



## **Rochester Conservation Commission & Town Forest Committee**

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

### 2019 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 conduct 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.

## 2019 Wetland Protection Act and Rochester Wetlands By-law Filings

The Conservation Commission held 23 meetings in the year 2019. The following is a summary of the applications received and formal actions by the Commission in 2019:

<u>Permits/Actions</u>	
Building Permit Interdepartmental Review	91
Board of Health Percolation Review	34
RDA Applications	16
Notice of Intent Applications	14
Certificates of Compliance	8
ANRAD Wetland Delineation Review	9
Amended Order of Conditions	1
Enforcement Orders	1
Chapter 61 Right of First Refusals	1

## 2019 Conservation Commission Actions/Accomplishments:

- Applied for and received a \$345,769 Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant from the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) for the Walnut Plain Conservation Project. The Buzzards Bay Coalition negotiated with the landowner and provided technical support on this project, which will result in permanent protection of 109-acres of forested upland and wetland presently owned by Decas Cranberry Company, LLC. off Walnut Plain Road, Ryder Road and Old Middleboro Road for public passive recreation purposes. The subject property contains the headwaters of the Sippican River and is part of a 2,500 acre Core Habitat that includes Forest Core, Wetland Core and Species of Conservation Concern. Mass NHESP identifies this as part of the sixth largest Forest Core in the ecoregion and reports that it is almost completely unprotected.
- Applied for and received a \$45,000 Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program Municipal Minigrant for the Gifford's Mill Land Preservation Project to purchase and permanently protect two adjoining pieces of land off Quaker Lane in Rochester totaling 20.9-acres. Acquisition of the Jackson Trust/McCarthy properties by the Rochester Land Trust resulted in the permanent protection of 20.9-acres of property within the DEP Zone II aquifer of the Mattapoissett River, 16.9-acres of wetland, and 1,255 linear feet of frontage on Gifford's Mill Pond/perennial stream.

- Submitted a draft updated Open Space & Recreation Plan to 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.
- 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 on Southeast Regional Planning & Economic Development District (SRPEDD), as Flood Plain Coordinator, 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.

- Updated the Board of Selectmen and town departments on proposed changes to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps

The Commission wishes to recognize longstanding member Chris Post for her many years of dedicated service to the Rochester Conservation Commission. Ms. Post stepped down from the Commission in 2019 and will be sorely missed.

The Commission also wishes to recognize Margaret Gonneville who served as Board Administrator for over four years and is now working in the Assessors' office. The Commission wishes her all the best in her new position.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Conway, Chairman  
Dan Gagne, Vice-Chairman  
Léna Bourque  
Christopher Gerrior  
Maggie Payne  
Kevin Thompson

Tanya Ventura, Board Administrator  
Marissa Perez-Dormitzer, Recording Secretary  
Laurell J. Farinon, Environmental Planner/Conservation Agent