

Conservation Commission Annual Report 2020

The Conservation Commission oversees the town's natural resources—including wetlands, waterways, wildlife habitat, fields and forests—at times a daunting charge. Admittedly, this past pandemic year, the Commission has gone into more of a reactive mode. Initiatives were few.

Land stewardship

To improve stewardship of town conservation land, the Commission had contracted for Natural Resource Inventories on four town properties. Goal is improved stewardship of natural resources, including identifying threats thereto. Towards that end, work began reclaiming the Burke Road field following the model of Fernald Field off Cheney Avenue: regular mowing plus neighborhood volunteerism. As always, the goal is balancing wildlife habitat with human use. Patches of goldenrod and wild cherry will remain, two species that rank high for pollinators.

Trails work is ongoing, with continuing assistance from stalwart volunteer Peter Harrison and occasional workgangs.

Town ordinances

The Commission comments to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment relating to development applications with potential wetlands, shoreland or stormwater impacts, in addition to applications under the Open Space Residential Development code. Despite the pandemic, it's been a busy year for site visits and submitted comment.

The year ahead

Stewardship of town conservation land remains a focus. With the sunseting 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,
Swift Corwin
Bryn Dumas, Alternate
John Kerrick, Secretary
Matt Lundsted
John Patterson, Co-chair
Liz Thomas, Alternate
Francie Von Mertens, Co-chair
Robert Wood, Vice Chair
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