



Town of Brunswick, Maine
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

85 UNION STREET
BRUNSWICK, ME 04011

- AGENDA -

Thursday, April 4, 2019

TOWN HALL

COUNCIL CHAMBERS

85 UNION STREET

4:30 P.M.

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Minutes - Dec., Feb.

3. Conservation Commission Activities

- a) 300th anniversary of Town Commons - Spring 2019 - review of program/
events
- b) Annual Report '18
- c) Captain Fitzgerald site - planning '19 work
- d) W. Sawtooth going forward - '19 work
- f) Annual Commission Elections

4. Coordination and Communication

- a) Your Land columns for March, April. Suggestions?
- b) Bowdoin Fellow

5. Other Business

- a) Staff Report — projects: Coastal Resilience; Mare Brook Watershed; Bike Path
- b) Next Meeting

6. Adjourn

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Brunswick Conservation Commission is to serve the Brunswick community by advocating for conservation values and stewarding our ecologically rich natural communities and open spaces.

OBJECTIVES

The Conservation Commission serves the community of Brunswick by promoting land conservation to benefit Brunswick residents and visitors; fostering the conservation of open space, habitat and ecological values; advocating for the appropriate protection, development, or use of open spaces in town; providing educational outreach to residents on local and regional conservation and ecological issues; coordinating with town departments, committees, and local organizations in support of conservation efforts; and overseeing the management of town-owned conservation lands and interests.

Primary Priorities for 2018:

1. Work on adoption of the draft Conservation Commission ordinance by Town Council.
2. Continue to assist in the conservation management, planning, and stewardship of Brunswick Landing Conveyance Properties, in particular the Western “Sawtooth” Parcel.
3. Continue to be involved in the conservation management activities for Captain Fitzgerald Park, including planning next steps for conservation management.
4. Continue to work on targeted invasive species efforts (current efforts: Fitzgerald Park, Furbish Preserve, Western Sawtooth), and on updating town policy as needed for appropriate invasive species treatments. Removal of Bittersweet from Western Sawtooth and closer look at if the knotweed in Fitzgerald meets the standards for herbicide usage. Learn more about what the Recreation Department plans to do with Fitzgerald property and to learn more about the best management practices for the use of herbicides.
5. Identify management and stewardship needs and priorities for other town-owned conservation properties, using the Conservation Commission’s Inventory for guidance. Regular review of town-owned properties that are not tied to the Recreation Department or other entity.

Secondary Priorities

1. Follow up with the Council and Town Manager on short-term actions and priorities. Prepare and present the Annual Report.
2. Public Education project with Rivers and Coastal Waters and outreach opportunities. More information to the public regarding the value of open space.
3. Communications with other Brunswick Commissions, and affiliate conservation entities such as BTLT.
4. Host a 2018 field day to promote Conservation Commission efforts and inform residents about specific conservation properties

300th Anniversary Event Presentation Schedule

- April 23 6:30 PM **BHS Film Department Presentation: Uncommon Ground a Documentary Premier & 300th Commons History Talk by Jym St. Pierre**
At Crooker Theater
- April 28 1:00 PM **Wildlife Walking Tour – Ben Wilson and Scout Masse**
At Commons
- May 5 7:30 AM **Bird Walking Tour – Dale Dorr**
At Commons
- May 12 1:00 PM **Botanical Walking Tour – Eben Baker**
At Commons
- May 19 **300th Anniversary: Formal Town Commons Ceremony.**
At Commons
- 7:00-8:30 **Bird Walking Tour - John Berry and Gordon Smith**
- 7:00-9:30 **Run for the Commons – Blaine Moore**
- 10:00-11:00 **Tree Walking Tour – Jesse Bishop**
- 12:30-1:00 **Formal Ceremony**
Welcome and Introductory Remarks; Brunswick Town Council
Brief History of the Commons; Jym St. Pierre
Reading of Declarations:
May 9th, 1719 (o.s) Pejepscot Proprietor Statement; Larissa Vigue Picard,
Executive Director, Pejepscot Historical Society
1968 Selectmen Historic Landmark Designation; Angela Twitchell,
Executive Director, Brunswick Topsham Land Trust
2019 Maine Legislature Recognition
Commons Poetry Reading
Ribbon Cutting by Honorary Chair
Closing Comments; Brunswick Town Council
- 2:00 **Commons History Exhibit – Jym St. Pierre**
Formal Opening at Pejepscot Historical Society, 159 Park Row
- 5:30 **Wildlife Walking Tour – Ben Wilson and Scout Masse**
At Commons
- May 20 9:00-11:00 **US Postal Stamp Commemorative Cancellation**
At Town Hall; Council Chambers, 85 Union Street
- June 2 1:00 PM **The Commons and Brunswick’s Aviation History – Fred Koerber**
At Brunswick Naval Museum and Gardens, 179 Admiral Fitch Avenue
- June 9 1:00 PM **Tree Walking Tour – Jesse Bishop**
At Commons

