

Center Harbor Conservation Commission

In 2012, the Center Harbor Conservation Commission (CHCC) continued its efforts to preserve and protect the high quality wetlands throughout the town. In March 2011, the CHCC with the professional expertise of Dr. Rick Van De Poll, obtained the support of the town's residents in establishing the Center Harbor side of the Snake River as protected wetlands. This project was brought to fruition with state approval of the Snake River Prime Wetland application in March 2012. It was originally anticipated that the Town of New Hampton would join the effort to protect the Snake River from development by protecting the New Hampton side of the river jointly with Center Harbor. This was eventually accomplished by the purchase of two large parcels by the Towns of Meredith and New Hampton along with donation by a number of individual contributors. These two independent actions resulted in the protection of the majority of the high value wetland located between Lake Winona and Lake Waukegan, thereby constituting the completion of the Second Phase of the CHCC wetlands projects.

Earlier this year, the CHCC started work on the Third (and final) Phase of the protection of the town wetlands. Six additional carefully delineated wetland complexes within Center Harbor were identified as Prime Wetlands candidates to be assessed and conserved. These include wetland sections within Belknap Woods Beaver Pond, Chamberlain-Reynolds/Heron Cove, Newman Trust Wetland on Center Harbor Neck, Otter Pond, Fogg Hill Bog and Sturtevant Bay on Squam Lake. As we approach the end of 2012, work is nearly completed which would protect these six wetland complexes and their high value wildlife habitats from development. A warrant article to protect these wetland complexes will be put before Center Harbor voters in March 2013.

In 2012, Dr. Van De Poll put the finishing touches on the Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) for the Town of Center Harbor. The condensed version ("chapter")

of the NRI has been incorporated into the Town's recently updated Master Plan. Both documents are available for the review by the public at Town Hall.

Members of the CHCC continue to participate with other Lakes Region conservation organizations along with local residents and land owners to conserve a number of properties in West Center Harbor. This long term project once completed will potentially conserve over a thousand acres of forest and waterfront property. Approximately 200 acres are currently under contract for purchase by a local land trust.

As always, The CHCC continues to encourage Center Harbor residents to volunteer participation with the town's conservation commission. Should you wish to learn more about the activities of the CHCC, please attend one of our meetings. Currently, the CHCC meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 10 AM in the Town Hall. The minutes of our meetings are on-line at the town's web site.