CONSERVATION COMMISSION
2014 TOWN REPORT

2014 was a year filled with accomplishments. At the beginning of 2014; this Commission finalized the purchase of the Lawrence property on Bay Rd. This is a 46+/- acre parcel that sits in between the Town Forest (Abbott's Grant) and 200 acres of protected land held by Society of Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF). Now the Town Forest consists of 5 separate parcels which totals a little over 100 acres and in abutting SPNHF land, over 300 acres are conserved on Bay Rd at the New Durham town line.

November 12th proved to be an historical day in Farmington with two (2) separate properties being placed into conservation. Working with Moose Mountains Regional Greenway (MMRG) and the Town of New Durham; over 200 acres of the Thompson property on Meaderboro Rd. was conserved and in working with Strafford Rivers Conservancy; now known as Southeast Land Trust of NH; 100 acres of the Huppe property known as Berry Brook Farm, also on Meaderboro Rd, is now also in conservation. In addition, the Thompson's land was MMRG's first conservation easement as a land trust and this Commission is proud to be a part of that.

Work is continuing on the French property on Hornetown Rd where we have established a trail system. This trail is 5036 feet and there is still some work to be done. Bog bridges and stream crossings need to be constructed and installed however, one can walk the trail by following the grade stakes that have been put in place. With thanks to our DPW, a kiosk has been placed at the parking area where a trail map and other information is posted.

Speaking of kiosks, there is also a kiosk in the parking area of the Dubois property on River Rd and just past the gate at the Town Forest.

Arbor Day 2014, which was April 25th; this Commission donated a 7' Balsam Fir to the Town which was presented and planted on the grounds of the Municipal Offices. We wish to thank Cameron's Home Center for working with us on this donation.

On May 24th, we held our 2nd Annual Spring Town Clean-Up. Approximately 12 volunteers came together on a drizzly day and walked Meetinghouse Hill Rd and River Rd and collected over 750 pounds of trash. Thank you to members of our Police Department, Goodwin Library employees and volunteer citizens who participated. We also wish to thank Honey Dew Donuts, Subway, Farmington House of Pizza, Crowley's and Circle K for donating refreshments and to local band "As We Know It" for providing entertainment. Our hope for 2015 is to get more volunteers so we can clean up more of our roads here in town.

In keeping with our commitment to educate the public about conservation; we hosted a couple of public forums; "The Plight of The New Hampshire Moose" and "Invasive Plants" in conjunction with MMRG. We are planning on holding more forums in 2015. Watch for announcements on the Town's website and on our facebook page.

Speaking of education, this Commission is proud to have two (2) Farmington High School students from the Environmental Studies class sit on the Commission. Past sitting students have gone on to college to major in conservation/environmental studies. For the second year in a row, this Commission has been fortunate enough to sponsor a student from Henry Wilson School to attend a week of summer camp. With cooperation from the school staff, a student who is interested in conservation but due to financial restraints can not attend such an event; we sponsor that student. Our goal is to continue to provide a student each year with this unique experience.

The Conservation Commission is funded by a number of avenues. First and foremost is the current use tax. This is a tax that is applied to land when it is taken out of current use. The idea is when land is developed the revenues can be put towards other lands to be conserved and maintained. For the fifth straight year, this funding has been negligible due to the decreased local development activity. The Commission is also funded by revenues of timber harvesting that is done on lands held by the Conservation Commission. The Commission can also accept donations.

The Conservation Commission currently meets the second Wednesday of the month with the exception being March. We convene at 6:30pm in the Selectman's Chambers at the Municipal Offices. We are always seeking new members, regular and alternate, to join this active and fun group to help preserve the Town's waterways and natural resources.

Respectfully Submitted

David Connolly Chairman