

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Robert Boette, Chairman

Established in 1961, the Conservation Commission is dedicated to preserving the ecological integrity of the Town's wetlands and natural assets for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations. Foxborough has a strong and deeply-rooted conservation ethic, which is evident as one travels along our scenic roads and trails.

Foxborough Conservation Commission is responsible for managing 2,000+/- acres of conservation land and waterbodies; maintaining the Foxborough Open Space and Recreation Plan; seeking grants for acquisition of open space; accepting gifts of land or money for conservation purposes; administering the Mass. Wetland Protection Act and Foxborough Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Ch. 267); advising Town boards about wetland concerns; and providing environmental education.

Conservation Commission - The Commission consists of seven volunteer members who are appointed by the Board of Selectmen. In 2018, Commission members (and year appointed) included: Robert Boette (1986), Chair, Judith Johnson (2001), Vice Chair, Eric Nelson, (2009), Clerk, James Marsh (2009), Jeff Ambs (2016), Richard Golemme (2016) and David Opatka (2016).

2018 Statistics	
<i>Wetland Applications Filed</i>	
Requests for Determination	15
Notices of Intent (NOI)	8
Notices of Resource Area Delineation	2
<i>Meetings Held / Permits & Orders Issued</i>	
Public Meetings Held	21
Orders of Conditions (OoC)	7
OoC Amendments	2
Orders of Resource Area Delineation	3
Determinations	17
Certificates of Compliance	7
Partial Certificates of Compliance	9
<i>Wetland Application Fees</i>	
Bylaw Filing Fees	\$20,075
State Filing Fees	\$ 7,255

Conservation Department Staff and Website

Conservation Department staff includes Conservation Agent Jane Sears Pierce, and Diana Gray, Land Use Administrator. The Conservation website is linked to the Town's at www.foxboroughma.gov/conservation.

Conservation Meetings, posted in Town Hall and on the website, are held every other Monday at 7:00 PM in the Andrew Gala Meeting Room in Town Hall.

Administration of Wetlands Protection Laws

Anyone contemplating work in or within 100 feet of a wetland, or within 200 feet of a stream, should seek information about State and Town wetland laws by visiting the Commission's website or the Conservation Office on the second floor of Town Hall.

Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) and Update

An OSRP is a way for a community to take control of its future growth, while preserving the natural assets that make a community unique. An up-to-date OSRP is required for a town to be eligible for state grants.

The Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee and Recreation Dept. have been working to update the Town's OSRP (2019-2026; the older plan expired in July). Since residents' input is a crucial part of any OSRP update, a survey (on-line and paper version) was posted and a public forum was held to gather residents' input. The March 27, 2018 forum, held in Town Hall, was attended by more than 30 residents, many of whom stayed after it wrapped up to discuss the OSRP and give additional input.

Merissa Robertson, Summer Intern Volunteer

Merissa, a Bristol County Agricultural High School senior interested in wildlife and habitat management, volunteered as the Commission's summer intern. She updated the OSRP's Section 4 (environmental inventory and wildlife) and also attended site visits with the Agent to vernal pools (below) and conservation areas. Merissa's help was very much appreciated!



Regional Open Space Planning Meetings

Regional meetings, initiated by Commissioner David Opatka as part of the OSRP update, were held in April, June and October. Conservation Agents from most neighboring towns attended the first meeting, which was so successful that they enthusiastically decided to meet regularly to discuss topics of regional interest.

Vernal Pool Workshop, April 7, 2018



This annual event, presented by Agent Jane Pierce and Commissioner Judi Johnson and held at Sprague Road vernal pools, was advertised in the Recreation Dept. Spring Brochure. Although held on a cold and dreary Saturday, a few hardy families showed up to join in on the fun. Children were encouraged to dip their nets into the water to see (and touch) tiny vernal pools critters, including wood frog eggs and a spotted salamander.



TOWN CONSERVATION LAND NEWS

Conservation Land Management and Stewardship

The Commission remains committed to the responsible management of 2,000 +/- acres of town land and waterbodies. Due to the increase in illegal activities on Town conservation land, which includes vandalism, dumping, campfires, and ATVs (see info below), the Commission has been posting conservation land rules at trailheads and using surveillance cameras.

Lane Homestead Learning Center News and Thanks

The Commission is very grateful for the assistance of the many volunteers and DPW staff who helped out with this new flagship property, and would like to thank them for their help, including (*partial list*):

Greeters and Gardeners – Thanks to our wonderful senior tax write-off volunteers, we were able to open the Center's building to the public from 9-5 on week days. A year-end BBQ was held to celebrate a successful season (photo, left to right): Leah Snow, Elmer Morse, Ken Travis, Rick Plasmati, (Jane Pierce) and Alda Kalberer (missing: Tom DeLuca, Bill Wirell).



Ahern Cares' Rain Garden Project – Stacie Charron and her 7th grade science class (see photo) decided to do their Ahern CARES service project at the Lane property, so a day-long field trip was held to build a rain garden and remove invasive plants. During snack break, they enjoyed a nature hike to the Reservoir.



The work crew included some greeters/gardeners.



Lane Has Water! – Thanks to Water Department staff, we can now water our new landscaping!



Girl Scout Troop 82350 Garden Project – The troop's six year old girls created a beautiful new garden (phase I) in May, next to the Lane Learning Center's patio. They also adopted and planted two of the property's planters and held an Earth Day cleanup at the property. The girls took turns through the summer, watering the garden and planters. We are thankful for all their help!



