

Open Space Committee Annual Report 2010

The Open Space Committee (OSC) continues outreach efforts to landowners and townspeople with one main goal: that owners of land that ranks high in natural resource value give thoughtful consideration to conservation. The OSC is available to talk with landowners about the many forms of land conservation, as well as funding support.

Voter support

Funding. The Open Space Committee recommended to the Capital Improvement Committee and Budget Committee a \$10,000 appropriation to the Land Acquisition Capital Reserve Fund, and voters approved that amount at May town meeting. Voters have added to the fund every year since it was established in 2002.

Land conservation

Peterborough has what might be an unequaled tradition of landowning families placing their land in permanent, deeded conservation. Over 30 families have conserved almost 4,000 privately owned acres in town. In 2010 two more made that decision.

Tom and Pat Neff conserved 36 acres along Bogle Brook, an important Contoocook River tributary; and Otter Brook Farm conserved 241 acres of forest and wetland on the Greenfield town line in the northeast quadrant of town.

In partnership with Otter Brook Farm, the Town of Peterborough placed a conservation easement on 141 acres that abut the Otter Brook land. This was a long-term project of the Conservation Commission and is detailed in the commission's report of the year.

All three properties fall along the Temple-to-Crotched corridor that has been identified by regional and state conservation groups as a high priority conservation corridor. The Open Space Committee did not have an active role in these three land conservation projects, but is very pleased to see the properties added to the town's conservation lands map. To see that map, go to the Open Space Committee's link on the <www.townofpeterborough.com> web page or request one from an OSC member.

Projects

Calendar project. OSC produced its third high quality photo calendar. The previous two focused on Peterborough's many conservation lands. Each month featured one property and told the story of the people behind its conservation. Every conserved property has a unique and compelling story to tell. The 2011 calendar has a different focus. Titled *A Year in the Wild*, each month has photos and narrative about what's going on in wild world at that time. As with the other calendars, the goal is education. Through knowledge we build appreciation and connection, and perhaps become better stewards of the natural resources that support all life.

As part of the education goal, calendars were donated to schools in the region for classroom use.

Landowner outreach. Each year the OSC seeks to communicate with owners of land with high conservation value following a natural resource ranking system set forth in the town's Master Plan. This year's letter included a complimentary "Year in the Wild" calendar.

As always, members attended land conservation workshops; wrote town newsletter and Ledger-Transcript articles; and assisted the Conservation Commission in monitoring the 21 conservation

easements held by the town. When families put their land under deeded conservation easement, the easement must be held by a land trust or conservation commission that monitors the land to ensure the development restrictions are honored.

The involvement of townspeople is essential to natural resource conservation. The OSC meets the second Thursday each month, 7 p.m. in the Town House, and welcomes townspeople attendance and participation.

Alan Bannister

Ed Henault, Chair

Debby Kaiser, Vice-chair

Liz Thomas

Eric Thum

Francie Von Mertens, Secretary

Alex Walker