BRUNSWICK CONSERVATION COMMISSION
2018 Annual Report of Commission Activities
Approved by the Commission: _____

2018 MEMBERS: Amanda Bunker, Sarah Carr, Steve Cohen, Tom Rumpf, Kurt Stinson (vice chair), Sandy Stott (chair), Steve Tibbetts

STAFF TO CONSERVATION COMMISSION DURING 2018: Jared Woolston, Town Planner; Jeff Hutchinson, Code Enforcement Officer; Julie Erdman, Administrative Assistant

SUMMARY: The Commission's efforts and activities during 2018 were focused on:

1. *To be filled in...*
- 2.

COMMISSION MISSION & OBJECTIVES STATEMENTS

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OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION

1. Participation in other committees and work groups during 2018:

- a. Shoreline Erosion Working Group – Jared Woolston, Town Planner, continued to work with this group and establish a pilot project in Brunswick to further the project.
- b. Brunswick-Topsham Land Trust – Sandy Stott and Amanda Bunker serve informally on behalf of the Commission on the BTLT Lands Committee.
- c. Brunswick Rivers and Coastal Waters Commission – Amanda Bunker has been listed as the de facto representative (as Commission chair) but is unable to attend meetings; the Commission will continue to do what it can to coordinate and participate in RCWC meetings and activities.
- d. Sandy Stott was again able to write and publish several “Your Land” articles in the Times Record, articles that highlight wildlife, natural resources, and/or public parks or properties with

conservation value. These help serve as outreach to residents to expand public awareness of wildlife and natural resources as well as Brunswick's many conserved lands and conservation values.

NATURAL RESOURCES PLANNING

1. Brunswick Landing & Conveyance Properties.

- ◆ **Captain Fitzgerald Park:** The Commission made a recommendation to the Parks & Recreation Dept. on the short-term habitat management for Fitzgerald Park, specifically for mowing and brush removal. This involved developing a strategy to mow/cut only a portion of the property each year, rotating around the property, to lessen maintenance work per year and potentially to adapt management treatments to different sections of the property.

A controlled burn was successfully held on the property in April 2018. This burn was more productive and successful than the previous one, and covered the half of the site not burned last time. While there conducting the burn, the Fire Dept. and Parks & Recreation Dept. staff also cut many gray birch sprouts that had returned aggressively following the prior tree harvest and removal. See also "Invasive Species", below, on the treatment of invasive knotweed on the property.

- ◆ **Western "Sawtooth" Property:** The Commission was not able to make significant progress on the draft management plan for the sawtooth property. This continues to be a goal to complete, as the property is identified as a high value and important habitat.

NATURAL RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP

1. **Conservation easement monitoring.** Monitoring activities were conducted in July and August by members of the Conservation Commission and the 2018 Bowdoin Summer Fellow, Charlotte Hevly. Reports were prepared by Charlotte Hevly, and reviewed and approved by the Commission members. The following easements were monitored and reported on:

- ◆ Damarin Lane
- ◆ Two Echo
- ◆ Otter Trace II
- ◆ Coon

The Commission continues to struggle with monitoring properties with unclear boundary markings (whether property boundaries or easement boundaries), many of the town conservation easement have few or no discoverable boundary medallions. Following the drafting and presentation of the easement reports, the Commission approved the reports.

2. **Invasive Species on Town Conservation Land and Properties.** In the past several years, the Commission has conducted invasive species removal activities on three properties: Captain Fitzgerald

Park, the Western “Sawtooth” Parcel (abutting the Brunswick Executive Airport), and Furbish Preserve. In 2018, the Commission only conducted removal activities at Fitzgerald Park and the Western Sawtooth. The Commission recognizes that there is not the time/man hours or resources available to conduct many invasive species removal efforts, and has so far focused on small and achievable projects, projects on high-value habitat properties, or projects with joint conservation and recreation benefit.

