

CONSERVATION COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT

Welcome to the Fifth Annual Report of the [Waitsfield Conservation Commission](#). The commission has kept busy with plenty of work this past year. The commission would like to thank the community for its vote to expand the board to nine members. The addition of Elizabeth Cadwell, Chris Loomis, Spencer Potter and Kate Williams has given us a boost and expanded the amount of work we can accomplish.

For the second time, the Town has received a grant from the State Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation's Trees for Local Communities Program to conduct a natural communities inventory. This year's grant provides \$2,000 to inventory the expanded Scrag Town Forest. In addition to this grant, an anonymous donor has given \$5,000 to the commission to support its work. Some of these funds have been used to hire Arrowwood Environmental to perform the inventory and to conduct research to confirm the boundaries. A public meeting to discuss the inventory is tentatively planned for late March or April.

Audubon Vermont provided free assistance to the Town by conducting a forest bird habitat assessment on the Scrag Town Forest and issued their report this past September. The commission intends to use this assessment and Arrowwood's natural communities inventory as key components in updating the management plan for the Scrag Forest lands.

The commission is currently reviewing the GPS mapping of Wu Ledges and intends to print and distribute trail maps this spring in conjunction with the Mad River Riders, who have agreed to maintain the trails on Wu Ledges. In other news about Wu Ledges, it was brought to the commission's attention that some people were misusing the Wu Ledges property last summer. As a result, through a public hearing in late November, we established the following rules for the property:

- 1) Open dawn to dusk.
- 2) No open fires.
- 3) Carry out all trash and personal items ("Pack in/Pack out").
- 4) Do not damage resources (vegetation, soils, wildlife, wet areas, etc).
- 5) No motorized vehicles.
- 6) Hunting is allowed (provided it is conducted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations).

PLEASE RESPECT THESE RULES, ESPECIALLY NO FIRES. Fire fighting equipment can not get to Wu Ledges, and a forest fire there could have a devastating effect on the property and be a great danger to neighbors.

In addition to the initiatives mentioned above, other priority projects for 2008 include the following:

- Secure access to the enlarged Scrag Town Forest,
- Revise management plans for Scrag and Wu Ledges,
- Develop and install signage for town properties, and
- Work with the [Mad River Valley Planning District](#) and [Mad River Path Association](#) to establish the path on Town lands along the river.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Grosby, Chairman

Elizabeth Cadwell

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Paul Hartshorn

Phil Huffman, Secretary

Leo Laferriere

Chris Loomis

Spencer Potter

Kate Williams