

Conservation Commission

2009 was a year of significant accomplishment for the Grantham Conservation Commission. In this vein the voters of the town at the yearly meeting in March recognized the importance of conservation and voted to establish a Land Preservation Capital Reserve Fund and appropriate \$20,000 for preservation efforts.

Most important, the work with Plymouth State University was completed in March 2009. The Town of Grantham Critical Conservation Lands Index is a very important document for guiding the town boards and selectmen in the decision process from a perspective of those areas which are deemed of critical natural value to the town. One of the areas identified by the Index was the Bog Brook area. Shortly after the Index was delivered the Conservation Commission was alerted to the potential sale of a 150 acre parcel known as the Heath Lot that bordered the Bog Brook area. At that time the Conservation Commission, with the advice of the Ausbon Sargent Land Preservation Trust began action to conserve the land. An appraisal was completed in September at which time the Eastman Community Association (ECA) Board of Directors took an interest in the property since it abutted the southern border of the Eastman community and completed the purchase of the property in October 2009. The property is currently set to be used as a recreational area.

The Conservation Commission has continued its efforts to secure the undeveloped land within Grantham. The Commission worked with the Upper Valley Land Trust to finalize the conservation of the town owned Smith Lot on Miller Pond Road. The Selectmen signed the Conservation Easement on November 10, 2009. In addition to its conservation value, the property has value as an historical site.

Eastman Community Association and the Grantham Conservation Commission continued the process of conserving a 12 acre parcel known as the Frog Pond area. Negotiations between ECA and the Conservation Commission have resulted in a Conservation Easement, currently under legal review, that will lead to signature most likely in January 2010. This wetlands/thickly forested land is home to a wide variety of creatures and will provide an accessible area for a number of activities once conserved.

The Commission has also begun efforts toward the conservation of a sizable tract in the community. This tract is vital to the future of the Town. In its present form, the tract will provide an array of public benefits but if developed would increase the town population by 20-40 percent. We are working with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest to secure permission to proceed with an appraisal of the property.

The Perambulation of the town boundaries continues. A walk in May by six experienced individuals to find the last missing marker was unsuccessful in the area where the marker is located. This was the 4th search for this particular monument. A review is now being made to establish the steps and cost required to consider replacement of the missing monument.

The Grantham Conservation Commission was a significant partner in the October 2009 Eastman Charitable Foundation Conservation symposium. The Symposium included representatives from the Enfield and Springfield Conservation Commissions and the principal Conservation organizations in New Hampshire. A significant outcome was the symposium was a new level of joint efforts between the respective organizations.

Respectfully Submitted,

The Grantham Conservation Commission Members

Richard Hocker, Chair, Andy Eastman, Adele Furdyna, Jeremy Turner, Patricia Woolson, Merle Schotanus and Tom Vogel

