

The work of the Conservation Commission during the 2022 calendar year included:

- Updating Inventory of Conservation Land
- Reviewing Wetlands Permit and Design Review Applications
- Maintaining and Creating Trails/Posting Conservation Parcels
- Monitoring Conservation Easements and Recording Easements at *Rockingham County Registry of Deeds*
- Working with The Nature Conservancy, Select Board, and State Officials to Complete Phase I, Philbrick Pond Cobble Weir Replacement and Plans for Phase I and II Philbrick Pond Saltmarsh Restoration Objectives
- Creating Professional Trail Maps and Guides
- Continuing Initiatives to Protect Water Quality, Wetlands, and Mitigate Potential Flooding:
 - Natural Resource Inventory*
 - Coastal Hazards and Adaptation Chapter of the Master Plan*
 - Septic System Inventory and Database*
- Educating the Public on How to Better Protect North Hampton 's Natural Resources

Updating Inventory of Conservation Land: North Hampton has approximately 1,800 acres of conservation land, approximately 19.5% of the Town's total land area. *The Database of Conservation Land* in North Hampton is posted on the *Town Website* and updated periodically. To learn more about the Town's conservation parcels, ten miles of trail networks, and the hundreds of acres of conservation land that are open to the public for year-round recreational enjoyment, please refer to the Conservation Commission's section on Town website for a look at the *North Hampton Conservation Properties* and the *Conservation Commission's Trail Map Brochure and Guide*.

Review of New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services ("DES") Wetlands Permit and Design

Review Applications: To protect and preserve the Town's wetlands, wetland buffers, streams, and waterways, the Conservation Commission typically makes recommendations to the DES, the Planning Board, the Zoning Board, and Applicants to protect the Town's natural resources and the quality of its water resources. The Commission reviewed and sent comments to the NH DES, boards in Town, and applicants for the following applications:

- **Trails Notification Statutory Permit-by-Notification (SPN):** The Commission submitted an application for the Dustin-Booker Trail Eagle Scout Project to construct a 12-foot-long bridge along one of the trails on the conservation land.
- **NH DOT Standard Dredge & Fill Application:** The Commission reviewed the Hampton Portsmouth Rail Trail application. The application notes that "the project consists of approximately 7.9 miles of the Hampton Branch Rail Corridor, a portion of the 9.6-mile corridor recently purchased by NHDOT from Pan Am Railways. The project begins at approximately the Hampton/North Hampton town line and continues north-northeast to the northern terminus at Barberry Lane in Portsmouth. The purpose of the project is to improve the condition of the trail to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians
- **NH DES Wetlands Bureau: Expedited Minimum Impact Wetlands Permit Application:** Prepared by CMA Engineers, 35 Bow St, Portsmouth, NH in collaboration with Northeast Wetlands CMA Engineers, 35 Bow St, Portsmouth, NH in collaboration with Northeast Wetlands Restoration, 17 Keay Road, Berwick, Maine for Robert and Mary Omberg, 7 Old Locke Road, North Hampton, NH (Map 5, Lot 23). The project aims to improve drainage and the health of the marsh.

Maintaining and Creating Trails/Posting Conservation Parcels: The Commission encourages trail users and volunteers to help post land where hunting is prohibited, to mark and clear trails, and to report trail

conditions to the Commission and Town. Assisted by other members of the Commission, Phil Thayer, Trail Maintenance Subcommittee Chair, continues to help keep our trails clear for public use. Phil also led efforts to add a quarter mile trail loop to the existing two-mile trail network on Corbett Farm with the help of cartographer Kate Dardinski, Kathy Grant, and Andy Vorkink. The Commission engaged Knowles Tree Service for work along the Oliver Brook Trail and Marc Lariviere to mow the field adjacent to the Community Garden.

Monitoring Conservation Easements and Recording Easements at the Rockingham County Registry of

Deeds: Kathy Grant, Vice Chair Conservation Commission and member of the Conservation Easement Subcommittee, and Andy Vorkink, Chair Conservation Easement Subcommittee, periodically review and update the Conservation Land Database. The Conservation Easement Subcommittee has set up a process for monitoring conservation easements that includes both physically walking the land and employing the use of aerial monitoring using Google Earth mapping. The Commission also asks members of the Community to be the eyes and ears for the Town and, when appropriate, to complete a “*Conservation Easement Violation Complaint Form*.” This established process helps ensure a fair review of a complaint which is designed to respect the property rights of landowners who have conservation easements on their land. The Southeast Land Trust of New Hampshire, Rockingham County Conservation District, and The Society for Protection of New Hampshire Forests (“Forest Society”) are third-party easement holders who continue to monitor Forest Hills Farm, Governor Dale Farm, Jenkins Farm, and the Robie, Boies, and Little River conservation acreage.

Phase I: Philbrick Pond Cobble Weir Replacement: In February 2022 work was completed to remove the cobble stone weir located along Route 1-A that has been restricting tidal flow at Philbrick Pond. A concrete slab was installed set to the culvert’s inlet elevation to stabilize the culvert and maintain the desired stream channel elevation to improve tidal flushing. This work has improved the health of the marsh by increasing the tidal range approximately 12-inches. This project has been funded with generous awards and grants from a private family foundation award to The Nature Conservancy, the Moose Plate Program, the NH DES Coastal Program, and NH DES 319 grant program.

Phase I and II: Philbrick Pond Saltmarsh Restoration Project is designed to improve the health of the marsh by enhancing native plant re-colonization and salt marsh drainage in order to encourage native plant re-colonization, as well as salt marsh functions and values. The project involves ditch remediation and micro-runnal restoration techniques to restore the Philbrick Pond salt marsh system. Strategies are proposed to address the presence of phragmites. The tentative schedule is for permitting to conclude in 2022 and field work to begin in spring of 2023. The project team and Conservation Commission thanked Rob Omberg, Philbrick Pond Salt Marsh land owner, for supporting the work of the project team and providing access from his property. Funding for this project is provided, in part, by NOAA's Office for Coastal Management under the Coastal Zone Management Act in conjunction with the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Coastal Program Watershed Assistance Grant program.

Creating Professional Trail Maps and Guides: The Commission engaged Kate Dardinski, a local map maker to design and create trail maps and guides for the Town’s conservation parcels. Ms. Dardinski creates the maps using GIS data gathered by a handheld GPS. Data gathered is then applied to a trail map template to create custom maps. Ms. Dardinski will provide digital files to allow the Commission to reproduce signs and brochures/pamphlets to better inform and educate the public about the specific location and natural features of the trails.

Continuing Initiatives to Protect Water Quality, Wetlands, and Mitigate Potential Flooding:

Natural Resource Inventory

Coastal Hazards and Adaptation Chapter of the Master Plan

Septic System Inventory and Database

In 2019 Commission engaged Jenn Rowden, Rockingham Planning Commission Senior Planner, with Amanda Stone, State Specialist, Natural Resources & Land Conservation, UNH Cooperative Extension to help prepare a

Natural Resource inventory ("NRI") for the Town.

The *NRI* will form the basis for a conservation plan to further protect the Town's water and natural resources and will help supplement the *Coastal Hazard and Adaptation Chapter of the Master Plan*. North Hampton has made significant strides with the North Hampton *forever* initiative to safeguard sensitive ecological uplands and wetlands. Future conservation plans will need to address areas flood prevention, identification and removal of invasive plants, forest management, and the protection of agricultural soils, wildlife corridors, and drinking water supplies.

Information derived from the *Septic System Inventory and Database* will serve as a guide for further water quality sampling within the Winnicut and Little River Watersheds to help safeguard the Town's water resources. The database will also serve as an educational tool to encourage residents to inspect, maintain, and pump-out their septic systems, and to help assess potential vulnerability of specific septic systems in the wake of extreme storm events and sea level rise. It continues to be a challenge for entities throughout the *State of New Hampshire* to protect precious waterways and water resources. A considerable amount of pollution stems from nonpoint source pollution which occurs when rainfall, snowmelt, or irrigation runs over land or through the ground, picks up pollutants, and deposits them into rivers, lakes, and coastal waters or introduces them into the groundwater. Septic tank maintenance, reduction of soil erosion and protecting and preserving wetlands helps reduce, mitigate, and prevent nonpoint source pollution and flooding.

Educating the Public on How to Better Protect North Hampton's Natural Resources: Through quarterly newsletters, letters to the boards and commissions in Town, and televised meetings, the Commission strives to share with the public and Town officials the importance of protecting North Hampton's conservation parcels to include the Town's water resources, wetland buffers, and marsh lands. The Commission looks forward to better educating and involving the public in the work of the Commission.

Acknowledgments: On behalf of the Conservation Commission, I thank the boards and commissions in Town for consulting the Conservation Commission about land use matters that pertain to water quality, natural resource preservation, and acquisition of open space. Special thanks to:

John Hubbard and the Department of Public Works Staff for work done on behalf of the Town and Conservation Commission throughout the year.

Beverly Moore, Recording Secretary, for exceptional service to the Commission since 2008.

Thank you to all of the members of the Commission who have contributed much time and energy throughout the year to preserve and maintain the Town's conservation land and to protect North Hampton's vital natural resources and water quality.

Respectfully Submitted,

Lisa Wilson, Chair, North Hampton Conservation Commission

Commissioners:

Kathy Grant, Vice Chair, North Hampton Conservation Commission

Phil Thayer, Chair, Trail Maintenance Subcommittee

Andy Vorkink, Chair, Conservation Easement Subcommittee

Lauri Etela

Audrey Prior

Dave Ciccalone

Allyson Ryder, Alternate Member

Dave McGilvary, Alternate Member

Beverly Moore, Recording Secretary