

# The Herald News

Swansea conservation agent to receive Community Preservation Award

**By Deborah Allard**

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Conservation Commission Agent Colleen Brown got a nice Christmas surprise in the form of a much-deserved award.

Brown will be named a Community Preservation hero and receive the Kuehn Community Preservation Award from the Community Preservation Coalition, a group that works with the state and local governments to help preserve the state's and its various community's unique character.

"I'm thrilled," said Brown, who is also chairwoman of the Swansea Community Preservation Committee. "I was shocked."

The coalition was formed in the 1990s with a goal of passing the Community Preservation Act which protects open space, historic sites, affordable housing and outdoor recreation. The act was signed into law in 2000, the same year that Brown became Swansea's conservation agent.

Since the town passed the act at its own Town Meeting in 2008, Brown has worked with the Conservation Commission, Board of Selectmen, and Community Preservation Committee to make several projects possible.

CPA funding is created with a 1.5 percent property tax surcharge that is matched by the state. The fund currently stands at roughly \$400,000.

Projects that have been completed with CPA funding include the purchase of the Baker Farm, work at the new Veterans Memorial Park, a new slate roof for the library, and most recently the purchase of 19 acres in Village Park.

Brown was nominated to receive the award by fellow CPC member Pamela Kirkpatrick. Brown and nine others will be honored at the Third Annual Kuehn Community Preservation Awards ceremony on Jan. 14 in the Great Hall of the Statehouse.

"I also accept it in the memory of Ernie Wheeler who was my co-chair in the CPA campaign without whom none of this would have been possible," Brown said.

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