess water temperature levels and how they may affect aquatic organisms, such as fish and amphibians, that live within Lull's Brook.

E. coli is naturally occurring bacteria found in the feces of animals as well as humans, but it can enter our rivers and streams through faulty septic systems, flood events, or runoff from animal waste. High amounts of *E. coli* pollution can cause serious illness in humans. Phosphorous is an essential nutrient to healthy aquatic ecosystems, but high amounts lead to excessive algae growth, impaired water supplies and harmful toxins. Excessive phosphorous is largely the result of runoff from roads, developed areas, lawns and farmlands. Individuals can help to maintain healthy water quality in our waterways through the judicious use of fertilizers, proper maintenance of septic systems, and keeping a nice buffer of flowers, shrubs and trees (25' or more) between their lawns or pastures and streams.

Education and Outreach

The Commission had a booth at Farm Fest, spreading the word about Sumner's Falls Town Park, native plants, and the Conservation Trust Fund.

In April we used a weed wrench and elbow grease to remove some invasive honeysuckle and buckthorn along Lull's Brook near the library. Honeysuckle berries, though often seen as good food for birds, are really just "junk food" for them, providing a quick sugar buzz but no lasting nutritional value. Worse still, the honeysuckle crowds out native food-producing plants that would give the birds what they need.

The Commission bestowed our 2nd annual Conservation Award at Town Meeting to Mary Holland for her efforts to inform the public of the wonders of nature at our doorstep.

We worked with UVM student Peter Crosby on a mapping project of public and conserved lands in town.

We urged the selectboard to develop and implement a policy relating to divesture of roads.

We made some suggestions to the Planning Commissions on proposed Land Use Bylaws.

We continue our fundraising efforts to build the Hartland Conservation Trust Fund, and welcome any contributions. They will be used in our land conservation efforts in Hartland.

Sumner's Falls Town Park

Sumner's Falls is a valuable, 55-acre park now owned by the Town that offers many different recreational and nature experiences to those who visit. We are working on a Management Plan for the park, and have provided suggestions to the town on ways to help maintain and enhance these resources. As part of this, we met with most of the local canoe liveries that use Sumner's Falls for their trips, and they were very supportive of working together on future health and safety improvements.

Hartland Conservation Comm continued

Membership

Jennifer Waite (Chair), Dean Greenberg (Clerk), Cordie Merritt (Treasurer), Guy Crosby and Bill Stack; this year we welcomed Knox Johnson, Rob Anderegg, Dori Galton and Jared Ulmer as new members. A huge thanks to our former co-chair Natalie Starr, who had to move out of Town for us to let her leave the Commission! We meet at 7pm in the Lister's Office, downstairs in Damon Hall on the second Wednesday of the month. All are welcome!



Conservation Commission members Dean Greenberg, Cordie Merritt, Natalie Starr and Jennifer Waite clear invasive Japanese honeysuckle shrubs from the banks of Lull's Brook