



New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions

SERVING NEW HAMPSHIRE'S COMMUNITIES SINCE 1970

"We are part of the natural world, we depend on Mother Nature for clean air, for water, for food, for clothing...for everything. We have to do everything in our power to make the world a better place, for the children alive today and for those that will follow. You have it in your power to make a difference. Don't give up. There is a future for you. Do your best while you're still on this beautiful planet Earth."

Jane Goodall

Executive Director's Report 2024

Jane Goodall's death was a great loss to environmentalists world-wide. We can take heart in her message and know that municipal conservation commissions work to protect clean water, clean air, and wildlife throughout the state. NH's conservation commissions are the local stewards of their town's natural resources and wildlife. They serve as advisors to their town government and residents, they manage land for public benefits including recreation, forest management, drinking water protection and wildlife habitat. **You are making a difference!**

Being an conservationist can be a challenge, but know you are not alone. The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) is dedicated to providing support, education, and advocacy for New Hampshire's 217 conservation commissions. NHACC has supported the work of conservation commissions for more than 50 years, helping them to be effective in their communities.

At NHACC we strive to make the world a better place, one community at a time. We provide educational opportunities for our members with an on-line **Lunch & Learn** series. Our Spring series focused on balancing conservation and development and our Fall series covered recycling and waste management. We worked with our partners at UNH Extension and NH Fish & Game to present the *Wildlife Webinar Series* connecting commission members to resources that help towns protect wildlife habitat on town lands. We coordinated a **Trails Skills & Maintenance Training** program with the Appalachian Mountain Club to provide commission members with knowledge of trail design, erosion control, and how to address overuse of trails. We worked with NH Department of Environmental Services on a three-part **Wetlands Assessment Training** program. This training series was designed to help conservation commissions identify basic wetland functions and services.

NHACC hosts networking opportunities for commissions through our listserv, **NHACC Exchange**, so commission members to reach out directly to each other. We also facilitate and attend conservation commission roundtables all over the state. To keep our members up-to-date on current issues and topics we sent out a dozen monthly **E-newsletters** to a list of more than 1,500 people. We also sent out **legislative updates** to make sure our members were aware of proposed bills in the legislature. NHACC tracked 27 bills this year and provided testimony on 7 bills to ensure our member's voices are heard at the state house. **We defended the Current Use law, protected wetlands and surface waters, and supported towns right to local zoning.** Aside from speaking at the State House, NHACC continues to represent our members at more than a dozen state-wide committees and initiatives.

With a grant from the **Davis Conservation Foundation**, NHACC helped three towns, Litchfield, Hillsborough and Nottingham find interns to complete a conservation project designed to protect natural resources. NHACC created onboarding materials for the commissions to make the most out of the intern project and we coordinated a cohort program to learn from each other. The Litchfield Conservation Commission's did an inventory of town properties, and created public information on the attributes and key historic details for properties. Hillsborough Conservation Commission's worked with an intern to map and document town conservation lands. Nottingham Conservation Commission developed a Natural Resources Inventory that details ecosystems and identifies wildlife habitats and corridors. The NHACC intern produced an online outreach tool kit for conservation commissions and expanded capacity through social media.

This year we received a grant from the **Horne Family Foundation** to fund a **Landscape Scale Land Management Initiative** to support conservation commissions interested in expanding land management beyond town properties. NHACC is working with UNH Extension on this initiative to highlight the benefits of working beyond conservation land boundaries to private abutting lands and to focus more specifically on stewardship of town conservation properties. In the spring of 2026 we plan to work with selected towns to present training and public outreach programs that support landscape scale land management. **If you are interested in hosting an outreach event on your town land please contact me at Barbara@NHACC.org**

NHACC was part of a coalition of conservation organizations that produced a new, statewide report which highlights how open space provides a broad range of benefits: it supports a dynamic Granite State economy, improves our health, and enhances our quality of life. Natural areas provide ecosystem services; such as flood storage, protecting drinking water, moderating temperatures, and improving air quality. **The report is available on the home page of our website - NHACC.org**

At NHACC we have many people to thank for the success of our organization. We rely on our organization partners, sponsors, board, and volunteers to accomplish all the work we do to ensure NH remains a healthy, beautiful place to live, work and play. First, I want to thank our sponsors for their continued support of NHACC. Sponsors not only help support NHACC financially, they also provide important services to municipalities that help identify and protect natural resources. I would also like to thank our session presenters. We are grateful to have such talented experts who are willing to share their knowledge and experience with us today to help protect NH's natural environment. We are also grateful for our dedicated NHACC Board of Directors. The NHACC Board of Directors shares their time, energy, and guidance as leaders of this extraordinary organization.

Thank you to our conservation commission members for the important work they do protecting their local natural resources. By joining NHACC, you have made it possible to build a network of conservation volunteers throughout the state who are focused on preserving NH's natural environment. I am continually impressed by the achievements of NH's Conservation Commissions; your work ensures NH's natural environment will endure into the future. **Your effort on the local level makes a difference in your community!**

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Richter,
NHACC Executive Director