

DRAFT
Report of the Conservation Commission to the Board of Selectmen
2010/2011

Norfolk's Conservation Commission consists of five regular and two alternate members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to three-year staggered terms. The members are: John Anderson, Elizabeth Borden, Shelley Harms, Elizabeth Potter and Nash Pradhan, and alternates Adair Mali and Molly Ackerly. Founding Chair Sue Frisch stepped down from the Commission in February 2011. Current officers are: Shelley Harms, Chair; John Anderson, Vice Chair; and Adair Mali, Secretary.

The Commission's duties include: (1) keeping an index of open publicly or privately owned areas, including wetlands, for the purpose of obtaining information on their proper use; (2) conducting research into the use, and possible use, of land in the municipality; (3) administering gifts made to the municipality for the commission's purposes, subject to the terms of those gifts; and (4) approving, before their submission, state grant-in-aid applications for programs related to the use of open space land for conservation or recreation purposes. It also has a number of discretionary abilities, such as: (5) making recommendations on proposed land use changes, (6) recommending plans and programs for the development and use of all open areas, (7) acquiring (with approval of the legislative body) land and easements in the name of the municipality, and (8) coordinating and working with non-government bodies for conservation purposes.

Invasive species initiatives

The commission continues to focus on increasing community awareness of invasive species and motivating residents to get rid of them. Shelley Harms placed notices in Norfolk Now's Community News and Briefly, and wrote articles for Norfolk Now: October 2010, "Bad and Beautiful, Purple Loosestrife Threatens Norfolk's Wetlands" and "Seeing Red" (about taking out burning bush), and May 2011, "Invasive Species – Many Rear Their Destructive Heads in May."

The commission had a booth at the Farmers Market on May 29 and June 12, 2011, where residents asked questions and picked up information about invasive species.

At the June 12 Farmers Market, we held a successful plant exchange where we supplied native plants to residents on Sunset Ridge, Litchfield Road, Emerson Street, Doolittle Drive, Lover's Lane, Wheeler Road, North Street, Winchester Road, Estey Road and Grant Street Extension, to replace burning bush, barberry, buckthorn, honeysuckle, bittersweet, and knotweed that they removed. The native replacement shrubs were donated by the Northwest Conservation District and by wholesale nursery Pride's Corner Farm.

Nash Pradhan edged the native planting in front of Town Hall with granite cobbles. Funding for this was supplied by the Norfolk Community Association. Nash continues to take care of this planting, which is growing in nicely.

Talks and presentations

September 1, 2010: City Meadow by Sean Hayden, Northwest Conservation District, at the Commission's meeting at Town Hall. After this discussion of making City Meadow a showplace of a functioning wetland,

the Selectmen created the City Meadow Committee, on which Commission members Molly Ackerly and Adair Mali both serve.

February 22, 2011: Controlling Invasive Species by Donna Ellis of the University of Connecticut, at the Norfolk Library.

June 18, 2011: Identifying Invasive Species by John Anderson, for the Public Works Department.

The commission also cosponsored a series of talks presented by Great Mountain Forest.

Other activities

In November 2010, Shelley Harms and Elizabeth Potter attended the annual meeting and symposium of the Connecticut Association of Conservation and Inland Wetlands Commissions (CACIWC). Nash Pradhan and John Anderson attended the 2010 Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) Invasive Plant Symposium at the University of Connecticut.

Sue Frisch updated the Natural Resources Inventory online to include the jellyfish found at Tobey Pond by Katherine Kasacek and Mary Gollan.

Elizabeth Potter continued to maintain the commission's library and files.

The state soil scientist supplied a map identifying soils of local agricultural importance.

The natural resource inventory continues to be sold at the town clerk's office. The natural resource inventory is sold for \$25, a price that covers its cost (last printing, \$18.45 each).

The commission wrote to the Norfolk Planning & Zoning Commission in support of a moratorium on industrial wind turbines to allow time to craft appropriate regulations.

The commission spent \$50 for its annual CACIWC membership, \$100 to send two members to the annual CACIWC symposium, and \$40 to send Nash Pradhan to the 2010 Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) Invasive Plant Symposium at the University of Connecticut. The remainder of the commission's budget of \$2250 was unspent.

In the coming year the commission plans to continue its efforts related to controlling invasive species and educating Norfolk residents about conservation issues, to continue work on assessing the town's open space and creating an open space plan, and to continue gathering data to add to the inventory of natural resources.

Respectfully submitted,
Shelley Harms
Chair, Conservation Commission
July 2011