



Rochester Conservation Commission & Town Forest Committee

Town Hall Annex, 37 Marion Road, Rochester MA 02770
Phone: 508-763-5421 Fax: 508-763-5379

2018 Annual Report

Members & Purpose

Rochester has a long history of preserving important ecological, agricultural, cultural and water supply related lands for future generations. The Town of Rochester established the Conservation Commission & Town Forest Committee ("Commission") in 1963 under the Conservation Commission Act.

The Commission is responsible for protecting Rochester's natural resources, managing the Town Forest and conservation lands, administering the Massachusetts and Town Wetland Protection statutes, and advising other municipal officials and boards on conservation and environmental matters.

The Rochester Conservation Commission office is located at the Town Hall Annex at 37 Marion Road; office hours are Monday 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Tuesday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Friday 8:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. 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 beginning at 7:00 p.m. at the Rochester Town Hall Conference Room or Council on Aging. Commission members conducted periodic site visits during evenings or on Saturdays as needed.

Commission Staff

The Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent and Board Administrator work under the direction of the Conservation Commission and provide support, coordination, and professional management for the Conservation Commission in carrying out its mission to protect Rochester's natural resources. Commission staff assists landowners, developers, applicants, engineers and the general public to provide due diligence information and professional advice on the Wetlands Protection Act and Rochester Wetlands Protection Bylaw. Commission staff assists the Commission in planning, acquisition, administration and management of municipal conservation land conservation restrictions.

2018 Wetland Protection Act and Rochester Wetlands By-law Filings

The Conservation Commission held 22 meetings in the year 2018. The following is a summary of the applications received and formal actions by the Commission in 2018:

<u>Permits/Actions</u>	
Building Permit Interdepartmental Review	86
Board of Health Percolation Review	60
RDA Applications	10
Certificates of Compliance	8
Notice of Intent Applications	7
Chapter 61 Right of First Refusals	7
ANRAD Wetland Delineation Review	2
Amended Order of Conditions	2
Enforcement Orders	1
Extension Permits	1

2018 Conservation Commission Actions/Accomplishments:

- Adopted Wetlands Bylaw Filing Fees effective January 16, 2018 to offset the general budget.
- Secured a \$28,000 grant from the Municipal Vulnerability Grant Program (MVP) through the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs to complete a vulnerability assessment and develop a resiliency plan. The Town of Rochester partnered with the Town of Lakeville on a joint application Lakeville and Freetown to apply for funding that assesses our collective vulnerability, the Assawompsett Pond Complex (APC).
- Accepted a Conservation Restriction on 78.6-acres of land (former Estabrook property) owned and managed by the Rochester Land Trust off Walnut Plain Road in Rochester. The property provides a critical connection to two landlocked parcels totaling 19.5-acres owned by the Town of Rochester, as well as Atlantic White Cedar Swamp. A significant portion of the property is located within BioMap 2 Core Habitat, Priority Habitats of Rare Species and BioMap 2 Critical Natural Landscape.
- Updated MapGeo Browser – web mapping interface located on Town’s website for use by residents and staff.
- Co-ordinated update of Rochester’s GIS parcel layer for use by the Commission, all Town departments and boards, SRPEDD, and state agencies.

- Communication and coordination with Plymouth County Mosquito Control on projects involving Rochester properties.
- Reviewed DCR Forest Cutting Plans for Rochester projects and communicated with state and local foresters on projects.
- Staff represented the Commission at Technical Review Committee Meetings, on the Zoning Bylaw Subcommittee, and coordinated the Green Communities Initiative as directed by the Board of Selectmen.
- Staff served as Rochester's representative as Flood Plain Coordinator, on the Buzzards Bay Action Committee, Mattapoissett River Valley Water Supply Protection Advisory Committee, Mattapoissett River Valley Water District Commission, Watershed Protection Committee of The Coalition for Buzzards Bay and Massachusetts Pesticide Board.
- Updated the Board of Selectmen and town departments on proposed changes to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps
- Continued work on updating Rochester's Open Space & Recreation Plan to provide a landscape guide into the future. The Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, Division of Conservation Services (DCS) requires municipalities to update their plans every seven years to remain eligible for state and federal money sources.

The Commission wishes to recognize longstanding members Rosemary T. Smith and Laurene Gerior for their many years of dedicated service to the Rochester Conservation Commission. Both members stepped down from the Commission in 2018 and will be sorely missed.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Conway, Chairman

Dan Gagne, Vice-Chairman

Léna Bourque

Christopher Gerior

Maggie Payne

Chris Post

Kevin Thompson

Margaret Gonneville, Board Administrator

Marissa Perez-Dormitzer, Recording Secretary

Laurel J. Farinon, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent