



CLAREMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSION CONSERVATION PLAN

Adopted 7/21/2016

THE CLAREMONT CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Claremont Conservation Commission provides the following services to the City:

- Advises residents and municipal boards and commissions regarding compliance with local and State natural resources regulations.
- Encourages the public to become involved in natural resource conservation.
- Coordinates activities of volunteer organizations that have conservation-minded goals similar to those of the Commission.
- Provides recommendations to municipal boards and commissions for minimizing possible environmental impact of proposed developments.
- Reviews State wetland permit applications and provides recommendations to the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services Wetlands Bureau.
- Compiles and oversees the information being collected in regards to water quality monitoring in the Sugar River and other public drinking water sources.
- Manages the Claremont conservation fund to promote land and water conservation.
- Hosts public forums on conservation topics and informational workshops.
- Annually sponsors camperships for Claremont youth to attend Barry Conservation Camp.
- Maintains an index and record of open space land and natural, aesthetic or ecological areas including conservation easements.

The Claremont Conservation Commission is committed to pursuing the following goals:

- To protect the quality of Claremont's air and water resources and encourage sustainable multiple use of these resources.
- To protect valuable land resources to assure that open land areas are available for responsible and sustainable recreational use.
- To promote the protection and quality of wildlife resources.
- To preserve open land areas for the maintenance and protection of natural habitat critical to wildlife preservation.
- To create wildlife corridors between existing protected habitats through acquisition of easements or conservation lands.
- To increase public awareness of the importance of natural resource conservation.
- To work with municipal boards and committees, specifically the Claremont Planning Board, to balance development with natural resource conservation consistent with city regulations and the City Master Plan.

- To develop working relationships with other Conservation Commissions, private organizations, State and Federal environmental agencies, UNH Cooperative Extension, and state, local and federal representatives to achieve the aforementioned goals and services.

CREATING THE CURRENT PLAN

Background for development of the Conservation Plan:

The 2011 Master Plan called for the creation of a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI). The Commission contracted with Jeff Littleton of Moosewood Ecological LLC to prepare it. The NRI was completed in January 2013 and adopted by the Commission on February 21, 2013. (See Appendix B)

The Claremont Master Plan is once again being updated. As part of that process, the Planning and Development Department hosted a public forum (on March 3, 2016) at which Claremont residents were invited to participate in a natural resources survey. The survey contained questions regarding ecologically significant areas to be protected, various conservation topics, invasive species, and creation and development of wildlife corridors. (For more information of the specific survey results see Appendix A.) The Conservation Commission decided that pertinent results from the survey could be helpful in guiding our work of developing a conservation plan. (NOTE: There will be additional survey information available after 5/17/2016)

Recommendations used for development of the plan:

The following recommendations represent a compilation of recommendations from the 2013 NRI and the survey results from the Master Plan Public Forum.

The Claremont Conservation Commission recommends:

- Protecting large un-fragmented blocks of wildlife habitat, especially those with high quality habitats located within close proximity of one another and with limited barriers for wildlife movement;
- Protecting known rare species populations;
- Protecting representative examples of critical habitats for known rare species;
- Protecting rare and representative examples of natural communities;
- Protecting intact wetland and stream riparian buffers and promoting the restoration of degraded areas;
- Supporting voluntary and regulatory approaches at natural resource protection;
- Building upon existing contiguous protected lands;
- Connecting protected lands and other critical habitat with upland, aquatic and/or riparian corridors;
- Developing a better understanding of wildlife movement patterns to identify and design the most effective conservation corridors; and
- Promoting community education and outreach regarding Claremont's biodiversity and the importance of long-term strategies

CONSERVATION PLAN AND TIMELINE:

VISION STATEMENT:

Claremont will have practices and policies which protect valuable and vulnerable natural resources and the quality of the life associated with the rural nature of the City by balancing development and conservation.

INTENT:

The Conservation Commission intends that this plan (based on data contained in the Natural Resource Inventory, the City Master Plan and on-going projects) will guide the City's actions regarding its long-term conservation interests.

The plan is intended only to guide the Commission's prioritization of projects in the next five years and is not meant to be comprehensive.

NEW FIVE YEAR GOALS STARTING 2016

GOAL # 1

EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO.

