



New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions

SERVING NEW HAMPSHIRE'S COMMUNITIES SINCE 1970

Executive Director's Report 2026

The New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC) is the only organization in NH that is dedicated to building and strengthening the capacity of municipal Conservation Commissions.

We are a strong network that plays a vital role in the protection and conservation of NH's natural environment.

Together, we are all stewards of NH's natural resources. We actively seek partnerships with our members and organizations that bring a diverse perspective and unique expertise to our organization. Through our leadership, communications, consultation, and relationship-building with commission members, we have developed training and technical assistance programs to meet their needs.

This year, our board of directors updated our strategic plan to ensure we continue to provide an effective voice representing our members and to remain a trusted advisor and partner to environmental organizations. Our mission is to support New Hampshire's conservation commissions in their work to protect the natural environment. Our strategic plan focuses on the following goals: engage and empower conservation commissions; optimize organization effectiveness; enhance financial stability; advocate for the environment; and foster external relationships.

NHACC achieved many significant goals in 2026. We continued to provide educational opportunities for our members with our on-line **Lunch & Learn** series. We hosted programs on NH's RecReady, a guide to outdoor recreation, with the NH Business and Economic Affairs. Additionally, we presented online programs on pollinators, GIS tools, and what commissions need to know about the natural burials. We kept our members informed with the monthly **Enews** filled with training opportunities, commission member highlights, and available grants. NHACC continues to be a powerful and respected voice in the State Legislature and among State agencies and organizations. We tracked state legislation and provided testimony on bills impacting natural resources and conservation commission operations, while keeping commissions aware and involved with the legislative process. In 2026, we supported conservation commissions' authority to use the **Conservation Fund** to purchase land. We defended the **Current Use Law** by opposing House Bill 1691. We partnered with other organizations to protect **Threatened and Endangered** species by opposing House Bill 1603. We continued to host the NHACC listserv to facilitate member networking and communications. As usage increases, so does our connection to each other.

We partnered with the NH Department of Environmental Services on a spring **Wetlands Training** program focused on wetlands identification using online tools and in the field. The goal of the program was to help conservation commissions identify wetland indicators like soil, plants, and hydrology, and to identify wetland functions in order to provide relevant comments on permit applications.

We presented Trail Skills training with the **Appalachian Mountain Club**. This hands-on workshop focused on trail design, erosion control, and how to address over-use. We are pleased to partner with AMC and NHDES on our field training for conservation commission members.

This year NHACC completed the ***Landscape Scale Community Land Management Initiative***, a program that coordinated efforts on town-owned land and provided public education and awareness to inspire and promote good stewardship on conservation lands. NHACC worked with the Derry Conservation Commission and the Rindge Conservation Commission to provide public education and outreach programs. The Derry Conservation Commission focused on grassland management on the town-owned Broadview Farm Conservation Area and held a bioblitz to engage the community. Rindge Conservation Commission presented the program, ***Wildlife Corridors in Your Backyard: How You Can Help Protect Wildlife in Rindge***, to introduce New Hampshire's Wildlife Action Plan and how it applies directly to Rindge. Thanks to the Horne Family Foundation for providing much of the funding for this project.

At NHACC, we depend on many people to achieve our conservation goals. First, I want to thank our sponsors for their continued support of NHACC and the connections they provide to keep this conference going year after year. Sponsors not only help support NHACC financially, they also provide important services to municipalities and help keep NHACC in touch with emerging issues. 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.

I have great appreciation for our dedicated NHACC Board of Directors. They share their knowledge, experience, and connection to their communities as leaders of this extraordinary organization. They respond to conservation commissions' issues and concerns and provide feedback from their experience as commission members. Their time, dedication, and guidance help to keep this organization up and running. We received a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation to expand board members' engagement on the regional level. Expanding capacity through our board members will increase sharing of knowledge, information and build relationships among our members.

Thank you to our members for the important work you do protecting natural areas in our communities that enable citizens and visitors alike to enjoy clean air and water, scenic vistas, and outdoor access. By joining NHACC, you have built a network of volunteers focused on preserving NH's important resources. Your commitment to protecting natural resources helps to ensure that **New Hampshire has the wild places and open spaces that provide a healthy natural environment**. It is my pleasure to encourage, assist, and facilitate the service that you provide for your local friends and neighbors.

Respectfully submitted,

Barbara Richter, NHACC Executive Director