

## Lakeview Board Wrestles with State Act 46

by Hester Fuller

**GREENSBORO** — The Lakeview School Board wrestled themselves as a unified group, with a joint proposal, the agency responded separately to the union school districts (Hazen, Lakeview and their member districts), to Craftsbury and to Wolcott.

Second, while the agency is not recommending merger, any member district at this time they do suggest the entire OSSU might be eliminated and its members reassigned to other superintendency units. The suggestion appears on the next-to-last page of the 188-page report.

Specifically, the agency suggests that Craftsbury might be reassigned to Otisville Central, Wolcott to Lunenburg South; and Hazen Union, Lakeview Union and their member districts to Caladonia Central. At least some of those ideas have already been vigorously explored — and rejected.

As part of the proposal development process. Presently, OSSU member districts share complex, intertwined relationships, combining choice in some districts at some levels, independent (Craftsbury) and participation by several towns in both of the Union School Districts (Lakeview and Hazen). The joint proposal for an Alternative Structure under the new law leverages this diversity by advancing collaborative partnerships that tap distinctive community resources to provide educational opportunities tailored to the varied needs and aspirations of students.

In less than a month, districts in the OSSU have an opportunity to tell the board how they feel about the Agency's recommendations at a regional hearing scheduled for Wednesday, July 18, in Newark. The starting time for the hearing has not yet been set, but the group has been advised that they will be afforded two minutes to respond to the recommendations.

OSSU Superintendent Joann LeBlanc reported to the Lakeview group that she has been advised that respondents need to convey to the board that they continue to actively explore governance consolidation efforts. She also reminded the group that as a superintendency unit, member districts are already well down the path of accomplishing the goals that Act 46 intends to accomplish.

He also offered the view that this is a point the districts might wish to stress in their comments to the Board. The Board of Education will issue final orders, binding on all districts in the state, this November.



A determined high-way wiper tries to convert a bird feeder into a bear feeder. Members of the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department go to bat together as an "outdoor dog for dogs."

## More Bear Sightings Raise Safety Concerns

by Michael Bielawski

**MARSHFIELD** — There's been an uptick in bear activity in the region, including increased sightings by residents in Hardwick and Plainfield. Don Rodgers of Vermont Fish and Wildlife is offering advice on what to do not to when bears are around. First off, he cautioned, is not to be in bear activity.

"More and more during the summer, we are in full-out press here at the department," Rodgers said. "Our wardens, our bear biologists, they are spending a ton of time on this. I actually brought in a half-time intern from UVM and her whole time has been spent dealing with bear conflicts."

According to Fish and Wildlife Department estimates, there were 5,500 bears in the state as of 2017, which Rodgers called a "robust and healthy" population. A key message he conveyed is that for all the trouble and dangers that bears and people can pose each other, the solution is simple — do not feed the bears.

"It is a problem when people are feeding bears, intentionally or unintentionally, because it not only increases their chances of getting shot when they are breaking into a back porch or something like that, but also to get hit by a car."

Rodgers said that one of the most common items that bears will go after is a bird feeder. "We typically refer to bird feed as 'outdoor dog for dogs,'" he said. "It's most bears' first introduction to food that has been provided to them by humans, so it's frustrating to hear people are still feeding bears outside the winter months."

Cassandra Hensemayr, out-

reach manager for the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District, posted a warning online including other common materials which should be addressed. For example, she suggested eliminating sweet-scented fruits, mixing in brown material, such as dried leaves and wood shavings, and adding powdered pepper can deter bears.

Rodgers added that garbage containers should be sealed with extra caution, outdoor grills should be kept clean, and chicken coops and hen levers should have electric fencing around them. And if you know there is a bear around, such precautions are actually legal obligations.

Rodgers said bears are typically not put down by the state unless they become aggressive, and if their food sources are taken away, the bear will move on. "All this advice doesn't make a bear sighting can't be enjoyed from afar."

"In that case, we really recommend that you try to give the bear a bad experience," he said. "Lean out the door and long on a pot and let it do anything to make it understand that backyarders are not where they want to be."



An appointment for the Porter Brook Trail raves about the High Road Lodge view, officially signed, guaranteeing public access. The trail is now open to the public. Front row: Heidi Laster Duke, High Road Lodge CEO and Dave Gray, Greensboro Land Trust Chair. Second row (left to right): Liam Wright, Maria Whigam, Town Treasurer Barbara Brokaw and Town Clerk Kim Groves.

