

## 2007 TOWN FOREST REPORT

The town forest management committee is happy to report completion of 4 successful projects this year.

In the spring, contractors hired by National Grid completed the repairs to Root Hill Road and the loop road as requested. These repairs were needed following renovation work on power line #149, which bisects the town forest. Erosion channels were graded out, water bars installed with heavy gravel in the wet spots, and the appropriate areas were seeded and mulched. Extra seed was also provided by National Grid which is being used here and there as needed. Restricted motor vehicle access in times of wet soil is now enforced by the gate and logs installed in 2006. The result is that the southern part of Root Hill Road and the loop road are actually now in better condition than before the power line work, and when dry can be driven on by many vehicles, not just high clearance 4 wheel drive. No town funds were used in this restoration, since all the work was done by National Grid's contractor, as negotiated in 2006 by John Hammond and Jim Fitch. Many thanks to Peter Burling for putting a word in with National Grid to make sure this got done!

In order to protect the repaired water bars and loop road, the road will be closed to motorized wheeled vehicles and horses from March 1 to July 1 and at other times when the committee feels access needs to be restricted to prevent soil damage.

Completion of the road restoration, and a drier year allowed a small tree harvest from the designated timber management areas to be completed in September. Hemlock and poplar logs selected by Richard Thompson were removed by Reyer Jaarsma, Leo Maslan, Jim Fitch, Silas Treadway and John Hammond, working on one of the hottest days of the late summer. The logs were later sawed out by Leo and Jim with help from Josh Worthington and are being used for town projects including the new recycling center building.

A major item was crossed off our previous to do list with the epic construction of the Eagles Ledge lean to, by Brian Gee's eagle scout project. The project was begun at easter time and fully completed by the target date of Brian's 18th birthday in June, thanks to many hours of hard work by Brian, scout troop #332 and assistance by Leo Maslan, Kyle Wittie, Keith Jones, David Gee, John Hammond and Jim Fitch. This beautiful, cozy Adirondack style shelter is located about 50 yards east of the highest point on Root Hill Road. During dry seasons, a 4 wheel drive vehicle can drive to within 50 yards of the shelter. Please stop in!

The last project, or set of projects was the highly successful work day on Nov. 11, attended by approximately 18 volunteers. The view of Ascutney and points west was recut and brush piled for eventual burning. A group led by Kate Freeland dug up 2 long pieces of silt fence left by the power line renovation. These silt fences were acting as dams and had been heavily silted in. To complete the highly effective water bar project on Root Hill Road, one more water bar was hacked out of the rock and gravel to divert

long-standing, damaging run off from the section above the south parking area. Many, many thanks to a lot of hard work done this day by cheery volunteers too numerous to list!

In addition to the previously described projects, the forest management committee officially met on April 21 for trash pick up on Tandy Brook Rd. Constant trail maintenance was done through the year by many trail users. Mowing, reseeding and minor grading of the loop road and power line renovations were done in the summer and fall by Ginny Prince.

The committee would like to encourage visits by hikers and nature viewers - there are maps posted on all the trails a short distance in from their starting points, and there is a container of paper maps at the posted map on the trail from Tandy Brook Rd. In addition maps are available at the town office.

The town forest also continues to be popular for hunting and is open to all licensed hunters in season.

From time to time there is interest in scout or other youth or community projects; the current To Do list follows. If interested in working on any of these items contact any of the committee members.

#### To Do List:

1. Refine and maintain erosion control structures on loop road, Root Hill Road and power line and reseed as needed.
2. Burn the brush at the lookout to tidy up and revitalize existing blueberry patches
3. Renovate foot bridges and water crossings as needed.
4. Inventory the flora and fauna of the town forest, ideally with photographs.
5. Make and install signs - directional signs for the trails, no motor vehicle signs where needed, possibly more detailed signs at the forest entrances explaining permitted activities, same as on the back of the trail maps.
6. Archeology study - find and map the foundations, stone walls, etc., find the privy and trash pits and excavate, research the history of residence and land use, etc.,
7. Create an interactive guide to the town forest for school age kids.
8. Release and prune apple trees (second go-round)
- 9- Construct privy building for the Eagles Ledge lean to.

10. design and at least begin a way to quantify and then monitor the growth of buckthorn, and other invasive plants.

11. Renew paint trail blazes.

As in past years, the town forest budget includes no tax money. Because state law requires that any funds, donation or payment or otherwise, must be authorized in the warrant, the forest management committee is requesting permission to spend up to \$1500 for trail marking paint and other miscellaneous items for repair and construction of signs, etc.

For more information or to share thoughts about the town forest contact any committee member:

Ginny Prince, chair

Jim Fitch

Kate Freeland

Bill Gallagher

John Hammond