

Report of the
Conservation Commission
& Town Forest Committee

Purpose of Conservation Commission

The Rochester Conservation Commission & Town Forest Committee was formed in 1963 as a broad based committee responsible for protecting open space and promoting land conservation. The Commission is a seven-member all volunteer board appointed by the Board of Selectmen for renewable three-year terms, and is supported by a full-time Conservation Agent and part-time Administrative Assistant. The Commission is responsible for administering the interests of the *Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act*, MGL Chapter 131, Section 40 and the *Rochester Wetlands Protection By-Law*. The Rochester Conservation Commission manages all Town-owned Conservation land in order to protect and sustain these natural ecosystems for current and future generations to use and enjoy.

The Rochester Conservation Commission office is located at the Town Hall Annex at 37 Marion Road; office hours are 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The office can be reached by calling 508-763-5421 extension 206. The Commission holds public meetings on the first and third Tuesday of each month. Meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Rochester Town Hall Conference Room. All hearings are advertised in *The Wanderer* at least five (5) calendar days in advance of the meeting. Public hearing notices may be viewed on-line at www.wanderer.com.

2012 Filings under the Wetlands Protection Act and Rochester Wetlands By-law

The Conservation Commission held 13 meetings in the year 2012. The following is a summary of the number of applications received and formal actions by the Commission in 2012:

<u>PERMITS</u>	
Notice of Intent Applications	9
Requests for Determination of Applicability	8
Amended Order of Conditions	1
Extension Permits	1
Certificates of Compliance	6
Enforcement Orders	1

2012 Conservation Commission Accomplishments

- * Co-ordinated the submittal and acquisition of a \$3,000 Makepeace Neighborhood Fund grant to develop a canoe/cartop boat access at town owned property on Leonard's Pond.
- * Co-ordinated update of Rochester's GIS parcel layer for use by the Commission, all Town departments and boards, SRPEDD, and state agencies.
- * Administered a \$15,000.00 Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program Municipal grant to upgrade Rochester's GIS parcel coverage to MassGIS Level 3 compliance and digitize wetland boundaries defined on plans accepted pursuant to the MA Wetland Protection Act and Rochester Wetlands Protection Bylaw. A new, more accurate wetlands data layer was created and distributed for use by the Rochester Conservation Commission, Rochester Assessors' Office, Buzzards Bay NEP, SRPEDD and MassGIS.
- * Collaborated with the MA Department of Environmental Protection and UMASS Amherst to collect data for the River and Stream Continuity Project. The majority of Rochester's stream crossings were measured and evaluated in accordance with established protocol. This information will be used statewide to help determine if crossings are barriers to fish and wildlife movement and cause habitat fragmentation. Barriers that are identified can be prioritized for improvement.
- * Collaborated with the Rochester Land Trust, Inc. and Open Space Action Committee on a walking trail guide highlighting permanently protected lands in the Town of Rochester.
- * Collaborated with the Rochester Land Trust and The Wildlands Trust on a \$23,000 grant to the Massachusetts Environmental Trust for the Doggetts Brook Land Preservation Project.
- * Provided technical support to the Rochester Country Fair Committee by researching grants and flagging and locating wetlands on the Town owned Pine Street property.
- * Prepared a \$49,300 PARC grant application on behalf of the Park Commission for Phase III of the Dexter Land Recreational Area Improvement Project. The project proposal included a proposed little league field, multi-purpose field, and fencing of the skateboard park.

- * Staff served as Rochester's representative on the Buzzards Bay Action Committee, Mattapoisett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee, Mattapoisett River Valley Water District Commission, Watershed Protection Committee of The Coalition for Buzzards Bay and Massachusetts Pesticide Board.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemary T. Smith, Chairperson 2014

Dr. John Teal, Vice-Chairman, 2013

Kevin Cassidy, 2014

Chris Post, 2013

Judy Schaaf, 2013

Christopher York, 2015

Laurene Gerrior, 2014

Patrice LaForest, Board Administrator

Laurell J. Farinon, Conservation Agent