

## CENTER HARBOR CONSERVATION COMMISSION (CHCC) 2019 Annual Report

In 2019, two opportunities presented themselves to the CHCC that required the Commission to research, identify, examine and document the natural resources that exist within specific areas of the Town.

The first opportunity came from the New Hampshire Department of Public Safety, when the CHCC was asked to review a mooring application submitted by the Sturtevant Cove Association on Squam Lake. The Commission identified several key environmental attributes within the area by reviewing its Natural Resources Inventory, Prime Wetlands Report and other related documents and permits. They subsequently organized and prepared a chronicle of their findings, which were presented at a public hearing in August in Concord. In addition, letters of concern were drafted by the Commission and sent to the Department of Safety and NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES).

The second opportunity arose as a result of a donation of a parcel of land to the Squam Lakes Association, expanding the Belknap Woods Conservation Area to over 100 acres. In conjunction with this expansion project, the CHCC was approached by the Squam Lakes Conservation Society (SLCS) and the Lakes Region Conservation Trust (LRCT) to support and contribute to the long term monitoring and stewardship of the conservation easement that would be held by these entities. After researching and determining that this area possessed high conservation value, the CHCC voted to disburse contributions from their Conservation Fund for these purposes. The Commission's ability to participate with its conservation partners in this manner stems from the passage of a 2015 warrant article granting the Commission this optional power. The Commission is grateful to the residents of Center Harbor for the ability to participate and partner in land conservation projects in this way.

This year, the Town of Center Harbor's Select Board entered into a five year contract with Ecosystem Management Consultants / Dr. Rick Van de Poll to perform annual monitoring of the Town / CHCC held conservation easements on the 235-acre Fogg Hill Conservation Area in West Center Harbor. Monies to cover these costs are disbursed from the Town's Stewardship Fund, which receives deposits arising from the Land Use Change Tax (LUCT).

In 2019, the Conservation Fund received a LUCT deposit of \$8750.00 and disbursed \$5000.00 to SLCS and 2500.00 to LRCT for the Belknap Woods project noted above.

In November, CHCC Chairman Harry Viens was invited to participate in a panel discussion on land conservation strategies as part of the NH Association of Conservation Commissions' Annual Conference.

The Commission was notified by NHDES that updated Wetlands rules and regulations went into effect on December 15<sup>th</sup>. As a result, the Commission will be taking a more active role in the future in application review and sign off prior to applications being submitted to NHDES.

The Commission voted to schedule QUARTERLY meetings in 2020, the second Thursday of the month in **February, May, August and November**. Additional meetings and public hearings will be scheduled and noticed on an “as needed” basis. Meeting notices, agendas and minutes can be found on the Town’s website.

With Maureen Criasia’s return as an Alternate Commissioner, the CHCC has openings for one additional commissioner and an additional alternate. Should you wish to learn more about the activities of the CHCC, please join us at one of our meetings or contact the Selectmen’s office for further information.