

Report of the Conservation Commission

The Conservation Commission was established in accordance with Revised Statutes Annotated (RSA) 36-A for the proper use and protection of Jaffrey's natural resources and watersheds. The Commission provides a focal point within the town and its government for environmental concerns, joined in 2007 by the Energy Committee. The Commission may advise the Planning Board and other local bodies on conservation matters. The Commission may act more directly to protect natural resources by acquiring land, either outright or through easements, with the approval of the Selectmen. The Commission also manages designated town forests.

2010 was an atypical year for the Conservation Commission in two distinct ways. First, the lack of Land Use Change Tax funds experienced in 2009 continued until November 2010, so the Commission lacked funds for initiating new projects and in contributing to the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund (LACRF) as originally intended. Second, the Commission operated for most of the year without a permanent Chairperson.

The Annual Town Meeting voted to contribute \$5,000 to the LACRF, and it increased the annual Commission funding to \$400. The annual Commission funding is the only monies the Commission is able to use in support of community groups. Of this \$400, \$200 was used to sponsor a Jaffrey student at Camp Wildwood, \$50 was contributed to the NH Envirothon in which two teams from Conant HS participated, and \$100 was used in support of an Eagle Scout project helping to protect wetlands at Gilmore Pond.

Achievements during the year included:

1. Participation in the Ad Hoc Committee to investigate the feasibility of a permanent Open Space Committee for Jaffrey. This was originally proposed by former Commission Chair John O. Field. Two Commission members and two Planning Board members formed the original Committee. An expanded Committee of ten members recommended formation of a permanent Open Space Committee, and this was approved by the Selectmen
2. Consolidation of the Commission's files in a central location at the Town Office.
3. Decision to produce an accurate trail map for Children's Woods and Carey Park in a brochure format, that will be made available to the public in 2011.

Routine tasks included monitoring the following environmental activities: wetland permit applications, the easement on Gray Goose Farm, and a timber harvest on Great Road. The Commission also assisted landowners seeking funds for a conservation easement and citizens with conservation questions.

In transition, former Chair, John O. Field left the Commission in the spring, and Michael George

joined the Commission in May, becoming Chair in December.

Going forward into 2011, the Commission has the following aspirations:

1. Reorganize so that individual Commission members gain expertise in and take responsibility for specific conservation areas.
2. Enhance public education with the production and distribution of a brochure that explains clearly the role and responsibility of the Commission.
3. Improve coordination with other Town Committees and Boards.
4. Identify conservation related programs that can be made available to the public.

The Commission welcomes participation by Jaffrey citizens in its deliberations and activities. It also encourages inquiries and suggestions. The town website contains the schedule of meetings and approved minutes of past meetings, as does the bulletin board at the Town Offices. Relevant documents may also be found on the town website, including the Natural Resources Inventory, the Management Plan for the Cheshire Pond Conservation Area, the Baseline Documentation Report for Gray Goose Farm, and the 2005 Cost of Community Services Study.

Respectfully submitted,

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