

**TOWN OF TUFTONBORO
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
ANNUAL REPORT
2012**

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 the monitoring the environmental health of lakes and waterways.

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 2012 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. The Commission continues its efforts to ensure permanent protection of this wetland complex. Lakes Region Conservation Trust has agreed to be the easement holder and the Commission continues to work through the process of securing this conservation easement. It is the hope of the Commission to secure the easement by year end 2013.

This past year the Commission also conducted a pilot Well Water Testing Initiative program. Statistics for the 123 participating households were received and concluded that while the results are in line with NH averages, the data indicates that over 34% of the wells tested have one or more elements that are above recommended levels and indicate potential health risks to our population. The Commission feels strongly that it is critical to the health and wellbeing of New Hampshire private well owners to become better informed of the health effects of common well water contaminants and that it is important to have well water tested regularly. Steve Wingate along with Pierce Rigrod, NH DES, is scheduled to present the results and methods used in this initiative at the 2013 NH Water & Watershed Conference on March 22, 2013.

Due to continued expressed interest in the Well Water Testing Initiative program, the Commission is implemented an annual testing program and the 2013 testing is scheduled for July 8-12, 2013 for the distribution of the kits and July 14, 2013 for the collection of the kits (both distribution and collection of the kits will occur at the Town Offices). Sample bottles must be filled on July 14, 2013.

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 2012 workload for NHDES applications for Tuftonboro residents included 16 approved permits, 1 Complete Forestry Notification and 27 new

permit applications in addition to multiple requests for additional information and wetlands complaints.

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. The Town's consulting engineer reviewed the data from the water testing and provided a synopsis of violations occurring at the site. The engineer's report, in addition to the Commission's letter of concern, were forwarded to NH DES in July 2012 and to date, there has not been a response to the Commission's letter and the Town of Wolfeboro has not been issued a new Ground Water Permit.

Contact any of the members of the Conservation Commission at the Town Offices or refer to the NHDES web site www.des.nh.gov/wetlands regulatory assistance regarding wetland permits.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mike Phelps, Chairman

Lloyd Wood, BOS Representative

Jerry Light, Nancy Piper, Steve Wingate, Nancy Byrd, Mark Howard, Dave Durnam, Members, Bill Stockman, Alternate