

Center Harbor Conservation Commission (CHCC) Annual Report 2014

In 2014, the Conservation Commission continued its efforts to preserve and protect the high quality land and water resources throughout the town.

On December 2, 2013, the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) completed their two-year process of purchasing a property atop Fogg Hill in West Center Harbor. The CHCC agreed to purchase a Conservation Easement on the 192 acre property because of its value to the town as a wildlife and wetlands conservation area along with its recreation potential for Center Harbor and area residents. The Conservation Easement will be paid for using monies from the Conservation Fund. The Fogg Hill Easement process is still in its early stages since the LRCT must first develop management and stewardship plans for the property prior to writing the Conservation Easement document. Conservation members and volunteers have already removed large trailers and debris from the site while members continue to work closely with Rick Van de Poll from Ecosystem Management Consultants and LRCT to aid in preparing for the ultimate goal of procuring a Conservation Easement which will be monitored by the Conservation Commission and/or its designees.

In March of 2014, the voters of Center Harbor elected to place the Belknap Woods Beaver Pond Prime Wetland Complex into State Prime Wetland Status. The NH Department of Environmental Services' (DES) approval of this last proposed wetland on May 7, 2014 marks the completion of the Prime Wetlands Project in Center Harbor, which was initiated in 2005 by alumni of the CHCC.

In March of 2014, the voters also approved an increase in the Land Use Change Tax allocation to the Conservation Fund from 25% to 50%. It is with the monies from the Conservation Fund that the CHCC has been able to purchase Conservation Easements for Center Harbor Woods and Fogg Hill while developing a comprehensive Natural Resources Inventory and completing the Prime Wetlands Project.

During 2014 a significant task was completed by Rick Van de Poll from Ecosystem Management Consultants and members of the CHCC updating and revising the Natural Resources Chapter of the Master Plan (2010) and Natural Resources Inventory (2011) along with their maps which now align with and conform to the **Town's Tax Maps**. The Planning Board worked closely with the Conservation Commission on the **Natural Resources Chapter** of the Master Plan which they subsequently adopted in December, 2014.

Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) and Center Harbor Conservation Commission partnered on September 6th and October 18th for guided excursions of the Center Harbor Woods and Fogg Hill properties. Forester, Jon Martin, led the **Center Harbor Woods** hike and wetlands expert, Rick Van de Poll the walk around Fogg Hill. **Both were well attended and very informative.**

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 a.m. in the Town Hall. The minutes of our meetings are on-line at the Town's web site.