

GUILFORD CONSERVATION COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT 2022
for Town Report March, 2023

The Guilford Conservation Commission (GCC) continued our pandemic practice of meeting remotely over zoom, thus reducing our carbon footprint while making meetings more accessible to Guilford citizens.

We continued to support the field work of naturalist Patti Smith, who completed on-the-ground surveys of Guilford's important natural species for our Natural Resource Inventory. She is now organizing the data into a reportable form. We met with Patti and Alec Kaisand, a mapping expert from Antioch University, several times to develop maps of Guilford's natural communities and other important features of our landscape. We hope the report will wrap up this year, and we have allocated funds for preparing the final report in a form that will be accessible and highly usable for different purposes, including conservation planning, house siting, and flood hazard mitigation. The Inventory is an important resource for updating our Town Plan.

The Conservation Commission is one of several town-based partners with the newly renovated Broad Brook Community Center. We were invited to offer public events at BBCC, so we developed a series of educational programs we'll be offering over the coming year. The series kicked off with a very successful workshop on using trail cameras to observe backyard wildlife, presented by Commissioner Steve Soszynski and local environmentalist Jimmy Karlan.

We devoted time at several meetings to review the content of a new handbook created by the Association of Vermont Conservation Commissions. We were inspired to undertake Strategic Planning and to think about better ways to archive our documents and to recruit and educate new members for our group.

We continue to deal with invasive plants and insects. We help the Road Crew monitor and remove potentially hazardous invasive roadside plants such as cow parsnip. We regularly schedule work session in the Weeks Forest to control the numerous invasive plants such as bittersweet, multiflora rose, glossy buckthorn. Once again we participated in Emerald Ash Borer Awareness Week by posting notices in Front Porch Forum alerting landowners to potential damage from the EAB, and providing information about how to manage ash trees on their land.

Other important work of GCC included maintenance of the Carriage Trail in the Andrew Weeks Forest. This year's improvements include the addition of a footbridge and a mailbox at the end of the trail that holds a trail register for guests to sign. We know that the trail is visited frequently and much appreciated for its natural and historic values. We created a Trails Committee, inviting members of the Recreation Commission and the public to join us in expanding the current trails. The group is moving forward in

developing a cross country ski trail on the property, with the help of Guilford's Olympic medalist, Bill Koch, who grew up in Guilford.

We collaborate with other town organizations to make Guilford a better place for all. We worked with the Historical Society to present a very successful Open House at the historic Carpenter House on Carpenter Hill Road in October and are helping them develop a data base and map of historic sites around town. We participated in the Recreation Commission's Winter Fest by leading a snowshoe walk. We work with the Planning Commission to update and implement the Town Plan. Our two groups met jointly in December with Chris Campany of the Windham Regional Commission to discuss Strategic Planning.

Our commission members participate in regionwide conservation activities with the Green River Watershed Alliance, Windham Connectivity Collaborative, Vermont Woodlands Association, Women Owning Woodlots, Windham Regional Commission, and joint regional meetings of conservation-focused groups, all of which continued working during the pandemic.

We communicate with Guilford community members via Front Porch Forum, the Guilford Gazette, and Town Meeting displays of maps and information. We established a Conservation Commission page on the town website to house information relevant to our mission of educating the public about our natural resources.

Current members of the Guilford Conservation Commission are Linda Hecker, Susan Bonthron, Bill Jewell, Linda Lembke, Steve Soszynski, Karen Murphy, Bevan Quinn, Marli Rabinowitz, Anne Montgomery, with Michael Becker representing the Select Board and David Eastman and Richard Austin contributing as highly valued frequent volunteers.

The Conservation Commission holds regular meetings at 5:30pm on the third Thursday of each month in the Town Office or virtually via Zoom, including phone access. If you'd like to participate in our walks, activities or join a working committee, contact chair Linda Hecker at lrhecker47@gmail.com

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."