

Durham Conservation Commission

Mission Statement

The Town of Durham, in conjunction with passage of the 2018 Durham Comprehensive Plan, seeks to update and rebuild the Durham Conservation Commission.

The Durham Conservation Commission **shall**:

- be comprised of no more than seven voting members;
- Keep records of its meetings and activities and make an annual report to the municipality;
- Work to protect current and potential water resources;
- Work to conserve natural resources in the Town of Durham;
- Work to create and preserve open space for recreational use and wildlife habitat;
- Advise Board of Selectmen and Planning Board on sustaining our Town's natural resources, including land, water, air, wildlife habitat, and scenic views; and
- Conduct research, in conjunction with the Planning Board, into local land areas that are being considered for development. The Planning Board will request input from the Commission in conjunction with any proposed subdivision that impacts natural resources or Town-owned property or which involves the transfer of an interest in land to the Town.

The Durham Conservation Commission **may**:

- Advertise, prepare, print and distribute books, maps, charts, plans and pamphlets, which it considers necessary.
- Acquire land in the municipality's name for any of the purposes set forth in this section with the approval of the municipal legislative body.
- Receive gifts in the municipality's name for any of the commission's purposes with approval of the Board of Selectmen and shall administer the gift for those purposes subject to the terms of the gift.

* Note: both of these sections are derived from MSRA Title 30-A §3261 and/or the 2018 Durham Comprehensive Plan

The Commission shall achieve these duties by:

- Pursuing public/private partnerships.
- Cooperating and coordinating with neighboring communities and regional/local advocacy groups.
- Initiating and/or participating in inter-local and/or regional planning, management and/or regulatory efforts.
- Raising public awareness through educational outreach.
- Recommending to the municipal officers or any municipal body or board, or any body politic or public agency of the State, programs for the better protection of water resources, natural resources or open space.

Implementation Philosophy - *The Durham Conservation Commission shall work on conservation-related issues in a climate of mutual respect with all Durham employees, volunteers and residents, other communities, and advocacy groups. We will seek to foster a collaborative working relationship with public and private groups organized around the preservation and enjoyment of the natural environment.*

Goals Included in the 2018 Durham Comprehensive Plan:

Water Resources

Help implement the Water Resources and Natural Resources recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan update.

- Identify and promote hazardous or commercial waste disposal programs, highlighting the importance of protecting wells and aquifers

- Develop a strategy and requirements for "community" wells and waste water systems. i.e. shared well and/or septic systems.
- Provide local contact information at the Town Hall for water quality best management practices from resources such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Maine Forest Service, and/or Small Woodlot Association of Maine.
- Provide educational materials at appropriate locations regarding aquatic invasive species.

Natural Resources

Help implement the Water Resources and Natural Resources recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan update.

- Pursue public/private partnerships to protect critical and important natural resources such as through purchase of land or easements from willing sellers.
- Distribute or make available information to those living in or near critical or important natural resources about current use tax programs and applicable local, state, or federal regulations.
- Initiate and/or participate in inter-local and/or regional planning, management, and/or regulatory efforts around shared critical and important natural resources.
- Make available to the public the most recent data on rare plants, animals, and natural communities and important wildlife habitats provided by the Beginning with Habitat program of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, included on maps in this document.

Recreation

Help implement the open space recommendations of this Comprehensive Plan update.

- Develop a comprehensive open space plan for the community that evaluates the potential for expanding protected open space in the Town. This plan should assess the value of open space for a range of benefits including recreational use, retention of scenic views, wildlife habitat protection, protection of groundwater quality and quantity, protection of the quality of surface waters including Runaround Pond.
- Work with Royal River Land Trust, Androscoggin Land Trust, other conservation organizations, other towns, state agencies, and landowners to explore ways to protect important open space and recreational land.
- Provide educational materials regarding the benefits and protections for landowners allowing public recreational access on their property. At a minimum this will include information on Maine's landowner liability law regarding recreational or harvesting use, Title 14, M.R.S.A. §159-A.
- Create and maintain an inventory of our recreational resources, including ball fields & other sports facilities, water access points, conservation lands, and trails.
- Monitor conditions of existing public access to the Androscoggin River, Runaround Pond and Chandler Brook areas for boating, fishing, and swimming, and recommend repairs & improvements.
- Create a map of existing trails, abandoned roads and future trails and potential linkage with regional recreational resources, including nearby Bradbury-Pineland Corridor Trails.

Solid Waste

- Raise public awareness on single stream recycling. Create a list of incentives to meet the state goal of 50%.