

**TOWN OF TUFTONBORO
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
2014**

In addition to advisory duties concerning permit applications, the Tuftonboro Conservation Commission responded to environmental concerns and worked to protect and preserve the natural resources within the Town of Tuftonboro. The Commission continues to facilitate the placement of conservation easements, the attendance of professional presentations and conferences that support conservation and preservation efforts in New Hampshire, and monitoring the environmental health of lakes and waterways. The Commission conducted its annual monitoring of the Bentley Parkhurst and Cheney Conservation Easements and continues expanding its educational opportunities through memberships to the NH Association of Conservation Commissions, Lake Winnepesaukee Watershed Association and the NH Association of Natural Resource Scientists. The Commission also developed a Land Protection Policies and Acquisition Criteria which provides guidelines for the protection of land that has significant value for conservation, education, scenic pleasure and recreation either by direct ownership or by easement.

An important part of the Commission's work is monitoring water quality in Lake Winnepesaukee and Mirror Lake. We fully appreciate the work of all the volunteers that take water samples and deliver such to a UNH laboratory for testing. The number of samples taken in Mirror Lake in 2014 is continuing to show a pristine water quality.

In 2011 the Town voted to place a conservation easement on Town owned land known as the Great Meadow. The Great Meadow consists of 176 acres of a 512.8 acre wetland complex which is ranked the highest for ecological integrity in the region, provides recharge for the area aquifers and includes 22 different natural communities, some rare in the State. Located at the headwaters of the Melvin River, the Great Meadow helps protect Melvin Bay and the upper part of Lake Winnepesaukee by intercepting floodwaters and capturing sediments and nutrients from upstream sources prior to reaching the lake. A conservation easement was executed in April 2014 and the Lakes Region Conservation Trust is the holder of that easement. The Commission continues its effort to ensure permanent protection of this wetland complex by encouraging abutters of the Great Meadow to consider placing conservation easements on their properties as well.

This past year the Commission held its third Well Water Testing Initiative for Tuftonboro residents. The Commission feels strongly that it is critical to the health and well being of New Hampshire private well owners to become better informed of the health effects of common well water contaminants and the importance of having well water tested regularly. An article was written in NHDES' newsletter about the Commission's Well Water Testing Program and both the Towns of Tamworth and Bow have inquired about our Town's program. It was recently learned that the Toxic Metals Research Program at Dartmouth

Medical School published a scientific paper about our program. The paper is titled “ A Community-Driven Intervention in Tuftonboro, New Hampshire Succeeds in Altering Water Testing Behavior” and will be published in the December 2015 issue of the Journal of Environmental Health. This article is also posted on the Conservation Commission webpage of the Town’s website.

Regular recurring activities include the preliminary review and processing of numerous New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Wetlands Bureau applications from Tuftonboro residents. These applications include docks and dock repair, breakwaters, beaches, retaining walls, culverts, and the dredging and filling of wetlands among other issues. The Commission reviews each application by conducting a site visit and, when necessary, prepares and submits field notes and recommendations to the NHDES. The 2014 workload for NHDES applications for Tuftonboro residents included review of the following applications; 14 Standard Dredge & Fill, 11 Permit By Notification and 7 Minimum Impact Expedited in addition to multiple requests for additional information, wetlands complaints and receipt of Complete Forestry Notification.

It was another active year dealing with the Wolfeboro Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) Rapid Infiltration Disposal System (RWIDS). In July 2012 the five-year Ground Water Permit issued to the Town of Wolfeboro expired and the new five year Ground Water permit was issued in September of 2012 with included the reduction and frequency of monitoring requirements in areas of concern. The RWIDS continues to degrade the waterways outside the Ground Water Discharge Area and to what level will this be allowed to continue until something is done is unknown. An annual update of the violations will continue to be monitored at the RWIDS.

The Commission currently has one vacant member position. If interested in serving the Town and community please contact the Town Offices. For additional information regarding wetland permitting and/or regulatory assistance, please refer to NHDES’ website www.des.nh.gov/wetlands.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Phelps, Chairman

Lloyd Wood, BOS Representative

Nancy Piper, Steve Wingate, Nancy Byrd, Mark Howard, Kate Nesbit, Members

Bill Stockman, Jerry Light, Alternates