

Role of a Conservation Commission

36-A:2 Conservation Commission. – A city or town which accepts the provisions of this chapter may establish a conservation commission, hereinafter called the commission, for the proper utilization and protection of the natural resources and for the protection of watershed resources of said city or town. Such commission shall conduct researches into its local land and water areas and shall seek to coordinate the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes, and may advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets which in its judgment it deems necessary for its work. It shall keep an index of all open space and natural, aesthetic or ecological areas within the city or town, as the case may be, with the plan of obtaining information pertinent to proper utilization of such areas, including lands owned by the state or lands owned by a town or city. It shall keep an index of all marshlands, swamps and all other wet lands in a like manner, and may recommend to the city council or selectmen or to the department of resources and economic development a program for the protection, development or better utilization of all such areas. It shall keep accurate records of its meetings and actions and shall file an annual report which shall be printed in the annual town or municipal report. The commission may appoint such clerks and other employees or subcommittees as it may from time to time require.

Source. 1963, 168:1. 1973, 550:1, eff. Sept. 3, 1973.

In order to comply with the Role as designated in RSA 36-A:2, the Holderness Conservation Commission proposes the following areas for focus during 2010:

1. Natural resources inventory, or local “index”. The CC should compile a local inventory and establish a formal index on the CC website with a map and associated resource descriptions. This index should include all open space and natural, aesthetic or ecological areas within the town, including all marshlands, vernal pools, swamps and all other wetlands.
Goal - Review and update any resource maps or previous index information. Post on CC website.
Priority: First area to focus on prime wetland maps. Update and digitize.
2. Standard operating procedure (SOP) for identifying areas which are impacted by site activity.
Goal – Establish an SOP for CC members to communicate areas or issues of concern to the property owners regarding resource areas.
3. Conservation Plan to be consistent with Town Master plan.
Goal - Review and update any formal Conservation Plan as may have been developed in Holderness. Assess compatibility with Town Master Plan.
4. Town Conservation Properties and Easements.
Goal – Review Management Plans and document status of compliance with plans, including annual on-site monitoring, site improvements, recordkeeping and reporting. Update maps of sites. Post information on the website.
Priority: Trail on Pilote Forest – completion of the bridges over wet areas, and continued trail maintenance.

5. Dredge and Fill Permits
Goal – Timely review of permit applications with formal assignment of review to members.
6. Sand and gravel excavations
Goal – Establish SOP for monitoring any permits issued in Town for this activity.
7. Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act
Goal – Review changes to the program and understand as a function of reviewing permit applications provided to the CC.
8. Administrative systems for CC documents and records
Goal – Overhaul the filing system and scan important documents. Discard outdated materials or resources that are now readily available on-line.
9. Website and digital file storage
Goal - Improve the functionality of the website for public inquiry. Establish electronic capacity to store all CC documents. Eliminate reliance on multiple personal computers for any public domain activities.
10. Annual calendar of events
Goal - Establish annual calendar of events to include deadlines for easement monitoring and reporting, trail clean-ups, and public functions
11. Policies of Conservation Commission
Goal – Document all Conservation Commission policies; post on the website.

Long-term goals:

1. Cross town trail establishment from Squam Lakes to Pemigewasset River
2. Trail from Holderness Central School to Town Forest
3. Protection of stratified drift aquifers, particularly those located on the western edge of Town, adjacent to the Pemigewasset River.
4. Mapping and monitoring of vernal pools in Town.

On-going goals:

1. Monitor Town properties for additional easement opportunities.
2. Education and outreach on conservation matters (workshops, meetings, etc.)
3. Coordination with local and regional conservation NGOs including, but not limited to, Squam Lakes Association, Squam Lakes Conservation Society, and other local Conservation Commissions.
4. Monitoring of town logging activities as they relate to water quality impacts.
5. Establish clear responsibilities for the Commission members.