## Porter Brook Nature Trail Opens to Public

by June Pichel Cook

**GREENSBORO** — The Porter Brook trail traverses wetlands on the 76-acre Highland Lodge property that was conserved with the Vermont Land Trust in 2016 by David and Wilhelmina Smith. Earlier this month, Chair of the Greensboro Land Trust Dave Gray and Heidi Lauren Duke, CEO of the Vermont Land Trust, celebrated the formal signing of an easement agreement that guarantees public access to the trail in perpetuity. The trail has undergone a res-

tauration and is now open for the public. It was established 20 years ago and over the years has drawn hikers, school children, and naturalists, enjoying and studying the diverse area. The self-guided nature trail, developed by Cheryl Ecklund in 1996, follows a cross-country ski trail. The Smiths, former owners of the Highland Lodge, had created the cross-country ski trail in the early 1970s. Gray said the trail had fallen into disrepair and was closed. Through the efforts of Duke, See TRAIL, 7



A play structure and playground was dedicated June 22 at the Craftsbury Public Library. Money for the project was donated by the Esplanon Foundation. The children's room of the library is dedicated to Della Estlin. Volunteers (from left) Krista Meyer, Dawn Rourke and Marc Cavallaro make final adjustments to the play structure.

## While State Regulations Drive Up Sand Prices, Town Getting Good Deals

by Michael Bielawski

**HARDWICK** — Each winter, once the roads get snowy and icy, the town road crew trucks plow the snow and disperse sand and salt to help mitigate the slippery surface. Over the years, sand prices have been going up, which means town budgets must increase. According to Statistics.com, the average price for sand from 2007 to 2017 has gone up from \$7.06 to \$8.70 per metric tonne.

According to town manager Jon Jewett, Hardwick goes through around 4,000 cubic yards in a typical winter, for a cost of \$24,000. That comes to about \$6 per cubic yard, a price that has held steady over recent years. The sand is purchased from local providers Dennis Denters and Ken Davis.

Jewett said that some towns have had shortages and were forced to shop around to mitigate rising prices. With Vermont's Clean Water Act and efforts to stop unwanted materials from draining into the state's streams, brooks, and large lakes, the standards for clean sand are tougher than they used to be.

"The standards contained in the new storm water permit that Vermont towns need to comply with are meant to reduce erosion and siltation of streams and to reduce phosphorus loading to Lake Champlain," Jewett wrote in an email. "Twice that a lot of sand on their roads during the course of a winter."

He said that the sand has too many fine materials that have the local waterways get contamin-

## Sugaring Operation Draws Public Concern

by Will Walters

**MARSHFIELD** — The sugaring operation that has recently been built along Route 2 and now has created a lot of curiosity in town over its scope. The sugaring operation covers 2,200 acres and runs up streams almost two miles through the woods. It's a sugar bush on Drew Mountain.

The operation came up at the recent select board meeting, but there was divide over whether the board has any jurisdiction. Member Rich Baker said agricultural operations are exempt from local review and there was no need for a local permit. He said sugaring is considered agriculture, regardless of the operation.

The operation crosses the railroad bed and is in some agricultural, said Jon Gromann, be-

cause the operation is using the town's right of way. Chair Chris Martin said the railroad bed is private property and the issue will be clarified in the future. Gromann said the operation is large for a small town and he and others have concerns about part of it going through an area that has been available for recreation at use by the town residents. He said the prior logging operations have not interfered with that use. He said it has been a peaceful recreational area and the sugaring project has changed that.

Gromann explained his back ground at the Agency of Natural Resources, where he was chair of the natural resources board. He is currently with the Vermont Natural Resources Council, a non-profit, said Jon Gromann, be-

See SUGARING, 7

## Independence Day Activities Set

by Will Walters

**CABOT** — The Independence Day parade will kick off 11 a.m. in the village on July 4, starting on the first station. Anyone who wants to drive a float, march in the parade, ride farm equipment or bring a parade float to the parade in line. Musically groups and floats are especially welcome this year.

The parade started about 1955, according to notes written by Franny Walbridge, who worked on many of the parades through the 1970s. She noted that beef was used in the first barbecue and that many others since then have used chicken.

The Masses will have their annual sausage cookout at the Masses Farm Building, and food will be for sale to the public.

A large rummage sale in the school gymnasium will be held from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The parade, rummage sale, barbecue dinner and activities, now held at the school gymnasium, are sponsored by the Parent Teacher Service Organization and Cabot School. The money raised goes to support next year.

The Cabot Historical Society students at Cabot School. The work has been an ongoing project since the 1970s. The Friends of the Library will set up tables on the front lawn of the Miller Building, and the work has been an ongoing project since the 1970s.

See FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY, 7

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 WILL NOT BE MAILED UNTIL  
 THURSDAY, JULY 5, NEXT WEEK

In Towns, 2  
 SENIORS PROGRAM  
 PRESENTS CHALLENGES

In Sports, 10  
 HARDWICK MEN'S  
 SOCCER CLUB EARNS TIE