

Guilford Conservation Commission Annual Report 2013

The Guilford Conservation Commission (GCC) was formed in 2000. Our mission is

...to identify, inventory, foster education about, and help protect Guilford's natural, scenic, recreational, historic, educational, cultural, architectural, agricultural, and archaeological resources for the public good. The commission shall help residents and town officials recognize the value of these resources and administer them for the benefit of future generations.

Current members include Bill Jewell, Linda Hecker, Susan James, Linda Lembke, Karen Murphy, Sarah Quine, Bevan Quinn, Marli Rabinowitz, with Dick Clark representing the Select Board. We have two emeritus members: John Kristensen and James Young. Last year we invited members of the community to join a number of working sub-committees, including Trail Development, Signage, Natural Resources Inventory, and Communication.

In 2013 we continued our focus on "invasives" - invasive plants that are displacing native species and altering the ecological balance in our rural community. In March of 2013 the GCC warned an item at Town Meeting requesting funding specifically for developing a plan for dealing with invasive plants. The town supported our request with \$1000 which we used to plan, advertise and host a successful Invasive Plant workshop at the Broad Brook Grange in September. Over 50 people attended, not only from Guilford, but from neighboring towns, since invasive plants do not acknowledge town boundaries. Brian Colleran, Vermont State Invasives Specialist biologist, gave an informative talk about identifying and dealing with invasive plants. Then we moved outside for field demonstrations by several local experts on how to use mechanical tools such as weed wrenches and pull bars to uproot unwanted plants. We collected contact information from attendees and sent a follow-up survey to gauge interest in ongoing work by individuals and committees, since it will take a coordinated effort across town to keep invasive plants in check. We have also purchased several specialized tools which citizens can borrow. Our work on invasives will continue in 2014.

We are in the early stages of conducting a Natural Resources Inventory and hope to coordinate our work with the Town Planning Board to best manage and preserve Guilford's valuable natural resources. At our November meeting Jens Hilke of VT Agency of Natural Resources gave an enlightening demonstration of various digital mapping tools that will support this work.

The Conservation Commission holds regular meetings on the third Thursday of each month and sponsors monthly exploratory walks on Guilford's old roads and special places, usually on Sunday afternoons, to which the public is invited. If you'd like to participate in our activities or join a working committee, contact chair Linda Hecker at lrhecker47@gmail.com.