Mike Gawronski, Eagle Scout Service Project – After diligently working for more than one year to build the Learning Center's amazing new trailhead kiosk, Mike Gawronski completed this Eagle Scout service project. We, and obviously Mike, couldn't be more pleased!

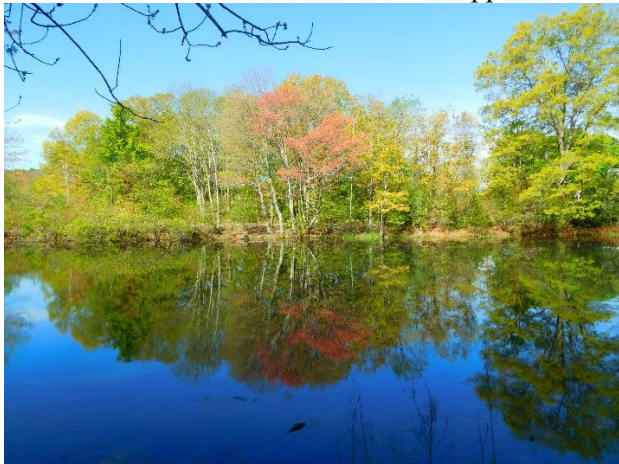


Neponset Reservoir (photo, below)

This relatively shallow 314-acre impoundment has a state and federal water resource goal of supporting aquatic habitat and recreation, but has been listed as impaired due to invasive aquatic plant species overgrowth and turbidity.

The NRRC provides a tremendous service to the Town and the Commission by regularly monitoring the water

quality and water levels of the Reservoir and advising the Commission regarding its care and management. NRRC's invaluable assistance is much appreciated.



Small Boat Access - The NRRC, in cooperation with the Commission and DPW, will soon begin work on a project to reduce a stormwater outfall's pollution and improve the small boat access area off Edward's Road.

Cocasset River Preserve [Park]

New Name; Fresh Start - During last year's ceremony to remove the site's building where sexual abuse took place long ago, renaming the park was discussed as a way to help erase its negative reminder to survivors' of abuse. Referring to the area as a "Preserve" rather than a "Park" seems an appropriate and healing name. The Commission plans to undertake a wildlife habitat restoration project at the property in the near future.



New Sign – Thanks to Corey Hall (*above, center*), the Cocasset River Preserve has a nice new sign. Corey built the sign as part of his Eagle Scout service project. He also restored two other signs (Harold Clark Town Forest and Kersey Point) and drafted kiosk plans and specs that other scouts can use for their Eagle Projects.

TOWN CONSERVATION LAND ISSUES

Rumford River Conservation Area

Unauthorized ATVs/OHVs - After reports that trucks had torn up the area's conservation field (off Cocasset Street) so badly that no grass was left, the Commission asked Foxborough Police for their help in stopping this ongoing issue. Ken Fitzgerald worked with the Agent, who posted "No Motorized Vehicle" warning signs near the property's entrances and installed a camera trap near the river. This trap immediately "caught" illegal violators in the act (*below*).



Due to the camera trap's success, additional camera traps will now be used in other conservation areas to prevent illegal activities from destroying our Town's many beautiful conservation areas.

Murray's Brook Conservation Area

Mile-a-Minute (MAM) – Last year, MassDAR released weevils, hoping to help control the MAM infestation in Murray's Brook area, but since the weevils are not making a big enough impact they now recommend that hand-pulling the plants is needed to control them. Since MAM seeds live for 7 years, this means that we will need to hand-pull the invasive plants annually for at least 7 years. Please let us know if you'd like to help.

MORE THANKS AND APPRECIATION

The Commission is very grateful for all the help and support of *so many* wonderful volunteers during 2018 and want to thank all of them, including (*partial list*):

Conservation Land Stewards, who monitor town conservation areas and report any issues they find while visiting "their" favorite conservation property.

Please contact our office if you'd like to be a steward.

Mitchell Green, who has been a volunteer for 7 years, completed his Eagle Leadership Service Project and Hornaday Projects in 2018 (all for the benefit of the

Commission) and is now an Eagle Scout. We couldn't be more proud of Mitchell and appreciate all his help.



With Special Thanks To:

- The DPW, who cares for the Neponset Reservoir's dam and our many land management needs;
- Ryan Norton, our DPW Engineering and Mapping Technician, who regularly assists with GIS needs;
- The OSRP Implementation Committee;
- Foxboro Garden Club members, who maintain the Sallie conservation area's lovely entry gardens;
- Ed Lawton, who maintains our hay fields;
- The Boy Scouts who volunteered their help; and
- F. Gilbert Hills Forest Supervisor, Tom Ashton.

FOXBOROUGH'S WILDLIFE

Vernal Pools and Rare Animals - Foxborough is home to countless vernal pools and several State-listed rare animals, including turtles (Blanding's, wood and box), marbled salamanders, and fresh water mussels. Please visit the Commission's website for more information and also see Chapter 4 of the OSRP.



Wood Turtles' shells look like wood.



Blanding's turtles have yellow necks.

If you happen to find a rare animal, plant or insect in Foxborough, please take photos (*please don't touch*), call Jane Sears Pierce as soon as possible (508-543-1251), and send her your photos (including your name, date and location). This important data will help us to protect the Town's (free) natural assets. *Thank you!*