Why have a Conservation Commission?

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Does your community have a Conservation Commission?
The Vermont Statutes Online

Title 24: Municipal And County Government

Chapter 118: Conservation Commissions

(Cite as: 24 V.S.A. § 4501)

§ 4501. Creation of conservation commissions

A conservation commission may be created at any time when a municipality votes to create one, or, if the charter of a municipality permits it, when the legislative body of the municipality votes to create one. (Added 1977, No. 250 (Adj. Sess.), § 1.)
Conservation Commissions are Advisory
What does a Conservation Commission DO?

§ 4505. Powers and duties of conservation commissions

Any conservation commission created under this chapter may:

(1) make an inventory and conduct continuing studies of the natural resources of the municipality including but not limited to:

(A) air, surface and ground waters, and pollution thereof;
(B) soils and their capabilities;
(C) mineral and other earth resources;
(D) streams, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and floodplains;
(E) unique or fragile biologic sites;
(F) scenic and recreational resources;
(G) plant and animal life, especially the rare and endangered species;
(H) prime agricultural and forest land, and other open lands;
Natural Resources INVENTORY

Mad River Valley Planning District
Natural Heritage Element Inventory and Assessment for Waitsfield and Fayston, Vermont
April 13, 2007

Warren, Waitsfield & Fayston
Natural Resources Inventory by Arrowwood Environmental

Thetford
“Crown Jewel” Walks
(Other) INVENTORY

(2) make and maintain an inventory of lands within the municipality which have historic, educational, cultural, scientific, architectural, or archaeological values in which the public has an interest;

Putney
Natural and Cultural Resources Inventories,
with help from UVM students

Waitsfield, Warren, and Fayston
Community Values Mapping
Municipal Land Conservation

(3) recommend to the legislative body of the municipality the purchase or the receipt of gifts of land or rights thereto, or other property, for the purposes of this chapter;
Municipal Land Management

(7) administer the lands, properties and other rights which have been acquired by the municipality for the purposes of this chapter;

Hartford
Management of Town Forest

Bradford
Establishment of Trail Network
Help with Regulatory Review

(8) assist the local planning commission or zoning board of adjustment or the district environmental commission, by providing advisory environmental evaluations where pertinent to applications made to those bodies, for permits for development;

Williston
Works alongside DRB

Weathersfield
Conducts site visits for some development review, with ZA or ZBA
Help with Planning & other boards

(9) cooperate with the local legislative body, planning commission, zoning board of adjustment, road committee, or other municipal or private organizations on matters affecting the local environment or the natural resources of the municipality;

Cornwall
Established to work alongside Planning Commission

Bethel
Involved extensively in aftermath of Irene, including FEMA buyouts and development of policies & regs for future prevention
Community Education

(10) prepare, collect, publish, advertise and distribute relevant books, maps and other documents and maintain communication with similar organizations; and encourage through educational activities the public understanding of local natural resources and conservation needs;

Middletown Springs
Sullivan Woods Educational Walks

Woodbury
Publication of local natural history
Benefits for Municipal Planners, Selectboards, and DRBs

• TIME

• EXPERTISE in natural resources/science
New Legislation

Act 171
Fragmentation

Act 174
Energy Siting
How Do You START a Conservation Commission?

- Town Vote –or—
- Selectboard Vote (if charter allows)
- Determine your town’s needs
- Write up an initial workplan
- Find interested individuals
For more information:

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