RECOMMENDATION: Continue to explore avenues for keeping the public informed.

Objective 1: Investigate signage at supported projects

Objective 2: Share information about current and ongoing projects

Objective 3: Make available “did you know ...” information pertaining to natural resources conservation issues, etc.

Objective 4: Explore the use of social media, example: What's Up Claremont

Objective 5: Explore the creation and circulation of a monthly Conservation Newsletter

Objective 6: Explore working with existing networks and publications

RECOMMENDATION: promote community education and outreach regarding Claremont’s biodiversity and the importance of long-term protection strategies

GOAL #2

ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL LANDOWNERS TO BE GOOD STEWARDS OF THEIR OWN PROPERTIES.

RECOMMENDATION: Promote public education on land stewardship

Objective 1: Make available information on best management practices for agriculture, forestry, and conservation

GOAL #3

CONTINUE TO REVISIT THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR AND PROTECTION OF THE CRITICALLY SIGNIFICANT AREAS THAT WERE SET FORTH BY THE NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY.

RECOMMENDATION: Protect large undeveloped blocks of land and add to existing protected lands

Objective 1: Investigate annexing adjacent properties to the existing Moody Park Parcel

Objective 2: Continue to oversee and follow-up on the Stevens Brook Conservation Area.

Objective 3: To monitor any other current Conservation Easements for which we are responsible

RECOMMENDATION: Maintain an index of all open areas and natural resources

GOAL #4

ENCOURAGE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE STEWARDSHIP OF THE CITY'S PARKS AND OTHER NATURAL OPEN SPACES.

RECOMMENDATION: Create the Friends of Moody park group

Objective 1: Oversee the Friends of Moody Park Group

Objective 2: Bring the different interest/user groups together to conduct projects

Objective 3: Make available information on local Invasive species and how to manage them

Objective 4: Investigate the option of kiosks, signage and other public information displays for example: Signage on flora and fauna for trails

Objective 5: Continue to encourage school participation

RECOMMENDATION: Make available information on current forest management practices

GOAL #5

SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRENT FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN.

“To actively support the management of Claremont’s natural areas with a strong land ethic in order to achieve responsible land stewardship. These stewardship activities will help to promote Claremont as a healthy community with a quality of life that values the environmental quality of forest ecosystems and the benefits of commercial and recreational land uses.” (See Appendix B)

RECOMMENDATION: The Commission will continue to be kept informed on the implementation of the Forest Management Plan.

Objective 1: Insure the Forest Management Plan is being followed with conservation in mind.

Objective 2: Offer suggestions for best practices that focus on conservation.

GOAL #6

CONTINUE TO ACT AS CUSTODIANS OF THE BOBBY WOODMAN RAIL TRAIL.

RECOMMENDATION: Create a long range plan for the care and use of the Rail Trail

Objective 1: Continue to seek grant opportunities for maintenance of and improvements to the trail.

Objective 2: Continue to oversee and follow up on projects related to the trail that are already in progress.

Objective 3: Continue to oversee the map of the Rail Trail and list of potential improvements that was created in February of 2014 by the Upper Valley Lake Sunapee Regional Planning Commission. (See Appendix C (need to add map))

Objective 4: Collaborate with City Planning on the feasibility of plans for car top boat launch to the east of Home Depot: cost, permits, landowners etc.

GOAL #7

ACTING AS STEWARDS, SUPPORT THE IMPROVEMENT OF RECREATIONAL ACCESS AT ASHLEY FERRY BOAT LAUNCH.

RECOMMENDATION: investigate the feasibility and creation of a better car top access for recreational boat launching.

