

MONT VERNON OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

The town voted to form an Open Space Committee in 2003 to study the appropriation of funding and designation of open spaces to protect the natural resources of the town of Mont Vernon. At the March 2005 town meeting, citizens approved a \$750,000 bond for one year for the purpose of purchasing open space. The Mont Vernon Conservation Commission has the authority, under NH RSA 36-A:2 to appoint subcommittees, and voted on 3/09/05 to re-appointed the members of the Open Space Committee for 2005 to continue their efforts to protect the natural resources of the town. The Open Space Committee is a sub-committee of the Conservation Commission, bringing forth recommendations for open space parcels. The Conservation Commission has the authority for purchases of open space or property with town approval. The Open Space Committee was very busy this year with the following:

- Developed a Criteria Checklist for Open Space Parcels. The Criteria for open space parcels was established according to the Town's Master Plan and Natural Resource priorities developed by the Conservation Commission.
- Reviewed all town tax maps and prioritized parcels that met the criteria set forth
- Contacted over 25 landowners with property in town to determine if any interest in working with the town.
- Worked with the Local Government Center and Center for Land Conservation Assistance who provided advice and protocols for working with landowners and with UNH County Extension of Hillsborough County to evaluate natural resources of parcel under consideration.
- Met with Conservation Commission and Selectmen regularly to inform and update them on our activities.
- Met with real estate agent, forester, appraiser and, other local land conservation group to research potential parcel for open space purchases. One landowner expressed interest in working with town and an appraisal was performed, funds authorized by the Conservation Commission. The landowner has requested more time to talk with family members. No decision has been made at this time.
- Two other parcels were explored but did not meet criteria for open space parcels and had issues that would not at this time be in the town's best interest to acquire.
- Contact with NH Municipal Bond Bank and Dept. of Revenue to determine tax impact of bond, which at this time there is none since no funds were used.
- The Open Space Committee requests your support of a warrant article requesting another bond for \$750,000 for the purpose of open space. **NO FUNDS FROM THE 2005 BOND WERE USED.** The Open Space Committee is requesting that the new bond for 2006 be good for 3 years instead of one year. This will give the committee more time to negotiate with land owners, obtain the required appraisals (which can take up to 2-3 months), and meet State requirements of posting notices and meetings in order to bring a property to vote for a special or annual town meeting. This will also give landowners time to consider working with the town to protect and preserve their property.

2005 Open Space Committee Members: Andrea Baver, Joanne Draghetti, Jane Flythe, Mary Jean MacGillivray, Mark Murdock.