

# Windham Forestry Committee

## 2014 Annual Report

The Windham Forestry Committee was established in 2014 by the town of Windham Board of Selectmen following an affirmative Town Meeting vote to create a town forest comprised of Conservation Land parcels collectively known as the South-Eastern Properties. These six parcels form a contiguous area of approximately 200 acres that can be accessed from both Bayberry Road and Osgood Road.

The function of the Committee is to encourage proper management of the town forest resources through timber stand improvements including thinning, harvesting, reforestation, and other multiple use programs consistent with a Forest Management Plan developed by licensed foresters, with input of wildlife biologists.

The Committee is comprised of 5 regular members, two of whom are members of the town's Conservation Commission. Members are appointed by the Board of Selectmen and serve three year terms which have been initially staggered so each year at least one member's term will expire. All members serve without compensation. The Committee meets regularly as needed and all meetings are open to the public with meeting minutes available on the Town web site.

Our first year as a committee has been a busy one as we learn and prepare to effectively manage our new town forest. Members have been meeting monthly, and participating in forest management planning related activities. A professionally prepared Forest Stewardship Plan, previously completed for the Conservation Commission, was reviewed and approved by the Committee. This ten year plan will form the basis for future forest management activities under a multiple use concept. This includes supporting various recreational activities, improving wildlife habitat, soil and water conservation, buffering wetland areas, historical site protection, and sound long term sustainable timber management. Other Committee activities in 2014 have included;

- Meeting with consulting forester Mike Powers, who authored the ten year plan.
- Guided tour of Pelham town forests to see their timber harvest activities in various stages, from active, to previously completed one to two years ago.
- Site review of the Osgood Road fire cistern with Windham Fire officials.
- Guided tour of Londonderry's Bockes Forest with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forest to view their current "bio-mass" harvesting activities.
- Tour of the town forest with a University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension wildlife biologist and Rockingham County Extension forester, for input on our harvest planning.
- Created and submitted to qualified foresters, a timber harvest bid proposal for the South-Eastern Properties. Bay State Forestry was selected to manage the harvest.
- Members of the committee walked the property in order to locate hunters' deer stands and mark them with notifications of the upcoming harvest and asking that the stands be removed after hunting season.

- Some members attended the Forest Laws for Municipal Officials workshop sponsored by the University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.
- Some members attended a seminar on the Emerald Ash Borer at the Massabesic Audubon Center to learn more about this highly destructive, non-native pest.
- Members reviewed additional town parcels, as requested by the Board of Selectmen, to determine if any might be viable for town forest designations. None of the properties viewed were recommended by the Committee for re-designation.

In 2015 the Committee plans to conduct our first bio-mass timber harvest on the South-Eastern Properties. Our goal is to use accepted long term forestry practices to improve the overall health of the forest by removing low quality and mature trees. Additional harvest will be planned in 10-15 year cycles.

Long range plans include wildlife habitat improvements, kiosk and walking trail improvements, preserving historical sites, and providing a healthy forest for wildlife and all Windham residents to enjoy.

Respectfully Submitted

Wanda Rice, Forestry Committee Chair