



**SHARON
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**



2004 Members

Liz LaRose (Chair), Ken Callahan, Selinda Chiquoine, Ian Coles, Karen DeBonis, Gina Goff, Don Hart.

2004 Activities

Land Protection

Initiated conversations and shared information with several Sharon landowners about permanently protecting their land. Although the conservation commission has no easements in the works as of this date, we are always available to discuss the various land protection options available to interested landowners.

Provided a formal letter to the Town of New Ipswich Conservation Commission regarding an apartment construction project near Tophet Swamp and the Gridley River.

In 2004, \$4,500 use change tax was deposited into the Sharon Conservation Fund and no money was spent. Two other properties incurred the use change tax penalty, which is expected to be deposited to the account in the new fiscal year. The Conservation Fund was established by citizen vote in 1994 for land acquisition and/or offsetting costs of land conservation. At Town Meeting in 2002, Sharon citizens voted to deposit 100% of the revenues collected via current use change tax into the fund.

Submitted a grant request to The Virginia Wellington Cabot Foundation and was awarded a \$25,000 grant. The intent of the grant was for the funds to be deposited into the Conservation Fund to help the town and landowners offset costs associated with donating conservation easements, such as title searches, surveys, deed registrations and legal fees.

Town Forest

Contracted with forester Swift Corwin to identify and mark the boundaries of the Town Forest. Marking the boundaries of town-owned lands is commonly done and considered good practice. The project goal is to help avoid confusion over private land and town forest boundaries as the town grows, land changes hands and more activity occurs (such as logging).

The final year of logging on the 3-year logging project of white pine in the Town Forest was postponed until January 2005 due to poor conditions last winter. The project is expected to be completed this winter. New tree growth is already coming up and many signs of moose, bear, porcupine, deer and other wildlife were observed.

Water/Water Quality/Wetlands

Participated in public hearings regarding the Barking Dog company's potential water extraction projects in Sharon and the neighboring towns of Peterborough and Jaffrey. Sent an official letter to the DES sharing our concerns that the aquifer be adequately protected for the citizens of Sharon as well.

Conducted water quality testing on the Gridley River, for the fourth year in a row. This work was performed through the NH Volunteer River Assessment Program. At key points throughout the summer members of the Conservation Commission collected water samples at four sites on the Gridley River. Copies of the official DES report on our water quality will be published by the DES in the upcoming months. Please feel free to contact the Conservation Commission for a photocopy.

Conservation of "Place" & Sharon Culture

Planted more than 200 bulbs and plants at the Brick Schoolhouse and the McCoy Road/Route 123 triangle.

Coordinated Earth Day Town Clean Up.

Participated on the Town Building Committee.

Other

Developed and approved official By-Laws, which are on file with the Selectmen/Town Administrator.

Issues and Projects in 2005

Land Protection

Action: Educate and encourage Sharon landowners to permanently conserve their land via conservation easements or donations to land protection organizations.

Action: Monitor and support the Quabbin to Cardigan (Q-to-C) greenway project currently spearheaded by SPNHF and 20 partners including Audubon, the Nature Conservancy and the Monadnock Conservancy.

Action: Assist Planning Board in researching and drafting a steep slopes ordinance for vote by citizens at Town Meeting in '06. Join many other NH towns in enacting this ordinance as a way to reduce damage from erosion and excess runoff.

Town Forest

Action: Oversee the timber harvest in the Town Forest.

Action: Maintain and re-mark hiking trails; create new trails if time.

Action: Research and draft an All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) ordinance for Planning Board and Selectmen review and vote by citizens at Town Meeting in '06.

Action: Continue discussions with major land trusts NEFF and SPNHF regarding the feasibility of placing permanent conservation easements on their properties as well as the town forest. This would permanently protect approx. 3,000 acres from development. If both groups agree, will present a proposal for vote by citizens at Town Meeting in '06.

Water/Water Quality/Wetlands

Action: Establish process for monitoring timber cuts to ensure proper wetland crossings.

Water/Water Quality/Wetlands

Action: Conduct the fifth year of water quality monitoring of the Gridley River.

Action: Continue to learn about aquifer and surface water protection.

Conservation of "Place" & Sharon Culture

Action: Coordinate the 2005 Earth Day Town Cleanup, planned for Saturday, April 23 (Rain/snow date: April 30). Please sign up to help at Town Meeting. All trash will be taken to the Peterborough Recycling Center.

Action: Maintain heirloom perennial garden around the brick schoolhouse. Plant more bulbs at the Sharon markers on town lines.

**The Sharon Conservation Commission meets on the second Monday
of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the schoolhouse.
Interested citizens are welcome to attend.**

**More information about conservation issues and activities are on the
Town of Sharon Web Site: www.sharonnh.org**

