

**Town of Vassalboro
Conservation Commission Ordinance**

Adopted May 1988
Amended June 2008

The Vassalboro Conservation Commission Ordinance

As recommended by the Town's Strategic Plan adopted June 2006, the Vassalboro Conservation Commission is hereby established.

I .Authority

This ordinance has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Home Rule Authority, MRSA, Title 30-A § 3001 and § 3261.

II. Effective Date

The effective date of this Ordinance is June 30, 2008. A certified copy of this Ordinance and any amendments thereto shall be filed with the Town Clerk and shall be made available to the public upon request according to requirements of State Law.

III. Conflict with other Ordinances

Nothing in ordinance shall be construed to conflict with or usurp any duties, powers, of functions of the Recreation Committee or any other Town Ordinance.

IV. Purpose

The purpose of the Commission as recommended by the Town's Strategic Plan is to protect the environmental health of the community and to play a role in implementing the natural resource strategies and goals of the Strategic Plan which include

1. To protect and manage the quality of the Town's water resources including rivers, streams, ponds and aquifers.
2. To protect the Town's critical natural resources including wetlands, wildlife and fishery habitats, shoreland, scenic vistas, and unique natural areas.
3. To safeguard the town's agricultural and forest resources from development that threatens those resources.

V. Appointment of Commissioners

The Municipal Officers may appoint 3 but not more than 7 conservation commissioners serving without pay. Members shall initially be appointed for terms of 1, 2, and 3 years, such that the terms of approximately 1/3 of the members will expire each year. Their successors shall be appointed for terms of 3 years each. Members shall serve until the appointment of a new successor. Members may serve for more than one term.

VI. Duties of the Commission

The Commission shall

1. Keep records of its meetings and activities, and shall make an annual report to be included in the annual report of the Town

2. Foster an open dialogue with local, state, and regional conservation groups that promote land trusts and land preservation programs. Activities that foster interest in preservation programs should be offered to willing landowners.
3. Work with local and regional watershed groups and DEP on water quality projects that promote improvements and protection to water quality of rivers, lakes, streams and groundwater within the Town.
4. Cooperate with local farmers and foresters and other regional, state, and federal organizations to seek ways to promote the economic health and vitality of agriculture and forestry.
5. Develop and update an index of all open areas whether publicly or privately owned, including but not limited to open marsh, swamps, wetlands, conserved lands, scenic areas, and natural undeveloped land with special qualities worth protecting.
6. Develop a town trails plan. Promote the use of existing trails and seek opportunities for new trails.
7. Monitor the environmental health and vitality of the Town's natural resources and seek ways to maintain their vitality

VII. Power of Commission

The Commission may:

1. Form subcommittees of town citizens and local and regional conservation groups on a voluntary basis as necessary to assist with the duties of the Commission
2. Recommend to the Municipal Officers and Planning Board programs for the better protection, development, or use of identified open areas including the acquisition of conservation easements, ordinance revisions or enactment, or develop prepared plans.
3. Recommend land acquisitions in the municipality's name for any purpose set forth in this ordinance subject to the approval of the municipal legislative body.
4. Advertise, prepare, print, and distribute books, maps, charts, plans, and pamphlets which it considers necessary subjected to Town approval of necessary funds.