



2010

# Scituate Conservation Commission Annual Report

March 2011

*"WORKING TO CONSERVE  
SCITUATE'S NATURAL &  
COMMUNITY RESOURCES"*

The Scituate  
Conservation  
Commission exists to  
help the community and  
its citizens sustain their  
environment and quality  
of life while meeting their  
economic needs.

We are a non-regulatory,  
town organization  
dedicated to:

- Identifying and conserving Scituate's important natural resources;
- Improving the knowledge base from which land use and natural resource decisions are made;
- Building local capacity to protect and manage natural resources as our town grows;
- Conserving our town's unique community character;
- Continuing the Town's legacy as the steward of the state's primary drinking water supply—the Scituate Reservoir.

For More Information

Contact:  
Scituate

Conservation  
Commission

P.O. Box 328  
North Scituate, RI 02857  
Gloria Loyd, Town Hall  
647-2822

## *Lawton Farm Management Plan Implemented in 2010*



The Plan was approved by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) in September and by the Scituate Town Council in November. The Conservation Commission held public informational meetings at Chopmist Center and at Hope Elementary School to talk with residents and friends about the policy changes at Lawton Farm. The Lawton Property Management Plan may be viewed at the Town Clerk's office in the Town Hall in North Scituate village or downloaded from: [www.scituatericonservation.org](http://www.scituatericonservation.org). People are welcome to walk the property, without their dogs, during the nesting season if they stay on the mowed path at the edge of the hayfield. Dogs on leashes are welcome from September 1 to March 30, provided their owners pick up after them.

We thank the town residents and friends of the Lawton Farm for their gracious cooperation in 2010. We hope that riders of horses and ATV operators will show their understanding of the damage these activities can cause to the Lawton property, particularly to the soils in the riparian area, and will visit the property only as pedestrians. We all share the task of managing the Lawton Farm as a wildlife conservation area, and of protecting the nesting habitat for grassland nesting birds.

## *Property Steward Program in Third Year*

People willing to function as "Property Stewards" by walking one of the properties (Lawton Farm or Westconnaug Meadows, especially) once a month and then sending an online paragraph to the Commission regarding the condition of the property, **please call Ruth Strach, 934-2277**.

## *Providence Water Supply Board secures properties in Scituate to protect them from development and further protect the watershed of the Scituate Reservoir*

The Conservation Commission and the Land Trust have supported the 2009 agreement with the PWSB as one of the ways by which Scituate's land conservation goals can be fulfilled. Jon Vernava, from the Scituate Conservation Commission and Scituate Land Trust, and Leo Thompson from the Scituate Land Trust have served during 2010 on the committee to help the PWSB identify properties that relate directly to the watershed and are in other ways suitable for acquisition. Three properties were identified, negotiations entered, and either the land or development rights purchased in 2010.

## *Community Septic System Loan Program (CCSLP)*

In April 2010 the Scituate Town Council voted to accept the CCSLP Program. In compliance with the requirements of the federal Clean Water Act, the Program would make 2% loans available to Town residents for repair of failed septic systems. The Program is to be funded in part by a loan to the Town through the RI Housing and Mortgage Corp (RIHMFC) acting as agents for the RI Clean Water Finance Agency. The Conservation Commission certainly supports the Town Council's ongoing efforts to protect the ground water quality in Scituate, and we look forward to the time when this program can be operational.

### ***Alice M. Howland 2010 Conservation Award***

Chair Thomas Angell presented the 2010 Alice M. Howland Conservation Award to Hans Bergey, a forester and former director of the Providence Water Supply Board, in recognition of his tireless dedication to the trees and woods of North Scituate, and to ongoing forestry education that is accomplished, we believe, in the spirit of Alice Howland. Hans has been more than willing to help lead educational woodland walks sponsored in part by the Conservation Commission so that the public can learn more about the growth and aging of tree kinds, forest growth, and tree succession. His love of the forest is evident to all who have attended these walks.

The Alice M. Howland Conservation Award recognizes an individual, group or organization rendering outstanding service, either recently or over a period of years, to natural resource conservation in the Town of Scituate. The award is dedicated in the memory of Alice M. Howland, formerly of Hope, one of Scituate's conservation pioneers. Previous recipients include Mr. Alvah Vernava (2003), Mr. Alfred Hawkes (2004), Mr. James Doris (2005), Ms. Diana Reisman (2006), Mr. Chris Modisette (2007), Mr. Paul Dolan (2008), and Hope Associates (2009).



