

## Conservation Committee 2005 Report

The Warren Conservation Committee is a five-member board appointed by the Selectboard. The committee meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 7 to 9 PM in the Warren Municipal Building. The public is welcome!

The Conservation Committee is seeking your feedback in 2006. Please take a moment at Town Meeting this year to complete our survey regarding use and management opportunities for several Town owned parcels. The Conservation Committee hopes to develop management plans for some of the larger Town owned parcels in the upcoming year. The management plans will document how these parcels will be managed. Thank you in advance in assisting us to develop management plans that reflect the voters desires, visions and goals for the lands we own together as a town.

In 2005, the Committee:

- Acted as a resource to the Select Board, the Planning Commission and the Development Review Board on a number of conservation-related matters;
- Continued to assist the Warren Planning Commission to revise portions of the Town Plan;
- Initiated the process to obtain Town approval where by \$20,000.00 was allocated to the Conservation Reserve Fund;
- Refined the Town's conservation priorities based on community input from the 2004 Planning Commission survey;
- Developed the Town of Warren Conservation Plan;
- Participated in the Green Mountain National Forest Plan revision process; and
- Investigated several land conservation projects.

With Conservation Reserve Fund monies the Town purchased 11 acres of land adjacent to the Kingsbury iron truss bridge. The parcel has 1000 +/- feet of Mad River frontage and riparian zone, an active section of the Mad River Greenway, an open field and wetlands habitat. This parcel is currently under investigation to support a collaborative effort between the Town of Warren and Sugarbush Resort for a multi faceted affordable housing/conservation/recreation project. The 11 acre parcel will be combined with an abutting Sugarbush owned parcel, which Sugarbush will be donating to the Town, to provide the needed acreage for the project.

The Committee worked methodically to develop the Town of Warren Conservation Plan, which the Select Board approved in November. The plan can help Warren achieve its various goals for protecting open space, including leveraging resources, directing growth, and focusing efforts on the most significant natural and cultural assets by establishing a process to:

- Identify and Conserve Land
- Assess Land Project-By-Project
- Prioritize Among Potential Project, and
- Develop Stewardship and Management Plans for Conserved Parcels

The Conservation Plan can be viewed from the Warren web site at [www.warrenvt.org](http://www.warrenvt.org) along with committee meeting agendas and minutes.

In the coming year, the Conservation Committee will be inventorying ancient roads, class 4 roads, and trails. We also plan to compile a more comprehensive inventory of natural features in Warren and proactively pursue the conservation of resources the community has indicated are a priority. Conservation planning is an important component of the local planning process and can help Warren achieve its various goals for protecting open space, including leveraging resources, directing growth, and focusing efforts on the most significant natural and cultural assets. In addition, it helps to focus land conservation efforts on properties with multiple natural and cultural features and reinforce local land use planning efforts and other community objectives. Conservation planning also helps to identify and maintain contact with landowners and alert the community of the importance of specific fragile resources and of an interest in pursuing land conservation projects in the future.

As is widely accepted now, the cost of services necessary to accommodate new residential growth (roads, emergency services, etc.) far outweigh any loss of tax revenue resulting from land being removed from the town's grand list. This is particularly true with the ramifications of Act 60 (and 68) wherein only a third of the tax rate is municipal taxes (the rest being the school tax).

Please be in touch with us concerning your ideas on conservation-related projects and matters.

Respectfully submitted,  
Trafton Crandall  
Tara Hamilton  
Erin Russell-Story  
Glenn Thomas  
Margo Wade, Chair