

The purpose of the Bolton Conservation Commission (BCC) is to promote the development, conservation, supervision, and regulation of natural resources, including water resources within the Town of Bolton and provide the methodology for protection and maintenance of these resources. The accomplishments of the BCC summarized below are possible due to the determination, skill and effort of its members and many volunteers. The BCC invites you to attend our monthly meetings held mostly on the first Monday at the Town Hall at 7:00 PM. There is always an item on our Agenda set aside for comments from the public at the beginning of each meeting. For more information, please contact the Chairman at 649-8066 ext. 110 or send e-mail: TOBCC@aol.com

In celebration of **Earth Day** in April, Commission member Jim Toner and his son-in-law William Kauffman provided 25 people with a fishing demonstration on Notch Pond adjacent to Freja Park. Jim also exhibited his tabletop wood carving collection of fresh water fish. Herpetologist Marissa Wright gave an in-depth talk on turtles and snakes and demonstrated how she tracks the movement of Box Turtles with radio telemetry. Mary-Beth Kaeser and her husband Alan Nordell from Horizon Wings showed a Broadwing hawk, Peregrine falcon, American kestrel and a Box turtle. Horizon Wings is a non-profit Wildlife Rehabilitation Center located in Ashford, CT specializing in the rehabilitation of birds of prey. After the lectures participants enjoyed a short hike around the 21-acre Freja park. At the onset of the hike the group was treated to a close-up view of a Northern Black Racer snake sunning itself on top of a Huckleberry bush right along the Shenipsit trail. Special thanks to all who made this event a success!

On a sunny and warm Saturday in June the BCC hosted **Nationally celebrated Trails Day** in Bolton with two hikes. This year, Connecticut offered more hikes than any other state in the country. Both hikes were co-sponsored by the Bolton Historical Society and were included in the Governor's statewide program "The Great Park Pursuit". Special guests were nationally known arborist Matt "Twig" Largess and Bolton's Town Historian Hans Depold. In 2006 Yankee magazine named Matt Largess "Tree Preservationist of the Decade." Hans Depold is also the author of *Bolton: Historic Trails*.

The morning four-mile **Tree and Bird hike** departed from the Heritage Farm via the Hop River Linear State Park to Squaw's cave in Bolton Notch State Park to Town-owned Freja Park. Participants had the option of hiking back the same route or taking a school bus back from the Commuter Lot. On the return trip back to the Heritage farm, thanks to our special guest Matt "Twig" Largess the group measured and identified one of the town's largest and oldest Red oaks right alongside the Hop River State Park trail.

The afternoon program consisted of a two-mile **Tree walk** from the Commuter lot through town-owned Freja Park along the Hop River State Park Trail to Bolton Notch State Park and Squaw's Cave. The BCC and volunteers were extremely delighted with the large turnout of over 120 people. All were safely led through the parks up to the cave, in the cave in small groups and back without incident. Big "THANK YOUs" go to Matt "Twig" Largess who volunteered the whole day (two hikes) and came all the way from Rhode Island, Town Historian Hans Depold, Commission members, State Program Director of the Sierra Club John Calandrelli, Stephenie Greenleaf of First Student school bus company and senior bus operator Chris Boyd who graciously volunteered her services on her day-off.

The **Eight Annual 2008 Town-wide Photo Contest** had one of the most submissions of any in past years. BCC judges voted on the photos at their meeting in May. Prizes were awarded at the BCC tent and tabletop exhibit as part of the Family Day celebration on Memorial Day at Bolton Center School after the parade. The following residents won prizes for their respective photos and categories:

Beauty of Open Space & Nature **1st Place** - *Fiddlehead Sunrise* - **Heidi Luck** - Custom Water color painting from Susan Bosworth and an Organic Tee-Shirt. **2nd Place** - *Birch Mt Hayfield* - **Nancy Soma** - Pagoda Dogwood, EMS Kayak Rental and Free Water Test by Phoenix Labs. **3rd Place** - *Stream at Gay City State Park* - **Neal Wasserman** - EMS Kayak Rental and a Sweet Fern.

Wildlife in Bolton **1st Place** - *Great Blue Heron on Bolton Lake* - **Brenda Cataldo** - Pagoda Dogwood, Blue Bell perennial and an Organic Tee-shirt. **2nd Place** - *Chipping Sparrow Nest* - **Lisa Catanese** - Free Water Test by Phoenix Labs and EMS Kayak Rental. **3rd Place** - *Snowy Deer* - Lee Paquette - EMS Kayak Rental and a Sweet Fern.

People and the Environment **1st Place** *Early Spring Bike Ride* - **Sylvia Oumpuu** - Pagoda Dogwood, Blue Bell perennial and an Organic Tee-shirt. **2nd Place** *Deb Livingston on the Greenway* - **Scott Livingston** - Free Water Test by Phoenix Labs and EMS Kayak Rental. **3rd Place** *Top of the World* - **Tracy Verrastro** - EMS Kayak Rental and a Sweet Fern.

Green Building & Vehicle Concepts **1st Place** *Kitchen Composting* - **Helen Winkler** - The Earth Machine and an Organic Tee-Shirt. **2nd Place** *Composting in Winter* - **Gunther Winkler** - Pagoda Dogwood, EMS Kayak Rental and Free Water Test by Phoenix Labs. **3rd Place** *Heated by the Sun for 23 years!* - **Lee Paquette** - EMS Kayak Rental and a Sweet Fern.

