

## **Jackson Conservation Commission Annual Report 2018**

The purpose of the Conservation Commission is to protect the town's natural resources and maintain and improve environmental quality. By statute, the Commission is responsible for the conservation of natural resources in the Town of Jackson. The Commission's duties include keeping an index of all open areas, including wetlands, and conducting research into the possible use or proposed use of open spaces.

The Commission reviews dredge and fill permits, participates in a voluntary water quality monitoring program organized by the state, reports to the Board of Selectmen on issues related to the Wildcat River Management Plan, and helps educate the public on environmental and conservation issues.

### **Prospect Farm**

The Prospect Farm area of Jackson is the crown jewel of the town. It offers wild and undisturbed forests, clean rivers and streams, and sweeping panoramic views of the area. This multi-use area continues to draw many people seeking solace from the drumbeat of society. We contracted the annual mowing of the apple orchard, historic cellar holes, and views, and replaced trail and historic signage when necessary. One of our work sessions focused on clearing and burning the invasive Japanese knotweed near the stump dump site. Our work on updating the Prospect Farm management plan has begun and is a priority for 2019.

### **Jackson Falls**

Jackson Falls is one of the most popular natural areas in the town and is enjoyed by thousands of visitors and townspeople each year. Restoration efforts at the falls continued with our work sessions focusing on planting seedlings, spreading conservation seed mix, and distributing wood chips to designate paths and to help cover exposed tree roots. We installed several "revegetation area" signs to discourage rogue pathways. 2018 saw the first full year of the split-rail fencing installed in 2017. The fencing has been very successful funneling foot traffic to designated pathways, mitigating human caused erosion.

Parking is a major concern at the falls and continues to be one of the top challenges in the summer months. We continue to work with the State DOT, the Jackson selectmen, local law enforcement, and town road officials on the best way forward.

Continued use of a seasonally removable bathroom facility located at the upper portion of the falls seems to be a great relief to all. Volunteer efforts to control the trash accumulation around the site are ongoing.

Soil scientist Greg Howard and Hydrologist Sean Sweeny were hired to reassess the ever-changing effects of natural and human caused erosion. A list of recommendations is forthcoming which we will be implementing in the coming year.

### **Easement Monitoring**

We completed our annual monitoring of the six existing conservation easements in town and shared our updates with The Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

### **Wetlands Permits**

We expedited two wetland permits (Adams Rd., Eagle Mt. Rd.) and monitored four others (JSTF and Kendall property, Jackson Water Precinct, Doublehead parking lot, and Meserve Brook.) We continue to monitor the development of a wetlands plan between Black Mountain Ski Area and New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services for the removal of snow making water from Great Brook, a part of the Wildcat River wild and scenic designation.

### **Monthly Meetings**

As always, the public is encouraged to attend and share their vision for the use and conservation of our beautiful town. Our meetings are typically 5:30 PM at the town office building on the first Monday of each month.

The board would like to thank Hank Benesh for filming our monthly meetings, and Susan Ross-Parent, minute taker.

Tom Seidel, Chair  
Brian Byrne, Vice chair  
Margaret Graciano, Secretary  
Bill Terry  
Pam Smillie  
Mike Dufihlo

Respectfully submitted  
Mark Ross-Parent



***Jackson Falls & Valley Cross Rd Bridge  
Photo courtesy of Kathleen M. Dougherty***