

## CONSERVATION COMMISSION DECEMBER 2016

2016 was another busy year for your Conservation Commission. Our group continued to work with the Highway Garage Study Committee on plans to minimize erosion and run-off from the public works facility into the nearby Penniman Road wetland. That wetland effectively serves as a collecting basin for the headwaters of the Blow-me-down brook. The basic site plan is to change some of the existing grades around the various structures, improve the salt storage shed and reinforce a system of earthen berms previously installed around the eastern and southern borders of the property.

Almost all site monitoring of existing, town conservation easements was completed during the year. This work included the property surrounding Mud Pond, Benson Town Forest, and the Walker Farm #1 and #2 easements. In the case of the Walker Farm, a meeting was held prior to the monitoring visit with the new owners. They planned a timber harvest of their forest that would sustain the health and vigor of the trees in their forest. As required by the easement, the timber harvest was conducted in a manner that preserved the forest itself and the one designated, public trail—aptly named, “Walker Farm Trail.” This trail leaves Sanborn Road at a kiosk and travels northeasterly to the top of French’s Ledges.

The Commission continues to develop a public trail on the town-owned Spencer Lot (off of Columbus Jordan Road). Our hope is to develop a loop trail that passes by beautiful moss-covered outcroppings, a wide depression with interesting moisture-loving plants, deer yards, and wide-girthed trees that require two humans to hold hands to encircle their trunks.

The Commission sponsored two education events: the fourth annual lady-slipper/wildflower walk in the spring and the first annual here’s-one-way-to-eradicate woody stemmed invasive plants. The Commission will encourage each Plainfield and Cornish resident to participate in the Upper Valley-wide effort to create pollinator gardens. Bees are our most obvious pollinators, but so are butterflies, bats, birds, wasps, etc. If a large majority of town folk learn how to create these unique gardens, our vital pollinators will regain their numbers and continue their important role in sustaining the food supply for human consumption. Also, the Commission is available to assist private landowners (at a site of their choosing) with evaluating whether (or not) they have some invasive plant species on their property.

The Conservation Commission has invested a fair amount of time and effort assisting Julie and James Murray of Kenyon Road with the establishment of a conservation easement on the couple’s 81 acres of land. The property includes forest land as well as agricultural fields. The Commission voted to pledge \$10,700 from the Conservation Fund to assist in the project.

The Commission encourages public participation at all of its meetings and events.

Respectfully Submitted, *Myra Ferguson*, Chair  
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**CONSERVATION COMMISSION FUNDS YEAR END BALANCES**

<b>Forestry Maintenance Fund</b>	01/01/16 Beg. Balance	\$18,796
Interest earned		\$198
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12/31/16</b>	<b>\$18,994</b>
<b>Conservation Fund</b>	01/01/16 Beg. Balance	<b>\$74,015</b>
Interest earned		\$386
<b>Balance</b>	<b>12/31/16</b>	<b>\$ 74,401</b>