Rapid Bioassessment of Wadeable Stream by Volunteers is a citizen based water quality-monitoring program developed by the CT DEP's ambient monitoring program. The presence of many macro invertebrates that require clean, healthy water to flourish indicate that the water quality is adequate to support other levels of river life ranging from fish to microorganisms. The Commission has been conducting assessments now for six years. The three sites and results were as follows: French Brook - Identified and Collected 3 most wanted macroinvertebrates; Blackledge River (Deming Rd) - Identified and Collected 2 most wanted macroinvertebrates; and Railroad Brook (Freja Park) - Identified and Collected 1 most wanted macroinvertebrate. Collectors were Ron & Deb Beaudoin, Susan Frampton, Rod Parlee and Guest Nancy Bobskill. Nancy Bobskill, a science teacher from Agawam, MA joined us so she could share the collection techniques with her school and community in Agawam, MA.

The Commission sold another pallet (20) of **Earth Machine Composters**. Sales and distribution took place at Bolton Family Day, Eastern Mountain Sports Club Day and at the Residential Recycling Center. By composting, residents can remove more than 500 lbs. of organic matter from household waste per year, diverting it from collection, the landfill, or incinerator thereby reducing taxes. The Commission has now sold 160 Earth Machine composters and is considering selling more next year along with rain barrel cisterns.

The BCC continues to manage their **Geographic Information System (GIS)** workstation at Town Hall and is eagerly anticipating the completion of the Parcel Data Conversion by Applied Geographics. The project promises to obtain recent and accurate base map data, convert existing digital parcel data into a seamless up-to-date town wide parcel layer, create new hard copies, digital tax maps and link a digital parcel polygon layer to the Assessor's CAMA database. The BCC has put much effort into this project that will benefit the Town and Town staff. Jonathan Gourley, Trinity College Geography and GIS professor (and Bolton resident) set up a BCC project for his Trinity College Students. By joining functional parcel data with BCC provided data, students were able to create GIS maps showing properties of importance. John Pagini, Director of Community Development also has been very helpful to the BCC.

Four-town Bolton Lakes ERT (Environmental Review Team) Application Approved then Delayed- The Bolton, Coventry, Tolland and Vernon Conservation Commissions application for a Bolton lakes environmental review was approved in March. The BCC Chair and many others worked hard on the detailed application and set up many meetings before it was approved. In June, the Chairman reported that the Bolton Lakes ERT which set out to do many things including examine the effects of drawdown on all three Bolton lakes, had been delayed apparently due to a wetlands litigation issue in the Town of Vernon.

BCC member Ron Beaudoin prepared a draft executive summary of the **Cider Mill Village ERT Report**. The draft PowerPoint supported the ERT and Commission members' findings and opinions regarding proposed development over Bolton's only stratified drift aquifer. The BCC agreed on the importance of providing additional copies of the report to members of land-use commissions, preferably in hard copy format. However, in light of the limited number of copies provided and cost of reproduction, the BCC agreed to arrange to present highlights of the report to land-use commissions.

BCC Adopts Greenhouse Gas Emissions Resolution – The Commission unanimously adopted a resolution endorsing the initiatives set forth by the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Special guest Patrice Gillespie of the Sierra Club Cool Cities Campaign explained to the Commission how the national program strives to reduce the United States' dependence on fossil fuels, accelerates the development of clean, economical energy resources and fuel-efficient technologies, encourages the U.S. Congress to demonstrate new vision and leadership in controlling greenhouse gas emissions and supports municipal efforts to do the same.

The Commission agreed on the importance of **Protecting Notch Pond from Highway Stormwater** runoff. Members discussed the possibility of researching land-use grants to retrofit the storm drains along I-384 to better handle the pollution that runs directly into Notch pond. The BCC agreed to contact Inlands Wetlands Enforcement Officer Barbara Kelly and look into the use of storm water catch basins as well as technical information on retrofitting existing outflow pipes with particle separators.

The Chairman met with Connecticut notable tree expert Edward Richardson at the Heritage Farm to investigate the size, population and **Diversity of Native Hickory Trees on Heritage Farm**. Mr. Richardson is involved with the CT Notable Tree Project which manages a database of 2700 trees categorized by size, location and ownership. Heritage Farm is now identified for having all four varieties of native hickory, some of which with significant size ratings. The Bitternut Hickory is the 2nd largest in the State and the Mockernut and Pignut are both the 8th largest. It was determined that a damaged Mockernut tree will require restoration in order to maintain the diversity of the hickory population. Mr. Richardson plans to obtain additional data including measurements of the Shagbarks with a goal of providing reports to Heritage Farm Commission, as part of a preservation effort on behalf of BCC.

CT DEP Enforcement and Black Bear Sitings – The BCC worked closely with the CT DEP throughout the year and strongly encourages residents to report illegal activities in Bolton parks. Illegal hunting and operation of ATVs in State parks or on trails should be reported immediately to the CT DEP Hotline 860-424-3333 or for Town park violations the Resident State Trooper 860-643-6060. Do **not** call 911. Also worth noting, the BCC has been made aware of the fact that there has been bear sightings in the Bolton area over the last year. Please consider these guidelines: Enjoy bears only from a distance. Advertise your presence by shouting and waving your arms. Never attempt to feed or attract bears.

Serving as members of the Commission during the fiscal year 2007-2008 were Chairman Rodney Parlee, Vice Chairman Susan Frampton, Treasurer Ronald Beaudoin, James Toner, Stephen Pinkowski and Alternate Andrew Perham.