

Conservation Commission

For several months, the Conservation Commission has been working with the Three Rivers Land Trust, the Shapleigh Conservation Commission, the Maine Association of Conservation Commissions, and the Maine State Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife to preserve land in an area known as "Walnut Hill". This region has been identified as part of one of the State's areas of ecological significance. The Walnut Hill Focus Area is a densely forested expanse of rolling uplands interspersed with a high density of stream drainages and several large wetland mosaics. Vernal pools and small pocket swamps are also numerous. The area in question has been designated as one of the largest pieces of unfragmented land in York County. This type of undeveloped open space provides a haven for the highest value wildlife. Known rare species include the Blanding Turtle, Spotted Turtles, Ringed Bog Haunter Dragonfly, the Black Racer Snake. This month a proposal was submitted for a grant to the Maine Natural Resources Conservation Program for the purchase of one of the properties in Walnut Hill. The Conservation Commission, together with Shapleigh, Three Rivers, MEACC, and Inland Fisheries and Wildlife will attend an open session at the Natural Resources Buildings to determine the outcome of this proposal. If successful, this will be the beginning of a long term plan to make as much of this area a conservation region as possible. As far as we can tell this is the first time two Conservation Commissions and a Land Trust joined together toward a common goal of conservation.

The Conservation Commission cleaned up the deadwood and fallen trees on the Clayton Carl trail in Massabesic Forest and repaired one of the major signs for the trail systems. Ida Jim Road has been opened this year after the damage from the Ice Storm last winter. It has been suggested that the road remain closed in order to keep people from using Ida Jim as a "dumping ground". If you desire that this road be opened every spring to recreational use, please support your local Conservation Commission by reporting anyone seen dumping trash and by picking up trash when you see it.

Mr. John Brisette, Project Leader for the US Forest Service in Massabesic Forest, attend the November meeting of the Conservation Commission. A decision was reached to try to keep the road open during the summer months. Additionally, the US Forest Service will be receiving Stimulus funding from the Federal Government to repair Ida Jim road to US Forest Service Standards. Mr. Brisette gave the Commission a copy of the final Management Plan for the Massabesic Experimental Forest.

Members of the Alfred Conservation Commission have joined forces with the "Kennebunk and Mousam Rivers Alliance" and are sampling the waters on the Middle Branch of the Mousam River, the Littlefield River, Hay Brook and the

outflow of the water from Lake Estes. Data has been collected twice a month during the summer months and will be collected once a month as long as weather permits. This data will be funneled to Maine Department of Environmental Protection for analysis.

The Commission participated in a survey for invasive aquatic plants in Lake Estes. The survey was conducted as part of the York County Invasive Aquatic Species Project, and was lead by Laurie Callahan.

The Commission sponsored a hike up Bauneg Beg Mountain. We didn't have a great turnout but those who participated enjoyed a nice hike on a nice day.

