

## GUILFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2017

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 of The Guilford Conservation Commission include, Linda Hecker, Susan James, Susan Bonthron, Bill Jewell, Linda Lembke, Rory Lincoln, Karen Murphy, Bevan Quinn, Marli Rabinowitz, with Gabrielle Ciuffreda representing the Selectboard. We invite members of the community to our working projects, including Natural Resources Inventory, The Andrew Weeks Memorial Forest trail maintenance, and an Invasives Patrol.

Major projects for 2017 included maintenance and enhancements for the Weeks Memorial Forest Carriage Trail; initiating work on our Natural Resources Inventory; participating in the Green River Watershed Alliance; supporting the Floodplain Coordinator; working with town road crew on management plan for controlling roadside invasive plants.

Our work on the Weeks Forest Carriage trail included trail grading and improvements, rebuilding a culvert, clearing invasive plants, adding a stone bench. We continue to maintain the trail and plan to extend it across the Broad Brook, working in collaboration with the Recreation Commission's newly-formed Trails Committee.

We began work on the Natural Resource Inventory, identified in our Town Plan as crucial for establishing a baseline for planning how to best manage and preserve Guilford's valuable natural resources, especially our productive forests and woodlands. We engaged naturalist Patti Smith to lead the project, and continue seeking small grants to defray expenses. We welcome volunteers to help with field work, and begin by asking citizens to identify places that are of particular interest. This year we collected existing research and maps on Guilford's lands and waterways. We will continue with field work on selected areas of high interest and value.

We were asked to participate in an application to establish the Green River Watershed Alliance, which brings together the towns of Marlboro, Halifax, and Guilford, as well as cultural and conservation groups, to increase public awareness of the value of our Green River Watershed as a natural and cultural resource. The project was funded, and includes money for some elements of our Natural Resource Inventory. The Conservation Commission sends a representative to the Steering Committee. Stay tuned for neighborhood and regional events that celebrate our treasured Green River.

Guilford Conservation Commission members attended several joint regional conservation commission meetings in 2017, to increase our collaborative efforts with nearby commissions. We communicate with Guilford community members via Front Porch Forum, the Guilford Gazette, and Town Meeting displays of maps and information. We are establishing a Conservation Commission page on the town website to house information relevant to our mission of educating the public about our natural resources

New in 2018 will be a citizen-volunteer Invasives Patrol to coordinate management of roadside invasive plants. Mowing many invasives like knotweed spreads them rapidly to new areas. The town road crew will inform us about roadside stands of invasives; the Invasives Patrol will follow up with recommended methods for containing the invasive plants.

The Conservation Commission holds regular meetings at 5:00pm on the third Thursday of each month in the Town Office. We sponsor monthly exploratory walks on Guilford's old roads and special places, usually on Sundays, to which the public is invited. If you'd like to participate in our walks, activities or join a working committee, contact chair Linda Hecker at [lrhecker47@gmail.com](mailto:lrhecker47@gmail.com)

Submitted by Linda Hecker, GCC chair