

Wolfeboro Conservation Commission 2020 Annual Report

New Hampshire's Conservation Commissions were created by Governor King in 1963. The Wolfeboro Conservation Commission is comprised of seven appointed volunteer members, two alternates, a Selectman's Representative, and a part-time administrative staff.

The pandemic slowed us down slightly while we learned to conduct virtual meetings and permit review. The cost of lumber spiked so we were unable to prioritize Ellie's Woodland Walk repairs as hoped. Ultimately it did not stop us from being busy.

Our biggest accomplishment was completing the Conservation Easement on 125 acres of land encompassing Whiteface Mountain, identified as a "key scenic vista" in our Natural Resource Inventory and approved by the voters. The Easement is now held by the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT). Abutting the 42-acre Bridger Wildlife Easement, we now have 167 acres of permanently protected, contiguous forestland designated "highest ranked wildlife habitat" or "supporting landscapes" for such by NH Fish & Game. In 2021 we will acquire property that will expand the Easement area and provide permanent parking for the hiking trail.

We contributed towards LRCT's purchase of 127 acres on Pleasant Mountain, which crosses the border into Wolfeboro and contains the headwaters to Wolfeboro's water supply.

We assisted the Eastern Lakes Region Housing Coalition in amending their Conservation Easement so they can move forward with a project to provide affordable housing to Wolfeboro's workforce, and we helped them place a new Easement to protect a wetland.

We worked with an Eagle Scout candidate to construct a kiosk at the trailhead of our Wiley Brook trail system off the Cotton Valley Rail Trail, and to blaze the trails. In 2021 we will add an additional mile of trail.

Most recently, we formed a partnership with the Land Bank to begin a comprehensive effort to tackle invasive plants and trees. We hired a Master arborist to create and implement plans for Front Bay Park and the Town's Garden. Abutter outreach was conducted with many enthusiastic responses, and the first stage was performed right before the first major snowfall. With voter approval of the Town budget this March, we will implement the second stage this Summer.

We reviewed 27 DES Wetlands Permit applications, including the Town's proposed remediation at the Rapid Infiltration Basins, and provided input to the Planning Board on five Special Use Permit applications. We continue to monitor and maintain Town properties and Easement holdings.

I thank the Commission members for their commitment to protecting Wolfeboro's unique character and resources. We thank Matthew Sullivan, former Director of Planning and Development, and welcome Tavis Austin in his stead. Thanks also to DPW Director Dave Ford, staff LeeAnn Hendrickson, Board of Selectmen, Budget Committee, and other Town staff, departments and volunteers for their continued assistance. Finally, to the voters who supported us—THANK YOU and please come check out one of our trails—they're there for you!

Respectfully submitted,

Lenore Clark, Chair
Dan Coons, Vice-Chair
Ed Roundy, Member
Art Slocum, Member
Jeff Marchand, Member
Brian Gifford, Member
Warren Muir, Member
Sarah Silk, Alternate
Nancy Byrd, Alternate
David Senecal, Selectman's Representative