

Bolton Conservation Commission FY 2023-24 Annual Report

Rodney Parlee (Chair), Peter Van Dine (Vice-Chair/Treasurer),
Brenda Cataldo, Alan Bicknell, Matt Rivers and Leslie Brand (Clerk)

The Connecticut General Statutes mandate that a Conservation Commission, among other duties, research the utilization and potential uses of the land within the municipality. This responsibility is vital for preserving the natural resources, conservation areas, and ecological features that contribute to the character and beauty of Bolton. To ensure the town's natural environment is maintained while balancing economic development, it is crucial to approach conservation with a combination of knowledge, observation, outreach, and persistent effort.

The preservation of high-quality, intact, and contiguous habitats is central to a healthy landscape. As Bolton continues to grow economically, it is essential that all proposed developments be carefully assessed. Utilizing available tools, including scientific data, planning expertise, and public engagement, can help regulatory commissions make informed decisions that protect these irreplaceable resources. This careful review ensures that Bolton's ecological integrity is safeguarded while accommodating thoughtful and justifiable growth.

In fiscal year 2023-2024, the Bolton Conservation Commission (BCC) made significant strides, thanks to its dedicated volunteers. Here are some key accomplishments:

- **Stream Temperature Monitoring:** Collaborated with CTDEEP to track watershed resources in five streams and two vernal pools.
- **Watershed Conservation:** Continued partnership with local conservation alliances and awaited approval for the Bolton Lakes Watershed Management Plan.
- **Riffle Bioassessment by Volunteers (RBV):** Organized the 20th Annual RBV event, assessing stream health through macroinvertebrate collection.
- **Photo Contest and Calendar:** Hosted the 23rd Annual Town-wide Photo Contest and published the 13th edition of the traditional calendar, raising funds for conservation efforts.
- **Peak Foliage Hike:** Led a hike at Box Mountain Forest old growth forest with notable guests, highlighting woodland stewardship proforestation without habitat manipulation.
- **Winter Faire:** Set up a tabletop exhibit, sold calendars, and hosted the Recycling Challenge.
- **Winter Trails Day:** Hiked through Freja Park, showcasing habitat restoration projects and discussed the rare occurrence of ice circles on Notch Pond.
- **Vernal Pools Day:** Explored a rare vernal pool with a professional wetland scientist, educating participants on vernal pool obligate species.
- **Earth Day Celebration:** Hosted a Recycling Workshop at the Library and Fairy House Building contest at Freja Park, followed by a mini bio-blitz.
- **Kids to Parks Day:** Presented on watershed conservation at Indian Notch Park beach.
- **Trails Day:** Explored Box Mountain's old growth forest with special guests, discussing dendrology and forest conservation.
- **Park Management:** Managed trails and provided educational materials in local parks.

- **Community Engagement:** Participated in monthly local and state-wide board meetings, town forums, and conservation conferences.
- **Citizen Science:** Conducted water chemistry testing and salamander surveys, addressing environmental concerns.
- **Public Safety:** Coordinated with local and state conservation officials on managing trail erosion and illegal motor vehicle access in parks.

These actions reflect the BCC's ongoing commitment to conservation, environmental education, and community involvement in protecting Bolton's natural resources.

Originals Printed on 100% Recycled Paper– Earth Day and Every Day 

