

## Guilford Conservation Commission Annual Report 2006

The Guilford Conservation Commission has been in existence since 2000. Serving on the commission during 2006-2007 have been: Al Haumann, chairman; Bill Jewell, vice chairman; Linda Hecker, clerk; James Young, treasurer; Eric Barradale, Mary Ellen Franklin, Robert Stack and John Kristensen. This year we have also included Tyler Potter as non voting youth contributor to our group. The Conservation Commission holds monthly meetings on the third Thursday of each month at the town offices. These meetings are open to the public.

### Ancient Roads Legislation

In 2006, the Vermont Legislature passed a law regarding old roads. It requires towns to inventory all of their town roads (class 1, 2,3,& 4) and trails and provide this information to the state highway department for inclusion on state maps. If roads or trails do not appear on approved maps by July 1 2009 and are not clearly definable on the ground they become “unidentified corridors”. These then would revert to the abutting land owners on July 1, 2015, and no longer be public rights of way unless additional steps are taken by the town. The Conservation Commission has therefore taken on the task of identifying old roads in town and assisting the selectboard in compiling the required information,

Our project to identify and map old roads started with a wonderful town resources - a map and ledger compiled by former town clerk Marguerite Evens and land surveyor Jim Ferguson- that show the location of many old roads and provides references to town records. Many of the references are the original road surveys. Using these and other input we have identified the following roads and trails that we will investigate first:

- Burrows-Culver
- Belden Hill: middle section
- Road off Hale Road (up to Camp Waubanog)
- Private roads off Tater Lane/Creamery Lane
- Road south of Lowry Rd off Rt 5
- Road off Keets Brook near Franklin Farm
- Off Locust Hill connecting to Cemetery Hill
- Barney Hill
- Bullock Road
- Stark Cemetery Road to Amidon Hill
- Some possible trails that don't appear on maps (e.g. East Mountain ridge)

Our investigation to date has consisted of reviewing the town road books, and, if possible, the original survey data (note some of this is as follows, “ starting at the old maple on John Smiths dooryard and proceeding 25 rods 10 links north 5 degrees west to a stake and a stone...” ). We also use information from other map sources. This book work is followed by a walk on what we believe to be the road. During these walks we use a portable Global Positioning system (GPS) receiver to record the road track and then download this information for later use with digital maps. This data along with observations we make along the way will be provided to the selectboard for input to the state.

This a project of value to the whole town and we cannot do all the research alone. If you know of any old town roads that do not show up on existing maps please let us know. This information can be dropped at the town offices any time or feel free to come to one of our meetings and tell us what you know. In addition, we are looking for volunteers to go through town records such as deeds that might provide more information.

#### Other Projects

The Conservation Commission has also been approached by members of the public asking that we investigate the feasibility of the town acquiring conservation rights to a calcareous fen located off Creamery Road and land presently owned by VELCO adjacent to the VELCO right-of way. We are reviewing these requests.

We have also discussed the benefits of acquiring a Town Forest and reviewing the criteria for such an acquisition.