

# **CONSERVATION COMMISSION REPORT**

The Sandown Conservation Commission enjoyed an event-filled year in 2019.

On February 16, the Conservation Commission hosted their annual Valentines Moonlight Snowshoe Promenade complete with a bonfire, warm drinks, and hiking under the full moon. The Friends of the Sandown Library provided delicious treats.

Four conservation members attended a Finding Mitigations Opportunities in Your Community workshop on March 11. The workshop reviewed upcoming grant opportunities and went over helpful mapping programs and techniques.

Three members attended the Saving Special Places workshop on April 6. Attendees were able to take multiple workshops and learned a variety of conservation related information.

On April 20, Conservation Member Tom Sands led an Earth Day Cache In Trash Out (CITO) event supported by the geocaching community. Despite rainy weather, 16 to 18 people were in attendance to help clean trails at the Morrison Lane conservation property.

The Conservation Commission sponsored the Community Garden again this year. The garden is open Memorial Day through mid-October. If you are interested in joining the Community Garden, please contact the Conservation Commission in early May to reserve your plot. The Conservation Commission would like to thank Scott Bassett for tilling the Community Garden again this year.

On April 27, the Conservation Commission held their 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Kid's Fishing Derby. There were 64 children in attendance and 116 fish were caught. A special thank you to Brianna Butler for chairing the derby again this year and to Sal Genuardo, who allowed us to hold the Derby at his pond for the 20<sup>th</sup> year in a row. Thank you to TD Bank for providing t-shirts and sponsoring the event again this year and to all the local businesses who donated prizes.

In May, the Conservation Commission replaced the picnic tables at the Fremont Road Town Forest parking lot. A special thanks to Sandown resident Paul Larocque for building these tables! Members are also working to enhance the parcel on Morrison Lane. Benches have been constructed by Conservation Member Nick Ortins and will be placed at the end of the blue trail overlooking Cub Pond.

On May 17, Conservation Commission Chair Jill Winmill visited Playmates Learning Center to talk about pollinators. She made save the bee bracelets with the children and went over why we need pollinators. She presented different foods and discussed which foods we wouldn't have without pollinators.

On June 30, the Subaru Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers conducted an Outdoor Skills & Ethics Workshop at the Fremont Road Town Forest. They presented a hands-on workshop teaching kids to protect the outdoor places they love by enjoying them responsibly and ethically.

On July 2, the Conservation Commission closed on their most recently purchased property. It is an approximately 47-acre parcel near the Wells Village Town Forest identified on Map 13 as Lot 4. This brings the total conservation land in town to approximately 640 acres.

On July 28, Conservation Member Terry Knuuttunen led a Pop-Up Paddle around Phillip's Pond. Attendees enjoyed paddling around the pond and hotdogs on the beach afterwards. On August 1, Conservation Member Mark Traeger led a Pop-Up Hike in the Wells Village Town Forest. Attendees enjoyed a fun and informative hike along the Exeter River.

The month of October brought back Sandown Conservation Commission's "Walktober" for a fourth year. This year's event included three walks. On October 5, Terry Knuuttunen led a Sounds of the Night hike. Attendees tested their sense of smell, played an in-the-dark game of hide and seek, and learned some history about the Fremont Road Town Forest. On October 19, Forester Fred Borman led an Invasive Species ID hike. Due to rain, the third hike of the series, Tails and Trails with Katie Palladino, was postponed to November 3. Attendees learned leave no trace principals for pups, hiked to Great Rock at the Fremont Road Town Forest, and earned some treats and toys!

Four members of the Conservation Commission attended the NHACC Annual Meeting and Conference on November 2. Conservation members attended 9 of the 24 classes offered and were excited to see their magnet used as a featured example of public awareness.

The Conservation Commission, in coordination with the Heritage Commission, applied for and received a grant through the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources and Preservation Alliance to have the "Red Barn" on Fremont Road assessed for its historic value, and recommendations for needed repairs. The "barn whisperer" Bill Coleman performed the assessment and provided a detailed account of the history of the barn, which was built in 1830 in the style of an English Thresher Barn and was modified over time to accommodate the changing needs of use. A copy of the report is on file at the Town Hall. Many volunteers and local groups worked to clear brush and invasive plants from the exterior of the barn, as well as clean and organize the interior. Conservation Vice-Chair Brian Butler and Selectman Darren Hudgins later replaced the ladder to the loft area with a wooden staircase and added railings for safety.

The Sandown Conservation Commission would like to thank Environmental Consultant Bruce Gilday for his hard work in keeping the commission up to date on the ever-changing wetland rules and providing valuable advice and feedback. The Conservation Commission would also like to offer best wishes to former Administrative Assistant Melyssa Tapley as she commences a new career in childhood education.

The Conservation Commission continues to exist and do meaningful work because of the community support it receives. If you are interested in getting involved with the preservation of Sandown's natural resources, contact us at [cortins@sandown.us](mailto:cortins@sandown.us). You can also find us on Facebook at *Sandown Conservation Commission*.

Respectfully submitted by the Sandown Conservation Commission,

Jillian Winmill – Chair  
Brian Butler – Vice Chair  
Paul Carey  
Thomas Sands  
Pamela Gaudreau  
Nicholas Ortins  
Christy Ortins  
Mark Traeger – Alternate  
Terry Knuuttunen – Alternate