

Short Range Action Plan 2022-2023

Fracesttown Conservation Commission

Purpose & Intent of this Plan

The purpose of this short range conservation action plan is to identify and set forth the Fracesttown Conservation Commission's most important and immediate priority actions, measures and/or conservation projects crucial for protecting the natural resources of the community during 2022 and into 2023.

This short range action plan is an advisory guide only as the Conservation Commission develops its annual work program. More importantly, however, the plan provides a communications tool to inform and educate the public and other boards, committees and commissions within the community what the Conservation Commission views as its highest priorities for the coming year.

While it is recognized that not all plans are static and that conditions may change, all the Conservation Commission's actions, measures, and/or conservation projects identified in this plan are supported by and/or based upon many of the following documented and/or adopted natural resource reports, plans, studies, and/or publications prepared for the community:

- Fracesttown Conservation Plan & NRI
- FCC Land Protection Guidelines & Criteria List
- Piscataquog Watershed Land Conservation Plan (without co-occurrence model)
- 2010 Piscataquog River Management Plan or most recent update
- NH Wildlife Action Plan
- Fracesttown Master Plan

The Fracesttown Conservation Commission intends to review and update this plan every year and communicate this plan by making the plan available on the Fracesttown Website.

Comments from the Conservation Commission Chair

Some of the most significant issues currently facing our community are related to:

1. Invasive species (environmental harm/costs to manage)
2. Watershed and water quality issues (environmental damage/human welfare/ safe drinking water/ associated costs)
3. Land fragmentation (wildlife habitat/species biodiversity; impacts to farming, forestry, tourism & local economy)
4. Protection of local agricultural resources (potential to grow local food, reduce carbon footprint, support local economy)
5. Loss of human connection to the land and nature.

Betsy Hardwick, Chair

Core Conservation Goals for the Year:

- Connect people to land and nature
- Education and outreach on environmental issues
- Wildlife habitat improvement & protection
- Maintain watershed & water quality

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- Support the wise use (conservation) of forests and farmland
- Manage town forests and other town-owned conservation land protected through the conservation commission and monitor town-held easements.

Key Conservation Priorities and Strategies:

- Improve wildlife habitat on conservation lands; update management goals for town-owned conservation lands as appropriate
- Encourage good Stewardship on private and public land through education and example
- Promote education related to environmental issues (ourselves and others)
- Work to identify risks to water quality and wildlife habitat and develop mitigation strategies
- Engage people of all ages in outreach and education initiatives
- Promote access to nature and land – develop/maintain “ ambassador lands”
- Continue building partnerships and working cooperatively with other conservation organizations on conservation projects in Francetown.

Recommended Actions/Measures/Projects:

- Continue working on trails in the Fisher Hill Town Forest and support connections to nearby trail networks.
- Consider the need for boundary work on Rand Brook Confluence property.
- Review existing trails on town-owned land for negative wildlife impacts and consider relocation feasibility if needed/appropriate, update maps as necessary and continue with trail maintenance on existing trails.
- Create a Watershed Study subcommittee and appoint members to look into Pleasant Pond and Haunted Lake (Scoby/Scobie) watershed issues.
- Educate ourselves on natural resource/environmental through available programs;
- Outreach & educational programs; host or promote outdoor activities such as the storybook walk, small-group activities such as “contemplative” walks, or birding/plant ID hikes, or other similar educational hikes; continue to provide printed material to the public (brochures/pamphlets) when available, and submit articles or educational/informational blurbs/ photos to the Francetown News;
- Promote backyard habitat improvements such as native plantings that support wildlife or songbird species through educational articles/website information or links to other websites
- Connect with people as opportunity permits about the importance of critical natural resources that are on their own property;
- Continue to review applications to the Planning Board and ZBA that have potential impacts to natural resources and make appropriate recommendations to avoid/minimize any negative impacts.
- Begin planning work to update the 2013 NRI and Conservation Plan

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- Work with the Planning Board on amendments to the Zoning Ordinance (in accordance with the Conservation Plan, updated water resources plan and other sections of the Master Plan, and to see that the ZO meets State laws and regulations.)
- Coordinate outreach/educational programs with local schools/consider support of Harris Center/other conservation education programs for children/youth.
- Promote good access to suitable conservation lands: consider acquiring access easements/property for better access to more remote lands if not contrary to conservation purposes for those parcels.
- Continue collaborative education programs such as the Joan Hanchett Nature Series with the library, Francestown News, Francestown Land Trust. Educate ourselves on natural resource/environmental through available programs;
- Consider identification and mapping work for invasive plant areas town wide and/or on conservation lands, and develop an appropriate management strategy;
- Continue to work with Francestown Land Trust and other conservation organizations on the protection of key conservation parcels.
- Update town website