Conservation Commission



Joseph Sina
Chairman

The responsibility of the East Haddam Conservation Commission (EHCC) is to develop, manage and regulate natural resources in the town pursuant to Connecticut State Statue section 7-131a. Primary responsibilities include, but are not limited to, open space stewardship such as signage, marking boundaries, blazing and maintaining trails, inventorying of plant and wildlife, controlling invasive plants, planting native plants, and preparation and distribution of maps. In addition, the EHCC assists with the management of forestry and the review of land use changes for impact on natural resource with the Land Use office. East Haddam's many natural characteristics have drawn people to the community to enjoy the rural atmosphere, scenic vistas, recreational opportunities and many qualities of life that define what the town represents. Therefore, through community outreach and education, EHCC aims to be a vital asset to the Town and its citizens by advocating for sound environmental and conservation solutions that impact the Town and its future and is focused on upholding the tranquil, natural and rural quality of life within East Haddam.

Staffing

Ruth Ziobron has been our recording secretary for a couple of years, and has been a very reliable asset to us since her hire.

Position	Status	Budgeted Hours	Elected/Union/Non-Union
Recording Secretary	Hourly	75 hours/year	Non-Union

Statistics

Some interesting statistics regarding EHCC's responsibilities:

- Twenty-six (26) properties encompassing over 1,750 acres and 50-75 miles of boundaries
- Maintain over 25 miles of trails on about 1,500 acres of property
- Thirteen (13) bridges including:
  - Seventy-five-foot (75') bridge that is horse rider rated over the Eightmile River at Chapel Farm Preserve
  - Two-hundred-foot (200') bridge connecting the two (2) halves of Rose Farm Reserve
  - Twenty-five foot (25') footbridge across Roaring Brook near the Florida Rd entrance
- 8+ bog bridges for low lying areas at Shugrue and Moodus Forest
- Volunteer labor for the maintenance of the town open space properties consisted of about 1200 hours this past year,with extensive efforts at Salmon R Overlook.

Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Major Service Level Accomplishments

Trail Enhancement:
Note: Past efforts in maintaining preserves were tacitly recognized by decision of E. Haddam family to place, at their own expense, a granite bench at Boot Rock where the parents had often enjoyed hiking.

- Extensive work at Salmon River Overlook (2 work parties, numerous individual hours) clearing knotweed around gazebo, new plantings of apple trees, swamp white oak, black walnut, mulching existing saplings (red mulberry), brush hogging to keep down mugwort.
- Work on further beautifying Patrell ADA trail included planting and maintenance of 17 additional native shrubs (highbush cranberry, Joe Pye weed, gray dogwood, possum haw viburnum, button bush), trimming with an eye toward encouraging natural areas
- Planted, fenced, mulched, maintained swamp white oak seedlings around parking areas at Lena, Hatch
- Put up 6 bluebird boxes across Patrell, Lefebrve, and Urbanik
- Obtained plot at Community Garden and prepared soil as "nursery" for staging plantings for preserves where needed; currently growing highbush cranberry viburnum and black walnut
- Performed walk through of Shugrue, Lake Hayward with DEEP forester who generated report on improving state of the land

Trail Maintenance (across 19 preserves):

- replacement bench built for Nichols
- 6 bog bridges built, 2 repaired/upgraded
- 9 new kiosks erected and maps/signage installed; signage also placed, as appropriate, (e.g., No ATVs, hunting restrictions, etc.)
- extensive work repairing damage (washout, fallen trees, site cleanup, re-routing trails around wet spots) involving substantial man-hours
- directional posts/blazes installed or refreshed as needed for easier hiking
- To reduce cost of printing maps, QR codes referencing town website on 8 preserves; signs at kiosks reminding people to use their cell phone to take picture of the map; investigating geo-referenced navigation apps

Work with other organizations/community

- appointed liaison to Sustainability committee; represented at their events
- worked closely with EHLT on work parties, movie production at Patrell, trail on Hand property, constructing pavilion at Burnham Brook
- Facebook page developed to keep community informed about our reserves
- 2 students involved; one keeping 3 preserves trimmed back, one trimming a preserve and attending meeting because of interest in environmental policy
- Article in each of the 4 Events magazines, and 7 articles published in E. Haddam News

Climate Change Resilience

- Succor Brook Flood Mitigation Project initiated with State of Connecticut and Kleinfelder Engineering; public workshops held
- Articles on climate impacts and Succor Brook project in Conservation Conversations column in the East Haddam News and as general news articles.
- East Haddam designated *Climate Leader* by Sustainable CT
- East Haddam becoming a sub-applicant with State of Connecticut as applicant for FEMA Resilient Infrastructure Grant
- Educational outreach continuing; partnership initiated with EightMile Wild and Scenic River, Lifeforms Inc, and the East Haddam School District to develop educational modules based on two of the Eightmile River Watershed's Outstanding Resource Values – Natural Communities and Intact Watershed Ecosystems

Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Major Service Level Goals

- Trail maintenance and enhancement will require the most manpower and cost for the CC over the 19 properties (possibly 20 with Kronberg); currently evaluating Hatch, in conjunction with DEEP to discuss forest management options and planning for future needs
- Invite reserve monitors to a regular meeting to discuss what they enjoy about the trails and what would enhance their enjoyment of the trails, and to get them more involved
- Conduct at least one event aimed at engaging community (e.g., scavenger hunt, expert led hike partnering with EHLT, garden club, etc)
- Continue interaction with school (e.g., students looking for senior projects, environmental club), other community groups to generate interest in CC activities
- "Inventory" interesting plants or features on various trails (with Garden Club, Master Gardeners, historian) and add to information on Town CC website
- Contribute at least 6 articles to East Haddam News or Events magazine
- Begin to update the 2011 Trails brochure (electronically) and make accessible to public; Land Trust web pages and 2011 brochure as models
- Take steps to get away from cost of printing maps by introducing QR codes at more sites; encourage use of GPS navigation apps
- East Haddam applies as sub-applicant for FEMA Resilient Infrastructure Grant
- Conservation Commission partners with Eight Mile Wild and Scenic River, Lifeforms Inc, and the East Haddam School District to develop educational modules.

Additional Budget Information

Purchased Property Services: $5,000: For surveying properties that were never surveyed and to mark boundaries.
Printing and Binding: $3,000: We have reduced this item for printing trail maps and other promotional materials for outreach events over the years. We will explore maps at targeted locations and more extensive use of QR codes to bring it down further.
Other Supplies: $4000: For paint, hardware, lumber for kiosks and bog bridges, metal signage, and for plantings to "seed" preserves in order to combat the invasives like barberry, burning bush, and bittersweet, especially around parking areas
Community Events: $1,000: We intend to hold events where we invite residents and provide small incentives to attend. Examples include talks on pollinator gardens and rain gardens.
Transfer to Special Revenue Fund: There is an existing fund balance in the special revenue fund: For the creation of parking lots or any other large expense initiatives as needed. Forest management plans conducted with DEEP will inform projects utilizing some of these funds.
Clerical: $2000. Based on the second half of 2024 budget, total for fiscal year should be about $2000

Expenditures by Expense Type

Name	Account ID	FY2023 Actual	FY2024 Actual	FY2025 Budgeted	FY2026 Budgeted	FY2026 Budgeted ($ Change)	FY2026 Budgeted (% Change)	FY 2026 ($ Change)
Expense Objects								
Salaries & Wages								
CLERICAL	10541750-51540	$1,051	$1,389	$1,200	$2,000	$800	66.7%	$800
Total Salaries & Wages:		**$1,051**	**$1,389**	**$1,200**	**$2,000**	**$800**	**66.7%**	**$800**
Purchased Property Services								
PURCHASED PROPERTY SERVICES	10541750-54010		$0	$5,000	$5,000	$0	0%	$0
Total Purchased Property Services:			**$0**	**$5,000**	**$5,000**	**$0**	**0%**	**$0**
Purchased Other Services								
PRINTING & BINDING	10541750-55500	$3,113	$2,204	$3,000	$3,000	$0	0%	$0
Total Purchased Other Services:		**$3,113**	**$2,204**	**$3,000**	**$3,000**	**$0**	**0%**	**$0**
Supplies								
SUPPLIES	10541750-56010	$132	$0	$200	$200	$0	0%	$0
BOOKS AND PERIODICALS	10541750-56400		$0	$200	$200	$0	0%	$0
OTHER SUPPLIES	10541750-56900	$2,061	$3,444	$3,000	$4,000	$1,000	33.3%	$1,000
Total Supplies:		**$2,193**	**$3,444**	**$3,400**	**$4,400**	**$1,000**	**29.4%**	**$1,000**
Miscellaneous								
DUES & FEES	10541750-58100	$300	$0	$500	$300	-$200	-40%	-$200
CONFERENCE	10541750-58110	$160	$270	$500	$500	$0	0%	$0
COMMUNITY EVENTS	10541750-58815	$282	$0	$1,000	$1,000	$0	0%	$0
Total Miscellaneous:		**$742**	**$270**	**$2,000**	**$1,800**	**-$200**	**-10%**	**-$200**
Transfers								
FUND TRANSFERS OUT	10541750-59020	$15,500	$0	$0	$0	$0	0%	$0
Total Transfers:		**$15,500**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**$0**	**0%**	**$0**
Total Expense Objects:		**$22,599**	**$7,307**	**$14,600**	**$16,200**	**$1,600**	**11%**	**$1,600**