



Wilton Water Recreation Initiative

Wilton Conservation Commission

September 2018

Current State Assets

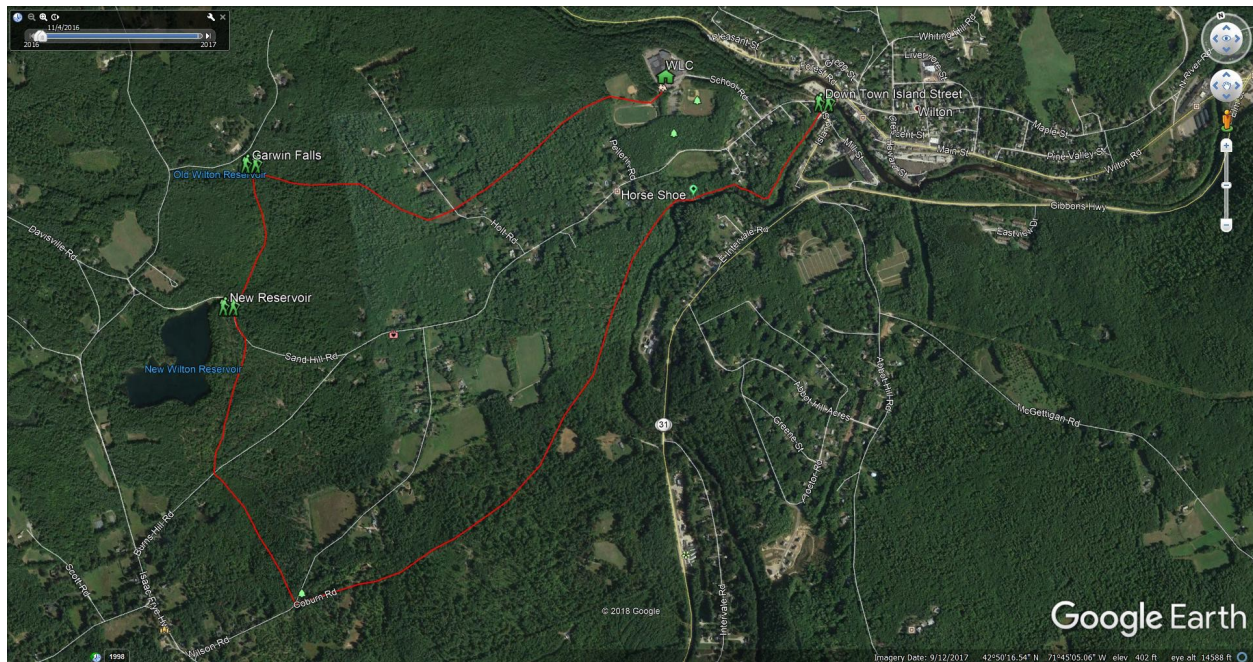
The town of Wilton, NH has precious few water resources although its downtown village sits at the confluence of two protected rivers; the Souhegan and Stony Brook. The 50 acre “**New Town Reservoir**” is on town property and is in the process of being de-commissioned as a public drinking reservoir and re-classified as a public water resource by DES. **Horseshoe Falls** is a unique geological area on a giant bend in the Souhegan River with a 12-foot pool, small waterfalls and flat rocks and little pools all along the river’s edge. The area was once a popular family picnic, swimming and fishing area dating back over 100 years. It is surrounded by three lots totaling about 10.8 acres of private property, owned by S&G Realty Trust. **Garwin Falls** is at the outlet of the town reservoir and consists of horsetails and cascades with a 40-foot waterfall at the upper end. It’s located on private property owned by Paula and Alan Sweezy.

Today, these falls are on current use properties, are prominently listed on social media sites and suffer from bad actors who take advantage of their seclusion and lack of monitoring to misuse these tranquil natural resources. Neighbors try to clean up trash and log complaints to local law enforcement, that has no jurisdiction, and can only tow and ticket cars parked illegally on the access roads. Several public hearings and meetings have been conducted this summer as the usage and associated issues increase.

Interviews have been conducted with town department heads, police, fire, emergency services and DPW, who have all offered suggestions in support of the overall vision. Two of the select board members have already informally approached the WCC and expressed their support for the plan.

The Vision

The Wilton Conservation Commission has been studying various scenarios to solve the problems with these vital assets and secure them for public use, and ecological protection. The concept is to acquire these lands, conserve them, open them to the public and establish rules for use, and safe access solutions. Then to link them via a multi-use trail system that connects to downtown, leveraging visitor use to economic benefit for the downtown’s shops, restaurants and entertainment establishments.



1. WCC has been in discussion with the property owner of the Horseshoe lands who is a motivated seller who wants this asset secured for public use and conservation. A certified appraisal has been completed by Arol Charbonneau, Crafts Appraisal of Bedford for \$360K.
2. A purchase price of \$300K has been offered and an option to buy is under consideration.
3. About half the trails to connect the sites already exist as snowmobile trails or abandoned public access class 6 roads, one of which links the Horseshoe to the Souhegan River downtown.
4. The Wilton Select Board will be briefed again on October 29th on the feasibility of the overall concept.
5. The town is prepared to apply for grants, issue a warrant article and conduct public fundraising via a FUNDME.com campaign and approaching private investors.