

NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY COMPLETED

Jeff Littleton of Moosewood Ecological LLC has completed a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI) for the town. This effort is part of the mission of all conservation commissions in NH. It is an important function, as our primary goal is to promote and protect Candia's water, forest, agricultural and wildlife resources. The purpose of this work is to assist the town in making decisions about zoning and priorities for conservation in town. The NRI also can serve as an update for the Natural Infrastructure Chapter of the Town's Master Plan.

Along with research and field verification, the process included two public forums to solicit input from residents. It concluded with a public presentation of the final draft of the report. Copies of the NRI are available from the Conservation Commission.

OPEN SPACE PLAN UPDATE

Simultaneous to the NRI study, Candia's Planning Board commissioned an update to our Open Space Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to assist the town in land use planning decisions by providing information about important features of our undeveloped natural resources. The goal is that, in the process of providing for development around town, we maintain a network of undeveloped land connections allowing natural systems, (e.g. watersheds, wildlife) to continue to function effectively. The accompanying maps are designed to be used as guides to these connections.



Mary Brundage and Linda Madorma of SNHPC explain the Open Space Plan update at the public presentation of the NRI

The update of the Open Space Plan was funded with CTAP money and conducted by Southern NH Planning Commission staff with the help of a committee of Candia representatives. Information from the NRI was useful to the committee in this process. The plan will be finalized by early 2011. Copies of the updated Open Space Plan will be available from the Land Use Office.

BUILDOUT MAPPING PROJECT

Southern NH Planning Commission also worked with the Planning Board on a third project that relates to the NRI and Open Space Plan Update. They created a series of "buildout"

maps, which are useful to the board in assessing our current and potential zoning ordinances.

The first map shows how Candia would look if all the available land were developed according to our current ordinances. Other maps offer a chance for the Planning Board to consider changes to the ordinances and to see how they would affect land use in town. Copies of the maps are available in the Land Use Office.

COORDINATION OF EFFORTS ~ OPEN SPACE & DEVELOPMENT

All of the above projects relate to each other and demonstrate the importance of communication among town boards in land use planning. The NRI provides a scientific basis for decisions made in the Open Space Plan. Both of these projects provide a sound base for consideration in decisions about zoning ordinances. The end result is a process that facilitates thoughtful, sustainable development in Candia without jeopardizing our rural character.

It has been shown that towns with open space preservation pay lower taxes than towns with greater development. Additionally, open space lands cost towns very little in services compared to residential developments. This concept was verified by a Cost of Community Services study done for Candia by SNHPC in 2009. The study reported that for every \$1 in taxes the town receives, it costs Candia \$1.03 to provide community services to residences, \$0.69 to commercially developed properties and \$0.19 to open space.

Aside from the environmental and health benefits of maintaining a balance of open space while providing for development, it is a fiscally responsible approach to the goal of sustainability.

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

When discussing land conservation, many people ask, "What does it do for me?"

To appreciate the benefits of conservation, we must first understand that we are protecting the ecosystems on which we rely for healthy living. An ecosystem is all living and nonliving things interacting in a given area. It provides a variety of *goods* such as water, agricultural products, fuel and game. These items are easy for us to see and evaluate.

An ecosystem also provides *services* like cleaning our drinking water, turning carbon dioxide into life-supporting oxygen, and fostering the work of microbes breaking down organic material so new plants can grow. How would we determine the value of these services?

It is easy to take ecosystems for granted because they function naturally, without our help ~ unless we interfere with their process... One might argue that there are enough ecosystems around that we're not in danger of extinction. However, the more we replace them with pavement or structures, the less able they are to provide the goods and services we need for survival.