

Conservation Commission Annual Report 2021

The Conservation Commission oversees the town's natural resources—including wetlands, waterways, wildlife habitat, fields and forests, always a daunting task.

Land Stewardship

Conserving important natural resource land remains a goal, along with improved stewardship of the town's conservation lands. Balancing natural resource protection with human use remains the goal.

Trails stewardship has improved largely through continuing assistance from volunteer Peter Harrison. Fremont Field neighbor Bob Strong has volunteered similar major stewardship help with that popular town conservation land—including hands-on reclamation of the washed-out culvert along the main trail.

Huge thanks also to Carl Staley and Jack Ellerkamp for passing the hat among Fernald Field neighbors to fund annual mowing of the field needed to prevent woody vegetation from taking over. Patches of native willow and wildflowers (milkweed, asters, goldenrod) remain unmowed or mowed late in the season. The Staley-Ellerkamp team also replaced planking on the Wheeler Trail bridge across Wallace Brook.

Town Zoning Code

In an advisory role, the ConCom makes comment to the Planning Board and Zoning board on applications before those boards that involve potential natural resource impacts. Site visits and submitted comment included reclamation of the Han-Sul gravel pit on Route 202S, an application for a new shooting range by Peterborough Road and Gun Club, and the Eco-Village Open Space Residential Development subdivision application on Middle Hancock Road.

Conservation Easement Monitoring

The Commission made progress monitoring 20 easement properties in town, an annual challenge it does not always meet.

The Year Ahead

A ConCom project to engage townspeople documenting plants and wildlife on certain town conservation properties through the iNaturalist app is in the works. Both the Fremont Field and Fernald Field off Cheney Avenue have neighbors engaged in their stewardship. Those will be the starting points in townspeople engagement. The iNaturalist app is an easy, recommended, free, download. As always, the goal is to connect townspeople with the town's native plants and wildlife—and assist with their stewardship.

Jo Anne Carr

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John Kerrick, Secretary

Matt Lundsted

John Patterson, Co-chair

Francie Von Mertens, Co-chair

Robert Wood, Vice Chair

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