### ***Open Space Saves Tax Dollars***

(courtesy of Janet Coit, former Director, The Nature Conservancy, and current Director of the RI Department of Environmental Management)

**“In Rhode Island communities where this has been carefully studied, for each dollar of tax revenue a new home brings to a town, the cost to the community in schools, police, fire, public works and other services ranges from \$1.05 to \$1.46. Who pays the difference in revenue to expenses? You and I. On the other hand, open space and working lands cost only 31 cents to 46 cents for every dollar of revenue they generate. Do the math—protecting open space and working lands makes solid economic sense for all of us. Once a piece of open space is developed into residential housing, the town is faced with increased costs that outpace the added taxes from the new housing. Farms, forests and other open spaces are good for Rhode Islanders. Rhody Fresh milk, the wine from our East Bay vineyards, fresh fruits and vegetables at the farmers markets, clean water, forest and wood products, or the nursery plants in your yard, all come from our working lands. Currently, 28 of Rhode Island's 36 school districts buy locally raised or grown products. This works perfectly with the state's initiative to make school meals and snacks healthier and more nutritional for our children. Local agriculture is a growing sector of our economy, and conserving these productive lands is good for our food security and our health. Residents understand that the forests, fields, and wetlands that recharge public aquifers and reservoirs are necessary for clean drinking water, and that the state's rivers, marshes and coastal ponds support our fisheries. People know that these lands and waters will not continue to support the state's economy and enhance our quality of life without efforts devoted to protecting them for the future.”**

### ***Arbor Day, May 2010***

This was the 24<sup>th</sup> year that Arbor Day celebrations were held in the Town. Trees were planted this year at North Scituate, Hope, and Clayville elementary schools, at the High School, and at the Chopmist Center. Many thanks to Hope Associates, the Gentian Garden Club, the Rhode Island Tree Council, the Scituate School Department and the teachers and staff at the various schools for their assistance with this year's events. Special thanks go to Paul Dolan and Chris Modisette for their dedication and support for Arbor Day at the schools and for ongoing mulching and forestry instruction at the High School.



**In the past 24 years, more than 5,600 school children have attended Arbor Day events and 118 trees have been planted to honor the importance of trees in the environment.**



***Tours, Workshops & Celebrations in 2010 sponsored or co-sponsored by the Conservation Commission***

**• 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, March 2010**



Shannon Donovan, SHS  
Environmental Science



Stephanie Shaw, Architectural  
Historian, John Milner



Rick Greenwood, RI Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission



**• Woodland Vernal Pools Walk at Westconnaug Meadows, April 2010**



**• Arbor Day Celebrations, May 2010**

**• Lawton Farm Access Policy, Public Informational Meetings at Chopmist Center and at Hope Elementary School**

**• Shannon Donovan's forestry walk at the High School, 26 May 2010**

**• Summer Solstice Paddle, 26 June 2010**



**• Providence Water Supply Board Meeting regarding permitted deer hunting on PWSB lands**

## ***Historic Barns of Rhode Island: Statewide Framework and Foster, Glocester, and Scituate Pilot Survey Project Kickoff***

At the March 2010 Annual Meeting, Rick Greenwood, Deputy Director of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission spoke on the many structures in Scituate relating to farming that were lost in the construction of the Reservoir. Efforts to document the barns and outbuildings that do exist are especially important to the town's agricultural roots. The consultant for this project, Stephanie Shaw, is an architectural historian with John Milner Associates. Stephanie outlined a number of barn types characteristic of this area. Several attendees at the meeting volunteered to help document the historic barns in our area.



**“The Horse Barn” at the Scituate State Police Headquarters on Danielson Pike before the massive restoration undertaken in 2010. This photo, taken by George Beaubien, appeared in the *Valley Breeze & Observer* on February 18, 2010.**



**“The Horse Barn,” with exterior restoration almost completed, in July 2010. Photo by S. Adams**



**TOP: Historic picture of Smith's Dairy Farm, North Scituate; BOTTOM: Borders Barn, Foster. Pictures courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission**

### **Scituate Conservation Commission**

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North Scituate, RI 02857

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401.647-2822 or  
Ruth Strach 401.934-2277



### **“WORKING TO CONSERVE SCITUATE’S NATURAL RESOURCES”**

#### **Mission Statement**

To promote and develop natural resources, to protect watershed resources, and to preserve natural aesthetic areas within the town.

#### **Current Members**

Thomas Angell, Chair

Ruth Strach, Vice-Chair

Sara Adams

Michael Capirchio

Cheryl Dexter

Cynthia Gianfrancesco

Jon Vernava

Gloria Loyd, Clerical Assistant

**We're on the Web!**

[www.scituatericonservation.org](http://www.scituatericonservation.org)

**Join us on our outings in 2011!**