
Stratham, Our Town

An Initiative to Save our Open Land

Issue 5, February 20, 2002

Stratham Conservation Commission

The Water Issue

The greatest threat to public drinking water is caused by development activities on the land surface

In Stratham we get our water from wells, which recharge with rainwater. But all the buildings we construct, with their streets and driveways, prevent rain water from seeping into the ground to recharge our wells. Water that hits pavement cannot seep directly into the ground. It runs downhill, typically collecting in stormdrains that flow to a stream or a river, and then it continues out of town to a distant water body.

The health of our streams, ponds and groundwater depends upon the use of the surrounding lands

Since we do not have a town water system, Stratham residents all depend on the groundwater running beneath our own properties. Every summer, along with the threat of contamination, we face the threat of a major drought: it's affecting us *right now*. In addition to causing wells to dry up, the drought poses a major problem for fire fighters who rely on ponds for their water supply. "This is the driest spell since I came on with the Fire Department," says Fire Chief Robert Law, a Stratham native who has been Fire Chief for six years. "The newer ponds are dry as a bone. Everyone in town is worried about it."

Our surest means of protecting groundwater is through land protection.

Now is the time for Stratham to plan ahead and set aside land to help ensure safe and adequate water for the future

Land protection through purchase or conservation easement is the surest way to protect groundwater. A *conservation easement* is a legal agreement that permanently restricts development on a parcel of land. People *voluntarily* enter into conservation easements to protect and enhance the natural resources on their property.

To protect water resources in Stratham as a whole, we need to preserve our wetlands and their buffers, and protect large blocks of land. These are just two of the vital steps we can take now to invest in the preservation of our water supply.

**Vote YES on Article 4 at Town Meeting
March 15, 7:30 pm**

New residents must register to vote at the Town Office before March 2nd. Call 772-4741 for details.

For more information on how this initiative can help protect our water supply, please call Gordon Barker at 778-1039, Pat Elwell at 778-1659, or Ann Sloan at 778-9018.

Stratham Conservation Commission
Stratham, Our Town
Town Offices
Stratham, NH 03885

Bulk Rate
US Postage
PAID
Stratham, NH
Permit #1

Resident
Stratham, NH 03885

Join us

for more information
and to get involved:

Town Library: March 5th, 6:30-8pm

Memorial School: March 6th, 6:30-8pm

What Protecting Our

Jim Stuart, Chairman of the 1998 Master Plan Review Committee: "Anything that preserves open space and removes an area from the residential market is in the public interest. The bond is a good idea."
Marty Wool, Selectman: "This is an idea whose time has come. We cannot afford not to do it."
David Short, Selectman: "This is an important tool for our town's ability to plan growth in the future."
Lucy Cushman, Chairman of the Cooperative School Board: "This is our first real chance to be pro-active. When you consider that every child's schooling costs the town at least \$7,000, preserving our land is just like putting money in the bank."
Joe Derviecki, former Chairman, Planning Board: "I'm all in favor of this land protection initiative."
John Hutton, former Chairman, Planning Board: "This is a wonderful, well designed tool to slow development. Our homes will be worth more and it will make our commercial area more attractive to businesses."
Pete Wiggin, Chairman, Heritage Commission and 13th generation Stratham resident: "I totally support this initiative. It gives landowners an option to realize a financial benefit while preserving their land in its natural state."

What do our civic leaders think of this initiative?