
Sanbornton Conservation Commission

Committed to the Stewardship of Sanbornton's Natural Resources

Summer 2020 Newsletter

Trail Update

The four Sanbornton Town Forest hiking trails overseen by the Conservation Commission are in the process of being upgraded. The initial project of clearing the entrances has been completed and Commission members have recently cleared the Virginia Hutton and This is My Song Trails.

Have an Interest in stone walls? You will find just that on the Hal Graham Trail where a portion of the wall stands at over 4-feet with a most unique design.

Need a Map? Trail maps are available at the entrance of all trails and on the Conservation Commission website: sanborntonnh.org/conservation-commission

Have Trail Feedback? If you've visited and hiked on any of our trails, we are interested in your insights and suggestions for improving the trails in our community's interest. Please email any comments to conservation@sanborntonnh.org.

Virginia Hutton Trail

Virginia "Ginny" Hutton and her husband spent their retirement years living on Hermit Lake in Sanbornton. Ginny served on the Conservation Commission and was an active volunteer in the community. In 1992 the Commission recognized Ginny's contributions by making her an Honorary Member of the Conservation Commission and also by naming the "Virginia Hutton Trail" in her honor. Ginny passed away in 2012 at the age of 94.

Trout in Classroom Project

The Commission, in partnership with NH Fish and Game and Trout Unlimited, supported a science project on habitat for trout led by Faith Sanborn, a fifth-grade teacher at Sanbornton Central. During the program students raise trout from eggs, monitor and care for their temporary habitat and learn about ecosystems. The program was interrupted in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting school closure. Rob Berry, Facilities Director for Winnisquam Regional School District stepped up and kept the trout fed and

cared for. In mid-May Rob, along with Commission Members Brad Crosby and Ray Masse, released the trout in Weeks Brook. The following video link shows the entire process for release of the trout. If reading an electronic copy of this newsletter, simply click the image below to watch the video, or access it from our website: sanborntonnh.org/conservation-commission



Earth Day 2020

The Commission continued the tradition of supporting Earth Day with the distribution and assistance with the [NH The Beautiful](#) bags for collecting roadside litter. Well over 100 bags were given to Sanbornton citizens at the Town gazebo this year. The Commission wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Transfer Station staff for creating and sustaining a drop-off site for roadside litter. These roadside cleanup bags are available for Sanbornton citizens at the Transfer Station.

Conservation Commission Role

The Commission works to encourage and promote conservation by land owners. They help to ensure the proper management of timber, firewood, reforestation and other natural resources through planning, timber stand improvement, harvesting, reforestation and use programs. They also help to ensure consistency with forest management programs, deed restrictions and pertinent ordinances or regulations.

Consider a Conservation Easement

A conservation easement is a permanent, legally binding agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation organization such as the Town of Sanbornton's Conservation Commission. Primary attention is given to protection of the land's significant natural features. The landowner continues to have use of and the right to manage the land while giving up the right to engage in certain intensive uses of the property. If interested in learning more about the benefits of a conservation easement, please contact any Commission member: sanborntonnh.org/conservation-commission

Pathway to Sanbornton Library

The pathway from the Sanbornton Central School parking lot to the Town library continues to be used as a safe and convenient walkway. The Commission has discussed for some time how we might use the naming of this trail as a way of recognizing the contributions of residents to conservation priorities. The Commission has settled on a name that will honor all conservationists. Stay tuned for our formal announcement of the new name of the library path!

American Woodcock (By Karen Bordeau)

The American woodcock is an upland game bird that is nearly invisible as it blends in with the dead leaves of the forest floor. It will wait motionless, until nearly stepped upon before exploding into flight. Its large eyes are set far back on its head to provide a wide viewing angle to see predators. Its long bill has a flexible tip which aides in grabbing earthworms while probing through moist soil. Ants, moths, snails, and seeds from various plants are occasionally taken. It has short rounded wings that enable it to fly through dense shrubby habitat.

Breeding woodcock are well distributed and fairly common throughout New Hampshire, although their numbers have declined since the 1960's in much of the Eastern region. Woodcock arrive back in New Hampshire from mid-March to mid-April and make their southward fall migration in October. The preferred habitat is a mix of aspen or birch saplings, alders or some combination, and also use overgrown fields or recently logged areas, and wetlands. In the spring, the males perform an acrobatic courtship display at dawn and dusk. The males utter a series of nasal "peent" calls during a brief ground display and then perform a flight with wing twittering during the ascent and a distinctive flight song of 5 or 6 chirps during the rapid descent.

Woodcock nest on the ground and the nest consists of a cup-shaped depression in dead leaves with a few twigs arranged around the rim (see photo below). Clutch size is usually 4, with the female doing all of the incubation, which lasts 20-21 days. Chicks leave the nests soon after hatching and fly 2 weeks later. The female will feign injury when flushed with her brood.

Annual counts of singing males along permanent, randomly selected routes have been conducted since 1968 in New Hampshire and are used to assess the regional population status and long-term trends of the woodcock breeding population. Woodcock need the following habitats:

Feeding cover – moist, rich soils with abundant earthworms and overhead cover. These characteristics are generally found in 10-20-year-old alder swales and some young hardwood stands.

Singing grounds – forest clearings, agricultural fields, orchards, and hay fields adjacent to feeding cover are needed for spring courtship displays.

Nesting cover – woodcock nest in young, open second growth stands.

Roosting areas – at dusk woodcock move from their daytime feeding cover to roost at night in fields of at least 3 acres.

Sources: 1) New Hampshire Fish and Game Wildlife Action Plan, Species Profile; wildlife.state.nh.us/wildlife/wap.html

2) Atlas of Breeding Birds in New Hampshire, Audubon Society of New Hampshire; nhaudubon.org



© Photo Courtesy of Len Medlock

Curious About Birds?

Let us know your questions about birds from throughout our community. We will feature birds native to Sanbornton in future editions of this newsletter. Email bird feature suggestions to conservation@sanborntonnh.org.