

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Town of Hampden Conservation Commission currently sits with five full time members and two associate members. We hold regularly scheduled meetings on the second Monday of every month, and “special” meetings when required. Our purpose is to protect the streams, rivers, natural wetlands, flood plains and resource areas in town from abuse and over-development. The guidelines used are the *Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act*, the *Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act* and the *Town of Hampden Wetland Protection By-laws*. Our goal in 2004 is to become more proactive in the education of the Town’s Wetland bylaws as well as State’s Wetlands Protection Act to all residents that are interested in learning about them.

This past year the commission held twelve regular meetings and numerous special meetings as well as required site inspections. We reviewed several filings for Requests for Determinations, Notices of Intent, Requests for Certificates of Compliance, Enforcement Orders, and general information.

We are sometime forced to issue Enforcement Orders resulting from complaints received by a resident and then corroborated by our group regarding wetland violations. Some of these violations may include logging operations, new home construction or land clearing being conducted without approved plans and properly submitted/approved applications. Also the filling in or dredging of wetlands, or altering wetland buffer zones and flood plains are considered violations.

We are committed to educating homeowners of the importance of checking to make sure the loggers or building contractors doing work on their property are properly licensed under the state of Massachusetts and follow all the proper procedures as set forth by the *Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act*, the *Massachusetts Rivers Protection Act* and the *Town of Hampden Wetland Protection By-laws*. Commission members are also dedicated to helping homeowners with any questions they may have and encourage them to contact us. We will gladly answer your questions or direct you to the appropriate Town or State agency.

By following these laws it will ensure that the Town’s natural resources are protected for many generations to come. It will also ensure that there will be an adequate supply of clean drinking water by keeping the aquifers and the areas that supply the water to them clean, functional, and fully intact.

The Conservation Commission encourages the Town to responsibly purchase open space for permanent preservation so that this land may be enjoyed by all and preserved in it’s natural state. The not only helps assure that there is a balance between development and wildlife but also will help maintain the rural characteristics that the Town of Hampden is know for and the reason why our residents enjoy living here. We

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also support the efforts of the Mill River Watershed group as well the Scantic River Watershed group and the Minnechaug Land Trust in their efforts to preserve and protect valuable open space and resources.

We always welcome proactive residents who are interested in joining our group to assist with preserving our Town's natural resources. We are always willing to speak with anyone interested in joining the commission to explain the responsibilities associated with the Conservation Commission and how you as a member of the community can help. Please contact our Chairman, Michael Gerrard, at the Town House, if you have any questions regarding wetland laws or to find out how to join and become involved with us and your community.

We would also like to thank our current members: Mike Gerrard, Sheila Thompson, Bonnie Geromini, Camilla Desmarais, Richard Gouvan, and associate member Joe Savoie. A special "thanks" also to Pat Smith, our clerk and associate member who will be leaving us at the end of January 2004. Pat has been a great help to us and will be missed by everyone on the commission. Also, "thanks" to former member Dean Perham for all his past help and efforts.

Respectively submitted for the commission,

Michael Gerrard- Chairman
Sheila Thompson-Co-Chairman
Bonnie Geromini
Richard Gouvan
Camilla Desmarais
Patricia Smith