

PUBLIC NOTICE

***DRAFT* Wetlands Conservation Work Plan**

The Conservation Commission is in the process of forming a sub-committee that will be studying the Wetlands of Exceptional Value and their importance to the Town of Bedford. This document will serve as the basis for the operation of the sub-committee.

Once the final document is approved by the Conservation Commission, it will be sent to the Town Council for approval. We will then begin soliciting members of the community who may want to serve on this study committee.

We are asking all interested parties to please read the document and forward all comments to Karin Elmer at kelmer@ci.bedford.nh.us or mail any comments to Karin Elmer at 24 No. Amherst Road, Bedford, NH 03110. All comments should be received no later than Friday, November 24, 2006.

**TOWN OF BEDFORD
CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

WETLANDS CONSERVATION WORK PLAN

Subcommittee or Working Group

Wetlands Subcommittee
Wetlands Subcommittee Planning Team

Background

This Wetlands Conservation Work Plan (the "Plan") has been created as a result of efforts by the Bedford Conservation Commission (the "Commission") to help assure preservation of the important values and functions of Bedford's wetlands of significant

value. The Plan is proposed to be undertaken by a subcommittee of the Commission with participation from a select group of citizens (together, the "Subcommittee Planning Team") of the Town of Bedford (the "Town"), in concert with those citizens of the Town who may be so interested in participating in the public comment portion of the study.

Upon Bedford Town Council approval, the Subcommittee Planning Team will be formed and a number of working sessions and informal public meetings will be conducted. Following such Subcommittee Planning Team action and public participation and comment, a report of findings will be prepared outlining future action of the Commission, if any.

Objectives

The Subcommittee Planning Team will investigate the development of attainable measures to assure preservation of the important values and functions of Bedford's wetland resources. It is the objective of the Subcommittee Planning Team to develop measures which are in harmony with the needs and desires of the Commission and private land owners of the Town.

The Subcommittee Planning Team proposes to obtain its objectives through a program of identification, conservation, public education and outreach, and/or regulatory protection. The Subcommittee Planning Team hopes to encourage the Bedford community to identify and adopt standards to assure preservation of the important values and functions of Bedford's wetland resources. To achieve the Plan goal, technical and administrative requirements for successful wetland conservation must be addressed and specific objectives developed.

In December 2005, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. completed the Town of Bedford Prime Wetland Study & Mapping (the "Wetlands Study"), which includes the classification and prioritization of wetlands within the Town in a concise and readily available format¹. The Wetlands Study will be a key component in defining and shaping the objectives of the Plan.

Benefits or Justification

In a world where water resources are more precious than ever, wetlands serve a number of vital functions. There are numerous reasons to support formulating methods and actions for protecting our fragile wetland resources. Though the Plan will attempt to address all that are relevant to Bedford's wetlands, it is likely that the Plan process will focus on the following three areas:

¹ The Conservation Commission chose to refer to the wetlands contained in the Town of Bedford Prime Wetland Study & Mapping as "wetlands of significant value" so as not to confuse the study and identification of such wetlands as having been considered under the definition of "prime wetlands" as defined by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, Wetlands Bureau.

(1) **Ground water filtration and recharging.** Wetlands filter surface and ground water and slow soil and pollutant run-off to help keep our lakes, rivers, streams, and even our well water clean and pure - destroy the wetlands and we lose our clean water.

(2) **Wildlife habitat.** Wetlands are ecological wonderlands. The web of life starts in wetlands, and wildlife depend on wetlands for food, water or shelter. Nearly half of our endangered and threatened species rely on wetlands. Wetland loss means habitat loss for many plants and animals. Of course, we cannot forget the beauty that wetlands and wildlife bring to our increasingly urbanized world - in that sense, wetlands are a natural reserve for humans seeking quiet and tranquility as well.

(3) **Flood control.** Besides keeping our waters clean, wetlands naturally help keep flood waters under control. Preserving and restoring wetlands means reducing the frequency and intensity of seasonal floods. When wetlands are altered or destroyed, flooding is greatly increased because water is no longer held back.

Scope of Work

The Plan aims to promote wetlands conservation through one or more of the following measures: (1) awareness of the need to protect wetlands; (2) an integrated program of education and training for the public and professional community; and (3) implementation of additional regulatory efforts.

Successful implementation of the Plan must address a multiple-component approach to wetlands management and protection. One or more conservation components may be applied to a particular wetland, depending on the type, function, use or priority of the wetland.

Public education and outreach is essential to ensure ongoing support and enforcement. Wetland-specific education is necessary for professionals and citizens of the Town, and should be an ongoing goal of the Commission.

Without proper rules and regulations, and enforcement capabilities, regulatory and resource agencies cannot carry out the goal and objectives of the Plan. The Plan proposes to investigate potential new regulations, if deemed necessary, to further promote wetlands conservation within the Town.

Milestones and Schedule

| Action | Date | Lead | Primary Participants |
|--|-------------|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| Contact interested Bedford residents and assemble Subcommittee Planning Team | Jan 2007 | KJZ | Conservation Commission Subcommittee |

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| Frame objectives and goals of Conservation Commission Subcommittee; Establish logistics for public participation | Feb-Mar 2007 | KJZ | Conservation Commission Subcommittee |
| Public meetings Explanation of Prime Wetlands Study: how process began, methodology for selecting wetlands, what does it mean; Identifying threats to wetlands, both globally and locally Exploring resident input and concerns | Apr-Jun 2007 | Conservation Commission Subcommittee | Wetlands Subcommittee Planning Team; General public |
| Evaluate and address highest priorities of actions needed, working from results of public participation | Jul-Aug 2007 | KJZ | Wetlands Subcommittee Planning Team |
| Prepare and present report to the Conservation Commission; Discussion and determination of scope and breadth of action to be taken, if any | Sep-Oct 2007 | KJZ | Wetlands Subcommittee Planning Team; Conservation Commission |
| Take action (educational, legislative, other) | Ongoing | Conservation Commission | TBD |

Funding Sources or Request: Not applicable at this time.

Points of Contact

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Citizen Members of Subcommittee
Planning Team: TBD

This first version of the Plan is subject to revision. The Conservation Commission Subcommittee welcomes any and all comments which will help to assure that the Plan is

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workable and contributes to the protection of Bedford's limited and fragile wetland resources.