APPENDIX A:

Master Plan Survey Results from March 2016:

1. Most important “Ecologically Significant” areas (to survey respondents)

Arrowhead Forest Area	31.67%
Connecticut River South	15%
Sugar River East	15%
Cat Hole Area	13.33%
Grissom Lane Wetland Complex	11.67%
Connecticut River North	8.33%
Unity Road Wetland Complex	3.33%
Twistback Area	1.67%
Southeast Corner	0%
Sugar River West	0%

2. How should ecologically significant areas be protected? (to survey respondents)

Purchase them	1.61%
Landowner education	3.23%
Conservation easements	8.06%
Zoning and subdivision regulation	3.23%
All of the above	16.13%
Combination of some of the above	67.74%
None of the above	0%

3. Which conservation topics would you like to learn more about? (to survey respondents)

Invasive species	7.81%
Forest management on City-owned land	42.19%
Aquifer protection	21.88%
Value of wetlands	7.81%
Vernal Pools	1.56%
Conservation easements	18.75%

4. Should the City take a more aggressive role in controlling invasive species on publicly owned lands and roadsides? (to survey respondents)

Yes	74.19%
No	12.90%
No Opinion	12.90%

5. Are the creation and/or preservation of wildlife corridors important for the Conservation Commission to pursue? (to survey respondents)

Yes	64.52%
No	1.61%
Maybe in certain cases	25.81%
Don't know what wildlife corridors are	8.06%

6. Should development be allowed along ridgelines? (to survey respondents)

Yes	17.46%
No	41.27%
Maybe	41.27%

APPENDIX B

GOALS FROM 2011 MASTER PLAN

GOALS:

The following goals are taken from the 2011 Master Plan, Chapter 7 "Natural Resources", Section 5. References are noted to the [Master Plan](#) or to the [Natural Resources Inventory \(NRI\)](#) for those goals which relate to narratives contained in these documents.

GOAL #1:

NATURAL RESOURCE INVENTORY

RECOMMENDATIONS: Create an inventory to support the City of Claremont's objectives for natural resources protection and provide a basis for informed land use planning

Objective 1: Provide a framework document that highlights the natural infrastructure to support numerous facets of municipal planning

Objective 2

Emphasize providing new natural resource information, as opposed to the dissemination of existing information

Objective 3

Provide a wetland component that will lend itself to support a multi tiered priority process

GOAL #2:

IMPLEMENT FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

To actively manage Claremont's natural areas with a strong land ethic in order to achieve responsible land stewardship. These stewardship activities will help to promote Claremont as a healthy community with a quality of life that values the environmental quality of forest ecosystems and the benefits of commercial and recreational land uses.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Adopt a holistic view of natural systems which places human activity within rather than apart from the natural environment.

Objective 1: Designate some "forever wild" areas to serve natural diversity and educational opportunities

Objective 2: Create educational infrastructure such as interpretive signs and kiosks and provide diverse opportunities for education

Objective 3: Identify and conserve important archaeological and cultural sites

RECOMMENDATIONS: Implement forest management that is ecologically, economically, and socially responsible.

Objective 1: Protect and improve the water quality of our water resources including streams and wetlands

Objective 2: Be responsible stewards of the land and its resources

Objective 3: Maintain the stability and integrity of the ecosystems within our control

Objective 4: Maintain a healthy, biodiverse, productive and aesthetically pleasing forest

Objective 5: Manage with respect to "Natural Community" type

RECOMMENDATIONS: Resource extraction should not exceed the regenerative capacity of the ecosystem or reduce natural productivity or diversity.

Objective 1: Enhance the quality and quantity of our timber resource

Objective 2: Manage for Sustainable harvest and growth

Objective 3: Provide periodic revenue through the sale of forest products

RECOMMENDATIONS: Adopt management practices that support indigenous habitats and prevent fragmentation so that wildlife can migrate for seasonal food and reproductive needs.

Objective 1: Provide and enhance the naturally diverse variety of wildlife habitat in forest, wetland, and open land settings

RECOMMENDATIONS: Manage for ecologically and socially sustainable recreational opportunities.

Objective 1: Continue to provide for both motorized and nonmotorized sustainable recreation opportunities such as ATV and snowmobile trails, foot-paths, and cross country skiing and snowshoe trails

Objective 2: Continue to provide recreational infrastructure such as picnic areas and shelters where appropriate

Objective 3: Create aesthetic vistas along recreational trails and wildlife viewing areas

Objective 4: Provide opportunity for hunting

GOAL #3:

ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL LANDOWNERS TO BE GOOD STEWARDS
OF THEIR OWN PROPERTIES

RECOMMENDATIONS: Promote public education on Best management Practices (BMPs).

Objective 1: Make available information on best management practices for agriculture, forestry, and other resource extraction activities

APPENDIX C:

(Bobby Woodman Rail Trail Map)