

Pond Watershed to ensure that the health of the pond and its environs is preserved. A number of these reviews were performed and the committee approved each with a quorum. Of particular concern to the WPAC is any activity that can have an adverse affect on the quality of the Pond water.

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail (BFRT)

The WPAC has been actively involved in the discussions surrounding the BFRT, to ensure that the Pond is properly protected given that the proposed trail passes closely to White Pond. The WPAC is working with the Town's Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee and other groups such as Concord-based Friends of Rural Trails and the Friends of the BFRT to elevate awareness of the impacts of the trail surface, trail construction activities, and increased visitor traffic on the health and aesthetics of the Pond and on the wildlife corridor.



Water testing on White Pond

AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

John Bemis, Chair
Jim Catterton
Dan Giurleo
Jenn Verrill
Jim Wayman

Since formation as a Town Committee, the Agricultural Committee has worked to promote agriculture in Concord.

This year's growing season was productive but not normal, whatever that is these days. Spring was long, cold and wet, offset by a lovely warm autumn that allowed harvest well into November. The disastrous tomato "late blight" struck very locally, in some areas unusually early,

in others late, and in some not at all.

Ag Day – The Committee sponsored a fourth farmer's market festival in September on the Milldam, with a good turnout and good sales, but held in a pretty steady rain. "Ag Day" remains popular with townspeople and visitors, and worthwhile for growers. We do not plan to host a regular, weekly, market because so many growers in Town have farmstands. We note that there is interest in Town for a more regular and expanded market.

Guide to the Farm Stands of Concord – We are continuing to distribute this informative brochure. It is a useful guide for residents and visitors alike.

The second Stone Soup Dinner featured Concord-grown produce prepared by Concord chefs. It was even better than the first one. The event was held in September on the grounds of the Buttrick Mansion at Minute-man National Historical Park. A subcommittee of the Agricultural Committee consisting of Jim Wayman, Jen Verrill and Dan Giurleo and several other citizens planned the event and made it happen. Many hands were involved in food preparation and service. About 340 folks ate very well and had a neighborly, convivial evening. The Ag Committee encourages other groups in Town to also sponsor harvest parties that help celebrate community and our local bounty.

Ammendolia Property–This agricultural parcel was purchased by the Town a few years ago as a site for ball fields, but the wet nature of this land makes it unsuitable. The Committee took a look at agricultural uses for this property, but we have not gotten very far.

Through the work and persistence of a group of neighbors interested in gardening, with some help from the Ag Committee, Delia Kaye and particularly Bill Kenney, the East Quarter Farm Community Garden was established on a portion of the property. Bill Kenney also farmed a portion of the land. The tillable land was quite overgrown, and Bill and his John Deere tractor did a remarkable job of bringing the fields back.

Agricultural Drainage Ditches – The Committee made little real progress in addressing the various problems associated with Concord's ancient and inconsistently maintained system of agricultural drainage ditches. We will invite the Director of Public Works to one of our meetings in 2010 to discuss ditches.

“What’s Growing in Concord” Movie – Concord resident Dan Latham filmed and produced a 45 minute video about farming in Concord in the summer of 2008, featuring Concord farms, greenhouses and farmers. While not a complete inventory of all agricultural activity in Concord, Mr. Latham has captured some remarkable images and interviews. The video, narrated by R. D. Sahl, presents an overview of agriculture’s role in Concord’s past, present and future and the importance of supporting local agriculture today. The Committee provided a little help and guidance but this is very much Mr. Latham’s work.

The premiere screening was held at Alcott School Auditorium on March 19, and was attended by a crowd of about 230. It was well received. The video is shown periodically on CCTV, and copies of the DVD are available at the Concord libraries. DVDs are also available at the Concord Town Clerk’s office for a donation of \$20 to the Concord Agricultural Committee.

Agricultural Events – The year saw some significant events which affect agriculture in Concord. The Agricultural Committee had no official role in any of these events, but notes them here.

After a late September 2008 fire, Verrill Farm continued to operate out of temporary quarters for most of 2009, but this fall saw the opening of their new farm stand.

Susan Macone won awards for two of her family heirloom tomatoes at the Boston City Hall Plaza competition.

In the Coming Year

Right to Farm Bylaw—The Committee will bring a “Right to Farm Bylaw” to Town Meeting. RTF Bylaws have been adopted by 97 Massachusetts towns.

A Right to Farm bylaw will highlight the importance of farming to the Town of Concord and will remind non-farm residents that generally accepted agricultural practices are reasonable activities to expect here. It will reiterate that farming is a valued and accepted activity in Concord.

It is intended to help promote understanding between farmers and their neighbors and to discourage neighbors from suing farmers. A Right to Farm Bylaw will provide a Town-level procedure for resolution of disputes.

Identify and solicit new Committee members—all current Ag Committee members’ terms expire in 2011.

Inventory of Farms, Agricultural Parcels and Farmers - We will complete this work.

375 Celebration—Since Concord was founded in 1635 as a farming town, the Committee will have some role in the festivities, with perhaps a tractor or tractors and wagons in the parade.

Clearing House—The Committee would like to establish a procedure to match up farmers and underutilized agricultural parcels, Town, State, Federal, non-profit and private.

Aging Farmers /Young Farmers—The Committee would like to assist aging farmers with estate planning issues (perhaps with the Land Trust), and would like to identify ways to foster young farmers. We have talked about these matters but not taken any concrete steps.

Other Issues—The Committee has discussed and will consider further: Ag in the schools, Water quality issues, New farmers, Buy local, Playing fields, Ag worker housing, and the Farm at Concord MCI.

Concord has an ample base of good farm land. Active agriculture will succeed in Concord if there are people who want to work the land and markets for our products. Concord produces high quality vegetables, fruit, flowers and meat, and there are good opportunities to expand production and sell what we grow.

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