Invasive Plant Species Guidelines. The Commission finalized and adopted the guidelines that will be used to determine when to expend time and resources to treat/remove invasives, and the process for considering herbicides. It has been the stated goal of the Commission to only consider high priority areas for invasives removal on town conservation land. (*Invasives Guidelines attached.*)

Captain Fitzgerald Park. Commission continued to pursue the option for safe herbicide treatment of the knotweed patch at Captain Fitzgerald Park, including the review of what is allowed by ordinance, what channels the Commission has to go through to get permission, and confirming the selection of the best possible herbicide in terms of effectiveness and safety. The Commission made the request to the Code Enforcement Officer for permission to use herbicides on the site, and coordinated with Parks & Recreation Department staff on implementation. A recommendation was made on herbicide treatment selection and to coordinate directly with Nancy Sferra of The Nature Conservancy (due to her direct knowledge and experience with these types of treatments). Treatment was approved and conducted (town staff licensed to apply herbicides), with the recommendation that if the patch comes back at all next season, to cut it down and treat with herbicides a second time.

Western Sawtooth. The Commission was able to cut back the bittersweet along the western side of the property once again. Though not a large amount of work and the property is a high value habitat, it is a challenging project due to the overwhelming amount of bittersweet on several of the abutting private properties which continues to invade the Sawtooth Parcel.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

1. Development review cases are projects which are being reviewed by the Planning Board or Planning Staff which include conservation land, proposed conservation land or easements, designated or proposed open space, or which have a potential significant natural resource impact. The Commission provides recommendations to either the Planning Board or Council on these projects.

The following development review cases and issues before the Conservation Commission in 2018:

- ♦ **Miller Point.** The Commission reviewed a request to amend the conservation easement for a portion of the property, citing a mapping and clerical error made at the time of the subdivision’s original approval. The Commission received input from within the Brunswick community indicating likely negative impacts to the sensitive shoreland zone. The Commission raised concerns specifically regarding the Town’s liability in making the type of changes requested for the easement, and recommended the Town check with the State Attorney General before the Council makes any

decision. Following further input and revision of the original request, the Commission made a recommendation to the Council regarding allowing changes to the easement and site plan as discussed.

- ◆ **Douglas Ridge Easement.** Following the Town’s acceptance of this particular easement, the Commission discussed the Town Council’s general comments and concern with the tax impacts/implications of conservation easements. The Commission spent time at a few different meetings discussing the resources that exist which could help bring residents and Councilors up to speed on the value of conservation easements and tax implications (*see below, under Conservation Commission Activities*).

CONSERVATION COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

1. **Presentation and Discussion on Benefits and Tax Implications of Conservation Land.** The Commission hosted Angela Twitchell of Brunswick Topsham Land Trust and Tim Glidden of Maine Coast Heritage Trust at a Commission meeting to discuss the resources and information their organizations use to answer questions that property owners and municipalities have about the impacts of conservation land on the local tax base. Many of the resources they use can serve the Commission in addressing concerns when considering proposals for new conservation land and easements. The Brunswick Assessor was unable to join the meeting, but further discussion with her may be helpful to get more specific feedback on Brunswick’s particular situation regarding taxation on undeveloped and conserved land.
2. **Woodward Point, BTLT & MCHT Project.** The Commission received a presentation from Angela Twitchell of Brunswick Topsham Land Trust regarding the Woodward Point property that BTLT and the Maine Coast Heritage Trust are campaigning to conserve. Following the presentation, the Commission agreed that this property was a high value conservation project and felt the Town of Brunswick should support BTLT and MCHT. The Commission formally requested to the Council that the funds from the sale of **XXX Mere Point Road** be dedicated to this project, as these funds were slated to be used towards the preservation of coastal land for public access (*letter attached*). The Council ultimately agreed, and voted to provide those town funds to the BTLT & MCHT campaign to permanently protect the property, which would have public access.

OTHER BUSINESS

The following activities were not Conservation Commission projects, but involved minor participation or general support from the Commission.

1. **Planning Staff Project Work on Shoreline Stabilization.** The Commission received regular updates on the Town Planner’s work on developing best management practices for “living shoreline” methods for coastal shoreline erosion. A site was selected as a pilot project, town-owned Wharton Point.

2. Commission again considered the idea of creating a volunteer work group to assist with special projects or field work. While the Commission all agreed that this would be a great idea, it came down to Commission members not being able to dedicate the time it takes to coordinate a volunteer group.