



Job Title	Conservation Specialist
Department	Planning & Community Development
Employment Status	Full-time
FLSA Status	Non-exempt

Scope of Work

Under the general supervision of the Director of Conservation, assists the Division in the administration and enforcement of the MA Wetlands Protection Act (M.G.L. Chapter 131 Section 40), Rivers Protection Act and the Needham Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Article 6), and their respective regulations, guidelines and policies; provides support in office administration and organization, public assistance, grant administration, and land conservation and management. Responsible for maintaining and improving upon the efficiency and effectiveness of all areas under direction and control of the position. Performs varied and responsible duties requiring a thorough knowledge of departmental operations and the exercise of judgement and initiative in completing tasks.

Supervision

Received	Director of Conservation
Exercised	None.

Essential Job Functions

An employee in this position may be called upon to do any or all of the following essential functions. These examples do not include all of the duties which the employee may be expected to perform. To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential function to satisfaction.

- Assists the Director of Conservation (Director) by advising applicants, developers, builders, realtors, citizens, property owners, and other municipal departments on the permit application policies and procedures related to the MA Wetlands Protection Act (Act), the River's Act, and the Town of Needham Wetlands Protection Bylaw (Bylaw) and Regulations.
- Assists applicants and town departments with permit application process and procedures, responds to the public's conservation-related inquiries, conducts timely property review as triggered by the Town OpenGov electronic permitting system and determine if projects fall under the Commission's jurisdiction and requires permitting.
- As the Conservation Commission remains completely remote or moves to a hybrid meeting format, sets up the Conservation Commission Zoom meetings including sending out Zoom invitations and monitoring during the meeting for audiences questions. Attends two (2) evening Commission meetings per month, via Zoom or in-person as needed.
- Prepares and coordinates legal requirements of both the Act and the Bylaw regarding permit

applications (i.e., legal ads, agenda postings, abutter notifications, permit issuance).

- Assists with scheduled drop-in office hours to respond to miscellaneous inquiries from the public. Responds to public inquiries received through the civic plus website, email and by telephone.
- Assists with the drafting of wetland permits and approvals for Commission review (i.e., Order of Conditions, Determinations of Applicability, Orders of Resource Area Delineation, Certificate of Compliances, Minor Modifications, Amendments, Exemption Letters etc.).
- Assists in the review of permit applications for completeness, including all required forms, supporting documentation and fees. Consults with Director to determine if application may be processed if found to be deficient. Assists in the review of permit applications for compliance with applicable performance standards under the Act and the Bylaw. Assists in the preparation of draft Application Summaries for each new application for distribution to Commission members.
- Assists with the implementation of Division policies and procedures associated with wetland project violations and enforcement actions as directed.
- Participates in or leads site inspections for a variety of functions including: the project review process; pre-construction meetings; ongoing inspections for project compliance; site inspections in support of Certificate of Compliance requests; and inspections for violations and enforcement actions.
- Participates in professional development; keeps current on important regulatory and legal developments.
- Assists in planning, acquisition, administration and management of conservation land, including the Ridge Hill Reservation Ecological Management Plan.
- Performs field review of wetland resource delineations, including assessment of resource impacts from proposed projects.
- Assists with the preparation of grants and proposals for the acquisition and maintenance of conservation lands.
- Assists with community outreach events, social media, and public educational efforts, coordinating with conservation partners and agencies as needed.
- Willingness to learn how to educate the public on the importance of controlling stormwater through the use of the Conservation Department's interactive stormwater model.
- Assumes the responsibilities of the Director of Conservation in his/her absence.
- Recruit, organize, train, monitor and coordinate volunteers and trail stewards to maintain lands, trails, and signage. This effort includes in-person trainings/kick-off events, safety review, and monitoring.
- Establish a reporting method for stewards to provide information back to the Town regarding their assigned trails/properties.
- Establish and maintain a database with projects identified by trail stewards and volunteers including trail maintenance, tree removals, kiosk and footbridge repairs, etc. Liaise with other Town departments to resolve trail maintenance needs that require Town staff or contractors. Coordinate with local Scouts and volunteers to address those needs that do not require Town staff or contractors.
- Performs other duties (i.e., land management) as assigned by the Director.

Other Job Functions

- Performs related duties as assigned.
- Follow safe work practices.

Requirements of Work

The following requirements may be substituted by any equivalent combination of education, training, and experience which provides the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform the job:

- Completion of a four-year degree program, degree in Natural Resources, Environmental Science, or related field preferred
- One to three years of related experience, experience in conservation preferred
- Excellent communications and customer service skills, and tact and poise to interact with a wide variety of people and situations.
- Broad knowledge of state, federal and local environmental regulations, reading engineered plans and topographic maps, botany and wildlife, and personal computer and computer software, including GIS.
- Possession of a valid motor vehicle operator's license required.

Knowledge, Ability, and Skill

In addition to the requirements of work, the individual should also have the following knowledge, ability, and skill:

Knowledge of	• Knowledge of standard office procedures, practices, forms, and equipment. • The use of standard office equipment including computers and relevant software programs. • Knowledge of MA Wetlands Protection Act (MGL Chapter 131 Section 40) and familiarity with Needham's Wetlands Protection Bylaws (Article 6). • Knowledge of wetland functions and values, wetland boundary delineation, local rare species requirements, land management and conservation practices, applicable policies, regulations and laws. Working knowledge of botany, geology, hydrology, forestry, natural communities, vernal pool identification and certification requirements, wildlife habitat evaluation and sustainability.
Ability to	• Ability to recognize when a situation or decision should be referred to the Director. • Ability to work independently or as part of a group. • Ability to understand, learn, interpret and explain policies and procedures and to apply such guidelines appropriately to different situations. • Ability to interact effectively and tactfully with a wide variety of individuals including management personnel, other department staff, outside professionals and members of the public. • Ability to communicate clearly and concisely with others, both verbally and in writing. • Ability to maintain confidentiality of sensitive information consistent with rules for public disclosure. • Ability to prioritize multiple tasks and deal effectively with interruptions. • Ability to perform detailed work accurately and efficiently within strict deadline.
Skill In	• Continuously update skills in operation of new systems and applications.

Necessary Special Requirements

- Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS) or Wetland Professional in Training (WPIT) preferred.

Physical Demands

The physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by an employee to successfully perform the essential functions of this job. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

- Some work is performed in the field, in thick woods, on steep slopes, and in wet areas. Frequent and extended periods of outside work, subject to all weather conditions including heat, high wind, rain, and deep snow. Frequent walking, standing, climbing, bending and lifting.
- Often exposed to health hazards (Lyme Disease and West Nile virus), and plant irritants such as poison ivy and thorny plants, and the hazards of site work associated with construction including noise and heavy equipment.
- Some work is performed in a normal office environment, not subject to extreme variations of temperature, noise, odors etc. Majority of work is performed in a quiet work environment, with frequent interruptions. Frequently subjected to the demands of other individuals and the volume and/or rapidity with which tasks must be completed.
- Operates computer, printer, trail cameras, telephone, copier and all other standard office equipment.

Pay Equity/Equal Opportunity/Americans with Disabilities Act Employer