

Conservation Commission Annual Report 2019

The Conservation Commission oversees the town's natural resources—wetlands, waterways, wildlife habitat, fields and forests—a multi-faceted, at times daunting, charge.

Land stewardship

To improve stewardship of town conservation land, the Commission contracted Rick Van de Poll, Ecosystems Management Consultants, for Natural Resource Inventories on four town properties. The inventory covers four seasons and results will be delivered in 2020. Goal is a management plan for each property based on its natural resources—forestry, agriculture, recreation, wildlife included, and threats to them.

Trails work is ongoing, with assistance this past year from volunteer Peter Harrison, as well as neighbors of the Fernald Field off Old Street Road.

The ConCom honored Dick Fernald for his role in conserving what had been called the Cheney Avenue field (and abutting forestland) as town conservation land by officially naming it "Fernald Field"—a name neighbors have used for decades.

The Open Space Committee's report details town funding to conserve the Cunningham Pond viewshed plus land for trails that will be open to the public, a project both committees worked on.

Wetlands

Zoning change: The Commission worked with the Planning Board to craft a code change to clarify certain uses allowed in the 50-foot wetland buffer, addressing an apparent loophole. Voters approved the change.

Wetland buffer infractions: The Commission tracked several potential and actual infractions, working with NH Dept. of Environmental Services and town staff.

The Commission also tracked and gave comment on the Stone Barn and Woodmans condo projects relating to stormwater, flood plain, steep slopes and wetlands.

The year ahead

Stewardship of town conservation land will remain a major focus. With the sunset of the town's Water Resources Advisory Committee, the Commission has taken over that role and will further define what that means. ConCom member Matt Lundsted chairs the Local River Advisory Committee relating to the Contoocook and Nubanusit, and the ConCom values good communication with that group.

Jo Anne Carr, Alternate
Swift Corwin
Bryn Dumas
John Kerrick, Secretary
Matt Lundsted
John Patterson, Co-chair
Liz Thomas, Alternate
Francie Von Mertens, Co-chair
Robert Wood, Vice Chair
Tyler Ward, Select Board Liaison